



Bord Oideachais & Oiliúna
LUIMNIGH & AN CHLÁIR
LIMERICK & CLARE
Education & Training Board



INAUGURAL REVIEW OF QUALITY ASSURANCE

.....

FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING DIVISION SELF-EVALUATION REPORT

December 2020



QAI AWARD



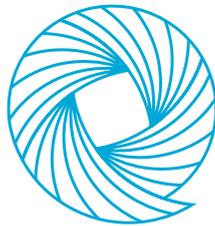
Bord Oideachais & Oiliúna
LUIMNIGH & AN CHLÁIR
LIMERICK & CLARE
Education & Training Board

INAUGURAL REVIEW OF QUALITY ASSURANCE

FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING DIVISION

SELF-EVALUATION REPORT

December 2020



QAI AWARD

Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board
Marshal House,
Dooradoyle Road,
Limerick, V94 HAC4

Paul Patton, Director of Further Education and Training | paul.patton@lcetb.ie
Maud Baritaud, Quality Assurance Review Co-ordinator | maud.baritaud@lcetb.ie
Alan Hogan, Further Education and Training Manager, Innovation,
Development and Quality | alan.hogan@lcetb.ie

We are pleased to endorse Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board's Institution Self-Evaluation Report (ISER) as part of the Inaugural Review of Quality Assurance process.

Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board, in its FET Strategic Framework (2015-2020), describes its vision for the future as '*Quality Further Education and Training will inspire people to realise their personal and professional potential and contribute to the social, cultural and economic development of the region*'. This institution self-evaluation report describes how the ETB develops, implements, monitors and maintains effective quality assurance processes, and the resultant impact on its learners, stakeholders and community, in line with QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines, and associated sector-specific and topic-specific guidelines.

Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board welcomes this opportunity to evaluate and reflect on the effectiveness of its quality assurance systems. The feedback from the external peer review team, providing external perspective and enhancement advice,

will be invaluable in our quality assurance journey.

We would like to thank the staff, learners and stakeholders who were involved in this process. This is the first review of its kind for the FET sector, and a significant milestone for Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board.

We would like to thank and commend Maud Baritaud, FET Research, Planning & Evaluation Officer for managing this extensive consultative, collaborative and integrated process of internal self-evaluation. Additionally, the work and support of the Quality Assurance Review Task Group, with representatives from FET full-time and part-time provision, management, administration, development and support services, in overseeing and guiding the self-evaluation process, and drafting the self-evaluation report.

We look forward to welcoming the Review Team to Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board in April 2021 and to engaging with them in the Institutional Review Process.



George O'Callaghan

Chief Executive



Paul Patton

Director of Further Education and Training and Chair of ETB Quality Council



Foreword	3
Context	9
Report Methodology.....	14
Report Structure.....	16
OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY	19
a) The ETB's Mission and Strategy.....	19
b) Structures and Terms of Reference for the Governance and Management of Quality Assurance.....	30
Governance of Quality Assurance.....	30
Management of Quality Assurance.....	32
c) The Documentation of Quality Assurance Policy and Procedures.....	35
d) Staff Recruitment, Management and Development.....	38
e) Programme Development, Approval and Submission for Validation.....	51
f) Access, Transfer and Progression.....	56
g) Integrity and Approval of Learner Results.....	64
h) Information and Data Management.....	65
i) Public Information and Communications.....	70
OBJECTIVE 2: TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT	75
a) Quality Teaching and Learning in FET.....	75
b) Assessment of Learners.....	80
c) Supports for Learners.....	86
OBJECTIVE 3: SELF-EVALUATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW	99
a) Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review.....	99
b) Programme Monitoring and Review.....	105
c) Oversight, Monitoring and Review of Relationships with External/Third Parties.....	108
CONCLUSION	113
APPENDICES	117
1 - Glossary and Abbreviations.....	117
2 - QA Task-Group TOR and Membership.....	119
3 - ETB QAR Communication Process.....	124
4 - ETB QAR Consultation Approach.....	125
5 - List of QQI-Registered Centres.....	127
6 - Extracts from EA Reports.....	128
7 - Evidence of Excellence in TL.....	132
8 - Case Studies.....	135
9 - FET SLAs and MoUs.....	144

Underlined text in blue are hyperlinks in the PDF version of this report to referenced documents



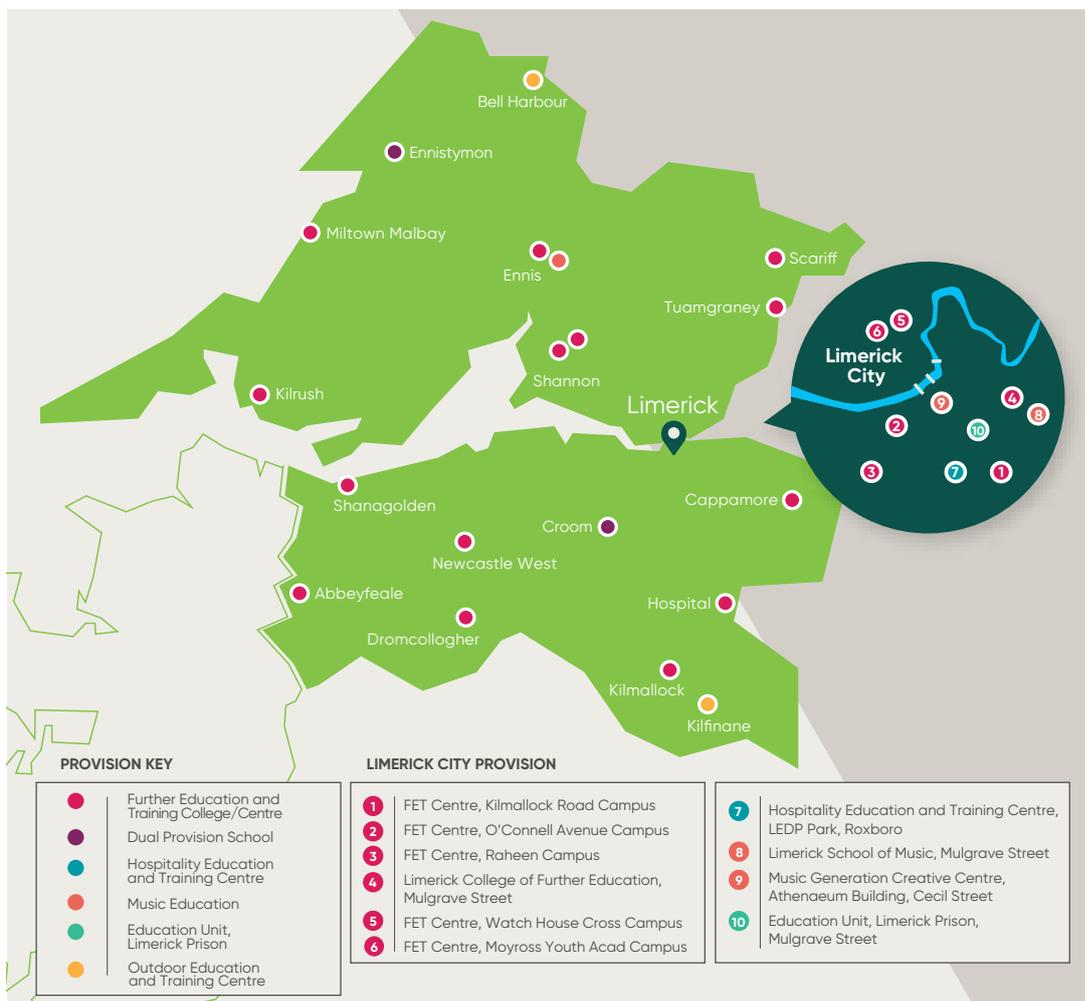
**LIMERICK AND CLARE
EDUCATION AND
TRAINING BOARD
CONTEXT**



Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board¹ is the state education and training authority for the Limerick and Clare region. It is one of 16 statutory regional education authorities established by the Education and Training Boards Act 2013. It was established following the amalgamation of 3 Vocational Education Committees, which provided post-primary, adult and community education in Limerick City, County Limerick and County Clare since 1902. Established on 1st July 2013, it further assumed responsibility from SOLAS of two former FÁS Training Centres in Limerick and Clare on 1st July 2014.

The FET Division is responsible for the management and operations of 37 QQI-registered FET Centres in Limerick and Clare, where it provides a suite of full-time and part-time provision and support services ([See Regional Profile](#)).

It should be noted that there are multiple FET campuses² in Limerick and Clare and that the FET Division works in approximately 300 community-based locations. In County Clare, the FET Centres are feeders to the new College of FET in Ennis. The map below provides a profile of FET College/Centre locations throughout Limerick and Clare.



¹ For the purpose of this document, Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board is referred to as 'the ETB'.

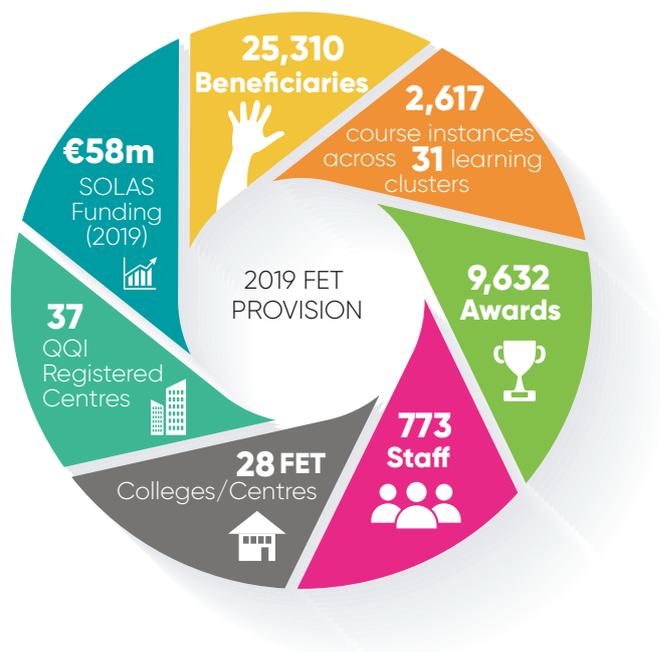
² There are 28 FET campuses in Limerick and Clare, which comprise 37 QQI-registered centres.

Contextual Factors

The total population of the Limerick and Clare region is 313,802 (Census 2016). County Limerick's total population is 195,175, of which 94,192 people live in Limerick City and suburban areas while County Clare has a population of 118,627. Limerick is the third most populous urban area in the state, and the fourth most populous city on the island of Ireland.

In Q4 2019, the Mid-West Region³ accounted for 9.1% of employment in Ireland, and had an unemployment rate of 4.9% - down from 19.5% in Q1 2012. However, the Limerick and Clare region has 21 of the 79 Electoral Divisions (EDs) (27%) in the country classified as unemployment blackspots. Limerick City is the worst affected area nationally with a total of 17 unemployment blackspots, 8 of which are in the top 10 most affected blackspots nationally.

These statistics reflect the challenges faced by the ETB in terms of addressing the needs of its target groups, particularly when operating in both urban and rural areas. Indeed, rural disadvantage can be associated with limited employment opportunities, lack of transport and other services, high dependency levels and isolation. This presents a challenge in terms of upskilling and for occupation-specific skill development in the region.

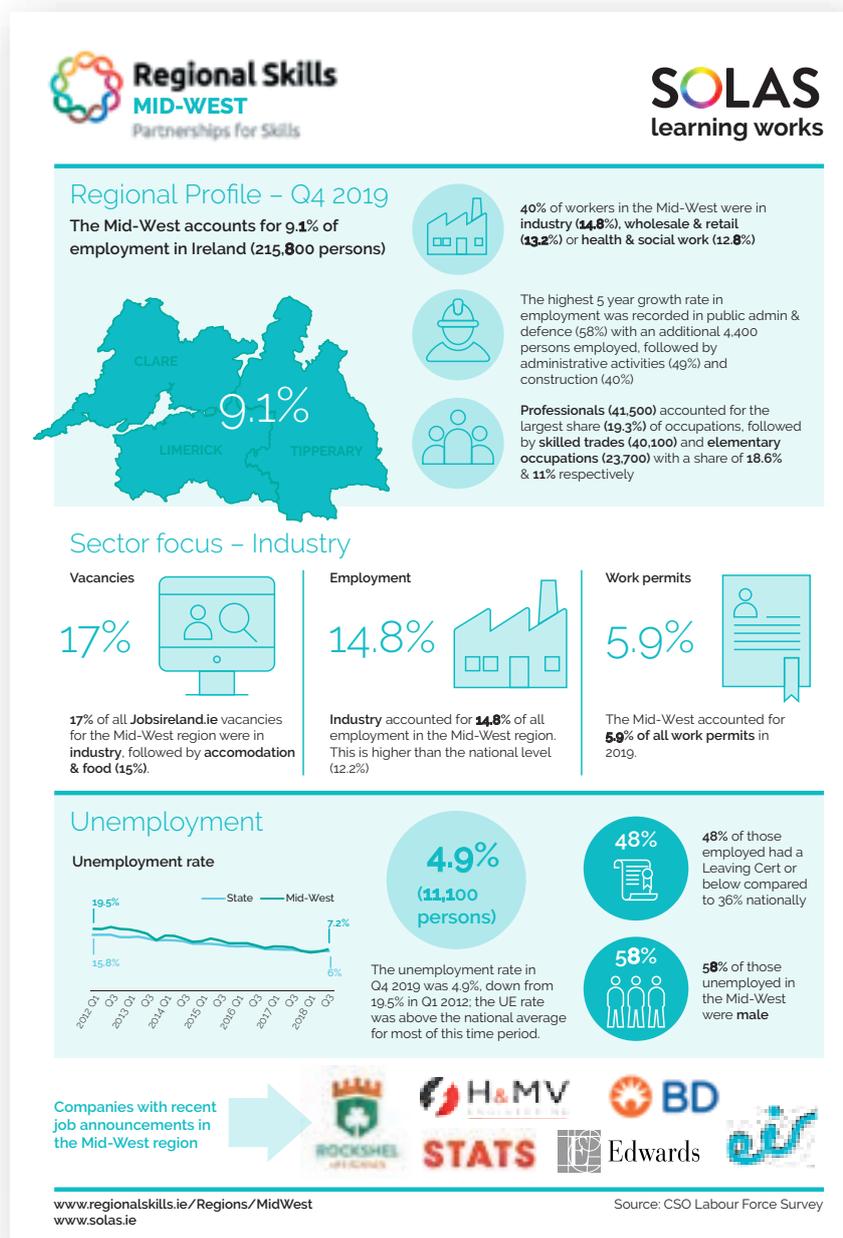


³ The Mid-West Region is a NUTS Level III statistical region of Ireland. The region comprises the counties of Clare, Limerick, and Tipperary. Limerick City is the economic centre of the region.

In the last two years, the Mid-West region had grown into a most dynamic environment in terms of job creation, and benefited from 17 FDI* announcements outperforming the rest of the country. The main employment sector in Limerick and Clare remains the services sector, followed by commerce and trade and manufacturing industries. In 2016, small and medium enterprises represented 92% of active enterprises in the Mid-West, accounting for 36% of persons in employment in the business economy. Key growth sectors identified were in bio-technology, medical technology, ICT, aerospace, tourism, agri-business and logistics. The global focus of the Mid-West region is evident in its reliance on international tourism and foreign-owned multi-national enterprises, which significantly contribute to the regional employment market.

This review takes place against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic, an unprecedented health crisis, which will have long-lasting implications for the whole FET

sector, not only in terms of funding but also in terms of strategic priorities. The economic outlook for the Mid-West region means there will be long-term social and economic challenges for families, communities and local economies in the Mid-West region. It is not yet known what impact the Covid-19 pandemic will have on the enterprise base of the Mid-West region.



* FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) - Commerce, trade and manufacturing industries.

CONTEXT

However, we know that *'in terms of sectors, those employed in the accommodation and food, wholesale and retail, and construction sectors have been hardest hit to date. How each of these sectors recovers over the long-term will depend on government interventions, the length and severity of the restrictions, and the overall economic outlook at both national and international levels.'*⁴

Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board is a partner in the Mid-West Regional Covid-19 Employment Response Steering Committee, which has engaged with industry leaders across a number of sectors to devise a short, medium and long-term response to the challenges faced by the Mid-West region. This upskilling initiative initially worked with a team of industry leaders across Retail and Hospitality to upskill hundreds of employees currently out of work. Courses have been identified and in some cases modified to meet industry skill needs reflecting the values of collaboration and partnership within the region. The long-term ambition is to deliver a strategy to develop a world class Smart Region, and to be the most digitally-connected peripheral region in EU, with the lowest possible carbon footprint.

Existing inequalities are being exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic and many people are experiencing anxiety and/or mental health issues. Many have or will become unemployed and will need upskilling and reskilling. Educationally vulnerable adults are now

at a particularly high risk of being left behind, and the crisis will likely further accelerate the digitalisation of the labour market and requirements for digital skills in all professions. In that context, adults with low digital skills are in an increasingly vulnerable position to upskill or take up new roles. Effective FET provision and support services will be essential to respond to these challenges.

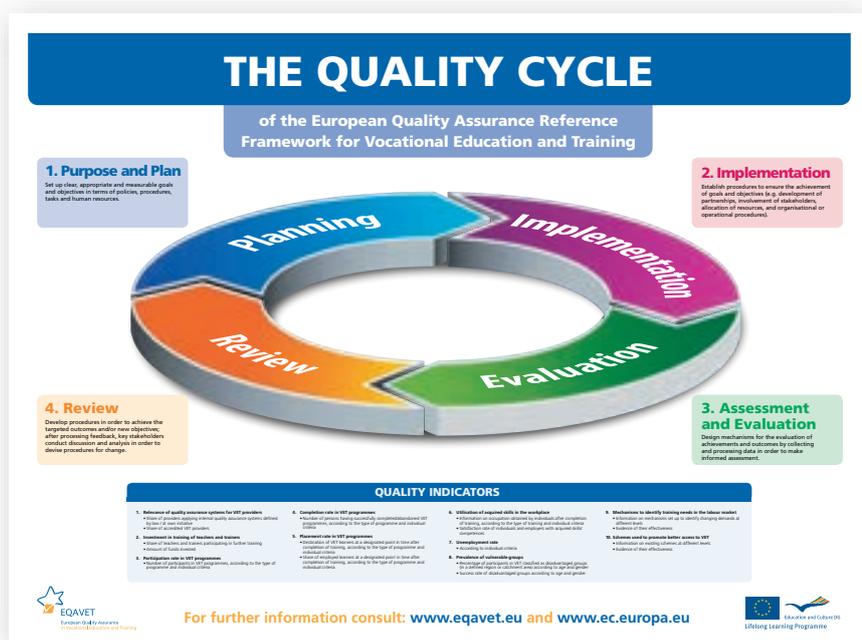
Clear strategic priorities are emerging for the sector in terms of upskilling and digital skills development, active inclusion, the role of Community Education for social cohesion, learner supports, TEL, professional development, and the development of closer links across FET and HE, towards an effective tertiary education sector. In the face of these unprecedented challenges, the FET Division is well equipped with established structures and internal specialist supports, which has enabled agility and a quick, effective and co-ordinated response to the crisis (see FET Division Self-Evaluation Report on Covid-19 Response for Teaching, Learning and Assessment, *June 2020*). Indeed, given its inherent flexibility, adult education can be one of the solutions to the new socio-economic challenges. The role of FET learning practitioners in particular is key, as they are not just the teachers but often key support persons, particularly for isolated adults, migrant/refugee learners, and young people who have dropped out of formal education. The FET sector has the tools and methodology to engage people and build their capacity to respond to life challenges.

⁴ Impact of Covid-19 on Ireland's labour market, May 2020, Skills and Labour Market Research Unit, SOLAS

Approach to Quality Assurance

QQI Policy on Quality Assurance Guidelines defines Quality Assurance as 'the processes that seek to ensure that the learning environment (including teaching and research) reaches an acceptable threshold of quality.' The policy goes on to quote the UNESCO definition of Quality Assurance as 'an ongoing, continuous process of evaluating (assessing, monitoring, guaranteeing, maintaining and improving) the quality of [an] education system, institution or program'. Another useful tool that the ETB considers when developing approaches to Quality Assurance is the EQAVET⁵ Building Blocks. EQAVET works collectively to build a shared understanding of quality assurance and development among member countries and social partners through exchanging experiences and generating new insights that can influence policy and practice at national and local levels.

In 2018, the FET Division completed a re-engagement process, and QQI formally approved the ETB's quality assurance procedures. As outlined in QQI's Core QA Guidelines, the primary responsibility for the quality assurance of FET provision lies with the ETB, which is therefore responsible for operating, monitoring and reviewing its quality assurance arrangements on an ongoing basis, through annual Quality Improvement plans. The quality cycle also includes an external dimension in the form of monitoring and periodic review by QQI. The ETB is committed to quality assurance and enhancements of all its programmes and support services, in order to improve the learner and learning practitioners' experience across the FET Division. This commitment is evidenced in the FET Division, through the setting up of new quality-related roles, Support Service and governance structures (see FET Division Management Structure).



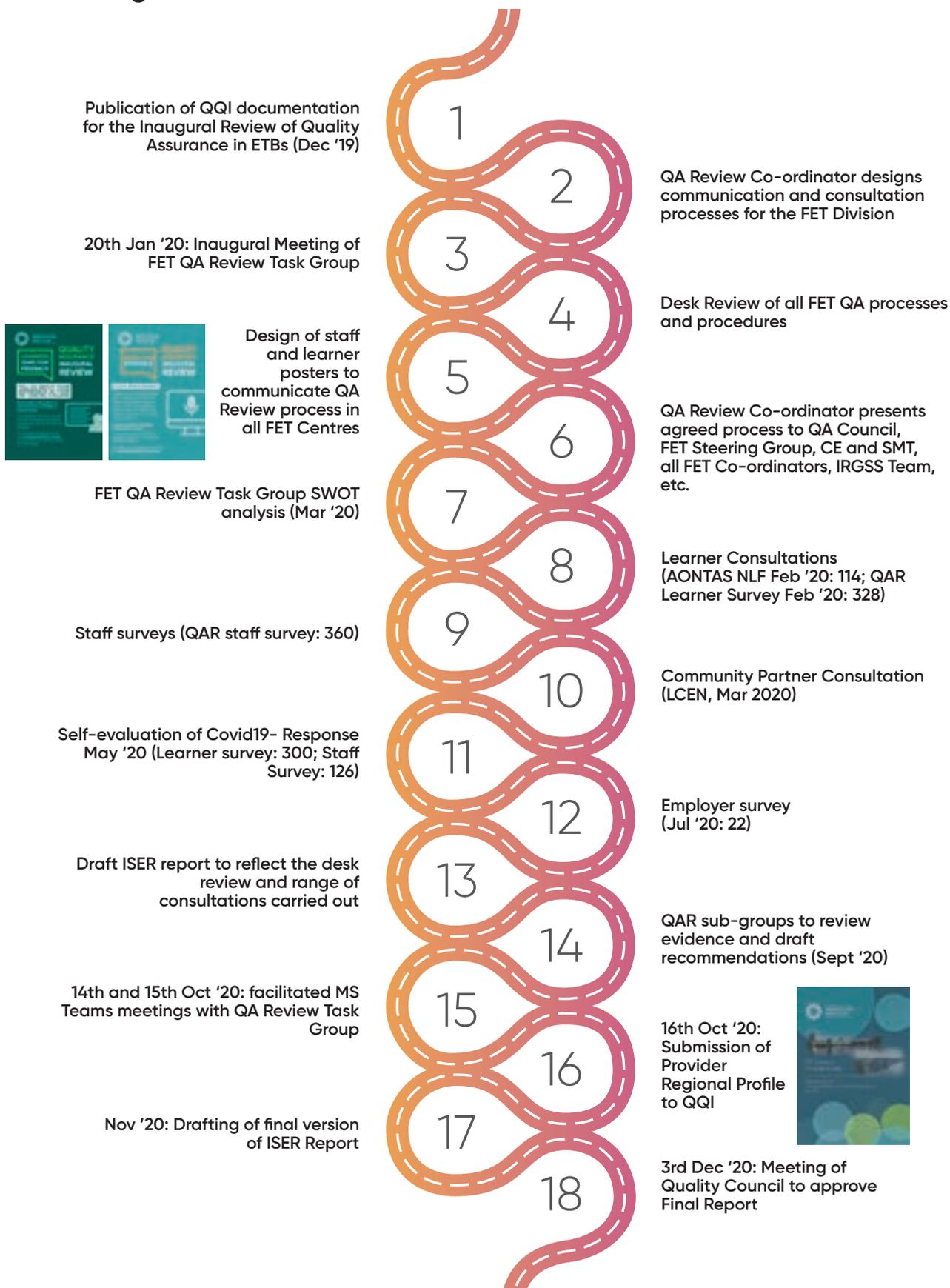
⁵ European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training

REPORT METHODOLOGY

In December 2019, following the publication of QQI documentation on the Inaugural Review of Quality Assurance in Education and Training Boards, the Director of FET set up a Quality Assurance Review Task Group, to oversee the QAR process. The membership of this group ([Appendix 2](#)) includes representatives from FET full-time and part-time provision, administration, QA Support Service, Active Inclusion Support Service, Technology Enhanced Learning Support Service, Professional Development Support Service, Enterprise Engagement Support Service, Information, Recruitment and

Guidance Support Service, FET Steering Group and ETB Senior Management. The work of the Task Group was facilitated by the FET Research, Planning and Evaluation Officer, who designed and co-ordinated the QA self-evaluation process for the FET Division ([Appendix 3](#), [Appendix 4](#)). A programme of work was approved by the Task Group at their inaugural meeting on 20th January 2020. Throughout this process, all information and relevant documentation has been accessible through a QA Review Task Group MS Team, where updates and exchanges between members took place.

Planning and Consultation Process



REPORT STRUCTURE

This Self-Evaluation Report was prepared by the FET Research, Planning and Evaluation Officer, reviewed and approved by the QAR Task Group. It was then submitted for final approval to the Quality Council, chaired by the Director of FET on 3rd December 2020.

This report follows the structure provided by the QQI Review Handbook. It gives a short description of our current QA processes under each Review objective, followed by self-evaluative statements discussed and agreed by the QAR Task Group, using evidence gathered

during the consultation phase. These statements highlight 1) the strengths of the FET Division in each area and 2) key recommendations for improvement. Key appendices and URL links to relevant documentation are also provided as evidence in the report.

**Objective 1:
Governance and
Management of
Quality**



a) The ETB's Mission and Strategy

The authority is committed to the quality assurance of all its provision and support services, and quality is a core value in all FET strategies and action plans.

[Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board's Strategy Statement 2017 – 2021](#) charts the path for education and training programmes, youth work and other statutory functions. It was

the product of a consultative process, which gave opportunities to boards of management, staff, students, learners, parents, community partners and representative bodies of business, industry and employers in Limerick and Clare to have a say in the future direction of the authority. It defines the vision statement for the authority as follows:

Vision Statement:

Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board plays a leading role in the provision of high quality education and training in Limerick and Clare. The authority achieves this by transforming the lives of our students, our learners, our communities and the social and economic prosperity of the region through responding to student/learner, community and enterprise needs.

The Strategy Statement is built around key operating principles of personal and professional integrity, empowerment, quality and partnership focussed at all times on the needs of all our learners and communities.

OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

As a statutory framework, the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board Strategy Statement sets out four strategic goals to be achieved over the five-year lifespan of the strategy, namely:

<p>Strategic Goal 1: High Quality Student and Learner Experiences:</p> <p>To provide comprehensive high-quality education, training and lifelong learning opportunities to address the personal, social, economic and employability needs of people in our community.</p>	1
<p>Strategic Goal 2: Staff Support and Organisational Development:</p> <p>To provide a supportive, collaborative, safe and healthy working environment for all staff, through the provision of relevant responsive supports, appropriate policies and procedures, which are underpinned by a culture of continuous professional development.</p>	2
<p>Strategic Goal 3: Good Governance:</p> <p>To provide a governance and support framework that facilitates the effective and efficient delivery of all education and training services.</p>	3
<p>Strategic Goal 4: Partnership:</p> <p>To provide relevant responses and supports as required by the Department of Education and Skills, other Government departments and agencies and to develop effective partnerships, which respond to the evolving education and training needs of the region.</p>	4

The goals and priorities outlined in the Strategy Statement have been aligned to the goals and priorities laid out in the Performance Delivery Agreement between the Department of Education and the ETB. In working to achieve the stated targets, the ETB commits to the highest possible standards of corporate governance outlined in the Code of Practice for Governance of Education and Training Boards. Implementation

of the strategy by the management of the ETB is supported through an annual planning and budgeting cycle. The ETB's Board approves the annual plan and budget. A formal evaluation of actual performance referenced to the service plan and budget is carried out on an annual basis by publishing the ETB Annual Report and Financial Statements.

OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

Corporate Governance

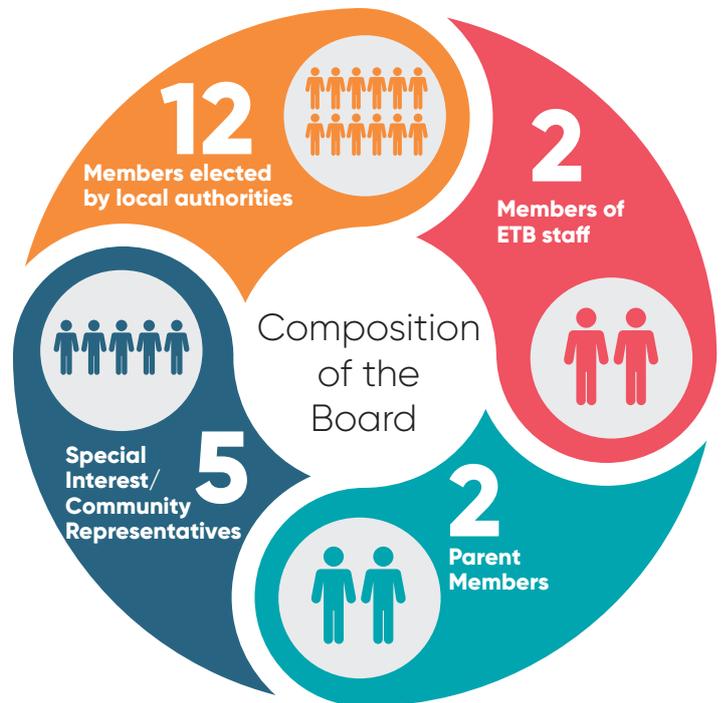
Corporate governance comprises the systems and procedures by which organisations are directed and controlled. 'Good governance within an ETB, is a shared responsibility which requires leadership, collaboration and ethical conduct by Board Members, senior executive management and all staff and stakeholders together.'⁶

The ETB sector has been subject to sectoral Codes of Practice for Governance. The DES* Circular Letter 0002/2019 outlines the code of practice for the governance of education and training boards, effective from 30th January 2019.

In compliance with legislation, Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board consists of 21 members in total.

The reserved functions of the Board are stated in the Education and Training Boards Act 2013. Local Boards of Management report to the ETB. The Chief Executive (CE) and the Director of FET are ultimately responsible for the oversight of FET and its Quality Assurance policies and procedures.

The executive functions of the authority are related to service provision in education and training, corporate and operational matters. The work of the ETB is structured across three separate but interlinked divisions: Organisation Support and Development, Schools and Further Education and Training, with the Director of each division reporting to the Chief Executive.



The following committees are in place to support the Board in its functions:

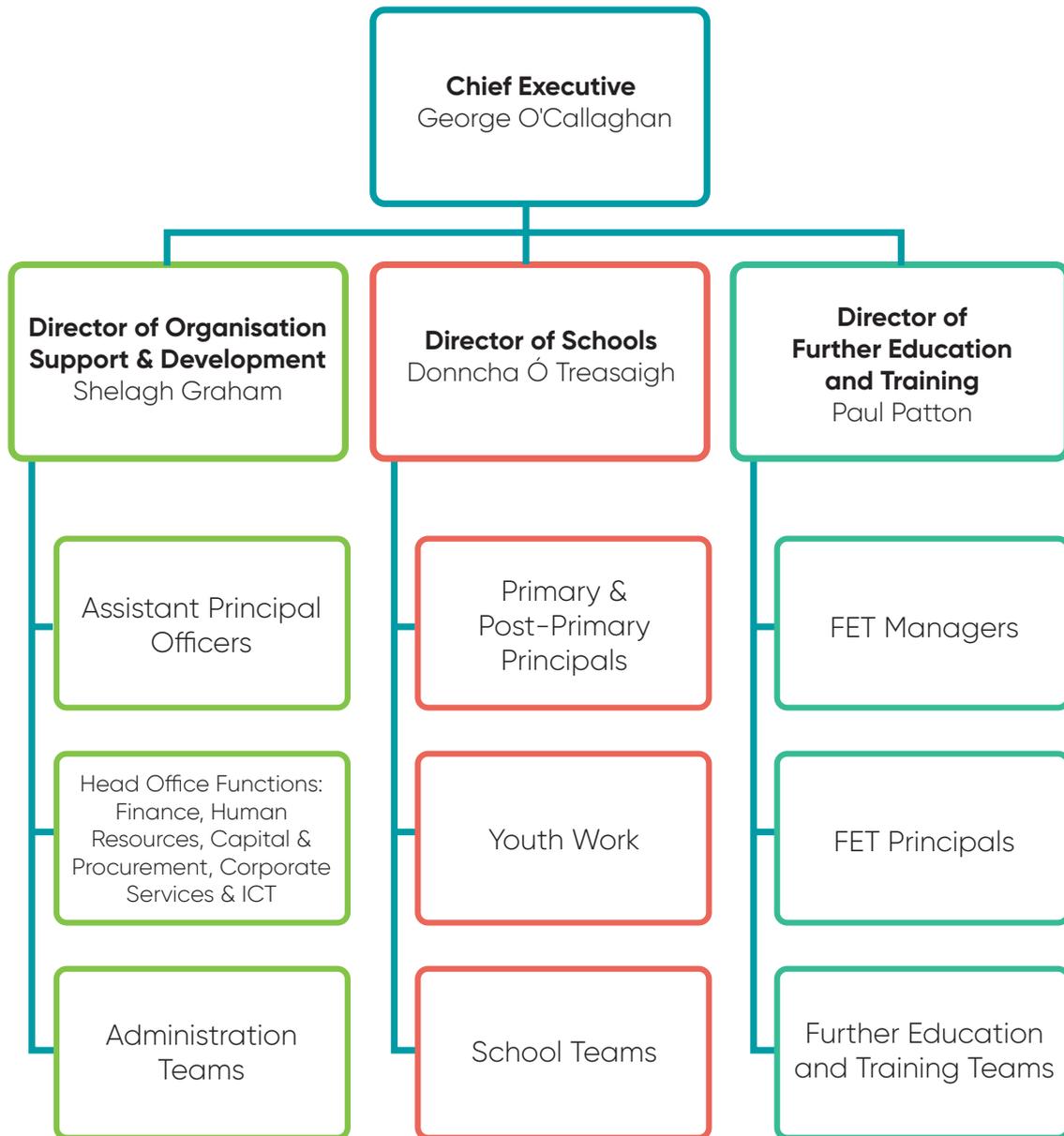
- Audit and Risk Committee
- Finance Committee
- Schools Boards of Management
- FET Steering Group
- Youth Work Committee.

⁶ Governance Training Programme, ETBI Handbook: Implementing the Code – the Role of an ETB Director, January 2020.

* DES - Department of Education and Skills

OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

The executive governance and oversight structure of Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board is illustrated in the diagram below.



OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

The Organisation Support and Development directorate has responsibility for five departments operating at two locations: Limerick (the authority's Head Office) and Ennis.

The Schools Division is responsible for the management and operation of eighteen Post-Primary Schools and four Community National Schools in Limerick and Clare.

The FET Division is responsible for the management and operation of 37 QQI-registered FET Centres in Limerick and Clare ([Appendix 5 - List of FET Centres](#)), where it provides a suite of full-time and part-time provision and support services. The Director of FET works closely with both the Director of Schools and the Director of Organisation Support and Development to deliver on the four goals outlined in the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board Strategy Statement.

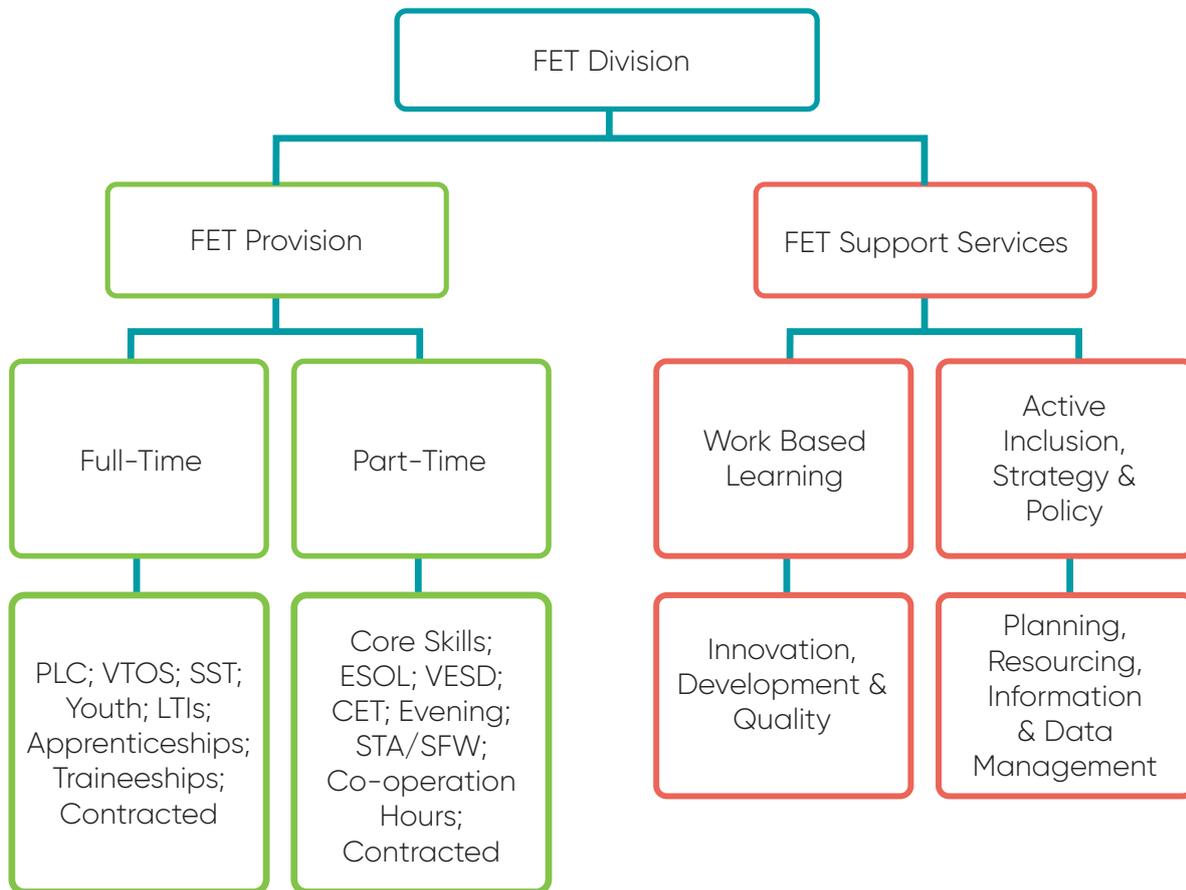
There are multiple FET campuses⁷ in Limerick and Clare and the FET Division works in approximately 300 community-based locations. In County Clare, the FET Centres are feeders to our new College of FET in Ennis.



⁷ There are 28 FET campuses in Limerick and Clare, which include 37 QQI-registered centres.

OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

The FET Division management structure is outlined in the diagram below:



This diagram highlights the FET Division's **long-standing model of integrated support services, which is unique in the ETB sector**. Established since 2001 by City of Limerick VEC, this model was strengthened following the amalgamation in 2013, expanding supports to all FET provision in Limerick and Clare. Underpinning all FET provision, a range of FET support services has been

put in place to develop areas of strategic importance for the FET Division, and ensure strategic commitments around quality assurance, learner supports, active inclusion, technology-enhanced learning, professional development, employer engagement and planning and monitoring and evaluation.

[\(See Regional Profile\)](#)

OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

FET Division Mission and Strategy

[Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board FET Strategic Framework 2015-2020](#) was developed in line with the authority's Strategy Statement, and the SOLAS Strategy 2014-2019. It is built around key guiding principles of respect/equality, quality/professionalism, integration, responsiveness, support and collaboration. As an umbrella framework, it promotes a shared vision across the division and guides our FET colleges, centres and support services in the development of integrated implementation plans for their full-time and part-time provision.

This was a key challenge for the ETB in 2015, as it merged three former VECs and two former FÁS Training Centres into one organisation. While the change-process presented some difficulties, the early strategic planning process showed a genuine integration effort, and created expectations that needed to be followed up on. This participative and integrated approach has been replicated in all subsequent planning processes, involving cross-FET Division representatives from provision and support services, and has proven effective in promoting a shared purpose and focus.

88% of FET staff surveyed for the QAR consultation reported they are aware of the FET Division mission and objectives.

FET Division - Vision for the future

Quality further education and training will inspire people to realise their personal and professional potential and contribute to the social, cultural and economic development of the region.

OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

Our Core Purpose

We provide relevant and innovative further education and training opportunities that address the needs and aspirations of our learners, local communities and employers.

<p>Strategic Priority 1: Access & Progression:</p> <p>This is about supporting learners to access and sustain participation in education and training and to progress in key aspects of their lives, including personal development, further education and/or employment.</p>	1	<p>Strategic Priority 2: Quality Teaching & Learning:</p> <p>This is about promoting a culture of continuous improvement and organisational learning in the FET Division, so that staff, learners, employers and communities have confidence in the quality and relevance of FET in Limerick and Clare.</p>	2
<p>Strategic Priority 3: Stakeholder Engagement:</p> <p>This is about communicating with learners, staff, community partners, employers, other agencies and education providers and using feedback to enhance the quality and relevance of our work.</p>	3	<p>Strategic Priority 4: Effectiveness & Accountability In Governance & Leadership:</p> <p>This is about ensuring that the quality of our education and training provision is supported by ETB management and administration systems that meet the highest standards of accountability, transparency and compliance.</p>	4

OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

Following the launch of the FET Strategic Framework in 2015, a series of horizontal FET action plans/frameworks were developed, using participatory methodologies (facilitated workshops, consultations, etc.) and a collegial and integrated approach.

- FET Language, Literacy and Numeracy Strategic Framework
- FET Integrated Guidance Strategic Framework (2016–2020)
- FET TEL Action Plan (2017–2020)
- FET Enterprise Engagement Framework (2017–2020)
- FET Professional Development Action Plan (2019–2021)
- FET Active Inclusion Support Service Framework
- FET Quality Improvement Planning Process (QIP)

FET Planning Model



OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

FET Implementation Teams monitor the implementation of each framework, with representatives from part-time and full-time provision, FET management and relevant staff from other support services. This ensures FET learning practitioners are included in the decision-making process around the implementation of FET strategies. The chairpersons of all implementation teams also sit on the FET Steering Group, bringing key issues and development for discussion at senior management level.

In addition, 2018 marked a significant milestone in the reform of the FET sector, towards a more strategic and integrated FET system. A national framework was agreed for a new process of strategic

dialogue to inform the development of three-year [Strategic Performance Agreements \(SPA\) with SOLAS](#). The agreement between SOLAS and Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board set out the context, strategic priorities and the authority's contribution to the achievement of key national FET sector targets over the period 2018-2020. It also articulated the ETB's commitment to supporting the implementation of a range of national policies and strategies relevant to FET provision and identified the key risks and challenges, which must be mitigated and addressed in order to ensure successful delivery of this agreement.



OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

A) ETB MISSION & STRATEGY

Strengths

- The FET Division structures reflect the strategic imperative to move away from programme silos, and to build the capability of the organisation around cross-organisational supports and development structures. The FET frameworks/action plans developed and implemented have provided a **consistency of focus across the FET Division, a sense of purpose and cross-fertilisation** through the cross-service implementation groups.

Recommendations

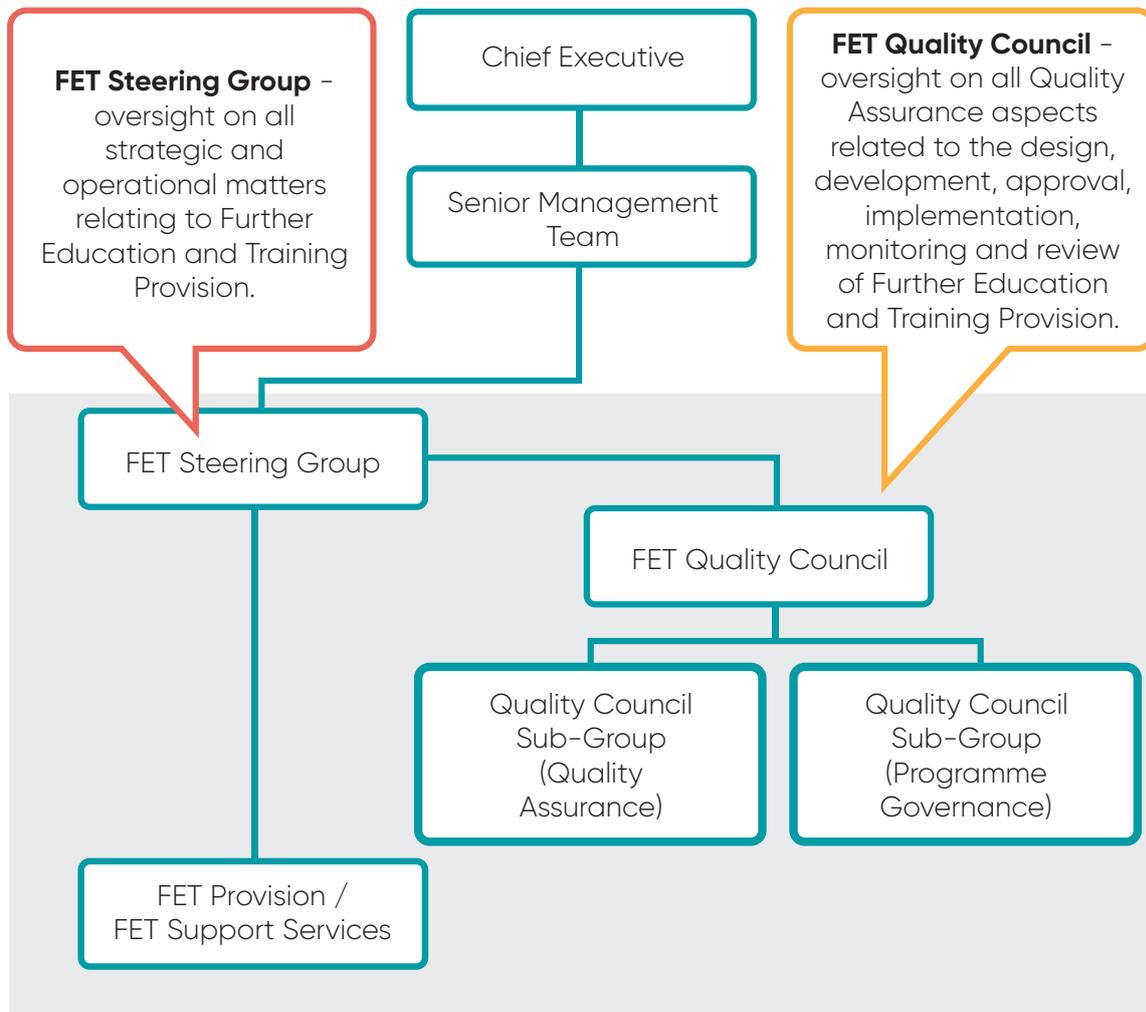
- The size of the organisation and breadth of strategic initiatives have an impact on FET management.
 - While more collaboration/contact between FET management staff is acknowledged as very positive, the continuous integration and strategic efforts have resulted in increased demands, which make it difficult to achieve a **balance between service-wide work and the core business of teaching and learning** at centre level.
 - There must be a balance between cross-division, centralised approaches to the development of policies, strategies and new initiatives, and preserving the 'ground-up', collaborative work to ensure the FET Division continues to champion innovative ideas.
- The consultation and reflective process undertaken for the preparation of this QA self-evaluation report, together with the publication of the new SOLAS FET Strategy 2020-2024, will inform our forthcoming strategic planning process, towards a **new ETB FET Strategic Framework 2021- 2025 and associated action plans**.

OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

b) Structures and Terms of Reference for the Governance and Management of Quality Assurance.

Governance of Quality Assurance

The FET Quality Assurance Governance structures were formalised following the 2018 Executive Self-evaluation process with QQI. The framework structure for QA governance structures within ETBs is an output from a shared Quality Assurance Enhancement project, supported by ETBI. This framework was adapted for implementation in the context of the ETB's structure and requirements.



OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

Clear and comprehensive [terms of reference for QA structures](#), as well as externality mechanisms, reflect robust QA arrangements for the governance and management of ETB operations. These mechanisms are useful to open QA conversations and avoid duplication. They also provide a legitimate space for QA decision-making in the FET Division.

- The role of the **Quality Council** is to *'oversee all Quality Assurance aspects related to the design, development, approval, implementation, monitoring and review of the Further Education and Training provision offered by the ETB. It protects, maintains and develops the standard of Education and Training programmes and related activities'*. In doing so, the Further Education and Training Quality Council is ensuring, as far as possible, that all learners receive an equivalent experience. The first meeting of the Quality Council took place on the 25th February 2019.
- The **Quality Council Sub-Group (Quality Assurance)** has responsibility for the development, oversight, planning, co-ordination, and improvement of quality assurance policies, procedures and processes.
- The **Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Governance)** has responsibility for the oversight, planning, co-ordination, development and quality of all of the programmes of the FET Division.

These sub-groups, with working groups at an operational layer below, ensure separation of responsibilities from those

that develop (working groups), those that analyse and recommend for approval (sub-groups), and those that approve (Quality Council).

In addition, a range of mechanisms ensures visibility and transparency of QA governance and management:

- Minutes, Agendas, Membership, Presentations from all Quality Council meetings and sub-groups are available to all staff on the QA site on StaffCONNECT (MS SharePoint platform);
- Membership of Quality Council sub-groups includes a range of FET provision co-ordinators, ensuring that input from centre level and communication to centre level is achieved;
- Integrated Results Approval Panel procedure ensures more transparent ETB-level governance, with subsequent reporting to Quality Council;
- Regular [Quality Assurance newsletters](#) highlight the FET Division's significant outcomes and achievements around QA and are emailed to all FET learning practitioners with hard copies available;
- The ETB website www.lcetb.ie links to the FET Division's website www.learningandskills.ie, which has an external facing FET Quality Assurance page, with QA structures' membership and minutes of Quality Council.

OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

Externality is also provided through:

- External Authenticators for assessment, certification, authentication;
- Appeals Examiners for results appeals;
- External Subject Matter Experts for curriculum review;
- Independent Results Approval Panel membership to approve provision results;
- Summary of results, trends and risks from provision certification reports to Quality Council;
- Employer-led Consortium Steering Group for the National Hairdressing Apprenticeship.

Management of Quality Assurance

In compliance with the QQI Sector Specific guidelines for the ETB Sector, the governance and management of QA is a multi-layered process in the FET Division, reflecting the scale of the organisation and the breadth of provision. Reflecting the wide range of expertise and experience around QA matters across the organisation, QA responsibilities and accountability exist at several levels in the FET Division:

■ Teaching and Learning - Centre Level:

Learning practitioners and learners, with communication, instruction, teaching, assessment briefs, marking schemes, assessment, feedback, portfolio preparation and submission, etc.

■ Centre QA Management Level:

Selection, Recruitment, Induction, Assessment planning, portfolio receipt, QBS entry, Internal Verification management, External Authentication co-ordination, Results Approval Panel, Learner results notification, Appeals, staff allocation and development, self-evaluation.

With respect to training provision, FET Managers are supported by Assistant Managers. Day-to-day responsibility for assessments and monitoring lies with the Training Standards Office. There are three Training Standard Officers in Raheen and Shannon campuses. In 2019, all other provision came under the updated FET QA System in the ETB. The TSO, while operating under the FET QA Agreement, is in place to facilitate the appropriate running of apprenticeship, traineeship, SST and evening provision. Training provision operates the Transitional Quality Assurance System in respect of Craft Apprenticeship, which remains under direct remit of SOLAS.

■ Cross-Centre QA Functions:

Programme development, Communities of Practice, central appeals, common EA panel, CPD schedule, Self-Evaluation process, Monitoring and self-improvement, etc.

■ Quality Assurance Support Service:

Develops, implements, manages, supports all cross-centre and centre level QA activities, monitoring, reviewing and improving quality of service and provision.

OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

■ FET Quality Council and FET Steering Group:

Corporate planning, oversight, governance. Considers ETB quality provision, reviewing monitoring, self-evaluation, certification, risk factors, and critical indicators.

QASS

In 2016, the FET Division established a **Quality Assurance Support Service (QASS)** to develop, implement and monitor an effective, integrated Quality Assurance system for FET provision. Its role is to provide regional QA support to FET colleges, centres and schools, and to provide development and management support for cross-centre FET Quality Assurance processes. The QASS team now comprises 5 staff including a Quality Assurance Officer, and four Quality Assurance Support Officers, who provide regional QA support to FET centres, colleges and schools in the form of:

- A calendar of QA professional development events (seminars, workshops, etc.) on topics such as consistency in grading, marking seminar, assessment procedures.
- QA related communication with all relevant staff (email, QA newsletter, etc.)
- Briefings to, and individual support, to provision co-ordinators by QA support officers.
- Annual Quality Improvement Planning meetings between QASS and provision co-ordinators.
- Central management of Quality Assured Assessment and Certification processes of - External Authentication, Results Approval Panel and Appeals process.
- Lead development on Quality Assurance and Programme Curriculum development and review.

OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

B) GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QA

Strengths

- **Robust Governance structures** are in place in the FET Division. This was evidenced during the Covid-19 pandemic, where support structures and governance mechanisms were tested and proved effective in ensuring a quick, effective and co-ordinated response, based on established strategies and action plans.
- The FET Division's QA governance and management structures have provided enhanced transparency and a **legitimate space for decision-making on QA matters** across the organisation.
- There are many staff across the organisation with extensive experience in quality assured teaching, learning and assessment, and the co-ordination of quality-assured provision. The ETB Quality Assurance Support Service facilitates connections between the various layers of QA management, and helped develop a **better understanding of QA roles and responsibilities at local level**. The staff consultation showed that given the volume of information available on QA matters, clear points of contact and known QA resource staff have made QQI processes easier to understand and to deal with.

'66% of teaching staff respondents to the survey are either very satisfied or satisfied with the support received from QASS. 75% of FET Co-ordinators agree that the Centre Quality Improvement Plan (CQIP) process is useful.'

Recommendations

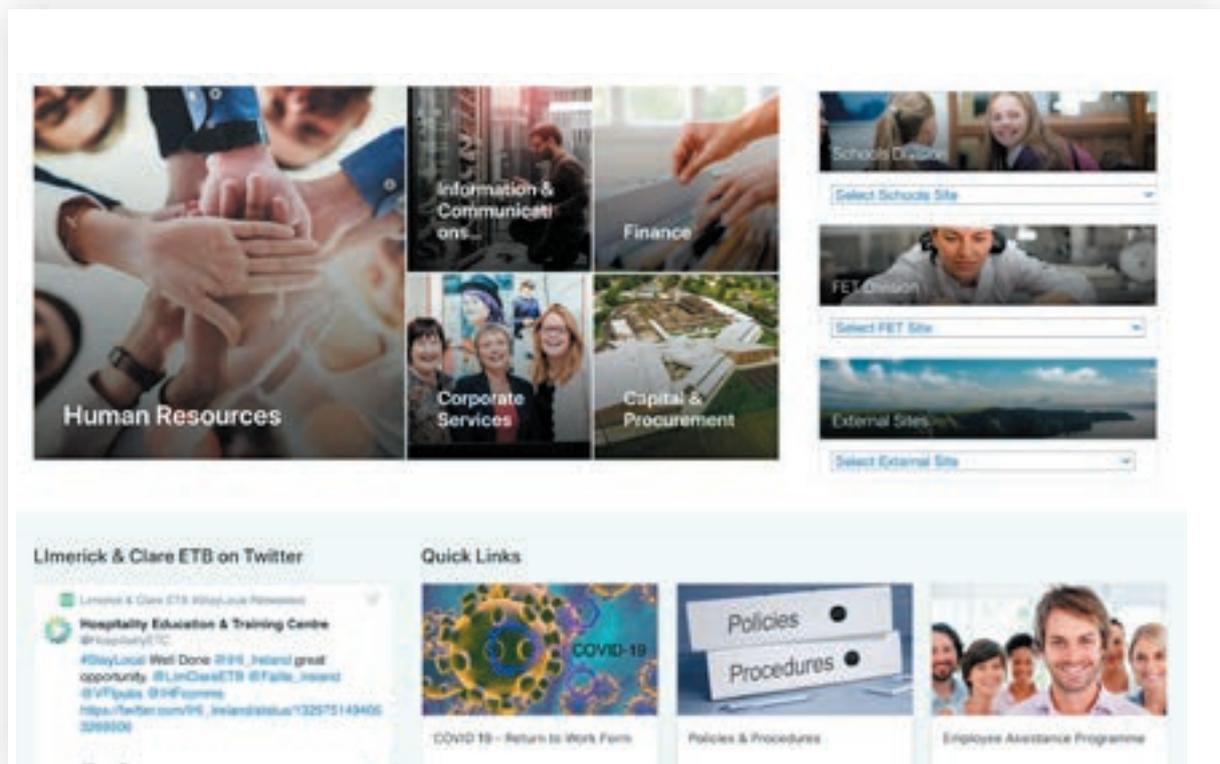
- **Alignment of current dual quality assurance and curriculum environments** between Further Education provision and Training provision (former FÁS). While significant progress has been made in introducing single ETB-level policies and procedures, there remains substantial differences across FE and Training. This can lead to inequality and inconsistency from a learner perspective and is a complicated environment to maintain.
- Although governance structures' terms of reference provide for both learner and stakeholder representation, there is a need to review **learner and stakeholder representation** in quality management structures and programme management.
- Our QA processes are closely aligned to QQI requirements and can sometimes be perceived to focus on accredited provision. It will be important to better **articulate and communicate how QA procedures apply to all FET provision**, including non-accredited provision and industry-driven certification.

OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

c) Documentation of Quality Assurance Policy and Procedures

The ETB documents all its policies and procedures, including those relating to quality assurance. Corporate and core institutional policies and procedures developed and approved

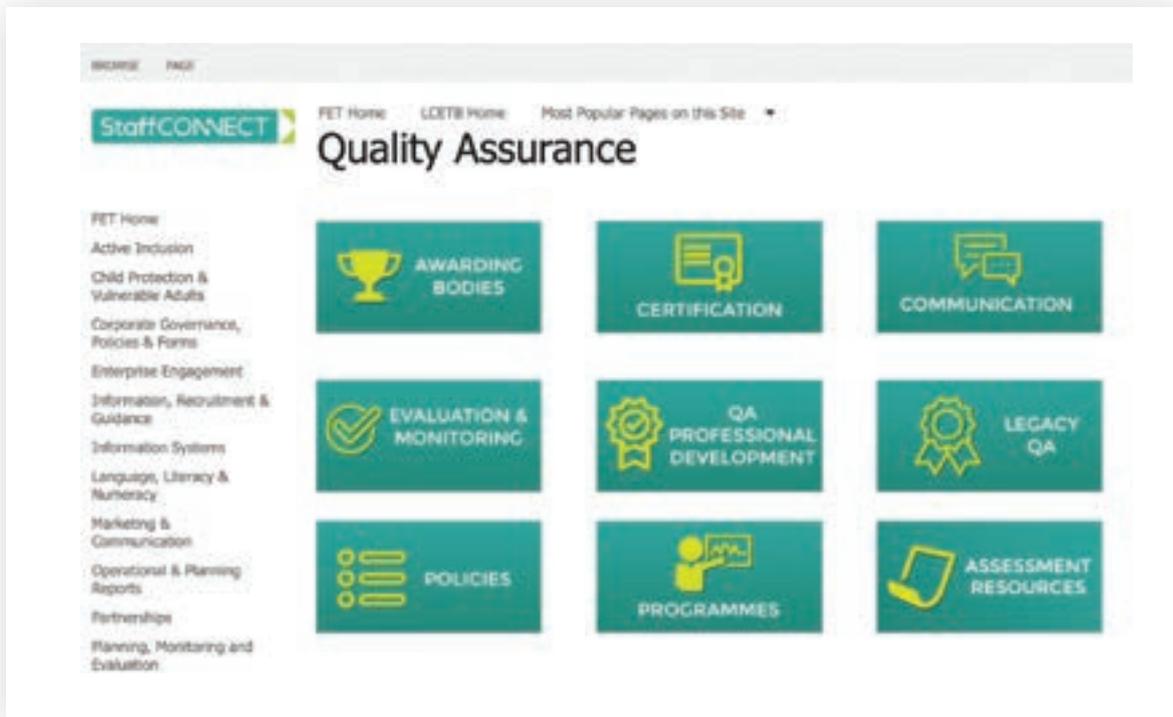
by the authority are accessible on StaffCONNECT. Many policies and procedures are also publicly accessible on www.lcetb.ie.



Some quality assurance policies and procedures remain legacy policies and procedures. However, a significant achievement since the amalgamation is the alignment of Assessment Procedures, External Authentication, and Results Approval Panel across the 7 former providers that now constitute Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board. Individual awarding bodies' QA policies and procedures are in place, aligned to ETB QA procedures where appropriate.

All QA policies and procedures are accessible to all FET learning practitioners via StaffCONNECT. There is also a [QA page on www.learningandskills.ie](http://www.learningandskills.ie) to provide information for staff, learners and stakeholders. While being robust and comprehensive in the context of the existing provision, planning and implementation of common policies and procedures across the FET Division is ongoing.

OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY



In addition, the Code of Practice for the Governance of Education and Training Boards ([Circular letter 0002/2019](#)) requires ETBs to 'publish a customer charter which outlines the nature and quality of service which learners and other stakeholders can expect'. A draft Learner Charter has been developed (August 2020), in line with the ETBI framework, to allow learners, FET staff and learning practitioners to know and understand their respective responsibilities and be informed of key

policies and procedures in the ETB. A simple online version of a FET Learner Handbook is in development with links to existing supports such as the Referencing Handbook, Academic Writing Handbook, Study and Learning Handbook and existing agreed FET-wide processes such as Appeals/Assessment/T&L Online etc. It is expected the new Learner Charter will replace the different versions in individual FET Colleges/Centres.

OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

C) QA POLICY & PROCEDURES DOCUMENTATION

Strengths

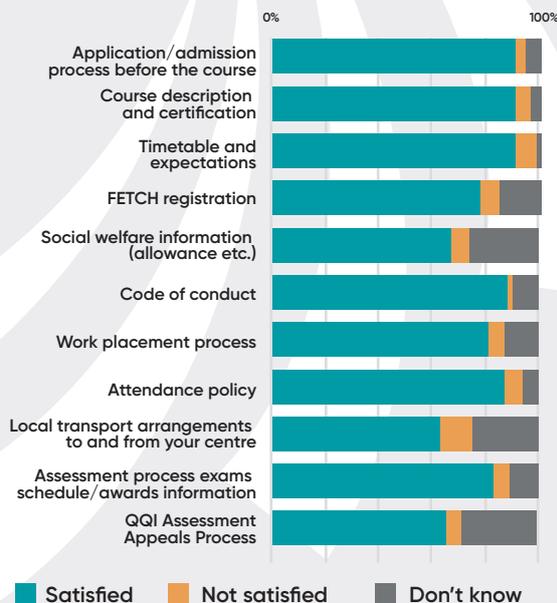
- Over the last few years, there has been **improved standardisation of policies and procedures** across the FET Division, and the setting up of clear platforms to access same.
- The strategic decision to use StaffCONNECT (MS SharePoint platform)** to share all QA policies and procedures is effective in providing a one-stop-shop to access all relevant documentation.

"91% of FET staff surveyed for the QAR consultation reported they know where to find policies and procedures relevant to their work. Overall, 69% of respondents agree their awareness of QA has improved over the last few years (65% of teaching staff; 88% of FET Co-ordinators and 78% of FET Managers/Support Service staff)".

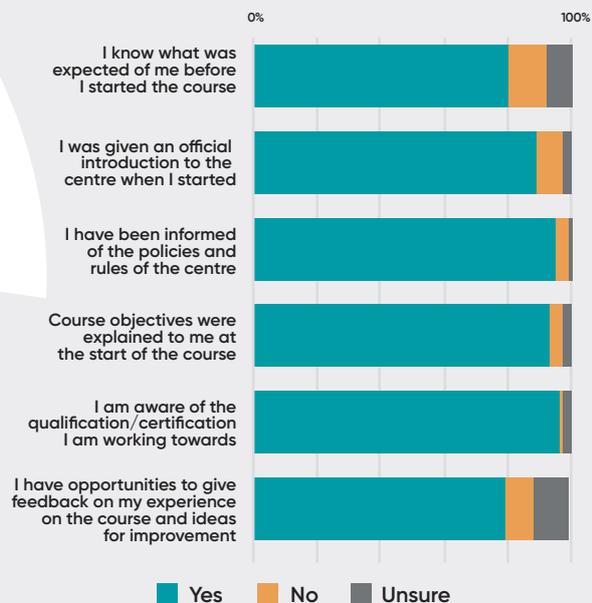
- Learner consultations show a **high level of satisfaction with information provided by the FET Division** on various QA processes.

Information to Learners

Satisfaction with information received



Do you agree with the following statements?



OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

C) QA POLICY & PROCEDURES DOCUMENTATION

Recommendations

- **The FET Division operates several QA systems**, guidelines and procedures (e.g. QQI, City & Guilds, DES, etc.), which makes for a complex environment and often duplicates efforts at centre level. There is a need to **develop further overarching policies** (e.g. assessment, learner admission, communication, etc.)
- Develop a **Quality Manual for the FET Division** to provide an accessible overview of all policies, procedures and QA arrangements in the FET Division.
- Once approved, the **draft learner charter will need to be supplemented with new FET-wide policies** (e.g. Learner Code of Conduct, learner complaints procedure, learner anti-bullying procedure, learner disciplinary procedure, etc.).
- A **formal learner induction process** should be developed at FET Division level, and implemented in all FET Colleges/Centres.

d) Staff Recruitment, Management and Development

The ETB is committed to the recruitment and retention of staff of the highest calibre, those who will provide the best quality teaching, learning opportunities and support services for all its learners in the fulfilment of their individual aspirations and objectives.

Staff Recruitment

The [authority's Recruitment and Selection policies and procedures](#) comply with Irish public sector recruitment and appointment procedures, and apply to all employees (temporary and permanent, whole-time and part-time) irrespective of length of service. Recruitment opportunities are advertised on the authority's website (<https://lchetb.ie/recruitment/>) and a robust and formalised interview process

is in place, with training provided for interviewers.

The authority's Equality Policy is designed to ensure that procedures and practices operate in a manner that is consistent with our commitment to equality, and do not discriminate against individuals on grounds of gender, gender identity, gender expression, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race or membership of the Traveller community, socio-economic status, ethnicity, national identity or neurodiversity.

All HR recruitment and staff development procedures ensure that FET learning practitioners are suitably qualified and experienced for their roles, with either Teaching Council recognition, or academic/professional qualifications

OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

as appropriate. All staff are hired in line with HR protocols. All full-time staff are recruited through a competitive process run by the HR Department, and part-time staff are recruited through approved ETB panels in all cases. In Contracted Training provision (or with second providers e.g. STPs or CTCs), staff are recruited directly by these external bodies, having first met with the minimum staffing requirements as set out by the ETB.

Applicants called to interview are required to submit references prior to interview, and subsequent offers of employment are subject to receipt of satisfactory references. Prior to taking up an offered position, the successful candidate must submit evidence (original copies) of professional or technical qualifications. The recruitment policies are reviewed regularly, updated as required, approved by the authority and published on the corporate website.

STAFF RECRUITMENT

Strengths

- The self-evaluation found that there are **formalised and robust recruitment processes**, including trained interviewers.

Recommendations

- Recruitment processes could benefit from **better forward planning and resource needs analysis at centre level**. This would enhance effectiveness of the HR Department's response, given the volume of requests it has to process across the ETB.
- Key concerns include the **programme-based rigidity** around the deployment of resources, operational regulations, salary scales and the nature of some part-time employment contracts. These issues can sometimes be a **barrier to recruitment and retention** of industry experts, and more generally to building the FET Division's capability to workforce planning, in line with the needs of the future.
- Work within the Organisational Design Stage 2 process at national level to enhance **promotion opportunities for administrative staff within FET settings**.

OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

Staff Management and Information

Terms of employment, including line management, are articulated in new employees' contracts and job specifications. There is no performance management system in place in the FET Division, but staff are provided with feedback on their work by their managers.

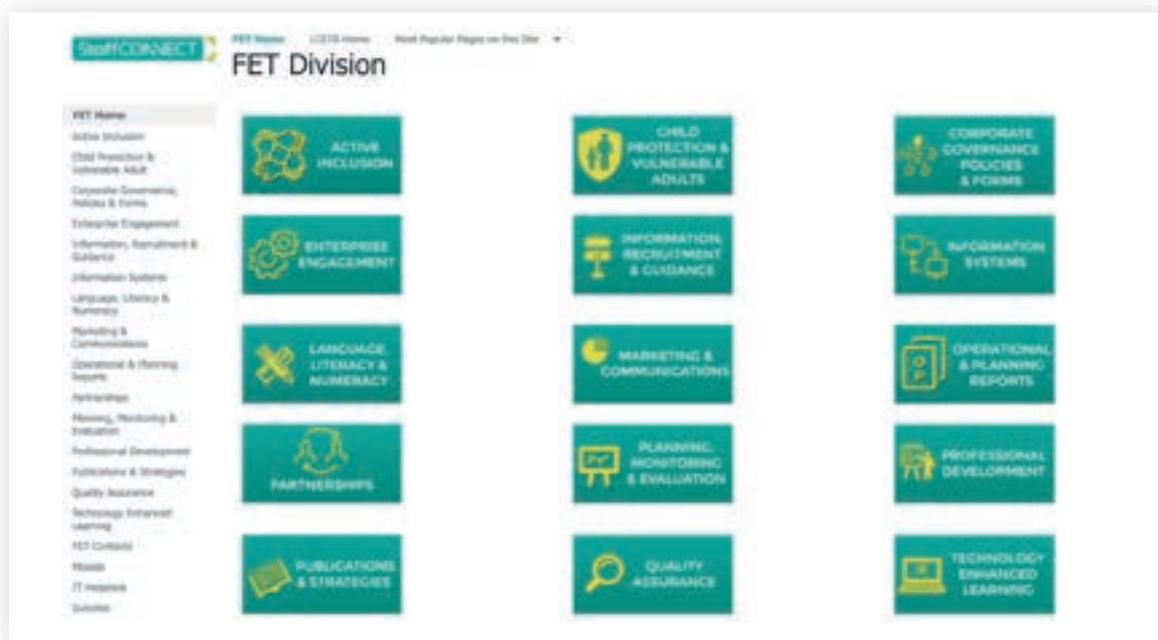
In addition, a number of mechanisms are in place to keep staff informed and engaged in the developments impacting on their work and the FET sector:

- The FET Manager in charge of FET Provision leads **part-time and full-time FET Co-ordinators Groups** and holds regular meetings to discuss strategic developments and operational issues. These groups also enhance cross-provision communication and collaboration across Limerick and Clare. The FET Manager role is an essential part of the feedback loop between FET Co-ordinators and the FET Steering Group.
- The **QASS oversees the effective and compliant management of all QA matters** through:
 - Regular staff briefings to keep staff informed in key QA areas;
 - Staff Quality Assurance Seminars and training sessions, e.g. *'Ensuring Consistency of Assessment across Multi-Centre Provision'*; *Marking Seminars*; *Implementation of ETB Assessment Procedures*; *Internal Verification Training*; *Academic Writing and Referencing Skills*;
 - *Assessing Learner Evidence in FET*;
 - Individual Centre Quality Improvement Planning Meetings – held annually between QASS Officers and provision Co-ordinators, typically to review recent certification period, internal verification/external authentication reports and results approval panel meeting minutes, as well as appeals examiner feedback;
 - Planning for next authentication period – Estimates, IV process and training needs, EA Process, RAP Procedure and process, Appeals;
 - Changes to programmes or modules being delivered by the centre;
 - Curriculum Review Input requests via Module Revision form;
 - QA Professional Development requirements of centre;
 - QA needs/supports/queries/inputs as identified by centre.
- **Local staff meetings** are held at FET centre level, which allows FET Co-ordinators to cascade service-wide initiatives and provide information on all new developments. They are also an accessible way for staff to relay their feedback on operational issues and trends they observe with their learners.

83% of FET staff surveyed for the QAR consultation reported they regularly take part in team meetings in their centres.

OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

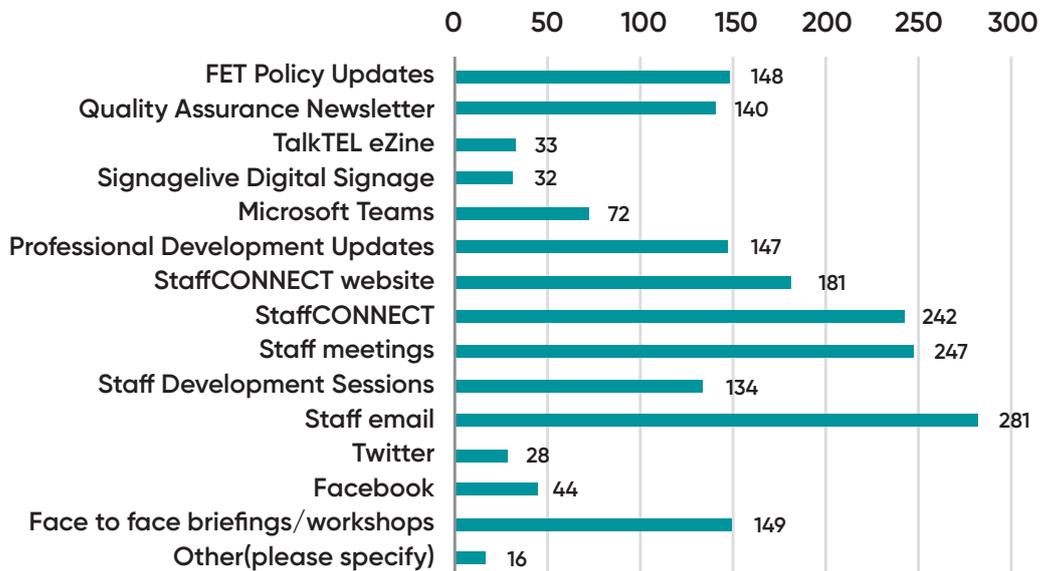
- All FET Division policies, procedures and new developments are available on **StaffCONNECT**. Ongoing communication also happens through email (AllFET@lceetb.ie), Signagelive, Twitter feed - @LimClareETB_QA, @LimClareETB_TEL, @LimClareETB_PD.



- Several **thematic communication tools** are also produced by FET Support Services to keep staff abreast of key developments in strategic areas:
 - Quality Assurance Newsletters are published bi-annually, made available via email, on StaffCONNECT and in hard copy, to inform staff of internal and external QA developments, policies, procedures, structures, curriculum, working groups, national and international reports, etc.
 - [TEL eZine – TalkTEL](#) – comprehensive annual publication detailing TEL activity across the FET Division.
 - Signagelive is a purpose-built digital signage platform for the FET Division. Comprising 27 players and approximately 35 screens situated in FET campuses across Limerick and Clare, this communication platform enables FET centres to share information, advertise course offerings and publicise achievements both within their centres and across the region as appropriate, using locally-produced short videos.
 - [FET Policy Updates](#) – Internal publication to highlight and summarise key regional, national and European policies and publications relevant to the FET Sector.
 - Professional Development Updates – Regular update is sent to all FET staff via email, highlighting forthcoming PD opportunities across the FET Division, as well as externally.

OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

Most used information sources



STAFF MANAGEMENT & INFORMATION

Strengths

- The ETB's **strategic decision to use StaffCONNECT** as the main platform to share documents has been effective in promoting information-sharing and is used widely by all staff.
- There are **clear communication channels** used across the FET Division to inform FET staff of all relevant developments. The existence of well-resourced support services with familiar personnel allow direct points of contact for information. These support services have also developed many **user-friendly tools** to articulate key strategic developments and disseminate information widely, using technologies.
- Learning practitioners also reported the **value of peer-to-peer/colleagues interactions** (and for PT staff conversations with FT staff) to keep up-to-date with recent developments. FET Co-ordinators also value contacts and fora with other ETB colleagues around the country.
- Evidence of **enhanced collaboration with Head Office administrative pillars** was also highlighted during the review (e.g. GDPR, Child Protection, Finance training, etc.) with a need to further improve communications around HR issues.

STAFF MANAGEMENT & INFORMATION

Recommendations

- Continue to ensure all **information pages are regularly updated on the website**, with a focus on the learner user experience.
- Given the size of the organisation and breadth of provision the **volume of information available is a challenge**. A better balance between direct communication and cascaded information should enhance effectiveness of information-sharing processes.
- The alignment of staff support services (Quality Assurance, TEL, Professional Development, Monitoring and Evaluation) as part of an overall Innovation, Development and Quality Service will provide greater opportunities for aligned, integrated staff communication, with consistency of message and communication channels.

Staff Development

The FET Division promotes a culture of continuous improvement and organisational learning to ensure our stakeholders have confidence in the quality and relevance of our provision. It places great value on the commitment, expertise and professionalism of all staff and seeks to foster a culture where staff are encouraged and supported to be pro-active in their own development.

Induction Process

New FET staff members take part in a multi-layered induction programme:

- **A corporate induction programme** is delivered by the Corporate Services department in an intensive, one-day general induction programme for new staff, which highlights all available resources, policies and procedures accessible to all staff via StaffCONNECT. However, our staff consultation showed that only 30.5% of non-teaching staff, 29% teaching staff, 80% FET Co-ordinators, 27% FET

Managers and Support service staff availed of the corporate induction. The staff consultation showed that take-up of GDPR induction training is higher (75% for non-teaching staff, 58% teaching staff, 81% FET Co-ordinators, 65% FET Managers and Support Service staff).

- **FET Colleges/Centres induction programmes** are locally-devised for new staff to familiarise themselves with their designated roles and responsibilities within their FET centres.

64% of teaching staff surveyed reported having a local centre induction.

- **A compulsory QA induction programme** is also organised for all new staff when commencing employment. The QA Support Service delivers a 2-session QA induction programme, ensuring that all

OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

teaching staff have been trained on the fundamentals of the role of the assessor, standards, developing briefs, marking schemes and exams, giving feedback, etc.

3. Professional Development Structures and Systems
4. Transparent and Consistent Professional Development Policies and Procedures

FET Professional Development

The FET Division uses the expertise of our own learning practitioners to deliver professional development opportunities, while also working with a range of external providers and trainers. An integrated planning model ensures the development needs of learning practitioners are at the core of the PD approach, with staff competence and capability as both core values and objectives.

In 2019, a FET Professional Development Action Plan (2019–2021) was developed by a cross-FET group of 18 staff representative of part and full-time provision and services, in line with both national and local policy priorities. Four priority areas were identified:

1. Strong Commitment to Professional Development for all FET Staff
2. Professional Development for Teaching and Learning

Key structures and processes

The FET Division has developed the structures and processes necessary to take a systematic and quality-assured approach to identifying needs, planning, delivering, evaluating and tracking of professional development activities. Professional standards are maintained through a range of PD opportunities and external inputs to review practice. Upskilling and reskilling activities range in duration, and depending on needs, they can vary from half and full-day workshops to specialist diplomas and Master's degrees, following specific selection criteria.

The table below highlights the PD stages and processes currently in place in the FET Division.

Area	Process	Evidence
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated Professional Development Budget to centrally organised, strategically aligned PD. In 2019, a total of 127 training events were organised centrally with an attendance of 1,669 staff. • Erasmus+ Funding for Staff Development Mobility • Provision/Services use budget to fund local centre-specific PD • FET contributes to HR Professional Development Budget 	Dedicated Budget Codes

OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

Area	Process	Evidence
Professional Development Needs Identification and Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Managers and Implementation Team Chairs who are responsible for strategic areas such as TEL, Integrating Literacy, QA, ICT, Active Inclusion etc. identify PD needed for a 12-month period • Tailored PD training needs analysis developed where gaps arise. • Erasmus+ Staff Mobility Projects are focused on meeting PD needs of FET Frameworks/Action Plans • Provision/Services identify local PD needs based on variety of methods – one-to-one meetings, surveys, etc. 	<p>SOLAS Planning Templates</p> <p>Range of bespoke TNA's e.g. Health and Safety, Child Protection, ESOL</p> <p>Centre-based Processes</p>
Logistics of PD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PD Officer and admin team assists Chairs/Managers in the realisation of plans for PD e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Preparing training proposals ○ Identification and liaison with internal/external trainers/providers ○ Preparing PD registration forms and communicating with staff ○ Disseminating training resources ○ Room and refreshment booking systems ○ Evaluation and post-training debriefing ○ Finance - Invoicing etc. ○ Monitoring, tracking and recognition 	<p>Training Proposals</p> <p>Eventbrite and Badge Creation Form</p> <p>Room and Refreshment Booking System</p> <p>Payment Systems</p>
Communication with Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff receive emails around upcoming professional development including booking and registration links. • All staff can access Professional Development Calendar on StaffCONNECT, which contains information about centrally-organised PD (including QA training) • Monthly PD news to be shared on Signagelive • FET staff newsletters share information about new initiatives and pilots, innovative practice and PD - e.g. QA Newsletter, TEL Times etc. 	<p>Regular PD Update via email</p> <p>PD Calendar</p> <p>Signagelive</p> <p>AllFET@lctb.ie</p> <p>Staff Newsletters</p>

OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

Area	Process	Evidence
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All staff professional development evaluated post-event to capture learning, identify further training needs and to ensure the quality of the training Other longer term evaluation methods are used to evaluate usefulness of training and measure transfer of learning Staff encouraged to participate in the evaluation of SOLAS national PD initiatives 	PD Evaluation templates – paper-based and online ESOL Evaluation, Accredited Programmes
Monitoring and Tracking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eventbrite's and sign-in sheets to track attendance Eventbrite data to be used to provide a profile of PD attendance – staff role, provision/service type, location etc. All data is used to produce end-of-year tracking report 	Eventbrite Sign-in sheets Excel Tracking Sheet
Recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All centrally-organised professional development is badged using Moodle Open Badges. This is a unique model in the FET sector. A portion of professional development both run in-house or via other institutions is accredited. 	Moodle Open Badges (See Appendix 8 - Case Study 1) Accreditation via WIT, NUIG, NCI
Externality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback to instructors from Internal Verification, External Authentication and RAPS. QASS centrally select, recruit, brief and liaise with External Authenticators. External Authentication reports provide detailed review, analysis and feedback for teaching and assessing staff, which is then communicated to staff. SOLAS provides briefing sessions to staff (particularly Senior Training Advisors) to ensure staff remain well-informed and up-to-date on developments SOLAS engages with both centres on monitoring and evaluation visits to ensure Craft Apprenticeship operates to the highest standards Staff attend a range of work-relevant PD sessions each year. Some are provided directly by the ETB and some are provided by ETBI, SOLAS and other external agencies. 	

Integrated PD Planning Model during Covid-19

The FET Division's integrated approach to PD was illustrated by its response to the emergency move to online teaching, learning and assessment due to Covid-19. An early strategic decision was made by the FET Steering Group to use MS Teams as the collaborative tool of choice across the FET Division. This provided greater clarity for learning practitioners and enabled safe information-sharing and collaborative decision-making.

In order to upskill and support staff during the crisis, the TEL and PD Support Services came together as a 5-person team to ensure a single, co-ordinated strategic organisational response ([Appendix 8 - Case Study 4 - Covid-19 PD/TEL approach](#)).

A range of TEL supports was put in place including the TEL Learning Zone, a one-stop-shop for online resources in MS Teams, providing real-time support, training videos, key online resources, etc. for all FET learning practitioners. This FET-level response ran alongside other extraordinary support initiatives provided on the ground by FET personnel, including our network of Digital Champions, Managers, and Resource staff and by the FET Active Inclusion and Quality Assurance Support Services.

As blended and online teaching and learning will increasingly become a feature of FET delivery in the future, the FET Division is committed to promoting a **model of self-development** to ensure ongoing capacity development in digital teaching and learning. To support this process, the TEL and PD Support Services have put together a TEL PD Roadmap for autumn 2020, which details 9 steps that FET learning practitioners can take to prepare for online or blended delivery.

OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

YOUR LOGO | WWW.YOURWEBSITE.COM

9 Top tips to develop your online teaching skills this Autumn

Online teaching has many benefits but is also new to many learners and learning practitioners alike. It is important that all engaged in remote teaching and learning are fully equipped with the skills and knowledge to operate safely online.

This Autumn 2020 roadmap will help you develop the knowledge and skills required for safe and effective online teaching.

- ### 1 Take the 'Teaching and Learning Online' Course

The custom built LCEFB FET Online Course is designed to assist Learning Practitioners to teach remotely. It is an essential first step in your learning journey if you will be teaching online this Autumn.
- ### 2 Read the Guidelines

Start Safe - Stay Safe. Download and read our new Safe Practice Guidelines for Online and Blended Learning in Further Education and Training.
- ### 3 Check In Check Your Skills

Decide which platform you will use (Teams, 3, Moodle 3, FutureLearn) and use the skills checker to assess your skills and identify any skill gaps you may need to address.

The FET & TEL Support Services have developed skills checkers for Teams, Moodle, FutureLearn & FutureLearn. Available to download from the TEL Learning Zone.
- ### 4 Develop your Personal Learning Plan

Use the results from your skills check to put in place a Personal Learning Plan. Your first point of call should be the TEL Learning Zone where you will find all the resources you need (video tutorials, handouts etc.) to address these learning gaps.
- ### 5 Connect with key Colleagues

Every LCEFB FET Campus has identified Digital Champions who help support adoption and use of TEL tools at centre level. Some of our campuses also have Learning Hubs which support learners and Learning Practitioners to effectively use TEL Tools. Identify & attend all relevant local PD opportunities.
- ### 6 Follow the Professional Development Calendar

The TEL and PD Support Services will together design and offer a range of professional development opportunities including workshops on the use of key supported platforms. We will also offer the national LCEB programme led by the HE Teaching and Learning Forum. Follow the professional development calendar for dates and registration details.

- ### 7 Consider National PD programmes

There are many opportunities to participate in national PD programmes. These include Level 4 & 5 TEL Programmes from NCFE and eCollege courses including Moodle for Teachers. LCEFB have also partnered with Wriggle Learning to give us access to Wriggle Connect Learning Platform with short e-learning courses on Office 365, Teams, FutureLearn etc.
- ### 8 Review your plan

Check in regularly with your personal learning plan. Use the skills checkers to record your progress and identify areas for further development.

If you are unsure how to address a development need, why not post a message in the TEL Learning Zone.
- ### 9 Stay connected

Use the TEL Learning Zone to connect with the TEL and PD Support Services and your colleagues across Further Education and Training.

Use the TEL Learning Zone to connect with the TEL and PD Support Services and your colleagues across FET.

Produced by Literacy and Basic Education and Training Board FET Division TEL and PD Support Services

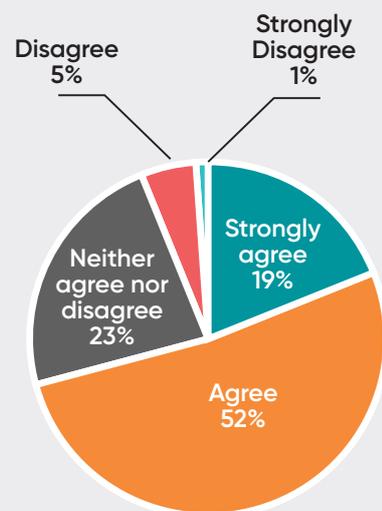
OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Strengths

- There is a systematic, **whole-organisation approach to workforce planning & development**, focusing on capacity building of our learning practitioners.
- The **FET professional development processes and procedures** are bedding in well. In terms of centrally-organised professional development, the level of take-up and variety of activity is very impressive.
- The **collaboration between FET TEL and Professional Development Support Units** ensures a co-ordinated approach to upskilling learning practitioners, particularly as blended learning becomes more used.
- 88% of employers surveyed reported they were **satisfied with ETB teachers/trainers' skills and experience** of their industry.
- The **alignment of activities with local and national priorities is a strong feature of our PD activity**. One of our key priorities in the PD Action Plan was to refocus our activities on the core business of teaching and learning; something that we are managing to achieve.
- There is ample evidence of **excellent practice and innovative models** of staff development e.g. TEL Champions Group, ILLN ESOL PD Working Group, and communities of practice ([Appendix 8 – Case Study 2 on ESOL Community of Practice](#)) that need to be further promoted and supported. The use of the [FET Best Practice Toolkit](#) should be encouraged to allow staff to share best practice for organisational learning and dissemination at national level.
- The QA Support Service offers and delivers an extensive Professional Development QA calendar to staff – QA Induction, Internal Verification, Exam Writing, Academic Referencing and Writing, Assessing Learner Evidence, Seminars on Consistency of Marking and Assessment Procedures.

I am supported by the ETB to maintain and enhance my professional standards



OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Recommendations

■ Induction processes:

A more cohesive approach to staff induction (including corporate, FET and centre-level processes) should be prioritised, using technology as much as possible for these processes. A new online staff onboarding/induction programme is currently in development for all ETB staff, using Moodle. It is envisaged that this new programme will significantly enhance the induction experience of all staff. As part of a review of FET staff induction processes, a staff mentoring model will also be explored to allow trained tutors to mentor new tutors.

■ PD needs identification:

- There could be a more comprehensive approach to addressing the PD needs of administration and ancillary staff.
- In the absence of a PMDS system, approaches remain ad-hoc. A formalised needs identification process should be implemented at centre level, which would feed into centrally-organised PD.
- There is a need to develop a strategy to address the PD needs of second providers.

■ Engagement:

Whilst the engagement for regional FET PD is strong, it can be uneven across strands of provision. At organisation level, we need to identify ways to overcome barriers to engagement, including local promotion of PD offerings and mechanisms for staff release (particularly instructors), as well as developing an organisation-wide policy on release and remuneration.

- An area where significant improvement was made during the Covid-19 pandemic was the promotion of self-managed learning. We need to continue to promote this approach to PD, using innovative ways of delivering formal PD, through blended and online PD to enable more people in more dispersed locations to avail of it. This would include delivering and recording more webinars and using our MS Teams and MS Sway Platforms.

e) Programme Development, Approval, and Submission for Validation

In accordance with QQI Guidelines (Core, Sector Specific for the ETB Sector, Policy and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes), ETB programme development and approval processes are managed by the FET Regional Planning Network and the Quality Council sub-group (Programme Governance) and according to the [ETB Programme Delivery, Development and Validation Policy](#).

The FET Regional Planning Network facilitates integrated curriculum planning with a cross-provision and cross-campus development focus in line with the Strategic Priorities and the Enabling Themes in the FET Strategy 2020-2024. The work of the FET Regional Planning Network ensures the avoidance of

programme duplication, enhanced communications and integration to ensure a strategic focus in achieving the targets as set out in the Strategic Performance Agreement.

All new programme development and centre delivery approval must be ratified by the Regional Planning Network prior to deliberation at the Quality Council sub-group (Programme Governance). The Quality Council sub-group (Programme Governance) has responsibility to – review proposals, appoint programme development group(s), comment on draft programme development, recommend developed or reviewed programmes to the Quality Council for approval.

OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

Programme Delivery, Development and Validation Policy

The table below shows the number and outcomes of programme applications in the FET Division since September 2019.

Date	Number of Applications	Applications for Full Awards	Number of Approved Applications	Requests for Further Information	Applications Approved with Conditions	Applications Rejected
Sept 2019	8	1	8	0	4	0
Dec 2019	16	3	16	4	2	0
Feb 2020	20	6	19	1	7	0
April 2020	14	3	14	0	0	0
June 2020	13	5	10	1	2	0
August 2020	12	0	10	2	0	0

Regional Planning Network

Terms of reference for a new Regional Planning Network were drafted, with the requirement for the network identified and agreed by the Quality Council. This new decision-making structure, chaired by the Director of FET, will provide a coherent area-based approach to planning on a regional and local basis, in consultation with all relevant stakeholders. The objective is to identify needs, avoid duplication, enhance integration and ensure that strategic priorities and targets are addressed. This network will operate in conjunction with the FET Quality Assurance Governance structures, specifically the Programme Governance sub-group, which has responsibility for reviewing and recommending programme development, access and validation applications to the Quality Council for approval.

Collaborative Programme Development Processes

The FET Division is also involved in several collaborative programme development processes:

- The **ETB works collaboratively with other ETBs, ETBI and the Further Education Support Service (FESS)** whenever possible to develop new programmes ([Appendix 8 – National Hairdressing Apprenticeship Case Study 3](#)). This allows for the sharing of expertise and helps to maintain a national standard for the awards.
- The **FET Enterprise Engagement Support Service (EES)** is engaging with a broad range of stakeholders, employers and learners, improving engagement in an ongoing effort to highlight the strategic role of the ETB in skills development in the Mid-West. This is achieved through networking with the Mid-West Regional Skills

OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

Forum, targeted interventions through Skills to Advance and other FET provision. The range of engagement activities with employers, from strategic meetings at regional and local level, consultations, site visits, input in the curriculum development, etc. have all contributed to enhancing the relevance of our FET provision.

92% of employers surveyed strongly agreed/agreed they can influence the curriculum and content of FET programmes to make them more relevant for the workplace.

- The Mid-West sectoral approach to skills development through **Skills Clusters** (i.e. Limerick for Engineering, Limerick for Film, Limerick for Hospitality, STEM Alliance, etc.) is a **unique and innovative approach**, which facilitates the sharing of regional labour market intelligence, and allows industry needs to be matched to education providers.
- For the provision of Community Education, including non-accredited provision, **local area planning** is used in Limerick and Clare. A cluster process is used for planning community-based provision in partnership with local community groups.

The purpose of these local network meetings is to:

- Facilitate co-operation between groups and organisations involved in the delivery of community-based adult education
- Ensure that a wide range of target groups are catered for and that courses are planned in accordance with their needs
- Reduce overlap of courses between neighbouring communities
- Ensure a broad range of options are available for learners
- Feed into the Citywide Cluster process.

Example of Good Practice

The local area planning process has highlighted the need for a more formalised approach to provision planning in community settings. Community Education provision in Limerick City developed an online Course Start-up Request / Change of Details Form to facilitate management of the flow of information from community groups. This form is on learningandskills.ie and is completed each time a community group starts a new course. It is accessible, user-friendly and supports the flexible nature of community education. In addition, a ['Handbook for Community-based Adult Education Co-ordinators'](#) was produced as best practice guidelines for groups involved in the provision of community education in Limerick City.

OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

E) PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT, APPROVAL & SUBMISSION

Strengths

- The FET Division has **a clear Programme Delivery, Development & Validation Policy**, which is implemented effectively using appropriate QA governance structures. The self-evaluation process found it is effective at identifying duplication of provision.
- The **collaborative models of programme development** have worked well and offer opportunities to enhance our industry-led offerings.
- [The FET Division's Mid-Term Review](#) (2018) highlighted that the centralised approach to enterprise engagement has been effective in enhancing the profile of the ETB, giving it more visibility and leverage in employer fora.

The employer survey showed that:

- *88% of employers surveyed strongly agreed/agreed that it is evident, from the calibre of FET graduates that their programmes have been quality-assured.*
- *96% of employers surveyed strongly agreed/agreed that the ETB delivers quality education and training programmes, which are relevant and current for their employees' needs.*
- *96% of employers surveyed strongly agreed/agreed that the content of training delivered is up-to-date.*

E) PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT, APPROVAL & SUBMISSION

Recommendations

- The **Regional Planning Network** will facilitate integrated curriculum planning with a cross-provision and cross-campus development focus in line with the Strategic Priorities and the Enabling Themes in the FET Strategy 2020-2024. The work of the FET RPN will ensure the avoidance of programme duplication, enhanced communications and integration to ensure a strategic focus in achieving the targets as set out in the SPA. This will result in the development of integrated Further Education and Training plans on a regional basis across Limerick and Clare.
- **The FET Division's Curriculum and Programme Development/Validation structures** should be strengthened to increase our local capacity to:
 - Meet the demands for new programmes, including industry-led, community education and blended learning provision. This work would include the alignment of face-to-face, online and RPL into an integrated provision that responds to needs, using imaginative and flexible approaches to teaching, learning and certification and offering quality-assured programmes of education and training.
 - Respond to industry demands through effective collaboration between EESS and QASS and ensure programme development and QA requirements can meet expectations. This work will involve discussions at national level to streamline validation requirement processes with QQI, making them more efficient, and ensuring the FET sector can provide timely responses to new programme demands.
- **Replacing the current dual curriculum with a single curriculum** across Further Education and Training is a priority, as is the management of the development of new curriculum.
- The FET Division will **contribute to shared curriculum review and development initiatives at national level**, to ensure FET provision is relevant, up-to-date and recognised.
- There is a need for the FET Division to **develop a blended/online learning strategy** and associated policy to develop, manage and monitor quality-assured online delivery. This must recognise that the development of well-planned blended and online learning experiences requires a different approach than the emergency TLA response adopted due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

f) Access, Transfer and Progression

'Access and Progression' is the first strategic goal in our FET Strategic Framework. It is defined as being about *'supporting learners to access and sustain participation in education and training and to progress in key aspects of their lives, including personal development, further education and/or employment.'* One of the priorities for the FET Division is to identify and provide seamless transitions and pathways to learners both within the FET sector, and towards higher education and employment.

Access

Information, Recruitment and Guidance Support Service (IRGSS)

The FET Division is committed to providing a professional and confidential Information, Recruitment and Guidance Support Service to all learners (see FET Integrated Guidance Strategic Framework (2016–2020)). The IRGSS plays a critical role through clear, transparent and accessible person-centred, pre-entry and on-programme information and guidance supports, designed to facilitate access for learners. These include:

- **Pre-entry Flyers** – distributed in the region with clear information on who the service is for, what users can expect and how to access it. IRGSS staff also attend various local and regional fairs and other fora to promote FET opportunities.
- **Information Hubs** in Limerick and Clare provide a one-stop-shop for information on FET opportunities in the region.



OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

- **Centralised information query systems**, e.g.
 - A centralised Freephone number 1800 70 70 77
 - A centralised Course Enquiry system accessed through www.learningandskills.ie
 - A centralised course query email coursechoices@lceetb.ie
 - Drop-in services
 - One-to-one, pre-entry guidance available in FET Colleges/Centres and Community locations across the region for a clearly-defined target group.

It was noted during the consultation that the dedicated FET website, branding and marketing collateral has enabled the IRG team to engage with all stakeholders in the recruitment of learners and the promotion of guidance supports.

Enterprise Engagement Support Service

The FET Enterprise Engagement Support Service has developed strong employer engagement mechanisms, through its partnership with the Mid-West Regional Skills Forum to facilitate participation of employees in FET (e.g. the *Skills to Advance* initiative). It works in collaboration with the IRGSS to provide relevant information to employers on how to access FET provision to upskill their workforce. Key activities include:

- **Representation** on local and regional employer fora
- Networking at Career Fairs, Employers Events, etc. to **promote FET opportunities**

- Mechanisms to raise awareness of FET in schools, promoting **pathways from school to FET** through large-scale events such as the Mid-West Careers Fair, and the Mid-West Apprenticeship and Traineeship Showcase event as part of European Vocational Skills Week.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

RPL is acknowledged by the FET Division as a critical point of access for learners. In 2019, as part of a suite of new assessment procedures, an [RPL procedure](#) was developed and implemented through the QASS across all FET provision.

A learner can use RPL to gain entry to a programme; gain credit towards an award; get recognition of Prior Certified Learning (RPCCL), or learning that has already been accredited by an awarding body e.g. QQI; get recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL); get recognition for non-certified learning – learning acquired through life or work experience.

The FET Division has used these new procedures in a practical context with **three successful initiatives**:

- The TOBAR project with the Defence Forces, accrediting prior experiential learning for two cohorts of soldiers with Level 3, 4 and 5 Awards;
- The National Hairdressing Apprenticeship ([Appendix 8 – Case Study 3](#)), where RPL can be used to gain:
 - Access or entry to the Hairdressing Apprenticeship programme where the applicant does not meet the standard entry requirements;

OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

- o Advanced Entry onto Stage 2 of the National Hairdressing Apprenticeship Programme;
- o Certification of the Level 6 Certificate in Hairdressing Award.
- Collaboration with Donegal ETB: Validating Competencies of Care Sector Employees (VCCSE), an RPL collaborative project between Donegal ETB and the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board, with a link to Letterkenny Institute of Technology. This project uses RPL as a mechanism to support care sector employees to engage with FET.

Community Education as an entry pathway to FET

The community-based ethos of FET and its reach into areas of relative disadvantage is facilitated by a long-standing partnership between the FET Division and community organisations and schools working in these areas.

The FET Division addresses the lifelong learning needs and interests of adults in these communities by providing a broad menu of unaccredited and accredited learning opportunities that are accessible, low cost and can link to longer-term pathways within FET and beyond. This approach plays a recognised role in re-engaging in lifelong learning those who are most distant from education and the labour market. Learners on community education programmes have access to supports including literacy, numeracy, language assistance and broad learning supports, and all learners have access to the FET Information, Recruitment and Guidance Service both as groups and as individuals. This has led to an increase in progression to certified learning in

community settings, and an integrated approach between learning networks and FET part-time/full-time provision. In order to widen access, particularly in rural areas, blended learning offerings could be promoted (e.g. the development of short, sharp sessional programmes as tasters/one-off to promote access to FET provision).

Learner Registration and Admission

A standardised learner registration process applies across all FET provision. All registrations to FET courses must be completed online using FETCH (the national Further Education and Training Course Hub). Courses listed on PLSS contain information where appropriate on the requirements for a learner to access a course, in addition to information on progression routes after successful completion of the course. The applicant referral and learner registration process are detailed in the [FET Learner Management Information System Policy \(Section 5\)](#).

The management of learner admission remains at centre level. Depending on the centre, it is the responsibility of the course co-ordinator, or other identified staff member, to determine that the learner has the knowledge, skill and competence to successfully participate on the course. Typically, prospective learners would attend an interview to assess their suitability for the course for which they are applying. The purpose of the interview is to assess whether the learner meets the entry criteria for the course where these exist, or to facilitate the learner to find the course most suitable for their needs. More vocational courses in training settings may require aptitude and/or

OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

medical testing. Similarly, some courses may require security clearance before a learner can join their class.

Access to Apprenticeship programmes is in the first instance through their employer. Apprentices and their employers must register with SOLAS through a Senior Training Advisor prior to attending for their Apprenticeship training. Apprentices must equally meet the minimum requirements as set by SOLAS.

87.5% of employers surveyed for the self-evaluation found the process of recruiting and enrolling an apprentice is very effective or effective.

Learner Supports

There are a range of learner supports, which facilitate access, participation, retention and progression of learners. ([See Learner Support section](#)).

Transfer and Progression

IRGSS

Once again, the IRGSS plays a critical role in ensuring all FET learners have access to impartial guidance, relevant and accurate labour market information and to all relevant progression pathways to employment or further and higher education. This is enabled through a network of guidance professionals across FET Colleges/Centres, accessible and dedicated guidance spaces through information hubs, and a central online portal for careers information and resources. Integrated on-programme

and post-programme information and guidance supports for current FET learners are provided to facilitate transfer within FET provision, and highlight progression pathways. Key support mechanisms include:

- Group sessions
- One-to-one guidance meetings
- Referral protocols
- Frontline staff training
- Resources (e.g. Information and Guidance flyers for current learners; Learner Handbooks - Information and Guidance Section; Education, Training, Careers and Employment Information Resources include Careers Library, Factsheets, Once a term Newsletter, Noticeboards, Social Media, Webpage, etc.)
- Networking Representation on FET/ local/regional networks
- A clear and transparent tracking system.

Progression Pathways

The FET Division promotes learner progression within FET, to HE and employment.

- **Progression within the ETB:** There is ample evidence of learner progression within the ETB's FET provision, particularly to PLC provision. The IRGSS plays a critical role in promoting progression within FET. All FET courses also have an employability statement as part of the programme documentation, and list specific progression destinations for successful learners.

OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

■ Pathways to Apprenticeship

Programmes: Following the success of the Pathway to Engineering course, which allows for an alternative entry-route for people who wish to pursue a career in engineering, a working group was formed within the FET Division to work on the development of further Pathway Programmes. These new programmes were particularly focused on facilitating the transition for learners coming from full-time and formal Education or Training (such as from schools or Youthreach). In 2019, SOLAS approved four new Pathways to Apprenticeship programmes for LCFE in Culinary Skills, Construction, Accounting and Hairdressing. These programmes will provide a pathway for diverse learners to a full apprenticeship with the ETB.

■ Progression Pathways to Higher

Education: PLC plays a critical role in facilitating progression to higher education, and has well-established relationships with higher education institutions, through memoranda of understanding and protocols between ETBs and these institutions.

In addition to the national Higher Education Links Scheme (HELs), several **MoUs between the ETB and HEIs** have been agreed:

- LCFE has negotiated a seamless local progression agreement with LIT, operating through CAO with potential for entry to first year of all programmes of study at LIT;
- Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT Further Education Progression Scheme);
- Advanced Entry progression agreements with IT Tralee and with LIT whereby LCFE learners can gain entry to Year 2 of specific courses on completion of specified Level 6 courses;
- Memoranda of Understanding have been developed in areas such as Engineering to ensure learners from FET courses can avail of places on LIT courses while also ensuring that students from LIT who drop out of courses can be referred to apprenticeship and traineeship courses within the ETB;
- The Teacher Education Access Programme (TEAP) has been running for 6 years. This innovative and successful initiative delivered in partnership with the ETB (through VES provision in Limerick City) and Mary Immaculate College (MIC) increases diversity within the teaching profession by providing a direct-entry route for mature students.
- Maths for STEM is a partnership initiative set up between VES provision in Limerick City and University of Limerick to facilitate access for FET learners into Higher Level Science, Maths and Engineering Programmes.

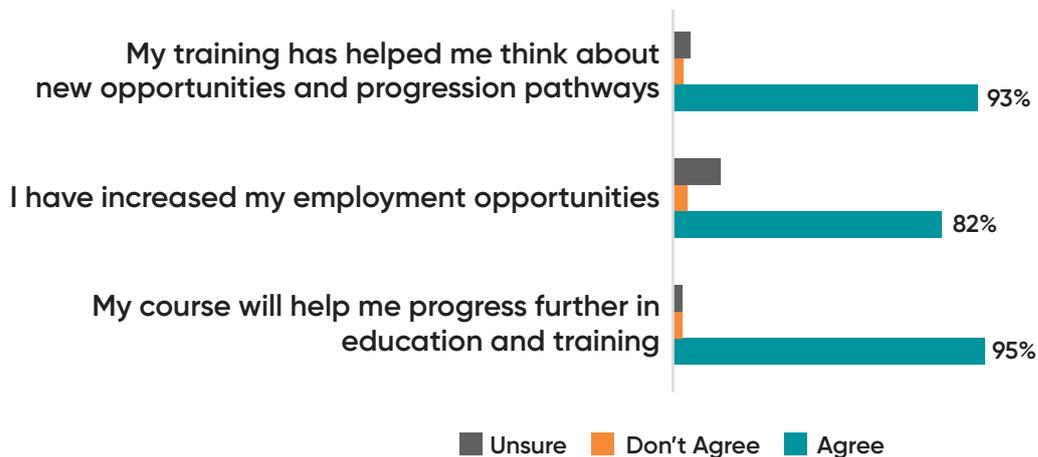
OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

'The development of a tertiary education framework and the formation of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science marks a major milestone in ensuring a more cohesive and collaborative approach across FET and HE. '(SOLAS FET Strategy 2020-2024).'

Capturing Learner Progression

One of the FET Division priorities is to enhance our progression tracking mechanisms to fully reflect learners' outcomes and promote FET as a valuable option to HE and employment for learners and employers. Respondents to the learners survey overwhelmingly agreed that their participation in a FET course helped them to think about new opportunities and pathways.

Do you agree with the following statements?



Current tracking systems used in the FET Division include PLSS entries, which require capturing the expected progression of all learners on FET courses. Additional progression tracking systems are implemented in some FET provision, and a forthcoming tracking system will be developed as part of the IRG approach, to demonstrate progression routes to CAO and Apprenticeships/Traineeships.

OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

F) ACCESS, TRANSFER AND PROGRESSION

Strengths

- The consultation highlighted the **critical role played by the IRGSS** to guide FET learners from the pre-entry to progression stages of the learner journey.
- The **FETCH system, managed by SOLAS, has provided a standardised and consistent approach to registration**, which is essential for a clear and transparent access process. The implementation of this national system has highlighted that learners' digital skills are increasingly important to access FET opportunities.⁹

"In the staff survey, 100% of FET Centre Co-ordinators responded that their centres support learners to use the online FETCH registration process. Indeed, 78% of learners who responded to the survey were satisfied with the information they received from their centre on FETCH".

- The **FET Division's work on RPL** is to be commended. It has been effective at raising awareness on RPL through staff training and has engaged in several successful initiatives at local and national level.
- The FET Division has several **long-standing MoUs in place with HEIs**, which have facilitated FET-HE transitions for learners. There is also strong evidence that *'PLC graduates who enrol in a HE course have a high progression rate within the HEI, therefore suggesting high completion rates in subsequent years.'*¹⁰

⁹ Limerick Digital Inclusion Working Group, chaired by the FET TEL Officer commissioned The Tavistock Institute to conduct a research on 'The Meaning And Experience Of Digital Exclusion' (2020) in Limerick. This highlighted lengthy and over-complicated online application and registration systems and procedures. 'There are several ways in which service users may be further supported, such as through reducing bureaucratic procedures; promoting jargon-free language and instructions; developing simple-to-use apps for service delivery and creatively managing the restrictions imposed by GDPR.'

¹⁰See SOLAS report on FET PLC Learners Outcomes (October 2020) - https://www.solas.ie/f/70398/x/9a738eae45/fet_outcomes_plc_report.pdf

F) ACCESS, TRANSFER AND PROGRESSION

Recommendations

- Develop an **overarching FET Division Learner Admission Policy**, complying with the requirements of the QQI Core Statutory QA guidelines Section 3.2, learner admission, progression and recognition.
- **Continue work to clarify learner pathways both within FET and from FET to HE.** The learner survey showed that some FET learners remain unclear about how to progress on to third-level education from their course. This points to the need for a better alignment of educational opportunities from a learner perspective, in the context of a new tertiary education landscape.
- Continue to build on RPL initiatives to **develop comprehensive RPL mechanisms** for our FET provision.
- Continue to focus on **building the digital skills of learners**, in order to enhance access to FET.
- Develop and resource a cross-division, **consistent approach to progression tracking**.

OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

g) Integrity and Approval of Learner Results

The FET Division has robust processes in place to ensure the integrity of learner assessment and results and to provide for consistent decision-making and standards across services and centres. These include:

1. Professional Development (QA) ensures that all staff receive a consistent message on standards, briefs, marking schemes, feedback, procedures – the role of the assessor.
2. Assessment procedures and associated forms/templates provide structured marking sheet and commentary on where marks are applied/deducted. An exemplar bank on agreed assessments is also provided to learning practitioners.
3. Internal Verification process is in place with teams of trained internal verifiers within each centre.
4. External Authentication process: Consistent message to External Authenticators via briefing seminars ensures that EAs are trained on assessment procedures and guidelines, templates, etc. The new National EA Panel, with associated retraining for EAs on standards, role of EA, consistency, reporting and responsibilities assures a more consistent approach to the application of standards.
5. Appeals procedures are in place and are centrally managed by the ETB Appeals Office, resourced by the Quality Assurance Support Service.
6. Results approval panel (RAP).
7. In 2019, a new single-version of the ETB FET Division Results Approval Panel (RAP) Procedure was replaced with a Quality Assurance Support Service centrally-managed process. Its purpose is to ensure that results are fully quality-assured and signed off by the Provider prior to submission to QQI. This new procedure replaces all the pre-existing legacy Results Approval Panel procedures.
8. Centralised role of the QA Support Service to provide supports, briefing and management of External Authentication, central review of IV, EA and RAP panel meetings. It reviews assessor briefs and marking schemes. The QASS also co-ordinates Centre Quality Improvement Planning Meetings.
9. Summary of certification and outcomes to Quality Council (governance oversight) including data analysis of grade consistency – trends, centre-to-centre consistency.
10. Standard template for the collation and feedback of comments arising from IV and EA processes to tutors on completion of EA processes.
11. For FET provision delivering Junior and Leaving certifications, the DES State Examination Commission's (SEC) Junior Certificate & Leaving Certificate results are externally assessed by the SEC. Classroom CBA's for Junior Cycle adhere to strict guidelines set by the SEC.

OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

G) INTEGRITY & APPROVAL OF LEARNER RESULTS

Strengths

- There has been **focussed consideration given to improving the integrity of learner results** in quality planning of recent years. Targeted initiatives, standardising templates, forms, processes and procedures are now in place and effective.
- There are **centralised processes of external authentication, results approval panel and appeals**, managed by the QASS.
- **Analysis and reports to QA governance structures** are provided.
- Provision-level actions are also supported through the **Centre Quality Improvement Planning process**.

Recommendations

- There has been progress in alignment of QA templates and procedures, but **further development and implementation is needed to fully integrate processes across the dual FE and Training quality assurance systems**. This will include overarching ETB policy development, to replace former legacy provider policies.
- Need to **explore increased resources towards data analytics**, monitoring and evaluation of critical indicators of assessment (e.g. grade distributions, etc.)

h) Information and Data Management

The authority operates the following information management systems:

- CORE (HR Information Management system)
- Agresso (Finance Information Management system)
- PLSS (national Programme and Learner Support System)

OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

PLSS

In line with the new SOLAS FET Strategy 2020–2024, the ETB fully supports the development of FET data infrastructure. Indeed, the ETB was the first pilot site in the country for the new learner database. The PLSS consists of a National Course Calendar incorporating a National Learner Database; a National Programme Database; and a companion course finder and online application website, www.fetchcourses.ie (FETCH), which is fully integrated via a real-time synchronisation link to PLSS.

An integrated Funding Allocation Request and Reporting (FARR) System also supports the annual planning cycle for FET provision to facilitate alignment with the Strategic Performance Agreement. Given the broad range of provision category types (e.g. Youthreach, PLC, Core Skills, SFW, ITABE, etc.), the ETB continues to operate a number of inherited legacy management information systems (MIS) but the national PLSS system is now adopted as the primary learner MIS system, and it is in widespread use throughout the FET Division. A dedicated FET Manager, in charge of provision Planning, Resourcing & Reporting, supports this work.

In April 2020, the FET Division developed a [Learner Management Information System Policy](#). It relates to a number of key areas associated with Learner Management Information Systems (LMIS), which include appropriate user access controls; adequate security and data protections (GDPR); verification of

learner identity and unique identifier; maintaining accurate and up-to-date data; applicant and learner lifecycle management; and the efficient and effective use of learner management information systems in support of provision planning, operational delivery, and reporting requirements.

Use of data as part of QA system

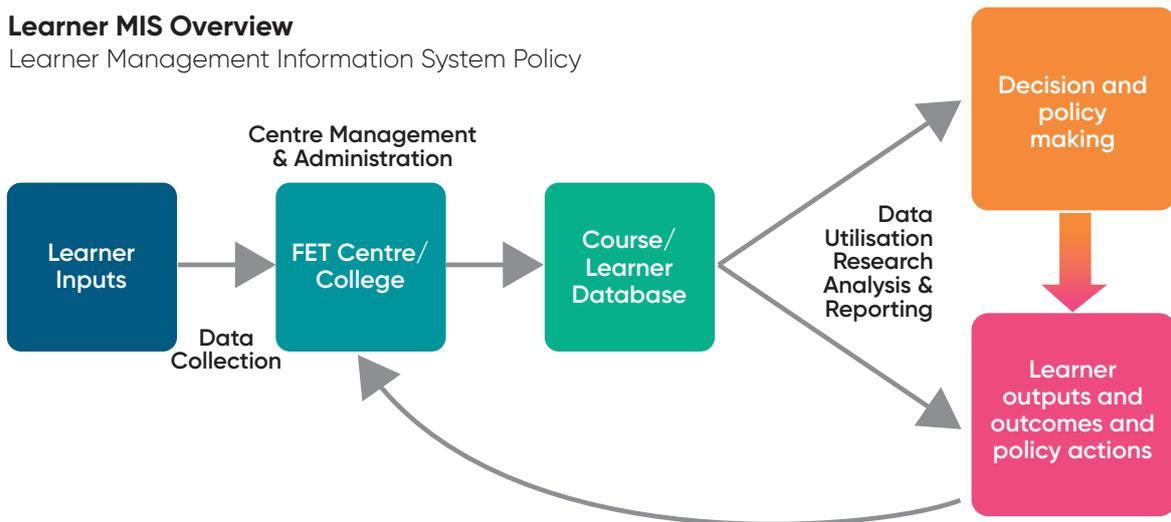
A FET Operational Planning and Reporting Calendar outlines the key timelines and deadlines for FET Provision reporting. All FET Co-ordinators/Managers and Partner Groups must ensure that submissions for their areas of provision are reported well in advance of these national deadlines, so that a review of the ETB-wide performance can be undertaken prior to national submission, and corrective action commentary added, where necessary. The effectiveness of the process necessitates that all course, learner, and learner support data records are complete and maintained up-to-date.

PLSS reports offer a flexible means of generating a variety of user-specific report formats and saving them for regular use. Activity Progress and Monitoring reports are generated by the FET Operations Manager. Data is also used for national Activity Returns and ESF Returns, and other audit requests. SPA target reports to all areas of provision are generated in order to monitor progress toward achieving SPA targets agreed with SOLAS.

Learner Management Information System Policy

Learner MIS Overview

Learner Management Information System Policy



Other indicators of quality (completion, certification and progression data) are available via:

- Analysis of certification data: Via QBS and QQI certification reports – data analysed, trends in rates of distinction by centre and award.
- Infographics generated for review, i.e. external authenticator, centre portfolios, number of grade changes at external authenticator, number of EA days, cost etc.

Data reliability, security and integrity

The FET Learner Management Information System Policy articulates all arrangements concerning learner data security and integrity.

Primary learner records are created in the national Programme and Learner Support System (PLSS), which has been subject to a DPIA so that data

protection mechanisms are in-built.

The authority manages access control to its various FET Centres/Colleges, and Partner Groups, by creating sub-partitions known as 'Providers' within PLSS, to limit the scope of data access to local administration teams and thus minimise the potential exposure level of learner data at any access-point. PLSS users undertake GDPR Awareness Training in advance of being assigned access to learner records within PLSS. Controls on learner identity and PPSN ownership are in place at all centres. Learner data is updated on a per course basis involving a new registration and at other times where learners notify of changes administratively or via FETCH profile update. FETCH Accounts are learner's personal accounts, and no staff member shall retain FETCH account credentials belonging to an applicant/learner.

OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

PLSS is a web-based portal, which facilitates granular and controlled access from outreach locations and by local Partner Groups where applicable. In 2019, an Addendum to all SLAs with partner groups was developed to cover the sharing of learner data. A signed Data Protection Addendum in respect of Article 28 GDPR Controller to Processor Transfers of Personal Data is now appended to relevant SLAs ([See Appendix 9 - List of SLAs](#)).

In addition, a range of [FET QA procedures](#) is in place to ensure the reliability, security and integrity of assessment data:

- FET Secure Storage procedures for full-time and part-time provision are in place for the secure storage of assessment materials, records and learner assessment evidence.
- QQI assessment certification records are kept via a secure QBS platform, and the 'Walled Garden' for City & Guilds certifications.
- Secure storage exists in all FET buildings.
- The external authenticator directory is secured via the ETBI website.
- Good practices are in place for the QASS disposal of learner records post-certification.

Legislative Compliance

The authority's Corporate Services department page on StaffCONNECT provides information on all legislative compliance requirements, including data protection forms. The [ETB Data Protection Policy](#) highlights that all personal information, which Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board holds, is protected by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), a European Union (EU) regulation introduced in May 2018 to strengthen and unify data protection within the EU. GDPR replaces the Irish Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003. The policy document sets out the manner in which Personal Data relating to staff, students/learners and other individuals (e.g. parents, ETB board members, members of boards of management etc.) are kept, and how the data is protected. It includes a range of appendices to cover Records Management Procedures, Record Retention Policy and Schedule; disposal policies; Personal Data Rectification/ Erasure Form; Data Access Procedures, etc. that apply to both hard copy and electronic forms.

A new system (Sytorus) enables the ETB's compliance with GDPR. This automates the implementation of a Compliance Workbook. All FET centres apply the authority's GDPR and data protection policies and procedures. An online GDPR course has been developed and is compulsory for all FET Staff. As with all centrally-organised PD, the programme is digitally-badged enabling tracking of completion.

The ETB ICT department also ensures appropriate data protection policies and virus protection software are in place in all FET Colleges/Centres.

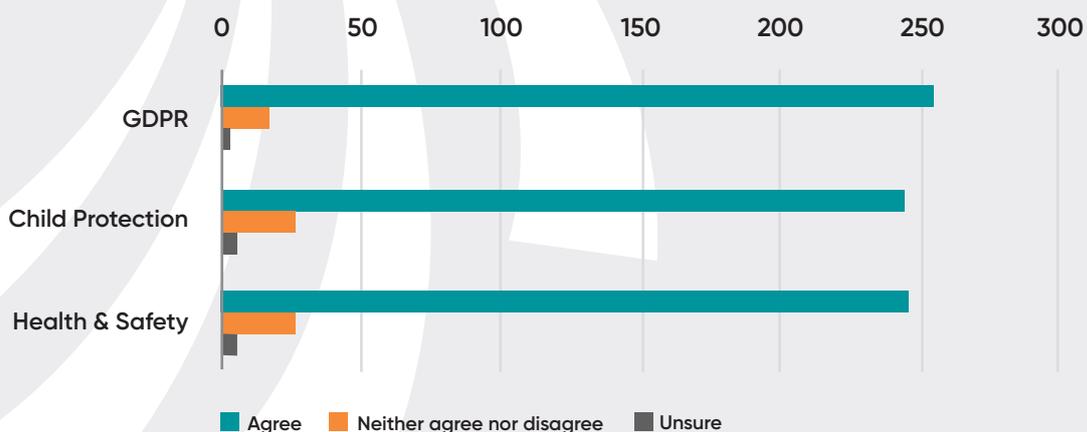
OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

H) INFORMATION & DATA MANAGEMENT

Strengths

- Despite being a huge change, the amalgamation process successfully bedded down, with many system changes (i.e. PLSS, FARR, FETCH, the streamlining of finances (DCS, P2P, etc.). The self-evaluation found that the introduction of these systems increased accountability and introduced a more consistent **approach to data gathering across the FET Division**.
- The evidence-based approach to the national data infrastructure system also provided an overarching view of provision, in turn allowing less duplication and better planning.
- The **centralised management of funding and certification databases** supported by the FET Operations Manager and Quality Assurance Support Service, with local centre responsibility for data entry and maintenance, has proven effective. As part of the Planning, Resourcing, Information and Data Management Support Service, the FET Operations Manager's role ensures consistency of information and respect of critical deadlines. It also provides a feedback mechanism to SOLAS/ETBI on the ongoing development of features within the existing framework and exploration of effective continuous improvements.
- Great **staff awareness** about professional obligations re. GDPR, Child Protection and H&S.

I understand my professional obligations re:



OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

H) INFORMATION & DATA MANAGEMENT

Recommendations

- One of the key challenges identified with PLSS is its **lack of some functionality**. PLSS does not yet capture historical data for learners that former MIS provided. It focuses on provision management, rather than learner management information (what a learner does, at what time, certification, etc.). This information is critical at centre level.
- There is a need for an **ETB certification database**, as an internal database, not relying on an external awarding body (QBS/Walled Garden, etc.) and providing certification history, not currently aligned with PLSS.
- Continue to collaborate with other ETBs on the **development of CRM/database** for the management of organisational data re. QA and employer engagement.

I) Public Information and Communications

The authority's website (www.lcetb.ie) provides information and links to its key publications, policies and procedures in relation to capital and procurement, recruitment, governance structures, data protection, complaints and appeals, etc. Section 8 of the Freedom of Information Act 2014 requires Freedom of Information (FOI) bodies to prepare and publish as much information as possible in an open and accessible manner on a routine basis outside of FOI, having regard to the principles of openness, transparency and accountability as set out in Sections 8(5) and 11(3) of the Act.

The FET Division website (www.learningandskills.ie) is accessible from the authority's website homepage, and is updated on an ongoing basis

so that the public and all stakeholders can easily access relevant information. Different pages offer useful information and links to learners, communities and enterprise partners on FET courses (including online), provision types and campuses.

The homepage of the site provides information on FET courses available, FET centre locations and the different learning pathway options available. A specific Quality Assurance page is available on the website that provides information on each of the 11 Quality Assurance areas. It contains links to QA policies, procedures and forms; QA management and governance information including minutes of meetings; QA newsletters; handbooks, etc.

OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

The use of social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, and other internet applications is also an integral element of daily communication with the public, including the ETB's customers and staff. Many of these platforms are also used to deliver FET provision marketing campaigns with all linking directly to provision or campus pages on the learningandskills.ie website. The [Corporate Social Media Policy](#) as well as the ETB's [ICT Acceptable Usage Policy](#) outline the procedures for establishing and operating social media sites and set out the code of conduct when communicating through social media.

Name Referencing Guidelines have been developed in line with the Education and Training Act 2013 to ensure consistency of message and communication when using the authority's name. A strategic approach to FET communications and marketing was developed by the **ETB's Marketing/External Communication Unit** and approved by the FET Steering Group. This includes the design of all collateral used to promote provision and services, whether internal or external. The communications function provides centralised design and proofing of

content for any resource that gets wide distribution including provision guides, leaflets, print adverts, digital and social artwork etc. Extensive marketing collateral has been developed to promote provision and campuses through this centralised strategy, with a consistent look and feel across all assets. Individual FET centres use the provision guides to inform potential learners of all FET opportunities in their areas. In Clare, five Local Learning Networks as well as local links such as parish newsletters and local publications are also used to promote FET opportunities.

In line with the national strategy to enhance the standing of FET, in October 2019, the ETB's communications team developed a new integrated marketing campaign to run over 2 years using the #FindTheBestInYou tagline to promote FET opportunities in Limerick and Clare. The campaign assets developed are used in cinema, digital media, social media and out-of-home including 48-sheet billboards, purchase-point panels in shopping centres and on public buses. <https://www.facebook.com/learningandskills.ie/videos/764473830653995/>.

OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

I) PUBLIC INFORMATION & COMMUNICATIONS

Strengths

- The ETB's **rebranding and communication strategy** has been effective in enhancing the authority's profile, and giving FET an enhanced standing in the region. More employers and other partners now recognise the size and remit of the ETB, giving it more visibility and 'bargaining power'. An example of this is the fact that the FET Division has been chairing the Mid-West Regional Skill Forum for two consecutive years, on an equal footing with Higher Education Institutions and other providers.

Recommendations

- There is a need to keep a consistent approach to our communications with key stakeholders (learners, employers, etc.) Clear, **standardised language for all communication and platforms** (including PLSS, FETCH) should be used, keeping the target audience in mind.
- Given the size of our organisation, a **level of autonomy is necessary at local level for the marketing of local FET provision**. It should be informed by overarching communication guidelines to ensure consistency and clarity of message for all our stakeholders.

Objective 2: Teaching, Learning and Assessment





OBJECTIVE 2: TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

a) Quality Teaching and Learning in FET

The Further Education and Training sector serves a rich and diverse cohort of learners through multiple strands of part-time and full-time provision, spanning from community-based education, to Apprenticeships, Youth Education and Training, work-based learning, Post-Leaving Certificate and much more. What unites all these strands is a shared ethos and a commitment to high quality teaching and learning – the ‘core’ of our business.

The FET Division has demonstrated evidence of a continuous improvement approach around **key features of FET teaching and learning:**

- Provision that is **learner-centred, holistic and tailored** to suit the needs of specific target groups.

Innovative teaching methodologies are adapted to suit the provision context and tailored to the needs of specific target groups. External Authenticators’ reports provide ample evidence of excellent teaching and learning in both part-time and full-time provision, in adherence with national best practice and QQI guidelines ([See Appendix 6 – Extracts of EA reports](#))

- Continuous **investment in facilities and resources** providing learners access to excellent learning environments.

In the FET Strategic Framework 2015–2020, one of the strategic objectives in ‘Quality Learning and Teaching’ is to ‘ensure ETB FET learners have access to welcoming, safe and fit-

for-purpose learning environments.’

Recognised as one of the enabling themes of the SOLAS strategy, capital and FET infrastructure are essential to the learning experience. Significant investments across our FET Colleges/ Centres have improved the quality of buildings and enhanced the on-course experience for learners and staff. This includes new kitchens, ICT labs, science labs, canteens, workshops as well as significant investment in ICT for centres – laptops, interactive whiteboards, projectors, and other devices. **Cross-provision FET campuses** in Limerick and Clare provide hubs for communities, and valued opportunities for staff and learners to share experiences and good practice. This is in line with the concept of the ‘FET College of the Future’, a key strategic objective within the SOLAS FET Strategy 2020–2024.



OBJECTIVE 2: TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

■ Embedded **Inclusive Practices**

The concept of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is promoted across the FET Division, as a key to inclusion to increase access to equal learning opportunities within the mainstream teaching environment, including for learners with disabilities. During 2019, the FET Division ran the National Teaching and Learning Forum's digital badging on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as a joint-initiative between key FET support services, i.e. TEL, PD and AISS.

■ Access to an **increasing range of supports for all learners** (See Section on Learner Supports).

■ Adherence to national and international **quality standards**.

Quality Teaching and Learning is about enhancing the quality and delivery of our provision to meet national and international quality standards. It is also about reflecting on and sharing good practice and celebrating the achievements of our learners and learning practitioners. Many FET learning practitioners from part-time/full-time, accredited and non-accredited provision have been locally, nationally and internationally recognised for their expertise; speaking at various conferences and fora in Ireland and abroad, or contributing to education journals and publications (e.g. ETBI newsletter, International Family Learning Conference, TEL Showcase in 2020, etc.). There is ample evidence of excellence in T&L in the FET Division ([Appendix 7](#)).

■ Commitment to continuous professional development of all our staff and exposure to the latest approaches to teaching and learning and assessment (research, methodologies, curricula, pedagogy)

This is one of the pillars of the FET Division PD Action Plan. Each year, a wide-ranging programme of professional development is developed to support learning practitioners to build on their skills to meet the diverse needs of learners. Recent focus included training in the areas of pedagogy/andragogy and working with learners who have diverse needs e.g. disability awareness, dyslexia training, integrated literacy and numeracy awareness, family learning, intercultural awareness, UDL, etc.

■ Investment and adoption of new technologies to enhance our delivery and support learners to work more independently.

In the FET Division's TEL Action Plan, Technology-Enhanced Learning is defined as '*the use of Technology to enhance the teaching and learning experience*'. A focus on developing technology-enhanced pedagogy has been supported by the TEL Support Service to support best practice on the effective use of technology for evaluation and reflective practice. Examples include:

- A two-year professional development programme for staff working in Youthreach provision in Mid-Clare on embedding evaluation and critical reflection into the adoption of learning technologies;

OBJECTIVE 2: TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

- TEL Pilot Programme funded projects identified by staff using technologies to support teaching and learning;
- The TEL Support Service has developed a Blended Learning Development Model based on the ADDIE model (Source: Florida State University) with evaluation at the centre of the process and using a bespoke review template for online content;
- Key learnings from across the FET Division on the use of technology for the enhancement of learning is shared on the TEL eZine; TalkTEL;
- TEL teams (TEL implementation team, TEL sub-groups, Office 365 Digital Champions, Moodle Champions etc.) act as communities of practice sharing experiences of the use of technology to enhance learning;
- The adoption of blended approaches for teaching and learning have highlighted some benefits, i.e. learners can become more independent, they work at their own pace and at a time which is convenient to their current living or work-life situation, etc.

TLA during Covid-19

During the Covid-19 pandemic, there was a collaborative approach taken at organisational level, and **huge flexibility, creativity and professionalism displayed by learning practitioners** at all levels across the FET Division. This ensured the modified arrangements on teaching, learning and assessments were effective in supporting learners to stay engaged and complete their studies, while also protecting the integrity of the FET awards offered¹¹.

Many staff used tools and resources for the first time and in the process commenced a journey of professional development in relation to online learning. A survey designed by the TEL Support Service (April 2020) found that 97.3 % of surveyed learning practitioners in the FET Division used technology to reach out to learners immediately following campus closures. The FET Division was praised for the quick response in rolling out iPads/laptops and software for learners. This minimised disruption around teaching and learning activities. Respondents praised the constant liaising and ongoing support and troubleshooting provided by the TELSS Team through the **FET Division TEL Learning Zone**, a one-stop-shop for online resources in MS Teams, providing real time support, training videos, key online resources, etc. *'I think the FET Division did an amazing job in such a short space of time with the TEL Learning Zone [...] without which things would have been much more difficult'*.

¹¹ See [ETB FET Division Self-Evaluation Report on the effectiveness of the Covid-19 Modifications to Teaching, Learning and Assessment](#) (June 2020)

OBJECTIVE 2: TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

Quality learning experience on work placements

The Quality Council has agreed on standard work experience durations – 60 hours for generic programmes, 120 hours for childcare/healthcare/nursing programmes – applied from September 2020, improving standardisation and quality. Work Experience Guidelines for Employers have been developed to highlight roles, responsibilities and forms to be used by employers before, during and at end of the work placements. In addition to the above, many local arrangements are in place for work placement visits and centres have developed a range of supporting documentation for work placement supervisors. Work placement feedback from both learners and supervisors is used to ensure a consistent quality learning experience for learners.

With regards to Apprenticeship provision, employers are approved to carry out

on-the-job Apprenticeship training and assessments by the FET Senior Training Advisors/Authorised Officers. This process ensures that apprentice employers meet minimum requirements to train apprentices, and helps ensure the apprentice receives quality training while on the job. Similarly, in Traineeship training, work placement requires the learner to undertake a series of tasks, the standard of which is signed-off on by their work placement supervisor (i.e. employer – e.g. head chef on catering traineeship etc.). To ensure that the work placement provides a quality opportunity for learners, employers must meet the minimum requirements of the programme. Instructors will visit employers to determine the quality of the placement and, as subject matter experts, will recommend employers for the provision of work placements.

A) THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Strengths

- Consultations have highlighted a **positive learning environment** across the FET Division. Learners juxtaposed this environment to their previous school experiences, where they felt unsupported, and felt they could reach their full potential thanks to this learning environment. They enjoy the peer learning aspect of their courses, meeting new people and learning from them. Learners felt tutors played an important role in facilitating this type of learning and praised the positive impact it had on the learning environment overall.

OBJECTIVE 2: TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

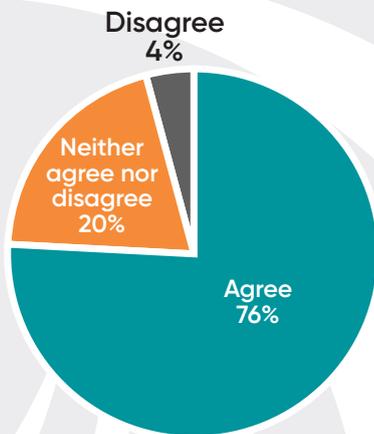
A) THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Do you agree with the following statements?

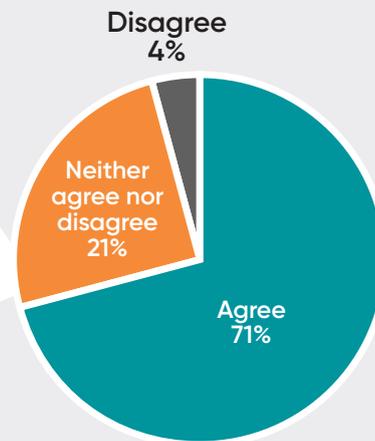


- Staff also refer to a **positive working environment**. The physical upgrades and investments in FET buildings over the last few years were praised by respondents to staff consultations.

My centre provides a safe, stimulating working environment



I feel respected by my peers, management and learners



- The **recognition of the Quality of Teaching and Learning** at local, regional, national and international levels contributes to enhancing the profile of the FET Division and the FET sector.
- The FET Division's **strategic focus and investment on TEL** over the last few years has reaped dividends during the Covid-19 pandemic. There are established and recommended core platforms (MS Office 365, MS Teams, Moodle, Padlet, etc.), tools and resources, which are safe and secure. Training and supports are provided to enable safe usage. This strategic approach is effective in providing the necessary flexibility, agility and creativity required for effective teaching and learning.

OBJECTIVE 2: TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

A) THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Recommendations

- Continue to promote **UDL** as a key approach to all our TLA activities.
- Aligning with the national objective of the '**FET College of the Future**', the FET Division will continue to develop integrated facilities and lifelong learning provision to place it at the heart of communities and respond to global challenges, and the changing demands and expectations of people, employers and communities.
- As we move to **increased blended provision**, the FET Division needs to both build the skills of all staff to adopt safe emergency remote teaching practices and build its capability to develop quality blended and online provision. Post-pandemic, an internal conversation with learning practitioners should take place to identify what elements of teaching and learning could be developed using blended methodologies.
- It is important to recognise that due to the vocational nature of many FET courses and the diversity of FET learners, **face-to-face interaction is intrinsically part of the teaching and learning experience** and should be safeguarded.
- Although 81% of respondents to the FET Learner Survey reported they were satisfied with the information they received on work placements, further discussions revealed the need for a **more consistent approach to work placement** across all provision.

b) Assessment of Learners

Following the publication of the ETBI Assessment Framework in 2018, the FET Division developed a single version of Assessment Procedures for all FET provision (excluding Craft Apprenticeship programmes as per SOLAS QA Provision). In September 2019, eight [new assessment procedures](#) were introduced across FET Colleges/Centres in Limerick and Clare.

1. Assessment Malpractice Procedure
2. Compassionate Consideration Procedure
3. Short-Term Extension Procedure

4. Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment Procedure
5. Appeals Procedure – Results or Process
6. Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure
7. Examinations Procedure
8. Secure Storage Procedure

All assessment procedures and associated forms are available on StaffCONNECT, including standardised procedures, forms and templates to be used across the FET Division.

OBJECTIVE 2: TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

All procedures are also available for learners to view on the Quality Assurance page of learningandskills.ie.

In addition, in response to local and national calls for assistance with referencing, a Referencing Handbook and a Writing Handbook were developed by FESS and ETBI. These are assessor and learner-focused, and promote a standardised referencing system for use at all relevant levels.

Integrity, consistency and security of assessment

The integrity, consistency and security of assessment instruments, methodologies, procedures and records are safeguarded by a series of processes outlined below.

■ **Documentation**

- All assessment procedures, associated forms and templates are documented for implementation across all FET provision.
- A StaffCONNECT QA sub-site provides a centralised portal for all FET learning practitioners to access curriculum, policies, procedures, templates, forms, notifications.
- Standardised Examination Answer Booklet.

■ **Professional Development**

- QA-specific training for assessors on assessment process, roles and responsibilities, assessment instruments, importance of

communication to learners, clarity on feedback, marking breakdown and justification.

- QA induction of staff is mandatory for all new staff. In addition, further training on internal verification, Assessing Learner Evidence, Academic Referencing, Exam Writing etc. is available to all learning practitioners.



■ **Internal verification (IV) process**

This checks that assessments have been carried out in accordance with procedures, using correct assessment instruments, learner details and results correctly entered, etc.

■ **External Authentication (EA) process**

This is essential to ensure the quality and integrity of the assessment process. ETBI, on behalf of the 16 ETBs, has established a national panel of External Authenticators (EA) for FET provision. Their role is to review IV reports to ensure that assessments have been carried out in a fair and consistent manner, and to authenticate that the grades given are in line with the national standards for that level. External Authenticators provide feedback to FET Co-ordinators who pass on feedback to assessors.

OBJECTIVE 2: TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

■ **Results Approval Panel (RAP)**

This provides an opportunity for the senior management team within a centre to review the results of a given assessment period, identify issues arising out of the assessments, and decide on recommendations for future actions to be taken.

■ **Appeals Process**

Learners have the right to appeal their results for QQI awards, should they not agree with the assessment judgement that has been made. Appeals are managed by the External Appeals Office (QA Support Service), and follow the FET External Appeals Process Handbook in respect to QQI Awards, which outline the roles and responsibilities of FET Colleges/Centres, learners and the External Appeals Office in the processing of External Appeals of the assessment results.

Assessment Results Appeal



■ The QA Support Service has a centralised role for the briefing and management of External Authentication, central review of internal verification, RAP panel meetings, and the appeals process. It also provides summary of certification and outcomes, including quantitative

and qualitative analysis reports from Results Approval Panels, as well as data analysis of grade consistency – trends, centre-to-centre consistency for consideration to the Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Governance).

OBJECTIVE 2: TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

Modified arrangements during Covid-19

During the Covid-19 pandemic, formative assessments were carried out through both synchronous and asynchronous means. Synchronous methods involve remotely dispersed learners and teachers using the same platform to increase input, output and engagement. Asynchronous methods can involve the use of Virtual Learning Environments where questions can be asked, and tasks, activities, and quizzes can be stored and completed by learners.

A range of guidelines were developed by the FET Division to support learning practitioners:

- [FET Guidelines and Procedures for Covid-19 Contingency Planning of Assessments](#) (March 2020) in line with QQI Guiding Principles for Alternative Assessment. These guidelines and procedures informed and supported the development of alternative forms of assessment (i.e. learning outcomes-based approach to assessment design, replacing exams with assignments, developing online assessments, work experience RPL for any recent placement, alternate Personal Professional Development modules as replacement to Work Experience etc.).
This allowed learners to achieve the qualification they had been working towards while maintaining the integrity of the award.
- [‘Teaching and Learning Online - Safe Practice Guidelines for Online and Blended Learning in Further Education and Training’](#) (May 2020). These guidelines aimed ‘to provide guidance and support, particularly those who are new to teaching and learning online. The ETB approach from the outset needs to be one of ‘start safe, stay safe’, and take small incremental steps to develop online activity and to ensure that compliance with guidelines, the ETB’s Data Protection, ICT Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) and other relevant policies.’
- Guidelines and Procedures for Covid-19 Contingency Planning of Internal Verification and associated documentation
- Guidelines and Procedures for Covid-19 Contingency Planning of External Authentication
- [Assessment Online - Safe Practice Guidelines for Online and Blended Assessment in Further Education and Training’](#) (September 2020). This provides staff with details on communicating, developing, conducting and storing evidence related to online assessments, as well as specific instructions for Administration, Storage and Retrieval of assessment material.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the QA Support Service also developed a short communication document for centres to use when communicating with learners. This document is a distillation of the overall Contingency Planning of Assessments document, and states from a learner’s perspective what they are to expect from Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board as a provider, and what their responsibilities as learners are.

OBJECTIVE 2: TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

Assessments on work placements

The adoption of standardised module descriptors for Work Experience modules at Levels 3/4/5/6 are the result of shared curriculum development at national level. Associated forms and templates assure that employers are communicated a standardised engagement document, expectations of learner assessment are communicated, and that clear and consistent marking rubric is applied to work experience placements. See work experience supplementary documentation as information to FET centres and learners.

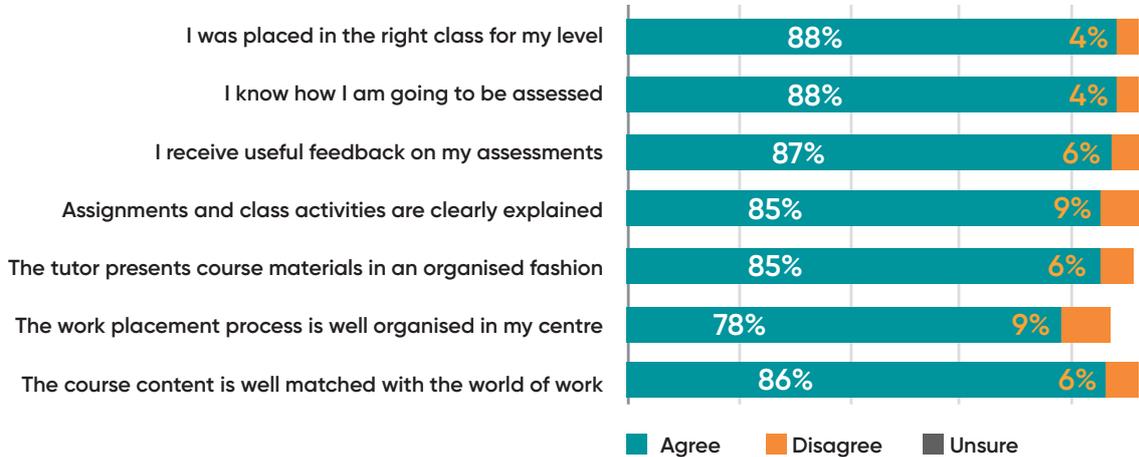
In terms of Apprenticeship provision, employers are approved to carry out on-the-job Apprenticeship training and assessments by the FET Senior Training Advisors. This process ensures that apprentice employers meet minimum requirements to train apprentices, and helps ensure the apprentice receives quality training while on the job. Similarly, in Traineeship training, work placement requires the learner to undertake a series of tasks, the standard of which is signed-off on by their work placement supervisor (i.e. employer – e.g. head chef on catering traineeship etc.). In many cases, these tasks must meet an industry standard such as Culinary, Aircraft and Industrial Maintenance and Craft Apprenticeship. In some cases, there is a requirement for the supervisor to undergo assessment training and/or coaching or mentoring training.

Learner information on assessments

At induction times, all FET learners receive general information about their centre, as well as course-specific information such as modules to be covered, the course calendar and timetable, centre attendance policies and procedures, assessment policies, procedures and deadlines, supports available to learners, SUSI grants, code of conduct, complaints procedure and other relevant information. These induction sessions are facilitated and managed by the local FET centre. Throughout the course, learners are kept informed of activities and assessment requirements through briefs distributed in class, course notice boards, and where available, through a VLE. Upon receiving notification of final results, learners are informed of their right to appeal their grade in accordance with the FET Division Appeals Policy.

OBJECTIVE 2: TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

Do you agree with the following statements?



B) ASSESSMENT OF LEARNERS

Strengths

- The feedback on the range of **new assessment procedures** introduced in 2019 was positive. They are seen as fair and equitable to all learners, as they apply across the FET Division.
- The communication processes between QASS staff, internal verifiers, external authenticators and learning practitioners have proven **effective in maintaining the quality and consistency of marking and assessment results.**
- **Feedback on the modified assessment arrangements during Covid-19 was also positive** and highlighted effectiveness of policies and procedures.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
I was informed about any alternative assessment arrangements in a timely manner.	60 27.40%	109 49.77%	40 18.26%	7 3.20%	3 1.37%	219 100%
I feel confident in my ability to complete the alternative assessments in place.	59 26.58%	113 50.90%	42 18.92%	7 3.15%	1 0.45%	222 100%

OBJECTIVE 2: TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

B) ASSESSMENT OF LEARNERS

- The Quality Assurance Support Service was commended for its **comprehensive support** of provision during this challenging time for all. It is too early to analyse fully the certification results, in order to conduct a comparative analysis of rates of unsuccessful/pass/merit/distinction grades to equivalent periods in other years. Learner appeals analysis of the 2020 certification periods (June and July) showed 48 of 10,523 grades being appealed, or 0.45%, all unsuccessful. This compares with 44 of 13,223 grades in June 2019 being appealed, or 0.33%, with 13 successful. This shows a comparable level of appeals, and a lower number of successful appeals, indicating a minimal impact on contingency arrangements on learner appeals.

Recommendations

- Future programmes of teaching and learning require a longer-term **procedural approach to online assessment, post-contingency**. This is currently in development, with a cross-functional working group established to develop guidelines, to address issues such as – information to learners, staff development, learner induction, learner supports, technological infrastructure, pre-assessment, academic integrity, access to learner evidence for IV/EA/Appeals, reasonable accommodations, secure storage, monitoring and evaluation, collaborations with third party providers, etc.

c) Supports for Learners

Consistent learner support is a key to 'Fostering Inclusion', one of the strategic priorities of the new SOLAS FET Strategy 2020-2024. FET learners are not a homogenous group, and learner diversity covers a range of dimensions including previous education, personal disposition, current circumstances and cultural heritage. Increasingly, FET staff members have found that new participants present with lower skills levels at entry. In particular, the lack of digital skills has emerged as a barrier to access for many potential learners. The FET Division offers

a range of learner supports, which reflects the diverse base of FET learners, in order to meet their needs at different stages of their learning journey.

Planning and monitoring of support services

The FET Division is constantly reviewing its range of supports, in order to respond to an increasing number of learners presenting with a wide range of needs that must be addressed in order for them to maximise their participation and fulfil their potential.

OBJECTIVE 2: TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

There is a range of long-standing supports available at local centre level (e.g. the Special Education Needs Initiative in Youthreach settings is based on a general allocation and mentoring model, and has proven effective in meeting learner needs). FET Colleges/Centres provide information to their learners at induction times on key aspects of their learning, including the range of supports available to them and how they can access same.

Many FET Colleges/Centres also have Learner Handbooks for their own campus (see example [here](#)) Learner Handbook Vocational & Employment Skills Limerick City (formerly BTEI).

In recent years, it has become clear that a more coherent and systematic approach to planning and managing supports is necessary in the FET Division. In 2018, the FET Division established an **Active Inclusion Support Service (AISS)** to promote activation in blackspot and deprivation areas. The AISS Action Plan identifies new ways of working and implementing a range of new partnership practices, interventions and supports, including pilot projects to target learners from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, lone parents, members of the Irish Traveller community, vulnerable migrants, learners progressing within FET programmes and people with disabilities.

In 2020, the AISS developed a centralised and co-ordinated approach to the provision of wrap-around support services across the FET Division. [A single registration process](#) for learners has

been established to ensure that, as far as is reasonably possible, all FET learners are provided with the supports they need during their learning to fully participate and benefit from their learning journey with the ETB. Approved by the FET Steering Group, this new process will provide a fair and consistent approach to planning and delivering individualised learner supports. It will also provide better governance, oversight and strategic analysis of the types of wrap-around support services provided by the FET Division.

A collaborative approach between the AISS, the FET Co-ordinators and FET Guidance staff has ensured the registration process is simple and supported, and referrals are managed centrally. A Learner Support brochure has been developed to explain the registration process, how to get more information and access the range of supports available in the FET Division. An learnersupport@lcebtb.ie email was also set up to facilitate communication and registration, and the online registration process is accessible through the FET website at learningandskills.ie/learner-supports.



OBJECTIVE 2: TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

Range of learner supports

There are key learner supports provided by the FET Division in the areas of core skills, facilitating access and engagement, health and wellbeing, learning supports, and equality and diversity. Some are long-established and some are new, but all FET Support Services work in synergy to support the learner journey.

■ **Core Skills Provision**

Literacy is fundamental to personal fulfilment, active citizenship, social cohesion and employability. Core Skills provision is primarily focussed on learning outcomes at NFQ Levels 1-3. There is an increasing number of adults seeking foundation literacy, numeracy and digital skills. Since these skills are essential to all areas of learning, it is necessary to ensure that appropriate interventions and supports are available to all FET learners.

The integration of Language, Literacy and Numeracy (LLN) into mainstream FET provision is the main focus of our FET Language, Literacy and Numeracy Framework (2017-2020). Integrated supports are provided by the FET Core Skills provision for learners in FET centres, including Apprenticeship settings.

In 2018, a cross-FET sub-group on LLN Initial Assessment was established to lead the work in this area, with a special focus on the implementation of the [ETBI / SOLAS Initial And Ongoing Assessment Of Adult Literacy And Numeracy At NFQ Levels 1-3 – Guidelines, Toolkit And Research Report \(2018\)](#). The FET Division piloted and evaluated the usability and feasibility of the rollout of

the guidelines. A report presented the findings of the internal evaluation to inform the FET Division's approach to the implementation of the guidelines. In addition, an [internal audit of all LLN initial assessments processes](#) and procedures across the FET full-time and part-time provision provided a baseline from which to plan for the introduction of LLN initial assessment into all FET provision, with an objective to enhance the consistency of initial assessment processes across the division.

■ **Information and Guidance**

Guidance is embedded in all FET provision, using flexible models of delivery congruent with the different types and needs of programmes (full-time, part-time, community-based outreach).

Information and guidance support is available at the pre-entry, induction, ongoing, pre-exit and post-exit stages, and supports are delivered through a number of mechanisms including one-to-one guidance, group guidance, drop-in and online information query services, Information Hub and self-access resources in Learning Hubs, Noticeboards in FET centres and in Communities, and using Social Media with a dedicated FET Information, Recruitment and Guidance Facebook Page. Services are free, impartial, confidential, and networked. In the learner consultation carried out, IRGSS was the support service most used by respondents, and received the highest satisfaction rate. While no group had a negative experience with guidance services, some learners recommended that the FET Division better promotes that guidance support services are available to all learners.

OBJECTIVE 2: TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

■ Supporting Learner Access and Engagement

- Collaboration with the **Department of Social Protection (DSP)**: An inter-agency framework was signed between the ETB and the DSP in 2016, as well as a protocol with the Local Employment Office (LEO). The Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board/DSP Action Group allows greater collaboration through quarterly strategic meetings. PLSS briefings with DSP Case Officers in Limerick and Clare have helped identify DSP priority cohorts, in particular the long-term unemployed (LTU), and the appropriate responses required by local FET programmes and services. While 67% of respondents to the 2020 survey were satisfied with information received on social welfare entitlements, confusion on DSP entitlements and potential impact on completing a course or progressing to HE remains a concern. Learners would like the FET Division to work with the DSP to provide information and clear communication on the relationship between courses and social welfare entitlements.
- **Transportation** is an issue for many of our learners. While we work with the local accessible transport providers in each county whenever possible, the timing and location of

programmes has required the FET Division to put solutions in place either using ETB minibuses or those hired to support learners' attendance on specific programmes. Both Raheen and Shannon Campuses provide transport to enable learners from remote rural areas to attend courses, the provision of specific courses during the day, evenings and weekends, to accommodate learners in employment and the provision of courses in specific locations to meet the needs of employers.

- **Listening to the Learner Voice** is also critical to adapt and improve our provision and support services. While there are currently no learner representatives on governance structures, the FET Division has supported the AONTAS Learners Voice/National Learner Forum initiative, by facilitating learners to attend the annual event, and facilitating the organisation of regional meetings of the AONTAS National Further Education and Training Learner Forum in 2019 and 2020 ([see reports here](#)). The most recent collaboration took place in May 2020 for the AONTAS National Covid-19 Learner Consultation. Over 300 Limerick and Clare FET learners took part in the consultation, accounting for 33.9% of all respondents nationally.

OBJECTIVE 2: TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

'ETB learners were so pro-active in contributing to the survey responses, and we are really grateful for your help with that recruitment. AONTAS'

■ Learner Health and Wellbeing

The FET Division is committed to respond appropriately to learners' emotional, behavioural, health and mental wellbeing needs. There are many ongoing initiatives at FET centre level that promote learners' health and wellbeing (e.g. Amber Flag initiative, etc.)

82% of FET learners surveyed agreed wellbeing was actively promoted in their centre.

Over the last few years, learning practitioners also observed an increasing number of FET learners presenting with psychological needs. As a result, in September 2020, the FET Division set up a fund, managed by the AISS, for the provision of confidential, one-to-one, solution-focused, **psychological counselling** sessions for learners attending FET provision in the ETB, including the capacity to provide online counselling.

■ Learning Supports

As digital skills become increasingly essential for learners to access learning and employment, a specific focus has been given to the development of those skills for FET learners. Indeed, the use of TEL encompasses the entirety of the learning journey including pre-entry engagement, induction, engagement on learning programme and progression. These new skills are transformative for learners because they change the way they go about their everyday lives.

While over 76% of learners who responded to our survey were

confident or very confident that they had enough digital skills to engage effectively in digital learning, a significant 24% were neutral or not confident in their level of skills¹². This places an impetus on the FET Division to continue to support the development of functional ICT skills to support learning.



OBJECTIVE 2: TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

o Learning Hubs

Many FET Colleges/Centres offer study supports (e.g. LCFE Online Study Skills Course for learners to dip in and out of throughout their studies). In addition, a **network of Learning Hubs** is being developed in FET campuses across the region. This collaborative initiative between TEL, AISS & ILLN support services combines the use of technology (Assistive Technology and Technology-Enhanced Learning) with one-to-one and group learner supports in areas such as Literacy, Numeracy, Digital Literacy, study support, etc. This network of self-access learning centres provides FET learners with access to resources, material, software and ICT facilities, which support their learning goals. Study periods are built into course timetables and learners can access Open-Access Learning facilities outside of normal contact times in many FET centres. A steering group, made up of management from Core Skills, TEL, AISS and Raheen Campus, steers the development and implementation of the Learning Hubs and the associated learner supports provided there.

61% of learner respondents to the QAR survey felt they had improved their computer/technology skills.

o Device Loan Scheme

Following the initial Covid-19 pandemic lockdown, and in the further application of blended learning approaches, consideration has been given to the devices and equipment available to learners. Appropriate technological resources and ICT skills support are essential to enable them to engage with their learning and communicate with their learning practitioner. All FET learners now have an ETB email address. In addition, following the funding provided by SOLAS and the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS), specifically targeted at disadvantaged learners to access ICT devices, a suite of documents was developed by the AISS and the TELSS to support a new process around device equity, which is managed by the AISS.

- ETB FET Device Equity Guidelines ([click Here](#)): to ensure equity in the implementation of the BYOD policy, to ensure all FET Learners have access to appropriate technological resources required for them to engage with particular provision and to provide a framework through which the FET Division can loan equipment to learners in a fair and consistent manner dependant on the requirements of their programme of study. This is accompanied by a FET BYOD Acceptable Usage Declaration for learners [Click Here](#), and a BYOD Device Loan Agreement to confirm acceptance of Loan Agreement terms.

¹² This should be compared to DESI statistics that indicate that 48% of Irish citizens don't possess basic digital skills.

OBJECTIVE 2: TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

- Device Equity Needs Assessment and Plan Template. Relevant staff have also been trained on a Needs Assessment process and the BYOD Equity Guidelines Process.
- Bring Your Own Device for Learners Guidelines [Click Here](#): to facilitate and promote learners bringing a personal mobile device to FET campuses for use in their education and training and/or using a computer/mobile device for remote learning.
- Learner FAQ September 2020 [Click Here](#).
- ICT Acceptable Usage Policy [Click Here](#).
- ETB Class Recording Guidelines. [Click Here](#)

■ **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Practices**

Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board has a strong inclusive and learner-centred ethos, and is committed to its public sector duty as specified in the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014. In 2020, the authority finalised its [Equality And Human Rights Values Statement And Action Plan](#) to allow our ETB to apply a values lens to embedding a coherent and consistent approach to promoting equality, preventing discrimination and protecting human rights, across all of our function areas and encompassing our roles as a service provider and employer.

Significant professional development investment was made to support those working with FET Learners, mainly in the area of pedagogy/ andragogy and working with learners who have diverse needs e.g. disability awareness, dyslexia training, integrated literacy, numeracy awareness, family learning, intercultural awareness, etc.

- **Learners with Disabilities:** FET learners are encouraged, upon application for admission, to disclose any special needs or disabilities they may have, in order that appropriate supports or reasonable accommodations may be put in place. Following the transfer of the disability fund to SOLAS, which is available to HEIs and PLCs, the AISS has piloted a model of supports for learners with disabilities, through a Learner Support Fund, available to non-PLC learners. Relevant staff have undergone Needs Assessment Training with AHEAD and follow-up mentored sessions with the Disability Officer from LIT. The TELSS also oversees the needs analysis and provision of assistive technologies through its centralised budget, in order to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of a learner with a disability.

OBJECTIVE 2: TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

- o The Equal Status Act 2000 (Section 4) also requires education and training establishments to provide **reasonable accommodation**¹³ to meet the needs of learners who have a disability (Government of Ireland, 2000). A new Reasonable Accommodation Procedure was implemented in September 2019, as part of a suite of eight FET Division Assessment Procedures, developed by a national working group. It outlines examples of relevant evidence/documentation necessary for application for reasonable accommodation in assessment, which include but are not limited to: Medical Report; Wide Range Achievement Test, fifth edition (WRAT5); Educational Psychologist Report; Occupational Therapist Report; Guidance Counsellor Report. All our FET Colleges/Centres have been offered WRAT 5 training and WRAT 5 packs have been purchased and are available through the Active Inclusion Support Service to support learners who are applying for Reasonable Accommodation but do not have access to the relevant evidence/documentation necessary to support their application.
- o A key focus of the AISS is to promote the concept of **Universal Design for Learning (UDL)** to increase access to equal learning opportunities within the mainstream teaching environment, including but not only, for learners with disabilities. The FET Division ran the National Teaching and Learning Forum's digital badging on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as a joint initiative between key FET support services, i.e. TELSS, PDSS.

¹³ In the context of assessment, reasonable accommodation is the term for the adaptation of assessment as necessary to cater for the needs of learners whose personal situation means that the assessment would otherwise be unfair, e.g. learners with a disability, and/or other learners covered by equality legislation. Reasonable accommodation in assessment will only be accommodated when a learner can demonstrate with appropriate evidence/documentation that, because of a specific need, s/he cannot compete on equal terms, under standard assessment conditions, with his/her peers.

OBJECTIVE 2: TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

C) SUPPORTS FOR LEARNERS

Strengths

- The FET Division has **long-standing and well-established models of good practice around learner supports** (e.g. SENI, Guidance supports, Core skills supports, self-access hubs, advocacy services, etc.)
- The FET Division has strategically prioritised the learner experience through **additional resources for support structures and significant investments.**
- The consultation process has highlighted a **high level of learner awareness of the FET supports** available by respondents (Figure 1). It also showed a high satisfaction level with the supports provided, when used by learners (Figure 2).

In your centre, are you aware you can access the following supports if you need them?

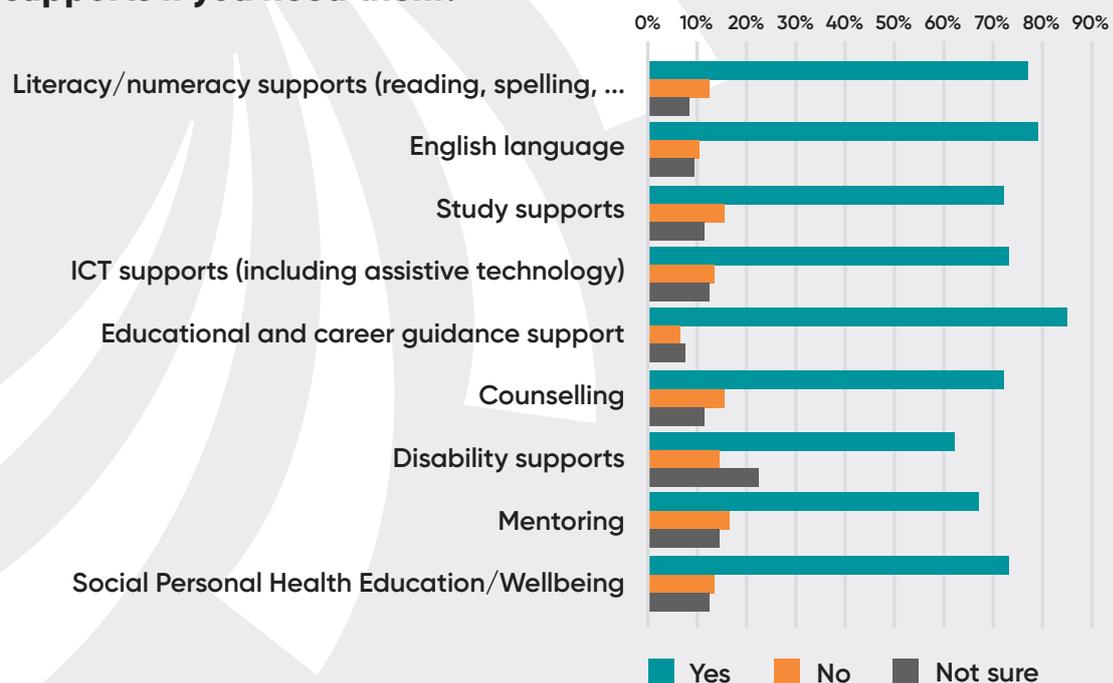
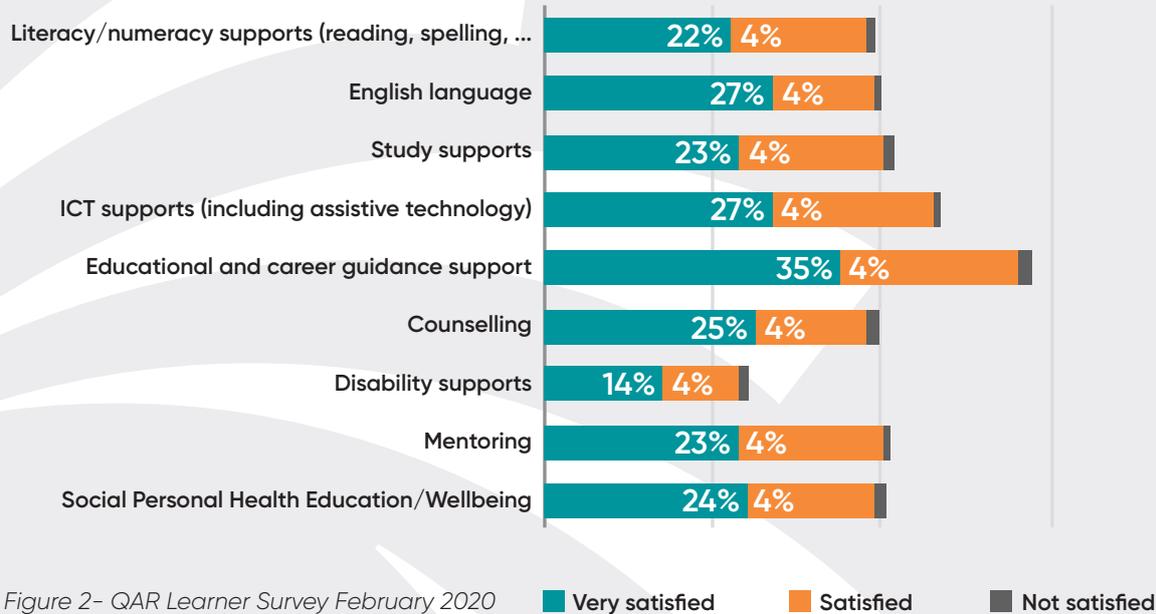


Figure 1 - QAR Learner Survey -February 2020

OBJECTIVE 2: TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

C) SUPPORTS FOR LEARNERS

Satisfaction with support services, when used



- Throughout the various learner consultations, learning practitioners are praised as the main source of support for learners, who highly value their professionalism and dedication. Indeed, the QAR Task Group identified the **quality of supports provided and the relationships with learners and partners as a unique selling point** for the FET Division.

'The tutor is the reason for my success on this course'

Recommendations

- The FET Division must continue to raise awareness and **promote the range of supports available** to learners. Particular attention should be given to the promotion of information and guidance supports.
- The **SENI model has proven effective in Youthreach provision**, as a model of excellence.
- At the time of writing this report, a single registration process for learner supports, and a range of new supports have just been introduced. It is too early to assess the effectiveness of the procedures. However, it will be important to **monitor all support functions** as part of the QA improvement plans.



Objective 3: Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review





OBJECTIVE 3: SELF-EVALUATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

a) Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

Processes for QA planning, monitoring and reporting

In 2018, the ETB completed an executive self-evaluation, as part of the re-engagement process with QQI, identifying key areas for development and improvement. The ETB monitors and reviews its quality assurance arrangements on an ongoing basis, through [annual Quality Improvement Plans](#) with listed priorities for policy and procedure development, submitted for approval to QQI and discussed at annual dialogue meetings. The 2019 QIP identified 39 individual actions across each of the 11 Quality Areas listed in the Core Statutory QA Guidelines. An annual self-evaluation report is also prepared by the QASS for QQI. Furthermore, the QA governance structures have responsibility for oversight and monitoring of Quality Assurance in areas of responsibility – Policies and Procedures, Programme Responsibilities, Monitoring and Review responsibilities, Assessment responsibilities, Apprenticeship responsibilities. Emerging policies and procedures (assessment forms, procedures etc.) are evaluated as part of an annual review post-implementation. Online staff feedback forms are used to allow for collation of individual feedback on new procedures.

At local level, [FET Centre Quality Improvement Plans](#) are prepared following meetings between FET Co-ordinators and QASS Support Officers. The purpose of these meetings is to review certification period,

internal verification reports, external authentication reports, results approval panel meeting minutes, and appeals examiner feedback. Discussions also take place re. planning for the next authentication period, changes to programmes or modules delivered, curriculum review input requests via Module Revision form; QA Professional Development requirements of the centre, etc. Feedback on policies and procedures is also used to review accordingly.

In terms of data analysis, the QASS provides:

- A summary of certification and outcomes to the Quality Council (governance oversight) including data analysis of grade consistency – trends, centre to centre consistency (see table on the next page)
- A standard template for the collation and feedback of comments arising from IV and EA processes to tutors on completion of EA processes.

OBJECTIVE 3: SELF-EVALUATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

Topic (in order of frequency)	Examples of feedback from External Authentication
Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of verbal feedback taking place should be provided. • Written feedback should be provided which can then be revisited at next feedback opportunity to see if advice was taken and to note progress. • More evidence should be provided of constructive feedback i.e. what can be done to achieve criteria.
Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration can give learners greater opportunities to consolidate their learning and can help to reinforce the learning process. • Integration of multiple assessments and modules is possible with clear planning and mapping of the assessment evidence.
Borderline marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher/Tutor is best placed to make the decision on the appropriate grade for the learner. Marks near borderline between grades will be reviewed by External Authenticator and may be adjusted.

Overview of June 2019 Certification Statistics

Number of Centres presenting for Certification	24
Total Number of Portfolios	13,223
External Authentication Process	
Number of External Authentication Locations	11
Number of External Authenticators	27
Total Number of External Authenticator Days	84
Total Cost of External Authentication Process	€35,147
Grade Change Summary	
Number of Grade Changes	59
Percentage Grade Changes	0.45%
Appeals Summary	
Number of Appeals	44
Number of Successful Appeals	13

Internal monitoring and self-evaluation

A FET Monitoring and Evaluation Framework is in place since 2016, highlighting agreed key outcomes and measurable performance indicators. It uses a range of participatory tools and methodologies from management to centre level to help us measure and monitor progress towards our strategic priorities.

Following the planning cycle, the table below shows the range of tools used for planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting purposes. These internal and external processes all contribute to review progress around the implementation of our mission and objectives, in line with national objectives.

OBJECTIVE 3: SELF-EVALUATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

PLANNING PROCESSES		
	Purpose	Lead
ETB Strategy Statement 2017-21	ETB corporate-level strategy.	Chief Executive
ETB FET Strategic Framework 2015-2020	Multi-annual division-wide planning document.	Director of FET
ETB FET Thematic Action Plans / Frameworks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FET Integrated Guidance Strategic Framework (2016-2020) • FET TEL Action Plan (2017-2020) • FET Enterprise Engagement Framework (2017-20) • FET Professional Development Action Plan (2019-21) • FET Active Inclusion Support Service Framework & Action Plan 	To articulate support service actions, in line with the FET Strategic Framework and national policies.	Chairs of Implementation Groups
ETB/SOLAS SPA 2018-2020	3-Year Strategic Performance Agreement with targets agreed with SOLAS.	Director of FET
Annual ETB FET Service Plan	To present a rationale and projected outputs for the annual funding allocation request to SOLAS.	Director of FET, FET Steering Group
Detailed Implementation Plan	Annual planning tool for the FET Steering Group focused on implementation of high-level local strategies linked to national goals (SOLAS Implementation Plan).	Research & Evaluation Officer
Regional Planning Network (<i>Clare, Limerick City, Limerick County</i>)	To review local and regional FET provision to avoid duplication, identify gaps and emerging trends.	Director of FET, FET Co-ordinators
<i>Quality Improvement Plan</i>	ETBs to report on their QIP activity is part of QQI's routine monitoring function.	FET Quality Council
MONITORING PROCESSES		
FET Expected Outcomes and Indicators	Document highlighting agreed outcomes re. 4 key priority areas in FET Framework, and corresponding indicators to monitor progress and facilitate analysis.	Research & Evaluation Officer

OBJECTIVE 3: SELF-EVALUATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

FET Part-time and Full-time Provision Meetings	Cross-division part-time and full-time provision meetings take place every 6 weeks between FET Co-ordinators and the FET Manager in charge of FET provision. This allows information flow and a feedback loop on strategic and operational issues.	FET Manager, FET Co-ordinators
FET Risk Register	This document is prepared by the FET Steering Group to signpost the strategic, operational, financial, compliance and reputational risks to the achievement of the FET Strategic Framework 2015-2020 and identifies key management controls.	Director of FET
Quality Council sub-group (Quality Assurance and Programme Governance)	Quality Council sub-groups have delegated responsibilities for monitoring, Quality Assurance, Programmes, Assessment, Apprenticeships, Monitoring and Evaluation.	FET Quality Council
REVIEW/EVALUATION PROCESSES		
FET Colleges/Centres have embedded self-evaluation mechanisms at local level to inform their course planning and delivery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To review course provision at centre level to inform course planning and delivery To review overall objectives/strengths and challenges of FET provision strands National programme evaluations (ETB contributions through consultations). 	QASS Programmes Individual Centres, Development Team, SOLAS
FET Strategic Plan Mid-Term Review (June 2018)	Internal self-evaluation process to review progress on implementation of strategy.	Research & Evaluation Officer, Operations Manager
Framework for 'Capturing the Wider Benefits of Learning' (CWBL)	A FET Framework for 'Capturing the Wider Benefits of Learning' (CWBL) was developed in 2010, as a self-assessment tool for learners to assess their before and after level of skill development on a course and also any wider benefits. In 2019, a digital version of this tool was produced and is embedded in the learningandskills.ie website.	
ETB Self-Evaluation Report on the Effectiveness of the Covid-19 Modifications to Teaching, Learning and Assessment (June 2020)	This document provides an analysis of qualitative feedback from learners and learning practitioners on the effectiveness of modified QA arrangements during the Covid-19 pandemic.	Research & Evaluation Officer, AISS, QASS
Programme Board, National Hairdressing Apprenticeship	Review and Evaluation reporting from the National Hairdressing Apprenticeship, determining the effectiveness of Limerick and Clare as co-ordinating provider, and all 15 ETBs as collaborating providers.	FET Quality Council

OBJECTIVE 3: SELF-EVALUATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

REPORTING MECHANISMS		
Monthly Activity Report to CE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To keep CE and the Board informed of FET progress at programmes/support services level To provide data for compiled FET Annual Report 	Provision Co-ordinators, Development Team
FET Steering Group member activity report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To share key developments in strategic areas with the FET Steering Group and facilitate discussions and decision-making. 	Director of FET
FARR/PLSS Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide updates to SOLAS/Management on actual outputs against original request FARR/PLSS review meetings to review planned outcomes in line with targets agreed in our SPA with SOLAS FET Operational Planning and Reporting Calendar. 	FET Co-ordinators, Operations Manager
FET Annual Reports	Annual report template is completed by provision managers, and all data is collated into a compiled FET annual report for publication.	Research & Evaluation Officer

These planning, monitoring and self-evaluation processes all use integrated and evidence-based approaches. Feedback from key stakeholders is consistently sought out to inform all strategic decisions, and processes are multi-layered, involving roles and responsibilities at local FET Colleges/Centres and FET Division levels. Review reports, external authenticator reports, learner feedback reports, minutes of meetings, etc. are all available on StaffCONNECT and/or the FET Division website. Feedback from these processes is provided by the FET Planning and Evaluation Officer and the QA Officer who sit on the FET Steering Group. Strategic analysis by the FET Steering Group informs decision-making and action planning.

Externality is provided through:

- QQI Review of Annual QIP
- SOLAS Review Meetings to discuss

progress on implementation of SPA

- QQI Inaugural Review of Quality Assurance: This self-evaluation process is an important milestone for Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board and has given us momentum to enhance our engagement efforts. The findings from this QA SER, together with the new SOLAS FET Strategy 2020-2024 will all feed into the preparation of:
 - A new FET Division Strategic Framework 2021-2024 (and corresponding reviews of all FET Division frameworks and action plans);
 - A new Strategic Performance Agreement with SOLAS;
 - A Quality Improvement Action Plan based on the SER findings and recommendations from the QQI Review Team.

OBJECTIVE 3: SELF-EVALUATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

A) SELF-EVALUATION, MONITORING & REVIEW

Strengths

- The FET Division's **approach to monitoring and evaluation is multi-layered** in its development and implementation. It provides multiple opportunities for learners and learning practitioners to reflect and provide feedback, based on a continuous improvement approach.

The staff survey showed that 100% of FET Co-ordinators or a representative from the provision area regularly contributes to consultation processes in the FET Division. 78% of FET Managers/Support Service staff have opportunities to make effective contributions to strategy/policy/procedures relevant to their area of work. In terms of input into decision-making, 71% of staff surveyed agree they have opportunities to give feedback or make suggestions for improvements in their place of work.

- A particular focus on monitoring activities allows the FET Division to meet key deadlines and ensure **compliance to good governance** requirements.
- The **M&E functions are recognised and resourced** in the FET Division: The M&E activities for QA processes and programme review are developed and managed by the QASS. Cross-organisational and strategic M&E processes are developed and managed by the Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer. Many FET Colleges/Centres and support services also carry out local self-evaluation activities to inform planning and development of their provision/services.
- Throughout these processes, quality is constantly promoted and recognised as one of the core values of all FET Division strategy and planning documents. The setting up and resourcing of a QA Support Service also shows the organisational commitment to quality. A 2018 staff survey (see infographics) showed this has impacted positively on the development of a **culture of quality across the FET Division**.



OBJECTIVE 3: SELF-EVALUATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

A) SELF-EVALUATION, MONITORING & REVIEW

Recommendations

- A **quality Control Monitoring Process** is required to ensure consistency and compliance in the implementation of QA policies and procedures.
- A **FET Monitoring and Evaluation Policy** should be developed to promote a consistent approach to monitoring and evaluation activities across the FET Division, including the streamlining of existing effective processes..
 - The policy will clarify the feedback loop from consultations, by providing a single, integrated masterplan of all FET monitoring and evaluation activities, and highlighting key roles and involvements of all stakeholders. This would review the coherency of reporting mechanisms to avoid duplication of efforts.
 - It would build in self-evaluation mechanisms and benchmark quality standards for non-accredited provision and for FET support services.
 - It will also promote a consistent approach to stakeholder consultation. In particular, there will be collaboration with SOLAS/AONTAS on an annual survey of FET learners to capture views on their experience within the FET Division. Attention should also be paid in engaging/consulting hard to reach potential learners to promote access and support retention.

b) Programme Monitoring and Review

A Programme Module Revision Form and development review process for staff are in place to identify issues and concerns with individual curriculum or assessment as detailed in the module descriptors.

The availability of this feedback mechanism is communicated to all staff (specifically in QA newsletter). The QASS monitors review requests, and manages these changes based on the scale of the review required, engaging external subject matter experts, bringing together internal communities of practice etc.

OBJECTIVE 3: SELF-EVALUATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

7. MODULE UPDATES FOR SEPTEMBER 2019 MODULE DESCRIPTORS UPDATED

Module Name	Module Code	Updates
Module Name	Module Code	Updates
Breads, Pastry and Desserts Co. Clare	3N0522	Code corrected in module descriptor
Business Administration	5M2428	Table layout corrected
Digital Media Technology Co. Limerick	4N1858	Error corrected in Learner marking sheet for Skills Demonstration
Digital Presentation	5N0563	Code corrected in module descriptor
Horticultural Science Co. Clare	4N0682	Error corrected on page 12 of module descriptor
Irish Tour Guiding	6N20229	Percentage weighting for simulated tour corrected
Medical Terminology	5N2428	Page break removed on page 2 of module descriptor
Payroll Manual & Computerised	5N1546/6N4005	Module descriptors updated based on National Workgroup feedback
Reception Skills	4N1867	Co. Limerick (national) descriptor to be used going forward
School Age Childcare	5N1781	"Practitioner" changed to "Programme" on page 15 of module descriptor

The module updates are published to coincide with the beginning of the academic calendar, and detailed via the QA newsletter. Published programme updates are available for staff to see, following QA review of the update request. A history of programme updates can be tracked via the QASS database.

The outputs of programme monitoring and review are considered on a strategic basis by the ETB's governance structures. The Quality Council sub-group (Programme Governance) has responsibility for managing development, reviewing, and recommending to the Quality Council any developments or modifications to validated programmes for approval. All programme development, revisions, reviews and updates are fully governed by ETB QA governance structures, with inherent separation of responsibilities from the development and approval processes.

The ETB has also participated through national consultation processes to reviews and evaluations of national programmes (VTOS, Youthreach, PLC review, etc.). National Evaluation Reports and their impact on local provision are discussed on an ongoing basis at FET Steering Group level, as well as at the QA governance structures level.

OBJECTIVE 3: SELF-EVALUATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

B) PROGRAMME MONITORING & REVIEW

Strengths

- There is a strong **history of curriculum review/update** in this ETB.
- The Curriculum and Assessment relevant to training setting is now locally managed by the ETB, and versions controlled by the QASS. The process for FET Colleges/Centres to request updates to curriculum and assessment in the form of the Assessment Instrument Specifications (AISs) will be available via the **AIS Revision Form process managed by the Quality Assurance Support Service**.

Recommendations

- There is a need to **develop a curriculum review schedule** by subject area to support programme reviews.
- A **collaborative approach with other ETBs** should be prioritised to enhance the effectiveness and value for money of programme review processes.

OBJECTIVE 3: SELF-EVALUATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

c) Oversight, Monitoring and Review of Relationships with External/Third Parties.

The ETB ensures an integrated system of quality assurance in relation to its collaborative activities.

Limerick Community Education Network (LCEN)

LCEN member organisations have had their own individual Quality Assurance, for a number of years, with a representative of Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board on their QQI sub-group to maintain a link between the groups. The LCEN QQI sub-group has also worked with part-time provision in the FET Centre, O'Connell Avenue Campus in the provision of Level 3-6 QQI programmes in community settings and for the recruitment of learners. Recognising our

common history as providers of Further Education and Training in Limerick City, the ETB and 7 members of the LCEN¹⁴ signed a Memorandum of Agreement in 2020. These centres relinquished their existing provider status with QQI to come under the Quality Assurance remit of Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board. This changeover was approved by the FET Division Quality Council and QQI to come into effect from 1st September 2020.



¹⁴ Adapt Services, Moyross Adult Education Group, Our Lady of Lourdes Community Services Group, Northside Family Resource Centre, Southill Family Resource Centre, St Mary's Community Adult Education Group, and Limerick City CDP.

OBJECTIVE 3: SELF-EVALUATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

Walter Balfe, QQI Head of Quality Assurance (QQI Awards), wrote in the confirmation letter that the '*QQI Programme and Awards Executive Committee (PAEC) acknowledges the co-operation demonstrated by the centres and the Education and Training Board, and commended all involved for their commitment to quality-assured training for the learners served by the community centres*'.

The [consultation](#) carried out for this QA Review highlighted the effectiveness of ETB QA arrangements with Limerick Community Education Network partners. It found that QA arrangements, under the new MoU, have made it possible for community groups to continue to provide QQI certification, ensuring more access to accredited options for community-based learners. The QQI re-engagement process had become unsustainable (in terms of workload and resources/costs) for community groups, and there was a risk QQI certification would not be available to learners in communities. There is now **more clarity for community partners on the ETB's approach to quality**, and LCEN representatives sit on FET QA Governance sub-groups. A series of recommendations emerged from the consultation report to enhance the effectiveness of this collaboration, which will be acted upon.

Secondary Providers

In Training settings and in the case of Contracted Training, where a second provider delivers the provision of specific courses, the contractors undergo an OGP competition, whereby their experience in delivery is a key criterion. The performance of each course is assessed from a placement, certification and learner feedback perspective.

A business-planning model and monitoring process is in place for engagement with Community Training Centres and Specialist Training Providers. Business plans are submitted by each second provider and reviewed by the Community Development team. For CTCs and STPs, business planning and review meetings take place every 6 months and monitoring visits by Community Training Officers take place on a regular basis to discuss issues and where secondary providers can input into decision-making. Minutes are kept of these meetings.

The ETB is a Crafts Apprenticeship provider and as such is under SOLAS oversight and monitoring procedures.

OBJECTIVE 3: SELF-EVALUATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

SOLAS engages with the FET Centres in Raheen and Shannon campuses for monitoring and evaluation visits to ensure the Craft Apprenticeship operates to the highest standard.

C) OVERSIGHT, MONITORING & REVIEW OF RELATIONSHIPS

Strengths

- **MoUs are in place** to outline QA arrangements with our external partners.
- There is a **national agreement to collaborate with second providers** for CTCs and LTIs. SLAs have been drafted, which include built-in business planning and monitoring processes.

Recommendations

- **The monitoring of all SLAs** (including the FET Division's SLAs and MoUs) should be centralised at ETB level.
- **There is a need to review and formalise SLAs processes as part of our business process.** This would include expanding the SLA model to community partners.

CONCLUSION





This self-evaluation process has provided a timely opportunity for the ETB to review its FET Division arrangements for the governance and management of Quality Assurance. These processes have been put to the test during the Covid-19 pandemic, and have proven both robust and effective in facilitating an agile response, while maintaining the quality of standards for FET learners during the crisis.

The QA Review Task Group has identified key strengths in this ETB, supported by ample evidence of excellent teaching and learning and a number of unique models in the FET sector. Indeed, consultations have highlighted FET learners' high satisfaction levels with their experience, and a quality culture in the FET Division.

The self-evaluation process has also identified key areas of improvement for the FET Division, which will be critical to consider as we embark on a new strategic planning process 2021-2024. Key priority areas have already emerged such as building the capability of the FET Division through continued investment in staff development, 'FET Colleges of the Future', building the digital skills of staff and learners, enhancing learner supports, facilitating pathways, etc. It is also about building our capacity to develop a curriculum that meets the demands of learners, communities and enterprise, as well as responding to potential societal and economic shocks in the future.

Finally, we would like to sincerely thank all learners, learning practitioners, FET Co-ordinators and Managers for their invaluable inputs into this self-evaluation process. We look forward to meeting the QQI Review Team to continue our discussions.



APPENDICES





Appendix 1 – Glossary and Abbreviations

AISS	Active Inclusion Support Service
AONTAS	The National Adult Learning Organisation
BTEI	Back to Education Initiative
CAO	Central Applications Office
CSO	Central Statistics Office
CTC	Community Training Centre
DCYA	Department of Children and Youth Affairs
DSP	Department of Social Protection
DES	Department of Education
DPIA	Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)
EA	External Authentication /External Authenticator
EESS	Enterprise Engagement Support Service
EGFSN	Expert Group on Future Skills Needs
ESF	European Social Fund
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
ETB	Education and Training Board
ETBI	Education and Training Boards Ireland
FARR	Funding Allocation Request and Reporting
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FET	Further Education and Training
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
H&S	Health and Safety
HE	Higher Education
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IoT	Institute of Technology
IRGSS	Information, Recruitment and Guidance Support Service
IV	Internal Verification
LCDC	Local Community Development Committee
LCETB	Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board
LDC	Local Development Company
LECP	Local Economic and Community Plan
LEO	Local Enterprise Office
LES	Local Employment Service
MOODLE	A free and open-source online learning management system (LMS) that supports learning and training needs for a range of educational institutions and organisations worldwide

APPENDIX 1 – GLOSSARY AND ABBREVIATIONS

MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MWRSF	Mid-West Regional Skills Forum
NALA	National Adult Literacy Agency
NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
NFQ	National Framework of Qualifications
NHA	National Hairdressing Apprenticeship
OETC	Outdoor Education and Training Centre
OGP	Office for Government Procurement
OSD	Organisation Support and Development
PD	Professional Development
PDSS	Professional Development Support Service
PLC	Post-Leaving Certificate
PLSS	Programme Learner Support System
QA	Quality Assurance
QAR	Quality Assurance Review
QASS	Quality Assurance Support Service
QBS	Quality Business System (QQI)
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SER	Self-Evaluation Report
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SLMRU	Skills and Labour Market Research Unit
SOLAS	The National Further Education and Training Authority – An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh Agus Scileanna
SPA	Strategic Performance Agreement
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths
TEL	Technology-Enhanced Learning
TELSS	Technology-Enhanced Learning Support Service
TNA	Training Needs Assessment
TSO	Training Standards Officer
UDL	Universal Design for Learning
VEC	Vocational Educational Committee
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment – used to deliver content, support learners and manage assessments
VTOS	Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme



FET Quality Assurance Review Task Group-Terms of Reference

Policy Area	Quality Assurance
Version	1.0
Date	Created: January 2020 Revised: September 2020
Monitored	N/A
Responsibility	FET Division
Approval	

APPENDIX 2 – QA TASK-GROUP TOR AND MEMBERSHIP

Quality Assurance Review Task Group – Terms of Reference

1.0 Title

The name of the Team shall be the 'Quality Assurance Review (QAR) Task Group'.

2.0 Background

QQI established *Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines* for all providers in April 2016, and *Sector-Specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Education and Training Boards (ETBs)* in May 2017. These guidelines collectively address the quality assurance responsibilities of ETBs as the significant public providers of further education and training. The scope of the guidelines incorporates all education, training and related services of an ETB, leading to QQI awards, other awards recognised in the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), or awards of other awarding, regulatory or statutory bodies.

Self-evaluation and review of quality are fundamental elements of a provider's quality assurance system and the ETBs' external quality assurance obligations include a statutory review of quality assurance by QQI.

As the ETBs were all established at the same time and this will be the first review of its kind within the sector, the inaugural review is being undertaken as an omnibus review whereby all sixteen ETBs will be reviewed within a relatively short timeframe. Each ETB will be reviewed as a standalone corporate entity and an individual review report will be produced in respect of each ETB. The full context and methodology for the reviews are outlined in the *Review Terms of Reference and Review Handbook* (see attached).

This review is pitched at an institution-wide level, and is about the preparation and publication by ETBs of individual, inclusive, whole-of-organisation self-evaluations of how effectively they assure the quality of teaching, learning and service activities, particularly focusing on:

1. Governance and management of quality
2. Teaching, Learning and Assessment
3. Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

Quality Assurance Review Task Group – Terms of Reference

3.0 Purpose of the QA Review Task Group:

The work of the QA Review Task Group will be to:

- 1) Steer the design and implementation of a FET Division-wide self-evaluation process.
- 2) Oversee the production of the ETB FET Division Inaugural Self-Evaluation Report (ISER)
- 3) Facilitate QQI Planning and Main Review Visits.
- 4) Consider the QQI Review Team report and contribute to a formal response from the ETB.

4.0 Membership

The Team shall consist of twenty (21) members as follows:

- Director of FET
- Director of Organisation Support & Development
- Research, Planning and Evaluation Officer (QA Review Co-ordinator)
- FET Manager, Innovation, Development & Quality
- Quality Assurance Resource Worker
- FET Manager, Operations
- FET Manager, Active Inclusion Support Service
- FET Manager, FET Provision
- FET Manager, Employer Engagement
- Guidance Service Representative
- Professional Development Officer
- Technology Enhanced Learning Officer
- FET Manager, FET Training Provision
- Five FET Provision Co-ordinators: three Full-time - PLC (one); VTOS (one); Youthreach (one); two Part-time - Core Skills (one); Vocational Skills (one)
- Representative Administration staff
- FET Manager, Youth Work
- Communications and External Relations Specialist

The Task Group may invite persons with relevant expertise to attend meetings to provide advice and assistance.

A quorum of five (5) members must be present before a meeting can proceed.

APPENDIX 2 – QA TASK-GROUP TOR AND MEMBERSHIP

Quality Assurance Review Task Group – Terms of Reference

5.0 Chairperson

The Chairperson of the Task Group will be the FET Research, Planning and Evaluation Officer, who will act as the Inaugural Review Co-ordinator for the duration of this process. As a full member of the Task Group, she will provide expertise, and ensure work is conducted in a professional manner and in compliance with the QQI Policy.

The role of the QA Review Co-ordinator is to:

- Be the main liaison point between the institution, the QQI and the Review Task Group throughout the review process
- Liaise with the QQI to submit the self-evaluation report
- Liaise with the Co-ordinating Reviewer on the schedule, and make the local logistical arrangements (including catering, hospitality, transport and accommodation arrangements) for the Planning and Main Review Visits
- Provide the primary contact throughout the Planning and Main Review Visit
- Provide any additional supporting materials required for the Review Team to supplement the report
- Meet/attend meetings with the Chairperson and Co-ordinating Reviewer throughout the Main Review Visit
- Within two weeks following receipt of the Review Report, forward comments to QQI from the institution on the factual accuracy of the Review Report
- Provide (if necessary) an institutional response for publication as an annex to the Review Report.

6.0 Timeframe

- The Task Group shall produce a final Self-Evaluation Report for QQI by 18th December 2020
- The Task Group will facilitate the QQI Planning Visit on the 10th February 2020
- The Task Group will facilitate the QQI Main Review Visit to be taking place from 12-16th April 2020
- The Draft Review Report from the QQI Review Team will be produced by 3rd September 2021
- A formal response from the ETB will be produced by 1st October 2021.

APPENDIX 2 – QA TASK-GROUP TOR AND MEMBERSHIP

Quality Assurance Review Task Group – Terms of Reference

Membership of the QA Review Task Group	
Director of FET	Paul Patton
Director of Organisation Support & Development	Shelagh Graham
QA Review Co-ordinator, Research, Planning and Evaluation Officer	Maud Baritaud
FET Manager, Innovation, Development & Quality	Alan Hogan
Quality Assurance Resource Worker	Máire Lynch
FET Manager, Operations	Raymond O’Brien
FET Manager, Active Inclusion Support Service	Aobhán Haverty
FET Manager, FET Provision	Triona Lynch
FET Manager, Employer Engagement	Eimear Brophy
Guidance Service Representative	Emma Maher
Professional Development Officer	Tara Robinson
Technology-Enhanced Learning Officer	Brendan Ryan
FET Manager, FET Training Provision	James Maher
Five FET Provision Co-ordinators: three Full-time - PLC (one); VTOS (one); Youthreach (One); two Part-time – Core Skills (one); Vocational Skills (one)	Francis Benson (VTOS) Patrick Maunsell (LCFE) Máire Kerrane (VES) Seán O’Carroll (Core Skills) Lorraine O’Leary (Youthreach)
Representative Administration Staff	Áine Sheerin
FET Manager, Youth Work	Martin Cournane
Communications and External Relations Specialist	Patrick Hogan

APPENDIX 3 – ETB QAR COMMUNICATION PROCESS

DATE	METHOD	LEAD	Evidence
13/01/2020	Presentation to FET QA Council Meeting	Maud Baritaud	Minutes of meeting – PowerPoint presentation
14/01/2020	Presentation to FET Steering Group Meeting	Maud Baritaud	Minutes of meeting – PowerPoint presentation
20/01/2020	QAR Task Group Inaugural Meeting	Maud Baritaud	Minutes of Meeting Presentation and associated documentation
January 2020	Inform all FET Staff/Learners about significance of QAR and need for involvement in forthcoming consultations and opportunities to participate in QAR	Maud Baritaud /Patrick Hogan/ QASS/TELSS	Director of FET email (29.01.20) QA newsletter (02/20) Poster for staff (01/20) Poster for learners (02/20) Social Media/Website/Signagelive
27/01/2020	Presentation of process to SMT members to highlight their role		
28&29/01/2020	Presentation of process at PT and FT Provision meetings	Triona Lynch/Maud Baritaud	
29/01/20	Presentation of process at Integrated Guidance meetings	Eimear Brophy/Maud Baritaud	

PHASE 1 – BENCHMARKING

1. **Desk Review Template** designed by QAR Co-ordinator, in line with QQI Inaugural review of QA Handbook.
2. Steering Group Members to fill in all relevant sections with FET-wide procedures by 7th February 2020 (2 weeks).
3. Draft Review of FET procedures document, pre-populated by Steering Group members with FET-wide procedures, to be circulated to all FET Co-ordinators to add relevant centre-specific procedures to the document,
Highlight local best practices for case studies.
To be completed by all FET Co-ordinators by 21st February 2020 (2 weeks).
4. **REGIONAL PROVIDER PROFILE**: Each Centre Co-ordinator adds data re. learner/tutor ratio and details re. staff types to Profile document, pre-populated by QA Review Co-ordinator, QASS and Operations Manager (to be completed by March 2020)

APPENDIX 4 – ETB QAR CONSULTATION APPROACH

PHASE 2 - STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS	
<p>STAFF</p> <p><i>(Multi-tiered survey to direct questions at admin & ancillary staff, guidance, teaching staff, development staff, management - sort feedback by centre)</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anonymous Survey Monkey questionnaire designed and administered by a sub-group of the QA Review Task Group. (Feb/Mar 2020) – Staff Consultation Report (Apr 2020). 2. FET Co-ordinators to use a FET Provision Staff meeting to reflect on centre’s QIP Report provided by QASS and staff survey (Mid-Mar 2020) - encourage self-analysis at centre level. 3. COVID-19 Response on Teaching, Learning & Assessment – Staff Survey (June 2020) - See Full Report here.
<p>LEARNERS</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anonymous survey monkey questionnaire designed and administered by QA REVIEW Team re. Learner experience and Learner supports (Mid-Feb 2020) 2. Use 2019 AONTAS Learner voice Report (Full-time learners) 3. Conduct a 2020 AONTAS LEARNER FORUM for Part-time learners (27th Feb 2020) and use report. A Learner Consultations Report provided a combined analysis of findings from these 3 consultation processes. 4. COVID-19 Response on Teaching, Learning & Assessment – Learner Survey (Jun 2020) - See Full Report here.
<p>EMPLOYERS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer Survey questionnaire (Jul 2020) • Interview with Chairperson of MWSF (Sept 2020)
<p>COMMUNITY PARTNERS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus Group with LCEN (Mar 2020) • QASS to bring trends identified through QIPs to Task Group discussions.
<p>QASS</p>	<p>Staff Meeting to reflect on findings from overall analysis of QIPs and highlights FET-wide priorities for improvements around Operational QA arrangements (Sept 2020)</p>
<p>QAR Task Group Meetings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWOT analysis Session (Mar 2020) • Self-Evaluation Session (14 & 15th Oct 2020)

APPENDIX 5 – LIST OF QQI-REGISTERED CENTRES

Centre Number	FET Centre Name
409800	FET Centre, Kilmallock Town Campus (Part-time provision)
40927K	FET Centre, O’Connell Avenue Campus (Core Skills)
42511M	FET Centre, Abbeyfeale Campus (Part-time provision)
42352S	College of Further Education and Training, Ennis Campus (VESD)
42282A	College of Further Education and Training, Ennis Campus (Core Skills)
71840V	Croom College of Further Education
40096Q	FET Centre, Scariff Campus (VTOS)
70830N	College of Further Education and Training, Ennis Campus (Ennis College of Further Education)
40020G	College of Further Education and Training, Ennis Campus (VTOS)
40095O	FET Centre, Kilmallock Town Campus (VTOS)
71930W	Limerick College of Further Education
38418A	Limerick College of Further Education Evening Provision
722362	FET Centre, Raheen Campus (Community Services)
79069	FET Centre, Raheen Campus (Training Services)
40709A	College of Further Education and Training, Ennis Campus (Youthreach provision)
38509D	FET Centre, Watch House Cross Campus (Youthreach provision)
40787U	FET Centre, Shanagolden Campus (VTOS)
79155	FET Centre, Shannon Campus (Training Services)
40105O	FET Centre, O’Connell Avenue Campus (VESD)
40008Q	FET Centre, Kilmallock Road Campus (VTOS)
40075I	FET Centre, Kilrush Campus (VTOS)
40467C	FET Centre, O’Connell Avenue Campus (Youthreach provision)
40803P	FET Centre, Kilrush Campus (Youthreach provision)
38510L	FET Centre, Kilmallock Road Campus (Youthreach provision)
40627V	FET Centre, Shanagolden Campus (Youthreach provision)
40679R	FET Centre, Hospital Campus (Youthreach provision)
38710T	LCETB Administrative Centre
40769S	ADAPT Services
71850B	An t-Ionad Glas
70840Q	Ennistymon School of Art
38900B	Limerick City CDP CLG
40500U	Moyross Adult Education Group
40493D	Northside Family Resource Centre
40742V	Our Lady of Lourdes Adult Education Centre
40457W	Education Unit, Limerick Prison
41120P	Southill Family Resource Centre
38135L	St Mary’s Community Adult Education Group

APPENDIX 6 – EXTRACTS FROM EA REPORTS

Region	Certification Date and Award Areas	EA Feedback
Co Clare	December 2019 L1-5 General	<p>Planning: Commendable lesson planning, feedback, monitoring and assessment of learners by Tutors Assessment briefs were well designed and carefully planned and offering clear guidelines to learners Clear and detailed Assessment plans included by Tutors Appropriate methodology and procedures in place Portfolios were presented in a coherent and comprehensive format by learners All necessary records/paperwork maintained by Tutors and to a high standard for QA purposes</p> <p>Processes: Robust Internal Verification completed for each Component and signed off by individuals with codes – good practice</p> <p>Teaching, Learning and Assessment: Quality assurance adhered and practiced in the running and delivering of modules to learners Fair and consistent grading of learners evidence in almost all modules Overall learners evidence is of a high standard for the levels here authenticated Very good digital evidence provided to support some of the different modules skills Independent actions demonstrated by learners in skills demonstrations and responsibility for their learning in a lot of evidence viewed.</p>
Limerick City	December 2019 Levels 1-3 General	<p>Planning: Formative assessment evident by all Tutors along with good summative assessment demonstrating achievement of standard and outcomes Overall, necessary records maintained to an exceptional standard therefore, meeting the quality assurance for QQI Clear guidelines provided to enable learners achieve requirements of all components on their courses</p> <p>Teaching, Learning and Assessment: Tutors are considerate of the needs of the learner in terms of providing them with opportunities to apply some essential functional life skills in assessments Commendable feedback and monitoring been carried out by Tutors Tutors are striving to provide a high standard of academic training and ensuring learners reach their potential Fair and consistent grading of all learners collection of works Some very good use of Audio and visual recordings to support evidence in a number of component awards</p>

APPENDIX 6 – EXTRACTS FROM EA REPORTS

Limerick City	December 2019 Catering	<p>Examination papers: Paper used mixed methodology very effectively and questions posed would have enabled learners to develop skills and knowledge in key components of food hygiene in their relevant environment. Outline solutions were provided for the Examination papers in Tutors pack. All learning outcomes were assessed appropriately and accordingly as per component specification. Assessment techniques were appropriate for this level. Marks awarded were fair and consistent across the grade bands.</p> <p>Implementation of standardised LCETB templates & Documentation: All essential record keeping and standardised documents for Quality Assurance from LCETB are in use by Tutors. Robust Internal verification has taken place and report included and IV had picked up an error in calculation and other matters and this was to be commended. Good supporting visual evidence for the Skills Demonstration where present in all those who attended the assessment. GDPR adhered to with use of individuals personal details /PPS nos.</p> <p>Organisation and Presentation of Portfolios: Learners portfolios were presented in a professional, clear, coherent and concise manner with all relevant supporting documentation.</p> <p>Assessment Briefs: Standardised paperwork and generic assessment tools for examination and skills demonstration, recording and evidencing of Hygiene practices were used for this module. Detailed and descriptive assessment brief outlining clearly to learners requirements and marks awarded. This all allows for fair and consistent grading of learners and quality assurance. Tutors had clear lesson planning and delivery methods in place that were included in Tutor pack. Thorough breakdown on marking scheme and rubric format utilised by Tutors.</p>
Co Clare	December 2019 Levels 4& 5 IT	<p>Quality of Evidence : Excellent Tutor Packs available for all modules. Evidence presented was to a very good standard.</p> <p>Feedback: Encouraging feedback commentary visible on most evidence providing encouragement to the learner.</p>
Co Limerick	August 2019 Healthcare and Childcare	<p>Teaching and Learning: Excellent standards in teaching and learning evident with appropriate assessments, good standard and range of grades;</p> <p>Quality of Evidence: all work/evidence well presented by teachers.</p>
Co Limerick	August 2019 L3	<p>Teaching, Learning and Assessment: The innovative approach taken to the delivery of the Personal Effectiveness component is to be welcomed and encouraged.</p>
Co Clare	August 2019 L4 variety	<p>Planning: Tutors folders were of a high standard; some of them would make fine exemplars to show to new tutors starting in the FE area All tutors had very good to excellent Module Outlines and Assessment Briefs, having made use of the templates provided</p>

APPENDIX 6 – EXTRACTS FROM EA REPORTS

		<p>Teaching, Learning and Assessment: The vast majority of learners' folders were of a very high standard; credit goes to the tutors for guiding them towards such excellence</p> <p>Encouraging feedback given to learners in many modules</p> <p>In the majority of modules, it was easy to determine that they were delivered to the required national standard.</p>
Co Clare	June 2019 Art <i>(demonstrates how teacher used feedback from previous EA visit)</i>	<p>Recommendations taken on board: Marking is much improved, since recommendations made on my previous visit.</p> <p>Marking much improved from last visit. I recommend keeping to this standard.</p>
Limerick City	June 2019 L5 Office and Administration awards	<p>Teaching, Learning and Assessment: High standard of work presented – very comprehensive examination administered and students work was of a high standard. The project was detailed and extensive and good work produced by students.</p>
Co Limerick	June 2109 L5 Sport and Recreation	<p>Teaching, Learning and Assessment: The work shows evidence of high standards of tutoring, assessment and management throughout. QQI Award Specifications clearly followed. Learners were assessed in a fair and consistent manner in accordance with national standards</p> <p>Planning: All documentation for External Authentication was well prepared & organised. Internal Verification is clearly understood and executed thoroughly. Documentation for the learners was organised and presented clearly, including; examination papers and marks awarded for practical and theory components of assessment.</p>
Co Limerick	June 2019 L6 Animal Science and Horsemanship	<p>Teaching, Learning and Assessment: I was very taken by the innovative use of a variety of methods to gather and show learner evidence. Verbal, Visual, Video, Written, Audio, and tactile. This allowed the students to work to their strengths and the best of their abilities. All tutors covered the courses to the correct level.</p>
Co Clare	June 2020 Business	<p>Teaching, Learning and Assessment: Marking schemes were easy to follow and evidence of comprehensive marking was presented. It was obvious that assessors had made use of digital equipment and remote learning techniques to ensure that their students completed the modules</p>
Co Limerick	June 2020 Childcare	<p>Feedback: Evidence of timely and constructive feedback.</p>

APPENDIX 6 – EXTRACTS FROM EA REPORTS

Hospitality Education and Training Centre	June 2020 Culinary Arts	Feedback: The nature and quality of feedback is commendable and continuous monitoring of learners progress is very evident in this Centre in both written comments and audio. Tutors are striving to provide a high standard of academic training and ensuring learners reach their potential.
Co Clare	June 2020 Healthcare (Nursing Studies)	Teaching, Learning and Assessment: There was fair and consistent marking by teacher with good examples of feedback to learners on where they gained/lost marks with recommendation for improvement.
Co Clare	June 2020 General Learning	Planning: Excellent tutors pack presented showing detailed briefs and a very detailed description of module delivery by the tutor. Excellent practice
Co Clare	June 2020 Design	Planning, Assessment: The learning outcomes of this module have clearly shown that the evidence demonstrates a wide range of skills and applications relevant to level 5 Graphic Design. The learners were introduced to a very logical practical step by step education into What is the role and requirements of the Graphic Designer. The personal notebooks and sketchbooks especially those of the Learner with Distinction and Merit are rich with ideas and show the journey and Design process that the Tutor taught.
Limerick City	June 2020 Business	Assessment: Assessor marking was excellent. Easy to follow, clear indication that material was looked at and explanation on learner scripts where marks were lost.
Limerick City	June 2020 Sports and Rec	Teaching, Learning and Assessment: As regards the submission content, I thought the setting of assignments mirroring the learner's interests, i.e. sport and recreation, was a particularly good way of eliciting the best responses from each learner. There was very good integration of briefs for 3 different complimentary modules.
Co Limerick	June 2020 Healthcare	Referencing: There was a very good standard in the assignments which included good referencing and well written bibliographies.

APPENDIX 7 – EVIDENCE OF EXCELLENCE IN TL

1. Core Skills

- **Family Learning:** Under the leadership of the ETB's Core Skills provision in County Clare, the Clare Family Learning project has enjoyed national and international recognition. Several articles were published in ETBI newsletters (2015; 2018) as examples of effective literacy practice. Articles were also published by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002342/234252e.pdf>), and presented at the European Family Learning Sharing Best Practice Conference, National College of Ireland Conference (2018), NALA conferences, etc. The *My Baby and Me* programme was developed in response to needs identified by the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, and was shortlisted for an AONTAS Star Award.
- **ESOL:** Michelle Benson, a VTOS teacher, was selected by LEARGAS to be the national ETB representative at an international ESOL conference in Austria (2018).

2. Vocational Education and Training

- **Information Technology:** In 2016, the FET Centre, Raheen Campus received the Centre of Excellence Status from Prodigy Learning. This recognises exceptional performance in delivering internationally recognised IT certifications from industry leaders such as Adobe, Autodesk and Microsoft.
- **Hospitality:** The ETB's Hospitality Education model is recognised at national and international level for its leadership in Hospitality Services. Over the years, the Hospitality Education and Training Centre, as well as graduates, received multiple awards, recognising its excellence in teaching and learning.
 - 2016 - European Framework Quality Management Award (EFQM);
 - 2017 - Hygiene and Standards Award from the Irish Accommodation Services Institute;
 - 2017 - Excellence in Local Government Awards in promotion of Economic Development, in partnership with Limerick City and County Council for their Regeneration Programme: Model of pathways to employment in the hospitality and catering industry;
 - 2017 - First National Career Traineeship developed;
 - 2018 - The first Apprenticeship Commis Chef Programme was launched in Limerick in conjunction with the Irish Hotels Federation, Restaurant Association of Ireland, Fáilte Ireland, Euro-Toques Ireland, Irish Hospitality Institute and Tralee Institute;
 - 2018 - Award Winners in the Generation Apprenticeship Competition sponsored by ESB;
 - 2019 - Catex Chef Ireland 2019 Culinary Competition;
CATEX is Ireland's largest foodservice and networking event. It takes place annually over three days in Dublin and attracts up to 12,000 visitors per year. Level 6 Commis Chef Apprentices Marilena Gherbezan and Jose Mata, from our Hospitality Education & Training Centre won gold at the Chef Ireland Culinary Championships 2019 at the CATEX Exhibition in the RDS, Dublin.
 - 2019 - European Alliance of Apprenticeships SME Training and Apprenticeship Award won by one of our HETC chefs;
 - 2019 - Helsinki European skills winner of best collaboration between an SME (Limerick Strand Hotel) and an education provider;
 - 2020 - Food & Beverage Live winners of the Chef Of The Year 2020;
 - 2020 - Winners of the National Employee Award Irish Hotels Federation (HETC graduates)



APPENDIX 7 – EVIDENCE OF EXCELLENCE IN TL

- **Apprenticeships**

- 2019 - FET Centre, Shannon Campus Wins 2019 Generation Apprenticeship Competition

A team of 41 apprentices and staff from the FET Centre, Shannon Campus, were joint winners of the 2019 Generation Apprenticeship Competition, an event organised by SOLAS. The team included four Electrical apprentices, twelve Metal Fabrication apprentices, fourteen Toolmaking apprentices, five Aviation apprentices, two Refrigeration apprentices, three Carpentry apprentices and one Plumbing apprentice.



- 2018 – National Hairdressing Apprenticeship (See Case Study – Appendix)

- **Examples of Other sectors:**

- LCFE Art & Design teacher, Audrey Fitzgerald won the Smarter Travel Curriculum Development Award 2018 for Multimedia
- LCFE Tutor - Laura Halvey, renowned make-up artist took home the prestigious 'Make-Up Artist of the Year' at the Brides of Limerick Awards

3. Community Education and Training

- 2018 - The Clare **Community Care Integrated Learning Programme** with the Brothers of Charity was shortlisted for the AONTAS Awards under the small/medium organisation category.
- 2004- Ongoing: **Learning Limerick**

The ETB has been chairing the work of the Learning Limerick Steering Group since 2006. In June 2016, three ETB staff attended the Learning Cities Conference in Glasgow to present a paper on 'Limerick's journey to become a Learning Region - exploring the connection challenges'. Following this networking event, a Limerick Delegation of representatives from the ETB, Limerick City and County Council including the Mayor of Limerick was invited to attend the Urban/Rural UNESCO Conference in Hangzhou City, China. A paper on 'Distributing Learning Resources evenly between Urban Communities and Rural Areas' was presented. Now a member of UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC), Learning Limerick, with significant support from the ETB FET Division, submitted an application to UNESCO for Learning City Award which was successful.



4. Youth Education and Training

- In 2019, former FET Centre, O'Connell Avenue Campus Youthreach provision learner, Hope Shannon O' Brien, received an award from the Engineering Technology Teachers Association (ETTA) at its national conference.
- ETB FET practitioners' contributions to the 2019 national Youthreach Conference:
 - Lorraine O'Leary, FET Co-ordinator, Youthreach provision – FET Centre, Hospital Campus, gave a presentation on effective responses to the Special Education Needs of Students through the SEN Initiative.
 - Dr Declan Blackett – FET Co-ordinator, Youthreach provision, FET Centre, Kilmallock Road Campus, made a presentation on the methodology and findings of his PhD research 'Voices from 'the back of the class': An examination of the potential role of education for regeneration from the perspective of residents from Limerick's regeneration community.' (2016). The complete thesis can be accessed at the library Mary Immaculate College, Limerick – register of Thesis at www.mic.ul.ie



APPENDIX 7 – EVIDENCE OF EXCELLENCE IN TL

5. Innovation and Development

- 2017 - As part of the Learning Limerick Festival and the All Aboard initiative, over 20 **Show and TEL** events were delivered by in-house staff across Limerick and Clare. Hundreds of staff and learners attended the workshops and seminars exploring the use of a diverse range of technology tools for learning. In recognition for work on Show & TEL, the FET Division was awarded an All Aboard 2017 Gold Badge by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning.
- 2017-ongoing - New tools used to enhance the teaching and learning experience, including the use of Open badges, which was initiated by the EU EDGE project, which ended in 2017 (**see case study Open Badges**).
- LCFE has a **Teaching and Learning Policy** and a **Teaching and Learning Committee**, which promotes good practice in FET teaching throughout the College.
- **Professional Development Delivery Model in Limerick and Clare**

APPENDIX 8 - CASE STUDIES

CASE STUDY 1 – Professional Development

DIGITAL BADGES IN LIMERICK AND CLARE EDUCATION AND TRAINING BOARD FET DIVISION

Since 2017, the ETB has been issuing digital badges for all Staff CPD, which is organised at FET Division Level. The use of digital badges came about as a result of mainstreaming an output of an Erasmus Plus Strategic Partnership – [EDGE- Enhancing the delivery of Guidance and Employability](#). Badges are awarded at Site Level in Moodle (the ETB’s Virtual Learning Environment). They have embedded data and are exportable to users Backpack (previously Mozilla now Badgr). To date (September 2020), 109 individual badges have been created and approx. 4000 badges have been awarded to staff. Each badge has specific award criteria. In many cases the badges are awarded manually for attendance at CPD events, which may include the completion of defined tasks. For core mandatory CPD in GDPR and Child Protection, staff are required to successfully complete key activities (lesson and quiz) in order to gain the badge. We are also using Open Badges in the new National Hairdressing Apprenticeship, with teachers being given the ability to award badges for each course in Moodle. This will provide informal recognition of learning achieved. We also have a cohort of staff who are nearing completion of the Digital Badge for Universal Design in Teaching and Learning designed by AHEAD and UCD. This is one component in a suite of professional development courses created through the [National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning](#) in Higher Education.

APPENDIX 8 – CASE STUDIES

CASE STUDY 2 – Professional Development



Building Capacity in Further Education and Training through practitioner-led Professional Development

This poster showcases a model of professional development delivery in Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board's FET Division.

Key Features of the Model

- It is practitioner-led and targets both ESOL and non-ESOL practitioners.
- It harnesses the expertise of ESOL practitioners who identify, organise and deliver professional development.
- It is organisationally supported through guidance provided by the PD Officer, resources from the PD budget and the release of staff facilitated by management and senior management.
- Its work is aligned to several national policy priorities and to local FET strategic priorities.
- In the long term it is hoped the initiative will increase organisational capability and ultimately allow the Limerick and Clare ETB FET Division to better meet the needs of ESOL learners.

Context and Rationale

In 2018, an ESOL Professional Development Working Group was convened to start the implementation of the FET's FET Network for the Introduction of Language, Learning and Literacy (LILL). Managers identified staff who were in an ESOL role (provision or teaching role) as the group, with four members from Clare and four from Limerick, representing both full and part-time provision. The group is chaired by the Professional Development Officer.

The objectives of the group are to:

- Identify the professional development needs of ESOL Practitioners in the FET Division.
- Bring ESOL Practitioners together to network and share practice.
- Put a range of professional development interventions in place to meet needs.
- Look at broader issues such as language awareness in classes where native and second language learners are integrated.

Key Findings: ESOL Provision Profile and Training Needs Analysis (2018)

108 ESOL practitioners, 34 non-ESOL practitioners

- Majority of the ETB's ESOL provision is between A0 and B1.
- 90% of non-ESOL practitioners had ESOL learners in their classes some or all the time, yet only 20 had completed any kind of language awareness training, and only 1-3 always received advance information about the language level of learners.
- Teaching beginner ESOL learners with little or no education proved to be the greatest challenge for ESOL practitioners, along with the lack of suitable accreditation options for this group.

Key Outputs: Professional Development Activities Organised

Since late 2018, the ESOL PD Working Group have organised and delivered workshops and training for 233 beneficiaries, both ESOL and non-ESOL practitioners as outlined below. A critical output was also the development of an ESOL PD Network of approximately 40 ESOL practitioners, who have met for three full day sessions built ground knowledge and practice sharing. An online ESOL Share Space has also been created to facilitate virtual collaboration in the future. All participants on our events are awarded online PD badges in Moodle.

Event and Target Group	Themes and Topics	Att.
ESOL Practitioners PD Network Day 1 ESOL Practitioners	Initial Assessment, CEFR, EU Reception Conditions Directive - Right to Work	40
Cambridge Assessments ESOL Practitioners	Cambridge Preliminary English Test; Resources, materials and assessment	20
ESOL Input with BIG Information, Recruitment and Guidance Team	CEFR and Initial Assessment Awareness, International Protection and Right to Work	32
ESOL Practitioners PD Network Day 2 ESOL and non-ESOL Practitioners, Managers etc.	Supporting ESOL learners in FET - with Philida Schellekens focus for ESOL learners in transition provision; Teaching beginners; ESOL Resources; How to Present New Language	38
Level 1 TESOL 1 and TESOL 2 delivered by Waterford IT ESOL Practitioners	Upskilling experienced teaching staff to deliver ESOL; Pedagogy; Methodologies; Materials etc.	25
ESOL Practitioners PD Network Day 3 ESOL Practitioners	ESOL Initiatives and Updates; FET ESOL Online Share Space; Practice Share; Teaching Beginners; UNIG; Ombus; Teaching Higher Level B1-B2	26
Language Awareness Pilot Non-ESOL Staff	Understanding language needs of non-native speakers; Tips and techniques to make teaching more effective for all	11
Business + Conference and Seminar ESOL Practitioners	Belfast Seminar - Teaching Beginners; NATCCLA - Birmingham - LR ESOL Ashweek; ICEL - Goa - Language for Work	7

Key Outcomes and Impact: Survey of ESOL PD Participants (2020)

98% of respondents felt that attendance at an ESOL Professional Development Event was of benefit to them.

From your experience how useful have these event(s) been for the following?

Legend: Extremely useful (dark green), Useful (medium green), Somewhat useful (light green), Not useful (blue), Not applicable/relevant (dark blue)



Testimonials

"I think ESOL tutors have felt valued and heard and because it was continuous, not just once off it created continuity and cohesion to the whole ESOL CPD process."

"As a new tutor, these ESOL training days have helped me learn from my peers and practitioners as well as instilling a greater self confidence in my own work"

"I implemented a different structure for my classes, whereby if I had the group for two days, for example, I would try to do only listening and speaking with them on day 1 and then repeat the lesson content/target language on day 2 in reading and writing form. So far this has worked really well."

"Being informed about the CEFR helped me talking about it to my colleagues about learner's progression and what class they would go in to the next year"

"The talk from Philida Schellekens informed me that learners need to be at a B1/B2 level before studying a vocational subject with native speakers"

Conclusion

Creating opportunities for practitioners to come together to share practice can be transformative

You can be innovative and creative when looking for ways to implement strategy and policy

Nurturing practitioner led professional development and professional development networks is of great value but takes organisational commitment and resources to sustain

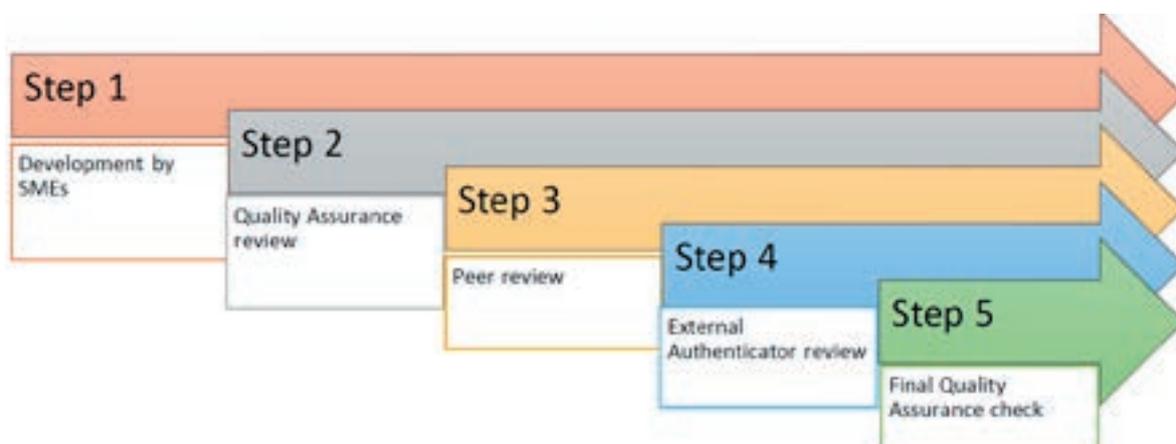
APPENDIX 8 – CASE STUDIES

CASE STUDY 3 – Programme Development and Validation

NATIONAL HAIRDRESSING APPRENTICESHIP

The National Hairdressing Apprenticeship was developed by a consortium of industry and education providers and, as a statutory apprenticeship, is governed by the Industrial Training Act, 1967. Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board is the co-ordinating provider and for the first time, all 15 of the other ETBs have signed memorandums of understanding to be collaborating providers, making this the **first national post-2016 apprenticeship**. The apprenticeship is a minimum of three years in duration with a ratio of 80:20 on-the-job and off-the-job work-based and FET centre-based training and education. On completion, graduates from the programme will be awarded a QQI Level 6 Major Award on the National Framework of Qualifications. The rollout of the National Hairdressing Apprenticeship means that for the **first time in Ireland there is now a nationally recognised standard for the hairdressing industry**.

In order to quality assure all assessments developed for the National Hairdressing Apprenticeship, a 5-step process was devised to ensure 'fair and consistent assessment of learners.



Step 1 – Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) were engaged to write the assessments. These SMEs were provided with *Development of Assessment Documentation Training* by Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board’s QA Support Service.

Step 2 – A member of the QA Support Service carried out a detailed QA check on each developed piece of assessment. These were then returned to the assessment writers for correction.

Step 3 – Once the corrected assessments were returned to the assessment development team, they were then sent for peer review. The peer review team made recommendations for amendments and then returned the assessments to the assessment development team.

Step 4 – The recommended amendments/corrections were carried out by the assessment development team and the assessments were then sent to EAs (External Authenticators) for review. The assessments were then once again returned to the assessment development team. If the EAs made further recommendations for amendments, these were done by the assessment development team.

Step 5 – The assessment bank was given a final check by Quality Assurance.

This significant body of work was tracked and managed by the assessment development team, which designed an **Assessment Development Management System** in Ms Excel to track development and progress during each step.

APPENDIX 8 – CASE STUDIES

INTEGRATED ASSESSMENTS														
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O
4 Modules	Assessment Type	Paper A	Paper B	Paper C	%	SBs	Written	Peer Review	SB Review	QA	Amendments	Final QA Loop	Amendments	Used by TEL
1	Practical Exam 1	Complete	Complete	Complete	75	101-103	Para and Notes	*	Completed by Assoc Exam A	*	*	Completed by Assoc	*	In Ready for Moodle for Moodle for Moodle
2	Practical Exam 2	Complete	Complete	Complete	75	104-106	Notes	*	Completed by Assoc, Paper A and C	*	*	Completed by Assoc	*	In Ready for Moodle for Moodle for Moodle
3	Safety Audit	Complete	N/A	N/A	9	107	Para	*	Completed by Assoc	*	*	Completed by Assoc	*	In Ready for Moodle for Moodle for Moodle
4	Practical Exam 3	Complete	N/A	N/A	75	108-110	Notes	*	Completed by Assoc	*	*	Completed by Assoc	*	In Ready for Moodle for Moodle for Moodle
5	Assessment - Competency	Complete	N/A	N/A	40	111-115	Para	*	WIP - FA	*	*	*	*	*
6	Practical Exam 4	Complete	N/A	N/A	75	116-118	Notes	*	Completed	*	*	Completed by Assoc	Completed	In Ready for Moodle for Moodle for Moodle

Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL) Integration

Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL) was integrated into the National Hairdressing Apprenticeship programme from the early stages of design. TEL principles were built into the programme validation document which was submitted to QQI and formally validated in September 2019, in the individual module descriptors and sections such as the teaching and learning strategy and the assessment strategy.

The TEL team worked closely with the National Hairdressing Apprenticeship development team and encouraged all ideas/inputs that could use TEL to enhance the user experience. As well as being integrated into the programme itself, TEL was used to assist programme, curriculum and assessment development. Some examples of how TEL was used include the following:

- Moodle **hairapp.ie** site developed with access for apprentices and teachers of the programme that includes an Office 365 account and an Outlook email address
- Moodle and instructional design for development of teaching and learning resources and assessments
- MS Teams (part of the Office 365 suite) for collaboration between NHA team members
- H5P for development of interactive video tutorials
- Online assessment of learners via Moodle **hairapp.ie**
- Intelliboard Moodle plug-in to allow data analysis of all instances of the programme nationally by designated users
- Potential teachers of the apprenticeship programme were given a one-day workshop in using and incorporating resources such as Kahoot! and Zeetings into their classrooms, along with training on Moodle basics.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Process

The ETB, as co-ordinating provider of the National Hairdressing Apprenticeship, is committed to utilising RPL as an instrument for determining standard access equivalences and for the award of credit or exemptions to apprentices with qualifications or prior experience in the Hairdressing field of knowledge.

For the National Hairdressing Apprenticeship, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) can be used to gain:

- Access or entry to the Hairdressing Apprenticeship programme where the applicant does not meet the standard entry requirements
- Advanced Entry onto Stage 2 of the National Hairdressing Apprenticeship Programme
- Certification of the Level 6 Certificate in Hairdressing award.

There are two main categories within RPL:

1. The recognition of learning which has already had formal certification within the Further Education and Training system in Ireland or abroad, often referred to as Certified Learning.
2. The recognition of learning which has been gained through experiences in the workplace, usually referred to as Experiential Learning.

APPENDIX 8 – CASE STUDIES

CASE STUDY 4 – Teaching and Learning

FET Division Support Services Collaboration during Covid-19

Context

In order to effectively upskill and support staff during the emergency move to both online teaching and learning and online work, the TEL and PD Support Services came together as a 5-person team to ensure a **single co-ordinated strategic organisational response**. This FET-level response ran alongside other extraordinary support initiatives provided on the ground by FET personnel, including our network of Digital Champions, Managers, and Resource Staff and by the FET Active Inclusion and Quality Assurance Support Services.

Background

Both the TEL Support Service and the Professional Development Support Service are responsible for the implementation of the TEL and PD Strategies respectively in the FET Division. Our target cohort is the 1,000 staff of the FET Division, including learning practitioners, managers and support and administration staff. The work of the TEL Support Service involves the rollout of service-wide strategic initiatives in Technology-Enhanced Learning. The PD Support Service works with TEL and with the other Strategic Implementation Groups to help address the professional development priorities within all strategic initiatives.

In January 2020, the TEL and PD Support Services commenced an organisation-wide rollout of Office 365 and MS Teams. The goal of this ambitious programme, to be delivered to all FET Staff by the end of September 2020, was to ensure a strategic co-ordinated adoption of Office 365 and MS Teams. A network of digital champions was established in order to rollout PD using a cascade training model. When Covid-19 and the lockdown hit, there was a need to dramatically FastTrack this initiative to enable all staff to safely and appropriately use all supported TEL platforms and particularly the core teaching and learning platforms MS Teams and Moodle.

Main Issues Emerging

In our work with staff across the FET Division, we discovered that many of the issues they faced in terms of continuing their work and upskilling in new tools mirrored those of learners, e.g.

- Access to technology – the hardware and software required to work online effectively
- Access to broadband, particularly in rural areas
- Underlying digital skills base
- Access to ICT support for troubleshooting issues
- Childcare and other family commitments
- Confidence in making the jump to online work/teaching and learning

Learning practitioners were often faced with the dual difficulty of upskilling themselves in parallel with supporting learners to move to new platforms and doing so in a manner that was safe and effective. A key challenge was ensuring that all staff were fully informed and competent in addressing issues such as privacy, copyright and compliance with GDPR in an online environment. Many practitioners were also at varying stages of the assessment cycle, which presented challenges in combining online and offline assessment. An issue identified early in the lockdown was engagement with MS Teams and Moodle in Community Education provision.

APPENDIX 8 – CASE STUDIES

Approach

The first decision made at the start of the lockdown was that the TEL and PD personnel should come together and that work would focus on supporting the move to online teaching and learning and online work. We immediately developed a strategy comprising of key professional development and support initiatives delivered over the period from March to mid-June.

TEL Professional Development

During the lockdown, **approx. 50 professional development sessions were delivered with over 1,000 participants attending.** In addition, one-to-one and small group support was delivered on a rolling basis as required. All Professional Development was booked through Eventbrite, delivered through our Learning Platforms (generally using MS Teams) and badged using our digital badge programme administered through Moodle. Among the key PD initiatives were

- *MS Teams and Office 365:* We delivered 38 training sessions focused on the use of MS Teams and Office 365. These were hosted online and delivered by the TELSS. We also worked closely with our Microsoft Training Partners Wriggle who supplemented in-house professional development offers with valuable centre/service specific training.
- *Padlet for Community Education:* The TEL/PD team supported the rollout of a FET-wide Padlet Initiative for the Community Education sector, designed to engage with Community Education learners for whom MS Teams/Moodle would not have been a suitable learning environment. The TEL/PD team collaborated with the key Community Education managers and learning practitioners to support the adoption of a Padlet Backpack, including the delivery of the training to 50 staff. Padlet is an online digital canvas and learners can openly and safely access information, learning resources and activities prepared by ETB staff, for a wide variety of subjects and topics. The intention is to grow and build on the initiative and to mainstream across FET as appropriate.
- *Moodle and Other Platforms:* The TELSS team supplied online learning clinics both to groups and on an individual basis for those using Moodle. We also provided exploratory sessions with staff who were interested in seeing whether Moodle would be suitable for use with their learners. We promoted and supported staff to participate in the 30-hour Moodle for Teachers Course hosted on eCollege.
- *Self-Managed Learning Options:* We promoted and supported engagement in relevant Self-Managed Learning Options either through our own FET Moodle platform or through links to webinars provided by external agencies and partners e.g. AHEAD, NALA, Aontas, EDEN; Moocs in Online Teaching and Learning from Future Learn, ED Ex etc.
- *Re-energising Digital Champion Model:* As May drew to a close, it was agreed that the best way to consolidate and develop staff skills in the use of MS Teams for Teaching and Learning was to return to our planned model of cascade training by our core group of Digital Champions. These champions are staff who have been identified as having expertise in TEL and who are supported to lead out staff upskilling in their centre/service. The champions group was supported to develop local plans to support learning over the summer/autumn period.

APPENDIX 8 – CASE STUDIES

TEL Supports

- *TEL Learning Zone:* The TEL Learning Zone was developed as a public team that is open to every member of staff and every learner in Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board. It is packed with resources to help staff get started with all supported TEL platforms including links to videos, websites and help centres. The TELSS also post announcements and have a link to the CPD calendar of training events where staff can keep up-to-date and book in to upcoming training sessions. The posts channels are home to daily Q&A sessions where we answer questions everyone can receive help from. The learning zone has been a significant support to staff in accessing real-time support around issues met when using various TEL tools.
- *Online Teaching and Learning Guidelines:* During lockdown, the TEL Support Service developed Safe Practice Guidelines for Online and Blended Learning in Further Education and Training in order to provide clear guidance and support for all, particularly those who were new to teaching and learning online. Online teaching and learning requires of learning practitioners a different skillset than classroom or workshop-based activities. The guidelines were designed to provide useful, clear and concise guidance for teaching online including the use of eLearning and video-conferencing platforms, leading and moderating online activities and setting online assignments.

Communication was a key focus over the period. The TEL and PDSS sent weekly emails to staff outlining the training open and available to all staff. All events were also posted on to our Professional Development Calendar with booking links. These emails also signposted staff to relevant Self-Managed Learning Options either through our own Moodle platform or with external partners e.g. AHEAD, NALA, Aontas, EDEN, Wriggle etc.

Other Initiatives of Note: During lockdown, we also set up and had the first meeting of a 40-strong team of FET Social Media Managers. We have conducted a needs analysis with this group and have commenced planning for online training in the autumn. Upskilling staff in social media will support effective communication with existing and new learners throughout these challenging times. In addition, we commenced a pilot programme in online Self-Care sessions with staff groups. 6 sessions have been made available to managers with more to follow as/if required. Finally, a Reflective Practice Peer-Support Pilot has also commenced in one of our centres in Clare.

Results

During the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, 97.3% of surveyed Learning Practitioners in the FET Division used technology to reach out to learners immediately following campus closures. Many used online tools and resources for the first time, and in the process commenced a journey of professional development in relation to online learning.

We have seen a willingness and openness to engage in online and blended learning and working online that would have previously been unimaginable. This has been met and matched with opportunities for training, development, and support. The engagement has been obvious in a ten-fold increase in MS Teams use (reaching over 3000 active daily users) and a doubling of activity on Moodle (reaching over 1,100 users).

APPENDIX 8 – CASE STUDIES

We have collaboratively developed Online Teaching and Learning Guidelines, which will help lead our activity in Online and Blended Learning over the coming years.

The engagement online has been far greater than we might have imagined. We have been able to demonstrate the power of blended learning to provide increased flexibility for learners. It has also allowed us to promote the use of technology to support the adoption of UDL principles and with an approach that focuses on equity in line with our values.

Benefits

The work of the TEL and PD Support Services supported staff in developing skills to continue to engage with their learners during lockdown and around the crucial assessment period. This resulted in significantly improved engagement by learners than could have been envisaged. 87% of learners surveyed continued to engage in their courses and only 9% of staff reported that engagement by learners was 'very limited' in the weeks following the start of lockdown. The staff development process enabled staff to reach learners and support them to engage in digital learning and it was a significant achievement that less than 4% of learners surveyed at the end of the academic year felt that they did not have the digital skills to engage effectively in digital learning.

Whilst the engagement across sectors was not uniform, staff and management worked collaboratively and creatively to minimise the impact of the crises and reach learners with the appropriate tools and resources. In Community Education, where MS Teams and Moodle proved ineffective, the co-ordinated adoption of Padlet using a Community of Practice approach proved to be very successful. In addition, there were numerous examples where we supported bespoke solutions which were specifically designed for the class or cohort being served. In the National Hairdressing Apprenticeship programme, the TEL and PD Support Services supported the ramping up of delivery, so that online provision could be delivered for 2 days per week compared to the one day per week planned prior to the crisis. This highly innovative approach was blended by design, incorporating numerous innovations with interactive video, personalised learning using tag clouds, digital badges and online proctoring of examinations. The feedback from apprentices was extremely positive and the impact on the industry is that the apprentices will now be able to work and learn five days per week in the hair salons for a period post-Covid-19 to support the re-start of the industry.

Lessons for Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The decision to unite the TEL and PD Support Services enabled the dedication of all resources and efforts to meeting very specific demands during a time of emergency. This meant that pre-existing work-plans were parked to allow us to address new needs and requirements. The main difference between our work pre and post lockdown was that it transitioned to a 100% online environment. As all of our training was now delivered online, we were able to deliver key essential professional development inputs to higher numbers of staff than would have been possible offline.

The team adopted an action planning model and our approach evolved in response to key learning. Key learning from the period included:

- The need to move from initial responses which were reactive and focused on immediate priorities, such as the functional aspects of technology use, to a more strategic approach focused on pedagogical priorities and the delivery of quality online teaching and learning.

APPENDIX 8 – CASE STUDIES

- That shorter PD inputs work better online. Initial workshops were comprehensive and up to 3 hours in duration, whereas later workshops were a maximum of 1 hour in duration and focused on 3 to 5 key skills/areas. This adjustment was made as a result of evaluations, which highlighted the greater impact of shorter workshops.
- The value of working with local digital champions in a regionally-led approach implemented locally at campus level. Whilst most of the workshops delivered at a regional level (i.e. available to all staff) were highly effective in developing core skills, the local support model enabled peer-support and the adoption of a social learning model more suited to the effective adoption of technology, particularly for staff who were initially least comfortable with the use of technology.
- The value of recording. All workshops were recorded and made available to staff and this proved to be very popular and effective for reinforcing key learning.
- The value of breakout rooms. Synchronous online learning particularly with large groups allows little time for learner involvement and peer-to-peer sharing of experiences. The use of breakout rooms in later workshops and meetings enabled participants to actively participate and helped to ensure action was informed by the voices of all staff.
- The value of the 'TEL Learning Zone'. This public team has proven to be a key resource for all staff learning and particularly as a space to share learning, highlight issues and challenges and help shape future responses by the TEL and PD Support Services as part of our action planning model.

From all the key learning, there was perhaps one area where, with the value of hindsight, we may have taken a different approach. In the first three weeks our approach was reactive with a central focus on equipping staff with the skills to immediately move online. This involved the delivery of daily large-group workshops focused on functional skills. Whilst pedagogical considerations and issues such as safe practice online were always covered, the workshops tended to be technology-led. This approach was in response to the demands of staff who were keen to get online ASAP in order to support their learners, and ensure they continued to participate in their learning programme. With the benefit of hindsight, we may have been better to adopt a pedagogy-led approach based on the key principles from our online teaching and learning guidelines. This may have resulted in a gap before learning practitioners began delivering synchronously online, but would have ensured that all staff were more fully confident that they were doing so with an approach that was based on pedagogically sound and fully safe. In order to address this issue, the TEL Support Team is developing an e-Learning programme of approx. 20 hours' duration, which will be available to all staff before the start of the new academic year in September 2020.

In addition to our own learning, as a result of feedback and evaluations, we have identified a number of key supports that need to put in place to ensure our learners and staff are able to continue their learning journey in an effective manner:

- Investment in digital resources/equipment needed for staff and learners to allow blended/online learning. We are working with the Active Inclusion Support Service to ensure that policies and practices are in place focused on device equity.
- Continued digital skills development for teachers and learners.

APPENDIX 9 – FET SLAS AND MOUS

1. LIST OF SLAs	
Ballynanty Garda Youth Diversion Project	Community Youth
Clare Youth Service	Community Youth
Garryowen CDP	Community Youth
Limerick City Sports Partnership	Community Youth
West End Youth Centre (OLOL)	Community Youth
Southill Club2gether	Community Youth
Southside Youth Initiative	Community Youth
St Augustine's School	Community Youth
St Munchin's 3 O'Clock School	Community Youth
Limerick School of Music	Larger Provision
St Canice's – Mount St. Vincent	Larger Provision
Catherine McAuley Special School	Larger Provision
St Annes SEN School	Larger Provision
Learning Hub	Larger Provision
Céim ar Chéim	Larger Provision
Coiscéim (Moyross Youth Academy)	Larger Provision
St Munchin's	Larger Provision
Cura (Limerick Social Services Centre)	Larger Provision
Limerick Youth Service	Larger Provision
Clare Immigrant Support Service	Larger Provision
Education Unit Limerick Prison	Larger Provision
Alzheimer	Social Services
Brothers of Charity Clare	Social Services/ Specialist Training Provider
Brothers of Charity Limerick	Social Services/ Specialist Training Provider
Clare Mental Health Association	Social Services
Deaf Community Centre	Social Services
Iniscara	Social Services
Le Chéile Mental Health	Social Services
Irish Wheelchair Association	Social Services
MS Society	Social Services
Rehabcare	Social Services / Specialist Training Provider
5B UHL	Social Services
Seanoira - St Camillus Hospital	Social Services
Ennis Music Centre	Other
Music Generation Limerick City	Other
Music Generation Clare	Other
Adapt House	Other

APPENDIX 9 – FET SLAS AND MOUS

Limerick City Education Network	Other
Clare Youth Service – Guidance SLA	Other
Ballyhoura Rural Services Company Limited by Guarantee	Local Training Initiative
Cumann Peile na hÉireann - Football Association of Ireland	Local Training Initiative
Kilmeedy Community Development Company	Local Training Initiative
Clare Local Development Company	Local Training Initiative
Broadford Community Development Company	Local Training Initiative
Headway (Ireland) Company	Specialist Training Provider
Chéim ar Céim	Justice Workshop
Limerick Youth Service	Community Training Centre
Clare Youth Service	Community Training Centre

2. List of MoUs

- MoU LCETB/LIT: Advanced-Entry progression agreements
- LCETB / Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT Further Education Progression Scheme)
- LCETB / IT Tralee: Advanced-Entry progression agreements
- LCETB / Mary Immaculate College (Teacher Education Access Programme (TEAP))



Bord Oideachais & Oiliúna
LUIMNIGH & AN CHLÁIR
LIMERICK & CLARE
Education & Training Board

INAUGURAL REVIEW OF QUALITY ASSURANCE

FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING DIVISION

SELF-EVALUATION REPORT

December 2020



QI AWARD

Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board
Marshal House,
Dooradoyle Road,
Limerick, V94 HAC4