



**etb**

Bord Oideachais agus  
Oiliúna Thiobraid Árann  
*Tipperary Education and  
Training Board*



# Tipperary ETB

## Self Evaluation Report

### Inaugural Review of Quality Assurance

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Prepared by Tipperary Education and Training Board  
for the QQI Inaugural Review of Quality Assurance  
in Education and Training Boards.

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**October 2021**





**etb**

Bord Oideachais agus  
Oiliúna Thiobraid Árann  
*Tipperary Education and  
Training Board*

## **Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna Thiobraid Árann, Tipperary Education and Training Board**

Oifig an Aonaigh: Bóthar an Teampaill, An tAonach, Co. Thiobraid Árann, E45 XD59

Nenagh Office: Church Road, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary, E45 XD59

T: 067 31250 / F: 067 32273

[nenagh@tipperaryetb.ie](mailto:nenagh@tipperaryetb.ie)

Oifig Chluain Meala: Bóthar an Iarthair, Cluain Meala, Co. Thiobraid Árann, E91 WK13

Clonmel Office: Western Road, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary, E91 WK13

T: 052 612 1067 / F: 052 612 5951

[clonmel@tipperaryetb.ie](mailto:clonmel@tipperaryetb.ie)

Registered Charity Number 20083595



QQI AWARD

**SOLAS**  
An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanaí agus Scileanna  
Further Education and Training Authority



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland



Clár Chisti Eorpacha Struchtúrtha  
agus Infheistíochta na hÉireann  
2014-2020  
Cómhaoinithe ag Rialtas na hÉireann  
agus ag an Aontas Eorpach



**An tAontas Eorpach**  
Ciste Forbartha  
Réigiúnach na hEorpa

Learning Together, Your Success, Our Goal.





# Foreword

It gives us great pleasure, on behalf of the Tipperary Education and Training Board (ETB), our Executive, learners and staff, to present this Self-Evaluation Report as part of the Inaugural Review of our Quality Assurance processes. We are very proud of the work we do as an ETB and are committed to our mission to provide quality education and training, and to creating a range of diverse opportunities that enable learners and communities to unlock their full potential. Our values of inclusion, innovation, respect and transparency guide our activities and are central to all our endeavours.

Over the past year we have embraced the self-evaluation process as an opportunity to reflect as an ETB on our significant achievements to date and on our approach to quality provision for our learner groups. Our focus is on ensuring learners achieve quality outcomes at all stages of their learning journey and across the diverse range of communities we serve. We are grateful for the significant and genuine engagement of learners, staff and our stakeholders, and we value the feedback we received throughout the process, which represented a wide range of views and opinions.

There can be no doubting the importance of self-reflection and we are confident that the process undertaken as part of this review will serve to underpin the core values at the heart of Tipperary ETB. As a provider of quality education and training opportunities, we endeavour to always place the learner at the centre of everything we do and ensure that learners achieve their personal goals.

Over the past number of years, Tipperary ETB has undergone significant change. In the past two years alone, Tipperary ETB has transitioned to a new organisational and development structure to ensure our support services are adding value to front-line education and training services. Further Education and Training (FET) in particular has seen significant change that included the establishment of Training Services in 2016 and the expansion of provision right across the FET spectrum that saw numbers in FET provision grow to over 12,000 in 2019. To underpin our commitment to quality assurance, in 2020 a new Development and Support Structure was established that encompasses our Quality Assurance Office and our learner support structures.

The self-evaluation process has come at a pivotal time for our ETB as we continue a process of change and look to develop the FET College of the Future in Tipperary. There is an exciting future ahead that will see the further integration of our FET provision and the creation of exciting and new further education and training pathways. This self-evaluation report will assist in our development and growth as an organisation and so will be aligned to our Statement of Strategy and our Strategic Performance Agreement with SOLAS.

We would like to thank our Quality Assurance team for their coordination of the process, our Self-Evaluation Review Advisory Group and all our learners, staff and stakeholders for their engagement with the process.

While Tipperary ETB has always had a focus on quality improvement, this is the first self-evaluation review of its kind for our ETB and the preparation of this report is an exciting stage of the process. We very much look forward to welcoming the Review Panel to Tipperary in February 2022 and to engaging with them in the review process.

As an organisation we are committed to learning from our experiences and the experiences of our learners, staff and stakeholders, while we are dedicated to a process of continual reflection and improvement. We are confident that the outcomes from this review will be central to our efforts to further develop high quality provision while ensuring we operate consistent policies, procedures and processes that lead to the enhancement of our FET service for the benefit of all.



**Chief Executive**  
**Ms Bernadette Cullen**



**Director of Further Education and Training**  
**Mr Colin Cummins**



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# Glossary and Abbreviations

AEGIS	Adult Educational Guidance and Information Service	LES	Local Employment Scheme
AEO	Adult Education Officer	LTI	Local Training Initiative
AIS	Assessment Instrument Specifications	MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
AONTAS	The National Adult Learning Organisation	NALA	National Adult Literacy Agency
BTEI	Back to Education Initiative	NFQ	National Framework of Qualifications
CAO	Central Applications Office	NLN	National Learning Network
CAS	Common Awards System	OGP	Office of Government Procurement
CE	Community Employment	OSD	Organisation Support and Development
COP	Community Of Practice	PD	Professional Development
CSO	Central Statistics Office	PLC	Post-Leaving Certificate
CTC	Community Training Centre	PLSS	Programme Learner Support System
DCYA	Department of Children and Youth Affairs	QA	Quality Assurance
DES	Department of Education	QBS	Quality Business System (QQI)
DSP	Department of Social Protection	QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
EA	External Authentication	RAP	Results Approval Process
ELC	Early Learning and Care	RPCL	Recognition of Prior Certified Learning
ESF	European Social Fund	RPEL	Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages	RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
ETB	Education and Training Board	SER	Self- Evaluation Report
ETBI	Education and Training Board Ireland	SLMRU	Skills and Labour Market Research Unit
ETBI	Education and Training Board Ireland	SMT	Senior Management Team
FARR	Funding Allocation Request and Reporting	SOLAS	The National Further Education and Training Authority- An tSeirbhís Oideachais
FESS	Further Education Support Service	SST	Specific Skills Training
FET	Further Education and Training	STA	Skills to Advance
HE	Higher Education	SUSI	Student Universal Support Ireland
ICT	Information and Communications Technology	TEL	Technology Enhanced Learning
IoT	Institute of Technology	ToR	Terms of Reference
IV	Internal Verification	TQAS	Transition Quality Assurance System
LDA	Locally Devised Assessment	TSO	Training Standards Officer
LDC	Local Development Company	UDL	Universal Design for Learning
LDF	Learner Detail Form	VEC	Vocation Education Committee
LEO	Local Enterprise Office	VTOS	Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme

# Tipperary ETB Context

Tipperary Education and Training Board (ETB) is one of 16 ETBs established under the provisions of the Education and Training Boards Act, 2013. The introduction of this legislation in 2013 saw both North Tipperary Vocational Education Committee (VEC) and South Tipperary VEC amalgamate to become Tipperary ETB.

The Further Education and Training (FET) Act, 2013 was signed into law in July 2013. The Act provided for the establishment of An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna (SOLAS) and the dissolution of Foras Áiseanna Saothair (FÁS). SOLAS was established on the 27th October 2013. SOLAS works with the ETBs to support the development of appropriate FET programmes and curricula. Tipperary ETB formally assumed responsibility for Training Services in Tipperary on the 28th March 2016.

The remit of Tipperary ETB, as the statutory provider of education and training for county Tipperary, is to provide a comprehensive range of quality education and training programmes to meet the needs of the community it serves. These include Second Level Education and Further Education and Training programmes. In addition, Tipperary ETB plays a significant role in the strategic development of the county through a variety of inter-agency initiatives.

Tipperary ETB serves the entire county of Tipperary, with a population of circa 160,000<sup>1</sup> people and is responsible for:

- 10 Post Primary Schools.
- One stand alone and five other PLC Centres.
- One All Irish Second Level Unit.
- Education provision at Coláiste Sliabh na mBan.
- Providing a range of further education and training programmes and services.
- Administering a range of support services including youth services.
- Acting as a patron on the Board of Management of Cashel Community School.
- The FET Division is responsible for the management, operation, and delivery of full-time and part-time education across locations in Tipperary (see Figure 1 and [Appendix I](#)).

<sup>1</sup> CSO 2016

**Fig 1: Location of Tipperary ETB Main Centres**

In addition to the main centres of FET shown on the below map, FET is delivered in 34 locations in the county overall.

Tipperary ETB is one of the main employers in Tipperary with 1,446 staff (ESBS-HR BI Report), as at 31st August 2021, providing education and training opportunities and support services.



### Tipperary Regional Profile Information

County Tipperary is located in the province of Munster covering 4,305km<sup>2</sup> with a population of 160,441 according to the 2016 census. The largest towns are Clonmel, Nenagh and Thurles. In 1838, County Tipperary was divided into two ridings, North and South for administrative purposes and in June 2014, the two ridings were reunified to form one county following the local elections (Tipperary County Council). Tipperary is the sixth largest of the 32 counties by area and the 12th largest by population. It is also the largest landlocked county in Ireland. The distance by road from Lorrha in the north-west of the county to Carrick-On-Suir in the south-east is 126 km and takes nearly two hours to travel by car.

Rank	Town	Population (2016 census)
1	Clonmel	17,140
2	Nenagh	8,968
3	Thurles	7,940
4	Carrick-on-Suir	5,771
5	Roscrea	5,446
6	Tipperary	4,979
7	Cashel	4,422
8	Cahir	3,593
9	Ballina	2,632
10	Templemore	1,939
11	Fethard	1,545



Population per Town in Tipperary

The population of county Tipperary grew by 0.5% between the years 2011 and 2016 which was significantly less than the national average of 3.8%. There were nearly 60,000 households in the county in 2016 with an average household size of 2.7 equalling the national average. The average age of the population of Tipperary is between 37.7 years and 38.5 years (2016 CSO figures), and is in line with the national average 37.4 years. The population aged 18 years and under in 2016 totalled 42,869 or 26.9% of the population.

### Education

In 2016, 34.8% of the population in Tipperary had third level education, compared to the national average of 42%, with 26.3% having lower second level or below education levels, in line with the national average of 27%<sup>2</sup>. 14.2% of the population of Tipperary aged 15 years and over have no formal, or primary only education, compared to the national average of 7%.

### Socio-economic Profile

Average incomes in county Tipperary are significantly less than the national average and with regard to deprivation, by far the greater part of the county is marginally below average on the Pobal Index. Dependents are defined for statistical purposes as people outside the normal working age of 15-64 years with Tipperary having an age dependency of 36.6% (2016 Pobal HP Deprivation Index for Small Areas). There are a number of disadvantaged areas associated primarily with urban centres but no areas classified either as affluent or as extremely disadvantaged. The 2016 Census estimated that the active Tipperary workforce was 74,339 (this includes unemployed looking for first regular job and unemployed having lost or given up previous job) compared to 2,304,037 nationally.

In the 2016 Census, 14.8% of the population recorded as having a disability which was higher than the national average of 13.5%, the percentage of lone parents was 21.71% and 9% of the population were non-Irish nationals which was less than the national average of 11.6%. Of those, however, 19.2% could speak English not well or not at all compared with 14% nationally. In 2016, 0.77% of the population in Tipperary identified as white Irish Traveller which compares with a national figure of 0.65%.

### Unemployment

The Live Register numbers in Tipperary for July 2021 totalled 6,740, i.e., numbers of people (with some exceptions) registering for Jobseekers Benefit or Allowance or for various other statutory entitlements.<sup>3</sup> This is an unemployment rate of 3.65% against a national rate of 6.5%, indicating that the unemployment rate in Tipperary is below the national average. The rate does vary across the county with higher rates being experienced particularly in some smaller urban centres.

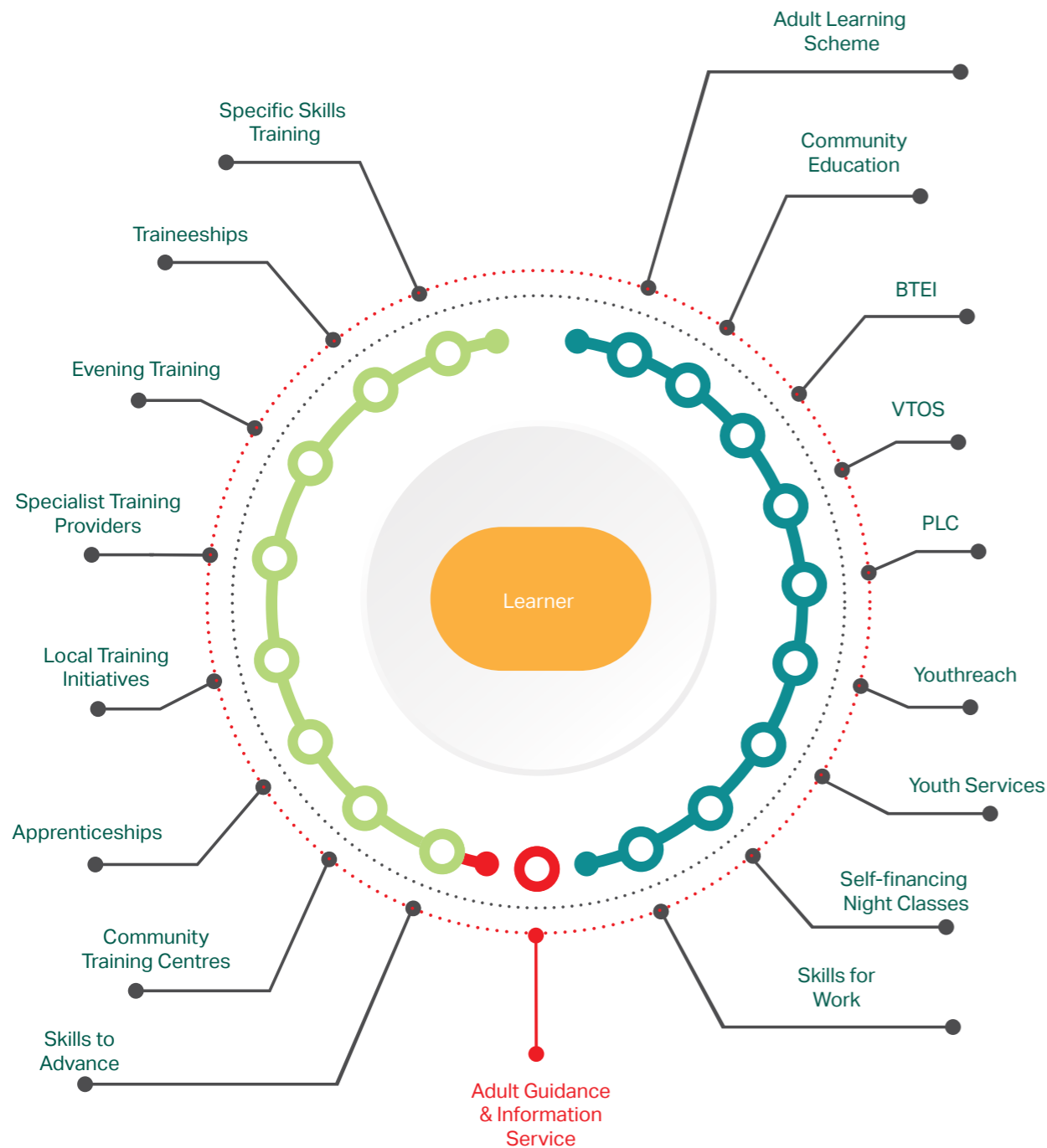
According to the [Census 2016 Summary Results](#), there are 79 unemployment blackspots identified by the Electoral Division in Ireland, i.e., where the unemployment rate was considered high relative to the level of the State overall. Tipperary has two unemployment blackspots with an average unemployment rate of 30.8% compared to a County unemployment rate in 2016 of 14.6%:

- Tipperary East Urban, South Tipperary: 34.0%
- Carrick-on-Suir Urban, Tipperary: 29.2%

<sup>2</sup> [Level of Education - CSO - Central Statistics Office](#)

<sup>3</sup> [CSO/Live Register](#)

FET Provision



Total FET Beneficiaries In 2020

Programme Category	Learners Total
Apprenticeship	714
Adult Learning Scheme	1,393
Back to Education Initiative (BTEI)	1,734
Community Education	1,938
Community Training Centre	196
English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)	496
Evening Training	379
Intensive Tuition in Adult Basic Education (ITABE)	84
Local Training Initiatives	184
Post Leaving Certificate (PLC)	1,245
Refugee Resettlement	37
Skills for Work	335
Skills to Advance (STA)	247
Specialist Training Providers	65
Specific Skills Training (SST)	220
Traineeship Training (TT)	164
Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS) Core	149
Youthreach	168
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>9,748</b>

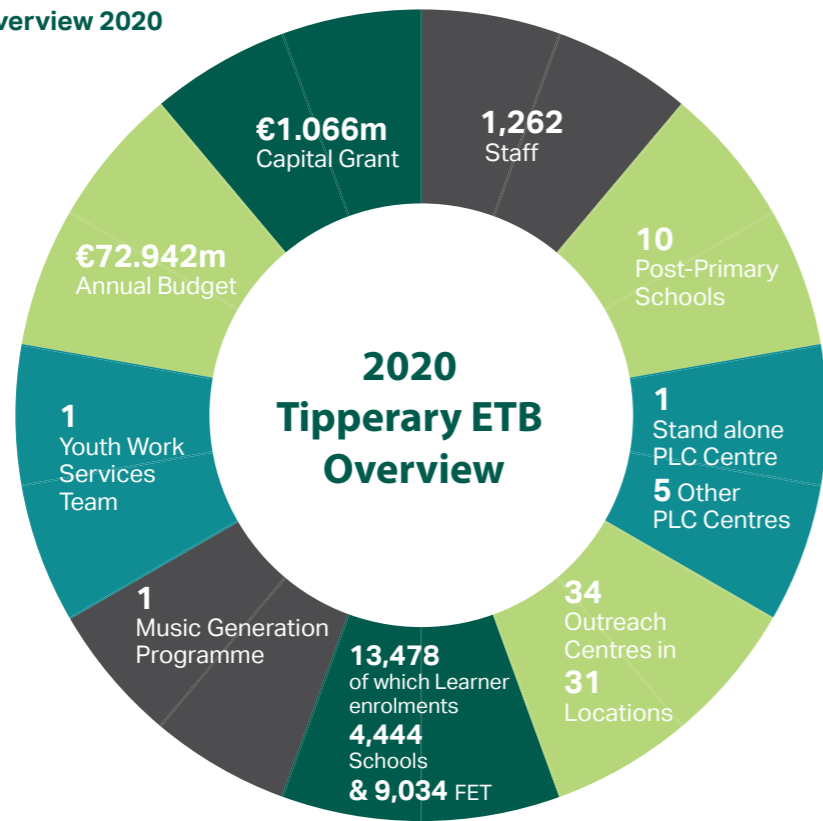
Total Beneficiaries by Age Profile

Learner Age	2017	2018	2019	2020
15-24	2,067	2,293	2,465	2,098
25-44	3,071	3,527	3,845	3,124
45-64	2,774	3,276	3,841	2,747
Over 64	1,085	1,662	2,221	1,065
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,007</b>	<b>10,761</b>	<b>12,373</b>	<b>9,034<sup>4</sup></b>

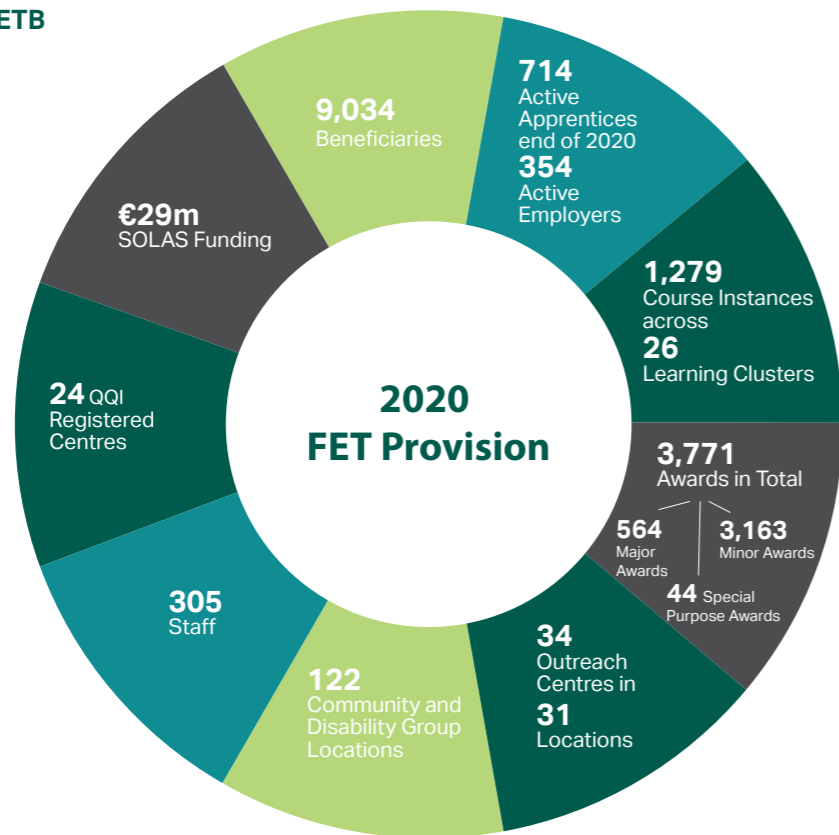
<sup>4</sup> Data Source: ETBI PLSS Reports-Beneficiaries 2020. (Excluding Apprenticeship Learners)



Tipperary ETB Overview 2020



2020 Tipperary ETB FET Provision







# Self-Evaluation Process and Methodology

Following the October 2019 publication of QQI's policy for the Inaugural Review of Quality Assurance (QA) in Education and Training Boards, Tipperary ETB's Chief Executive, Ms. Bernadette Cullen, commissioned an independent consultant, with expertise in QA and FET to assist the FET Management Team in the review of QA policies, procedures and structures in Tipperary ETB in preparation for the QQI Statutory Review. A series of group and individual meetings took place from February to March 2020 between the consultant and the Chief Executive, the FET Senior Management Team (SMT), members of the QA Steering Group and the QA Officer. The outcome of this review was a report to the Chief Executive which detailed the short and medium-long term priorities as well as an inaugural review process action plan and corresponding timeline.

2020 was significant in terms of organisational change with the implementation of a new organisational structure for FET. April 2020 saw the appointment of a new Director of FET (DFET), followed by the creation of a FET Development and Support Unit in November. Managed by a newly appointed Adult Education Officer (AEO), this unit included a restructured FET QA Office. The FET Development and Support Unit was assigned responsibility for the coordination of the self-evaluation process, with the support of the FET SMT and the Director of FET. The research team, including the FET QA office, comprised members with the competence, expertise, skills and knowledge to complete the self-evaluation task; including management, coordination, research and writing skills.

While the self-evaluation journey in 2020 and 2021 is not defined by the COVID-19 pandemic it is important to highlight that it affected a number of the data collection methodologies during the process and potentially framed some of the research findings. The use of additional methodologies in the primary research, for example, more face to face interviews, on site meetings with employers, personal accounts and more case study research may have provided more data, and perhaps richer data, to areas requiring a deeper dive or where the research findings could have been better informed by the stakeholder voice. Another identified challenge was the change in Review Coordinator role mid-project, an unexpected setback that was promptly managed and resolved resulting in minimal impact on the process and outcome.

Another observation regarding the self-evaluation was, due to the longevity of the process itself, some stakeholders (e.g. learners that have completed their learning journey with Tipperary ETB) will not directly reap the benefit of the implemented changes and outcomes.

## Self-Evaluation Process and Methodology

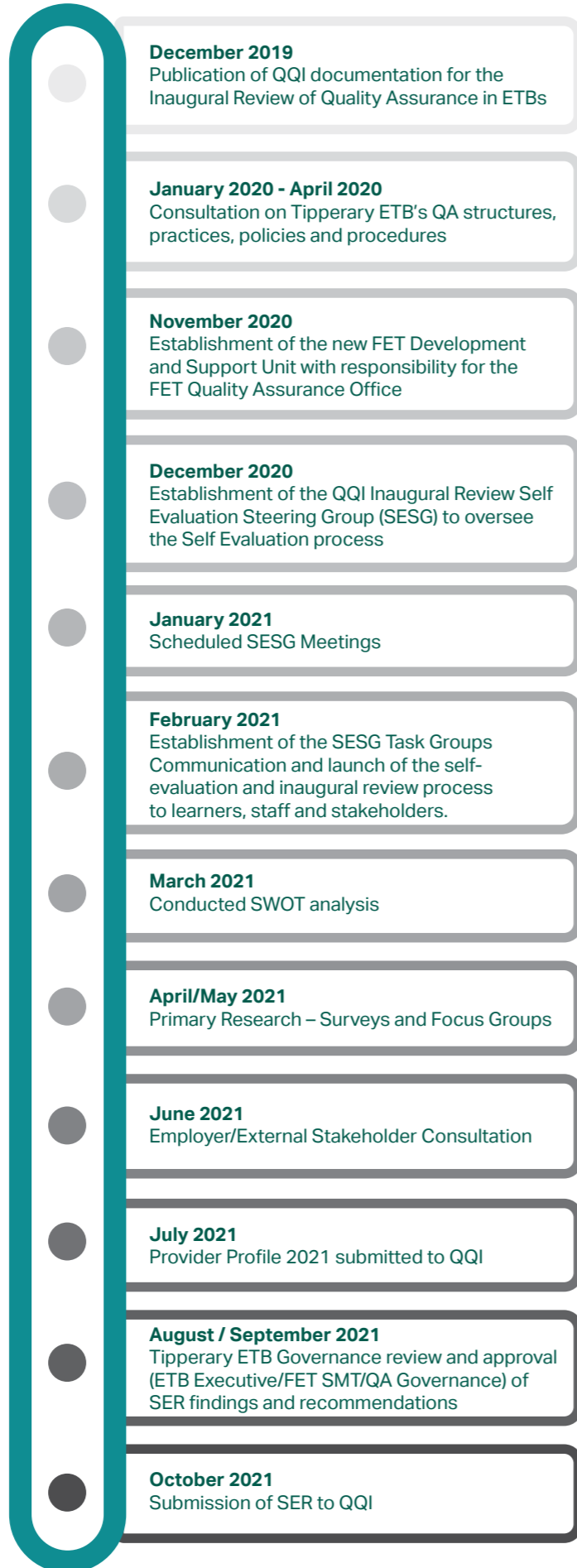
It was decided at the outset, based on the parameters that were set by QQI, that the self-evaluation format would review and present three objectives: Governance and Management of Quality; Teaching, Learning and Assessment; Self Evaluation, Monitoring and Review. These objectives would be reviewed with findings presented, accompanied with a description, evaluation and conclusion.

Tipperary ETB used a range of self-evaluation methodologies. Commencing in February 2021, primary and secondary research processes ran concurrently in a seven-month self-evaluation consultation period. The primary research consisted of surveys, focus groups, interviews, meetings, observations, SWOT<sup>5</sup> analyses; gathering both quantitative and qualitative data to inform the evaluation. Primary research consultations included learners, staff and stakeholders. Secondary research included a desk review of all FET quality assurance policies and procedures, both documented and undocumented, analysing existing data; information, statistics, evidence, reports, meeting minutes, for example, for a broader understanding to inform the research. All participants in the research were assured of anonymity, that the survey was voluntary and that the information collected was for research purposes to enhance the ETBs teaching and learning service.

A thematic analysis to identify common themes and patterns was undertaken to extrapolate qualitative data from the primary research, desk review and the quantitative survey data. In addition, relevant published reports were considered in the self-evaluation process, e.g., Tipperary ETB's Executive Self-Evaluation Report (2018), Tipperary ETB Statement of Strategy, Service Plans, Annual Reports, ETB SOLAS Strategic Performance Agreements, The National FET Strategy, Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs), QIP Progress Reports, AONTAS National FET Learner Forum Report etc.. The results of the thematic analysis, the quantitative survey data, the SWOT along with the methodical desk review provided Tipperary ETB with very rich data to inform the evaluation.

<sup>5</sup> Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats





**Key milestones in the Self-Evaluation Process**

**December 2019**, publication of QQI documentation for the Inaugural Review of Quality Assurance in ETBs.

**January 2020- April 2020**, consultation on Tipperary ETB's QA structures, practices, policies and procedures.

**November 2020**, establishment of the new FET Development and Support Unit with responsibility for the FET Quality Assurance Office.

**December 2020**, establishment of the QQI Inaugural Review Self Evaluation Steering Group (SESG) to oversee the Self Evaluation process, including documented terms of reference. The Review Coordinator role was assigned at this point, but was subsequently changed in April 2021, as the appointed Review Coordinator changed roles. The new Review Coordinator is the Adult Education Officer (AEO) for the FET Development and Support Unit (DSU).

**January 2021**, SESG Meetings scheduled for the period of self-evaluation were:



**February 2021**, establishment of the SESG Task Groups to progress key stakeholder information and feedback:



\*Refers to the individual involved in the activity of teaching and facilitating learning e.g. teacher, tutor, instructor, trainer, adult educator.

SESG Task Groups Terms of Reference included review of the three objectives; Governance and Management of Quality, Teaching, Learning and Assessment and Self Evaluation, Monitoring and Review, using the following criteria:

- **What** questions/approaches are needed to satisfy the indicative content.
- **Who** are the stakeholders, e.g., learner, employer, learning practitioner.
- **How** will the information be gathered, e.g., survey, interview, focus group.
- What **evidence**, if any, will be required.

Additional members included in External Stakeholder and Learner SESG Task Groups to provide further expertise and knowledge, see [Appendix IV](#)

**Communication/Launch**

- Agenda item on every Executive SMT and FET Committee meeting. Review Coordinator presents progress report to the monthly FET SMT (QA Governance) meeting for approval in addition to ongoing agenda item at the Quality Assurance Steering Group (QASG) periodic meetings
- 20/01/21 – Launch at FET Programme Managers Meeting – DFET & AEO
- 23/03/21 – Presentation to the Executive/Tipperary ETB Board
- 30/03/21 – Communication via email from DFET to ALL STAFF

## Self-Evaluation and Monitoring

### QQI Inaugural Review and Tipperary ETB’s Self-Evaluation

TETB’s external quality assurance obligations include a statutory review of quality assurance by QQI, as outlined in the Qualification and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012. The QQI Main Review Visit is scheduled for 7<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> February 2022. In advance of this, TETB will initially conduct a Self-Evaluation of its Quality Assurance systems and outline findings in a Self-Evaluation Report, due for submission 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 2021. The function of the Inaugural Review will be to inform the future development of quality assurance and enhancement activities within the organisation.

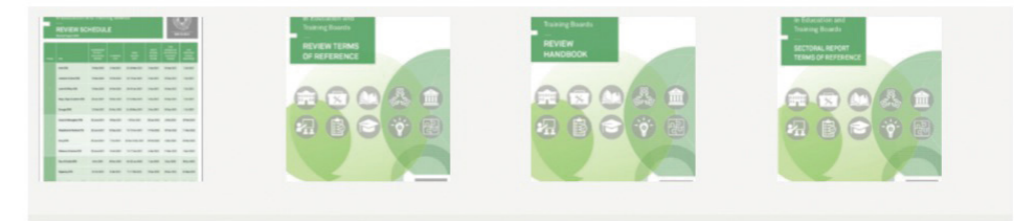
The self-evaluation process will be guided by, and overseen by, a TETB Self-Evaluation Steering Group. Terms of Reference for this group can be viewed [here](#).

Self-evaluation is a reflective and critical evaluation completed by the members of the ETB community, including learners, staff at all levels of the organisation, and external stakeholders.

It is the way in which the ETB outlines how effectively it assures and enhances the quality of its teaching, learning and service activities to support the achievement of its strategic goals.

When it is completed effectively, and in an open and inclusive manner, it is one of the most important and valuable components of the review process.

The purposes, scope and methodology for the reviews are outlined in QQI’s Policy for the Inaugural Review of Quality Assurance in Education and Training Boards. The Inaugural Review Schedule, Terms of Reference, Review Handbook and Sectoral Terms of Reference are available below:



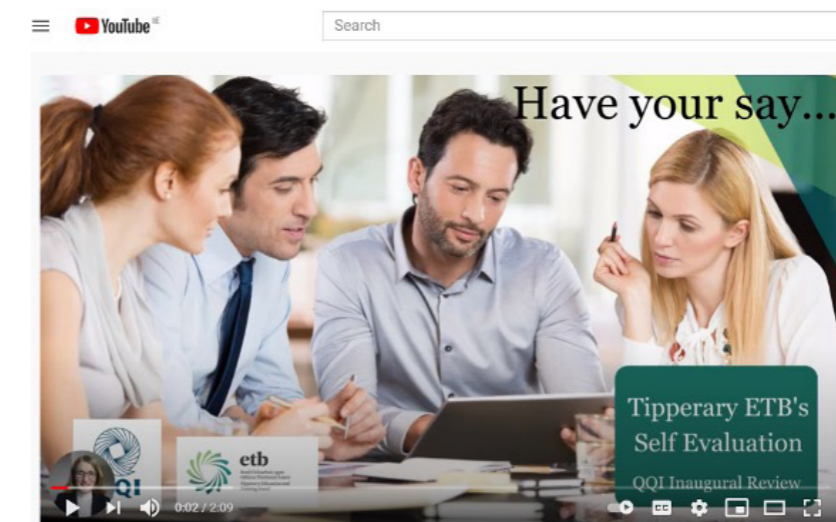
QQI Inaugural Review Website  
Communication Publication 2

Published information on the Tipperary ETB website updated – the Inaugural Review Self Evaluation Communication on the Tipperary ETB home page. In addition, YouTube link circulated to all staff and on-course learners: [Tipperary ETB’s Self Evaluation 2021](#)



QQI Inaugural Review Website  
Communication Publication 1

“Have your say...”



QQI Inaugural Review Website  
Communication Publication 3



March 2021, SWOT analysis was conducted to help Tipperary ETB understand its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. To extend the findings of the SWOT analysis, a TOWS<sup>6</sup> examination went a step further to match a selection of the strengths with opportunities and the threats with weaknesses, to effectively reduce threats.

TOWS MATRIX		
	Opportunities	Threats
	<p>O1. Inclusion of FET on CAO (RTE, 2021)</p> <p>O14. FET not 'back-up' plan (RTE, 2021) "Mr Harris said the current third level model had failed to recognise the brilliance of further education and training, which should be a first choice, rather than a fallback option, for students"</p> <p>O13. Socio-economic landscape may mean higher unemployment (IBEC thinks unemployment will remain high at 15.6% in 2021, before easing back to 9.3% next year) (RTE, 2021)</p> <p>O14. QQI Core Guidelines in relation to 'Progression' (QQI)</p> <p>O9. HE, Tech Universities and IOTs – opportunities to enhance relationships</p>	<p>T3. Moving to online space now means ETBs are competing with wider group of competitors who do not have a geographical remit or other restrictions</p> <p>T4. Growth of private providers in competition</p> <p>T10. Competition from other non TETB FET providers within a short distance of local towns</p>
Strengths	<p>S+O=Maxi-Maxi Strategies</p> <p>O1+O14+S1+S2+S3+S4 Communicating the strengths of TETB to capitalise on the inclusion of FET on CAO and the support for FET at Government Level (Simon Harris) "as a first choice"</p> <p>O13+S1+S2+S3+S4+S13 Using TETB's strengths, links with schools and the expectation of high unemployment, TETB should capitalise on 'unemployment-enrolment link'</p> <p>O14+O9+S8 Build on 'progression' pathways leading to HE, Tech Universities and IOTs, communicate these</p>	<p>S+T=Maxi-Mini Strategies</p> <p>S13+T3+T4+T10 Continuing to strengthen the links with schools and students to mitigate competition</p> <p>S1+S2+S3+S5 Using strengths to expand the provision and mitigate competition</p>
Weaknesses	<p>W+O=Mini-Maxi Strategies</p> <p>O1+W8+W15 Developing an 'Access Policy' that is less onerous for the student to capitalise on the inclusion of FET on CAO</p>	<p>W+T=Mini-Mini Strategies</p> <p>W12+T3+T4+T10 Continue to market TETB as a provider of choice to mitigate competition</p>

SWOT/TOWS analysis

April/May 2021, Primary Research – Surveys and Focus Groups

Learner Consultations:

Learner Survey using www.surveymonkey.com issued directly to 2,466 'On Course' Tipperary ETB learners via PLSS SMS. Tutors, teachers, leaders in centres assisted and facilitated completion as required and hard copies were made available if needed.

- 632 learners completed the survey, i.e., approx. 25%, with an average time for completion of 13 minutes. A 632-sample size which included representation from all FET programme categories ensures that the survey is large enough to be reliable and statistically significant.
- Focus group and interviews were used extensively as learner consultation methodologies, with 29 engagements, including past and current learners from full and part time programmes across all categories, see Appendix V for the full listing.

Staff Consultations:

- Staff Survey using www.surveymonkey.com was issued directly to 650 Tipperary ETB Staff (FET and OSD)
- 310 staff completed the survey, i.e., approx. 48%, with an average time for completion of 11 minutes. A 310-sample size ensures that the survey is large enough to be reliable and statistically significant.
- Tipperary ETB staff completed ETBI's 'Evaluation of the impact of the COVID 19 modifications to Teaching, Learning & Assessment' template to capture learning from COVID-19 mitigation processes. The approach taken was a FET wide response with each theme addressed per programme category, e.g., PLC, Part time, Youthreach, Training etc.
- Additional consultation with staff in the form of meetings and focus groups with the research team and review of evaluation findings continued throughout the self-evaluation process.

June 2021, Employer/External Stakeholder Consultation:

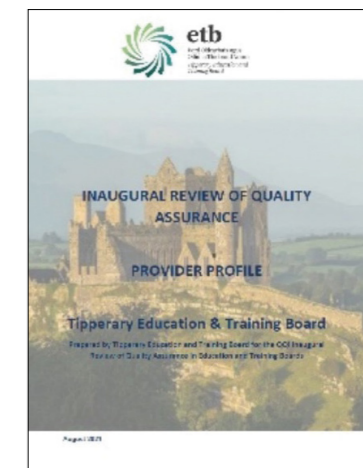
- Employer Survey to 248 Employers, including the South-East and Mid-West Regional Skills Fora (RSF) and 64 Apprenticeship Employers
- 10 responses to date (3.76%). As a low response rate and under representative, this is not sufficient to extrapolate findings as representative of all employer views across Tipperary, but the response data, including comments, is valuable and can be considered on an individual basis.
- The survey is just one mode of consultation with Tipperary Employers in addition to our ongoing Workforce Development Group, links with RSF (a member of the RSF sits on the SESG) and an appointed dedicated Employer Engagement role working alongside the existing Apprenticeship Senior Training Advisors.

July 2021 Provider Profile:

Following approval by the Tipperary FET Senior Management Team/QA Governance 19th July 2021, the Tipperary ETB Provider Profile 2021 was submitted to QQI 23rd July 2021.

August/September 2021

- Review the Tipperary ETB FET 2020 Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) and integrate the identified in progress quality assurance activities into the inaugural review self-evaluation report.
- FET Senior Management Team (QA Governance) review and approval of SER findings and recommendations.
- Tipperary ETB Executive Senior Management Team review and approval of SER findings and recommendations.
- Notification to Tipperary ETB Board and FET Committee.



Tipperary ETB Provider Profile Report

October 2021 Submission to QQI

6 Threats Opportunities Weaknesses Strengths



# Objective 1:

Governance and Management of Quality



The ETB's  
Mission  
and Strategy





# DESCRIPTION

## Governance and Management Structures

Established in accordance with [Section 30 of the Education and Training Boards Act 2013](#), Tipperary ETB's Board consists of 21 members: 12 members elected by local authorities, two members of staff, two parent representatives and five members with specialist knowledge of education and training. The Board of Tipperary ETB confirms that the 2019 [Code of Practice for Governance of Education and Training Boards](#) has been adopted and that Tipperary ETB complies with the up-to-date requirements of the Code in their governance practices and procedures. The functions of the Board are either executive or reserved. Executive functions are carried out by the Chief Executive; 'a chief executive shall, in the performance of an executive function, act in accordance with the policies for the time being of the education and training board for which he or she is the chief executive'<sup>7</sup>. Reserved functions are carried out by the Board and are set out in [Section 12 \(2\) of the Education and Training Boards Act 2013](#). In accordance with [Section 44](#) and [Section 45](#) of the Education and Training Boards Act 2013, the following Committees were established to support the Tipperary ETB Board in its functions:

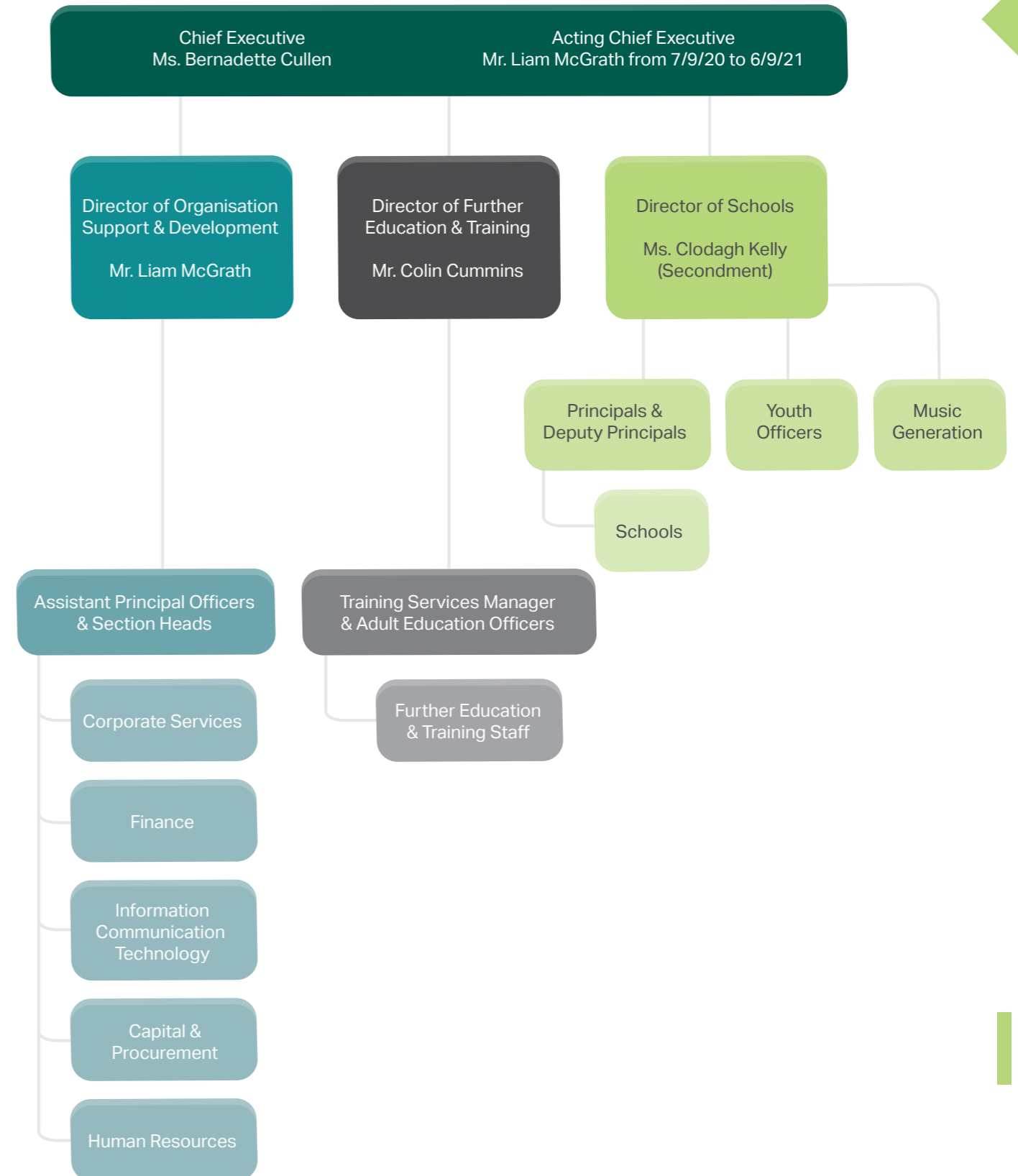
- Audit and Risk Committee
- Finance Committee
- Further Education and Training (FET) Committee
- Youth Work Committee

Tipperary ETB is committed to maintaining the balance between skills for the economy with the wider benefits of learning that are an intrinsic part of Further Education. The organisation has identified core values which underpin the work of Tipperary ETB with learners, staff and the community.



<sup>7</sup> Education and Training Boards Act 2013

Tipperary ETB's Governance and Management Organisational Structure:





Structure of FET:



Strategic Priorities & Goals:

The [Tipperary ETB Strategy Statement](#) was developed in accordance with Section 27 of the [Education and Training Boards Act 2013](#), following significant and ongoing consultation with key stakeholders for the period 2018-2022. It was the first such Statement of Strategy since the merger of North and South Tipperary VECs in 2013, mapping out the Tipperary ETB Board's plan for the period. Tipperary ETBs Statement of Strategy through ideas, energy and commitment of stakeholders is advancing the educational and training landscape in Tipperary. Four goals were identified in the Strategy Statement, as follows:



Underpinning the Tipperary ETB Strategy Statement, [Tipperary ETB's Strategic Performance Agreement 2018-2020](#) is an agreement between SOLAS and Tipperary ETB setting out the context, strategic priorities and ETB contribution to achievement of National FET sector targets over the period 2018-2020. It also articulates Tipperary ETB's commitment to supporting the implementation of a range of national policies and strategies relevant to FET provision and identifies the key risks and challenges which must be mitigated and addressed in order to ensure successful delivery of this agreement. The agreement is the product of extensive dialogue and engagement between SOLAS and Tipperary ETB, with independent input and validation from a panel of experts with an understanding of Irish and international good practice in FET systems.





The strategic priorities supporting the four goals of the Tipperary ETB Statement of Strategy 2018-2022:

GOAL 1	GOAL 2	GOAL 3	GOAL 4
Lead the development of quality provision to meet the education and training needs of learners and the wider community engaging with the ETB.	Continue to build an effective and progressive organisation and adhere to best practice in Corporate Governance and Compliance.	Develop modern, dynamic learning and working environments & embrace innovation & technologies in support of learners and staff.	Communicate and collaborate in an effective manner to reinforce inclusivity and promote our organisation.
STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1.1	STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2.1	STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3.1	STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4.1
Ensure education and training provision & youth services are quality-assured, relevant, innovative & evidence based.	Develop an organisational structure that ensures purposeful integration of services and reflects evolving needs.	Continue to improve and invest in facilities.	Enhance internal and external communication across the organisation using the most up to date materials.
STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1.2	STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2.2	STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3.2	STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4.2
Demonstrate a commitment to all learners across the organisation by developing policies and practices that improve access and appropriate course placement.	Support the on-going professional needs of staff and Board members to develop capacity and skills.	Create inclusive and creative practices and environments.	Establish mechanisms for feedback from learners, staff, Board members and stakeholders.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1.3	STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2.3	STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3.3	STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4.3
Encourage activities that promote wellbeing in all our schools and centres.	Ensure robust corporate governance, practices and compliance across the organisation.	Embrace and utilise new technology.	Foster a culture of collaboration and partnership with stakeholders and showcase best practice.
STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1.4	STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2.4		STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4.4
Develop and implement integration of literacy and numeracy across provision.	Undertake regular planning and review to improve the provision of all services.		Engage in a variety of activities that promote Tipperary ETB as an organisation of high-standing that is responsive to evolving education and training needs.
STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1.5			STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4.5
Improve inclusion of all learners via targeted provision, that meets the needs of specific learner groups, providing learner supports to assist successful participation.			Communicate and collaborate in an effective manner to reinforce inclusivity and promote our organisation.
STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1.6			
Support innovation, creativity and change across all provision.			







## Evaluation

Tipperary ETB's objectives are aligned with the mission and the strategic goals and priorities of the organisation and the self-evaluation findings give the ETB confidence that quality assurance is present across the organisation at all levels, including learners, learning practitioners, administration, senior management, FET committee, Executive and Board. Academic processes and standards are maintained in a learner-centred approach.

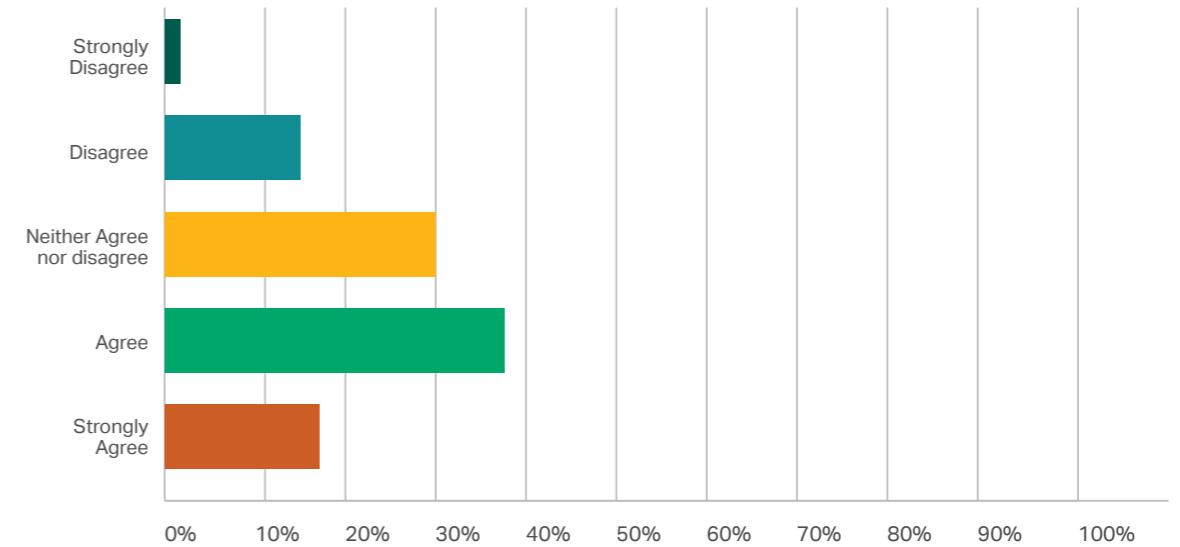
Equally the learner survey of approximately 2,466 current learners resulted in 632 responses, i.e., 26% learner engagement demonstrates the acknowledgment by learners that they feel their voice matters, and that they too have a responsibility and opportunity to input into the quality agenda.

With just below 50% of staff stating that they have opportunity to make effective contributions to strategy, policy, procedures relevant to their area of work, although a positive response there is some room for improvement here.

74% of Tipperary ETB Learning Practitioner respondents reported that they feel their awareness of Quality Assurance has improved over the last few years

### Staff have opportunities to make effective contributions to strategy, policy, procedures relevant to their area of work:

95% of Tipperary ETB staff surveyed reported that they are aware of Tipperary ETB's Mission and Objectives and what it is trying to accomplish.



68% of Tipperary ETB staff surveyed reported that they are aware of Tipperary ETB's Statement of Strategy 2018-2022.

The survey of approximately 650 staff yielded 310 responses, i.e., 48% staff participation expressed a willingness, responsibility and acceptance that they have a role in the improvement of quality. This demonstrates that Tipperary ETB staff have a sense of ownership which is important in embedding a quality assurance culture and for ongoing improvement and enhancement.





Tipperary ETB committed to making specific contribution to each of the six core national FET sector targets over the period 2018-2020:<sup>8</sup>

Target	National Sectoral Target	Tipperary ETB Contribution (Target)	Actuals (CSO) 2020 <sup>9</sup>
More learners securing employment from provision which primarily serves the labour market	10% over 3 years	48% over 3 years, equating to 618 learners securing employment in 2020	345
More learners progressing to other further or higher education courses from provision which is primarily focused on this purpose	10% over 3 years	10% over 3 years, equating to 962 learners progressing to other courses in 2020	558
Increase in the rate of certification on courses primarily focused on transversal (social mobility) skills development	10% over 3 years	10% over 3 years, equating to 421 completers certified in 2020	301
Increase in adults seeking FET level provision engaging in lifelong learning interventions	10% over 3 years	13% over 3 years, equating to 7,615 starting LLL relevant programmes in 2020	3955
Increase in learners securing relevant qualifications in sectors where employment growth/skills needs have been identified	10,000 learners per annum	Average annual increase of 342 and a 47% increase in learners in 2020 compared with 2017	1011
New apprenticeship and trainee registrations in the period 2018 to 2020	13,900 over 3 years	258 over 3 years, more than a five-fold increase	311

<sup>8</sup> [https://www.solas.ie/f/70398/x/6199335089/14717\\_solas\\_etb\\_tipperary\\_web.pdf](https://www.solas.ie/f/70398/x/6199335089/14717_solas_etb_tipperary_web.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Figures subject to change – SOLAS/CSO Data Gathering Protocols

In Q4 2020 Tipperary ETB FET department welcomed the appointment of a dedicated resource for Information and Data Management, a service that will inform strategic analysis and decision making through quantitative data collection and analysis at programme and provision level.

## CONCLUSION

### Recommendations/Actions

- Progress with SOLAS the Strategic Performance Agreement, informed by the self-evaluation and based on the SOLAS FET Strategy 2020-2024 strategic priorities: Building Skills, Fostering Inclusion, Creating Pathways.
- Implement the new FET Funding Model, once finalised, to include Discretionary Funding, Skills for Employment and Progression (L3-6), Bridging and Foundation Skills (L1-2) and Core Funding Allocation.
- Further create the opportunity for the wider engagement of staff in the contribution to quality assurance in Tipperary ETB, including the creation, promotion and awareness of feedback and contribution pathways.



# Objective 1:

Governance and Management of Quality

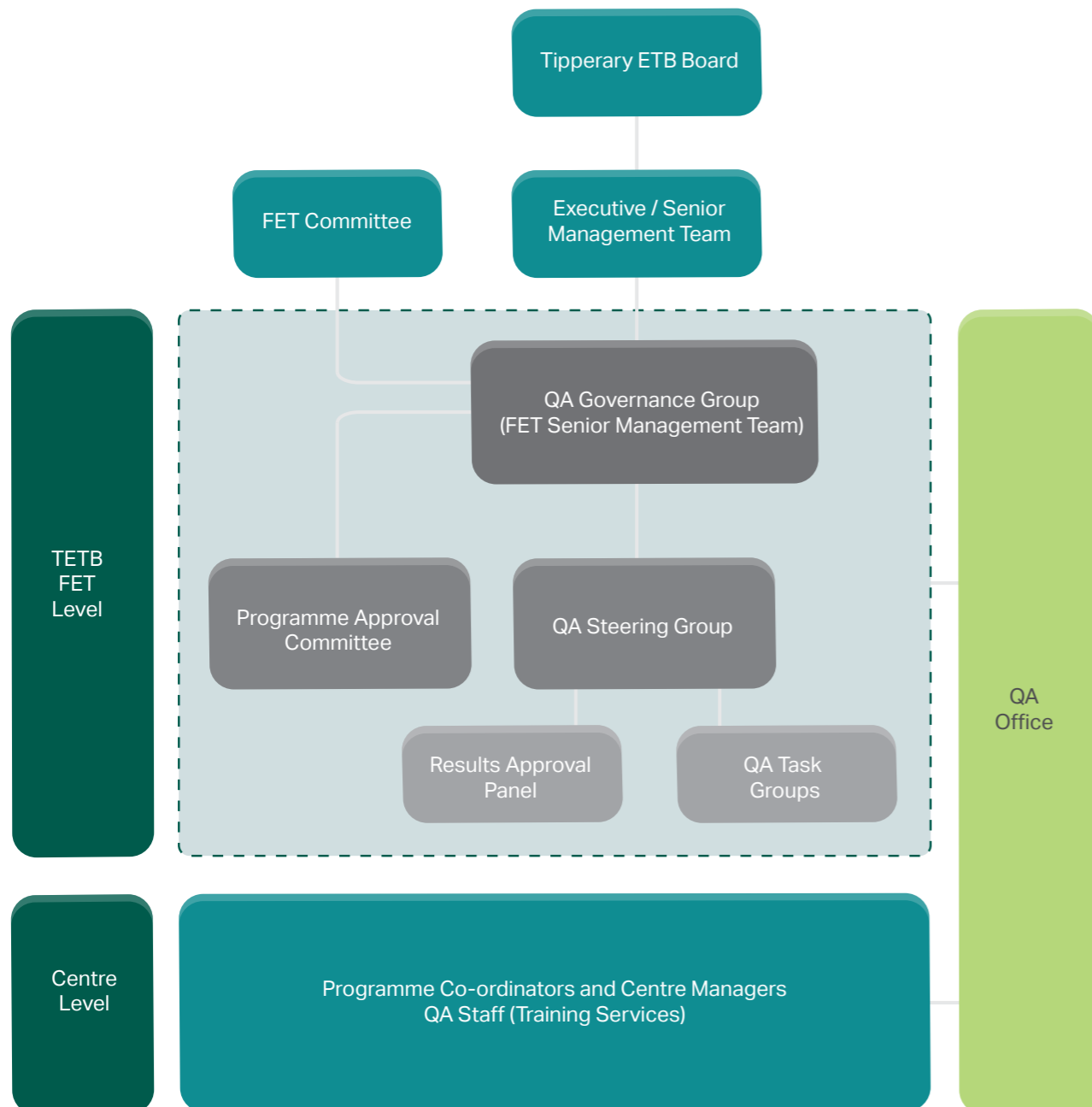
Structure & Terms of Reference for the Governance & Management of Quality Assurance





## DESCRIPTION

Tipperary ETB FET department has established governance structures for the oversight of quality assurance. This includes the QA Governance Group (comprising of members of the FET SMT) which has oversight and responsibility for all programme development and delivery, in addition to oversight of teaching, learning and assessment. See graphic below that illustrates QA governance and management structures:

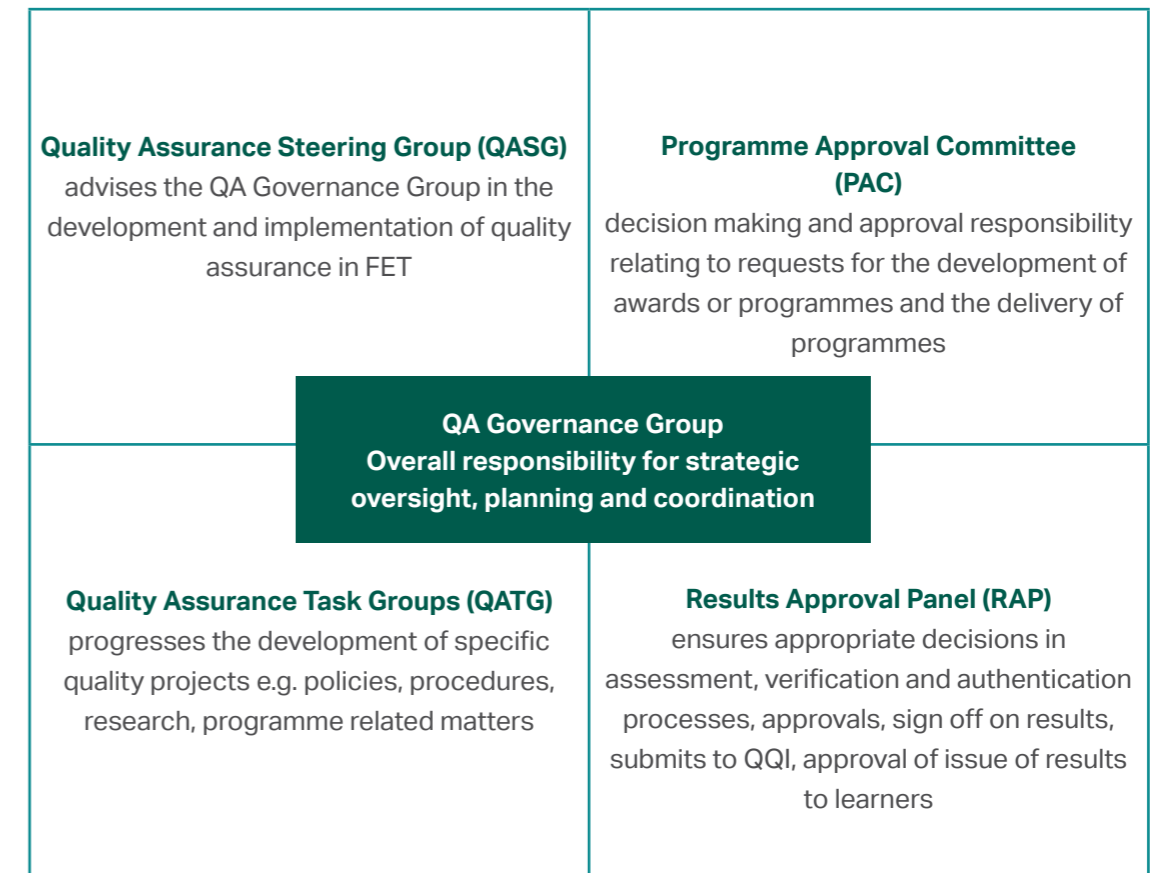


### Purpose of Tipperary ETB's QA Governance System

The FET SMT includes the DFET, Adult Education Officers and the Training Services Manager who meet monthly to quality assure all FET provision in Tipperary ETB with overall responsibility for strategic oversight, planning and coordination. With the publication of QQI's Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers and the Executive Self-Evaluation undertaken in 2018, Tipperary ETB recognised the need for clear QA-specific governance structures with terms of reference (which are now established and operational). These QA governance structures oversee all aspects of Tipperary ETB's quality assurance provision including QQI and non-QQI awards. This governance structure reflects the obligations noted in QQI's Core and Sector-Specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines, along with Tipperary ETB's aspirations for an organisation wide quality-led system that is transparent, documented and accessible to all stakeholders.

Further detail on the expectations and operation of the ETB's QA governance system can be found in the [Tipperary ETB's QA Governance Terms of Reference](#).

### Structure of Tipperary ETB's QA Governance System





## EVALUATION

Tipperary ETB has governance structures that ensure separation of responsibilities between those involved in developing proposals or materials and those involved in the approval of those recommendations (decision-making), ensuring objective oversight is maintained.

In evaluating the effectiveness of the current governance systems, careful consideration in the ETB has been given to **selection of members** for each governance group and only members who have the required expertise, as set out in the relevant terms of reference documents, to fulfil the duties and any decision-making responsibilities required of that group are in place. For example, the QA Governance Group comprises of members who have the expertise and authority. Similarly, the Programme Approval Committee (PAC) from the perspective of expertise and authority, is also comprised of FET SMT. Finally, the QASG membership has significant FET and/or QA expertise along with professional expertise so that recommendations made are more robust as multiple perspectives and implications are considered. The inclusion of the local Further Education Support Service (FESS) officer to Tipperary ETB's QASG also provides additional externality.

In terms of **rotation of members**, this is working well across some governance groups but is more challenging to implement in other groups. For example, the greater availability of expertise (e.g. learning practitioners, tutors, programme co-ordinators, centre managers, principals, resource workers, FET managers etc) for the RAP facilitates easier rotation of membership. Regarding the QASG, in Q3 2021, membership was restructured removing two members who already belonged to the QA Governance Group. Where less expertise and authority is needed (e.g. senior management experience) and/or where more permanent membership is needed, rotation of membership is much more difficult.

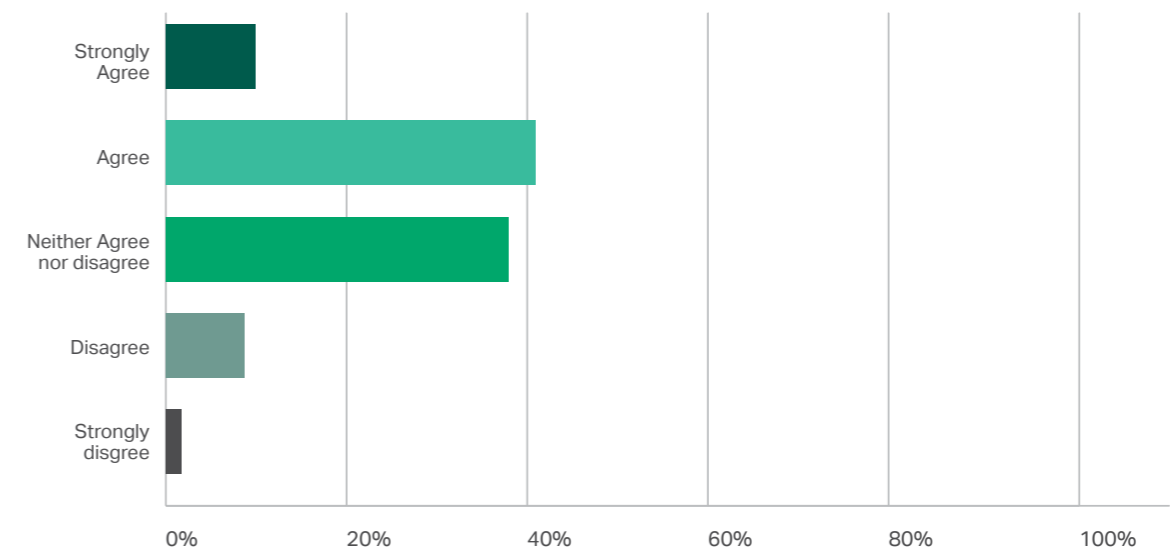
The **duplication of members** across some of the governance groups does raise externality and independence challenges to governance. For example, some members of the QA Governance Group are line managers to FET centres in their individual roles and also have formal committee roles on the QA Governance and the Programme Approval Committee. Whilst there is a conflict of interest here, duplication cannot be avoided due to the level of expertise and authority needed. Consideration will need to be given to the effective management of these issues and challenges to minimise risk so that adequate separation of responsibility is ensured and good governance practice is demonstrated.

**Documented terms of reference** has supported Tipperary ETB's governance structures to provide the appropriate governance. For example, the RAP has clear and transparent terms of reference including roles and responsibilities of panel members, types of decisions required, what happens if there are differing opinions, frequency of meetings and reporting and conflicts of interest. This supports effective practice and ensures that the panel take the appropriate decisions in relation to learner results. Tipperary ETB's results approval process is well embedded and this provides the ETB with the assurance that robust oversight is present to ensure the integrity of awards and reputation of the NFQ are intact.

With regard to the QA Governance Group, terms of reference are documented and in practice, but procedures evolve more frequently as Tipperary ETB banks QA learning and experience with regard to this level of governance. Whilst these evolving terms of reference are working well to support this group in its ultimate goal of overseeing quality assurance in the ETB, the effectiveness of the QA Governance Group is sometimes challenged operationally to meet QA agenda targets, due in part to the role and functions of QA Governance being performed by the FET SMT. In addition, the PAC which has its own set of terms of references and roles and responsibilities, also resides as a function of the QA Governance Group. The implementation of programme approval functions by the PAC is working well as they too operate within the clear parameters set out for this group's activity.

**The frequency of meetings** of Tipperary ETB's various governance units ensures that programme needs are met in a timely manner. For example, the QASG, QA Governance Group and PAC meet approximately once per month and the RAP convene to ensure demands for certification are met.

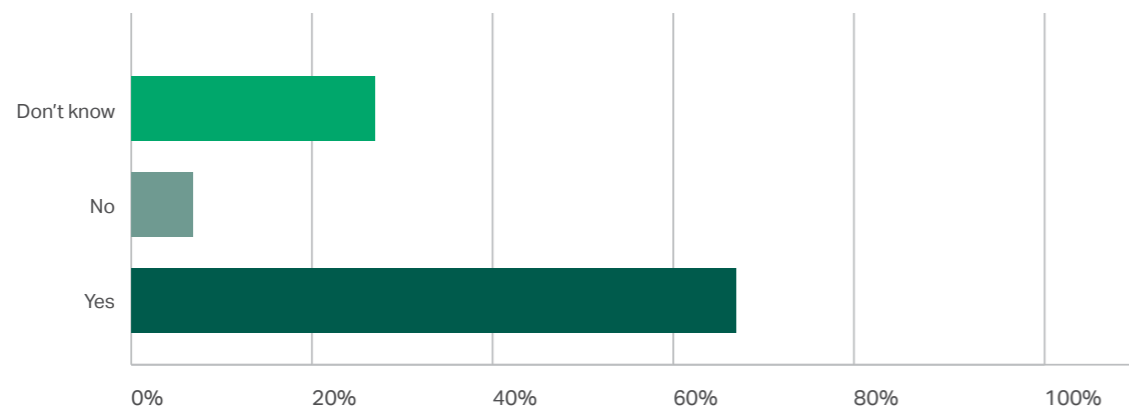
### Information regarding Programme Approval decision making is clear and transparent





The **interaction** between the various units of governance is important. For example, the relationship and communication between the QASG and QA Governance Group has improved with the appointment of the AEO with responsibility for the Development and Support unit, including QA, in November 2020. The AEO is the link person between both governance groups, Chair of the QASG and a member of the QA Governance Group. To support preparation for effective meetings of governance groups, related materials and information are made available in advance, for example, using a dedicated Microsoft Teams space. The QASG minutes for the attention of the QA Governance Group are communicated via the AEO, who also notifies the QA Office of actions and decisions, in turn relaying outcomes to the QASG at the next meeting.

**Tipperary ETB's Governance and Management of Quality Assurance is visible and transparent?**



Whilst the governance around results approval activity is thought to be working very effectively to ensure integrity of the awards, the governance of learner results and outcomes at centre/programme-level prior to the presentation of results to RAP, needs addressing. This was identified both in the Tipperary ETB 2020 RAP process and in the independent review report of Tipperary ETB's QA policies, procedures and structures.

The effectiveness of the governance and management of quality assurance in the areas of non-accredited provision, non QQI certification and contracted training QA arrangements is identified in the evaluation as being less robust than other areas of provision. Non-accredited provision in FET Community Education accounted for 36% of all provision in 2020 with non QQI certification increasing in recent years in Tipperary ETB FET to 35% of awards in 2020, including; City and Guilds, ICDL, Cambridge English, ACCA, CompTIA etc. Specific Skills Training and Traineeship training, in some instances, is contracted under the providers own QA arrangements; Tipperary ETB does not have procedures that cover the responsibility and governance in relation to this structure.

## CONCLUSION

### Recommendations/Actions

- Minimise the duplication of membership across the governance committees/boards, considering expansion/rotation and include documented procedures for the management of conflict of interest.
- Finalise and implement the programme approval policy and associated procedures, currently in draft stage.
- Establish procedures to guide centres in conducting centre/programme-level reviews of learner results/outcomes.
- Review the role of QA governance and oversight in relation to non-accredited provision, non QQI certification and contracted training QA arrangements working towards a single QA system.



# Objective 1:

Governance and Management of Quality

The Documentation of  
Quality Assurance  
Policies and Procedures





## DESCRIPTION

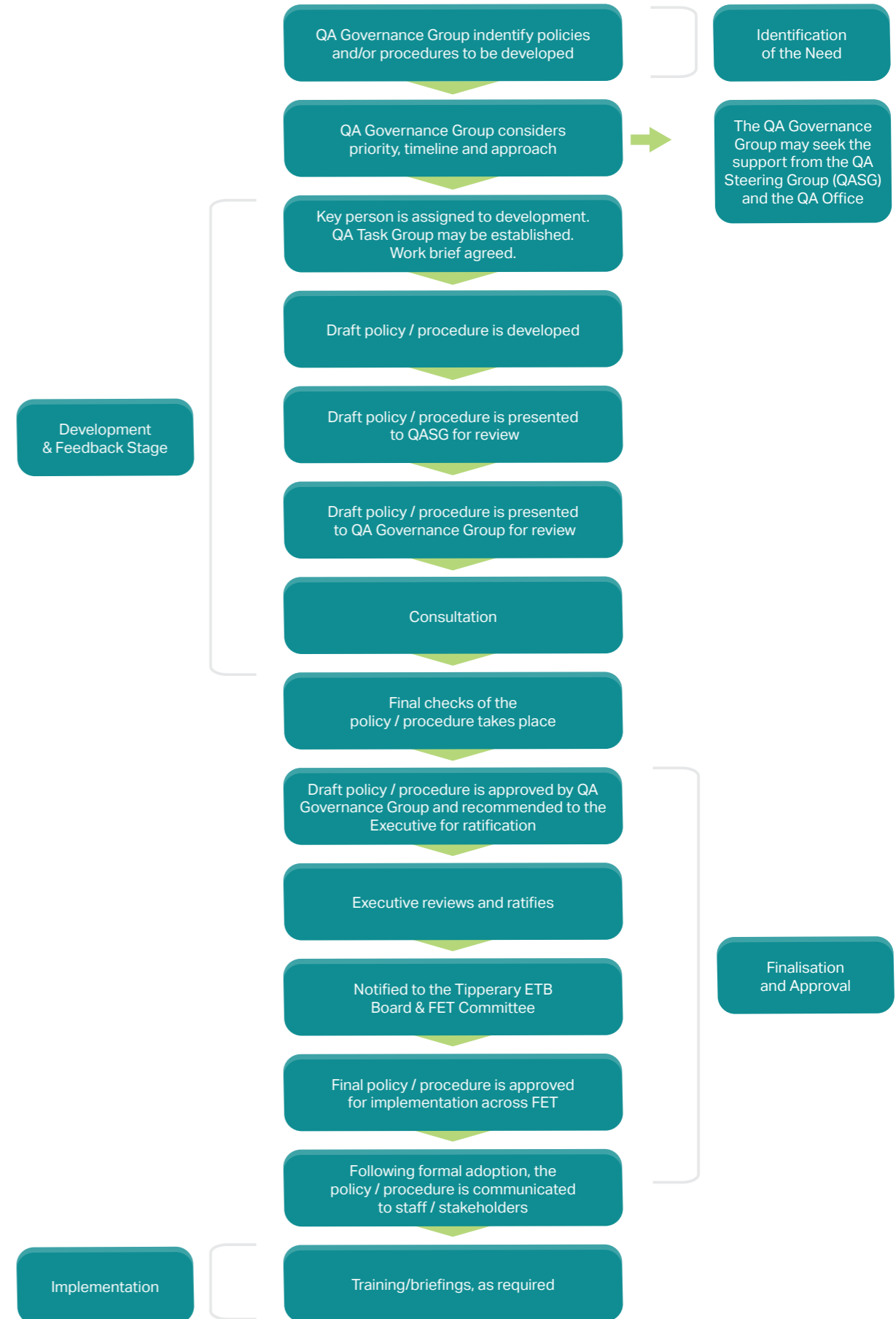
The completion of Tipperary ETB's Executive Self-Evaluation in January 2018 has supported the goal to achieve a transparent, robust and fully documented approach to QA by identifying and evaluating the areas of quality assurance that required attention, including the governance and management of QA and the need for a documented approach.

### Process for QA Policy and Procedure Development

Tipperary ETB's QA Governance Group agree and approve the development of a given QA policy or procedure based on an agreed need and determines the priority, timeline and approach to be taken. Stakeholders are consulted for input, where necessary. Policies and procedures are developed in Tipperary ETB based on QQI QA guidelines, legislative requirements, strategic importance, assuring the quality and standards of provision.

All policies and procedures are brought to draft level with the support of the FET QA Office, QA Steering Group and/or a QA Task Group, before being presented for review and approval by the QA Governance Group. Once approved, policies and procedures are sent to the Executive SMT for ratification and finally notified to the FET Committee and Tipperary ETB Board. The new policy/procedure is implemented and recommendations for amendments collated by the FET QA Office for periodic reviews and updates. In the case where policies or procedures are reviewed and deemed ineffective, they can be rescinded, amended or replaced.

Newly developed policies and procedures are available publicly on the Tipperary ETB website [www.tipperary.etb.ie](http://www.tipperary.etb.ie) and to FET staff on the Quality Assurance Sharepoint (QASP).







### Use of QA Language for Documented Policies and Procedures

All newly revised quality-related policies and procedures use the QA terminology and definitions noted in Tipperary ETB's [Glossary of Standard Language](#) document to ensure clarity and consistency of the use of QA language across all FET QA policies and procedures.

### Infographics and easy to read versions

A number of procedures, particularly those that impact learners the greatest, have flow charts and infographics to illustrate the process e.g. reasonable accommodation. In addition, an easy-to-read version of this procedure is also available since June 2021.

### Availability of QA Policies and Procedure

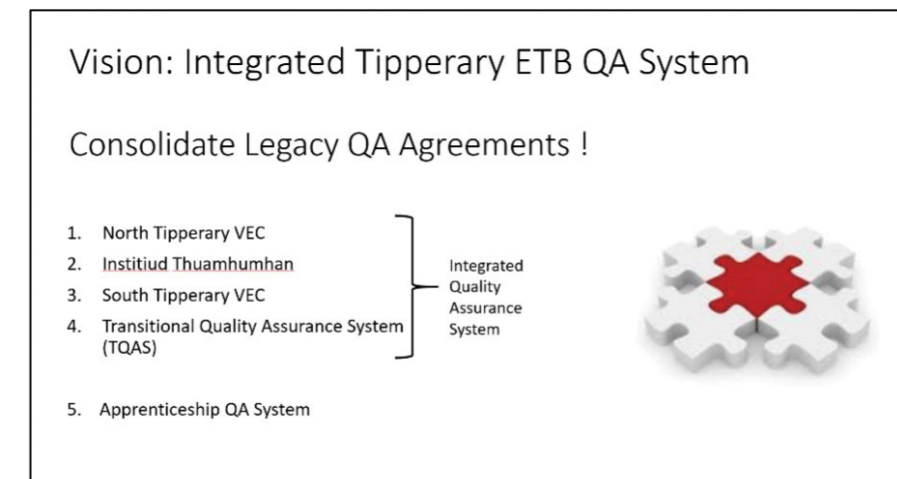
As new policies/procedures are approved, these will supersede any legacy ones. As stated earlier, all Tipperary ETB FET centres have access to the updated FET policies and procedures via the Tipperary ETB QASP. If a particular quality assurance policy or procedure has not yet been updated, then centres must be guided by the relevant legacy arrangements that are described in the legacy QA agreements. These are also available on the website on [Governance and Management of Quality Assurance - Tipperary Education & Training Board \(etb.ie\)](#)

- [North Tipperary VEC QA Agreement](#)
- [South Tipperary VEC QA Agreement](#)
- [Institiud Thuamhumhan QA Agreement](#)
- [Transitional Quality Assurance System \(TQAS\) QA Agreement](#)

## EVALUATION

### Legacy QA Agreements

Tipperary ETB is committed to developing an integrated Quality Assurance (QA) system and is striving to develop a QA system that is fully documented to ensure that there are robust, documented policies and procedures in place for the assurance of quality across provision, services and other related activities. As part of this process, 2019 saw the implementation of the FET Internal Verification (IV) process and the FET Exams Procedures and in 2021, the implementation of a new RAP procedure that combined the FE and Training Services RAPs into one collective RAP process, allowing for a more efficient process, supporting the sharing of best practice, all paving the way for an integrated QA system in Tipperary ETB.



### QA Policy and Procedure Development Process

June 2021 saw the documentation of the QA Policy and Procedure Development process, to inform management, staff and stakeholders about the ETB's approach to developing quality assurance policies and procedures across FET. On implementation, it will serve as a robust guide to future development of QA, from the identification of need, policy development, consultation, finalisation and approval, communication, implementation to monitoring and review.

### QA Templates

The FET QA office has an agreed set of QA Templates which are used for QA policy and QA procedure documents to support common presentation. These templates are only used for documentation in the QA office and differ from those in use by other Departments in the ETB, for example, in OSD; Finance, HR, Corporate Governance policies and procedures.





### Access to QA Procedures

Common templates for display with infographics and plain english and common language help with engagement with QA documentation. However, where there are multiple user groups for some procedures technical language may be a barrier to access. For example, the Reasonable Accommodation procedure will need to be understood by learners, administrators, learning practitioners, principals, parents/guardians etc. With access in mind, Tipperary ETB created an easy-to-read version of the Reasonable Accommodation Procedure in April 2021, which was subsequently tested for understanding on two groups of learners (at NFQ levels 3 and 5) in June 2021. Feedback confirmed that those learners 'understood the language around the process' but were unclear on some aspects of the requirement for medical evidence. They also commented on access challenges to hyperlinked application forms if information/documentation is presented in paper format. It is acknowledged that more work is needed to create easy-to-read versions, supported by infographics. The Learner Appeals process has been highlighted as being a priority procedure requiring an easy-to-read version.

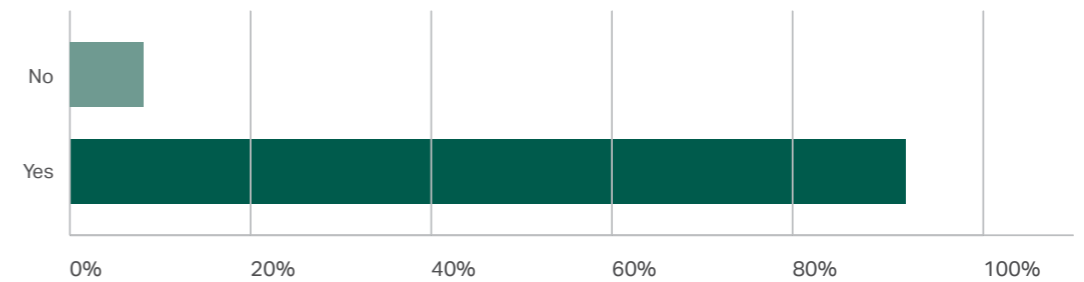
### System of Document Control

In March 2021, Tipperary ETB FET implemented a Documentation Control Procedure to detail how to control documentation and revision history to ensure the correct version of documentation is easily identified and history and/or summary of revision is available. The scope of this procedure includes assessment instruments, programme descriptors and modules, procedures, terms of reference, guidelines, policies, forms, reports etc., ensuring clarity and consistency in the quality assurance documentation. The evaluation noted, however, this system is in place only for documentation that is managed by the FET QA office and furthermore, in regard to monitoring, the process for policy and procedure review needs to be developed further as well as formalising a schedule.

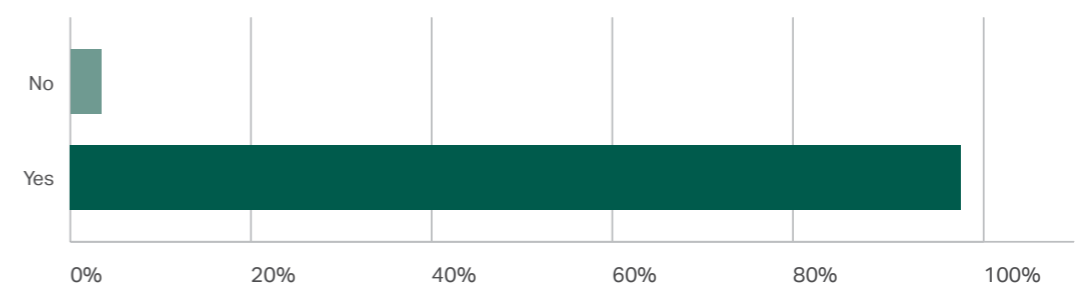
### QA Information and Communication

2020 welcomed the roll out of the new QA Sharepoint (QASP) site, a resource hub for Tipperary ETB staff to access information; validated programmes, modules, descriptors, QA forms, policies and procedures, RAP and CPD (Continuous Professional Development) dates. The QASP site keeps staff informed of QA news, updates and professional development as well as housing programme modules, descriptors and RAP reports.

### I know where to find policies and procedures relevant to my work



### I am aware of the policies and procedures relevant to my work



Home page of Tipperary ETB Quality Assurance Sharepoint site





As it's a self-directed information repository requiring staff to connect, continual promotion is required to embed within staff groups; the effectiveness as a communication tool is not fully known at this early stage and will be evaluated into the future.

**"I would rather access the required quality forms directly from the ETB website than relying on someone else to do it and attend training myself rather than getting it second hand from another. I believe many mistakes, outdated forms, suggestions, and recommendations are made/lost in translation!"**

(Staff Quote)

## CONCLUSION

### Recommendations/Actions

- Continue the integration of the quality assurance systems in Tipperary ETB by mapping legacy policies and procedures with QQI QA Core Guidelines to create one comprehensive, robust and responsive QA system.
- Develop the Tipperary ETB Staff HUB as an overall internal Information & Communication repository where necessary information is available to staff in usable formats.
- Ensure access to policies and procedures by having plain english versions including infographics, as required, for learners and stakeholders.
- Implement a coordinated and standardised approach to the development, review, update and management of policies and procedures across Tipperary ETB.
- Further enhance the process of capturing learner's input in the relevant policy and procedure development and review stages.



# Objective 1:

Governance and Management of Quality

Staff Recruitment,  
Management and  
Development





## DESCRIPTION

### Staff Recruitment

Tipperary ETB is an equal opportunities employer committed to fairness, equality, and transparency in respect of all recruitment, aligning to best practice and meeting all legislative requirements (Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015 and Disability Act 2005), including Garda vetting and Teaching Council regulations. The Human Resource (HR) function in Tipperary ETB, as part of the OSD department is currently transitioning from a dual base; Nenagh and Clonmel to one location, i.e., Clonmel.

The Department of Education and SOLAS sanction recognised posts and all approved vacancies are filled through a formal recruitment and selection process. Relevant competencies are identified by Senior Managers/Principals in consultation with HR and matched to the skills required for each post. All posts, with relevant downloadable documentation, are advertised in the vacancies section of the Tipperary ETB website and via email to all staff."

A transparent and consistent shortlisting process is conducted by the relevant Senior Manager(s) in consultation with HR. The composition of all Selection Boards are in compliance with Department of Education regulations and considerate to the Board member's expertise in a particular field of FET. Recruitment and selection checks are conducted by HR, including the completion of the Garda Vetting process, a pre-employment online medical, submission of qualifications etc. A formal induction is facilitated annually for newly appointed staff at the beginning of the academic year. The procedures in place for the induction of new staff members are well-established and work effectively. In 2020, due to the restrictions of COVID-19, a successful online induction programme was delivered.

### Staff Development

In striving to deliver high quality services which are innovative and inclusive, it is vital that the highest calibre of staff is recruited; it is also crucial that our staff have the ability to learn, train and develop within their roles and the organisation. The purpose of the [Tipperary ETB Professional Development Policy](#) and Procedure signposts how Tipperary ETB will manage the various procedures to support employees in acquiring the necessary additional skills and knowledge for their roles. Tipperary ETB is committed to growing as a learning organisation, and ensuring that all staff have access to professional development (PD) opportunities. PD includes enabling staff to enhance their skills, update competencies, explore modern teaching methods and collaborate with colleagues. FET PD coordinator responsibility was assigned to a member of FET SMT in December 2018. Managers currently operate an informal appraisal system with staff to give feedback.

## EVALUATION

### Staff Recruitment

Focus group qualitative feedback during the consultation process showed that the operation of the HR function from two locations has been challenging. The HR function will complete its move to the Clonmel office during 2021, this should result in a resolution of the issues faced to date and an improved communication channel between HR and FET. In FET, it has been highlighted once the need to recruit has been identified by FET Senior Management, an often extensive lengthy process must be undertaken to secure sanction from both SOLAS and DFHERIS, before recruitment can commence. Time must be given for effective advertising of upcoming posts and to allow appropriate time for the application and interview process to be put in place and to complete.

It is evident from consultation that the HR support for FET staff operations is effective and consistent, and all of the function is done to an excellent standard, including identification of the need for roles, notification to staff, production of job and person specifications, formation of independent interview boards with appropriate knowledge and subject matter expertise, including briefing of board members and interview question preparation, scoring and feedback, but can be impacted by recruitment needs across the Schools and Operational Support divisions, along with other HR priorities.

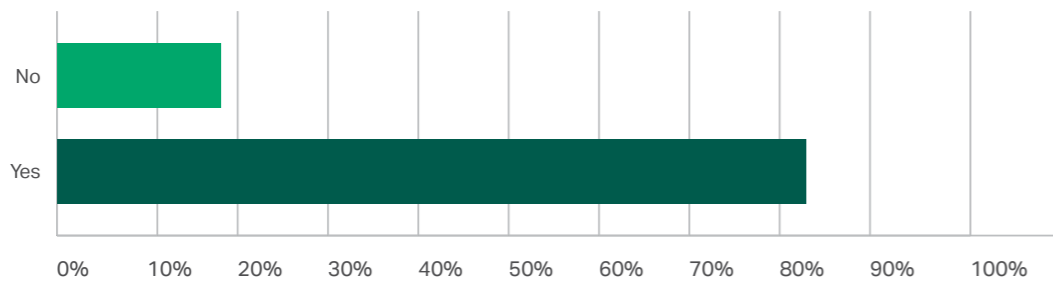




### Staff Communication

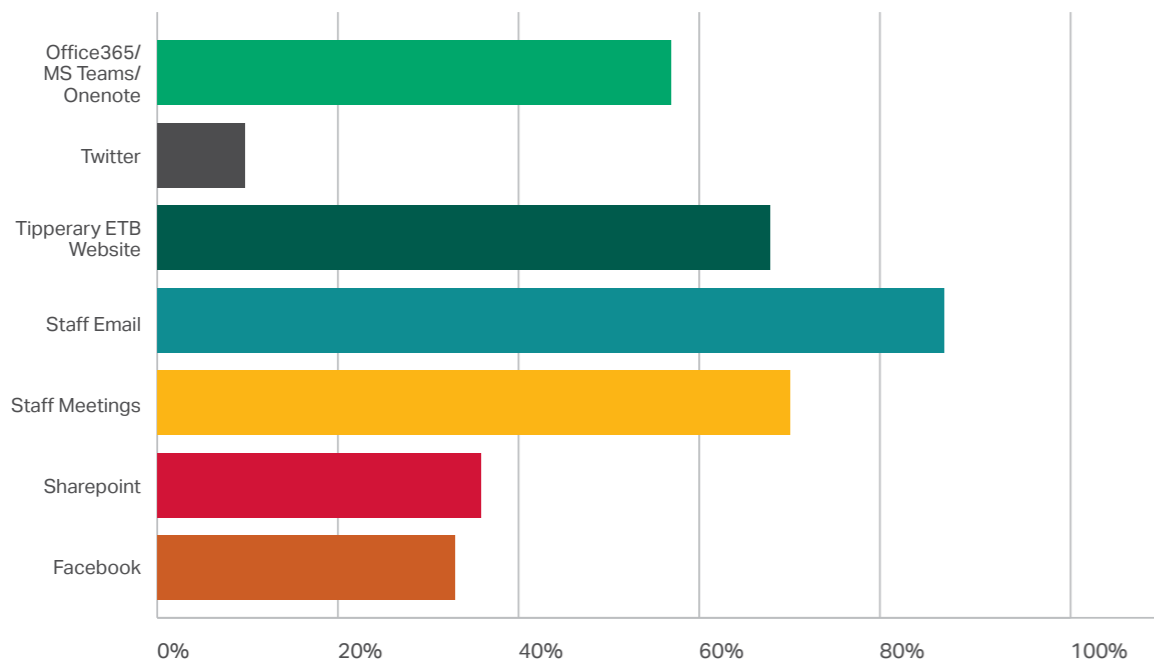
Staff Communication through the mode of regular staff/team meetings allows for two-way communication channels ensuring staff members are informed of issues in their operational areas, whilst also providing a platform for feedback and review to inform SMT.

#### I regularly take part in Staff meetings (in centre, MS Teams etc) - 310 respondents



In addition to staff meetings, there are several methods of connecting with staff in Tipperary ETB; [www.tipperary.etb.ie](http://www.tipperary.etb.ie), Sharepoint, Newsletters, QASP News and Updates, Social Media, email etc.

#### I use the following methods to keep informed about Tipperary ETB? (310 respondents)

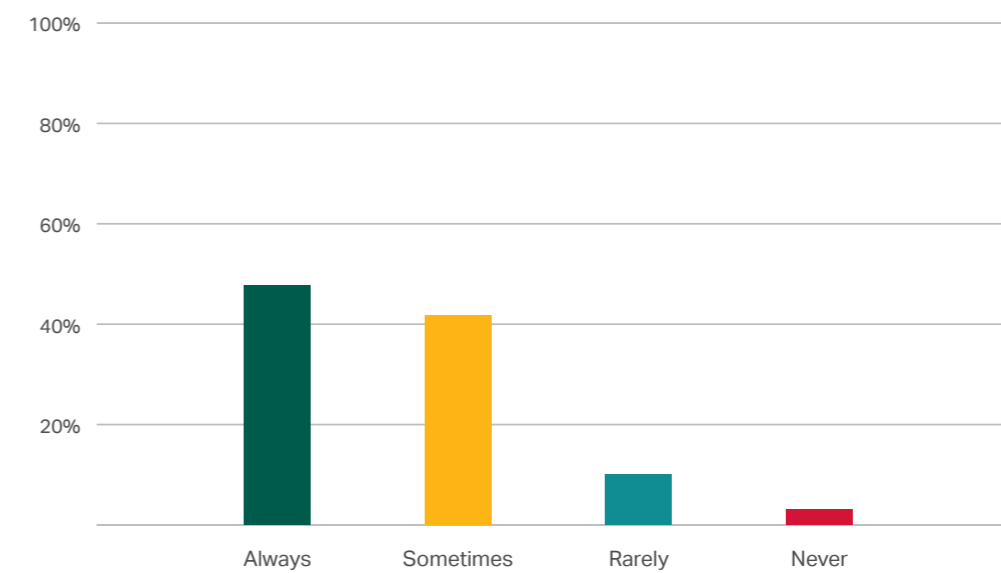


**“There are plenty of meetings aimed at feedback from managers Grade 5 up, but little or no opportunity for Clerical Staff Grade 3/4/5 to give feedback in any aspect of their roles and responsibilities, to contribute to strategy or see how they could contribute to it.”**  
(Staff Quote)

74% of Tipperary ETB staff respondents said they strongly agreed or agreed that they have opportunities to give feedback or make suggestions for improvements in their place of work

73% of Tipperary ETB staff respondents reported that they feel well informed of developments impacting their workplace in Tipperary ETB

#### I receive regular feedback from my line manager on my duties and responsibilities? (310 respondents)

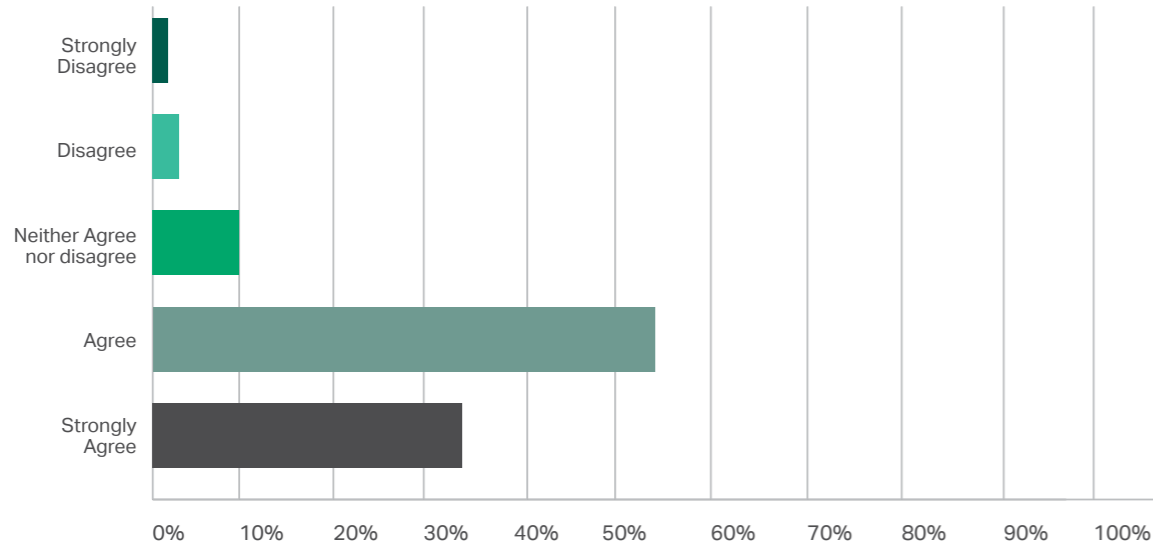




### Professional Development

The success of Tipperary ETB in delivering on its strategic objectives and fulfilling its mission of providing a quality Education and Training service for Tipperary, is dependent on its people.

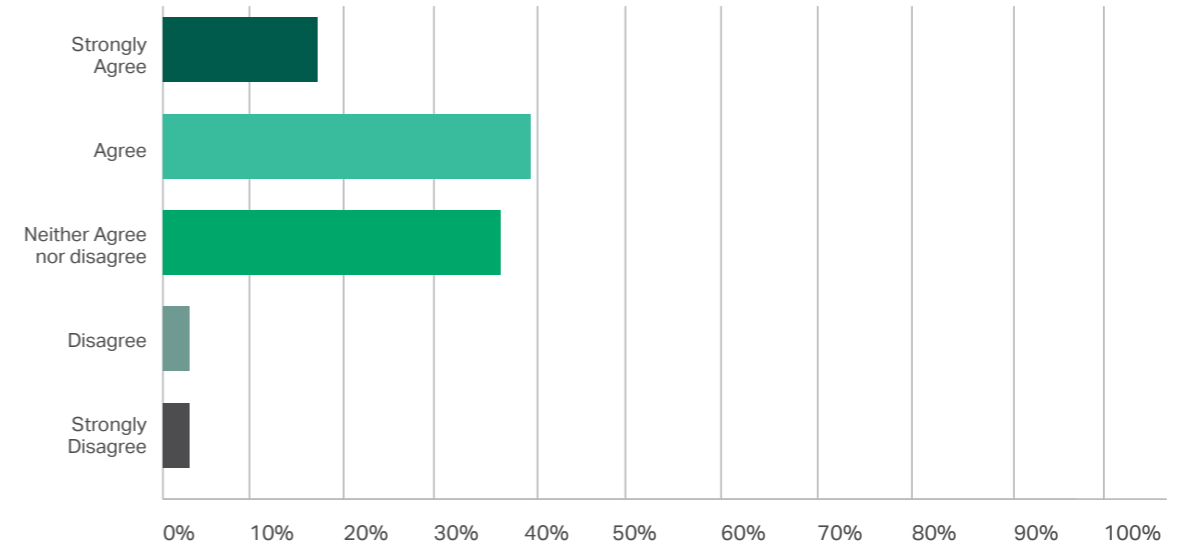
#### I am supported in my workplace to maintain and enhance my professional standards (310 respondents)



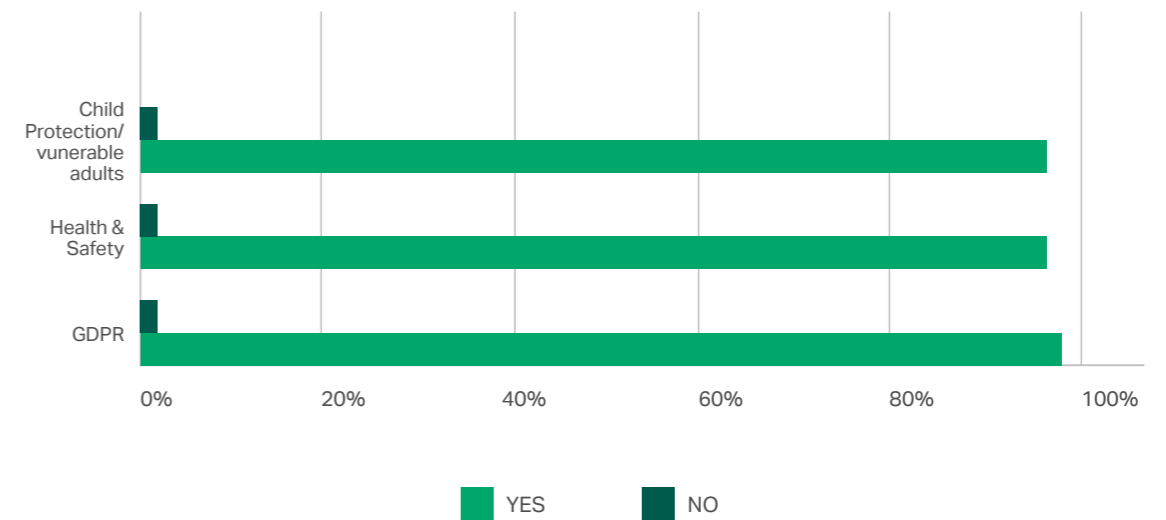
The Professional Development Policy in place facilitates support for staff (financial support, study/exam leave, and time off from work to attend courses), who wish to engage in Professional Development activities/opportunities that are relevant to their role.

68% of Tipperary ETB Teacher/Tutor respondents reported they feel supported by the Quality Assurance unit

### As a Manager; Supervision, Peer Support or Personal Support is made available to me?



### I understand my professional obligations in relation to:

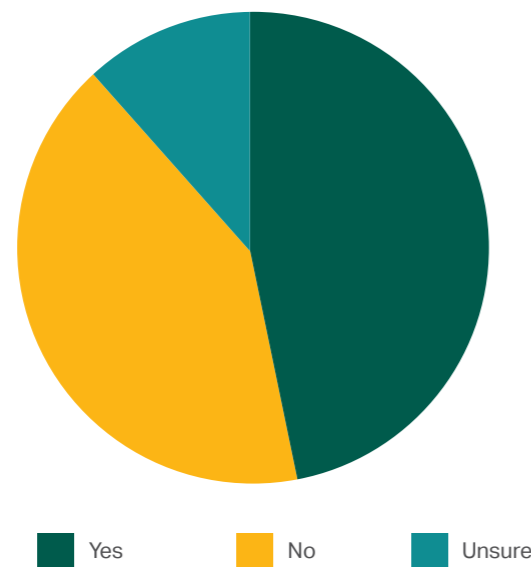




It would be fair to infer that staff are enabled in Tipperary ETB to enhance their professional development with over 50% agreeing strongly and 35% agreeing very strongly supported. Key areas supported through internal continuing professional development opportunities are outlined in Table below.

In the last number of years, I have attended Staff Development in:	
TEL	52.33%
QA	51.97%
Legislative Compliance (GDPR, Child Protection, Vulnerable Adults, H&S etc)	46.59%
Supporting Learners	39.78%
Tech for Management and Admin (e.g. Forms, Teams etc)	36.20%
Integration of Language, Lit, ESOL	20.07%
PLSS/ FARR	19.00%
Inclusion	17.92%
Pedagogical Methodologies	17.56%
FETCH	11.47%
Management of People	10.04%
Other	8.96%
Information, Recruitment and Guidance	7.89%
Budgeting/ Financial management	6.09%
Enterprise Engagement	5.38%

Have you completed a formal induction process (310 respondents)



### Performance Management

Tipperary ETB doesn't operate a formal staff performance management development system. The lack of a formal appraisal system could be perceived as a missed opportunity to offer staff direction around PD which would enhance their performance, develop competence and support their professional development for progression within FET or the ETB as a whole. Staff performance management and appraisal is a complex issue and cannot be resolved by Tipperary ETB alone, it needs a sectoral solution for implementation in ETBs.

### Induction

As staffing levels grow and staff commence employment throughout the year, there is a need for induction programmes throughout the year, including recorded programmes that staff can access remotely. Based on consultation with over 300 staff, over 50% respondents either haven't completed a formal induction or are unsure. Note: with over half of all respondents with Tipperary ETB (previously VEC/FÁS) over 11 years, this could account for the lack of a recent formalised induction process.

**"Tutors receive no induction, leaving them in a poor position to give students a well informed induction about student services available with Tipperary ETB."**

(Tutor Quote)

## CONCLUSION

### Recommendations/Actions

- Complete the transition to the new HR Online Recruitment System which will support the new HR Payroll System.
- Review the Tipperary ETB formal induction process giving consideration to greater availability of the programme throughout the year, including an online recorded version for remote access.
- Develop and implement an organisation wide Professional Development (PD) strategy in consultation with all stakeholders, including progressing an application with SOLAS for a dedicated PD officer.
- Develop a model for organisational development and planning in regard to future roles, that is implemented systematically between HR and FET SMT.
- In the absence of a sectoral performance management system, Tipperary ETB will look at options regarding Team and Individual support and development models.





# Objective 1:

Governance and Management of Quality

Programme Development,  
Approval and Submission  
for Validation





## DESCRIPTION

### Programme Development

Tipperary ETB, as a collaborating provider, in the development of new programmes, ensures internal (including learners) and external consultation and evaluation of new programmes by the ETB QA governance and management structures. New programme development is in line with the ETB's strategic priorities, adhering to awarding body requirements and policies in relation to access, transfer and progression, compliant with regulatory or professional body conditions and inclusive of programme monitoring for periodic programme review.

Programme development of the Advanced Certificate in **Early Learning and Care (ELC)** and **Level 5 Certificate in Early Learning and Care** began with a national ETB-wide governance oversight body, consisting of the Directors of FET of the 16 ETBs and an agreement that a shareable curriculum in ELC should be developed for the ETBs and their partner organisations, led by Dublin and Dún Laoghaire ETB, and supported by all 15 other ETBs. Tipperary ETB FET QA Office staff attended the consultation stages during 2020 and 2021, including stakeholder engagement consultation updates on feedback from, for example, graduates, learning practitioners, employers, parents and children. As a collaborating provider and in consultation with local and national stakeholders, the QA Office and FET SMT completed the ELC programme descriptor's differential content for the implementation of QA.

In July 2021, Tipperary ETB developed the differential content relating to the implementation of the quality assurance for the **Commis Chef Apprenticeship/Advanced Certificate in Culinary Arts – Major Award 6M20815** and applied to the National CSG (Consortium Steering Group) and Kerry ETB for collaborating provider approval to deliver in the FET Centre, Archerstown, Thurles. Kerry Education and Training Board has been appointed by the National Consortium Steering Group (CSG) to act as the Coordinating Provider to deliver the National Apprenticeship Programme: Commis Chef Apprenticeship in compliance with [QQI Topic Specific Quality Assurance \(QA\) Guidelines](#) for providers of statutory apprenticeship programmes.

The ETB's QA involves conducting a programme evaluation by a suitable expert (internal or external) prior to submission to the governing body. In the example of the ELC programme, an evaluation of the differential elements was conducted to ensure compliance with the requirements of QQI's validation policies and criteria. An external consultant with significant knowledge and expertise in FET quality assurance, including validation was assigned to complete this work on behalf of the ETB, involving the evaluation of the differential elements of the ELC programme descriptor against the applicable validation criteria and policies set out in the evaluation tool that was provided to ETBs by QQI. Recommendations of the evaluator were addressed by the ETB and subsequently, the programme was presented to the PAC for approval before being submitted to QQI for validation.

### Programme Approval

For new programme/module requests for validation with a view to their delivery in Tipperary ETB; the PAC decision-making and approval responsibility is followed, as a function of the QA Governance group in Tipperary ETB. The ETB conducted an evaluation of the differential elements in the example of the ELC programme to ensure compliance with the requirements of QQI's validation policies and criteria.

### Programme Validation

Following approval from QA Governance, the FET QA office applies to the relevant awarding body for authorisation to use the programme, for example, for QQI programmes the QA office authorised user will submit the programme descriptor and supporting documentation via the QQI [QHub](#) system. QHub is a new online platform for QQI to engage more efficiently and effectively with ETBs, supporting business processes such as programme validation, revalidation and extension, in addition to re-engagement and quality reviews. Once a programme validation application is considered by the awarding body, approval and permission are granted. At this point, the QA office will ensure that programme descriptors and modules are made available to the programmes/centres for the scheduling and roll-out of the programme. In the example of the ELC validation request, the QQI Programme and Awards Executive Committee (PAEC) approved the validation for Tipperary ETB on the 15th of July 2021, having confirmed that it is satisfied that the conditions of validation have been met. In the Commis Chef programme validation application, Tipperary ETB has provided Kerry ETB with evidence that it meets approval criteria in four key areas of operation: quality assurance, staff resources, environment and physical resources and assessment on and off-the-job for the delivery of the programme. At time of print, the site visit and grant of collaborating provider approval is pending. Once granted, it will be valid for a period of five years, subject to ongoing compliance monitoring.





# EVALUATION

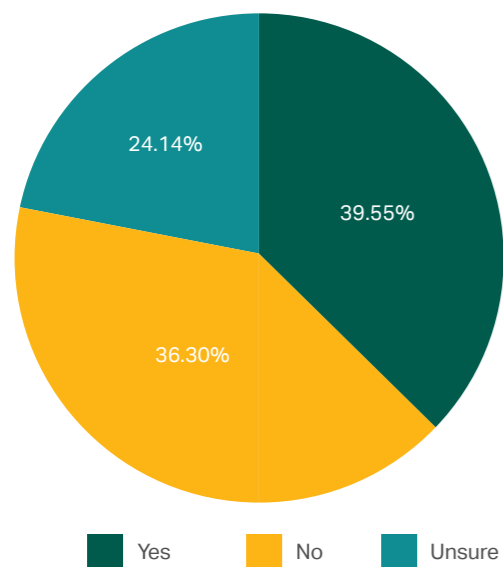
54% of Tipperary ETB staff respondents reported that they would like to become more involved in programme development

Tipperary ETB has had programme development experience, for example, Childcare and Safety 4N1905, Child Development and Play 4N1111, Drama 4N1875, After School Support Skills 5N4465, Animating Characters in 3D Skills 6N4906, Digital Compliance 6N1272, Television and Film Production Management 6N5432, and engaged the relevant subject matter experts to create the module content and complete the evaluation.

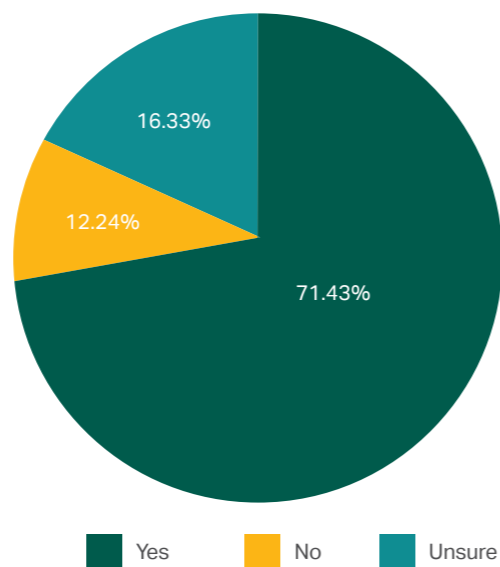
The publication of [QQI Policies and Criteria for Programmes of Education and Training \(revised 2017\)](#) has changed the quality assurance processes for programme development for the ETB sector. In the years ahead the FET sector will be required to have all programmes revalidated in line with the QQI 2017 policies and criteria.

In 2020, with the onset of blended and online learning as part of COVID-19 contingency arrangements, it has been identified that post contingency, if blended learning (face to face and online) continues, then Tipperary ETB will be required to apply to QQI for validation of new blended programmes or to amend the validation of existing programmes.

I would like more online/blended learning (584 respondents)



I would like more classroom (face to face) learning (588 respondents)



However, the ETB has not embarked on programme development work in the last 4-5 years, outside of the recent collaborations on the ELC and Commis Chef shared curriculum whereby Tipperary ETB applied for differential validation of its corresponding programme. It is an identified challenge that the ETB is not currently in a position to go solo in the area of programme development and is limited in its current capacity for how it can contribute. Recently key programme design and development staff have been offered the opportunity to attend the Level 9 Post-Graduate Certificate in Programme Design and Validation (PDV) for FET 2021/2022 with Maynooth University and FESS to develop expertise inhouse in PDV.

See [Appendix VI](#) – **Case Study: City and Guilds Global Hospitality Centre Approval.**

72% of Tipperary ETB Learner respondents (580) reported that the course content is matched to current job opportunities

Overall, the ETB governance processes regarding programme approval are very effective, as detailed in section Governance and Management, with the appropriate governance structures in place to ensure robust decisions regarding provision in centres and across the ETB, as well as a high frequency of PAC meetings to ensure timely response. Challenges identified include the lack of communication to the broader FET provision of individual centre/programme approval submissions in advance of PAC. A system of notification would further inform local planning, allow opportunity to object to or support a proposal, consider progression pathways etc. Another challenge identified is the balance of meeting planning, budgeting and scheduling deadlines whilst completing validation applications to the awarding body to ensure authorisation is received prior to programme commencement.

Following the migration of data by QQI to their new programme management space; QHub, and due to the merge of North and South Tipperary VECs, each having their own suite of validated programmes; in 2021 Tipperary ETB completed an exercise to identify any inconsistencies between programmes listed on QQI's QHub against Tipperary ETB's records of validated programmes for updating on QHub.

## CONCLUSION

**Recommendations/Actions**

- Complete the documented FET procedure to describe Tipperary ETB's Programme Development, Approval and Submission processes, including PAC decision appeal process and publication of all PAC submissions to all FET centres in advance of programme approval.
- Continue to welcome opportunities to collaborate on programme development with other ETBs.
- Develop a Blended Learning Strategy, pending QQI/National decisions.
- Contribute to and learn from the evaluation of the collaborated programme development processes, e.g., ELC and Commis Chef to inform future programme development, review and validation whether as an individual ETB or in collaboration with the sector.
- Plan the development of a Curriculum Development Structure within Tipperary ETB, in line with national and sectoral developments.



# Objective 1:

Governance and Management of Quality

Access, Transfer  
and Progression





# DESCRIPTION

## Access

In the [Tipperary ETB Strategy Statement 2018-2022](#), under strategic Goal 1, the ETB has agreed as priority 1.2 to demonstrate a commitment to all learners across the organisation by developing policies and practices that improve access and appropriate course placement.

Tipperary ETB's FET Courses have varying entry and eligibility criteria with learner access ascertained through various and combined methods e.g. informal discussion, application form, aptitude testing and/or interviews, programme eligibility criteria. The responsibility for and management of learner admission is at centre/programme level. Tipperary ETB is aware of the importance of learners choosing the right course and at the right level and endeavours to assist learners with this process through a range of information and operational support mechanisms. Some of these are summarised below;

- Access to course information is provided via Tipperary ETB website and dedicated course email enquiries option, online via [www.fetchcourses.ie](#), [www.apprenticeship.ie](#) and Tipperary ETB Course Brochure distributed annually via An Post.
- Organisational, programme and centre level advertising e.g. social media, posters, print media, learner information events, employer breakfast events, information webinars.
- Referral pathways and partnerships with internal and external agencies within the county e.g. DSP, Employer collaborations, Community and Voluntary groups.
- Adult Guidance and Information Service (AGIS) including 1:1 career and education guidance, information and support.
- Learners on course seek advice and are supported by a range of Tipperary ETB FET Staff including AGIS, centre/programme managers and Learning Practitioners.



Further Education and Training Courses Brochure 2021/2022 and Further Education and Training Open Day Flyer

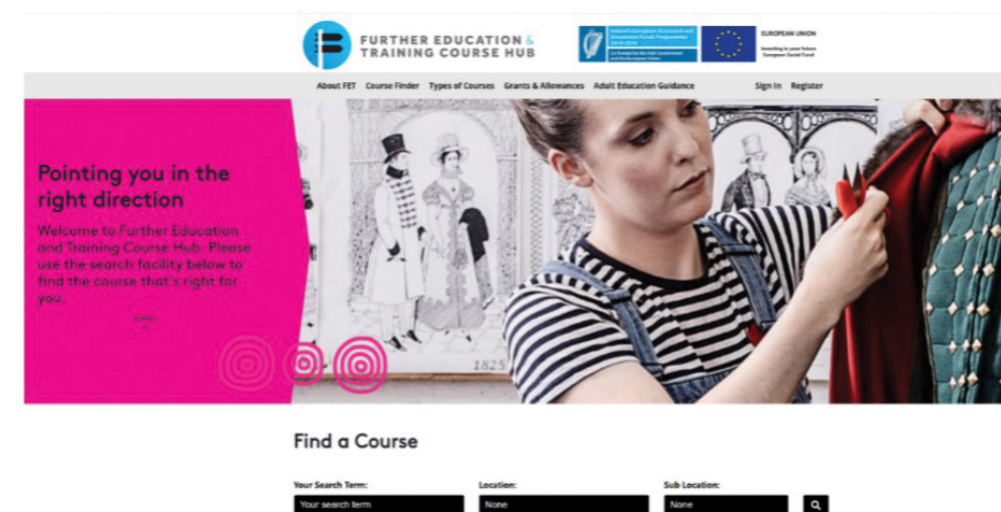
## Operational Structure Supporting Learner Access

Tipperary ETB FET service has two Adult Guidance Counsellors and the Adult Guidance and Information Service (AGIS) which offers impartial and confidential information and guidance on Education and Training options available within Tipperary ETB and with other education/training providers. The aim of the service is to support applicants to make the right decisions about returning to education and training whilst also considering other commitments a person has.

AGIS relationships with relevant external stakeholder organisations are also used to support learner access as well as facilitating FET information and careers events. Some of these external organisations include AONTAS, Citizens Information Services, Family Resource Centres, local FE and HE Institutions, HSE, Jobs Clubs, Local Enterprise Offices, Local Authorities, local Library network, Local Development Companies, TUS and Community Employment Schemes, Mid-West/South-East Regional Skills Fora, Tipperary PPN (Public Participation Network), Tipperary Volunteer Centre etc. The AGIS service also offers and utilises web tools such as Careersportal My Future+ with learners needing this support.

Additionally, a cross-functional team of two Adult Guidance Information Officers based in Nenagh and Clonmel and a FET Recruitment Officer based in the Training Centre in Archerstown, Thurles, work collaboratively in progressing the access and information service for Tipperary ETB learners which includes the production of the annual course brochure, consistent ongoing social media presence including live and interactive online events, the establishment of a generic email address for enquiries: [courses@tipperaryetb.ie](mailto:courses@tipperaryetb.ie), print media, radio advertising, leaflets, brochures, career fairs and events, e.g., Schools Senior Cycle Career's Day.

Tipperary ETB FET learners currently register several different ways; online via [www.fetchcourses.ie](#), MIT enrol, apprenticeship client services, directly to a FET centre using a paper-based application form; [Learner Details Form](#).



Home page of fetchcourses.ie



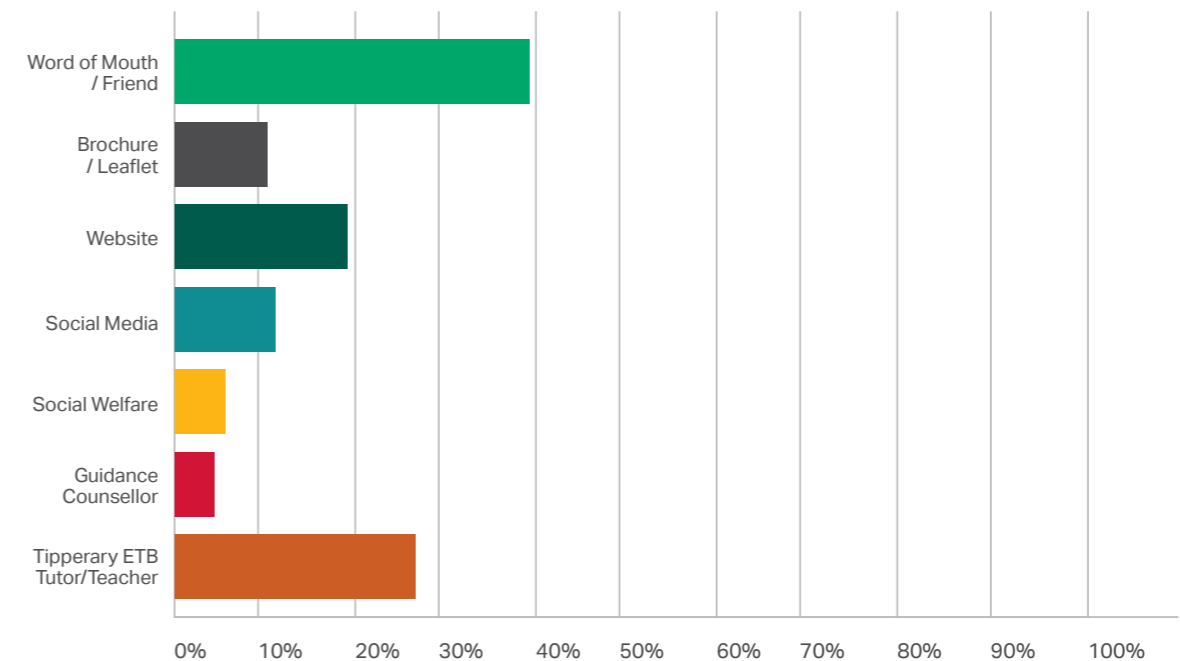
A national course finder for FET learners, [www.fetchcourses.ie](http://www.fetchcourses.ie), was established by SOLAS, the Further Education & Training Authority, in partnership with Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI) and other FET providers to support learners to search and make online course applications. This web-based resource is fully integrated with Tipperary ETB's course provision allowing learners access information on programme objectives, entry requirements, content, learning outcomes, course location/ logistics in addition to an online application function "Apply Now", was established by SOLAS, in partnership with Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI) and other FET providers to support learners to search and make online course applications.

Learners specifically interested in pursuing a career as an apprentice are directed to another online resource at [www.apprenticeship.ie](http://www.apprenticeship.ie). This resource supports potential applicants with the process to connect with SOLAS approved employers who are hiring within their sector. Tipperary ETB is currently engaged with 350+ Tipperary based companies who are approved to employ and train apprentices in their designated trades and occupations. Two Senior Training Advisors are in place in Tipperary ETB who are authorised officers acting on behalf of SOLAS to approve companies and support the apprentice. Under these employers, there are currently close to 700 apprentices currently engaged in their apprenticeships across various programs. Some examples of the more popular sectors in which these employers are engaged include Construction, Electrical, Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Hospitality, ICT etc.

#### Collaborations with External Partners Supporting Learner Access

The Mid-West and South-East divisions of the Department of Social Protection (DSP) are strategic partners for Tipperary ETB. In 2016, the DSP and Tipperary ETB, recognising the common elements of their respective work, developed an interagency framework that facilitates the exchange of information between organisations including the referral of clients to suitable education and training interventions provided by the ETB. Potential learners are supported directly by DSP case officers to apply online through [www.fetchcourses.ie](http://www.fetchcourses.ie) or are directly referred onto a particular course provider within FET across all NFQ levels. Tipperary ETB also offers FET responses to the specific needs of this group as identified by DSP case officers. Tipperary ETB programme coordinators and guidance representatives attend this interagency forum and DSP information events as well as developing bespoke responses to this learner cohort.

#### Where did you hear about your course with Tipperary Education and Training Board?



#### Workforce Development/Employer Services

Tipperary ETB offers various services to Tipperary employers ranging from employee upskilling courses (e.g. Skills For Work, Explore, Skills To Advance, online courses, customised/bespoke training, access to Apprenticeships, Traineeships) as well as support to conduct training needs analysis, work placements and guest speaker opportunities.

The ETB works with several external parties as part of the enterprise engagement approach, including Regional Skills Fora, DSP, LEO, Chambers of Commerce, Local Authority, Industry Consortia, Contracted Trainers and so on. These relationships assist Tipperary ETB to identify education and training needs of local employers. If required, contracted trainers can provide industry-specific expertise and deliver training programmes. With the establishment of a Workforce Development team to support enterprise engagement within Tipperary ETB, input from programme managers across FET allows the ETB to continually review and improve planning to meet industry needs. Successful events supporting employee access to FET includes Engineering Breakfast Briefings and Hospitality Webinars. This sectoral engagement approach has assisted Tipperary ETB to profile industry in Tipperary and has enabled us to co-design our enterprise training provision.





### Transfer & Progression

Tipperary ETB FET learners transfer and progress to and from programmes of education and training to achieve specific awards and qualifications, or to pursue lifelong learning goals. Both transfer and progression enable learners to pursue further training at the same level or a higher level on the NFQ within Tipperary ETB or onto further and higher education and training opportunities. Transfer and progression pathways within Tipperary ETB are facilitated and supported by the Course Coordinators/ Centre Managers, the Adult Guidance Service and Learning Practitioners who support learner transitions. A tool that assists and tracks the learner journey is the Programme and Learner Support System (PLSS) which maps learner admission, course completion and course outcomes.

### PLSS Course Completion Outcomes

FET course at the same or higher level	HET course at the same or higher level	Paid full-time employment
Paid part-time employment	Self-employment	Employment scheme
Voluntary work	Unemployed	Inactive-engaged on home duties
Inactive-retired from employment	Inactive for other reasons	Other
Unknown	Deceased	

Tipperary ETB is committed to supporting learners with opportunities to progress to Higher Education opportunities in the region and nationally, for example, Limerick Institute of Technology (LIT) has representation on Tipperary ETB Governing Bodies; FET Committee to further develop progression links between Tipperary ETB and LIT in the region.

### Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Tipperary ETB FET recognises the value of prior learning and accreditation achieved outside the formal education and training programmes. The ETB offers access and progression routes for applicants who present with accredited learning in the form of exemptions given for related minor awards and advanced entry based on major awards at previous levels in related/recognised awards. Access and progression routes are available in certain situations, for example, in Evening Training provision as a self-referral mechanism, in the case where the applicant has no qualifications for Level 5 entry. A process is underway within Tipperary ETB FET service to review and design a roadmap to inform a FET wide integrated RPL policy and procedure.

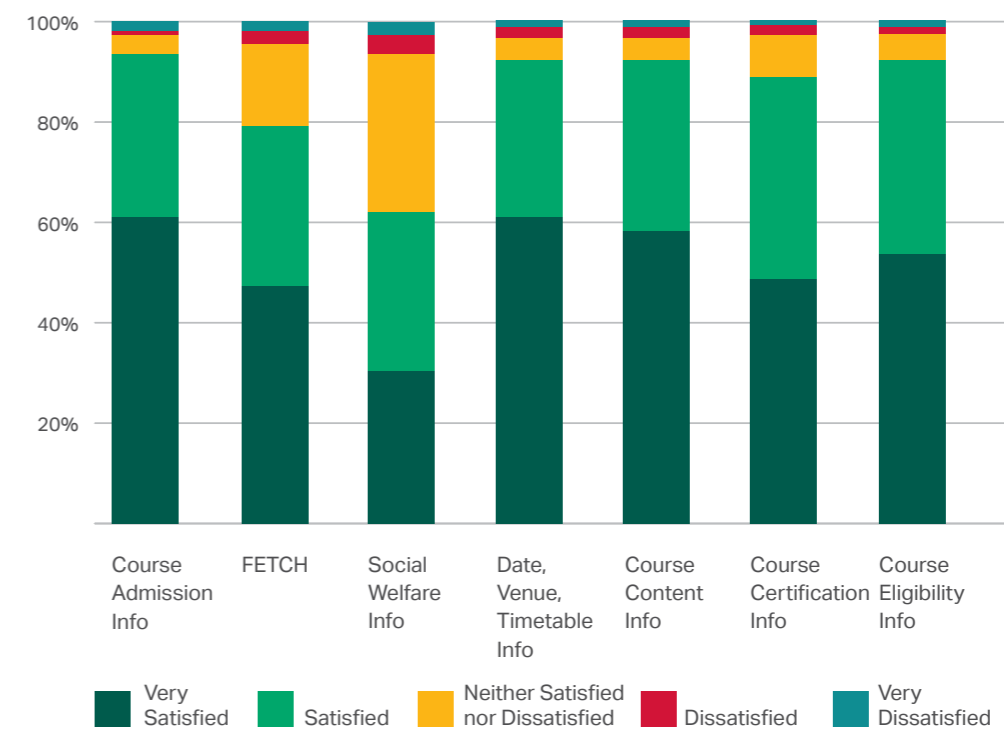
### Recognition of Foreign Qualifications

Recognition of foreign qualifications in Ireland is supported through the National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) Ireland. This centre offers advice on the academic recognition of foreign qualifications in Ireland. Tipperary ETB FET Guidance Service provides information supports and advice to our learner cohort who need and want to pursue this avenue for qualifications recognition.

## EVALUATION

For the provision of information by the FET QA Office and the Programmes; of the 613 respondents, the majority of learners were either very satisfied or satisfied with information on:

92% of Tipperary ETB Learners surveyed (632) reported that they were either very satisfied or satisfied with the Course Admission Information



92% of Tipperary ETB Learners surveyed (593) reported that the course is the right choice for them

Furthermore, 89% of surveyed learners said they were placed in the right class for their ability level and 91% stated that assignments and class activities were clearly explained.

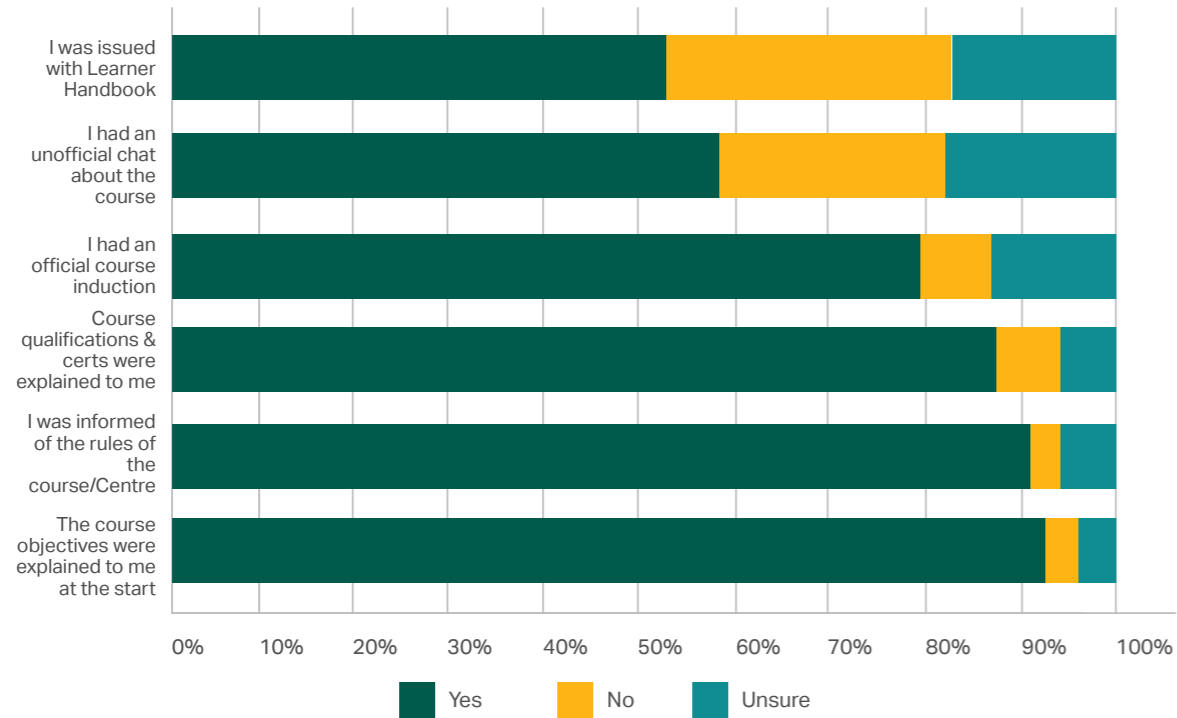
**“We had to do an induction day for the course to see whether you’d be able for the Level 3 or Level 4. It was just English and Maths. The first day I applied for a Level 4 course because that’s what was on at the time and the day that suited me to do it. After doing the induction, I realised that I wasn’t able for the next level so I did Level 3.”**  
 (Learner Quote)





87% of Tipperary ETB Learners surveyed (533) reported that they were fully aware of the Award they will receive if they complete the course successfully

Learners surveyed were asked did they agree with the following statements:

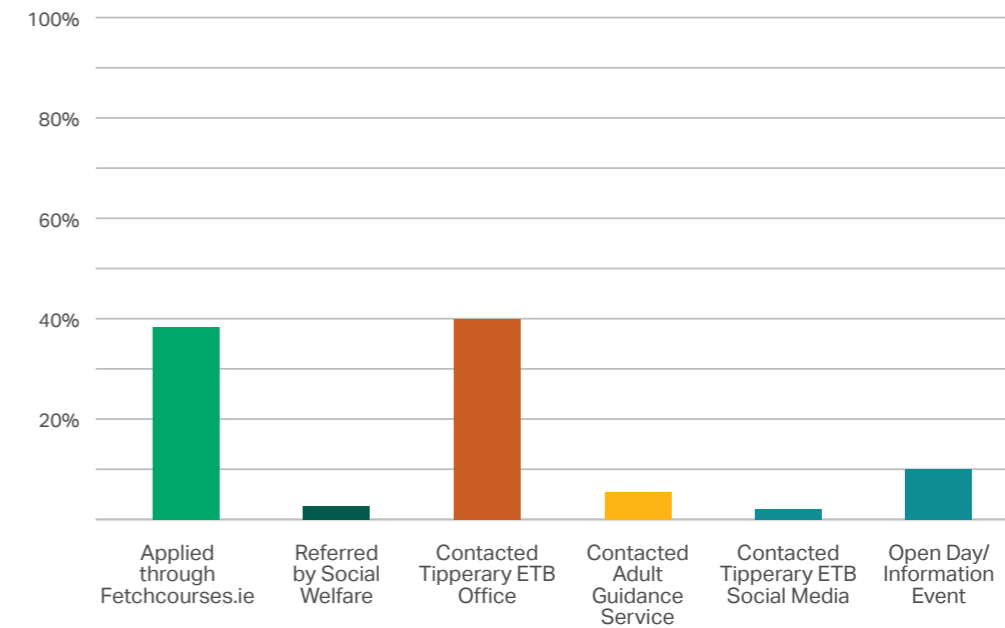


The Tipperary ETB Learner Handbook is an important tool in the learner admission and access process as a learner support. With just over 50% of the 613 2021 on course learners stating that they were issued with a Learner Handbook, this highlights significant room for improvement in this area.

Recognition of Prior Learning pathways are set out to facilitate a learners' entry to programmes, but Tipperary ETB at this point has a goal to facilitate recognition of prior certified learning (RPCL) and/or recognition of prior experiential learning (RPEL) through the development of policies and procedures to support learner access, transfer and progression.

Based on focus group feedback in addition to survey response, it can be concluded that Tipperary ETB has developed a strong social media presence across social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube facilitating smoother access to course information. The delivery of the Tipperary ETB Course annual brochure to households across the County has had a direct and positive impact on course enquiries.

What was your FIRST STEP in applying for this course with Tipperary ETB



The survey of the 2021 on course learners identified that the majority of initial applications are via online platforms, i.e., [www.fetchcourses.ie](http://www.fetchcourses.ie) and a reduction in referrals from DSP and Open Days/Information Events. On analysis of the PLSS actual data over the 2017 to 2020 period for application origin, there's a marked increase in online applications from 2017 to 2020, with a drop in total applications in 2020, which could be attributed to the changing landscape due to COVID-19 and the availability of learners to apply online via [www.fetchcourses.ie](http://www.fetchcourses.ie).

	2017	2018	2019	2020
Administrative Referral	2,623	7,193	9,115	5,905
DSP Referral	1,158	884	596	237
Guidance	1	1	-	-
Client Services	57	14	1	-
Online	316	998	1,605	2,051
Other	5,278	2,048	1,027	841
Total	9,433	11,138	12,344	9,034







When learners were asked to identify the main reasons for engaging in FET, in addition to the skills, certification and qualification answers - meeting new people, increasing confidence, getting out of the house and improving mental health all scored very highly - clearly showing the wider benefits of learning and a lifelong learning approach expected from FET provision:

Answers	Responses	
To Learn new Skills	359	56.80%
To Improve my Skills	275	43.51%
To get Certification/Qualification to get a Job/Promotion	191	30.22%
To meet new people	172	27.22%
To increase my confidence/self-esteem	154	24.37%
To get out of the House	137	21.68%
To Improve my Mental Health	109	17.25%
To get Certification/Qualification to move to Higher Education	107	16.93%
To get Certification: Junior Cert/Leaving Cert/QQI	89	14.08%
For the Love of Learning	87	13.77%
To improve my English	70	11.08%
To start my own business	47	7.44%
To get skills for Community/Voluntary work	45	7.12%
It was part of an Apprenticeship or Traineeship	11	1.74%
Required by Social Welfare	8	1.27%
Total Respondents: 632		



See [Appendix VIII](#) – **Case Study : Tipperary Rural Traveller Project (TRTP) – Transformative Effect**

2021 saw the appointment of a dedicated Active Inclusion role to develop and implement an Active Inclusion Strategy by the end of 2021, across FET, furthering our FET provision to consider social inclusion, equality, diversity, barriers to participation and progression opportunities.

Barriers/Challenges faced when accessing Tipperary ETB Courses (632 respondents)	
I have not experienced Barriers/Challenges to Learning	44.30%
Lack of confidence with Computers or Online	13.61%
No courses in my local area	10.28%
Concerned about ability to finish the course	9.02%
Lack of confidence when meeting new people	8.70%
My English is not good	8.23%
Access to Computer/IT equipment	8.07%
Access to broadband at home	8.07%
Childcare	7.12%
Home caring responsibilities	6.33%
Transportation costs to get to Course	5.85%
Lack of confidence with reading & writing	5.70%
Previous bad experience of Learning	5.22%





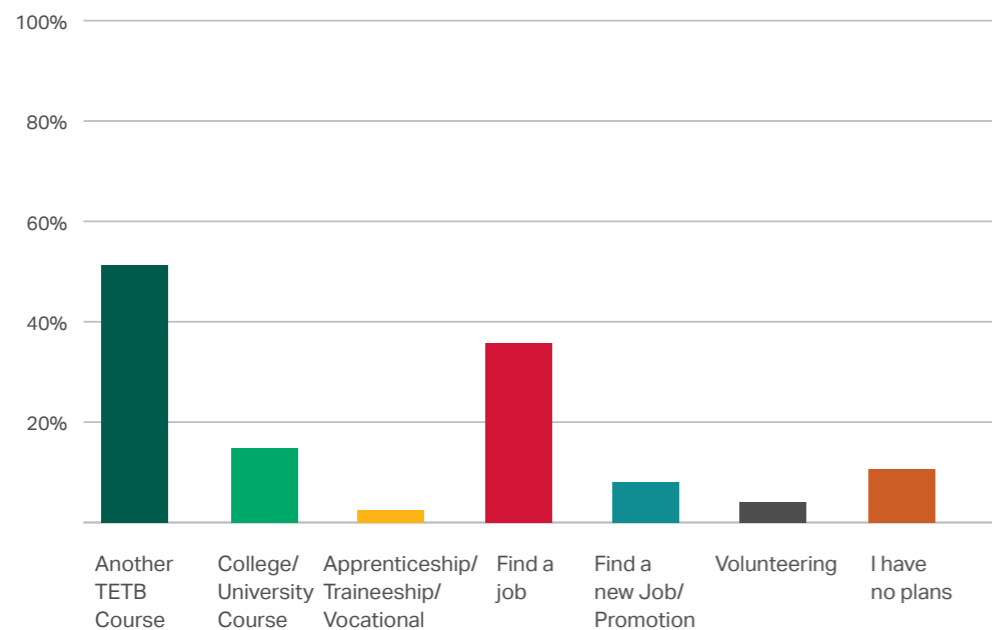
Progression

63% of Tipperary ETB Learners surveyed (533) reported that their Tutor/Teacher will help them plan for the future after the course finishes

83% of Tipperary ETB Learners surveyed (533) reported that the course will help them progress further in FET and 73% stated that the course will help them get a job

2020 progression outcomes saw 345 Tipperary ETB learners secure employment from provision which primarily serves the labour market with 558 progressing to other Further Education or Higher Education courses from provision which is primarily focused on this purpose<sup>10</sup>.

What do you plan to do next after your course finishes?



10 CSO

To support learners with opportunities to progress to Higher Education opportunities, Tipperary ETB is in the process of developing formal links with the new Technological University of the Shannon, Midlands and Midwest and is represented on the Stakeholder Engagement Advisory Group of the Technical University of the South East (application for TU status pending at time of writing). The recently appointed position of FET Management Information Systems Administrator will support and monitor the implementation, usage and management of PLSS in the capture of learner progression and completion data for analysis to inform planning in addition to the examination of SOLAS/CSO progression statistics for interpretation in Tipperary ETB.

CONCLUSION

Recommendations/Actions

- Develop and implement an Access, Transfer and Progression Policy and procedures that improve access and appropriate course placement, progression pathways and transitions across FET provision.
- Develop a standardised methodology within Tipperary ETB for Learner Induction.
- Develop and implement an Active Inclusion Strategy across FET including social inclusion, equality, diversity, barriers to participation and progression opportunities.
- Review existing links and establish formal partnerships with Higher Education Institutions.
- Review the process to develop and implement appropriate and consistent Recognition Procedures, i.e., RPL policy, with consideration for exemptions, recognition of prior certified learning (RPCL) and/or recognition of prior experiential learning (RPEL).
- Review the current working relationship and engagement between the Adult Guidance and Information Service and Recruitment functions to consider a cohesive approach.



# Objective 1:

Governance and Management of Quality



Integrity and Approval of  
Learner Results





## DESCRIPTION

The integrity of learner assessment and results is assured in Tipperary ETB via a number of processes including the following:

New assessors are provided with CPD opportunities to learn about the requirements of the assessment and quality assurance process. Tipperary ETB works closely with the local FESS Officer for facilitation and/or delivery of PD related to devising and evaluating assessment instruments.

Assessment instrument templates (i.e. assessment brief, exam cover sheet, marking scheme) and updated assessment procedures for [conducting exams](#) (including contingency arrangements for online exams) are standardised.

[Internal verification](#) of assessment happens prior to external authentication and electronic resources are available on the QA dedicated SharePoint space to support the training needs of internal verifiers on QQI programmes. For non-QQI programmes, Tipperary ETB follows the awarding body's requirement for internal verification.

[External authenticators](#) for QQI programmes are chosen from a Tipperary ETB-approved external authenticator panel that is taken from a national directory maintained by ETBI. The retraining of all registered external authenticators by FESS, supports a consistent approach to the interpretation of standards, the role of the external authenticator and the report-writing element. Standardisation and consistency is further enhanced by our feedback process to the external authenticator after the results approval process. As part of the EA process, external authenticators are asked to identify and report any issues that affect the integrity of the assessment process. The schedule and detail for external moderation for non-QQI programmes (e.g. City and Guilds) are notified to the ETB and an external report is provided to the centre.

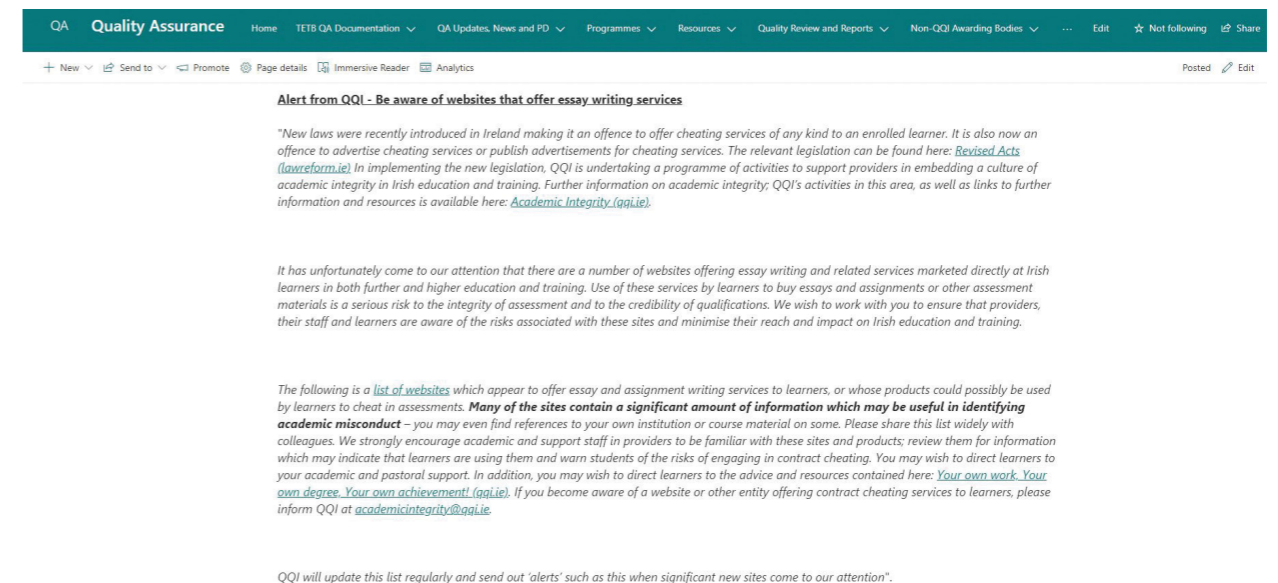
Via the [certification audit process](#), Training Services programmes monitor adherence to the ETB's assessment procedures and also sample the effectiveness of the internal verification process. The certification audit process was revised in 2020 to ensure relevance, strengthen monitoring of results and to enable a consistency of approach for ETB staff.

The [results approval process](#) is co-ordinated centrally by the Tipperary ETB QA office and all FET centres requesting certification attend this meeting. Selection of members of the results approval panel, in line with the procedure, ensures that this group is appropriately competent and experienced. The results approval process reviews all reports generated during the authentication process. The panel identify and discuss any issues arising in relation to the reports and make recommendations for improvements or corrective actions. Results are reviewed and signed-off by the panel at the end of the meeting and the QA office is then authorised to inform the relevant centres to proceed with the submission of results to QQI.

An updated [learner appeals process](#) is centrally managed by the Tipperary ETB QA Office. The process works to ensure that learners have 10 working days to consider their appeal and that appeal outcomes are turned over in a timely fashion to meet learner needs e.g. CAO.

Annually, and following the conclusion of the assessment process, a review of all certification reports is completed by the QA office. Findings of the IV and External Authentication processes are collated and thematically presented to the QA Steering Group where PD needs and other interventions/plans are agreed and recommended to the QA Governance Group.

The QA office provides a support service to centres/programmes and maintains the QASP dedicated to quality assurance. QA policies, procedures, notices and alerts are communicated here; available to all staff (see screenshot message posted 26th March 2021 alerting FET staff of essay writing services that threaten academic integrity).





Whilst the review and updating of assessment instruments by QQI assessors is being encouraged in order to avoid repeated assessments in use, the extent and depth to which this takes place following feedback from the authentication process is unknown. Additionally, as training services programmes still use existing legacy Assessment Instrument Specifications (AISs), assessments are repeated which presents risks to integrity

The process of internal verification is reported as being time-consuming and can be also perceived negatively as it highlights errors, issues and irregularities. However, from recent reviews of the IV process across centres, it can be seen that there is a shift away from producing 'clean' IV reports and a willingness to report clear and specific findings to support corrective actions needed. This provides the ETB with confidence that the value and importance of IV is understood. Following the review of certification and authentication reports, collated findings and plans for improvement are shared with centre co-ordinators via annual Information and feedback sessions.

A more centralised-approach to EA per award (as opposed to centre-based EA approach) could offer more standardisation and consistency of EA experience, feedback and reporting. The centralised-approach to the results approval process has brought enhanced consistency of practice and greater robustness to the process and has enabled further learning as the centre-designate must present an oral summary of the authentication process and any recommendations they have to the panel and to the other centre designates. However, Tipperary ETB has identified that learner results need to be reviewed at centre-level, prior to presentation to RAP, to ensure that trends or issues are identified (e.g. per group, class, module etc). This was also a recommendation of the formal QA review in 2020.

The centres are availing of the support services offered by the Tipperary ETB QA office which is apparent from queries received, visits and meeting requests and 'hits' on the Sharepoint news posts. This positive engagement from centres and staff with the QA office provides confidence that the processes that are designed to preserve academic integrity will continue to be strengthened as the feedback and feedforward loops are maintained.

## CONCLUSION

### Recommendations/Actions

- Develop and implement a Tipperary ETB policy/procedure for monitoring and reviewing Assessment Instruments.
- Assess further the approach to the assignment of EAs to determine feasibility of moving from a centre level to a centralised system for consistent EA management across FET provision.
- Develop and implement an Academic Integrity policy locally following ETBI and National guidelines.



# Objective 1:

Governance and Management of Quality

Information and Data Management

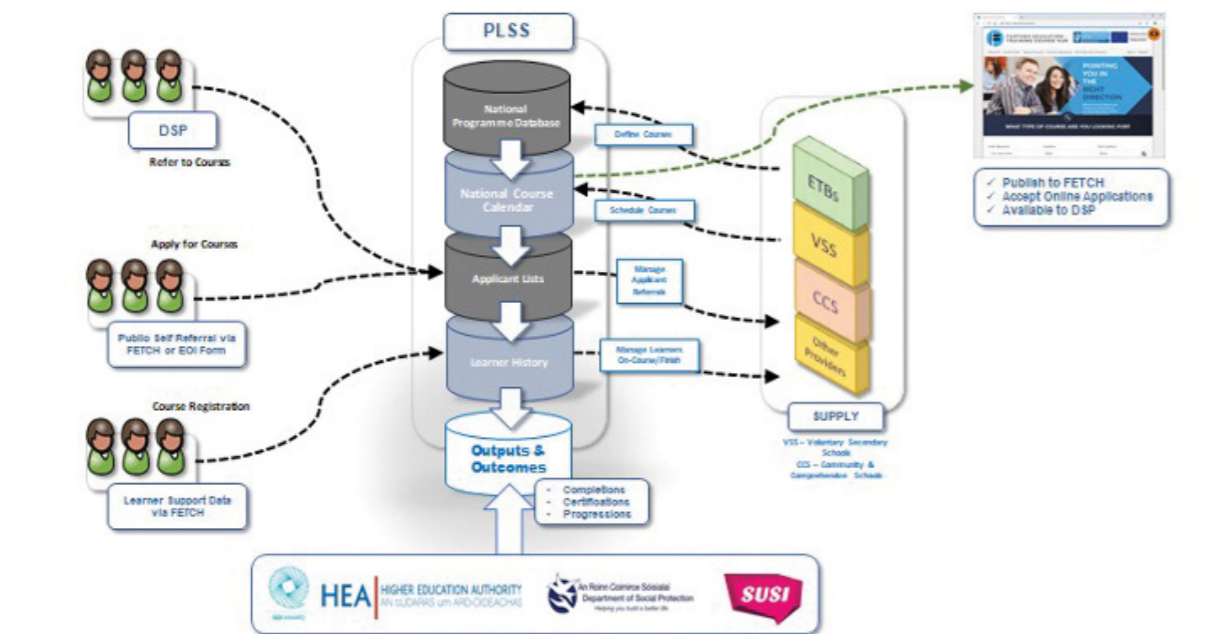




## DESCRIPTION

The Programme and Learner Support System (PLSS) has been designed and developed in collaboration with SOLAS and other FET Sector stakeholders, and continues to evolve. The PLSS system consists of a National Course Calendar (NCC) incorporating a learner database; a National Programme Database (NPD); and a companion course finder and online application website; [www.fetchcourses.ie](http://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 is also contained within, which supports the annual planning cycle for FET provision so as to facilitate alignment with the Strategic Performance Agreement.

### PLSS outline



All Tipperary ETB FET provision is scheduled on the PLSS National Course Calendar by the Programme Coordinator, and approved by the FET SMT member or designate, once all scheduling information is accurate. On approval, courses, if appropriate, are published to [www.fetchcourses.ie](http://www.fetchcourses.ie), made available to DSP on their internal Business Object Model Implementation (BOMI) system and/or marked to accept online applications. Applicants can apply online themselves, be referred by the DSP or be referred by an ETB staff member. The learner's journey in FET from start to end is tracked in the PLSS system, from access, interview, on course, completion, certification etc.. In addition to the tracking function, PLSS captures learner's personal, education, economic and inclusion information and allows FET staff the ability to contact the learners en masse or individually via email, SMS or generated letters. PLSS maintains secure and accurate learner records and is compliant with data protection legislation.

**MIT Enrol** continues to provide online enrolment, admissions management and payment solutions to our PLC Programmes and works in tandem with PLSS.

**Tableau** is a visual data analytics platform linked to PLSS which enables Tipperary ETB to explore and manipulate graphic visualisations to inform decision making, enabling collaboration and sharing of information and insights. The Tableau Server is administered centrally by SOLAS who control licences and access, and who also provide a collection of standard dashboards containing basic information on learner and enrolment numbers and breakdown by provider, programme category, gender etc. In addition, SOLAS provide the monthly MIS dataset as a Data Extract available for interaction and interrogation on Tableau Server locally by Tipperary ETB staff.

**CoreHR (PeopleXD)** is the learner payment system integrated with PLSS; when an existing FET learner is transferred onto a course on PLSS which involves payment of an allowance, all personal details, contact details, PPSN, etc. are automatically transferred to the payment system.

### Apprenticeship Client Services System (ACSS)

Tipperary ETB uses this system to register employers as trainers and register apprentices when their apprenticeship commences. All exam results are entered after each of the 7 phases are completed. Induction training is scheduled on the system and information pulled as required.

**QBS/RCCRS** are the secure online portals facilitating the administration process for certification. A QQI Awards XML function in PLSS enables the export of learner details for upload to the QQI Business System (QBS), i.e., a secure online service provided by QQI. QBS facilitates the submission and making of awards for learners across all 10 levels of the NFQ<sup>11</sup> and provides opportunities for certification six times per year. Tipperary ETB FET Training services utilise the RCCRS (Results Capture and Certification Request System) administration portal to submit Training services learner results for certification.

### City and Guild's Walled Garden

Tipperary ETB, as an approved City and Guilds provider, uses Walled Garden, the secure administration system supporting different centre administration tasks e.g., registering learners, booking end-point assessments and viewing the full catalogue of qualifications, publications and merchandise<sup>12</sup>.

### Education Shared Business Services Centre (ESBS)/CoreHR

Tipperary ETB payroll function moved to ESBS Q3 2020. The HR element of the payroll function continues to be processed and maintained by Tipperary ETB in the HR Office on a new HR system called CoreHR, with Employee Self Service (ESS) and Manager Self Service (MSS) portals.

<sup>11</sup> [QBS – Guide to Certification](#)

<sup>12</sup> [City and Guilds – Walled Garden](#)



**ESI Manser/SAP/SUN**

Financial management in Tipperary ETB is delivered using two main financial systems: ESI Manser and SAP, but is in the process of migrating from ESI Manser to a new financial management system – SUN V6.4. This system is operated by Core Financials and includes the implementation of a Purchase to Pay (P2P) system that will replace the ESI Outcentre portal. Tipperary ETB will be in the third wave of migration and is scheduled to go live 1st January 2022.

**SharePoint /Office 365**

Tipperary ETB also uses other web-based collaborative platforms that integrate with Microsoft Office such as SharePoint and Teams. SharePoint is secure web application for document management and collaboration. A dedicated FET QA SharePoint space was launched in 2020 which hosts all quality-related documentation, e.g., validated programmes, RAP reports, news and communications for access by internal FET Tipperary ETB staff. Microsoft Teams is a cloud-based team collaboration software that is part of the Office 365 suite of applications. The core capabilities in Microsoft Teams include business messaging, calling, video meetings and file sharing. Tipperary ETB use it as a communications application, providing dispersed teams with the ability to work together on documentation and share information via a common space.

**Data Protection & Freedom of Information**

Tipperary ETB has a unit dedicated to corporate governance which includes responsibility for oversight of data protection, freedom of information and risk management. A Data Protection Officer is appointed within Tipperary ETB with responsibility for Data Protection. Data protection policies and procedures are continuously kept under review to comply with relevant legislation. In relation to security, access to databases is by named and authorised personnel only, for the purposes of entering data in local centres and for reporting as appropriate at local centres or centrally within Tipperary ETB. For more information on data protection within Tipperary ETB, see GDPR. Freedom of Information policies and procedures comply with legislation and learners are informed of their right to request any data pertaining to them. For more information on freedom of information see FOI. Primary learner records are created in PLSS which has been subject to a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) so that data protection mechanisms are in-built. A Tipperary ETB compliance pre-requisite for staff access to PLSS is that GDPR awareness training is completed.

**Records Management and Retention Policy/Secure Storage**

A Records Management and Retention Policy has been developed to provide a statement of intent outlining records management standards for the administration of Tipperary ETB records. All documents created and received in the course of its official business, as laid out in the Education and Training Boards Act 2013 and formerly under the Vocational Education Act 1930 to 2001, constitute the official records of the ETB. The information that the ETB records contain serves as evidence of functions executed and activities performed and comprises a valuable source of knowledge as to how and why decisions were taken.

Tipperary ETB recognises that good quality records are of value to the organisation and their effective management is necessary to ensure that records maintained are authentic, reliable, complete, protected and preserved as evidence to support future actions and to ensure current and future accountability. The ETB ensures the preservation of records of permanent value and has established archival criteria to maintain and assure continued access to appropriate historical records and to support both protection of privacy and freedom of information services throughout the ETB.

## EVALUATION

In 2016, Tipperary ETB was the second ETB nationally to successfully integrate PLSS, replacing the CSS (Client Services) systems for Training provision and Salespulse for Further Education data management. Over the last 5 years, the transition has been smooth with the integration of the new systems; PLSS, FARR and FETCH providing a more robust and comprehensive learner information system for all FET provision that is user friendly, efficient and effective, and enables reporting, data analysis and planning.

**PLSS Integration**

It can be concluded from the focus group feedback that the benefits of PLSS far outweigh any limitations. Overall the system has transformed the organisational experience for capturing the learner journey information and reporting. But, it has been highlighted that elements of the system are 'one size fits all' and do not comprehensively capture some data measurements in our FET provision, for example:

- Part time provision where modules of a programme are completed, the system doesn't allow selection of individual modules or multiple modules, to enable more accurate measurement of outputs and outcomes.
- Non certified wider benefits of learning outcomes are not captured
- Non QQI awards, e.g. City and Guilds, ACCA, RTITB, Microsoft etc. are not identified in PLSS learner outcome reporting.
- Medium and long term completion outcome data is periodically reported to ETBs from CSO via SOLAS, based on revenue, HE enrolment, social welfare data etc. informing Tipperary ETB of its progress in contribution to the six core national FET sector targets over the period 2018-2020. PLSS captures the immediate outcome and subsequent later outcome, but these outcomes are not always a true reflection of the progression and are not consistently updated across Tipperary ETB FET provision. This results in discrepancies in outcome data between local PLSS data and CSO figures, therefore, not a reliable outcome indicator.
- Apprenticeship learner data in ACSS is not integrated with PLSS which is challenging for reporting and FARR input.







### Learner Data Collection Process

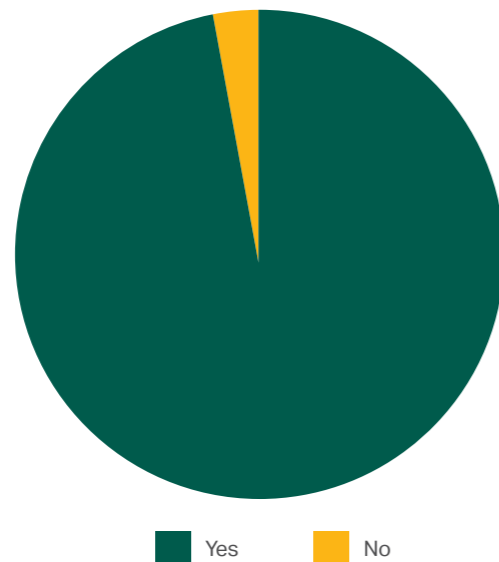
Every FET learner must complete all applicable sections of the Learner Details Form (LDF), either online or via paper based form, to register for a course. Tipperary ETB is cognisant that the extensive list of information required helps map the learner journey as well as contributing to national data analysis. However survey data and focus group discussion has shown that this data collection process is challenging, especially in some Adult Literacy groups and can be deemed excessive in, for example, Community Education.

**“They run a mile from them (LDF’s), before the last lock down...a group was doing yoga and one candidate was afraid she was going to lose benefits and felt the course wasn’t worth it. This girl has a undisclosed disability. Some other learners have mental health issues and they wouldn’t have a clue how to fill up a form. Some are willing to share this information – others are not willing. While we try to explain that to them during a 1:1 with each learner. The depth of disclosure required, and the fear that it will interfere with their benefits puts them off’.” (Tutor Quote)**

Support to FET staff in managing, monitoring and reviewing the data collection process has been assisted with the 2020 appointment of a FET Management Information Systems Administrator. Staff with data collection/management responsibilities are provided with monthly monitoring reports that signpost level of data entry across learner personal data, education and economic fields. This support is embedding and supporting a consistent approach across FET. Additional data collection supports to FET staff includes continuing professional development opportunities e.g. access to the PLSS management information system is only available to those who completed GDPR training.

Of the 310 staff survey respondents, 98% understand their professional obligations in relation to General Data Protection Regulation.

### I understand my professional obligations in relation to GDPR



## CONCLUSION

### Recommendations/Actions

- Develop and implement a Management Information Systems policy and associated procedures to inform strategic analysis, programme/ centre level planning and decision-making. This will include analysis of quantitative data in PLSS.
- Complete the transition from ESI Manser to a new financial management system: SUN V6.4 and Purchase to Pay (P2P) and complete the move to ESBS, including the new online expense system (Travel and Subsistence) supporting the HR Payroll system.
- Continue to engage with ETBI/SOLAS and feedback the benefits and limitations of PLSS for capture and monitor of Learner data, including outcomes and outputs.
- Complete the transition to CoreHR (People XD) for Youthreach and VTOS learner payments, including learner access to CoreHR self-service portal for payment details.
- Participate in the PLSS course fee payment pilot for Evening Training learners, i.e., the transition from the current Way2Pay system to the PLSS payment management system.



# Objective 1:

Governance and Management of Quality



## Public Information and Communications

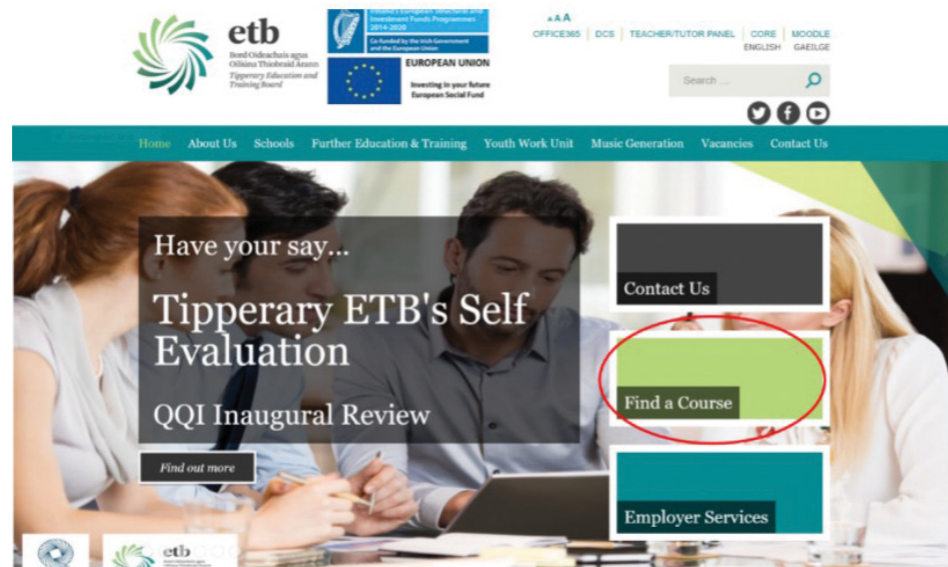


## DESCRIPTION

Tipperary ETB is cognisant of the importance of organisational visibility for all stakeholders and is committed to publishing and communicating accurate information on all structures, services and supports. The Tipperary ETB website; [www.tipperary.etb.ie](http://www.tipperary.etb.ie) is the principal platform used to share information about FET, youth work, music generation, schools, governance structures, human resource information, procurement, GDPR etc., including the provisions of access to all key publications, policies and procedures, quality assurance evaluations and findings.

### Learner Information

Fetchcourses.ie, as the course finder and online application website integrated with PLSS, provides information from programme objectives, entry requirements, content, learning outcomes, course location/logistics, name of awarding body, title of award, NFQ level to access transfer and progression information.



Tipperary ETB and FET centre websites also serve as the repositories for key learner information relating to programmes and assessments, e.g., learner application forms for reasonable accommodation and appeals, learner handbooks and other support material.

Tipperary ETB has developed a strong social media presence across a number of platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube ensuring information provided to the public is current, updated daily and is accessible across multiple platforms and devices.

Information is also provided to the public in the form of an annual brochure, print media: newspaper, leaflets, flyers, radio advertising and promotional videos.

### Further Education and Training (FET)

The FET section of the Tipperary ETB website provides information to the public on the Adult Guidance and Information Service, the full range of FET full and part time programmes from unaccredited to Level 6 on the NFQ, including apprenticeship with a description of the programme category, contact information and centre/service locations, course costs and access, transfer and progression information.

2019 saw the inclusion of a dedicated Employer Services section in the website providing information on the various services offered to Tipperary employers ranging from employee upskilling courses; skills for work, explore, skills to advance, online, customised/bespoke training, training needs analysis, apprenticeships, traineeships to work placements and guest speaker opportunities.

### Quality Assurance

Quality assurance has a dedicated page within the Tipperary ETB website providing information on each of the 11 QQI Core QA areas. Included in this section are QA staff contact information, governance and management structures including terms of reference, legacy QA agreements, policies, procedures, forms, validated programmes, teaching, learning and assessment information etc.

### Publication of Quality Assurance Evaluation Reports

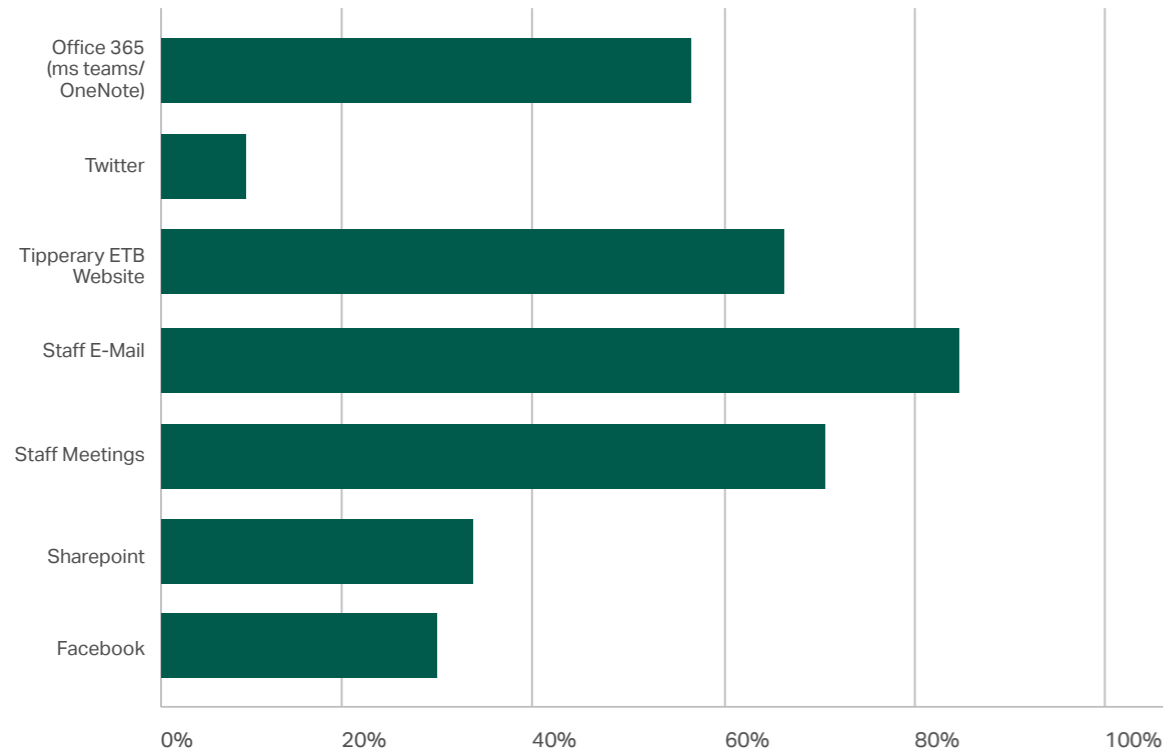
The self-evaluation and monitoring reports and publications for Tipperary ETB, including the 2018 executive self-evaluation report, yearly quality improvement plans (QIPs) and QIP progress reports are published in a timely manner and in an easily accessible format: [Self-Evaluation and Monitoring - Tipperary Education & Training Board \(etb.ie\)](http://www.tipperary.etb.ie). Examples of learner feedback and testimonials are also showcased in this location.

## EVALUATION

The Tipperary ETB staff survey shows over 65% of respondents use the Tipperary ETB website as a method to keep informed about the organisation. With just over 30% using Facebook and approximately 10% using Twitter; social media is not at the forefront of preferred methods of receiving communication and information, staff continue to rely on email and meetings, as the most popular methods of communication in the ETB.

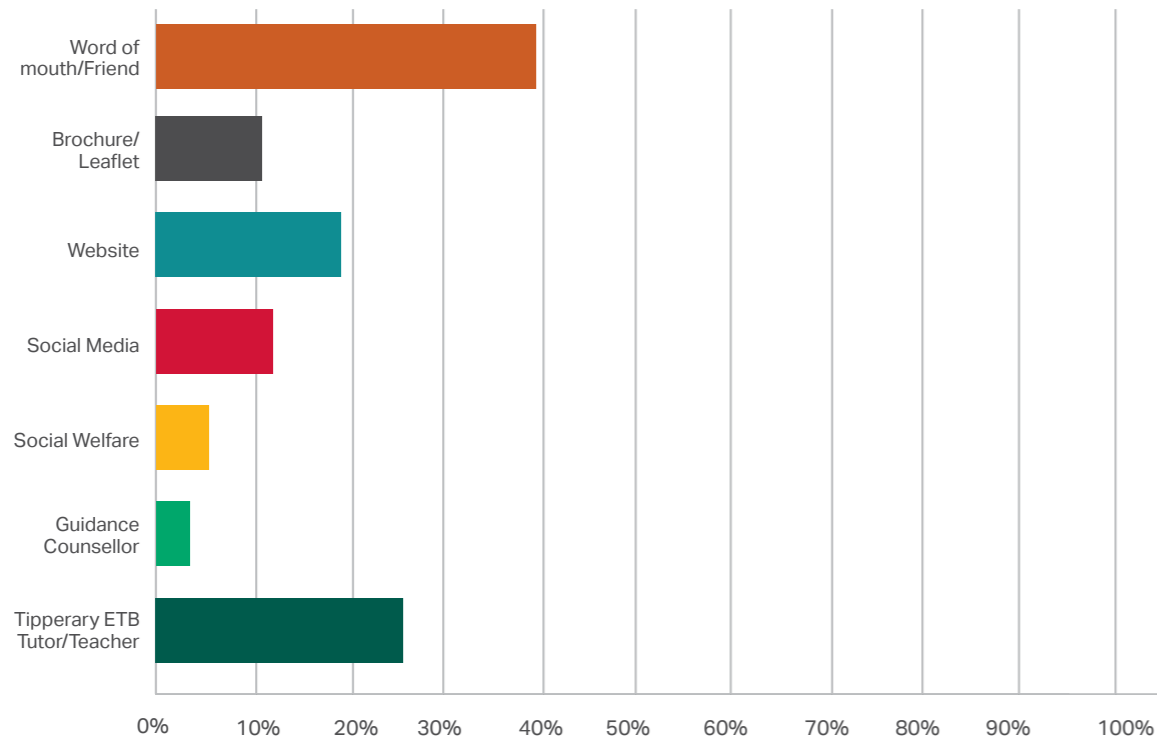


I use the following methods to keep informed about Tipperary ETB? (310 respondents)



Mirroring the more conventional methods of communication in the staff survey; learners, when accessing public information and communication in relation to Tipperary ETB courses; word of mouth and tutor/teacher communication together account for approximately 65% of respondents experience.

Where did you hear about your course with Tipperary Education and Training Boards?



In the last 5 years, along with the establishment of social media platforms, FET now uses canva (www.canva.com) with Tipperary ETB branded templates available for use in the creation of flyers, posters, presentations, videos, social media content and infographics. Canva has allowed Tipperary ETB to grow its brand in addition to promoting and advertising upcoming programmes, communicating information and support to learners.

78% of Tipperary ETB Learners surveyed (632) reported that they were either very satisfied or satisfied with the information on FETCH

March 2020 to August 2021 has seen the Tipperary ETB Facebook page likes increase from 5,645 to 7,141, a 21% increase during the COVID-19 period. Facebook is the ETB's most active page for customer engagement. Instagram in the last 3 months, June to August 2021 has achieved a 4% increase in page followers to 1,427. These increases are a consequence of the engaging and relevant information and content shared across platforms. In response to the COVID-19 crisis a greater demand was put on Tipperary ETB staff to utilise social media as a means of reaching out to the community, learners, and potential learners. To support the ETB in this regard, training was organised for 40 staff members, in the effective use of social media platforms, and in the creation of engaging content for social media pages through the online platforms and www.canva.com. Feedback from the 'Evaluation of the impact of the COVID-19 modifications to Teaching, Learning & Assessment' highlighted that the remote information sessions should continue in addition to regular in person open day events, resulting in the Tipperary ETB Online Information Event held on Thursday 26th August 2021 via MS Teams – a question and answer session with Tipperary ETB Guidance, Information and Recruitment Staff, Citizens Information and DSP (INTREO).

CONCLUSION

Recommendations/Actions

- Develop and implement a Communications and Marketing Strategy with a potential communications role to standardise and monitor communication, marketing, social and print media, publications and branding etc. across the organisation to build on the profile and standing of Tipperary ETB in the County.
- Implement a Corporate Social Media Policy inclusive of FET.
- Develop and implement an ICT Acceptable Usage Policy for staff, learners and external parties who use the Tipperary ETB ICT resources.
- Redevelop the Tipperary ETB website that is easy to use, accessible, up to date, functional, interactive and well designed for all published information and communications.

# Objective 2:

Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The Learning Environment





## DESCRIPTION

Tipperary ETB is committed to creating within each teaching and learning context; either in centre, outreach or in collaboration with other providers/organisations, a learning environment which, in its physical, social, cultural and intellectual aspects, allows learners a holistic learning experience facilitating them to develop both personally and academically. The FET service delivers a range of full and part time education and training programmes from unaccredited to level 6 on the NFQ focusing on provision for the unemployed, while also developing opportunities to upskill those in employment, ranging from community education, post leaving certificate, vocational training opportunities schemes (VTOS), youthreach, back to education initiative, adult literacy to traineeship, apprenticeship, skills to advance and many more for a wide diversity of learners.

### Premises, Equipment and Facilities

The ETB is methodical in the ongoing development and review of its entire building infrastructure assessing the effectiveness of premises, equipment and facilities to ensure they are fit-for-purpose in relation to the programmes of education and training, research and related services. See below a selection of the Tipperary ETB FET premises in various locations across the County.



FET Centre, Archerstown, Thurles



Templemore College of Further Education



Adult Learning Scheme, Clonmel



FET Centre, Roscrea



Teach an Léinn FET Centre, Nenagh



FET Centre, Carrick on Suir



FET Centre, Cappawhite

### Archerstown Virtual Tour (Tipperary ETB)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nnA8Fv-ub8E>



In March 2016, Tipperary ETB formally assumed responsibility for Training Services from LCETB and WWETB. Following a proposal, approval was granted from SOLAS in 2017 to establish an Apprenticeship Training Centre in Archerstown, Thurles, a first for the County, to deliver 3 Electrical Apprenticeships (Phase 2). Building works commenced in 2017 with 6 workshops, 4 classrooms, canteen and administration offices. Over the next 2 years, Tipperary ETB developed a state of the art facility in Archerstown for the Construction Plant Fitting Apprenticeship, Hospitality centre (training kitchen, restaurant, bedroom and ensuite facilities), Traineeship corridor, including delivery of full and part time education and training with integrated adult literacy supports onsite. 2020 delivered additional workshops and classroom facilities to accommodate Plumbing Apprenticeship, including Welding facilities.

In 2020, there were additional SOLAS capital building projects and renovations undertaken; in Youthreach Centre Cappawhite, Cahir, Killenaule, Clonmel and Carrick on Suir FET Centres and Thurles, Nenagh and Clonmel CTCs.



Welding Workshop Tipperary ETB FET Centre, Archerstown, Thurles





### Information Technology and Digital Learning Environment

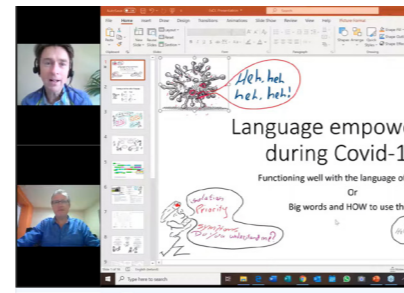
Goal 3 of Tipperary ETB's Strategy Statement sets out the organisational commitment to develop a modern dynamic teaching, learning and work environment and embrace innovative technologies in support of learners and staff. Tipperary ETB, to this end, is developing a TEL Strategy using technology to facilitate teaching and learning and in line with the [National Strategy for Technology-Enhanced Learning \(TEL\)](#) and has appointed a dedicated Technology Enhanced Learning role. The digital learning ICT infrastructure has included the replacement and improvement of hardware and Wi-Fi in various FET centres. Tipperary ETB has also established use of core platforms for teaching and learning such as Office 365 and Moodle not to mention the myriad of tools and functionality that these platforms facilitate for teaching, learning, assessment, sharing resources etc.



Online Teaching during Covid 19 restrictions



Return to the classroom with new measures in place



ESOL tutor, presented an online workshop for NALA in May 2020 relating to ESOL materials and resources for COVID-19

ICT digital resources to learners were enhanced through the roll out of an ICT Grant for Disadvantaged Students (renamed the Technology Equity Scheme in Tipperary ETB) during the Covid pandemic. This scheme facilitated learner access to laptops and other devices.

**"I found that having the laptop from the ETB I had great pleasure of taking part in the online learning as I would not have been able to take part in the video call for each class each day otherwise. It has also helped me follow all class notes and interact in class groups and with other people for group assignments. I have been able to type out my assignment instead of hand writing and sent it straight back to my class tutor if or when needed. Thank you for giving me a great opportunity to take part in online learning via the course laptop. It would not have been possible for me to continue this full module with you."**

(BTEI Learner - Current)

**"With the support of the TETB I received a laptop some months back. It has been of great benefit to me in my studies especially with the Covid restrictions in place and we had to move to Microsoft teams as our only form of having a class. Having such an up to date laptop has helped me in every way that I could of dreamed of. I thank my tutor and the TETB for the support in getting the laptop to me."**

(BTEI Learner - Current)

Tipperary ETB has invested considerably in ICT within FET programmes. Staff in FET have been issued with suitable devices and significant professional development opportunities. Commitment of staff to this endeavour was demonstrated with the Government closure of FET centres in March 2020 due to COVID-19. The Tipperary ETB pivot to 'Emergency Remote Teaching' involved the widespread transition to Moodle and Microsoft Teams as FET staff swapped the classroom to online platforms. While the impact of not being able to attend in-centre was significant, affecting the number of learners attending FET throughout 2020/2021 and delaying the delivery of some programmes, staff showed significant and substantial innovation and creativity to continue teaching and learning, minimising disruption to learners, which was particularly challenging for learners with high support needs or in practical areas. The QA Team and Senior Management worked in parallel to put in place alternative assessment contingency arrangements, in line with guidelines issues by QQI.

### Integration of Adult Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Skills into FET learning environments

Tipperary ETB is committed to integrating subject knowledge and skills and the related language, literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across our FET provision. This is demonstrated in the Tipperary ETB Statement of Strategy 2018-2022 (Strategic Priority 1.4) that provide guidelines for a whole organisation approach to Literacy Awareness and integrating literacy into programme delivery. This organisational priority is in line with the SOLAS Further Education and Training Strategy (2014-2019) which includes a strategic goal of active inclusion that aims 'to promote literacy and numeracy across FET' aiming for greater learner retention and success rates. A Tipperary ETB working group was set up in 2018 to progress this model of integrated core skills support as per the Integrating Literacy and Numeracy Strategy (ETBI). Adult Literacy Organisers offer a range of core skill supports across FET to learners, which include special education needs, English language, ESOL, skills for work, family learning, core literacies etc., integrated into mainstream services, for example, BTEI, Templemore PLC, and Apprenticeship programmes. In parallel to integrated core skills services provision, Tipperary ETB ALS continues to maintain a strong partnership approach to facilitate learner access to core literacy skills, from non-accredited to levels 1, 2 and 3, for example, the Roma Working Group liaising with Tipperary County Council. There are on average 1600 learners per annum engaged in core skills provision in Tipperary ETB.

In tandem with existing integrating literacy strategies within the organisation Tipperary ETB will review the recently published intergovernmental [Adult Literacy for Life Strategy](#) and will embed the recommendations into service delivery going forward.



### Integration of Refugees into FET provision

The Refugee Resettlement Programme welcomed Syrian Refugees to Tipperary, Clonmel and Nenagh in 2020. Tipperary ETB, working as part of an interagency effort appointed a Refugee Resettlement Support Worker who will be in place until March 2022 to support the language needs of refugees throughout the county. Having identified a huge gap in materials aimed at ESOL learners with literacy difficulties and learners who are new to the Roman alphabet, a bank of progressive resources were created for this cohort. Staff were trained in using these and they are now embedded for our pre-A1 learners. Integrating ESOL into other FET programmes is progressing; supporting English language within programmes including apprenticeship and English language assessment for learners applying for FET courses.

### Work Placements

Work placement is a valuable part of the learning experience, allowing learners sample the world of work and get a taste of the realities of working in their chosen occupation. The majority of courses leading to a major award at NFQ levels 4 to 6 include a Work Experience or Work Practice module and Tipperary ETB is committed to ensuring that the work-based learning environments that learners experience as part of their work placements are appropriate, safe, and not exploitative of the learners that engage in them. The work placement duration can vary, depending on programme, from 60 hours to 120+ hours, with programme-specific guidelines for monitoring visits, employer supervisor reports, learner journal and feedback etc. Required documentation for all FET work placements is managed and reviewed at centre/programme level.

## EVALUATION

91% of Tipperary ETB Learners surveyed reported that they had access to the equipment and materials needed for the course, with 85% stating that the use of IT/Technologies on the course were up to date and helpful

82% of Tipperary ETB Staff respondents reported that they have the necessary resources (information and materials, supplies, ICT) to successfully perform their role

During the primary research learner survey of the self-evaluation, of the 593 respondents, over 89% agreed that their learning space contributed positively to their ability to learn, felt welcomed and treated with respect and had a good open relationship with their tutor/teacher.

**“Tutors are dedicated and treat you as an adult. They are enthusiastic and want you to excel to complete the course. The support from the tutors is super! They remove the fear out of learning. I will be sad to leave. Thanks to all of you for doing an exceptional job in such a difficult year.”**

(Learner Quote)

	YES	NO	NOT SURE
Learning materials, e.g., handouts, books, notes, etc. are up to date and helpful	90.99%	2.55%	6.46%
Assignments & Class activities are clearly explained	91.33%	3.91%	4.76%
The Tutor/Teacher is well organised and prepared for class	94.25%	2.54%	3.21%
The course delivery pace is just right	83.84%	5.27%	10.88%

See [Appendix VII](#) – Case Study : Dry Lining ‘Centre of Excellence’ in Tipperary Town.





**Review of Teaching Learning and Assessment 2021**

Tipperary ETB has completed a [Survey](#) in the form of a template document in relation to the review of Teaching, Learning and Assessment in FET, to capture learning from COVID-19 mitigation processes. This exercise was a request from ETBI, who is conducting an 'Evaluation of the impact of the COVID-19 modifications to Teaching, Learning & Assessment', to ascertain the challenges, strengths and recommendations. This process is expected to complete Q4 2021. The summarised report of Tipperary ETB findings include:

What Worked	What didn't go as expected/challenging
Technology loan scheme	Access issues/poor broadband/Wi Fi across the County, particularly rural areas
TEL: OneDrive, Office 365, Moodle, OneNote, MS Teams, Powerpoint	No Learner IT Support outside of hours
Online Skills Demonstrations	Difficult to engage Learners Online over long periods
Learners supported by Tipperary ICT/TEL staff	ICT Skills of some groups was poor, in addition to being diverse within groups
Working collaboratively	ICT Support required longer lead in time for staff, i.e., setup, accounts, support
Learners and staff stayed connected	Learners missed face to face, connection, social side
Enjoyed the online teaching experience	Online experience prohibitive for some learners, reduced engagement, comradery missing and the interaction between learners online more stilted – the deeper learning that comes from organic discussions during class was missing.
Opportunity to develop online teaching strategies and technological tools	Online teaching required additional content in some programmes
Learners benefited from being introduced to new technologies	Not all learner cohorts had autonomy to engage online, depending on organisation policies and procedures, safety online etc.
Reached isolated people	Mental Health issues more prevalent for some learners during COVID
Great support for the vulnerable	Learners expected more out of hours contact from tutors
Asynchronous classes: Content available in a Teams classroom for students to access when it best suits and work submitted by specified dates	Remote not suitable for practical elements, e.g., hairdressing, beauty, stonewall construction

**What should remain post COVID-19**

The mix of blended delivery and the use of blended teaching practices should continue across provision post Covid
Continue use of TEL in Teaching, Learning and Assessment: OneDrive, Office 365, Moodle, OneNote, MS Teams, Powerpoint
Set up of Individual MS Teams per class/programme should be continued
Technology Loan Scheme
Expanding the use of MS Teams for e-portfolios
Consider Online Teaching & Learning where there are barriers to participation, e.g., Childcare, Transport etc.
Remote learning, as it has taught many tutors/teachers the endless possibilities and range of resources they can use to deliver their courses in a creative way

Overall, learner feedback of blended learning methodologies, and online teaching and learning during Covid 19, has been positive. One barrier however that presented and affected learner engagement was access to good quality rural broadband, a challenge for FET as highlighted in the [Tipperary ETB Strategy Statement 2018](#). Developments to integrate an innovative and responsive teaching and learning environment within Tipperary ETB FET service are ongoing with it being a strategic priority for the organisation.

Tipperary ETB planning for the "[FET College of the Future](#)" is underway, with the learning environment a key element in the implementation. The concept is built on simplification of the FET structure, improved access, community based and consistent learner experience. The development of the Tipperary ETB facilities into an integrated service in the context of the Future FET strategic framework is a priority for the FET SMT into 2022.





## CONCLUSION

### Recommendations/Actions

- Analyse and consider implementation of findings on completion of the ETBI 'Evaluation of the impact of the COVID-19 modifications to Teaching, Learning & Assessment' for the sector.
- Revise the Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Strategy; using technology to facilitate and support learning.
- Continue to review and upgrade facilities in line with Capital Investment 2021/2022.
- Promote the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) badge to all FET teachers/tutors as a CPD opportunity to support teaching and learning design and instruction to accommodate the needs of all learners.
- Develop and implement a Tipperary ETB FET-wide policy for quality assuring work placements for all programmes/learners.
- Deliver on Tipperary ETB Adult Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy in line with the SOLAS Adult Literacy for Life 10 year strategy for Ireland.
- Deliver the concept of the FET College of the Future in the context of Tipperary ETB.



# Objective 2:

Teaching, Learning and Assessment

## Assessment of Learners





## DESCRIPTION

A number of processes in Tipperary ETB support the integrity, consistency and security of assessment and these include the following:

The publication and subsequent implementation of updated assessment procedures, templates and resources are available to Tipperary ETB FET practitioners on Tipperary ETB's QASP space. These FET assessment procedures include: Assessment Instrument templates, [Marking Procedure](#), [Plagiarism Code of Conduct](#), [Reasonable Accommodation](#), [Examinations](#), [Internal Verification \(IV\)](#) and [Learner Appeals](#). Resources available include a Tipperary ETB-produced guideline 'Devising Assessment Instruments: Guidelines for Assessors', checklists for assessors submitting learner portfolios and checklists for the preparation for results approval panel meetings, and templates for assessment verification and authentication activities.

Assessment instruments in FE centres are created and issued to the learner by the assessor and following the assessment event, the assessment material is securely retained within the centre. For Training programmes, the QA office makes the AISs (assessments) available to the assessor who issues the assessment instruments to the learner.

Prior to the request for certification, the Internal verification (IV) process confirms the implementation of various assessment procedures and the accuracy of marks and transfer of grades to the certification system. Issues/errors identified are referred to original assessor, centre manager or programme co-ordinator prior to external authentication taking place.

The [external authentication](#) process is facilitated by External Authenticators (EAs). EAs are asked to examine evidence and confirm that fair and consistent assessment has taken place and that grades presented are in line with national standards. For the larger certification rounds, many EAs are assigned to authenticate the same award across multiple centres. EAs also provide feedback in the form of a) improvements needed, b) good practice observed (that can be promoted across centres) and, c) identify any issues/irregularities in relation to the Assessment Process.

The [certification audit process](#), a legacy process from TQAS which has been retained and updated, is a summative audit used in 2nd provider training programmes to monitor the adherence to several assessment procedures (e.g. assessment planning, records and maintenance) and includes the sampling of the internal verification process conducted by the 2nd provider. The certification audit is conducted by the QA Training Services staff in line with the updated procedure and commences with the review of findings including the areas for improvements and/or any non-conformances from the previous audit.

The [results approval process](#) reviews all reports generated during the authentication process and listens to oral presentations by each centre submitting results. Following the presentations, the panel reviews the reports (oral and written), discusses issues arising, grade changes recommended by EAs and signs off on results. Following the conclusion of the RAP, all reports are submitted for secure storage in a central location.



Following the review of certification and authentication reports, collated findings and plans for improvement are shared with centre co-ordinators via annual Information and feedback sessions. In the example of Training programmes, issues relating to the assessment process (including integrity, security, consistency) are monitored per centre/contractor and recorded in the 'Quality Issues Log'. The following screenshot provides an example of monitoring records i.e. monitoring assessment practice during assessment events (Internal verification of Conduct of Assessment – an interim monitoring process) and the recording of any irregularities, inconsistencies and issues around assessment process (Cert audit – a summative monitoring process):

Date	Contract No	Contractor Name	Award Title	Award Code	Issue (s) Identified	Stage at which issue was identified
26/11/2020			Bookkeeping Manual & Computerised	5N1354	One learner had a coat left on the back of their chair instead of being left at the back of the room with the bags and mobile phones	Internal Verification of Conduct of Assessment
03/12/2020			Office Administration	5M1997	One totaling error (only half a mark incorrect), digital evidence sometimes not labeled appropriately	Cert Audit

### Developing common assessments

A group of childcare/healthcare programme practitioners of FE programmes met, as a pilot project, to devise and agree common assessments for modules in childcare and healthcare. The work of this group was facilitated by a member of the Tipperary ETB QA office and a positive outcome of this group included the production of assessment instruments and related documentation for 3 modules that are available to all FE programmes, incorporating those modules.





### Learner Information on Assessment

Learners are provided with information on assessment firstly, at the point of induction. All Training services programmes use a standardised Learner Induction Checklist which signposts assessment information that must be presented to learners. This checklist is also available to FE programmes as a guideline to support induction. Induction sessions are managed locally at centre-level. Assessment information is continually communicated throughout the programme at the appropriate points e.g. planning of assessment, feedback following assessment, in advance of examinations, for assessment appeals.

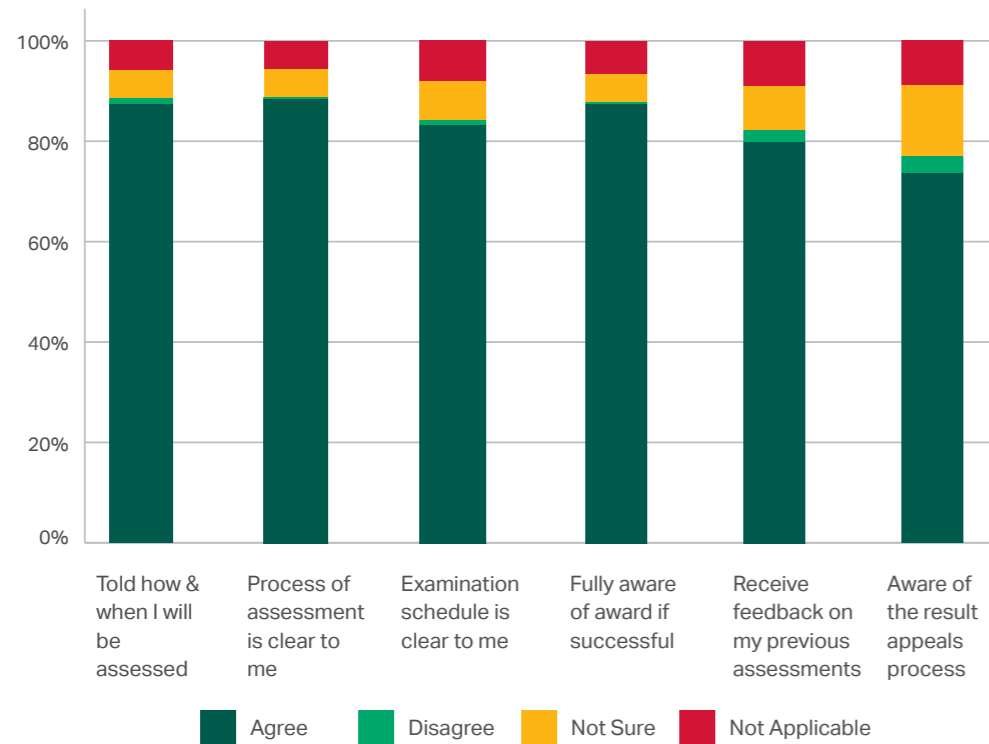
Learner handbooks in local centres also provide information about assessment.

There are many mechanisms and processes in place that positively support the assessment process in Tipperary ETB. The introduction of assessment instrument templates has almost entirely reduced the incidence of assessor error in presenting required information. Similarly, new reporting templates across FET (e.g. IV, EA, Cert Audit) has facilitated easier analysis and review findings. Whilst, 'templates' and 'standardisation' offer benefits to the delivery of consistent assessment practice and subsequent reporting, it is acknowledged that local centre autonomy will not be lost at the expense of a one-size-fits all approach. To manage this balance is challenging but critical to maintain.

80% of Tipperary ETB Teacher/Tutor respondents reported that the QA Checklists around Internal Verification are comprehensive and consistently implemented

## EVALUATION

### Do you agree with the following statements?



The work of childcare/healthcare groups along with the QA office, in relation to devising common assessments for implementation by all programmes, proved successful in achieving consistency of assessment instruments for these modules. Participants also valued new knowledge regarding assessment-writing, a positive networking opportunity, and the facilitation of this work by QA staff. The continuation of this process offers multiple benefits and can be explored further.

QA Training services visits to centres to observe the examination process has supported consistent practice in examination preparation, implementation and information exchange for all staff engaged in the process.

Engaging the services of an experienced EA to authenticate programme(s) across multiple centres over time has supported consistent assessment practice in Tipperary ETB. For example, in late 2018, Tipperary ETB engaged a single EA to authenticate the assessments for all General Learning 4M2010 programmes in all community training provision over a period of 18 months. The EA provided centre-based EA reports and an overall report outlining good practice and highlighted inconsistencies where evident. A feedback session was delivered in March 2020 by the EA to centre staff where findings were presented and discussed. Staff considered this process as very positive.



72% of Tipperary ETB Teacher/Tutor respondents reported that they have the opportunity to discuss feedback from External Authenticators with their Centre/Programme Manager

The certification audit process has proven to be a very successful tool for reviewing and monitoring adherence to a wide range of assessment procedures (beyond authentication processes). The way in which Tipperary ETB conducts the results approval process has elevated the importance of assessment integrity, consistency and security. This has been supported by a request for summary reports of the centre authentication process and the presence of centre staff at the RAP meetings, The summary reports requested required centre staff to review, prepare and reflect on the authentication process, and inclusion of staff at RAP deliberations enables significant preservation of standards and procedures. The value of being involved in the RAP meetings is continuously reported.

Regarding QA procedures for security, a draft version of Secure Storage of Assessment Materials procedure has been developed as part of the 2019 Quality Improvement Plan. Staff consultation and feedback has highlighted the need to consider security of assessment material in outreached part-time provision where assessors do not have regular access to a fixed base.

83% of Tipperary ETB Teacher/Tutor respondents reported that they give their Learners regular feedback on their progress in the subject area

Even though the development of QA policies and procedures is progressing well in Tipperary ETB, it is acknowledged that there are some areas ear marked for attention going forward and these include; a FET wide vision for a range of assessment procedures e.g. locally devised assessment versus centrally devised, integration of learner handbook across FET, implementation of reasonable accommodations during examination process, examination monitoring process in FE, and CPD needs assessment supporting QA.

## CONCLUSION

### Recommendations/Actions

- Develop a Tipperary ETB assessment approach as part of the process to integrate the legacy quality assurance systems in Tipperary ETB.
- Finalise the Tipperary ETB draft procedure for Secure Storage of Assessment Materials.
- Establish Communities of Practice (COP) for knowledge sharing, networking, sharing of good practice, professional development etc., e.g., the establishment of the new ELC programme COP.



# Objective 2:

Teaching, Learning and Assessment



Supports  
for Learners





## DESCRIPTION

Learner supports in Tipperary ETB range from psychological, advocacy, wellbeing, guidance, information to literacy and numeracy, ICT facilities and equipment as well as financial and a sense of belonging and connectedness. There are long standing supports available at centre/programme levels that are introduced to the learner at induction stage, when the learner is provided with information on how to access those supports and the majority of programmes provide a learner handbook outlining the supports available. Learner supports in Tipperary ETB vary across the different FET programmes, depending on location, programme category, centre size and learner cohort etc.

### Mental Health & Wellbeing Supports

Counselling supports are embedded in a small number of FET programmes but not the majority. Youthreach and CTCs are supported with approximately 10 counsellor hours per week, in addition to working closely with the Drug Addiction Counselling Services of the HSE. The 'Making Connections' LTI receives funding for supervision under the Waterford and South Tipperary Community Youth Service (WSTCYS). Learners in certain programmes also have access to an Advocate, providing information on career development, supporting transfer and progression, engaging with parents, and liaising with employers facilitating work placement. The Advocacy service is accessible, confidential and non-judgmental.

A national online text support service has become available to all Tipperary ETB learners through ETBI. This anonymous text service provides a continuum of support ranging from a calming chat to immediate support for learners experiencing mental health or emotional crisis, e.g., bullying, anxiety, depression and suicidal feelings.

Another characteristic of our FET centres and programmes is the promotion of a positive teaching and learning environment. This is evident in our FET services through centre policies and procedures, learner participation on learner councils, supportive staff and learner relationships, as well as facilitating learner participation in community or social events e.g. art exhibitions/educational trips/learner led charitable events.

The individual and collective voice of the learner is important to Tipperary ETB FET service. Towards this end the ETB has facilitated FET learners to engage in AONTAS's Adult Learner Fora. Three events have taken place which engaged Tipperary ETB learners since 2018. In 2021 AONTAS advised Tipperary ETB that the learners represented the highest learner cohort that engaged in the forum across the country feeding back experiences of learning at that point in time. Individual learner feedback is also collected through post course evaluations, learner group evaluations, work experience employer evaluations, outreach centre-tutor-programme manager feedback for adults with intellectual disabilities etc.

The Adult Education Guidance and Information Service provides "impartial career and education information to Tipperary ETB FET learners or adults who wish to return to education and training, to make informed educational, career and life choices. The support is provided in a group or one-to-one basis and is free, impartial, friendly and confidential. In addition Learning Practitioners and Coordinators also assist in supporting the learner regarding progression options.

Some of the full-time courses offer a weekly Training Allowance and minimal financial support for meal, travel and accommodation costs. Transportation to FET centres has been an issue for many learners in the Tipperary region and this is addressed by providing information to learners on travel options as well as engaging local bus companies to transport the learners in some instances where budget permits.

For eligible Tipperary ETB programmes, learners access Childcare assistance through the National Childcare Scheme (NCS), with application via ncs.gov.ie or the local County Childcare Committee. The Childcare provider must be registered with the NCS. A number of Programmes/Centres have onsite community childcare services which learners can access for their children, e.g., Templemore College of Further Education and Local Training Initiatives in Tipperary Town and Cashel.

### Reasonable Accommodation (for Access, Learner Journey, Assessment & Examinations)

Tipperary ETB is committed to the public sector duty as outlined in the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014. This duty is embedded in our organisational approach that aims to ensure that every reasonable effort is made to support learner accommodations which enable equal opportunity in the learning environment for all. [Tipperary ETB Access Officer](#) contact details are on the ETB website and these officers offer support to programmes and centres supporting participation for FET learners.

Currently in FET programmes there are a range of entry access points where a learner can disclose information about any learning needs, accommodations required, and this information is collected in a variety of formal and informal ways. When a disclosure is made an appropriate staff member is assigned the task to identify the nature of support required and learner supports are accessed through centre level learner support structures, for example, the Fund for Learners with Disabilities for PLC learners. The QASP page facilitates staff access to learner information on procedures and resources that support the learner journey e.g. FET Digital Library, FESS resources etc. in addition [Tipperary ETB Supports for Learners](#) gives learners access directly to academics skills supports, guidance, learner handbook etc. Individual FET programmes and centres also have various learner handbooks outlining the programme content, facilities, timetable, assessment information etc., e.g., Adult Learning Scheme Learner Handbook.

In tandem with supporting the learner with accommodations during the learner journey the scheme of Reasonable Accommodations at the Certificate Examinations (RACE) facilitates learner support at point of assessment and examination. This scheme supports accommodations and access arrangements for all learners and is managed at centre level. The guidelines for reasonable accommodations for State Examinations Commission assessments are outlined [here](#). The guidelines for reasonable accommodations for all other assessments in Tipperary ETB are found here: [Reasonable Accommodation - Tipperary Education & Training Board \(etb.ie\)](#).

Additional supports for FET learners include individual/group, literacy, numeracy/mathematical, teaching and learning technologies and enhanced building design to accommodate people with disabilities.







### Staff Supports for Learner Inclusion

One focus for learner support in FET is the provision of continuing professional development opportunities for programme managers, learning practitioners and other relevant support staff across a range of areas – some examples of these are outlined below;

- Conducting Dyslexia Needs Assessments
- Mental Health First Aid awareness
- MSO 365 functionality for teaching and learning
- TEL Assistive Technology Tools
- Universal Design for Learning CPD opportunities

Moodle platform managed by SOLAS supports integrated single sign-on with Office 365 facilitating learners to log in using their Tipperary ETB email address. Moodle has been used to deliver several courses for Learners and professional development for teachers, e.g., Blended Learning, Digital Citizenship

## EVALUATION

Even though it is accepted that there are various levels, consistency, access to and availability of learner support in Tipperary ETB FET Service, learner support is a core ethos within Tipperary ETB FET provision, as demonstrated in the infographic below.



Interviews and focus groups with current and past learners from unaccredited to Level 6 demonstrate this care ethos. Most current and past learners highlighted support from a key staff member or tutor while on the course and felt that this supported their success. Many managers also reported that they supported learners broadly on issues related to childcare, mental health, housing, and jobs.

**“They ask about us, you don’t miss a day without the centre checking to see if you are ok and see if you are alright and that is what we like about the centre. The concern is there and we (the learners) feel it is genuine.”**

(Current Learners- VTOS Nenagh)

**“The main things we have gotten from the courses are a level of fitness and diet and recipes which were put online during Covid and each learner would try the recipe. The cooking is not back yet because of Covid- just P.E. Another real benefit we got was Chai-Gong, a great stress relief- gentle exercise on a Friday morning deep breathing and meditation, things we never did, and we realise the benefit of it now.”**

(Current Learner- Community Education –Clonmel)

Some centre and programmes in FET facilitate specific learner mental health and well-being initiatives. One example is the [Amber Flag](#) initiative which involves the organisation of an in centre Mental Health Awareness Day and Fundraising event which facilitates a cultural change. By achieving the Amber Flag in this extraordinary year was a testament to the importance placed on creating healthy, inclusive environments that supported mental health and well-being for these learners. Another example of learner support includes the development of a study support group in Nenagh VTOS which provides assistance and space on a need’s basis. Learner and staff collegiality is facilitated in the short order cooking programme in the LTI Littleton where both sit down to eat together. Littleton LTI also includes learner participation in a walking group as part of the induction programme.

Learners reported widely on their experience in FET supporting health and well-being;

**“I was terrified of school in the past and I really liked this experience and everyone was really approachable.”** (Past Learner Templemore College)

**“This course has been a great help to me, I live on my own and don’t meet many people every week, I look forward so much to meeting others and learning art.”**

(Current Learner Community Education – Nenagh)

**“I felt it was a great course. I couldn’t read or write prior to starting the course. I felt embarrassed going to a place where others could read. The Tutors were very encouraging at this point. I can read and write now.”**

(Past Learner Adult Learning Scheme - Clonmel)

**“I felt very supported by the centre even now that I am no longer a learner. The centre staff give me a call to see how I am doing and my daughter is now a learner there also and the staff are asking after me regularly.”**

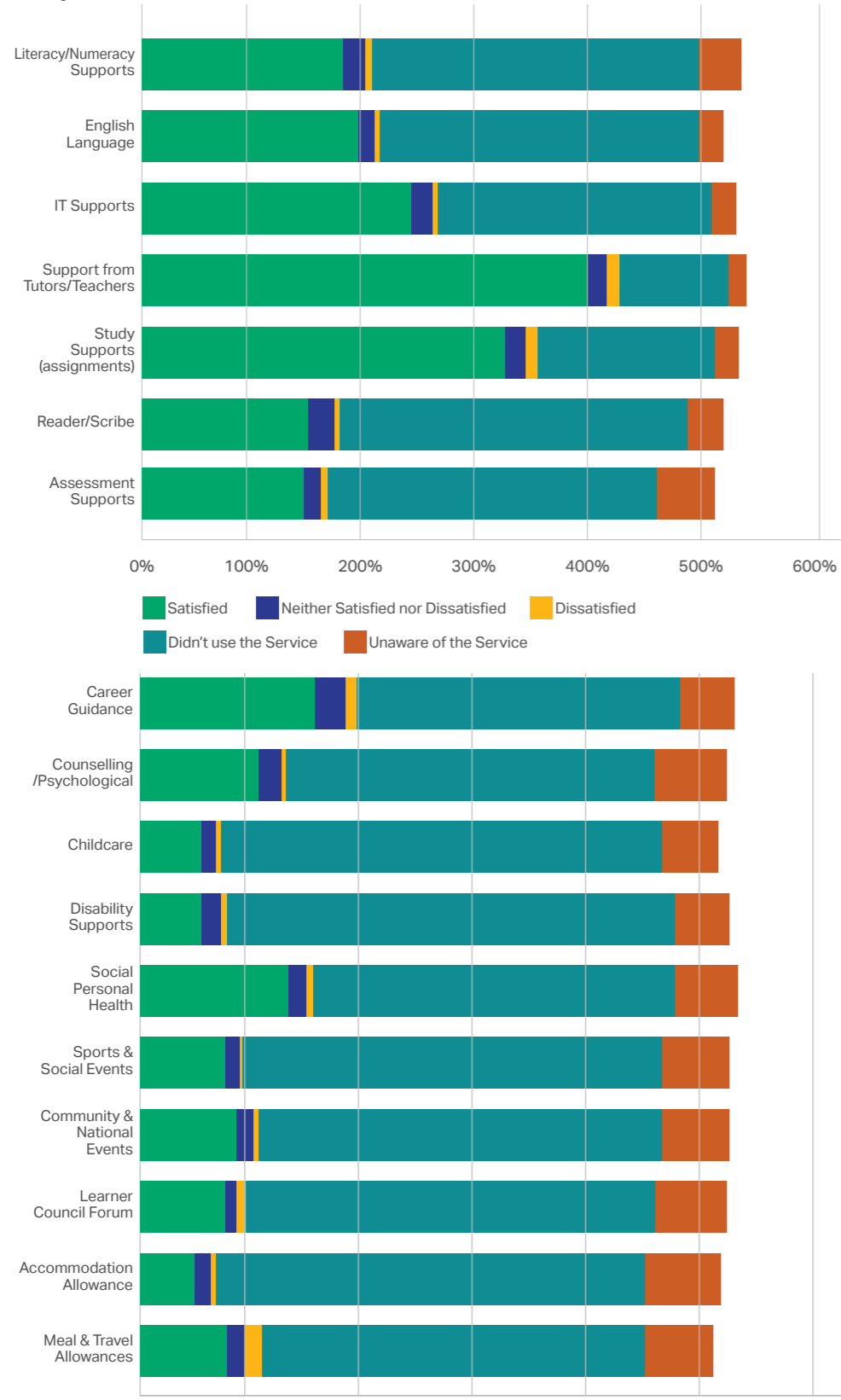
(Past Learner- Adult Learning Scheme - Nenagh)





### Learner Survey

Learners were asked, if they used the following Support Services, how satisfied were they with the support they received:

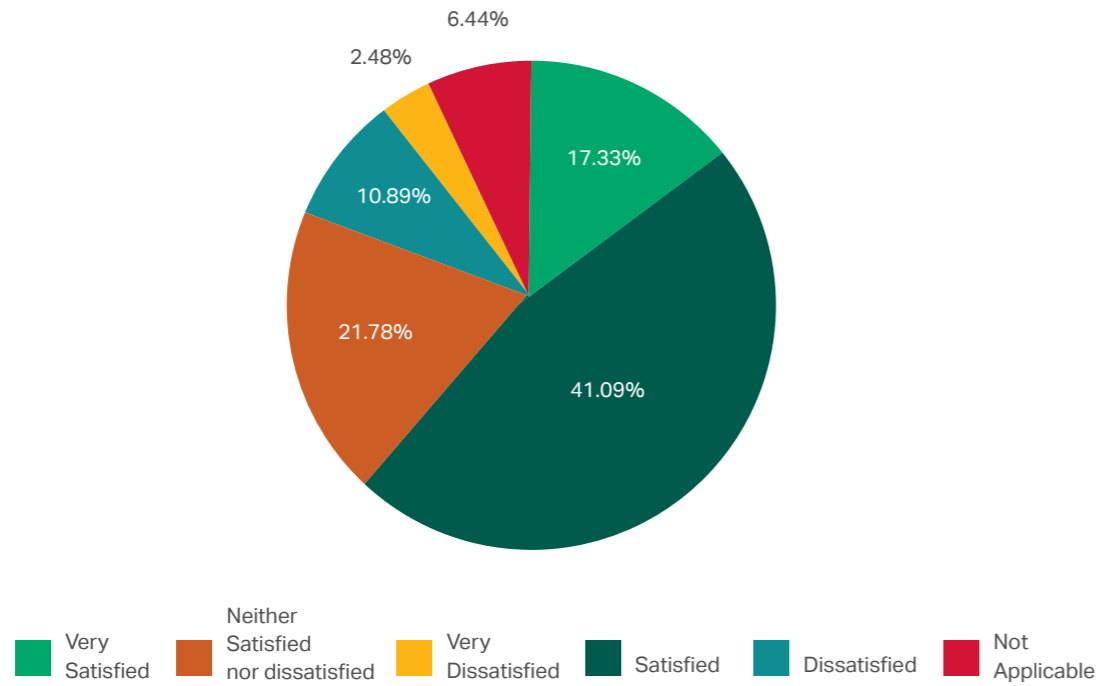




“It was great to meet the others online and continue with our classes – the translation tool was great too and helped a lot.” (CE Learner – Current)

**Staff Survey:**

**How satisfied are you with learning supports on your programme or in your centre, e.g. Literacy, Numeracy, ICT, ESOL, Guidance, Childcare, SPHE/Wellbeing, Psychology/Counselling Study, Sports & Social etc.**



It is clear that there is a learner centered ethos throughout the FET provision, however variations across programmes and centres is great, depending on programme category, location, availability, learner cohort etc. which has demonstrated the need for a coherent and systematic approach. Positive strides to support learners are already underway. For example in late 2020 the FET Development and Support Unit (DSU) was established to support all learners, with the appointment of two roles with responsibility for Well-being and Active Inclusion. In line with the SOLAS FET Strategy 2020-2024 Tipperary ETB is developing a strategy for these key themes. Attention to learner supports will be supported by the Development and Support Unit with the overall goal of providing equal access, opportunity and the provision of support to all Learners.

## CONCLUSION

### Recommendations/Actions

- Develop a Learner Support Strategy, that gives consideration to equity in support across provision where practicable.
- Agree the terms of reference and progress the pilot of the Drugs Misuse Support Group across the FET sector to support centres, managers and ultimately the Learner in terms of managing drugs misuse for younger learners.
- Establish FET service plan in the Development and Support Unit to include a strategic approach to learner support services including a strategy for well-being and active inclusion.
- Reformat the existing Learner Handbook Master Template to a more user-friendly learner centred guide, in plain English easy to read, including infographics, an online accessible version that is implemented across FET provision.
- Include accessible information for Learners regarding Academic Integrity, based on the planned Academic Integrity policy.
- Develop and implement a FET feedback to learner policy/procedure.
- Support the implementation of the Restorative Practice model in the relevant Tipperary ETB programmes, i.e., a collaboration between the Youth Work service and FET services that work with children and young people.



# Objective 3:

Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review



## Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review





## DESCRIPTION

### Internal review, self-evaluation and monitoring

In preparation for the inaugural review by QQI, Tipperary ETB completed an executive self-evaluation in 2018 and evaluated the governance and management of QA and the effectiveness of QA procedures. A report and an improvement plan arising from this exercise set out areas for improvement and a schedule of actions. The production of an annual quality improvement plan and an annual progress report is now a central part of Tipperary ETB's quality improvement process in self-evaluation, monitoring and review:

- [Executive Self Evaluation \(ESE\) Report, 2018](#)
- [Quality Improvement Plan \(QIP\), 2018](#)
- [Progress Report on 2018 QIP](#)
- [Quality Improvement Plan \(QIP\), 2019](#)
- [Progress Report on 2019 QIP](#)
- [Quality Improvement Plan \(QIP\), 2020](#)

There are a number of quality indicators identified in Tipperary ETB that are utilised to support internal self-monitoring. Useful indicators include for example, learner start, completion and progression data from PLSS and CSO statistical data, i.e., progression to FE/HE, employment, unemployment etc., learner satisfaction indicators from course evaluation processes across FET provision, learner certification rates, trends and consistency from QQI and other Awarding bodies.

In regard to the course evaluation processes, there are a variety of mechanisms used to collect information from learners on their experiences within FET in Tipperary ETB. Currently the learner perspective is collected across FET via informal and formal feedback mechanisms, i.e., post course evaluation forms, learner group evaluations, confidential learner feedback forms, work experience employer evaluations, centre-tutor-programme manager feedback for learners with intellectual disabilities.

In addition to the learner journey outcomes and feedback, the views of staff, the processes and the teaching and learning environments are regularly reviewed and monitored as part of the quality assurance system. Recommendations and actions from authentication (IV and EA) reports and Results Approval Panel Report(s), learner complaints and appeals all input to the internal self-monitoring and quality improvement plan.

Tipperary ETB's Cert Audit Procedure: [Cert-Audit-Procedure.pdf \(etb.ie\)](#) is a documented procedure for monitoring in the area of assessment, detailing the steps involved in the certification audit process for training centre programmes in the context of second providers.

The feedback and change request log is the evidence of sources of feedback on Tipperary ETB QA procedures, submitted to the QA office ensuring the continual monitoring and effectiveness of procedures. The log also records changes and implementation, sample:

CHANGE REQUEST/FEEDBACK LOG - for tracking requests for changes to policies, procedures, templates, programmes, modules etc							
Name of Procedure	FET, or FE, or T	Change Request/Issue- detail	Source of information for Change	Considered	Change Request - approved by	Implemented by - Initials	Comment
Reasonable Accommodation	FE	Addition of one-page plain english version of procedure	QA Steering group	✓	SMT	CO'D	
Reasonable Accommodation	FET	Logo DES to be swapped to Government of Ireland	QA Office	✓	QA Office	CO'D	
Reasonable Accommodation	FET	Retention period is for 7 years after the end-of-course for all programmes. Exception: ESF funded programmes must retain for audit purposes. Notification will issue when retention periods have expired."	QA Office	✓	QA Gov	CO'D	
Results Approval process	FET	RAP report usefulness to all centres if skewed by centre C, or, if centre A had no issues with paperwork presented to RAP	Findings from Review of RAP documentation Aug 2020	✓			
Results Approval process	FET	Review RAP report - references centre names only Include Number of Grade Changes upheld, not upheld Record of attendance for presenters	QA Office TS (TP2)	✓			
Results Approval process	FET	Include: Update on status of improvements/actions undertaken from last assessment period. Would this be a good way of tracking RAP actions? Note: this suits a local RAP process, rather than ETB RAP process. Discuss	QA office: reading of another ETB's RAP				
Results Approval process	FET	Logo DES to be swapped to Government of Ireland	QA Office	✓	QA Office		
Results Approval process	FET	4.1 enhance to include observer that is present for learning purposes at the meeting	QA TS office (TP2)	✓	QA Office		

### Change Request Log

### Reporting Structures

- Regular programmes meetings across Full Time, Part Time, Training Services provision and the Development and Support Unit; for programme coordinators, centre managers to report and feedback on progress and key indicators, views of staff etc.
- Monthly FET SMT Meetings review programme areas, plan and progress key strategic developments.
- Monthly Executive SMT Meetings, or more often if the need arises, for Director of FET to inform the Executive SMT of FET progress.
- The Director of FET and the FET SMT report to the FET Committee quarterly to discuss FET provision. A role of the FET Committee is to advise and support FET management and to monitor and review the delivery of FET inputs and outputs.
- Quarterly reports are produced from the Managers in Full Time, Part Time, Training and Development & Support to inform the CE, Board, FET Committee on progress at programme, centre and support level across FET. These quarterly reports provide input to the [FET Annual Report](#).
- End of Month SOLAS PLSS MIS report made available, including learner activity, outcomes, certification as part of a multitude of PLSS MIS Learner Activity, allowing Programme Managers review actual outputs against planned targets.





## EVALUATION

External Authentication: OCT 2020 TO JULY 2021

Total Number of EA reports	90
Total Number of External Authenticators	59
Total Number of Grade Changes Recommended	21
Total Number of upgrades	13
Total Number of downgrades	8
Total Number of Grade Changes adopted by Results Approval Panel (RAP)	20
Total Number of Learner Appeals	3
Total Number of Successful Learner Appeals	0

### EA Reports

All EA reports are monitored both by the centres after each certification period and by the QA office. The following are sample extracts from External Authenticator reports illustrating adherence to quality assurance and commends good practices:

Evidence of confirmation of fair and consistent assessment	10 June 2021	Fair and consistent assessment of learners
	30 May 2020	Marking appears to be fair and consistent
	16 May 2018	There was evidence of fair and consistent marking by this teacher throughout
	20 June 2017	All evidence [was] marked according to the marking criteria
Evidence of consistency of assessment results in line with national standards	8 June 2021	Marks and grades are very much in line with QQI national standards
	5 May 2020	Work is of good standard fitting of the grades awarded
	22 April 2018	Work was of a good standard and all learning outcomes were met
	18 Sept 2017	All work is consistent with the QQI standard
Other Evidence of good practice	9 June 2021	The media modules were all accessible on one computer in the room allocated to me. This is really so helpful and time-saving. Furthermore, the file management of these modules was excellent. There was a logical hierarchy, with all sub-folders labeled clearly. This made is very easy to pinpoint specific tasks and learners
	20 May 2020	Assessment task and activities that incorporated learner's work interests, for example, the retail sector
	21 August 2018	The [internal verification] report has been used to identify and correct minor errors identified by the centre prior to authentication.
	16 May 2018	Clear and transparent marking by this teacher
	25 Nov 2017	Very well illustrated portfolios of candidates evidencing their skills





The EA Reports are reviewed by the QA office and inform the ETB of recommendations and issues. The following is an example of some of the results of the most recent review:

EA REPORT FINDINGS DEC 2020 to JULY 2021 CERTIFICATION ROUND		TOTAL	
Ensure learner instructions/guidelines are included in the Assessment brief rather than have some tasks appearing on a separate document		4	
Number the briefs - where multiple briefs are used (eg 10 briefs used)		2	
Marking	No breakdown of marks	1	
	Marks not broken down on LMS - only totals given	1	
	Each page of learner evidence to contain evidence of marking ie initials, mark, tick	3	
	Generous marking (L6)	9	
	Assessor added 2 marks instead of 2.5 (resulted in upgrade and this folder was IV'd)	1	
	Correct marking sheet not used	1	
	EA could not distinguish between tutor and learner comment (digital evidence that was scanned in B&W)	1	
	Allocations of learner marks should be evident on the learner's work - will give greater clarity	2	
	EA unable to see whether marks won or lost	18	
	Marking sheets not signed by assessor	1	
Marks - Tots and transfers	EA detecting incorrect mark entered on QBS sheet. Should have been 49, not 50.	12	
	totting error	4	
		16	
Video/ photographic evidence	Video evidence for practical assessments and SD	2	
	Learner should identify themselves for skills demo evidence - name badges would mean learner names are identifiable throughout the SD	3	
	Electronic evidence could be downloaded before EA visit - timesaving	1	
	Vide evidence hard to hear	4	
	Useful to the EA if both sides of the conversational content could be heard	1	
	No need for learners to quote PPSN numbers in video recordings	1	
	EA difficulty in locating evidence within long recordings	1	
		13	
Standards/ Quality	For interviews, avoid using learners as the interviewers	1	
	Referencing and bibliography particularly at Level 5 and 6 - includes images	12	
	Difficulty hearing learner contribution through masks/visors on video	1	
	CVs and letter of application - not of standard in today's world of work	1	
	Wikipedia - reservations about its use (reliability)	1	
		17	
Sampling	Some of the LOs were not fully assessed by the assessment brief	1	
	EA not highlighting on result sheet which portfolios were EA-ed	11	
		11	
Presentation	Marking scheme in assessor pack was different to learner marking scheme	1	
	Learner marking sheet to be displayed at front of portfolio	2	
	Learner marking sheets were presented separately to the learner evidence	1	
	Recommendation for file storage on a central location and to avoid USBs (unreliable)	1	
	presentation of coursework to be separated from learner evidence	2	
	Sequence IV and QBS reports in order of how modules are listed on the EA report	1	
	useful to put overall mark and grade on front cover	1	
	No polypockets- for RAP folder	1	
	QBS sheets printed light green colour (too close to yellow colour)	1	
	Tutor pack very unorganised & learner portfolios disorganised	1	
	PPSN only needed where x2 learners of same name.	1	
	Clear signposting needed to point to e-evidenc	1	
	digital learner evidence to be labelled	4	
	Remove failed video attempts from folder of evidence presented to EA	2	
		14	
Internal Verification	IV report not signed	3	
	IV did not detect mark error above that resulted in grade change	1	
	IV sample not identified on the QBS sheets	2	
	Assessor did not sign off on updated QBS sheet following IV	1	
	Q11 asking if assessors signed QBS sheet - left blank	1	
	EA did not sign IV report	1	
			1
	Total number and sample number not entered on IV report	2	
		12	
Evidence	Duplicate information in learner portfolio - difficult to navigate	3	
	Learner evidence not identified with learner's names (online evidence)	1	
		4	
Validation	Centre requesting certification for module that is not validated under the major	1	
		1	

In the 2019 EA report review, the top issues/areas for improvement that emerged were the following:

1. Assessment briefs and exams - 37
2. Quality of the Assessor Pack to EA (Presentation of) - 34
3. Standards/Quality – 37 (including Referencing and Plagiarism - 15)
4. Tots and Transfer errors detected by the EA - 16
5. Photographic/Video evidence – 14

In 2021, the review highlighted areas as follows:

1. Assessment briefs – some 'housing-keeping issues' in relation to presentation and some issues regarding the quality of the assessment instruments themselves eg learning outcomes not adequately addressed by the assessment, further breakdown of marks needed in marking schemes.
2. Marking – marking practices of tutors/teachers and EA reporting difficulties in seeing where marks were awarded/lost.
3. Standards/Quality – Referencing and plagiarism continues to present challenges.
4. Video/photographic evidence – a variety of issues with presentation and quality of digitally produced evidence.

The following are examples of actions implemented to support quality as a result of the information from reviews:

1. To improve the quality of assessment instruments (briefs and examinations), Tipperary ETB produced a standardised suite of assessment instrument templates in 2019 to achieve a common standard of presentation of assessment information and requirements and to act as a guide for information layout to assessors. This has helped greatly to reduce 'omission' type errors. Additionally, the standardisation of assessment instrument templates has helped with consistency of presentation for learners as well as external authenticators. In March 2020, Guidelines for Assessors: Devising Assessment Instruments was produced and circulated to all FET assessors. This guide explains the process for devising assessment instruments for QQI certification with references to the award and programme standards, steps and tips for writing assessments, samples of the template instruments to be used and finally samples of completed assessments. Finally targeted PD sessions have also taken place in centres following the authentication process feedback.
2. To address the issues found by EAs in relation to the "The Assessor Pack", the Tipperary ETB Assessors Checklist for Submission of Portfolios was created. This provided a simple one-page guide to help assessors prepare and collate the necessary documentation and material for the EA.
3. In relation to referencing and plagiarism, the Referencing Handbook and Academic Writing Skills Handbook are actively and continually promoted by centres/programmes: [Supports for Learners - Tipperary Education & Training Board \(etb.ie\)](https://www.tipperaryetb.ie/Supports-for-Learners-Tipperary-Education-&Training-Board-etb.ie).

Feedback in relation to marking continues to be present on EA reports. A set of guidelines Marking Guidelines for Assessors: marking Learner Assessment Evidence in Tipperary ETB Further Education Programmes, Levels 4 – 6 was developed by the QASG in August 2019. In 2021, as commentary about marking is reoccurring, it has been decided that marking practices and guidelines need to be revisited (Recommendation of QA Steering Group Meeting, 8th July 2021).

As EA commentary in relation to the quality of digitally produced evidence is repeated, Tipperary ETB plans to create a guideline for assessors for the creation of digital evidence. (Recommendation of QA Steering Group Meeting, 8th July 2021).



QQI Programme and Benchmarking Data for Tipperary ETB:

Certification	2020	2021
Centres - Registered and Active	24	18
Learners Entered	2,328	1,346
Majors	564	383
Non Majors	1,757	941

Top 10 Compound Awards 2020	
Award	Awarded
5M2009 Early Childhood Care and Education	161
5M4339 Healthcare Support	112
6M2007 Early Childhood Care and Education	79
5M2468 Business Administration	66
5M4349 Nursing Studies	64
5M2181 Applied Social Studies	45
6S3372 Training and Development	44
4M2010 General Learning	37
5M1997 Office Administration	32
5M5146 Sports, Recreation and Exercise	30

Self Evaluation

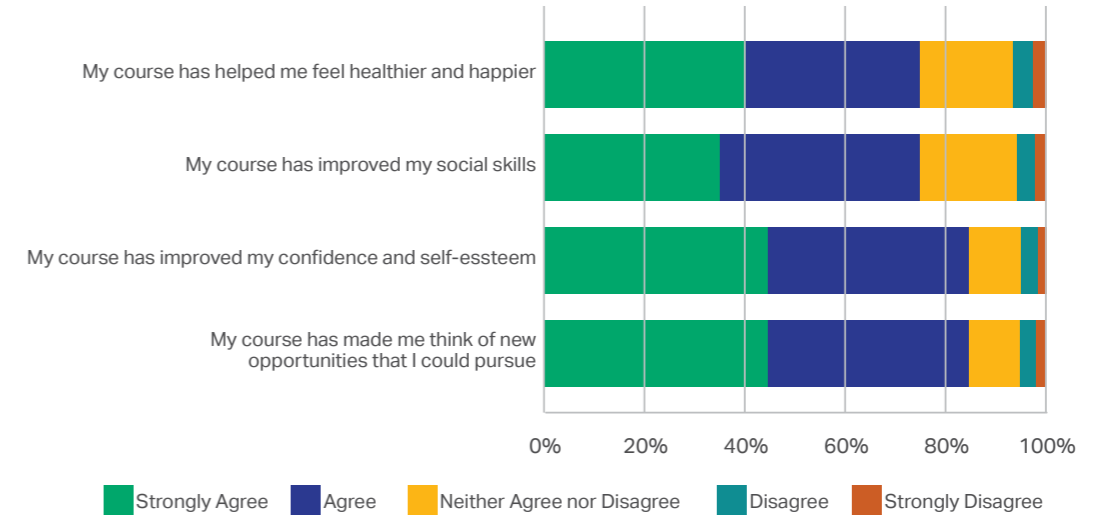
Other self evaluation measures in Tipperary ETB include external formal evaluation processes. Two noteworthy tools included here include ETBI's evaluation of impact of COVID-19 and learner feedback from AONTAS's Adult Learner Forum (2019):



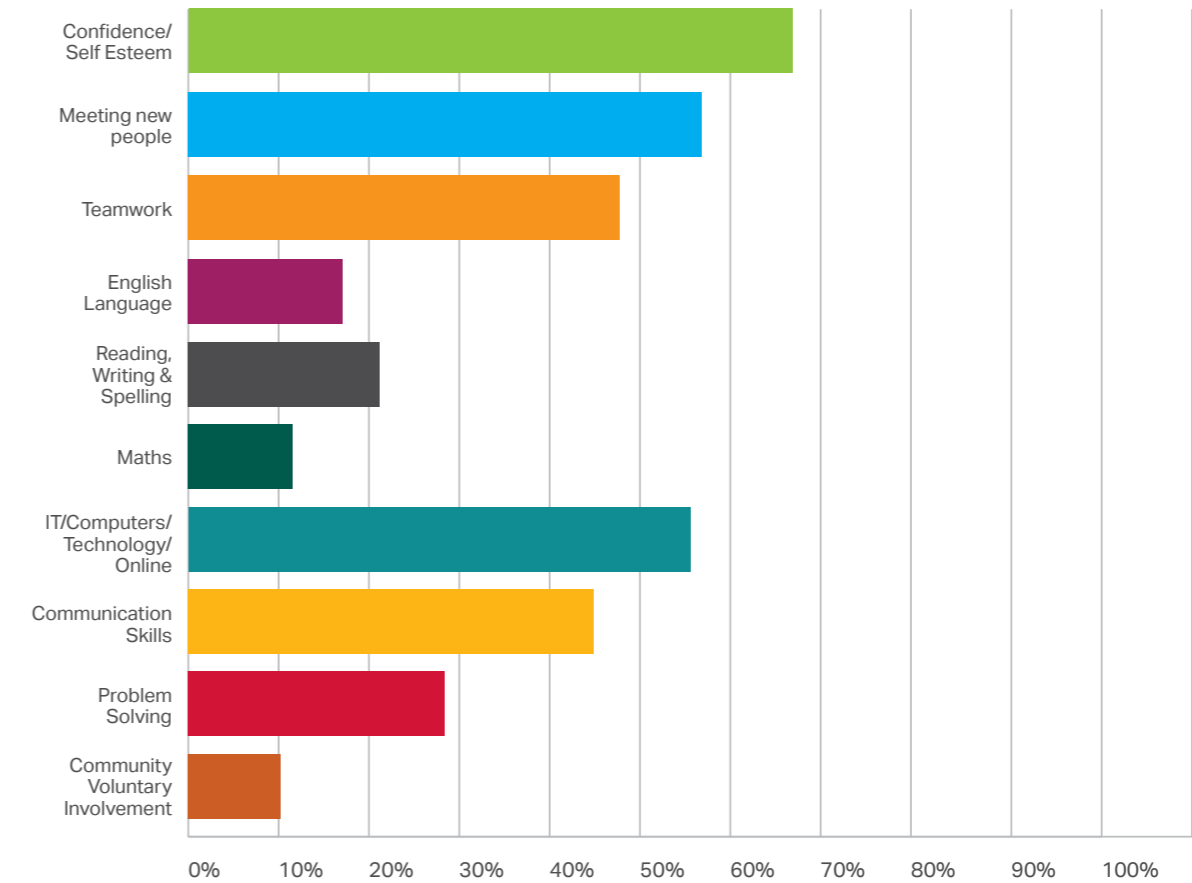
Tipperary ETB Learners taking part in the Aontas National FET Learner Forum Regional Event 12th March 2019

Over 75% of the learner survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed to 'Wider Benefits of Learning' in their programmes, in the areas of health, happiness, social skills, confidence and self esteem.

Wider Benefits of Learning



Since joining their Tipperary ETB course, have improved in the following:





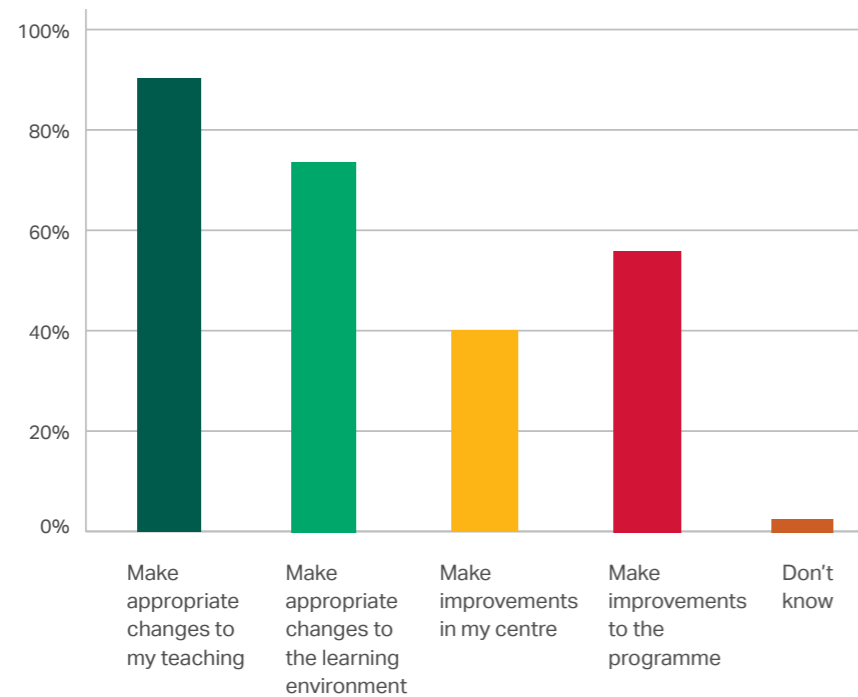


Apart from the Community Education Service and Adult Learning Scheme, the wider benefits of learning are not formally captured across Tipperary ETB FET provision within or outside of PLSS, and it has been identified in the National FET Strategy 2020-2024 as a quality indicator worth measuring to inform future strategy and planning. Staff members from the senior management team and adult learning scheme sit on the national steering group to support progress in this area.

**“It got me out of the house and made me more social, and feeling like I was part of a team, that sort of thing like. You turn up some days when you really don’t want to turn up just because you feel part of that team.”** (Learner Quote)

74% of Tipperary ETB Teachers & Tutors surveyed reported that they collected the Learner’s feedback and perspective on their learning experience

The learner feedback is used to:

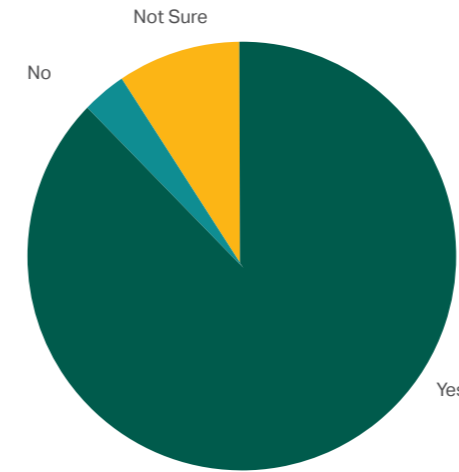


**“My name is Nassiba and I come from Syria. I came to Ireland to finish my education but it was not easy because I did not speak English. I started learning English but then Covid 19 happened. I was still able to able to help friends and family and study English at home. When I moved to Tipperary a new life and a new world began, I started learning in the ETB. I am getting along with people and making new friends here. It is a good experience. This year I learned the things I can do in life and nothing was difficult for me because anything I needed the teacher helped me with. It was not easy in the beginning but now it has become easy and simple because I know what I need in life. Thank you to everyone who helped me to achieve my dream and my biggest thanks to the ETB.”**

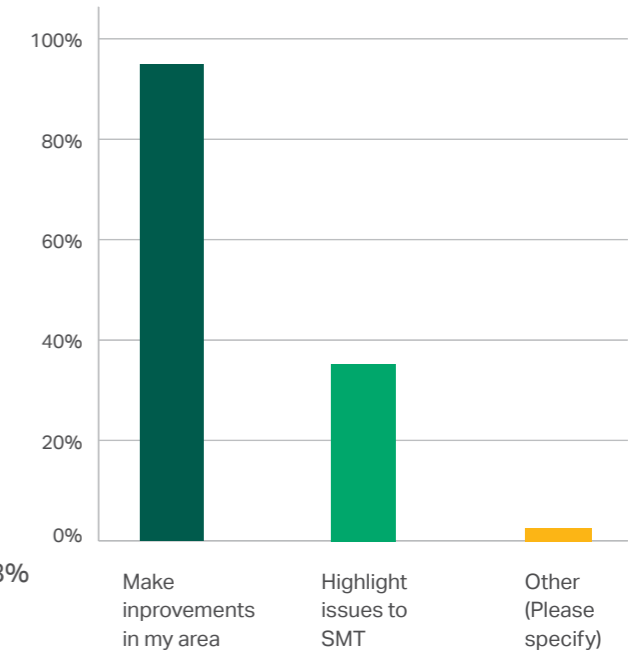
(Learner Quote – Beginners ESOL/Refugee Resettlement Programme)



52% of Tipperary ETB Management surveyed reported that they regularly seek feedback from learners and staff on quality issues, with a further 42% stating they sometimes seek feedback



Of Learners surveyed (512 respondents), a decisive 88% say they are given opportunities to give feedback on their Tipperary ETB course:



With 94% of management surveyed stating that they would use feedback to make improvements in their areas and a further 36% would highlight issues to the Senior Management Team.

## CONCLUSION

### Recommendations/Actions

- Develop a FET Internal Self-monitoring and Evaluation Policy and associated procedures, including key performance indicators, continued production of annual QIPs with schedule of actions and strengthened QIP monitoring and review processes.
- Develop a consistent FET Course Evaluation process to include learners and stakeholders.
- Progress the development of a framework across the FET sector nationally with the continued membership and input to the national steering group for the capture of the 'Wider Benefits of Learning', with an initial pilot by the Tipperary ETB Adult Learning Scheme (ALS).
- Implement the proposed Learner Management Information System Policy to include capture of learner progression, retention, completion, certification and outcome data for analysis to inform, as quality measures, the internal self-monitoring process.
- Participate in the annual AONTAS National FET Learner Forum to engage the Tipperary ETB FET Learner’s voice and review the subsequent report findings.



# Objective 3:

Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

## Programme Monitoring and Review





## DESCRIPTION

### Programme monitoring and review by Centres

Centre-level monitoring and review of programmes is the responsibility of the Programme Co-ordinator and/or Centre Manager. Feedback is sought from learners, staff and stakeholders (internal and external) along with recommendations and actions required from authentication (internal verification and external authentication) reports, the Tipperary ETB Results Approval Panel Report(s), learner results, learner complaints and appeals and completion rates. Feedback is used to inform changes to existing or future iterated programmes, local procedures and to inform of staff (e.g. assessor) development needs.

### Programme monitoring and review at ETB level

Currently there is no formal Tipperary ETB-led process/practice that centrally collates and analyses feedback following programme monitoring and review at centre level. However, risks that are identified as an outcome of the centre's review process are highlighted to the FET SMT for action.

As new FET assessors, programme co-ordinators, centre managers etc are inducted to the Tipperary ETB QA assessment process, they are encouraged to provide feedback (including anomalies or inaccuracies detected) and suggested recommendations for change in relation to QQI programmes, modules and assessment. Training Services have a more formal process for reporting issues/errors within assessments (AIS) via the Report of Module Assessment Form (FO4b).

Feedback is recorded in the Tipperary ETB 'Change Request Log'. If immediate attention is required, the FET SMT sanction the work and resources required e.g. subject-matter experts, evaluator training etc.. For non-QQI programmes (eg City and Guilds), Tipperary ETB staff maintain a record for each qualification to collate feedback that can be provided to City and Guilds quality assurance staff upon monitoring visits.

### Governance

Any changes that are made in relation to programmes and assessments are brought for approval to the appropriate QA governance group. This ensures separation of responsibilities of development and approval activity for robust quality assurance. For example, changes made to the validated programme's assessment guidelines are approved by Tipperary ETB's Programme Approval Committee; changes to indicative content or minor edits are approved by the QA office following tutors' endorsement; changes to assessments that are centrally-administered are approved by an independent tutor within a QA process that is overseen by Training Services QA staff and Management and in line with Tipperary ETB's Procedure for Assessment Instrument Development with TETB's Procedure for Assessment Instrument Development.

## EVALUATION

44% of Tipperary ETB management staff surveyed reported that they always take part in programme review activities, with a further 42% stating they sometimes participate

Examples of how feedback from centres/programmes contributed to programme modifications and enhancements are noted:

- Following the External Authenticator's collated report on EA of Community Training programmes (from Nov 2018 to Jan 2020), feedback was provided regarding observations made regarding consistency and standardisation of assessment practice across modules and between centres. Modifications & enhancements put in place include new Assessment Instruments created for 4 of the modules that the Community Programmes offer, in particular the Work Experience module where the consistency and standardisation of assessment practice was particularly problematic. CPD is scheduled with these providers in November 2021, and a review of the EA's collated report will be part of the delivery and discussion, with further modifications and enhancements being implemented as a result of these discussions.
- The module Infection, Prevention and Control (5N3734) was reviewed and approved by QA Governance in March 2021 to ensure relevance to COVID-19.

Updates and revisions to date have been prioritised on a matter of risk (high) and the capacity to respond with a wider plan of action has been delayed due to limited resources to co-ordinate curriculum-related projects. Areas that are identified for improvement, but not regarded as high risk are exposed to the possibility of been overlooked.

Whilst programme monitoring and review is an ongoing activity in local centres, it is however not yet collated at ETB-level. The process of how centres review and monitor programmes, the frequency of the monitoring and review cycle, and the depth of reviews (e.g. programme material, delivery and operations, assessment guidelines or assessment resources/delivery etc) and the extent to which feedback from the review is implemented and the success of that implementation will be an area for attention going forward. It is important to note here, however, that embedding a more formal system for monitoring and review will be initiated and potentially developed as Tipperary ETB delivers the new programme in Early Learning and Care (ELC) in Sept 2021.

Training programmes (that were centrally managed by FÁS/SOLAS) continue to be in use by Tipperary ETB and have yet to be scheduled for review. The Tipperary ETB RAP reports since 2016 support the need for review of specific programmes and modules. The extent to which they are outdated means that programme documentation cannot be widely distributed to centres, contractors and learning practitioners and consequently they revert to the use of the AISs as a guide to the programme itself.





For programmes and modules used in Further Education centres (former VEC centres), the experience of long-standing FE learning practitioners and access to supports from fellow colleagues enables them to interpret the module sufficiently enough to apply some flexibility to teaching, learning and assessment. This helps somewhat to mitigate risk to standards from outdated programmes.

The quality/strategic planning process is informed by programme monitoring and reviews that take place, particularly where risk is involved. However, it is acknowledged that a more robust programme monitoring and review would provide more, better and evidence-based information for strategic decision-making. Finally, where projects are agreed and implemented following review activity, Tipperary ETB has very strong governance mechanisms in place for assuring quality.

## CONCLUSION

### Recommendations/Actions

- Document a programme review process that is systematic, periodic and collaborative for both centre-level and Tipperary ETB-level monitoring and review activity.
- Address programme review in the implementation of the planned Curriculum Development Structure within Tipperary ETB, in line with national and sectoral developments.



# Objective 3:

Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

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





## DESCRIPTION

Tipperary ETB engages with a range of external parties, second providers and external stakeholders including but not limited to the Community Sector, Government Departments, ETBs, HE, Local Authorities and Partnerships, Employers, Industry and Awarding Bodies.

### Community Education Partners

All FET centres and programmes network with local community and voluntary partners in the course of considering FET needs, creating referral pathways as well as supporting interagency events. Tipperary ETB maintains [Service Level Agreements](#) (SLA)/Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with local community and voluntary organisations across County Tipperary varying in size, capacity, function and priorities<sup>13</sup>. Part time FE provision in particular outreaches a flexible adult education service to community and voluntary organisations across the County, engaging with 122 external groups and services. This provision supports the development of course content based on the needs of the learner group or service with priority given to engage individuals or groups who experience particular barriers to participation in adult learning.

### Second Providers

**Contracted Training** refers to the structure, procurement and management of Training provision outsourced to Contractors by the ETBs. Under the current Super Contractor Framework Tipperary ETB has four contractors & under the Traineeship Framework six contractors. There is a Framework agreement in place between the ETB and each of the Super Contractors in addition to Service Contracts in place for each course. Contracted Training is a flexible, innovative approach to delivering training and is procured and managed in line with Irish and European law and follows guidelines as set down by the funding authorities i.e. DFHERIS, SOLAS, the European Social Fund (ESF) and the requirements of the ETBs, complying with policy like the FET Service Plan, ESF requirements and Government directives. All Contractors must meet the Quality Assurance guidelines detailed in the Core and Sector Specific Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines for ETBs issued by QQI, for example; legal, reputation, resource, governance and structural requirements. The ethos of the agreement between the Contractor and Tipperary ETB is based on a Supplier Relationship Management (SRM) model. Tipperary ETB and Contractors conduct bi-monthly review meetings to discuss local needs, contractor/sub-contractor performance, areas of improvement, course/employment outcomes, innovation, issue resolution & monitoring.

**Community Training Centres (CTCs)** are independent community based organisations facilitating education, training, employment and support needs of early school leavers, primarily aged between 16 and 21. There are three CTCs funded by Tipperary ETB in Clonmel, Nenagh and Thurles, meeting the needs of young people, operating outside of the school system in the local community. The CTCs are run by a board of management, a limited company under charitable status and a non-profit organisation. On approval on an annually submitted business plan, an Agreement to Collaborate Contract is issued to providers, including Agreed Operational Budget, Training Programme Specification (TS), Certification of Incorporation (or charitable status) and Tax Clearance Certificate.

<sup>13</sup> Note: 2020/2021 list is 60% less than pre COVID figures as Community Groups have not yet returned

**Specialist Training Provider (STP)** programmes are delivered to people with disabilities who may require more intensive support. There are two STPs in Clonmel: National Learning Network and Cluain Training and Enterprise Centre. Similarly to the CTCs, annually each Specialist Training Provider submits a business plan for the following year, that is reviewed and on approval of the business plan Tipperary ETB will issue a Grant Agreement with the provider.

**The Local Training Initiatives (LTIs)** are project-based training and work experience programmes carried out in the local community and managed by local community groups throughout Tipperary. All LTIs submit a Local training Initiative Application/Renewal Form, that is reviewed and if successful, Tipperary ETB issues an Agreement to Collaborate with the training provider.

### Employers

Tipperary ETB works with Employers and several external parties as part of enterprise engagement, including RSF, DSP, LEO, Chambers of Commerce, Local Authority, Industry Consortia, Contracted Trainers and so on. The Workforce Development team allows the ETB to continually review and improve planning to meet industry needs and increase engagement and collaboration. The ETB delivered **Step up and Grow** which is a Company Benchmarking process aimed at promoting business excellence, initiated as part of the [Supporting Working Lives and Enterprise Growth in Ireland 2018-2021](#) further education and training policy framework for skills development of people in employment, see [Case Study](#). Tipperary ETB is currently engaged with 350+ Tipperary based companies who have been approved to employ and train apprentices in their designated trades and occupations. Under these employers, there are currently close to 700 apprentices currently engaged in their apprenticeships across various programs. In relation to the suitability of employers to train and employ Apprentices, Tipperary ETB follows the procedures set out by SOLAS detailing the process of approving companies, assessing qualifications of the designated assessors/mentors and assessing that the employers have the range of work available to see apprentices through of the on-the-job phases of the program. All arrangements with employers and apprentices are available through the various documents used at the initial point of engagement. These documents include the Employer Suitability to Train Form which details the company, the supervisors, qualifications and the company's agreement to follow the rules and regulations and the Apprenticeship Code of Practice set out by SOLAS. The effectiveness of these arrangements are monitored and reviewed by the Tipperary ETB SOLAS Authorised Officers whose main responsibility is to monitor, engage and review the progress of these companies and the apprentices under their employment to ensure that quality standards are maintained and improved upon.





### Awarding Bodies

In regard to awarding bodies, e.g., QQI, City and Guilds; as a provider, Tipperary ETB has approval of its institutional capacity and quality assurance procedures with responsibility for the development, maintenance, provision and internal QA of Tipperary ETB programmes, for example. Tipperary ETB also funds programmes leading to certification in a range of QQI and non-QQI awards, including:

City and Guilds	ECDL/ICDL	VTCT	ACCA
RTITB	MTA	MCSA	ICM
Adobe	MOS	CIBTAC	CompTIA
EHAI	ICS Skills	ITEC	Microsoft
PHECC	RSA	RTITB	CIDESCO

Tipperary ETB Board Members and/or Staff have seats on a number of external committees, including; Tipperary Sports Partnership, Youthwork Committee, Public Participation Network (PPN) Disability Forum, North Tipperary Development Company, South Tipperary Development Company, National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals, Children and Young People’s Services Committee, National Literacy and Numeracy Committee, HSE Connecting for Life and Governing Body of Limerick Institute of Technology (LIT).

## EVALUATION

### Community Partners/Second Providers

In regard to the oversight and monitoring of Tipperary ETB’s Community Education Partners, clarity on the existing SLAs/MoUs is needed and a framework for future monitoring considered. The structure of oversight and monitoring in regard to community training: CTC, LTI, STP is documented and reviewed annually, and contracted training providers have undergone an OGP (Office of Government Procurement) competition in addition to ongoing monitoring and review by Tipperary ETB. The Learner survey respondents in the self-evaluation process for second providers, including contracted training, accounted for approximately 17% of all learner respondents, in addition to 7% Community Education learners, ensuring representative feedback across FET learners. 10% of staff respondents represented second providers demonstrating their willingness to participate and input to the self-evaluation process. Focus group feedback from second providers funded by Tipperary ETB highlighted the imbalance that exists in the relationship between the funder and the second provider, particularly in the areas of support, feedback and professional supervision, for example, for management and staff in second providers to discuss their work, strengths and weaknesses, in an open and honest forum with the ETB.

### Employers

During the evaluation process and the low response to the Employer survey, as documented in the self-evaluation methodology, the data gathered cannot be extrapolated to represent all employers in the region. But the qualitative feedback from the twenty plus Employers has highlighted the need to continue and improve our employer engagement and workforce development supports. When asked what recommendations would they suggest to improve collaboration between the ETB and Employers in the future:

“Create greater awareness of what the Tipperary ETB has to offer!”  
“On site meetings to understand better what we do and maybe TETB could offer practical suggestions”

“Very hard to cover for staff that are attending courses. Would be good to provide weekend courses or more evening hours.”

To further stimulate relationships with wider stakeholders including enterprise partners, Tipperary ETB has started work on its submission of an [‘Innovation through Collaboration 2021’](#) proposal.

[See Appendix IX](#) – Case Study: Step-Up-And-Grow

### MAEDF Fund – Community Education Providers

The Mitigating Against Educational Disadvantage Fund’s (MAEDF) aim is to provide funding to support educationally disadvantage learners in accessing and participating in community education. The Fund places a strong focus on community education as a mechanism to continue to support and engage with disadvantaged learners. In addition, there is a focus on enabling the investment in building the digital infrastructure of providers and their capability to ensure that online learning/blended learning can be delivered in a way that meets the complex needs of learners. SOLAS invited ETBs to apply for funding on behalf of community groups under the MAEDF fund in late 2020 . Over 500 community education projects were funded through the 16 Education and Training Boards. Tipperary ETB funded 29 Community groups throughout the county, amounting to €150,446. The projects funded varied from projects to help support online learning, connect communities and provide social supports to the most disadvantaged. The fund has continued for 2021 and the application process is underway.

### External Authentication

The recent update to the EA Contract of Employment including an EA declaration of conflict of interest, is good practice and strengthens the independence of the authentication process.

## CONCLUSION

### Recommendations/Actions

- Implement the new Contracted Training Framework to further enhance the Specific Skills Training and Traineeship Training in FET.
- Review and extend the MoUs and SLAs between external/third parties and Tipperary ETB to address gaps in governance and oversight.
- Continue to engage with Employers and External Stakeholders, through the function of the Workforce Development Team, to further enhance and strengthen links.



# Conclusions







The Tipperary ETB self-evaluation process was a critical reflection and analysis, through consultation, of our FET structures and provision in the context of governance and management of quality, teaching learning and assessment, and self-evaluation, monitoring and review. The evaluation identified a number of key strengths across the organisation, including the high level of engagement from learners, staff and stakeholders in the consultation, the existence of robust structures and processes regarding governance, integrity and approval of learner results and assessment. Also acknowledged was the high learner satisfaction in terms of information, access, learning environment, wider benefits of learning and supports available. Areas identified for improvement include programme development, capturing the learner voice, policy in the areas of access, transfer and progression, recognition of prior learning, blended learning, self-monitoring and in addition, a focus on building the profile and standing of FET in Tipperary. A priority for the ETB is the integration of the quality assurance systems in Tipperary ETB to create one comprehensive, robust and responsive QA system.

The consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic continued to impact on the delivery of services through 2020 and into 2021, and while the challenges dominated by COVID-19 across FET were significant, it also highlighted the dedication and commitment of staff, the resilience of learners and an overall level of creativity and innovation as Tipperary ETB responded to the impact of the pandemic in the delivery of programmes and services. The ETB is committed to continuing to meet the needs of learners despite the challenges that COVID-19 presents and while no doubt COVID-19 will continue to dominate the landscape in late 2021 and perhaps into 2022, FET has proven it's resilience and ability to adapt and develop.

Tipperary ETB would like to thank all contributors to the self-evaluation process; learners, staff and stakeholders, internally and externally; the self-evaluation steering and task groups, the review coordinator and supporting team, the QA office and senior management. The contributions from across the ETB have been instrumental in informing the self-evaluation report and particularly the resulting recommendations and actions. It has been a reflective process, a celebration and recognition of what is being done well and a driver for change in areas requiring improvement and action.



# Appendices



**Appendix I – FET Colleges/Centres**

Borrisokane	Borrisokane Community College (School) FET Centre
Cahir	Coláiste Dún Iascaigh (School) FET Centre (Former Vocational School)
Cappawhite	Youthreach
Carrick-on-Suir	Comeragh College (School) FET Centre (Former Vocational School)
Cashel	FET Centre (Former Vocational School)
Clonmel	Tipperary ETB Sub-Office (Administrative Office) Raheen College (School) Gaelcholáiste Chéitinn (School) Central Technical Institute Senior College (FET Centre) FET Centre Kickham Barracks Campus Coláiste Shliabh na mBan (School)
Killenaule	Scoil Ruáin (School) FET Centre (Former Vocational School)
Nenagh	Tipperary ETB Head Office (Administrative Office) Nenagh College (School) Teach an Léinn (FET Centre) Lifelong Learning Centre (FET Centre)
Newport	Newport College (School)
Roscrea	Coláiste Phobal Ros Cré (School) Roscrea FET Centre including Youthreach
Templemore	Templemore College of Further Education including Youthreach
Thurles	Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed (School) Coláiste Éile (FET Centre) FET Centre, Archerstown
Tipperary Town	FET Centre (Tipperary Technology Park/Tipperary Community Centre)

**Appendix II – List of QQI registered centres**

Centre Name	QQI Centre Code
Adult Literacy South Tipperary	40651S
Adult Literacy North Tipperary	40930W
Adult Learning (ESOL Archerstown)	40930W
BTEI Clonmel	42633D
VTOS Cahir Adult Education Centre	40089T
VTOS Teach an Leinn, Nenagh	40055C
VTOS Coláiste Eile, Thurles	40543P
VTOS Carrick on Suir	72400V
FET Centre (VTOS) Clonmel	38957H
FET Centre Carrick On Suir	38931M
FET Centre Tipperary Town	38954B
Youthreach, Cappawhite	40468G
Youthreach, Roscrea	40472S
Community Education, Martyrs' Rd., Nenagh	42492L
Coláiste Phobal, Roscrea	76069P
Newport College	72450N
Nenagh College of Further Education	72440K
Coláiste Mhuire Co Ed, Thurles	72490C
Coláiste Mhuire Co Ed, Thurles (Night Class)	38163Q
Templemore College of Further Education (St Sheelans)	72470T
Borrisokane Community College	72370P
CTI Senior College Clonmel	72420E
St Ailbes, Tipperary Town	72480W
Scoil Ruain, Killenaule	72430H
Coláiste Dun Iascaigh, Cahir	76063D
St Joseph's School	19687U
Tipperary ETB Training Services (Community)	38816M
Tipperary ETB Training Services (Contracted)	38815K
Tipperary ETB Training Services (Evening School)	38857D
Tipperary ETB Training Services (Employer Training)	38899T
Adult & Further Education Centre	40469G
Thurles Education Centre	404640N
Tipperary ETB Administrative Centre	38711V

### Appendix III – Self Evaluation Steering Group ToR and Membership

#### QQI INAUGURAL REVIEW OF QUALITY ASSURANCE IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING BOARDS TIPPERARY ETB (TETB) SELF-EVALUATION STEERING GROUP (SESG) TERMS OF REFERENCE

##### 1. BACKGROUND

As outlined in Quality and Qualifications Ireland's (QQI) Core Quality Assurance Guidelines, quality and its assurance are primarily the responsibility of the provider, in this case TETB, and review and self-evaluation of quality is a fundamental element of an ETB's quality assurance system. TETB's external quality assurance obligations include a statutory review of quality assurance by QQI, as outlined in the Qualification and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012.

An external review of quality assurance has not previously been undertaken for the ETBs, either through QQI or former legacy awarding processes hence in October 2019, QQI published its Policy for the Inaugural Review of Quality Assurance in Education and Training Boards, outlining its intended approach to the first external reviews of quality assurance within the sector (herein referred to as Inaugural Review). QQI is cognisant of the ETBs' current organisational context in which the establishment of comprehensive and integrated quality assurance systems is an ongoing process.

The outcome of the Inaugural Review will be the production of a formal report from QQI upon which an improvement plan will be created by TETB and agreed with QQI. Hence the function of the Inaugural Review will be to inform the future development of quality assurance and enhancement activities within the organisations.

##### 2. ROLE

The role of TETB's governance system is to oversee the quality of education and training, research and related activities of TETB. TETB's governance and management system takes account of the overall corporate responsibility of TETB, vested in the Chief Executive (CE) and supported by senior management of TETB, in all aspects of the strategy, governance and management of quality assurance throughout the corporate entity.

A TETB SESG will provide oversight and governance on the internal evaluation of TETB's quality assurance processes, and the preparation of the related Self-Evaluation Report. The SESG may also have a role in supporting the QQI main review process.

##### 3. AIMS

To provide clarity on respective roles and outline the SESG's responsibility for co-ordinating the Self-Evaluation process, monitoring progress and ensuring the production, approval and submission of the Self-Evaluation report.

##### 4. FUNCTIONS

The SESG will fulfil the following functions:

- Support the Review Coordinator, Senior Management Team (SMT) and the Quality Assurance (QA) Office in developing strategies, actions, methodology, including supporting documentation, for the purpose of the evaluation process
- Plan and develop the implementation of the evaluation process from above
- Plan, identify and support activities for engagement with stakeholders
- Provide an objective voice and input
- Provide ongoing strategic advice and guidance on the progress of the evaluation process in line with the purpose and objectives of the evaluation
- Consider draft documentation and/or further information as it arises for inclusion as part of the evaluation process
- Monitor progress of key milestones of the self-evaluation process
- Identify the need for any working/sub-groups to progress key themes or coordinate engagement/ data collection activities with specific stakeholder groups in respect of the evaluation process. The SESG member maybe required to sit on and/or lead a subgroup as appropriate.
- Consider the draft TETB Self-Evaluation report and make recommendations to the Review Coordinator prior to its finalisation and submission
- Present the TETB Self-Evaluation report to the Chief Executive (CE) and the QA Governance Group SMT prior to its submission to QQI
- Engage with QQI staff and members of the review panel during the panel visit(s)

The SESG will be supported by the QA Office

## 5. MEMBERSHIP

Group membership extends out of Further Education and Training (FET), to include all TETB sectors. Members of the TETB SESG will be appropriately qualified and experienced to perform their role.

Area	Member
Director of Further Education	Colin Cummins (Chair)
Director of Schools	Clodagh Kelly
AEO (Development & Support)	Catherine O'Callaghan (Co-chair) (Review Coordinator)
AEO (PLC/VTOS/Youthreach)	Olivia Kennedy Murphy
Principal / Centre Manager	Noel Colleran
FESS	Jenny Whelan
Regional Skills Forum	Edmond Connolly
QA Office	Carol O'Donovan
MIS Support	Síle McDonnell
Human Resources	Fiona Campbell
Corporate Governance	Bernie Hartly
Contracted Training Officer	Helen Ryan
Apprenticeship Senior Training Advisor	Damian Walshe
CTC Manager	Una O'Dwyer
PLC	Jane Quinlan
BTEI Coordinator	Kathleen Grimes
BTEI	Geri Cullen
VTOS Coordinator	Geraldine O'Brien
Adult Learning Scheme	Lillian Hahessy
Adult Learning Scheme	David Golden
FET Committee Member	Michael Power

Other members may be requested to attend as required. The CE may attend meetings of the Self-Evaluation Steering Group as he/she sees fit.

## 6. MEETINGS

### FREQUENCY

This group will meet 6 times over the duration of the evaluation period, or as required. The group may review and revise the frequency and timing of meetings to meet requirements of the evaluation process and priorities.

Meeting agendas and supporting materials will be circulated electronically by the Review Co-ordinator. The meetings may be conducted electronically, in centre, or as appropriate.

### RECORDING

The Review Co-Ordinator will record the notes and minutes after each meeting and will be circulated within 3 days of the meeting taking place.

### CHAIR

Director of FET / AEO (FET Development & Support)

## 7. ACCOUNTABILITY

The chair of the SESG will report progress to the CE Executive. In the instance of unresolved issues in the SESG, the chair will escalate to the CE/Executive for decision. Where a sub-group exists, progress will be reported, via the sub-group chair, to the SESG.

**Appendix IV – SESG Task Group Membership**

External Stakeholder (Employers, Community Partners, Contracted Training Providers) Engagement Group	
Damian Walsh (Chair)	Senior Training Advisor, Apprenticeships
Edmond Connolly	South-East Regional Skills Forum
David Golden	Literacy Resource Worker (ALS)
Colin Cummins	Director of FET
Emer Leahy	Knockanrawley Resource Centre Manager
Deborah Ryan	CEF- Active Inclusion

FET Staff, Centre Managers, Programme Co-ordinators, Learning Practitioners, Ancillary Staff Engagement Group	
Noel Colleran (Chair)	Principal, Templemore College
Geri Cullen	BTEI Resource Worker
Carol O'Donovan	Quality Assurance Officer
Una O'Dwyer	Manager, Clonmel CTC
Geraldine O'Brien	VTOS Coordinator
Jane Quinlan	PLC Coordinator

Governance, Executive, FET SMT, MIS, QA Office, HR, OSD Engagement Group	
Jenny Whelan (Chair)	FESS Officer
Olivia Kennedy Murphy	AEO
Fiona Campbell	Manager, Human Resources
Bernie Harty	Manager, Corporate Governance
Clodagh Kelly	Director of Schools

Learner Engagement Group	
Síle McDonnell (Chair)	MIS Support
Lillian Hahessy	Literacy Resource Worker (ALS)
Helen Ryan	Contracted Training Senior Training Officer
Michael Power	Tipperary ETB Board/FET Committee Member
Catherine O'Callaghan	AEO
Ciarán Kennedy	CEF- Well-being
Emma Wing	Learner Recruitment Officer
Veronica Crowe	CEF- Community Education
Alan Tobin	Literacy Resource Worker (ALS)
Rose Shanahan	Manager, Nenagh CTC

**Appendix V – Learner Focus Groups**

Past Learners (PLC) Templemore	One to One
Present Learner (PLC) Templemore	One to One
Palliative Care (BTEI) Clonmel	Group
Hairdressing Course (BTEI) Clonmel	Group
Past Learner (BTEI)	One to One (x2)
Past Learner (Adult Literacy) Tipperary Town	One to One
Past Learner (Adult Literacy) Nenagh Town	One to One
Tipperary Rural Traveller Project (Adult Literacy)	One to One with Manager of Centre*
Past Learner (Adult Literacy) Refugee Resettlement	One to One
Apprenticeships, Thurles	Group
Hospitality/National Tour Guiding (Traineeships)	Group
Leadership and Management (Evening Training)	Group
HGV Rigid (Specific Skills Training)	Group
Youthreach, Templemore	Group
Past Learners (Youthreach) Cappawhite	Group
VTOS, Nenagh	Group
LTI, Littleton	One to One with Manager of Centre
LTI, Cahir	One to One with Manager of Centre
LTI, Wilderness	One to One with Manager of Centre
LTI, Scoil Chormaic	One to One with Manager of Centre*
Disability Groups/Agencies*	
Glenroyd, Nenagh	One to One with Manager of Centre
Brothers of Charity, Ballina	One to One with Manager of Centre
Knocklofty Rural Resource Centre	One to One with Manager of Centre
Ormond Resources, Nenagh	One to One with Manager of Centre
Rehab Care, The Mill, Clonmel	One to One with Manager of Centre
Rehab Learning, NLN, Clonmel	One to One with Manager of Centre
St. Cronin's Rehabilitation Service	One to One with Manager of Centre
Three Drives, FRC, Thurles	One to One with Manager of Centre

\* Focus Group comprised Provider as representative and advocate of the Learner

### Appendix VI – Case Study : City and Guilds Global Hospitality Centre Approval

Tipperary ETB has City and Guilds (C&G) centre approval for IT Users, Bartending and Barista Skills and recently submitted a qualification approval application for the Global Hospitality Diploma in Food Preparation and Culinary Arts, following a government initiative to promote these courses in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic.



Qualification Number	Qualification Name
8064-01	Level 2 Diploma in Food Preparation & Culinary Arts
8064-02	Level 2 Diploma in Food Preparation & Culinary Arts - Patisserie

As part of the application process, an Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) Strategy was submitted including a list of staff, names of modules and plan for verification of practice and evidence (IQA plan). C&G require all processes and staff to be approved prior to course commencement. Learning practitioner staff curriculum vitae and CPD records were uploaded to the C&G Walled Garden site for four different FET programme categories (Traineeship Training, Specific Skills Training, Skills to Advance & Evening Training) for review and approval by the External Quality Assurance (EQA). The EQA decides if the staff members put forward are suitably trained with suitable recent industry experience. It may be decided that some staff on the application are not suitable or need further CPD before being approved. Staff were trained by the Tipperary ETB QA unit in the C&G process. The application process also involved uploading a scheme of work, produced by the Assessor and the IQA. This showed the EQA that there is a plan of how and when the teaching, learning and assessing will take place. The EQA assessed the premises that the training and assessment will take place in, prior to centre approval.

The EQA also made arrangements to visit the centre during the course, preferably when an assessment is taking place and Direct Claim Status (DCS) may be achieved. DCS enables Tipperary ETB to request certification without the EQA approval, i.e., QA Staff can request certification directly, following the results approval process, without the EQA having to approve the course first. Each qualification with DCS requires the EQA, on an annual basis, to ensure the ETB is adhering to the required standard. This involves a review of the paperwork and learner evidence for each course since the previous visit, as well as interviewing learners, learning practitioners, IQAs and Tipperary ETB staff, to ensure standards are maintained. If there were any previous recommendations made by the EQA, they will also be reviewed at this stage, to ensure that these have been implemented in centre. 1st March 2021, City & Guilds notified Tipperary ETB that their qualification approval application for Global Hospitality Diploma in Food Preparation and Culinary Arts was successful. The written and enforceable agreement between Tipperary ETB, as an approved C&G centre, and C&G consists of:

- Centre Approval Application (CAP)
- City & Guilds Centre Manual (which includes the General Terms and Conditions)
- Policies, Procedures and Regulations
- Relevant Qualification Approval and Qualification Handbook(s)



Approval will lapse for C&G qualifications if no learner registrations are made over the two-year period starting from the 1st March 2021 or the date of the last registration made.

### Appendix VII – Case Study : Dry Lining 'Centre of Excellence' in Tipperary ETB Training for the Unemployed

The Strategic Performance Agreement 2018-2020 between SOLAS and Tipperary Education & Training Board sets out the context, strategic priorities and ETB contribution to the achievement of key national further education and training (FET) sector targets over the period 2018-2020.

It also dictates the ETB's commitment to supporting the implementation of national policies and strategies relevant to FET provision. Part of this agreement was to identify risks and challenges which need to be addressed in order to ensure successful delivery of the agreement. One of the challenges presented to Tipperary ETB over the period 2018-2020 was the identification of Tipperary Town as an unemployment 'blackspot' in the county.

Tipperary ETB responded by providing 6 training courses under Specific Skills Training here in 2019 in the following areas

- Maintenance & Renovations
- Tourism Visitor Care
- Construction Groundworks Operator (with tickets)
- Deliver Driver
- Retail Sales – Pharmacy Sales Assistant
- Dry Lining (City & Guilds – Level 2 Diploma)

Our Strategic Priority 1.6 in the Tipperary ETB Statement of Strategy is to "Support innovation, creativity and change across all provision" and in line with the ETB's contribution to the National FET Sector Targets, Tipperary ETB responded to a need identified in the Construction sector to providing training in the area of Dry Lining in August 2019.

Dry Lining is the fitting of plaster board or other board material to finish walls and ceilings in place of the more traditional plastering. Many modern domestic and commercial properties are finished with dry lining instead of plaster, and this qualification provides the learner with the skills needed to work as a dry liner in the industry.

In advance of this programme a suitable venue was identified, and 14 bays were constructed suitable for learners to complete their assessments with all correct materials and equipment available in a new approved training facility in Tipperary Town. This programme was delivered for Tipperary ETB by a contractor; FRS Training and is 25 weeks in duration which includes 3 weeks work placement with an employer.

The awarding body for this course is City and Guilds and it was visited by an External Quality Assurer (EQA) in November. The purpose of the visit was to observe that all of City and Guilds requirements were being correctly implemented on the Dry lining qualification. As part of the visit the EQA sampled learner's assessment evidence, observed a learner completing a practical task, conducted an interview with a learner and checked specific Quality Assurance documentation. City and Guilds were

very impressed with the additional layer of quality assurance provided by the contractor through monitoring the practical assessments and completing a verification on an end of unit test. In addition, the verification & monitoring visits as well as the feedback from Tipperary ETB were complimented as very positive by City and Guilds. The tutor was also provided with complimentary feedback on learner assessment. The EQA observed through informal chatting with the learners, that they displayed a high level of knowledge of Health and Safety.

In addition to the Dry Lining Level 2 Diploma the learners took part in a Suspended Ceiling workshop in January with Armstrong Ceilings. This greatly enhanced their skills for their 3-week work placements. All 9 learners secured work placements from this course and were all offered employment on its completion, with one learner taking up an apprenticeship. The tutor has advised that there is great demand for this qualification & employers are looking for people from the next course already. An employer day is going to take place during the next course whereby employers will see the learners work & the learners will hear about employment opportunities and have a chance to network.



Tipperary ETB  
Dry Lining Class

**Currently, Tipperary ETB is the only ETB running this programme in the Southern region of Ireland (outside of Dublin).**

The learners completed learner feedback forms at the end of the course, and this provided evidence that all learners were very positive about the training delivery and their learning experience.



Tipperary ETB  
Dry Lining Class



Tipperary ETB  
Dry Lining Class

[Viktors - Tipperary ETB Dry Lining Course Learner – Now Self Employed - Shares Experience.mp4](#)

## Appendix VIII – Case Study : Tipperary Rural Traveller Project (TRTP) – Transformative Effect

### [Tipperary Rural Traveller Project \(TRTP\) \(MP4\)](#)



Tipperary Rural Travellers Project (TRTP) is set up to promote self-determination, self- esteem and leadership amongst the Traveller community. It also supports equal access to quality services, facilities and progression opportunities for members of the Traveller community by advocating with and behalf of Travellers, and by promoting equality and human rights. In meeting these organisational objectives TRTP supports development work with Traveller men, women and young people, operates a Primary Healthcare Programme to improve Traveller health and wellbeing, delivers community leadership training and networks with local mainstream service providers at the local level.

Tipperary ETB Adult Learning Scheme works in partnership with TRTP to support the education and training needs of this group through the provision of an outreach adult education service. TRTP has indicated that the outreach aspect of our FET service assists Travellers to link with adult education opportunities which they may not generally access directly or independently.

The benefits of the partnership practice between our organisations are outlined by TRTP to include enhanced literacy and digital skills, positive learning experiences, and learner engagement in FET generally. TRTP highlighted that three learners from their service progressed to FET and HE as a result of support and engagement in adult education opportunities.

In December 2020, learners in one of the TRTP adult literacy classes participated in the documentary recording which sought and gathered feedback from the learners about the tutor’s approach to teaching and learning. The outcome of this short documentary highlights the value of teaching methodologies used and how the course content has had a transformative effect on their lives and that of the wider Traveller Community. The learners featured are Traveller Community Health workers who support children in an after school Family Learning project.





Appendix IX – Case Study : Step-Up-And-Grow



As part of the Innovation through Collaboration initiative in the South-East and in collaboration with WWETB and KCETB, Tipperary ETB delivered Step up and Grow which is a Company Benchmarking process aimed at promoting business excellence, initiated as part of the Supporting Working Lives and Enterprise Growth in Ireland 2018-2021 further education and training policy framework for skills development of people in employment.

PROBE is the business software used in the process and is a proven methodology that will demonstrate how business practices are driving company performance across a demanding scorecard of performance measures. James Heffernan (FET Employer Engagement) and Damian Walshe (Apprenticeship Senior Training Advisor) facilitated benchmarking with eight companies in Tipperary and one company in Co. Kilkenny, approaching employers across various sectors based on their eligibility criteria; maximum of 50 staff and maximum turnover of €7m. The facilitated benchmarking looked at the following areas:

- Vision and Strategy
- Markets, Products & Services
- Performance – Financial Perspective, Internal Process & Learning and Growth
- Delivery of Products/Services
- Customer Service
- Customer and Stakeholder Perspective
- Developing and Managing People
- Assets and Finance
- Sustainability
- Managing Improvement & Change



Following presentation of a benchmarking report and further feedback sought from the employer, Tipperary ETB liaised with the Consultants to help appoint specialists in the areas of business where help was needed. Consultancy costs are funded through the initiative. All companies are now working with Consultants to help improve their practices and performances as they strive for business excellence.





**etb**

Bord Oideachais agus  
Oiliúna Thiobraid Árann  
*Tipperary Education and  
Training Board*