

QA Review Follow-Up Report

Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board

Date: March 2023



QQI

Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann



PREFACE

Following publication of the review report, and one year after submission of its QA review action plan, each ETB submits a **follow-up report** to QQI on progress against the plan, and how it is addressing the outcomes of the review. The report should identify the range of strategic and logistical developments and decisions that have occurred within the ETB since the publication of the review report and address each of the key findings and recommendations that the reviewers presented. Significant milestones should also be included, as well as any reflections and learnings from the inaugural review process.

Each follow-up report is **published in full on QQI's website**, providing transparency on the ETBs' assurance and enhancement of quality to external stakeholders.

The follow-up report is part of the inaugural review process. Subsequent reporting will be through QQI's annual reporting and dialogue processes.

This is the follow-up report for Laois and Offaly ETB

It is to be submitted by 13th March 2023

The follow-up report has been approved by LOETB's Quality Council and is submitted by Mary Dooley, FET Manager - Quality

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GUIDELINES ON COMPLETING THE REPORT

The **Follow-up Report** provides a detailed update on developments since the inaugural review, incorporating the **Action Plan** previously submitted. It will include links to any policies that have been amended or introduced since the **Self-Evaluation and Review Report**. It is the responsibility of each ETB to ensure before submission that all links within the report are correct and functional, and that the policies and procedures referred to are the most up-to-date versions available.

The **Follow-up Report** identifies **key developments, plans and/or decisions arising from the Review Report findings** that have occurred in the year since publication. The report should include progress in relation to specific recommendations, if any, on each topic. To assist you in responding, the template provides tables aligned with the review report's themes and topics. Where no recommendation has been received, **please delete the table. Please note** any changes to policies and procedures during the reporting period and, if applicable, include links to updated policies. QA developments/enhancements undertaken, not directly addressing the review report recommendations, may also be included.

Particular attention is asked to be given to noting any impact arising from the actions, this includes:

- the key areas of focus prioritised for action and any specific changes arising as well as links to any associated outputs (e.g., procedures, reports etc.)
- reflections on the **Inaugural Review** and **Follow-Up Report** process, barriers or challenges arising in implementation of the review recommendations and actions identified within the **Action Plan**.

The ETB is recommended to include some **reflections and learnings** from the review process in commentary.

1.0 Follow-up Report Post-Review

Include links to policies and procedures that have **not been already included or have been amended** since the ETB's Self-Evaluation Report as part of the review process.

Please add or delete rows in the tables below, as required.

1.01 ETB Mission and Strategy

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Planned Actions	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
<p>The review team recommends that LOETB mission & strategy be shared with and reiterated to staff at all levels and across all services and centres with greater frequency.</p>	<p>Include in Communications Strategy (Q4 2022)</p>	<p>Sharing and reinforcing LOETB's mission and strategy with staff is key for attuning everyone's efforts towards the same goals. LOETB's mission and strategy is aligned with the Strategic Performance Agreement 2022-24 agreed with SOLAS. The agreement sets out six agreement themes, including four FET Strategy areas – Building Skills, Fostering Inclusion, Creating Pathways and Enabling Themes. LOETBs mission and strategy are re-iterated both implicitly and explicitly not just at events such as the FET staff day in October 2022, but in the every-day business of the ETB.</p>

		<p>Work has commenced on compiling a formal Communications Strategy and the sharing and re-iteration of LOETB's mission and strategy will be included in this document.</p>
<p>Commentary and Reflections Click here to enter text.</p>		
<p>Link to Current strategy / documents Click here to enter text.</p>		

1.02 Structures & Terms of Reference for Governance of QA

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Planned Actions	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
<p>Management of Quality Assurance</p> <p>The review team recommends that LOETB engages in a full review of all existing policies and ToR which relate to the function and membership of management groups and subgroups. The review should take a particular focus on ensuring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistency in relation to terms of reference and the organisational structure • Group membership that includes all relevant stakeholders • The provision of relevant inductions and ongoing training for all group members • Clarity and co-ordination between the various quality groups 	<p>Review governance groups (Q4 2022)</p>	<p>A re-structuring of the FET Management team took place in late 2022 and early 2023, and a review of all governance groups, structures and Terms of Reference will be undertaken, led by a new Strategic Projects Lead appointee. The review will include all elements of the current governance structure and the subgroups therein and it is planned to use an external facilitator, at least partially, for the review.</p>
<p>Governance Groups in General</p> <p>The review team recommends that the ETB provide training for members of governance groups and that information from the various groups should be published on the LOETB website. Publication of information should</p>	<p>Training of Group Members (Q4 2022)</p>	<p>As the structural review is completed, training needs for members of the various groups will be identified and a training programme put in place to ensure that all members of each group are fully cognisant</p>

also include communication with staff at centre and service level. This could be addressed in conjunction with the development of the internal communications strategy which is recommended elsewhere in this report (Objective 1i).

The review team also recommends that LOETB ensure increased clarity and co-ordination between the various quality groups. This would improve understanding of the system by all staff members. It would also improve efficiency and minimise the likelihood of nugatory duplication.

of both their own individual role and the function of the group itself within the overall governance structure.

The publication of information as well as communications with staff will be formally addressed in the new Communications Strategy. However, the recent launch of a bespoke internal communications app has been a welcome addition to the organisation and facilitates quick and easy dissemination of information across the FET service, working on a basis similar to Twitter. The new app also includes a staff contact book, searchable by name or Centre. It is planned to add the option for teaching staff to include their subject areas if they so wish, to make it easy to find colleagues who may be teaching similar subjects.

Commentary and Reflections

Link to Updated Policy & Procedures

	<p>Make policies available on SharePoint and/or website (as appropriate) (Q3 2022 – ongoing)</p>	<p>Accommodation and it has been identified as a priority for review, with QQI Learner Appeals to follow.</p> <p>A member of the Quality Assurance Support Service has taken responsibility for documentation control, with details of all policy and procedure documents kept in a database, with review due dates etc. As a general rule new policies or procedures are reviewed after twelve months and thereafter every three years. There may occasionally be a need to amend/review a document before its review date and where this arises, the Quality Forum take the necessary steps to carry out the review.</p> <p>An audit of the QASS documentation on LOETB's website was carried out to ensure that all appropriate documentation is current and accessible.</p>
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	<p>QQI component descriptors on SharePoint to be navigated by Major Award (Q3 2022)</p>	<p>A new QASS SharePoint is in development, with a target publication date of the academic year commencing September 2023. This is intended to be a “one-stop-shop” for staff and second providers for all QA documentation, including policies, programme descriptors, forms, etc.</p> <p>Where documents need to be accessed by the general public, they will remain on LOETB’s website.</p> <p>In order to encourage Centres to focus on pathways to major awards, the component specifications will be navigable by major award on the new SharePoint site (as it currently is on the staff section of the website), with specific information in relation to validation requirements</p>
<p>Commentary and Reflections</p>		
<p>Link to Updated Policy & Procedures</p>		

1.04 Staff Recruitment, Management & Development

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Planned Actions	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
<p>Staff Professional Development</p> <p>The review team recommends a revision of the Staff Professional Development Policy to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal recognition of the position of Professional Development Coordinator • A mechanism to survey staff on CPD needs, which takes the centre as well as broader LOETB requirements into account. • A mechanism to establish communities of practice for teaching staff in specific areas as well as subject-specific areas. • Formal recognition of, and a structure for, an LOETB staff mentoring programme • Formal recognition of an induction process tailored to the needs of the various staff cohorts, including an input into the process which relates to LOETB as a corporate body. • A major focus on online/blended learning, which could be addressed in the context of an LOETB 	<p>Survey Staff before academic year end for PD needs for start of new academic year. (Q2/3 2022 – ongoing)</p> <p>Establish “fixed” PD calendar, eg specific workshops that repeat every September (Q3 2023)</p>	<p>Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.</p> <p>At the time of the review LOETB had recently appointed a PD co-ordinator which was hugely beneficial to the FET service. However, LOETB were without a PD co-ordinator for the start of the 2022/23 academic year.</p> <p>The QASS deliver annual sessions on plagiarism and reasonable accommodation, as well as briefings on any changes to certification processes for the coming year.</p> <p>A new PD co-ordinator has recently been appointed and planning is underway for September 2023, as well as for current needs.</p> <p>It was initially planned to review Business & IT provision as a whole, but in an initial</p>

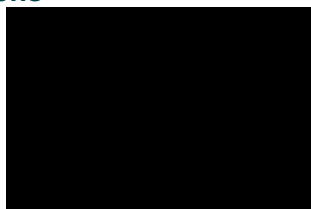
	<p>Complete Blended Learning Policy (Q4 2022)</p>	<p>Centre/Service, including learner support workers. The material has been particularly targeted at learners from level 3 and up and work continues on induction material for learners at level 1 and 2. All material has been reviewed and updated for 2023. Work is ongoing to eliminate any remaining discrepancies in practice. Some sample material is included at the end of this section.</p> <p>There are statutory QQI-specific guidelines for blended learning courses. However, LOETB's online delivery to date has been of a remote synchronous nature and we have not yet developed blended learning capacity, at which point a policy will be advanced.</p> <p>The Quality Assurance Support Service facilitate briefings to new staff regarding QA requirements for delivering their modules. It is mandatory that new staff attend these briefings. As part of this process staff may be put in touch with other more experienced staff for support, but in an informal way. A</p>
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	<p>Staff Mentoring Programme to be explored and volunteers sought to participate (Q3 2022)</p>	<p>more formal staff mentoring programme is planned for September and volunteers are currently invited to submit expressions of Interest..</p>
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Commentary and Reflections



Sample Learner Induction Material



QQI Courses in LOETB



Adobe Acrobat Document

Sample Poster – Academic Writing



Adobe Acrobat Document

Sample Poster – Referencing Handbook



Adobe Acrobat Document

Sample Poster – Reasonable Accommodation Quiz

Link to Updated Policy & Procedures

Click here to enter text.

1.05 Programme Development, Approval & Submission

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Planned Actions	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
<p>Programme Development & Validation</p> <p>The review team recommends:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and support to be provided to staff in the area of programme development and validation. • Staff secondment to programme development initiatives which are relevant to LOETB and being led by other ETBs, should be facilitated where possible. 	<p>Training in new programme validation (As it arises)</p> <p>Review internal programme development and approval process (Q4 2022)</p> <p>Facilitate collaboration with other ETBs in programme development (As it arises)</p>	<p>An external facilitator has been engaged to provide training, which is scheduled to take place this year.</p> <p>A review of the internal programme development and approval process will form part of the governance review outlined previously and all documentation will be reviewed accordingly.</p> <p>In 2022 LOETB were invited to collaborate on the development of a new non-CAS level 3 family learning programme. Ten ETBs participated in the development of a Special Purpose Award in Learning to Support Children in Primary School (25 credit award). Staff from LOETB's Adult Literacy Service were involved in the collaboration. KCETB, the lead ETB, achieved validation for the programme in</p>

		<p>early 2023. The award was formally launched on ETB day in March. LOETB will now be submitting a differential validation application to deliver this innovative award.</p> <p>LOETB are also represented in the SOLAS Skills to Advance Green Skills Micro Qualifications group, and were one of five lead ETBs in the rollout of a level 4 special purpose award in Environmental Sustainability Awareness, which was validated in 2022. As part of this group, LOETB have also successfully submitted differential validations for a level 5 Building Digital Skills award and a level 5 Environmental Sustainability in the Workplace award, with more applications in the pipeline for 2023. These programmes are current and responsive to industry needs, allowing learners to achieve qualifications in small chunks of learning.</p>
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2023 will also see LOETB apply for validation as a collaborating provider to offer a hairdressing apprenticeship.

In December 2020, Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, Simon Harris TD, announced Mount Lucas in LOETB would become a Centre of Excellence for NZEB & Retrofit training.

There are 6 centres of Excellence in total across the country, LOETB, LCETB, WWETB, MSLETB, CETB and CDET. A construction steering group has been set up with representation from all 6 centres of excellence to ensure consistency of delivery of training with standardisation across both training and Assessment. This includes programme sharing of new and updated content.

The National training target for 2022 was 2000 learners with LOETB achieving 1162 successful completers.

The courses range from NZEB Fundamental Awareness for New Entrants to NZEB Ventilation for Experienced professionals. LOETB in conjunction with the Construction Industry Federation has begun offering a TY programme for schools that includes Safe Pass, BIM and NZEB training.

LOETB have also applied for validation for a new level 5 Special Purpose Award in Construction Skills for Energy Conservation, which is due before a QQI PAEC meeting in April 2023.

This programme was developed in conjunction with the Industry, a panel of experts was formed with representation from CIF, MosArt, SEAI, NSAI, Department

	<p>Co-Develop Retrofit Co-Ordinator programme with TUS MidWest. (Q3 2022)</p> <p>Developing process with TUS, with embedded guidance on site (Q2 2023)</p> <p>Staff group to review/revise Communications Level 4 descriptor (Q2 2022)</p>	<p>of housing, Manufacturers and Installers to ensure each were fit for purpose.</p> <p>While not yet co-developing this programme with TUS, the above-mentioned Construction Skills programme was developed in consultation with TUS and leads in to the current level 7 and 8 retrofit programmes offered in TUS Midwest.</p> <p>This project was superseded by the tertiary project outlined in the commentary section at the end of section 1.06 Access Transfer and Progression</p> <p>A working group comprised of staff members from a number of Centres reviewed and re-designed the component descriptor for Level 4 Communications. The members of the group came from teaching staff, QASS and management. Assessments were revised and streamlined into a more meaningful and</p>
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		<p>structured approach, which has been welcomed by tutors delivering this particular component. Both the old and new descriptors were available for use for 2022/23 and the old one will be phased out for 2023/24.</p>
Commentary and Reflections		
Link to Updated Policy & Procedures Click here to enter text.		

1.06 Access, Transfer and Progression

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Planned Actions	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
<p>Access, Transfer and Progression</p> <p>The review team recommends an over-arching LOETB policy or suite of policies on access, transfer and progression for learners, which will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set out and clarify the standard application procedures across LOETB services. • Clarify the status of learner applications. • Outline transfer and progression routes as well as the transfer of credits that apply to all validated programmes. • Detail a formal internal transfer system, applications for which should be underpinned by policy and procedures. <p>The review team recommends that training and support be provided to centres and services, to ensure consistent implementation of the induction process.</p>	<p>Map current admissions/access processes (Q1 2022)</p> <p>Standardise access process (Q3 2023)</p> <p>Standardise induction programmes (Q3 2022)</p>	<p>A learner information and communications subgroup completed mapping the admissions/access process in 2022.</p> <p>While there is a standardised approach to access in place for Healthcare and Nursing awards, there are variations to the induction process across other programmes. Work is ongoing to address these differences with the aim of standardisation.</p> <p>As outlined previously, considerable work has been undertaken regarding the learner induction process. Centres are using the standardised material. A survey of learners was undertaken in September 2023 to ascertain their views of the induction process. The responses were very positive, however the response rate</p>

	<p>Identify and publish progression routes (Q2 2023)</p> <p>Develop model and pilot on Tullamore Campus (Q3 2023)</p>	<p>was relatively low, with small numbers of respondents in some Centres/Services, thus identifying a need to find ways to encourage a higher response rate in future surveys.</p> <p>Videos, pdfs and transcripts for 10 different skills clusters have been compiled and distributed to all Centres. These document possible career paths linked to different major awards. Posters are on display on Centre noticeboards with “Scan Me” QR codes leading to videos and further information. These videos have been updated in 2023, but will need review/updates on an annual basis to remain current. Some samples are available at the end of this section.</p> <p>Access, Transfer and Progression model to be explored</p>
<p>Click here to enter text.</p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>

Commentary and Reflections

Community Education adapted a new approach in 2021 which involved delivering short taster programmes in our Further Education and Training Centres that were linked to the programmes in the Centres. This engagement tool worked really well in increasing the number of learners accessing our centres and progressing within them. There was also a targeted approach to delivering uncertified and lower level programmes in rural communities by tutors that also deliver programmes in our FET Centres. This also removed barriers for learners and encouraged them to undertake further courses in our FETCs.

In December 2022, the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science announced the establishment of a significant new policy in the development of a unified tertiary sector. The project is jointly managed by the HEA and SOLAS through a National Tertiary Office. The project will facilitate learners to commence their third level experience in further education, completing their studies in higher education colleges. LOETB is one of eight ETBs involved in the roll-out which will see 13 courses associated with 6 higher education institutions being offered in FET colleges. Discussions are taking place with SETU Carlow and it is planned to deliver years 1 and 2 of Business and Computing courses in Portlaoise Institute, commencing in September 2023.



Adobe Acrobat Document



Adobe Acrobat Document



Poster linking to all clusters



Sample QR Code (included on posters)

Sample Progression Route Posters/Videos

Link to Updated Policy & Procedures

[Click here to enter text.](#)

1.07 Integrity and Approval of Learner Results

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Planned Actions	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
<p>The review team recommends that LOETB:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate the possibility of providing an opportunity within the RAP for teaching staff and EAs to review the outcomes of the Exam Board's deliberations and, where appropriate, a mechanism to challenge their findings. Strengthen the process around the communication of feedback from EA reports to teaching staff (involving the EAs if possible) and as part of that process that examples of good practice are also highlighted. Ensure that all policies and procedures relating to the assessment process are accessible in a specific section for learners on the LOETB website. This could be undertaken in conjunction with the recommendation (Section 1i) relating to internal communications and review of the web site. 	<p>Update EA guidelines (Q2 2022)</p> <p>Review RAP guidelines to include Assessor invite where appropriate (Q2 2022)</p> <p>Policies and Procedures Available on SharePoint (Q3 2022)</p>	<p>EA guidelines were updated in April 2022 and EAs are asked to communicate with assessors where grade changes are recommended.</p> <p>The RAP guidelines were also updated in April 2022 to include an invite to the RAP meeting for Assessors who wish to discuss EA recommendations. This was not a new option, but is now explicitly stated and communicated to staff.</p> <p>SharePoint site is under development. In the meantime policies and procedures are available on LOETB's website.</p>

Commentary and Reflections

The majority of components at level 5 and 6 are IV'd and EA'd online. This has brought significant challenges to assessors, QASS staff and EAs. Comprehensive guidelines are in place for all involved in the process and the organisation of online evidence has received favourable comment from several EAs.

Link to Updated Policy & Procedures

[Click here to enter text.](#)

1.08 Information and Data Management

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Planned Actions	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
<p>The review team recommends that, as a matter of urgency, there be an increased focus on the inclusion of all relevant learner data on the PLSS system as part of the application process, as well as the appointment of a specialist data analyst to the IT or QASS Team.</p>	<p>PLSS Reports Training (Q2 2022)</p>	<p>PLSS training is an ongoing exercise with both new and current staff. Some instructional videos have been created with instructions for creating some common reports. Further training sessions are planned for Q1-2 2023.</p> <p>In January 2023, sessions were held with Centre Managers and all staff involved with collecting and/or inputting data on PLSS to emphasis the important of accurate data input. These sessions were attended in-person with two online sessions in March for staff who were unable to attend the in-person sessions.</p> <p>SOLAS have begun the rollout of Tableau dashboards displaying specific data regarding LOETB's targets under the Strategic Performance Agreement. The</p>

		<p>data behind the dashboards comes from PLSS and will be updated on a monthly basis, thereby quickly presenting valuable information in an accessible, visual format. These dashboards are easy to interpret and will provide further clarity around the interpretation of data from PLSS.</p> <p>Some of the QASS staff have undertaken training in Tableau with a view to producing further customised visual reports in the future.</p>
Commentary and Reflections		
Link to Updated Policy & Procedures Click here to enter text.		

1.09 Public Information and Communication

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Planned Actions	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
<p>Information to Learners</p> <p>The review team recommends that every available opportunity be used to better highlight FET opportunities and pathways for school leavers as well as for current LOETB learners. This should be addressed as part of the review of communications recommended in Section 1i.</p>	<p>Include in Communications Strategy (Q4 2022)</p> <p>Guidance Space on Moodle (Ongoing)</p>	<p>The dissemination of information to learners will be included in the Communications Strategy.</p> <p>Currently the Guidance Service have a space on Moodle. All learners at level 5 and 6 are required to use Moodle and all of these learners have access to this Guidance space, which is updated regularly by the Guidance team. Information is included across a range of topics, including CAO applications, learner supports, grant information and so on. Moodle's "broadcast announcements" are used to notify learners of key information – this method sends an email to the users.</p>
<p>Communication</p> <p>The review team recommends an immediate focus on developing an internal and external communication</p>	<p>Portlaoise Information Hub Opened to the public (Q3 2021)</p>	<p>Situated in Portlaoise town centre, the Portlaoise Information Hub was opened to the public in Q3 2021 with the Tullamore</p>

	<p>Website Upgrade (Q1 2023)</p>	<p>to be accessible to all relevant staff and stakeholders.</p> <p>The tender process for the development of new website for LOETB is expected to be finalised in March 2023 with work expected to commence in April.</p> <p>The current website has been checked and updated to ensure all relevant QA documentation is current.</p>
<p>Click here to enter text.</p>		
<p>Link to Updated Policy & Procedures Click here to enter text.</p>		

2.0 Teaching, Learning & Assessment

2.01 The Learning Environment

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Planned Actions	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
<p>Monitoring the Learning Experience</p> <p>The review team strongly recommends that formal arrangements be standardised across all LOETB centres and services to ensure the surveying of student feedback and that these surveys be undertaken at key stages during the course delivery cycle.</p>	<p>QASS to gather data on current practice and agree best practice with Centre Managers (Q2 2022)</p> <p>Agree schedule – standardise where appropriate (Q2 2022)</p>	<p>The QASS team carried out a survey of all Centres and Services regarding current practice in terms of surveying learners. This data gathering was completed July 2022 and proved to be a fruitful exercise which identified some very useful practice, including “Settling-In” surveys in some Centres that focus on checking in with learners to see that they have all they require for their course, eg that they can access Moodle, their student email account, etc.. However there are considerable variations in both content and timing of surveys, with some Centres carrying out multiple surveys and others far less frequently. The learner information sub-group is working with Centres with a view to standardising timing of surveys.</p>

The subgroup is also considering common questions which could be streamlined to gain a service-wide picture in part of the survey, with Centre-specific questions also included. A consistent approach will be taken in Centres for an end of academic year survey for May 2023, with further surveys to be in place of 2023/24.

“Scan Me” QR-code posters are already in circulation in some instances, where a poster invites the learner to scan a QR code that brings them directly to the relevant survey. This practice to be expanded when timing etc is agreed.

There is also need to agree with Centres on processing of surveys, how they are followed-up etc so that the surveys are used to inform or improve provision and are not just a data collecting exercise.

In May, learners were invited to take part in a National FET Learner Forum Regional

	<p>Devise and implement plan for tracking of former learners (Q2 2023)</p>	<p>Event. This was well attended by learners from LOETB who took part in a survey during the event. The survey questions were grouped under three headings –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment, Registration & Induction. • Facilities & Services • Learner Supports <p>Eighty-nine learners completed the survey, which identified areas that learners believed were working well as well as areas for improvement. While the results were largely positive, areas for improvement were also identified. The survey was distributed to the relevant Centres with a view to implement improvements where possible.</p> <p>The discussion on surveys will include communication with former learners to track their progress post-LOETB and how such data could be used.</p>
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<p>The review team further recommends that LOETB support the continued development of online tools and digital resources as part of the QA system.</p>	<p>PD to be continued (Current and ongoing)</p>	<p>The QASS currently support PLSS, Moodle and BKSb for Centres and Services.</p> <p>New PLSS users are given individual training on the basics of using PLSS. Group sessions are also planned for 2023.</p> <p>BKSb is an assessment tool that is used to help gauge a learner's suitability for a course at a particular level. Depending on their application, learners undergo an assessment in English and/or Maths. The QASS team support BKSb. Some Centres carry out the assessment themselves with minimal support, while others require greater input. During the COVID pandemic learners were invited to take the assessment at home and this was organised and facilitated by the QASS team.</p> <p>COVID brought with it a rapid move to using online platforms for teaching and learning. This has proved to be a very</p>
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steep learning curve for all concerned. Learners at level 5 and 6 are required to use Moodle, while it is optional for the lower levels. Moodle is supported by a member of the QASS team who assists both staff and learners with the day-to-day use of the platform. The QASS team developed a bespoke “Teach with Moodle” course designed to give basic instruction to teachers who are new to the platform. Similarly a “Learn with Moodle” short course assists learners with basic functions.

A number of members of the teaching staff have taken up places on TEL courses and technology has become an integral part of everyday teaching and learning in LOETB.

Commentary and Reflections



Adobe Acrobat Document

Induction Survey 2022



Adobe Acrobat Document

Teacher/Tutor feedback on Learner Induction



Adobe Acrobat Document

Aontas Report from Regional Forum

Link to Updated Policy & Procedures

2.02 Assessment of Learners

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Planned Actions	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
<p>Assessment of Learners</p> <p>The review team recommends that LOETB establish a policy and procedures to support RPL and that it should also introduce formal arrangements, standardised across all centres and services to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity for all students around module descriptors • Facilitation of teacher planning in the delivery of modules while avoiding content overlap. • Regular student feedback on assignments and assessments 	<p>Engage with RPL discussions – as they arise</p> <p>Feedback - ongoing</p>	<p>Discussions continue across the sector regarding a unified approach to RPL. LOETB engage with such discussions as they arise.</p> <p>The importance of regular, relevant feedback to learners is reiterated at every opportunity. At Internal Verification stage, the QASS specifically check that feedback has been provided. The importance of feedback is stressed at staff briefings, both for new staff and at annual QA briefings at the start of the academic year. The VLE Moodle affords teachers the opportunity to offer audio feedback, which is proving popular and useful to both teachers and learners alike. Using audio feedback was a specific point of information at QA briefings with teaching staff in September 2023 and teachers were encouraged to use it,</p>

	<p>Document best practice in areas such as release of results and standardise where appropriate – Q3 2023</p>	<p>supported by instructional videos for those who were not familiar with it, Staff are also encouraged to attend Further Education Support Service (FESS) training on Feedback, which has received positive reviews from those who attended.</p> <p>The QASS have instructed Centres and Services to provide provisional results through the course and there is a clear process re release of final results and appeals information. Work is ongoing to identify further areas that could be approached more uniformly across the ETB.</p>
<p>Work Experience / Work Placement Module</p> <p>The review team recommends that LOETB engage the expertise of the Employer Services Team to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the current arrangements that are in place to support the consistency of workplace competency assessment. <p>Recommend the formal arrangements necessary for the delivery, monitoring and assessment of work experience/Placement</p>	<p>Currently researching a Work Based Learning Pack (Q4 2022)</p>	<p>The Early Learning & Care programme team has devised a booklet for Work Experience that is a useful tool for learners, teachers and supervisors. The possibility of developing similar booklets for other programmes is to be explored with Work Experience teachers..</p>

	<p>Establish oversight model for all work based learning (Q3 2023)</p>	<p>This to be explored further in 2023 with Work Experience teachers. The Employer Engagement team have commissioned a bespoke database system to capture their dealings with employers. The QASS have suggested that the database might also be used as a resource for identifying employers who would be willing to facilitate LOETB learners seeking work experience.</p>
<p>Link to Updated Policy & Procedures Click here to enter text.</p>		

2.03 Supports for Learners

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Planned Actions	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
<p>The review team recommends that LOETB appoint a learner support officer to establish a de facto learner support service, consolidating all existing learner supports.</p>	<p>Develop community of practice for learner support workers to ensure consistent approach across key functions (Q4 2022)</p> <p>Engage five further learner support workers (Q4 2022)</p>	<p>Arising from a Guidance initiative, a community of practice for Learner Support has been set up and is comprised of approximately 20 staff members, primarily learner support workers but also including other resource or teaching staff who are involved with providing learner supports. While still in its infancy, this is proving to be an active and worthwhile COP</p> <p>A total of eight Learner Support Workers have been employed and are based in Centres across the service.</p>

Commentary and Reflections

In 2020, the government announced a funding programme “Mitigating Against Educational Disadvantage” (MAEDF) to increase the capacity of ETBs and Community Education providers to address the decline in participation of disadvantaged learners. Renamed as the REACH fund in 2022, the fund was designed with two strands – an individual learner fund and Community Groups. Applications for support are invited under these two strands and in 2022 LOETB administered funds of €478K to almost 600 individuals and approximately 20 groups.

The Adult Literacy Service provides ongoing learner support throughout all programmes in the form of ESOL assessments, Dyslexia Assessments and targeted support where required and Literacy, Numeracy and Digital supports to learners at all levels, from beginners through to level 6. In

addition, the Adult Literacy Service supports the learners on the Traveller Community Development Diploma with NUIG, Maths for Trades and other supports as required for Apprentices and Assistive Technology support where required. These and other inclusive practices are promoted through the LOETB FET Inclusion Support Network and LOETB Inclusion Week 2021 and 2022.

Link to Updated Policy & Procedures

Click here to enter text.

3.0 Self-Evaluation, Monitoring & Review

3.01 Self-Evaluation Monitoring & Review

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Planned Actions	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
<p>Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review</p> <p>The review team recommends that LOETB work to embed a formal process of self-evaluation from institutional level up through to SMT and board level, and that this should be more fully documented in a form of a 'quality manual/handbook' or similar. The process should be structured to include, among others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The FET Management Team as well as the QASS in order to facilitate the evaluation of provision at centre and service level on a formal basis and so that the entire process can be considered at a strategic level. • The learner voice across all centres and services. This should operate in addition to the recommendation on learner feedback at 2(a) 	<p>Devise schedule of Centre/Service evaluations on a rolling basis with first Centre schedule for end of Academic year 2022/23 (Q3 2022).</p> <p>Document process (Q1 2023)</p>	<p>Portlaoise Institute has been identified as the first Centre to undergo an internal self-evaluation process, followed by the National Construction Training Centre at Mount Lucas. The full schedule and frequency has to be finalised and the frame/structure agreed.</p> <p>The process will be documented so that a standard approach is taken to all.</p>

<p>SER Steering Group</p> <p>The review team recommends that the actions identified in the SER, together with the recommendations in this report, be incorporated into a strategic plan – such as the annual QIP – with SMART targets and embedded in a projected timeline.</p>	<p>QASS to draw up projected timeline for implementation of action plan. Progress report to be submitted to QQI March 2024, integrated into new Annual Quality Report (Q4 2022)</p>	<p>The Action Plan timeline was completed in March 2022 and submitted to QQI, with this current update document due for submission in March 2024.</p> <p>A new format Annual Quality Report is planned for 2024 and the template for this report has yet to be finalised by QQI in agreement with the FET Directors.</p>
<p>Self-Evaluation Monitoring and Review</p> <p>The review team recommends a full revision and subsequent issuing of the documentation associated with TQAS</p>	<p>Prioritise AISs for review (Q2 2022-ongoing)</p>	<p>Where AISs are found to be outdated, the use of locally devised assessments is encouraged. Discussions are currently underway with Community Training Providers with a view to provider training for Assessors in September 2023 to begin a planned phasing out of AISs. We are also in the process of agreeing an approach to the same with Contract Training providers.</p>
<p>The review team recommends a review of the effectiveness of the FET centre model</p>	<p>Select Centre for review at end of 2023/24 academic year (Q2 2024)</p>	<p>FMT to agree a Centre for review.</p>

Link to Updated Policy & Procedures

Click here to enter text.

3.02 Programme Monitoring & Review

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Planned Actions	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
<p>Programme Review</p> <p>The review team recommends that there should be a policy to underpin an annual review of programmes (as suggested Objective 3, Section (a)), with the review of programmes taking place strategically on an annual rolling basis at ETB level.</p>	<p>Review process to commence Q3 2022 with a view to implementation in Q3 2023</p> <p>Devise schedule for further reviews (Q1 2023)</p>	<p>See previous entry regarding Business & IT Review</p> <p>Schedule and of reviews to be agreed</p>
<p>Commentary and Reflections</p> <p>Click here to enter text.</p>		
<p>Link to Updated Policy & Procedures</p> <p>Click here to enter text.</p>		

4.0 Update on other additional QA Objectives/actions arising from internal QA planning and monitoring

Guide:

An update should be provided on any objectives/planned actions for the year **not already addressed in the follow-up report**.

The table is designed to assist in this process and should include headline information only.

No.	QA Objectives <small>These should relate to objectives not already discussed in the progress report.</small>	Update on Status <small>Provide brief update on status, whether completed or in progress.</small>	Link to updated/new Policy
1	Ukraine Response	Over 363 Ukrainian Nationals fleeing the conflict arrived in Laois and Offaly between March and September 2023. LOETB played an integral part of the Regional Response Forum in Laois and in Offaly which is a multi-agency group that was formed to support those arriving in Ireland fleeing the Ukraine. LOETB provided emergency accommodation to many of those arriving in Offaly at the LOETB Outdoor Education Centre and the Adult Literacy Service and Adult Guidance Service met with people as they arrived at the various locations across the two counties. The Adult Literacy Service conducted an English Language Assessment with everyone within weeks of their arrival, in our FET Centres, hotels and community centres across 25	Click here to enter text.

		<p>locations. Some were referred to the Adult Guidance Service as they had a proficient level of English, however, most were at Level 1 - 3. LOETB provided 294 learners with short unaccredited ESOL classes in venues right across Laois and Offaly as well as other short programmes such as Art, Cookery and so on. In addition, an ESOL specific Initial Tutor Training short course was developed and delivered on 7th and 8th June to 12 participants wishing to volunteer.</p> <p>Most of these learners progressed to certified ESOL courses at Level 2 or 3 which started in September 2022, however, many still arrive from the Ukraine and we continue to conduct assessments and provide beginner classes across the two counties.</p> <p>The Adult Literacy Service developed an ESOL specific Community of Practice in Q1 of 2023 and it has been very well received and welcomed. All of the ESOL tutors as well as Second Providers such as the CTC and NLNs were invited to attend and everyone agreed that the resources shared and development and promotion of best practice in this area when working with society's most vulnerable was essential.</p>	
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