

QA Review Follow-Up Report

Longford and Westmeath Education and Training Board

Date: February - 2024



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 (Education and Training Boards) 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 Longford and Westmeath Education & Training Board

It is to be submitted by February 12th, 2024

The follow-up report has been approved by Antonine Healy, Director of Further Education & Training and is submitted by Karen Moore, Further Education and Training Standards Officer

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1.0 Follow-up Report Post-Review

1.01 ETB Mission and Strategy

Recommendation 1	Planned Actions	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
<p>1.The review team recommends that LWETB establish a clear plan and timeline to integrate their QA systems. The plan needs to include clear and robust goals and objectives, which can be communicated to the wider ETB community to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of the planned integrated QA system, and the progression being made</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. QSI: Continuation of the Quality System Index to outline strategy of cohesion and merging of one QA system to that of the FETQS (Further Education Training & Quality System) plan to merge inclusive of policy. Procedure and QA system documentation objectives. The QSI will hold a plan of action, QA systems in review, review dates and future goal aspiration timelines. ii. Intranet: Use of the LWETB Intranet to disseminate QA plans, objectives, review, and consultation under review for all internal and external stakeholder engagement. iii. Communications Strategy: implementation and dissemination of internal and external stakeholder engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The Quality System Index (QSI) has evolved through the oversight of the Quality Governance Group (QGG). This system has been absorbed and utilised through the QGG MS Teams Channel where the group plan, create, collaborate, consult, and draft FETQS policies, procedures, documents, and templates that align to 1 QA system. This informs all stakeholders as they can engage in collaborative feedback opportunities. The QGG utilise the open SharePoint Consultation Procedure and Process to consult, review, collaborate and share information on QA goals, objectives and outcomes of QA integration status and planned actions. IN ACTION ii. Intranet: As part of the development of an intranet for the wider ETB community, our FET provision have been working on a FET website. The purpose of the FET website is to highlight all FET programmes and services to prospective and existing learners. However, to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of the planned integrated Quality Assurance system, we have incorporated a ‘Staff Hub’ into the FET website. This LWETB Intranet will allow internal and external stakeholders to engage with plans, supports, materials, documents, policies, procedures and so much more. The Staff Hub will be visible to everyone on the website home page. However, only internal, and external stakeholders will have access to this LWETB Intranet. The Staff Hub will represent FETQS and TEL & PD. A committee carried out the work for the FET website. Staff were invited to join the ‘FET Website Working Group,’ which met fortnightly via Microsoft Teams for an hour to discuss and make decisions around branding and website. ACTION COMPLETE iii. Intranet: LWETB is in the process of developing as outlined within our SER a new OSD intranet. Where possible we have used resources that were already licenced for or owned to reduce and reuse costings while still providing a quality solution. We aim to utilise our already licensed

SharePoint product for our Intranet solution. LWETB runs a classic SharePoint, so decided to first update all current SharePoint to a more modern solution. While upgrading we have engaged with schools and centres to see what information they would like to see on this Intranet. It became apparent that many of our sites had legacy server devices retaining considerable data along with a local active directory. After discussing this with each location it was decided to remove these legacy devices and provide each location with their own SharePoint document store as part of the intranet rollout. There is a considerable challenge to removing a local Active Directory, moving all users to azure in the cloud and retaining services such as “follow me print.” There is also the process of moving the data and designing a new fit-for-purpose document storage solution. To date we have completed our SharePoint upgrade. The basis of the intranet has been designed. We have moved four locations to Azure in the cloud and will start moving their data this month. Populating the Intranet with appropriate data and setting up rules ensuring it is the home page for each of our staff are the next steps for this project. We hope to have a fully functioning Intranet by the end of Q2 2024. We also expect this to be a project to continue running as we find new ways to communicate with colleagues and friends around our organisation. **IN ACTION**

iv. Communications: LWETB have made considerable progress in collaborative communications across LWETB and through all stakeholders. We have initialised a dedicated Comms Officer with responsibility for developing effective communications with internal and external stakeholders including networking within the ETBI (Education and Training Boards, Ireland) Communications Network. PD (Professional Development) is taking place also in that the Comms Officer is completing a certificate in strategic communications through the Public Relations Inst of Ireland. There is a dedicated Comms MS Teams comprising of staff with responsibility for various aspects of comms such as content creation, event organisation etc. Future plans include the development of a communication strategy to compliment the communication policy to increase engagement with key stakeholders such as learners, staff, and the local community. The aim of the team is to raise awareness around the LWETB brand, leading to increased enrolment figures and a better understanding of the opportunities available through an LWETB school or further education centre. **IN ACTION**

Commentary and Reflections

Over the last 12 months LWETB has worked strategically and innovatively to address recommendations in a multifaceted capacity and through varying methods to ensure full stakeholder engagement. This is an ongoing process, particularly in documenting our approach to communications to increase and enhance engagement with key stakeholders.

Link to Current strategy / documents:

[Documented Approach to evidence gathering for Recommendation 1](#)

1.02 Structures & Terms of Reference for Governance of QA

Recommendation 2 and 3	Planned Actions	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
<p>2.The review team recommends more diverse representation in LWETB’s QA and wider governance structures, particularly in terms of including learner voice and that of employers. This will strengthen the development of LWETB’s plans to improve. Furthermore, the ETB needs to ensure that representation is valued and used effectively with a clear strategic direction.</p> <p>12. The review team recommends that LWETB use the experience gained through developing the SER to continue to strengthen its engagement with external stakeholders. This will further enhance its capacity to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Employer Representation: Recruitment of Enterprise Engagement Representative on governance group PGG to represent employer voice and engagement. ii. Employer Representation: LWETB representative voice on external boards. STB Management and FET Director representation to engage current and future FET needs. Ongoing engagement and where applicable presentation to external boards and invitation to internal QOG (Quality Oversight Group) meetings to identify future training needs and future opportunities. iii. Learner Voice: Development of a Learner Voice Working Group (WG) in accordance with LWETB WG ToR to develop Learner Voice MS Form for all learner engagement on a bi-yearly basis. iv. Learner Voice: Development of thematic learner face to face session in conjunction with AONTAS v. Learner Voice: Exploration in the development of a hub for Learner Forum to coincide with LWETB College of a Future SEED: STB utilising the SEED system to track and monitor relationships in employer engagement to utilise towards strategic direction of FET programmes. STB to develop sectoral workshops to engage with regional sectors, establish sectoral needs and develop compatible programmes to suit the FET needs of Longford and vi. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Employer Representation: The Programme Governance Group (PGG) has a diverse representation of LWETB stakeholders to uphold QA and governance structures. A way in which the PGG address employer representation has been the inclusion and recruitment of an Enterprise Engagement Representative to join the Programme Governance Group (PGG) November 2023. An interim representative joined the PGG in early 2023 and absorbed the role of enterprise engagement to support employment services within Longford & Westmeath. The PLSS Report on work carried out supporting employers can be viewed as evidence to date of programme delivery and tailoring the needs of the employer with fit-for-purpose programme delivery that is to requirement. The Enterprise Engagement representative, through this engagement have to date ran programmes that are both standardised and tailored. A case-study of where LWETB has tailored such a programme can be found here. The now dedicated enterprise officer provided the PGG with an implementation plan to share the employer voice. IN ACTION ii. Employer Representation: LWETB has been involved in many external and internal working groups, committees and board meetings identifying opportunities with stakeholders. When reviewing these activities, we realised we did not hold a central document which described these activities. Since our last report we have built a database which entails our employer engagement through regular meetings. The database is kept up to date in real time and the senior management team will be reviewing the employer representation database twice a year identifying opportunities

<p>identify emerging needs and develop services to address them.</p>	<p>Westmeath including linking in with Midlands Regional Skills Forum</p> <p>vii. Data Driven: LWETB FET Management will utilise data derived from PLSS as the stepping stone to strengthen SARS applications for the establishment of FET Colleges of the Future to the contribution of the Estates Strategy.</p> <p>viii. Data Driven: The FET Management Team will review research that is available to meet the requirements as outlined and meeting the requirements of the LWETB Strategic Performance Agreement to address KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) identified.</p> <p>ix. Data Driven: Inclusion of SOLAS to update on bulletins, population, and industry requirements to cross compare CSO (Central Statistics Office) data to conduct TNAs for programme development through the PGG.</p> <p>x. QA Culture: Develop a QA Induction Guidelines and Presentation for all new and existing LWETB staff internal and external to LWETB. This will embed, strengthen, and enhance a QA culture. The QA Culture Presentation and Induction will strengthen the profile across all stakeholder groups to encourage diversity in representation across governance. QA Culture: Publication and implementation of QA culture branding communication with ‘call to action’ application for QA governance groupings will be included yearly in the FETQS Quality Newsletter.</p> <p>xi. Networking: Establishment of the LWETB Regional ALO to engage with employers and stakeholders within Longford and Westmeath. Establishment and ongoing engagement by the LWETB Enterprise Engagement Officer within SME (Subject Matter Experts) as well as multi-national representation of employer engagement within Longford and Westmeath. Ongoing engagement and relation building with STB and Training Advisor staff and employers. FETQS meeting existing and potential future second providers and providing informational sessions on QA engagement. Centre level staff engaging with local authorities and Department of Social Protection in formal and informal sessions.</p>	<p>for improvements on stakeholder connectivity, growing interdepartmental awareness, training needs, marketing, streamlining, and progressing relationships. As with any database we face the challenge of ensuring we are capturing all the relevant information whilst ensuring we maintain high GDPR standards. The database does not hold any unnecessary supporting documentation such as policies, minutes, communications. This information is held by the participating parties separately but can be provided upon request. IN ACTION</p> <p>iii. Employer Representation: Please refer to Case Study 3 – Enterprise Engagement. ACTION COMPLETE</p> <p>iv. Learner Voice: LWETB has developed a Working Group within the Programme Governance Group (PGG) to develop a Learner Voice MS Form for all learners. The collation of this feedback will be input into the app Power BI through MS Teams. Through this qualitative and quantitative data, we will derive much valued feedback and be consistent in its collation. LWETB has worked with NALA in finalising the learner feedback sections (of which there are 10 areas in total). We will be rolling out our first LWETB Learner Feedback form to all learners spanning Level 1-6 programmes in January of 2024. IN ACTION</p> <p>v. Learner Voice: The AONTAS Learner Forum took place in the Mullingar Park Hotel on February 22nd, 2023. Feedback from the Forum was carried out with 77 learners taking part in 10 focus groups at the event combined with 164 Learners from LWETB giving a total learner engagement of 241. The LWETB AONTAS Regional Report is available for viewing. The next AONTAS learner forum is booked for April 2024. IN ACTION</p> <p>As LWETB College of the Future has not been established to date, it has not been possible to establish Learner Forums through the establishment of an LWETB College of the Future. In the interim LWETB will continue to engage with learners through the AONTAS Learner Forum, and LWETB FET Learners Surveys. This work is ongoing. We have tested the PLSS engagement portal and established that we can send a text from PLSS direct to learners on their mobiles. This text can include a link to the learner survey. The text can be sent to learners during class times so that they can be supported by educators during class time. IN ACTION</p> <p>vi. SEED: The SEED system will hope to be rolled out in Q3 2024. IN ACTION</p> <p>vii. Data Driven: PLSS has been and remains to be an essential tool to utilise in relation to data mining enrolment, certification, gap analysis and target V outcomes etc. It allows us to ensure ourselves that we are reaching those most vulnerable and those most in need of further education and training</p>
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	<p>xii. Interdepartmental Information Sessions: Planning, establishment, and implementation of formal events with QOG oversight of departmental presentations with Q&A engagement sessions for all FET Management and SLT with LWETB Board of Directors ‘Who We Are in LWETB.’</p>	<p>initiatives and provisions. Our MIS (Management Information Systems) department utilise Tableau to oversee target enhancements and areas for future focus both weekly (gap analysis, age report (16-18) and un-terminated learners) and monthly (awaiting certification, course activity figures, skills to advance and future courses reporting, cancelled courses with learners, unprocessed referrals, early finishers report, beneficiary outturns, current courses V learner ratio). MIS cross-reference validated data with QBS, and this ensures fluidity of information confirmation to quality assure results. The MIS feature prominently within FET Management meetings and Coordinator Meetings in aligning actuals versus targets and this includes creating comparison pivot tables to recognise target adherence with our Strategic Performance Agreement. IN ACTION</p> <p>viii. QA Culture: Throughout the last 12 months LWETB has undertaken significant initiatives in response to the recommendations put forth by the QQI Review Team. Recognizing the importance of fostering a robust Quality Assurance (QA) culture, LWETB has developed comprehensive QA Induction Guidelines and Presentations for both new and existing staff, internal and external to the ETB. These efforts are geared towards embedding and strengthening QA practices across all levels. Additionally, the board has implemented measures to ensure diverse representation within governance structures, acknowledging the significance of learner voice, employer perspectives and needs, and other stakeholders in shaping QA policies. Leveraging the insights gained from the Self-Evaluation Review (SER) process, LWETB has actively enhanced its engagement with external stakeholders, aiming to identify emerging needs and refine services and systems accordingly. LWETB has also taken steps to communicate and reinforce the QA culture through annual publications and 'call to action' prompts in the FETQS Quality Newsletter. The aim is to embed, strengthen, and enhance a Quality Assurance (QA) culture within LWETB. Initiatives that have supported and enhanced the ongoing development and enhancement of a QA culture are as follows: IN ACTION</p> <p>QA FETQS Induction Presentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Developed individual slides for LWETB staff induction and presentation sectors to include FETQS representation. ACTION COMPLETE -Development of QA FETQS Induction presentation for both new and existing LWETB QA staff and stakeholders - Internal & External ACTION COMPLETE
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-Development of a FETQS LWETB Learner Induction Presentation to standardise learner induction and experience across FET provisions. **ACTION COMPLETE**

Diverse Representation in Governance:

-Implemented measures to encourage diversity in representation across governance structures. **ACTION COMPLETE**

-Implementation measures to include learner representation across governance structures including AONTAS Learner Forum, AONTAS Surveys and LWETB Learner Survey. **ONGOING**

Engagement with Stakeholders and QA Culture Branding Recognition:

-Training engagement with Educators – Feb 2023 **ACTION COMPLETE**

-Training engagement with Educators – Sept 23 **ACTION COMPLETE**

-FETQS Workshop – Devising Assessment – Dec 23 **ACTION COMPLETE**

-SME Review Feedback for future development and engagement -Educator Sessions – Sept 23 **ACTION COMPLETE**

-Strengthened engagement with internal/external stakeholder educators to identify emerging needs and improve services/systems **ONGOING**

-FETQS Quick Guide Recordings for FETQS Policies & Procedures x 7 **ACTION COMPLETE**

-Published and implemented QA culture branding communication including across FET (FET Marketing) – MS Teams, FETQS Newsletters **ONGOING**

-Included a 'call to action' in the FETQS Quality Newsletter on a yearly basis to promote and reinforce QA culture **ONGOING**

In summary, LWETB has taken concrete steps to instil and continue to embed a QA culture, encourage diverse representation in governance, and enhance engagement with external stakeholders based on the recommendations from the QQI Review Team. These actions are aimed at improving the overall quality assurance processes and responsiveness to emerging needs within the organization.

- ix. **Networking:** Ongoing networking has ever been a priority for LWETB in representation, building rapport and developing programmes that meet standards and needs of those within Longford and Westmeath. LWETB have been involved in many external and internal working groups, committees and board meetings identifying opportunities with stakeholders. When reviewing these activities, we highlighted a gap in the holding of one central document point which documented these activities. Since our last report we have worked on building a robust database which entails our employer engagement through regular meetings and

encapsulates our internal and external engagement activities. The database is live to the members and is to be kept up to date in real time. FET Management and our senior management team will add this to their management meeting agenda to review the employer representation database twice a year identifying opportunities for improvements on stakeholder connectivity, growing interdepartmental awareness, training needs, marketing, streamlining, and progressing relationships. With any database we face the challenge of ensuring we are capturing all the relevant information whilst ensuring we maintain high GDPR standards. The database does not hold any unnecessary supporting documentation such as policies, minutes, communications. This information is held by the participating parties separately but can be provided upon request. **IN ACTION**

x. **Regional ALO:** A regional ALO is currently with recruitment and will be in situ for 2024 **IN ACTION**

xi. **Interdepartmental Information Sessions:** In 2023, in line with the LWETB Statement of Strategy - Goal 3: Enhance Organisational Support and Development, and Goal 4: Enriching Partnerships OSD commenced face to face strategy meetings within LWETB, 3 strategic information sessions were held: OSD administration staff, schools, and FET leaders. The first session held was an OSD Head Office strategy meeting in Mullingar in May 2023, where all OSD administration staff attended. A second event was held for new teachers in September in ATC and third was the FET leadership event held in Athlone in October 2023. High attendance figures were recorded across all 3 events. Corporate Services (CS) had a sign in desk on entry with name badges issued with 98% of attendees providing a prominent level of positive feedback, innovative ideas, suggestions, and comments was provided by the attendees. CS are aiming to schedule follow up meetings in 2024, one which will take place online in the first half of the calendar year and the second, being in person towards the second half of the calendar year and will ensure these meetings will be interactive. **IN ACTION**

Interdepartmental Information: Historically our LWETB newsletter was a main source of internal information transfer within the organisation. Information funnelled from all sections of the organisation was edited, published, and distributed across the organisation. This approach seemed less and less fruitful over the years due to low levels of engagement from stakeholders. From this we have established a new communications section within corporate services. They are currently working on bringing

		<p>inline our multiple social media accounts and reimagining our communication styles and methodologies so that we can start to publish quality content with strong engagement and participation.</p> <p>Meta Compliance has been implemented by Corporate Services as this allows us to not only implement online training across the organisation but also allows for better governance as we distribute our policies through this system. We also use meta compliance for the distribution of the LWETB Safety Statement. This system allows us to track if a person has read and understood the document and again, we can implement training if we feel something is not widely understood. Messages such as Christmas greetings etc can also be recorded and sent out to all staff on this system.</p> <p>Another tool that is used through meta compliance is the distribution of our LWETB policies and procedures. We also upload all these policies to our website, so they are available to staff and stakeholder.</p> <p>The LWETB intranet is being developed and our policies will also be available there from Q2 of 2024.</p> <p>In 2023 inductions for all new staff were commenced in LWETB. All staff are given a firm grounding in our legislative obligations, our role in the community and the policies we rely on to implement our key goals.</p> <p>In and throughout 2024 the same H&S staff induction will take place upon the commencement of a role within LWETB. This also includes GDPR, inductions and #WeAreLWETB values, and mission etc. IN ACTION</p>
<p>3.The review team recommends that a clear communication strategy be developed. This needs to identify a clear communication loop between the SMT, governance and management structures and feedback from and to stakeholders, particularly the learner voice. It is important for LWETB to develop a communication strategy that informs stakeholders of its aims, of any progress being made towards those aims, and of how feedback is received</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. QMP: The online Quality Management Portal (QMP) will be a web-based portal for all staff and stakeholders to act as the connection point for all live and static QA material, QA system, programme requests, material access and a full QA informational portal hub with training, resources and supports and live updates. ii. AMS: The Assessment Management System (AMS) will sit into and in addition and tandem to the QMP to support the dissemination of AIS (Assessment Instrument Specifications) materials and FE (Further Education) Module Descriptor distribution on a secure platform for ease of accessibility to all required stakeholders with privilege level access. iii. QMP: The QMP will act as a feedback structure informing impact of strategic planning of QA enhancements which will span across SLT, governance structures and staff including the QSI, live update sections, training material 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. QMP: The FETQS developed the initial plans on how we would like the proposed quality system to work, and we engaged the services of an IT developer/advisory company who works on bespoke software and managed solutions for the Education service. They guided us through what the possibilities were, and the technical work required to support this. They supplied a costing to produce the system. We also approached other software developers to receive comparison quotes. Consultation with Management, Key Staff, Governance Groups have taken place at all stages which consequently impacted on plans. The plans have developed from what originally was a modular management system – MMS to a Quality Management Portal (QMP) developed the initial plans on how we would like the proposed quality system to work, and we engaged the services of an IT developer/advisory company who works on bespoke software and managed solutions for the Education service. They guided us through what the possibilities were, and the technical work required to support this. They supplied a costing to produce the system. We also approached other software developers to receive comparison quotes. Consultation with

<p>and the impact it has on the strategic planning and enhancement of quality assurance.</p>	<p>and supports readily available to all centres across LWETB. This will be overseen by the QGG.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> iv. Communication: Usage of bulletin emails systems to promote QMP, direct stakeholder traffic to a one fit-for-purpose QA hub, distribute supports, training opportunities and actions to the QMP to promote inclusion and consultation opportunities v. Educator Handbook: FETQS to develop, consult upon, produce, and promote an Educator Handbook to serve as a guide, support, one stop resource location and communication methodology for quality standards for all staff and stakeholders. Updated, overseen, and reviewed periodically by FETQS via the QGG vi. Communication: FETQS continuation of representation across ETB networks to communicate best practice initiatives (QA Network, EA Working Group, RPL (Recognition of Prior Learning) Network etc) vii. Website Communication: LWETB to develop a FET learner website to act as a learner communication platform to support, contribute and disseminate learner and public information. This web-based platform will align with all the LWETB social media plan with a dedicated focus on FET marketing, branding and social media promotion and knowledge sharing outlets. This will streamline public consumption information and allow the delivery on key actions as identified through the SER and QQI Review Report to support planned actions, outcomes, and planning strategy. 	<p>Management, Key Staff, Governance Groups have taken place at all stages which consequently impacted on plans. The plans have developed from what originally was a modular management system (MMS) to a Quality Management Portal (QMP). A new FET website was due to be launched and suggestions were made that the system would be best placed as a link from the new FET website thus directing staff to one point. After discussions took place with Management, it was agreed that the new FET website would have a dedicated 'Staff Hub.' The new FET website is due to be launched in Q1 2024 and incorporated will be the 'new staff hub' with the various sections incorporating links to existing Teams/SharePoint which holds all quality information as originally planned. The QMP will be accessible through a staff log-in informing staff and users (internal and external) of strategic planning updates and will be filled with training and supporting material as well as FETQS policies and procedures that have superseded legacy QA systems. IN ACTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii. AMS: The AMS evolved over the past year to utilise systems already integrated across LWETB and second providers to provide a fit for purpose, assessment distribution tool. The system has been populated and is already in operation across community providers and is in the process of being rolled out among our contracting partners. ACTION COMPLETE iii. Communications: There are many communication tools that FETQS use at their disposal to communicate with all internal and external stakeholders. We have worked diligently in condensing, refining, and honing our communications tools to streamline information effectively and efficiently. One such tool will be the QMP which acts as an all-round conduit for information, consultation, and to promote inclusion. IN ACTION iv. Educator Handbook: Working group was formed on the 4th of December 2020, initial meeting took place on the 4th of December 20. Online meetings took place fortnightly. Working group contained representatives from Youthreach, FETQS, Senior Management, BTEI, Adult Lit etc. An MS TEAMS was set up where all relevant documents, drafts, subgroup information etc would be kept. Agendas were devised for each meeting; this was communicated with the working group by email as well as information on what areas required review before the next meeting. Members of the work group were broken into sub-groups to work on specific areas required for the educator handbook. Numerous meetings took place, it became apparent that the Educator Handbook could not be created until all relevant Policies and Procedures were developed by the FETQS unit. Decision was made on the 9th of Sept 21 by the Chair of QGG
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& Educator Handbook WG to disband the working group and FETQS would take control in creating/developing the Educator Handbook. When completed it would be issued to the members of the working group for feedback and then go to open consultation. The Educator Handbook went out for open consultation on the 28th of October 2022 to all stakeholders. Feedback was gathered from this open consultation, reviewed and changes made where applicable. Handbook went out to the QGG for consultation on the 16th of Nov to the 22nd of November and was approved on the 2nd of December 22 by the QGG. The LWETB lead governance group, the QOG, approved the Educator Handbook on the 8th of December 22. Educator handbook was sent for proofreading, once handbook was returned from proofreading, amendments were made. Meetings were then held with designers; an agreement was made on the design of the handbook, and it was officially launched on February 9th, 2023, at the Mullingar Park Hotel as part of the LWETB FETQS Educator In-Person Support Session. The educator handbook is an online document that is updated annually. It resides in the Educator Assessment Support Teams for their access. The handbook is a welcome addition to educators and is a fantastic tool for all internal and external educators and staff internal and external to LWETB. **ACTION COMPLETE**

- v. **Website Communication:** As above LWETB have developed and are launching in Q1 2024 the FET Website. The FET Website team have worked hard not only on this web portal to disseminate information to learner, staff and the public but also in aligning marketing strategies including the commencement of a Marketing Working Group to oversee this next step. This WG have supported the rebranding of centres to campus' with alignment of branding, signage, and email signature changes. Future work and objectives for the WG include social media plan, branding, advertising etc. A focus group was carried out with this WG and can be viewed below.

IN ACTION

Commentary and Reflections

Recommendation 2 and Recommendation 12 were merged to combine planned actions to address representation of all stakeholders, stakeholder engagement and the continuation of strengthening external stakeholder engagement, voice, and participation to identify emerging needs and requirements

Link to Updated Policy & Procedures

[Documented Approach of evidence gathering for recommendation 2 and 12](#)

[Documented Approach of evidence gathering for recommendation 3](#)

1.04 Staff Recruitment, Management & Development

Recommendation 4 and 5	Planned Actions	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
<p>4.The review team recommends that LWETB develop means of sharing best practice through the establishment of communities of practice (CoP) and staff integration across FET. This should include teaching and support staff (including contracted training) and will be critical to a ‘one ETB’ approach.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Communities of Practice: Development of a PGG CoP Working Group to collate educator database per field of learning to commence dedicated CoP groupings. ii. CoP: TEL and PL&D (Professional Learning and Development) to initiate two CoP models of UDL (Universal Design for Learning) and EdTech to initiate the educator involvement in a CoP to capture and enhance peer to peer collaboration, learning and support to develop the competencies required in the quality improvement works undertaken iii. Procedure: FETQS to develop a CoP procedure with appending documentation to support QA iv. CoP Pilot: FETQS pilot a model of CoP through module enhancement-based emphasis. v. CoP Champions: Development CoP champions within centres and LWETB to facilitate change and support a culture of peer learning and support in the engagement of CoPs (Community of Practice). vi. CoP: Integration of Literacy championing literacy across levels 1-6. Working towards an Integrating Literacy Policy vii. CoP: Commencement of an ESOL level 3. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Communities of Practice: Communities of Practice: Development of a PGG CoP Working Group to collate educator database per field of learning to commence dedicated CoP groupings. <i>No actions took place on this yet, raised at PGG and senior Management informal meetings.</i> IN ACTION ii. CoP: TEL and PL&D to initiate two CoP models of UDL and EdTech to initiate the educator involvement in a CoP to capture and enhance peer to peer collaboration and learning and support to develop the competencies required in the quality improvement works undertaken. IN ACTION iii. CoP: EdTech and UDL Cops established with voluntary membership, this continues to be promoted to staff on an on-going basis, through induction process, monthly emails, briefings, FETQS newsletter. IN ACTION iv. CoP: on P2P System organically developed around supporting new and existing staff using the finance system and share learning and collaboration. IN ACTION
<p>5.The review team recommends that LWETB develop ways of measuring the impact of CPD on driving quality and develop this to determine how CPD opportunities are prioritised.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. PL&D: Continue to deliver and advertise CPD and training opportunities through the PL&D TEL Wakelet, MS Teams, LWETB QA Newsletter and briefings. ii. Training Material: Easy to access pre-recorded video recordings to detail specific section of the Educator Handbook and the inclusion of this for all new educator staff internal and external. iii. Networking: Continue to liaise with PL&D network to nationally develop a system to record PL&D iv. Engagement: Establish a PL&D Working Group with ToR to research ways to evaluate and plan PL&D v. Development: Continuation of developing PL&D workplans with collaboration and through consultation from middle and senior management teams prioritising areas as per the LWETB Strategy Statement and National PL&D strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> v. PL&D: This action is ongoing and the PLD department also include some PL&D highlights in monthly bullet emails. IN ACTION vi. Training Material: For the relevant TEL section on the Educator Handbook Videos are contained in the Edtech learning support stream channel. These include Remote EA Video, Blended Learning Basics, Setting Up your virtual classroom, Using Turnitin etc. ACTION COMPLETE vii. Networking: Continuing membership of this network, attending Erasmus in Jan 16th, 2024, to Slovenia to look at best practice in EU, we will investigate systems they use. ETBI hold notes, Calendar appointments on teams is evidence. IN ACTION viii. Engagement: Rebrand the PLD Approvals committee to incorporate a more holistic approach to evaluating and planning for PL&D – QTR 2 24 IN ACTION

		<p>ix. Development: Workplans continue to be developed in line with national and local strategy which will now encompass ALL (Adult Literacy Life) strategy in QTR 2 24, through the PL&D Network, PL&D Applications Framework updated application form to link to both local and national strategies. IN ACTION</p>
<p>Commentary and Reflections FETQS developed a CoP for communication educators at levels 4, 5 and 6. An outcome of this CoP was the desire to commence the development of a hybrid model module descriptor. Seven educators worked together to review the level 4 communications including the development of exemplar assessments, marking schemes and UDL exemplars. This hybrid Educator Pack was consulted upon by stakeholders and approved by the Programme Governance Group in Q2 2023 and is currently being piloted by the seven educators who took part in this project. Upon completion of this pilot, the PGG will conduct a review and where applicable, release the Communication 4N0690 Educator Pack to all educators for usage within all LWETB centres.</p>		
<p>Link to Updated Policy & Procedures Documented Approach of evidence gathering for recommendation 4 Documented Approach of evidence gathering for recommendation 5</p>		

1.05 Programme Development, Approval & Submission

Recommendation 6	Planned Actions	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
<p>6.The review team recommends that LWETB prioritise the development of a Programme Delivery, Development and Validation Policy and subsequent procedures to ensure a strategic focus in line with QQI Guidelines.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Policy & Procedure Development: FETQS Programme Development to commence the drafting of a Programme Delivery, Development and Validation Policy, procedure and required documentation to support the application, review, oversight, and governance approval processes required. ii. Training & Supports: TEL to support Blended Learning opportunities, integration and UDL for enhancement of TLA. iii. Module Enhancement: FETQS to commence a data-gathering plan for collation of modules for review and development. iv. ETB Collaboration: Engage and collaborate with other ETBs (Education and Training Boards) in the review of existing programmes and the development of new programmes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Policy & Procedure: The PGG allocated the draft documentation to be commenced and developed at its initial stage within the FETQS Unit while also working alongside the TEL PD department to work in tandem with the development of a digital learning policy and accompanying process. Working on the two policies in tandem has meant there has been a waiting period in relation to the QQI Statutory QA Guidelines – Blended and Fully Online Programmes, which was released 20.10.2023. To date the FETQS unit has been working on a 1st draft iteration of the following: - FETQS Policy – Programme Development and Approval - FETQS Procedure – Programme Development and Approval - FETQS Guidelines – Changing a Descriptor - FETQS MS Form – Programme Approval Request Application – PAR1 - FETQS Appendix 1 – Programme Approval Criteria.

	<p>v. Networking and collaboration: FETQS to work closely with the ETBI Quality Network to continue to develop the CAS (Common Award Standard) Programme Development Initiative</p>	<p>-FETQS Appendix 2 – PGG Criteria for Evaluating Programme Requests -FETQS Appendix 3 – PGG Sub-Committee Request for Further Information -FETQS Appendix 4 – PGG Declaration of Programme Outcome</p> <p>The FETQS unit have also supported and have been working alongside the TEL & PD unit to develop a 1st iteration working draft of the FETQS Policy – Digital Learning.</p> <p>Additionally, the FETQS unit, in collaboration with the TEL & PD Unit, is developing the initial working draft of the FETQS Policy for Digital Learning, which will complement the suite of policies created for program development and approval. The progression of creating a robust and effective policy, along with supporting documentation, has faced hindrances due to the delay in receiving QQI's statutory QA guidelines for blended and fully online programs. Overall, LWETB's efforts in developing these policies and procedures, despite the delay caused by awaiting the QQI guidelines, demonstrate a commitment to ensuring the quality and alignment of their programs with established standards and guidelines. The above is now in open stakeholder consultation. IN ACTION</p> <p>ii. Training and Supports: Develop systems in conjunction with FETQS to ensure BL (Blended Learning) Policy and QQI Statutory Guidelines for Blended Learning are incorporated into Programme application documentation as outlined above. Investigate the Development of a Digital Learning Working Group under the PGG – to evaluate applications for Blended programmes. QTR 1 -2024. IN ACTION</p> <p>Edtech Support Structures to be put in place, currently in development including Educator Course. IN ACTION</p> <p>Development of Support Pack (Toolkit) for Development of Blended programmes and Teaching Learning and Assessment Blended Resources QTR 1 – 2024. IN ACTION</p> <p>TEL courses will be offered to staff on an on-going basis. Continue to engage with TEL Network and collaborate where possible with other ETBs. IN ACTION</p> <p>iii. Module Enhancement: FETQS are in the development stage of the suite of policies, procedures and documentation that will be attached to Programme Development and Approval within LWETB across all programmes of learning in relation to teaching, learning and assessment. Legacy CAS and non-CAS programmes require ongoing monitoring, self-evaluation, review and updating in relation to teaching, learning and</p>
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assessment. This is to ensure all programmes; in-development, new and existing are fit-for-purpose, adhere to MIMLOs (Minimum intended module learning outcomes) and MIPLOs (Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcomes) of programme requirements, meet national standards, are in alignment to determinations for the outlines of the NFQ (National Framework of Qualification) level and NFQ level outcomes, Grading Criteria and QQI Grid of Level Indicators etc. to name a few.

LWETB has responded to the need for Module Enhancement in the context of Further Education and Training Quality Assurance by proposing the initiation of a data-gathering plan. This plan aims to collect information regarding modules that require review and development including the proposal of new programmes for delivery within LWETB.

In view of the data-gathering plan, FETQS then assessed the QQI infographics to ascertain the most popular awards certified as to identify priority reviews. The PGG approved the review of our most accredited level 4 modules: Communications 4N0689. In May 2023 FETQS established a dedicated educator working group consisting of current educators internal and external to LWETB with experience of working with both centrally devised and locally devised module descriptors. The group's primary objective is to examine the NFQ (National Framework of Qualifications) Level 4 module descriptor with the aim of merging two types of assessment instrument specifications: centrally devised assessments and locally devised assessments. The goal is to create a new and improved educator pack. This new educator pack is intended to contain assessment exemplars, providing examples of best practices for assessments. These exemplars will serve as models to guide educators in designing assessments that align with the learning outcomes and standards specified and as required by QQI and the NFQ module descriptors. Instead of being strictly prescriptive or completely open-ended, the pack will offer guidance and examples to ensure that assessments are well-constructed, aligned with learning goals, and represent best practices in evaluation. **IN ACTION**

- iv. **Networking & ETB Collaboration:** Based on the recommendation from the QQI review team, LWETB responded and actioned the development, consultation, and approval of a full suite of Policies and procedures with strategic focus on meeting the requirements of QQI statutory guidelines and in line with strategic focus. Here is a breakdown of the progress made to date:

QQI Review Team Recommendation: Development completed of a Programme Development and Approval Policy, Procedure and Blended Learning Policy

Development of subsequent working procedures and appendices aligned with QQI guidelines in relation to the Programme Development and Approval Policy and Blended Learning Policy

LWETB Response - ETB Collaboration: Future engagement and collaboration of *new programme opportunities* with other Education and Training Boards (ETBs)

LWETB Action: LWETB has collaborated with SOLAS on the validation of several micro-credentials to date within the last 12 months. All have been reviewed and approved via the LWETB PGG

LWETB has reviewed new programmes from other ETBs that were approved and sought differential validation for several principal programmes. All have been reviewed and approved via the LWETB PGG LWETB within the QA Network has continued to express interest in collaborating with other ETBs for both reviewing existing programmes and developing new programmes. All expressions of interest have come via the ETBI Quality Assurance Network.

In summary, the QQI review team has recommended the establishment of a policy and supporting procedures for programme development and approval which incorporates validation of the same. LWETB is responding by emphasizing collaboration with other ETBs, citing examples of past collaboration with SOLAS, and expressing intent for future collaboration in program reviews and development. This evidence can be viewed in the programme validation and collaboration carried out to date as viewed within the evidence submitted. **IN ACTION**

Commentary and Reflections

FETQS has prioritised a needs analysis of centres based on supports and resources required. Throughout 2023, the FETQS Unit delivered specific, effective, and in-depth workshops and face-to-face sessions on: Assessment of Learners, Conducting Learner Feedback, Standards & Integrity, QQI Grading Criteria, Devising Marking Schemes etc. These sessions have received positive feedback from both internal and external educators from NFQ levels 1-6. Outputs of these sessions have also included in FETQS devising supporting Toolkits and Guidelines to support teaching, learning and assessment (TLA) at centre level and FETQS have developed a 2024 plan which includes but is not limited to: Integration Workshops – Fusion and Cross-Curricular, The LWETB Assessment Toolkit and Programme Development. These inclusions to the supports and resources available to both internal and external educators have been instrumental in enhancing the teaching, learning and assessment for both new and existing staff and educator feedback on these sessions reflect a deeper embedding of a quality culture within our services.

1.06 Access, Transfer and Progression

Recommendation 7	Planned Actions	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
<p>7.The review team recommends that LWETB develop a mechanism for monitoring its guidance service. This will include who is accessing the service, and crucially who is not, so that it can ensure that the service is consistently available across the ETB, including to harder to reach groups. This monitoring will also allow for the measurement of the service’s quality and impact.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Review the database and who is accessing the service – Adult Education Guidance Service Management system is the database and Guidance staff and AEO can access it. ETBI currently have ownership of this database. ii. Review existing data and critically analyse the groups/people guidance is not reaching – Adult Education Guidance Service Management system is the database and Guidance staff and AEO can access it. ETBI currently have ownership of this database. iii. Continue to use feedback surveys and develop reports with actions plans to ensure the service remains current – Surveys include Client feedback and FET teaching staff. All guidance staff have access to the forms. iv. Review our work on a bi-annual to ensure that we are proactively meeting the changing needs of the community of learners both internally and externally – Review will be done by the guidance team and led by the co-ordinator which can be relayed to AEO and FET director 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. As per the Guidance ETBI database in 2023, the service met with 6,890 beneficiaries which comprises of the following categories: carers, disadvantaged people, early school leavers, ESOL, Ukrainian refugees, other refugees, international protection applicants, lone parents, unemployed, people with disabilities, people working with basic skills and members of the traveller and Roma community. This is an 84% increase on 2022. In 2023. we had an additional staff member so were a team of 6 working across the two counties. The increase also demonstrates the increased demand and workload on our service. We have widened our methods of accessibility to our service by creating an on-line booking form, offering virtual guidance meetings, drop-in sessions and broadening our outreach provision to include the libraries, community centres and liaising more with the local partnership companies. From analysis of the data our guidance work has changed with the priority given to the Ukraine crisis which we have met. Ukraine response team meetings external and internal. Driving the need for increased ESOL within LWETB and reaching these learners. We had to reach many of these learners, working with local partnerships, serviced accommodation managers and voluntary groups. The work involved bridging the gap between LWETB provision and the increased demand from this cohort. The service was instrumental in driving the ESOL need within LWETB and led to an increased evening on-line, outreach and in centre ESOL provision. We are a need led service and the work above has taken priority. From analysis of the database there is a small cohort of minority target group, members of the Traveller and Roma community that we will focus on 2024. In late 2023 we have commenced this work with visits to Community Houses and CV workshops in collaboration with local

development partnerships. This work needs to be a wider LWETB approach particularly with Community Education.

As part of measuring our work with clients we are going to review the client feedback forms quarter 1 in 2024. This form is valuable for us as a team to plan our work and acknowledge the impact we have on individuals. We feel the form could be developed further to reflect the changes in our work but as mentioned we prioritised the volume of our work this meeting the needs of our clients particularly with Ukrainian community. This need required meeting the people on an individual basis, working with accommodation service providers, the local authorities, local integration teams, local ETB meetings, the Department of Social Protection and the intense feedback and follow up with the relevant personnel.

Bi-annual reviews were held in Q1 and Q3. Continuous updates and feedback are provided to senior management.

Accessing the service – Adult Education Guidance Service Management system is the database and Guidance staff and AEO can access it. ETBI currently have ownership of this database.

Review existing data and critically analyse the groups/people guidance is not reaching – Adult Education Guidance Service Management system is the database and Guidance staff and AEO can access it. ETBI currently have ownership of this database.

Continue to use feedback surveys and develop reports with action plans to ensure the service remains current – Surveys include Client feedback and FET teaching staff. All guidance staff have access to the forms.

Review our work on a bi-annual basis to ensure that we are proactively meeting the changing needs of the community of learners both internally and externally – Review will be done by the guidance team and led by the co-ordinator which can be relayed to AEO and FET director. **IN**

ACTION

Commentary and Reflections

2023 was an exceptional year for the Guidance service regarding the number of beneficiaries. The increased demand placed on the service is evident and not sustainable going forward. Forward and strategic planning is needed in line with the new Guidance framework to ensure the harder to reach target groups are not missed. Our work is constantly evolving and changing, and the Lifelong Guidance Framework has expanded our target groups to include people in employment and increased the referrals from people with disabilities. The 4 main pillars from the framework, are that there will be lifelong and guidance and information services, a focus on standards and quality throughout the lifelong guidance system, access, inclusion and UDL plus emphasis on career-management skills and lifelong career mobility. This change of direction to work with career changers and

lifelong guidance for people in employment will necessitate an increase in resources to meet this demand. CPD will be essential for staff to meet this work. The move to a FET Guidance, Information and Recruitment Support Service (GIRSS) will impact how we work internally with staff and how the work will be delivered.

Link to Updated Policy & Procedures

[Documented approach of evidence gathering for recommendation 7](#)

1.08 Information and Data Management

Recommendation 8	Planned Actions	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
<p>8.The review team recommends that LWETB develop mechanisms for the systematic collection of data and its use. Data can be used effectively to review and evaluate provision and for performance management. This will enhance both operational and strategic planning and enable the provision of a more consistent FET experience. Furthermore, the development of KPIs and plans which include clear targets and measures will be important for continuous self-evaluation and enhancements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. KPI (Key Performance Indicators): PLSS system allows for identified KPI targets to be monitored with additional dashboards provided by SOLAS allowing for further analysis. Utilising and sharing of this data on PGG governance group to feedback data loop to inform programme needs. Inclusion of above notation that SOLAS to receive an invitation to FET Management Sessions to update of programme TNA. ii. PLSS: Utilising the PLSS text system to send learner surveys and questionnaires including AONTAS invitations for face-to-face thematic focus sessions. iii. QMP Development and tender process of the QMP to keep internal and external stakeholders up to date on all QA with interaction capability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. KPI: SOLAS issues PLSS MIS reporting on or around the 5th business day of each month. This MIS data is shared via two platforms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MS Excel – MIS Report - Tableau Report – SPA (Strategic Performance Agreement) Targets 2023 The FET Management team review the SPA targets and MIS reports at the weekly Friday FET Management Meeting. In conjunction with the above data, the PLSS Analyst created a local real-time analysis of the Tableau SPA target detail which is reviewed by FET Managers on a weekly basis. IN ACTION ii. PLSS: FET Coordinators and Garrycastle Campus Recruitment team utilise the PLSS SMS system to communicate with students. The last survey was issued Q3 2023. IN ACTION A 2023 learner survey will be issued shortly via MS Form – LWETB FET Learner Voice Survey: Q1 2024. IN ACTION iii. QMP: See recommendation 3. IN ACTION

Commentary and Reflections

One of the main contributing factors to delivering key performance indicators on PLSS data within LWETB has been building, enhancing and developing clear and effective communication channels that engage all stakeholders within the process. Building and strengthening the links between the required parties; recruitment departments, centres, line management and the PLSS Advisor. Through this engagement process gap analysis and MIS reports. This has also lead extending the abilities to utilise the PLSS system to engage with learners in the texting service to participate and engage in learner surveys to support centralising the learner voice in a more learner friendly and participatory process that aligns to where the learner is most engaged. FETQS will collate this qualitative data and utilise within governance structures and address enhancing supports and resources for and on behalf of learners.

Link to Updated Policy & Procedures

[Documented Approach of evidence gathering for recommendation 8](#)

2.0 Teaching, Learning & Assessment

2.02 Assessment of Learners

Recommendation 9	Planned Actions	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
<p>9.The review team recommends that LWETB develop a learner induction process and learner handbook that is FET-wide and consistent, so that every LWETB FET service user receives the same information and is aware of the supports available and how to access them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Learner Handbook: FETQS through open stakeholder consultation to develop, consulted upon and published a learner handbook for all learners across all provisions within LWETB. ii. Learner Induction: FETQS through open stakeholder consultation to develop a learner induction presentation with checklist. Assurance of all FET learners receiving the same integral introduction to LWETB mission and values, their learning journey, programme, and centre with checklist for a documented approach to programme initiation iii. QA internal and external training: FETQS to develop a QA Induction Training Programme for both existing and inexperienced QA staff including stakeholders. This QA induction support will be pre-recorded and readily available to all on QMP. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Learner Handbook & Learner Induction: As the Learner Handbook and Induction involved creating relevant and beneficial content/copy for the Learner, the process of creation and consultation spanned across all LWETB departments and provisions. To create copy we sourced copies of learner handbook and learner inductions that had already been created by provisions themselves to ensure we captured content required across the range. We have Learners from L1-L6 across various programmes, so we needed to ensure where possible the handbook and induction was inclusive. The first draft of the handbook was created by the FETQS department including what content FETQS felt was suitable for the Learners. FETQS then sent the draft copy to the designer who incorporated the LWETB branding, colours, design, and layout. Once a draft was created by the FETQS department they approached the LWETB Recruitment working group and a sub working group was created using key provision personnel to review the proposed content and feedback where relevant. Copy was revised if feedback was agreed, and final copy was then sent through LWETB Quality Governance Group – QGG for approval and then on to open consultation for all LWETB staff to review and comment. The handbook was also subject to a Learner Focus Group. The learner handbook and learner induction were officially launched in Q4 2023. This is an on-line resource as it incorporates web links etc and will evolve over time depending on changes in practices. FETQS may want to expand in areas such as online study tips and other areas as they emerge. Any feedback received on the resource will be incorporated in changes in the July revision period. ACTION COMPLETE ii. QA Internal and External Training: FETQS have devised many induction presentation slides that are incorporated into different department introductions. FETQS also has a FETQS QA presentation with supporting resources and information available through the LWETB website, MS Teams as well as the new FET website. Educators have access to the Educator Handbook; contractors also have access as well as contracting supporting

material. LWETB have created presentations as well as voice-overs for many of the new FETQS policies and procedures as well as resources such as assessment templates. Harvard referencing and Internal Verification (IV) Training and IV refresher courses. **IN ACTION**

Commentary and Reflections

Ensuring both staff and learners at centre level have access to sufficient, adequate and robust resources that is both easy to access when they need them and fit-for-purpose is paramount to FETQS. LWETB have worked alongside the FET Marketing department to streamline accessibility for both learners and staff to the FET website. Within the FET website is here the learner section will allow learners to access not only the Learner Handbook and FETQS policies, procedures and application forms but all information needed to support them through their learner journey, regardless of NFQ level or accredited or non-accredited courses. The information website will be easily accessible for learners and simple to navigate and will serve as a one-stop-shop hub for all needs, requirements and information seeking. Staff in turn on the FET website will have a log-in section where all departments, supports and resources will be available to them. FETQS will have 5 sections within this hub to support staff: 1: FETQS Coordinator Supports & Resources, 2: Educator Assessment Supports * CoPs, 3: FETQS Policies, Procedures & Documentation, 4: Module Descriptors & Educator Packs and 5: FETQS News.

Link to Updated Policy & Procedures

[Documented Approach of evidence gathering for recommendation 9](#)

2.03 Supports for Learners

Recommendation 10	Planned Actions	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
<p>10.The review team recommends that LWETB develop mechanisms for embedding the learner voice across all relevant activities and governance. Furthermore, a clear process needs to be developed to ensure the feedback informs strategy and accountability. This needs to be supported by a</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Policy Establishment: A Management Information Policy is to be developed to support provision planning, operational delivery and reporting requirements creating a looped engagement process for all stakeholders. ii. Learner Engagement and Voice: Augmenting the learner voice through Learner Surveys, AONTAS thematic sessions, PLSS engagement portal and learner forums through the establishment of an LWETB College of the Future iii. Employer and External Stakeholder Engagement: Augmenting the employer and industry voice utilising SEED as the documented approach to engagement to inform strategy and accountability periodically and systematically. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Policy Establishment: The Management Information System has been drafted and will go through open consultation via the QGG Q1 2024. IN ACTION ii. Learner Engagement & Voice: Refer to recommendation 2. IN ACTION iii. Employer and Stakeholder Engagement: Refer to recommendation 2. IN ACTION iv. Apprenticeship Management System: The AMS evolved over the past year to utilise systems already integrated across LWETB and second providers to provide a fit for purpose, assessment distribution tool. The system has been populated and is already in operation across community providers and is in the process of being rolled out among our contracting partners. IN ACTION

robust procedure and a more coherent and consistent feedback loop so that learners know their voice is being heard.

- iv. Apprenticeship Management System: Direct link from STB to employers in the engagement, strategic approach to engagement and training plans for all apprentices

Commentary and Reflections

Through the PGG, FETQS have prioritised augmenting the learner voice both through AONTAS and also through the development of a systematic and scheduled LWETB Learner Feedback form which will occur each Q2 and Q4 yearly. The data collated will be embedded into Power BI to analyse both quantitative and qualitative data year on year. This feedback will encompass both standardised and specific feedback to better support the learner journey through all stages.

Link to Updated Policy & Procedures

[Documented Approach of evidence gathering for recommendation 10](#)

3.0 Self-Evaluation, Monitoring & Review

3.01 Self-Evaluation Monitoring & Review

Recommendation 11	Planned Actions	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
<p>11.The review team recommends that LWETB introduce continuous and systematic self-monitoring and evaluation to support organisational learning. This should be supported by data – standards, targets, and indicators – as well as by benchmarking and the systematic collection of feedback from student, staff, and stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Plan: Development of the Annual Service Plan led by FET Director to deliver on Strategic Goals and as such KPI outcomes identified and actioned through the 2023 Service Plan Support Services Document ii. SER: Utilising the future focus areas identified through this process to review and plan outstanding QIP areas. Actions identified will be risk assessed to establish prioritisation. iii. Policy Development: Develop a Self-Evaluation and Monitoring Policy based on all FET monitoring and evaluation activities to support future provision planning and development. iv. System Management: Explore QA measurement systems with project management software 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Annual Service Plan: The QQI review, action plan and report has supported and aided the development, progression, and pathway for a stronger, more cohesive and aligned annual service plan that supports our progression towards a unified LWETB and quality system that supports all. ii. SER: The FETQS unit have taken all areas of future focus and under development plans that were identified as outcomes of the SER. These identifiers support our enhancement plans and support centres and staff in actively engaging in development plans and actions. iii. Policy Development: Many departments have requirements, plans, and needs at centre and community levels that require change and as such policy development is crucial to strategise and align development with operational. Please refer to linked documentation for 2024 plans. iv. System Management: LWETB has strengthened its ability to manage, implement and utilise system management systems such as Power BI, MIS reporting software as well as financing and budgeting. These updates can be reviewed within the completed and published SER 2023 and future targets within the SER 2024.
<p>Commentary and Reflections LWETB have the Strategic Performance Agreements in place and our KPIs as set by SOLAS are reviewed in tableau monthly with oversight from FET Management and our MIS department. Monthly budget analysis and reviews are held monthly at department and FET management level with reports distributed at centre level with year-on-year comparatives conducted based on FARR projections versus actuals including FAR4 financial budget bids.</p>		
<p>Link to Updated Policy & Procedures Documented Approach to evidence gathering for Recommendation 11</p>		

3.03 Oversight, monitoring & review of relationships with external parties

Recommendation 12	Planned Actions	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
<p>12.The review team recommends that LWETB use the experience gained through developing the SER to continue to strengthen its engagement with external stakeholders. This will further enhance its capacity to identify emerging needs and develop services to address them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Employer Representation: Recruitment of Enterprise Engagement Representative on governance group PGG to represent employer voice and engagement. ii. Employer Representation: LWETB representative voice on external boards. STB Management and FET Director representation to engage current and future FET needs. Ongoing engagement and where applicable presentation to external boards and invitation to internal QOG meetings to identify future training needs and future opportunities. iii. Learner Voice: Development of a Learner Voice Working Group (WG) in accordance with LWETB WG ToR to develop Learner Voice MS Form for all learner engagement on a bi-yearly basis. iv. Learner Voice: Development of thematic learner face to face session in conjunction with AONTAS v. Learner Voice: Exploration in the development of a hub for Learner Forum to coincide with LWETB College of a Future vi. SEED: STB utilising the SEED system to track and monitor relationships in employer engagement to utilise towards strategic direction of FET programmes. STB to develop sectoral workshops to engage with regional sectors, establish sectoral needs and develop compatible programmes to suit the FET needs of Longford and Westmeath including linking in with Midlands Regional Skills Forum vii. Data Driven: LWETB FET Management will utilise data derived from PLSS as the stepping stone to strengthen SARS applications for the establishment of FET Colleges of the Future to the contribution of the Estates Strategy. viii. Data Driven: The FET Management Team will review research that is available to meet the requirements as outlined and meeting the requirements of the LWETB Strategic Performance Agreement to address KPIs identified. ix. Data Driven: Inclusion of SOLAS to update on bulletins, population, and industry requirements to cross compare CSO data to conduct TNAs for programme development through the PGG. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Refer to recommendation 2 & 12. IN ACTION

- x. QA Culture: Develop a QA Induction Guidelines and Presentation for all new and existing LWETB staff internal and external to LWETB. This will embed, strengthen, and enhance a QA culture. The QA Culture Presentation and Induction will strengthen the profile across all stakeholder groups to encourage diversity in representation across governance. QA Culture: Publication and implementation of QA culture branding communication with 'call to action' application for QA governance groupings will be included yearly in the FETQS Quality Newsletter.
- xi. Networking: Establishment of the LWETB Regional ALO to engage with employers and stakeholders within Longford and Westmeath. Establishment and ongoing engagement by the LWETB Enterprise Engagement Officer within SME as well as multi-national representation of employer engagement within Longford and Westmeath. Ongoing engagement and relation building with STB and Training Advisor staff and employers. FETQS meeting existing and potential future second providers and providing informational sessions on QA engagement. Centre level staff engaging with local authorities and Department of Social Protection in formal and informal sessions.
- xii. Interdepartmental Information Sessions: Planning, establishment, and implementation of formal events with QOG oversight of departmental presentations with Q&A engagement sessions for all FET Management and SLT with LWETB Board of Directors 'Who We Are in LWETB.'

Commentary and Reflections

Click here to enter text.

Link to Updated Policy & Procedures

[Documented Approach for evidence gathering of recommendation 2 and recommendation 12](#)

4.0 Update on other additional QA Objectives/actions arising from internal QA Planning and Monitoring

No.	QA Objectives	Update on Status	Link to updated/new Policy
	These should relate to objectives not already discussed in the progress report.	Provide brief update on status, whether completed or in progress.	
1	Policy Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - FETQS Department and TEL PL&D Department have worked collaboratively on an Academic Integrity Policy – Q1 2024 - FETQS Programme Development and Approval Policy – Q1 2024 - Blended Learning Policy Q1 2024 - FETQS Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review Policy – Q3 2024 - OSD Policy review and Development 2023 	Energy Policy Sustainability Policy Firewall Policy
2	Access, Transfer and Progression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MoU (memorandum of understanding) signed into agreement: TUS (Technological University of the Shannon) Memorandum of Understanding - MoU signed into agreement: Department of Social Welfare (DSP) - MoU signed into agreement: Meeting with TUS, Head of Department Dr D. Cawley for Nursing and Healthcare to widen the diversity of learners entering Nursing Programmes from FET. Confirmation was granted from our QQI Level 5 Nursing programme with the extension of 5 learner candidate availability to 50 learner candidate availability. - Joint Tertiary Agreement for Bachelor (BA) in Business – 4 Year level 8 Honours Degree: Joint tertiary degree proposal with year 1 located in LWETB and subsequent 3 years in TUS Athlone Campus - MoU in Progress: TUS Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure and LWETB 	Click here to enter text.
3	National Programme Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working with and actively participate in ELC (Early Learning and Care) National Programme Development through the Quality Network and DDLETB - Collaboration of working with SOLAS on QQI micro-credentials and green programme initiatives 	Click here to enter text.
4	Training and Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integration and UDL: Provision based in-house practical workshop for integration within the module as well as integration across modules. 	Click here to enter text.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Programme Development: Workshop based sessions to enhance opportunity to programme development for both new and existing programmes 	
5	Programme Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LWETB is working with LCETB in support of the development of a non-CAS programme – QQI level 5 Dementia Care and Support - LWETB is working on a QQI validation of 5N1752 All-Terrain Vehicle Operations to meet new governing regulations in the use of ATV/quad biking for all workplaces/farm in possession of same and similar industry sectors that came into effect Q4 2023 - FETQS will see the commencement of a dedicated staff member in the Programming sector to promote and meet Programme Development Plans or new programmes and existing by Q2 2024 - Development and approval of Health Services Supervisory Management 6M4978 - Development and approval of Maintenance Skills Technology 6M5154 	Click here to enter text.

5.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies

Case Study 1: The QGG and the Learner Voice

Introduction

Learner feedback is essential for quality assuring teaching, learning, and assessment. By understanding the learner's perspective, LWETB can identify areas for improvement and develop/enhance a stronger and fit-for-purpose quality assured teaching, learning and assessment environment for all learners. This case study examines how FE learner feedback received to date can be studied and used to develop a continuous quality culture as well as supports, resources etc. including identifying the need for specific QA policies, procedures, guidelines, and templates to support our services and delivery. Our Quality Governance Group (QGG) are responsible for the oversight and support in reviewing, developing and embedding all QA FETQS policies, procedures, documentation and supports and the learner voice is integral to this process.

Description of issue

LWETB Learner feedback can come from a variety of sources, including learner surveys, interviews, focus groups, and observations. It is important to collect feedback from a variety of sources to get a well-rounded understanding of the learner's perspective. Once feedback has been collected, it can be analysed to identify key themes and insights. This analysis can be used to develop recommendations for how to improve teaching, learning, and assessment. This case study will focus on learner feedback received via an MS form link presented to learners within FE at the end of a programme. This case study presents a specific example of how learner feedback can be used to improve teaching, learning, and assessment services within LWETB.

Action

The case study focused on Further Education (FE) within LWETB where FETQS implemented 3 Learner Feedback Surveys:

- NFQ level 1, 2 and 3 – Learner Feedback Form
- Young Learners – Feedback Form
- NFQ level 4, 5 and 6 – Learner Feedback Form

Learner feedback was collated from end of programme learners by way of an MS Form anonymous link. The learner feedback was collated to assess the learner journey and experiences of learners of LWETB programmes of learning that have been completed. The findings of the case study will be used to develop a process for how LWETB can use learner feedback to create/improve quality assurance within LWETB within our Quality Governance Group (QGG) with approval and oversight from our Quality Oversight Group (QOG).

Key Outcomes/Impacts

In reflecting on the work carried out and conducting the pilot above it became evident that capturing, reviewing, and implementing actions where feasible from the learner voice was paramount for us to imbed a learner focused QA culture, we needed to listen and act consistently and effectively. While majority learner feedback is brought to the LWETB Results Approval Panel (RAP) by provisions was positive it did permit us to focus on priority areas that we knew required work such as the Learner handbook, induction, developing and devising educator supports, In-person training/support sessions etc. The learner feedback consolidated the supports we knew were required.

The learner feedback led to the planning and development of supports as identified above to improve the learner experience from the beginning of their programme and throughout their time within our provisions.

The pilot ran from February 2022 certification period to August 2022. A meeting via the QGG was held on September 22nd, 2022, to discuss the pilot and the Results Approval Panel (RAP) Process overall where senior management and FETQS were in attendance of this meeting. It was decided at this meeting that although it is apparent learner feedback needs to be placed and homed somewhere it was not felt that the RAP meetings were the best place for this discussion and review. Coordinators/Centre Managers discussed their concerns in relation to the implementation of learner feedback into the RAP process with AEOs. AEOs brought this feedback to this meeting, and it was discussed at length. Centre Managers/Coordinators believed that the RAP process had now become time consuming in relation to preparation. Some provisions could not retrieve feedback from learners in a timely manner for RAP and the collation of this information became excessive for RAP meetings.

Provisions were instructed to continue to use the MS forms to gather learner feedback and for this feedback to be reviewed at the end of each programme for learning and implementation of improvement as recommended by learners where feasible. This learner feedback is utilised and retained at local level. Future intention is to bring the area of Learner Feedback to the Quality Oversight Group (QOG) for a decision to be made & further discussion on where it should reside. This will depend on the type of feedback being sought from learners, for example, if it is 'end of programme feedback' we ask ourselves where this data and information should reside within LWETB and our governance structures. Is this an area of programme responsibility or teaching and learning. These are questions that we will continue to interrogate to ensure the correct response, action and outcomes are taken.

Key Learnings

- Learner Voice is paramount for LWETB to actively engage in learning opportunities & ensure the learners voice is provided to support continuous improvements.
- Decision is required from QOG on where Learner Voice resides.
- The pilot consolidated the importance of capturing, reviewing, and actioning learner feedback.

Case Study 2: FET Buildings and Infrastructure

Introduction

LWETB buildings estate and infrastructure support the delivery of services to students and learners at locations throughout the two counties. These buildings vary in capacity, function, quality, and ownership. Some buildings provide excellent environments such as Athlone Community College. However, many fall well short of the standards necessary to create the desired environments that support the optimum working and learning outcomes for the services being provided in them. The LWETB strategy statement 2022-2026 recognises this and identifies it as strategic priority No.2 “Enhance Infrastructure across LWETB”. This Strategic Priority focuses efforts to “**Enhance working and learning environments, Develop and improve infrastructure, facilities and resources for staff and learners.**”

This need to enhance infrastructure is intended to address the deficits in the current LWETB built environment. These deficits are a consequence of many factors which have combined over time to give rise to the LWETB infrastructure as we see it today, many of these factors remain as challenges today, such as demographic demands, lack of strategic planning, internal and external delivery capacity issues, resource provision and evolving societal requirements. There is however an opportunity for LWETB to work with key stakeholders to address these complex challenges and so move towards providing an enhanced working and learning environment across all LWETB infrastructure improves learner participation and outcomes and assists in staff recruitment and retention. The need to deliver enhanced working and learning environments has been recognised by central government and through various capital programs they are supporting LWETB in the delivery of extensive capital investment program. This program will see the delivery of substantial capacity increases, quality of environment improvements, energy efficiency and new facilities of national importance such as the new National EV Training centre announced in November 2023 by Minister for Education Simon Harris.

Description of issue

The LWETB strategy statement 2022-2026 identifies as strategic priority No.2 “Enhance Infrastructure across LWETB”. This Strategic Priority focuses efforts to “Enhance working and learning environments, Develop and improve infrastructure, facilities and resources for staff and learners.” This priority can be broken into five key points which detail the key objectives and outcomes of this priority:

- Maintain, enhance, and expand buildings and facilities to provide fit for purpose accommodation for staff and learners.
- Explore expansion of LWETB services to include Community National Schools and FET Colleges of the Future
- Implement and expand ICT infrastructure to support governance systems, Data Protection systems, business continuity and risk management.
- Develop appropriate management information and reporting systems across LWETB.
- Review and enhance effective Health and Safety systems and structures across the organisation.

The broader mission and vision structure is set out in the LWETB strategy statement 2022-2026. This key document outlines the path for education, training, youthwork and other statutory functions for LWETB. This high-level document sets out the mission, vision, values, and strategic priorities.

The five strategic priorities:

- **Priority 1** Provide High Quality Teaching, Learning, Assessment, Development and Learner Experience
- **Priority 2** Enhance Infrastructure across LWETB
- **Priority 3** Enhance Organisational Support & Development
- **Priority 4** Enrich Partnerships
- **Priority 5** Develop Environmental & Social Sustainability

The foreword from the CE in the LWETB strategy statement 2022-2026 sets out the creation, importance, delivery, and review of these priorities. “Key strategic priorities were developed following extensive and comprehensive consultation with multiple stakeholders. Underpinned by LWETB’s mission, vision and values, each priority will support the organisation to remain contemporary and responsive in meeting the future education and training needs of learners. The five Strategic Priorities in this document are of equal importance. In partnership with our stakeholders, the priorities aim to support learners to reach their full potential by having quality learning experiences in an environmentally and socially sustainable world. Over the lifetime of the strategy, our focus will be on the implementation of the priorities as defined in LWETB annual Service Plans, with comprehensive Annual Reports providing the status of outcomes achieved each year.”

Action

Several building and infrastructure improvements have been made in pursuit of priority 2, Enhance Infrastructure across LWETB.

Example:1 Connolly Campus, Battery Road Building, 3 new classrooms and tearoom spaces.

This improvement was designed to address a need for additional high-quality teaching and recreational space for learners and staff. This improvement is aligned closely with the sub priority 2.1 to “Maintain, enhance, and expand buildings and facilities to provide fit for purpose accommodation for staff and learners.”

Example: 2 Athlone Campus, Additional Common Spaces and Master Plan. This improvement which is at planning and design stage will see the need for fit for purpose common spaces provided on Athlone Campus, as part of the deliverables a master plan will be developed which is to consider how the site can evolve to meet the ambitions set out in the Future FET Transforming Learning the National Education and Training (FET) Strategy document and specifically the road map for the site to meet the characteristics of the FET college of the future as set out in the document. This improvement is aligned closely with the sub priority 2.2 to “Explore expansion of LWETB services to include Community National Schools and ‘FET Colleges of the Future.’

Example: 3 Health and Safety Systems improvement

This action will assist LWETB in fulfilling their duties and requirements of relevant Health and Safety regulations. As part of this process the organisation has created a committee system which will serve to highlight health and safety issues in various parts of the organisation. This improvement is aligned with the sub priority 2.5 “Review and enhance effective Health and Safety systems and structures across the organisation.”

Much of the infrastructure improvements undertaken are primarily aimed to enhance the learner experience, they also provide an improved working environment for staff. These improvements also enhance engagement with external stakeholders such as the public and industries, their perception of LWETB can be improved and reinforced by LWETB presenting a professional corporate identity by the efficient management of an estate of high-quality buildings. The responses from stakeholders to the work that took place to provide additional classroom space in the Battery Road building on Connolly Campus, Longford was sought by the Buildings Department. The views of internal stakeholders such as teaching staff, support staff and learners as expressed were positive, external stakeholders such as contractors were also canvassed for their views which were broadly positive. There were no structured feedback mechanisms to formally capture stakeholder feedback, deployed by the capital section. However, I understand that feedback is captured by other sections of the organisation.

Key Outcomes/Impacts

FET Performance Indicator	FET Target
Works are prioritised and commenced and /or completed in 2023.	Budget of €700,000 to be expended.

Funding applications to be made to SOLAS using new application process: a) Strategic Infrastructure Upgrade Fund (SIUF) Application Form and Business Case b) Strategic Assessment Report (SAR) Template c) Emergency Health and Safety Works Application Form.	A minimum of two applications are made.
Lease applications approved by SOLAS, DES (Department of Education and Skills) and DFHERIS.	A minimum of 1 new location for FET is approved.
Meet funding guidelines and deadlines, achieve planning permission approval, and commence construction.	Additional funding is secured, and construction work commenced.
Support procurement process to contract professional services to undertake Building Condition Survey (BCS) Reports.	Complete a minimum of 2 Building Condition Survey (BCS) Reports.
Respond to requests from DFHERIS/SOLAS to advance both Strategic Assessment Reports (SARS) which were submitted to DFHERIS/SOLAS in 2022.	Process towards establishing FET Colleges of the Future in LWETB is advanced.
LWETB's Director of FET represents FET on the National FET Capital Working Group.	FET sector is represented and involved in decision making at a national level.
Applications developed for DFHERIS/SOLAS along with supporting business cases for the sanction of roles.	Application requests submitted and approved for the sanction of roles.
FET risk management is included in the overall LWETB risk management system.	FET risk management system is updated quarterly.
Annual ICT plan created, and items prioritised subject to budget availability.	Priority items are delivered and / or installed.
Monthly reports created for review by FET Management and coordinators to inform financial planning.	Monthly reports prepared and distributed to all budget holders using SharePoint.
Monthly reports created for review by FET management and coordinators to inform provision delivery.	Monthly reports prepared and distributed using SharePoint.
Work towards the delivery of SPA targets by end of 2023.	Meet SPA 2023 targets by the end of the year.
Funding Allocation Request and Reporting (FARR) is completed.	PLSS and Fetch courses display all LWETB's FET programmes.
FET has nominated 3 staff to the LWETB organisational H&S working group.	Staff attend meetings, represent FET, and contribute their expertise to LWETB's H&S systems and procedures.
H&S training is incorporated into the Professional Learning and Development (PL&D) plan.	A record of H&S training is maintained.

LWETB Priority 2	LWETB Goal	FET Action	FET Performance Indicator
2. Enhance Infrastructure across LWETB	2.1 Maintain, enhance, and expand buildings and facilities to provide fit for purpose accommodation for staff and learners.	A plan of works is devised for buildings which are used by FET.	Works are prioritised and commenced and /or completed in 2023.
		Funding to be sought for infrastructure/building projects from SOLAS.	Funding applications to be made to SOLAS using new application process: a) Strategic Infrastructure Upgrade Fund (SIUF) Application Form and Business Case b) Strategic Assessment Report (SAR) Template c) Emergency Health and Safety Works Application Form.
		Alternative locations to be explored for relocating some FET provision.	Lease applications approved by SOLAS, DES (Department of Education and Skills) and DFHERIS.
		Progress Just Transition Fund project.	Meet funding guidelines and deadlines, achieve planning permission approval, and commence construction.
		Identify buildings to carry out a building condition survey.	Support procurement process to contract professional services to undertake Building Condition Survey (BCS) Reports.
	2.2 Explore expansion of LWETB services to include Community National Schools and FET Colleges of the Future	Secure funding from SOLAS to establish 'FET Colleges of the Future.'	Respond to requests from DFHERIS/SOLAS to advance both Strategic Assessment Reports (SARS) which were submitted to DFHERIS/SOLAS in 2022.
		FET representation on National FET Capital Working Group with SOLAS, DFHERIS and ETBI.	LWETB's Director of FET represents FET on the National FET Capital Working Group.
		Enhancement of FET facilities across Longford and Westmeath.	Applications developed for DFHERIS/SOLAS along with supporting business cases for the sanction of roles.
	2.3 Implement and expand ICT infrastructure to support governance	FET feeds into the risk management system.	FET risk management is included in the overall LWETB risk management system.

	systems, Data Protection systems, business continuity and risk management	Develop an ICT plan in conjunction with FET management and coordinators.	Annual ICT plan created, and items prioritised subject to budget availability.
	2.4 Develop appropriate management information and reporting systems across LWETB	Management information systems (Financial).	Monthly reports created for review by FET Management and coordinators to inform financial planning.
		Management information systems (non-Financial).	Monthly reports created for review by FET management and coordinators to inform provision delivery.
		Strategic Performance Agreement (SPA) signed with SOLAS for period 2022-2024.	Work towards the delivery of SPA targets by end of 2023.
		Ensure all available FET programmes are open and visible to potential learners.	Funding Allocation Request and Reporting (FARR) is completed.
	2.5 Review and enhance effective Health and Safety systems and structures across the organisation.	Review and enhance Health and Safety (H&S) procedures across FET.	FET has nominated 3 staff to the LWETB organisational H&S working group.
FET Staff are trained in H&S.		H&S training is incorporated into the Professional Learning and Development (PL&D) plan.	

Key Learnings

- The case study process reinforces the importance of the creation of clear priorities and supporting the delivery of this priority through the selection of realistic goals and related KPI's which when taken together create a structure to align the actions of the organisation.
- Alignment of infrastructure improvements with the strategic priorities is key to the efficient deployment of efforts in pursuit of the staged goals. If alignment is logical in theory and achieved in practice it leads to the organisation working towards the achievement of the goals and the fulfilment of vision and mission statements set out in the *LWETB Strategy Plan 2022-2026*
- Ensure that all KPI's are simple, relevant, aligned, actionable, measurable, this will ensure that they will provide quality information on progress towards the end goal.

The organisation may benefit from a structured process to capture stakeholder feedback and assess progress towards achieving the goals and delivering the priority. It may be beneficial for the organisation to engage with external Project Management services to assist in the delivery of the existing project portfolio and contribute to the application process for funding. This approach would accelerate the delivery of projects and reduce the time required to achieve the goal of enhancing infrastructure across LWETB.

Case Study 3: Employer Engagement

Introduction

The LWETB STA programme provides support to enterprise through the upskilling and reskilling of employees, thereby increasing market competitiveness, and economic growth.

LWETB's projected business opportunities for 2023 included:

- Flexible training aligned to business needs.
- Training needs identification to suit individual enterprise requirements.
- Courses that are responsive to emerging and evolving markets.

Description of issue

LWETB's projected benefits of employer engagement to enterprise/employers through 2023.

Include:

- Supporting business growth.
- Developing enterprise workforce.
- Help retain and recruit employees.
- Increase productivity and competitiveness.

In 2023 a local employer (3MKCI) contacted LWETB's employer engagement department seeking training and upskilling for their employees.

Action

The employer engagement department contacted 3MKCI and arranged a meet up to discuss their specific training needs and requirements. The employer engagement department discussed the options available to the employer.

The steps taken were after engagement with the employer and line managers. The LWETB employer engagement department then delivered a specific training solution with the outcome being a tailored training needs analysis specific to the 3MKCI. This training solution suited both the employer (3MKCI) and the employees that were to be trained. LWETB agreed the training schedule with 3MKCI and the employees commenced training.

Key Outcomes/Impacts

The identification of needs involved the employer engagement department liaising with the employee's line manager to identify the specific areas where the employees needed upskilling and training. LWETB met up with the employer several times over a 2-week period to finalise and agree the training solutions that could be offered that would suit all parties involved.

Through regular communication with the learners (3MKCI employees) they gave incredibly positive feedback verbally, throughout the training courses they undertook. They are all still employed by 3MKCI and both parties are very satisfied with the training received to date.

Both employer and employee have given verbal feedback which was positive in relation to the training received.

In relation to repeat business, the company will have more employees to train again in 2024.

Key Learnings

The employer engagement department contacted 3MKCI and arranged a meet up to discuss their specific training needs and requirements. The employer engagement department discussed the options available to the employer. The main takeaways from this case study are that there is an appetite for specific employer/company training solutions from LWETB in the Midlands region. As a result of this training to 3MKCI, LWETB will have more staff from them to train in 2024 and from other similar companies in the region.

- To ramp up employer engagement in relation to site specific training/upskilling solutions for staff.

Focus Group 1: Marketing and Branding LWETB

Introduction

The work carried out on the FET Website Working Group far superseded that of its original plan of developing a website for both learners and stakeholders of LWETB. The commencement of the Marketing Working Group was to take on and carry out the work still needed within LWETB to align marketing, advertising, and branding for all stakeholders internal and external to LWETB.

Description of issue

The marketing working group must define and develop key performance indicators aligned to that of annual and strategic performance plans that coincide and adhere to LWETB vision, goals, and mission.

Action

In terms of the elements contributing to brand recognition:

- We have rebranded Further Education and Training (FET) and it has its own logo.
- We will have a new FET website going live in the next few months. This site will highlight the FET brand, campus locations, courses and supports available to learners.
- Our centres have been rebranding as campuses, we have started to implement the new FET brand into building works around the different campuses. We will be investing in superior quality branded merchandise to share with current and potential learners.
- We will be investing in branded promotional materials e.g. pull ups to use at events to help with brand recognition.

All these elements will help us to ensure that our brand is consistent across the FET provision.

- *See Appendix & Supporting Documentation 1: FET logo and campus logos.*
- *See Appendix & Supporting Documentation 2: FET brand been introduced into campuses.*
- *See Appendix & Supporting Documentation 3: FET branded pull ups & bunting.*

In terms of partnerships, LWETB liaises with the local newspapers and radio stations for advertising. Advertising locally helps to create awareness in the local community of who we are and what we offer. During the year, we have contributed to national campaigns such as Year of Skills, we invited 2 local journalists to take part in our courses and they wrote about their experience in the newspaper. This campaign is to encourage people to learn a new skill.

- *See Appendix & Supporting Documentation 4: Longford Leader Journalist*

In terms of tracking and evaluating improvements in brand recognition, we will be taking several measures:

- We will have analytics from the FET website.
- We can record analytics from our social media accounts.
- We can measure the success of the online newsletter using the analytics and the number of signups.
- At Events, we can measure the number of people visiting our stand with the number of enquiries we get about courses and learner supports etc.
- During our open days we can evaluate how people heard about the open day, was it social media, newspaper, radio, from talking to the visitors.

LWETB has many partnerships internally and externally.

Within the FET provision, the Community Education works with the local communities and businesses to provide education opportunities. As part of the Year of Skills, the Community Education department invited a local journalist into a basic IT course in Granard. The Journalist took part in the course and wrote about her experience. This is a fitting example of how a partnership between LWETB and Active Age supported in the marketing and branding of FET.

- *See Appendix & Supporting Documentation 4: Longford Leader Journalist*

Throughout the year, we organise a lot of open days. This is an example of an internal partnership and all provisions (Youthreach, BTEI, Adult Literacy, Community Education and PLCs (Post Leaving Certificate)) joining together to highlight what LWETB has to offer. A committee is formed with a representation from all provisions and staff work together to organise marketing for these events in terms of radio advertising, newspaper advertising, social media posts and distributing flyers around town. These open days are a prime example of how LWETB partnerships internally can support and market the FET branding.

- *See Appendix & Supporting Documentation 5: Connolly Campus Open Day Poster*

In Athlone, LWETB has partnered with Athlone Town AFC as part of the Local Training Initiative programme, to announce a Player Development Course.

The Player Development courses offers participants the opportunity to experience a full-time professional coaching environment while continuing with their education. There are several progression routes for learners, with learners progressing to third level education, vocational training, footballing scholarships in America and full-time professional football in both Ireland and abroad. In addition, Athlone Town AFC has offered LWTEB the opportunity of pitch side advertising to help the FET marketing and branding.

- *See Appendix & Supporting Documentation 6: Player Development Course*

To maintain a successful marketing strategy, it does take several resources such as Finance, Human Engagement and Time.

Finance: we need a budget for advertising, purchasing merchandise and promotional materials, exterior signage, commissioning of video production etc.

Time: we need to set aside time to talk as a team about our marketing strategy, time to plan and an agreed timeline to implement our plans to then review, monitor and evaluate.

Human Engagement: we need staff from all the different provisions to bring their knowledge and expertise to ensure a successful marketing strategy.

We have created a Marketing Working Group; we encouraged staff from the different campuses to join. The aim of this Marketing Group is to implement and maintain a successful FET marketing strategy. A Teams Channel has been created for staff with all FET marketing resources, making it easy for staff to find all logos, brand guidelines, templates etc. The brand can be recognised internally and externally with the new FET brand guidelines and templates. When staff are creating posters or getting brochures printed, they use the approved template, and this ensures that the brand is consistent. Everything has the same 'look and feel.' The new FET brand is starting to pop up in all campuses. Our email signatures are being updated so when we communicate internally or externally, we are representing the new FET brand. We are investing in a branded Gazebo for open days and tradeshows.

- *See Appendix & Supporting Documentation 7: Presentation slides from the first Marketing Group*

There are potential risks and challenges, the main concern is geographically. The organisation is across 2 counties with at least 10 campuses. It is a challenge to ensure that all campuses are following the approved guidelines and templates. Another challenge is that if we become too corporate, we might lose our identity and risk losing learners.

Key Outcomes/Impacts

Social Media Engagement:

KPI: Increase in social media engagement metrics (likes, shares, comments, followers) by a certain percentage.

Advertising Effectiveness:

KPI: Track the ROI (Return on Investment) for various advertising campaigns.

Standardization of Messaging:

KPI: Achieve a certain level of alignment in messaging across different service provisions and communications.

Brand Recognition and Perception:

KPI: Measure the improvement in brand recognition and perception within Longford and Westmeath communities.

Competitive Analysis:

KPI: Regularly assess the LWETB position of programmes compared to other FET providers in terms of marketing strategies and branding.

Key Learnings

We use several metrics to measure the success of brand recognition and innovation:

- On a monthly basis, we record our social media insights. We can tell engagement rates, new followers and so much more.
- When the website goes live, we will be able to measure website traffic, the number of visitors to the site and how long they stay on the website.
- Our Adult Guidance Team issue an online newsletter to staff and learners, we can measure the number of new signups.
- The increase of enrolment numbers recorded on PLSS.

Progress should be assessed on a regular basis:

For instance, evaluating the progress on our social media accounts, we will be using the social media insights. We record these analytics every month and we do a month-on-month comparison. We can evaluate the number of new followers, what post got the most engagement and then based on the insights, we can make improvements. When the FET website goes live, we aim to complete weekly progress checks. Using the analytics, we will be able to analyse the website traffic i.e. what page is the most popular, where are we losing visitors to the site.

Feedback from learners, staff, and stakeholders is crucial in assessing the effectiveness of LWETB's marketing and branding.

The Learner's voice is especially important to LWETB, whether that feedback is gathered from a Learner Feedback form or a Learner Voice workshop. This brings insight into what the learners are looking for and how LWETB plan to support and improve our brand recognition and innovation in the delivery of fit for purpose programmes.