# EXECUTIVE SELF-EVALUATION REPORT

Executive Self Evaluation Report

Louth and Meath Education and Training Board

December 2017

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# 1. Introduction, Purpose and Objectives

This document describes the Executive Self-Evaluation Report for Louth & Meath Education and Training Board (LMETB).  This Executive Self Evaluation (ESE) was conducted in line with the QQI Statutory Core Quality Assurance and Sector Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for the Education and Training Boards, and within nationally agreed Terms of Reference (Appendix 1).

LMETB is committed **to insurance of excellence in** Quality Assurance for all its programmes and services.  This Executive Self-Evaluation process is enhancement based and is focused on review and resultant improvements to policies, structures and processes. This will enable the improvement of quality assured provision to all LMETB service users.  It is a quality objective of LMETB to ensure compliance with QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines.

## 1.1. Purpose

The purpose of this executive self-evaluation process is to:

- Map the current governance and management of QA across LMETB's FET sector
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the governance and management of QA across the sector
- Develop a sector wide improvement plan for QA within LMETB

The executive self-evaluation process will significantly contribute to LMETB's commitment to its statutory obligations (Education and Training Board Act 2013 & the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act 2012), compliance with QQI Core and Sector Specific QA Guidelines and a commitment to the learner, based on an organisation wide ethos to constantly strive for excellence.
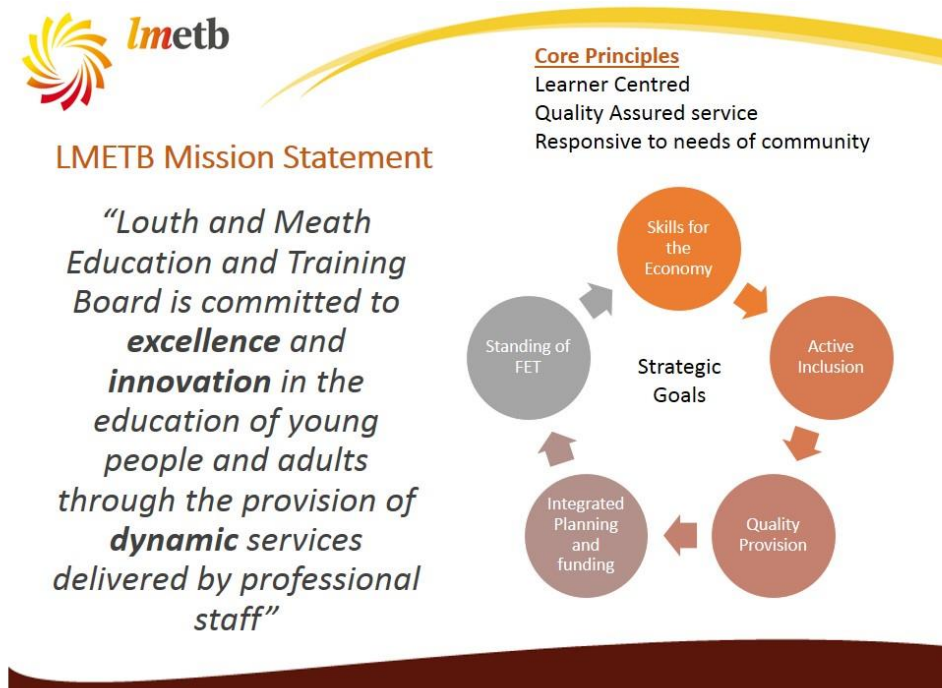


*Figure 1 LMETB Mission and Strategic Goals*

This process will also contribute to:

- Finding local good practice and apply them globally
- Identifying gaps and deficiencies and structuring improvements
- Promote a culture of self-analysis and a commitment to a constantly improving organisational culture
- Promote structured and organisationally cohesive planning
- Give a structured grounding to the achievement of the organisation's mission statement and the achievement of LMETB Values (Hereunder)

## 1.2. LMETB Mission Statement

*"Louth and Meath Education and Training Board is committed to excellence and innovation in the education of young people and adults through the provision of dynamic services delivered by professional staff"*

LMETB's commitment to "excellence" manifests itself in a commitment to improve and develop. This commitment places quality at the heart of its provision as a key tool to achieving its mission.

LMETB's commitment to "innovation" manifests itself in the historical development of FET provision within the region. The innovative approach of LMETB centres to provide for local needs is a hallmark of organisational governance process and will continue to be a central focus to developing quality programmes.

LMETB's commitment to being "dynamic" manifests itself in a commitment to a proactive change philosophy. In committing to a review of Quality Assurance there is a clear understanding within the organisation to honest and robust self-evaluation of its provision encapsulating dynamic and proactive change where required. The alternative is being static and reactive.

LMETB's commitment to "the education and training of young people and adults" manifests itself in placing the learner at the heart of its endeavours by committing itself to quality assured programmes.

## 1.3. Core Values and Principles

LMETB values and seeks to improve its corporate reputation. Quality assured programmes are key to the maintenance and enhancement of LMETB's corporate reputation. The commitment to this review focuses on a concept that in quality assurance, controls are only valid if put through a process of review. This enables the organisation to learn, listen to stakeholders, improve, optimise resources and ultimately be more professional in its service to the learner.

LMETB are proud to serve the communities of counties Louth and Meath, work with our educational partners and contribute to the development and growth of the Louth/Meath region. LMETB aims to be the leading provider of quality education and services for the people of counties Louth and Meath through the management and delivery of a diverse range of accessible, progressive and responsive programmes.

Underpinning LMETB's Mission Statement is a set of core values and principles that were developed in consultation with all stakeholder groups.
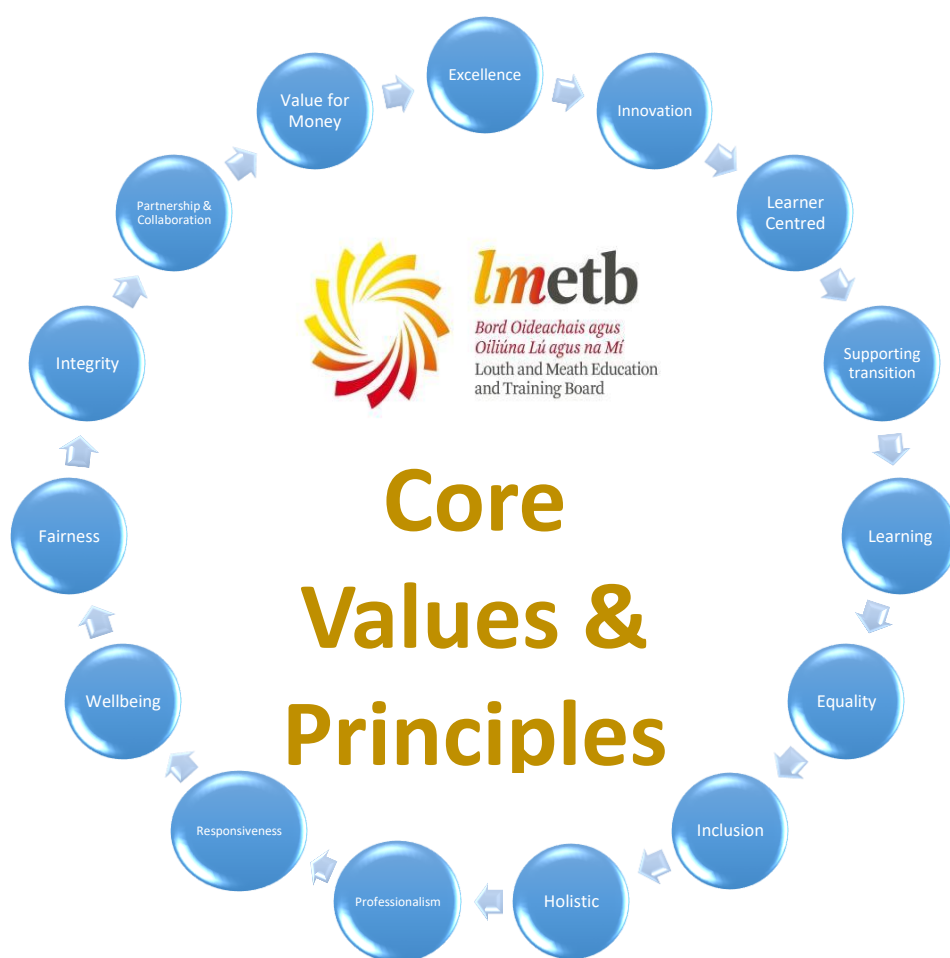
*Figure 2 LMETB Core Values and Principles*

**LMETB Core Values and Principles**

**Excellence**                    All stakeholders are afforded the highest
                                  standards of service provision.

**Innovation**                    Staff and learners are encouraged to be
                                  progressive, creative and dynamic in their
                                  teaching and learning practices. Staff and
                                  learners are encouraged to explore the use of
                                  ICT to enhance teaching and learning.

**Learner Centred**               LMETB programmes and services are
                                  delivered in response to the needs of the
                                  learners in counties Louth and Meath.

**Supporting Transition**         Transfer, Transition and Guidance
                                  Programmes and supports are provided to all
                                  learners to ensure they make the right

choices regarding career pathways and choices and that they transition successfully from one phase of their educational journey to another.

**Learning**

A lifelong learning perspective is promoted among staff and learners.

**Equality**

All learners are provided with access to education and supports that maximise learning opportunities and help them to reach their potential.

**Inclusion**

All learners are enabled to participate effectively in education, particularly those groups who may have experienced exclusion or isolation.

**Holistic**

The programmes and services available in LMETB cultivate the moral, emotional, physical, social, psychological and spiritual dimensions of the learner.

**Professionalism**

Staff, learners and our stakeholders are encouraged to interact with each other in a courteous, respectful and professional manner where diversity is welcomed and embraced.

**Responsiveness**

An awareness of national and local requirements forms the basis for provision.

**Wellbeing**

The programmes and services available in LMETB strive to develop learners' self - confidence and promote learner wellbeing.

**Fairness**

All policies, procedures and practices of LMETB are just and reasonable.

**Integrity**

Staff, learners and stakeholders are encouraged to ensure they act honestly, ethically and transparently. Highest standards in confidentiality where applicable are promoted.

**Partnership & Collaboration**

Programmes and services are developed and delivered in conjunction with key stakeholder groups and organisations.

**Value for Money**                          The work of LMETB is conducted in an
                                             efficient, transparent manner with due regard
                                             for public accountability.

As part of the Executive Self Evaluation the LMETB QA Review team have concurred our adherence to our core values and principles and would view as the basic tenet of all future review and evaluation.

## 2. LMETB Profile

### 2.1. The Historical Development of LMETB

LMETB was established under the terms of The Education and Training Board Act (2013), transferring the functions of Louth and Meath VEC's to the new entity. Currently QA agreements between QQI and Co. Louth VEC, Co. Meath VEC and the Regional Skills Training Centre's TQAS have been retained as part of the transfer of undertakings effected by the amalgamation process. The Further Education and Training Act 2013 allowed for the dissolution of An Foras Áiseanna Saothair, subsequently to became SOLAS and in 2014 the transfer of training function previously managed by FÁS in Louth, Meath, Cavan and Monaghan was transferred to LMETB. In 2015 as part of disaggregation process, training functions for counties Cavan and Monghan were subsequently transferred to CMETB.

The wide distribution of services (c.f. map) is a commitment by LMETB to providing quality services to meet the demographic and geographic challenges of the region.

The geographical reach of services is key to LMETB philosophy of providing locally accessible FET provision. This is clearly set out in the map below.
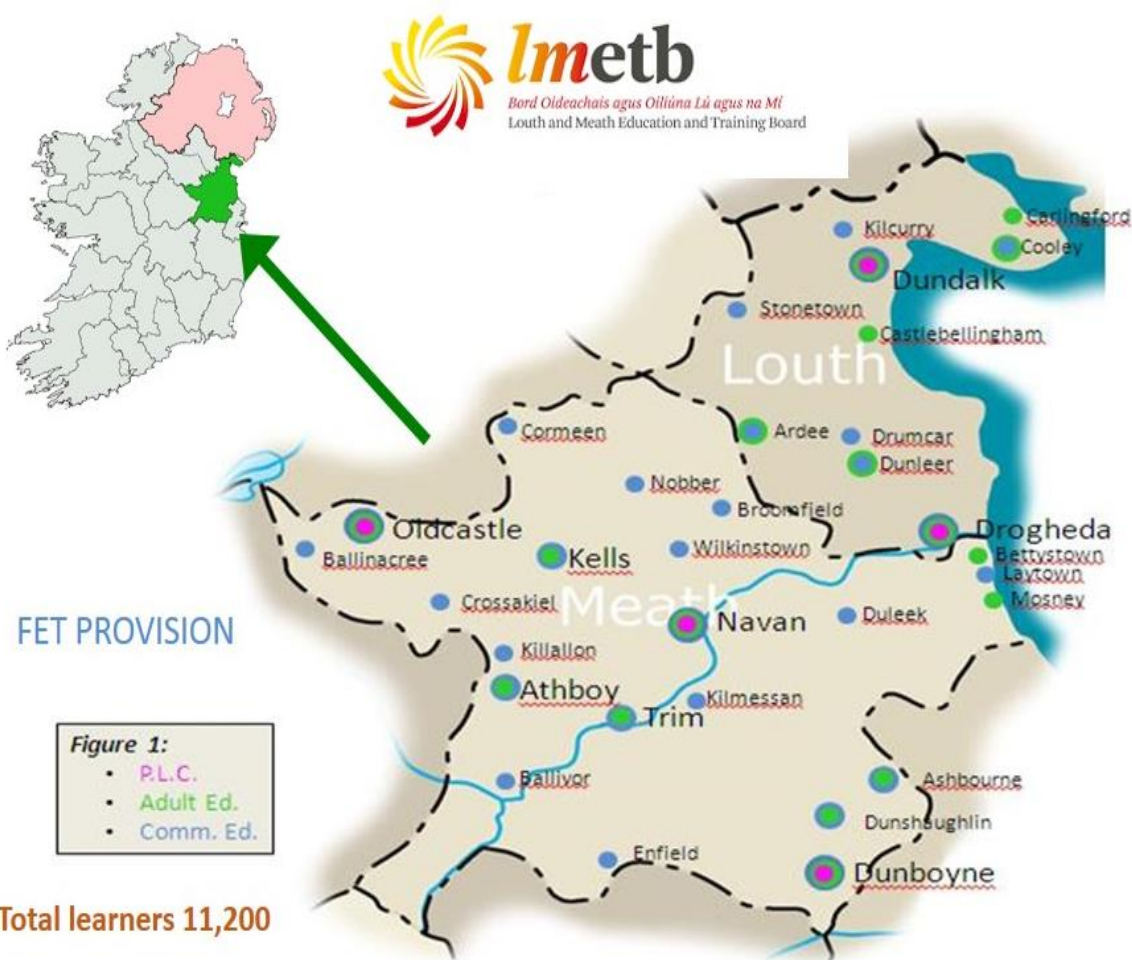


*Figure 3 LMETB Region*

## 2.2. The Constituent Parts of FET in LMETB

FET Provision developed from a number of initiatives such as VPTP (at 2$^{nd}$ level) and subsequent programme developments rolled out incrementally over a decade by DES in the FET area, these include the following: BTEI, VTOS, Community and Adult Education and Youthreach in response to local needs. LMETB's ability to respond to the needs of the community has made it adaptive and innovative. The provision of quality assurance systems reflects the need to adapt to learner needs and enhance the learner experience.

The FET sector managed and operated by LMETB consists of:

- 2 PLC Colleges
- 2 Colleges with PLC Components
- 1 Training Centre (includes apprenticeship, traineeship and contracted training provision)
- 9 Youthreach Centres
- 3 VTOS Centres
- 12 Centres offering a range of Adult Literacy, BTEI, Community Education, Adult Guidance Recruitment and Information Service
- 9 Evening Course Centres across the region
- Youth Service supporting 106 Voluntary Youth Clubs and 5 Youth Projects
- 10 Co-operation centres
- 1 Community Training Centre
- 9 Local training initiatives
- 1 Specialist training provider (NLN)
- Asylum/ Refugee Centre
- Skills for Work programmes
- Voluntary Literacy Provision

Tables hereunder represent detail, which gives the reader a sense of further education and training provision both actual and planned for the year 2015, 2016, 2017/ 2018



Projected FET Beneficiaries – 2017/18

PLC (4) 3366
RSTC 3405
Youthreach (9) 437
Guidance, Information and Recruitment Services 6373
Community Education 2581
VTOS (3) 365
Total 21,594
BTEI FET(12) 1565
Evening Classes (9) 3060
Co-operation (10) 1441
Literacy (FET 12) 5374
Youthwork Services 5631
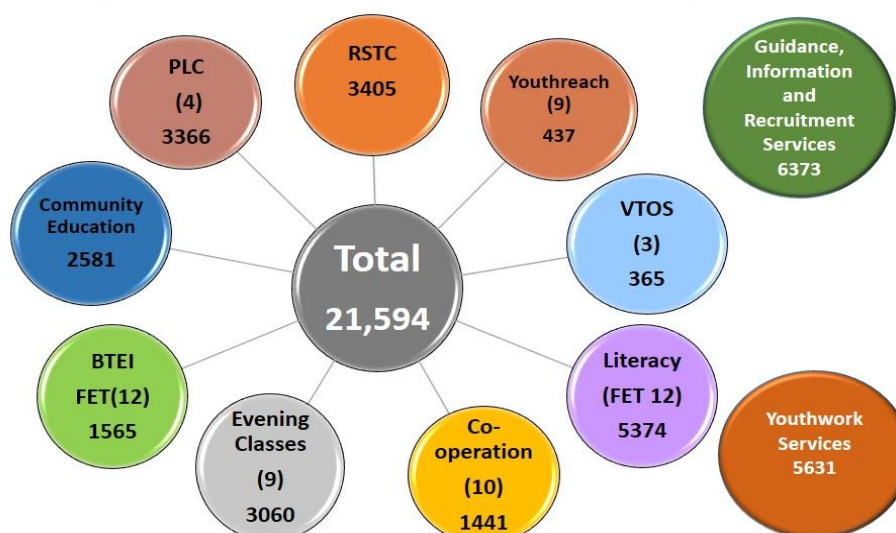
*Figure 4 LMETB FET Beneficiaries*

## FET Provision 2015 and 2016

| | Actual Learners 2015 | ACTUAL LEARNERS 2016 |
|---|---|---|
| NIGHT CLASSES | 2644 | 3060 |
| TRAINING CENTRE: | 2415 | 2455 |
| YOUTHREACH | 715 | 615 |
| VTOS | | 31 |
| PLC | 4769 | 3548 |
| CO-OPERATION HOURS | 981 | 1419 |
| COMMUNITY EDUCATION | 2143 | 2561 |
| BTEI | 1767 | 1171 |
| ADULT LITERACY | 5535 | 5746 |
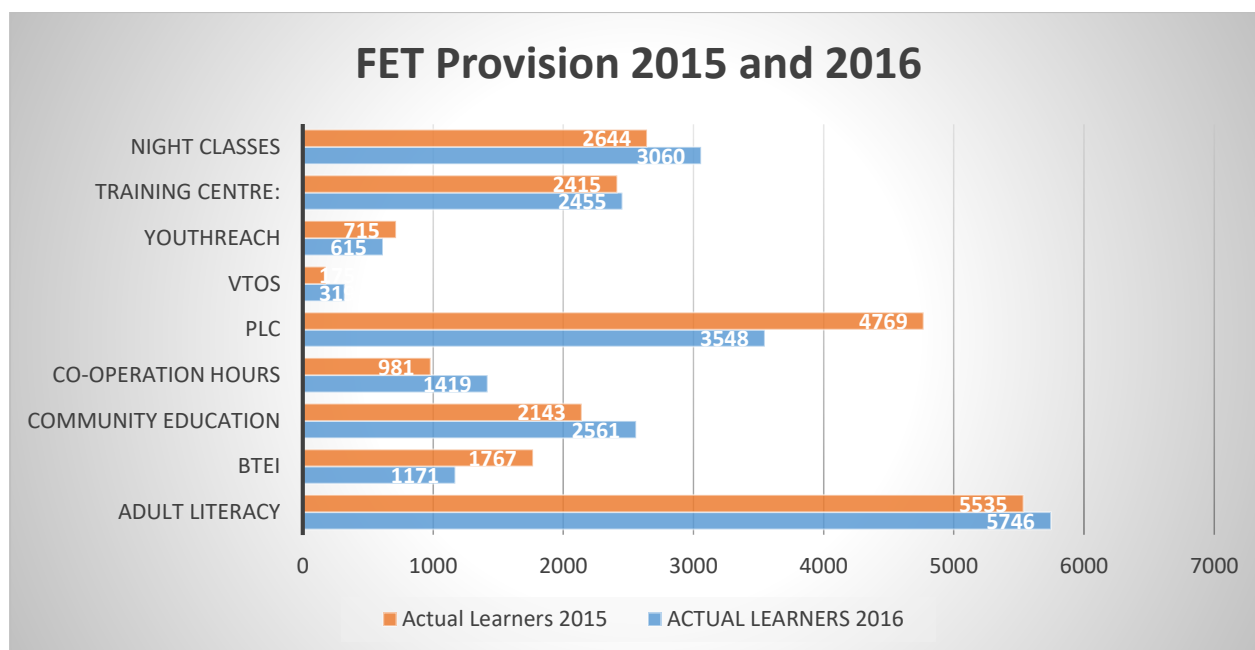
*Figure 5 FET Provision 2015 & 2016*

| PROGRAMME | ACTUAL LEARNERS 2015 | ACTUAL LEARNERS 2016 |
|---|---|---|
| Adult Literacy | 5535 | 5746 |
| BTEI | 1767 | 1171 |
| Community Education | 2143 | 2561 |
| Co-operation Hours | 981 | 1419 |
| PLC | 4769 | 3548 |
| VTOS | 175 | 319 |
| Youthreach | 715 | 615 |
| Training Centre: | 2415 | 2455 |
| Night Classes | 2644 | 3060 |
| TOTAL | 21144 | 20894 |

*Figure 6 Learner Demographics 2015 &2016*

Although a variation in provision numbers will change from year to year, this reflects a change in external factors such as the labour market, number of learners returning to the workplace and 3rd level intake.  The ability of the LMETB FET sector to react to such changes with flexibility is crucial to the organisation's commitment to quality provision in the region.

| Skills Cluster (Orange denotes legacy cluster) | Number of Instances for courses already started on 1st Jan 2016 | Number of Instances in 2016 for courses scheduled to start in 2016 |
|---|---|---|
| Agriculture, Horticulture and Mariculture | 14 | 16 |
| Animal Science | 3 | 5 |
| Art, Craft and Media | 38 | 89 |
| Built Environment | 15 | 59 |
| Business, Admin & Management | 12 | 36 |
| Financial Services | 3 | 5 |
| Food and Beverage | 3 | 5 |
| General Learning | 92 | 1019 |
| Hairdressing, Beauty and Complementary Therapies | 8 | 16 |
| Health, Family other Social Services | 39 | 160 |
| Information Technology | 28 | 90 |
| Manufacturing | 9 | 21 |
| Sales & Marketing | 1 | 3 |
| Sampling Skills | 0 | 6 |
| Science and Technology | 7 | 16 |
| Tourism and Sport | 10 | 17 |
| Transport, Distribution & Logistics | 1 | 12 |
| Total | 283 | 1575 |

*Figure 7 LMETB Skills Cluster*

## 2.3. Key Target Groups

- Gender Ratios in FET programmes 2016
- As part of LMETB's ESE review/analysis of FET activities the following annual statistical data demonstrates LMETB's efforts to encourage and enable gender and economic participation in FET programmes. We are however committed to its ongoing review and development within the context of both LMETB and national government priorities.
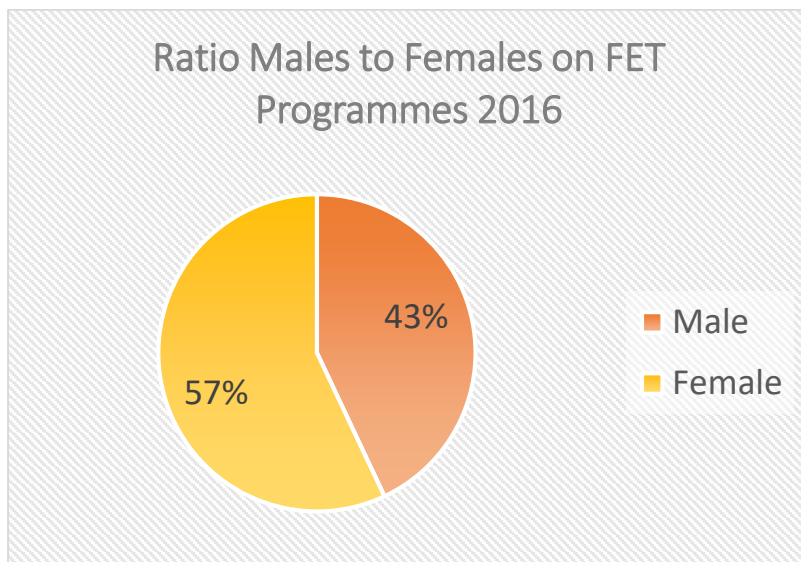


*Figure 8 Gender Data for FET Programmes*

- Long term unemployed participation in targeted FET provision
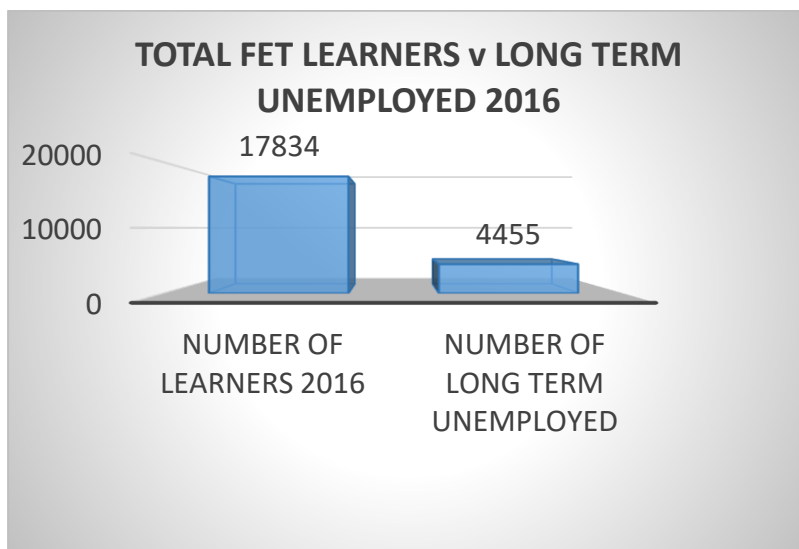


*Figure 9 Long Term Unemployed FET Participation*

- Active inclusion of learners with disabilities
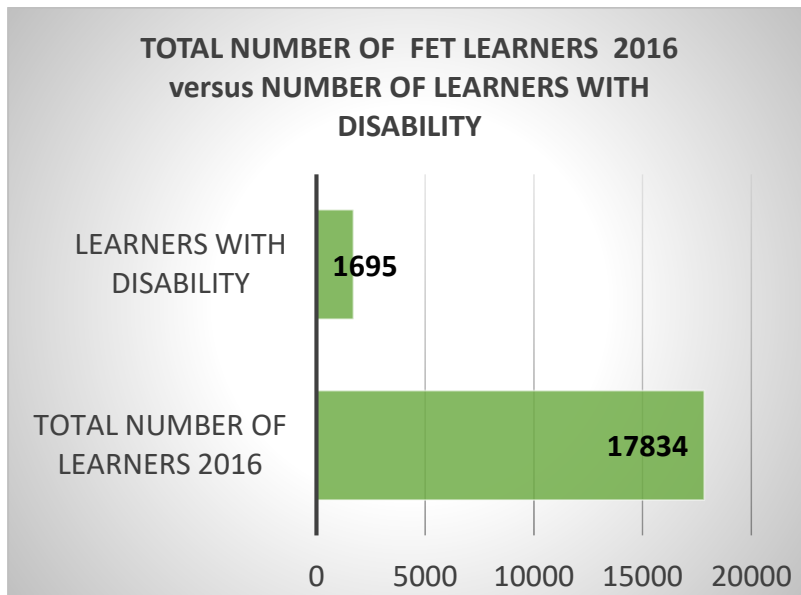


*Figure 10 Disability participation in FET*

- Commitment to young jobseekers in giving them confidence and a foothold in the labour market
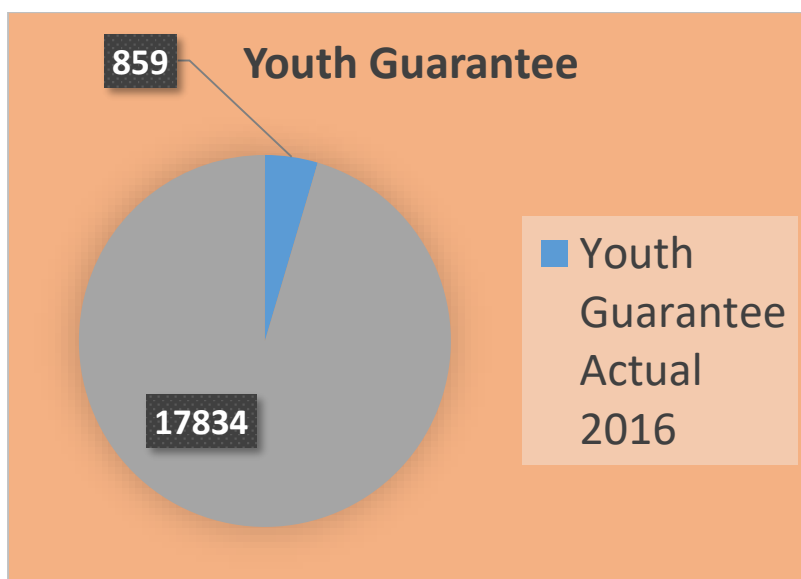


*Figure 11 Youth Guarantee Data*

# LMETB QQI Awards
# 2016 & 2017(YTD) AWARD  CLASS

## Award Class

Special Purpose

Major

Minor

## Award Class

Special Purpose

Major

Minor

**2016**
MIN:      7415
MAJOR: 1554
SPA:       578

**2017**
MIN:      6339
MAJOR: 1602
SPA:       609

*Figure 12 Award Class  Data*

LMETB QQI Awards

2016 & 2017 (YTD) AWARD LEVEL



**2016**
Level 1:   219
Level 2:   643
Level 3: 1446
Level 4: 1444
Level 5: 5044
Level 6:   751

**2017**
Level 1:   364
Level 2:   695
Level 3: 1172
Level 4:   941
Level 5: 4639
Level 6:   639
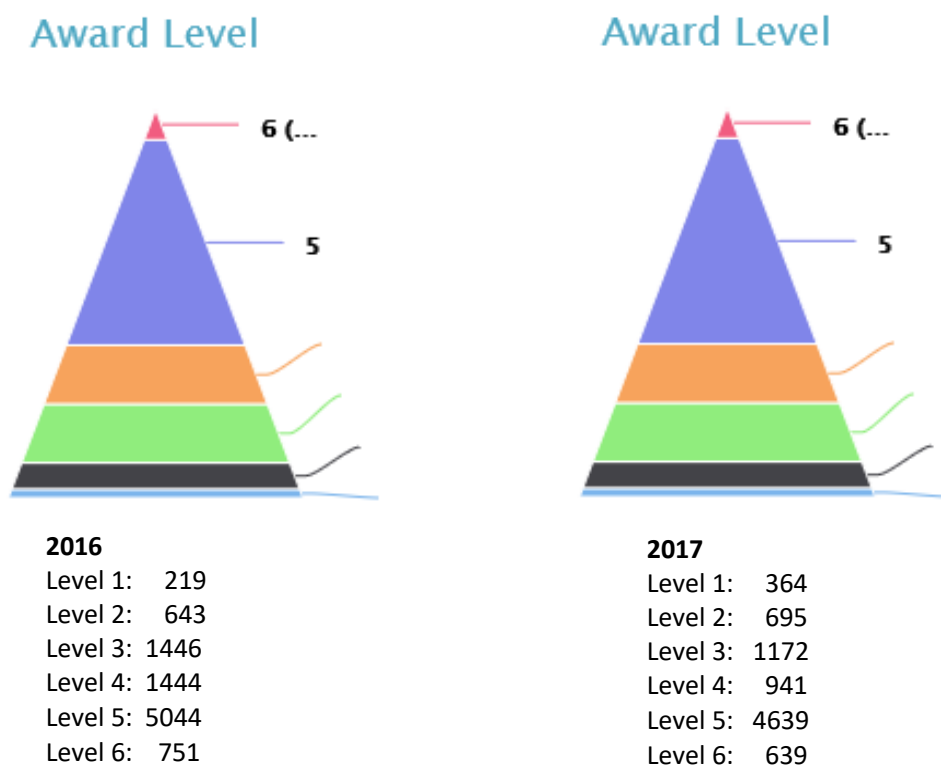
*Figure 13 Award Level Data*

Provision reflects a commitment to respond to labour market needs; prepare and equip learners to enter into the labour market; prepare students for progression into further studies at higher levels in the QQI framework within LMETB provision; advance to 3rd level through the CAO or locally through partnerships developed with Institutes of Technologies.  For example, the North East Further and Higher Education Alliance (NEFHEA); Drogheda Institute of Further Education, O'Fiaich College, Dunboyne College of Further Education and Beaufort College are constituent members of NEFHEA and have formed strong links with Dundalk Institute of Technology and other partners.  LMETB is committed to promoting ease of progression from Level 5 to Level 7 and from Level 6 to the 2nd year of Level 7 degree courses. These linkages are enabled through well-established partnerships, which are both encouraged and supported by FET senior management and staff.

### 2.4. QQI Award Data

The profile of FET students on a gender basis is 57% female, 43% male.  Some investigation is required into the reasons for this and consideration of possible programme changes to increase the participation rate of males in FET courses.  The high numbers of females returning to the workforce may account for the disproportionate figure but clear research would be required in relation to the age profile of students and gender ratios.  The age profile reflects the factor that 39% of participants are between the ages of 15 to 24 years.  Among the remaining group, 60% are mature adults of working age, thus the nature and extent of FET provision in LMETB is reflective of same.
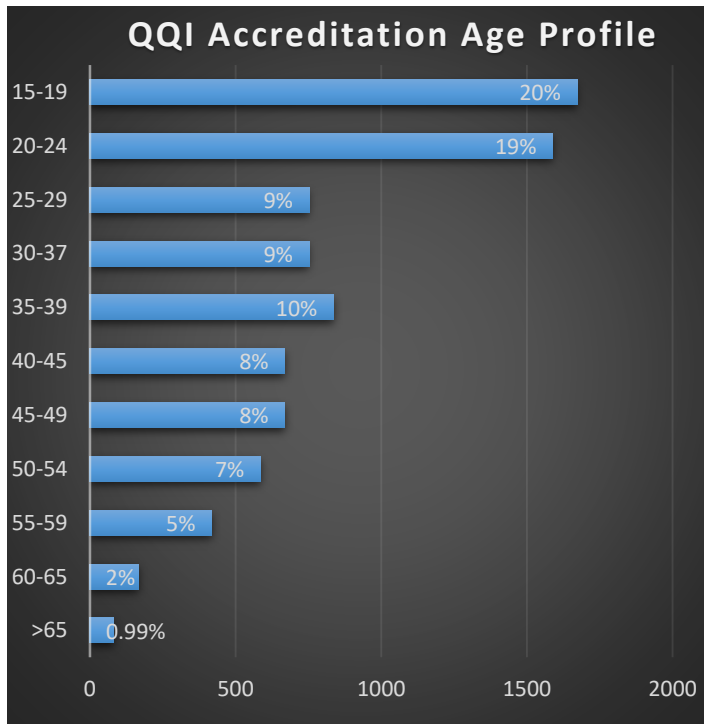


*Figure 14 Learner Participation by Age*

### 2.5. Overall Demographic Context

LMETB covers an area of 3169 km$^2$ and has a population of 323,928 people (2016 Census of Ireland). Population growth is 5.5% in the period between 2011 and 2016.  The three large towns in the region showed a significant increase.  All three towns are significant in size in nationally, Drogheda being the largest town in the country:

| Town | Rank Nationally Towns Classification | Population 2016 | % Change (2011 to 2016) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Drogheda | 1st | 40,956 | 6.2% |
| Navan | 3rd | 30,173 | 5.7% |
| Dundalk | 5th | 39,004 | 3.1% |

*Figure 15  Population by Major Urban Centre for LMETB Region*

Also of note is increased sub-urbanisation in the south of the region with, for example, Ashbourne showing a growth of 11.7%.  In terms of its rural communities, greater socio economic isolation is a key feature.  This presents key challenges to LMETB in providing services for growing regional towns, rapidly growing sub-urban centres in the Dublin commuter belt and because of the size of the region greater rural isolation further from the capital.  Proximity to the border with Northern Ireland along County Louth's northern perimeter has significant implications, which must be reflected in our FET planned provision going forward. This location may be further impacted by ongoing Brexit negations.

### 2.6. LMETB Existing QA Agreements

Current LMETB QA agreements between QQI and Co Louth VEC, Co Meath VEC and the Regional Skills Training Centre's TQAS have been retained as part of the transfer of undertakings effected by the amalgamation process. Thus there currently exists 5 historic QA agreements in LMETB.

A key aspect of the Executive Self-Evaluation process is the review of current and existing QA policies and procedures. This will identify synergies that exist across all current QA agreements so as to enable and support the process of consolidation and the re-engagement process with QQI.

# 3. Executive Self-Evaluation Process

The Terms of Reference (Appendix 2) for the Executive Self-Evaluation Process were agreed at a national level between the FET Directors and QQI.  LMETB's FET Director established a working group composed of members representing a broad range of FET provision within LMETB.  Key senior staff members who are currently engaged in centre based QA activities took a lead role in the coordination on both the executive self- evaluation and the quality improvement plan process.  The working group were composed of the following members:

| Member | Designation/Centre |
| --- | --- |
| Sadie Ward McDermott | FET Director |
| Imelda Prunty | Adult Education Officer |
| Raymond Murphy | Training Services Manager |
| Vivienne Brannigan | Co-Ordinator, Laytown/Bettystown Youthreach |
| Kelvin Harvey | Training Standards Officer |
| Claire O'Boyle | BTEI |
| Maria Morgan | Adult Literacy |
| Angela Cahill | VTOS |
| Kenneth Rea | O'Fiaich College |
| Irene Togher | Dunboyne Institute of FE |
| Margaret Donohue | Deputy Principal DIFE |
| Barry Williams | Youth Service |
| Margaret Deegan | Deputy Principal O'Fiaich |

The quality assurance review working group met on a number of occasions and also conducted base research across centres and programmes, specific to their areas of expertise. This informed the work of the group and the information input into executive self-evaluation. The meetings were a key part of LMETB's philosophy of consultation and the promotion of ownership by LMETB staff of the QA process and the review as a key part of the QA cycle.  The working group was established to support the development of executive self- evaluation and subsequent development of the quality improvement plan.

The process concentrated on three specific areas:

- The documentation and mapping of current governance arrangements
- Examination of the strengths and weaknesses of those arrangements
- Production of recommendations to improve the structures and processes of QA

Information was gathered by means of questionnaires and contributions to the working group.

The process was facilitated with the assistance of ETBI External Consultant, Dr. Trish O'Brien who carried out a review of QA Governance and Management within LMETB. The findings of this independent review are reflected in the body of this report and set out in Appendix 3.

The project lead in this self-evaluation process is FET Director, Ms Sadie Ward McDermott.

Following the consultative process and input of the working committee, the report will be composited by the lead with the assistance of the external consultant.

# 4. Governance, Planning and Management of LMETB FET Quality Assurance

Currently QA agreements between QQI and Co Louth VEC, Co Meath VEC and the Regional Skills Training Centre's TQAS have been retained as part of the transfer of undertakings effected by the amalgamation process.  Fundamental to the governance of quality is the completion of the "Shewhart cycle" (The Man Who Discovered Quality by A. Gabor, Penguin Books, 1990.) where quality systems are subject to "adjustment" or review before the quality policy is renewed and adopted by those in the organisation.  This theoretical underpins LMETB's current review of QA.

## 4.1. Governance Structure of LMETB (Legislative Framework)

Louth and Meath Education and Training Board (LMETB) is governed by a Board comprising twenty-one members.  This includes five representatives from Louth County Council, seven representatives from Meath County Council, two staff representatives, two parent representatives and five community representatives.  LMETB board is collectively responsible for promoting the success of the ETB by directing and controlling the ETB's activities.  In order to deliver good governance in the ETB, the Board must act in the interest of the ETB at all times, consistent with the requirements of legislation and government policies.  The LMETB Board is required to confirm to the Minister for Education and Skills that they comply with the up to date requirements of the Code of Governance (Circular Letter 0018/2015) in their governance practices and procedures.  Board members at all times must act on a fully informed basis, in good faith, with due diligence and care, and always in the best interest of the ETB, subject to the objectives set by the Government. Boards of Management in LMETB schools, colleges and Youthreach Centres support the LMETB Board.  LMETB has also



*Figure 16 Current LMETB Governance Structure*

established a Finance Committee and an Audit Committee in accordance with Section 45(1) of the Education and Training Boards Act 2013, which supports the work of the LMETB Board. Details of the current LMETB Board members and the areas as per legislative requirement that they are nominated from are included in Appendix 4. Within LMETB administrative offices, a team of administrative staff provide support to LMETB schools/colleges/centres in a range of areas including Human Resources, ICT, Finance and Corporate Education Services. This network of administration at Head Office level supports the work of the LMETB Board in ensuring that all schools/colleges/centres are compliant in the areas of Corporate Governance.

## 4.2. Further Education and Training Management Model

The LMETB FET senior management Team consists of the AEO, Training Manager, reporting directly to the director of FET. A number of senior FET management groups enable governance, management and reporting these include; Youthreach, PLC Principals and FET Co-ordinator groupings.

# LMETB FET Governance Structure
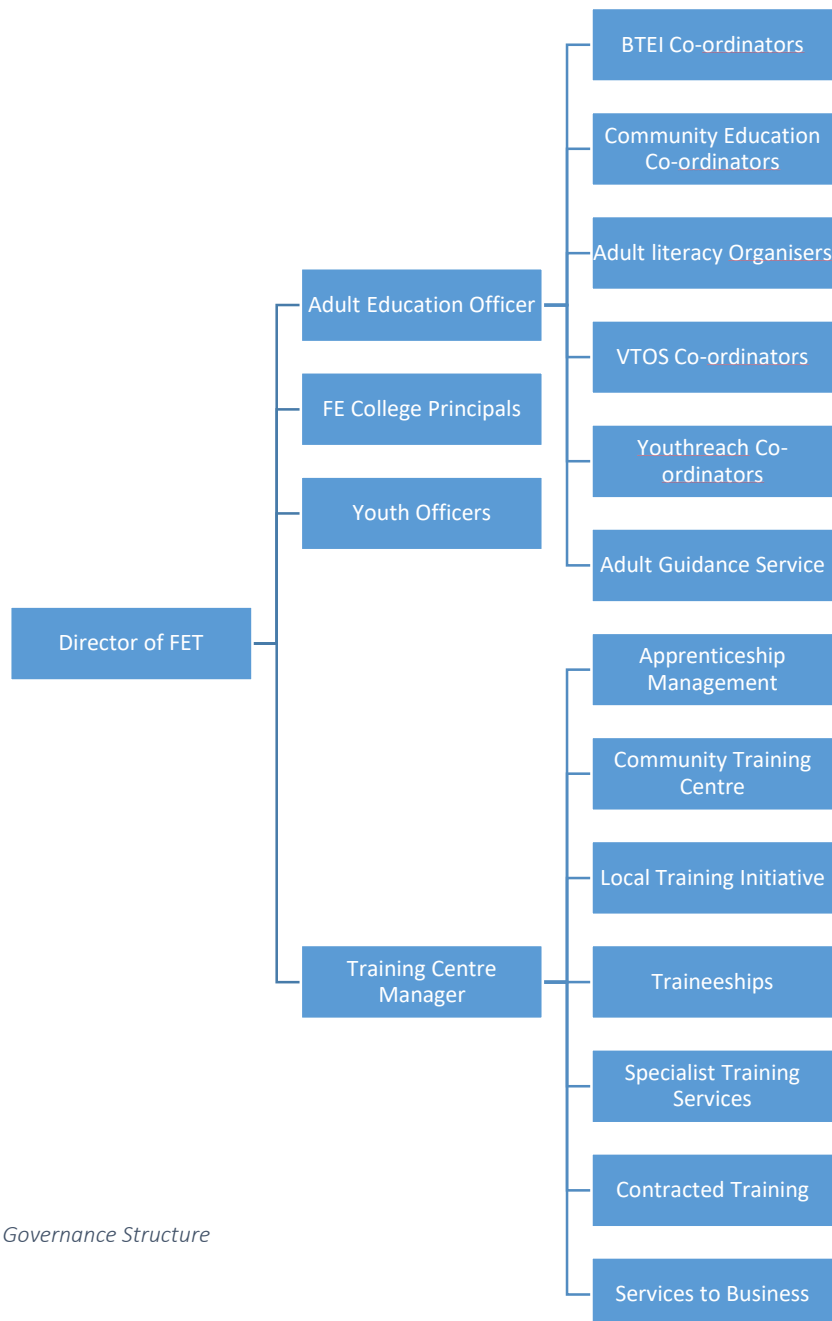


*Figure 17 FET Governance Structure*

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Responsibility for the management of LMETB QA policy at centre/programme or college level lies with the individual centre manager/principals. As part of this responsibility, senior management play a key role in management of review and evaluation processes, covering all aspects of LMETB QA policy, this is a consequence of LMETB's QA policy being both a dynamic and organic in nature.  Equally, centre based management have a key role in feedback and on-going review and revision of the organic nature of QA.  Each of the subcommittees reference hereunder meets 4/5 times per year or as needed. QA is a standing item for each agenda.

# FET Senior Management Team
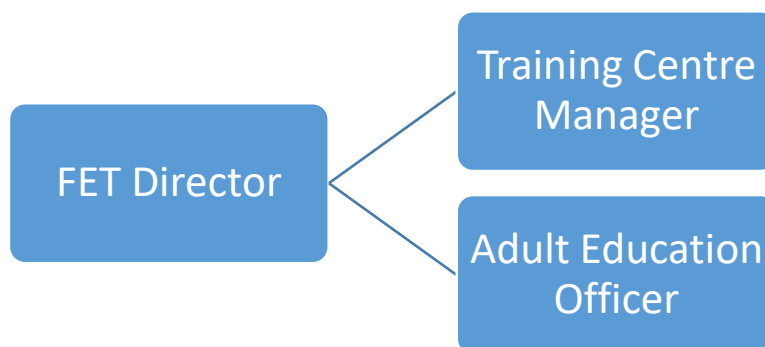


*Figure 18 Senior FET Management Team*

## 4.3.  LMETB Quality Assurance

Current committees and fora with responsibility for QA processes within the FET sector of LMETB are set out in the table below.  Included in the table is an outline of the role, scope and key areas of responsibility of each committee.

| Committee/ QA Team | Key People | Reporting to: | QA Role |
|---|---|---|---|
| FET Senior Management | • AEO<br>• Training Manager | Director FET | • Policy review / development<br>• Programme development review<br>• Quality Assurance processes review and Evaluation<br>• Resourcing |
| FET Planning Forum | • Training Manager<br>• Adult Literacy Officers<br>• Community Ed Facilitators<br>• Youth Officers<br>• BTEI<br>• VTOS Coordinator<br>• Guidance Officers<br>• Contracted Training Officers<br>• Community Training Officers<br>• Youthreach Coordinator<br>• QA Officer<br>• PLC Principals | Director FET | • Programme development review<br>• Informing Policy review/Update<br>• Quality Assurance review of Process and procedure<br>• RAP update<br>• Resourcing |
| Training Services | Chair: Manager Training Services<br>• Contracted Training Officers<br>• Apprenticeship Officers<br>• Com Training Officers<br>• Recruitment/Info Officer<br>• Training Standards Office | Director FET | • Informing programme specific development/review<br>• Leading Programme Evaluation as apt.<br>• Quality Assurance review of programme Process and procedure, reporting on same<br>• Review of assessment and certification processes<br>• Learner experience<br>• Resourcing |
| Further Education forum | Chair/Convenor: AEO<br>• Adult Literacy Officers<br>• Com Ed Facilitators<br>• Youth Officers<br>• BTEI<br>• VTOS Coordinators<br>• Guidance Officers<br>• Youthreach Coordinator<br>• QA Officer | Director FET | • Informing programme development/review<br>• Coordinating /review of programme writing teams.<br>• Leading Programme Evaluation as apt.<br>• Quality Assurance review of programme Process and procedure reporting on same.<br>• Review of RAP<br>• Resourcing<br>• Review of assessment and certification processes<br>• Learner experience |

| Committee/ QA Team | Key People | Reporting to: | QA Role |
|---|---|---|---|
| PLC Principals forum | • PLC Principals | Director FET | • Informing programme specific development/review and programme writing teams.<br>• Leading and informing Programme Evaluation as apt.<br>• Quality Assurance review of programme Process and procedure<br>• Review of RAP<br>• Resourcing<br>• Review of assessment and certification processes<br>• Learner experience<br>• |
| ALO Forum | • ALO officers<br>• AEO | Director FET | • Informing programme specific development/review and programme writing teams.<br>• Leading Programme Evaluation as apt.<br>• Quality Assurance review of programme Process and procedure<br>• Review of RAP<br>• Resourcing<br>• Review of assessment and certification processes<br>• Learner experience |
| CEF Forum | • CEF Officers<br>• AEO | Director FET | • Informing programme specific development/review and programme writing teams.<br>• Leading Programme Evaluation as apt.<br>• Quality Assurance review of programme Process and procedure<br>• Review of RAP<br>• Resourcing<br>• Review of assessment and certification processes<br>• Learner experience |
| VTOS Forum | • VTOS Coordinators<br>• AEO | Director FET | • Informing programme specific development/review and programme writing teams.<br>• Leading Programme Evaluation as apt.<br>• Quality Assurance review of programme Process and procedure<br>• Review of RAP<br>• Resourcing<br>• Review of assessment and certification processes<br>• Learner experience |

| Committee/ QA Team | Key People | Reporting to: | QA Role |
|---|---|---|---|
| Guidance, Recruitment & Information Forum | AEO<br>• Training Manager<br>• Guidance Officers<br>• Recruitment Officers<br>• Information officers Guidance and Recruitment service | Director FET | • Informing programme specific development/review.<br>• Quality Assurance review of programme Process and procedure<br>• Resourcing<br>• Review of assessment and certification processes<br>• Learner experience |
| Youthreach Forum | AEO<br>• Youthreach Coordinators | Director FET<br><br>BOM | • Informing programme specific development/review and programme writing teams.<br>• Leading Programme Evaluation as apt.<br>• Quality Assurance review of programme Process and procedure<br>• Review of RAP<br>• Resourcing<br>• Review of assessment and certification processes<br>• Learner experience |
| QA Committee | • AEO / Training Services Manager<br>• QA / TQAS officers per FET programme | Director FET | • Programme Review<br>• RAP analysis to inform future planning<br>• Assessment processes<br>• Role IV/ EA<br>• Learner experience<br>• QQI update/ communication<br>• Exchange of best practise |

*Figure 19 Current FET Governance Committee/Fora Structure*

LMETB Code of Governance

LMETB Board has adopted the Code of Governance on its establishment and has set up the relevant subcommittee structure with specific reference to finance and audit subcommittee to ensure that compliance with CL18/2015.  In addition, risk registers (Appendix 5) for the FET area have been established as part of governance procedures and are reviewed annually.

As part of the Code of Governance, existing QA policies and procedures are implemented, as part of this current review will be updated as apt.

## 4.4. FE Colleges

Each FE College must have structures that are appropriate to their locality, programme, community, student profile, size, building environment, historic development and organisational culture.  There are however common structures to all FE colleges within the LMETB region.

| Committee/Team | Key People | Reporting to | QA Role |
|---|---|---|---|
| Board of Management | All Members | ETB | Approval of Policies and local adjustments of QA procedures |
| Management | Principal, Deputy/Deputies | Director of FE, Board of Management, ETB | Overall responsibility and leadership in all Function |
| Heads of Department Committee | Assistant Principals | Principal, Deputy/Deputies | IV, Exam Approval Board, Programme Development |
| QA Committee | QA Officer, Teacher Members | Principal, Deputy/Deputies | Overall development, implementation and review of QA with particular emphasis on assessment, recording and reporting, monitoring of student experience. |
| Exam and Assessment Teams | Exam Secretary and as required: IV Leaders, Exam Organisers (Timetable etc..)  Exam board Leaders, Extern. liaison personnel. | Principal, Deputy/Deputies | Overall maintenance of Exam and Assessment Standards |
| Programme Development | Principal/ Deputy, Department Heads and Staff relevant to the subject discipline | Principal, Deputy/Deputies | The organic development of programmes in response a changing economy both local and national. |
| Course Team | Coordinator or | Principal, | Monitoring attendance, identifying |

| | Tutor | Deputy/Deputies, Department Heads | students with problems and monitoring academic performance and setting up feedback mechanisms for students. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Subject Team | Subject teachers | Principal, Deputy/Deputies, Department Heads | To ensure that best practice is shared among all staff and common standardised solutions to problems are implemented |
| Health and Safety and Risk Assessment | Health and Safety Officer, Staff with appropriate skills or experience | Principal, Deputy/Deputies | To plan, respond and assess risk in all aspects of the centre's physical and community environment. |
| Special Needs Team | Team Leader, Staff with appropriate skills or experience | Principal, Deputy/Deputies | To ensure that appropriate systems are in place for the care and educational needs of students. To monitor their experience and plan for future developments (e.g. the full implementation of the EPSEN Act. |
| Communications and IT team | Team Leader, Staff with appropriate skills or experience | Principal, Deputy/Deputies | Ensuring Moodle, Cloud and other communication systems are managed effectively, appropriate training is provided and systems operate to an optimum level and to the highest standards. |
| Ad Hoc Teams | Team Leader, Staff with appropriate skills or experience | Principal, Deputy/Deputies | Project and time specific teams to solve a particular problem such as project planning, policy development, building projects, IT development, external links with employers or progression such as NEFHEA etc.. |
| Staff Development and Mentoring of New Staff | Staff Development Officer, Staff with appropriate skills or experience | Principal, Deputy/Deputies | To ensure that all teachers regardless of the stage in their careers fully up to date in leaching and learning methods. To assist in compliance with the CPD requirements of the Teaching Council |

Whilst due to staffing shortages, employment embargo and size for centres, LMETB has varying staffing models in regard to QA. The centre manager has overall responsibility for QA, in some colleges/centres a QA officer exists. An assigned staff member carries out the very important role of IV and separately of exam secretary.

The management structure is slim and historic in that it reflects traditional second level functions and has relied heavily on a staff cooperative and entrepreneurial spirit to take on tasks as required. The traditional structure of Principal, Deputy, Department Heads, Course Coordinator / Tutors and Subject teachers is clearly established in each college with clearly defined roles and functions reflected in the staff handbook. Colleges have been proactive and positive to change.

Planning, recording and implementation of team meetings is crucial to an overall accountability and the knowledge base required by senior management. This information is also required by team members to access the decisions and deliberations of meetings. Clarity of task is also required where members are assigned specific undertakings. There are several key aspects to productive meetings:

- Written terms of reference for each committee
- File shared documents for ease of access to documents such as agendas, minutes supporting documentation and individual undertakings.
- Common calendar automatic reminders to team members of undertakings to be carried out.

## 4.5. Further Education and Training

| Committee/ Team | Key People | QA Role |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |
| QA Committee | AEO QA officer Centre Manager Exam secretary Staff with appropriate skills or experience | Overall development, implementation and review of QA with particular emphasis on assessment, recording and reporting, monitoring of student experience. |
| Exam and Assessment Teams | AEO QA officers Centre Manager Staff with appropriate skills or experience Exam secretary | Overall maintenance of Exam and Assessment Standards |
| Programme Development | AEO Centre manager Staff with appropriate skills or experience | The organic development of programmes in response to a changing economy both local and national. |
| Learner Support | Centre manager Staff with appropriate skills or experience Teachers/Tutors | Monitoring attendance, identifying students with problems and monitoring academic performance and setting up feedback mechanisms for students. |
| Subject Team | Centre manager Staff with appropriate skills or experience IV team | To ensure that best practice is shared among all staff and common standardised solutions to problems are implemented |
| Health and Safety | Health and Safety Officer, Staff with | To plan, respond and assess risk in all aspects |

| and Risk Assessment | appropriate skills or experience | of the centre's physical and community environment. |
|---|---|---|
| Communications and IT team | Centre manager<br> Staff with appropriate skills or experience<br>IT Department | Ensuring Sharepoint, Cloud and other communication systems are managed effectively, appropriate training is provided and systems operate to an optimum level and to the highest standards. |
| Ad Hoc Teams | Centre managers<br>Staff with appropriate skills or experience | Project and time specific teams to solve a particular problem such as project planning, policy development, building projects, IT development, external links with employers or progression such as NEFHEA etc.. |
| Staff Development and Mentoring of New Staff | AEO<br>Centre managers<br>Staff with appropriate skills or experience<br>IV team | To ensure that all teachers/tutors regardless of the stage in their careers are fully up to date in teaching and learning methods.  To assist in compliance with the CPD requirements of the Teaching Council |

## 4.6.  Planning, Policy, Strategy and Risk by Service

Key labour market intelligence provided by presentations from SOLAS' Skills and Labour Market Research Unit (SLMRU), Regional Skills Forum, Department of Social Protection, Local Community Development Committees, Local Enterprise Offices and other stakeholders as well as key documents and strategies, learner feedback and programme review informs the planning of courses for the coming year.

### 4.6.1. Key documents reflected in LMETB planning:

- Action Plan for Education 2017, Department of Education and Skills
- SOLAS FET Strategy 2014-2019
- LMETB Strategy Statement 2017-2021
- Co. Louth Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2022
- Co. Meath Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021
- TEL Strategy 2016-2019
- Mid East Region Action Plan for Jobs 2015-2017
- North East Region Action Plan for Jobs 2015-2017

The organisational culture within LMETB has embedded policy production/Development and review into its fabric.  The production, implementation and review of policy is highly developed at this point in time.  Central to this is a communication's strategy to ensure that all staff are aware of these policies.  The use of IT shared storage is crucial to ease of access and ownership of these policies. Regular review has the added benefit of refocusing attention on policies and their content.

### 4.6.2. Possible Challenges/ Risks

- Data Protection
- Freedom of Information
- Protected Disclosures

Policies have been developed by LMETB and ratified by the LMETB Board. As part of these policies there are in-built procedures to address possible risk factors and/or potential breaches of policies alongside clearly defined review periods as apt per policy (Appendix 5).

## 4.7. Further Education

Policy development and/or review of policies and related procedures follow a common process

- Input from staff
- QA committee drafts policy
- Policy presented to staff for input
- Policy final draft drawn up by QA committee
- Policy ratified by Board of Management
- Policy ratified by LMETB

### 4.8. Governance by Programme Development



SMT

QA office

IV/EA
RAB
Appeals Board

Exam
Secretary

QA
Youthreach

QA
FE
Centre
Managers

QA
PLC
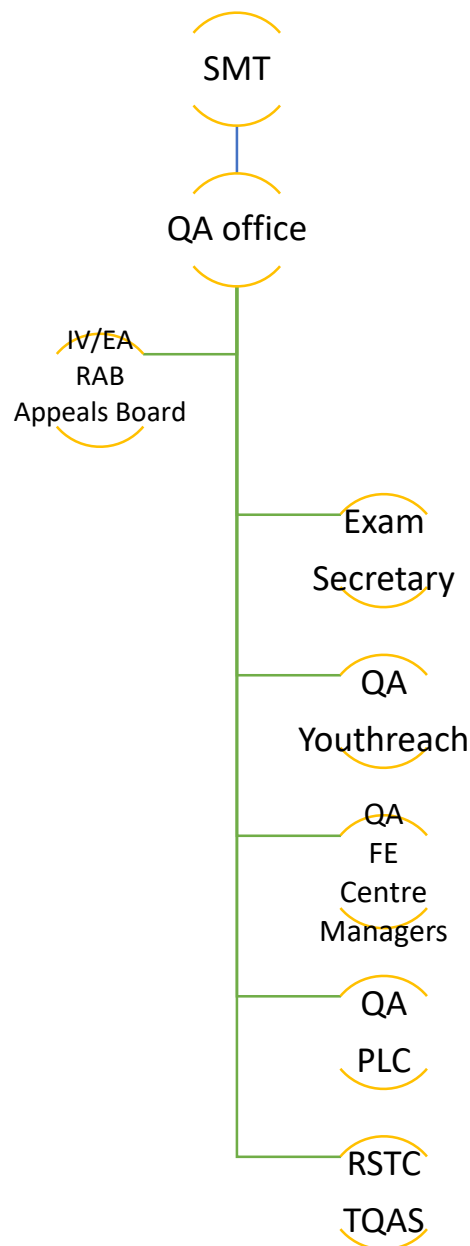
RSTC
TQAS

*Figure 20 KEY QA Linkages*

The common FET policy development/review process is as follows:

- In the first instance senior management and centre/programme /college personnel must establish either learner need /market justification used historically (need to have quantitative research) to establish the need for a new programme to be developed or introduced to the offering of LMETB.

- This information is brought to the Quality Assurance officer in centre, who reviews the information and reports to centre manager/Principal with a proposal for discussion at department meetings
- QA officer meets to discuss the proposal and resource implications with Principal/Centre Management
- Principal seeks course approval from LMETB Director of Further Education in the first instance, who in turn once having checked the veracity of the requirement and the detail of the programme as proposed, will then bring the proposal to the PAC (Programme Approval Committee)
- Ultimately all course offerings are brought to the LMETB Committee, by the Director of FET normally Bi annually (As required) to facilitate introduction of programmes in areas such as such as Literacy and BTEI etc.
- All courses are forwarded to SOLAS via the FAR/PLSS on line data platform
- SOLAS using data from PLSS, enables the transfer of information to SUSI grant authority.

## 4.9. Governance and Programme Delivery

FET programmes are managed in first instance by the College Principal /Centre/DES Programme manager. Dependant on the size of the centre there may be a course/programme Co-ordinator, who reports directly to senior management of centre in respect to programme development.

Course scheduling /timetabling is developed at each centre by the senior manager.  In PLC Colleges, this duty is assigned to a senior member of college management team reporting to Principal. Scheduling/Timetabling ensures there is sufficient time allowed to ensure appropriate course delivery and assessment.

The College Management /Programme/Centre Manager is responsible for planning for and enabling the provision of adequate resourcing of all courses and programmes.  This includes staffing, physical resources, buildings, classrooms, alongside teaching and learning requirements for each course, this may include practical facilities and equipment.  Where learners may experience difficulties in engaging in Learning, every effort is made to enable and support engagement, this to include ICT facilities to enable and support learning

### 4.9.1.QQI Syllabi/Programme Documentation

LMETB have developed a unique online awards portal site where all documentation pertaining to every validated award available to LMETB FET staff is housed.  This enables the Director of FET to effectively manage course syllabi and thus version control of data for LMETB is tightly controlled.  Thus ensuring all staff have access to correct up to date approved courses, programme/module descriptors- enables version control.  FE administrative officer with controlled access rights administers this portal.  Staff access to this

site can only be enabled by Senior College/Centre management through the FET administrator.  Training and staff support is provided to all staff members to enable use of this portal site.  Reports can be run to track staff use of the site where necessary.

### 4.9.2.Staff Induction Programme

FET Director / Centre Management ensure all new staff recruited to FET Centres/Colleges, are required to attend mandatory LMETB QQI induction programmes developed by Senior FET management.  This ensures that staff who are unfamiliar with QQI programmes have a good grounding in the policies, procedures and requirements of programme delivery and assessment before embarking on delivery of such courses.  The induction programme is specifically designed by LMETB senior staff to support new staff members in understanding the premise of the ethos, values and guiding principles that underpin all aspects of LMETBs QA systems

### 4.9.3.Staff Supports; Teaching and Learning

Supports are provided on an on-going basis to all staff with particular emphasis placed on new staff members.  The Internal Verifier plays a key supporting role to the tutor, as does the centre management team, in enabling and supporting the delivery of a quality assured service to all our service users.  QA IV officers' meetings take place with each staff member individually on 3 occasions throughout the course.  This is in order to ensure they are meeting the needs of both Learners and the QQI programme course descriptor.

Working collaboratively the IV and centre team support, enable and encourage teachers by way of open discussion and review of teaching strategies/methodologies; level of course work (appropriate to the needs of learners) and review of Learners work to ascertain breadth/depth of learning and its demonstration for assessment.  A variety of communication methodologies are used with Learners to support and reinforce learning (As apt for level – On line learning tools, assignments, reinforcement strategies, peer learning focus groups etc.),

Annually LMETB senior staff teams organise a CPD, day long, event called Tutor Meet.  At this event staff from FET showcase specific innovative practises, which both enable and support good practice teaching, learning and assessment methodologies and practises.  It is based on a peer learning model, is totally voluntary and is extremely beneficial for sharing of good practise and encouraging use of transversal skills across centres and programmes.

### 4.9.4.Assessment Methodologies

Review of Assessment methodologies forms part of the centre QA officer support role, this may involve review and discussion of methodologies used per level to ensure both aptness and consistency for assessment by External Authenticator.  This may include but not limited to, aural/oral/visual/written methodologies, practical demonstrations of work, class/focus group assignments, course assignments and or examinations.

As part of the end of course review the QA officer convenes a RAP meeting.  The meeting is informed by the External Authenticator's report, which both recognises and acknowledges good practice and commends same, whilst also highlighting areas for improvement.  Such commentary is always fed back to individual teachers and where possible meetings between External Authenticator and teachers are encouraged and facilitated if time allows, by the QA officer as this is seen to be both affirming and very encouraging for staff.

### 4.9.5.ICT as an Aid to Programme Delivery

All ICT development of infrastructure and related ICT CPD is linked to the LMETB TEL strategy

Planned investment in centre/college ICT facilities and resources is a key priority in enabling and supporting digital literacy alongside being a tool for both teaching and learning.

- Significant investment in interactive whiteboards/Touch screen Mi touch in all centres supports the broadening of exposure to ICT technologies and enables interactive learning at all QQI levels
- Significant investment in mobile devices and a mobile ICT lab enable use of ICT in out centre locations
- On line assessment tools enable and support assessment of learners to ensure that they are aptly placed appropriately in the correct level of course, this enables and supports the course delivery to learners.
- Moodle both enables and supports innovative teaching/learning and feedback strategies, thereby ensuring ease of access for learners to on line notes/assessment materials for courses.
- On line folders and trial of Windows one note used to enable teaching /learning / assessment has been piloted in centres of education with good success to present student work via Adobe Software Presented in IT, Communications Cultural Studies, Work Experience, Cakes Pastries/Baking and Desserts. Excellent report from EA on it. Incremental Improvement achieved as planned.

All innovative strategies are introduced at centre level, and learning is cascaded across centre programme management to enable and support sharing of good practice in FET centres.

## 4.10.        Staff Development

LMETB is committed to ensuring that all its teaching staff are of the highest level of qualification, experience and suitability for the role.  This is clearly reflected in LMETB's recruitment procedures.  However, LMETB is committed to maintaining, improving and developing its staff to the highest level of teaching skills, subject knowledge and knowledge of LMETB policies and procedures with particular emphasis on Quality Assurance.

- LMETB and SOLAS have developed an LMETB skills profile of FET staff, which enables apt planning for CPD requirements of LMETB FET personnel.
- Resourcing of staff CPD is limited and thus LMETB senior management support staff and encourage them to continue the Lifelong-learning journey as resources allow.
- QA Staff development needs have traditionally been addressed through centre/college based CPD programmes, where apt pooling of resources enables increased CPD opportunities.
- Communities of practice have been encouraged and enabled to establish and are supported as an effective method of sharing subject specific information and indeed good practice methodology.
- Subject specific groupings across Programmes /Centres, enable sharing of best practice and enable and support good practice methodologies in Teaching and Learning strategies and resource developments.
- Working in consultation with SOLAS FET staff enabled a CPD needs analysis, which is now being used to inform the development of a CPD Strategy.
- Tutor Meet –Enabled sharing of good practice in workshop settings with peers leading out on strategies.

### 4.11. FET Future Planning

LMETB will review its organisational structure with a view to implementing a multi-layered governance structure to ensure consistent governance oversight across all LMETB FET centres. This review will take account of existing structures, enhancing and extending these systems to address gaps to support the ETB governance needs and to better manage the flow of information to the ETB of governance and activities that are taking place within and across its centres.

LMETB intends to develop a multi-layered QA governance structure (see diagram below):
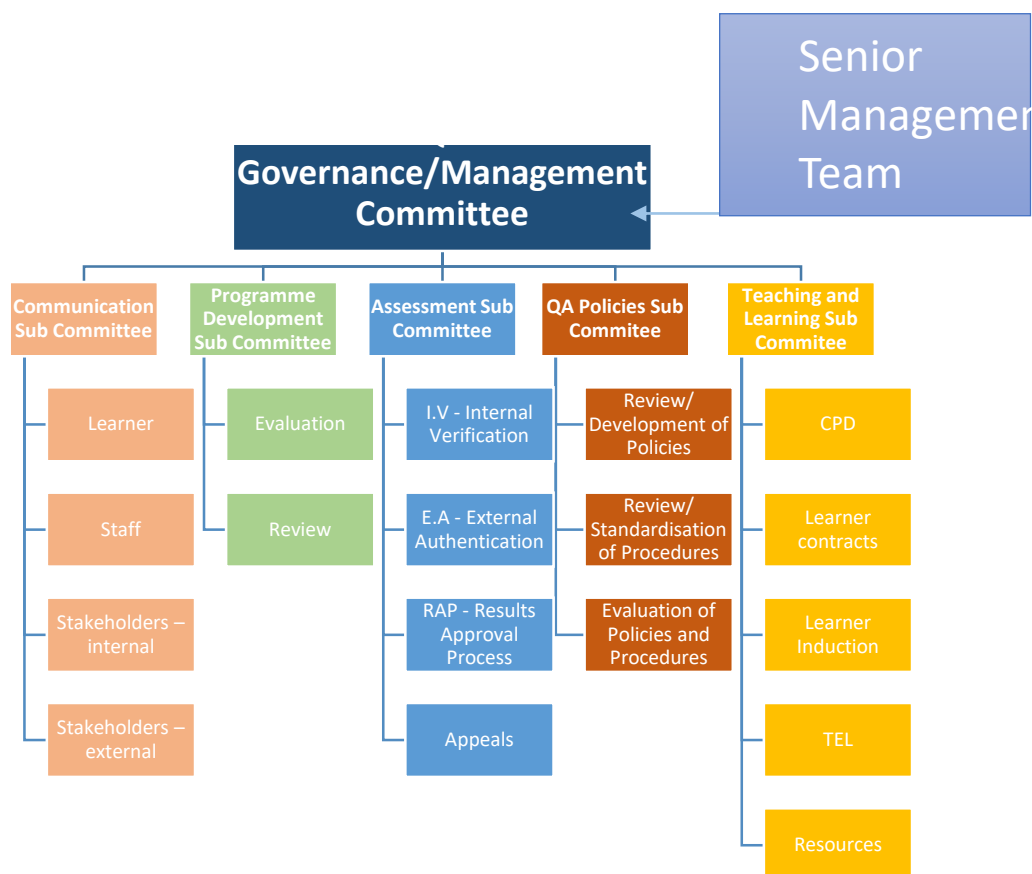


*Figure 21 Proposed QA Structures and Committees*

The map of new FET governance structures/Terms of Reference for each structure will encompass the following:

• the decision-making process,

• reporting lines

• governance reporting responsibility

• recommended membership

LMETB will incorporate Quality as an agenda item on all agendas for all SMT meetings

A high level oversight governance body, in the shape of the *QA Governance Management Group* will be formalised with new Terms of Reference outlining their decision making authority to implement change as it deems necessary and to work collaboratively at a national level with other ETBs on sectoral developments.

Policies that manage the Governance Framework of LMETB FET Quality Assurance system:

• Oversight of planning for all provision (Programme Approval a key function)

• Oversight of the assessment of fairness/consistency of assessment

• Promotion of quality teaching and learning in all relevant learning environments;

• Ensuring the integrity of learner records and assessment results;

• Protection of the integrity of academic processes and standards

LMETB will establish a Common QA Framework comprising a QA Subcommittee which will review and evaluate 5 existing QA agreements, consolidating into an overarching set of procedures in the context of the new QQI statutory QA guidelines.

Risk Register

It is intended that the QA Governance Management Group (Oversight Body) will have a reporting role into the Risk Register Management Group to advise it on any areas of risk associated with the QA of FET.

Common QA

The QA Governance Management Group will establish a QA sub-committee to consider a review and evaluation of the various Quality Assurance agreements with a view that they be consolidated into an overarching set of guidelines/procedures in the context of the new QQI statutory QA guidelines.

Working Groups

LMETB will identify working groups to take forward planned review/actions in the following key areas:

1. Programme Design, Development & Review

2. Learner Assessment

3. Monitoring evaluation & review

4. CPD

5. Communications

6. TEL Strategy

7. Employer Engagement

8. QA Review

## Quality Assurance Office

To date LMETB has resourced QA from FET programme staff.  It is LMETB's intention to set up a unit to assist with developing, implementing and monitoring an effective, integrated Quality Assurance system for all LMETB provision with responsibility for providing:

(a) A regional QA support to LMETB centres, PLCs and FET Centres

(b) Development and management support for cross-centre LMETB Quality Assurance processes.

The Unit will develop, implement, manage, and supports all cross-centre and centre level QA activities, monitoring, reviewing and improving quality of service and provision.

## A New Self-Evaluation Model

A new self-evaluation model for centres to review programme outcomes.

**QA Officers will engage with centres on outcomes and assist them plan for continuous improvement**

QA officers will monitor the effectiveness of the self-evaluation and monitoring procedures;

• Ensuring that the requirements set out in QA policies are complied with

• Assign actions for improvement to individuals and groups assigned responsibility for QA.

## CPD

Develop FET CPD Plan in conjunction with SOLAS.  In addition, develop framework and annual plan for CPD which identifies specific priority areas

# 5. Delivery of FET

## 5.1. Courses Delivered by LMETB

LMETB delivers a variety of courses in response to local needs.  QQI programmes under the common Awards System (CAS) are the predominant awards type.  In addition, City & Guilds, Junior Trades, IATA/UFTA, MOUS, ITEC, IATI, ICS are among the awards that are delivered in LMETB Centres.  These programmes have been developed by the ETBI Shared Development Process.  Many of the teachers/tutors in LMETB were involved in development of modules as practitioners in the subject areas using their knowledge and experience of their own learner.  LMETB encourages its teachers/tutors to shape the module delivery in two ways:

- Shared experience through subject groups/departments
- Respond and plan delivery to learner profile and local environment.

### 5.1.1. The Course Provision Cycle

It is a clear organisational objective that all courses in LMETB FET operate within this cycle in order that they continue to be responsive, relevant and fresh/dynamic in terms of presentation and maintain a positive learner experience.



LMETB Course Provision Cycle
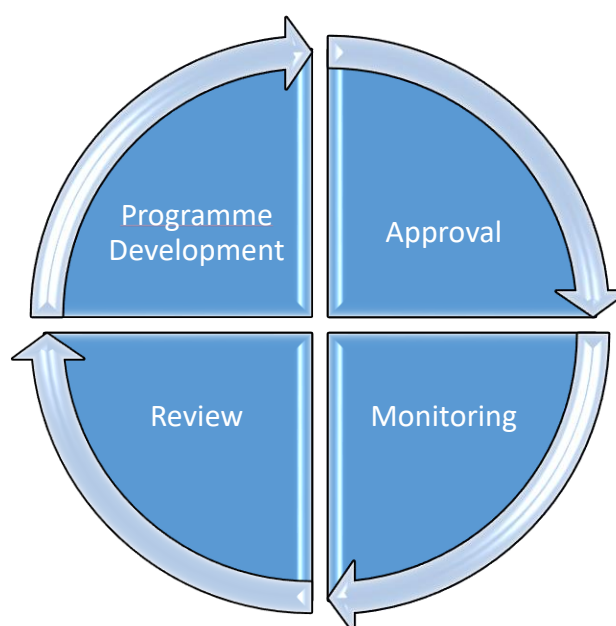
*Figure 22 LMETB Course Provision Cycle*

LMETB FET has several Legacy Quality Assurance Agreements.  Although variances in emphasis exist between them, they have a common structure and focus.  Any future LMETB common QA document must reflect both the need for uniformity across the scheme and the need to adapt to size, function and reflect the needs the centre.  If QA is to be owned by LMETB employees and stakeholders then it must reflect their input and the expertise of their experience.  To that end

any future harmonisation of QA must have a high emphasis on consultation and be flexible enough to be adjusted by the centres themselves.

An analysis of the process within LMETB's Course Provision Cycle has yielded a summarised
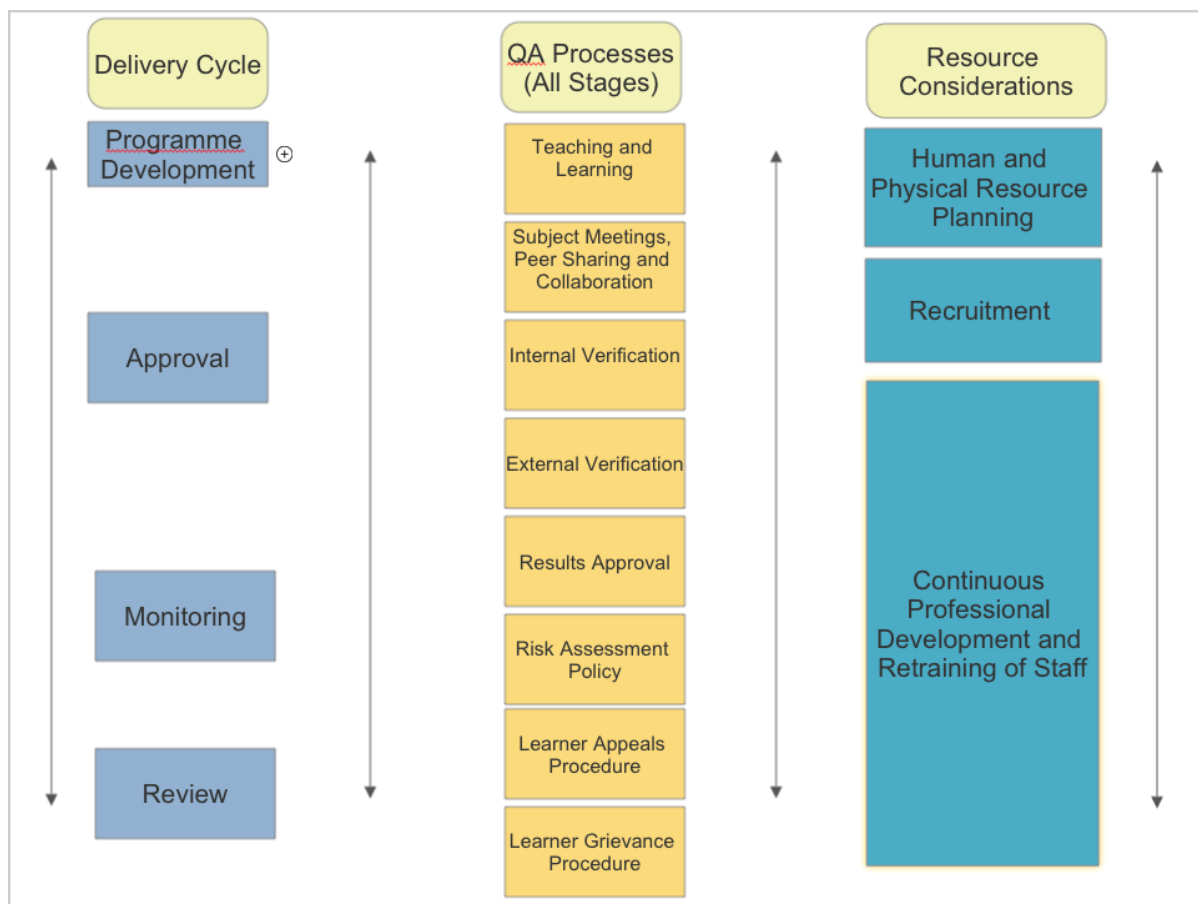


*Figure 23 Current Course Provision Process*

diagram as follows:

The component parts are simply structures and sub processes that have developed organically within the organisation and now form an interrelated matrix which have synthesised to form a dynamic process with the breathing room to facilitate change through review.

## 5.2. Programme Design and Approval

### 5.2.1. External Approval to Develop Programmes

Approval process is based on the availability of human and physical resources or a commitment to acquire resources at ETB level. This is often the result of consultation process with local businesses and community groups, chamber of commerce etc. Once course sanction has been secured in conjunction with QQI (or other assessment body), SOLAS (resourcing) and Department of Education

(teachers and buildings) then the course can proceed.  Clearly an assessment of value for money and ability to satisfy needs and planned strategic initiatives has to be made by all concerned agencies at this stage.

### 5.2.2. Internal Approval and Programme Development

Top-Down/Bottom-Up Programme Development

Top-down is the process whereby a senior manager will introduce a new initiative based on a variety of decision making inputs.  In the same way a bottom–up initiative may be introduced by a group of teachers/tutors. The decision factors are essentially identical including but not exclusively:

- Relevance to the learner
- Success by other provider
- Response to a national initiative
- Local or national economic need
- Local or national social need
- High likelihood of progression by learners undertaking the programme.

Historically most of the programmes in LMETB have resulted from proposals being made from the centre or individual teachers and tutors (bottom-up policy formulation).  The experience of this has been to foster:

- An entrepreneurial culture within FET centres
- An ownership of the programme with the spin of benefits of a commitment to quality delivery, quality evaluation, and commitment to progressing the learners on completion of the course.
- An organisational commitment to proactive and positive change.

The internal organisational approval process within LMETB seeks to encourage and promote this dynamic process and is committed to ensuring that its programme approval structures do not inhibit this positive and beneficial practice. The Programme Development Committee is designed to formalise the process region wide while maintaining the creative and innovative ethos within FET centres.  In some centres there are already approval panels in existence to approve new programmes and modules.

LMETB has made a significant contribution to the collaborative national programme development process as part of the Common Awards System (CAS).  Also many legacy FÁS programmes have been retained as part of the incorporation of the training centre into LMETB.  As one of the largest FET providers nationally, LMETB has played a significant role in the shared programme development processes that have existed up to this point in time, providing programme writing expertise through subject matter experts, and the management and co-ordination of a number of major programme developments on behalf of the sector.

Most of the development work undertaken by LMTB FET staff has been conducted without the allocation of additional resources, and with a reliance on staff commitment and goodwill as no additional payments were made to staff involved.

### 5.2.3    The Role of the Programme Approval Committee (PAC)

The Programme Approval Committee has the following brief:

- To approve new programmes
- To review existing programmes
- To review parts/modules of existing programmes
- Look at the comprehensive review of progression and employment opportunities and skills shortages
- Look at the examples of good practise, examples that may have applicability across services
- Check that sharing and approve of programs is there.

LMETB has a Programme Management System in place whereby centres can propose to develop a new programme for delivery, make amendments to an existing programme or review of an existing programme/programme module.  Proposals to develop a new programme or component are processed through the Quality Assurance Officer for consideration by the Programme Approval Committee.  The application process requires the centre to provide the following information:

- • Identify the reasons for proposing the development of a programme or component leading to the award(s) listed.
- • information on research undertaken to support the proposal
- • Include reference to national/regional/local studies indicating a lack of current provision of programmes leading to the type of award(s) listed
- • Include any consultation or engagement with relevant stakeholders, including industry representatives
- • Outline the capacity of the centre to deliver the programme/programme module considering staffing and resource requirements.

LMETB recognises the need for an independent assessment of new or reviewed programmes.  This independence is key to overall good organisational governance.  To this end, the new proposed structure whereby there will be a separate Programme Development Sub-committee and the programme approval process will be managed at a higher level (Governance Management Committee will ensure this independence).  The new structure will assess the proposed programme for relevance within LMETB plan and current provision. It will also be a key feasibility check evaluating resourcing, programme monitoring implementation. Issues in terms of clear value for money, value to the community and above all to the learner can also be independently evaluated at this stage.  The Programme Approval Committee will review all such proposals in accordance with these axioms and with due regard to its terms of reference

The QA Officer/AEO/Training Manager confirms that this information is complete before bringing it for consideration to the Programme Approval Committee.
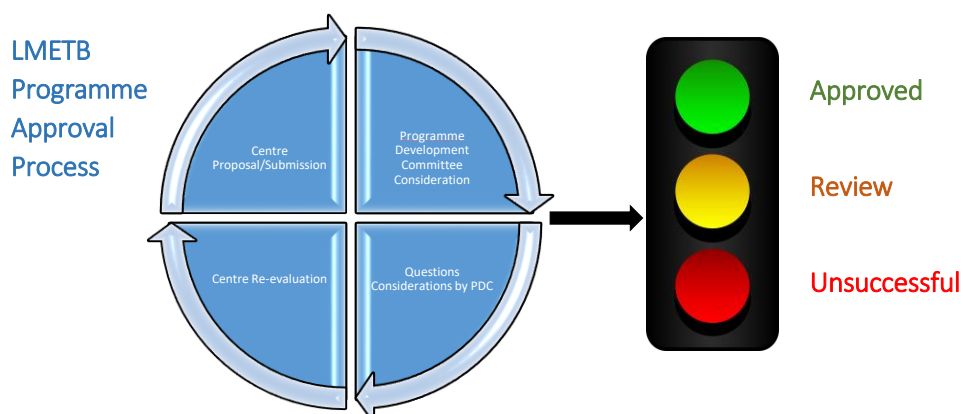
*Figure 24 LMETB Programme Approval Process*

Proposals for programme development or amendment are considered by the PDC to ensure that the programme is valid, meets award specification, resources are available and appropriate for its development and delivery, and validation is in place or can be sought. Programme documentation is approved at PDC level prior to submission to QQI for validation.

The programme development process is coordinated by the QA officer/AEO, who co-ordinates the writing and evaluation of the programme by subject matter experts who have been trained to evaluate programmes.  Programme development considers the access, transfer and progression of the intended target group as well as the intended modes of learning and the learning environment.

Programme development is limited at present but is a key component in LMETB's mission to be dynamic and meet the needs of the learner and of the broader society.

### 5.2.4    Programme Review

LMETB does not currently have a periodic review schedule which is standardised across all FET programmes and services to ensure that programmes are appropriate and are achieving their intended objectives.  The relevance of LMETB programmes is contingent on an efficient, robust and fit for purpose review structure.  To this end LMETB is committed to the programme review as a vital part of the QA cycle.

Currently informal or formal advisory groups exist in each centre to review or modify programmes. Clearly a more formal structure needs to be developed in each centre to make submissions to the PDC within a periodic review cycle.

The critical elements of any review must be:

- Learner profile and needs
- Economic and social environment (current and future trends)
- Progression
- Overall LMETB planning

### 5.3.  Planning and Management of FET Delivery

Ownership of LMETB by teachers/tutors and all support staff is crucial to placing quality at the heart of delivery.  Currently much of the management and delivery of modules is a singular activity. Increasingly in larger centres subject/team meetings to plan delivery schedules, assessment dates,

review common policies such as plagiarism and share resources.  There is no region wide structure for sharing resources and joint planning.  Given the One Drive, One Note, Moodle and video conferencing availability to LMETB FET delivery staff a more structured approach to collaborative module delivery could be developed.  The sharing of teaching resources through the effective use of IT both within centres and on a regional basis needs to be reviewed for the purpose of maximising good practice and collaboration.

At centre level the key tool is timetabling.  The curriculum planning phase has begun to exhibit greater cooperation between centres in terms of sharing staff expertise.  Improvement is possible if curriculum planners were to meet annually at the planning phase of timetabling and share ideas, techniques and explore the feasibility of staff sharing and the possible use of technology to share specialisms that are in short supply.  Likewise scheduling techniques need to be shared in a more formalised timetabler's forum.

LMETB has in accordance with national criteria and LMETB's own Human Resources policies strived to engage and appoint staff of the highest qualification, experience and suitability to maintain the highest possible standard of programme delivery to its learners.  Likewise, LMETB is committed to review and maintain a high standard of equipment, learning resources, IT hardware and software in course provision through policies based on value for money procurement, usage reviews and planning.  Also staff handbooks and induction are well established features in all LMETB centres.

Review and development of CPD in centres is now an integral part of the centre's annual cycle.  A skills assessment and skills plan on a regional basis needs to be considered with a view to providing for updated and relevant teaching skills.

LMETB is committed to the support for good teaching which in turn facilitates good learning.

## 5.4. Monitoring of Programmes

LMETB relies significantly on its Director of FET in consort with FET senior management to monitor programmes.  Currently, all quantitative and qualitative data is collated centrally using ICT tools which include-Salsepuse, PLSS, RCCRS and FARR systems.  National monitoring processes such as the role of SOLAS in Apprenticeship schemes are well established.  Training programmes still operate with reference to the TQAS system of quality assurance, which provides for a monitoring and review. Review and monitoring outcomes are considered at the Training Management group and by training services management. Monitoring of the Youth Service through the National Quality Standards Framework administered by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs for both Voluntary and Special projects is another key area of national good practice centred on proactive engagement and listening to young people.

In the Further Education services, the over reliance on individual managers and senior staff needs to be assisted by centre independent measurement tools.  This will establish a standardised ETB wide monitoring process. However, there are currently some soundly embedded measurement mechanisms in place in LMETB centres.

Consistent processes for record keeping and the setting of clear parameters LMETB wide.  Learner records, feedback, planning at all levels, monitoring, reporting, attendance, progression…etc are key to good management of information and mapping provision.

External Authentication (EA) reports are considered at centre level at the Results Approval Panel meetings and areas for improvement are identified.

EA reports are forwarded to the AEO/Training Manager for review and to enable issues that require addressing to be identified. These may be:

• Commonly occurring issues that need to be highlighted and addressed with all centres/services

• Issues particular to a specific centre

• Issues with the descriptor

The evaluation and feedback of monitoring tools can assist in regional mapping and local issues requiring remediation.

LMETB welcomes initiatives by ETBI to introduce national EA panels and provide a standardised national approach.

Qualitative, quantitative and financial data is submitted to SOLAS by LMETB through the Financial Allocation Requests and Reporting (FARR) system reporting templates. The qualitative data returned, when placed in the context of the quantitative data relating to FET provision assists SOLAS in its understanding of LMETB's FET Services Plan. The FARR 2 report ensures that key governance issues are understood and provides information for SOLAS on how issues are being progressed. The FARR 3 template provides an opportunity to describe aspects of FET that benefit the learner, enterprise and the community.  The importance of gathering data tends to be passed to individual course co-ordinators who quite openly complain that it is time consuming and question the necessity to carry out these tasks.  When considering the training needs in relation to staff using these systems, greater efforts must be made to outlining the benefits and need for such reporting as part of both the funding process and the provision of data for planning.  Quantitative reports, (including financial reports) are provided to SOLAS three times per year, at the end of May, September and December.

Qualitative reports are provided annually and they inform the planning process for the following year. The process of qualitative reporting in terms of teacher/tutor experience can have a positive impact on ownership of provision, better inclusiveness and overall commitment.  Likewise, the experience of the learner can provide vital feedback for management, planning and development of programmes. Engagement with other stakeholders needs to be developed by way of informing decision making in relation to programmes.  An engagement with employers on their assessment of student skills should be developed.  An example of where positive engagement with stakeholders takes place is through meetings of NEFHEA where students of the level 7 Business Studies give feedback on which modules at LMETB Level 6 were of benefit and even prompted the introduction of new modules in LMETB FE Colleges.

## 5.5. Assessment

LMETB believes that assessment must fully comply with three key axioms of fairness, consistency and transparency.  The provision of a dynamic QA process ensures that these axioms can be adhered to as part of LMETB's commitment to learning and the learner.  Assessment through its various mechanisms is essential to learner self-validation and achievement.  LMETB's corporate reputation for quality, credible assessment has a clear impact on organisational growth and on learner access, transfer and progression in terms of labour market needs and the National Framework of Qualifications.

Assessments for LMETB training services are standardised nationally through the CAMS system and are a carry-over from former FÁS arrangements. These assessments are currently being reviewed and updated to ensure they are appropriate.

### 5.5.1. Consistency, transparency and fairness of assessment

As part of the application of standards as set out in module descriptors, learning outcomes/objectives are identified and inform the production of assessment tools (e.g. skills tests, work experience reports, assignments, projects or exams). Marking tools reflect these outcomes/objectives and ensure that standards and compliance with the three axioms are adhered to. LMETB recognises that more needs to be done in terms of standardising in terms of greater cooperation in subject areas across the region and exchange of information. Also a complete LMETB wide standardisation of IV, EA and RAP by setting core common principles for these processes. A universally applied process will likely overburden smaller centres but a set of core common principles will set a region wide common approach to assessment.

## 5.6. Assessment Procedures

Marking processes are derived from teacher/tutor module specific marking schemes reflecting module objectives. Currently this is a solitary individual activity. The only exception being larger centres with subject committees where a common approach can be developed. There is currently little cross sharing of information regionally. Peer review or cross moderation is not common and may need consideration going forward.

The progress towards the development of a national ETBI Assessment Procedures Handbook (NAPH) is a welcome step in standardisation and will contribute positively to LMETB's own localised standards setting. The draft documents will contribute to good practice and form part of LMETB's contextualisation to local needs:

- Reasonable accommodation in assessment
- Assessment malpractice
- Assessment deadlines
- Compassionate consideration in extenuating circumstances.

### 5.6.1. Internal Verification (IV)

Internal verification processes are common across all FET programmes and centres in LMETB. The purpose of the internal Verifier/verification process is to supply support to the teachers/tutors thereby enabling teaching and learning, secondly it enables the support of assessment processes within each centre or programme. Its purpose is to provide for the reduction of common errors and assist in the preparation for external authentication. The TQAS in the training centre demands 100% IV while other further education programmes require a sample which is set in the centre commonly ranging from 25% or greater with a minimum sample set. The independence of the IV process is essential to but just part of the overall verification of marks.

### 5.6.2. External Authentication (EA)

At the core of quality and credibility of assessments is the deployment of the EA scheme across LMETB's FET provision. Marking, the transfer of results, adherence to specification and overall accuracy form an essential core objective of this process. Currently recruitment is from an LMETB panel and this does pose a significant challenge particularly as it is preferable to have subject specialist appointed to the role. The development of a sectoral model by the ETBI FET Directors' QA

Strategy Group is awaited and will contribute to national standards and consistency among the pool of External Authenticators.

### 5.6.3.Results Approval Panel (RAP)

At centre level the Results Approval Panel is responsible for approving assessment results and requesting certification.  The Results Approval Panel plays a significant role in the following areas:

- Cross award evaluation of marks
- Review of EA report
- Learner appeals
- Validation of overall processes and procedures
- Documentation of its deliberations
- Acknowledge or reject EA report.

### 5.6.4.Learner Appeals

Learner appeals can be made to the RAPs for a time sensitive period after the issuing of results to the learner.  Many centres offer a viewing of assessment materials to the learner as a preliminary stage in the appeals process.  Currently LMETB centres manage the review of scripts with the support of a partner ETB.  Assessment materials must also be kept in a secure location for three months to facilitate this any other process arising.

Centres have their own grievance procedures for learners and the processes involved are outlined in the centre's student handbook.  Also LMETB have written procedures for learner grievances.

### 5.7.  Feedback on Programmes

Feedback from staff and learners on FET programmes and services is a vital component of FET planning and review.  In the majority of centres, learners are requested to complete evaluation forms, however there is a lack of uniformity in how these are structured and applied across centres and services. Outcomes from learner feedback depend largely on local structures and management to consider and implement same.

Staff have an opportunity to give feedback on programmes through consultations and advisory groups. Most of feedback from staff is considered at local, centre or service level, with centre/service management adjusting delivery in light of the feedback received if appropriate, or requesting /proposing programme changes to address issues raised.

Feedback from other stakeholders such as 3rd Level progression partners and employers should also be developed to inform programme review in particular.

Changes to the selection of components to be included as part of a programme are generally considered at local level, within the overall existing programme structure. If a need is identified to develop a new programme or to review a programme, a request is made through the QA Office/AEO for consideration by the PAG/FET Director.  Approvals to deliver a new programme is managed through the FET planning process and is approved by the FET Director.

## 5.8. Access, Transfer and Progression

LMETB does not have a specific Access, Transfer and Progression policy in place, rather it operates and relies on local and other arrangements to support students accessing and moving between and from various programmes.  There are, however informal agreements between centres and 3rd level partners.  The signing of a memorandum of understanding with DkIT and the neighbouring VEC's including Louth and Meath has facilitated progression.  This North East Further and Higher Education alliance provides for

- CPD for staff
- Routes for progression for learners including access from level 6 to level 7 in the 2nd year
- Feedback from learners who have progressed into course review at FET level

The extension of similar formal arrangements to other 3rd level providers is ongoing.  The experience of NEFHEA has been positive for both FET and DkIT and development of the scheme is subject to regular review.

Access, transfer and progression is a key area that was identified during the executive self-evaluation process for policy development. Entry arrangements for learner, including admissions policies, learner induction, reasonable accommodations and pre-entry assessment, need to be reviewed. A policy is also required on the recognition of prior learning and identification and tracking of progression pathways is also an area for improvement.  Internal progression from Community, BTEI and Youthreach needs to be closely monitored and evaluated going forward.

LMETB needs to set up an Access, Transfer and Progression working group to plan for the development and implementation of a specific policy for LMETB in line with the QQI Policy Restatement "Policy and Criteria for Access Transfer and Progression in Relation to Learner for Providers of Further Education and Training" [NQAI 2003, Re-stated 2015].

## 5.9. Recognition of Prior Learning

RPL is an essential component in FET adult learning.  LMETB are committed to cooperating with any national processes in order to have transferability of RPL between providers nationally and internationally within the European context.  LMETB is committed to implementing any national guidelines in the interests of consistency ensuring the best RPL outcomes for the learner. LMETB facilitates and encourages all learners to enter education and enables and supports them to find the level, which best suits their entry-level knowledge skills and competency; This is established by use of assessment on entry and referral to our Guidance and Recruitment Services.  RPL has not been a significant factor in the FET sector to date.

## 5.10.      FET Future Planning

## Subcommittees of the Governance /Management Committee

These subcommittees are a key part of LMETB's strategy to provide region wide QA structures. Detailed Terms of Reference for each distinct subcommittee and a clear outline of the reporting structure will be developed.

Programme Development, Evaluation & Review Sub-committee

- Standardised programme development procedures will be in introduced
- Effective consultation processes developed
- The working Group Programme. Design, Development and Review will devise a specific set of standardised processes for FET programme development
- Programme Request Proposal Form: a standardised 'Programme Request Proposal Form' for approval to the LMETB Programme Approval Committee.

Assessment sub-committee

- Results approval Panel(s)
- Appeals committee(s)

Quality Assurance Sub-committee

- Documentation of QA procedures covering all education and training activities
- System wide QA Review Reporting mechanism: monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of the procedures so that exceptional points (positive or negative) arising from feedback can be communicated to the ETB so that cross-centre issues, themes and supports can be identified and addressed
- The Committee will also consider results of thematic QA reviews and recommendations on changes to QA policies

Teaching & Learning Sub-committee

- TEL Strategy
- CPD Strategy
- Capacity to deliver statements

Communications Sub-committee

- Managing the public dissemination of QA policies and procedures,
- Develop processes/communication channels to review learner/staff feedback at ETB level

Project Specific Working Groups in the Following Areas:

- Programme. Design, Development and Review
- Learner Assessment
- Monitoring evaluation & review
- CPD
- Communications
- TEL
- Employer Engagement
- QA Review

LMETB FET Quality Assurance Office

A unit to assist with developing, implementing and monitoring an effective, integrated QA system for all LMETB provision with the broad role responsibility of providing:

- A regional QA support to LMETB centres, PLCs and FET Centres, and,
- Development and management support for cross-centre LMETB Quality Assurance processes.

The above is subject to dedicated resources/funding being made available by DES/SOLAS.

# 6. The Learner Experience

## 6.1. Introduction

Education for the adult learner is based on the principles of self-direction, choice, personal circumstances, motivation and experience.  Fundamental to andragogy is that the adult learner chooses to engage with learning and LMETB are committed to facilitate that engagement.  Thus the learner voice is key to that educational philosophy.  Likewise, the diversity of the FET programmes from specific purpose apprenticeship and traineeship, literacy and numeracy programmes and programmes to Level 6 target particular societal requirements and vary to meet the needs of the individual learner.  Also the principles of inclusion and the special needs adult learner form an important part of LMETB's ongoing provision.

The adult learner profile is varied and includes:

- Early school leavers
- Post Leaving Cert. students
- Students with literacy and numeracy needs
- Learners with special needs
- Minorities, marginalised or disadvantaged learners
- Adult Learners for whom English is not the primary language,
- Long-term unemployed
- Short-term unemployed
- Carers and homemakers returning to the workplace
- Learners requiring new skills or updated skills
- Apprentices
- Employees requiring specific skills
- College leavers
- Learners requiring alternative access (progression) to 3rd level
- Those requiring skills for work

## 6.2. Learner Admission

### 6.2.1.Communication with Potential Learners

Learners access courses by application through a variety of means through the Adult Guidance Recruitment and Information Service, referral from the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, school career guidance websites, LMETB website and social media platforms, advertisements, brochures, local radio and not least the personal recommendation of former students.  LMETB values its corporate reputation built up over many years by its providers for quality educational provision for the adult learner.  LMETB will continue to reassess its communications and media programmes with a view to reaching the maximum amount of potential learners in the region.

### 6.2.2.Admissions Policies

Each FET section has an individual admission's policy.  Each policy reflects LMETB mission statement and core values.  The core areas of entry criteria and interview policy and procedures.  Typically, a potential learner will attend for interview at which a clear written interview marking scheme is

followed.  On this basis the experience, competence and skills required for the course will be assessed and reflected in the marking scheme developed in each centre.

## 6.3.  Recognition of Prior Learning

Currently Recognition of Prior Learning is facilitated through our assessment and guidance processes in LMETB.  LMETB is committed to working with the stakeholders at a national level (QQI and ETBI) to roll out an RPL mechanism that has national relevance and attributes value to the learner's experience.  To this end the QQI Validation of Programmes of Education and Training policy will be complied with in the future development of RPL by LMETB.

Each constituent sector of FET is required to produce a Learner Handbook or Diary

- Duration and times of course
- Exam and assessment schedule
- Certification
- Facilities
- Assessment Policy
- Exams Policy
- Appeals
- Plagiarism
- Code of Conduct/Learner Contract
- General Course Information
- Use of ICT policy
- Complaints and Grievances Procedures
- Health and Safety

## 6.4.  Learner Feedback

Listening to learners can inform planning throughout the organisation.  It also values the equal partnership between learner, teacher and organisation in providing a qualitative experience for the learner.

The learner voice and mechanisms in each centre to evaluate the learning experience are based on the following principals.

- The right to ask questions and receive answers
- Be consulted and included in decisions
- Be treated with respect and dignity
- Be supported in learning
- Receive feedback on their progress

## 6.5.  Learning from the Learner

LMETB believes that learner consultations should be designed in such a way to assist in future planning. Learners are encouraged and facilitated where required to give feedback on all courses and programmes, this is captured both in video, audio file and in written format dependant on the skills of the learners. LMETB greatly value the learner's voice as it reflects their experience of our service. LMETB colleges and centres review annually all evaluations/comments from learners, and they inform

future planning and resourcing of services.  The voice of our learner is to be found on national and local radio programmes, talking of their experiences of LMETBs FET services.  LMETB learners are to be seen in television series dedicated solely to our learners, and finally they are to be seen in our books of learner writings, where we capture the centre's learners' efforts in short story, narrative, reminiscence or verse.  All are available on our website to view.  LMETB actively encourage and enable learners to attend learner events at national level where they have a national voice and can inform policy making nationally.  A standardised exit interview may be of benefit to the organisation for planning purposed.  LMETB will continue to facilitate and encourage the learner voice to both inform and support our quality assurance planning and review processes.

## 6.6.  The Learner and Progression

LMETB prides itself on a long tradition of enabling and supporting learners in their pathway and journey of learning. To this end, LMETB have supported and resourced, transitioning programmes and taster programmes which enable learners to try new courses without fear. Learners are also supported to transition between programmes and to build on prior learning.  This is evidenced very much as learners move from adult literacy levels 1 ,2 and 3 into programmes such as VTOS, where learners can gain level 4 certification and then from VTOS and Youthreach to move to a level 5 training or PLC programmes. Progression options are clearly identified for learners by means of both group and one to one on going engagement with the Adult Guidance and Information Service, working with staff and centre management to enable and support transition and progression. This support may sometimes require consultation and support of external stakeholders, such as Child and Family Support Services, Department of Social Protection, Department of Justice or Local Authorities to name but a few.  LMETB operates a case conference type model, so as to ensure that where relevant to a learner, all parties are at the table so as to ensure ease of transition and progression. For this to happen, the permission of the learner is required and they are active agents in all aspects of the process.  This has proven with particularly difficult cases to be extremely effective in aiding progression and ensuring QA policies and procedures are adhered to at all times.

## 6.7.  Support for Learners

LMETB enable and support learners in a variety of ways, dependent upon identified/assessed needs and the requirements of specific courses.  Due to the nature of programme target groups, every effort is made to ensure that there are no barriers to participation for learners, regardless of level, to this end, courses, tend not to have an economic fee charged at point of entry. Where a fee is charged, it is clearly advertised. The fee charged can only cover the cost of the course, as LMETB is a not for profit organisation.

## 6.8.  Flexible Learning Opportunities

Flexible learning opportunities are offered, both in urban and in rural locations, on both a full and part-time basis.  Courses are scheduled during the day, in the evening and can offer a combination of blended and on line options, so as to enable and support attendance and participation of persons whose means or access to education and training opportunities may have been limited.

Resources required for courses are provided by LMETB, to enable and support participation, this includes books, materials, paper, stationary, calculators, use of computers practical equipment etc. Where textbooks are required, they are provided on a loan basis and returned at the end of the course to LMETB.

Where learners may have particular special needs, LMETB will make every effort to enable and support the learner's participation. This is subject to limitations in some instances, as PAs are not funded for some courses. However, where ICT is required to enable participation this resourced e.g. Loop system to enable those with hearing loss, large text print books, audio books for partially sighted etc .....

### 6.9.  Guidance and Counselling

Guidance and Counselling and the promotion of student wellbeing are a critically important part of LMETBs service to its learners and one which we have has been of significant assistance in both retaining learners in services and enabling re-entry to services after ill health.  Indeed, to participate in programmes whilst undergoing treatment for a medical condition is something that LMETB has been assisting learners with for many years.  The support of tutors, teachers and ancillary staff in enabling participation is acknowledged and very much valued.

### 6.10.      ICT and the Learner

LMETB has always embraced new methods of using ICT as a mechanism for enhancing communication and as learning resources.  The use of ICT and in particular enhanced communication methods will continue to be developed to their fullest potential.   Examples of these resources are:

- Moodle
- OneNote
- Websites
- Email
- On line assessment
- Blended Learning
- Video and other Platforms.

To fully synthesise the experience and the voice of the learner into policy formulation and good teaching and learning strategies, LMETB recommits itself to:

- Develop further the role of learner/student councils and incorporate their deliberations into planning
- Provide as part of the learner experience an opportunity for the learner to participate in a review of their learning
- To ensure that all learner feedback is evaluated and the results of that process acted upon
- To developed strategies that prioritise the process of listening to the learner.

### 6.11.      FET Future Planning

Guide to Assessment for Learners

Develop guide to assessment for learners covering marking schemes, plagiarism, assessment, feedback, portfolio preparation and submission.

Learner Handbook/Learner Contract

Supporting a positive teaching and learning experience by a review existing documentation and update as appropriate, with a view to standardisation of information dissemination and review process.

Repeats and Appeals

Agree standardised procedures will be in place for the management of Repeats for Learners at level 4, 5 and 6

Agree new policy and procedures for all centres for learner appeals.

Access, Transfer and Progression

- Develop a policy on ATP
- Review existing progression pathways and identify additional progression opportunities
- Expand the relationship with third level institutions/colleges
- Standardise pre-entry assessments across the ETB so as to enable placement of that learners are placed at the correct access level in all FET centres
- Develop a policy and procedures for the recognition of prior learning in the context of national developments

Improve Communications with Learner

- Enhance and extend existing learner representation mechanisms
- Development of FET learner Fora to inform programme/service development

- Development of a customer learner charter.

# 7. Information and Data Management

The purpose of effective data management in LMETB is:

- To inform good decision making and planning
- The communicate effectively with funding partners
- To ensure that learner results and records are accurate and up to date
- To monitor progress in achieving both qualitative and quantitative targets.

All data stored on LMETB systems is subject to legislation and policies on Data Protection within the organisation. Data is only stored and used for the intended purpose and is mindful of the protection of privacy. LMETB is currently reviewing its procedures and holding a series of information meetings in response to the new the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

## 7.1. Programme Learner Support System (PLSS)

LMETB is currently involved in the roll out of the Programme Learner Support System. Prior to this, there were a variety of systems in place including:

- Salespulse (Adult Literacy, Community Education, English for Speakers of Other Languages, Back to Education Initiative and Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme)
- P-Pod for PLC returns
- An Excel based survey for Youthreach.

The PLSS system will replace the current legacy systems and will be fully compliant the General Data Protection Regulation which will become law across the EU in May 2018.

Key components of the PLSS system are:
- The National Course Calendar which facilitates the scheduling of courses. All course data will be transmitted to the Department Employment Affairs and Social Protection ACM(BOMI) system. All courses will be available to the Department with a view to referral of potential learners. The availability of this information to the general public will be facilitated by the FETCH website ([www.fetchcourses.ie](www.fetchcourses.ie)) where learners can apply on line for courses provided by LMETB. The learning journey of each learner can be tracked on the system using the key field identifier of the PPS number. It is also envisaged that local centre's MOODLE content will be linked to the National Course Calendar
- The National Programme Database is a central data repository for courses and programmes. There is a central SOLAS national programme database and LMETB has its own partition where its programmes are stored. The NPDB facilitates scheduling of programmes on the National Colander. LMETB data on courses is available to other users in a read only format. A full programme development process must take place before it can be uploaded/published.

## 7.2. Funding Allocation Request and Reporting (FARR)

The system currently operates on the submission of projected figures in January for the following year. Actual returns are inputted for the periods January-May, June-September and October – December. The following data is recorded:

- Number of learners starting
- Retention figures
- Full or partial award data.
- Progression to employment, higher education or other courses

## 7.3. Planning

LMETB informs it planning processes with reference to CSO, POBAL and AIRO demographic systems to map provision and identify potential changes in the learner profile. More locally LMETB participates in CYPSC in both counties and in the LDP. This data also informs planning. LMETB intends to develop greater consultation procedures with its learners and this data is expected to be rich in qualitative data assisting LMETB to better meet the needs of learners.

## 7.4. Learner Communication and Commitment

LMETB is committed to the operation of learner friendly ICT systems. Moodle, One Note, Onedrive, Office 365 and email for learners and other platforms are operated with a view to providing an effective means of communication in both directions. LMETB is committed to the development of a Technology Enhanced Learning Strategy (TEL) strategy to develop the role of ICT in learning.

## 7.5. FET Future Planning

Development of a Technology Enhanced Learning Strategy and the appointment of a dedicated staff member to lead the strategy- LMETB will conduct a benchmarking exercise to support the development of a Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Action Plan.

LMETB will input data using appropriate systems which provide statistics on FET learner outcomes for LMETB, SOLAS and DES purposes

Implementation of a mechanism for interpreting and analysing data available from various reporting systems so that the results relating to accreditation, progression, educational/job placement outcomes can be used at centre/ETB level in terms of programme review and identification of areas for improvement.

# 8. Collaborations and Stake Holder Relationships

## 8.1. National Stakeholders

### 8.1.1. Department of Education and Skills (DES)

While many of the stakeholders at a national level have been established by statute, LMETB is very much directly engaged with the DES in terms of:

- Teacher salaries which is the largest single part of the FET budget
- Regulation by circular letter
- ETB governance
- Adherence to statutory obligations.

The DES maintains a key role in FET provision in LMETB.

### 8.1.2. Other Departments of Government

LMETB is currently engaged in providing through PLSS in particular, an ever closer relationship with the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP). LMETB is committed to developing deeper relationships with the DEASP to retrain learners, assist in reducing youth unemployment, prepare homemakers for a return to the workplace and provide programmes to tackle long term and structural and regional unemployment.

LMETB is also compliant with the sound financial principles as set out by circulars from the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

### 8.1.3. Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI)

LMETB is a constituent member of ETBI which has a statutory function to plan and provide for Further Education and Training in the sector.

ETBI represents ETBs at a national level. LMETB is active in assisting national policy formulation through the ETBI FET Directors' QA Strategy Group and other fora. To this end, a number of key areas of development can be identified:

- Collaboration between ETBs in programme/module development
- Common strategies in QA development
- Assessment policies
- A new EA model
- Providing a general forum and conduit to solving, not only QA but common FET problems in general.

### 8.1.4. Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)

LMETB is committed to adherence to QQI Statutory Sector Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines and the Education and Training Boards Sector Specific Guidelines. Provision of QA processes must take into account the size and scale of the individual provision centres, the type of programme and the background of the learner. This is a particular challenge for LMETB given the geographical and demographic variances that exist in the region. The monitoring of a consistent, single region wide QA system will require a well monitored, multi-layered system to be in place. These refer to the many schools, colleges, training centres and community-based, adult education services, and contracted providers that are engaged in the delivery and assessment of education and training programmes.

Through the planned QA office and the proposed new QA structures, LMETB will be in a position to offer effective oversight and governance for all its layers of complexity in provision.  LMETB will also be required to provide oversight in terms of governance and monitoring in relation to contracted training to ensure sufficient levels of quality for learners.  LMETB will consider risk and capacity and resources to provide its programmes will work closely with QQI to inform where adverse changes occur or where particular programmes have reached the end of their life cycle.

LMETB will continue to engage with QQI and continuously review and monitor its provision as a vital part of the QA cycle. LMETB will continue to develop programmes in conjunction with QQI to best meet the needs of learners, partners and stakeholders in the region.

### 8.1.5. Seirbhísí Oideachais Leanunaigh Agus Scileanna (SOLAS)

SOLAS was established under the Further Education and Training Act 2013.  A key aspect of this was the incorporation of the FÁS training centre in Dundalk into LMETB and the TQSF processes into the organisation.  It is the key FET regulatory body with a central role in planning, funding and strategic planning of the sector from a national perspective.  As a key funding partner LMETB works closely with SOLAS to provide programmes that are of tangible benefit for the learner.  LMETB is committed to gathering and transmitting both quantitative data and learner experience (qualitative data) to SOLAS to assist in planning quality provision both regionally and nationally.  LMETB works in conjunction with SOLAS as its funding body in furtherance of the Further Education and Training Plan and submits a service plan (FARR planning) for funding on a yearly basis.  Funding from SOLAS can be conditional in terms of the Further Education and Training Plan.

## 8.2.  European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET)

While much of the innovation in the area of QA has a European dimension as a commitment to streamlining post qualification learner travel and freedom of movement, LMETB will continue to engage with EQAVET as part of its commitment to a Europe wide quality assures qualifications objective.  Engagement will also provide a degree of futureproofing of its LMETB planning and provision.  LMETB fully subscribes to the EQAVET Mission which states:

> *"European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET)*
> *brings together the EU Member States, the Social Partners and the European*
> *Commission to develop and improve quality assurance in European VET systems*
> *within the context of the implementation of the European Quality Assurance*
> *Reference Framework"*

## 8.3.  Local Stake Holder Relationships

### 8.3.1. The North East Further and Higher Education Alliance (NEFHEA)

LMETB's commitment to this local stakeholder has been referred to in Sections 2.3 and 5.4 of this document.  That commitment benefits the learner in terms of:

- Ease of progression for learners
- Feedback from students who have progressed
- CPD for staff
- Assistance in planning integrated programmes.

LMETB and its member colleges will continue to engage with NEFHEA and develop additional structures of mutual benefit.

### 8.3.2. Local Agencies

LMETB works closely with all local organisations.  In particular, LMETB is represented at Director level on CYPSC.  LMETB also works closely with the local authorities in Louth and Meath on the local development planning process.  This assists in reducing duplication of services, exchange of valuable information and data informing planning and provision.  LMETB interfaces with a large number of stakeholders/agencies to support partnership and collaborative action examples listed hereunder:

- MOU with SOLAS
- MOU with DSP/DSEP
- Protocols with the LEOs
- Protocols with the Libraries
- Interagency collaboration with HSE North East
- DES  Regional Skills Forum North East, Associated Action Plan
- DES regional skills forum Mid East, Associated Action Plan
- LCDC Meath, Associated sub groups and Action Plan templates
- LCDC  Louth, Associated sub groups and Action Plan templates
- Louth Leader Partnership Associated sub groups and Action Plan templates
- Meath Leader Partnership Associated sub groups and Action Plan templates
- Louth County Childcare Committee and associated sub committee
- Meath County Childcare Committee and associated sub committee
- Action Plan for Jobs (DEJI)
- Progression Forums NEFHEA (PLC and DKIT), Blanchardstown, Tallaght and Maynooth  (FE to HE working group)
- Chambers of Commerce Louth and various Meath
- Children and Young People Services Committees Louth and Meath
- Various Learner centred Planning groups Louth /Meath; TUSLA, JLO
- Representative- Staff and Learners ; NALA and Aontas.

### 8.3.3. Local Employers

LMETB works in partnership with local employer representative groupings to enable and support communication and partnership working.  The recently launched Employer Ambassador Award Scheme has been very successful in recognising employers' investment with LMETB services. Currently local employers, businesses and industry provide a high level of service to learners through work experience schemes.  LMETB values the role and level of opportunity that this gives the learner in preparation to enter or re-enter the workplace. LMETB is committed to working with and listening to employers with a view to further develop the scheme.

The organisational reputation of LMETB programmes is at a high level among local employers. Continued improvements in QA will ensure that this reputation is maintained and enhanced.  To this end LMETB is committed to maintaining high standards of provision so employers can have confidence in our learners' ability to "do what it says on the certificate" when they enter the workplace. LMETB will improve its engagement with employers and their local representative organisations to include them in a dialog with a view to an ever improved and relevant service.

### 8.4. FET Future Planning

Employer Engagement

Review the interaction between points of Employer Engagement across FET centres and at a wider ETB level with QA procedures to ensure that responses to the employers' needs are managed in a streamlined effective manner, minimising duplication and ensuring the most relevant programme development response is delivered with appropriate accreditation, if necessitated.

# 9. Apprenticeships/Traineeships and Work Based Learning

Through the National Skills Strategy 2025, the Action Plan for Education 2016-2018 and as part of the current Programme for Government, Ireland aims to significantly grow work-based learning over the coming five years using the apprenticeship and traineeship modes of learning and skills development.[1]

Features of apprenticeship and traineeship (2016)

Note: The table below presents current state – a number of the elements below will change during 2017-2020

|  | Apprenticeship | Traineeship |
|---|---|---|
| Legislation | Governed directly by legislation – currently 1967 Industrial Training Act | Not governed directly by legislation |
| Employment basis | Starts with a contract of employment | Starts with enrolment on an education and training course |
| Industry involvement | Industry-led – requires good industry support and involvement from the outset | Led by education and training providers but based on identified industry skills need and requires industry support and involvement from the outset |
| Time on the job | Minimum of 50% on the job and up to 80% | Generally, a minimum of 30% on the job |
| Qualifications level(s) | Can be at Levels 5-10 on the National Framework of Qualifications | Currently between Levels 4-6 on the National Framework of Qualifications |
| Duration | Between 2 and 4 years | Between 6 months – 2 years |
| Target cohorts | Open to all, including those already in employment | Unemployed people |
| Payment to apprentices/trainees | Employer pays a apprentice a salary | No payment by employer to trainee; trainee currently in receipt of income support from D/SP |
| Numbers | 3,472 apprentice registrations forecast for 2016. 10,316 apprentices in the system nationally; 3919+ employers | An estimated 2,500 enrolments on traineeship in 2016, 1,000+ employers |

*Figure 25http://www.regionalskills.ie/Documents-Publications/Action-Plan-to-Expand-Apprenticeship-and-Traineeship-in-Ireland-2016-2020.pdf*

## 9.1. Apprenticeships Provision

Apprenticeship is a programme of education and training, which combines learning in the work place with learning in a training centre or educational college. It provides the opportunity for learning

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[1] http://www.regionalskills.ie/Documents-Publications/Action-Plan-to-Expand-Apprenticeship-and-Traineeship-in-Ireland-2016-2020.pdf

acquired off-the-job to be applied and further developed under supervision in the workplace. It is delivered via a combination of flexible learning options - online, blended and off-the-job learning in increments/blocks

Apprentices are employed by a SOLAS-approved employer for the duration of the programme which is generally between 2-4 years. Apprenticeship programmes provide at least 50% workplace-based learning.

There are seven phases in an apprenticeship (see diagram below) – Phases 1, 3, 5 and 7 are on-the-job, whilst Phase 2, 4 and 6 are off-the-job.[2]
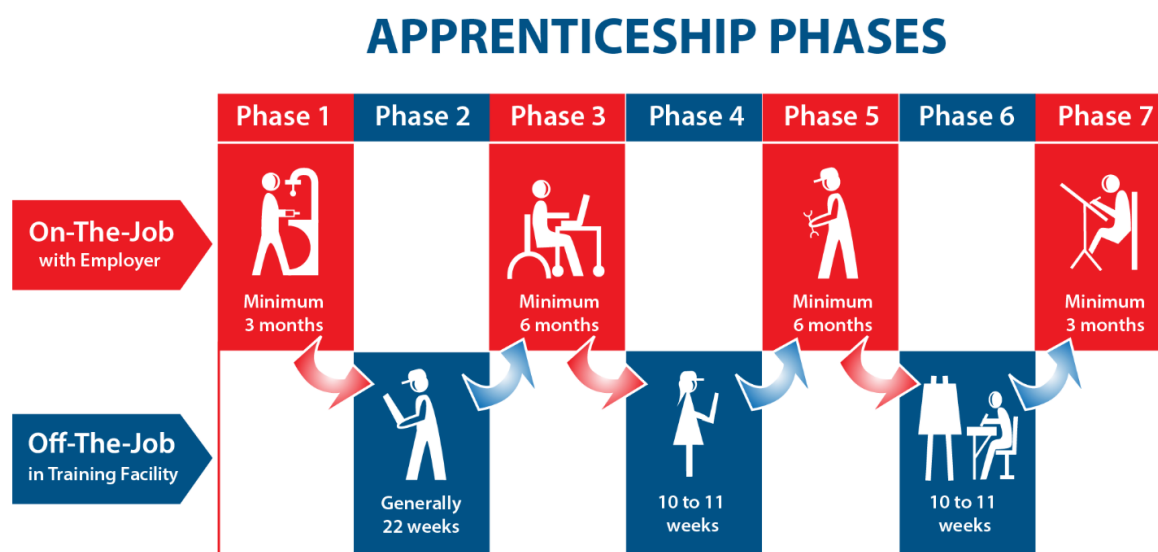


*Figure 26 Apprenticeship Phases*

New developments in expanding the range of apprenticeships available have been developed under the 'Generation Apprenticeship', which is a major expansion project to more than double the number of learners of all ages and backgrounds taking the apprenticeship route. The Apprenticeship Council, in accordance with the Apprenticeship Implementation Plan:

1.  Develops Calls for Proposals for apprenticeships in areas outside of the existing apprenticeships

2.  Examines and analyses proposals arising from the Calls for Proposals

3.  Reports to the Department of Education and Skills on viable new apprenticeships - having particular regard to the sustainability of the proposals received

Monitors the development by industry and education and training partners of the successful proposals into new apprenticeships, including curriculum development, awarding arrangements, duration and entry level.

### 9.2. Stakeholders

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[2] http://www.apprenticeship.ie/en/employers/Pages/EmployerInfo.aspx

The following are the key stakeholders involved in apprenticeship programmes nationally:

- Apprenticeship Council
- Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection
- SOLAS
- ETBI
- FET
- HEA
- Industry Provider Consortium
- QQI

At a local level the new Network of Regional Skills Fora created as part of the Government's National Skills Strategy provides an opportunity for employers and the education and training system to work together to meet the emerging skills needs of their regions.[3]

LMETB strategic location straddles two regions: Midlands and North East. The local stakeholders involved are:

- Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection
- Construction Industry Federation
- Regional Skills North East
- ETBS
- Chambers of Commerce
- Local Enterprise Offices
- IBEC
- IDA Ireland
- Skillsnets
- 

## 9.3.  LMETB Regional Skills Training Centre (RSTC)

As a quality assured provider of both education and training services LMETB RSTC is very well placed to provide tailored programmes for local employers to enable employees to be upskilled or reskilled so as to better equip them for the ever changing needs of our growing economy. Provision includes:

- Apprenticeships
- Career Traineeships
- Community
- Contracted Training
- In-house Direct Provision - Daytime
- Evening Courses

Out of the 16 ETBs nationally, RSTC is currently ranked 6th highest in terms of the number of active apprentices. Numbers continue to grow with 310 new registrations to date in 2017, an increase of 44% since 2014.

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[3] http://www.regionalskills.ie/

It is the first training centre to provide the new pipefitting apprenticeship at Phase 2 and 4. To date there are 882 apprentices engaged with LMETB.

RSTC provides apprenticeship training for the following trades:

- Carpentry & Joinery – Phase 2 (Version 4)
- Electrical - Phase 2 (Version 4)
- Metal Fabrication - Phase 2 (Version 4)
- Motor Mechanics - Phase 2 (Version 2)
- Pipefitting - Phase 2 (Version 2); Phase 4 & Phase 6
- Plumbing - Phase 2 (Version 4)
- Toolmaking - Phase 2 (Version 4)
- Wood Manufacturing and Finishing - Phase 2 (Version 2)


Of the trades listed above, the following depicts the number of programmes in each category that commenced in 2017:

Phase 2 (Version 2)

- 1 x Motor (20 weeks)
- 1 x Pipefitting (20 weeks)
- 1 x Wood Manufacturing (20 weeks)
- 0 x Toolmaking (Toolmaking provision is currently paused pending approval to recruit replacement instructor)


Phase 2 (Version 4)

- 2 x Plumbing (21 weeks)
- 3 x Electrical programmes (22weeks)
- 3 x Carpentry and Joinery (21 weeks)
- 1 x Metal Fabrication (22 weeks)

*(N.B. The above figures do not include the number of programmes that were commenced in 2016 and completed in 2017)*

Through our Regional Skills and Training Centre we provide services relating to apprenticeships across all registered trades. Our services in the field of apprenticeships involves:

- Assessing new employers with regards to their suitability to register apprentices and the requirements and obligations of this.
- Assisting employers in the registration process after apprentices are recruited.
- Monitoring apprentice progress in company and college/training centre block release.
- Assist with apprentices who change employers, are made redundant, leave and return to apprenticeship, and also assist apprentices who are struggling to pass examinations with extra supports.

- Informing employers on changes to existing apprenticeships, new apprenticeship trades being introduced and new developing trades to meet technological changes requiring new emerging skill sets.
- Final completion certification and arrangement of award ceremonies.[4]

Our Senior Training Advisors (AO's) are responsible for the validation and verification of 'Suitability to Train' of all employers registered by Coordinating Providers of any new Apprenticeships

## 9.4. Specifically Tailored Education and Training Courses/Programmes

Some recent examples of training designed around employer's needs are in the areas of:

- Bus and Coach Driving
- Call Centre training
- Retail
- Engineering

LMETB has in partnership with, the Department of Social Protection (DSP) and local employers developed tailored courses/programmes which enable the identification and upskilling /partnering of persons who are currently on the live register with local companies who may be preparing to increase their work force.

## 9.5. Traineeships

Traineeships have been part of the Training Centre in Dundalk offering for over twenty years. Over that period there have been a significant number of trainee participants, with a large number of participant companies in the North East.  Today's Career Traineeship programmes have a number of key features. Its primary aim is to provide work-based learning in partnership with employers, improving employment outcomes for participants and recruitment, retention and productivity within industry. Traineeships are generally 40 weeks in duration, beginning in an education and training environment, with work placement following either during or after the on-campus learning. A traineeship includes a substantial period of time (generally 30% minimum) in the workplace. Development of a traineeship programme is triggered by identification of a skills need within a particular industry. Successful trainee participants receive an award or industry certification at Levels 4-to-6 on the National Framework of Qualifications. The work-based component is supported by an in-company mentor/supervisor who oversees completion of each trainee's skills checklist on-the-job. To date the RSTC has been responsible for the successfully delivery of two Career Traineeship programmes in the hospitality and engineering operations areas.

## 9.6. Quality Assurance

All provision within the RSTC is underpinned by the TQAS QA policies and procedures. These overarching QA governance arrangements cover a range of programmes {including day and evening provision} and also for second provider procured training outside of the centre {Contracted/Community/STP}. The process includes suitably qualified and appropriately trained

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[4] http://rstc.ie/images/pdfs/ServicetoBusinessLMETB.pdf

instructors, Internal Verification, External Authentication and Results Approval Panel that oversees the learner's journey through to completion. Additionally, the TQAS sets out policies, procedures, and regulations regarding Assessment Malpractice including Plagiarism, Reasonable Accommodation, Assessment Deadlines, Compassionate Consideration, Repeat of Assessment Activity, Security issues regarding assessment including examination conditions, security of assessment processes and learner assessment evidence.

In addition to the above, the centre also provides City & Guilds accredited programmes, which are governed by its quality assurance procedures and delivered within the TQAS context.

The 2012 Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act also underpins apprenticeship, supporting validation and quality assurance arrangements for programmes nationally. The Quality Assurance processes and requirements for the original 32 craft apprenticeships has been the responsibility of SOLAS, as approved through QQI's validation procedures and policy and SOLAS have issued to the ETBs, The SOLAS Craft Apprenticeship Assessment Rules. This document underpins the planning, coordination, conduct, marking and storage of assessments, the recording and approval of results, and the verification and authentication of all craft apprenticeship assessments leading to the request of an award from recognised bodies whose awards are within or aligned with the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

## 9.7. Work Experience

Work experience is fully covered by LMETB employers' liability and public liability insurance and these documents and polices have been updated by LMETB last month.

As there is extensive coverage and opportunities for work experience with LMETB, learners have the opportunity to participate in weekly, and or block periods of time for work experience. Centres/ providers liaise with potential employers in making the necessary arrangements regarding insurance documentation, clarity of the role of the learner and the role of the employer, completing timesheets for payable allowances and site visits by centre staff during work experience. Each Centre/Provider has within their internal procedures responsibility for induction and pre work experience preparation including a code of conduct or code of practice.

In certain work experience placements learners will be completing competency documents which are directly linked to their learning such as QQI level 5 (5N1356) Work Experience. These documents including learner records are subject to the same IV, EA and RAP procedures in place for all modulates within our certification processes.

LMETB also offer a linked work experience programme which is a short term 20 week for learners who are exiting a programme but wish to continue with on the job training

In September 2017 ETBI initiated a review of all facets of the work experience element of education and training programmes this review included modules and many templates to assist Centres/providers utilise best practice. This review is now complete and in LMETB Centres/Providers have been issued with these revised templates and modules.

Stakeholders in the delivery of work experience are the tutors preparing the learners for work experience. The varied and extensive pool of employer locally and regional are of critical importance who provide direct supervision, guidance and support to the learner and the relevant centre keeping in mind that the learner remains central to the three-way partnership. Local Government, Local

Health and Community Services and Community Groups are central stakeholders to providing community and public service work experience where relevant as certain training and learning programmes are directly linked to community development and local public service.

### 9.8. FET Future Planning

LMETB recognises that there is a national review of the TQAS and LMETB are happy to support same.

Employer Engagement

To ensure that responses to the employers' needs are managed in a streamlined effective manner, minimising duplication and ensuring the most relevant programme development response is delivered with appropriate accreditation.

# 10.    Conclusions and Planned Actions

The Self Evaluation Process has been of considerable benefit in outlining both strengths and weaknesses in the FET provision in LMETB.  The process produced key recommendations outlined in the Quality Improvement Plan.  The value of LMETB's corporate reputation is contingent on placing QA at the centre of all organisational processes.

The conclusions/recommendations can be summarised as follows:

Conclusion 1

A new QA structure within LMETB comprising of key committees in the area of Communications, Programme Development, Assessment, Quality Assurance and Teaching and Learning.

Conclusion 2

A structured plan to move from the five existing Quality Assurance Plans to an LMETB wide QA mechanism.

Conclusion 3

The establishment of a Quality Assurance Service to support and develop QA across the varied provision units.

Conclusion 4

Further embed FET Risk Management Processes as a key axiom of the organisation.

Conclusion 5

A commitment to listening to and learning from the learner by improving existing learner QA processes with a view to enhancing the learner experience.

Conclusion 6

To build on partnership and cooperation with stakeholders to elevate the quality of FET service provision across the LMETB region.

Conclusion 7

To review, explore and enhance the creative use of IT in all aspects of provision in terms of both administration and teaching and learning.

Conclusion 8

To commit to regular review and self-evaluation across the LMETB region with a view to making QA a dynamic part of the organisational process and create a sense of ownership of QA by all partners in the process.

LMETB is committed to delivering on its mission and core principles with the learner at the centre of its activities through the provision of innovative, quality services, with timely evaluations and embracing the need to constantly review, renew and embrace change.

# Appendix 1 List of Abbreviations

| AIRO | All-Island Research Observatory |
| BTEI | Back to Education Initiative |
| CAS | Common Awards Structure |
| CSO | Central Statistics Office |
| CYPSC | Children and Young Peoples Services Committees |
| DEASP | Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection |
| EA | External Verification |
| EQAVET | European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training |
| ESE | Executive Self Evaluation |
| ETBI | Education and Training Boards Ireland |
| FARR | Funding Allocation and Request Reporting |
| FÁS | An Foras Áiseanna Saothair |
| FET | Further Education and Training |
| GDPR | General Data Protection Regulation |
| IV | Internal Verification |
| LDP | Local Development Plan |
| LMETB | Louth & Meath Education and Training Board |
| NAPH | National Assessment Procedures Handbook |
| NEFHEA | North East Further and Higher Education Alliance |
| PDC | Programme Development Committee |
| PLC | Post Leaving Certificate |
| PLSS | Programme Learner Support System |
| QA | Quality Assurance |
| QQI | Quality and Qualifications Ireland |
| RAP | Results Approval Panel |
| RSTC | Regional Skills Training Centre |
| SOLAS | Seirbhísí Oideachais Leanunaigh Agus Scileanna |

TEL          Technology Enhanced Learning

TQAS      Transitional Quality Assurance System

VTOS      Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme

# Appendix 2 Nationally Agreed Terms of Reference



## ETB EXECUTIVE SELF-EVALUATION [2017]
## TERMS OF REFERENCE *[Version 0.1]*

### Background and Context

The 16 Education and Training Boards (ETBs) were established in 2013 following the amalgamation of former Vocational Education and Training Committees (VECs) and the transfer of 13 former FÁS training centres.

The 2012 Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act 2012 sets out detailed responsibilities that apply to the ETBs for quality assuring their programmes of education and training and related services. Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) published Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines in April 2016 and Sector Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for the Education and Training Boards in May 2017.[5] Since establishment in 2013 ETBs have been operating legacy quality assurance arrangements which transitioned to QQI under section 84 of the Act.

The FET Strategy 2014-2019 provides a clear policy context for quality in further education and training (FET). One of the five goals within the strategy is 'Quality Provision - *that FET will provide high quality education and training programmes and will meet national and international quality standards.*' [6] ETBs are moving now to new phase of quality assurance and establishing the foundations for the development of a sectoral QA Framework that will assure quality across the sector and enable the sector to deliver on both its statutory and policy objectives for quality. This is a transformational change and developmental process; several sectoral development projects are progressing and will impact in this regard.

### Executive Self-Evaluation

It is the responsibility of each provider, i.e. ETB, to devise procedures for quality assurance and to have its own systematic processes for evaluating its own activity and for formulating plans and recommendations for its own improvement. The self-evaluation process needs to be flexible and appropriate to the provider and its stage of development. ETBs are relatively new statutory entities, within a significant transformational change process, including for structures and governance. In the context of the requirements of QQI Core and Sector Specific QA Guidelines, there is need to evaluate the effectiveness of legacy QA procedures

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[5] http://www.qqi.ie/Publications/Publications/Sector%20specific%20QA%20Guidelines%20for%20ETBs.pdf
[6] https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Further-Education-and-Training-Strategy-2014-2019.pdf

which may no longer fit for purpose. Within the current developmental context of ETBs, this self-evaluation process is designed to:

- assist in building capacity and identify gaps within ETBs to ensure compliance with QQI statutory core and sector specific QA Guidelines
- enhance ownership of quality and quality enhancement processes
- demonstrate leadership within the ETB
- result in recommendations for improvement and priority actions for each ETB
- recognise the environment, contexts and emerging structures of the ETBs

This is an ETB executive management level self-evaluation which will be undertaken in the context of QA sectoral development projects and in accordance with these Terms of Reference.

## Purpose

The purpose of the ETB executive self-evaluation process is to evaluate the governance and management of quality assurance and the effectiveness of quality assurance procedures, and to contribute to the development of an improvement plan which will support the ETB in meeting its statutory requirements for the establishment and operation of internal quality assurance procedures, recognising the developmental and transitional contexts.

## Objectives

The objectives of the ETB Executive Self-Evaluation are:

- To contribute to and support the ETB quality improvement planning and ETB ownership and governance of quality and quality enhancement.
- To promote the improvement of quality assurance and further embedding of a quality culture in the ETB.
- To support sectoral level improvement by ensuring there is a consistency in the approach to the executive self-evaluation process, thematic focus and criteria applied self-evaluation report format and improvement plan.
- To identify current gaps and priorities for improvement in the context of QQI statutory QA guidelines.

## Process and Methodology

The executive self-evaluation will be conducted with an external advisor/facilitator(s). A project lead for the executive self-evaluation process will be identified in the ETB.

The FET management team in the ETB, in collaboration with the external facilitator(s) will identify the evidence basis for the self-evaluation, and will produce the ETB executive self-evaluation report addressing the agreed objectives, criteria and terms of reference.

The final report will be agreed and signed off through the ETB Chief Executive and will form the basis of the ETB Improvement Plan.

# Appendix 3 Independent Review by ETBI External Consultant, Dr. Trish O'Brien.

**Some summary notes that may assist with the ESE of LMETB:**

LMETB understands that the Core and Sector-Specific QA Guidelines underscore the corporate responsibilities of the ETB (through the CEO) for the quality assurance of FET; that the guidelines anticipate that the governance of the ETB will be capable of exercising oversight of the quality of FET across the education and training centres of LMETB; and that a multi-layered governance system will be put in place that connects with governance and activities at centre-level.

**Key points regarding current LMETB governance:**

o   LMETB has Audit, Finance, Board of Management, and Youthreach Committees reporting directly into its Board and has operational terms of reference for these with membership and meeting frequency identified;

o   LMETB operates an ETB SMT Group that includes the CEO, as well as an FET SMT group;

o

o   LMETB has a number of governance groups at ETB level that are focussed on particular areas of FET, such as, the FET Management QA Group and the Programme Approval Committee;

o   The ETB operates an FET Risk Management Group;

o   At a centre level, several governance forums exist.  For assessment, the most important are the Results Approval Panels, some of which take place at campus rather than individual centre level;

o   A number of important cross-centre forums also exist, which are key routes of information and consultation.  These include, the Principals' Forum, Adult Education Groups, and the ALOs Forum Group;

o   Learner feedback and staff supports are largely identified and addressed at a local level, but are supported by ETB initiatives;

o   LMETB intends building on, and improving, its existing governance systems, when deciding what revisions are needed to its current arrangements.

## Summary of areas of development LMETB is considering in its governance of QA of FET:

o   LMETB is currently placing attention on identifying how best to re-configure aspects of its current QA governance structures and to better manage the flow of information to the ETB of governance and activities that are taking place within and across its centres;

o   LMETB is considering what decisions need to be made by the CEO and SMT (for instance if decisions on resources are required) and how this decision-making will connect with its FET QA governance structure;

o   LMETB considers it very important to work on governance in conjunction with its education and training centres.  It is working with its centres to capture exactly how governance operates within its centres and between its centres and the ETB.  It has identified some inconsistencies in approval practice that it will be addressing in its revised governance system;

o   LMETB has identified that it doesn't have a consistent unit of governance that is exercising oversight of the QA of FET.  It will be addressing this gap in its revised governance system;

o   It is intended that the unit of governance LMETB identifies as extending oversight of FET governance will have a reporting role into the Risk Management Group to advise it on any areas of risk associated with the QA of FET;

o   LMETB will be reviewing the aspects of its governance that are currently operating at an ETB level and focus on QA, programmes, and assessment.  It will be looking at the terms of reference of these governance units to see if they are suitable and how they can be written more specifically to connect with and report into a higher level of oversight governance and to receive information from the centres.  It is also considering having a unit of governance at ETB level that focusses on teaching and learning;

o   LMETB intends putting in place a formal reporting mechanism from the RAPs to the ETB to provide information on quantitative assessment trends and key areas of good practice or areas for continuous improvement arising through, for instance, EA reports;

o LMETB is also considering how exceptional points (positive or negative) arising from learner and staff feedback can be communicated to the ETB so that cross-centre issues, themes and supports can be identified and addressed;

o In reviewing its governance structures, LMETB will be taking the opportunity to bring its education and training activities more closely together and to use its governance systems strategically to ensure that decision-making is supporting high-quality programme development, delivery and assessment that meets stakeholder needs;

o As in every ETB, LMETB has a significant body of work to undertake in establishing one set of QA procedures that align with the Core and Sector-Specific QA Guidelines (it currently has 5 different quality assurance systems).  When it is developing these procedures, it will cross-reference these with its governance system to ensure that decision-making responsibilities are clearly identified;

o The ETB has identified that it needs to systematically provide reports to the ETB SMT Group to ensure that the CEO, supported by the SMT, has the information required to assure himself regarding the quality of FET across the ETB.  This will be written into the terms of reference of the relevant units of governance;

o Finally, LMETB is aware of the resourcing required for the smooth operation of its FET governance system and is considering how this can be best managed within its current resources.

# Appendix 4  Composition of LMETB Board

| NAME | Nominated By |
|------|--------------|
| Oliver Tully | Louth County Council |
| Maeve Yore | Louth County Council |
| Marianne Butler | Louth County Council |
| Tomás Sharkey | Louth  County Council |
| Vacancy to be filled | Louth County Council |
| Vacancy to be filled | Meath County Council |
| Sarah Reilly | Meath County Council |
| Wayne Harding | Meath County Council |
| Sharon Tolan | Meath County Council |
| Nick Killian | Meath County Council |
| Damien O' Reilly | Meath County Council |
| Trevor Golden | Meath County Council |
| Ciarán O'Donnell | LMETB Staff Representative |
| Catherine Clair | LMETB Staff Representative |
| Ashimedua Okonkwo | LMETB Parent Representative |
| Cormac Bohan | LMETB Parent Representative |
| Bill Sweeney | Community Representative |
| Siobhán Greer | Community Representative |
| Sean Patrick Carey | Community Representative |
| Alan Breathnach | Community Representative |
| Jennifer D'Arcy (Chairperson) | Community Representative |

# Appendix 5 Risk Management Policy



## Louth and Meath Education and Training Board

## Risk Management Policy

| Document reference number | LMETB/RMP | Document initiated by | LMETB SMT |
|---|---|---|---|
| Revision number | 001 | Document drafted by | LMETB CES Section |
| Document reviewed by | SMT | Document ratified by | LMETB Board |
| Date document ratified | | Date document implemented | June 2016 |
| Assigned review period | 3 Years | Responsibility for implementation | LMETB SMT |
| Responsibility for review | SMT | Next review date | 1 year after implementation |
| Original issued by | LMETB SMT | Date of withdrawal of obsolete document | |

| Amendment History |
|---|

| Date | Revision level | Details of amendment | Approval signature |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| | | | |

## Contents

## 1. Introduction

It is the policy of Louth and Meath Education and Training Board (LMETB) that risks to the achievement of LMETB's strategic and operational objectives should be identified, assessed, managed and monitored to support the demonstration of good governance in compliance with legislation, codes of practice, standards, guidance and relevant Department circulars.

All employees are mandated to comply with this policy.

Louth and Meath ETB is committed to supporting and empowering all employees in their work to manage all identified risks and to mitigate the level of risk to a level that is as low as is reasonably practicable.

**This policy should be read in conjunction with VEC - Risk Excellence in Governance through Best Practice Risk Management Guidelines (IPB 2009) and the Code of Practice for the Governance of ETBs. (Department of Education and Skills, 2015).**

## 2. Purpose

2.1 To support all employees to comply with this policy and procedure so as to support the management of risks that could prevent the achievement of LMETB's strategic and operational objectives.

2.2 To ensure that every effort is made to manage risk appropriately to maximise potential opportunities and minimise the adverse effects of risk.

## 3. Scope

3.1 This policy and procedure applies to all employees of Louth and Meath ETB.

3.2 The effective management of risk depends on the commitment and co-operation of all staff. All staff have a significant role in the management of risk, particularly within their own areas of control. Consequently all staff are responsible for and have accountability for adherence to the principles outlined in this policy.

3.3 It is a requirement of Louth and Meath ETB that where it engages with third parties, that appropriate evidence is sought of their risk management systems and structures; the objective being to ensure that Louth and Meath ETB will not be adversely impacted by third party activities.

## 4. Governance

Corporate Governance comprises the systems and procedures by which entities are directed and controlled. In the interests of transparency and accountability, it is important that Corporate Governance of Education and Training Boards should operate to the highest standards applicable and operates in an effective, efficient and economic manner. The practice of managing those risks that have the potential to adversely impact on the strategic and operational objectives of the ETB should support the demonstration of good governance.

## 5. Objectives of Risk Management Policy

5.1   Support compliance with legislation, codes of practice, standards, guidance and Department circulars

5.2   Support implementation of management controls to mitigate risk

5.3   Support delivery of LMETB's strategic and operational objectives

5.4   Empower all employees to take ownership of risks within their scope of work

5.5   Demonstrate support for good governance

5.6   Improve business performance

5.7   Develop an enhanced awareness of business risk

5.8   Encourage innovation and improvement

5.9   Promote an integrated approach to the management of risk.

**The benefits of managing risk provides assurance that:**

5.10   Adverse events will not happen or are less likely to happen

5.11   Beneficial outcomes will be achieved or are more likely to be achieved

5.12   Awareness of managing risk becomes embedded in strategic thought and structure

5.13   Provides a framework that enables future activity to take place in a consistent and controlled manner

5.14   Improves decision-making, planning and prioritisation by comprehensive and structured understanding of business activity, volatility and project opportunity/threat

5.15   Contributes to more efficient use/allocation of capital and resources within LMETB

5.16  Reduces volatility in the non-essential areas of the activities of LMETB

5.17  Protects and enhances assets and LMETB's image and reputation

5.18  Develops and supports people and LMETB's knowledge base

5.19  Optimises operational efficiency

5.20  Enhances outputs

The management of risk will become an integral part of strategic policy decisions and inform the decision making process.

## 6. Risk

Risk can be thought of as a possible loss or other adverse consequence that has the potential to impact on an ETB's ability to achieve its objectives and fulfil its mission.  *(VEC Risk excellence in governance through best practice risk management –IPB 2009)*

Risks to the achievement of LMETB's strategic and operational objectives can be due to both internal and external events. Effective management of risk offers Louth and Meath ETB the means of improving its strategic, operational and financial management.  Managing risks can also help to minimise financial losses, service disruption, adverse publicity and compensation claims. It is important to understand that risk is a broader concept than the traditional view of merely a threat.  It also recognises the risks of taking or not taking opportunities.

Risks can exist at a number of different levels and when risk materialises it can impact at these levels resulting in increased working, increased cost and adverse or positive impact on reputation.  The levels may be Strategic, Operational, Financial, Reputational, Regulatory and Complicance.  There are nine categories associated with risk identification.

 These categories are:

1. Professional/Managerial
2. Student/Adult Learner
3. Contractual
4. Business Continuity
5. Physical
6. Legislative/Regulatory
7. Legal
8. Social

9. Financial

## 7. Risk Management

The management of risk increases the probability of success and reduces the possibility of failure.  The risks to the successful achievement of LMETB's strategic and operational objectives shall be identified, assessed, managed and monitored on a predetermined basis.

| Managing Risk: 4 step process |
| --- |
| 1.  Identify the Risks |
| 2.  Assess the Risks |
| 3.  Manage the Risks |
| 4.  Monitor and Review |

### 7.1  Identify the Risks

**Risk identification** is the process of finding, recognising and describing risks. (ISO 31000)

Identifying risk flows from the strategic and operational objectives of LMETB. Where a strategic decision is taken or undertaken then the major risks associated with that decision or activity should be added to the risk register.

New risks arising from a new Strategic Statement shall be identified, assessed, managed and monitored.  New risks shall be identified arising from:

- Non-conformances
- Incidents
- Near misses
- Complaints
- Claims
- Reports

These risk should be reported to the Risk Manager for inclusion/deletion on the Risk Register.

### 7.2  Assess the Risks

Putting in place a structured approach where both the likelihood and impact of each risk are considered.

**Likelihood:** representing the possibility that a given event will occur – how likely is it to happen/what is the frequency?

**Impact**: the impact or effect on the ETB if the risk actually happens – how significant might the consequences be?
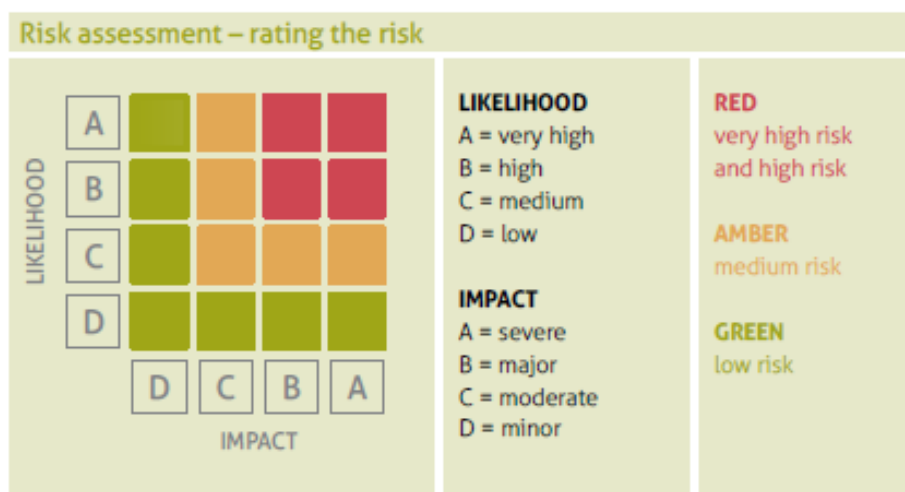


### 7.3  Managing the Risk

Prioritisation and monitoring - Risk management needs to be seen as a continuous process. As the activities of Louth and Meath ETB evolve, new risks may emerge or the potential impact of existing risks may change.  It is important that the incidence of risk be reviewed to see whether it has changed over time.  Some will be terminated and control measures will need to be updated in response to changing internal and external events.

There are four key aspects to managing risk;

   I.    **Terminate:**  some risks may only be treatable or containable by terminating the underlying activity.  The option of terminating activities may be severely limited in the ETB environment as compared to the private sector.  ETBs provide certain educational activities or provide for specific groups of students because the associated risks are so great that there is no other way in which the outcome, which is required for the public benefit, can be achieved.

   II.    **Treat:**  the purpose here is to contain the risk to an acceptable level.  By far the greater number of risks will be treated in this way.

   III.    **Tolerate:**  the ETBs exposure may be tolerable and may not therefore require taking any further action.  Even if not tolerable, it may not be possible to take any significant action against certain risks, or the cost of taking such action may be disproportionate to the potential benefits gained.   In these circumstances the option may be to tolerate the existing level of risk.  This option, of course, must be supplemented by contingency planning to handle the impacts that may arise if the risk is realised.

IV.  **Transfer:** this entails measures to transfer a risk, or responsibility for a risk, to a third party.  Risks may be transferred either to reduce the exposure of the ETB or because another organisation is more capable of managing it.  It is important to note that some risks are not fully transferable – in particular it is generally not possible to transfer reputational risk even if the delivery of the service is contracted out.

Risk Management should form part of the Management Agenda and be reported on regularly at each Senior Management Team and Board meetings.

### 7.4  Monitor and Review

**Audit**: is a systematic independent and documented process for obtaining audit evidence and evaluating it objectively to determine the extent to which audit criteria are fulfilled.

Monitoring should be undertaken as part of the day to day supervision of employees to ensure compliance with ETB policies and procedures.

Monitoring and audit shall be undertaken by:

- Senior management with the support of the Risk Manager
- Internal Auditor shall undertake audit of the risk management system at pre-determined intervals to provide evidence of compliance with legislation, codes of practice, standards, guidance and Department Circulars.
- Comptroller and Auditor General shall be facilitated to undertake audit of the risk management system.

The effectiveness of management controls shall be reported on at predetermined intervals to the Senior Management Team and the Audit Committee.

- High level risks every three months
- Medium level risks every six months
- Low level risks on an annual basis or more frequently if circumstances change
- Management shall facilitate audit of the risk management system
- Management shall implement corrective and preventive actions identified as necessary from monitoring and audit exercises

## 8.    Roles and responsibilities

8.1   **Board of Louth and Meath ETB shall** ensure that appropriate systems and structures are implemented, monitored and controlled to manage risk.

8.2   **Audit Committee shall** undertake its role in compliance with relevant legislation.

8.3    **Chief Executive shall** ensure that:
   a) Key risks to the successful delivery of LMETB's strategic and operational objectives are identified, assessed, managed and monitored
   b) Reported non-conformances are appropriately investigated and that preventive or corrective actions are implemented
   c) CE to appoint a member of staff with responsibility for Risk Management

8.4    **Senior Management Team (SMT) shall:**
   a) Identify corporate risks
   b) Review corporate risks and mitigating actions
   c) Consider risks in decision making process
   d) Report to the Board on management of risks

8.5    **Management shall ensure that:**
   a) This policy and procedure is implemented
   b) They notify change in the level of risk to Senior Management
   c) They provide appropriate support to their staff to manage risk
   d) They support systems for the investigation of incidents that may give rise to risk

8.6    **LMETB's Risk Manager shall** co-ordinate all functions to support the ETB's risk management system

8.7    **Internal Audit Unit shall**:
   a) Undertake audits of compliance with required legislation, codes of practice, guidance, standards, and policies, procedures and Department circulars.
   b) Provide reports to the Chief Executive and Audit Committee for corrective and preventive action to be taken to mitigate risk

8.8    **Comptroller and Auditor General shall:**
   a) Audit compliance in respect of legislation, codes, of practice, standards, guidance and policies and procedures and Department Circulars
   b) Provide reports to the Chief Executive and Audit Committee for corrective and preventive action to be taken to mitigate risk

8.9    **Employees shall** comply with this policy and all instruction issued by their supervisor/line manager. All staff to be alert to possible corporate risks and to          raise same with managers.

8.10    **Operating Divisions**

a) Risk identification throughout the year
b) Review of Risk Register
c) Identification and operation of mitigations

8.11 **External review** of effectiveness of the risk management framework on a periodic basis

## 9. Training

Training shall be provided as and when requested to the Risk Manager

## 10. Reference Material

- Code of Practice for the Governance of Education and Training Boards 2015 (Circular Letter 018/2015) Department of Education and Skills
- ISO 31000: Risk Management Standard
- Code of Conduct for Employees
- VEC Risk – excellence in governance through best practice risk management (IPB Insurance 2009)
- Government Department circulars
- Further Education and Training Act, 2013
- Legislative Requirements
- Internal Audit Unit – Best Practice Guidelines
- Internal Audit Reports
- Comptroller & Auditor General Reports
- Incident Reports, Complaints, Claims
- Education and Training Boards Act, 2013
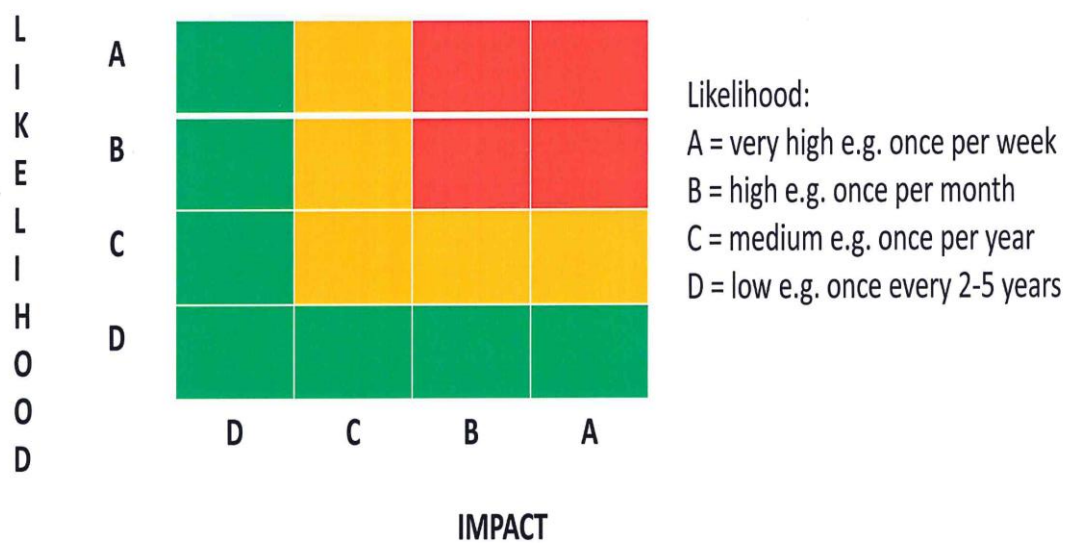
Adopted:    Louth and Meath ETB

Date:       15th June 2016

## Appendix 1

## Assessment of risk (qualitative matrix)

All risks shall be identified using a qualitative approach as shown in the matrix below.

## ASSESS THE RISKS

Likelihood:
A = very high e.g. once per week
B = high e.g. once per month
C = medium e.g. once per year
D = low e.g. once every 2-5 years

**IMPACT**

Impact:
A = very high e.g. death of an employees or other person; serious threat to business
B = high e.g. damage resulting in long-term disability; or loss of a valuable asset
C = moderate e.g. damage resulting in absence from work; or impact on finances
D = low e.g. incident occurred but no harm/damage resulted