QA Review Follow-Up Report

Waterford & Wexford Education and Training Board

Date: August - 2023

QQI
Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

PREFACE

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

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

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

This is the follow-up report for

It is to be submitted by 30/08/23

The follow-up report has been approved by Ms. Lindsay Malone, WWETB Director of Further Education and Training, and is submitted by [Alan Larkin, WWETB Quality Manager (Acting).

CONTENTS

GUIDELINES ON COMPLETING THE REPORT

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

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

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

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

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

1.0 Follow-up Report Post-Review

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

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

1.01 ETB Mission and Strategy

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Planned Actions	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
The review team recommends that WWETB review and update the mission statement to ensure it fully reflects the key pillars of their next Strategy Statement 2023-2027.	▪ Review as part of Statement of Strategy Development. - **Action Complete** ▪ Consultation with Stakeholders as part of Strategy Development- **Action Complete**	Strategy Statement 2023-2027 has been developed and approved by the Board of WWETB. The process included extensive consultation with internal and external stakeholders. The mission, vision and values were reviewed and updated to reflect the next cycle of WWETB's development.
The review team recommends that WWETB establish key performance metrics to enhance future annual service plans..	▪ Selection of key metrics to be agreed by FET Management Team- **Action Complete** ▪ Use Key Metrics in Data Reporting for FET provision- **Action Complete**	Actions Complete: WWETB has in place a FET Programme data Management policy (attached) and an accompanying procedural document (attached), approved by the FET Management Team and noted to the Board. This document lists the key

		metrics that are systematically reviewed for FET provision and the process for same. The WWETB FET Data Management Policy and Procedures will be reviewed in the 4th Quarter of 2023Click here to enter text.
The review team recommends that WWETB develop a new method of engagement with stakeholders (internal and external) to further enhance its capacity to identify emerging needs and to develop services to address same	▪ Rollout of Sectoral Workshops by the Service to Business Unit. - **In Progress**	▪ Regional Dialogue Meeting with WWETB, SETU, KCETB, SOLAS, QQI, NTO and DHERIS. ▪ IBEC Regional Executive Meeting ▪ Quarterly South East Regional Skills Forum meetings. ▪ STB employer upskilling breakfast briefing West Waterford on 25/04/23. ▪ STB employer upskilling breakfast briefing Wexford on 27/04/23. ▪ School Summit event 19/20/04/23 ▪ DSP employer Roadshow event 04/04/23 ▪ Women in Tech SETU Carraignore 30/03/23 ▪ Waterford city Chamber event 20/04/23 ▪ Financial Compliance showcase event SETU 19/04/23 ▪ Wexford county Chamber Job Fest 26/04/23 ▪ Waterford city Chamber Business expo (George Corbett Motors) 27/04/23 ▪ Leargas Gathering Skills for Life 27/04/23 ▪ College awareness week will be planned in Q3/Q4 2023.

		up to and Including May 2023, x 90 Career guidance talks to schools , FET centres and Training Centre Tours .Ongoing planned for the remainder of 2023.
		▪ STB employer upskilling breakfast briefing Tramore on 23/08/23.
		▪ STB employer upskilling breakfast briefing Gorey TBC for Oct 2023 .
		▪ Waterford city business engagement folder drops on 26/07/23 .
		▪ WWETB Generation apprenticeship employer roadshow SETU Arena Carraiganore on 08/11/23.
	▪ Rollout of 'Step up and Grow' initiative. - **Action Complete**	Step up and grow project 2022, has been extended to end of June 2023 due to the impact of Covid 19 pandemic. Contractors report due in the coming weeks.
	▪ Investigate 'SEED' project for suitability, appropriateness. **Action Complete**	Members of the WWETB FET Management Team have attended several SOLAS presentation workshops regarding the SEED project. The decision was made on foot of these sectoral presentations not to procced with the implementation of the SEED model, as it is felt that the proposed

		system does not present as a value for money return for the investment at this point in time.

In addition to these actions, WWETB has also staged information mornings on our further Education programmes (Connections Breakfast Events) for stakeholder agencies across the two counties. |
| | ▪ Agree Terms of Reference for Learner Forum Group- **Action Complete**

▪ Form Learner Forum Group- **Action Complete** | Action Complete- WWETB Learner Forum. (Terms of Reference attached). The action to form a WWETB FET Learner Forum has been completed. The inaugural meeting of this forum took place on the 24th of November 2022. Coupled with this, the action to complete and agree a Terms of Reference for the Learner Forum has also been completed and is attached. |

Commentary and Reflections
Along with the STB events listed above, WWETB continues to roll-out stakeholder engagement events for both external and internal stakeholders with the purpose of identifying emerging needs and determining services to address same. These include FET Forum meetings with all Programme

Coordinators, FET Managers and Senior Managers, Learner Forum Meetings comprising learners from all provision types and members of the FET Management Team, and Teaching, Learning and Assessment Network Meetings where there is representation of practitioners from all provision types and key functions of the organization. The latter two feed directly into our Quality Assurance Steering Group. WWETB engaged in extensive consultation with both internal and external stakeholders for the development of the Strategy Statement and continue to do so for its implementation. This is done by way of focus group meetings, one-to-one meetings and also by way of survey events and questionnaires. WWETB continues to engage prospective learners through extensive media work and using all forms of media at our disposal from broadcast media to social and print media. We have also been staging FET Fair events that are held in large central hotels. All FET provision is represented at these events to give information and demonstrations to prospective clients. These have proved very successful and are very well attended events.

Link to Current strategy / documents

WWETB Strategy Statement 2023-2027 https://www.wwetb.ie/about/organisation/compliance/access-to-personal-and-non-personal-information/freedom-of-information-act-foi/model-publication-scheme/strategy-statement-2018-2022/#:~:text=Providing%20quality%20education%20and%20training,changing%20needs%20in%20our%20society.

WWETB FET Programme Data Procedures https://www.wwetb.ie/about/organisation/quality/information-and-data-management/

Learner Forum Terms of Reference https://www.wwetb.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/FET-Learner-Forum-Terms-of-Reference.pdf

1.02 Structures & Terms of Reference for Governance of QA

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Planned Actions	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
The review team recommend that WWETB take a more strategic approach to quality assurance. Based on the size of the organisation and the diversity of provision, the QA overarching function needs to operate at a higher executive level and be integrated within the senior	▪ Include Quality as a core pillar of the WWETB Strategy Statement- **Action Complete**	Action complete. Description of the context of the inclusion of Quality as a core pillar of the Strategy Statement. (Strategy Statement attached).

management strategic planning and monitoring process. .	▪ 'Quality' to be included as a standing item on SMT Agendas- **Action Complete**	Every FET Management Team Meeting now includes Quality Assurance as a standing item for update and discussion. Quality is standard section on the quarterly Chief Executive Report, which is presented to WWETB Board. The CE Report is reviewed and noted at the SMT meeting.

Commentary and Reflections

Link to Updated Policy & Procedures

WWETB Strategy Statement 2023-2027 https://www.wwetb.ie/about/organisation/compliance/access-to-personal-and-non-personal-information/freedom-of-information-act-foi/model-publication-scheme/strategy-statement-2018-2022/#:~:text=Providing%20quality%20education%20and%20training,changing%20needs%20in%20our%20society.

1.03 Documentation of QA

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Planned Actions	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
The review team recommends that WWETB use a broader database, for example, sector comparisons with other ETB and/or their European VET counterparts to inform the setting of benchmarks. This would offer an	▪ Investigate EU VET Benchmarks- **Action Complete**	WWETB Targets and Benchmarks are established in the main within the Strategic Performance Agreement (SPA). The targets in the SPA have been developed in line

external element to the evaluation of the Quality Assurance Framework to include the effectiveness of policies and procedures.

with national targets, have a multi-departmental context, and also a European and global economy frame of reference (National SOLAS FET Strategy 2020-2024). In terms of the annual data reporting carried out by the QA Team, in addition to reporting on SPA targets there is reporting on programme output data. 6 data indicators have been selected as part of the WWETB Programme Data Management process, two of which are taken from the EQAVET Indicators' Toolkit. The FET Management Team agreed 5 of the 6 indicators and these form the basis of the annual FET Data Report. One of these indicators is 'Grade Distribution'. This indicator compares WWETB FET grade distribution data with the national data.

Several of the remaining EQAVET indicators form part of the context of our SPA agreement. EQAVET acknowledge that while it is preferable to use all 10 indicators included in the toolkit it also states that; *"In particular, and in so far as*

		the indicators are concerned, different stakeholders may have differing priorities, different levels of knowledge and ability and/ or willingness to use them." EQAVET Indicators' Toolkit (European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training- 2020.
	▪ Discuss National Benchmarks & provision of national data with SOLAS- **Action Complete**	As part of the collaborative work for the leading to the Strategic Performance Agreement, this action was completed.
Click here to enter text.		

Commentary and Reflections

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Link to Updated Policy & Procedures

2022 SOLAS FET Services Plan https://www.solas.ie/f/70398/x/7c76f57325/fet-services-plan-2022.pdf

1.04 Staff Recruitment, Management & Development

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Planned Actions	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
The review team recommends that WWETB, in the absence of a national framework for PMDS in the sector, consider developing a formal Continuous Professional Development (CPD) system to support staff and to enhance their skills and qualifications as they progress through their careers	▪ Raise and discuss at DFET Forum-Q4 2023. ▪ Form Teaching, Learning & Assessment forum. **Action Complete**	This action is yet to be carried out. There is tacit recognition of the absence of a national framework for PMDS and the semi-optional nature of PLD across the sector and the associated challenges. The WWETB FET Teaching, Learning and Assessment Network was established in December 2022 and the first full meeting of the network was held on the 22nd of February 2023. The Network has 15 members comprising of Practitioners representing WWETB provision-types and also representing key functions such as Professional Learning & Development, IT, Learner Support, QA and TEL. In addition to this, there is FET Management representation on the Network.

	▪ Review Organisational PLD Policy and FET PLD processes. - **Action Complete**	The FET PLD procedures were reviewed in May 2022 by FET PLD Co-ordinator/DFET & relevant AEO, and approved by SMT. Changes included: • a minimum threshold for fee reclaims. • Staff need to complete a Learning Contract. • For SMT Evaluation Committee, an Assessment and Recommendation form will be supplied by PLD Function. • Postgraduate diploma*, Masters and PHD level only to SMT. • Course payment schedules often vary and can be staggered. In addition to the WWETB FET PLD policy, WWETB continues to plan for the enhancement of staff skill levels. The WWETB Strategy Statement outlines actions in this regard such as: 1.4.1.: *Undertake a skill needs analysis for each functional area, leading to a planned approach for staff PLD.* 1.4.2.: *Further develop Communities of Practice model across the organisation to enhance collaborative practice, including for the purposes*

		of forming supportive networks across teaching and administrative services.

Commentary and Reflections

WWETB QA would like to take the opportunity to reflect on this recommendation in light of Frida Helgevest's comments on sectoral 'Performance Management' at the QQI Review event in Clontarf. During her address, Ms. Helgevest suggested that Performance Management systems could be driven from the 'bottom-up' in the sector as opposed to from the 'top-down' and that the sector should not wait for legislation to guide ETB approach to performance management. There is some merit in Ms. Helgevest's assertions and WWETB is certainly committed to the effective development and support of all its staff in the delivery of an efficient and professional service as evident from WWETB's Statement of Strategy. However, implementing an effective **Performance Management** system is problematic in the absence of a clear mandate to do so via the relevant Irish departmental channels, and ETB's must be wary of being seen to act outside of their legislative and remit in a legislative and procedural context.

Link to Updated Policy & Procedures

Click here to enter text.

1.05 Programme Development, Approval & Submission

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Planned Actions	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
The review team recommends that WWETB develop systematic processes to share good practice developed in parts of the organisation to support the quality and enhancement of all provision, for example, the innovative programme developments and the structured learner support services on apprenticeships programmes could better inform WWETB's approach to programme development and enhancement in other sections of their FET provision.	▪ Finalise Terms of Reference for Teaching, Learning & Assessment Forum. - **Action Complete** ▪ Form WWETB FET Teaching, Learning and Assessment Network.- **Action Complete**	Actions Complete- The terms of reference for the WWETB Teaching Learning and Assessment network was finalised on the 22nd of February 2023 by the group itself at the first full meeting. The terms of reference represent the modus operandi for the network and will be reviewed as appropriate.

	• Investigate and develop plan for future communities of practice in collaboration with TLA, TEL, PLD. - **In Progress**	QA, TEL and PLD now collaborative via the formal platform if the TLA Network. One of the objectives of the recently established WWETB TLA Network is the exploration of effective ways to promote and sustain communities of practice.
The review team recommends that WWETB develop as part of their QA framework a structured approach, with an appropriate infrastructure, that is fully resourced, to support curriculum/programme development across their FET provision.	• Recruit a Programme Development Officer. - **In Progress** • Engage in national ETB working Groups. - **In Progress**	WWETB ran a recruitment campaign for Programme Development and Review Officer (at Adult Educator grade) in October 2022, however we were was unable to fill the role. WWETB have sought sanction for a new post in March 2023, this time as Community Education Facilitator grade and we await formal decision on sanction. This action is in progress. WWETB QA are represented on the national working groups that are working with QQI to streamline where appropriate, the process of new programme validation. The ETBI FET Director Forum are also involved in this

		action inclusive of the WWETB FET Director.
The review team recommend that WWETB build QA capacity in order to seek devolved responsibility, from QQI, for programme development and approval.	▪ Engage in national ETB working Groups. - **In Progress** ▪ Participate in sectoral engagement with QQI regarding devolved responsibility.	Through the Director of FET Forum, WWETB have join the Quality Sub-Group in order to contribute to this action Nationally. See note above in relation to ETB working groups and FET Director involvement. (See Commentary and Reflections). This action is yet to be carried out and is due by the 4th quarter of 2024. WWETB have registered interest at FET Director Forum in being involved in a pilot for a formal process for devolved responsibility.
The review team recommends that WWETB review of their current FET provision to enhance the development of their next Strategic Plan 2023-2027. WWETB's FET amalgamated services are now embedded in the organisation, and it would be timely to review the provision to ensure WWETB continues and grows in their ability to action strategic priorities identified in their Self Evaluation Report (SER).	▪ Develop, issue and collate the responses from, Strategic Plan consultation tools. - **Action Complete**	Strategy Statement 2023-2027 has been developed and approved by the Board of WWETB. The process included extensive review and consultation with internal and external stakeholders. Alignment of the key pillars of WWETB – FET, Schools and Organisation Support and Development - is a key focus for WWETB in this next strategic cycle. WWETB's strategy is

		aligned with the strategies of DFHERIS and SOLAS in terms of providing coordinated service provision to learners across FET.WWETB Senior Management held a Strategy Implementation workshop in the Brandon House Hotel on the 8th of May.
	▪ Completion of SPA with SOLAS.- **Action Complete**	This action is now complete. WWETB has engaged with SOLAS throughout the process and the targets have been formally agreed. WWETB QA Team have held workshops with both FET Managers and Programme Managers with regard to clarifying and analysing the targets.
	▪ Investigate the implementation of the FET College of the Future Model. **Action Complete**	WWETB launched the Wexford College of Further Education and Training on the 21st of August which is located in Wexford Town. The FET College has the capacity to serve up to 350 learners per day across multiple interdisciplinary programmes.

Commentary and Reflections

WWETB welcome the recommendation to build on their capacity. Rather than devolved responsibility, WWETB welcome the opportunity to explore delegated authority with QQI to enhance its overall capacity for programme development and approval. Learning from colleagues in former IoTs who operated with delegated authority, their validation processes appeared to enable them to respond more effectively and promptly to programme development needs of their stakeholders. Also, in light of the establishment of the tertiary education office, it is timely to review how ETBs can now

enhance their capacity for programme development and validation in order to contribute to programme creation in a meaningful way with other HE stakeholders. Particularly in the area of joint programme developments and validation.

WWETB recognise that the protocol for delegated authority is designed to fulfil the relevant requirements of Section 55B of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act (2012) as amended for previously established universities, the National University of Ireland, an educational institution established as a university under section 9 of the Act of 1997, a technological university, an institute of technology and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland. WWETB would welcome an opportunity, with ETBI and QQI, to explore whether ETBs could be included within this cohort to have delegated authority. With delegated authority, similar to the IoT's formally, a sectoral protocol for ETBs could be developed in order to set out the high level quality principles that underpin the sector's approach to joint awarding, and the related activities of collaborative and transnational provision; and the essential quality assurance infrastructure that should be in place within an ETB before applying for the authority to make joint awards within the scope of its delegated authority. This would enable ETBs to develop joint awards as part of the tertiary education office and would ultimately enable them to enhance their overall capacity for programme development and validation within the current educational landscape and context.

Link to Updated Policy & Procedures

SPA Agreement- https://www.solas.ie/f/70398/x/57bb90f777/wwetb-agreement.pdf

Wexford Collage of Further Education & Training- https://www.wwetb.ie/new-wexford-college-of-further-education-and-training/

1.06 Access, Transfer and Progression

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Planned Actions	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
The review team recommends that WWETB develops formal systems to promote and track internal and external access, transfer and progression opportunities between and from each of their FET provisions.	▪ Implement a system for enabling the tracking of internal progression and a function for the display of the progression data. - **Action Complete**	This action has been formally implemented as part of the Strategic Performance agreement. WWETB is keeping a keen focus on learner progression in line with our

		learner progression targets. Respective data is readily accessible via Tableau, the data visualising tool made available for the sector by SOLAS.
	▪ External- Work with SOLAS, SETU and HE. - **In Progress**	Action in progress. WWETB continues to work with SOLAS and other agencies for the most accurate data relating to progression into Higher Education and employment. As the tracking of student progression to HE is a national systematic process that WWETB cannot change, WWETB raised this as a priority action for review at the regional Dialogue Meetings with DFHERIS in June. WWETB & SETU are engaged in a collaborative data analysis project to determine FE-HE progression between WWETB & SETU. There is a view that progression data presented by CAO does not accurately represent true progression (due to how data is captured).

Commentary and Reflections
With regard to the accurate recording of progression to Higher Education, the system currently asks for last school which we believe is causing learners to select post primary rather than ETBs, which may be having a negative impact on the true rate of progression. This has prompted a

collaborative piece of work between WWETB and SETU. Both institutions have devised a mechanism for recording progression from one to the other to cross-reference with SOLAS data to check for data accuracy.

Link to Updated Policy & Procedures
Click here to enter text.

1.07 Integrity and Approval of Learner Results

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Planned Actions	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
The Review Team recommends that WWETB consider additional processes that could further enhance the overall QA monitoring and review process.	▪ Reintroduce monitoring visits where appropriate - **In Progress**	The QA Team have introduced 'unannounced Internal Verification of assessment event' (monitoring) visits for all Contracted Training programmes. Reintroduction of monitoring visits is being explored by the QA Team in the context of Apprenticeship programmes. A final informed decision will be made on this in consultation with Training Managers in Q4 2023. (See reflections).
	- Increased amount of QA briefings both online and in location. - Briefings for contracted EAs prior to authentication	This multi -part action is complete. The WWETB QA Team has increased the number of briefings, particularly online

	• An interim annual data reporting process. QA Team contact Centre and FET managers with key data analysis. • Develop FET Data Management Policy. - **Action Complete**	briefings and has also introduced an annual Quality Workshop which was held this academic year in the Greenway Manor Hotel. A standard online briefing has been developed for FE EAs scheduled to carry out authentication. WWETB have established an interim reporting process as part of the annual FET Data reporting process and this is outlined in the FET Data Management Policy. See below.

Commentary and Reflections

Monitoring visits by a Training Standards Officer (TSO) or an Assistant TSO were a part of the old Transitional Quality Assurance System and would have been implemented across Apprenticeship programmes heretofore. As such, there is a precedent here, and exploring the reintroduction of monitoring visits in apprenticeship programmes can be proposed on this basis. In Further Education, however, there has been no such practice in place nationally or locally and attempts to introduce procedures akin to monitoring have been met with strong opposition within the sector from Unions and other stakeholders. WWETB QA is keen to try to achieve commonality of approach where possible/appropriate.

Link to Updated Policy & Procedures

Click here to enter text.

1.08 Information and Data Management

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Planned Actions	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
The review team recommends that WWETB develop a data strategy policy, to include clear organisational performance indicators, and that the ETB further develop their use of performance data in support of strategic decision-making.	▪ Develop procedure for collation and sharing of FET programme data. - **Action Complete** ▪ Implement benchmarks for key data indicators; - **Action Complete** ▪ Put in place additional PLSS Coordinator. - **Action Complete**	These actions are complete. The WWETB FET Management Team receive monthly information system (MIS) reports which is a summary of the PLSS entry for the period by programme and by centre. WWETB have also developed and implemented an annual FET Data Report for FET and Programme managers complete with a mid-year review of data showing key data indicators. FET data is benchmarked according to programme category means and deviation from these means beyond a certain tolerance is brought to the attention of the relevant managers. WWETB has now in place two PLSS coordinators. They work in tandem with the FET Data Analyst to ensure that our data entry is as accurate as possible and that the resulting data and information is

		accurate, available and disseminated appropriately.
The review team recommends WWETB continued investment in the data team and ongoing training to improve data literacy and interpretation across the organisation.	Secure licensing for appropriate Data collection and analysis tools - **In Progress**	This action currently rests with SOLAS/ETBI who are trying to determine whether to issue 30 View licences or promote sending out packaged workbooks.
	▪ Continue implementation of QA Briefings in FET Programme Data Management. - **In Progress**	This action remains actively in progress. In This academic year, the QA Team have given briefings on FET Data Management and SPA targets to Programme Managers at briefing sessions in Wexford and Waterford. There has also been a briefing on same to the FET Management Team.
	▪ Continue implementation of scheduled PLSS training for WWETB data inputters. - **In Progress**	This action remains actively in progress. There are regular scheduled briefings meetings for data inputters throughout the year. These briefings happen both face-to-face and online. These meetings are both a combination of QA Team initiated briefing events for general or distinct groups and one to one or group briefings as requested

		by data inputters, Centre or FET Managers.

Commentary and Reflections
In addition to the actions above, WWETB intends to appoint a Data Officer with responsibility for data, data analytics and data protection as outlined in the Statement of Strategy 2023-2027.

Link to Updated Policy & Procedures
Click here to enter text.

1.09 Public Information and Communication

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Planned Actions	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
The review team recommends that WWETB continue to develop and enhance their communications strategies to support the effective promotion of educational services at organisation and centre level, for example, improve the consistency of industry links across the FET provision, increase student voice participation at Centre and ETB level, develop systematic learner, staff and external stakeholders feedback structures and organise information events for key external stakeholders.	▪ Continue Rollout of Sectoral Workshops and stakeholder events- STB- **In Progress**	▪ STB employer upskilling breakfast briefing West Waterford on 25/04/23. ▪ STB employer upskilling breakfast briefing Wexford on 27/04/23. ▪ School Summit event 19/20/04/23 ▪ DSP employer Roadshow event 04/04/23 ▪ Women in Tech SETU Carraiganore 30/03/23 ▪ Waterford city Chamber event 20/04/23 ▪ Financial Compliance showcase event SETU 19/04/23

		• Wexford county Chamber Job Fest 26/04/23 • Waterford city Chamber Business expo (George Corbett Motors) 27/04/23 • Leargas Gathering Skills for Life 27/04/23 WWETB Communications Group are currently working with the Service to Business Unit on developing WWETB promotional videos for FET.
	• Strategize for the development of Communications and Marketing in the Strategy Statement 2023-2027. - **Action Complete**	This action has been completed. WWETB's Strategy Statement outlines Communications and Marketing as a strategic priority and there are 18 objectives associated with this priority. The Strategy statement includes as objectives all the elements recommended by the panel: Enhancing Industry links **(1.1.5),** Student Voice **(1.4.6),** Systematic stakeholder feedback **(4.1.28),** and Information events **(3.1.13 and 3.2.5).**
	• Establish WWETB FET Learner Forum- **Action Complete**	The WWETB FET Learner Forum has been established comprising of Learners representing all provision types and an external Chair (AONTAS). The inaugural

		meeting of this forum took place on the 24th of November 2022.
	▪ Capitalise on the WWETB FET Fair process. **- Action Complete**	As per the action, the WWETB FET Fair has been now established as an important promotional event. The second iteration of the event took place most recently on the 11th of May in the Tower Hotel and was publicised through various media channels. The event was very successful and there was a substantial turnout of interested parties and prospective learners.
	▪ Develop a system for annual consultation of learners, staff and external stakeholders to inform quality improvement. **- In Progress**	This action is in progress and due for the 2nd quarter of 2024. The Quality Team have begun planning for the development of an improved system of consultation with the learner body on their experience as WWETB learners and their satisfaction with the services offered to them. Similar processes for staff and external stakeholders will follow thereafter.

	▪ Agree Terms of Reference for Learner Forum Group. **- Action Complete**	Action Complete- WWETB Learner Forum.. The action to form a WWETB FET Learner Forum has been completed. The inaugural meeting of this forum took place on the 24th of November 2022. Coupled with this, the action to complete and agree a Terms of Reference for the Learner Forum has also been completed and is attached.
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Commentary and Reflections
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Link to Updated Policy & Procedures
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2.0 Teaching, Learning & Assessment

2.01 The Learning Environment

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Planned Actions	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
The review team recommends that WWETB increase 'learner voice participation' in the QA governance and oversight processes and develop a system that is suitable and consistently implemented to capture and act on learner feedback, to include the learner experience, capturing and acting on learners' feedback during the programme and not only at the end of the programme.	▪ Complete enlisting process for WWETB Learner Forum. **- Action Complete**	This action was completed in line with the establishment of the Learner Forum Group. The Group currently consists of 8 learners from various programmes representing full and part-time provision. Also, on the group is and external Chair representing AONTAS, The Quality Assurance Officer and the Access & Inclusion Officer. The forum will regroup in September and some new learners will be required to represent certain provision types such as apprenticeships.
	▪ Review the effectiveness of the WWETB Learner forum- (short survey of stakeholder groups).	Much of the initial work with the learner Forum Group this academic year has been the establishment of the group and the terms of reference and the format for engagement. AONTAS supported the

		learners with learner empowerment guidance. Q3 of this year may be too early to review its effectiveness. WWETB defers this action until the same quarter of 2024.
	▪ Finalise and Rollout Learner Support Fund. **- In Progress**	An interim plan has been put into place until an FE Learning Support Co-ordinator is in place. Academic/Learning support for FET is funded through the Adult Literacy Programme via Tutor hours. The ALO in each location currently allocates the Learning Support hours in consultation with programme co-ordinators. When the FE Learning support Co-ordinator is in post, they will work alongside the established Learning Support Co-ordinator for Training, to develop and structure the Learning Support Service across all FET provision.
The review team recommends that WWETB provide a more cohesive approach to the provision of learner	▪ Develop plan for Learner Support Services Unit including a formal	A training campaign on supports and tools to commence in September 2023.

supports, to ensure all learners have appropriate access to learning support services, to include counselling and psychotherapy services if deemed necessary.	mapping of supports available across provision. **- In Progress**	Information and resources available on staff Hub and Inclusion Officer providing advice on inclusion at operational levels. A mapping exercise will be conducted November 2023. WWETB is engaging Spectrum Life to provide an extensive and comprehensive suite of supports that will be continually available to FET learners.
	▪ Implement plan for counsellor access across FET Programmes	A limited internal counsellor resource is available to FET, however this would not meet the overall needs of all FET learners. The hours available are used for Gateway Counselling via Apprenticeship Learners Support and for critical incident counselling. A pilot project utilizing Spectrum Life for learner support and counselling service was rolled out for all Youthreach programmes for the 22/23 academic year. We are working with Spectrum Life to further scale this model to provide consistent learner support to all FET learners and it is planned to roll this out in Q4 2023/Q1 2024.

Commentary and Reflections Click here to enter text.		
Link to Updated Policy & Procedures Click here to enter text.		

2.02 Assessment of Learners

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Planned Actions	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
The review team recommends that WWETB include a Teaching, Learning and Assessment group as part of the QA governance structure (see SER (p. 35, figure 2.3) to enhance the quality of teaching, learning and assessment within the ETB.	• Draft Terms of Reference- **Action Complete** • Agree Terms of Reference- **Action Complete** • Complete enlisting process for WWETB TLA Network. **- Action Complete**	Actions Complete- The terms of reference for the WWETB Teaching Learning and Assessment network was finalised on the 22nd of February 2023 by the group itself at the first full meeting. The terms of reference represent the modus operandi for the network and will be reviewed as appropriate. The TLA Network membership has been established and there have been four meetings to date with associated agendas and minutes.

The review team recommends that WWETB make provision to formally facilitate staff to collaborate under the concept of "Communities of Practice" as stated in the SER on (p. 49) and to support a culture where individuals engaged in Professional Learning and Development (PLD) further share their learning with their peers in a more formal way as stated in the SER on (p. 108).	▪ Investigate strategies and opportunities to promote and support communities of practice. - **In Progress**	It is a key priority of WWETB to develop and facilitate communities of practice across the organisation and a formal structure for this will be established. One of the objectives of the recently established WWETB TLA Network is the exploration of effective ways to promote and sustain communities of practice. With regard to opportunities for staff to engage in PLD, it is stated in the PLD procedures that staff must engage with ways of sharing information with colleagues.

Commentary and Reflections
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Link to Updated Policy & Procedures

WWETB Teaching, Learning and Assessment Network- Terms of Reference https://www.wwetb.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/FET-TLA-Network-Terms-of-Reference.pdf

2.03 Supports for Learners

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Planned Actions	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
The review team recommends a review of the various aspects of learner support to ensure that there is a holistic, integrated and consistent offer that can meet the changing demands of their range learners and ensure there is clear referral and reporting mechanisms between services and their courses. This includes ensuring the services are well promoted and can be accessed confidentially and safely.	▪ Finalise and Rollout Learner Support Fund. - **In Progress** ▪ ▪ Develop plan for Learner Support Services Unit. - **In Progress**	An interim plan has been made and a funding mechanism in place in order that all Learners receive supports and all staff have the ability to include and support learners. The Learner Support Fund is similar in methodology to the FSD. While this action was due for delivery during the 2nd quarter of 2023, it is still in progress. The Learning Support Unit has not yet convened and will be progressed in Q4 2023/Q1 2024. The Membership of this unit is to include; ▪ Learning Support Co-ordinators ▪ Access and Inclusion Officer ▪ QA Representation ▪ Guidance Service Representation ▪ Representation of staff in a supporting role from FET provision WWETB continues to plan toward the completion of this action in line with the

		following organisational strategic priorities. *(WWETB Strategy Statement 2023-2027)*
		4.1.1. Establishment of a Health and Wellbeing Committee in WWETB, with representation from students/adult learners and staff.
		4.2.1. Develop a strategy for the delivery of guidance services and supports for students/adult learners across
		4.2.2. Develop a structure for clear and defined pathways to emotional, psychological and psychotherapy supports for students/adult learners where required.
		WWETB.
	▪ Expand Adult Guidance Team- **- Action Complete**	A training campaign on supports and tools will commence in September 2023. Information and resources available on staff Hub and Inclusion Officer available for advice on inclusion.
		A mapping exercise will be conducted November 2023
		WWETB sought the expansion of the Guidance Team and received sanction for an additional Guidance Counsellor. This position was filled by the organisation.

The review team recommends that WWETB develop an organisational led learner support system that integrates with and supports centre/programme-based learner support systems	▪ Finalise and Rollout Learner Support Fund. - **In Progress**	An interim plan has been made and a funding mechanism in place in order that all Learners receive supports and all staff have the ability to include and support learners. The Learner Support Fund is similar in methodology to the FSD.
	▪ Develop plan for Learner Support Services Unit - **In Progress**	While this action was due for delivery during the 2nd quarter of 2023, it is still in progress. WWETB continues to plan toward the completion of this action in line with higher-order organisational strategic priorities. See previous recommendation.
The review team recommends that WWETB develop a system that can monitor, and review, learner supports on a regular basis to ensure they continue to meet evolving learners' needs.	▪ Develop system to track monitor, and review learner supports provision. - **In Progress**	This action will form part of the learner consultation action listed below in the short term. As a more systematic approach to learner support is developed for FET, WWETB will review these supports with our leaner cohorts.
	▪ Implement Teaching, Learning and Assessment Network. **- Action Complete**	This action is complete. The TLA Network has been fully established.

| | • Develop a system for annual consultation of learners to include learner supports. **In Progress** | This action is in progress and due for the 2nd quarter of 2024. The Quality Team have begun planning for the development of an improved system of consultation with the learner body on their experience as WWETB learners and their satisfaction with the services offered to them. Similar processes for staff and external stakeholders will follow thereafter. |

Commentary and Reflections
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Link to Updated Policy & Procedures
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3.0 Self-Evaluation, Monitoring & Review

3.01 Self-Evaluation Monitoring & Review

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Planned Actions	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
The review team recommends that WWETB develop a process that leads to the use of quantitative data that can be integrated into the decision-making processes at organisation and centre level.	• Introduce process for systematic compilation and review of quantitative data. **- Action Complete**	This action is complete. The WWETB FET Management Team receive monthly information system (MIS) reports which is a summary of the PLSS entry for the period by programme and by centre. WWETB have also developed and implemented an annual FET Data Report for FET and Programme managers complete with a mid- year review process, showing key data indicators by provision type: -Course Participation Rates -Course Completion Rates -Early-Leaver Rates and Reasons -Learner Certification Rates -Grade Distribution Data
	• Conduct a review of the policy and procedure.	This action is set for completion in Q3 of 2024.

Click here to enter text.		
Commentary and Reflections Click here to enter text.		
Link to Updated Policy & Procedures **8. Information and Data Management - Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board (wwetb.ie)**		

3.02 Programme Monitoring & Review

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Planned Actions	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
The review team recommend that WWETB prioritise resourcing programme development in their next Statement of Strategy (2023-2027). Specifically, the team recommends, that WWETB resource and devise a timeframe to marry the centre led operational work with a broader strategic approach to programme monitoring and review.	▪ Recruit a Programme Development Officer. - **In Progress**	WWETB ran a recruitment campaign for Programme Development and Review Officer (at Adult Educator grade) in October 2022, however we were was unable to fill the role. WWETB have sought sanction for a new post in March 2023, this time as Community Education Facilitator grade and we await formal decision on sanction.
	▪ Review the current WWETB Programme Development, Approval, Review and Validation Policy.	This action is set for completion in Q3 of 2024.

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Commentary and Reflections
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Link to Updated Policy & Procedures
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3.03 Oversight, monitoring & review of relationships with external parties

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Planned Actions	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
The review team recommends that WWETB embed the culture of using data and regional information to inform strategic decisions. Consideration should be given to an overall strategic input process (across the WW Region); such an approach may be more beneficial in terms of the overall strategic direction of the ETB rather than just a local operational view.	▪ Collaborate with SOLAS on strategic goals. **- Action Complete**	The Strategic Performance process is a collaborative one between WWETB and SOLAS, our principal funding body. Both Regional and national data play a central role in the establishment of the targets in the Strategic Performance Agreement. In addition to this, WWETB proposes to develop a blueprint for future development long term strategic planning. WWETB is a member of the Sout-East Regional Skills Forum which are for a that

		were created as part of the Government's National Skills Strategy and provides an opportunity for employers and the education an training system to work together to meet the emerging skills needs of their regions WWETB attended a Regional Dialogue meeting in June chaired by DFERHIS, involving multiple regional stakeholders (WWETB, SETU, KCETB, SOLAS, QQI, NTO and DHERIS), to look at multiple regional strategic priorities. WWETB and SETU met with the IBEC Regional Executive to examine strategic enterprise priorities in the region.
	▪ Investigate collaboration opportunities with Higher Education bodies regarding strategic approaches to provision and innovation. - **In Progress**	WWETB and SETU will have a formal signing of the Progression Agreement on 01/09/2023 which demonstrates our continued commitment of working with SETU to ensure progression pathways for learners. WWETB gave the keynote address at the SETU Conference entitled Pathways from FE to HE on 03/05/2023 and WWETB have committed to hosting the next conference

in the new Wexford College of FET in conjunction with SETU to continue to work in partnership to promote research and collaborative projects focused on progression pathways.

WWETB and SETU have a new pilot project entitled 'a 'My Voice – My Choice' WWETB learners will complete WWETB taught modules on the SETU Waterford Campus. The learner cohort will be 10-15 learners with intellectual disabilities. The learners will be engaging in level 2 and 3 modules (taught by WWETB tutors) and the expectation is that they are engaging in an appropriate programme, for the level they are currently at, whilst experiencing learning in a university setting. The modules are level 2 Computer Skills and Advocacy on Tuesday with level 2 Personal Decision Making and on Friday. Timetable below running across term 1 and 2, starting on 26/09/2023.

WWETB have had multiple engagements with SETU to further investigate collaborative approaches to provision and innovation, both strategically and in specific thematic areas. See Commentary.

The Review team recommends that WWETB give access to their QA digital resources, for example their QA SharePoint to the second providers that are delivering programmes under WWETB QA system.	▪ QA and IT departments to meet formally on this action. **- Action Complete**	Second Providers now have access to the QA digital Resources by way of the new WWETB Website. On the website is a QA section which contains the QA Framework. The Framework contains all the WWETB QA-related policies and procedures for easy access by second providers and external stakeholders.
	▪ Viability and risk assessment of action to be carried out by IT. **- Action Complete**	This action is now void/complete as the WWETB QA documentation in question is now on a more public and accessible platform. The initial risk associated with access permissions for external users is negated now by moving the appropriate documentation and content to a publicly accessible interface. WWETB QA will continue to monitor and control the content.
	▪ Implement solution. **Action Complete**	Action complete- Solution implemented.
Commentary and Reflections		

- WWETB have agreed to present at an SETU organised seminar titled "Education for Sustainable Development" This will include a presentation of the use of virtual reality to enhance the delivery of courses in healthcare and nearly zero energy building including retrofit.

- WWETB and SETU collaborated in the design, delivery and certification of the Certificate in Manufacturing and Design Engineering.

- WWETB and SETU are exploring a cooperative approach in the delivery of a construction course.

- Ongoing discussions are taking place between SETU and WWETB around the delivery of courses in hospitality.

- Pathways to University pilot with SETU in development.

- SETU (Carlow Learners in NZEB Enniscorthy.

- SETU Access – 'Well Project' in Bunclody

- Data Analytics - Meetings (Alan O'Gorman WWETB, Jon Ishaque WWETB, Richard Hayes SETU, Mark O'Dowd-SETU) regarding process and plans for future collaboration specifically around progression data.

Link to Updated Policy & Procedures
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4.0 Update on other additional QA Objectives/actions arising from internal QA planning and monitoring

Guide:

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

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

No.	QA Objectives	Update on Status	Link to updated/new Policy
	These should relate to objectives not already discussed in the progress report.	Provide brief update on status, whether completed or in progress.	
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5.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies (optional)

Guide:

You are invited to provide up to 3 x **short case studies**, 1-2 pages, as part of your ETB's Follow-up Report demonstrating QA enhancements and impacts arising from the review process and implementation of the review report recommendations. **You are encouraged to reflect on and highlight areas that may be of interest to other providers and would benefit from wider dissemination**. Note: Submission of case studies are not mandatory to the follow-up report. However, please know that any submitted case studies will be published on QQI's website in full unabridged format.

Guideline for Case Study

QQI recommends that written case studies should:

⇒ Be between half a page and two pages in length
⇒ Limited to 2-2500 words
⇒ Relate to a specific time- and subject-bound issue
⇒ Include an introduction that sets out a brief overview of contextual matters
⇒ Include any relevant supporting data and data analysis
⇒ Include links to any sources cited
⇒ Include a clear concluding paragraph with overview of key outcomes/learning

Case Study 1- WWETB's Learner Voice Forum

Background:

As part of the self-evaluation process associated with the external review, WWETB engaged extensively with the learner body including former learners. Over 1,000 learners were consulted by way of survey and focus groups. Feedback from learners regarding the services offered to them by WWETB was overwhelmingly positive. Furthermore, many learners took the opportunity to describe in detail the elements that contributed to their positive experiences learning within the organisation. The external Review Team recommended that WWETB increase 'learner voice participation' in the QA governance and oversight processes and develop a system that is suitable and consistently implemented to capture and act on learner feedback, to include the learner experience, capturing and acting on learners' feedback during the programme and not only at the end of the programme.

Actions Undertaken:

To this end, WWETB made provision for the establishment of a Learner Forum Group. An invitation was issued to the learner body through Programme Coordinators to garner interest in participation with a forum of FET Learners. Learners who came forward were confirmed on the Forum until there was representation from each provision type across the organisation. The resulting learner representatives presented as a diverse group of learners, reflective of the learner diversity within WWETB FET provision.

A Terms of Reference was drafted by the WWETB Quality Team and agreed upon in consultation with the new Learner Forum and the WWETB FET Management Team. The Learner Forum would not consist only of Learners, additional members of the Forum included; WWETB's Access and Inclusion Officer, the Quality Manager and Quality Assurance Officer and the Chair of the Forum would be from an external organisation. It was agreed by all that externality would be important for such a group. This externality was provided by Aontas, the National Adult Learner Advocacy Group. The QA Manager reports on the work and progress of the group to the Quality Assurance Steering Group. Throughout the year, the group were consulted with regard to their use of Social Media and results of this fed back to the FET Management Team to inform discussion and assist strategizing activity in this area.

The WWETB Learner Forum is in its infancy, and much of the early work of the group has been about the establishment of the mechanism itself, empowering learners (Learners as Leaders facilitated by Aontas) and sharing experiences of learning. Some members of the group have expressed interest in the areas of diversity and inclusion and this has prompted follow-up work by the Access and Inclusion Officer.

Challenges:

While good ground is being made with the initiative, there are also challenges that require continued reflection and planning. The inevitable transience of FET Learners and turnover of participants with the forum can somewhat disrupt continuity of thought and process, and mitigate against appetite for larger pieces of work or the success thereof. The diversity too, while critically reflective of the diversity within our principal stakeholder group, can in itself pose challenges in terms of shared vernacular, vastly differing priorities and needs, and even the logistics of finding times that suit all participants, some of whom are on part-time courses is challenging. WWETB have supported travel arrangements where possible (the Forum have favoured face-to-face meetings over online). Take for example a Phase 2 apprentice. They are on-course with us for 20 weeks. A participating apprentice may get the opportunity to engage in two learner forum meetings and then must relinquish their place on the forum. Apprentices consist of 10% of our Learner cohort.

Conclusion:

Despite the challenges, the establishment of the Forum has been a positive development within the organisation and WWETB is committed to continuously improving and refining the mechanism. In addition to this, the QA unit are currently reviewing our 'End of Course Evaluation' process, which is for the most part a programme/centre-oriented process, with the intention of creating a more standardised 'Learner Satisfaction Survey' process with the ability to electronically compile, view and interrogate the data arising. Coupled with the Learner Forum, these learner engagement actions will lead to vast improvement in our systematic approach to capturing the learner voice and ensuring the mechanisms are in place to listen to it.

WWETB 2022/2023 Learner Forum

Case Study 2- WWETB's Use of Data

Background:

WWETB has sought to improve its ability to collect and consult data as a constituent element of ascertaining the quality of provision and has invested in putting personnel and systems in place to that end. Data related recommendations accounted for seven of the recommendations comprising the external Review Team's report and WWETB is committed to establishing a robust systematic approach to meet these recommendations and to ensure that:

- We input information accurately into our data systems and achieve a high degree of data fidelity.
- We have established procedures for data inquiry and have efficient processes for same.
- We systematically report to the FET Management and Programme Management teams on key data points in association with provision that can help inform the overall provision landscape.
- Understanding data contexts and being comfortable with using data is standard across FET management and coordination personnel.

WWETB wanted to take the opportunity by way of the Case Study option to outline the progress that has been made to date in the meeting of both the recommendations and the general objectives outlined above.

Actions Undertaken:

Robust management of data is a key element of quality assurance. WWETB was one of the first ETB organisations to put in place a designated Data Analyst (by way of a CEF contract). The WWETB appointed Data Analyst works closely with our PLSS Coordinators and all are part of the WWETB Quality Team. At the time of the review, the Quality Team were in the process of drafting a FET policy for the management of data. In addition to this, a draft procedure was developed for the compiling and analysis of key indicators relating to FET programmes. These key indicators are compiled by the QA team and communicated to FET Managers and Programme Coordinators/Principals twice yearly by way of;

    I.   A mid-year review.
    II.   An end of year report.

To establish a system of benchmarking, WWETB use both the average data for the provision type over the preceding 3-year period, and the average 3-year data for the programme/centre itself. For the mid-year review process, the QA Team flag with the Programme Coordinator and FET Manager a ± 20% or more deviation from the benchmarked averages. The e-mail recipients are asked to run a check on the data to ensure that it tallies with their own records and confirm same. If the data is confirmed as accurate, then the Programme/FET Manager is asked to give relevant information leading to the variance. It is important to note that there are often very legitimate and logical reasons why certain data indicators might rise or fall to a ≤ 20% variation and the mid-year review allows us to record this for data purposes. The end of year report, the 'FET Programme Data Management Report', is a formal report issued to all members of the FET Management Team in February of the succeeding year after all yearly data has been consolidated. In terms of benchmarking, the report highlights a lesser variance from average figures than the mid-year review process does, ± 8% for most indicators. The indicators currently being reviewed and reported on in both processes show 3-year data for:

- Participation Rates
- Completion Rates
- Early-Leaver Rates and Reasons
- Certification Rates
- Grade Distribution Analysis (Using National data supplied by QQI).

In addition to the current policy and procedures, WWETB continue to refer to Tableau for data relating the Strategic Performance targets. The QA Team have rolled out a series of presentations to FET Managers and Programme Coordinators for both the internal data processes and use of Tableau. These have developed with the objective of improving data fluency and data-attentiveness across FET provision.

Challenges:

It would be fair to say that systematic use of data with the FET sector has not been widespread up until quite recently and all ETBs are striving to respond to the challenge of using data in an efficient and constructive manner. Doing this requires data expertise, data fluency, and a good understanding of the limitations of data in terms of converting ***data into information***. A key concern of many of our Practitioners, Coordinators and Managers is the potential over-reliance on data as a lens by which to assess the quality of provision. Data targets, while important can often carry an implication that other elements of service are under-valued or of less importance. These concerns are valid. There are examples of discrepancies within SPA targets where certain cohorts/programmes are excluded from certain targets, even though they fit the profile of the target. What are the potential negative interpretations of this? While data-based targets can motivate and help drive activity in certain directions, there is a danger they can demotivate too. This is particularly true of elements of the FET sector that are difficult to quantify. The attainment of 'soft skills', informal learner support, innovation based on local knowledge or opportunity, these are an example of fundamental elements of the FET sector, arguably key elements that have made the sector what it is today. Does the language of data respect these key elements? WWETB has acknowledged the shortcomings of data in this regard in our FET Data Management Policy and a conscious decision has been made to not refer to our currently employed set of data indicators as 'performance' indicators as it is felt that 'performance' comprises of a multitude of elements that would not be adequately contained within the data sets analysed by the current QA data process.

Another challenge linked to the relative infancy of the more central role of data within sector would be the time and effort the ETB is expending to assist in elevating PLSS to the efficient and responsive data system that it needs to be for business. We are continuously working closely with key personnel within SOLAS to try to achieve that common goal.

Conclusion:

WWETB considers the management of FET data to be an area of strength for the organisation. Next year will see our current FET data policy and procedures reviewed and redeveloped. Even before this review takes place, the QA Team intend to make changes and improvements to the way the reports present data to the viewer. It is hoped that the new format will make the data more coherent and promptly comprehensible through use of more sophisticated graphs and graphics.

The WWETB Strategy Statement 2023-2027 identifies a number of objectives with regard to data use within the organisation which illustrates WWETB's commitment to quality in the area of data management. These include:

1.1.16 Appointment of Data Officer – with responsibility for data, data analytics and data protection.

6.1.3 Enable the organisation to use data for accurate reporting, by developing a formal data governance procedure to standardise how data is collected and processed within internal systems.

6.4.4 Enable the organisation to use data for accurate reporting. Build data analytics capabilities within the organisation to consistently extract reliable data for reporting and generating business insights.

The WWETB QA Team has shared our current Policy and procedures with other ETBs for reference upon their request. The organisation is committed to collaborating with our fellow ETBs and our stakeholders to aspire to best practice in the core quality pillar of Information and Data Management.