Interim Quality Report

Louth and Meath Education and Training Board

Date: February - 2025

PREFACE

The inaugural review by QQI of the quality assurance in the 16 Education and Training Boards (ETBs) took place between March 2021 and May 2022. Following the review, each ETB provided an **action plan** and **follow-up report** in response to the recommendations made in the individual review report. QQI's role is to monitor and review the QA of providers, and the effectiveness of provider's internal QA system. Systematic quality reporting by providers is an integral part of this process. The development of an integrated and systematic annual quality reporting model for ETBs has commenced; for this quality reporting period, ETBs are submitting an interim quality report. This interim quality report records progress, developments and impacts in furtherance of recommendations arising from each ETB's review report, as well as other QA enhancements and initiatives.

In addition, the interim quality report requires each ETB to include updated links to its published quality assurance policies and procedures.

This is the interim quality report for [Louth and Meath ETB]

It is to be submitted by [28/02/25]

The interim quality report has been approved by [LMETB's Quality Assurance Governance and Management Committee (QAGMC)] and is submitted by [Angela Cahill]

CONTENTS

GUIDELINES ON COMPLETING THE REPORT

This **interim quality report** provides a progress update to the ETB's inaugural review follow-up report, in addition to information regarding quality plans and initiatives in the ETB. Whereas details regarding all inaugural review recommendations were included in the follow-up report, please note that information relating to completed actions in response to recommendations, if any, are not required in this interim quality report.

Links to the published quality assurance policies and procedures of the ETB must be included in this interim quality report. Each ETB should ensure before submission that all links within the report are <u>correct and functional</u>, and that the policies and procedures referred to are the most up-to-date versions available.

The ETB is asked to give particular attention to specific impacts arising from QA actions/initiatives, 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 Follow-up reporting **process** and any barriers or challenges arising in implementation of the review recommendations.

The ETB is also asked to include additional **reflections** in the commentary.

The ETB is invited to provide up to 3 short case studies, 1-2 pages, demonstrating QA enhancements and their impacts.

There is a short survey on the follow-up process in Section 6. The results of this will be used to inform QQI and will not be published as part of this report.

1.0 Interim Quality Report

Include all links to published QA policies and procedures relevant to each section in the table below.

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

1.01 ETB Mission and Strategy

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
Development of a Further Education and Training (FET) Strategy (2022-2025) for LMETB.	LMETB strives to provide high-quality education and training opportunities that enable learners to reach their full potential and contribute meaningfully to their communities. By aligning with national FET priorities, LMETB aims to build skills, foster inclusion, and create clear pathways for all learners, ensuring they are equipped for the evolving demands of society and the economy. LMETB's Further Education and Training Strategy will build on its established strengths while addressing emerging challenges through innovation, inclusivity, and collaboration. By focusing on the FET strategic pillars: Building Skills; Fostering Inclusion; and Creating pathways, LMETB aims to provide transformative learning experiences that meet the needs of learners, society, and the economy. This strategy underpinned by five key enabling strategies of Learner-Centred Approach; Staffing and FET Capability; FET Curriculum Development, and Infrastructure and Performance; and, Strategic Partnerships, will ensure that LMETB continues to be a key player in the regional and national education landscape, equipping learners for a changing world and contributing to the ongoing social and economic development of Louth and Meath. The draft LMETB FET Strategy has been circulated to FET

	Leaders and will be updated based on the feedback received. The final iteration of the LMETB FET Strategy will be available once the new SOLAS FET Strategy 2025-29 is published to ensure strategical alignment between the two documents.
Commentary and Reflections Click here to enter text.	
Link to Published Policies and Procedures Click here to enter text.	

1.02 Structures & Terms of Reference for Governance of QA

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
1.Strengthen the membership of the Quality Assurance Governance Management Committee and its sub-committees through the inclusion of employer and learner representatives.	LMETB has made progress in 2024 in extending the membership of its QA governance committees. It is planned that by the end of 2025 that there will be external representation on the Quality Assurance Governance and Management Committee (QAGMC), the Programme Development, Review and Evaluation (PDRE) sub-committee and the Quality Assurance (QA) sub-committee. An invitation to sit on the QAGMC is currently being considered by an industry external representative. The remit of the QAGMC is being extended to manage the Robotics and Automation (RAA) apprenticeship programme in 2025 to accommodate the necessary governance changes required for the administration of post-2016 apprenticeships. LMETB was validated by QQI

	for this apprenticeship programme in Q4 of 2024, please see Figure 1 below for the governance diagram of the RAA apprenticeship. Nominations from suitable industry/academic stakeholders are being sought to effect this change of responsibility.
	Some changes in internal membership of the PDRE and the QA sub-committee have taken place in 2024 due to staff changes/movement in order to continue to ensure a broad representation of FET provision on these sub-committees. As the remit of the QA sub-committee is quite extensive, a QA Working Group has been established in Q1 of 2025 to specifically focus on policy development, policy update/revision and the review of QA processes. Membership of the QA Working Group encompasses staff from LMETB's three PLC senior management teams as well as members of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Service (QAES).
	LMETB's FET Learner Voice Network (LVN) is established and operates under a defined Terms of Reference. Calls for new members takes place across FET centres at various stages in the academic year and 1-2 members of the LVN are invited to be part of LMETB FET Communications sub-committee.
2.Consider reviewing the internal ETB structures to create greater visibility for quality assurance. The review team recommends that the ETB should promote consistency across centres, establish	The first annual FET Support event incorporating input from the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Service (QAES) was held in December 2022. The QAES encompasses QA, Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL), Professional Learning and Development (PLD), Programme Development and Learning Support functions.

| standardised processes, and develop a common understanding of quality assurance. | A second FET Support event was held in October 2024 and was attended by FET centre management, teaching staff and administrative staff. The aim of the event was to share internal best practice in the areas of Quality Assurance, Teaching Learning and Assessment and TEL. The event showcased activities which the QAES staff had been working on, with a focus on new LMETB policy developments and associated procedures, the sharing of any recent sectoral developments, highlighting new TEL areas of potential interest to teaching staff and introducing the work of the Learning Support Officer. The event also provided a networking space for FET Leaders and FET administrators where they could share any challenges they had experienced regarding operational aspects of QA, data collection, etc as well as providing an opportunity to feed back their perspectives on the support provided by the QAES. Co-currently, time was given to participating FET educators at the event to network with teachers from other centres and to join relevant Communities of Practice to encourage a sense of collegiality and the sharing of best practice in different subject areas.

A 'QA Check-In' survey was sent out to all FET centres and PLC colleges in September 2024. The survey looked to gain an overview of practices around data capture, pre-assessment practices, internal verification, external authentication, knowledge of LMETB FET policies and procedures, communication to learners and post-submission processes. On the basis of the survey findings, additional training in uploading to the QBS system was provided in Q4 of 2024. Refresher Internal Verification training is being delivered in Q1 of 2025. |

	A follow-up action from the QA Check-In survey is a site visit to each FET college and centre to discuss the findings from the survey. In 2024, members from the QAES visited provision across FET including Drogheda College, VTOS and LMETB's three PLC colleges. In-person visits to the rest of LMETB's FET centres by QAES staff will be carried out in 2025 with the aim of increasing the visibility of supports available to centres.

A Training Standards Officer (TSO) Network was established in Q4 of 2024 comprising QA members of staff from LMETB's three training centres, the Regional Skills Training Centre (RSTC), the Advanced Manufacturing Training Centre of Excellence (AMTCE) and Drogheda College as well as the QA Officer and AEO with responsibility for QA. The aims of this network are to provide networking opportunities for the QA staff in these centres, to promote the sharing of good practice as well as supporting awareness of QA initiatives across the wider FET provision in LMETB.

A FET Support Newsletter was first issued in Spring 2024 to keep FET staff up to date with developments in QA, TEL, PLD, Learning Support and Programme Development. This newsletter will be issued to all FET staff on an annual basis going forward and supports the current communication channels (MS Teams, email updates and SharePoint) used by FET Support Services and the QAES. |
| 3.Establish a quality assurance office as described in the ETB's self-evaluation report. | LMETB's QAES' staffing includes two Adult Education Officers with responsibility for QA and Curriculum Development respectively, the QA Officer, the PLD Officer and the Programme Development Officer. Sanction will be sought in 2025 to replace the TEL Officer and the |

	Learning Support Officer roles. Sanction will also be sought for a PLSS Coordinator/Data Analytics Officer and an Educational Technologist with this latter role required for LMETB's move to blended and online delivery of education and training programmes. In addition, ETBI has submitted a business case to DFHERIS for a dedicated FET Communications Resource for each ETB.

Commentary and Reflections

Figure 1: **Governance structure for the Robotics and Automation Apprenticeship**
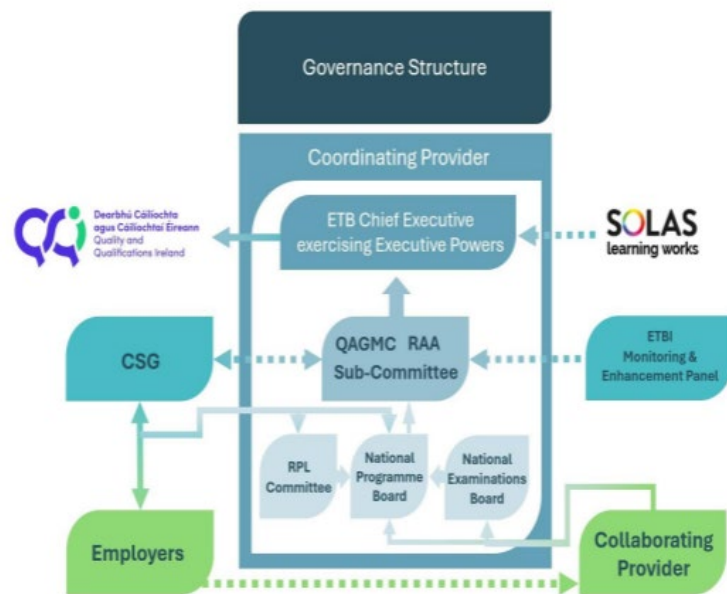
Link to published policies and procedures
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1.03 Documentation of QA

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
4. Identify, at the strategic level, a more consistent and integrated approach to quality assurance to create greater parity of experience for learners, staff, employers and other stakeholders.	While FET provision is currently underpinned by a visible and accessible system of policies and procedures LMETB Quality Assurance Revised Policies and Procedures (QA Manual), further development over the next couple of years of an explicit Quality Framework informing FET provision will act as a focus for continued quality improvement and enhancement. The opportunity afforded by the Inaugural Review through the initial self-evaluation exercise, the review of current practices, the insights and informed recommendations from the review panel, and the development of follow-up plans actioning these recommendations have resulted in a sharper focus on the development of the Quality Framework.

Work has started in 2024 on an LMETB FET Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TLA) Strategic Framework which will set out LMETB's strategic priorities in relation to TLA, providing a framework for ensuring that these are used to promote learner achievement in line with the vision and priorities in LMETB's Statement of Strategy 2022-2026.

Given the specialised nature of provision in the AMTCE with its focus on supporting industry involved in advanced manufacturing, another aspect of this continuing work on the Quality |

	Framework is the development of a Guiding QA Framework for third party delivery of education and training courses. This Guiding QA Framework will encompass the complexity of the broad range of both the AMTCE and other LMETB provision in delivering focused, industrially relevant training so as to ensure a quality assured learning experience for all.
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Commentary and Reflections
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Link to Published Policies and Procedures
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1.04 Staff Recruitment, Management & Development

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
5.Identify effective mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning to support improvements in the quality of all provision. Such mechanisms could include appraisal, performance procedures, communities of practice networks and other initiatives aligned with continuing professional development.	In 2022, six online Communities of Practices (CoPs) were set up on MS TEAMS covering core subject areas. FET educators were invited to be part of these as a pilot scheme. The subject areas were ICT, Communications. Adult Literacy, ESOL, Maths and Work Experience. This online pilot scheme was reviewed and to encourage increased participation of staff in CoPs, the opportunity was given to FET educators at the LMETB FET Support Day in October 2024 to meet face to face with other subject matter experts in their relevant Communities of Practice. In 2025, to build on the professional networks

	developed on that day, all FET educators who attended will be added to one CoP specific to their core subject area where they can collaborate with other educators. The QAES/FET Support Service will be there to act as guidance/support to the CoPs as needed and these groupings will meet again at the next in-person FET support event in Autumn 2025. This event will also act as a chance to evaluate the progress of the CoPs to date and to plan for any changes or expansion of the project.
6. Develop and implement an ETB-wide strategy for the design, monitoring and evaluation of the induction programme offered to all FET staff.	A standardised FET staff induction checklist has been developed by the QAES/FET Support Services with a view to rollout in 2025. A suite of induction materials will be available for use by FET centres. These materials will be updated on an annual basis, reflecting any new or up-dated organisational developments and will be available online on Office 365 SharePoint. There will be ongoing review and evaluation processes to ensure induction remains fit for purpose. Staff Mentoring schemes will be explored further in 2025.
7. Develop and promote an ETB strategy for the professional development and learning of all FET staff	In 2023, an outline FET Professional Learning and Development (PLD) strategy for LMETB was developed taking account of the SOLAS/ETBI National FET PLD strategy 2020-24 Additional survey based and work-shop planning was to take place to set out the vision, goals and actions for PLD in LMETB FET for 2024-28.

This work has been suspended whilst awaiting the development of the upcoming SOLAS National FET Strategy 2024-28 and a potential national FET PLD strategy 2024-28, as these documents would be crucial in informing the LMETB FET PLD strategy.

Once in draft format, the normal consultation process will be in place in the further development, review and update of the PLD strategy i.e., consultation with FET Leaders and FET Senior Management. LMETB's FET Professional Learning and Development Strategy will ensure that staff will continue to be given opportunities to upskill and engage in teaching and learning related PLD. A detailed evaluation of LMETB's PLD strategy will be carried out in 2028 when the next strategy is to be developed.

LMETB Professional Learning and Development Office will continue to collaborate with SOLAS, ETBI and the National PLD Coordinators' Network in the planning, development and implementation of PLD for FET Staff in LMETB.

Commentary and Reflections
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Link to Published Policies and Procedures
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1.05 Programme Development, Approval & Submission

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
8. Identify when each programme, course and qualification need to be revised or reviewed. This information should be used to establish an agreed schedule of work to ensure every part of provision is up-to- date and meets the needs of learners and employers	LMETB along with the fifteen other ETBs are involved in the pilot sectoral review and update of selected CAS modules. A total of twenty-eight modules at levels 4, 5 and 6 have been chosen for review in the pilot phase of the programme. LMETB is developing two Level 6 modules: Training Needs Identification & Design and Training Delivery & Evaluation. Work is currently underway to review these modules, resulting in modified minimum intended module learning outcomes (MIMLOs) that remain true to the original learning outcomes for each module. Once re-drafted modules have been through a rigorous review process with input from teachers who deliver the module, the Curriculum Writer, and an External Authenticator, the revised modules will be, subject to internal governance, rolled out for sharing with all ETBs at the end of the pilot phase. A sectoral review of the pilot phase will be conducted by the Quality Network in order to learn from the process and to aid in planning the next steps in a sectoral approach to CAS programme review. Learning from this process will be used to build programme development capacity in ETBs in terms of resourcing and staffing with a view to a systematic review of existing CAS programmes over the next few years.
9. Ensure the Programme development, review and evaluation (PDRE) sub-committee includes representatives from all areas of the ETB's FET provision including employers, learners and other stakeholders.	Currently the PDRE Committee comprises members from across the broad spectrum of FET provision within LMETB including, Adult Guidance, PLCs, Youthreach, VTOS, the RSTC as well as members of the QAES. External representation will be sought in 2025.

10. Review the manageability of the workload and responsibilities assigned to the Programme Development, Review and Evaluation sub-committee.	LMETB have a Programme Approval, Review and Evaluation Process ([Programme-Development-and-Approval-Process-Map.pdf](#)) that ensures manageability so that the responsibilities of the PDRE Committee are well defined with robust quality assurance standards in line with national policy objectives. Programme applications from LMETB FET centres are made via an MS Form created and approved by LMETB's Quality Assurance team. The applications are collated by the Programme Development Officer and circulated to PDRE Committee members a week before their meeting. The application summaries from each FET centre give the committee members time to analyse the information provided and its alignment to programme approval criteria, prior to meeting. The PDRE considers each application and either recommends them or not for consideration by the QAGMC. LMETB's Programme approval, review and Evaluation process can be accessed here [LMETB Programme Development and Approval Policy and Procedures](#)

Commentary and Reflections

LMETB has demonstrated a proactive approach in developing innovative QQI awards aligned with SOLAS national strategy and the key pillars of Further Education and Training. This commitment is evident in the successful validation by QQI in Q4 of 2024 of a national apprenticeship programme in Robotics and Automation (RAA). LMETB were also validated in 2024 to deliver a Level 4 Special Purpose award in Barista Skills.

In Q4 2024 LMETB submitted to QQI for validation a Level 3 programme leading to a Special Purpose Award in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths (STEAM). This innovative programme developed in collaboration with the National Youth Council of Ireland and DCU's Centre for the Advancement of STEM Teaching and Learning aims to equip the learner with an introductory knowledge of science,

technology, engineering, arts, and maths with a focus on the interdisciplinary nature of these subjects and related skills with relevance to their daily lives. It is envisioned that this award once validated will have particular relevance and application in Youthreach centres.

Additionally, LMETB are preparing to submit a validation application to QQI in 2025 for a programme leading to a Level 5 Special Purpose Award in 3-D Construction Printing Operations. This proposed programme will equip learners with the skills, knowledge, and competencies to carry out 3-D Construction Printing Operations safely and competently. Learners will gain practical, hands-on experience in using the complete suite of equipment required for the 3-D Construction Printing process as well as the theory and science behind the additive manufacturing principles.

As part of the SOLAS Innovation through Collaboration Fund 2024 Call - FET Micro-Qualifications Project, LMETB, in collaboration with an industry partner is currently developing a suite of micro-qualifications leading to an overall Special Purpose Award at Level 6 in the Factory of the Future/Smart Factory processes. This programme will prepare manufacturing professionals for the impact that digital technologies will have on their factory operations, offering a comprehensive understanding of new and advanced technologies.

LMETB's Programme Development Officer is a member of SOLAS Green Skills Development Committee. Whilst LMETB are not taking the lead in the development and validation of these awards, we support their development through participation in the SOLAS Green Skills Development committee. Three new Special Purpose awards currently being developed include:

- Sustainable Leadership
- Sustainable Finance
- Sustainable Reporting

When validated LMETB will be able to apply to QQI for differential validation for delivery.

Looking ahead, LMETB is exploring the development of further programmes. Overall, these programme development initiatives showcase LMETB's dedication to addressing emerging industry needs and supporting diverse learner pathways.

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In 2024, LMETB applied for differential validation for a number of awards (see below):

- Level 3 Specific Purpose Certificate in Introduction to Climate Justice Level 3 Special Purpose Award
- Level 6 Specific Purpose Certificate in Mentorship Practice Level 6 Special Purpose Award
- Level 4 Specific Purpose Certificate in Digital Citizenship Level 4 Special Purpose Award
- Level 4 Specific Purpose Certificate in Social Innovation in the Community Level 4 Special Purpose Award
- Level 2 Specific Purpose Certificate in English for Speakers of Other Languages Level 2 Special Purpose Award
  - Certificate in Speaking and Listening Level 2 Minor Award
  - Certificate in Writing Level 2 Minor Award
  - Certificate in Reading Level 2 Minor Award

- Level 1 Specific Purpose Certificate in English for Speakers of Other Languages Level 1 Special Purpose Award
  - Certificate in Speaking and Listening Level 1 Minor Award
  - Certificate in Writing Level 1 Minor Award
  - Certificate in Reading Level 1 Minor Award

1.06 Access, Transfer and Progression

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
11. Develop and use a policy for the recognition of prior learning and prior experiential learning.	In Autumn 2023, ten members of LMETB FET staff attended a six-week in-house Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) training course, which was facilitated by an experienced practitioner. This course provided an introduction and overview of the RPL process, with a particular focus on using RPL for gaining a QQI award. Following this training and, as part of LMETB's phased approach to RPL aimed at building RPL capacity among staff, a number of FET educators have successfully completed a programme of study in 2024, utilising an RPL approach, securing QQI accredited awards in areas ranging from Work Experience to Culinary Skills.

Aligning with this phased approach, a pilot RPL programme is being implemented in Dunboyne College of Further Education (DCFE). The pilot is being run with a view to enhancing skills, knowledge and competencies in the RPL area, and also to facilitate cascading of the training across FET staff teams. In tandem with this work, an RPL Policy together with an RPL Handbook has been developed in 2024 for use in the pilot phase of implementing the RPL process.

An LMETB RPL Working Group was set up in Autumn 2024 and will meet four times per annum with the intention of reviewing the pilot phase and making further applications for |

	awards through the RPL process. The pilot will be reviewed over the next academic year and amendments to policy and practice will be made where necessary.
	In terms of networking and sharing of practice, LMETB's AEO with responsibility for QA is a member of the newly formed sectoral FET RPL Network. The QA Officer is a member of the sectoral RPL Practitioner Network and attended their national event 'People, Validation and Power (Sharing, Learning)' in Q4 2024.
12. Identify the inconsistencies in individual centres' approaches to admissions and develop and use an ETB-wide admissions policy	A review of admission practices across FET provision with a view to identifying gaps and inconsistencies has been ongoing in 2024. Changes to practice include a standardised induction process across LMETB for Level 4 and 5 learners on Moodle to ensure that as the learners progress, their ability and skills to use Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) are ensured.
13. Use the available quantitative data to review and update existing policies relating to access, transfer and progression.	In 2024, LMETB's Adult Education Guidance and Information Service began a review of current access, transfer and progression processes across FET provision. This work built on their FET Progression Framework showcasing LMETB FET provision and developed in 2023 as a visual aid to learners so as to promote understanding of the totality of programme offerings, associated NFQ levels as well as acronyms used. Continuation of this work in clarifying application, transfer and progression routes is planned for 2025. In conjunction, the QAES will be reviewing and updating LMETB's Admission policy and its Access,

	Transfer and Progression policy. Revision of this latter policy will be informed by the publication of QQI's Green Paper on Access, Transfer and Progression policy.
Commentary and Reflections Click here to enter text.	
Link to Published Policies and Procedures **LMETB FET Progression Poster**	

1.07 Integrity and Approval of Learner Results

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
14. Speedily develop the single overarching set of policies, procedures and practices for quality assuring all aspects of assessment relating to the ETB's provision.	The QAES organises regular training on IV and QBS procedures to ensure that colleagues are informed of any new developments with regard to QA procedures. In December 2024, 33 staff attended QBS training and IV training is scheduled for early 2025. The QAES also prepares an anonymised, consolidated Results Approval Panel (RAP) Summary report following each assessment period, in total six times per year. These reports summarise the good practice noted during external authentication visits to FET centres/colleges as well as any areas for improvement. The consolidated RAP report is brought to the QA subcommittee

for discussion and is then made available on the FET Quality Assurance MS Team to keep teaching staff informed of any quality matters arising from authentication processes.

The LMETB FET Learner Information Guide/Learner Handbook specifically references assessment policies and signposts the learner to the QA Policies and Procedures section of LMETB's website.

The *Turnitin* Artificial Intelligence (AI) Checker was introduced in 2024. It enhances academic integrity by providing educators and learners with a reliable tool to identify AI-generated content. The tool helps educators detect potential misuse of AI tools. Both learners and educators can generate a report to identify the potential of AI-generated content. This ensures that submitted work reflects a genuine effort from the learner. Work has begun in Q1 of 2025, via the QA Working Group, to update LMETB's Assessment Malpractice policy to encompass developments in Gen AI and contracted cheating since the policy was last revised. Guideline documents for both learners and teaching staff in relation to the ethical use of Gen AI in assessment will also be developed.

Given the range and specific nature of the provision offered by the AMTCE which has a focus on industry-led vendor specific courses in the area of advanced manufacturing, the QAES is currently working with the centre to augment their QA framework ensuring in the process that their assessment practices are aligned with the ETB's integrated quality management system.

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Commentary and Reflections

In Q4 of 2024 a full Quality Assurance and Enhancement review was carried out with FET centres and colleges. This was part of a three-pronged approach to auditing QA within the ETB. Firstly, a comprehensive survey (a 'QA Check-in' MS Form) was issued to all FET centres covering all elements of the QA process from Learner Recruitment through to IV, EA, RAP, Certification of Learner results and auditing of learner progression. The QA survey garnered information on;

- how centres initially engage in data capture, pre-assessment information, IV and EA related feedback
- centres' awareness surrounding LMETB policies including recent amendments to policies
- all aspects of communication to learners
- how centres deal with post-submission learner queries
- identification of any areas for development together with specific training needs in relation to QA processes.

Coordinators in FET Centres were invited to a series of dedicated FET Support/Review Days in October 2024 which allowed for colleagues to respond to the broad findings of the QA Check-in, giving immediate feedback in the second phase of the FET Quality Review. In this session, colleagues were also appraised of the ETBI/QA Network-led Pilot Module Review of a selection of 28 modules across QQI. The final part of this QA review involves in-person QA visits to each FET centre to better understand any QA issues faced by the centre and to respond to any QA matters raised. Some of these visits have been completed in 2024 with more scheduled for 2025.

Please refer to the Case Study section which focuses on some current examples of quality enhancement initiatives related to assessment practices piloted by LMETB centres.

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Link to Published Policies and Procedures

In 2024, all six LMETB assessment-related policies were reviewed by the QA Subcommittee and revisions approved by the QAGMC.
The revised policies are listed below:

- LMETB Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment
- LMETB Assessment Appeals Process
- LMETB Assessment Deadline Process
- LMETB Secure Storage Procedure
- LMETB Assessment Malpractice Procedure
- LMETB Examinations Procedure

LMETB Quality Assurance Revised Policies and Procedures (QA Manual)

1.08 Information and Data Management

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
15.Reviews how data is used to inform quality assurance. The review team recommends that greater emphasis should be placed on the collection and use of	The use of the Tableau data visualization tool has enhanced our data analysis capabilities. This tool allows LMETB to extract and scrutinize PLSS data by systematically tracking, evaluating, and assessing the outcomes of FET programmes.

internal data to ensure high quality outcomes as opposed to the current focus on data for external stakeholders.

Areas of concern such as high early leaver numbers or low certification rates can be identified. Progress in meeting SOLAS Strategic Performance Agreement targets can be monitored and key actions taken if required. A key aspect of this initiative has been the distribution of the Management Information System (MIS) report, a comprehensive document that encapsulates PLSS learner and course data. This encompasses critical metrics such as retention rates, outcomes, and certifications, shown by provider and programme category. FET Senior Management monitors the completion of PLSS data on a regular basis in collaboration with FET centres. The distribution of the MIS reports and the use of Tableau visualisation information has recently been paused due to staffing changes, however the recruitment of a PLSS Coordinator/Data Analytics Officer will allow these practices to be resumed.

In 2024, LMETB's internal Annual Learner Experience Survey and the AONTAS facilitated Learner Voice report (arising from LMETB's annual Learner Forum) have provided valuable, qualitative information that has aided the development of specific learner supports. These supports include provision of e-learning modules for learners in the area of mental health, Mental Health First Aid training for staff, Learner ID cards (supporting learning identity and provided discounts to help with the cost-of-living crisis) and Assistive Teaching training.
Sample e-learning modules:

- Taking Care of Your Digital Wellbeing
- 5-Day Challenge to Improve Your Mental Health

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Commentary and Reflections

Building on the feedback from the Inaugural Review of Quality Assurance in LMETB, there needs to be an investment in the creation of a data team and ongoing training to improve data literacy and interpretation internally within LMETB. This would include sanction for a PLSS Co-ordinator/Data Analytics Officer in LMETB to further the support of ETB data inputters to continue to improve data accuracy and retention.

While acknowledging the use of the Tableau tool and MIS reports as mentioned above, LMETB is working towards developing a process that would lead to the enhanced use of quantitative data that can be integrated into the decision-making processes at organisation and FET centre level. Data collection processes and the use of data to inform strategic decision-making and enhancement initiatives tend to be under-developed. The intention is that a process for systematic compilation and review of quantitative data should be reflected in an LMETB FET Data Management Policy and a procedure for analysing key data sets against considered benchmarks. A reporting process needs to be in place and integrated into the FET system. As part of this process, LMETB needs to establish key performance indicator (KPI) metrics to enhance future planning - this selection of key metrics needs to be agreed by the FET Management Team and these key metrics captured in data reporting for FET provision. e.g. the use of KPIs be introduced consistently to set targets in areas such as retention, certification and progression in all education and training programmes delivered by centres and second providers and those outcomes should be measured and recorded.

The development of a FET Data Management Policy and procedures would play an important role in the review of performance leading to an annual report issued by the QAES Team to FET Management. The selected indicators will aid the FET Management Team in evaluating FET provision in relation to the SOLAS Strategic Performance Agreement. All this work would be underpinned by the appointment of full-time PLSS Coordinator/Data Analytics Officer.

LMETB recognises the need for the use of 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 external element to the evaluation of the Quality Assurance Framework.

There would be a need to investigate EQAVET Framework indicators and provision of national data with SOLAS. Briefings on data usage and the FET data processes need to be embedded into the ETB FET systems. Data management should be an item on the induction programme for FET Managers and Coordinators.

LMETB is developing a system that can monitor, and review learner supports on a regular basis to ensure they continue to meet evolving learners' needs. A PLSS Coordinator/Data Analytics Officer, if sanctioned, will work along with the Learning Support Officer to develop a system to track and review learner supports provision. This could include using the functionality of the PLSS.

In terms of programme monitoring and review there is currently no systemic, consistent approach to the review of FET programmes. Programmes are reviewed locally in FET centres and colleges using learner satisfaction data gathered through a variety of approaches and the data analysed locally. Monitoring is carried out in accordance with the SOLAS Strategic Performance Agreements. There are different experiences across programmes and centres in terms of capturing learner feedback. There is a need to develop a systemic approach to the review of programmes across FET ensuring consistency across services. An annual, institutional cycle of monitoring and review could help achieve ownership of quality (internally driven to meet internal needs) and utilised to help achieve strategic ambitions for FET. Such reviews could be supported by the QAES.

LMETB would significantly benefit from routinely capturing external stakeholder voices such as employers and second providers in formal QA processes at both local and central level. Access to the SEED/customer relationship management (CRM) database of employers engaged with the ETB will help support this QA function. This database should be widened to include employers active with the ETB in providing work experience and work placement opportunities, engaging in programme development or receiving education and training services for employees.

Link to Published Policies and Procedures
Click here to enter text.

1.09 Public Information and Communication

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
16. Complete the development work on the FET learners' handbook.	In 2024 a FET Learner Virtual Hub was added to the FET area of the LMETB website to supplement the information available to FET learners through the Learner Handbook and the FET Learner Support information section on the LMETB website. The FET Learner Virtual Hub is a dedicated space designed to empower and guide learners on their learning journey with LMETB. The Hub is a go-to resource for accessing support while studying with LMETB. There are training programs, support materials and support updates. The Hub is sub-divided into broad areas including the following: • Learner Support Request • Our Learning Space • Wellbeing Space • Learner Support Updates.

	'Our Learning Space' hosts training sessions and resources designed to help learners develop their skills in Microsoft Office 365: Microsoft Teams Word, PowerPoint, Excel, OneDrive and Outlook. Further down the page, learners can access material to help improve literacy and numeracy skills. In the 'Understanding the Academic Process' course, learners are prepared for their academic journey by being provided with information on three core areas: Academic Integrity, Referencing and Academic Writing. The FET Learner Support Update section provides useful resources for the Louth and Meath areas to improve wellbeing and learning. It is regularly updated with local events and important information.
Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.

Commentary and Reflections
Click here to enter text.

Link to Published Policies and Procedures

FET Learner Support section of LMETB website

LMETB-FET-Learner-Handbook-Jan-2025-2.pdf

FET Learner Virtual Hub

2.0 Teaching, Learning & Assessment

2.02 Assessment of Learners

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
17. Prioritise support for learning and teaching. At a local level there is evidence that the quality of learning and teaching is good. The review team recommends that, at a strategic level, the ETB identifies mechanisms to support a more consistent approach across all its provision.	LMETB continued in 2024 to prioritise support for teaching and learning through targeted initiatives in order to ensure a consistent approach across its variety of FET provision. In 2022, six online Communities of Practices (CoPs) were set up on MS TEAMS covering core subject areas and FET educators were invited to be part of these as a pilot scheme. The subject areas were ICT, Communications. Adult Literacy, ESOL, Maths and Work Experience. This online pilot scheme was reviewed and to encourage increased participation of staff in CoPs, the opportunity was given to FET educators at LMETB FET Support Day in October 2024 to meet face to face with other subject matter experts in Communities of Practice. In 2025, to build on the professional networks developed on that day, all FET educators who attended will be added to one CoP specific to their core subject area where they can collaborate with others who they may have met at the FET Support Day. The QAES/FET Support Service will be there to act as guidance/support to the CoPs as needed and these groupings will meet again at the next FET support event in Autumn 2025. This event will also act as a chance to evaluate the progress of the CoPs and plan for any changes or expansion of the project. The TEL mentoring scheme continues in operation, with teaching staff who champion the appropriate use of, and support peers, using technology to enhance learning in the classroom. These staff members have

worked with the TEL Officer in 2024 in promoting learning and development for other teachers in this area. In 2024 they delivered training to colleagues on Padlet and AI Chatbot in an online format.

LMETB's PLD and TEL Officers have continued to offer and promote workshops and opportunities that support teaching and learning in 2024 e.g.

- Certificate in Global Citizenship Education (Maynooth University)
- Specialist Certificate in AI in Learning (Digital Learning Institute)
- Education for Sustainability Digital Badge (TUD, SETU, ATU and National Forum for Teaching and Learning)
- UDL Digital Badge in Teaching and Learning (AHEAD, UCD and National Forum for Teaching and Learning)
- Dyslexia Course for FET Educators (Dyslexia Ireland)
- TEL Courses (National College of Ireland)
- TESOL and Literacy related PLD for educators (SETU Waterford)
- Higher Diploma in Computing for Educators (ATU Letterkenny)

Furthermore, in association with the National Youth Council of Ireland (NCYI) and DCU, 7 staff from our Youthreach and CTC centres participated in an accredited Professional Learning and Development module to enable them to deliver the newly developed Level 3 Special Purpose Award in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths (STEAM). This programme was developed by LMETB in conjunction with the NCYI in 2024 and has been submitted to QQI for validation.

	In addition, a number of sensory spaces have been created and developed across LMETB FET centres. Sensory spaces are specially designed areas or zones that focus on engaging the senses and in doing so provide support for students' sensory needs. They are available in a number of centres in LMETB; at Dunboyne College of Further Education, at the FET Centre in Navan, and in Youthreach Dundalk. Designed to help learners regulate their emotions, improve focus, and thereby learn effectively, they help learners with self-regulation and provide an inclusive learning environment. In addition, Drogheda Adult Learning Service (ALS) are actively incorporating sensory resources within a main classroom environment to help with the additional needs of some of their learners.
18. Develops and uses a more consistent approach to informing learners of what is expected from assignments.	The LMETB Learning Support Officer developed an e-learning course in 2024 to strengthen learners' understanding of the academic standards expected when undertaking an LMETB programme of study; the course covers academic integrity guidelines, academic referencing and writing. This e-learning course (The Academic Process) is now available on LMETB's website. It is designed primarily to aid learners embarking on programmes located at Levels 4-6 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

The FET Support event in October 2024 provided a valuable opportunity for centres to provide feedback on their assessment processes and to share their good practices around assessment. Evidently FET centres have put in place robust systems to communicate with learners in terms of expectations from the course or programme of study in general and specifically in terms of academic assignment expectations; centres also provide information on assessment schedules. Learners are provided in advance with a course outline, indicating assessment periods and where appropriate, e.g. in the PLCs, learners are provided with a detailed assessment calendar. There is guidance given on expectations around assessments as part of |

	the induction programme, including support for the required referencing format to be used in academic writing throughout the programmes of study.
19. Develop and use a standardised learner handbook across all FET centres in order to strengthen consistency in relation to assessment.	In 2025, an assessment specific resource, the Learner Assessment Handbook will be developed and made available to all learners on the Learner Support site of the LMETB website. The Learner Assessment Handbook will augment the information available to learners in the Learner Handbook.
20. Review how QA arrangements are applied to all forms of work experience	In 2024, LMETB updated its Work Based Learning Policy, including resources for centres, a Learner Pack and Employer Pack. These documents were reviewed by the QA subcommittee, approved by the QAGMC and the updated documentation is available on the LMETB website. The Strategic Employer Engagement Database (SEED) project has been instrumental in transforming employer engagement within LMETB's Skills to Advance team. This innovative CRM system has not only streamlined processes but also empowered staff to provide a more comprehensive and targeted approach to employer support. As part of its rollout, a facility of the SEED system to support work experience placement in FET centres/PLCs is being developed to underscore quality assurance requirements for FET provision offering certified work experience modules. Work placement reporting via the CRM facility will be standardised with the aid, in the first instance of the PLC colleges.

Commentary and Reflections

LMETB are preparing an application to QQI to extend its approved scope of provision to include blended and online learning. This application will be submitted to QQI by the end of June 2025. A Blended Learning Action Plan outlining the steps that LMETB will take in developing its application was submitted to QQI in late January 2025.

As part of the Craft Electrical Apprenticeship Drogheda College in conjunction with SOLAS have been successfully piloting the delivery of online Theory examinations in phase 2.

Link to Published Policies and Procedures
Click here to enter text.

'The Academic Process' e-learning course

LMETB Work Based Learning Policy and Procedures and Associated Resources

2.03 Supports for Learners

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
21. Make explicit how the quality of each support service is monitored and evaluated in order to provide a more formalised and consistent approach in each FET centre.	Ensuring the consistency of targeted supports requires a reliable approach to identifying needs and managing the process by which learners' needs are recognised, how learners are made aware of the relevant supports, how they are facilitated to apply for these if required, and how they may avail of these supports, if approved. The

Learner Support Officer began to informally review learner supports in 2024 with a view to standardising processes and procedures. This review of policy and strategy was to focus on whether LMETB policy and strategy clearly support high quality delivery of reasonable accommodations across all provision; whether FET within LMETB and the associated organisation support structures have plans to improve the accessibility of its physical and digital infrastructure, and whether universal design principles have started to embed within our teaching practice. It was also to look at whether key quality assurance and communications processes strategically ensure that learners are well informed about support, and that support provision is of a high quality. Finally, it was also to look at whether LMETB have trained and qualified staff coordinating the provision of disability support across the ETB and guiding local staff to support quality.

Arising from this a Learner Needs Assessment form has been developed for use in FET centres outside of the PLC environment where learner needs are managed via the Fund for Students with Disabilities (FSD). The current LMETB Reasonable Accommodation policy focuses on assessment processes only, therefore a revised Reasonable Accommodation procedure encompassing assessment, and the learning environment is in development, whereby a timelier intervention will be put in place covering the period when the learner begins a course thus enabling possible support with any identified issues which may militate against the learner's fulsome participation within the learning environment.

LMETB is actively engaging with the national ETBI & AHEAD working group: 'Reasonable Accommodations (RA) in FET Feedback Group'. LMETB supported the roll out of a formal survey into the provision of reasonable accommodation policy and practise in FET by this working group. The finalization of tools in Needs Assessment and Reasonable accommodations, development of short courses, support video and formal polices and processes guidelines for learners to access supports are being agreed across all FET provision by this group and FET Directors and these will inform the future iteration and development of LMETB's Reasonable Accommodation Policy and Procedures.

Going forward for LMETB FET, there will be a focus in 2025 on increasing the accessibility for learners of policies and procedures of relevance to learners through the use of Plain English and through the utilisation of a variety of communication mediums.

In 2024 the OSD Directorate has appointed an Access Officer in accordance with section 26(2) of the Disability Act 2005. An Access Officer is responsible for providing and coordinating assistance and guidance to persons with disabilities when accessing services across a Public Body such as LMETB. They can also act as a point of contact for people with disabilities intending to access services of the Public Body and assist in directing queries to the appropriate contacts. The organisation acknowledges that its accessibility journey is constantly evolving with new technologies and updated legislative requirements, and at times there may be issues with accessing some services. Should there be an identified accessibility requirement, this can be

	communicated via accessofficer@lmetb.ie so that work can be undertaken to improve the service and resolve the matter. Under the EU Web Accessibility Directive, Public bodies in Ireland must ensure their websites and mobile apps are accessible to all people, including persons with disabilities, the Access officer and LMETB IT Department have begun the process to ensure compliance in this regard.
22. Implement the SOLAS Guidance on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to support the diverse needs of learners.	Relevant supports, where possible are being made available to facilitate all learners, taking account of their diversity, to afford any individual, regardless of background or formal education level, an opportunity to learn and develop. The continued roll out during 2024 of PLD opportunities related to the acquisition of UDL Digital Badges is providing additional staff trained in UDL principles thereby enhancing the learning environments for all learners. In-person visits to centres by the Learner Support Officer highlighted possible UDL approaches via the utilisation of TEL resources.

Commentary and Reflections

The provision of learner support is central to LMETB's FET programme provision. The appointment of a dedicated Learner Support Officer has had a significant impact on the learner journey and works as a key part of the QAES/FET support Team in increasing the availability and awareness of learner supports across FET provision. Self-guided e-learning resources in assistive technology, learner wellbeing, and study

skills are in development. These resources will be integrated into the learners' VLE, providing support and enhancing the learner experience in FET.

Development and publication of an LMETB Reasonable Accommodations procedure and policy has been deferred in response to the formation of the ETBI and AHEAD Reasonable Accommodations (RA) in FET Feedback Group. LMETB's draft policy and procedure in Reasonable Accommodations will be reviewed and augmented to align with the best practices advised by the ETBI/AHEAD working group. Following this the policies will be reviewed by FET senior management, go through appropriate consultation and governance processes with an implementation plan developed.

Example of learner support in LMETB - The Drogheda College Training Centre is dedicated to supporting apprentices in both their academic and personal development through a range of learner supports. The college ensures an inclusive learning environment by offering assessments for apprentices with learning difficulties and providing reasonable accommodations to meet individual needs. These accommodations can include extended time for exams, the use of assistive technology, or a reader for exams, ensuring all apprentices have equal opportunities to succeed.

Additionally, extra evening tuition is available to help apprentices enhance their understanding of course materials and improve their academic performance. This supplementary support is especially beneficial for apprentices who may need extra guidance outside regular class hours, especially where language may be a barrier.

Recognising the importance of mental health, Drogheda College offers professional counselling services, providing a safe space for learners to seek guidance on emotional, social, and personal challenges. The college also actively promotes mental health and well-being through various initiatives, including wellness days and activities. As part of the National Apprenticeship Offices 'R U OK?' Campaign, a football tournament was arranged, to encourage physical activity, and teamwork, and promote positive mental health, fostering a sense of community and belonging

among apprentices. Additionally, a coffee morning in support of Suicide Prevention Awareness Month took place in September 2024, and everyone wore green to show solidarity for this important cause.

These combined efforts reflect Drogheda College's commitment to creating a well-rounded, supportive environment where apprentices can thrive both academically and emotionally, preparing them for future success in their studies and beyond.

Link to Published Policies and Procedures

LMETB Learner Supports Flyer

3.0 Self-Evaluation, Monitoring & Review

3.01 Self-Evaluation Monitoring & Review

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
23. Identify a small number of quality assurance priorities for each year and identify who will lead on ensuring their implementation.	Identified QA priorities for 2024 included a focus on improved learner supports, public information and communication and a standardised self–evaluation process. **Learner Support** – Along with established localised learner feedback processes, the Annual Learner Experience Survey in conjunction with the AONTAS Annual forum report are providing centre and college FET managers the opportunity to identify areas to be addressed from the learners' perspective. The 2024 report highlighted that learners would welcome further information around FET supports available, in addition to information regarding LMETB's Access, Transfer and Progression processes. Learners also expressed a need for further guidance on RPL processes. To some extent these concerns are being addressed via the draft RPL policy and supporting documentation and the work planned for 2025 in updating LMETB's access, transfer and progression procedures. Further policies and learner support resources will continue to be updated and uploaded on the LMETB website.

	Public Information and Communication – In 2024, LMETB's FET Communications sub-committee, as a means of progressing its Work Plan 2024/25, set up working groups to progress the key actions identified within the plan. The following working groups were established and have been meeting since 2024: • Learner Stories/Testimonials • Public Newsletter • FETCH guidelines • Social Media • Pathways Examples of actions completed as a result of these working groups have included: • Centralised collection of Learner Stories from FET centres that may be used for promotional events and awareness raising on the benefits of being a FET learner both personally and professionally • Organisation of LMETB FET Information Event for members of the Institute of Guidance Counsellors in North-East Region.
Click here to enter text.	**Self-Evaluation** - LMETB Youthreach centres are governed by two quality assurance systems – the QA system for QQI and the Youthreach Quality Framework known as the Centre Evaluation and Improvement Plan (CEIP) process which is an externally facilitated self-evaluation and monitoring/review process which happens annually. In a similar manner to schools, Youthreach centres are also subject to inspections by the Department of Education's Inspectorate with

reports published on their website. In 2024 two out of the eight Youthreach centres in LMETB had Whole Centre Evaluations conducted by the Inspectorate. Both centres selected for inspection were highly commended for their provision, QA management and learner-centred approach.

QA priorities for 2025 will include:

- Successful application to QQI for LMETB to extend its scope of provision to include blended and online learning.

- Revision/development of a number of policies as identified by the QA Working Group, including:
  - Development of an LMETB Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategic Framework
  - Revision of LMETB's Assessment Malpractice procedure to encompass developments in the use of Gen-AI and contracted cheating services.
  - The development of Gen-AI Guidelines for both staff and learners.
  - Revision of LMETB Assessment Deadline process
  - Revision of FET Admissions policy
  - Revision of LMETB's Access, Transfer and Progression policy
  - Development of an LMETB Attendance policy
  - Revision of LMETB Reasonable Accommodation procedure

	o Development of LMETB Guidelines for Engaging with an External Training Provider, Collaborative Provision and Partnerships. The term 'collaborative provision' refers to the formal agreement between LMETB and other parties to jointly deliver and assess a programme, ensuring shared responsibility and high standards in meeting learners' needs. • Successful application to QQI for the validation of programmes in various areas. • Framework developed for the review of programmes across FET provision in LMETB. *LMETB Centre Review of Programme Process - Information Guide for FET Services*

Commentary and Reflections
Click here to enter text.

Link to Published Policies and Procedures

3.02 Programme Monitoring & Review

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
24. Establish and use a consistent approach to recording when programme and module reviews need to be completed, whether they have been completed on schedule, and what changes have been made to programmes.	Self-evaluation at centre level will be formalised across FET provision in 2025. A quality reporting template or self-evaluation monitoring form is currently being developed. The policy document will outline the LMETB Centre Review of Programmes process, establishing a structured and timebound framework for evaluating the quality, effectiveness, and relevance of programmes across FET centres. The process will integrate feedback from stakeholders and support continuous improvement, ensuring alignment with learner needs, employer requirements, and national quality assurance standards. By participating such a review process, LMETB is not only refining existing offerings but also identifying opportunities for innovation and growth in new programme areas. This proactive approach supports the continuous improvement of programme design, delivery, and assessment, while also ensuring alignment with the SOLAS National Strategy and the strategic pillars of Further Education and Training. Through this engagement, LMETB reinforces its role as a leading provider of dynamic, learner-centred educational programmes, including its efforts to develop and validate cutting-edge QQI awards such as the Level 5 Special Purpose Award in 3D Construction Printing Operations and other emerging qualifications.

	On a sectoral level, LMETB is actively engaging with the ETBI/QA Network-led Module Update Process as part of its ongoing commitment to delivering high-quality, relevant education and training opportunities. This engagement will ensure that the updated CAS modules remain aligned with national and international best practices, industry standards, and the evolving needs of learners and employers.
Commentary and Reflections	
Link to Published Policies and Procedures Click here to enter text.	

3.03 Oversight, monitoring & review of relationships with external parties

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
25. Develop and use a single set of quality assurance policies, procedures and practices across all the ETB's provision, including contracted (second) providers.	LMETB continues to work towards ensuring the harmonisation of the management of quality processes across its varied FET provision. Further development over the next couple of years of an explicit Quality Framework informing FET provision will act as a focus for continued quality improvement and enhancement. However, it is recognised that the work of integrating and harmonising assessment-related policies and procedures across all the FET Centres /Colleges into a Quality Framework is

incremental. The LMETB Quality Assurance Revised Policies and Procedures (QA Manual) section of the LMETB website is the primary resource for staff members on all QA requirements. LMETB will continually review and develop its QA systems to ensure that QA policies, procedures and associated materials are readily available and accessible to all personnel delivering LMETB programmes. It is envisaged that by Q2 2027 a fully integrated set of QA policies and procedures will underpin FET provision in LMETB.

A FET Quality Assurance MS Team, with over 270 members comprising FET teachers, tutors, instructors and support staff, is used as an information point regarding assessment practices, QA training policy updates and other matters relating to QA. All matters related to QA are communicated via email to FET coordinators and PLC/Training Centres' management staff. The QAES/FET Support team meet every 3 weeks to action ongoing QA related work, and the newly formed TSO Network will meet on a regular basis to share good practice and to keep abreast of QA developments and initiatives. Integration of QA processes in the AMTCE is currently being progressed.

Commentary and Reflections
Click here to enter text.

Link to Published Policies and Procedures

LMETB Quality Assurance Revised Policies and Procedures (QA Manual)

4.0 Quality Developments and Enhancements

In this section, please provide an update on QA developments and enhancements within the ETB. This could include programme and curriculum developments and initiatives, and enhancements of teaching, learning and assessment.

Guide:

An update should be provided on any objectives/planned actions for the year <mark>not already addressed in the Interim quality report in sections 1-3.</mark>

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.	
	*The following documents refer to policies and procedures developed and approved during the preparation of the Robotics and Automation Apprenticeship (RAA) validation application which was successfully validated by QQI in Q4 2024.		
1	This Code of Practice applies from 15th August 2016 to employers approved by SOLAS to train statutory apprentices and apprentices registered by SOLAS for statutory apprenticeships on or after 15th August 2016.	Approved for adoption by LMETB's QAGMC committee April 2024.	Code-Of-Practice-for-Employers-and-Apprentices
2	The purpose of this policy is to ensure fit for purpose apprentice access and progression opportunities and programme delivery structure across all LMETB Provision	Completed	LMETB RAA Access Transfer & Progression Policy

3	The purpose of this policy is to set out the admissions criteria for entry on to the RAA Programme	Completed	LMETB RAA Admissions Policy
4	An Assessment Process Appeal is where the apprentice believes that the assessment did not comply with LMETB's assessment conditions, specifications or procedures and that the apprentice's assessment performance was negatively impacted as a result	Completed	LMETB RAA Assessment Appeals Form
5	The purpose of this policy is to set out the procedure to appeal the Assessment process or result	Completed	LMETB RAA Assessment Appeals Procedure
	This form should only be completed by Apprentices who wish to pursue a complaint beyond Stage I of the Institute's Apprentice Complaints Procedure.	Completed	LMETB RAA Assessment Complaints Form
	The purpose of this policy is to set out the procedure to appeal the Assessment process or result	Completed	LMETB RAA Assessment Malpractice Procedure
	Assessment	Completed	LMETB RAA Assessment Outline
	The purpose of this policy is to set out the attendance and absence policy and guidelines for the RAA Apprenticeship programme	Completed	LMETB RAA Attendance Policy
	RAA Programme Structure	Completed	LMETB RAA Book of Modules
	The dual purpose of this policy is to provide a framework, enabling teaching staff and FET Management, to maintain	Completed	LMETB RAA Disciplinary Policy

satisfactory standards in work and conduct, while providing Apprentices and Apprentices' access to a procedure whereby alleged failures to comply with standards may be fairly and sensitively addressed		
Assessment Procedures	Completed	LMETB RAA Examinations Procedure
To assist LMETB AMTCE managers in the quality assured process of External Authentication.	Completed	LMETB RAA External Authentication Guidelines
The purpose of this policy is to outline the policy and procedures relating to Internal Verification in LMETB and the role of the LMETB Quality Assurance Office, the AMTCE in LMETB and all collaborating providers delivering the RAA programme, Contracted Trainers, Internal Verifiers and External Authenticators in the IV process.	Completed	LMETB RAA Internal Verification Guidelines
This Further Education and Training Learner Charter sets out our values and provides a framework that allows learners, our staff and learning practitioners to know and understand their respective responsibilities.	Completed	LMETB RAA Learner Charter & Support Policy
Learner Behaviour and Code of Conduct	Completed	LMETB RAA Learner Contract
The key tasks and responsibilities for a Robotics and Automation Technician are outlined in this document.	Completed	LMETB RAA Occupational Profile

The procedures, guidelines, and expectations for delivering training programs under a contractual agreement between a training provider and LMETB.	Completed	LMETB RAA Operational Document for Contracted Training
To detail how LMETB will ensure that appropriate decisions are taken with regard to the outcomes of the assessment, verification and authentication processes in programs leading to QQI awards. The Results Approval Panel (RAP) confirms the fairness, transparency and consistency of the assessment process and ensures the validity of the assessment results.	Completed	LMETB RAA Results Approval Panel Policy and Procedures
The purpose of these guidelines is to assist FET Centre managers in the quality assured process of Recognition of Prior Learning	Completed	LMETB RAA RPL Policy
The purpose of these guidelines is to assist all parties involved in the delivery of the RAA Apprenticeship programme in the secure storage of all documentation relating to this programme.	Completed	LMETB RAA Secure Storage Policy
This policy aims to ensure apprentices and employers know what they can expect from an apprentice while active on a programme in terms of an agreed set of reasonable and expected behaviours and performance during all on and off-the-job programme elements.	Completed	LMETB RAA Work Based Learning Code of Conduct

5.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies (optional)

Guide:

The ETB is invited to provide up to 3 x **short case studies**, 1-2 pages, demonstrating QA enhancements and their impacts (these may relate to topics covered in sections above). **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. 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: Dundalk Youthreach QQI Assessment Integration Project

Introduction

Having attended a national Youthreach conference at which a colleague delivered a compelling presentation on the integration of assessment in QQI accredited programmes, the Youthreach Coordinator in Dundalk began to consider alternative approaches to assessment within their provision. The concept of integrating assessment was as a response to dealing with issues particular to Youthreach settings. The presentation at the conference aligned fully with the concept of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), a framework created by CAST, the Centre for Applied Special Technology, who define UDL as 'a teaching approach that works to accommodate the needs and abilities of all learners and eliminates obstacles in the learning process'.

Description of issue

The centre coordinator observed that whilst assessment practices were endorsed in the internal verification (IV), external authentication (EA) and Results Approval Panel (RAP) processes, much of the assessment events were carried out in isolation, resulting in a lack of meaningful connections for the learners across different modules. A common concern from learners was the repetition of certain tasks, as they found themselves repeating similar activities across different modules; some of which were delivered in different styles and formats. This not only added unnecessary work for both learners and staff but also sometimes caused confusion and frustration on the part of the learner.

Another recurring issue was the personal challenge many learners faced in completing their portfolios. Frequently staff would report that learners may have completed only 80% of their portfolio, or as the year neared completion, the service would see learners completing numerous exercises or worksheets in an attempt to address gaps in their work where the submission would not meet the assessment criteria. This became a frustrating exercise for the learner and was viewed by them as having little to no relevance to their learning.

There was initial hesitation to the integration project from both staff and learners. The colleague who had presented at the Youthreach Conference visited the centre and worked closely with the coordinator and staff to address their wish for change and to work with learners across different subjects to integrate their assessment.

Action

Work began in September 2023 between the centre coordinator, teaching staff and a specialist External Authenticator (EA) who had experience of designing integrated assessments and signposting the evidence of integrated assessment for the purpose of the external authentication process. The integration process required significant changes in the planning and delivery of assessment, including the systematic coordination of assessment activities to allow assessment of Learning Outcomes (LOs) across multiple subjects, with the achievement of each LO carefully signposted back to the relevant module descriptor. Teachers in the centre worked collaboratively across a number of separate programme areas to design and deliver much broader Teaching and Learning projects, incorporating LOs from a number of discrete programme descriptors without compromising the integrity of each programme descriptor's assessment requirements. Furthermore, each assessor had to be assured that their individual LOs would be guaranteed to meet both IV and EA requirements as part of the Quality Assurance process. By working collaboratively with other assessors, and in cooperation with the centre coordinator and the EA, the project gained momentum, with colleagues sharing resources and actively supporting each other in the design of overarching projects. The centre coordinator prioritised time for teaching staff to meet, plan, assess and periodically review their work.

The centre developed four distinct Teaching and Learning projects throughout the year. These were often based on locally arranged events of particular interest to the learners such as the Christmas Fair. In practice, much of the prescribed material across a number of different modules was being completed by learners engaging in activities such as group discussions and record-keeping, through creating tables, planning events and designing the communications and marketing to support these events. The process made for a much more enjoyable and much less repetitive learning experience for the learners.

Key Outcomes/Impacts

At the end of the first year of piloting the integration of assessment, Dundalk Youthreach saw a significant increase in the number of full awards achieved within the centre compared to the previous year. This was a hugely encouraging result. However, the project is still a work in progress. Whilst there have been significant improvements in staff morale, in learner engagement and in the overall outcomes of the project, there is more to do to refine and further strengthen the process.

Key Learnings

There were several key learnings for all parties in the integration of assessment project across a number of different modules. Primarily, systematic design of the assessment events in advance of delivery allowed for integration of assessment opportunities, thus avoiding a situation where learners repeatedly produced the same or very similar pieces of evidence for assessment.

For the Youthreach service, the integration of assessment provided several valuable benefits namely:

- Improved engagement in the learning process from those learners who participated in projects which allowed for integrated assessment
- Increased completion of modules and thus QQI certification over the course of the academic year
- Improvement in staff morale, together with a boost in team spirit and sense of camaraderie

It is hoped that further development of opportunities to integrate assessment will continue to benefit the learners, who view Youthreach as a second chance to achieve their much-needed qualifications and to progress in their education journey, as well as enhancing the teaching and learning environment for the learners, teachers and support staff.

Case Study 2: Review of Internal Verification Process in Dunboyne College of Further Education (DCFE)

Introduction

Dunboyne College of Further Education (DCFE), as part of its ongoing review of its QA processes, continues to work on making improvements to its existing internal verification (IV) procedure. The entire IV process had been subject to a full review in the past academic year and implementation of LMETB's standardised Internal Verification Guidelines assessed with a view to ensuring that it was implemented in the most effective way.

Description of issue

The year-on-year increase in learner numbers in DCFE necessitated an internal review of the way in which the IV process was administered in order to manage the increased provision. A comprehensive review was carried out on the IV process leading to a number of quality enhancement activities described below. The expansion of learner numbers in DCFE had also resulted in an increase in the number of staff conducting internal verification.

Action

DCFE introduced a system of peer internal verification, with teacher pairings allocated at the commencement of the academic year, on the understanding that staff changes could result in changes to partnered pairs. The intention was that paired colleagues would be drawn from a variety of subject areas to avoid teachers focusing on their own specialist area. This was intended to foster a greater understanding of the process. The IV process was structured to ensure that Stage 1 of the process, which focuses on the review of assessment briefs, took place at the beginning of the academic year. All IV forms and reports were uploaded onto the MS Forms platform to streamline the process and to allow for a more efficient feedback process.

Key Outcomes/Impacts

Moving to an electronic IV process via the use of MS Forms allowed for the filtering of all responses at an individual, award or programme level. This in turn allowed for the identification of good practice and ensured that if any follow up action was necessary, this could be identified quickly. A meeting with the relevant staff member to discuss any issues raised on the MS Form, allowed action to take place in a timely manner. DCFE set aside time for the completion of all IV stages, so that intervention could take place within a time dedicated exclusively to all IV matters. This change came about in the college because of IV issues identified in its previous approach. The implemented changes have resulted in an improvement in the process approach adopted to IV. IV issues identified either in the paired IV meetings or at any point further along in the process, were referred back to the person who has carried out the IV, thereby conferring ownership of the process to this person. To date, there has been an increased focus on ensuring that there is a strong and robust IV process and this, in turn, has followed through to the external authentication process and onward to the RAP process, with a reduction in the number grade changes and a reduction in the overall administration issues raised by EAs over the past series of authentication periods.

Key Learnings

There were several key learnings for all parties arising from the use of MS Forms and the enhancement of the IV process. These are documented below with further enhancements planned:

- The additional stage in the checking process allows for corrective action to be taken in the initial IV Stage, before the sample progresses to the EA stage
- Using technology, via the integration of the IV checklists/reports to MS Forms, allows the filtering of responses, enabling the quick identification of good practices and also any issues and allow for a speedy response.
- Moving to MS Forms has allowed for an IV Form to be viewed on an individual module basis, further streamlining the process for the EA to encourage greater efficiency
- There has been a reduction in the number of issues raised by the EA, prior to the RAP process and this therefore represents an enhancement to the current IV process as part of DCFE's quality enhancement processes.

Further enhancements to the IV process are anticipated as a result of ongoing IV training across FET provision and the sharing of good practice amongst diverse FET centres and colleges.

6.0 Follow-Up Report Survey

(This section will not be published)

Please complete a short survey in relation to the Follow Up Reporting **process** using this link.