

Inaugural Review Action Plan

LOETB

February 2021

Part 1: Dissemination of Review Report Findings

On receipt, the review report was forwarded to the Senior Management team (SMT), FET Management Team (FMT), the Steering Group and Centre and Service Managers for circulation. It had been decided at the end of the review visit that the Steering Group would remain in place to oversee the implementation of the recommendations of the review report. The Steering Group is comprised of staff members from across the entire FET service and it was agreed that this broad representation and input would be invaluable in agreeing and overseeing the Action Plan. The Quality Assurance Support Service (QASS) team organised a planning day from which an action plan was drafted for discussion and adjustment by the FMT and the Steering Group. Finally, the Action Plan was presented to the Quality Council who approved the plan on the 8th March 2022.

	Recommendation^{1 2}	Commentary³	Planned Actions⁴	Planned Completion Date⁵
1	Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review The review team recommends that LOETB work to embed a formal process of self-evaluation from institutional level up through to SMT and board level, and that this should be more fully	Resulting from the implementation of other recommendations in this review, there will be a more standardised approach to collating evaluation data, such as greater emphasis on feedback from learners, across LOETB. The FET Management Team	Devise schedule of Centre/Service evaluations on a rolling basis with first Centre schedule for end of Academic year 2022/23	Q3 2022

¹ The top 5 recommendations should be addressed first; the full text of the recommendation from the review report should be included.

² A number of recommendations may be combined where they are addressed by a common action.

³ Provide an overview of the ETB's plans to address the recommendation.

⁴ Add or remove rows as appropriate.

⁵ This should be no later than 5 years following the publication of the review report.

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	<p>documented in a form of a 'quality manual/handbook' or similar. The process should be structured to include, among others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The FET Management Team as well as the QASS in order to facilitate the evaluation of provision at centre and service level on a formal basis and so that the entire process can be considered at a strategic level. • The learner voice across all centres and services. This should operate in addition to the recommendation on learner feedback at 2(a) 	<p>(FMT), with the Quality Assurance Support Service (QASS), will select one Centre/Service per academic year to be subject to a more in-depth self-evaluation process.</p>	<p>Document Process</p>	<p>Q1 2023</p>
2	<p>Programme Review The review team recommends that there should be a policy to underpin an annual review of programmes (as suggested Objective 3, Section (a)), with the review of programmes taking place strategically on an annual rolling basis at ETB level.</p>	<p>Business & IT has been chosen as the next area of provision for programme review. The QASS will lead the review with Centre Managers nominating representatives to be part of the review group.</p>	<p>Review Process to commence Q3 2022 with a view to implementation in Q3 2023</p>	<p>Q3 2022 → Q3 2023</p>
			<p>Devise schedule for further reviews</p>	<p>Q1 2023</p>
3	<p>Monitoring the Learning Experience The review team strongly recommends that formal arrangements be standardised across all LOETB centres and services to ensure the surveying of student feedback and that these surveys be undertaken at key stages during the course delivery cycle.</p>	<p>There are currently some variations in the approach to monitoring the learning experience and the first step is to compile data on current practice and standardise, where appropriate, while recognising variations may be necessary in some instances.</p>	<p>QASS to gather data on current practice and agree best practice with Centre Managers</p>	<p>Q2 2022</p>
			<p>Agree schedule – standardise where appropriate</p>	<p>Q2 2022</p>
			<p>Devise and implement plan for tracking of former learners</p>	<p>Q2 2023</p>

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4	<p>Communication The review team recommends an immediate focus on developing an internal and external communication strategy, which would include amongst others the following initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advancement of the proposal to develop information hubs as soon as circumstances allow. • More comprehensive and targeted use of social media • Additions to the web site, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A search facility to assist navigation. <p>A FAQ section in the staff zone with a focus on QA policies and procedure</p>	<p>Portlaoise Information Hub is now open to the public and work is underway in Tullamore with a planned opening in the second quarter of 2022.</p> <p>The FMT will work with the Communications Officer to devise a Communications Strategy, including details on social media targets.</p> <p>A full revamp of the website will be undertaken and is currently out to tender with a view to being in place by Q1 2023</p>	Portlaoise Information Hub	Opened to the public Q3 2021
			Tullamore Information Hub	Open to the public Q2 2022
			Communications Strategy	Q4 2022
			Policies & Procedures on Sharepoint	Q3 2022 - Ongoing
			Website Upgrade	Q1 2023
5	<p>Staff Professional Development The review team recommends a revision of the Staff Professional Development Policy to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal recognition of the position of Professional Development Coordinator • A mechanism to survey staff on CPD needs, which takes the centre as well as broader LOETB requirements into account. • A mechanism to establish communities of practice for teaching staff in specific areas as well as subject-specific areas. • Formal recognition of, and a structure for, an LOETB staff mentoring programme • Formal recognition of an induction process tailored to the needs of the various staff 	<p>The appointment of a Professional Development Co-Ordinator has greatly increased awareness of, and participation in, PD. The identification of staff needs to be further streamlined.</p> <p>A small number of Communities of Practice are up and running and these will be expanded to other areas, starting with Business & IT as part of the review of this provision.</p> <p>QASS have established new staff briefings around the delivery of programmes, but there is a need for a more structured approach to induction with input from HR and any other relevant parties.</p> <p>A Blended Learning Policy is currently under development.</p>	Survey Staff before academic year end for PD needs for start of new academic year	Q2/Q3 2022 – ongoing
			Establish “fixed” PD calendar, eg specific workshops that repeat every September	Q3 2023
			Establish Business & IT COP at start of Programme Review	Q3 2022
			Identify current induction material and collate into one comprehensive package	Q3 2022
			Complete Blended Learning Policy	Q4 2022

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	<p>cohorts, including an input into the process which relates to LOETB as a corporate body.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A major focus on online/blended learning, which could be addressed in the context of an LOETB digital strategy, recommended elsewhere in this report. <p>The review team also recommends that an appropriate model of teaching observation be introduced to support staff development and the realisation of institutional strategic objectives.</p>	<p>Introduction of a staff mentoring programme will be explored further.</p>	<p>Staff Mentoring Programme to be explored and volunteers sought to participate</p>	<p>Q3 2022</p>
6	<p>ETB Mission and Strategy</p> <p>The review team recommends that LOETB mission & strategy be shared with and reiterated to staff at all levels and across all services and centres with greater frequency.</p>	<p>The reiteration and promotion of LOETB’s mission and strategy will be considered in the Communications strategy.</p>	<p>Include in Communications Strategy</p>	<p>Q4 2022</p>

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7	<p>Governance groups in general</p> <p>The review team recommends that the ETB provide training for members of governance groups and that information from the various groups should be published on the LOETB website. Publication of information should also include communication with staff at centre and service level. This could be addressed in conjunction with the development of the internal communications strategy which is recommended elsewhere in this report (Objective 1i).</p> <p>The review team also recommends that LOETB ensure increased clarity and co-ordination between the various quality groups. This would improve understanding of the system by all staff members. It would also improve efficiency and minimise the likelihood of nugatory duplication.</p>	<p>As outlined in Recommendation 8, a structural review of the Governance groups will be undertaken by the FMT/SMT. When this review is complete and TORs have been updated, members of the groups will be given training to ensure all understand the structure and the role of each element of the governance groups. This training to be facilitated by an external trainer.</p>	<p>Training of group members</p>	<p>Q4 2022</p>
8	<p>Management of Quality Assurance</p> <p>The review team recommends that LOETB engages in a full review of all existing policies and ToR which relate to the function and membership of management groups and sub-groups. The review should place a particular focus on ensuring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistency in relation to terms of reference and the organisational structure. • Group membership that includes all relevant stakeholders. • The provision of relevant inductions and ongoing training for all group members. <p>Clarity and co-ordination between the various quality groups.</p>	<p>A structural review of Governance Groups will be carried out, TORs updated and training needs identified. The review will be led by the FMT, with approval from the SMT for any proposed structure changes.</p>	<p>Review governance groups</p>	<p>Q4 2022</p>

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9	<p>Documentation of Quality Assurance</p> <p>The review team recommends that the ETB establish policy review groups without delay, taking into consideration the recommendations set out under Objective 1(b) and which should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prioritise the remaining areas in need of policy development and proceed on that basis. • establish a formal schedule for a continual rolling review of existing policies. • publish all policies on the website, arranged under specific categories. These should be accessible to the specific groups to whom they are relevant, e.g. staff (password secured), learners, general public. <p>The review team further recommends that LOETB support the continued development of online tools and digital resources as part of the QA system.</p>	<p>The identification of new policies and the review of existing ones is ongoing and will benefit from a more formal, planned approach, starting with the identification of current policy gaps. Policy review groups to be formed as needed, multiple groups may be in operation simultaneously where appropriate.</p> <p>All pertinent documentation will be collated into a central repository on sharepoint and made available to all relevant staff members.</p> <p>Where policies need to be accessible to the general public, they will be published on LOETB's new website.</p>	Identify two policy priorities (agreed with FMT) and write same, with input from relevant stakeholders/staff in policy development group	Q1 2023
			Compile policy review schedule	Q4 2022
			Make policies available on sharepoint and/or website (as appropriate).	Q3 2022 - Ongoing
			QQI component descriptors on Sharepoint to be navigated by Major Award	Q3 2022
10	<p>Programme Development & Validation</p> <p>The review team recommends:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and support to be provided to staff in the area of programme development and validation. <p>Staff secondment to programme development initiatives which are relevant to LOETB and being led by other ETBs, should be facilitated where possible.</p>	<p>The Programme Development and Approval process needs to be reviewed and implemented fully.</p> <p>With regard to the development of completely new programmes, this can only be done as the need arises, as the process varies for different awarding bodies.</p> <p>Where opportunities arise for collaboration with other ETBs in the development of new Programmes, LOETB will endeavour to facilitate staff involvement – a recent example is the new Early Learning and Care Award where a member of staff was seconded</p>	Training in new programme validation	As it arises
			Review internal programme development and approval process	Q4 2022
			Facilitate collaboration with other ETBs in programme development	As it arises
			Co-Develop Retrofit Co-Ordinator programme with TUS MidWest.	Q3 2022

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		to work on the development of the award. This has proved immensely beneficial in the introduction of the new programme.	Developing process with TUS, with embedded guidance on site	Q2 2023
			Staff group to review/revise Communications Level 4 descriptor	Q2 2022
11	<p>Access, Transfer and Progression</p> <p>The review team recommends an over-arching LOETB policy or suite of policies on access, transfer and progression for learners, which will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set out and clarify the standard application procedures across LOETB services. • Clarify the status of learner applications. • Outline transfer and progression routes as well as the transfer of credits that apply to all validated programmes. • Detail a formal internal transfer system, applications for which should be underpinned by policy and procedures. <p>The review team recommends that training and support be provided to centres and services, to ensure consistent implementation of the induction process.</p>	<p>A good deal of work has been undertaken in mapping access processes in each of our Centres/Services. The next step is to review these processes and agree a best-practice approach. Likewise, more work is needed to identify variations in induction procedures and standardise as far as possible.</p> <p>A working group has been identifying progression possibilities across LOETB. Some of these routes are listed in the current brochure and will continue to be expanded upon.</p>	<p>Map current admissions/access processes</p> <p>Standardise access process</p> <p>Standardise induction programmes</p> <p>Identify and publish progression routes</p> <p>Develop model and pilot on Tullamore Campus</p>	<p>Q1 2022</p> <p>Q3 2023</p> <p>Q3 2022</p> <p>Q2 2023</p> <p>Q3 2023</p>
12	<p>Information to Learners</p> <p>The review team recommends that every available opportunity be used to better highlight FET opportunities and pathways for school leavers as well as for current LOETB learners. This should be addressed as part of the review of communications recommended in Section 1i.</p>	<p>This will be addressed in the Communications Strategy and will also be considered when reviewing relevant policies and procedures.</p> <p>Guidance service has a space on Moodle which keeps learners at Level 5/6 informed and updated</p>	<p>Include in Communications Strategy</p> <p>Guidance space on Moodle</p>	<p>Q4 2022</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

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13	<p>Integrity and Approval of Results The review team recommends that LOETB:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate the possibility of providing an opportunity within the RAP for teaching staff and EAs to review the outcomes of the Exam Board’s deliberations and, where appropriate, a mechanism to challenge their findings. Strengthen the process around the communication of feedback from EA reports to teaching staff (involving the EAs if possible) and as part of that process that examples of good practice are also highlighted. <p>Ensure that all policies and procedures relating to the assessment process are accessible in a specific section for learners on the LOETB website. This could be undertaken in conjunction with the recommendation (Section 1i) relating to internal communications and review of the web site.</p>	<p>EAs will be reminded of the guideline which states they should request to meet an Assessor where they are recommending a grade change. In such cases, Assessors will also be offered the opportunity to attend RAP meeting if they wish to discuss any such recommendations.</p>	Update EA guidelines	Q2 2022
			Review RAP guidelines to included Assessor invite where appropriate	Q2 2022
		<p>Policies and procedures available on Sharepoint</p>		Q3 2022
14	<p>Information and Data management The review team recommends that, as a matter of urgency, there be an increased focus on the inclusion of all relevant learner data on the PLSS system as part of the application process, as well as the appointment of a specialist data analyst to the IT or QASS Team.</p>	<p>Centre Managers and designated staff to be trained by the QASS in the production of meaningful reports from PLSS, thus taking more responsibility for the “completeness” of their own datasets.</p>	PLSS Reports Training	Q2 2022

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15	<p>Monitoring the Learning Experience The review team recommends that LOETB support the continued development of online tools and digital resources as part of the QA system.</p>	<p>See Recommendation 3 QASS currently support Moodle and BKSBS for Centres. Under PD, members of teaching staff have taken up places on TEL courses</p>	<p>PD to be continued</p>	<p>Current and ongoing</p>
16	<p>Assessment of Learners The review team recommends that LOETB establish a policy and procedures to support RPL and that it should also introduce formal arrangements, standardised across all centres and services to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity for all students around module descriptors • Facilitation of teacher planning in the delivery of modules while avoiding content overlap. <p>Regular student feedback on assignments and assessments.</p>	<p>RPL is a national question and not one that LOETB will address on its own. LOETB will avail of any opportunity to be involved in collaborating on this issue with other ETBs. Centres are encouraged to offer a more modularised approach to some programmes and to take care in planning timetables to ensure a logical order to components offered. The QASS continues to encourage Assessors to offer regular and meaningful feedback to learners and will consider including this in appropriate policies as they are identified. The use of audio feedback has increased in recent times and is proving popular with learners and teachers alike.</p>	<p>Engage with RPL discussions</p>	<p>As they arise</p>
			<p>Feedback</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
			<p>Document best practice in areas such as release of results and standardise where appropriate</p>	<p>Q3 2023</p>

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17	Work Experience / Work Placement Module The review team recommends that LOETB engage the expertise of the Employer Services Team to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the current arrangements that are in place to support the consistency of workplace competency assessment. Recommend the formal arrangements necessary for the delivery, monitoring and assessment of work experience/Placement	Work Experience Assessors to be brought together for workshop(s) with a view to reviewing and updating the current work experience pack. The new Early Learning & Care programme has devised a booklet for Work Experience that may be useful as a starting point for other programmes. QASS to discuss possible strengthening of links with employers with the Employer Engagement team.	Currently researching a Work Based Learning pack	Q4 2022
			Establish oversight model for all work based learning	Q2 2023
18	Supports for Learners The review team recommends that LOETB appoint a learner support officer to establish a de facto learner support service, consolidating all existing learner supports.	Five learner support workers were engaged in Q4 2022 and are based in Centres across the service providing support to learners on an individual basis. A further five will be engaged by the end of 2022.	Develop community of practice for learner support workers to ensure consistent approach across key functions	Q4 2022
			Engage five further learner support workers	Q4 2022
19	SER Steering Group The review team recommends that the actions identified in the SER, together with the recommendations in this report, be incorporated into a strategic plan – such as the annual QIP – with SMART targets and embedded in a projected timeline.	The Action Plan will be incorporated into LOETB's Strategy Statement and the plan will be overseen by the Quality Assurance Support Service	QASS to draw up projected timeline for implementation of action plan. Progress report to be submitted to QQI March 2024, integrated into new Annual Quality Report	Q2 2022
20	Self-Evaluation Monitoring and Review The review team recommends a full revision and subsequent issuing of the documentation associated with TQAS	TQAS documentation has been reviewed and updated. AISs to be reviewed and replace/updated where appropriate	Prioritise AISs for review	Q2 2022 - Ongoing

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21	Self-Evaluation Monitoring and Review The review team recommends a review of the effectiveness of the FET centre model	FMT/QASS to select a Centre and conduct Review	Select Centre for review at end of 2023/24 academic year	Q2 2024