Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board
Quality Improvement Plan 2018 Progress Report
and Quality Improvement Plan 2019

April 2019

Part 1: Overview of Quality Improvement Activities in 2018

1. **Priority Areas in 2018**

Governance:

Establishing formal FET Governance structures was a key priority for 2018. This process began with a full review of the current Governance structure and its relevance to the QA requirements of our expanding FET provision. In conducting this review, consultation sessions were held with all management staff to ensure that the rationale for the process was clear. The outcome provides an agreed formal FET Governance structure that encompasses the challenges of:

- Programme development and approval and,
- Policy and procedure development and approval

The structure clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of each fora, and allows for the separation of development and decision making at the appropriate levels.

Excellent Experience for Learners:

The expansion of Traineeship provision was a key priority for 2018. The traineeship model combines valuable work placements with relevant education and training, with a view to gaining sustainable employment. LOETB's approach was to engage with employers in the Laois Offaly area in order to ensure that the traineeships provided were linked to local labour market needs. The strategy employed also links to priorities of both government and SOLAS. Based on CSO data and the local narrative, the skills areas identified for expanded provision were Hospitality, Healthcare, Construction, Beauty Therapy, Manufacturing Engineering, Retail and Office Skills.

Excellent Education and Training:

FET Provision Review: LOETB identified the review of all FET related provision as a priority to ensure consistency across the scheme and also that provision remained relevant to learner and industry needs. A Healthcare Programme Review Group was established in 2018. The overall objective of the group was to discuss and recommend improvements to the Assessment & Delivery processes of the QQI Level 5 Healthcare Support Programmes being delivered through LOETB FET services. The review process was coordinated through the QA Office and external facilitation was provided by an experienced QQI External Authenticator, who is familiar with the healthcare provision across all LOETB centres through the EA process. The remaining members of the group were nominated by FET centres delivering healthcare

awards. These teaching practitioners come from a variety of clinical backgrounds as well as having experience of delivering full and part-time Healthcare programmes.

The overall focus of the Group was on the learner and specifically in relation to how improvements in assessment processes and programme delivery could enhance learners' academic and practical competencies and skills in the following areas;

• Their readiness for progression into further education and/or training

• Their readiness for employment; being 'Workplace Ready'

• Their practical understanding of current regulations, legislation and national standards that apply in the provision of healthcare services, appropriate to the HCA level.

Effective Communication and Collaboration:

The provision of useful resources and information for staff is key to ensuring that all staff are well-informed and well-prepared for the delivery of quality education and training programmes. The availability of this information in one specific online space has been very beneficial to all staff. In 2018, the QA Department ensured that all resources were uploaded to the Staff area on the website. All teaching staff had access to this area and were made aware that the most up-to-date information would be held in this section.

The sharing of knowledge, skills, ideas and resources amongst staff was a major priority for 2018. In particular, the SMT and centre managers had identified the need for creativity in the integrating of literacy into all FET provision. To this end, it was decided to hold an Integrating Literacy and Numeracy Conference for LOETB staff to provide an event for staff to learn more about innovative methods of integrating literacy into their everyday teaching.

Staff Development and the identification of staff PD requirements was recognised as a priority by the Senior Management Team. In line with LOETBs Strategic Performance Agreement with SOLAS, Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) and integrating literacy were identified as priority Professional Development (PD) areas for LOETB in 2018. To commence the process, a survey of staff capacity was deemed critical in planning TEL-related PD activities for the foreseeable future.

2. Main Achievements in 2018

Governance:

The consultative process used to develop a revised, formal FET Governance structure allowed the management team in LOETB to play a lead role in reviewing and improving the way we work. The process helped to provide a clearer understanding of a common vision and improved communication channels across the FET service.

Implementing the new structure has further improved relationships, and built a greater sense of trust internally and externally with our second providers. Formalising our processes, roles and responsibilities has engendered a new sense of confidence for the entire management team.

In February 2019, LOETB made the decision to invite an external stakeholder to review the implementation of the QIP. The rationale for this was not just to ensure that the structures and processes being developed were robust, but that this external review might highlight further improvements that could be made. LOETB will forward a copy of the final external report to QQI when complete.

Excellent Experience for Learners:

2018 saw the further expansion of Traineeships into other key skills areas – hospitality, leisure management, engineering and motor technology. Over 250 learners commenced traineeship programmes throughout the year. At least 30% of the duration of the programmes consisted of supervised work placements for the learners, enabling them to learn and develop valuable skills and experience. Feedback from learners and employers has been very positive, and the programmes that have concluded yielded significant outcomes for learners.

Excellent Education and Training:

FET Provision Review: The Healthcare Review Group established in 2018 worked very effectively and produced a report in early 2019 with key findings and a range of recommendations for improvements/initiatives to put into place in the short, medium and long term.

An extremely positive outcome from the review is the establishment of a Community of Practice (COP). The COP will facilitate teaching staff to share good practice, resources, knowledge and experiences. A range of further actions have been identified over the next three years. These include:

- Creation of a sample Scheme of Work for the Healthcare major award
- Review of assessment formats and weightings within selected modules and if necessary recommendation of changes for adoption through the Programme Approval Group.
- Develop contents of Healthcare Induction programme
- Provision of dedicated, resourced healthcare skills assessment rooms for providers of healthcare courses where local venue resources may not be sufficient

The significant buy-in from teaching staff is another positive outcome, and has strengthened the validity of the process at centre/service level.

Professional Development: The appointment of a Professional Development Co-ordinator in November 2018 now allows the organisation to plan for and provide targeted training to our practitioner and support staff to positively impact the learning experience for our students from programmes Levels 1 – 6.

Through the provision of quality local and national professional development opportunities there is no doubt that this increases the quality of education and training LOETB delivers across its programmes and services increasing learner capabilities and retention/progression rates also. Such provision also deepens staff engagement in their own lifelong learning.

A CPD calendar has been set for 2019 taking in 7 key themes in its planning: Technology Enhanced Learning, Quality Assurance, Vocational Upskilling and Reskilling, Management Training, Enterprise Engagement, ICT, working with and supporting learners.

Effective Communication and Collaboration:
The Integrating Literacy and Numeracy Conference took place in November 2018. While the Conference was organised by LOETB's Adult Literacy Organiser and the Literacy Service staff, many of the presenters came from other services and programmes within the FET Service, which demonstrated the flexibility of some of the approaches taken. The response to this Conference was extremely positive, and attendees took advantage of the opportunity to network with other staff.

The establishment of an Employer Engagement Unit was critical for 2018. New staff had been appointed and in order to present a professional impression to employers, it was vital that the various staff members worked together to ensure a level of consistency and to avoid any duplication in relation to initiating and maintaining communications with employers.

3. Barriers or Challenges Encountered

Original Timelines:

Whilst the Quality Improvement Plan was devised with the best of intentions, on reflection, some of the timelines set out for implementation of identified actions was unrealistic. A number of changes in personnel took place during the year which had an effect on implementation of some of the actions. Significant effort was made to reach the proposed timelines but in some cases, other tasks had to be prioritised. In our attempts to improve the service going forward it is critical that we do not reduce the quality or consistency of the service being provided presently. The process of change must be incremental and allow FET staff to focus on their primary concern, learners and learning.

Revised Actions:

Some of the actions identified in QIP 2018 were revised in 2018. For example, it was decided that the functions of the two groups identified in 1.1.3 and 1.1.4 of QIP could be conducted by the same group, and having consulted with another ETB, the cost of producing interactive presentations was found to be prohibitive (4.1.2).

4. Priorities in 2019/2020

2018 Actions

The implementation of 2018 QIP actions that have not yet been completed. In particular, introduction of new policies – Plagiarism, Reasonable Accommodation, Access Transfer and Progression. These actions will be prioritised in 2019.

The Learner Voice

In 2019, LOETB will focus on improving opportunities for the Learners Voice to be heard and influence the shape of provision. This will begin with a pilot project in Tullamore FET Centre. In our largest FET centre, LOETB will form a Learner Council with representatives from each class group. The Learner Council provides learners with an opportunity to share ideas, interests, and concerns with tutors and management. Participation on a Learner Council helps develop learners' leadership skills and improves their confidence. We believe that initiating a Learner Council will aid in the early identification of any issues that may arise so that appropriate solutions can be found.

In addition, to further improve the Learner Voice across the FET Service, we will introduce a consistent comprehensive induction for all learners. Feedback will be sought from learners at agreed, regular intervals throughout the academic year and there will be greater focus on the formal provision of feedback to learners.

A Single Common QA System

In 2019, LOETB will commence the process of developing a single system of common QA policies and procedures for all FET provision. This process will be co-ordinated and managed by LOETBs QA Department using consultative workshops with learners, staff and second providers, discussion groups with external stakeholders (HEA, RSF etc.) and interviews and meetings with LOETB SMT, FET SMT and Centre/Service Managers

Data Analysis

In 2019, LOETB will engage an external data analyst to assist us in identifying areas where particular services and programmes need to be concentrated to best serve the needs of the Laois Offaly community.

We will identify two communities in the region regarded as local blackspots and use the data available to shape a focused response to the local community's needs. These actions will be documented and measurable, with a report prepared for LOETB SMT in December 2019.

Traineeships/Skills to Advance

LOETB has identified as a priority a concentrated approach to obtaining learner feedback on traineeship programmes in order to improve the learner experience in 2019. A plan is in place to ensure the integrity of the work placement element of Traineeship programmes, and to improve employment prospects.

LOETB intend to expand provision into areas such as Entrepreneurship, Logistics, and Biopharmaceuticals. A significant level of engagement with employers has, and will continue to take place to ensure that the combination of modules and skills delivered on the Traineeship programmes are relevant for learners to enable them to progress to sustainable employment opportunities. Furthermore, the engagement with employers will identify opportunities to introduce provision under the Skills to Advance programme, whereby existing employees can avail of upskilling programmes to improve their chances of promotion within the organisation.

Effective Communication and Collaboration:

A 'Pathways' Conference will be held in 2019 to highlight the work that has been undertaken at Centre level to meet the needs of learners and provide a range of progression options including access to HE, and into various forms of employment

FET Provision Review: The actions identified by the Healthcare Review group will start to be implemented in 2019. A Programme Review in the area of Childcare provision will commence in September 2019, with similar aims to that of the Healthcare Review.

Part 2: Detailed Update on Activities in the QIPs

1. **Governance**

Quality Improvement Objective / Desired Outcome	Key Tasks/Activities	Timeline	Measure / Benchmark	Status	Update	Revised Timescale
1.1 Develop an enhanced governance structure which protects the integrity of academic processes and standards, considers risks and takes account of the results of internal and external evaluation.	1.1.1 Formalise governance structure for LOETB FET Service	Q1 2018	Formal Governance Structure	Complete	Published on website	N/A
	1.1.2 Finalise Terms of Reference (TOR) for FET Senior Management Team (SMT)	Q1 2018	TOR & Membership published	Complete	Published on website	N/A
	1.1.3 Finalise TOR and membership of FET Programme Provision Review Group	Q1 2018	TOR & Membership published	Complete	A decision was taken to amalgamate these two groups to form Programme Development and Review Group	N/A
	1.1.4 Finalise TOR and membership of FET Programme Development Group	Q1 2018	TOR & Membership published	Complete	Published on website	N/A
	1.1.5 Finalise TOR and membership of QA Forum	Q1 2018	TOR & Membership published	Complete	Published on website	N/A
	1.1.6 Review TOR of the Results Approval Panel groups	Q1 2018	TOR & Membership published	On Track	Draft RAP Policy including TOR completed, to be approved by SMT	Q2 2019
1.2 Improve the process for contracting third party providers	1.2.1 Implement the new framework for tendering and awarding contracted training	Q2 2018	New Framework in place.	Complete	New Framework in place – 3 contractors were successful in their tenders for providing training programmes for LOETB	N/A
1.3 Review the FET Risk Register	1.3.1 Review the Risk Register according to identified timelines,	Ongoing	Up-to-date FET Risk Register	Complete	Risk Register is reviewed on an ongoing basis. The last review meeting was 18/10/18	N/A

	take necessary actions to reduce risk					
1.4 Put in place arrangements for oversight of non-QQI certification	1.4.1 Map all non-QQI certification being delivered in FET centres	Q1 2018	List compiled	Complete	Information of all non-QQI certification offered in centres has been gathered.	N/A
	1.4.2 Develop structures and procedures for ETB-level oversight of non-QQI certification	Q3 2018	Procedures & structures established	Delayed	Structure established for oversight of C&G Certification. SMT is considering the level of oversight that is required for other certifying bodies.	Q3 2019

2. Excellent Experience for Learners

Quality Improvement Objective / Desired Outcome	Key Tasks/Activities	Timeline	Measure / Benchmark	Status	Update	Revised Timescale
2.1 Provide positive learning experiences and environments with suitable resources and premises	2.1.1 Consult with centre/service managers to identify priority areas for improvement of resources and premises	Q2 2018	Identified Improvements to infrastructure identified and actioned	Complete / Ongoing	Improvements were identified and work was completed. This consultation will continue to take place each year as different resourcing needs are identified.	N/A Ongoing
2.2 Provide programmes which equip the learner with relevant knowledge and skills for lifelong learning, personal development, progression and employment.	2.2.1 Continue to engage with employers in the development of traineeship models that are most appropriate for employers and trainees in Laois and Offaly	Q2 2018	Continuous engagement	Complete / Ongoing	2018 saw the further expansion of Traineeships into other key skills areas – hospitality, leisure management, engineering and motor technology. Exploration of traineeship as key component of Skills to Advance Strategy is ongoing.	N/A Ongoing
	2.2.2 Review existing progression pathways and identify additional progression opportunities	Q2 2018	Pathways reviewed and opportunities identified	On Track	VTOS centres planning provision at lower levels in order to offer learners opportunities to progress from there to Level 5 programmes and onwards.	Q2 2019
	2.2.3 Increase awareness and identify transparent pathways for FET learners	Q2 2018	Pathways established	On Track	Visual presentation of progression pathways through FET provision being developed. FET Centre/Service Managers completed workshop March 2019 to populate this.	Q2 2019

					Centres developing a plan for raising awareness of programmes and services on offer in each centre. Cooperation Agreements with Athlone IT and IT Carlow being updated to reflect the enhanced progression pathways to HE in STEM subject areas.	
	2.2.4 Provide annual CPD calendar for FET staff	Q3 2018	CPD Calendar published on Staff Section of Website	Complete	2018 CPD was publicized. New PD Coordinator appointed in late 2018 = will publish 2019 CPD calendar building on provision of 365 Training and Level 9 Academic Leadership programme.	2019 Calendar – Q1 2019
	2.2.5 Engage expertise and internal resources to develop means of enhancing generic employability skills development among LOETB learners	Q4 2018	Employability skills programme established	Delayed	Developed (using both external expertise and internal staff) an integrated approach to providing generic employability and transversal skills across provision, that provides a more intensive focus on transversal skills prior to engaging in a skills/subject specific programme commensurate with their academic capacity. Plan in place to integrate Transversal Skills across the first 6 weeks of NLN and LTI programmes, with first project to commence in Tullamore NLN in May 2019.	Review Q2 2019
2.3 Commitment to technology-enhanced learning to support	2.3.1 Provide CPD for teaching staff on how to incorporate Office 365 into programme planning and delivery, e.g. workshops, collaboration sessions.	Q3 2018	CPD Calendar	Complete / ongoing	Significant progress made on Pilot TEL Project in Clara FETC. Office 365 training provided to all staff over a number of workshops, priorities identified and CPD Coordinator will continue to liaise	N/A Ongoing

independent and collaborative learning.					with this group about further training. Roll out to other centres has commenced with 365 training delivered in early 2019.	
	2.3.2 Staff CPD -Support interested staff in upskilling using options available through SOLAS e-college	Q3 2018	Staff engaging in CPD	Delayed	PD Coordinator will be advancing this action. It was decided to wait until 365training was completed before moving forward with Moodle Training, which is required for eCollege.	Q4 2019
	2.3.3 Complete SOLAS TEL Baseline and Action Plan	Q1 2018	Baseline and Action Plan completed	Complete	Completed on target, and interim progress report has been completed.	N/A
	2.3.4 Conduct survey of FET staff to capture the current capacity of staff in using technology	Q1 2018	Survey conducted	Complete	Survey was completed, which informed the plan for roll out of 365 training. The IT skills capacity of staff is very varied and this had to be taken into account when planning for CPD.	N/A
	2.3.5 Plan for the implementation of TEL strategy	Q2 2018	Implementation plan developed	Complete	Action Plan in place and interim progress report completed. PD coordinator is now responsible for implementation of Action Plan.	N/A
2.4 Provide relevant and timely feedback to learners and ensure that learner feedback is obtained at various stages of provision	2.4.1 Introduce a common feedback process for learners across LOETB's FET Service	Q3 2018	Common feedback process established	Not started	This has not yet been started. The most suitable time to introduce a new process is at start of academic year, and due to staff changes in September 2018, this action did not commence. Some work completed on establishing a cmmon evaluation form which gives learner opportunity to provide feedback. Plan in place for project in Tullamore FETC from September 2019, which involves the	Q3 2019

					introduction of a new feedback process which involves increased communication with learners, and formation of a Learner council with representation from each level 5 and 6 class group to start with.	
	2.4.2 Agree a mechanism for evaluation of learner feedback	Q2 2018	Agreed mechanism for evaluation of feedback	Not started	As in 2.4.1 above, this has not been progressed. However, when feedback mechanism has been established and the volume and medium of feedback is clear, SMT will formulate a plan for evaluation of feedback and dispersal of learning among relevant staff.	Q4 2019
	2.4.3 Formalise a policy regarding timely provision of feedback to learners	Q3 2018	Policy formalised	Complete	In September 2018, all teaching staff were informed at staff briefings that learners were to be provided with feedback on assessments within 3 weeks of submission.	N/A
2.5 A FET Service for all: Improve Access, Transfer and Progression arrangements for Learners	2.5.1 Develop a LOETB Access, Transfer and Progression Policy	Q3 2018	Policy developed and implemented	Delayed	Learner Info/Communications subgroup is in process of establishing a common set of principles to be contained within Centre Admissions Policies. Cooperation Agreements with IT Carlow and Athlone IT being reviewed and formalised.	Q3 2019
	2.5.2 Research mechanisms for better tracking of progression	Q2 2018	Tracking plan established	On Track	High level outcomes are being tracked by SOLAS staff embedded in CSO. A mechanism for tracking recruitment, retention, certification, progression and placement is currently being piloted, whereby specific	Q3 2019

					programmes are chosen and staffing resources in place to make direct contact with the completers of that programme in order to establish the outcomes/outputs. This is labour intensive exercise but provides valuable information which helps to inform planning.	
	2.5.3 Introduce a common Induction Process for all learners	Q3 2018	Common Induction Process introduced	Delayed	As per 2.4.1 above, the only time to introduce this process is at start of academic year. While significant work had been done in gathering information for Induction process, there was not enough time to have all materials ready for launching in September 2018. Therefore, it was decided to delay this until September 2019. At this point the feedback mechanism will be ready to evaluate the Induction process.	Q3 2019
	2.5.4 Formalise Policy and Procedures for Reasonable Accommodation for learners	Q3 2018	Reasonable Accommodation Policy developed and implemented in all centres	On Track	QA Forum is working on this. Draft will be circulated to all staff in May 2019. Policy will be implemented from September 2019.	Q3 2019

3. Excellent Education and Training

Quality Improvement Objective / Desired Outcome	Key Tasks/Activities	Timeline	Measure / Benchmark	Status	Update	Revised Timescale
3.1 Provide quality-assured programmes with high levels of achievement and accreditation by learners.	3.1.1 Engage with learners and teaching staff to identify the barriers to programme completion / achievement of certification	Q1 2018	Barriers identified	Complete	Engagement took place on an informal basis with learners and potential learners, and with teaching staff. It is intended that a more focused engagement will be conducted whereby early leavers will be contacted directly to investigate reasons for leaving.	N/A Q4 2019
	3.1.2 Evaluate the findings of 3.1.1 above and put plan in place to reduce identified barriers	Q2 2018	Findings evaluated, plan established	Complete	A series of interventions are being trialed to reduce barriers – transport provision, integration of positive mental health and personal development programmes into FET provision, development of clear progression (FET/HE/employment) pathways for learners, provision of progression programmes at Levels 4, 5 and 6	N/A
	3.1.3 Provide regular QA updates and briefings on QA policy to FET teaching staff	Ongoing	QA Briefings calendar	Complete Ongoing	Briefings held for all staff in August and September 2018. Briefings to help assessors prepare for	N/A
	3.1.4 Introduce common Plagiarism policy; educate learners about plagiarism at induction stage	Q3 2018	Plagiarism policy developed; awareness training for learners at induction	Delayed	The publication of ETBI docs did not allow enough time for LOETB to contextualise and collaborate with staff so it was decided to delay this till new academic year 2019/20	Q4 2019

	3.1.5 Roll out anti-plagiarism software in centres on an incremental basis	Q3 2018	Incremental roll-out: PLC centres prioritised	On Track	Access to Urkund was made available on a request basis in September 2018 to allow for gradual roll out. Training provided by QA staff. Will be further rolled out in September 2019.	Q4 2019
3.2 Evidence-based planning, co-ordination and review.	3.2.1 Introduce a process of consultation with FET Forum in new Programme Planning process	Q2 2018	Process established	Complete	With effect from December 2018, all proposed new programmes are presented to a sub-group of the FET Forum and the FET SMT.	N/A
	3.2.2 Formalise Planning and Approval Process	Q2 2018	Process formalised	Complete	This process has been incorporated into the new FET Governance Structure	N/A
	3.2.3 Establish formal Programme Review process for existing programmes which takes into account learner satisfaction, retention, completion, progression	Q2 2018	Process established	Complete Ongoing	Under the LOETB FET Structure, a Programme Development and Review Group has been established. A review of Healthcare provision took place with final findings agreed in March 2019.	N/A
3.3 Relevant, responsive, integrated and innovative programmes and initiatives.	3.3.1 Collate document which provides examples of collaboration with employers which is already occurring within LOETB	Q2 2018	Document collated	Delayed	Employer Engagement Group has decided that best way to showcase best practice is to host a Conference in Summer 2019 – publication of conference will be documentary illustration of collaboration.	Q3 2019
	3.3.2 Begin awareness raising campaign focusing on opportunities for employers to benefit from engagement with LOETB	Q3 2018	Campaign commenced	On Track Ongoing	Ongoing but on an ad-hoc basis. The proposed Conference (3.3.1) will initiate formal and systematic approach using CRM.	Q3 2019

3.4 Reflective practice to support improvement and sharing of knowledge, skills and resources.	3.4.1 Facilitate the establishment of communities of practice / subject networks to allow for sharing of knowledge and resources	Q3 2018	Establishment of communities of practice	On Track Ongoing	Healthcare Review – main outcome was establishment of a community of Practice. Some COPs have been formed organically. The next skill area for review is Childcare, which will lead to formal formation of COP.	Ongoing
	3.4.2 Utilise the skills and knowledge of existing staff members to facilitate the sharing of knowledge through provision of briefings, mentoring, and snapshots of good practice	Q3 2018	Mentoring / practice sharing process commenced	Complete Ongoing	Literacy and Numeracy Conference November 2018 provided an opportunity for a range of staff members (from all FET centres) to showcase best practice in a range of literacy-related areas. Attendees and participants at Conference engaged in extensive networking and sharing of resources on the day and since.	N/A Ongoing
3.5 Improve the monitoring of delivery	3.5.1 Expand a centralised system for monitoring the delivery of programmes across the ETB, in particular for the delivery of programmes by second providers	Q2 2018	Monitoring system for second providers established and implemented	Complete Ongoing	The timing of certification audits was altered in order for them to take place prior to submission of results on QBS. A workshop is planned for May 2019 which will offer an opportunity for second providers to provide their input into improving the quality system in place.	N/A Q3 2019

4. Effective Communication and Collaboration

Quality Improvement Objective / Desired Outcome	Key Tasks/Activities	Timeline	Measure / Benchmark	Status	Update	Revised Timescale
4.1 Develop excellent internal and external communication systems.	4.1.1 Further develop the LOETB Staff Resources section of website as a resource for staff to access information and resources	Q3 2018	Increased functionality and resources on website for staff	Complete	All resources from Staff Briefings and update information received from QQI is published on Staff Section of Website. HR Dept plan to add policy information to this section also to enhance communication with staff	N/A Q3 2019
	4.1.2 Provide a bank of briefing materials for teaching staff to include videos, interactive presentations, etc	Q4 2018	Bank of resources made available	Complete Ongoing	The cost of producing interactive presentations has proven to be a barrier. Presentations from briefings and "Quick Guides" that have been produced utilizing the skillset of QA staff are published on an ongoing basis.	Ongoing
	4.1.3 Design an information document for all staff detailing LOETB FET services	Q3 2018	Internal information document published	Delayed	Initial work has commenced on this project. The pace of change in the organization has proved to be problematic in getting to publication stage!	Q4 2019
	4.1.4 Organise a LOETB FET Service Awareness Campaign for both internal and external stakeholders	Q4 2018	Awareness Campaign launched	Delayed	SMT currently discussing with FET Centre Managers the best approach for creating awareness of FET Services that promotes the LOETB Brand and is also relevant to the target market. SMT will propose the most effective approach, post-	Q3 2019

					consultation, and will delegate implementation.	
4.2 Establish strategic partnerships with key stakeholders.	4.2.1 Establish a coordinated approach to engaging with local employers	Q2 2018	Approach agreed and communicated to relevant staff members	Complete	Services to Employment/Employer Engagement Unit established who work together in an organized manner in relation to approaching employers, provision of services to employers etc. in order to avoid duplication or inconsistency.	N/A
	4.2.2 Ensure LOETB representation on relevant local committees and groups to enhance networking opportunities and improve engagement with stakeholders	Q2 2018	Representation by LOETB staff on relevant committees	Complete	LOETB is represented on Local Community Development Committees (Laois and Offaly), Regional Skills Forum and Midlands, East and North Dublin (MEND) Regional Committee.	N/A Ongoing

Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board
Quality Improvement Plan 2019/2020

Introduction

Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board is committed to the provision of Quality Education and Training Programmes and Services. The Statement of Strategy published in 2018 focuses on four key goals:

- Excellent Education and Training
- Excellent Experience for Students
- Organisation Transformation
- Staff Development

Since the establishment of LOETB we have been committed to the development of an organisation that is learner and staff centred, that provides seamless pathways for learners and encourages staff to develop and grow as part of a lifelong learning philosophy.

Quality transcends and underpins everything we do. It is our belief that Quality is a culture in our organisation, a cornerstone of our development to date and into the future. This commitment underpins the narrative that LOETB is developing through our Statement of Strategy, SOLAS Strategic Performance Agreement, FAR Planning documents, QQI Executive Self Evaluation and subsequent QIPs.

LOETBs commitment to quality is most visible in the establishment and considerable development of our Quality Assurance (QA) Department.

The QA Department has been established as a support mechanism for all staff and learners. We have removed the 'monitor' tag previously associated with QA by consulting widely with all staff to develop new and more effective procedures and processes. The initial Executive Self Evaluation and subsequent Quality Improvement Plan developed in 2017 provided a formal template to outline our achievements to date and identify where we needed to improve.

The concept of constant improvement is another tenet of LOETB's approach to developing as an organisation. In February 2019 LOETB invited an external stakeholder into the organisation to review our progress to date in Quality Assurance and the implementation of our Quality Improvement Plan. This process involved interviews with Senior Management,

Middle Management, Staff and learners (a full copy of the final report will be forwarded to QQI) and is an example of our willingness to hear other voices and review our practice.

The rationale for this review was based on listening to another voice, critiquing where we are, and identifying the priorities for 2019/20. The process also recognised our ambition in the first QIP and the importance of maintaining realistic timelines to allow processes to develop at a pace that is manageable and contributes to the quality of the outcome.

This Quality Improvement Plan will continue to expand on the priorities established in 2017/18 and provide a focus for the development of:

- A Common QA system for all LOETB FET Services
- Greater Data Analysis and how that informs how or provision is (re)shaped as learner needs evolve
- Increased opportunities for the Learner Voice to be heard in developing our FET Services
- Further improvements in Staff collaboration

As Director of Further Education and Training I am confident that LOETB will continue to further improve the services we have available to all learners, and support the staff in expanding the creativity and innovation that they show to provide a high quality FET service.

1. **Governance**

Quality Improvement Objective / Desired Outcome	Key Tasks/Activities	Lead Person Responsible for Implementation	Timeline	Measure / Benchmark
1.1 Develop an enhanced governance structure which protects the integrity of academic processes and standards, considers risks and takes account of the results of internal and external evaluation.	1.1.1 Review TOR of the Results Approval Panel groups (QIP 2018 1.1.6)	QA Dept	Q2 2019	TOR & Membership Published
	1.1.2 Formalise TOR and membership of FET Service Complaints Committee	FET SMT	Q3 2019	TOR & Membership published
	1.1.3 Develop and formalize a Results Appeals Process which applies to all certified FET provision	FET SMT	Q4 2019	Process formalised
1.2 Put in place arrangements for oversight of non-QQI certification	1.2.1 Develop structures and procedures for ETB-level oversight of non-QQI certification (QIP 2018 1.4.2)	QA Dept	Q3 2019	Procedures and Structures established

2. Excellent Experience for Learners

Quality Improvement Objective / Desired Outcome	Key Tasks/Activities	Lead Person Responsible for Implementation	Timeline	Measure / Benchmark
2.1 Provide positive learning experiences and environments with suitable resources and premises	2.1.1 Provide dedicated, resourced healthcare skills assessment rooms that can be made accessible to all providers of healthcare courses where local venue resources may not be sufficient	FET SMT	Q4 2019	Provision of resources
2.2 Provide programmes which equip the learner with relevant knowledge and skills for lifelong learning, personal development, progression and employment	2.2.1 Review existing progression pathways and identify additional progression opportunities (QIP 2018 2.2.2)	Learner Info/communications Sub Group	Q2 2019	Pathways reviewed and opportunities identified
	2.2.2 Increase awareness and identify transparent pathways for FET learners (QIP 2018 2.2.3)	FET Centre Managers – publicity plan FE Manager - Cooperation Agreements	Q2 2019	Updated Cooperation Agreements with Athlone IT and IT Carlow
	2.2.3 Engage expertise and internal resources to develop means of enhancing generic employability skills development among LOETB learners (QIP 2018 2.2.5)	FET SMT	Q2 2019	Programme commenced
	2.2.4 Incorporate elements of Toolkit for Initial and Ongoing Assessment into all programmes up to Level 3, with a view to developing ILPs	Centre Managers	Q4 2019	Roll-out of templates
2.3 Commitment to technology-enhanced learning to support independent and collaborative learning	2.3.1 Staff CPD -Support interested staff in upskilling using options available through SOLAS e-college (QIP 2018 2.3.2)	PD Coordinator	Q4 2019	Staff engaging in CPD
2.4 Provide relevant and timely feedback to learners and	2.4.1 Introduce a common feedback process for learners across LOETB's FET Service (QIP 2018 2.4.1)	QA Dept	Q3 2019	Feedback process established

ensure that learner feedback is obtained at various stages of provision	2.4.2 Agree a mechanism for evaluation of learner feedback (QIP 2018 2.4.2)	QA Dept	Q4 2019	Mechanism established and in use
2.5 A FET Service for all: Improve Access, Transfer and Progression Arrangements for Learners	2.5.1 Develop a LOETB Access, Transfer and Progression Policy (QIP 2018 2.5.1)	QA Dept	Q3 2019	Policy formalised
	2.5.2 Research mechanisms for better tracking of progression (QIP 2018 2.5.2)	QA Dept	Q3 2019	Mechanisms researched
	2.5.3 Introduce a common Induction Process for all learners (QIP 2018 2.5.3)	QA Dept	Q3 2019	Process introduced
	2.5.4 Formalise Policy and Procedures for Reasonable Accommodation for learners (QIP 2018 2.5.4)	QA Dept	Q3 2019	Policy in place
	2.5.5 Promote and encourage inclusivity in the FET Service; host a series of events to showcase LOETB's FET Service as one that welcomes all learners, to commence with an intercultural event	Centre Managers	Q2 2019 and ongoing	Events hosted

3. Excellent Education and Training

Quality Improvement Objective / Desired Outcome	Key Tasks/Activities	Lead Person Responsible for Implementation	Timeline	Measure / Benchmark
3.1 Provide quality-assured programmes with high levels of achievement and accreditation by learners	3.1.1 Introduce common Plagiarism policy; educate learners about plagiarism and referencing at induction stage (QIP 2018 3.1.4)	QA Dept	Q4 2019	Policy developed; awareness training for learners at induction
	3.1.2 Roll out anti-plagiarism software in centres on an incremental basis (QIP 2018 3.1.5)	QA Dept	Q4 2019	Further roll-out
	3.1.3 Provide CPD and promote sharing of resources regarding integration of modules	QA Dept	Q3 2019	Provision of CPD and support
3.2 Evidence-based planning, coordination and Review	3.2.1 Gather local demographic data provided from SLMRU, and other sources to identify areas of high unemployment and low education attainment.	FET SMT	Q4 2019	Information gathered and analysed
	3.2.2 Using the information gathered in 3.2.1 above, plan targeted provision in identified regions.	FET SMT	Q 4 2019	Plan for provision
	3.2.3 Conduct a review of Childcare provision across LOETB's FET Service	Childcare Review Group	Q1 2020	Review completed and recommendations identified with plan for implementation
3.3 Relevant, responsive, integrated and innovative programmes and initiatives	3.3.1 Collate document which provides examples of collaboration with employers which is already occurring within LOETB (QIP 2018 3.3.1)	EE Sub Group	Q3 2019	Document collated
	3.3.2 Begin awareness raising campaign focusing on opportunities for employers to benefit from engagement with LOETB (QIP 2018 3.3.2)	EE Sub Group	Q3 2019	Campaign commenced
3.4 Reflective practice to support improvement and sharing of knowledge, skills and resources (QIP 2018 3.4)	3.4.1 Facilitate the establishment of communities of practice / subject networks to allow for sharing of knowledge and resources (QIP 2018 3.4.1)	QA Dept	Ongoing	Establishment of COPs
	3.4.2 Develop a Healthcare Assessor Pack containing common Guidelines and a template for a common Assessment Brief – to ensure consistency for all Healthcare Programmes	Healthcare COP	Q3 2019	Development of Pack

| | 3.4.3 Agree a common approach to Induction for Healthcare programmes | Healthcare COP | Q3 2019 | Development of template |

4. Effective Communication and Collaboration

Quality Improvement Objective / Desired Outcome	Key Tasks/Activities	Lead Person Responsible for Implementation	Timeline	Measure / Benchmark
4.1 Develop excellent internal and external communication systems	4.1.1 Design an information document for all staff detailing LOETB FET services (QIP 2018 4.1.3)	QA Dept	Q4 2019	Document published
	4.1.2 Organise a LOETB FET Service Awareness Campaign for both internal and external stakeholders (QIP 2018 4.1.4)	SMT	Q3 2019	Campaign organized and commenced
	4.1.3 Nominate a designated QA staff member to each centre as specific support person for QA related issues	QA Dept	Q2 2019	Staff members identified, contact initiated with centres
	4.1.4 Promote the involvement of external stakeholders into shaping of course provision; support teaching staff in incorporating relevant information sessions from relevant local employers into course content	Centre Managers	Q4 2019	External involvement organised
4.2 Collaborate with FET centres, second providers and contract trainers to work towards a common QA system.	4.2.1 Commence a review of existing TQAS documentation with a view to a common set of QA policies, procedures and documentation to be used by all	QA Dept	Q2 2019	Reviewed documentation
	4.2.2 Introduce, on a trial basis, a similar process to that of the Internal Verification process used in FET centres, to selected Training courses	Qa Dept	Q3 2019	Internal Verification Completed
	4.2.3 Commence a system of tutor-devised assessments on Training Programmes, with support provided by QA Dept and experienced FE tutors.	QA Dept	Q3 2019	Tutor-devised assessment