

LCETB FET
Enterprise
Engagement
Framework

2017-2020



Bord Oideachais & Oiliúna
LUIMNIGH & AN CHLÁIR
LIMERICK & CLARE
Education & Training Board

INTRODUCTION

The development of this LCETB FET Enterprise Engagement Framework (2017-2020) has been informed by a number of key European research papers and national policy documents, which highlight the clear links between enterprise engagement, the enhancement of teaching and learning, learners' employability and workforce development. At national level, the SOLAS FET Strategy emphasised that the success of the sector depends on a 'broad range of FET stakeholders, government departments and agencies, employers, FET providers and practitioners, Higher Education Institutions and the community and voluntary sector, working collaboratively to implement the national FET Strategy'. The national FET Professional Development Strategy (2017-2019) identified enterprise engagement as a key priority, and highlighted the need for FET practitioners to develop their skills in that area. In addition, as there are signs of recovery in the Irish economy, the national Workforce Development Framework highlights the need to strengthen FET engagement with enterprise, in order to develop competencies that will contribute to the competitiveness of enterprises locally, regionally and nationally.

In this context, it is important that LCETB's FET engagement with enterprise is scaled up to identify opportunities and benefits of new partnerships. We will need to develop new ways of working, in order to play a leading role in the local, regional and national economic recovery and competitiveness, and to 'address the needs and aspirations of FET learners, local communities and employers'¹. Collaborative processes have been identified in this framework to develop labour-market intelligence-led initiatives, while also continuing to encourage FET Centres to forge strong links with employers at local level. A new project management approach will be adopted, which will require appropriate resourcing and restructuring to enhance the capacity of the FET Division to meet the commitments made in this framework. This coherent and collaborative approach to FET enterprise engagement will enhance its effectiveness, raise the FET profile with key partners and employers, and result in positive outcomes for FET learners.

¹LCETB FET Strategic Framework 2015-2020

The process to develop this LCETB FET Enterprise Engagement Framework was initiated by the Adult Education Officer in charge of the Enterprise Engagement Support Service. A cross-service Planning Team was set up in January 2017, comprising key managers across FET part-time and full-time provision in Limerick and Clare ETB, as well as FET Information, Recruitment and Guidance Support Service Coordinators. The planning process was designed by LCETB's FET Planning and Evaluation Development Officer and involved four facilitated meetings with draft documents produced and follow-up feedback, comment and exploration via a discussion group on Yammer. A review of the current FET enterprise engagement activities was carried out in 2016, and Ms. Mary Lyons, Director National Innovation, SOLAS, provided an input at the first meeting to highlight national priorities in terms of enterprise engagement and workforce development. In addition, LCETB's Adult Education Officer with responsibility for Enterprise Engagement Support Service, FET Division updated the team on the new regional and national developments throughout the process, particularly as the LCETB is currently chairing the Mid-West Regional Skills Forum. Discussions were also informed by key documents including national strategies, LCETB's FET Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL) Action Plan, LCETB's FET Integrated Guidance Strategic Framework and the Integrated Language, Literacy and Numeracy Framework.

This LCETB FET Enterprise Engagement Framework 2017 – 2020 includes 27 actions under 5 Priority Areas:

1. Enterprise engagement structures & processes
2. Industry currency for FET learning practitioners
3. FET upskilling pathways
4. Employability skills and career planning
5. Enterprise engagement communication & marketing

We would like to thank all those involved in the development of this Framework, particularly the members of the planning team (see Appendix) and Maud Baritaud, LCETB FET Planning and Evaluation Officer who facilitated the process and drafted this document.

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Director of Further Education and Training

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FET Enterprise Development Manager

ENTERPRISE ENGAGEMENT

Agreed Definition:

LCETB FET Enterprise Engagement describes a range of activities, initiatives and approaches that target employers, employees, sectoral industry organisations and social enterprises in communities. The aim is to promote and foster mutually beneficial partnerships, resulting in positive outcomes for FET learners.

BENEFITS OF ENTERPRISE ENGAGEMENT

FOR ENTERPRISE

- Recruitment of appropriately skilled staff
- Retention of valuable employees
- Reduced training costs
- Enhanced access to relevant FET provision
- Opportunities for enterprise to shape FET in the region
- Return on Investment for training programmes (e.g. increased productivity, competitiveness, etc.)
- Improved marketing and visibility with prospective employees
- Meets Corporate Social Responsibility objectives

FOR FET LEARNERS

- Apply classroom learning to practical situations
- Increased motivation/engagement for subject
- Gain relevant skills
- Improved understanding of work environment and local opportunities
- Improved career prospects/outcomes
- Soft Skills, employability and entrepreneurship development

FOR COMMUNITIES

- Employers are attracted to the region based on the available skilled labour
- Entrepreneurship/ start-ups opportunities encouraged
- Boost to local employment/economy
- Improved social inclusion
- Support for local social enterprise and social entrepreneurs

FOR LCETB FET

- Updated quality and relevance of LCETB FET curricula
- More placements for FET learners
- Improved teaching and learning experience
- More attractive to job-oriented learners
- Access to employers latest processes, equipment, ideas
- Enhanced vocational currency for learning practitioners
- Opportunities for funding/sponsorships/partnerships

LCETB FET DIVISION UNIQUE SELLING POINT

- Continuum of available provision (PT/FT/ Apprenticeship/Traineeships models) at level 1-6
- Statutory backing
- Significant resources
- Recognised quality of teaching /expertise/ experience
- Strong partnership culture
- Regional reach and locations
- Short-term but also medium and long term delivery available
- Learner focused provision
- Experts in soft skills development (highly valued by employers)
- Range of support services available to learners (from pre-entry information through to on-course supports)
- Significant potential to build on curriculum expertise

ENTERPRISE ENGAGEMENT STRUCTURES & PROCESSES

PRIORITY
AREA 1

This is about developing internal structures and two-way communication, as well as reviewing processes to enhance the coherence and effectiveness of LCETB FET Enterprise Engagement. It is also about contributing to external partnerships that create synergies with key stakeholders, to identify regional and national skills needs and appropriate FET responses for the benefit of learners, communities and enterprise.

KEY ACTIONS:

1. **Set up an Enterprise Engagement Support Service (EESS)** to build up connectedness across LCETB FET in Enterprise Engagement. This Support Service will:
 - Provide a **centralised point of contact for enterprise** to broker the range of FET provision and services to employers.
 - **Highlight and develop, as appropriate, the range of supports available to full-time and part-time provision** to upscale their EE activities at local level.
 - Formally **link with enterprise networks**, sectoral interest groups, etc.
 - **Monitor/analyse sectoral market needs** in Limerick and Clare – Occupational profiling.
 - **Explore new areas of provision** with high employment turnover, and unexploited growth areas.
 - **Communicate effectively with FET provision and services** to build awareness and commitment to LCETB FET Enterprise Engagement activities.

- 2. The FET Steering Group** provides strategic leadership on Enterprise Engagement priorities in LCETB's FET Division.
- 3. Set up an Implementation group** to facilitate communication, two-way feedback, share information and best practice and discuss new projects.
- 4. Develop an Enterprise Engagement database** to provide a contact list of all partners across the region, and monitor the types and level of engagement activities.
- 5. Adopt a project management approach to sectoral enterprise engagement and new programme development**, from skills needs analysis to development of education and training solutions, marketing, etc.
This will include Occupational Profiling; Review of FET work placements processes for learners; Curriculum design inputs from employers - Pooling FET curriculum development or subject experts; Staff CPD; Recruitment processes.
- 6. Put in place feedback mechanisms** from key stakeholders as part of the continuous improvement cycle.
- 7. Continue to play a leading role in regional structures** to identify skills needs and opportunities for synergies through external partnerships (e.g. Regional Skills Forum; LEO; Skillsnet; SICAP; Chambers of Commerce; County Councils; Professional Associations, etc.)

This is about recognising that FET learning practitioners include both education and industry professionals. The currency of their skills and knowledge directly affect learners' employment outcomes, and the FET sector credibility. Developing industry currency is also a key opportunity for enterprise, providers and learning practitioners to engage in effective partnerships.

KEY ACTIONS:

1. Ensure the **range of awards, professional certification and assessment techniques** offered to FET learners are relevant to sectoral requirements, and **in line with industry standards**.
2. Ensure **access to technologies** (software packages, etc.), **resources and equipment used in FET provision** is in line with current industry requirements.
3. Provide CPD to **build awareness for all FET learning practitioners** of the value of enterprise engagement for FET learners and their own practice.
4. Ensure **CPD reflects industry relevant qualifications** for FET learning practitioners.
5. Provide **short sharp refresher courses for learning practitioners** using various modes of delivery (e.g. work shadowing/industry placements opportunities, etc.)
6. Identify and **harness expertise within the FET Division** to provide in-house CPD.

This is about ensuring the relevance of LCETB's FET curricula, and developing a continuum of pathways to upskilling the workforce, from flexible, unaccredited initial engagement, to accredited part-time and full-time opportunities.

KEY ACTIONS:

1. **Review existing LCETB FET curricula by occupational sector**, evaluate its relevance and use findings to inform future programme development.

This will include:

- Reviewing unaccredited work-based learning options as flexible initial engagement with employers;
- Providing short accredited and tailored industry-led responses, while ensuring they can be developed into mainstream FET provision;
- Reviewing modes of delivery to explore opportunities for blended learning, distance learning, etc.

2. **Collaborate on the development of Apprenticeships and Career Traineeships** as full-time career specific opportunities.

This will include identifying potential entrepreneurship supports required by apprentices and trainees preparing for self-employment.

3. Use a **sectoral approach to Workforce Development**.

4. **Use a project management approach to develop new full-time and part-time curricula and initiatives.**

This will include developing a step by step toolkit to project management.

5. **Pilot an RPL project for work-based learning.**

One of LCETB's FET unique strengths is its expertise in the development of learners' soft skills, which are critical to economic competitiveness and to the ability of individuals to access and progress in employment. This is about providing personalised supports to both learners distant from the labour market, and those in employment, to maximise their potential and make informed choices to gain, retain or progress in employment, and achieve their career goals.

KEY ACTIONS:

1. Promote the importance of core, as well as industry-specific **employability skills** to learners, learning practitioners and employers, and enhance their integration **into FET core provision**.

2. Carry out an **audit to establish career planning capacity** within the FET Division **and upskill learning practitioners** as required.

3. **Identify and/or strengthen linkages with employers** to promote career planning services for employees, and communicate enterprise needs to LCETB FET.

4. **Map out available supports for learners and employers** (Including information, guidance, recruitment services, career planning, site visits, employability skills, etc.)

5. **Enhance LCETB FET entrepreneurship provision and supports.**

This will include:

- Building relationships to learn from knowledgeable local partners (LEOs, Skillsnets, local development companies, etc)
- Identify and exploit potential of shared services across the sector.
- Offer entrepreneurship supports for learners (e.g. "hot desk"/ incubation facilities, linkages to mentoring partners, etc.)

This is about effectively communicating the joint benefits of a two-way collaboration between enterprise and LCETB's FET Division. It is about highlighting the range of FET provision and support services, as well as the opportunities for employers to engage with and influence LCETB's FET provision, while better promoting the need for quality and sustainable learning outcomes for learners.

KEY ACTIONS:

1. Develop **sector-specific marketing products** as relevant and appropriate, to promote LCETB's FET provision and support services.
2. **Develop a communication toolkit/template/roadmap** to explain to employers the key phases of the development process for sustainable and scalable programmes (timeline, investigation phase, curriculum design, etc.)
3. Ensure **LCETB's FET website/social media provides easy navigation for employers**, including the range of services available to them (learning solutions development, career planning, RPL, free advertising for recruitment of candidates, etc.)
4. **Maximise external partnership fora** to enhance visibility of FET EE activities and communicate key messages.

**KEY OUTCOMES & MONITORING
& EVALUATION PROCESS**

KEY OUTCOMES

During the planning discussions, key overall outcomes were identified to highlight the impact that LCETB's FET Division expects to achieve over the next 3 years:

- LCETB's FET provision is relevant to labour-market needs at a regional and national level.
- LCETB's FET learners have enhanced placement/employment and career progression opportunities.
- Improved recruitment/enrolment/progression on LCETB FET courses.
- Increased capacity, coherence and internal awareness of LCETB's FET Enterprise engagement activities.
- The enterprise community clearly understands what we do, what we can bring to their businesses and the value of our graduates.
- LCETB's FET learners have enhanced career management and employability skills.
- LCETB's FET graduates are recognised and highly valued by employers.
- Enhanced LCETB FET profile due to our coherent and regional approach to EE.
- LCETB FET is central to discussions and decisions linked to the role of skills in regional economic growth.
- LCETB's FET contribute to positive outcomes for the local, regional and national economies.

IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING & EVALUATION PROCESS

This 3 year framework is an evolving document, which will guide the implementation and future developments of LCETB's FET Enterprise Engagement activities across the organisation, and will be reviewed and updated as appropriate.

In order to monitor the implementation of the framework, the following process needs to be put in place:

- Key indicators have been identified for each strategic priority and will be monitored on an annual basis.
- Monitoring of the framework will also feed into existing reporting systems (FARR, Annual reports, cross-service consultations)
- The FET Steering Group will provide leadership on the implementation of the framework.
- A sub-group of the Implementation Team will meet once a year to review indicators of progress.
- Biennial employer consultations will inform the review of the work. programmes and services in Clare and Limerick City and County.

FET ENTERPRISE ENGAGEMENT PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT TEAM:

The FET Enterprise Engagement Planning & Development Team was set up by the Adult Education Officer with responsibility for Enterprise Engagement Support Service in January 2017. It comprised key managers across LCETB Further Education and Training part-time and full-time provision in Limerick and Clare, as well as FET Information, Recruitment and Guidance Support Service Coordinators.

MEMBERSHIP

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Bord Oideachais & Oiliúna
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