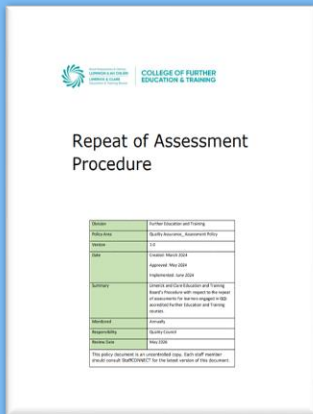




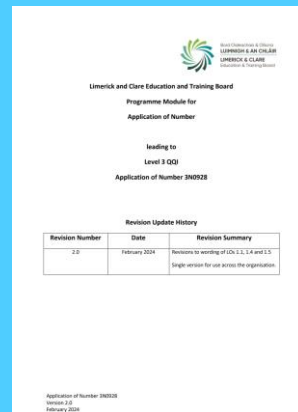
College of Further Education and Training

QUALITY ASSURANCE NEWSLETTER

Policies and Procedures



Curriculum Development



Quality Review Process



Recognition Of Prior Learning



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1. Governance and Management of Quality

College of FET Department Structures that have been developed after an iterative process over several months under the remit of the Strategic Regional Planning Network (SRPN). These new CFET Departments will help streamline operations and delivery with new strategic and operational structures and Terms of Reference developed.

	Website User Interface Title	LCETB College of FET Internal Operational Title	ISCED Code
1	General Learning & Employment Skills	Department of General Learning & Employment Skills	00
2	Childcare, Health and Social Care	Department of Childcare, Health & Social Care	01 09
3	Arts & Media	Department of Arts & Media	02 03
4	Business & Administration	Department of Business & Administration	04
5	Natural Sciences	Department of Natural Sciences	05 08
6	Computer Science & Technology	Department of Computer Science & Technology	06
7	Engineering, Manufacturing and Built Environment	Department of Engineering, Manufacturing & Built Environment	07
8	Personal and Professional Services	Department of Personal and Professional Services	10

Each CFET Department will promote a shared vision and help guide Campuses in the development of integrated implementation plans for full-time and part-time FET Provision and Support Services. The work of each CFET Department will ensure the avoidance of programme duplication, enhanced communications and integration to ensure a strategic focus in achieving the targets as set out in the Strategic Performance Agreement (SPA) and the implementation of recommendations as set out in the Inaugural QA Review.

This will result in the development of integrated Further Education and Training programmes and plans across the College of FET.

College of FET Strategic Framework Mid-Term Review

The College of FET Strategic Framework 2022 – 2025 established a framework for advancement and implementation of the national FET priorities: Building Skills, Fostering Inclusion and Creating Pathways by identifying key enabling strategies of Learner-Centred Approach; Staffing and FET Capability; FET Curriculum; Infrastructure and Performance; Partnerships for Transitions.

On 11th June 2024, a mid-term review of the strategic framework will take place, where Managers, Coordinators and Support Service staff will meet to reflect on progress and review plans and priorities for the next two years.

QQI Quality Improvement Plan Reporting

QQI are in the process of establishing a sectoral Annual Quality Review and new monitoring framework, and in the interim they will continue to monitor and seek periodic QA updates from the ETBs. We have been notified that they will be seeking a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) from each ETB at the end of this year. The QIP will be requested for submission in Q1 2025. The format for the QIP is in development, however it is intended it will build on the follow-up report, and ongoing developments and activities arising from the review.

2. Documented Approach to Quality Assurance

POLICY AND PROCEDURE DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW

The following documents were approved at the recent Quality Council meeting and are now available both on the College of FET Quality Assurance site or on StaffCONNECT.

	Title	Link to Document in StaffCONNECT
1	Disciplinary_Procedure_V1.4	College of FET Learner Disciplinary Procedure V1.4 (collegeoffet.ie)
2	09_Repeat_of_Assessment_Procedure_V1.0	09 Repeat of Assessment Procedure V1.0
3	Early Learning and Care Assessment Policy_V2.1	ELC Assessment Policy V2.1 Located in ELC Programmes Folder
4	01_Assessment_Malpractice_Procedure_V2.0	01 Assessment Malpractice Procedure V2.0
5	Results_Approval_Panel_Procedure_V2.0	Results Approval Panel Procedure V2.0
6	07_Examinations_Procedure_V1.2	07 Examinations Procedure V1.2
7	08_Secure_Storage_Procedure_V1.2	08 Secure Storage Procedure V1.2

1 Disciplinary_Procedure_V1.4

Scope and Purpose

The purpose of the Disciplinary Procedure is to provide guidance to learners and staff on the steps to be followed in the event of a breach of the FET Learner Charter. It is intended to provide a clear, transparent and fair process for dealing with allegations of learner mis-conduct within a reasonable timescale.

The procedure applies to all Further Education and Training learners registered with Limerick and Clare ETB. It includes all engagement on- and/or off-campus while engaged in learning activities including online delivery and work placement.

Summary of Policy Update

1. Updated to refer specifically to Youth Provision and learners under 18.
2. Updated to include separate suspension and expulsion stages.

2 09_Repeat_of_Assessment_Procedure_V1.0

Scope and Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board's Procedure with respect to the repeat of assessments for learners engaged in QQI accredited Further Education and Training courses.

Some programmes, such as Early Learning and Care (ELC), Craft Apprenticeships and Consortium-led Apprenticeships have programme specific requirements which supersede those outlined in the main body of the procedure and are detailed specifically in the relevant appendix.

1. All learners must be given the opportunity to apply to repeat a skills demonstration or examination where they fail this assessment piece that results in not meeting all the MIMLOs and/or not achieving 50% of the assessment mark, in any of the QQI programme modules in which they have engaged.
2. Learners will be given the opportunity to repeat the assessment task once {i.e. two (2) assessment opportunities in total}.
3. Repeats will occur at element level and not at module level for example, a learner can repeat an examination for a module only and will not have to repeat all assessments in that module if otherwise successful.
4. Learners are NOT permitted to repeat an assessment task when they have already passed, in order to improve their grade.
5. Assessors must develop new assessment instruments for the repeat assessment, ensuring that the standard remains the same as the initial assessment.

6. Where the learner has repeated an assessment task, all evidence submitted must be marked and graded in accordance with the standard of the award and as such, learner marks must not be capped.
 7. If a learner does not attend for a scheduled examination or skills demonstration and /or has missed the submission deadline for an assessment task and has not informed the teacher of any extenuating circumstances (i.e., the learner has not applied for Compassionate Consideration or a Short-term Extension in line with Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board's Assessment Procedures), then this will be deemed a missed first assessment opportunity. The subsequent sitting will be then considered a repeat and thus a second and final assessment opportunity. This assessment piece will then be capped at 50% (pass grade) i.e. the maximum mark a learner can achieve is 50%.
 8. Where possible, the repeat assessment opportunity should be made available as soon as possible to the learner. For example, where the unsuccessful assessment task took place early on during the course, then the learner should be given the opportunity to repeat as soon as possible within the duration of that course.
 9. Where the learner has been unsuccessful in an assessment task towards the end of the course, and there is not time for a repeat assessment task to be undertaken, then the learner must be given the opportunity to repeat the task at the next reasonable assessment opportunity.
 10. Repeat assessments will be conducted in the same or similar conditions as the original assessment event.
-

3 Policy on Assessments for Early Learning and Care Programmes_V2.1

Scope and Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to outline Limerick and Clare ETB's policy with respect to assessments (including repeat assessments) undertaken by learners engaged in the Level 5 Certificate in Early Learning and Care and the Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care (Level 6).

Summary of Policy Update

1. The repeat of ELC assessments applies to all types of assessment tasks undertaken as part of the ELC programmes.
 2. The policy is aligned with the ETB-wide Procedure for the Repeat of Assessments but supersedes this Procedure (3.2)
 3. All learners must be given an opportunity to apply to repeat the assessment tasks in which they were unsuccessful (4.4 and 6.1)
 4. Assessors must develop new assessment instruments for the repeat assessment, ensuring that the standard remains the same as the initial assessment (6.9)
 5. Repeat assessments will be conducted in the same or similar conditions as the original assessment event (6.1)
 6. Repeat assessments must uphold the QQI Principles of Assessment - validity, fairness, reliability, quality assurance and transparency (6.11)
 7. The learner has the right to appeal their module result (6.12)
 8. Section 7 Repeat when Assessment Task and/or Submission Deadline has been missed, also applies to ELC.
-

4 01_Assessment_Malpractice_Procedure_V2.0

Scope and Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to define the definition, process and practice associated with assessment malpractice – any act or practice which brings into question the validity or integrity of the assessment process, in this case a malpractice committed by a learner during the course of the assessment process.

Summary of Policy Update

1. Updated to incorporate *Minor Cases of Plagiarism* and *Major Cases of Plagiarism* categorisations, with associated revised sanctions.
 2. Minor Cases of Plagiarism – where the suspected plagiarism is a first offence and represents poor academic practice, such as apparently innocent misuse of materials, inadequate citation such as poor referencing and over-reliance on sources. In this case the learner will be allowed to resubmit within 3 working days without sanction.
 3. Major Cases of Plagiarism – these include such practices as copying material from another source such as another learner or the internet, also a second offence of Minor Case of Plagiarism. If such an allegation is upheld then a zero mark will be awarded for the assignment.
-

5 Results_Approval_Panel_Procedure_V2.0

Scope and Purpose

The purpose of the Results Approval Panel (RAP) is to ensure that results are fully quality assured and signed off by the Provider prior to submission to the awarding body.

The purpose of this procedure is to detail how Limerick and Clare ETB will ensure that appropriate decisions are taken with regard to the outcomes of the assessment, verification and authentication processes in programmes leading to QQI awards. Awards certified by other awarding bodies will follow the certification guidelines as set out by the respective awarding body. They will also be noted in these RAP Meetings for reporting and governance purposes.

Summary of Policy Update

1. Updated to accurately reflect process and procedure associated with Results Approval Panels in Shannon and Raheen Campus.
 2. Amended to include reference to the hosting of RAP meetings online, and submission of Confidentiality Statement and RAP Results Statement by MS Form
 3. RAP Summary Reports no longer uploaded to StaffCONNECT.
 4. RAP Panel membership pool widened to include QA Officers
-

6 07_Examinations_Procedure_V1.2

Scope and Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to define the principles, roles and guidelines for Examinations in Limerick and Clare ETB's College of FET. Examination refers to any theory based, oral, aural, online or practical examination which occurs on Campus on a specific date and for a specific duration. All other assessment techniques, including assignment, collection of work, learner record, project and skills demonstration are not informed by this document.

Summary of Policy Update

1. Updated to include reference to exams which may take place online or are completed on a PC.
 2. Update to accurately reference Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board procedure for Repeat of Assessments
-

7 08_Secure_Storage_Procedure_V1.2

Scope and Purpose

This procedure outlines how assessment materials (both pre and post-assessment) and learner assessment evidence should be securely stored. This procedure applies to both hard and soft copy formats of assessment materials and learner assessment evidence and should be read in conjunction with the *Digital Assessment Guidelines* and the *Assessment Online Specific Instructions* where assessment materials and/or learner assessment evidence is being stored/presented in a digital format.

Summary of Policy Update

1. Updated to reflect move to presentation of evidence on Teams / Moodle for EA.
 2. Updated to include reference to the *Digital Assessment Guidelines* and the *Admin, Storage and Retrieval Policy*.
 3. Incorporates process at IV and EA for addition and removal of IV and EA personnel.
 4. Personal devices not allowed to be used for recording of assessment evidence.
-

OTHER POLICIES CURRENTLY IN DEVELOPMENT

1. College of FET Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TLA) Policy

A working group has been established to develop a College of FET Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy which will be an overarching statement of what the College of FET do in terms of TLA, what resources exist to support it and where these resources and supports can be found.

The policy states: “Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board’s multi-campus College of FET is committed to the continued enhancement of all teaching, learning and assessment practices through ongoing review, monitoring, evaluation and development of ETB-wide quality assured policies and procedures. The College of FET recognises that teaching, learning and assessment are intrinsically linked to each other and require ongoing development to ensure that our learners and staff receive and participate in high-quality services, in-line with our core values and priorities. This policy document sets out our commitment to a best practice approach which places the learner at the centre and meets learner’s diverse needs as set out in the College of FET Strategic Framework 2022-2025, Priority 1: Learner-Centred Approach.”

The policy document is currently in development and will be finalised for FET Quality Council approval by August this year.

2. College of FET Attendance Policy

A working group has also been established to develop a College of FET Attendance Policy which will scaffold Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board’s College of FET commitment to providing a supportive learning environment which enables all enrolled learners to achieve their full potential. The policy will apply to all learners enrolled on a course within Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board’s College of FET as attendance and engagement are key factors in learner achievement, progression, and preparation for employment.

The policy document is currently in development and will be finalised for FET Quality Council approval by August this year.

3. Programmes of Education and Training

SUMMARY OF NEW PROGRAMMES DEVELOPED AND IN DEVELOPMENT

New Programmes Validated for use in LCETB	New Programmes available pending validation
L1 English for Speakers of Other Languages 1	L3 Introduction to Climate Justice
L2 English for Speakers of Other Languages 2	L4 Digital Citizenship
L3 ESOL and L4 ESOL (local programmes updated)	L4 Social Innovation in the Community
L3 Drugs and Alcohol Awareness	L6 Mentorship Practice
L3 Sustainability	
L3 Online Awareness and Responsibility	Programmes in Development
L4 Door Security Skills	L5 Dementia Care and Support
L4 Security Guarding Skills	L5 Attic Insulation
L5 Volunteering for Community Engagement	National Beauty Therapy Apprenticeship
L5 Construction Skills for Energy Conservation	National Barbering Apprenticeship
L5 Digital Assisted Eco Driving	National Bakery and Confectionery Apprenticeship
L5 Digital Assisted Eco Driving (Coach and Bus)	
L5 Sustainable Supply Chain Procurement	
L6 Work Based Learning Practices	
National Hairdressing Apprenticeship (revalidated)	

CONSOLIDATION OF LEVEL 3 MODULE DESCRIPTORS

79 modules from the three former VEC regions were reviewed over the course of the academic year and standardised into one version for use across the organisation. QASS worked with subject matter experts from across the organisation to review the outcomes, content and assessment in all modules. The revised versions, which must be used from September 2024, are now available on StaffCONNECT in a single [Level 3 Programmes](#) folder. A further review will be undertaken in June 2025.

CONSOLIDATION OF LEVEL 4 MODULE DESCRIPTORS

From September 2024, QASS will be working on the L4 modules and standardising them into one single version for use across the organisation. We aim to have this work completed by June 2025. As module descriptors are revised, they will be uploaded to the single [Level 4 Programmes](#) folder on StaffCONNECT. Teaching staff may use these updated versions once available on StaffCONNECT.

NATIONAL MODULE AND PROGRAMME REVIEW

ETBs nationally are currently engaged in the process of reviewing and updating a number of QQI modules across levels 4, 5 and 6. As well as looking at the most commonly used programme modules within the ETB sector, it was agreed to look at the most problematic, and those awards in most need of immediate updating. Links have been sent to all Provision to input into this process. Work will also commence on identified programmes (major awards) most in need of update.

Staff are still encouraged to use the [Programme Module Revision Form \(FE Descriptor\)](#) to request a review of any module descriptor. Requests now will be reviewed in line with the national process.

APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

1. The **National Hairdressing Apprenticeship (NHA)** has been undergoing a rigorous revalidation process over the past 18 months. Having agreed Terms of Reference with QQI, the revalidation team began a process of extensive Provider review of the programme involving all stakeholders. Review occurred in the form of surveys and face-to-face events and was followed by the redesign of the programme curriculum and assessments.

A Revalidation Panel meeting was held on 23rd January 2024 and the outcome was that the panel identified a number of commendations, recommendations, and one special condition of validation for the programme. Currently the finalised new programme has been submitted to QQI for consideration at their June Programme Awards Executive Committee (PAEC) meeting where they will base their decision on approving revalidation on the panel report, the ETB's response to the panel report, the ETB's Provider Review Report and the submitted programme. Following approval, all new and existing apprentices will be following the new curriculum from the date of revalidation.

2. Currently under development is the new **National Barbering Apprenticeship**. This new apprenticeship will be an NFQ Level 6 QQI major award – *Advanced Certificate in Barbering* and will be run over two Stages (years). Apprentice training will be 80% on-the-job (in the Barbershop) and 20% off-the-job (in the FET College). This award will be the first nationally-recognised qualification for Barbers in Ireland and there is great support and enthusiasm for the programme in both the industry and education sectors. Following initial consultations, development work, curriculum peer review (online and face-to-face) and expert inputs from the UK, the curriculum development team are busy preparing the programme for QQI validation. This is expected to happen in September this year with the scheduling of a pilot group in January 2025.
3. Another apprenticeship programme currently under development is the new **National Beauty Therapy Apprenticeship**. This apprenticeship will also be an NFQ Level 6 QQI major award – *Advanced Certificate in Beauty Therapy* and will be run over two Stages (min 2 years, duration TBC). Apprentice training will be 60% on-the-job (in the salon) and 40% off-the-job (in the FET College). This apprenticeship is also in the curriculum development and review phase following on from online and face-to-face consultation events with industry and education partners. Again, the industry and education sectors are very supportive and enthusiastic about the apprenticeship and have provided incredible support to the development team. An independent expert in Beauty Therapy apprenticeships in the UK also came to Ennis to work with the team and provide expert insights into this model of training for the industry. As with the Barbering, the curriculum development team are busy preparing the programme for QQI validation. This is expected to happen later this year with the scheduling of a pilot group in early 2025.
4. A proposal for a new NFQ Level 6, two-year **National Bakery and Confectionary Apprenticeship** has recently been submitted to the National Apprenticeship Office by Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board as lead Provider on behalf of the Consortium Steering Group (CSG) for the new apprenticeship. The CSG is made up of representatives from industry and education and they have gathered the information required for a proposal and come together to develop the Occupational Profile for the qualification, with the support of Limerick and Clare ETB. It is proposed that the programme will be delivered 80% on-the-job and 20% off-the-job. If approval to develop the apprenticeship is given, then the next phase will be consultation and curriculum development.

4. Staff Recruitment, Management and Development

QUALITY ASSURANCE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT CALENDAR

QA Induction for Level 1-3 Thursday 26th September 11am – 1pm. Venue to be confirmed.

QA Induction for Level 4-6 Thursday October 3rd 11am – 1pm. Venue to be confirmed.

IV Training on request.

Links to register for any QA PL&D will be issued via the PL&D Wakelet.

5. Teaching and Learning

RETHINKING ASSESSMENT

QASS staff attended a number of masterclasses hosted by QQI, based on the theme of rethinking assessments. The main aim of such events is to “stimulate a sustained and forward-looking focus on assessment to ensure that it keeps pace with the needs of contemporary learning contexts”. The first session in January focused on learning outcomes, followed by an event in March on inclusive assessment and standards. The final session in June will look at the area of feedback.

Workshops are being planned locally for the 2024/25 academic year on this area, linking it with the area of Inclusive Assessment.

ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT

A reminder that staff may request the use of alternative assessment(s) under the ETB’s quality assured governance of curriculum processes.

If staff wish to change the current mode of assessment from an examination to an assignment, this [Form¹](#) must be completed and submitted in advance, along with any assessment briefs and assessment material (for this assessment only).

Each request will be reviewed by the Quality Assurance Support Service, and any agreed changes will be made to the module descriptor.

SEMESTERISATION

It has been agreed by the Strategic Regional Planning Network that a consistent approach to the delivery of an Award will be adopted across all Campuses in terms of 1) Curriculum Structure and 2) Semesterisation as follows:

1) Curriculum Structure

- Only a single version of each Award is to be delivered apart from where exceptional circumstances exist and where the prior approval of the Director of FET has been given;
- Advance annual approval is required to continue current practice;
- Eight (8) modules per Award type will be agreed for delivery across all Campuses where that Award is delivered;
- Part-Time provision and/or contracted training will be used for any additional:
 - focused modules;
 - specialism modules designed to meet identified local industry needs;
- Where an existing Award type is being used and is not reflective of the programme specialism, then a process of curriculum development will take place via the Curriculum Development Support Service;
- Learning outcomes and assessments for high workload modules to be reviewed and reconfigured in support;

2) Semesterisation

- Delivery of programmes to be migrated on a phased basis to semester delivery;
 - All modules for each programme to be delivered on a single semester basis (e.g. 4 and 4).
-

¹ <https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=AUCH-6T78U-H7eyW1KtS-4ZbtIAsbJhOtZYYQEcSdUM1pNTU03S1c4U05HNDJCRzNCWTVRNlpNMC4uwdLOR=c66835F40-7B1D-4B35-A69E-300288018351>

COLLEGE OF FET GUIDANCE ON THE USE OF AI IN EDUCATION

In collaboration with the TEL Support Service, Version 2 Spring 2024 of the [College of FET Guidance on the use of AI in Education](#) is now available. This follows a very successful College of FET AI and Assessment Week in November, where both Support Services facilitated over 18 workshops across the organisation with over 200 participants. The workshops offered support to “AI proof” assessment instruments and assessments.

The [Assessment Brief](#) Template has been updated to reference AI.



Presentations to showcase the journey on the development and implementation of the Guidelines in the organisation were delivered to a FESS audience in March and at the Ahead GATHER Conference in May.

ONLINE AND BLENDED LEARNING

In October 2023, QQI published the guidelines for Providers of Blended and Fully Online Learning Programmes. Providers who wish to extend the approve scope of provision, i.e. offer Blended and Fully Online programmes from September 2025 will need to have their QA processes and documentation approved by QQI. Once approved, each ETB will be responsible for quality assuring blended and fully online learning courses they plan to offer.

In preparation for this, the Blended and Online Learning Support Service have started to conduct a gap analysis using the new guidelines, in order to develop an action plan for QQI. The guidelines are divided into three sections – Operational Context, Programme Context and Learner Context. Example projects currently under development in these three areas include –

1. Programmes: The development of a Programme Approval process for both new and existing blended and fully online programmes.
2. Learners: The development of information for learners enrolling on a blended or fully online learning courses e.g. a website page on the College of FET and a Learner handbook.
3. Operational: The updating of existing policy and procedure documents e.g. the Assessment Procedures and the development of new policy and procedure documents.

Professional Learning & Development (PL&D) Staff: Following the review of the secondment project and the blended learning design programme, the PL&D for staff wishing to teach a blended or fully online learning course has been redesigned. Teaching staff will need to complete the Blended and Fully Online Learning Design Certificate. The certificate is made up of a series of badges. Teaching staff will need to complete the first two badges before they can teach a blended or fully online learning course. The remaining badges can be completed in any order within a 3-year period.

1. The Fundamentals of Blended and Fully Online Learning Design badge
2. The Synchronous Online Learning Design badge
3. The Asynchronous Online Learning Design badge
4. Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) badge
5. Multimedia Design for Learning badge
6. Online Assessment Design badge
7. Online Safety, Accessibility & Copyright badge

A number of ESOL teachers are currently working through the first badge the Fundamentals of Blended and Fully Online Learning Design and will complete their second badge the Synchronous Online Learning Design badge in August 2024.

SCHEDULE FOR SUBMISSION FOR CERTIFICATION

At a recent Strategic Regional Planning Network Meeting of 30th April 2024, it was decided that the maximum duration between course completion and submission of learners for certification be no more than a maximum of **three months**.

All provision must ensure that learners are submitted for certification within this timeframe, availing of the six available certification periods in the year.

The Quality Assurance Support Service will be implementing measures at Results Approval Panel to verify that all completed courses are compliant with this.

6. Assessment of Learners

SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK FROM RESULTS APPROVAL PANELS (FEBRUARY & APRIL)

Area of Focus - Allocation of Marks/Marking Scheme	
Commendations	Recommendations
1. Good, detailed breakdown of marks. Very evident where marks were deducted	<p>1. Providing the marking scheme from the module descriptor, with no additional evidence in the tutor folder, is not acceptable as a standalone instrument by national standards. It's essential that the allocation of marks is clear and robust both qualitatively and quantitatively. It is essential that detailed marking schemes or rubrics are presented as part of the EA process.</p> <p>2. Consider adding detailed marking scheme as found on the page titled - marking scheme onto the assessment brief itself under the heading – Assessment/Performance Criteria and Marks. This will give learners a clear signposting of how the marks is being divided up from the outset. It also gives them detail from the beginning as to how the learner evidence is generated and assessed.</p> <p>3. Consider adding a minimum quantity needed/expected of learner evidence in the relevant subsections in the Assessment Briefs</p>
Area of Focus - Digital Portfolios	
Commendations	Recommendations
1. Both the hard copy and digital evidence all very well organised, all labelled and easy to navigate	1. Consider using a subfolder in learners' individual channel to include any documents that is not learner evidence.
2. The use of the assignment feature supported the EA process as it was easy to view all learners' submissions.	<p>2. The use of individual channels for learners is time consuming for EAs to access – multiple clicking. EAs need to be added to each channel as well as to the Team. Alternative layout should be considered.</p> <p>3. The navigation of materials would be supported by ensuring that all assessment materials are appropriately named to match the assignment titles found in the module descriptor.</p>
Area of Focus - Internal Verification (IV)	
Commendations	Recommendations
1. Portfolios were presented from 25 groups and five tutors/assessors. All portfolios were internally verified. This is a strength of the process when a new cohort of learners are engaging with the level and modules for the first time.	1. Issues identified at IV should be included in the IV report along with the corrective action that was taken.
2. The internal verification of all portfolios is good practice when a tutor is new and presenting portfolios for the first time.	2. General comments such as "No issues identified" should be avoided.
Area of Focus - Feedback	
Commendations	Recommendations
1. Very good feedback evidenced throughout portfolios.	1. It is good practice at level 1 to include the referred and successful task in the portfolio.
2. Great tutor feedback and marking showing candidates progress and providing great encouragement.	2. Evidence of feedback on MS Word doc submissions should be included as well as a general overall comment in the assignment feature.

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

In the move towards further embedding RPL in our provision and practice, a number of significant events have taken place and are still planned for 2024.

1. Over February and March of this year, 11 members of staff completed the QASS in-house *Introduction to RPL for Mentors and Assessors* course. The course sessions run over six weeks at 2½ per week, four online and two face-to-face. This course offering is part of building staff knowledge and capacity in the area of RPL. In total, 61 people have now completed this training since 2022 and we need anyone interested in this training to let your line managers know so you can be included in future offerings. If there are sufficient numbers the course will run in the autumn of this year, if not, it will be offered again in February 2025.
2. As a follow-on from this training, we will be putting a 'Mentor the RPL Mentor/Assessor' system in place in the autumn where more experienced RPL Mentors will be available to provide support to those who are newly trained and who may feel nervous about taking on RPL work. Update on this to follow in September.
3. On February 14th a FET Administration Staff Networking Day was facilitated by the Professional Learning & Development Support Service and during the session participants were offered the opportunity to avail of RPL themselves, in-line with **Priority 2: Staffing** of the **College of FET Strategic Framework 2022 – 2025**. An Expression of Interest form was circulated to all admin staff followed by two briefing sessions to give everyone an opportunity to attend and find out what RPL is all about and what the process would involve for them. 21 admin staff have completed the form and the QA RPL Support Officer has been contacting everyone to finalise details. We wish everyone the best of luck with this RPL experience and look forward to reporting on progress in the next QA Newsletter.
4. On March 27th a refresher RPL session was facilitated for the Information, Recruitment and Guidance Support Service (IRGSS). This session was a follow-on to the full-day workshop held in June 2022. These sessions were designed to provide IRGSS staff with the key knowledge about RPL to enable them to support any enquiries from the general public.

5. On May 2nd a session on RPL for FET Managers was held in Kilmallock Road Campus. 33 managers attended and the feedback from the session was very positive. The purpose of the session was to provide key operational detail and project updates to managers who find it difficult to spare the time to attend the six-week RPL course. The morning was opened by the Director of FET, Paul Patton who spoke about 'how we have worked to embed RPL as a key process in FET' and how important RPL is for supporting enterprise engagement. Thanks to all the speakers who gave inputs on the day.



6. Over the summer months the RPL Assessment Procedure will be updated to remain in line with new developments in the College of FET. More to follow on this in September.
7. An RPL Communications Campaign has begun which has been developed by the Communications Team in consultation with QASS. A phased approach to content and brand identity development is in place with stage 1 (identifying RPL advocates, information gathering and content writing) complete. Stage 2 involves concept and brand asset development while stage 3 will result in the production of graphics, distinctive brand assets and an information guide. As the campaign is implemented this will be communicated to all FET staff and shared on our ETB social media platforms.
8. The 5th Validation of Prior Learning (VPL) Biennale held in Kilkenny, from 6-8 May was attended by 10 College of FET staff.



The conference, jointly hosted by Canada, Ireland and the USA, discussed validation of prior learning in the context of the conference theme: 'People, validation and power: democracy in action?' Participants were invited to "gather", to collaborate, and share, achieving more together than alone. Participants also had opportunities to explore approaches to validation, the systems used and the potential they offer. They also considered underlying forces at play, challenges faced, solutions developed, and what all of this means for individuals, for societies, for skills, for inclusion and mobility in the bigger picture of global practices today. The presentations and resources from the Biennale will shortly be available on [VPL Biennale – May 6-8 May 2024, Ireland](#) including the presentations by Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board 'Embedding and Promoting VPL across the College of FET' and 'Update on VPL of the NFQ Level 6 Advanced Certificate in Hairdressing QQI Major Award'.

9. Please join our RPL Community of Practice in our MS Team: [CFET QASS RPL Network](#) which is open to everyone to join. This is a sharing and collaboration site and a place where RPL practitioners, new and experienced, can share learning, resources, ask a question or learn from others.

10. Another community to become a part of is the RPL Practitioner Network Ireland. This is a national cross-sectoral community of RPL practitioners which was formed 2015 and is going from strength-to-strength: [RPL Practitioners Network Ireland \(rpl-ireland.ie\)](https://www.rpl-ireland.ie). Follow [RPL Practitioner Network Ireland: Overview | LinkedIn](#). Use this link to join: [RPL Practitioner Network Ireland | Groups | LinkedIn](#).
11. The latest Cedefop European Inventory Country Report on VNFIL in Ireland (2023 Update) has been published in which our ETB features very strongly. Please do have a read, it's a very easy to digest publication and our ETB is represented very positively in this space. [European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning 2023 update: Ireland | CEDEFOP \(europa.eu\)](https://europeaninventory.cedefop.europa.eu/country-report/ireland).



College of FET RPL Success Stories:

RPL with Ukrainian Learners

An RPL project was created for two Ukrainian learners with a wealth of Childcare Experience with the aim of validating their knowledge, experience and skills with an award on the NFQ for the purposes of employment in the childcare sector. There was a time constraint with this due deactivation of the QQI Level 5 Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) major award in Dec 2023. The mentors, Megan Buckley and Jessica Tuite (pictured), worked together to map and integrate 72 learning outcomes across eight modules from the QQI ECCE major award. They then identified five linked themes which were used to create five assessment briefs. Each brief contained several tasks for the applicants to complete. Both applicants successfully achieved the major award via RPL and are now in full-time employment. Congratulations to the two ladies and to all the staff involved.



"RPL has completely transformed my life and that of my family. I am now employed in a job that I never thought possible when I first arrived in Ireland."

RPL in the Irish Defence Forces

As a follow on to the successful TOBAR project with the defence forces, a new project has begun called SEED: The Shared Educational Empowerment Drive. Donna Horgan and Megan Buckley from O'Connell Avenue Campus have worked collaboratively with Sergeant Mark Slattery from Sarsfield Barracks to make this project happen. A total of 12 members began the RPL process with each assigned an RPL mentor to work with them 1:1. A total of nine completed the Work Experience module (three at Level 5 and six at Level 6) and are now working towards major awards in various fields of learning. Well done to all involved.

RPL in Full-time Provision

The QASS have worked with Marie O'Callaghan, one of the full-time provision Co-ordinators in Ennis Campus on a project to incorporate RPL into full-time provision, with great success. Barbara Ryan has successfully mentored seven learners through Level 5 Word Processing and five through Level 5 Intellectual Disability Studies with the support of Megan Buckley and Jessica Tuite as RPL assessors. Traditionally, at a national level, it has been difficult to implement RPL processes in full-time provision, but this project shows that it can be a success. The potential for RPL was identified at the course briefing stage and then a mentor was assigned to work 1:1 with the learners. They primarily completed their RPL portfolios in their scheduled course time and also attended a class(es) as needed to address any gaps in learning. It is hoped to expand this offering for September 2024 intakes. Thanks to everyone for making this project a success.

Marie says: ***"We are delighted to be up and running with RPL. It wouldn't have happened without the dedication of Barbara! By dipping our toes in last year, we have grown in confidence and hope to train more RPL mentors in staff"***.

RPL in the National Hairdressing Apprenticeship



The graduation of the first recipients of the QQI Level 6 Advanced Certificate in Hairdressing via RPL was a very special event for both the graduates and Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board. An extensive review and evaluation followed, and with some modifications the process was rolled out nationally to all Collaborating Providers of the National Hairdressing Apprenticeship. Most notably a group of seven of Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board's hairdressing teachers started the process in October 2023 and are due to finish in May for August authentication. This project also meets Priority 2 (Staffing) of our College of FET Strategic Framework 2022 – 2025: RPL for staff.

Other Providers who ran the process were Mallow College of FET and Waterford College of FET. These groups are also shortly due to finish. Currently, in Ennis Campus, a new group of 10 experienced hairdressers from the Limerick and Clare region plus one from Kildare, one from Athlone and two from

Galway, have just begun their RPL journey with their mentor Michelle Nugent who also mentored our teachers. We look forward to reporting on their progress later in the year.

7. Supports for Learners

Development of a single College of FET **learner handbook** has been identified as a key priority of the College of FET. The Quality Assurance Support Service will be leading the development of this important learner resource. A working group is being established to progress this development. If you wish to get more information or to be involved in this working group, please contact the Quality Assurance Support Service at qa@lcebtb.ie.

8. Information and Data Management

This QQI report is a summary analysis of QQI certification data for 2023. It encompasses QQI awards made in respect of programmes delivered by further education and training (FET) providers and higher education (HE) providers.

The analysis includes trends and information on apprenticeships, the profile of learners achieving QQI awards, and comparative analysis of awards relating to provision by the education and training boards (ETBs). The analysis suggests that the overall number of awards made by QQI in 2023 continued to recover from the impact of COVID-19 restrictions.

<https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2024-03/analysis-qqi-certification-data-2023.pdf>



NUMBER OF QQI AWARDS MADE FOR ETBS 2019 - 2023 AND % CHANGE 2022-2023

The number of awards made between 2022 and 2023 increased in all ETBs except in Kildare & Wicklow ETB (down 7% from 2022) and increased the most in Longford & Westmeath ETB (up 49% from 2022).

	Total No. 2019	Total No. 2020	Total No. 2021	Total No. 2022	%change 2022-2023	Total No. 2023
City of Dublin ETB	19,089	13,356	12,780	12,850	9%	13,966
Cork ETB	14,466	11,133	10,774	10,035	11%	11,143
Dublin & Dún Laoghaire ETB	11,889	9,198	9,989	9,639	4%	10,013
Louth & Meath ETB	8,167	6,506	7,226	7,008	19%	8,360
Limerick & Clare ETB	9,632	8,006	7,371	7,148	8%	7,749
Waterford & Wexford ETB	9,265	6,790	6,213	5,562	21%	6,717
Laois & Offaly ETB	5,569	3,833	4,168	4,933	27%	6,256
Mayo, Sligo & Leitrim ETB	7,623	5,476	4,406	5,169	20%	6,222
Cavan & Monaghan ETB	6,796	4,972	4,581	4,792	8%	5,161
Galway & Roscommon ETB	8,483	6,394	5,173	4,918	2%	5,034
Kildare & Wicklow ETB	7,022	5,236	4,386	5,055	-7%	4,683
Kerry ETB	4,432	3,405	2,881	3,235	31%	4,236
Donegal ETB	4,451	2,870	2,781	2,725	42%	3,864
Kilkenny & Carlow ETB	5,824	4,478	3,516	3,174	17%	3,721
Longford & Westmeath ETB	3,485	2,298	1,629	2,322	49%	3,470
Tipperary ETB	4,840	3,771	3,276	3,146	5%	3,300

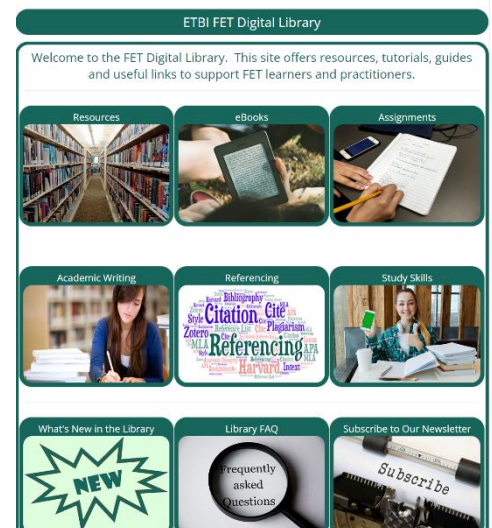
9. Public Information and Communication

ETBI FET DIGITAL LIBRARY

The ETBI FET Digital Library (<https://library.etbi.ie/home>) is an excellent and highly recommended resource for both learners and practitioners, which provides access to digital resources that support teaching and learning practices and to improve the educational experience for learners. The Digital Library offers resources for supporting learning as well as providing a support tool for teachers, trainers, and instructors.

The objectives of the Digital Library are:

- to provide a cost-effective, shared resource to all ETBs
- to improve learner resource access and experience,
- increase the breadth, depth and quality of online educational resources
- to ensure these resources are easy to discover and easy to use



10. Other Parties Involved in Education and Training

The Tertiary Education programme collaboration between Limerick and Clare ETB and Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest (TUS) is progressing with the addition of Bachelor of Business in Business with Computing in Ennis Campus, and Bachelor of Science in Construction Management in Raheen Campus.

The Quality Assurance Support Service are working closely with Regional Tertiary Managers Declan Blackett and Sarah O'Toole in finalising quality assurance processes and procedures related to these programmes.

Tertiary Degree	Graduating from	Starting at	Duration
Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Business	Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest (TUS) TUS Moylish Campus	Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board (LCETB) College of FET Ennis Campus	4 Years
Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Business with Computing	Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest (TUS) TUS Moylish Campus	Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board (LCETB) College of FET Ennis Campus	4 Years
Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Construction Management	Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest (TUS) TUS Moylish Campus	Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board (LCETB) College of FET Raheen Campus, Limerick City	4 Years
Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Mobile and Web Computing	Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest (TUS) TUS Moylish Campus	Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board (LCETB) College of FET Múghnaigh St. Campus, Limerick City	4 Years

11. Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

COLLEGE OF FET LEARNER VOICE POLICY

The College of FET Learner Voice Policy was approved at the Quality Council meeting of 27th February.

Policy Objectives

- To provide coherence and consistency of approach in all College of FET learner voice initiatives.
- To clarify and communicate the College of FET values and expectations of the learner voice mechanisms for learners, staff and the organisation.
- To link learner voice activities to quality enhancement in the College of FET.
- To ensure the effectiveness of our learner voice mechanisms and close the feedback loop.
- To harness digital technologies to advance the learner voice in the College of FET.
- To recognise the valuable contribution learners can make in the College of FET change management processes.
- To capture good practice across the College of FET and share it with all key stakeholders, and with the FET sector.
- To positively influence FET learners' mental health and wellbeing, through meaningful engagement in their own learning processes.
- To promote the value of FET learning in the Irish education system.

Scope

All Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board College of FET learners, irrespective of location, mode of delivery, level or type of provision and/or support service, should have fair opportunities to share their views and feedback on their learning experience.

Link to Learner Voice Policy - [24_02_27_FET_Learner_Voice_Policy_-_approved.pdf](#)

COLLEGE OF FET LEARNER VOICE SURVEY

Reflecting on the strengths and challenges from the 2023 survey, the 2024 survey comprised of 22 questions, with the addition of a question asking about the learners increased skills in areas such as Self-confidence, Team working and Problem Solving.

There have been 1,977 responses, with notable findings including a diverse age range and a high attendance at Level 5 courses.

The process of feeding back the details of survey responses to provision managers for discussion and dissemination is now underway with reports expected to circulate to FET Campuses by end of June.

A summary report of the findings of this survey is here - [College of FET Learner Survey Report 2024](#). This report includes a concise overview of the survey findings, complemented by graphical representations of the responses categorized under relevant headings.

Campus Management and staff team will review the feedback to celebrate positive learner experience reported by learners while also developing action plans where relevant to address where improvements in Teaching and Learning experiences were highlighted.

These actions will be documented in a 'Closing the Loop exercise' circulated by QASS and completed by Campus Management following review of the Learner Voice Survey 24.



The overall satisfaction rate with learning experience was 91% up 1% from 2023, with the vast majority of respondents strongly endorsing their learner experience.

One such example *“Overall everything about the course, campus, staff, assistance with learning, supplies you need, laptops out on loan to do assignments everything is just amazing I can honestly say I love being on campus and getting the help I need and deserve as my human right, to have an entitlement to education no matter what age you are it’s never too late to return to school and learn all over again absolutely amazing that we can all have this amazing opportunity to have such a bright future ahead of us’*

COLLEGE OF FET QUALITY REVIEW FRAMEWORK PILOT SELF-EVALUATION PROCESS

The aim of the Quality Review Framework is to continue to promote an ongoing culture of quality assurance and enhancement throughout Limerick and Clare’s Education Training Board’s College of Further Education Training. The process reflects an embedded and dynamic process that is continuous, reflective, enhancement and inclusive focussed.

This Quality Review Framework enables this by providing a consistent approach to reflecting on and assessing the quality of the College of FET activities through three complementary processes:

- Quality Improvement Planning;
- Self-Evaluation;
- Curriculum Review processes;

The **Self-Evaluation** process is 3-year cycle reviewing quality of learner’s experience and impact service has on their achievements. It incorporates contributions from the many key stakeholders aligned with Campus Programme Categories. The purpose of this facilitated process is to document best practice and ensure continuous improvement of quality that is structured and planned.

Self-Evaluation Report Content

The Campus Self-Evaluation Report contains documented evidence of quality service along with a three-year agreed Action Plan addressing identified areas for improvement noted during the self-evaluation process. Monitoring of approved action plan will occur annually through the Quality Improvement Planning Process.

The report also includes the collated Programme Category Summary Reports prepared in advance of the session along with feedback recorded during the session from participants focusing on strengths and challenges of the quality of service provided and how this impacts on the learner’s experience.

Two key components, *Teaching, Training and Learning* and *Governance, Leadership and Management* also reviewed as part of the Self-Evaluation Session.

Self-Evaluation Pilot

Two self-evaluation sessions took place as part of the pilot stage of the rollout of this College of FET process.

The first pilot self-evaluation session involved Cappamore, Kilmallock Town and Hospital Campuses, referred to as East Limerick. The second Campus involved in the pilot phase was Kilrush Campus.

Attendance at both pilot sessions included key Senior Management, Campus Management and staff along with relevant support service staff. Fifty-two staff attended the East Limerick Campuses Pilot Self-Evaluation Session on April 10, 2024, representing eight different programmes across five programme categories.

Twenty-six staff representing five programme categories attended Kilrush Campus Pilot Self-Evaluation Session on April 15, 2024.

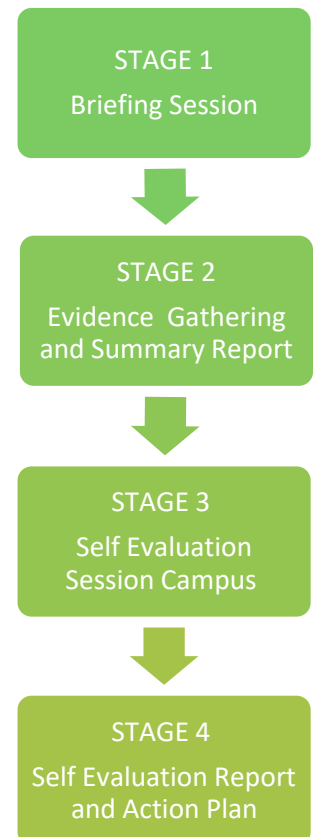
Draft reports for the two pilot campuses have been collated and the pilot campuses management teams have met online to review the final drafts. Once received these reports will be reviewed by the QA Subgroup and recommendations for approval to the Quality Council.

Self-Evaluation Pilot Process Review

A Pilot Review Subgroup of the QR Framework working group has been formed to consider feedback from the session and to plan for rollout.

Priority areas for subgroup considerations include:

- Length of Evaluation Session.
- Review of templates to ensure broader Strategic Priorities are reviewed and considered by Campuses in action plans.
- Digitisation of feedback being recorded during sessions by facilitators.
- Scheduling of Self Evaluation Sessions.



CHILD SAFEGUARDING UPDATES

An information and Networking event for all FET Managers/Coordinators and Campus DLP/DDLP's took place in the Radisson Hotel on 19th March.

The purpose of the event was:

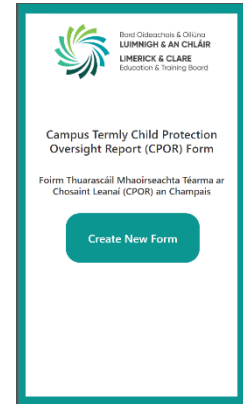
- To provide briefing on Child Safeguarding Compliancy Oversight Reporting.
- To present Mandatory Reporting information and guidance from experienced consultant, Suzanne Phelan.
- To give opportunity for networking in smaller groups to further explore areas highlighted in DLP/DDLP training feedback and thereafter.
- To provide clarity of roles through feedback and discussion.

Updates were given on developments to support the CoF Compliancy Rollout.

These key developments include

- Tusla online Training - Privacy Engine Process established
- DLP Training - 75 staff received training in 2023
- New Child Safeguarding section on StaffCONNECT
- CoF Oversight reporting rollout March 2024
- Ongoing support by Lead Representative and Child Safeguarding Working group

All staff who have their Mandatory Privacy Engine E-Learning Programme for Child Protection pending are being asked to complete same by May 31st so that Campuses are fully compliant.



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