



SELF-EVALUATION REPORT

CMETB FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROVISION



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Co-funded by the
EUROPEAN UNION



QCF AWARD

SOLAS
learning works



cmethb

Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna
an Chabháin agus Mhuineacháin
Cavan and Monaghan
Education and Training Board

STRATEGIC APPROACH

Underpinned by Governance

STRATEGIC APPROACH

Developing an integrated Quality Assurance governance system

MISSION
provide quality education and training for young people and adults through a professional, inclusive and innovative approach

VALUES

- PROGRESSIVE
- PROFESSIONAL
- LEARNER CENTRED
- COMMUNITY
- DIVERSE
- QUALITY

LOCATION (CAVAN/MONAGHAN)

UNIQUELY LOCATED IN BORDER REGION

Serving Population of **[137,562]**^a

GROWTH SECTORS IN THE BORDER REGION^b

- 26% Professional Services**
- 16% Construction**
- 15% Insurance Activities**

Delivering FET at **14 CENTRES**

^a 2016 Census Data
^b 2019 CSO data

STAFF AND LEARNER PROFILE

CMETB ONE OF LARGEST EMPLOYER IN REGION - 1300 STAFF MEMBERS

382 FET STAFF

TOTAL NUMBER OF DISTINCT LEARNERS^c

Year	2019	2020	2021
Count	8341	6425	3110

LEARNERS BY AGE

15-25	26%	25-44	39%
45-64	28%	64+	7%

LEARNERS BY GENDER

Female	65%	Male	35%
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^c 2021 figures to date

FUNDING

FET BUDGET 2020 €27.5M

PROGRAMME DELIVERY

QQI

Re-engagement with QQI - May 2018

39 Unique Target QQI Awards in 2020^d

19 Unique Non QQI Awards in 2020

^d (This does not include duplicates of awards ran i.e. General Learning Level 4 only listed once although it may form the majority of awards we offer)* footnote

PARTNERSHIPS

NATIONAL
SOLAS, QQI, ETBI, DFHERIS, DSP, AONTAS, FESS

REGIONAL/OTHER
Regional Skills Forum, Local Enterprise Offices, Cavan/Monaghan County Councils, Monaghan Integrated Development, Breffni Integrated

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ADDITIONAL CASE STUDIES

These additional case studies can be accessed via the link
<http://cavanmonaghan.etb.ie/overview/qualityassurance/qa/>

Case Study on Internal Audit of Policy Compliance in CMETB, 2020
Case Study on PLC Access Programme
Case Study on CMETB's Response to Covid-19
Case Study on CMETB's Response to Covid-19 – TEL Support
Case Study on Stakeholder Engagement – Cavan Institute & Southern Region College

FOREWORD



Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board (CMETB) fully appreciates the transformative impact that Further Education and Training (FET) has for our learners, our communities and the development of our economy. We welcome the publication of this CMETB Self-Evaluation Report, clarifying Quality Standards for the delivery of FET Services for the Cavan and Monaghan region and building upon the successful engagement with QQI in progressing Quality Assurance governance structures, policies, processes and procedures.

This Self-Evaluation Report is timely as CMETB has outlined an ambitious agenda for the delivery of services in its new FET Strategy 2021 – 2024. Covid-19 has had a serious impact on the regional employment status with CMETB FET seeking to enable learners and employers to upskill, re-skill and best position themselves for our post Covid-19 economy.

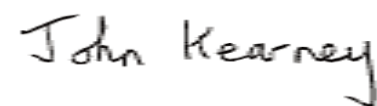
CMETB FET Services provide a means for our learners and communities to be equipped with the skills needed to adapt to living and working sustainably in an increasingly global, digital and automated world. CMETB also seeks to provide significant opportunities for supporting our learners to engage with FET at every stage of their lives. It is essential in accomplishing all of these objectives that CMETB programme delivery is characterised by robust and reputable Quality Assurance.

This Self-Evaluation Report has been developed in a time of unprecedented turbulence and change. The Covid-19 pandemic and associated closures and restrictions necessitated a complete change of delivery across all FET Service and introduction of additional Quality Assurance processes and procedures.

While this level and rate of change may be unprecedented, the FET sector and CMETB is well accustomed to, and indeed characterised by, change. CMETB FET provision continuously adapts to meet the needs of its learners and stakeholders. Amidst this pace of change, it can be both difficult and rare to find an opportunity for self-reflection. The preparation of this Report required and enabled us to stand back and take an in-depth review of quality and provision within CMETB. This self-reflection and evaluation has facilitated us to critically assess our operations and identify areas of strengths and those requiring further development and enhancement. This Report and the process behind it will provide us with a clear pathway for continued and enhanced quality service delivery across all aspects of CMETB FET provision.

We would like to thank all those who engaged and helped with the development of this Self-Evaluation Report. We particularly appreciate the contributions of staff and stakeholders for their commitment and enthusiasm in enhancing CMETB's commitment to promoting the highest standard of Quality Assurance for our services.

We look forward to delivering the recommendations set out in this Self-Evaluation Report and to hosting the Review Panel visit in November 2021.

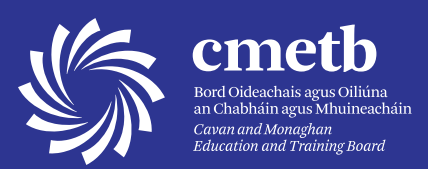


John Kearney
Chief Executive



Dr Linda Pinkster
Director of FET

1 ENVIRONMENT AND CONTEXT



1.1 Background to Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board

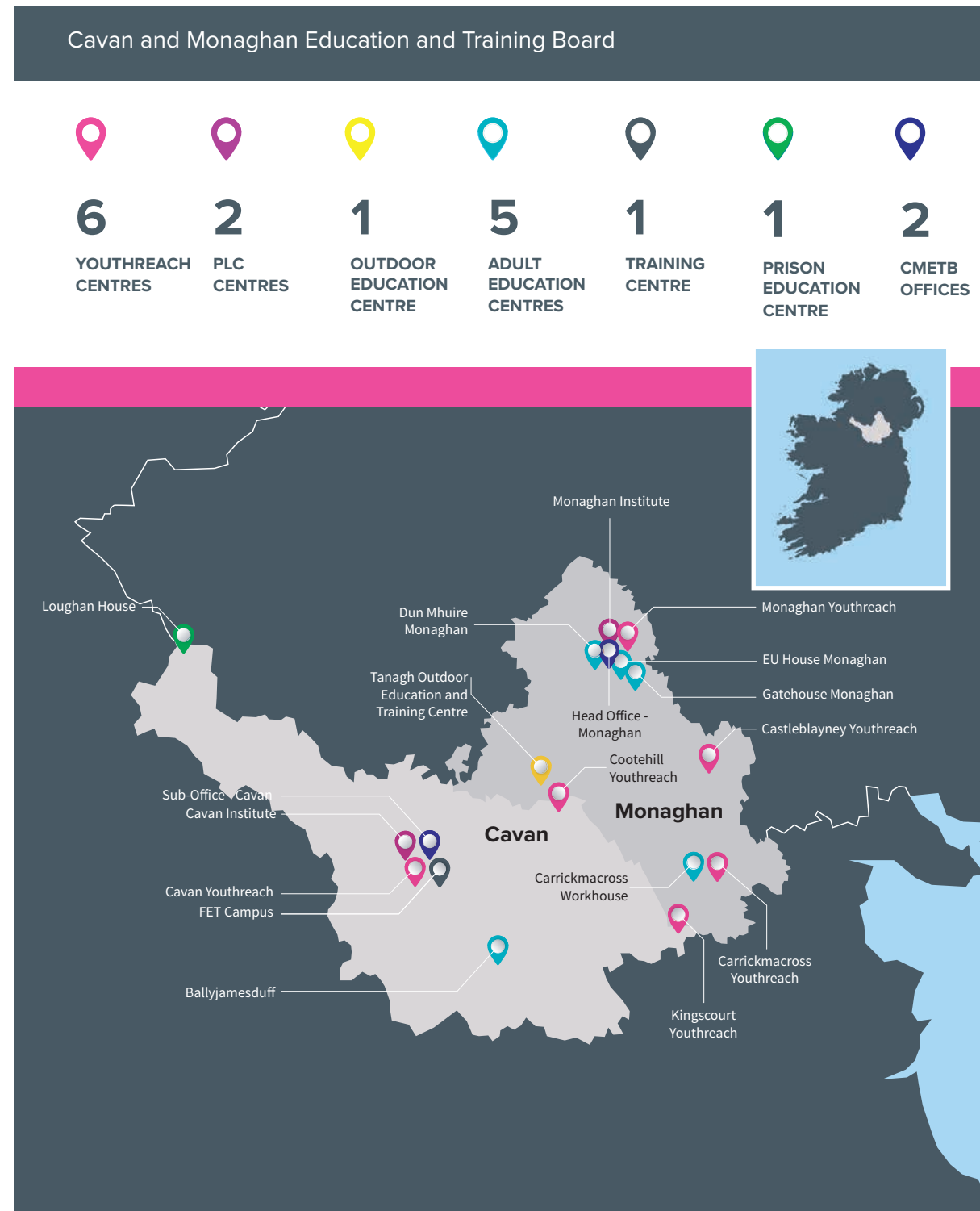
Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board (CMETB) was formally established in July 2013 upon enactment of the Education and Training Boards Act 2013. Operationalised through the merger of the two existing Vocational Education Committees (VECs) in Counties Cavan and Monaghan, CMETB successfully completed the transfer of the training function from Louth and Meath Education and Training Board (LMETB) in September 2015.

CMETB offers a broad range of education and training services to over 12,000 learners across eleven post-primary schools and fourteen Further Education and Training (FET) centres. CMETB also provides a range of youthwork services and is responsible for the delivery of the Music Generation¹ programme locally. The Garage Theatre, which incorporates a 289-seat auditorium, and Tanagh Outdoor Education and Training Centre also come under the remit of CMETB. In addition, CMETB also provides training at Loughan House Open Prison in association with the Irish Prison Service.

As one of the region's principal employers, employing over 1,300 full-time and part-time staff, CMETB plays a pivotal role in the economic and social life of the Cavan-Monaghan region, as well as the wider Border and North-East regions. Consequently, ongoing trust and confidence in the programmes and supports provided by CMETB is critical to its success and the success of the local, regional and national economies.

Led by the Director of FET, CMETB FET Services deliver a broad range of full-time and part-time programmes and supports to individuals over the age of sixteen via a network of centres as outlined in **Figure 1.1**.

¹ Music Generation is a national programme aimed at providing high-quality music education to help transform the lives of children and young people. For more information click [here](#).

Figure 1.1: Location of CMETB FET Services

In addition, CMETB works closely with a range of second providers as part of the wider delivery of FET programmes and services locally. These include three Local Training Initiatives (LTIs), contracted training and the National Learning Network (NLN). CMETB also provides a diverse range of community groups and employers with assistance across the Cavan-Monaghan region.

1.2 Economic and Geographical Context

Predominantly rural areas, the counties of Cavan and Monaghan straddle the border with Northern Ireland, acting as a key gateway to the North-West, the Midlands and the wider Dublin regions. This is facilitated by the region's strategic location on a number of important national arterial roads – the M1, M3, N2, N16 and N55.

Covering a combined area of 3,227Km², Cavan (1,932Km²) is ranked 19th and Monaghan (1,295Km²) 28th out of 32 counties in terms of size.²

With a combined population of 137,562³, Cavan (76,176) is the 8th smallest and Monaghan (61,386) the 5th smallest county by population. The population aged over 16 years of age in Cavan is 57,443 (75%)⁴ and in Monaghan is 46,583 (76%).⁵

15.84% of the population of County Cavan is concentrated around the Cavan Rural (10.86%) and Cavan Urban (4.96%) areas, while 14.07% of the population of County Monaghan is concentrated around the Monaghan Rural (10.12%) and Monaghan Urban (3.91%) areas.

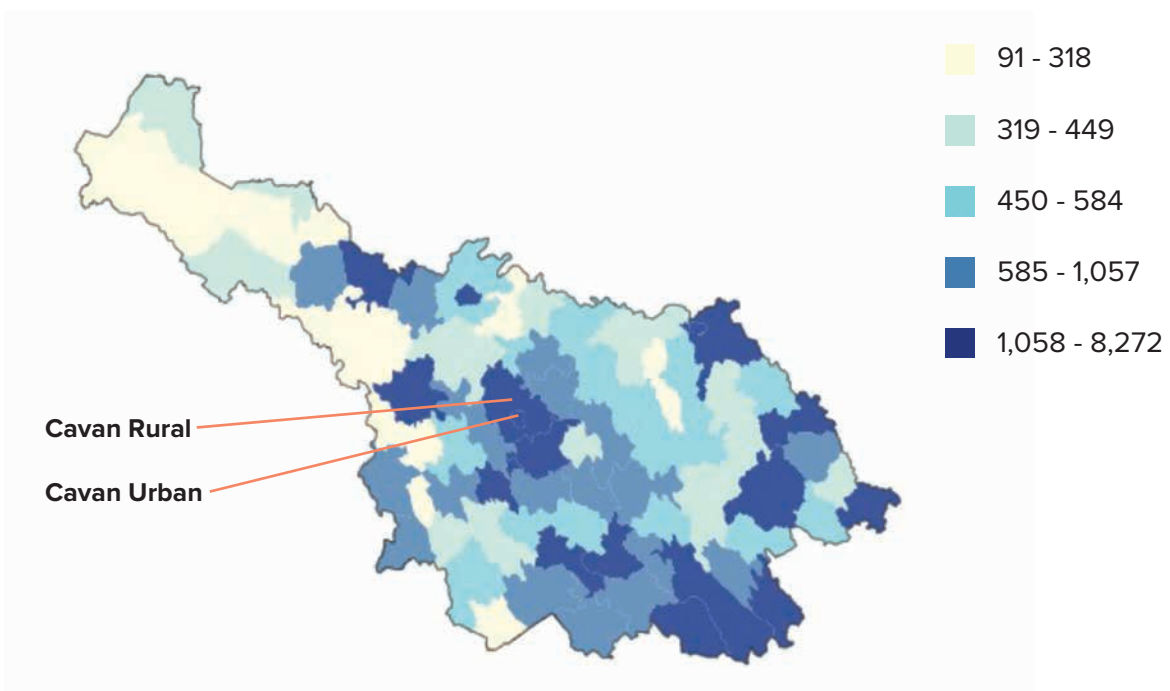
² 26 counties are located in the Republic of Ireland, with Northern Ireland comprised of six of the most northerly counties.

³ Central Statistics Office, Census 2016.

⁴ http://census.cso.ie/sapmap2016/Results.aspx?Geog_Type=CTY31&Geog_Code=2AE19629149D13A3E05500000000001#SAPMAP_T1_100

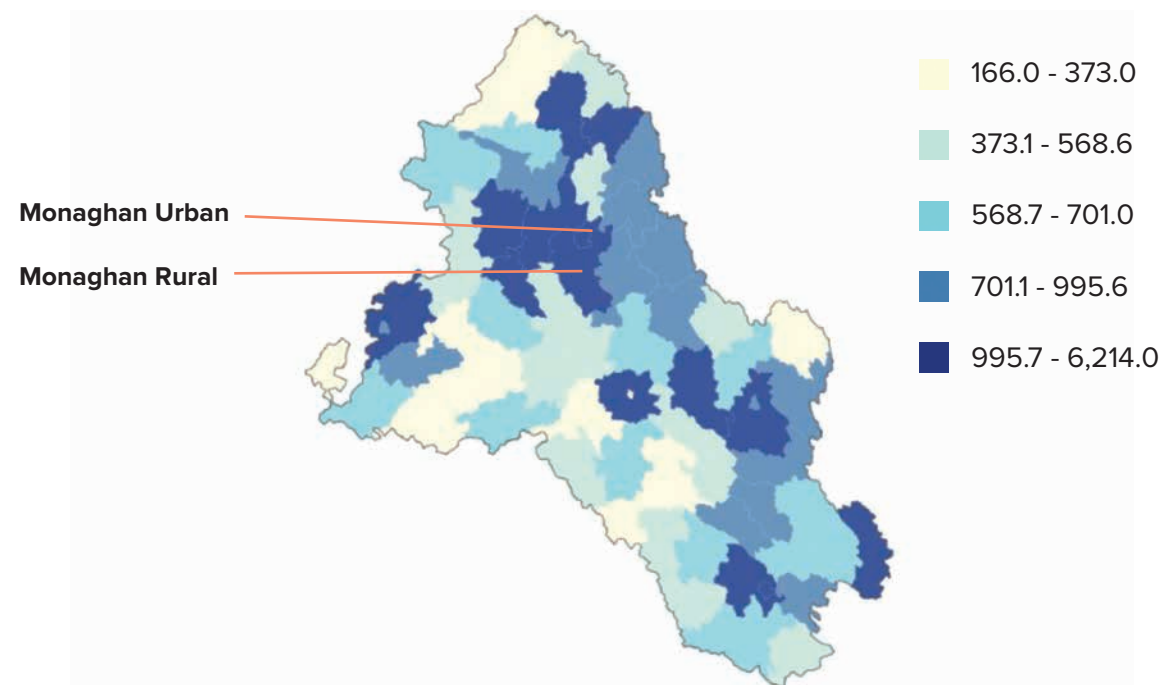
⁵ https://census.cso.ie/sapmap2016/Results.aspx?Geog_Type=CTY31&Geog_Code=2AE19629149513A3E05500000000001#SAPMAP_T1_100

Figure 1.2a: Population Density of County Cavan by Electoral Division (Census 2016)



Source: <http://airo.maynoothuniversity.ie/external-content/cavan>

Figure 1.2b: Population Density of County Monaghan by Electoral Division (Census 2016)



Source: <http://airo.maynoothuniversity.ie/external-content/monaghan>

Table 1.1 highlights the population of the five largest towns in counties Cavan and Monaghan.

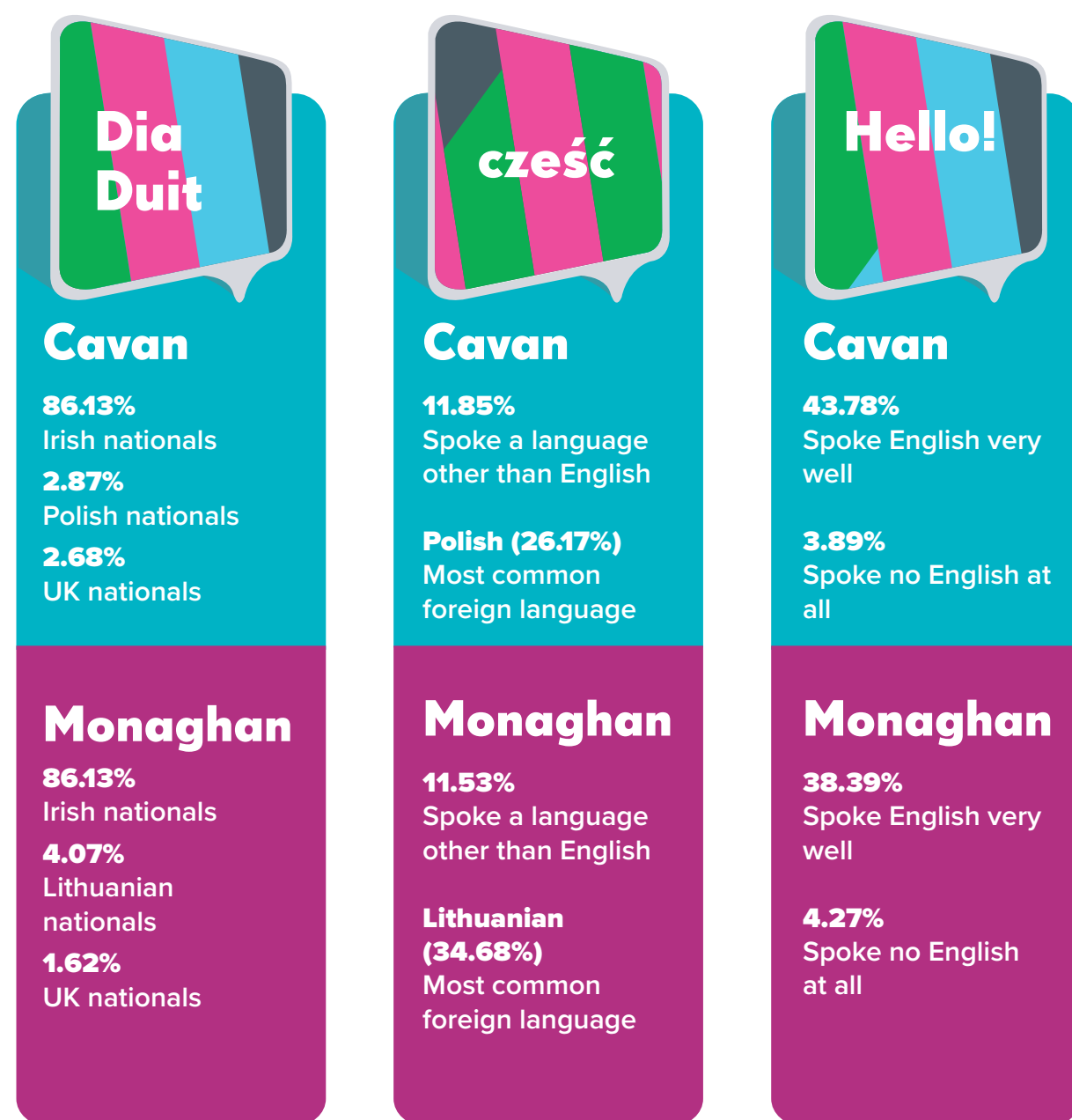
Table 1.1: Top 5 Largest Towns by Population⁶

County	Town	Population	% of Total
Cavan	Cavan	10,914	14.33%
Cavan	Bailieborough	2,683	3.52%
Cavan	Ballyjamesduff	2,661	3.49%
Cavan	Virginia	2,648	3.48%
Cavan	Kingscourt	2,499	3.28%
Total		21,405	28.10%
Monaghan	Monaghan	7,678	12.51%
Monaghan	Carrickmacross	5,032	8.20%
Monaghan	Castleblayney	3,607	5.88%
Monaghan	Clones	1,680	2.74%
Monaghan	Ballybay	1,241	2.02%
Total		19,238	31.35%

Figures 1.3 provides an overview of some key demographics of the Cavan-Monaghan Region.

⁶ Central Statistics Office, Census 2016.

Figure 1.3: Key Demographics of the Cavan-Monaghan Region



1.3 Education Levels

Of the population aged 15 years and over the highest levels of educational attainment by gender are denoted in [Table 1.2a](#).

Table 1.2a: Highest Level of Educational Attainment (15 years and over) by Gender⁷

Educational Level	County Cavan			County Monaghan			State		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
No formal education	675	507	1,182	560	438	998	28,296	23,918	52,214
Primary	4,413	2,939	7,082	3,239	2,559	5,798	175,603	158,681	334,284
Lower Secondary	4,904	3,362	8,266	4,510	2,999	7,509	243,128	206,638	449,766
Upper Secondary	4,090	4,720	8,810	3,499	3,677	7,176	268,675	304,968	573,643
Technical/ Vocational	2,547	3,075	5,622	1,665	2,119	3,784	122,938	148,594	271,532
Advanced Certificate/ Apprenticeship	2,344	1,196	3,540	1,593	872	2,465	119,588	62,730	182,318
Higher Certificate	986	1,542	2,528	667	1,169	1,836	66,290	87,061	153,351
Ordinary Degree/ National Diploma	1,352	1,820	3,172	1,022	1,525	2,547	106,692	130,425	237,117
Honours Degree/ Professional qualification or both	1,361	2,279	3,640	1,206	2,126	3,332	147,460	183,833	331,293
Postgraduate diploma/degree	908	1,647	2,555	707	1,391	2,098	119,676	164,431	284,107
Doctorate (Ph.D) or higher	79	58	137	50	64	114	16,016	12,743	28,759
Not stated	1,390	1,391	2,781	1,164	1,107	2,271	99,422	99,246	198,668
Total	24,779	24,536	49,315	19,882	20,046	39,928	1,513,784	1,583,268	3,097,052

⁷ Central Statistics Office, Census 2016.

Source: CSO, Census 2016

This data shows that 33.5% of those aged 15 years or over in County Cavan have lower secondary level or below, standard of education, while 35.8% represents the situation in County Monaghan. This compares to a national average of 27%.

Table 1.2b highlights the highest level of educational attainment of CMETB FET learners based on 2020 Management Information System (MIS) data, with 26.9% of FET learners having lower secondary level or below, standard of education.

Table 1.2b: Highest Educational Attainment of CMETB FET Learners, 2020

Education Type	Beneficiaries
No Formal Education	298
Primary Education	880
NFQ Level 1 or 2	50
NFQ Level 4	272
Junior Certificate	1,388
Transition Year	75
Leaving Certificate	3,190
PLC NFQ Level 4 or 5	2
NFQ Level 5	1,209
Higher Cert NFQ Level 6	310
Advanced Cert NFQ Level 6	426
Ordinary Bachelor Degree	520
Hons Bachelor Degree	443
Other non NFQ	70
Postgraduate	181
Professional Level 8+	160
Unknown	265
Total	9,739

1.4 Employment Trends

As of Quarter 3, 2020, the Border Region⁸, of which counties Cavan and Monaghan form part, accounted for 7.4% (169,500 individuals) of the total number of people employed across Ireland. The corresponding unemployment rate for the region was 6.9%. While this represented a significant reduction from an unemployment rate of 13.7% in Quarter 1, 2012, the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted considerably on employment levels across the Region. In real terms the cited unemployment rate of 6.9% represents an increase of 2,200 persons unemployed or a 1.4% increase across Quarters 1 to 3, 2020. This leaves the Border Region ranked as having the third highest unemployment rate in Ireland, alongside the Midlands region. Additionally, 15.4% of the labour force in the Border Region was in receipt of the Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP)⁹ in Quarter 3, 2020.

Based on Census 2016 data, there were 51,135 persons in the Cavan-Monaghan region in employment, with Professional Services (22.5%) and Commerce and Trade (20.3%) being the most prominent sectors. Equally, key growth sectors across the wider Border Region have been identified as Professional Services (26%) and Construction (16%) while Financial and Insurance activities recorded growth of 15% based on Gross Value Added (GVA)¹⁰ data published by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) in 2019.

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) accounted for 15.5% of the total employment in County Cavan in 2016 and 10.3% of the total employment in County Monaghan, the lowest rate nationally. Both of these are below the national average FDI rate of 16.8%. Manufacturing was the FDI sector with the highest employment across both counties.

According to Census 2016, there were three electoral districts in the Cavan-Monaghan region designated as unemployment blackspots¹¹ (**Table 1.3**).

⁸ The Border Region consisting of counties Cavan, Monaghan, Donegal, Sligo and Leitrim is a NUTS Level 3 region, straddling the border with Northern Ireland.

⁹ The Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP) is a support payment paid to employees and those in self-employment who have lost their jobs as a direct result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

¹⁰ Gross Value Added (GVA) is similar to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in that they both measure the added value to an economy by the production of goods and services.

¹¹ An unemployment blackspot is identified as an area where there are at least 200 people in employment, but the unemployment rate is 27% or higher.

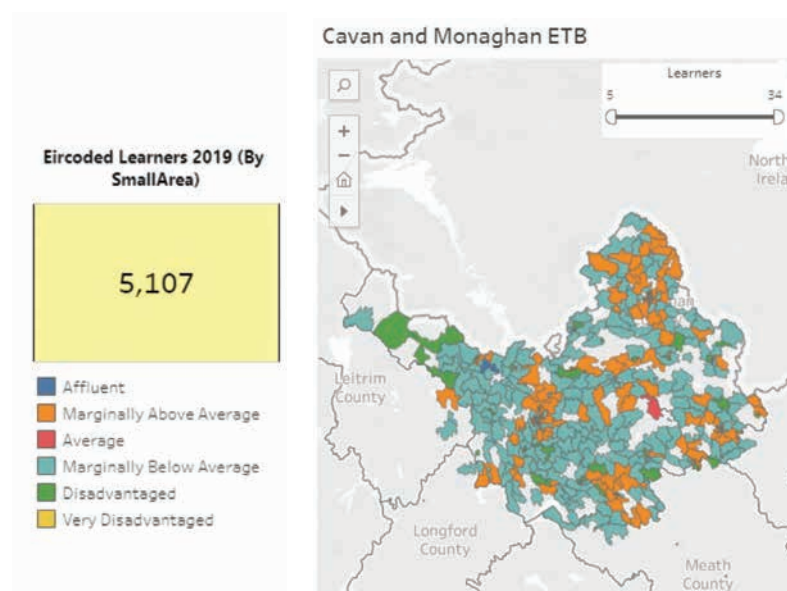
Table 1.3: Unemployment Blackspots – Cavan-Monaghan Region, 2016¹²

Electoral Division	Unemployment rate 2016
Cavan Urban (Cavan)	35.8%
Belturbet Urban (Cavan)	33.5%
Castleblayney Urban (Monaghan)	27.7%

1.5 Deprivation Levels

The 2016 HP Deprivation Index¹³ for County Cavan was -3.9 which is described as ‘marginally below average’ and making it the eighth most deprived county nationally. The County Monaghan score was -3.2 also ‘marginally below average,’ making it the eleventh most deprived county.

Figure 1.4, which contains data on the deprivation levels across the Cavan-Monaghan region, created by SOLAS based on 2019 learner data, further highlights that the Cavan-Monaghan region remains marginally below average.

Figure 1.4: Deprivation Index for CMETB Region, 2019¹⁴

Source: SOLAS

¹² Central Statistics Office, Census 2016.

¹³ The HP Deprivation Index, funded by POBAL and developed by Trutz Hasse and Jonathan Pratschke provides a measurement of overall affluence and deprivation levels.

¹⁴ This data is based on learners recorded on PLSS who provided an Eircode on their learner application.

This data points to a number of significant challenges facing the Cavan-Monaghan region; some of which will be referenced throughout this Self-Evaluation Report (SER). **Figure 1.5** points to some of the more pertinent challenges highlighted by various research initiatives undertaken by CMETB.

Figure 1.5: Main challenges facing Cavan-Monaghan Region

Equally, the data points to a number of opportunities for CMETB in terms of providing upskilling, reskilling and specific training supports, to include the enhancement and expansion of the range of programmes available to jobseekers, employers and those in employment, with a need for responses occurring in a proactive and timely manner.

CMETB is committed to working to reduce social isolation via the delivery of programmes and supports that promote inclusion and progression. The experiences of providing Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) in response to Covid-19 will be central to these continuing efforts.

Furthermore, the identification of needs, such as those outlined in **Figure 1.5**, coupled with CMETB's recent experiences and responses to the challenges posed by Covid-19 have been central in the development of the CMETB FET Strategy 2021 – 2024.

1.6 Impact of Brexit

Due to its location along the border with Northern Ireland, the Cavan-Monaghan region is particularly exposed to the UK's withdrawal from the European Union. Utilising Census 2016 data, IBEC, in 2017, formulated a list of those counties which have the highest proportion of workers in industries most exposed to the impact of Brexit. Counties Cavan and Monaghan topped this list at 28% and 27% respectively.¹⁵

Details emerging from the 'Border into Brexit' Report¹⁶, which emanated from a project co-ordinated by Queen's University Belfast in conjunction with the Irish Central Border Area Network (ICBAN), a consortium of eight local authorities.¹⁷ in the region, outlined the impact Brexit was already having on business and work in 2019, before the UK formally exited the European Union. The research reported that 1 in 10 respondents to a survey, which formed the basis of the report, described '*a change in business plans as a result of Brexit.*'¹⁸ There was also considerable evidence of a delay or cessation of investment or expansion by businesses within the local authority regions covered by the research. There is, in addition, also some uncertainty regarding the cross border currency of qualifications post-Brexit.

While it is still too early in the post-Brexit period to assess the full impact, CMETB remains ready to respond to emerging needs and continues to liaise closely with SOLAS, the North East Regional Skills Forum, the Department of Social Protection, employers, learners and other concerned stakeholders.

For example, CMETB has secured funding, as part of a €3 million investment for local projects under the Border Enterprise Development Fund¹⁹, to develop a new FET Centre of Excellence in Supply Chain Logistics and Procurement. This new centre will support business transformation and workskills development. In welcoming the announcement, CMETB Chief Executive, Mr John Kearney, stated that the development was '*not just timely but critical in the unprecedented national and global circumstances in which we find ourselves.*'

¹⁵ <https://www.independent.ie/business/brexit/cavan-monaghan-kerry-and-longford-most-exposed-to-brexit-36015583.html>

¹⁶ <https://www.qub.ac.uk/brexit/Brexitfilestore/Filetoupload,940194,en.pdf>

¹⁷ The eight local authorities of ICBAN are Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon, Fermanagh and Omagh, Mid-Ulster, Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Monaghan and Sligo.

¹⁸ <https://www.qub.ac.uk/brexit/Brexitfilestore/Filetoupload,940194,en.pdf>

¹⁹ The Border Enterprise Development Fund was announced in early 2020 as an economic stimulus package for the Border region to help address the labour market challenges arising out of Brexit, as well as the ongoing transition to a low carbon environment.



Finally, in terms of offering awards from UK based certifying bodies, CMETB is monitoring the impact of Brexit on existing arrangements and is endeavouring to be proactive in its response. For example, Cavan Institute is currently working on the development of a Level 6 Award in Audio and Music Production (AMP) to address a specific gap in existing provision and to reduce the impact of potential difficulties, arising from Brexit.

1.7 Impact of Covid-19

The Covid-19 adjusted unemployment rate for April 2021 stood at 22.4%, down from 25% in January 2021, inclusive of persons in receipt of the PUP.²⁰

The wholesale and retail, construction, accommodation and food sectors have been the hardest hit by the pandemic, and with considerable numbers working across these sectors, CMETB needs to be in a position to support these companies and their employees to avail of upskilling and/or reskilling supports.

With regard to the accommodation and food sector, CMETB, along with other ETBs, is responding in a timely and proactive manner to SOLAS, the Irish Hotel Federation and Fáilte Ireland's new skills programme *initiative*. This project, through the delivery of the City and Guilds Level 4 Diploma in Hospitality Management, is aimed at assisting the hospitality and tourism sectors to ensure they are ready to reopen as Ireland emerges from Covid-19. Some of the local hotels involved include the Nuremore Hotel, The Glencarn, Hotel Kilmore and The Slieve Russell.

²⁰ Central Statistics Office, 2021.

2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY



2.1 Overview

CMETB formally commenced the process of preparing for this inaugural review in February 2020 with the appointment of a Research and Evaluation Facilitator to co-ordinate the various stages of the review process including the preparation of this SER in association with the Quality Assurance (QA) Team. In addition, a Self-Evaluation Steering Group, chaired by the Director of FET, was established to *'provide oversight and governance of the internal review of CMETB's quality assurance processes.'*²¹ The Steering Group's membership includes representatives of all CMETB FET Services, as well as Senior Management, nominees from the Human Resources (HR), Finance, Information Technology (IT), Communications and Compliance Departments. In order to provide additional breadth and insight, other key internal and external stakeholders were also represented with learner and employer representatives included in the membership. The Steering Group's Terms of Reference are provided in **Appendix 1**.

2.2 Consultation Process

Comprehensive consultation activity took place in preparation of this SER with a broad range of internal and external stakeholders engaged in the process. It was agreed, however, that both the QA Working Group and the FET Management and Quality Council would act as the key conduits for consultation on the development of the SER. This was to ensure that the fully constituted Steering Group, once convened, could add meaningful support and value to the process. The fully constituted Steering Group met on 7th May 2021 to review and recommend the Provider Profile to the FET Management and Quality Council for approval and submission to QQI. Further meetings took place on 28th May and 11th June 2021 to review and recommend the SER for approval.

²¹ CMETB Self-Evaluation Steering Group Terms of Reference.

In the context of Covid-19, the QA Working Group and FET Management and Quality Council played a critical role in ensuring the development of the SER remained on track despite the numerous challenges that the pandemic posed.

To help ensure a sufficiently broad and inclusive approach to the consultation process, a wide range of primary and secondary data sources were engaged.

Figure 2.1a: Primary Methodologies Employed

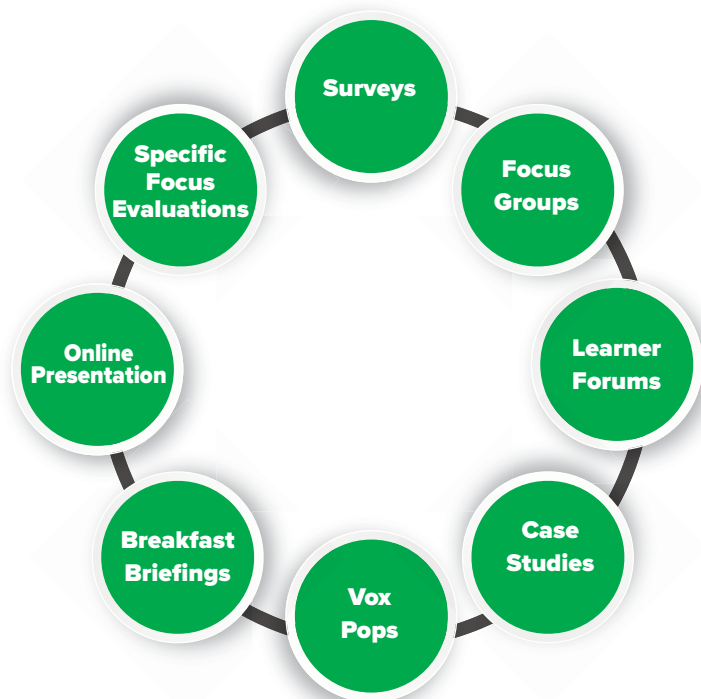


Figure 2.1b: Secondary Methodologies Employed

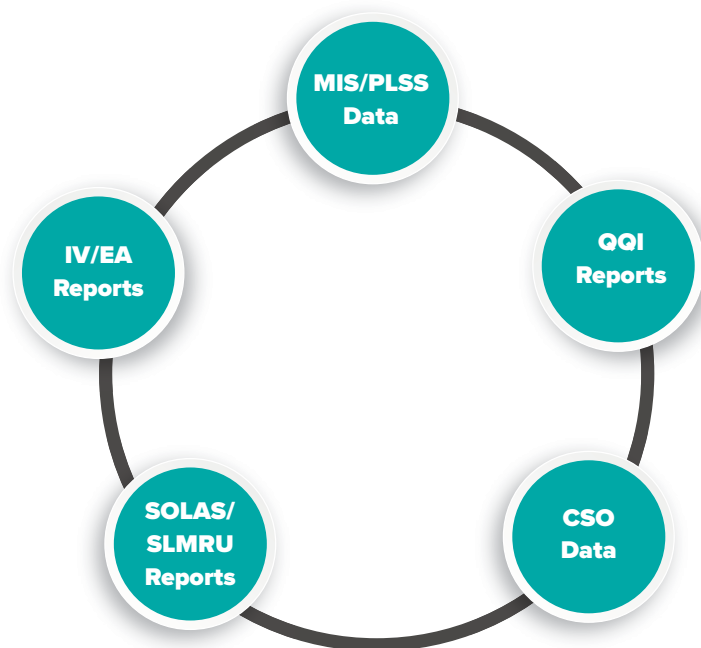
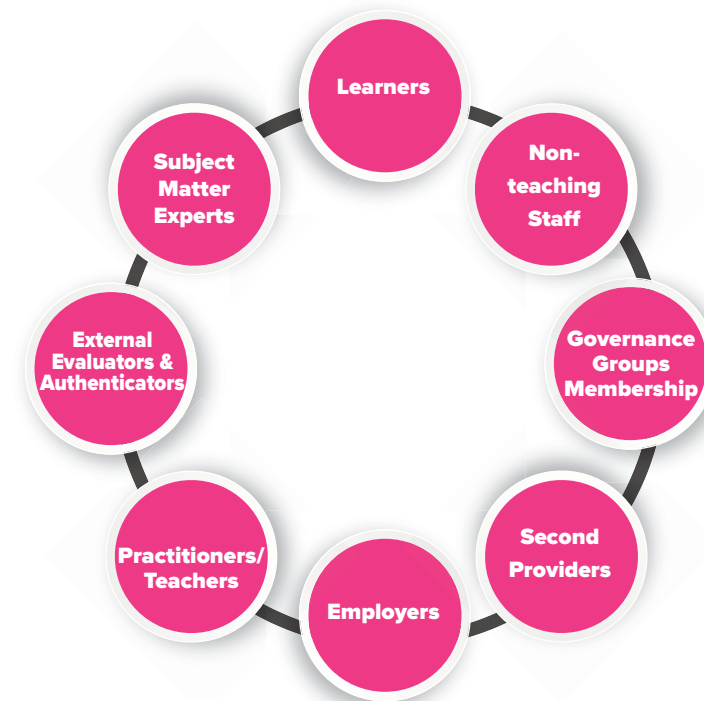


Figure 2.2: Internal and External Stakeholders Engaged

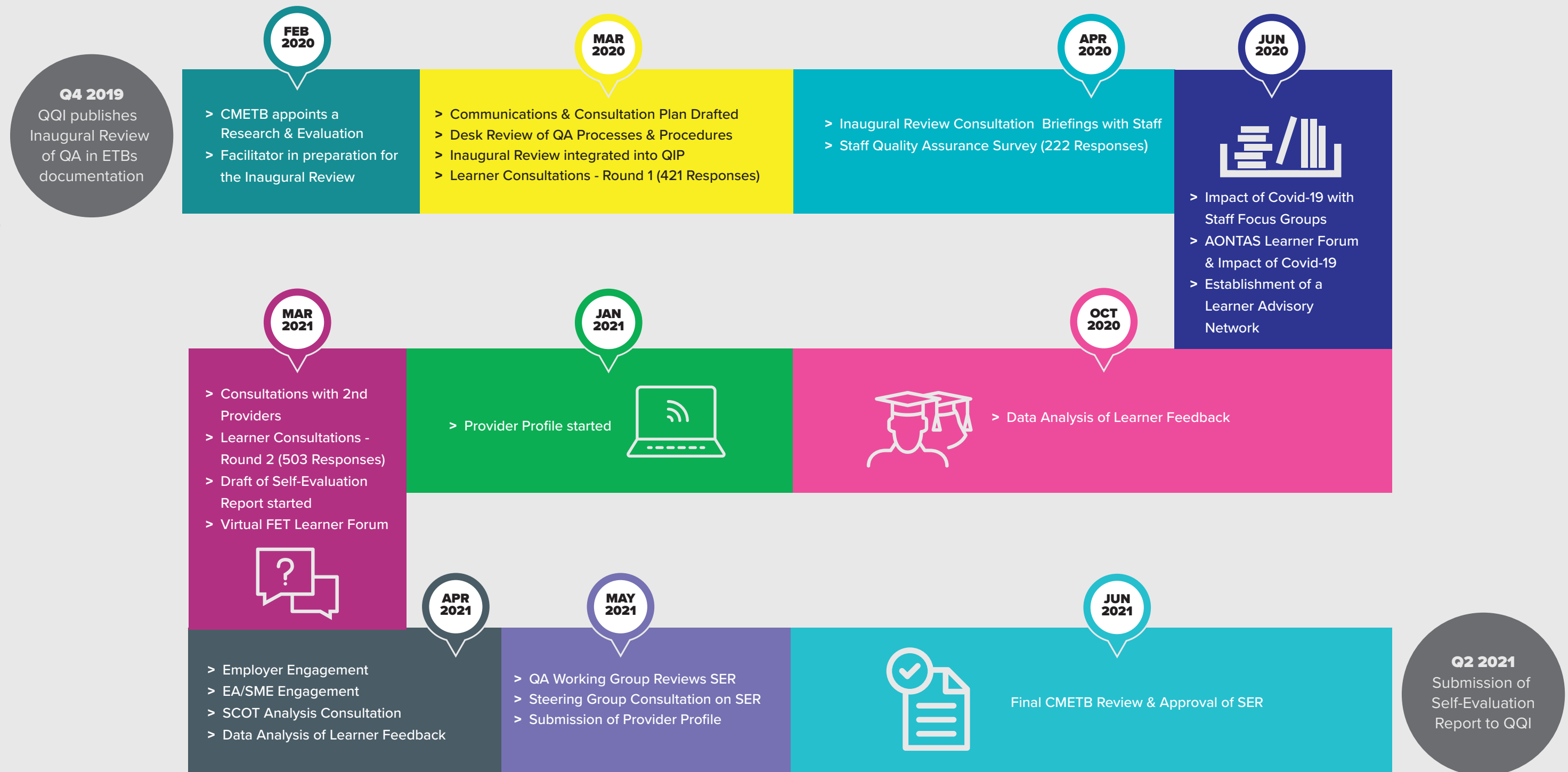


In parallel with this, a staff consultation event was held in April 2021 which resulted in the development of a SCOT²² analysis for each of the 15 key areas²³ addressed in this SER. This event was attended by members of the QA governance groups, the Chief Executive and the Director of FET, along with representatives of the Compliance, Corporate Services, Finance, Guidance, HR, IT, Land and Buildings and Procurement Departments.

²² Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities and Threats.

²³ As outlined in the Inaugural Review Handbook.

2.3 Inaugural Review Timeline



2.4 Structure of the Self-Evaluation Report

This SER was drafted by CMETB's Research and Evaluation Facilitator in conjunction with the QA Team, QA Working Group, Self-Evaluation Steering Group and the FET Management and Quality Council. The report was reviewed and recommended for approval by the Steering Group on 11th June 2021 before receiving final approval from the FET Management and Quality Council and Chief Executive on 22nd June 2021.

The report is divided into **seven chapters** as follows:



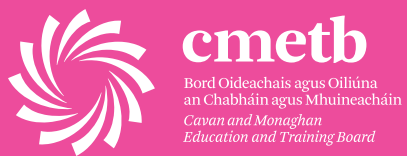
Chapters 3 to 6 are structured in line with a 5Is framework to ensure evaluative depth whilst providing sufficient description:

	1 Information Description of the topic/area under consideration.
	2 Insights Outline of the effectiveness of practices relevant to topic/area.
	3 Impact Analysis/case studies supporting the evaluation of the effectiveness of the practices identified.
	4 Issues Challenges and threats impacting the effectiveness of practices.
	5 Implementation Considerations for further application.

In terms of populating each of the sections, the SCOT analysis, conducted at the staff consultation event in April 2021, was pivotal in highlighting key areas and prioritising future Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), while additional and supporting evidence was drawn from the various primary and secondary data gathered throughout the review process.

Finally, through the application of the 5Is framework throughout Chapters 3 to 6, a total of 82 implementation actions have been identified and converted in KPIs, in **Chapter 7**, using a Horizon Timeline.

3 GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY



3.1. CMETB's Mission and Strategy

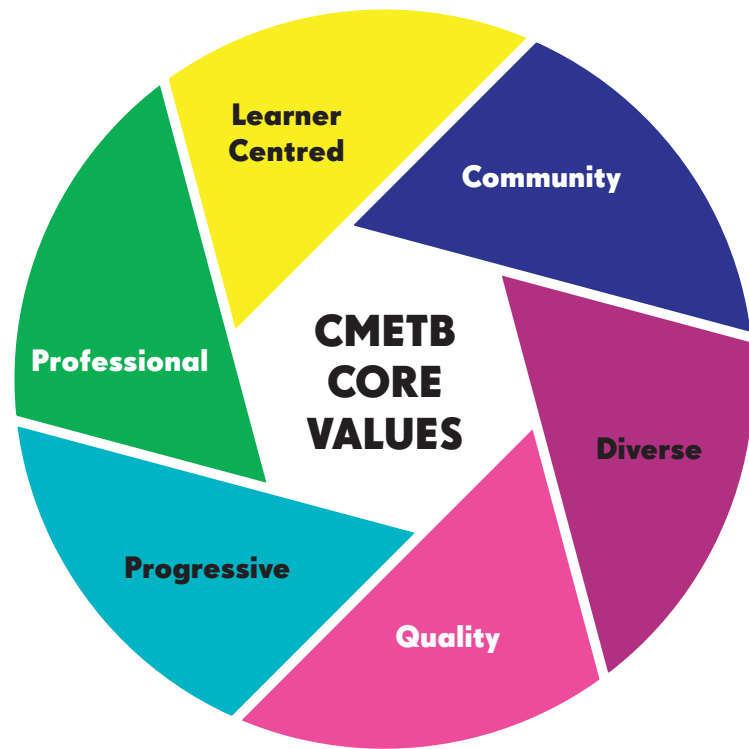


3.1.1. Information on CMETB's Mission and Strategy



CMETB has also developed a number of **core values** which apply across the entire organisation.

Figure 3.1: CMETB's Core Values



Underpinned by its mission, vision and core values, **CMETB's Statement of Strategy 2017 – 2021** is a shared document that sets out key strategic actions and targets for each of the three pillars under which CMETB operates – Organisational Support and Development (OSD), Schools and Further Education and Training (FET). The result of a consultation process with staff, learners and a range of internal and external stakeholders, this strategy maps out CMETB's strategic direction up to 2021.

Specifically, in relation to FET, the strategic objectives set out are further developed in **CMETB's FET Strategy 2017 – 2021**. While many of the strategic priorities set out in this strategy remain relevant, the publication of the new **National FET Strategy 2020 – 2024**²⁴ meant that these existing priorities were out of sync with revised national priorities and enabling themes focused on the attainment of the *FET College of the Future*.

Consequently, CMETB opted to be proactive in developing a new **FET Strategy 2021 – 2024**, bringing its strategic objectives into line with the *FET College of the Future* agenda. Equally, ongoing critical events within the wider economy, such as the evolving Brexit and Covid-19 situations, acted as opportune junctures to pause and reflect on strategic objectives and where CMETB needs to be to effectively support the economic and social recovery of the Cavan-Monaghan region in a post-Brexit, post-pandemic environment.

²⁴ To access the SOLAS FET Strategy 2020 – 2024 please click [here](#).

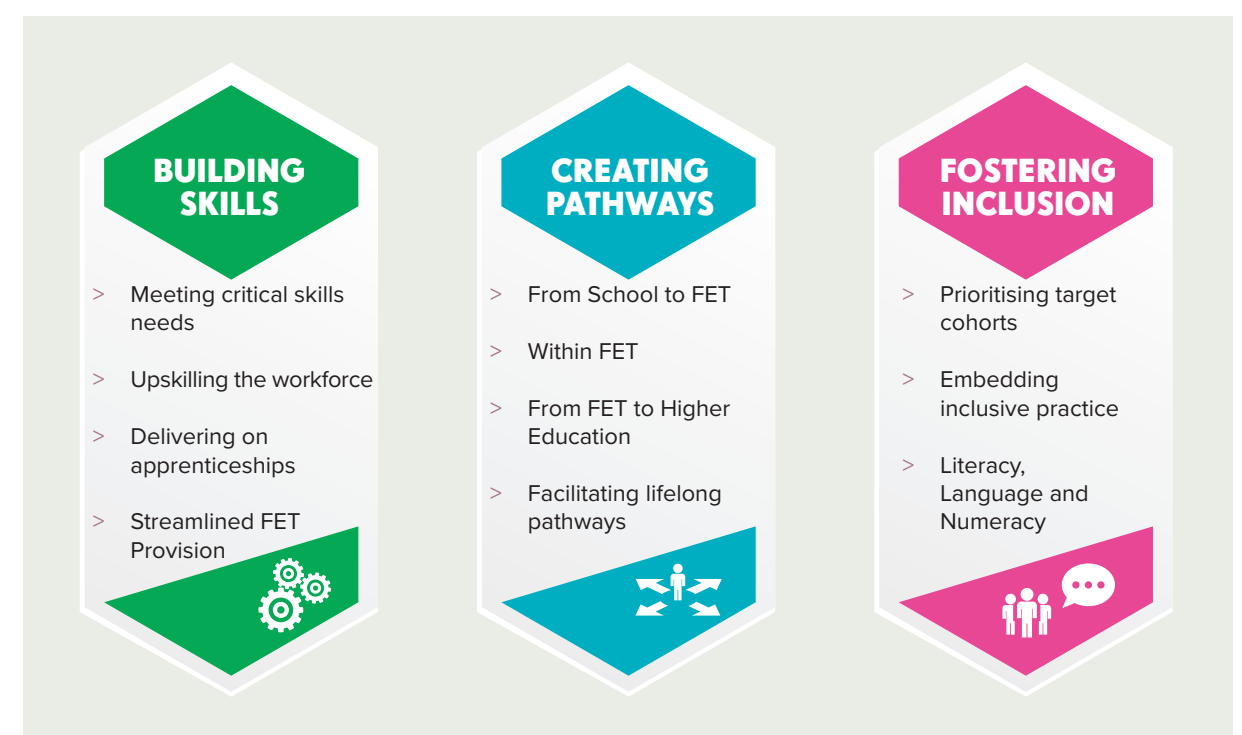
CMETB's new FET Strategy is structured around three core strategic pillars, as outlined in the National FET Strategy.

Figure 3.2. CMETB FET Services Strategic Pillars 2021 – 2024



Within these strategic pillars are a series of key strategic priorities.

Figure 3.3: CMETB FET Services Strategic Priorities 2021 – 2024



In addition, CMETB has identified a number of specific, targeted actions aimed at operationalising these strategic priorities. While the strategy is currently being finalised²⁵, examples of these actions have been outlined in **Table 1** in the **Profile of CMETB Further Education and Training Provision**. Consultation with all FET Services, via a Strategy Working Group chaired by the Director of FET, aided and informed the development of these actions.



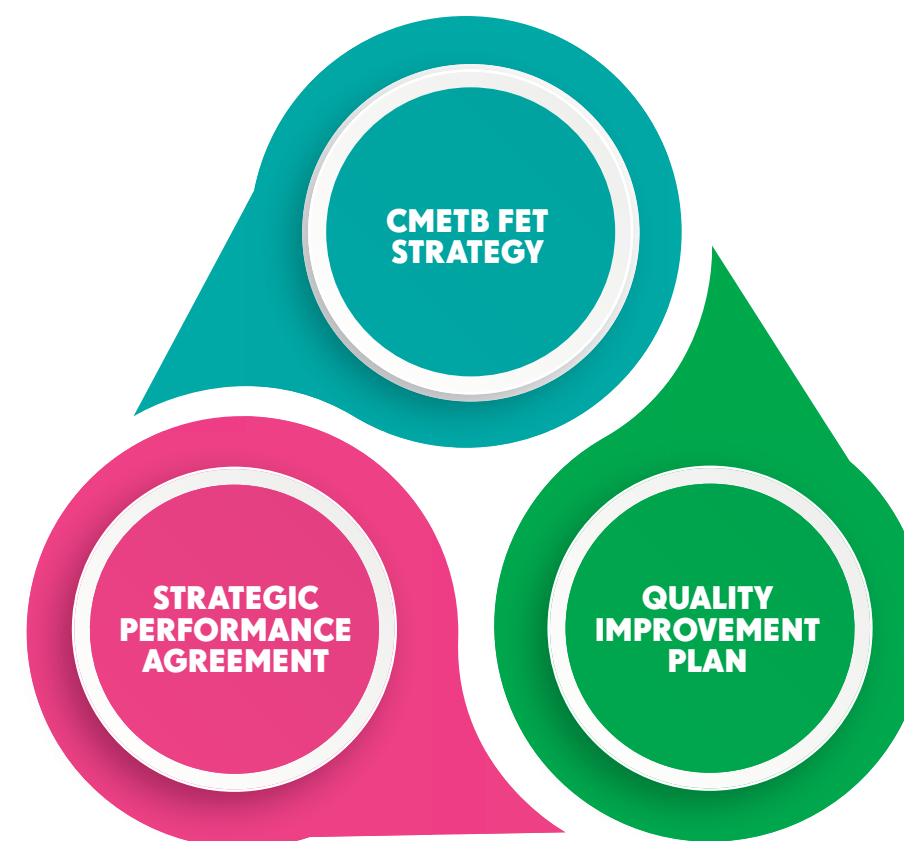
3.1.2. Insights into CMETB's Mission and Strategy

In engendering the philosophy that *'quality is the responsibility of all,'* CMETB is acutely aware of the importance of creating a culture of quality at all levels of the organisation. This philosophy is to the forefront of how CMETB operates on a daily basis as espoused through its mission, vision and core values. This commitment to, and focus on quality, is further instilled in CMETB's dedicated QA mission statement. This vision is operationalised through the QA Team's structure as a dedicated FET-wide support, with its role concentrated on enabling each service to manage its own quality provision, thereby maximising the impact of the subsidiarity principle.

This is being actively achieved through the QA Team's focus on supporting the development of an integrated QA system across FET. The methodology being employed is one of collaboration, with ongoing support, participation and co-operation from all centres and services fundamental to its long-term adoption and success.

This approach also feeds into ongoing efforts at embedding a quality culture, with CMETB's FET Strategy, **Strategic Performance Agreement** (SPA)²⁶ and **Quality Improvement Plan** (QIP) acting as key conduits for the achievement of the organisational and QA mission statements, vision and core values.

Figure 3.4: Integration of Key Strategies, Agreements and Plans



The proactive development of a new CMETB FET Strategy highlights an enhanced level of strategic and operational development, spurred on by the introduction of the SPAs. Forming part of a new strategic dialogue process between SOLAS and ETBs, the SPAs ushered in a new era of collective attainment of key sectoral targets across the 16 ETBs. CMETB had a positive experience of implementing its SPA in its first year of operation²⁷ and hopes to maintain this positivity for the duration of its FET Strategy.

Additional evidence of this greater level of strategic and operational development can be garnered from the re-engagement process with QQI, which CMETB successfully completed in May 2018. As part of this process, an **Executive Self-Evaluation Report** (ESER) was developed with the expressed purpose of evaluating the governance and management of QA systems within CMETB FET Services. The end result of this process was the development of a more integrated governance structure, better aligned to CMETB's strategic priorities and more suited to the organisation's current level of complexity.

²⁵ Once finalised, the new CMETB FET Strategy 2021 – 2024 will be published on www.cmetb.ie.

²⁶ To access CMETB's Strategic Performance Agreement, click [here](#).

²⁷ The implementation of the SPA was impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

This process also supported the development of an ongoing Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), which utilised the ESER as a baseline for assessment attainment which was built upon in 2019 and subsequent years. Designed as a progress monitoring system, the QIP highlights CMETB's commitment to the systematic collection of data to ensure outputs remain firmly aligned to strategic priorities. The adoption of a traffic lighting system in the QIP, which covers a two-year period, aids the quarterly review process, while affirming CMETB's commitment to continuous improvement.



3.1.3. Impact of CMETB's Mission and Strategy

Key documents in their own right, the synergies between its FET Strategy, SPA, ESER and QIP have been critical to CMETB FET Services development as a more integrated and strategically focused service.

In its methodical gathering and analysis of data, in pursuit of its strategic priorities, CMETB aims to ensure an appropriate balance between qualitative and quantitative data. The benefit of key platforms such as PLSS, MIS and QQI certification data, along with other relevant data instruments is enshrined in CMETB's FET Strategy 2021 – 2024 as part of the learner and performance-centred enabling theme, one of four enabling themes underpinning the strategy. CMETB's efforts in this regard have been greatly enhanced through the creation of a dedicated Data Reporting Officer role, which sits within the QA Team.

The impact of CMETB's effort can be further assessed from the results of learner surveys conducted in 2020 and 2021.

Figure 3.5: Would you recommend CMETB to others?



When asked to give reasons for their answer, a study of key words points to success for CMETB in achieving its strategic priorities while remaining true to its mission, vision and core values. Some of the recurring key words across both years include:



Coupled with the breadth of responses received to the learner surveys, this points to CMETB leading and delivering excellence in education and training for all in a professional, inclusive and innovative manner – the epitome of its mission, vision and core values. Finally, the consistency of results across both learner surveys highlight CMETB's commitment to its dedicated QA mission of enabling learner-centred education and training that consistently conforms to the highest national standards.



3.1.4. Issues Affecting CMETB's Mission and Strategy

While the evidence points at success for CMETB FET in achieving its mission, vision, core values and strategic priorities, there were a number of challenges facing CMETB, that were brought to the fore by the research.

1. Consequences of economic and public health events

The threat and disruption posed by Brexit and Covid-19 present numerous challenges. With the trajectory of both situations remaining volatile, CMETB needs to remain cognisant of their potential disruptive impact on the attainment of key strategic priorities and flexible in its response.

In particular, a consequential economic downturn could negatively impact funding of key actions outlined in CMETB's FET Strategy 2021 – 2024, thereby curtailing the ability to respond to critical needs in a timely manner. The net result could be negative public perceptions of CMETB, as well as a perceived lack of fulfilment of strategic objectives. Ongoing data analysis will be critical in managing issues and recalibrating strategic directions as required.

2. Changing world of work

While the world of work has evolved rapidly over the past decade, Covid-19 has accelerated this transformation significantly.

With remote working now the norm for office-based situations or for certain sectors, and with the wholesale and retail, construction, accommodation and food sectors most impacted, CMETB needs to be responsive to emerging upskilling and reskilling needs.

Remote working also directly impacts the viability of securing work placements for learners and highlights a growing need to be creative through, for example, the use of workplace simulations.

3. Evolution of teaching and learning

When Covid-19 hit, CMETB had to rapidly move to ERT to ensure continuity of service.

While these measures were designed to be temporary, blended and online learning will become key features moving forward. CMETB, therefore, needs to respond to new ways of working, teaching and learning to effectively meet post-pandemic economic and societal needs. For example, the development of a robust blended learning framework will ensure that the commitment to embedding a culture of quality is not compromised.

4. FET College of the Future

SOLAS' FET Strategy 2020 – 2024 promotes achievement of a Future FET Strategic Framework entitled '*FET College of the Future.*' While CMETB's FET Strategy 2021 – 2024 aims to work towards the attainment of this new model, there is a recognition that additional human, financial and capital resources will be required for successful realisation of a CMETB FET College of the Future. A balance of human resources with the requisite skills is a key enabler and challenge for CMETB in realising this vision.

5. Using strategic data to support equality

CMETB has invested significantly in the collation and analysis of key data metrics to support strategic implementation. Moreover, while CMETB strives to strike a balance between quantitative and qualitative data, it also needs to ensure that such data analysis does not become process driven or narrowly focused. For example, there is a growing need to strengthen the collation and reporting of non-binary data to support equality and diversity, whilst retaining a balance between quantitative and qualitative data.

Under Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014, in particular The Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty, CMETB, as a public body, is obliged to eliminate discrimination, promote equality and protect the human rights of all staff, learners and service users. Consequently, CMETB is required to incorporate its obligations in this regard into its statements of strategy and annual reports, while ensuring accessibility to the public. The collation and reporting of the data above will ensure that CMETB has the insight and knowledge of needs and requirements of stakeholders and the community it services, allowing it to ensure that the public sector duty is fulfilled.



3.1.5. Implementation Points Relating to CMETB's Mission and Strategy

CMETB has identified a number of enhancement opportunities in support of its mission, vision, core values and strategic priorities.

1. Development of the new CMETB FET Strategy 2021 – 2024 provides an opportunity for CMETB to review its QIP to ensure it remains aligned to overall strategic priorities. This SER is timely and is feeding this process.
2. Enabling themes which underpin strategic priorities provide an opportunity to strike a balance between centre/service level and ETB level activity as CMETB moves towards an integrated FET College of the Future. This will be monitored quantitatively and qualitatively.
3. The Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty, now a statutory requirement, provides CMETB with an opportunity to foster a shared understanding of its mission, vision, core values and strategic priorities by ensuring they promote equality and diversity. The recently established Equality and Human Rights Group can help in this regard.
4. The experience of ERT has provided an opportunity to revise teaching and learning methodologies to ensure that the most vulnerable and isolated learners can access suitable provision and supports. Developing a robust blended learning framework will allow CMETB to increase its learner base across traditional geographic boundaries, aiding the achievement of key strategic priorities.

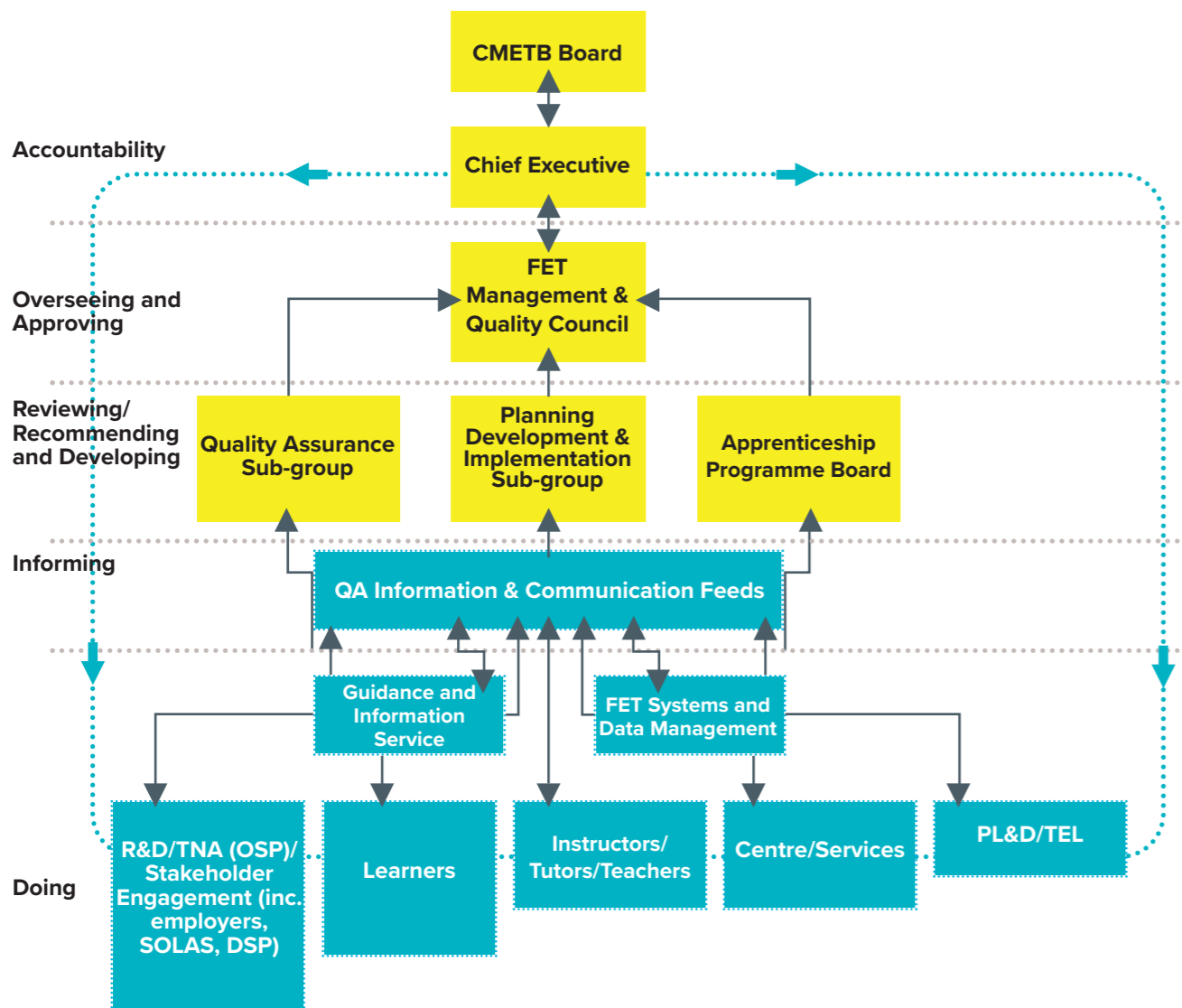
3.2. Structure and Terms of Reference for Governance and Management of Quality



3.2.1. Information on the Governance and Management of Quality

Following successful re-engagement with QQI in May 2018, CMETB set about updating its FET governance structures. In place since early 2019, these governance structures enforce the separation of responsibility at all levels of management as evidenced in **Figure 3.6**.

Figure 3.6: Separation of responsibility in CMETB's QA governance system



While ensuring the segregation of duties, these structures also highlight that quality is the responsibility of all within CMETB and not a duty that is vested in one department or group of individuals.

With the Chief Executive accountable to the CMETB Board, much of the developmental work occurs at the 'overseeing and approving' and 'reviewing/recommending and developing' levels. This developmental work is then operationalised on a day-to-day basis at the 'doing' level.

Figure 3.7: How sub-groups feed the overall governance structure



The Terms of Reference for each of these groups are included in **Appendix 2**.

In support of this governance structure, FET managers report to the Director of FET, who is assisted in the management and oversight of quality by the QA Team. The QA Team has been fully operational since November 2017, although it was initially established in August 2015.

The current QA Team is resourced as follows:

Figure 3.8: CMETB QA Team Structure



While these roles are broad and constantly evolving to meet organisational needs, the QA Team’s objectives are to:

1. Provide QA guidance and assistance to all CMETB FET services in programme, design, implementation, evaluation and review,
2. Provide QA supports to Training Services,
3. Provide development and management support across FET centres with a view to integrating QA policies and procedures across all services,
4. Lead quality enhancements in programme provision,
5. Underpin good governance, supported by robust policies, procedures and guidelines.



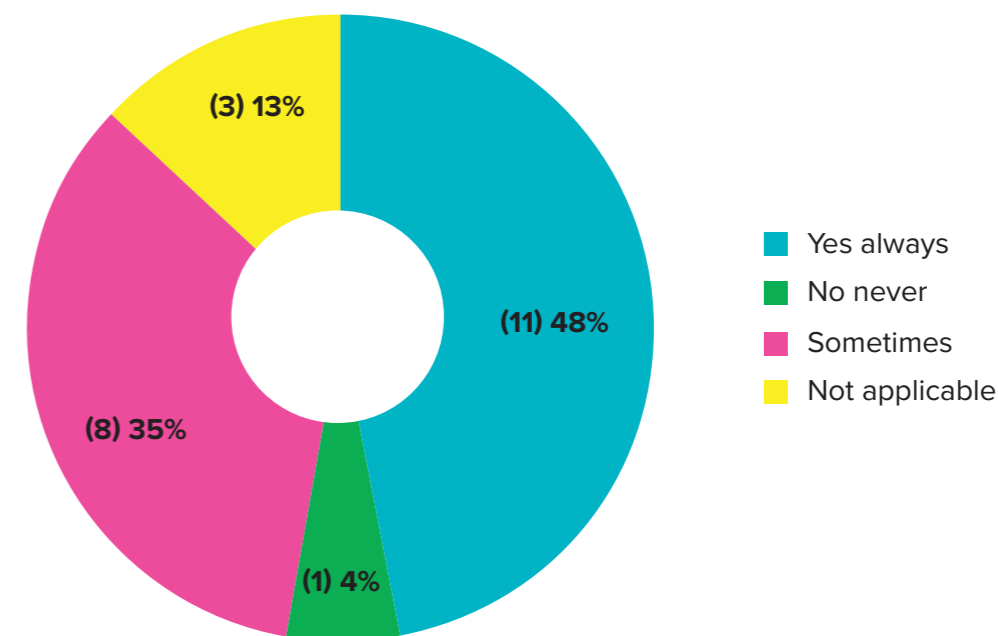
3.2.2. Insights into the Management and Governance of Quality

In terms of gaining insight into the operation and achievements of the FET governance system, a review was carried out in March 2020, one year on from the system’s initial establishment.

An online survey was circulated to the membership of the FET Management and Quality Council, QA Sub-group and PDI Sub-group. (The Apprenticeship Programme Board was not fully operational at this time.) 96% (23 out of 24 members) responded, representing 100% of those available to participate.

96% (22 members) felt that they were in the right group based on their skills set, with one member unsure if they were in the most appropriate governance group. Furthermore, conscious of CMETB’s wider promotion of the philosophy that *quality is the responsibility of all*, the survey gathered data regarding the sharing of information emanating from these governance groups. **Figure 3.9** highlights the range of responses received.

Figure 3.9: Are you cascading the information you gather at these meetings to your staff?



In the case of the one member who stated that they never cascaded information back, they did not have any management responsibilities. However, since the survey was anonymous it was not possible to identify this person and establish if they reported information back to their line manager for onward dissemination.

At a follow-up face-to-face engagement session, governance group members were asked to describe what governance meant to them 12 months following initial establishment of the new governance structures. A **Vox Pop** was recorded to capture this feedback and can be accessed here. A visual representation of the main responses is provided in **Figure 3.10**.

Figure 3.10: What does governance mean to you?



As part of this engagement, members of the governance groups were asked to review the Terms of Reference for their respective groups and to make suggestions/recommendations for strengthening these documents. They were also asked to identify any particular skill sets that may be missing from their group.

In terms of amending the Terms of Reference, proposed changes were minor in nature and related to the clarification of roles and the removal of duplication in some of the stated functions. Regarding missing skills sets, the need to include learner representation on the QA Sub-group and industry and future skills representatives on the PDI Sub-group was articulated. In addition, the FET Management and Quality Council agreed that there was merit in having access to HR, compliance and/or financial expertise at appropriate times where interdependent issues were being considered.



3.2.3. Impact of Governance and Management of Quality

In terms of measuring the impact of the governance structures on the management of quality, the governance survey asked governance group members to identify three key achievements of their respective groups over their first 12 months in operation. These can be summarised as leading to:



Table 3.1 further summarises the range of achievements highlighted.

Table 3.1: Key achievements of CMETB governance groups, 2019 - 2020

PDI Sub-group	QA Sub-group	FET Management & Quality Council
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> CMETB Staff induction pilot programme 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Standardised assessment process: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> External Authentication (EA) shared response Focus on Results Approval Process (RAP) Identifying good practice and innovative projects Documenting process around EA selection 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Information sharing: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Open discussion e.g. re. duplication Updates from other subgroups Introduction of MS Teams information sharing platform Discussions affecting all services
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Stronger Communications: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of PLSS & MIS Reports Service awareness through service updates Information sharing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Standardised assessment policies 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Effective oversight: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) Review Review of EA reports Attention to centre operational issues Monitoring MIS data

PDI Subgroup	QA Sub-group	FET Management & Quality Council
d. Sharing good practice e. Problem solving f. Identifying risks and duplication g. Introduction of MS Teams as a shared, easy to access platform.		
3. New Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) role and TEL workshops	3. Development of QA Risk Register	3. Development of QA Risk Register
4. New programme approval leading to increased choice of programmes	4. Approval of new programmes, i.e. OEM National Apprenticeship	4. Engagement with SOLAS' Strategic Performance Agreement (SPA)
5. PLC Access Programme for Youthreach learners	5. Introduction of MS Teams to aid paperless meetings	5. Implementation of PLSS

In terms of creating awareness of the governance structures amongst all FET staff, a number of initiatives were undertaken:

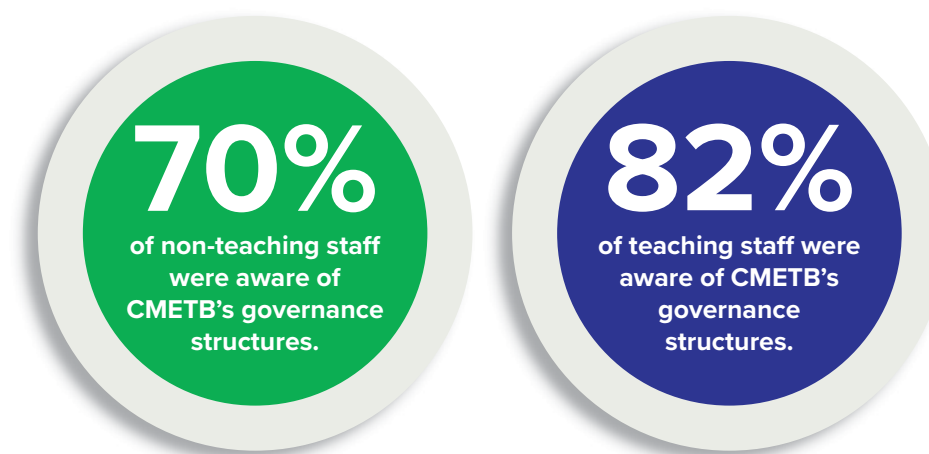
1. CMETB FET governance presentation

A **governance presentation**, describing CMETB's approach to the management of quality and the structure of its governance system, was recorded and made available to all FET staff. To date this presentation has received 217 unique views. With a total of 382 FET staff, this means that 57% of staff engaged with this presentation. In addition, following their viewing of the presentation, staff were requested to complete a short quiz, aimed at checking their understanding of the content of the presentation. 190 FET staff, or 88% of staff accessing the presentation, completed the quiz with an average score of 48.9 out of 60 recorded. This clearly demonstrates a high level of engagement from FET staff in terms of building awareness of the governance system. It also shows that CMETB is having success in highlighting that quality is the responsibility of all, thereby embedding a robust culture of quality.

2. FET Staff Survey

A FET staff survey was conducted in May 2020 and the results provide some further insights into the impact of CMETB's governance and management of quality.

Circulated to all FET teaching and non-teaching staff, a total of 222 responses were recorded, representing an engagement rate of 58%. Of those respondents:



Tables 3.2a and 3.2b highlight the top three mechanisms employed to create these levels of awareness.

Table 3.2a: Top 3 mechanisms for building awareness of CMETB's governance structure (non-teaching staff)

Ranking	Method	Non-teaching Staff (n=56)
1	CMETB Online QA Briefing for staff (Available on Microsoft Stream)	35.7%
2	I am a member of one of the governance groups/ sub-groups.	32.1%
3	Centre/Service Manager informs us of who our representative is.	19.6%

Table 3.2b: Top 3 mechanisms for building awareness of CMETB's governance structure (teaching staff)

Ranking	Method	Teaching Staff (n=166)
1	CMETB Online QA Briefing for staff (Available on Microsoft Stream).	54.8%
2	Centre/Service Manager informs us of who our representative is.	31.9%
3	Governance group/sub-group membership is published on the centre/service website/intranet/SharePoint site.	6%



3.2.4. Issues Affecting the Governance and Management of Quality

While the data highlights high levels of awareness of the governance structures amongst FET staff, it should not distract from a number of challenges which were identified as part of the SCOT analysis development.

1. Being flexible and responsive while remaining compliant

While CMETB is succeeding in embedding a quality culture across FET by creating an awareness that quality is the responsibility of all, governance arrangements must remain suitably flexible to ensure they are capable of meeting new and emerging needs in a timely and effective manner.

Covid-19 challenged CMETB's governance structures, testing their ability to respond to a period of unprecedented turbulence and change. While CMETB had to be flexible and responsive in operationalising its response to Covid-19, it also needed to remain compliant with its statutory obligations regarding the management of quality.

In formulating a response to QQI's research on the impact of Covid-19 on teaching, learning and assessment, CMETB conducted an online survey of FET managers to gather their perspectives on measures taken to deal with the impact of the pandemic on FET provision.

A total of 15 responses out of 22 survey recipients were recorded, with the results clearly highlighting the flexibility of CMETB's governance and management structures in responding to the impact of Covid-19. For example, a wide range of modifications were made to allow for teaching, learning and assessment processes to continue in an ERT environment.

While a much fuller analysis of the impact of Covid-19 on CMETB FET Services is reserved for **Chapter 5**, it is important to highlight at this point that CMETB has learnt a lot about the robustness and appropriateness of its approach to the governance and management of quality as a result of Covid-19. The timetabling and the sequencing of the governance meetings was effective and required a minimum number of supplemental meetings.

See here for the Timetable of FET Management Meetings 2021.

Table 3.3 - Timetable of FET Management Meetings, 2021

	PCC Submissions	PDI Sub-group & PPC	RAP	RCCRS – 2021	QA Sub-group & PAC	FET Management & Quality Council	QBS Submission
Period 1	8 th January 2021	25 January 2021	20 January 2021	28 th January 2021	4 th February 2021	9 th February 2021	12 th February 2021
Period 2	10 th March 2021	22 nd March 2021	22 nd March 2021	26 th March 2021	25 th March 2021	8 th April 2021	12 th April 2021
Period 3	29 th April 2021	24 th May 2021	24 th May 2021	28 th May 2021	8 th June 2021	9 th June 2021	12 th June 2021
Extra Ordinary					29 th June 2021	1 st July 2021	7 th July 2021
Period 4	8 th July 2021	5 th July 2021	22 nd July 2021	28 th July 2021	5 th August 2021	10 th August 2021	12 th August 2021
Period 5	31 st August 2021	13 th September 2021	22 nd September 2021	28 th September 2021	4 th October 2021	7 th October 2021	12 th October 2021
Period 6	2 nd November 2021	2 nd November 2021	22 nd November 2021	26 th November 2021	6 th December 2021	9 th December 2021	12 th December 2021

2. Availability of sufficient resources

As CMETB continues to work towards the development of an integrated QA system, the availability of sufficient resources will be challenging in terms of standardising QA procedures whilst remaining compliant with new and existing legislative requirements. In addition, having access to suitably experienced staff in the areas of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), programme development and blended learning will prove equally challenging.

3. Management and resourcing of governance structures

Succession planning and having enough people to populate all of the governance groups required could prove challenging as CMETB expands in size and complexity.

Furthermore, to ensure consistency, and to reduce demands on the limited pool of staff available to populate the governance groups, there is a need to reach consensus in areas such as Professional Learning and Development (PL&D) and curriculum where, due to the diverse nature of FET provision, there are a broad range of needs to be met. While the PL&D Co-Ordinator feeds into the work of the PDI Sub-group, a PL&D Working Group may need to be established on a temporary basis to establish baseline priority areas and consensus across FET centres. This flexibility is built into the governance structures and this may be a timely intervention given the recent publication of SOLAS' Statement of Strategy on Professional Learning and Development 2020 – 2024. In relation to curriculum development, the establishment of a Curriculum Development Unit would help address concerns regarding curriculum and programme design and validation.

4. National External Authenticator (EA) Panel

While the updated National EA Panel is welcomed, processes for managing these panels, which have been agreed nationally may present challenges at ETB level due to limited subject matter expertise in some subject areas. This is a situation likely to be exacerbated as new niche, future-focused programmes come on stream.



3.2.5. Implementation Points for the Governance and Management of Quality

A number of enhancement opportunities aimed at further strengthening the governance and management of quality have been identified:

1. To help keep staff apprised of QA updates, 61% of staff stated²⁸ that a quarterly QA newsletter would be beneficial, with 45% of teaching staff in agreement. In addition, 54% of non-teaching staff stated that QA updates could be provided at FET events such as FET Breakfasts and the annual FET Meet event. 45% of teaching staff stated that QA should be a standing agenda item at all staff meetings.

In October 2020 the **QA Team** started publishing a quarterly QA newsletter entitled **ConexUs!**. This publication has been welcomed by staff and is making the work of the governance groups more visible and transparent. Its impact will continue to be monitored and subject matter recalibrated in line with feedback.

2. CMETB is conscious of the need to develop and enhance expertise in emerging areas such as RPL and programme development, with a number of staff participating in upskilling opportunities in these areas. Four members of staff are currently undertaking a Level 9 programme with Maynooth University in Programme Design and Validation (PDV).

3. Due to the scale and breadth of services it provides across the Cavan-Monaghan region, CMETB has a strong identity. In addition, the absence of an Institute of Technology provides opportunities for CMETB to expand its range of provision locally. Continuous stakeholder engagement will be critical, with inputs required at governance level.

4. CMETB values the importance of the learner voice and is keen to integrate learner representation into its governance structures. Over the past three years, CMETB has been working on better engaging the learner voice through the annual learner survey and learner forum. In 2021, in preparation of the learner survey and learner forum, CMETB established a Learner Advisory Network (LAN) with representatives from across different FET Services. The network's role is to assist in the promotion of the learner survey as well as advising on the format of the learner forum.

Using the valuable learning gained from this experience, CMETB is keen to further enhance the learner voice through the direct involvement of learners in the governance structures at both FET-wide and centre level. Learnings from this experience suggest timing and a build-up of early momentum is critical given the transient nature of many learners, particularly in PLC.

5. CMETB should establish a temporary FET PL&D Working Group to establish key baselines and priorities for all FET centres in line with SOLAS' Statement of Strategy on PL&D 2020 – 2024. The outcome of this could be a dedicated CMETB PL&D Strategy.
6. CMETB must establish a FET Curriculum Development Unit, co-ordinated by a Programme Design, Validation and Evaluation Manager to oversee and support programme and curriculum development.
7. CMETB should work towards the implementation of centre-level QA plans.

²⁸ CMETB FET Staff Survey 2020.

3.3. Documentation of Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures



3.3.1. Information on the Documentation of Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures

The QA Working Group, operating as a subsidiary of the QA Sub-group, has been developing a broad range of QA policies and procedures. Many of these policies have been developed in line with work carried out by ETBI's National Assessment Procedures Handbook Working Group. In adopting these policies, procedures and guidelines, the Working Group has ensured that the learner remains to the fore. QA policies, procedures and guidelines adopted to date include:

- ▶ Compassionate Consideration
- ▶ Assessment Malpractice (under review)
- ▶ Assessment Process Appeals
- ▶ Results Approval Process
- ▶ Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) (under review)
- ▶ Reasonable Accommodation
- ▶ Secure Storage
- ▶ Assessment Deadlines – Short-Term Extensions and Guidelines
- ▶ Examinations – Planning, Conducting and Concluding

A number of additional policies, procedures and guidelines are currently being reviewed, to include:

- ▶ External Authentication Documentation
- ▶ Internal Verification Policy
- ▶ Marking Rubric and Feedback Guidelines
- ▶ Guidelines for Remote Learning

In addition, individual centres also have in place a range of policies relevant to their specific processes and procedures including, for example, admissions policies. There are also a wide range of corporate policies which apply to all staff within CMETB, many of which are relevant in the context of the governance and management of quality.

These policies are managed centrally by the Compliance Department and approved by the Senior Management Team. They are then sent to the CMETB Board for noting. Only policies directly relating to the reserved function of the Board are adopted by the Board; all others are noted as part of their oversight function.

- ▶ Charter for Internal Audit
- ▶ Code of Conduct for Staff and ETB Members
- ▶ Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy
- ▶ Data Protection Policy
- ▶ ICT Acceptable Usage Policy
- ▶ Risk Management Policy
- ▶ Social Media Policy
- ▶ Equality and Diversity Policy



3.3.2. Insights into the Documentation of Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures

The existence of appropriate QA policies and procedures helps create fair and consistent processes for all, while also being an effective way of managing risk.

The QA Working Group, which consults regularly, reviews QA specific policies and procedures to ensure they remain fit for purpose in both a CMETB and a service level context and consistent with applicable statutory requirements. These policies are approved by the FET Management and Quality Council.

In some centres, where full-time staff are available (e.g. postholders), for example in Cavan and Monaghan Institutes, staff review and provide feedback on policies when they are first introduced and when they have had the opportunity to implement them.



3.3.3. Impact of the Documentation of Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures

This practice of reviewing QA policies at centre level is supported through reporting via the QA Sub-group where experience of implementation of policies and procedures is a standing item on the agenda in the service updates. This provides an opportunity for issues to be highlighted.

CASE STUDY 1

ASSESSMENT MALPRACTICE POLICY

In relation to the Assessment Malpractice Policy, an individual FET centre, having applied and reviewed the policy with staff, identified an issue with the policy and brought it to the attention of the QA Sub-group through the service update mechanism. The issue highlighted related to ambiguity in some of the language used within the policy and there was also a concern that elements may be open to interpretation.

The policy was brought to the QA Working Group and the highlighted issues were discussed at length. This resulted in amendments and clarifications being made to the policy to avoid future issues for tutors and learners. These updates occurred outside of the normal policy review cycle, as it was considered high priority for intervention. This process also highlights CMETB's proactivity in amending policies in a timely manner as and when required.

The amended policy is due for ratification by the FET Management and Quality Council.

The Internal Audit Unit (IAU) conducted an audit of Policy Compliance in CMETB in 2020. For a Case Study on the outcome of this audit, [please click here](#).



3.3.4. Issues with the Documentation of Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures

A number of key challenges and threats to the documentation of policies and procedures at CMETB have been identified:

1. Ensuring policies and procedures remain relevant and fit-for-purpose

Ensuring policies and procedures remain relevant and fit-for-purpose over the long term is challenging. Policy development is a complex and time-consuming process. Moreover, due to the rapidly evolving nature of FET, policies can become dated quickly. Consequently, as QA policies tend to be interconnected, there is a risk that, if not updated in a regular, systematic manner, policies could be in conflict with each other.

Furthermore, due to the mix of full-time and part-time staffing, some centres, such as Adult Education and Youthreach, who have limited full-time co-ordination staff, don't have the necessary supports to review policies consistently and regularly. Consequently, policy review tends to be left to the centre manager/co-ordinator who many not always have the time or necessary expertise to positively influence the review process.

Finally, in instances where centres are required to develop their own policies, there is a risk that these may not be developed equally across centres as a result of different resourcing levels, thereby creating inequalities in the learning experience.

2. Version control of policies and procedures

As policies tend to be updated regularly, there is an ongoing risk that, due to the fact that FET operates across fourteen distinct centres, outdated versions or documents that do not have the correct levels of approval may be in use. CMETB, therefore, needs to be continually aware of the importance of version control and ensuring updated policies are available and being implemented consistently across all centres. It is envisaged that these documents will be located on a centralised QA SharePoint.

3. Managing awareness of policies

Due to the existence of both part-time and full-time staff across FET centres, there is an ongoing risk that part-time staff, in particular, may not be as aware of relevant policies and procedures as full-time staff.



3.3.5 Implementation Points on the Documentation of Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures

A number of enhancement opportunities aimed at strengthening practices in the area of documenting policies and procedures have been identified:

1. Continued centralised work on the development of standardised policies and procedures will reduce the burden on individual centres, while also achieving equality and consistency for learners.
2. The possibility of allocating additional hours to part-time staff to allow them to engage in the policy review process will be explored. The added benefit of this would be to enhance awareness of policies and procedures amongst part-time staff, whilst also fostering a sense of ownership. This will take time and will need resourcing to ensure all centres move forward together.
3. CMETB should further expand its Staff SharePoint to house and share QA policies. This will also aid version control.

3.4. Staff Recruitment, Management and Development



3.4.1. Information on Staff Recruitment, Management and Development

CMETB is committed to recruiting and retaining quality staff to ensure the best possible learning experience, as espoused by the organisational mission.

The recruitment process, as outlined in the Recruitment and Selection Procedures Policy (**Appendix 3**), is centrally managed by the HR Department and, as an equal opportunities employer, CMETB does not discriminate on the grounds of sex, marital or family status, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, race or membership of the travelling community. CMETB's commitments in this regard are set out in its Policy Statement on Equality and Diversity.

Figure 3.11: CMETB's recruitment and selection process



Panels

Following interview, CMETB may form panels from which further appointments may be made. Panels remain in existence for one academic year.

Teaching Council

In line with Section 30 of the Teaching Council Act 2001, all teachers employed in recognised schools are required to be registered with the Teaching Council in order to be paid from public funds.

Garda Vetting

CMETB is registered with the National Vetting Bureau (NVB) and as part of the recruitment and selection process candidates are required to complete garda vetting for positions which require regular contact with children and/or vulnerable adults. Staff are re-vetted every 3 years.

New Staff Induction

A new FET staff induction programme was piloted with a number of existing and new staff in March 2020. The programme was delivered across three distinct workshops:

- ▶ **Workshop 1:** Who is CMETB?
- ▶ **Workshop 2:** Teaching and Learning (including Technology Enhanced Learning)
- ▶ **Workshop 3:** QQI, QA and the Assessor

Due to Covid-19, CMETB has not been in a position to advance work on the programme, but feedback will be taken on board and incorporated into future iterations. The possibility of moving the programme online is also being explored.

Professional Learning and Development (PL&D)

CMETB is committed to providing ongoing PL&D opportunities to ensure staff regularly update their skills and competencies, as well as keeping abreast of best practice in teaching, learning and assessment.

CMETB has a designated PL&D Co-ordinator who is tasked with overseeing, implementing and developing FET-wide PL&D initiatives. The ongoing delivery of a diverse and responsive PL&D programme will help build confidence and capacity amongst practitioners, leading to a high-quality learning experience. As such, CMETB is committed to prioritising critical PL&D areas of need as outlined in SOLAS' PL&D Statement of Strategy 2020 – 2024.²⁹ These areas include:

Figure 3.12: PL&D Priority Areas



²⁹ <https://www.solas.ie/f/70398/x/1e2e117467/solas-professional-dev-strategy.pdf>

PL&D initiatives will be aligned to these priority areas, while also responding to new and emerging needs such as wellbeing and resilience. In responding to new and existing needs, CMETB will continue to provide a balanced range of certified and uncertified options for staff. Staff can also suggest their educational and training requirements to management and there is a **PL&D Support Process** in place which provides financial assistance to staff undertaking relevant certified programmes outside of normal working hours.

The PL&D Co-ordinator regularly consults with staff on the development of an annual PL&D plan with such consultations taking place at least annually. The most recent consultation took place via an online survey in December 2020 and the top five areas of need for 2021 have been identified as:

Figure 3.13: CMETB Top 5 PL&D Areas of Need, 2021 (n=53)



These course requirements very much reflect the dynamic created by Covid-19.

In addition to PL&D supports, CMETB also has a dedicated Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Officer who provides ongoing upskilling supports in the use of technology in the teaching, learning and assessment environments. The PL&D Co-Ordinator and the TEL Officer have identified synergies in terms of wider staff training needs in the area of technology usage and have collaborated closely to address these needs.

3.4.2. Insights into Staff Recruitment, Management and Development

CASE STUDY 2

SYNERGIES BETWEEN CMETB'S PL&D AND TEL SUPPORTS

1. Requirements:

Since March 2020 the core focus of staff PL&D initiatives has been Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) and Information Communications Technology (ICT) supports. In response, the TEL Officer developed, co-ordinated and rolled out a comprehensive training programme aimed at enhancing the digital skills capabilities of all staff. Examples of topics covered included Microsoft Teams, Microsoft Lens and Moodle.

In addition, the PL&D Co-ordinator and TEL Officer collaborated to develop and co-ordinate the delivery of fully online Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) Word and Excel Programmes. This followed on from a successful blended learning pilot which was rolled out in autumn 2019.

In advance of the rollout of the MOS programmes, CMETB supported staff to complete a customised, fully online introduction to Microsoft Word and Excel blended learning programmes which CMETB engaged Educoot to develop. This training was offered to support and enable both teaching and non-teaching staff to cope with remote working.

2. Results:

Staff have developed greater abilities and confidence in the use of various technologies and software packages. Furthermore, staff are more open to, and competent, in accessing CMETB's Microsoft Teams and Moodle platforms, for example, to access future PL&D opportunities.

CASE STUDY 2 (CONTINUED)

SYNERGIES BETWEEN CMETB'S PL&D AND TEL SUPPORTS

3. Benefits: One of the key long-term benefits of the move to blended/fully online PL&D interventions is that staff training and development will be more accessible and attractive to staff, particularly in instances where training sessions are recorded and circulated to staff following the event. This experience has further highlighted the interdependencies between PL&D and TEL and will lead to enhanced synergies going forward.



3.4.3. Impact of Staff Recruitment, Management and Development

Ongoing initiatives in the area of staff recruitment, management and development across FET Services are having a positive impact. This has been evidenced by a number of core strengths highlighted by staff in the development of a SCOT analysis, at a staff consultation event in April 2021.

The core strengths which are having a positive impact are:

1. Staff Recruitment

The long-established centralised HR led staff recruitment process is working effectively and there are clear procedures in place as set out in the CMETB Recruitment and Selection Procedures Policy.

There are also streamlined processes in place between QA, HR, Finance and IT in terms of setting up payroll and IT systems access for new staff in a timely and efficient manner.

Moreover, the creation of a number of new FET posts in recent years, to include, TEL Officer, Workforce Development Co-ordinator, Communications Officer and Evening Provision Co-ordinator, has added to the existing breadth of expertise within CMETB FET Services.

2. Staff Induction Programme

Following completion of the pilot staff induction programme in March 2020, an evaluation was carried out with participants. This feedback is summarised in [Table 3.3](#).

Table 3.4: Feedback on Pilot Staff Induction Programme

Workshop 1	Workshop 2	Workshop 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Very informative session. > Learnt about various aspects of CMETB. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Some useful tools available. > More aware of learning styles and will review teaching methods in line with these. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > PowerPoint seemed long and information was heavy but necessary. > Blooms Taxonomy was very useful.

3. Professional Learning and Development (PL&D)

The appointment of a designated PL&D Co-ordinator in 2017 has helped bring a more streamlined approach to the delivery of staff training and development programmes and supports. This has facilitated change management processes and aided communication across FET services.

The success and positive impact of this approach to PL&D can be measured from the results of the 2020 FET Staff Survey which attracted 222 responses.

82%

of respondents participated in PL&D training organised or supported by CMETB.

4
out of
5

Average score on how well CMETB is at supporting FET staff to avail of appropriate PL&D opportunities and supports.

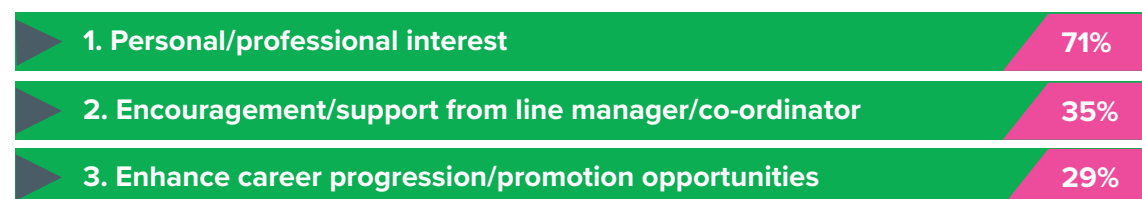
Examples of the broad range of PL&D opportunities that FET staff have availed of are outlined in [Table 3.5](#).

Table 3.5: Examples of internal and external PL&D CMETB FET Staff have engaged in

Focus Area	Internal/External PL&D Programme
Working with and Supporting Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults > LGBTQIA+ Awareness > Literacy Awareness/Integrating Literacy
Vocational Upskilling and Reskilling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > First Aid > GDPR > Health & Safety
Quality Assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Programme Design and Validation (Maynooth University)
Technology Enhanced Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Moodle Training > Technology Enhanced Learning (An Cosán) > Certificate in Technology Enhanced Learning (National University of Ireland Galway)
Information and Communications Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Microsoft Office Specialist > Introduction to Word and Excel
Leadership and Management Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Change Management (National University of Ireland Galway) > Instructional Leadership > Project Management > Therapeutic Crisis Intervention

A number of staff have also completed certified programmes outside of normal working hours and were eligible to avail of the **CMETB PL&D Support Scheme**. Examples of programmes undertaken by staff include an M.A. in Management of Education and Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Public Management.

The staff survey also collected data concerning staff motivation for deciding on what PL&D to engage in and the top 3 motivators were identified as:



Another key success of this more centralised approach to PL&D in recent years has been the delivery of the annual FET Meet Event. It is designed as an annual event where all FET staff come together to participate in a range of taster sessions focused on new and emerging areas within FET. It also serves as an opportunity to update staff on key developments in terms of

QA, as well as offering a showcasing opportunity to facilitate the sharing of good practice from across FET Centres. An added bonus of the FET Meet event has been the opportunity for FET staff from across the various centres to network in a less formal environment. The results of the 2020 Staff Survey (n=222) found that the benefit of the annual FET Meet event in identifying and sharing models of best practice received an average rating of 3.25 out of 5.



3.4.4. Issues with Staff Recruitment, Management and Development

While CMETB is experiencing much success in relation to the recruitment, management and development of staff, a number of potential challenges and threats to further progress in this critical area have been identified.

1. Staff Recruitment

There are a number of issues affecting CMETB's ability to consistently attract high quality staff:

- > FET is different than other areas of the education sector in that it operates on a year-round calendar rather than an academic one. This can be an obstacle in terms of attracting teaching staff to FET.
- > Due to government policy on public sector recruitment and terms and conditions and entry level salaries it can be difficult to attract people in certain areas, particularly people with industry experience.
- > Getting the appropriate sanction for new posts or the retention of existing posts can cause delays in advertising posts, meaning CMETB is not as responsive as it should be to new and emerging needs.
- > How posts are advertised publicly is also proving problematic. ETBs use different websites to advertise their posts, for example, www.etbjobs.ie and www.etbvacancies.ie. This is confusing as there is a lack of awareness of both of these sites amongst the general public. Consequently, the challenge for CMETB is to develop innovative ways to advertise posts in order to attract the right calibre of people to vacant posts. Social Media channels have been used, in the past two years, to highlight vacancies being advertised.
- > There is also a lack of subject matter experts in certain teaching disciplines and it is proving difficult to recruit suitable staff in these areas. This issue is only likely to become more problematic as CMETB FET provision evolves into more niche areas in order to meet new and emerging trends within the wider economy.

- > Due to the diverse nature of FET, there are a variety of terms and conditions of employment within centres e.g. in Adult Education there are difficulties in terms of teaching and tutoring contracts, while differences in terms and conditions for Further Education and for Training staff (previously under the remit of FÁS) is also proving challenging. There are also disparities and inequalities in management grades.

2. Staff Induction Programme

Of the teaching staff (**n=166**) and non-teaching staff (**n=56**) that responded to questions in the 2020 FET Staff Survey on the pilot staff induction programme:

57%

of teaching staff were unaware of the new staff induction programme.

3.5
out of
5

the average rating given by teaching staff (who were aware of the new staff induction programme) to the benefit of the programme to new staff.

43%

of non-teaching staff were unaware of the new staff induction programme.

3.7
out of
5

the average rating given by non-teaching staff (who were aware of the new staff induction programme) to the benefit of the programme to new staff.

3. Professional Learning and Development

In terms of encouraging and supporting staff to engage in ongoing PL&D opportunities and supports, the various consultations undertaken highlighted that the timing of PL&D and opportunities not being relevant/applicable to current roles, were key issues preventing staff from engaging. It is hoped, however, that the greater availability of both synchronous and asynchronous online PL&D programmes will help alleviate these issues.



3.4.5. Implementation Points for Staff Recruitment, Management and Development

Based on the evaluation of processes in this area, a number of enhancement opportunities have been identified:

1. An ESBS e-Recruitment project is currently underway with a view to standardising recruitment processes for all ETBs. CMETB's HR Department is represented on the national working group for this project.
2. Due to the rapidly evolving nature of FET there are ongoing opportunities for existing staff development and advancement within the organisation as new roles emerge. There is, therefore, a clear opportunity for CMETB to be proactive in terms of supporting the advancement of existing staff through targeted PL&D opportunities. Key areas going forward will be RPL, blended learning and programme development.
3. Based on the piloting of the Staff Induction Programme, CMETB should advance the rollout of this programme to all new staff upon entry. There is an opportunity for this programme to be developed and delivered fully online.
4. Based on learnings from remote working, CMETB should develop remote working policies to embed more flexible working arrangements for relevant staff. This might also be considered in the context of expanding the available pool of staff.
5. There is an opportunity to review promotion methods/increase promotion around PL&D so that all staff are aware of these options on an ongoing basis.

3.5. Programme Development, Approval and Submission for Validation



3.5.1. Information on Programme Development, Approval and Submission for Validation

The current suite of QQI programmes available to CMETB FET Services were largely developed on foot of the introduction of the Common Awards System (CAS). These programmes were either developed nationally in collaboration with other ETBs or by individual centres of the VECs in the counties of Cavan and Monaghan. Other programmes were originally FÁS programmes inherited by CMETB upon transfer of the training function in 2015.

The development and validation of new programmes has become a key priority for ETBs in recent years, particularly in light of the 2017 publication of *'Policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training'*³⁰ by QQI. In 2019, QQI also published detailed *'Guidelines for Completing the CAS Compound Programme Descriptor Template'*³¹ which were designed to support providers in the preparation of programme validation applications.

To date, CMETB's experience of programme development under the new validation requirements has been limited to the apprenticeship space with the development of the Level 6 Original Equipment Manufacturing (OEM) National Apprenticeship, for which CMETB is the co-ordinating provider. The OEM National Apprenticeship was developed by CMETB in collaboration with Limerick and Clare ETB (LCETB) and in consultation with industry. The apprenticeship was developed in direct response to *'The Future Skills Requirement of the Manufacturing Sector Report to 2020'*,³² which addressed the emerging demands for skills in the manufacturing sector in Ireland.



CMETB FET Services are keenly aware of the growing importance of new programme development in ensuring provision remains relevant and responsive to the needs of learners and employers across the Cavan-Monaghan region. As such, CMETB is actively engaged in the Level 9 Certificate in Programme Design and Validation (PDV) in FET, delivered by Maynooth University and the Further Education Support Service (FESS), to build capacity across the sector in this area. Four CMETB staff are currently engaged in this programme and, as part of the assessment for the programme, have been working on the development of a non-CAS Level 6 Award in Audio and Music Programme (AMP) for Cavan Institute, which it is hoped will be brought forward for validation later in the year for roll-out from September 2022. This will ensure that CMETB has experience in programme development of CAS, Non-CAS and Apprenticeship programmes.

Feedback from the four staff members involved has elicited detail in optimal group formation, project management approaches and the use of technology in driving efficiencies in these processes, which will be beneficial in future programme development.

In addition, a number of CMETB FET staff are engaging with QQI on the development of new Broad Standards at NFQ Levels 1 to 4, which once published, will heighten demand for the development of new programmes nationally.

Most recently, CMETB has received differential validation for the new national Early Learning and Care Awards at Levels 5 and 6 which will be introduced from September 2021.

Supporting these initiatives, CMETB has robust internal governance processes in place to oversee the approval of new programmes which have already been developed nationally or by other CMETB centres. A Programme Proposal Committee (PPC) and Programme Approval Committee (PAC) are in place to support and manage this process. Both of these committees are independently chaired from outside of CMETB, bringing a level of externality to CMETB's governance processes.

CMETB provides a broad range of certification options for learners with QQI, BTEC, CIDESCO, CIBTAC and City and Guilds just some of the certification bodies that CMETB works with. Decisions pertaining to the delivery are taken through the aforementioned process as relevant.

³⁰ https://www.qqi.ie/Publications/Publications/Initial_Validation_policy_7_10_13.pdf

³¹ <https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/CAS%20Compound%20Programme%20Descriptor%20Template%20Guidelines.docx>

³² http://www.skillsireland.ie/media/270213-future_skills_requirements_of_manufacturing-publication.pdf



3.5.2. Insights into Programme Development, Approval and Submission for Validation

Individual FET centres and services are responsible for assessing the appropriateness of their existing suite of certified programmes as well as identifying new and emerging needs.

Developing strong linkages with industry is critical to the development of appropriate and responsive programmes, particularly in the context of developing traineeships. CMETB has a strong track record in this regard over recent years having developed a range of Level 5 and 6 traineeships in healthcare, hospitality, youth work, advanced building design, digital marketing, engineering, laboratory assistant, outdoor pursuits instruction and Heavy Good Vehicle (HGV) Professional Driving.

Labour market justification reports are also an important resource utilised by CMETB to support the need to develop and seek approval for the delivery of new programmes. For example, these reports are key factors in helping both the PPC and PAC make informed decisions on relevance and value and on whether or not to approve applications to deliver new programmes.

The PDI Sub-group, which reports directly to the FET Management and Quality Council, assists in the recommendation of new programmes and programme specific policies and procedures. All FET services are represented in the membership of the PDI Sub-group and each service provides regular reports on new programme demands and concerns, as well as sharing models of best practice. The collaborative work undertaken by this group also ensures that duplication of programmes is minimised.



3.5.3. Impact of Programme Development, Approval and Validation

CMETB, as co-ordinating provider, led out on the development of the new Level 6 Original Equipment Manufacturing (OEM) National Apprenticeship. Significant learning was gained from this experience and will help inform the future development of new programmes by CMETB. For example, the experience of this apprenticeship greatly assisted the staff members developing the Audio and Music Production (AMP) award as part of the Level 9 PDV programme.

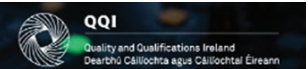
CASE STUDY 3

AMP AWARD

A recorded case study, reflecting on the process of developing the AMP award is available to [view here](#).

AUDIO & MUSIC PRODUCTION

LEVEL 6 AWARD



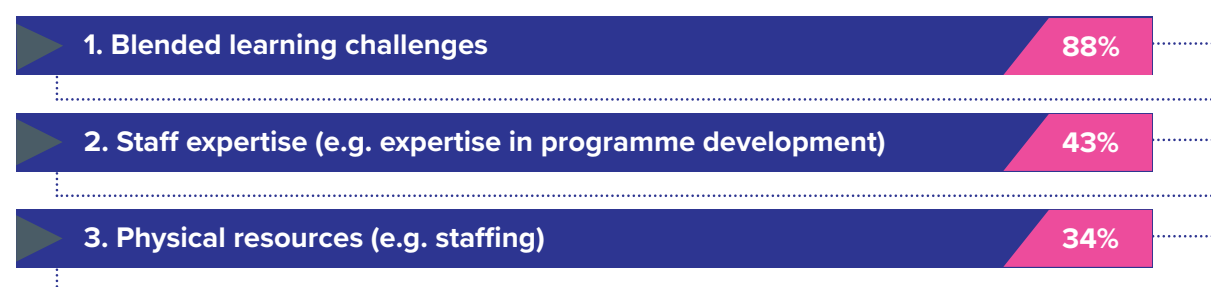


3.5.4. Issues for Programme Development, Approval and Validation

Based on staff consultations a number of challenges and threats for CMETB in this area were identified:

1. In the 2020 FET staff survey (n=56) the top 3 challenges for programme development were identified as being:

Figure 3.14: Top 3 Challenges for Programme Development



2. Specifically, in the context of training programmes, CMETB has a limited range of programmes available – approximately 85 – due to fact that CMETB was one of a small number of ETBs not to have a training centre at time of establishment in 2013. An added complication is the presence of a growing number of private providers, including those operating online, who can offer a much broader suite of programmes as well as alternatives to existing CMETB programmes within a faster turnaround.
3. Some FET centres have little to no experience of programme development compared with larger centres (e.g. PLC). Training Services utilise awards that were developed by SOLAS, so little or no programme design expertise exists within this service. Programme development, at all levels of CMETB, will require significant additional financial and human resources over the next number of years. This is an urgent requirement given that a significant number of national programmes are outdated and in need of review/rewriting. The deactivation of existing awards is an additional threat in this respect.

4. Due to the rapidly evolving nature of the world of work, keeping pace with the needs of industry in terms of relevant programmes is proving challenging due to the complexity and lengthy nature of the programme development and validation process. In addition, people are changing careers at much faster rates than previously and this is increasing demand for lifelong learning. CMETB needs to remain equally innovative and effective in order to meet the current and future needs of industry across the Cavan-Monaghan region in a timely and proactive manner.
5. The scheduled introduction of the new national ELC Awards at Level 5 and 6 from September 2021 will prove challenging in terms of having tutors suitably trained to commence delivery by the nationally agreed start date. This programme, whilst very welcome, brings additional challenges with respect to increased work placement hours, RPL etc.
6. Within CMETB there is an ongoing risk of duplication of programmes across services, with similar programmes being available on both a full-time and part-time basis within different centres. CMETB is aware of this and the role of the PDI Sub-group is to monitor to ensure duplication of programmes does not negatively impact any service. The advertising of multiple instances of programmes, on both a full-time and part-time basis, is causing confusion for members of the public. In line with the proposed FET College of the Future model, CMETB is committed to simplifying its programme offering and the way in which programmes are advertised. Systems data provided to the PDI Sub-group is very important in this regard.
7. The experience of implementing ERT solutions is likely to lead to increasing demand for blended learning and/or fully online programme delivery in the future. Consequently, there will be a need to develop programmes suitable for blended and/or online delivery and for CMETB to secure validation for these in a timely manner. An extensive data gathering exercise is underway across services to inform these decisions.



3.5.5. Implementation Points for Programme Development, Approval and Validation

There are a number of enhancement opportunities for CMETB in the area of programme development, approval and validation based on the outcome of staff consultations:

1. An increasing focus on blended/online learning will provide a broader range of options and will ensure flexibility for learners in terms of managing family and work commitments.
2. With many programmes out-of-date, with references to outdated legislation, for example, there is an opportunity for CMETB to be involved in the development of a suite of modern, fit-for-purpose awards. It is recognised that these are national programmes solutions and will require CMETB involvement at a national level. Such an approach, however, will ensure access to the economies of scale required to be successful in developing programmes in an efficient and timely manner.
3. CMETB recognises the need for an internal Curriculum Development Unit with appropriate resourcing to support the programme development process. The establishment of this dedicated unit will provide a mechanism to allow subject matter experts to be seconded internally for the purpose of writing new programmes.

3.6. Access, Transfer and Progression



3.6.1. Information on Access, Transfer and Progression

In support of provision, CMETB offers a number of ancillary services. For example, the Adult Education Guidance and Information Service (AEGIS) is a free, confidential service for young people and adults over the age of 18/out of second-level education. Offering face-to-face and/or phone consultations, AEGIS provides information and support on access, transfer and progression opportunities both in and out of FET.

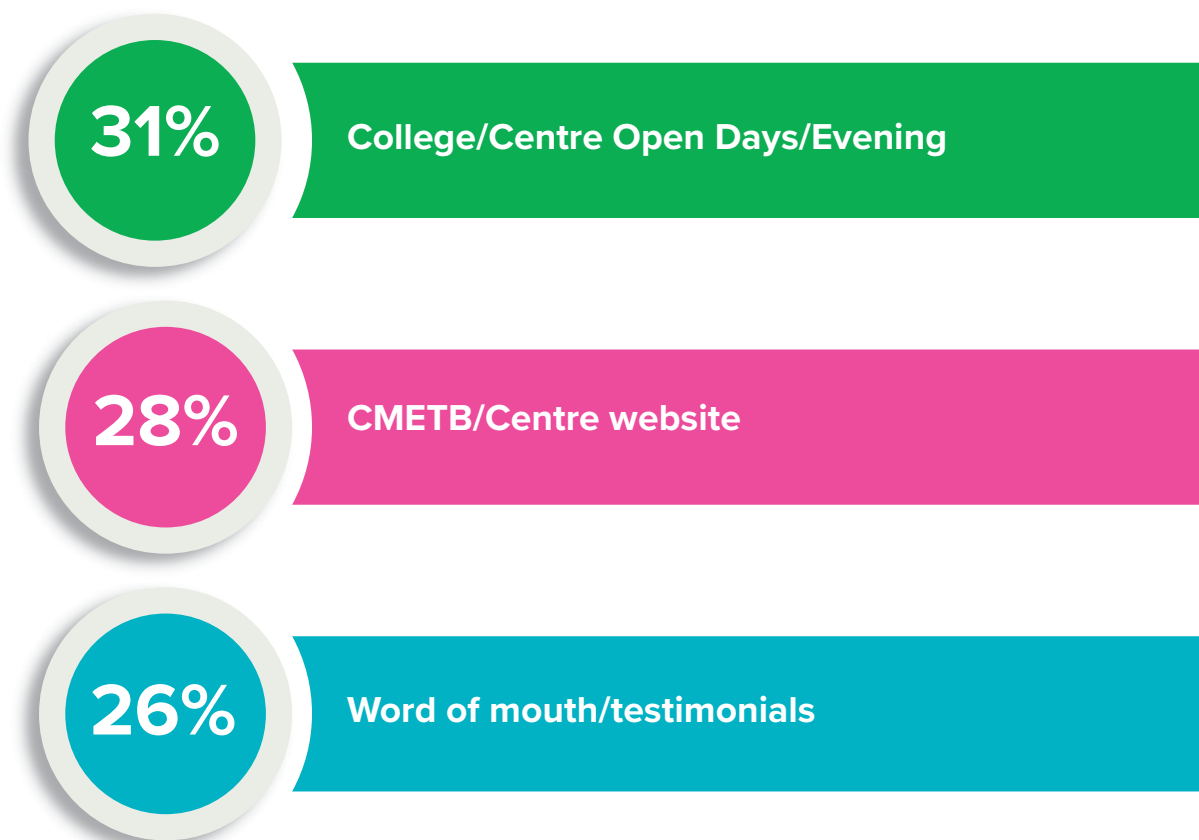
Access to CMETB Courses

Learners seeking access to FET programmes either self-refer or are referred by external agencies. Many learners self-refer to courses on foot of seeing advertisements, social media postings, attending centre open days or following engagement with AEGIS.

CMETB has developed strong links with external agencies such as the Department of Social Protection (DSP) and there are clear protocols in place to support the referral of learners, which assist CMETB in engaging with some of the most vulnerable cohorts, particularly those in long-term unemployment and those displaced through redundancy.

Outside of these arrangements, learners who self-refer are made aware of access requirements for CMETB programmes through a variety of communication channels including, the Further Education and Training Course Hub (FETCH), the CMETB website, CMETB's social media accounts, college/centre brochures, flyers, advertisements via local media and notices in church bulletins.

In terms of accessing CMETB's FET provision, the 2021 FET Learner Survey highlighted the main sources of information for learners:



CMETB is also actively working to promote access to FET from second-level schools across the Cavan-Monaghan region. In line with the National FET Strategy, creating pathways from school to FET is a key strategic priority enshrined in CMETB's FET Strategy 2021 – 2024. As such, CMETB recognises that FET offers a variety of pathways for school leavers via PLC, traineeships, apprenticeships or foundation skills courses that lead to Higher Education progression. CMETB is actively working with schools to position CMETB FET as an attractive, progressive and viable option for all school leavers. This is being achieved through the FET into Schools Programme, which is currently running in two schools, with plans to expand this option going forward.

CASE STUDY 4

FET INTO SCHOOLS PROGRAMME 2020/21

1. Overview

The FET into Schools Programme was launched for Transition Year students in September 2019. Beech Hill College, Monaghan and St. Bricin's College, Belturbet piloted the initiative which involved participation in a range of FET taster sessions.

The main aim was to introduce CMETB's range of FET programmes and promote another pathway of education with an emphasis on Apprenticeships and Traineeship Programmes.

A total of 112 students took part in the programme in 2020/21.

The following modules were timetabled each week:

OEM Engineering – Students covered areas such as Electronics and Control Systems through the completion of electronics projects and gained knowledge on the importance of electricity in automotive vehicles.

Digital Marketing – Students covered Graphic Design, Social Media Marketing, Video Marketing, Facebook Advertisements and Web Design. The aim of this module was to develop knowledge and understanding of what Digital Marketing is, and what areas it covers. Students learnt how to take a business-like approach to developing Digital Marketing strategies and discover how creativity is an important asset.

CASE STUDY 4

FET INTO SCHOOLS PROGRAMME 2020/21

Personal Care and Presentation – Students gained knowledge, skills and competence in demonstrating good personal care and presentation. As well as improving their confidence, students also covered topics such as Healthy Lifestyle Choices, Stress Management and Personal Hygiene.

2. Feedback

Students – Overall, feedback from students was very positive. There was a request for longer sessions and more interaction online, e.g. use of games and quizzes.

'I was already considering a career in Beauty, but I am convinced now. Even though some aspects of the course will be difficult (like anatomy and biology), I am going to do it!'

(Student A)

'I really enjoyed learning about auto electricity and the importance of electricity in vehicles.'

(Student B)

Schools – Overall, feedback from the schools was very positive, in particular, the use of the practical delivery of skills amongst the tutors. Apprenticeships were viewed very positively, and the schools outlined that some learners will be pursuing this route.

'This programme worked very well with our Transition Year group this year. The electronics module was very hands on and the tutor did a terrific job of making it accessible to every learner. The Digital Marketing was also a vital link for students with their enterprise projects and helped them design, create and produce logos for their businesses.'

(Deputy Principal, St Bricin's College)

'Pupils received information on the area of Apprenticeships and FET and some will pursue this route. The facilitators were excellent.'

(Deputy Principal, Beech Hill College)

To help promote FET as a viable and attractive progression route for school leavers, two key goals have been set out in the CMETB FET Strategy 2021 - 2024:

GOAL
1

Development of strong linkages and joint projects with schools

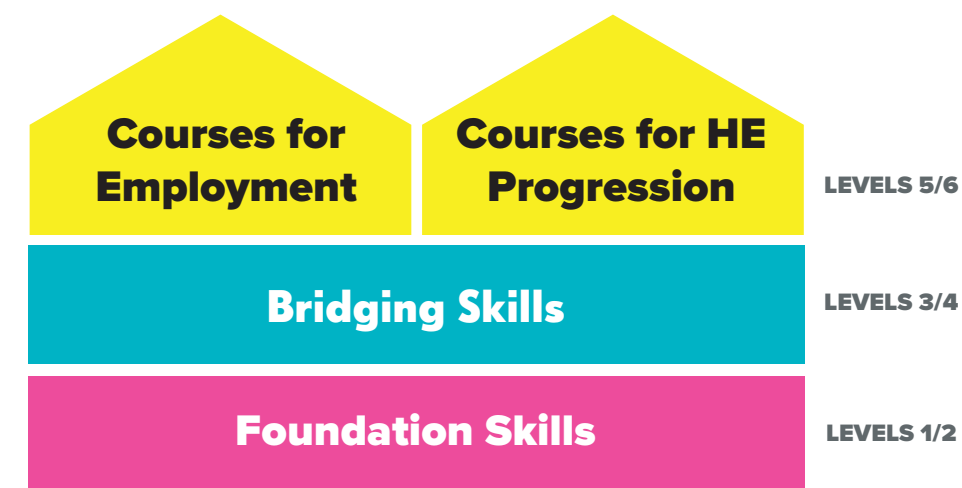
- > Development and delivery of structured FET sampling programmes.
- > Development and delivery of preparation for work programmes.
- > Provision of appropriate numeracy and digital resources and supports.
- > Shared curriculum development and delivery.

GOAL
2

Increase recognition of FET achievement for the purposes of entry to work

- > A key enabler of this will be the simplification of the existing 34 pathways within FET as outlined in the National FET Strategy 2020 - 2024 (**Figure 3.15**).

Figure 3.15: Simplification of FET Pathways



Source: SOLAS FET Strategy 2020 – 2024

Progression

CMETB FET Services also provide and support a number of progression routes both in and out of FET and there are strong internal linkages, with centres working together to create awareness of the range of progression options available to learners within CMETB. CMETB has identified internal progression as a key strategic priority.

Within Adult Education, learners are actively encouraged and supported to progress across levels in their service, as well as supporting those learners wishing to progress to other FET services such as PLC or traineeships. For example, the Pathways to Success programme, run through Adult Education Services, enables learners to progress to Level 5 programmes – PLC, traineeships and apprenticeships.

Learners are also encouraged to progress between services/centres. The PLC Access Programme is specifically targeted at Youthreach Learners and is aimed at supporting them to progress from Youthreach to PLC courses at Cavan and Monaghan Institutes. A case study on the PLC Access Programme can be accessed [here](#).

Additionally, CMETB supports learners wishing to progress from FET to Higher Education (HE). Due to its strategic location, learners in the Cavan-Monaghan region have access to a number of HE institutions both in the Republic of Ireland and in Northern Ireland. CMETB facilitates access to HE Institutions via the Higher Education Links Scheme and the North East Further and Higher Education Alliance (NEFHEA). For more information on both of these see pages 78 – 79 of the [Profile of CMETB Further Education and Training Provision](#).



3.6.2. Insights into Access, Transfer and Progression

The Higher Education Links Scheme facilitates learners from Cavan and Monaghan Institutes who have achieved a QQI Level 5 Major Award or Level 6 Advanced Certificate to progress to a range of programmes at HE institutions across Ireland. At present, approximately 40 HE institutions offer progression into a broad range of Level 6 Higher Certificate, Level 7 Ordinary Degree and Level 8 Honours Degree programmes. Specific examples of these progression options include:

- > Athlone Institute of Technology's Level 7 Bachelor of Arts in Applied Social Studies in Social Care,
- > Institute of Technology Sligo's BSc in General Science,
- > St. Angela's College, Sligo's Access to Post-Primary Teaching (APT) programme
- > Letterkenny Institute of Technology – Level 7 Bachelor (Ordinary) Degree in Health and Social Care (Commencing September 2021).

In addition, Cavan and Monaghan Institute, along with Dundalk Institute of Technology, Drogheda Institute of Further Education, O'Fiaich College, Dundalk, Dundalk College of Further Education and Beaufort College, are members of the North East Further and Higher Education Alliance (NEFHEA).

NEFHEA is a regional higher and further education initiative working to promote greater take up of further and higher education opportunities among learners in the North East region. Working to ensure the provision tailored to the specific needs of the region, the participating institutions collaborate on the development of relevant and responsive programmes. A key priority of the alliance is to increase progression rates from FET to Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT). A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) underpins the work of the alliance.

At present, learners from Cavan and Monaghan Institutes can progress to DkIT under the Higher Education Links Scheme and also via direct entry links to Year 2 of related degree programmes.

In addition to NEFHEA, Cavan and Monaghan Institutes have arrangements in place with Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT), Letterkenny Institute of Technology (LYIT) and the Institute of Technology Sligo for a variety of Science, Healthcare and Business programmes.

Years 1 and 2 of many of these programmes can be delivered on site at Cavan and Monaghan Institutes.

Cavan Institute also has excellent linkages with a number of UK and European universities to support progress to degree programmes in areas such as:





3.6.3. Impact of Access, Transfer and Progression

The following case studies provide written and visual evidence of access, transfer and progression options within CMETB.

CASE STUDY 5

PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS

Historically, the Adult Literacy Service in Monaghan ran a full Level 4 General Learning Award over an academic year, called Learning to Learn. Running on a part-time basis over 3-4 mornings a week, the course covered the following modules:

- Communications
- Mathematics
- Personal Effectiveness
- Career Planning
- Computer Applications
- Information Technology Skills
- Customer Service
- Work Experience
- Team Working

The last group to participate on this course was in 2018-2019. Ten learners took part in the course, with five gaining full awards and progressing to Monaghan Institute. The remaining learners progressed to other FET courses or into employment.

From 2019 to 2020 shorter Level 4 courses were offered and included three modules – Communications, Career Planning and Information Technology Skills. The first course ran from January to March 2020, and ten learners participated, most of whom were former employees of Lac Patrick who were being made redundant. All learners gained minor or major awards. Eight progressed to Level 5 PLC Courses – five to Monaghan Institute and three Cavan Institute.



From Easter to July 2020, two Learning to Learn courses were run online. As CMETB is not validated to run programmes online, these courses were uncertified, and learners progressed on the basis of provisional results – they covered the course content of QQI Level 4 Communications, Career Planning and Information Technology Skills. Thirteen learners participated, with eight fully completing. Three learners progressed to Monaghan Institute, two to HE and three to Level 5 courses in the Adult Education Service.

In late-2020 the course was re-branded as Pathways to Success, and promoted as a pathway to FET options rather than solely to PLC. The first course started online in January 2021 but moved to face-to-face engagement after Easter in order to complete assessments. Seven learners are attending with four intending on progressing to Monaghan Institute and one to an apprenticeship.

CASE STUDY 6

IT PROGRESSION COURSES

CMETB Training Services are currently working on developing a range of IT Progression Courses for learners. For a visual representation of the options available, [please see the following diagram.](#)

CASE STUDY 6

IT PROGRESSION COURSES

ROUTE 1

COMPUTER SKILLS
DURATION: 12 WEEKS
ENTRY REQUIREMENTS: BASIC COMPUTER EXPERIENCE
CERTIFICATION: ECDL OR MOS
JOB OPPORTUNITIES: OFFICE ADMINISTRATION ROLES

ROUTE 2

DIPLOMA IN SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT
Duration: 9 months
Entry Requirements: Demonstrate technical ability and problem-solving skills.
Certification: Diploma in Software Development
Job Opportunities: Junior Software Development

PRE-TECH APPRENTICESHIP
DURATION: 30 Weeks (Online)
ENTRY REQUIREMENTS: Junior Certificate or equivalent.
CERTIFICATION: Pre-Tech Apprenticeship in ICT Systems & Principles (City & Guilds)
JOB OPPORTUNITIES: IT Support Specialist, IT Support Technician, IT Systems Administrator, Helpdesk Support Engineer, Field Services Technician

CYBER FORENSICS ASSOCIATE
Duration: 6 Weeks (Online)
Entry Requirements: Familiarity with general network security components and terminology.
Certification: E-Council Cyber Forensics
Job Opportunities: Entry level roles in Cybersecurity industry.

ROUTE 3

NETWORK ENGINEER
Duration: 26 weeks
Entry Requirements: Leaving Certificate or equivalent.
Certification: Diploma in ICT Systems and Principles for IT Professionals (City & Guilds)
JOB OPPORTUNITIES: Network Engineer, Network Administrator, Network Specialist

CYBERSECURITY
Duration: 46 weeks
Entry Requirements: Level 5 qualification or other relevant experience
Certification: CompTIA IT Fundamentals, CompTIA Networks+, CompTIA Security+, CompTIA Cybersecurity Analyst CySA+, CompTIA Penetration Tester Pentest+
Job Opportunities: Numerous roles in Computer Security, Cybersecurity Specialist

ROUTE 4

ADVANCED NETWORK ENGINEER (26 WEEKS)



3.6.4. Issues with Access, Transfer and Progression

In terms of challenges and threats for CMETB in the area of access, transfer and progression a number of key areas have been identified:

1. In relation to public awareness of CMETB and its branding there isn't always a widespread awareness of the range of services available within CMETB. This is an awareness/access to information issue as people are not always cognisant of the lifelong learning opportunities available to them locally and the role that FET plays in provision.
2. In relation to ongoing efforts and commitments to promoting FET as a viable option for school leavers, the existence of unofficial School League Tables means that schools will actively promote progression to HE rather than steer learners towards FET.
3. Furthermore, in relation to supporting progression to FET, Institutes of Technology have reduced the CAO points required for many of their courses, as well as increasing the number of places available. This is resulting in lower number of learners applying for FET courses, particularly within Cavan and Monaghan Institutes.
4. Regarding online training, CMETB can only currently provide this service via Contracted Training, where the contractor is validated to deliver programmes online. This is expensive to run. As the focus shifts towards increased levels of blended/fully online provision, this could become a challenge for CMETB if it is not able to adapt to demand in a timely and efficient manner and gain the necessary QQI approval. CMETB has the capacity but the requirements of QQI validation is a key issue in terms of being time and resource intensive.



3.6.5. Implementation Points for Access, Transfer and Progression

Based on the research carried out, a number of enhancement opportunities have been identified:

1. CMETB has a strong track record of working with HE Institutions to develop and promote appropriate progression routes for CMETB FET graduates. With recognition of Level 5 and Level 6 programmes more visible, there is an opportunity for CMETB to further develop these relationships to the benefit of learners looking to progress beyond QQI courses.
2. The Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research and Innovation's recent commitment to including FET programmes as an option on the CAO Application Form provides FET with the opportunity to increase awareness and compete alongside HE courses.
3. CMETB has the opportunity to move into the blended/online delivery of programmes to meet growing demand in this area. Blended/online learning offers greater flexibility for learners while also allowing us to extend our provision beyond traditional geographical boundaries.
4. While AEGIS has been successful in supporting learners looking to access FET, the naming of the service, particularly the AEGIS acronym, is causing confusion and this presents CMETB with an opportunity to rebrand the service to better reflect the quality and nature of the service being delivered.
5. While AEGIS is seen as a key service for adult learners, trainees within Training Services do not have access to such supports. There is, therefore, an opportunity to expand AEGIS as a FET-wide service, while ensuring such a service is adequately resourced.
6. There is an opportunity for CMETB to continue to strengthen linkages with industry locally, regionally and nationally, via its Workforce Development and Skills for Work Co-ordinators, to meet current and future skills needs, while also encouraging FET graduates to seek work locally, thereby supporting the Irish government's efforts at promoting rural Ireland as a viable place to live and work.

3.7. Integrity and Approval of Learner Results



3.7.1. Information on the Integrity and Approval of Learner Results

In providing a quality assured service for learners, CMETB understands the importance of building confidence in the integrity of the assessment process and the maintenance of national standards. As such, CMETB has robust policies and procedures in place to ensure consistency, fairness and transparency at all stages of the assessment process.

At present CMETB is working with two assessment processes as a result of the transfer of the training function from LMETB in 2015. Within Further Education, locally devised assessments are utilised, and teaching staff are responsible for the development of these. Centre management and the QA Team provide support in terms of ensuring locally devised assessments are appropriate and in line with statutory requirements and best practice. Training Services use Assessment Instrument Specifications (AIS). These are nationally devised assessments which have been in operation for some time.

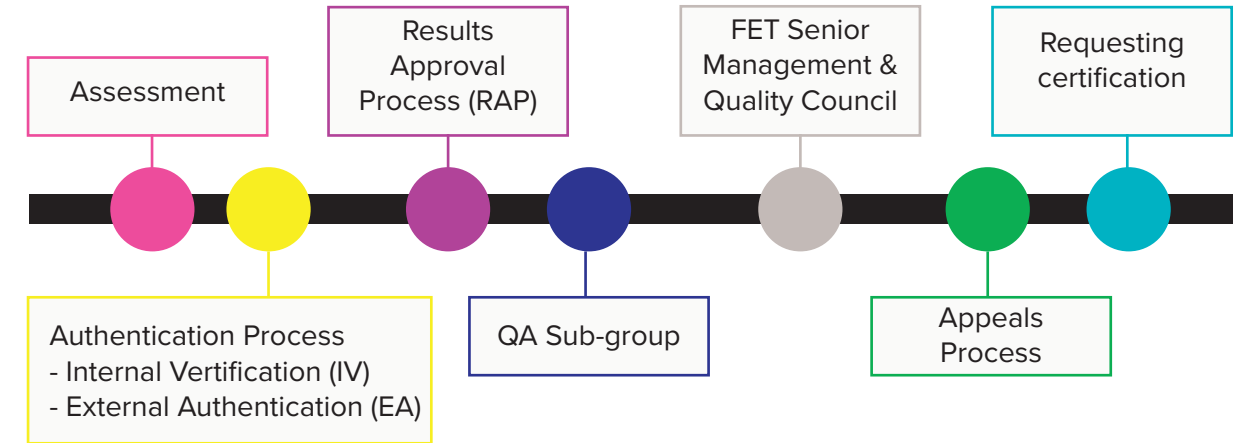
CMETB has in place an Assessment Malpractice Policy which addresses abuses of assessment process and procedures, including plagiarism. Prior to the submission of assessments, learners are required to sign a declaration of authenticity, confirming that the submitted assessment is their own work and where the work of others has been used or referenced, that appropriate referencing conventions have been applied. To further enhance the integrity of the assessment process, CMETB has access, via Moodle, to Urkund, a similarity checking software, as part of a national agreement reached by SOLAS in 2018. CMETB encourages centres and their tutors to make use of this software.

The need for a CMETB-wide approach to assessment that balances academic integrity with assessment security is currently under consideration.

With regard to the approval of learner results, CMETB has in place a number of robust processes which centres are required to complete before learner results can be formally signed off and submitted for certification.

Figure 3.16: Results Approval Process

Key Stages in the Quality Assuring Assessment Process



1. Internal Verification (IV)

The IV process is an internal process designed to ensure that learners have been assessed in a fair and consistent manner. In so doing, Internal Verifiers are required to corroborate both the assessment process and the results. This is in keeping with QQI guidelines, which state that the role of the Internal Verifier *'is to systematically check that the provider's assessment procedures have been consistently applied across assessment activities and to verify the accuracy of assessment results.'*³³

CMETB has documented the IV process in detail in its Guidelines and Procedures for Internal Verification. In April 2020 these were updated to include additional considerations in the specific context of Covid-19.

2. External Authentication (EA)

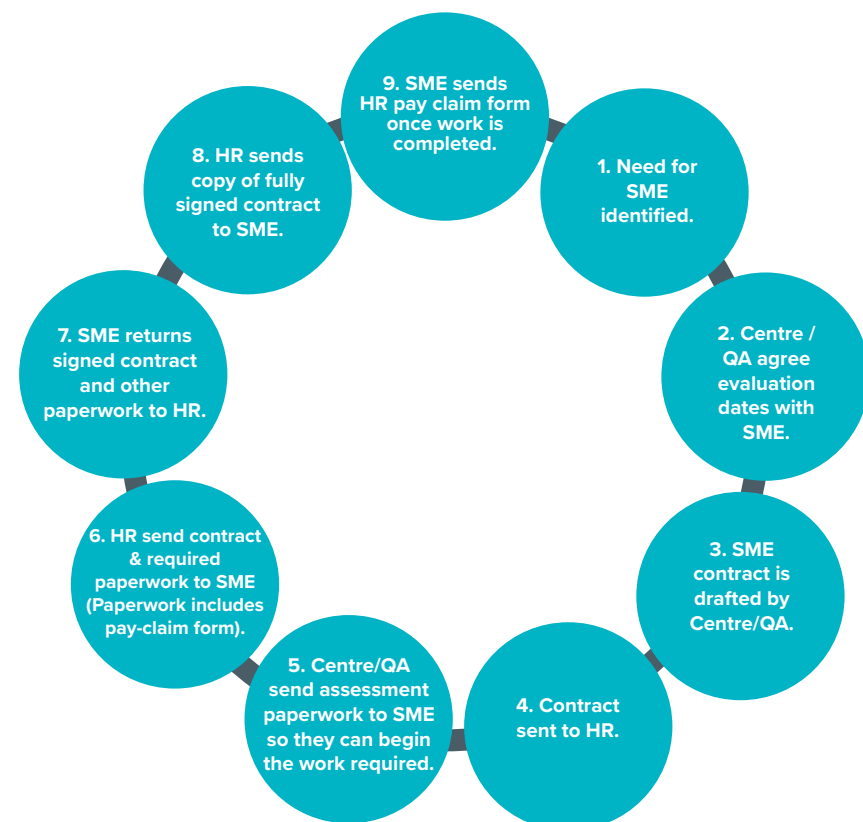
The purpose of the EA process is to provide independent confirmation that the assessment of learners has been conducted in a fair and consistent manner and in line with national standards. It provides reassurance to learners, and other stakeholders, as to CMETB's integrity and credibility in relation to assessment processes.

CMETB appoints independent External Authenticators to moderate assessment results for awards in a defined field or sub-field. CMETB requires that External Authenticators are subject matter experts in the awards area they are moderating.

The CMETB process of engaging EAs from a nationally approved database has been revised in association with HR and Finance processes.

³³ <https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/Quality%20Assuring%20Assessment%20-%20Guidelines%20for%20Providers%2C%20Revised%202013.pdf>

Figure 3.17: CMETB EA/SME³⁴ Engagement Process



3. Results Approval Panel (RAP)

The purpose of the RAP is to review learner results, reports from the IV and EA processes and to identify issues and any remedial action required. As with the IV and EA process, the work of the RAP is to safeguard the learners and to ensure that their assessment has been conducted in a fair and consistent manner, in line with national standards.

The QA Sub-group oversees the EA and RAP processes at CMETB level and recommends the approval of results to the FET Management and Quality Council, the governance group which has ultimate sign-off on results.

4. Appeals Process

Once results have been approved by FET Management and Quality Council, learners are notified of their individual assessment outcomes.

As part of this communication learners are advised that they can appeal their results within a defined timeframe should they wish to do so. These appeals are considered by a subject matter expert and learners are notified of the outcome by return. If necessary QQI is notified of any amendments to results.



3.7.2. Insights into the Integrity and Approval of Learner Results

Useful insights into the outcomes of CMETB's procedures in relation to the integrity and approval of learner results can be garnered from an analysis of recent EA reports.



³⁴ Subject Matter Expert



3.7.3. Impact on the Integrity and Approval of Learner Results

In having robust procedures in place to ensure the integrity of the assessment process, CMETB graduates can rest assured that their results are fair, consistent and valid. In fact, an analysis of both IV and EA reports highlights consistent high-quality assessment standards and methodologies used for CMETB FET learners. These assessments are regularly mentioned as models of best practice by both Internal Verifiers and External Authenticators. Each year the findings of the EA reports across CMETB are collated and shared with centres to ensure that all services are aware of the areas of best practice and aspects of provision requiring additional improvement.

CMETB also carries out audits of its programmes to ensure they are validated within specified periods to avoid the possibility of learners pursuing a programme for which CMETB is not validated, putting certification at risk. CMETB consistently receives zero non-compliance issues from QQI audits.



3.7.4. Issues with the Integrity and Approval of Learner Results

With regard to the integrity and approval of learner results, a number of key challenges and threats have been identified:

1. PLSS & QBS

Given that neither the PLSS nor QBS system are currently linked, there is significant duplication of data input occurring across both systems.

2. Recognition of Distance Travelled by Learners

PLSS is focused on capturing quantitative data for the purpose of tracking learner progression. There is, however, no tool available to capture or measure the distance travelled by learners in terms of the wider benefits gained by FET learners.

3. Future Funding of FET

The future funding of FET is signalled to be partially dependent on learner outcomes. This is a cause of concern in terms of the lack of recognition of the transformative nature of lifelong learning. Success should not, and cannot, only be measured based on learner assessment and certification outcomes, but these need to be balanced against the wider impact of the journey learners have undergone, particularly those learners that come to FET for assistance. The distanced travelled indicator needs to be reflected in any future realignment of the FET funding model.



3.7.5. Implementation Points on the Integrity and Approval of Learner Results

Based on research and consultations undertaken in the preparation of this SER, a number of enhancement opportunities connected to the integrity and approval of learner results have been identified.

1. Referencing the data arising out of the IV, EA and RAP processes, FET centres and services should continue to review and calibrate their programmes to ensure results remain in line with national comparative indicators.
2. The success of CMETB FET learners with respect to progression outcomes needs to be promoted more aggressively by the organisation.
3. In recognising the importance of relevant data, CMETB needs to train relevant staff in the area of data analytics to increase resourcing, support and decision making in this important and growing sector.
4. There is an opportunity for collaboration across FET centres to standardise assessment templates and instruments to ensure results consistently reach national standards at a CMETB-wide level.

3.8. Information and Data Management



3.8.1. Information on Systems for Information and Data Management

CMETB makes use of a wide range of data management systems and platforms to aid the collection and management of data required for the completion and evaluation of key operational processes. While many of these systems have been developed in recent years and are greatly assisting CMETB FET Services in the pursuit of its strategic objectives, there are a number of legacy systems which CMETB inherited through the transfer of the training function in 2015.

The systems that CMETB FET Services avail of perform a wide variety of functions to aid the smooth and consistent operation and provision of teaching, learning and assessment supports. **Table 3.6** highlights the wide range of information and data management systems currently used by CMETB FET Services.

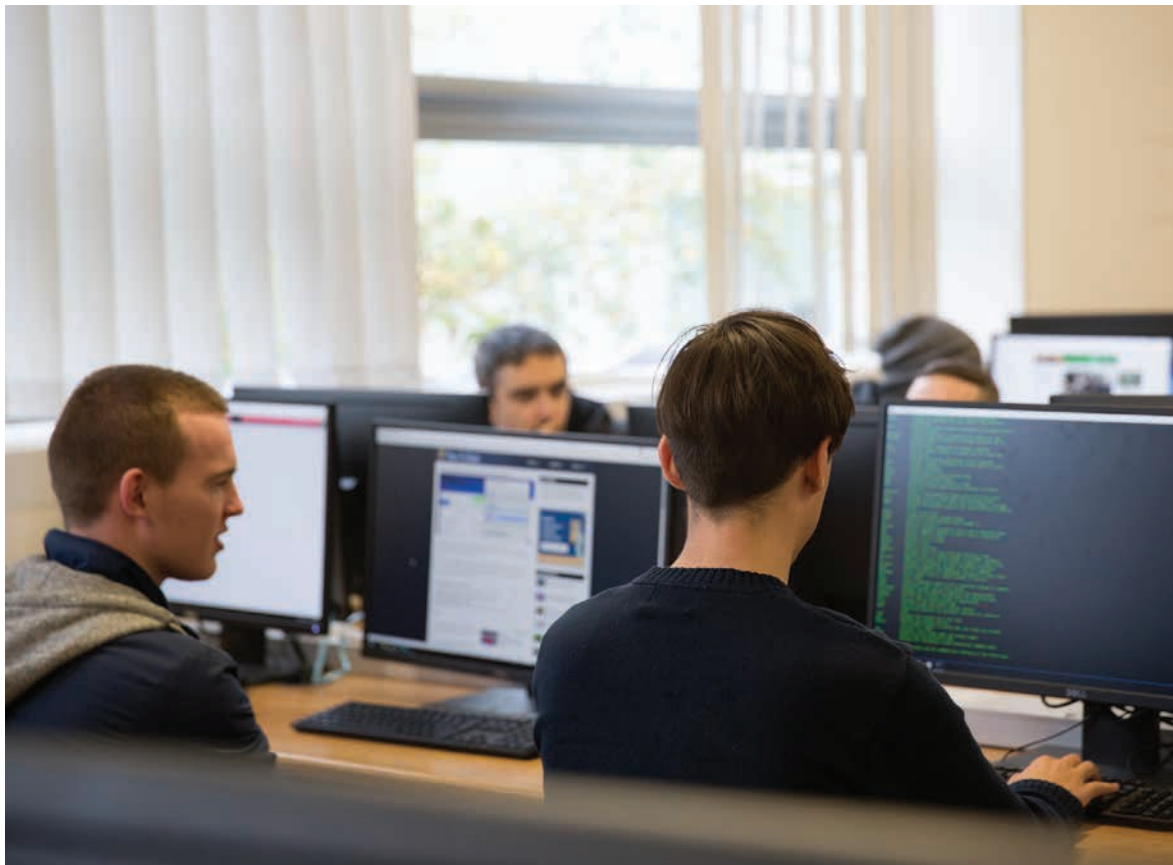


Table 3.6: CMETB Information and Data Management Systems

System Category	System Name
Learner Management Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > FETCH Courses > Programme Learner Support System (PLSS) > QBS > RCCRS > Apprenticeship Client Services > Transition Quality Assurance System (TQAS) > MIT eNROLL > Facility/EPortal
Virtual Learning Environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > eCollege > Microsoft Teams > Moodle
Human Resource Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > CoreHR > Part Time Tutor (PTT) System
Information Sharing/Management and Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Microsoft SharePoint > Microsoft Teams > MIS > eCohesion
Financial Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Purchase to Pay (P2P) > FARR > SAP > SUN Accounts > Time and Attendance Clocking System (TACS)
Certification and Validation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > RCCRS > QBS > QHub > Walled Garden > ICDL

FET Services, in consultation with the IT Department, places great emphasis on the security of the data it manages, as well as providing a secure environment for teaching, learning and assessment resources. CMETB aims to provide the most up to date protection in this regard and engages with experts to ensure appropriate investment in online security.



3.8.2. Insights into Information and Data Management

PLSS is the principal data reporting tool used in CMETB. It houses a wealth of information relating to learner intake, learner retention, learner completion and certification levels and is the key conduit for making returns to SOLAS. Work is ongoing in terms of integrating PLSS with other key systems such as Moodle, CoreHR and RCCRS.

The role of the Data Reporting Officer and the CMETB PLSS in-house Group, has been critical in disseminating key information from the PLSS National Advisory Group back to individual CMETB centres. This enables them to apply the data in the review and evaluation of their performance and in analysing the success of, and demand for, the programmes they offer in terms of employment and progression indicators.

The deployment of Office 365 applications across CMETB has also greatly assisted in the storing, management and dissemination of key data. In addition, Microsoft Teams has become a powerful tool in terms of ensuring business continuity by facilitating meetings and timely data sharing.



3.8.3. Impact of Information and Data Management

The growing availability of key data metrics via the PLSS database and other platforms has played an intrinsically important role in CMETB FET Services development as a strategically focused organisation, that measures impacts both qualitatively and quantitatively.

That being said, the wide array of systems being employed across CMETB and the lack of interconnection between many of them is causing considerable difficulties and replication and, thereby impacting on effectiveness and efficiency in data management and reporting.

PLSS is not yet a fully functional single tracking systems as it does not currently incorporate a number of operationally linked features such as learner attendance management. Equally, in terms of learner attendance and certification, there is no interplay between PLSS and QBS, meaning double entry of data is required.





3.8.4. Issues with Information and Data Management

A number of key challenges and threats to CMETB FET Services in terms of information and data management have been identified and are outlined here:

1. GDPR

CMETB is required to comply with GDPR and the Data Protection Acts 1988-2018 in terms of the processing of personal data, including collection, storage, organisation and retention. Due to the nature of FET and its diverse range of services, managing CMETB's GDPR obligations is proving challenging.

2. Data Quality

While the implementation of PLSS has been a welcome development, the quality of data extracted from the system is wholly reliant on the accuracy and completeness of the data inputted. Data inputting requires significant time and resourcing and is proving challenging for some centres due to a shortage of administrative support staff.

3. PLSS Learner Application Form

Related to the capturing of quality data, the complexity and length of the current PLSS learner application form is causing significant difficulties for certain cohorts of learners and in many instances can actually deter learners from engaging with FET provision due to the level of detail required on the form in relation to the learner requirements and literacy levels. CMETB managers and tutors do their best to explain to learners that full completion of the forms are a funding requirement and all necessary supports are provided to ensure completion of the form does not become a barrier to learning.

4. Tracking Learner Progression

Tracking learner progression outcomes once they leave CMETB is challenging and requires a significant amount of time and resources. Consequently, centres and services are not always in a position to gather this information routinely and consistently, which in turn has implications for data available to justify funding applications etc.



3.8.5. Implementation Points for Information and Data Management

Based on the assessments carried out in this area, a number of enhancement opportunities have been highlighted. It should, however, be noted that CMETB systems are all inherited, be they from SOLAS, ETBI, or QQI. Any changes will be agreed at national level.

1. The provision of Tableau licences to CMETB will help the organisation drill further informing data and make more meaningful and productive use of same in terms of informing strategic priorities and enhancing our service offering.
2. Due to the wealth of data now emerging across the FET sector, this data can be utilised to help address specific gaps and provide more targeted and customised solutions, while measuring impacts.
3. There is an opportunity for the full integration and development of PLSS as a complete learner tracking database, capable of building up a learner profile from entry to exit and beyond. Interactions between external systems such as QBS will be necessary for this to be achieved.

3.9. Public Information and Communications



3.9.1. Information on Public Information and Communications



CMETB uses a wide range of channels to communicate its service offering to learners, employers, stakeholders and the wider public, with the main conduit being the CMETB website (www.cmetb.ie).

The CMETB website provides a wide range of information relating to the services provided, details on CMETB centres and how CMETB is managed and governed, news updates and key publications. Some CMETB centres and services (Cavan Institute and Monaghan Institute, for example) maintain their own websites and contain information relevant to the range of services and supports they specifically provide.

All FET courses are publicly advertised via the FETCH website (www.fetchcourses.ie) and uploads contain all relevant course information including, entry criteria, target award, course commencement and duration and application procedures. DSP staff are also able to refer clients directly to courses via BOMi which also links to FETCH.

The appointment of a dedicated Communications Officer has enabled CMETB to maintain an active social media presence with a variety of ETB and centre/service specific Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram pages in operation. These pages are used to keep learners, employers, stakeholders and members of the general public updated on new courses and news feeds.

The Communications Officer also works closely with FET centres/services and assists them in the development of promotional materials and press briefings, as well as the wider promotion of CMETB.



3.9.2. Insights into Public Information and Communications

The FET learner survey highlighted the top 3 methods that helped learners decide to participate on a CMETB course. (Table 3.7)

Table 3.7: Top 3 Methods for Deciding to Attend a CMETB Course

Method	2020 (n=421)	Method	2021 (n=503)
1. Word of mouth/testimonial	31%	1. College/Centre Open Days/Nights	31%
2. Information from CMETB website/centre website	28%	2. Information from CMETB website/centre website	28%
3. College/Centre Open Days/Nights	24%	3. Word of mouth/testimonials	26%

While the numbers and order varied slightly, the three primary sources of information for CMETB FET learners has remained consistent over the past two years. Covid-19 has most likely had an influence on this ranking. The survey data for both years also highlighted that notices in church bulletins and interviews on local radio were amongst the least popular methods of advertising and promotion. However, CMETB cannot measure the indirect impact of these media with older age groups who are often influencers in programme decision making processes.

The FETCH website has become the go to place for registering for the wide variety of courses provided by CMETB. Even a cursory review of the breadth of courses advertised on FETCH helps demonstrate how CMETB consistently delivers a diverse range of education and training for the public and communities of Cavan and Monaghan, which is reflective of our mission, vision and core values.

In addition, the appointment of a Workforce Development Officer has helped increase awareness of the supports and services available to employers and employees through CMETB. The many success stories evident through the provision of apprenticeships, traineeships, Skills for Work and Skills to Advance in operation across various centres, forms the basis of ongoing communications to learners and stakeholders.



3.9.3. Impact of Public Information and Communications

CMETB places great importance on providing accurate and up-to-date information to the public in a variety of formats to ensure it reaches as many (potential) learners as possible. While CMETB believes that this is the best and most impactful way of advertising its services, it does not currently have a mechanism for measuring the impact of its public information and communications. This is something that CMETB FET Services is keen to address, along with a number of other key challenges and threats at national and local level.

CMETB FET has also developed a Customer Charter which can be accessed [here](#). The impact of this will be measured over time.

Figure 3.18: Public Information and Communications



CASE STUDY 7

ADULT LEARNERS WEEK

CMETB' Adult Learners Week in conjunction with AONTAS formed part of the National Adult Learning Festival which seeks to encourage participation from young and old in a range of vocational and hobby type courses.

The theme of this year's Adult Learners' festival was "Building Back Better Together". Classes were offered in a range of subjects including make-up and care of mature skin, gardening tips for spring, cooking, art, flower arranging, IT skills and accessing the library's online resources. Learners flocked to these classes with some tutors hosting in excess of 50 learners at a time.

In total, CMETB Adult Education Services, delivered taster sessions to 1500 learners during the week with additional learners participating in courses the following week. The appetite for online learning it seems is insatiable and particularly so for people, who for one reason or another, cannot leave home. CMETB's Adult Education Service has made a suite of unaccredited programmes available online for this term and will continue to do so post-COVID in response to this new and emerging need.



3.9.4. Issues with Public Information and Communications

Based on the research and consultations undertaken in the preparation of this SER, a number of challenges and threats in respect of public information and communications were identified:

1. Building a shared awareness of CMETB

Despite it being almost 8 years since the establishment of ETBs, the legacy of the VEC brand remains and this is impacting on building a greater awareness of CMETB and making it a household name across the wider Cavan-Monaghan region.

2. Building a shared understanding of FET

There is also a lack of common understanding of what FET is and what it stands for. While this is a national issue, it is impacting on CMETB. With numerous streams of funding and naming conventions, which mean nothing to the general public, there is widespread confusion about what FET is.

The FET College of the Future model as espoused in both the national FET Strategy and in CMETB's FET Strategy, aims to simplify FET provision through the creation of three clear pathways as outlined in **Figure 3.15**.

This approach will help CMETB simplify FET provision and make it more visible, understandable and learner focused, thereby better aligned to CMETB's mission, vision and core values.

3. Public and internal messaging

CMETB needs to clarify and simplify its core messaging to the public. There are currently too many points of contact within CMETB due to the diverse nature of provision which is resulting in the lack of clear and consistent messaging and information emanating out of FET Services.

Central to this is ensuring that FET staff understand who CMETB is and what it does to ensure that staff are sharing correct information and acting as positive ambassadors for the organisation. The current lack of FET-wide internal staff mailing lists is a barrier in this regard as it means that staff can be regularly omitted from receiving key updates/data relevant to the provision of important public information and data. The possibility of having central admissions is being reviewed as part of our Future FET Strategy.

4. Keeping information up-to-date

Due to the constant levels of change within FET, it is proving challenging to keep public information hubs, such as websites, updated with the current versions of policies and procedures. This is also associated with resourcing.

In relation to FETCH, keeping module descriptors of courses updated is also proving challenging given that many programmes are outdated and current under review. While this is a national issue, CMETB's cross-functional auditing currently in operation between PLSS and QBS is mitigating this issue somewhat.



3.9.5. Implementation Points for Public Information and Communications

There are a number of enhancement opportunities which have been identified to aid CMETB in improving the provision of information to the general public.

1. There is an opportunity to enhance internal communication amongst staff through existing networks and media, as well as through new methods, such as the recent development of a QA newsletter – ConexUs!
2. CMETB FET Services should continue to work with the Communications Officer to increase its presence on social media to promote services and supports available, as well as enhancing awareness of CMETB's mission, vision and core values.
3. CMETB is currently in the process of developing a new website and once launched, this will provide an opportunity for CMETB FET to streamline its message and to ensure public information is up-to-date, consistent and relevant.
4. CMETB also needs to standardise its branding, making sure that the same logo is being used by all centres and that there is a standardised format to signage on buildings. This will help build public awareness of CMETB. There is an opportunity to do this in conjunction with the FET College of the Future Strategy.
5. Promote FETCH courses across the region as the one stop shop for gaining information on FET courses provided and for registration purposes. Direct links to FETCH courses should be included on the new CMETB website.
6. CMETB needs to update SharePoint to house version controlled data for access by staff.

4 TEACHING, LEARNING & ASSESSMENT



4.1. Learning Environment



4.1.1. Information on the Learning Environment

While CMETB is fully committed to providing a safe, inclusive and supportive learning environment at all times, it is important to understand, in the first instance, what motivates learners to pursue FET studies. This is so services and supports can be tailored to harness learner motivation, thereby giving them the best possible chance to be successful in their endeavours. In this regard, the top three motivators for CMETB FET learners in 2020 and 2021, according to the learner surveys, are outlined in [Table 4.1](#).

Table 4.1: Top 3 reasons why learners chose CMETB FET Services, 2020 - 2021

Reason ³⁵	2020 (n=421)	Reason	2021 (n=503)
1. To gain a qualification	227 (54%)	1. To gain a qualification	269 (53.4%)
2. To learn a new skill	213 (50.6%)	2. To learn a new skill	200 (39.8%)
3. To find employment	156 (37%)	3. To find employment	169 (33.6%)

In its commitment to supporting learners throughout their educational journey, CMETB has invested significantly in a range of measures aimed at ensuring the best possible experience for all FET learners.

New Facilities

In recent years, CMETB has delivered new facilities, while also working to modernise its existing stock of FET buildings. Such developments include a new purpose-built, state of the art Monaghan Institute, provision of modern, fully equipped facilities for Training Services and relocation of Adult Education staff and provision in Monaghan to a single site location at Dún Mhuire. Cootehill Youthreach has also relocated to a bigger, more modern facility.

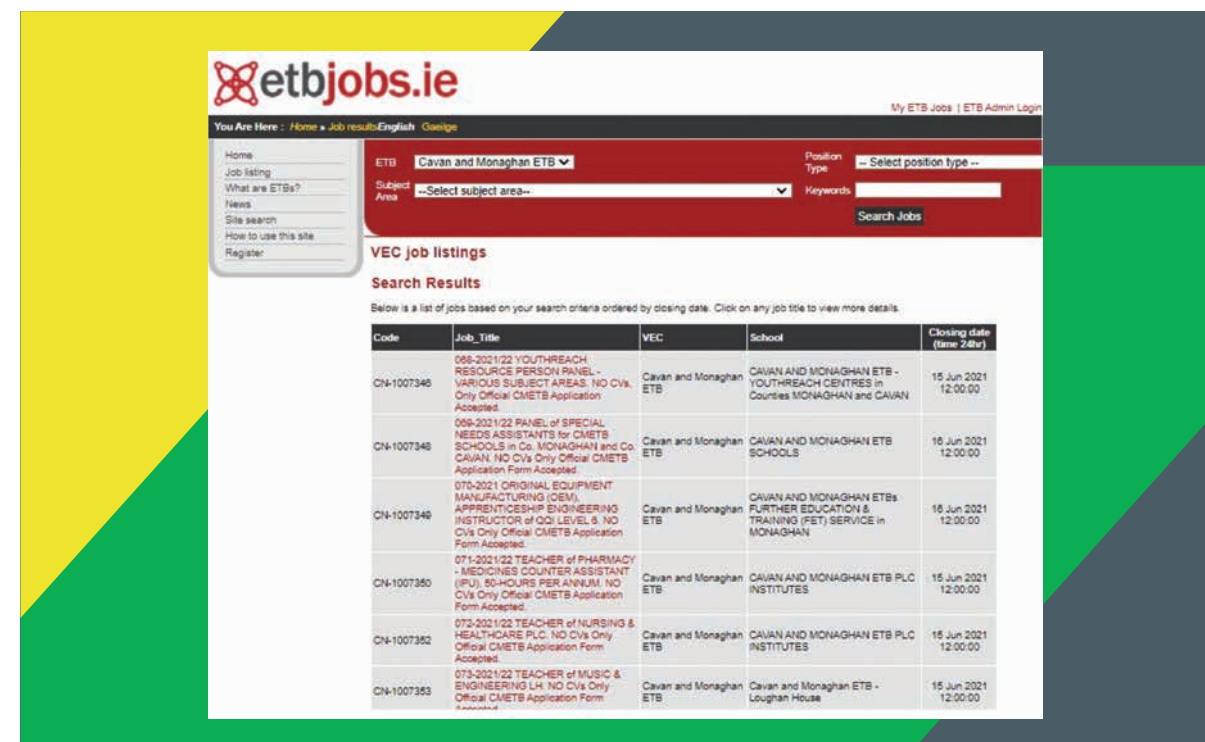
³⁵ Learners had the option of selecting multiple reasons in response to this question.

The CMETB FET Strategy 2021 – 2024 outlines a number of key capital investment priorities aimed at providing further modern, fit for purpose and accessible facilities to help CMETB enhance the learning environment. These projects include:



Quality Teaching and Learning

While modern, fit for purpose facilities are important, CMETB is cognisant of the importance of providing a supportive and inclusive learning environment through the provision of quality teaching and learning experiences. As such, CMETB is committed to the recruitment of high-quality professional teaching staff. Most interviews for FET teaching posts now require applicants to demonstrate their teaching abilities via a short presentation. The composition of selection boards ensures appropriate FET representatives are capable of making informed decisions when recommending applicants for appointment or placement on a panel. The value of having such robust recruitment practices is borne out in the learning environment.



Furthermore, CMETB believes that the creation of a supportive relationship between staff and learners is central to the development of a consistent, high-quality standard of teaching and learning. This is a particular strength within CMETB as highlighted by staff in the development of a SCOT analysis. In addition, this relationship is not limited to the relationship between the learner and practitioner, but rather includes all staff who play a role in creating an inclusive learning environment. This includes management, administrative and support staff, IT staff and ancillary staff. CMETB has a FET Customer Charter which supports engagement with all stakeholders, including learners.

Learner Voice

The learner relationship is also a two-way process, and CMETB is determined to help learners find their voice and contribute to the enhancement of the learning experience. Consequently, CMETB has invested significant time and resources into promoting the learner voice and encouraging learners to get involved in the future development and enhancement of FET. An annual learner survey and forum have become key tools in promoting the learner voice.

In an attempt to enhance opportunities for the learner voice to be amplified, a Learner Advisory Network (LAN) was established in early 2021. The purpose of the LAN, which included representatives from Cavan and Monaghan Institutes, Adult Education and Training Services, was to encourage and support learners to promote the learner survey and outputs from the forum amongst their peers, whilst also developing ideas for learner-centred feedback and feedforward activities. Some of Cavan and Monaghan Institute learners on the LAN were also members of the Student Councils in the Institutes and were able to use these platforms to promote the survey and forum. To assist the learners in their endeavours, posters were devised and circulated to help explain and promote the survey.

Figure 4.1: Learner Survey & Forum Posters 2021



4.1.2. Insights into the Learning Environment

The FET learner surveys attracted high levels of engagement with **421** and **503 responses** received in 2020 and 2021 respectively. Not only did these high levels of responses generate a wealth of valuable data, but it also allowed CMETB to compare trends across both years and track improvements or indeed any declines in service provision. In this regard, many of the main items for concern arising out of the 2020 learner survey have been incorporated into CMETB's revised QIP 2020 – 2021. The results of these surveys have also informed much of the content of this SER.



In addition to the learner surveys, CMETB facilitated and hosted a number of learner forums. The first forum was hosted by AONTAS, as part of their National FET Forum Regional Events, on 25th March 2019 with 59 learners from across full-time and part-time FET provision in attendance. Following the event AONTAS circulated a survey to attendees, which 58 learners completed. While the full report can be accessed [here](#), a summary of the key findings that emerged from the forum and survey are presented in [Table 4.2](#).

Table 4.2: Key findings of National FET Learner Forum for CMETB, 2019³⁶

1. What was your experience of entering FET?	
Advertisement	> Need for increased and more diverse forms of advertising
Reasons for Joining FET	> To gain employment > To increase everyday life skills
Course Entry Process	> Learners are satisfied with course entry processes
Course Options	> Learners would like more options, particularly for popular modules > Learners would also like more options provided in each community
IT Skills	> Learners would like more IT support
2. How has your FET programme met your needs as a learner?	
Benefits of FET	> Confidence building and new social interactions are some of the main benefits of FET
Tutors	> Majority of learners praised tutors for their support > Learners would like to be treated equally by all tutors across all centres
Course Content	> Clearer and more accurate information on course content required
Course Assignments	> More instructions required in assignment briefs > Assignments to be more spread out across course duration
Guidance Service	> Guidance Service needs to be better advertised, and made available across all FET centres > More support required in establishing progression pathways
FET Satisfaction	> High levels of satisfaction > Would recommend CMETB to others

Most of the findings presented in [Table 4.2](#) formed a baseline for the 2020 FET Learner Survey so that enhancements and developments in respect of these could be tracked over time.

As a follow up, CMETB planned to host its own learner forum on 31st March 2020. 165 learners signalled their interest in attending, but due to the onset of Covid-19 this event had to be cancelled.

AONTAS, however, facilitated a virtual learner forum on 9th June 2020 focused on assessing the impact of Covid-19 as part of CMETB's preparation for its response to QQI's call for research inputs on the impact of Covid-19 on teaching, learning and assessment. 16 learners participated in the forum and the outcomes of the discussions will be included in [Chapter 5](#).

CMETB hosted a virtual learner forum on 23rd March 2021 which was attended by 46 learners. The theme of the forum was *#StayingConnected* and responded to concerns raised by learners in the learner survey or via the LAN. The primary focus was learner wellbeing and learner assessment supports, and incorporated inputs from a number of speakers including:

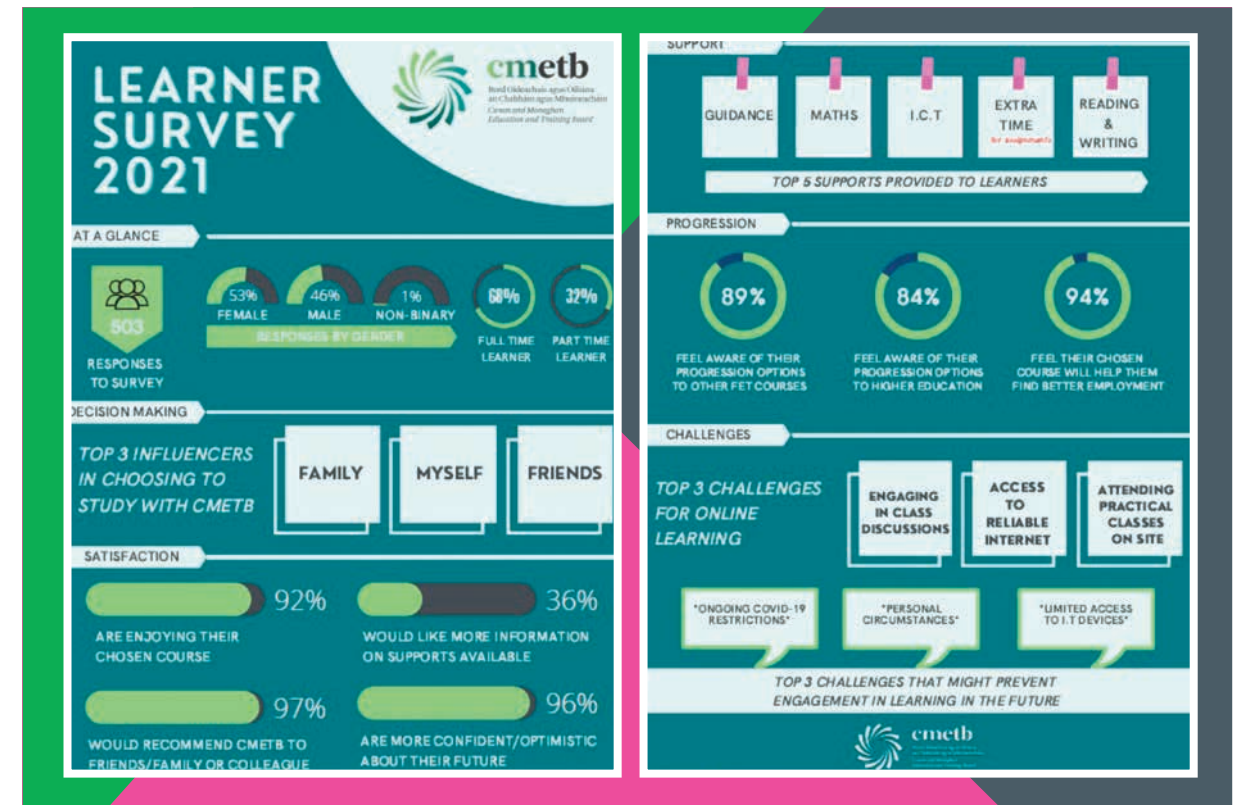


Feedback from the event was captured via a Menitmeter Survey, the results of which are outlined in [Table 4.3](#). As a follow-up to the forum, an infographic (See [Figure 4.2](#)) displaying the key findings of the 2021 Learner Survey was circulated to attendees along with copies of the Harvard Referencing and Academic Writing Guides which were developed nationally for FET learners by the Further Education Support Service (FESS) in consultation with ETBs.

³⁶ AONTAS, 2019

Table 4.3: Feedback on the 2021 CMETB FET Virtual Learner Forum

What are your key takeaways from today's Learner Forum? (n=14)
> Advice on keeping positive and steps to take stress out of daily life
> Very positive, plenty of emphasis on mental health
> Good success stories and sincere speakers
> Stay positive, plan ahead and make your health a priority
> Plan and organise your study
> Overall the event was very good
> Keep busy, get a hobby or do something; don't just sit around doing nothing
> Very well organised event
What topics would you like to see covered at future learner events? (n=11)
> Dealing with stress
> Learner educational journeys with current learner input
> Dealing with online study and keeping motivated online
> How to increase confidence
> More training in the use of IT e.g. Zoom etc.
> How to balance work and education
How long should these learner events be in future? (n=10)
> Responses ranged from 90 minutes to 3 hours maximum, while one learner stated that it, if it was a live event, it could be a full day event.

Figure 4.2: Learner Survey 2021 Infographic

CMETB also engaged with staff via the FET Staff Survey 2020 and a number of questions in the teaching staff version of this research (**n=166**) related to the teaching and learning environment. Some of the key insights arising from the Learner and Staff surveys were as follows:





1. Learner Induction

CMETB recognises the importance of providing learner induction sessions at the start of programmes. Of the 503 learners who responded to the 2021 FET learner survey, 85% stated that they completed induction, an increase from 74% in 2020. Of those 85%, 81% completed a face-to-face induction, while the remaining 19% completed their induction virtually. Of the 15% who stated they did not complete induction in 2021, the precise reason for this is not known. However, it is felt that there may be an issue with terminology used within specific centres and this is something CMETB is looking to address.

In relation to the topics covered during learner induction, [Table 4.4](#) outlines the top 5 topics covered in both 2020 and 2021.

Table 4.4: Top 5 topics covered in learner induction 2020 and 2021

Topic	2020 (n=421)	Topic	2021 (n=503)
1. Details of course content	254 (60%)	1. Details of course content	350 (70%)
2. Course timetable	233 (55%)	2. Course timetable	321 (63%)
3. Details of course assessment	184 (44%)	3. Details of course assessment	254 (50%)
4. Details of tutor expectations of learners	162 (38%)	4. Covid-19 protocols for face-to-face classes	246 (49%)
5. Relevant CMETB policies and procedures	154 (37%)	5. Details of tutor expectations of learners	223 (44%)

It is interesting to note that policies and procedures slipped out of the top five in 2021. It is not known however, to what extent policies and procedures were embedded in the explanation of Covid-19 protocols at induction, for example, in relation to ERT and Alternative Assessments.



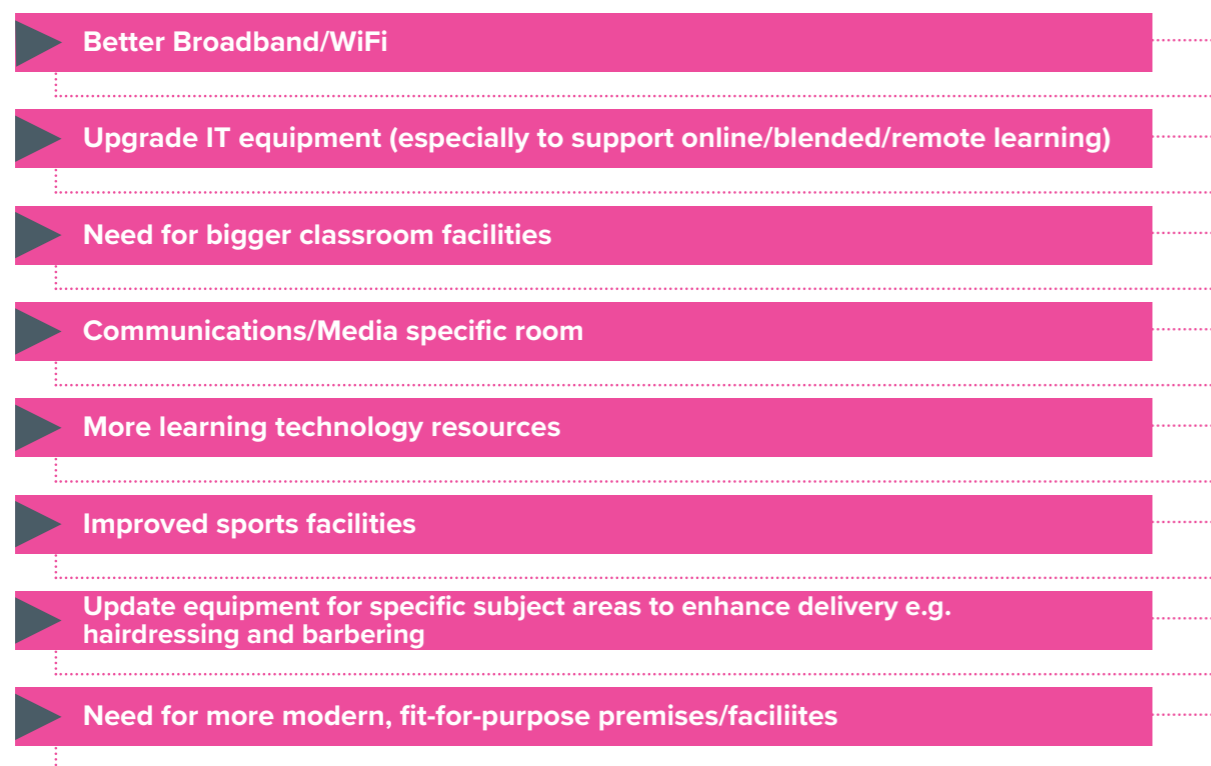
These findings, however, show consistency with how various FET centres present their learner induction programmes, with the only significant alteration being the introduction of information on Covid-19 protocols for face-to-face engagements.

2. FET Facilities

In the teaching staff version of the 2020 FET Staff Survey, a number of questions were posed on the quality of facilities from a teaching perspective. In response, 70% of tutors/instructors stated that current facilities within their respective service/centre were adequate to address their teaching needs, with 14% stating No. The remaining 16% were unsure either way.

For the 14% who stated that current facilities were not adequate, a number of suggestions for how facilities could be improved were identified and these are summarised in [Figure 4.3](#).

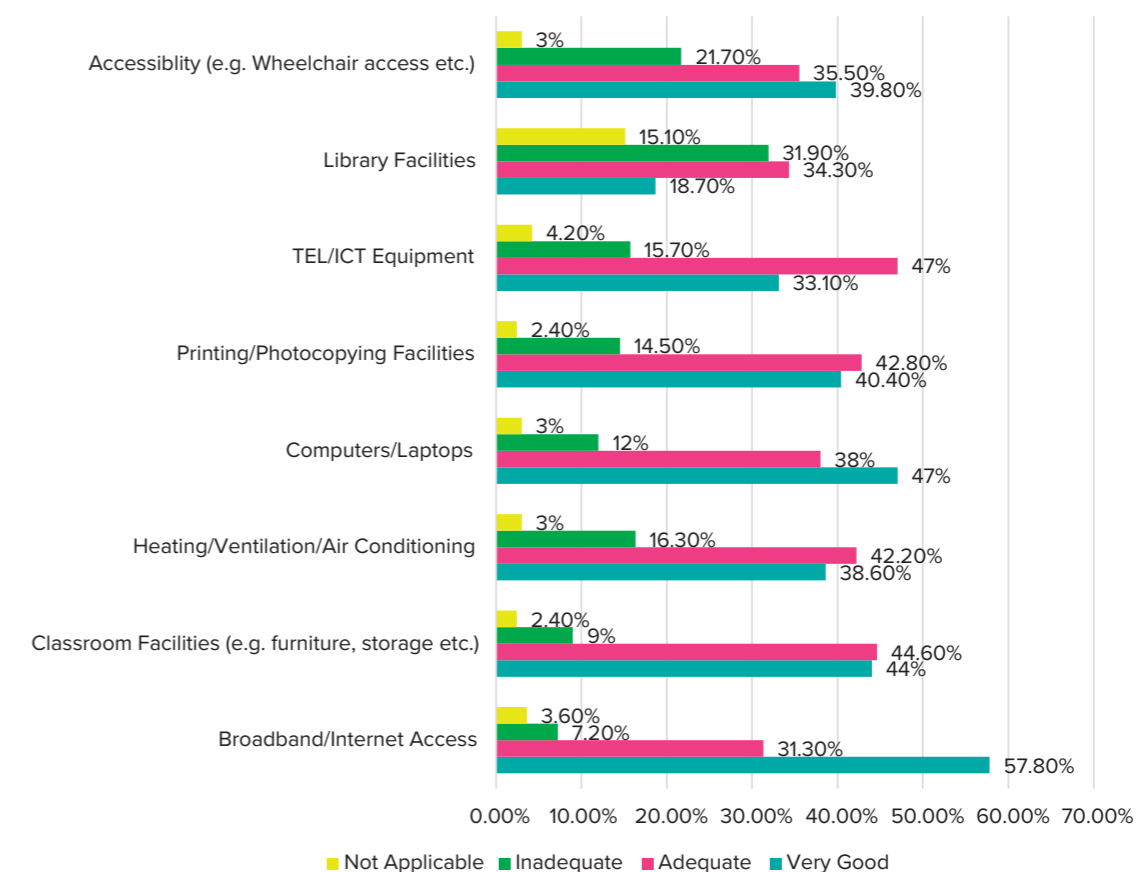
Figure 4.3: How CMETB could improve facilities to adequately meet teaching needs (n=23)



It is important to note that each of these suggestions are firmly focused on enhancing the learning environment for learners and may have become amplified issues in the context of required responses to Covid-19.

In terms of providing further insights into tutors and instructors perceptions of the current facilities within CMETB Centres, tutors/instructors were asked to rate them as highlighted in **Figure 4.4**.

Figure 4.4: Tutor/Instructor Perceptions of current CMETB facilities



In relation to library facilities, it is important to note that only Cavan and Monaghan Institutes have dedicated onsite libraries. Adult Education Services, however, have strong relationships with the library services in counties Cavan and Monaghan. This relationship is supported by a joint national protocol between ETBI and the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA). In support of this, meetings between Adult Education Services and the library services take place twice annually to ascertain how best to work together. Collaboration on a range of programmes and events also takes place including:



The ongoing development of the ETBI Digital Library will also be of benefit to FET learners.

In terms of teaching methods utilised in course delivery:



4.1.3. Impact of the Learning Environment

The learner surveys provided some evidence of the impact of CMETB's efforts in terms of providing an inclusive, caring and supportive learning environment. This data, outlined in [Tables 4.5a](#) and [4.5b](#), explains why learners consistently rate CMETB so highly.

Table 4.5a: Overall satisfaction with CMETB FET Services, 2020

Criteria (n=421)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
I am enjoying my chosen course and I am finding the workload manageable.	54.8%	40.7%	3.3%	1%	0.2%
The course is meeting my expectations/goals.	51.4%	44.2%	2.9%	1%	0.5%
I need more information on who to contact if I need more information/support.	19.2%	26.3%	37.1%	9.8%	7.6%
I am developing personally from my participation on this course.	50.4%	46.9%	1.7%	0.2%	0.7%
CMETB provides a wide range of courses in centres/locations across Cavan and Monaghan.	50%	44.9%	2.7%	0.5%	1.9%

Table 4.5b: Overall satisfaction with CMETB FET Services, 2021

Criteria (n=501)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
I am enjoying my chosen course and I am finding the workload manageable.	43.7%	46.8%	5%	3.2%	1.3%
The course is meeting my expectations/goals.	41%	49.4%	8%	1.3%	0.7%
I need more information on who to contact if I need more information/support.	12.2%	23%	43.4%	12.4%	9.4%
I am developing personally from my participation on this course.	42.4%	51.6%	4%	1.3%	0.8%
CMETB provides a wide range of courses in centres/locations across Cavan and Monaghan.	43.3%	49.3%	2.1%	0.3%	5.1%

Overall, this data show consistently high levels of satisfaction with CMETB FET Services, which is very encouraging. That being said, the results presented here point to some enhancement opportunities. In particular, CMETB clearly needs to do more in terms of informing learners of who to contact if they need more information or support. In this regard, as CMETB works to streamline its provision in pursuit of the FET College of the Future, there is a clear opportunity for CMETB to map provision and support services and to simplify the communication channels through the designation of single points of contact where possible. A central admissions office is being considered to support this work.

Furthermore, in terms of the quality of course delivery at CMETB, responses to the FET learner surveys show high levels of satisfaction with provision as summarised in [Tables 4.6a](#) and [4.6b](#).

Table 4.6a: Learner opinions of course delivery at CMETB, 2020

Criteria (n=421)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
Course objectives are made clear from the outset.	56.8%	40.1%	2.1%	0.2%	0.7%
Course materials are useful and aligned to the course objectives.	57%	40.1%	1.9%	0.2%	0.7%
Course content is current and up-to-date.	55.1%	39.9%	3.6%	1%	0.5%
Course content is applicable to my personal/work situation.	52.7%	42.3%	3.3%	0.5%	1.2%

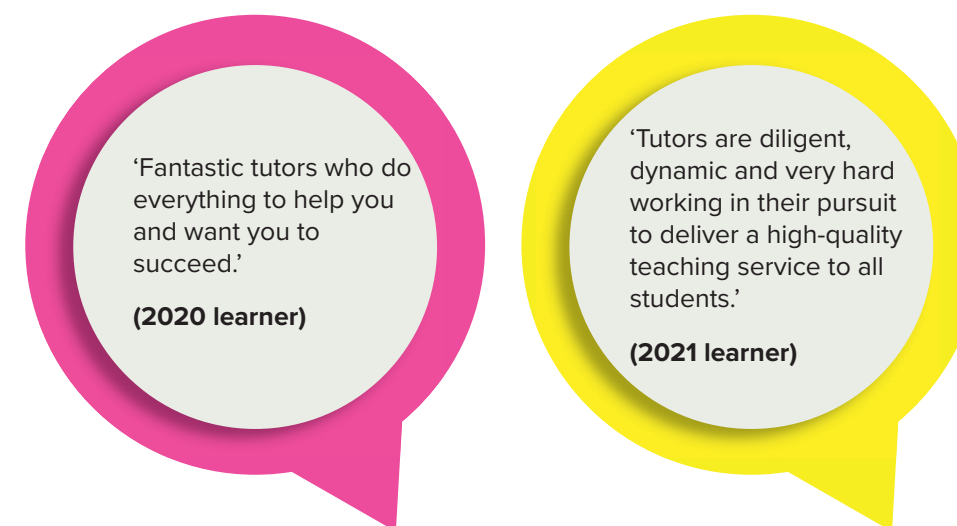
Table 4.6b: Learner opinions of course delivery at CMETB, 2021

Criteria (n=501)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
Course objectives are made clear from the outset.	43.4%	54%	2.3%	0.2%	0.5%
Course materials are useful and aligned to the course objectives.	42.2%	54%	1.6%	0.8%	1.4%
Course content is current and up-to-date.	45%	49.1%	5%	0.6%	0.6%
Course content is applicable to my personal/work situation.	42%	48.8%	5.2%	0.8%	3.3%
Course lends itself to Online Learning.	29%	48%	13%	8.4%	1.8%

This data further reinforces the high levels of satisfaction with the quality of teaching offered by CMETB. However, while satisfaction rates have remained consistently high over the past two years, there has been a noticeable downward movement in the 'strongly agree' to the 'agree' category across all criteria. Some of this decline may relate to the impact of ERT. CMETB will continue to monitor these trends and will work to identify any other barriers or issues that may have contributed to this decline.

Quality of Teaching and Learning

In 2021, 96% of learners who responded to the learner survey (n=503) stated that they would recommend CMETB to their friends, family and/or work colleagues, while the corresponding figure was at 98% for the 2020 learner survey (n=421). In providing reasons for their recommending of CMETB, references to the quality of tutors features prominently. Examples of the feedback relating to tutors included:



CASE STUDY 8

LEARNER TESTIMONIALS

For Monaghan Institute Student Testimonial Sylwia Fryzlewicz Interview, [please click here](#)

For Monaghan Institute Student Testimonial Shannon Murphy Interview [please click here](#)

For Monaghan Institute Student Testimonial Michael Boyle Interview [please click here](#)

For Monaghan Institute Student Testimonial Amy Monahan [please click here](#)

For a selection of other learner testimonials [please click here](#)



4.1.4. Issues with the Learning Environment

Based on consultations undertaken in preparation of this SER, a number of noteworthy challenges and threats to the learning environment have been identified:

1. Some centres and services such as Cavan Institute and Adult Education are operating across multiple sites and this is preventing the development of a cohesive learning environment and acts as a barrier for some learners in accessing certain services and/or supports.
2. In terms of carrying out minor upgrades and maintenance to CMETB's existing buildings and facilities, procurement procedures can be quite cumbersome and often result in delays in advancing projects.
3. With a number of services operating out of rented accommodation, their ability to expand or modify facilities to best suit their learners' needs is limited. Health and Safety requirements is a particular challenge in this regard.
4. There is difficulty in sustaining momentum with the Learner Advisory Network due to the transient nature of many FET learners. For example, in PLC learners remain on average for 9 months before moving on to HE or into employment.



4.1.5. Implementation Points for the Learning Environment

In terms of improving the learning environment for current and future FET learners, the following enhancement opportunities have been identified.

1. SOLAS' recent announcement of a dedicated FET capital funding stream is a welcome development and provides an opportunity for CMETB to advance the development of new FET facilities, as well as allowing for the upgrading of existing ones.
2. With the growing importance of work-based learning and assessment, there are ongoing opportunities for FET Services to develop new and innovative programmes and supports to help meet the needs of industry across the Cavan-Monaghan region. The creation of a Curriculum Development Unit will assist with this work.
3. In terms of encouraging and facilitating learners to become more engaged in their own learning journey, as well as contributing to the enhancement of FET Services through CMETB's commitment to the learner voice, CMETB is focused on establishing a permanent Learner Advisory Network. A schedule of activity in line with the academic year is also under consideration.
4. In developing a Learner Advisory Network and encouraging learners to advocate for themselves and their peers, CMETB is currently exploring options for the delivery of a leadership programme for learner representatives.

4.2. Assessment of Learners



4.2.1. Information on the Assessment of Learners

In keeping with its mission, vision and core values, CMETB is committed to ensuring a fully accessible, consistent and transparent assessment process for all learners. As outlined in **Chapter 3**, CMETB has a broad range of assessment specific policies and procedures, all of which are focused on ensuring the integrity and validity of the assessment process.

In the intervening period, while work advances on merging legacy systems into a single FET QA system, CMETB operates two assessment processes across FET. In relation to Further Education, which incorporates PLC, Adult Education and Youthreach provision, assessments are designed and carried out by the tutor, as internal assessor, in line with the requirements set out in the relevant QQI component and programme specifications. The assessment guidelines and marking criteria are monitored to ensure that they are reflective of the Learning Outcomes stipulated in the component specification.



In terms of Training Services, Assessment Instrument Specifications (AIS) are utilised, a legacy of the training provision previously delivered by FÁS.

In addition, CMETB also offers a wide range of non-QQI awards, such as City and Guilds, and CIDESCO, and centres offering these qualifications are required to comply with the relevant assessment criteria, guidelines and processes as stipulated by the awarding body. The QA Team supports centres in this regard and maintains details of the relevant QA agreements in place with awarding bodies.



4.2.2. Insights into the Assessment of Learners

CMETB is committed to ensuring the fair and consistent assessment of learners, while encouraging learners to take responsibility for their own learning journey. To this end, fairness and transparency across all levels of the assessment process is critical, and the learner surveys provide some insights into how CMETB has been performing in this regard.

95% of learners who responded to the learner surveys in 2020 and 2021 stated that the assessment timetable/plan was clear, while 92% of learners in both years felt that their assignments/assessments were well spread out across the entire duration of the course.

In terms of providing feedback to learners,

91%

of learners in 2020 were given regular verbal and written feedback.

97%

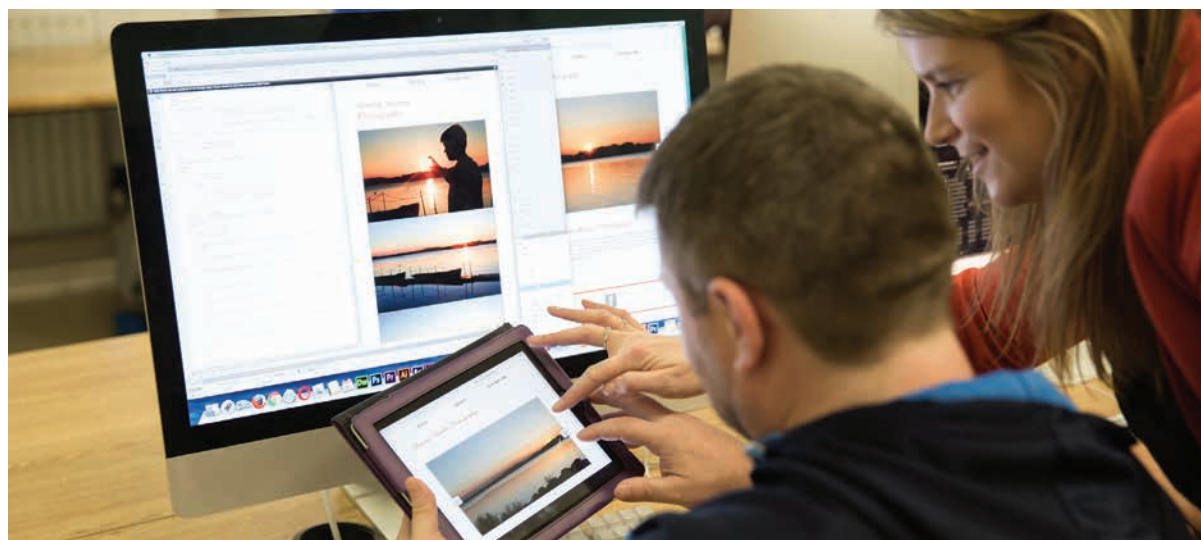
of learners in 2021 were given regular verbal and written feedback.

While, the 2021 figure represents an improvement, the fact that 3% of learners were not given regular feedback is not satisfactory as CMETB aims to provide feedback to 100% of learners. The reason for this difference is being reviewed.

Equality is critical to ensuring that learners have the same opportunities when completing assignments/assessments and the fact that 62% of learners, in 2021, stated that the additional supports they required to complete their assignments/assessments were provided is positive. However, with 32% not requiring any supports, this meant that 6% of learners who required supports felt that they did not receive the necessary support is a cause for concern. Furthermore, the fact that there were also 6% of learners in a similar situation in 2020, highlights the need for remedial action to be taken to address this issue. It would appear that there is an opportunity to improve communications and intervene with actions earlier in assessment processes.

Verification of Assessment

CMETB has in place a robust assessment verification process which includes Internal Verification (IV), External Authentication (EA) and the convening of a Results Approval Panel (RAP). Each of these processes are key steps in the assessment verification process as they provide different levels of independent oversight, while confirming whether or not the assessment process and results awarded are in line with national standards. Equally, CMETB places great value in monitoring these reports in terms of identifying both models of good practice and further opportunities for enhancement. Issues arising from any of these processes are highlighted and feedback is given to the relevant service managers/co-ordinators and practitioners. Where required appropriate PL&D supports are put in place.



Work Experience

Work placements are a key element of the learning process by providing learners with an opportunity to put their theoretical learnings into practice in an applied environment. The learner survey results help highlight the importance of work experience to FET learners.

In 2021, 26% of learners surveyed completed work experience as part of their chosen course with 57% of these stating that their ability to find a suitable work placement was affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Despite this difficulty in finding suitable placements, 63% confirmed that they were able to find a work placement by themselves. 92% of learners found the work placement useful in developing an applied understanding of their programme of study.

In 2020, 46% of learners surveyed completed work experience during their course with 79% of these securing their own work placement. 92% of learners found the work placement useful to them.

Reasons why learners did or did not find their work placement of benefit

“There is a difference in the general information and techniques taught in a college and the specific tasks required when working in the industry. From the act of physically participating in the actual work required, I got a better understanding of what is required and the stresses of the work load out there.”

(2021 learner)

“It let me take part and get hands on with treating clients”

(2020 learner)

“It gives us real world experience and awareness of the sector we will be going into after our course is complete.”

(2021 learner)

While these comments are representative of the largely positive feedback received, some learners did not have as positive an experience. The following comment highlights an issue in relation to ensuring learners get the full value from completing a work placement:

“Given my previous employment history, the placement taught me little or no new skills. Given my work with sport in Cavan and Monaghan, I was accustomed to the environment and it didn’t provide any new challenges.”

(2020 learner)

This shows that work experience needs to add value for the learner and encourage them to move outside their comfort zone and perhaps look for opportunities which will help them develop new skills in their chosen area. However, comments such as these could have been more widespread in the survey feedback given that a number of learners stated that they completed their placement in their existing workplace.





4.2.3. Impact on Assessment of Learners

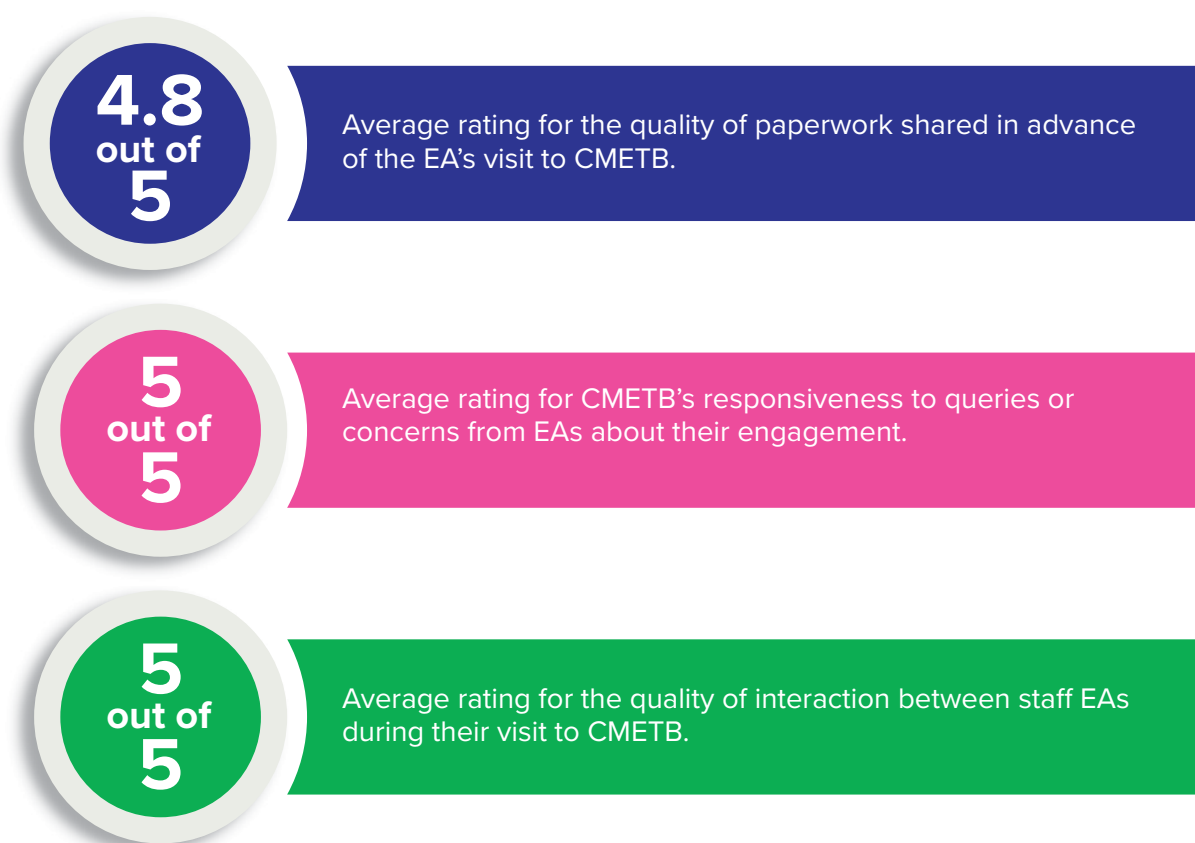
The impact of the processes and procedures CMETB has put in place to quality assure the assessment process can best be assessed through an analysis of the outcomes of the EA process.

Table 4:7: Sample Feedback from an ECCE External Authentication Report, 2021

Component Award Title	EA Feedback
Child Development (5N1764)	> 'Revised approach to assessment (i.e. alternative assessment) is 'very creative and allows for a much more progressive learning experience. In particular the EA is impressed with the inclusion of a presentation and the peer learning opportunity offered.'
Early Childhood Literacy and Numeracy (6N1935)	> 'Each of the learners have worked extremely well to the briefs and the recordings to validate their participation in the simulated Skills Demonstration is very well executed. The integration with the activities from the Child Development project are clear, precise and are reflective of the intended Learning Outcomes.'
Early Care and Education Practice (5N1770)	> 'And the innovation to alternative assessment during unprecedented times continues! The Assessor has ensured the connection from other subject areas within the major award are not lost. There are strong links between aspects of the Child Development module and the project.'
Work Experience (5N1356)	> 'Alternative Assessment used in lieu of the skills demonstration. The AA was not applied to all LR's as some LR's were fortunate to have secured and experienced work placement. The Assessor included an extremely detailed document outlining the 3 work experience skills demonstration assessment 'options.' The LR's participating in one or another were identified, and their assessment approach reflected same.'

Component Award Title	EA Feedback
Describe examples of good practice observed/identify concerns:	> 'Overall, there is fantastic creativity to the assessment materials. The Assessors have used the opportunity to AA to the LR's' advantage by devising assessment briefs that allow for so much integration of learning. Well done.'

In terms of further assessing the impact of the assessment processes and procedures CMETB has in place, an online survey was circulated to eight External Authenticators (EAs). Four responses were received, which represents 33% of the total number of EAs used by CMETB in 2021.



Some additional comments were also provided by EAs:

'Simply they are professional in their manner and communications (written and verbal). They are very open to discussion and new ideas. They are also very friendly.
I think the only advice is to keep doing what you are doing.'



4.2.4. Issues with the Assessment of Learners

Based on data analysis and consultations with staff, a number of challenges and threats in relation to the assessment of learners have been identified:

1. Finding suitable External Authenticators who are available when required is becoming more challenging, especially in new and emerging subject areas.
2. The TQAS system which is used by Training Services for the inputting of assessment results and requests for certification is very paperwork heavy and does not facilitate the flexibilities required in today's educational context.
3. There is a lack of consistency across centres and services in terms of categorising learners being entered for QQI assessment and certification. For example, some learners are being entered under Skills to Advance in one centre, while for similar programmes they are being entered under a different funding stream/category in another centre and this is leading to confusion internally.
4. CMETB recognises the need to increase communications around the many advantages of pursuing a QQI award/other certified awards.
5. Transitioning learners to new awards is challenging as the turnaround time tends to be quite quick and there is a shortened period for practitioners to develop resources, including assessment materials, to comply with the requirements of the new programmes. An example of this is the new Early Learning and Care Levels 5 and 6 programmes which are due to be implemented from September 2021.
6. A significant number of existing National QQI awards are in urgent need of review and updating, while other programmes are being deactivated regularly and need to be replaced. This is a challenge for CMETB in terms of remaining relevant and responsive to the current and future needs of learners and industry. This is also a threat in terms of other providers, such as private entities, and their ability to offer a much broader range of courses with a faster turnaround.
7. RPL is a considerable challenge for CMETB at present due to insufficient internal expertise in this area.



4.2.5. Implementation Points for the Assessment of Learners

CMETB has identified a number of enhancement opportunities in the area of learner assessment:

1. CMETB needs to advance work on the development of a single, FET-wide assessment system, inclusive of appropriate policies, procedures and processes for ensuring the ongoing integrity and efficiency of learner assessment.
2. There is a clear opportunity for the standardisation of assessment within and across centres. The development of assessment instruments is a complex, time consuming and repetitive process and is problematic for some services that do not have sufficient staffing. There is, therefore, an opportunity for a shared approach to the development of assessment instruments across FET Services. This will also help manage and ensure standardisation in terms of quality and meeting and maintaining best practice and will further enhance the fair and consistent assessment of learners.
3. A review of Assessment Instrument Specifications (AIS) needs to be carried out.

4.3. Supports for Learners



4.3.1. Information on Supports for Learners

CMETB is consistently working to ensure all learners have equal access to FET provision. This is achieved through the provision of a range of learner supports aimed at assisting learners on their learning journey. These services are available both within individual centres or across the wider FET Service. Examples of such services currently available to CMETB FET learners include:



FET learners also have access to guidance supports via AEGIS. PLC learners in Cavan and Monaghan Institutes have access to guidance supports within the Institutes dedicated guidance services. Training Services learners, however, do not have access to dedicated guidance supports.

Furthermore, learner mental health and wellbeing has become a significant concern and factor for many learners. This came across clearly through feedback from the Learner Advisory Network (see [Chapter 5](#)).

As well as placing Wellbeing to the fore of the 2021 Learner Forum, CMETB is also engaging in a number of other initiatives aimed at supporting learner wellbeing. Adult Education Services, for example, in collaboration with the Family Resource Centres in counties Cavan and Monaghan, are offering learners access to free and confidential counselling. Under this initiative learners can arrange either a face-to-face or virtual engagement with a qualified counsellor for up to six one-hour sessions.

Figure 4.5: CMETB Adult Education Services Learner Wellbeing Initiative

Family Resource Centre	Area covered	Contact	Phone	Email
Tech Ombú FRC, Cavan	Cavan Town, South and East Cavan	Aislin MacDonagha Orla Treanor	044 4372730	aislin@techombu.ie or treanor@techombu.ie
FOCUS FRC, Killybeggs	Killybeggs and West Cavan	Key O'Connell	086 6099965	key@focus.ie
Classics FRC, Class	Class and surrounding area, Castleblayney	Angela O'Connell	086 1787110	angelao@classics.ie
Binary Bridge	Castleblayney and surrounding area	Lorraine Cunningham	087 6876637	lorraine@binary.ie
Tech up Doneg	Monaghan	Donalanne Treanor	047 71398	info@techupdoneg.com

Finally, CMETB has also secured funding for the provision of psychological and counselling supports for FET learners. As part of this initiative a Wellbeing Co-ordinator will be appointed, and relevant service managers and co-ordinators will be able to refer learners in need of support. In addition, CMETB is forming a panel of qualified counsellors and will be able to draw on this panel as and when the additional need arises. It is important, however, to note that this initiative is being funded by the Mitigating Against Educational Disadvantage Fund (MAEDF)³⁷ and funding is, therefore, not guaranteed beyond 2021.



4.3.2. Insights into Learner Supports

Central to the commitment to providing equal access to FET provision for all is the removal of barriers that prevent learners from engaging and where barriers cannot be removed fully, relevant and timely supports need to be put in place.

In its commitment to achieving this, CMETB recognises that it needs to understand the barriers facing learners as they embark on their learning journey. To this end, the FET learner surveys set out to gain a better understanding of these barriers. These are identified in [Table 4.8](#).



³⁷ The MAEDF was introduced for 2021 to support community education for those adult learners who have high levels of need. A key focus of the fund was to provide devices and software to help increase capacity to provide online learning.

Table 4.8: Barriers to Course Completion

Criteria	2020 (n=421)		2021 (n=503)	
	True	False	True	False
The time requirements for my chosen course are unrealistic and require too much time.	19.2%	80.8%	17.1%	82.9%
I have difficulty with the course due to no/poor internet access at home.	17.3%	82.7%	29.6%	70.4%
I feel that I do not receive/have access to sufficient resources/materials to enable me to successfully participate on my chosen course.	12.1%	87.9%	17.8%	82.2%
My personal home duties/responsibilities are preventing me from participating fully in my chosen course.	22.8%	77.2%	28.3%	71.7%
Transportation costs are too high for me.	23%	77%	18.2%	81.8%
Affordability/availability of suitable childcare supports is an issue for me.	13.5%	86.5%	8.1%	91.9%
Affordability of the course is an issue for me.	12.8%	87.2%	11.2%	88.8%
The course location is an issue for me.	16.2%	83.8%	11%	89%
The course times are an issue for me.	13.1%	86.9%	9.3%	90.7%
The course level is too low/high for me.	12.8%	87.2%	3.8%	96.2%
I didn't have access to a suitable device to engage in online learning.			7.8%	92.2%

While the data shows that learners have experienced barriers across all of the areas outlined in [Table 4.8](#), solutions to some of these are, unfortunately, outside of CMETB's control.

However, in those areas that are within CMETB's remit, it is proactively looking at how best to address these barriers. For example, access to suitable devices to engage in online learning was a new barrier that emerged in 2020 and 2021. CMETB has responded to this through the establishment of a Loan Device Scheme for learners by way of funding received under the MAEDF. In so doing, this ensured that learners had equal opportunities to learn. Future funding of this initiative, however, is not guaranteed.

In relation to some of the other areas identified, practitioners make learners aware of the time requirements of their programme at the outset, while also aiming to provide learners with sufficient and suitable materials and resources to support them in completing their programme. In relation to the timing of courses, CMETB aims to offer a balanced level of day and evening provision, while pre-assessment and induction sessions, as well as engagements with guidance supports aim to assess whether or not a learner's chosen course is at the correct level for them.

In terms of what practitioners are doing to meet the needs of learners, some further insights can be gained from responses to the practitioners' version of the staff survey. When asked what they did to ensure delivery and pedagogical methods were evaluated to ensure they met the needs of learners, a range of responses were provided:

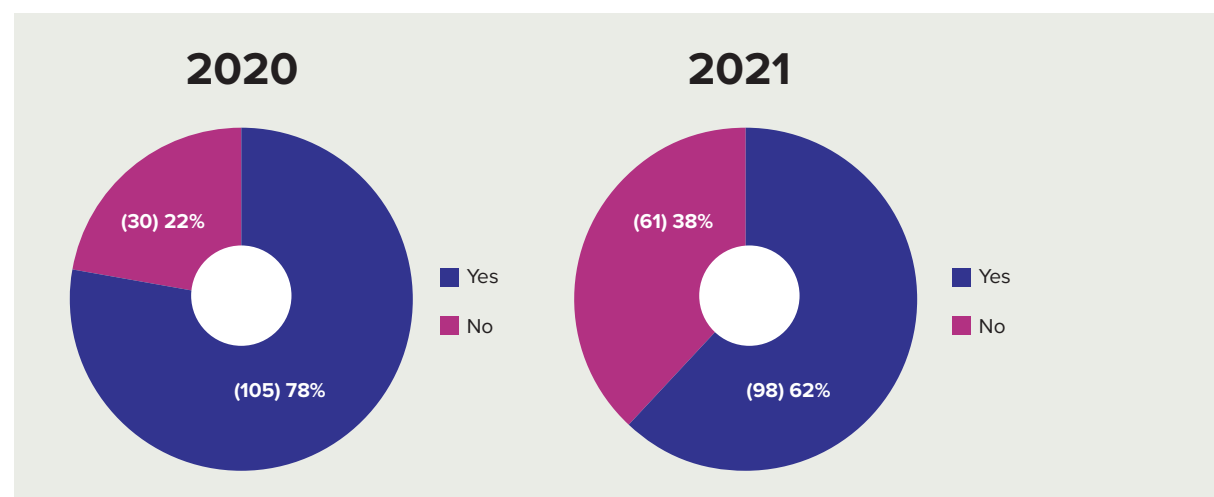


Guidance Supports

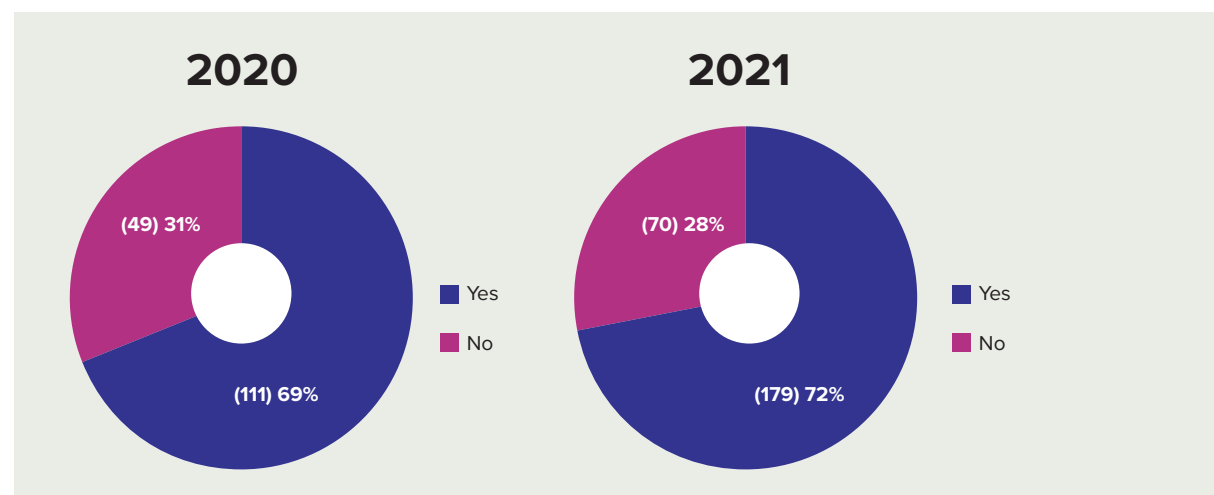
In response to the 2021 FET learner survey, 67% of learners were aware of the guidance supports provided by CMETB at the outset of their course. The equivalent figure for 2020 was 74%. It is, however, important to reiterate that guidance supports are only available within Adult Education Services and Cavan and Monaghan Institutes. Therefore, in order to gain a better understanding of engagement levels, it is important to break these figures down further.

Figure 4.6: Awareness of Guidance Services – Adult Education Vs PLC, 2020 – 2021

Adult Education Services - AEGIS



Cavan and Monaghan Institutes

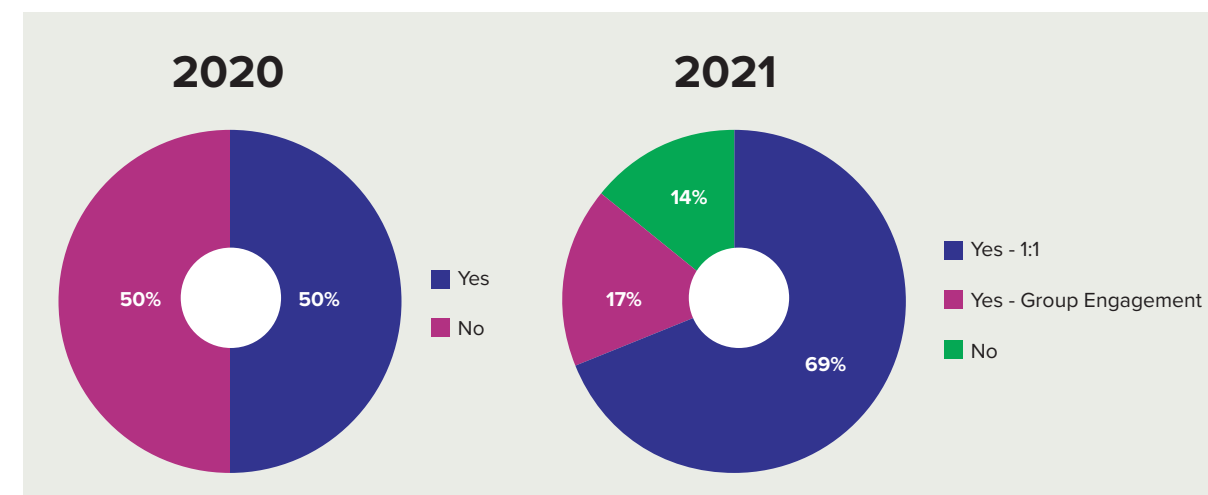


While the data suggests good levels of engagement, there is also a significant number of learners who were not aware of Guidance Services. Follow-up engagements with staff of AEGIS suggests that the term 'Guidance Support' does not effectively capture what the service is. This is something that both AEGIS and the QA Team are keen to address in advance of the next learner survey, to help capture more accurate data in this area.

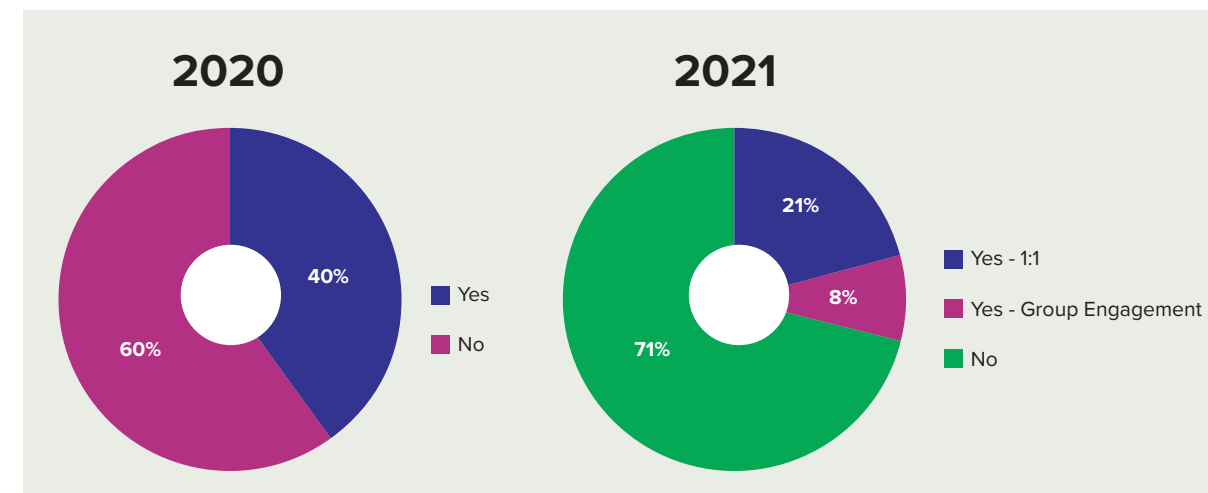
In terms of engagement levels with Guidance Services, [Figure 4.7](#) summarises the findings:

Figure 4.7: Percentage of learners accessing Guidance Services, 2020 - 2021

Adult Education Services - AEGIS



Cavan and Monaghan Institutes



Firstly, it is important to highlight that, following consultation with Guidance Service staff, the way in which this data was captured was altered with 'Yes' being broken down into two separate classifications – 'Yes: 1:1' and 'Yes – Group Engagement.'

The data shows growing levels of engagement with AEGIS – 50% in 2020 to 86% in 2021. It is, however, uncertain whether this change is attributable to a growth in demand for AEGIS during Covid-19 and the availability of online/telephone engagements or the way in which the question was posed in the survey. For PLC, there is a growing number of learners not engaging with Guidance Services – 71% in 2021 up from 67% in 2020. The reason for this is not currently known, but CMETB will engage with guidance staff in both Cavan and Monaghan Institutes to clarify this.

In both 2020 and 2021, 85% of all FET learners surveyed stated that they would recommend guidance supports to other learners. **Table 4.9** provides a breakdown of results across Adult Education Services and PLC in terms of learners who attended Guidance Services and would, as a result, recommend them.

Table 4.9: Learners who attended Guidance Services and would recommend them

Service	2020		2021	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Adult Education - AEGIS	90%	10%	84%	16%
Cavan and Monaghan Institutes	83%	17%	88%	12%

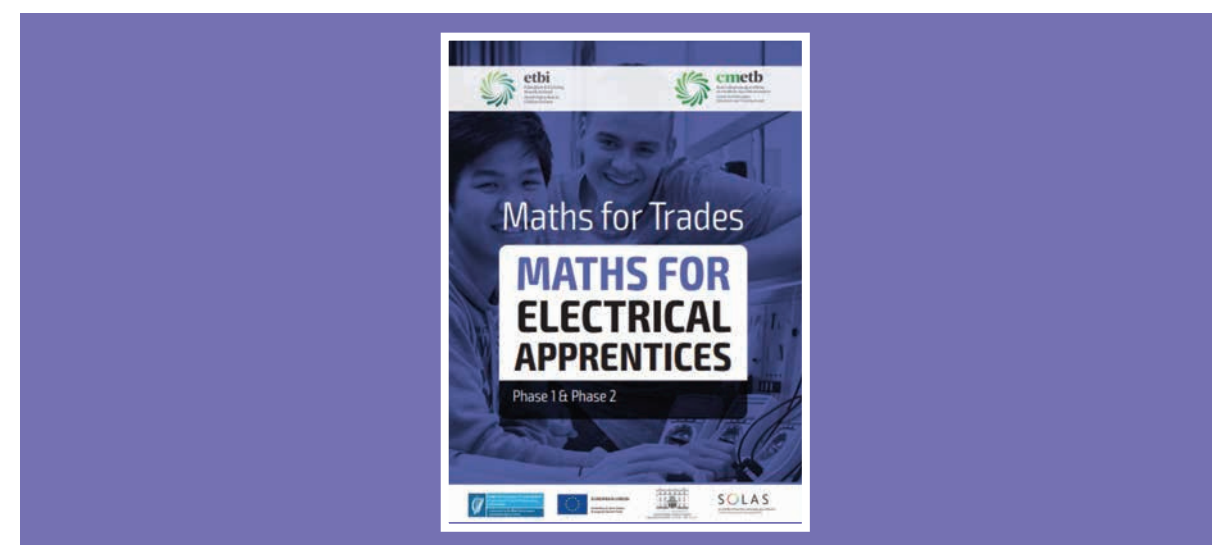
While the results presented here are positive overall, there is an increase in the number of learners who attended AEGIS and would not recommend it to others. The reason for this is currently unclear, but AEGIS staff are currently working on how to promote and advertise the service going forward and ensure continued relevance.

In a staff consultation event held in April 2020, it was suggested that the name of the service, commonly referred to as AEGIS, could be changed to better reflect what the service actually does. In highlighting this, it was suggested that this acronym confuses learners and while there is no concrete data to support this, this may help explain the lower than expected levels of engagement given that it is a free and confidential service. Following consultation (post-

learner survey), it has been decided to remove the acronym AEGIS from all literature and simply call the service the Adult Guidance and Information Service. It is felt that this will present a clearer view of the role of the service to the general public.

In addition, Guidance Staff will visit all Adult Education classes within the first month of their course to ensure that all learners are aware of the Guidance Service and the support it offers to Adult Education learners.

Learners accessing AEGIS may also be enrolled on a 4 week course entitled 'Shaping your Future' which covers goal setting, as well as facilitating one-to-one discussions with a Guidance Counsellor regarding options and individual suitability for particular courses. This service is provided when the Guidance Counsellor feels it is relevant to learners at that time. However, as the course appears on PLSS, learners can self-refer and DSP can also refer to the course. The programme is still in the pilot stage, having only been introduced in May 2021.



Learning Supports

In response to the 2021 FET Learner Survey, 62% of learners stated that they required additional support to help them complete their course assignments or assessments, while 32% stated such supports were not required. The remaining 6% stated that required supports were not provided. In 2020, 60%³⁸ of learners were provided with additional supports, 34% did not require any support, while 6% stated that they did not receive the required assistance.

³⁸ Upon further analysis of the survey data, it was found that a large proportion of learners who stated that they required additional support in 2020 and 2021, went on, in subsequent questions, to state that they did not require specific additional supports at the time when they completed the survey. As a result, this data has been excluded from the analysis contained in Table 4.10.

While the provision of appropriate additional supports for learners remains consistently high across FET Services, the fact that 6% of learners were not provided with the required supports in 2020 and in 2021 is a cause for concern. While the survey did not explore the reasons for this, all FET centres and services need to ensure that learners are aware of the supports available to them. Learners should be made aware of these supports at learner induction sessions, since the data presented earlier shows high levels of engagement with these sessions. In addition, relevant details should be displayed in prominent locations within centres and within relevant materials such as handbooks, social media accounts and websites to ensure maximum visibility. It is felt that perhaps constant, ongoing communication of these supports is necessary.

In terms of the types of supports learners have availed of, [Table 4.10](#) provides a summary of the top 5.

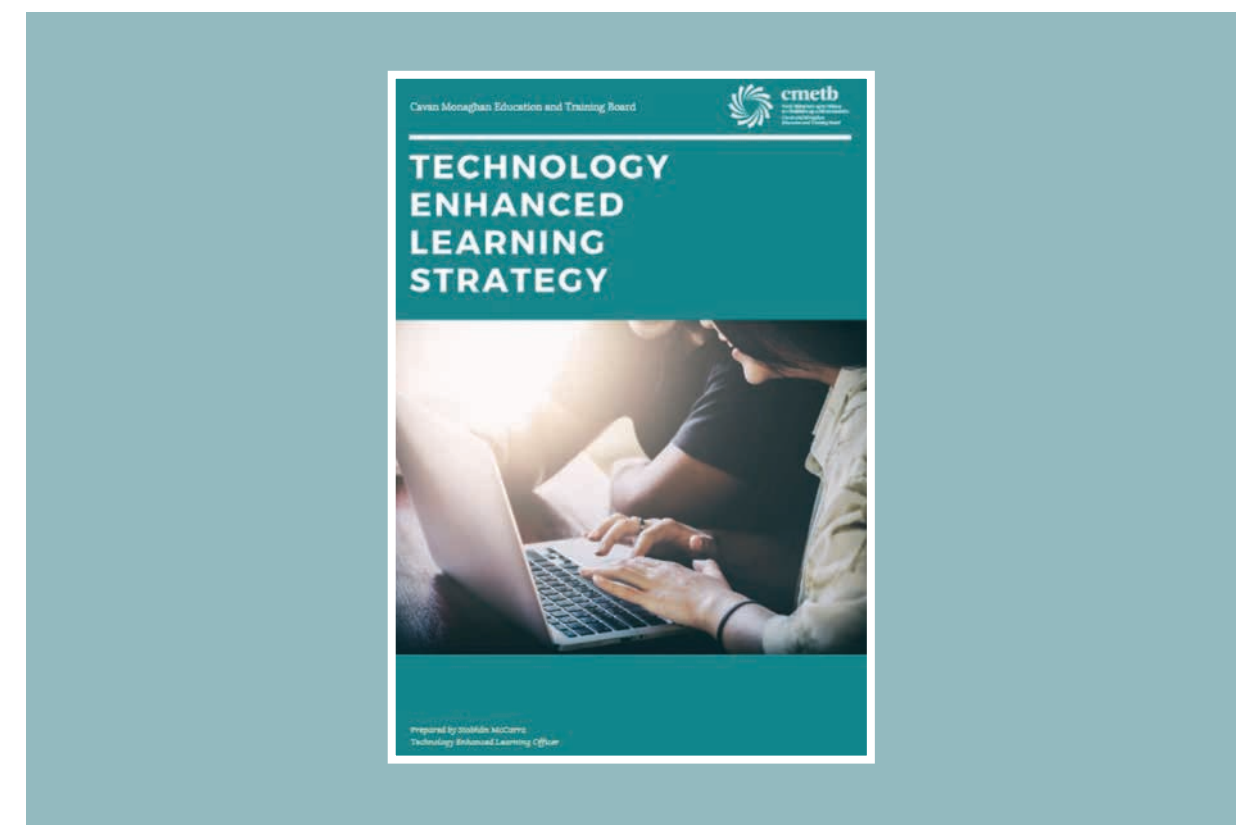
Table 4.10: Top 5 types of additional supports accessed by FET learners

Type of Support ³⁹	2020 (n=421)	Type of Support	2021 (n=503)
1. Reading/Writing supports	126 (30%)	1. Guidance Supports	136 (27%)
2. Extra time/support to complete assignments	92 (22%)	2. Extra time/support to complete assignments	121 (24%)
3. IT support classes	86 (20%)	3. Reading/Writing supports	113 (22%)
4. Maths support	82 (19%)	4. IT Support classes	96 (19%)
5. English language classes	56 (13%)	5. Maths support	84 (17%)
		5. Counselling	84 (17%)

Based on earlier discussions regarding Guidance Supports, it is positive to note that, in 2021, Guidance Supports featured at number one on the list, while it did not feature in the top five in 2020. This is a positive indicator of how data from surveys is used in a targeted fashion.

³⁹ The areas of guidance support and counselling were new areas added to the 2021 learner survey, so there is no comparative data available for 2020. In terms of counselling, this was a new support service introduced by CMETB FET Services in 2021 in response to new funding streams from SOLAS via the MAEDF. With respect to guidance support, the data here also adds further weight to the previous analysis carried out in the Guidance Support section of this chapter and does not warrant further comment here.

Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Supports



CMETB is committed to supporting and advancing the use of appropriate TEL supports and platforms. A dedicated TEL Officer was appointed in September 2019 to assist the consistent and targeted rollout of supports and associated training across all centres and services. A TEL Strategy was finalised in March 2020. An Academic Technologist has also recently been added to the TEL Team.

While TEL had become a key priority for CMETB FET Services since 2017, the absence of a dedicated TEL Officer meant that progress was limited. Between 2017 and September 2019 key progress in relation to TEL related to the development of a detailed Action Plan, but in the absence of a dedicated TEL budget or staffing, advancing the key actions identified was problematic.

The Action Plan highlighted a clear gap in the technological skills of practitioners across CMETB FET centres, with both Cavan and Monaghan Institutes much more advanced than Adult Education and Youthreach, for example. By 2017 both institutes had been using Moodle as their primary Virtual Learning Network (VLN) for some time, while it was only rolled-out to a limited number of Adult Education programmes between 2017 and 2019, and uptake remained low.

The basic IT competencies of FET practitioners varied across centres and this proved problematic in efforts to develop a standardised approach to TEL engagement across FET. Considerable time and effort was invested in upskilling the basic IT skills, particularly amongst Adult Education, Youthreach and Training Services staff during this time. However, from 2019, with the appointment of a TEL Officer, the pace of change intensified, and a more formalised and targeted approach was adopted, as evidenced by the [TEL Strategy](#).



4.3.3. Impact of Learner Supports

CASE STUDY

9

ESOL FAMILY LEARNING PILOT PROGRAMME

1. Background

In 2019 an ESOL Unaccredited Programme Development Working Group was established by SOLAS and ETBI in collaboration with seven ETBs, including CMETB. The purpose of the group was to develop unaccredited English language programmes in line with the Migrant Integration Strategy and the SOLAS review of *English language provision and language assessment for low-skilled and unemployed migrants: Recommendations for good practice at NFQ levels 1 – 3 in ETBs*.

2. Programme Development

Using an 8-week unaccredited Family Learning English for Primary School Parents programme previously developed by CMETB, the Working Group worked on the development of a 210-hour programme for primary school parents.

The programme was developed at A1 level on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and its focus included, but was not limited to:

- School application procedures
- School rules, policies and procedures
- Communicating with teachers and school authorities
- Helping children with their homework

3. Programme Delivery

Dedicated funding was secured by each of the seven ETBs from SOLAS and piloting of the programme commenced in early 2020. The CMETB pilot programme commenced in February 2020 and concluded in December 2020. Tuition took place both face-to-face and online.

4. Programme Outcomes

Despite being developed as an unaccredited programme, a number of learners on the programme had successfully completed the ESOL QQI Level 3 component by the end of the 210 hours.

At the time of conducting this evaluation, the learners were also keen to progress to other certified ESOL programmes with CMETB.

5. Programme Evaluation

CMETB conducted an end of programme evaluation with the learners and tutor. Overall, the feedback was positive with learners noting that, having completed the programme, they were better equipped to support their children with their homework and become more involved in their school lives.

In terms of improving the programme for future rollout, the tutor noted that closer co-operation with primary schools in preparation of delivery would be advantageous.

A wider national evaluation, in conjunction with the seven ETBs, is currently underway and the findings will inform the future content and delivery of the programme.

In addition, CMETB is finalising best practice guidelines and toolkit for the initial and ongoing assessment of the English language competency of migrant learners. These will be published in Quarter 3 2021 with a view to being implemented across all sixteen ETBs.



4.3.4. Issues with Learner Supports

The research and consultations carried out as part of the preparation of this SER have highlighted a number of key challenges and threats to CMETB in terms of the provision of learner supports.

1. In some respects, the data presented in this section highlights that there is a gap in awareness of the various support services currently offered by CMETB to FET learners. The challenge, therefore, for CMETB is to ensure that all learners are aware of the supports available and can access them in a timely and straightforward manner. In addition to this, there is a lack of uniformity in availability to some of these services across centres and services. This is something that CMETB is eager to address.
2. In terms of the learner voice and promoting same, there is an awareness that an inability to react and respond to the issues and concerns of learners may affect both engagement with the process and retention rates on programmes. If learners feel that they are not supported by CMETB, they are less likely to remain on programmes or recommend CMETB to others.
3. While the introduction of a Loan Device Scheme was a welcome additional support for learners, the challenge facing CMETB is control of the scheme in terms of ensuring that devices are not abused and returned promptly once learners complete their studies. Broadband connectivity is linked to the success of this scheme but outside the influence of CMETB.



4.3.5. Implementation Points for Learner Supports

The following enhancement opportunities have been identified:

1. CMETB is exploring how best to include learner representatives on governance sub-groups in order to enhance the work of the sub-groups.
2. Additional IT supports need to be provided for learners commencing on programmes and to assist with delivery in the event of future restrictions and reliance on ERT. Such an approach will also help prepare learners for the growing use of blended and online learning.
3. Appropriate training needs to be provided for FET staff, in particular practitioners, to assist them in identifying issues that learners may be experiencing in terms of their mental health and wellbeing and guidance on referring learners in the context of ERT and the move to blended learning. The forthcoming appointment of a Wellbeing Co-ordinator and associated counselling supports for FET learners will assist in this regard.
4. There is a need to set up an ICT Helpdesk for learners on blended learning courses to support them with issues relating to devices, software, access, etc.
5. AEGIS staff are currently exploring ways of better promoting the service with the renaming of the service to better reflect the work they do under consideration. As part of this work, the QA Team will engage with AEGIS staff to clarify how relevant questions on guidance supports are posed in future learner surveys.

5 IMPACT OF, AND RESPONSE TO, COVID-19



5.1. Information on the Impact of Covid-19

Covid-19 continues to have a significant impact on CMETB FET Services. However, since mid-March 2020 and the introduction of restrictions aimed at curbing the spread of the virus, CMETB has consistently responded to the ongoing disruption the restrictions have caused, all with the expressed aim of maintaining continuity of service for learners.

FET provision has been permanently transformed by Covid-19 and with demand for blended/online learning likely to increase in future, the experiences of implementing Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) will serve to inform and strengthen the development of policies, procedures and processes aimed at enhancing the QA system that will underpin the 'Future FET' model.

Since the onset of Covid-19, FET centres have relied on ERT measures to ensure continuity of provision and supports to learners. With the aid of the TEL Officer and in-centre expertise, a wide variety of online tools and platforms were deployed to meet the immediate needs of learners and practitioners.

While CMETB, in consultation with the IT Department, advocated the use of Microsoft Teams as the online platform of choice, some centres, in particular Adult Education, were approved to use Zoom as it was deemed to be more user-friendly for learners accessing literacy and numeracy programmes.



Furthermore, as the pandemic deepened and the public health restrictions were extended for an indefinite duration, CMETB had to respond in a prompt, yet consistent and transparent manner, to safeguard the integrity and validity of the assessment process and to allow learners complete their programmes and achieve certification. In so doing, CMETB developed and published a Business Continuity Plan in Response to the Covid-19 Emergency, which can be accessed [here](#).

CMETB has also responded, in a timely way, to national efforts aimed at assisting Ireland's recovery from Covid-19. This has been achieved via the SOLAS Skills to Complete initiative, which will lead the reskilling and retraining response by combining and ramping-up three strands of FET provision, linked to tailored advice and support:

1. Transversal skills development to help employability.

2. Build the digital capabilities now required for almost every job.

3. Specific Level 4-6 courses targeting growth sectors and occupations.

In addition, CMETB has mobilised both its Skills to Advance and Evening Provision offerings as part of its ongoing response to supporting employers' efforts at upskilling and reskilling staff.



CMETB also acknowledges the impact Covid-19 has had on learners' family circumstances, particularly in situations where family members were relied upon to provide the type of supports (e.g. counselling, additional food) that some FET Centres, such as Cavan and Monaghan Institutes and Youthreach, may have been in a position to provide, had learners been physically present in college. It is, however, difficult to capture and evaluate the true impact of this.



5.2. Insights into the Impact of Covid-19

5.2.1. Insights into the Learning Environment

Through the medium of a virtual learner forum facilitated by AONTAS and attended by 16 learners from across CMETB FET provision at NFQ Levels 1 to 6, it was reported that learners accessed these online platforms from a wide variety of locations including study desks, from kitchen tables and even from their bedrooms.

The impact of ERT was felt by many learners, not only from a learning perspective, but also from a mental health perspective with one learner stating that:

'It can be lonely in the virtual world.'

However, the learners reported receiving resources and information relating to mental health and mindfulness supports and greatly appreciated CMETB's efforts in this regard. The learners wanted to convey their appreciation for the continuing emphasis tutors placed on their wellbeing and mental health. In particular, one learner stated that:

'Once we were happy, they were happy.'

Other learners suggested that more needed to be done and that a dedicated mental health and wellness website specifically for learners should be set up.

Learners also reported tutors as being very supportive and maintaining regular contact with them. In response to the AONTAS survey, which was circulated following the forum, learners applauded the *'fantastic efforts'* of tutors and staff in supporting them in the transition to remote engagement. Learners also highlighted the *'rapid speed'* with which CMETB staff provided support and responded to individual need.

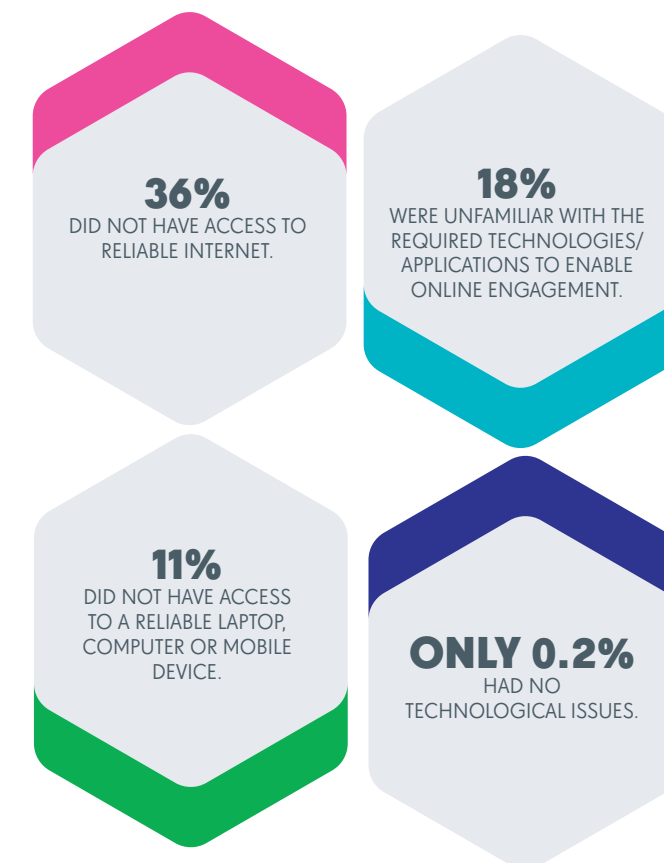
In terms of adapting to the virtual learning environment, the FET learner survey 2021 also provides some additional valuable insights into the experience. Firstly, in terms of how well learners have adapted to the alternative arrangements put in place, **Table 5.1** summarises the feedback received from learners.

Table 5.1: How learners have adapted to alternative Covid-19 arrangements, 2021

Criteria	Managing extremely well	Managing OK	Struggling a little	Struggling a great deal
Online learning	24%	51%	21%	4%
Communications technology (e.g. MS Teams, email etc.)	31%	60%	8%	1%
Time management	26%	53%	18%	3%
Keeping up to date with my subject outside of class time	22%	53%	21%	4%

While on the whole, learners appear to have adapted relatively well to the alternative arrangements put in place to ensure continuity of services during the public health restrictions, there was a significant proportion of learners, up to 25% in some areas, who struggled due to Covid-19. This is clearly a cause for concern, and highlights areas which CMETB needs to address as a priority.

52% of respondents to questions on Covid-19 in the 2021 learner survey (**n=916**)⁴⁰, stated that they would prefer a return to face-to-face teaching and learning and this was a sentiment that was originally first articulated in the AONTAS learner forum in June 2020.

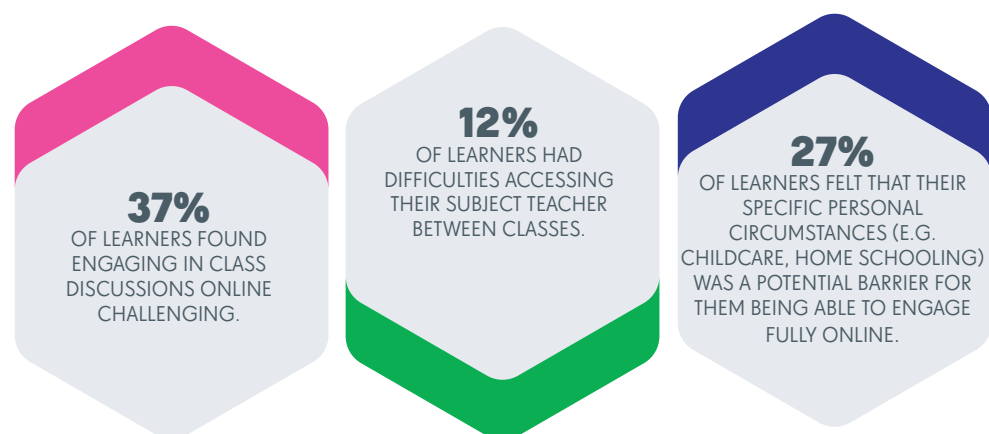


While this data clearly highlights the reliance on technology to ensure a smooth transition to ERT, solutions to many of the issues faced by learners are outside of CMETB's control. The results of the 2020 FET Staff Survey also confirmed these findings with the importance of providing upskilling opportunities in IT for both learners and tutors highlighted.

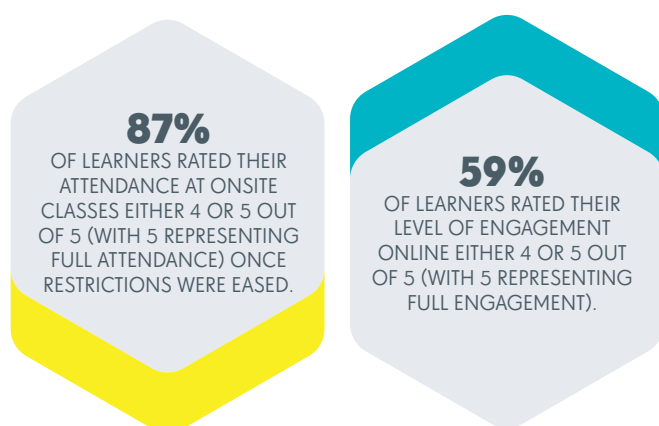
Notwithstanding this, CMETB has endeavoured to address those challenges it could control or influence. Learners were allowed to return to face-to-face learning in some instances, for example, for practical subjects, once the easing of restrictions allowed. Furthermore, the introduction of the Loan Device Scheme, through the MAEDF helped alleviate issues with access to reliable devices. This required the sourcing of software for many learners also.

⁴⁰ Cavan Institute circulated a survey relating to online learning to learners in October 2020. Rather than asking Cavan Institute learners to answer the same questions again in the 2021 learner survey, these questions were omitted for Cavan Institute learners. The results of the responses of other FET learners to this section of the 2021 learner survey were added to the results of the Cavan Institute survey from October 2020, yielding a total number of 916 individual responses only to the Online Learning section.

In addition, other challenges included:



There were some positive experiences of online engagement, as conveyed by learners at the AONTAS Learner Forum. For example, a number of learners extolled the advantages of having their *'home comforts'* when learning remotely, while also acknowledging that it saved them both time and money and allowed greater flexibility in terms of learning in their own time.



Engagement levels are unsurprising given that, at the AONTAS Learner Forum, the loss of the welcoming atmosphere of the physical classroom was missed by many learners. Some learners highlighted the partial or complete loss of the *'personal experience.'* In fact, 85% of learners who responded to the AONTAS learner survey wanted a return to the physical classroom. This is not unexpected given the profile of CMETB learners and the addition of active inclusion as part of FET provision.

In terms of the level of difficulty experienced by learners in attending onsite classes, [Table 5.2](#) summarises the findings.

Table 5.2: Level of difficulty in attending onsite classes

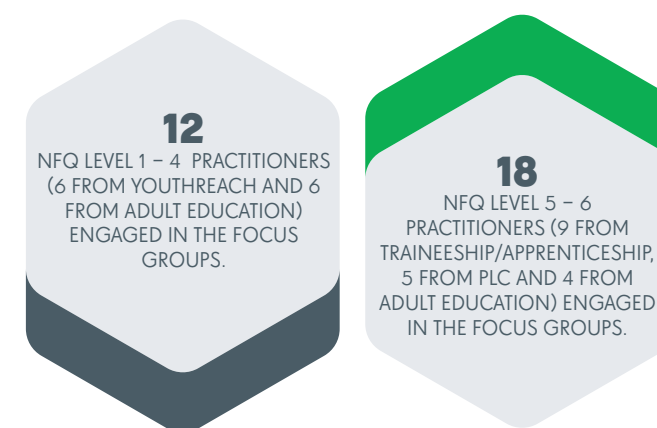
Criteria	No difficulty at all	A little difficulty	Some difficulty	Very difficult
What level of difficulty have you experienced in attending onsite classes so far?	53%	32%	11%	4%

In spite of the many challenges encountered by learners as a result of Covid-19, feedback from the AONTAS Learner Forum found that most learners who had planned to continue their learning in the 2020/21 academic year still planned on doing so, even if learning continued online. This infers that initial barriers to online participation were slowly coming down.

5.2.2. Insights into the Teaching Environment

CMETB also engaged with practitioners on a number of occasions since May 2020 via Covid-19 specific focus groups, as well as the 2020 FET Staff Survey and 2021 Staff Survey on alternative assessments.

A number of focus groups were conducted with practitioners⁴¹ from Youthreach, Contracted Training, Apprenticeship and Traineeships, PLC and Adult Education in an attempt to assess how Covid-19 impacted on FET provision from their perspective.



⁴¹ Some of the Adult Education tutors who engaged work across Levels 1 – 6 and as a result have been counted as both Levels 1 – 4 and Levels 5 – 6.



Tutors also noted that, while initial learner interactions online were generally good amongst Level 5 to 6 learners, motivation and levels of engagement waned over time. In this regard, tutors drew attention to how challenging it was for them to rapidly adapt their resources to suit the online environment in order to maintain learner interest on an ongoing basis.

In terms of what worked well in assisting tutors maintain a consistent and engaging teaching environment, Youthreach tutors, for example, reported coming together to support each other and share knowledge and learning. This allowed for a much greater focus on cross-curricular activities in a number of instances. In fact, the momentum gained from this experience is being harnessed outside the Covid-19 context, via the recent launch of a Communities of Practice (COP) initiative across CMETB's six Youthreach Centres.⁴²

In contrast to some of the negative experiences amongst some Youthreach tutors, other Youthreach tutors actually reported lower levels of absenteeism amongst learners because *'the centre came to the learners.'* In fact, it was reported that work from learners increased considerably and it *'forced'* them to engage via IT. This was noted to be particularly positive in light of an acknowledgement that, within Youthreach, there tends to be a lot of support for learners in terms of teaching and learning and in some instances, this can lead many learners to become overly dependent. This has, in the past, led to problems when learners looked to progress in and out of FET where there is much less *'hand holding;'* a reality which led CMETB FET Services to develop a PLC Access Programme to support Youthreach learners progression to PLC. Consequently, it was positively noted that the experience of ERT made learners realise that they had to take responsibility for their own learning journey.



⁴² The aim of the Youthreach Communities of Practice initiative is to capture and share models of best practice in learner assessment and to develop common assessment standards and consistency across CMETB's six Youthreach Centres.

Youthreach tutors, in particular, reported differing experiences. In acknowledging that learners were used to 100% face-to-face learning, tutors had to consistently maintain contact with learners for a multitude of reasons. For example, despite their ardent efforts, tutors reported that there was very little work done by a significant proportion of learners, with the exception of those who were in the process of completing programmes and actively looking to progress. To help mitigate this, tutors reported making house calls to ensure work was being completed and submitted.

Not wanting to apportion blame or single out any particular cohort of learners, tutors were at pains to highlight that the situation thrust upon learners was extremely difficult across the board, particularly for learners at Levels 1 to 3. In their efforts to engage with and support learners, most tutors reported largely engaging with learners outside of their contracted teaching hours. This resulted in a significant increase in workload and led to the loss of traditional work boundaries, with some reporting that they were always *'switched on'* and always accessible to learners.

In raising these issues, tutors were not looking for sympathy or compensation of any kind but were attempting to verbalise the impact ERT had on teaching and learning, with the loss of the value of being physically present with learners being widely felt. For example, some tutors stated that they could determine learners' understanding and mood from their body language, but this was not possible in the online context. With respect to Adult Education learners at Levels 1 to 3, tutors found that they were better able to gauge their learners' mood and understanding when engaging with them via a phone call.

5.2.3. Insights into Alternative Assessments

From the tutors' perspective, based on the focus groups conducted in June 2020 in preparation of CMETB's input into QQI's research on the impact of Covid-19, some tutors felt that the assessments were adversely affected by the adoption of alternative assessment formats. For example, Personal Effectiveness tutors at Levels 3 and 4 stated that the alternative assessments utilised lacked the physical teamwork elements required in such modules. Learners did not get experience of the practical aspects of team activities and as such many learners found it difficult to 'imagine' what they would do in teamwork settings.

In addition, Youthreach tutors felt that their learners were also adversely impacted due to the largely practical focus of modules undertaken by learners as part of the programme. Practical modules are chosen in this setting because learners tend to shine and 'put their best foot forward' on applied programmes. This, however, proved challenging in terms of engaging learners and encouraging them to complete the programme remotely.

In acknowledging these problems, tutors recognised that the issues and the solutions were outside the control of CMETB as ongoing restrictions and their easing were dictated by the trajectory of the virus and public health guidance at a particular point in time.

Furthermore, in order to learn from the experience of providing alternative assessments in 2020, so as to ensure the most appropriate assessments and associated supports for the 2021 assessment period, a survey of tutors who used alternative assessment methods was carried out. A total of 92 responses were received.

Figure 5.1 summarises the service/centres where tutors who responded to the survey worked, while **Figure 5.2** highlights the QQI/NFQ levels at which these tutors were working.

Figure 5.1: Services Using Alternative assessments, 2020

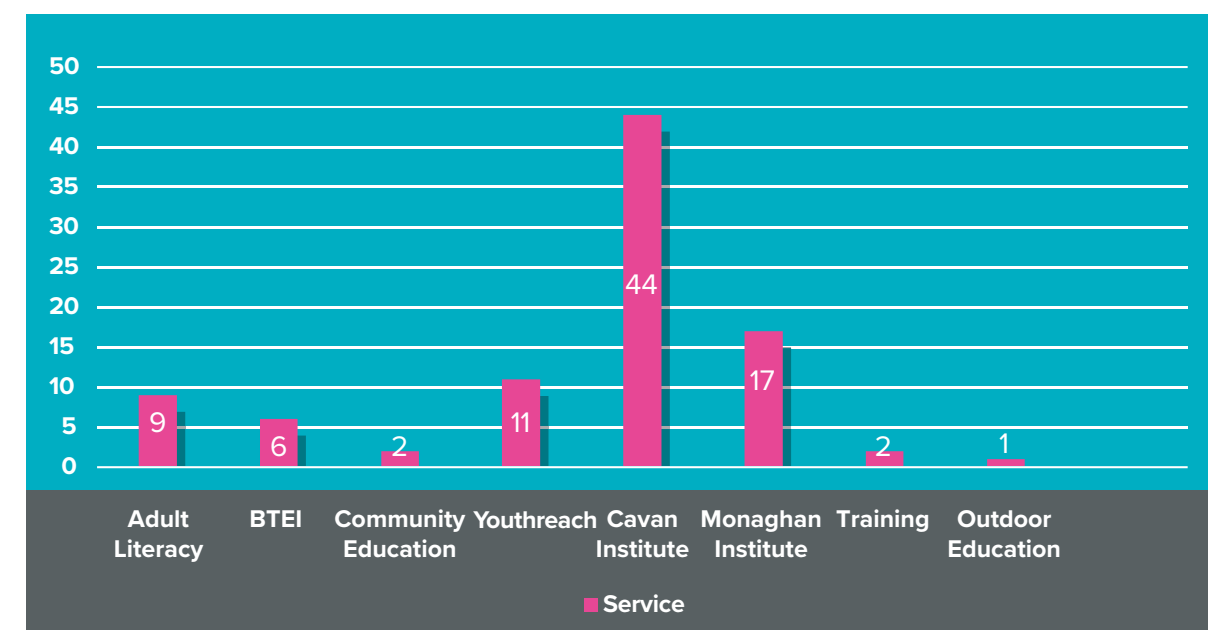


Figure 5.2: Levels at which Alternative Assessments were Used, 2020

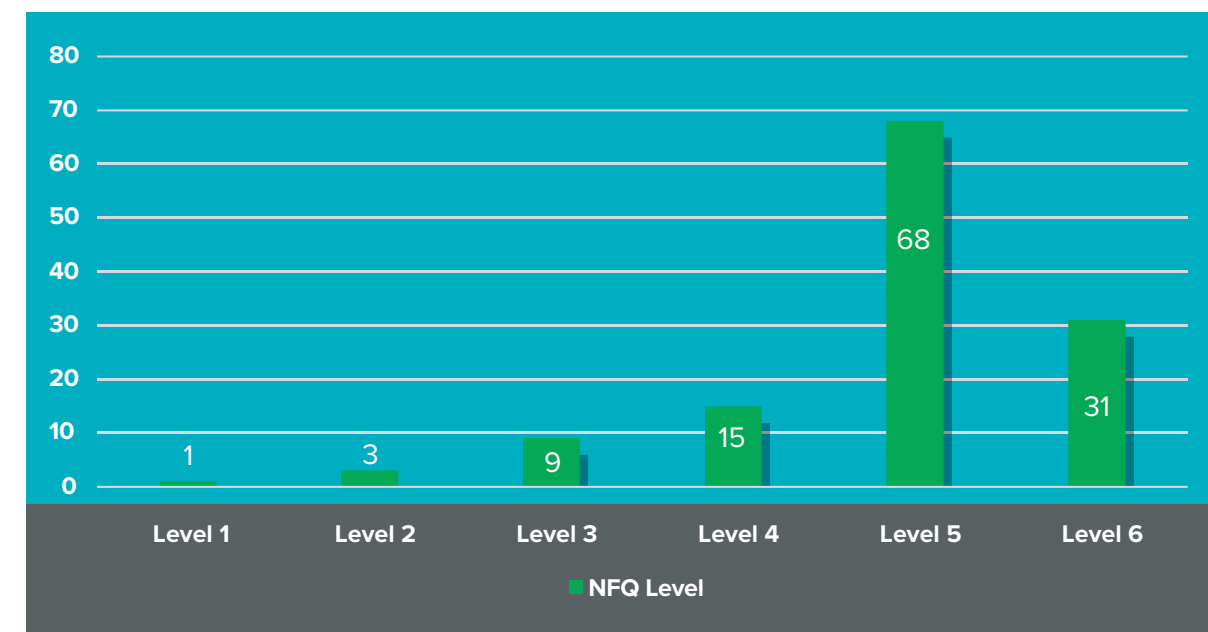
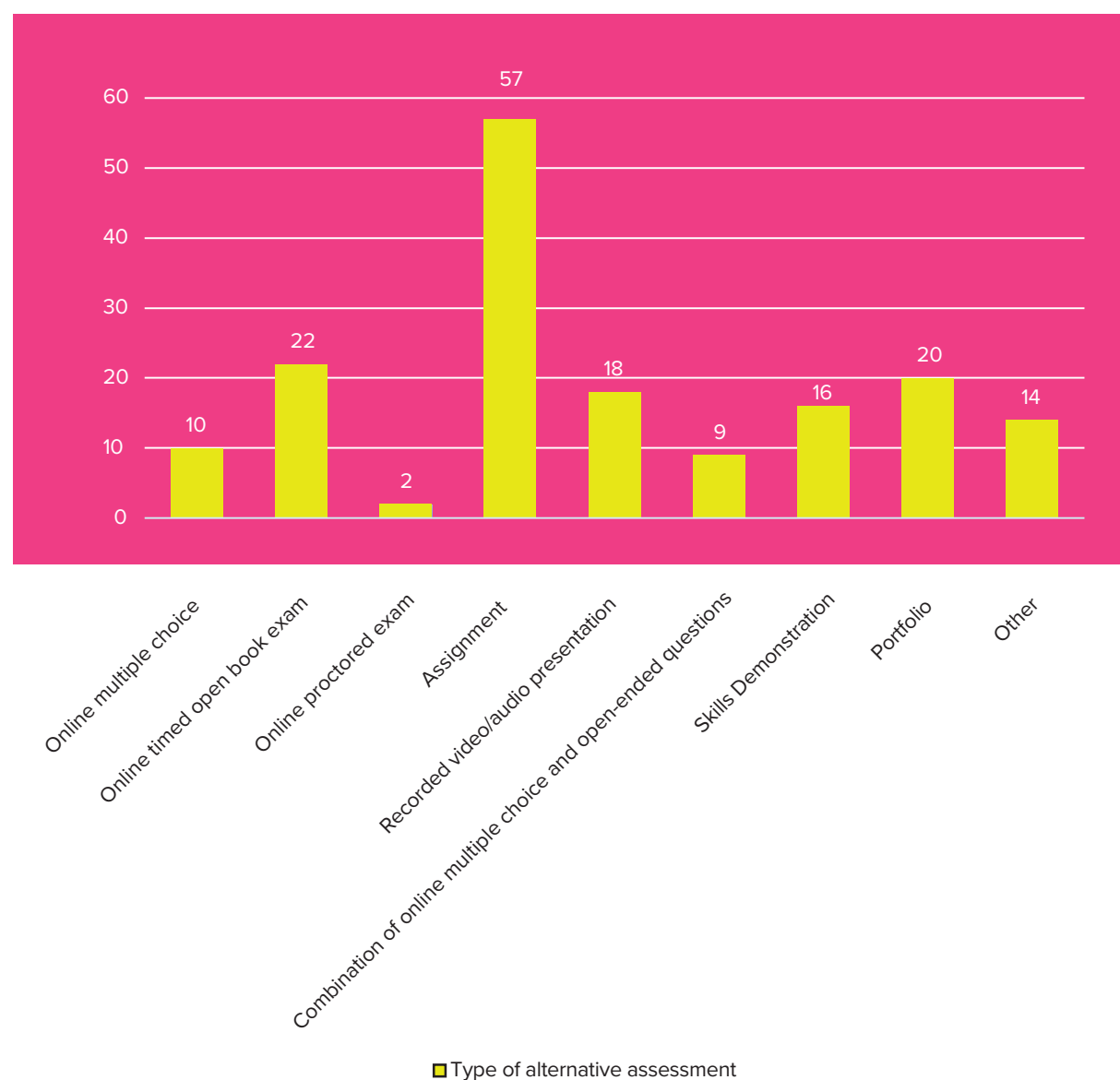


Figure 5.3 highlights the type of alternative assessments that were used.

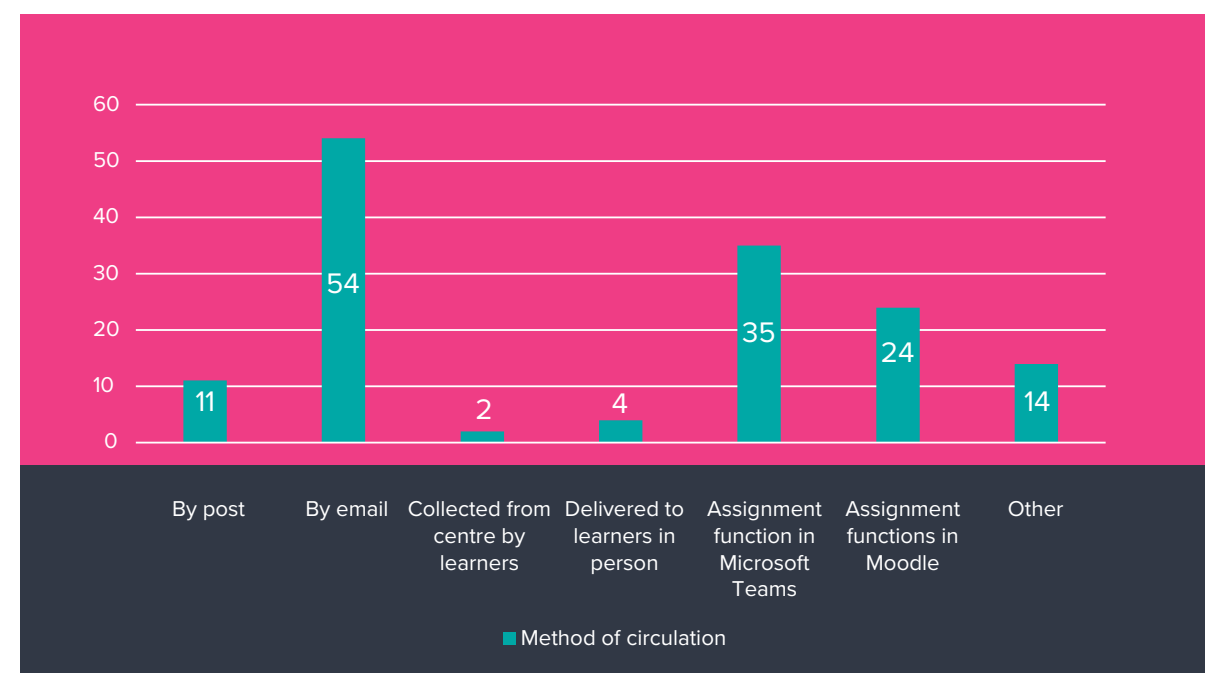
Figure 5.3: Type of alternative assessment used, 2020



With regard to the other category, this largely accounted for tutors who stated that they did not need to use alternative assessments, although some tutors reported that they used case studies or workbooks as part of their assessment.

When it came to circulating alternative assessments and ensuring they reached learners on time, a wide variety of methods were used as evidenced in Figure 5.4. It is important to note that 2021 figures are not currently available but high-level governance data has been reviewed.

Figure 5.4: Method of circulation of alternative assessments, 2020



In terms of the other category, this relates to alternative methods of circulation such as OneNote, SharePoint or OneDrive. The more manual methods were employed to access hard to reach learners and to check in with vulnerable learners.

Furthermore, Microsoft Teams (51% of respondents) was by far the most popular platform used to administer/complete alternative assessments, with Moodle in second place (26%). This is in line with CMETB policy.

In the interest of minimising learners' concerns, CMETB sought to communicate revised procedures for alternative assessments in an open and prompt manner. At the AONTAS Learner Forum in 2020 and in the subsequent learner survey, learners stated that they were largely happy with how tutors dealt with amendments to their assessments, with most learners positively responding to statements about being provided with information on alternative assessments in an appropriate and prompt manner. In particular, some learners drew attention to the fact that, when they submitted assignments via email, they received regular and timely feedback with corrections.

Adding weight to this, tutors, via the alternative assessment survey, also stated that in many instances the alternative assessment worked better than the traditional format as learners were less stressed. It was also positively highlighted through the EA process that all learning outcomes were covered and that all the required aspects of the course were assessed. For example, one tutor was recorded as saying:

'I liked that it gave the student time to submit the assessment. I personally don't like an exam as I feel it does not suit all learners and it does not always measure their knowledge, just the ability to learn off content.'

In another instance a tutor stated that:

'It gave each individual learner a 48 hour turn around window to complete the assignment through research and referencing and all Learning Outcomes were able to be reached and achieved. It also eliminated the issue of poor internet connection for some learners in different areas.'

However, the reality was that, for certain groups of learners, particularly at Levels 1 and 2, it was not possible to engage them in alternative assessment and as such their completion of the programme had to be deferred until such time as they were permitted to return to the classroom environment in person. CMETB worked to ensure this was an option as soon as the government's roadmap for reopening of society allowed.

At a wider level, some learners felt that their alternative assessments did not go as well as they would have, had they taken place in their traditional in person format. This is a regrettable outcome and something CMETB was determined to learn from as it reviewed and refined its alternative assessment processes for 2021.

Tutors, in the alternative assessment survey, also echoed some of these concerns with issues such as the ability to provide support to learners being more problematic. Others stated the need for more flexibility in relation to the timing for completing open book examinations. Practical skills assessments were also a cause for concern for many tutors, with some practical

assessments deferred until such time as the public health restrictions eased and learners were allowed to return to the centre. At a wider, more general level, tutors stated that, in many instances, it was difficult to get learners to engage.

In terms of learning from the experience of conducting alternative assessments in 2020, tutors were asked to state what alternative methods they planned on using in 2021. **Figure 5.5** summarises the methods used, as well as comparing them to the methods employed in 2020.

Figure 5.5: Planned alternative assessment methods 2021 vs methods used in 2020

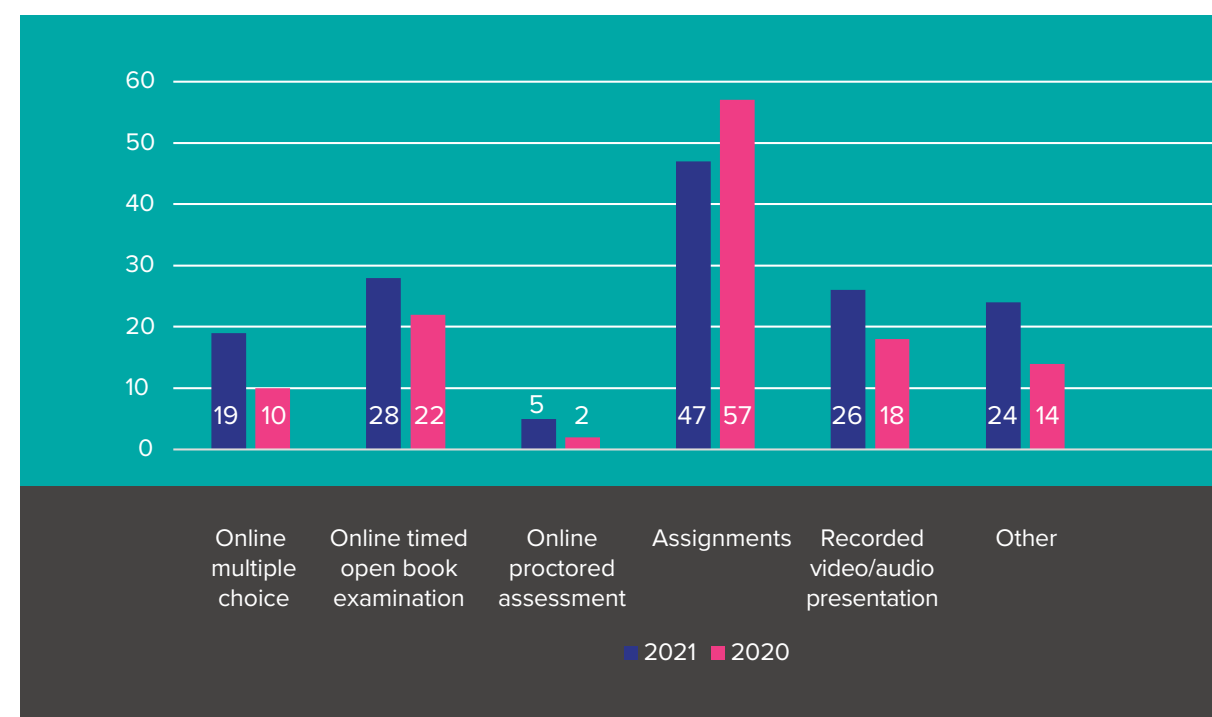
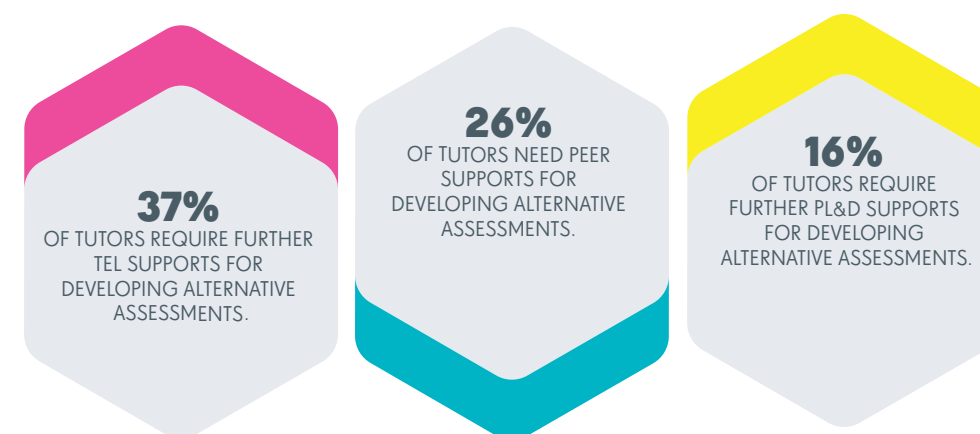


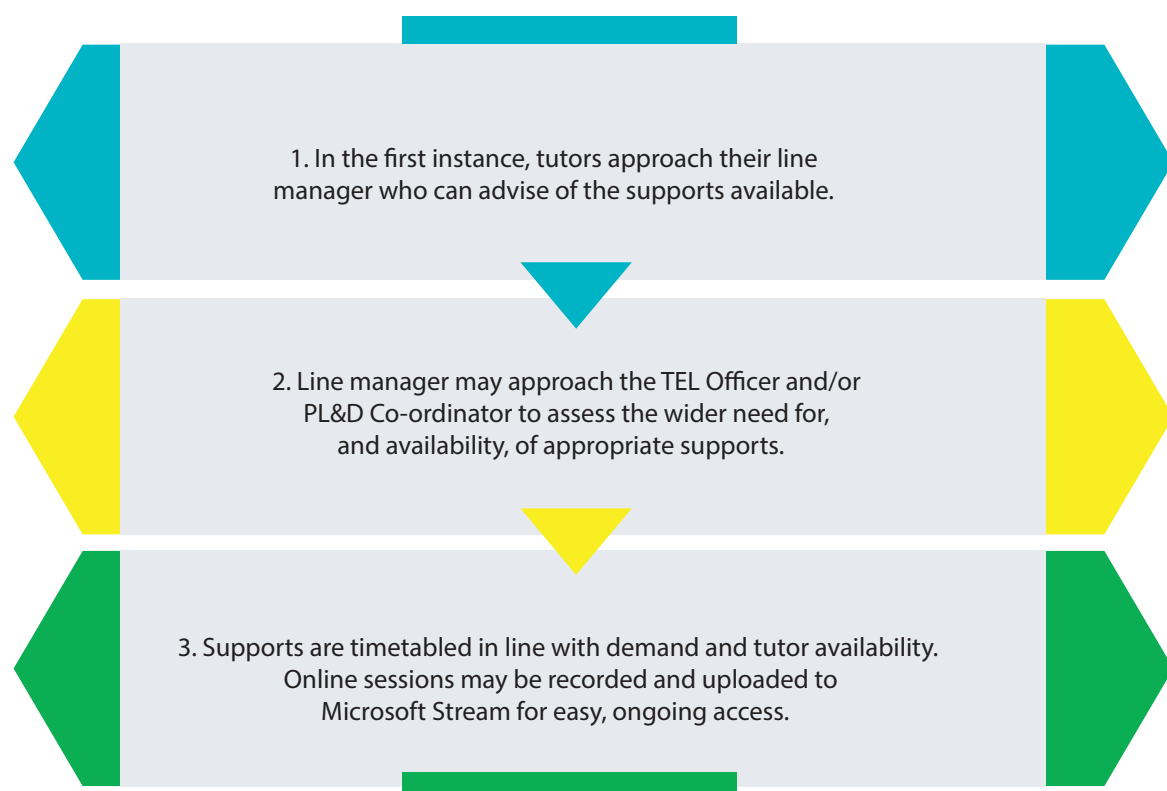
Figure 5.5 shows an increased confidence in tutors to use different assessment methodologies.



TEL supports are being advanced on an ongoing basis via the TEL Officer, TEL Champions and in-centre expertise.

In the case of tutors accessing additional PL&D supports, the following process is in place:

Figure 5.6: Access to Additional PL&D Supports



Development of Temporary Career Preparation and Planning Module

With restrictions came the challenge of being unable to find work placements for learners and how to fill a gap in the CAS module structure which developed from not being able to complete this module. Career Planning (4N1109) was the only alternative to Work Experience (4N1168) at Level 4 available to CMETB learners but it was a 10 credit module which left centres with a 5 credit deficit in that pool. CMETB took the lead in developing a 15 credit Career Preparation and Planning Module (4N21060) on behalf of the ETB sector. This module was written by CMETB Youthreach staff in consultation with Adult Education tutors. It was externally evaluated, approved by QQI as a temporary modification and shared with other ETBs as a viable alternative to work experience in the restricted environment presented by Covid-19. Initial feedback from centres has been very positive and it is likely that a request will be made to QQI to retain this module going forward.

Ensuring Academic Integrity

In order to preserve the integrity and transparency of awards available to CMETB learners and the validity of the implementation of assessment in the context of Covid-19, a three-part approach was adopted:

1. Firstly, centres wishing to use Career Preparation and Planning at Level 4 or Personal and Professional Development at Levels 5 and 6 had to formally apply to the FET Management and Quality Council for inclusion of these modules in their award offerings at centre level. Once approval was received, centres have temporary permission (up to December 2022) to deliver their approved awards with the inclusion of the CAS modifications.

2. Secondly, centres proposing to substitute work placement, partially or fully, with simulation for awards that were vocationally oriented and whose integrity is predicated on CMETB learners being able to enter the workplace as 'safe entrants' had to apply to the FET Management and Quality Council through an Alternative Work Placement process. Centres completed a number of online forms linked to vocationally specific programmes including Early Childhood and Care Education at Levels 5 and 6, Professional Cookery, Nursing Studies Level 5 and 6 and a range of Healthcare programmes. The forms detailed the Learning Outcomes impacted by not being able to access work placements, the alternative simulations proposed and the resources to be employed. After consideration at centre and FET Management and Quality Council level, decisions were made on each application by centre and by award to ensure consistency across CMETB.

Initial feedback from External Authenticators and tutors has been very positive about the learning achieved and how standards were met through these alternatives to work placement processes.

3. The third element of the response to delivery during Covid-19 was the agreement of alternative assessments where it was not practical or safe for learners to sit traditional examinations. CMETB consulted with all tutors on their experiences in 2020 so as to inform the parameters for alternative assessments in 2021. Training was developed to assist tutors with setting up exams, proctoring exams and then removing exams from the system once completed. Details of the training provided can be accessed [here](#).

All tutors had to complete an application form and present it to their centre manager detailing the nature of the alternative assessment, the learning outcomes impacted, the resources required and the actions taken to ensure integrity of assessments. These were collated by centre managers and presented to the FET Management and Quality Council for discussion and approval.

These processes ensured quality, transparency, fairness, validity and integrity across all aspects of provision and assessments throughout CMETB in times of unprecedented challenge for programme delivery. An overview of impacts can be accessed [here](#).



5.3. Impact of Covid-19

In terms of measuring the true impact of Covid-19, it is important to note that this will not be possible until such time that the pandemic ends. It is, therefore, CMETB's intention is to conduct a further evaluation of the full impact of Covid-19 at this stage.

Second Providers were also consulted, with responses received from the National Learning Network and Contracted Training (TMTS).

Four key questions were considered as part of this analysis:

1. What did you do that was different (in response to Covid-19)
2. What worked?
3. What did not go as expected and what did you learn from that?
4. What should be kept post Covid-19 and why?

These questions were answered with respect to 12 thematic areas:

1. IT access and TEL ability
2. Learner recruitment, selection and retention
3. Semesterisation
4. Work experience/work placement
5. Remote teaching and learning
6. Alternative Assessment
7. PD and upskilling
8. QA procedures and supports
9. College Life
10. Management and administration
11. Supports for learners
12. Other

The inputs under each thematic area are represented on a centre by centre basis in the report, which can be accessed [here](#).

CASE STUDY

10

CMETB LEARNER PERSPECTIVES ON ERT

To help gain an understanding of the impact of Covid-19 and the ERT measures implemented by CMETB from the perspective of learners, please click [here](#).

2020 - 2021 Covid-19 Self-Evaluation Report



The Evaluation of the Impact of Covid-19 on Teaching, Learning and Assessment in CMETB from June 2020 to June 2021 represents the inputs received from all CMETB services and second providers. The report considers their individual centres key learnings from engaging with mitigating processes and procedures implemented as a response to the challenges posed by Covid-19 interruptions to teaching, learning and assessment.

The following CMETB centres are represented in the analysis:

- > Adult Education
- > Cavan Institute
- > Monaghan Institute
- > Apprenticeship - Craft Apprenticeships and Post 2016 Apprenticeships
- > Specific Skills Training
- > Traineeships
- > Youthreach



5.4. Issues with the Impact of Covid-19

A number of challenges and threats to CMETB were identified as result of Covid-19.

5.4.1. Issues for the Learning Environment

1. Childcare was a major concern for learners with many of them struggling to balance childcare and home-schooling responsibilities with online learning.
2. Mental health was also a particular challenge and concern for learners with as many as 30% of learners who completed the AONTAS survey following the learner forum stating that their mental health was adversely affected.
3. The lack of structure to their day as a result of Covid-19 was also a particular challenge for learners and this had a negative impact on their motivation to engage in ERT.

5.4.2. Issues for the Teaching Environment

1. Some learners are unable and/or unwilling to engage online. A lack of appropriate digital skills and/or a lack of motivation was largely the reason for this. Either way, this is a threat to CMETB in terms of both course completion and progression in and out of FET.
2. Tutors, particularly at Levels 1 – 3, expressed concern regarding the negative impact online platforms were having on efforts to build learner confidence. In particular, English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) learners with little or no English language skills have been disproportionately impacted.

3. Tutors of practically focused subjects reported many difficulties in terms of finding alternative, more creative ways of engaging learners. Learners who were required to complete work placements as part of their programme, were particularly impacted in this regard.
4. Childcare was also major concern for teaching staff with many of them struggling to balance childcare and home-schooling responsibilities with teaching online.

5.4.3. Issues with Alternative Assessments

1. In allowing learners complete online assessments, such as open book or proctored examinations, CMETB needs to continually ensure that the academic integrity of the process is not compromised in any way and that the process does not give learners the scope or outlet to cheat.
2. Recognition needs to be given to the fact that the assessment elements of many practically focused subjects cannot be replicated online. Consideration needs to be given to how the negative impact on a learner's ability to complete their programme on schedule be mitigated in situations if further periods of restrictions are required.



5.5. Implementation Points Regarding the Impact of Covid-19

A number of enhancement opportunities arising from experiences of Covid-19 to date have been identified.

5.5.1. Implementation Points for the Learning Environment

1. Learners would like to see greater support provided for them in accessing suitable devices, such as laptops, to ensure they are in a position to continue and complete their learning. Furthermore, learners want to ensure that there is a level playing field for all learners, and as such are requesting access to the same technology and software at home. The extension of the Loan Device Scheme will be important in this regard.

2. Learners should be offered support to develop and update their IT skills as part of the programme induction process, something which was also highlighted by tutors in the 2020 FET Staff Survey. Equally, learners stated that it should be made very clear to them, from the outset, what the hardware and software requirements of their course are in order for them to successfully engage and achieve certification. This will be built into the guidelines for online teaching for tutors.

3. Learners recognised that the move to ERT was also proving challenging for tutors and as such would like to see greater training for FET staff in relation to digital technologies. It was evident from the learners who participated in the AONTAS Learner Forum that it was very important that tutors were confident in their ability to deliver high-quality teaching online. The TEL Officer, as well as in-centre expertise, have been pro-active in relation to this with the appointment and training of tutors as TEL Champions, whose role is to support their fellow tutors to develop their digital capabilities.

5.5.2. Implementation Points for the Teaching Environment

1. At Levels 1 – 3, tutors expressed a desire that ‘homework’ should be the norm for learners, where appropriate, so as to encourage them to take more responsibility for their learning and better prepare them for blended learning in the future, as well as for progression within FET and to Higher Education, where there is less structured support provided.

2. Continuing Professional Learning and Development training should be afforded to tutors to enable them to build and foster learner confidence in the use of technologies and online platforms such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom. Tutors must be afforded the time and support to upskill and much work has been done in this regard thanks to the synergies created between the work of the TEL Officer and PL&D Co-ordinator (See Case Study 2 in Chapter 3).

3. Management should give further consideration to the choice of technologies used to support the teaching and learning environment, both online and in the face-to-face environment. To this end, tutors and learners should be consulted regularly to adjust in a timely way to changing requirements. Management and staff also need to be conscious of the potential confusion that can be caused by allowing access to multiple technologies and online platforms.

4. In encouraging and supporting learners to advance their digital skills, particularly amongst learners at Levels 1 to 3, tutors need to recognise that learners could easily be scared off by an over reliance, perceived or otherwise, on digital skills development. This is particularly relevant for literacy learners and ESOL learners. The general consensus is that technology should enhance the learning experience, not replace it.

5. In developing Blended and Online Learning Frameworks, arising out of the experience of providing ERT during the pandemic, the process needs to work for different cohorts of learners across a variety of settings and contexts. As such, there cannot be ‘a one size fits all’ solution.

6. Tutors highlighted the need for appropriate ‘netiquette’ when using online platforms, such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom, and to convey this at the start of the programme and/or as part of learner induction. For example, many learners are reluctant to participate when tutors or fellow learners keep their cameras turned off whilst speaking.

7. Buoyed on by the experience of some tutors during Covid-19, there is a need and desire for greater collaboration amongst tutors delivering the same or similar modules. The six Youthreach Centres are currently leading out on this form of co-operation with the recent launch of their Communities of Practice (COP) initiative.

5.5.3. Implementation Points for Alternative Assessments

1. As society recovers from the impact of Covid-19, there is an opportunity to learn from the experience of providing alternative assessment to ascertain how the future model of assessment might look in terms of making the process more focused on assessing learner performance outside of the stresses prompted by the traditional assessment environment.

2. There is a need to balance academic integrity with assessment security issues. CMETB needs to undertake a detailed analysis in this regard.

3. CMETB wishes to take the best parts from the experience of ERT and integrate them into future blended learning delivery.

6 SELF-EVALUATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW



cmetb

Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna
an Chabháin agus Mhuineacháin
Cavan and Monaghan
Education and Training Board

6.1. Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review



6.1.1. Information on Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

At CMETB, QA processes and procedures are supported by a commitment to continuous improvement and enhancement by way of ongoing self-evaluation and monitoring activities. Such activities take place at both centre and ETB-wide level on an ongoing basis.

In 2018, as part of the re-engagement process with QQI, CMETB developed an **Executive Self-Evaluation Report (ESER)**. Drafted in line with QQI's Statutory Core Quality Assurance and Sector Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines, the preparation of the ESER afforded CMETB the opportunity to reflect on quality management and governance at an important juncture in the organisation's development. In devising the ESER, it was highlighted that there were gaps within existing QA policies and procedures, with the main gap emerging being the need to consolidate governance structures to ensure there was sufficient oversight and accountability at all levels of management.

Furthermore, given that CMETB continues to operate under four QA agreements, it was acknowledged that there was a lack of coherent information, co-ordinated monitoring and consistent documentation feeding in at the organisational level. This had given rise to difficulty in identifying and analysing trends and risks in order to allow for more informed and evidence-based decision making. In this regard, five priority goals were identified, which formed the basis of CMETB's inaugural **Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)**:



As has been evidenced throughout this SER, CMETB has advanced work in each of these priority areas, while at the same time identifying further enhancement opportunities. This serves to highlight CMETB's commitment to consistent and ongoing improvement and development of QA processes and procedures.



6.1.2. Insights into Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

The QIP, which stemmed from the ESER, is revised every two years to reflect this commitment to quality and a number of new enhancement opportunities have been added to the 2020/21 QIP arising from the outcomes of learner and staff surveys conducted throughout 2020. Progress is monitored at the QA Sub-group and FET Management and Quality Council meetings on an ongoing basis.

In revising its governance structures in line with the subsidiarity principle, the work of the streamlined governance structures has been directed and influenced by key developments in the use of management and information tools, the ongoing development of integrated policies and procedures and the integrated planning and management of programme related activity. These activities are reinforced by the greater involvement of staff and stakeholders in the development and delivery of relevant, future focused curricula.

One such example of this increased involvement of stakeholders has been ongoing efforts to incorporate and enhance the role of the learner voice; efforts which have been outlined in detail elsewhere in this SER.



In developing the learner voice, coupled with the greater deployment and analysis of management and information data, through the utilisation and cross-referencing of a variety of data capture systems, CMETB has enhanced its monitoring and oversight of FET provision. For example, the results of the learner surveys from 2020 and 2021 are available to staff in all centres via a live database. Engagement of staff also has a key role to play in the self-evaluation, monitoring and review of processes and procedures.

1. Staff Surveys

A number of surveys have been carried out with FET teaching and non-teaching staff across 2020 and 2021, covering QA, the impact of and response to Covid-19 and alternative assessments. Data and feedback generated from these surveys is being used to aid the review and monitoring process. Some of the emerging issues identified have been incorporated into the QIP. For example:

Date	KPI	Status
September 2020 & Ongoing	- Communications plan	QA updates to be communicated through ConexUs! on a quarterly basis.

2. FET Briefings and FET Breakfasts

FET Services use regular briefing events to inform staff of key developments at the local, national and international level that have an impact on CMETB FET provision, processes and procedures. The purpose of these events is to inform staff of new developments so that they can effectively monitor and review their respective processes, equipped with learnings from the most up to date intelligence available. Inputs and feedback are also sought from staff at these events.



3. FET Planning and Review Process

The Chief Executive and Director of FET regularly review FET services within CMETB. The purpose of these reviews is to assess performance on an ongoing basis and to identify key targets, concerns and challenges facing the service to assist with integrated corporate planning. Armed with these insights, it is easier for senior management to make decisions cognisant of potential impacts across CMETB.

4. Learner Survey and Learner Forums

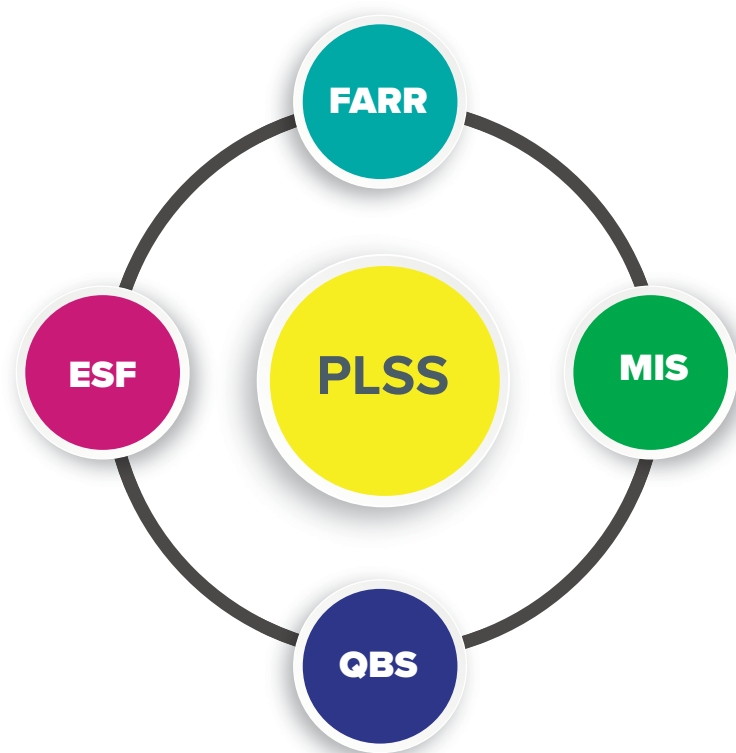
Since 2019 learner surveys have been conducted across FET Services by both AONTAS and CMETB in terms of gathering data on learner experiences, as well as in the context of Covid-19. Each of these surveys have been supplemented by either an AONTAS or CMETB hosted learner forum. The data and feedback gathered from both the learner surveys and forums aid the overall monitoring and review of FET provision, processes and procedures and enables CMETB to apply qualitative and quantitative metrics to same. For example, a number of the key issues arising from the 2020 Learner Survey have been incorporated into the updated QIP for 2021. For example,

Date	KPI	Status
March 2021	- Establishment of Learner Advisory Network	
November 2020	- Follow up learner survey 'temperature checks'	Completed March 2021

In addition to the engagement methods identified above, CMETB routinely monitors key data in support of its QA processes and procedures.

1. Data management process and cross-checking

Figure 6.1: CMETB Data Management Process



PLSS is a powerful data source used for many purposes including record capture, funding planning and stakeholder reporting. The system generates a variety of reports to aid CMETB in its monitoring and review activities, including learner numbers, completion rates and progression and certification. Examples have been included in the [Profile of CMETB Further Education and Training Provision](#).

> MIS

The MIS report is a static report generated by ETBI from data inputted into PLSS. It has a range of filters by which data can be reviewed and interrogated at centre level. Each month the previous monthly report is uploaded onto a shared Microsoft Teams site and individual centres are asked to review the data. In parallel with this, the Data Reporting Officer uses PLSS reports to identify any possible anomalies and brings these to the attention of the relevant centre for amendment, explanation or corrective action.

> FARR

The Funding Allocation Request and Reporting (FARR) system is used to plan and project funding for courses and projected learners throughout the year. FARR and PLSS are semi-integrated. The MIS is viewed at the mid-year reporting period to assist projection on how many beneficiaries are expected to enrol between July and December as this is the most reliable data available. This FARR data informs the SOLAS Strategic Performance Agreement (SPA).



> ESF Audits

The European Social Fund (ESF), via SOLAS, regularly issues a template for completion for ESF funded programmes based on a sample of learners to ensure data in PLSS is accurate and up to date. This is uploaded to the eCohesion system.

To assist this process, the Data Reporting Officer has created a checklist to guide centres and help them ensure all required data and documentation is captured. 'Mock ESF Samples' using PLSS reports are also used to assist in the ongoing monitoring of the accuracy of data. An internal audit team has been established to monitor its progress.

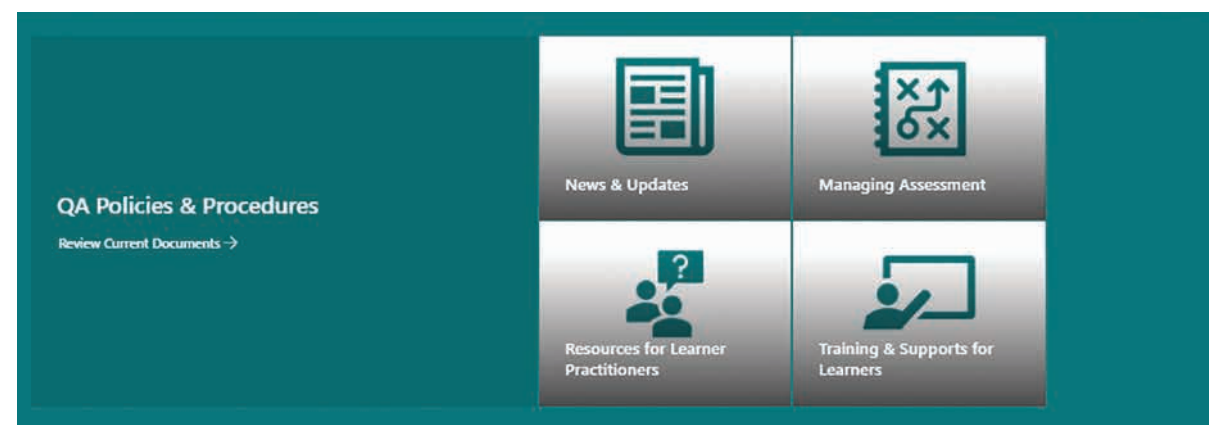
> QOI Reports

Upon receipt of QOI validation and certification reports twice yearly, they are divided into centre-specific reports and issued to centre managers for review and feedback. In reviewing the reports, centres are asked to consider the following questions:

- Are there any omissions?
- In areas where the centre/service is behind the national standard, they are required to provide reasons why this might be the case and any corrective measures that need to be taken.
- How might these reports be used more effectively for monitoring in conjunction with other data?
- Centres are also given the opportunity to request data not included in the attached reports that they consider useful to have.

Following receipt of responses from centres, the data is collated and fed back to the QA Sub-group for further discussion and any additional data requests submitted to QOI. CMETB works hard at delivering meaningful reports and ensuring they add value to the processes.

Prior to the September start, normally in June, centres are also required to submit details of all their provision for the next academic year and all these awards are monitored for compliance with validation requirements.



3. Policy Review

The QA Working Group, a subset of the QA Sub-group, is working on reviewing, updating and amalgamating policies and procedures that relate to CMETB FET. Priority areas for revision and development have been identified in consultation with management and are reflected in the Quality Improvement Plan. The final outputs from this process will be an integrated CMETB QA Handbook.

The formal review of policies, through the work of the QA Working Group, is being carried out to ensure that content, processes and recommendations in these policies are current and accurate so that each policy can be applied consistently across all FET centres. Consultation with CMETB's Compliance Department to ascertain synergies on policy review has also been recommended.



6.1.3. Impact of Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

The implementation of the ESER and QIP processes heralded a new cyclical, systematic FET-wide process of self-evaluation, monitoring and review. In addition, the expansion of the QA Team over the past number of years has helped strengthen these processes at both centre and ETB-wide level.

This has helped bring these developments have helped bring CMETB FET Services to a new phase of development, as are evidenced in the previous section. A broad range of self-evaluation, monitoring and review is occurring consistently across all levels of FET provision and is resulting in more robust QA processes and procedures, while ongoing opportunities for enhancement and development are being continuously sought.

The cross-checking of data across the various reports and online platforms in operation ensures anomalies are identified at an early stage and these are rectified in a timely manner, with the net result being high quality data sets which are accurate and provide a true reflection of FET activity at CMETB.

In terms of reviewing QQI reports, centre level reviews are helping to highlight anomalies with the reports themselves which are being communicated back, via the QA Team, to QQI for amendment. This shows the depth of monitoring and review that CMETB undertakes and which is not only having an impacting at ETB level, but also at a national level in terms of strengthening the accuracy and usability of reports.

Finally, it is also felt that the QA approach adopted by CMETB has led to the development of stronger relationships between centres. As a result, CMETB FET services/centres are much more integrated and a formalised support network has emerged with centres regularly supporting each other as and when required. The net result of this has been greater transparency, thereby creating greater trust and respect amongst and between FET centres.



6.1.4. Issues with Self-evaluation, Monitoring and Review

A number of potential challenges and threats to the quality of self-evaluation and monitoring undertaken by CMETB have been identified:

1. Learners are pivotal to the successful self-evaluation, monitoring and review of FET provision and processes and while CMETB has been advancing work in terms of better engaging the learner voice, challenges remain. Due to the transient nature of FET learners, it can be difficult to get responses and/or engagement from learners and this directly impacts the quality and robustness of data to aid the monitoring and review processes. Specific examples are in the area of learner progression six months after completion of a programme of study.
2. CMETB needs to be cognisant of the fact that in carrying out self-evaluation, monitoring and review activities, it won't only be positive data or feedback that emerges, nor should it. Notwithstanding this, the challenge lies in managing feedback, especially if perceived to be negative, and how to manage its impact on CMETB's reputation.
3. While self-evaluation, monitoring and review are important processes, they are largely internal processes conducted by CMETB staff. For example, Adult Education, Youthreach, Training Services and Cavan and Monaghan Institutes carry out individual self-evaluation exercises.
4. In keeping with its commitment to embedding a quality culture, CMETB recognises the importance of bringing a level of externality, and by extension objectivity, to these processes. While external stakeholders are regularly engaged in many respects, there is a need to expand this in the context of the governance structures and this has already been highlighted elsewhere in this report. Furthermore, the Youthreach Centre Evaluation and Improvement Plan (CEIP) process is a good example of the benefits of externality in centre evaluations.



6.1.5. Implementation Points for Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

The following enhancement opportunities have emerged as a result of the research and consultations undertaken:

1. The completion of this inaugural review process affords CMETB an opportunity to gain independent, external input on the effectiveness of QA processes and procedures and to identify additional enhancement opportunities aimed at further strengthening existing and evolving activities.
2. Regular internal auditing and monitoring by CMETB will help to consistently and regularly identify strengths, challenges and compliance issues that need to be addressed and will help identify threats and/or opportunities at the earliest possible juncture.
3. Ongoing enhancement of engagement with stakeholders such as learners and employers will help bring an additional level of robustness to the self-evaluation, monitoring and review processes.
4. MIS is a powerful tool, however, if MIS was also run as a live report with the option to be date specific it would be very beneficial. CMETB will raise this with the National PLSS Advisory Group.
5. PLSS and FARR⁴³ are semi-integrated, however, if FARR generated the Planned Programme Indicators, using data from previous years, this may prove more time efficient. CMETB will raise this issue directly with SOLAS.
6. The eCohesion⁴⁴ software is not user-friendly and can be confusing to upload without clear instructions. There may be an opportunity to make the integration between eCohesion and PLSS more streamlined and user-friendly by incorporating a secure document upload area.
7. Further integration of data and KPIs will bring significant benefits to CMETB activities.
8. A regular review of different data sets and feeds would help identify any data gaps.

⁴³ The Funding Allocation Request and Reporting is the process by which ETBs apply for funding annually and provide updates at designated times throughout the year.

⁴⁴ The eCohesion software is an electronic data exchange system used by bodies involved in the implementation of the European Union's European Social Fund (ESF).

6.2. Programme Monitoring and Review



6.2.1. Information on Programme Monitoring and Review

Programmes are monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure they remain relevant and up to date. The most recent versions of QQI programmes are housed on the CMETB Awards Portal. At present an exercise is underway to update these programmes, ensuring that the correct logos are being used and to remove the requirement for PPS numbers to be inserted on marking sheets, to bring them into line with GDPR.

Centre managers and co-ordinators can bring forward requests to make minor amendments to module descriptors via the Programme Approval Committee (PAC). Such amendments may relate to removing references to outdated legislation or outdated technology, for example. The Programme Proposal Committee (PPC) and Programme Approval Committee (PAC) are responsible for the approval of new programmes or programmes which have already been developed nationally or by other CMETB Centres/Services for use within specified centres/services.

Figure 6.2a: CMETB Programme Proposal Process (Stage 1)

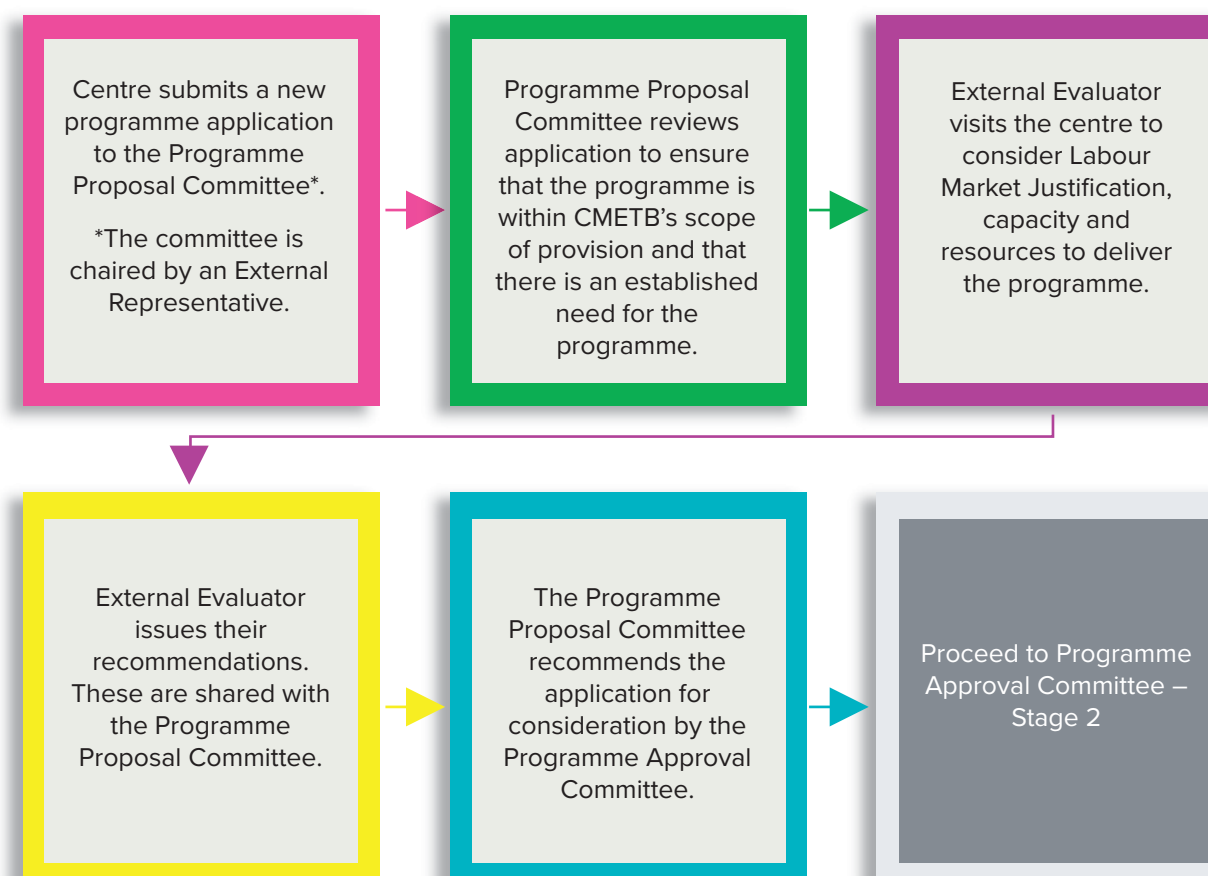
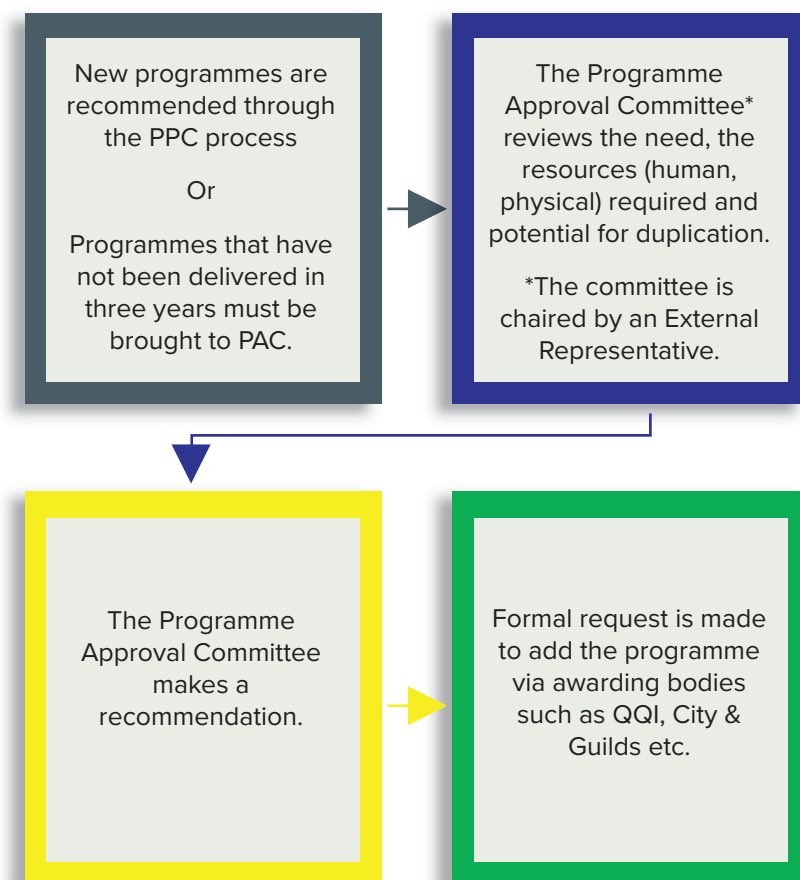


Figure 6.2b: CMETB Programme Approval Process (Stage 2)



Both of these committees are chaired by independent chairpersons. The work of the Programme Planning, Development and Implementation (PDI) Sub-group assists in the process of recommending new programmes and programme specific policies and procedures. In relation to centres looking to access programmes that have not been delivered in the previous three years, the centre is required to submit an application to the PAC to ensure that the programme is still fit for purpose, has sufficient resources to run and does not compromise existing provision. EAs may be employed to add additional subject matter expertise.

In addition, QA policies and procedures are regularly monitored through the QA Sub-group. An example of how this process works on a practical level has been included in Case Study 1 in **Chapter 3**.



6.2.2. Insights into Programme Monitoring and Review

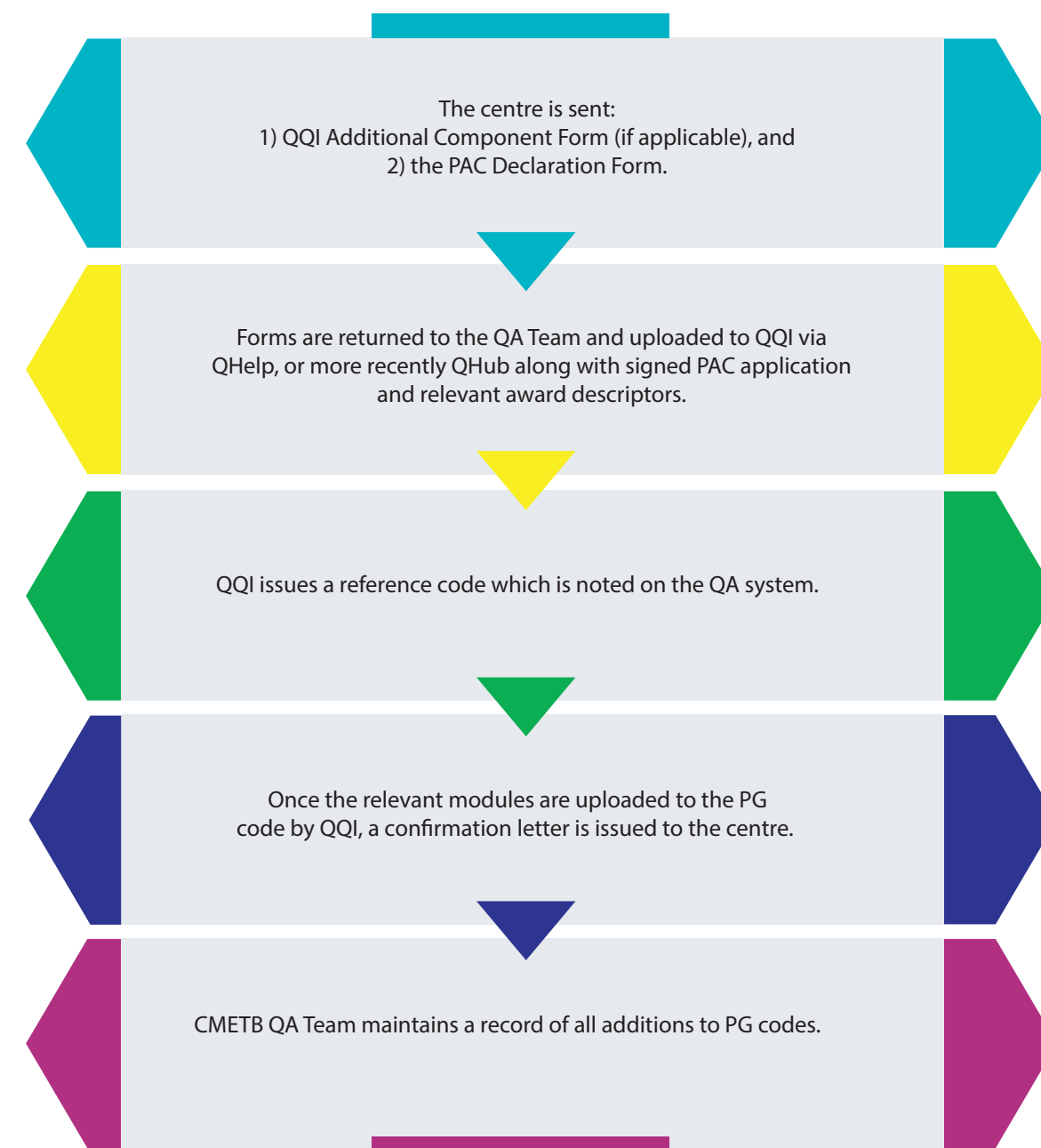
CMETB is consistently strengthening the relationships between processes and related systems. The governance structures, such as PPC and PAC, provide services with the platform to propose new programmes and obtain internal approval and subsequently QQI, or other awarding body validation. CMETB has recently updated its PPC application form to better incorporate the information required to ensure transparency in advertising to the public via FETCH. As such, programme information provided on the PAC forms will assist in building programmes on the PLSS National Programme Database.



Table 6.1: PAC Applications, 2018 – 2021

PAC Applications, 2018 - 2021				
Year	No. of Applications	Certifying Body	Major or Minor Award	New award / Re-activation of award / Adding to an award
2018	26	20 QQI	9 Major 11 Minor	8 x New QQI award for Centre 9 x Adding QQI minors to an award 3 x Re-activating a QQI award
		5 City and Guilds	5 Major award	5 x New C&G awards
		1 NEBOSH	1 Major award	1 x New award
2019	13	13 QQI	4 Major 9 Minor	3 x New QQI award for Centre 3 x Adding QQI minors to an award 7 x Re-activating an award
2020	44	36 QQI	16 Major 20 Minor	1 x New QQI award for CMETB 9 x New QQI award for Centre 11 x Adding QQI minors to an award 15 x Re-activating an award
		7 City and Guilds	7 Major award	7 x New C&G awards
		1 CompTIA	1 Major award	1 x New award
2021 (to May)	26	16 QQI	3 Major 13 Minor	1 x New QQI award for CMETB 2 x New QQI award for Centre 6 x Adding QQI minors to an award 7 x Re-activating an award
		10 City and Guilds	10 Major award	8 x New C&G awards 2 x Re-activating C&G awards
Total PAC Applications 109				

Furthermore, once a programme has been approved at PAC:

Figure 6.3: Post-PAC Process

This process helps ensure that centres are at all times compliant with validation requirements. A similar process applies to non-QQI awards.

Programmatic Review

Programme reviews also take place at national level and CMETB staff have been involved in a number of these reviews:

1. A CMETB staff member participated in the development of the new ELC Awards and Levels 5 and 6.
2. CMETB wrote the Career Preparation and Planning module at Level 4 to assist with CAS modifications required during Covid-19.
3. As a collaborating provider on a number of programmes, CMETB provides ongoing feedback to SOLAS, Accounting Technicians Ireland and Kerry ETB, for example.

In terms of National Apprenticeship reviews, CMETB, as co-ordinating provider, has a responsibility to undertake a programmatic review of the OEM Apprenticeship. At Programme Board level there is a review of what worked, areas of concern and areas for future development, as well as a review of teaching and learning resources on an annual basis to feed the wider programmatic review process. The OEM Apprenticeship is due for review and revalidation in 2022/23.

Risk Register

A Risk Management Policy is in place, the purpose of which is to support CMETB's ability to deliver on its strategic and operational objectives, to ensure that every effort is made to manage risk appropriately, to maximise potential opportunities and to minimise the adverse effects of risk.

Risk registers are in place which identify the key risks facing CMETB and these have been identified, evaluated and graded according to their significance. The QA risk register is reviewed and assessed on a quarterly basis by the QA Sub-group and presented to the FET Management and Quality Council. The outcome of these assessments is used to plan and allocate resources to ensure risks associated with QA are managed to an acceptable level. A similar process occurs at centre level.

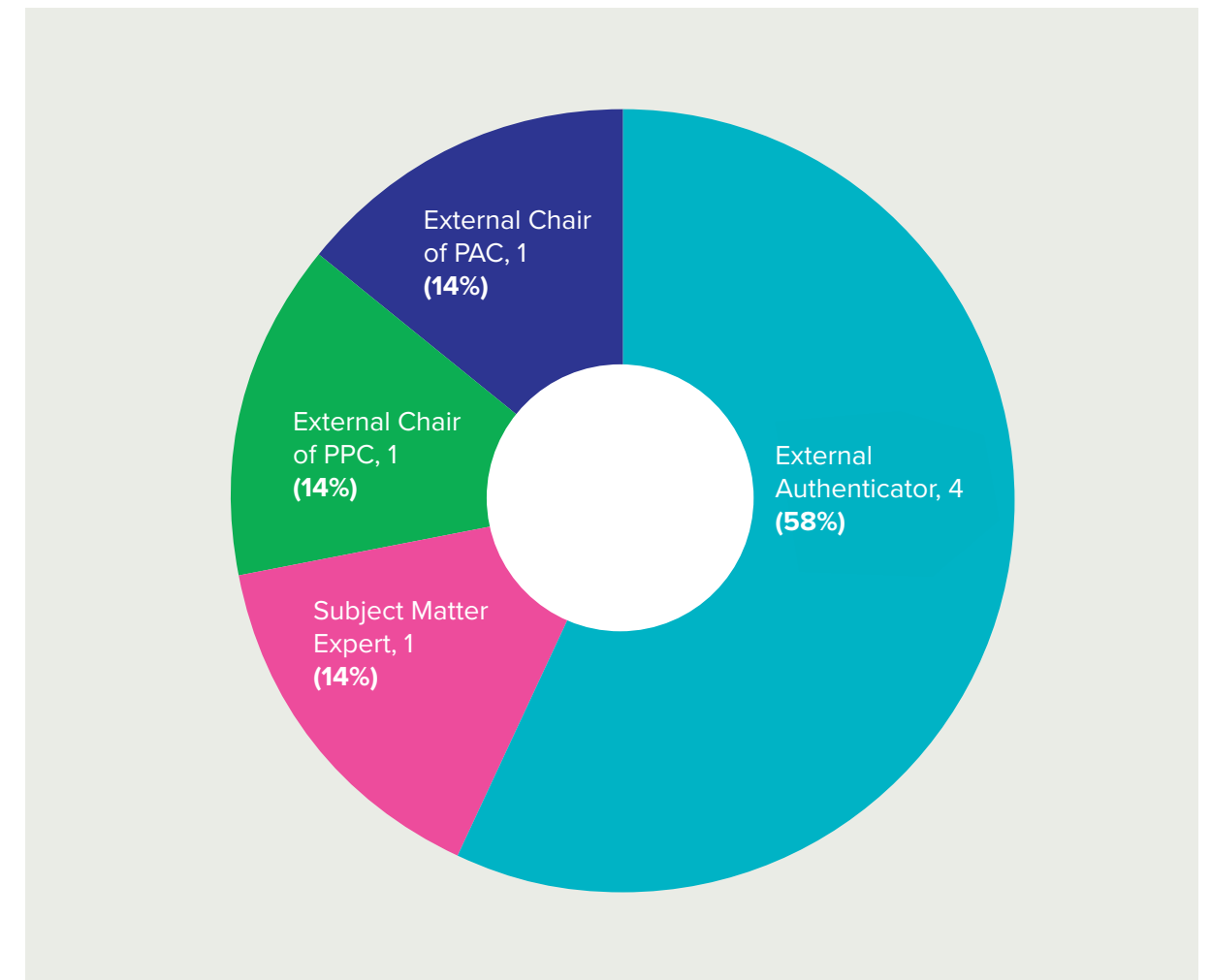
The risk register details the controls and actions needed to mitigate risks and assigns responsibility for the operation of control to specific staff.



6.2.3. Impact of Programme Monitoring and Review

In terms of assessing the impact of programme monitoring and review activity undertaken by CMETB, an online survey of External Authenticators (EAs) and Subject Matter Experts (SMEs)⁴⁵ was undertaken. The responses were received as outlined in **Figure 6.4**.

Figure 6.4: Profile of Respondents to EA and SME Survey⁴⁶



⁴⁵ Subject Matter Experts are utilised by CMETB because they provide specific skills and knowledge on a particular subject or area. They bring valuable insights from within and outside the FET sector in the development and approval of new programmes.

⁴⁶ Some respondents had more than one role, i.e. EA and SME.

Evaluation of PPC and PAC Process

5
out of
5

Rating given to the quality of paperwork shared with the external Chairs of the PPC and PAC.

5
out of
5

Rating given to CMETB's responsiveness to questions or concerns raised by the external Chairs of the PPC and PAC in relation to their engagement with CMETB.

5
out of
5

Rating given to the quality of interactions with CMETB staff during onsite/in meeting engagements.

Additional commentary pointed to the professionalism and rigorousness with which CMETB staff apply QA processes and procedures in relation to programme proposal and approval.

One comment stated that *'there is clear evidence that QA processes are well embedded in the organisation.'*

'I would like to commend CMETB on the rigorous processes in place prior to proposals coming to the PAC for decision. The structure of the PAC meetings and the ability of proposing staff to argue their case with conviction, is very noteworthy and is further clear evidence that QA is embedded among all staff, including the tutors, and teaching staff.'



6.2.4. Issues with Programme Monitoring and Review

Consultations with stakeholders identified a number of potential threats and challenges to CMETB in terms of programme monitoring and review:

1. The timing and staffing required to progress programme reviews is a cause for concern and CMETB has identified the need for a dedicated and appropriately staffed Curriculum Development Unit.
2. Programmes need to be kept up to date on a regular basis as failure to do so could result in CMETB losing learners and/or its reputation as a provider of quality, fit for purpose awards.
3. In relation to Training Services, Assessment Instrument Specifications are causing some challenges as they are dated.
4. CMETB has recently identified a need to review programmes in terms of being fit for purpose.



6.2.5. Implementation Points for Programme Monitoring and Review

A number of enhancement opportunities have been highlighted to aid further developments in this area going forward:

1. Establish a dedicated Curriculum Development Unit to support the growing need for programme development and appoint a Programme Development Manager to lead out on this.
2. As CMETB's range of provision evolves and becomes more complex, it is important to ensure consistency in applying QA systems across a wider scope of activity.
3. CMETB needs to continually upskill staff to prepare them for programme development.
4. CMETB needs to conduct a fit for purpose review of programmes at centre level. As part of this process, tutors will be asked to advise on outdated terminology and assessments, and issues with Learning Outcomes.

6.3. Oversight, Monitoring and Review of Relationships with External/Third Parties



6.3.1. Information on the Oversight, Monitoring and Review of Relationships with External/Third Parties

CMETB maintains a wide range of relationships with external bodies, organisations and stakeholders across the Cavan-Monaghan region, as well as nationally, and is continuously consulting on how best to enhance and develop these relationships. These relationships help CMETB maximise its service offering, helping it to reach as many beneficiaries as possible to the social, cultural and economic advantage of the Cavan-Monaghan region.

Community Groups

CMETB's Community Education Programme provides assistance to community and voluntary groups through the delivery of a range of education activities for disadvantaged adults within their own local communities.

CMETB administers a Community Education Grants Scheme annually, which provides funding to community groups for programme delivery in their localities.

Second Providers

CMETB engages with a number of Contracted Training Providers, Local Training Initiatives (LTIs) and Specialist Training Providers (STPs) on the delivery of education and training activity in the Cavan-Monaghan region.



Table 6.2: List of LTIs and Priority Delivery Areas

LTI	Priority Delivery Area
Moving On Programme	Level 4 Sport and Recreation (Major Award)
Teach na Daoine	Level 3 Science and Engineering (Major Award)
Cavan Genealogy	Level 4 Early Childhood Education and Care Support Level 4 ICT Skills Level 4 Office Skills Learners can work towards a Major Award in at least one of the above.

CMETB also acts as a 'collaborating provider' for a number of programmes as outlined in **Table 6.3**.

Table 6.3: CMETB Collaborating Provider for Programmes

Programme	Co-ordinating Provider
Accounting Technician Apprenticeship	Accounting Technicians Ireland
Commis Chef Apprenticeship	Kerry ETB
Hairdressing Apprenticeship (to commence)	Limerick and Clare ETB
National Craft Apprenticeships	SOLAS

Contracted Trainers

CMETB has procedures in place for the tendering and awarding of contracts to second providers for the purpose of providing training programmes within and outside of standard CMETB provision. As part of their agreement with CMETB, contracted trainers are required to adhere to CMETB's QA policies and procedures. Training Services staff conduct regular monitoring to ensure programmes are being delivered as agreed.

Higher Education Partners

While there is no Higher Education Institution (HEI) located in the Cavan-Monaghan region, CMETB maintains close relationships with a number of HEIs regionally, nationally and internationally. Many of these relationships are operationalised via the North East Further and Higher Education Alliance (NEFHEA) and the Higher Education Links Scheme, partnerships which have already been outlined in [Chapter 3](#). Some of these arrangements allow students to complete Years 1 and 2 of certain Higher Education courses locally at Cavan and Monaghan Institutes.

Employers

CMETB engages extensively with employers across the Cavan-Monaghan region, as well as the wider regional and national levels. CMETB is fully cognisant of the important role it plays in the economic development and success of the region and as such invests significant resources in working and liaising with employers on the development and delivery of appropriate programmes and supports to ensure a sufficient pool of suitably qualified employees locally, as well as providing upskilling opportunities for employees. The work of the Skills for Work Co-ordinator and Workforce Development Officer is critical in this regard.



6.3.2. Insights into the Oversight, Monitoring and Review of Relationships with External/Third Parties

In terms of managing its relationships with 'second providers' and 'collaborating providers' CMETB maintains documented agreements which formalise these relationships. For example, CMETB has in place, Agreements to Collaborate with each of the three LTIs that operate in the Cavan-Monaghan region. These agreements outline the terms and conditions for the operation of the LTIs as funded by CMETB. These agreements are regularly reviewed and updated as required by both the Second Provider and CMETB. CMETB also maintains a range of Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and Service Level Agreements (SLAs) with a range of other providers, to include partnering Institutes of Technology.

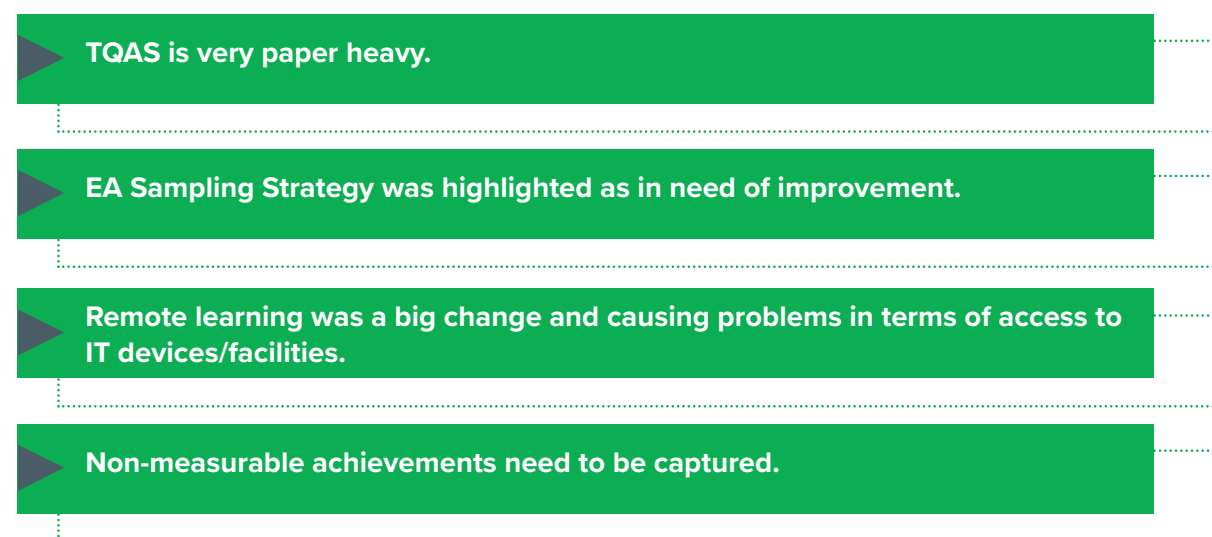
As part of the preparation of this SER, CMETB FET Services also engaged with each LTI to update them on the inaugural review process and to capture their feedback and insights on the relationship with CMETB and how it could be improved going forward.

In terms of the relationship with CMETB, it was found that:



However, a number of areas of concern were highlighted ([Figure 6.5](#)).

Figure 6.5: Areas of concern in the relationship between LTIs and CMETB

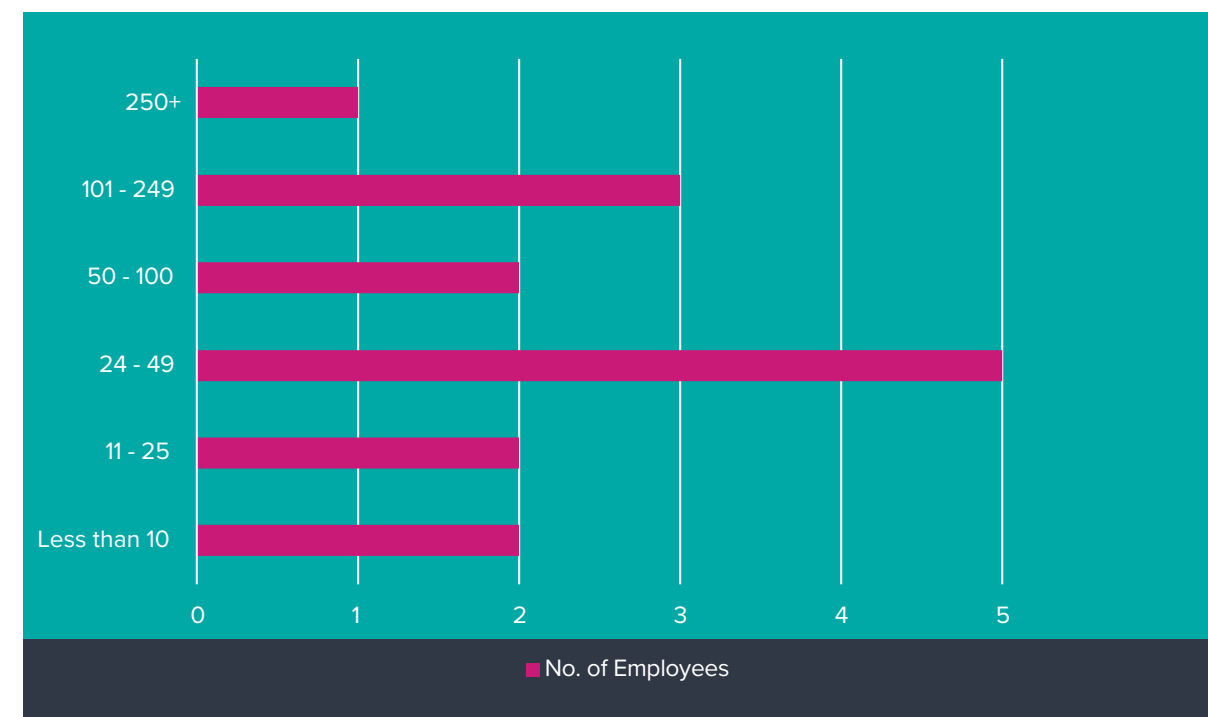


In relation to concerns with the EA Sampling Strategy, it was advised that CMETB is currently working on a risk-based Sampling Strategy for the EA process. A number of operational issues were also raised during the consultations, and co-ordinators were advised to bring these to the attention of both the Adult Education Officer and their programme sponsors.

With regard to employers, a short online survey was circulated to assist in an evaluation of their relationship with CMETB and its effectiveness. The findings of this survey are presented as follows.

Fifteen employers responded to the survey. Their size in terms of employee numbers is outlined in **Figure 6.6**.

Figure 6.6: Number of Employees by Category



In terms of describing their relationship with CMETB, the following responses were received (**Table 6.4**).

Table 6.4: Nature of Employer Relationships with CMETB⁴⁷

Relationship (n=15)	No. of response
Provide work placements for CMETB learners	4
Apprenticeship/Traineeship	1
Member of Advisory/Steering Group	2
Apprenticeship/Traineeship	11
Employees attend CMETB Courses (either on or off-site)	7
Other:	1
> Provide Training Space to CMETB	

Employers were also asked to state their level of agreement with a number of statements relating to CMETB FET provision.

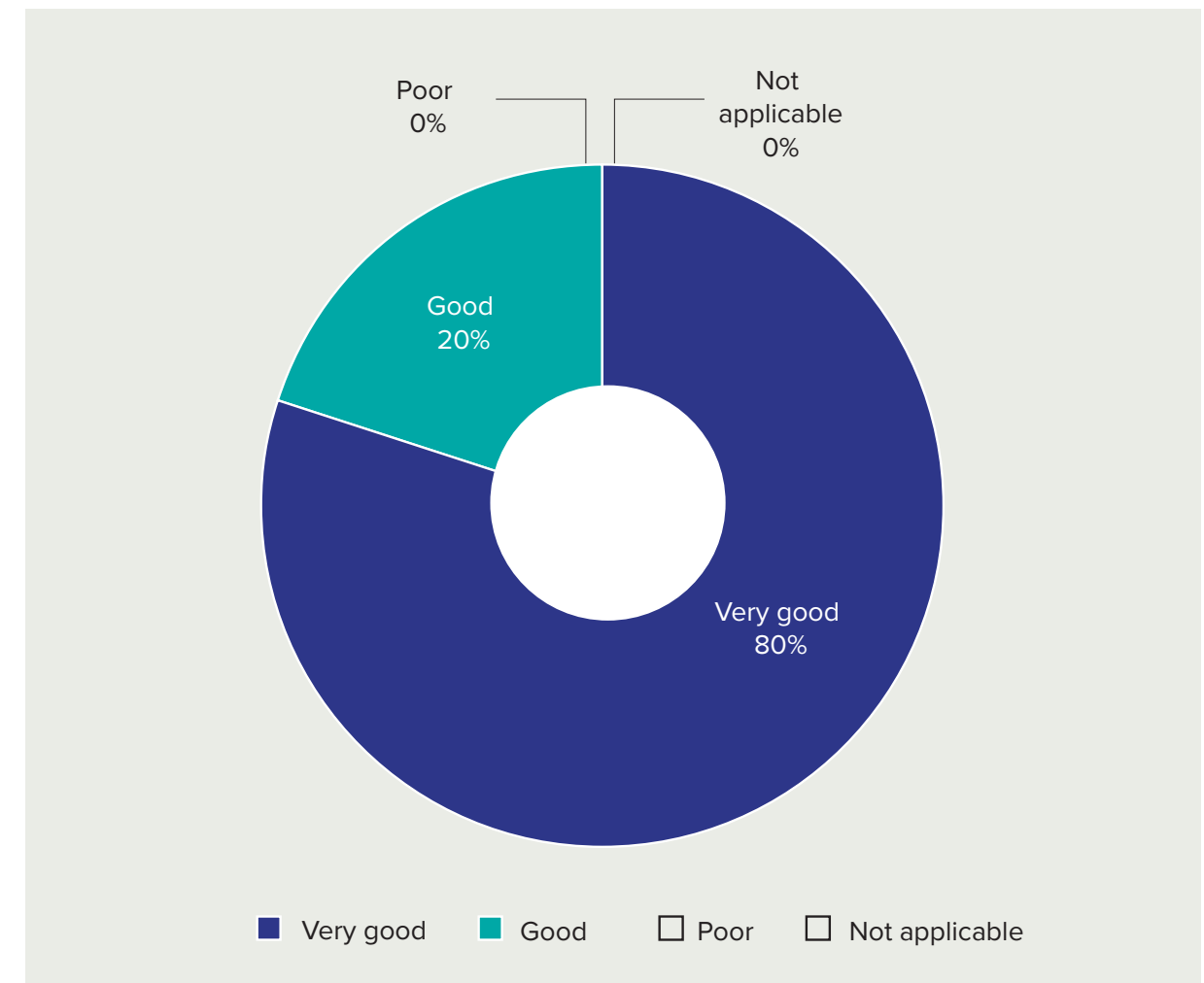
⁴⁷ Employers could choose more than one option in their response.

Table 6.5: Employers' Levels of Agreement

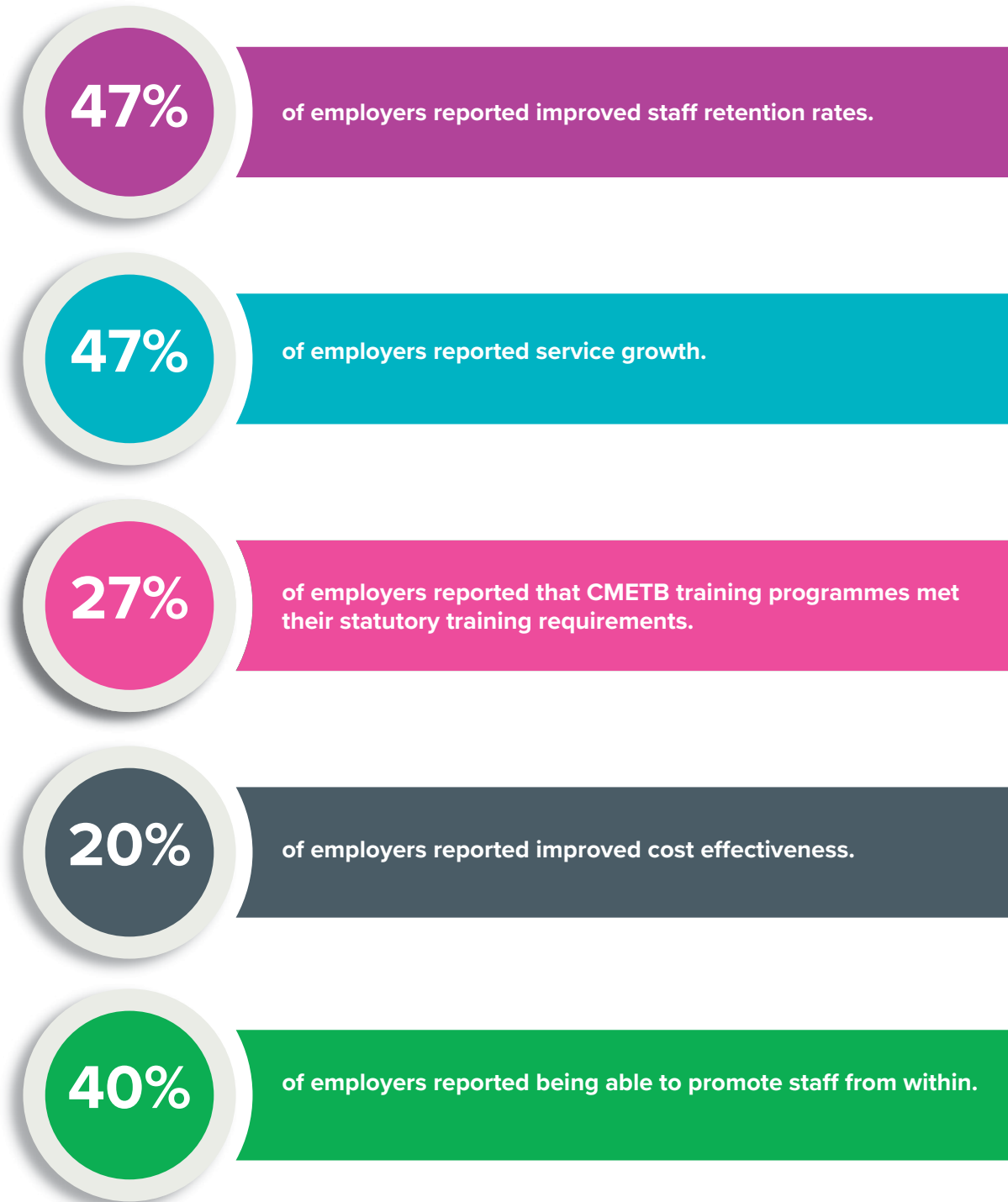
Statement (n=15)	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
CMETB provides quality education and training programmes which are relevant and current for the needs of our employees.	0%	0%	6.7%	33.3%	60%
I understand how engagement with CMETB can positively benefit my company.	0%	0%	6.7%	20%	73.3%
As an employer, I have found engaging with CMETB representatives to discuss/develop employee initiatives to be useful and constructive.	0%	0%	13.3%	20%	66.7%
Training provided by CMETB is cost effective.	0%	6.7%	6.7%	13.3%	73.3%
As an employer I can influence the curriculum and content of the programmes delivered by CMETB to best suit employee needs.	0%	0%	26.7%	33.3%	40%
CMETB is flexible in its ability to meet specific learner and delivery needs.	6.7%	0%	13.3%	26.7%	53.3%
I am satisfied with CMETB's tutors/instructors skills and knowledge of my industry.	0%	0%	13.3%	13.3%	73.3%
I have found CMETB to be professional, knowledgeable and helpful.	0%	0%	0%	20%	80%
Qualifications offered by CMETB are adequate for the company's needs.	0%	6.7%	6.7%	26.7%	60%
Course delivery times are flexible.	0%	0%	13.3%	46.7%	40%
I would recommend CMETB to other companies.	0%	0%	0%	20%	80%

These results are very positive and encouraging and highlight CMETB's effectiveness in supporting companies, regardless of their size, with their upskilling and reskilling needs. However, in its commitment to both ongoing engagement and improvement, CMETB is keen to better understand why one employer either 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed' with a number of the criteria outlined in **Table 6.5**.

In terms of their overall experience of CMETB employment focused programmes, employers provided the following feedback:

Figure 6.7: How would you rate your overall experience of CMETB employment focused programmes?

In terms of the impact of participation on CMETB training programmes, the survey results highlighted the following:⁴⁸



In addition, one employer stated that CMETB training programmes assisted in the development of new areas of work.

With regard to the effectiveness of the various mechanisms employed by CMETB to engage with employers and promote FET Services, the following responses were received (Table 6.6).

Table 6.6: Effectiveness of mechanisms used to engage employers & promote FET Services

Statement (n=15)	Not Effective	Effective	Very Effective	Not Sure	Not Applicable
Attending employer networking/career events	0%	26.7%	33.3%	26.7%	13.3%
CMETB website/Social media channels	6.7%	53.3%	26.7%	6.7%	6.7%
Generic advertisements (e.g. social media posts, flyers etc.)	13.3%	46.7%	26.7%	6.7%	6.7%
Email/telephone communication	0%	46.7%	53.3%	0%	0%
Face-to-face meetings	0%	33.3%	66.7%	0%	0%
Through external third parties (e.g. North East Regional Skills Forum etc.)	6.7%	33.3%	20%	20%	20%
Work placements	0%	53.3%	33.3%	0%	13.3%
Traditional media (i.e. newspaper, radio)	6.7%	73.3%	0%	13.3%	6.7%

Additionally, of those employers (n=13) who had a relationship with CMETB's Workforce Development Officer 54% stated that the relationship was very effective, 23% stated that it was effective, while the remaining 23% were not sure.

This data clearly highlights that CMETB needs to do more in terms of advertising and the communication of information to employers. While it is anticipated that the development of a new CMETB website, along with ongoing support from the Communications Officer, will aid improvements in this area, CMETB will continue to liaise with employers to identify further enhancement opportunities.

⁴⁸ Employers were able to select more than one option in response to this question.

In terms of the most positive aspects of the employers' relationship with CMETB, the following responses were received:

‘Easy to work with and willing to engage with us as a placement provider.’

‘Training advisors are extremely approachable, their assistance and input with our apprenticeship programmes is invaluable.’

‘We get the sense that CMETB listens and acts upon our requirements/ suggestions.’

‘We have had many employees upskill and learn new things which we have found helps with our plan for employee development, upskilling and retention of employees.’

Finally, in terms of additional training requirements over the next 2 – 3 years and which are not currently available, the following areas were highlighted:

COMPUTER ASSISTED DESIGN

LOW VOLTAGE SYSTEMS

DATA ANALYTICS

TIMBER FRAME BASED COURSES



6.3.3. Impact of the Oversight, Monitoring and Review of Relationships with External/Third Parties

CASE STUDY 11

EMPLOYER TESTIMONIALS ON CMETB SKILLS TO ADVANCE INITIATIVES

In terms of the impact of CMETB's oversight, monitoring and review of relationships with employers across the Cavan-Monaghan region, a number of testimonials have been provided:

1. To access feedback from McAree Engineering, please click [here](#).
2. To access feedback from MDE Installations, please click [here](#).
3. To access feedback from Combilift, please click [here](#).



6.3.4. Issues with the Oversight, Monitoring and Review of Relationships with External/Third Parties

A number of challenges and threats to the oversight, monitoring and review of external/third party relationships have been identified:

1. Given the important requirement to respond to employer needs in a timely manner, the QA processes of external awarding bodies in terms of securing approval to deliver programmes can be time consuming and as such is a threat to CMETB's perceived responsiveness to needs. The presence of private providers is also a challenge in this respect.
2. In terms of second providers and collaborating providers, maintaining ongoing monitoring and reporting via onsite visits/audits is challenging due to limited staffing resources.
3. Contracted Training Services is dependent on a limited number of contractors and this is a threat to CMETB in terms of business continuity should unforeseen circumstances arise such as termination of contract, failure to meet contractual obligations etc.
4. Managing employer expectations and aligning these to CMETB's ability to respond is challenging.



6.3.5. Implementation Points on the Oversight, Monitoring and Review of Relationships with External/Third Parties

A number of enhancement opportunities in this area have been identified:

1. Additional support resources should be considered to aid the work of the Workforce Development function.
2. Annual reviews with second providers should be carried out by CMETB.
3. CMETB should develop an integrated annual monitoring plan.
4. A curriculum review schedule needs to be developed and implemented on an ongoing basis with employers/third party stakeholders.

7 CONCLUSIONS



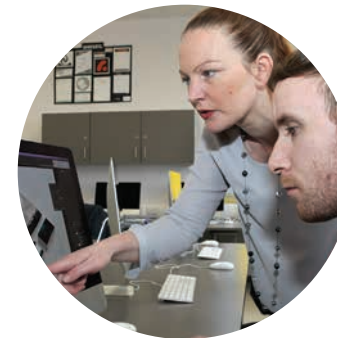
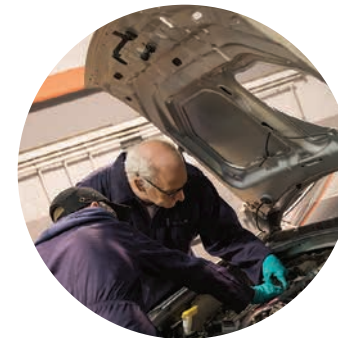
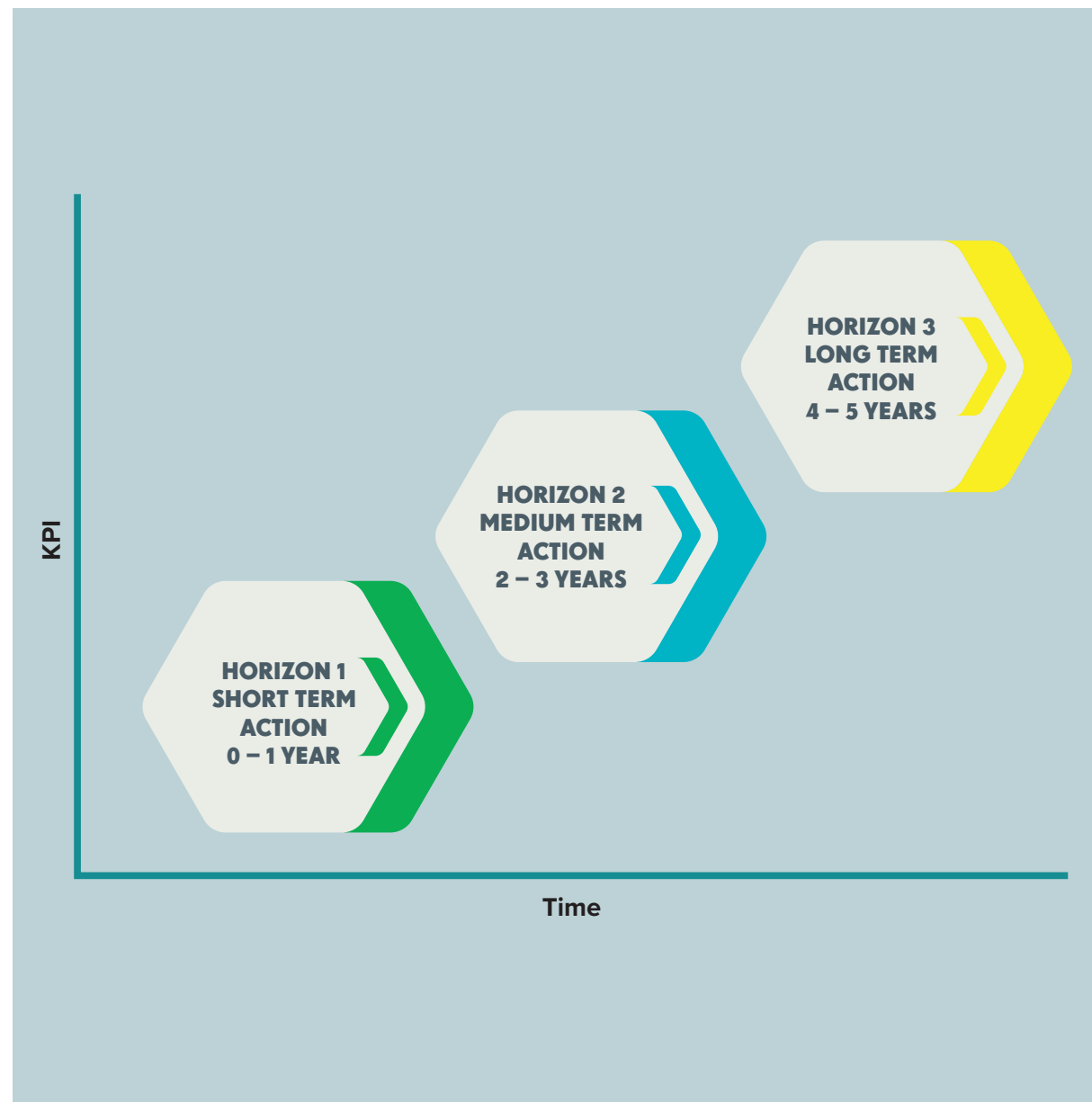
The development of this SER has been very useful for CMETB FET Services, affording them the opportunity to consider and articulate how their QA processes and procedures have developed and evolved since successful re-engagement with QQI in May 2018. This SER highlights many positive developments within CMETB during this time and points optimistically to the future as the organisation expands its range of provision and support services. Notwithstanding the positives, there are clearly some areas of opportunity and improvement that have emerged as a result of this process.

A total of 82 implementation actions were identified throughout this report. These actions have been divided into enhancement categories. Furthermore, using a Horizon Timeline, these actions have been translated into draft KPIs which will be finalised with the benefit of additional insights from the Review Panel.

Figure 7.1: Enhancement Categories



Figure 7.2: Horizon Timeline



KEY

ENHANCEMENT
CATEGORY

BLENDED
LEARNING

CAPITAL
INFRASTRUCTURE
& RESOURCES

COMMUNICATIONS

KPI
HORIZON
1

1. PDI Sub-group to conduct a review of course provision to identify programmes that lend themselves to Blended Learning.
2. CMETB IT agreement on access to digital platforms to be adopted across FET centres.
3. Implement Emergency Remote Teaching Checklist for FET Practitioners.
4. Work to develop digital skills of learners at NFQ Levels 1 to 3 in a way that will support access to Blended Learning in the future.
5. Develop 'netiquette' policies and procedures for tutors and learners.

1. Review CMETB's buildings portfolio to assess their ongoing suitability.

1. Publish ConexUs! as a quarterly QA newsletter and benchmark its success after 12 months in terms of awareness and impact.
2. Carry out a branding audit to ensure that logos are being applied correctly and consistently across CMETB FET centres.
3. Assess the impact of existing social media platforms.
4. Review public facing communications to ensure they are current and impactful.
5. Include links to FETCH on all documentation, communications and advertisements.
6. Utilise Tableau licences and emerging data to support CMETB's strategy development documentation.

KPI
HORIZON
2

1. Finalise CMETB's Blended Learning Policy.

1. Progress capital infrastructure development priorities to support the provision of modern, state-of-the-art FET facilities.
2. Continue investment in suitable infrastructure to support the digital transformation of FET.

1. Develop a new CMETB FET identity and branding in line with the FET College of the Future.
2. Develop a Pathways Communications Plan aligned to the Future FET Strategy.
3. Develop an integrated FET Communications Strategy.

KPI
HORIZON
3

1. Review CMETB land and buildings portfolio with a view to consolidation.

KEY

ENHANCEMENT
CATEGORY

LEARNER
ADVOCACY &
SUPPORT

KPI
HORIZON
1

1. Conduct an annual learner survey.
2. Host an annual learner forum.
3. Establish a Learner Advisory Network (LAN) with 4 meetings per year.
4. Pilot learner participation on governance structures.
5. Utilise the inputs of the LAN in self-evaluation, monitoring and review activities.
6. Facilitate leadership programme for members of the LAN to assist them with learner advocacy.
7. Implement TEL induction and support for learners.
8. Develop a policy and procedures for the Loan Device Scheme.
9. Conduct ongoing auditing of CMETB's device inventory to ensure sufficient supply at centre level.
10. Use the PLC Access and Pathways to Success Programmes to assist progression among learners who may require additional support.

KPI
HORIZON
2

1. Support the development of a 'distance travelled' measurement tool for use across CMETB.
2. Establish an ICT Helpdesk to support learners, particularly those engaged in Blended Learning.

KPI
HORIZON
3

1. Consider establishing a CMETB Alumni.

KEY

ENHANCEMENT
CATEGORY

QUALITY
ASSURANCE

STAFF LEARNING
& DEVELOPMENT

KPI
HORIZON
1

1. Develop a SMART Quality Improvement Plan which is reflective of the findings of the Self-Evaluation Report and panel review.
2. Develop an integrated data analysis framework linked to CMETB's planning process which supports data driven decision making and ongoing auditing and monitoring.
3. Further the development of a suite of standardised policies and procedures for implementation across all CMETB FET centres leading towards a single QA system.
4. Establish synergies with CMETB's Compliance Department to support the ongoing review of policies and procedures.
5. Develop an accessible SharePoint site for staff to access current QA policies and procedures.
6. Review existing programmes to identify and rectify issues with logos, Learning Outcomes, legislation, equipment etc.
7. Conduct annual validation and certification audits across all CMETB FET centres.
8. Progress and refine internal reviews in conjunction with CMETB's Compliance Working Group.
9. Publish annual consolidated EA reports.
10. Identify an MIS lead person in each FET centre.

1. Establish a PL&D Working Group to assist the development of a CMETB PL&D Strategy.
2. Publish an annual PL&D Plan in line with staff requirements.
3. Integrated PL&D and wellbeing initiatives to maximise synergies
4. Develop a synchronous and asynchronous staff induction programme.
5. Provide and monitor TEL supports through TEL Champions.

KPI
HORIZON
2

1. FET centres to identify QA Champions to support the policy review process.
2. Engage in national programme development through CMETB participation on ETBI working groups.
3. Evaluate alternative assessments used as part of ERT with a view to integrating best practice.
4. Review assessment practice to consider a balance between academic integrity and assessment security.
5. Create a curriculum review schedule and implement on an ongoing basis.
6. Review the Youthreach Communities of Practice pilot and use the learnings gained to review the process before wider rollout across all FET centres.
7. Finalise an online integrated QA Handbook.
8. Support collaboration amongst FET centres on the development of individual centre-level QA Plans.

1. Work to develop appropriate staffing structures to support the FET College of the Future.

KPI
HORIZON
3

1. Pilot an integrated annual QA monitoring plan in consultation with FET centres.

1. Work to ensure that the FET College of the Future has the appropriate number of staff and ancillary staff to support service delivery.
2. Update on developments and achievements with regards to Human Rights and Equality in the CMETB annual report.

KEY

ENHANCEMENT
CATEGORY

STRATEGIC &
ORGANISATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT

KPI
HORIZON
1

1. Establish a RPL Team and Admin Centre at CMETB level.
2. Recruit a Programme Design, Validation and Evaluation Manager to support programme activity at CMETB.
3. Continue development and enhancement of new and existing relationships with HEIs to facilitate progression from FET to HE.
4. Support work on the development of an ESBS e-Recruitment process via the national working group.
5. Support the development and implementation of a CMETB Remote Working Policy and measure uptake and impact on FET after 12 months.
6. Rebrand AEGIS and monitor the impact after 12 months.
7. Develop an implementation plan to expand AEGIS as a FET-wide service.
8. Recruit additional staffing to support workforce development activity.
9. Recruit a manager for new Supply Chain, Logistics and Procurement Centre of Excellence.
10. Pilot SEED – Strategic Employment Engagement Development tool – once operational to assess its impact on employer engagement.
11. Establish Employer Consultation Groups per sector to assist in the development of new and innovative programmes to support the needs of industry and the region.
12. Gather data to inform FARR, PLSS, MIS, eCohesion systems development at a national level.
13. Conduct annual reviews with second providers to assess the ongoing appropriateness and effectiveness of supports provided by CMETB, including QA.
14. Public Sector Equality & Human Rights Duty working group are to assess the Human Rights and Equality issues it believes to be relevant to the functions and purpose of CMETB.

KPI
HORIZON
2

1. Establish a centralised Curriculum Development Unit to co-ordinate future programme design and validation activity.
2. Respond to the opportunity to include CMETB FET programmes on the CAO application form.
3. Review synergies between data requirements and tools available with a view to establishing an integrated reporting system.

KPI
HORIZON
3

1. Establish the CMETB FET College of the Future.



GLOSSARY



cmetb
Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna
an Chabháin agus Mhuineacháin
Cavan and Monaghan
Education and Training Board

Term	Definition	Description
AEGIS	Adult Education Guidance and Information Service	Support service providing information and guidance to adults to assist them in making informed decisions regarding their education, training and career choices.
AIS	Assessment Instrument Specification	Method used to assess learners pursuing training programmes.
AIT	Athlone Institute of Technology	Large higher education institute located in Ireland's Midlands Region.
AMP	Audio and Music Production	Proposed new non-CAS award at Level 6 in Audio and Music Production being development by Cavan Institute for planned rollout in September 2022.
AONTAS	Aos Oideachais Náisiúnta Trí Aontú Saorálach	AONTAS is Ireland's national adult learning organisation, working to promote the importance and benefits of adult learning. AONTAS advocates and actively lobbies on behalf of the Adult Education Sector in Ireland.
BOMi	Business Object Model Implementation	ICT system used by the Department of Social Protection to support service delivery.
BTEC	Business and Technology Education Council	Provides Second and Further Education level qualifications across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
BTEI	Back to Education Initiative	Part-time provision for individuals over the age of sixteen and who have less than Leaving Certificate standard of education and/or are unemployed or not active in the labour market.
CAO	Central Applications Office	The Central Applications Office receives and processes applications for undergraduate courses in Higher Education Institutions.
CAS	Common Awards System	System linked to Further Education and Training Award specifications at Levels 1 to 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Term	Definition	Description
CEIP	Centre Evaluation and Implementation Plan	External quality review process conducted on Youthreach centres nationally.
CIBTAC	Confederation of International Beauty Therapy and Cosmetology	International body offering qualifications in areas such as beauty therapy, complementary and spa treatments.
CIDESCO	Comité Internationale d'Esthétique et de Cosmétologie	International beauty therapy organisation providing the world's leading qualifications in aesthetics and beauty therapy.
CMETB	Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board	One of sixteen national statutory Education and Training Boards responsible for the delivery of Further Education and Training in the Cavan-Monaghan region.
CompTIA	Computer Technology Industry Association	Internationally recognised industry standard qualification for computer support technician.
COP	Communities of Practice	Groups of people with similar issues/interests coming together to learn and share best practice.
CSO	Central Statistics Office	National statistics office responsible for the collection, analysis and reporting of key statistics relating to the Irish population and residents of the state, society and the economy.
DkIT	Dundalk Institute of Technology	Large Higher Education Institutions located in Ireland's North-East region.
DSP	Department of Social Protection	Irish government department which directly funds a wide range of employment programmes and provides welfare supports to individuals.
EA	External Authentication	External process to ensure fairness, consistency and validity in the assessment of learners.
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education	Provision of formal early learning to pre-School aged children.
ELC	Early Learning and Care	Provision of care and learning to children from birth up to six years of age.

Term	Definition	Description
ERT	Emergency Remote Teaching	Process engaged to ensure continuity of teaching and learning supports for Further Education and Training learners online in an emergency capacity for the duration of Covid-19 linked restrictions.
ESBS	Education Shared Business Service	A shared service operation, under the remit of the Department of Education and Skills, established to consolidate payroll, HR, Finance and ICT systems and services.
ESER	Executive Self-Evaluation Report	Report on the governance and management of Quality Assurance in Education and Training Boards and submitted to QQI as part of the provider re-engagement process.
ESF	European Social Fund	The European Union's primary mechanism for supporting and promoting employment and inclusion across member states.
ESOL	English to Speakers of Other Languages	Process of learning English as a second/additional language to reach functional competence in personal, social, work-related and cultural settings.
ETB	Education and Training Board	Statutory education authorities with responsibility for education and training, youthwork and a range of designated functions.
ETBI	Education and Training Boards Ireland	Representative body for Ireland's sixteen Education and Training Boards.
FARR	Funding Allocation Request and Reporting	Process by which Education and Training Boards apply for funding annually and provide updates at designated times throughout the year.
FÁS	Foras Áiseanna Saothar	Former statutory training and employment authority formally dissolved in July 2013 with the formation of Education and Training Boards.

Term	Definition	Description
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment	Investment in a business in one country by a company or organisation located in another country.
FESS	Further Education Support Service	Provides support and consultancy services to Education and Training Boards.
FET	Further Education and Training	Post-compulsory programmes of education and training generally aimed at individuals over the age of sixteen and offered up to and including Level 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.
FETCH	Further Education and Training Course Hub	Centralised course hub for accessing information and registering for Further Education and Training courses nationally.
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	Monetary value of goods and services produced in a country within a specified period of time.
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation	Privacy and security law introduced across all European Union member states in May 2018.
GVA	Gross Value Added	Measures the value added to an economy by the production of goods and services.
HE	Higher Education	An umbrella term used to describe third-level institutions in Ireland, including Institutes of Technology and Universities.
HEI	Higher Education Institution	Colleges, Institutes of Technology and Universities providing third level education across Ireland.
HGV	Heavy Goods Vehicle	
HR	Human Resources	Department responsible for the recruitment, contracting and training of staff.
IAU	Internal Audit Unit	Unit providing internal auditing functions for the sixteen Education and Training Boards.

Term	Definition	Description
IBEC	Irish Business Employers Confederation	Body representing the interests of Irish businesses nationally and internationally. IBEC also provided services to over 7,500 member businesses.
ICBAN	Irish Central Border Area Network	Cross-border partnership between local authorities in the Central Border Region of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Established to promote cross-border co-operation and communication at local government level.
ICDL	International Computer Driving Licence	The world's leading computer skills Certification used for those looking to develop international standard IT knowledge and skills.
IV	Internal Verification	Internal process verifying that assessment procedures have been applied fairly and consistently.
KPI	Key Performance Indicator	Measurable action or value that shows how effectively key objectives are being achieved.
LAN	Learner Advisory Network	Learner network established by CMETB to support the Learner Voice by engaging learner directly in the learner survey and forum processes.
LCETB	Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board	One of sixteen national statutory Education and Training Boards responsible for the delivery of Further Education and Training in the Limerick-Clare region.
LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex and Asexual	
LGMA	Local Government Management Agency	State agency providing a range of professional services to local authorities across Ireland.
LMETB	Louth and Meath Education and Training Board	One of sixteen national statutory Education and Training Boards responsible for the delivery of Further Education and Training in the Louth-Meath region.

Term	Definition	Description
LTI	Local Training Initiative	Community-based education and training programme aimed at unemployed persons aged between 18 and 35.
LYIT	Letterkenny Institute of Technology	Higher Education Institution located in the North-West Region of Ireland.
MAEDF	Mitigating Against Educational Disadvantage Fund	Fund introduced for 2021 to support community education for those adult learners who have high levels of needs. A key focus on the fund was to provide devices and software to help increase capacity to provide online learning.
MIS	Management Information System	Computer system designed to aid the collection, analysis and reporting of data relevant to the provision of core services and supports.
MOS	Microsoft Office Specialist	Certification that demonstrates high-levels of proficiency in the use of Microsoft Office software packages.
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding	Non-legally binding agreement between two or more parties which shows willingness to co-operate professionally.
MS	Microsoft	
NEBOSH	National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health	Internationally recognised health, safety and environmental qualifications.
NEFHEA	North East Further and Higher Education Alliance	Regional further and higher education initiative comprising further and higher education institutions in the North-East region of Ireland.
NFQ	National Framework of Qualifications	10-level framework used in the development, recognition and awarding of certified qualifications across the Irish education system.
NLN	National Learning Network	Non-governmental education and training organisation providing a range of training courses for people who have had an accident or who have mental health issues, illness, disabilities and/or additional support requirements.

Term	Definition	Description
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics	A geocode standard devised by the European Union for referencing areas of Ireland for statistical purposes.
NVB	National Vetting Bureau	Provides for the vetting of persons working with children or vulnerable adults in Ireland.
OEM	Original Equipment Manufacturing	Refers to the QQI Level 6 National Original Equipment Manufacturing Apprenticeship launched in 2019 to address demands from the machine manufacturing industry.
OSD	Organisational Support and Development	Refers to the Human Resources, Finance, Information Technology, Corporate Services and Procurement sections of an Education and Training Board.
OSP	Occupational Skills Profile	Summarises the core, essential skills and characteristics required for a specified job role.
PAC	Programme Approval Committee	Responsible for approving new programme proposals or requests for reactivation, and recommends programmes for validation to QQI.
PDI	Planning, Development and Implementation	The Planning, Development and Implementation sub-group is one of that CMETB's governance groups which assists in the recommendation of new programmes and programme specific policies and procedures, as well as a range of other related supports.
PDV	Programme Design and Validation	National Framework of Qualification Level 9 qualification in Programme Design and Validation awarded by Maynooth University. Designed to support the upskilling of staff in Further Education and Training in the area of programme development and validation.
PLC	Post Leaving Certificate	Full time education and training programme for adults generally leading to awards at Levels 5 and 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Term	Definition	Description
PL&D	Professional Learning and Development	A continuous process of professional skills development, upskilling and reskilling for staff of Education and Training Boards.
PLSS	Programme Learner Support System	Central data repository utilised across the sixteen Education and Training Boards for the purpose of gathering and tracking key data relating to FET provision, to include, a national course database and calendar and a learner database. The PLSS system is also used for the purpose of reporting to SOLAS on learner outcomes and progression routes achieved.
PPC	Programme Proposal Committee	Responsible for reviewing applications submitted by CMETB centres who wish to offer a new programme.
PUP	Pandemic Unemployment Payment	A social welfare payment introduced by the Irish Government to support employees and self-employed individual who have lost their employment due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.
QA	Quality Assurance	The process employed to ensure that the teaching, learning and assessment environments achieve and retain an appropriate level of quality.
QIP	Quality Improvement Plan	Education and Training Boards are required to develop bi-annual Quality Improvement Plans outlining areas for improvement across a provider's Quality Assurance processes and procedures.
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland	Independent state agency responsible for the promotion, maintenance and development of Ireland's National Framework of Qualifications.
RAP	Results Approval Panel	Process used to ensure learner assessment results are fully quality assured and signed off at ETB level before results are submitted to QQI for certification.

Term	Definition	Description
RCCRS	Results Capture and Certification Request System	System used to record learner assessment results and request certification.
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning	Process used by education institutions, employers and other bodies to assess, recognise and validate an individual's knowledge and skills against agreed national standards and qualifications.
R&D	Research and Development	Process of gaining new knowledge in a specific area.
SCOT	Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities and Threats	
SLA	Service Level Agreement	A Service Level Agreement is a documented agreement between a provider and other stakeholder(s), outlining the services provided and the expected quality/level of these services.
SLMRU	Skills and Labour Market Research Unit	Based in SOLAS the SLMRU, provided data gathering, analytical and research services to identify skills needs. The SLMRU works in close collaboration with the National Skills Council.
SME	Subject Matter Expert	An expert in a particular subject area who provides expertise in particular areas of need e.g. programme development, external authentication etc.
SOLAS	An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúaigh agus Scileanna/Further Education and Training Skills Authority	SOLAS is responsible for managing, co-ordinating and supporting the effective delivery of Further Education and Training programmes and support services by Education and Training Boards.
STP	Specialist Training Provider	Provision of learner-focused training to assist persons with disabilities who are experiencing exclusion and labour market disadvantage.
TACS	Time and Attendance Clocking System	System used to track learner attendance on training programmes.

Term	Definition	Description
TEL	Technology Enhanced Learning	Term used to describe the application of technology to support teaching and learning processes.
TNA	Training Needs Analysis	Process used by organisations to determine the specific professional learning and development needs of staff.
TQAS	Transition Quality Assurance System	Quality Assurance system used in conjunction with training programmes provided by Education and Training Boards.
VEC	Vocational Education Committee	Former providers of Further Education and Training in Ireland, replaced on 1 st July 2013 by Education and Training Boards.
VLN	Virtual Learning Network	Online learning tool that supports both synchronous and asynchronous learning.



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an Chabháin agus Mhuineacháin
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Education and Training Board

Document	Link
Chapter 1	
CMETB FET Strategy 2021 – 2024	Strategy document is currently being finalised. Once available it will be published on www.cmetb.ie
Developing Leaders for Hospitality and Tourism – Skills to Advance	https://www.solas.ie/f/70398/x/f2284d29d3/solas-skills-to-advance-brochure-final-web-solas-version.pdf
Chapter 3	
CMETB’s Statement of Strategy 2017 – 2021	http://cavanmonaghan.etb.ie/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2019/10/CMETB-STRATEGY-STATEMENT-2017-2021-30.05.18.pdf
FET Strategy 2020 – 2024	https://www.solas.ie/f/70398/x/64d0718c9e/solas_fet_strategy_web.pdf
Profile of CMETB Further Education and Training Provision	http://cavanmonaghan.etb.ie/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2021/05/ONLINE-CMETB-Profile-Provider-booklet-for-web.pdf
CMETB’s Strategic Performance Agreement	https://www.solas.ie/f/70398/x/55bd795cc0/14717_solas_etb_cavan_monaghan_web.pdf
CMETB’ Quality Improvement Plan	http://cavanmonaghan.etb.ie/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2021/05/CMETB-QIP-2020_21_Updated.pdf
CMETB’s Executive Self-Evaluation Report	http://cavanmonaghan.etb.ie/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2018/05/CMETB-ESER-Final-31012018.pdf
CMETB’s Governance Review Individual Questionnaire	https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=z0c6mHesd0qIU_tNhYhZKND0LEsWSu5EhdcUxDdcaHhUNkQ2QVAzWTFURDNLr1JPR1AwMzBBRExRRC4u
CMETB Governance Vox Pop	https://youtu.be/PX8iH6xMbag
CMETB FET Governance Presentation	https://youtu.be/oikKbnehWE4
CMETB FET Strategy 2021 – 2024	Strategy document is currently being finalised. Once available it will be published on www.cmetb.ie
Developing Leaders for Hospitality and Tourism – Skills to Advance	https://www.solas.ie/f/70398/x/f2284d29d3/solas-skills-to-advance-brochure-final-web-solas-version.pdf
CMETB FET Governance Quiz	https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=z0c6mHesd0qIU_tNhYhZKND0LEsWSu5EhdcUxDdcaHhUQ0hVSKiYUTYyVxkKTFdMRjICTVNTUUDyOS4u

Document	Link
CMETB FET Staff QA Survey	<p>FET Staff QA Survey 2020 - Centre/Service Admin Version: https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=z0c6mHesd0qIU_tNhYhZKND0LEsWSu5EhdcUxDdcaHhUOUc5UFEyV0dGVTFcNDQ0WEJLRjNDWEwxUi4u</p> <p>FET Staff QA Survey 2020 - Centre/Service Admin Version: https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=z0c6mHesd0qIU_tNhYhZKND0LEsWSu5EhdcUxDdcaHhUQTVPtUhxQVZYTFhQV0hYWUpDV01ESFcxTi4u/</p>
SOLAS' Statement of Strategy on Professional Learning and Development 2020 – 2024	https://www.solas.ie/f/70398/x/1e2e117467/solas-professional-dev-strategy.pdf
CMETB's QA Newsletter – ConexUs!	http://cavanmonaghan.etb.ie/overview/qualityassurance/qa/
CMETB PL&D Support Scheme	
Case Study 3: AMP Award Level 6	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MiDQw8NVYpY&list=PLkZM_GiZyF-i-Hy6oVFPc1be_PMC1yBxh&index=4
CMETB FET Customer Charter	http://cavanmonaghan.etb.ie/overview/qualityassurance/qa/
CMETB FET Learner Surveys 2020 & 2021	<p>CMETB FET Learner Survey 2020 https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=z0c6mHesd0qIU_tNhYhZKAyzbaBleNdDoXVm_CeQeyIUQTM5TVdJWkRBSdkxQVZRUDVYNFVMTzhKNCQIQCN0PWcu</p> <p>CMETB FET Learner Survey 2021 https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=z0c6mHesd0qIU_tNhYhZKlnMde126WJHu0Xa565-j0IUODUzSihaUVdBWEVEMDBFRkZITjZCVThZNI4u</p>
AONTAS Report on National FET Learner Forum for CMETB 2019	http://cavanmonaghan.etb.ie/overview/qualityassurance/qa/
Case Study 8:: Learner Audio Testimonials	https://youtu.be/knyOsGaY0uo https://youtu.be/L-E2T6Qb0SI https://youtu.be/d87VBQ1v4OI https://youtu.be/vLmQoeihBPY https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_2sRfxv5w7
Chapter 4	
CMETB TEL Strategy	http://cavanmonaghan.etb.ie/overview/qualityassurance/qa/
CMETB Inaugural Review External Authenticator/Subject Matter Expert Consultation Survey	https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=z0c6mHesd0qIU_tNhYhZKND0LEsWSu5EhdcUxDdcaHhUNVpVTU81VIFZTEpCNDEwQIBOSjJSTIRFSi4u

Document	Link
Chapter 5	
CMETB Business Continuity Plan in Response to the Covid-19 Emergency	http://cavanmonaghan.etb.ie/overview/qualityassurance/qa/
Staff Feedback on Alternative Assessments Survey	https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=z0c6mHesd0qIU_tNhYhZKND0LEsWSu5EhdcUxDdcaHhUOFo0TzBQU0NPOE9OUjFPSEpZNUIUQIFTUy4u
CMETB's Reflections on Covid-19 Modifications to Teaching, Learning and Assessment	http://cavanmonaghan.etb.ie/overview/qualityassurance/qa/
Case Study 9: Learner Perspectives on ERT	
Evaluation of the Impact of Covid-19 on Teaching, Learning and Assessment in CMETB.	http://cavanmonaghan.etb.ie/overview/qualityassurance/qa/
Chapter 6	
CMETB's Executive Self-Evaluation Report	http://cavanmonaghan.etb.ie/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2018/05/CMETB-ESER-Final-31012018.pdf
CMETB's Quality Improvement Plan	http://cavanmonaghan.etb.ie/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2021/05/CMETB-QIP-2020_21_Updated.pdf
CMETB Inaugural Review Employer Consultation Survey	https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=z0c6mHesd0qIU_tNhYhZKND0LEsWSu5EhdcUxDdcaHhUM0hRSFhGtK5TS1o0SjNWRVRRU1FCUzIJMC4u
Case Study 11: Employer Testimonials on CMETB Skills to Advance Initiatives	http://cavanmonaghan.etb.ie/overview/qualityassurance/qa/



APPENDICES

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Appendix 1: Self-Evaluation Steering Group Terms of Reference

CAVAN AND MONAGHAN ETB SELF-EVALUATION STEERING GROUP TO OVERSEE QQI INAUGURAL REVIEW OF QUALITY ASSURANCE IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING BOARD

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Context:

Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board has a multi-layered governance structure in place that aims to ensure that the quality of its FET provision is monitored and assured, in a consistent and appropriate way, within and across the various constituent services of the ETB.

CMETB's quality governance structure complements the overall corporate responsibility of the ETB, vested in the Chief Executive. It is supported by senior management, with the assignment of responsibility based on the subsidiary principle across all aspects of strategy, oversight and the management of quality throughout the organisation.

Role of Self Evaluation Steering Group:

The role of CMETB's Self Evaluation Group is to provide oversight and governance of the internal review of CMETB's quality assurance processes.

Its main output will be the preparation of a Self-Evaluation Report detailing the current status of Quality Assurance processes as evidenced in Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board. This will be supported by a Quality Assurance Handbook.

Membership

Group membership will have representation from all FET sectors within CMETB (one member may represent several elements/services).

1. Director of Further Education and Training – Dr Linda Pinkster (Chair)
2. Chief Executive – John Kearney
3. Director of Organisational Support and Development – Berni Power
4. Director of Quality Assurance – Dympna McCarron
5. Quality Assurance Officer – June Neylon (Secretariat)
6. Research & Evaluation Facilitator – Michael Donohoe

7. Adult and Community Education - Carol Kelly
8. Cavan Institute – Louise Clarke
9. Monaghan Institute – Rynagh Williams
10. Training Services – Sinead McKenna
11. Youthreach – Michael Murphy
12. Data Reporting Officer – Sharon Cosgrove
13. Student Representative – Nora Fay
14. Employer Representative – Aidan Kinsella
15. External Representative – Nikki McGoohan
16. AEGIS – Siobhan Mulleary
17. HR – Ciosa McClave/Pauline Grogan
18. Finance – Karen McBride
19. IT – Liam McCarren
20. TEL– Siobhan McCarra
21. Communications – Geraldine Gray/Seamus Connolly
22. Compliance – Fiona Nugent

Other members may be requested to attend as required.

Accountable to: The Chief Executive

Aims:

The primary aims of the group are to:

- > Support, guide and advise in the preparation of the review of CMETB's FET quality assurance for inclusion in the Self Evaluation Report
- > Participate in review activities
- > Advise on and contribute to the ETB's Self-Evaluation Report
- > Support CMETB's Quality Assurance Office and individual services throughout the review process

Responsibilities:

For the duration of the inaugural review of CMETB's FET quality assurance, the group will fulfil the following functions:

- > Support the Research & Evaluation Co-ordinator and the Quality Assurance Office in developing a methodology, including supporting documentation, activities and supports for the purpose of the review
- > Provide strategic advice and guidance on the review process.
- > Plan, develop and agree appropriate actions and timelines for the review
- > Identify and support activities for engagement with all stakeholders to the review
- > Provide an objective voice and input into the review
- > Identify areas of good practice
- > Identify the need for any additional working/focus groups as and when required.
- > Consider draft documentation as prepared by centres/services for inclusion as part of the review reporting process
- > Consider the draft CMETB review report prior to its submission and make recommendations to the Research & Evaluation Co-ordinator prior to its finalisation and submission
- > Present the CMETB review report to the Chief Executive and the FET Management & Quality Council prior to its submission to QQI
- > Engage with QQI staff and members of the review panel during the panel visit(s)

OPERATIONAL MATTERS

Frequency of Meetings

- > This entire group will meet 4 times over the duration of the review period, or as required. The group may review and revise the frequency and timing of meetings to meet requirements of the review process and priorities.
- > The QA Working Group, which is a sub-committee, will meet monthly.
- > In order for a quorum to be established, 50% of membership +1 additional member must be in attendance.

Chair

- > The Self-Evaluation Steering Group will be chaired by the Director of FET.

Conducting of Meetings

- > The meeting agenda and supporting materials will be circulated through Microsoft Teams or any other pre-agreed electronic format
- > Decisions are made by consensus or by the exercise of a vote if necessary. The Chair has the deciding vote in the event of a tie.

Recording and Reporting (see Appendix 1)

- > The Quality Assurance Office will support the Self-Evaluation Steering Group through the provision of a record taker for all meetings
- > A meeting record will be made available on the Microsoft Teams page or another pre-agreed electronic format within 5 days of the meeting taking place.
- > The minutes of meetings are approved at the beginning of the subsequent meeting of the committee

Accountability

- > The Group will report progress and escalate unresolved issues to the CE/FET Management and Quality Council as appropriate.
- > Individual members of the oversight group are expected to report back as appropriate to their services and any other group they represent

Review

- > The Group will review its role, membership, effectiveness and terms of reference after the initial review has been concluded, and make a recommendation to the CE/FET Management and Quality Council on any matters it feels should be amended/alterd for any future activities in this field.

Appendix 2: Terms of Reference of CMETB Governance Groups and Sub-Groups**A. FET MANAGEMENT AND QUALITY COUNCIL**

Governance Unit	CMETB FET Management and Quality Council
Document	Terms of Reference
Approved by/ Date	Chief Executive / 21 Jan 2019
Version	1.1
Due for Review by	01 December 2021

PURPOSE OF CMETB's FET MANAGEMENT & QUALITY COUNCIL

The purpose of the FET Management and Quality Council at CMETB is to oversee the planning, co-ordination, quality, development and improvement of all aspects of the further education and training offering of CMETB. It protects, maintains and develops the standards of education and training programmes and related activities. In doing so, the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council is ensuring, as far as possible, that all learners receive an equivalent experience.

CMETB FET MANAGEMENT AND QUALITY COUNCIL TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Chief Executive (CE) of CMETB, supported by the SMT, has delegated certain governance responsibilities to the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council, as detailed below. The CMETB FET Management and Quality Council is accountable to the CE for carrying out its functions, regardless of whether it forms governance sub-groups or working groups to advance these tasks.

The CMETB FET Management and Quality Council is responsible for the following:

Operational matters

- > Agreeing its operating procedures
- > Establishing one or more sub-groups of governance, as required, and delegating responsibilities to those groups through defined terms of reference. In the first instance, CMETB will establish a QA Subgroup and a Programme planning, development and implementation sub group.

- > Establishing ad-hoc working groups to assist it in fulfilling its functions, if required
- > Receiving recommendations from sub-groups of governance on specified matters to inform its functions
- > Receiving annual reports from sub-groups of governance on their activities
- > Providing a CMETB FET Management and Quality Council Annual Report to the CE, identifying key decisions and actions taken by the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council and making any recommendations to the CE, as appropriate
- > Participating in the review of its terms of reference and formally making recommendations to the CE for amendments and additions, if required
- > Reviewing the outcomes of reviews of terms of reference by its sub-groups and making recommendations to the CE as appropriate
- > Exercising any other functions, which may be formally delegated to it by the CE.

QA policies and procedures

- > Approving the FET quality assurance policies and procedures of CMETB as recommended by the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council Sub-Group (QA)
- > Approving revisions to CMETB FET quality assurance policies and procedures as recommended by the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council Sub-Group (QA)

Programme responsibilities

- > Recommending proposals to the CE, as appropriate, for the development of new programmes that are consistent with the mission and strategy of CMETB, as recommended by the CMETB FET Programme planning, development & implementation subgroup)
- > Approving programme documentation prior to its submission to the awarding body for validation, as recommended by the CMETB FET Programme planning, development & implementation subgroup)

- > Making recommendations to the CE for the establishment of appropriate structures to support new or existing programmes
- > Making recommendations for staff development where it is necessary or desirable for the improved delivery or development of programmes.

Monitoring and Review responsibilities

- > Noting the annual schedule of reviews submitted by the Quality Assurance Sub-group and Quality Assurance Sub-Group
- > Approving programme and organisational review documentation prior to its submission to the awarding body
- > Receiving reports from the Quality Assurance Sub-group of progress against action plans arising from quality reviews
- > Receiving observations arising from programme feedback reports and other internal and external stakeholder reports, as appropriate
- > Escalating areas of risk associated with further education and training to the CE.

Assessment responsibilities

- > Ratifying the agreement of persons to act as External Authenticators and External Examiners
- > Noting assessment reports received from the Quality Assurance Sub-group and confirming they are in line with agreed assessment processes and procedures
- > Ratifying assessment results and final results presented by the QA Officer (or equivalent) prior to their submission to the awarding body for the purposes of certification.

Apprenticeship responsibilities

To fulfil the governance role for new apprenticeships as coordinating provider, the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council will undertake the following responsibilities:

- > Considering reports from the Consortium Steering Group established by the Apprenticeship Council on matters affecting apprenticeship programmes
- > Considering reports from programme coordinators on the delivery of programmes
- > Receiving named annual and biannual reports from the national Programme Board(s)
- > Receiving reports from the ETBI new Apprenticeship QA Monitoring and Enhancement Panel
- > Considering proposals from the National Programme Board(s) and from the Consortium Steering Group for new partnerships and for new members of partnerships
- > Ensuring that the proposals received from the National Programme Board(s) and from the Consortium Steering Group for new partnerships conform to the requirements of the programme and that suitable Memorandums of Agreement are in place
- > Fulfilling any reporting requirements to external authorities on apprenticeship activities.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE CMETB FET MANAGEMENT AND QUALITY COUNCIL

Chair: The Chair is appointed by the Chief Executive and can be internal or external.

Secretary: CMETB Director of Quality Assurance, or equivalent staff member designated by the CE.

Ordinary Members:

- > Normally, up to 6 staff members with relevant experience drawn from across CMETB, as the CE determines appropriate.

- > 1 representative from the CMETB FET Quality Assurance Sub-Group and 1 from the CMETB FET Programme planning, development & implementation subgroup
- > Where applicable, 2 representatives from the National Programme Board(s), one of which is from industry
- > 1 learner representative.

External Members:

The Chair of the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council may from time to time recommend to the CE the appointment of external members to the Council. These will be persons who can bring an external perspective to the working of the Council, such as employers or experts in FET or in quality systems. Persons with expertise from other ETBs may also be invited to join the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council for a defined period.

Additional Expertise:

From time to time, the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council may request that its Secretary source specialist expertise to inform its deliberations if necessary.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHAIR

The responsibilities of the Chair of the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council include:

- > Working closely with the Secretary to agree meeting agendas
- > Ensuring meetings function efficiently and effectively
- > Providing adequate time for discussion of agenda items
- > Ensuring that members have been provided with materials in advance of the meeting to support informed decision-making
- > Ensuring that a quorum is present before commencing an CMETB FET Management and Quality Council meeting
- > Ensuring that decisions are taken in the context of the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council's remit and that they are recorded.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SECRETARY

The Secretary of the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council is a full member of the Council. his/her responsibilities include:

- > Agreeing a schedule of meetings with the Chair in consultation with the Council members and having regard to the business of the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council and the meeting dates of the sub-groups reporting into the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council
- > Convening meetings of the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council and determining the agenda of the meetings, in consultation with the Chair
- > Circulating the agendas for meetings and associated documentation and reports for review by CMETB FET Management and Quality Council members
- > Liaising with the secretaries of the sub-groups reporting into the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council to manage a smooth flow of information
- > Preparing draft minutes of meetings and circulating these to members
- > Ensuring that the decisions of the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council are made known to the appropriate individuals /governance units
- > Reporting to the Chair and the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council on the implementation of the decisions of the FET Management and Quality Council
- > Ensuring that membership terms are managed, and new member induction / briefing provided.

OPERATING PROCEDURES

- > The CMETB FET Management and Quality Council will meet at least 4 times a year (it is recommended that it meets 6 times in its first year)
- > In order for a quorum to be established, 50% of members + 1 additional member must be in attendance
- > The meeting agenda and supporting documentation must be circulated to members at least one week in advance of a scheduled meeting and external members may be invited to present agenda items
- > Decisions are made by consensus or by the exercise of a vote if necessary; the Chair has the deciding vote in the event of a split decision
- > Meeting outcomes are recorded and circulated in draft form within 2 weeks of a meeting
- > The minutes of meetings are approved at the beginning of the subsequent meeting of the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council
- > In some cases, at the discretion of the Chair, an incorporeal meeting of the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council may be held where reports can be circulated virtually and accepted by the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council without the FET Management and Quality Council having to meet.

CMETB FET MANAGEMENT AND QUALITY COUNCIL SUB-GROUP (Quality Assurance) TERMS OF REFERENCE

Governance Unit	CMETB FET Management and Quality Council
Document	Terms of Reference
Approved by/ Date	CMETB FET Management and Quality Council 26 Feb 2019
Version	1.1
Due for Review by	01 December 2021

PURPOSE OF THE CMETB FET QUALITY COUNCIL SUB-GROUP (Quality Assurance)

The purpose of the CMETB FET Quality Assurance Sub-group is to fulfil the role and responsibilities delegated to it by the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council, for the development, oversight, planning, co-ordination and improvement of quality assurance policies, procedures, and processes. In doing so, it assists the FET Management and Quality Council in protecting, maintaining and developing the standards of education and training programmes and the related activities of CMETB.

CMETB FET QUALITY ASSURANCE SUB-GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE

The CMETB FET Management and Quality Council has delegated certain governance responsibilities to the CMETB FET Quality Assurance sub-group, as detailed below. The CMETB FET Quality Assurance Sub-Group is accountable to the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council for carrying out its functions, regardless of whether governance sub-groups or working groups are formed to advance these tasks.

The CMETB FET Quality Assurance Sub-Group is responsible for the following:

Operational matters

- > Agreeing its operating procedures in consultation with the Chair and Secretary of the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council
- > Establishing sub-groups or working groups to advance QA-related matters, if required

- > Making recommendations to the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council to inform its decision-making and in line with its terms of reference
- > Preparing an Annual Report for the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council on key decisions and actions taken, and making any recommendations to the CMETB FET Quality Council, as appropriate
- > Participating in the review of its terms of reference and formally making recommendations to the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council as appropriate
- > Exercising any other functions, which may be formally delegated to it by the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council.
- > Supporting the implementation of the relevant CMETB FET actions outlined in the 2016-2020 CMETB Strategy Statement.
- > Acting as a forum for the exchange of ideas, information and best practice in Quality Assurance.
- > Identifying potential collaborative projects and working to implement these
- > Providing a collective response to calls for submissions, applications, etc
- > Supporting the implementation of Technology Enhanced Learning within assessment in CMETB
- > Promoting assessment practices in CMETB and raising the awareness of quality FET provision in CMETB

QA Policies and Procedures

- > Approving a schedule for review, amendment and development of quality assurance policies and procedures and submitting this to the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council for noting
- > Reviewing and commenting upon draft quality assurance policies and procedures

- > Recommending quality assurance policies and procedures to the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council for approval
- > Recommending revisions to quality assurance policies and procedures to the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council for approval
- > Working to enhance practices in Quality Assurance, Active Inclusion and Reporting
- > Supporting the implementation of the relevant QQI / SOLAS / DES initiatives / Policies & Programmes
- > Working to develop policies and enhance practices in assessment

Monitoring and review responsibilities

- > Approving a schedule for quality reviews and submitting this to the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council for noting
- > Reviewing and commenting upon the quality review schedule and submitting this to the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council for noting
- > Making recommendations to the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council for the approval of programme and other quality review documentation and outcomes that is required to be submitted to an awarding body
- > Receiving reports on follow-up on actions arising from quality reviews and reporting to the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council on issues or recommendations arising
- > Receiving reports on significant and common issues arising through monitoring processes and reporting to the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council on any recommendations arising
- > Escalating identified areas of risk to the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council.

Assessment Responsibilities

- > Agreeing individuals to act as External Authenticators and submitting details to the FET Management and Quality Council for ratification
- > Receiving reports on the outcomes of assessment appeals processes
- > Receiving and considering quantitative and qualitative analysis reports from Results Approval Panels and making any recommendations arising to the FET Management and Quality Council on teaching, learning and/or assessment matters
- > Reviewing analyses of Internal Authenticators and External Authenticators reports and making recommendations to the FET Management and Quality Council
- > As part of programme reviews, questioning the effectiveness of assessment strategies being implemented for validated programmes.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE CMETB FET QUALITY ASSURANCE SUB-GROUP

Chair: The Chair is appointed by the Chief Executive and can be internal or external.

Secretary: The Secretary is appointed by the CE and should be an individual capable of liaising closely with the Secretary of the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council and with any sub-groups of governance that are reporting to the CMETB FET Quality Assurance Sub-Group, or other groups providing information to inform the CMETB FET Quality Assurance Sub-Group.

Ordinary Members:

- > Normally, up to 6 staff members with relevant experience drawn from across CMETB, as the CE determines appropriate
- > 1 representative from the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council
- > 1 learner representative
- > 1 representative from any subsequent QA Working Group

External Members:

The Chair of the CMETB FET Quality Assurance Sub-Group may from time to time recommend to the Chair of the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council the appointment of external members to the sub-group.

Additional Expertise:

From time to time, the CMETB FET Quality Assurance Sub-Group may request that its Secretary source specialist expertise to inform its deliberations if necessary.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHAIR

The responsibilities of the Chair of the CMETB FET Quality Assurance Sub-Group include:

- > Working closely with the Secretary to agree meeting agendas
- > Ensuring meetings function efficiently and effectively
- > Providing adequate time for discussion of agenda items
- > Ensuring that members have been provided with materials in advance of the meeting to support informed decision-making ensuring that a quorum is present before commencing a CMETB FET Quality Assurance Sub-Group meeting
- > Ensuring that decisions are taken in the context of the remit of the CMETB FET Quality Assurance Sub-Group and that they are recorded.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SECRETARY

The Secretary is a full member of the CMETB FET Quality Assurance Sub-Group. his/her responsibilities include:

- > Agreeing a schedule of meetings with the Chair in consultation with members and having regard to the business of the CMETB FET Quality Assurance Sub-Group and the meeting dates of the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council
- > Convening meetings of the CMETB FET Quality Assurance Sub-Group and determining the agenda of the meetings, in consultation with the Chair
- > Circulating the agendas for meetings and associated documentation and reports for review by FET Management and Quality Council Sub-Group (QA) members
- > Liaising with the Secretary of the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council, and with the secretaries of any governance units reporting into the CMETB FET Quality Assurance Sub-Group, to manage a smooth flow of information
- > Preparing draft minutes of meetings and circulating these to members
- > Ensuring that the decisions of the CMETB FET Quality Assurance Sub-Group are made known to the appropriate individuals / governance units
- > Reporting to the Chair on the implementation of the decisions of the CMETB FET Quality Assurance Sub-Group
- > Ensuring that membership terms are managed, and new member induction / briefing provided.

OPERATING PROCEDURES

- > The CMETB FET Quality Assurance Sub-Group will meet at least 6 times a year (it is recommended that it meets 8 times in its first year). The purpose of this subgroup is to review the consolidation of the following development and adoption of integrated Quality Assurance policies and procedures, reviewing the consolidated results of Results Approval Process, Learner Appeals, Programme Approval Process, External Authentication matters, Quality Improvement Planning and Continuous Professional Development.
- > In order for a quorum to be established, 50% of members + 1 additional member must be in attendance
- > The meeting agenda and supporting documentation must be circulated to members at least one week in advance of a scheduled meeting and external members may be invited to present agenda items
- > Decisions are made by consensus or by the exercise of a vote if necessary; the Chair has the deciding vote in the event of a split decision
- > Meeting outcomes are recorded and circulated in draft form within 2 weeks of a meeting
- > The minutes of meetings are approved at the beginning of the subsequent meeting of the CMETB FET Quality Assurance Sub-Group
- > Confirmed minutes are submitted for noting to the next meeting of the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council
- > In some cases, at the discretion of the Chair, an incorporeal meeting of the CMETB FET Quality Assurance Sub-Group may be held where reports can be circulated virtually and accepted by members without the CMETB FET Quality Assurance Sub-Group having to meet.

CMETB FET MANAGEMENT AND QUALITY COUNCIL SUB-GROUP (PROGRAMME PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT & INTEGRATION) - Terms of Reference

Governance Unit	CMETB FET Management and Quality Council SUB-GROUP (Programme Planning, Development & Integration)
Document	Terms of Reference
Approved by/ Date	CMETB FET Management and Quality Council 26 March 2019
Version	1.1
Due for Review by	01 December 2021

PURPOSE OF THE CMETB FET PROGRAMME PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT & INTEGRATION SUB-GROUP

The purpose of the CMETB FET Programme Planning, Development & Integration sub-group is to fulfil the role and responsibilities delegated to it by the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council, for the oversight, planning, co-ordination, development and quality of the programmes of CMETB. In doing so, it assists the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council in protecting, maintaining and developing the standards of education and training programmes, and learner achievement, and the related activities of the ETB. The CMETB FET Programme Planning, Development & Integration sub-group is overseeing all programme developments, however, its role and responsibilities below do not apply directly to apprenticeship programmes, unless otherwise specified. Governance of apprenticeship programmes is managed by the National Programme Board(s) and reports are provided to the CMETB FET Programme Planning, Development & Integration sub-group

CMETB FET PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT & INTEGRATION SUB-GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE

The CMETB FET Management and Quality Council has delegated certain governance responsibilities to the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council Sub-Group – Programme Planning, Development & Integration Sub-group, as detailed below. This sub-group is accountable to the CMETB FET Quality Council for carrying out its functions, regardless of whether governance sub-groups or working groups are formed to advance these tasks. The CMETB FET Programme Planning, Development & Integration sub-group is responsible for the following:

Operational matters

- > Agreeing its operating procedures in consultation with the Chair and Secretary of the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council
- > Establishing sub-groups or working groups to advance programme-related matters, if required
- > Making recommendations to the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council to inform its decision-making and in line with its terms of reference.
- > Preparing an Annual Report for the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council on key decisions and actions taken, and making any recommendations to the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council, as appropriate
- > Participating in the review of its terms of reference and formally making recommendations to the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council as appropriate
- > Exercising any other functions, which may be formally delegated to it by the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council.
- > Supporting the implementation of the relevant FET actions outlined in the 2016-2020 CMETB Strategy Statement
- > Acting as a forum for the exchange of ideas, information and best practice
- > Identifying potential collaborative projects and working to implement these
- > Working to develop policies and enhance practices in Teaching and Learning practices
- > Promoting Teaching and Learning practices in CMETB and raising the awareness of quality FET provision in CMETB

Programme development responsibilities

- > Reviewing proposals for the development of new programmes and making recommendations to the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council
- > Approving the appointment of the Programme Development Working Group to develop draft programme documentation
- > Reviewing and commenting upon draft programme validation documentation submitted by the Programme Development Working Group
- > Recommending programme validation documentation to the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council for approval and making recommendations to the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council for submission to the awarding body
- > Reviewing proposals for the provision of newly validated or existing programmes and making recommendations to the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council
- > Making recommendations to the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council for the establishment of appropriate structures to support new or existing programmes

- > Approving the assignment of the Programme Development Working Group to implement minor modifications and additions to programmes, where these do not affect module outcomes
- > Approving modified programme documentation submitted by the Programme Development Working Group.
- > Providing a collective response to calls for submissions, applications etc

Apprenticeship responsibilities

- > Receiving reports from the National Programme Board(s) on its activities (other than when CMETB is co-ordinating Provider. These reports will go directly from the Apprenticeship Board to the CMETB FET Quality Council).
- > Noting proposals from the National Programme Board(s) to the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council for new apprenticeship partnerships and for new members of partnerships
- > Noting annual and biannual specified reports provided by the National Programme Board(s) to the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council for approval.

Programme review

- > Implementing programme modifications arising from programme review processes, as requested by the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council
- > Submitting draft programme revisions to the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council for ratification
- > Implementing feedback on programme revisions received from the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council or Quality Assurance subgroup, if relevant, prior to its resubmission.
- > Identifying skills/ training gaps and shortages in programme delivery
- > Identifying overlap / duplication in programme delivery and working to address this

Workforce Planning and Development will become a working group of Planning, Development & Integration Sub-Group

- > **Supporting the implementation of the SOLAS Workforce Development Framework**
- > **Identifying and prioritising local, regional and national skills needs**
- > **Working to develop policies and procedures regarding workforce development**

MEMBERSHIP OF THE PROGRAMME PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT & INTEGRATION SUB-GROUP

The membership of the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Planning, Development & Integration) is designed to enable professional colleagues to collectively contribute to the oversight, planning, coordination, development and quality of the ETB's education and training programmes.

Chair: The Chair is appointed by the Chief Executive and can be internal or external.

Secretary:

The Secretary should be appointed by the CE and an individual capable of liaising closely with the Secretary of the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council and with any sub-groups of governance that are reporting to the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Planning, Development & Integration), or other groups providing information to inform the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Planning, Development & Integration).

Ordinary Members:

- > Normally, up to 6 staff members with relevant experience drawn from across the ETB, as the CE determines appropriate
- > 1 representative from the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council
- > 1 learner representative
- > 1 industry representative
- > 1 representative from the Programme Development

External Members: The Chair of the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Planning, Development & Integration) may from time to time recommend to the Chair of the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council the appointment of external members to the sub-group.

Additional Expertise: From time to time, the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Planning, Development & Integration sub group) may request that its Secretary source specialist expertise to inform its deliberations if necessary.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHAIR

The responsibilities of the Chair of the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Planning, Development & Implementation) include:

- > working closely with the Secretary to agree meeting agendas
- > ensuring meetings function efficiently and effectively
- > providing adequate time for discussion of agenda items
- > ensuring that members have been provided with materials in advance of the meeting to support informed decision-making
- > ensuring that a quorum is present before commencing a CMETB FET Management and Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Planning, Development & Implementation) meeting
- > ensuring that decisions are taken in the context of the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Planning, Development & Implementation) remit and that they are recorded.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SECRETARY

The Secretary is a full member of the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Planning, Development & Implementation). His/her responsibilities include:

- > agreeing a schedule of meetings with the Chair in consultation with members and having regard to the business of the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Planning, Development & Integration) and the meeting dates of the CMETB FET Quality Council
- > convening meetings of the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Planning, Development & Implementation) and determining the agenda of the meetings, in consultation with the Chair
- > circulating the agendas for meetings and associated documentation and reports for review by CMETB FET Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Planning, Development & Integration) members
- > liaising with the Secretary of the of the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council, and with the secretaries of governance units reporting into the CMETB FET Management and

- Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Planning, Development & Implementation), to manage a smooth flow of information
- > preparing draft minutes of meetings and circulating these to members
 - > ensuring that the decisions of the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Planning, Development & Integration) are made known to the appropriate individuals / governance units
 - > reporting to the Chair on the implementation of the decisions of the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Planning, Development & Implementation)
 - > ensuring that membership terms are managed, and new member induction / briefing provided.

OPERATING PROCEDURES

- > The CMETB FET Management and Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Planning, Development & Integration) will meet at least 4 times a year (it is recommended that it meets 6 times in its first year)
- > In order for a quorum to be established, 50% of members + 1 additional member must be in attendance
- > The meeting agenda and supporting documentation must be circulated to members at least one week in advance of a scheduled meeting and external members may be invited to present agenda items
- > Decisions are made by consensus or by the exercise of a vote if necessary; the Chair has the deciding vote in the event of a split decision
- > Meeting outcomes are recorded and circulated in draft form within 2 weeks of a meeting
- > The minutes of meetings are approved at the beginning of the subsequent meeting of the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Planning, Development & Integration)
- > Confirmed minutes are submitted for noting to the next meeting of the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council
- > In some cases, at the discretion of the Chair, an incorporeal meeting of the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Planning, Development & Integration) may be held where reports can be circulated virtually and accepted by members without the CMETB FET Management and Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Planning, Development & Integration) having to meet.

Terms of Reference - OEM Apprenticeship Governance Structure

The Terms of Reference for Apprenticeship related governance can be accessed [here](#).

Appendix 3: CMETB RECRUITMENT & SELECTION PROCEDURES

Procedures

Policy Statement

It is the Policy of Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board to recruit and retain a quality staff in a fair and consistent manner, free from discrimination. To this effect, Cavan and Monaghan ETB bases the following recruitment and selection procedures on the job description and the objective requirements of the job without bias on the grounds of the candidate's sex, marital or family status, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, race, or membership of the traveling community.

These procedures are governed and informed by the following National and European Union Legislation:

1. Articles 48 & 49 (re: Free Movement of Workers) and Article 119 (re: Equal Pay) of the Treaty of Rome, 1957, as Amended by Subsequent Treaties.
2. Employment Equality Acts, 1998-2007
3. Employment Permits Acts, 2003 & 2006
4. European Communities (Aliens) Regulations, 1977
5. Aliens Act, 1935
6. Data Protection Acts, 1998-2003
7. Freedom of Information Acts, 1997 & 2003
8. Disability Act, 2005
9. Department of Education and Skills Circular Letters/Notices/Memoranda/Collective Agreements
10. Public Service Management (Recruitment & Appointments) Act, 2004
11. Protection of Employees (Part-time Work) Act 2001
12. Protection of Employees (Fixed-Term Work) Act 2003
13. Other relevant Legislation and Collective Agreements

Vacancy

The recruitment and selection process begins when a vacancy exists, arising from either:

- > a new post
- > a vacant existing post
- > a substitute post

The initial steps taken are as follows:

- > Determine the nature of the contract i.e. permanent whole-time/contract of indefinite duration, fixed-term, pro-rata, part-time, non-casual part-time, casual part-time
- > Clarify the exact nature of duties

Advertising the Post

Cavan and Monaghan ETB currently advertise vacancies in a number of ways, namely:

- > National press
 - > Local press
- www.etbjobs.ie

Selection Board

The primary method of selection in Cavan and Monaghan ETB is by means of interview. A Selection Board is established in respect of each post and is requested to recommend a candidate for appointment following a selection process. The Selection Board assesses all applications against the selection criteria.

The main assessment method of short-listed candidates is a formal interview, supplemented in some cases by presentations, second interviews, skills and aptitude tests.

The Selection Board

The purpose of the Selection Board is to assess the merit of each candidate and to recommend for appointment the candidate with the greatest merit, **in relation to the criteria as specified for the post**. The deliberations of the Selection Board should at all times remain confidential. The recommendation of the Selection Board is forwarded to the HR Department and confirmed for appointment by the Chief Executive.

Composition of the Selection Board

The composition of the Selection Board is dependent on the nature of the vacancy.

- > Appointment and promotion of second level teaching staff is currently subject to the terms and conditions of Department of Education & Skills Circular Letter 43/00; the typical composition of such a board is three members, including an educationalist, a personnel specialist and a member of the ETB.
- > Composition of Selection Boards for all staff appointments is generally a member of the ETB plus two specialists in the relevant area.

Cavan and Monaghan ETB will strive to have a gender balance on all Selection Boards which reflects the gender balance of the candidates invited to interview. The Composition of the Selection Board must be consistent at all times.

Declaration of interest

Each Selection Board member is required to complete a Declaration of Interest form before being ratified to the Selection Board.

A conflict of interest is deemed to be where a Selection Board member feels that their relationship/knowledge of an applicant will not allow them to make an unbiased judgement. A close relationship to a candidate such as Spouse/Partner/Child/other close Relative or close acquaintance is deemed to be a conflict of interest and should be declared. Should a board member identify a conflict of interest, they should bring it to the attention of a member of the Human Resources Department immediately.

Teaching Council of Ireland

The Teaching Council was established on a statutory basis in March 2006 to promote teaching as a profession at primary and post-primary levels, to promote the professional development of teachers and to regulate standards in the profession.

Under section 30 of the Teaching Council Act 2001 teachers employed in recognised schools must be registered with the Teaching Council in order to be paid from public monies by the Department of Education and Skills or an ETB.

The Minister for Education and Skills signed the commencement order for Section 30 of the Teaching Council Act 2001 on 01 November 2013 to come **into operation from a legally irrevocable date of 28 January 2014**.

The Department of Education and Skills and ETBs are prohibited by law from paying unregistered people employed in teaching positions in schools on or after 28 January 2014 except in very exceptional circumstances and for very short time periods.

Further details including registration application forms and frequently asked questions are available from the Teaching Council:

Website: www.teachingcouncil.ie

E-mail: postprimaryregistration@teachingcouncil.ie for post-primary school teachers

Cavan and Monaghan ETB requires that all applicants for teaching posts are registered with the Teaching Council and possess the relevant qualifications for that post.

For details of how to register and other information, please refer to the Teaching Council of Ireland website www.teachingcouncil.ie

DES Circular Letters:

Circular 0031/2011 - *Teacher Recruitment, Registration and Qualifications*

Circular 0052/2013 - *Procedures on the Commencement of Section 30 in Recognised*

Schools

Circular 0025/2013 - *Requirement for Teachers in Recognised Schools to Register with the*

Teaching Council

are available on www.education.ie or may be obtained from the HR Department.

Shortlisting

Shortlisting is the process whereby candidates are assessed against the agreed selection criteria on the basis of information provided in the application documentation, in order to identify those candidates who best satisfy those criteria for further assessment.

The number of applications received for a position may exceed that required to fill existing vacancies.

If numbers applying for the position are such that it would not be practical to interview everyone, CMETB may decide to employ a short-listing process to select a group for interview who, based on an examination of the information provided in application form, appear to be the most suitable for the position.

This is not to suggest that other candidates are necessarily unsuitable, or incapable of the job, rather that there are some candidates who are, prima facie, better qualified and/or have more relevant experience.

During any short-listing exercise that may be employed, CMETB examines the application forms and assesses them against criteria based on the requirements of the position. It is therefore in applicant's own interests to provide a detailed and accurate account of qualifications/experience on the application form.

Other Forms of Assessment

For some posts it may be necessary to supplement the interview with other forms of assessment. Shortlisted candidates will be advised in advance of any alternative forms of assessment. The Board reserves the right to use a variety of assessment techniques; such additional forms of assessment may include inter alia the following:

- > Delivering a brief presentation on a particular subject

- > Demonstrating the safe use of a basic piece of equipment
- > Completing an assessment of computing skills, for example word processing, spreadsheet or desktop publishing skills
- > Psychometric testing
- > Oral and/or written tests in the Irish Language
- > Demonstration on teaching a lesson

Interview Arrangements

The HR Department will make arrangements for the interviews by:

Preparing a schedule of interviews from the agreed shortlist

- > Arranging for an appropriate venue – interviews and waiting area
- > Advising shortlisted candidates of their interview date, time and venue
- > Advising Selection Board members of the interview date, time and venue
- > Preparing a file for each member of the Selection Board containing the advertisement, the job description (if any), the candidates application form and any supplementary documentation, Declaration of Interest form

Please note, during Covid-19, interviews took place on-line, via Teams.

Guidelines for Selection Boards

- > The interview file containing a copy of the post as advertised, application forms of shortlisted candidates and a draft schedule is available to board members prior to interviews. The completed schedule will be made available to the board prior to commencement of interviews.
- > Each board member will be required to complete a Declaration of Interest form before being ratified to the interview board.
- > A Conflict of Interest is deemed to be where a board member feels that their relationship/knowledge of an applicant will not allow them make an unbiased judgement. A close relationship to a candidate such as Spouses/Partner/Child/ Relative or close acquaintance is deemed to be a Conflict of Interest and should be declared. Should you identify a Conflict of Interest please bring to the attention of the HR Department (047 30888 extension 4) immediately.
- > Before interviews commence, the board will be briefed by a member of the HR Department who will provide specified details for the post being interviewed, give the board any additional information and who will be on hand throughout the process to assist the board as required.

- > Each candidate will be allocated equal time for their interview. All candidates will be asked the same core questions to ensure a consistent and fair approach. The board are requested to keep to the interview schedule in so far as possible.
- > Suggested interview questions and interview evaluation forms may be supplied to the board prior to interviews. It is important that board members attend at the requested time to enable questions and evaluation forms to be agreed before commencement of interviews. As the evaluation form correlates directly to the areas questioned it is important that both documents are agreed by the board before interviews begin.
- > Interview questions are in line with current employment law legislation and must not discriminate under any of the 9 grounds covered by Employment Equality Act, 1998 (i.e. Gender, Marital status, Family status, Age, Disability, Race, Sexual Orientation, Religious Belief and Membership of the Traveller Community).
- > The board are required to elect a Chairperson (normally the Cavan and Monaghan ETB Rep) and to nominate a secretary who is responsible for the completion of the interview evaluation forms. Each board member is required to sign off on the evaluation form. It is important to note that the evaluation form is made available to interview candidates should they request feedback.
- > The evaluation form provides for marks and remarks to be completed and the board will be required to complete all sections fully. The aim of this form is to provide constructive feedback to the candidates and it is therefore important to complete the remarks section.
- > In addition to the completion of an evaluation form for every candidate interviewed the board must complete the overall appointment form detailing, in order of merit, the candidate/s that are recommended for appointment to the post. Candidate/s should be placed on a panel only if the selection board is fully satisfied with the candidate/s suitability for appointment.

Referee Reports

Offer of employment will be conditional on receiving satisfactory references. References will be sought immediately following interview in respect of the recommended candidate. The nature of referee reports sought is dependent on the nature of the vacancy, at least one of the referees should be in a position to report on a previous employment.

In some instances, references may be sought prior to interview, which is notified to applicants on the application form.

Offering Appointment

It is the role solely of the Chief Executive, or the Human Resources Department if nominated by the Chief Executive, to contact the successful candidate following recommendation of the Selection Board.

Offers of employment will be contingent on receipt of the following:

- > Original documentary evidence of academic qualifications
- > In the case of teachers, documentary evidence of current Teaching Council Registration
- > Original long version of birth certificate
- > Satisfactory Garda Vetting and completion of the Statutory Declaration
- > Satisfactory medical examination
- > Satisfactory Referees' reports
- > Satisfactory completion of all pension-related documentation
- > Acceptance of Code of Conduct

Panels

Following interview, a Panel may be formed from which further appointments may be made in a fixed term, fixed purpose capacity. The panel will exist for one academic year.

Each year a Teacher Substitute panel is created on basis of qualifications, Teaching Council registration and satisfactory Garda Vetting. Short term teacher substitution vacancies are filled from this panel.

Pre-Employment Medical Assessment

The primary purpose of the pre-employment medical assessment/examination is to assess an individual's fitness for a particular post or occupation with regard to the requirements of that post.

Pre-employment medical questionnaires can:

- > Help ensure the individual can perform the tasks effectively
- > Detect an infirmity that may be of danger to the worker or co-worker
- > Help determine if the job poses a health risk
- > Advise if any job restrictions or accommodations are required
- > Facilitate health and safety best practice

CMETB requires all successful candidates to complete a pre-employment medical assessment. The pre-employment medical assessment will be carried out by the DES approved Occupational Health Service via their website www.medmark4teachers.ie or www.medmark4snas.ie or www.medmark.ie.

Original Documentary Evidence of Qualifications

The successful candidate is required to submit original documentary evidence of his/her academic qualifications from the awarding institution i.e. his/her academic transcripts for each year of study (statement of results) and parchment/s, following acceptance of the offer of employment. Teachers must also provide documentary evidence of current Teaching Council Registration and evidence of the subjects they are registered to teach and any conditions placed on them by the Teaching Council e.g. conditional on post qualification experience.

Garda Vetting

Cavan and Monaghan ETB is registered with the National Vetting Bureau (NVB) which provides a disclosure service for organisations who have staff positions which involve regular unsupervised access to children and vulnerable adults. As part of the CMETB recruitment and selection process, each offer of employment to posts where working with children and vulnerable persons, is subject to a satisfactory outcome of the GV process.

CMETB reserves the right to have employees vetted every 3 years or more frequently, if deemed necessary.

Newly Registered Teachers will be vetted by the Teaching Council; all other employees will be vetted by Cavan and Monaghan ETB.

As an additional safeguard, under DES Circular Letter 31/2016, a child protection related Statutory Declaration must be provided by all persons being appointed to teaching and non-teaching positions of any duration. A Statutory Declaration is regarded as valid if made in the same or previous calendar year. In addition, the associated undertaking (which is specific to the employing school authority) must be signed by all persons prior to commencing employment of any duration.

DES Circular Letters 31/2016, 16/2017 & 72/2017 may be accessed on www.education.ie or obtained from the HR Department.

Advising Unsuccessful Candidates

The HR Department will advise unsuccessful candidates as soon as possible after interview.

Post Interview Feedback

A copy of the Interview Evaluation Form, which is completed by the Selection Board for each candidate, is available upon request to any candidate seeking post interview feedback.

The Interview Evaluation Form details the marks allotted in respect of the selection criteria and will be made available on receipt of a written request to:

Human Resources Department

Cavan and Monaghan ETB

Administration Centre

Market Street

Monaghan

Or, request by e-mail to info@cmetb.ie

Work Permits

A work permit is an employment permit issued to the employee, which permits his/her employment in the State by the employer in the occupation stated on the permit. In general, non-EEA* nationals must have a permit to work in Ireland. EEA and Swiss nationals do not need an employment permit, except for Bulgarian and Romanian nationals

**The EEA (European Economic Area) consists of the EU member states together with Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein.*

Cavan and Monaghan ETB complies with guidelines with regard to work permits as laid down by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation from time to

“Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.”

Viktor E. Frankl



www.cmetb.ie



cmetb

Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna
an Chabháin agus Mhuineacháin
*Cavan and Monaghan
Education and Training Board*