LOUTH MEATH EDUCATION AND TRAINING BOARD

PROVIDER PROFILE

November 2021

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BACKGROUND

Louth and Meath Education and Training Board (LMETB) was established under the Education and Training Boards Act 2013. The act, which took effect from 1st July 2013, provided for the dissolution of thirty-three Vocational Education Committees and the establishment of sixteen Education and Training Boards (ETBs), through a process of merging some of the existing VECs. LMETB was formed due to the merger of Co. Louth and Co. Meath VECs.

The Further Education and Training Act 2013, which was signed into law in July 2013, established SOLAS, the Further Education and Training Authority, with responsibility for planning, funding and co-ordination of the Further Education and Training Services provided by ETBs. This act also provided for the transfer of the former FÁS training functions and staff to the newly formed ETBs. On 1st July 2014, the former FÁS training centre in Dundalk, Co. Louth therefore came under the governance of LMETB. LMETB is the largest comprehensive educational provider in the Louth and Meath region, with a range of educational services from primary to post-primary and Further Education and Training.

LMETB is one of the largest ETBs in the country, employing over 2,400 staff and providing education for over 13,000 students at primary and post-primary level, and approximately 14,000 learners in Further Education and Training.

LMETB's provision includes:

- 4 Community National Schools
- 18 post primary schools including one with PLC provision
- 1 Centre for European Schooling
- 2 PLC colleges
- 1 Training Centre
- 1 Advanced Manufacturing Training Centre of Excellence
- 8 Youthreach Centres
- 7 multi-use Further Education and Training campus/centres delivering education and training programmes
- Youth and Community Education and Training Services in a range of community-based locations
- Music Generation Programmes

LMETB is joint patron of 6 Community Schools at: Ardee, Kells, Trim, Athboy, Ashbourne, and Ballymakenny College, Drogheda.

LMETB manages a budget of in excess of €170 million, serving a population of 323,317 and a staff of approximately 2,400 full-time and part-time personnel across all LMETB services. LMETB covers an area of 3169 km^2.

LMETB's Further Education and Training (FET) Services

LMETB's FET Services offer a diverse range of full-time and part-time education and training opportunities for all individuals over the age of sixteen across a variety of centres, colleges and outreach locations across Louth and Meath.

The map in Figure 1 shows the wide range of facilities and locations through which LMETB FET Services currently operate, which include:

- 3 PLC Colleges (one of which is a shared campus with Post-Primary School provision)
- 1 Regional Skills and Training Centre
- 1 Advanced Manufacturing Training Centre of Excellence
- 1 Community Training Centre
- 8 Youthreach Centres
- 7 multi-use FET campuses/centres

Location of FET Centres in LMETB
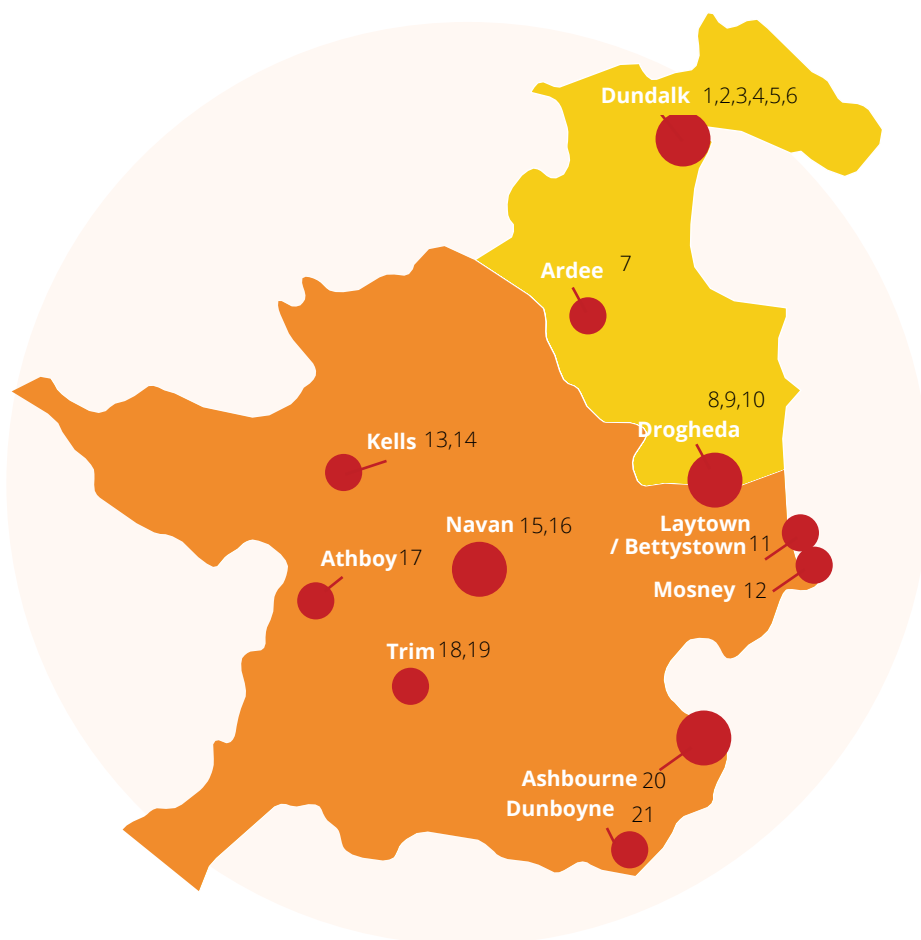
Key

1	FET Campus, Chapel St, Dundalk	11	Youthreach Laytown/ Bettystown
2	Youthreach Dundalk	12	FET Centre, Mosney Village
3	Regional Skills and Training Centre	13	FET Centre Kells
4	Advanced Manufacturing Training Centre of Excellence	14	Youthreach Kells
5	O Fiaich Institute of Further Education	15	Youthreach Navan
6	Community Training Centre, Dundalk	16	FET Campus, Railway St, Navan
7	Youthreach Ardee	17	FET Centre Athboy
8	FET Campus, King Street	18	Youthreach Trim
9	Drogheda Institute of Further Education	19	FET Centre Trim
10	Youthreach Drogheda	20	Youthreach Ashbourne
		21	Dunboyne College of Further Education

Courses/Service also running in other outreach settings across Co. Louth/Co. Meath

Figure 1: Location of FET Centres in LMETB

For the purpose of consistency, throughout the Provider Profile, all FET colleges and centres will be referred to as 'FET Centres.'

The map in Figure 2 indicates the individual FET services available at the various geographical locations across LMETB:

Location of FET Services in LMETB

Dundalk: 1 - 18 inclusive

Drogheda: 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 14, 15, 17

Laytown/Bettystown: 9

Mosney Village: 6

Ardee: 6, 9, 7

Kells: 6, 7, 9, 12

Trim: 6, 7, 9, 12, 14

Navan: 1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 15, 17

Athboy: 6, 7, 12

Dunboyne: 2, 8, 15

Ashbourne: 6, 9
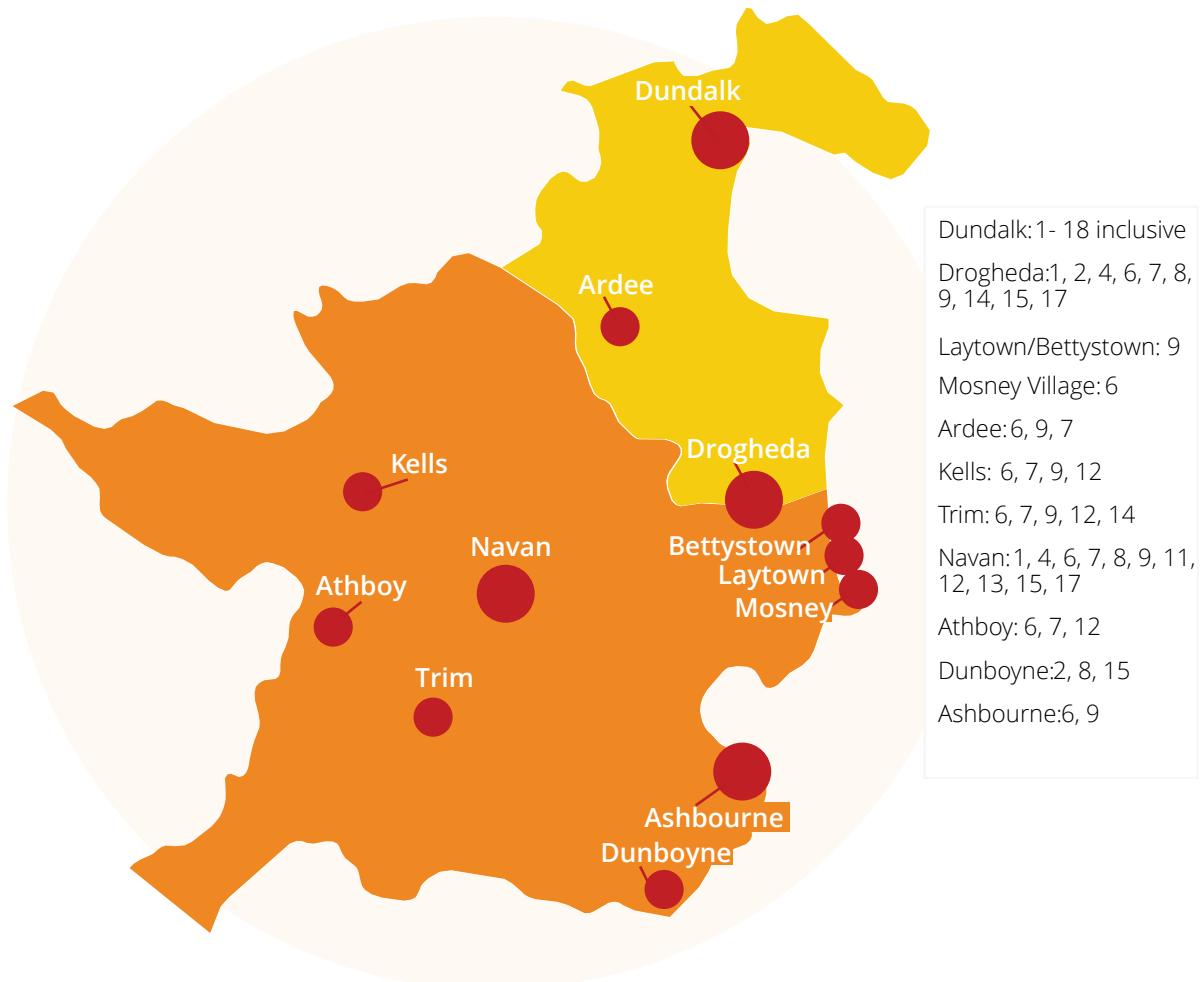
Key		
1	Guidance, Information and Course Recruitment Services*	10 Community Training Centre
2	PLC	11 Youth Services*
3	Apprenticeship and Traineeship*	12 Community Education Service*
4	VTOS	13 Specialist Training Providers
5	Specific Skills Training*	14 Local Training Initiatives
6	Literacy, Numeracy and ESOL*	15 Skills to Advance*
7	Back to Education Initiative*	16 Advanced Manufacturing Training Centre of Excellence
8	Evening Courses	17 Skills for Work*
9	Youthreach	18 PEACE IV projects*

Courses/Service also running in other outreach settings across Co. Louth/Co. Meath

Figure 2: Location of FET Services/ Programmes in LMETB

Funding in FET

SOLAS funds the following full-time, part-time and support programmes within LMETB's FET services:

- Post-Leaving Certificate (PLC) Colleges
- Apprenticeships
- Traineeships
- Youthreach
- Community Training Centre
- Local Training Initiatives
- Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS)
- Specialist Training Providers
- Specific Skills Training
- Bridging and Foundation Courses
- Community Education Service
- Back to Education Initiative
- Adult Learning Service
- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
- Skills for Work
- Skills to Advance
- Advanced Manufacturing Training Centre of Excellence
- Evening Courses
- FET Co-operation Hours
- Quality Assurance Office
- Adult Educational Guidance and Information Service
- Technology Enhanced Learning Office
- Professional Learning and Development/ Communications Office

Within that grouping, the following programmes have been co-funded by European Social Investment Fund 2014-2020

- Traineeships
- Specific Skills Training
- Bridging/Foundation courses
- Youthreach
- Community Training Centre
- Back To Education Initiative
- Adult Literacy Service

LMETB's Youth Service is funded through Department of Children, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Youth (DCEDIY). Peace IV programme is funded though the European Regional Development Fund along with the Irish and UK governments. The Advanced Manufacturing Training Centre of Excellence (AMTCE) is also part-funded by Enterprise Ireland.

Certification:

- The FET Service in LMETB is responsible for the management and operation of 24 QQI registered centres across 21 FET centres/colleges.

- FET programmes are also accredited by a range of other awarding bodies, including City and Guilds, ICDL and ITEC.

- LMETB is a recognised provider with QQI under section 44(7) of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012.

LMETB MISSION, VALUES, STRATEGIC FOCUS AND KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

LMETB Mission Statement

Louth and Meath Education and Training Board (LMETB) is committed to excellence and innovation in the education of young people and adults through the provision of dynamic services delivered by professional staff.

LMETB serves the communities of counties Louth and Meath, working with its educational partners on contributing to the development and growth of the Louth/Meath region. LMETB aims to be the leading provider of quality education and services for the people of counties Louth and Meath through the management and delivery of a diverse range of accessible, progressive and responsive programmes.

Underpinning LMETB's Mission Statement is a set of core values and principles which were developed in consultation with all stakeholder groups.

LMETB Core Values and Principles

Excellence
All stakeholders are afforded the highest standards of service provision.

Innovation
Staff and learners are encouraged to be progressive, creative and dynamic in their teaching and learning practices. Staff and learners are encouraged to explore the use of ICT to enhance teaching and learning.

Learner Centred

LMETB programmes and services are delivered in response to the needs of the learners in counties Louth and Meath.

Supporting Transition

Transfer, Transition and Guidance Programmes and supports are provided to all learners to ensure they make the right choices regarding career pathways and choices, and that they transition successfully from one phase of their educational journey to another.

Learning

A lifelong learning perspective is promoted among staff and learners.

Equality

All learners are provided with access to education and supports that maximise learning opportunities and help them to reach their potential.

Inclusion

All learners are enabled to participate effectively in education, particularly those groups who may have experienced exclusion or isolation.

Holistic

The programmes and services available in LMETB cultivate the moral, emotional, physical, social, psychological and spiritual dimensions of the learner.

Professionalism

Staff, learners and our stakeholders are encouraged to interact with each other in a courteous, respectful and professional manner where diversity is welcomed and embraced.

Responsiveness

An awareness of national and local requirements forms the basis for provision.

Wellbeing

The programmes and services available in LMETB strive to develop learners' self-confidence and promote learner wellbeing.

Fairness

All policies, procedures and practices of LMETB are just and reasonable.

Integrity

Staff, learners and stakeholders are encouraged to ensure they act honestly, ethically and transparently. Highest standards in confidentiality, where applicable, are promoted.

Partnership & Collaboration

Programmes and services are developed and delivered in conjunction with key stakeholder groups and organisations.

Value for Money

The work of LMETB is conducted in an efficient, transparent manner with due regard for public accountability.

In addition, LMETB's Strategy Statement 2017 – 2021, sets out clearly defined strategic priorities for each of the three pillars within which the wider LMETB organisation operates. These three pillars are Organisation Support and Development, Schools and Further Education and Training.

The LMETB Strategy Statement 2017 – 2021

LMETB's Strategy Statement 2017-21 sets out high level strategic objectives and actions for the organisation under seven strategic goals, as outlined below in Figure 3.

01 To promote active inclusion and access to high quality teaching, learning and assessment for all students/learners in LMETB.

02 To enhance communications across LMETB, and to further develop the capacity of LMETB staff to provide responsive, high quality programmes and services.

03 To ensure continued provision of high quality and innovative teaching and learning in LMETB Schools & Colleges.

04 To support the development and expansion of the Further Education and Training Section of LMETB.

05 To strengthen and develop LMETB organisation systems.

06 To develop LMETB Buildings, Facilities & Infrastructure.

07 To further develop strategic partnerships and to promote the LMETB brand within the communities of Louth and Meath.

Figure 3: LMETB's Strategic Goals 2017-2021

Key Performance Indicators

In 2018 a new strategic dialogue process for the FET sector was developed, which resulted in the development of Strategic Performance Agreements (SPAs) for each of the sixteen ETBs. These SPAs outlined each ETB's strategic priorities and how they were to contribute to the achievement of key national targets for the FET sector between 2018 and 2020. The targets set out in LMETB's SPA, covering the period 2018 to 2020, firmly align to the SOLAS National FET Strategy 2014-2019. LMETB's Specific Performance Agreement 2018-20 is available to view here.

A key strategic priority for LMETB's FET Division is the development of an 'LMETB FET Strategy' which will align with national priorities outlined in SOLAS National FET strategy 2020-24, as well as local priorities identified at LMETB FET planning workshops, which are held annually.

Figure 4 below outlines the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for FET in LMETB and their link to LMETB's overall planning goals for 2021 and identified risks as per LMETB Risk Register. Due regard is given, in the development of these KPIs, to funder/Government priorities and Government policy objectives.

Goals for Further Education and Training (FET)	Key Performance Indicator	Target	Alignment to LMETB Risk Register	Alignment to LMETB Service Plan for 2021
Fully operational FET Quality Assurance (QA) governance system	QA framework developed and integrated across all FET provision Continued implementation of Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) Participation in QQI Inaugural Review of Quality Assurance Risk Management for FET reviewed as per schedule depending on risk type and severity and appropriate actions taken to manage risk Effective data protection procedures are in place in FET	Effective implementation of QIP Robust Self-Evaluation Report prepared for QQI Actions from Risk Management implemented High level of data protection awareness amongst staff	Risk that LMETB cannot maintain certification status or that QA procedures are breached (Reviewed 6 monthly basis)	Implement QA systems Develop organisational structures and systems to meet the changing needs of the organisation Effectively manage finances and risk Ensure effective data protection

Greater investment in FET teaching staff training and professional learning and development (PLD) opportunities	Further strengthening of key competences in FET curricula and provide more effective opportunities to acquire or develop those skills throughout LMETB FET Introduction of systematic approaches to, and opportunities for, initial and continuous professional learning and development of FET teachers, tutors & instructors in FET centres and work-based settings Communication of available training options to staff and implementation of training	Increased applications for professional learning and development (PLD) opportunities Build on partnership between LMETB PLD Officer, national network of PLD Officers and dedicated sections within SOLAS to continue to implement nationally identified areas of training Cascade training received via peer to peer and workshop-based learning, facilitated by PLD Officer Retain database of all staff training received, to identify areas where further training to comply with FET Strategy All new teachers participate in induction training	Risk arising when staff do not participate in PLD (Reviewed 6 monthly basis)	Support staff in ongoing PLD
Optimise Learner experience Enhanced linkages for learner progression pathways	Greater Completion rate in FET programmes Greater Certification in FET Programmes Greater Placement rate of FET Graduates Utilisation of Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) to enhance learner experience and provide learning supports outside of teaching hours. Continue to develop and maintain the built environment in FET provision	Increased enrolments and strong retention: monitoring outcomes as indicators of quality Available via analysis of certification data: Via QBS and QQI certification reports - data analysed, trends in rates of distinction by centre and award. Infographics generated for review, i.e. external authenticator, centre portfolios, number of grade changes. Compile data on those learners that leave programmes prematurely. Ensure the appropriate supports are available to support students with individual requirements. Ongoing works on FET buildings identified as in need of repair/upgrade	Risk that students/learners do not view LMETB as their provider of choice for education and training requirements, resulting in reduction in enrolments (Reviewed 6 monthly basis)	Wide range of FET programmes offered and delivered. New programmes initiated by FET provision Continuous engagement with employers and vendors to determine existing and future training needs Provide high quality learning/training facilities.
Greater participation/access to FET Programmes Enhancement of social inclusion strategies embedding inclusive practice, prioritising target cohorts, learner support and literacy/numeracy supports	Enhance access to FET and qualifications for all through more flexible and permeable systems, notably by offering efficient and integrated guidance services and enabling the validation of non-formal and informal learning through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process Identify student welfare requirements as communicated by Programme Coordinators Implement allocation of resources to meet learners' requirements, including literacy and numeracy Monitor to identify opportunities for improvement and to ensure learners' needs are met Continue to build on support services for referral of learners who are identified as at risk Participation in and responding to Refugee Protection Programmes	Ensuring access, at all times, to Guidance RPL procedure/policy in place to recognise prior informal and non-formal learning. Learner supports in place Increased retention and progression figures for disadvantaged learners Appropriate placement of learners from Refugee Protection Programmes in FET centres	Risk that we do not provide for student welfare (Reviewed 2 monthly basis)	Support learners at risk of educational disadvantage in line with current national policy Meet the needs arising from the Irish Refugee Protection Programme and provision for international protection applicants

Improved mechanisms for identifying training needs in the labour market - meeting critical skills need. Greater work-based learning in all its forms, with special attention to apprenticeships	Monitor published data CSO, DE, SOLAS, DSP Continue to develop Employer Engagement team to conduct Training Needs Analysis with employers Develop further programme development resources to respond flexibly and adequately to identified employer demands and industry standards Work to develop effective industry linkages. Seek to achieve increased participation by employers in skills development and workforce planning On going development and expansion of Skills to Advance programme Further development of evening provision in LMETB Engage with Regional Skills Fora in a structured & meaningful manner Work to expand the range of apprenticeship programmes and phases delivered in LMETB Work to integrate literacy and numeracy across all apprenticeship & traineeship programmes	Increased training provision to workplaces and employees Further development and strengthening of LMETB/industry linkages Increased number of programmes delivered, and participants engaged Wide range of day and evening programmes offered in LMETB New apprenticeships and traineeships commenced, and existing programmes maintained Continued development of support programme for apprentices Maintain and develop the synergies between PLC and traineeship/apprenticeship co-provision	Risk that LMETB does not keep up to date with opportunities arising from changes in demographics e.g. birth rates, enrolment data, employment / unemployment data, so that it can respond in a timely manner to changes arising from economic changes (reviewed 6 monthly basis)	Engage effectively with employers Provide and develop traineeship and apprenticeship programmes which are adaptive in response to changing industry needs

Figure 4: Key Performance Indicators for Further Education and Training in LMETB.

LMETB's Strategy Statement 2022-26

LMETB's Board approved the newly-developed LMETB Strategy Statement 2022-26 on 18th November 2021, which was the culmination of a process of consultation in line with the requirements of Section 27 of the Education and Training Boards Act of 2013.

The keys steps of the consultation and development process included:

- Formation of a Strategy working group comprising LMETB Board members and senior OSD team members to assist in developing the strategy statement and oversee the consultation and analysis of responses.

- Implementation of consultation via electronic survey and email. (Due to COVID-19 restrictions all consultation was carried out online)

- Asking consultees for input relating to mission, values and principles, and on strengths, opportunities, aspirations and results using the 'SOAR' evaluation approach. (Feedback from 114 consultees gained)
- An analysis of the operating environment was also carried out using the PESTLE methodology.
- Development of a set of high-level strategic goals which were recommended to the Board of LMETB in November 2021

The 5 strategic goals agreed were as follows:

Strategic Goal 1:
Provide a High-Quality
Learner Experience

Strategic Goal 3:
Promote innovation and
collaboration

Strategic Goal 5:
Act Sustainably

01 **02** **03** **04** **05**

Strategic Goal 2:
Ensure Equity of
Opportunity

Strategic Goal 4 :
Provide a High-Quality
Governance and Support
Framework

LMETB has, in its new strategy statement, continued to focus on themes such as quality, inclusion, innovation, partnerships and organisation systems. These themes were all reflected in its Strategy Statement 2017-21 and continue to be reflected in its FET section. It has also now included keys actions related to sustainability in light of current requirements. LMETB FET section will continue to cater to the skills and training needs of learners, stakeholders and employers in that regard and will promote the sustainability focus amongst its staff as per LMETB strategic requirements.

A separate strategic implementation plan, in the form of a Service Plan, will soon be developed to set out the KPIs to measure progress against strategy. A sustainability policy is also in development to underpin the sustainability goal in the strategy. LMETB's Strategy Statement 2022-26 is available to view here.

GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES

LMETB is governed by a Board comprising twenty-one members. Membership includes five representatives from Louth County Council, seven representatives from Meath County Council, two staff representatives, two parent representatives and five community representatives. The LMETB board is collectively responsible for promoting the success of the ETB by directing and controlling the ETB's activities.

In order to deliver appropriate governance in LMETB, the Board must act in the interest of the ETB at all times, consistent with the requirements of legislation and government policies. The LMETB Board is required to confirm to the Minister for Education that they comply with the up-to-date requirements of the Code of Practice in their governance practices and procedures. Board members at all times must act on a fully informed basis, in good faith, with due diligence and care, and always in the best interest of the ETB, subject to the objectives set by the Government.

The LMETB Board is supported by a sub-committee structure and at centre/school level is supported by Boards of Management in LMETB schools, PLC colleges and Youthreach centres. The standalone Post-Leaving Certificate Colleges have Boards of Management as defined by the Education Act, 1983, and these Boards are committees of the ETB Board. There is one Youthreach Board of Management which has oversight and management functions for all of the LMETB Youthreach Centres in the geographic region. This board reports into the overall LMETB Board.

LMETB has also established a range of subcommittees which support the work of the board. These are listed below:

- Finance Committee and Audit and Risk Committee (both established in accordance with Section 45(1) of the Education and Training Boards Act 2013)

- Land and Buildings Sub committee

- Gifts scholarships and Trusts subcommittee

- Adult Education Committee

- Youthreach Committee

- Strategy sub-committee (established in 2021 to assist in development of LMETB Strategy Statement 2022-26)

Within LMETB's administrative offices, the OSD administrative staff provide support to our schools/colleges/centres in a range of areas including Human Resources, ICT, Finance, Land and Buildings and Corporate Services. This network of support at Head Office level supports the work of the LMETB Board in ensuring that all schools/colleges/centres are compliant in the areas of Corporate Governance.

LMETB administrative offices are currently based with Head Offices in Abbey Road, Navan, Co. Meath and Chapel Street, Dundalk, Co. Louth. Plans are currently underway for the development of a new Headquarters which will be based in Drogheda, Co. Louth.

LMETB's Management Structure

The work of LMETB is structured across three pillars: Organisation Support and Development, Schools and Further Education and Training. Each pillar has a Director, who reports to the Chief Executive.

The specific responsibilities assigned to each pillar are highlighted below in Figure 5.

LMETB Management Structure

LMETB Board

Chief Executive

Director of FET

Director of Schools

Director of Organisation Support and Development

- Quality Assurance
- FET Provision
- FET Support Services

- Community National Schools
- Post- Primary Schools

- Human Resources
- Finance
- Corporate Services
- Land and Buildings
- ICT
- Music Generation
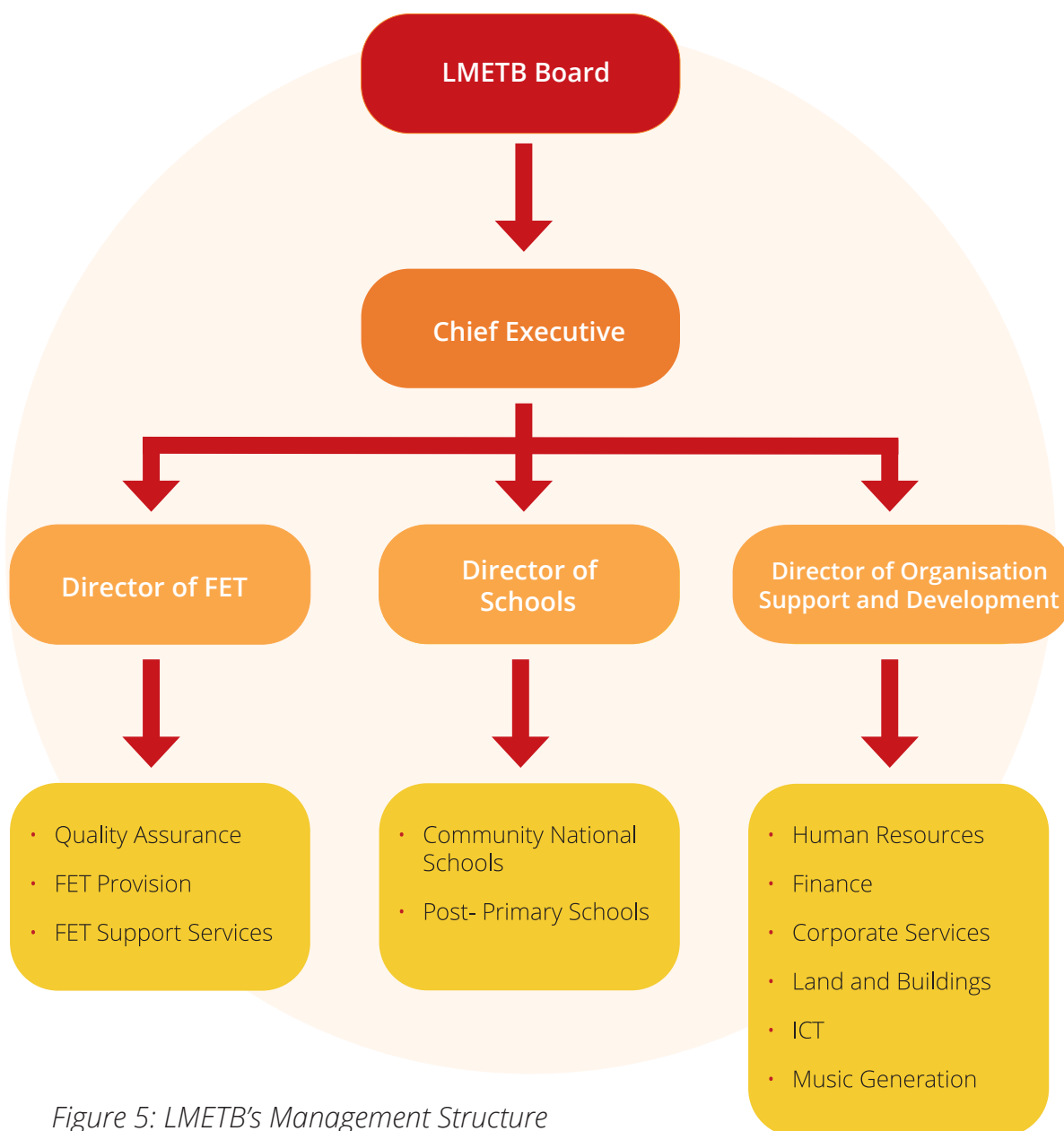
Figure 5: LMETB's Management Structure

FET Management Structure

Director of FET

FET Senior Management

Adult Education Officers

Area Training Manager

PLC Principals

Director of AMTCE

FET Provision and Support Services

Full- time FET Provision
- Post Leaving Certificate Colleges
- Apprenticeships
- Traineeships
- Youthreach
- Community Training Centre
- VTOS
- Specialist Training Providers
- Specific Skills Training*
- Bridging and Foundation Courses

Part-Time FET Provision
- Community Education and Training
- Back to Education Initiative
- Adult Literacy Service
- ESOL
- Skills for Work
- Skills to Advance
- Advanced Manufacturing Training Centre of Excellence
- Evening Courses
- FET Co-operation Hours
- Youth Services
- PEACE IV programme

FET Support Services
- Quality Assurance Officer
- Adult Education Guidance and Information Service
- Technology Enhanced Learning Office
- Professional Learning and Development/ Communications Office

- Some part-time options may also exist

Figure 6: LMETB's FET Management Structure

Structures within LMETB's FET governance:

FET Senior Management

The Director of FET has overall responsibility for Quality Assurance, FET Provision and FET Support Services. The Director is supported in this work by the Senior Management Team in FET.   Senior Management includes: 2 Adult Education Officers, 1 Area Training Manager, 3 PLC Principals and 1 Director of AMTCE. Within the FET SMT, each of the Adult Education Officers (AEOs) and Area Training Manager has responsibility for a number of programmes/ services within FET.

FET Reporting Structures

1. FET Forum

   The FET Forum comprises co-ordinators from a range of FET provision/services. It is chaired by the Senior Management Team and meets 4 times annually. Its purpose is to share information between SMT and FET Co-ordinators and to discuss key developments within FET in LMETB.

The FET Forum has representation from the following services:

Full-time:
- Regional Skills and Training Centre
- VTOS

Part- Time
- Community Education Service
- Youth Services
- Back to Education Initiative
- Adult Literacy Service
- Skills to Advance
- Advanced Manufacturing Training Centre of Excellence
- PEACE IV programmes

FET Support Services

- Quality Assurance Office
- Adult Educational Guidance and Information Service
- Technology Enhanced Learning Office
- Professional Learning and Development/ Communications Office

2. Youthreach Forum:

    The Youthreach Forum is made up of the 8 Youthreach Co-ordinators. It meets four times annually.

3. PLC Management Forum:

    The PLC management Forum consists of the 3 PLC principals, Director of FET and 2 Adult Education Officers. It meets 4-5 times annually.

FET Planning Days

FET Planning Days bring together all leaders across FET, Youthreach and PLC in LMETB. The group meets at key times annually to ensure that the planning process for FET provision is streamlined, responsive and relevant. As well as the facilitation of planning workshops, guest speakers have also been invited from a range of organisations, including for example, SOLAS, Enterprise Ireland, DSP and IBEC.

LMETB Quality Assurance Governance Structures

Since its re-engagement with QQI in June 2018, LMETB has been proactively working on the development of an integrated Quality Assurance governance system highlighting its commitment to ensuring the consistent and ongoing maintenance of quality across all its education and training services and activities.

LMETB's QA Governance/ Management Committee (QAGMC) oversees all Quality Assurance aspects related to the design, development, approval, implementation, monitoring and review of the Further Education and Training provision offered by LMETB.

The QAGMC:

• Protects, maintains & develops standards

• Provides oversight of planning, coordination, quality development and improvement of all aspects of FET

• Approves new and amended FET courses for delivery in line with LMETB strategy

Figure 7 below shows LMETB FET's Quality Assurance Governance Structure:
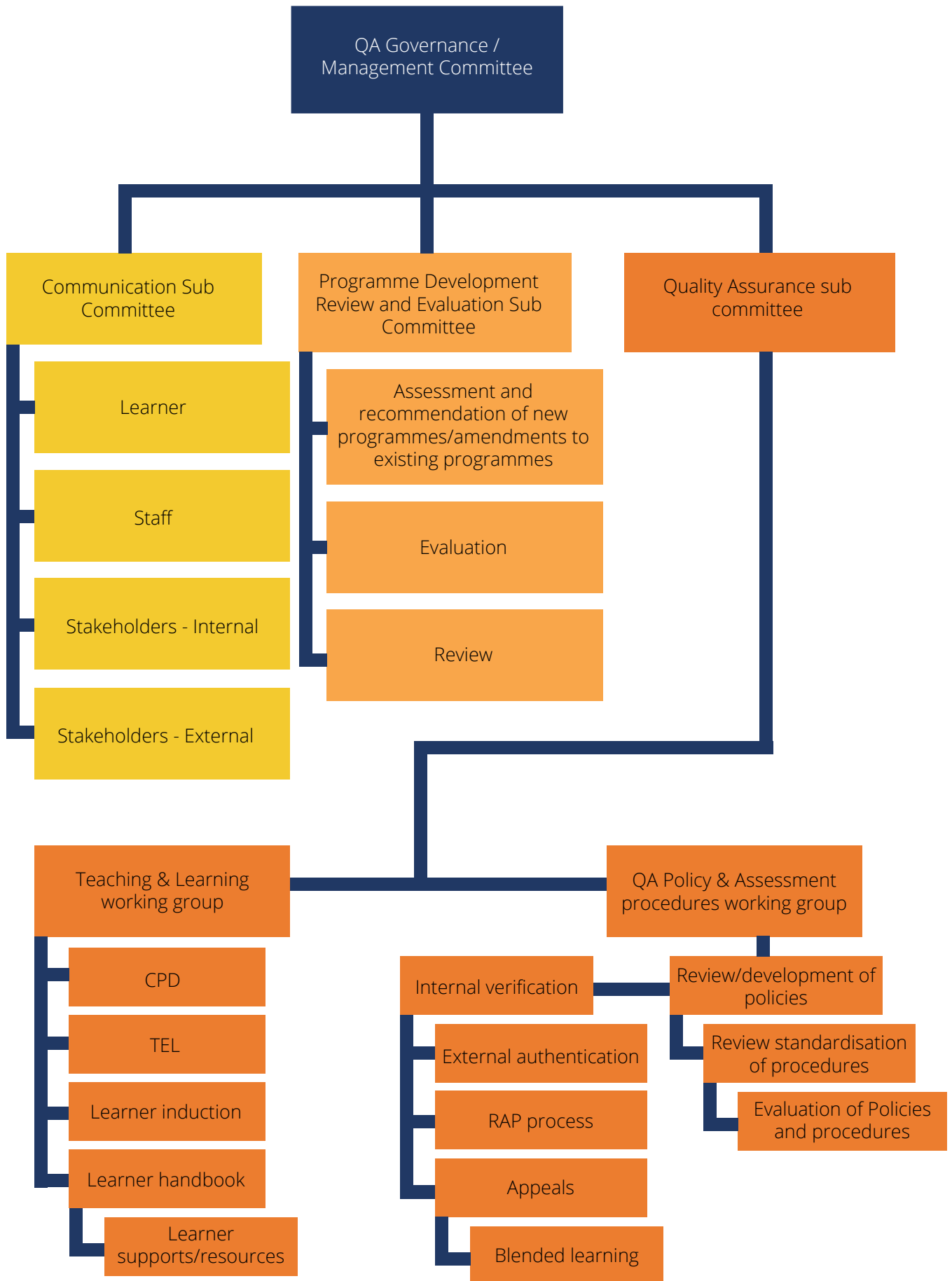

Figure 7: LMETB FET Quality Assurance Governance Structure

APPROACH TO QUALITY

Quality Assurance in LMETB

Key Development

LMETB was established under the terms of The Education and Training Board Act (2013), transferring the functions of Louth and Meath VECs to the new entity. Quality Assurance agreements between QQI and Co. Louth VEC, Co. Meath VEC and the Regional Skills Training Centre's Transitional Quality Assurance System (TQAS) were retained as part of the transfer of undertakings effected by the amalgamation process. The Further Education and Training Act 2013 allowed for the dissolution of An Foras Áiseanna Saothair, subsequently to became SOLAS, and in 2014 the transfer of the training function previously managed by FÁS in Louth, Meath, Cavan and Monaghan was transferred to LMETB. In 2015 as part of the disaggregation process, training functions for counties Cavan and Monaghan were subsequently transferred to Cavan and Monaghan ETB.

FET centres in LMETB continued to work to their own QA arrangements until 2018 when LMETB went through a process of re-engagement with QQI, in accordance with Section 30 of The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012. This process involved approval of LMETB's Quality Assurance Procedures (QAP). As part of this process, LMETB undertook a self-evaluation process involving a review of QA processes and procedures across FET provision. This culminated in the production of LMETB Executive Self-Evaluation Report 2017. The key findings from the Executive Self Evaluation Report (ESER) are highlighted below and these recommendations helped to set out the impetus for developing quality assurance as a key support for FET provision in LMETB, as evidenced in the examples of actions implemented in QA since 2017.

Key Recommendations	Examples of Action Implemented
A new QA structure within LMETB comprising of key committees in the area of Communications, Programme Development, Assessment, Quality Assurance and Teaching and Learning.	LMETB's QA governance architecture began to take shape with the establishment, in 2018, of the QAGMC as the main oversight body for quality assurance in LMETB. LMETB's QA governance structure is outlined here
A structured plan to move from the legacy Quality Assurance Plans to an LMETB wide QA mechanism	Work ongoing since 2018 to provide a common, integrated QA framework encompassing QA policies and appropriate QA procedures across all FET provisions
The establishment of a Quality Assurance Service to support and develop QA across the varied provision units	Appointment of a QA officer reporting to the AEO with overall responsibility for QA
A commitment to listening to and learning from the learner by improving existing learner QA processes with a view to enhancing the learner experience	Learner Fora held in 2019 and 2021 with the aim of becoming annual events to promote inclusion of learner voice in FET
To build on partnership and cooperation with stakeholders to elevate the quality of FET service provision across the LMETB region	Appointment of dedicated Employer Engagement Officers in 2020. Appointment of Communications Officer in 2020
To review, explore and enhance the creative use of IT in all aspects of provision in terms of both administration and teaching and learning	Appointment of TEL Officer in 2020
To commit to regular review and self-evaluation across the LMETB region with a view to making QA a dynamic part of the organisational process and create a sense of ownership of QA by all partners in the process	Mid and end of course evaluations embedded into all FET provision. Formal mechanisms in place to capture learnings from authentication processes to inform practice going forward

Based on the outcomes from the ESER, a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for LMETB FET programmes and services was developed and approved in June 2018.   LMETB's Quality Improvement Plan 2018 is available to view here. The initiation of work on specific policies and procedures in the QIP demonstrated LMETB's intention to enhance and monitor quality on an ongoing basis from this point forward.

LMETB became a QQI recognised provider in June 2018 when its quality assurance procedures were formally approved by QQI in accordance with Section 30 of the 2012 Act.

The review of QA policies and procedures is an ongoing process as LMETB actions key areas of its quality improvement plans over the last few years, as demonstrated in LMETB Quality Improvement Plan 2019 and LMETB Quality Improvement Plan 2020.

The move to emergency remote learning as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated the revision and ongoing monitoring of assessment processes and procedures. The QA Office ensured that guideline documents for alternative assessments and contingency arrangements for remote authentication processes were approved by the QAGMC and then issued to all FET centres so that learners could still achieve successful certification outcomes at a time of great national uncertainty.

A key area of focus of quality improvement activity in 2021 has been initiated by the process of engagement with learners, FET centres and stakeholders in consultation and reflective processes in the gathering of data for the Self-Evaluation Report for the Inaugural Review process. The key findings and emerging themes will help to focus QA priorities for 2022.

LMETB Core Quality Assurance Principles:

- LMETB is committed to ensuring excellence in quality assurance for all its programmes and services, aligned with the goals set out in its LMETB Strategy Statement 2017-2021 and LMETB Strategy Statement 2022-26.

-

- LMETB will ensure compliance with QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines and QQI Sector Specific QA Guidelines for ETBs so as to ensure that any learner participating in a programme of FET with LMETB enjoys a quality assured experience.

- LMETB is committed to delivering on its mission and core principles to ensure that the learner is at the centre of its activities through the provision of innovative and quality assured education and training courses.

- LMETB aims to foster a culture of quality throughout FET to embed both individual and organisational commitment in recognising quality assurance as a means of driving continuous improvement, embracing the need to constantly review through timely evaluations.

- LMETB will develop innovative, inclusive, and timely responses to local learner and employer needs with evidence-based programme development and delivery.

- LMETB's Quality Assurance Office will support its FET centres in managing and delivering quality FET provision.

- LMETB's QA processes will enhance transparency and accountability across FET provision, promoting public confidence in LMETB's capacity to provide education and training programmes to agreed standards.

Quality Assurance Roles and Responsibilities – Governance Architecture

Quality Assurance Governance Management Committee (QAGMC) – Strategic direction, governance and oversight of all aspects of FET provision across LMETB.

The QAGMC will oversee all quality assurance aspects related to the design, development, approval, implementation, monitoring and review of FET provision across LMETB.
It:

• Protects, maintains & develops standards.

• Has oversight of development and improvement of all quality aspects of FET

• Approves new and amended FET courses for delivery in line with LMETB strategy.

In doing so, the QAGMC is ensuring, as far as possible, that all learners receive an equivalent experience.

Quality Assurance Sub-Committee – overview of quality assurance and teaching and learning processes.

The role of the QA sub-committee is to recommend and make recommendations to the QA Governance Management on:

• The development, review, planning, co-ordination, and improvement of quality assurance policies, procedures, documentation and processes, resources and supports.

• The development and enhancement of the teaching learning and assessment policy and strategy of LMETB FET.

The QA sub-committee may choose to form working groups for:

- QA policy and assessment procedures related matters

- Teaching and learning matters.

Should it decide to do so, the sub-committee has the option of co-opting additional members from staff members/ learners/external bodies to these working groups if required.

Programme Development, Review and Evaluation Sub-Committee – overview of new programme development and review of existing programmes

The Programme Development, Review and Evaluation sub-committee reports directly to the QAGMC and will:

- Review and evaluate requests for new and existing programmes according to LMETB's internal quality assurance requirements and make appropriate recommendations to the QAGMC, the overarching body for the establishment of new programmes.

- Review and monitor existing provision and to oversee self-evaluation of programmes.

The existence of this sub-committee enables a clear separation between those who engage in programme modification/development and those who approve proposals in relation to same.

Communications Sub-Committee – overview of dissemination of information to learners and public

The Communications sub-committee reports directly to the QAGMC and may:

- Recommend on procedures for the dissemination information to learners and public

- Recommend on the necessary safeguards and procedures for managing public information to ensure that the information presented to the public is accurate and up to date.

- Review and recommend for approval, policies (and revisions) relating to learner and public information to the QAGMC

- Develop guidelines/branding protocols for all communication and marketing materials.

The activities of all sub-committees will report to the QAGMC Committee as the most senior unit charged with maintaining organisational oversight in terms of quality assurance and advising on and approving significant decisions in relation to LMETB's quality assurance system.

Quality Assurance Roles and Responsibilities – FET Provision

FET Centres

FET Programme Coordinators and PLC Principals/Deputy Principals have day-to-day responsibility for the provision of the courses, which are delivered by teachers/tutors who are subject matter experts.

All FET centres delivering QQI assessments operate Internal Verification/External Authentication (IV/EA) processes and have Results Approval Panels (RAPs) which review the results of the IV/EA processes, and address any quality assurance issues which may have arisen during the assessment process.

Centre QA staff are responsible for receiving assessed learner evidence from assessors, arranging data entry to the QQI database (QBS), managing the IV and EA processes, attending or organising RAP meetings, distributing learner results and appeals information, circulating certification, and looking after appeals.

Ultimately, centre-level responsibility for quality resides with the Principal/Programme Coordinator, who are often themselves (or a designated person from within their centre) represented on QA sub-committees.

Regional Skills and Training Centre (RSTC)

The RSTC is managed by the Area Training Manager, supported by Assistant Training Managers. Day-to day responsibility for assessments and monitoring lies with the Training Standards Officer (TSO), supported by an Assistant Training Standards Officer (ATSO). The TSO reports directly to the Area Training Manager.

Training centres deliver courses leading to QQI certification, as well as extensively delivering courses leading to non-QQI certification. Courses are delivered by instructors who are subject matter experts.

All contracted trainers who deliver courses for the training centres are monitored by the Contracted Training Officers (CTOs) regarding operational matters and the TSO in terms of QA arrangements. All results are submitted to QQI through the training centres, following processes of EA and RAP.

Teacher/Tutor/Instructor

Teaching staff are central to ensuring that learners receive a quality assured learning experience in LMETB as they are the main point of contact and communication for learners. They have primary responsibility for teaching, assessment, marking and submission processes. Teachers are also expected to implement FET centre policies and procedures.

Quality Assurance Office

The QA Office supports all FET provision in the development, management, monitoring and review of QA policies, procedures, and processes to enhance the overall quality of FET provision. FET management and teaching staff are supported by the QA Office through regular communications, QA methodologies and associated training opportunities.

Learners

FET learners are LMETB's reason for existing and are central to all aspects of work. In general, learners are recruited and engaged through LMETB Guidance Services, and as a result of induction events or awareness raising advertising and promotional events. Learners attend courses/programmes and workshop events and are supported in their engagement by LMETB staff teams. Learners submit coursework and assessment work and receive feedback on this work. Their results are submitted for certification and they receive their results in person or through the post and celebrate same at graduation ceremonies or in-centre events.

REGIONAL PROFILE

LMETB covers an area of 3169 km². The geographical area is bordered by counties Westmeath, Dublin, Cavan, Monaghan in the Republic of Ireland and counties Armagh and Down in Northern Ireland.

The Louth Meath region has a population of 323,928 people (2016 Census of Ireland). In the 2016 Census, 50.5% (163,519) of Louth and Meath's population was female and 49.5% (160,409) was male.

Population growth was 5.5% in the period between 2011 and 2016. See Figure 8 below:

	Pop 2002	Pop 2006	Pop 2011	Pop 2016	% Pop Change 2006	% Pop Change 2011	% Pop Change 2016
Louth	106,046	111,267	122,897	128,884	4.9	+10.5	+4.9
Meath	146,059	162,823	184,135	195,044	11.5	+13.1	+5.9
National	4,013,448	4,239,318	4,588,252	4,761,865	5.6	+8.2	+3.8

Figure 8: Population change from 2002-2016 at local authority area level

Dundalk, Drogheda and Navan are the main urban centres of population. These three large towns showed a significant population increase between 2011 and 2016, as depicted in Figure 9. All three towns are significant in size nationally, Drogheda being the largest town in Ireland:

Town	Rank Nationally Towns Classification	Population 2016	% Change (2011-2016)
Drogheda	1st	40,956	6.2%
Dundalk	3rd	39,004	3.1%
Navan	5th	30,173	0.6

Figure 9: Population Change in main urban areas in Louth and Meath 2011-16

Also of note in the 2016 census was increased sub-urbanisation in the south of the region with, for example, Ashbourne showing a growth of 11.7% from 2011.

Geographical and demographic factors combine to present challenges for LMETB in its provision, for example:

- provision of services for growing regional towns and rapidly growing suburban centres in the Dublin commuter belt
- the larger size of the region creates greater rural isolation further from the capital.
- LMETB's close proximity to the border with Northern Ireland, which presents significant implications and uncertainty.

HP Pobal Deprivation Index

In terms of overall deprivation, there are DEIS designations for 21 primary schools and 7 secondary schools in the LMETB region. There has also been considerable application of the Department of Rural and Community Development's former RAPID scheme of planning, investment and development to large, disadvantaged areas of Dundalk, Drogheda and Navan.

The HP Pobal Deprivation Index shows the overall affluence and deprivation of a particular geographical area based on the data from the 2016 census. It looks at 10 key indicators, including the proportion of skilled professionals, education levels, employment levels, and single- parent households found in an area. The HP Pobal Deprivation Index highlights the following in relation to the LMETB region:

Louth:
- 96 small areas in Louth exist with scores of -10 or below, 22 of which are classified as "Very Disadvantaged"
- The vast majority of the "very disadvantaged" areas are located in the two major towns of Drogheda (8 small areas including Ballsgrove Central and Beechwood Avenue) and Dundalk (12 small areas including Cedarwood Park and Grange Drive).

- Ardee and Dunleer have one area designated as "Very Disadvantaged" each (Ardee/ Moorehall/Riverside and Dunleer/ Shamrock Gr/Beechwood Drive)

Meath:

- 53 small areas in Meath exist with scores of -10 or below, seven of which are classified as "Very Disadvantaged"
- 6 of these "very disadvantaged" areas are in Navan (Reask, Claremont Estate, St. Bridget's/Ashbrook, Townparks, Abbeyland South and Tailteann) and 1 is in Trim (Trim/ Mornington Way)

Figure 10 below shows the Relative HP Deprivation Index score at county and national level in 2006, 2011 and 2016:

	Relative HP Index Score 2006	Relative HP Index Score 2011	Relative HP Index Score 2016
Louth	-3.8	-3.5	-3.0
Meath	2.6	0.9	1.8
National	-0.4	0.2	0.6

Figure 10: Relative POBAL HP Deprivation Index at county and national level in 2006, 2011 and 2016.

Employment Profile

This section provides an overview of the Louth-Meath region in terms of employment and vacancy levels by sector. In addition to analysing data from the Central Statistics Office, LMETB reached out to SOLAS' Skills and Labour Market Research Unit (SLMRU).
The number of employees in Louth and Meath is approximately 133,576 employees (Source: Census 2016). The Mid-East[1] area which comprises Louth, Meath, Kildare and Wicklow, accounts for 14.8% of employment in Ireland as shown in Fig. 11.

[1] Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) 3 Region

Employment

The Mid-East accounts for 14.8% of employment in Ireland (338,800 persons)

Top 5 Sectors	Total employed	Q1-Q3 2020	
Industry	45,900	+15%	▲
Wholesale & retail	44,800	-9%	▼
Health	42,100	+7%	▲
Education	31,800	+3%	▲
Construction	25,900	+2%	▲

LOUTH

MEATH

14.8%

KILDARE

WICKLOW
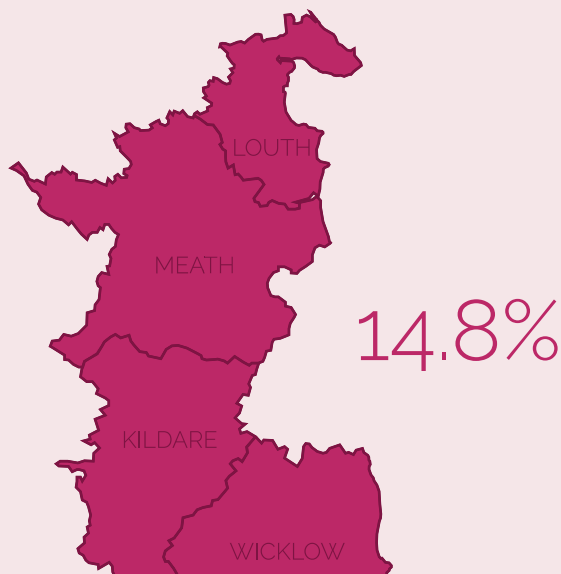
Figure 11: Employment Figures Mid-East Region Q1-Q3 2020 by sector

We can see from Figure 12 below that wholesale and retail was the biggest employer in the region for the second quarter of 2020, with 47,600 persons in employment, followed by the health sector with 41,700 and industry, with 40,500 persons in employment. It is worth bearing in mind that the wholesale and retail sector has been one of the sectors most impacted by the onset of COVID -19.

Mid-East

Sector	Value
Wholesale & retail trade	47.6
Health	41.7
Industry	40.5
Education	31
Construction	24.6
Public admin and defence	19
Professional activities etc.	18.5
Financial etc.	17.9
Transportation	17.2
Other NACE activities	15.9
Accommodation & food	14.9
ICT	14.4
Admin support	10.1
Agriculture etc	10.1
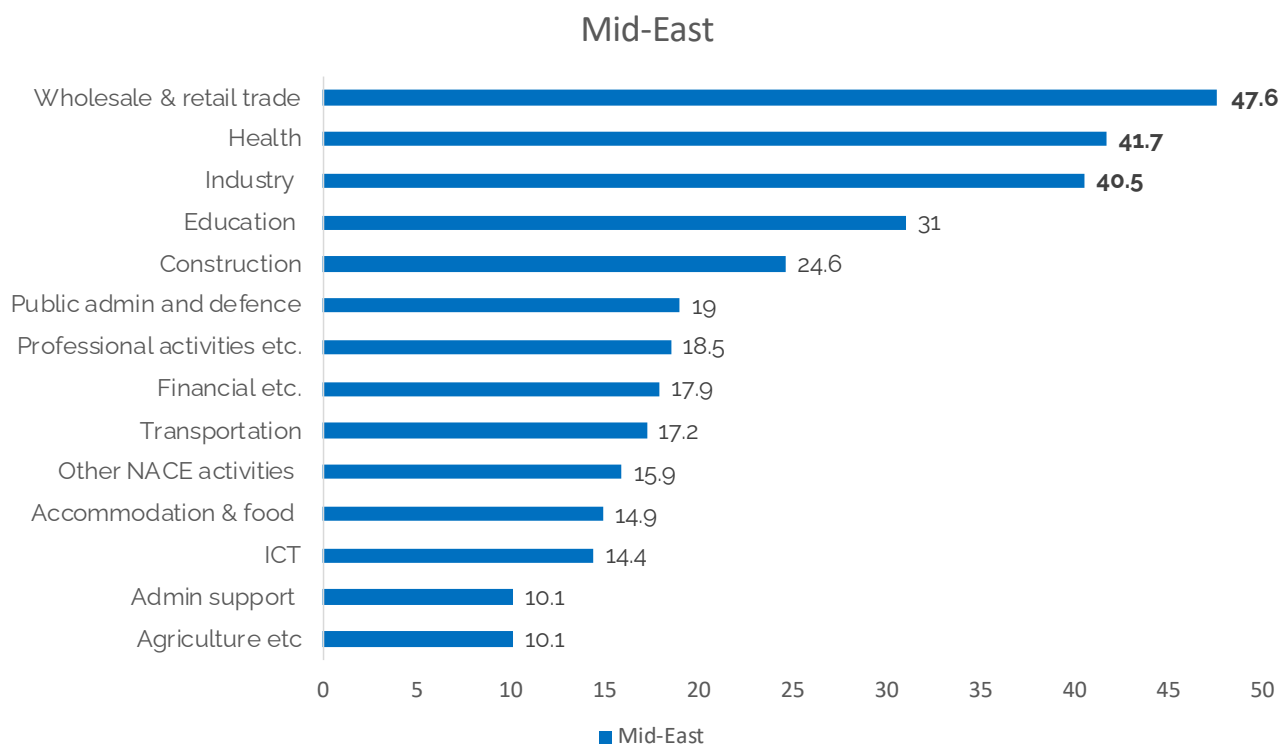
■ Mid-East

Figure 12: Employment by Sector in Mid-East Region Q2 2020.

Source: SOLAS (SLMRU) analysis of CSO (LFS) data

Figure 13 below shows the share of employment by sector in the Mid-East region compared to the share of employment by sector at a national level. For the wholesale and retail sector in the Mid-East region, the share is higher, at 15%, than that at a national level, which is 13%. In addition, the share of Education is higher in the Mid-East region when compared again to the state. However, in Construction, another sector impacted heavily by COVID-19, there is a higher share in the Mid-East region than at national level.
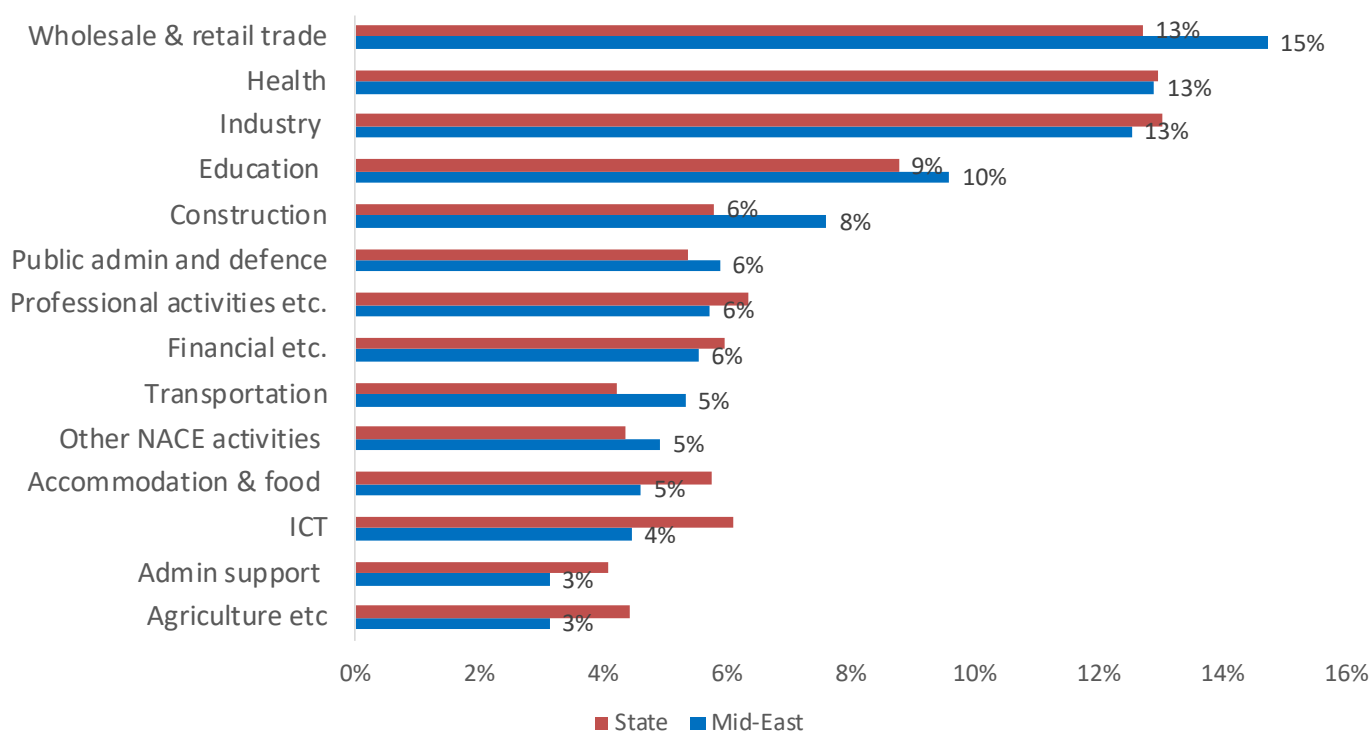
Figure 13: Employment by Sector in Mid-East Region Compared to State Q2 2020
Source: SOLAS (SLMRU) analysis of CSO (LFS) data

Impact of COVID-19

The Mid-East region is more exposed to the impact of COVID-19 when compared to the state; 27% of employment in the Mid-East region is in the most at risk sectors (Wholesale/ Retail, Accommodation/Food & Construction), compared to 24% in the state overall. The Construction sector should recover to levels of employment pre-COVID-19, whereas upskilling and reskilling will be essential to people who are unlikely to be able to return to the jobs they previously held in the Wholesale & Retail and Accommodation & Food sectors (SMLRU).

Impact of COVID-19 on the Mid-East

(from Q1 2020 to Q3 2020)

Employment
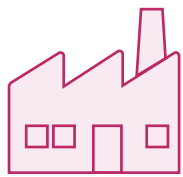
↓ **0.5%**

Employment fell by 1,700 persons (0.5%)

0.3% ↑   1.5% ↓

Females experienced a fall in employment of 2,300 persons (1.5%); the number of males in employment remained almost unchanged (increase of 0.3%)

Work Force

↑ **63.7%**

The labour force participation rate increased from 62.6% in Q1 to 63.7% in Q3

Wholesale & Retail Sector

↓ 9%

The wholesale & retail sector saw the largest absolute decline in employment (4,200 persons or a 9% decrease) whereas employment in industry increased by 5,900 persons

Figure 14: Impact of COVID 19- on Mid East (SOLAS SLMRU)

Sector	Active Enterprises Louth	Active Enterprises Meath	Total Active Enterprises	Persons Engaged Louth	Persons Engaged Meath	Total Persons Engaged
Accommodation and food service activities	518	558	1,076	4,569	5,047	9,616
Administrative and support service activities	353	593	946	1,794	3,192	4,986
Business economy	6,427	9,864	16,291	32,791	44,680	77,471
Construction	1,452	2,707	4,159	3,538	7,957	11,495
Financial and Insurance activities	132	147	279	652	775	1,427
Information and communication	245	417	662	780	1,320	2,100
Manufacturing	448	696	1,144	6,951	8,590	12,541
Professional, scientific and technical activities	945	1,367	2,312	2,441	3,039	5,480
Real estate activities	309	451	760	660	754	1,414
Transport and storage	645	1,146	1,791	2,333	3,149	5,482
Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	32	49	81	292	256	548
Wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	1,337	1,702	3,039	8,616	9,821	18,437
Total	6,627	9,864	16,291	32,791	44,680	77,471

Figure 15 Active Enterprises by sector, 2019 (CSO defined)

Figure 16: Selected top companies in Louth and Meath

PROVISION PROFILE

LMETB is the largest provider of Further Education and Training in counties Louth and Meath. Its FET service provides education and training services to communities across Co. Louth and Co. Meath on a full-time and part-time basis, both non-accredited and accredited from Levels 1-6.

LMETB's provision includes

- Guidance, Information and Recruitment Services

- Post Leaving Certificate Colleges

- Apprenticeships and Traineeships

LMETB also offers

- Full-time education and training for the unemployed

- Part-time education and training for those returning to learning as an adult, or those already in employment looking to upskill or retrain

- A wide range of Youth and Community Education and Training Services

Figure 17 below shows LMETB beneficiaries by Centre* in 2020

Name of Centre	Centre type as per PLSS	Full Time		Part Time		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Adult Literacy Programme Drogheda	Adult Literacy			1,012	6.1	1,012	6.1
Adult Literacy Programme Dundalk	Adult Literacy			1,278	7.7	1,278	7.7
Adult Literacy Programme Navan	Adult Literacy			1,941	11.7	1,941	11.7
Advance Manufacturing Training Centre of Excellence (AMTCE)	Training			21	0.1	21	0.1
Beaufort College	Skills to Advance Dispersed			14	0.1	14	0.1
BTEI Programme Louth	Adult Education			593	3.6	593	3.6
BTEI Programme Meath	Adult Education			1,394	8.4	1,394	8.4
Community Education Programme Louth	Adult Education			518	3.1	518	3.1
Community Education Programme Meath	Adult Education			2,012	12.1	2,012	12.1
Drogheda Institute of Further Education	College of Further Ed/PLC	1,819	2,333			1,819	11.0
Dunboyne College of Further Education	College of Further Ed/PLC	1,993	2,333			1,993	12.0
Louth Meath Regional TC	Training	1,694	2,333			1,694	10.2
Meath Training	Training	202	2,333			202	1.2
O'Fiach College	College of Further Ed/PLC	1,311	2,333			1,311	7.9
VTOS Programme Drogheda	Adult Education	51	6,951			51	0.3
VTOS Programme Dundalk	Adult Education	52	2,441			52	0.3
VTOS Programme Navan	Adult Education	108	660			108	0.7
Youthreach Ardee	Youthreach	25	4,569			25	0.2
Youthreach Ashbourne	Youthreach	49	1,794			49	0.3
Youthreach Drogheda	Youthreach	65	32,791			65	0.4
Youthreach Dundalk	Youthreach	53	4,569			53	0.3
Youthreach Kells	Youthreach	40	1,794			40	0.2
Youthreach Laytown	Youthreach	58	32,791			58	0.3
Youthreach Navan Hi Way	Youthreach	97	4,569			97	0.6
Youthreach Trim	Youthreach	44	1,794			44	0.3
Other	Other					157	0.9
Total						16,601	

Figure 17: LMETB Beneficiaries by Centre* 2020

*Data extracted from PLSS – does not include Apprenticeship (Figure 19), Self-Financing (Figure 21) or Adult Educational Guidance (Figure 22) numbers.

Name of Centre	Beneficiaries 2020
Open Call Access	20
Route 1	705
Route 3	36
Total	761

Figure 18: Skills to Advance Beneficiaries 2020

Skills to Advance beneficiary numbers are included in Figures 17, 24, 25, 27,28, 29, 30, 31, 32.

Trade and Phase	2020
Phase 2 Carpentry & Joinery	47
Phase 2 Electrical	63
Phase 2 Metal Fabrication	13
Phase 2 Motor	12
Phase 2 Pipefitting	28
Phase 2 Plumbing	27
Phase 2 Wood Manufacturing	15
Phase 4 Carpentry and Joinery	24
Phase 4 Electrical	64
Phase 4 Motor	24
Phase 4 Pipefitting	7
Phase 4 Plumbing	31
Phase 6 Carpentry & Joinery	13
Phase 6 Electrical	12
Phase 6 Motor	28
Phase 6 Plumbing	27
Phase 7 Various Trades	15
Total	659

Figure 19: LMETB Apprenticeship Learner Numbers 2020

Provider / Provision Type	No. Centres / Locations	F/T Learners 2020		P/T Learners 2020		Total Learners	
		No.	%	No.%	%	No.	
Community Training Centres	1	45	2%			45	2%
Local Training Initiatives	7	177	6%			177	6%
Specialist Training Providers	4	127	4%			127	4%
Specific Skills Training	3	1,171	40%			1,171	40%
Traineeship Training	2	110	4%			110	4%
Cooperation Hours	9			1,326	45%	1,326	45%
Total		1,630		1,326		2,956	8.4

Figure 20: Contracted/ External Provision with which the ETB is engaged:

2019	2020
2,461	1,655

Figure 21: Self-Financing Programme Learner Numbers 2019-20

2019	2020
4,967	2,960

Figure 22: Adult Educational Guidance Learner Numbers 2019-20

Services

In addition to its full-time and part-time course provision, LMETB's Further Education and Training section provides a range of support services which focus on providing a learner-centred, integrated FET service which is reflective of national and local priorities.

Specific support services engage directly with learners and, also indirectly, via support for staff to assist in the planning and delivery of a responsive, innovative FET service.

Learner and Staff Supports in LMETB's FET services are outlined below in Figure 23:

Guidance, information and Recruitment Services	AEGIS is a free and confidential service providing comprehensive, professional and quality guidance and information to adult learners. AEGIS offers one-to-one tailored appointments or group supports and provdes advice on training, career and funding opportunities available locally, as well as nationally. The Adult Educational Guidance and Information Service in Louth and Meath had 2960 beneficiaries in 2020.
Counselling Services	LMETB FET Centres have access to a panel of suitably qualified and experienced professionals for Psychotherapy and Counselling Services for learners. Staff members have access to LMETB's Employee Assistance Programme.
Professional Learning and Development / Communications officer	In line with the SOLAS Professional Learning and Development Strategy 2017-19, LMETB appointed a Professional Learning and Development Officer in 2020 whose role is to co-ordinate, identify and procure relevant professional learning and development opportunities for LMETB FET staff in line with national and local staff upskilling priorities.
Technology Enhanced Learning Officer	LMETB appointed a dedicated Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Officer in 2020 whose role is to co-ordinate, develop, deliver and procure relevant training and support aimed at enhancing the digital and technology linked skills of all staff, especially teaching and instruction staff.
Quality Assurance Officer	LMETB has in place a dedicated Quality Assurance Officer. The core objectives of the Quality Assurance Office are to provide Quality Assurance guidance and assistance to all LMETB FET Services, to provide development and management support across LMETB centres with a view to integrating Quality Assurance policies and procedures across all services.
Employer Engagement Officers	Since 2020, LMETB has dedicated employer engagement personnel working within the FET Services. Their role is to engage with employers and employees in the Louth Meath region to assess and address their specific staff training needs through the Skills to Advance initiative.

Figure 23: Learner and Staff Support Services in LMETB

Fields of Learning	2018	2019	2020
Agriculture, Horticulture and Mariculture	16	70	52
Animal Science	248	276	309
Arts & Crafts	162	172	158
Built Environment	21	37	86
Business, Administration	924	939	1,188
Core ICT	671	909	616
Core Personal	6,214	6,047	5,653
Engineering	118	84	75
Engineering (IT)	12	30	33
Engineering (Mechanical)	104	123	31
Engineering (Transport)	31	31	36
Entrepreneurship	89	46	19
Financial Services	28	18	23
Food and Beverage	120	133	133
General Learning	3,679	3,081	2,804
Hairdressing, Beauty and Complementary Therapies	420	495	458
Health, Family other Social Services	1,588	2008	3,241
Information Technology	255	267	263
Management	11	31	53
Manufacturing	0	37	34
Media Graphics Communications	227	260	368
Sales & Marketing	165	172	183
Science and Technology	180	195	193
Security, Guarding & Emergency Services	19	28	22
Sport and Leisure	325	359	330
Tourism	236	193	146
Transport, Distribution & Logisticts	180	207	41
Web Development & Design	126	121	53
Grand Total	16,169	16,369	16,601

Figure 24: LMETB FET provision – beneficiaries by field of learning 2018-2020*

* Data extracted from PLSS – does not include Apprenticeship (Figure 19), Self-Financing (Figure 21) or Adult Educational Guidance (Figure 22) numbers.

Award Level	2018	2019	2020*
Level 1 Certificate	748	647	846
Level 2 Certificate	878	951	1,048
Level 3 Certificate	2,287	2,010	1,789
Level 4 Certificate	1,107	1,327	1,014
Level 4/5 Certficate	226	263	244
Level 5 Certificate	4,789	5,682	6,883
Advanced Certificate / High Certificate	401	401	446
Non-accredited	5,733	5,088	4,331
Grand Total	16,169	16,369	16,601

*Figure 25 : LMETB FET Provision by NFQ Level 2018-2020**

*Data extracted from PLSS – does not include Apprenticeship (Figure 19), Self-Financing (Figure 21) or Adult Educational Guidance

(Figure 22) numbers.

Figure 26 depicts the non-accredited provision including that available under the KEATS framework from 2018 – 2020. The KEATS framework encompasses programmes that are not accredited but enable:

· Key Skills

· ESOL

· Access, Transfer and Progression

· Thematic and Social Inclusion

Non-accredited provision 2018-2020

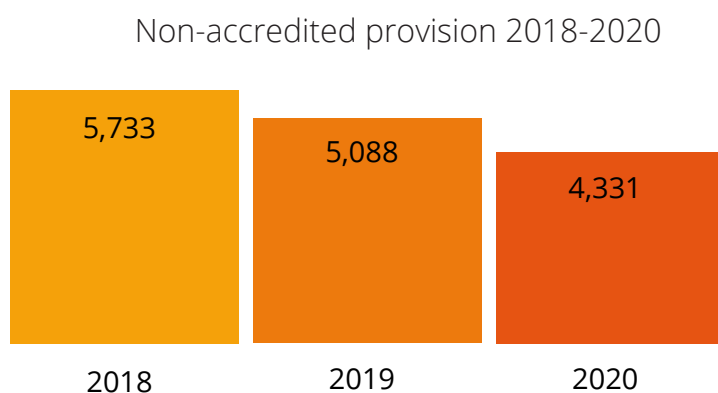| 2018	2019	2020
5,733	5,088	4,331

*Figure 26: Non-accredited provision 2018-2020**

*Data extracted from PLSS – does not include Apprenticeship (Figure 19), Self-Financing (Figure 21) or Adult Educational Guidance (Figure 22) numbers.

Awarding Body	2018		2019		2020	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
ACCA	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	6	0.0%
Approved EN Certifying Body	104	0.6%	123	0.8%	31	0.2%
Cambridge English Language Assessment	12	0.1%	12	0.1%	0	0.0%
City & Guilds	123	0.8%	185	1.1%	89	0.5%
Department of Education & Skills	231	1.4%	271	1.7%	251	1.5%
ICS SKILLS	71	0.4%	145	0.9%	122	0.7%
ILM	62	0.4%	46	0.3%	19	0.1%
ITEC	134	0.8%	141	0.9%	151	0.9%
LIFE INSURANCE ASSOC IRELAND	28	0.2%	18	0.1%	0	0.0%
MICROSOFT	267	1.7%	59	0.4%	114	0.7%
PHECC	23	0.1%	44	0.3%	16	0.1%
QQI-FFE	9,320	57.6%	10,185	62.2%	11,444	68.9%
RSA (Road Safety Authority)	73	0.5%	64	0.4%	27	0.2%
Blank	5,721	35.4%	5,076	31.0%	4,331	26.1%
Grand Total	16,169		16,369		16,601	

Figure 27: Awarding Bodies* 2018 – 2020

*Data extracted from PLSS – does not include Apprenticeship (Figure 19), Self-Financing (Figure 21) or Adult Educational

Guidance (Figure 22) numbers.

LEARNER PROFILE

Traditionally, LMETB has had more female participants with an average of 65% females vs 35% male. LMETB is actively working to address this and ensure a greater gender balance.

Learner Gender	2018	2019	2020
Female	10,684	10,245	11,077
Male	5,485	6,124	5,524
Not Specified / Other			
Total	16,169	16,369	16,601

Figure 28: Gender Profile* 2018-20

* Data extracted from PLSS – does not include Apprenticeship (Figure 19), Self-Financing (Figure 21) or Adult Educational Guidance (Figure 22) numbers.

Programme	Female	Male	Total
Adult Literacy Groups	1,098	690	1,788
Bridging and Foundation Training	5	5	10
BTEI Groups	1,444	445	1,889
Community Education	2,103	409	2,512
Community Training Centres	24	33	57
ESOL	1,306	509	1,815
Evening Training	55	115	170
ITABE	69	38	107
Local Training Initiatives	49	128	177
Other Funding	115	77	192
PLC	3,019	2,058	5,077
Refugee Resettlement	176	164	340
Skills for Work	139	86	225
Skills to Advance	47	36	83
Skills to Advance Dispersed	34	2	36
Specialist training Providers	58	88	146
Specific Skills Training	932	239	1,171
Traineeship Training	69	41	110
Voluntary Literacy Tuition	36	18	54
VTOS Core	101	110	211
Youthreach	198	233	431
Total	11,077	5,524	16,601

Figure 29: Gender Profile of 2020 beneficiaries* per Mainstream Programmes

* Data extracted from PLSS – does not include Apprenticeship (Figure 19), Self-Financing (Figure 21) or Adult Educational Guidance (Figure 22) numbers.
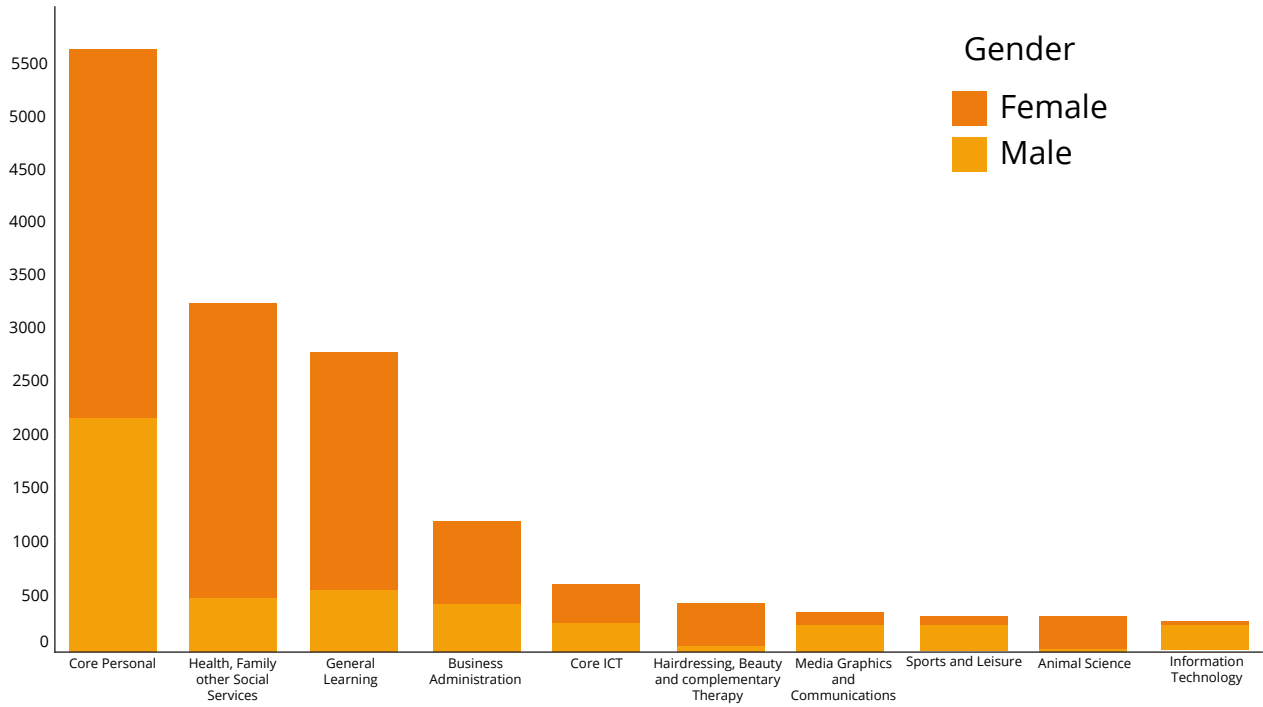
Figure 30: Breakdown of Fields of Learning by Learner Gender

Age Range	2018	2019	2020
15 - 24	5,364	6,022	6,253
25 - 44	5,450	5,506	5,770
45 - 64	3,714	3,857	3,899
Over 64	1,609	976	679
Grand Total	16,137	16,361	16,601

Figure 31: Age Profile of Beneficiaries 2020*

*Data extracted from PLSS – does not include Apprenticeship (Figure 19), Self-Financing (Figure 21) or Adult Educational Guidance (Figure 22) numbers.

Country	Percentage	Number
Ireland	64.7%	10,688
Syrian Arab Republic	3.1%	514
Lithuania	2.9%	475
Poland	2.2%	370
Nigeria	2.2%	368
Romania	1.6%	262
Latvia	1.4%	225
United Kingdom of Great Britain & Northern Ireland	1.4%	225
Brazil	0.9%	152
Pakistan	0.8%	137
Somalia	0.7%	120
Rest of the World	10.6%	1,743
Not Stated	7.5%	1,232
Total		16,511

Figure 32: Nationality Profile of LMETB beneficiaries in 2020

STAFFING PROFILE

LMETB FET Staff	2019	2020	2021
Director of FET	1	1	1
Area Training Manager	1	1	1
Assistant Training Manager	2	2	2
Adult Education Officer	2	2	2
FET Programme Co-ordinator	16	16	18
Resource Person	30	30	29
Principals	3	3	3
Deputy Principals	6	6	9
Guidance Co-ordinator	2	2	2
Guidance Counsellor	8	8	8
Information Officer	2	2	2
Youth Officer	2	2	2
Quality Assurance Officer	0	0	1
Workforce Development / Employer Engagement	0	1	3
TEL Officer	0	1	1
Professional Learning and Development / Communications Officer	0	1	1
PEACE IV Project Co-ordinator	1	2	2
Training Standards Officer	1	1	1
Asst Training Standard Officer	1	1	1
Senior Training Advisor	4	4	4
Community Training Officer	1	1	1
Asst Community Training Officer	1	1	1
Contracted Training Officer	2	2	2
Finance and Administration	34	31	31

Figure 33: Staffing overview in FET

Teaching Staff	2020	2021
Total Teachers	392	423
Total P/T Tutors	169	213
Total Instructors	65	75
Total	626	711

Figure 34 : FET Teaching staff

General Guidance on learner/teacher ratios is provided by some FET provision operational guidelines:

Provision Type	Provision Sub Type	Ratio
Vocational and Employee Skills Development	Levels 3 and 4 Level 5	1:7/12 1:10/14
Core Skills	Group classes Individual	1:6 1:1
PLC		1:19
Youthreach		1:5/10
Apprenticeships		1:14
Community Training Centre	Induction, targeted inputs Choices Foundation and Progression Bridging, Pre-apprenticeship	1:15 1:8 1:10 1:12-15
LTIs		1:14
Contracted Training		1:16

Figure 35 : Teacher/learner ratio

COLLABORATIONS & PARTNERSHIPS

LMETB FET Service has formed solid working relationships with many statutory and non-statutory agencies, stakeholders at local, regional and national levels, as well as a variety of employers, voluntary providers and community groups.

National Agencies:

Dept of Further and Higher Education (DFHERIS)

DFHERIS is a new government department, officially established in August 2020, with responsibility for policy, funding and governance of Ireland's Further and Higher Education and research sectors, and for the oversight of the work of state agencies and public institutions operating in those areas.

LMETB FET Services now come under this department as part of the restructuring of Further and Higher Education.

SOLAS

SOLAS is the state organisation with responsibility for funding, planning and coordinating Further Education and Training. LMETB FET is funded by SOLAS annually and has significant regular engagement with SOLAS. The relationship is articulated in its [Strategic Performance Agreement](#) (SPA) with LMETB which commenced in 2018.

ETBI

Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI) is an association established to collectively represent the sixteen Education and Training Boards and promote their interests. LMETB is represented on the following groups in ETBI: Chief Executives Forum, FET Directors Forum, Directors of FET Quality Assurance Strategy Group, the Quality Network, New Apprenticeship Development Network and Active Inclusion Working Group.

QQI

In 2018, the QQI Programmes and Awards Executive Committee (PAEC) approved LMETB's Quality Assurance Procedures, in line with QQI's 2014 policy "Re-engagement with QQI, Overarching Policy for All Providers." The agreed re-engagement process required LMETB to develop an Executive Self Evaluation Report addressing QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines. As a result of this self-evaluation a Quality Improvement Plan for LMETB was developed. In addition, LMETB engage with QQI on quality assurance policy, programme development and data management matters on an ongoing basis.

Department of Social Protection (DSP)

DSP's mission statement is "*to promote active participation and inclusion in society through the provision of income supports, employment services and other services.*"   It is the largest payment organisation in the State and directly funds a wide range of employment programmes.

A very close working relationship exists between LMETB and DSP, and LMETB is a key partner in the delivery of training and education supports to DSP recipients.

Collaboration with DSP at local level assists with the identification of priority cohorts, in particular the long-term unemployed, allowing LMETB to deliver the appropriate, targeted responses at a local level.

The collaboration involves:

- Strategic meetings with Senior Management in both bodies
- Delivery by LMETB Guidance Staff of Group Information/Engagement sessions to DSP clients and in the event of local redundancies.
- Referrals and correspondence between the client/ learner management systems of DSP and LMETB i.e. BOMI and PLSS.

Further Education Support Service (FESS)

FESS was established in 1997 as a full-time support and consultancy service for FET operated through the ETBs. FESS provides a range of supports to ETBs in the areas of Quality Assurance, programme development, assessment, teaching and learning resources, and professional learning and development. LMETB staff regularly attend FESS CPD events.

National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA)

NALA is an independent charity committed to making sure people with literacy and numeracy difficulties can fully take part in society and have access to learning opportunities that meet their needs.

 LMETB works with NALA in the following ways:

- FET staff attend NALA's PLD opportunities and avail of NALA- developed teaching materials
- NALA promote LMETB's Literacy Services
- LMETB promote NALA's Literacy campaigns

AONTAS

AONTAS is an Ireland's National Adult Learning Organisation. LMETB works with AONTAS in the following ways:

- Promotion of the AONTAS Adult Learners' Festival and STAR awards
- Capturing the learner voice: In both 2019 and 2021, LMETB FET Service worked closely with AONTAS to facilitate LMETB learner participation in the National FET Learner Forum. These events allowed learners to give feedback on the quality of their learning experience with LMETB.

Apprenticeships

LMETB is involved with collaboration with other ETBs and bodies in the area of apprenticeships. For example, a memorandum of understanding is in place with Limerick Clare Education and Training Board for the delivery of the National Hairdressing Apprenticeship.

Enterprise Ireland

Enterprise Ireland is the government organisation responsible for the development and growth of Irish enterprises in world markets. Enterprise Ireland is one of the funders for LMETB's newest FET facility, the Advanced Manufacturing Training Centre of Excellence.

Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY)

DCEDIY's mission is to enhance the lives of children, young people, adults, families and communities, recognising diversity and promoting equality of opportunity. LMETB is the agent for Youth Services in Louth and Meath, operating in collaboration and consultation with DCEDIY.

Regional partners:

LMETB provides staff representation on a range of regional committees/ boards. The relevant bodies are outlined below, as well as a brief description of their function.

North East Regional Skills Forum and Mid East Regional Skills Forum
Regional Skills Fora provide an opportunity for employers and the education and training system to work together to meet the emerging skills needs of their regions.

Dundalk Chamber of Commerce

Drogheda Chamber of Commerce

Meath Chamber of Commerce

Chambers of Commerce consist of local business representatives who join together to promote the economic and social development of their community in order to make it a better place in which to live, work and do business.

Louth Local Community Development Committee

Meath Local Community Development Committee

Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) were established on a county basis to promote wider economic and community development planning through the implementation of Local Economic and Community Plans (LECDs).

Louth Economic Forum

Meath Economic Forum

Economic Forums comprise members from business and state development agencies with the aim of connecting business leaders in order to increase economic activity and job creation.

Louth Children and Young People's Service Committee

Meath Children and Young People's Service Committee

Children and Young People's Service Committees (CYPSCs) were established on a county-basis to facilitate an inter-agency approach to meeting the needs of children and young people aged 0-24 years, focussed on the five national outcomes areas identified in Better Outcomes Brighter Futures (2014-2020), (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2014).

Louth County Childcare Committee

Meath County Childcare Committee

City/ County Childcare Committees support and assist families, as well as early learning and care and school age childcare providers with childcare matters at local level.

Local Development Companies (Louth Leader Partnership and Meath Partnership)

Local development Companies (LDCs) are multi-sectoral partnerships that deliver community and rural development, labour market activation, social inclusion, climate action and social enterprise services.

Louth Meath Connecting for Life Planning Group

Louth Meath Connecting for Life is a suicide prevention and self-harm action plan for the area. This plan represents local implementation of Connecting for Life, Ireland's National Strategy to Reduce Suicide.

Jigsaw Advisory Group Meath

Jigsaw Meath provides a free and confidential youth mental health support service for young people aged 12-25.

Drogheda Implementation Board

Drogheda Implementation Board is the key co-ordinator of the Drogheda Implementation Plan, which outlines 70 actions to improve community safety and wellbeing in Drogheda through greater co-operation by state agencies and others. LMETB hosts the board and will appoint a Project Co-ordinator as part of the action plan.

Dundalk Institute of Technology (DKIT)

DKIT, initially established as a Regional Technical College, first enrolled students in the college in 1971 and it was re-defined as an institute of technology in January 1998. DKIT offers a range of apprenticeships in conjunction with LMETB, including Electrical, Motor Mechanics, Plumbing and Carpentry. LMETB currently has 4 representatives on the governing body of DKIT.

Other FET/ HE Alliances:

North Eastern Further and Higher Education Alliance (NEFHEA) is a regional initiative in the North East comprising Higher and Further Education institutions in the region. Its members work together to enhance progression opportunities for students from Further to Higher Education, to collaborate on course design and development in response to regional needs and to share expertise and resources. LMETB's 3 Post-Leaving Certificate Colleges are represented on this alliance.

Further Education & Higher Education Network (FE-HE Network) is an output from a previous collaboration under the HEA-funded MEND pathways project. This network is a formal grouping based upon an Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed in July 2015 between Dublin City University, Athlone Institute of Technology, Dundalk Institute of Technology, Maynooth University and 8 ETBs including LMETB. Its overall aim is to create and develop a formal network of Further Education and Higher Education providers within the Leinster Pillar II cluster, specifically for the purpose of collaboration on enhancing access, transfer and progression opportunities across the region.

DCU Connections Initiative is a newly established project which aims to ease the pathway of progression from FET providers in the DCU hinterland into the university. It aims to simplify entry routes, develop advanced entry options into certain programmes and to establish a FET route into DCU's primary education teaching programme. LMETB's Post-Leaving Certificate Colleges are supporting this project.

Other Partnerships/Networks

Through its Youth Service and Community Education Service, LMETB offers educational or developmental opportunities in the local community for young people and adults. Strong links have been developed with a diverse range of partners. The examples below give a snapshot of the range of youth and community partners with whom LMETB is engaged.

- Family Resource Centres in Trim, Drogheda, Laytown and Kells
- Disability organisations including Prosper Meath, RehabCare Group, St John of God's Services
- ICA Women's groups in Louth Village, Termonfeckin and Athboy
- Home School Community Liaison parent groups in DEIS Schools
- Youth Organisations including Irish Girls Guides, Macra na Feirme and Youth Work Ireland
- Slane Men's Sheds
- Ozanam Day Care Centre, Co. Meath
- Meath Travellers Network
- Traveller Women's Project, Dundalk
- Cultúr Migrant Centre, Navan
- Culture Connect, Drogheda

LMETB was also one of the 10 ETBS who took part in TOBAR, an RPL pilot project delivered in 10 ETBs in partnership with the Defence Forces during 2018 and 2019.

Co-operation Centres:

Under what is commonly termed the 'Co-operation Hours' scheme, LMETB provide teaching allocations to specific institutions and bodies in Louth and Meath. Educational activity funded under these arrangements varies from supporting learners with Literacy and Numeracy needs to the provision of uncertified programmes within the FET services. LMETB's Co-operation Hours scheme provides a holistic range of skills and competences for its participants, intended to give them improved confidence and self-development for use in work, learning and home life as relevant. The following groups/organisations are supported with teaching hours funded by LMETB's Co-operation Hours Scheme:

- Ogra Dún Dealgan, (Community Training Centre), Dundalk
- Ladywell Centre, Dundalk
- St. Brigid's Hospital/ Drogheda Day Hospital
- Order of Malta, Drogheda
- RehabCare, Dundalk
- St. Brigid's Special School, Dundalk
- St. Ita's Special School, Drogheda
- St. Mary's Special School, Drumcar
- Cox's Demesne Project, Dundalk
- Táin Centre, Ashbourne and Navan, Co. Meath

Employer Engagement

LMETB works in partnership with enterprise to identify and develop training programmes which are crucial to the upskilling and reskilling of employees and the socio-economic development of the region. This is achieved primarily through the implementation of the Skills to Advance and Skills for Work programmes, in addition to the development of apprenticeships and traineeships.

The Employer Engagement Team works closely with employers and enterprise representative groups, including Chambers Ireland, the Regional Skills Fora (North East and Mid East), Local Enterprise Offices and the DSP. Courses are provided on a part-time basis, both through the night schools and via day-time provision. The main centres currently involved include DIFE, DCFE, OFI and the RSTC. Classes are delivered both by in-house tutors, teachers and instructors, in addition to Contracted Training. The Contracted Training Services section is central to the delivery of Skills to Advance, as this section provides the opportunity to engage training services across a broad range of suitably identified trainers. Resources have recently been enhanced in the Contracted Training Services section, with the recruitment of an additional staff member, in response to the demand from employers for key upskilling and reskilling of employees.

The Senior Training Advisors in the RSTC are also crucial to employer liaison and the development of the key area of apprenticeships and traineeships. Broader FET provision, including PLC colleges, BTEI and Youthreach also work very closely with employers to facilitate work experience for learners and to provide employment progression opportunities on completion.

LMETB has also responded to the need for training in Advanced Manufacturing, through the establishment of the Advanced Manufacturing Training Centre of Excellence (AMTCE) in Dundalk. This is a joint collaboration with SOLAS and Enterprise Ireland, to proactively respond to the need for training in Industry 4.0 technologies and to respond to current and future skills needs.

In summary, LMETB's Provider Profile has highlighted how the mission, values and core principles of the organisation have been instrumental in its strategic direction. A commitment to "excellence and innovation" has been and will continue to be the cornerstone of LMETB's provision, collaboration and partnerships. For more information on LMETB, the largest provider of education and training in the region, see http://www.lmetb.ie.