LAOIS AND OFFALY

EDUCATION AND TRAINING BOARD

PROVIDER PROFILE

Submitted in advance of Inaugural Review of Quality Assurance in ETBs

OCTOBER 2020

1. Background

Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board (LOETB) was established on 1 July 2013 through the merger of two Vocational and Education Committees (VECs); Co. Laois VEC and Co. Offaly VEC. This was followed by the transfer of SOLAS (former FÁS) training services, including the National Construction Training Centre in 2016.

LOETB FET Services consists of eleven FET Centres (including Midlands Skills Centre (recently opened) and the National Construction Training Centre at Mount Lucas), two Education Centres on the Midlands Prison campus, and Birr Outdoor Education and Training Centre. LOETB offers a comprehensive range of courses from part-time learning to full-time study, leading onto higher education, training or employment. Each of our centres (listed below) offer a broad range of full and part time programmes with onsite learning supports such as literacy, guidance, learning support etc. Our FET services are profiled below.

LOETB FET Centres	LOETB FET Services
- Abbeyleix FET Centre - Banagher FET Centre - Birr FET Centre - Birr Outdoor Education & Training Centre - Clara FET Centre - Edenderry FET Centre - Midlands Skills Centre - Mountmellick FET Centre - National Construction Training Centre, Mount Lucas - Portarlington FET Centre - Portlaoise FET Centre - Portlaoise Institute - Tullamore FET Centre	- Adult Educational Guidance & Information Service - Adult Literacy Service - Apprenticeship Services - Community Education Service - Community Training – Specialist Training Providers, Local Training Initiatives, Community Training Centre - Contract Training Services – Traineeships, Specialist Skills Training - Enterprise Engagement Service - Prison Education (Midlands and Portlaoise Education Centres) - Quality Assurance Support Service

2. Mission, Values, Strategic Focus and Performance Indicators

LOETB's **vision** is to actively lead the provision of high-quality education and training in Laois and Offaly. Our mission is excellence through education and training.

We put learning at the heart of everything we do through the provision of a wide range of education and training programmes, services, and supports to young people and adults across the LOETB region.

We believe that lifelong learning is key to personal development and wellbeing, social inclusion, and economic prosperity. Our **core values** as a service provider are as follows:

Equality
Fairness, respect, and inclusion in the treatment of our students, stakeholders, and staff and a culture where diversity is welcomed and valued.

Collaboration

Working in partnership with our students, stakeholders and staff to facilitate the sharing of knowledge, expertise and skills.

Innovation

Remaining a leader in the provision of education and training by encouraging new ideas, trying out different approaches and responding to change.

Professionalism

Courtesy, efficiency and excellence in our dealings with our students, stakeholders and staff and working to the highest standards in education and training.

Integrity

Honesty, transparency, and confidentiality and meeting our responsibilities as a provider of lifelong learning in a consistent and ethical fashion.

The development of LOETB's **Statement of Strategy 2018-2022** was led by the Senior Management Team, and included a consultative process with all sectors within LOETB, and key external stakeholders. The Strategy sets out four **strategic goals**, with a range of strategic priorities to further the achievement of those goals, through a series of supporting actions.

1. *Excellent Education and Training Programmes*
   The provision of quality-assured excellent teaching, learning, and assessment for all with high levels of achievement and accreditation by students.

2. *Excellent Experience for Learners*
   The provision of positive learning experiences and environments with suitable resources and facilities for students.

3. *Organisation Transformation*
   The promotion of a culture of innovation and improvement within the organisation.

4. *Staff Development*
   To recruit and retain a highly-qualified and motivated workforce and to provide staff support and opportunities for continuing personal and professional career development.

This Statement of Strategy informs future decision-making processes and further facilitates the prioritisation of target areas for development, particularly with respect to governance, quality assurance, and the policies and procedures needed to ensure appropriate oversight of all FET programmes.

3. Governance and Management Structures
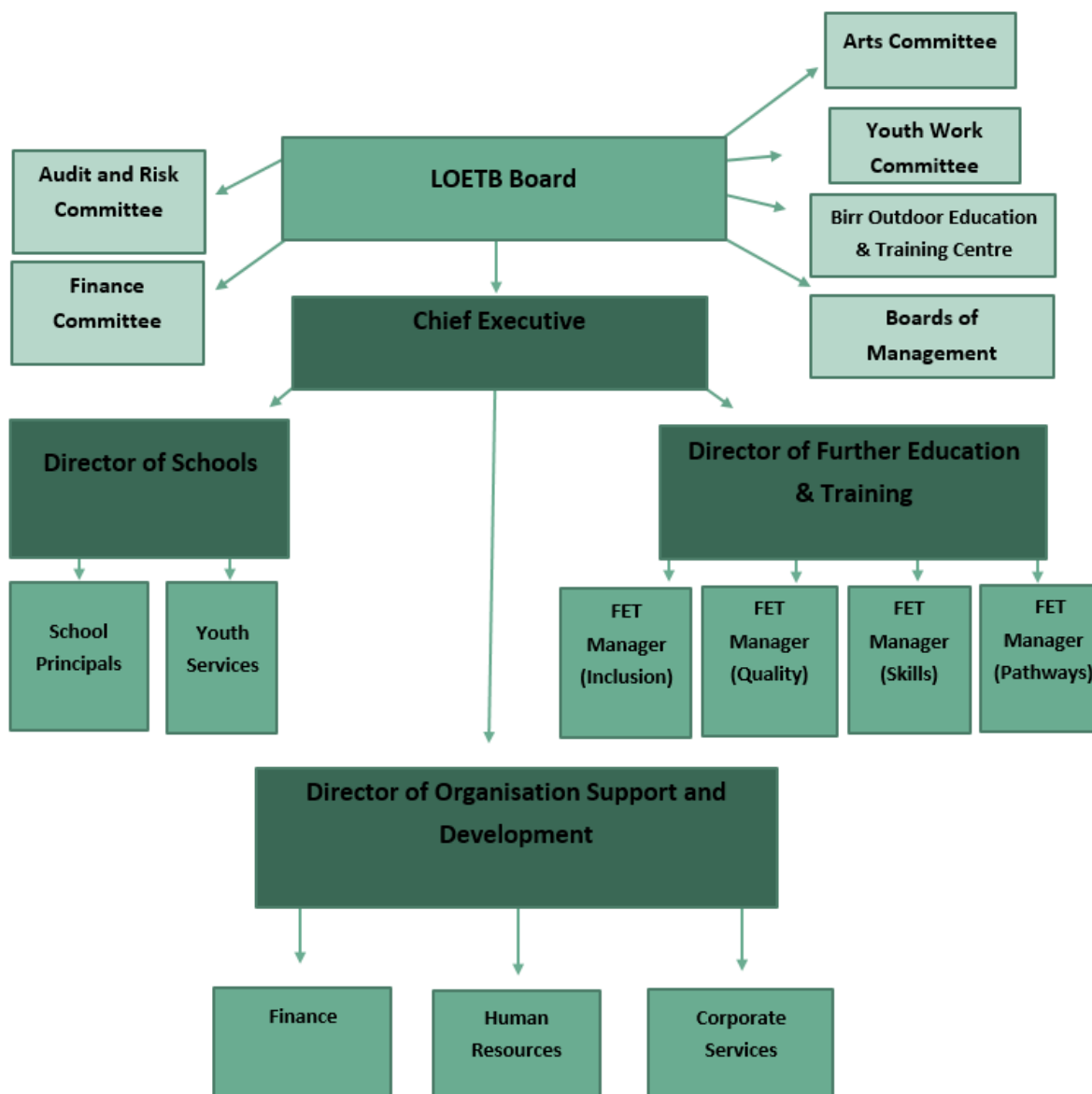
LOETB is governed by a Board consisting of 21 members. Reporting to the Board, the Chief Executive (CE) is the Accounting Officer for LOETB and holds responsibility for the executive management of the organisation. In line with the governing legislation, the Board has established a number of committees, including Finance, and Audit and Risk Committees, Boards of Management and other committees as required. These committees are composed of Board members and / or agreed other representation.

The CE is responsible for the performance of the executive functions of the Board and is accountable to the Board for the performance of such functions. The CE must provide information regarding performance to the Board and to the Minister for Education and Skills as may be required.

Further Education and Training Services

The Director of Further Education and Training (FET) reports to the CE and has operational responsibility for the coordination and management of FET Services and activity, and is responsible for the planning and delivery of high quality and responsive FET provision and the

governance and management of FET, as well as coordinating a FET Senior Management Team (SMT) and having responsibility for workforce planning and performance management.

Operational Structure of FET Service

The FET SMT reports to the Director of FET and is made up of four FET Managers with distinct responsibilities in relation to the FET Service. This year, the FET services were restructured to align with the new national FET Strategy 2020-2024. Each of the FET Managers now has specific responsibility for one of the pillars outlined in the national document – Skills, Inclusion, Pathways and Quality. These changes have led to a greater emphasis on supporting the learner journey through the scheme, moving away from a 'programme'-based approach to a more learner-centred process. The FET SMT meets weekly to discuss operational and strategic issues. The diagram below outlines the current line management / reporting structure in LOETB FET Services.
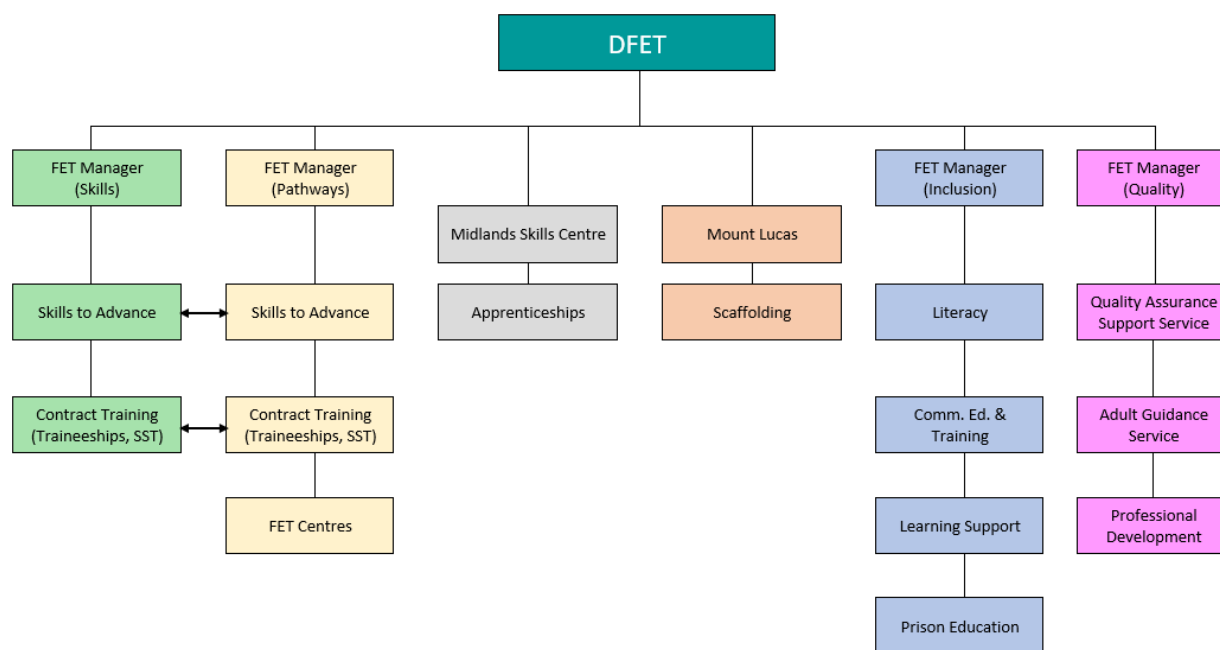

Governance Structure of FET Service

In 2020, LOETB formalised a robust FET governance structure. This structure provides a platform for strategic planning and the continuous formal review of provision. Within this structure, the FET Quality Council provides leadership and oversight for all aspects of the FET services. The function of the FET Forum (made up of the FET SMT and all Centre/Service Managers) is to strategically plan changes to provision and oversee the implementation and review of the FET strategy. The FET Forum meets once a quarter and holds an annual two-day planning workshop for all Centre and Service management staff.

Programme Development and Review Groups are established on a sectoral or needs basis which provides a forum for the ongoing review of existing provision and a mechanism for an evidence-based approach to developing new courses and programmes. Proposals for new programmes or review of existing programmes are submitted to the FET Quality Council for consideration and approval. Development and Review Groups includes external members (e.g. Regional Skills Forum Manager, Employers, Third Level Institutions reps), which provides an essential independent voice in the planning process. In 2018/2019, an extensive review of Healthcare provision across LOETB FET Services was conducted, leading to approved short,

medium and long term actions to be implemented across the service. This proved to be a very worthwhile project.

A representative from each FET Centre and Service is on the FET Quality Forum and it is this group that considers and recommends for approval new quality policies or reviews to amendments to policies as proposed by Quality Policy Development and Review Groups. The new or amended policies may be proposed as a response to identified corrective action required, or from policy development that takes place nationally through ETBI.

The FET Governance Structure is set out below.
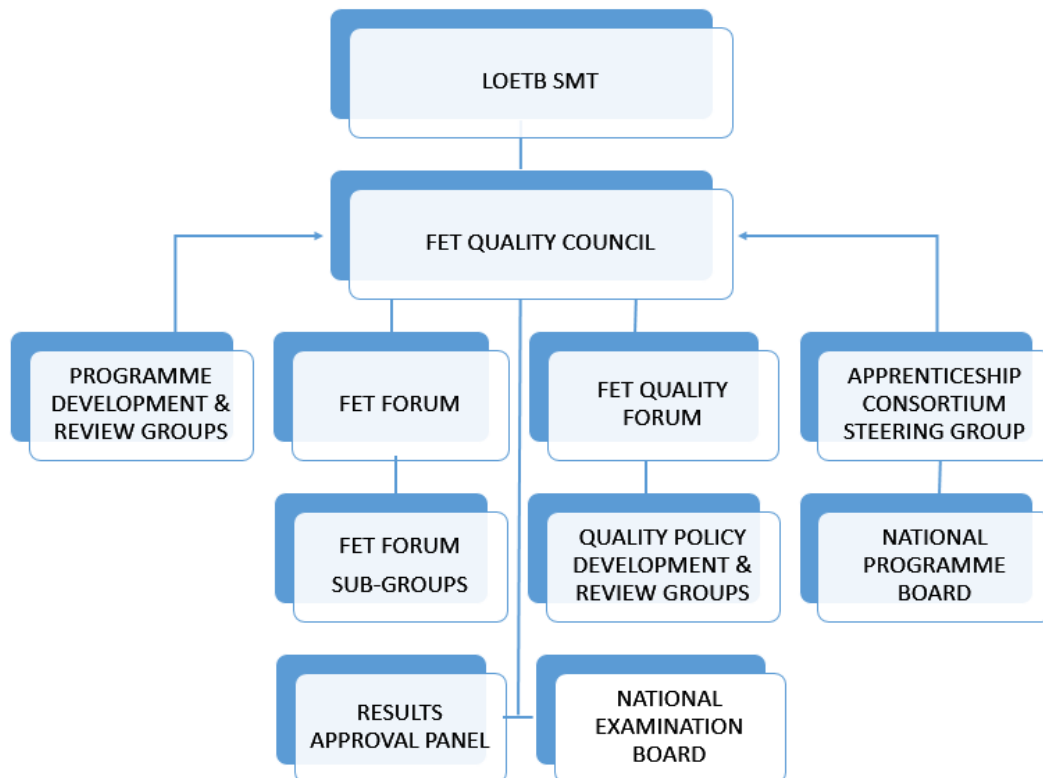
Details of the Governance and Management of Quality Assurance are set out here.

4. Approach to Quality

4.1 Amalgamation of VECs

When the VECs of Laois and Offaly amalgamated in July 2013 to form Laois and Offaly ETB, the main priority of the two Adult Education Officers (AEOs) at the time was to ensure that a consistent approach be taken to the provision of Further Education in both counties. During the summer of 2013, significant progress was made in relation to the planning of FE provision in each county, to eliminate unnecessary duplication and to scope/track progression opportunities from one programme to another. Similarly, the quality assurance agreements in each former VEC (one QA agreement in each VEC) were compared and contrasted to identify areas in which quality assurance arrangements differed. Fortunately, there were very few differences between what each individual VEC had committed to in their QA agreement with QQI (then FETAC) and therefore it was decided that, with some small adjustments, a joint QA document which reflected the commitments of the new organisation would be the most positive way forward. The joint document was collated by the AEOs, the Quality Assurance Manager, and representatives from the FET centres.

Once the joint document was agreed, the process of incrementally developing a common set of policies and procedures began. Common documentation was introduced in the first academic year following amalgamation, and staff briefings were provided where the documentation was introduced and explained. In the second academic year (September 2014-June 2015), the certification process was managed centrally by the QA Officer, and this arrangement has continued since then. Central management of the certification process provides:

- an assurance of transparency, consistency, and fairness,
- an opportunity for oversight of the process by management,
- a shared responsibility for ensuring that identified corrective action is implemented, where required.

4.2 Transfer of responsibility for former FÁS Training Services

In March 2016, LOETB assumed responsibility for the provision of former SOLAS training programmes in Laois and Offaly. Operation of the Transition Quality Assurance System (TQAS) required some adjustment to usual work practices as it was significantly different to the QA agreement in place for Further Education provision and LOETB did not have an experienced Training Standards Officer (TSO). It was decided that the QA Support Service (QASS) (established in 2016) would take some time to become familiar with all aspects of the TQAS before making any changes. In 2019, the process of integrating QA systems for former VEC and former FÁS Training programmes commenced. This involved the introduction of common policies and procedures in some areas being introduced in an incremental way.

4.3 LOETB Quality Assurance Support Service (QASS)

The QASS is managed by the FET Manager with responsible for Quality, and the role of the QASS is to support Centre and Service Managers and Staff in the implementation of all aspects of QA policies and processes, from point of leaners first accessing programmes, to certification stage. The QASS play a key role in overseeing the scheduling and administration of certification processes. Each Centre/Service has a designated QA staff member, who acts as the point of contact for any QA-related queries. The QASS administer and manage the

Programme Learner Support System (PLSS), which means that they ensure that courses are scheduled appropriately and that learners' details are maintained in a timely manner.

Awareness of quality assurance and recognition of the need for a consistent approach to quality assurance provision has significantly increased, particularly since the introduction of QA briefings and the establishment of the QASS in 2016.

The responsibility for quality assurance is one that is shared among all staff members of the FET Service. Staff are regularly briefed on their responsibilities and provided with relevant updates as required. In order to ensure that all FET staff and external trainers (contract training companies and second providers in the community) are aware of their responsibilities in relation to quality assurance and that they feel supported in the delivery of FET programmes, a specific member of the QASS is assigned to each FET Centre/contractor/second provider. This QASS member liaises closely with the staff members/contractors/second providers and with the relevant LOETB Centre/Service Manager at all stages from the admissions process right through to assessment and certification stage. The QASS takes a hands-on approach with the FET Centres and Services in order to ensure consistency and implementation of policies and procedures that apply to all FET provision e.g.:

- Members of the QASS conduct the IV process in all FET Centres and have recently become involved in the IV process for second providers.
- Specific QASS staff members have responsibility for selecting appropriate EAs for each Centre/Service on a programme by programme basis, and it is the policy of LOETB to only select EAs with subject matter expertise or relevant teaching experience for each programme.
- All EA Reports are made available to the QASS, and Results Approval Panel (RAP) meetings are convened by the QASS for each certification round.

While this level of QASS involvement is labour-intensive, the process is worthwhile as it ensures transparency and a common approach to the IV and EA process, and aids in the identification of training needs and corrective actions for future provision. This, in turn, helps to inform the development of the monthly PD calendar, in consultation with the PD Coordinator.

4.3.1 Establishing a Culture of Quality in the Laois and Offaly Region

LOETB's FET Service have recently made contact with the Community and Voluntary Providers in the region with a view to establishing a Memorandum of Understanding with them, which would enable these providers to maintain and expand their programme provision. This would mean that the providers would operate under LOETB's Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures, and the QASS would have oversight of this process. The benefit of this arrangement for all involved is that the level of FET activity in the region will be available to those that need and want it. There will be cohesion and consistency of approach across the two counties.

4.4 Executive Self-Evaluation and Quality Improvement Plans

The Quality Assurance Support Service is responsible for the development and oversight of all LOETB QA policies and procedures. In late 2017, an Executive Self-Evaluation was conducted of the governance and management of quality assurance within the delivery of FET provision in LOETB. The Self-Evaluation Process was conducted in line with the QQI Statutory Core Quality Assurance and Sector Specific QA Guidelines for ETBs. The purpose of the process was to evaluate the governance and management of quality assurance, and the effectiveness of quality assurance systems within the FET service. The results of the process contributed to the development of a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). The QIP consists of a range of identified actions which were planned to take place throughout 2018. The actions identified fell under the following themes:

- Governance
- Excellent Experience for Learners
- Excellent Education and Training
- Effective Communication and Collaboration

At the end of 2018, a review of the progress of the QIP was conducted and, arising from that, actions were identified for 2019. A similar process took place for 2020. The FET Service has been focused on the development/review of quality, flexible, responsive programmes, while working towards the achievement of its identified targets for the period 2018-2020. All programmes have been quality assured and delivered to the highest standard by qualified and experienced tutors/trainers.

The concept of constant improvement is another tenet of LOETB's approach to developing as an organisation. In February 2019 LOETB invited an external stakeholder into the organisation to review our progress to date in Quality Assurance and the implementation of 2018's Quality Improvement Plan. This process involved interviews with Senior Management, Middle Management, staff and learners and demonstrated our willingness to get external feedback and review our practice. The rationale for this review was based on listening to another voice, critiquing where we are, and identifying the priorities for 2019/20. The process also recognised our ambition in the first QIP and the importance of maintaining realistic timelines to allow processes to develop at a pace that is manageable and contributes to the quality of the outcome.

4.5 Integrated FET Centre Model Approach

LOETB's Strategic Performance Agreement with SOLAS outlined an ambitious set of targets (outcomes for learners) across the full range of our provision. These targets were established on the principle of 'doing the right thing for the learner' such as:

- ensuring that every learner was on the right programme at the right level
- ensuring that every FET facility was accessible and offered progression options on site
- ensuring that all learners could avail of the full range of supports on site
- Ensuring that the learning experience was consistent and equitable across the scheme

A cornerstone of this approach was the development of the FET Centre model. This multiplex model of provision offers the learner multiple FET services on a single site, allowing for ease of Access, Transfer and Progression.

In the 2019/2020 academic year, three FET Centres that traditionally only offered Youthreach programmes increased their range of provision to offer Traineeships in Healthcare, Childcare and/or Barbering. In 2019, approximately 70 learners commenced a Traineeship in one of our newly integrated FET Centres.

Furthermore, the inclusion of second providers on various FET groups – sub-groups, FET Forum, etc. has led to a greater sense of cohesion, and a sense of shared goals and objectives. The success of the integrated FET Centre model approach is evidenced by an average retention rate of over 90% on courses in our integrated FET Centres, and 4,617 beneficiaries progressing to another FET / HET course at the same or higher level in 2019.

4.6 Commitment to Continuous Professional Development (PD)

In late 2018, LOETB appointed a FET PD Coordinator, who is responsible for:

- Developing an annual PD calendar for all staff
- Researching and scheduling appropriate PD courses
- Working with the SMT to ensure that all PD is in line with the strategic direction of the organisation.

LOETB's commitment to the continuous development and upskilling of its management, teaching and administrative staff helps to ensure that the FET programmes and services provided by LOETB are high-quality, up-to-date and responsive to the needs and demands of our learners and of industry.

Since March 2019, the focus of the PD Coordinator has been to ensure that the training needs of teaching and administrative staff are addressed to enable continuity of our FET services for learners during the COVID-19 Pandemic. A comprehensive PD Calendar is released monthly, and is open to all staff.

Several staff members have been supported to engage in accredited Professional Development, up to Level 9 of NFQ, either on an individual basis, or in groups in collaboration with IT Carlow (MA in Teaching and Learning) and NUI, Galway (Level 8 Diploma in TEL).

4.7 COVID-19 Pandemic: Responses and Contingency Arrangements

4.7.1 Response of FET Senior Management Team

When the Government announced restrictions on 12 March, the FET SMT notified all learners and teachers of the decision to close centres and to move tuition to on-line systems. The aim was to ensure the continued provision of essential FET services and certification as far as was practicable. It was decided that while every effort would be made to maintain all programmes, it was essential to support learners who were completing full award at Levels 5 and 6.

In the addressing the implications of the closures for QA procedures, teaching and assessment and putting new arrangements in place, the FET SMT was the final decision maker. The governance for the management of the quality assurance procedures and the temporary changes that needed to be put in place was as follows:

- Regular FET SMT meetings via Microsoft Teams to discuss proposals for alternative assessments and contingency arrangements regarding the Certification process.

- Where changes in procedures are proposed these are approved by the FET SMT and forwarded to the LOETB SMT for final approval.

- Any areas for concern will be reported immediately to management on identification for follow up or action.

- Records of all decisions and changes required to existing Quality Assurance processes will be maintained and reviewed by Governance Structures and noted in all meeting minutes.

The FET SMT identified as a priority cohort the Post Leaving Certificate courses and other courses where learners were aiming for a major award with a view to applying to third level institutions through the CAO system. Every effort was made to ensure that these groups were processed for certification on time for the June certification round. This affected over 500 learners in four centres, with over 80 teachers involved. All other courses would be supported to be completed for the August assessment period, or the extra July assessment round provided by QQI.

The Quality Assurance Support Service team undertook a survey of teaching staff involved in teaching and assessing that priority cohort to determine for each module the following information; what assessments had already been completed, whether all Learning Outcomes had been delivered, and what had already been corrected.

From the survey results the FET SMT was able to determine that most of the class content for programmes that operate according to the academic calendar had already been delivered to learners so most modules were almost at the stage of assessment. However, much of the assessments that were to take place were now not possible as they would require learners to attend at centres to complete Written Examinations and Skills Demonstrations.

4.7.2 Alternative Assessments

The results of these surveys provided the QA Support Service with a snapshot of what assessments remained, and of those, what needed to be changed in order to facilitate completion on time for the June round of certification and for subsequent certification rounds.

In relation to the administering of alternative assessments, it was LOETB's priority to ensure the following:

- Learners had the opportunity to provide evidence of their achievement of all learning outcomes specified

- Information relating to alternative assessments would be communicated to learners in a timely and understandable manner allowing sufficient time to prepare. Assessment deadlines were set taking into consideration that learners may struggle with access to or ability to use technology, learners may have childcare or other care commitments, or may be unwell themselves (due to COVID-19 or other illness)

- The integrity of the assessments would be maintained; learners would be informed and reminded of rules in relation to assessment malpractice

- Proctoring arrangements would be in place to protect integrity of online exams.

- All learners would be encouraged to undertake alternative assessment arrangements where this course of action was deemed appropriate and feasible. Where a learner does not engage or requests to defer or postpone assessment this would be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

- Learners would not be disadvantaged by changes to assessment formats and timeframes.

- Learners would continue to be supported during this time when completing assessments in any different format

4.7.3 Changes to Certification Procedures

4.7.3.1 Internal Verification (IV) Process

LOETB put in place a Contingency Plan for Learner Evidence in the possession of teachers to be collected from their homes. This enabled the IV and EA processes to continue, with a limited number of critical staff conducting IV under strict social distancing conditions.

The QA Support Service conducted the IV process. This was a mammoth task and required flexibility from the staff involved. Because of the unique circumstances it was decided that Internal Verifiers would check the marks of 100% of the folders this year to eliminate calculation errors. This turned out to be an important decision as some totting or transcription errors were identified and addressed, thus reducing the number of subsequent appeals.

4.7.3.2 External Authentication (EA) Process

Arrangements were made whereby modules taught by new teachers were externally authenticated. In addition, EAs were employed to work across centres in areas such as Communications and Work Experience. Arrangements were made for the EAs to visit or, if that was not possible, arrangements were made for either the evidence to be made available digitally to the EA or for the learner evidence to be delivered by courier to and from the EA's home, with their agreement. The EA process was successfully completed, and all reports were presented to the Results Approval Panel meetings.

4.7.3.3 Results Approval Panel (RAP) Process

Results Approval Panel meetings took place face-to-face or through Microsoft Teams as planned in time for the June, July, and August submission deadlines. Emphasis was placed on the following:

- A comprehensive comparison of this year's results compared to previous years' results in order to ensure that there is a level of consistency with the results awarded, taking various factors into consideration.
- Ensuring that the Record of Approved Alternative Assessments forms part of the records for certification processing.

4.7.4 Contingency Planning for new academic year

LOETB prepared a QQI Contingency Planning Report in June 2020 which outlined the process described above, and other contingencies that have been put in place for the duration of the COVID-19 Pandemic. An updated Contingency Plan is currently being prepared to outline plans that are in place to ensure continuity for the 2020/2021 academic year. These include:

- modularised approach to delivery
- blended learning model
- additional supports for learners and staff

5. Regional Profile

Offaly is a predominantly rural county with a population of 77,961 (census 2016), an increase of 1,314 persons (1.7%) since 2011 census. Offaly accounts for 1.64% of the total population of Ireland (which is 4,761,865, an increase of 3.8% on the 2011 population). Therefore, the rate of population increase in Offaly (between 2011 and 2016) was less than half of that of the State as a whole.

The 2016 population of Co. Laois was 84,697 - an increase of 5.2% (4,138) on 2011 compared to a national increase of only 3.7% in the same period. This increase follows an even greater population surge in the county between 2006 and 2011, when Laois experienced a 20% population growth. The population of Laois has grown by 60% since 1996, putting services and facilities under persistent pressure.

Enterprise Base

The main sectors of employment in the midlands region are as follows:

Industry	20%
Wholesale & Retail	14%
Health	12%
Education	9%
Agriculture	8%
Accommodation & Food	6%
Construction	6%

LOETB has strategically aligned its FET provision to the skills clusters relevant to the Laois and Offaly region. In doing so, there has been a focus on provision in the areas of Engineering, Bio Pharma/Medtech, Health, Family and other Social Services, and the Built Environment. We aim to establish clear pathways through our service to support learners with progression options in education and employment within these cluster areas.

Employment by Occupation in Laois and Offaly is set out in the table below:

Laois/Offaly

(Bar chart: Skilled trades 20%, Professionals 15%, Elementary 11%, Associate Prof. 10%, Admin 11%, Personal services 9%, Operatives 10%, Managers 7%, Sales 8%)
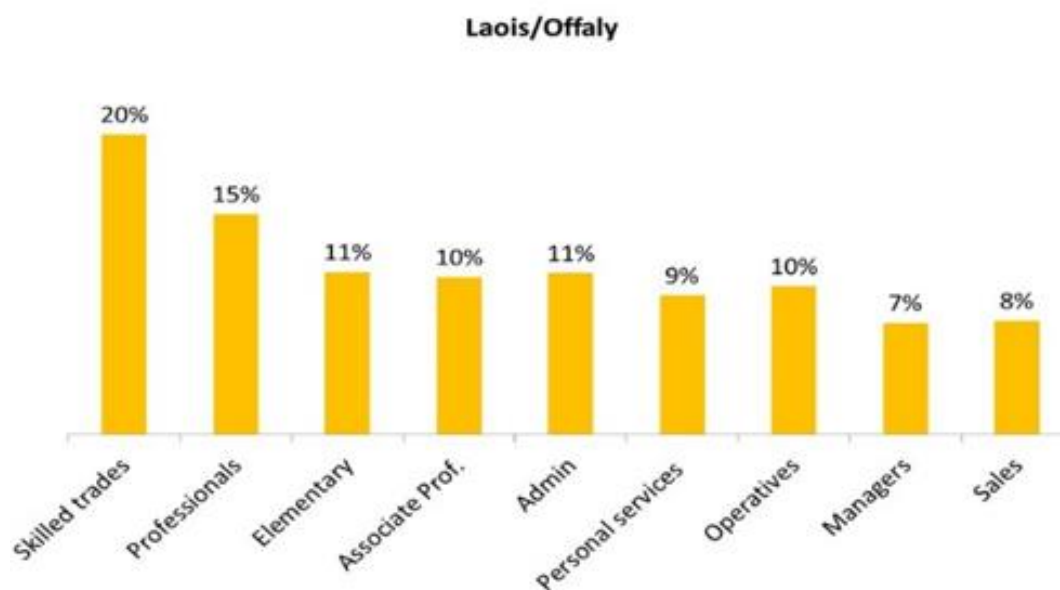
6. Provision Profile

In this section, please note that 2017 data was incomplete as PLSS was not used fully by all centres and services until mid-2017.

a) ETB Centres

Name of Centre	Centre Type	F/T Beneficiaries (2019)		P/T Beneficiaries (2019)		Total Beneficiaries	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Abbeyleix FET Centre	FET Centre	192	72.73%	72	27.27%	264	2.44%
Banagher FET Centre	FET Centre	46	100.00%		0.00%	46	0.43%
Birr FET Centre	FET Centre	11	78.57%	3	21.43%	14	0.13%
Clara FET Centre	FET Centre	32	100.00%		0.00%	32	0.30%
Edenderry FET Centre	FET Centre	51	86.44%	8	13.56%	59	0.55%
Midlands Education Centre	FET Centre	0	0.00%	1147	100.00%	1147	10.62%
Mountmellick FET Centre	FET Centre	48	68.57%	22	31.43%	70	0.65%
National Construction Training Centre	FET Centre	148	88.62%	19	11.38%	167	1.55%
Portarlington FET Centre	FET Centre	198	34.74%	372	65.26%	570	5.28%
Portlaoise College	FET Centre	557	100.00%		0.00%	557	5.16%
Portlaoise Education Centre	FET Centre	0	0.00%	1564	100.00%	1564	14.48%
Portlaoise FET Centre - BTEI	FET Centre	0	0.00%	671	100.00%	671	6.21%
Portlaoise FET Centre - Adult Literacy	FET Centre	0	0.00%	1327	100.00%	1327	12.29%
Portlaoise FET Centre - Community Education	FET Centre	0	0.00%	506	100.00%	506	4.68%
Portlaoise FET Centre - Youthreach	FET Centre	48	100.00%		0.00%	48	0.44%
Tullamore FET Centre - PLC	FET Centre	238	52.19%	218	47.81%	456	4.22%
Tullamore FET Centre - Community Education	FET Centre	0	0.00%	405	100.00%	405	3.75%
Tullamore FET Centre - VTOS	FET Centre	38	100.00%		0.00%	38	0.35%
Tullamore FET Centre - Adult Literacy	FET Centre	0	0.00%	1547	100.00%	1547	14.32%
Tullamore FET Centre - BTEI	FET Centre	9	0.69%	1304	99.31%	1313	12.16%
Total		1616	15.0%	9185	85.0%	10801	

b) Contracted / External Provision with which the ETB is Engaged

Provider/Provision Type	No. of Centres / Locations	F/T Learners (2019)		P/T Learners (2019)		Total Learners	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Community Training Centres	1	148	94.3%	9	5.73%	157	1.45%
LTI	5	100	100.0%	0	0.00%	100	0.93%
Skills to Advance	Throughout region	6	1.0%	604	99.02%	610	5.65%
Specialist Training Providers	2	258	100.0%	0	0.00%	258	2.39%
Traineeships	Throughout region	365	91.7%	33	8.29%	398	3.68%
Total		877	57.6%	646	42.4%	1523	

c) ETB Services

Service	No. of beneficiaries 2019
Guidance	1,742

d) ETB Provision by Field of Learning

Fields of Learning	Beneficiaries 2017	Beneficiaries 2018	Beneficiaries 2019
Agriculture, Horticulture & Mariculture	36	0	0
Animal Science	0	0	0
Arts & Crafts	85	82	164
Built Environment	379	258	247
Business, Administration	501	896	1,333
Core ICT	19	16	83
Core Personal	3,580	4,818	5,908
Engineering	57	66	64
Engineering (Electrical)	0	0	16
Engineering (IT)	0	0	0
Engineering (Mechanical)	14	21	87
Engineering (Transport)	13	17	27
Entrepreneurship	0	0	0
Financial Services	51	61	63
Food and Beverage	119	195	216
General Learning	958	1,254	1,344
Hairdressing, Beauty & Complementary Therapies	226	230	269
Health, Family & Other Social Services	1,506	1,827	1,972
Information Technology	62	72	68
Management	0	8	53
Manufacturing	13	14	0
Media, Graphics, Communications	39	36	32
Natural Resources	0	0	0
Research and Education-Training	0	23	39
Sales & Marketing	114	164	65
Science & Technology	42	49	53
Security Guarding & Emergency Services	22	21	21
Skills Sampling	8	25	34
Sport & Leisure	82	84	166
Tourism	0	0	0
Transport, Distribution & Logistics	0	12	1
Web Development & Design	0	0	0
Total	7,926	10,249	12,325

e) ETB Provision by NFQ Level

NFQ Level	Beneficiaries 2017	Beneficiaries 2018	Beneficiaries 2019
Uncertified	2,425	3,496	3,563
1	43	151	401
2	500	533	604
3	1,114	1,368	2,020
4	1,006	1,323	2,015
5	2,569	2,957	3,141
6	269	421	581
Total	7,926	10,249	12,325

f) Awarding Bodies

Awarding Body	Awards 2017		Awards 2018		Awards 2019	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
QQI	2545	97.81%	5971	96.57%	8061	96.60%
CIBTAC	20	0.77%	10	0.16%	1	0.01%
DES	35	1.35%	70	1.13%	46	0.55%
IATA	2	0.08%	48	0.78%	27	0.32%
Active IQ	0	0	7	0.11%	15	0.18%
City & Guilds	0	0	23	0.37%	100	1.20%
CIBTAC	0	0	41	0.66%	36	0.43%
ITEC	0	0	7	0.11%	32	0.38%
PHECC	0	0	6	0.10%	12	0.14%
VTCT	0	0	0	0	15	
Total	2602		6183		8345	

7. Learner Profile
a) Gender Profile

Learner Gender	2017	2018	2019
Female	4,752	5,879	6,342
Male	3,174	4,370	5,983
Other/Not Specified	0	0	0
Total	**7,926**	**10,249**	**12,325**

b) Age Profile

Learner Age	2017	2018	2019
<15	6	10	4
15-24	2,126	2,432	2,777
25-44	3,479	4,783	5,939
45-64	2,028	2,604	3,044
65+	287	420	561
Total	**7,926**	**10,249**	**12,325**

c) Nationality Profile

Region	2017	2018	2019
Ireland	Not available	6,955	8,141
United Kingdom	Not available	186	196
Europe	Not available	1,190	1,377
Africa	Not available	304	387
Asia	Not available	390	422
North America	Not available	30	16
Oceania	Not available	10	12
South America	Not available	76	118
Unknown	Not available	1,108	1,656
Total	**Not available**	**10,249**	**12,325**

8. Staffing Profile
a) Staffing Overview

Role	Total 2017	Total 2018	Total 2019
Post Primary Teachers		450	460
FET Teachers/ Tutors / Instructors		320	360
Administrative Staff		98	94
Co-ordinators / Centre Managers		15	15
Resource Workers		7	14
Maintenance Staff		29	36
Support Staff (including SNAs)		31	40
	914 (breakdown not available)	950	1019

b) Teacher: Learner Ratio
i) Overall

	2017	2018	2019
FET Teacher/Tutor/Instructor	Not available	320	360
Learners		10249	12325
Ratio		1:32	1:34

Please note that the Learner Number is based on number of beneficiaries of programmes, and therefore the ratio based on beneficiary numbers is not reflective of the actual teacher / tutor / instructor: learner ratio in our Centres and Services.

9. Collaborations and Partnerships
a) National Agencies

- Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI)
- National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA)
- AHEAD
- Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection
- IDA Ireland

b) Regional Partners

Our regional partners include:

- Midlands Regional Skills Forum
- Laois Partnership
- Offaly Local Development Company
- Portarlington Community Development Association
- Laois Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)
- Offaly Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)
- IT Carlow and Athlone IT

LOETB continues to work in partnership with a number of agencies and voluntary organisations across the region to support and develop communities through engagement in lifelong learning interventions. In 2019, LOETB provided Community Education courses to approximately 775 learners, including some very successful partnerships with local and regional agencies. For example, a very successful Community Craft project was run in Clara recently in partnership with the Men's Shed and the Family Resource Centre. Participants developed many craft skills and the project culminated in displays of weaving, yarnbombing, rock painting, stone sculpture, and tyre art in the local park. LOETB continues to work closely with DEASP and other agencies to identify and engage people in areas of high unemployment with a wide array of priority cohorts. The integrated nature of our provision ensures that our Literacy, Community Education, Community Training and our Adult Guidance Service work in a coordinated manner with the DEASP, Local Development Companies and Community Groups.

c) Other Partnerships / Networks

Grow Remote: In response to the current pandemic and the future potential for remote working, LOETB, in collaboration with IDA Ireland, SOLAS, and Grow Remote, have developed a host of new online national training programmes that develop the capability and capacity of those wishing to become remote workers. 'Remote Work Ready' is designed for unemployed and underemployed people hoping to transition to a remote working role. 'Leading Remote Teams' is designed for managers that are new to remote leadership or looking to optimise the productivity and culture of their remote teams.

Construction Industry Federation: LOETB collaborated with CIF to develop a Level 5 Scaffolding Apprenticeship. This project is now at validation stage and it is hoped that the programme will be launched in Quarter 2 of 2021.