

Interim Quality Report

Galway-Roscommon Education and Training Board

Date: February- 2025



Dearbhú Cáilíochta
agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann
Quality and
Qualifications Ireland



PREFACE

The inaugural review by QQI of the quality assurance in the 16 Education and Training Boards (ETBs) took place between March 2021 and May 2022. Following the review, each ETB provided an **action plan** and **follow-up report** in response to the recommendations made in the individual review report. QQI's role is to monitor and review the QA of providers, and the effectiveness of provider's internal QA system. Systematic quality reporting by providers is an integral part of this process. The development of an integrated and systematic annual quality reporting model for ETBs has commenced; for this quality reporting period, ETBs are submitting an interim quality report. This interim quality report records progress, developments and impacts in furtherance of recommendations arising from each ETB's review report, as well as other QA enhancements and initiatives.

In addition, the interim quality report requires each ETB to include updated links to its published quality assurance policies and procedures.

This is the interim quality report for Galway-Roscommon Education and Training Board

It is to be submitted by 28/02/2025

The interim quality report has been approved by [GRETB Quality Council] and is submitted by



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GUIDELINES ON COMPLETING THE REPORT

This **interim quality report** provides a progress update to the ETB's inaugural review follow-up report, in addition to information regarding quality plans and initiatives in the ETB. Whereas details regarding all inaugural review recommendations were included in the follow-up report, please note that information relating to completed actions in response to recommendations, if any, are not required in this interim quality report.

Links to the published quality assurance policies and procedures of the ETB must be included in this interim quality report. Each ETB should ensure before submission that all links within the report are correct and functional, and that the policies and procedures referred to are the most up-to-date versions available.

The ETB is asked to give particular attention to specific impacts arising from QA actions/initiatives, this includes:

- the key areas of focus prioritised for action and any specific changes arising as well as links to any associated outputs (e.g., procedures, reports etc.)
- reflections on the Follow-up reporting **process** and any barriers or challenges arising in implementation of the review recommendations.

The ETB is also asked to include additional **reflections** in the commentary.

The ETB is invited to provide up to 3 short case studies, 1-2 pages, demonstrating QA enhancements and their impacts.

There is a short survey on the follow-up process in Section 6. The results of this will be used to inform QQI and will not be published as part of this report.

1.0 Interim Quality Report

Include all links to published QA policies and procedures relevant to each section in the table below.

Please add or delete rows in the tables below, as required.

1.01 ETB Mission and Strategy

Links to current strategy Documents

Strategy Document 2022 - 2026

Local Creative Youth Partnership Strategic Plan 2023-2027

Service Plan 2023

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
N/A	N/A
Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.
Commentary and Reflections Click here to enter text.	
Link to Published Policies and Procedures N/A	

1.02 Structures & Terms of Reference for Governance of QA

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
<p>The review team noted the lack of learner representation on GRETB's governance groups. It is recommended that the ETB examine ways of including the learner voice throughout the 20 organisation and that formal means of ensuring learner representation on executive boards and committees be explored with other ETBs and the relevant government departments.</p>	<p>A staff member has been appointed to represent the views of learners gathered from the Regional Learning Events with a view to supporting the ongoing development and support of Regional Learning Forums. Feedback from Learner Forums is a point on the agenda for the QA Quality Council and QA Steering groups at each meeting.</p>
<p>Click here to enter text.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Learner Experience Report was completed by QA in January 2024 and distributed to all Governance Groups, Centre Managers. • Feedback on the findings was distributed to learners through a variety of means, including face to face meetings with regional forum members held regionally in February & March and led by the QA Team. The Report was published on the QA SharePoint site. • Centres were surveyed in January 2024 to request their feedback on the report and identify what suggestions from learners they had identified as realistic and achievable for implementation.

- The QA department sought Training from Aontas to support learners and staff. This was completed in June 2024. GRETB were pleased to be part of an Aontas pilot initiative in CPD sessions for 12 staff in four ETB's for 2024.
- GRETB will continue to liaise with learners and establish forums that best suit their schedules and create an environment that they feel comfortable contributing in.
- The forums will continue to have members that represent each level of courses/provision within GRETB.
- GRETB senior management is currently reviewing The Learner Forum Structure and process to ensure its effectiveness going forward.

Commentary and Reflections

GRETB continued its plan, as outlined in the 2023 QIP, to develop and progress the Learner Forum with significant progress made in this area described above. The process is now under review by the Senior Management Team.

Link to published policies and procedures

N/A

1.03 Documentation of QA

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
<p>The review team recommends that all QA documentation be digitised in accordance with GDPR best practice. It should be centralised and made available to staff in accordance with a hierarchy of access depending on role.</p>	<p>A QA section with a repository for all documents is available to all staff as a resource within SharePoint. This includes an Educator Hub, a Policy and Procedures Library and all other relevant QA resources. This is regularly updated with resources as they are developed/ updated. Internally, all QA documentation is digitised and stored electronically using Teams and SharePoint. In addition, QA has a section on the GRETB external Website where policies can be accessed.</p> <p>Click here to enter text.</p>
<p>Click here to enter text.</p>	<p>FET Quality Assurance: https://gretb.ie/further-education-training/quality-assurance/</p>
<p>Commentary and Reflections</p> <p>Click here to enter text.</p> <p>GRETB continuously updates its QA documentation system to ensure relevance and currency. Staff are routinely informed by QA on updates to policies, procedures, and all associated documentation. QA Briefings are provided to all staff regularly and on request. All relevant materials are accessible through the updated QA SharePoint. The QA SharePoint now has dedicated areas for Craft Apprenticeships and EA's to access role specific resources. IT have facilitated the EA's and non - GRETB staff with access to the QA SharePoint where appropriate. This has facilitated the standardisation of information provided by QA to all stakeholders. Feedback from all staff is that the QA SharePoint is an excellent resource that is valued by them.</p>	

Link to Published Policies and Procedures

Click here to enter text.

FET Quality Assurance: <https://gretb.ie/further-education-training/quality-assurance/>

GRETB Assessments in ELC Programmes: <https://gretb.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/GRETB-Assessments-in-Early-Learning-and-Care-Programmes-February-2023.pdf>

Polasaí maidir le Measúnuithe i gCláir Chúram agus Foghlaim na Luath-Óige:<https://gretb.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/GRETB-Polasai-maidir-le-Measunuithe-i-gClair-Churam-agus-Foghlaim-na-Luath-Oige-February-2023.pdf>

Professional Practice Placements in ELC Programmes: <https://gretb.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/GRETBs-Professional-Practice-Placements-in-Early-Learning-and-Care-Programme-February-2023.pdf>

Polasaí maidir le Socrúcháin Cleachtais Ghairmiúil ar an gClár Foghlama agus Cúraim na Luath-Óige: <https://gretb.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/GRETBs-Polasai-maidir-le-Socruchain-Cleachtais-Ghairmiuil-ar-February-2023.pdf>

GRETB QA Policy Statement: <https://gretb.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/GRETB-QA-Policy-Statement-February-2023.pdf>

Ráiteas Polasaí GRETB maidir le Dearbhú Cáilíochta: <https://gretb.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/GRETB-Raiteas-Polasai-GRETB-maidir-le-Dearbhu-Cailiochta-February-2023.pdf>

FET Teaching, Learning & Assessment Policy: <https://gretb.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/GRETB-FET-Teaching-Learning-Assessment-Policy-V1.-Final.-2024.pdf>

Programme Approval Policy: <https://gretb.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Programme-Approval-Policy.-Final.-2024.pdf>

Fair and Consistent Assessment of Learners Policy: <https://gretb.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Fair-Consistent-Assessment-of-Learners-Policy.-Final-2024.pdf>

1.04 Staff Recruitment, Management & Development

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
<p>The review team recommends that, based on COVID-19 experiences, the ETB continue to use the digital environment to support and extend PL&D. This should be extended to include apprenticeship tutors in profession linked PL&D activities.</p>	<p>Professional Learning & Development opportunities shared on Connect HUB and updates sent to staff on an ongoing basis. Monthly emails are sent to all FET staff with calendars of events. Expressions of Interest are circulated to staff on occasion where courses might be over-subscribed. Selection for these courses are done by SMT.</p> <p>To support FET PL&D:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GRETB Professional Learning & Development Policy developed • GRETB Professional Learning & Development Strategic Plan developed • All key areas in the PL&D Strategic Plan are actively being progressed • Training Needs Analysis completed as part of ETBI TNA and shared with SMT/FET Director <p>Teaching & Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - External provider calendars (FESS, etc.) are shared when available with all FET staff - Inhouse training is provided based on requests, budgets and availability (Dyslexia Training, Facilitating an Active Teaching & Learning Environment, etc.) - Erasmus+ opportunities for both VET and Adult Education teachers/tutors with growing numbers requesting mobility opportunities (courses/job shadowing) <p>Management/Leadership</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4 day bespoke course for Managers (Grade 7s) designed and delivered to support managers in their roles - FET Management Conference for Service/Centre Managers – October 2024 with workshops, speakers, panel discussions and networking opportunities <p>Specialised Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training provided for staff as required: Intermediate/Advanced Excel, Teams/SharePoint, etc.
<p>The review team recommends that the ETB, in addressing the changing needs in programmes, explore the skill sets of existing teaching, instructing and tutor staff, to identify subject matter expertise that they may have, and which could be utilised. In addressing the difficulties of recruiting teaching staff, particularly in Gaeltacht and rural areas, pathways should be explored to encourage recently qualified learners to upskill and become FET practitioners.</p>	<p>PL&D investigating COREHR functionality with HR to examine if staff training records can be stored and analysed. It is hoped that this will allow for a systematic approach for data storage/analysis.</p> <p>Recruitment in GRETB along with the Communications team, have been looking at more specialised platforms for roles as part of a more targeted approach. Recently, we have advertised on Tuairisc, Peig, Indeed and Galway Bay FM job slot.</p> <p>Panels are live and niche roles are advertised individually if required</p>
<p>Commentary and Reflections Click here to enter text.</p> <p>GRETB is committed to the development of these areas to support and enhance learner and staff development. Offerings of CPD have included Diversity and Inclusion, Mental Health First Aid, Plain English, First Aid, UDL, Management/Leadership, Dyslexia Training, Active</p>	

Teaching & Learning, Academic Integrity, Health & Safety, Cybersecurity, Wriggle Connect and other relevant CPD. Support funding is available to all staff in line with the PL&D Policy.

Link to Published Policies and Procedures

[GRETB Professional Learning & Development Policy](#)

[Professional Learning & Development Connect HUB](#)

1.05 Programme Development, Approval & Submission

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
<p>The review team recommends that the ETB continue to work on new programme development to address the changing needs of industry, society and learners.</p>	<p>GRETB have continued to expand their programme offering and have added a number of programmes to their QQI validated programmes via the process of Differential Validation since 2023. GRETB is currently validated for 210 programmes. In addition, PG26194 6M22741 Arboriculture was revalidated in 2024. Please see a list of other newly validated programmes in 2024 below.</p>
<p>Click here to enter text.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>• PG26251 Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in Immersive Technology 5S22366 Special Purpose Award 5 Validated New 27/11/2024 30/11/2028</p> <p>• PG26252 Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in Wind Energy with Immersive Technologies 5S22439 Special Purpose Award 5 Validated New 27/11/2024 30/04/2029</p> <p>• PG26248 Level 4 Specific Purpose Certificate in Barista Skills 4S22449 Special Purpose Award 4 Validated New 27/11/2024 30/04/2029</p> <p>• PG26189</p>

Level 4 Specific Purpose Certificate in Digital Citizenship 4S22364 Special Purpose Award 4 Validated New **24/09/2024** 30/11/2028

- **PG26175**

Level 3 Specific Purpose Certificate in Introduction to Climate Justice 3S22362 Special Purpose Award 3 Validated New **24/09/2024** 30/11/2028

- **PG26188**

Level 4 Specific Purpose Certificate in Social Innovation in the Community 4S22201 Special Purpose Award 4 Validated New **24/09/2024** 31/08/2028

- **PG26143 with associated Minor Awards x3**

Level 1 Specific Purpose Certificate in English for Speakers of Other Languages 1S22419 Special Purpose Award 1 Validated New **24/09/2024** 30/04/2029

- **PG26146 with associated Minor Awards x3**

Level 2 Specific Purpose Certificate in English for Speakers of Other Languages 2S22427 Special Purpose Award 2 Validated New **24/09/2024** 30/04/2029

- **PG25705**

Door Security Skills 4S20612 Special Purpose Award 4 Validated New **07/02/2024** 31/07/2028

- **PG25728**

Security Guarding Skills 4S20606 Special Purpose Award 4 Validated New **07/02/2024**
31/07/2028

- **PG25580**

Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in Sustainable Supply Chain Procurement 5S22199
Special Purpose Award 5 Validated New **28/11/2023** 31/08/2028

- **PG25628**

Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in Lean Practice for Sustainable Business 5S22193
Special Purpose Award 5 Validated New **28/11/2023** 31/07/2028

- **PG25666**

Certificate in Lean Principles for Sustainable Business 5F22195 Minor Award 5 Validated New
28/11/2023 31/07/2028

- **PG25667**

Certificate in Lean Tools for Sustainable Business 5F22197 Minor Award 5 Validated New
28/11/2023 31/07/2028

Commentary and Reflections

Click here to enter text.

GRETB continues to engage with QNet in the development of a coherent sectoral plan for programme planning and review. GRETB is currently collaborating with LCETB as part of the sectoral pilot project in module updates presently underway. GRETB are collaborating actively with other awarding bodies. Examples of this include Tertiary Degrees/Apprenticeships/FDQ/City & Guilds/Lantra. The Hairdressing Apprenticeship in collaboration with LCETB is now on offer in two GRETB centres. GRETB is also collaborating with Kerry ETB on the Commis Chef apprenticeship. GRETB will continue to work with other ETB's, QQI, and other stakeholders to offer programmes of mutual interest.

GRETB Employer Services are offering a range of programmes to meet the needs of employers and enhance the skills-set of employees. This has been achieved in 2024 whereby target has been achieved. Meaningful relationships have been established with companies in the Med Tech, Pharma, Hospitality and Care sectors across the region where a broad range of programmes have been made available through individual, company and regional routes through the Skills to Advance funding mechanism. Micro-credentials in Environmental Awareness and Building Digital Skills. This provision will be expanded upon to include additional courses in 2025.

Link to Published Policies and Procedures

Click here to enter text.

1.06 Access, Transfer and Progression

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
<p>GRETB has stated its commitment “to ensure that a Recognition of Prior Learning Service is available to learners” and to the development of a Recognition of Prior Learning Policy (SER, 46). The review team recommends that the ETB continue with the development of this service to allow for its early introduction across centres.</p>	<p>GRETB is committed to ensure that a Recognition of Prior Learning opportunities are available to learners subject to available resources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A draft GRETB Policy has been developed • A number of GRETB staff have completed the RPL Digital Badge with Open Courses and new AEO with RPL responsibility has completed a Level 9 in RPL: Policy, Pedagogy and Practice thus equipping a staff team with capacity to progress RPL to policy sign off and implementation. • Staff have attended a number of RPL networking events and are actively engaged with RPL practitioners in FE and HE through the RPL Practitioner Network and beyond • This will be updated following completion of QQI’s consultation on the Green Paper on QQI’s Access, Transfer & Progression Policy and ATP policy, currently in progress.
<p>The review team recommends that the ETB work in conjunction with SOLAS and other bodies to develop a system of tracking graduates, to explore use of IT in graduate tracking and in line with European examples.</p>	<p>Click here to enter text. Click here to enter text.</p> <p>PLSS is currently the system utilised and GRETB will continue to liaise with SOLAS regarding graduate tracking. and any national developments to identify best practice for tracking graduates using existing CSO Data.</p>

Commentary and Reflections

GRETB is actively committed to RPL Policy and RPL Strategy for the sustainable development and implementation of RPL within the organisation.

Link to Published Policies and Procedures

Click here to enter text.

1.07 Integrity and Approval of Learner Results

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
<p>The review team recommends that the ETB review the changes to the IV and EA processes that have been implemented as a result of Covid-19 with a view to making them standard thus reducing the paper-heavy trail and making the IV process more streamlined and time efficient. The ETB should also continue to recruit EAs to ensure subject matter experts are available across all centres and programmes.</p>	<p>A review of FET QA processes which included the development of a Risk Analysis database to track FET QA EA visits by centre, and enable a more efficient RAP cycle for QA, centres and EAs was undertaken by QA. The actions related to this are outlined below:</p>
<p>Click here to enter text.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of Annual RAP calendar shared with centres to facilitate smoother planning of EA visits & RAP meeting documentation • Development of live database with all centres and modules authenticated & certified from Dec 2022 to present, to quickly determine at each certification period which modules require external authentication • Introduction of enhanced Excel Estimates file to gather relevant Major & Minor Award information to easily map to QQI data • Non QQI course activity tracked • Hosting of regular briefings with EAs and centres to communicate expectations and updates

- Surveyed centres to gather feedback and rate satisfaction on RAP process
- Refreshing & updating material on Quality Connect SharePoint including developing a dedicated section for EA's

Commentary and Reflections

Membership of the ETBI QA EA working Group remains active and the EA Directory is used to source EA's.

Link to Published Policies and Procedures

Click here to enter text.

<https://gretb.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Fair-Consistent-Assessment-of-Learners-Policy.-Final-2024.pdf>

1.08 Information and Data Management

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
<p>The basic foundation of information and data management in GRETB is adequately organised and in compliance with GDPR. The review team recommends that GRETB continue to address the issue of staff shortages in the IT department. All data management systems should be checked to ensure they meet GDPR guidelines, including Multi-Factor Authentication, where required.</p>	<p>The IT Department conducts data management systems check on an ongoing basis to ensure compliance.</p> <p>Completed for Staff Accounts. FET Learner Accounts will be reviewed for MFA in 2025</p>
<p>Click here to enter text.</p>	
<p>Commentary and Reflections GRETB recognises the challenges in staff resources in IT and, along with colleagues in ETBs, has engaged and will continue to engage with government departments and key stakeholders.</p>	
<p>Link to Published Policies and Procedures Click here to enter text.</p>	

1.09 Public Information and Communication

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
<p>The review team recommends that GRETB further examine the issue of communications to ensure that members of the public and prospective learners are aware of the extent of the services it offers. It is recommended that GRETB continue with the work already underway to develop a shared sectoral identity and communication strategy as outlined in the SER (p 57)</p>	<p>In March 2024 an Administrative Officer with responsibility for Communications and Strategy was appointed. Key areas of focus include; internal communication i.e. Sharepoint, Branding (streamlining), events and promotional materials. An audit of both internal and external factors pertaining to communication has begun – significant progress has been made by the team (Adult Education Officer, Communications Officer, Support person) this has highlighted strengths and areas for development which have been incorporated into a plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three online communications training sessions were hosted by the Comms team for GRETB staff on Branding, Social Media and content creation. Additionally, in collaboration with PL&D department an in-person FET Professional Development Day focused on Communications and PL&D entitled "Empower & Engage," took place in Q4 of 2024. • Development of FET Communications Strategy. To be completed in by end of Quarter 1 in conjunction with SMT. • Branding guidelines have been approved and shared with staff. Training sessions were also provided to help apply the guidelines effectively. • GRETB staff can access a range of branding assets through Staff Connect Hub. Clear processes are in place for promoting content on social media and the website, as well as sharing news relevant to their centre, service, or college.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Communications Team provides support with design and paid social media promotions. Additional in-person training for FET Centres is being planned and will take place in Q1 and Q2 of 2025. The Aqua Farm programme was rolled out in December 2024 where the VR Platform was an integral piece of the delivery.
Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.
<p>Commentary and Reflections</p> <p>GRETB is committed to continuously improving both internal and external communications. We recognise and have carried an extensive review on how our current communications department can best service the organisation as a whole. The team are currently working in conjunction with SLT & SMT to define the parameters of the division. The new FET strategy will bring both opportunities and challenges, depending on the resources available. This highlights the need for an effective and professionalised communications structure that can adapt to support the strategy and keep everyone informed and engaged</p>	
<p>Link to Published Policies and Procedures</p> <p>https://gretb.sharepoint.com/sites/Communications</p>	

2.0 Teaching, Learning & Assessment

2.01 The Learning Environment

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
<p>The review team recommends that GRETB continue to develop and implement a consistent approach to blended learning and delivery which would be available to learners across all centre locations. It is recommended that the momentum and the effective internal practice that was begun as a response to Covid-19 be continued and that GRETB liaise with other ETBs to address regulatory and other issues which might arise.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is ongoing and GRETB are actively engaging with QQI regarding the application process for extension of scope. • The QQI blended and online learning self-assessment form is complete for GRETB. • QQI’s blended and online learning gap analysis is complete. • Digital Learning Steering group established SOLAS (GRETB TEL as a representative) • Digital learning (TEL coordinators) working group established across ETB’s to inform SOLAS steering group. <p>Continuous professional development of staff to build digital capacity has included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot in UDL subject specific workshops completed. • A UDL working group has now been established to include a wider cross section of GRETB services (TEL a member)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conversational learning project ongoing. As a result of the pilot, a gap in accessible online support for maths was identified; also short demonstrations for safety procedures/equipment (new content now in development) • App Project support extended to Youth Advocacy “Jump Start” Programme. Currently being piloted through YA service. • Moodle training rolled out for centres to help with course design and delivery on Moodle. • Brickfield Accessibility toolkit integrated into GRET B FET Moodle. Toolkit supports accessible course design. • Moodle support for National Hairdressing Apprenticeship now delivered by GRET B centres • Moodle style guides updated and located on TEL sharepoint • TEL Tuesday: A series of short 20 weekly sessions provide ongoing training in using pedagogically supported TEL tools
Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.
<p>Commentary and Reflections Click here to enter text.</p>	
<p>Link to Published Policies and Procedures Click here to enter text.</p>	

2.02 Assessment of Learners

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
N/A	Click here to enter text.
Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.
Commentary and Reflections GRETB's Fair & Consistent Assessment of Learners policy with associated procedures has been approved by the Board of Management and are published on GRETB's external website in addition to QA's internal SharePoint.	
Link to Published Policies and Procedures Click here to enter text. www.gretb.ie and as outlined in section 1.03	

2.03 Supports for Learners

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
<p>The review team observed very good practice at the majority of centre locations and recommends that GRETB streamline methods to take this best practice and implement it at smaller and rural locations.</p>	<p>The identification of areas for continuous improvement is ongoing and some exemplars of actions undertaken/underway are outlined below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner regional forums have been created and further feedback will be sought through these forums. This is ongoing. • Centre Managers were surveyed in January 2024 to request their feedback on the Learner Experience Report and the suggestions from learners that they had identified as realistic and achievable for implementation. • Summary reports for each RAP period, including Craft Apprenticeships have been implemented and provided for QA Steering Group review. • In the academic year 2023-2024, the first full roll out of a self-referral for learner support system was in place 1206 unique referrals were received. Supports provided include counselling, device equity loans, sign language interpretation and LENS report completed. • The development of Communities of Practice has been supported as per Case Study 5 exemplar. • The Learner Inclusion service continues to expand its services. Please see Case Study 6.
<p>Click here to enter text.</p>	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>

Commentary and Reflections

The Learner Support Service, continues to provide a learner centred approach which is based on providing appropriate supports to ensure a successful learning experience while on a GRETB course. | Please see **Case Study 6** from The Learner Support and Inclusion service with respect to Fostering Inclusion and further developments within their service.

Link to Published Policies and Procedures[Click here to enter text.](#)

3.0 Self-Evaluation, Monitoring & Review

3.01 Self-Evaluation Monitoring & Review

<p>Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)</p>	<p>Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.</p>
<p>The review team emphasises the necessity of using KPIs to review, monitor and evaluate the quality of the educational process. Consequently, the review team recommends the development and maintenance of a system of metrics based on KPIs to measure and analyse the progression of the training and education provided. In this way, achievements can be recognised, and any shortcomings addressed.</p>	<p>GRETB are committed to developing a FET Monitoring and Evaluation policy. The utilization of Tableau to analyse data has increased the capacity within GRETB to use data and data analytic software to monitor key indicators of progress and support the future development of GRETB.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certification benchmarking analysis from QQI is ongoing
<p>Click here to enter text.</p>	<p>.</p>
<p>Commentary and Reflections</p>	
<p>GRETB plan to Develop a Monitoring and Evaluation policy based on all FET Monitoring and evaluation activities subject to staff resources</p>	
<p>Link to Published Policies and Procedures Click here to enter text.</p>	

3.02 Programme Monitoring & Review

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
<p>The review team recommends that GRETB continue to focus on the needs of external stakeholders and employers. This would involve linking “graduate tracking” to the programme monitoring and review process to check if the educational needs of the learners have been sufficiently met as they enter employment or continued education and to ascertain why some of them might drop out of programmes completely.</p>	<p>GRETB continue to liaise with SOLAS and ETBI. SOLAS have responsibility for updating the PLSS management system from which progression details are recorded</p>
<p>Click here to enter text.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within some centres, midterm evaluation reports, end of course evaluations and learner feedback is captured in addition to feedback forms. • Formal Systematic Programme Monitoring and Review of courses will be implemented subject to staff resources being in place.
<p>Commentary and Reflections Ongoing evaluation occurs internally in the form of midterm reports, end of course evaluations. Additional feedback mechanisms include feedback from Guidance and Learner Support. GRETB engages with QNet and QQI in a sectoral approach to programme review and is actively collaborating with LCETB in the updating of programme modules as part of a national pilot.</p>	
<p>Link to Published Policies and Procedures Click here to enter text.</p>	

3.03 Oversight, monitoring & review of relationships with external parties

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
<p>The review team recommends that GRETB further develop its procedures for engaging in external stakeholder relationships.</p>	<p>The Employer Services team are represented on Western Regional Skills Boards, Western Region Skills Sales, Bia Innovator, Net Zero Cities, Galway Chamber Sustainability Committee, and Sales Professional Network and Crew Academy West, Steering Group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Assistant Manager with responsibility for Post 2016 apprenticeships has taken the place of the AEO with responsibilities for Pathways on this board. (Western Region Skills forum) The AEO with responsibility for Enterprise Engagement has joined the Education sub-committee board • GRETB hosts an annual business breakfast where employers across the two regions are invited to attend. The first event took place on the 4th of September in the Connacht Hotel in Galway city – the Autumn Programme was launched. This was a very successful networking event. The second event took place in the Abbey Hotel Roscommon on the 25th September. • Project SEED a Client Relationship Management (CRM). The SEED project is completed – an issue arose at national level re: bidding resulting in the project not going ahead. This will be launched in Quarter 2. • Collaboration with Roscommon County Council to establish new sustainable programmes that have impacted communities affected by redundancy in an

	attempt to eliminate fossil fuels and support the national and GRETB climate agenda while supporting skills and employment development.
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<p>Commentary and Reflections</p> <p>The Enterprise Engagement division is fully operational after a period of change, in 2023 a new Senior Manager, further changes in 2024 i.e. three new appointments. 2024 was a very successful year for the division in terms of business and development, delivery.</p>	
<p>Link to Published Policies and Procedures</p> <p>N/A</p>	

4.0 Quality Developments and Enhancements

In this section, please provide an update on QA developments and enhancements within the ETB. This could include programme and curriculum developments and initiatives, and enhancements of teaching, learning and assessment.

Guide:

An update should be provided on any objectives/planned actions for the year **not already addressed in the Interim quality report in sections 1-3.**

The table is designed to assist in this process and should include headline information only.

No.	QA Objectives	Update on Status	Link to updated/new Policy
	These should relate to objectives not already discussed in the progress report.	Provide brief update on status, whether completed or in progress.	
1	<p>Drive QA continuous improvement initiatives for the CRAFT Apprenticeship program with the goal of improved standardisation and process optimisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of a new IV documentation checklist to ensure clarity and accuracy of detail submitted and documented. New documentation and aids published on the Quality Assurance SharePoint for easy access by all relevant personnel. • Creation of a visual flowchart for Craft instructors and Incentre tutors to facilitate training by the availability of a quick reference guide. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation Date: May 2024 • Implementation Date: July 2024 	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of a process flow map to facilitate TQAS IV training by outlining the steps required in completion of the Internal verification process. • Conduct continuous engagement with regular QA briefings with all Craft Instructors to provide feedback, direction and discuss any queries. • Champion ongoing one to one training and knowledge sharing with new Craft instructors to facilitate their understanding, acquisition and application of the Craft QA process. <p>Result of initiatives: Improved consistency and standardisation identified with the Craft Apprenticeship documentation leading to a more efficient overall process flow, reduction of non-value time spent in seeking clarification and/or follow-ups along with timely completion of RAPS meetings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation Date: September 2024 • Implementation Date: Ongoing throughout 2024 and 2025 • Implementation Date: Ongoing throughout 2024 and 2025 	
<p>2</p> <p>Review of FET QA processes to include development of Risk Analysis database to track FET QA EA visits by centre and enable a more efficient RAP cycle for QA, centres and EAs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of Annual RAP calendar shared with centres to facilitate smoother planning of EA visits & RAP meeting documentation • Development of live database with all centres and modules authenticated & certified from Dec 2022 to present, to quickly determine at each certification period which modules require external authentication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation Date: September 2024 • Implementation Date: Ongoing since November 2024 	<p>Click here to enter text.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of enhanced Excel Estimates file to gather relevant Major & Minor Award information to easily map to QQI data • Host regular briefings with EAs and centres to communicate expectations and updates • Surveyed centres to gather feedback and rate satisfaction on RAP process • Refreshing & updating material on Quality Connect SharePoint 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation Date: November 2024 • Implementation Date: Ongoing since November 2024 • Complete December 2024 • Implementation Date: Ongoing in 2024 and 2025 		
3	<p>TEL Quality Dev/enhancements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TEL purchase fund 2023/2024 support centres upgrading their digital equipment. Training packages provided for use of new Clevertouch boards, podcasting equipment, Software • TEL Hub building complete: to provide a flexible digital training space and digital centre of excellence for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete • Complete 	Click here to enter text.

<p>GRETB services. Hub includes podcast suite, VR and Green screen Room, Video editing suite.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brickfield Accessibility toolkit now integrated into GRETB FET Moodle. Accessibility toolkit evaluates Moodle course content and helps auto remediate accessibility errors. In addition, accessibility toolkit offers file conversion to audio mp4/screen reader/other accessibility file types. • Conversational learning project development support extended to support other services (YA “Jumpstart” programme). • Digital learning steering group SOLAS – member ship GRETB TEL/ TEL coordinators digital learning working group across ETB • Moodle TEL support for National Hairdressing Apprenticeship – TEL as category manager for GRETB centre cohorts • TEL Tuesday weekly series of 20 minute demonstrations of TEL tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete • Ongoing • Ongoing • Ongoing • Ongoing 	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre specific training pilot: Offering ongoing TEL support to centres for the academic year to support in digital assessment/ ePortfolios/ building digital skills in centres/ Digital assessment • Moodle training for centres, course design and delivery through Moodle, Moodle grade centre • Liaison with QA: Digital tutor packs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot • Ongoing • Pilot 	
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5.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies (optional)

Guide:

The ETB is invited to provide up to 3 x **short case studies**, 1-2 pages, demonstrating QA enhancements and their impacts (these may relate to topics covered in sections above). **You are encouraged to reflect on and highlight areas that may be of interest to other providers and would benefit from wider dissemination.** Note: Submission of case studies are not mandatory. However, please know that any submitted case studies will be published on QQI's website in full unabridged format.

Guideline for Case Study

QQI recommends that written case studies should:

- ⇒ Be between half a page and two pages in length
- ⇒ Limited to 2-2500 words
- ⇒ Relate to a specific time- and subject-bound issue
- ⇒ Include an introduction that sets out a brief overview of contextual matters
- ⇒ Include any relevant supporting data and data analysis
- ⇒ Include links to any sources cited
- ⇒ Include a clear concluding paragraph with overview of key outcomes/learning

Case Study Title 1: Orientation for Refugee Learners at the Ballaghaderreen Reception Centre

Introduction

As well as general English and Literacy classes, GRET B staff also run a comprehensive Orientation programme in the Ballaghaderreen Reception Centre, with a mixture of classroom delivery and guest speakers. We've developed a suite of materials addressing topics from Irish Geography to Public Transport, Fire Drills, the Education and Health Systems, Public Holidays, Banking, and Irish Law. This material is delivered roughly twice monthly in hour-long classes.

We also organise a series of guest speakers including workers from Tusla, HSE, Psychology West, Citizens Information, and a range of other public bodies, organisations and charities. These guest-speaker sessions are also delivered roughly twice-monthly and alternate with the Orientation classes. The aim of the programme as a whole is to introduce various aspects of Irish Life, Society, and Culture, and to ensure residents leave the centre with information and skills that will enable them to operate independently in Ireland and seek help from relevant services when they need it

Description of issue

All our learners are new in Ireland and unfamiliar with the workings of Irish systems, culture and society

Action

Classroom delivery of orientation topics including Irish Geography to Public Transport, Fire Drills, the Education and Health Systems, Public Holidays, Banking, and Irish Law.

Series of guest speakers in collaboration with other local agencies and groups from throughout Ireland, such as Tusla, HSE, Psychology West, The Islamic Cultural Centre of Ireland, the Citizens Information Centre

Key Outcomes/Impacts

Learners receive a basic grounding in how Ireland works, how to navigate Irish culture and society, and where to get help when they need it

Key Learnings

The level of information can be somewhat overwhelming, so it is important to deliver information in bitesize chunks.

Learners don't always retain all the information from the first offering, so sessions repeat frequently and build on each other.

Learners are from war-torn countries so trauma awareness is important, especially around potentially sensitive topics.

Case Study Title 2: ESOL Literacy for Refugee Learners at the Ballaghaderreen Reception Centre

Introduction

In ESOL Literacy, we have developed a model delivering twenty-week programmes addressing two subjects: Communication and Speaking, and Alphabet and Letters. These classes are delivered across 4 levels which correspond to the LASLLIAM pre-A1 descriptors developed by the Council of Europe in 2023 to address levels below CEFR A1. Learners who may have a limited or patchy educational background can join our classes at LASLLIAM 1 level and progress through 4 discrete stages as they develop their literacy and communication skills

Description of issue

Learners arrive with very low levels of pre-existing literacy, language and prior education.

Learners have weak oral language skills in their second language and no familiarity with the Roman script. Many learners are also pre-literate in their home language

Action

The programme is delivered in two streams: a Communication and Speaking class to develop oral language, vocabulary and fluency, and an Alphabet and Letters class to develop literacy, reading and writing. Both classes are delivered at 4 levels corresponding to the LASLLIAM pre-A1 descriptors

These modules also map well onto the new ESOL awards developed by CMETB at Entry Level, QQI Level 1 and QQI Level 2.

The first batch of the new Entry to ESOL awards, an un-certified course designed to prepare learners for the QQI Level 1 award will be handed out in February this year to students in our Alphabet and Letters 1 class. We hope to have the full suite of awards from Entry to Level 2 in place by the end of 2025.

Key Outcomes/Impacts

Learners who are new to English and new to Literacy pass through 4 discrete stages on their language and literacy journey, with comprehensive literacy support throughout.

Learners complete the Alphabet and Letters 4 class with the ability to read and parse short sentences and multi-syllable words, and are ready for a General English or regular ESOL class at A1 level.

Key Learnings

Moving the learners through the different stages of Literacy acquisition takes a long time. Each of Alphabet and Letters 1, 2, 3, and 4 take 20 weeks to complete, and the same for Communication 1, 2, 3, and 4, roughly 800 hours delivery in total.

Learners are keen to be tested to demonstrate skills acquisition and with good uptake for the inaugural round of Entry to ESOL assessments in Speaking and Listening.

Tutors require extensive onboarding and CPD to become familiar with the techniques required to reach students at these levels. ESOL Literacy is quite different to general ESOL and presents unique problems in terms of dealing with students with low levels of oral language, literacy, and prior education.

All of the students in these classes are from war-torn countries so trauma-awareness is key: this involves some training for tutors as well as intentional planning, delivery, and classroom management.

Case Study Title 3: English for Work and Employability Pilot

Introduction

GRETB received funding from the Collaboration and Innovation Fund under the ALL strategy to develop a pilot in English for Work and Employability. We are at the tail end of this pilot programme, aimed at all adult residents of working age in the centre. We delivered a 20-week course addressing a range of topics and industries including classes on construction, tools, kitchens, health and safety, hospitality, and retail. We also had several one-day and two-day workshops on manual handling, basic first aid, food safety, and CV prep

Description of issue

Learners are interested in work and employment but often spend several years working on their language skills before specific work-related skills can be addressed

Learners are unfamiliar with the Irish labour market and how to look for and start work

Action

2 trainings sessions for tutors funded by CIF

Development of a pilot programme

20 weeks of delivery at 4 levels: CEFR pre-A1, A1, A1+ and A2

Evaluation pending

Key Outcomes/Impacts

The most successful aspects of the programme were the vocabulary classes and the one-day workshops. Learners retained much of the vocabulary we input and recycled in relation to health and safety, construction, retail, hospitality, and other sectors. Uptake was good for the workshops in food safety, manual handling, and basic first aid

Key Learnings

We have found it difficult to appeal to a broad audience across a number of sectors with targeted lessons on particular topics. For example, although both men and women are attending these classes and we have not split the classes by gender, we have found that men have more of an interest in the construction and tools classes, while women have more interest in content about textiles and food. By trying to appeal to both we have ended up with a somewhat scattergun approach that somewhat alienates everyone at different times.

Next term we plan to repackage this content into a series of shorter workshops that students can sign up for one-by-one. Instead of having a general class that attempts to address both construction and clothes repair as well as everything in between, we will have a short course focusing on vocabulary for the construction sector, a short course about textiles and clothes, and a range of other short courses addressing all the other subject areas that are of interest to our learners or in which they already have skills but lack specific vocabulary in English. This will allow people to opt in to their own areas of interest and opt out of areas that are not relevant to them.

Case Study Title 4: Knowledge Transfer (KT) Initiative

Introduction

The Level 6 Advanced Certificate in Arboriculture, provided by Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board (GRETB), is a two-year apprenticeship programme tailored for individuals passionate about tree care and woodland management. It offers a blend of practical on-the-job training and formal education, equipping apprentices with a comprehensive skillset in arboriculture.

The programme, developed in collaboration with industry experts, includes education and training at the Petersburg Outdoor Education & Training Centre in County Galway and hands-on experience with approved employers. Apprentices engage in diverse tasks, such as tree felling, pruning, thinning, preservation, and protection, using advanced equipment to manage trees, hedgerows, and woodlands in urban and rural environments. Graduates earn a QQI Level 6 Advanced Certificate in Arboriculture and eleven Lantra certificates of competence that are required to work as qualified arborists. The programme's earn-while-you-learn structure ensures at least 50% of learning takes place in the workplace, offering invaluable real-world experience.

This apprenticeship is ideal for those who enjoy outdoor work, are passionate about the environment, and seek a rewarding career in tree and woodland management. With growing attention on maintaining safe and sustainable tree environments, demand for qualified arborists continues to rise across Ireland.

Description of issue

As Ireland's sole provider of arboriculture education, GRETB plays a critical role in shaping the nation's tree management practices. The Level 6 programme addresses the need for skilled arborists to support sustainable urban forestry, biodiversity, and tree preservation. However, the demand for arborists greatly exceeds the number of graduates, highlighting the necessity for GRETB to expand its services.

Action KT Events 2024

In 2024, GRETB Arboriculture launched a pioneering knowledge transfer initiative aimed at fostering collaboration and expertise-sharing across various sectors. This initiative brought together state agencies, universities, local authorities, environmental organisations, private companies, and community groups through workshops, seminars, outreach programmes, and case study site visits. Participation was free and open to current, past, and prospective students, mentors, employers, and programme stakeholders. 15 KT events were deployed during the initial pilot year.

Key events included:

Agroforestry Systems Field Day with Teagasc Forestry Development Department.

Veteran Tree Management Seminar and Field Day with the Office of Public Works and the Tree Council of Ireland.

Atlantic Rainforest Restoration Seminar with Hometree Charity Ltd.

Urban Tree Planting Systems and Structural Soils Workshop with Greenleaf Ireland.

Timber Utilisation for Arborists Workshop with Atlantic Technological University Connemara and Fiachrua Timbercraft.

Trees and Bats for the Arborist Seminar and Field Day with Beoecology and Coillte.

Level 1 Tree Inspection Training with Beith Tree Consultancy Ltd.

Suburban Tree and Woodland Surveying Field Day with UCD School of Landscape Architecture.

Electricity Safety Awareness for Arborists Seminar with ESB Networks.

Tree Pests, Pathology, and Protection Seminar with the Department of Agriculture, Food, and the Marine.

Biochar for Tree Planting and Establishment Seminar with Probio Carbon Ltd.

Earth and Soil Science Seminar and Field Day with Joyce Country and Western Lakes Geopark.

Ash and Elm Dieback Research Seminar with Teagasc Forestry Development Department.

Key Outcomes/Impacts

The initiative has significantly expanded GRETB's stakeholder network to include state agencies, higher education institutions, NGOs, and private sector providers. Local community actors, landowners, and businesses also engaged actively. Events have driven strong participation from students, mentors, employers, and industry representatives, while functioning as open days for prospective participants. In addition, the initiative has:

- Strengthened CPD and lifelong learning systems for the sector.
- Addressed critical national knowledge gaps in arboriculture.
- Enhanced the curriculum and supported the development of new qualifications.
- Elevated GRETB Arboriculture's national profile.
- Helped position Petersburg House as a new National Centre of Excellence in Arboriculture.

Key Learnings

The workshops, seminars, field trips, and case study property visits have been met with a highly positive response, particularly due to their strong environmental and ethical focus. Participants consistently express a strong preference for highly tailored content that meets their specific needs and interests. They have also highlighted their appreciation for the programme's emphasis on cutting-edge scientific research, the integration of emerging technologies and innovations, and the in-depth focus on pest and pathogen management.

Additionally, participants value the national networking opportunities provided through these events, as well as the chance to engage in interactive Q&A sessions with leading specialists, scientists, and academics. There is a growing demand for advanced skills training, alongside increasing calls for certification or formal recognition of the knowledge and skills gained through these initiatives.

Case Study Title 5: Communities of Practice

Introduction

GRETB is currently in the process of piloting two Communities of Practice (CoP). The CoPs are discipline/subject led pilots for teaching staff, with a view to rolling out further subject area CoPs across GRETB FET. It is envisaged that CoPs will provide the opportunity for staff collaboration, more consistent programme delivery across the organisation, and the sharing of best practice thus enhancing learner experiences.

Description of issue

GRETB runs a wide range of programmes across a large geographical area in Galway and Roscommon. Frequently staff are the only person delivering a module/subject in their Centre/Service. The QA Steering Group identified this as an issue and thus a working group was tasked with examining how CoPs could be established in order to enhance provision with improved outcomes for both staff and learners. At the core of this objective was the importance of establishing sustainable CoPs which could run independently

Action

Exploration Phase

1. The QA Steering Group has established a number of working groups including the Teaching, Learning & Assessment (TLA) working group. The TLA has completed key pieces of work since it was established and in 23/24 & 24/25, the terms of reference for the TLA working group were to explore and establish Communities of Practice.
2. A comprehensive literature review of Communities of Practice was completed by the TLA working group.
3. Internal existing Communities of Practice were examined, with feedback provided to the working group.
4. External Communities of Practices, outside of GRETB were examined (setup, implementation, benefits/challenges encountered) and key learnings presented to the working group.
5. A meeting took place with an educational expert in the CoP field and another with a facilitator of several CoP in another ETB.

Planning Phase

6. Two key disciplines were identified as pilot groups based on number of staff, geographical spread and staff isolation (generally one staff member per Centre) – Horticulture & Healthcare.
7. A CoP initial half day meeting took place in December 2024 with these two groups in the Connacht Hotel, Galway. The objective of this meeting was to establish whether there was an appetite to establish a CoP within the group; explore potential areas where a CoP would be beneficial; and identify next stage in the CoP development for pilot groups.
8. The invitation was extended to all teachers/tutors in these two disciplines. Due to the linkage of Arboriculture to Horticulture and as Arboriculture is very niche, it was decided to invite this group of tutors to join the Horticulture group.
9. The meeting included:
 - a. Introduction
 - b. Explanation of CoP
 - c. Group activities: Who do you currently collaborate with? What do you share (resources, practices, etc)? What are you hoping to achieve by coming here today? What are some of the successes/challenges you have experienced in your practice? How do you think a CoP could support you in your teaching practice? What would you like to see in a CoP? Next meeting ideas?
10. The outcome of this initial meeting:
 - a. Both groups actively participated in group activities
 - b. An evaluation distributed to both groups resulted in very positive feedback (informal feedback on the day concurred with this evaluation)
 - c. Both groups expressed a desire to move forward with the establishment of a CoP although two different outcomes for the next meeting were expressed:
 - i. Horticulture – Next meeting to discuss approach to assessments
 - ii. Healthcare – Next meeting to plan how the CoP would work and areas prioritised for phased approach to support
 - d. A follow up Padlet was sent to the group which recorded all flip chart activities, photos, slides, etc.

Execution Phase

The next meetings for both disciplines are currently in planning phase

Other CoP

A similar initial meeting is currently in the planning phase for “ESOL” tutors. Given that these are larger groups, it is envisaged that one meeting will take place in Roscommon and another in Galway

Key Outcomes/Impacts

- Appears to be significant appetite to establish CoP
- Very positive feedback received formally and informally

Key Learnings

- Initial research was important before moving to setup phase in order to plan for success
- Appears to be significant appetite to establish CoP

Building sustainable CoP will take time and resources (several members of the TLA Working Group spent considerable time planning for the initial meeting, facilitating same and evaluating/follow-ups). Another meeting is planned for this group, and it is hoped that some of the members of the group will become actively involved. However, it is likely that in order to plan for success, some members of the TLA working group will be involved in the next meeting at least

Case Study Title 6: Learner Support and Inclusion Service

Introduction

The SOLAS FET Strategy has identified three Strategic Priorities in the strategy, one of these priorities is 'Fostering Inclusion' This priority has a focus on 'Consistent Learning Support' to ensure Inclusion. The strategy also identifies enabling themes including 'Learner and Performance Centred'.

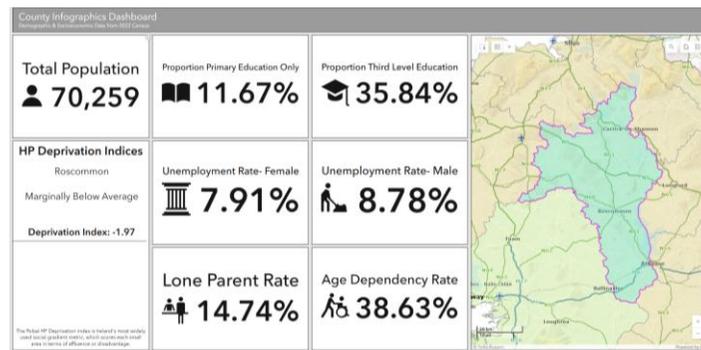
https://www.solas.ie/f/70398/x/64d0718c9e/solas_fet_strategy_web.pdf

Description of issue

This priority has always been at the heart of the provision of learner support for GRETB and inclusion is the responsibility of every employee in GRETB from the centre manager to the tutor, the caretaker. However, to ensure learner support and inclusion is provided in an equitable and consistent manner across overall FET in Galway and Roscommon, GRETB established the Learner Support and Inclusion Service in 2023. This service was designed to promote, facilitate and support the inclusion and support of learners in addition to providing leadership in building inclusive practices across FET.

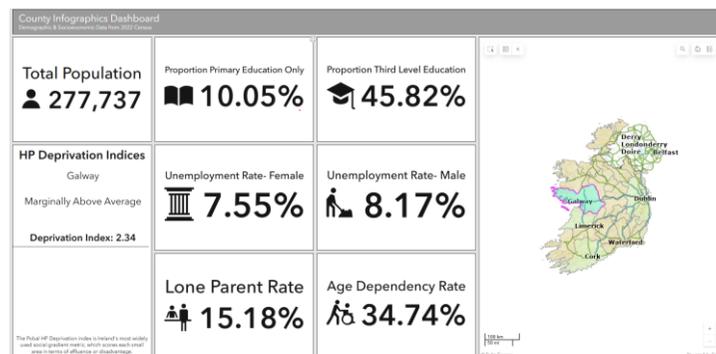
The need for such a service is underpinned by the Demographic & Socioeconomic Data from 2022 Census for both Galway and Roscommon:

Roscommon:



data.pobal.ie

Galway:



data.pobal.ie

Furthermore, disability prevalence is a crucial indicator of the need for additional supports and inclusion measures in Further Education and Training. According to the Central Statistics Office (CSO) Census 2022, the rates of long-lasting conditions or difficulties experienced to a great extent varied across regions:

- Galway County: 7% of the population reported experiencing long-lasting conditions or difficulties to a great extent.
- County Roscommon: 9% of the population reported similar challenges.

These figures underscore the importance of tailored support services in these areas.

westerndevelopment.ie

Action

Since its establishment the Learner Support Services have put in place a range of learner supports to meet needs of learners a person-centred way with its overall aim to support the learner to engage in their chosen course in an equitable manner. Some of the supports include:

- Assessment of Learner Support Needs
- Design of a Learner Educations Needs Summary (LENS) in conjunction with the Learner
- Provision of Personal Assistance supports for people with disabilities
- Provision of Counselling Supports across FET – online and in-person
- Creation of a Learner Assistance Fund
- Coordination of the Laptop Loan Scheme
- Creation of an Assistive Technology Loan Scheme
- Identifying Inclusion Champions around groups or area where there are significant barriers in access and participation i.e. Disability, LGBTQIA+, People experiencing Domestic Abuse and/or Violence
- Development of an Online Learner Supports Hub
- Training in Disability and Inclusion for FET Practitioners
- Wellness and wellbeing Initiatives for Learners
- Development of Calm Spaces within out FET centres.

Key Outcomes/Impacts

In 2024 the number of Beneficiaries of the Service are as follows:

Support	Number of Beneficiaries
PA/Scribe/Sighted Guide	134
Referral for Counselling	165
Laptop Loan Scheme	482

Device Loan Scheme/Access to AT	35
Learner Assistance Fund	646
Referral and Signposting	128
Sign Language Interpreting	91
Training/Workshops to Support Learner Wellbeing	415

Key Learnings

A survey was conducted with Learners who engaged with the Learner Support Service and the feedback has been positive as the examples below outline. However there is still scope for growth with the provision of additional supports and the targeting of more hard to reach individuals and communities.

Examples of Learner Feedback:

- *The assistance fund really helped me, I was about to give up the course, but this money gave me the kick start I needed!*
- *The access to counselling has changed everything for me!*
- *Being able to say what I needed and getting support with it was just brilliant.*
- *I just feel included, I feel I can be myself and that's ok to be me. The course has taught me so much more than IT skills*
- *The app which reads out the documents has made such a difference to me.*
- *I love my course, the fact that sign language is provided, tells me, I matter!*

6.0 Follow-Up Report Survey

(This section will not be published)

Please complete a short survey in relation to the Follow Up Reporting **process** using this [link](#).