Interim Quality Report

Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board

Date: February - 2025

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 [Dublin and Dún Laoghaire ETB]

It is to be submitted by [28/02/25]

The interim quality report has been approved by the DDLETB Quality Council and is submitted by Clodagh Beare

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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

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
1. The review team recommends that DDLETB create a strategy that identifies and prioritises areas for improvement.	Completed and reported upon in the 2024 Interim Quality Report • All Inaugural Review Plan action points have been mapped to the new Statement of Strategy. • All new QA actions and enhancement activities are routinely mapped to the goal and action items of the Statement of Strategy.

Commentary and Reflection
When the new DDLETB Statement of Strategy was completed, one of the first activities undertaken by the QA Unit was to map all the action points identified in the Inaugural Review report. Following on from that, a range of governance and other documentation was reviewed to include reference to the statement of Strategy. This includes the Course Approval Application form, the New Programme Development form and others. The practice of grounding all developmental work within the strategic priorities of the organisation has continued in the past year. As new QA enhancements and initiatives are prioritised and then evaluated, due consideration is given to the extent to which they address DDLETB's strategic goals. Adopting this approach has helped the QA Unit to be more focused and strategic in planning its activities.

Link to Published Policies and Procedures
DDLETB Statement of Strategy 2022-2026

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.
3. The review team recommends that DDLETB implement the recommendations identified in the external review of Quality Governance by O'Brien Governance Design (OBGD). The relaunching of the different governance roles is necessary in the next phase of development of the QA system.	**The external review of the DDLETB governance system** is now complete.QA governance groups are meeting regularly as per their terms of reference. These groups consist of the **Quality Council (QC),** who have oversight of the quality of all Further Education and Training (FET) provision, supported in this role by the **Quality Enhancement Committee**, which has responsibility of the development of all QA policies and procedures, and **the Programmes Committee** which is responsible for the oversight of all programme development in DDLETB. In a survey undertaken in 2024, members of the various governance units reported that they understood the role of the group, their role in the group and felt confident that the work of the group was supporting the quality of provision in DDLETB's FET services. **Development of Team site for FET QA governance groups** To enhance communication and collaboration among the governance groups, three DDLETB FET Governance Team sites were designed. Accessible through the QA Hub and the Teams App, these secure locations now ensure that all relevant information and documentation supporting the work of the governance groups is easily available to committee members as relevant, and is not visible to other QA Hub users.

	The three Team sites have significantly improved support for collaboration and communication, by organising and archiving meeting information for ease of access and maintaining version control by sharing links to relevant folders instead of emailing attachments. Additionally, other channels with different access permissions are now available for other working groups as needed.

Commentary and Reflections

DDLETB had been one of the early ETBs to develop QA governance processes, at a time when these were very new concepts to the sector. While these governance structures provided support when COVID struck, it also highlighted weaknesses in the systems. DDLETB has always believed in taking a foundational approach to development: building strong foundations to support future growth and development. As we emerged from COVID and reflected upon the weaknesses in the system that it had exposed, it was decided to undertake a review of our governance systems, to address the weaknesses of the past, and build the strong foundations that we sought for the future. To this end, O'Brien Governance Design was engaged to undertake an external review, as part of the ETB's preparation for the Inaugural Review. The opportunity of the Inaugural Review was also used to engage with the international panel and gather any insights and guidance they had to offer.

In the two years since the review of the Governance system, terms of reference have been developed, new members recruited, groups have met, and systems have bedded down. The confidence expressed by members that they understood their role in the oversight of the quality of provision in DDLETB's FET services, is evidence to the growing maturity of the ETB's governance systems, and testament to the foundational approach that DDLETB took.

DDLETB now has those strong foundations upon which to anchor all future development. The strength of its governance systems lies in the willingness to reflect, critically evaluate, and change. It did so once before, and will continue to do so, in order to meet the evolving needs of its learners.

Link to published policies and procedures
Click here to enter text.

1.03 Documentation of QA

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
2. The review team recommends that DDLETB continue developing a single, standardised quality assurance system for all its provision in the next academic year.	**QA Framework** • In 2024, DDLETB Quality Council decided not to develop a Quality Assurance (QA) Handbook, which may become quickly outdated, needing to be revised if one element is changed. Instead, it decided to focus on developing its QA policies and procedures as a suite of separate, yet interrelated documents, organised within the framework provided by the QQI Core QA Guidelines. • This QA Framework is now housed on the QA Hub, accessible to all DDLETB FET staff. As the QA Hub is a one-stop-shop for all QA needs (descriptors, resources, guidelines, calendars etc.), it is used extensively by FET staff and was thus a logical place to house the QA Framework, as staff could freely engage with the policies and procedures housed there. • Having a set interrelated documents has meant that policy and procedural documents can easily be added or amended, and communicated through news items on the QA Hub, as well as through the traditional email channels. **Policy development completed in 2024** • In 2024, the QA Unit completed work on a **Professional Learning and Development (PL&D) policy**, which was revised to align with the wider DDLETB organisational PL&D policy. As part of this development work, FET PL&D guidelines were also developed. These guidelines included a detailed breakdown of the different types of

PL&D available to all FET staff, how to apply for them, how they are funded, and what different supports are available for each category of PL&D.

- This detailed document is accompanied by a 1 page quick-reference sheet, available on the PD Hub (see below), so that all staff can instantly identify what PL&D opportunities are available to them, and how they may be supported.
- As part of this work, governance structures were put in place to oversee the transparent allocation of funding for PL&D opportunities, in conjunction with the DDLETB Human Resources Department.

Policy development commenced in 2024

- Work is currently underway to complete a **Programme Development and Review policy**. The policy and its accompanying procedures and infrastructural mechanisms focus on the programme life cycle. They are due for completion in spring/summer 2025
- Work is currently underway to complete a **Teaching, Learning and Assessment policy**, to include consideration of feedback to learners plus the impact of Gen AI on assessment design and academic integrity. The policy is due for completion in spring/summer 2025. See Section 2.02 below for more information.
- In 2024, work commenced on the development of a **Blended Learning Policy** and associated documentation and protocols, in preparation for DDLETB to apply for an extension of its scope of provision.
  - o A survey of all FET centres indicated an interest in applying for approval for synchronous and asynchronous delivery. This was approved by the DDLETB

Quality Council, and QQI were informed of this intention. Since then, a detailed **Gap Analysis** has been undertaken and an action developed.

- o Work has started on a **Strategy for Blended Learning**, with the guidance and support of the Quality Enhancement Committee and the Quality Council. This strategic statement will inform the development of the Blended Learning policy itself.

- o As the work progresses on the Blended Learning policy, representatives from the different FET services will provide support through the Blended Learning Working Group, to ensure that any policy developed will serve the needs of all learners.

Safe Exam Browser

- As part of the development work for the Blended Learning Policy, the Quality Council approved a pilot project to explore the use of "Safe Exam Browser", a tool designed to assure the integrity of examinations undertaken on a computer.

  - o A Safe Exam Browser working group was established, protocols were developed for the appropriate use of the software tool, and a two-part, assessed training programme was developed for all participants to complete prior to using the software with their learners.

  - o This pilot will be completed and reviewed in summer 2025, in time for inclusion in the DDLETB application to extend their scope of provision to included synchronous and asynchronous learning.

4. The review team recommends that DDLETB create a QA handbook that focuses on specific elements, including:
 	
• a policy review schedule that ensures that all policies are not being reviewed at the same time and that everyone involved in quality assurance is aware of the schedule
	• The **DDLETB policy review schedule** is managed by the QA Unit and overseen by the Quality Enhancement Committee.
	    o In 2024, there was a considerable volume of new policy development which had to take precedence over policy review. However, all new policies include a review date, and the QA Unit keeps a log of these dates. The system is sufficiently flexible that if an urgent need for review is identified, this can be brought to the attention of the Quality Enhancement Committee, and that work can be undertaken at once.
	    o Thus in 2024, the **Reasonable Accommodations Handbook** needed to be reviewed to allow for the use of Dyslexia diagnostic tests. This work was authorised by the Quality Enhancement Committee, and when complete, was approved by the Quality Council. For more information, see Section 2.02 below.

• investment in quality culture (based on professionalism, leadership and ownership) using communities of practice (CoPs) and other methods to address issues experienced across the organisation	**Professionalism through communities of practice, leadership and ownership** • In 2024, the DDLETB PL&D unit supported 29 middle leaders in DDLETB to participate in a 6-part course on Leadership: *Leading and Motivating Teams through Growth and Change*, developed by the UCD Professional Academy for DDLETB. • A new Learner Support Working Group has been formed to develop a **Learner Support Framework** for FET provision in DDLETB. This group is building on the work of the Learner Support Community of Practice, which focused on supporting learners with disabilities, and the learner support sub-group of the Admissions working group. For more information about the work of this group, please see Section 2.03 *Supports for Learners*, below.

	• As a matter of principle, all working groups have representatives from the different FET services. This serves a range of purposes: it facilitates communication across a large organisation, it ensures that everyone's voice is represented at the table, and most importantly, it helps to foster a sense of ownership.
	As the planning work for the proposed College of FET Steering gathered momentum in 2024, the steering group and its working groups reflected that cross-service representation, so as to ensure that all staff understand what is being planned, and the role that they and their centre will play in the new DDLETB College of FET.
• seeking the balance between diversity (the different centres and activities) and standardisation	**Finding a balance of standardisation and diversity**
	• All DDLETB FET QA policy is intended to be standardised and used equally across all FET centres. This goal has been supported by housing the QA Framework on the QA Hub, where it can be accessed by all staff. However, there are some instances where it is essential that policies and procedures should reflect the diversity of DDLETB provision. This may be due to the varying needs of different learner cohorts, or due to legacy issues.
	Thus, in 2024, as part of the Programme Development and Review Policy development process, a separate strand had to be developed, with associated documentation and governance structures, to support the development and review of 'Assessment Instrument Specifications'. These are standardised assessment instruments which are used by all training centres, but not by any other ETB centres.
	In other cases, policies and procedures are developed locally but then standardised to be shared more widely. Thus, in 2024, the FE Policy working group had developed a

	number of policies and procedures, initially for use in PLC Colleges and FE Centres, However, the Quality Enhancement Committee agreed that these could be shared across all centres, and a working group will be set up in 2025 to standardise these policies for all centres. The policies developed include an: • Additional Educational Needs Policy • Critical Incident Policy.
Not addressed in original recommendations from the Inaugural Review	**Streamlining online governance documentation: Submit.com** • In 2024, the QA Unit identified an ongoing challenge with their QA documentation and the various applications etc. that they had to process, as part of managing the governance system. Thus, for example, applications to the Course Approvals Committee were all received on individual application forms. This placed a considerable administrative burden to upload and process applications, log decisions, and report those decisions back to the applications. Additionally, cross-referencing or checking past applications (e.g. to prevent duplication) which were filed as individual applications was an extremely time-consuming process. Therefore, it was decided to explore systems to automate and streamline governance documentation, to ensure that it could be processed quickly and efficiently, be permanently archived in a way that could be quickly cross-referenced, and provide the data required for evidence-based decision making. It also had to be simple to use for busy centre coordinators, and easily integrated into tools they were currently using, so as not to add any extra administrative burden. The QA Unit devised a brief, and identified an Irish company that could deliver a package called Submit.com to meet the needs of that brief. The QA Manager and Data

Officer were trained in the use of the software package, and work started on developing the first form—the Course Approvals Form. This will be piloted in Q1 & 2 2025, and the roll-out is planned for the new academic year. The form will be embedded within a tile on the QA Hub (used on a daily basis by all QA Coordinators already). The single sign-on in use on the QA Hub will mean that users will move seamlessly and transparently into the 'Approvals' app.

It is intended that over time, all governance documentation will be migrated to this software system.

Commentary and Reflections

In 2023, having bedded down the governance system following its review and relaunch, the Quality Council had agreed to take a foundational approach to the development of its suite of QA policy, and focused on the development of a Policy on Policies, and its associated documentation. This ensured a common approach to all future policy development—one which ensured standardisation in principle, while allowing for DDLETB's diversity when needed. Thereafter, in 2024, careful consideration was given to how best to support staff to engage with QA policies, and it was decided to house the QA Framework on the QA Hub, where relevant policies and procedures are easily accessible and logically stored. Taking this strategic approach, and ensuring that strong foundations were in place, has ensured that policy development work has now been able to progress in earnest; much policy work is currently underway, and more is planned for 2025.

A considerable amount of time in 2024 was invested in researching the most suitable software package to migrate all governance documentation online. Again, this is in the spirit of DDLETB QA's principle of investing time and resources early on, to build systems on strong foundations which will be sustainable and return that investment many times over. Thus, it is anticipated that the online governance forms will facilitate the cross-referencing of documentation, and the gathering of data to support evidence-based decision-making. Most importantly, it will reduce the excessive administrative burden that governance processes place on the already-overstretched centre coordinators and the QA unit. This is the single most important factor that will ensure that the governance processes will be sustainable over the years.

Link to Published Policies and Procedures
Link to Policy on Policies
Link to PL&D policy and guidelines

1.04 Staff Recruitment, Management & Development

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
5. The review team recommends that, while it is always appropriate to recruit the most qualified candidate, DDLETB also develop a diversity and inclusion agenda to be introduced into the current recruitment and selection process to reflect the diversity of the learner population.	**Equal Opportunities Policy** • DDLETB finalised its Equal Opportunities Policy in late 2023, and it was rolled out in 2024—too late to be included in the 2023 Interim Quality Report. This Policy is now published on the DDLETB website. It is a crucial component of DDLETB's Human Resources (HR) recruitment policy and procedures and underpins all recruitment practices.
13 The review team recommends that continuous professional development of DDLETB FET staff be managed and planned through a formal training needs analysis and review process. The review team deems this should be introduced in the academic year of 2023-24 and linked to the new statement of strategy.	**Organisational and FET PL&D Policy** • In 2024, the QA & PD Unit worked closely with the DDLETB HR department to update the **organisational PL&D policy**, which is due to be approved by Board and rolled out spring 2025. As part of the work on the organisational policy, the FET PL&D policy was finalised so as to integrate seamlessly with the wider organisational policy. As outlined above, the FET PL&D policy and its accompanying guidelines have now been approved by the FET Quality Council. For more information about the **FET PL&D Policy**, the **PL&D Guidelines** and the **Quick Reference Sheet**, see Section 1.03 *Documentation of QA* above. **Training Needs Analysis** • The PL&D Coordinator undertakes a training needs analysis for all staff every spring, in order to inform the strategic development of the PL&D calendar for the coming year.

	Additionally, the PL&D Coordinator undertakes training needs analyses for specific purposes, or individual services, as required.
	• A Training Needs Analysis (TNA) was conducted in 2024 which informed the development of a Professional Learning and Development (PL&D) Calendar of workshops and. Some notable workshops/courses delivered in 2024 included:
	o AI in the Classroom
	o Mentoring
	o Mind Mapping
	o New MS Stream
	o Effective classroom management
	o How are the strengths and identities of LGBTQ+ staff and learners centered, affirmed and sustained?
	An evaluation survey was conducted after every course/workshop as well to gather feedback the session, and suggestion for future workshops.
	In 2024, in total, 534 FET staff attended different courses/workshops:
	• 69 people attended 20 different webinars organised by ETBI
	• 257 people attended 23 different courses/workshops
	• 57 people were sponsored by DDLETB to attend courses with 10 different institutions
Not addressed in original recommendations from the Inaugural Review	**PD Hub** • The PD Unit rolled out the PD Hub in 2024. This SharePoint site serves as a one-stop Professional Learning and Development (PL&D) shop for all FET staff. On the PD Hub, they can access information about PL&D opportunities, register for workshops

	and courses, and engage with carefully curated external courses and MOOCs. The registration process automatically seeks manager approval—a feature which has significantly reduced 'no-shows', where someone confirms their attendance, and then fails to come. For more information about the PD Hub, see *Case Study 1* below.
Not addressed in original recommendations from the Inaugural Review	**LinkedIn Learning** • DDLETB acquired licences for LinkedIn Learning for FET staff. About 50% of these staff have activated and are using their accounts. • DDLETB LinkedIn Learning numbers for 2024: o 23 Centre-level sub-administrators from 16 different centres o Sub admins and curators curated **7 different Course collections** and 1**0 Learning Paths** for FET staff o 208 people completed 306 courses on LinkedIn Learning o Learners in a DDLETB college have enrolled in a LinkedIn Learning course: *Foundations of AI for Business* as a part of their course.

Commentary and Reflections
In 2023, DDLETB engaged a full-time PL&D Coordinator. Having a dedicated staff member to support the PL&D needs of all FET staff has allowed the PL&D programme to develop in much more strategic manner. A calendar of workshops and other PL&D opportunities is devised twice a year, informed by the regular TNAs, feedback from staff and managers, and the principles outlined in the Statement of Strategy. The use of the PD Hub has exponentially increased staff engagement with PL&D, and it is anticipated that this growth will continue as the hub becomes more firmly established in the culture of FET staff. Having a dedicated coordinator has also supported the roll-out of LinkedIn Learning, allowing busy staff members to engage in PL&D at a time of their own choosing, across a huge range of topics, while also ensuring that DDLETB is able to track that learning, and build up a better understanding of the skillsets available in their staff. Finally, it is hoped that the publication of the PL&D support guidelines will provide a transparent guide to all staff members, and encourage an even greater engagement with PL&D.

Link to Published Policies and Procedures
Equal Opportunities Policy
Link to PL&D policy and guidelines

1.05 Programme Development, Approval & Submission

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
7. The review team recommends that DDLETB use communities of practice as a working method and model of good practice in curriculum design and QA processes and expand this to other appropriate curricular areas.	**Communities of practice in curriculum development** • The QA Unit routinely uses communities of practice for module reviews, curriculum development and QA development. As with all working groups, it is a matter of principle to include representatives from each service wherever appropriate to the theme of the work being undertaken. For more information about modules reviews undertaken in 2024, please see Section 3.02 *Programme Monitoring and Review* below. **ELC Community of Practice** • DDLETB leads the Community of Practice for programme managers of the Early Learning and Care (ELC) programme across all 16 ETBs and other providers who share the ETB curriculum. The community of practice met periodically through 2024 to support the programme delivery and to inform the annual evaluation process overseen by the ELC programme board.
A more holistic approach should be taken in course development, involving industry experts, external authenticators, prospective learners and tutors in order to ensure a complete learning programme	**Using Industry Experts in Curriculum Design** • DDLETB is currently leading on the development of a **special purpose award in Soft Skills for Elder Care,** using virtual reality and AI to facilitate learners to build up the transversal skills needed to work in elder care. The award consists of minor awards in:

where the learner's needs can be fully met so that the learner can become a highly employable member of the labour force.	**Communication Skills for Elder Care**; **Interpersonal Skills for Elder Care**; **Cultural Awareness for Elder Care**; **Self-care for the Care-giver**. This programme will hopefully be validated in Spring/Summer 2025, with the first learners enrolling shortly thereafter. The development of this special purpose award is being guided by a Steering Group consisting of 12 industry experts, from healthcare providers such as Bluebird Care, Home Instead, the Hospice Foundation, Bons Secours and St. John of God, and healthcare teachers. Including these industry perspectives has been crucial in ensuring that the award, when complete, will meet the specific needs of healthcare employers and care givers. **Employer Engagement Team** • One of the actions included in the first Inaugural Review Action Plan, was to engage an Employer Engagement Officer. Since then, both an Employer Engagement Manager and an Employment Engagement Information Officer have been engaged. This has proven extremely successful in strategically managing and optimising DDLETB's engagement with employers and industry. From a curriculum development perspective, this has facilitated the QA Unit to gather feedback from employers and the Regional Skills Forum on the various programmes and micro-qualifications that DDLETB are developing or collaborating on. For more information on the Employer Engagement Team, see Section 3.03 *Oversight, monitoring & review of relationships with external parties.*
15. The review team recommends that DDLETB develop further pathways for learners to contribute to society by creating programmes that support the Euro Skills agenda or contribute to achieving	**In 2024, DDLETB collaborated or led in the development of a range of programmes** **New QQI programmes validated for DDLETB in 2024:** • Level 4 Special Purpose Award in Security Guarding Skills • Level 4 Special Purpose Award in Door Security Skills

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). New and existing programmes should be developed support these global goals and local needs.	• Level 6 Special Purpose Award in Using Robotics in Advanced Manufacturing • Level 5 Special Purpose Award in Digital Assisted Eco Driving (HGV) • Level 5 Special Purpose Award in Digital Assisted Eco Driving (Coach & Bus) • Level 1 Specific Purpose Certificate in English for Speakers of Other Languages • Level 2 Specific Purpose Certificate in English for Speakers of Other Languages **New QQI programmes DDLETB collaborated on with SOLAS in 2024:** • Level 6 Specific Purpose Certificate in AI, legal and strategic (working title) - commenced in 2024 **New QQI green programmes validated for DDLETB to date:** • Level 4 Specific Purpose Certificate in Environmental Sustainability Awareness • Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in Environmental Sustainability Awareness in the Workplace • Level 6 Specific Purpose Certificate in Circular Economy in the Workplace • Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in Resource Efficiency for a Sustainable Workplace • Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in Lean Practice for a Sustainable Workplace • Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in Sustainable Supply Chair Procurement • Level 5 Special Purpose Award in Digital Assisted Eco Driving (HGV) • Level 5 Special Purpose Award in Digital Assisted Eco Driving (Coach & Bus)
Not addressed in original recommendations from the Inaugural Review	**Tertiary award development** • In 2024, DDLETB started collaborating in the planning work for several tertiary awards or access, which are planned to commence in September 2025. These include a: ○ B.A. Hons. In Politics, Society and Media: DDLETB, CDETB and TU Dublin

	○ Access programme into BSc in Radiography: DDLETB, CDETB and UCD
	• Other work commenced or planned includes a BSC in Networks Systems Engineering: DDLETB & TU Dublin; commencement date to be confirmed.
Not addressed in original recommendations from the Inaugural Review	**Green skills Planning Day** • In December 2024, DDLETB FET managers met to reflect on the Green Skills Strategy, and how actions arising from that strategy might be implemented at an organisational level, local level, and in programme development. The conclusions from that planning day are currently being analysed and will be incorporated into DDLETB's next strategic action plans.

Commentary and Reflections
The DDLETB QA Unit has continued to engage in programme development and review, leading on the development of curricula using innovative methodologies such as virtual reality and artificial intelligence, and collaborating with SOLAS and colleagues from other ETBs in the development and validation of a range of programmes and micro-qualifications. However, DDLETB can only continue to respond agilely to the evolving needs of its learners, employers and society in general, if it has the capacity to develop new programmes as required. Therefore, sanction has been sought for two more programme development staff.

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.
8 The review team recommends that work needs to be done to increase recognition of prior learning	**RPL Biennale** • The DDLETB Programme Development Officer delivered a Lightening Talk to the Recognition Of Prior Learning Biennale, held in Kilkenny in May 2024. The

(RPL) so that opportunities are opened up for those who have built up on-the-job experience and to create a more accessible learning environment.	presentation outlined the RPL toolkit developed as part of the Early Learning and Care Programme, the challenges faced, lessons learned, and next steps identified. **Interim ELC RPL policy** • The Interim ELC RPL Policy was designed to facilitate the recognition of prior learning (RPL) for learners within the Early Learning and Care (ELC) sector. This policy aims to ensure that learners' existing skills, knowledge, and competencies are acknowledged and credited towards their qualifications. • The Learner Experience QA Officer who has completed Level 7 Certificate with University College Cork in Recognition of Prior Learning for Adult and Community Education, conducted RPL research by piloting the process with a Skills to Advance learner from a DDLETB Training Centre. Please refer to *Case Study 2* below for further details.
Not addressed in original recommendations from the Inaugural Review	**FET to HE Pathways Project** • DDLETB is collaborating with UCD in a project called FET to HE Pathways. The purpose of the project is to strengthen transitions from further education to higher education, to formalise the partnership between Dublin and Dun Laoghaire ETB and the participating higher education institutions of the Leinster Pillar 1 Cluster. This will be done by developing a framework through which the cluster HE colleges and DDLETB can progress pathways from FET to HE. The steering group for this project, which includes the QA Manager and an FE principal, commenced its work in 2024, and a project officer, based between UCD and DDLETB has been engaged. A highly successful workshop, designed to forge links and partnerships between FE and HE

	representatives took place in UCD in October 2024, with more activities planned for 2025.

Commentary and Reflections

In 2024, DDLETB engaged in an action research project, in order to identify the resources that would be needed to roll out RPL sustainably across its FET services. The findings of this research identified the need for a central RPL Coordinator at DDLETB Head Office level to coordinate all applications in order to ensure a consistent approach to RPL; the need for guidance counselling to be available to all RPL candidates and a panel of suitably resourced Mentors and Assessors. This last point is especially important, as the FET sector has all too long relied on good will for new initiatives such as RPL.   The findings from this research will be used to present a business case to SOLAS to seek the required resources. That resourcing will be essential if DDLETB is to commit itself to a scalable and sustainable RPL programme. In the meantime, DDLETB continues to engage in projects, such as the FET to HE Pathways project, which seek to develop seamless routes of access, transfer and progression for FET learners.   For more details about the RPL action research project, please see *Case Study 2* below.

Link to Published Policies and Procedures

Interim ELC policy link here

1.07 Integrity and Approval of Learner Results

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
4. an accessible, easily read, simplified reporting system for all internal verification (IV), external authentication (EA) and results approvals panel (RAP) processes and procedures policy and processes on assessment. T	**Analysis of Authentication Reports** • At the Inaugural Review, the QA Manager had reported on the challenges that they faced in trying to review and analyse the hundreds of IV, EA and RAP reports that they received annually, in a way that was manageable and meaningful, and could provide the required insights and assurances for the Quality Council and Senior Leadership Team.

In the QA Unit, each officer has responsibility for supporting a specific service within DDLETB FET (e.g. Adult Education, Further Education, Training Centres and Youthreach). Each officer analyses the reports of the service they are responsible for, in order to identify the support needs required for their service for the coming year. Yet, it is still a challenge for the QA Manager to have the oversight required to provide the Quality Council with the required assurances regarding quality of provision.

Therefore, in the year following the Inaugural Review, the QA Manager put considerable effort into exploring how the quantitative data provided by QQI could be used to more meaningfully target the authentication reports needing a more thorough analysis. This was done using purposive and random sampling to allow the manager quickly and efficiently to identify those reports which needed to be analysed in greater depth in order to provide the necessary assurance. For more details of this process, see Section 1.08 *Information and Data Management* below.

Review of Authentication Reports

- The work undertaken in 2024 on Programme Policy Development, and the investigation into moving governance documentation online, has identified a need to review the existing IV, EA and RAP reports. The QA Unit currently has a busy schedule of work planned for 2025, but with the assistance of the Quality Enhancement Committee, it is hoped to schedule this review process for late 2025 or early 2026.

Commentary and Reflections
The Inaugural Review identified that the centre-level processes around authentication were, for the most part, working well. However, it is the authentication reports arising from those processes, which are the interface between the centre, and the organisation-level QA governance systems. It is through these reports that the QA Unit identifies issues on the ground needed further QA support, PL&D or new policy development. They are also the mechanism through which the QA Unit can assure the governance system of the quality of provision. As our systems mature and evolve, and the QA Unit matures in its ability to analyse data, the central significance of the authentication reports (IV, EA and RAP), is becoming ever more

important. Therefore, it will be essential, in the year or so ahead, to review those reports, make sure that they can be used simply yet effectively, and ensure that all staff members understand their importance in our governance system.

Link to Published Policies and Procedures
Click here to enter text.

1.08 Information and Data Management

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
4. The standardisation and consistency of practice and documentation around annual monitoring and gathering data, including information relating to drop out rates, in order to work efficiently on attaining improvement for learners based on evidence presented by research and analyses	**Data Support Officer** • Arising out of the experience of the Inaugural Review, and a recognition that DDLETB was '*data rich, but analysis poor*', the QA Manager decided that greater resources needed to be dedicated to building a culture of data analysis to inform evidence-based decision-making and foster that culture both at organisational/ governance level, but also at local level. While QQI has been providing certification data for a number of years now, there rarely seemed to be enough time to undertake anything more than the most superficial of analysis. To rectify this, a QA Officer was assigned to dedicate half of their role to data support and analysis. At organisational/governance level, this officer provides the data needed for the Governance groups to provide them with the oversight of DDLETB provision and assure them of the standard of that provision. At local level, the Data Support Officer provides each centre with twice-yearly packs with their own certification and grade distribution data, in order to augment the qualitative data that they have from their IV and EA reports, and to support evidence-based

	decision-making. These reports are now being augmented retrospectively with historical certification data for each centre, so that they can start to take a longitudinal approach in the analysis of their data.
	Data Analytics Training
	• The Data Support Officer and the QA Manager are both completing a Data Analytics course in order to help them to identify new ways in which the data can be used.
9. The review team recommends that DDLETB develop a set of key performance indicators (KPIs), perhaps in collaboration with other ETBs, for each of the services provided. Indicators can be motivating for all involved, including instructors and learners. At a local level, these indicators can be linked to risk assessment and strong leadership. The review team recommends that DDLETB set targets on essential indicators at corporate management level, to limit the number of indicators that need to be managed at each organisational level.	**Data analysis using purposive and random sampling**
	• Following the Inaugural Review, the QA Manager put considerable effort in 2023, into exploring how its data can be effectively, yet sustainably used, both for monitoring purposes, and for evidence-based decision-making. This methodology was implemented in 2024. It involved **purposive** and **random sampling,** using Key Performance Indicators from quantitative certification data provided by QQI and other sources, as well as the qualitative data generated from the authentication processes.
	In the **purposive sampling,** the KPIs were analysed to identify outliers, and the authentication reports of those specific outliers were analysed to identify the cause of the statistical anomaly and determine whether or not there was a QA problem that needed to be addressed. For example, the analysis showed that there was a cohort of Level 6 groups where the grade distribution was considerably higher than the benchmarked data for learner for the same award, in the same centre type. The corresponding EA reports were analysed for each group, and it was noted that the EAs all commented on the very high standards in

	each of those groups. Thus, it was possible to assure the Quality Council that in this instance, the unusually high marks were due to high standards, rather than poor assessing.
	Once the purposive sampling was undertaken for all outliers, the remaining authentication reports were sampled **randomly** by the QA Manager to identify general themes of interest, and areas possibly needing improvement.

Commentary and Reflections
While the approach of using purposive and random sampling worked well when analysing objective KPIs such as grade distribution, it proved more problematic where KPIs were more subjective in nature. For example, where EAs were asked to rate a centre's effectiveness, they tended to grade it as "Excellent", even if they had noted problems in the report. While their intentions were good, it seemed that innate Irish kindness may have undermined the effectiveness of this part of the evaluation process. As a result, these KPIs will be used with caution, until the QA Unit has time to review them in the revised EA reports planned for 2025/2023.

Link to Published Policies and Procedures
Click here to enter text.

1.09 Public Information and Communication

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
10 The review team recommends that DDLETB increase the effectiveness of its communication policy (including media policy) by monitoring and publishing results that appeal to more employers, learners and stakeholders in the community. This should include more qualitative data	**Increasing effectiveness of communications and media policy** • In 2024, DDLETB engaged a FET Communications Officer. Her role is to manage the social media accounts for DDLETB FET and support the communications strategy for the planned College of FET. She uses these social media accounts, to share news of graduations, awards ceremonies, projects, open days, learner

(testimonials, success stories, community involvement) in reports on quality assurance.	testimonials and any other activities which might be of interest to learners, employers, staff, and members of the community. While many centres have had their own social media accounts for years, and there have long been DDLETB FET social accounts, having a dedicated person to oversee these accounts, has promoted clear, consistent messaging, in line with DDLETB's strategic action to "Develop a strategy to improve communications, brand recognition and marketing of DDLETB with a focus on the positive contribution DDLETB makes to our society."(Statement of Strategy 3.9). • As outlined in Section 3.03 below, the Enterprise Information Officer also uses social and other media to promote upskilling opportunities and provide information to local enterprise and employees.
Not addressed in original recommendations from the Inaugural Review	**New College of FET website** • As part of the planning for the new College of FET, a working group was put in place in late 2024, to plan a website for the new College of FET and start the tendering process for a company to design the site. It is hoped that this work will be complete in 2025.

Commentary and Reflections
The individual DDLETB services and centres have traditionally been very good at managing their social media, highlighting and celebrating their activities and the successes of their learners. However, the appointment of a Communications Officer to take a much more strategic approach—not only gathering, and amplifying messages from across the different services, but over time also planning strategic communications campaigns, for the entire FET service, to ensure that the important work of the ETB is understood more widely. As DDLETB progresses with its College of FET plans, the development of the new DDLETB College of FET website will be an essential element of that communications strategy and will be pivotal in promoting the branding of the new College.

Link to Published Policies and Procedures

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.
11. The review team recommends that DDLETB implement a standardised assessment of learners' level of English for relevant courses so that all learners can start at a base level and progress simultaneously, making it easier for learners to relate to each other.	**English Language Assessment for Admission** • In 2024, the DDLETB ESOL Development Officer delivered further training to staff, to administer language assessment, for admission onto courses. Thereafter, follow-up support was delivered to individual centres, as they built up local capacity to administer English language assessment for admissions. • In 2025, the ESOL Development Officer plans to run training in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) for all staff on FET programmes. The training is to support teachers to deal with the language and literacy needs of all learners in their classrooms.
3 Expanding the role and organising the view of learners is recommended by the review team	**Learner Experience QA Officer** • The role of one of our QA Officers has now expanded to include a focus on learner experience. This addition signifies an enhanced commitment to prioritising learner voice and addressing learners' needs in decision making and policy development. By prioritising learner experience, we aim to create a more inclusive and supportive educational environment within DDLETB FET.

Learner Voice Training

- In September 2024, members of the QA and PD Unit attended Learner Voice Training facilitated by AONTAS. This workshop provided an introduction to Learner Voice Theory and its practical application. During the session, opportunities were identified where learners could be more involved, such as participating in curriculum development discussions and providing feedback on teaching methods. For example, learners could join focus groups to share their experiences and suggestions for improving course content. After the workshop, attendees reported that they had a greater understanding of learner voice as a process and a culture. They identified that current and planned policy development would address many of the priority actions, such as incorporating learner feedback into the quality assurance processes and developing policies that ensure regular learner consultations.

Learner Forum

- In November 2024, DDLETB FET hosted a successful Learner Forum in collaboration with AONTAS at the Maldron Hotel in Tallaght, attended by 94 learners. In addition, 254 learners completed the online survey sent out by Aontas. Thus, in total, 348 DDLETB FET learners engaged in the process. The forum provided a platform for learners to share their experiences and feedback, which will help shape future educational strategies. Learners appreciated the opportunity to be heard and valued the supportive environment created by DDLETB and AONTAS.

	The report from the Learner Forum is expected in spring 2025 and will be carefully analysed to identify areas of success, but also areas where further work will be required to meet the needs of our learners.

• Attendees were also introduced to the project team working on the new SOLAS FET Strategy and during the day, some learners had the opportunity to meet with SOLAS and contribute their perspectives to its completion. The event highlighted ongoing collaborations between DDLETB, AONTAS, and SOLAS, aiming to enhance the learning experience for all FET participants.

• The positive engagements with AONTAS have led the QA Unit to recommend to the Quality Council that DDLETB FET should continue collaborating with them rather than hosting our own forum events. The expertise of AONTAS staff has provided valuable insights and strategies to enhance our approach to learner voice. Through these collaborations, we have fostered positive relationships and built strong foundations for future initiatives. |
| Not addressed in original recommendations from the Inaugural Review | **Assessors Hub**

• The Assessors Hub, located within the DDLETB FET QA Hub, was developed as a comprehensive resource for assessors, providing essential training resources and support. It includes detailed guidelines on the QQI assessment process and assessment principles, ensuring assessors are well-equipped to maintain high standards. The Hub also offers links to the DDLETB FET QA Framework, which includes the DDLETB FET Assessment Procedures, fostering an understanding of how to ensure a robust and secure assessment environment. |

Not addressed in original recommendations from the Inaugural Review	**Appeals Hub** • The Results Appeals Process Hub, located within the DDLETB FET QA Hub, was developed to streamline the process of managing assessment appeals. It provides centres with essential training resources and support, including detailed procedures, guidelines and appeals calendars. The Hub ensures a robust and secure environment for handling appeals by offering an inbuilt application form, secure locations for uploading digital learner evidence and the ability to share information as appropriate with the appeals examiners. This centralised platform facilitates efficient and transparent processing of appeals, ensuring that all relevant information is easily accessible, and that the integrity of the learner appeals process is maintained.
Not addressed in original recommendations from the Inaugural Review	**Turnitin & Academic Integrity** • In 2024, the Quality Council approved the purchase and roll-out of Turnitin licenses for all FET learners at levels 5 & 6. This means that all learners at those levels must submit their assignments through an originality and AI checker, as part of DDLETB's commitment to academic integrity. • As part of DDLETB's commitment to academic integrity, the QA Manager became the ETB's representative on NAIN—the National Academic Integrity Network in December 2024, and will use that forum to share with, and learn from colleagues, and identify innovative practices to support academic integrity, to bring back to DDLETB.

Commentary and Reflections
DDELTB has always gathered feedback from learners during and at the end of each course and used that learning to inform future courses and practices. However, there is also real value in hearing the collective voice of the learner, and to that end, DDLETB was delighted with the success of

the Learner Forum, with 348 learners participating. While the report has yet to be completed, there was palpable excitement amongst the learners on the day of the Forum, and initial feedback has been very positive.

Many of our learners are among the most marginalised in Irish society, and that made it all the more meaningful that they had the opportunity to meet with SOLAS and give feedback on the new SOLAS FET strategy; they had the opportunity on the day to give feedback on national strategy that would impact on their learning and the learning of everyone engaging with FET.

DDLETB will continue to engage with Aontas and other organisations to explore further ways in which the learner voice can be heard and acted upon.

Link to Published Policies and Procedures
Click here to enter text.

2.02 Assessment of Learners

There were no recommendations made relating to Assessment of Learners in the Inaugural Review Report.

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
Not addressed in original recommendations from the Inaugural Review	**Teaching, learning and assessment policy** • As noted in Section 1.03 above, work is currently underway to complete a **Teaching, Learning and Assessment policy.** A strategic decision was made to integrate these topics into one, coherent policy, as they are so inextricably interlinked. Included in this policy will be guidelines and protocols on feedback, and all other aspects of teaching, learning and assessment. As the QA Officer developing this policy has recently completed a Level 9 in AI, the document will also include a consideration of how Gen AI is impacting assessment design. The

	QA Officer will be supported be a working group, with representatives from all services, to ensure that the final policy will reflect the diverse needs of DDLETB's services. The policy is due for completion in Spring/Summer 2025.
Not addressed in original recommendations from the Inaugural Review	**Review of Reasonable Accommodations Handbook** • In 2023 and 2024, the PL&D Unit organised a series of workshops with the Dyslexia Association of Ireland, to train specially identified staff members in administering screening tests for older learners who had never been tested for learning difficulties. While not intended as a diagnostic test, this screening was intended to provide QA evidence for Reasonable Accommodation. This necessitated a review of the Reasonable Accommodations Handbook, which was approved by the Quality Council in 2024.

Commentary and Reflections

As the QA Unit undertook its work in 2024, it became increasingly obvious that our thinking on all topics, but especially on teaching, learning and assessment needs to continuously evolve, to meet the evolving environment in which our learners find themselves. New modes and methodologies such as Blended Learning, new tools such as Virtual Reality, and new challenges such as Artificial Intelligence are a reality in our classrooms, and those ever-evolving realities mean that the policies intended to support learners and teachers/instructors in the classroom, must evolve too. While it is always important to have a review schedule, the QA Unit, and the Quality Council will need to remain mindful of the importance of being flexible, and willing to revise and amend policy, to reflect changing realities in the classroom.

Link to Published Policies and Procedures

Click here to enter text.

2.03 Supports for Learners

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.

12 The review team recommends that DDLETB invest in resourcing additional counselling services for learners in the FET centres.	**Psychological support for learners**
	
	 • The Psychological Support Service (PSS) is available to many staff and learners in Further Education within Dublin and Dun Laoghaire Education Training Board (DDLETB). Interventions by the team are directed towards:
	
	     o The provision of both direct and indirect support to students.
	     o The resolution of behavioural, motivational, emotional and cognitive difficulties of individuals, through assessment and therapeutic intervention.
	     o Preventative work with target groups.
	     o Professional support of teaching staff, e.g. Consultation.
	     o In-service training in a range of areas.
	     o Critical incident response
	
	 A sample of activities engaged in with FET during 2024 included:
	
	     o Supporting students with Additional Educational Need
	     o Supporting Students with ASD
	     o Changing Minds mental health initiative
	     o Psychological First Aid (PFA)
	     o Understanding stress and the Window of Tolerance
	     o Support for the Guidance Counsellor Network

	Other collaborations in 2024 included:
	- PSS engaged with the Professional Learning & Development Unit and delivered a series of workshops as part of the PL&D calendar. - PSS worked with the Digital Learning Team and the online module of the Changing Minds Mental Health Initiative is now hosted on the FET Moodle platform **Learner Support Working Group** • A Learner Support Working Group has been formed to develop a Learner Support Framework for FET provision in DDLETB. This group will build on the work of the Learner Support Community of Practice, which focused on supporting learners with disabilities, and the previous Learner Support sub-group of the Admissions Working Group, which reviewed current FET supports. The new group will make recommendations to the DDLETB College of FET Steering Group on how best to enable all learners including potential learners to successfully participate in FET provision in DDLETB. **Reasonable Accommodation (RA) in FET Feedback Group.** • The QA Learner Experience Officer is a member of the national group is the Reasonable Accommodation (RA) in FET Feedback Group. Among their goals is to develop a Maturity Model for ETB disability support provision (self-review and improvement planning tool), a User Guide and Checklists; a short self-directed course under development by AHEAD about Reasonable Accommodations and Needs Assessment, and gathering observations on the FSD fund for submission to and consideration by SOLAS

The review team recommends that DDLETB develop additional resources for learners in the areas of career guidance support, counselling supports, learning support (Maths & English), disability support services, and psychological support across FET provision.

Critical Incident Policy

- In 2024, the Further Education Policy Development Working group completed a Critical Incident Policy, which was approved by the DDLETB Quality Council. This policy will be rolled out to all FET centres in 2025.

PL&D Opportunities for staff to support learners' needs.

In 2024, the following PL&D was delivered for FET staff:

- Dyslexia Assessment of Need - Refresher Training – delivered by Dyslexia Ireland
- Age - Action Webinar – Delivered by Age - Action
- Supporting learners with ASD - DDLETB Psychological Support Services
- Dyslexia Training - delivered by Dyslexia Ireland
- Assessment of English language levels for admission - (DDLETB)

Commentary and Reflections

DDLETB has always prioritised the need for supports to learners, and this has been reflected in its various statements of strategy (e.g. *"1.9 Enhance strategies and resources which reduce barriers to participation, address educational disadvantage, and support those with special and additional educational needs, and ensure our policies and practices promote fairness and transparency"*, p.19, SoS 2022-2026). Following the Inaugural Review, the Learner Support Community of Practice commissioned research into DDLETB's practices with respect to supporting learners with disabilities while, as noted above, a sub-group of the admissions working group was working on supports for all learners. In 2024, it was noted that there were potential synergies between these two groups, and it was therefore decided to form a new Learner Support Working group, which would build on the work of the previous two groups, but more importantly, would be represented on the College of FET steering group. Thus, from now on, learner support needs can be formally considered as part of all decisions made regarding the ongoing development of DDLETB College of FET.

Link to Published Policies and Procedures

Click here to enter text.

3.0 Self-Evaluation, Monitoring & Review

3.01 Self-Evaluation Monitoring & Review

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
13 The review team recommends that continuous professional development of DDLETB FET staff be managed and planned through a formal training needs analysis and review process. The review team deems this should be introduced in the academic year of 2023-24 and linked to the new statement of strategy. *This was the only recommendation given for Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review in the Review Report, but it actually refers to staff development. An update on relevant actions has been included in Section 1.04 Staff Development above*	A **Self-evaluation, monitoring and review policy** had been scheduled for development in Q4 2024, but that work has been delayed, due to other commitments that arose in the QA Unit. A revised schedule of policy development will be considered at the next Quality Enhancement Committee meeting.
Commentary and Reflections Click here to enter text.	
Link to Published Policies and Procedures Click here to enter text.	

3.02 Programme Monitoring & Review

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
4 a systematic internal review process whereby programmes that require updating can be identified within a periodic review cycle 6. The review team recommends that DDLETB continue to review and update its programmes and to ensure they are current and up to date. Planning schedule can be part of the QA Handbook. 14 The review team recommends that DDLETB ensure all programmes that require updating within a periodic review cycle are appropriately resourced to ensure appropriate curriculum design that meets the needs of learners and employers. This will also require prioritising programme reviews to resource reviews in the best order.	**Module Reviews** • The DDLETB module review process facilitates centres to identify CAS modules that require review. In 2024, three module updates were approved by the Course Approvals Committee at monthly meetings, managed by the QA Unit and overseen by the Programmes Committee. **National Module Update Process** • DDLETB is collaborating with all 16 ETBs in the national module update process, overseen by QQI and ETBI. In 2024, DDLETB led the review of two modules as part of this process. The DDLETB QA Manager is a member of the pilot national Module Update Process Steering Group. The purpose of this process is two-fold: the immediate purpose is to update 28 of the most problematic/frequently used modules, but the longer-term purpose to build the sector's capacity to undertake a larger collaborative programme review process, developing communication strategies, curriculum writing training programmes, governance structures etc. One of the intended outcomes of this pilot is an identification of the probable resource implications, both financial and in terms of staffing, that would be needed for a full-scale sectoral programme review process, and to develop a business case to

	submit to SOLAS to get the resources to undertake this essential piece of work. This work is due to be complete in Spring 2025.
The review Team recommends DDLETB identify all FÁS Legacy programmes that require updating and progress as a matter of urgency.	**AIS development and review process, planned** • In DDLETB, a strategic decision was made for training centres to continue to use Assessment Instrument Specifications (AISs). Many of these AISs had originally been developed by FAS and are thus now very out of date. It was decided to include the review of existing, and the development of new, AISs within the DDLETB Programme Development and Review Policy (in development). A significant policy development process took place in 2024. This included writing new procedures, mechanisms, training and governance processes to create sustainable processes to review and develop new AISs. It is expected that this policy will be approved by the Quality Council in spring/summer 2025.

Commentary and Reflections
The QA Unit developed and validated a large number of programmes in 2024 but is aware that there will be an even larger volume of programme development work that will be required in the near future, as the CAS awards reach their end of life, and micro-qualifications become more common. This work will also have to involve the development of new Assessment Instrument Specifications for training centres, to accompany the new programmes. As ever, the QA Unit was interested in taking a foundational approach and so invested a considerable amount of time in 2024, to reviewing, refining and developing the policies and procedures needed to manage the scale of programme development that will needed in the near future.

Link to Published Policies and Procedures
Click here to enter text.

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.
16. The review team recommends that DDLETB be more proactive in recruiting employers. Most of the employers the review team met had made the initial approach to ETB. The review team recommends that DDLETB establish a range of employer advisory boards in the academic year 2023-2024 that will contri bute to ongoing curricular and programme evaluation.	**Recruitment of Enterprise Engagement Team** • In 2024, DDLETB FET established a dedicated Enterprise Engagement team, led by a newly recruited Enterprise Engagement Manager to coordinate engagement activity with enterprise across all of DDLETB FET, ensuring that there is a single point of contact for enterprise in our region. The new, centralised unit has been working to build strong links with employers and key stakeholders including the five chambers of commerce in Dublin, industry bodies, the Dublin Regional Skills Forum, the Dublin Regional Enterprise Plan, County Councils and the Department of Social Protection Employer Engagement unit. In late 2024, an enterprise information officer was added to the team to work proactively, contacting business in the DDLETB region, which is home to a large, concentrated range of employers. The Enterprise Information Officer works through a range of in-person and digital mediums to promote upskilling opportunities and provide information to local enterprise and employees. The team work directly with local business, providing consultation to discuss and analyse their training needs followed by the provision of appropriate, funded training responses to those needs.

	- In 2025, the enterprise engagement team will oversee the roll out of an enhanced digital framework to support enterprise engagement with the implementation of a dedicated CRM system. The team have also rolled out a dedicated website which now acts as a one stop shop for enterprise in the DDLETB region – providing information on all enterprise focused services and programmes in one place (www.ddletb.ie/business). In 2025 the enterprise engagement team will continue to coordinate and integrate enterprise engagement activity across FET and will roll out a dedicated Enterprise Engagement SharePoint Hub to assist with this. By working closely with employers, DDLETB can ensure that our FET provision is agile and responsive to changing industry needs, enabling us to provide reskilling and upskilling opportunities to employed learners to meet these changing needs.
17 The review team recommends that DDLETB gather qualitative data on the value of nonaccredited courses for these learners who have come through the ETB to help with marketing and image. DDLETB should develop its training needs analysis and progression plans for these learners.	**Identifying training needs and progression plans for learner on non-accredited courses** - When a learner applies for a course in the ESOL and Literacy Programmes in the Adult Education services, their skills levels are assessed, taking into consideration their needs and interests. Following a needs analysis, an individual learning plan is designed, this determines placement on a relevant course to meet their individual needs. This may result in placement in a non-accredited course to develop the skills necessary to progress to accredited programmes. Community Education Programmes are delivered in conjunction with community partners. These courses are delivered in a supportive environment where

learners can build confidence and improve their skills at their own pace. They help learners improve their essential skills that are crucial for everyday life. Community Education programmes include a range of courses e.g. Voter Education/Active Citizenship, Gardening, Upcycling, Art, Crafts, Sewing, IT, Drama, Pottery, Cookery, Mindfulness, Yoga, Irish, Spanish, Photography & Film Making.

These courses serve as a stepping stone for further education and training. They help learners build on their foundational skills and knowledge that prepares them for accredited courses and qualifications in the future. They provide the learners with a sense of achievement and motivation to continue learning and improving.

Identifying the value of non-accredited courses
- Community Education programmes play an important role in fostering social cohesion and supporting a democratic society.

Feedback from learners on non-accredited programmes has determined the following wider benefits of learning:

  - Increased confidence and self-esteem
  - Prevented social isolation
  - Developed personal and interpersonal skills
  - Developed relationships and social networks
  - Encouraged Active Citizenship
  - Provided positive, supportive learning environments
  - Improved mental health and wellbeing
  - Provided progression routes to accreditation and training

Wider Benefits of Learning Tool

- DDLETB has participated in Phase 1 of the piloting of the Wider Benefits of Learning (WBL) tool which is being designed to gather qualitative and quantitative information on the value of nonaccredited courses. Phase 2 will begin in March 2025.

  When the WBL tool is operational it will provide information that can be used to improve the ETB image and marketing to this target group. Training Needs analysis and progression plans will result from the use of the WBL tool. A Community Education Framework has also been launched which also focuses on the value of non-accredited provision.

Learner testimonials

Eileen Brennan

"The decision to pursue adult education turned out to be one of the best choices I've made. Through the program, I not only gained valuable knowledge but also rediscovered my self-esteem. The supportive environment and my dedicated teacher who supported me throughout the learning journey allowed me to learn at my own pace and ask questions without fear of judgment."

Niall Brosnan

"It was with a certain sense of trepidation and anxiety that I embarked on these computer classes in Blanchardstown. I was out of my comfort zone and heading into the unknown as I had very little knowledge of, or interest in computers up to that point. But the computer's tutor put everyone at ease. As a result, he ensured the classes were not just informative but also enjoyable".

	Eileen and Niall both started on non accredited courses. Eileen has progressed to QQI Level 3 and Niall has progressed to digital skills modules at QQI Level 4.

Commentary and Reflections
DDLETB has always captured learner feedback on all courses, both accredited and non-accredited, and this feedback has clearly illustrated the transformative impact that non-accredited courses have on the lives of those learners who engage with them. However, the development of the Wider Benefits of Learning Tool, as well as the work of the Community Education Framework, will help to gather the qualitative and quantitative data needed to promote the value of this learning more widely.

Link to Published Policies and Procedures
Click here to enter text.

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 These should relate to objectives not already discussed in the progress report.	Update on Status Provide brief update on status, whether completed or in progress.	Link to updated/new Policy
1	Conversion of all module descriptor marking sheets to Excel marking sheets.	Work started in 2024 to convert all Word marking sheets to Excel. This will minimise the risk of errors in calculation, and ease the IV process. DDLETB has offered to share these marking sheets with the rest of the sector once this work is complete, later in 2025.	Click here to enter text.
2	Redevelopment of External Authenticator (EA) panel	DDLETB manages its own EA panel, which it populates with appropriate qualified EAs chosen from the national panel. Work commenced in 2024 to make the DDLETB panel more user friendly. The revised panel will be launched at the next briefing of QA Coordinators in March 2025	Click here to enter text.

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: One-stop shop for Professional Learning & Development – The **PD Hub**

Introduction

Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board (DDLETB) is committed to fostering a culture of continuous Professional Learning and Development (PL&D) among its staff. Recognising the importance of accessible and efficient PL&D opportunities, DDLETB has developed and implemented the PD Hub, a comprehensive SharePoint platform designed to centralize and enhance PL&D activities. The PD Hub serves as a one-stop shop for staff, offering up-to-date news, information about PL&D opportunities, and the ability to register for workshops and courses instantly.

Description of issue

Before the implementation of the **PD Hub**, information flow about PL&D opportunities was identified as a challenge. Information was emailed to line managers, who would then cascade it down to their teams. Relying on this method at times led to low registration rates and high no-show rates for workshops and courses. Employees faced challenges in accessing and managing their professional learning and development resources, resulting in inefficiencies and a lack of engagement in courses and workshops.

Action

To address these issues, in a collaboration with the company Cloud Design Box, a Microsoft Partner, DDLETB developed and implemented the **PD Hub**. The platform (SharePoint website) offers a centralized repository of training materials, training opportunities, news, and short, bite-sized videos. Our staff can now be informed about their Professional Learning and Development opportunities and register right on the spot. It includes automated line manager's approval to attend the workshops/courses, and automated emails to confirm attendance and reminder emails. It informs attendees about possible changes and notifies line managers if someone confirmed their attendance but didn't show up on the day. It also automatically gives access to the repository of the course/workshop materials to attendees. Additionally, the **PD Hub** provides information and direct links for external free courses and workshops in line with DDLETB's needs, as well as links to other DDLETB's websites and a FAQ section.

Key Outcomes/Impacts

The implementation of the **PD Hub** has led to significant improvements in employee engagement and satisfaction with Professional Learning and Development programs. Feedback from staff showed that they appreciate the **PD Hub's** user-friendly interface. The incorporation of Universal

Design principles exemplifies DDLETB's commitment to inclusivity and accessibility (Immersive reader, descriptive imagery, different content formats etc).

The centralized system has streamlined access to workshop/courses and resources, resulting in increased participation and completion rates for training workshops/courses. Since the start, there has been a **350% reduction in no-shows** to workshops and courses, and overall PL&D engagement has grown. It also helps with day-to-day automation (emailing) and record keeping.

Key Learnings
The success of the **PD Hub** highlights the importance of having a user-friendly and centralised platform for Professional Learning and Development. Information flow has been improved with constantly growing PL&D engagement. The automated features have proven vital in ensuring attendance and keeping both employees and line managers informed, ultimately leading to higher engagement and reduced no-show rates. Additionally, the **PD Hub** has enabled the PD Unit to reach a larger audience, ensuring that more staff members are aware of and can participate in PL&D opportunities.

Case Study Title: A Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Application and its Impact on DDLETB Policy Development

Introduction

Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board (DDLETB) is committed to providing high-quality education and training services that align with the needs of learners and the labour market (DDLETB 2022). As part of this commitment, DDLETB has been actively involved in the Skills to Advance initiative, which focuses on upskilling and reskilling individuals in employment to enhance their career prospects and meet the evolving demands of the workforce (SOLAS 2018).

In this context, a learner from one of DDLETB's training centres, who was enrolled in the Skills to Advance Level 5 programme, enquired about the application process for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for two components under the Major Award of Office Administration 5M1997: Work

Experience 5N1356 and Customer Service 5N0972. The RPL process allows learners to gain formal recognition for skills and knowledge acquired through previous work experience, training, or life experiences, thereby facilitating their progression within the education and training system. However, at the time of the application, DDLETB did not have a formal policy, procedures, or processes in place for the practical application and resourcing of RPL.

This case study examines how an RPL application from a Skills to Advance learner informed a small-scale action research project, which in turn is guiding the plan for the future development of DDLETB Policy. It highlights the key actions taken, outcomes achieved, and lessons learned throughout the process.

Description of issue

This learner's need for RPL highlighted a significant gap within DDLETB's existing framework. The lack of structure posed several challenges:

1. Without a formal RPL policy, there was no standardised approach to guide the process. This lack of structure meant that decisions made during the research phase needed to be sustainable to ensure consistency and fairness in assessing prior learning.

2. The absence of clear procedures meant that there were no established steps for the learner to follow when applying for RPL. This created some ambiguity and somewhat delayed the application process.

3. There were no dedicated resources allocated for RPL, making it challenging to engage a qualified Mentor and Assessor.

4. The practical application of RPL required a structured approach to ensure that the learner's prior experiences and skills were accurately assessed and recognised. This involved developing resources with clear criteria for evaluating evidence of prior learning.

5. Overall, it was crucial to ensure that processes undertaken were aligned with DDLETB's strategic goals and the available infrastructure, technologies, and resources within the organisation.

Action

To address the learner's RPL application, DDLETB took several key steps to support the process despite the absence of a formal policy. The Adult Education Services (AES) played a crucial role by providing the opportunity for the RPL applicant to meet with an AES Guidance Counsellor. This initial support was essential in guiding the learner through the RPL process.

The DDLETB Human Resources (HR) Department advised that the only option to pay a Mentor and an Assessor was through the part-time teacher (PTT) rate. This meant that the DDLETB Adult Education Services (AES) would be the first point of contact, as many of the tutors were on the PTT rate. Fortunately, this proved to be the correct approach, and a Mentor was located who had completed a Level 7 qualification in RPL with University College Cork and had also been involved as an Assessor in the Tobar project. The Tobar project was a national initiative aimed at recognising prior learning for members of the Defence Forces, enabling them to gain various awards based on their prior experience.

However, engaging an Assessor through the same method proved challenging. Nevertheless, through the promotion of the project, a DDLETB Teacher from a Further Education (FE) College offered her time voluntarily and without payment as part of her studies for the completion of the RPL Digital Badge with the Teaching and Learning National Forum. This voluntary contribution was invaluable in ensuring the learner's portfolio and associated evidence were thoroughly assessed by a subject matter expert.

Throughout the process, the Mentor was available to meet with the learner at mutually suitable times. Briefs were developed organically during these sessions as and when gaps were identified. It was found that the Mentor's support was instrumental in helping the learner navigate the RPL process and enhance their existing skills.

Once the RPL portfolio was completed, the Assessor dedicated her time to evaluate the completed evidence and provided a comprehensive report laid out as a rubric detailing her findings along with feedback to the learner.

 By taking these actions, DDLETB was able to support the learner's RPL application despite the initial lack of formal policy and resources.

Key Outcomes/Impacts

The RPL application process yielded several significant outcomes and impacts, demonstrating the effectiveness of the support provided and highlighting areas for future improvement.

The Mentor's availability and support were instrumental in guiding the learner even though they showcased exceptional competence throughout the process. The Mentor received specific praise from the External Authenticator (EA) for their role in enhancing and highlighting the learner's existing skills. The EA noted, "The support and input from the mentor to augment the process and outcomes have been invaluable." This recognition from the EA underscored the importance of having qualified and dedicated Mentors to support RPL applicants.

The EA also commended the Assessor's role in the process highlighting the feedback given to the learner, describing it as "excellent, and extremely positive and encouraging". This high-quality feedback was crucial in validating the learner's prior experiences and skills.

Overall, the entire RPL process was commended by the EA, who stated, "The use of RPL in the assessment of these components has been extremely successful and completed to a very high standard." This endorsement highlighted the effectiveness of the RPL process in recognising and validating the learner's prior learning.

Key Learnings

A business case evolved identifying the need for funding and a plan, for the following. However, it is recommended that the following areas would need to be addressed before DDLETB FET could commit to developing an RPL FET policy:

- The coordination and management of RPL – A central RPL Coordinator at DDLETB Head Office level to coordinate all applications is required to ensure a consistent approach to RPL.
- Guidance Counsellor appointments for all RPL candidates - This service is not available throughout DDLETB FET services, so this is problematic.
- Engaging Mentors and Assessors – The development of a panel for each would be an excellent solution. RPL cannot be facilitated through goodwill; this is not sustainable.

- Resourcing the roles of Mentor and Assessor – There are difficulties hiring Mentors and Assessors due to the limits of employment contracts.

Further Developments:

A recent RPL in FET Network meeting revealed that other ETBs, who are further along in implementing RPL, are also experiencing difficulties with resourcing and managing RPL. The new Adult Educator contracts may have implications for engaging future Mentors and Assessors due to staff availability and pay constraints. This underscores the need for a national solution to these issues such as an ETB panel of RPL Mentors and Assessors which would provide a consistent and reliable pool of qualified professionals to support RPL processes throughout all 16 ETBs.

Additionally, a national ETB solution to pay arrangements for RPL Mentors and Assessors would remove a significant barrier to the process. The development of a national ETB policy for RPL would ensure that RPL is standardised throughout all ETBs, providing a clear and consistent framework for recognising prior learning. Furthermore, the coordination and management of RPL need to be ring-fenced in funding to ensure that all of the above can be maintained to the appropriate standard.

Conclusion:

In essence, the RPL research project not only validated the learner's prior experiences but also provided several valuable insights that will inform the future development of a comprehensive DDLETB RPL Policy. One of the key learnings was the importance of having a structured and well-resourced RPL framework. The reliance on goodwill and voluntary contributions for engaging Mentors and Assessors highlighted the need for sustainable resourcing. It became evident that RPL cannot be facilitated through goodwill alone, as this approach is not sustainable in the long term.

The RPL application from the DDLETB Training Centre Skills to Advance learner underscored the necessity of a structured and well-resourced RPL policy to ensure consistency and sustainability in recognising prior learning. The insights gained from this project will in time inform the future development of a comprehensive DDLETB RPL Policy that aligns with organisational strategy and ensures the effective recognition of prior learning

for all learners. By addressing the challenges related to policy, procedures, and resourcing, DDLETB can in time create a sustainable and effective RPL framework that supports learners in gaining formal recognition for their prior experiences and skills.

References:

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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.