



wwetb

Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna
Phort Láirge agus Loch Garman
*Waterford and Wexford
Education and Training Board*

Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board

Further Education and Training Programme Data Management Policy

(FET Programme Data Management Policy)

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1 PURPOSE OF POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to establish the principles underpinning WWETB's processes for the systematic and accurate compilation of programme and learner data associated with the provision of further education and training, and the practices for processing this data into information to be used for the planning and review of provision.

2 SCOPE OF POLICY

This policy applies to the data and information processes associated with all WWETB's Further Education and Training programmes.

3 DEFINITIONS

The WWETB FET Programme Data Management policy sets down the management processes of data for the purposes of planning and review of FET provision.

Definitions include:

- **FET** – This denotes Waterford & Wexford Education and Training Board's Further Education and Training provision.
- **DATA** – This refers to facts and figures gathered and generated by Waterford & Wexford Education and Training Board in the administration and monitoring of FET provision.
- **INFORMATION** – This refers to the processing and presentation of data and details that have been gathered by Waterford & Wexford Education and Training Board.
- **PROGRAMME** – This refers to a validated educational/training curriculum offered by WWETB which may lead to a specific award. The word programme is used in some instances to refer to a specific further education and training provision type or funding stream (e.g. VTOS, Adult Literacy etc.)
- **COURSE** – This refers to a single instance of further education and training provision that may lead to:
 - A major Award.
 - A minor award.
 - A special purpose award.
 - A specific training award such as an apprenticeship award.
 - A specific vocational award bestowed by a certification provider.
 - A non-accredited WWETB-run or funded course.

- **Beneficiary** – A Beneficiary is a learner enrolment during a calendar year. The enrolment exists within the limits of the course duration. If the enrolment spans two calendar years, then it is counted as beneficiary in both calendar years.

4 POLICY STATEMENT

WWETB is committed to the appropriate compilation and use of reliable data for the administration, monitoring and review of its further education and training provision. The organisation is committed to implementing and maintaining adequate measures to safeguard collected data, in particular personal data relating to learners, staff and other stakeholders and to operating with due regard to the organisation's **Data Protection Policy**.

WWETB is committed to ensuring the highest levels of factual accuracy in the data it collects and shares. The organisation is committed to providing our oversight bodies, sponsors, funding partners and stakeholders with accurate and up to date information as might be required for the purpose of planning, monitoring and reporting. Similarly, data and information provided to the WWETB Board will be appropriate and accurately reflective of WWETB's FET statistics, outcomes and planning processes.

WWETB is committed to the implementation of systems and processes that will enable the organisation to record and monitor provision to ensure accurate data to support the planning, implementation and review of further education and training provision.

WWETB is committed to implementing procedures for the review of FET provision. These procedures will include the use of appropriate indicators and benchmarks to aid in the performance review of provision with the ability to refine as appropriate to individual courses, modular areas and specific locations.

WWETB is committed to supporting quantitative information gathering methods with qualitative ones in the context of performance review in order to establish comprehensive insight and achieve high-levels of understanding with regard to all aspects and perspectives relating to specific areas of provision.

5 INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND DATA RELIABILITY

5.1 MANAGED INFORMATION SYSTEMS

WWETB uses a number of designated information systems in the management of data associated with WWETB courses and learners. WWETB endeavours to ensure that the systems it uses are robust and secure and that the processes for using the information systems are equally secure and rigorous. This section outlines the information systems predominantly used by WWETB.

5.2 PROGRAMME LEARNER SUPPORT SYSTEM (PLSS)

PLSS is a suite of software applications that are designed to provide an integrated approach to the collection and processing of personal data of users of PLSS and FET programmes funded through SOLAS, and the outputs, outcomes and performance of such programmes. The Programme and Learner Support System (PLSS) is partitioned nationally into 16 separate and locally autonomous ETBs; additional Voluntary Secondary Schools; additional Community and Comprehensive Schools; along with some other providers; and access control is established and limited to within these partitions for each ETB/FET provider. PLSS is a national SOLAS/ETBI initiative and data is hosted by SOLAS. It is used to manage course information, learner records and reporting- providing the key data on FET course outputs and outcomes. PLSS provides a secure sharing, collecting and use of data system through four portals:

- **National Programme Database (NPD)**- repository of FET programmes being delivered nationally
- **National Course Calendar (NCC)** –schedule of programmes. Data in the NCC is transferred to the Further Education Resource Hub (FETCH) website fetchcourses.ie – allowing applicants to search, view and apply for courses online
- **FARR**- The Funding Allocation Requests and Reporting function is open for data entry for four periods annually, one planning, input and three review inputs. WWETB records the amount of learners enrolled on courses, course completers and early leavers, course beneficiaries and learner progression information via the FARR system.
- **Learner Database** – Data from FETCH online applications is transferred into the Learner Database. Further data entered at ETB level for enrolled learners creates a secure learner record
- An **Assessment Management Information System** is in place to record apprentice achievement on new Apprenticeship Programmes (SOLAS Service Agreement / MIS Moodle March 2017)

WWETB manage access control to its various FET Centres/Colleges and Partner Groups by creating sub-partitions, known as Providers within PLSS, to limit the scope of data access to local

administration teams and thus minimise the potential exposure level of learner data at any access point. SOLAS retains access to aggregated data across all providers at national level. SOLAS provide WWETB with a monthly Excel pivot analysis of learner activity on PLSS in the current year.

During national design and development, the PLSS system was subject to a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA), conducted in forward compliance of the GDPR Regulation that came into force in May 2018

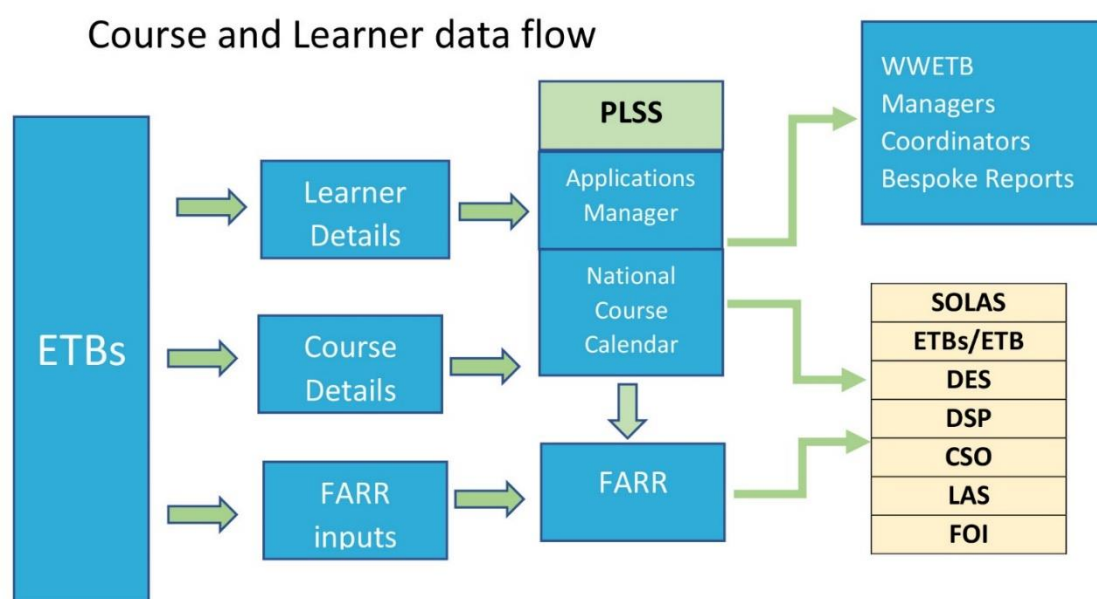


Figure 1: Data Flow

5.2.1 Inputting data into PLSS

Data input into PLSS happens at centre-level by designated WWETB centre-based/programme personnel. WWETB provides training for data inputters to support the accurate input of information and data and the organisation has a designated PLSS Coordinator who supports and assists centres in the management of their PLSS input and data. WWETB has developed a Standard of Practice for the use of PLSS. See PLSS Standard of Practice at Appendix #.

5.3 QUALITY & QUALIFICATIONS IRELAND BUSINESS SYSTEM (QBS)

QQI Business System (QBS) is the online service provided by QQI to facilitate the making of awards to learners. It incorporates all awards made by QQI and operates at all 10 levels of the NFQ. QBS is a secure on-line system which authorised providers and centres can log into. As with all such systems, security of access and accuracy of data are crucial. QBS provides opportunities for certification every two months – i.e. six times per year. The basic model for QBS is as follows: Providers enter learner, programme and result data into the QBS workspace and, when it has been fully quality assured as

valid and accurate, submit it for certification by QQI with the online declaration. For FET learners, QQI determines the award achieved based on the rules for each award and including the relevant learner history. Every provider has a code which is also the username allowing access to QBS. Providers can enter / edit data at any time. Data can be entered into QBS in two ways:

- By data file upload, where the provider's own IT system can generate the data file in a specified file format.
- Direct data entry using the QBS user interface and/or copy and paste from Excel. Even where a file upload is used the editing, reporting and submission for certification will be done using the QBS interface

5.3.1 Inputting Data into the QBS System

Data input into the QBS system happens at centre-level by designated WWETB centre-based personnel. The WWETB Quality Team supports centres and colleges in their use of the QBS system and a WWETB QBS guide has been developed for reference. The Quality team liaise with QQI with regard to any system or input anomalies of issues to ensure that all data is accurate and up to date.

5.3.2 QBS Data Share

QQI share data with providers incrementally which contains details relating to certification on the provider run courses over a defined timeframe. WWETB reviews this data when received from QQI.

5.4 RESULTS CAPTURE AND CERTIFICATION REQUEST SYSTEM (RCCRS)

The RCCRS system is a SOLAS managed online system used for the recording of results and certification attainment associated with many state-funded apprenticeship and training programmes. Data input into RCCRS is by designated WWETB centre-based/programme personnel. The RCCRS interfaces with the QBS system which is then utilised to process certification as appropriate.

5.5 CITY AND GUILDS 'WALLED GARDEN'

'Walled Garden' is a secure administration system managed by City and Guilds for the registration of learners, the administration of learner details and management of certification for City and Guilds certified courses. The Quality Team manages the input of learner details and assessment results onto 'Walled Garden'. City and Guilds certify WWETB learners based on the data input from WWETB.

5.6 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Certain provisions use additional data systems for specific reasons. This includes the use of systems such as Core, MIT, Apprenticeship Client Services, TACS, TAPS, VSware etc.

5.7 TABLEAU

Tableau is web-based data analytics visualisation software. It enables tabular information to be communicated in graphic formats.

- The SOLAS MIS file is distributed via Tableau
- Quality Team Indicators are available on Tableau.

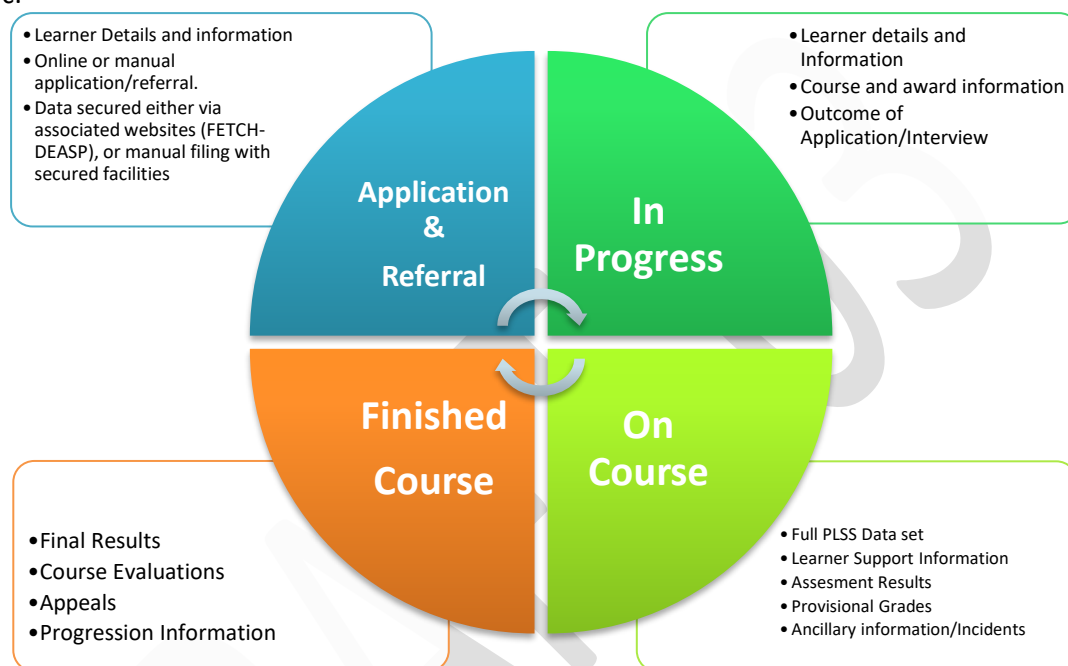
5.8 DATA INTEGRITY

WWETB commits to accuracy and validity in terms of the data and information it creates, uses and provides to other bodies such as relevant funding bodies. WWETB endeavours to create the systems, checks and supports to achieve high levels of accuracy in the processing of data. Nevertheless, system anomalies and human error can cause incongruencies, levels of variance or margins of error in data. WWETB endeavours to identify risks to the accuracy of data and address them where possible. To this end, WWETB have created a **'Data Caveat and Limitations Index'** which lists any apparent or potential limitations or deficiencies in any of the data used.

6 DATA LIFE-CYCLE

6.1 LEARNER DATA LIFE-CYCLE

The Learner Life-Cycle can be defined as the period of engagement of WWETB with an individual learner. There is a sharing of data and information associated with the learner life-cycle which can be described as the '**Learner Data Life-Cycle**'. The data-life cycle is best illustrated in the following graphic:



Stage	Data Types	Format	Safeguard Responsibility
Application/Referral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner Personal Details 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online Forms • Manual forms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOLAS/DEASP (online platforms. • WWETB Programme Management. • Any Developers/Hosts of Educational Management online tools utilised.
In Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner Personal Details • Course/ Award Information • Application Outcome 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online Forms • Manual Forms • Letter Correspondence • Electronic Correspondence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOLAS- PLSS • WWETB Programme Management. • Any Developers/Hosts of Educational Management online tools utilised.
On Course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner Personal Details • Learner Supports Info. • Assessment Results • Provisional Grades • Ancillary information/Incidents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online Forms • Manual Forms • Letter Correspondence • Electronic Correspondence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOLAS- PLSS • WWETB Programme Management. • Practitioners • FET Management • Support Agencies • QQI- QBS • Any Developers/Hosts of Educational Management online tools utilised.
Finished Course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner Results • Course Evaluation/Review • Appeals • Progression Information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online Forms • Manual Forms • Letter Correspondence • Electronic Correspondence <p>Data retained as appropriate on designated servers and subject to Data Protection legislation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOLAS- PLSS • WWETB Programme Management. • Practitioners • Quality Team • QQI- QBS • Any Developers/Hosts of Educational Management online tools utilised.

Figure 2: Learner Data Life Cycle

7 DATA SETS AND INDICATORS

WWETB is committed to implementing procedures for the review of FET provision. These procedures will include the use of appropriate indicators and benchmarks (where appropriate) to aid in the review of provision with the ability to refine as appropriate to individual courses, modular areas and specific locations.

7.1 DATA FOR REVIEW PURPOSES

Data for review purposes will be systematically collated by WWETB's Data Analyst and the Quality Team as required. WWETB commits to aiding centre-level review of provision by providing specific predefined data sets to Centre-Managers, relevant Principals and FET management. This will happen periodically to allow centre-management and FET management to track notable variances and anomalies in data sets.

7.2 DATA SETS AND INDICATORS

WWETB has selected the following data sets as 'indicators' for review purposes. While these data sets will be termed as 'indicators' it is important to note that these indicators alone will not be viewed as 'indicators of performance' or 'performance indicators'. Programme performance is influenced by many factors and variables, many of which are difficult to capture via data gleaned from the aforementioned information data systems in use by WWETB for FET provision. In addition to this, 'performance' is a contextual concept requiring the consolidation of the experiences and perspectives of all key stakeholders in order to apply an evaluative measure to a review activity.

The data-sets which comprise the incremental indicators include:

7.2.1 Certification Data Compliance

7.2.1.1 What will be compiled:

This data-set will show award certification data as entered by providing centres on PLSS. The data-set will also show the rates of major awards achieved determined by achieved components entered on the QBS system and then the variance rate between the two will be displayed.

7.2.1.2 Who will compile:

The data will be compiled by the Quality Team twice annually (in the third quarter of the year and first quarter of the successive year) and available to FET Managers thereafter.

7.2.1.3 How the data will be reviewed:

The data will be reviewed by the Quality Team. Where there are high-levels of variance between the PLSS and QBS data-sets, the Quality Team will flag this with the relevant Centre and FET manager in the third quarter to allow for remedial action. The Quality Team will be able provide support and further training to data inputters if this is deemed appropriate by the FET Manager.

7.2.2 Course Participation Rates (Actuals Vs. Planned)

7.2.2.1 What will be compiled:

This data-set will show the percentage rate of course participation by way of the planned course numbers as entered into FARR as against the actual course participation numbers or 'Actuals vs Planned'. The data will be shown over three years where appropriate.

7.2.2.2 Who will compile:

The data will be compiled by the Quality Team once annually (in the first quarter of the successive year) and available to FET Managers thereafter.

7.2.2.3 How the data will be reviewed:

This data will be reviewed by the Quality Team and form part of a general report issued to the FET Management Team.

7.2.3 Course Completion Rates

7.2.3.1 What will be compiled:

This data-set will show the number of course starters as entered on PLSS and the number of full and partial completers (by centre and by course) The rate will show the percentage of course completion (starters minus early-leavers). Data is per course finish year and not per learner finish year.

7.2.3.2 Who will compile:

The data will be compiled by the Quality Team twice annually (in the third quarter of the year and first quarter of the successive year) and available to FET Managers thereafter.

7.2.3.3 How the data will be reviewed:

This data will be reviewed by the Quality Team to allow for remedial action where appropriate in the third quarter by centre management and respective FET management. The QA Team will review the updated data in the first quarter of the successive year and include in a general report generated submitted to the FET Management Team.

7.2.4 Early-Leaver Reasons

7.2.4.1 What will be compiled:

This data set will show the numbers of early leavers and reasons for same as entered on PLSS by centre and by course.

7.2.4.2 Who will compile:

The data will be compiled by the Quality Team twice annually (in the third quarter of the year and first quarter of the successive year) and available to FET Managers thereafter.

7.2.4.3 How the data will be reviewed:

This data will be reviewed in the third quarter by the Quality Team to allow identification of trends in early-leaving where they might occur and to allow for remedial action where appropriate by centre management and respective FET management. The QA Team will review the updated data in the

first quarter of the successive year and include in a general report generated submitted to the FET Management Team.

7.2.5 Certification Rates

7.2.5.1 What will be compiled:

This data set will show both certification numbers and certification rates by centre and by course. Rates will include both rate of certification as a percentage of starts and as a percentage of completers over three years.

N.B. Also shown will be a separate workbook of **Late-Start learners** who begin a course more than 25% into the course. This can be quite common in specific FET settings such as Youthreach, Community Training Centres, BTEI, Adult Literacy, Local Training Initiatives where there can be continuous intake of learners. This creates a caveat associated with data where a learner may show as not achieving certification but in reality will continue their studies on the next iteration of the course.

7.2.5.2 Who will compile:

The data will be compiled by the Quality Team twice annually (in the third quarter of the year and first quarter of the successive year) and available to FET Managers thereafter.

7.2.5.3 How the data will be reviewed:

This data will be reviewed by the Quality Team to allow for remedial action where appropriate in the third quarter by centre management and respective FET management. The QA Team will review the updated data in the first quarter of the successive year and include in a general report generated submitted to the FET Management Team.

7.2.6 Grade Distribution Analysis

7.2.6.1 What will be compiled:

This data-set will show the national benchmark by component award by level. Also shown will be the WWETB average mark by centre, by course and by year.

7.2.6.2 Who will compile:

The data will be compiled by the Quality Team once annually (in the third quarter of the year) and available to FET Managers thereafter.

7.2.6.3 How the data will be reviewed:

This data will be reviewed by the Quality Team and form part of a general report issued to the FET Management Team.

Data-set.	Reporting Frequency	Reported to	Report Format
1. Cert. Data Compliance	Bi-Annually- Third Quarter- Interim Reporting- First Quarter Formal Report	Centre Manager FET Manager	E-mail format for noteworthy data. Annual Report
2. Participation Rates	Annually- First Quarter of successive year.	FET Management Team	Annual Report
3. Completion Rates	Bi-Annually- Third Quarter- Interim Reporting- First Quarter Formal Report	FET Management Team	E-mail format for noteworthy data. Annual Report
4. Early-leaver Reasons	Bi-Annually- Third Quarter- Interim Reporting- First Quarter Formal Report	Centre Manager FET Manager	E-mail format for noteworthy data. Annual Report
5. Certification Rates	Bi-Annually- Third Quarter- Interim Reporting- First Quarter Formal Report	Centre Manager FET Manager	E-mail format for noteworthy data. Annual Report
6. Grade Distribution	Annually- First Quarter of successive year.	FET Management Team	Annual Report

Figure 3: Data Set for Review- Summary

7.2.7 External Stakeholders

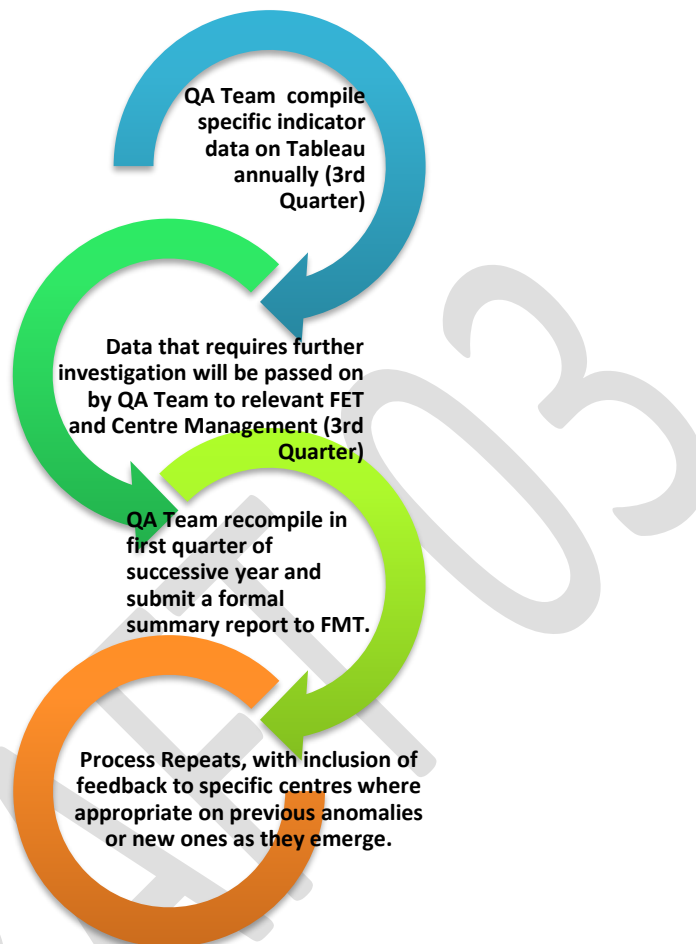
The aforementioned data-sets above are available to SOLAS as the principle funding body. This data may also be presented by WWETB as information or to supplement information that may be presented to our funding partners or other external parties as deemed appropriate by WWETB Senior Management.

7.3 DATA IN PROGRAMMATIC REVIEW

WWETB is developing a procedure for 'WWETB Programmatic Review'. The data indicators outlined above will be used as supplementary information in the incremental review of programmes by WWETB.

8 OUTLINE PROCEDURE FOR ANALYSING DATA INDICATORS

The following graphic represents the workflow associated with this policy.



9 POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed after two years from policy ratification date.

10 RELATED WWETB POLICIES

- [WWETB Data Protection Policy](#)
- [Code of Practice for the Protection of Personal Data in VECs](#)
- [WWETB Mobile Computer Use Policy](#)
- [WWETB Policy for Responding to Requests for Records](#)
- [WWETB Wireless Use Policy](#)
- [WWETB Records Management Policy](#)