



BORD OIDEACHAIS AGUS OILIÚNA
CHILL DARA AND CHILL MHANTÁIN

KILDARE AND WICKLOW
EDUCATION AND TRAINING BOARD



SELF-EVALUATION REPORT 2021



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“ We are a teaching and learning organisation - we should be teaching and learning from each other!”

(Workshop participant)

INTRODUCTION



FOREWORD

We are very pleased to endorse Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board (KWETB)'s Institutional Self-evaluation Report, which will inform the Inaugural Review of Quality in FET Services. In KWETB's Statement of Strategy 2020-2024, there is a commitment to ensuring the highest quality of delivery for all of our learners availing of education and training throughout Kildare and Wicklow.

This Self-evaluation Report is the outcome of the first self-evaluation of quality in further education and training (FET), and is the outcome of an inclusive, participatory process which reflects the perspectives of stakeholders on quality assurance of FET. The process started with consultation about the approach and methodology to be used, and a collaborative development of data collection instruments for surveying learners; practitioners; leaders of teaching, learning and assessment; and support staff. The process included focus groups and review workshops. These activities have resulted in the collation of rich data and insights into quality assurance in our FET services.

The purpose of the self-evaluation was to look at quality and quality assurance in FET objectively, to identify effective practice and challenges and to identify potential enhancements that can be introduced following the Quality and Qualifications, Ireland (QQI) cyclical review of quality. The self-evaluation report documents the outcomes of the self-evaluation under the three themes of governance and management of quality; teaching, learning and assessment; and self-evaluation, monitoring and review, which align with the three objectives of the cyclical review of quality.

FET quality assurance processes are developing with reference to the QQI Statutory and Sector-specific Guidelines for Quality Assurance, and we consider their implementation and development to be an ongoing, cyclical process. In this report, you will discover that there is strong commitment in KWETB to the planning of improvements, implementation of the improvements, and monitoring, review and evaluation of the impacts of actions. The self-evaluation process has offered an opportunity to reflect on our quality assurance structures and on the application of quality assurance to practice across delivery of FET. This process will lead to new cycles of improvement throughout our services, contributing to greater coherence in FET, and improved learner experience.

We would like to thank all staff involved in the process, and all practitioners, learners, leaders of teaching, learning and assessment and stakeholders who contributed to the process so generously. We look forward to engaging in the next phase of the review of quality, to the implementation of actions arising from the process, and to aligning these with internal, local, national and international policy and good practice.



Deirdre Hayes

Dr. Deirdre Hayes
Chief Executive



Ken Seery

Mr. Ken Seery
Director of Further
Education and Training

GLOSSARY AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACSS	Apprentice Client Support System
AEO	Adult Education Officer
AHEAD	Association for Higher Education Access & Disability.
AIS	Assessment Instrument Specification
ALISS	Accessible Learning Integrated Support Service
AM	Assessment Malpractice
Aontas	(Gaeilge) The National Adult Learning Organisation
BIFE	Bray Institute of Further Education
BOS	Bord Oiliúna Sléibhe
BTEC	Business and Technology Education Council
BTEI	Back to Education Initiative
CAS	Common Awards System
CC	Compassionate Consideration
CE	Chief Executive
CEF	Community Education Facilitator
CEIP	Centre Evaluation and Improvement
CIBTAC	Confederation of International Beauty Therapy and Cosmetology
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CTC	Community Training Centres
DAI	Dyslexia Association of Ireland
DE	Department of Education
DigCap	Digital Capabilities Professional Development Programme
DoE	Department of Education
EA	External Authenticator/Authentication
ECDL	European Computer Driving Licence
ELC	Early Learning and Care
ERT	Emergency Remote Teaching
ERTL	Emergency Remote Teaching and Learning
ESBS	Education Shared Business Services
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
ESF	European Social Fund
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
ETB	Education and Training Board
ETBI	Education and Training Board Ireland
FARR	Funding Allocation Requests and Reporting
FAS	Foras Áiseanna Saothair
FE	Further Education
FESS	Further Education Support Service
FET	Further Education and Training
FETAC	Further Education and Training Awards Council
FETCH	Further Education and Training Course Hub
FSD	Fund for Students with Disabilities
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulations
GROW	Goal, Reality, Options, Will
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HELs	Higher Education Links Scheme
HR	Human Resources
ITEC	International Therapy Examination Council

ICT	Information and Computer Technology
IV	Internal Verification
KWETB	Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board
LCAP	Leaving Certificate Applied Programme
LiFT	Lifting Ireland's Future Together
LO	Learning Outcomes
LTI	Local Training Initiatives
MIMLO	Minimum Intended Module Learning Outcomes
MIPLOS	Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcomes
MISs	Management Information Systems
NALA	National Adult Learning Authority
NCC	National Course Calendar
NFQ	National Framework of Qualifications
OGP	Office of Government Procurement
OSD	Executive Supports and Organisation Support and Development
OU	Open University
PAA	Programme Approval Agreement
PD	Professional Development
PDTEL	Professional Development, Technology Enhanced Learning
PLC	Post Leaving Certificate
PLSS	Programme Learner Support System
PR	Public Relations
QA	Quality Assurance
QBS	QQI Business System
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
RA	Reasonable Accommodations
RAP	Results Approval Panel
RCCRS	Results Capture and Certification Request System
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SLO	Specific Learning Outcomes
SME	Small or Medium Enterprise
SMEs	Subject Matter Experts
SMT	Senior Management Team
SNA	Special Needs Assistant
SOLAS	National Organisation for Further Education and Training Provision in Ireland
STP	Specialist Training Providers
T	Training
TC	Teaching Council
TEL	Technology Enhanced Learning
Tobar	Pilot RPL Initiative for the Defence Forces
TQAS	Temporary Quality Assurance System
TQAS	Transition Quality Assurance System
TSO	Training Standards Officer
TY	Transition Year
UDL	Universal Design for Learning
VEC	Vocational Education Committee

LIST OF FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING CENTRES

ARKLOW

- Arklow Further Education and Training Centre, Fernhill Plaza, Wexford Road, Arklow, County Wicklow
- Shelton Abbey Education Unit, Shelton Abbey Prison, Arklow, County Wicklow. Y14 T638

ATHY

- Athy Further Education and Training Centre, Carlow Road, Athy, County Kildare. R14 D272
- Athy College, Monasterevin Road, Athy, County Kildare Y14 AV27

BALTINGLASS

- Baltinglass Outdoor Education Centre, Market Square, Baltinglass, County Wicklow. W91F3CH
- Baltinglass Further Education and Training Centre, Weaver's Square, Baltinglass East. W91F4A9

BLESSINGTON

- Further Education and Training Centre Blessington, Community Education Centre, Old Vocational School, Blessington, County Wicklow. W91 HDH9

BRAY

- Bray Further Education and Training Centre, 1 Brennan's Parade, Bray, County Wicklow. A98 D9X0
- Bray Institute of Further Education (BIFE), Novara Avenue, Bray, County Wicklow. A98 ND89
- Bray Further Education and Training Centre, Block E, Civic Centre, Bray, County Wicklow. A98 R6W4
- Bray and North Wicklow Youthreach, Sunbeam House, Bray, County Wicklow. A98 F3C1

CARNEW

- Carnew Further Education and Training Centre New Line, Aughrim Road, Carnew, County Wicklow. Y14 YD80

CELBRIDGE, LEIXLIP AND MAYNOOTH

- Celbridge Further Education and Training Centre, North Kildare Further Education and Training Campus, Unit A11, M4 Business Park, Maynooth Road, Celbridge, County Kildare. W23 YK2V
- Leixlip Youthreach, Mill Lane, Leixlip, County Kildare. W23 K6K7
- Maynooth Further Education and Training Centre, Manor Mills Shopping Mall, Maynooth, County Kildare. W23 V9P2

CROOKSTOWN

- Crookstown Further Education and Training Centre, Crookstown Upper, Ballitore, County Kildare. R14 K578

KILDARE TOWN

- Further Education and Training Centre Kildare Town, Bothar Na gCorp, Kildare Town, County Kildare. R51 AX65

NAAS

- Naas Further Education and Training Centre, Jigginstown, Naas, County Kildare. W91 FT54
- Naas Youthreach, Jigginstown, Naas, County Kildare. W91 TH93
- Pipers Hill College, Naas, County Kildare. W91 RW14
- KWETB Training Centre, Business Centre, Devoy Quarter, The Osprey, Naas, County Kildare

NEWBRIDGE

- St Conleth's Community College, Station Road, Newbridge, County Kildare
- Newbridge Further Education and Training Centre, Áras Sláinte, Station Road, Newbridge, County Kildare. Eircode: W12 XD45

WICKLOW TOWN

- Further Education and Training Centre Wicklow Town, The Murrugh, Wicklow Town. EIRCODE: A67 V248
- Hospitality Training, Marine House, Corporation Land (1st Division), Wicklow, EIRCODE: A67 A329
- Dr. Mary Kenny, Education Support Officer, Wicklow Town Office, Education Support Officer, Church Street Administrative Offices, Wicklow Town.

Administrative Offices

- Áras Chill Dara, Devoy Park, Naas, County Kildare. W91 X77F
- Church Street, Wicklow Town, County Wicklow. A67 A971



ETB CONTEXT

Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board (KWETB) referred to for the remainder of this report as ‘the ETB’ or ‘KWETB’ was established on 1st July 2013 under the Education and Training Boards Act, 2013. Its corporate structure is made up of a democratically appointed committee, ‘The Board’ and an executive management team (‘The Executive’).

KWETB serves a population of circa 364,929 (2016 census) across Kildare and Wicklow counties. The population in the region is one of the fastest growing in the country, spanning the ‘commuter belt’ linking the region with Dublin City, and more remote rural areas, including large urban towns and smaller towns and rural villages.

KWETB’s services include primary education; post-primary education; further education and training; support for youthwork; music education and community education, targeting

- Primary and post-primary students and their parents/guardians
- Adults
- Young people, youth groups and volunteers.

KWETB provides primary education in three Community National Schools; post-primary education at 23 schools and Further Education and Training in standalone and multiplex centres in 19 locations, together with additional delivery in temporary locations, as the need arises. For the purposes of planning and identification of local needs and labour market needs, the FET sites are divided into seven areas: Bray and North Wicklow; Mid-Kildare; North Kildare; South Kildare; South Wicklow; West Wicklow and Wicklow Town and Community Education, covering the whole region.

KWETB FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING SERVICES

KWETB services deliver full-time, part-time and short further education and training programmes that are designed to meet the specific needs of learners; the labour market and to fulfil national strategy.

Full time provision includes:

- Apprenticeships
- Community Training Centres (CTC)
- Local Training Initiatives (LTI)
- Post-leaving Certificate (PLC) Colleges
- Specialist Training Providers (STP)
- Specific Skills Training
- Traineeships
- Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS)
- Youthreach

Part-time provision includes:

- Adult and Community Education
- Adult Literacy and Basic Education
- Back to Education Initiative (BTEI)
- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
- Night/evening Training
- On-line Skills Training
- Skills for Work
- Skills to Advance

PLANNING AND DEVELOPING THE FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING OFFERING

The diversity of the population and needs requires constant review and monitoring of delivery by KWETB personnel, and active engagement with local employers and communities, industry groups and other government departments and statutory organisations. European and national policy also drives decision making and planning.

An area-based planning model across the ETB informs funding allocation requests to SOLAS for the delivery of programmes of further education and training. The achievement of key performance indicators has been monitored by SOLAS, based on the agreement for 2018 – 2020, and a new process is now active.



Figure 1: Map of locations

EXECUTIVE SUPPORTS AND ORGANISATION SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT (OSD)

KWETB Executive Services and OSD staff are located in two administrative offices, in Naas (Head Office) and Wicklow Town. The OSD group supports the Chief Executive in delivering the following key services:

- Strategy Development
- Board and Committee Secretariat
- Corporate Governance and Services
- Capital and Procurement
- Legal and Compliance
- Human Resources (HR) and Employee Relations
- Financial Services
- Health and Safety and all Risk Management
- Information and Communications Technology (ICT)
- Specialist Projects
- Organisational Policies and Procedures

These Executive and OSD Services ensure legislative and regulatory compliance; administrative and management support. This ensures the delivery of effective and efficient services satisfying the needs of communities, and the safeguarding of these services by good governance practices. The executive structure for further education and training is set out in the graphic below:

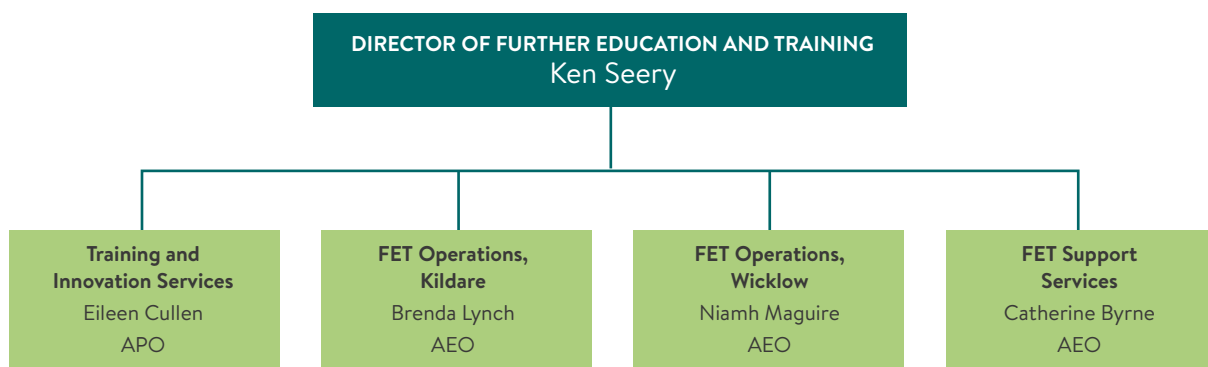


Figure 2: Executive Structure of FET

FET LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENT

KWETB FET services operate in accordance with the strategies (Future FET: Transforming Learning: SOLAS: 2020), policies and directives of SOLAS (established under the Further Education and Training Act, 2014) and QQI (established under the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act, 2012). FET services also operate under the policies of the Department of Education (DE) and the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS). Delivery of further education and training (FET) is informed by The Further Education and Training Boards Act (2013), the Official Languages Act (2003) and the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act (2014), among others. KWETB's Quality Assurance Procedures were officially approved by QQI in 2019 following Executive Self-evaluation which started in 2018, Quality Improvement Planning and a series of dialogue meetings with QQI. Statutory legislative requirements such as GDPR, Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults and employment legislation applying to the whole organisation are observed throughout FET services.

Finally, the delivery of FET is informed by a wide range of national and international strategies and priorities, including the Programme for Government and Council of Europe recommendations.

SELF-EVALUATION PROCESS AND METHODOLOGIES

The KWETB self-evaluation process commenced in February 2020, in preparation for the QQI Inaugural Review of Quality, and with reference to the QQI Handbook for ETBs (QQI Review Handbook: 2018). A Review Coordinator was appointed for the process, and a Staff Officer was tasked to support the process. A plan for the Self-evaluation was developed in consultation with FET Management and members of FET management and the Quality Council and its Sub-groups briefed. It was decided that the Quality Council would be responsible for oversight of the process. The Review Coordinator reported regularly on progress to the Quality Council and the QA Sub-group.

The goal of the Project Team was to ensure that the self-evaluation was inclusive and that all associated activities would be as inclusive as possible. A mixed methods approach was taken, including gathering of quantitative data and qualitative data using surveys; focus groups and referencing a range of documentation. A range of activities were instigated to commence the project including the initiation of a new quality framework; planning of the self-evaluation process and preparation for the inaugural review of quality.

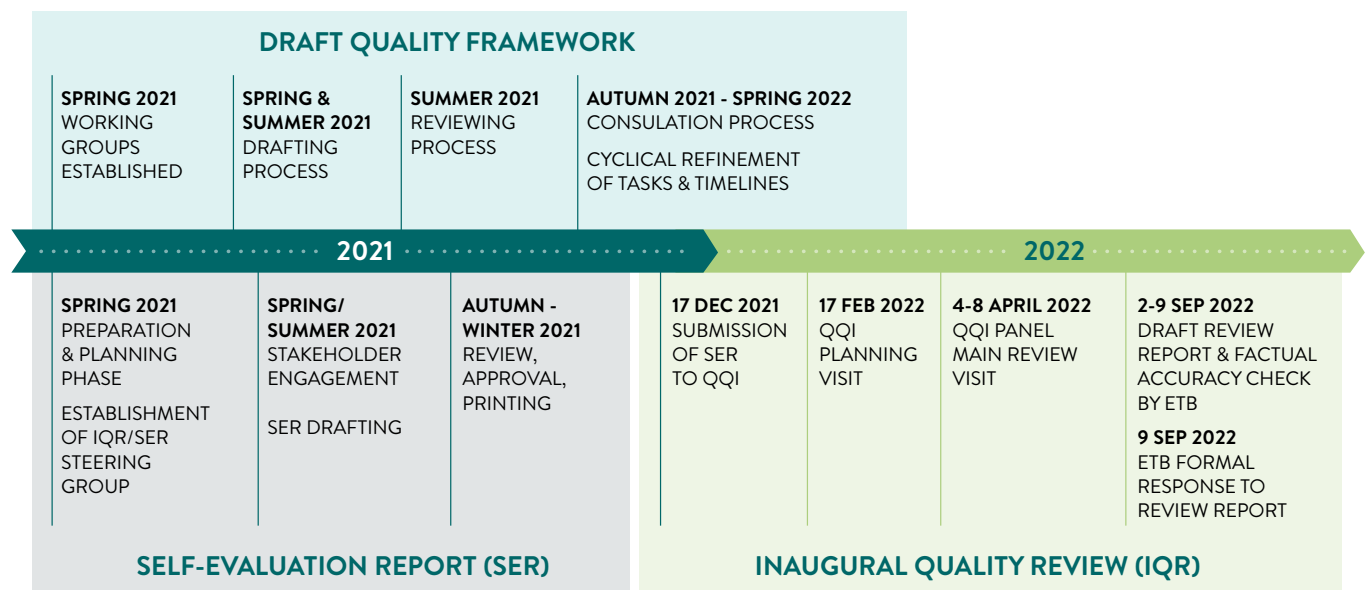


Figure 3: Project Timeline

Information and publicity tools were developed, targeting specific groups.

Posters informing practitioners were designed to enable ease of messaging and communication at centre and stakeholder level (Appendix 1: Self-evaluation Promotional Material).

The self-evaluation was promoted through the in-house Quality Assurance E-Zine and through all internal networks (Appendix 2).

A data collection working group was established, representing FET services, (Appendix 13: Data Collection Working Group) and four anonymous survey instruments were designed with the intention of targeting four groups:

- Learners throughout all services. (499 responses)
- Practitioners (covering teachers, tutors, trainers, and instructors across all FET services). (69 responses)
- Leaders of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (covering Centre Coordinators; College Principals and Programme Managers across all FET services). (21 responses)
- Support Staff (intended to cover administrative staff in centres and colleges of further education and training). (22 responses)

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

On-line Surveys

Online surveys were developed to reflect the objectives of the cyclical review. Each survey was tested with a number of stakeholders and adjustments made, based on feedback. The surveys could be accessed using an accessible reader, and were available in alternative languages if necessary. An option to access a printed copy was given.

The data collected through the surveys was analysed thematically to identify emerging patterns. Focus Groups
A number of focus groups with coordinators and learners were hosted by the Community Education Facilitator and further data from the Aontas Learner Forum held in Spring was considered. Two focus groups were held with the members of the Quality Assurance Team.



Cyclical Review Workshops

Following the data collection phase, two Cyclical Review Workshops (CRWS) with key personnel were delivered to review the data. Data collected and categorised were shared prior to each workshop. These were delivered face to face over four days, allowing for Covid19 restrictions (Appendix 3: Cyclical Review Workshop Details). Workshop participants contributed to a democratic prioritisation process based on the data gathered and shared. The workshops proved to be vibrant, interactive events.

Limitations

1. The roll out of the active part of the project coincided with the onset of the Covid19 crisis, and business continuity, supporting the 'pivot' to emergency remote teaching and assessment adaptation resulted in extended timelines.
2. Working remotely from one another and promoting the project in online environments was challenging, and we were reliant on the digital capacity and competence of team members, leaders, learners and practitioners.
3. The learner survey link was distributed throughout all services and centres via communications coordinators and principals in each centre, through social media posters, and in-centre.
4. FET learners and staff were issued with institutional e-mail addresses during 2020. Security concerns and GDPR policy mitigated against the project team circulating survey links directly to learners and Staff.
5. Initial analysis of the learner survey showed an apparently large number of responses from adult basic education learners (135); and a low number from PLC (105) given the number of full-time students there are in the PLC sector (105), indicating a possibility of a margin of error.

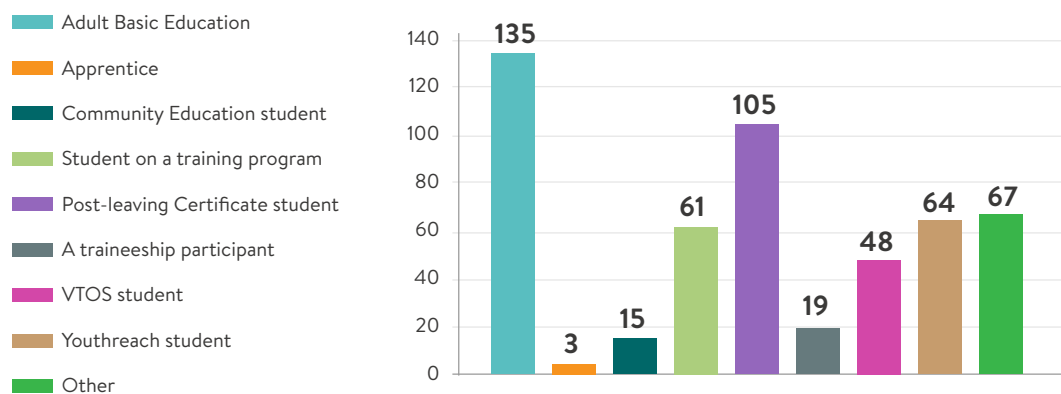


Figure 4: Learner Respondents

6. Efforts to include representatives of industry partners and external stakeholders failed. This may be because of the stage of the organisation as a relatively new organisation that has experienced some turbulence in recent years. It would be advantageous however to seek interaction with representatives of these groups during the ongoing review process.

1

SECTION 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY



KWETB MISSION AND STRATEGY

KWETB has embraced the formal mission of ETBs specified in the Education and Training Boards Act (2013), to plan, provide, coordinate and review the provision of education and training in their functional areas. KWETB is committed to providing high quality education and training programmes which are designed to meet the needs of our communities of learners. The KWETB mission is:

To provide high quality and innovative education, training, youth and supports, which are accessible, responsive to the developing needs of learners, of the community and of society, which promote excellence, equality and social inclusion. (KWETB Statement of Strategy, 2020-2024)

KWETB's vision is:

To deliver high quality, inclusive, innovative education, training, youth and support services. To promote excellence in all we do and to be a leader at both community and national level. (KWETB Statement of Strategy, 2020-2024)

KWETB places a high value on providing programmes of education and training in a climate of care and respect. The experiences of the ETB's employees and learners will demonstrate that there is a striving for excellence in all of our undertakings.

KWETB'S VALUE STATEMENTS

KWETB's four value statements set the tone for the ethos and quality of FET services in Kildare and Wicklow as follows:

Integrity

Ensuring that all our activities in pursuit of the mission and vision of KWETB are supportive of our employees and learners, and demonstrate accountability, professionalism, honesty, and loyalty

Respect

Promoting a climate of care and respect in every KWETB workplace and centre of learning

Learner-centred

Recognising that the learner experience is central to our work and that each learner is an important contributor to their own learning and wellbeing

Excellence

Embracing a culture of ongoing improvement and the promotion of the highest standards. Our schools and centres strive for excellence in all their endeavours



Figure 5: KWETB Value Statements

In the self-evaluation survey, an aggregated total of 69% of teaching staff said that the value of mutual respect in their KWETB workplace was very good or excellent. (Practitioner Survey, 2021)

KWETB QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS

KWETB's FET sector was established in 2013, following signing into law of the Education and Training Boards Act, 2013. The establishment of KWETB brought together Kildare and Wicklow Vocational Education Committees and their existing QA agreements with the former awarding body, the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC), followed quickly by the assumption of responsibility for training formerly delivered by FAS in the region. Quality Assurance (QA) of former FAS programmes and certification was governed by a temporary quality assurance system (TQAS). These developments coincided with the establishment of Quality and Qualifications, Ireland (QQI), integrating a number of other organisations formerly responsible for quality and standards in further and higher education. This paved the way for the introduction of an integrated system for the quality assurance of programmes provided through a range of education and training delivery mechanisms within the ETB.

A strong focus on high quality in the delivery of further education and training, and specifically on the integrity of certification issued, and the delivery of a number of innovations to support and enhance this quality was maintained and developed throughout FET services. These included:

- ▶ Engagement in national programme development projects, building on Programme Approval Agreements with other former VECs.
- ▶ Establishment of an External Authenticator (EA) panel for KWETB (2014), and development of a new national panel of EAs.
- ▶ Development of a single online QA hub to improve information flows and provide access to validated programmes
- ▶ Development of an online system for the submission of estimates and management and assignment of EAs.
- ▶ A routinised approach to communication and organisation of assessment and results approval across FE services.
- ▶ Improved awareness of provision of supports for learners in the context of assessment.
- ▶ Participation in national networks and working groups and contributing to sectoral QA projects
- ▶ Participation of key staff in Erasmus projects, including KA1 staff mobility projects focused on enterprise and QA.
- ▶ A focus on the relationships between the Training Standards Office and contracted training, and community organisations, and establishment of the presence of this office in the region.

The Quality Assurance Team

A QA Team was established in 2018, and currently numbers six, under the leadership of an Adult Education Officer with responsibility for FET supports across KWETB. The QA team roles are:

- ▶ Adult Education Officer (AEO) (1): manages and leads the quality assurance team, linking the work of the team with overall organisational strategy
- ▶ Assistant Training Standards Officer (ATSO): Assists in the management of QA processes for assessment in the training sector, deputises for the Training Standards Officer.
- ▶ Education Development Officer (EDO) (1): tasked with coordinating the Self-evaluation and Cyclical review of Quality. Supports development of systems. Other development projects as required.
- ▶ Community Education Facilitator (CEF): Manages quality assuring assessment processes for further education services, including external authentication, appeals and quality improvement. Represents KWETB on the ETBI Quality Assurance Network.
- ▶ Staff Officer (1): provides administrative, secretariat and procurement support
- ▶ Training Standards Officer (TSO) (1): manages the quality assuring assessment process in the training sector, including administration of the assessment system, application of the TQAS and liaison with contracted training companies, second providers contracted by contracted training companies and community providers.
- ▶ Validation Officer (Part-time) (1): manages validation processes, including approvals to deliver existing validated programmes and management of new validation applications, including collaborative programme development. Review of existing validated programmes and liaison with QQI regarding the business system (QBS).

The Quality Assurance Team was recognised by coordinators as being a neutral, supportive, problem-solving resource. This is a facet of the team that should be grown and enhanced, making it a much more integral part of FET services. 68.8% of respondents strongly agreed they were satisfied with support from the QA team and 25% agreed they were satisfied with the support provided (Leader Survey). One of the October workshop groups stated that ‘a positive aspect is that if there is a difficulty during the process, there is someone in the QA team that is available to guide, support and advise’, and another group identified ‘great support from the QA team’ (CRWS2).

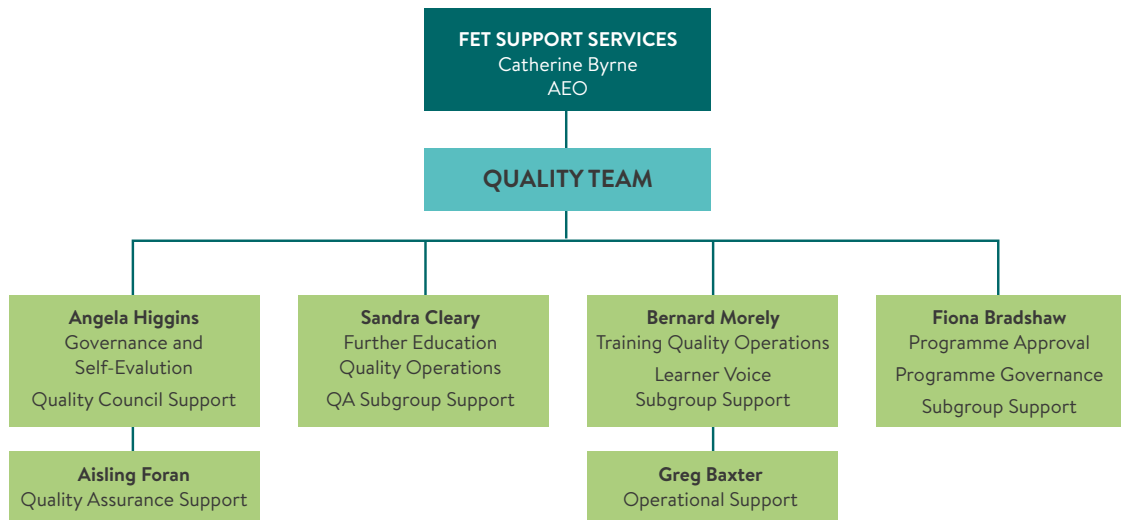


Figure 6: Quality Team

QQI Reengagement

The publication of Core Statutory QA Guidelines by QQI (QQI Guidelines, 2016) and the Sector Specific (ETB) Statutory QA Guidelines (QQI Sector Specific QA Guidelines: ETBs: 2017) informed the development of organisation-wide structures and practices in QA, clarifying the responsibilities of the ETB to

- ▶ have regard to the QA guidelines prior to the approval of their QA procedures by QQI (2016: P2);
- ▶ to contribute to the delivery of education and training within a national system underpinned by quality assurance;
- ▶ to uphold the reputation of the system through the provision of high-quality education and training programmes.

KWETB formally participated in a process to re-engage with QQI in 2018, through an executive self-evaluation and the development of Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs). An annual process of Quality Improvement Planning ensued throughout 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021, and KWETB reported on the first three of these through the mechanism of dialogue meetings with QQI (Appendix 4: Summary of QIP actions 2018 – 2021).

KWETB’s quality assurance arrangements were approved by QQI in 2019. The QIP process provided a focus for the planning of a number of initiatives for the enhancement of quality in the ETB, and supported progress towards improved governance of quality. The quality improvement planning process introduced a cyclical approach to quality assurance, allowing for routine review of plans and the development of subsequent actions.

A temporary governance oversight group was established in 2019, and a first draft of the KWETB further education and training risk register was drafted, including risk identification and management for quality assurance. The further education and training risk register is aligned with the KWETB risk register.

STRUCTURES AND TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY ASSURANCE

The QIP for 2019 identified the establishment of a Quality Council and Sub-groups as priorities for quarter 4. The Quality Council met for the first time in November 2019, and agreed terms of reference. A Quality Assurance Sub-group and a Programme Governance Sub-group were established and terms of reference for these agreed. A third sub-group for Learner and Stakeholder engagement will be put in place for quarter 4, 2021. An annual schedule of governance unit meetings is published, (Appendix 5) and a QA and Governance of Quality site supports communication and storage of documentation. Members of the QA Team act as a secretariat for the governance structures. Quality assurance news is published in the KWETB Quality Council's E-zine which is cascaded through all on-line channels and networks.

2020 and the Covid19 pandemic tested the efficacy of these new governance structures, and demonstrated that established norms for QA of assessment and for communication were strengths that contributed to the pivot to emergency remote online teaching and learning; adaptation of assessment and online external authentication and results approval. The communication and reporting lines have evolved during 2020 and 2021.

FET Quality Council

The purpose of the FET Quality Council is to oversee planning, co-ordination, quality, development and improvement of all aspects of the further education and training offering of KWETB. It protects, maintains and develops the standards of education and training programmes and related activities. In doing so, the KWETB FET Quality Council is ensuring, as far as is possible, that all learners receive an equivalent experience. The terms of reference for the Quality Council can be found in Appendix 6: Quality Council Terms of Reference.

FET Quality Council Sub-group (Programme Governance)

The purpose of the FET Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Governance) is to fulfil the role and responsibilities delegated to it by the FET Quality Council for the oversight, planning, coordination, development and quality of the programmes of KWETB. In doing so, it assists the FET Quality Council in protecting, maintaining and developing the standards of education and training programmes, and learner achievement, and the related activities of KWETB.

The FET Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Governance) oversees all programme developments, although its role and responsibilities do not apply directly to apprenticeship programmes, unless otherwise specified. Governance of apprenticeship programmes is managed by the National Programme Board(s) and reports are provided to the FET Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Governance). The terms of reference for the Programme Governance Sub-group can be found in Appendix 7: Programme Governance Subgroup Terms of Reference.

FET Quality Council Sub-group (Quality Assurance)

The purpose of the FET Quality Council Sub-Group (Quality Assurance) is to fulfil the role and responsibilities delegated to it by the FET Quality Council, for the development, oversight, planning, co-ordination and improvement of quality assurance policies, procedures, and processes. In doing so, it assists the FET Quality Council in protecting, maintaining and developing the standards of education and training programmes and the related activities of Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board (KWETB). The terms of reference for the Quality Assurance Sub-group can be found in Appendix 8: Quality Assurance Subgroup Terms of Reference.

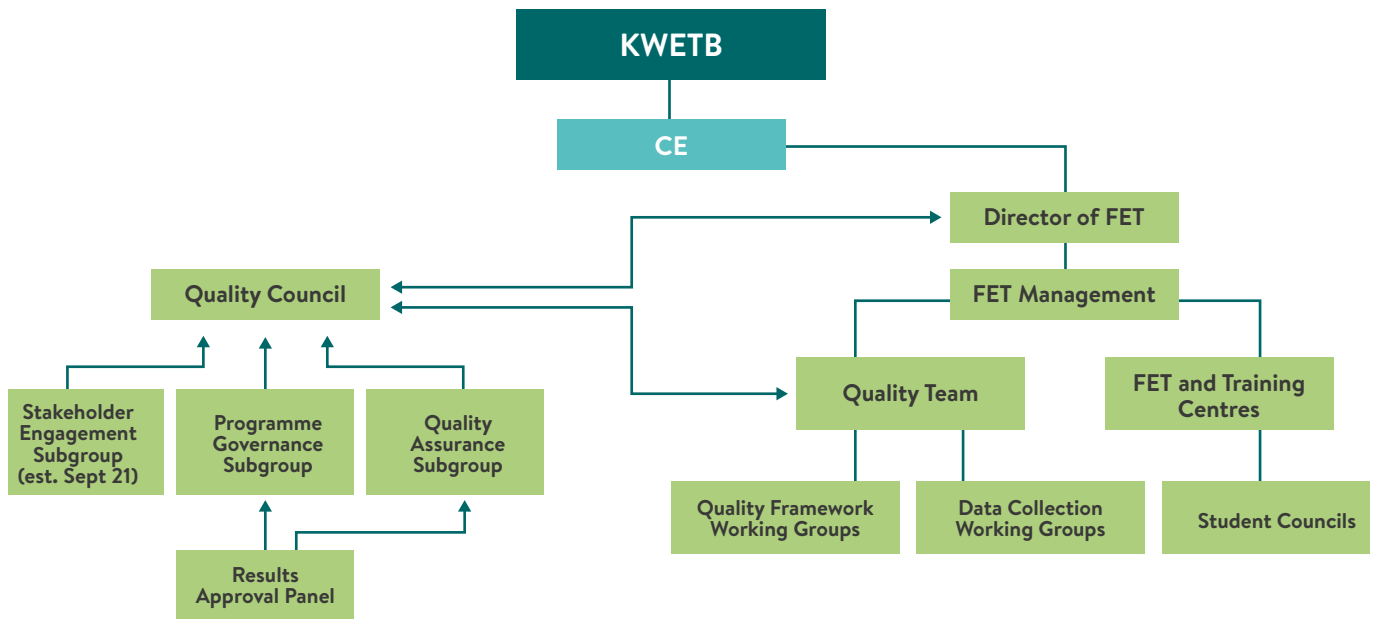


Figure 7: FET Governance Relationships

Results Approval Panels

KWETB provides six opportunities per annum to avail of certification. In the FE sector, the Results Approval Panel (RAP) is a collective of coordinators, principals and/or delegated individuals representing centres that have submitted for the period in question and is chaired by an AEO or member of the Quality Team. A report on the Quality Assuring Assessment processes is presented; key elements identified through the Internal Verification and External Authentication processes are presented, and the expected outcomes are a set of approved results and identified local and cross-sector quality improvement actions if necessary. In the training sector, a panel of the Training and Development Manager; AEO and TSO meets to review the submitted documentation.

In both cases, a report of the RAP is submitted to the Quality Assurance and Programme Governance Sub-groups, together with recommended action areas for consideration. In 2020 a protocol for ensuring the effectiveness of online RAP meetings was published. Participants in the October cyclical review workshops appreciated the way in which these meetings were very well managed and that the process of feedback to both centres and EAs which is embedded provides opportunities for learning. The QA sub-group is responsible for reviewing patterns in grading and in the outcomes of actions and recommendations identified. A report from the QA Sub-group is submitted to the Quality Council for final sign-off.

CASE STUDY 1

EXPERIENCE OF THE QUALITY COUNCIL: STAFF REPRESENTATIVE AND YOUTHREACH COORDINATOR

As a Youthreach Coordinator it has been a tremendous learning experience to be involved in the Quality Council. It has allowed me to gain a wider understanding of how the Quality Assurance process operates in KWETB.

Being an active member of the Quality Council has enabled me to incorporate a more integrated approach to quality assurance in my role as Youthreach Coordinator. This has enhanced my delivery of Initial Induction to the Quality Assurance Process to new students. It has improved my understanding of the requirements regarding delivery of QQI modules in my Centre, thus ensuring that all Centre Educators are fully informed of the requirements of the Quality Assurance process. It has enabled me to oversee the Internal Verification Process, as well as ensuring the appropriate feedback in our Results Approval Panel meetings. I am grateful to have this opportunity, as member of the KWETB Quality Council, to contribute to the successful functioning of this Quality Assurance process.

As an active contributor to the governance of the Quality Framework Development process, I have become more aware of the exceptional work of KWETB Educators - from the ground up. I have greater esteem for the QA support staff and members of the sub-group committees in their work ensuring the integrity of the QA throughout KWETB. This has highlighted for me the strengths of our individual programmes in the FET Sector.

Working with my fellow Quality Council colleagues has been an enriching collaborative experience. I continue to enjoy being part of this dedicated dynamic group working diligently to ensure appropriate learning, assessing, and equal opportunities for learners. As a group we oversee the standards for course validation ensuring all decisions made are improving the learning experience for every KWETB Learner. Through my involvement with the Quality Council, I am encouraged and reassured that throughout each stage of the Quality Assurance process, all decisions and actions are student centred and focus on the needs of learners.

Jonathan McNab

CASE STUDY 2

MY EXPERIENCE OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE SUB-GROUP OF THE QUALITY COUNCIL: LEARNER REPRESENTATIVE

When I was first approached about becoming the student representative on the QA Subgroup, I was slightly hesitant, not fully understanding what the role would entail and if I could add value to the project. However, I had a wonderful time as a student at the FE centre in Wicklow and so I was delighted to help, also recognising the significant learning experience that this opportunity would bring. As a mature student returning to education after many years, I feel very strongly about advocating on behalf of students and I relished the opportunity to have a voice in the development of the policies and procedures which directly impact students across the organisation.

My first meeting with the subgroup was quite nerve wracking as I quickly recognised that I was in the company of industry professionals, who are passionate in their fields, with a wealth of knowledge and experience to share. My nerves were quickly overcome however as the other group members could not have been more welcoming and supportive, seeming genuinely interested in what I had to say. Over the next several months, we hashed out our role, and began to understand our duties and position within the organisation.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time on the QA Subgroup so far and look forward to seeing the results of our work in the coming months and years. I also look forward to one day passing the baton on to a new student representative who can bring fresh insight and understanding to the role.

Elizabeth Jenkins



EVALUATION

The FET Quality Council, Programme Governance Sub-group, Quality Assurance Sub-group and RAPs form a cross-organisation collaborative structure to formalise decision-making regarding quality and its assurance in the ETB's FET services. While these structures are in the formation phase, there is significant learning and development of new processes for central decision-making and information-sharing and for communication and integration of governance processes. One group at the October cyclical review workshops commented that 'keeping learners at the front at all times is good practice' (CRWS1) which is evident in the operation of the governance units.

Leaders of Teaching, Learning and Assessment reflected on the impact of the governance and management structures in their responses to the self-evaluation survey. The governance units were perceived as a source of knowledge, culture development and change through which participation and involvement was a positive experience. Survey respondents reflected that the assurance of quality is becoming more collaborative, and QA is becoming more integrated as part of day to day life at centre level, featuring strongly in the management of assessment.

The emerging governance system is collaborative and inclusive of opinions from all the sections of FET. The Quality Council is perceived as a very good development, providing good direction, deadlines, and ensuring timeliness, responsiveness and prompt decision-making. Expectations are clearly expressed and there is openness to the consideration of ideas and to different voices. There is openness to change of processes where existing ones do not meet needs or where they are not effective (CRWS 2).

Terms of reference for the governance units have been agreed, and these are due for review in December 2021. New representatives will join the Quality Council and Sub-groups in 2022. There is a need to review the experience of the existing members before they step down and to lend this experience to improvements and review of the terms of reference of the Quality Council and its Sub-groups (CRWS2).

Each of the governance sub-groups has met regularly, according to a defined schedule for meetings. Meetings are aligned to allow for consideration of documentation in advance and for reporting to the next level. There are concerns about the availability of practitioners to sit on these governance units, and about likely clashes with teaching time, and associated concerns about consequent loss of learning for learners. On the other hand, the principles behind the governance units provide for substantial improvement of services for all learners, so this element needs to be weighed up and supported within the organisation.

Practitioners working on KWETB programmes were asked about the intersection of quality assurance with their teaching practice, and about whether they felt informed about governance of quality:

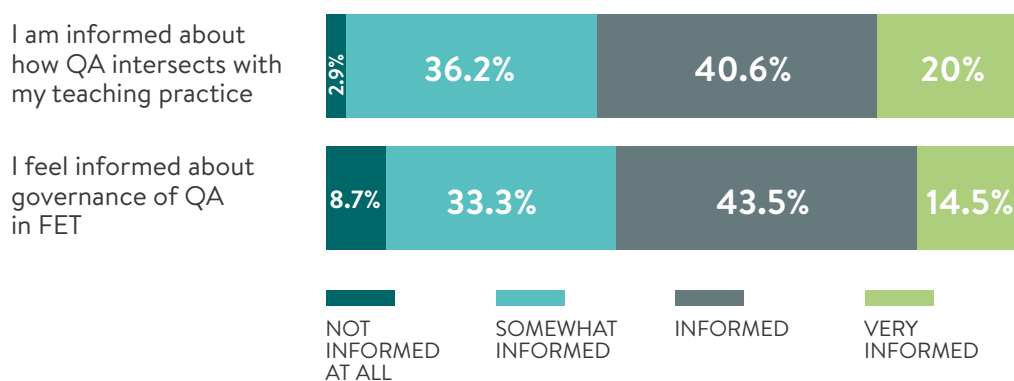


Figure 8: Embedding Quality Assurance

Quality Assurance is embedded in centres, predominantly through coordinators' experience of managing quality assuring assessment and also as a result of robust reporting principles. Coordinators described their approach to quality assuring assessment:

As a manager, being in constant discussion with staff. Being available and making time for staff and QA. Ensuring at all times all staff, even those new staff are aware of how QA impacts on students and that it has to be part of their class just like teaching. During IV stage taking into account the work and learning from it. Ensuring the ethos of the service is adhered to at all times. Providing CPD opportunities.

Leaders of Teaching, Learning and Assessment Survey

October Workshop participants commented:

The quality council and sub groups are now in place and we have a pathway for answers. Learners trust us to manage quality and we can explain our position when required based on quality documents. The learner is at the heart of the decision making based on fairness, reliable and robust system (CRWS2).

A practitioner reflected on the role of QA at centre level:

QA is the cornerstone of all accreditation. New tutors and long-term existing tutors need approachable access to QA and timely answers on concerns or challenges. QA shouldn't be seen as an inconvenience but more a standardised but lightly flexible process to make planning, delivery and assessing easier for tutors, IV and EA's. The inconsistency of opinions of EA's needs also to be looked at as this creates a feeling of demotivation in tutors.

Practitioner Survey

EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

- ▶ Representative governance structures are established and regular meetings are scheduled.
- ▶ There is a published schedule of aligned meetings to enable decision-making and communication cascades.
- ▶ Decisions of the governance units are publicised through the Quality Assurance E-Zine, Coordinator networks and the KWETB Intranet.
- ▶ The work of the governance units is documented for each meeting and approved at the following meeting.
- ▶ A teams site enables the sharing of documents prior to meetings to be 'taken as read' for consideration at the meetings.
- ▶ Participants report that their involvement in the QA governance units has enhanced their knowledge of QA.
- ▶ There is openness and transparency within and across the governance units.

CHALLENGES

- ▶ Improving knowledge of the governance units and the QA team and their roles and responsibilities throughout the organisation is a challenge possibly based on the diversity of FET services, on communication structures and strategies:
 - 'Governance systems are not 'front of house' and visible – people aren't aware of each sub group. These are seen as content in a policy document rather than as something to be used and questioned and adapted. Ensuring everyone understands the hierarchy of QA systems in place is important'.
 - The currency and impact of the work of the governance groups needs to be disseminated more. The 'process can be a bit slow in relation to getting things through the various sub groups and to the Quality Council for approval.'
 - There needs to be even broader representation across the governance units - for example we need to live the idea of transparency. There are a number of sub-groups and unless you are physically a member of that group, there is no sharing (to date) of information or output from the work of these groups

CRWS 2 Participants

There is a need to address this through support and promotion of governance structures by Senior Management and FET management, giving the structures legitimacy.

- ▶ The distinction between governance and operational units requires further clarification, and associated with this, the members of the governance units require support to help them distinguish between their roles as managers, practitioners or learners and their representative status on the governance units.
- ▶ The level of information and detail to be considered is challenging, resulting in concerns about the amount of work to be done by unit members, and the perception of time required for this added to time required for regular operational duties.
- ▶ Lack of consistency between further education practices and training practices is a challenge due to the differing levels of associated bureaucracy. There is a need to develop shared vision, understanding and approved documentation.
- ▶ The QA team identified that the current 'siloes' structure and lack of stated purpose of the team presents challenges to coherence and internal 'marketing' of the team throughout the organisation, and this has an impact on the team's identity.
- ▶ The absence of centralised meetings, networking and cohesiveness across further education and training is cited as a blocker to the achievement of greater cohesion and to the improved integration, standardisation and articulation of programmes and of the evolving QA system. Workload and availability to attend events is also cited as a barrier to development of coherence (CRWS 2).
- ▶ The 'turnaround' time for decisions and answers to requests from centres can represent a pressure from centres, and associated stress at centre-level if there is a feeling that the issues is not being resolved quickly enough. This points to a need to put in place clear change management approaches.
- ▶ One practitioner talked about coherence and connections:

I would like to see a linkage between teachers and head office on at least a yearly basis. Topics that could be discussed are technology, resources, relevance of subjects. This year especially has been extremely busy and stressful and therefore difficult/ impossible to go the extra mile to train myself and/or make suggestions. It would be a welcome and supportive gesture to see the relevant departments from head office opening the line of communication with us. (CRWS 1)

POTENTIAL FUTURE ENHANCEMENTS

Governance Unit, QA Team visibility and integration:

- ▶ Promote the work of the QA team and the governance units widely and improve visibility of these groups throughout the organisation
- ▶ Further develop of the QA Team through:
 - Improve the definition of the QA team and its role. Develop clear organisational maps. Build the identity and values of the QA team, highlighting its existing customer service ethos.
 - Provide support for governance unit members to ensure clarity about roles and responsibilities.
 - Include a QA person as a member on each of the sub-groups to maximise the efficiency of the group.
 - Increase the staffing of the QA team, and support integration and acceptance of QA Team staff in all centres of further education and training throughout FET services.
 - Provide support for student representatives and external stakeholders on governance units.
- ▶ Communication
 - Put in place a clear reference person as a contact in the QA team and improve the QA Team's connection to centres, increasing the visibility of the QA team in centres.
 - and Identify a local QA liaison person for each Multiplex Centre. A multiplex centre is a single physical location where, for example, a Youthreach, VTOS and Adult Basic Education centre are housed.
 - Improve engagement and interaction of the QA Team with all training providers and develop opportunities for more regular meetings between all centres and the QA Team
 - Engage all key personnel in regular centrally planned meetings and events to ensure that governance of QA is understood.
 - Engage administrative staff more effectively in QA processes, and provide training in these processes consistently across the FET services.
 - Embed principles of well-being in our QA systems: 'In an evaluation of what we can bring to the organisation we need to be mindful of our own wellness, to avoid burnout and to make work sustainable' (CRW1).
 - Overhaul the KWETB website and intranet within 12 months to include a section on QA with access for all staff. Ensure that QA documentation, including the e-Zine is available to all staff.
 - Use less prescriptive, more consistent language across FET and ensure that all documents published are written in Plain English.
- ▶ Development/PD
 - Develop more community of practice workshops led by the QA Team and delivered in the various FET centres covering policy and procedure development and update of learning outcomes and assessment.
 - Develop induction for new staff that includes segments on quality assurance, governance and management structures.
 - Provide regular mandatory training to be implemented for all teaching staff on QA processes either online or face to face.
 - Implement a quality assured process for the review and update of existing programme descriptors; and of assessment instrument specifications. Develop working groups to support programme reviews and updates and policy and procedure development. Options for this include establishment of timebound working groups lead by a specialist team, or establishment of a specialist team to do the work. This would provide opportunities for team learning across the FET organisation.

THE DOCUMENTATION OF QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES: KWETB'S EVOLVING QA FRAMEWORK

DESCRIPTION

The ETB has combined legacy requirements for quality assurance established in 2013, with the development of new procedures based on QQI Core Guidelines for QA. Centres and colleges apply QA as required for programmes leading to awards from other awarding bodies, for example, City and Guilds and Pearson. Coordinators and principals in further education have access to an online platform for QA communication; news; a document repository and repository for validated programmes.

Quality assured processes to administer access to programmes of further education and training have become embedded through the adoption of the Programme Learner Support System (PLSS) and the associated development of standardised registration forms. Decisions about delivery of programmes of education and training are managed through the administration of the online National Course Database and Calendar and approvals are associated with this and managed by the FET Management Team.

There was a need to develop coherent documentation for QA in the ETB's further education and training services, informed by the QQI Core Statutory QA Guidelines (2016) and by QQI's Sector Specific Guidelines (2016). A framework development project was initiated in 2019. In 2020, a desk review was carried out to determine the range of policies and procedures applied in the further education and training services. This process, and an online prioritisation process involving coordinators, principals, programme managers and practitioners, led to the drafting of a document with the working title of a 'Quality Framework'. This framework has three sections:

- ▶ Core policies and procedures
- ▶ Support policies and procedures
- ▶ Corporate policies and procedures

The draft framework covers 11 areas, and the current number of associated procedures is seventy-five (Appendix 14: Quality Framework Outline). In February 2021 eleven working groups were set up to begin phase one of the process of review, drafting and redrafting of procedures. In total, fifty-seven practitioners who responded to a call were involved in these small working groups, with members of the QA team. The project pivoted online, as the starting point coincided with the onset of the Covid19 pandemic. The purpose of this participative approach is to ensure that the development contributes to the further building of a culture of quality in KWETB, and of commitment to the policies and procedures as enablers of positive outcomes for learners.

In response to a question about the establishment of governance units, in the self-evaluation survey, coordinators identified the establishment of these working groups as being a positive outcome of the new governance processes, and as contributing to the development of a culture of quality in the organisation. The process is now progressing to phase 2. The new governance units have

'Helped promote a culture of QA in FET through (the) QA newsletter, establishment of working groups, provision of guidance and clarity for staff and approval of required amendments to assessments etc. from Quality Council.'

(FET Coordinator)

PHASE 1: DEVELOPMENT	QUARTERS 2-3 2021	Procedure development and drafting
PHASE 1: PROJECT REVIEW	QUARTER 4 2021	Review and forward planning; plan for new working groups
PHASE 2: DEVELOPMENT	QUARTER 2 2022	Additional procedure development. Associated policy development
PHASE 3: DEVELOPMENT	QUARTER 3 2022	Draft cohesive KWETB handbook
PHASE 4: TESTING AND CONSULTATION	QUARTER 4 2022	Information sharing and consultation: Core policies and procedures
	QUARTER 1 2023	Information sharing and consultation: Support Policies and procedures
	QUARTER 2 2023	Information sharing and consultation: Management and Corporate policies and procedures
PHASE 5: IMPLEMENTATION	QUARTER 3 2023	V1 Organisation Handbook and V1 Student Handbook prepared.
	QUARTER 4 2023	Launch of first iterations of KWETB FET Quality Framework and plan for cyclical review of policies and procedures

Figure 9: Phasing of the Quality Framework Development process

Parallel to this process, where the need arises, emergency procedures may be developed if necessary. The quality framework will be an overarching one, elements of which may be rendered context specific, subject to approval by the Quality Council. The QA Sub-group has oversight of these development processes.

In the review of phase 1, which ended in May 2021, participants were asked what they had learned thus far. They responded that

- ▶ All voices are needed
- ▶ Collaboration is a key important and valuable factor
- ▶ The expertise of colleagues is valuable
- ▶ Practitioner voice is valued
- ▶ Quality matters to KWETB
- ▶ There was insight into QA, QA processes and policy writing
- ▶ Clarity, understandable language and plain English will be important

(Debrief, May 26th, 2021)

EVALUATION

Documentation of policies and procedures for quality assuring assessment and associated practices is well established in KWETB further education services. In the training services, the temporary policies and procedures of TQAS are applied. There has been some crossover in the form of delivery of programmes validated through the FETAC Programme Approval Agreement (PAAs) process to learners engaged in programmes delivered under training services, and practices used in QA of assessment in further education have been adopted. There has been no crossover to date of former training practices into FE.

The existence of a robust and known system and established collective norms for the administration of quality assuring assessment enabled the pivot to emergency remote online teaching and learning in response to the pandemic. Similarly, the online system for quality assuring assessment enabled a fluid transition to the QA processes required for the implementation of a pilot e-portfolio project.

While policies and procedures for quality assuring assessment are known, other policy areas and associated procedures have developed locally at centre-level and organically, informed by a range of national publications and in-services delivered by a range of different parties, but without reference to a centralised KWETB system for QA. This undermines the potential for ETB-owned policies and procedures to support an equitable system of FET. Broad knowledge, understanding and confident application of QA procedures is a challenge. Ensuring that there is a measured and monitored approach to the implementation of policies and procedures is also a challenge. There is a need for more cohesive, understood QA system documentation. One October workshop group reflected that

Policies and procedures have developed in a piecemeal fashion to date and have stood us in good stead but looking forward this is a good opportunity to start from scratch and have a more unified and structured approach. (CRWS1)

There is a mismatch at times between the great work that's happening at administrative level (Quality Team) and the management teams on the ground. Time can be an issue to give what is needed to policy review and development. Similarly, time for planning and reflecting on change is a challenge, given the intensity of other work. (CRWS2)

Staff are aware that there is a developing quality framework through regular communications and through participation in working groups. Existing policies, procedures and validated programmes are accessible to centre coordinators and principals through online communication platforms, and information is downloaded from this platform for dissemination to staff in further education. .

In relation to the culture of quality one practitioner commented:

We need to develop a culture and approach to QA on the ground. It should be on the agenda during team meetings. We need to understand what QA really is i.e. not just folders or e-portfolios at assessment. I think there is an automatic association with this.

A practitioner highlighted the need to disseminate the new framework to centres to allow them to update practices:

On completion of updated Quality Assurance measures over the coming months, training and information is required in centres to update practices.

EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

- ▶ There are robust systems for administration, management and quality improvement in quality assuring assessment, which are accepted as a norm.
- ▶ Robust legacy systems have sustained engagement with contracted and second providers under the multi-supplier agreement ensuring that there is a quality assured system for quality assuring assessment, giving stability during rapid change.
- ▶ Online communications platforms are used for quality assuring assessment, for quality framework development and as a hub for the governance structures.
- ▶ Phase one of the development of a Quality Framework is progressing, and there has been collective collaboration in this development.
- ▶ There is a plan for phase 2, development of the quality framework, including completion of policies and procedures, QA handbooks, consultation and establishment of a cyclical approach to review of policies and procedures.
- ▶ Policies and procedures for quality assuring assessment are available to centres delivering at all levels from one to six, making processes transparent.
- ▶ There is a standard application form for learners who want to pursue programmes of further education and training.
- ▶ The drive to make the policies and procedures available in language that is accessible to all, including learners is welcome (CRWS2).

CHALLENGES

- ▶ Promotion, communication and implementation of QA policies and procedures to ensure their adoption throughout FET consistently is challenged by the absence of clear coherent communication systems and connectivity across the FET services.
- ▶ The QA team identified that understanding of QA processes is a challenge across different roles in the organisation. In some cases, knowledge of the policies and procedures, and related information is not easily available to practitioners.
- ▶ Clear and consistent interpretation of the technical vocabulary of QA is challenging.
- ▶ Time for coordinators to engage in QA processes as well as other management tasks is a challenge because it is only one part of a considerable administrative load. Similarly, time for planning and reflecting on change is a challenge, given the intensity of other work. (CRWS2)
- ▶ The existing model of a QA hub requires updating to include training, and to ensure that it covers all aspects of QA in one location. The hub requires integration into the new dynamic website.
- ▶ Policies and procedures for QA need to be recognised at corporate level, and the links between these policies and corporate policies need to be improved. Relationships between the Quality Team and Organisational Services and Development (OSD) are challenging and gaining support for policy development as a collaborative practice is hampered by lack of connection between OSD and the QA Team.
- ▶ There are legacy differences between some training and FE procedures which should be addressed through the Quality Framework development process. (CRWS2)
- ▶ The existence of 'silos' mitigates against sharing of information and collaborative work between FE and T.
- ▶ Integrated meaningful, proactive planning between FE and T, and the QA Team as a support is limited.

POTENTIAL FUTURE ENHANCEMENTS

- ▶ A glossary of terms to enable greater confidence in communication of QA should be developed.
- ▶ The QA hub should be updated and integrated in the KWETB website to represent the full breadth of QA as it applies to FET.
- ▶ Improve relationships with corporate services and OSD to enhance knowledge and understanding of the relevance of QA and its relationship to corporate policies and procedures.
- ▶ Increase delivery of information and training regarding QA either in the online space or face to face.
- ▶ Practitioners suggested a number of enhancements:
 - *Provide peer mentoring or shadowing for new staff who may not have taken part in QA before in any capacity would be a huge benefit.*
 - *I work across three centres and I feel that the policies and procedures (for QA) should be a permanent item on team meeting agendas.*

CRSW Participant

- ▶ Support the continuation of collaborative, deliberative policy and procedure development for the next phases.
- ▶ Acknowledge the time constraints on practitioners to complete modules and the small window available to carry out internal verification (IV) and participate in external authentication (EA) a week later and then RAP meeting; and the administrative burden associated with QA for coordinators, principals and programme managers and address these.
- ▶ Provide constantly updated organisation charts with clear role descriptions and deliver training for staff at all levels to increase awareness and confidence.
- ▶ Merging FET and making policies and procedures the same for both would make running programs easier and better for the learner overall. 'Learners do not care if they do FE course or training course – they care about the quality of education and supports available to achieve their learning' (CRWS).
- ▶ Ensure that the new documentation is easily accessible to all, making them visible and building awareness of them for all. Ensure they are open and transparent and user friendly.



STAFF RECRUITMENT, MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

DESCRIPTION

Recruitment of staff in FET is carried out in line with KWETB policies for recruitment and with national employment policy, ensuring transparency and accountability. It is managed by the Human Resources (HR) section. Staff are directly employed by KWETB or employed by second providers according to multi-supplier contracts. Information to staff is available here: [KWETB Intranet - Home \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

FET posts are publicly advertised in the print media, through an on-line platform, [etbvacancies.ie](#) and through social media. The recruitment process is:

- ▶ The rationale and need for the post are identified and submitted to FET Management and HR. This includes a job description or existing defined descriptions for roles.
- ▶ The post is approved, or not.
- ▶ An advertisement is drawn up, approved, and placed in the media and in the online [etbvacancies.ie](#) platform.
- ▶ A shortlisting and interview panel are set up by the Human Resources section.
- ▶ The interview panel is chaired by a member of the ETB board and includes a personnel expert and a FET expert.
- ▶ Candidates are invited to interview, and following a competency-based interview, are marked and a recommendation is made to the Chief Executive.
- ▶ References are checked and an offer of employment is made.
- ▶ All prospective employees are the subject of a Garda vetting check in accordance with national policy.

KWETB teaching staff are required to hold a suitable subject matter qualification and a pedagogical qualification. KWETB teaching staff in PLCs and VTOS centres are recognised by the Teaching Council and uphold professional standards based on the published codes of practice.

Management of Staff

Responsibility for day to day management of staff rests with line managers. In the case of administrative staff, the public sector framework is applied. In some cases, administrative staff are outsourced from a specialist agency.

Professional Development (PD) and Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

The Human Resources section manages applications annually from FET staff to engage in CPD delivered, for example, by a Higher Education Institution (HEI).

Staff are also encouraged to participate in

- ▶ Induction training
- ▶ Statutorily required training in Health and Safety; Child Safeguarding; Occupational First Aid; Fire Safety and Manual Handling
- ▶ Training and information seminars re Quality Assurance
- ▶ Innovative training such as digital upskilling
- ▶ Further Education Support Service (FESS) training
- ▶ Erasmus+ Projects
- ▶ Programme-specific training
- ▶ Tailored training responding to specific needs such as those arising from a quality improvement goal.
- ▶ ICT training

KWETB has appointed a PD and Research Projects Coordinator, who facilitates the development of internal PD opportunities. An updated policy for staff induction, CPD and PD have been published.

KWETB FET practitioners have engaged in two significant ‘in-house’ PD opportunities which have enhanced their digital competence recently: The Dig Cap project and the e-Portfolio project which was piloted in 2020. The e-portfolio project has been recognised by coordinators as ‘leading the way in good practice’ across multiple services and levels (CRWS2). Staff also participated in the AHEAD Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in-service programme. Finally, PD staff trained as facilitators, and management staff participated in the Lifting Ireland’s Future Together (LiFT) programme.

CASE STUDY 3

OVERVIEW OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

As a learning organisation, KWETB are committed to continuous improvement and quality enhancement by supporting, developing and providing innovative professional Learning and Development (PL&D) initiatives for all staff. By promoting a culture of learning and development, we strive for excellence in service provision to provide high quality, accessible learning experiences for all.

The FET PD and Research Projects Coordinator was appointed in April 2020 and together with Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Support the PDTEL team of two was formed. In June 2020, we introduced the ‘PD Virtual Hub’ ([link to infographic](#)), online learning platform for all FET staff in MS Teams. Aspiring to connect staff and build professional networks to foster a culture of collaborative working and sharing of knowledge and experience. With more than 370 members the PD Hub is updated weekly with PL&D opportunities together with resources and on-demand video content. Developed from an initial response to Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) the Hub provides an integrated space for information and support for staff in the areas of PL&D, TEL, UDL, ALISS and Induction together with closed channels for collaborative FET Projects and CoPs.

Supported by FET Management, the PDTEL team developed and mobilised a streamlined strategic response to support staff with ERT by developing a digital strategy and resources to support educators to maintain delivery while providing virtual drop in sessions for staff. In June 2020, as a key response to support ERT, two weeks of PDTEL Summer Sessions were facilitated. 1,200 staff attended 24 webinars, as a result there are 17 hours of on-demand learning available for FET staff in the Hub with more than 1,300 views to date.

Based on the success of Summer Sessions, KWETB were the lead ETB and host for [FET Fest](#), a PL&D initiative borne in KWETB; a week-long online festival of learning for educators in FET in ETBs nationally. There were 21 live events, featuring 8 international keynotes together with more than 40 on demand sessions presented by educators from ETBs nationally. With circa 2,500 attendees, [social media impact](#) of 300,000 impressions, all sessions are open access on [FET FEST YouTube channel](#) reaching excess of 5,000 views thus far.

51 staff graduated from [DigCap](#), KWETB’s 6 month PD programme aligned to the [European Commission \(EC\) Digital Competence Framework for Educators](#), DigCompEDU.

The programme had three pathways for staff based on their self-identified level of digital competence; Pathfinders, Associates and Fellows. “100% of participants in the Associate and Fellow track agreed that DigCap has had a positive impact on their teaching and learning practice.” ([Link to DigCap Impact Survey Infographic](#))



[DigCap](#) was designed ‘in house’ guided by the principles of UDL, Instructional Design (ID) and Learning Experience Design (LXD) focusing on the following themes; Professional Engagement and Reflective Practice, Content Creation and Digital Resources, Learner Digital Competence, Teaching, Learning and Reimagining Assessment. Delivered via asynchronous activities and self-directed learning, in addition to facilitated live virtual sessions with a strong focus on collaborative peer learning and the development of professional learning networks. A key element of the sessions were the ‘spotlight’, best practice presentations from participant fellows demonstrating authentic action research in practice direct from our classrooms.

The FET Management team together with 5 staff together with KWETB colleagues from Schools and OSD engaged in an 8 week LiFT Leadership Development programme; piloted to promote cross-organisational integration and this initiative was introduced and facilitated by FET staff. ([KWETB LiFT video on YouTube](#))

Responsiveness to COVID restrictions led to development of a new practice-based, quality innovation by staff. An ePortfolio template was designed and developed to facilitate the use of high quality digital portfolios of assessment. The template was designed to support current and future assessment practices, with Quality Assurance at its core. In February 2021, the KWETB ePortfolio Project was launched and involved the roll out of the template in tandem with a supported PD programme for educators in the PD Virtual Hub. 100 staff participated in the initial pilot, receiving positive feedback from EA processes. The ePortfolio Project now has 223 staff participating; 11 locations have participated in face to face workshops, including one of our PLC colleges, in addition, [support videos](#) have received more than 5,700 views. Learning from this project together with the ePortfolio template was shared nationally with colleagues in ETBs, FESS and furthermore on the international stage. ([Weblink to webinar collection](#))

The PDTEL team are working to consolidate learning from ERT; planning stages of staff consultation to develop a KWETB PL&D strategy to support continuous improvement and quality enhancement with opportunities for all FET staff to upskill and continue to deepen our foundations as we prepare for the KWETB FET College of the Future. This strategy will also be informed by the [SOLAS FET PL&D Statement of Strategy 2020-2024](#).



Ashley Stephens,
Professional Development and Research Coordinator and snapshot

Of the survey respondents the following reported participating in Professional Development (PD) and arranging PD:

	Practitioners (69)	Leaders of T, L and A (24)	Support Staff (22)	Leaders who arranged PD (24)
GDPR training	78%	91%	63%	75%
Child and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding training	61%	58%	77%	58%
Health and Safety	61%	75%	63%	62%
Fire Prevention and Safety	53%	79%	72%	58%
Manual handling				58%
Centre-based induction	49%		63%	37%
Administrative staff training			45%	54%
QA training	46%	24%	45%	50%
Dig Cap	40%	4%		58%
Corporate induction		29%	13%	12%
Conflict management		37%		
FET Fest		93%		
FETCH	2%	25%	22%	
FESS		45%		62%
LiFT		4%		
NALA/Aontas		33%		62%
Technology for administration		33%	22%	33%
Budgeting/financial management		50%	13%	29%
Change management		41%		
Competency-based interviewing		79%		
Management		37%	9%	8%
PLSS/FARR		75%	54%	58%
Self-evaluation		25%		
Pedagogical upskilling				25%

Figure 10: Professional Development Participation

A review of the sample shows that prioritisation of those areas of PD associated with legislative and corporate requirements is reflected in the responses, with less emphasis on participation in PD in quality assurance, pedagogy and subject area/vocational area expertise. Statistics for participation in Dig Cap and other online PD opportunities regarding pedagogy paint a wider picture, and suggest that personal agency on behalf of practitioners is a factor that needs to be considered when planning and strategizing regarding participation in professional development. There is a need to put in place a consistent system for recording and recognising participation in PD and CPD, and to provide clarity on release for staff to participate in PD, and the purpose of that participation.

EVALUATION

While recruitment processes are well-established for regular posts, there is a perceived time lag between the requisitioning of new staff and the completion of the recruitment process. Supply and demand are an issue in the sector, especially in relation to practitioners with specific vocational skills. There is a need to engage in succession planning to ensure that all systems are up to date and that hand over does not result in loss of systems and approaches with a consequent negative impact on learners.

Professional development programmes have been very successful and have contributed to the effectiveness of the move to emergency remote teaching and learning, and to increasing pedagogical skills.

Workshops for the development of the quality framework proved to be a success, and arising from this, there is a need to increase opportunities for practitioners to work together to build capacity and to learn from one another, through communities of practice for example:

It would be helpful to see the standard in other centres, have allotted timetabled hours to go to other colleges and see how others do it. Sometimes you can feel like you are in a bubble other than your own excitement about the subject.

A community of practice for reviewing assessments in each subject area would be beneficial.

Practitioner Survey Responses

Informal feedback on the Quality Framework development working groups was that practitioners enjoyed meeting colleagues from other centres and sectors of FET to work together and share knowledge in what were referred to by one as 'virtual staff rooms'.

There is a need for improved induction of managers, practitioners and support staff in QA, the rationale for our QA system, and to inform them about the QA systems. Enabling leadership teams to provide training to staff in QA, and to provide ongoing organisational training in QA at different levels (Leader survey and Workshop outcomes) would enhance the visibility and currency of QA. For example, participants in the workshops cited the fact that QA governance structures and the QA team were not widely known across the FET system in KWETB (CRWS1). The phased approach to the development of the quality framework will support this learning. Practitioners responding to the self-evaluation questionnaire indicated that they would value more contact with the QA team to further their knowledge and understanding of quality assurance beyond its relevance for assessment and to build greater confidence and capacity in QA.

EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

- ▶ There are robust systems and policies in place for the management and recruitment of staff.
- ▶ National legislation is applied to these processes.
- ▶ Training and updates are provided to all interview panel members in competency interviewing.
- ▶ A new policy on staff induction has been released.
- ▶ The Professional Development service was a very strong support during the Covid19 crisis, providing training in the use of digital technologies; supporting the move to emergency remote teaching and learning; encouraging conversations about pedagogy; motivating staff to participate in UDL training and organising the LiFT programme.
- ▶ There is an appetite for PD opportunities that focus on pedagogy, as exemplified in the statistics for participation in the Professional Development and Technology-enhanced Learning initiatives.
- ▶ The Covid19 environment created a unique situation which accelerated participation in the development of digital skills.

CHALLENGES

- ▶ Recruitment of practitioners is very challenging because the supply chain of staff is an issue, particularly in certain vocational skill areas e.g. IT, advanced manufacturing.
- ▶ Time to process paperwork and requisitions is a problem:
 - CRWS2: Streamlined/quicker processes for recruitment are required to enable more agile responses to needs.
- ▶ More staff require training in Competency Based Interviewing and other recruitment processes.
- ▶ Induction for staff is still in development and we need to move quicker on this process
 - Access to development opportunities – provide time or money to support CPD that would benefit the organization. (CRWS2)
- ▶ Coherence: there is a need to pool resources to maximise the upskilling of staff e.g. training to complete dyslexia assessments.
- ▶ Practitioners constantly require upskilling which can disrupt the teaching and learning process if it is delivered during teaching hours. The conflict between the need to upskill staff, especially teaching staff and the need for staff to be released during class time is a challenge.

POTENTIAL FUTURE ENHANCEMENTS

- ▶ Develop a dedicated FET Human Resources section designate staff within OSD assigned to this role
- ▶ Streamline staff recruitment and improve succession planning. Continue to provide CDP in recruitment for all co-ordinators
- ▶ Introduce standard staff induction and upskilling processes – organised by a designated ‘go-to’ person.
- ▶ Increase in-house training in QA for all staff. Ensure all staff are trained and knowledgeable about QA Processes.
- ▶ Establish communities of practice to enable improved professional sharing and learning for practitioners, focused on pedagogy; subject matter learning and policy.
- ▶ Increase and promote the use of Erasmus funding for staff mobility and professional learning
- ▶ Provide team building events for staff, and acknowledge the good work that they do, continuing to support staff motivation.
- ▶ Develop the practice of evaluation of staff, highlighting good practice and establishing where training is required. Improve our approaches to promotion.
- ▶ Continue to support the great work of the professional development team.
- ▶ Given the importance of the relationship with learners, it is vital to support contracted training staff in their roles
- ▶ Provide continued training for EAs, for example in UDL and e-Portfolios.
- ▶ Develop a staff training unit offering tailored CPD plans, individual staff plans and internal PD.



CASE STUDY 4

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

In 2021, I completed my Masters in Educational Practice with First Class Honours, awarded by the National College of Ireland. I am very grateful to KWETB who provided me with a financial contribution towards my course fees, via my application for grant aid for CPD, as per the organisations Learning and Development Policy.

My dissertation focused on an area of practice-based research that had become of particular interest to me. Specifically, I wanted to examine the process of quality assuring assessment from the perspective of educators. While my experience as an educator had provided me with the anecdotal evidence from which my research questions developed, carrying out this research allowed me to systematically and critically explore this area of practice. Firstly, in order to gain a proper understanding of the current assessment landscape in the sector, experiences of the assessment process were explored from the perspective of assessors nationally, via an online survey. In addition, the impact of the KWETB e-Portfolio system which had been designed to meet the needs of quality assured assessment in the 21st century was also investigated, via a focus group. Some findings from this research have important implications for practice, including the significance of open, collegial and collaborative QA processes. In addition, it supports the ongoing development of our e-Portfolio Project to support educators and students in the preparation of quality assured portfolios of assessment in the sector.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to KWETB for supporting my research and the associated e-Portfolio Project. In my view, this project has clearly demonstrated the value and importance of practice-based research and a culture of organisational collaboration between educators, administrators and management in pursuing authentic quality enhancement. It has also demonstrated that educators themselves can innovate and impact real change in the sector when supported by an organisation to do so.

An overview of some of my main findings can be found here:
<https://view.genial.ly/6133ecb1003e770de096442d>

The dissertation can be read in full here:
<https://1drv.ms/b/s!AhBCIUpaICiQggJZWFeROkE2i4lx>



Rachael Doherty

PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT, APPROVAL AND SUBMISSION FOR VALIDATION

DESCRIPTION

70.5% of beneficiaries of KWETB FET services participated in programmes leading to QQI-FE awards, while 9.5% participated in awards from other awarding bodies such as City and Guilds and Pearson. A further 20% participated in uncertified programmes. Programme development takes place for example, when there is a need for a new programme module or programme for a specific centre, or for a programme module validated to another ETB under legacy Programme Approval Agreements (PAAs). A proposal seeking internal approval is made to the FET Management Team by centres wishing to deliver a new module or programme and this is considered in the context of the needs and resources of the proposing centre and the wider organisation. The Validation Officer administers this process and liaises with other ETBs in relation to programmes not yet validated for KWETB. Following approval to deliver, the Validation Officer processes the inclusion of the new programme module in the QBS and the change is approved through the line management system and submitted to the Programme Governance Sub-group of the Quality Council. A report with recommendations is submitted to the Quality Council for final agreement. A leader described the planning process:

Through programme review, new programme specifications are considered; modules looked at, new programmes of awards are applied for approval on FARR or to KWETB; enhancements to programmes discussed, planned and applied.

Leader Survey Respondent

When the centre is approved to run the programme, the centre Principal, Coordinator or Manager is responsible for planning delivery and ensuring that practitioners have developed appropriate schemes of work, locally devised assessment instruments and an assessment schedule, and that the programme is delivered effectively:

I familiarise myself with the relevant programme module descriptor and the required learning outcomes. The module descriptor is given to the tutor for the same purpose. The tutor is asked to develop a Scheme of Work – to demonstrate how the Learning Outcomes will be met, assessment plan, and schedule for implementation and this is sent to me for me to review in advance of a planning meeting. An initial planning meeting is held with the tutor to agree the plan and discuss any materials required, any perceived issues.

Leader Survey Respondent

In the training services, an agile, innovative and responsive approach is taken. Programmes are developed based on local need, labour market needs and engagement with employers and industry representatives. Development of programmes is carried out by a subject matter expert (SME), in collaboration with stakeholders and approved through line management channels.

In the context of the 2017 QQI Policies and Procedures for the Validation of Programmes of Education and Training, KWETB has not engaged as an individual provider in programme development applying these policies recently, but has participated in the consortium to develop the programme in Early Learning and Care, led by Dublin and Dunlaoghaire ETB. A successful validation application was made and KWETB's differential application was validated. The programme is being piloted in two centres. This development process was reported on and monitored through the Quality Council and the Programme Governance Sub-group.

EVALUATION

There is an emerging balance between a consistent approach to approving delivery of existing validated programmes and a developing, agile approach to meet immediate needs. There is strong commitment to the responsibility for the quality of programmes at centre level, as expressed by this leader in response to the question ‘list strategies you employ to integrate QA in your centre’:

We design programmes that meet QQI requirements and learner needs; communicate programme information to (the) community at large, existing students and staff

Leader Survey Respondent.

Knowledge of a consistent programme approval and validation approach has not yet been disseminated to practitioners effectively throughout FET services, and distinctions between the roles and responsibilities of QQI, the provider, and the current status of the common awards system need to be clarified. There is a need for more knowledge-building and understanding of the potential of programme development, approval and validation and clarification of the KWETB stance and strategy in this area. The role of the QA Team was recognised at the cyclical review workshops, and a programme development/curriculum development unit was proposed as a solution to the problem. There is some frustration at the slowness of update of existing programmes. One practitioner commented on QA Team involvement:

The QA Team need(s) a more active role in delivery and assessing. Module descriptors need to be updated to reflect changes in business and work environments and to allow for variation in assessment criteria.’

Practitioner Survey Respondent

The frustration was manifested in the workshops where groups identified that there is a lack of transparency around which programmes are validated for each centre. A list of validated programmes is circulated to centres to support their decision-making. There is a perception that the work associated with validation is ‘quite tedious and time-consuming’ (CRWS1). There is a sense of frustration about the need to update existing programmes, and an acknowledgement of the resourcing requirements to undertake this work effectively:

Many of the existing programmes need an overhaul. How to achieve this? Working Groups? Specialist teams? How to include the voices of busy educators? Modules may become outdated. How can we remunerate teachers for this work?’ (CRWS1)

There is a strong call to update existing programmes, with CRWS respondents saying they would like to have more consistent, regular updating of programmes and programme modules by SMEs and communication of these across FET in order to ‘keep up with the changing environment’.

A defined strategy for the development and validation of programmes would enhance the delivery of quality programmes of education and training. There is lack of knowledge and clarity about the validation policy and concern about the fact that many of the validated programmes leading to CAS awards are becoming outdated and are ‘not fit for purpose’ (CRWS2). These outdated programme descriptors may be inhibiting KWETB’s ability to respond in an agile fashion to industry and labour market needs. Discourse ranges from the possibility of adopting programmes developed by other awarding bodies to the development of an internal programme and curriculum development unit. Feedback indicates that there needs to be a more routine, scheduled approach to programme planning:

We need a proper strategic plan where we can all feed into FET. Who makes the decisions on planning, programmes etc, where does the process stop and start?’ (We) ‘need a timeframe for same. (CRWS1)

EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

- ▶ The existing validated descriptors are deeply embedded in education and training practice, and they contribute a defined frame within which practitioners deliver programmes and assess learners.
- ▶ Flexibility in the delivery of existing validated programmes is encouraged.
- ▶ A robust QA and programme governance process for programme approval based on existing validated programmes has been tested, for example, through changes to Work Experience modules, during the pandemic.
- ▶ The role of the Programme Governance Sub-group was tested and further developed during this period and awareness of the QA processes is improving.
- ▶ Through the Early Learning and Care (ELC) programme development (Appendix 15) there was good collaborative teamwork between the QA Team, Co-ordinators and Subject Matter Experts and consortium members and significant organisational learning.
- ▶ Employer engagement is being strengthened to ensure that programmes are meeting current and emerging labour market needs.

CHALLENGES

- ▶ A large number of existing CAS programme descriptors and 2014 Assessment Instrument Specification (AISs) are out of date and require review and update. (CRWS 1 and 2).
- ▶ The lack of an internal process for programme development, approval and validation based on QQI validation policy may lead to lack of opportunities for innovation, organisational learning and capacity building. There are perceptions that the validation process is time consuming and onerous.
- ▶ Resources for high level strategic and innovative projects are perceived as limited, and thus opportunities to shape the KWETB approach to programme development and validation are limited.

POTENTIAL FUTURE ENHANCEMENTS

- ▶ There is potential for the delivery of programmes leading to a wider number of diverse awards across further education and training services.
- ▶ Establish a dedicated curriculum and programme development unit within the QA team for all of KWTEB FET with a brief to develop a process, inform strategy and engage in programme development and validation.
- ▶ Establish communities of practice of practitioners with defined timelines to review and update existing programme descriptors and build knowledge of curriculum development.
- ▶ Develop informed, evidence-based approaches to programme development to allow opportunities to explore inclusion, for example, of Access/bridging courses/tailored programmes; blended learning programmes and modularisation.
- ▶ Merging further education and training and making policies and procedures the same for both would ensure common standards: 'Learners do not care if they do FE course or training course – they care about the quality of education and supports available to achieve their learning.' (CRWS2).
- ▶ Build on and broaden the use of other awarding and validating bodies and develop QA processes for this engagement.

CASE STUDY 5

INNOVATIVE PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

The Bretzel Bakery Traineeship

The Bretzel Bakery Traineeship is a new collaboration between KWETB and the Bretzel Bakery. The Bretzel Bakery has a long tradition of artisanal baking, but like the hospitality is struggling to recruit and retain bakers for this important industry. The aim of this 24-week programme is to develop occupational skills and knowledge in bakery, including automated or semi-automated food processing techniques. Learners will be able to produce and cook a range of dough and flour products including assorted breads and morning goods and savoury baked products.

Learners are educated in a state-of-the-art bakery school which KWETB designed last year, situated in the Bretzel bakery plant in Kilcullen and are immersed in skills development through on the job experience. Learners can progress to further training or to job roles such as: Bakery Processing Operative; Bakery Packaging and Distribution Operator; Bakery Service/Sales Operative, or Bakery Quality Assurance Operative.

Developing Leaders in Hospitality- collaboration with the Irish Hotels Foundation (IHF)

The Developing Leaders for Hospitality and Tourism programme proposed and led by KWETB will upskill team leads and supervisory staff in critical areas including operations, finance, systems, and people management. This programme is part of the national Skills to Advance Further Education and Training initiative, which supports employers to develop their workforce and employees to avail of upskilling and reskilling opportunities. As a major employer in Ireland, the hospitality and tourism sector has identified the need to retain key talent and develop leadership capacity to rejuvenate businesses for recovery and growth.

Flexibility is assured both in programme content and delivery schedules to meet the sector's requirements. The focus on developing skills to future proof the workforce in vulnerable occupations, businesses and sectors is central to the strategic mission of the Skills to Advance Initiative. Recent events highlight that those in vulnerable sectors run the risk of being most at risk of job loss and need upskilling and reskilling to develop agile skills for employment.

Early Learning and Care

KWETB participated in the collaboration between ETBs to develop a new Professional Award Type Descriptor and programme in Early Learning and Care, and the new programme was validated in time to commence the piloting of delivery in September 2021. The programme is being piloted in the Bray and Wicklow Further Education and Training Centres and two more pilots will commence in January 2022, with the remaining centres to commence in September 2022.

A community of practice for subject matter experts has been formed, and there is ongoing reflection and review of the pilots.

CASE STUDY 5 CONTD.

Track and Trails

This is a 16-week programme designed to give participants the skills to lead groups on tracks and trails. The programme leads to the Mountaineering Ireland Lowland Leader Award, and the Rescue Emergency Care Ireland Level 2 First Aid award.

50% of the learner intake on this programme are existing qualified National Tour Guides who want to enhance their ability to deliver a better outdoor experience for the wider public.

This programme has been an enormous success for KWETB, and other ETBs are now currently running the same programme and modules are currently being developed at level 5.

Manufacturing

KWETB were the first ETB to establish an Advanced Manufacturing Centre of Excellence in Celbridge, delivering a level 6 programme leading to a major award in Maintenance Skills Technology. Starting with one instance of the programme with sixteen learners, delivered over a 48-week period we are now delivering 4 instances of the programme every year with a 94% job outcome.

In conjunction with Fast-track to IT (FIT), KWETB developed a Mid-East Region Advanced Manufacturing Group where employers and other ETB's can meet to forecast further developments in this field, in their regions. An enhancement which proved to be successful is the delivery of this programme to employers through the blended learning mode.

We have lots more to do in the advanced manufacturing space and are looking at establishing a Local Training Initiative (LTI) programme at level 4 as a pathway to Advanced Manufacturing in 2022.



ACCESS, TRANSFER AND PROGRESSION

DESCRIPTION

The national framework of qualifications (NFQ) provides a roadmap for practitioners and learners, enabling the articulation of possibilities for learners throughout KWETB.

Access

FET programmes are advertised through local media, social media and through the www.fetchcourses.ie website. This database can be searched by keyword, programme, location and sub-locations and prospective learners can complete programme applications online. A notification of the application is received by the centre and processed internally. Learners may also access an application form through centre websites, and submit these by e-mail or by hand. The learner application guides an informal interview, and if successful, the learner is offered a programme place. PLC learners must apply using the PLC website application form. Where learners apply using the FETCH application, they are advised to complete the college website process (PLC Coordinator).

180 learners, or 37% of respondents reported that they had heard about their programme through word of mouth, while 137 became aware of it through social media or a website. 39 respondents became aware through an adult guidance officer, and brochures and community development workers were the least likely source of information about programmes for learners or prospective learners.

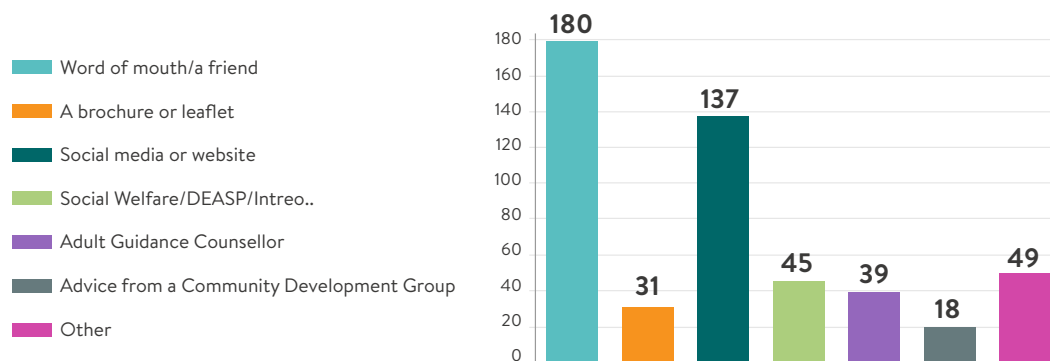


Figure 11: How learners heard about courses

Depending on the programme, intake periods can occur at the beginning of the academic year in September (PLC), in January and December, (VTOS and Youthreach); or in advance of the start date of training programmes. Prospective learners may be requested to complete an initial assessment, although currently this is not consistent practice across centres. Flexibility is provided for learners to transfer to a different programme within centres if required. Students who apply to PLC programmes are interviewed by programme tutors. If the programme is not suitable, they may be referred to another option within the college, or to an alternative option provided within KWETB. The access process, particularly the interview stage is perceived as a first insight for learners into the centre, and as a marker for success:

The more we approach access in a face-to-face, personal manner, the more success we have. The prospect of formalised processes such as aptitude tests deter many people (VTOS Coordinator).

In the Adult Basic Education Services and the Prison Education Service, the first point of contact with a prospective learner will normally be through a face to face meeting, during which prospective learners are assisted to complete the application form.

At the beginning of programmes, learners participate in induction to give them details of the centre, the award, the programme and arrangements for support. This is an essential part of information-giving, helping learners to settle in, and setting expectations. During the structured Youthreach induction period, learners are further assessed before a decision is made to place them on a programme at a specific level.

The Induction period is going well for each Centre. The learners are inducted to the programme and all that this requires (CRSW1).

In the Adult Basic Education Services and the Prison Education Service, the first point of contact with a prospective learner will normally be through a face to face meeting, during which prospective learners are assisted to complete the application form.

Transfer

Transfer between programmes is not encountered very often according to coordinators with whom this was discussed. Exceptions were instances where learners transferred to the same type of centre due to a relocation, for example, from one VTOS centre to another. In this case, the coordinators liaise to facilitate the transfer. Details of modules completed are forwarded to the receiving centre. In the Prison Education Service, there is provision for learners participating in Open University (OU) programmes to continue seamlessly when they transfer between prisons. Students participating in other programmes cannot be assured of the same seamless transfer, as their work tends to take the form of hard copy, which is less easily transferred.

Progression

Coordinators cited the importance of the continuum for learners. Learners can be provided with insight into progression opportunities through engagement with the Guidance service and the Youthreach Advocate. Work Experience tutors play a positive role in encouraging and supporting learners to explore their own progression options. Preparation for progression is built into the teaching and learning offering, recognising the transversal skills transferable to the workplace, further, or higher education. Centres arrange opportunities for learners to meet with individuals from other institutions and recruitment organisations and to visit open days remotely. Positive promotional links for apprenticeships are being established through the Youthreach centres. The quality of the guidance and advocacy service was acknowledged (CRWS2), and input from them is perceived as helping learners to set personal goals.

In-house progression options are provided, particularly in the two-year full-time programmes such as Youthreach and VTOS, enabling learners to progress from level to level. This can occur within centres or across centres and services, and centre staff, guidance personnel and advocacy services play a key role in enabling this. Back to Education Initiative (BTEI) and Skills to Compete programmes offer bridging opportunities to allow learners to complete programmes on a modular basis and to experience higher levels and standards of learning without the challenge of a full-time programme. The Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) colleges have established progression links through the Higher Education Links Scheme (HELs) and memorandums of understanding. The KWETB Training Service promotes opportunities for progression from post-primary schools, offering 'tasters' in training for hospitality at our Marine House Centre.

KWETB participated in the Tobar pilot project, testing RPL as a process for enabling recognition of prior learning, and certifying this knowledge to enable progression for Defence Force retirees who had acquired skills through their work and voluntary activities. While this project was very successful for the candidates, the practice has not yet been 'mainstreamed' in the organisation.

In partnership with Worldchefs Global Culinary Certification and City and Guilds, KWETB has piloted Recognition of Prior Learning for the hospitality industry, recognising the skills and experience of hotel employees gained through on the job learning and making them visible through the Global Hospitality Digital Badge. Forty hospitality job roles are mapped to industry standards and the system is benchmarked through City and Guilds.

CASE STUDY 6

RPL FOR THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

KWETB Training Services and City & Guilds, in partnership with Worldchefs, have piloted a Recognition of Prior Learning through the world's first Global Certification for the hospitality industry in Ireland.

Co-designed with leading employers, the Certification recognises skills and experience gained on the job against a global benchmark and makes them visible, in the form of a digital badge (Global Hospitality Badge).

The project offered to major hotels, allows for a benchmarking of job roles and performance management systems, through a City & Guilds audited framework over 40 Hospitality Job roles have mapped to an Industry based set of standards.

The Global Hospitality Certification maps out typical job roles in the hospitality industry and shows where an individual is, based on their existing competencies, and where they could progress.

The Certification is fully aligned to the Worldchefs Global Culinary Certification, which is quality assured by City & Guilds, to create a comprehensive offer for hospitality businesses covering culinary, food and beverage, front of house and housekeeping operations.



CASE STUDY 7

THE TOBAR PROJECT

The objective of TOBAR was to accredit or validate the knowledge, skills and competencies acquired by members of the Defence Forces outside the formal learning environment. Prior learning (accredited and non-accredited) is generally recognized at the point of entry to further education and training programmes. Validating or recognising prior learning has four stages which are outlined in the European Guidelines for Validating Non-Formal and Informal Learning:

- ▶ **Stage one** (1) is the identification stage: This stage identified the related learning outcome with the cohort of learners to participating in the pilot to and offering the opportunity for accreditation of the identified outcomes.
- ▶ **Stage two** (2) is the documentation stage and includes provision of evidence of learning outcomes acquired. This can take the form of a Portfolio of Tasks and documents, (CV, Career history, verification of knowledge, skills and competence).
- ▶ **Stage three** (3) is the assessment stage. This stage compares and checks individual learning outcomes against specific standards to determine whether the candidate meets the standards.
- ▶ **Stage four** (4) is the certification stage. This stage follows the QA process and results in the awarding of certification to the candidate.

The awarding body was Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI).

The ABE services delivered the TOBAR project in partnership with senior staff in the Curragh Camp Defence Forces Training Centre. Five participants engaged in the RPL project to validate their informal and non-formal learning, and benefitted from

- A session with the Guidance Counsellor who worked with the participants to complete a Europass CV allowing them the support and space to reflect on their prior achievements which would be applicable to the RPL process;
- Workshops with tutor facilitators who supported the learners in compiling the material needed to submit for assessment and certification. The learners achieved major awards in QQI Level 3 Employability Skills and component awards in QQI L4 Workplace Safety, and QQI L3 Woodwork and Office Procedures;
- Submission of the completed portfolios for External Authentication to complete the certification process.

The support of QQI and ETBI were key to that success. In KWETB the success of the pilot was due to the staff in the ABE and Guidance services who engaged in the training and upskilling required to deliver the pilot in addition to their core work. Internal and external evaluations were carried out and a key finding of both was that in order to mainstream RPL, and VNFIL, core staff and resourcing will need to be made available to the ETB.

EVALUATION

Access

Learners' first experience of programmes is either be through an online application form, or through an initial meeting following a referral or self-referral. There are multiple options for making an application for courses. Learners are registered through the Programme Learner Support Service (PLSS).

The popularity of the 'word of mouth' route to programmes warrants some further investigation about whether learners are matched with programmes that will enable them to meet their potential. Responding to the survey, 228 learner respondents said that their main reason for starting a course was to get a qualification, while learning new skills was the second reason cited.

Prospective learners are interviewed to ensure that their course choice meets their needs, 'through conversations rather than setting tests' (VTOS Coordinator). PLC tutors interview prospective learners for their programmes. In training services, a Recruitment Officer (RO) and SME interview prospective learners and initial assessments for level 5 and 6 courses are carried out to ensure candidate suitability.

There is a need to determine KWETB's priorities, strategy and stance on the recognition of prior learning (RPL) and validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL), in order to develop consistent and cohesive policy and procedures reflecting national and European policy, drawing on learning from a number of pilot projects and external projects.

Transfer

Centres receive transfer requests infrequently, and where these arise, the focus is on the administration of the transfer of the learner rather than transfer of evidence of learning and assessment and appropriate recognition through credit.

There is no consistent policy regarding access, transfer and progression. Practice is informed by legacy processes and requirements to document learners using the PLSS and by determining whether learners are equipped to participate and well matched with their programme.

Progression

The progression system is strongly informed by local links and knowledge, and by access for learners to high quality work experience modules and to the guidance service or advocacy service. There is a need to improve the understanding and knowledge of the national framework of qualifications and the application of the levels of learning to progression. It would be advantageous to illustrate the linkages between levels, linking FE and T programmes clearly for the purpose of access, transfer and progression. There is a need for improved knowledge and understanding of how the programmes at different levels link to one another across the organisation and to enable clear communication of these by all categories of staff in the ETB.

EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

- ▶ The availability of the FETCH Courses system allows learners to exercise considerable agency in finding programmes that meet their needs.
- ▶ When linkages between programmes for learners are provided, through information sessions, it can be very effective for learners, for example delivery of a presentation on Apprenticeship to Youthreach learners made it more real as a progression option.
- ▶ BTEI, Skills to Compete and online courses provide flexible opportunities for students to progress.

CHALLENGES

- ▶ There is a challenge as a result of internal competition to creating better linkages between further education programmes and training programmes as progression options:
 - *Competition for learners in each centre means we may be losing sight of learners' best interest sometimes. The numbers game makes collaboration and transfer more challenging. This competition causes a lack of transparency of our offerings between FE and T, and this may have an impact on learners' access to the correct programme for their needs.*
 - *Whilst links between programmes and training have been established on the ground very successfully in some cases it's not automatic and there can be too many layers to get through*
CRWS2 Participants
- ▶ Initial assessment of new learners is problematical because there are too many learners and not enough staff trained to do this. It is not standardised yet.
- ▶ Use of staff resources to help people and guide them through progression pathways needs to improve, including improved and visible articulation of progression pathways and the NFQ.
- ▶ RPL/VNFIL is not yet embedded or understood as a concept, and represents a missed opportunity.
- ▶ The learner details form (PLSS) is not user friendly and is very detailed for applicants with lower levels of literacy or who are speakers of other languages.
- ▶ The PLSS system creates additional burdens in terms of time for inputting details and accuracy checking.
- ▶ There are no clear access, transfer and progression policy and procedure.

POTENTIAL FUTURE ENHANCEMENTS

- ▶ Improve the links between the Guidance Service and FET services.
- ▶ Develop clear 'pathways' graphics.
- ▶ Plan, design and put in place internal learning pathways to improve progression and transfer for learners.
- ▶ The role of 'front of house' staff in articulating opportunities for progression to prospective learners should be enhanced, adding to the quality of the service to learners through clear information and capacity building.
- ▶ Establish a working group for access, transfer and progression, include RPL/VNFIL and start a process of research and learning to develop a clear pathways model, and improved policies and procedures.
- ▶ Further integrate the role of guidance to cover all areas of FET.
- ▶ Design and implement a centralised student recruitment service managed and coordinated by the Guidance Service for all of FET similar to the Kerry College system.
- ▶ Develop flexible learning pathways to ensure learners have access to module accreditation as well as accreditation for achieving major awards. Improve the use of credit and recognition.
- ▶ Develop a consistent initial assessment and placement approach

INTEGRITY AND APPROVAL OF LEARNER RESULTS

DESCRIPTION

The integrity of learner results is embedded in the process of delivery and assessment of further education and training from the moment that the programme is envisaged as a proposal. Two members of the QA team are responsible for administering the process over six periods of certification for the common awards system (QQI-FE), and centres delivering programmes leading to other awards must demonstrate that all of their QA requirements to assure integrity of results are met .

Processes to ensure integrity of results are embedded at centre, programme and central level, and rely on open and transparent communications between centres, the QA team, External Authenticators and the governance units. A common schedule for certification is published by the QA Team annually (Appendix 16) to support centres to engage in assessment scheduling, planning for certification and provision of information to learners and staff. A regular request is issued to centres before the certification period begins and they submit estimates of the number of candidates for assessment.

Common Awards System (QQI-FE/CAS), assessors develop locally devised assessment (LDA) instruments, ensuring that these are reliable and valid, and that marking schemes align with the criteria identified in the programme descriptors. In centres delivering programmes which refer to Assessment Instrument Specifications (AIS), these are requested from the TSO, in accordance with the TQAS, and they are distributed securely to ensure the integrity of the assessment is not compromised. Assessment instruments must be stored securely. Learners and assessors are informed of their responsibilities in relation to assessment, as detailed in quality assuring assessment policies and the TQAS. Examination, marking and recording of assessment evidence are conducted under secure conditions. Assessment briefs, examination instruments and submitted assessment evidence are held securely until the assessment event. Centres are required to follow processes for other awarding bodies where these apply.

In each centre delivering programmes leading to QQI-FE awards, an Internal Verification (IV) process, is carried out in with advance of assignment of the External Authenticators (EA). In the PLC colleges, there are two instances of IV, one at mid-year and one at the end of the year before the EA's visit to reduce the administrative burden and identify issues early. The purpose of Internal Verification is to ensure that all processes have been followed throughout the assessment period. Internal verifiers report on compassionate consideration, reasonable accommodations and instances of assessment malpractice and on corrective action in the IV report. The IV process is conducted by Coordinators; Programme Directors and other responsible staff on a sampling basis. IV reports are uploaded to the online certification system prior to the EA visit and RAP meeting.

When all assessment is marked by the assessor, provisional results are uploaded to the QQI Business System (QBS). In the PLCs, Programme Boards review the results to ensure that they are reliable in advance of inputting to the QBS.

FE (excluding Bray Institute of Further Education (BIFE))			Training Service
	Applied for	Granted	Granted
Reasonable Accommodations			
2017	29	25	
2018	17	17	1
2019	54	52	4
2020	63	60	6
Compassionate Considerations			
2017	34	31	
2018	61	60	
2019	74	73	
2020	70	6	
Assessment Malpractice			
2017	15	15	
2018	21	21	
2019	22	22	
2020	17	15	1

Figure 12: Instances of Reasonable Accommodations; Compassionate Considerations and Assessment Malpractice

External Authentication

The QA team assigns External Authenticators based on estimates submitted. EAs are drawn from the national panel and assigned to visit centres over three consecutive periods, and these visits are tracked centrally. EAs can be assigned according to a number of criteria including first instances of delivery of the programme; new tutors; previous issues identified during the process or on specific request. There is KWETB guidance on managing any transfer of materials between centres and a policy on the security of assessment instruments and evidence.

In April, 2020, a centralised, 'blind' EA process was tested, and the outcomes of this are currently being reviewed. From 2020, in addition to onsite EA visits, KWETB moved to online EA in further education services. The QA Team shares folders to centres through an online platform, for upload by centre personnel of e-portfolios or traditional electronic folders of learner assessment evidence, the tutor folder and the coordinator folder, IV report and QBS results sheet. When EAs are notified of their assignments, they are issued with temporary KWETB e-mail accounts with access to electronic folders relevant to their tasking. The EA arranges an opening and closing meeting with the centre coordinator or principal. Following the EA visits centre Coordinators or Principals and the QA team are issued with the EA report in accordance with agreed timelines.

Following receipt of all reports, and according to the schedule, the results approval process commences, and results are uploaded to the QBS. All results are reported on through the QA governance structure (Appendix 17).

EVALUATION

There is a well-established system for assuring the integrity of learner results and for results approval. The introduction of the Quality Council has contributed an extra layer of governance to this system. The further education and training services are drawing closer together, and this is contributing to greater coherence in the system.

During the Covid19 pandemic, the IV and EA processes pivoted smoothly to the online environment because online systems were established. The e-portfolio project contributed to this effective process.

The team managing the administration of quality assuring assessment is small, and this represents a risk of interruption to the service where an absence occurs. A more integrated system for further education and training would enhance consistency of approach.

Results Approval Panel

The Results Approval Panel (RAP) for FE is made up of representatives of each centre submitting, a representative of the QA Team and a member of the FET Management Team at a minimum. The RAP for training services includes the Training and Development Manager; an AEO and TSO. During the meetings, key points arising from the reporting processes are addressed, corrective actions are identified and an improvement plan agreed if necessary.

A report of the approved results is submitted to the Programme Governance Sub-group, and a summary of actions arising to the QA Sub-group and these are recommended if appropriate to the Quality Council. This is a positive outcome of the introduction of a QA governance structure.

Following approval, centres are formally notified, results are submitted to the QBS and learners are informed of their results and of their right to appeal the result and of deadlines for appeal.

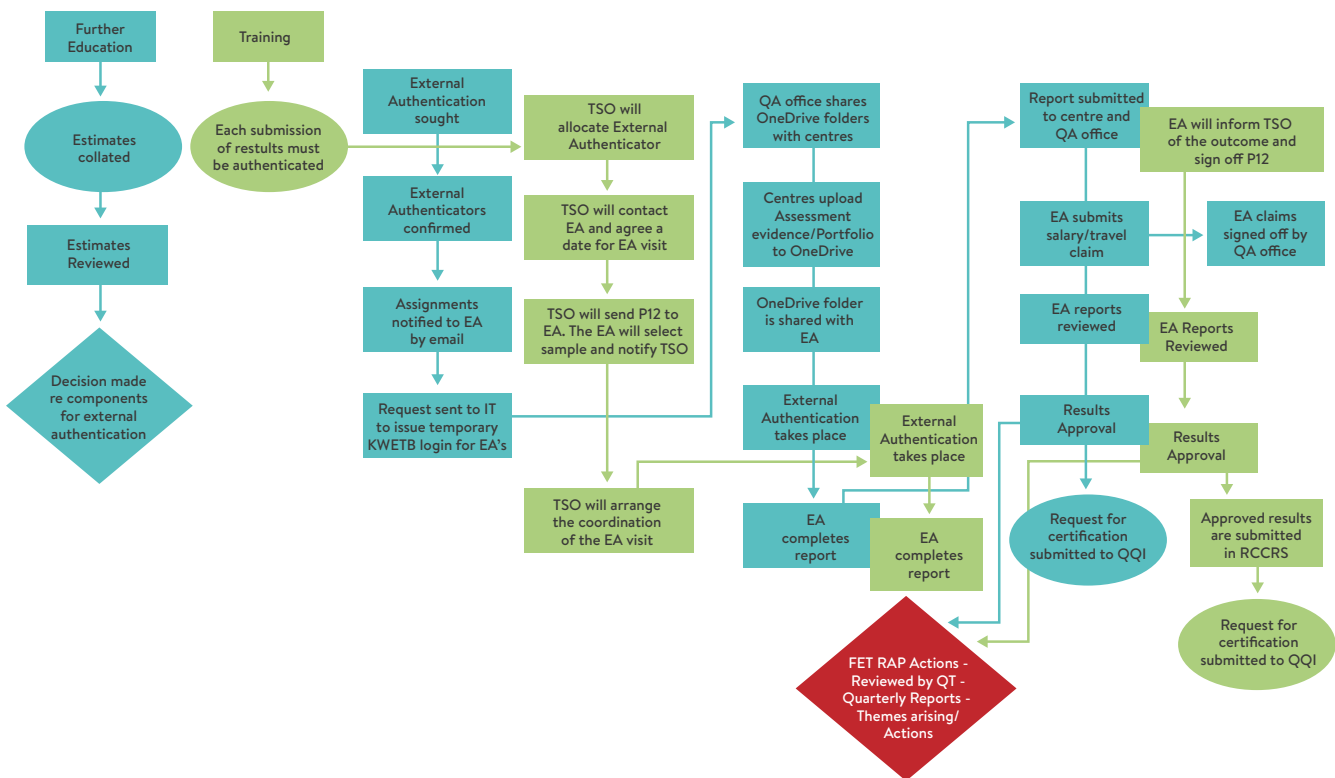


Figure 13: Quality Assuring Assessment Processes

EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

- ▶ There is a well-established IV and EA process
- ▶ The RAP process is accepted as a constructive, transparent part of the quality assuring assessment process, ensuring integrity and maintenance of standards and is a vehicle for continuous improvement.
- ▶ Processes were moved very effectively online during the Covid19 pandemic because the established systems were robust and allowed ease of transition.
- ▶ There are consistent and regular communications about the IV, EA and RAP processes with centre coordinators, principals and programme managers.

CHALLENGES

- ▶ There is an overreliance on a small team to ensure that the central process is followed.
- ▶ There are still two separate processes for FE and for training programmes.
- ▶ A system for approval and integration of the other awarding bodies into the reporting practices is required to support data gathering.
- ▶ There is too much reliance on Coordinators to carry out the IV process - in some cases only the coordinator is shouldering this. The responsibility should be distributed. (CRWS2)
- ▶ There are some challenges in the use of learner signatures on digital platforms, and GDPR requirements can be an issue.

POTENTIAL FUTURE ENHANCEMENTS

- ▶ Clear guidance, direction and training is required for the conduct of the IV process, with refresher training every two years to avoid it becoming a 'box-ticking' exercise.
- ▶ EAs with more subject specific knowledge and industry experience are needed to improve the relevance of the process to vocational standards.
- ▶ EA reports need to be more objective.
- ▶ Consider the viability of extending the appeals process and retaining the July certification period.



INFORMATION AND DATA MANAGEMENT

DESCRIPTION

Data Protection

Information and data relating to FET is processed and stored in multiple data systems. The ETB's data protection (DP) website available to all staff through the intranet reinforces our commitment to protecting the right to privacy of individuals and to ensure that personal data is used appropriately by staff, and in situations where data is being transferred to other organisations, for example, between FET services and QQI for the purpose of issuing of certification.

The ETB has established processes and guidance for dealing with data breaches, data sharing, protection of data when working from home, access requests and for collection of data during the Covid19 pandemic. There is a named Data Protection Officer. The DP website includes clear policies for all areas of GDPR.

Data protection training is provided to all staff regularly. 92.8% of teaching, training and instruction staff agree they understand their obligations for GDPR. 95% of respondents to the support staff survey are aware of their GDPR obligations. 87.5 % of leaders of teaching, learning and assessment strongly agree that they understand their obligations. All employees are required to complete mandatory online GDPR training using the ETBI Training Tool, and must achieve 100% to be successful.

Consciousness of GDPR is at a very high level, probably due to the fact that GDPR training is the most popular training for respondents, perhaps due to its mandatory nature, with 85% of leaders; 78% of practitioners and 14% of support staff who responded having participated in GDPR training.

Security of assessment instruments, evidence and data

There are QA policies and procedures in place to ensure that all assessment materials are stored in secure locations, and to protect the integrity and reliability of assessment instruments. There are arrangements in place to cater for breaches of this security. Assessment evidence is retained in secure locations, and there are clear arrangements for the safe transfer of assessment evidence where this is required, for example where single-location authentication is taking place. Within training programmes, assessment instruments are requested, issued and returned through the TSO, in line with the requirements of the temporary quality assurance system (TQAS).

ICT supports

KWETB personnel use a wide range of management information systems and communication systems in the course of their work and a small ICT support office staffed by two people, supports the provision of hardware and software (Appendix 18). Technical support is outsourced through Office of Government Procurement (OGP) tenders.

A Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Coordinator supports the use of online platforms and Learning Management Systems (LMS) throughout Schools and FET centres, delivering training and resources for both. The TEL Coordinator and Professional Development (PD) Coordinator work together to support the constructive adoption of technology for teaching and learning in KWETB, and the continuous development of competence in the use of digital technology.

Information Systems

Teaching and Instruction Staff (Practitioners) use the following information systems and platforms in the course of their work:

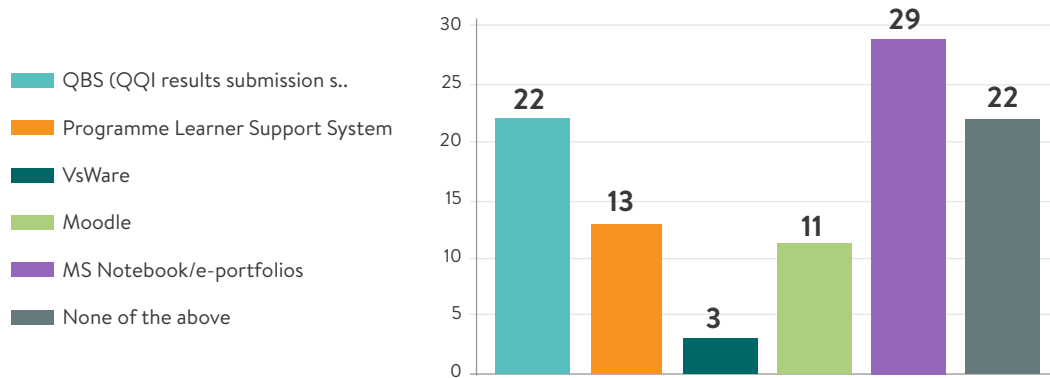


Figure 14: Practitioners' use of ICT

Leaders and Managers of T, L and A, make the following use of information management systems:

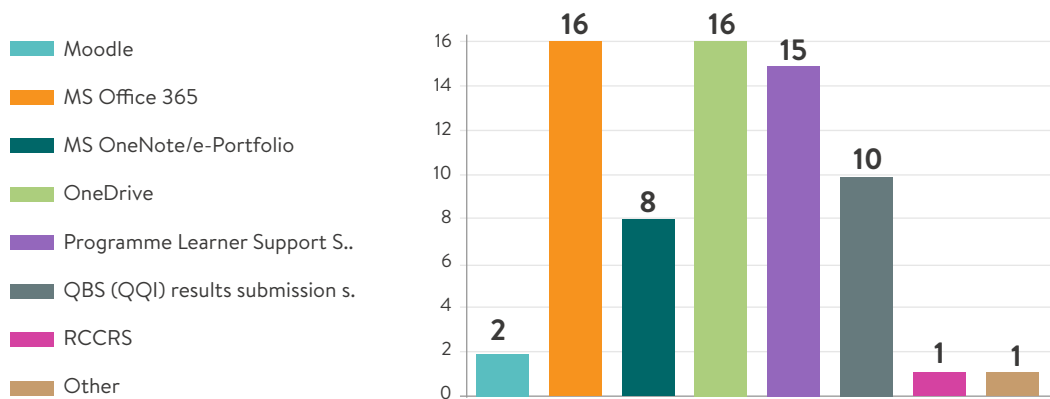


Figure 15: Leaders' use of ICT

The Programme and Learner Support System (PLSS) and the Apprentice Client Support System (ACSS) are the national platforms for recording student participation and outcomes and inform national decisions for funding of FET. The Funding Allocations Requests and Reporting (FARR) platform records activity which is uploaded automatically from the National Course Calendar (NCC), according to specific timelines. Responsibility for input of data in these systems rests with coordinators and principals and the system includes built-in protections.

The ACSS is the recording platform for apprenticeships which is accessed by Authorised Officers, Coordinating Providers and Consortium Providers. The ACSS has been the subject of enhancement and data cleansing recently, and this has improved access to accurate information about apprentices for all users.

Coordinators and principals are responsible for managing the input of learner data to the QQI Business System (QBS), and the input of approved results following Results Approval Panel meetings, to ensure that certification is delivered to learners in a timely fashion. Users of other awarding body data systems are expected to apply the same levels of propriety when using their systems. Schools/centres must capture certification outcomes after RAP and input these to the PLSS to enable reporting to the funding bodies, SOLAS and ESF.

PLC October Returns are declared every year on the PLSS. Following this, the record is printed, with a PLSS declaration certification document, signed by the college Principal and the Chief Executive and this completed paperwork is submitted to the Department of Education (DE). Data reports are drawn from the PLSS for use in reporting to SOLAS in relation to Strategic Performance Agreement targets, for European Social Fund (ESF) reporting, and for internal decision making and forward planning.

The main operation system for communications is Microsoft 365. In 2020 all FET learners were allocated their own e-mail addresses to enable participation in online learning. This system was critical to business continuity during the pandemic. The Quality framework development and self-evaluation projects were planned and facilitated using this platform. Each quality framework working group was set up with a dedicated channel to support their deliberations. Likewise, self-evaluation events, the data collection working group and the cyclical review workshops were all planned and facilitated using online channels. The platform was used to gather data at the cyclical review workshops, providing a balance of traditional face to face facilitation methods with technology-enhanced facilitation which was necessary to maintain the safety and wellbeing of all involved.

An online platform is used for communication of Quality Assurance, and is the current single platform which allows Coordinators, Principals and Programme Directors to access all validated programmes for FET, including access to certification calendars; policies; news and information and relevant forms. An online form is used for the submission of estimates for certification, and data collated centrally using this system informs the assignment of External Authenticators across centres.

EVALUATION

There is robust application of GDPR legislation in KWETB, and a high level of awareness of obligations under GDPR due to high uptake of online training by staff.

Innovation and creativity in the use of ICT and MISs enabled a successful pivot to robust systems for delivery, assessment and reporting during the Covid19 pandemic. A very small ICT team was exceptional, rapidly providing the resources needed for teaching, learning, communication, PD and management. A larger dedicated team with a balance of technical and pedagogical expertise to support the ICT needs of KWETB further education and training would allow for more infrastructure and strategic development such as the introduction of systems to enable blended and online learning and assessment.

There are well-established systems for recording data for quality assuring assessment and an associated platform for single communications with managers and leaders. Communications platforms have been developed to support QA, including teams channels and document repositories for the QA governance groups.

KWETB FET services use a number of national data-gathering platforms, and these inform decision-making, planning and funding applications. There is a perception that these add to the administrative and bureaucratic pressures within centres, and this could be addressed by distributing improved administrative support fairly across the FET services.

EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

- ▶ There are high levels of GDPR awareness and staff GDPR training is mandatory and supported by an intranet website.
- ▶ There has been substantial progress in the adoption of Information and Data Management systems throughout FET and the system is 'unrecognisable' now. (Quality Team Focus Group Participant)
- ▶ The systems for gathering information have been updated and are populated in accordance with defined timelines.
- ▶ New systems that include digitization of materials are accessible and safe (CRSW1)
- ▶ The availability and innovative use of information and data management systems and communication platforms enabled a very efficient 'pivot' to the use of online tools for teaching, learning and QA of assessment.
- ▶ The commitment of the teams involved and their knowledge supported this process, and resulted in business continuity.
- ▶ Communications platforms are supporting the documentation of QA and communications for governance groups and the QA team.

CHALLENGES

- ▶ There is a gap in the number of people who have participated in 'mandatory' GDPR training, especially in the percentage of support staff who have participated.
- ▶ There are potential limitations to the possibilities for strategic development of ICT, management information systems and data management in the FET services due to the scale of the ICT Support Service and their responsibility for a large number of post-primary schools as well as FET centres.
- ▶ There are time pressures and administrative burdens in relation to responsibility for data entry. These are often perceived as drawing education and training staff away from their core work with learners.
- ▶ Some of the MISs are built on older legacy systems, and this can fuel frustration with the data input requirement, and, as a consequence, the availability of accurate data.
- ▶ Systems are not yet sufficiently developed to enable robust delivery of blended and online learning opportunities and knowledge.
- ▶ The ICT strategy for FET 'needs to be more visible and transparent.
- ▶ There are limitations to accessing data on learner needs through the PLSS, for example, disability or SEN, Access to this data would enable strategic planning for inclusion and accessibility.

POTENTIAL FOR ENHANCEMENTS

- ▶ Develop a dedicated FET ICT team including individuals with technical; instructional design; pedagogical and PD skills, providing resourcing and technical support, training, delivery of technology enhanced learning, policy development and improved system architecture.
- ▶ Advocate for more coherent national systems, with single user interfaces which focus on gathering learner, certification and programme data rather than on multiple different kinds of learner and funding strands. Allow this data to be accessible to inform localised decision making and inclusion within ETBs.
- ▶ Continue to provide high quality support and training for the systems in use.
- ▶ Participate as a user and provider in the design of new national systems.
- ▶ Publish a training video on the PLSS for staff.
- ▶ Update the QA Site to reflect recent developments and to cater for an integrated FET service and an integrated QA team.



PUBLIC INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

DESCRIPTION

KWETB public communications are designed with reference to published branding guidelines. All KWETB centres are visible within their communities and carry recommended signage. A dedicated FET Promotion Steering Group develops and publishes an annual digital brochure highlighting FET services for each county, and this is published in all online channels, centre websites and social media. Programmes of FET are promoted through the Further Education and Training Course Hub (FETCHcourses.ie), and in local news and broadcast media. There is a dedicated section for QA in the KWETB website to publicise standards, and a dynamic new KWETB website will allow for more flexibility for updating information from 2022 onwards.

There are dedicated KWETB social media accounts, managed internally, and centres and colleges use social media accounts. A KWETB Social Media Hub highlights promotional campaigns and provides tips and tricks for using social media effectively.

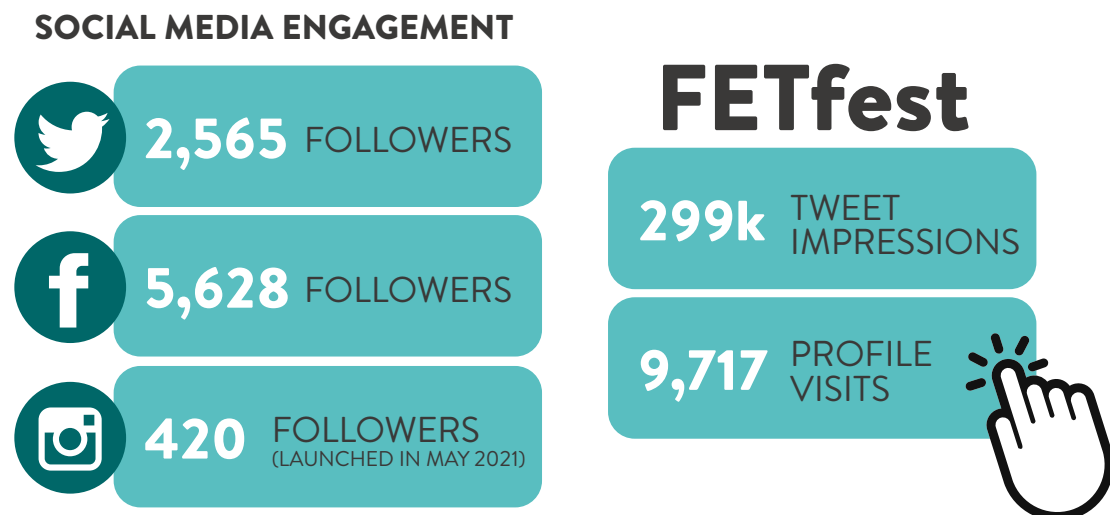


Figure 16: Social Media Interactions

A development in the marketing of FET is an initiative to engage with Transition Year (TY) and Leaving Certificate Applied (LCAP) programmes and students in KWETB schools to raise awareness of FET and of programmes in FET which can provide a pathway to employment or higher education. Students visit Marine House in Wicklow town, and participate in the 'Building a Greener Future' programme and tasters for barista training; pizza making; culinary skills, beauty and media production, providing an insight into these careers. KWETB will also be piloting career sampling through VR technology and artificial intelligence.

Information regarding the structure of programmes of education and training, and the awards to which they lead, or not, are published through the FETCH hub. It is interesting to note that learners responding to the self-evaluation survey said that they heard about their course through word of mouth, with social media and websites being the second source of information:

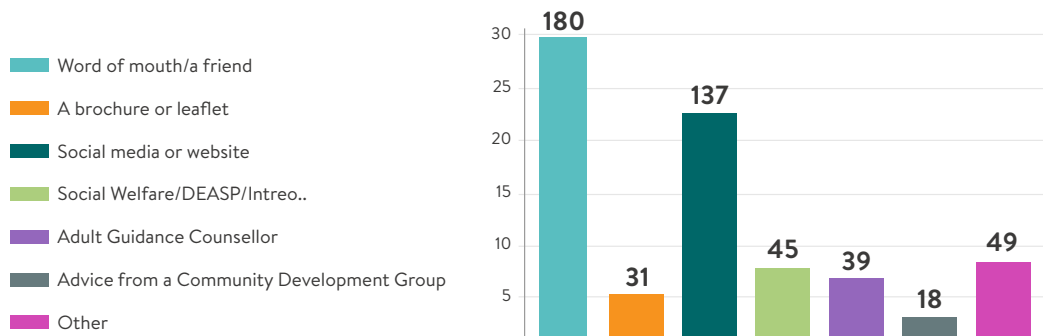


Figure 17: Source of course information

A guidance officer commented that:

For someone considering returning to education it can be difficult to find the information they require - a lot of the terminology used is meaningless to someone who is not working in the sector. FETCHcourses can be a challenge to navigate and from my experience learners just want to know if a course is available, when and where is it on, is there a cost, and if they are on social welfare payment can they retain it whilst on the course. They tend not to differentiate between training and education, nor is everyone familiar with how courses are accredited. When courses are advertised they are often referred to as VTOS, ABE or BTEI and the titles do not accurately reflect the content. Courses are often not live on Fetchcourses until shortly before they start and particularly perhaps for the more reluctant or anxious learner this does not give adequate time to plan.

Publication of Quality Assurance Evaluation Reports

Since 2018, the ETB has published executive self-evaluation reports and quality improvement plans on the organisation's website and this practice will continue in a dedicated section of the updated website.

EVALUATION

KWETB uses multiple different means of communicating with the public. The organisation's website is currently being rebuilt and the new site will be a dynamic source of information for the public. There is a need to improve the representation of FET programmes and the framework of qualifications to ensure that there is clear, easily accessed public information about learning pathways and opportunities, improving the promotion of FET to the public. Standard agreed communication conventions are required for programmes of FET to ensure access to clear information for potential learners and staff.

EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

- ▶ Some college and centre websites are learner-centred, designed to be accessible and user-friendly, with accessible language (e.g. Arklow Further Education and Training Centre).
- ▶ The KWETB website includes information about FET programmes and quality assurance.
- ▶ There is standard guidance for branding for KWETB.
- ▶ The local face of FET and word of mouth are an effective part of communication with the public.

CHALLENGES

- ▶ Centre and college websites follow local designs, and are locally developed, without a consistent KWETB 'look'.
- ▶ A more integrated approach to the design and coherence of public information, including standard conventions is required.
- ▶ There can be confusion between the naming of FET programmes, centre titles and programmes defined by funding streams (e.g., Youthreach, BTEI, VTOS, PLC, LTI, STP) and standard, agreed conventions for communication with the public are required.
- ▶ Design and presentation of information in local media where there are multiple FET centres, does not reflect consistent naming conventions. This can be confusing for the public and requires attention.
- ▶ Reaching all of our target groups through channels other than word of mouth or social media can be challenging, especially when the time between advertising of a programme and the start of a programme is short.

POTENTIAL FOR ENHANCEMENTS

- ▶ Increase the use of the internet for sharing contact details, service referrals and to increase visibility of FET
- ▶ Develop the use of more accessible plain language for FET programmes; descriptors; publications and centres/ funding strands.
- ▶ Improve the ability of frontline contact staff to articulate services and give accurate information to the public about FET through the development of clear 'pathway' documents and illustrations.
- ▶ Quality assurance commitments need to be communicated in accessible language to ensure that the public understand the FET commitment to quality, and the importance of quality to the organization.
- ▶ Naming conventions for programmes need to be agreed and used consistently to avoid confusion and to more clearly articulate how programmes relate to the National Framework of Qualifications and to awarding bodies.
- ▶ KWETB require a consistent marketing strategy with plans for targeting specific groups effectively. Develop a coherent marketing strategy.
- ▶ Design publications for ease of access by the public so that anyone can read a KWETB brochure and see where they fit in and what KWETB can do for them.
- ▶ Improve communication to the enterprise sector and employers about why quality is important and demonstrating KWETB's unique selling points.
- ▶ Accelerate the development of the new dynamic website as a first point of information about services and quality for the public, ensuring that content is legible and accessible.
- ▶ Recruit a PR person (to link with OSD) within the organisation whose specific role is to ensure consistency and advise about branding/marketing of KWETB and FET services in particular.
- ▶ Cascade the engagement protocol down from management to all layers of the organisation.
- ▶ Ensure there is one consistent, coherent professional message to employers.

CONCLUSION AND INTENDED FUTURE DIRECTION

KWETB is progressing towards the establishment of coherent systems for the governance and management of quality assurance in further education and training. These include the tasking of an AEO with specific responsibility for leading QA; the establishment of a QA team; and the development of a Quality Council and its three sub-groups with membership representing all services. There is a published schedule of meetings which is aligned with certification schedules and RAP meetings. A Quality Assurance team of six people has been established.

The visibility and identity of the QA Team will be improved, and additional resource planning and implementation engaged in to ensure that the breadth of work required is achievable, including resources for developing the capacity of the organisation in flexible programme and curriculum development. A dedicated team for curriculum and programme review, development and validation within the QA team will be put in place.

A base location for the Quality Assurance team and the Professional Development and Technology-enhanced Learning team established. There will be a plan to increase the size of the ICT team integrating procurement of infrastructure, support pedagogical and instructional design knowledge and training.

There are existing legacy policies and procedures in use for QA, some of which have been updated in accordance with national developments. Some areas, for example, access, transfer and progression, require renewed focus in order to develop clear, coherent and consistent policy and procedures across all FET services, ensuring that there is equity of access for prospective and existing learners.

A unified Quality Framework is being developed, with a phased process for further development, consultation, testing and implementation. Through this process, practitioners and other stakeholders involved in the administration of policies were involved in collaborative working groups, contributing to new learning and capacity building. There is positive cross-service support for the existing centralised processes for quality assuring assessment and for the development a new Quality Framework. This work is critical to improving knowledge of QA systems, and it is recommended that the use of communities of practice is maintained to extend learning and developing professionalism. It is also recommended that there should be induction in QA for all new staff.

The Quality Framework will be published in 2023, with associated staff and learner handbooks and a published review and update cycle. Clearly illustrated learning pathways will be available to all stakeholders. Plain English will be a standard throughout all documentation, and all staff will be enabled to communicate information to learners, prospective learners and other stakeholders. A working group for Access, Transfer and Progression will be established to develop evidence-based policy and procedures in this area, for application throughout FET. Clear, consistent, learning pathway illustrations will be developed and all staff will be enabled to articulate these.

On-line platforms have been used effectively to support development processes, and are repositories for documentation including the committee papers for the Quality Council and its sub-groups. An on-line QA hub has been used since 2014 in further education, and this is being developed to include updated QA documentation. A Validation Hub is being developed. There is an on-line system for the assignment of EAs and management of certification processes.

A review group will be established for the purpose of learning why there have been delays in the integration of FET services. This investigation can establish the barriers and assist management in addressing these and supporting a more effective merger of services leading to a more integrated planning process across FET to establish the needs of learners; and one universal system of quality assurance and curriculum development, including program development, approval and validation. Working together, the culture of quality can be further enhanced, building improved levels of awareness of quality assurance.

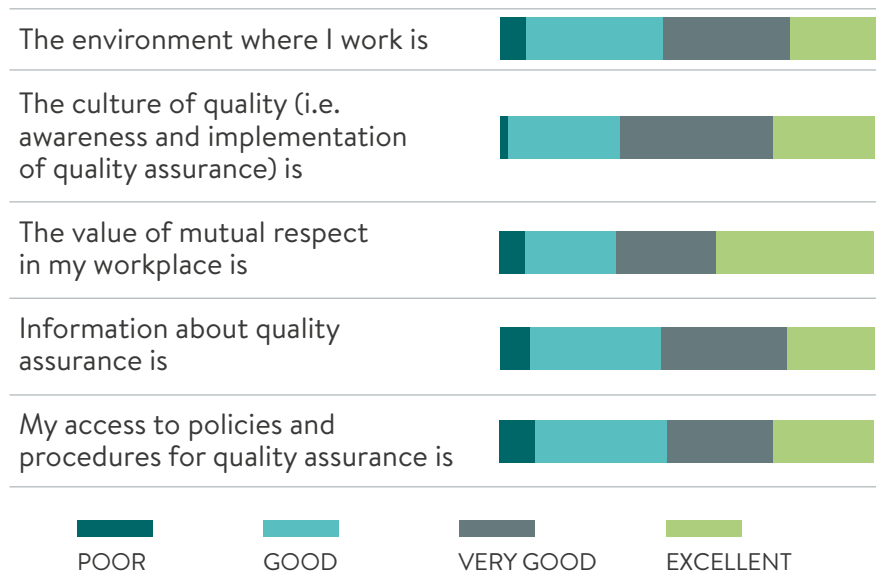


Figure 18: Environment and culture of quality

A very successful Professional Development and Technology-enhanced Learning (PDTEL) team operates within FET, and provided excellent supports during the pivot to emergency remote teaching (ERT), including contributing to the development of skills in digital pedagogy and communications, and to training in the practical use of e-Portfolios. Highlights of the PDTEL unit's activities included the FETFest hosted by KWETB, Dig Cap, the AHEAD digital badge in Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and the Lifting Ireland's Future Together (LiFT) programme.

Staff recruitment, CPD and Information and Data Management are governed by KWETB corporate policies, procedures and operations. The relationship of the human resources section to further education and training requires strengthening to take account of the complexity of staffing roles involved and required. There needs to be improved efficiency in the process from requisition to approval, recruitment and appointment of new staff. Robust data collection systems provide the information required to manage learner records; track their trajectories, and inform decision-making locally and regionally. Through constructive consultation and interaction, these systems are continuously improving.

The QA Team has provided a trusted focal point for the ongoing development of quality assurance and a culture of quality in KWETB and the management and governance of quality is emerging as a positive element contributing to the overall development of FET in the region.

Intended future direction

- ▶ Use plain, accessible language in all communications, and embrace the principles of universal design for communications.
- ▶ Develop a coherent approach to QA that covers both further education and training.
- ▶ Increase and strengthen the visibility of the Quality Assurance Team, the units of governance (the Quality Council; QA Sub-group; Programme Governance Sub-group; and Stakeholder Engagement Sub-group) and the Quality Framework within centres and colleges. Ensure that the role and responsibilities of the QA Team and governance units are defined and known.
- ▶ Provide regular communication, information and training for all FET personnel in quality assurance and its implementation. Develop and deliver intensive training at centre level about quality assuring assessment, supported through video presentations.
- ▶ Cascade responsibility for QA throughout FET, for example, by creating area-based or centre-based QA teams.
- ▶ Improve knowledge of the range of awarding bodies and establish a consistent QA process related to due diligence, monitoring, review, and evaluation of arrangements with awarding bodies.
- ▶ Complete and publish a single Quality Framework for FET services, including staff and student handbooks, developed through collaborative communities of practice and consultative processes, on a phased basis, starting with the core policies and procedures.
- ▶ Provide a dedicated base for the Quality Assurance Team and the Professional Development and Technology-enhanced Learning team, included an integrated, dedicated team for programme and curriculum development and validation, to facilitate continued effective planning, delivery and development of projects and enhanced synergy between the teams.
- ▶ Seek broadening of recognition of qualifications and experience for the purpose of recruiting practitioners with subject matter expertise in specific specialisms.
- ▶ Strengthen the connection between human resources and FET to ensure prompt recruitment.
- ▶ Develop a dedicated ICT support team, linked to KWETB corporate governance, but tasked with supporting the needs of FET.
- ▶ Recruit a specialist PR person to advise and support enhanced consistent marketing of FET services and programmes, ensuring accuracy and consistent messaging, and enabling communication with hard-to-reach communities.
- ▶ Develop a FET PR strategy and standardise branding and marketing materials for FET.

2

SECTION 2: TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT



THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

DESCRIPTION

KWETB FET Services provide programmes of education and training leading to awards from a range of awarding bodies from levels 1 to 6 of the National Framework of Qualifications (Appendix 19). The term ‘learning environment’ is broad, referring to the quality of the relationships between staff and learners, the quality of the experience of learners; quality of content; the modes through which learners learn; the built environment and provision of resources and equipment. KWETB FET personnel are fully committed to the values of learner-centredness, integrity, excellence and respect and this is reflected in the overall experience reported by learners and was consistently reflected in the surveys of learners, practitioners and leaders.

The provision of training for practitioners through the professional development hub and opportunities to avail of training in UDL and dyslexia testing has anecdotally enhanced the development of course content, assessment and recognition of diversity. Practice includes teaching using a variety of methods and strategies, providing a wide range of stimuli for learners and recognising that learners can be enabled to demonstrate what they have learned in a variety of different ways.

In their responses to the learner survey, students praised the quality of their engagement with staff, especially during the pivot to emergency remote teaching and learning. They felt very well supported:

As a mature student I was extremely nervous and anxious about starting the course. My fears were allayed by the support and kindness shown by staff. I was made feel very welcome and soon relaxed into work with support and guidance from my Tutors. My experience at BIFE was wonderful, so much so I have signed up for a two-year course in fine art.

I found that KWETB worked perfectly during this year the only problems that happened where outside their control.

Learner Survey Responses

This commitment to learners is reflected in the following statements from CRWS1:

It's not just delivering to a descriptor, it's how they link with the Learners.

We are providing a quality service for our learners.

KWETB staff are responsive, flexible and willing to adapt to the ever-changing teaching and learning landscape to ensure that they meet needs of learners and employers.

EVALUATION

There is evidence of commitment to learners across all services, reflected in the responses to the learner survey and practitioner input. An adult learning approach is adopted by practitioners. A repeating theme in the staff and coordinator feedback is one of care for learners, corroborated by the learner feedback. Management and practitioners create an environment where they welcome and support students. Coordinators, principals and programme managers cited the quality of teaching, and instruction staff as a key contributor to the learning environment (CRWS2). The Quality Assurance Team reported that the learning environment is very effective and that centres adapted very well to the changes required associated with the pandemic (Focus Group).

Practitioners indicated their commitment to meeting the needs of learners by drawing on a repertoire of strategies, their knowledge of the learners and the technical pedagogical task. Survey data from leaders of teaching, learning and assessment, and practitioners provided a picture of the synergy in FET services, in which leaders provide the scaffolding for teaching, learning and assessment through management activities and practitioners successfully deliver programmes and assess the outcomes of the programmes. Learner results for accredited programmes indicate that learners experience high levels of success.

29.5% of learners agreed with the statement 'I feel welcome in the centre or college I attend' while 65.7% strongly agreed. An aggregated figure of 96% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'there is a nice atmosphere in the centre', while 97% agreed that the centre they attend is kept neat and tidy, reflecting the commitment to the provision of education and learning environments where teams of staff ensure that learners feel comfortable and included. 93% of learners agreed or strongly agreed that all students were treated equally and fairly by staff, while 95% agreed or strongly agreed that 'the centre promotes wellbeing'. Learners gave positive feedback about their courses and about their experiences of learning:

From the very start it was a pleasure to learn new things at this centre. The people are kind and always ready to help, especially our tutors and centre coordinator. Even when the assignments, projects and exams put pressure on me, I was always encouraged to keep moving forward and remember my final goals.

...my fears were allayed by the support and kindness shown by staff. I was made feel very welcome and soon relaxed into work with support and guidance from my tutors. My experience was wonderful.

Since I was ill and it was, it was a huge learning. It made me confident to talk, whereas I wasn't before. I was really reluctant at the start of doing this course - I thought it wasn't for me - I actually told the tutor that at the end of the first class, but the tutor encouraged me to stay, and I was able to get up and read out my piece, so it really did build my confidence up and my self-esteem. Two-and-a-half years later, I'm still here.

Learner Survey Respondents

56% of teaching staff indicated that the environment they work in is very good or excellent, 46% rated it as good while 7% rated the environment as poor. 83% of learners reported that their relationships with classmates were very good or good and 89% reported that their relationships with practitioners were good or very good.

In some feedback, there are indications that communication about programmes and about timetabling of courses can be problematic. There is a need to encourage more interaction and discourse at the interface between learners, practitioners, leaders, the Quality Team and the Governance groups to maintain a focus on the impact of teaching and assessment on learners, and to improve articulation of the education and training system at all levels.

Some learner respondents commented on communications and information-giving in relation to their programmes:

It was confusing as the procedure of the course was not explained fully to us. As a group we all felt the same. In time it sorted itself out but there was a lot of confusion to start.

I felt it was a little vague as to what the course content was.

It was a disaster. We started a month late; our kits didn't arrive for weeks. They allowed so many students into the course that we were instantly divided and only allowed to come in half of the time. There was no facility for online classes from home as the tutors were with the other half of the group.

Learner Survey Respondents

The period experienced by learners and practitioners in 2020 – 2021, was unusual, and centres and colleges had to make changes to the norms for delivery. This statement above indicates that clearer communication and articulation of the arrangements for delivery may have helped to ease the impact of the negative experience.

Practitioners feel they have embraced innovation resulting in improved course delivery, practice and content, through the impact of PD, adopting e-portfolios for assessment and participation in Dig Cap:

My approach has changed greatly since the arrival of Covid19. Due to necessity and also a large amount of valued training I am now presenting my online classes through Teams and a variety of wakelet presentations. Wakelet is making my classes more informative by using a variety of sources such as pdf documents and YouTube clips.

Having been stagnant for ideas, during lockdown, we started working with Dig Cap and entered into the world of technology and it has opened my eyes and mind about varied ways that I can completely revamp my programmes.

Practitioner Survey Respondents

Responding to survey question 25: 'Tell us your process for decision-making about teaching/training strategies you use when planning delivery, practitioners responded:

I assess what the students want, need and will find useful. I look at the backgrounds of my students and try to make the material interesting and relevant. If doing QQI I try to make sure the students' entry level is right for the certificate level or suggest a different certificate.

Based on information about students' needs, I plan my teaching and learning strategies using best practices for example, UDL. I also seek further opportunities for students to access external learning opportunities outside of QQI.

I use a combination of teaching methods within the classroom to vary delivery for students.

Practitioner Survey Respondents

Survey respondents reported using cooperative learning; new technologies such as Wakelet, Flipgrid and Mentimeter and Microsoft Teams; inquiry-based instruction; guided instruction; differentiation; practical exercises; demonstration; Socratic questioning; handouts and traditional lecturing in their classes to enhance the learning experience and ensure that the needs of learners are met.

In response to an invitation to rate elements and purposes of their teaching (Q28), practitioners rated knowledge of students; enabling students to master module content; updating their teaching skills and updating subject knowledge as being very important.

Workshop participants commented that:

We have brought more practical skills into the delivery of our courses.

Work based learning is developing with collaboration from employers.

Practitioners described how their commitment to meeting learners' needs is at the forefront of their decision-making and it is notable that there is collaboration with colleagues in making decisions too:

Student induction assessment; staff meetings on student needs; feedback from the literacy and numeracy support tutor; student engagement on course work; fellow tutors in KWETB subject networks; external course materials; current global issues relating to the subject area; QQI supports on module delivery changes or updates inform decisions.

One always needs to meet the needs of learners. (I) refer to guidelines in terms of content and delivery. Liaise with teaching colleagues to share ideas and resources. Evaluate outcomes against goals with lesson plans. Activities in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) always need to reflect needs, ability level, cultural interests and beliefs.

Learner Experiences

Learners were asked which subjects they had difficulty with, and the highest number of responses listed Communications (39) and Maths (35) as difficult. 236 respondents cited no difficulty. When asked about the main reasons for difficulty experienced in subjects, learners responded:

I don't feel confident about the task (72).

I don't understand a lot of the explanations (65).

I get easily distracted (59).

Asked how much time they spent studying (Q14), the majority spent thirty minutes to one hour:

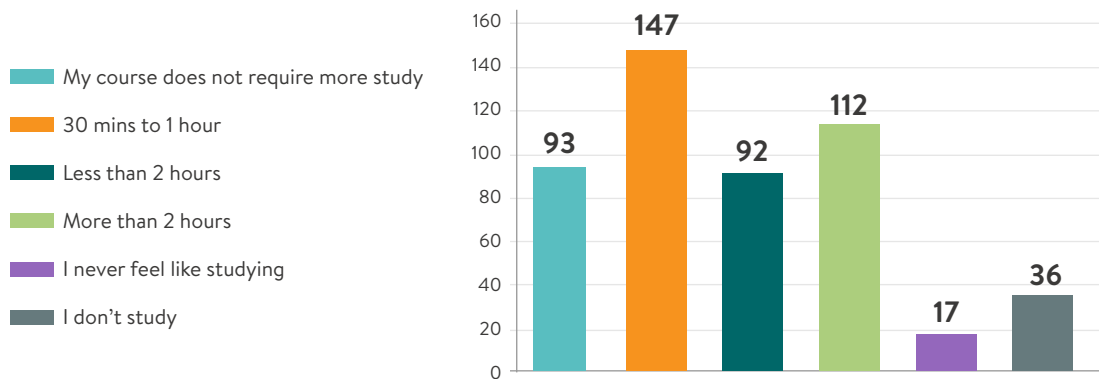


Figure 19: Time spent studying

In response to the statements about their satisfaction with their experience, learners were overwhelmingly positive, agreeing or strongly agreeing to them:



Figure 20: How I am taught

Learners commented on their experience of teaching and learning:

I have improved so much and have got some certificates. I want to keep going and get more. I left school at 14 after having a very bad time there.

My learning helped me boost my confidence. I learned a lot and am thankful that my instructors are very helpful.

Our teachers, and in particular our lead teacher is inspirational...his knowledge, enthusiasm and professionalism is unquestionable and he has so many outstanding qualities, among them, patience, flexibility, maturity and adaptability due to his ability to pivot online with so much interesting and novel assignments and content.

This was so well taught and material supplied was excellent. When we did get to meet in person to practice what we had learned online it was not like hearing it for the first time. It was very well delivered online which translated and made sense in the real world.

Learner Survey Responses

Experience of Emergency Remote Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Learners rated their progress during the emergency remote teaching (ERT) phases as positive (78.6%) and their ability to follow classes online as 78% positive. For 71% of learners, their internet connection was rated as positive and 74% rated their home study environment as suitable.

The majority of learners used laptops for their work during the ERT phase and submission of assignments was mainly by e-mail, teams assignment channels or OneDrive:

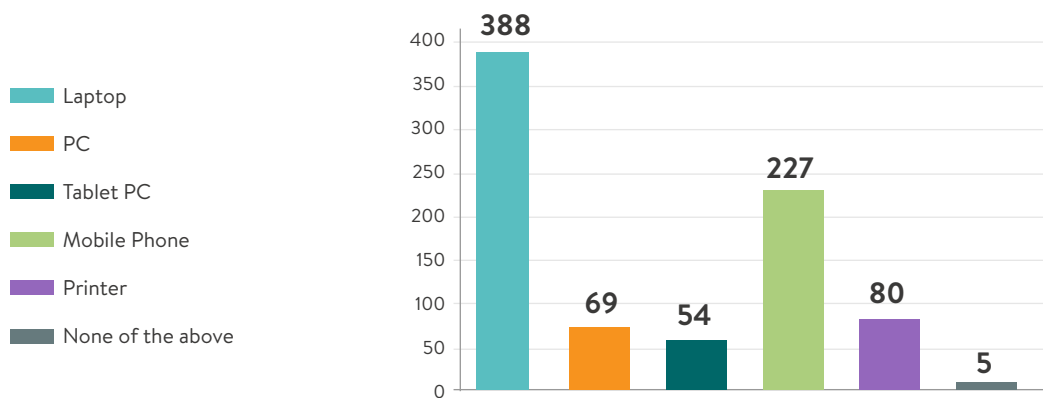


Figure 21: Devices used by learners

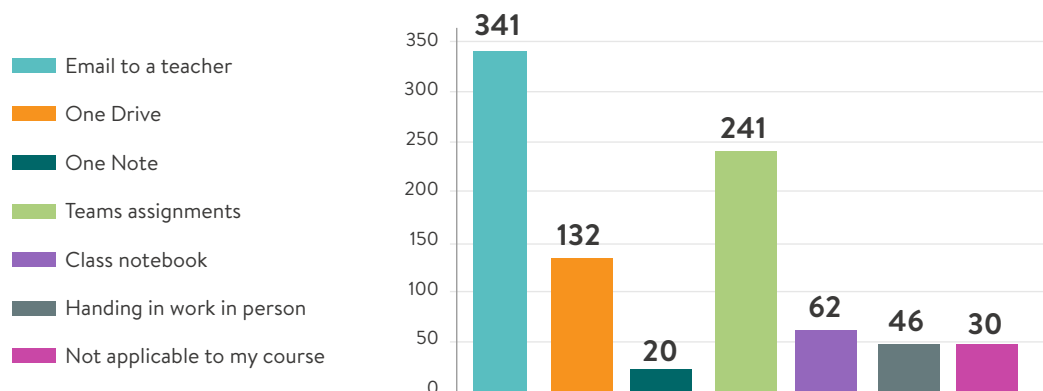


Figure 22: Methods for submitting assignments

I contributed to discussions and asked questions while in online class

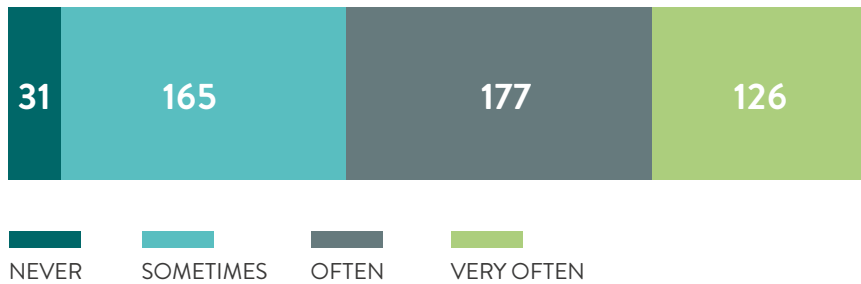


Figure 23: Challenges of ERT and L

Learners would like to see more opportunities for peer interaction incorporated into online learning. (Aontas Forum Report: 2020:4)

I worked with other students online

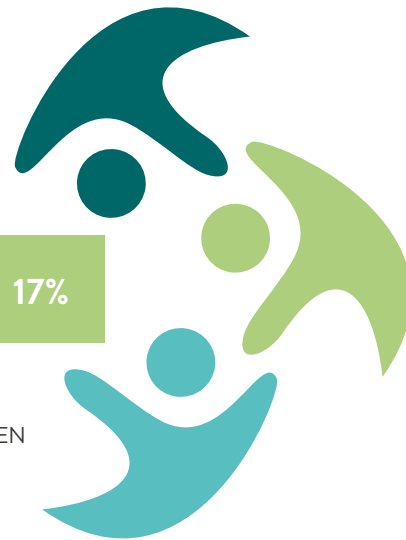
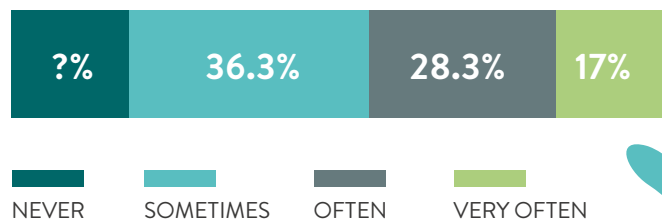


Figure 24: Challenges of Emergency Remote Teaching and Learning (2)

Learners rated the support they received during ERT on average at 4.5 out of 5. Asked what they would retain of the online learning experience, learners said:

It allowed for everyone to contribute; the class size was expanded to allow two centres to participate which allowed for sharing of experience and knowledge; it overcame access issues, for example, for tutorials from the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Sports Ireland and Mountaineering Ireland; handouts/pdfs available with access 24/7; easy access to tutors to clarify/ask questions; content was available to download and save on our own devices.

It would be nice to be in the centre 2 or 3 days and online the rest of the days – it gives time to do further work on your assignments when at home (when I get on a roll I could be writing for the day); it's nice to accomplish it at home as well and gives a sense of independence.

Learner Survey Response

Learners attending an Aontas Forum expressed satisfaction about their experiences:

All 15 applicable survey responses from learners at levels 1-3 indicated that these learners were either 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the organisation of classes, the staff support and the teaching methods used on their course or at their centre. (Aontas Report, 2020:12)

Premises and Resources

The quality and standard of buildings and equipment are critical to the learning experience, and to learners' ability to use industry standard equipment if they are attending courses of vocational education and training. The majority of locations where further education and training are delivered by KWETB's FET services are maintained to a high standard, and provide for occupants' needs.

Through the training and innovation services, facilities which simulate real work environments have been provided. One example of this is the Bretzel Bakery in Kilcullen, County Kildare, which provides a purpose-built training bakery within its plant for the delivery of a traineeship. Another is the Marine House Hospitality Training Centre in Wicklow Town. Within further education, a digital media hub has been developed at the Newbridge FETC; Bray Institute of Further Education has purpose-built television production and media facilities; training kitchens; hairdressing and woodworking facilities and a number of the Youthreach centres across both counties have purpose-built training kitchens and woodwork rooms. The most recent 'state of the art' FET centre opened in October 2021 in Celbridge.

All locations are governed by KWETB's health and safety policies and have their own safety statements, which are updated regularly. Cleaning and IT infrastructure support are outsourced through Office of Government Procurement tenders.

There are a number of locations in the region where centres are accommodated in old or historical premises not originally designed as education and training facilities. Availability of suitable new premises and local need versus availability of transport can present barriers to upgrading to premises better suited to delivery of our services. (CRWS2) FET management and senior management continue to seek improvements for these services.

EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

- ▶ KWETB FET services serve a wide range of needs across the region, through unaccredited and accredited programmes and across the levels from 1-6. Teaching is adapted to meet the needs of diverse learners.
- ▶ There are high levels of commitment to learner wellbeing, and to establishing positive learning environments featuring good relationships, quality experiences and ‘fit for purpose’ premises throughout the FET services.
- ▶ Practitioners bring a balance of commitment to learner wellbeing, information about learners and their own knowledge to decision-making about how to meet learners’ needs.
- ▶ Participants in quality framework working groups indicated that they welcomed the opportunity to discuss their practice with others, with one person commenting that the working groups were like ‘virtual staff rooms’ during the first Covid19 lockdowns. Maintaining and developing connectivity between practitioners aligns with the values of the organisation, promotes collaboration and sharing, and feeds innovation and professionalism.
- ▶ The commitment of staff in FET was clearly evident during the Covid19 crisis and learners expressed their gratitude for this in the learner survey. This commitment to continuity of teaching and learning was manifested in staff readiness to avail of multiple ways of retaining connection with learners; their creativity and the support they gave learners in the online environment. The availability of online platforms and flexible provision of support through the Quality Assurance Team and the Professional Development and Technology-enhanced Learning Team are major strengths.
- ▶ Practitioners are willing to enhance and expand their capabilities and the availability of professional development to support this was welcomed.
- ▶ Practitioners’ ability to ‘meet learners where they are at’ while delivering at the required academic standards is appreciated by learners.
- ▶ Practitioners call on a wide range of strategies for teaching in their practice.
- ▶ There is a dedicated capital budget to provide for improvements to facilities.
- ▶ OSD support structures enabled the transition to online teaching and learning in the crisis situation and supported business continuity while protecting learners and staff.

CHALLENGES

- ▶ The perceived gap between further education services and training services challenges delivery of consistency across FET.
 - *(The) Experience is not the same across the board for Learners. Integration of modules (should be) across the board not just for further education but for training as well. (CRWS 1)*
- ▶ The need to update existing programmes of FET is becoming a critical issue, as is ensuring that content is up to date and assessment is fair and transparent.
- ▶ There are a number of FET centres that are located in old buildings. These present challenges in accessibility; functionality and flexibility.
 - *Our buildings are not fit for purpose – slow process getting anything to the finish line. Poor quality of buildings – affects teaching and learning, staff morale, quality of building. (CRWS1)*

POTENTIAL FUTURE ENHANCEMENTS

- ▶ Provide consistent messaging and information about programmes of further education and training; learning pathways, and about supports available for learners.
- ▶ Adopt the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to inform programme development and pedagogy across all services.
- ▶ Develop a policy, procedures and guidelines for online teaching and learning
- ▶ Provide shorter courses for students with mental health difficulties and other needs, including developing more unaccredited programmes focused on the needs of specific groups. Put in place more effective approaches to equitably include learners with special needs throughout programmes of further education and training.
- ▶ Upgrade buildings that are unsuitable or identify alternatives and manage the move to new locations.
- ▶ Expand the building services team, and ICT help desk, and put in place systematic audits and to ensure that universal accessibility and environmental protection standards are being met in all centres of further education and training.
- ▶ Continue to enhance the quality and number of simulated training environments in order to provide realistic experiences for learners. Continue to build relationships with industry stakeholders to increase the number of workplace learning opportunities, both short term and long term.
- ▶ Integrate more opportunities for independent, self-directed learning in programmes, and provision for learners to develop the associated skill sets.
- ▶ Integrate Universal Design for Learning (UDL) into modules, referencing and including it in the development and design of all new programmes of further education and training.
- ▶ Enhance all programmes by ‘proofing’ them according to the sustainable development goals.



ASSESSMENT

DESCRIPTION

Assessment is organised, scheduled and carried out in centres and colleges, guided by the standards expressed by the relevant awarding body; programme descriptors; quality assuring assessment policies and procedures; and awarding body certification periods.

In further education programmes leading to awards in the common awards system (QQI-FE), assessors devise assessment locally with reference to the learning outcomes and criteria for the specific programme. In training services, practitioners refer to Assessment Instrument Specifications (AISs) and pre-prepared assessment instruments, which are stored securely and issued on request. It is expected that assessors will draw on their subject area expertise when making assessment judgments.

Quality assuring assessment policies and procedures are published and available to coordinators and principals through the Quality Assurance Site and the Training Standards Office and are based on the 2013 guidelines for quality assuring assessment, and the ETBI reference handbook for assessment. Policies and procedures cover the assessment process from beginning to end, including planning assessment, administering assessment; providing reasonable accommodations and compassionate consideration; internal verification; external authentication; results approval and assessment results appeals. There are standard corporate formats provided to centre coordinators and principals reflecting standard conventions for presenting assessment evidence and documentation to external authenticators during their visits while maintaining the authenticity of learners' work. These standards have transferred to the standards for submission of e-portfolios.

It is expected that learners will be given fair and transparent opportunities to demonstrate the knowledge and skills acquired through engagement with valid and reliable assessment. Assessment techniques used include learner portfolios; assignments and reports; projects; skills demonstrations; learner records and examinations. Criteria for assessment and marking schemes are included in validated programme descriptors. There is recognition that these require updating and improvement.

Planning and collaboration is an essential part of the assessment process, as it enables practitioners to ensure that the burden of assessment for learners is manageable. Integrated assessment reduces the assessment burden for learners and assessors. Where there are multiple practitioners delivering a component in a centre, they can engage in peer collaboration to ensure the consistency, reliability and validity of the assessment process for their component.

Assessment for learning and assessment of learning are used to ensure that learners are benefitting from the unit of learning being delivered and to find out whether there is a need to supplement the knowledge and skills learned or to approach the topic in a different way. Assessment of learning takes place to ascertain whether the learner has achieved the standard for the level and certification in question.

Feedback to learners on their performance in all kinds of assessment is considered an essential part of learning, offering opportunities for improvement and development with the support of practitioners. It is recommended that continuous assessment is built into all programmes to ensure that learners receive continuous feedback on their performance.

Learners are informed of their responsibilities as an assessment candidate at induction, and before assessments take place. This information is communicated appropriately for the stage of the learner. Learners are fully informed about assessment supports available in the form of reasonable accommodations and compassionate consideration, and are invited to apply for the former in a timely manner so that centre personnel can provide supports.

Learners are informed about the consequences of assessment malpractice, including plagiarism and are given instruction about citing and referencing pitched at the level of the award. Examination instruments are prepared, stored and distributed under secure conditions. Learners are given fair notice of assessment deadlines, and dates of examinations. Invigilators are assigned to supervise examinations.

Assessment of Workplace learning

In programmes delivered by Training Services the Training Standards Officer ensures that learning journals are completed and signed and dated by the employer. Learning journals are submitted as portfolio evidence for inclusion in EA sampling.

In Further Education Services, a Supervisor's report and a learning journal form part of the assessment. A workplace supervisor signs off on learner achievements during the placement. Learners complete a learning journal, which is assessed as part of the submitted assessment portfolio.

Processing Assessment Evidence, Results Approval and Celebration

Assessment evidence is stored safely, internal verification carried out, and if necessary peer checking of totted marks takes place. In the PLC colleges, Programme Board meetings are held to ensure consistency of marking across modules and programmes. Provisional results are issued to learners. Learners may appeal their provisional result, and centre personnel meet with candidates to discuss the provisional result.

Arrangements for external authentication are made, as described in the section on integrity of learner results. External authenticators meet with coordinators or principals, and can request to meet with practitioners if necessary. Completed IV and EA reports are uploaded to the results approval system in SharePoint, and prepared for the Results Approval Panels. When the results are approved, learners are notified of their result, and informed about the process for external appeal.

If necessary, appeals examiners are appointed to review appeals evidence submitted and issue reports. The QA Office notifies the outcomes of this process to centres and the centre notifies learners of the outcome. If necessary, results are adjusted. Typically, the QA team handles 14-25 appeals per annum, amounting to approximately .3% of the overall cohort of beneficiaries.

Since 2017, the number of external appeals in further education are:

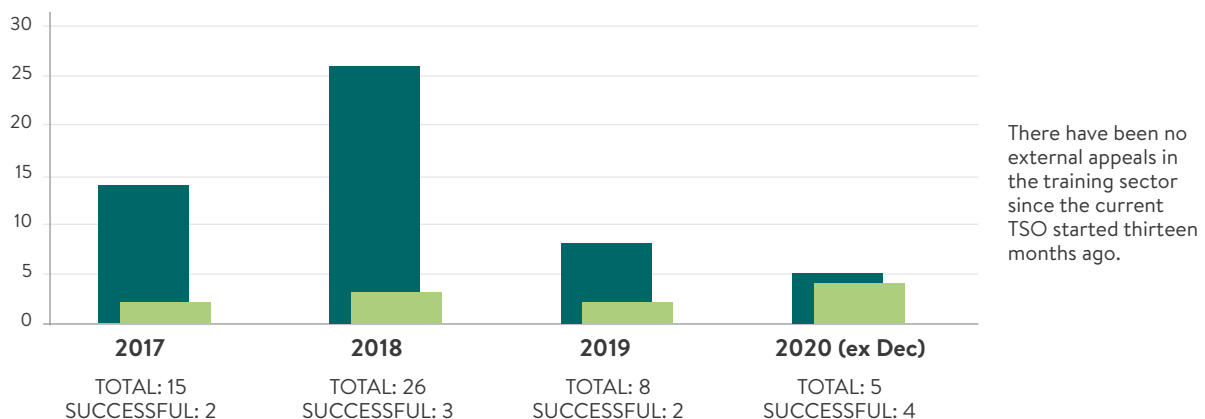


Figure 25: Appeals Statistics

Finally, learner achievements are celebrated. Prior to the pandemic, public celebrations were organised and reported on in local press and social media. These celebrations have moved on-line more recently.

EVALUATION

There are robust practices to assure quality and standards in assessment in both further education and training. There is a need to merge the operation of quality assured assessment in further education services and training services in the interest of fairness and consistency for learners, bringing together the best of both approaches, applying and adopting contemporary research and practice in assessment.

KWETB is committed to the principle of continuous assessment and staff works consistently to ensure that the learner experience is improved by reducing the burden of assessment on learners while ensuring that the standards for the levels are met by candidates for assessment. Assessment for, and of learning is encouraged, and there is an emphasis on the role of feedback as an integral part of the learning experience. Practitioners in the FE sector who locally devise assessment are supported to adapt and modernise assessment while staying within the required criteria and standards for the level.

One practitioner commented on the tension between the value of continuous assessment, the interest in results, and on the quality of programme descriptors:

Continuous assessment is important, but the students are sometimes more interested in results rather than process. Some content in the descriptors is outdated.

Practitioner

In the training sector, the suite of Assessment Instrument Specifications is still used for certain programmes, drawn on request from the RCCRS and distributed under the required secure processes identified in the TQAS.

Lack of consistency in assessment between legacy programme descriptors and QA58s (the former FAS programme descriptors) and between quantities and standards of assessment evidence required are risks that may result in undermining of the reputation of the FET system and are a priority which needs to be addressed strategically. There are issues about how this process is to be resourced, about capacity within the system to deliver on this, and about the role of the provider for setting standards in the form of their own programme descriptors versus the potential of collaboratively developed national programme descriptors.

Currently, there is no mechanism for checking or approving the quality of locally devised assessment beyond trust placed in assessor professionalism, the line manager and reporting by the External Authenticators. There is a need to combine these robust approaches to ensure that the correct type of assessment instruments are developed for different scenarios while maintaining fairness, consistency and the standards for the award. Developing the capacity of practitioners in assessment through participation in communities of practice to revise and develop assessment instruments is one approach to securing consistency in assessment. Another approach would be to consider using cross-moderation as a practice to continuously enhance awareness of grading and standards.

One coordinator described how they ensured that assessment is quality assured through Internal Verification (IV):

Assessment Briefs and a breakdown of marks, along with a set of dates for submission are given to learners at the start of each assessment period. These briefs and marking schemes are drawn from KWETB quality assured programme descriptors. Assessments are graded after submission and feedback is then given. Upon completion of the module the work is submitted for certification at the next available period. All portfolios and all modules are subject to the internal verification process. Assessment materials are then checked by the internal verifiers. Depending on the number of submissions KWETB's sampling strategy may or not may not be used. Once the IV process has been completed, selected modules are submitted for External Authentication to assure alignment with national standards.

Leader Survey Response

There is evidence that practitioners play an active and responsive part in the design of assessment instruments in some sectors:

Sometimes I amend assessment I have prepared myself for previous classes

Using Biggs model of constructive alignment, I find the learning outcomes, then develop an appropriate assessment regime based on this and then develop teaching methods based on the assessment.

Primarily I construct assessment on my own, but I do liaise with colleagues re streamlining/best practice

My assessments have the scope to (be) updated and as I progress over the years I include new items and ideas to reflect the current industry

Practitioner Survey Response

The design of the CAS programme descriptors currently in use can lead to a tendency to over assess learners and a practice of assessing learners multiple times for the same tasks, and ensuring consistency of quantity of assessment is a challenge. Marking schemes need to be reviewed and updated to address this issue in the short term. There is a need to either update the existing suite of descriptors or to develop and have new programmes validated. (CRSW2).

The policies and procedures for quality assuring assessment ensure fairness, transparency, and secure the standards for certification across FET. These approaches to quality assuring assessment contribute to consistent improvement of practice across FET enhancing and improving the assessment experience for learners.

Assessment scheduling and planning is embedded in practice with 57% of leaders leading assessment scheduling throughout the year, with 24% leading this at the beginning of a programme:

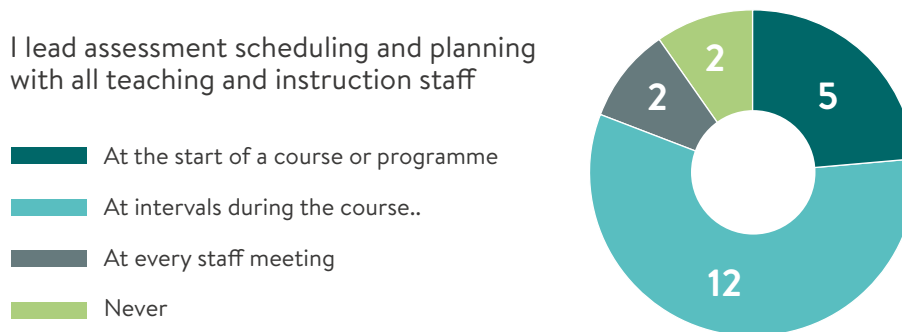


Figure 26: Assessment scheduling

The reasons for planning and scheduling assessment cited by leaders were multiple, including:

Tutors have a detailed roadmap of what has to be covered throughout the course. Details the time and duration that the tutor has to deliver all LO's. Can help to highlight any areas where the tutor may need training. Assessment schedule/scheme of work is essential if substitute cover is required for a class.

Assessment schedules are planned in our service for the following reasons: allow staggered assessment for students, allow the organisation of exam supervision, allow students to have an indication of the overview of the assessment required on the course.

Leader Survey Respondents

67% of practitioners agreed or strongly agreed with the statement ‘I participate in assessment planning/scheduling with my colleagues’ while 26% disagreed.

The assessments required for my subject, are also required for 2 other subjects, so I work with those teachers in preparation and completing them.

(It is) best practice to design in collaboration with other team members to standardise with consistency.

Practitioner Survey Respondents

68 of 69 respondents always inform learners in advance of assessment deadlines and dates and 62 consider assessment an important part of the teaching and learning process. 62% of practitioners reported relying on the specified marking scheme in programme descriptors while 34% reported using their own marking scheme.

Leaders of teaching, learning and assessment use a range of methods for embedding QA of assessment, and responsibility for communication devolved to practitioners is an important element of this:

Staff are aware of the need to advise learners at the start of courses about assessment schedules, compassionate considerations, reasonable accommodation, plagiarism etc.

Leader Survey Response

Assessment and certification are an essential part of the quality cycle, and the leaders reflected how this is part of their practice:

Constant communication with staff on the importance of Quality Assurance. Regular ‘check ins’ with tutors to ensure that all QA procedures are/have been correctly deployed throughout the course. Detailed feedback is provided to all tutors from IV/EA process. Areas for improvement are identified at IV/EA and any corrective action required (training/support) is organised to ensure a culture of continuous improvement.

Leader Survey Response

The majority of learners agreed or strongly agreed with a number of statements about assessment reflecting in particular the effectiveness of the assessment scheduling processes the importance of feedback processes for learners:

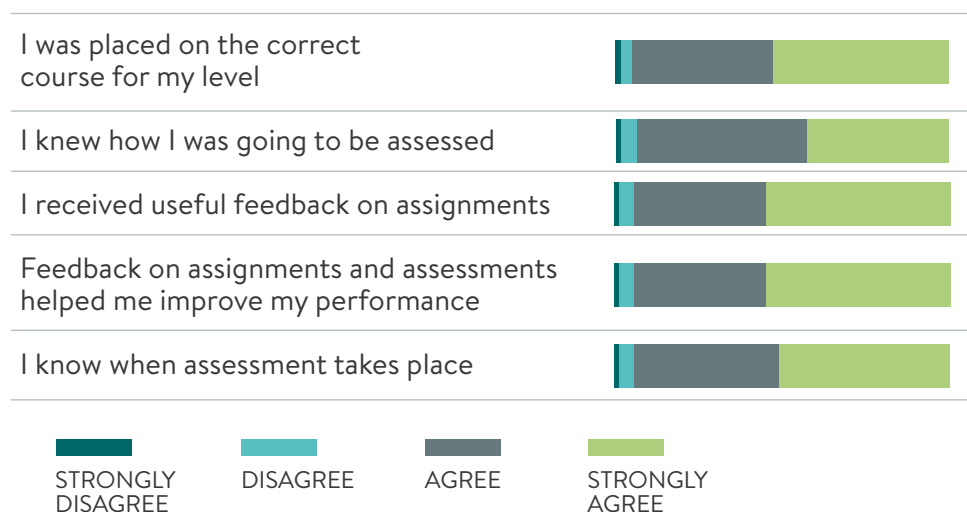


Figure 28: Informing learners about assessment

In feedback to the Aontas forum, ‘Thirty-six of 41 applicable survey responses from level 5 learners indicated that learners were either satisfied or very satisfied with “the fair and continuous assessment” on their courses or at their centres.’ (Aontas Report, 2020:14)

277 learners were informed about the process for appealing an assessment, while 101 did not know what it meant, 76 said they were not informed, and 45 said it was not applicable to their course.

Commenting on their general experience of assessment, learners thought:

I found that assignments were graded fairly and helpful feedback given.

I was notified of each step of assessment. I was provided with provisional results for each module and C. told us how to appeal our results if we were not happy.

The assessment was done by external assessors. We were told that there was no ‘fail’ for the assessment, only ‘deferral’. However, our whole training was thorough and nobody who took part in the course could have failed.

Tutors always gave constructive feedback to improve assignments. Tutors were flexible with setting assignment dates and could work together so there were no clashes.

Learner Survey Respondents

One practitioner commented on feedback as an organic part of the learning process, and the impact of a rigid approach to giving feedback:

I believe there is too much emphasis on the requirement for physical proof of feedback. Feedback is an organic process where we have the opportunity to have helpful discussions with students face to face. This should occur regularly and be normalised as in my experience, the results from a proper conversation are hugely beneficial to build trust and confidence.

Practitioner Survey Response

Practitioners commented on how they know learners are progressing:

You see it in the progression of work naturally. It is in their engagement in the work. For me, it is about the students developing their own self-esteem, confidence, sense of self and identity, mastery, social engagement, because that is where you see the real learning happening.

For unaccredited programmes I usually complete informal assessments on a weekly/bi-weekly basis or as required.

During feedback on course work, in class discussion, whether they can follow my written feedback and make suitable changes to their work, liaising with other staff especially the 1-1 literacy teacher.

Formative Assessment in advance of Summative Assessment e.g. mocks, drafts, homework with feedback provided by teacher and any follow up questions addressed individually or collectively with group.

Practitioner Survey Respondents

Responding to questions about continuous assessment, 62% of practitioners use assessment results for general review and 20% reflect on the results with colleagues. When results are unsatisfying, 52% of practitioners reported discussing the reasons with learners and 25% said they revise the topic with learners. When results are positive, 70% of practitioners highlight individual progress with learners; and 71% use the information to plan the next topic.

In terms of practitioners' responsibility for issuing results, 71% reported issuing provisional results to learners. 41% of practitioners answered 'yes' to the statement that learners can appeal a provisional result, while 36% responded that they don't know. 78% were aware of the internal appeals process, while 22% were not. 73% are aware of the external appeals process and 26% are not aware of it. 48 practitioners (69%) report to the centre coordinator, principal or manager when an assessment outcome is questioned by students.

EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

- ▶ Assessment processes are well-known and embedded in the quality culture of KWETB, as a centralised practice.
- ▶ There are robust monitoring and support systems in place and leaders of T, L and A and practitioners are competent in assessment practice.
- ▶ There is commitment to continuous assessment.
- ▶ Peer support is used in centres and colleges to support quality assurance of assessment.
- ▶ External Authenticators are assigned to centres/programmes for three-year cycles.
- ▶ There is commitment to openness and transparency in the quality assurance of assessment and to taking corrective action where this is required.

CHALLENGES

- ▶ Assessment instruments are not standardised throughout programmes within further education and training.
- ▶ Design of assessment criteria and marking in the CAS programme descriptors results in overassessment of learners, and in inequitable task quantities for assessment candidates.
- ▶ Quantity of assessment can vary from programme to programme and from centre to centre, and this is potentially unfair to assessment candidates.
- ▶ The scale of the organisation means that it is difficult for the QA team to track all instances of QA issues.
- ▶ Currently validated programme descriptors and AIs require systematic update and realignment.
- ▶ Legacy quality assuring assessment systems hamper consistency of assessment, and a single system for KWETB is required.
- ▶ Over-familiarity with assessment instruments which have not changed over many years may be affecting the reliability and validity of assessment.
- ▶ Commitment to the CAS assessment methods is restricting the potential for adopting other types of assessment. For example, considering the application of UDL to assessment could result in significant improvement in inclusion while maintaining validity and reliability of assessment. .
- ▶ Common, coherent appreciation of standards is lacking, and assessment rubrics are used in some services, but not all.
- ▶ Some of the Quality Assurance Team is not familiar with the quality assurance and assessment processes for awarding bodies other than QQI. This affects the intersection and quality assurance relationship between KWETB and second providers' QA policies and processes.
- ▶ Induction of new leaders and practitioners in the quality assurance processes is required, especially if they are recruited externally.

POTENTIAL FUTURE ENHANCEMENTS

- ▶ Unify and harmonise good practice in both training and further education to create a more consistent system for quality assuring assessment and to build the overall quality assurance system.
- ▶ Improve the focus on candidates' roles in assessment, increasing their knowledge and understanding of assessment and of their responsibilities as an assessment candidate. Involve learners more actively as participants in the assessment process to move away from the concept of assessment as something done to learners.
- ▶ Reintroduce cross-moderation to ensure common appreciation of standards. Introduce assessment rubrics to be applied across programmes.
- ▶ Continue to use technology to encourage authentic, detailed demonstration of skills learned and maximise its benefit for sharing and storing work, enhancing digital competence in the process
- ▶ Provide more consistent accessible information to learners regarding assessment, and remove the fear of seeking support.
- ▶ Develop assessments designed to be adaptable for all learners, and include the principles of UDL. Develop capacity in assessment design.
- ▶ Establish subject specific expert groups to review, enhance and update specific learning Outcomes (SLOs), assessment instruments and criteria.
- ▶ Establish a group to oversee the current e-portfolio process and provide training and professional development for tutors to be able to facilitate this process.
- ▶ Research and pilot the reintroduction of cross-moderation.



SUPPORT FOR LEARNERS

DESCRIPTION

In KWETB further education and training services, it is the responsibility of centre personnel to provide support for individual learners and to ensure that learners are aware of the supports available for them. Learners are advised to enquire in their own centres about supports. Specialist supports are available for specific target groups. The supports available can be summarised as follows:

- ▶ Adult Guidance (This service makes guidance available for adult learners within KWETB programmes, as well as a 'shop-front service' for the public.
- ▶ School Guidance Counsellors (located in the PLC colleges)
- ▶ Youthreach Advocate (available to Youthreach learners in Wicklow)
- ▶ Special Education Needs Provision (Arklow Youthreach)
- ▶ Counselling services
- ▶ Fund for Students with Disabilities (FSD – PLC)
- ▶ Literacy and Numeracy support
- ▶ Adult Basic Education Services
- ▶ Programme Assessment: reasonable Accommodations; Compassionate Consideration; Guidance on Assessment Malpractice and personal responsibility as an assessment candidate.

The seamless integration of support for learners is a priority beyond concerns with provision of supports for assessment. Development of knowledge and skill in this area within the practitioner cohort of KWETB has been supported through participation in the National Teaching and Learning Forum and AHEAD in-service programme in Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and in staff development from the Dyslexia Association of Ireland (DAI):

The importance of UDL is seen as ground level - it incorporates inclusivity for learners to ensure that they can access the learning environment. (CRWS 1)

The recently launched Accessible Learning Integrated Support Service (ALISS) is designed to enable provision of practical support for all FET learners at all levels, in-person and on-line in the form of a study hub. There are growing professional working relationships between students and staff, and staff are strongly committed to advocating on behalf of learners, recognising and understanding their challenges and barriers (CRWS2).

CASE STUDY 8



WHAT IS ALISS?

ALISS (the Accessible Learning Integrated Support Service) is a language and learning support service for learners in all KWETB FET programmes.

It was developed as part of the social inclusion measures within KWETB's Strategic Performance Agreement with SOLAS.

What is ALISS's role?

There are two main aspects to ALISS's role – initial assessment and learner supports.

▶ Initial assessment

The service is supporting the collation, sharing and building on existing expertise and good practice within KWETB to further develop a consistent, learner-centred approach for assessment of core skills. This will ensure learners can be supported to identify:

- their existing skills and experience
- the best course pathways to meet their current needs and goals
- any learning supports they will require to assist them in the successful completion of their studies

▶ Learner supports

ALISS is supporting the development of a consistent approach for ongoing embedded support provision in literacy, numeracy, digital skills and language as required by learners participating in FET programmes to enhance the quality of their learning experience.

Recent ALISS initiatives

▶ Initial assessment

- A digital assessment for entry to the new Early Learning and Care Programme has been developed and is at present being piloted in all participating centres
- A Common Initial Assessment QQI 1-4 resource has been developed and is currently being piloted in all ABE Centres
- A Common Initial Assessment QQI 4-6 resource is under development and is to be piloted 22/23
- An Assessment of Youthreach Language Learners Referral protocol has been agreed and is currently being piloted throughout KWETB Youthreach centres.

▶ Learner supports

We are currently exploring a three strand approach:-

1) Discrete Learner Support

- Provision of timetabled, tailored support classes (both online and face to face) around core skills
- Being Piloted across all programmes in 2 FET centres in KWETB - Wicklow Town and Athy in 21/22

2) Online 'Self Study' Hub

- Online study hub for learners to access support resources independently or with tutor support
- Will be central hub in which to curate consistent KWETB-wide support resources developed in collaboration with subject experts
- Flexible platform which will be easy to continue to update to support new programmes delivery, innovations and developments
- Learning units are designed in accordance with UDL principles so they can be easily accessed and worked through independently by learners on any device at a time and pace that suits them

Click [here](#) to view the hub.

Click [here](#) to hear educator and learner perspectives on using hub resources.

3) ALISS Professional Development for KWETB FET educators

- available either remotely or in-person
- to develop accessible teaching and learning methodologies to support an inclusive model for accessible learning for literacy and language learners
- including incorporation of the principles of UDL into curriculum design and development
- development of community of practice and expertise

EVALUATION

Throughout FET services, there is a high level of concern expressed for the well-being of learners. The value of learner-centredness is tangible, and is reflected in feedback from learners, practitioners and leaders.

Learners are informed of supports available by practitioners, with centre or school principals being the second source of information. It would be worth paying more attention to the ‘cascade’ model of information-giving to ensure consistency across services and to providing universally available support for learners throughout programmes of further education and training. Enhanced capacity in information giving for ‘frontline staff’ would help to improve information given to learners.

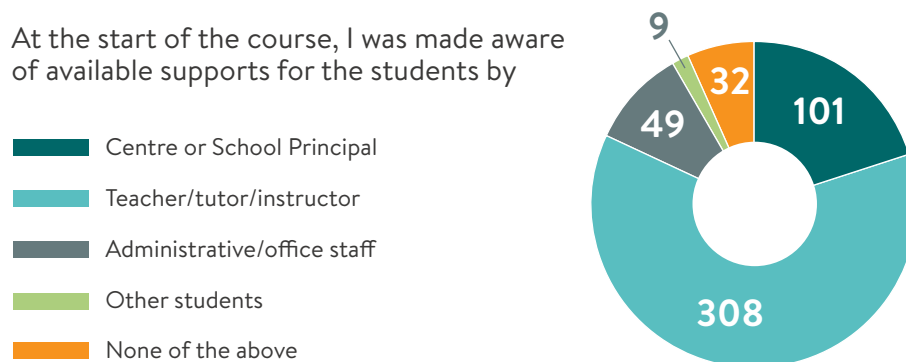


Figure 29: Information about supports for learners

Guidance forms an important part of the supports available to learners, yet the number of learners availing of these supports appear to be small, with 39 full-time learner respondents and 17 part-time learners reporting availing of guidance. In total, 11% of all respondents availed of the service. 3% of learners responding reported availing of compassionate considerations or reasonable accommodations, and 18% of respondents availed of literacy or numeracy supports. It is important to note that the response rate from students availing of the adult basic education service was high in comparison to the other services represented. 3% availed of a new offering of mentoring, and five learners out of 499 availed of disability support.

Looking at statistics from internal verification reports, since 2017, there were 163 applications for Reasonable Accommodations, of which 158 were approved; 239 applications for Compassionate Considerations, of which 230 were approved, and 75 recorded instances of Assessment Malpractice, which were all proven to have occurred. Bray, Arklow and Newbridge, as three of the largest population areas, represented the largest numbers seeking supports with 50, 40 and 26 applying for supports respectively.

Asked how supports could be improved, 38 (7%) learners felt supports for teaching, learning and assessment could be improved; 26 (5%) felt that access to supports could be improved and 25 (5%) would like more technology support. On average, learners availing of supports rated the quality at 3 or 4 on a rating scale in which 4 was best.

Asked what KWETB could improve in terms of supports during the current phase, some learners were very positive about the services:

I think the KWETB did nearly all they can with the current circumstances by giving us laptops to do our online classes with.

I believe KWETB does everything possible to support each of us presently.

Learner Survey Respondents

Other learners suggested:

Maybe have one to one private chats on how the course is going; how the group is working for you; any difficulties/situations happening outside of the course the tutor needs to be aware of. When I did have a personal issue (home) and brought it to my tutor's attention I received complete support. But a review chat anticipating there might be issues would help create a sense of support/inclusion.

(It) would be good to know the support for students in the college like the counsellor and career guidance counsellor earlier in the course.

Learner Survey Respondents

Learners commented on their experience of online teaching and learning:

Class interaction should be encouraged and facilitated.

Record the courses and send them to us, so we can go through them again to learn more, and make notes when I have no time to do it in the classes.

Have a computer class or qualification as a pre-requisite as some in class were useless with basic computer skills. To be patient with students starting new, allowing a grace period to understand the use of teams and the standard required when doing assignments.

A handbook on how to use the different online supports.

The course content should be adjusted to remote learning.

Learner Survey Respondents

In the Aontas forum responses, learners commented on the need to support digital skills:

‘...many learners still felt ongoing supports, such as technology courses would need to continue for learners to be truly supported’. ‘Learners would like “an induction on Microsoft teams” and “a review of learners’ computer skills at the beginning and during courses” to ensure learners who needed these supports could access them.’ (Aontas Report, 2020:12)

Learners suggested that some additional supports would be welcome:

- *Provide broadband allowance for students, especially those in Direct Provision centres.*
- *To ensure students have books or printed material. There was a shortage on my course and some students didn’t have them. Maybe print out documents needed for the course as sometimes it’s easier to read on paper rather than screens and not everyone has a printer.*
- *Although things kept changing with successive lockdowns, a timeline would be useful for the remainder of the course. Don’t know if the current 4 days/week placement is going to change and/or if the avital placement is going to change.*

Learner Survey Respondents

Mental Health was a recurring theme when students were asked how KWETB could improve supports for learners, illustrating the link between the frontline role of practitioners in learner wellbeing. This challenges KWETB FET service personnel to ensure that wellbeing and resilience are embedded in programmes and learner responses suggested that this could be further developed:

- *More mental health awareness workshops (and) seminars in relation to remote learning.*
- *For many people, working remotely is very isolating so organising some online social events would be a nice way to connect with teachers and fellow students in a less formal manner.*
- *More mental health services and support for students struggling to manage their workloads due to issues beyond their control.*
- *If we struggle with stuff to be understanding – e.g. with mental health.*
- *Have teachers thoroughly understand mental health.*
- *Maybe online mental health class or mindfulness- no-one knows how much people are struggling during these times, not able to see friends etc.*
- *The teachers and counsellors should give some notice (attention) to students’ mental health and respond to students more often.*

Learner Survey Respondents

One practitioner highlighted the need to balance support with teaching and learning:

I think in our programme, the only focus appears to be on getting the work done and outcomes, which ignores the bigger issues that are ongoing for these (learners). I believe much more needs to be done to properly support them which in turn will improve their academic performance.

Practitioner Survey Respondent

Responding to the Aontas Survey, learners commented on supports:

Learners felt that KWETB was understanding and supportive of their mental health and wellbeing. (Aontas Report, 2020:5)

The processes for planning and development of programmes and their validation are perceived currently as preventing the development of learner-centred responses. For example, there is a need to provide courses that meet the needs of learners or prospective learners with mental health difficulties, allowing them to participate in shorter courses. This issue requires further study to determine how established programmes and centres can provide reasonable accommodations for learners with special needs or with particular healthcare needs inclusively and how programmes developed can be more flexible.

Overall, the learners responding gave a rating of 4.5 stars to their experience of KWETB:



Figure 30: Learner Experience

And 4.25 stars in relation to support for their wellbeing:



Figure 31: Support for learner wellbeing

Practitioners are committed to providing in-class supports for learners, and to meeting their needs individually:

First and foremost, (it) is where my student is at, emotionally, academically and physically. A student cannot learn if they are emotionally dysregulated. I observe their triggers and find the best ways to work around that - for instance, the student who has had up until now a SNA due to severe dyslexia most likely will avoid any situation where that feeling of being "stupid" and other negative thoughts are triggered, so I will not expect them to ask for help or to accept the offer of 1:1 subject support.

Practitioner Survey Respondent

Depending on the type of centre, there are different supports for learners. In Youthreach centres, the literacy and numeracy tutors work as part of the team to enhance supports across modules, and address short-term and longer term needs of learners. The further education and training services are developing as integrated services which will provide enhanced access to support for learners, building on existing practice.

EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

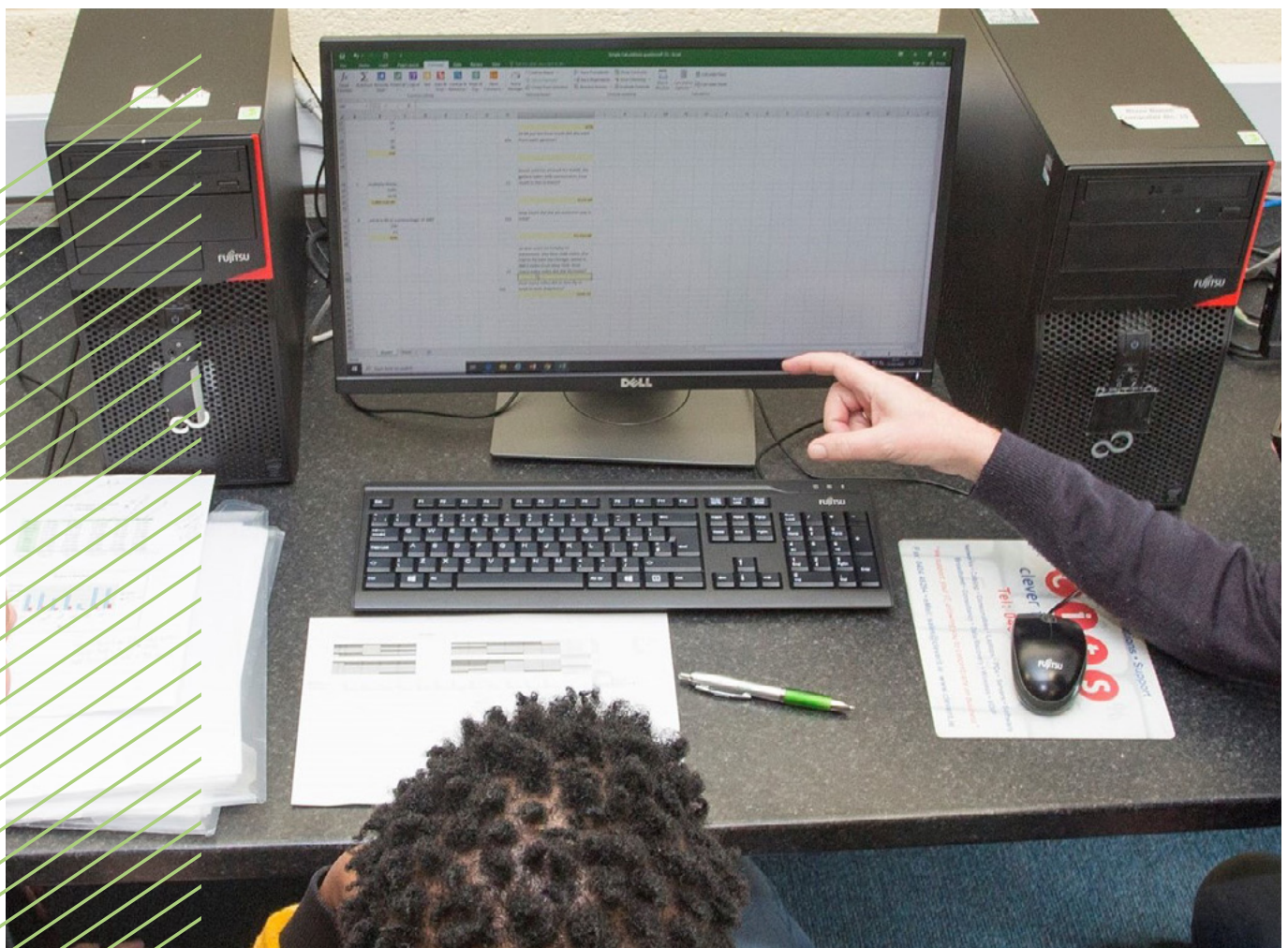
- ▶ The value of learner-centredness is embedded in programmes. There is a lot of support for learners in practice. Unofficial support given to learners is extensive – from talking to learners, learner development plans, extra hours or resources. There is a supportive environment and culture of holistic learning in many centres
- ▶ There is availability of a range of learning environments including practical, online and in-classroom and the readiness of educators to move to different modes when required is effective.
- ▶ Flexibility within the system, for example, the addition of a mentoring module to support the return to the classroom, ICT supports provided to learners during the Covid19 crisis, and the focus on learner wellbeing are positive practices.
- ▶ The introduction of the ALISS Service has been widely welcomed, because it can support development of staff awareness and knowledge of initial assessment of learners to ensure that they are correctly placed and can avail of appropriate resources, and will lead to the development of more integrated support services. ALISS will provide a single point of contact for learners seeking support.
- ▶ The Youthreach advocacy service and the guidance services are significant resources for learners. Guidance and advocacy ensure that learners commence on the right course at the correct level and time, and that they receive adequate support for the duration of the programme. .
- ▶ Policy and procedures for reasonable accommodations and compassionate consideration are clearly set out, these are communicated to learners and are fair, flexible and consistent.
- ▶ Knowledge of universal design for learning (UDL) has changed the way that learners are taught and assessed, offering flexibility to provide for diversity in the learner population.

CHALLENGES

- ▶ The provision and availability of supports for learners is currently dependent on the programme in which the learner is placed, which is inequitable and leads to potentially missed opportunities for learners and to issues with progression routes. Supports are available based on specialist funding strands rather than being seamlessly available across further education and training following a transparent identification of needs.
- ▶ The ALISS service is not yet available to the training services.
- ▶ Adult guidance is not fully integrated and unified across further education and training, meaning that the service is not available to all.

POTENTIAL FUTURE ENHANCEMENTS

- ▶ Develop an equitable system of supports for learners regardless of centre or funding strand, eliminating barriers to support. Support learners equally across the whole of further education and training, through an objective central office.
- ▶ Open ALISS and the Study Hub to learners in training service
- ▶ Promote the guidance service, and availability of counselling, and improve access to guidance for learners and prospective learners
- ▶ Use new technologies (including assistive technology) to provide greater equity for learners and enhance digital skills.
- ▶ Provide more access to support hours and learning facilities if required e.g. access to buildings in the evening to study/learn independently in a quiet space.
- ▶ Work with the County Childcare Committees to seek more childcare places
- ▶ Create a mentoring program accessible across all programs as an optional support for learners.
- ▶ Recruit more specialist staff who are expert in the provision of learner supports.
- ▶ Continue to build on the use of initial assessment to provide targeted learner supports for individual learners as required and make this available across programmes.
- ▶ Develop 'short, sharp' IT upskilling for all learners on commencement of their programmes, introducing them to the different platforms available and addressing basic gaps to ensure no loss of engagement due to technical issues.



CONCLUSION AND INTENDED FUTURE DIRECTION

Learners reported high levels of satisfaction with the learning environment in the further education and training services. There are high levels of commitment from staff at all levels to creating and maintaining positive learning environments for all learners, supporting the value of learner-centredness. Practitioners have demonstrated this commitment through participation in training to enhance their digital skills and their knowledge for teaching to diversity and through adapting their practice to meet the needs of learners. Leaders of teaching, learning and assessment demonstrate high levels of support for practitioners and there is evidence of teamwork which contributes to this environment.

Transmission of information about supports could be improved, particularly where there are part-time practitioners. Positive relationships are valued, and maintained during the periods of emergency remote teaching, to the best of practitioners' ability. Learners' interaction and participation appears to have suffered during periods of emergency remote teaching and increased attention on the development and delivery of short digital upskilling and introductions to online learning would be advisable. The welcome accorded to learners could be enhanced by involving learners in student councils, governance units and in initiatives prompted by the Stakeholder Engagement Sub-group of the Quality Council. This interaction, and subsequent learning would inform improved communications, and help to enhance communication with learners.

Innovation was a strong characteristic of the pandemic and included enhanced digital skills; flexibility to adapt assessment and increased engagement with employers. Learners expressed their satisfaction with learning in KWETB. There are robust, well-understood practices in assessment across further education and training. There is a need to regularise both systems so that there is consistency and coherence. There are issues with the currency of existing FET programmes, most of which were developed under the PAAs, and these require review and update.

The commitment to care for learners is apparent in the provision of supports and by efforts to enable learners to access them. The development of the ALISS hub will help to direct support to learners and offer them greater independence as learners. There is a need to ensure that all learners can avail of appropriate supports and that there is equity of access for learners and this extends to access to physical resources and premises.

Intended Future Directions

- ▶ Develop an equitable, holistic, consistently applied fair and transparent integrated support service for all FET learners, including access to the guidance service. Document the use of support services to enable evidence-based development of appropriate new initiatives to ensure that KWETB meets its statutory commitments to inclusion.
- ▶ Establish a specialist team including an Educational Psychologist, Guidance Counsellor, Resource Teacher(s), and Professional Development person to support learners and to provide specialist training in the area to staff.
- ▶ Continue to integrate universal design for learning in programme and assessment development and implement the GROW (Goals, Responsibility, Options and Will) model of coaching across programmes, training staff in its use.
- ▶ Develop fully integrated approaches to programme development, approval and validation.
- ▶ Build capacity in programme development and design programmes that can be delivered through a variety of different modes, including part-time; full-time; as short modular courses; in classroom and blended environments and including accredited and non-accredited programmes and micro-credentials.
- ▶ Harmonise quality assurance of assessment and standards across further education and training services.

- ▶ Build capacity in assessment design; integrated assessment; and knowledge of standards through communities of practice and through cross-moderation.
- ▶ Pilot a cross-moderation model for one programme across all of further education and training. Review the pilot to determine whether the practice should be implemented throughout our further education and training services.
- ▶ Establish an Erasmus partnership to support development of skills in cross-moderation and assessment and to enhance learning for practitioners and leaders.
- ▶ Establish a working group to develop and enhance policy for access, transfer and progression, including RPL and VNFIL, to create an illustrated learner pathway to enhance opportunities for learner progression internally, within KWETB and externally. This will improve, ease and enhance dissemination of information about opportunities by all staff, including 'frontline' staff. Draw on research and evidence of good practice for this project.
- ▶ Ensure that all premises are to standard, and that environmental considerations are included in ongoing premises maintenance and improvement and in new developments. Place consciousness of care of the environment at the centre of decisions about premises, and resources, including moving to a paperless environment.
- ▶ Develop facilities for learning in simulated environments and increase employer engagement to improve delivery of and opportunities for, workplace learning.

CASE STUDY 9

EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (ESD)

KWETB has been responding to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) across its FET offering, leveraging the advantages of collaborative approaches, and including industry and subject matter experts to deliver relevant and timely responses to our stakeholder skills gaps and needs.

In conjunction with Fifty Shades Greener we offer post primary schools programmes, 'Building a Greener Future,' 'the Carbon Conscious Schools Manual,' TVET and a third level 'Green Managers' programme preparing learners for the emerging roles in the world of work.

In response to specific industry needs identified within the hospitality sector, we have designed and delivered the 'Green Business Programme' to individual hospitality businesses, providing the knowledge and skills a hospitality or tourism business need, to be able to control and reduce their use of utilities. These can be delivered in-person or on-line.

This programme upskills the business workforce to effect change, promoting:

**ENERGY
REDUCTION**

**WASTE
REDUCTION**

**WATER
CONSERVATION**

The resulting reduction of consumption will result in a reduction in the Carbon Footprint, and a savings in the business. The successful implementation saw the collaboration of 14 sister ETB's to upskill their own training staff to meet their own local hospitality business needs.

Participating businesses have reported reductions in energy, water and waste costs as well as helping towards meeting strategic goals for their organisations in environmental sustainability and working towards carbon neutrality. Our continued commitment to ESD in our FET offering sees the development and roll out of an all-industries awareness programme for multiple industry sectors in Q4 of 2021.

CASE STUDY 10

THE COMMUNITY EDUCATION ERASMUS PROJECT: AN UNACCREDITED PROGRAMME

The project Womens' Perspectives on Societies Division: Peace. Power. Poetry is a Kildare Community Education Project funded through Erasmus. The partners are

Estonia: [Innowise](#)

France: [Association Hors Pistes](#)

Germany: [Weltgewandt](#)

Poland: [Boris](#)

Poland: [To the Future](#)

Two student representatives participated with tutors in a hybrid mode in Learning, Teaching, Training Activities (LTTA). They reflected on what it means to be a woman in society; how women are portrayed in media, and how we experience public spaces as women. Participatory and art-based methods were used to facilitate the LTTA including the use of radical collage as a starting point.

All partners apart from KWETB travelled to Germany, but we could not because we were not approved to do so. The hybrid mode was very new to us. We participated, and facilitated the group remotely. We received very positive feedback from the partners who were present in the room on our hybrid facilitation. We will travel to a Transnational Project Meeting (TPM) for strategic planning on December 10th, bringing with us art created by the group in Ireland.

This art was created using collage as a radical art form, creating space for critically reflecting on assumptions and representations of women, communities and society. It is a visual art form that uses photographs, news cuttings, ribbons, fabric, art work and other objects to create visual representations, becoming a tool for social protest.

The radical possibilities of collage free us from the idea of painting alone as an imitation of reality. Collage reflects fragments of the world, weaving together both the material and imaginary. It is a space where we can deconstruct and reconstruct, conceal and reveal through layers of intentions, concepts, hopes and uncertainties thus creating a new narrative.

Collage's dynamic visionary process of fragmentation and reconstruction is used as a way of exploring intersectional feminist issues of sexuality, age, race, and class and inspiring critique of how systems shape society. By identifying existing and new contexts, the everyday can be reimagined in a social as well as creative sense and present alternative perspectives of women as a form of protest.

Stefanie Larkin and Zorhyana Pshyk, Kildare Community Education Service.

3

SECTION 3: SELF-EVALUATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW



SELF-EVALUATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

DESCRIPTION

Self-evaluation, monitoring and review has been embedded through different processes across the ETB. These processes include review of certification cycle outcomes; the Youthreach Centre Evaluation and Improvement Process (CEIP); QQI executive self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes commenced in 2017-2018. Quality assuring assessment and results approval have contributed to review and continuous improvement of quality assurance and quality at central level and at centre level.

Internal verification and external authentication reports and certification data are regularly reviewed and inform corrective action and recognition of exemplary work locally and centrally. A process of sampling of certification documentation by the QA Team has been introduced, adding a monitoring layer to existing processes. The introduction of governance units and the development of associated reporting structures provide accountability, transparency and opportunities for review of patterns and trends in further education and training. Youthreach centre evaluations take place annually, and changes and adjustments are made based on these evaluations, which include a cross-section of stakeholders and, together with Department of Education inspections, provide opportunities for reflection, change and improvement.

At centre level, across full-time and part-time programmes, and in the training services, programme evaluations are used to gather data locally about learner experiences and these inform improvements within each centre or programme. Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) programmes are the subject of regular monitoring and evaluation.

Quality Improvement Plans arising from the Executive Self-evaluation gave an impetus to the development and implementation of structures for governance of quality; the Quality Framework; centralised thematic external authentication; the development of ALISS and preparation for the Self-evaluation and Cyclical Review of Quality in further education and training.

The 2021 Self-evaluation has offered an opportunity to take an inclusive approach to self-evaluation, and to frame methodologies for the future. The systematic approach has gathered baseline data, and allowed KWETB to test the approach and reflect on current practices.

EVALUATION

The practice of review of external authentication reports and internal verification reports is used as a transparent approach to recognising good practice and identifying areas for improvement and constructive corrective action. There is a collaborative, cyclical approach to this work, and improvement is evident as a result.

At centre-level, there are accepted cycles for evaluation that provide opportunities for reflection, change and improvement. The Youthreach CEIP is an example of good practice, and regular programme evaluations in full-time and part-time FET programmes contribute to improvement at centre-level.

The Executive Self-evaluations provided, lead to significant developments in the governance of quality; in the policy area and in the development of supports for learners.

Inclusive methodologies used in the 2021 self-evaluation provided real opportunities to reflect objectively on the role of quality assurance and governance systems. The role of student, stakeholder and practitioner ‘voice’ in KWETB decision-making has come to the fore and a third sub-group of the Quality Council is being established to develop this aspect of more active engagement with stakeholders. This form of detailed, triangulated feedback will contribute to future action planning and inform new methodologies for evaluation, monitoring and review.

Participants at Workshop 1 reflected the benefits of self-evaluation practices:

At an organisational level, we need ways to gather data and capture (it) on an ongoing basis to improve our self-evaluation.

EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

- ▶ There is openness and transparency in the form of quality assuring assessment report reviews, and analysis of results, and their use for improvement and corrective action.
- ▶ The Youthreach CEIP is a valuable model that promotes reflection and improvement, and is embedded as good practice.
- ▶ Student, staff and employer evaluations are carried out in training programmes to ensure that the service is meeting the needs of all stakeholders.
- ▶ The support and openness of staff and learners to the current self-evaluation process and their open contributions indicate a strong commitment to reflective practice.

CHALLENGES

- ▶ There is a perception of a lot of duplication in gathering data and information regarding stakeholders (CRWS1). The challenge is in how to gather data usefully and efficiently, without inundating people with requests for information.
- ▶ It is a challenge to ensure that the actions arising are meaningfully applied in a timely fashion and their impacts monitored.
- ▶ There are no standardized formal self-evaluation tools or processes in place as yet that are accessible to all programmes across FET.
- ▶ There is perceived complexity of self-evaluation processes.
- ▶ It is a challenge to embed the concept of self-evaluation in organisational culture due to competing concerns. It needs to be supported at all levels.
- ▶ Perceived time poverty is a barrier to consistent meaningful application of self-evaluation, monitoring and review processes.
- ▶ Fear of punitive consequences can be a barrier to the honest and open adoption of evaluation, monitoring and review.
- ▶ The current lack of formalised processes for self-evaluation means that adopting, planning, and delivering the process is an onerous task.

POTENTIAL FUTURE ENHANCEMENTS

- ▶ Put in place consistent, proactive self-evaluation, monitoring and review processes across further education and training.
- ▶ Provide professional development in self-evaluation models and practice for staff.
- ▶ In communications, ensure that there is clear understanding of why self-evaluation/monitoring and review processes take place.
- ▶ Ensure that robust and efficient scoping and data collection methods are employed to yield useful and realistically actionable data and feedback.
- ▶ Formalise, routinise and schedule self-evaluation, monitoring and review.
- ▶ Embed the practice of self-evaluation, monitoring and review across all sectors and programmes.
- ▶ Create more opportunities for anonymous surveys to gather views and feedback from stakeholders.
- ▶ Adopt a model similar to the Youthreach CEIP in all centres.
- ▶ Provide standard forms and templates for recording and documenting meetings to assist in monitoring and review.
- ▶ Ensure that the outcomes of reviews are sustainable and embedded in culture through:
 - Encouraging engagement in self-evaluation, monitoring and review processes
 - Keeping the momentum going and interest 'live'
 - Ensuring there is implementation arising from self-evaluation, monitoring and review.
- ▶ Continue to promote and develop existing good practice – including review and monitoring of EA reports, RAP actions and improvements identified. Adopt cyclical practice for other quality assurance policies. .
- ▶ Improve engagement with learners and other stakeholders using methods other than end-of-term or end-of-year surveys and enable practitioners and leaders to participate in stakeholder engagement in a meaningful way.
- ▶ Establish student councils throughout FET and involve learners in consultation and self-evaluation, including consultation on Quality Assurance policies and procedures.
- ▶ Review the 2021 self-evaluation process and design meaningful processes and procedures for FET self-evaluation, monitoring and review.

PROGRAMME MONITORING AND REVIEW

DESCRIPTION

Learners give feedback about their satisfaction at further education and training centre level, and this feedback informs decisions about changes to programmes. Feedback is gathered through end-of course evaluations; end-of programme evaluations in the training services, and college-wide evaluations in the PLC sector. There is currently no centralised approach for gleaning information about learner satisfaction levels and the impact of programmes of FET. There are, however, processes for regular two-weekly reporting by centre coordinators to AEOs, for the purpose of monitoring.

Contracted Training Officers review learner evaluations and monitor learner experience during and at the end of training programmes, which inform programme improvements. Feedback received during courses is actioned immediately. Learners and contractors complete a feedback form at the end of courses. This forms the basis of decisions about further planning for delivery, and changes to modules or duration of delivery. Collation of this data is difficult, as it is in the further education sector, as available personnel and workload prevents its use to influence longer-term strategic changes. Data from the PLSS is used to inform programme decisions.

Centre coordinators, principals and practitioners report issues with programme descriptors and assessment criteria to the Quality Team and if there are multiple reports of issues or an urgent need, these are addressed as an interim measure. The quality assuring assessment processes and report reviews also inform programme adjustments. SOLAS Performance Agreement review and monitoring inform programme improvements and adjustments. Programme monitoring and review focuses on making changes to existing validated programmes including the addition of new modules if necessary.

EVALUATION

There is localised review of programmes through gathering of learner satisfaction data using multiple methods and approaches. Monitoring in accordance with the KWETB- SOLAS Performance Agreement is carried out. Learner satisfaction data is gathered regularly in centres, using locally devised instruments, and is analysed locally, informing improvement and celebration. The outcomes of these evaluations are reviewed through the coordinator networks and coordinators send regular reports to AEOs. There is a need to develop an approach to the review of programmes across further education and training ensuring consistency across services.

There is currently no systematic organisation-wide feedback loop for determining learner satisfaction with further education and training services and programmes. Responsibility for proposing or making changes to programmes being delivered rests with centre coordinators and principals.

Completion statistics compiled using the PLSS are reviewed by FET Management to determine whether the delivery has been successful, and labour market needs have a role to play in area-based decision-making about new programme delivery. Programme monitoring and review for impacts can be conducted based on data gathered through PLSS and FARR reporting processes. Currently, there is no practice of regular reporting to stakeholders on this data.

There is a need to systematically review and update the current suite of programme descriptors leading to awards in the QQI-FE common awards system. This is a theme that arose frequently during the self-evaluation. This task needs to be planned and scoped to ensure that any resulting improvements will be sustainable, and an organisational decision is required about new programme development and validation under the 2017 QQI policies and criteria and adoption of programmes and awards from other awarding bodies.

EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

- ▶ Quality assuring assessment; internal, local, centre-based learner feedback; feedback from learners and contractors on contracted training provision; and PLSS/FARR statistics all inform the monitoring and review of programmes.
- ▶ Administrative documentation such as schemes of work, assessment schedules and timetables provide a secondary source for monitoring and review of programmes by centre coordinators, principals and programme managers. There is commitment on the part of practitioners to gathering learner feedback and to acting on it and these practices inform reflection on the impact of programmes and local changes to programme delivery.
- ▶ Findings of review and monitoring through the quality assuring assessment process are acted upon and tracked.
- ▶ Contracted Training Officers review feedback and evaluations with contractors regularly and act on these.
- ▶ Centres compile and review end-of-term and end-of-programme reports featuring feedback and recommendations and these are considered at coordinator networks. Regular reports are made to the FET Management Team.

CHALLENGES

- ▶ Lack of systematic, routinised, service-wide approaches to programme review and monitoring.
- ▶ The relatively small size of the QA Team, and scale of the work involved.
- ▶ At centre level, keeping on top of the requirement for ongoing AEO reports is a challenge due to 'time poverty'.
- ▶ Changes are made to programmes currently on a 'case by case' basis, without a systematic approach due to the existing scope of work of the QA team and the size of the team.
- ▶ The high turnover of staff in the contracted training services can result in inconsistencies in programme delivery, in interpretation of programmes and in sustainable application of change.

POTENTIAL FUTURE ENHANCEMENTS

- ▶ Establish a defined process for the systematic evaluation, review and monitoring of existing and newly validated programmes.
- ▶ Embed the stakeholder engagement sub-group of the Quality Council and ensure that practitioner and stakeholder 'voice' is included in programme improvement and development.
- ▶ Engage practitioners as subject matter experts (SMEs) in the review and update of existing programmes and development of new programmes.
- ▶ Enhance the role of the Quality Assurance Team and their knowledge of national policy in programme review and development enabling them to lead programme review and monitoring and to support associated projects.
- ▶ Ensure that decisions resulting from programme review and monitoring are supported and signed off on through the governance of quality, further education and training management and are reported to Senior Management.

OVERSIGHT MONITORING AND REVIEW OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH EXTERNAL/THIRD PARTIES

DESCRIPTION

Relationships with external and third parties include those with Contracted Training Providers; Community Training Centres; Community Groups, and with Erasmus Plus Project Partners. The organisation works in partnership with other external stakeholders, such as the Irish Hotels Federation (IHF), for the purpose of delivery of training and development of programmes.

Contracted Training Providers with Education and Training Boards operate within a multi-supplier framework agreed for the sector. Monitoring is carried out by a Contracted Training Officer at least twice during programme delivery, and there are defined processes for establishing programmes to be delivered by contracted providers, and for monitoring their selection of second providers. The Multi-supplier Framework is subject to renewal every five years, and tendering for the contract and selection is overseen by the Office of Government Procurement. Contracted Training Officers work with the TSO in maintaining the working relationship with contracted trainers.

Community Training Centres are governed by a local Board, and their relationship with KWETB is monitored and overseen by the Senior Development Officer, and by the Training Standards Officer. Authorised Officers oversee and monitor apprenticeships, liaise with employers and with the consortium provider in the case of post-2016 apprenticeships.

Through Community Education facilitators, the application of KWETB's QA policies and procedures are monitored and reviewed, and positive working relationships are maintained with a number of community organisations in both Kildare and Wicklow:

Community group coordinators feel that the current QA arrangements were of great benefit to their community groups. Groups recognised the advantage of KWETB being the QQI provider so that they are not required to oversee the QA process themselves.

Community Education Focus Group

Erasmus Plus projects are bound by the quality assurance requirements of the European Commission and the national agency, Leargas. Partners sign an agreement detailing roles, responsibilities and commitments of each partner, and these form part of the evaluation and granting process, and are the subject of evaluation, monitoring and spot checking during, on completion and within two years of completion of the projects.

EVALUATION

There are established processes for the monitoring and review of relationships with third parties. Responsibility for these is located with the project leaders or managers for the particular partnership in question. Within each service affected, there are processes for monitoring relationships. There is no consistent central process for monitoring or reviewing relationships regularly or for the purpose of quality assurance, although there may be more informal relationships that assure quality (Appendix 20: Engagement with Second Providers).

There is a need to strengthen the relationship of the Quality Assurance Team and Governance Units to engage with external partners where these relate to quality assurance systems.

EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

- ▶ Monitoring of programmes with Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), and employers in the various regions accompanied by real time data is very beneficial in the training services of KWETB currently and has resulted in new projects under the innovation strand.
- ▶ There is a strong tradition of evaluation and monitoring of relationships with contracted training providers.
- ▶ There are existing monitoring arrangements for external stakeholder relationships.
- ▶ The whole organisation is subject to Department of Education (DE), Comptroller and Auditor General, European Social Fund (ESF), and Internal Audit Unit audits regarding financial probity and delivery. KWETB has an audit sub-committee which is a subset of the Board, as required in ETB legislation. The organisation has been rated as 100% compliant with DE governance requirements.
- ▶ There is rigorous application of quality assurance for Erasmus Plus projects, including monitoring.

CHALLENGES

- ▶ There are multiple internal and external arrangements for monitoring , resulting in considerable reporting pressure.
- ▶ A centrally defined approach to oversight, monitoring and review of third-party relationships is required.
- ▶ Communication of quality assurance requirements to external stakeholders is not consistent, and a strategic approach is required, including information about roles and responsibilities.
- ▶ External relationships can form through informal channels, and moving these to more formal arrangements can be challenging.

POTENTIAL FUTURE ENHANCEMENTS

- ▶ Engage constructively with contracted training providers to deliver more information about Quality Assurance processes and validated programmes.
- ▶ Prioritise Oversight and Review of third parties, increasing the role of the Governance Units and QA Team in this process.
- ▶ Enhance the QA Team's broad understanding and knowledge of all awarding bodies and contracted arrangements in FET. Include this in the work of the QA Team.
- ▶ Strengthen the role of the Quality Assurance Team in monitoring and informing contracted training providers on their use of KWETB QA procedures and validated programmes. Strengthen the relationship between the QA Team, governance structures and contracted training and community providers.
- ▶ Gather feedback from external providers who support and engage with learners, for example, look for feedback from stakeholders who have given students work experience.
- ▶ Include contracted training providers and community providers in preparation and training for the roll out of the Quality Framework.

CONCLUSION AND INTENDED FUTURE DIRECTION

There is considerable transparent practice in the self-evaluation of different services and operations throughout further education and training services, including the review of internal verification and external authentication reports and results, and this contributes to the quality of services. There are embedded local evaluation practices which could be standardised to enable cross-organisational monitoring, review and feedback, to determine patterns that occur across further education and training and inform decision-making.

Programmes of further education and training leading to QQI-FE awards require update and modernisation, based on feedback from practitioners, who are invited to report issues to the QA Team. There is a need for the scoping of a structured review of these programmes. While programmes delivered through the training services are frequently monitored by the training standards office, in further education, these are monitored locally by line managers and through local learner evaluation. There is a need to improve consistency of approaches to determining the effectiveness of programmes across different locations where they are delivered to inform development and improvement and provide coherence.

There are defined responsibilities for the monitoring of relationships with contracted training providers and second providers, embedded in the multi-supplier framework, and there is real commitment to upholding and managing these. Similarly, approaches are defined for Erasmus partnerships. There is no evidence of consistent standard approaches to the monitoring of relationships at central level however. These responsibilities are distributed to the project 'owners'.

Intended Future Direction

- ▶ Gather learner feedback centrally to inform improvement, including through processes designed with the Stakeholder Engagement Sub-group, using active consultative methodologies.
- ▶ Establish a structured, systematic approach to the review and monitoring of existing programmes of FET and of implementation of newly validated programmes. This should include learners, practitioners, subject matter experts, industry professionals, external authenticators and community stakeholders.
- ▶ Adopt a model similar to the Youthreach CEIP model across all centres and services.
- ▶ Enhance and strengthen the relationship between the Quality Assurance team, the units of governance, third parties and external partners.
- ▶ Review the 2021 Self-evaluation process and develop meaningful cyclical self-evaluation and practice throughout FET, informed by good practice and integrated in annual processes.

CONCLUSION

A comprehensive, inclusive self-evaluation process was planned to allow a broad range of stakeholders to consider the current implementation of quality assurance for further education and training services in KWETB. There were three key objectives: Governance and Management of Quality; Teaching, Learning and assessment and Self-evaluation, Review and Monitoring of Quality and these were used as a guide to the process.

There have been significant enhancements to the governance of quality in KWETB, and these are now forming the future direction of quality assurance in the further education and training services, including the development of a coherent quality framework for the delivery of further education and training services. The quality assurance team is established as a trusted element of the delivery of further education and training although the self-evaluation has highlighted the need to improve the visibility of this team.

Professional development and technology -enhanced learning have enabled the continuation of delivery of programmes despite restrictions due to the Covid19 pandemic. A structured approach and policies for the support of continuing professional development and professional development have been implemented and there is significant change in practitioner competence in the digital skills as they apply to pedagogy as a result. There is a need to improve the relationship between the HR services and the further education services to enable greater flexibility and efficiency in recruitment.

The assessment system is well regarded and procedures are well-embedded through further education and training services. Programmes of further education and training leading to QQI common awards system awards are universally recognised as requiring update, and system need to be established to allow this update and the development of new programmes for validation.

There are high levels of learner satisfaction with their experience, and the quality of care and support for learners is evident through responses from learners, practitioners and leaders of teaching, learning and assessment. There is a need to improve the equity of access to support for learners, and to improve the delivery of information about supports for learners, the national framework of qualifications and the potential for progression within and beyond KWETB through the development of clear pathway illustrations accessible to stakeholders and staff. Clear consistent information about access, transfer and progression requires development, including processes for recognition of prior learning or validation of non-formal and informal learning.

There is commitment to the assurance of quality within the further education and training services through evaluation, monitoring and review, and there are multiple mechanisms and processes for this at centre, central and national levels. Data gathered at centre level through local evaluations; through review of quality assuring assessment documentation and from the PLSS are accepted mechanisms for quality improvement planning. The process of Quality Improvement Planning implemented since 2018 has informed a number of projects, including the development of the ALISS and the Study Hub, and the establishment of units for the governance of quality assurance. There is a need to standardise approaches to evaluation, review and monitoring of external stakeholders and to ensure that this element of quality assurance is comprehended as a part of the role of the quality assurance team and governance units.

The self-evaluation process has affirmed that learners are at the centre of the work of KWETB further education and training services and that each learner is an important contributor to their own learning and wellbeing. The inputs of the Leaders; Practitioners; Support Staff and QA team have shown that they are fully committed to the delivery of a quality service to learners regardless of level, background or location. Learners were especially appreciative of the efforts of organisation personnel to support them during the Covid19 pandemic.

Reporting on and discussing their quality assurance activities and in their descriptions of accountable and transparent practices across all FET services, respondents have illustrated a system that is open and flexible. There is some work to do, but this is to be expected in an organisation that the further education and training system is in a formational stage, and that the actors within this are striving for greater coherence across further education and training services, embracing a culture of ongoing improvement and promotion of high standards and excellence aiming to uphold the mission and vision of KWETB's Statement of Strategy.



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Appendix 1: Self-evaluation Promotional Materials

Communication Planning

Recorded/Written Communication	Multimedia and newsletter	Face to face	Presentations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recorded or written piece Staff Acknowledging efforts in bringing expertise to the project, and encouraging participation Chief Executive Circulated via Teams, email and QA newsletter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted short videos (1-2 minutes; infographics; e-newsletter articles. Learners, staff, stakeholders All about self-evaluation, why are we doing it? Promoting buy in Delivered by Project Team via online and social media platforms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within centre and school communications Learners, teacher, trainers, admin staff. Reminder about the self-evaluation and why we are doing it. Circulation of self-evaluation questionnaires. Communications about focus groups Coordinators, principals and deputy principals Through meetings and other centre/school platforms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recorded presentations/ face to face and online Quality Council and Subgroups, Quality Team, FET Management Teams, Detailed background, criteria requirements, methodology for self-evaluation and IQR planning and updates. Project Team Online updates

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The KWETB Self-Evaluation Survey

Plain English guide to taking part
Click on each bubble for information

What is the Self-evaluation survey?

I need support to type. Can I complete the survey?

Can I take part without revealing my name?

How do I complete the survey?

English is not my first language. Can I complete the survey?

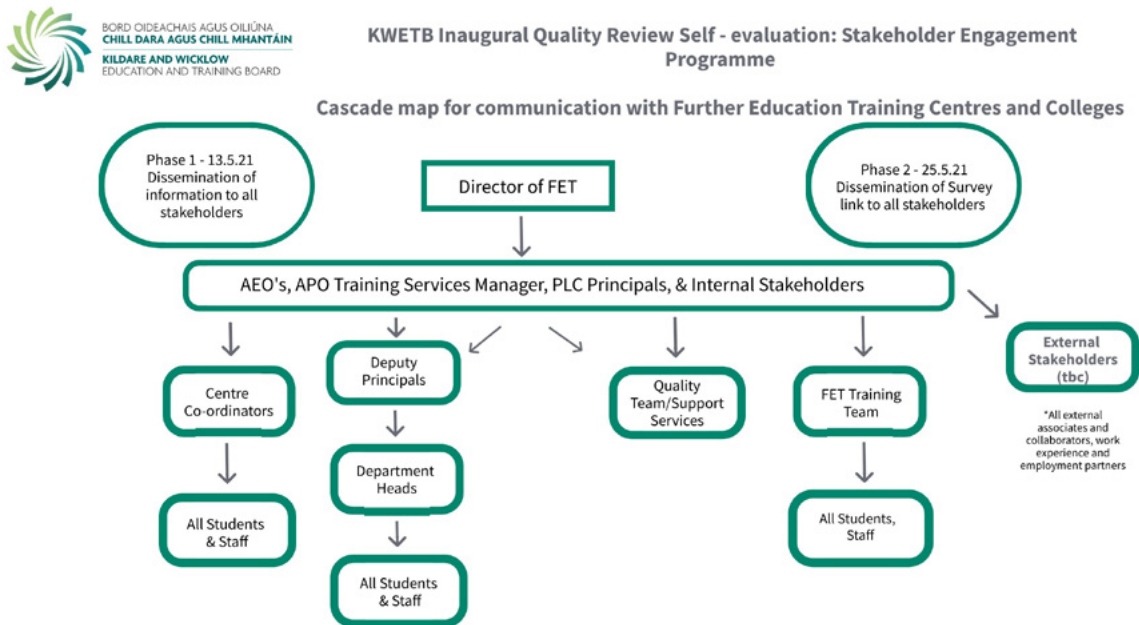
I have a question. Where can I find out more?


The infographic features icons for a laptop, a megaphone, a smartphone, a desktop monitor, a tablet, a checklist, and a question mark. At the bottom, there are icons representing diverse individuals: a person in a wheelchair, a man, a woman, another person in a wheelchair, another man, another woman, another person in a wheelchair, another man, another woman, and another person in a wheelchair.



To view the interactive element of this poster click here: [CORKBOARD](#)

Plan for stakeholder communication



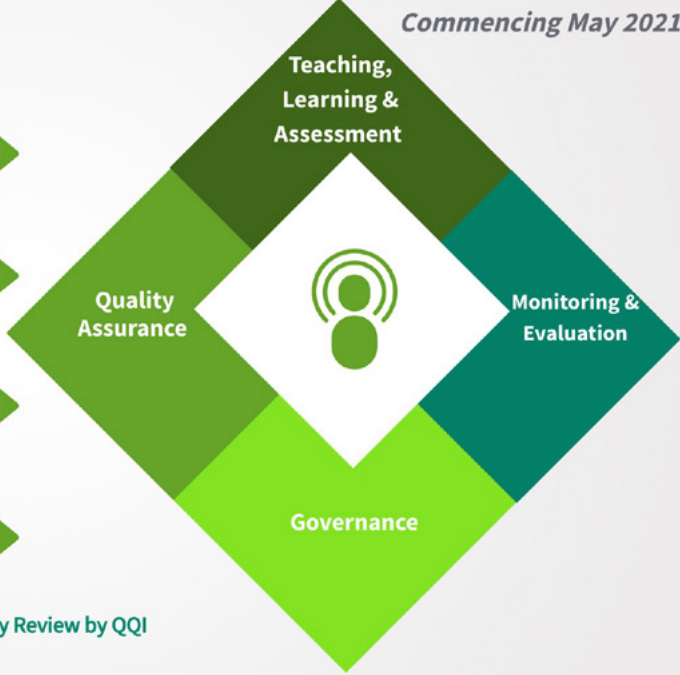


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The KWETB Self-Evaluation Survey

Commencing May 2021

- + Students
- + FET Co-ordinators & Principals
- + Stakeholders
- + Staff



An Inclusive Self-Evaluation of FET to inform the Inaugural Quality Review by QQI

Click on the (+) for more information



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Self-Evaluation Survey





April 2021 Surveys
created in consultation
with Stakeholders



May 2021
Surveys distributed for
completion (Your chance to
have your voice heard)



July 2021
Results &
reccomendations
drawn up



2022
Improved
processes
implemented

For more information contact us at QualityTeam@KWETB.ie

Appendix 2: e-zine Distribution



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Quality Council eZine

QUALITY COUNCIL NEWSLETTERS ANALYTICS

Edition	Views
	Sway
October 2020	180
November 2020	102
January 2021	111
March 2021	129
May 2021	109
June 2021	106
October 2021	254

Appendix 3: Cyclical Review Workshop Details

Workshop 1: Tuesday October 12th (Clanard Court Hotel, Athy) and Thursday October 21st (Glenview Hotel, Delgany)

Workshop 2: Thursday October 14th (Glenview Hotel, Delgany) and Tuesday October 21st (Clanard Court Hotel, Athy)



Agenda Day 1

9.00am - The area will be open for anyone who would like to network prior to the event

9.30-10.00am - Arrival, tea, coffee, technology log in

10.00 – 10.30am Welcomes

10am - Welcome from Chief Executive, Deirdre Keyes

10.10am - Welcome from Ken Seery, Director of Further Education and Training

10.20am - Welcome from Catherine Byrne, Adult Education Officer

10.30am - What is the task? Objectives - Angela Higgins

10.35am - 11.45am - Section 1: Governance and Management of Quality

11.45am - 1pm - Section 2: Teaching, Learning and Assessment

1pm-2pm - Lunch

2.00pm – 2.40pm – Reflections - questions to consider

“How would you like to see the role of the QA team at centre or programme level?”

“How can you lead quality improvement of Teaching, learning and assessment at programme level?”

“How do we foster accessible learning experiences to ensure student success?”

2.45pm - 3.45pm Section 3 - Self Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

3.45pm - Recap on the day and brief on day 2

Refreshments will be provided in the space to access as you wish

Agenda Day 2

9.30am – Arrival. Tea, Coffee, Log in.

10.00am sharp Welcome | Intro | Briefing for the task

10.20 - 11am Recommendation Drafting in Triads

11.00 - 11.45 Group Work - Refining Recommendations | Suggestions

11.45 - 12.15pm Recommendation Townhall - Angela Higgins to facilitate feedback from tables

12.15 Post Its Challenge/ - 3 Questions

We have €5m - what would you spend it on to improve our FET Services?

In Workshop 1, you identified what we do effectively. Now tell us how KWETB FET can build on what we do well.

What support or resources do you need in your role to lead the change you discussed in the workshops?

12.45pm A Quick Survey Question! What is the 'elephant in the room' for you?

1pm - 2pm Lunch

2.00 pm Governance and Management of Quality Prioritisation and Voting

2.30pm Teaching Learning and Assessment Prioritisation and Voting

3.00 pm Self Evaluation and Reporting Prioritisation and Voting

3.30pm Final Feedback

4.00 pm Close

Appendix 4: Quality Improvement Plan Actions

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN REVIEW – 2018-2021

2018

Governance and Management of Quality	Draft Governance of Quality structures. Interim oversight group established FET risk register created
Delivery of Further Education and Training	Annual FET Service Plan delivered Contracted training framework implemented CPD and Professional Development strategy devised and identification of staff training needs carried out. Engaged in national External Authenticator Panel developments, briefings and training Moodle platform established, training and support provided.
Learner Experience	TEL Strategy defined
Information and Data Management	
Collaboration and Stakeholder Relations	Continued promotion and participation in Erasmus projects
Apprenticeship, Traineeship and Work-based Learning	Collaboration with KETB re Commis Chef apprenticeship starts

2019

Governance and Management of Quality	Quality Council established: December 2019 Annual schedule of Quality Council meetings agreed Terms of reference for Quality Council and Subgroups approved
Delivery of Further Education and Training	Additional QA team member recruited to CEF scale QA role descriptions defined Desk review of QA documents completed Staff participated in Aware UDL programme
Learner Experience	Research proposal for Learner Experience project drafted and budgetary approval sought Approval received from DES to recruit an ALO for a learning and Language Support Service and recruitment completed.
Information and Data Management	Teams SharePoint site designed to support QA Governance structure.
Collaborations and Stakeholder Relations	KWETB representation on National QA forums continued Leadership of workshops at two RPL Practitioner Network Events and representation (Co-convenor) on the RPL PN Steering Group. Tobar project.
Apprenticeships, traineeship and work-based learning	Met commitments to SOLAS.

2020

Governance and Management of Quality	Quality Assurance Sub-group and Programme Governance Sub-group convened. Organisational structure for QA approved. Learner-representative assigned to Quality Council Regular meeting schedule published On-line Teams platform in use to support documentation of QC and Sub-group meetings Induction briefings provided to members of sub-groups New training Standards Officer (TSO) appointed First Erasmus+ QA visit to Roosendaal (The Netherlands) completed, and extension to parts 2 and 3 approved by Leargas due to Covid19. DigCap programme launched and staff participate
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2020 contd.	
Delivery of Further Education and Training	<p>Single-location External Authentication process piloted</p> <p>Procedures for assessment and work experience adaptation operationalised.</p> <p>Review of adaptation of programme delivery and assessment carried out.</p> <p>Staff and management participate in LiFT programme</p> <p>Review of existing programmes carried out and approvals system put in place.</p> <p>E-portfolio project successfully trialled</p>
Learner Experience	<p>Development of ALISS and Student Hub commenced</p> <p>Review of initial phase of delivery of emergency online teaching and learning carried out.</p> <p>Premises improvement plan continued, including acquisition of new premises.</p>
Information and Data Management	<p>Communication strategy for QA change projects devised</p> <p>FET organisational charts communicated via e-zine</p> <p>Naming and coding conventions for programmes of FET clarified and improved.</p>
Preparation for Inaugural Review of Quality	<p>Establishment of oversight group; planning for self-evaluation - communications delayed due to burden of Covid19 adaptations and changes.</p>
2021	
Governance and Management of Quality	<p>Quality Framework Outline Draft published</p> <p>Expression of interest survey completed</p> <p>Quality framework working groups selected, briefed, and supported</p> <p>Updated procedures drafted (phase 1)</p> <p>Plan for Phase 2 and 3 in place</p> <p>Support provided to QA Subgroup to establish roles and responsibilities</p> <p>New reporting process for RAP process agreed across FET – report formats agreed for QA and Programme Governance Subgroups.</p> <p>Programme Governance: Records of validated programmes published to centres/colleges; Clear process for deactivations in place; clear process for approvals in place/Approvals and Validation Hub in place; Successful differential validation of Early learning and Care Programme and piloting of the programme commenced in two centres.</p>
Professional Development	<p>Briefings delivered to Quality Council; Coordinators; Quality Framework Working Groups</p> <p>New staff induction delivered</p> <p>DigCap continues</p> <p>LiFT programme</p> <p>FETFest hosted</p> <p>E-Portfolio project extended with further training and support for staff</p> <p>Quality Improvement Planning based on IV and EA reports implemented and monitored.</p>
Delivery of FET: Teaching, Learning and Assessment	<p>E-portfolios adopted across programmes</p> <p>EA reports reviewed for impacts of e-Portfolio and DigCap projects.</p> <p>IV and EA report formats updated.</p> <p>Single-location authentication pilot carried out and reported on.</p>
Information and Data Management	<p>Governance structure communications and meetings documented through Teams</p> <p>Quality Council Meeting schedule published and visible in Teams site.</p>
Self-evaluation and Inaugural Review of Quality	<p>Quality Council tasked with oversight of the Self-evaluation</p> <p>Workplan published</p> <p>Communication strategy devised</p> <p>Methodology approved</p> <p>Data collection working group established</p> <p>Briefings provided to all internal stakeholders</p> <p>Promotional material published</p> <p>Surveys designed and circulated; focus group questions devised; plan for October Review workshops devised and workshops delivered.</p> <p>Draft Self-evaluation Report to graphic designer and approved by CE/DFET</p>

Appendix 5: 2021 List of Governance, Quality Team and Quality Framework Meetings

List of Meetings

Results Approval Panel	FE: 3rd February; 7th April; 2nd June; 4th June; 28th July; 6th October; 8th December. Training: 26th January; 23rd March; 23rd September; 23rd November.
Programme Governance Subgroup	10th February; 14th April; 8th September; 16th June; 3rd November.
Quality Assurance Subgroup	20th January; 24th February; 21st April; 16th June; 8th September; 3rd November.
Quality Framework Working Groups briefings and weekly support meetings	26th February; w/e 5th March; w/e 12th March; w/e 19th March; w/e 26th March; 14th April; 30th April; 26th May (Phase 1 Wrap-up/Review meeting)
Quality Team	27th January; 3rd March; 31st March; 28th April, September; 29th September;
IQR Steering Group	29th April; June 3rd.
Data Collection Working Group	21st April; 29th April; 6th May; 13th May.
Quality Council	11th March; 23rd April; 17th June; 23rd September; 9th November; 6th December.
Inaugural Cyclical review of Quality Workshops	12th October; 14th October; 19th October; 21st October.

Appendix 6: FET Quality Council Terms of Reference

Governance Unit	FET Quality Council
Document	Terms of Reference
Approved by/Date	Chief Executive/SMT
Version	1.1
Due for Review by:	December 2020

PURPOSE OF THE FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING (FET) QUALITY COUNCIL

The purpose of the FET Quality Council is to oversee planning, co-ordination, quality, development and improvement of all aspects of the further education and training offering of the ETB. It protects, maintains and develops the standards of education and training programmes and related activities. In doing so, the FET Quality Council is ensuring, as far as is possible, that all learners receive an equivalent experience.

FET QUALITY COUNCIL TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Chief Executive (CE) of the ETB, supported by the Senior Management Team (SMT), has delegated certain governance responsibilities to the FET Quality Council, as detailed below. The FET Quality Council is accountable to the CE for carrying out its functions, regardless of whether it forms governance sub-groups or working groups to advance these tasks.

The FET Quality Council is responsible for the following:

Operational Matters

- Agreeing its operating procedures – council will agree how it operates
- Establishing one or more sub-groups of governance, as required, and delegating responsibilities to those groups through defined terms of reference
- Establishing ad-hoc working groups to assist it in fulfilling its functions, if required
- Receiving recommendations from sub-groups to inform its functions
- Receiving annual reports from sub-groups of governance on their activities
- Providing a FET Quality Council Annual Report to the CE, identifying key decisions and actions taken by the FET Quality Council and making any recommendations to the CE, as appropriate
- Participating in the review of its terms of reference and formally making recommendations to the CE for amendments and additions, if required
- Reviewing the outcomes of reviews of terms of reference by its sub-groups and making recommendations to the CE as appropriate
- Exercising any other functions, which may be formally delegated to it by the CE.

QA policies and procedures

- Approving the FET quality assurance policies and procedures of the ETB as recommended by the FET Quality Council Sub-group (QA)
- Approving revisions to FET quality assurance policies and procedures of the ETB as recommended by the FET Quality Council Sub-group (QA).

Programme responsibilities

- Recommending proposals to the CE, as appropriate, for the development of new programmes that are consistent with the mission and strategy of the ETB, as recommended by the FET Quality Council Sub-group (Programme Governance)
- Approving programme documentation prior to its submission to the awarding body for validation, as recommended by the FET Quality Council Sub-group (Programme Governance)
- Making recommendations to the CE for the establishment of appropriate structures to support new or existing programmes
- Making recommendations for staff development where it is necessary or desirable for the improved delivery or development of programmes

Monitoring and review responsibilities

- Noting the annual schedule of reviews submitted by the FET Quality Council Sub-group (QA)
- Approving programme and organisational review documentation prior to its submission to the awarding body
- Receiving reports from the FET Quality Council Sub-group (QA) of progress against action plans arising from quality reviews
- Receiving observations arising from programme feedback reports and other internal and external stakeholder reports, as appropriate.
- Escalating areas of risk associated with further education and training to the CE.

Assessment responsibilities

- Ratifying the agreement of persons to act as External Authenticators and External Examiners.
- Noting assessment reports received by the FET Quality Council Sub-group (QA) and confirming they are in line with agreed assessment processes and procedures
- Ratifying assessment results and final results presented by the QA Officer (or equivalent) prior to the submission to the awarding body for the purposes of certification.

Apprenticeship responsibilities

To fulfil the governance role for new apprenticeships as coordinating provider, the FET Quality Council will undertake the following responsibilities:

- Considering reports from the Consortium Steering Group established by the Apprenticeship Council on matters affecting apprenticeship programmes
- Considering reports from programme coordinators on the delivery of programmes
- Receiving named annual and biannual reports from the National Programme Board(s)
- Receiving reports from the ETBI New Apprenticeship QA Monitoring and Enhancement Panel
- Considering proposals from the National Programme Board(s) and from the Consortium Steering Group for new partnerships and for new members of partnerships
- Ensuring that the proposals received from the National Programme Board(s) and from the Consortium Steering Group for new partnerships conform to the requirements of the programme and that suitable Memorandums of Agreement are in place
- Fulfilling any reporting requirements to external authorities on apprenticeship activities.

MEMBERSHIP OF FET QUALITY COUNCIL

Chair: The Chair is appointed by the Chief Executive and can be internal or external

Secretary: The ETB Quality Officer, or equivalent staff member designated by the CE.

Ordinary members:

- Normally, up to six staff members with relevant experience drawn from across the ETB, as the CE determines appropriate
- One representative from the FET Quality Council Sub-Group (QA) and one from the FET Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Governance)
- Where applicable, two representatives from the National Programme Board(s), one of which is from industry
- One learner representative.

External members: The Chair of the FET Quality Council may from time to time recommend to the CE the appointment of external members to the Council. These will be persons who can bring an external perspective to the working of the Council, such as employers or experts in FET or in quality systems. Persons with an expertise from other ETBs may also be invited to join the Quality Council for a defined period.

Additional expertise: From time to time, the FET Quality Council may request that its Secretary source specialist expertise to inform its deliberations if necessary.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHAIR

The responsibilities of the Chair of the FET Quality Council include:

- Working closely with the Secretary to agree meeting agendas
- Ensuring meetings function efficiently and effectively
- Providing adequate time for discussion of agenda items
- Ensuring that members have been provided with materials in advance of the meeting to support informed decision-making
- Ensuring that a quorum is present before commencing a FET Quality Council meeting
- Ensuring that decisions are taken in the context of the FET Quality Council's remit and that they are recorded.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SECRETARY

The Secretary of the FET Quality Council is a full member of the Council. His/her responsibilities include:

- Agreeing a schedule of meetings with the Chair in consultation with the Council members and having regard to the business of the FET Quality Council and the meeting dates of sub-groups reporting into the FET Quality Council
- Convening meetings of the FET Quality Council and determining the agenda of the meetings, in consultation with the Chair
- Circulating the agendas for meetings and associated documentation and reports for review by the FET Quality Council members
- Liaising with the secretaries of the sub-groups reporting into the FET Quality Council to manage a smooth flow of information
- Preparing draft minutes of meetings and circulating these to members
- Ensuring the decisions of the FET Quality Council are made known to the appropriate individuals/governance units
- Reporting to the Chair and the FET Quality Council on the implementation of the decisions of the FET Quality Council
- Ensuring that membership terms are managed, and new member induction/briefing provided.

OPERATING PROCEDURES

- The FET Quality Council will meet at least four times per year, except for the first year, when it will meet at least six times.
- For a quorum to be established, 50% of members plus one additional member must be in attendance
- The meeting agenda and supporting documentation must be circulated to members at least one week in advance of a scheduled meeting and external members may be invited to present agenda items
- Decisions are made by consensus or by the exercise of a vote if necessary; the Chair has the deciding vote in the case of a split decision
- Meeting outcomes are recorded and circulated in draft form within two weeks of a meeting
- The minutes of meetings are approved at the beginning of the subsequent meetings of the FET Quality Council
- In some cases, at the discretion of the Chair, an incorporeal meeting of the FET Quality Council may be held where reports can be circulated virtually and accepted by the FET Quality Council without the FET Quality Council having to meet.

Appendix 7: Programme Governance Subgroup Terms of Reference

FET QUALITY COUNCIL SUB-GROUP (PROGRAMME GOVERNANCE) PURPOSE AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

The purpose of the FET Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Governance) is to fulfil the role and responsibilities delegated to it by the FET Quality Council for the oversight, planning, coordination, development and quality of the programmes of KWETB. In doing so, it assists the FET Quality Council in protecting, maintaining and developing the standards of education and training programmes, and learner achievement, and the related activities of KWETB. The FET Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Governance) oversees all programme developments, although, its role and responsibilities below do not apply directly to apprenticeship programmes, unless otherwise specified. Governance of apprenticeship programmes is managed by the National Programmes Board(s) and reports are provided to the FET Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Governance).

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The FET Quality Council of KWETB has delegated certain governance responsibilities to the FET Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Governance), as detailed below. The FET Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Governance) is accountable to the FET Quality Council for carrying out its functions, regardless of whether governance sub-groups or working groups are formed to advance these tasks.

The FET Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Governance) is responsible for the following:

Operational Matters

- Agreeing its operating procedures in consultation with the Chair and Secretary of the FET Quality Council.
- Establishing sub-groups or working groups to advance programme related matters, if required.
- Making recommendations to the FET Quality Council to inform its decision-making and in line with its terms of reference.
- Preparing an annual report to the FET Quality Council on key decisions and actions taken, and making any recommendations to the FET Quality Council, as appropriate.
- Participating in the review of its terms of reference and formally making recommendations to the FET Quality Council as appropriate.
- Exercising any other functions, which may be formally delegated to it by the FET Quality Council.

Programme Responsibilities

- Reviewing proposals for the development of new programmes and making recommendations to the FET Quality Council. *
- Approving the appointment of Programme Development Group(s) to develop draft programme documentation.
- Reviewing and commenting upon draft programme validation documentation submitted by the Programme Development Group.
- Recommending programme validation documentation to the FET Quality Council for approval and making recommendations to the FET Quality Council for submission to the awarding body.
- Reviewing proposals for the provision of newly validated or existing programmes and making recommendations to the FET Quality Council.
- Organising applications for programme validation, including site visits where these are required.
- Making recommendations to the FET Quality Council for the establishment of appropriate structures to support new or existing programmes.
- Approving the assignment of Programme Development Group(s) to implement minor modifications and additions to programmes where these do not affect module outcomes.
- Approving modified programme documentation submitted by the Programme Development Group.

* In relation to programmes, the Sub-group for Programme Governance will make recommendations to the Quality Council to inform its decision-making in three distinct areas:

1. Applications for approval to deliver programmes of education and training from education and training locations within KWETB. Pre-approval regarding resources and facilities will already have been sought from FET Management. The Programme Governance sub-group will evaluate the application in the context of the validation requirements for the programme proposed e.g. is the proposed programme structure appropriate; evidence of inclusion of validated minor awards?/suitability of the location from a QA perspective.
2. Review of programmes where there is duplication of programme descriptors.
3. New programme development.

Assessment responsibilities

- Agreeing individuals to act as External Authenticators and External Examiners and submitting details to the FET Quality Council for ratification.
- Receiving reports on the outcomes of assessment appeals processes.
- Receiving and considering quantitative and qualitative analysis reports from Results Approval Panels and making any recommendations arising to the FET Quality Council on teaching, learning and/or assessment matters.
- Reviewing analyses of Internal Verifiers and External Authenticators' Reports and making recommendations to the FET Quality Council.
- As part of programme reviews, questioning the effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment strategies being implemented for validated programmes.

Apprenticeship Responsibilities

- Receiving reports from the National Programme Board(s) on its activities.
- Noting proposals from the National Programme Board(s) to the FET Quality Council for new apprenticeship partnerships and for new members of partnerships.
- Noting annual and biannual specified reports provided by the National Programme Board(s) to the FET Quality Council for approval.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE FET QUALITY COUNCIL SUB-GROUP (PROGRAMME GOVERNANCE)

The membership of the FET Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Governance) is designed to enable professional colleagues to contribute collectively to the oversight, planning, coordination, development and quality of the ETB's education and training programmes.

Chair: The Chair is appointed by the Chief Executive and can be internal or external.

Secretary: The Secretary should be appointed by the CE and be an individual capable of liaising closely with the Secretary of the FET Quality Council and with any sub-groups of governance that are reporting to the FET Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Governance), or other groups providing information to inform the FET Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Governance).

Ordinary members

Normally, up to six staff members with relevant experience drawn from across KWETB as the CE determines appropriate.

- One representative from the FET Quality Council.
- One learner representative.
- One industry representative.
- One representative from the Programme Development Group.

External Members

The Chair of the FET Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Governance) may from time to time recommend to the Chair of the FET Quality Council the appointment of external members to the sub-group.

Additional Expertise

From time to time, the FET Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Governance) may request that its secretary source specialist expertise to inform its deliberations if necessary.

Role and Responsibilities of the Chair

The responsibilities of the Chair of the FET Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Governance) include:

- Working closely with the Secretary to agree meeting agendas.
- Ensuring meetings function efficiently and effectively.
- Providing adequate time for discussion of agenda items.
- Ensuring that members have been provided with materials in advance of the meeting to support informed decision-making.
- Ensuring that a quorum is present before commencing a FET Quality Council Sub-group (Programme Governance) meeting.
- Ensuring that decisions are taken in the context of the FET Quality Council Sub-Group (programme Governance) remit and that they are recorded.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SECRETARY

The Secretary is a full member of the FET Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Governance). His/her responsibilities include:

- Agreeing a schedule of meetings with the Chair in consultation with members and having regard to the business of the FET Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Governance) and the meeting dates of the FET Quality Council.
- Convening meetings of the FET Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Governance) and determining the agenda of the meetings, in consultation with the Chair.
- Circulating the agendas for meetings and associated documentation and reports for review by FET Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Governance), to manage a smooth flow of information.
- Preparing draft minutes of meetings and circulating these to members.
- Ensuring that the decisions of the FET Quality Council Sub-group (Programme Governance) are made known to the appropriate individuals/ governance units.
- Reporting to the Chair on the implementation of the decisions of the FET Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Governance).
- Ensuring that membership terms are managed, and new member induction/briefing provided.

OPERATING PROCEDURES

- The FET Quality Council Sub-group (Programme Governance) will meet at least six times per year (it is recommended that it meet eight times in its first year).
- Duration of membership: Members will commit four years to the Quality Council and/or its sub-groups. Opportunities to review or adjust membership will be provided for every two years, in December of each calendar year. There is a maximum turnover of 50% of the members (i.e., staff and learner representatives) per cycle in order to maintain a knowledge base within the groups. Where members need to step down for personal reasons at any time during the year, force majeure can be applied. A formal communication to the Chair of the Quality Council or Sub-group is required in advance of a resignation. In order for a quorum to be established, 50% of members plus one additional member must be in attendance
- The meeting agenda and supporting documentation must be circulated to members at least one week in advance of a scheduled meeting and external members may be invited to present agenda items.
- Decisions are made by consensus or by the exercise of a vote if necessary; the Chair has the deciding vote in the event of a split decision
- Meeting outcomes are recorded and circulated in draft form within two weeks of a meeting
- The minutes of meetings are approved at the beginning of the subsequent meeting of the FET Quality Council Sub-group (Programme Governance)
- Confirmed minutes are submitted for noting to the next meeting of the FET Quality Council
- In some cases, at the discretion of the Chair, an incorporeal meeting for the FET Quality Council Sub-group (Programme Governance) may be held where reports can be circulates virtually and accepted by members without the FET Quality Council Sub-group (Programme Governance) having to meet.

Appendix 8: Quality Assurance Subgroup: Purpose and Terms of Reference

The purpose of the FET Quality Council Sub-Group for Quality Assurance (QA) is to fulfil the role and responsibilities delegated to it by the FET Quality Council, for the development, oversight, planning, co-ordination and improvement of quality assurance policies, procedures, and processes. In doing so, it assists the FET Quality Council in protecting, maintaining and developing the standards of education and training programmes and the related activities of Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board (KWETB).

FET QUALITY COUNCIL SUB-GROUP (QA) TERMS OF REFERENCE

The FET Quality Council of KWETB has delegated certain governance responsibilities to the FET Quality Council Sub-Group (QA), as detailed below. The FET Quality Council Sub-Group (QA) is accountable to the FET Quality Council for carrying out its functions, regardless of whether governance sub-groups or working groups are formed to advance these tasks.

The FET Quality Council Sub-Group (QA) is responsible for the following:

Operational Matters

- Agreeing its operating procedures in consultation with the Chair and Secretary of the FET Quality Council
- Establishing sub-groups or working groups to advance QA-related matters, if required
- Making recommendations to the FET Quality Council to inform its decision making and in line with its terms of reference
- Preparing an Annual Report for the FET Quality Council on key decisions and actions taken, and making associated recommendations to the FET Quality Council, as appropriate
- Participating in the review of its terms of reference and formally making recommendations to the FET Quality Council as appropriate
- Exercising any other functions, which may be formally delegated to it by the FET Quality Council.

QA Policies and Procedures

- Approving a schedule for review, amendment and development of quality assurance policies and procedures and submitting this to the FET Quality Council for noting
- Reviewing and commenting upon draft quality assurance policies and procedures.
- Recommending quality assurance policies and procedures to the FET Quality Council for approval.
- Recommending revisions to quality assurance policies and procedures to the FET Quality Council for approval.

Monitoring and review responsibilities

- Approving a schedule for quality reviews and submitting this to the FET Quality Council for noting.
- Reviewing and commenting upon the quality review schedule and submitting this to the FET Quality Council for noting.
- Making recommendations to the FET Quality Council for the approval of programme and other quality review documentation and outcomes that is required to be submitted to an awarding body.
- Receiving reports on follow-up on actions arising from quality reviews and reporting to the FET Quality Council on issues or recommendations arising.
- Receiving reports on significant common issues arising through monitoring processes and reporting to the FET Quality Council on any recommendations arising.
- Escalating identified areas of risk to the FET Quality Council.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE FET QUALITY COUNCIL SUB-GROUP (QA)

Chair: The Chair is appointed by the Chief Executive (CE) and can be internal or external.

Secretary: The Secretary is appointed by the CE and should be an individual capable of liaising closely with the Secretary of the FET Quality Council and with any sub-groups of governance or working groups that are reporting to the FET Quality Council Sub-Group (QA), or other groups providing information to inform the FET Quality Council Sub-Group (QA).

Ordinary members

- Normally up to six staff members with relevant experience from across KWETB, as the CE determines appropriate
- One representative from the FET Quality Council
- One learner representative
- One representative from the QA Working Group

External Members

The Chair of the FET Quality Council Sub-group (QA) may from time to time recommend to the Chair of the FET Quality Council the appointment of external members to the sub-group.

Additional Expertise

From time to time, the FET Quality Council Sub-Group (QA) may request that its secretary source specialist expertise to inform its deliberations if necessary.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHAIR

The responsibilities of the Chair of the FET Quality Council Sub-Group (QA) include:

- Working closely with the Secretary to agree meeting agendas
- Ensuring meetings function efficiently and effectively
- Providing adequate time for discussion of agenda items
- Ensuring that members have been provided with materials in advance of the meeting to support informed decision-making
- Ensuring that a quorum is present before commencing a FET Quality Council Sub-Group (QA) meeting
- Ensuring that decisions are taken in the context of the remit of the FET Quality Council Sub-Group (QA) and that they are recorded.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SECRETARY

The Secretary is a full member of the FET Quality Council Sub-Group (QA). His/her responsibilities include:

- Agreeing a schedule of meetings with the Chair in consultation with members and having regard to the business of the FET Quality Council Sub-Group (QA) and the meeting dates of the FET Quality Council
- Convening meetings of the FET Quality Council Sub-Group (QA) and determining the agenda of the meetings, in consultation with the Chair
- Circulating the agendas for meetings, associated documentation and reports for review by FET Quality Council (QA) Sub-Group members
- Liaising with the Secretary of the FET Quality Council, and with the secretaries of any governance units reporting into the FET Quality Council Sub-Group (QA) to manage a smooth flow of information
- Preparing draft minutes of meetings and circulating these to members
- Ensuring that the decisions of the FET Quality Council Sub-Group (QA) are made known to the appropriate individuals/governance units
- Reporting to the Chair on the implementation of the decisions of the FET Quality Council Sub-Group (QA)
- Ensuring that membership terms are managed, and new member induction/briefing provided.

OPERATING PROCEDURES

- The FET Quality Council Sub-Group (QA) will meet at least six times per year (it is recommended that it meet eight times in its first year).
- Duration of membership: Members are expected to commit four years to the Quality Council and/or its sub-groups. Opportunities to review or adjust membership will be provided for every two years, in December of each calendar year. There is a maximum turnover of 50% of the members (i.e. staff and learner representatives) per cycle in order to maintain a knowledge base within the groups. Where members need to step down for personal reasons at any time during the year, force majeure can be applied. A formal communication to the Chair of the Quality Council or Sub-group is required in advance of a resignation.
- In order for a quorum to be established, 50% of members plus one additional member must be in attendance
- The meeting agenda and supporting documentation must be circulated to members at least one week in advance of a scheduled meeting and external members may be invited to present agenda items
- Decisions are made by consensus or by the exercise of a vote if necessary. The Chair has the deciding vote in the event of a split decisions
- Meeting outcomes are recorded and circulated in draft form within two weeks of a meeting
- The minutes of meetings are approved at the beginning of the subsequent meeting of the FET Quality Council Sub-Group (QA)
- Confirmed minutes are submitted for noting to the next meeting of the FET Quality Council. In some cases, at the discretion of the Chair, an incorporeal meeting of the FET Quality Council Sub-Group (QA) may be held where reports can be circulated virtually and accepted by members without the FET Quality Council Sub-Group (QA) having to meet.

Appendix 9: Quality Council Members (November 2021)

Chairperson, Ken Seery, Director of Further Education and Training
 Secretary, Catherine Byrne, Adult Education Officer
 Gabriel Allen, Deputy Principal, Bray Institute of Further Education
 Sheila Bradley, Senior Development Officer, Training Services, (Further Education and Training)
 Una Burke, VTOS Coordinator, Athy
 Eileen Cullen, Innovation and Training Manager
 Louise Fortune, Deputy Principal, Bray Institute of Further Education
 Michael Goeden, External Adviser
 Brenda Lynch, Adult Education Officer
 Niamh Maguire, Adult Education Officer
 Jonathan McNab, Co-ordinator, Naas Youthreach
 Stephanie Thompson, Learner Representative
 Fiona Tuite, Community Education Facilitator, Community Education Wicklow

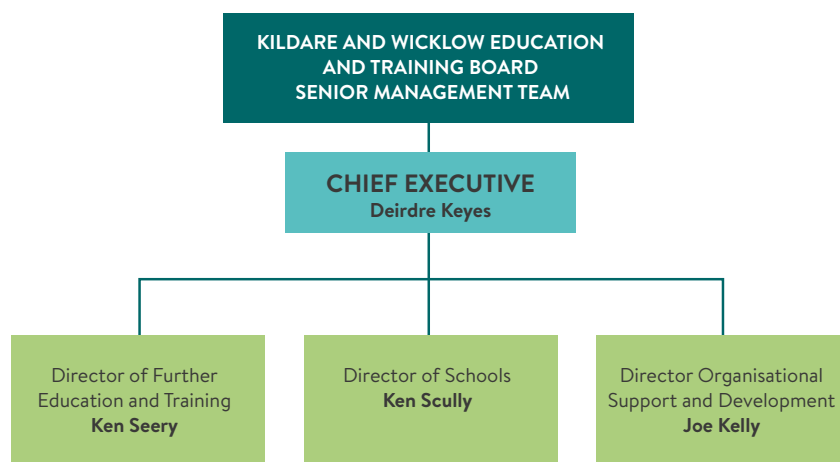
Appendix 10: Quality Assurance Subgroup Members (November 2021)

Chairperson, Niamh Maguire, Adult Education Officer
 Secretary, Sheila Bradley, Senior Development Officer, Training Services, (Further Education and Training)
 Lynn Armstrong, VTOS Coordinator, Arklow Further Education and Training Centre
 Roy Brennan, Adult Literacy Organiser, Mid Kildare
 Elizabeth Jenkins, Learner Representative
 Susanne Kelly, Resource Worker, Athy Further Education and Training Centre
 Maria Lally, VTOS Coordinator, Wicklow Further Education and Training Centre
 Bernice McLaughlin, Employee Engagement Officer, Training and Innovation Services
 Paddy McNulty, Deputy Principal, Bray Institute of Further Education
 Patricia O'Brien, Principal, St Conleth's PLC

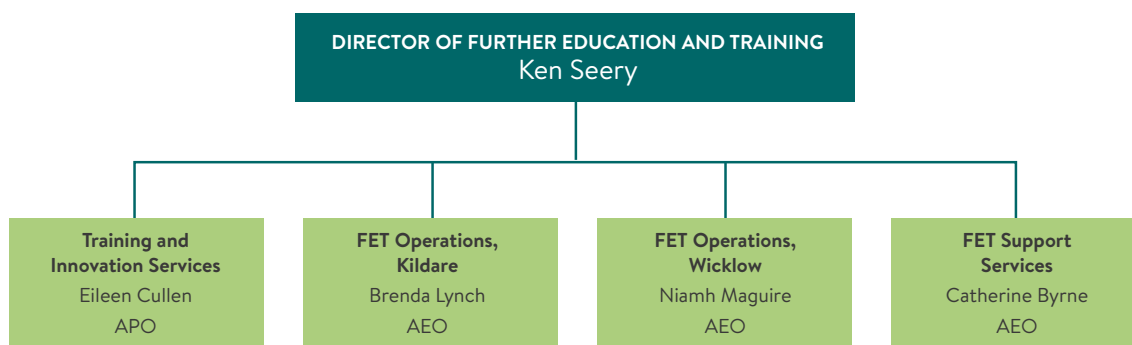
Appendix 11: Programme Governance Subgroup Members (November 2021)

Chairperson, Brenda Lynch, Adult Education Officer
 Secretary, Ruth McSherry, Contracted Training Officer, Training and Innovation Services
 Fiona Bradshaw, Programme Validation, Quality Team
 Patrick Flanagan, Hospitality and Education Subject Matter Expert, Training and Innovation Services
 Darryl Griffith, VTOS Coordinator, Newbridge FETC
 Annette Mangan Adult Literacy Organiser, West Wicklow
 Lorraine O'Sullivan, Youthreach Coordinator, Leixlip
 Ashley Stephens, Professional Development and Research Projects Coordinator
 Tracy O'Shaughnessy, Senior Training Advisor, Training and Innovation Services

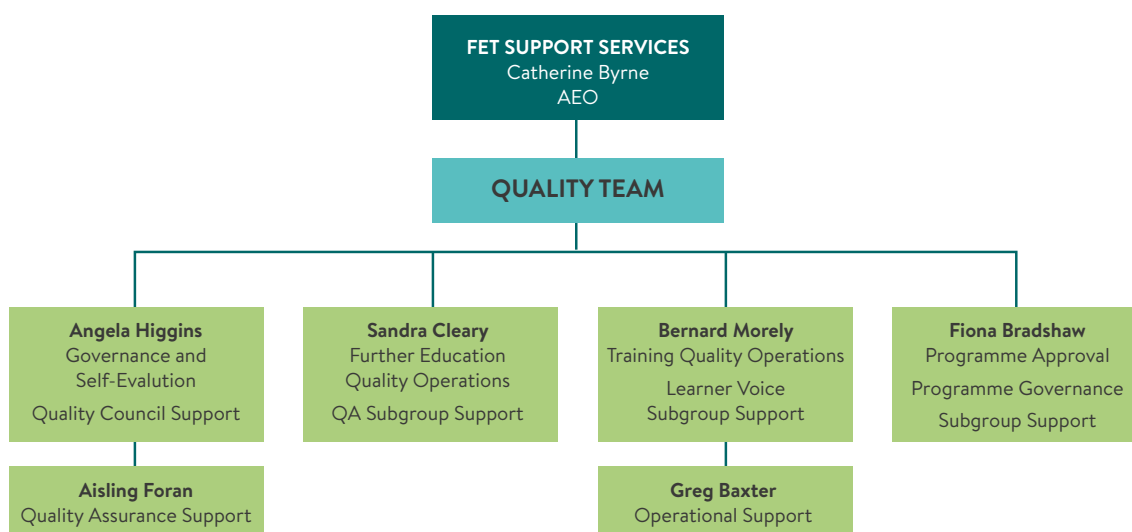
Appendix 12: Senior Management, FET Management and Quality Team Members



Further Education and Training Management Team



Quality Assurance Team



Appendix 13: Data Collection Working Group Members

Sheila Bradley

Ray Finucane

Bernie Fitzgerald

Louise Fortune

Bernard Morley

Kathryn Orr

April White

Appendix 14: Draft Quality Assurance Framework Outline

KWETB FET QA Framework Outline and Adjusted Plan– Update September 29th, 2021

Sections 2 & 3 of the draft framework will feature three main headings: Core Policies; Support Policies and Management Policies. The ‘Policy Area Titles’ will serve as chapter headings. Each chapter will contain brief details of KWETB’s commitments under that policy area heading, procedures for the area, and all associated forms and templates.

All titles are ‘working titles’, in recognition of the fact that these procedures will be developed by working groups, and finalised in consultation across the FET sector in KWETB.

The framework will contain three sections:

SECTION 1: KWETB’s organisational structure; management system and FET QA governance structure in the form of organisation charts.

SECTION 2 of the framework will be a policy document, detailing all of KWETB’s relevant quality assurance policies in plain English. Some of the featured policies will be national level policies, and some will be inhouse policies. All will express KWETB’s distinctive commitment to a culture of quality and to developing and enhancing the quality for FET in the region.

SECTION 3 includes the procedures to be followed in the management of all aspects of quality assurance in further education and training (FET) .

This work will lead to the publication of KWETB’s Quality Assurance Framework for FET containing two parts. Part 1 will detail KWETB FET QA Policy and Part 2 will contain step by step procedures to be followed; graphic representations of these and associated forms where necessary will act as the QA manual for FET in KWETB and will inform the development of the student handbook. A schedule for systematic review of the policies and procedures will also be published at that time and adhered to by the relevant Governance units.

Following feedback from the QA Sub-group on September 29th, this document has been extended to include a plan for Phase 2 of the project onwards.

1. CORE POLICIES	
WORKING POLICY AREA TITLES	WORKING PROCEDURE TITLES [^] denotes next priority items for completion – tranche 2 to be submitted for review by the QA Sub-group
1.1 Programme Development, Approval and Validation	1.1.1 Programme Review 1.1.2 Programme Development and Curriculum Development, including the development of face-to-face, online and blended programmes. 1.1.3 Programme Approval 1.1.4 Programme Validation 1.1.5 Decisions about local delivery of validated programmes/planning for delivery
1.2 Programme Delivery	1.2.1 Programme Delivery 1.2.2 Organisation of teaching and learning 1.2.3 Blended Learning policy 1.2.4 Work placement
1.3 Quality Assuring Assessment	1.3.1 Assessment regulations 1.3.2 Development and design of assessment 1.3.3 Planning, conducting and concluding assessment 1.3.4 Information to learners about assessment 1.3.5 Adapting assessment 1.3.6 Administration of examinations 1.3.7 Security of assessment materials 1.3.8 Marking of assessment/making the assessment judgement/cross moderation 1.3.9 Assessment by third parties 1.3.10 Feedback to students

2. SUPPORT POLICIES	
WORKING POLICY AREA TITLES	WORKING PROCEDURE TITLES
2.1 Communications	2.1.1 Student Induction 2.1.2 Promoting and marketing programmes Corporate 2.1.3 Information to students 2.1.4 Information about student supports available 2.1.5 Information to staff 2.1.6 Information to stakeholders 2.1.7 Learner and stakeholder engagement <i>For completion/ review by Stakeholder Engagement WG</i> 2.1.8 Student Councils <i>For completion/ review by Stakeholder Engagement WG</i>
2.2 Support for Learners	2.2.1 Guidance and Counselling 2.2.2 Learner complaints procedure 2.2.3 Learner appeals procedure 2.2.4 Appeal of assessment results 2.2.5 Academic Integrity and Assessment Malpractice 2.2.6 Reasonable Accommodations in Assessment 2.2.7 Compassionate Considerations 2.2.8 Deadlines, short-term extensions and deferrals 2.2.9 Recognition of student achievement 2.2.10 Support for graduates 2.2.11 Access, transfer and progression – Subject to establishment of specialist working group in September 2021.
1.3 Quality Assuring Assessment	2.3.1 Staff induction process OSD/Corporate 2.3.2 Code of conduct for staff OSD/Corporate 2.3.3 Continuing professional development policy, including ref to international activity 2.3.4 Staff support service OSD/Corporate
2.4 Partnerships and collaboration	2.4.1 Establishing partnerships, collaborative and shared arrangements 2.4.2 Staff international activity

MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE POLICIES		
WORKING POLICY AREA TITLES	WORKING PROCEDURE TITLES	
3.1 Services and resources	3.1.1	Resource allocation
	3.1.2	Planning, development and maintenance of resources
	3.1.3	Risk Management
	3.1.4	Staff planning and recruitment OSD/Corporate
3.2 Quality Assurance	3.2.1	Governance of Quality
	3.2.2	Operation of Working Groups
	3.2.3	Coordinating Providers
	3.2.4	Sub-contracting programme delivery
	3.2.5	Protection of enrolled learners (Refer to Framework for Contracted
	3.2.6	Training)
		International activity
	3.2.9	Security and storage of assessment instruments and evidence
	3.2.10	Management of the certification process
3.3 Monitoring and Evaluation	3.3.1	Internal self-monitoring system
	3.3.2	Internal programme evaluation and review
	3.3.3	Self-evaluation
	3.3.4	Conducting thematic reviews
	3.3.5	Quality Improvement Planning
	3.3.6	Review of learner support services
	3.3.7	Gathering feedback from learners and staff
	3.3.8	Data collection, processing and analysis (designing surveys)
	3.3.9	Corrective action
	3.3.10	Programme monitoring
	3.3.11	Internal policy evaluation and review
3.4 Information Management and Data Systems Drafted but require review/cross-reference to corporate policies/ rendering in a format accessible to FET practitioners and managers	3.4.1	Learner Records To refer to KWETB records retention schedule – OSD/ Corporate
	3.4.2	Blended Learning Platforms
	3.4.3	Information systems – Corporate/OSD overlap
	3.4.4	GDPR policies Existing up to date corporate documentation and GDPR website should fulfil all requirements i.e – KWETB has required policies in place.
	3.4.5	Document storage and version control: issuing, amending and withdrawing documents.
	3.4.6	Contingency planning
	3.4.7	Data security

Appendix 15: Early Learning and Care Programme Development and Validation Process

September 2020 (All grey cells =Lead ETB actions)	Research Phase
October 2020	Development of Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcomes (MIPLOs); curriculum structure and Minimum Intended Module Learning Outcomes (MIMLOs)
November 2020 (All green cells = KWETB actions)	KWETB staff member nominated to the Programme Board, as an oversight group for this phase. Publicised through the KWETB Quality E-zine.
December 2020	Stakeholder Consultation
December 2020	Programme Board Meeting to agree Terms of Reference; Agreement of Programme Board Meeting schedule
January 2021	Development of modules and programme documentation
	Information about the draft shared curriculum shared through KWETB e-Zine. Consultation documentation sent to all KWETB FET centres.
February 2021	Stakeholder consultation re: Modules
February/March 2021	Preparation for differential validation Programme Board meeting Development of RPL toolkit; teaching resources and CPD programmes
March 2021	ELC workshop for QA Staff
February/March 2021	RPL advisory meeting QA team members meet to prepare for differential validation X2 Briefing to all FET centres introducing the draft programme
April 2021	Programme Board recommends applications for differential validation Meeting about access, transfer and progression/RPL
April 2021	KWETB Programme Governance Sub-group meeting; Briefing Approval to proceed with application for differential validation
May 2021	Application for differential validation uploaded to QBS
May 2021	Professional development for practitioners delivered
May 2021	Briefings to FET Centre Coordinators, principals and Guidance Services
June 2021	ELC Validation Panel Meeting
June 2021	KWETB Validation Panel Meeting – differential validation Meetings with County Childcare Committees Meeting with ALISS Coordinator re learners supports and entry requirements
June 2021	QQI PAEC approves validation of the ELC programmes Validated modules distributed to ETBs Programme Board informed of validation
July 2021	PLSS changes notified to pilot centres, and notified that the validation is approved.
September 2021	Delivery commenced in two pilot centres

Appendix 16: Certification Schedule 2022

KWETB Further Education and Training Key Dates – Certification Schedule 2022

Further Education		Training (RCCRS Submission Calendar)	
February 2022 Submission of Estimates	Friday 10th December 2021	February 2022	
Deadline for submission of Internal Verification Reports	Thursday 13th January 2022		
Deadline for upload of documentation for online EA	Thursday 20th January		
External Authentication	Monday 24th January-Friday 4th February	Last submission date into TSO office	Friday 7th January 2022
Results Approval Panel Meeting (meeting may be subject to change)	Tuesday 8th February	Latest date for TSO Submission of Approved Results using RCCRS for inclusion in file upload to QQI	Friday 28th January
Deadline for submission of authenticated results to QBS	Saturday 12th February	Final Date on QQI QBS to close invalid entries/submit certificate requests	Saturday 12th February
Final Statement of Results available for download from QBS	Wednesday 16th February		
Certificates issued by QQI	Monday 28th February		
Deadline for QQI External Appeals application	Friday 4th March		
April 2022 Submission of Estimates	Friday 25th February	April 2022	
Deadline for submission of Internal Verification Reports	Friday 11th March		
Deadline for upload of documentation for online EA	Wednesday 16th March		
External Authentication	Monday 21st March-Friday 1st April	Last submission date into TSO office	Monday 7th March
Results Approval Panel Meeting (meeting may be subject to change)	Tuesday 5th April	Latest date for TSO Submission of Approved Results using RCCRS for inclusion in file upload to QQI	Monday 28th March
Deadline for submission of authenticated results to QBS	Tuesday 12th April	Final Date on QQI QBS to close invalid entries/submit certificate requests	Tuesday 12th April
Final Statement of Results available for download from QBS	Saturday 16th April		
Certificates issued by QQI	Monday 9th May		
Deadline for QQI External Appeals application	Friday 29th April		

KWETB Further Education and Training Key Dates – Certification Schedule 2022			
Further Education		Training (RCCRS Submission Calendar)	
June 2022		June 2022	
Submission of Estimates	Friday 18th March		
Deadline for submission of Internal Verification Reports	Friday 6th May (centers must request late submission for June – 18th May – this will be dependent on EA availability)		
Deadline for upload of documentation for online EA	Thursday 12th May (20th May if late request granted for IV submission)		
External Authentication	Monday 16th May – Thursday 2nd June	Last submission date into TSO office	Friday 6th May
Results Approval Panel Meeting (meeting may be subject to change)	Tuesday 7th June (two RAPs may be held for June certification – to be confirmed)	Latest date for TSO Submission of Approved Results using RCCRS for inclusion in file upload to QQI	Friday 27th May
Deadline for submission of authenticated results to QBS	Sunday 12th June	Final Date on QQI QBS to close invalid entries/submit certificate requests	Saturday 12th June
Final Statement of Results available for download from QBS	Thursday 16th June		
Certificates issued by QQI	Monday 18th July		
Deadline for QQI External Appeals application	Friday 24th July		
August 2022		August 2022	
Submission of Estimates	Friday 3rd June		
Deadline for submission of Internal Verification Reports	Tuesday 5th July		
Deadline for upload of documentation for online EA	Thursday 7th July		
External Authentication	Monday 11th July – Friday 22nd July	Last submission date into TSO office	Thursday 7th July
Results Approval Panel Meeting (meeting may be subject to change)	Tuesday 26th July	Latest date for TSO Submission of Approved Results using RCCRS for inclusion in file upload to QQI	Thursday 28th July
Deadline for submission of authenticated results to QBS	Friday 12th August	Final Date on QQI QBS to close invalid entries/submit certificate requests	Friday 12th August
Final Statement of Results available for download from QBS	Tuesday 16th August		
Certificates issued by QQI	Monday 5th September		
Deadline for QQI External Appeals application	Friday 9th September		

KWETB Further Education and Training Key Dates – Certification Schedule 2022

Further Education		Training (RCCRS Submission Calendar)	
October 2022		October 2022	
Submission of Estimates	Wednesday 14th September		
Deadline for submission of Internal Verification Reports	Tuesday 20th September		
Deadline for upload of documentation for online EA	Thursday 22nd September		
External Authentication	Monday 26th September – Friday 30th September	Last submission date into TSO office	Wednesday 7th September
Results Approval Panel Meeting (meeting may be subject to change)	Tuesday 4th October	Latest date for TSO Submission of Approved Results using RCCRS for inclusion in file upload to QQI	Wednesday 28th September
Deadline for submission of authenticated results to QBS	Wednesday 12th October	Final Date on QQI QBS to close invalid entries/submit certificate requests	Wednesday 12th October
Final Statement of Results available for download from QBS	Sunday 16th October		
Certificates issued by QQI	Monday 7th November		
Deadline for QQI External Appeals application	Friday 4th November		
December 2022		December 2022	
Submission of Estimates	Monday 24th October		
Deadline for submission of Internal Verification Reports	Tuesday 8th November		
Deadline for upload of documentation for online EA	Thursday 10th November		
External Authentication	Monday 14th November – Friday 25th November	Last submission date into TSO office	Monday 7th November
Results Approval Panel Meeting (meeting may be subject to change)	Tuesday 6th December	Latest date for TSO Submission of Approved Results using RCCRS for inclusion in file upload to QQI	Monday 28th November
Deadline for submission of authenticated results to QBS	Monday 12th December	Final Date on QQI QBS to close invalid entries/submit certificate requests	Monday 12th December
Final Statement of Results available for download from QBS	Friday 16th December		
Certificates issued by QQI	Monday 16th January 2023		
Deadline for QQI External Appeals application	Friday 6th January 2023		

Appendix 17: KWETB Results Data

Certification Period	Core, Language	Education, Health, Wellbeing	Business, Admin	Info Technology	Art, Craft, Design	Sport, Science, Services, Horticulture	Engineering, Construction	Total	
Feb-21	50	139	80	138	5	160		572	BASED ON GRADES (ACTUAL)
Apr-21	61	140	251	138	5	94		689	BASED ON GRADES (ACTUAL)
Jun-21	80	1506	950	325	594	1580	72	5107	BASED ON GRADES (ACTUAL)
Jul-21	219	443	257	33	81			1033	BASED ON GRADES (ACTUAL)
Aug-21	474	137	47	137	0	34		143	BASED ON GRADES (ACTUAL)
Oct-21	67	56	11	198		22		354	BASED ON GRADES (ACTUAL)
Dec-21	409	83	24	116				632	BASED ON GRADES (ACTUAL)
TOTAL	1360	2524	1620	689	685	2575	72	3940	

Appendix 18: Information Systems

The main systems in use in KWETB FET services are:

- A Customer Relations Management System (training services)
- Apprentice Client Support System (ACSS)
- HR and Finance systems
- Microsoft Office 365
- Moodle, including access to eCollege courses; Skillsoft eLearning Content; URKUND plagiarism checker; Adobe Connect; Learn Key and Virtual Labs. The PLSS and Moodle are fully integrated to enable seamless access for learners
- National Course Calendar
- Programme and Learner Support System (PLSS). This is the system for allocation of learners to courses
- QQI Business System (QBS)
- Results Capture and Certification request System (RCCRS)
- OLAS FARR system

Appendix 19: List of Awarding Bodies

- Bord Oilúint Sléibhe
- City and Guilds
- CIBTAC
- Cidesco
- CompTIA
- CPA Ireland
- International Computer Driving Licence (ICDL)
- ITEC
- Microsoft
- Pearson
- QQI
- Rescue and Emergency Care (Ireland)

Appendix 20: Engagement with Second Providers: Contracted Training and Quality Assurance

In the training and innovation division, training course demand is identified through

- Industry links, and requests from local industry
- Review of local and national economic data
- Consultation with the learner recruitment department

Second Providers are chosen from the Contracted Training Framework. All second providers on the Framework have proven that they:

- Hold considerable experience in the subject area and a proven record of accomplishment in delivery
- Have qualified tutoring staff available who hold pedagogical expertise, professional qualifications, and relevant industry experience
- Have considerable experience in delivery of similar courses
- Have appropriate management and administration structures in place

KWETB personnel engage with the management of the second provider and the following items are reviewed and/or agreed:

- Course requirements; delivery duration; course content; objectives and certification requirements and physical resources are available and in place.
- That the second provider agrees to follow the Contracted Training Procedures
- The second provider agrees to provide certification for the programme (if required)
- There are suitably qualified teaching staff available who meet the pedagogical, qualification and industry experience required by KWETB
- That management and administrative staff are in place to manage the course along with KWETBS Contracted Training Officer
- Agreement to submit the initial paperwork to KWETB at least 2 weeks prior to course commencement, including a list of teaching staff; a Course Approval Plan (CPA) and a course schedule.

The second provider consults with their Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to ensure that all learning objectives will be covered as part of the certification requirements. A briefing session is delivered to prospective learners, giving information about the course. Learners confirm their interest in the course and are interviewed to ensure they meet the entry requirements.

Quality is monitored through a variety of mechanisms:

- A Contracted Training Officer (CTO) is assigned to the course ensures that contracted training procedures are followed
- The Training Standards Office (TSO) liaises with the contractor regarding quality assuring assessment.
- The Training Services Manager meets with the second provider every month to review any issues arising and to address these
- Regular feedback is received from learners through informal meetings and written questionnaire feedback.



BORD OIDEACHAIS AGUS OILIÚNA
CHILL DARA AGUS CHILL MHANTÁIN
KILDARE AND WICKLOW
EDUCATION AND TRAINING BOARD