

QQI Review Report 2022

Inaugural Review

of Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board



QQI REVIEW

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Foreword

Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) is responsible for the external quality assurance of further and higher education and training in Ireland. One of QQI's most important statutory functions is to ensure that the quality assurance procedures that providers have in place have been implemented and are effective. To this end, QQI conducts external reviews of providers of further and higher education and training on a cyclical basis. QQI is currently conducting the inaugural review of quality assurance in education and training boards. Cyclical review is an element of the broader quality framework for ETBs composed of: statutory quality assurance guidelines; quality assurance approval; annual quality reporting; dialogue meetings; the National Framework of Qualifications; validation of programmes; and, most crucially, the quality assurance system established by each ETB. The inaugural review of quality assurance in education and training boards runs from 2020-2023. During this period, QQI will organise and oversee independent reviews of each of the sixteen education and training boards. On conclusion of the sixteen reviews, a sectoral report will also be produced identifying system-level observations and findings.

The inaugural review evaluates the implementation and effectiveness of the quality assurance procedures of each ETB with a particular focus on the arrangements for the governance and management of quality; teaching, learning and assessment; and self-evaluation, monitoring and review. These are considered in the context of the expectations set out in the relevant QQI statutory quality assurance guidelines and adherence to other relevant QQI policies and procedures.

The review methodology is based on the internationally accepted and recognised approach to review:

- a self-evaluation conducted by the provider, resulting in the production of a self-evaluation report;
- an external assessment and site visit by a team of reviewers (due to the government's restrictions due to COVID-19, the review team completed a virtual visit);
- the publication of a review report including findings and recommendations; and
- a follow-up procedure to review actions taken.

This inaugural virtual review of Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board was conducted by an independent review team in line with the Terms of Reference at Appendix A. This is the report of the findings of the review team.

The Review Team

Each inaugural review is carried out by a team of independent experts and peers. The 2022 inaugural review of Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board was conducted by a team of six reviewers selected by QQI. The review team attended a virtual briefing and training session with QQI staff on 3 February 2022 and the virtual planning visit to Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board took place on 17 February 2022. The main virtual review was conducted by the full team via Microsoft Teams between 4 and 8 April 2022.

Chair

Mr David Jones stepped down as Chief Executive/Principal of Coleg Cambria at the end of 2019 after steering the institution to great acclaim. A champion of work-based learning, apprenticeships, fundraising and accessible education for people of all ages, he has made a vast contribution to shaping the careers of tens of thousands of youngsters and mature learners over more than three decades. Initially a chartered electronics engineer, as the CEO/Principal of Deeside College from 2004, he led its mergers from 2009 to 2013 with the Welsh College of Horticulture, Llysfasi College and Wrexham's Yale College, to create Coleg Cambria. In addition to a wide range of previous non-executive appointments, David is currently the Chair of Qualifications Wales, a board member of the Defence Electronics Component Agency (DECA) and the Wales Appeals Board of NSPCC Wales and chaired the inaugural review of Laois and Offaly ETB. He is also a commissioner for the UK-wide Independent Commission on the College of the Future, which published its initial reports in 2020.

Coordinating Reviewer

Dr Deirdre Stritch is an independent education and QA consultant. Until end of August 2021, she held a number of roles with Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). Most recently, she was Quality Assurance Approval and Monitoring Manager and Programme Manager for Academic Integrity Initiatives. In that role, she led QQI's 'reengagement' process, which saw the QA evaluation of all QQI-regulated private and voluntary sector HE and FE providers. Deirdre has significant regulatory experience with private and public providers and has represented Ireland in a number of international fora, including the Council of Europe; the European Commission; the European Network for Quality Assurance and the European Network for Academic Integrity. She has participated in national steering groups dealing with the internationalisation of Irish education and developing new regulatory

structures for international learners. She was also responsible for implementing new legislation pertaining to the criminalisation of contract cheating which was introduced at the end of 2019. Previously, she managed projects related to the development and implementation of the National Framework of Qualifications and the recognition of qualifications with the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland and on national higher education policy development with the Higher Education Authority and the Royal Irish Academy.

Learner Representative

After leaving secondary school, Maura Field completed a secretarial course and went to work as a secretary in a purchasing department for an electronics company. She became very interested in the work and after a short time, was hired as a junior buyer. She worked as a buyer and customer service representative in the private sector for almost 20 years. After having her second child, she made the decision to be a stay-at-home parent. Once her children were settled in primary school, she wanted to look at a career which would work for her family situation. In 2019, Maura achieved a level 5 qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education at the local secondary school who were providing FET courses. In 2020/2021 during Covid-19lockdown, she completed the level 6 Advanced Early childhood care and education (special needs) online with the Cork College of Commerce. Since receiving her qualifications, she is working as a substitute Special Needs Assistant.

Peer Expert

Mr Hans Almgren has been involved in vocational education and training since 2000. He is a former principal of an upper secondary VET-provider in Sweden and director for Education of the Swedish National Agency for Education. He is currently working as a senior advisor of the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education. He has been coordinator of the Swedish national reference point for EQAVET and ECVET and is member of a team evaluating the Norwegian NQF.

Peer Expert

Mr David Treacy was Education Officer with the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee for eight years with responsibility for adult education services and further education colleges prior to the VEC becoming an ETB in 2013. He became Director of Further Education and Training with the formation of the City of Dublin Education and Training Board and was responsible for managing the

transfer of two ex-FÁS training centres to the ETB in 2014. He was responsible for the strategic planning and delivery of further education and training in the city, with a budget of over €80m, and for managing CDETB's relationships with SOLAS and QQI. He represented CDETB on the Government's National Advisory Committee for the piloting of the Youth Guarantee scheme in Ballymun in 2015 and on the North Inner City Development Initiative in 2016. He managed the development of the quality assurance policies and procedures, transitioning from 21 quality assurance systems to four, and the re-engagement process with QQI in 2017.

Prior to his role with CDETB, David had a lengthy career as a youth worker in a number of national voluntary organisations. He entered CDVEC as director on the City of Dublin Youth Service Board – the youth work development agency of the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee. He was a member of the Government's National Youth Work Advisory Committee which produced the first Youth Work Development Plan. Later he was on the Government's National Youth Facilities and Services Fund which funded the development of youth work facilities and services in the 12 drugs task force areas in the country. He has also worked as a Youth Work Assessor in the Department of Education and Science and as a part-time lecturer in Maynooth University where he completed his MA.

David is a member of the North South Education and Training Standards Committee for Youth Work. The NSETS is an initiative of the Departments of Education in the Republic of Ireland and Northern 4 Ireland. As a member of the NSETS, David continues to chair professional endorsement panels with third level institutions on the island of Ireland on behalf of NSETS.

David chairs panels for QA approval processes for QQI and has most recently chaired reengagement evaluations for the National Adult Literacy Agency and the International Centre for Security Excellence

Industry Representative

Willie Mc Mahon is presently co-owner and director of CalX Instrumentation Services Ltd. Career background is in industrial manufacturing environments from the aspect of instrumentation and calibration to enable same. He grew up on a farm in north Meath, served an instrumentation apprenticeship in a very large local mine and has worked in various industries across Ireland in the intervening years providing calibration support to clients. Having been self-employed since 2015, in

2019 he merged that business with another local business and today they employ 42 people. He is not only passionate about apprenticeships, but all 3rd level education in general and empowering the next generation. His workplace currently employs 10 apprentices across 4 disciplines and have been short listed for Apprenticeship employer of the year 2021. Married to Claire, Willie has three children and shares their house with a lot of pets.



Section

1

Introduction and Context

Section 1: Introduction and Context

Introduction

Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board (KWETB) was established on 1 July 2013 under the Education and Training Boards Act (2013). In January 2014, SOLAS transferred the training centres across the country, and all training provision, to the relevant, regional ETB. A number of ETBs, such as KWETB, had no training centre in their region. During 2014, aspects of the training provision in Kildare and Wicklow were managed through other ETBs, but in November 2015, responsibility for the former FÁS training functions were transferred from three ETBs - Waterford and Wexford ETB, Longford and Westmeath ETB and Dublin and Dún Laoghaire ETB - to KWETB in line with the provisions of the Further Education and Training Act (2013). KWETB is governed by a Board supported by an executive management team. This review of quality assurance is the first conducted by QQI and is exclusively concerned with the further education and training services of KWETB.

Context

According to the 2016 census, KWETB serves a fast-growing population of circa 364,929 across counties Kildare and Wicklow. This disparate area includes the Dublin City 'commuter belt', as well as more remote rural areas, and both larger and smaller towns and villages.

KWETB operates a wide range of services to meet the needs of learners in this diverse region, including primary education; post-primary education; further education and training; Youthreach and community education. It operates in three community national schools; 23 post-primary schools and in 19 further education and training (FET) standalone and multiplex centres, as well as in temporary locations as required (SER p.13). FET sites are divided into seven areas based on local and labour-market needs: Bray and North Wicklow; Mid-Kildare; North Kildare; South Kildare; South Wicklow; West Wicklow and Wicklow Town. Community education services cover the whole region. KWETB also has two administrative offices, one in Naas (Head Office) and one in Wicklow Town, in which executive services and organisation support and development (OSD) staff are located. Training Services deliver programmes through contracted training providers, local training initiatives and specialist training providers (SOLAS Strategic Performance Agreement - 2018-2020, p. 6). PLC provision was, until recently, offered across 6 dual provision schools, though this is now reduced to one, and one dedicated college, Bray Institute of Further Education (BIFE), which caters for over 1000

students per annum (ibid. p.6). In 2017, there were 231 part-time FE tutors and 123 full-time whole-time equivalent VTOS and PLC teachers in KWETB (ibid. p.6).

KWETB offers a variety of education and training programmes on a full-time and part-time basis, which are designed to meet the needs of learners and the labour market and to fulfil national strategy (SER p.13).

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

According to its Strategic Performance Agreement (2018-2020) with SOLAS, KWETB caters to a diverse range of learners. The priority groups for 2018 – 2020 included:

- Adults returning to education;
- Low skilled people;
- Long-term unemployed people;
- People under 25;
- People with disabilities, travellers, refugees, ex-offenders and disadvantaged members of our communities; early school leavers and recent school leavers;
- Those in employment wishing to upskill/reskill and gain a qualification;
- Those wishing to become an apprentice or trainee on a work-based learning programme; and
- People not in education, employment or training (NEET)¹ .

¹ Strategic Performance Agreement (2018-2020) with SOLAS, page 3

The Strategic Performance Agreement also outlined that “KWETB has noted a significant increase in learners who require supports and are striving to meet and support learner needs across all programmes.²

The top enterprise areas in Kildare and Wicklow are in wholesale, retail, industry, health, education, hospitality and food (with over 50% in professional, associate professional and skilled trades), whilst employment in the region increased primarily in administrative and support services, construction and industry, health and social activities. Key growth areas with potential for strategic development are identified in The Mid-East Regional Action Plan for Jobs. KWETB ensures a strategic contribution to this growth through its involvement in the Regional Skills Forum; development work focussing on current and future needs, and regular engagement with employers (SOLAS Strategic Performance Agreement (2018-2020), p. 3). The presence of large multinational organisations in the region in the agri-food sector; the manufacturing sector; the Irish horse industry; the hospitality, tourism and film sector; ICT and the financial services sector is also significant.

Management of FET

KWETB is led by a Chief Executive who works closely with the Board in line with the functions laid out in the Education and Training Boards Act (2013). The Chief Executive leads the senior management team (SMT) which includes three directors with responsibility for each of the three pillars of the organisation: further education and training (FET); schools; and organisation support and development (OSD). The management structure for FET is illustrated below:

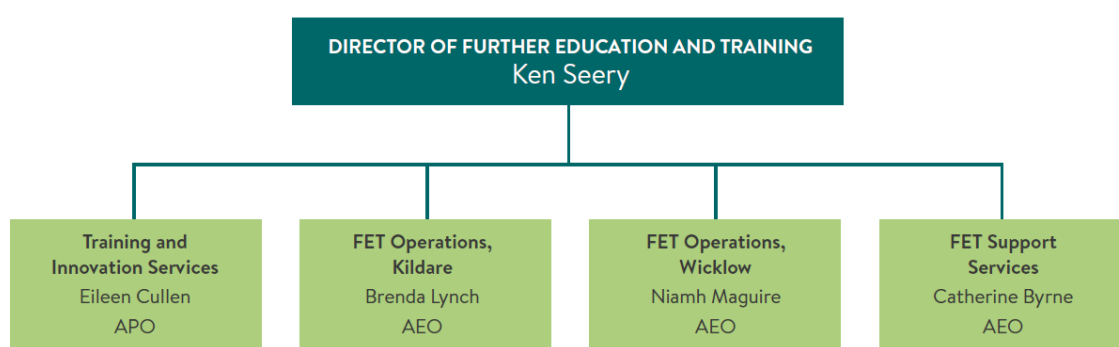


Figure 1: Executive Structure of FET (SER p.15)

² Ibid, page 3

The KWETB Provider Profile, submitted as part of the review process, describes each of these roles in more detail as follows:

Training and Innovation Services:

Managing KWETB training response – both current provision and integration of support for education programmes using contracted training and employer engagement including Specialist Skills Training (SST), Apprenticeship, Traineeship, Bridging and Foundation, Community Training Centre (CTC), Specialist Training Providers (STP), Skills to Advance, Skills for Work. Identification of innovative and development opportunities for FET working with education operations in Kildare and Wicklow.

FET Operations Management

VTOS, BTEI, Youthreach (including Advocate), Adult Basic Education (including English for Speakers of Other Languages [ESOL] and Intensive Tuition [ITABE]), Community Education and Adult Guidance operations and delivery. Create site hubs for services based on the geographical, facilities, resources and location and local client demands. Develop a flexible learner response for full time and part-time options in close cooperation with training and systems units to continually improve the service delivery and ensure compliance with funder's data and system reporting requirements. Produce integrated localised responses that maximise the ETB's location and staff resources.

FET Support Services

Managing and maintaining KWETB's PLSS, Quality Assurance and Training Standards, Music Generation, and Youth Services. Developing a single QA system for FET compliance with QQI organisational accreditation and governance requirements that supports innovation and delivery of programmes for operational delivery. Developing systems and system support that ensure compliance with requirement of funding and management agencies. Facilitating and assisting with audit responses requiring systems data mining.³

The KWETB Youth Officers report to the AEO (FET Support Services). Programme coordinators in Adult Basic Education, VTOS, Youthreach, Skills for Work, Prison Education, Back to Education Initiative and community education facilitators work with the Adult Education Guidance Service, QA staff, outreach and Youthreach resource workers and administration staff to support delivery of the FET service. A community development officer, apprenticeship authorised officers, contracted training officers, a training standards officer, a recruitment officer and administration support staff support the

³ Kildare and Wicklow ETB Provider Profile, p 6

delivery of training services.⁴ In total, there are approximately 122 staff employed across FET services throughout Kildare and Wicklow (excluding teaching and instructing resources).

Mission, Vision and Strategy

KWETB's mission, which was identified following a broad internal consultative process, 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 identified four key values underpinning and informing its mission in its Statement of Strategy (2020 - 2024). These are:

- **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 well-being.
- **Integrity** – Ensuring that all our activities in pursuit of the mission and vision of KWETB are supportive of our employees and learner, and demonstrate accountability, professionalism, honesty and loyalty.
- **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.
- **Respect** – Promoting a climate of care and respect in every KWETB workplace and centre of learning.

The Statement of Strategy identifies four priority areas for the ETB: teaching and learning; work and learning environments; valuing and developing staff; and corporate governance and external relations. Each priority area has associated objectives, the achievement of which is overseen by a steering group.

SOLAS also monitors the achievement of key performance indicators, based on multi-annual agreements. The ETB uses an ETB-wide, area-based planning model to inform funding allocation requests to SOLAS for the delivery of FET programmes.

⁴ SOLAS Strategic Performance Agreement (2018-2020), p 6

Approach to Quality

KWETB's QA procedures were approved by QQI in 2019 following an executive self-evaluation process which commenced in 2018 and resulting quality improvement planning. FET services in the ETB observe other legal requirements such as GDPR, the protection of children and vulnerable adults and employment legislation.

The ETB focuses particularly on the quality of delivery of further education and training programmes, and the integrity of assessment. To that end, a number of innovations to support and enhance this quality were made 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 region⁵.

Nonetheless, as reflected in the SER, and as evidenced to the review team throughout the course of the review week, KWETB is at a formative stage in the development of its formal QA policies, procedures and governance structures. This is discussed in more detail in Section 3 of this report. The recommendations identified in this report arise largely from the early stage of development of the QA system and the need to develop that system further.

⁵ Kildare and Wicklow ETB Self-Evaluation Report (SER), p 21

A chef with a beard, wearing a black toque, a white chef's jacket with a crest on the sleeve, a black apron, and blue gloves, is focused on plating food in a professional kitchen. The background shows stainless steel equipment and a range hood. The text 'Section 2' is overlaid in the upper right, and 'Self-evaluation Methodology' is overlaid at the bottom.

Section

2

Self-evaluation Methodology

Section 2: Self-evaluation Methodology

KWETB began its self-evaluation in preparation for QQI's inaugural review of QA in education and training boards in February 2020. Its existing Quality Council was given responsibility for the process and for producing the final SER. The Quality Council was a relatively new group at the time. It met for the first time and agreed its terms of reference in November 2019. The Quality Council is comprised of twelve members of staff and one learner. The Director of FET chairs the Quality Council, with this appointment being made by the Chief Executive. The terms of reference of the Quality Council permit, subject to the Chief Executive's approval, the appointment of external members to the group. While an external member was appointed to the Quality Council in March 2021, this membership is on an ad hoc basis and no meetings have been attended to date. The review team is of the opinion that external membership provides an opportunity to bring different perspectives and specialist experience to this senior unit of governance and should have been adopted when engaging in the self-evaluation process for the inaugural review. The review team finds that this was a lost opportunity, particularly as the external review process identified a range of external stakeholders who have the potential to make extremely helpful contributions as members of the group.

KWETB has an operational quality team that reports to the Adult Education Officer for FET Support Services. A member of this team was appointed review coordinator, while a staff officer was tasked with supporting the process. They developed a plan for the process in consultation with FET management and led on the implementation of that plan. The review coordinator reported regularly to the Quality Council (as it had delegated responsibility for oversight of the process) and to FET management.

The review coordinator led a project team that engaged with internal stakeholders on the SER process using information and publicity tools, and through surveys of learners and staff. Over 500 learners responded to the survey (12.9%), with almost one third of these being from adult basic education. Only 105 PLC learners responded (10.3%), which is low when considering the full-time nature and scale of enrolments in this area. Staff feedback was extremely low, with only 2.79% of staff responding. The low response rates to the internal surveys were attributed to unfortunate timing. The surveys were distributed in April 2021 following unintended delays, at a time of year when both staff and learners face additional workload pressures and survey fatigue. This was compounded by the fact that the project team could not circulate surveys directly to all participants, this function having to be delegated to individual centres. External stakeholder feedback was sought through internal channels with a view to inclusion of stakeholder representatives in focus groups. There was difficulty contacting external stakeholders such as employers and employer representatives due to lack of a

comprehensive and available database of details for this purpose. As a result, no feedback was obtained from any external stakeholders other than some community groups. The SER (p.18) largely acknowledges these shortcomings in the surveys. The review team finds that careful consideration must be given when using the outcomes from surveys where the response rate is very low or misrepresentative of the overall group size. Furthermore, where the SER refers to “data collection and analysis” it is predominantly referring to these surveys of learners and staff, as other than these perception measures, no significant use of other numerical/quantitative data was included.

Two cyclical review workshops were held with KWETB staff in October 2021. These were supported by the Chief Executive and other senior staff, and provided an opportunity to review the outcomes from surveys and to inform the final SER.

The review team acknowledges that, although it was not emphasised as a major difficulty by KWETB in the SER or during the review week, the entire process was undertaken during the period of challenge and disruption caused by Covid-19. While this interrupted KWETB’s plans, alternative online arrangements were put in place. However, these could have been expanded further to facilitate external stakeholder participation in the process.

The final SER was considered by the Quality Council, and presented to the SMT and, ultimately, the Chief Executive for approval.

Of those met by the review team during the review week, awareness of the SER and the self-evaluation process varied significantly. The greatest awareness was from senior staff, members of the QA team, and members of the QA Sub-group of the Quality Council. External stakeholders and other staff’s awareness was very minimal. The review team met with three members of the KWETB’s Board during the review week. They confirmed that whilst they were not involved, and that the SER was not circulated to the Board, they were aware of the inaugural review process.

The Self-Evaluation Report (SER)

The SER is a comprehensive, open and transparent document. KWETB used the QQI framework and guidance to inform its structure and content. The Introduction provides an informative overview of the organisation and its wide range of FET centres, local and regional context, organisational structures,

a reminder of the FET legislative environment, and a detailed overview of its approach to self-evaluation and the inaugural review process.

In line with the QQI review framework, the main part of the report is made up of three chapters, each of which deals in turn with the objectives from QQI's Review Handbook. Each chapter considers the sub criteria for each objective. Aside from the first section, which covers the ETB's mission and strategy (including QA systems), and which is purely descriptive, the remaining sections of the SER are presented in the form of a "Description and Evaluation", concluding with lists of "Effective Practice", "Challenges" (faced) and "Potential Future Enhancements". Case studies were used to support the evaluation in the chapters dealing with Objectives 1 and 2. Each chapter concludes with a "Conclusion & Intended Future Direction" section. The SER includes a range of illustrations, such as diagrams, some data, and photographs. The review team finds the SER would benefit from greater use of data and further illustrations.

While the SER is frank and accurate in its identification of challenges faced, there are no stated recommendations arising from the self-evaluation process identified within the SER. Rather, KWETB indicated that they were seeking the external recommendations from the review team to direct their future plans. Whilst this recognition of the role of the review team is positive and reflects an appetite for learning and improvement, the review team considers it unfortunate that KWETB felt unable to identify and begin to progress its own recommendations, through SMART actions (i.e., specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely), as is the purpose of self-evaluation. This observation, notwithstanding, the report team is in agreement with many of the "potential future enhancements" identified in the SER and recommends that steps be taken to progress these. This is in addition to the review team's own recommendations outlined in this report.

The SER includes a short conclusion chapter, and a comprehensive list of helpful and relevant appendices, which are cross-referenced within the main body of the SER.

In summary, the SER includes most of the issues that the review team identified through its external review. The prompt identification and ownership of a suitably ambitious action plan, as a positive response to the observations highlighted above in this section, along with the issues of commendation and recommendation in the remainder of this report, will provide an excellent foundation for the further development of institutional QA at KWETB, alongside external assessments. This would support the opportunity to proactively embed an annual QA cycle to drive improvement and support the achievement of corporate objectives.

A scenic view of a coastal cliffside. The foreground shows a steep, grassy slope leading down to a rocky shore. A winding road with a stone wall runs along the cliff edge. In the distance, a tunnel entrance is visible in the rock face. The ocean is a vibrant blue-green color. The sky is filled with soft, white clouds.

Section

3

**Quality Assurance &
Enhancement**

Section 3: Quality Assurance & Enhancement

Objective 1: Governance and Management of Quality

ETB Mission & Strategy

KWETB's formal, published mission is informed by the overall mission of ETBs as set out in the Education and Training Boards Act (2013) - to plan, provide, coordinate and review the provision of education and training in their functional areas. 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 states that it "places a high value on providing programmes of education and training in a climate of care and respect" (SER p. 20).

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

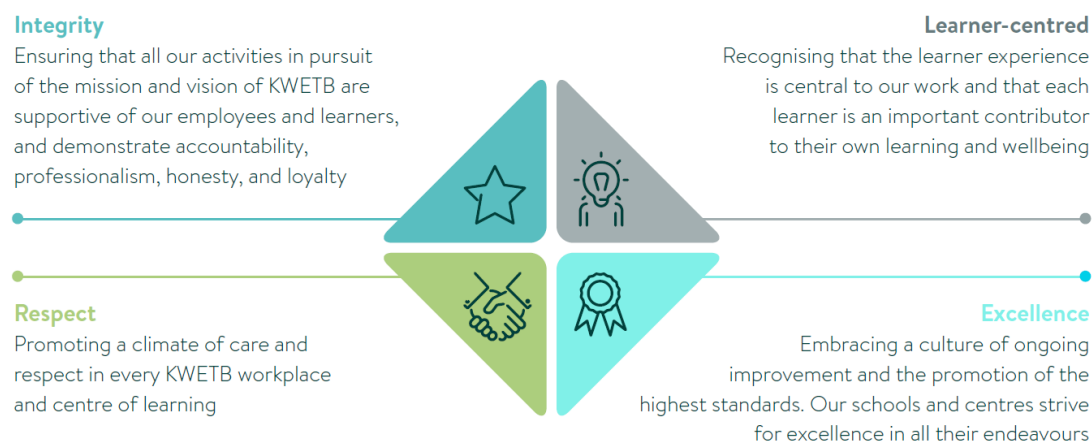


Figure 2: KWETB Value Statements (SER p. 20)

The review team finds that the mission and vision of KWETB as identified in its Statement of Strategy (2020-2024), and the values which underpin them, are appropriate and that the learner experience, as shared with the review team during the review week, is consistent with that mission. The dedication of staff to ensuring a positive, quality learning experience in line with the ETB's mission (Strand 1) was clear to the review team.

While KWETB has a Statement of Strategy (2020-2024) which sets out actions under four broad strategic aims, the review team was advised that there is no dedicated strategy for FET within the ETB. Rather, the ETB has concentrated in the recent past on its corporate structure and rolled in behind the national FET strategy to guide its activities in that space. Work on an organisational FET strategy was initiated two years ago, but this was not implemented due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which threw the ETB into 'operational mode'. Senior management advised the review team that it is working on a FET strategy going forward with a focus on organisational integration. The Director of FET advised that the building strategy, based on a proposal for a FET College of the Future, will give impetus to look at how to progress FET at KWETB.

It is the view of the review team that the ETB urgently requires a clear strategy for the unification of further education and training services, underpinned by a coherent, cohesive QA system. There is a need for a clear plan for the development of an integrated FET service, incorporating further education and training programme provision. The review team supports the stated intention to move to one single quality framework for FET services (SER p.70) with integrated quality assurance policies

and procedures and recommends that a plan and timeline for the completion of this task is developed as a matter of priority using the newly introduced governance structures. The strategy for FET and QA framework should be harnessed to nurture the development of a singular ETB identity internally and externally.

Commendation

- The review team commends the dedication of staff to ensuring a positive quality learning experience in line with the ETB's mission (Strand 1).

Recommendations

- The review team recommends the immediate development of a clearly articulated, long-term vision and strategy for an integrated FET service, which identifies the changes needed for its realisation and related timeframes.
- The review team recommends the immediate development of a single QA framework and a clear plan for its implementation which identifies the changes needed for its realisation and related timeframes. The development and implementation of the new QAF should be prioritised and expedited as a matter of utmost importance to ensure that the ETB's commitment to quality can be fully realised.
 - a. Ensure examples of best practice are identified and inform the development of the new QAF.
 - b. This new QA Framework must include a strong focus on robust internal self-evaluation processes at all levels of the organisation, which expands the approach to seeking feedback to include a much greater range of external perspectives.

Structures and Terms of Reference for the Governance and Management of Quality Assurance

KWETB is led by a Chief Executive who works closely with the Board in line with the functions laid out in the Education and Training Boards Act (2013). The Chief Executive leads the senior management team which includes three directors with responsibility for each of the three pillars of the organisation: FET, schools, and organisation support and development (OSD). Transparency in Board decision-making is supported through the publication of meeting minutes on the KWETB website.

The academic governance structure for FET at KWETB was introduced as part of the quality improvement plan (QIP) put in place following reengagement with QQI. The senior unit of academic

governance is the Quality Council. It was formed at the end of 2019 and is chaired by the Director of Further Education and Training. The AEO for FET Support Services acts as secretary. Membership is representative of management roles across FET services and also includes a learner representative. Whilst there is the possibility for external stakeholders to be appointed as members, only one external stakeholder representative has been appointed on an ad hoc basis and has not been involved in any Quality Council meetings to date. There is no external membership on the council's three sub-groups: the Quality Assurance Sub-Group, the Programme Governance Sub-Group and a very newly established Stakeholder Engagement Sub-Group, which convened for the first time at the end of 2021. This is a significant missed opportunity for the ETB, which the review team recommends be addressed promptly. Conversely, the inclusion of learners in all units of governance, and the focus on the learner voice in the new Stakeholder Sub-Group is commended by the review team.

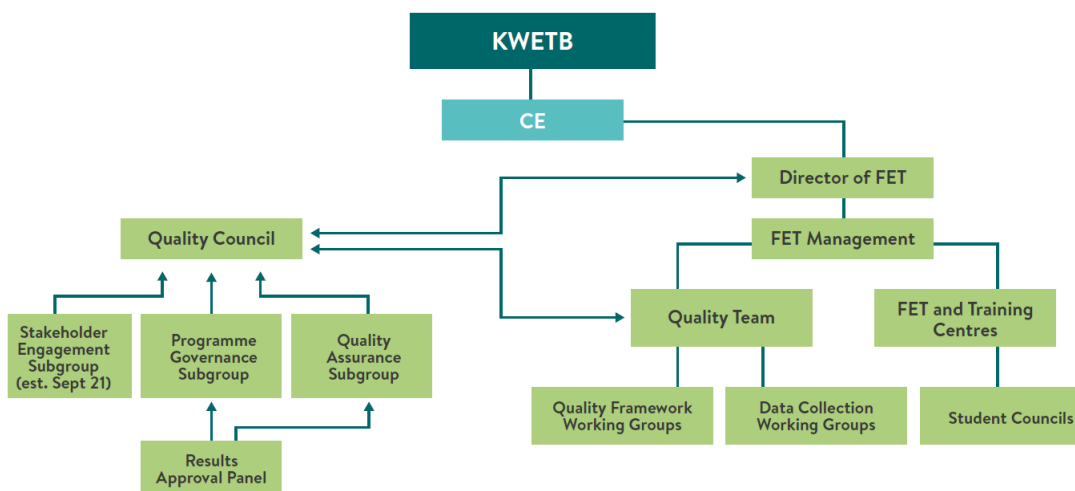


Figure 3: FET Governance Relationships (SER p. 24)

All units of governance have approved terms of reference outlining their responsibilities and functions. These, along with membership, were scheduled for review at the end of 2021. The review team was advised during the review week that the QA Sub-Group did look at its terms of reference at the last meeting of 2021 but agreed not to review them at that stage partly because they felt it was premature to do so. The review team was advised that all the governance sub-groups are still in development and there are aspects of the terms of reference that have not been addressed yet. Staff advised that the terms of reference for both the QA Sub-Group and the Programme Governance Sub-Group will be reviewed together to ensure they are consistent and coherent. It is intended that this will take place once the external review by QQI is completed. The review team recommends that this review be conducted within 12 months to ensure the terms of reference (and membership) of units of governance remain fit for purpose.

Responsibility for leading the implementation of quality and supporting governance rests with the QA Team which forms part of the FET Support Services. The QA Team works directly with the centres, colleges and services on quality implementation and development. Whilst members of the QA Team are not included in the membership of the Quality Council and its sub-committees, named members of the team provide support to each of the units of governance as a means of enhancing cross-organisational communication. However, it is not clear to the review team how the QA Team's priorities or work-plan are identified outside of responding to issues as they arise or work on specific projects, such as the self-evaluation report for this review. To ensure that it adopts a strategic approach to its work and maximises its effectiveness and role in embedding a unified QA system across the organisation, the review team recommends that the QA Team produce an annual plan identifying priorities and associated timelines.

In addition to the formal units of governance and the QA Team described above, there is a senior leadership team within the FET directorate. It meets on a quarterly basis and typically divides its activities between FE, training and community education. The Director of FET meets with individual managers on a weekly basis, but the review team understands that these are less formal meetings that are not always minuted. Two challenges acknowledged by the leadership team during the review week are to work more cohesively together and move the integration of FE and training services agenda forward. It is the review team's recommendation that a strengthening of governance and management structures and arrangements to ensure their effectiveness, including regular meetings of all FET management teams and a common standard for recording minutes, would significantly help address these challenges.

The word 'silo' was used in the SER and by a variety of staff throughout the review week to describe working practice within the organisation. Difficulties experienced by the QA Team in gaining direct access to external stakeholders as part of the self-evaluation process for this review were also discussed. The review team also heard of separateness between 'Head Office' and staff within colleges and centres. This 'disconnect' was voiced in both the SER and in several conversations the review team had with a variety of staff during review week. The review team finds this to be a risk to the embedding of quality assurance practices in the organisation.

The culture of separateness described to the review team between FE and training and between 'Head Office' and centres is an obstacle to the development of one, integrated service and needs to be addressed as a priority. The development of a shared vision and strategy for achieving that vision, as discussed previously, will greatly enable organisational cohesion. The review team strongly recommends that the ETB uses the development of the new QA Framework (discussed in greater

detail in the following section) to unify as a coherent organisation with quality assurance the vehicle for coherence. This must include a strong focus on robust internal self-evaluation processes at all levels of the organisation, which expands the approach to seeking feedback to include a much greater range of external perspectives, something that was noticeably absent in the self-evaluation process for this review. The review team further recommends that steps be taken to enhance information and communication flows to and from 'Head Office'.

Commendations

- The review team commends the inclusion of learners in all units of governance, and, in particular, the focus on the learner voice in the new Stakeholder Sub-Group of the Quality Council.
- The review team commends the transparency of governance structures through the publication of Board minutes.

Recommendations

- The review team recommends the strengthening of governance and management structures and arrangements to ensure their effectiveness, to include:
 - a. Review of the Quality Council and sub committees Terms of Reference and membership within 12 months to ensure they continue to be fit for purpose and to provide clarity for members and wider audiences.
 - b. regular meetings of all FET teams and a common standard for recording minutes.
 - c. enhanced information and communication flows to and from 'Head Office'.
 - d. increasing the involvement of independent, external experts in QA governance structures.
- The review team recommends that the QA Team produce an annual plan with the priorities for the team identified and the timeline for delivery.

Documentation of Quality Assurance

KWETB's documented QA system comprises a combination of legacy arrangements established in 2013 and new procedures developed in response to QQI's Core QA Guidelines. The temporary policies and procedures of Transition Quality Assurance System (TQAS) are applied in training services. The SER notes that there has been some crossover in the delivery of programmes validated through the Programme Approval Agreement (PAA) process to learners engaged in programmes delivered under training services, and practices used in QA of assessment in further education that have been adopted. There has been no crossover to date of former training practices into FE (SER, p.

34). Centres and colleges apply QA as required to programmes leading to awards from other awarding bodies, for example, City and Guilds and Pearson.

Despite the important developments in the management and governance of quality assurance already detailed, the review team finds that significant steps remain to be taken to ensure that a unified and efficient QA system is embedded across FET services. There are currently two distinct, parallel, legacy QA systems in operation, creating a concrete separation between the further education and training sides of the ETB. Within these two systems, practice is not always uniform. As stated in the SER:

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 (p. 34).

Furthermore, the review team heard that Community Training Centres (CTC) staff do not have the same level of access to the system as other staff, thereby reducing the efficiency of the service.

To address these vulnerabilities, and to ensure that it is fully compliant with QQI's core and sector-specific QA guidelines, KWETB has commenced work on the development of a single, coherent set of QA policies and procedures, termed the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF), which is intended to be applied across further education and training. This QAF will also address those policy areas where there are gaps in formal policies or divergent practice currently, for example in relation to work experience. A framework development project was initiated in 2019, and a desk review was carried out in 2020 to determine the range of policies and procedures applicable in the further education and training services.

In February 2021, 11 working groups, comprising 57 staff on a voluntary basis, together with the QA Team, were set up to begin phase one of the process of review, drafting and redrafting of procedures. The QA Sub-group has oversight of these development processes. The review team heard that consultation with staff on the policy development process will consist of surveys, supplemented by

focus groups. However, neither will be extended to all staff. Given the ETB's previous experience with these methodologies in the self-evaluation process for this review, the review team recommends that KWETB consider more varied and extensive means of consultation with staff and learners regarding policy development. The consultation process, when strategically designed, may be harnessed as a means of generating 'buy in' from staff and a sense of ownership and investment in the quality system. The review team further recommends that the many examples of current good practice across the organisation be collated to inform the new QAF.

It is stated in the SER that the QAF will be completed in 2022 and implemented in 2023; however, the review team was advised that the timeline has been considerably extended and that development of the framework is being carried out on a phased basis, and will be completed in late 2025. A significant recommendation arising from this review is that the finalisation and implementation of the QAF be prioritised and expedited as a matter of utmost importance to ensure that the ETB's commitment to quality can be fully realised.

The review team further recommends that when developing staff and student handbooks, KWETB should ensure that they are derived directly from the finalised QAF to ensure uniformity of information and practice. Both handbooks should be easily accessible; the student handbook, in particular, should be referenced at different stages of programme delivery and not just at induction (as would appear to be the case currently from discussions with learners) to ensure that all learners are familiar with it and familiar with the ETB's expectations and requirements from them (e.g., as set out in the Code of Conduct).

Recommendations

- The review recommends that KWETB considers more varied and extensive means of consultation with staff and learners on policy development. The consultation process, when strategically designed, may be harnessed as a means of generating 'buy in' from staff and a sense of ownership and investment in the quality system.
- The review recommends that KWETB ensures that the staff and learner handbooks are derived directly from the finalised QAF to confirm uniformity of information and practice and that students have easy access to all relevant documentation, such as the Code of Conduct.

Staff Recruitment, Management and Development

In opening this section, the review team wishes to highlight that throughout the review visit, it met with dedicated and energetic staff with a learner-focused approach to their work. This is a significant contributory factor to the very positive feedback the review team heard from learners about their experience at KWETB.

KWETB has policies for staff recruitment, which it states accord with national employment policy. Staff recruitment is managed by the human resources (HR) section. Staff are directly employed by KWETB or employed by second providers on multi-supplier contracts. In some cases, administrative staff are outsourced from a specialist agency. The review team heard that it is challenging to get funding approval for some staff positions and to recruit specialist staff given competition from private industry in the current economic environment. Time lags between requisitioning new staff and completing the recruitment process can also be problematic. In line with sectoral norms, KWETB teaching staff must hold a suitable subject matter qualification and a pedagogical qualification.

KWETB has a recent policy (2021) in place for the implementation of annual professional development plans (PDPs) for staff. However, very few staff met by the review team had undertaken or had heard of PDPs. It would seem from this, that the existing policy on PDPs is not being implemented consistently across the entire organisation. The review team recommends that KWETB fully and consistently implements the organisation's approach and policies for performance management and professional development.

Peer learning (and contact) seems to be restricted by the current segregated nature of the organisation. The review team endorses the stated intention of KWETB- that communities of practice should be developed in key programmes delivered in a number of centres to support consistency in curriculum and assessment. The review team finds that current practice in Youthreach is a successful example that could be usefully extended across the ETB. The review team further recommends the implementation of a mentoring system for new teaching / instructing staff to support new staff in curriculum and assessment. Finally, the review team recommends that communication channels be enhanced across the organisation and between centres and 'Head Office' to ensure best practice is identified and shared between staff, peer learning is promoted, and organisational developments and enhancements are widely known and understood.

Staff are encouraged to participate in a range of continuing professional development (CPD), though surveys conducted as part of the self-evaluation process indicate that most CPD undertaken is in areas with legal compliance requirements (such as GDPR and health and safety) and less in areas related to quality assurance or pedagogy (SER, p. 40). According to the SER, “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”⁶. This was borne out in discussions with staff during the review week.

The review team welcomes the establishment of key posts in the areas of professional development and technology enhanced learning (TEL). The review team was impressed by the significant work undertaken to support teachers/tutors and learners migrate to online learning during the pandemic. Two significant ‘in-house’ PD projects were implemented to enhance staff’s digital competence: the Digi Cap project and the e-Portfolio project which were piloted in 2020. The review team strongly endorses the ETB’s stated plans to “introduce standard staff induction and upskilling processes” (SER, p 43).

Commendation

- The review team commends the move towards establishing communities of practice which enables staff on similar programmes across the ETB to benefit from peer learning opportunities. The review team encourages the expansion of this practice across all FET provision.

Recommendations

- The review team recommends that KWETB fully and consistently implement the organisation’s approach and policies for performance management and professional development. This should include the introduction of a mentoring system for new teaching / instructing staff to support new staff in curriculum and assessment.
- The review team recommends that KWETB Enhances the communication channels across the organisation and between centres and ‘Head Office’ to ensure best practice is identified and shared between staff, peer learning is promoted, and organisational developments and enhancements are widely known and understood.

⁶ Kildare and Wicklow ETB Self-Evaluation Report (SER), p 41

Programme Development, Approval and Submission for Validation

As discussed in Section 1 of this report, KWETB offers a variety of further education and training programmes on a full and part time basis across Levels 1-6 of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). Just over 70% of KWETB provision leads to QQI awards. Just under 10% leads to awards from other awarding bodies and 20% is uncertified. KWETB recognises the need to build capacity in programme development and to design programmes that can be delivered through a variety of different modes (SER, p. 97). It also acknowledges that dated Common Awards System (CAS) programmes are a challenge for the ETB (SER, p. 46), something which was reiterated in discussions with the review team over the course of review week.

In training services, programmes are developed in response to 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 (SER, p. 45). The review team was advised during the review week that many such programmes lead to non-QQI awards as other awarding bodies have been able to respond more rapidly to labour-market demands. KWETB has not developed any new QQI-validated programme as an individual provider since the introduction of QQI's new validation policy in 2017. It was, however, a member of the consortium to develop the programme in Early Learning and Care, led by Dublin and Dún Laoghaire ETB, which resulted in a successful differentiated validation application to QQI (SER, p. 45).

There are new programme approval processes in place under the governance of the new Programme Governance Sub-Group, with final approval coming from the Quality Council. This group has two functions in relation to approvals: approval for a centre to use existing KWETB programmes and approval for the development of new programmes. The Programme Governance Sub-Group is working well and in meeting with members, the review team was assured that they understood their role and were working effectively. Other significant, positive developments include the new Programme Development Hub launched in 2021. The online approval hub facilitates the application process for approval to change course modules, change programme titles and approval to run an existing programme that the centre has not been validated for as well as proposals for new programmes.

The review team heard of many innovative initiatives with employers, industry and other providers and commends the development of new programmes in partnership with third parties, such as the Bretzel Bakery Traineeship and the pre-University Engineering collaboration between BIFE and TU Dublin.

The benefits of such initiatives to learners, employers and the broader community were evident to the review team in discussions held over the course of the review week.

Despite these positive developments in the quality assurance of programme development and approval, the review team finds there is further scope to realise their full potential. According to the SER:

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 (SER p. 46).

The review team supports the assertion in the SER that “a defined strategy for the development and validation of programmes would enhance the delivery of quality programmes of education and training” (p. 46) and acknowledges the stated intention to “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” (SER p. 47).

The review team heard from a variety of staff that outdated programme descriptors may be inhibiting KWETB’s ability to respond in an agile fashion to industry and labour market needs. This concern is also reflected in the SER (p. 46). The review team supports the stated intention to “implement a quality assured process for the review and updating of existing programme descriptors” (SER p. 31) and recommends collaboration with other ETBs to fast track the achievement of this priority. The review team further welcomes the stated intention to “establish a defined process for the systematic evaluation, review and monitoring of existing programmes” (SER p. 106) and recommends that an audit of the existing programmes be undertaken urgently to identify the priority programmes that will need re-development. The review team encourages KWETB’s collaboration with other ETBs in the development of new programmes.

Commendations

- The review team commends the development of new programmes in partnership with industry, such as the Bretzel Bakery Traineeship and the pre-University Engineering collaboration between BIFE and TU Dublin.

- The review team commends the introduction of the online Programme Development Hub.

Recommendations

- The review team welcomes the stated intention to “establish a defined process for the systematic evaluation, review and monitoring of existing programmes” (SER p. 106) and recommends that:
 - a. an audit of the existing programmes should be undertaken urgently to identify the priority programmes that will need re-development. Consideration should be given to collaborating with other ETBs in the development of new programmes.
 - b. KWETB collaborates with other ETBs to fast track the achievement of its stated intention to “implement a quality assured process for the review and updating of existing programme descriptors (SER p. 31).

Access, Transfer and Progression

In common with other ETBs, KWETB operates a number of access routes and intake periods dependent on the type of programme in question. In some instances, prospective learners may need to complete an initial assessment, although practice is inconsistent across centres in that regard (SER, p. 50). Following assessment, learners may transfer to a different programme within centres if required. Programme tutors interview learners applying to PLC programme to ensure a good fit between learner and programme. The ETB uses the interview process as a means of granting learners an insight into the programme and the centre and to help gauge how successfully the learner is likely to engage with the course. In the Adult Basic Education Services and the Prison Education Service, a face-to-face meeting also normally marks the first point of contact with a prospective learner. Prospective learners are assisted to complete the application form.

Induction is provided at the start of programmes. Learners are given details of the centre, the award, the programme and arrangements for support. Feedback from learners with whom the review team met suggests that whilst this interview and induction process is valuable, many would have liked and benefited from being provided with much of this information in advance of applying or enrolling. Both the SER (p. 54) and learners themselves confirmed that most became aware of the ETB and its offerings through ‘word-of-mouth’. The review team is of the opinion that this is not the best way of ensuring a good fit between learner and programme. There is a need for a process of placing learners in courses that they want and also have the capability to undertake. The review team recommends that the current pilot projects, developed under ALISS (the Accessible Learning Integrated Support Service), be extended. These are:

- A digital assessment for entry to the new Early Learning and Care Programme which is being piloted in all participating centres;
- A Common Initial Assessment QQI 1-4 resource, which is being piloted in all ABE Centres;
- A Common Initial Assessment QQI 4-6 resource, which is to be piloted in 2022/23; and
- An Assessment of Youthreach Language Learners Referral protocol, which is currently being piloted throughout KWETB Youthreach centres (SER p. 90).

The review team also heard that the application form may act as a barrier to applicants (feedback from employers and those with literacy needs). The review team recommends that a modified application processes be considered for learners with additional needs or literacy challenges. The data collection requirements associated with the PLSS should not act as a barrier to initial engagement.

Local links and knowledge underpin the progression system, supported by guidance and advocacy services. The inherent linkages between NFQ levels, and between FE and training programmes could be highlighted and strengthened to support access, transfer and progression for learners. “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” (SER, p. 54). To that end, the review team supports the stated intention to “plan, design and put in place internal learning pathways to improve progression and transfer for learning” (SER, p. 55).

The review team heard very positive feedback from higher education institutions (HEI) with progression pathways in place with KWETB. These linkages are largely made and maintained at a local level rather than centrally. The review team recommends that the current good practice be enhanced by formally seeking feedback from HEI partners which can be shared and promoted within the ETB.

During the review week, the review team heard examples of the benefits of enhanced collaboration and communication between services; for example, training services outreach activities to marginalised groups through the Adult Education Service. This collaboration between units to meet learner needs is commended and should be extended wherever possible.

The review team also heard about and commend the critical work conducted by guidance services and practitioners in a context of limited resources. The team understand from staff that practice is often specific to a particular service or centre and more could be done to ensure sharing and consistency of practice. The review team recommends that guidance services be facilitated to work more cohesively and consistently across the organisation to ensure all prospective learners have access to a seamless and equitably resourced service.

Commendations

- The review team commends the critical work conducted by guidance services and practitioners in a context of limited resources.
- The review team commends the collaboration between units to meet learner needs. This practice should be extended under a unified FET strategy.

Recommendations

- The review team supports and recommends KWETB's stated intention to "plan, design and put in place internal learning pathways to improve progression and transfer for learning" (SER, p. 55).
- The review team recommends that KWETB expands the current pilot projects developed under ALISS to place learners on programmes that they want and have the capability to undertake.
- The review team recommends that KWETB considers the development of a modified application processes for learners with additional needs or literacy challenges.
- The review team recommends that KWETB facilitates guidance services to work more cohesively and consistently across the organisation to ensure all prospective learners have access to a seamless and equitably resourced service.
- The review team recommends that KWETB Enhances their current good practice by formally seeking feedback from HEI partners which can be shared and promoted within the ETB.

Integrity and Approval of Learner Results

Processes to ensure integrity of results are embedded at centre, programme and central level, and their implementation is supported by two members of the QA Team. The QA Team publishes a common schedule for certification (over 6 periods) annually to support centres in scheduling assessment, planning for certification and provision of information to learners and staff (SER, p. 56).

There are well established internal verification (IV) and external authentication (EA) processes in place. These are described in detail in the SER. The IV process is conducted on a sampling basis by coordinators, programme directors and other responsible staff. IV reports are uploaded to the online certification system prior to the EA visit and RAP meeting (SER, p. 56). During the Covid-19 pandemic, the IV and EA processes were successfully moved online.

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 (SER, p. 56).

The SER notes that a small team is responsible for managing the administration of quality assuring assessment, which constitutes a risk to the service in the case of staff absence. The SER also notes that “A more integrated system for further education and training would enhance consistency of approach” (p. 58).

A report of the approved results is submitted to the Programme Governance Sub-Group, and a summary of actions arising is presented to the QA Sub-Group, which are then recommended to the Quality Council if appropriate. Following approval, centres are formally notified, results are submitted to the QQI Business System (QBS) and learners are informed of their results, their right to appeal the result, and of deadlines for appeal (SER p. 58).

Members of the QA Sub-Group informed the review team that they are very happy with the quality assurance of assessment processes. This unit of governance monitors the outcomes of RAPs and follows up on actions across the organisation. Some examples of follow up activity described to the review team include the development of training and induction for new tutors and changes made to some of the EA template reports to enhance their efficacy. The review team also heard that there is scope for further enhancement through ensuring that issues and trends identified in RAP and QA-Sub-Group meetings are fed back consistently to the relevant centres. It was also noted that further training and induction for EA staff would be a valuable means of ensuring consistency.

There are two separate assessment systems in place in the ETB: Locally devised assessment instruments and centrally devised assessments. There are challenges in terms of ensuring consistency in the locally devised assessment instruments. Another challenge relates to the dated assessment instruments in training and how to address this. The review team did not hear any clear

statement as to which assessment system KWETB will follow in the future under the integrated QA Framework currently under development.

Commendation

- The review team commends the ETB on the successful moving of the IV and EA processes online.

Information and Data Management

KWETB has clear policies for all areas of GDPR and has a named data protection officer. All staff are regularly offered, and a significant number have undertaken, GDPR training. The ETB has an internal data protection website which is available to all staff via the intranet. The website is used to ensure personal data is used appropriately by staff and in situations where data is transferred to third parties, such as QQI for certification purposes (SER, p. 60).

Whilst a variety of management information and communication systems are in use by staff at KWETB, ICT supports comprises a team of only two people. Additional technical support is outsourced. The review team heard from staff that this often causes delays of several days when ICT issues arise, a particular challenge in the context of remote working. This poses a risk to seamless delivery for learners. As such, the review team recommends that consideration be given to expanding in-house ICT supports.

The review team commends the establishment of key posts in the areas of professional development and TEL and the significant work undertaken to support tutors, instructors and learners migrate to, and develop competence in, online learning and digital technology in response to Covid-19 pandemic restrictions. The TEL Coordinator supports the use of online platforms and learning management systems and delivers training and resources for both (SER, p. 60). Microsoft 365 is the main operation system for communications and was critical to business continuity during the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2020, all FET learners were allocated their own e-mail addresses to enable participation in online learning. Microsoft Teams is used extensively to support work on the development of the new QA Framework and was used during the self-evaluation process for this review (SER, p. 62).

There is also an online platform to communicate QA information. It is used by coordinators, principals and programme directors to access all validated programmes for FET, certification calendars policies, news and information, and relevant forms (SER, p. 62).

The national Programme and Learner Support System (PLSS) and Apprenticeship Client Support System (ACSS) used for recording student participation and outcomes are both in use in the ETB. Coordinators and principals have responsibility for inputting data to these systems. The ACSS is accessed by Authorised Officers, Coordinating Providers and Consortium Providers. Enhancement and data cleansing activity was recently conducted on the ACSS (SER, p. 62). The SER notes that

“There is a perception that these [the PLSS and the ACSS] add to the administrative and bureaucratic pressures within centres, and this could be addressed by distributing improved administrative support fairly across the FET services” (p. 63). The review team recommends that the ETB seeks ways of enhancing its systems for managing learner data, using the “Potential Enhancements” identified in the SER (p.64) as a starting point.

The review team found that data collection processes and use of data to inform strategic decision-making and enhancement initiatives was under-developed at KWETB. This is discussed in more detail in the “Self-evaluation, Monitoring and Review” section of this report. However, the review team commends KWETB’s acknowledgement of the data diversity challenge and its stated commitment to making greater use of data.

Commendations

- The review team commends the roll out of the GDPR training to staff and the supports provided by an intranet website.
- The review team commends the establishment of key posts in the areas of professional development and TEL and the significant work undertaken to support teachers/tutors and learners migrate to online learning in response to Covid-19 pandemic restrictions.

Recommendations

- The review team recommends that KWETB seeks ways to enhance systems for managing learner data, using the “Potential Enhancements” identified in the SER (p. 64) as a starting point.
- The review team recommends that KWETB considers ways to expand in-house ICT supports.

Public Information and Communication

KWETB has a central website and dedicated social media accounts, including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. More flexibility in updating information will be provided by a new website from 2022 onwards (SER, p. 65). Individual centres also have their own websites and social media accounts. The ETB maintains a social media hub which highlights promotional campaigns and provides advice for using social media effectively as well as standard guidance for branding. There is a FET Promotion Steering Group which develops and publishes an annual digital brochure highlighting FET services for each county. This is published in all online channels, centre websites and social media. The Further Education and Training Course Hub (FETChcourses.ie) is used to promote programmes,

as are local news and media (SER, p. 65). The dedicated section of the KWETB website on FET includes information on FET programmes and quality assurance (SER, p. 67).

Despite these initiatives, the review heard from learners, employers and other external stakeholders that more could be done to enhance public knowledge and information about KWETB and what it has to offer. Some stated that they had been completely unaware of KWETB and the opportunities it presents until directed there by a third party. It was suggested that KWETB should connect with employers and other representative from the sectors in which programmes are offered so that upskilling opportunities are widely communicated. The review team supports the proposal in the SER to develop a comprehensive PR “marketing strategy with plans for targeting specific groups effectively” (p. 67). This will be an important step in increasing the publication and promotion of KWETB programmes.

The review team also commends use of the ETB website to publish Board minutes and QA policy and procedures.

Commendation

- The review team commends the use of the KWETB website to publish Board minutes and QA policy and procedures.

Recommendation

- The review team recommends and supports the proposal to develop a comprehensive PR “marketing strategy with plans for targeting specific groups effectively” (SER, p. 67). This will be an important step in increasing the publication and promotion of KWETB programmes.

Objective 2: Teaching, Learning & Assessment

The Learning Environment

As stated previously, all feedback received by the review team indicates that the move online in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, and supports for staff and learners in that regard, was accomplished swiftly and successfully. Both staff and students were supplied with devices where needed and key posts were appointed in TEL. CPD was provided to staff on an ongoing basis.

In terms of the physical environment, the review team heard that the ETB has a large stock of older buildings. These are at capacity and limit the ETB's ability to deliver on its bigger ambitions. Nonetheless, both staff and learners expressed satisfaction that buildings are well maintained and meet learning needs. Where required for programmes, facilities which simulate real-life work environments have been provided; for example, The Marine House Hospitality Training Centre in Wicklow Town, the digital media hub at the Newbridge FETC, the purpose-built television production and media facilities at Bray Institute of Further Education (BIFE), and a number of Youthreach centres have purpose-built training kitchens and woodwork rooms (SER p. 78). The review team recommends that KWETB develops an estate strategy to enable the achievement of its ambitions in the longer term.

The commitment of teachers, tutors and instructors to their learners and supporting their learning journeys especially during Covid-19 was very evident to the review team. The review team commends ETB staff and management for providing a quality learning environment, and in promoting and supporting a learner-centred approach to teaching, learning and assessment.

Commendations

- The review team commends KWETB's swift and effective response to Covid including the technology support; CPD provided for staff and equipment for staff and learners.
- The review team commends KWETB's staff and management for providing a quality learning environment, and in promoting and supporting a learner-centred approach to teaching, learning and assessment.

Recommendation

- The review team recommends that KWETB develops an estate strategy to enable the achievement of KWETB's ambitions in the longer term.

Assessment of Learners

KWETB operates two different assessment systems, a locally devised assessment system in its further education provision and a centrally devised assessment system in the training provision. This reflects the fact that it is currently operating two legacy QA systems as described earlier. Assessment is organised and conducted at FE centre and college level, guided by the standards of the relevant awarding body, programme descriptors, quality assuring assessment policies and procedures, and awarding body certification periods (SER, p. 81). In training services, assessment instrument specifications (AISs) and pre-prepared assessment instruments are used. These are securely stored and issued on request (SER, p. 81) by the Training Standards office.

Assessment policies and procedures are based on the 2013 guidelines for quality assuring assessment, and the ETBI reference handbook for assessment. They are available to coordinators and principals on the quality assurance site (*ibid.*).

The review team commends the introduction of the ePortfolio template to facilitate the use of high-quality, digital portfolios of assessment. The review team heard evidence that this had a significant, positive impact on the management of assessments in FE services during the pandemic.

The outdated AISs in use in training services are a risk that needs to be addressed. The majority of programmes provided through training services is delivered through contracted second providers. In the interim, the review team recommends a plan be developed to address the dated AISs in training as a matter of urgency and to have new AISs validated through the QA governance structures before being uploaded to the TQAS. The review team is of the opinion that KWETB should work with second providers on updating those most dated AISs.

Another issue identified is that currently, KWETB does not have a way for checking or approving the quality of locally devised assessment beyond trust placed in the assessor, the line manager and reporting by the EA (SER, p. 83). The review team encourages KWETB to prioritise this for the benefit of tutors and learners alike. The review team recommends that in centres where locally devised assessments are operating, KWETB should introduce cross moderation at regional level to support consistency in the development of assessment and develop exemplars of assessment instruments and marking schemes.

In moving to one integrated QA system, KWETB will need to make a policy decision on its approach to assessments in the near future. Making a decision on the model of assessment will determine many of the procedures going forward. However, it was clear to the review team that such a decision has not yet been made and this decision is critical to the future shape of the integrated QA system.

Some of the QA Team were 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 providers (SER, p. 87).

As noted in the SER, the ETB is aware of this lack of consistency between the legacy programmes descriptors and FÁS, and between quantities and standards of assessment evidence required (p. 83). It notes that “these are risks that may result in undermining the reputation of the FET system and are a priority which needs to be addressed strategically” (p. 83).

Commendation

- The review team commends the introduction of the ePortfolio template which had a significant, positive impact on the management of assessments.

Recommendations

- The review team recommends that KWETB develops procedures for checking or approving the quality of locally devised assessment. This should include the development of a plan to address the dated AISs in training as a matter of urgency and validate new AISs through the QA governance structures. KWETB should work with second providers on updating those most dated AISs.
- The review team recommends that KWETB make a decision on the future model for assessment development across FE and training.
- The review team recommends that in centres where locally devised assessments are operating, KWETB should introduce cross moderation at regional level to support consistency in the development of assessment and develop exemplars of assessment instruments and marking schemes.

Supports for Learners

Supports for learners in KWETB are provided on an individual basis by centre personnel, who are also responsible for ensuring that learners are aware of the supports available for them. Specialist supports are available for specific target groups:

- Adult Guidance
- School Guidance Counsellors (located in the PLC colleges)
- Youthreach Advocate (available to Youthreach learners in Wicklow)
- Special Education Needs Provision (Arklow and Naas 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 candidate⁷

Staff development in this area has been supported through participation in the National Teaching and Learning Forum, the AHEAD in-service programme in Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and in staff development from the Dyslexia Association of Ireland (DAI) (SER, p. 89).

The review team was impressed with the learner-focused approach of staff across KWETB, and the positive engagement of staff with learners. The review team noted that the impact of guidance and support where available is very positive. The review team commends the guidance service and its role in assisting learners to identify courses that best fit their needs and in providing ongoing support throughout their learner pathway. However, career guidance is not fully integrated across FE and training, and this means that it is not available to all. The availability of learning support services also varies across centres. The review team recommends that KWETB reviews supports available across centres of different sizes and fully integrates career guidance to ensure consistency.

⁷ Kildare and Wicklow ETB Self-Evaluation Report (SER), p 89

The review team heard that the links between guidance counsellors which may result in peer learning and enhancement of practice are not ETB led, but personally led. The team finds there is scope for the ETB to build on informal networks of guidance counsellors and facilitate communities of practice within and across the ETB.

The review team warmly commends the introduction of the new ALISS (Accessible Learning Integrated Support Service) and the piloting of a common system for the initial assessment of core skills. It 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 (SER, p. 89). The review team supports the KWETB plan to expand the ALISS service and the Study Hub to all learners including those in training services (SER, p. 96).

The review team heard how a shortage of staff across support services puts enormous pressure on existing staff and restricts the capacity of the support services to ensure all learners have equitable access to required supports.

The provision and availability of supports for learners is currently dependent on the programme in which the learner is placed, which the review team finds inequitable and leads to potentially missed opportunities for learners and issues with progression routes. Supports are available based on specialist funding strands rather than being seamlessly available across FET following a transparent identification of needs (SER p. 95). The review team supports KWETB's intention to "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" (SER p. 96).

Commendations

- The review team commends the guidance service and its role in assisting learners to identify courses that best fit their needs and in providing ongoing support throughout their learner pathway.
- The review team commends the establishment of the ALISS and the piloting of a common system for the initial assessment of core skills.

Recommendations

- The review team recommends that KWETB proceed with its plan to expand the ALISS service and the Study Hub to all learners including those in training services (SER, p. 96).
- The review team recommends that supports are available across centres of different sizes and fully integrate with career guidance to ensure consistency. The review team supports KWETB's intention to "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" (SER, p. 96).

Objective 3: Self-evaluation, Monitoring & Review

Self-evaluation, Monitoring & Review

The review team considers the overall approach to quality at KWETB as reactive rather than proactive or strategic. This was acknowledged by the senior leadership team in FET, who reported to the review team that the ETB has been in operational mode in the recent period. Interest from staff in formal QA and familiarity with the language associated with it could be enhanced (SER, p. 30 and 31). The review team finds this may partially account for the very low response rates from staff (less than 3%) to the surveys conducted as part of the self-evaluation process for this review. It is apparent that a lot of QA-related activity is driven in response to external requirements imposed by regulators and funders, such as QQI and SOLAS. The review team strongly recommends that the ETB take steps to ensure that quality is owned (internally driven to meet internal needs) and utilised to help achieve strategic ambitions for FET. The review team suggests that an annual, institutional cycle of monitoring and review could help achieve that.

The review team found that use of data by all units of governance, the QA Team and the senior leadership team, was comparatively limited and not systematic. For example, learner information, such as enrolment, completion, certification and progression rates are not systematically analysed to identify trends and issues or inform strategic decision-making. The review team strongly recommends that KWETB makes greater use of data to inform strategic decision-making, including in performance review, target setting and provision development. The review team further recommends that KWETB introduce an annual evaluation process at centre level engaging all staff. Outcomes of such reviews should inform planning at centre level, at regional level and central level. Data on progression, retention and outcomes should inform the review and such reviews could be supported by the QA Team.

As outlined in Section 1, the absence of any feedback from external stakeholders in the SER is a notable and unfortunate omission. The review team heard of the challenges faced by the QA Team in gaining direct access to stakeholders, such as employers and second providers. The ETB would significantly benefit from routinely capturing such voices in formal QA processes at both local and central level and stakeholders should be made aware of obligations in this regard from the commencement of any engagement. The review team recommends that the QA Team be given direct, formal and routine access to the full range of stakeholders to inform QA processes.

More broadly, the positive developments in governance and management of QA at central level need to filter down throughout the organisation. In addition to endorsing implementation of the “potential enhancements” identified in the SER (p. 104), the review team recommends that a culture and framework for self-evaluation be developed and promoted at class level and centre level. Centres should review the outcomes of their work annually examining feedback from learners, staff and stakeholders and data on retention, certification and progression.

Recommendations

- The review team recommends that KWETB takes steps to ensure that quality is owned (internally driven to meet internal needs) and utilised to help achieve strategic ambitions for FET. An annual, institutional cycle of monitoring and review could help achieve that. This should include the development and promotion of a culture and framework for self-evaluation at class level and centre level. Centres should review the outcomes of their work annually examining feedback from learners, staff and stakeholders and data on retention, certification and progression. Such reviews could be supported by the QA Team.
- The review team recommends that KWETB makes greater use of data to inform strategic decision-making, including in performance review, target setting and provision development.
- The review team recommends that the QA Team should be given direct, formal and routine access to the full range of stakeholders to inform QA processes. KWETB should develop a central database of employers engaged with KWETB to support the QA function. This database should include employers active with the ETB in providing work experience and work placement opportunities, engaging in programme development or receiving education and training services for employees. The data base should also name the department that manages the relationship with that employer.

Programme Monitoring & Review

There is currently no systemic, consistent approach to the review of FET programmes at KWETB. Programmes are reviewed locally using learner satisfaction data gathered through a variety of approaches and which is analysed locally. Monitoring is carried out in accordance with the KWETB-SOLAS Performance Agreement. Coordinators send reports on outcomes to their AEOs. The SER acknowledges that “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” (SER p. 105).

FET management reviews statistics compiled using the PLSS, while new programme delivery is informed by local, labour-market needs. The SER further notes that:

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 (SER p. 105).

The review team welcomes KWETB's intention to "establish a defined process for the systematic evaluation, review and monitoring of existing programmes" (SER p. 106) and recommends that an audit of the existing programmes should be undertaken urgently to identify the priority programmes that will need re-development. This is listed as a formal recommendation earlier in the report. The review team is of the view that consideration should be given to collaborating with other ETBs in the development of new programmes. The review team further recommends that data from the PLSS be used to inform reviews of programme outcomes in centres and across centres and to give management at centre level and central level the data to support strategic decision-making.

Throughout the review week, the review team heard from a variety of internal and external stakeholders that there is a lack of consistency across programmes and centres. There is a need to have a standardised approach to programme content, descriptors, quality assurance, and continuous assessment. The programme descriptors require updating and improvement across all centres for FE and training.

Whilst learner satisfaction data is one of the primary means of monitoring programmes, feedback during the review week from learners and tutors / instructors indicated that there were different experiences across programmes and centres in terms of capturing learner feedback. The review team heard that some programmes lack a formal process for collecting feedback from learners. In the absence of such mechanisms, staff use a variety of methods of their own devising to collect feedback directly on a regular basis to ensure that the course content meets learner needs and is applicable to future employment opportunities. Staff reported that where formal processes are in place, feedback is usually sent to the course coordinator but tutors were unaware of what happened from then on. Learners confirmed that they receive feedback from tutors in a timely manner. The review team recommends that the ETB establish clear mechanisms to capture learners' feedback in a consistent manner at class level, centre level and central level across its FET provision and that the feedback is actively used in evaluation and to inform decision-making.

The review team heard from second providers during the review week that key performance indicators (KPIs) are either not used, can vary a lot or are not as strong as in other ETBs and that there has been a shift away from their use. Second providers reported that, in the main, they are required to submit attendance and overall results at the end of the programme. The review team strongly recommends that the use of KPIs be re-introduced consistently to set targets in areas such as retention, certification and progression in all education and training programmes delivered by centres and second providers and those outcomes should be measured and recorded. This quantitative data should be used by centre management and senior management in future planning.

Recommendations

- The review team recommends that KWETB establishes clear mechanisms to formally capture the learner voice consistently at programme, centre and central level to inform decision-making at all levels.
- The review team recommends that data from the PLSS should be used to inform reviews of programme outcomes in centres and across centres and to give management at centre level and central level the data to support strategic decision-making.
- The review team recommends that KPIs should be re-introduced consistently to set targets in areas such as retention, certification and progression in all education and training programmes delivered by centres and second providers and those outcomes should be measured and recorded. This quantitative data should be used by centre management and senior management in future planning.

Oversight, Monitoring & Review of Relationships with External Parties

KWETB has a range of relationship with third parties, including with second providers (contracted training providers); community training centres and groups; Erasmus Plus project partners and other stakeholders, such as the Irish Hotels Federation, for the development and delivery of training programmes. There are established processes for the monitoring and review of these relationships, responsibility for which rests with the project leaders or managers for the particular partnership in question. However, as noted in the SER, “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” (p. 107).

The review team commends the strong, productive relationships at local level with industry, employers and HEIs which should be harnessed centrally to maximise opportunities for the ETB and its learners. Examples include the development of new programmes in partnership with industry, such as the Bretzel Bakery Traineeship. The review team heard very positive reports from external partners / employers about the fast and efficient response from KWETB to developing and adapting programmes to meet industry needs and examples of good practice in responding to employer requests for the delivery of education and training programmes for their staff. Second providers described KWETB’s timely response to industry and employer training needs where the ETB does not have the in-house capacity to do so, though engagement with awarding bodies other than QQI.

The ETB’s positive and proactive engagement with industry and the wider community was also evident in its engagement in apprenticeships, for example, and the roll out of the apprenticeship in commis chef to three parts of the region. The review team encourages KWETB to enhance its innovation role in that area. The review team also commends KWETB’s relationship with community organisations and the support role the ETB plays in providing community education courses to vulnerable adults.

Whilst the strength and responsiveness of the local relationships described above was attested in discussions held by the review team with third parties, a need for central knowledge and oversight of such relationships is needed. The review team recommends that the formalisation and centralisation of QA processes for, and oversight of, the monitoring and review of external relationships should be progressed as a priority. This could be achieved by:

- a) Strengthening the role of the QA Team in monitoring and informing contracted training providers on their use of KWETB QA procedures and validated programmes.
- b) Strengthening the relationship between the QA Team, governance structures and contracted training and community providers.

The review team further recommends that KWETB develops a central database of employers with which it is engaged to support the QA function. This database should include employers active with the ETB in providing work experience and work placement opportunities, engaging in programme development or receiving education and training services for employees. The database should also name the department that manages the relationship with that employer.

Commendations

- The review team commends the strong, productive relationships at local level with industry, employers and HEIs which should be harnessed centrally to maximise opportunities for the ETB and its learners. Examples include the development of new programmes in partnership with industry, such as the Bretzel Bakery Traineeship.
- The review team commends that KWETB works with second providers to ensure a timely response to industry and employer training needs where the ETB does not have the in-house capacity to do so.
- The review team commends the examples of good practice in responding to employer requests for the delivery of education and training programmes for their staff.
- The review team commends the engagement in apprenticeship, for example, the roll out of the apprenticeship in commis chef to three parts of the regions. The review team encourages KWETB to enhance its innovation role in that area.
- The review team commends the relationship between the ETB and community organisations and the support role the ETB plays in providing community education courses to vulnerable adults.

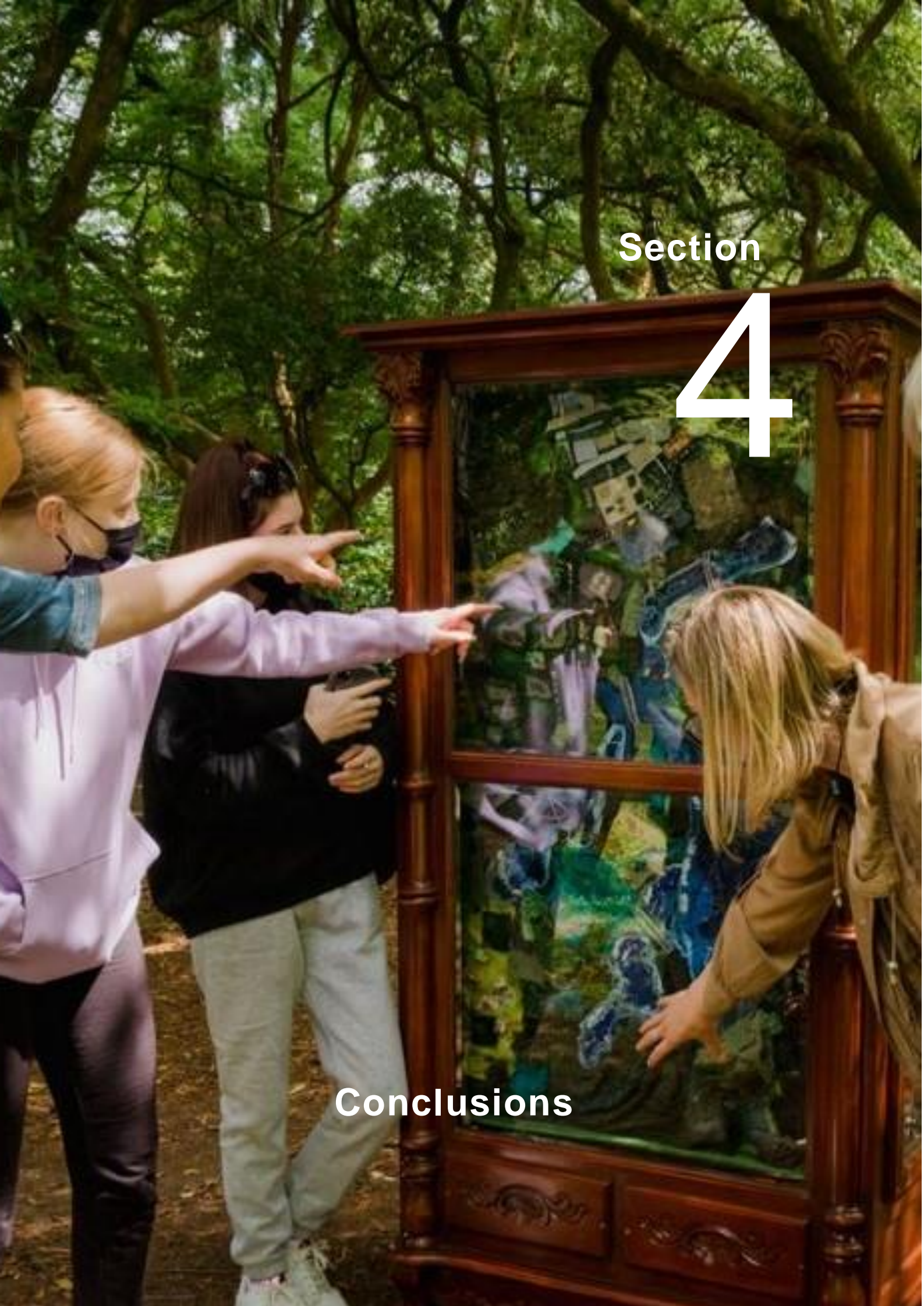
Recommendations

- The review recommends that KWETB formalises and centralises QA processes for, and oversight of, the monitoring and review of external relationships as a priority. This could be achieved by:
 - Strengthening the role of the QA Team in monitoring and informing contracted training providers on their use of KWETB QA procedures and validated programmes.
 - Strengthening the relationship between the QA Team, governance structures and contracted training and community providers.

Section

4

Conclusions



Section 4: Conclusions

4.1 Conclusions on Arrangements for Governance & Management of Quality

The review team commends the open, frank and honest manner in which the ETB engaged in the process, both in the SER and throughout the discussions during the site visit. The review team finds that KWETB has taken important steps in the recent period to enhance its arrangements for the governance and management of quality. The introduction of new governance structures has ensured enhanced oversight of academic decision-making. Whilst these structures are still very new, they appear to be working well. The review team recommends that the terms of reference and membership of the formal units of governance be reviewed within 12 months to ensure that they are consistent and continue to be fit for purpose (Recommendation 3). Extending membership to include independent, external expertise will be an important step in strengthening the role of governance structures (Recommendation 3).

Despite these enhancements, the review team found a further education and training service which is not yet working as cohesively as it could. It recommends that KWETB immediately develops a clearly articulated, long-term vision and strategy for an integrated FET service, which identifies the changes needed for its realisation and related timeframes (Recommendation 1). This will be underpinned by the finalisation and implementation of the new quality assurance framework, the prioritisation of which is strongly recommended by the review team (Recommendation 2) and further supported by the strengthening of governance and management structures and arrangements to ensure their effectiveness (Recommendation 3).

The review team commends the dedication of KWETB staff to ensuring a positive quality learning experience in line with the ETB's mission (Strand 1). The inclusion of learners in all units of governance, and, in particular, the focus on the learner voice in the new Stakeholder Sub-Group of the Quality Council is welcomed. New policies and procedures for staff professional development introduced in 2021 are welcomed, but the review team found that these have not yet been fully or consistently implemented and has made a recommendation in relation to this (Recommendation 7).

A culture of separateness exists currently within the organisation, with the term 'silo' emerging both in the SER and in conversations between the review team and staff. The review team recommends that

KWETB enhance communication channels across the organisation and between centres and 'Head Office' to ensure best practice is identified and shared between staff, peer learning is promoted, and organisational developments and enhancements are widely known and understood. The review team commends the move towards establishing communities of practice which enables staff on similar programmes across the ETB to benefit from peer learning opportunities. The review team encourages the expansion of this practice across all FET provision.

The review team endorses the stated intention to "Establish a dedicated curriculum and programme development unit within the QA team for all of KWETB FET with a brief to develop a process, inform strategy and engage in programme development and validation" (SER, p. 47). It further welcomes the stated intention to "establish a defined process for the systematic evaluation, review and monitoring of existing programmes" (SER, p 106) and recommends that an audit of the existing programmes should be undertaken urgently to identify the priority programmes that will need re-development. Consideration should be given to collaborating with other ETBs in the development of new programmes.

4.2 Conclusions on Arrangements for Teaching, Learning & Assessment

The review team commends KWETB staff and management on providing a quality learning environment, and in promoting and supporting a learner-centred approach to teaching, learning and assessment. The establishment of key posts in the areas of professional development and TEL and the significant work undertaken to support teachers/tutors and learners migrate to online learning ensured that that KWETB successfully responded to the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions.

KWETB operates two different assessment systems, a locally devised assessment system in its further education provision and a centrally devised assessment system in the training provision. This reflects the fact that it is currently operating two legacy QA systems. In moving to one integrated QA system, KWETB will need to make a policy decision on its approach to assessments in the near future. Making a decision on the model of assessment will determine many of the procedures going forward. In the interim, the review team recommends a plan be developed to address the dated AISs in training as a matter of urgency. In centres where locally devised assessments are operating, KWETB should introduce cross moderation at regional level to support consistency in the development of assessment and develop exemplars of assessment instruments and marking schemes. The review team commends the introduction of the ePortfolio template to facilitate the use

of high-quality, digital portfolios of assessment. This had a significant, positive impact on the management of assessments in FE services during the pandemic.

The review team noted the commitment of the guidance service and its role in assisting learners to identify courses that best fit their needs and in providing ongoing support throughout their learner pathway. The review team commends the establishment of the ALISS and the piloting of a common system for the initial assessment of core skills and supports the KWETB plan to expand the ALISS service and the Study Hub to all learners including those in training services (SER, p. 96). To ensure consistency, the review team recommends that KWETB reviews supports available across centres of different sizes and fully integrate career guidance to ensure consistency. The review team supports the stated intention to “Develop an equitable system of supports for learners regardless of centre or funding strand, eliminating barriers to support” (SER, p. 96).

4.3 Conclusions on Arrangements for Self-Evaluation, Monitoring & Review

The review team commends the strong, productive relationships at local level with industry, employers and HEIs which should be harnessed centrally to maximise opportunities for the ETB and its learners. Examples include the development of new programmes in partnership with industry, such as the Bretzel Bakery Traineeship. KWETB also works well with second providers to ensure a timely response to industry and employer training needs where the ETB does not have the in-house capacity to do so. The review team saw a number of examples of good practice in responding to employer requests for the delivery of education and training programmes for their staff. The review team further commends the relationship between KWETB and community organisations and the support role the ETB plays in providing community education courses to vulnerable adults.

Despite these many examples of good practice, the review team found that there is a need to formalise and centralise QA processes for, and oversight of, the monitoring and review of external relationships. The review team recommends that KWETB develop and promote a culture and framework for self-evaluation at class level, centre level and central level. Centres should review the outcomes of their work annually examining feedback from learners, staff and stakeholders and data on retention, certification and progression. Such reviews could be supported by the QA Team (Recommendation 24).

KWETB should make greater use of data to inform strategic decision-making, including in performance review, target setting and provision development (Recommendation 25). The review team also found that formal mechanism for capturing stakeholder voices should be developed and recommends that the QA Team should be given direct, formal and routine access to the full range of stakeholders to inform QA processes (Recommendation 26). Similarly, clear mechanisms are needed to formally capture the learner voice consistently at programme, centre and central level to inform decision-making at all levels.

The review team welcomes the stated intention to “establish a defined process for the systematic evaluation, review and monitoring of existing programmes” (SER, p. 106) and recommends that an audit of the existing programmes should be undertaken urgently to identify the priority programmes that will need re-development. Consideration should be given to collaborating with other ETBs in the development of new programmes (Recommendation 9). KPIs should be re-introduced consistently to set targets in areas such as retention, certification and progression in all education and training programmes delivered by centres and second providers and those outcomes should be measured and recorded. This quantitative data should be used by centre management and senior management in future planning (Recommendation 29).

4.4 Commendations

1. The review team commends the dedication of staff to ensuring a positive quality learning experience in line with the ETB’s mission (Strand 1).
2. The review team commends the inclusion of learners in all units of governance, and, in particular, the focus on the learner voice in the new Stakeholder Sub-Group of the Quality Council.
3. The review team commends the transparency of governance structures through the publication of Board minutes.
4. The review team commends the move towards establishing communities of practice which enables staff on similar programmes across the ETB to benefit from peer learning opportunities. The review team encourages the expansion of this practice across all FET provision.
5. The review team commends the development of new programmes in partnership with industry, such as the Bretzel Bakery Traineeship and the pre-University Engineering collaboration between BIFE and TU Dublin.
6. The review team commends the introduction of the online Programme Development Hub.

7. The review team commends the critical work conducted by guidance services and practitioners in a context of limited resources.
8. The review team commends the collaboration between units to meet learner needs. This practice should be extended under a unified FET strategy.
9. The review team commends the ETB on the successful moving of the IV and EA processes online.
10. The review team commends the roll out of the GDPR training to staff and the supports provided by an intranet website.
11. The review team commends the establishment of key posts in the areas of professional development and TEL and the significant work undertaken to support teachers/tutors and learners migrate to online learning in response to Covid-19 pandemic restrictions.
12. The review team commends the use of the KWETB website to publish Board minutes and QA policy and procedures.
13. The review team commends KWETB's swift and effective response to Covid including the technology support; CPD provided for staff and equipment for staff and learners.
14. The review team commends KWETB's staff and management for providing a quality learning environment, and in promoting and supporting a learner-centred approach to teaching, learning and assessment.
15. The review team commends the introduction of the ePortfolio template which had a significant, positive impact on the management of assessments.
16. The review team commends the guidance service and its role in assisting learners to identify courses that best fit their needs and in providing ongoing support throughout their learner pathway.
17. The review team commends the establishment of the ALISS and the piloting of a common system for the initial assessment of core skills.
18. The review team commends the strong, productive relationships at local level with industry, employers and HEIs which should be harnessed centrally to maximise opportunities for the ETB and its learners. Examples include the development of new programmes in partnership with industry, such as the Bretzel Bakery Traineeship.
19. The review team commends that KWETB works with second providers to ensure a timely response to industry and employer training needs where the ETB does not have the in-house capacity to do so.
20. The review team commends the examples of good practice in responding to employer requests for the delivery of education and training programmes for their staff.
21. The review team commends the engagement in apprenticeship, for example, the roll out of the apprenticeship in commis chef to three parts of the regions. The review team encourages KWETB to enhance its innovation role in that area.

22. The review team commends the relationship between the ETB and community organisations and the support role the ETB plays in providing community education courses to vulnerable adults.

4.5 Recommendations

1. The review team recommends the immediate development of a clearly articulated, long-term vision and strategy for an integrated FET service, which identifies the changes needed for its realisation and related timeframes.
2. The review team recommends the immediate development of a single QA framework and a clear plan for its implementation which identifies the changes needed for its realisation and related timeframes. The development and implementation of the new QAF should be prioritised and expedited as a matter of utmost importance to ensure that the ETB's commitment to quality can be fully realised.
 - a. Ensure examples of best practice are identified and inform the development of the new QAF.
 - b. This new QA Framework must include a strong focus on robust internal self-evaluation processes at all levels of the organisation, which expands the approach to seeking feedback to include a much greater range of external perspectives.
3. The review team recommends the strengthening of governance and management structures and arrangements to ensure their effectiveness, to include:
 - a. review of the Quality Council and sub committees Terms of Reference and membership within 12 months to ensure they continue to be fit for purpose and to provide clarity for members and wider audiences.
 - b. regular meetings of all FET teams and a common standard for recording minutes.
 - c. enhanced information and communication flows to and from 'Head Office'.
 - d. increasing the involvement of independent, external experts in QA governance structures.
4. The review team recommends that the QA Team produce an annual plan with the priorities for the team identified and the timeline for delivery.
5. The review recommends that KWETB considers more varied and extensive means of consultation with staff and learners on policy development. The consultation process, when strategically designed, may be harnessed as a means of generating 'buy in' from staff and a sense of ownership and investment in the quality system.
6. The review recommends that KWETB ensures that the staff and learner handbooks are derived directly from the finalised QAF to confirm uniformity of information and practice and that students have easy access to all relevant documentation, such as the Code of Conduct.

7. The review team recommends that KWETB fully and consistently implement the organisation's approach and policies for performance management and professional development. This should include the introduction of a mentoring system for new teaching / instructing staff to support new staff in curriculum and assessment.
8. The review team recommends that KWETB enhances the communication channels across the organisation and between centres and 'Head Office' to ensure best practice is identified and shared between staff, peer learning is promoted, and organisational developments and enhancements are widely known and understood.
9. The review team welcomes the stated intention to "establish a defined process for the systematic evaluation, review and monitoring of existing programmes" (SER p. 106) and recommends that:
 - a. an audit of the existing programmes should be undertaken urgently to identify the priority programmes that will need re-development. Consideration should be given to collaborating with other ETBs in the development of new programmes.
 - b. KWETB collaborates with other ETBs to fast track the achievement of its stated intention to "implement a quality assured process for the review and updating of existing programme descriptors" (SER p. 31).
10. The review team supports and recommends KWETB's stated intention to "plan, design and put in place internal learning pathways to improve progression and transfer for learning" (SER, p. 55).
11. The review team recommends that KWETB expands the current pilot projects developed under ALISS to place learners on programmes that they want and have the capability to undertake.
12. The review team recommends that KWETB considers the development of a modified application processes for learners with additional needs or literacy challenges.
13. The review team recommends that KWETB facilitates guidance services to work more cohesively and consistently across the organisation to ensure all prospective learners have access to a seamless and equitably resourced service.
14. The review team recommends that KWETB enhances their current good practice by formally seeking feedback from HEI partners which can be shared and promoted within the ETB.
15. The review team recommends that KWETB seeks ways to enhance systems for managing learner data, using the "Potential Enhancements" identified in the SER (p. 64) as a starting point.
16. The review team recommends that KWETB considers ways to expand in-house ICT supports.
17. The review team recommends and supports the proposal to develop a comprehensive PR "marketing strategy with plans for targeting specific groups effectively" (SER, p. 67). This will be an important step in increasing the publication and promotion of KWETB programmes.

18. The review team recommends that KWETB develops an estate strategy to enable the achievement of KWETB's ambitions in the longer term.
19. The review team recommends that KWETB develops procedures for checking or approving the quality of locally devised assessment. This should include the development of a plan to address the dated AISs in training as a matter of urgency and validate new AISs through the QA governance structures. KWETB should work with second providers on updating those most dated AISs.
20. The review team recommends that KWETB make a decision on the future model for assessment development across FE and training.
21. The review team recommends that in centres where locally devised assessments are operating, KWETB should introduce cross moderation at regional level to support consistency in the development of assessment and develop exemplars of assessment instruments and marking schemes.
22. The review team recommends that KWETB proceed with its plan to expand the ALISS service and the Study Hub to all learners including those in training services (SER, p. 96).
23. The review team recommends that supports are available across centres of different sizes and fully integrate with career guidance to ensure consistency. The review team supports KWETB's intention to "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" (SER, p. 96).
24. The review team recommends that KWETB takes steps to ensure that quality is owned (internally driven to meet internal needs) and utilised to help achieve strategic ambitions for FET. An annual, institutional cycle of monitoring and review could help achieve that. This should include the development and promotion of a culture and framework for self-evaluation at class level and centre level. Centres should review the outcomes of their work annually examining feedback from learners, staff and stakeholders and data on retention, certification and progression. Such reviews could be supported by the QA Team.
25. The review team recommends that KWETB makes greater use of data to inform strategic decision-making, including in performance review, target setting and provision development.
26. The review team recommends that the QA Team should be given direct, formal and routine access to the full range of stakeholders to inform QA processes. KWETB should develop a central database of employers engaged with KWETB to support the QA function. This database should include employers active with the ETB in providing work experience and work placement opportunities, engaging in programme development or receiving education and training services for employees. The data base should also name the department that manages the relationship with that employer.
27. The review team recommends that KWETB establishes clear mechanisms to formally capture the learner voice consistently at programme, centre and central level to inform decision-making at all levels.

28. The review team recommends that data from the PLSS should be used to inform reviews of programme outcomes in centres and across centres and to give management at centre level and central level the data to support strategic decision-making.
29. The review team recommends that KPIs should be re-introduced consistently to set targets in areas such as retention, certification and progression in all education and training programmes delivered by centres and second providers and those outcomes should be measured and recorded. This quantitative data should be used by centre management and senior management in future planning.
30. The review recommends that KWETB formalises and centralises QA processes for, and oversight of, the monitoring and review of external relationships as a priority. This could be achieved by:
 - a. Strengthening the role of the QA Team in monitoring and informing contracted training providers on their use of KWETB QA procedures and validated programmes.
 - b. Strengthening the relationship between the QA Team, governance structures and contracted training and community providers.

4.6 Statements on Quality Assurance

The extent to which existing quality assurance procedures adhere to QQI's Quality Assurance Guidelines and policies (as listed at 3.4 of the Terms of Reference)

As noted earlier in this report, KWETB is currently operating two legacy QA systems within which there are gaps and inconsistencies in formal, documented policies and procedures; for example, in relation to work experience and blended learning. The ETB is in the process of developing a new integrated quality assurance framework which will incorporate policies and procedures covering all areas of the QQI QA guidelines and areas of activity relating the further education and training services. The review team was advised that original plans to have this new framework completed and implemented by early 2023 have been extended considerably. The review team strongly recommends that completing and implementing the new quality assurance framework be prioritised and accelerated (Recommendation 2). This will in turn underpin and support the roll out and implementation of the FET strategy.

The extent to which the procedures are in keeping with QQI's Policy Restatement and Criteria for Access, Transfer and Progression

The review team finds that KWETB's existing QA policies and procedures largely adhere to QQI's quality assurance guidelines and policies with the exception of the omissions already noted. Areas for improvement have been identified in this report, for example in relation to the inclusion of independent external expertise in units of governance and the strengthening of formal mechanisms for self-monitoring and review. The review team finds that KWETB's policies and procedures are in keeping with QQI's Policy Restatement and Criteria for Access, Transfer and Progression in Relation to Learners for Providers of Further and Higher Education and Training.

A qualitative statement on the enhancement of quality

As noted, throughout this report, KWETB is at a formative stage in the formalisation of its QA system. The review team encountered a commitment to quality across the organisation and an enthusiastic and well-intentioned QA Team. Enhancement activity is, and should remain, focused on the completion and implementation of the single integrated quality assurance framework.



Section

5

ETB Review Response

Section 5: ETB Review Response

Response to QCI Inaugural Review Report

Introduction

Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board (KWETB) welcomes commendations and recommendations of the Inaugural Review Team. We thank and acknowledge the international review team of experts for engaging with KWETB staff, students and stakeholders in a robust and thought-provoking process. The ETB welcomes the external perspective of the review team.

The self-evaluation process, preparation of the self-evaluation report and the opportunity to engage during the week-long virtual visit, provided the ETB with opportunities to reflect critically on the strengths of the further education and training (FET) system and in particular on the effectiveness of its quality assurance procedures system. The review provides an insight into practice in KWETB, in a period of challenge and turbulence as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and is an essential element of the development of KWETB's future approaches to integrated quality assurance in FET, to be achieved through the development and implementation of an action plan. KWETB thanks the Review Team for commending KWETB's swift and effective response to Covid19 including the provision of technology support, CPD provided for staff and equipment for staff and learners, and for its commendation of staff and management's learner-centred approach to teaching, learning and assessment.

The Virtual Self-evaluation and Review

The self-evaluation of quality assurance systems in KWETB commenced in February 2020, immediately prior to the onset of Covid19 and its consequent restrictions. The planned self-evaluation activities were 'pivoted' to an online environment, at a time of considerable new learning and adoption of new working environments for all concerned. The self-evaluation process, preparation of the self-evaluation report and the review team visit, took place in the virtual environment, with the exception of two workshops to review and discuss the findings of the self-evaluation and to prioritise enhancements. The capacity of the team in KWETB to respond with resilience to the triple challenges of Covid19; the pivot to remote online teaching and learning and the online self-evaluation and review process, many of which are reflected at national level, cannot be underestimated.

KWETB welcomes and acknowledges the review team's commendation of the dedication of staff, their commitment to ensuring a "positive, quality learning experience", and their energetic, learner-focused approach.

KWETB acknowledges the review team recommendation to develop a more integrated FET service underpinned by a single QA framework.

Response to commendations

The review team, in its report, sets out 22 commendations. Kildare and Wicklow ETB sincerely thank the Review Team for the affirmation and acknowledgement of good practice identified and evidenced during the review process.

KWETB acknowledges the review team's recognition and commendation of our quality learning environment, including the learner-centred approach to teaching, learning and assessment, in high quality programmes of education and training delivered by dedicated staff and management. The KWETB mission and values places learners at the centre of the activities of the organisation, and this is reflected in practice in the further education and training services.

KWETB is pleased with the review team's commendation of the guidance service, which is at the centre of KWETB's intention to ensure access to FET programmes that meet the needs of all learners. The establishment of innovative new support systems and the piloting of a common system for the initial assessment of core skills was also commended by the review team, and reflects the ongoing commitment of KWETB to enabling access to high quality programmes of education and training with access to supports for learners.

KWETB is committed to developing a culture of quality through the involvement and inclusion of staff, learners and stakeholders and acknowledges the commendation of the establishment of communities of practice by the review team, and of the participation of learners in units for governance of quality. It is our intention to build on these approaches, including the voice of many different FET learners, stakeholders and staff, recognising the rich diversity within the region. The approach will contribute to the further development of a culture of quality within KWETB FET services.

Response to recommendations

There are 30 recommendations in the review team's report. Kildare and Wicklow ETB sincerely thank the review team for the recommendations, which will be reviewed by the FET management team and the QA team, and will inform the KWETB action plan and implementation plan. This will assist in further developing the QA systems of KWETB, and through broad involvement and consultation, will contribute to the growth of the existing culture of quality.

KWETB welcome the recommendation for a clear strategy for the unification of FET services, a cohesive QA system and a plan for the development of an integrated FET service. KWETB acknowledges the recommendation that the ETB engage in more varied and extensive consultation with staff and learners on policy development.

KWETB particularly welcomes the recommendation of the review team to accelerate the immediate development of a single QA framework and a clear plan for its implementation which identifies the changes needed for its realisation and related timeframes, and the recommendation to include stakeholder voice in consultation processes. This development will assist the development of a culture of quality, and promote 'ownership' of a quality assured system within KWETB. This work will be built on recommended enhanced communication channels across the organisation, which will improve the breadth of knowledge about QA and about KWETB's FET services.

Conclusion

The adoption of an action plan will provide a good foundation for the development of QA in KWETB. Within the action plan, the development of the QA framework will be prioritised and planned cycles adopted to support the achievement of corporate objectives.

The inaugural statutory review process offered an opportunity for KWETB to consider every aspect of FET provision as a corporate entity. Much has been achieved since the establishment of the ETB in 2013, but we recognise that there is much work yet to be done. This valuable report will guide the ETB in the next phase of its strategic development, and inform our approach to the quality assurance of FET.

KWETB sincerely thanks all of the members of the Review Team, in particular the Chair, Mr. David Jones and Coordinating Reviewer, Dr. Deirdre Stritch, for their expertise and professionalism during the process, and for the report.

KWETB also acknowledges and expresses gratitude for the contribution of its staff, current and past learners, employers and other partners to the process, and for their honesty and enthusiasm during the review process.

Dr. Deirdre Keyes

Chief Executive



Appendices

Appendix A: Review Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference for the Inaugural Review of Quality Assurance in Education & Training Boards

1 Background and Context for the Review

1.1 QQI established Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for all providers in April 2016, and Sector Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for Education and Training Boards (ETBs) in May 2017^{1F8}. These guidelines collectively address the quality assurance responsibilities of ETBs as significant public providers of further education and training. The scope of the guidelines incorporates all education, training and related services of an ETB, leading to QQI awards, other awards recognised in the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), or awards of other awarding, regulatory or statutory bodies.

1.2 The Education and Training Boards (ETBs) were established under the Education and Training Boards Act (2013). They are statutory providers with responsibility for education and training, youth work and other statutory functions, and operate and manage a range of centres administering and providing adult and further education and training (FET). ETBs also administer secondary and primary education through schools and engage in a range of non-accredited provision. These areas are not subject to quality assurance regulation by QQI.

1.3 In 2018, all sixteen ETBs completed re-engagement with QQI. Following this process each ETB established its quality assurance (QA) policy and procedures in accordance with section 30 of the Quality and Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 2012. QQI recognises that those policies and procedures are reflective of the evolving and developmental nature of quality assurance within the ETB sector as it continues to integrate the legacy body processes.

1.4 As outlined in QQI's Core QA Guidelines, quality and its assurance are the responsibility of the provider, i.e. an ETB, and review and self-evaluation of quality is a fundamental element of an

⁸ Policy for the Inaugural Review of Quality Assurance in Education and Training Boards (QQI, 2019)

ETB's quality assurance system. A provider's external quality assurance obligations include a statutory review of quality assurance by QQI. QQI review functions are set out in various sections of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act (2012) as amended (henceforth 'the 2012 Act'). The reviews relate to QQI's obligation under Section 27(b) of the 2012 Act (to establish procedures for the review by QQI of the effectiveness and implementation of a provider's quality assurance procedures) and to section 34 of the 2012 Act (the external review by QQI of a provider's quality assurance procedures).

1.5 An external review of quality assurance has not been previously undertaken for the ETBs, neither through QQI nor former legacy awarding body processes. QQI is cognisant of the ETBs' current organisational context in which the establishment of comprehensive and integrated quality assurance systems is an ongoing process. A primary function of the reviews will thus be to inform the future development of quality assurance and enhancement activities within the organisations. Following the completion of the sixteen review reports, a sectoral report will also be produced identifying systemic observations and findings.

1.6 The 2012 Act states that QQI shall consult with SOLAS (the state organisation responsible for funding, co-ordinating and monitoring further education and training in Ireland) in carrying out a review of education and training boards. This will take the form of consultation with SOLAS on the Terms of Reference for the review and the provision of contextual briefing by SOLAS to review teams.

2 Purposes

2.1 QQI has specific multi-dimensional purposes for its quality assurance reviews. The Policy for the Inaugural Review of Quality Assurance in Education and Training Boards outlines six purposes for this review process. Those purposes, and the ways in which they will be achieved and measured, are as follows:

Purpose	Achieved and Measured Through
1. To encourage a quality culture and the enhancement of the learning environment and experience within ETBs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasising the learner and the learning experience in reviews. • Constructively and meaningfully involving staff at all levels of the organisation in the self-evaluation and external evaluation phases of the review. • Providing a source of evidence of areas for improvement and areas for revision of policy and change and basing follow-up upon them. • Exploring innovative and effective practices and procedures.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing evidence of quality assurance and quality enhancement within the ETB.
<p>2. To provide feedback to ETBs about organisation-wide quality and the impact of mission, strategy, governance and management on quality and the overall effectiveness of their quality assurance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasising the ownership, governance and management of quality assurance at the corporate ETB-level, i.e. how the ETB exercises oversight of quality assurance. • Pitching the review at a comprehensive ETB-wide level. • Evaluating compliance with legislation, policy and standards. • Evaluating the impact and effectiveness of quality assurance procedures.
<p>3. To improve public confidence in the quality of ETB provision by promoting transparency and public awareness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adhering to purposes, criteria and outcomes that are clear and transparent. • Publication of clear timescales and terms of reference for review. • Evaluating, as part of the review, ETB reporting on quality assurance, to ensure that it is transparent and accessible. • Publication of the individual ETB reports and outcomes of reviews in accessible locations and formats for different audiences. • Publication of sectoral findings and observations.
<p>4. To support system-level improvement of the quality of further education and training in the ETBs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publishing a sectoral report, with system-level observations and findings. • The identification and dissemination of effective practice to facilitate shared learning.
<p>5. To encourage quality by using evidence-based, objective methods and advice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using the expertise of international, national, learner, industry and other stakeholder peer reviewers who are independent of the ETB. • Ensuring that findings are based on stated evidence. • Facilitating ETBs to identify measures for quality relevant to their own mission and context. • Promoting the identification and dissemination of examples of good practice and innovation
<p>6. To provide an opportunity for ETBs to articulate their stage of development, mission and objectives and demonstrate the quality assurance of their provision, both individually and as a sector.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication of self-evaluation reports, conducted with input from ETB learners and wider stakeholder groups. • Publication of the reports and outcomes of reviews in accessible locations and formats for different audiences.

3 Objectives and Criteria for Review

3.1 The core objective of the external review is **to evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of an ETB's quality assurance procedures**. As this is the inaugural review, it will have a particular emphasis on the arrangements established to date to support the operation of the quality assurance system. Recognising that the development and implementation of an ETB-wide quality assurance system and procedural framework is an ongoing process, the review will also have a forward-looking dimension and will explore the ETB's plans and infrastructure to support the ongoing development of these systems. The review will thus examine the following:

Objective 1: Governance and Management of Quality:

Evaluate the comprehensive oversight arrangements and transparent decision-making structures for the ETB's education and training and related activities within and across all service provision (for example FE colleges, training centres, community-based education services, contracted providers, collaborative partnerships/arrangements).

The governance and quality management systems would be expected to address:

Indicative Matters to be Explored

a) The ETB's mission and strategy

- How/do the ETB's quality assurance arrangements contribute to the fulfilment of these?
- Is the learner experience consistent with this mission?

b) Structures and terms of reference for the governance and management of quality assurance

- Are the arrangements sufficiently comprehensive and robust to ensure strong governance and management of operations (e.g. separation of responsibilities, externality, stakeholder input)?
- Is governance visible and transparent?
- Where multi-level arrangements exist (i.e. where responsibilities are invested in centre managers), is there sufficient clarity, co-ordination, corporate oversight of, and accountability for, these arrangements?

c) The documentation of quality assurance policy and procedures

- How effective are the arrangements for the development and approval of policies and procedures?

- Are policies and procedures coherent and comprehensive (do they incorporate all service types and awarding bodies?), robust and fit for purpose?

- Are policies and procedures systematically evaluated?

d) Staff recruitment, management and development

- How does the ETB assure itself as to the competence of its staff?

- How are professional standards maintained and enhanced?

- How are staff informed of developments impacting the organisation and how can they input to decision-making?

e) Programme development, approval and submission for validation

- What arrangements are in place to ensure alignment of programme development activity with strategic goals and regional needs?

- Are the arrangements for the approval and management of programme development robust, objective and transparent?

- What arrangements are in place to facilitate and oversee a comprehensive programme development process in advance of submission for validation (e.g. the conduct of research, inclusion of external expertise, writing learning outcomes, curricula etc.)?

- Are there structures in place to support collaborative programme development with other ETBs/providers?

f) Access, transfer and progression

- How does the ETB quality assure access, transfer and progression systematically across all programmes and services?

- Are there flexible learning pathways, respecting and attending to the diversity of learners?

- Are admissions, progression and recognition policies and processes clear and transparent for learners and implemented on a consistent basis?

g) Integrity and approval of learner results, including the operation and outcome of internal verification and external authentication processes

- What governance and oversight processes are in place to ensure the integrity of learner assessment and results?

- How does the ETB ensure that these arrangements provide for consistent decision-making and standards across services and centres?

h) Information and data management;

- What arrangements are in place to ensure that data are reliable and secure?
- How are data utilised as part of the quality assurance system?
- What arrangements are in place to ensure the integrity of learner records (including, where relevant, the sharing of learner data with other providers on national apprenticeships)?
- How is compliance with data legislation ensured?

i) Public information and communications;

- Is information on the quality assurance system, procedures and activities publicly available and regularly updated?

Indicative Matters to be Explored

- What arrangements are in place to ensure that published information in relation to all provision (including by centres) is clear, accurate, up to date and easily accessible?

Objective 2: Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Evaluate the arrangements to ensure the quality of teaching, learning and assessment within the ETB and a high-quality learning experience for all learners. These will include:

Indicative Matters to be Explored

a) The learning environment

- How/is the quality of the learning experience monitored?
- How/are modes of delivery and pedagogical methods evaluated to ensure that they meet the needs of learners?
- How is the quality of the learning experience of learners on work placements ensured?
- Is there evidence of enhancement in teaching and learning?

b) Assessment of learners

- How is the integrity, consistency and security of assessment instruments, methodologies, procedures and records ensured – including in respect of recognition of prior learning?

- How is the standard of assessment of learners on work placements ensured – particularly where these are undertaken by non-ETB staff?
- Do learners in all settings have a clear understanding of how and why they are assessed and are they given feedback on assessment?

c) Supports for learners

- How are support services planned and monitored to ensure that they meet the needs of learners?
- How does the ETB ensure consistency in the availability of appropriate supports to learners across different settings/regions?
- Are learners aware of the existence of supports?

Objective 3: Self-Evaluation, Monitoring & Review

Evaluate the arrangements for the monitoring, review and evaluation of, and reporting on, the ETB's education, training and related services (including through third-party arrangements) and the quality assurance system and procedures underpinning them. It will also reflect on how these processes are utilised to complete the quality cycle through the identification and promotion of effective practice and by addressing areas for improvement. This will include:

Indicative Matters to be Explored

a) Self-evaluation, monitoring and review (including programme and quality review)

- What are the processes for quality assurance planning, monitoring and reporting?
- Are the processes for self-evaluation, monitoring and review (including the self-evaluation report undertaken for the inaugural review) comprehensive, inclusive and evidence-based?
- Is there evidence of strategic analysis and follow-up of the outcome of internal quality assurance reviews and monitoring (e.g. review reports, external authenticator reports, learner feedback reports etc.)?
- How is quality promoted and enhanced?

b) Programme monitoring and review

- How are programme delivery and outcomes monitored across multiple centres (including collection of feedback from learners/stakeholders)?

- Are mechanisms for periodic review of programmes comprehensive, inclusive and robust?
- Is there evidence that the outcome of programme monitoring and review informs programme modification and enhancement?
- Are the outputs of programme monitoring and review considered on a strategic basis by the ETB's governance bodies to inform decision-making?

c) Oversight, monitoring and review of relationships with external/third parties (in particular, with contracted training providers, community training providers, and other collaborative provision).

- How does the ETB ensure the suitability of the external parties with which it engages?
- Is the nature of the arrangements with each external party published?
- Is the effectiveness of these arrangements monitored and reviewed through ETB governance?
- Does the ETB assess its impact within the region and local communities?

3.2 In respect of each dimension, the review will:

- evaluate the effectiveness of ETB's quality assurance procedures for the purposes of establishing, ascertaining, maintaining and improving the quality of further education, training, and related services; and
- identify perceived gaps in the internal quality assurance mechanisms and the appropriateness, sufficiency, prioritisation and timeliness of planned measures to address them in the context of the ETB's current stage of development; and
- explore achievements and innovations in quality assurance and in the enhancement of teaching and learning.

3.3 Following consideration of the matters above, the review will:

- Provide a qualitative statement about the effectiveness of the quality assurance procedures of the ETB and the extent of their implementation;
- Provide a statement about the extent to which existing quality assurance procedures adhere to QQI's Quality Assurance Guidelines and policies (as listed at 3.4), to include an explicit qualitative statement on the extent to which the procedures are in keeping with QQI's Policy Restatement and

Criteria for Access, Transfer and Progression in Relation to Learners for Providers of Further and Higher Education and Training;⁹

- Provide a qualitative statement on the enhancement of quality; and
- Identify effective practice and recommendations for further improvement.

3.4 The implementation and effectiveness of QQI's Core Quality Assurance Guidelines will be considered in the context of the following criteria:

- The ETB's mission and objectives for quality assurance;
- QQI's Sector-Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for Education and Training Boards
- QQI's Topic-Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Statutory Apprenticeship Programmes;
- QQI's Topic-Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for Blended Learning;
- QQI's Policy Restatement and Criteria for Access, Transfer and Progression in Relation to Learners for Providers of Further and Higher Education and Training;
- QQI's Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education and Training; and
- Relevant European guidelines and practice on quality and quality assurance

4 The Review Team

4.1 QQI will appoint a review team to conduct the review. Review teams are composed of peer reviewers who are learners; leaders and staff from comparable providers; and external representatives including employer and civic representatives. The size of the team will depend on the size and complexity of the ETB but in general will comprise five or six persons. A reviewer may participate in more than one ETB review.

4.2 QQI will identify an appropriate team of reviewers for each review who are independent of the ETB with the appropriate skills and experience required to perform their tasks. This will include experts with knowledge and experience of further education and training, quality assurance, teaching and learning, and external review. It will include international representatives and QQI will seek to ensure diversity within the team. The ETB will have an opportunity to comment on the proposed

⁹ <https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/ATP%20Policy%20Restatement%20FINAL%202018.pdf>

composition of their review team to ensure there are no conflicts of interest. The roles and responsibilities of the review team members are as follows¹⁰:

Chairperson

4.3. The chairperson is a full member of the team. Their role is to provide tactical leadership and to ensure that the work of the team is conducted in a professional, impartial and fair manner, and in compliance with the Terms of Reference. The chairperson's functions include:

- Leading the conduct of the review and ensuring that proceedings remain focused.
- Coordinating the work of reviewers.
- Fostering open and respectful exchanges of opinion and ensuring that the views of all participants are valued and considered.
- Facilitating the emergence of evidence-based team decisions (ideally based on consensus).
- Contributing to, and overseeing the production of, the review report within the timeline agreed with QQI, approving amendments or convening additional meetings if required.

Co-ordinating Reviewer

4.4 The co-ordinating reviewer is a full member of the team. Their role is to capture the team's deliberations and decisions during the proceedings and ensure that they are expressed clearly and accurately in the team report. It is vital that the co-ordinating reviewer ensures that sufficient evidence is provided in the report to support the team's recommendations. The role of the co-ordinating reviewer includes:

- Acting as the liaison between the review team and QQI; and, during the main review visit, between the review team and the ETB review co-ordinator.
- Maintaining records of discussions during the planning and main review visits.
- Co-ordinating the drafting of the review report in consultation with the team members and under the direction of the chairperson within the timeline agreed with QQI.

All Review Team Members

4.5 The role of all review team members includes:

¹⁰ Further detail on the conduct of reviewers is outlined in QQI's Code of Conduct for Reviewers and Evaluators.

- Preparing for the review by reading and critically evaluating all written material;
- Investigating and testing claims made in the self-evaluation report and other ETB documents during the main review visit by speaking to a range of staff, learners and stakeholders.
- Contributing to the production of the review report, ensuring that their particular perspective and voice (i.e. learner, industry, stakeholder, international etc.) forms an integral part of the review.
- Following the individual ETB reviews, providing observations to inform the development of the sectoral report.

5 The Review Process and Timeline

5.1 The key steps in the review process with indicative timelines are outlined below. Specific dates for each ETB review will be outlined by QQI in accordance with the published review schedule.

Step	Action	Timeframe
Preparation	Preparation of a provider profile by each ETB (e.g. outlining mission; strategic objectives; local context; data on staff profiles; recent developments; key challenges).	6-9 months before first main review visit
	Provision of ETB data by SOLAS (e.g. data on learner profiles; local context; strategic direction).	
	Establishment of review teams and identification of ETBs for review by each review team, selected in accordance with the ETB provider profiles and data and in consultation with ETBs on potential conflicts of interest.	
Self-Evaluation Report (SER)	Preparation and publication by ETBs of individual, inclusive, whole-of-organisation self-evaluations of how effectively they assure the quality of teaching, learning and service activities.	11 weeks before main review visit
Desk Review	Desk review of the self-evaluation reports by the review teams.	Before initial meeting

Step	Action	Timeframe
Initial Meeting	An initial meeting of the review team, including reviewer training, briefing from SOLAS, discussion of preliminary impressions and identification of any additional documentation required.	5 weeks after submission of self-evaluation report 6 weeks before main review visit
Planning Visit	A visit to the ETB by the chair and co-ordinating reviewer of the review team to receive information about the self-evaluation process, discuss the schedule for the main review visit and discuss any additional information requests.	5 weeks after SER 6 weeks before main review visit
Main Review Visit	A visit to the ETB by the review team to receive and consider evidence from ETB staff, learners and stakeholders in respect of the objectives and criteria set out in the Terms of Reference.	11 weeks following receipt of self-evaluation report
Individual ETB Reports	Preparation of draft ETB review report by review team.	6-8 weeks after main review visit
	Draft report sent to ETB by QQI for a check of factual accuracy.	1 week following receipt by QQI
	ETB responds with any factual accuracy corrections	1 week following receipt
	Final report sent to ETB.	1 week following receipt of any factual accuracy corrections
	Response to review submitted by ETB.	2 weeks after receipt of final report

Step	Action	Timeframe
Outcomes	QQI considers findings of individual ETB review reports and organisational responses through governance processes.	Next available meeting of QQI Approvals and Reviews Committee
	ETB review reports are published with organisational response.	
Follow-Up	Preparation of an action plan by ETB.	1 month after QQI decision
	QQI seeks feedback from ETB on experience of review.	6 weeks after decision
	One-year follow-up report by ETB to QQI. This (and any subsequent follow-up) may be integrated into annual reports to QQI.	1 year after main review visit
	Continuous reporting and dialogue on follow-up through annual reporting and dialogue processes.	Continuous

Appendix B: Main Review Visit Schedule

Date: Monday 4th April				
Time (GMT)	Group	Participants	Roles	Purpose
09.00-09.15	ETB Review Coordinator(s)/Director of FET	Ken Seery & Angela Higgins		Meeting with ETB Review Coordinator
09.15-09.30	Private Review Team Meeting	Review Team only (QQI representative will join for some minutes)		
09.30-10:00	1a. ETB Chief Executive & SMT representatives	Dr Deirdre Keyes	Chief Executive	Discussion of ETB Strategic Context and Governance.
		Ken Seery	Director of FET	
		Joe Kelly	OSD	
		Ken Scully	Director of Schools	
10.00-10.15	Review Team Break			
10:15-11:00	1b. Senior Management Team (joining 1a.)	Dr Deirdre Keyes	Chief Executive	Discussion of Mission, Strategic Plan, Roles and Responsibilities for Quality Assurance and Enhancement
		Ken Seery	Director of FET	
		Joe Kelly	OSD	
		Ken Scully	Director of Schools	
		Brenda Lynch	AEO Kildare FE Services	
		Niamh Maguire	AEO Wicklow FE Services	
		Eileen Cullen	Training and Innovation Manager	
11:00-11.30	Private Review Team Meeting			
11.30 -11.45	Review Team Break			
11.45-12.30	2. Self-Evaluation Team	Angela Higgins	Review Coordinator	
		Aisling Foran	Assistant Staff Officer	

		Louise Fortune	Member of the Data Collection working group	Discussion of the development of the self-evaluation report		
		Ray Finucane	Member of the Data Collection working group			
		Kathryn Orr	Member of the Data Collection working group			
		Bernard Morely	Member of the Data Collection working group			
12.30-1pm	Private Review Team Meeting					
1pm- 2pm	Review Team Lunch/Break					
2pm-2.45pm	3. Parallel sessions with learners, including learners (max 3 groups)			Discussion of learner experience		
	Parallel session 3a (Unaccredited and L 1-3 learners)	Rosie Griffith	Level 3, Bray ABE			
		Elsie Degallado	L3 General Learning and ESOL; Arklow ABE			
		Areerat Greene	Unaccredited Key Skills; ESOL L3 &4; Preparatory Healthcare; Arklow ABE			
		Rami Alhamad	General Learning L3; Wicklow Youthreach			
		Carly Lalor	Level 3 General Nursing; Athy Youthreach			
		James Gormley	L3, NLN, Bray			
		Mary Katie Vickers	L3, NLN, Bray			
	Parallel session 3b (L4-5-6 learners)	Norah Alosaimi	CompTIA A+ Programme, Bray VTOS (F/T)			
		Anna Nevin/Jenna Lane	General Learning L 4; Blessington Youthreach			
		Amber Byrne	BIFE Pre University Science			
		Trevor McCormack	Level 5 General Studies; Celbridge VTOS			
		Katie Dempsey	BIFE Pre University Science Course L5			
	2.45pm-3pm	Review Team Break				
	3pm-3.45pm	Parallel session 3c (Apprentices & other WB learners)	Calantha Aisling Wills		Maintenance Skills Traineeship	
Beau Kelly			RACE Traineeship			
Jack Teehan			Chef Apprenticeship			
Brian Clough			HGV Traineeship			
Stephen O'Dowd			Chef Apprenticeship			
Belle Phipps			Artisan Bakery, FDQ, L2			

	Parallel session 3d (Past Graduates in HE or employment)	Cleo Russell	2020 – 2021: Health Service Skills Level 5. 1 Year. VTOS Arklow	
		Samiha Hsouna	Teaching Foundation Certificate, Maynooth University. Graduate of Special needs Assisting, L5, bray VTOS.	
		Philip Walshe	BIFE PLC Music Production HND	
		Marlene O'Brien	Graduate of Legal Studies, L5, BIFE (VTOS Dispersed mode)	
		Shauna Casey	Hairdressing Apprenticeship	
		Neela Rahman	Community Training Centre Graduate	
3.45pm-4.15pm	Private Review Team Meeting			
4.15pm-4.30pm	Review Team Break			
4.30pm-5.15pm	4. Parallel sessions with LEARNING PRACTITIONERS (max 3 groups)			
	Parallel session 4a (Unaccredited and L 1-3 learning practitioners) 6	Joan Fitzpatrick	ABE & BTEI Resource Worker and Tutor: Bray ALC	
		Colm O'Callaghan	Horticulture L3-4; Community Education Tutor	
		Louise Quinn	ICT	
		Harriet Winstone	Literacy and Numeracy L3, CTC, Newbridge	
		Caroline Boyle	Athy Youthreach	
	Parallel session 4b (L4- 5-6 Learning Practitioners X 6)	Rory Clarke	Youthreach Wicklow	
		Martin Hamill	Bookkeeping, Payroll, Accounting, Business, ABE Resource Worker. Kildare Town FETC; Mid-Kildare ABE and BTEI.	
		Martin Doyle	L4, Engineering, CTC	
		Emma Deering	Course Co-ordinator Graphic Design, teacher	
		Hilda Harty	Course Co-ordinator and teacher - Animal Care and Science L5	
		Cúan Prendergast	Resource Person, Naas Youthreach, L4 Maths and ICT	
		Emmett Reilly	Chef Instructor	
		Shirley Brooks	BIFE Teacher, Business Dept	

	Parallel session 4c (Apprenticeship & other WBL instructors)	Noel MacAoidh	BIFE: Head of Film and Hospitality Departments; Teacher	
		Jodie Morris	Healthcare Level 5; Arklow VTOS	
		Adrian O'Connor	Tutor FDQ L2 Dip Artisan Bakery	
		Ross Lee	BIFE: Head of Dept of Music and Gaming; Teacher	
5.15pm-5.45pm	Private Review Team Meeting	QQI representative will join to discuss any support needs.		

Date: Tuesday 5th of April				
Time (GMT)	Group	Participants	Roles	Purpose
09.00-09.30	ETB Review Coordinator(s)/Director of FET	Angela Higgins & Ken Seery		Meeting with ETB Review Coordinator / Director of FET
9.30-10.00	Private Review Team Meeting			
10.00-10.45	5. Learner representatives	Christina Beasley	BIFE Student Council: Restaurant and Bar Management Course	Discussion of mechanisms for learner voice
		Sebastian Kemp	BIFE Adv Business Management (Board member)	
		Elizabeth Jenkins	Former VTOS Student - member of the QA Sub-group of the Quality Council	
10.45-11.15	Private Review Team Meeting			
11.15-11.30	Review Team Break			
11.30-12.15pm	6. Parallel sessions with FET Coordinators			
	Parallel Session 6a: Heads of Centre/FET Coordinators - Unaccredited/level 1-3 provision	Christine Wray	ABE/ESOL/BTEI: Bray and Wicklow ABE Services	Discussion of QA arrangements, responsibilities and implementation
		Mary McCall	ABE/ESOL/BTEI: Arklow ABE	
		Deirdre Curtin	ABE/BTEI Coordinator (ALO) North Kildare/Maynooth FETC	
		Roy Brennan	ABE/Mid-Kildare	

		Sheila Bradley	Senior Development Officer, Training Lead		
		Annette Mangan	ABE West Wicklow		
	Parallel Session 6b – Heads of Centre/FET Coordinators Level 4-6 provision (including training provision)	Ray Tedders	Principal, BIFE		
		Patricia O'Brien	Principal, St. Conleth's College, PLC.		
		Ray Finucane	VTOS Coordinator: Bray VTOS		
		Caitriona Cullen	Youthreach Coordinator, West Wicklow Youthreach		
		Linda Levingstone	Head of Centre, Coordinator of National Hairdressing Apprenticeship		
		Brian Doyle	Shelton Abbey Prison Education Unit		
12:15pm-12.45pm	Private Review Team Meeting				
12.45pm-1.45pm	Review Team Lunch/Break				
1.45pm-2.30pm	7. Second Providers (e.g. Representatives of Training Contractors, LTIs, CTCs)	Ronan Harrison	Optimum	Discussion of arrangements for quality assurance and enhancement of education and training delivered by second providers	
		Karl Sweeney	Swilly Group		
		Vaeni McDonnell	Cenit College		
		Dean Harrison	Oiluina		
		Yvonne Firth	CTC		
2:30pm-3pm	Private Review Team Meeting				
3:00pm-3.15pm	Review Team Break				
3.15pm-4pm	8. Parallel sessions with external stakeholders				
	Parallel session 8a (Collaborating Providers)	Raquel Naboia	50 Shades Greener	Discussion of quality assurance arrangements for collaborative programmes	
		Dympna O'Brien	Bretzel bakery		
		Karen Donegan	<i>KARE</i>		
	Parallel session 8b (Higher Education)	Dr Yvonne Kavanagh	Assistant Registrar, Institute of Technology, Carlow		Discussion of collaboration and engagement with
		Niall Murphy	Technical University Dublin		
		James Wright	Technical University Dublin		

		Therese Moylan	IADT	HEIs, including consideration of ATP
		Ruadhan Duggan	BIFE Liaison (IADT)	
		Jim Bird	University of Southampton: Lecturer, Senior Admissions Tutor, Practice Visitor, Academic Assessor	
	Parallel session 8c (Community Providers & Groups, including representatives of Cooperation Hours)	Pat Cronin	Avoca Men's Shed	Discussion of ETB engagement with community groups
		Adrienne Hatchell	Tiglin Men's Centre	
		Liz O'Brien & Kathleen O'Connor	Wicklow Travellers Group	
		Brandon O'Coileain	Literacy and Numeracy Cooperation Hours	
4:00pm-4.30pm	Private Review Team Meeting			
4:30pm-4.45pm	Review Team Break			
4.45pm-5.30pm	9. NEW Parallel sessions as per Planning Visit			
4.45pm-5.30pm	Parallel Session 9a - Professional and Administration Services (finance, HR and Facilities/IT)	Catherine Doran	Head of Finance	Discussion of the relationship between the ETB's quality assurance system and its professional functions
		Joe Kelly	Director of OSD	
		Aine O'Sullivan	IR, Communications and ICT	
		Emer Roy	Head of Corporate Affairs (inc. Estates)	
	Parallel Session 9b - Support Services / System Services	April White	Project Officer	
		Ashley Stephens	Professional Development and Research Projects Coordinator	
		Wendy O'Sullivan	Technology Enhanced Learning Support	
		Kathie Orr	Learning Support Service	
		Catherine Doody	Admin Support	
		Bernie Fitzgerald	Admin Support	

Date: Wednesday 6th of April				
Time (GMT)	Group	Participants	Roles	Purpose
09.00-09.30	ETB Review Coordinator(s)/Director of FET	Angela Higgins & Ken Seery		Meeting with ETB Review Coordinator / Director of FET
9.30-10.00	Private Review Team Meeting			
10.00-10.45	10. FET Leadership Team	Eileen Cullen	Training and Innovation Manager	
		Brenda Lynch	AEO, County Kildare	
		Patricia O'Brien	Principal, St. Conleth's College	
		Niamh Maguire	AEO, county Wicklow	
		Ray Tedders	Principal, Bray Institute of Further Education	
		Ken Seery	Director of Further Education and Training	
10.45-11.15	Private Review Team Meeting			
11.15-11.30	Review Team Break			
11.30-12.15pm	11. Learning Practitioners (cross-section of services and programmes) involved in programme development and review	Fiona Bradshaw	BIFE/Programme Development	Discussion of staff involvement in programme development & review
		Joanna Brennan	Art, Craft & Design Level 4; Bray VTOS	
		Elaine Finnerty	Art, Craft & Design Level 4; Bray VTOS	
		Patrick Flanagan	Subject Matter Expert	
		Garry Allen	Contracted Training Officer	
		Niall Murphy	Subject Matter Expert	
12.15-12.45pm	Private Review Team Meeting			
12.45pm-1.45pm	Review Team Lunch/Break			
1:45pm-2:30pm	12. Parallel sessions with Employer and regional skills bodies representatives			
1.45pm-2.30pm	Parallel Session 12a. Employer and regional skills bodies representatives (Group 1)	Gerard O'Brien	Woodenbridge Hotel and Lodge, Vale of Avoca, Co Wicklow	Discussion of the engagement of employers and regional skills bodies in strategic planning of programme delivery and
		Marian Roberts	General Manager, Conductix Wampfler Limited., Baltinglass Skills for Work Programme)	
		Siobhan Keogh	Regional Skills Forum	

	Parallel Session 12b. Employer and regional skills bodies representatives (Group 2)	Ciaran Brennan	Kyron Innovative Technologies, Celbridge, Co Kildare	quality assurance and enhancement activities
		Tiernan Gorman	Lidon Group	
		Bill Tinley	Maynooth Campus and Conference Centre	
2.30pm-3.00pm	Private Review Team Meeting			
3.00pm-3.15pm	Review Team Break			
3.15pm-4.00pm	13. ETB Employer Engagement Function	Eileen Cullen	Training and Innovation Manager	Discussion of the ETB's approach to, and experience of, employer engagement in responding to local skills needs and quality assuring provision
		Patrick Flanagan	Subject Matter Expert	
		Bernice McLaughlin	Enterprise Engagement Officer	
		Garry Allen	Contracted Training Officer	
		Deirdre Gallagher	Enterprise Engagement Officer	
		Tracy O'Shaughnessy	Apprenticeship and Enterprise Engagement	
4.00pm-4.30pm	Private Review Team Meeting			

Date: Thursday 7th April				
Time (GMT)	Group	Participants	Roles	Purpose
09.00-09.30	ETB Review Coordinator(s)/Director of FET	Angela Higgins & Ken Seery		Meeting with ETB Review Coordinator / Director of FET
9.30-10.00	Private Review Team Meeting			
10.00-10.45	14. Parallel sessions - Information, Recruitment & Guidance			
10.00-10.45	14a. Parallel Session 1 - Pathways - Information, Recruitment and Guidance (Group 1)	Lourdes Delaney	FET Information Officers	Discussion of arrangements for learner recruitment, access, transfer and progression
		Rachael Tuite	County Kildare Guidance Coordinator	
		Shane Barrett	Guidance Counsellor, Kildare	
		Angela Glynn	Youthreach Advocate	

		Dorothy Lawlor	Education Support Officer	
		Matt Way	Guidance Counsellor, BIFE	
	14b. Parallel Session 2 - Pathways - Information, Recruitment and Guidance (Group 2)	Suzanne Lawlor	Recruitment Officer	
		Leanne Ryan	Information and Guidance	
		Mairead O'Carroll	CTC Advocate	
		Catherine Green	Guidance Coordinator, Wicklow	
		Tina Campbell	Information and Guidance (TR)	
10.45-11.15	Private Review Team Meeting			
11.15-11.30	Review Team Break			
		Bernard Morley	QA Team Rep.	
		Sheila Bradley	Training Services Rep.	
		Louise Fortune	F/T Programme Rep.	
		Jonathan McNab	F/T Programme Rep.	
		Annette Mangan	P/T Programmes Rep.	
		Rachael Tuite	Guidance Coordinator	
12.15-12.45pm	Private Review Team Meeting			
12.45-1.45pm	Review Team Lunch Break			
1.45pm-2.30pm	16.Parallel Sessions: Quality Council (or equivalent) Sub-groups (max 3 groups)			
	Parallel session 16a: Programme Governance Sub-Group	Ashley Stephens	PDTEL and Research Coordinator	Discussion of role of committee in quality assurance of FET Division
		Brenda Lynch	Chair, AEO Kildare	
		Lorraine O'Sullivan	F/T Programme Rep.	
		Ruth McSherry	Secretary	
		Tracy O'Shaughnessy	Training Services Rep.	
		Patrick Flanagan	Training Services Rep.	
	Parallel session 16b: QA Sub-Group	Niamh Maguire	Chair, AEO Wicklow	Discussion of role of committee in quality assurance of FET Division
		Lynn Armstrong	F/T Programme Rep.	
		Susanne Kelly	P/T Programme Rep.	
		Bernice McLaughlin	Training Services Rep.	

		Patricia O'Brien	F/T Programme Rep.	
2.30pm-3pm	Private Review Team Meeting			
3:00pm-3:15pm	Review Team Break			
3.15pm-4pm	17. Quality Assurance Team	Greg Baxter	Asst Training Standards Officer	Discussion of the operation of the ETB's quality system, including arrangements for monitoring and review of quality
		Ken Seery	Director of FET	
		Fiona Bradshaw	Validation Officer	
		Sandra Cleary	QA – FE	
		Aisling Foran	Support - Governance and QA	
		Angela Higgins	Education Development Officer	
		Bernard Morley	Training Standards Officer	
4:00pm-4.30pm	Private Review Team Meeting			
4.30pm-4.45pm	Review Team Break			
4.45pm-5.30pm	18. Education and Training Board members	Stephen Horan	Board Member Staff Rep	
		Clr Daragh Fitzpatrick	Chair	
		Clr Kevin Duffy	Board Member (Apologies)	
		Clr Anne Ferris	Board Member (Apologies)	
		Clr Peter Hamilton	Board Member (Apologies)	
		Dr Áine Murphy	Corporate Governance	
5.30pm-6pm	Private Review Team Meeting			

Date: Friday 8th April				
Time (GMT)	Group	Participants	Role	Purpose
9-9.30	19. Free Session			To be used as team needs. For example, meet participants from earlier session again, private session etc.
9.30-10.45am	Private Review Team Meeting	QQI representatives will join team at 10.15 for 15 minutes.		
10.45-11.30	20. Free Session			To be used as team needs. For example, meet participants from earlier session again, private session etc.
11-11.30am	21. QQI & ETB Review Coordinator/FET Director	Angela Higgins Ken Seery	Review Coordinator DFET	QQI gathers feedback on the review process (Review Team not in attendance)
11.30-12.00	Private Review Team Meeting			
12.00-12.15	Initial Feedback to CE	Dr Deirdre Keyes	Chief Executive	
12.20-12.50	22. Oral Feedback: Feedback presented by Review Team Chair. Attended by ETB Chief Executive, SMT, Self-Evaluation Steering Group, Group of Learners	Gabriel Allen	Quality Council	Oral feedback on initial review findings
		Sebastian Kemp	BIFE Adv Business Management (Board member)	
		Elizabeth Jenkins	Former VTOS Student - member of the QA Sub-group of the Quality Council	
		Dr Deirdre Keyes	Chief Executive	
		Ken Seery	Director of FET	
		Joe Kelly	Director of OSD	
		Ken Scully	Director of Schools	
		Brenda Lynch	AEO Kildare FE Services	
		Niamh Maguire	AEO Wicklow FE Services	
Eileen Cullen	Training and Innovation Manager			

		Angela Higgins	Review Coordinator	
		Aisling Foran	Assistant Staff Officer	
		Louise Fortune	Member of the Data Collection working group	
		Ray Finucane	Member of the Data Collection working group,	
		Kathryn Orr	Member of the Data Collection working group	
		Bernard Morley	Member of the Data Collection working group/Training Standards officer	
		Ashley Stephens	Professional Development and Research Projects Coordinator	
		Wendy O'Sullivan	Technology Enhanced Learning Support	
		Greg Baxter	Asst Training Standards Officer	
		Fiona Bradshaw	Validation Officer	
		Sandra Cleary	QA – FE	
		Sheila Bradley	Training Services Rep/Quality Council	
		Jonathan McNabb	Centre Coordinator/Quality Council	
		Annette Mangan	Centre Coordinator/Quality Council	
		Rachael Tuite	Guidance Coordinator/Quality Council	
12.50-1pm	Review Team Break			
1-5 .pm	Private Review Team Meeting			Review team discuss report drafting

Glossary of Terms

QQI glossary of terms and abbreviations from this report

Term	Definition/Explanation
2012 Act	Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012
AONTAS	Ireland's National Adult Learning Organisation
ATP	Access, Transfer and Progression
BTEI	Back to Education Initiative
CAO	Central Applications Office
CEDEFOP	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
Core	Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines, developed by QQI for use by all Providers
ECVET	European credit system for vocational education and training
EQAVET	European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training
Erasmus+	European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students
ETB	Education and Training Board
EU	European Union
Fáilte Ireland	Ireland's National Tourism Development Authority
FET	Further Education and Training
HR	Human Resources
IT	Information Technology
Moodle	A free, open-source online learning management system (LMS) that supports learning and training needs
NFQ	National Framework of Qualifications

PLC	Post Leaving Certificate
QA	Quality Assurance
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
SOLAS (formerly FÁS)	The National Further Education and Training Authority (responsible for funding, co-ordinating and monitoring FET in Ireland)
SPA	Strategic Performance Agreement (between the ETB & Solas)
TEL	Technology-Enhanced Learning
Youthreach	Service providing early school leavers without and formal qualifications with opportunities for basic education, personal development, vocational training and work experience
VECs	Vocational and Education Committees (later became ETBs)