



Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board Self-Evaluation Report

June 2021



kcetb

Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna
Chill Chainnigh agus Cheatharlach
Kilkenny and Carlow
Education and Training Board



Table of Contents

Foreword	5
Glossary of Terms	6
List of Figures	8
List of Tables	9
Appendices	9
INTRODUCTION	11
Introducing KCETB	12
KCETB FET Provision	14
The Quality Assurance Journey in FET	15
KCETB's Approach to Quality Assurance	17
Self-Evaluation: Context and Process	18
OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY	21
a) The ETB's Mission and Strategy	22
b) Governance and Management of Quality Assurance	27
c) The Documentation of Quality Assurance Policy and Procedures	32
d) Staff Recruitment, Management, and Development	40
e) Programme Development, Approval, and Submission for Validation	46
f) Access, Transfer, and Progression	49
g) Integrity and Approval of Learner Results	54
h) Information and Data Management	57
i) Public Information and Communications	61
Evaluation Outcomes	65
Recommendations	67
OBJECTIVE 2: TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT	67
a) The Learning Environment	68
b) Assessment of Learners	78
c) Supports for Learners	84
Evaluation Outcomes	93
Recommendations	94
OBJECTIVE 3: SELF-EVALUATION, MONITORING & REVIEW	95
a) Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review	96
b) Programme Monitoring and Review	104
c) Oversight, Monitoring and Review of Relationships with External/ Third Parties	109
Evaluation Outcomes	115
Recommendations	116
Conclusion	117
Action Plan 2021-2026	118
Appendices	121

Inaugural Review Steering Group Members

Name	Title
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Sarah Barron	Adult Education Officer
Bernadette O'Rourke	Adult Education Officer
Triona Delaney	Head of Corporate Services
John Kavanagh	Deputy Principal, Ormonde College of Further Education
Tara Kelly	Adult Literacy Organiser, Carlow Adult Learning Service
Kevin O'Shea	Quality Assurance Officer, Quality Assurance Team
Amanda Butler	Quality Assurance Co-ordinator, Quality Assurance Team
Thomas Farrell	Staff Officer, Quality Assurance Team
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Edmond Connolly	Manager, South East Regional Skills Forum
Stephanie Thompson	Past Learner Representative
David Treacy	External Further Education and Training Subject Matter Expert

Foreword

In 2021 Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board will engage in an Inaugural Review of quality assurance with Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). This review will provide an external view of the quality assurance process within the Further Education and Training Service of Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board. This Self-Evaluation Report (SER) presents a distillation of the reflection and evaluation processes which has taken place in preparation for the evaluation visit. The process has been open and consultative and provides a snapshot of where we are on the QA journey.

The report outlines the role of Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board, and the place of the Further Education and Training Service within it. It outlines the quality assurance framework which has evolved and how this has been informed through learner, stakeholder and community engagement. It sets out how Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board develops, implements, monitors and evaluates its' quality assurance process, in line with the QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines, and the associated sector-specific guidelines.

In Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board all our efforts are focused on ensuring that the learner is at the centre of all we do and we have also identified the provision of quality services as one of our key strategic goals. The approach taken in preparation for this process has been open and reflective and staff and stakeholders have fully engaged with the opportunity which it has presented to consider the effectiveness of our quality assurance systems as they relate to our Further Education and Training Service.

The past year has been challenging for all education and training providers but despite this, staff and stakeholders have engaged fully with the process and we would like to thank all the staff, learners and stakeholders for their engagement and their contributions.

We would like to thank most sincerely our FET Service staff for managing the preparation and consultation process and for compiling the report. This work was guided and overseen by the Quality Assurance Oversight Committee and by the Inaugural Review Steering Group.

We are pleased to endorse Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board's Self-Evaluation Report as part of the Inaugural Review of the ETBs Quality Assurance processes and appreciate the contribution made to the process by all our stakeholders.

We look forward to welcoming the Review Panel to Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board in December 2021 and also to the dialogue and feedback which will further enhance our evolving quality assurance processes in the interests of our learners.

Eileen Curtis
Chief Executive

Martha Bolger
Director of Further Education and Training

Glossary of Terms

AEGS	Adult Education Guidance Service
AIIS	Assessment Instrument Specification
ALS	Adult Learning Service
AONTAS	Ireland's National Adult Learning Organisation
Assessment Policy	Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures for the Fair and Consistent Assessment of Learners
AWG	Assessment Working Group
BTEI	Back to Education Initiative
CAO	Central Applications Office
CE	Chief Executive
CIFET	Carlow Institute of Further Education and Training
CoP	Community of Practice
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
DCEDIY	Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
DE	Department of Education
DEIS	Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools
DFHERIS	Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science
DSP	Department of Social Protection
EA	External Authentication / External Authenticator
EQA	External Quality Assurance
ESER	Executive Self-Evaluation Report
ESF	European Social Fund
ETB	Education and Training Board
ETBI	Education and Training Boards Ireland
External Provider	Second Providers, Contracted Training, Community Training Centres, Local Training Initiatives, National Learning Networks.
FARR	Funding Allocation Request and Reporting
FÁS	Foras Áiseanna Saothair (former national Training and Employment Authority)
FE	Further Education
FET	Further Education and Training
FETCH	Further Education & Training Course Hub
FETAC	Further Education and Training Awards Council
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
H&S	Health and Safety
HE	Higher Education
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ILP	Individual Learning Plan
IoT	Institute of Technology
IQA	Internal Quality Assurance
IR	Inaugural Review

IV	Internal Verification / Internal Verifier
KCETB	Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board
LTI	Local Training Initiative
MIS	Management Information System
MOODLE	Online learning management system
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NFQ	National Framework of Qualifications
OCFE	Ormonde College of Further Education
OSD	Organisation Support and Development
PAC	Programme and Awards Committee
PAEC	Programme and Awards Executive Committee (QQI)
PD	Professional Development
PIC	Public Information and Communication
PLC	Post-Leaving Certificate
PLSS	Programme Learner Support System
PVME	Programme Validation, Monitoring and Evaluation
QA	Quality Assurance
QAOC	Quality Assurance Oversight Committee
QBS	Quality Business System
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
RAP	Results Approval Panel
RCCRS	Results Capture and Certification Request System
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SER	Self-Evaluation Report
SERSF	South-East Regional Skills Forum
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SMT	Senior Management Team
SOLAS	The National Further Education and Training Authority - An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh Agus Scileanna
SPA	Strategic Performance Agreement
Teaching staff	Represents Tutor, Teacher, Instructor, Assessor
TEL	Technology Enhanced Learning
TLA	Teaching, Learning and Assessment
TSU	Training Services Unit
TQAS	Transition Quality Assurance System
VEC	Vocational Education Committee
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment
VTOS	Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme
WBL	Work Based Learning

List of Figures

Figure 1	Location of KCETB FET Provision	10
Figure 2	Regional Map Locating Kilkenny and Carlow	11
Figure 3	FET Service	12
Figure 4	KCETB FET in Numbers 2020	12
Figure 5	KCETB QA Journey	13
Figure 6	KCETB Approach to Quality	15
Figure 7	KCETB Inaugural Review Process	17
Figure 8	KCETB Stakeholder Consultation	18
Figure 9	KCETB Strategic Goals	20
Figure 10	Composition of KCETB Board	21
Figure 11	Executive Governance and Oversight Structure of KCETB.	21
Figure 12	FET Management Structure	22
Figure 13	Does KCETB have a Quality Culture? (Staff)	24
Figure 14	Does KCETB have a Quality Culture? (External Providers)	24
Figure 15	Governance Structure for QA and Associated Subgroups	25
Figure 16	QA Oversight Committee Composition	25
Figure 17	Composition of Working Groups and Reporting Structure	27
Figure 18	Structure for Management of Quality	28
Figure 19	Quality Culture in Action	28
Figure 20	Policy Development Process	30
Figure 21	QA Handbook Project	35
Figure 22	Awareness of KCETB QA Policies	36
Figure 23	Professional Development	40
Figure 24	Staff Management Structure	41
Figure 25	Staff Awareness of Communication Channels	42
Figure 26	Stages of Programme Development, Approval and Validation	44
Figure 27	Admission Process	47
Figure 28	Advertising Methods	48
Figure 29	Learner Survey Results - Recruitment	48
Figure 30	Assessment Flow Chart	52
Figure 31	Other Awarding Bodies	53
Figure 32	Awareness of Data Protection	58
Figure 33	Staff Communication Channels	60
Figure 34	TEL Key Milestones Achieved in 2020	68
Figure 35	Professional Development Summary 2020	69
Figure 36	Professional Development Breakdown by Category 2020	69

Figure 37	Community of Practice in Action	70
Figure 38	Learner Feedback Collection Methods	71
Figure 39	Satisfaction with the Facilities	74
Figure 40	Satisfaction with Teaching and Learning	74
Figure 41	Assessment Policy Content	76
Figure 42	RPL Application Process	78
Figure 43	Learner Satisfaction with the Assessments Process	81
Figure 44	Supports Available to Learners	82
Figure 45	KCETB Adult Guidance Service 2020	83
Figure 46	The Quality Cycle	94
Figure 47	Role of Centre Manager in Monitoring and Review	95
Figure 48	Programme Monitoring	102
Figure 49	Best Practice Observed for Programme Monitoring and Review	103
Figure 50	Schedule for Annual Programme Review	104
Figure 51	KCETB Apprentices May 2021	107
Figure 52	How Impact is Assessed	109

List of Tables

Table 1	FET Working Groups	26
Table 2	QA Policy and Procedure Development	35
Table 3	QA Handbook Contents	36
Table 4	Learner Satisfaction with Guidance and Advice	51
Table 5	Learner Satisfaction Rating	73
Table 6	Learner Support Satisfaction	87
Table 7	Guidance Service Satisfaction	87
Table 8	Self-Evaluation Consultation Schedule	96
Table 9	QA Review	99
Table 10	Examples of Best Practice for Programme Monitoring and Review	105

Appendices

Appendix 1	KCETB Strategy Statement 2017-2021	122
Appendix 2	KCETB Self-Evaluation Review Document	123
Appendix 3	Case Studies Detailed	124
Appendix 4	FET SLAS and MOU'S	125
Appendix 5	Examples of Good Practice EA Reports 2020 - 2021	126
Appendix 6	Terms of Reference	130



Introduction

Introduction

Introducing KCETB

Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board (KCETB) was established on the 1st of July 2013 under the Education and Training Boards Act, 2013. It is one of sixteen ETBs and was established following the amalgamation of Kilkenny and Carlow Vocational Education Committees (VECs), each of whom provided post-primary, adult, and community education in their respective areas. During 2016, KCETB formally took over the former FÁS training functions in Kilkenny and Carlow. A Training Services Unit (TSU) was established as part of Further Education and Training (FET) provision in KCETB and continues to deliver many of the programmes previously run under the auspices of FÁS. Further information can be found in the [Provider Profile](#).

KCETB FET is responsible for the management and operation of 17 centres registered with Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) and delivers accredited provision in these centres and in community-based outreach locations throughout Kilkenny and Carlow, as outlined in Figure 1.



Figure 1 Location of KCETB FET Provision

- Adult Education Programmes
 - PLC
 - Training Services (Apprenticeship, Traineeship & SST)
 - Local Training Initiative
- Community Training Centres
 - Youthreach
 - KCETB Offices

Regional Profile

The counties of Kilkenny and Carlow are part of the South East region of Ireland and have a combined population of 156,164 people (Census 2016). Kilkenny City and Carlow Town are the main population centres with the next largest population centres being the Ferrybank area (adjacent to Waterford City), and the towns of Callan, Castlecomer, Graiguenamanagh, Tullow and Bagenalstown.

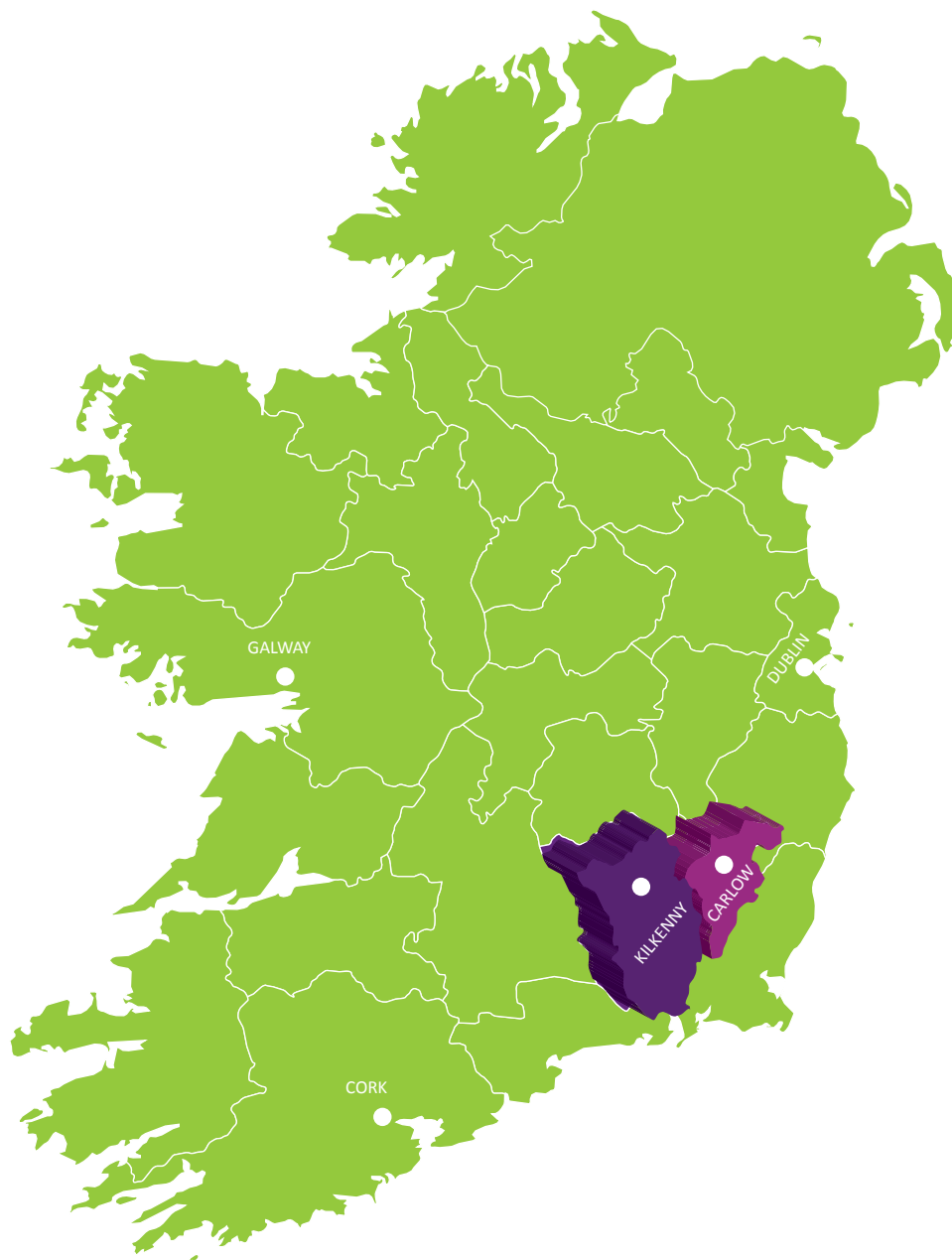


Figure 2 Regional Map Locating Kilkenny and Carlow

By early 2020, in excess of 190,000 people were employed in the South Eastern region. This had expanded by 35,000 or 22%, between 2012 and 2020. This increase in employment has made Ireland's South East, the 6th fastest growing region in Europe in terms of job creation, and the 7th fastest growing region in terms of Gross Value Added per person. The region had seen over 6,000 new jobs being created with the unemployment figure continuously falling year on year since 2012, from 11.1% to 6.8%¹.

Both COVID-19 and Brexit have impacted on the regional and local labour markets during 2020 and numbers receiving the unemployment and pandemic payments have risen significantly. The COVID-19 adjusted unemployment rate for December 2020 was 20.4% and included all those on the Pandemic Unemployment Payment. The FET Service has strategically aligned its provision to work with those most affected to ensure they are afforded opportunities to upskill and reskill to meet the needs of an evolving labour market.

¹ Solas (2020) [Impact of COVID-19 on South East Region](#).

KCETB FET Provision

During 2020, 6,466 individual learners commenced a programme at a KCETB FET centre in Kilkenny or Carlow. There are 21 distinct full-time, part-time and support programmes funded through SOLAS, with other initiatives for young people funded through the Department of Children Equality Diversity Inclusion and Youth (DCEDIY) and the Department of Education (DE). The FET Service offers full-time and part-time programmes accredited by QQI, City and Guilds, CIDESCO, ITEC and other awarding bodies. The Further Education and Training Service provision offered is outlined in Figure 3.

Further Education and Training Service

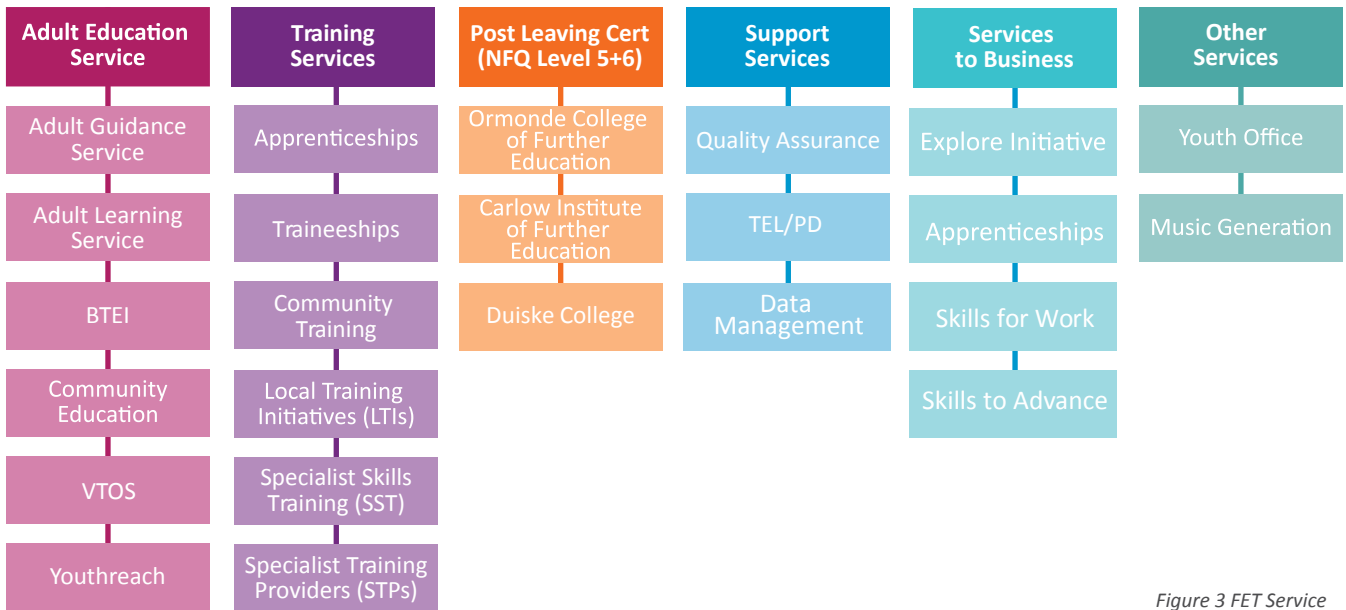


Figure 3 FET Service

KCETB FET in 2020

Key elements of the FET Service are presented in Figure 4, detailing the size and scope of the service in 2020.



Figure 4 KCETB FET in Numbers 2020

The Quality Assurance Journey in FET

The establishment of QQI under the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 and the ETBs under the Education and Training Boards Act 2013 saw the emergence of a new landscape in FET. The Further Education and Training Act 2013, further provided for the establishment of SOLAS, the dissolution of FÁS and the transfer of training functions to the newly formed ETBs. In Kilkenny and Carlow, the two independent VECs became Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board, with responsibility for second level and further education and training across the two counties.

Following the amalgamation process, KCETB had nine legacy agreements with QQI. At the early stages of re-engagement with QQI the strategic decision to develop one quality assurance agreement for KCETB was made. This was based on the experience of the previous approach adopted in Kilkenny to have one agreement for the then VEC. It was considered that this was the best way to embed an effective quality culture within the organisation.

In 2021, KCETB is working towards establishing policies and procedures which bring effective, consistent and transparent practices to all FET centres and which are compliant with national guidelines and standards of best practice. Figure 5 sets out the timelines and milestones on the quality assurance journey.

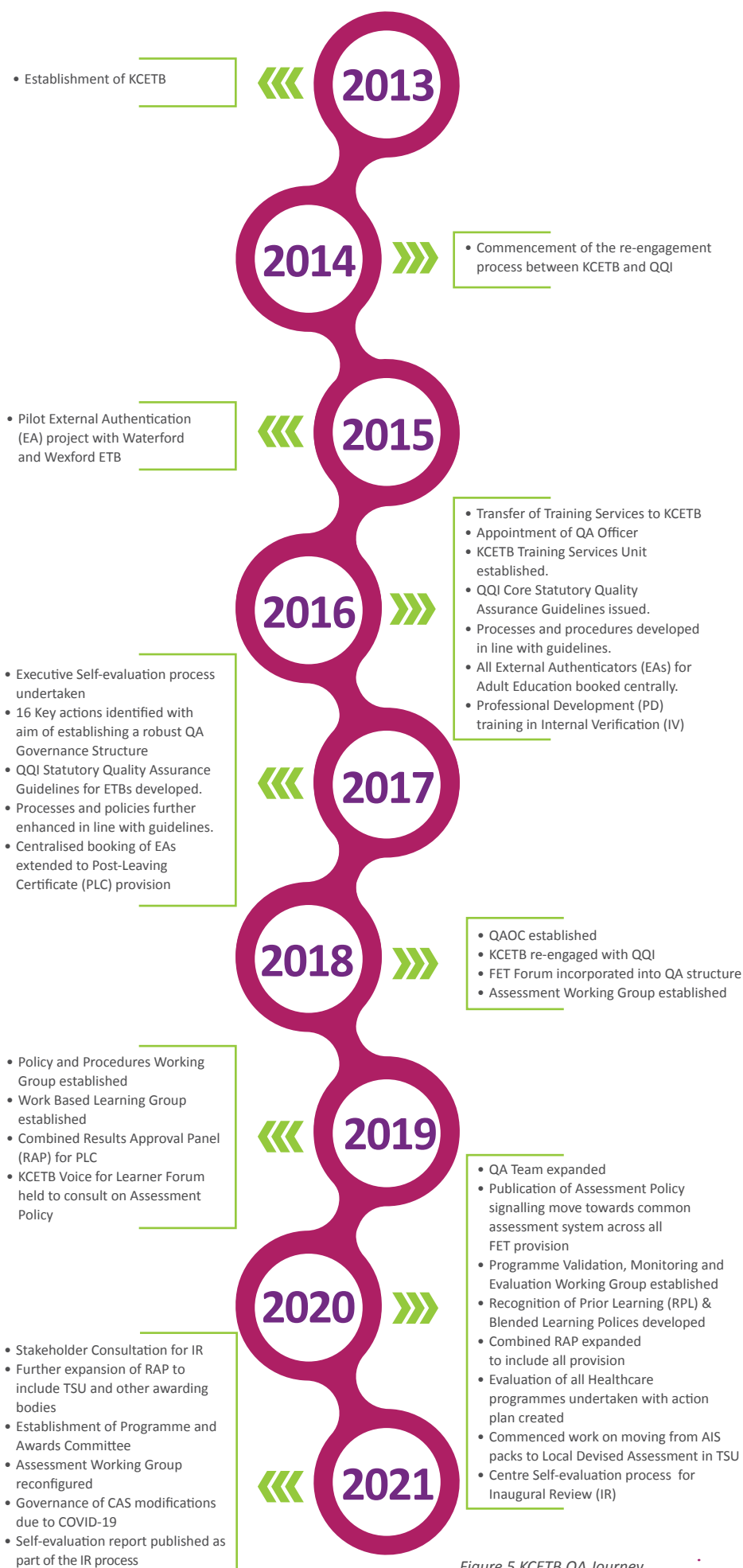


Figure 5 KCETB QA Journey

Following the amalgamation process, there were considerable legacy issues to be resolved which included:

- Nine legacy agreements in place.
- Duplication of provision with multiple assessment techniques, methodologies, and authentication processes.
- Different systems for the initial assessment of learners.
- Multiple systems for administration with different application processes.
- Multiple programmes, from both VECs and FÁS, whose content and assessment material were outdated and inconsistent.
- Challenges associated with external providers within Training Services.

In 2016 KCETB assumed responsibility for the delivery of training courses, with external providers such as Community Training Centres, Local Training Initiatives (LTIs), National Learning Network, and other agencies contracted to run specialist training provision. These operate under contract agreements. The Transitional Quality Assurance System (TQAS) was used as the QA system for these courses. KCETB has now replaced elements of the TQAS relating to assessment with the KCETB wide Assessment Policy.

Because these challenges were acknowledged early on, the Executive Self-evaluation process undertaken in 2017, and the Quality Improvement Plans (QIP) identified key actions which enabled significant progress in moving from several systems, as detailed above, towards one cohesive, consistent system with the needs of the learner at the core of the decision making. The establishment of the Quality Assurance Oversight Committee (QAOC) and some of the working groups was an early milestone on the journey. Another key achievement has been the development and implementation of the Assessment Policy in 2020. This policy was developed over two years and the process undertaken, both in terms of the analysis of existing policies and the level of learner and staff consultation, has created a strong sense of ownership of the new policy. The Assessment Policy will be outlined in greater detail later in the report.

While good progress has been made, there are some further areas requiring attention such as moving from Assessment Instrument Specification (AIS) packs and Locally Devised Assessment towards a more consistent approach in assessment. The aim is to move towards setting assessment standards that are consistent across all provision. Work has commenced in this area with Professional Development (PD) for teaching staff and the development of a programme review schedule which commenced with Healthcare in 2020. This will ensure a standard approach to assessment for learners regardless of where they learn in KCETB. This approach will be monitored by the QA Team and through External Authentication which will form the basis of a continuous improvement process. This is a significant undertaking and one that will take a number of years to complete.

*“one cohesive,
consistent system with
the needs of the learner
at the core of our
decision making.”*

KCETB's Approach to Quality Assurance

KCETB, through its Statement of Strategy 2017-2021 (Appendix 1), promotes evaluation and quality improvement as a priority throughout the organisation. The FET Service is committed to quality assurance and enhancement across all its programmes and these are evaluated through the quality cycle as recommended by EQAVET² and is detailed further in Objective 1. This commitment is underpinned by the QA systems and governance structures. The management of quality is multi-layered, placing the learner at the centre with clear, distinct, layers of oversight which ensure a separation of duties between those who:

- develop policy at QA Team and Working Group level
- approve policy at Quality Assurance Oversight Committee (QAOC) level
- implement policy at centre level through centre managers and teaching staff

Ensuring that a fair, equitable and transparent framework is in place, which is implemented uniformly across all provision is crucial. Feedback from staff and learners as stakeholders is vital in informing quality standards, developments, and improvements. To develop a robust culture of quality in the organisation requires input from learners, staff and management. The holistic approach, which KCETB takes to the promotion of quality, places the learner at the centre and identifies the key roles of all stakeholder groups in the achievement of standards and quality outcomes as detailed in Figure 6.

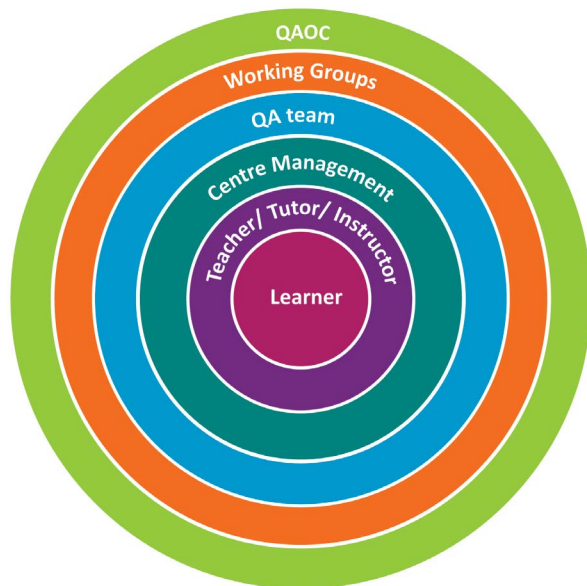


Figure 6 KCETB Approach to Quality

Learners: Actively engage in their learning, produce evidence of learning, seek, accept and provide feedback, contribute to evaluations, comply with assessment guidelines.

Teacher/ Tutor/ Instructor: Plan, deliver and assess courses of learning, facilitate learning, support learners, develop assessment tools and documents, provide feedback on learning, engage in professional development, implement policies, seek, accept and provide feedback, evaluate and collate the submission of assessment materials.

Centre Management: Plan, develop, support and manage programmes of learning, including, the management of required resources, recruitment of learners, instructional leadership, facilitation of induction, implementation of policies, facilitation of assessment process including IV and EA, provide learner and staff support, staff allocation and development, management of appeals, engaging in evaluations, seeking, accepting and providing feedback.

QA Team: Develop QA processes and policies, support the development of an overarching quality of culture, support the development of quality assurance, programme validation and approval, monitoring and review of quality processes, supporting communities of practice, facilitating assessment processes (EA,RAP, Appeals etc.).

Working Groups: Develop policies, consult with stakeholders, review and evaluation of policy implementation.

QAOC: Provides strategic direction, governance and oversight.

² <https://www.eqavet.eu/EU-Quality-Assurance/For-VET-System>

Self-Evaluation: Context and process

QQI outlined the quality assurance responsibilities of ETBs in the [Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines](#) and the [Sector Specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines](#).

As a result of re-engagement with QQI in 2018, KCETB is evolving from having multiple agreements towards a single agreement governed centrally by the provider. KCETB is subject to a statutory review by QQI as part of this process. This Inaugural Review is the first in a series of reviews and this report has been guided by the:

[Inaugural Review of Quality Assurance in Education and Training Boards - Review Terms of Reference](#) and the [Inaugural Review of Quality Assurance in Education and Training Boards - Review Handbook](#) (referred to as the QQI Review Handbook).

This report details the self-evaluation journey, the evolving quality assurance system in KCETB, and the associated processes by which it governs quality assurance. As part of the process, an Inaugural Review Steering Group was established which is chaired by the Director of FET and includes representatives from full-time and part-time provision, Corporate Services, the QA Team, and ETB Senior Management. The membership of the group was expanded to include external representatives from Carlow Institute of Technology, the South East Regional Skills Forum, an external FET expert and a past learner as outlined in the [terms of reference](#).

Prior to the establishment of the Inaugural Review Steering group the initial steps in the preparation process for the Review were agreed by the QAOC. The members of the QAOC attended the Inaugural Review briefing hosted by QQI in February 2020 and immediately embarked on detailing a comprehensive schedule for the review up to and including the submission of the self-evaluation report.

The QAOC identified critical elements of the process as including:

- Updating staff and learners
- Compiling the individual centre reports
- Establishing an Inaugural Review Steering group
- Consulting with key stakeholders
- Drafting the self-evaluation report

The roadmap for this process is detailed in Figure 7.

“This report details the self-evaluation journey, the evolving quality assurance system in KCETB, and the associated processes by which it governs quality assurance.”

KCETB FET Inaugural Review Process

PROCESS APPROVAL

- QAOC agreed process for Inaugural Review
- QA Team created template based on review TOR

February
2020

COMMUNICATION OF MESSAGE

- FET Forum meeting to present process to all FET Co-ordinators
- First newsletter circulated to all staff (March) and learners (May) informing them of the process.
- Further newsletters circulated during the year.

March - May
2020

CENTRE ENGAGEMENT

- Self-evaluation template report circulated to centres
- Guidance document sent to centres
- Nov 20- March 21 QA support visits

March
2020

SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED FROM CENTRES

- May: Sections 1-3
- June: SCOT, Case Study & Stakeholder sections.

May - June
2020

DRAFTING PHASE

- Initial draft of SER to reflect submissions from centres

June - Dec
2020

STEERING GROUP ESTABLISHED

- Steering group established to oversee completion of process
- Membership includes representation from KCETB, Regional Skills Forum, IT Carlow, FET expert and past learner

October
2020

CONSULTATION PHASE

- January: Learner Forum survey completed
- February – Staff, Employer & External Provider consultation
- March – Focus groups OSD, Community & Statutory, other awarding bodies

January -
March
2021

FINAL DRAFTING PHASE

- Consultation feedback incorporated into report
- Report finalised for review
- Feedback obtained from IR Steering Group & QAOC.

May
2021

PROVIDER PROFILE

- Submission of Provider Profile to QQI following approval from Steering Group and QAOC

March - May
2021

SELF-EVALUATION REPORT SUBMITTED TO QQI: 25TH JUNE 2021

- Meeting of Steering Group and QAOC to approve Final Report.

June
2021

Figure 7 KCETB Inaugural Review Process

The first phase of the review involved issuing each FET centre with a centre self-evaluation template. The questions were based on the key areas set out in the [QQI Inaugural Review Handbook](#). This template was supported by a guidance document and an FAQ document developed by the QA Team to assist centres in completing the template. A briefing for centre managers and co-ordinators regarding the process and schedule was communicated through the FET Forum. The documentation sent to centres in March 2020 is included in Appendix 2. The QA Team analysed the data received with a view to determining themes, highlighting areas of good practice and identifying areas for improvement. An overview of the data informs the narrative throughout the report.

The Consultation Process

The second phase of the inaugural review process involved consultation with internal and external stakeholders. The stakeholder groups were identified and a consultation schedule was planned. These plans were interrupted by the second COVID-19 lockdown (January 2021) with all events held online. However, the online platform has facilitated an extensive range of consultation events.

Central to all the stakeholder engagement was the communication about the self-evaluation and inaugural review process. The stakeholders were invited to online events to discuss quality assurance at KCETB and were also asked to complete an online survey. [The KCETB QA promotional video](#) was an important resource in conveying the Quality Assurance and Inaugural Review message to stakeholders. The consultation process is outlined in Figure 8.

The third phase of the inaugural review is the production of the report under the following objectives:

1. Governance and Management of Quality
2. Teaching, Learning and Assessment
3. Self-evaluation, Monitoring and Review



Figure 8 KCETB Stakeholder Consultation

OBJECTIVE 1:
Governance and
Management of Quality

a) The ETB’s Mission and Strategy

Following its establishment, KCETB commenced work on the creation of a strategic framework which would inform its work and set a direction for its activities in the years ahead. The first [Statement of Strategy](#) for KCETB was published in 2017 covering the period 2017-2021. This publication set out the vision, mission and values that shape the work of KCETB, as well as the specific goals and objectives. The strategy was based on an analysis of the external policy environment, the social and economic profile of the two counties and a review of services.

Vision:

Our ambition for the future is to:

Lead the development of education and training opportunities throughout our two counties by engaging with learners and communities, creating positive learning environments and experiences for people at all stages of lifelong learning, and contributing to social and economic development. In everything we do, we aim to be “the education and training service that others use as a benchmark of excellence.”

Mission

To enable learners to achieve their full potential and contribute to the social, cultural, and economic development of our area and of the country. These are underpinned by our **core values**:

- We value learning and recognise its role in the development, cohesion, and wellbeing of society. Everything we do is guided by serving the best interests of learners and putting their voice at the core of everything we do.
- We aim for excellence and are committed to continuous improvement throughout the organisation. We value relationships and working in collaboration within the education and training sector and with the wider community.
- As a public service organisation, KCETB has a culture of accountability, integrity, fairness, openness, and respect.
- We adopt high standards of professionalism, honesty, objectivity, and quality, which are central to serving all learners. We embrace diversity and are open to new ideas.

“The work of KCETB FET is driven, and underpinned, by the three key goals and associated actions set out in the Statement of Strategy 2017-2021.”

Strategic Goals

The work of KCETB FET is driven, and underpinned, by the three key goals and associated actions set out in the Statement of Strategy 2017-2021. This strategic focus is shared across all our services and guides our FET colleges, centres and support services to ensure the learner is at the heart of everything we do. These goals have shaped the FET Service over the past 4 years, and align to national policies, including the FET Strategy, SOLAS Strategic Performance Agreements (SPA) and the Action Plan for Education, with targets monitored and reviewed on an ongoing basis.



Figure 9 KCETB Strategic Goals.

KCETB Governance Structure

The Chief Executive (CE) of KCETB is ultimately responsible for the oversight and management of KCETB in line with section 15 of the Education and Training Boards Act 2013. The Chief Executive is accountable to the Board, which consists of 21 members, for the performance of the ETB’s executive functions. KCETB has a corporate structure which is made up of a democratically appointed board and an executive management team. The membership of the board is set out in Figure 10.

The **functions of the Board** are outlined in the Education and Training Boards Act 2013, and all local boards of management and sub committees report to the KCETB Board. The [role of the board](#) is published on the [KCETB website](#). The following committees are in place to support the Board in its functions:

- Audit and Risk Committee
- Finance Committee
- School Boards of Management
- Youth Work Committee

The **executive functions of KCETB** relate to service provision in education and training and to corporate and operational matters. The work of KCETB is structured across three pillars as detailed in Figure 11.

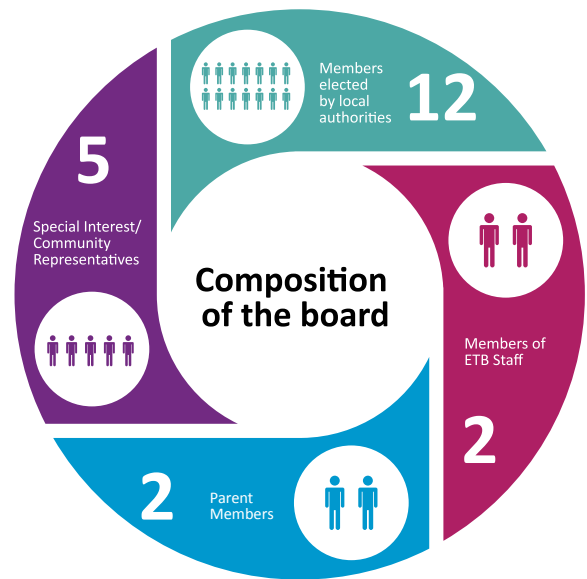


Figure 10 Composition of KCETB Board

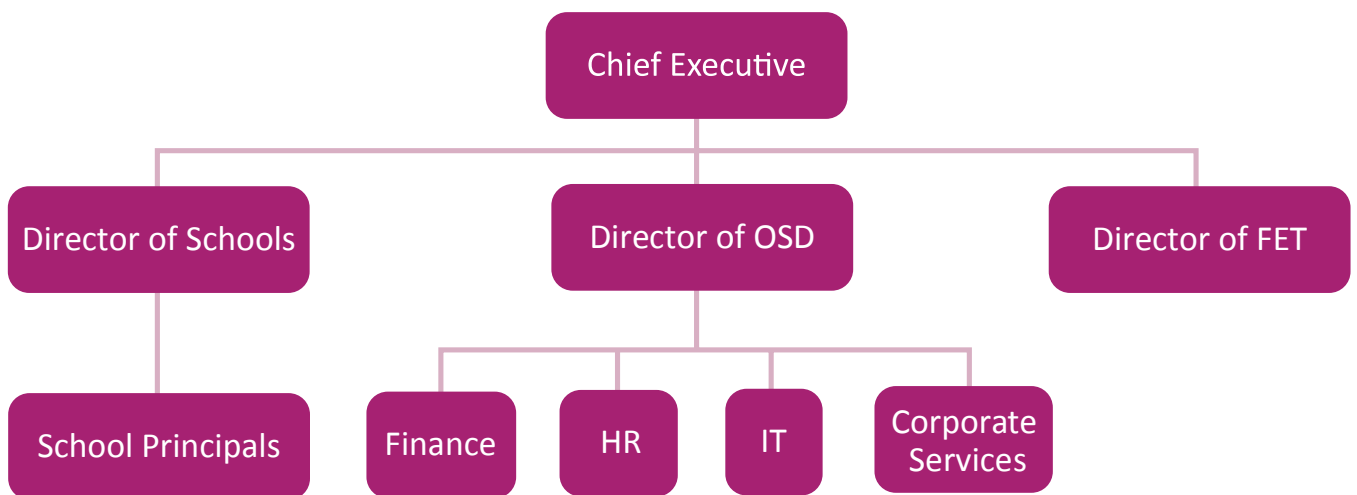


Figure 11 Executive Governance and Oversight Structure of KCETB.

The links between these pillars ensures that the processes and procedures for the governance and management of FET programmes are operated at “many levels of the organisation and throughout the different layers of the organisation”³ in line with the QQI Sector Specific Guidelines for Education and Training Boards (ETBs).

The Organisation Support and Development (OSD) pillar has responsibility for four sections, operating across two locations, Carlow (the authority’s Head Office) and Kilkenny, and supports the Schools and FET in the operation of their services.

The Schools pillar is responsible for the management and operation of thirteen post-primary schools throughout Kilkenny and Carlow.

The FET pillar is responsible for the management and operation of the FET Service.

FET Service

The FET service promotes:

- the value of learning
- an ambition for excellence
- a commitment to continuous improvement
- the adoption of high standards of quality

The Director of FET has responsibility for 21 separate programmes and a number of associated services across Kilkenny and Carlow. The FET Senior Management Team (SMT) comprises of the three AEOs, the Training Services Manager and Assistant Manager and a FET Principal. Each of these managers has responsibility for specific overarching areas as well as a number of programmes within FET as detailed in Figure 12 FET Management Structure.

“The FET service in KCETB is committed to supporting the vision and mission of the organisation by developing and leading the integrated delivery of a high-quality, learner centred, FET service across the ETB area.”

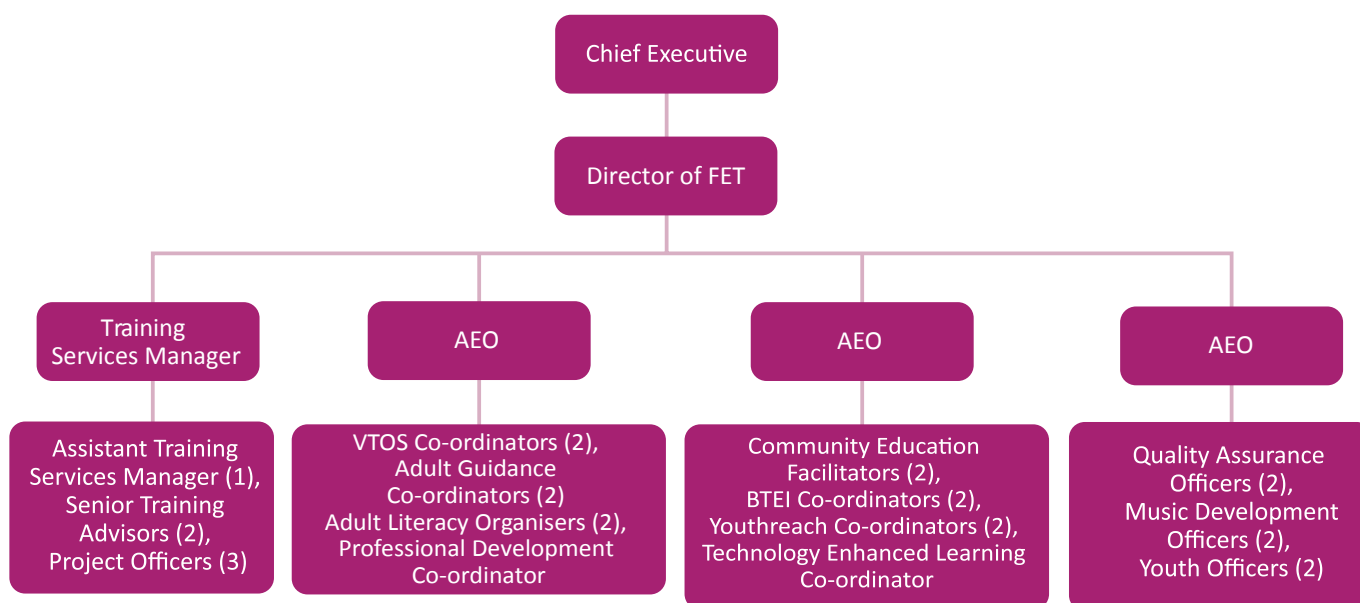


Figure 12 FET Management Structure

³ QQI (2017) Sector Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for Education and Training Boards, page 5 [3 QQI \(2017\) Sector Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for Education and Training Boards, page 5](#)



The strategic focus of FET provision is also driven by the key priorities set out in the three-year [SPA with SOLAS](#) which KCETB signed in 2018. This agreement brought with it significant changes in how ETBs are monitored and reviewed. It put in place Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for each centre and service.

These KPIs include:

- an increase in learners progressing to employment
- an increase in learners progressing to further and higher education
- an increase in certification
- an increase in those availing of traineeships and apprenticeships
- an increase in those entering lifelong learning

There has been significant progress made in meeting these targets, however challenges have been

encountered in increasing certification in lower-level provision, specifically in the Adult Literacy area. The duration of time which the learner journey can take in part-time provision has meant that there are peaks and troughs in our annual certification rates with performance more affected in some years. The placing of PLC under the '*progression to employment*' target has meant that credit has not been gained for those learners who progress to Further or Higher Education. A significant emphasis was placed on the growth of Apprenticeships and Traineeships and with no specialist training centre itself, KCETB is reliant on external training providers and facilities.

Evaluation Outcomes

The FET Service has a clear governance structure that ensures that the learner is at the heart of everything we do and this is reflected in the KCETB Statement of Strategy.

FET staff see themselves as being part of an organisation where there is a strong culture of quality. This is reflected in the responses outlined in the graphic below:



Figure 13 Does KCETB have a Quality Culture? (Staff)

External providers when surveyed also saw themselves as being part of an organisation where there is a strong culture of quality. The responses are reflected in the graphic below:



Figure 14 Does KCETB have a Quality Culture? (External providers)

There is a strong sense from staff that they work in an organisation where quality matters and there is a quality culture. Equally, it was evident that external providers, through their engagement with the FET services, recognise that a strong culture of quality underpins the work.

Recommendations

- As of April 2021, KCETB has started the consultation process for a new Statement of Strategy 2022 -2026. This document will be published across all platforms for centres to reference.
- The strategies and priorities identified in this report will be aligned with the new Statement of Strategy.

b) Governance and management of quality assurance

Quality Assurance Governance Structure

The QQI Sector-Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for the ETBs⁴, states that QA procedures for governance and management ‘take account of the overall corporate responsibility of the ETB, vested in the Chief Executive and supported by the senior management team of the ETB⁴. The function of QA in FET is delegated by the Chief Executive to the Director of FET, who leads the associated structure for QA as detailed in Figure 15 Governance Structure for QA and Associated Subgroups. The Director of FET reports to the Chief Executive of the ETB and is responsible for the governance and management of quality in the FET Service.

“The Director of FET reports to the Chief Executive of the ETB and is responsible for the governance and management of quality in the FET Service.”

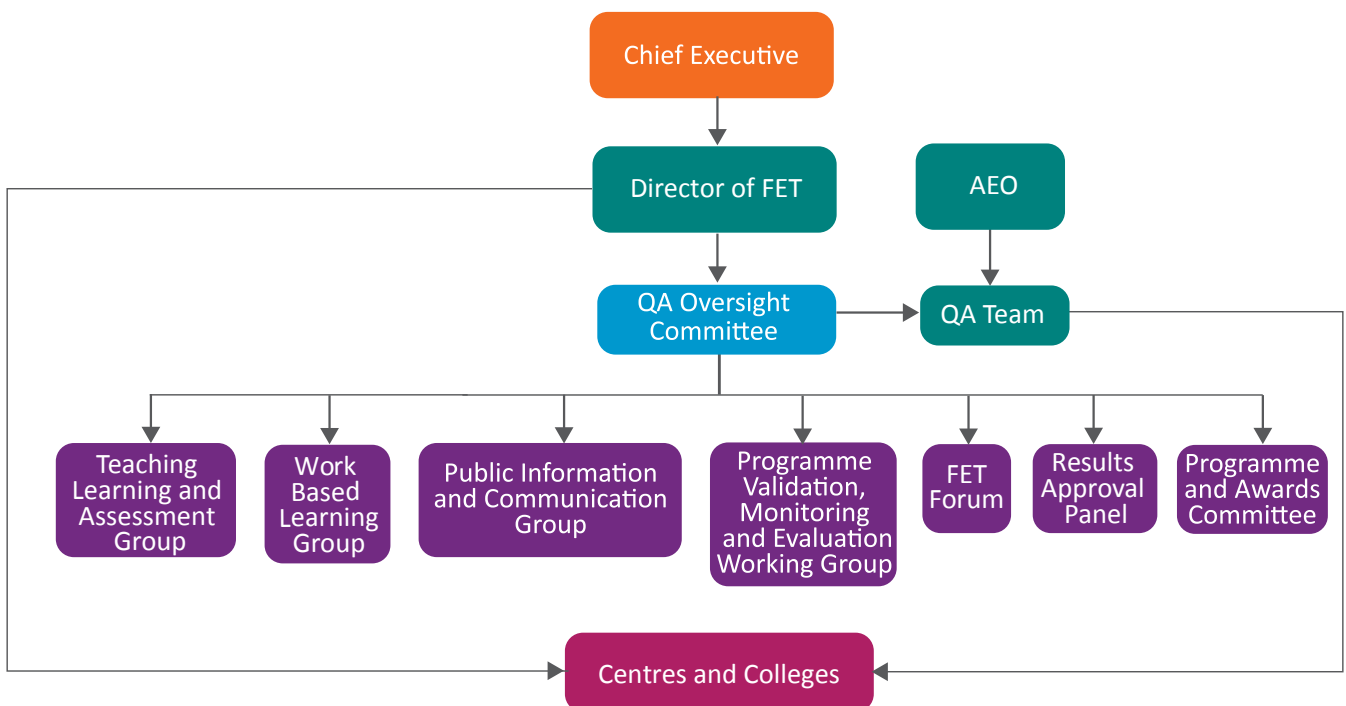


Figure 15 Governance Structure for QA and Associated Subgroups

This structure ensures there is a collaborative approach to quality ensuring a clarity and a consistency of message around the governance of QA throughout KCETB provision.

Management of Quality Assurance

QA Oversight Committee (QAOC)

Following on from the Executive Self Evaluation Report a Quality Assurance Overarching Committee (QAOC) was established in September 2018. The Committee is chaired by the Director of FET and its composition is set out in Figure 16.



Figure 16 QA Oversight Committee Composition

⁴<https://www.qqi.ie/Publications/Publications/Sector%20specific%20QA%20Guidelines%20for%20ETBs.pdf>

The role of the QAOC is to oversee all aspects of QA related to the design, development, approval, implementation and review of the FET provision offered by KCETB. The work of this Committee was initially informed by the recommendations of the Executive Self Evaluation Report 2018 and the annual QIP. The Committee established working groups to advance the recommendations arising from the report. The QAOC now monitors the progress of all working groups, recommends programmes for approval or validation and drives the strategic direction of QA in [KCETB \(see QAOC terms of reference\)](#).

Working Groups

The working groups have a central role in terms of the development of QA policies, processes and procedures which are in turn approved by the QAOC. The Results Approval Panel is convened in line with key certification periods and is chaired by the Director of FET, supported by the QA Team. Other members are invited to attend the RAP as appropriate.

GROUP	FIRST MEETING DATE:
<u>The Assessment Working Group</u> – this group has now evolved into the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Working Group	12th October 2018 10th March 2021
<u>The Work Based Learning Working Group</u>	1st February 2019
<u>The Public Information and Communications Group</u> (formerly the Policy and Procedure Group)	25th March 2019
<u>Programme Validation, Monitoring and Evaluation Group</u>	6th February 2020 (interrupted by COVID-19 emergency, subsequently reconvened on 9th November 2020)
<u>Results Approval Panel</u>	29 May 2019 – 1st PLC combined RAP 28th May 2020 – 1st KCETB wide RAP
<u>Programmes and Awards Committee</u>	26th April 2021
FET Forum	24th Oct 2017

Table 1 - FET Working Groups

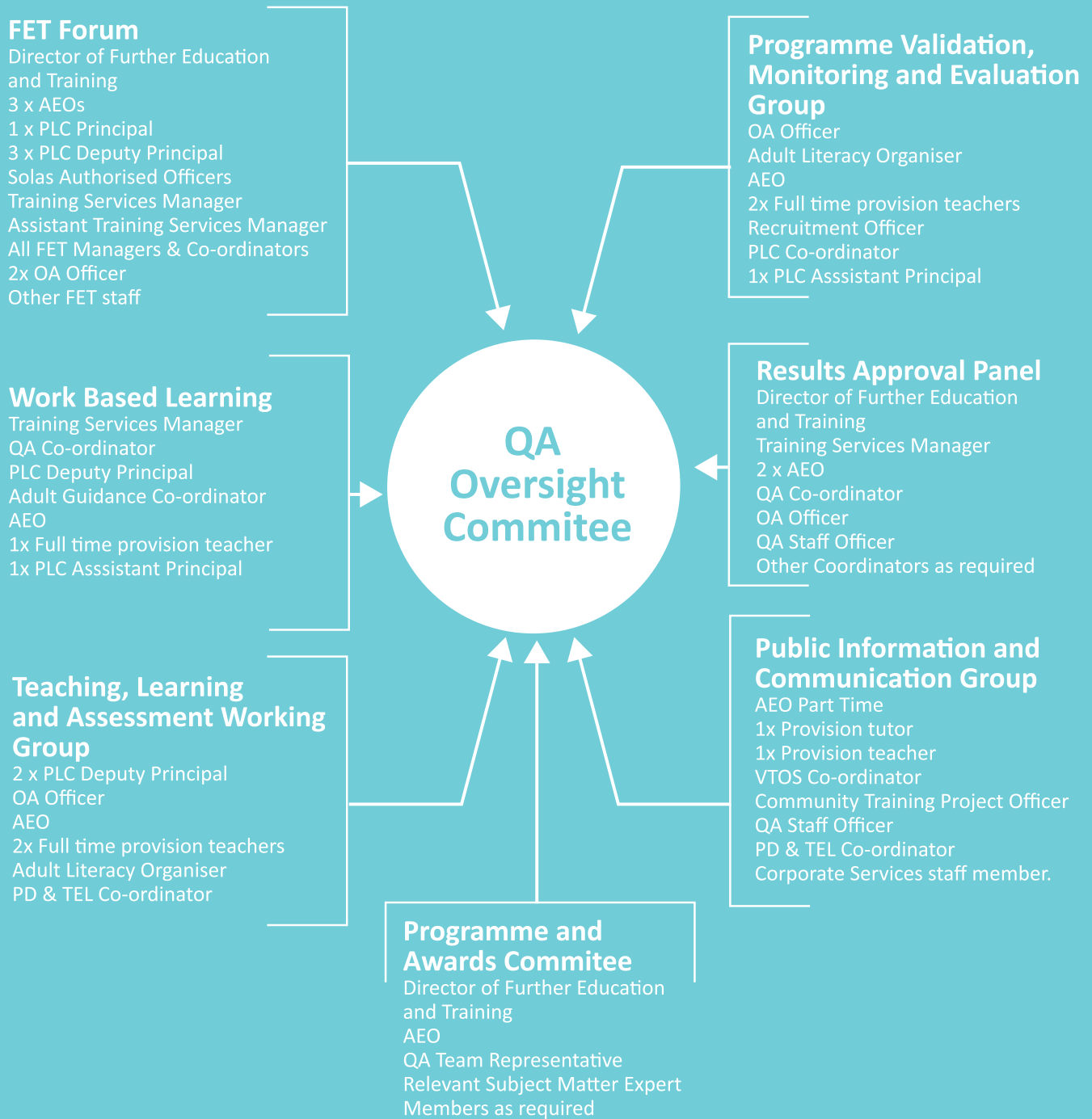


Figure 17 Composition of Working Groups and Reporting Structure

QA Team

The development of a QA Team within KCETB has been a key priority to support management and staff since the initial appointment of a QA Officer in 2016. The team was further enhanced in January 2020 when a QA Co-ordinator and staff officer were appointed. This team is managed by an AEO who has responsibility for QA and other areas of FET provision. The QA team oversee the development, implementation and co-ordination of the QA policies and procedures under the direction of the Director of FET and the QAOC. The QA Team ensure that the Core and Sector Specific QQI QA Guidelines along with the Statutory QA Guidelines are fully integrated into the QA procedures and that they are implemented consistently across all provision. As detailed in Figure 15 Governance Structure for QA and Associated Subgroups, the QA team plays an active role in terms of the day to day oversight and management of QA. The team works closely with the centres to implement policy, support provision, provide PD and collaboration opportunities and attend to authentication processes across all provision.

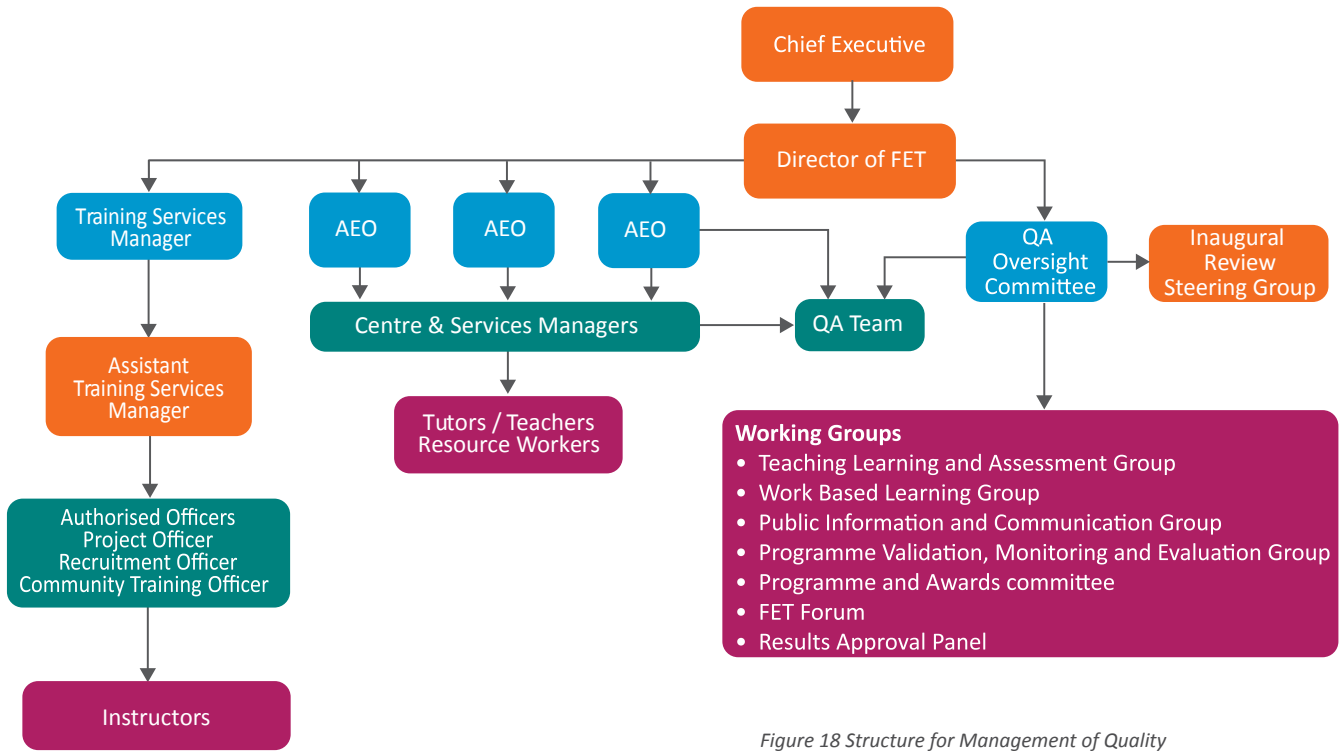


Figure 18 Structure for Management of Quality

Quality Culture in Action

The COVID-19 pandemic caused considerable disruption to learning and assessment for learners in 2020. As a result, the assessment process had to be reviewed and alternative programme modules had to be included. Alternative assessment options and authentication processes were also introduced to ensure that learners could complete their assessment and the integrity of the awards would not be compromised. A significant number of programmes were affected because learners could not complete the mandatory work placement module. An alternative module had to be introduced to overcome this for many awards. All modifications relating to this change were approved by the QAOC. Additional QA processes for alternative assessments were also approved by the QAOC and their implementation overseen by the QA team. This demonstrates that, despite the extreme impact that the COVID-19 pandemic had, the QA of processes was a key priority for KCETB. The different aspects of this QA process are showcased in [Case Study 1](#) highlights the national approach taken to modify awards under the QQI Common Award System (CAS) to ensure that those learners who did not complete work placement were provided with an alternative module and how the modification processes were managed through the QA governance structures.

Note: All case studies are collated at the end of each section with a detailed selection available in Appendix 3.



Figure 19 Quality Culture in Action

Evaluation Outcomes

The evaluation outcomes indicate that there is a good awareness of the QAOC, with 82% of FET staff surveyed stating they were aware of the governance structure. External providers, who deliver training through contracted or community training, also demonstrated a strong awareness of the QA governance structures where, 70% of those surveyed stated that they were aware of the governance structure.

A review of the centre self-evaluations indicates that centres have a strong understanding of the KCETB governance structures.

The FET Forum meetings were highlighted by centre managers as being a key vehicle for receiving QA updates and information.

“A QA Oversight Committee consisting of the CE, KCETB Board nominee, Further Education (FE) college principal, Training Centre Managers, Adult Education Officers and chaired by the Director of FET meets quarterly to review implementation of strategy and operational issues including QA. Responsibility for the governance and oversight of quality assured systems within FET programmes currently resides with this QA Oversight Committee.”

Duiske College.

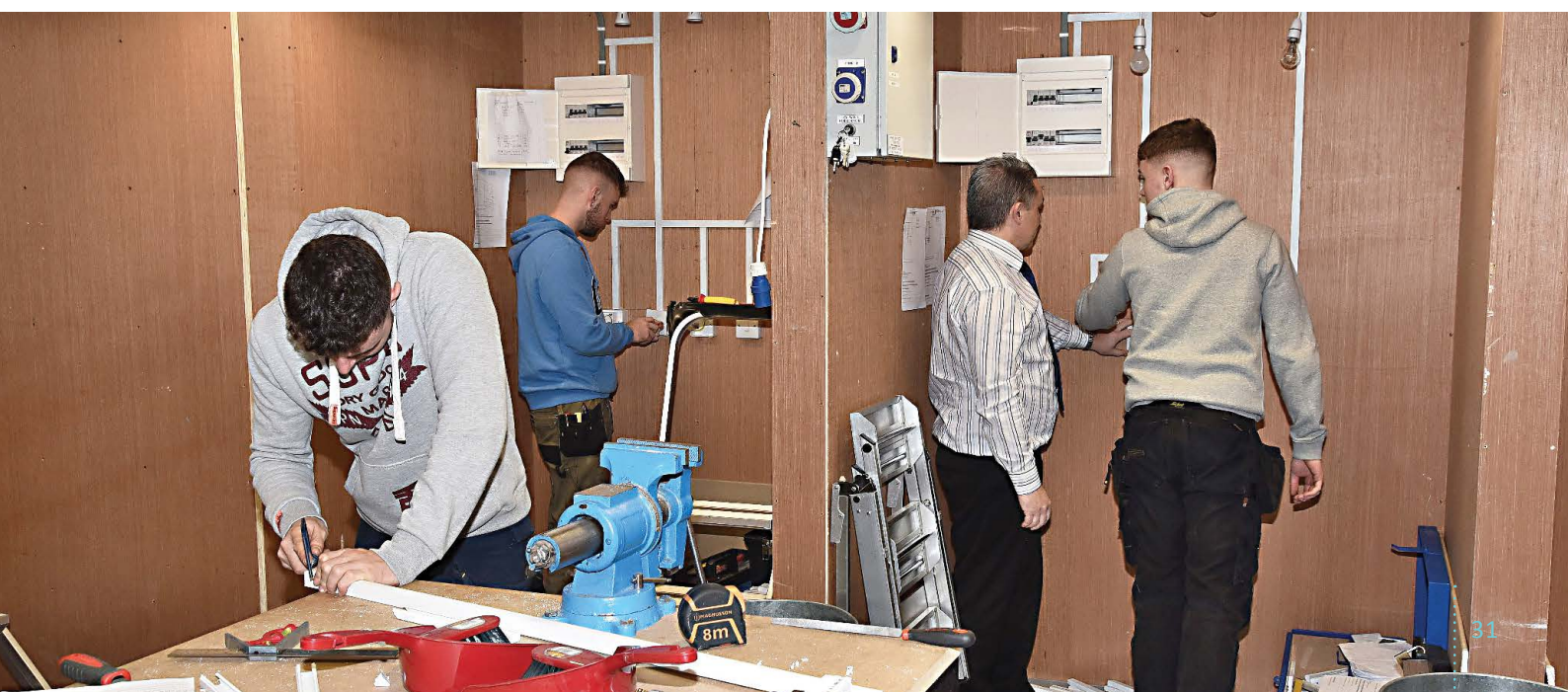
“We have received comprehensive training in relation to governance and I am acutely aware of the importance of regulated procedures and practices.”

Community Education
Carlow

Centres indicated that induction training and regular communication through a variety of means, are being used to communicate information relating to QA, governance, and management to learners.

Recommendations

- While there is good evidence of an awareness of the QA governance structure among existing staff, this needs to be further strengthened and a common induction programme developed for new staff to ensure awareness and consistency of approach among all staff.
- A common Learner Induction Programme will be developed to support learners to understand how assessment is quality assured and governed.
- The function and membership of the working groups will to be reviewed periodically to ensure appropriate membership and alignment with the priorities for QA.



c) The Documentation of Quality Assurance Policy and Procedures

Following the establishment of KCETB in 2013 there were nine legacy Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) agreements in place. This in effect meant that many centres had their own policies, processes, and procedures. The re-engagement process between KCETB and QQI commenced in April 2014. This process allowed VEC provider QA agreements to be consolidated, and signalled that KCETB was to be recognised as the provider with QQI, rather than individual centres. Following the commencement of this process, an early decision was made to move away from these legacy agreements towards one cohesive system across all provision.

There has been significant progress made in the move towards one cohesive set of QA policies and procedures as evidenced by the publication of three significant policy documents in 2020:

- [Assessment Policy](#)
- [Recognition of Prior Learning Policy](#)
- [Blended Learning Policy](#)

The KCETB process for policy development has five key stages as detailed in Figure 20

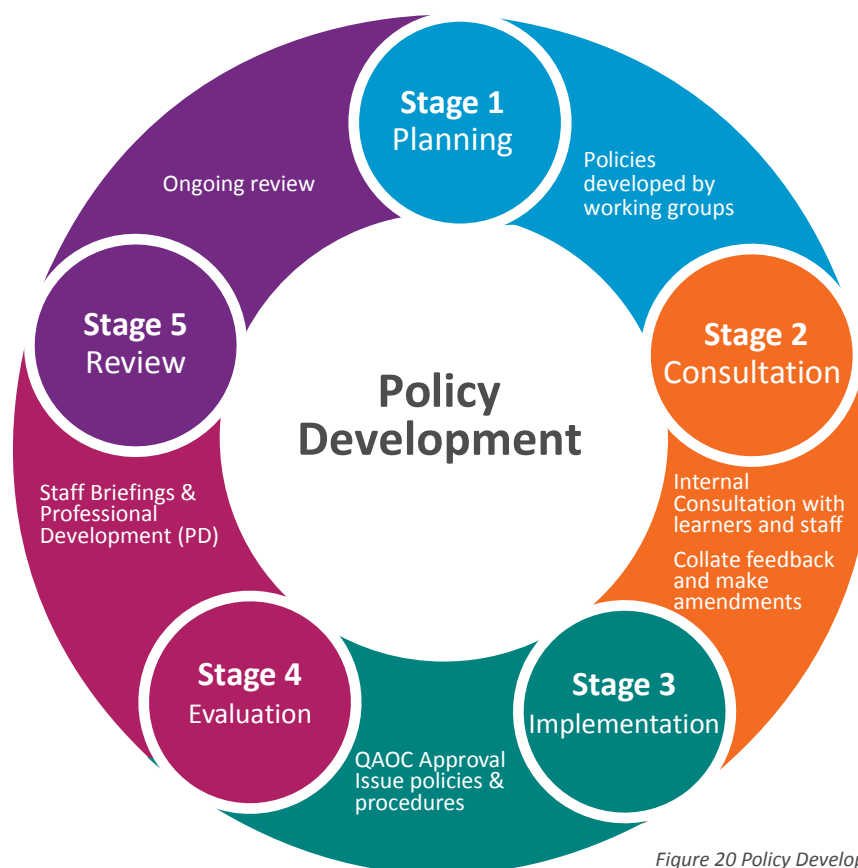


Figure 20 Policy Development Process

Quality Culture in Action: Assesment Policy Development

Following the establishment of the QAOC, the next key decision that was made following the recommendations of the Executive Self Evaluation report⁵ submitted to QQI in 2018, was the creation of a FET Assessment Policy document. This was included in the Quality Improvement Plan for 2019. The Assessment Policy was finalised in July 2020 and implementation of this policy began in September 2020. This was the first major collaborative QA policy project to be taken on as part of this process. The development of this policy was broken down into five key stages as detailed below and KCETB is using this as a model of best practice to inform current and future similar collaborative QA projects.

⁵ <http://kilkenny.carlow.etb.ie/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2018/05/KCETB-QQI-Executive-Self-Evaluation-Report-FINAL.pdf>

Stage 1: Planning:

<p>The 1st KCETB FET Working Group</p>	<p>The QAOC met on 10th September 2018 and formally agreed that a plan would be put in place to devise a FET wide Assessment Policy. An Assessment Working Group was then established with terms of reference drafted and agreed by the QAOC. The Assessment Working Group was charged with formulating a plan for the development of the Assessment Policy and for reporting back to the QAOC. The Assessment Working Group consists of staff from part-time and full-time programmes across all levels of provision. It was felt that having representation from as many centres as possible would lead to a comprehensive policy encompassing all learner levels and experiences. It would also ensure the policy was applicable across all National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) levels.</p>
<p>Methodology</p>	<p>The Assessment Working Group held its first meeting on 12th October 2018. At this meeting the terms of reference⁶ were reviewed and a calendar of meeting dates scheduled. In reviewing the decision making, the actions taken and the progress over time, the minutes have formed an important record of the evaluation process.</p> <p>Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI) Draft Assessment Policy resources were reviewed. These contain assessment policy guidelines on areas including assessment malpractice, compassionate consideration, assessment appeals, reasonable accommodation, RPL and secure storage. Each member of the working group also uploaded the assessment policies from their centres to a shared group folder for review.</p> <p>A review of existing policies from all centres was then undertaken. The Working Group agreed that the Carlow Institute of Further Education and Training (CIFET) policy was the most suitable policy document to be used as a template for the overall Assessment Policy.</p> <p>The Assessment Policy is guided by the QQI Quality Assurance Assessment Guidelines for Providers⁷ but it is applicable for implementation with all certifying bodies.</p>
<p>A structure for the policy</p>	<p>Each of the policy areas consists of a policy statement followed by procedures for the policy area. The relevant forms to be used to implement the policy are embedded into the policy document and the policy is available on the KCETB QA website. A version control system is in place.</p>
<p>Policy content</p>	<p>Ensuring the policy was applicable across all types of provision meant the development of the policy was time consuming. The full-time academic year approach does not represent all FET provision. Part-time, continuous intake and literacy provision all needed to be considered and catered for within the policy. Participation in this Working Group has led to the participants gaining a better understanding of where their work fits within overall FET provision. Reaching agreement on content was time consuming when covering areas such as malpractice and appeals as the wording has to be precise, and timelines for processes needed to be clear and in line with QQI guidelines.</p>
<p>Progress reports</p>	<p>Reports from each of the Working Groups is a standing agenda item of the QAOC. The Assessment Working Group chairperson provides updates at all QAOC meetings.</p>

⁶ <https://kcetbqa.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/TOR-OCT-18.pdf>

⁷ <https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/Quality%20Assuring%20Assessment%20-%20Guidelines%20for%20Providers%2C%20Revised%202013.pdf>

Stage 2: Consultation

<p>Consultation - Collaboration with other working groups</p>	<p>Two other working groups had been established and were working on other objectives as set out by the QAOC. These were the Work Based Learning (WBL) Group and the Public Information and Communication (PIC) Group. It was agreed that the WBL group would look at the assessment of work-based learning as part of their policy development objectives. The PIC hosted a Voice for Learners Forum in November 2019 to enable consultation with learners around key areas of the policy applicable to them.</p>
<p>Consultation - “Voice for Learners Forum” – November 2019</p>	<p>The three themes to be discussed at this forum were (i) access, (ii) induction and (iii) assessment. The rationale for holding this forum, was to work towards quality improvement. Specifically, it was:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> To embed a quality culture <i>“all of a provider’s staff and learners are involved in QA, and in which quality is accepted as a responsibility for all to improve upon”</i>⁸ To honour our commitment to learner representation <i>“There are mechanisms for learners to make representations to the provider.”</i>⁹ To listen to our learners <i>“Learners welcomed the opportunity to be heard... more regular and systematic direct engagement with learners to hear their ‘voice’ is essential. By ‘voice’ is meant...actively involving learners and supporting them to act as partners with policy makers...”</i>¹⁰ <p>The FET “Voice for Learners Forum” was held in the CIFET on 14th November 2019 and was attended by 39 learners from across all FET provision. In part, this forum was used to trial elements of the Assessment Policy. It was also used to inform future policy direction within the Assessment Policy. Learners were asked to act as representatives for their centre i.e., to focus on issues affecting their centre or learner group rather than issues that just affected them. All learners were requested to fill in a survey in advance of the Forum and those who attended on the day were further consulted through small group facilitated sessions. A number of findings and recommendations were gathered from learners through these methods. This feedback was reviewed and incorporated into the final Assessment Policy document. [findings presentation]</p>
<p>Consultation - “Voice for Learners Forum” – March 2020</p>	<p>A second Learner Forum was planned for 30th March 2020. This forum was to be used to trial the policy areas developed between November 2019 and March 2020. The main areas of focus were to be attendance, compassionate consideration, assessment feedback, assessment malpractice and assessment appeals. This could not take place because of COVID-19 and the closure of all centres. As an alternative a learner survey was carried out with a focus on the following areas: assessment feedback, assessment malpractice and assessment appeals. This survey highlighted the importance of providing formative feedback to learners, as it helps to inform them how they will tackle subsequent assessments and generally leads to improved performance. The survey also highlighted the fact that over 70% of learners were not aware of the details of the appeals system in their centre. This information was passed on to the Assessment Working Group and there was a focus on ensuring the communication of assessment policy information to learners throughout the Assessment Policy document.</p>

⁸ <https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/Core%20Statutory%20Quality%20Assurance%20Guidelines.pdf> p.8

⁹ <https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/Core%20Statutory%20Quality%20Assurance%20Guidelines.pdf> p. 17

¹⁰ <https://www.education.ie/en/publications/policy-reports/further-education-and-training-strategy-2014-2019.pdf> p46-47 (Footnote)

Consultation -COVID-19 response (survey)	<p>A third survey was distributed to learners in June 2020, the purpose of this survey was to measure KCETB's response to the COVID-19 emergency and the modifications made to teaching, learning and assessment. The responses received were important in informing the plagiarism section of the assessment policy.</p> <p>The COVID-19 survey found that awareness among learners of plagiarism and plagiarism checking software was low. For those submitting large amounts of written work awareness of the importance of referencing also required reinforcement. The use of plagiarism checking can be increased if more learners are setup on online learning platforms within appropriate programmes of learning.</p>
Consultation -Practitioners	<p>At this point in the development of the Assessment Policy document (i.e., Spring 2020), substantial input had been received on all areas of the policy from all members of the Working Group and from learners across all levels. It was agreed that as the document was approaching final draft, it was important to get feedback from teaching staff across all provision.</p> <p>The draft document was shared on KCETB's SharePoint system in May 2020 for consultation with staff. Over a period of three weeks staff completed a feedback form indicating where they felt attention was needed.</p> <p>This was another important step in the development process as all practitioners had the opportunity to comment on the document.</p>

Stage 3: Implementation

Final review	<p>The feedback received following all the consultation phases was reviewed by the Assessment Working Group. The feedback was considered and the Assessment Policy document was modified to reflect the feedback received.</p>
Approval of final draft	<p>An Assessment Process Flow chart was added and a final draft was signed off by the QAOC on the 27th August 2020 in time for implementation in September 2020.</p>
Implementation	<p>The document was made publicly available on the KCETB QA website. Several Assessment Policy Briefings and training sessions were held throughout September and October 2020. These sessions were attended by 179 staff members.</p>

Stage 4 Evaluation

Access, version control and feedback	<p>Some questions arose at the briefing sessions and the document was revised to version 2.0.</p> <p>Staff are encouraged to go to the QA website to access the most recent version of the policy and associated forms.</p> <p>A further update took place in October 2020.</p>
Centre support visits	<p>The QA Team undertook support visits with all centres from November 2020 to February 2021. The aim of these visits was to support centres in the implementation of the policy and to evaluate its effectiveness.</p>

Stage 5 Review

Policy Review	<p>The Assessment Working Group is undertaking a review of the implementation of the policy over its first lifecycle. Following the outcome of this review, modifications will be made to the policy as necessary and presented to the QAOC for approval prior to roll out in September 2021.</p>
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Continuing the Documentation of QA Policy and Procedures

The process detailed above demonstrates a best practice approach to policy development. A similar approach to policy development is being taken by the other working groups. Table 2 presents the policy development work that is being carried out by the various working groups. With the advent of the COVID-19 emergency, KCETB expedited the policy development process to devise a Blended Learning Policy. This policy is being monitored and reviewed in line with current experiences of teaching and learning online.



WORKING GROUP	QA POLICY AND PROCEDURE DOCUMENT TITLE	STAGE
Assessment Working Group	Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures for the Fair and Consistent Assessment of Learners	Completed 6th October 2020 – being monitored and reviewed
Assessment Working Group (subgroup)	Blended Learning Policy	Completed 27th November 2020 – being monitored and reviewed
Assessment Working Group (subgroup)	Policy for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	Completed 11th January 2021 – being monitored and reviewed
Work Based Learning Working Group	Work Based Learning Policies and Procedures	In development – for implementation in September 2021
Programme Validation, Monitoring and Evaluation Group	Programme and Awards Approval	In development – for implementation in July 2021
Assessment Working Group changing to Teaching, Learning and Assessment Group	Teaching and Learning Policy	This group began its work in March 2021 and is currently developing a Teaching and Learning Policy.

Table 2 - QA Policy and Procedure Development

QA Handbook

The ongoing work outlined above is forming the basis for the creation of a QA Handbook which will be published on the KCETB website. A consultative developmental process is being adopted. The QA Handbook will be completed by September 2023 and will contain all the QA policies and procedures. The GANTT chart provides the timeline for completion of the QA Handbook project. Once this is published, all policies and procedures will be subject to continuous monitoring and review. A snapshot of the project timeline is provided in Figure 21. To view the full GANTT chart, [click here](#).

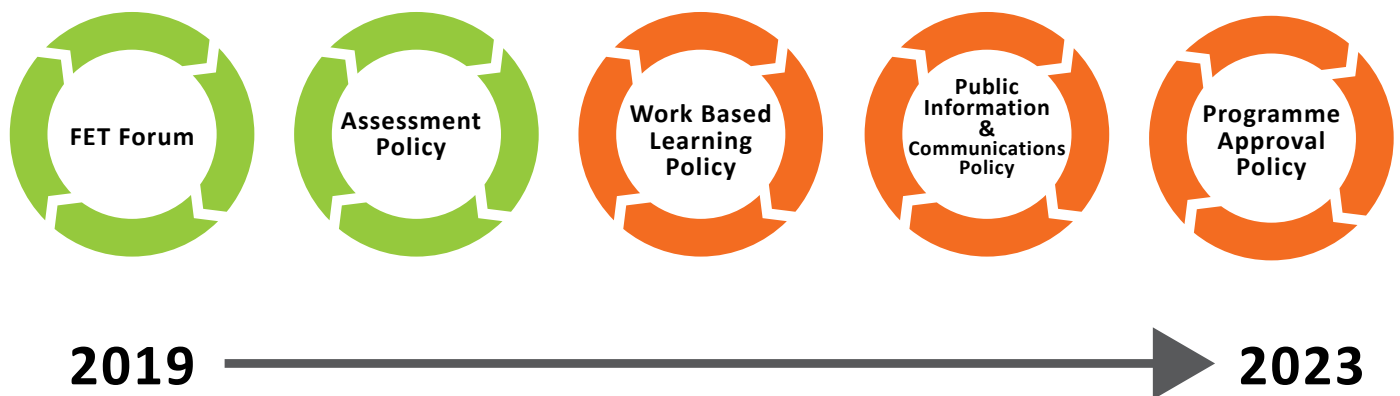


Figure 21 - QA Handbook Project

An outline of the QA Handbook is set out below.

SECTION	TITLE
Section 1	Governance and Management of Quality
Section 2	Documented Approach to Quality Assurance
Section 3	Programmes of Education and Training
Section 4	Staff Recruitment Management and Development
Section 5	Teaching and Learning
Section 6	Assessment of Learners
Section 7	Supports for Learners
Section 8	Information and Data Management
Section 9	Public Information and Communication
Section 10	Other Parties involved in Education and Training
Section 11	Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

Table 3 - QA Handbook Contents

Evaluation Outcomes

The centre self-evaluation process found that there were diverse approaches to QA in centres, and while there were policies and procedures in place, reviews were periodic and took place on an ad hoc basis. The model used to create the Assessment Policy provides a best practice approach with consistency across all provision.

This model is robust and comprehensive and incorporated the voice of learners and staff. The staff survey that took place in February 2021 found that there is a strong awareness among staff across all provision of the QA policies and procedures in place. 88% of the 141 staff were aware of the policies that are in place, with a further 81% aware of where to access policies.

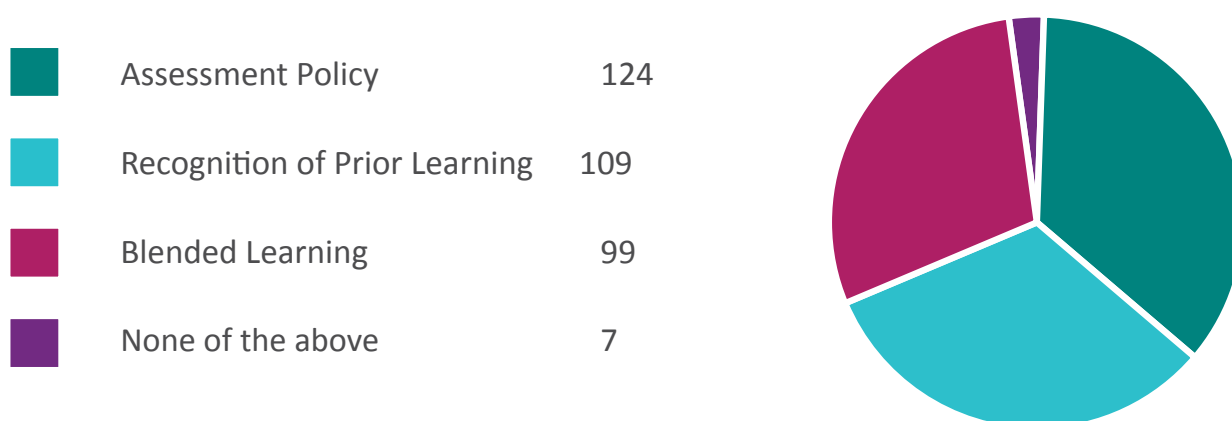


Figure 22 Awareness of KCETB QA Policies



‘Consistency of approach, regardless of scale, is the way forward’
Ormonde College of Further Education (OCFE)

Recommendations

- Continue to use model of best practice for future policy development of all subsequent policies, including the QA Handbook.
- Creation of an induction process and associated PD for new staff members.
- Clear communication channels with learners and staff with reference to QA policies and procedures will continue to be developed.

d) Staff Recruitment, Management, and Development

In line with KCETBs Strategic Goal 2 we aim to “ensure that all our education and training services meet high quality standards”. This goal is realised in our commitment to growing as a learning organisation, and to ensuring that all staff have access to PD opportunities. This includes cohesive recruitment policies, management structures and mechanisms to enable staff to enhance skills, update competencies, promote modern teaching methods and collaborate with colleagues.

Staff Recruitment

KCETB is committed to fairness, equality, and transparency in respect of all recruitment processes. The process is aligned to best practice and meets all legislative requirements (Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015 and Disability Act 2005), including Garda vetting. The Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS) and SOLAS sanctioned recognised posts, and vacancies are filled through a formal recruitment and selection process. The Vacancy Notice, Job Description, Person Specification, Application Form, and Information Document all form part of the standard Recruitment Pack for vacancies. Relevant competencies are identified by Senior Managers, in consultation with the Human Resources (HR) section, and matched to the skills required for the sanctioned post. Approved posts are advertised on the Vacancies Section of the KCETB website, on websites (e.g., Publicjobs.ie) and in regional/national press as appropriate. All relevant documentation is available to download.

Training is provided to Selection Board Members and guidelines are provided in respect of the recruitment procedures. As part of the Shortlisting and Selection Process, board members are required to complete Conflict of Interest forms and sign and confirm shortlisting and selection board results. Candidates are entitled to receive details of their Shortlisting and Selection Board results including notes of interviews, if requested.

Strategic Goal 2 we aim to “ensure that all our education and training services meet high quality standards”



A transparent and consistent shortlisting process is conducted by the relevant Senior Manager(s) in consultation with HR. Consideration is given to the essential criteria on the person specification, including qualifications and work experience commensurate with the requirements of the post. Selection board members are chosen in accordance with circular requirements and in accordance with their expertise.

Recruitment and selection checks are conducted by HR before an appointment is made, including the completion of the Garda Vetting process, a pre-employment online medical, checks on documentary evidence of qualifications, references, and the candidate's date of birth. All those involved in the recruitment and selection process follow step-by-step instructions, and clear information is provided to all candidates.

Staff Development

KCETB is committed to promoting and encouraging the personal and professional development of all its employees. All members of staff are eligible to apply for support/funding in respect of their desired course of study/training as set out in our [Staff Training and Development Policy](#). There is a cross directorate approach to PD with an example of this being the roll out of Magenta Principles training for teaching staff across schools and centres in 2019. This PD initiative enhanced teaching and learning, fostered practitioner reflection and promoted critical thinking in the context of curriculum delivery. Other PD opportunities that have been undertaken by staff include Level 6, 7 and 8 qualifications in Technology Enhanced Learning, Level 8 qualifications in Change Management and a Level 9 qualification in RPL.

The appointment of a Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) / PD Co-ordinator in KCETB has allowed the oversight and co-ordination of specialised training and a centralised approach to staff training.

The development of the PD Portal in 2020 further enhanced the range and accessibility of PD opportunities available to staff. Up to date information on training and events is available on the [PD portal](#). In 2020 a total of 90 training events were organised centrally through this portal, with an attendance of 3,460 staff across a diverse range of courses. 10,494 visits have been registered on the PD Portal since April 2020.

An extensive array of PD has been offered through the QA Team to staff across all provision in 2020, in line with recommendations received in EA reports and requests from centres. Examples of this training include the following QA events:

- Integration of Module Assessment
- Internal Verification
- Preparation for EA
- Locally Devised Assessment training - Designing appropriate and effective assessment briefs
- Feedback to Learners on Summative Assessment
- Good Assessment Practice in a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)
- Learner feedback
- Guidance on the development of alternative assessment
- Understanding Assessment Language, Briefs and Marking Training

“Teaching staff are surveyed on a regular basis and asked to highlight any areas in which they feel they need training.”

Community Education, Carlow

There is a strong awareness among staff of the PD & TEL supports available with 77% of the 141 staff surveyed indicating that they were aware of the service. The uptake of PD in the last year was also significant, with 96% of respondents having participated in PD in the past year.

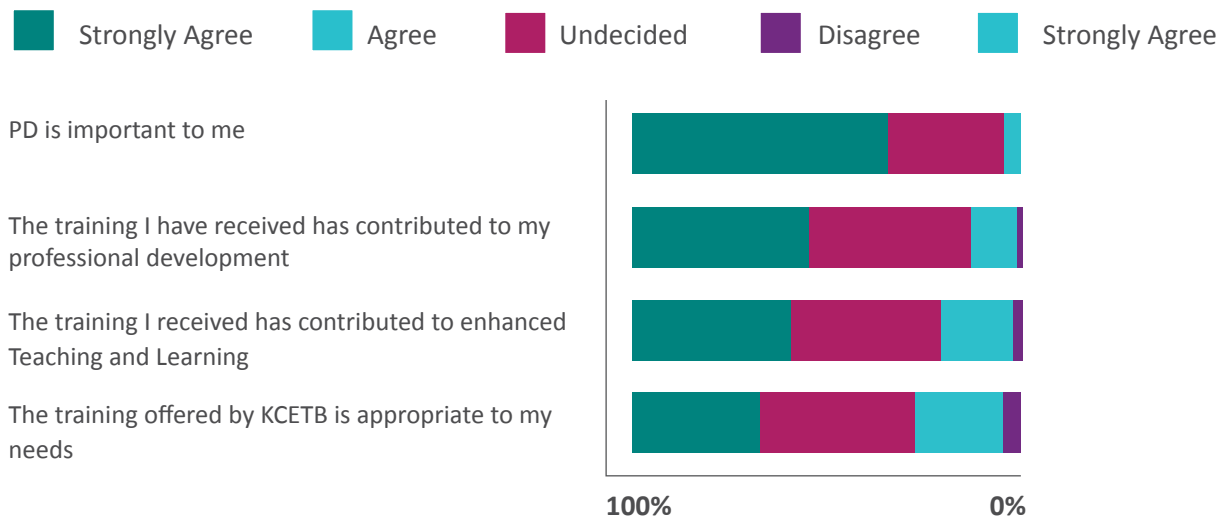
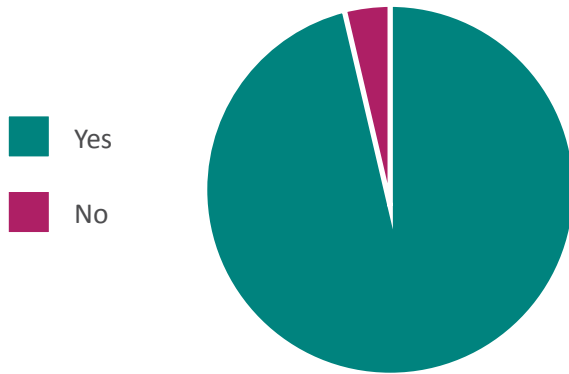


Figure 23 Professional Development

These responses indicate that there is a strong culture of professional development and continuous improvement within the FET Service.

Staff Management

The Director of FET has responsibility for 21 separate programmes and a number of associated services across Kilkenny and Carlow. The FET Senior Management Team (SMT) comprises of three AEOs, the Training Services Manager, Assistant Training Services Manager and a FET Principal. Each of the AEOs has responsibility for specific overarching areas as well as a number of programmes within FET. The Training Services Manager supported by the Assistant Manager has responsibility for all training provision across the two counties.

There is a clear reporting structure in place, with the SMT meeting with the Director of FET bi-monthly, these meetings are also attended by the CE. Monthly meetings are held with Co-ordinators to ensure oversight and support for staff across all provision by senior managers, and Co-ordinators have regular meetings with their staff groups. The PLC Principal and Deputy Principals also meet regularly with both the Directors of FET and Schools.

There are clear lines of communication supported through these structures. The FET Forum which comprises of Senior Managers, including Centre Co-ordinators, PLC Principal and Deputy Principals, is chaired by the Director of FET and meetings are held at key intervals throughout the year to update all staff on critical strategic areas. The Chief Executive regularly attends these meetings.

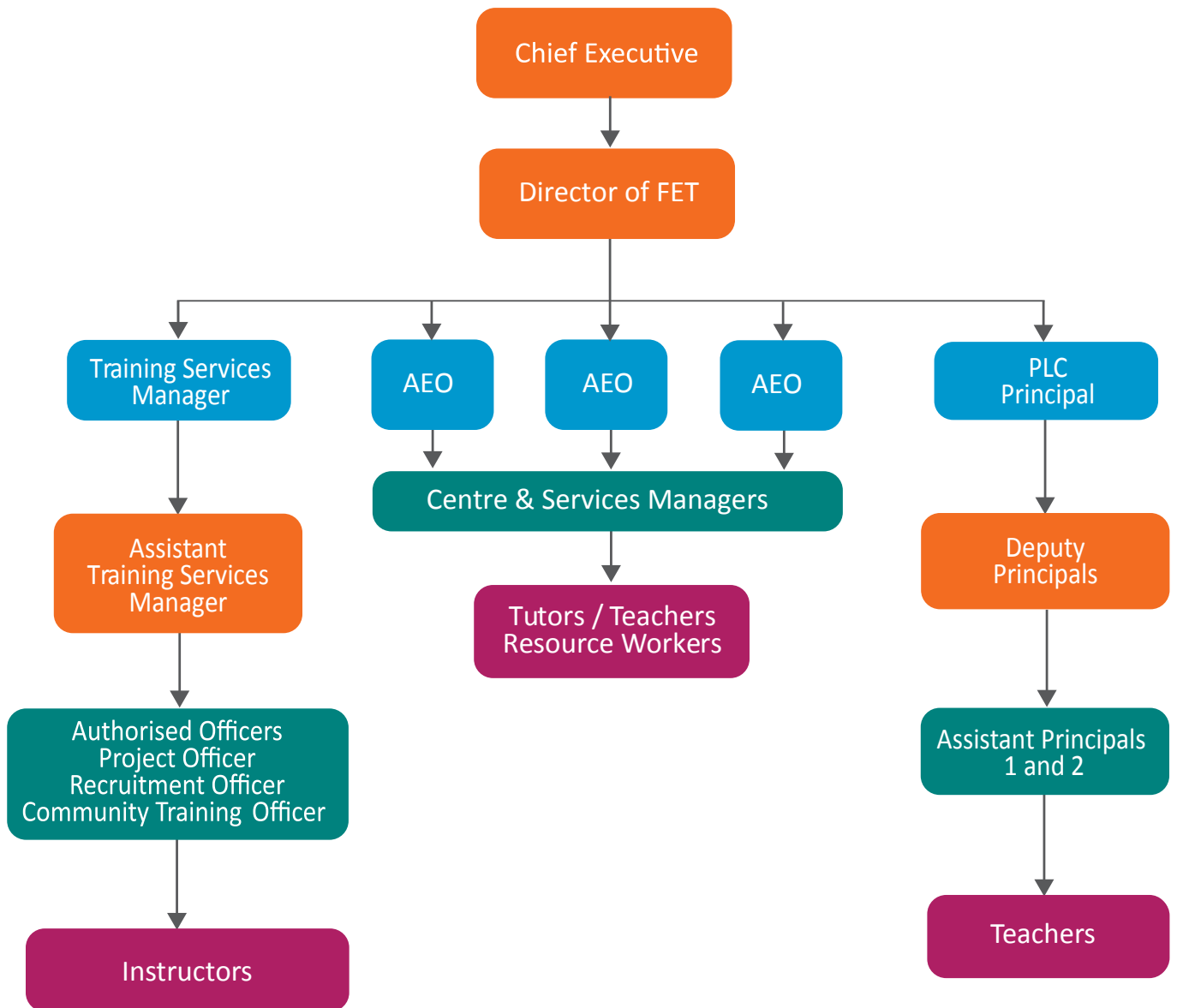


Figure 24 Staff Management Structure

Staff Information

The KCETB website is the first point of contact for staff with reference to HR policies and relevant information. The website was also used to update centres in relation to COVID-19 measures. Ensuring staff are kept informed of developments affecting provision is facilitated through the FET Forum topic specific briefings, which are in turn cascaded by centre management to teaching and administrative staff in each centre.

Significant progress was made in 2020 regarding the communication of core QA messages. The development of [QA newsletters](#) (first edition was March 2020) provides a medium for sharing collaborative work across KCETB. In addition, a [Learners' Newsletter](#) (first edition was May 2020) informs learners of ongoing work. A 'plain English' version is also available in line with the KCETB strategy for teaching and learning to "improve the learning experience and outcomes for all learners". The development of the QA portal where internal communication and centre specific information is housed, and the development of the [QA website](#), has meant there are clear channels of communication for staff with reference to QA policies, processes and procedures. The policies that have been developed to date are available through the [QA website](#) and there is an opportunity for staff to continually provide feedback on these policies. While these communication channels have strengthened the QA message, further training needs to be undertaken with centres to ensure they can easily navigate the website and portal.

"Staff participation is fundamental in Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS) Kilkenny and it encourages a sense of teamwork and empowers them to contribute to the success of VTOS Kilkenny."

VTOS Kilkenny

Detailed below are key findings from the staff survey which occurred in February 2021, showing a strong awareness among staff of these core communication channels.

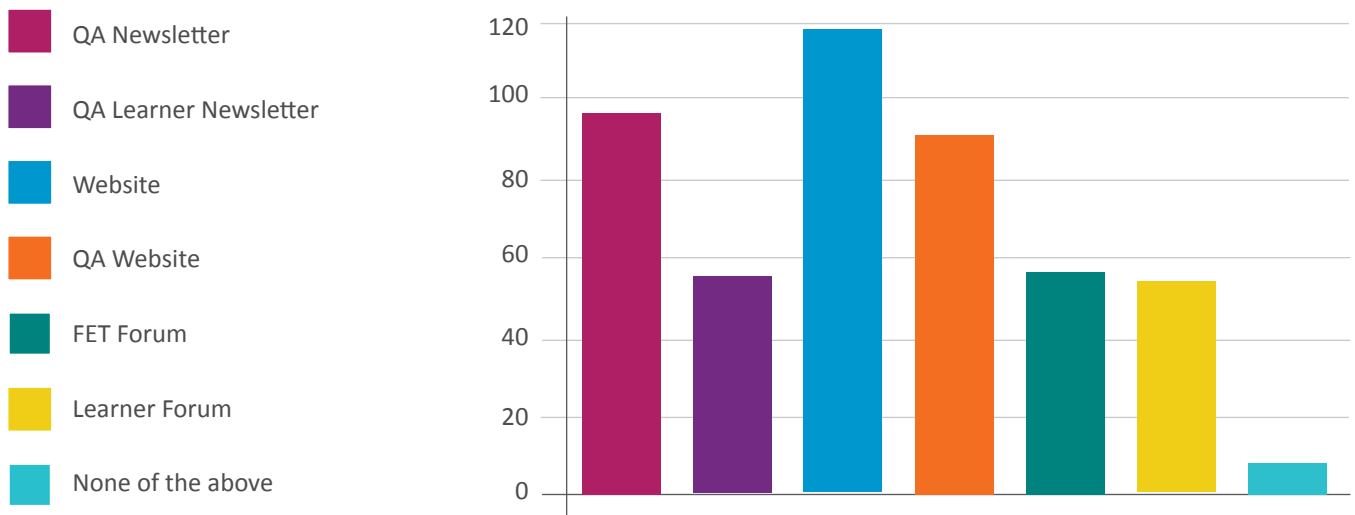


Figure 25 Staff Awareness of Communication Channels

Evaluation Outcomes

There is a robust, comprehensive, standardised recruitment process in place and consultation with centres confirms a strong awareness of these processes. Centres referenced Teaching Council registration and / or pedagogical qualifications as being important.

PD is offered to all staff and the presence of professional development opportunities in a centralised, co-ordinated way has enhanced the opportunities available to all staff.

There is a clear communication and management structure in place which provides oversight of and support for all staff.

There are strong QA communication channels in place ensuring staff have access to up-to-date information in an easy to access format. There are opportunities in place for staff to provide feedback on policies through the [QA website](#).

QAOC in line with the QQI Sector Specific Guidelines for ETBs is responsible for the oversight of the “design, development, approval, monitoring and review of all programmes, including programmes leading to QQI award”

Recommendations

- Development of an induction programme for new staff around governance, policies and processes to ensure a continued consistency in message.
- Access to policies currently housed on the KCETB website, the QA website and QA portal need to be streamlined to ensure policies and procedures are easily accessible
- Continued roll out of PD opportunities in line with identified training needs.



e) Programme Development, Approval, and Submission for Validation

The QAOC in line with the QQI Sector Specific Guidelines for ETBs is responsible for the oversight of the “design, development, approval, monitoring and review of all programmes, including programmes leading to QQI awards”¹¹. The oversight of programme validation, monitoring and evaluation remains with the QAOC, with responsibility for the development of policy, review and monitoring delegated to the Programme Validation, Monitoring and Evaluation (PVME) Working Group. The aim is to avoid programme duplication and ensure a strategic focus regarding achieving the targets set out in the SPA. The establishment of the PVME Working Group on the 9th of November 2020 created an extra layer of oversight in terms of the management and development of awards ([see terms of reference](#)).

Programme development, approval, and validation process

The Working Group (PVME) established a Programme and Awards Committee (PAC) in April 2021. The PAC is a subgroup of the working group and meets in line with key QQI validation periods to assess and recommend programmes for validation to the QAOC. Prior to the establishment of this group all awards being developed or requiring validation were approved through the QAOC.

In recognition of the different types of provision, this working group has established a specific programme approval process.

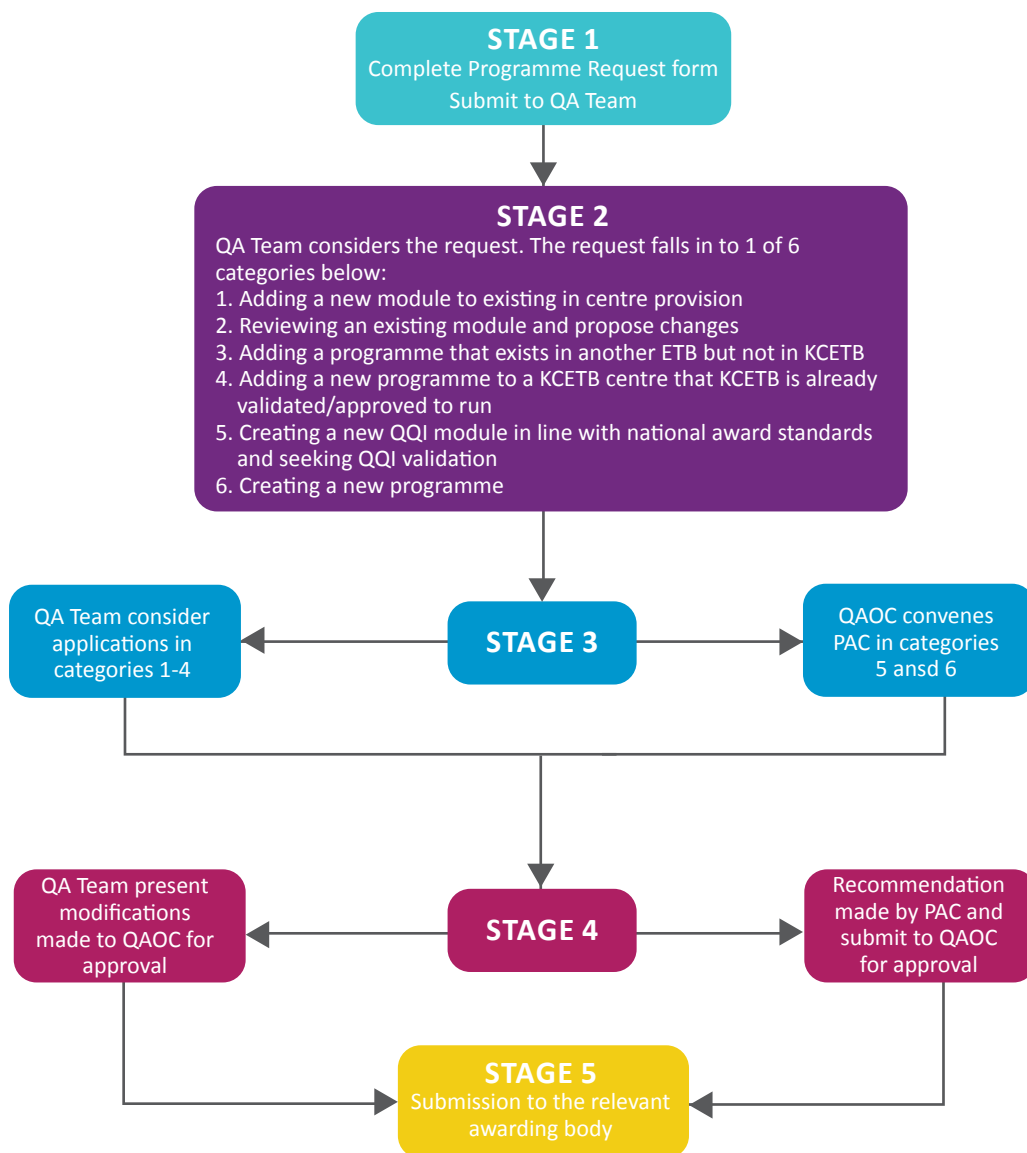


Figure 26 Stages of Programme Development, Approval and Validation

¹¹QQI (2017) Sector-Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for ETB's, page 6

Programme and Awards Committee (PAC)

The PAC is chaired by the Director of FET with members of the QA Team and relevant internal and external members considering the award in the context of local and regional needs ([see terms of reference](#)). Once approval is confirmed by the PAC, the award is recommended to the QOAC for final approval prior to submission to the relevant awarding body. An annual schedule of meetings is planned for the PAC. These meetings will take place in advance of the QQI Programme and Awards Executive Committee (PAEC) meetings. This will allow for the submission of new or differentiated validation applications to QQI as required.

The first PAC meeting took place on 26th April 2021. At this meeting, the PAC considered applications to approve two new Special Purpose Awards for delivery in Duiske College. These awards are:

- Lowland Leader - Special Purpose Level 5
- Stand Up Paddle Boarding Instructional Skills – Special Purpose Level 5

The PAC also considered a differential validation application for new Early Learning and Care awards at levels 5 and 6. This award was developed by DDLETB with KCETB being one of 15 collaborating ETBs. KCETB supported the development of this programme through the allocation of a Subject Matter Expert (SME) to work on the development of the award.

Programme Development

The process involved in programme development is extensive and requires consultation with industry and in some instances with other governing bodies. [Case Study 2](#) details the process undertaken for the development of the Lowland Leader and Stand Up Paddle Boarding Instructional Skills Level 5 Special Purpose awards. The development of this award required consultation with external expertise and governing bodies as well as the development of bespoke learning outcomes.

Partnership Approach

The FET Service has strong links with local and regional employers and industry. KCETB is represented on The Ireland Southeast (Action Plan for Jobs) and the [Southeast Regional Skills Forum](#) and this is beneficial

in ensuring the needs of industry are met through the programmes delivered. An example of this collaboration process is the recent development of a Level 6M4857 Management award, in line with SOLAS research and supported by the Southeast Regional Skills Forum and the Irish Hotels Federation. This award was developed in consultation with industry and is tailored to meet their requirements. As many of the courses run are vocational in focus, a large number of these programmes include work experience modules which further supports industry collaboration. A more robust process for consulting with industry should be developed in-line with the findings from the employer consultations to ensure that programmes developed meet industry needs.

An example of collaborations with other ETBs on programmes include:

1. Kilkenny Adult Learning Service participated in the Tobar project which involved collaboration with 10 other ETBs. A detailed report 'Evaluation of Tobar' - a pilot project in RPL is being prepared which presents a national review of the work involved.
2. Training Services collaborate with other ETBs on a number of programmes:
 - collaborating with KWETB and DDLETB on a City and Guilds RPL Digital Badges project. As KWETB are the lead project partner, they are responsible for managing the QA process with City and Guilds.
 - collaborating with KWETB for the Fifty Shades Greener programme.
 - working with WWETB and TETB on a Skills to Advance initiative called Step Up and Grow.
 - Skills to Advance initiative "Engineering Traineeship" supported by SERSF, KCETB, WWETB, and TETB.
 - Developing Leaders in Tourism and Hospitality – collaboration with SOLAS, Irish Hotels Federation, Failte Ireland and ETB stakeholders
 - Level 6 Software Traineeship in collaboration with IT Carlow

Evaluation Outcomes

There are robust governance and management arrangements in place for the development and approval of FET programmes in line with the QQI Sector Specific Guidelines for ETBs. This oversight is enhanced by the recent establishment of the PVME Working Group and the PAC both of whom report to the QAOC.

There is consultation between centres within the FET Service to avoid duplication of programmes and this is supported through the QAOC. Avoiding duplication of provision ensures clearer pathways for learners and ensures a considered approach to the process of programme management.

Opportunities for collaboration with other ETBs are available, through national initiatives. These opportunities for collaboration afford KCETB every opportunity to draw on external expertise and resources. This has extended the breath of our provision and the ability of our staff to develop awards. Recognition and awareness of the importance of QQI validation and approval for new programmes was acknowledged as important in the centre responses. Programme Learner Support System (PLSS) and Funding Allocation Request and Reporting (FARR) data are also used in reviewing programmes.

KCETB is not currently participating as a co-ordinating provider for any awards but is a collaborating provider for the Commis Chef apprenticeship with Kerry ETB, and for the Advanced Certificate in Early Learning Care (ELC) with DDLETB. QA responsibility is assumed by the co-ordinating ETB provider on behalf of the collaborating ETB partner(s) in line with QQI Sector Specific QA Guidelines for ETBs. KCETB has provided subject matter expertise (SME) to support the development of the Advanced Certificate in Early Learning Care (ELC) thus supporting the development of the award and enhancing our capacity to engage in collaborative programme development.

A collective approach to QA across ETBs is facilitated by Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI). The Director of FET sits on the QA Strategy Group and an AEO and the QA Officer sit on the Quality Network Group. These fora are vital for sharing information and discussing changes that impact on ETBs. A [digital library](#) has been established for sharing resources.

'It is recognised that a coordinated approach, underpinned by labour market intelligence and close links with local and regional employers best suits the learner and the economy of the region'.

OCFE

Recommendations

- The need to consult more actively with employers who host learners on work placement is a priority, as recent consultations found that only 17% say they had been consulted around programme development.
- Expanding the opportunities for staff participation in PD opportunities, such as the Maynooth University Level 9 Postgraduate Certificate in Programme Design and Validation in Further Education and Training would enhance our capacity in the development of awards into the future.
- The PVME Working Group will begin to look at the monitoring, evaluation and review of programmes.

f) Access, Transfer, and Progression

Access the legislative responsibility regarding access, transfer and progression is outlined in the QQI [‘Policy and Criteria for Access, Transfer and Progression in Relation to Learners for Providers of Further and Higher Education and Training’](#).

Access

While the admission process is broadly similar in centres, and may follow that outlined in Figure 27, centres must adhere to the operational guidelines set down for their programme when considering applications to participate on their programme. The FET PLC Colleges must also adhere to the Admissions Act 2018.

“In line with the KCETB vision, the FET Service aims to ensure equal opportunities in access, transfer, and progression for all our learners across the two counties.”



Figure 27 Admission Process



Figure 28 Advertising Methods

KCETB actively promotes courses as evidenced in the [Courses for Adults Kilkenny and Carlow, 2020 / 2021 booklet](#). This booklet provides comprehensive information on the range of education and training opportunities available to adults throughout Kilkenny and Carlow and can be accessed through the KCETB website. The information on courses ranges from unaccredited hobby and leisure courses to QQI Level 6 Advanced Certificates. It targets those people contemplating starting, returning, or seeking to re-engage in education and training.

The FET Service employs a wide variety of methods to advertise its provision as displayed in Figure 28. An example of a [flyer from Training Services](#) is published on their website. Other flyers have been provided by [Duiske College](#) and [Community Education, Kilkenny](#).

Centres indicated that networking with key stakeholders was central to establishing links with and for learners. The [Learner Survey](#) in January 2021 indicated that most learners heard about their course from ‘family or a friend’ with ‘online / internet’ and ‘career guidance’ also featuring as outlined in Figure 29.

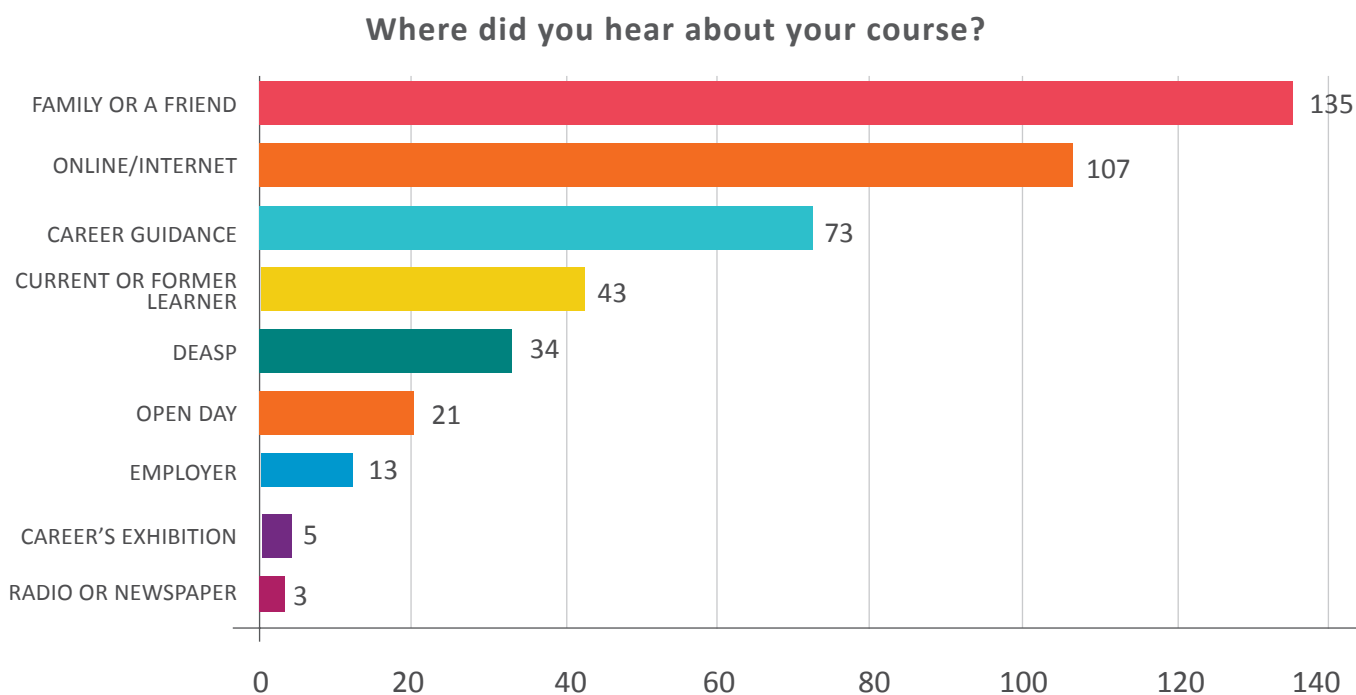


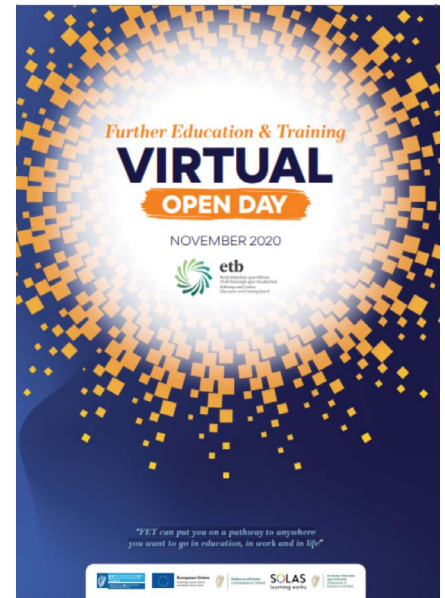
Figure 29 Learner Survey Results - Recruitment

Skills checks and interviews are conducted to ensure that the course meets the needs of the learner and is at the appropriate level. [The Adult Education Guidance Service \(AEGS\)](#) provides a key link between learners and centres and support learners in making informed choices around which course best suits their needs. The FET Service actively recruits a diverse range of learners ensuring access for learners from lower socio-economic backgrounds, recent immigrants, early school leavers, learners with disabilities and learners recovering from substance misuse, to courses.

In November 2020 as part of the KCETB DEIS to FET Network, a series of Virtual Open Days for secondary schools across Kilkenny and Carlow took place. The open days were attended by 459 students from 17 schools. The aim of these events was to increase transitions from DEIS schools to FET provision and this opportunity was then promoted to a broader range of secondary schools in December 2020. The key message of the Open Days was that *'FET can put you on a pathway to anywhere you want to go in education, in work and in life'*. The events were hugely successful, and it is anticipated that they will become an annual feature in the FET calendar.

This [Case Study 3](#) details one learner's journey through FET and demonstrates how learners are supported to achieve their potential through the range of provision FET has to offer.

KCETB strives to meet the needs of a diverse range of learners by using a variety of teaching methods and strategies to help all learners achieve success.



“It is pertinent to state at the outset that the college is proactive in seeking to admit learners from a diverse range of backgrounds. It actively recruits through agencies such as KCAT and the National Learning Network.”

OCFE

Information and guidance in relation to RPL, including learning that has been certified or the accreditation of experiential learning, is outlined in the KCETB policy [‘Recognition of Prior Learning’](#) (outlined further in Objective 2 (b)).

Transfer

There is continuous communication with learners regarding desired pathways. Teaching staff carry out a variety of reviews through: Monthly Progression Forms, Learner Progression Forms and Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) to assist in supporting the learner to identify and develop their learning pathway. The AEGS also plays a central role in ensuring learners are supported on their journey. This service is open to learners across all provision and adults wishing to assess their educational options. This is an important part of identifying opportunities suitable for individual learners when planning progression.

“Recreation course - All the participants successfully completed this course, achieving way beyond what many of them felt possible. One of the learners has since gone on to do a Level 5 QQI course with the intention of attending 3rd level. The QQI Level 4 course has given him the confidence, necessary tools, and a passion for something that he felt he never had.”
Community Education Carlow

Progression

Progression pathways both internally within FET provision from one programme to another and externally to other institutions is clearly communicated to learners throughout their studies.

Local Institutes of Technology (IoTs) are attractive to learners as progression routes. The path for progression to WIT is published on their website [WIT Further Education Progression Scheme](#) (2021) and to IT Carlow on their website [IT Carlow Further Education Progression Pathways](#) – Linked programmes with both colleges referencing KCETB. Progression agreements are in place between the [Institute of Technology Carlow](#) and [Waterford Institute of Technology](#) with KCETB. The creation of a [new Technological University for the South East](#) will provide additional progression opportunities for KCETB learners in the future. These agreements provide opportunities for learners to obtain advanced entry in line with specific entry requirements into a specified number of reserved places on particular programmes either into Year 1 or in some cases Year 2 of these courses.

Guidance services, whether delivered in PLC colleges or through the support of the AEGS once again provide significant supports around progression options for learners. Learners receive scheduled visits from AEGS staff in relation to progression options / CAO applications / employment opportunities and the range of supports which are available throughout their studies. They can also make individual appointments with a guidance counsellor. Learners have access to tools such as the Careers Portal website and ‘My Futures +’, software through which to explore career and progression pathways. Progression can be achieved through providing support and assistance with application forms for courses and jobs, interview techniques, CV preparation and career and course information.

The vocational nature of many of the courses mean that work experience and work placements are also valuable ways to facilitate learner progression to employment.

“Learners are supported during their programmes to explore future destinations. CIFET has a career guidance counsellor who leads this aspect of learner support. Progression for learners is outlined at the outset on the website and in the prospectus”
CIFET

Evaluation Outcomes

KCETB strives to ensure transparency in relation to learner admission, progression, and recognition. This is achieved by having systems in place as outlined and endeavouring to provide admissions, progression and RPL processes that are transparent, easy to navigate and readily available to all learners.

The AEGS is an integral part of the support to learners in accessing, transferring, and progressing through FET provision. Key findings from the Learner Survey conducted in January 2021 found a high satisfaction rating with the guidance and advice received, with 61% of those surveyed stating they were very satisfied with the service offered, and a further 33% stating they were satisfied.

“KCETB engages fully with our organisation. Community Education is always looking at innovative ways of engaging with marginalised learners in creative and effective ways”.
Community Partner
Consultation Participant

How satisfied were you with the guidance and advice you received when you initially contacted you centre? (336 responses)					
Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not applicable
207	111	15	0	0	3

Table 4 Learner Satisfaction with Guidance and Advice

The progression agreements that exist with the IoTs strengthen opportunities for progression for learners and create clearer pathways for learners. To showcase an example of this, [Case Study 4](#) submitted by AEGS Kilkenny details the supports given to a learner making a career change.

Recommendations

- The RPL opportunities to support access, transfer and progression will be further developed.
- A consistent approach to learner supports though the development of a learner support portal to support learners through induction in terms of registration, access to emails, learner wellbeing and academic writing will be developed to ensure a more consistent learner experience.

g) Integrity and Approval of Learner Results

The management of QA within FET puts the learner at the core. To ensure a fair and consistent assessment system for the learners, the development of consistent processes and procedures was identified as a key priority in 2017. Prior to the development and implementation of the [Assessment Policy in 2020](#), each centre had its own policies and procedures with the approval of learner results in line with the legacy agreement in operation in their centre. The roll out of the assessment policy has meant that there is now a fair and consistent system for the assessment of learners across all provision.

The process detailed in the Figure 30 is implemented uniformly across all centres offering QQI awards. The process also comprehends other awarding bodies with modifications allowing for the requirements of these awarding bodies.

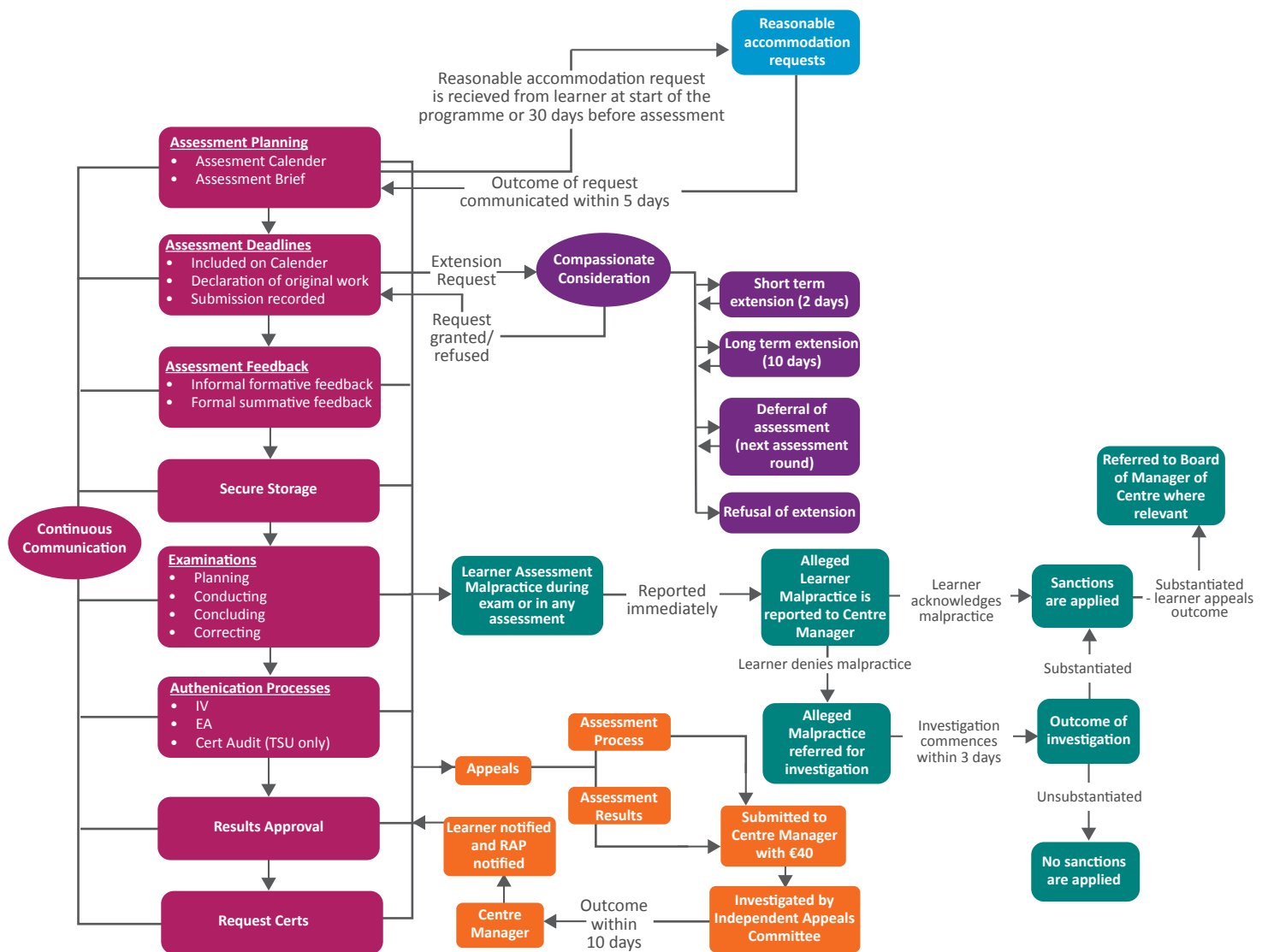


Figure 30 Assessment Flow Chart

The core areas covered in The Assessment policy that pertain to the integrity and approval of results are:

- IV
- EA
- RAP
- Assessment Appeals

The governance and oversight of the integrity of learner results is further enhanced through:

- **EA Process:** From January 2020, the QA Team have managed all EA bookings through a dedicated page which has been created on the [QA Portal](#). This process is supported through the preparation of guidance documents, as well as a briefing session for EAs outlining the types of provision and the key modifications made to assessment due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **RAP:** One centralised RAP takes place at specified times throughout the year in line with QQI certification periods. This panel is chaired by the Director of FET and encompasses all provision and awarding bodies. This allows for the sharing of good practice and the implementation of improvements in line with KCETB’s commitment to quality and excellence.

“The policy of VTOS Kilkenny is to have a fair and consistent assessment and verification of participant achievement, to inform the participant of what is expected of them and to inform them of their progress in achieving assessment goals.”
 VTOS Kilkenny

The policy of VTOS Kilkenny is to have a fair and consistent assessment and verification of participant achievement, to inform the participant of what is expected of them and to inform them of their progress in achieving assessment goals. VTOS Kilkenny

The measures introduced by the new procedures, including the new model of results approval, is likely to ensure a robust model of assessment across all KCETB FET provision and will create confidence in the integrity of the assessment process. OCFE

Other Awarding Bodies

While certification from QQI accounts for up to 91% of awards attained in any given year, KCETB also has arrangements with awarding bodies other than QQI as detailed in Figure 31. Centres offering the established Leaving Certificate and the Leaving Certificate Applied programme are governed by the State Examinations Commission (SEC) and SEC superintendents supervise written and practical exams for both. SEC arrange for the correction of all practical and project coursework and written examinations. Results are made available securely to each centre by the SEC in August each year.



Figure 31 Other Awarding Bodies

KCETB also has MoUs and Service Level Agreements (SLAs) in place with some of the other certifying bodies as detailed in Appendix 4. It is acknowledged by the QAOC that there needs to be a consistent approach to these arrangements. There are positive working relationships with these awarding bodies both at management and centre level and policies and procedures created apply to all awarding bodies. The QA policies and procedures in place recognise that each awarding body has its own requirements and KCETB must also adhere to these.

Evaluation Outcomes

The introduction of the Assessment policy in September 2020 has meant that all centres follow the same process for maintaining the integrity and approval of results for QQI awards.

The positive relationships which have developed with awarding bodies was evidenced in the consultation process for other awarding bodies. Those consulted on the day attached a 4-star rating in terms of the communication between them and the centres.

There is a strong awareness among external providers of the QA management processes and procedures that are in place in FET. This is evidenced in the responses received as part of the external provider consultation where 90% of those surveyed stated they were aware of the assessment and authentication processes that are in place.

“ITEC/VTCT keep a risk register. There is a low-risk status attached to KCETB”.

ITEC Representative

Recommendations

- To ensure a greater level of governance and oversight in our relationship with other awarding bodies, a consistent MoU/SLA will be developed and implemented across all awarding bodies.
- The RAP process will be further expanded to comprehend other awarding bodies. This is not the case currently, as in many cases results approval, is not a final requirement of those awarding bodies and other processes are in place to ensure this oversight exists.



h) Information and Data Management

In line with KCETB's strategic goal to 'ensure all services meet high quality standards' we recognise the importance of high quality data, as the source of reliable information, to facilitate decision making and planning. Good data is central to ensuring that KCETB realises its organisational goals and reporting obligations to certifying and regulatory bodies. KCETB is committed to retaining secure and robust systems and processes, in line with statutory and legislative requirements as detailed in our [Data Protection](#) and associated [Information and Communications Technology \(ICT\) policies](#).

Management Information Systems

The FET Service uses a number of data management systems namely, PLSS, QBS and Cloudschool. Some centres operate localised systems such as MIS, Salespulse and AGMS (Adult Guidance Management System). These systems are used to capture data and information which are processed in a timely manner, and also to monitor learner attendance, results and progression. All systems have restricted access to specific individuals and are only shared with authorised entities and with the express consent of learners.

Programme Learning Support System (PLSS).

PLSS is a system hosted centrally by SOLAS to retain data on learners, programmes and service provision nationally and is the main system used across all FET provision. This system is the main component of KCETBs management information system and is used as the primary repository to store and process course information, learner records, outcomes, and reports. PLSS provides a secure system for collecting, sharing and using data through a number of portals:

1. National Programme Database (NPD) – the national repository of FET programmes being delivered
2. National Course Calendar (NCC) – the schedule of all FET programmes. Data in the NCC may be transferred to the Further Education & Training Course Hub: (FETCH) website, fetchcourses.ie – allowing applicants to search, view and apply for courses online
3. Learner Database – Data from FETCH online applications is transferred into the Learner Database. Further data entered at ETB level for enrolled learners creates a secure learner record

KCETB is cognisant that individual centres may also use additional MIS systems, however the PLSS is the single uniform information management system and provides oversight of all SOLAS funded provision for ETBs. The learner database is operational across all centres. The PLSS advisor provides updates, support, and training to centres on the system with extensive training rolled out in 2021. Further guidance documents in relation to the system and associated training videos are being created to further support centres in operating the system.

The PLSS system is also used to facilitate the annual planning cycle with SOLAS through the Funding Allocation Requests and Reporting System (FARR). The data in PLSS provides real-time oversight of current and planned provision and assists in monitoring progress for the SPA with SOLAS.

“strategic goal ‘ensure all services meet high quality standards’ we recognise the importance of high-quality data, as the source of reliable information, to facilitate decision making and planning.”



Certification Data Systems

The Quality Business System (QBS) is the main on-line system supporting FET certification data. The Walled Garden system is used for City and Guilds certified awards and the RCCRS is used to capture Training Services certification.

The **QBS** is primarily used to request certification. This system is used at centre level and is facilitated by providing each centre with access to the QBS, using Multi-Factor Authentication. QBS functionality provides centres with a variety of reports on individual learner achievement and overall centre performance which supports data validation, QA monitoring and review, as well as supporting continuous development and improvement of provision at centre level.

The **Walled Garden Registration** system is used and accessed at centre level for the assessment and certification of awards offered through City and Guilds. The system provides centres with a variety of reports to support data validation, QA monitoring and review, as well as supporting continuous development and improvement at centre level.

The **Results Capture and Certification Request System (RCCRS)** is used in Training Centres to manage certification requests. The RCCRS certificate request functions are integrated with the QBS and the Apprenticeship Client Services Management System for apprenticeships. It is also used to capture results from other providers, e.g. City & Guilds.

Data security and integrity

The KCETB [Data Protection policy](#) sets out the context for the security of learner and staff data. The PLSS, QBS and other data management systems have built in data protection mechanisms. All staff receive extensive General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) training in advance of having access to any of these systems. Data protection forms are completed by all learners and staff outlining how their data is protected, who it is shared with and details of KCETB's Data Protection Policy and Officer.

“Data protection forms are completed by all learners and staff outlining how their data is protected, who it is shared with and details of KCETB’s Data Protection Policy and Officer.”

Legislative Compliance

KCETB Corporate Services upholds KCETB's statutory obligation to protect the rights and freedoms of individuals with respect to the processing of their personal data and ensures that staff are trained accordingly. All information is held in line with our [Data protection policies](#) and is treated lawfully in accordance with the Data Protection Acts, 1988, 2003 and 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679 and/or such amending legislation or other applicable data protection legislation as may be adopted in Ireland from time to time.

Compliance with information and data management is a requirement of all staff. Staff are required to undergo GDPR training and must complete an online test hosted by ETBI. There is a strong awareness among staff of their GDPR or data protection requirements with centres referencing both in their responses.

Data Utilisation

Data obtained through PLSS, QBS and other MIS systems is core to the review of programme performance across all provision. One of the key mechanisms for monitoring progress in terms of the SPA is the review and analysis of data with reference to provision. Data reports are drawn down monthly from PLSS in the form of MIS reports. These reports provide key statistics with reference to the number of learners on each programme, the number of learners commencing and completing courses as well as the certification outcomes. The SMT review all statistics and this information is disseminated through key communication channels such as monthly meetings and at the FET Forum to centre managers. The analysis of this data helps to ensure key agreed targets set down in the SPA are met and assist in monitoring the quality of provision.

“Staff are required to undergo GDPR training and must complete an online test hosted by ETBI.”

Evaluation Outcomes

The introduction of systems such as PLSS and FETCH has streamlined access to programmes and also significantly increased the reliability of data. The presence of this data has also supported a more strategic approach to planning provision and assisted KCETB in meeting national targets.

Centres across KCETB have robust methods for securing files, ranging from utilising secure online platforms such as MS Office or Moodle, to ensuring all paper-based work is locked away in secure presses, with restricted access. Microsoft Office 365 is available to staff and learners across the KCETB network, thus giving access to secure personal accounts.

Centres collate the data from IV, EA, RAP, exit interviews, progression, feedback, retention, QQI and PLSS. This leads to any corrective action with assessment procedures and is used to inform planning, funding, and staffing within the centres, while delivering high quality teaching and learning and meeting learner needs.

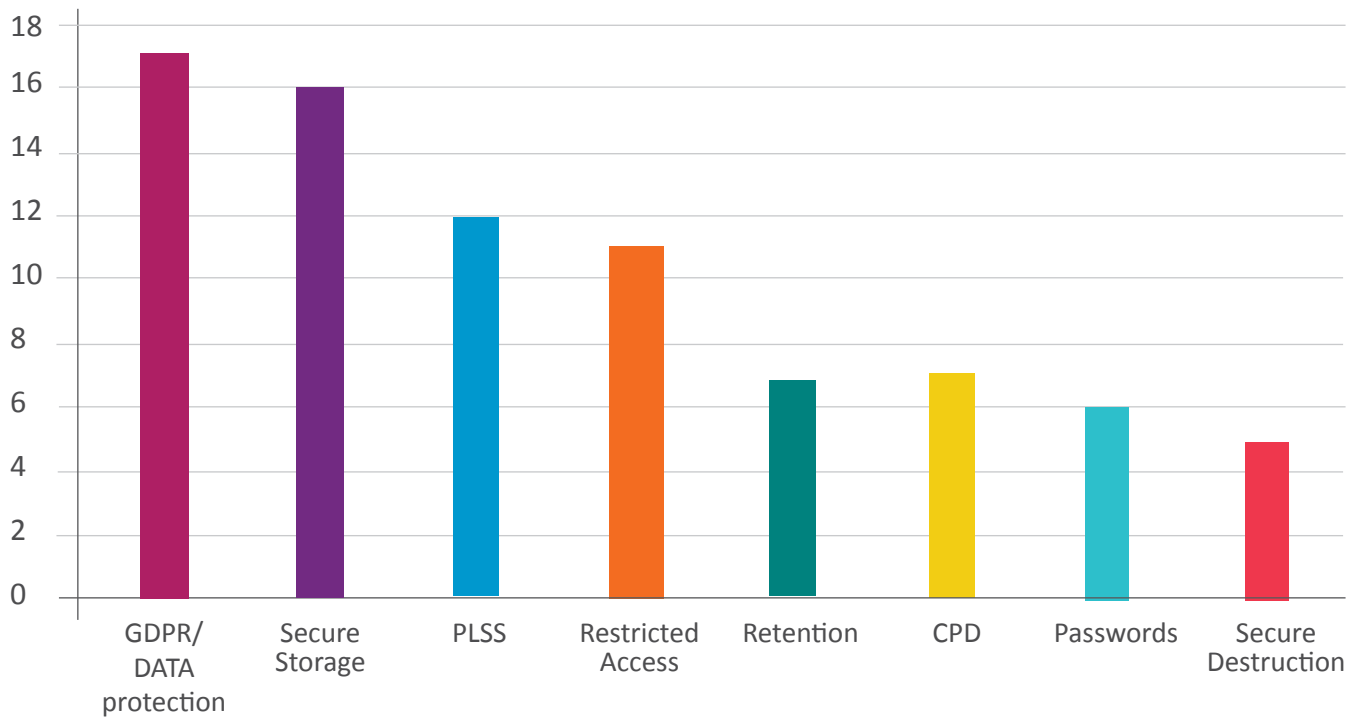


Figure 32 Awareness of Data Protection

Recommendations

- The development of a Learner Management Information System Policy to support the use and implementation of PLSS across all provision is being prioritised.



i) Public Information and Communications

In line with the Education and Training Boards Act 2013, KCETB is required to publish a 5-year strategic plan, an annual operational plan, and an annual report. Furthermore, in line with the QQI (2016) Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines, KCETB is required to make available key information with reference to programme delivery and QA policies, procedures, and governance. The KCETB website is the main repository for this public information for all sections of the organisation. All QA policies, procedures, and governance requirements as well as publications such as annual reports and KCETB board minutes are published on the KCETB website.

Public Information and Communications Working Group

The [Public Information and Communication](#) Working Group was established in March 2019 with its key aim being to create a Public Information and Communications Policy for FET in line with core strategies and guidelines. The group was instrumental in ensuring the voice of the learner was heard in the development of the assessment policy and has created guidelines around the development of templates for a learner handbook. This group works closely with the KCETB Communications Group to ensure that the quality message is consistent.

While there are strong communication channels among staff and learners as detailed below, it has been noted that the KCETB website and in some instances the QA portal can be difficult to navigate. One of the key tasks being undertaken by this group is a review of these communication channels.

“All public facing non centre specific QA information is available on the QA section of the KCETB website which was launched in August 2020”

KCETB Website

Ensuring staff, learners, stakeholders, and the general public have access to up-to-date relevant information is important to ensuring the communication of the QA message. All public facing non centre specific QA information is available on the QA section of the KCETB website which was launched in August 2020. This is now the main repository for KCETB QA publications and information.

Qa Communication Channels

All internal QA information and documentation is shared on the [staff portal](#) link on the www.kcetbqa.ie home page and is hosted on SharePoint. This portal contains the following information:

- Copies of module descriptors specific to the programmes delivered in each centre
- Information on previous PD, including recordings of training sessions, presentations, and associated notes
- Authentication information with reference to EA bookings and alternative assessment processes and procedures
- Updates on progress in preparation for the IR
- Terms of Reference of Working Groups

It also hosts a feedback channel whereby staff can provide feedback on policies, procedures, and processes. The QA team will carry out a support session for staff in relation to the portal one year after its implementation to ensure that staff can navigate the portal, and consider how it might be further developed in the future.

The [QA newsletter](#) is another key source of information in respect of QA updates. The newsletter is published on the QA website a minimum of 3 times per year for staff and learners. The newsletter provides a mechanism to communicate the quality culture which we promote and provides updates to learners and staff on achievements to date and modifications that have been made. The newsletter will be circulated to the OSD staff and also to external providers from May 2021 in order to ensure broader communication within and beyond the organisation.

Information to Learners

Ensuring that learners are communicated with, in a clear, consistent manner is aligned to KCETBs mission and vision. Learners have access to the [QA website](#) and the QA newsletter. Many centres also have their own websites where information is shared, with links made

to the KCETB site. Additionally, information is made available to learners through Moodle, leaflets, learner handbooks, FETCH courses, social media and email.

Information to Stakeholders

Formal and informal communication channels exist between key stakeholders in terms of regional, community and statutory partners as well as employers in the region. Formal communication agreements are in place in some instances, such as, the Department of Social Protection (DSP) protocol and in other areas there are links with employers through work experience. One of the key tasks of the Work Based Learning Group is the development of clearer communication channels and processes for linking with employers in the region. It is acknowledged that due to the breath of provision there needs to be a more co-ordinated approach to these engagements.

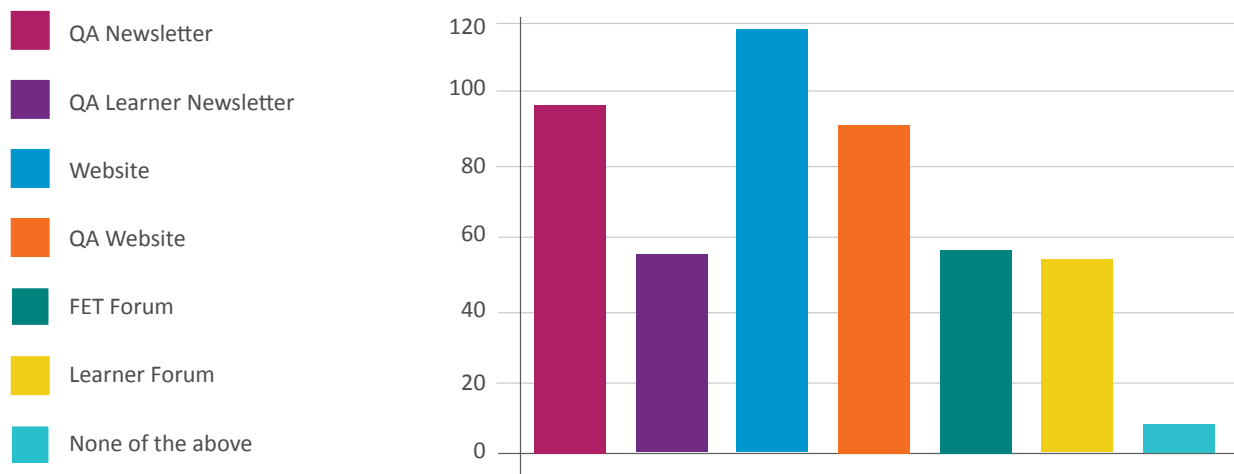


Figure 33 Staff Communication Channels

Evaluation Outcomes

There is a strong awareness among staff of the key communication channels used to provide up to date QA information. Of the staff surveyed, 48% stated that the communication processes in place were effective while 43% stated they were somewhat effective.

External providers identified a rating of 3.5 when asked about the effectiveness of KCETB communication with them. There was a strong awareness of the KCETB and QA website among external providers with 93% of those surveyed stating they were aware of both sites.

Recommendations

- A review of the KCETB website is underway to make it easier to navigate for staff, learners, and stakeholders.
- A communications policy for KCETB will be developed to ensure a co-ordinated approach to the communication of the KCETB message across all provision.
- The promotion of greater awareness of KCETB services among employers in the region needs to be a priority. In the employer survey only 61% were aware of KCETB. The Work Based Learning Group will continue to progress this priority.
- OSD staff and external providers will receive the QA newsletter.

Case studies – Governance and Management of Quality

For full case study see Appendix 3

Case Study 1 Approval of CAS Modifications	
Demonstrating:	Robust governance and QA oversight of modifications to awards
Details:	At the start of the academic year (September 2020), it was recognised that the COVID-19 pandemic would present difficulties for learners who required work placements. The awards were reviewed to identify where a replacement could be used. On 5th December 2020, QQI provided alternatives for 101 awards, subject to local governance and approval. Additional approval for simulated work placement for specific vocational awards was received in January 2021. These modifications were rolled out to centres, with a robust nationally approved approval process put in place. This involved centre's submitting a 'Programme modification request form' which could be approved by the QA Team by referencing the QQI approval list. For vocational programmes additional detail with reference to how the simulation would take place and the resources required was submitted on a nationally approved modification form (WP form), was considered by the QA Team and submitted to the QAOC for approval. All outcomes were notified to centres by the QA Team. Communities of Practice (CoP) were established for some awards. A QA review will be conducted on the implementation of the CAS modifications.
Highlights:	Transparency – Approval system / briefings / QA portal Effective governance – QA Team / QAOC Control of modifications – Documentation management External Collaboration – QQI, ETBI Quality network, other ETBs Internal Collaboration – Communities of practice, shared resources Learner centred - Equivalence of modified award

Case Study 2 Lowland Leader and Stand Up Paddle Boarding Instructional Skills Level 5 Special Purpose awards	
Demonstrating:	KCETB's Programme Development processes in advance of submission for validation (research, inclusion of external expertise, writing learning outcomes, curricula, etc.)
Details:	Duiske College, is seeking to have Mountaineering Ireland and Canoeing Ireland National Governing Body (NGB) awards recognised by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) so that they sit on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). In January 2021 it was agreed KCETB would work with both Mountaineering Ireland and Canoeing Ireland to apply for the Lowland Leader award and the Stand Up Paddle Boarding Instructional Skills award to be recognised as QQI Level 5 Special Purpose Awards. Extensive consultation with both National Governing Bodies and Subject Matter Experts took place to develop the award which was evaluated through the KCETB Programme Validation Process and was submitted to QQI in April 2021 for validation.
Highlights:	Collaboration with external stakeholders – QQI, Sports Governing Bodies Governance and approval of changes – QAOC Effective quality management of changes – QAOC, validation procedures Robust documentation – Validation application process Innovation – new award for the outdoor sports programme

Case Study 3 Learner Experience (Access, Transfer, and Progression)	
Demonstrating:	KCETB’s mission of “enabling learners to achieve their full potential and contribute to the social, cultural and economic development of our area and of the country.”
Details:	Learner R successfully completed several subjects in the Junior Certificate. However, she left school and took up employment but began to engage in drug use. At seventeen she became a mother and found parenting a challenge. Learner R decided to change her life and engaged with a range of recovery services. As part of her recovery, Learner R was referred to the “Making Connections” Programme in St Catherine’s Centre, Carlow. The programme required her to attend two hours per week. This really suited Learner R as she was expecting her second baby at the time. Having successfully completed a module at QQI level 3 just before her son was born, the flexibility of the programme allowed Learner R to take time out until it suited her to return. A year after her baby was born Learner R began to re-engage and went on to complete a QQI level 4 award. With the support of the Adult Education Guidance Service (KCETB) and the Local Training Initiative Co-ordinator, Learner R was successful in her application for a place on the Applied Social Studies QQI Level 5 programme in CIFET. Going forward Learner R has made an application to continue her studies in the Institute of Technology, Carlow, doing a QQI level 8 honours degree in Social Care.
Highlights:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flexible learning options Access, transfer and progression opportunities Focussed, targeted and individualised support Value of certified learning Facilitating the learner to achieve potential

Case Study 4 Client Support Through Career Change	
Demonstrating:	How a learner availed of opportunities with the support of AEGS.
Details:	The learner, Martin (name changed) had worked in the construction sector for 20 years and became unemployed during the economic downturn and subsequently became homeless. In February 2018 Martin was referred to the AEGS Service from DSP. Through the guidance process, Martin began to identify the skills he wished to develop for vocational and educational progression. The AEGS Service referred Martin to a local Family Resource Centre for ECDL classes followed by a referral to the Back to Education Initiative (BTEI) Horticulture programme in Sept’ 2018. In February 2019 he completed a mature CAO application and the Guidance Counsellor supported Martin to prepare for interview and apply for funding through SUSI. He received a CAO offer in July 2019 and continued his third level studies at level 8.
Highlights:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interagency collaboration – referral from DSP Learner centred – tailored solutions for learner Progression options – CAO opportunities Confidence building– opportunities to support learner in achieving goals Working on basics - IT skills developed Supporting career change – identifying alternative options

Evaluation Outcomes – Objective 1

Governance and Management of Quality		
	Detail	Evidence
Established quality management structures in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robust governance, oversight, and quality management systems in place. • Established QA Team to lead the delivery of QA initiatives • Systems in place to support centres with QA matters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QAOC TOR, meeting minutes, subgroups. • QA Team structure, EA, RAP, QA documents • QA website, QA portal, QA support visits, training delivered, Newsletters. • Individual Centre Self-evaluation Reports. • IV, EA and RAP reports
Quality culture of collaboration and continuous improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centres demonstrating an understanding of quality • Authentication of assessment processes including the actioning of recommendations arising • Sharing of materials and working collaboratively • Learner voice is heard and informs policy • Diverse range of PD Opportunities available to staff • Strong QA communication channels • Collaboration arrangements at local, regional, and national level • Assessment Working Group established 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CoP established in vocational areas • KCETB Learner Forum and associated surveys • PD report 2020 • QA website, portal and newsletters • DSP protocol, stakeholder engagement. • TOR, meeting minutes, Assessment Policy, RPL Policy, Blended learning policy issued. • TOR, meeting minutes, Validation policy in development (March 2021)
KCETB Working groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Validation, Evaluation and Monitoring Working Group established • Work Based Learning Working Group established • Public Information and Communications Working Group established • Assessment Working Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TOR, meeting minutes, Validation policy in development (March 2021) • TOR, meeting minutes, Work based learning policy in development • TOR, meeting minutes, key documents in development • TOR, meeting minutes, Assessment Policy, RPL Policy, Blended learning policy issued.

Recommendations – Objective 1

Governance and Management of Quality		
	Objective	Plan
Working towards the QA handbook	Develop and publish key documents outlined for the QA handbook.	QA handbook to be completed and implemented as detailed in Gantt chart.
Continues alignment of the KCETB Mission and Strategy to FET strategies	Review the KCETB Mission and Strategy.	Publish the KCETB Strategy Statement 2022 – 2026.
Staff Induction	Ensure awareness of QA governance structures among new staff.	Create an induction programme for new staff members across all FET provision.
Harnessing Learner Voice	Continue to develop the learner voice.	Create a learner support forum to build the capacity of learners to engage in consultation processes.
Working groups	Implement the objectives of the working groups.	As per the Terms of reference approved by the QAOC. Review membership to ensure representation of all provision. Expansion of RAP panel to fully encompass all awarding bodies.
Communication of message	Review KCETB website to ensure it is easier to navigate. Ensure Newsletter is shared across all provision including external providers.	Links between communications groups to build one consistent message for KCETB. Creation of KCETB Communication policy.
Engagement with Employers	Strengthening the employer voice in programme development	Work Based Learning Group to develop policy for a more cohesive approach to employer engagement.
Professional Development	Expansion of opportunities across core QA areas.	Increased participation in Programme Design and Validation Level 9 qualification and other QA PD opportunities as they arise.
Learner Supports	Ensuring learners are supported across all provision.	Creation of Learner Support Portal and Learner Induction Process
RPL	Expansion of RPL opportunities across FET	Develop additional structures to support RPL implementation.
Strengthening Governance Structures with External Providers and other awarding bodies	Review of arrangements currently in place with external providers.	SLA/MoU in place with all external providers.
Learner Management Information System	Support continued use and implementation of PLSS across all provision.	Development of Learner Management information System policy.

OBJECTIVE 2:
Teaching, Learning and Assessment

a) The learning environment

The creation of a quality learning and working environment for our learners and staff has progressed significantly over the lifetime of the Statement of Strategy. FET provision across Kilkenny and Carlow is primarily based in the main urban areas with community facilities used in rural outreach centres to facilitate provision. The suitability of these spaces is under regular evaluation and a detailed review took place of all centres in September 2020 as part of a SOLAS buildings review. In line with our strategic goals and relevant national strategies KCETB has progressed a number of infrastructural projects over the last number of years aimed at enhancing the learning environment for our learners and staff.

Physical Learning Environment

In 2018 Training Services opened a new training facility at Purcellsinch Industrial Estate in Kilkenny. While primarily used for phase 2 electrical apprentices, this facility has been fitted out to support a number of programmes particularly those with an IT focus. KCETB has submitted a business case to SOLAS seeking the future development of facilities.

In line with KCETB's strategic goals we are committed to: "Ensuring that all KCETB services meet high quality standards"

Goal 2 – KCETB Statement of Strategy 2017-2021



In 2019 CIFET opened the doors of its new purpose-built college at Mortarstown, Carlow. This campus is designed to cater for 1,000 learners and offers specialist training facilities in Media Production, Professional Cookery and also Performing Arts. The state-of-the-art facilities in the new college will ensure that it can provide high quality learning opportunities for those seeking career opportunities across a broad spectrum of disciplines.



Digital Learning Environment

The opportunities afforded through the focused introduction of technology into the learning environment have been further embedded through the development of the TEL infrastructure, new pedagogical approaches, and ongoing PD opportunities. Central to the pedagogical approach is the learning content and the sharing of best practice. Underpinned by the [SOLAS TEL Strategy 2016-2019](#), new technology has been purchased for centres, training has been provided in each centre and the appointment of Digital Leaders will further develop the approach to TEL in each centre. This was supported with increased investment in resources and the appointment of a TEL and PD Co-ordinator in 2020. The progress made has been reviewed and a [KCETB TEL Action Plan](#) detailing key priorities for the development of TEL for 2021 and beyond has been developed.

“The need for teaching staff to upskill in MS 365 came about when the need to share resources was identified. Most teaching staff are using OneDrive, MS Teams, Zoom to work together, this has proven to be an excellent resource. The recruitment of a TEL co-ordinator has made access to CPD for all staff more accessible.”
Kilkenny Adult Learning Service

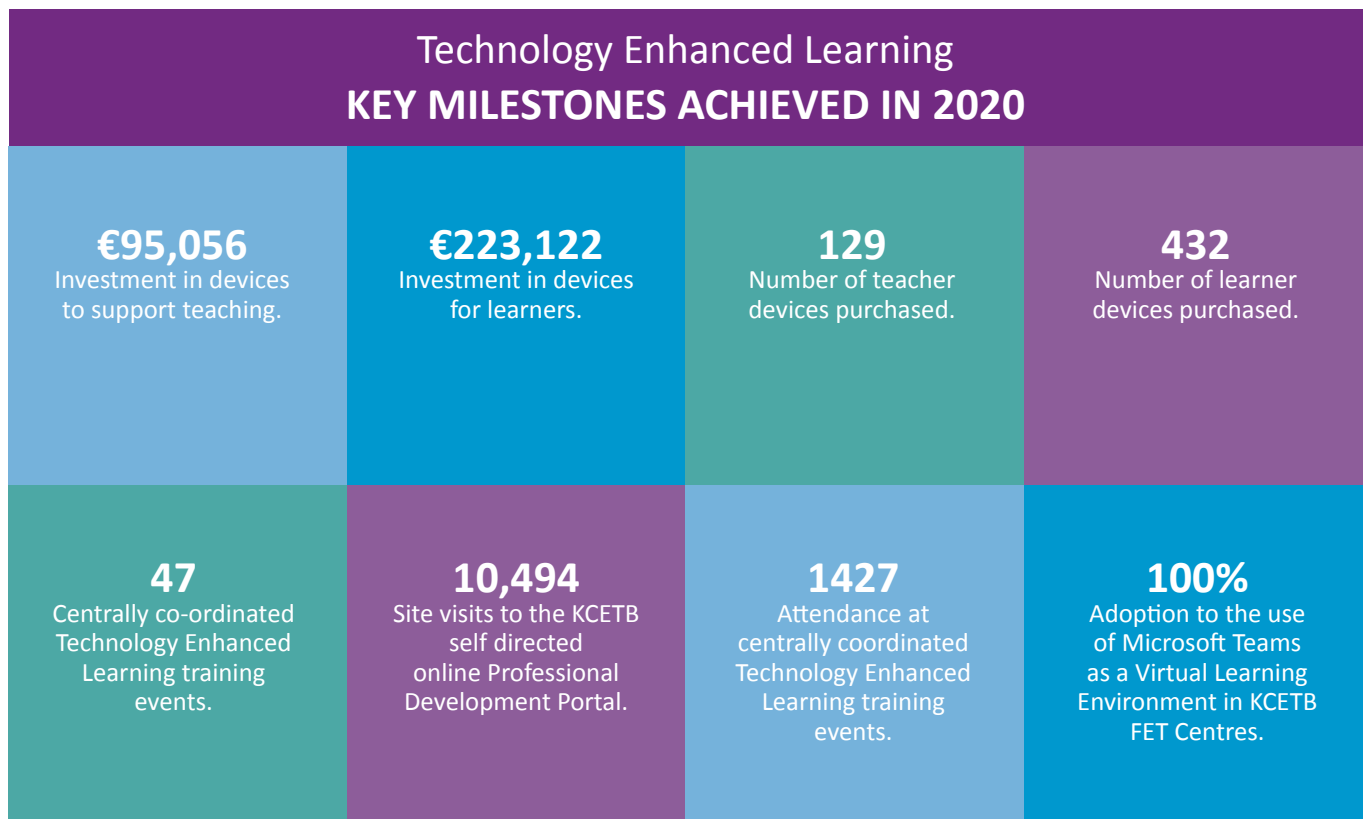


Figure 34 TEL Key Milestones Achieved in 2020

A key milestone in terms of the TEL infrastructure in 2020 was the expansion of access to the KCETB Office 365 platform to all learners across all provision as detailed in Figure 34. This access has offered learners accessibility to the full suite of Office 365 packages. The introduction of MS Teams as the main Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) across the ETB has meant that learners have the opportunity to engage effectively in a remote learning environment. There has been significant investment in devices across all provision with the purchase of 129 interactive touch screen laptop devices for teaching staff. Ensuring learners had access to devices was a priority and 432 interactive touch screen laptop devices were purchased and made available on loan to learners. This investment has enabled learners to become more independent in their learning by using tablets for self-directed learning, research, projects, etc.



This investment and the appointment of a PD and TEL Co-ordinator in January 2020 meant that centres were able to transition quickly to the remote learning environment required following COVID-19 in March 2020. The PD and TEL Co-ordinator was also core to developing the online PD Portal to build on the commitment, expertise and professionalism of staff and supporting a strong learning culture within the organisation. In 2020, a total of 90 training events were organised centrally with an attendance of 3,460 staff, with a further 10,494 visits to the PD Portal as detailed in Figure 35. The PD and TEL Co-ordinator also supports centres and staff to embrace new and emerging technologies to deliver the highest quality learning opportunities to all our learners.

The manner in which teaching and learning was implemented, and quality assured throughout the COVID-19 emergency arrangements is presented in [Case Study 5](#).

Enhancement of Teaching and Learning

KCETB strives to consistently enhance the quality of teaching and learning across all provision. This is evidenced in the approach taken to the PD opportunities afforded to our staff. The organisation made a strategic decision to support the enhancement of teaching and learning across our schools and FET centres by training staff in the Magenta Principles methodologies during 2019. A cross section of teaching staff participated in this PD initiative with the key benefits being enhanced teaching and learning; increased reflection and the promotion of critical thinking in the context of curriculum delivery. Other PD opportunities that have been undertaken by staff include Level 6, 7 and 8 qualifications in Technology Enhanced Learning, Level 8 qualifications in Change Management, Level 9 Certificate in Programme Design and Validation in Further Education and Training and a Level 9 qualification in Recognition of Prior Learning.

The appointment of a PD Co-ordinator in 2020 and the subsequent focused development of a PD Portal has further enhanced the range and accessibility of PD opportunities available to staff. [The Professional Development 2020 Annual Report](#) presents data from events that were centrally co-ordinated and/or delivered as detailed in Figure 36.

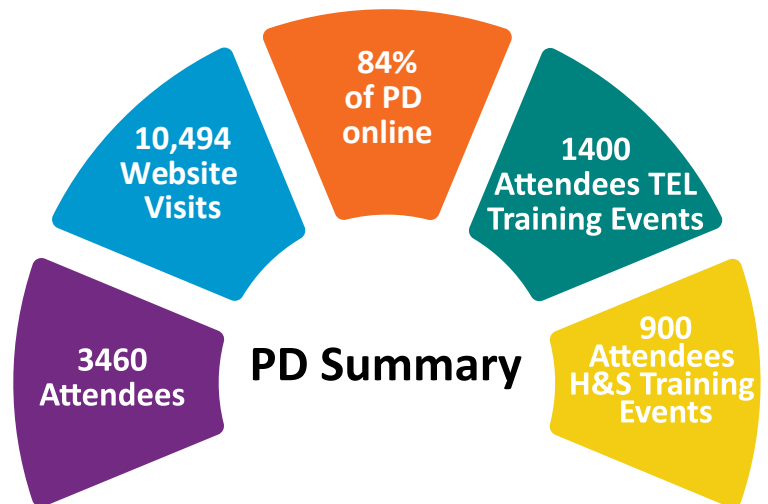


Figure 35 Professional Development Summary 2020

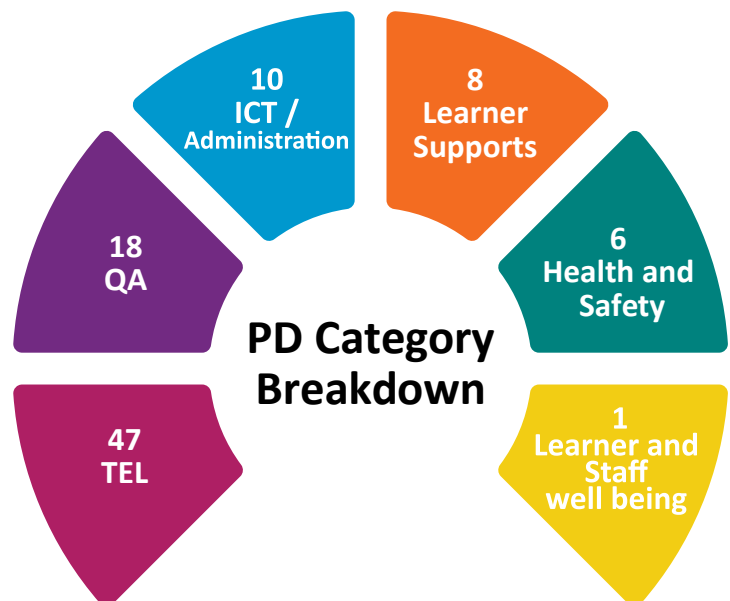


Figure 36 Professional Development Breakdown by Category 2020

There was a strategic decision taken in 2020 to focus training in the areas of Teaching, Learning and Assessment. The key focus here was to support teaching staff in the move to emergency remote teaching and learning. This move online dramatically increased participation in training events and also brought about a huge cultural change for Kilkenny and Carlow ETB, which will no doubt, impact on teaching and learning into the future.

Communities of Practice

Offering opportunities to staff to learn from each other has also been encouraged through the establishment of Communities of Practice (CoP). The establishment of these groups provides teaching staff with an opportunity to share ideas, work on collectively resolving an issue, improving skills, and learning from each other's experiences as outlined in Figure 37. In 2020, CoPs were established for the vocational areas of childcare and healthcare.



Figure 37 Community of Practice in Action

Monitoring of the Learner Experience

The quality of the learning experience is monitored by various means as outlined in Figure 38. Learners have formal and informal avenues to provide feedback to the centre on their experience. Formal structures such as one-to-one meetings, mid-term and end of year evaluations are undertaken to monitor the learning experience. The learner's voice was also heard through the FET Learner Forum and through feedback from the Learner Councils in Youthreach in Kilkenny and Carlow, VTOS in Kilkenny and Carlow, as well as Carlow Institute and Ormonde College of Further Education. Formal feedback is received through feedback forms and mid-term/end of year/end of module evaluations.

The feedback received is reviewed at centre level by management and teaching staff. This feedback is used to consider the effectiveness of processes within the centres and whether modifications to programmes are necessary. It is acknowledged that there is not a consistent approach to obtaining learner feedback in place at present. The Public Information and Communications Group is currently working on a uniform process for implementation across all centres in order to ensure a consistent approach to obtaining learner feedback. Once obtained this feedback will be considered at centre and SMT level with modifications being made where necessary.

Informal feedback takes place through class discussions, comments at the end of sessions, discussions at tea break, class outings, exit surveys, etc. Feedback is also elicited from teaching staff and stakeholders by management in the form of end of course evaluations and reflection forms. The focus of

the feedback is on learner needs and the survey looks at the methodologies used in class, how the classes are delivered, engagement levels, academic progression, support required, etc. This feedback is led by coordinators and is used to modify the delivery of course content and ensure learner needs are being met. Staff meetings focusing on the data from IV, EA and other reports, evaluations and informal information are conducted to examine data and identify approaches to improve the learner experience and the quality of the service provided. Centres can share information gathered internally on learning and learner feedback with other centres. Formally this is facilitated by the FET Forum and also through the QA processes of EA and RAP. The EA reports are reviewed at combined RAP meetings and centres can learn from the EA findings from other centres. Extracts from EA reports are provided in Appendix 5.

[Case Study 6](#) demonstrates enhancements to the learning experience made by Carlow Adult Learning Service as a result of learner feedback received.

“Mentor meetings between learners and teachers also give an insight into how learners feel about different subjects and give an insight into preferred learner methodologies. Two learners are invited to represent Youthreach at the Learner Voice Forum. A learner representative addresses the Board with updates at each meeting where they give feedback about the learning experience and what is going on in the centre. Teachers then use this information to adapt their teaching”
Youthreach Kilkenny



Figure 38 Learner Feedback Collection Methods

Monitoring Work Placement

Due to the vocational nature of the programmes offered, work based learning in the form of placement, work experience or work practice forms an essential element of many programmes. The quality of work placements is supported through a variety of methods including:

- monitoring visits
- employer and learner packs
- supervisor reports
- reports from learners in the form of journals/diaries.

All centres have staff dedicated to supporting learners engaging in work placements. In smaller centres this may be the work experience (WE) teaching staff, while in larger centres there may be a WE Co-ordinator overseeing all placements. Before placement, learners are given guidance by their teacher in relation to the organisations they are considering applying to. Packs are issued for both learners and work experience providers containing the required forms, outlining the roles and responsibilities as well as insurance and contact details. Formal feedback on placements is received from supervisor reports and daily learner journals/diaries and work experience teaching staff gain valuable insight into what the learner gained from their placement. Informal feedback is obtained through class discussion.

Work Experience Co-ordinators keep in regular contact with learners to ensure that the work provided to them is meaningful and will enhance their skills. This also allows centres to evaluate the suitability of placements for future learners. One centre is reinstating a process of issuing employer questionnaires midway through the placement to gain a better insight into the placement progress and to support any issues that may arise. Feedback from employers helps inform programme delivery.

“Employers suggested learners would benefit from training in specific areas such as Web Design and Payroll. These modules are now offered to BTEI learners”.
BTEI Carlow



As part of the self-evaluation process extensive engagement took place with 194 employers who have facilitated learners from a range of programmes on work placement in the past. The largely positive feedback that was received included:

- 23% rated their experience as excellent and a further 23% rated it as good.
- 62% stated they would take learners on placement again.
- 17% identified a lack of capacity to supervise learners as a challenge, while a further 27% stated staff were not sufficiently trained to supervise learners.
- 61% stated that the resources received were sufficient to support the placement supervisor
- 15% rated the work readiness of learners as excellent, 37.8% stated it was good, while a further 31.5% rated it as average.

In engaging with the employer cohort it was found that the experience of taking learners on placement from KCETB was largely positive. Of the responses received, 53% rated their experience as good and a further 23% rated it as excellent.

While the response rate from employers was positive, there is however, an inconsistent approach as to how work placement is currently monitored, reviewed and managed across provision. This is an area which is being reviewed by the Work Based Learning Group with a view to creating a consistent policy and process across all provision. Another key area of work that needs to be attended to is raising the profile of KCETB with employers to make them aware of how beneficial work placement opportunities can be for both learners and themselves.

“Learners are encouraged to communicate with management and staff to inform them of only supports required.”
VTOS Carlow

Evaluation Outcomes:

Consultation with learners found that there is a positive learning environment across provision with learners praising teaching staff for being supportive, encouraging, and generous with their time.

Overall learners were satisfied or very satisfied with the facilities and services across all provision.

How satisfied were you with the theory rooms (classrooms) of the centre? (327 responses)					
Very satisfied	satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not applicable
166	117	22	2	0	20

How satisfied were you with the computer rooms in your centre? (327 responses)					
Very satisfied	satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not applicable
154	105	23	4	2	39

Table 5 Learner Satisfaction Rating

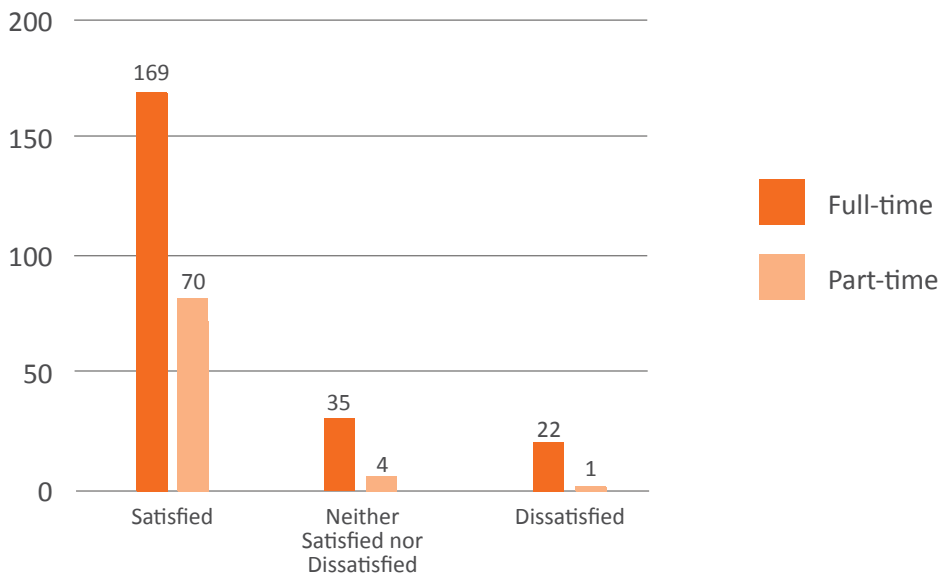


Figure 39 Satisfaction with Facilities

In regard to teaching and learning, learners across all provision were either satisfied or very satisfied with what was happening in the classrooms.

“74% of learners were satisfied or very satisfied with the learner representation at their centre.”

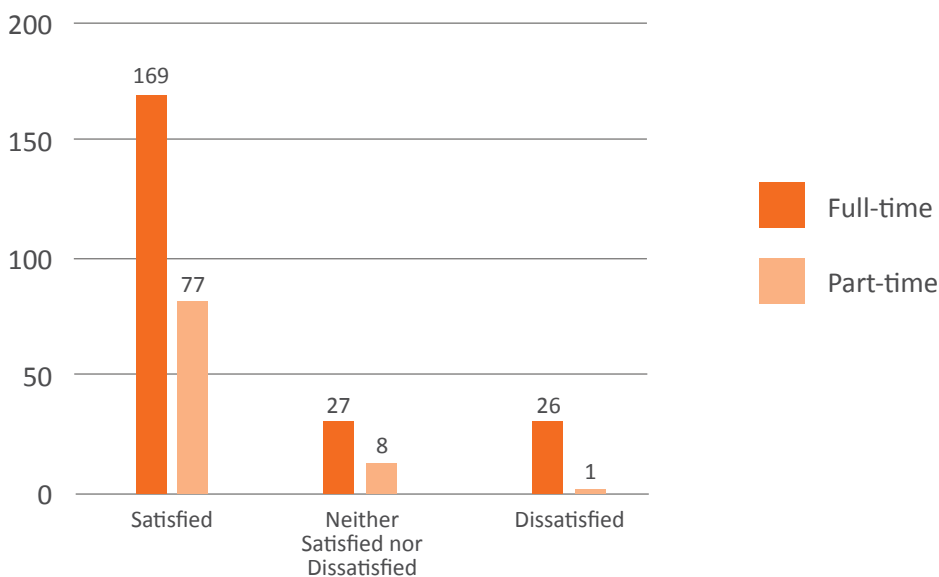


Figure 40 Satisfaction with Teaching and Learning Across all Provision

While all learners were happy to continue their course online, and felt supported to do so, they missed the social aspect of learning and the peer contact. Of those surveyed, 64% indicated they did not enjoy learning at home. National research has shown that the most vulnerable learners were impacted most by the move to online learning. This trend has been confirmed in KCETB with a number of centres identifying the more disadvantaged learners as struggling most in the online environment.

Recommendations

- The consultation completed with learners found that they struggled with their digital skills. A more co-ordinated approach to learner supports such as the portal that is being created, to support learners.
- Of the employers surveyed 60% were aware of KCETB and a further 62% stated the materials received from placement supervisors were suitable. A review of work placement paperwork will be undertaken by the Work Based Learning Group in line with the feedback received.
- An awareness raising exercise will be undertaken to develop a better understanding of KCETB's services with employers.



b) Assessment of learners

Integrity, Consistency, and Security of Assessment

The assessment and authenticity of results is paramount in ensuring all learners have equality of access and opportunity to attain the required skills and knowledge to progress in their education/employment journey. The move away from 9 legacy agreements and a diverse approach to assessment across provision was identified as a key priority in the 2017 Executive Self Evaluation Report (ESER). [The KCETB Assessment Policy](#) was developed by the Assessment Working Group in response to this priority and is central to teaching, learning and assessment processes and procedures across provision. Further information on the policies developed can be found in Section 1 (c). The key benefit of this policy is that it provides a consistent approach to the assessment, authentication and results approval processes for teaching staff, learners, support staff and management across all provision. The content of the policy is displayed in Figure 41. Each section detailed in this graphic is supported by related documentation which is implemented uniformly across all provision thus ensuring the integrity and consistency of how learners are assessed across all programmes and centres.

The Assessment Policy has common assessment templates and as a result there is consistency with respect to all aspects of assessment including learner briefs, assessment calendars, etc. Assessment is reviewed by management through authentication processes at centre level to ensure it is consistent with national standards and award specifications. Examinations are drafted by teaching staff and held securely in centres until required. Examination guidelines are issued to learners and it is the responsibility of teaching staff to follow relevant awarding body guidelines. Examinations are supervised by an impartial invigilator, following which completed examination papers are collected, placed in a specific folder, and then locked in a secure location. All learners sign statements of authenticity with respect to their submitted work. Centres store completed examination papers in secure cabinets and electronic files are held securely on OneDrive and can only be accessed by designated people. Files are kept for the time required to complete authentication and certification following which they are securely destroyed/deleted. All assessment instruments, methodologies, procedures, and records are maintained in accordance with the Assessment Policy.

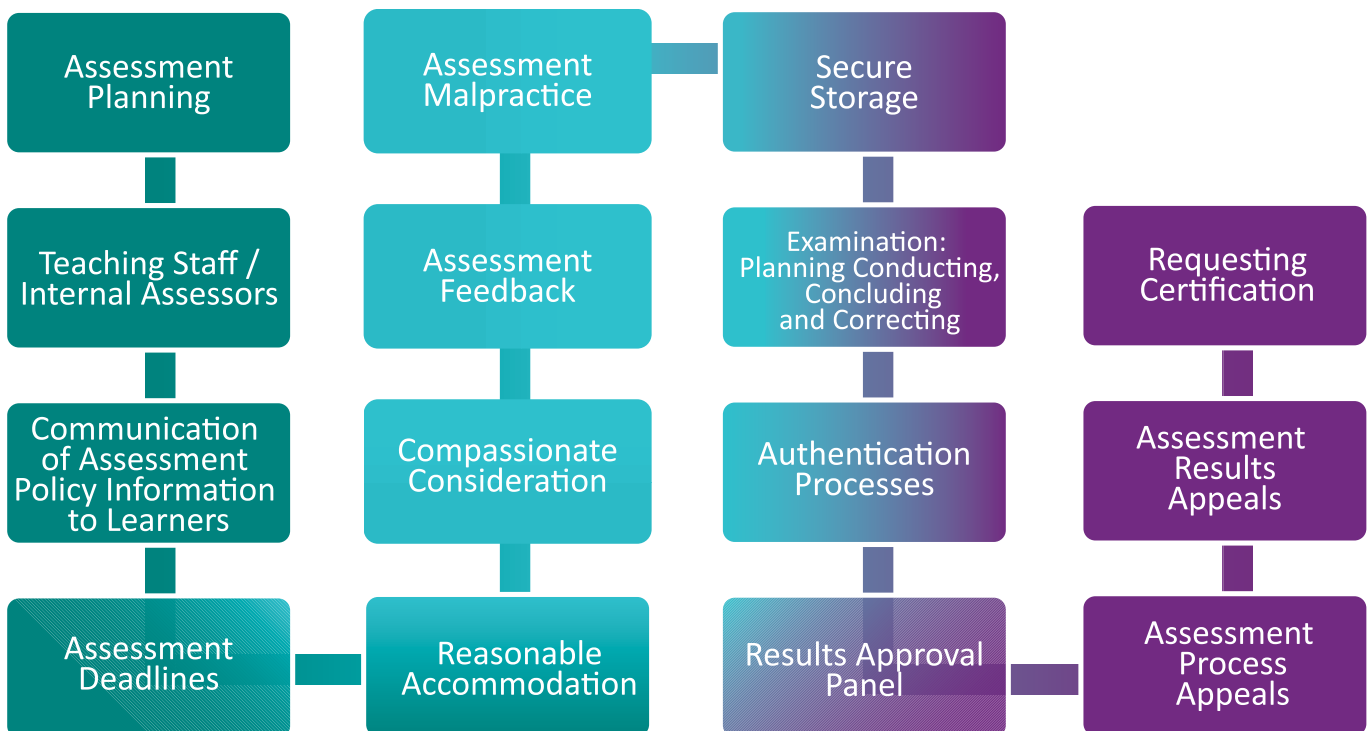


Figure 41 Assessment Policy Content

In Training Services AIS packs are used. They are used by Training Services in all ETBs and are essentially assessments prescribed by Training Services for use by external providers. They are stored centrally on a shared drive within Training Services and released to the providers on request. They are password protected and access is removed once the provider has completed the programme of learning.

The implementation of the Assessment Policy has not been without its challenges. While the majority of the feedback received from staff with regard to the implementation of the policy was positive, there were some concerns regarding areas of provision at lower levels, and with external providers. A further review of the policy is being considered to ensure all levels are sufficiently attended to. The development of this policy is the first step in a much longer process of moving toward a consistent standard in assessment briefs with a review of current locally devised assessment (LDA) in Further Education and AIS packs in Training.

Communication to Learners

Centres indicated that learners are informed about assessments throughout their programme. During induction the following are outlined: all policies and procedures for QQI awards, the combination of core and elective modules, various assessment procedures and the learner code of conduct. Learners are provided with a clear understanding of the programme content, and the assessment criteria and processes are explained to the learners by the teachers in each subject area. The grading system is outlined to the learners, setting out what is required to achieve Pass, Merit or Distinction in QQI or other awards. This information is revisited throughout the academic year, as necessary. Some centres provide learners with both a learner handbook and an examination handbook outlining the assessment process. The Public Information and Communication Group have developed a template for a Learner Handbook and this will be developed along with the Learner Support Portal.

“Again, a very important part of this is communication before the actual course starts. There, the requirements are clearly explained as well as the expected workload and type of assessments. As well as that assignment briefs are given to each learner which outline the requirements for each of the assessments very clearly.”

Teaching staff, Community Education Kilkenny



Recognition of Prior Learning

The [KCETB Policy for the Recognition of Prior Learning \(RPL\)](#), version 1.0 was issued on 27th November 2020. The RPL process allows for all learning to be recognised and validated, independent of the context in which it was achieved. RPL may be attained for formal, informal, or non-formal learning. This enables documentation, access, exemption, and accreditation. Participation in the RPL process offers further opportunities for access, transfer, and progression to other programmes. This process is managed by an AEO who is supported by an RPL subject matter expert and throughout this the QA Co-ordinator, ensures that the process is independent from centres and supports integrity.

This policy outlines how the process for RPL is conducted in KCETB and includes:

- an outline of the roles and responsibilities of those involved
- the procedures to be followed when drafting and submitting an RPL application
- the steps involved in the RPL application
- the appeals process

RPL offers the opportunity to individuals to validate their prior learning and experience through the RPL Programme for the Recognition of Prior Certified Learning (RPCL) and for the Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL).

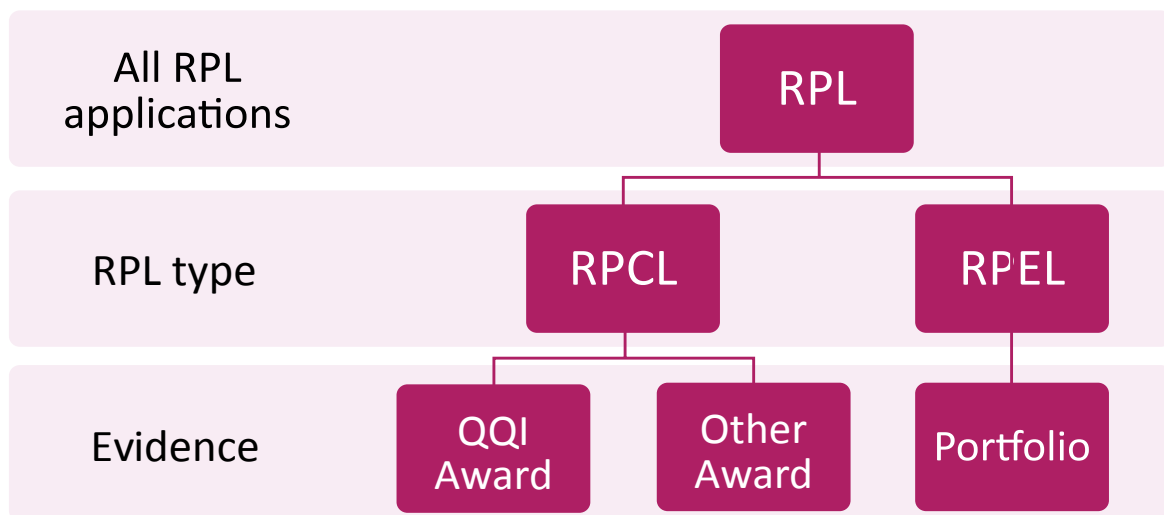


Figure 42 RPL Application Process



RPL Achieved (Tobar Project)

Prior to the introduction of the RPL policy, the ETBI RPL policy was used to quality assure a project entitled 'Tobar' which was undertaken by KCETB. The project was a collaboration between ten ETBs working in partnership with the Irish Defence Forces, to accredit learning between levels 3 and 5 on the NFQ.

“RPL - The question was how to guide but not to lead or teach? The solution arose organically with a flipped learning approach, where the participants were encouraged to take responsibility for the process and to explore components and learning outcomes to discover the answers for themselves.”

KALS Tobar project



The background to the project, the process undertaken and the challenges experienced are outlined in [Case Study 7](#) presented by Kilkenny Adult Learning Service.

RPL Going Forward

In 2020, following the development of the RPL policy, a further RPL pilot commenced. For the academic year 2020 / 2021, as a result of the COVID-19 emergency, learners were finding it difficult to obtain work placements. To facilitate learners who had previous work experience, RPL offered a clear means by which the learner could be certified. Initial 'Expressions of Interest' from learners were registered. Introductory sessions were arranged to explain the process. To date 10 participants across Equine Studies, Childcare and Horticulture awards have participated in the pilot which has enabled them to obtain recognition for their previous experience to achieve the Work Experience module. The process used here will be documented and reviewed to further develop the RPL opportunities which can be offered.

Work Placement

The standard of assessment of the learner's work placement is assisted by the support provided to both employers and learners. Employers are provided with a pack which provides clear guidelines on the standards the learner is expected to meet in line with component specifications, the grading process for work placement and the tasks required. Throughout the placement, ongoing communication is maintained between the learner, the employer and the centre, with site visits taking place in some instances. During the work placement, the employer is required to complete a supervisors report form where they award marks to the learner for their performance on the work placement. This is taken as a valid measure of their performance. The teaching staff consider this report in conjunction with the learner's performance in class and the learner's feedback to arrive at an overall decision. If there are discrepancies, further clarification may be sought from the employer. In some instances, such as apprenticeship, assessments may take place while learners are on placement, in which case, at least one of the assessments will be witnessed by the QA Officer. Video evidence may also be required to support any learning outcomes. Regular feedback and communication are key to ensuring the standard of the placement. Over the years, relationships have been developed between centres and employers who take learners on work experience each year.

"CIFET has an employer pack with guidance and information and supports available given by the learner when they begin their work experience."

CIFET

As the learner and the workplace assessment is independent of the centre, it is acknowledged that there are risks to the integrity of this process. Consistent guidance for work placements is being developed by the Work Based Learning group to ensure consistency of approach across all centres.

Significant feedback was received from employers who facilitate work experience for learners, as part of the review process. A key finding was that the current mechanisms to obtain feedback from employers and the supports provided to the employers at centre level need to be reviewed. Of those who responded, 23% stated the resources received were not sufficient, while a further 25% stated they were contacted to provide feedback (outside of the supervisor's report) on the learners' placement.





Evaluation Outcomes

Responses submitted by centres indicated they are aware of the need for integrity and consistency and for the security of assessment instruments, methodologies, procedures, and records with regard to the assessment process.

From the staff survey, completed in February 2021, it was noted that the streamlining of processes had a positive outcome for teaching staff, management, and learners. Of note were the following:

- 88% were aware of the Assessment Policy
- 89% stated they received feedback with reference to authentication
- 97% stated they used this feedback to enhance their teaching and assessment

The awareness of these policies and the reflective approach adopted by teaching staff aligns with the satisfaction levels expressed by learners about how they are assessed as detailed below in Figure 43.

Very Satisfied	52%
Satisfied	36%
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	8%
Dissatisfied	2%
Not Applicable	3%

Figure 43 Learner Satisfaction with Assessment Process

Recommendations

- The implementation of the Assessment Policy has led to significant progress in the development of templates for assessment. A move away from AIS packs in Training Services, and the development of exemplars across all provision is being prioritised. It is acknowledged this will be a long process but will benefit the learner experience and support teaching staff.
- The opportunities afforded through RPL will be expanded and the policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis.
- Following the feedback received from the engagement with employers a review of work based learning will take place.

C) Supports for learners

In line with KCETB Strategic Goal 1 all FET provision aims to:

'Support learners with additional needs and those affected by disadvantage to participate successfully in all education and training programmes.

Goal 1

This goal is achieved by ensuring learners have access to a wide range of supports offered to learners as outlined in Figure 44.



Figure 44 Supports Available to Learners

Adult Education Guidance Service

The services provided by [KCETB's AEGS](#) is available to learners across all centres as well as adults wishing to return to education. The supports range from group and one-to-one guidance support to learners, focusing on their learning and progression options, while providing comprehensive and up to date information on education and training courses. The AEGS provides information factsheets for mature learners, such as outlining the process for application to CAO, and is available to all learners regardless of need. They also provide information on funding and grants for education and explore learner's interests and aptitudes using guidance tools.

"The guidance service works closely with centre co-ordinators and teaching staff to ensure information is provided on the guidance service".

Adult Education Guidance Service Kilkenny

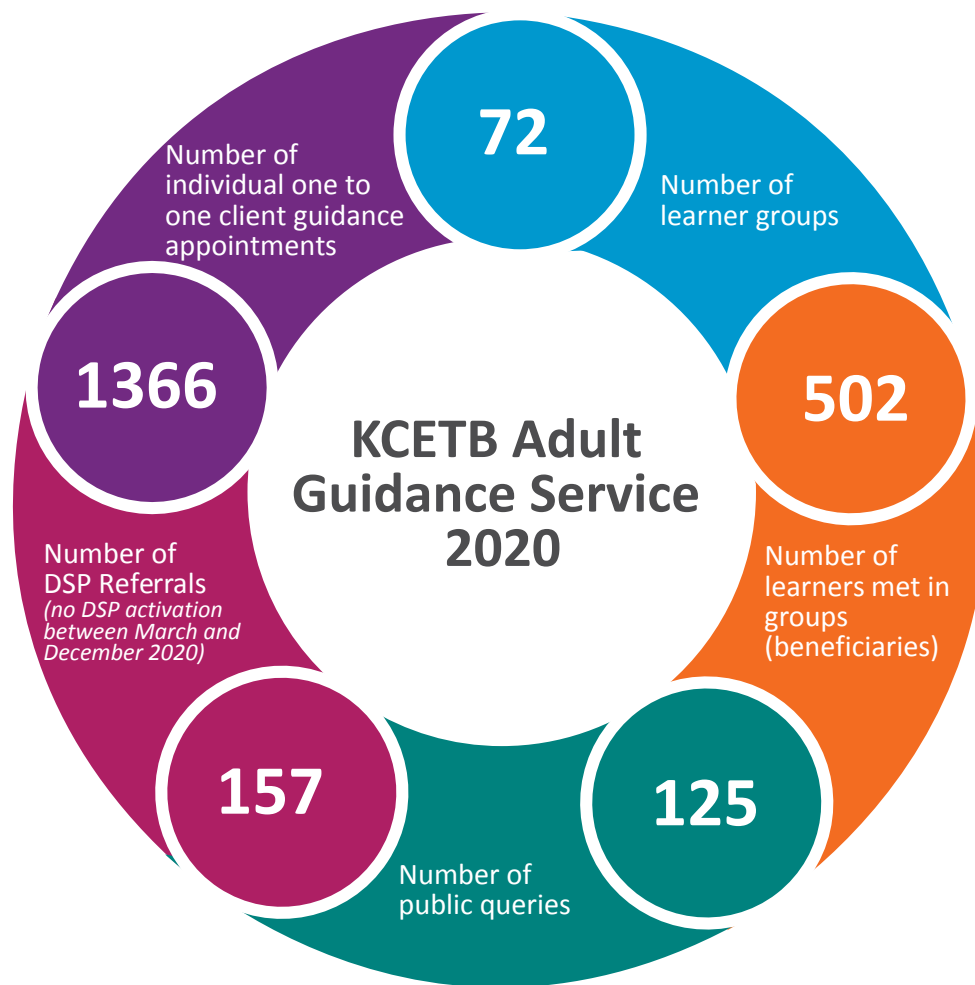


Figure 45 KCETB Adult Guidance Service 2020

Adult Learning Service

The Adult Learning Service provide literacy and numeracy supports to learners across the ETB on a one-to-one and group basis. Individual centres also have integrated literacy services in place. Following national collaboration there is an extensive support system for apprentices around study skills and numeracy supports. These supports are also integrated into other areas of provision and learners are encouraged to seek support when teachers become aware of needs in this area. Co-ordinators are also involved in arranging numeracy and literacy support for learners.

“Adult learners possess a wealth of knowledge and experience and it is by encouraging the learner to share his/her experience that both teaching staff and learner develop”
Carlow Adult Learning Service

In December 2020 a policy was developed for [Integrated Literacy and Numeracy in KCETB](#). The policy was developed primarily to address the needs of those learners requiring additional supports. A working group was established to assist in the implementation of the policy with representatives from all provision. The aim of the group is to work collaboratively across provision to enhance literacy and numeracy supports for learners. This will be achieved through providing information regarding available literacy supports to staff and learners, offering training and PD for staff on literacy awareness, developing an overall Literacy Plan and committing to using plain English in our communications.

Counselling Services

The AEGS offers managed counselling provision to learners while personal support and counselling are available in centres such as Youthreach. The scope of the counselling may range from addiction and art therapy to personal support. This is to assist learners who are facing challenges and need support to overcome or learn to cope with difficulties that are blocking the learner's progress. Personal advocacy supports are available in some centres, specifically assisting in areas such as housing, medical cards, school placements for children newly arrived in Ireland, etc.

Learner Device Loan Scheme

The move to emergency remote learning in March 2020 brought with it a new adventure in learning for teachers and learners alike. Significant challenges were experienced by learners who did not have access to devices to engage remotely. KCETB set about procuring devices which could be loaned to learners. This initiative was supported by SOLAS through the Disadvantaged Learner Device Scheme and in November 2020 following an extensive procurement process, KCETB received and through a loan scheme allocated 432 learner devices to learners across all provision.

Additional Supports

Other supports offered to learners include educational needs assessments, dyslexia screening, assistance with applications for SUSI grant funding and the provision of assistive technology, where required, through the AEGS. A full range of examination accommodations (e.g., separate centres, readers, scribes, extra time, rest breaks, use of recording and IT equipment) are available following an application for reasonable accommodation from learners. The process for this is outlined in the [Assessment Policy](#). Resources such as handbooks on [academic writing](#) and [referencing](#) are also available to learners.

“Literacy support is provided when learners and / or teachers highlight challenges faced. These are feed back to the co-ordinator who manages the process to support learners”
BTEI Kilkenny

Availability of Supports to Learners Across Provision

The challenges associated with meeting the diverse range of learner needs in FET has to be acknowledged. To support the principles of fairness and consistency, KCETB provides support and funding to learners across all provision and specific centres partner with each other to work collaboratively. The development of a KCETB Integrated Policy on Numeracy and Literacy will further enhance the fair and consistent availability of supports to learners. To enhance learner supports a Learner Support Portal is in development which, from September 2021, will provide supports around registration, IT, academic writing, learner wellbeing and key information regarding additional supports. This is being developed by the PD and TEL office in consultation with CIFET, OCFE, ALS and the QA Team. A review of this pilot will take place to assess what additional supports or services are required and to ascertain the costs that would be involved in expanding the supports beyond the lifetime of the pilot.

Communication of Supports to Learners

The types of supports available and how to access them are explained to learners at induction sessions. This is supplemented throughout the programme by teaching staff who remind learners what is available, especially if they identify particular individual needs. This is important for learners who are reluctant to disclose any learning support requirements that may arise. Teachers use their judgement to decide if it is appropriate or beneficial to make learners aware of the supports available. For example, if literacy needs are identified in a class, the teacher will discuss this with the learner involved and outline how the literacy service could assist and support them with their work. Learners from levels 1 to 6 present with a diverse range of needs and support requirements. Teaching staff are sensitive to the many different challenges that learners face and endeavour to create a supportive environment for learners throughout their learner journey.

The development of a KCETB Integrated Policy on Numeracy and Literacy will further enhance the fair and consistent availability of supports to learners.



Supports are also available to staff through PD and training. Teaching staff are kept up to date on the various services available through their centre.

Organised visits throughout the programme enhances the learner's awareness of the supports available. These can include guest speakers, visits to other services, or timetabled appointments with services such as the Adult Guidance or Adult Learning Services. Open days or events such as the DSP Jobs Fair provide centres with an opportunity to engage with prospective learners and outline what is on offer, including the supports that are available. Support services are also discussed with prospective learners during recruitment, interview, and programme registration. Awareness of services is further developed through noticeboards in the centre, leaflets, brochures, learner handbooks, diaries and welcome packs as well as centre websites, social media accounts and prospectus.

Needs can also be identified using the PLSS system following registration or through ILPs in centres where they are in use. An ILP is continually reviewed and identifies the supports most suitable for the individual learner e.g., level of literacy or learning support need, accommodation status, health needs, addiction issues. Continued learner feedback throughout the programme determines any adaptations that might be required. This feedback may be verbal or written.

“Teaching staff are made aware of all supports that are available for learners. Requests for supports are notified to the Adult Literacy Organiser, who ensures that appropriate support referrals etc. are made within available resources.”

Carlow Adult Learning Service



Every effort is made to ensure consistency of availability of supports across the ETB. Due to the varying sizes of centres and the resources available, this is a challenge. All learners receive the same information from the centre they attend. Support requests are usually submitted to one person which ensures consistency in approach within that centre. Strong relationships are forged with external support services, both local and national and ongoing communications are promoted and maintained. These supports provide all learners with the same opportunities and ensure that they can have the same learning experience and achieve to the same levels and standards as their classmates.

The staff in the Adult Guidance Service are on hand to put learners on the right path in regard to their careers. They keep both the teaching staff and learners up to date on all possible courses, jobs etc. that may be of interest to them.
Community Education Carlow

[Case Study 8](#) details the supports provided to a community education group to support their education journey.

Evaluation Outcomes

There are clear communication channels in place for staff and learners around the broad range of supports that are available to learners across all provision. This is reflected in the survey findings detailed below which reflects a high level of satisfaction with the learner supports currently in place.

“The staff in the Adult Guidance Service are on hand to put learners on the right path in regard to their careers. They keep both the teaching staff and learners up to date on all possible courses, jobs etc. that may be of interest to them.”
Community Education Carlow

How satisfied were you with the learner supports on your course or at your centre? (316 responses)					
Very satisfied	satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not applicable
157	122	19	6	2	10

Table 6 Learner Support Satisfaction

The presence of the guidance service and the importance of this service was confirmed by centre management, teaching staff and learners alike.

How satisfied were you with the guidance service on your course or at your centre? (313 responses)					
Very satisfied	satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not applicable
135	122	33	5	0	18

Table 7 Guidance Service Satisfaction

Supports in the area of well-being have also been provided. A number of initiatives took place in recent years, most notably the well-being input provided by Dr. Harry Barry in March 2021 which was attended by over 500 staff and learners.

The loaning of devices to learners under the Disadvantaged Learner Loan Scheme has had a significant impact on learners capacity to engage in the remote learning environment.

“I felt lucky that I got a laptop through the loan scheme, there was a slight delay before I was approved for it but once that happened, I got it quite quickly.”

Recommendations

- While feedback from learners shows a high satisfaction level with the supports available, a coherent, and systematic approach to planning and managing these supports needs to be implemented. The development of the learner support portal will assist in this regard.
- Centres and management have reported an increasing number of learners presenting with mental health issues. An evaluation of the types of supports that are required to assist learners and staff into the future will be undertaken to ensure all learners are supported to participate fully in education.
- Ensuring that the voice of the learner is heard at all levels of provision is a priority to determine that the supports provided are fit for purpose and meet the needs of learners. KCETB will engage with Aontas to further develop the voice of the learner.



Summary Case Studies – Teaching, Learning and Assessment

For full case study see Appendix 3

Case Study 5 COVID-19 response	
Demonstrating:	Adapting Teaching, Learning and Assessment through the COVID-19 pandemic
Details:	<p>The case study highlights the change from established classroom-based teaching to online learning from a centre perspective. When the impact of COVID-19 was apparent, the BTEI Team began a series of discussions and workshops about how to adapt teaching and Quality Assurance processes. Using Microsoft Teams, teaching continued for the remaining items on the curriculum. Developing lockdown friendly assessments and maintaining Quality Assurance, Internal Verification and External Authentication standards were important. IT skills improved in an accelerated manner.</p> <p><i>'We must continue with our innovations in an organised and structured manner to ensure that we deliver the quality of education which we are known for in a structured and Quality Assured process'.</i></p>
Highlights:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learner centred – providing solutions for learners Robust QA – approved procedures in place Integrity of assessments – consistent with other years Transparency – learners and staff informed of changes Flexibility in delivery – innovative practice

Case Study 6 Teaching in Adult Learning Service	
Demonstrating:	Learner centred approach to teaching
Details:	<p>W. was only able to attend on Wednesdays. W was the weakest student in the group. The tutor (in consultation with the students), arranged for Wednesday to be the day when basic grammar and new vocabulary would be taught (or reviewed). That meant that W. was able to work with the group and learn at an appropriate level. On the other days of the week, the tutor taught more difficult grammar or reading/writing, which W. would not need at that stage. All of the students enjoyed Wednesdays a lot as it was a day when they could relax a bit more and it got all the students to feel more confident in what they already knew. The case study confirms that the student is at the centre of every lesson that the tutor teaches. Depending on which students are in the class on that day, the tutor adjusts the lesson to best suit the students. Although the solution was focussed on an individual learner, it benefitted the group.</p>
Highlights:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flexible teaching Supported learning Focussed, targeted and individualised supports Innovative thinking Learner consultation Integrating literacy

Case Study 7 Tobar Project	
Demonstrating:	RPL in action
Details:	<p>The Tobar project was a collaboration between ten ETBs working in partnership with the Armed Defence Forces of Ireland, to accredit learning between levels 3 and 5. For KCETB, this involved a collaboration between the James Stephen's Army Barracks and the Kilkenny ALS. Governance was comprehended by the contract drawn up between the ETBs and the Defence Forces and ETBI issued guidelines for practitioners. The ETBI's RPL document was used for quality assurance. Assessors generated rubrics for grading and devised assessment tasks to capture gaps in learning. RPL applicants produced the required evidence which was compiled into a portfolio. Applicants were assessed under existing QA guidelines guaranteeing a quality process that was fair, transparent, valid and reliable. The process was tested under robust IV and EA processes. On completion of the project the applicants and assessors participated in an evaluation process reflecting on their learning experiences. Four applicants completed the programme. They received Major Awards with distinction at Level 4; three in General Learning and one in Horticulture at Level 3. In total, 41 modules were accredited.</p>
Highlights:	<p>Collaboration - with other ETBs and other agencies Innovative practice – adapting to RPL Quality Assurance - QA practices (IV / EA) implemented. Learner centred - promoting self-directed learning Review process - evaluation and feedback</p>

Case Study 8 UCasadh	
Demonstrating:	Support for marginalised learners
Details:	<p>U-Casadh is a social enterprise and registered charity based on the border of Kilkenny and Waterford. The Community Education Service felt that there should be some form of certification available to groups due to the standard of their work. The possibility of achieving a major award was limited due to language restrictions, Following discussion with the co-ordinators of UCasadh it was decided to help the learners achieve certification. The learners were already engaged in gardening and construction skills. In 2018, the Roma men received QQI Certificates (the first time any of them received any form of qualification) presented by the Romanian Ambassador to Ireland, Mrs. Manuela Breazu.</p>
Highlights:	<p>Support for learners – learning and progression opportunities Collaborating with external partners – local charity Learner centred - focussed, targeted and individualised supports Innovative thinking – creative assessment methods by teaching staff Confidence building – the value of certified learning</p>

Evaluation Outcomes – Objective 2

Teaching, Learning and Assessment		
	Detail	Evidence
Learning Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experienced, dedicated staff PD opportunities Commitment to learners Communities of Practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learner survey feedback PD and TEL website Case studies Microsoft teams
Assessment of Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult Guidance Service IT resources PD and TEL QA training and support Literacy Supports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learner Survey Equipment purchased QA website, QA report Microsoft teams
Support of Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment policy Topic specific policies developed Range of documents in relation to COVID-19 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment policy and forms Topic specific policies developed Suite of documents in relation to COVID-19



Recommendations – Objective 2

Teaching, Learning and Assessment		
	Objective	Plan
Continued development of standardised KCETB documents	Develop and publish key documents outlined for the QA handbook.	Detailed in Gantt chart .
	Continue to support the implementation and improvement of the Assessment Policy across KCETB.	QA support visits and feedback channels. Review of Policy to ensure effectiveness across all levels of NFQ.
	Formalise the induction process to have a core KCETB induction pack with scope for an additional section specific to each centre.	Public Information and Communication to create guidelines for induction pack.
	Formalise workbased assessments. Collation of assessment exemplars to support assessment standards across all provision.	Work Based Learning Policy in development. Incremental roll out of exemplars
Programme provision review	Incorporate reviews of programme provision into existing QA system.	Review opportunities for programme modifications at RAPs, QAOC, FET Forum.
	Identify opportunities for RPL and blended learning.	
Implement support for learners and staff	Consistent system for obtaining learner voice including feedback forms and acting on findings	Learner feedback forms to be standardised. Expansion of learner voice
	Replicate the level and efficiency of provision of supports across centres	Learner support portal to be piloted. Further consultation with learners around support required.
Work placement supports	Further guidance to be created to support employers who taken on work experience learners	Work Based Learning Group to create guidance documents

OBJECTIVE 3:
Self-Evaluation,
Monitoring and Review

a) Self-evaluation, Monitoring and Review

In line with the Strategy statement, we ‘ensure that all KCETB services meet high quality standards’. FET provision is evaluated through the quality cycle and in line with the EQAVET¹³ four-stage cycle of planning, implementation, evaluation, and review. The quality cycle process is overseen by the QAOC in line with the QQI Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines which outlines that “self-evaluation has a broad, systemic focus and is carried out at specified intervals”¹⁴.

“The FET team is innovative, progressive, creative and forward looking in this regard”
 Duiske College.



Figure 46 The Quality Cycle

¹³ <https://www.eqavet.eu/EU-Quality-Assurance/For-VET-System>.

¹⁴ [QQI \(2016\) Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines.](#)



Figure 47 Role of Centre Manager in Monitoring and Review

Self-Evaluation

The Executive Self-evaluation process in 2017 was the first ETB wide self-evaluation to be undertaken. As detailed in Figure 46 this process informed subsequent annual Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs) in [2019](#) and [2020](#) which have been used to identify and benchmark key areas for improvement. Prior to undertaking this ETB wide self-evaluation, Centre Managers carried out cyclical reviews in their centres. This process continues to be undertaken in centres. The self-evaluation process undertaken for the Inaugural Review at centre level was extensive and was supported through QA support visits. A more formalised centre led self-evaluation process will be developed which will be supported by the QA Team and considered by the QAOC going forward. This process will include reviewing data to gain a full picture of what is happening across centres and to identify good practice and areas for improvement.

The quality culture in KCETB centres is promoted by the centre manager as indicated in Figure 47. Feedback is considered and used to review programme provision, where possible both at centre and ETB level. Feedback mechanisms will continue to be supported by the centre manager, ensuring local ownership of the process and will be fed back to the QAOC for ETB wide consideration.

Inaugural Review Self-Evaluation Process

As part of this current self-evaluation process each FET centre submitted a centre evaluation report which was analysed and used to inform the Inaugural Review process. In addition, each centre was required to complete a [Strengths, Challenges Opportunities and Threats analysis \(SCOT\)](#) which assisted the evaluation process. The QA Team conducted surveys, QA support visits, briefing sessions and consultation meetings. In addition consultation occurred with stakeholders external to KCETB such as employers, community and contracted training providers, statutory and community stakeholders and awarding bodies. The engagements undertaken inform this report and are outlined in Table 10.

Engagement with:	Date(s)	Details	Findings
Centre evaluation	May 2020 June 2020	Phase 1 Phase 2	Integrated throughout Inaugural Review Report
Centre Support Visits	October 2020 – February 2021	QA support visits with all 17 FET centres	Revisions made to centre SCOT analysis.
KCETB Learners	12th January 13th – 21st January 2021	Learner Forum KCETB Learner engagement week (418 responses)	Aontas report
KCETB Staff	2nd – 24th February	Staff survey via MS forms (141 responses)	Microsoft Insights report
KCETB Internal Stakeholders	1st March 2021	Meeting and survey of OSD staff	OSD Survey summary
Employers	Complete 19th March 2021	193 responses received	Integrated throughout Inaugural Review Report
Community and Contracted Training providers	23rd February – 3rd March 2021	Survey QA Support Visits	Survey report
Statutory and Community stakeholders	10th March 2021	Meeting and survey	Survey report
Awarding Bodies	30th March 2021	Information session	See meeting minutes

Table 8 Self-Evaluation Consultation Schedule

Monitoring

KCETB have a number of mechanisms in place to effectively monitor the implementation of our QA procedures. These include:

- Authentication Processes including: Internal Verification (IV), External Authentication (EA) and a Result Approval Panel (RAP)
- Quality Assurance Oversight Committee meetings
- QA Department monitoring and support
- Documentation management and review
- QQI Dialogue meetings

One of the key mechanisms for internal monitoring and review is the authentication process. Authentication provides the opportunity to review the effectiveness of the QA processes. Following consideration by Centre management and the Results Approval Panel corrective action is put in place as appropriate.

*All assessments are marked, verified and externally evaluated each term. Results are uploaded on QQI. The process is implemented by BTEI Co-ordinator/teachers & administration staff.
BTEI Kilkenny*

Internal Verification (IV) reviews assessment outcomes and identifies any issues that are arising with assessment techniques and procedures. These are recorded on the IV report.

External Authentication (EA) provides independent authoritative confirmation of the fair and consistent assessment of learners. External authenticators are selected from a national panel hosted by ETBI. The EA process is external to the centre and co-ordinated by a member of the QA team. The EA provides specific evidence to support any recommendations made in their report, which are fed back at centre level by the centre manager to the relevant teaching staff and also considered at the Results Approval Panel.

External Quality Assurance (EQA) Programmes certified by awarding bodies such as City and Guilds, ITEC, CIBTAC, the British Horse Society, etc. have their own External Quality Assurance process. For example, if applying to run a new City and Guilds qualification the relevant FET Centre completes a qualification approval application. City and Guilds then assign an industry expert to assess the centre's ability to successfully deliver the qualification. The EQA decision is based on KCETB's and the FET centre's demonstration of robust QA procedures including an Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) strategy. If the EQA grants approval, the FET centre is required to keep in regular contact with the assigned EQA throughout delivery of the qualification up to the point of requesting certificates.

Results Approval Panel (RAP) Scheduled RAP meeting dates to coincide with the QQI certification dates. These are communicated to the FET Service at the start of the year. The Centre manager, or nominated person, represents their centre at RAP meetings.

Recommendations and any subsequent improvement actions required are always items on the RAP meeting agenda. Improvement actions are considered and actioned accordingly. An example of such an action would be the provision of locally devised assessment training which took place in November 2020, as a result of a move to update outdated assessment instruments in use within Training Services.

QA Support Visits

Arising from the self-evaluation process, and in order to support centre managers in their role, a series of QA support visits commenced in November 2020. The objectives of these visits was to:

- Follow up with centres on the implementation of the Assessment Policy
- Discuss issues arising from the centre evaluation reports
- Discuss the SCOT analyses submitted as part of the centre evaluation reports
- Raise awareness of the evaluation process that the FET service is engaged in
- Identify any other quality issues at centre level to be reviewed

These support visits will continue to take place annually and will help to foster a 'quality culture' within the FET Service.

Strategic Analysis of Reviews

Reviewing the effectiveness of the quality assurance process and procedures is a core element of the quality cycle. This is done through the authentication processes and also through consideration of feedback at the end of each course or programme from learners, staff and other stakeholders.



Learner Feedback

Each centre uses learner feedback forms as part of their internal QA procedures. These forms are completed at various intervals throughout the programme and inform programme provision. As part of this evaluation process one of the recommendations is that there should be a standardised learner form for documenting feedback across FET.

Learner Forum

The rationale for the establishment of this forum arose from the FET Service commitment to embed a quality culture within the service: “all of a provider’s staff and learners are involved in QA, and in which quality is accepted as a responsibility for all to improve upon¹⁵”.

A Learner Forum was established in 2019 and the first “Voice for Learners Forum” was held in CIFET on 19th November 2019.

The purpose of this forum was to:

- Capture the voice of the learner to inform policy development
- Listen
- Develop recommendations
- Improve our service

Some of the feedback arising from the Forum assisted the formulation of the Assessment Policy, highlighting areas such as:

- The induction process
- The assessments calendars early distribution
- The integration of assessment (vocationally related)
- The need to update some modules (e.g., Payroll)
- Fairness with reference to assessment extensions.

Learner surveys

With the onset of the COVID-19 emergency it was no longer possible to hold an in-person Learner Forum. In June 2020, a FET Service wide learner survey was conducted to evaluate the response to the COVID-19 emergency. Access to IT devices was identified as a barrier to learning. As detailed in Objective 2 (C), by September 2020 KCETB had invested €210,206 in learner devices and a loan scheme for learners has been put in place.

Staff

Staff are consulted regularly through formal means such as surveys and programme reviews and informally through staff meetings. Where possible feedback received is actioned.

“The teaching staff care about their learners and they want then to progress. They teach in a way I can learn and understand the course context and assist me when I struggle”
BTEI Kilkenny Learner

¹⁵<https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/Core%20Statutory%20Quality%20Assurance%20Guidelines.pdf#page=14>

External Stakeholders

KCETB engage with an extensive range of external stakeholders and sit on a number of committees and groups across the two counties as detailed in the [Provider Profile](#). Feedback from these stakeholders is currently obtained by a variety of methods. Training Services have oversight of external providers. [Case Study 9](#) illustrates this.

QA Review

A self-evaluation review of all QA activities in 2020 was conducted by the QA Team and was presented to the QAOC in February 2021 for approval. This review considered key achievements in 2020 and set priorities for 2021. A number of priorities have been identified as detailed below:

	Topic
1	Inaugural review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provider profile • Data management • Stakeholder engagement • Completion report • Key tasks to be further developed
2	Programme and awards approval policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme approval validation policy • Review of programmes currently running • Validation application to QQI for Level 5 Special Purpose Award in Low Land Mountaineering and Stand up Paddle Boarding.
3	QA Information, Process & Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role and function of QA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amalgamation of TQAS to FE QA • Roles and Responsibilities • Expand use of Gantt chart to track processes • Creating an Internal data management system • Access to data management systems (QBS, PLSS, City & Guilds) • EA Guidance system • Public Information – management of website, newsletters, Portal
4	Assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move away from use of AIS packs to common pool of assessment and standards FET wide development of time frame for same. • RPL – further development of the process. • Learner progression
5	QA Handbook <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop plan for work to be completed under each section • Allocate key sections to Working Groups • Teaching and Learning to be given a priority for this year by Assessment Working Group

Table 9 QA Review

Evaluation Outcomes

QA is the responsibility of everyone in KCETB, not just the QA Team and centres have indicated the many ways in which they promote culture that is quality focussed. This varies from centre to centre and includes robust feedback mechanisms, programme reviews and self-evaluation processes. An example of a centre self-evaluation is illustrated in [Case Study 10](#).

To continue to encourage and foster a quality culture, a consistent approach to self-evaluation, monitoring and review across centres is required. The self-evaluation process undertaken for the Inaugural Review at centre level was worthwhile and mechanisms to build on this practice will be considered as the process moves forward.

The authentication processes in place are long established across all centres. The benefit of these processes is referenced strongly by staff, in with 91% of those surveyed stating they receive feedback from External Authentication and a further 96% stating that this feedback enables them to enhance the quality of their teaching and assessment

Good practice is now facilitated by the centralisation of booking EAs and the RAP process, with ETB level oversight in terms of the authentication of results. Areas identified at RAP are actioned and professional development or associated measures are put in place to address issues raised. The function of the RAP will be expanded to inform a more strategic analysis of provision going forward.

The data gathered from and analysis of feedback surveys and periodic reviews informs decision-making by centres. There are mechanisms in place for learner feedback with a variety of methodologies to facilitate this process. Staff also feel their voice is heard, with 92% of those surveyed stating there are mechanisms in place in their centre to share ideas or concerns they may have. There is not currently one consistent methodology in place to obtain learner or stakeholder feedback from centres. A process for this will be developed by the Public Information and Communication Group.

Robust oversight by the QAOC is central to the review process. Formal links to programme review and validation are required and are being implemented in 2021 through Programme and Awards Committee (PAC) meetings. The remit of this group will assist in considering modules or awards that require review or revalidation. Linking reviews to training and PD is already ongoing with RAP outcomes informing a series of events scheduled throughout 2020 and 2021. The quality support visits conducted by the QA Team from November 2020 to March 2021 present centres with an opportunity to identify and engage in dialogue about quality issues.

All staff are provided with details of the EA report for their individual subjects and the overall centre comments annually to inform their planning. Learner feedback is reviewed and informs forward programme planning.
VTOS Carlow

“Quality Assurance is of paramount importance to our centre. Our QA Officer is integral to the delivery of Training Services programmes. QA is a constant item for discussion and review at formal and informal team meetings. Each member of our team is part of a QA sub-group who are working toward improving and streamlining QA processes for our ETB. This has led to embedding a quality culture within Training Services.”



Recommendations

- Development of a consistent centre led self-evaluation process, supported by the QA Team and overseen by QAOC.
- Standardised feedback forms for learners, staff and stakeholders will be implemented.
- The function of the RAP will be extended to inform more strategic analysis of provision.
- A quality management software system will be implemented to assist in tracking, evaluation, monitoring and review tasks.

b) Programme Monitoring and Review

In line with Goal 2 of our Statement of Strategy KCETB monitor the outcomes of our education and training programmes to support continued quality improvement. This may include a review of module descriptors, centre based monitoring, and FET wide programme reviews. The range of methodologies ensures a culture of continuous improvement across programmes and centres.

Centralised Module Descriptors

The QA portal is an internal information system accessible by KCETB staff and external providers. KCETB Centre representatives can access the portal where module descriptions specific to the centre are stored and updated.

Assessment Instrument Specification (AIS) & Module Descriptor Review

The QA Team monitors feedback to check for updates that may be required to module descriptors and AIS packs. Requests for updates are highlighted at the RAP meetings and by notifying the QA Team directly. It is proposed that from Autumn 2021 onwards, requests to update module descriptors and AIS packs will be forwarded to the Programme Validation, Monitoring and Evaluation Group. This group will be establishing formal procedures for the updating of module descriptors and AIS packs.

One example of a review of a module descriptor is the recent modifications made to the Payroll module. Following the modernisation of PAYE by Revenue in 2019 there was a requirement to update several payroll modules. The ETBs adopted a sectoral approach to the updates required and co-operation between two ETB's led to the changes in the descriptor which were then communicated to other ETBs through the ETBI Quality Network. ETBs adopted the changes and updated their respective module descriptors and disseminated the updated descriptors to the centres delivering these awards in their area.

It is acknowledged that there is a requirement for a systematic review of the suitability of modules across all provision. This is something that is being considered by the Programme Validation, Monitoring and Evaluation Group and a mechanism to oversee this process will be put in place. Discussions also take place nationally through the QA Network in regard to this area.

Centre Based Monitoring of Programme Delivery and Outcomes

Centres systematically gather information from learners and other stakeholders and use this to inform and implement programme reviews. All centres delivering courses have systems in place for monitoring. These include learner feedback forms, learner assessments, peer reviews, staff evaluations, meetings, analysis of data and the QA authentication processes. The most common methods are indicated in Figure 48.



“Teachers review their briefs and assignments at the start of each year and reorder or write new briefs as needed, after evaluating the success and relevance of the previous year’s programme”.

Youthreach Carlow

Figure 48 Programme Monitoring

- Learner Evaluations and feedback
- Reviews
- Meetings
- Data analysis
- QA authentication processes

An example of best practice for gathering information for a centre-based review is indicated in Figure 49 by OCFE.

This programme review tool requires staff to address the following areas and poses guiding questions in each case.

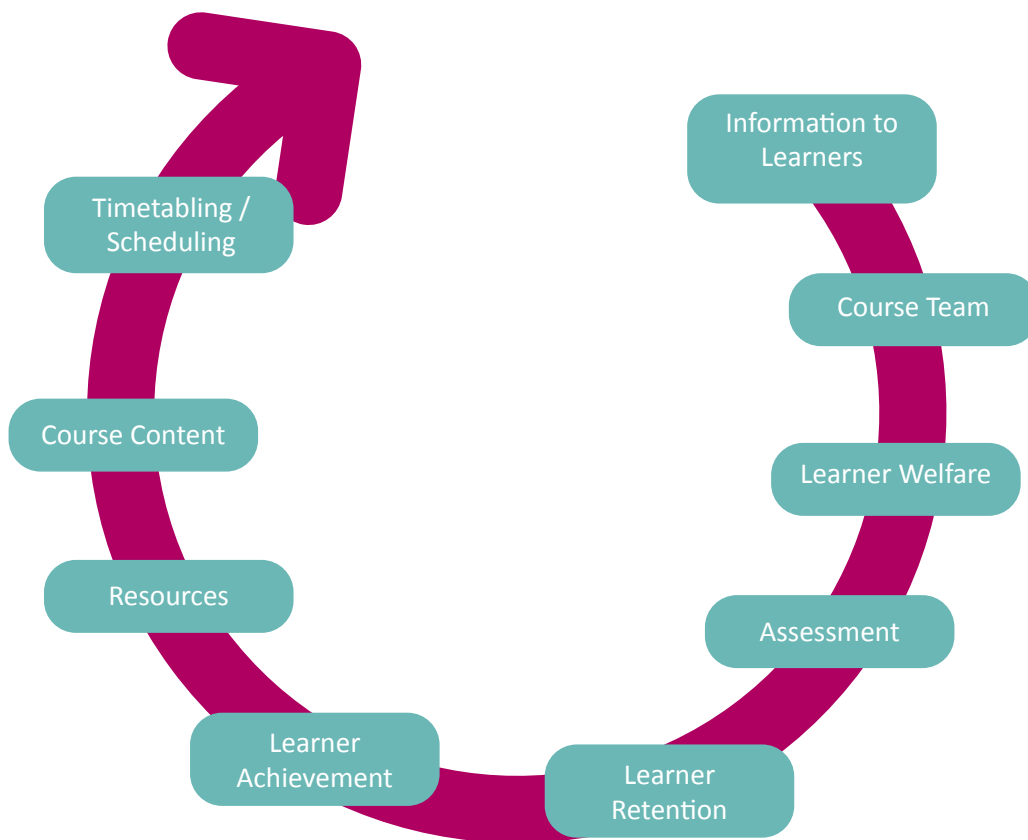


Figure 49 Best Practice Observed for Programme Monitoring and Review

A schedule for review meetings is devised in order to permit staff, who teach across a number of programmes, to attend the relevant meetings. A summary of the salient points emerging from the review are reported by Programme Co-ordinators at the final staff meeting of each academic year.

In addition to the methods outlined, consultation takes place with work experience host companies and other stakeholders to review the suite of programmes delivered by KCETB.

For Training Services, structured review systems are in place for organisations who deliver community and contracted training. Changes to programmes are subject to validation confirmation by the QA Team following consultation with QQI and the QAOC. A Programme Validation, Monitoring and Evaluation Working Group has been established to develop formal approval steps for this process.

ETB Programme Reviews

KCETB conduct annual programme reviews as detailed in Figure 50 to obtain feedback from learners and staff across programme disciplines. These reviews are driven by SOLAS, QQI and local requirements and the outcome of these reviews are considered by the QAOC and inform future planning. In 2020 KCETB reviewed Healthcare programmes and in 2021 is focusing on reviewing Art and Craft courses at Levels 5 and 6. In line with validation requirements the Level 6 Certificate in Early Learning Care will be reviewed annually.

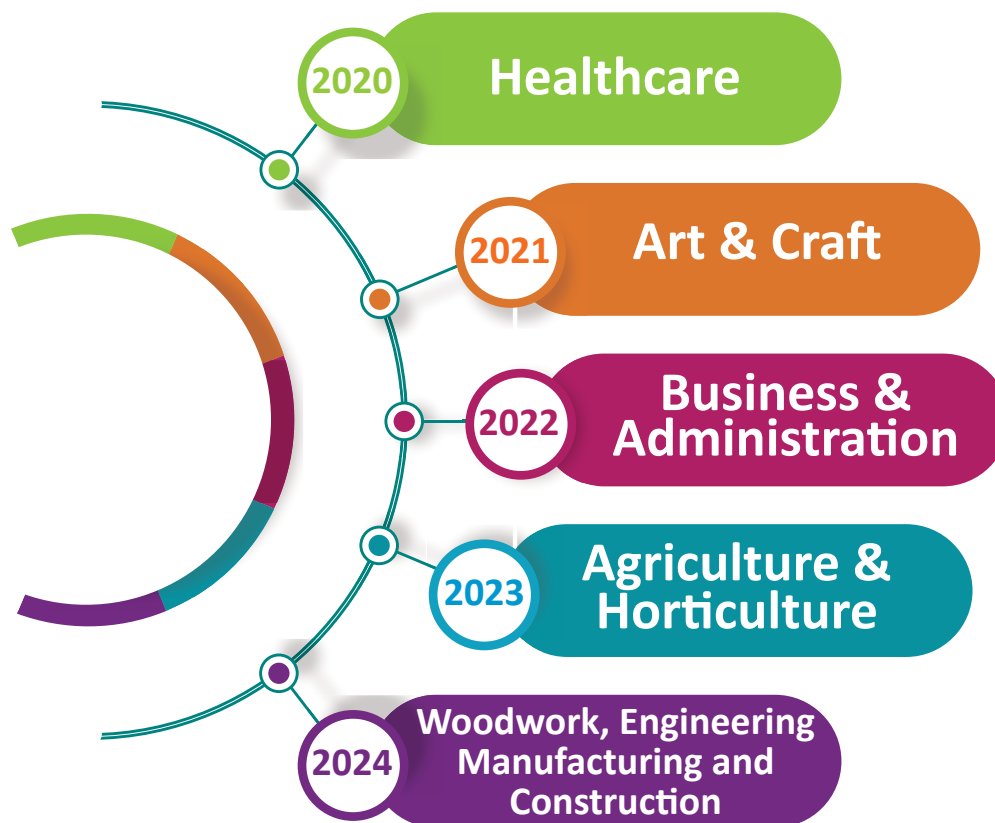


Figure 50 Schedule for Annual Programme Review

This programme specific review is part of an overall self-evaluation process aimed at quality improvement within KCETB and in the programmes offered. Programme reviews provide an opportunity for self-evaluation, self-reflection, review, and the identification of issues, both positive and negative, at programme level. It provides an account of the work that has been completed, showcases results, provides a learning platform for KCETB to discover what has or has not been successful and where improvements can be implemented.

[The Evaluation of Healthcare Programmes 2019 -2020](#) report was finalised in October 2020. The report found that 90% of learners were happy with the course structure and felt they understood what was involved in the course. A further 82% of learners stated that the content of the course allowed them to build on their prior learning and experience.

Feedback received from teaching staff was also largely positive with the following key recommendations received:

- Review of mapping of LOs, allocation of marks, indicative content and inclusion of specific vocational terminology across 5N2706 Care of the Older Person, 5N1794 Safety and Health at Work, 5N2668 Exercise and Fitness, 5N2770 Care Skills

and 5N3734 Infection Prevention and Control.

- Explore opportunities for Integration of assessment.
- Create Communities of Practice (COP). Convene meetings of subject matter experts to look at issues arising, suggestions for improvements and facilitate sharing of resources, eg, briefs, in various fields of learning.

Significant progress has been made in a number of the areas identified in the 2020 report. Following evaluation of healthcare programmes and subsequent EA reports, a specific analysis of healthcare assessment in centres is underway to move towards developing one consistent standard and approach to assessment across provision. Further information on the process and key outcomes can be found in [Case Study 11](#).

Examples of Actions taken following Programme Reviews

The centre level methodologies for completing programme reviews are varied, examples which are detailed in Table 12. [Case Study 12](#) illustrates this for OCFE.

Centre	Example of Best Practice	Values Evidenced
KALS	Introduced the use of the STAR answering technique for competence interviews to secure employment - informed by Adult Guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reacts to feedback • Improved learning opportunities for learners
CIFET	Staff review the content of programmes annually for PR / Marketing / PLSS course calendar and to meet higher level and industry requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes ownership at all staff levels • Structured reviews
BTEI CW	We look at what we can do to improve. Put supports in where they are needed. Installed additional Wi-Fi support network to boost the coverage in our centre so that every classroom now has fast, reliable broadband. Have continuously maintained and upgraded ICT equipment; last year we equipped our last classroom with new laptops. Now every classroom has access to ICT equipment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reacts to feedback • Investing in resources
BTEI KK	Feedback from Learners who were ineligible for interview by the HSE. These learners were not selected because of not having completed the Communications module as part of their major award. BTEI took the decision to include this additional module for the learners. Subsequent programmes now include the Communications module. This enables learners to apply for positions within the HSE.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reacts to feedback • Initiates programmes change • Facilitates learner progression
Training Services-Contracted Training	At our quarterly review meetings with contracted training providers, we review programmes. Continuous improvement is important to us and we work in partnership with our contracted training partners to deliver high quality programmes of learning in order to prepare learners for employment. Feedback from programmes is considered when planning new programmes. Programmes are amended accordingly for example additional time is given for delivery or a module is changed to enhance the overall qualification. Any changes and modifications are made in line awarding bodies certification criteria and in response to employment needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder engagement • Initiates programmes change
AEGS CW	Example of a recently introduced 'Information factsheet' following monitor and review for opportunities in the Pharmaceutical Industry. This information is then integrated into presentations to relevant groups."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous improvement • Facilitates learner progression
AEGS KK	Enquiry from member of public regarding creative writing class, established that there was none available in Kilkenny. This information was given to the Community Education Facilitator. The Community Education Facilitator had previously received a query for a group on creative writing classes. The need for the group was re-established, classes were organised, and the client accessed the programme through community education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reacts to feedback • Stakeholder engagement

Table 10 Examples of Best Practice for Programme Monitoring and Review

This self-evaluation has found that the centre level reviews (detailed in Table 12) need to be considered at more a strategic level by the QAOC. This in turn will lead to improving the quality of our programmes.

KCETB has an established programme review schedule up to 2024.

There are positive relationships in place with stakeholders, however, there is scope to further enhance these relationships in programme development and review.

The authentication processes have identified the need to update module descriptors and AIS packs.

Recommendations

- Implement the recommendations arising from the annual programme reviews.
- A mechanism to engage with stakeholders in relation to programme development, monitoring and review will be established.
- Ensure modules and programmes are fit for purpose for both learners and industry by developing a systematic approach to reviewing course content.



C) Oversight, Monitoring and Review of Relationships with External/Third Parties

One of KCETB's strategic priorities is to work in partnership with key stakeholders in the Kilkenny and Carlow region and at national level. The FET Service has formed solid working relationships with many statutory and non-statutory stakeholders at both local and national levels and with a variety of employers, community and voluntary providers and community groups.

KCETB has MoUs with the DSP, Local Enterprise Offices and local libraries. It is represented on, and engaged with a wide range of organisations such as Leader Groups, Local Community Development Committees, Ireland Southeast Action Plan for Jobs, South East Regional Skills Forum (SERSF), County Childcare Committees, Family Resource Centres, Chambers of Commerce and each Local Drugs Task Force, with whom we collaborate to identify and address local employment and educational needs.

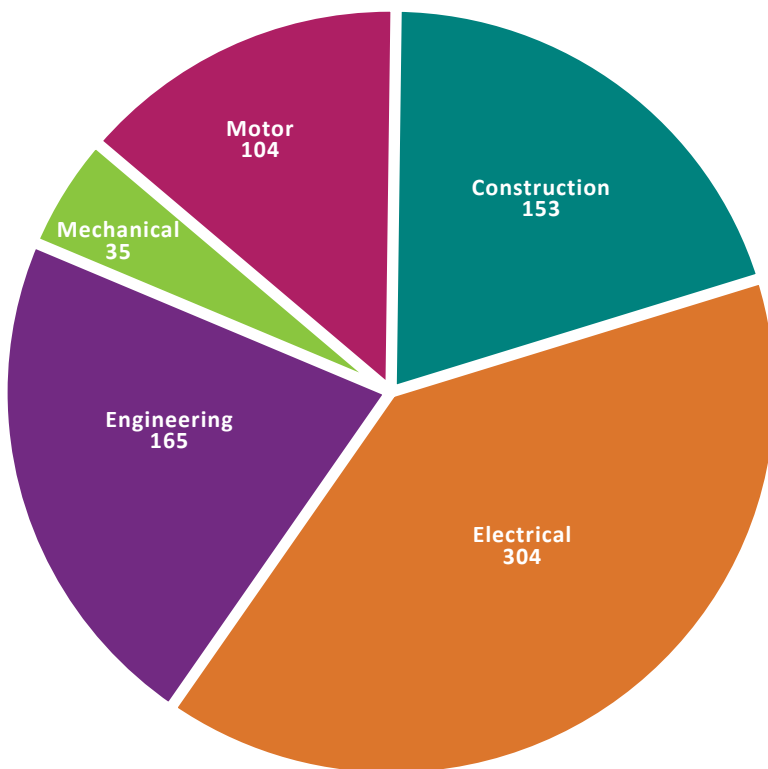
Other provider relationships exist through the contracted training provision undertaken on behalf of the Training Services, and funding agreements are in place with Community Training Centres, Local Training Initiatives, and the National Learning Network. The Training Services have formal contracts and agreements in place with other agencies, ETBs and community and contracted training providers. There are MOUs or Service Level Agreements (SLAs) in place with the majority of these external providers as detailed in Appendix 4. These agreements are not currently published.

Collaborative Provision

KCETB is a collaborating provider with Kerry ETB on the Commis Chef Apprenticeship programme. This means that KCETB follows the QA arrangements as set out by Kerry ETB as they are the co-ordinating provider.

Apprenticeships

In May 2021, there were 761 craft apprentices registered with companies in Kilkenny and Carlow. These apprentices are registered in a variety of trades in different sectors, as outlined in Figure 51.



“Interagency approach is based on needs of individual clients as it aligns with the service delivery model”.
Adult Guidance Service
Carlow

Figure 51 KCETB Apprentices May 2021

Two Senior Training Advisors liaise with employers and apprentices. Part of the role of the Senior Training Advisor is to ensure that the on-the-job elements of apprenticeship training are completed to the required standards. Craft Apprenticeships are governed by the SOLAS Quality Management System Standard Operating Procedures; all procedures are subject to regular internal SOLAS audits.

Electrical apprentices attend Phase 2 off-the-job training in the Purcellsinch Training Hub in Kilkenny. Two full-time electrical instructors are employed to deliver this training. There are two intakes per year each of 20 weeks duration. Quality assurance for Phase 2 provision is managed by the Quality Assurance Officer. Phase 2 provision is subject to External Authentication on a sampling basis.

The Training Services engages with external parties including, employers, apprentices, other ETBs, Institutes of Technology, SOLAS, Secondary Schools, Regional Skills Forums, DSP and other training areas of the ETB, to promote and enhance the services that are provided as part of the apprenticeship programmes.

The QA for the pre-2016 Craft Apprenticeships is underpinned by SOLAS Standard Operating Procedures. The QA for the 2016+ Apprenticeships is underpinned by the QA arrangements that are set out by the coordinating ETB. At present Training Services are running the Commis Chef Apprenticeship with Kerry ETB as the coordinating ETB.

Craft Apprenticeships: Training Services has a MoU with Carlow IoT in respect of the delivery of Phase 4 and Phase 6 classes.

Community Training

Community Training provision is training that is provided by external community-based organisations funded by KCETB Training Services.

There are two Community Training Centres, two Specialist Training Providers (STPs) and five Local Training Initiatives (LTIs) delivering community training programmes in Kilkenny and Carlow from levels 3 to 5 on the NFQ.

For each community training programme an annual agreement is in place with the provider and KCETB. Each provider is required to submit an annual business plan which is assessed by the Community Training Officer and the Training Services Manager. Once the business plan and application are approved a formal agreement to collaborate is established.

Community Training Centres

The Community Training Centres provide training to early school leavers aged between 16 and 21 years, who are most in need of basic vocational training. The training provision is divided between 'in-centre learning' and 'linked work experience learning'.

Agreements are in place with Kilkenny Employment for Youth and Carlow Youth Training to deliver this training.

Specialist Training Providers

A Specialist Training Programme (STP) delivers training courses to people with disabilities who require more intensive support than would be available in non-specialist training provision. The National Learning Network delivers these programmes at their training centres in Kilkenny and Carlow. In order to secure a place on an STP the learner must be referred by their GP and/or the DSP.

Agreements are in place with the National Learning Network Kilkenny and National Learning Network Carlow to deliver this training.

Local Training Initiatives

The Local Training Initiative (LTI) programme provides a range of learner-centred services to assist individuals to enter/re-enter the labour market. LTIs also promote the removal of barriers and provide supports, which ensure access to programmes, services and employment for individuals and groups experiencing exclusion and labour market disadvantage.

Initiatives are firmly rooted in the community and encourage people, primarily those 35 years or under, who otherwise might not avail of mainstream training, to develop their existing skills and learn new skills in an environment that is tailored to their specific needs. The LTIs provide a range of training programmes which lead to Major QQI awards at levels 3, 4 and 5 and their duration can vary based on programme requirements.

Management and oversight of Community Training Programmes

Community Training providers have their own governance structures in place to ensure that the funding is spent in line with the funding guidelines for community training provision. Documentation relevant to the community training programme is also held by the Community Training Officer, including: the business plan, signed agreement, financial reports, insurance and Health and Safety documents.

Regular site visits and meetings are conducted by the Community Training Officer and the QA Officer. Individual learning plans and learner feedback forms are completed and retained by the external providers and are available for inspection when required.

All review documents are retained, according to a retention schedule, for audit purposes by KCETB funding agencies, for example SOLAS and ESF.

Contracted Training:

Contractors have been selected through a national procurement framework agreement supported by the Office of Government Procurement (OGP). All contracts are monitored throughout their lifetime with a focus on ensuring that the course meets the required standards. During the Course Plan Approval (CPA) stage of programme development, teaching staff and support teaching staff CVs are reviewed to ensure that their qualifications and experience are in line with the standards and requirements of the programme they will be delivering.

There is a formalised, contractual relationship with each contracted provider through the contracted training framework. The Contracted Training Officer keeps a working file for each programme. The working file comprises the course plan approval, contract, invoices, assessment plans and other relevant documentation. Once a programme is completed this file is kept in line with European Social Fund (ESF) funding requirements. Learner assessments are kept in line with the requirements of the specific awarding bodies. Programmes that exceed €50,000 are discussed and ratified at KCETB Finance Committee meetings. Prior to the commencement of any course a contract is issued to the external party for the delivery of the course.

The framework agreement has a lifespan of 2 years. An extension was granted in 2020 for 1 year and a review of the framework agreement is underway for suitability and value regarding budget and the quality of training. Relations with contracted training companies are constantly reviewed. Regular structured meetings with the training companies provide opportunities to both parties to address any issues which may arise. Site visits also take place to all programmes and these also help to monitor and review progress.

Impact Within the Region and Local Communities?

As part of the self-evaluation preparations for the IR, KCETB conducted surveys with external stakeholders. The findings are outlined in this report with largely positive feedback in terms of the impact of KCETB in the locality referenced.



Figure 52 How Impact is Assessed

In addition, KCETB are members of the SERSF and liaise directly with the local DSP to identify emerging needs for training in line with local and regional trends.

There was a broad range of responses received in relation to how centres assess their impact within the region and local communities as displayed in Figure 52. The impact is measured by taking a cyclical approach from recruitment at course commencement to progression at course end.

Evaluation Outcomes

Consultations with external stakeholders found that there are positive relationships in place and that KCETB is held in high regard.

“KCETB have an open approach and strong interpersonal relationships have been built between our programme co-ordinators and the stakeholders surveyed”. Statutory Stakeholder

While there are MOUs or SLAs in place with most external providers namely community training and LTIs, there is not a consistent approach to these agreements, nor are they published on the KCETB website. Ensuring that there is a more consistent approach to these agreements and ensuring they are publicly available has been identified as an area for attention as a result of the review process.

The consultation with external providers found a strong awareness of KCETB processes, procedures and governance structures. Of those surveyed, 83% are aware of the authentication processes, and a further 70% stated they were aware of the governance structures. A rating of 3.43 out of 5 was given for the effectiveness of the communication processes in place with external providers. This should be considered and mechanisms put in place to strengthen and sustain these communication channels.

There are strong relationships with statutory agencies, community partners and employers in the region at centre level. This is evidenced in the referencing of specific centres in the feedback received. There is a need for an enhanced ETB level review of these relationships to assess local impact and also to ensure effective relationships are in place.

Recommendations

- Arrangements with external parties will be reviewed to ensure MoU or SLA is in place. These agreements will be published on the KCETB website.
- Scheduled engagement with statutory agencies, community partners and employers in the region, will be developed.
- Review of communication in place with external providers to enhance effective communication.



Case Studies Self-Evaluation Monitoring and Review

For full case study see Appendix 3

Case Study 9 Oversight of External Providers	
Demonstrating:	How KCETB Training Services oversee course recruitment for Local Training Initiative courses and appropriate placement for learners.
Details:	Potential learners can register for KCETB FET courses on fetchcourses.ie or directly through external providers. Learners can register for courses that they are potentially not eligible for. Since 2019 a Training Services Officer, with the LTI Co-ordinator, interview all prospective learners that register for Local Training Initiatives courses. One applicant, at interview for a Level 5 Multimedia Production course, did not meet the entry requirements for the programme. The applicant did not want to return to Secondary School. The Community Training Officer (CTO) arranged a meeting with a Guidance Counsellor. As a result of this meeting, the applicant successfully applied for a QQI Level 4 Local Training Initiative course in General Learning. Once registered, the learner was assisted in developing an Individual Learning Plan (ILP). A progression was identified for the learner upon course completion. The CTO monitors the implementation of all learners' ILPs. The learner is performing very well on the Level 4 course and is preparing to submit for certification in the Summer of 2021.
Highlights:	Monitoring – oversight of external providers Review – monitoring of ILPs Integration – using other services available (Adult Guidance Service) Access, transfer and progression – recruitment and progression routes

Case Study 10 Centre Evaluation and Improvement Plan (CEIP) – Youthreach	
Demonstrating:	Comprehensive and effective mechanisms for feedback
Details:	Every year the centre completes a CEIP report. The CEIP process means that learners, staff and parents are asked to review programmes, courses and the centre. This provides an opportunity to review learning and assessment methodologies, learner participation, extra-curricular and other aspects of the centre and course delivery. The CEIP report is completed with the help of an external facilitator using a SCOT analysis of the centre, staff evaluations, management evaluations, parent evaluations, learner evaluation of subjects and work experience evaluation. From the CEIP process, recommendations for improvement are identified and plans and strategies are put in place to implement these as appropriate. All recommendations for implementation are monitored and reviewed through the Learner Council, staff and Board of Management (BOM) meetings.
Highlights:	Evaluation – extensive consultation with stakeholders Continuous improvement – recommendations implemented Review – extensive reviews conducted annually

Case Study 11 KCETB Programme Review – Healthcare	
Demonstrating:	Review of healthcare programmes across KCETB 2019 – 2020
Details:	<p>The evaluation is part of an overall self-evaluation process aimed at quality improvement within KCETB and is documented in a report 'Evaluation of Healthcare Programmes 2019 -2020' published in October 2020. The report documents an account of the programme, showcases results, and outlines what has been successful and where improvements could be implemented. This is a key part of KCETB's strategy to conduct a cycle of self-evaluation across our programmes. The review demonstrated that the courses delivered continue to meet the needs of local communities and learners, as well as meeting future skills needs and industry requirements. The review indicated that participants were achieving major awards at Level 5 and a high proportion of learners were progressing into employment. There was a high satisfaction rate among learners with their modules and the tutors, indicating that these programmes are both relevant and interesting while being delivered at a level that is conducive to learner engagement. Improvements were identified in regard to the ongoing management of assessment, the provision of an assessment calendar to notify learners of upcoming deadlines and a review of specific modules; all of which are detailed in the report.</p>
Highlights:	<p>Self-evaluation process – annual review of programmes Monitoring – feedback from stakeholders including learners and staff</p>

Case Study 12 Programme Review – OCFE	
Demonstrating:	Annual review of programmes
Details:	<p>The Deputy Principal and Course Co-ordinators review and evaluate all programmes annually in conjunction with the staff team. The review includes: Information to Learners, composition of course team, course content, learner welfare, assessment, learner achievement, retention, resources, timetabling and scheduling. Feedback is collated on these issues/topics with learners through survey or focus groups and the results inform course design and delivery and how we advertise and promote the College. The review team is required to look at assessment and attendance data and External Authentication reports where they pertain. Minutes and recommendations from each review are provided to the Deputy Principal. A synopsis from each review team is provided at a whole staff meeting where common issues are discerned across departments/courses. This informs planning by the Deputy Principal and the individual course teams. Staff members have demonstrated commendable 'buy-in' because they are enabled to review, reflect and self-evaluate what worked well and what requires improvement as opposed to this being a process that is externally mandated.</p>
Highlights:	<p>Inclusivity – learners and staff are involved Consultation – extensive and structured process</p>

Evaluation Outcomes – Objective 3

Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review		
	Detail	Evidence
Robust self-evaluation systems in place for KCETB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Periodic organisational quality reviews • QA department role • Centre level reviews • Annual review of programme provision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESER reports and QIPs • Quality assurance report for 2020 • RAPs, EA reports, IV reports • Evaluation of Healthcare Programmes 2019 -2020 report
Building relationships with key stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good networking with established stakeholders • Integrated into the community • Training Services range of second providers – Community and contracted training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback and survey responses • Programme provision based on community needs • Contracted arrangements with providers to meet community needs
Strong leadership promoting the principles of continuous improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong communication systems in centres • Information dissemination • Training needs identified • Range of documents in relation to COVID-19 developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff meetings, emails, Microsoft Teams • EA report findings shared • PD opportunities



Recommendations – Objective 3

Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review		
	Objective	Plan
Established programme review and approval system	<p>Develop and publish a KCETB policy document outlining the validation and approval process for awards</p> <p>Establish a Programme and Awards Committee (PAC)</p> <p>Improve links with employers to understand training needs and support work placements</p> <p>Consider and implement recommendation of programme reviews in line with agreed schedule</p>	<p>Programme approval and awards policy to be published to include revalidation of awards.</p> <p>TOR for PAC to be issued and schedule of meetings in line with QQI dates</p> <p>Work based learning group to review and address</p> <p>Carry out schedule of programme reviews to ensure programme meets the needs of learners and employers</p>
Consistent feedback systems to be used across centres	<p>Encourage more interactive FET Forum to share centre experiences</p> <p>Standard KCETB feedback forms to be developed for learners, staff and stakeholders and systems to be put in place for regular reviews.</p> <p>Enhance centre level Self-evaluation process.</p>	<p>TOR / agenda for FET Forum to be reviewed</p> <p>Public Information and Communication Working Group to create consistent forms.</p> <p>Development of consistent centre level self-evaluation process supported by QA and overseen by QAOC. Continue QA support visits</p>
Arrangements with External Providers	<p>Consistent use of quality / service agreements across KCETB with external providers</p> <p>Review effectiveness of communication channels with external providers</p>	<p>KCETB to develop and adopt agreement documents as agreed with Corporate Services.</p> <p>Ensure clear communication channels with external providers to include circulation of QA newsletter and access to QA portal.</p>
Results Approval Panel	<p>Expansion of RAP to include strategic consideration of provision going forward</p>	<p>Agenda items to be expanded to include discussion regarding effectiveness of provision going forward.</p>

Conclusion

The self-evaluation process has provided KCETB's FET Service, its centres and colleges with the opportunity to review the effectiveness of its quality assurance processes and procedures across a broad range of areas aligned to the Inaugural Review Terms of Reference. There was significant input from all FET centres with each centre completing an extensive self-evaluation report. In addition, centres were required to complete a Strengths, Challenges Opportunities and Threats (SCOT) which assisted the evaluation process. This is summarised and published [here](#).

This report has detailed the key strengths found in the analysis undertaken and key recommendations under each thematic area. The feedback gained in the compilation of the report provided deep insights into organisation-wide approaches to quality and the overall effectiveness of our quality assurance systems. This is further supported by the feedback from external authentication included in Appendix 5. The report captures a point in time for QA in KCETB and presents an evolving QA system that is continuously improving and demonstrates that KCETB is on a specific journey in terms of QA enhancement.

The findings of this report have been supported through the feedback gathered from extensive internal and external consultations that have been conducted over the last year. The voice of the learner, staff, centre management and key stakeholders is represented throughout this report. This feedback has been considered by the Inaugural Review Steering Group and the QAOC and a detailed action plan has been produced to ensure that the recommendations are acted upon.

Many of the recommendations are learner centred in line with our strategic goals as an organisation. These recommendations include capturing the learner voice, improving communication to learners, supports for learners, the development of teaching, learning and assessment, and programme development. Other improvement areas highlighted refer to the continued development of the quality culture in KCETB, including the ongoing development of policies and procedures. Any recommendations received from the External Review Panel will be included in this action plan.

We would like to sincerely thank all learners, teaching staff, centre managers and external stakeholders for their engagement and invaluable inputs into this self-evaluation process. We look forward to the next stage of the process and welcoming the External Review Panel.

Quality Area 1: Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures Source: Objective 1

	Task	Responsibility
1.1	QA Handbook	QA Team
1.2	Teaching and Learning policy	TLA
1.3	Staff Recruitment, Management and Development	QAOC
1.4	Information and Data Management	QAOC
1.5	Public Information and Communication	PIC
1.6	Relationships with External Parties	QAOC
1.7	Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review	QAOC
1.8	Work Based Learning policy	WBL

Quality Area 2: Communication of Message Source: Objectives 1 and 3

	Task	Responsibility
2.1	Create a KCETB FET Communication policy	PIC
2.2	Review KCETB website to ensure it is easier to navigate	KCETB CG
2.3	Review effectiveness of communication channels with all provision, including external providers, to include the circulation of QA newsletter and access to QA portal	QA Team
2.4	Develop links between Communications Groups to build one consistent message for KCETB	KCETB CG

Quality Area 3: Working Groups Source: Objective 1

	Task	Responsibility
3.1	Implement the objectives of the working groups, as per the Terms of reference approved by the QAOC	QAOC
3.2	Review membership to ensure representation of all FET provision	QAOC

Quality Area 4: Relationships with External Providers and other Awarding Bodies Source: Objectives 1 and 3

	Task	Responsibility
4.1	Review arrangements currently in place with external providers	QA Team
4.2	Develop and adopt SLA/MoU documents (to be agreed with Corporate Services)	QAOC

Quality Area 5: Supports for Learners Source: Objectives 1 and 2

	Task	Responsibility
5.1	Standardise learner feedback forms and implement a process for acting on findings	PIC
5.2	Review supports required for learners across all provision, e.g. wellbeing, digital skills, disability access, including the creation of a Learner Support Portal	QAOC / PD & TEL
5.3	Create a learner support forum to build capacity of learners to engage in consultation processes	PIC
5.4	Implement consistent Learner Induction Process to ensure learners are aware of assessment and governance processes	QAOC

Quality Area 6: Staff Development and Support Source: Objectives 1 and 2

	Task	Responsibility
6.1	Create an induction programme for new staff members across all FET to ensure awareness of QA policy and procedures among new staff	PD & TEL
6.2	Review Professional Development opportunities for staff annually	PD & TEL

Quality Area 7: Programme Development, Approval and Review Source: Objective 3

	Task	Responsibility
7.1	Publish a KCETB policy document outlining the validation, revalidation and approval process for awards	PVME
7.2	Establish a Programme and Awards Committee (PAC)	PVME
7.3	Improve links with employers to understand training needs and support work placements	WBL
7.4	Ensure employers are represented in programme development	PVME / WBL
7.5	Carry out programme reviews and implement recommendations	QA Team
7.6	Consistent approach to centre led self-evaluation process	QA Team & QAOC

Quality Area 8: Feedback Systems Source: Objective 3

	Task	Responsibility
8.1	Develop standard KCETB feedback forms for learners, staff and stakeholders and introduce systems to for regular reviews	PIC
8.2	Conduct QA support visits as per schedule and ensure feedback channels are available	QA Team
8.3	Expand policy feedback process to incorporate new policies	QA Team

Quality Area 9: Results Approval Panel Source: Objective 1 and 3

	Task	Responsibility
9.1	Expand agenda items to include review of provision	QA Team
9.2	Expand RAP to include all awarding bodies	QA Team
9.3	Review opportunities for programme modifications at RAPs	QA Team

Quality Area 10: Assessment of Learners Source: Objective 2

	Task	Responsibility
10.1	Support the development of consistent assessment standards across all provision	QA Team
10.2	Phased removal of AIS packs	QA Team

Quality Area 11: Access, Transfer and Progression Source: Objective 1

	Task	Responsibility
11.1	Expand RPL opportunities across FET provision	QA Team
11.2	Review progression agreements with Higher Education Institutions	QAOC
11.3	Facilitate learner pathways across FET provision	QAOC

Quality Area 12: Data Management Systems Source: Objective 1 and 2

	Task	Responsibility
12.1	Develop a Learner Management Information System policy	QAOC
12.2	Implement a Quality Management system to ensure tracking of quality assurance across all provision	QA Team

Appendices

Appendix 1

KCETB strategy statement 2017 - 2021

Detailed document available on [KCETB Website](#)

etb

Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna
Chill Chainnigh agus Cheatharlach
*Kilkenny and Carlow
Education and Training Board*



Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board

Strategy Statement 2017-2021

Draft adopted by Board

13 July 2017

Appendix 2

KCETB Self-Evaluation Review Documents

Documents available on [KCETB Website](#)



Appendix 3

Case Studies - detailed

Detailed document available on [KCETB Website](#)

KCETB CASE STUDIES

As submitted by centres June 2020

Appendix 4

FET SLAs and MOUs

List of SLAs	
Moving On, Carlow	Local Training Initiative
Making Connections, Carlow	Local Training Initiative
Moving On, Ferrybank	Local Training Initiative
The Grow Project, Ferrybank	Local Training Initiative
Young Irish Film Makers, Kilkenny	Local Training Initiative
Pathway to Employment, Urlingford	Local Training Initiative
St. Catherine's Family Resource Centre	BTEI Community Strand
Details FET Co-operation	FET Co-operation hours
Music Generation Kilkenny and Carlow	Other
List of Awarding Bodies	
British Horse Society	MoU
CIDESCO	
ITEC	MoU
DES Junior and Senior Trades	
(BABTAC) CIBTAC	
RTITB Road Transport Industry Training Board	
EN Certification (ISO: European Standard for Welding)	
RSA Road Safety Authority	
Microsoft Office Specialist	
Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council	
NCEF National Council for Exercise and Fitness (University of Limerick)	MoU
VTCT	MoU
Other MOU	
Kilkenny Employment for Youth	MoU
Carlow Youth Training	MoU
Other Governance bodies	
SEC	

Appendix 5

Detailed below is a selection of EA comments from the certification periods June 2020 – June 2021.

Examples of Good Practice EA Reports 2020-2021

Assessment Design		
Comprehensive use of video and photographic evidence which was presumably also used for micro teaching. The locations chosen for the assessments were suitably challenging.	The Assessment, Administration and delivery of the Awards and Modules appears to demonstrate an effective centre in every way.	Excellent exam construction, clear and appropriate briefs and teaching materials. The samples of work provided justifies the grades awarded and met the module assessment criteria.
Excellent work by staff in creating the workplace simulation – great to see learners given the opportunity to achieve the award albeit they could not go out on Work Placement.	All assessment requirements were clear and concise. Breakdown of marking was excellent. Exam papers are well structured and use of images and media in exam papers is commendable. Feedback loops and the use of reviewing and marking tools in word are really effective.	Ormonde College assessment standards easily match or indeed exceed national standards. Assessment evidence produced was to a very high standard also, in line with the clearest and most accessible I have encountered as an EA.

Instructions to Learners		
This was a very well assessed module with a clear instructions given to learners and a generally high standard was achieved.	Excellent assessment briefs – great detail provided by the Assessor to guide each LR through the requirements.	The briefs were of a high standard with learning outcomes and clear making schemes
Really well thought-out assessment briefs. The Assessor has divided the CoW into 3 separate assessments. This is a super idea as it reduces the feeling of ‘pressure’ on the LR and allows the LR to progress their learning and understanding in a much more fluid manner.	The Exam Brief was also easy to follow in its instructions to the learner. Sample solutions were provided.	Assessments produced were of an excellent standard, reflecting good tutoring, and motivated learners.

Evidence Presented		
Substantial Portfolios covering all required competencies	All Learner evidence presented by the centre was exemplary. This was done under very difficult circumstances due to COVID-19 restrictions	This is an example of a well delivered, presented and assessed module.
Excellent documentation presented. The Assessment plan was well mapped out, clear and all learning outcomes covered.	This is quite a technical module and good learner effort combined with strong Tutoring has yielded great results.	The course has been delivered in great detail and the coverage of all aspects is noteworthy.
They have a great tutor/teacher pack, very good iv staff and all-around great tutors and teachers. This is clearly evident from the way the students were immediately put at ease and comfortable to speak on the evidence videos supplied.	It is obvious in the learner's folders that they engaged in the module and were honest in their submissions. They used the language of the vocational area with a degree of fluency and demonstrated reflective thinking in their career and life ambitions.	The securely shared folder created and uploaded to OneDrive was user friendly and made for ease of access to the various files.

Marking / Grading		
This module was presented well with clear marking and commentary to justify marks	The standard achieved across all levels in this centre is excellent, and well in keeping with national standards. The Level 3 modules in particular are exemplary.	Very high standard of evidence which correlated well with the grades awarded. The very high scoring evidence was very impressive in content and presentation. This is great preparation for third level and excellent for industry.
The Ormonde marksheet was a most useful means for referencing the gaining and losing of marks in a clear and objective manner. Well done to all concerned.	The marking was detailed and transparent and the high grades achieved (2x 'D') indicated an in depth understanding of the subject matter.	Excellent break down marking scheme and use of excel to collate all results together – easy to follow. Could be used as a model for other modules.

Feedback to Learners		
Excellent detailed feedback forms for both assignments and marks were transcribed correctly to summary marking sheet	All tutors at all levels deserve congratulations on a job well done – their investment in their learners is obvious, and their marking and feedback is completely transparent and fair.	All student work is clearly marked with some tutor comments seen on assignments to evidence marks. There are also feedback files on learner material to indicate why marks were deducted.

Authentication Process

<p>The work at Kilkenny VTOS was exemplary in the opinion of the EA. I can honestly say, without reservation, that this was one of the most highly organised centres I have visited. The standard of organisation, the layout of files, the hard copy evidence, along with associated IV Reports and thorough marksheets, demonstrates the huge effort made by all Tutors and Administrator alike to ensure a very smooth Assessment process.</p>	<p>The process and procedures at Ormonde College are noteworthy and thorough. This was one of the best organised centres I have come upon, a pattern emerging in KCETB centres to date. The uniformity of processes is noteworthy. The standard of organisation, the file structures, teacher folders, IV information, Assessment Instruments – all were provided in a consistent manner throughout.</p>	<p>Good clear briefs for learners across the modules. Folders laid out in a consistent clear order making it easy to navigate for EA. Robust IV process active in this centre. Relevant samples on display for IV and EA. Work presented in a very professional manner some work of a gallery standard.</p>
<p>Overall, The timeline from the initial request for EA to now has to be commended all information received in a easy to follow and timely manner.</p>	<p>Use of forms to gather Declaration of Authenticity efficient method. Reduces need for digital signatures / extra files.</p>	<p>Having the one contact person throughout this process has been key in following EA procedures and that online EA has run smoothly. CIFE and the KCETB QA Team seems clear on their roles and seem to carry them out efficiently.</p>

Recommendations EA Reports 2020

Recommendations

<p>Assessors need to be informed of the proper use of assessment language: The assessment is the over-arching measure of summative learning. Terms such as assignment, project, collection of work, learner record and skills demonstrations are examples of the different types of assessment methodologies/techniques</p>	<p>A standardised approach to assessment briefs and workbooks needs to be considered. The EA proposes that programme review work, at all levels, is undertaken to determine a KCETB/centre led standard to ensure consistency in the assessment element of any award undertaken</p>	<p>Tutor Pack does not include master copies of the assessment briefs, although there are copies within each LR's portfolio. It is imperative that Tutor Packs are fully coordinated with separated sections which are used to 'house' the correct and current assessment related documentation:</p>
<p>Thirteen different assignment briefs for this module. They are worded clearly and unambiguously with instructions for learners. Course overview document also offers clear information on course.</p>	<p>There should be a unique teacher folder for every module supplying blank copies of briefs and supplementary documents for every module. This should include submission sign in sheets, feedback to learners and any supplementary document that the assessor may want to provide. Inclusion of an assessment plan would also be recommended.</p>	<p>Assignment briefs would benefit from a redesign. Learners will perform to a higher level with clearer instructions and guidelines – Keep in mind verbs associated with different levels when writing briefs along with the NFQ Grid of level Indicators.</p>

Actions Arising from the Ea Report Recommendations

The introduction of the [Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures](#) for the Fair and Consistent Assessment of Learners in September 2020 was a big step towards addressing some of the recommendations in EA reports. This policy adopts a holistic approach to planning for assessment, including a standardised approach to assessment briefs. This was implemented across FET provision in the 2020/21 academic year and will now be reviewed to ascertain how it supported the assessment process and what amendments are required for the following academic year.

Training sessions were also delivered to address recommendations that arose in the EA reports. Training sessions were recorded and are available to all staff via the QA Portal along with additional relevant documents to support CPD. The follow are examples of training sessions that were delivered

1. Good Assessment Practice in a Virtual Learning Environment. The purpose of this training was to look at organising folders, marking, alternative assessments and providing feedback in a virtual learning environment. This was followed up later in the academic year by a briefing on Preparation for External Authentication Briefing. This briefing focused on what EA's would be looking for, e.g. Single point of contact, logical folder structure and outlined for staff how to prepare for EA with respect to marking, feedback, internal assessors packs and folder layout.
2. Understanding Assessment Language, Briefs and Marking Training provided by to staff. This session focused on the EA recommendations relating to the proper use of assessment language, clear instructions and guidelines in assessment briefs and the benefits of clear marking schemes.

Appendix 6 - Terms of Reference

Key Quality and Working Groups

Quality Assurance Oversight Committee (QAOC) - TOR



Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board

Further Education and Training

Quality Assurance Oversight Committee

(KCETB FET QA Oversight Committee)

Providing strategic direction for quality assurance.

The role of the **KCETB FET QA Oversight Committee** is to "Oversee all Quality Assurance aspects related to the design, development, approval, implementation, monitoring and review of the Further Education and Training provision offered by Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board".

The **QA Oversight Committee** has executive responsibility for the governance of quality assured systems within FET in KCETB. It protects, maintains and develops the standard of KCETB FET programmes and related activities. In doing so, the QA Oversight Committee is ensuring, as far as possible, that the procedures, processes and attitudes according to which QA is directed and controlled is robust, accountable and for the benefit of the KCETB learner.

The membership of this committee currently consists of:

- Chief Executive
- Director of FET
- 2 Adult Education Officers
- Training Services Manager
- 1 PLC principal 1 deputy principal
- ETB Board nominee

The committee is chaired by the Director of FET, and reports to the KCETB Board at their bi monthly meeting. The committee is scheduled to meet a minimum of four times per annum and has responsibility for the oversight of the development of new quality assured processes, programme development, delivery, assessment and review, approval of centres to deliver programmes etc. The membership of this committee may be reviewed to include representation from learners and / or tutors as deemed appropriate. The QA Officer reports to, and supports, the QA Oversight Committee.

Six distinct sub committees are being established and these committees will inform the work of the QA Oversight Committee. These sub committees consist of:

1. FET Forum
2. Programme Validation, Monitoring and Evaluation Group
3. Assessment Working group
4. Employer engagement/ Work based Learning Working group
5. Results Approval Panel
6. Policy and Procedure Group



The QA Oversight Committee will also direct the work of the subcommittees and will receive regular reports from the subcommittees. Terms of Reference are available for each sub group, and the QA Oversight Committee has a member on each sub group.

Role of KCETB FET QA Oversight Committee providing strategic direction for quality assurance.

- Governance of KCETB FET Division Quality Assurance system.
- Directing Quality Assurance Policy, Procedure and Process development as appropriate in Legislative, National and Local contexts.
- Promote quality teaching and learning in all relevant learning environments
- Overseeing the implementation of procedures for the assessment of learners to ensure fairness, consistency and fitness-for-purpose and monitor this at centre level and at ETB level.
- Ensuring review of KCETB quality policies.
- Ensuring the reliability and integrity of learner records and results of learner assessment.
- Protecting the integrity of academic processes and standards.
- Monitoring the effectiveness of the implementation of self evaluation systems and procedures
- Oversees assurance activity to ensure that protocol is followed and provide advice and troubleshoot where necessary
- Assigns actions for improvement to individuals and groups who have been assigned responsibility for quality assurance
- Considering risk and non compliance
- Ensuring effective communication across KCETB quality stakeholders

Other

- Approving policies and procedures as recommended by QA Sub-Group.
- Approving programme documentation prior to submitting to QQI for validation, as recommended by Programme Governance Sub-Group.
- Approving programme and organisational review documentation prior to submission to QQI.
- Ratifying External Authenticators, noting assessment reports, ratifying assessment results.
- Reporting from apprenticeship Consortium Steering Group(s), National Programme Board(s) and National Examinations Board(s).

Programme and Awards Committee (PAC) - TOR



Terms of Reference

Programmes and Awards Committee

Quality Assurance Group

KCETB Further Education and Training

ROLE:

The **Programmes and Awards Committee (PAC)** will review, approve and consider applications from centres for approval of programme and awards delivery.

The chairperson will be the Director of FET. There will also be a vice chairperson. One or both chairperson and vice chairperson will be in attendance at all PAC meetings. Decisions and recommendations from the PAC will be communicated to the Quality Assurance Oversight Committee.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this Committee is to ensure that programmes and the awards to which they lead are commensurate with KCETB strategies, appropriate and consistent with the required standards. Programmes and awards should enhance the transfer and progression opportunities for learners. The decisions and recommendations of the Committee are informed by internal (within KCETB) and external (when required) expertise. This expertise is normally provided by nominated experts attending the meetings or expertise can be provided in the form of reports, application forms and the outcomes of monitoring, review and authentication activities.

OBJECTIVES:

Consideration is given to establish if the centre has the appropriate resources to deliver the award based on the following (non-exhaustive) items:

- Rationale
 - o Demand (local/regional/national) from employers
 - o Viability (numbers of learners)
- Financial resources
- Access, transfer and progression opportunities
- Staffing
 - o Continuous Professional Development
 - o Health & Safety
- Physical resources
 - o Equipment
 - o Location/premises
 - o Transport required



- Existing provision
- Assessment planning and resources

DECISION MAKING:

Committee decisions are made by consensus.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

The QA Oversight Committee may co-opt participants to this Committee when it deems it necessary for the required expert to participate in the programme approval process.

The membership of this subcommittee will consist of:

- FET Director (Chairperson)
- 1 Adult Education Officer (Vice Chairperson)
- QA Office (secretary)
- Relevant external subject matter expert (for validation of new programmes)

The Chairperson can nominate additional decision making committee members.

APPROVAL APPLICANTS

The centre applying for approval or modification of an award can be invited to the PAC meeting to present their case. They are represented by:

- The relevant KCETB subject matter expert (teacher/tutor/instructor) delivering the award and/or
- The Centre Manager / principal of the applicant centre

Approval applicants provide evidence to inform the decision making process and may be asked to leave the meeting when a decision is required.

MEETINGS

- 6 meetings will be planned every year in line the QQI PAEC schedule
- These meeting dates will be published on the QA website every January
- Meetings will only be required to occur when applications are received
- A note taker will be nominated by the Chairperson in advance of the meeting
- Notes will be made available to the attendees within 5 working days of the close of the meeting

Outcomes

Formal communication on the outcome of the PAC meeting will be communicated within 5 working days to all meeting attendees. All outcomes at PAC meetings are communicated to the Quality Assurance Oversight Committee. The outcome of PAC meetings are a fixed agenda item on the Quality Assurance Oversight Committee agenda. The outcomes of the PAC meetings will be published on the KCETB website.

Results Approval Panel (RAP) - TOR

Terms of Reference Results Approval Panel

ROLE:

The **Results Approval Panel (RAP)** is a sub-group of the KCETB Quality Assurance Oversight Committee (QAOC). The QAOC has a key role in the governance and management of quality function of KCETB and oversees the review of 'learner results prior to submission for approval as qualifications/awards and for certification'¹ as per the [Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers Core, April 2016 QQI](#). These guidelines require providers to have 'A system of governance that considers the results of internal and external evaluation' where 'Consideration is given to the findings of internal and external evaluation and self-monitoring processes. Appropriate responses, including action plans, are developed in light of those findings and of past experience (including trends)'.

The RAP will be guided by the procedures outlined in the KCETB [Assessment Policy](#). The panel encompasses all provision and awarding bodies.

MEMBERSHIP:

The Director of FET (or nominated deputy) will chair the RAP meetings, supported by the Quality Assurance (QA) team. The RAP meetings will be scheduled by the QA team and members invited according to the submissions received. This will primarily consist of the Adult Education Officer (AEO), Centre Managers, Principals and Deputy principals for the centres that are submitting results for approval. Other members considered to be pertinent to the RAP can be requested to attend, as required.

SCHEDULE:

As the majority of awards in KCETB are submitted to QQI as the awarding body, the RAP meetings are convened in accordance with the QQI certification periods. The QA team issues the schedule to centres by email and it is also available through the QA portal.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of the Results Approval Panel is to approve assessment results and review other quality assurance matters arising from the outcomes of the assessment and authentication (including Internal Verification (IV) and External Authentication (EA)) processes.

The work of the panel must be conducted in a fair and transparent manner, while maintaining confidentiality around learner information.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To ensure that assessment of learner evidence and authentication of assessment results (including IV and EA) has been carried out in line with KCETB's quality assurance process.
2. To review validity of the results ensuring fairness and consistency in the assessment process.

¹ <https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/Core%20Statutory%20Quality%20Assurance%20Guidelines.pdf>

3. To consider grade changes recommended and decide to uphold or reject the proposed changes.
4. To recommend results for approval (or not) and endorse centres to submit approved results to the awarding body in accordance with the awarding body's timeframe.
5. To review the outcomes of the authentication processes including IV, EA and Certification Audits (where applicable).
6. To action improvements identified.
7. To share and promote good practice including the implementation of improvements in line with KCETB's commitment to quality and excellence.
8. To appraise programme assessment and identify areas for improvement.
9. To report findings to the QAOC.
10. To complete, as part of the RAP meeting, the required documentation as outlined in the KCETB assessment policy.

APPENDIX

Teaching Learning and Assessment Working Group - TOR

Terms of Reference Teaching, Learning and Assessment Quality Assurance (Sub Group) KCETB Further Education and Training

ROLE:

The **Teaching, Learning and Assessment Working Group** is a sub-group of the KCETB Quality Assurance Oversight Committee.

A Chair will be nominated from the KCETB Quality Assurance Oversight Committee. Reports and recommendations will be submitted through the KCETB Quality Assurance Oversight Committee. Reports may take the form of minutes or draft minutes of meetings.

PURPOSE/GOAL:

The working group is responsible for the development of a Teaching and Learning policy that will guide and promote high standards in teaching and learning in all of KCETB's Further Education and Training provision.

These proposals will then be presented for consideration to the Quality Assurance Oversight Committee or sub-committee.

OBJECTIVES:

In pursuit of this goal, it will;

- Ensure that the 'learner voice' guides the work of the working group
- Consider internal and external factors that impact on teaching and learning
- Define standards in terms of teacher practice
- Provide clear indicators of effective and highly effective practice applicable to self-evaluation for individual teachers and tutors
- Define a policy that will promote innovation in teaching and learning and support the professional development of teaching staff

PARTICIPANTS

- The QA Oversight Committee have nominated participants to this group.
- If representatives are not in a position to attend they should discuss this with their manager.
- A Quorum is needed for each meeting: 50% of the participants + one.
- The QA Oversight Committee may co-opt participants with specific expertise if required.

The membership of this subcommittee will consist of (at least):

- 1 Adult Education Officer
- 1 PLC Principal / Deputy Principal
- 1 Part time provision Co-ordinator
- 1 Recruitment Officer
- 1 Training Services Representative
- 1 QA Officer
- 1 Teaching Staff Member

*or nominated staff from membership list.

STRUCTURE

- The **Teaching, Learning and Assessment Working Group** will be chaired by John Kavanagh
- A note taker will be appointed by the group, this position will rotate.
-

MEETINGS

- The **Teaching, Learning and Assessment Working Group** will meet at agreed calendar dates, or as directed by the QA Oversight Committee.
- The group will agree a draft schedule of consultation / meetings that must be adhered to for any programme validation application.

Programme Validation, Monitoring and Evaluation Working Group - TOR

Terms of Reference

Programme Validation, Monitoring and Evaluation Group Quality Assurance (Sub Group) KCETB Further Education and Training

ROLE:

The **Programme Validation, Monitoring and Evaluation Group** is a sub-group of the KCETB Quality Assurance Oversight Committee.

A Chair will be nominated from the KCETB Quality Assurance Oversight Committee. Reports and recommendations will be submitted through the KCETB Quality Assurance Oversight Committee. Reports may take the form of minutes or draft minutes of meetings.

PURPOSE:

The purpose is to review and monitor existing provision, to consider proposals for new programmes and to oversee self-evaluation of programmes.

The Validation, Monitoring and Evaluation working group will also deal with proposals for new programmes or adjustments to current programmes to ensure suitability and adherence to specific validation criteria as outlined by the particular awarding body and KCETB.

These proposals will then be presented for consideration to the Quality Assurance Oversight Committee or sub-committee.

OBJECTIVES:

- To establish a KCETB wide programme approval policy and corresponding process
- To review existing provision and provide an up to date audit in relation to KCETB FET programmes.
- To inform and make recommendations to the Quality Assurance Oversight Committee on matters relating to, programme validation, programme monitoring and programme evaluation, including specific validation requirements.
- Recommend appropriate time frames and lead in periods for the validation of all new programmes.
- To promote the continuous improvement of validation within KCETB, and recommend draft methodology to facilitate the process.
- To review and monitor duplication of programmes at KCETB and draft rationale where there is duplication.
- To identify areas for further collaboration and integration across the ETB Sector.

Draft Terms of Reference 04.02.2020

Page 1 of 2

- To implement best practice in validation arising from professional development engagement and learning outcomes.

PARTICIPANTS

- The QA Oversight Committee have nominated participants to this group.
- If representatives are not in a position to attend they should discuss this with their manager.
- A Quorum is needed for each meeting: 50% of the participants + one.
- The QA Oversight Committee may co-opt participants to the Programme Validation, Monitoring and Evaluation Working Group with specific expertise if required.

The membership of this subcommittee will consist of*:

- 1 Adult Education Officer
- 1 PLC Principal / Deputy Principal
- 1 Part time provision Co-ordinator
- 1 Guidance Counsellor
- 1 Recruitment Officer
- 1 Training Services Manager
- 1 QA Officer
- Relevant subject matter expert (for validation of new programmes)

*or nominated staff from membership list.

STRUCTURE

- The **Programme Validation, Monitoring and Evaluation Group** will be chaired by Kevin O'Shea
- A note taker will be appointed by the group, this position will rotate.

MEETINGS

- The **Programme Validation, Monitoring and Evaluation Group** will meet as programmes are required, or as directed by the QA Oversight Committee.
- The group will agree a draft schedule of consultation / meetings that must be adhered to for any programme validation application.
- It is important to note that this group will be convened initially to inform it of its work, and review current provision, but then it may meet as new programmes are proposed.

Draft Terms of Reference 04.02.2020

Page 2 of 2

Work-Based Learning Working Group - TOR

TERMS OF REFERENCE

KCETB WORK BASED LEARNING WORKING GROUP

ROLE:

The **Work Based Learning Working Group** is a sub-group of the KCETB Quality Assurance Overarching Committee.

A Chair will be nominated from the KCETB Quality Assurance Overarching Committee. Reports and recommendations will be submitted through the KCETB Quality Assurance Overarching Committee. Reports may take the form of minutes or draft minutes of meetings.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of the group is not only to enhance the quality of service to employers in Kilkenny and Carlow within existing provision, but to develop uniformity for work experience / work placement requirements across KCETB FET programmes. The Work Based Learning group will also review work based learning in all sections of FET (employee development, traineeship, apprenticeship) to ensure it is meeting QA and Industry requirements and feedback its findings and recommendations the Oversight QA Committee for approval.

OBJECTIVES:

- To inform and make recommendations to via the Quality Assurance Overarching Committee on matters relating to work based learning within KCETB.
- To facilitate an exchange of views /information and best practice regarding work based learning practices.
- To promote the continuous improvement of work based learning.
- To identify areas for further collaboration and integration across the ETB Sector.
- To develop uniformity for assessing work based learning in all sections of FET, including but not limited to:
 - Sourcing placements
 - Monitoring placements
 - Assessing / scoring participants
 -

PARTICIPANTS

- The QA Overarching Committee have nominated participants to this group.
- If representatives are not in a position to attend they should discuss this with their manager.
- A Quorum is needed for each meeting: 50% of the participants + one.
- The QA Overarching Committee can and will co opt participants to the Work Based Learning Group with specific expertise if required.

STRUCTURE

- The Work Based Learning Group will be chaired by Mary Butler, Training Services, as a member of the QA Overarching Group and member of the Work Based Learning Working Group. Mary Butler was nominated by the QA Overarching Group.
- A note taker will be appointed by the group, this position may rotate.

MEETINGS

- The Work Based Learning Group will meet as required, as directed by the QA Overarching Committee or for specific pieces of work. (Minimum 3 times per year)
- The Work Based Learning group will agree a schedule of meetings for the year and a work-plan for the year. The work plan shall be subject to change as circumstances change.

Public Information and Communications Working Group - TOR

Terms of Reference

Public Information and Communication Group

ROLE:

The **Public Information and Communication Group** is a sub-group of the KCETB Quality Assurance Oversight (QA) Committee.

A Chair will be nominated from the KCETB Quality Assurance Oversight Committee. Reports and recommendations will be submitted through the KCETB Quality Assurance Oversight Committee. Reports may take the form of minutes or draft minutes of meetings.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this group is to inform and create a Public Information and Communications Policy for KCETB FET in line with the overall [KCETB Strategy Statement 2017-2021](#), [SOLAS Future FET: Transforming Learning 2020-2024](#) and guidelines from the relevant awarding bodies including section 9 of the [QQI Core Statutory QA Guidelines 2016](#).

To this end the following objectives and actions have been identified in order to achieve this purpose.

OBJECTIVES/ACTIONS:

Objective/Action	Timeline
• Identify the KCETB FET audience in respect of Public Information (External) and Communication (External and Internal).	March/April 2021
• Compile a list of current public information and communication methods within KCETB FET provision including websites, emails, social media, handbooks, information leaflets, radio and televisions advertising etc.	March/April 2021
• Create a list of all KCETB FET centre websites and ensure that the various KCETB FET centre websites and social media platforms link to and from the KCETB website.	March/April 2021
• Identify gaps and areas for development by researching individual KCETB FET centre websites and the KCETB overall website (including the QA website) with a view to establishing best practice in providing public information and communication. Consider the Public Information and Communication Section (9.1, 9.2 and 9.3 – pg. 19) of QQI Core Statutory QA Guidelines 2016	May/June 2021
• Agree a style guide for providing course information to the public to ensure consistency and to build the KCETB FET brand. Consider the Public Information and Communication Section (9.1, 9.2 and 9.3 – pg. 19) of QQI Core Statutory QA Guidelines 2016	May/June 2021
• Identify appropriate methods and means of communicating with learners in relation to assessment changes, surveys, key updates etc. Consider the	March/April 2021

1 | Page

Public Information and Communication Section (9.1, 9.2 and 9.3 – pg. 19) of QQI Core Statutory QA Guidelines 2016	
• Agree a style guide for a learner handbook template, to include for example: a) A standardised learner complaints/grievance procedure for implementation at centre level which might include an appeals process. b) A standard course evaluation form. c) Establish a template for learner exit interview.	September/October 2021
• Compile a draft Social Media Policy for use in KCETB FET.	November/December 2021
• Identify the key elements that make up a complete Public information and Communications Policy for KCETB FET.	December 2021
• Evaluate the progress of the overall policy and identify further objectives that need to be realised in line with the purpose of creating the complete policy.	December 2021

PARTICIPANTS

- The QA Oversight Committee will nominate participants to this group.
- If representatives are not in a position to attend they should discuss this with their manager.
- A Quorum is needed for each meeting: 50% of the participants + one.
- The QA Oversight Committee may co-opt participants to the Public Information and Communication Group with specific expertise if required.

The membership of this subcommittee will consist of:

- 1 Adult Education Officer
- 2 PLC teachers
- 1 Adult Education Co-ordinator
- 1 QA Officer
- 1 PD and TEL Co-ordinator
- 1 Corporate Services staff member
- 1 Training Services representative
- 1 Adult Education staff member

STRUCTURE

- The **Public Information and Communication Group** will be chaired by Bernadette O'Rourke, as a member of the QA Oversight Committee.
- A note taker will be appointed by the group, this position may rotate.

MEETINGS

- The **Public Information and Communication Group** will meet as required to achieve the objectives/actions outlined herein or as directed by the QA Oversight Committee.

2 | Page







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Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna
Chill Chainnigh agus Cheatharlach
*Kilkenny and Carlow
Education and Training Board*