

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN PROCESS REPORTING AND PLANNING 2019

MARCH 29, 2019

KILKENNY AND CARLOW ETB



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Introduction, Purpose and Objectives

This document provides an update on the Executive Self-Evaluation Report (ESE) developed by Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board in 2018. KCETB's Further Education and Training Service is committed to quality assuring all of its programmes and courses. The ESE Report demonstrated the measures which were put in place to ensure that this commitment is both governed and underpinned in all centres and services. The ESE developed was enhancement based and focused on improving and enhancing the policies, structures and processes to improve the quality of learning opportunities for all learners within the KCETB FET Service.

It continues to be a quality objective of KCETB FET to ensure compliance with QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines.

The mission of KCETB is to enable learners to achieve their full potential and contribute to the social, cultural and economic development of our area and of the country. The vision and 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."*

Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board:

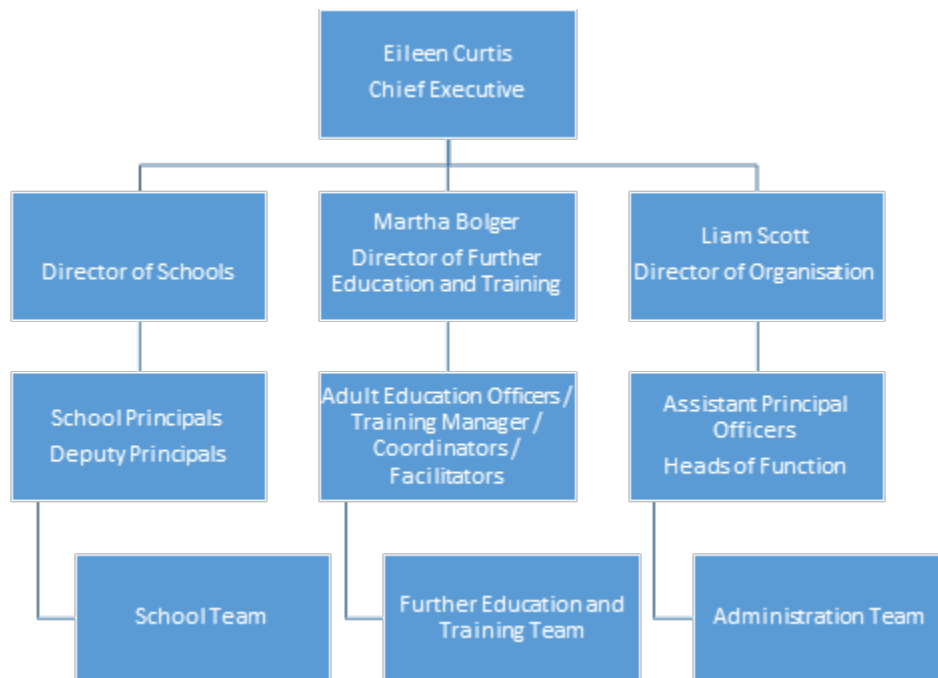
- Values learning and recognises its role in the development, cohesion and wellbeing of society. Everything we do is guided by serving the best interests of learners.
- Aims for excellence and is committed to continuous improvement throughout our organisation. We value relationships and working in collaboration within the education and training sector and with the wider community.
- Has a culture of accountability, integrity, fairness, openness and respect.
- Adopts high standards of professionalism, honesty, objectivity and quality, which are central to serving all learners. We embrace diversity and we are open to new ideas.

Revised Quality Improvement Plan (2019)

In this document, KCETB will detail its achievements for 2018, the challenges, barriers and learnings associated with each achievement, as well as setting out detailed Quality Improvements to be realised during 2019.

KCETB Profile

Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board operates across the two counties of Kilkenny and Carlow with its head office in Carlow and a further office in Kilkenny. The Kilkenny and Carlow ETB management team is led by the Chief Executive and three directors, the Director of Schools, the Director of Further Education and Training and the Director of Organisation. At the time of writing (29/03/19) the Director of Schools position is vacant.



KCETB Management Structure

In 2018 KCETB established its QA Oversight Group and started establishing its sub committees. The FET Forum which was formed in 2017 was incorporated into this structure, and the Assessment Working group was also established. In the first quarter of 2019 both the Work Based Learning Group and Policy and Procedure groups were established. The Results Approval Group will be established in April and the Programme Validation, Monitoring and Evaluation Group will follow.

Further Education and Training Services Summary 2018

Learner Activity in Further Education and Training Programmes <i>and Support Services</i>	2018
Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme	315
Youthreach	106
Adult Literacy	1326
Back to Education Initiative	1462
Community Education	3008
Training Services	1254
Adult Programmes – Part-time Day & Evening	739
Youth	5500
Adult Education Guidance Service	4730
PLC	1039
Music Generation	4081
TOTAL	23560

The KCETB Further Education and Training Service is committed to developing and leading integrated provision of FET throughout Kilkenny and Carlow. As the region approaches a higher employment rate, the Skills To Advance Initiative will enable targeted support for vulnerable groups in the Kilkenny and Carlow workforce, particularly those who have lower skill levels and who need more opportunities to advance in their working lives. The FET Service will continue to prioritise those individuals who are distant from the labour market, adhering to the established the Principals of equality and inclusion as set out in the national FET strategy and the DES Action Plan for Education.

The three year Strategic Performance Agreement with SOLAS is continuously monitored and reviewed in line with all learner data, and will be revised in cooperation with SOLAS this year to reflect all FET initiatives and the programme beneficiaries. Through this agreement, KCETB is contributing to the achievement of the national FET sectoral goals.

The FET service saw capital expansion in 2018 with the opening of The Training Services Unit at Purcellsinch, Kilkenny. This will further expand throughout 2019, with continued growth in Apprenticeship and Traineeship provision.

KCETB FET QQI Centres:

Adult and Further Education Centres
41047I - Carlow Adult Learning Scheme (Adult Literacy)
42332M - Community Education Centre (BTEI) Kilkenny
42422N - Back To Education Initiative Carlow
40007O - VTOS Carlow
40038C - VTOS Kilkenny
38818Q - Training Services (Contracted)
38819S - Training Services (Community Training)
38817O - Training Services (Apprenticeships)
38708J - KCETB Administrative Centre
40926I - KCETB Education and Training Centre
40847M - Word Aid Adult Learning Scheme (Adult Literacy)
40820P - Youthreach Kilkenny
38797L - Youthreach, Carlow
PLC Centres
70590T - Duiske College, Gaignamanagh, Co Kilkenny.
70420R - Carlow Institute of Further Education, Carlow.
70640I - Grennan College, Thomastown, Co Kilkenny.
70610W - Ormonde College, Kilkenny City Vocational School, Kilkenny.

In line with the SOLAS Strategic Performance Agreement (2018 – 2020), KCETB reconfigured areas of PLC provision during 2018. Accordingly, from September 2018, 4 centres offered PLC programmes at Levels 5 and 6. All centres have retained their QQI centre number, as some offer accredited evening classes.

Overview of Quality Improvement Activities in 2018

Key areas prioritised in 2018 (Separate spreadsheet to accompany this with status update for individual actions)

Area	Action	Lead	People
Management of QA – initial focus on assessment	Establishment of QA overarching group	FET Director	Senior Management Team & QA Officer
	Establishment of Assessment & Work based learning subgroup	FET Director	Some Senior Managers and subject matter experts within the ETB
Access, transfer & Progression	Ensuring Adult guidance is an integral part of the learners journey	FET Director	QA Oversight group
Internal Verification	Evaluation of IV process in Adult Education services	FET Director	QA Oversight group
External Authentication	KCETB FET Director chairs national EA forum	FET Director	FET Director & QA Officer
	Centralised booking of EA's	FET Director	FET Director, AEO & QA Officer
Results Approval	Identification of the reasons that influence learners unsuccessful result	QA Oversight group	Centre managers and Principals
	Centralised RAP meeting	FET Director	FET Director & QA Officer
Submission of results to awarding bodies	Centres encouraged to reduced certification windows and increase numbers going for major awards	QA Oversight group	Centre managers and Principals
Recognition of Prior Learning	Implement KCETB RPL Policy	QA Oversight group	Centre managers
Learner Feedback	Commencement of review of learner handbooks	QA Oversight group	Centre managers
Data Security	Comply with GDPR regulations	QA Oversight group	Centre managers and Principals
Relationships with other agencies	Review of criteria for all accrediting bodies	FET Director	FET Director & QA Officer
Traineeships	Implementation of moodle into all traineeships	QA Officer	QA Officer

QA Improvement Achievements 2018

Governance

The key Quality Assurance achievement for KCETB during 2018 was the establishment of the QA Oversight group. This group had its initial meeting during the SOLAS Strategic Performance Agreement dialogues in early 2018, and came together for Quality Assurance purposes in September 2018. Also, at this time there had been a number of briefing workshops regarding governance, the new governance structure and its roll out in KCETB. These were attended by senior management and Co-ordinators. These workshops laid the foundations of understanding for all staff regarding the importance of governance in Quality Assurance under these revised structures.

The QA Oversight Committee comprises the following individuals: CE, FET Director, KCETB Board Member, 2 AEO's, Training Services Manager, 1 PLC Principal, 1 PLC Deputy Principal and QA Officer. The Group met four times in 2018 with the key focus initially being the establishment of the other groups and the review of existing policies.

Subsequent to the establishment of the QA Oversight Committee, the Assessment Subgroup was established. This group had its first meeting in October 2018 and the membership was nominated from the QA Oversight Committee. This group comprises the following members: 2 PLC Deputy Principals, 1 AEO, QA Officer, 1 ALO, 2 Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) and the Recruitment Officer. This group met three times in 2018 with the key focus of these meetings being to develop a schedule of work for 2018 – 2019, formulate the sub groups and commencing the evaluation of all the existing assessment policies and procedures within all KCETB colleges and centres. Best practice from these documents will be collated and form the foundation of one KCETB assessment policy.

Adult Guidance

In tandem with the establishment of these committees other key priorities such as the embedding of adult guidance into services to ensure that learners are supported on their educational journey were developed. This structure has ensured that co-ordinators who have concerns about a learner's suitability for a programme have a point of contact to refer them to.

An increased focus has also been placed on the progression of learners, not only to employment but also onto higher education institutions. Links have been made with Carlow and Waterford Institutes of Technology ensuring in some cases seamless progression of our learners into these institutions. Progression agreements are being drafted with each IOT and KCETB.

Internal Verification and External Authentication

The strengthening of Internal Verification procedures was another key priority during 2018. The Assessment subgroup was tasked with devising common Internal Verification (IV) policies and procedures. Prior to commencing developing new policies; a review of the existing methods for IV took place. This review found robust IV policies and procedures in each college / centre. The Assessment subgroup are now working towards drawing one document together from these examples of best practice. A more unified approach to the IV process has commenced across some part-time provision centres. This has given rise to the need for training for key staff in these centres and this will take place in early 2019.

The development of a centralised External Authentication (EA) structure was also prioritised in 2018. The establishment of this system of EA has meant that there is a more cohesive governance structure in place regarding this process. EAs are contracted by and report to a team from the Oversight group. Reports are analysed to ensure correct procedures were applied at each centre as well as highlighting any areas of best practice which can be replicated. This will be further enhanced in 2019 with a pilot internal review process, that will examine internal verification, transfer of data to the QBS and presentation of learner evidence.

The need to develop, train and professionally develop new and existing EAs is being driven nationally with both ETBI and FESS support. KCETB's Director of FET chairs the national working group that is progressing this initiative and an extensive training schedule aimed at increasing the number of EAs available nationally and increasing the breadth of subject matter expertise is underway.

Results Approval Process

The recognition that a more cohesive approach to the Result Approval Process was a key finding of the Executive Evaluation and one that KCETB focussed on during 2018. The transition from centres and colleges doing individual Results Approval Panels (RAP) to one centralised procedure is not without its challenges. This process is being phased in on a pilot basis initially with a number of centres with a view to establishing one centralised RAP committee during 2019. During this pilot phase increased emphasis has been placed on analysing the reasons why learners are unsuccessful and a report on same will be produced in 2019 for discussion at the QA oversight group. The pilot will include the two FE colleges that have common awards for authentication in May 2019.

The ESE highlighted the varying periods for submission for certification in colleges and centres and the most popular periods for KCETB, as well as the desire to show learner achievement for part time programmes in many of these windows. KCETB is endeavouring to reduce the number of certification windows, and the volume of minor awards being processed. This has proved problematic in some centres as learners are reliant on certification for employment, and accordingly this will be reviewed continuously to determine the best route forward. In 2017 KCETB had a total of 6918 awards (984 major, 5828 minor and 106 special purpose). This reduced somewhat in 2018, with a total of 4907 awards (901 major, 3900 minor and 106 special purpose).

RPL

The implementation of a policy for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) was another key focus for 2018 and an area in which there has been significant progress in. The KCETB RPL policy is in draft format currently, and its approval was delayed pending the establishment of the Policy and Procedure Group. This will then go to the QA Oversight Group. KCETB assisted in hosting the RPL conference in October 2018 which focused on the processes and systems that support RPL and also policy development. Twelve staff attended this event in Kilkenny from different KCETB colleges and centres and as well as sharing good practice with other members, were able to provide both their voice and the KCETB experience to give input to policy development.

Subsequent to this conference KCETB Adult Literacy services commenced a pilot RPL programme with the Defence Forces in Kilkenny under the TOBAR project. This project involved seven members of the Defence Forces who will achieve certification in General Learning at Levels 3 and 4. Members are being guided through the process by a tutor who has previously received accreditation at a Level 9 Module in RPL. This initiative will continue in 2019.

Learner Experience

The learner is at the heart of all that KCETB does and with this in mind, KCETB commenced a review of the learner journey within the ETB during 2018. This review will aim to analyse the learner experience within KCETB centres and programmes to determine if the individual experiences are similar or not. As a result a more cohesive approach to learner handbooks and resources has commenced. This has involved the collation of all learner material currently in use and the development of common learner handbooks across centres. The outcome is that all KCETB FET centres will have one common learner handbook. The feedback received from learners must also guide how programmes are developed and delivered. The need for a review of how this data is currently collated was agreed in 2018 and a more comprehensive review of feedback received and how this affects the programmes delivered will be examined in 2019 / 2020.

Data Security / GDPR

In May 2018, the introduction of the GDPR regulations meant that all centres had to be fully GDPR compliant. Extensive training with all Principals, Co-ordinators, teachers and tutors took place throughout the year. Following this training a review of all current procedures in line with QQI and GDPR regulations took place. KCETB is now GDPR compliant and continues to review documentation and retention schedules to ensure it remains.

Other Awarding Bodies

KCETB currently deal with a number of awarding bodies and during 2018 received City and Guilds super centre status. The commitment to multiple awarding bodies has meant that all policies and procedures developed and in development must take equal cognisance of the requirements of all these awarding bodies. With this in mind, the QA oversight group strives to ensure that each

subcommittee has representation with knowledge and understanding of the different awarding bodies, thus contributing to effective oversight and compliance.

Technology Enhanced Learning

The implementation of technology to further enhance programmes, courses and the learner experience in KCETB is growing as Technology Enhanced Learning and the TEL Action Plan gather momentum, and as resources are being dedicated to facilitate the achievement of these actions. The use of Moodle to support learners, particularly, those in Traineeships was piloted during 2018 and found to be significantly successful. With the establishment of a dedicated Apprenticeship Unit (Phase 2) at KCETB the future use of Moodle throughout FET will grow throughout 2019. The capacity for TEL to support QA in all the centres will also be further developed in 2019.

Barriers and Challenges Encountered to date.

The ESE report submitted in 2018 highlighted a number of quality issues that were to be prioritised, and actioned in 2018. The deadline for many of the associated actions was set for the final quarter of 2018. KCETB realise that this was over ambitious, particularly since the ESE and QIP were formally approved by QQI in April.

The QA Overarching Committee met in March 2018, it only reconvened to consider its full schedule of work in September 2018. Arising from this meeting; the Assessment Working Group held its first meeting on the 12th October 2018. There are representatives from across education and training provision on each working group. The fact that representatives are coming from various centres with varying levels of experience has been largely positive. It has led to increased co-operation between the different centres within KCETB and an enhanced understanding as to how the work done at centre level fits in to the overall KCETB Strategy.

However, the model of a wide range of representation also presents challenges. KCETB has restricted numbers of staff to draw on for each sub group of the QA structure, some members sit on a number of groups and the QA Officer endeavours to attend all sub group meetings. Allocation of resources (both staffing and time) is another challenge for implementation of the QIP. The working groups represent an opportunity to be involved in improving quality education and training provision and by so doing contribute positively to KCETB with buy-in across all centres. However the process of embedding this work requires time and ongoing direction. Overall participation and engagement in the sub groups has been positive and fruitful.

Other operational considerations include the diversity between full-time and part-time programmes. For instance, while the implementation of a procedure for appeals may be relatively straightforward for a centre that is full-time and operating from an academic calendar, the appeals procedure can be more complex for a centre delivering education or training on a part-time basis over the full year. This challenge has emerged for different issues and has been discussed at the QA Overarching Committee. However (as is becoming evident from the Assessment Working Group) as the work of these groups progresses these challenges are being met and overcome.

At this point KCETB has revised the time frame for some actions, eg. the Policy and Procedure Group will be set an objective of devising a learner code of conduct and a learner handbook. In order to do this an 18 month timeline is required; gathering existing material, devising a draft code of conduct and handbook, engaging in consultation with learners in September 2019, with a final implementation date of September 2020.

The process of change is always challenging but KCETB is confident that the ongoing work of the QA Overarching Committee will drive this process in the period ahead and will over time embed the improvements required across all centres within the context of a culture of self evaluation and improvement.

Quality Improvement Plan 2019

Areas for Focus: (Separate detailed spreadsheet to accompany this)

Quality Area	Task/ Activity	Key Service	Timeline
The Management of Quality Assurance (FET)	Draft a KCETB provider agreement with QQI	QA Overarching Committee	Dec-19
	Draft and agree a work plan for the Assessment Sub Group	Assessment Subgroup	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has commenced • Report due at OC meeting May 2019
	Establish the Policies and Procedures Group	QA Overarching Committee/ Policy and Procedure Group	To be established during March 2019
	Establish the RAP Group	QA Overarching Committee / RAP Group	To be established during April 2019
	Establish the Validation Group	QA Overarching Committee / Validation Group	Autumn 2019
	Establish the Work Based Learning Group	QA Overarching Committee / Work Based Learning Group	To be established during February 2019
Governance and Management of Risk	Govern and manage risk in line with QQI QA Guidelines	QA Overarching Committee	2019 - 2020
Learner code of conduct and a learner handbook	Formulate learner code of conduct	Policies & Procedures sub group	Dec-19
Internal Verification	Develop an IV policy	Assessment working group	February 2019 onwards
External Authentication	Contribute to development of new National EA Panel	FET Director	April - September 2019
	Develop KCETB CETB wide EA Procedures	Assessment subgroup	2019 - 2020
Recognition of Prior Learning	Finalise KCETB RPL Policy	Policies & Procedures sub group	2019 - 2020
Programme Review	Establish and implement a full review of a sample of CAS programmes	QA oversight group	Ongoing 2019
Learner Feedback	To develop a template for a learner exit interview		April - September 2019
Relationships with other agencies	Review all awarding body agreements	QA Overarching Committee	Ongoing
Statutory Review	To work with QQI to develop the Terms of Reference for the Statutory Review Process	QA Overarching Committee	2019 - 2020
FET Forum		QA Overarching Committee	2019