



BORD OIDEACHAIS AGUS OILIÚNA
CHILL DARAGUS CHILL MHANTÁIN

KILDARE AND WICKLOW
EDUCATION AND TRAINING BOARD

FET

QUALITY
ASSURANCE

E-ZINE



Summer 2026



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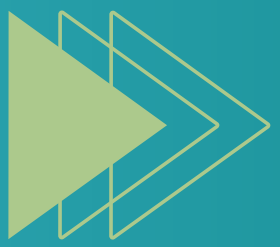
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Governance of Quality



Quality Assurance in Action: An Update from the KWETB Quality Council

I am pleased to share a brief update on the progress and priorities of the Quality Council so far in 2026. Our work continues to be guided by a shared commitment to strengthening quality assurance (QA) across Further Education and Training (FET), ensuring that our provision remains responsive, robust, and learner-centred.

A key focus for the Council has been the continued development and sustainability of our QA governance structures. At present, there are a number of vacancies across our QA governance groups. We have been encouraged by the expressions of interest received from staff members to date, and we extend our sincere thanks to those who have come forward. Their willingness to contribute reflects the strong culture of engagement within our organisation. We would warmly welcome further expressions of interest from colleagues who may wish to join a governance group and play a role in shaping quality practice across the ETB.

The Council was delighted to approve the Learner Voice Survey, developed by the Stakeholder Engagement Subgroup. This represents an important milestone in strengthening how we systematically capture and respond to the experiences of our learners. We also received an overview of the first iteration of feedback gathered through the survey. The richness and depth of these insights will prove invaluable in informing enhancement discussions. The Council commended the Subgroup for their thoughtful and impactful work in ensuring that the learner voice is meaningfully embedded in our QA processes. We look forward to disseminating this Survey in other FET centres later this year.

In addition, the Council reviewed the 2025 QQI Interim Report and engaged in constructive discussion on the associated actions for 2026. This review process provides an essential opportunity to reflect on our progress, identify areas for further improvement, and ensure alignment with national quality expectations.

A significant undertaking this year has been the Council's oversight of the Cyclical Review of the Quality Framework. This review is a cornerstone of our QA system, ensuring that policies, procedures, and practices remain current, coherent, and effective.

As part of this process, the Review included the development of new policies to address identified gaps and to ensure full alignment with QQI core and sector-specific procedures. It also involved a comprehensive review of selected existing policies and procedures, undertaken by the QA team in close consultation with FET staff, learners, and the Quality Assurance Subgroup. This collaborative approach ensured that the updated framework reflects both regulatory requirements and the lived experience of those engaged in teaching, learning, and programme delivery. Through this work, we continue to reinforce a culture of quality that is dynamic, evidence-informed, and focused on continuous enhancement in FET.

I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all FET staff for their ongoing engagement with quality assurance. Your commitment to reflective practice, collaboration, and continuous improvement is the foundation of a strong and vibrant quality culture across our ETB.

Quality assurance in FET is not simply about compliance, it is about ensuring that learners receive the highest standard of education and training, that their voices are heard, and that our provision continues to evolve in response to changing needs. Through robust QA processes and active participation from staff at all levels, we can sustain a culture that prioritises excellence, accountability, and meaningful learner outcomes.

Brenda Lynch, AEO, Quality Assurance Manager.
(Secretary, Quality Council)

Quality Assurance Sub-group

Spring Update: Strengthening Quality Across the ETB

It's been a busy and productive Spring term for the Quality Assurance Sub-Group (QASG), with a strong focus on improving policies that directly support learners, staff, and programme delivery across KWETB. Now chaired by Lynn Armstrong, Adult Education Officer for the Wicklow Region (from May 2026), the group has continued to build on its role in shaping clear, practical, and responsive quality assurance processes.

The term kicked off in December with the review of the Blended Learning Policy. This was a significant piece of work, reflecting the evolving nature of programme delivery.

The QASG recognised the scale of effort involved and supported its progression to the Quality Council. The policy was submitted to the Department before the December 19 deadline as part of a pilot initiative, allowing it to be rolled out in the new academic cycle, with a commitment to revisit and refine it based on real-world experience.

In February, attention turned to the Learner Handbook, a key resource for learners across all programmes. The review found that the handbook remains strong and fit for purpose, with only minor updates needed, mainly around clearer wording and refreshed branding. These small but important changes will help ensure learners continue to receive clear, accessible and accurate information throughout their learning journey.

The most in-depth work of the term came in May with the review of Version 1.1 of the Learner Engagement in Assessment and Assessor Grading of Learner Effort Policy. This policy is central to how assessment is understood and experienced by learners, and the revisions bring a welcome focus on clarity, consistency, and fairness. A key improvement is the stronger emphasis on helping learners understand what is required to achieve their awards. The updated policy makes it very clear that passing individual assessments does not automatically mean passing a module, all Learning Outcomes (MIMLOs) must be achieved. This is now highlighted throughout the policy and in how assessment is explained to learners from the outset.

There is also a move toward clearer and more consistent language, with the standard use of “Learning Outcomes / MIMLOs” across all documentation.

Alongside this, Learning Practitioners are expected to more clearly link each assessment task to specific learning outcomes, helping learners better understand what they are working towards and how they are being assessed.

Another important update relates to feedback. The policy strengthens expectations around the quality of feedback, ensuring it is detailed, supportive, and helps learners understand both their results and next steps. Notably, it also introduces a clear requirement that feedback must not be AI-generated, highlighting the importance of authentic, personalised engagement between staff and learners.

Additional updates provide clearer guidance on recording unsuccessful results and reinforce communication with learners throughout their programme, from induction right through to final assessment.

Additional updates provide clearer guidance on recording unsuccessful results and reinforce communication with learners throughout their programme, from induction right through to final assessment. The updated policy has now been recommended to the Quality Council, with implementation planned for 1 July 2026, alongside briefings to support centres in rolling out the changes.

Overall, it's been a strong term for the QASG, with practical, learner-focused improvements that support transparency, consistency and high-quality teaching and learning across KWETB.

Lynn Armstrong, AEO, Wicklow
(Chair, Quality Assurance Sub-group)

Programme Governance Subgroup: Advancing from Approval to Supporting Strategic Quality Leadership

The Programme Governance Subgroup (PGSG) has played a central role in supporting the Quality Council in ensuring programme governance across Further Education and Training (FET). Established in 2020, the subgroup's core function has been to oversee programme approval and validation processes, ensuring that provision aligns with national standards and organisational quality assurance frameworks.

In its early years, the PGSG operated in a demanding environment, responding to a backlog of programme validation and approval requests. During this time, the group developed consistent processes, strengthened governance arrangements, and built a shared understanding of quality standards. This work has been instrumental in developing, evolving and embedding confidence in programme approval systems across KWETB FET.

An Evolving Operational Context

In 2026, a notable shift in activity has emerged with a marked slowdown in programme approval applications. This reflects the successful clearing of historical backlogs and the stabilisation of programme approval processes.

While this reduced volume signals maturity in governance systems, it also presents an opportunity to utilise the expertise of the PGSG in a less reactive environment. The group is now transitioning from an operational focus on approvals to a more strategic role in supporting a culture of quality across FET. 7

Reflective Practice and the Exploratory Workshop

In response to this changing landscape, the PGSG participated in a reflective exploratory activity, using workshop-based discussions to re-examine its role and future direction.

The workshop focused on three key questions:

- How can the PGSG further enhance a culture of quality in FET?
- How can programme development be strengthened?
- How can programme approval processes be further improved?

This structured reflection enabled the group to move beyond transactional work and consider its broader contribution to system-wide quality enhancement.

Emerging Priorities: Renewals and Strategic Insight

Several priority areas have been identified where the PGSG can add significant value:

- Providing thematic insights to the Quality Council based on recurring issues in programme design and standards
- Supporting continuous improvement cycles, including programme renewal and updating processes
- Promoting greater awareness and ownership of quality assurance across practitioners and centres
- Contributing to organisational learning through annual reporting and dissemination of key findings (including through this e-zine)

Conclusion

The Programme Governance Subgroup is at a key point in its development. Having successfully established strong programme approval systems, it is now well-positioned to take on a more strategic, forward-looking role. This transition reflects not a reduction in relevance, but an evolution in purpose ensuring that governance moves beyond compliance to actively shaping and supporting excellence in provision.

Una Burke, AEO, Kildare
(Chair, Programme Governance Sub-group)

FE Centres/Schools – QOI Certification

As the academic year draws to a close, it is important to recognise and celebrate the outstanding efforts of Learning Practitioners and Learners across KWETB FET Provision.

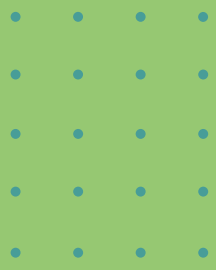
Between June 2025 and June 2026, a total of 15,386 learner portfolios were successfully submitted to QOI for certification across further education schools and centres. This significant volume of work reflects the engagement of learners and the guidance and support provided by tutors and centre/school staff throughout the assessment process.

Preparations will soon commence for the August 2026 certification period, ensuring continuity in assessment and certification timelines and supporting learners in achieving their educational and personal goals.

| Certification Period | Core, Language | Education, Health, Wellbeing | Business, Admin | ICT | Art, Craft, Design | Sport, Science, Services, Horticulture | Engineering, Construction | Animal Care, Equine | Micro Qual/SPA | Total (based on grades achieved) |
|----------------------|----------------|------------------------------|-----------------|-----|--------------------|--|---------------------------|---------------------|----------------|----------------------------------|
| June 2025 | 333 | 1407 | 1070 | 451 | 564 | 1167 | 77 | | 45 | 5114 |
| August 2025 | 977 | 175 | 167 | | 35 | 28 | | | 40 | 1422 |
| October 2025 | 69 | 120 | 73 | 1 | 9 | 6 | | | 10 | 288 |
| December 2025 | 54 | 112 | 14 | 8 | | | | | | 188 |
| Feb 2026 | 68 | 145 | 81 | 24 | | 25 | | | 8 | 351 |
| April 2026 | 105 | 308 | 218 | 34 | 14 | | | | 4 | 683 |
| June 2026 | 545 | 1728 | 1032 | 406 | 478 | 788 | 78 | 672 | 56 | 5783 |




Congratulations to all learners on their achievements over the past year. Thank you to the tutors and centre/school staff for their ongoing support in helping learners reach their full potential.



Quality Team News



CAS Review Deadline – June 2026



As we approach the June 2026 certification period, full implementation of all 27 revised CAS modules is now required. All delivery must align with the revised specifications. Supports are in place for learners not completing by June, and centres should review current cohorts to ensure compliance. Please get in touch if you need any support or clarification.



[Link](#)

[CAS REVIEW
REVISED MODULES](#)

Looking Ahead

Communities of Practice will recommence after the summer break. The Revised CAS Modules – Teams Channel will continue to provide access to:

- Module resources
- National and local updates
- Frequently asked questions

Together, these supports will help maintain a strong, collaborative, and quality-focused approach as we move towards full implementation of the revised CAS modules.

CAS Review Communities of Practice

Communities of Practice (CoPs) were central to the rollout of revised CAS modules across KWETB FET in 2025–2026, providing a structured, quality-assured space for staff to engage in professional dialogue and build confidence in implementing change. Sessions were organised across Humanities & Fitness and Administration & Business, with Communications and Work Experience used as common threads. This supported a more joined-up approach, encouraged cross-programme sharing, and created space for open discussion on practice, challenges, and ideas.

The CoPs strengthened understanding of CAS requirements and supported the practical application of QA processes. There was a strong focus on inclusive practice, particularly through UDL, alongside focused work on MILOs and LDAs to support more consistent assessment. Staff also built confidence in applying NFQ tools and responding to the needs of diverse learner groups. National supports, including the ETBI Digital Library and FESS, were also shared and explored within these sessions to further support delivery.

We extend our sincere thanks to all staff for their engagement, openness, and commitment. Their contribution has strengthened teaching, learning, and assessment, and continues to support a strong and sustainable quality culture across KWETB FET.

ELC PROGRAMME COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE 25-26

Thank you for your continued support and commitment to these communities of practice, and to all who took part. Your collaboration creates a positive, supportive environment. Over the past five years, a strong professional network has formed, with ongoing sharing reflecting your dedication to FET learners and the Early Years sector.

2025–26 sessions focused on:

- Inclusion in FET
- Alternative assessment and Universal Design
- Artificial intelligence
- Learner concerns, challenges, and achievements



2025

Extension to revalidation approved by the ELC Programme Board & QQI PAEC. With September 2027 as the agreed rollout of revalidated programme.

Revalidation Review informed by:
Evaluation surveys

DDLETB-hosted focus groups with - ELC teachers, placement monitors, programme managers, & Programme Board members.

2026

Lead ETB - Dublin College
SME redrafting modules

Draft modules shared for feedback

Consultations with stakeholders To submit revalidation application in Q4

Q1 2027
(projected)

Differential Validation for all ETB and Non-ETB Partners.
Further communications with the ETBs through the QA Network KWETB to submit DV application for April PAEC Sept 2027 (Projected)
Commence delivery of the revalidated ELC programme

SUPPORTING
RESOURCES

A range of national supports were highlighted to further strengthen delivery. The ETBI Digital Library offers access to a wide collection of high-quality teaching and learning resources, while the Further Education Support Service (FESS) provides targeted professional development opportunities for FET practitioners.



TÚS LA

An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency

DDLETB hosted a series of Aistear PD sessions focussing on the Aistear themes, throughout Autumn 2025.

The sessions were delivered by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment.

Aistear

Creatchuraclam na Luath-Óige
The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework

Published

- **Vetting of Staff in Early Years Services: Obtaining vetting for employees, contractors and volunteers.**
- **Guidance on Vetting for students before they commence practice placements in early years services**

These publications have a directly impact for FET learners going on placement in early years settings. All references must be verified, and the Professional Practice Placement handbook has been updated to include the formal data sharing agreement.

Please contact us if you have any questions.



**An Roinn Leanaí
agus Gnóthaí Óige**
Department of Children
and Youth Affairs

- ETBs are represented in the ELC Stakeholders group coordinated by the Department of Children as of now.
- The Department of Children will be issuing guidelines on student placement for ELC/ECEC. Timeline to be confirmed.
- The Department of Children has published Principles for Engaging with the Arts, along with a guide for ELC and SAC Childcare – an overview of their development.



Nurturing Skills



Nurturing Skills for Early Years Educators, School-Age Childcare Practitioners and Childminders

KWETB participated in the DCDE Nurturing Skills midpoint review to assess progress and develop an implementation plan for 2026–2028.

The Nurturing Skills Workforce Plan 2022–2028 is the national plan that explains how the Government will support, develop, and professionalise the workforce. It aims to strengthen the workforce through five pillars:

1. Establishing a career framework
2. Raising qualification levels
3. Developing a national Continuing Professional Development (CPD) system
4. Supporting recruitment, retention and diversity
5. Moving towards regulation of the profession

[Nurturing Skills.ie](https://www.nurturingskills.ie)

ETBI FET Digital Library

A new ELC resources page for the ETBI Digital Library will be available in November. This will be available as a plug in to Moodle or other online platform as a single sign-in.

Thanks to Breda Ladd and Ann Walsh.



Catch up here:

[Link](#)



Recordings now available to watch on Youtube

As an **ALTITUDE** pledge partner, KWETB is pleased to share the recordings of the recent inaugural **ALTITUDE** Summit

[Link](#)



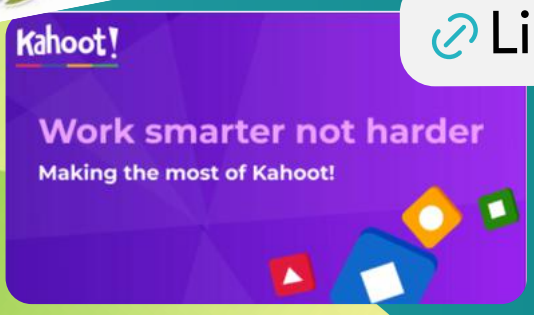
Barnardos E-Learning: Empowering Childcare Professionals. Free online courses including one on an Introduction to the Arts in Pre-school, Barnardos E-Learning:



PROGRAMME DESCRIPTORS



The QA team have updated the KWETB Descriptors SharePoint. Here you will find up to date information regarding all KWETB Programme & Modules Descriptors. To request access the new site please contact your coordinator



[Link](#)



Centre News



Blessington & West Wicklow Youthreach

Congratulations

to our Blessington FET Youthreach students who have been named winners of the "Most Innovative Financial Literacy Initiative 2026" award at the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (CCPC) Global Money Week launch event, held at Croke Park on 11th March last.



['Standing on your Own 2 Feet'](#)
Financial Literacy toolkit - Digital hub



Plain Language Training with NALA



We recently had the opportunity to take part in Plain Language training delivered by the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA).

The session brought together 22 participants from a range of departments from HR QA, FET and Corporate Services reflecting the strong interest in improving how we communicate with learners, colleagues, and the wider public. The training was organised by Iryna Avalishvili, the Regional Adult Literacy Coordinator for Kildare and Wicklow ETB, supporting the organisation's commitment to clear and accessible communication.

A sincere thank you to Sean Driver for delivering such an engaging and practical session. During the training, we explored what plain language means in practice and discussed practical ways to make our communications clearer, more accessible, and easier for everyone to understand.

It was very encouraging to see such enthusiasm and engagement from colleagues across the organisation. At KWETB, we are committed to embedding plain language principles in our work and continuing to strengthen our approach to accessibility and literacy-friendly practice.



Iryna Avalishvili
Regional Adult Literacy Coordinator

BIFE Culinary Arts students 'Bring Home the Gold'



Over the Easter break in studies BIFEs Advanced Culinary Arts students were hard at work representing their country at the Gastroerasmus Cookery Competition in Turkey. Held in Manavgat, southern Turkey the trio of chefs and their tutor took on 33 other teams from 22 countries around Europe and scooped the medals coming home 4 gold medals for their efforts.



Dara Byrne, Morgan McGinty and Deacon Greene, all local chefs competed in the unique competition over three days taking on some of the best cookery school students from Europe. The chefs had to compete individually on day one and day two in the Main Course, Fish and Dessert competitions then team up for the teams event on the final day where they had to produce two portions each of a starter, main and dessert in under 90 minutes with limited preparation.



Budding Wicklow chefs win gold medals for main, fish and dessert courses at Turkey competition | Irish Independent

The budding young chefs, all Wicklow natives, walked away with a first place in the Main Course competition for Dara Byrne Gold Medal, 2nd place for Deacon Greene Gold Medal and Gold medal for Morgan McGinty in the Dessert class.



Then the trio teamed up to win gold again in the teams event on the Sunday evening to walk away with a hand full of gold, literally.

Congratulations to Jennifer Wood a student at Bray Institute of Further Education (BIFE), who achieved an outstanding second place nationally in the prestigious “Pitch Your Erasmus” Competition.



Competing against students from both Higher Education Institutions and Further Education Colleges across Ireland, Jennifer impressed the judges with her engaging presentation, confidence, and creativity in sharing her Erasmus experience.

Project Spotlight

Pitch My Erasmus

Léargas was delighted to work with the Higher Education Authority on the 2025 Pitch My Erasmus Competition to celebrate learners' Erasmus+ journeys.

In October, participants of Erasmus+ School Education, VET and Higher Education came together in the Europe House, Dublin, to present the highs, lows and lessons learned of their Erasmus+ mobilities.

Their presentations were a fantastic display of the skills they learned, challenges they overcame, and friends the students made.

Congratulations to all the participants for showcasing the transformative power of Erasmus+, and particularly to:

- Jennifer Wood from Bray Institute of Further Education for her VET mobility to Spain
- Marta Sellitto from Luttrellstown Community College for her school pupil mobility to France
- James Harold from Luttrellstown Community College for his school pupil mobility to Germany

Jennifer and James were awarded second and third respectively!



Gina McGoldrick PA BIFE, Jennifer Wood, Gabriel Allen DP BIFE

“Her success is a fantastic achievement that highlights her talent, communication skills, and international outlook — qualities that embody the spirit of Erasmus and the values of BIFE”, says BIFE Deputy Principal Gabriel Allen

Reflecting on her Erasmus experience, Jennifer said she is grateful for the support she received from her College. She described the experience as one that helped build her confidence, gave her a newfound trust in her own abilities and competency, and allowed her to develop valuable social interaction skills — calling it an “all-around amazing experience.”

Her journey is a testament to the personal growth, courage, and resilience that Erasmus+ opportunities provide, and a proud moment for both her and BIFE.

BIFE extends heartfelt congratulations to Jennifer on this remarkable success — a shining example of determination, growth, and international spirit.

A night to celebrate achievement and community!

Blessington FETC

Our recent Awards Night held in Blessington FETC, proved to be a truly memorable occasion, with a fantastic turnout that reflected the strong sense of community and commitment within our organisation. The evening was filled with warmth, pride and celebration as learners, staff and guests came together to recognise hard work and achievement across a range of programmes.



We were delighted to extend a special and heartfelt welcome to Lynn Armstrong, who joined us on the night as our new Adult Education Officer (AEO).

Lynn's presence added to the sense of excitement and optimism for the future, and it was wonderful to introduce her to so many members of our learning community in such a positive and celebratory setting.



Awards were presented across a variety of areas, with particular recognition given to learners in Healthcare, ELC Stage 2, and a number of other modules. Each award represented months of dedication, perseverance and personal growth, and the pride among recipients—and those who supported them—was evident throughout the evening.

The atmosphere on the night was genuinely uplifting, marked by warm applause, shared smiles and moments of well-deserved recognition. It was, by all accounts, a lovely night enjoyed by everyone in attendance and a fitting celebration of both individual achievement and collective success.

We look forward to building on this momentum in the year ahead.





Maynooth FETC

International Cake Day was held at Maynooth FETC on 6th May 2026.



It was a vibrant and meaningful celebration that brought students and staff together in support of Goal 3 – Good Health and Well-being within the Sustainable Development Goals framework.

The event highlighted the importance of balance, community connection, and cultural exchange by encouraging participants to share homemade cakes inspired by their diverse backgrounds.

We had cakes from Ireland, Brazil, Portugal, Scotland, Moldova, Italy, Croatia, Poland, Sudan, Spain, Cyprus and Albania.



Alongside enjoying treats, attendees engaged in conversations about mental health, the value of social inclusion, and how small acts of kindness can strengthen overall well-being. Throughout the Centre there was so much laughter and fun experiencing different dishes from the range of countries mentioned above.



Emphasis was also placed on climate justice by promoting locally sourced ingredients, reducing food waste and using reusable materials. The event really demonstrated how even a simple celebration can contribute to both personal wellness and environmental responsibility.

The event was a huge success and we hope to be able to run many more in the future.



Next issue September 2026
Submit your article here



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KWETB FET!



**THE QUALITY ASSURANCE TEAM
WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU**

SUBMIT YOUR E-ZINE ARTICLE HERE

PLEASE REMEMBER TO SUBMIT LEARNER CONSENT FORMS



2026 submission deadlines
Spring - 19th February
Summer - 14th May
Autumn - 10th September
Winter - 19th November

For more information contact AislingForan@kwetb.ie