

TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

Kerry ETB operates over a range of Further Education and Training (FET) areas, in addition to its role in the provision of second level education.

The FET areas include:

- Craft Apprenticeship
- New Apprenticeships
- Adult Education Provision
- Youth Programmes Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS)
- Courses for Employment
- Courses for Progression

Kerry ETB offers several programmes in each area, and it operates across numerous centres throughout the County. This geographical dispersion, with similar programmes offered in different locations together with the range of disciplines, programme levels and structures, point to the absolute requirement for an overarching Teaching Learning and Assessment (TLA) strategy to deliver an effective and consistent service. This strategy provides the framework that determines how teaching, learning and assessment is implemented within a particular discipline and to programmes within that discipline.

Given the range of education and training activities it offers, Kerry ETB's learners come from diverse educational, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. The key strategic objective of Kerry ETB in the provision of its services of education and training is the promotion of lifelong learning among its learners. This is driven by Kerry ETB's Mission: *'Kerry Education and Training Board (Kerry ETB) in partnership with its members, staff and stakeholders is committed to creating and promoting the development of a lifelong learning society in Kerry, so that all who live there have access to the education and training required to fulfil their potential and meet their personal, social, cultural, economic and civic needs'*.

Based on this Mission and its values, Kerry ETB's TLA Strategy places inclusive lifelong learning at its centre.

In order to ensure that the Kerry ETB's teaching and learning practices are aligned with best practice, Kerry ETB actively promotes collaborative projects with other ETBs and Further Education Providers, with the aim of improving service delivery and the development of discipline-related best practice in Teaching and Learning, through a sharing of experiences. These projects are co-ordinated through Kerry ETB's QA Office, in consultation with Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI), or other agencies, where appropriate.

ELEMENTS OF KERRY ETB'S TLA STRATEGY

The TLA Strategy, which accords with QQI's Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016) and Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes (2018), aims to ensure that core practices are aligned with the Mission of Kerry ETB.

This is achieved by ensuring that:

1. Any programme proposed for validation by Kerry ETB will be accompanied by a programme-specific TLA strategy.
2. All programme-specific TLA strategies will be developed with reference to this overarching strategy.
3. In the case of programmes with a blended learning component, Kerry ETB's TLA strategy and programme specific TLA strategies are informed by best practice in blended and online pedagogy and instructional design.
4. The Quality Assurance systems of Kerry ETB are integral to and support the TLA strategy.

In particular, the following sections of the Quality Assurance Handbook are intrinsically related to and underpin the TLA Strategy:

- a) Programme Design and Development.
- b) Staff Recruitment and Development.
- c) Blended Learning Policy and Procedures.
- d) Learner Support.
- e) Programme Monitoring and Review.

PROGRAMME DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

Our Quality Assurance processes encompass all activities contributing to the design and development of the curriculum at both module and programme level. Learning design within the programme curriculum is learner-centred and takes into account the profiles and changing needs of learners. Programme development entails input from subject matter experts, industry representatives, educational and learning designers. In the case of blended learning programmes, the programme development process ensures that technology is used appropriately, and in the service of pedagogy (see guideline 4.1.4 of QQI's Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes).

STAFF RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Our Quality Assurance processes ensure the recruitment of high calibre teaching and instructor staff, and the provision of appropriate Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for all staff engaged in programme delivery and support. CPD facilitated by Kerry ETB takes account of the specific needs of staff involved in the design and delivery of blended programmes in Kerry ETB. Opportunities for CPD are facilitated internally, and staff are additionally supported to pursue external CPD opportunities, where this is required.

ONLINE AND BLENDED LEARNING

Our Quality Assurance processes ensure that all teaching, instructor, and staff involved in learner support, undertake a minimum level of training in the Virtual Learning Environment system (VLE), and participate in professional development in blended and online pedagogies. Minimum standards for online content and curriculum ensure the consistency of the learning experience across modules. The

ongoing development of Kerry ETB's pedagogic approaches is supported by the Teaching and Learning function of Kerry ETB. This function coordinates learning design resources, assesses potential platforms and tools for use in Kerry ETB and monitors/evaluates use of current platforms and tools.

Further details on Kerry ETB's policy and procedures in respect of Blended Learning are shown in the Blended Learning section of the QA Handbook.

LEARNER SUPPORTS

Our Quality Assurance processes ensure that all learners are accorded appropriate supports for their learning. In the case of programmes with a blended learning component, learners are introduced to the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) of Kerry ETB and provided with a high level of technical support and guidance in the course of their studies. Online and blended pedagogies are learner-centred, promoting interaction and facilitating the development of an online learning community.

As part of the programme induction process, each learner is provided with a Learner Handbook at the commencement of their programme, which is the essential reference for their programme of study. This Handbook details the rights and responsibilities of learners and detail the range of learner support available. Learner supports are designed to assist in developing learner confidence and independent study skills, including:

- Receiving a clear explanation of the blend of learning that learners will experience, and the realistic commitment required of them to complete the programme.
- The prior knowledge and technical skills necessary to participate in the programme.
- Programme elements, including practical sessions and workshops, skills demonstrations, and face-to-face peer discussions.
- The contribution of autonomous and collaborative aspects to the individual's learning.

The quality of learner supports and opportunities for enhancement are formally reviewed as part of Kerry ETB's Review and Enhancement processes, as described in the relevant sections of the QA Handbook. In addition, tutors and administrators respond to queries from learners during day-to-day programme delivery. In this way, areas of concern or potential areas for improvement, can be brought to the attention of the appropriate manager for immediate remedial action.

PROGRAMME MONITORING AND REVIEW

Our Quality Assurance processes ensure ongoing monitoring and review activities are undertaken that provide insights to the learner experience within Kerry ETB's programmes, including the quality of teaching and curriculum. Feedback is collected from learners on all aspects of their experience while undertaking a programme in Kerry ETB.

In the case of programmes with a blended learning component, feedback from learners is sought on their face-to-face classes and programme support services, including online learning support. Staff working in online learning support roles are able to provide real time feedback to teaching staff pertaining to synchronous learning, as well as contributing to overall programme monitoring. This is supplemented by the collection of feedback from teaching staff and other stakeholders in relation to programme delivery, and data on learner retention, outcomes, and completion. All of these indicators are reviewed by the appropriate QA mechanisms and recommended improvements implemented.

In addition, the Quality Committee monitors feedback on Learner Support as part of its academic oversight brief and makes decisions for enhancements to be implemented by the appropriate unit or manager.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TLA STRATEGY

Teaching, Learning and Assessment Practices

All teaching, learning and assessment practices at Kerry ETB are *Constructively Aligned*². There are three dimensions essential to the concept of constructive alignment.

1. Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs):

These articulate what learners will be able to do upon successful completion of each module and programme.

2. Assessment:

The assessment strategy for each module and programme is derived from the ILOs. Assessment must provide learners with an opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of the ILOs.

3. Learning Activities:

The learning activities within a module and programme are chosen to facilitate learners acquiring, developing and practicing the knowledge, skills and competences they need to achieve the ILOs, and to be able to demonstrate this through the assessment process.

Module and programme development will be undertaken with regard to the principles of Constructive Alignment, with ILOs derived from the relevant level of the NFQ, or Standards as appropriate. This approach focuses on each module's learning outcomes and assessment regimes, together with the teaching and learning activities required to deliver these learning outcomes. Kerry ETB recognises the need to balance these three elements in creating appropriate learning experiences and pathways.

² Biggs, J.B. & Tang, C. (2011). *Teaching for Quality Learning at University*. Buckingham: Open University Press/Society for Research into Higher Education. (Fourth edition)

All learning and teaching practices at Kerry ETB are firmly grounded in a learner-centred approach, with an emphasis on developing transversal skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving and independent learning within the learning journey. Learner-centred instruction emphasises the facilitative role of teachers and the uniqueness of learners. It encourages the fostering of successful interpersonal relationships between teachers and learners, and an appreciation and respect for diversity and difference.

Formative assessment and feedback are integral to the process of learning and reflect the emphasis on learner-centeredness that underpins teaching and learning in the programme. Feedback processes at Kerry ETB are intended to place the learner at the centre of the process, emphasising opportunities for learners to seek and use feedback, and develop self-evaluative judgement over time.

LIFELONG LEARNING

Lifelong learning, which promotes the continuing development of knowledge, skills and competences throughout an individual's career, is central to the ethos of Kerry ETB and is embodied in its Mission statement to enable our learners to grow personally and professionally. We are cognisant of the requirement to set processes in place to facilitate this and as our learners travel through their learning journey. Specifically in the case of adult learners, we have regard to fundamental principles of adult education in our approaches to teaching and learning, and our curriculum design:

- i. Adults need to be involved in the planning and evaluation of their instruction.
- ii. Experience provides the basis for the learning activities, and as adults possess significant past experience (including mistakes) to the classroom, this should form the basis for learning activities.
- iii. Adults are most interested in practical subjects that have immediate relevance and impact to their work or personal life.
- iv. Adult learning is problem-centred rather than content-centred (or memorisation oriented).

The curriculum will attest to the importance of lifelong learning for our learner cohorts, and this will be reflected in the programme teaching and learning strategies. Kerry ETB prepares its learners to succeed by ensuring their cumulative knowledge, skills and competencies, on programme completion, are relevant to the dynamic and rapidly shifting employment market.

Kerry ETB is committed to supporting learners in their development of transversal skills, for example, problem-solving, communication and creativity. Kerry ETB will approach this through a range of curricular and co-curricular measures.

STAFF TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

Kerry ETB is committed to the provision and support of appropriate Continuing Professional Development for all staff and has processes within its QA system to facilitate this. All teaching and instructor staff as well as learner support staff will be offered training and development opportunities that are directly relevant to their roles.

In the case of staff involved in the delivery of programmes with a blended learning component, a comprehensive induction programme will be available for all staff in teaching, instructor and learner support roles. This will include an introduction to the VLE and the Blended Learning component of Kerry ETB's TLA Strategy.