

# FET QUALITY COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2024

Kerry Education and Training Board



# Table of Contents

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Section 1: Governance and Management of Quality	8
<hr/>	
Section 2: Teaching, Learning and Assessment	14
<hr/>	
Section 3: Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review	25
<hr/>	
Section 4: Role as the Apprenticeship Quality Council	31
<hr/>	
FET Quality Council Members	35
<hr/>	

# Foreword

Is cúis áthais dom réamhrá a scríobh do Thuarascáil Bhliantúil na bliana 2024 ó Chomhairle Cáilíochta Breisoideachais agus Oiliúna Bhord Oideachais agus Oiliúna Chiarraí.

The Kerry ETB Further Education and Training (FET) Quality Council provides the central decision-making and oversight framework for the quality assurance of all Further Education and Training programmes under Kerry ETB. By supervising how courses are designed, delivered, and evaluated, it aims to safeguard and continuously improve the learner experience, ensuring compliance with national standards and best practice guidelines.

The members of the FET Quality Council have been very diligent in their attendances and their contributions to the work of the Council and this has added enormously to the quality of the deliberations and the outputs from the FET Quality Council. I would like to thank my fellow Council members for their excellent contributions and, in particular, our external members Jenny Conroy and Michael Vaughan.

This report provides details of the work of the Council in 2024 and it demonstrates the range and depth of work carried out over the year. There are some particular challenges to be addressed by County Kerry if the county is to perform to its potential in the long term. The following two issues are important in this regard.

## **Higher than average unemployment in County Kerry**

In December 2024, the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 4.2%. In terms of age, the Monthly Unemployment rate for people aged 15-24 years (youth unemployment rate) increased to 11.6%. The Monthly Unemployment rate for people aged 25-74 years was 3.0%. The unemployment rate in County Kerry is around 5%–6%.

## **Second lowest median annual earnings in the State**

In 2023, Kerry had the second lowest median annual earnings (all ages) at €37,151, followed only by Donegal at €35,010 while Dublin had the highest median annual earnings at €47,873, which was 10.8% higher than those of the State at €43,221 and 29% higher than the median in County Kerry. <sup>[1]</sup>

On average, wages in Kerry are lower than in Dublin and many of Ireland's other larger urban centres, due to Kerry's economy being more reliant on tourism, agriculture, and smaller-scale enterprise than, for example, the technology and financial services sectors that dominate in Dublin or other urban hubs.

## **Need to rebalance Kerry's economic sectors and upskill staff**

If County Kerry is to succeed in reducing its unemployment and increasing the annual earnings of workers, it needs to move up the value chain in the jobs provided across the county and also increase productivity. This will require upskilling of current workers; education and training of new workers in higher value skills that can be attractive to new companies to establish in County Kerry; and a rebalancing of the economic sectors in the county, with a significant increase in higher value sectors. Kerry ETB has an important role to play in rebalancing Kerry's economic sectors.

### **The challenges and opportunities provided by Artificial Intelligence**

Some of the greatest challenges and opportunities that are facing education and training and, more broadly business and society, revolve around the impact that will arise from Artificial Intelligence (AI), the pervasive and widescale impact and speed of rollout which has never before been experienced. In the words of Daron Acemoglu, MIT Institute Professor and 2024 Nobel laureate: “We are in the age of AI, but I remain convinced that human productivity, human ingenuity, [and] human resources broadly construed are still key to [the] meaningful flourishing of countries.”

Every organisation will be impacted by AI and if County Kerry was to embrace the opportunities afforded by AI, it could begin to address the twin challenges of higher unemployment and lower median earnings in the county. This will require a review of the challenges and opportunities afforded by AI as applicable to County Kerry and Kerry ETB and a plan to address both.

### **Mental Health of Young People**

Another issue that became apparent to the Quality Council throughout the year was concern about the mental health of young people and, in particular, how the impact of Covid 19 on the mental health of young people was still working its way through the system. For the sake of the individuals concerned and wider society, this issue is required to be addressed in a comprehensive manner and Kerry ETB has a role to play in that.

### **Opportunities for the Quality Council**

Kerry ETB is fortunate in having so many capable, enthusiastic and committed staff working to provide high quality further education and training and it is equally fortunate in the learners that it has across all its centres. At a time of global discontinuity, there are also opportunities and it is important that Kerry ETB (and the Quality Council) keeps focused on delivering the most appropriate education and training programmes that will help position County Kerry to increase the economic and social development opportunities for the people of the county.

### **Thanks**

In conclusion, I would like to thank my colleagues on the Quality Council, along with Ms Aoife McCormack, Quality Assurance Unit Manager and Adult Education Officer; Bláithín Shanahan O'Mahony, Administrator; all the other members of the Quality Assurance Unit; Owen O'Donnell, Director of Further Education and Training; and Colm Mc Evoy, Chief Executive, Kerry ETB, for their huge enthusiasm, support and commitment to the work of the Quality Council. It has made the work of the Council so much easier knowing that their support is available.

Míle buíochas díobh go léir



Brendan Tuohy  
Chair, Kerry ETB FET Quality Council



## Introduction

In 2024, the FET Quality Council was active in overseeing the quality and enhancement of Kerry ETB FET provision. More than 16,000 Beneficiaries took part in several Kerry ETB courses, which improved their knowledge, abilities and opportunities for work, further education, voluntary, or community work. These courses are planned, developed, and improved under the direction of the FET Quality Council. Its members' diverse backgrounds and experiences, both within and outside further education and training, are its greatest asset. I would like especially to express my gratitude to Brendan Tuohy for his continued commitment and expertise in his role as Chairperson.

Additionally, I am grateful to the members of the Programme Governance Board, the Quality Assurance Governance Board, the Apprenticeship National Programme Boards and the Apprenticeship Examination Boards for upholding quality, guaranteeing continual improvement, and maintaining the very high standards across FET. All Kerry ETB FET structures and provision have benefitted from the assistance and oversight of the Quality Assurance Unit and I would like to acknowledge their efforts and thank them for their ongoing commitment to excellence and quality within Kerry ETB FET.

This is an opportune moment to acknowledge the efforts of all the FET staff and teams across the organisation in delivering quality learning opportunities. I extend my thanks to all the members of the FET Quality Council for their dedication.



Owen O'Donnell  
Director of Further Education and Training  
Kerry ETB

# Quality Assurance Manager Report

This report provides an update on the work of the FET Quality Council and the quality improvement and enhancement activity of Kerry ETB Further Education and Training in 2024. It was initiated following a self-evaluation process in 2020. This is the fourth publication.

The 2024 report is set out in four main sections

- Governance and Management of Quality
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment
- Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review
- Role as the Apprenticeship Quality Council

In Section One, this report sets out how Kerry ETB governs and manages academic quality, through its academic governance structures and through its programme governance processes.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment are at the heart of Kerry ETB's mission. The FET Quality Council provides academic governance and oversight of teaching, learning and assessment. The main tool to guide practice across Kerry ETB FET is the Quality Assurance Manual. In addition, the FET Quality Council ratifies all results which in effect triggers requests for certification. It also considers the data that emanates from the certification processes. This data is set out in Section Two of this report along with some analysis.

Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review takes place to enhance quality and improve practice. The report outlines some of the key mechanisms that are used to assist FET in Kerry ETB to evaluate and review and report on processes that were undertaken in 2024. This is available in Section Three.

Kerry ETB's FET Quality Council reserves a section of its agenda to fulfil its role as 'Apprenticeship' FET Quality Council. This is set out in Section Four.

The data for this report was collated by Blaithín Shanahan O'Mahony, administrator of FET Quality Council and written by Aoife McCormack, Quality Assurance Manager, Kerry ETB, who used this data and other information provided by her team, in particular Dr Bríd Walsh, Aoife Comiskey Clifford and Monica Dillane. The information shared is based on the hard work and dedication of staff across the Quality Assurance Unit and across Further Education and Training.



Aoife McCormack  
Quality Assurance Manager  
Kerry Education and Training Board

## KERRY AND KERRY ETB FET AT A GLANCE



In 2024 there were 16,228 beneficiaries in Co Kerry



The budget for FET was €48,643,000 in 2024

- Kerry accounts for 20% of employment in the Southwest region representing 68,000 persons or 3% of national engagement (SOLAS, 2024). [2]
- The largest sectors of employment in Co. Kerry are wholesale/retail, health and industry. [2]
- 10% of those employed work in the accommodation/food sector. This is double the state average. [2]
- 20% of those employed in Kerry work in Trades while 91% are Professionals. [2]

### LOCATIONS



# Section 1: Governance and Management of Quality

## Who We Are

The Kerry ETB FET Quality Council, and its substructures, provide academic governance for the quality, development and improvement of further education and training. The FET Quality Council continues to be chaired by an external Chairperson, Brendan Tuohy and has a membership that includes the FET Director and management, staff representation and external partners. Learners are invited to attend meetings.

The FET Quality Council and its substructures are illustrated in Figure 1. The FET Quality Council outlined its vision for quality enhancement in the Kerry ETB Quality Action Plan 2022 – 2027. The Plan was developed in consultation with Kerry ETB key stakeholders and in response to recommendations received from QQI in its inaugural review of quality in Kerry ETB.

The Kerry ETB FET Quality Council held six ordinary and one special purpose meeting in 2024 as follows:

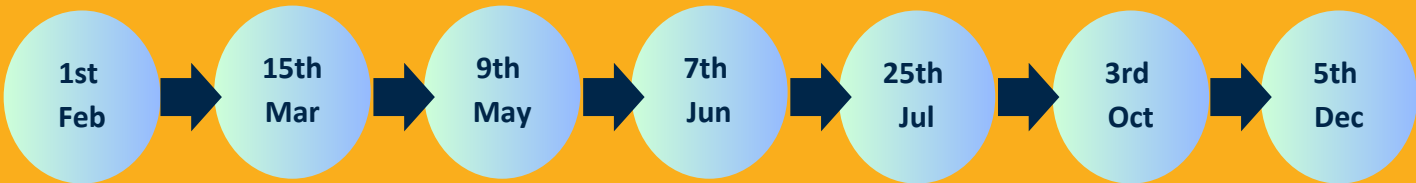


Figure 1 - The FET Quality Council and its substructures



## Kerry ETB Annual Quality Plan 2024

The Kerry ETB Annual Quality Plan 2024 was approved at the February meeting of the FET Quality Council, after the 2023 Action Plan was reviewed. It is derived from the Kerry ETB Quality Assurance Action Plan 2022 – 2027 which is the over-arching quality plan for FET, Kerry ETB. The actions implemented in 2024 were tracked and reported on at the meetings of the FET Quality Council. They are presented in this annual report. In addition, the FET quality enhancement activities that were not planned but which took place in 2024 were tracked by the FET Quality Council.

## New Programmes and Courses Approved

In 2024, the PGB considered 33 course approval applications and of these 31 were approved. All applications were prepared having engaged in a specific process and culminated in the completion of specific documentation. The categories of applications are detailed in Figure 2 which summarises the processes and the required documentation.

Some of the applications considered by the PGB sought approval to deliver on-line (via synchronous blended learning), others to introduce changes to modules descriptors, while others sought approval to deliver a programme in a FET that had not delivered the programme previously. Some applications focused on the change of course names prior to them being scheduled on PLSS. Other applications sought approval to establish a Programme Development group to allow a FET Centre or Kerry College Campus to develop a programme descriptor to meet a specific industry or community need. Other approvals focused on seeking to engage with QQI to seek differential validation or to submit a programme descriptor to QQI for validation. Applications are across the broad range of awarding bodies who provide certification to Kerry ETB learners. A summary of all programmes approved by the PGB is set out in Figure 2.



**Figure 2 - Summary of programmes approved by the Kerry ETB PGB**

<b>Applications to QQI for Validation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commercial Scuba Diving</li> <li>Commercial Inshore Diving</li> <li>Animation and 3D Character Creation</li> <li>Astronomy for Stargazing</li> <li>Eyelash &amp; Eyebrow Beauty Treatments</li> </ul>	<b>Courses Approved Through Differential Validation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specific Purpose Certificate in Sustainable Supply Chain Procurement Level 5</li> <li>Specific Purpose Certificate in Lean Practice for Sustainable Business Level 5</li> <li>ESOL Level 1</li> <li>ESOL Level 2</li> </ul>
<b>Change of Delivery Mode</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Payroll Manual &amp; Computerised 5N1546</li> <li>Supervisory Management 6N4329</li> <li>Bookkeeping Manual &amp; Computerised 5N1354</li> <li>Training Delivery and Evaluation 6N3326</li> <li>Challenging Behaviour 5N1706</li> <li>Medical Terminology 5N2428</li> <li>Digital Marketing 5N1364</li> <li>Computer and Online Essentials ICDL-C&amp;OE</li> <li>Spreadsheet Methods (ICDL-SpSheets)</li> <li>Word Processing ICDL-DOCS</li> <li>Bookkeeping Manual &amp; Computerised 6N4865</li> <li>Payroll Manual &amp; Computerised 6N4005</li> <li>Environmental Sustainability in the Workplace 5N21794</li> <li>Infection Prevention and Control 5N3734</li> <li>Special Needs Assisting 6N1957</li> <li>Irish Natural Heritage and Culture 6N20231</li> <li>Child Development 5N1764</li> </ul>	<b>Application to be included as a location for delivery</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City and Guilds Level 2 Barbering Techniques</li> <li>City and Guilds Level 2 Women's Hairdressing</li> <li>QQI Irish Tour Guiding 6N20229</li> <li>ITEC Level 2 Nail Technology</li> <li>Business 6M4985</li> <li>Community Health Services 5M4468</li> <li>Inclusive Education and Training 6M2263</li> </ul>
<b>Course Name/ Title Change and Addition of a New Module to a Programme</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pre-Apprenticeship Construction Management and Quantity Surveying 5M5010</li> <li>Communications and Journalism in Society 5M2464</li> </ul>	<b>Addition of a New Module to a Programme QQI</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Security Studies 5M2110</li> <li>Legal Studies 5M3789</li> <li>General Learning 3M0874</li> <li>General Learning 4M2010</li> <li>Sports and Recreation 4M4966</li> </ul> <b>Other Awarding Bodies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IT Support Technician</li> <li>IT Support Fundamentals</li> </ul>
<b>Course Approval Form</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City and Guilds Level 3 Biodiversity in the Community</li> <li>Closed Head Orbital Welding ISO 14732</li> <li>ILM Leadership and Management Award Level 3</li> <li>ILM Leadership and Management Certificate Level 3</li> <li>Ecollege APM Project Fundamentals</li> <li>SafePass with Dry Stone Wall Construction</li> </ul>	<b>Transition Year Career Taster Programmes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TY Engineering Careers Programme</li> <li>TY Trade Careers Programme</li> <li>TY Media Careers Programme</li> <li>TY Construction Careers Programme</li> <li>TY Network Infrastructure Careers Programme</li> <li>TY IT Careers Programme</li> <li>QQI Ecological Field Methods 5N1439</li> <li>Orienteering Ireland Orienteering Ability Awards</li> <li>Digital Design TY Programme</li> </ul>
<b>New Programme Proposals</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Animal Science Level 5</li> <li>Sommelier</li> </ul>	<b>Modifications to Module Descriptors</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Databases 3N0550</li> <li>Single Pitch Rock Climbing 5N6045</li> <li>Person Centred Focus to Disability 5N1728</li> </ul> <b>Course Name/Title Change</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level 5 Digital Journalism, Podcasting &amp; Radio <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Journalism, Podcasting &amp; Radio Level 5</li> </ul> </li> <li>Photography Level 5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creative Photography &amp; Techniques Level 5</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

# Programme Governance Board

There were seven meetings of the Programme Governance Board (PGB) held in 2024 in January, March, May, August, October and November. In addition, there was a special purpose meeting in April to consider Animation; Commercial and Inshore Diving programme descriptors as part of the governance of new programmes for submission to QQI for validation.

**Table 1 - Categories of applications**

Process	Documentation
Process 1: Propose the Addition of an Existing Module to a Kerry ETB Programme	Appendix 1: Addition of an Existing Kerry ETB Module to a Programme Form
Process 2: Propose the Addition of a New Module to a Kerry ETB Programme	Appendix 2: Addition of a New Module to a Programme Form
Process 3: Propose the Use of a NEW Certifying Body	Appendix 3: Application to Use a New Certifying Body
Process 4: Seek approval to deliver a new Course	Appendix 4: Course Approval Form
Process 5: Propose a Validated Major Award for a Campus/ Centre (to add to the suite of provision)	Appendix 5: Application to be included as a location for delivery
Process 6: Propose a Modification to a Module Descriptor	Module descriptor with comments
Process 7: Propose Change of Delivery Mode from in-class to Blended/online	Appendix 7: Change of Delivery Mode Form
Process 8: Proposing a New Programme	Appendix 8: New Programme Proposal Template
Process 9: Course Name/Title Change	Appendix 9: Course Name Title Change Form
Process 10: Formal Stand-Down of Delivery of a Programme	Appendix 10: Stand Down of a Programme Form

## Programmes Recommended by FET Quality Council

In 2024 the FET Quality Council recommended to Mr Colm McEvoy, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) that Kerry ETB seek validation/ differential validation of nine programmes. With the approval of the CEO, the QA Unit submitted these to QQI on behalf of Kerry ETB. These include programmes leading to awards in:

- Level 1 Specific Purpose Certificate in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
- Level 2 Specific Purpose Certificate in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)



- Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in Lean Practice for Sustainable Business
- Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in Sustainable Supply Chain Procurement



- Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in Eyelash and Eyebrow Beauty Treatments



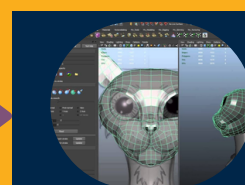
- Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in Astronomy for Stargazing



- Level 6 Special Purpose Award in Commercial Scuba Diving
- Level 6 Special Purpose Award in Surface Supplied Diving (Inshore)



- Level 6 Component Certificates in Animation Drawing and 3D Character Creation



In addition, the PGB approved that Kerry ETB would proceed with an application to QQI seeking to modify both [PG23027 Security Studies](#) and [PG17924 Legal Studies](#) so that a new module 5N3785 Employment Law is included in both programmes. Once approved, the QA Unit commenced work to finalise documentation for submission to QQI ahead of their Programme Approval (PAEC) Committee which meets six times annually. At this meeting, the PAEC considers the reports of external panels to inform its decision making on validation.

# Blended Learning

The FET Quality Council continued to support the delivery of some courses using MS Teams and approved 19 courses to run as blended learning on the basis that training is delivered synchronously (at the same time) on the approved TEL platform (MS Teams) and that assessments take place in Centre. In 2024 all courses approved were at programme module level. The FET Quality Council also noted reports from the Quality Assurance Unit on the use of Turnitin and MS Teams Pilots across FET provision. The courses approved included:

Blended Learning Course 2024			
Name of course	Course Code	Location of Delivery	Approved/ Not Approved
Payroll Manual & Computerised Level 5	5N1546	Monavalley Campus	Approved
Supervisory Management	6N4329	Monavalley Campus	Approved
Bookkeeping Manual & Computerised Level 5	5N1354	Monavalley Campus	Approved
Training Delivery and Evaluation	6N3326	Monavalley Campus	Approved
Challenging Behaviour	5N1706	Monavalley Campus	Approved
Medical Terminology	5N2428	Monavalley Campus	Approved
Digital Marketing	5N1364	Monavalley Campus	Approved
Computer and Online Essentials	ICDL-C&OE	Monavalley Campus	Approved
Spreadsheet Methods	ICDL-SpSheets	Monavalley Campus	Approved
Word Processing	ICDL-DOCS	Monavalley Campus	Approved
Bookkeeping Manual & Computerised Level 6	6N4865	Monavalley Campus	Approved
Payroll Manual & Computerised Level 6	6N4005	Monavalley Campus	Approved
Environmental Sustainability in the Workplace	5N21794	Monavalley Campus	Approved
Infection Prevention and Control	5N3734	Monavalley Campus	Approved
Special Needs Assisting	6N1957	O'Connell FET Centre	Approved
Irish Natural Heritage and Culture	6N20231	O'Connell FET Centre	Approved
Training Delivery and Evaluation	6N3326	O'Connell FET Centre	Approved
Child Development	5N1764	O'Connell FET Centre	Approved
Training Delivery and Evaluation	6N3326	Kenmare FET Centre	Approved

# Section 2: Teaching, Learning and Assessment

## Learner Results Ratification

The FET Quality Council ratifies results from across Kerry ETB FET provision prior to their submission to the awarding body. All results are recommended to the FET Quality Council by the QA Governance Board and are presented using the Kerry ETB FET Results Report Template. This assures the FET Quality Council that results are recorded in the same manner across FET provision. In 2024 a new FET Results Report was introduced. This Results Report records QQI results and results for all other awarding bodies under the following broad headings:



- PLSS Local Title and Reference Code
- Number of Learners Started on the Course
- Start and Finish Dates
- Major Award Code: Number of Major Awards Put Forward and the Grades (Pass; Merit; Distinction; Successful; Unsuccessful)
- Minor Award Code: Number of Minor Awards Put Forward and the Grades (Pass; Merit; Distinction; Successful; Unsuccessful)
- Special Purpose Award Code: Number of Special Purpose Awards put forward and the Grades (Pass; Merit; Distinction; Successful; Unsuccessful)
- Number of Learners Who Did Not Complete the Course ('terminated')



In 2024, the FET Quality Council reviewed 48 Results Reports and ratified the results set out in these reports with the majority being reviewed in June and August certification periods.



## Quality Assurance Governance Board

The Quality Assurance Governance Board (QAGB) met seven times in 2024. It considered actions outlined in the Kerry ETB Annual Quality Plan 2024 and updated progress against these actions, preparing a report quarterly for the FET Quality Council. It also considered and made recommendations on assessment procedures; learner results; learner surveys and external authentication reports. The outputs of the Quality Assurance Governance Board are presented in Section 2 of this report.

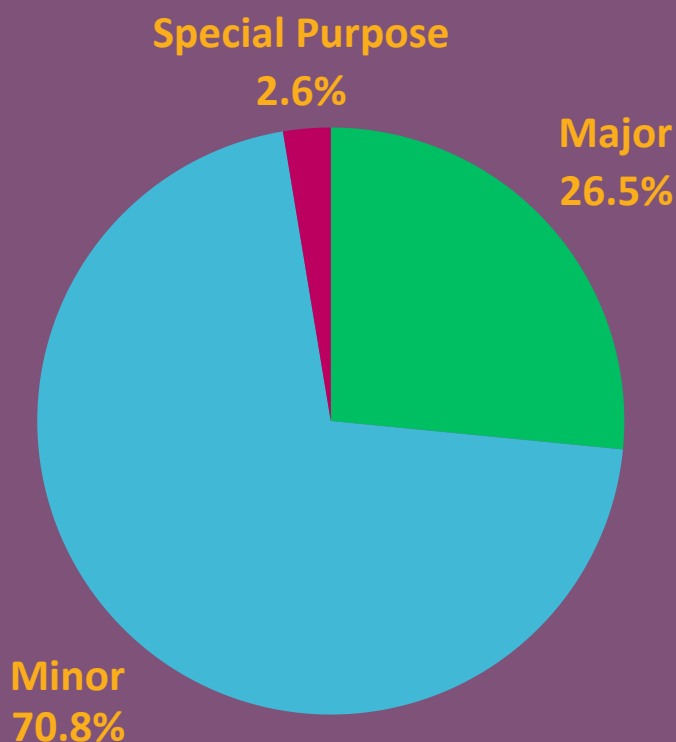


# Results

The QA Unit collates the results data across each calendar year to provide information on the breakdown by Campus/ Centre. In 2024, 5,368 results were ratified. In total, the FET Quality Council ratified 3,803 individual minor award results, 1,425 major award results and 140 special purpose award results.

This 2024 figure represents a 55% increase on certification levels in 2023 with 16% more major awards and 84% more minor awards. However, there were fewer special purpose award results ratified by Kerry ETB FET Quality Council in 2024 with a reduction of 14%. While it is notable that the FET Quality Council saw an increase in certification, the change in the Results Report template may account for the increase. Stabilising this reporting for the future is a key goal to allow for stable analysis of results data. It is worth noting that the majority of awards are at NFQ Level 5, followed by NFQ Level 3 with the least number of awards at NFQ Levels 1 and 2. Figure 3 provides a breakdown of the distribution of Major awards, Minor awards and Special Purpose awards across Kerry College Campuses and Kerry ETB FET Centres.

**Figure 3 - Major, Minor and Special Purpose Award Results Ratified in 2024**



# Major Award Results

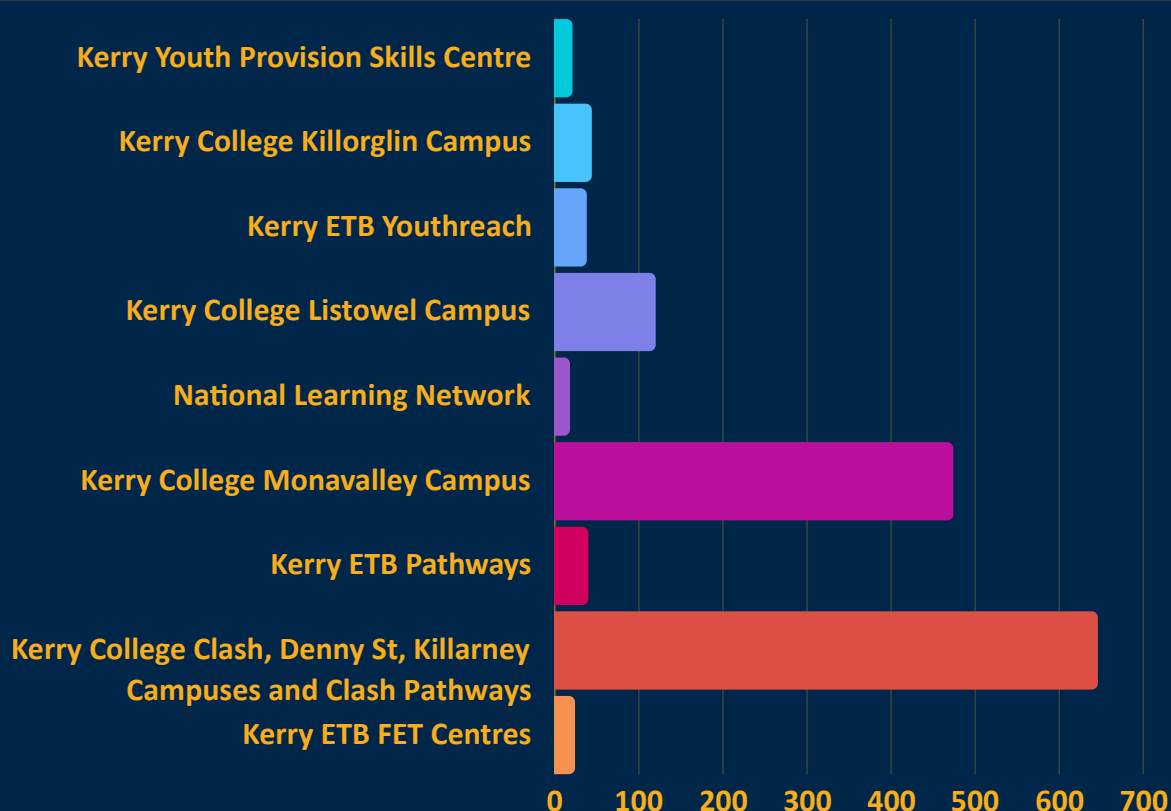
In 2024, the FET Quality Council ratified 1,425 major award results. The major awards are awarded by a number of different awarding bodies. Most of the certification is for QQI awards while substantial certificates are sought from other awarding bodies such as City & Guilds, iTEC, METLAB, VTCT and ICDL.

The data related to these awarding bodies will be explored further in the report. What is evident is that learners from across the broad range of Kerry ETB FET provision and locations achieve major awards.

Learners in Kerry College Clash, Listowel, Denny St and Killarney Campuses represent the largest number of major awards, followed by Kerry College Monavalley Campus.

It is clear that a large number of learners exit Kerry College Campuses and Kerry ETB FET Centres with major awards. Figure 4 provides a breakdown of the distribution of major awards across Kerry College Campuses and Kerry ETB FET Centres.

Figure 4 - Major Award by Kerry ETB FET Centres/ Kerry College Campuses



# Minor Award Results

What is notable in 2024 is the increased number of minor awards across FET provision. A total of 3,803 minor awards were ratified by the FET Quality Council for QQI awards as well as those from other awarding bodies. This is an increase of 84% on 2023.

Again, the introduction of the new results report template and better reporting processes in FET Centres and Kerry College Campuses may account for this increase. The introduction of a renewed evening class programme and the continuance of the Business Support Unit programmes which facilitate learners to attend part-time and achieve minor certification, particularly in QQI Common Award System (CAS) minor awards, may account for the increase. It is notable that Monavalley Campus learners achieved the largest number of minor awards.



However, as is evident in Figure 5, many learners right across FET Centres and Kerry College Campuses achieve minor certification awards, generally of 5 or 10 credit value. Such achievement of minor awards ensures that learners who are not successful in achieving a major award still leave with a recognised certificate which they can build on for future learning.

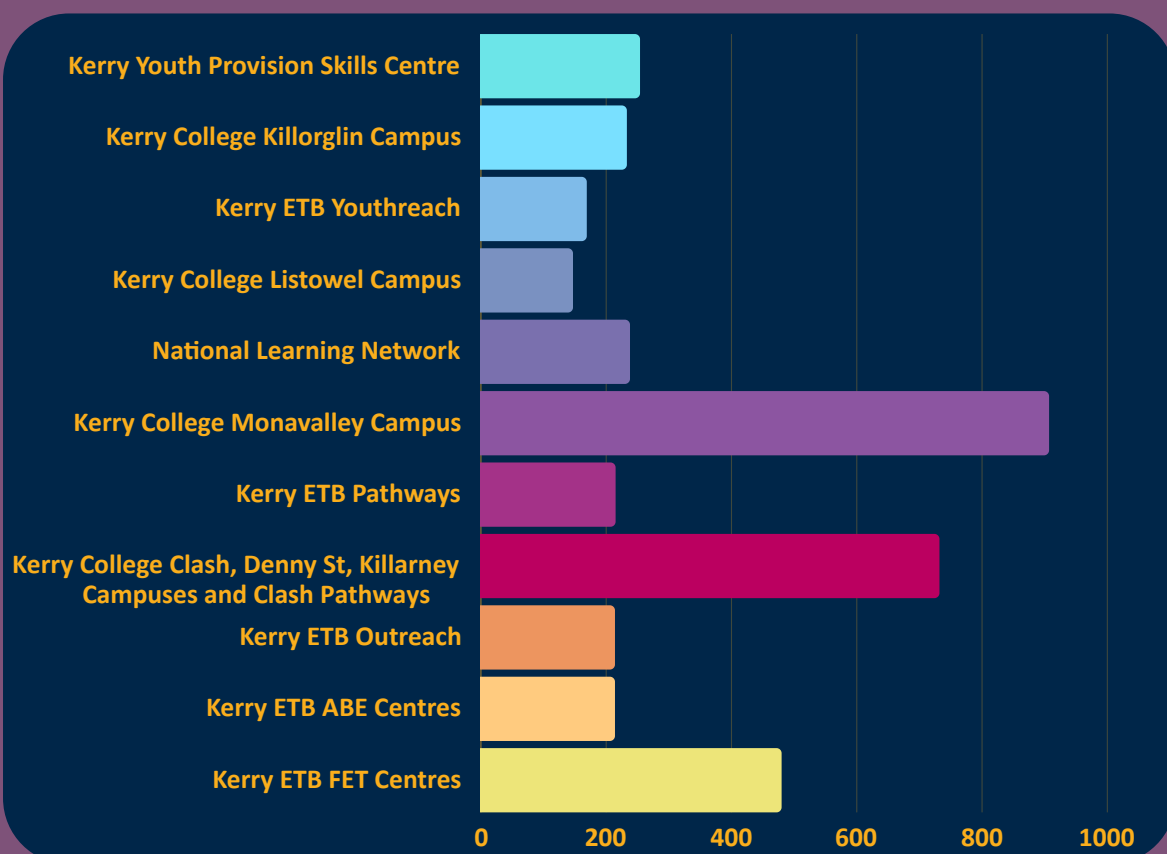


Figure 5 - Minor Award by Kerry ETB FET Centres/ Kerry College Campuses

# Special Purpose Awards Results

In 2024, there were 140 special purpose award results ratified. Figure 6 shows the breakdown of Special Purpose Awards across six award programmes. The special purpose award areas address skills needs in Co. Kerry across a number of areas including those in the tourism sector, construction, green skills and education.

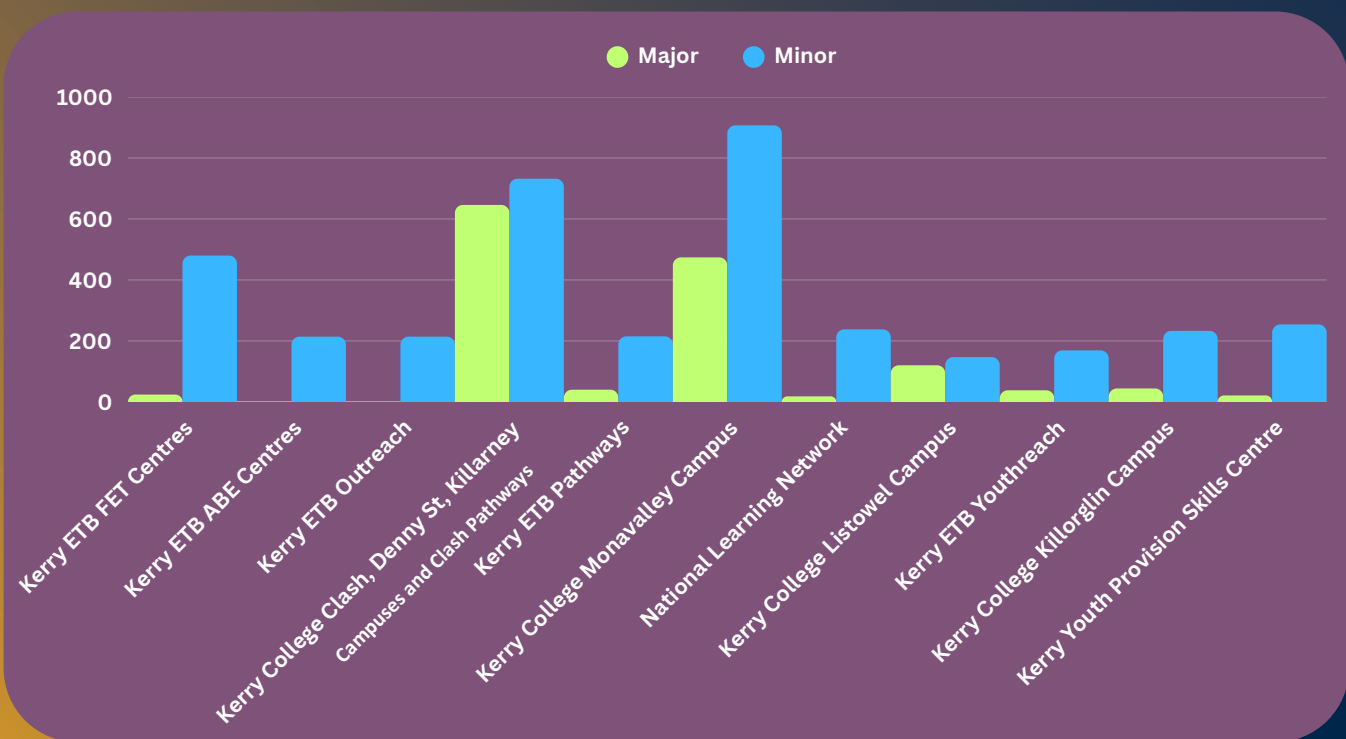


## Major and Minor Awards by Campus/ Programme

The FET Quality Council also considered the spread of results by Campus/ Centre.

Figure 7 illustrates the breakdown of 1,425 majors and 3,803 minors by Kerry ETB Campuses/ Centres for QQI awards as well as those from other awarding bodies. What is noticeable about these breakdowns is the significant number of minor awards achieved and that this is well in excess of major awards. In some Centres and programmes only minor certification is awarded. This may be indicative of a response by Kerry ETB FET to provide flexible education and training opportunities in a full employment market economy.

**Figure 7 - Major and Minor Awards by Kerry ETB Campuses/ Centres/ Programmes**





## Other Awarding Bodies

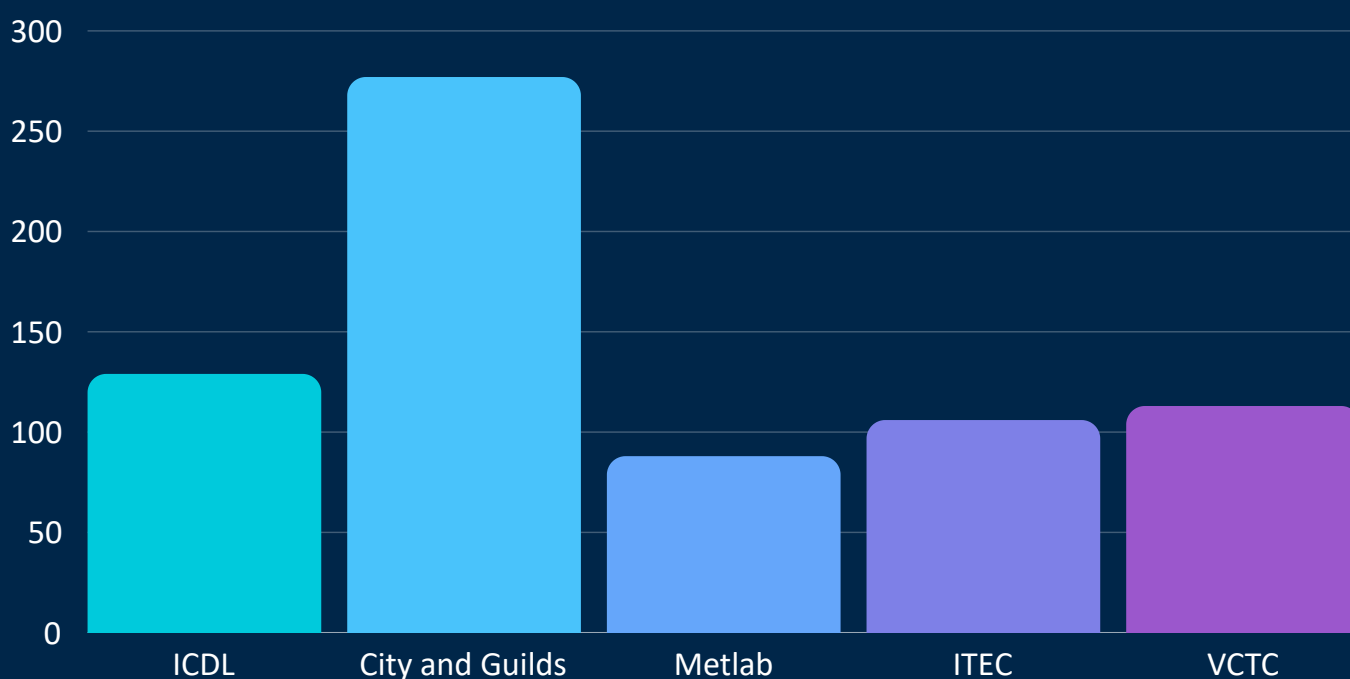
While the majority of certification in Kerry ETB is awarded by QQI, it is important to note that Kerry ETB learners achieve certification across a range of awarding bodies.

Figure 8 illustrates the top five other awarding bodies with whom Kerry ETB learners achieved certificates including ICDL (129), City and Guilds (277), METLAB (88), iTEC (106) and VTCT (113). This is a marked increase in City and Guilds certification, as well as an increase in ICDL and iTEC.

Courses provided across Kerry College Campuses and FET Centres fall into six main categories and respond to needs in the transmission/energy sector, hospitality sectors, hair and beauty sectors, construction and welding industries and office skills.



**Figure 8 - Other Awarding Bodies in Kerry ETB FET Centres/ Kerry College Campuses**



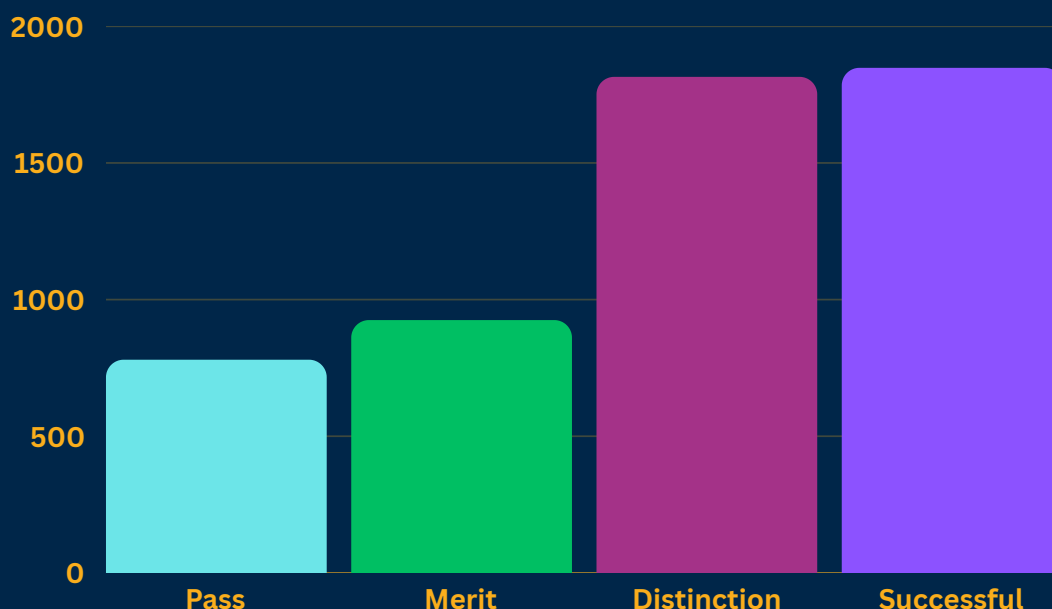
# Grade Results

In 2023 Kerry ETB FET Quality Council commenced tracking grades achieved across all awarding bodies.

In 2024, 780 grades achieved a Pass Standard, 925 achieved a Merit Standard and 1,815 achieved a Distinction Standard. 1,848 were recorded as 'Successful' as the particular certification being sought was ungraded.

Figure 9 illustrates this breakdown.

**Figure 9 - Kerry ETB FET Centres/ Kerry College Campuses Grade Breakdown 2024**

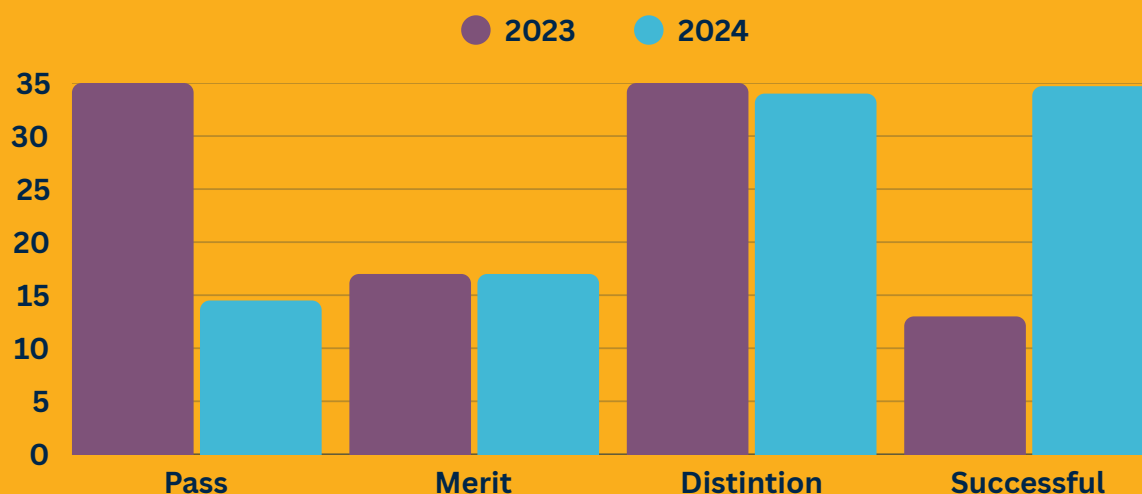


The QA Unit carried out an analysis of this data and with caution (as internal reporting templates were just stabilised in 2024) the ratio percentage of grades of overall certification numbers has not shifted. In 2023, 35% of all grades recorded were at Distinction level with this being recorded as 34% in 2024. In 2023, 17% of all grades recorded were at Merit level and this remained as 17% in 2024.

The most noticeable shift was for results recorded as Pass and Successful. In 2023, 35% of all results were recorded as Pass Grade. In 2024, this declined by a twenty percentage point, to 14.5%. There was a corresponding change to the results recorded as Successful. In 2023, 13% of all results were recorded as Successful. The percentage of results in this category rose to 34.5% in 2024, (an increase of twenty percentage points). It is reasonable to explain this change by the common understanding reached about what results will be categorised as Successful. Any result that does not have an associated grade has been categorised as Successful in 2024 (e.g. all ungraded results).

Figure 10 shows a comparison of the grade as a percentage of the overall certification numbers achieved across the two years. Further analysis will take place in 2025 of each Kerry ETB Campus/ Centre results and it is hoped with stabilised reporting systems that Kerry ETB will be able to take a step closer to developing grade benchmarks across a number of programmes.

**Figure 10 - Breakdown of Pass, Merit, Distinction and Successful grades as a % of all grades in 2024 compared to 2023**





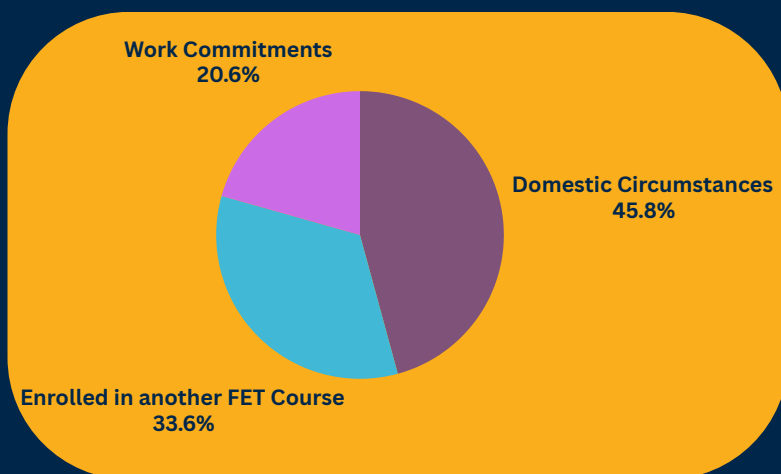
## Learner Retention

The FET Quality Council considered learner retention data at its December meeting having received a report from the QA Governance Board. The data was prepared by the Kerry College Admissions Office and showed that 921 learners finished early. These numbers are based on 2023 and 2024 starters who finished a course early in 2024 and who attended more than 25% of the course.

The FET Quality Council noted that 32% of respondents noted 'unknown' or 'other' as the reasons for leaving. This can be explained by learners not providing these details on early departure from the course but is unhelpful in trying to ascertain and establish trends especially where Kerry ETB is seeking to address future needs.

Top reasons, outside of these areas, include domestic circumstances (162), enrolment in another FET course (119) and work commitments (73). In 2023, domestic circumstances were also the top reason that people identified for leaving a course early. Other reasons differed, with transport and financial reasons most cited in 2023. Kerry ETB FET Management assured the FET Quality Council that it is committed to addressing these issues. Of those that identified reasons (not unknown or other) Figure 11 outlines the top three reasons provided.

**Figure 11 - Top Three Reasons Provided for Early Leavers**





# FET Staff Professional Development



The Continuous Professional Development (CPD) 2023 report was noted by the QA Governance Board and the FET Quality Council. It noted that:

- FET staff spent a total of 4,576 hours undertaking CPD in 2023.
- FET staff attended a total of 87 distinct CPD events during 2023.
- The most CPD events were held in Q1 (34) and the least in Q4 (11).
- 218 individual staff members completed one or more CPD events, with a sum total of 1,095 staff engagements in 2023.
- 38% of CPD events fell under the theme “Working with and supporting learners” accounting for 1,927 hours and 62% of all discreet CPD engagements.

The FET Quality Council also noted that a FET Staff Day was held in Killarney in March 2024.

It provided over 260 staff with access to keynote speakers, workshops and lightening talks. The focus was on ‘Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in FET’ and included workshops/ lightening talks focused on:

- Introduction to Autism
- Artificial Intelligence in Further Education and Training
- Introducing Tony Bazan Mind Maps – A Tool for Teaching and Learning
- Managing Challenging Behaviour in the Classroom
- Developing New QQI Programmes for FET: The Process in Kerry ETB and QQI
- Supporting English as Additional Language (EAL) Students: Current Practice and Future Directions
- A Trauma Informed Approach to FET
- Restorative Practices

Both the CEO, Mr Colm McEvoy and the Director of FET, Mr Owen O’Donnell delivered speeches focused on the transformation of FET in Kerry ETB and the Kerry ETB Strategy Statement 2023-2027.







## Section 3: Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

### Learner Voice and Representation

Hearing the learner voice and engaging with learner representatives is critical for Kerry ETB FET as they provide rich and insightful information to assist in continuous improvement and future development. Kerry ETB is committed to engaging with learners in a number of ways and the FET Quality Council heard reports from learners and of learners' participation in surveys and other initiatives throughout the year.



### Learner Representation at FET Quality Council

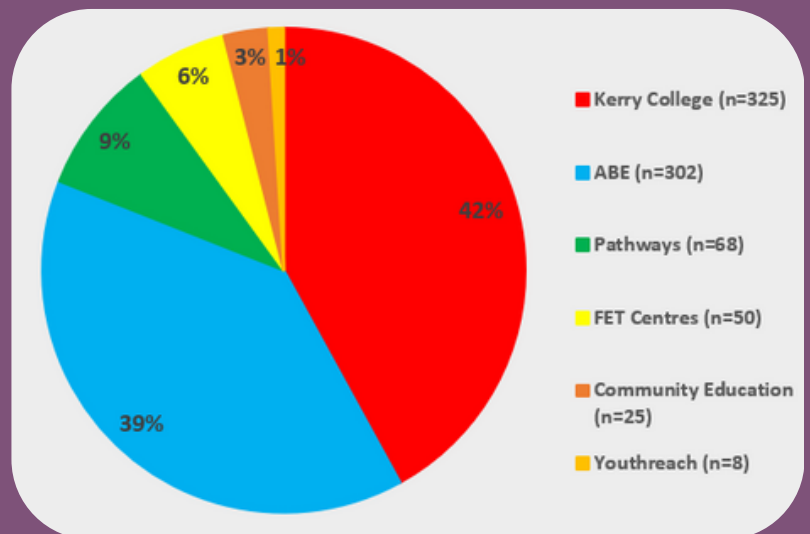
Giving learners an opportunity to attend FET Quality Council meetings is core to the workings of the FET Quality Council. This attendance provides the FET Quality Council with a sample of learner feedback and perspectives which resonate with the findings of the formal surveys.

In 2024, a learner from Kerry College Killorglin Campus attended the meeting in March and a learner from the Adult Literacy Provision attended the meeting in December. Both shared insights on what motivated them to engage with Kerry ETB FET or Kerry College provision and shared some suggestions on how Kerry ETB can continue to improve.

### Kerry ETB FET Learner/Apprentice Survey Results

At the May meeting, the FET Quality Council considered the key takeaways from the annual learner/apprentice survey conducted by the Kerry ETB Quality Assurance Unit which was presented in the 'Learner and Apprenticeship Survey Analysis Report'. 549 learners/apprentices from across all FET provision responded to the survey. Figure 12 shows the breakdown in responses across FET and Kerry College provision.

Figure 12 - The Breakdown in Responses Across FET and Kerry College Provision



The majority of learners/apprentices heard about their course from a friend or family. Learners/apprentices were asked to identify reasons why they decided to take their course and the three most frequently identified reasons were 'to improve their English', to 'learning something new' and to 'get employment.'

The majority of learners/apprentices rated their course very positively, 69% reported that the course was as they expected in terms of difficulty. They reported a wide range of positive impacts associated with their time with Kerry ETB and identified 'new experiences' and the building of 'self-confidence', 'making new friends' and developing a more 'positive outlook on the future'.



They identified that 'learning new skills' was a benefit of attending courses. Majority of learners/apprentices reported that their digital skills improved.

"I liked how the course was semesterised because I felt that by Christmas I had a feeling of achievement although the first semester was very full on. I would like if more activities could be brought into it such as group work"

"I feel that the course was perfect, we had a very small group and we gelled very well. The tutors and staff were very friendly and helpful and there was a fun atmosphere, which motivated us to come in every day, and get the work done on time"

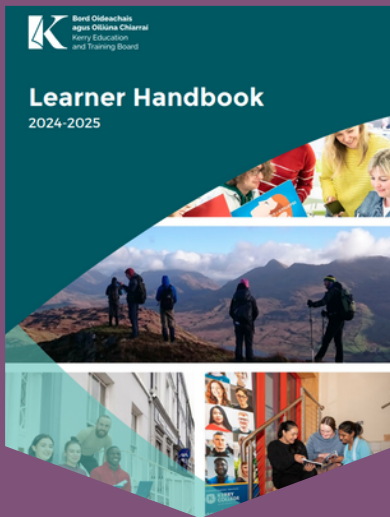
# Kerry ETB and Aontas Regional FET Learner Forum



In February 2024 Kerry ETB partnered with Aontas to facilitate a Regional FET Learner Forum. This took place in The Rose Hotel, Tralee and followed on from a learner survey that was circulated by Kerry ETB on behalf of AONTAS. The Regional FET Learner Forum offered Kerry ETB FET learners an additional opportunity to share their voice. Trained AONTAS facilitators support focus group participants to engage in dialogue, to reflect on their experiences in Further Education and Training, and to share their ideas and proposals.

The AONTAS Research Team recorded and transcribed all learner contributions. The accompanying learner survey provides additional insight into the adult learner experience. AONTAS analyses the resulting data and conducted a thematic analysis. All regional report findings were collated in and published in an overarching, synthesis report, Learner Voices Across Ireland.

There were 11 focus groups and 139 learners participated in the survey. Kerry ETB learners discussed many issues including their motivations for attending Kerry ETB FET courses; the positive impact of FET; a sense of belonging; range of supports across Kerry ETB; buildings and facilities; digital inclusion and course provision teaching and learning. They also identified critical issues impacting on their FET learning and noted their satisfaction across a number of areas including initial interview; Kerry College and Kerry ETB websites; the laptop device loan scheme and access to technology. Core areas for improvement were identified. The FET Quality Council noted how the themes arising from the Aontas survey aligned with the themes emerging from the learner/apprentice survey conducted by the QA Unit.



## Kerry ETB Learner Engagement Handbook Review

Learners were also involved in a consultation process for review and re-development of the Learner Handbook. Learners are engaged through surveys and focus groups and offer a wide range of perspectives and experiences that assist the FET Quality Council, and particularly the QA Unit, to enhance quality assurance activity.

## Employer Engagement

Kerry ETB engaged with employers across the region through a variety of activities including business and chamber meetings, as well as briefing employers at a regional level. Such engagement is critical to assist in determining the needs and to deliver courses to meet specific skills and societal needs.



## Assessment Procedures Review and Modification

The FET Quality Council agreed to the modifications of three assessment procedures based on a review conducted by the QA Unit. The procedures that were modified were:

- [6.11 Internal Verification](#)
- [6.12 External Authentication](#)
- [6.13 Results Approval Procedure](#)

A consultation process commenced on the [6.5 Secure Storage](#) Procedure.



## External Authentication Reports Key Themes

In 2024, 37 External Authenticators from the ETBI EA database were engaged to externally authenticate across the range of further education and training and post-2016 apprenticeship provision over 116 days. Some of this was conducted remotely (28 days) while most took place onsite (90 days). External Authentication takes place to provide independent authoritative confirmation that fair and consistent assessment of learners can take place. It takes place after “internal verification” which is an internal monitoring process to ensure that Kerry ETB systems and procedures are adhered to for the entire assessment process.

Table 2 shows the number of days and number of external authentication reports received across all certification periods

**Table 2 - External Authentication - FET Centres/ Kerry College  
Campuses and Post-2016 Apprenticeships**

Certification Period	Number of days of external authentication	Number of external authentication reports
February 2024 certification	3	2
April 2024 certification	29	33
June 2024 certification	44	98
August 2024 certification	17	12
October 2024 certification	14	8
December 2024 certification	11	8

In total 161 EA reports were received. These reports were collated and analysed. This formed the basis for the collated External Authentication Collated Reports prepared by the QA Unit which were considered by the FET Quality Council. These reports summarise external authentication reports from across FET provision to identify areas of good practice, areas for improvement and common themes. These reports also provide information to inform each Campus/ Centre Continuous Improvement Plan.

In the majority of External Authenticator reports, it was documented that:

- Assessment plans are clear
- Assessment deadlines are clearly communicated to learners
- Assessment briefs are clearly written
- Marking schemes provide a detailed breakdown
- There is evidence of feedback on assessment being provided
- There is evidence of integration of assessment (where applicable)
- Assessment documentation is informed by UDL

EAs also commented on the use of One Drive and the ease of access to both assessor and learner evidence folders. The FET Quality Council noted that some work is yet to be done on providing clear marking schemes with detailed breakdown in some areas.



## Continuous Improvement Plans

Each campus/ centre prepares a Continuous Improvement Plan that details quality enhancement activities for the year ahead. Most activities are identified as a result of external authentication processes with some emanating from internal verification processes. Analysis of key themes and key activities in 2024 will be considered by FET Quality Council in early 2025.



## Section 4: Role as the Apprenticeship Quality Council

The FET Quality Council has a specific role as the apprenticeship Quality Council for Kerry ETB post-2016 apprenticeships. The New Apprenticeship model is more generally known as Post-2016 Apprenticeship and Kerry ETB is the co-ordinating provider for two new apprenticeships. The FET Quality Council ensures that Kerry ETB operates in accordance to the QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Apprenticeship Programmes (2016).

Apprentices on these programmes are employed and paid under a contract of apprenticeship. For each of the apprenticeships a consortia of employers proposed the apprenticeships and submitted an occupational profile to the National Apprenticeship Council for their approval. The approved Occupational Profile is a core element of these programmes as it sets out clear information on the occupational skills, knowledge and competences that apprentices will acquire through training.

The specific role of the Quality Council is outlined in the terms of reference and it ensures that both programme development and delivery is aligned to employer needs and labour market trends and it provides oversight of quality assurance systems. To fulfil this oversight function, it reserves part of its agenda to receive these reports from the National Programme Boards, National Examination Boards and Consortia Steering Groups through the National Programme Co-ordinators.

### Commis Chef Apprenticeship

The Commis Chef programme prepares apprentices to train for full competence as a Commis Chef over a two-year period. This programme is delivered via both on the job and off the job training and prepares apprentices to carry out cooking tasks to produce finished dishes.

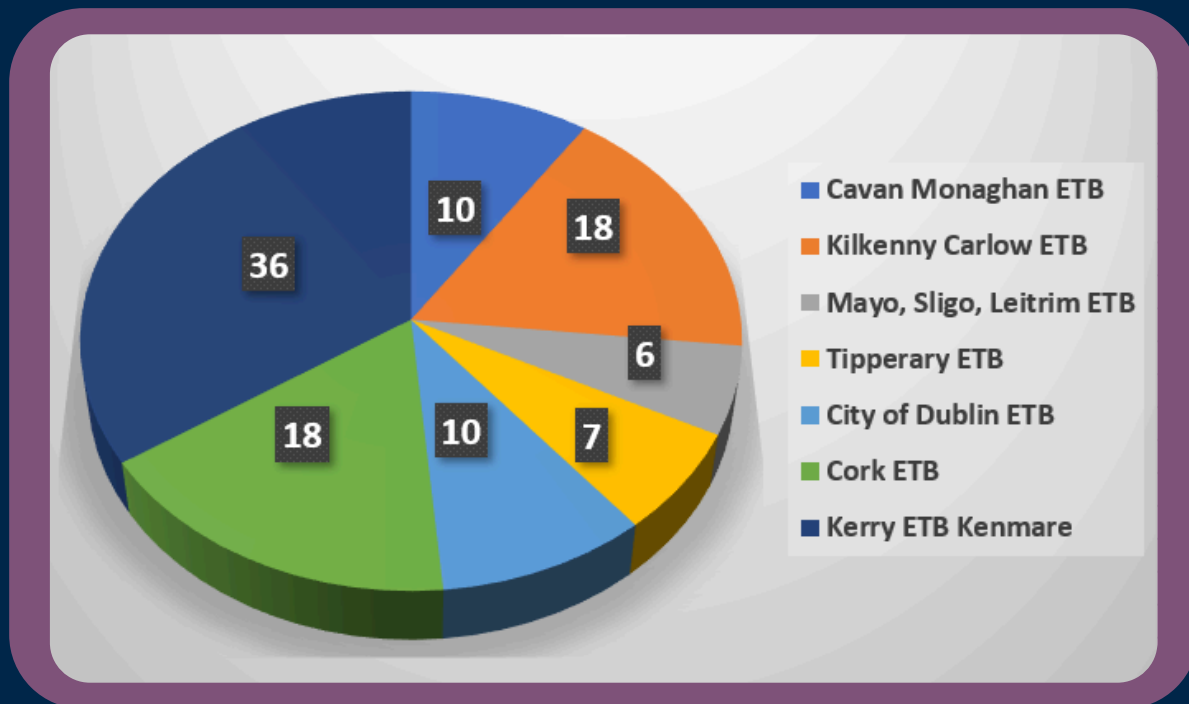
The FET Quality Council received a 'Consolidated Graduate Report' and a 'Consolidated Withdrawal Report' from the National Programme Co-ordinator, Mallory Higgins. An update of the 'Annual Programme Review Process' was also received. The FET Quality Council also received a report from the National Programme Board (NPB) after a review of the assessment process. This

review prompted a recommendation from the NPB proposal to modify the requirement of the mentor qualification and approved the updated QA documentation for use across this apprenticeship. This was ratified by the FET Quality Council.

The FET Quality Council ratified results for certification requests and to allow for progression. In 2024, fifty-six (56) apprentices completed year one. 73% of these completers were male and 27% were female. Figure 13 illustrates the breakdown of results for year one completers across six ETB locations in 2024. It demonstrates that Kerry ETB brought the lionshare of results for year one through in 2024, followed by Cork ETB.

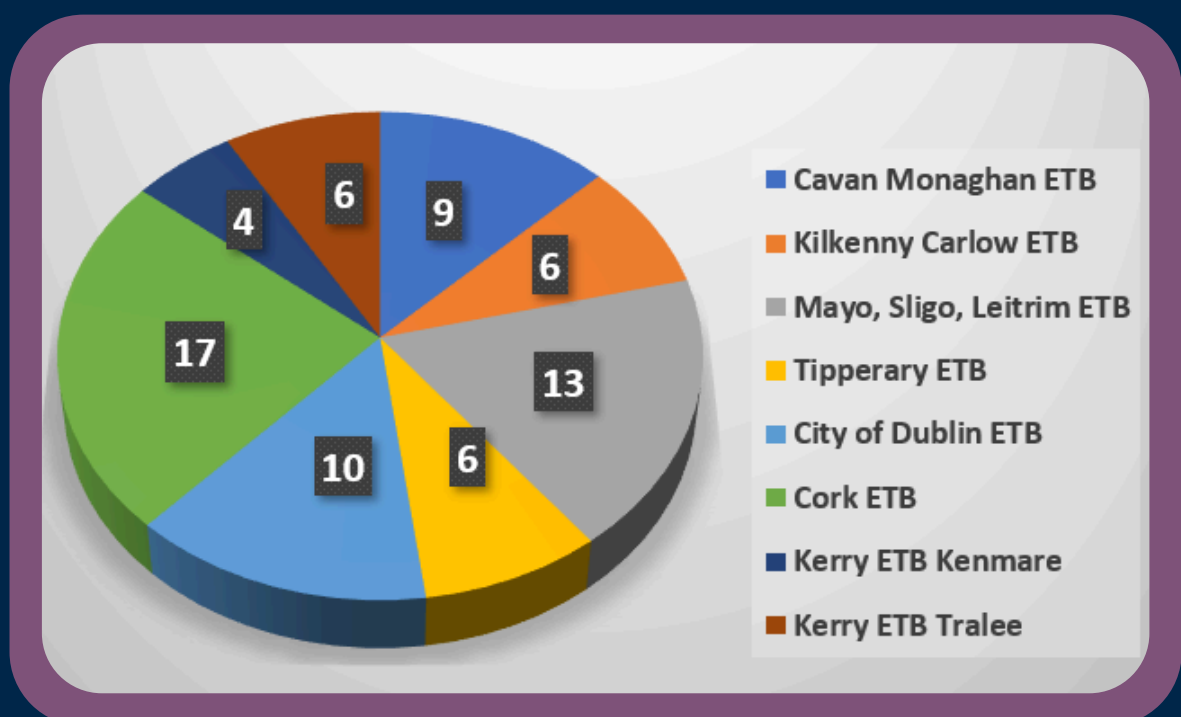


Figure 13 - Commis Chef Apprenticeship Award Results Ratified for Completion of Year 1



In 2025, 71 apprentices completed the Commis Chef apprenticeship, that is they exited with a full award on completion of the three year programme. Figure 14 illustrates the breakdown by location for the completed award stage. In 2024 Cork ETB has the largest percentage of those completing the award (24%) and were closely followed by Kerry ETB (21%).

Figure 14 - Commis Chef Apprenticeship Award Results Ratified for Completed Award Stage





# Wind Turbine Maintenance Technician Apprenticeship

The Wind Turbine Maintenance Technician apprenticeship programme prepares apprentices to carry out core maintenance tasks on commercial wind turbines. During the apprenticeship programmes, apprentices learn to select the correct methods, tools and equipment for the daily tasks, as well as applying the method in a safe and effective way. They also learn to interpret and communicate technical information correctly. This programme is delivered over 102 weeks (on the job) and 65 weeks (in centre/ off the job).

The centre based elements of the programme focus on the developing technical understanding, followed by the application of practical skills. The employer based elements focus on consolidating technical understanding and reaching a level of competency through coaching and mentoring.

At its June meeting, the FET Quality Council considered a modification to the validated WTMT apprenticeship programme which was recommended by the National Programme Board (NPB). The modification related to a change in the research theme for the Capstone Assessment at the close of the apprenticeship programme and the recording of this in the Module Revision Form and the Assessment Brief. The FET Quality Council received a report from the National Programme Co-ordinator, Kasia Lyko to assist in its decision making.

## Revalidation of Wind Turbine Maintenance Technician Programme

In 2024 the FET Quality Council approved the commencement of the Wind Turbine Maintenance Technician Programme review and revalidation process. A key aspect of the process is that the ETB can demonstrate engagement with relevant stakeholders as well as engagement in deliberate review and self-evaluation processes.

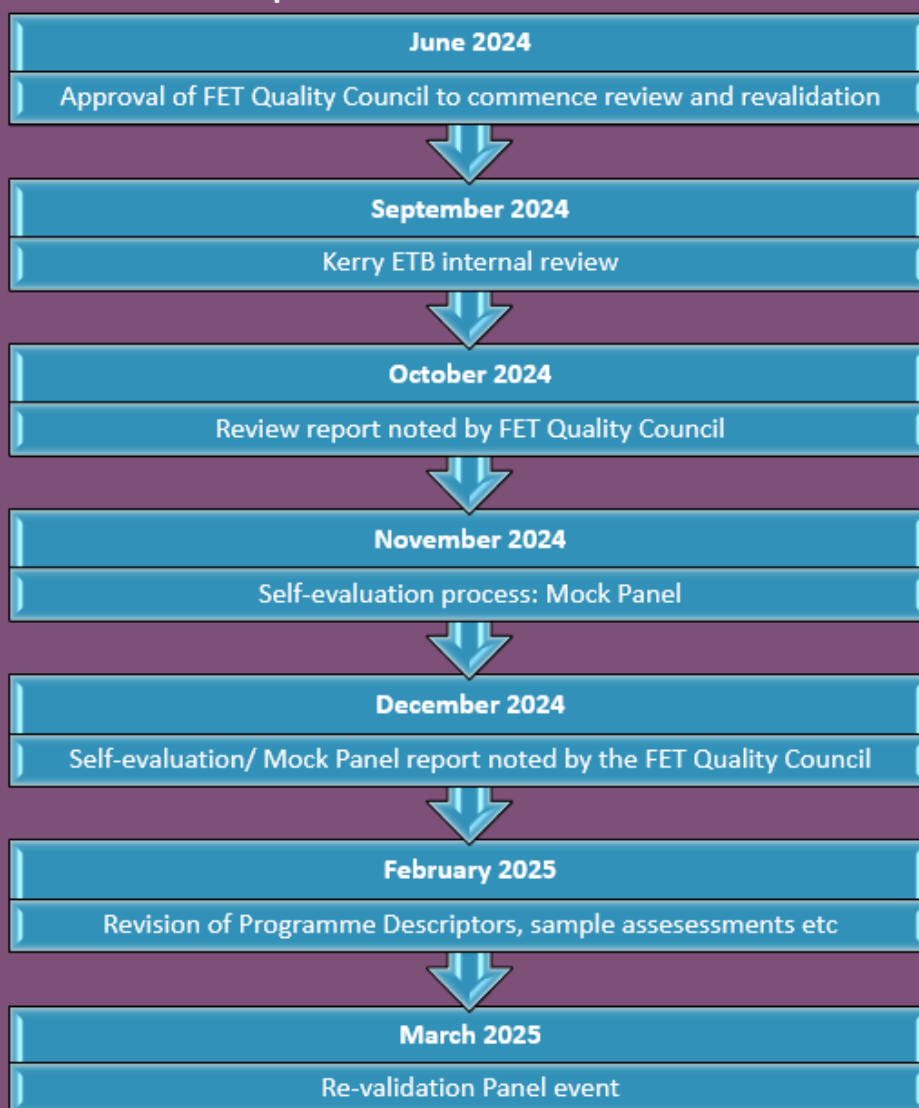
The FET Quality Council also noted the request from the Consortium Steering group to extend the validation period of the programme to April 2025 and noted this extension at the June meeting. The rationale for this change was the apprenticeship's first intake did not take place until November 2022. The extension has allowed Kerry ETB to consider a more complete picture of the programme up to and including outcomes for centre based modules in year 2.

Thirty three apprentices enrolled on the programme in the period November 2022 to May 2024 in Kerry ETB. A small number have withdrawn prior to their completion date. Two apprentices left from the 1st intake (2022), two from the 2nd intake (2023) and one from the 3rd intake (2024).

At the end of 2024 there were twenty eight apprentices enrolled on the programme, (twenty six males and two females). Twelve apprentices from the 1st intake are scheduled to graduate in November 2025. Twelve apprentices from the 2nd intake are scheduled to graduate in October 2026. The remaining four apprentices from the 3rd intake are scheduled to graduate in May 2027.



The re-validation process and timelines are outlined below:



Both new apprenticeships are subject to the same quality assurance procedures to support assessment processes internal verification and external authentications processes take place. Specific data related to the EAs for the Commis Chef Apprenticeship and the Wind Turbine Maintenance Technician is outlined in Table 3.

**Table 3 - External Authentication for New Apprenticeships**

Certification Period	Number of days of external authentication	Number of external authentication reports
February 2024 certification	2	1
April 2024 certification	8	4
June 2024 certification	4	2
August 2024 certification	4	2
October 2024 certification	9	4
December 2024 certification	9	6



## FET Quality Council Members



Brendan Tuohy  
Chairperson



Owen O'Donnell  
Secretariat



Aoife Mc Cormack  
Assistant Secretariat



John Skinner  
Staff Member



Mary Jo Staunton  
Staff Member



Stephen Goulding  
Staff Member



Con O'Sullivan  
National Apprenticeship  
Programme Board



Shivaun Shanahan  
Staff Member



Kevin Fay  
Staff Member



Elaine O'Connor  
Staff Member



Jenny Conroy  
External Member



Michael Vaughan  
External Member

## In Attendance



Aoife Comiskey Clifford



Bríd Walsh



Blaithín Shanahan O'Mahony  
Administrator

## Membership of the Kerry ETB FET Quality Council

**Chairperson** Brendan Tuohy, Former Secretary-General of the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources

**Secretariat** Owen O'Donnell, Director of Further Education and Training (FET)

**Assistant Secretariat** Aoife McCormack, AEO/Quality Assurance Officer

**Staff Member** John Skinner, Deputy Principal of Kerry College Denny Street

**Staff Member** Mary Jo Staunton, Medical Administration Secretary Instructor, Kerry College Monavalley Campus

**Staff Member** Stephen Goulding, Principal of Kerry College Clash, Denny Street and Listowel Campus

**National Apprenticeship Programme Board Representative** Con O'Sullivan, Kerry College Monavalley Campus Manager

**Staff Member** Shivaun Shanahan, AEO, Youthreach and VTOS/Pathways

**Staff Member** Kevin Fay, AEO, FET Centres

**Staff Member** Elaine O'Connor, AEO, Kerry College Admissions Unit

**External Member** Jenny Conroy, Quality Assurance Manager, ETBI

**External Member** Michael Vaughan, Irish Hotel Federation/ Proprietor Vaughan Lodge Hotel

### QA Unit staff in attendance at meetings

- Blaithín Shanahan O'Mahony, Administrator, QA Unit Kerry ETB
- Aoife Comiskey Clifford, Curriculum Development Officer, QA Unit
- Dr Bríd Walsh, Further Education Standards Officer, QA Unit



# Kerry Education and Training Board



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