

Quality Assurance Review Follow-Up Report

Donegal ETB Education and Training Board

Date: March - 2023



QQI

Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann



PREFACE

Following publication of the review report, and one year after submission of its Quality Assurance (QA) review action plan, each ETB submits a **follow-up report** to QQI on progress against the plan, and how it is addressing the outcomes of the review. The report should identify the range of strategic and logistical developments and decisions that have occurred within the ETB since the publication of the review report and address each of the key findings and recommendations that the reviewers presented. Significant milestones should also be included, as well as any reflections and learnings from the inaugural review process.

Each follow-up report is **published in full on QQI's website**, providing transparency on the ETBs' assurance and enhancement of quality to external stakeholders.

The follow-up report is part of the inaugural review process. Subsequent reporting will be through QQI's annual reporting and dialogue processes.

This is the follow-up report for Donegal ETB

It is to be submitted by 13/03/23

The follow-up report has been approved by Donegal ETB Quality Council and is submitted by Joe Whitelock (QA Coordinator)

CONTENTS

PREFACE	2
1.0 Follow-up Report Post-Review	4
2.0 Teaching, Learning & Assessment	22
3.0 Self-Evaluation, Monitoring & Review	34
4.0 Update on other additional QA Objectives/actions arising from internal QA planning and monitoring	38
5.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies	41
Case Study Title: Donegal Women In Business Network (DWBN)	41
Case Study Title: Donegal ETB UDL Professional Learning Network (PLN)	43
Case Study Title: Donegal ETB FET Service Student Hub	44

1.0 Follow-up Report Post-Review

Links to policies and procedures have been included that have **not been already included or have been amended** since the ETB's Self-Evaluation Report as part of the review process.

1.02 Structures & Terms of Reference for Governance of QA

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Planned Actions	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
<p>1. The review team recommends wider representation of learners within the governance structures to strengthen the learner voice in ongoing self-evaluation at Donegal ETB. The regular systematic collection of student views and ensuring the inclusion of a wider diversification of voices within the formal structures will be fundamental to the shaping of Donegal ETB's improvement journey.</p> <p>6. The review team recommends wider and deeper engagement with both internal and external stakeholders to ensure that all voices, particularly the learner voice, are able to shape and influence the emerging single QA process.</p>	<p>Donegal ETB will continue to develop mechanisms for the regular and systematic collection of student views ensuring the inclusion of a wide diversification of voices within formal quality assurance structures to allow them to contribute to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Quality assurance (QA) enhancement and the development of the integrated QA system. ● Programme evaluations to help continual improvement in programme delivery. ● Self-monitoring and evaluation to inform improvement. 	<p>Donegal ETB continues to actively seek ways to develop mechanisms through which FET students can systematically and periodically contribute to QA developments and enhancements. A number of mechanisms for the collection of the student voice have been developed since 2020.</p> <p>The FET wide Student Voice has been a recurring annual event since 2020 and is now in its fourth year. The aim of the event is to gather feedback from students regarding their experiences of various aspects of Donegal ETB's FET Service provision.</p> <p>Topics have included the student's experience of teaching, learning and assessment, the learning environment, returning to learning following the pandemic, student health and well-being, planning for future programmes and programme design, student progression and raising awareness of FET.</p> <p>Included in each event is a 'you said – we did' presentation, which outlines progress made toward feedback provided by students in previous events.</p> <p>A report is generated after each student voice event based on feedback from participants. The report is shared widely across the FET Service, including SMT and the Governance and Management groups, to inform future QA planning and developments.</p>

<p>8. The review team recommends wider representation on the QA governance structures. This will strengthen the shaping of Donegal ETB's improvement journey and will ensure the inclusion of a wider diversification of voices within the formal structures. Specifically, the review team recommends the inclusion of learners, industry and community sector representatives throughout the QA structures as relevant; and that systematic wider and deeper engagement with these groups to ensure all voices, particularly the learner voice, are able to shape and influence the emerging single QA process.</p>	<p>A review of current QA governance membership will be undertaken to include more diverse representation including the voice of students, industry and community stakeholders.</p> <p>Protocols will be established for engagement with industry and community stakeholders to systematically document how the ETB engages with these groups, and how they can input into our QA governance structures.</p> <p>Further mechanisms for the inclusion and representation of the student voice within our QA governance structures will be investigated and explored</p>	<p>In May 2022 the Governance and Management Student Forum was established in response to a number of key objectives directly related to the Learner Voice.</p> <p>The development of this forum is a key element of the new Donegal ETB Strategy Statement 2022-2026, where it is stated: "We place students at the centre of our work. Everything we do to serve the best interests of our students is based on our core values: excellence; equality; care; community, and respect".</p> <p>The forum is held four times each year. Students from across the FET Service are invited to attend to represent their programme areas. Due to the transient nature of the student population, each meeting may have different students representing their areas.</p> <p>The agenda items reflect those of the Governance and Management groups relating to new programmes, programme development and delivery, new policies and procedures and other aspects related to the development of the integrated QA system. Feedback is gathered and a report is developed and presented to the Governance and Management groups for review and response. The aim of the forum is to provide a channel for the student voice in QA planning and decision-making with clear communication between the groups.</p> <p>As part of a national initiative to record the impacts of community education and the benefits of community learning, the FET community provision has piloted a community learner survey. This survey aims to capture the wider outcomes that may occur because of participation in ETB adult literacy and community education provision. These outcomes are classified as broad, overarching categories, such as employability and personal development. The results from the survey enable the FET Service to move beyond anecdotal evidence and present learner feedback from participation in courses in a structured and systematic manner.</p> <p>At a local level, the community learner survey will enable the Community provision to find out what students want from the course and set target-</p>
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learning outcomes. From a strategic viewpoint, it will enable the recording of vital data, which will help with reporting and future planning.

Feedback from the initial pilot has been very positive and plans are underway for a wider roll-out of the survey.

In 2022, a review of current QA governance membership was undertaken. The review led to the addition of both internal and external members to the different groups. The Programme Sub-Committee and QA Sub-Committee now have wider representation including teachers, tutors and instructors. The Quality Council has further external representation from industry and community.

Donegal ETBs FET Service continues to establish ways of engaging with industry and community stakeholders. The purpose of the Enterprise Engagement Working Group (EEWG) is to foster stronger links with local enterprise and other relevant stakeholders. This is documented annually in the Skills to Advance Planning Report which clearly identifies how the ETB engages with various groups and who these groups are. The report also contains clear key performance indicators (indicative targets) for employer initiatives in 2023.

FET Service staff representatives engage with Community Stakeholders on a regular basis. A top-level report which documents engagement is reviewed by the relevant Senior Manager. The findings of the report are shared annually at the Community Provision Seminar. Both of the reports inform future strategic planning.

Commentary and Reflections

One of the benefits of the Inaugural Review Process is the positive impact it has had on developing a wider understanding of Quality Assurance across the Service. The focus has moved away from an assessment based quality process to a FET Service-wide oversight of quality assurance, which encompasses the learner journey from start to end and beyond.

Link to Updated Policy & Procedures

[Updated QA Policy](#)

1.03 Documentation of QA

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Planned Actions	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
<p>2. The review team recommends the development of a programme plan with clear priorities, targets and timelines to take its quality assurance journey to the next level. This should include the development of a route map to QA integration, supported by robust programme management with associated priorities, targets and timelines to drive continuous improvement.</p> <p>9. Recognising work already underway to progress the QA integration project, the review team recommends that any further work undertaken include analysis of consistent and wide reaching qualitative and quantitative data for quality enhancement purposes and ensure regular thematic analysis and benchmarking.</p> <p>10. The review team recommends the establishment of a robust programme plan with achievable timelines for the completion of the integrated quality assurance approach.</p>	<p>Donegal ETB will develop an internal operational QA action plan to help monitor, review and evaluate QA actions, which have been identified within the QQI review Report.</p> <p>A Quality Assurance Steering group will be established to pilot and project manage short, medium and long term quality assurance plans allowing for the further development of the Integrated Quality Assurance system.</p> <p>An initial one-year plan will be created based around the 7 themes of grouped recommendations identified in the review report and this will form the basis of the developing QA system.</p>	<p>A QA Operational Action Plan has been developed and implemented. The plan has been designed to monitor the progress of QA actions arising from the QQI Inaugural Review Report also incorporating QA actions/plans that support the development of the new QA system and operational day-to-day activities. The areas for action have been grouped in line with the QQI 11 Core Guidelines.</p> <p>The operational action plan clearly identifies the Core Guideline being addressed, intended outcomes with clear timeframes and the name of the Project Manager responsible for leading the completion of the individual project plan.</p> <p>The data project plan is reviewed regularly to monitor clearly defined actions geared towards improvement of use of both quantitative (performance from PLSS system) and qualitative data (thematic analysis of student voice and local surveys for data requirements).</p> <p>One-year plans are developed from the operational plan and reviewed to ensure priorities are current and progress is being made.</p> <p>A Quality Assurance Steering group (QASG) has been established to inform and agree priorities for the development of the QA system in line with the strategic direction of the Donegal ETB's FET service and national policy imperatives.</p>

		The QASG regularly monitors the goals and objectives of the QA operational plan and ensures they are progressed in a timely manner.
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Commentary and Reflections

The Inaugural Review process allowed time and resources to reflect on planning the integrated QA system and develop a system that can drive continual improvements for the benefit of the FET Service and its stakeholders.

1.04 Staff Recruitment, Management & Development

Commentary and Reflections

The staffing structure of the Quality Assurance Support Service has changed since the QQI Inaugural Review. A new dedicated QA Manager was appointed in April 2022 to further centralise quality assurance across the FET service.

1.05 Programme Development, Approval & Submission

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Planned Actions	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
11. The review team recommends the introduction of a consistent approach to programme development by Donegal ETB.	Produce and implement a Programme Development and Approval Policy and procedures to ensure a consistent approach to programme development.	Donegal ETB's FET Service Quality Council approved a Programme Development and Approval policy in March 2022. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the development of programmes is conducted systematically, leading to fit for purpose programmes that are in line with Donegal ETB FET Service and National Strategy for the FET sector. The policy and associated procedures also seek to ensure that all programmes undergo a robust design, development and approval process in line with 'Policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training' (QQI 2017) and with the approval requirements of other awarding bodies.

Commentary and Reflections

The review report identified that no new programmes had been developed under the QQI programme validation process and that this was an area for Donegal ETB to consider. Since the review report was published Donegal ETB has successfully validated with QQI a 10 credit Level 6 Special Purpose Certificate in Work Based Learning, which has been rolled out with employers and trainers from a range of sectors in Donegal.

In addition to this QQI Differential Validation was gained for the following micro credentials:

- L4 Environmental Sustainability Awareness 4S21809
- L5 Environmental Sustainability in the Workplace 5S21793
- L5 Digital Skills for Business 5S21869

Donegal ETB are also well advanced with a 10 credit L4 Digital Citizenship Special Purpose award that is being developed in conjunction with City of Dublin ETB, with a view to being submitted to QQI for validation in March 2023

These activities have been supported by CPD completed by three staff members who completed the Level 9 Certificate in Programme Design and Validation in Further Education and Training at Maynooth University.

Link to Updated Policy & Procedures

[Donegal ETB FET Service Programme Development and Approval Policy](#)

1.06 Access, Transfer and Progression

Commentary and Reflections

The review team commended Donegal ETB on its leadership in relation to Access, Transfer and Progression and its Recognition of Prior Learning Programme. Given the critical importance of both initiatives to ensuring fair and equitable access to learning for all, Donegal ETB has continued to progress its ambitions in this area and continues to collaborate with partners on developing and articulating clear progression pathways for learners.

The North West Tertiary Education Cluster (NWTEC) supports learners to reach their full potential by being able to stay in their region, thus incurring less economic costs, while also being able to develop their own learning. This allows under-represented groups in socio-economically disadvantaged regions the opportunity to learn and live in their region, which also speaks to the equality and social inclusion agenda.

The cluster consists of four educational partners: Donegal ETB, North West Regional College (NWRC), Ulster University (UU) and Atlantic Technical University (ATU) Donegal. The cluster is in the process of establishing a website, where all four educational partners will detail their course offering and have very clear pathways and progression routes. Donegal ETB has mapped its entire course offering using the International Standard Classification of Education codes, while the other three educational institutions are in the process of doing the same piece of work.

The Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education, Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science North South Student Enrolment in Tertiary Education in July 2022 made recommendations in terms of supporting pathways for cross border learners:

- Extend SUSI support to the payment of tuition fees to the four approved institutions in NI, as is currently the case for postgraduate studies. This issue should be included in the larger reform agenda of SUSI.
- Increase cross border pathways from further education to higher education. Work with NI HEIs and the Executive to remove residence criteria from postgraduate study in the NI for students from the ROI.
- A review should be undertaken by the Department of FHERIS into how coordination and integration of the UCAS and CAO system can be improved to make the application for HEIs in both jurisdictions as easy as possible for all prospective students. This can range from simple policies such as arranging the timing of the CAO result to correspond to UCAS results. It should also include engaging with CAO and partners in NI and GB to remove the UCAS exclusivity criteria for NI HEIs so they can offer courses directly through CAO.

The NWTEC also made a joint submission to the Department of Further and Higher Education in terms of the DFHERIS document: 2022 Spotlight on Actions Progressing the Development of a More Unified Tertiary System. The vision is that there will be clear and extensive pathways for students, learners, researchers and innovators and expansive skills and qualification frameworks aligned to current and future skills needs.

ATU Donegal commenced delivery of Electrical Phase 4 and 6 training in September 2021 following significant support from Donegal ETB which has a very long history of providing Electrical Apprenticeship training at its Training Centres in Letterkenny and Gaoth Dobhair. Donegal ETB Apprenticeship team continues to work with ATU staff in exploring opportunities for further expansion of Apprenticeship Training in Donegal.

The NWTEC has established a Smart Industry Board to work collaboratively with key stakeholders to respond to the skills needs of the region. The board has representatives from industry, Donegal County Council, Derry City and Strabane District Council, North West Regional Skills Forum, Invest NI, Fáilte Ireland, and the four education partners.

An indication of how the partners contribute to the economic development of the region is that FinTrU, a technologically enabled Regulatory Solutions company, has announced the establishment of a European Delivery Centre in Letterkenny and the creation of 300 jobs over the next five years. They have just announced in February 2023 an additional 300 new FinTrU graduate entry jobs in Derry. FinTrU, which has had a presence in Derry for a number of years, has forged a great partnership with the education partners where NWRC and Ulster University have provided a Skills Academy to train their staff and FinTrU's initial base in Donegal will be at the CoLab at ATU Donegal.

As a result of the work of the NWTEC, staff from each of the four educational institutions are exchanging ideas for future projects and making use of sharing facilities, for example within each engineering department for the Formula 24 project. Working together ensures that innovative ideas and specialist expertise are shared across the cluster and this level of collaboration is more economical in terms of sharing equipment and infrastructure.

Staff are able to benefit from relationships with colleagues in other institutions, as well as partnerships with industry, this ensures that the curriculum is kept modern and current. Continuous staff development and sharing resources and knowledge also enhance the student experience. Staff teams from Donegal ETB, ATU Donegal and NWRC are collaborating with electric vehicle specialists Hyundai to prepare for the ensuing transition to Electric Vehicles. The innovative new courses offered by ATU Donegal and Donegal ETB have been designed to allow graduates to work in this industry which is undergoing the rapid transition from internal combustion engines. Donegal ATU continue to use the modern facilities available at Letterkenny Training Centre for the delivery of practical elements of their Electrical Vehicle courses.

A matrix of course provision has been developed at undergraduate and postgraduate level across the partner institutions mapping common areas, specialist areas and progression opportunities. A visual map has been created which outlines the pathways for learners moving from Further Education to Higher Education programmes.

The articulation agreement between ATU Donegal and Donegal ETB examines entry requirements for Level 5 awards to each ATU Donegal award under the categories: (i) Essential Major Award Requirements, (ii) Essential Component Award Requirements and (iii) Donegal ETB Acceptable Programmes. Where quotas apply to FET award holders these are also set out. The articulation agreement also addresses advanced entry (into Year 2) for holders of Level 6 awards from Donegal ETB. This agreement is reviewed annually to ensure it remains current.

Further work is required to continue to enhance the work of the NWTEC. Research within each institution is underway to ensure that course provision addresses emerging needs; this poses an opportunity to offer exciting new courses targeted at areas such as climate change. For

example, ATU Donegal and NWRC will be collaborating on Republic of Ireland Level 6 & 7 courses in Electric Vehicle Technology. There needs to be a further examination of entry requirements into programmes and qualification equivalencies to address existing anomalies that encompasses the recognition of further education qualifications, Leaving Certificate, GCSE and A-Level qualifications. Collaboration will continue with the key aim of developing pathways and progression to promote the region as an attractive place to live with good education and job opportunities.

Locally within centres, work is continuing on improving the Access, Transfer and Progression process. More online sessions are being advertised and offered. The events are being advertised on social media to raise awareness of the FET Service provision and to provide potential students with relevant programme information supporting them to make the right choice of course. Further enhancements have been made with opportunities for potential students to meet with tutors as well as support in preparing for their interview. Engagement with post primary schools continues to strengthen. Every month schools are invited into the Training Centre where centre tours and FET/Apprenticeship information sessions are conducted for year five and six pupils. Examples of the effectiveness of this initiative are already evident. The Basic Welding Course delivered in Gweedore (September 2022) experienced a significant rise in applications from the Leaving Certificate, with the majority of the students taking up a place directly from Leaving Certificate, making FET their first choice!

Recently in collaboration with Post Primary schools Donegal ETB offered 5th and 6th year pupils the opportunity to gain a Welding qualification by providing Friday afternoon welding classes. Furthermore, some evening class provision courses have waived fees to remove barriers to participation.

Following Covid restrictions, the FET Fair was successfully resumed in 2022. The Fair was held over two days with the first day aimed exclusively at Leaving Certificate students and their parents/guardians, school guidance counsellors and principals and those currently working and seeking to upskill. FET staff provided information on Post Leaving Certificate (PLC), specific skills training courses, traineeships and apprenticeships and explained first-hand what the benefits of FET are for school leavers. Information was also provided on initiatives for those who are currently working and looking to upskill with free or subsidised part-time training opportunities from Levels 4-6 or for low skilled workers who, without the opportunity to participate in training, may not have the confidence to embrace change in the workplace.

The second day was open to everyone who wanted information on the wide range of full, part-time, evening and online education and training opportunities offered by Donegal ETB's FET Service. Tutors and advisers were available to talk through the ETB's comprehensive range of opportunities with qualifications including QQI, City & Guilds and industry-specific certification that allow students to choose their next best step. Current students were present and spoke to prospective students to inform them what it is like to undertake a Donegal ETB FET course.

The Fair was a huge success with over one thousand people attending over the two days. Surveys conducted from attendees suggested that over 92% of people who completed the survey reported that they were very satisfied or satisfied with the event. The survey also showed that attendees (students and parents) from fourteen Donegal schools attended the event. Many of the comments made in the survey related to how informative the sessions were and how competent and friendly the staff were when offering advice and guidance on their courses.

Recognition of Prior Learning

Since February 2021, the RPL Programme has gone from strength to strength. The initial partnership project with Limerick and Clare ETB funded under 'SOLAS Innovation through Collaboration (Skills to Advance)', 'Validating Competencies of Care Sector Employees (VCCSE)', by far exceeded its projected ambitions, resulting in RPL being embedded as a key process within Donegal ETB and the mainstreaming of an RPL Office in July 2022. A full-time RPL Coordinator leads a team of twelve part-time mentors and five subject matter experts from various ETBs. Over 550 beneficiaries have been supported in the last two years to achieve qualifications at NFQ Levels 5 and 6 in Healthcare, Childcare, Management, Administration, Business, Sport and Community Development.

The Validating Competencies of Care Sector Employees Project (VCCSE) provided space to develop, test and evaluate RPL policies and procedures. RPL defines a process for FET providers that is different to formal teaching/learning and examination/assessment processes that are associated with delivering a taught programme. This led to the development of relevant documentation and procedures to support and quality assure the process. To ensure expertise and best practice were achieved; staff participated in a NFQ Level 9 Special Purpose Award in Recognition of Prior Learning, as part of the Validating Competencies of Care Sector Employees Project, delivered by Atlantic Technological University, which informed the development of guiding principles, documentation, and assessment tools conversant with national and international evidenced methodologies.

The development of these RPL documents and tools resulted in the publication of an 'RPL Toolkit for Education and Training Providers' launched in June 2022. The RPL Toolkit is available nationally for use by all Education and Training Boards. The Toolkit includes publicity material, guidance for participants, assignment briefs, tasks for portfolio building and assessment rubrics to guide the process. The toolkit is beneficial for all ETB personnel considering the RPL process as a provision.

While the VCCSE project focused on the care sector, Donegal ETB has since branched into several different sectors. Due to the exit of Ulster Bank from Ireland, the RPL Provision was able to assist employees from various branches all over the county to achieve academic success. Many had no formal qualifications other than their leaving certificate and were having difficulty getting job interviews, despite over twenty years working in the bank. RPL was able to help them consolidate their previous learned experiences and seventeen Ulster Bank RPL applicants achieved NFQ Level 6 QQI Major awards. This has made employment mobility for these employees a reality. Progression pathways were also identified, with the assistance of Donegal ETB Adult Guidance Services, which motivated further engagement with FET.

Donegal ETB is currently experiencing demand from people migrating to Donegal with existing skills in need of nationally recognised qualifications. On a micro level, RPL is providing potential for employers to access proof of skilled personnel and the ability to match them to suitable roles while also increasing productivity. On a macro level, this will support our economy, increase competitiveness, sustain economic growth and allow for social inclusion and equity.

Link to Updated Policy & Procedures

[Updated Access, Transfer and Progression Policy](#)

[Updated Recognition of Prior Learning Policy and Procedure](#)

1.07 Integrity and Approval of Learner Results

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Planned Actions	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
<p>12. The review team recommends the urgent completion of a revised policy on the fair and consistent assessment of learners, which is currently being addressed by the ETB.</p>	<p>Devise a revised and updated policy and associated procedures for the Fair and Consistent Assessment of learners.</p>	<p>Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.</p> <p>As part of the development of the new Integrated QA System, a working group was established in 2022 to progress the Fair and Consistent Assessment of Learners Policy and associated Procedures.</p> <p>A framework for the development of the policy and its associated procedures for the assessment of students on all Donegal ETB FET programmes was agreed, ensuring that they adhere to the policies, criteria and guidelines outlined in the following QQI documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assessments and Standards (Revised 2013) and ● Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers (V.2 Revised 2018). <p>The policy and related procedures recognise the need to have adequate and appropriate processes for the assessment and authentication of student achievement and for the approval of assessment results. This includes demonstrating that each assessment is fair and consistent, that it is in accordance with national standards and that students are kept informed of expected outcomes and of their progress in achieving them.</p> <p>The group consists of 27 staff members from across the FET service, including senior managers, teachers, tutors, instructors, programme coordinators and QASS representation. Clear terms of reference and a policy framework drives the work of the group who meet off site every month. To date, the working group has developed a draft Fair and Consistent Assessment of Learner's Policy and is currently drafting the associated procedures. Nine of the nineteen procedures have been completed in preparation for wider FET consultation.</p> <p>Once the procedures are completed, wider FET Service stakeholder consultation will take place. The working group will review consultation feedback and agree changes to the policy and procedure documents. The final draft policy and associated procedures will be presented to SMT and to the relevant Governance and Management Groups for approval.</p>

1.08 Information and Data Management

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Planned Actions	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
<p>13. The review team recommends that Donegal ETB develop its use of data for performance monitoring.</p>	<p>Establish systematic ways of self-evaluation and monitoring which is supported by data and stakeholder feedback.</p>	<p>In 2022, a Data Management Working Group was set up to include PLSS users across the FET provisions with aims to standardise work practices and ensure use of the PLSS system is consistent and effective to meet overall FET targets and objectives. The Data Management working group contributes to the overall integrated QA system.</p> <p>The group considers more effective ways of using data to inform the FET provision, including access, transfer and progression and review, monitoring and self-evaluation to keep in line with QQI core guidelines and achieve the targets as set out in the Strategic Performance Agreement.</p> <p>Furthermore, the group aims to improve understanding of types of data collected, why it is collected and improve the quality of data collection from the PLSS system.</p> <p>The aim is to standardise operational processes for all provisions across FET as much as possible (there will be some unavoidable differences in procedures) to ensure consistency for Donegal ETB FET students.</p> <p>Tableau Software is being utilised to provide faster insights to Data Reports.</p>
<p>Commentary and Reflections Future planning will include the development of a clear plan and robust policy on the collection and use of data as part of the new integrated QA system and provide an extensive index of easily accessible information on further education and training in County Donegal.</p>		

1.09 Public Information and Communication

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Planned Actions	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
<p>14. The review team recommends that the Communications Advisory Group (CAG) develop annual plans and KPIs which go beyond social media engagement.</p> <p>15. The review team recommends that Donegal ETB explore additional opportunities to develop and strengthen its communications strategy and channels and to consider more ways of utilising digital communications both internally and externally.</p> <p>16. The review team recommends that Donegal ETB explore further opportunities to develop a structured rebranding and communications plan for the service, with defined targets and benchmarking, in order to fully engage with stakeholders and raise awareness of the services and support that can be offered.</p>	<p>A clear FET communication plan will be developed with performance indicators, which utilises digital communications both internally and externally alongside other communications mediums.</p> <p>This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defined targets (and monitoring mechanisms) which illustrate improved awareness of the FET programmes, services and supports offered. <p>A long-term project in marketing and re-branding FET will be developed to help both internal and external stakeholders understand the wider benefits, programmes and services the ETBs FET service can offer.</p>	<p>Donegal ETB's 2022-2026 Strategy Statement contains three themes, one of which is 'A progressive, accountable organisation.' This contains two priorities, one of which is 'Create and maintain a culture of achievement, innovation, accountability and public service.' This contains nine objectives, one of which states: 'Make Donegal ETB's work and successes more visible to the general public, using all relevant channels of communication.' This is also the stated communications objective for the FET Service: Make Donegal ETB's [FET] work and successes more visible to the public, using all relevant channels of communication. Communicating the work of the FET Service focuses on explaining who we are and what we do in terms of service provision and brand awareness raising. Performance indicators have been set through media monitoring metrics, Google analytics and analytics through Donegal's largest media outlet.</p> <p>Media insight reports provide metrics which highlight how Donegal ETB's communications vary and includes print, broadcast and (some) online communications. These reports showed a large increase in 2022 in Donegal ETB's media items outputs compared to 2021: print made the largest contribution, followed by broadcast and online in 2022, while in 2021 this was contributed by print, online and broadcast.</p> <p>Donegal ETB's largest media type in 2021 and 2022 was regional (regional print and regional radio broadcasts).</p> <p>In 2021, the top media source for Donegal ETB was broadcast (second in 2022), second was print (first in 2022) and third was online (in 2021 and 2022).</p>

Also seen was an increase in positive coverage in 2022 from 2021, with key drivers including the launch of the 2021 FET Fortnight and the publishing of the 2021-2022 FET Prospectus, and the in-person return of the FET Fair and the new Letterkenny FET Centre open day in 2022.

Donegal ETB's top key topic in 2021 was Business Support, followed by Community Education and Apprenticeships; in 2022, it was Community Education, followed by new appointments (ten out of twelve related to FET) and Skills for Work.

Dominant PRs in 2021 included the press release on the 2021-2022 FET Prospectus publication, while in 2022 this included the press release on the new Letterkenny FET Centre opening.

Google analytics show us that in 2021, Donegal ETBs website course finder had 43k+ page views and almost 43k in 2022. The FET section had almost 9k views in 2021 and over 8k views in 2022.

A structured rebranding of the FET Service began in 2020 which includes:

- branding overhaul of Youthreach promotional materials
- a complete overhaul and rebranding of the FET Prospectus
- an overhaul of promotional material for the VTOS programme
- Donegal ETB's generic pop-up banners were redesigned to represent a new, fresher and more on brand visual appearance following the publication of our 2022-2026 Strategy Statement. FET's visual identity has followed this approach. For example, the

		<p>Employer Services booklet and other related promotional material has been redesigned to ensure consistent branding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In 2022, with the first in-person FET Fair in three years, the visuals for this were rebranded which included posters, digital assets and subject banners. <p>Following the Review, the Enterprise Engagement team reviewed methods of communication and adopted different tactics to improve awareness of the provision. The team engaged in training around the story told, with expert training undertaken to improve storytelling, communication and presentation skills. The team engaged in upskilling around visual communications in order to create sharper, more professional, industry relevant communications consistent with the redesigned and updated ETB FET Service brand. A PR specialist was tasked with interviewing employers and gathering testimonials, supplemented by professional photos of the students/employees involved.</p> <p>In order to raise Donegal ETB's FET Service's profile amongst employers, the Enterprise Engagement team delivered presentations to various organisations across Donegal. These included Donegal Women in Business Network, the Profit Net Engineering Group with LEO, the Killybegs Cluster Group, Donegal County Childcare Committee, Letterkenny Chamber of Commerce, the Fintech group, Inishowen Development Group, Failte Ireland, and Udaras Na Gaeltachta. Donegal ETB's FET service will be present at the Local Enterprise Week and are organising two public events. Due to the positive engagement with the hospitality sector, representatives from the FET Service were asked to select the Irish Hotel Federation employee of the year.</p>
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Commentary and Reflections

There are some challenges that need to be considered in relation to the recommendations. For example, increased advertising costs which are made more difficult by legislation requiring from 2023 that 20% of all advertising is in Irish and 5% of budgets are spent on advertising on specific Irish language platforms, most of which are not based in Donegal. It is also proving very difficult to leverage additional funding to support communications, marketing and advertising. Furthermore, there are additional costs and staff efforts required to deal with the EU Directive on web accessibility.

Link to Updated Policy & Procedures

Updated [Public Information and Communication Policy](#)

2.0 Teaching, Learning & Assessment

2.01 The Learning Environment

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Planned Actions	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
<p>17. The review team recommends that all programmes be subject to progress reporting and that all teaching and learning is evaluated on a consistent basis to support data gathering and improvement.</p> <p>5. The review team recommends the introduction of a consistent and comprehensive evaluation of programme delivery and the student experience to support the continued improvement of the quality of teaching and learning.</p>	<p>Produce and implement a Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review policy and associated procedures.</p> <p>Establish systematic ways of self-evaluation and monitoring which is supported by data and stakeholder feedback.</p>	<p>As discussed above, further developments have been made in relation to student engagement to inform QA enhancements through the student voice activities and through local student engagement activities.</p> <p>Donegal ETB's FET action plan identified that the development of a Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review policy has been identified as a long-term project.</p> <p>It is recognised that, whilst progress has been made, self-evaluation, monitoring and review is an area for improvement. A more systematic way of collecting feedback is required through the utilisation of a FET-wide student satisfaction survey that would elicit feedback relating to course content, delivery and assessment. Relevant reports could be elicited at a strategic and operational level to inform QA enhancements and future planning.</p> <p>All options regarding the best way to proceed with the development of this process are being considered.</p>
<p>7. The review team recommends that Donegal ETB make every effort to communicate its best practice examples more widely</p>	<p>Document and further establish mechanisms for sharing best practice among staff across the FET Service to support staff development and further enhance the student experience.</p>	<p>A Donegal ETB UDL Professional Learning Network (PLN) was set up in February 2022 with the vision to support members implementing UDL in their work, to help practitioners gain a deeper understanding of UDL and support colleagues by showing best practice so other staff members may wish to embrace UDL and implement</p>

		<p>innovative practices within their classrooms. Please see case study 2 for further information.</p> <p>Since 2021, a number of Communities of Practice (CoP) have been established to support the development of programmes, to support programme enhancement, to standardise assessments and resources and to create a support network for practitioners.</p> <p>The Early Learning and Care CoP is well established. It has engaged in the review of the first iteration of the programme, which led to subsequent changes and enhancements, has developed excellent resources and meets regularly to review programme delivery.</p> <p>The Inclusive Education and Practice CoP has been established to review and update assessments, rethink and enhance delivery and develop programme resources. They have created a health promotion event, which will allow for the innovative integration of modules assessments.</p> <p>CoP are established in line with the FET Service Assessment Update Process. This process brings together teachers, tutors and instructors from across the FET Service to review and update current assessment documents. External subject matter experts including External Authenticators support this process.</p> <p>In 2021, Donegal ETB realised that it was essential that students have the necessary skills and competencies to actively, positively and responsibly engage in online activities while also having the ability to develop critical thinking skills. A specific module around the area of digital citizenship did not exist and this curriculum area was lacking within the FET sector. A group of educators formed a Community of Practice to identify relevant themes and</p>
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	<p>topics, discuss content and develop functional and practical resources for both teachers and students.</p> <p>The result of the development of this Community of Practice was the creation of a Digital Citizenship Website for staff and students to access. As well as the collaboration with CDETB in the development of a Digital Citizenship Level 4 Special Purpose Award, the collaboration also includes the development and design of a new Digital Citizenship Site to support the Digital Citizenship Special Purpose Award.</p> <p>The successful roll out of the “TEL Mentoring Programme” each September ensures that all FET Staff have the option to avail of Mentoring Support from designated TEL Mentors in a relaxed, non-judgemental manner. Survey feedback from participants is excellent.</p> <p>In 2022, to encourage the practice of peer-to-peer learning, staff were encouraged to participate in a course to unpack and understand the potential of peer-to-peer learning for students, staff and the organisation.</p> <p>This practice refers to the idea of collaboration between colleagues in a manner that allows them to gain knowledge and skills from one another, which is then put into practice. It often happens organically in the form of informal learning as individuals turn to those around them for advice, guidance or assistance with a task.</p> <p>FET Practitioners, coordinators and managers have put simple models of practice in place to encourage and support peer-to-peer learning in the organisation.</p> <p>The Quality Assurance Portal has been designed and implemented to enable the sharing of best practice, teaching and learning resources and QA news for all staff across the</p>
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		<p>FET service. This portal is live and is continually updated with relevant information, documentation and resources. FET staff are consulted regularly to ensure the portal remains fit for purpose and any suggestions of enhancements are made. The QA portal also contains a 'Get involved in QA' button where staff can provide QA feedback or register interest in future QA policy development and processes.</p> <p>The QA Newsletter is issued to all FET staff and contains relevant QA news items. For example, several themes have been identified through EA Reports over the past 18 months, and these themes will be explored through the QA Newsletter as an ongoing feature. The January issue concentrated on best practice in relation to Assessor Practice.</p>
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2.02 Assessment of Learners

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Planned Actions	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
<p>18. The review team recommends the introduction of a systematic approach to student engagement in course content, delivery and assessment as part of the annual programme review cycle.</p>	<p>Produce and implement a Self - Evaluation, Monitoring and Review policy and associated procedures.</p> <p>Establish systematic ways of self-evaluation and monitoring which is supported by data and stakeholder feedback.</p>	<p>Donegal ETB's FET action plan identified that the development of a Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review policy is a long-term project.</p> <p>1.02 and 2.01 above illustrates how Donegal ETB are developing its student engagement mechanisms to inform course content, delivery and assessment. It is recognised that this is an area for further development and will continue be undertaken as part of the development of the integrated QA system.</p>

2.03 Supports for Learners

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Planned Actions	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
<p>19. The review team recommends that Donegal ETB reviews the provision of support across all services and works towards consistent and equitable application across the service and within each FET programme.</p>	<p>A review of current learner supports will be carried out with a view to creating a systematic approach to supporting learners across the FET service programmes.</p>	<p>In December 2019, Donegal ETB commissioned DMH Associates to undertake desk research and interviews with staff and external agencies to inform and guide its FET learner support services going forward. The research was undertaken between 18th December 2019 – 30th April 2020. Findings were integrated into Donegal ETB’s quality improvement plans for the enhancement of learner support services. These also contributed to the comprehensive self-evaluation of the implementation and effectiveness of the FET Service’s Quality Assurance procedures, which took place in 2021 as part of the QQI-led statutory review of ETB FET Quality Assurance systems nationally.</p> <p>Following on from the research, progress has been made in developing the provision of support that is consistent and equitable across the service.</p> <p>Donegal ETB have employed two full time support officers as part of a student support service. The service provides student and tutor support across FET Centres, which aims to support those with additional needs that are not currently being catered for within their course of study or for tutors who request specific support for themselves.</p> <p>Student support can take many forms, and could include support for groups or individuals. Examples of support include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Writing/Academic Writing ● Maths/TEL/General Learning ● Study Skills/Time Management ● Wellbeing ● A situation where a student has a diagnosed disability and requires supports for their learning

		<p>The Adult Guidance Service has made progress embedding their service further into two additional FET Centres, supporting BTEI and VTOS programmes with access on a more regularised basis. Guidance counsellors have been allocated to both centres, supporting the BTEI and VTOS groups and providing both one-to-one guidance and delivery of group guidance workshops to ensure that the students in both centres have access to support. This increase in access to the students on the BTEI and VTOS programmes is a positive step towards embedding a more consistent guidance service to more BTEI and VTOS programmes throughout the county.</p> <p>Increased guidance access to groups in both centres has raised awareness about the guidance service and increased demand for support from the guidance service from staff and students in these centres.</p> <p>There are still historic practices operating where an external organisation is utilised to deliver guidance-related workshops to some programmes, which is inconsistent with the practices of similar programmes in other areas of the county who utilise all the adult guidance services provision for their students. Future planning will require review of this practice to ensure that there is a consistent approach across the FET service.</p> <p>The Collective is a new Donegal ETB initiative for students with autism. The Guidance Service, who meet with students on a one-to-one basis to support them when they are on their programme and with their progression options, supports this. This has enabled the guidance service to develop a very positive relationship with the staff and students in the Collective Centre.</p> <p>Guidance delivery has been expanded to additional Learning for Living groups. In addition to the existing groups that are regularly supported, additional requests are received to deliver employability skills guidance workshops and progression group talks to these additional Learning for Living groups. While this is very positive, there remains an inconsistent and ad hoc provision of guidance support to these programmes countywide and</p>
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further work is required to ensure a consistent approach across these programmes.

In November 2022, CAO/UCAS workshops were delivered to a PLC group in one of the ETB Colleges. Whilst this was a one-off agreement, it is a positive step forward. In future, a formalised plan needs to be agreed with the PLC provision so future supports can be agreed and planned. In order to support a plan, Donegal ETB's Adult Guidance Service staffing levels would need to be reviewed to ensure there were adequate resources to make the plan operational.

The Adult Guidance Service piloted guidance group inductions to several traineeship groups in both the Letterkenny Training Centre and the Gaoth Dobhair Training Centre in 2021 and 2022. This included the following programmes:

- Basic Welding traineeship
- Beauty Therapy traineeship
- Computer Network Installation traineeship
- Horticulture traineeship

Following the induction, the format and content was changed to meet the needs of the student cohort. Student survey feedback from the pilot of the new induction was very positive.

Future planning will need to be undertaken to ensure that all traineeship and apprenticeship students have access to the induction at the relevant point in the delivery of their programme and that adequate staffing resources are in place for the induction to be extended.

Whilst one-to-one guidance support is provided to students who are completing programmes in the Training Centres, this is still on an ad hoc basis and on an individual needs basis. In order to ensure that access to guidance is embedded and equitable across all programmes and is consistently applied across the service, it is recognised that greater investment in and expansion of the guidance service is required.

		<p>The Adult Guidance Service developed an agreed programme of work that each guidance counsellor has responsibility to deliver to all relevant groups assigned to them to ensure that there is a consistent approach used to deliver guidance to the groups throughout the county. However, this can only be achieved when the guidance counsellor has access to students across the FET provision.</p>
<p>20. The review team recommends that Donegal ETB explore opportunities for developing a structured best practice sharing approach for instructors and teachers to help ensure a greater level of consistency across programme delivery and improve the learner experience.</p>	<p>Document and further establish mechanisms for sharing best practice among staff across the FET Service to support staff development and further enhance the student experience.</p> <p>Establish staff development themes and a CPD calendar of staff development opportunities based around feedback from FET crosscutting executive groups, the strategic mission and vision of the organisation and the Certification and Approval Board processes for actioning external feedback.</p>	<p>Across 2022 -2023, a subject matter expert will deliver 12 series of webinars addressing Quality Standards in Facilitating Assessment to staff across the service. These are short virtual sessions, which will support collaborative opportunities for optimising practice. Each session is approximately 30-45 minutes long, aiming to support educators in taking ownership of their teaching, learning and assessing practice for the benefit of their students. The structure of the sessions will be progressive and practical to enable and empower participants to focus on a variety of trending topics in FET. All sessions are interactive and participants share ideas, experiences and best practice. In order to make the sessions accessible to all staff, the webinars are recorded and available to view on the QA Portal.</p> <p>Continuous Professional Development (CPD) events are published on the Donegal ETB Staff Intranet. Staff can view all upcoming CPD opportunities and apply online via an automated expression of interest form. Staff can view in advance upcoming CPD events that are planned for each academic term. Monthly reminder emails are cascaded to staff to remind them of upcoming CPD events. In 2022, Donegal ETB offered 44 CPD sessions attended by 955 staff. CPD was planned around national and local themes and in response to feedback from staff, service demands and continual improvement recommendations from EAs and other internal and external stakeholders. CPD offerings included accredited and non-accredited training.</p> <p>A CPD survey conducted in December 2022 helped identify key themes for 2023. This survey was communicated through the QA Communications email distribution list. The 5 Key Themes of CPD requested for 2023 were:</p>

- Teaching & Learning
- Technology Enhanced Learning
- Learning Supports
- Staff Wellbeing
- Mental Health Awareness

Donegal ETB's FET Service developed a strategic approach to the use of blended learning by engaging H2 Learning to facilitate a research and consultation process that focused on articulating a range of options for blended learning. A series of focused conversations held with key stakeholders have informed the development of a Blended Learning Framework. The framework will support and guide the ETB's strategic approach to blended learning. The framework anticipates that the majority of FET courses and programmes across the ETB will be supported by the use of technology enhanced learning approaches. Furthermore, the framework will also enable the ETB to plan, design and accredit flexible forms of blended learning that comply with QQI Guidelines.

The implementation of the FET TEL Action Plan 2022 by the TEL Coordinator and TEL Working Group enabled the development and mentoring of staff in using technology in the classroom to ensure the successful implementation of TEL initiatives within the FET service. A quarterly e-newsletter was issued promoting TEL initiatives and outlining good practice.

A TEL seminar (a week-long series of interactive webinars) delivered by Donegal ETB staff and external experts and leaders in the field of technology in the classroom was a huge success and was attended by 254 FET practitioners over 5 days in May 2022.

As part of the FET TEL plan for 2022, a €15,000 fund for Innovative approaches to utilising technology within the FET service was made available for FET Programmes to enter. Two programmes received funding through the TEL Innovative Project. The project ranked 1st in the competition had their proposals fully funded. BTEI "Photography & Editing Studio", Funding amount: €10,623.50 (Photography & Editing Studio that

		<p>staff and students can book into). The project ranked 2nd in the competition had their proposals partially funded. “The Power of Visuals”, Funding amount: €5,000. This project will enable the re-imaging of the PLC programme to make visual learning integral to programme delivery.</p> <p>In order to share best practice and to aid a consistent approach across the guidance service, a Google shared drive is used to share relevant resources. When useful resources or links to relevant information are identified, the shared drive is utilised as a central location so that everyone has access to them.</p> <p>In November 2022, a CPD course was developed in coordination with the TEL Coordinator, to inform both the guidance staff and other Donegal ETB staff about International Protection Applicants’ eligibility for access to FET courses and other supports. This CPD helped clarify this client cohort’s FET programme entitlements to ensure that all staff members who are meeting with these clients are consistently giving people the correct information in relation to their access and eligibility to FET programmes and other supports.</p>
<p>21. The review team recommends that Donegal ETB explore opportunities for increasing learner engagement in the Student Surveys and Student Voice to ensure more representative feedback.</p>	<p>Donegal ETB will continue to develop mechanisms for the regular and systematic collection of student views ensuring the inclusion of a wide diversification of voices within formal quality assurance structures.</p> <p>Establish systematic ways of self-evaluation and monitoring which is supported by data and stakeholder feedback.</p>	<p>Student feedback mechanisms are utilised across the FET service in many different ways. They are often designed to ensure inclusivity and support the needs of the student cohort.</p> <p>The Adult Guidance Service collects feedback at the end of each group induction to ascertain whether the induction met students’ needs or for them to give feedback on how it might be improved. At the end of a programme, the guidance counsellor who has supported that programme completes a group endings workshop and asks students to give their feedback on the guidance supports provided using a questionnaire. Feedback is collated and discussed in staff meetings to inform future planning.</p> <p>The guidance service staff have identified a need to formalise the collection of student views on the guidance service support they have experienced. To achieve this, an online survey will be developed and data collected used to inform an annual guidance service report.</p>

		<p>The Student Support Service has implemented a student evaluation form which is used at the end of the six-week programme. Feedback is analysed and actions derived to support enhancement of the service.</p> <p>As identified above in 1.02, Donegal ETB continues to actively seek ways to further increase learner engagement to ensure more representative feedback is obtained. A number of mechanisms for the collection of the student voice have been developed since 2020, such as the Annual Student Voice event, the Student Governance and Management Forum and more local activities. Examples of these include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Course evaluations, which are issued either each term or mid and end of course depending on the delivery of the programme. Outcomes from these evaluations are discussed and actions developed and monitored for progress.● Student Councils, mostly within the Youthreach provision. The Council meets regularly and an Advocate reports back to the Centre Manager. Items raised by the Council are discussed at staff meetings and actions agreed. The Advocate feeds back to the Student Council on actions agreed and progress made.● Surveys developed in order to gain feedback about specific issues. For example, a new course is in the process of being developed. Students were given the opportunity to give suggestions about the content and name of the course.● Student Forums, localised student meetings with representation from different courses within centres. Feedback from a recent forum resulted in changes in the canteen provision, additional courses for childcare students and improved classroom facilities. Further feedback has resulted in revised timetables to take into account student travel to make courses more accessible. Additional courses such as Dementia Inclusion training to support programme delivery have also been introduced as a result of the student voice.
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3.0 Self-Evaluation, Monitoring & Review

3.01 Self-Evaluation Monitoring & Review

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Planned Actions	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
<p>3. The review team recommends that Donegal ETB make more effective use of data in any self-evaluation and the use of evidence to improve performance by making use of KPIs. The review team further recommends benchmarking within Donegal ETB to support quality enhancement to ensure consistency for each and every learner as well as scope for continuous improvement.</p> <p>4. The review team recommends that Donegal ETB introduce continuous and systematic self-monitoring and evaluation to support organisational learning. This should be supported by data – standards, targets and indicators – as well as by benchmarking and the systematic collection of feedback from student, staff and stakeholder feedback.</p>	<p>Produce and implement a Self - Evaluation, Monitoring and Review policy and associated procedures.</p> <p>Establish systematic ways of self-evaluation and monitoring which is supported by data and stakeholder feedback.</p>	<p>The development of a Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review policy has been identified as a long-term project.</p> <p>Progress has been made with the effective use of data to support organisational learning and continuous improvement.</p> <p>Regular reports are presented to SMT to inform planning and decision making:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Regular reporting which monitors commenced courses with no learners, untermiated learners on finished courses, awaiting certifications outdated and data gaps reports. ● Creation of Tableau Dashboard Reports as requested by SMT, which include data reporting on enrolments, retention and achievement. ● Data reports for FARR projections V's PLSS actuals for recent years ● Engagement with the new SOLAS dashboard for ongoing monitoring of Strategic Performance Agreements and progress toward KPIs. <p>Data reporting across FET includes data management reporting as required at regular QA Steering Group meetings, SMT, Integrated Provision Planning Meetings,</p>

		<p>Programme Sub-Committee Meetings, PLSS Advisory National Meetings, and FET Coordinators Meetings and at the Certification Approval Board.</p> <p>Future plans include standardised reporting across the FET Service to all programme areas to enable more local use of data to drive quality improvements. Reports will capture data from PLSS and other reporting mechanisms as well as stakeholder feedback.</p>
<p>Commentary and Reflections</p> <p>Following the Inaugural Review process across all 16 ETBs, it is noted that many of the recommendations made in this report have been recurring key recommendations across the sector. Donegal ETB's FET Service Self Evaluation Report identified that self-evaluation, monitoring and review is an area for improvement. On a national level it has been recognised that underdevelopment of monitoring and self-evaluation is an area of concern requiring an ETB-wide policy and process to underpin internal monitoring.</p>		

3.02 Programme Monitoring & Review

Recommendation (as recorded in the review report)	Planned Actions	Update - Note progress/changes made to P&P, timeline.
<p>22. The review team recommends the introduction of a robust review framework to help Donegal ETB ensure its programmes are and remain fit for purpose and future-proofed against external environmental changes.</p>	<p>Produce and implement a Self - Evaluation, Monitoring and Review policy and associated procedures.</p> <p>Establish systematic ways of self-evaluation and monitoring which is supported by data and stakeholder feedback.</p>	<p>The development of a Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review policy has been identified as a long-term project.</p> <p>Feedback mechanisms are in place to support the review of current Donegal ETB programmes and inform the planning of future programmes.</p> <p>In 1.02 above, it has been demonstrated how the student voice is informing programme enhancements, delivery, design and development.</p> <p>In 1.05 above it is explained how the new Programme Development and Approval policy is designed to ensure that the development of programmes is conducted systematically leading to fit for purpose programmes that are in line with Donegal ETB's FET Service and national Strategy for the FET sector.</p> <p>1.05 and 1.06 above illustrate how collaboration with other ETBs and Higher Education Institutes are innovating our programme development and ensuring they are future proofed against external environmental changes.</p> <p>Furthermore, there are examples of how extensive engagement with employers influences and informs our programme development and curriculum offer, ensuring they remain responsive to employer needs and fit for purpose.</p> <p>As part of our continued enhancement of programmes, Donegal ETB continuously engages with employers to seek</p>

		<p>feedback regarding programme content and delivery. When developing the City and Guilds Supervisory Management in Hospitality programme, consultation with a number of hotels was carried out about their priorities and needs. Modules included ensured that they would add the most value to their businesses, such as managing rotas and payroll. The course was shaped to suit industry requirements. It was delivered from Nov-March over two years in the low season on a day, which suited the industry. Selection interviews and skills audits were conducted to ensure all participants were at the correct level. Students were offered support as required and IT equipment was arranged for online learning. The programme was front loaded with digital skills and health and safety training to ensure participants had a level of health and safety knowledge that was appropriate for the level of the course.</p>
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Commentary and Reflections

General feedback from the review team suggested that Donegal ETB's FET Service needed wider and deeper engagement with external stakeholders to ensure that all voices are able to shape and influence quality enhancements. FET Service Managers participate in external committees to develop relationships with organisations, which can be utilised to inform quality enhancements. One example, of many includes how feedback from Donegal County Childcare Committee regarding the need within the childcare sector for mentoring training led to the offer of a new programme. An ILM programme was developed and offered across the Donegal childcare sector. The award was designed to suit industry requirements; it included stress management and conflict resolution, key areas identified as the sector was experiencing the stress associated with working in a Covid environment. Delivery of the programme was tailored to meet industry needs outside of busy/peak times in childcare centres.

4.0 Update on other additional QA Objectives/actions arising from internal QA planning and monitoring

No.	QA Objectives <small>These should relate to objectives not already discussed in the progress report.</small>	Update on Status <small>Provide brief update on status, whether completed or in progress.</small>	Link to updated/new Policy
1	<p>Donegal ETB Strategy In March 2022 Donegal ETB launched its new Strategy Statement 2022-2026. Building on the achievements of the previous five years, the new strategy sets out an ambitious vision and a set of objectives that will guide our work for the coming years.</p> <p>The strategy for 2022-2026, sets out the mission, vision and values that will guide us in our work over the next five years.</p> <p>Priorities and objectives are outlined under three themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Teaching, learning and assessment. — A progressive, accountable organisation. — Working with our partners. <p>Under the leadership of Directors of Schools, Further Education and Training and Organisation Support and Development, the strategy will become part of the work of all Donegal ETB's Services and there will be clear measures of success, which will show how well we are achieving our priorities and objectives.</p>	Complete	Click here for access to the Strategy

2 National FET Strategy (Future FET) and Transforming Learning; Donegal ETB Strategic Performance Agreement 2022-2024

SOLAS is tasked with overseeing the planning, funding, and co-ordination of publicly funded FET and developing a strategy in relation to the provision of further education and training.

Donegal ETB signed their 2nd 3-year strategic performance agreement with SOLAS in the last quarter of 2022. This agreement is underpinned by the FET Strategy 2020-2024 in line with the key strategic priorities of inclusion, pathways, and skills which are aligned to relevant national policy.

The national system targets proposed under the Strategic performance agreements include 5 themes.

- Supporting jobs
- Learning pathways
- Facilitating inclusion
- Upskilling through life and careers
- Targeting key skills needs

This agreement took into consideration the resources and infrastructure available to Donegal ETB to deliver on these needs while clearly defining Donegal ETBs' strategic priorities over a three-year period. It clearly sets out the agreed expected contribution of Donegal ETB in meeting each of the national FET system targets in line with our quality assurance framework which ensures a consistency quality of provision across FET as part of the learner journey.

There will be a clear system infrastructure and framework for measuring success demonstrating how well we are performing in achieving our priorities and objectives.

	Both the FET Strategy and agreed strategic performance agreement will be a key driver of our provision over the next 3 years.		
3	<p>Bring Your Own Device Policy</p> <p>This policy was developed to ensure that students can use their own personal devices responsibly, safely, and effectively to support their education and engage fully in learning, both in-centre, where appropriate, and online.</p>	Complete	Click here for access to the policy.
4	<p>Digital Hubs</p> <p>Several of the review recommendations referred to developing a greater level of consistency across programme delivery to improve the learner experience. In 2022, Donegal ETB's FET Service opened 7 "Digital Hubs" across the service, offering support and access to devices and connectivity to Staff, Students and the General Public. An evaluation survey of the "Digital Hubs" was communicated by email through Hub Support Staff for onward distribution and completion by past and present users of the Digital Hubs. The purpose of the survey was to gauge feedback on the benefits of the service and identify ways to improve the support and service offered within the Digital Hubs. 30 respondents from across 7 Hubs participated. 93% rated the Hub supports as excellent.</p>	Complete	
5	<p>Donegal ETB FET Service Student Handbook</p> <p>The student handbook was developed in response to student feedback. The handbook was written to support students throughout their programme of study and to prepare them for assessment. The handbook informs students of what is expected of them as a Donegal ETB FET Student and what they can expect from Donegal ETB. The handbook also provides general information and study tips. The handbook will be reviewed on an annual basis in consultation with students and staff to ensure it remains fit for purpose.</p>	Complete	Click here to access the handbook

5.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies

Case Study Title: Donegal Women In Business Network (DWBN)

Introduction

Donegal Women in Business Network met with the Enterprise Engagement Officer to see how Donegal ETB could provide training support to their members. Many members are sole traders and do not have the resources to outsource to. Therefore, they were unable to maximise their reach to positively influence their businesses. Female sole traders can often feel isolated and some lack the confidence to highlight their businesses online. They requested practical training for their members that would enable them to do as much as possible to grow their businesses. The aim was to build a sense of self-efficacy in ecommerce.

Description of issue

Many of their members were spread throughout the County and needed upskilling in social media, as they wanted to trade online and create a social media presence. Firstly, Donegal ETB created a beginners level Social Media course with Skills for Work, which was attended by 21 sole traders. This was then followed with the Principles of Social Media (City and Guilds) in the format of Lunch and Learn Sessions as advised by DWBN for 20 members. Following on from the success of previous programmes, Donegal ETB are offering a Video Production Course as a progression in 2023.

Action

Several meetings were held with the President and Facilitator of DWBN from November 2021 - present time. These included face-to-face and online meetings. Meetings were held with all sole traders for the City and Guilds Principles in Social Media training face to face in various locations throughout the County. Even though this took considerable time, it was well received by the members. This generated a rapport and an understanding of the members/participants.

The tutor tailored the training to suit the needs of the group in line with the learning outcomes and QA processes. One to one sessions were offered with the tutor so that participants could access advice on live issues. The course was delivered as Lunch and Learn Sessions in order to allow for the greatest participation. We followed the lead and advice of DWBN in the shape of our delivery. The tutor remained supportive and flexible and went beyond the call of duty.

Key Outcomes/Impacts

- Those participating in the training found it very practical and were able to bring their businesses to the next level. Sole Traders felt more confident in their abilities and the 1-1 support addressed many of their concerns and queries.
- In addition, DWBN looked at other offerings offering Barista Skills Training and Wine Spirit and Education Trust Level 1 and 2 for DWBN members in hospitality/cafe owners. This increased reach with harder to reach businesses.
- Following reviews of training needs with DWBN, Donegal ETB developed an Understanding Your Numbers Programme in Partnership with Larissa Feeney of Accountant Online for members who needed assistance with financial/business acumen. Larissa is on the DWBN Committee and has a great profile both nationally and locally as a winner of the Business Person of the Year Letterkenny Chamber of Commerce Award.
- This collaboration arose from an excellent working relationship with DWBN and over 41 new businesses have signed up for training. Acting on the feedback from previous courses, the first meeting will be a business breakfast face to face followed by two mornings online. Currently this course is uncertified and run under Skills for Work. Future planning includes offering a certified unit in Business planning 5N1418 as a follow on.
- This is an integrated response to training needs by both Skills to Advance and Skills for Work in order to meet the needs of local businesses.

Key Learnings

- It is important to offer targeted training and offer courses that are relevant and important to employers and their employees. In addition, the first session of any course should be face to face in order to help with any technical issues and to create a positive relationship. Thereafter, it can be online. We had experienced technical glitches with those who found MS Teams hard to navigate. Therefore, an initial face-to-face classroom can address any issues with MS Teams or devices.
- We know the importance of good relationships with business groups such as DWBN and the importance of good working relationships internally. Listening is a key part of it alongside an agile response without compromising the need for quality processes. Collaborations are key to creative responses to industry.

Case Study Title: Donegal ETB UDL Professional Learning Network (PLN)

Introduction

A Donegal ETB Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Professional Learning Network (PLN) was set up in February 2022 with the vision to support members implementing UDL in their work, to help practitioners gain a deeper understanding of UDL and support colleagues by showing best practice so other staff members may wish to embrace UDL and implement innovative practices within their classrooms.

Description of issue

To create innovative ways of communicating best practice UDL examples across the FET Service to enhance the student experience.

Action

All staff are invited to join the PLN to Establish '+1' 'Lunch Bytes'. The 'Lunch Bytes' are short 15-minute monthly lunchtime sessions consisting of members' pre-recorded video on a UDL topic, a live introduction, and a Q&A session afterward. The focus is on short '+1' ideas to show how beneficial implementing UDL is to teaching and learning. Meetings are scheduled for the second Monday of each month and culminate with a Webinar at the end of the academic year for our organisation and educators nationally that highlights a variety of the UDL+1 ideas generated by the PLN. To support members implementing UDL in their work a Google Chat Group and Workspace was set up.

Key Outcomes/Impacts

This group engages in collaborative learning with others, ultimately improving outcomes for students.

Staff feel supported through the Chat Group where members can post UDL queries or ask for suggestions on UDL activities, and other members post responses and answer queries.

In October 2022, the Donegal ETB UDL Professional Learning Network was shortlisted for the "John Kelly Awards for Universal Design in Further and Higher Education". The PLN was successful in winning the "One to Watch" award for the collaborative category.

Key Learnings

Future plans to engage more collaboratively not just across the ETB sector but also within the wider education clusters in the northwest of Ireland will be an opportunity to showcase and share good practices with other organisations and stakeholders as a further opportunity to grow UDL initiatives.

Case Study Title: Donegal ETB FET Service Student Hub

Introduction

Donegal ETB's Further Education and Training (FET) Service launched its FET Student Hub in September 2022, a one-stop shop containing all the information a prospective or current FET student might need before or during their course.

Description of issue

During the student voice activities, students requested an online resource where they could access all relevant information in one place. Following this feedback the [FET Student Hub](#) was developed.

Action

Following initial feedback from students, the first draft of the Hub was created. Consultation with students took place with each iteration of the Hub shared with students at different student voice activities to ensure that it was being designed in a way that suited their needs. The Hub contains all relevant information for students and ensures that students across the FET service are receiving consistent information and access to academic and wider support. The Hub is live and is continuously updated with new items and information. Students are also able to express interest or register for student voice events.

Key Outcomes/Impacts

The Hub allows us to engage with the wider student community ensuring that they all receive the same information in a way that suits their needs. Initial feedback from students suggests that students find the Hub an excellent tool for academic support and for more general information. Teaching staff have found it an invaluable resource in the classroom for supporting learning. The Hub is designed to simplify and enhance the way that students access guidance and support services, making them more accessible and consistent for all students.

Key Learnings

It is vital that features are continuously added or enhanced based on student feedback to ensure the Hub remains fit for purpose.

Based on student feedback, future features in development include an online student forum so students can communicate with other students from across the FET provision.