Donegal Education and Training Board (ETB) Further Education and Training (FET) Service Quality Assurance

Joe Whitelock

INTRODUCTION

- Joe Whitelock
- Donegal ETB Quality Assurance Officer
- Background

CONTEXT – COUNTY DONEGAL

- County Donegal is one of the 26 counties of the Republic of Ireland.

- Located in the northwest corner of Ireland, Donegal is the island's northernmost county. In terms of size and area, it is the fourth-largest county in all of Ireland.

- Uniquely, County Donegal shares a small border with only one other county in the Republic of Ireland – County Leitrim. Most of its land border (93%) is shared with three counties of Northern Ireland: County Tyrone, County Londonderry and County Fermanagh.
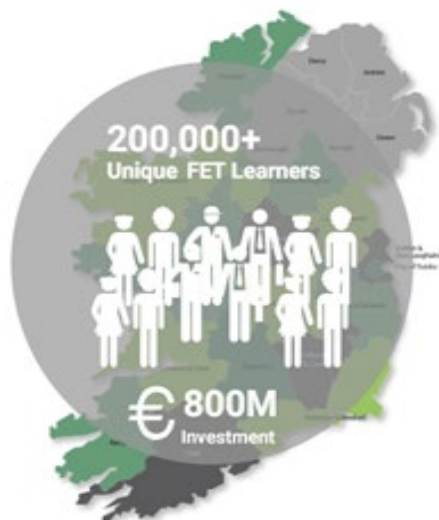
EDUCATION AND TRAINING BOARDS IN IRELAND

16 ETBs
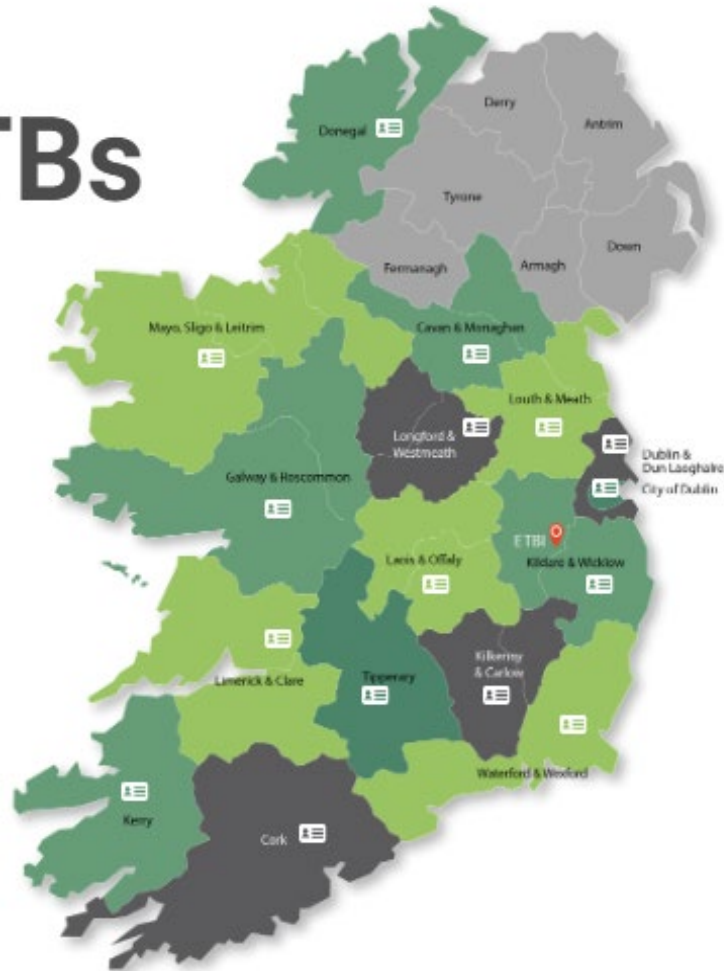
- On 1st July 2013, the 33 Vocational Education Committees (VECs) were dissolved and replaced by 16 Education and Training Boards (ETBs).

- Education and Training Boards are statutory education authorities with responsibility for education and training, youth work and a range of other statutory functions.

- Education and Training Boards are the driving force of education and training in the local community, with pathways for every learner across Early Education, Community National Schools, Post primary Education, Further Education and Training, Apprenticeships and Traineeships, Youth Services, Outdoor Education Services and Community Education Services.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING BOARDS IN IRELAND
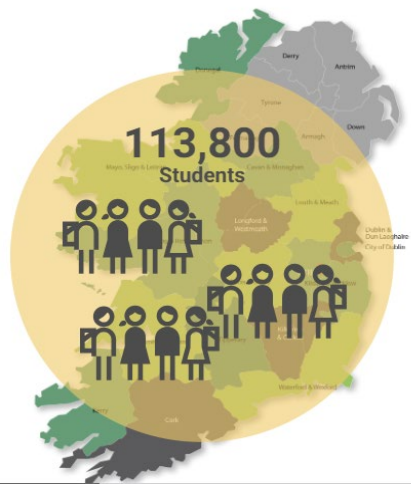
The general functions of an Education and Training Board, include:

Establish maintain, coordinate and review the provision of :

- recognised schools or centres for education
- education or training facilities
- youthwork services
- prisons

Develop and adopt a Strategy Statement and Annual Service Plan

ETBs are active in local communities through the direct provision of training and education programmes delivered in training centres, colleges and other training and educational settings.

External Organisation

Quality and Qualifications Ireland - QQI is the state agency responsible for promoting quality and accountability in the further and higher education and training sectors.

SOLAS - Funds, coordinates, and monitors a range of FET programmes in Ireland.

Education and Training Boards Ireland - Is the national representative body established to collectively represent the sixteen Education and Training Boards (ETBs) and promote their interests.

Further Education Support Service – supports ETBs offering programmes leading to QQI certification from the National Framework of Qualifications, levels 1-6.
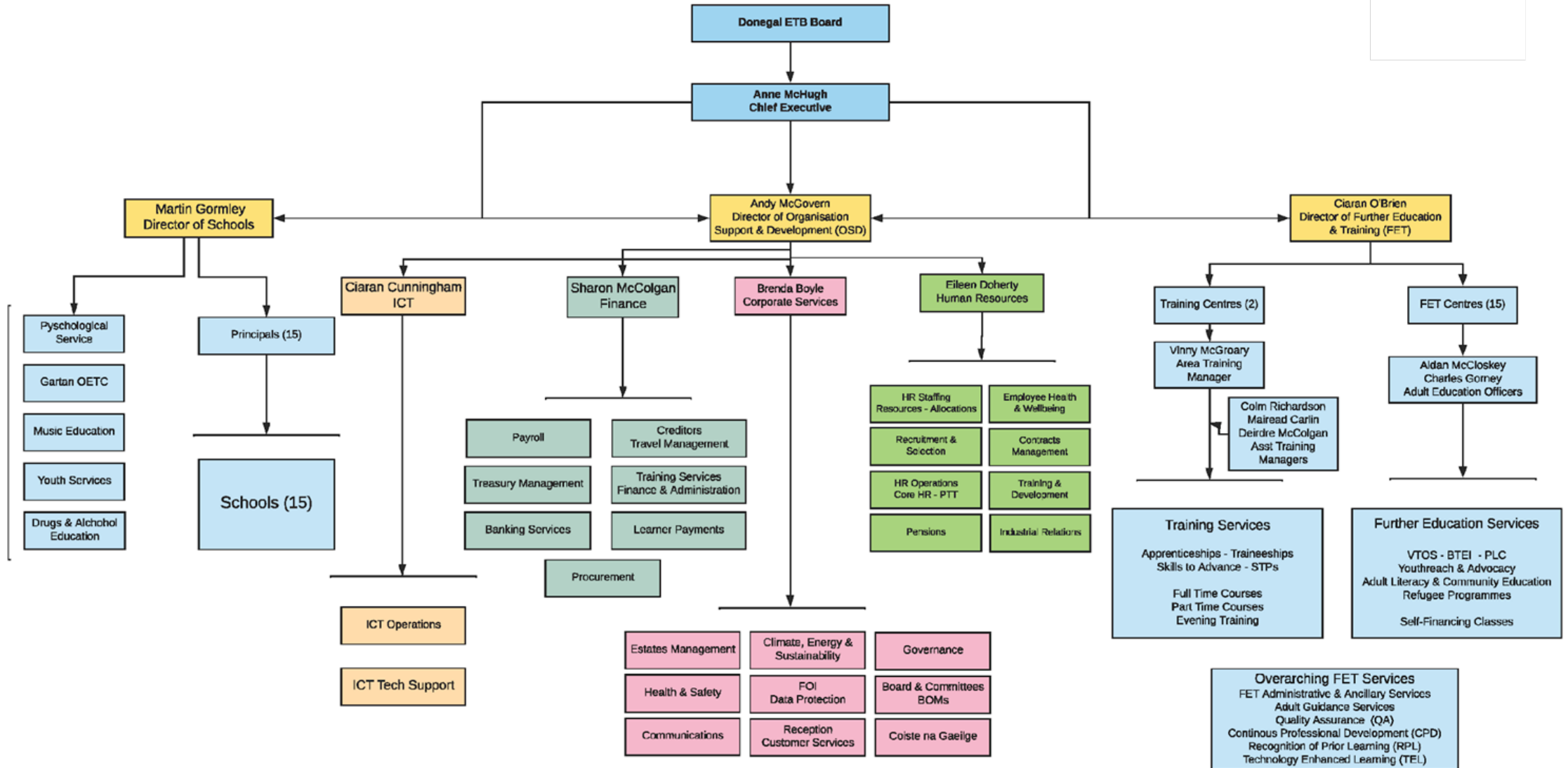
DONEGAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING BOARD (ETB)

- In line with legislation, Donegal Vocational Educational Committee (VEC) was dissolved and replaced by Donegal Education and Training Board. The ETB was established under and is governed according to The Education and Training Boards Act (2013).

- The Further Education and Training Act (2013) also dissolved the former Foras Áiseanna Saothair (FÁS) training centres and established SOLAS as a new statutory body. Former FÁS provision transferred to Education and Training Board governance in 2014.

- Donegal Education and Training Board is a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) legacy provider, currently operating under two Quality Assurance agreements with QQI. We are in a transition phase, seeking to adopt the best practice from both former organisations to ensure that students are offered an accessible, high-quality, enhancement- focused experience which meets all statutory and reporting requirements.

- Donegal ETB is structured with three pillars: Further Education and Training (FET), Schools and Organisation Support and Development (OSD).
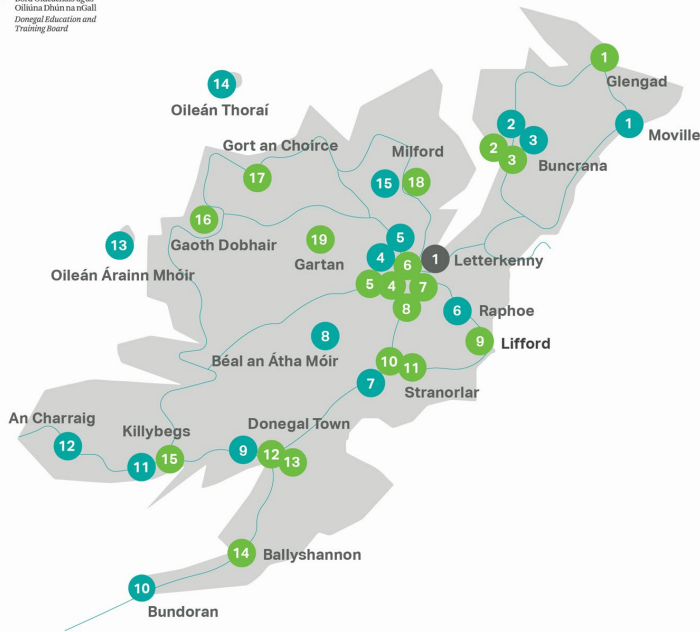
DONEGAL ETB ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Donegal ETB Board

Anne McHugh
Chief Executive

Martin Gormley
Director of Schools

Andy McGovern
Director of Organisation Support & Development (OSD)

Ciaran O'Brien
Director of Further Education & Training (FET)

Director of Schools

- Pyschological Service
- Gartan OETC
- Music Education
- Youth Services
- Drugs & Alchohol Education
- Principals (15)
  - Schools (15)

OSD Branch

Ciaran Cunningham
ICT

- ICT Operations
- ICT Tech Support

Sharon McColgan
Finance

Payroll	Creditors Travel Management
Treasury Management	Training Services Finance & Administration
Banking Services	Learner Payments
Procurement	

Brenda Boyle
Corporate Services

Estates Management	Climate, Energy & Sustainability	Governance
Health & Safety	FOI Data Protection	Board & Committees BOMs
Communications	Reception Customer Services	Coiste na Gaeilge

Eileen Doherty
Human Resources

HR Staffing Resources - Allocations	Employee Health & Wellbeing
Recruitment & Selection	Contracts Management
HR Operations Core HR - PTT	Training & Development
Pensions	Industrial Relations

FET Branch

Training Centres (2)

Vinny McGroary
Area Training Manager

Colm Richardson
Mairead Carlin
Deirdre McColgan
Asst Training Managers

Training Services

Apprenticeships - Traineeships
Skills to Advance - STPs

Full Time Courses
Part Time Courses
Evening Training

FET Centres (15)

Aidan McCloskey
Charles Gorney
Adult Education Officers

Further Education Services

VTOS - BTEI - PLC
Youthreach & Advocacy
Adult Literacy & Community Education
Refugee Programmes

Self-Financing Classes

Overarching FET Services
FET Administrative & Ancillary Services
Adult Guidance Services
Quality Assurance (QA)
Continous Professional Development (CPD)
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)
Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL)

DONEGAL ETB

Donegal Education and Training Board (ETB) is responsible for education and training in communities across the county. We manage fifteen post primary schools, nineteen further education and training centres, and we support an extensive network of community education providers. We also operate an outdoor education centre, a music education partnership and youth services.
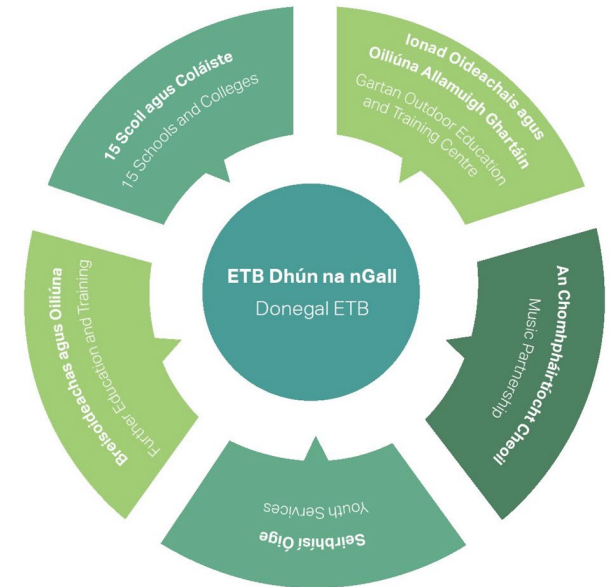
DONEGAL ETB FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING (FET) SERVICE

- Donegal ETB is the largest Further Education and Training provider in the county. It offers a comprehensive and diverse range of part time and full-time provision that meets the complex needs of students and the socio-economic development demands of the county.

- The service has many programmes, each with its own distinct identity and target cohort. Programmes are based in 19 Further Education and Training centres geographically spread across the county.

- The dispersed nature of the Community Education programme, part-time and contracted training provision allow for an established presence in multiple community settings on an outreach/partnership basis, in addition to the recognised ETB FET centres.

DONEGAL ETB FET
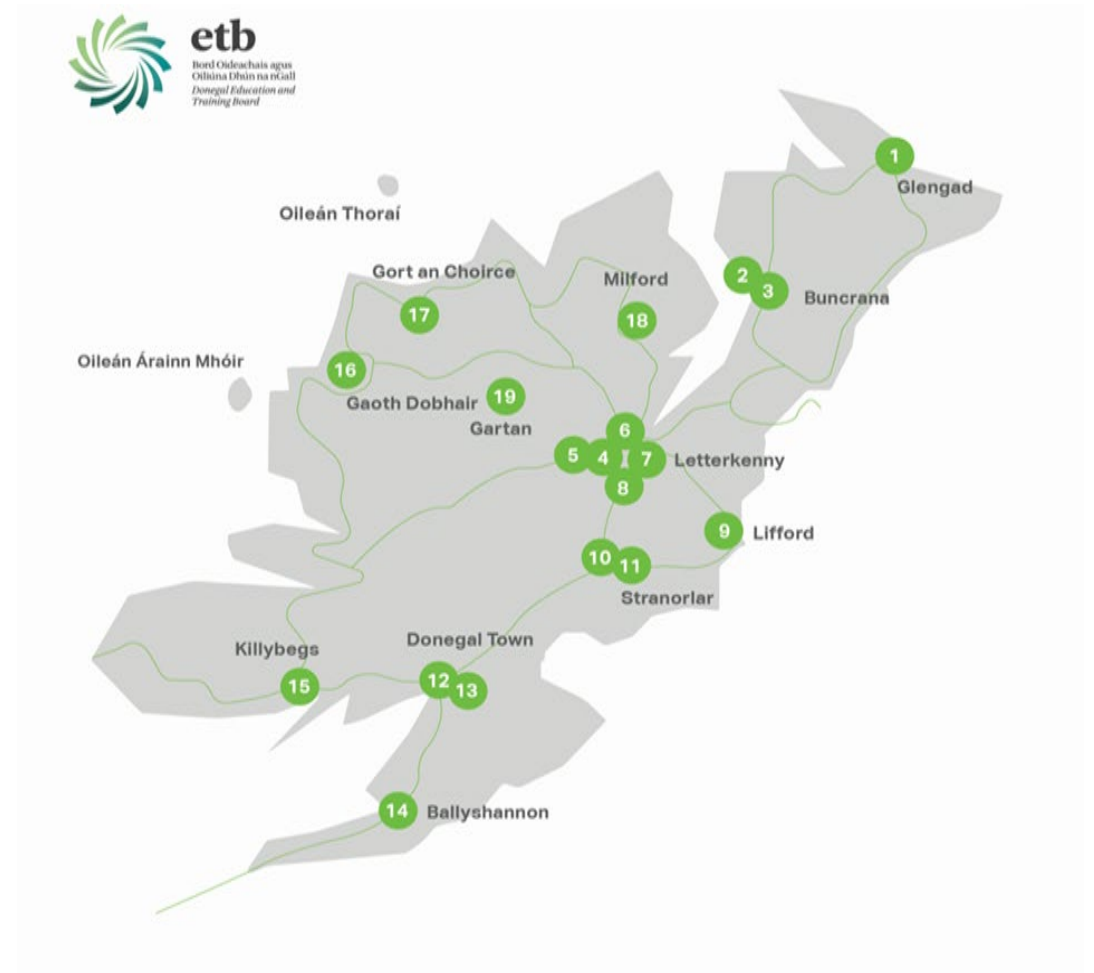
Broad Field of Learning
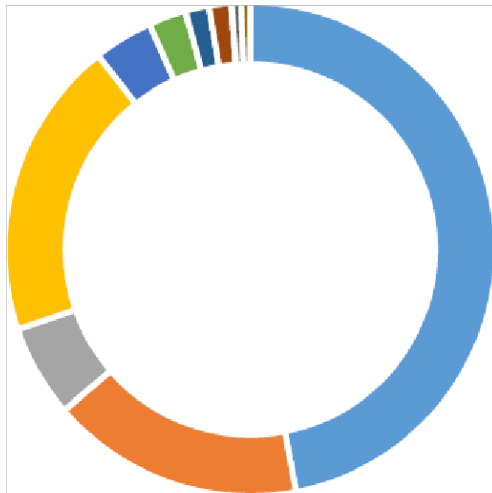
- Generic Programmes and Qualifications
- Business, Administration and Law
- Services
- Health & Welfare
- Information and Communications Technology
- Arts and Humanities
- Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Veterinary
- Education
- Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics
- Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction

- The FET Service offers thirty-four programmes of Further Education and Training

- Certification is offered through programmes ranging from levels 1 to 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) as well as a wide range of vendor and industry-certified programmes and awards.

- Our FET Service also delivers Apprenticeships within our two Training Centres.

- To date in 2023, 15,312 Donegal ETB FET students participated in the FET provision.

Part-Time Provisions

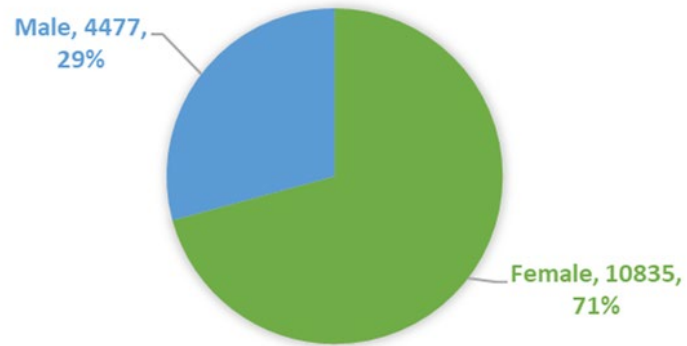| Back to Education Initiative (BTEI) | Learning for Living (L4L) incorporating ITABE and ESOL | |
| Community Education Programme | Evening Training | Recognition of Prior Learning |
| Skills to Advance | Skills for Work | Skills to Compete |

Full-Time Provisions

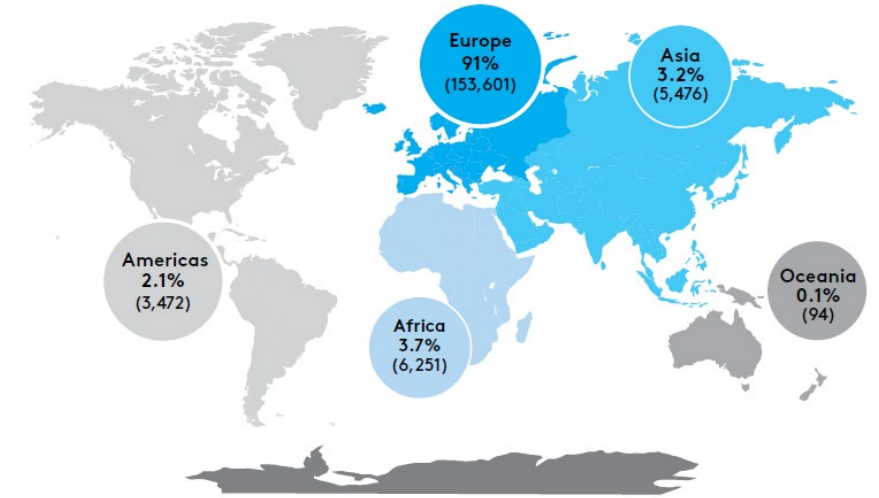| Post Leaving Certificate Course (PLC) | Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS) |
| Specialised Training Programme (STP) | Specific Skills Training |
| Traineeships | Apprenticeships | Youthreach |

STUDENT PROFILES

- Our student population is wide and very diverse.

In 2022, there were 195 different nationalities enrolled in FET.

Europe
91%
(153,601)

Asia
3.2%
(5,476)

Americas
2.1%
(3,472)

Oceania
0.1%
(94)

Africa
3.7%
(6,251)

2023 (TO DATE) DONEGAL ETB GENDER BREAKDOWN

Male, 4477, 29%

Female, 10835, 71%

2023 (to date) Age Profile of Learners

Age	Count
Over 64	2106
45-64	5338
25-44	5931
15-24	1930
<15	7

- As required by the QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance guidelines, the ETB's FET Service developed a Quality Assurance Governance structure. The groups are as follows:

  - Quality Council
  - Programme Sub Committee
  - Quality Sub Committee
  - Certification Approval Board.

- To support the QA governance groups and the objective separation required, the Quality Assurance Support Service (QASS) was formed. Part of their remit is to develop the new Quality Assurance system for the ETB's FET Service.

- The Student Voice within Governance and management of QA.
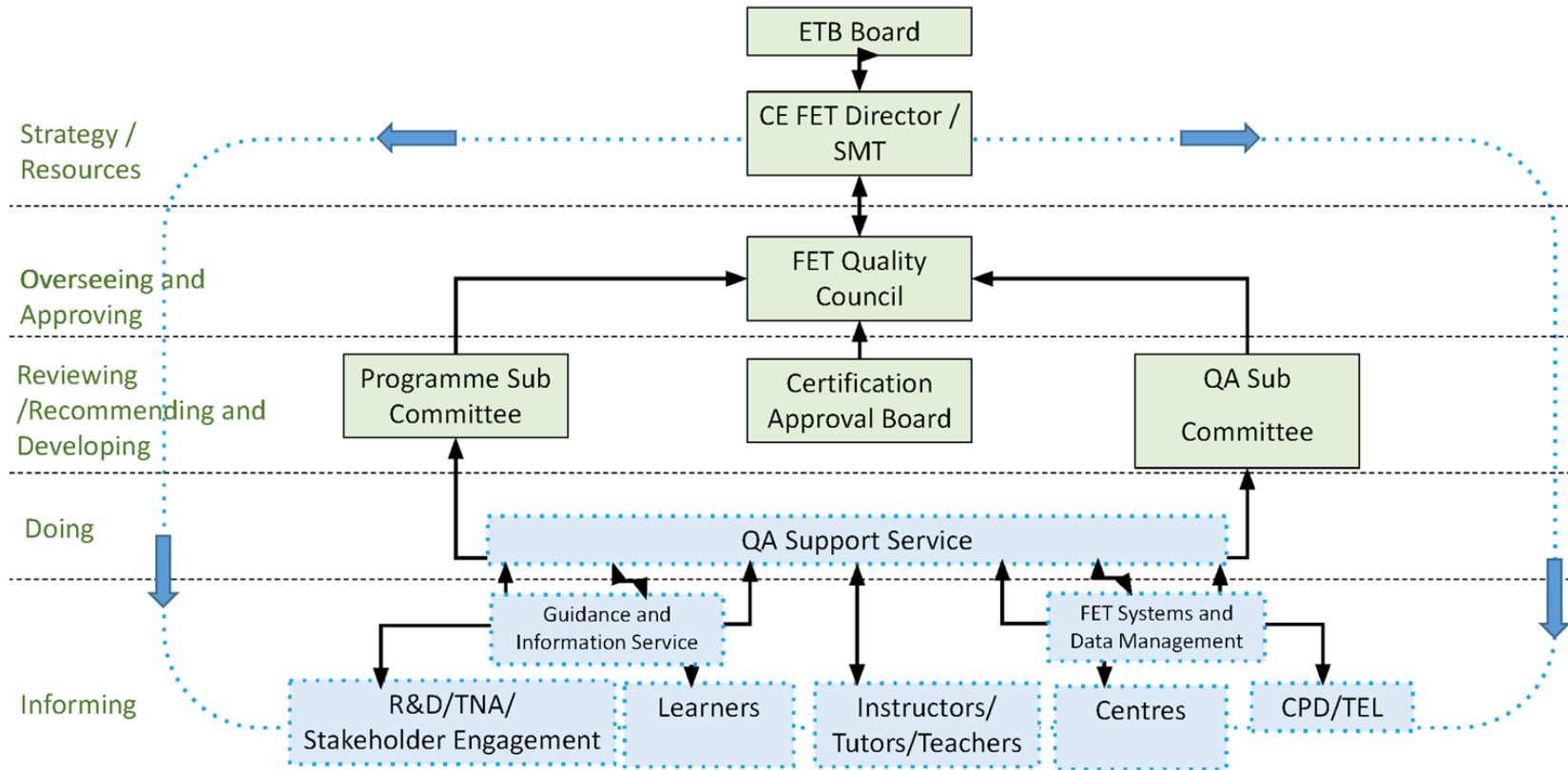
THE QUALITY ASSURANCE SUPPORT SERVICE

- Offers wide-ranging QA support to the FET staff and other stakeholders both operationally and strategically.

- Develops, implements and monitors the integrated QA system

- The QASS performs an essential role in the QA cycle, which is critical to the organised and structured evaluation process that underpins our new Quality Assurance system.

DEVELOPING A SINGLE QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

- In line with the ETB's Vision, Mission and Strategy statements, and to continuously improve the quality of the student experience, the ETB's FET Service is in the process of integrating the two current Quality Assurance systems. This will facilitate the gradual transition to a single system, drawing on best practice from both to reflect the unified and integrated nature of the FET Service.

- Through the development of Quality Assurance Policies, we are establishing a coherent framework for enhancing the quality of FET provision.

- The purpose of the policies are for the ETB's FET Service to deliver its education and training programmes to the highest standard, whilst conforming to national and international best practice guidelines, policies and procedures and legal and statutory regulations.

- The development of a comprehensive suite of shared quality assurance policies and procedures for Donegal ETB's FET Service is a long-term project. As new shared policies and practices are developed and approved by the appropriate governance structure, they will supersede the existing individual policies and procedures that currently exist.

A rationale is presented to the FET SMT by the QASS to develop new or update existing Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures based on a specific need and in line with the QA Guidelines

A Draft Policy and Procedure is then produced by the QASS

Draft Policy and Procedures are reviewed by FET SMT

Draft Policy and Procedure is then issued for wider consultation with relevant stakeholders

After feedback, amendments a review of Policy and Procedures take place in preparation for operational use

The Draft Policy and Procedure presented to relevant governance subcommittee(s)

Following recommendations by the subcommittee, policy or procedure presented to Quality Council for Approval

Following approval from the Quality Council – presented to the ETB Board for information

Communication to staff

Implementation

Publish

Ongoing monitor and review as part of self-evaluation procedures

Continuous improvement: a systemic approach to continuous improvement to the management and delivery of all aspects of the service

HOW DID WE DO IT?

Fair and Consistent Assessment of Learners

Draft Version 1.0

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Insert date

Draft V.1 Date

- Review of legacy policies and procedures
- Prioritising and planning
- Development of policies and procedures
- Collaboration and consultation
- Approval
- Monitor, evaluate and enhance

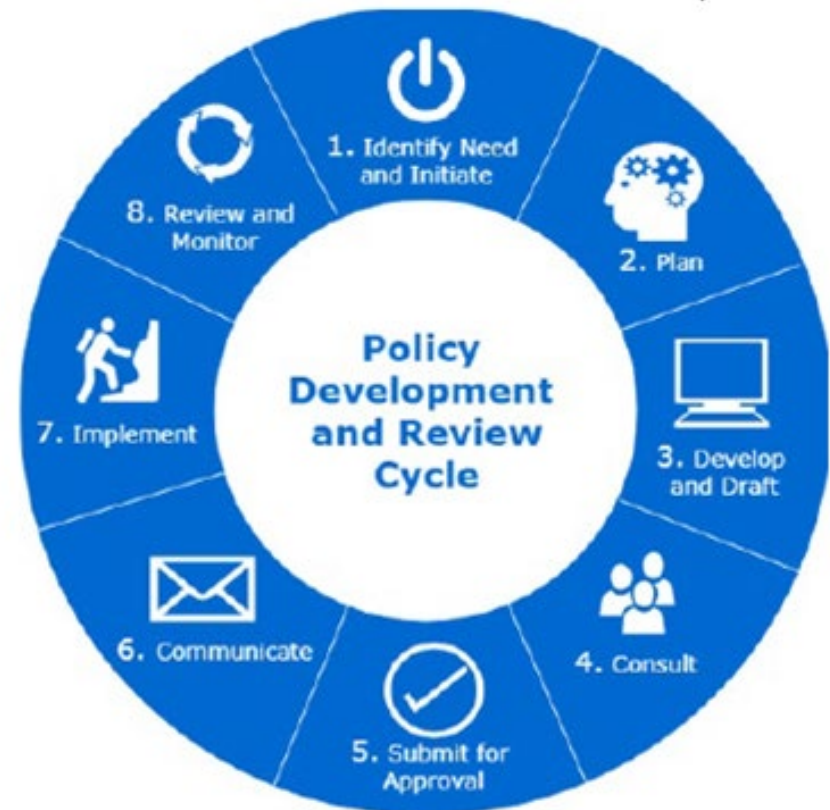**Quality Assurance Policy**

Version 3.0

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January 2023

QUALITY ASSURANCE CYCLE

- Strategy

- Policy – why?

- Procedure – how?

- Who is involved, responsibilities?

- Stakeholder engagement – Student Voice, Employers, Staff, National QA Network, External Authenticators.

- Self-evaluation, Monitoring & Review

- Communication and feedback – how do stakeholders know that we have listened to their feedback (QA Portal/Student HUB/ Student Voice Reports/QA Newsletter/G&M responses)

This cyclical approach, essential to quality development and sustained success, is outlined in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Stages of QA System

QA FUTURE PLANNING

- Quality Improvement Planning – FET Service approach

- Digitalisation

- Quality Assurance Culture – Support and **Enhance**

Hvala!