



Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board (KWETB) was established in July 2013 by the Education and Training Boards Act 2013 and provides a comprehensive range of education services throughout Kildare and Wicklow.

Excellence in Further Education
& Training Award
Eastern Region



As the largest education provider in counties Kildare and Wicklow, KWETB provides education and training opportunities for lifelong learning through ETB Community National Schools, Second Level Schools, Youth Support and adult learning services. The Further Education and Training (FET) section of the ETB provides full-time and part-time learning for employed and unemployed learners.

KWETB's adult learning programmes focus on social inclusion skills, including literacy, numeracy, ICT and English language. The facility educates learners for progression to higher-level academic courses, including universities. They also upskill employees for work competency and career progression and train learners for entry into a wide range of different occupations.

KWETB amalgams the VECs and the former FÁS training centres in the two counties. There are over 2000 staff in schools and FET centres. The head office is based in Naas, and they have administrative offices in Wicklow. There are just over 12,000 learners in FET on 730 courses.

KWETB works with employers and industry representatives to develop new and relevant courses specific to their skills needs. Most employment-related courses are available part-time, online, or in the employer's workplaces to facilitate easy access for learners.

The education uses innovative learning practices that allow greater flexibility for access, using technology to support learning remotely and using a hybrid of tutor lead and self-directed learning.

The changing demands of work environments and a high employment economy challenge the KWETB to develop and evolve. Choosing to enter the workforce after completing second level education is often seen as a lesser option for school leavers. The KWETB has found that learners engaging in FET courses and apprenticeships gain practical experience that remains a lifelong benefit. After committing to a career choice and gaining a FET qualification, people often choose to do related degrees, which employers typically support. KWETB offers taster courses to transition year students to help them make informed decisions on career options. They also work directly with employers to help upskill and retain staff through skills development programmes and learning support.

KWETB reviews and updates its courses regularly. They meet with employers and discuss the skills demands and working environments and use the information to look ahead at the future skills needs and develop courses to prepare learners for that future work environment.

KWETB's education courses are regularly reviewed to maintain their relevance as feeder programmes for third level access, and they enter into agreements with universities to ensure access and progression opportunities.

KWETB works with many sectors of the community and the team is proud of the work it does. Director of Further Education and Training Ken Seery explains: "Seeing a person who has come to Ireland through a refugee programme or a person who was unsuccessful at school receiving an award for learning achievement and hearing them telling of its impact on them and their families is always surprising and rewarding for us. Sharing that journey and our learners' successes is one of the key motivators for our staff.

"KWETB has a depth and range of provision that is not available to any other providers in the region. A significant advantage is customising solutions and delivering them to any learners. Most of our courses are entirely free, with just a small number having a nominal fee, and a lot of them have learner allowances to help participants with the costs of attending.

"We are customer-centric; we focus on the learners and their achievements, and we get great satisfaction from our customer's success. We love to see learners returning to us to share their accomplishments or continue their learning journey."

KWETB's courses are quality assured and checked under agreements with Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). Learners can be reassured that the work they do and the qualification they receive are to a high standard and recognised internationally. QQI is the state agency responsible

for promoting the quality, integrity and reputation of Ireland's further and higher education system

Ken goes on to say: "Our staff are our biggest asset, and they are people who help our learners and interact with them throughout their courses. Our back-office staff quietly support the development and smooth operation of our learning activities. KWETB greatly appreciates the hard work, particularly during the pandemic of all our staff."

Looking toward the future, a critical project for KWETB is developing its physical infrastructure so that its learners can work in the most up-to-date and relevant facilities. This will be a significant piece of work for the organisation as its building stock is old and requires considerable investment from the state.



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