

Governance Unit	FET Quality Council
Document	Terms of Reference
Approved by/Date	Chief Executive/SMT
Version	2.1
Due for Review by:	December 2025

PURPOSE OF THE FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING (FET) QUALITY COUNCIL

The purpose of the FET Quality Council is to oversee planning, co-ordination, quality, development and improvement of all aspects of the further education and training offering of the ETB. The Quality Council guides and supports the establishment of cyclical approaches to all aspects of further education and training in KWETB. It protects, maintains and develops the standards of education and training programmes and related activities. In doing so, the FET Quality Council is ensuring, as far as is possible, that all learners receive an equivalent experience.

The Quality and Qualifications (Education and Training Act), 2012 emphasises the obligation of providers to establish procedures ‘in writing for quality assurance for the purposes of establishing, ascertaining, maintaining and improving the quality of education, training, research and related services the provider provides’ (Section 28) and providers must have regard to guidelines issued by QQI in establishing procedures; the Quality Council supports decision-making in regard to this obligation.

FET QUALITY COUNCIL TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Chief Executive (CE) of the ETB, supported by the Senior Management Team (SMT), has delegated certain governance responsibilities to the FET Quality Council, as detailed below. The FET Quality Council is accountable to the CE for carrying out its functions, regardless of whether it forms governance sub-groups or working groups to advance these tasks.

The FET Quality Council is responsible for the following:

Operational Matters

- Agreeing its operating procedures
- Establishing one or more sub-groups of governance, as required, and delegating responsibilities to those groups through defined terms of reference
- Establishing ad-hoc working groups to assist it in fulfilling its functions, if required
- Receiving recommendations from sub-groups to inform its functions
- Receiving reports from sub-groups of governance on their activities
- Providing a FET Quality Council Annual Report to the CE, identifying key decisions and actions taken by the FET Quality Council and making any recommendations to the CE, as appropriate
- Participating in the review of its terms of reference and formally making recommendations to the CE for amendments and additions, if required

- The FET Quality Council and each of its sub-groups will promote and raise awareness of the functions of the Governance Groups charged with governance of quality.
- Reviewing the outcomes of reviews of terms of reference by its sub-groups and making recommendations to the CE as appropriate
- Exercising any other functions, which may be formally delegated to it by the CE.

QA policies and procedures

- Approving the FET quality assurance policies and procedures of the ETB as recommended by the FET Quality Council Sub-group (Quality Assurance)
- Approving revisions to FET quality assurance policies and procedures of the ETB as recommended by the FET Quality Council Sub-group (Quality Assurance).

Programme responsibilities

- Recommending proposals to the CE, as appropriate, for the development of new programmes or awards that are consistent with the mission and strategy of the ETB, as recommended by the FET Quality Council Sub-group (Programme Governance)
- Receiving and signing off recommendations for submission of programme documentation to the awarding body for validation from the Programme Governance Sub-group.
- Making recommendations to the CE for the establishment of appropriate structures to support new or existing programmes
- Making recommendations for staff development where it is necessary or desirable for the improved delivery or development of programmes

Monitoring and review responsibilities

- Noting the annual schedule of reviews submitted by the FET Quality Council Sub-group (QA)
- Approving programme and organisational review documentation prior to its submission to the awarding body
- Receiving reports from the FET Quality Council Sub-group (QA) of progress against action plans arising from quality reviews
- Receiving observations arising from programme feedback reports and other internal and external stakeholder reports, as appropriate.
- Escalating areas of risk associated with further education and training to the CE. These areas of academic risk may be identified by the Quality Council, or one of its sub-groups. Sub-groups escalate areas of significant risk to the Quality Council.

Assessment responsibilities

- Agreeing and adopting the Panel of External Authenticators for programmes leading to QQI awards annually for KWETB.
- Noting assessment reports detailing results approval recommendations by Results Approval Panels and ratified by the FET Programme Governance Sub-group), confirming they are in line with agreed assessment processes and procedures

Apprenticeship responsibilities

To fulfil the governance role for new apprenticeships as coordinating provider, the FET Quality Council will undertake the following responsibilities:

- Considering reports from the Consortium Steering Group established by the Apprenticeship Council on matters affecting apprenticeship programmes
- Considering reports from programme coordinators on the delivery of programmes
- Receiving named annual and biannual reports from the National Programme Board(s)
- Receiving reports from the ETBI New Apprenticeship QA Monitoring and Enhancement Panel
- Considering proposals from the National Programme Board(s) and from the Consortium Steering Group for new partnerships and for new members of partnerships
- Ensuring that the proposals received from the National Programme Board(s) and from the Consortium Steering Group for new partnerships conform to the requirements of the programme and that suitable Memorandums of Agreement are in place
- Fulfilling any reporting requirements to external authorities on apprenticeship activities.

MEMBERSHIP OF FET QUALITY COUNCIL

Chair: The Chair is appointed by the Chief Executive and can be internal or external

Secretary: The ETB Quality Officer, or equivalent staff member designated by the CE.

Ordinary members:

- Normally, up to six staff members with relevant experience drawn from across the ETB, as the CE determines appropriate
- One representative from the FET Quality Council Sub-Group (QA), one from the FET Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Governance), and one from the Stakeholder Voice Sub-group.
- Where applicable, two representatives from the National Programme Board(s), one of which is from industry
- One learner representative.

External members:

The Chair of the FET Quality Council may from time to time recommend to the CE the appointment of external members to the Council. These will be persons who can bring an external perspective to the working of the Council, such as employers or experts in FET or in quality systems. Persons with an expertise from other ETBs may also be invited to join the Quality Council for a defined period.

Additional expertise:

From time to time, the FET Quality Council may request that the Secretary source specialist expertise to inform its deliberations if necessary.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHAIR

The responsibilities of the Chair of the FET Quality Council include:

- Working closely with the Secretary to agree meeting agendas
- Ensuring meetings function efficiently and effectively
- Providing adequate time for discussion of agenda items
- Ensuring that members have been provided with materials in advance of the meeting to support informed decision-making
- Ensuring that a quorum is present before commencing a FET Quality Council meeting
- Ensuring that decisions are taken in the context of the FET Quality Council's remit and that they are recorded.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SECRETARY

The Secretary of the FET Quality Council is a full member of the Council. His/her responsibilities include:

- Agreeing a schedule of meetings with the Chair in consultation with the Council members and having regard to the business of the FET Quality Council and the meeting dates of sub-groups reporting into the FET Quality Council
- Convening meetings of the FET Quality Council and determining the agenda of the meetings, in consultation with the Chair
- Circulating the agendas for meetings and associated documentation and reports for review by the FET Quality Council members
- Liaising with the chairs and secretaries of the sub-groups reporting into the FET Quality Council to manage a smooth flow of information
- Preparing draft minutes of meetings and circulating these to members
- Ensuring the decisions of the FET Quality Council are made known to the appropriate individuals/governance units
- Reporting to the Chair and the FET Quality Council on the implementation of the decisions of the FET Quality Council
- Ensuring that membership terms are managed, and new member induction/briefing provided.

OPERATING PROCEDURES

- Meetings will take place four times per calendar year.
- New members will be identified through either an expression of interest or a nomination process, whichever is most suitable for managing the change. Nominations/applications will be considered by the Quality Council, and all nominees will be notified of the outcome. The names of the new members will be publicised, and outgoing members recognised publicly for their commitment and work through communications channels. The Quality Council will organise an induction meeting for new members.

- Duration of membership: Members are expected to commit four years to the Quality Council and/or its sub-groups. Opportunities to review or adjust membership will be provided for every two years, in December of each calendar year. There is a maximum turnover of 50% of the members (i.e. staff and learner representatives) to maintain the knowledge base within the group. It is acknowledged that members may need to step down for personal reasons at any time during the year. A formal communication to the Chair of the Quality Council or Sub-group is required in advance of a resignation.
- For a quorum to be established, 50% of members plus one additional member must be in attendance
- The meeting agenda and supporting documentation must be circulated to members at least one week in advance of a scheduled meeting and external members may be invited to present agenda items
- Decisions are made by consensus or by the exercise of a vote if necessary; the Chair has the deciding vote in the case of a split decision
- Meeting outcomes are recorded and circulated in draft form within two weeks of a meeting
- The minutes of meetings are approved at the beginning of the subsequent meetings of the FET Quality Council
- In some cases, at the discretion of the Chair, an incorporeal meeting of the FET Quality Council may be held where reports can be circulated virtually and accepted by the FET Quality Council without the FET Quality Council having to meet.
- Incorporeal meetings only take place in the event of an emergency and are normally held over phones or e-mail. The incorporeal meeting should be followed up immediately by a written note recording the decision of attendees. Formally scheduled routine meetings on electronic platforms are not comprehended as ‘incorporeal’.