

Employment | Progression | Apprenticeship



**KERRY
COLLEGE**

of Further Education & Training



BORD OIDEACHAIS
AGUS OILÚNA CHIARRAÍ
KERRY EDUCATION
AND TRAINING BOARD

THE EVOLUTION OF KERRY COLLEGE 2018–2021

How Kerry ETB Integrated
Further Education and
Training Provision



Colm McEvoy Chief Executive Officer
Owen O'Donnell Director of Further Education and Training



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

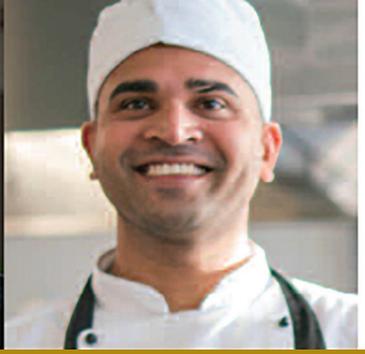


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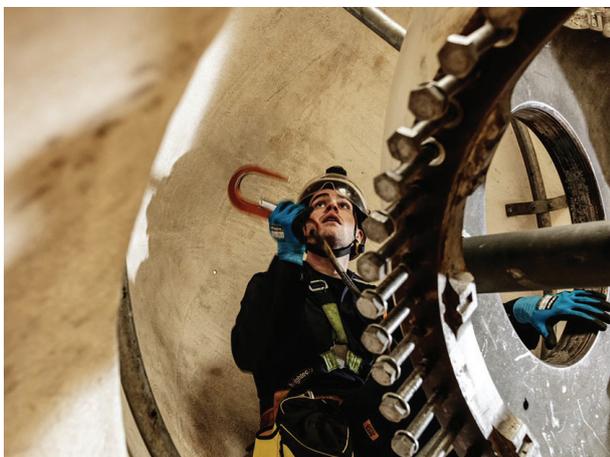
KERRY COLLEGE

of Further Education & Training

welcome ...

Kerry College is Ireland's only integrated provider of Further Education and Training. We offer clear routes to employment, further study, third level and apprenticeship.

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WHAT WE OFFER

FULL-TIME PROGRAMMES

A range of tried and tested full-time programmes focused on helping you build job ready skills for employment or preparing you to progress to third level.

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PATHWAY PROGRAMMES

Our pathway courses are a great way to build knowledge, skills and confidence to progress to further study or work.

TERMINOLOGY AND ACRONYMS

The following terminology is used nationally and in this report. It is defined here for clarity:

Apprenticeship is a programme of formal education and training. It combines learning in the workplace with learning in an education or training centre. On successful completion of a number of phases of training, apprentices become recognised craftspeople or professionals. Apprenticeships can be delivered from a training centre or a PLC college.

Traineeship is a programme of structured training which combines learning in an education and training setting as well as in the workplace, with the aim of improving recruitment and employment outcomes for participants and increasing retention and productivity of a skilled workforce within industry. Such programmes typically entail at least 30 per cent on-the-job work experience. Traineeships can be delivered from a training centre or a PLC college.

Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) *“is a self-contained, whole-time learning experience designed to provide successful participants with specific vocational skills to enhance their prospects of securing lasting, full-time employment or progression to other studies”* (McGuinness, et al, 2018). It is typically delivered from a dedicated PLC college, though some second-level schools also run PLC courses alongside their traditional provision.

ACRONYMS

| | | | |
|-----------------|--|-------------|---|
| AEGI | Adult Education Guidance Initiative | HEA | Higher Education Authority |
| BTEA | Back to Education Allowance | HSE | Health Service Executive |
| CAO | Central Applications Office | ITEC | International Therapy Examination Council |
| CEO | Chief Executive Officer | KCFE | Kerry College of Further Education |
| CTC | Community Training Centre | MIS | Management Information System |
| COP | Community of Practice | NFQ | National Framework of Qualifications |
| DFHERIS | Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science | NLN | National Learning Network |
| DSP | Department for Social Protection | OETC | Outdoor Education and Training Centre |
| ESBS | Education Shared Business Services | PLC | Post Leaving Certificate |
| ETB | Education and Training Board | PLSS | Programme and Learner Support System |
| ETBI | Education and Training Boards Ireland | QA | Quality Assurance |
| FARR | Funding Allocation Requests and Reporting | QQI | Quality and Qualifications Ireland |
| FÁS | Foras Áiseanna Saothair (former national training agency) | SEN | Special Educational Needs |
| FE | Further Education | SUSI | Student Universal Support Ireland |
| FE&T | Further Education and Training | TACS | Trainee Apprentice Clocking System |
| FET | Further Education and Training | TU | Technological University |
| FETCH | Further Education and Training Course Hub | VTOS | Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme |
| HE | Higher Education | | |

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Terminology and Acronyms | 5 |
| Foreword from the Chief Executive Officer | 9 |
| Introduction | 10 |
| 1: CONTEXT | |
| 1.1 PROFILE OF FULL-TIME FET PROVISION 2018 | 13 |
| Remit and Enrolments by Location | 16 |
| Features of Apprenticeships, Traineeships and PLC Programmes | 16 |
| 1.2 EXTERNAL DRIVERS OF CHANGE | 16 |
| 1.3 INTERNAL DRIVERS OF CHANGE | 19 |
| 1.4 CHALLENGES TO CHANGE | 21 |
| 2: VISION FOR THE FUTURE STRATEGIC APPROACH | |
| 2.1 TERMINOLOGY | 24 |
| 2.2 SEVEN KEY RECOMMENDATIONS | 25 |
| 2.3 STRATEGIC APPROACH | 26 |
| Stakeholder Engagement/Consultation Process | 27 |
| Rollout of the Pilot | 28 |
| Results of the Pilot | 29 |
| 3: A PROFILE OF KERRY COLLEGE 2021 | |
| 3.1 GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT | 32 |
| Establishing a New PLC Roll Number | 32 |
| Establishing a Governance Board | 32 |
| New Management Structure | 34 |
| 3.2 QUALITY ASSURANCE | 35 |
| Impact of Changes on Quality | 35 |
| Quality Assurance Unit Structure and Staffing | 36 |
| Highlighting Best Practice | 36 |
| 3.3 CENTRALISED PLANNING | 37 |
| 3.4 RECLASSIFICATION OF COURSES | 39 |
| Impact of Course Re-categorisation | 41 |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| 3.5 STAFFING | 42 |
| Staff Grades | 42 |
| Communities of Practice | 43 |
| Department/SOLAS Returns, Staff Allocation and Allowances | 43 |
| Learning from the Pilot | 44 |
| 3.6 MARKETING, PROMOTION AND RECRUITMENT | 45 |
| Overall Remit | 46 |
| Structure of Admissions Office | 46 |
| Admissions Clinics | 48 |
| 3.7 BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES | 49 |
| Future Priorities | 49 |
| 3.8 SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS | 50 |
| Grants and Financial Support | 50 |
| Building the Integrated Attendance/Payment System at Kerry College | 53 |
| Career Guidance and Counselling Support | 55 |
| Other Supports | 56 |
| 3.9 EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT | 56 |
| Identified Actions | 57 |
| Business Support Unit | 57 |
| | |
| 4: FUTURE PLANS/PRIORITIES | |
| Conclusion | 62 |
| References | 67 |
| | |
| APPENDICES | |
| Appendix 1: Indicative Goals, Targets and Actions from SOLAS Corporate Plan | 68 |
| Appendix 2: Proposal to SOLAS | 69 |
| Appendix 3: Key Milestones in Planning and Implementation of Pilot | 81 |
| Appendix 4: Courses on Offer at Kerry College | 82 |
| Appendix 5: Kerry College Pilot – Possible Reform of the Student Grant System | 86 |

FOREWORD



Since the 1st of January 2014, Kerry Education and Training Board (Kerry ETB) has been on a journey shaped and driven by a national policy to integrate the training function into the ETB fully. To date, this has been an exciting and fulfilling journey for all involved as we endeavoured to realign, develop and expand our provision of further education and training (FET) to reflect the new reality of the ETB's responsibility for FET in the county. The 'transfer, transition and transformation' change cycle has been useful in capturing the stages of this journey since the 1st of January 2014.

Early in this process, the Kerry ETB Board and Senior Management recognised the need for greater integration of the former Kerry ETB Training Centre (FÁS Training Centre pre the 1st of January 2014) and the Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) Colleges. These entities provided essential FET services but were primarily structured around legacy structures and systems. Over the years, the lines between "training" and "further education" had become blurred, with duplication of provision and internal competition for the recruitment of learners needing to be addressed.

From 2014 to 2018, much of the integration process focused on the transfer and transition phases of the change cycle. In late 2018, Kerry ETB compiled a paper for consideration by SOLAS addressing the need to transform existing provision into an integrated FET College structure. The paper outlined the key areas that needed to be addressed in integrating the former Kerry ETB Training Centre and PLC Colleges to create an integrated College of FET, with the needs of the learners driving the change process.

This paper was not compiled in isolation of national policy and developments. Its trajectory was firmly based on national policy and giving real effect to the vision of creating a single, clearly identifiable FET sector in Ireland. The legacy FE and T structures and systems were not consistent with real integration. For Kerry ETB, there was a clear need to move to the next phase of the journey in transforming our FET provision for the future, creating an integrated FET college with quality assured provision that could be easily recognised, understood and accessed by all learners equitably and fairly.

With the support of SOLAS, early in 2019, it was agreed that Kerry ETB would enter into a “pilot initiative” and establish Kerry College of Further Education and Training (Kerry College). Accordingly, the College was formally established on the 1st of September 2019, integrating the former Kerry ETB Training Centre and PLC Colleges in Tralee and Listowel under a single entity.

In 2019 the College had four campus locations between Tralee and Listowel. Since then, progress has continued unabated with tremendous support and positivity from staff, staff unions, and all internal and external partners. As with any pilot initiative, there have been challenges. However, the learnings from addressing these challenges have been informative, affirming and positive.

In September 2020, the former Outdoor Education and Training Centre at Cappanalea, Killorglin, became the fifth Kerry College campus, with further expansion to a sixth campus planned for Killarney for 2021/22.

The publication of the SOLAS FET Strategy – Transforming Learning 2020–24 and its vision for the FET College of the Future provided real affirmation for the work of this pilot initiative. SOLAS put forward eight characteristics of the FET College of the Future as part of this strategy. In establishing Kerry College, each of these characteristics have been actualised in a real and meaningful way.

As with any transformation process, change generally means some degree of adjustment for all involved, requiring good communications. It is essential that the entire team is part of the change process and takes ownership of elements of it. We are very fortunate with the cooperation and support we have received throughout this process from Senior Management and Colleagues in SOLAS, Departments, staff unions etc. In addition, the management and staff of the former Kerry ETB Training Centre, Post Leaving Certificate Colleges and Outdoor Education and Training Centre have been excellent in embracing and supporting this change process and, in many ways, have driven the process.

Documenting the key milestones and developments on this journey is very important at this time. As time passes and inevitable personnel changes occur, gaps in knowledge can emerge. Therefore, we hope this publication captures the key developments that internal or external audiences can refer to in time.

We look forward to completing the first five years of this journey, completing a formal review of this pilot initiative and the publication of a three-year Strategy Statement charting Kerry College’s continued development from 2022.

Colm McEvoy
Chief Executive Officer



INTRODUCTION

Kerry College is Ireland's first and only integrated provider of further education and training (FET). It provides clear routes to employment, further study, higher education and apprenticeship. It offers c. 180 full and part-time FET programmes and a range of apprenticeship training. It has evolved from a disparate system of individual colleges and centres, all operating independently under the Kerry ETB brand, to become a unified entity identifiable to stakeholders in the county as a single college with multiple campuses. This report charts the journey of a pilot development fully endorsed by SOLAS, from multiple and disparate FET provision to provision that is unified, standardised and integrated.

This report first describes the context and rationale for establishing an integrated FET college in Kerry. It then outlines the strategic approach taken to transforming the delivery of full-time provision, initially at levels 5 and 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and apprenticeships. Next, the key changes implemented during the integration/transformation process are identified and discussed, and the significant milestones throughout the five-year process, from 2018 to 2022. Finally, the benefits of the transformation are outlined.

Following the transition of the training function from the former state training agency FÁS to the newly formed Kerry ETB, similar courses were now being offered in the two types of FET centre, the Training Centre and PLC Colleges, but with different guidelines and course costs. From 2014 to 2018, Kerry ETB presented a confused

visual to learners across social and local media platforms. The Kerry ETB Training Centre and Colleges were, in effect, competing with each other when marketing their full-time provision. The need to rationalise was clear, and the timeline for moving from separate further education and training (FE&T) to integrated FET began.

At Kerry College, how courses were marketed and promoted to learners was simplified, and the recruitment process was streamlined. A new classification of courses for employment, courses for progression and apprenticeships made what Kerry College offered to prospective learners more transparent. In addition, a new centralised Admissions Office was established to deal with all aspects of the marketing and recruitment processes for all campuses under this new college brand. A significant decision in the change process was to retire the old designation of "PLC Colleges" and the "Training Centre" when referring to these FET centres. Now all would be known simply as campus locations, allowing for the integration of provision that would formerly have been the remit of one or the other type of provider.

Further transformation took place at the programmatic level, which saw standardisation applied to common courses, where it had not existed between centres previously.

Standardisation in relation to learner financial supports was implemented too, severing the traditional link between learner payment/grant type and location/type of course.

All of the changes that have been implemented have been with the learner in mind and with a view to removing inequities that had been features of legacy systems, such as the PLC model versus traineeship model, and to create more seamless and transparent pathways for learners into and through further education courses. At the same time, economies of scale and efficiencies were generated through integration, deficiencies in the overall system identified and addressed and new ways of working with stakeholders such as employers are coming to fruition.

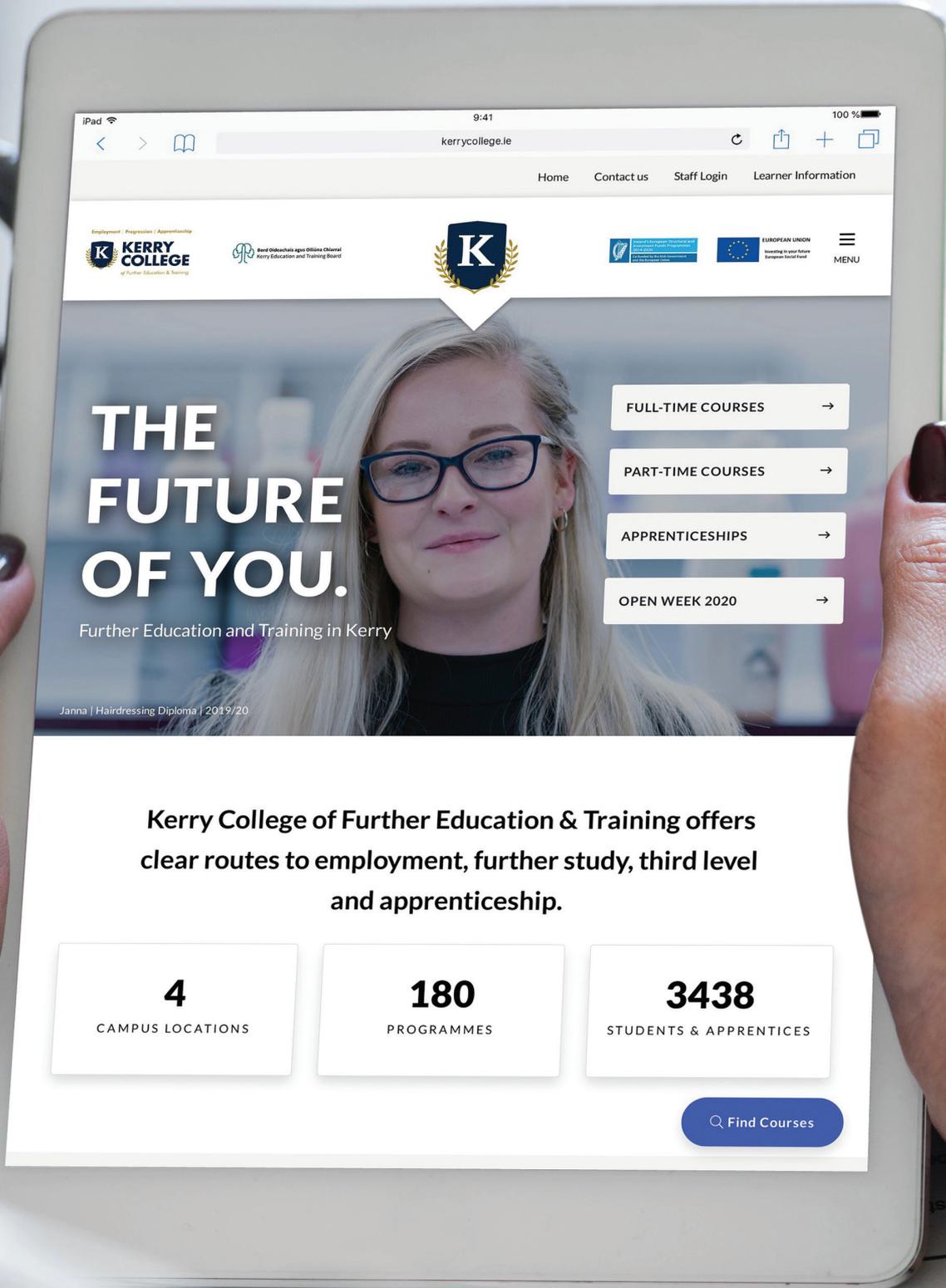
As Kerry College evolved from a pilot project planned during Q1–Q3 of 2019, it grew to include a fifth campus at Cappanalea in Killorglin (and soon a sixth in Killarney). Staff engaged fully with the process. Communication has been ongoing and the need for buy-in from all stakeholders recognised. The college would not have come so far in such a short time without the commitment and buy-in from the managers and staff (circa 204) at the various campus locations, staff unions, as well as SOLAS and the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS) and others.

Kerry College is now in the fourth year of its journey. It began as the seed of an idea in 2018 culminating a draft proposal to SOLAS at the end of that year; this pilot project has proved very positive for all involved with tremendous progress made in integrating the campuses into a single college entity, with strong brand recognition and enhanced enrolments by the end of 2020/21. Further ambitious plans are in place for 2022, 2023 and beyond.

It is hoped that this report will fully document how this college came into being and set out the benefits of truly integrated FET.

We also hope that Kerry College will provide a model of best practice for the concept of the "FET College of the Future", as envisioned by SOLAS in its National FET Strategy 2020–24.

1: CONTEXT



Kerry Education and Training Board (Kerry ETB) is a statutory provider of education and training courses in County Kerry. It was established on 1 July 2013, arising from the Education and Training Boards Act (2013). As part of that act, FÁS, the national agency responsible for apprenticeships and other training programmes, was disbanded, and its remit was transferred to the sixteen new ETBs (McGuinness et al, 2014). On 1 January 2014, the training function was transferred to the newly established Kerry ETB as part of phase one of this national process.

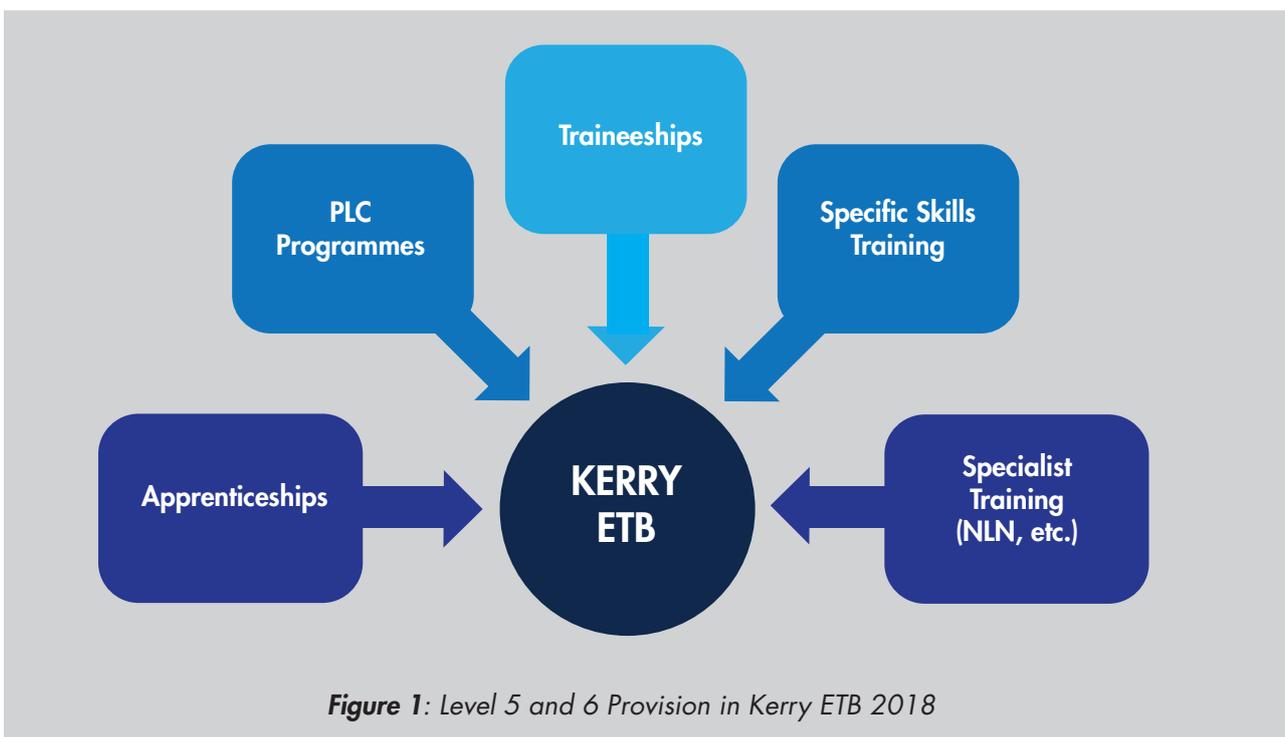
Kerry ETB provides a wide range of further education and training (FET) courses across County Kerry to meet the needs of learners on a full-time and part-time basis at levels 1–6 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). This report will focus on apprenticeships and course provision at levels 5 and 6 on the NFQ framework.

What became clear to Kerry ETB was that full-time courses at NFQ levels 5 and 6 and apprenticeships were being delivered via an integrated yet disparate model, i.e. planning centrally but with delivery driven by separate legacy systems and demands. This was the impetus behind the transformation of FET provision in the county and the eventual creation of one single entity, Kerry College.

1.1 PROFILE OF FULL-TIME FET PROVISION 2018

Figure 1 below demonstrates the range of full-time provision at levels 5 and 6 delivered by Kerry ETB and how this provision was classified/organised in 2018.

- At that time, Kerry ETB delivered apprenticeships, traineeships, specific skills training programmes, contracted training and specialist training provision from the **Kerry ETB Training Centre** at Monavalley in Tralee.



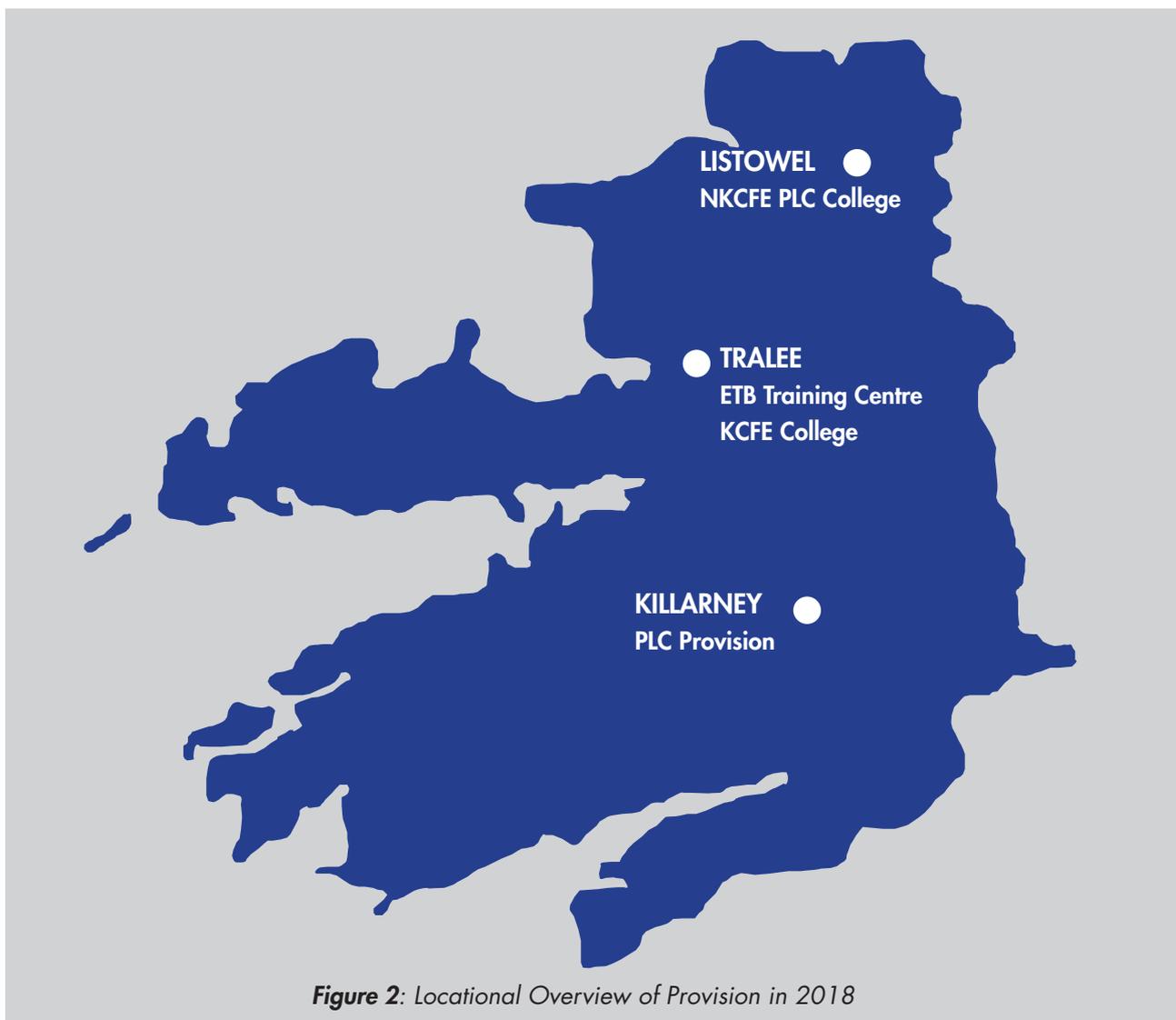
Kerry ETB delivered PLC programmes largely from two PLC colleges.

2. Kerry College of Further Education (KCFE) had campus buildings at Clash Road and Denny Street in Tralee.

PLC provision in Tralee had been mixed with second-level provision delivered from Tralee Community College at Clash Road. In 2017, provision was separated, and two new entities were created, each with separate roll numbers. Second-level provision was henceforth delivered from what was to be known as Coláiste Gleann Lí, Post-Primary School and PLC provision from KCFE. KCFE's PLC provision then expanded with the addition of a further campus building at Denny Street in Tralee's town centre.

3 PLC programmes were delivered in Listowel, where it was also mixed with second-level provision. In 2017, these programmes were marketed to the public through the newly rebranded **North Kerry College of Further Education**, which was co-located with the post-primary school, Coláiste na Ríochta.

4. A further limited number of PLC programmes were delivered in Killarney Community College under a similar mixed provision model. This dual provision was also phased out.





Nationally, Specialist Training Provision was and continues to be delivered under contract by the National Learning Network (NLN). This report does not address the future model for same as this is being addressed at Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI) level. Kerry ETB's stated preference is for a fully integrated Kerry ETB delivered Specialist Training Provision.

To summarise, from when the training function was transferred to Kerry ETB at the start of 2014 to the middle of 2019, Kerry ETB delivered full-time FET provision at levels 5 and 6 from three locations within a fragmented approach.



Remit and Enrolments by Location

Figure 3 below demonstrates the remit of Kerry ETB Training Centre and the PLC Colleges in 2018 respectively, as well as the enrolment figures for each location.

| Centre | | Remit | Enrolments |
|---------------------------|---|-----------------|--|
| Kerry ETB Training Centre | | Apprenticeships | Started 2017: 281 Started 2018: 279 |
| | | Traineeships | Started 2017: 155 Started 2018: 288 |
| PLC Colleges | North Kerry College of Further Education (Listowel) | PLC Programmes | Started 17/18: 181 |
| | Kerry College of Further Education (Tralee) | PLC Programmes | Started 17/18: 748 |
| Other PLC Provision | Killarney Community College | PLC Programmes | Started 17/18: 20 |

Figure 3: Centre Remit and Enrolments

Features of Apprenticeships, Traineeships and PLC Programmes

Focusing now on the three categories of courses mentioned above – apprenticeships, traineeships and PLC programmes – the next table provides an overview of the elements these course categories had in common and how they differed.

| | Apprenticeship | Traineeship | PLC |
|-------------------------|---|---|--|
| Target Audience | All school leavers, mature learners, unemployed, etc. | | |
| Course Orientation | Employment Orientated | | |
| | | | Progression Orientated (to FE and HE) |
| | | | |
| Certification | QQI Certification | Industry-Focused Certification | QQI Certification (with industry-focused certification, where relevant) |
| Financial Supports | Salary/Training Allowance | Trainee Allowance (trainee needs to be registered unemployed to participate) | School Leaver: SUSI Grant Unemployed: BTEA / VTOS Fees |
| Fees | No Fees | No Fees | Fees |
| Course Kit and Material | Provided for Free | Provided for Free | Learner Pays |
| Delivered in | Kerry ETB Training Centre | Kerry ETB Training Centre | PLC Colleges (Tralee and Listowel) and Killarney |

Figure 4: Commonalities and Differences between Course Categories

It is important to highlight that over the years some of the PLC Programmes have addressed training needs and likewise some of the current traineeships have provided for progression to third-level education.

1.2 EXTERNAL DRIVERS OF CHANGE

In planning for provision, each area of FET delivery within Kerry ETB endeavours to meet enrolment targets that are aligned to funding and staff allocations. The establishment of the new Strategic Performance Agreements with SOLAS in 2018 placed an even greater emphasis on such targets.

Central government policy and publications such as the Action Plan to Expand Apprenticeships and Traineeships in Ireland 2016–2020¹, the Evaluation of PLC Programme Provision (2018)² and the SOLAS Corporate Plan 2017–2019³ were among further key drivers of change in the planning and delivery process at Kerry ETB. See appendix one for indicative goals, targets and actions from the SOLAS Corporate Plan.

The following table summarises the targets Kerry ETB agreed with SOLAS as part of its Strategic Performance Agreement 2018–2020.

| Target | National Sectoral Target | Kerry ETB Contribution |
|---|---------------------------------|---|
| 1) More learners securing employment from provision which primarily serves the labour market | 10% over 3 years | 22% over 3 years, equating to 545 learners securing employment in 2020 |
| 2) More learners progressing to other further or higher education courses from provision which is primarily focused on this purpose 10% over 3 years | 10% over 3 years | 15% over 3 years, equating to 1,110 learners progressing to other courses in 2020 |
| 3) Increase in the rate of certification on courses primarily focused on transversal (social mobility) skills development 10% over 3 years | 10% over 3 years | 83% over 3 years, equating to 320 completers certified in 2020 |
| 4) Increase in adults seeking FET level provision engaging in lifelong learning interventions 10% over 3 years | 10% over 3 years | 10% over 3 years, equating to 8,783 starting relevant lifelong learning programmes in 2020 |
| 5) Increase in learners securing relevant qualifications in sectors where employment growth/skills needs have been identified | 10,000 learners per annum | 477 per annum or a 48% increase |
| 6) New apprenticeship and trainee registrations in the period 2017 to 2019 | 30,500 over 3 years | 830 over 3 years, almost doubling the current level of provision |

Figure 5: Kerry ETB Strategic Performance Agreement 2018–2020 – Agreed Targets

¹ <https://www.solas.ie/f/70398/x/0e99a88016/solascorporateplan.pdf>

² https://www.solas.ie/f/70398/x/83dc934f29/esri_plc_evaluation.pdf

³ <https://www.regionalskills.ie/imagelibrary/regional%20skills%20-%20national/publications-/publications-pdf/action-plan-to-expand-apprenticeship-and-traineeship-in-ireland-2016-2020.pdf>

Other aspects of the external environment at that time that contributed to change include:

- an economy that was characterised by low unemployment rates.
- a decrease in the number of referrals from the Department of Social Protection (DSP) of clients to Kerry ETB courses (as a result of the strong economy, DSP had fewer clients in need of training).
- an increase in the range of level 6 courses offered by the Institutes of Technology/Technological Universities (TU) to the same target audience as Kerry ETB.

1.3 INTERNAL DRIVERS OF CHANGE

In 2018, a review was carried out of the Kerry ETB model for the delivery of full-time level 5 and 6 provision and apprenticeships. As part of that review, the following areas of risk and concern with the model were identified:

1. Full-time courses at levels 5 and 6 and apprenticeships were being advertised, marketed and branded by the individual college/centre and what looked like unrelated entities. Although each college/centre included the Kerry ETB name and logo in its advertising, this individual approach led to **confusion for internal and external audiences**. There was no clear brand or common identity for FET provision and a potential learner would have no way of knowing, for example, that the Healthcare course he or she applied for in KCFE was the same as one being offered by Kerry ETB Training Centre. Both courses were delivered in Kerry ETB FET centres located in Tralee but with different costs associated with each.

CAREERS & TRAINING

KCFE: your step to a bright future

A major provider of further education in the county

ARE YOU ready to start your future? If so, the Kerry College of Further Education (KCFE) may be the place for you.

KCFE is Kerry's only independent college of further education and it's the major provider of further education in the county. Under the leadership of Principal Mary Lunny, it is recognised for the excellent provision of one and two-year study programmes which lead to exciting career opportunities as well as further study at third level colleges in Ireland and abroad.

There has been such an increase in student numbers and in demand for courses that KCFE is now operating a second campus in Tralee this September. This new campus will be in Denery Street and it will be dedicated to health and financial sciences courses.

There are many reasons why more and more Leaving Certificate students are choosing to study at KCFE. There's the fact that it provides an insight into college life in a supportive environment. Students can study a one or two-year programme and work while they study, or devote themselves to that field.

One in six first year students at institutes of technology and universities drop out of their chosen course, resulting in financial loss and disappointment. This alone justifies a useful P.F.C. course such as those offered by KCFE can be. So many problems can be overcome by taking a course at KCFE. Students learn just what is involved in their chosen field of study. They can get an insight into the industry they need to live away from home. They are taught how to study independently and they learn skills they will need to flourish at third level.

Because all P.F.C. courses have work experience components, students also get first-hand practical experience in their chosen field. This helps them to make an informed decision about their studies going forward. It also prevents them from making a big financial mistake. One year living and studying away from home costs up to €10,000. Compare this with the cost of a P.F.C. which is between €500 and €1,000, and it's easy to see which is the wise choice.

P.F.C.s can also function as an alternative to the CAO system. Student final year results can be converted into CAO points and used to secure a place on an institute of technology or university.

The programmes at KCFE are also open to mature students. Returning to education can be a daunting prospect but the Mature and International Student Office at KCFE is there to support you every step of the way. The mature students at the college leave with a new found confidence boost for employment or further third level study.

The college is run under the auspices of the Kerry Education and Training Board and is open to prospective students from a wide range of programmes. There are courses in science, health, sports, business, technology, education, childcare, beauty, fashion, construction, the humanities, tourism and hospitality.

This year, KCFE applications are being taken online at www.kerryetb.ie and places will be offered on a first come, first served basis, subject to minimum requirements being met. Places are limited so early application is advised. All courses commence the week beginning the 3rd of September and the information link will also post at the college on Wednesday the 30th of August at 6.30pm sharp.

For further information, contact info@kerryetb.ie or 066 7149600.

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| | | |
|--|---|---|
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| CAHERIVEEN CREDIT UNION 113 O'Connell Street, Caheriveen, Co. Kerry (066) 947 2711 caheriveencu.ie | COMHAR CHREIDHEASA CHORCA DHUBHINE Main St. Dingle, Co. Kerry (066) 915 1919 cccdu.ie | RATHMORE & DISTRICT CREDIT UNION Rathmore, Ballydoonard (0647) 775 8328 Arlington (0666) 976 7777 rathmorecu.ie |
| CARA CREDIT UNION Tullace 45-47, Aahie Street, Castlemoleend, 67 Main Street, Kilgarra, Mill Road (0646) 712 2373 caracreditunion.ie | KILLARNEY CREDIT UNION Killarney, Killarney (0644) 663 1244 (dial 2 for loans) killarneycu.ie | |

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Call Caroline or Maura: 066-7149600
Kerry ETB Training Centre, Monavalley, Tralee, County Kerry
APPLY ONLINE: WWW.KERRYETBTRAININGCENTRE.IE

KERRY ETB TRAINING CENTRE

Figure 6: Advertisements in the same local paper (Kerry) in Summer 2018

2. As identified in Figure 4, (page 17) the target audience for most full-time FET provision is largely homogenous. The individualistic approach at that time contributed to **internal competition** between the locations when it came to recruiting learners to courses, which was neither productive, economical nor collegial.
3. The **costs associated with promotion and recruitment** were being driven up by this disparate approach. With each location responsible for planning and marketing its courses, opportunities for economies of scale were being lost on marketing spend for separate media adverts and unique brochures for each college/centre etc.
4. Real concerns were identified from a quality assurance perspective relating to how direct tuition hours were being allocated to learners/trainees pursuing the same course in different locations. Significant variances were found in the duration of several courses leading to the same QQI award delivered in a PLC College as opposed to the Training Centre and the number of hours tuition per week of direct instructor/tutor/teacher-led delivery. This was highlighted as a serious anomaly.
5. There was a **lack of integrated planning and sharing of resources** by staff delivering similar courses in different locations.
6. The **learner experience was varied** across locations. Despite pursuing the same qualifications, the experience of learners/trainees differed between locations as a result of significant variances in the facilities, learning supports and resourcing of each of the colleges/centre.
7. It was evident that there were vast **differences in the range of financial supports** available to learners/trainees and **differences in the fees** they were required to pay for similar programmes leading to the same award. Financial supports and fees varied arbitrarily depending on the college/centre attended and the traditional classification assigned to that programme based on whether it was classified as a PLC programme or a traineeship.
8. Further disjointed approaches were highlighted when it came to **employer engagement and the provision of work experience/placement**, with separate locations managing these relationships individually.

Overall, the biggest single driver of change was the clear inequities and variances in the system in terms of what Kerry ETB was offering the learner. As discussed above, despite studying for the same qualification, learners were required to pay fees or not depending purely on the course location. In addition, they might have had to pay for their course kit or not; they might have gotten access to income support and other financial supports or not; they might have learned in an environment with access to industry-standard equipment or not.

From the arbitrary variances in fees and income supports available to learners, to the lack of standardisation in the learner experience in terms of contact hours, supports and facilities, it was clear that change was needed to ensure fairness for the learner and a standard of quality throughout all course provision. It was clear that this overall fragmented approach to FET provision would make it challenging to realise the goal of achieving an integrated FET service in Kerry ETB. Furthermore, it was becoming quickly apparent that change was needed if the ETB was to achieve the targets signed up to in the SOLAS Strategic Performance Agreement.

1.4 CHALLENGES TO CHANGE

As Kerry ETB began the process of transforming FET provision and embarking on the journey towards creating a single entity called “Kerry College”, these were the challenges it faced:

- How to address internal competition, learning from the example of advertisements placed during the Summer 2018 recruitment campaign, and how to do this in a way that caused the least confusion to the public. The message that needed to be communicated was that “Kerry ETB is one organisation”.
- How to move to “one organisation” while at the same time avoid eroding the market share and recognition built up over the years by each of the individual FET locations within Kerry ETB. Any displacement of provision would have significant consequences for staffing.
- How to adapt to the changing external environment, which at that time was characterised by low unemployment rates, fewer referrals from the DSP, an increased policy emphasis by the Government and SOLAS on promoting traineeships and apprenticeships and a growing range of level 6 courses offered by the Institutes of Technology/TU.
- How to coordinate PR campaigns and make the best use of marketing spend by using the “one organisation” approach. No longer would two different ads appear in the one publication for FET locations promoting largely similar courses.
- How to increase understanding among staff across the different colleges/centre that all course planning and strategy decisions made by management are informed by national policy and local needs.
- How to substantially change the way course planning is coordinated and conducted so that all staff involved in delivering common courses jointly plan the content, certification, work experience, access routes, progression, etc.

- How to increase the emphasis on work experience for PLC programmes that have traditionally been skills-based, with an orientation towards employment rather than progression. The aim is to modify these programmes to spend at least 30% on the job, with work experience potentially spanning holiday periods, etc.
- Securing a single Kerry ETB registration with certification bodies such as QQI, City and Guilds, ITEC, etc.
- Moving away from the “this is my space” view, if and where it existed, and encouraging a more strategic view for the benefit of the learners and the organisation.
- Addressing funding needs for full-time provision at levels 5 and 6, where required.
- Reviewing part-time provision at levels 5 and 6.

Kerry ETB was encouraged by SOLAS’ request that ETBs be more innovative in their approach to level 5 and level 6 provision and to making changes within their organisation. It was with that sense of support for new ideas by the management team at SOLAS that Kerry ETB embarked on what was to become its most significant organisational transformation.

In the Autumn of 2018, Kerry ETB compiled and produced a briefing document for SOLAS (see appendix 2) addressing the need to transform the legacy approaches to establish a new integrated FET College model, with real integration of FET meeting the needs of the learners and the wider community.

The Kerry ETB CEO and Director of FET had a meeting with SOLAS senior management in quarter 1 2019 addressing the document and a meeting with the Department of Education in quarter 2 of 2019. As a result, SOLAS approved Kerry ETB to commence a “pilot initiative” to establish an integrated FET College.

2: VISION FOR THE FUTURE AND STRATEGIC APPROACH





Kerry ETB's vision was to develop a model of FET provision that strategically positioned the ETB to meet the needs of learners across the county in a much more integrated manner. It was agreed that where a learner is studying for the same course/qualification, he or she should be provided with equality in terms of access to financial supports, industry-standard resources and facilities, standardisation and consistency of experience in terms of other learner supports, contact hours, programme materials, etc., regardless of the location of where he or she is studying.

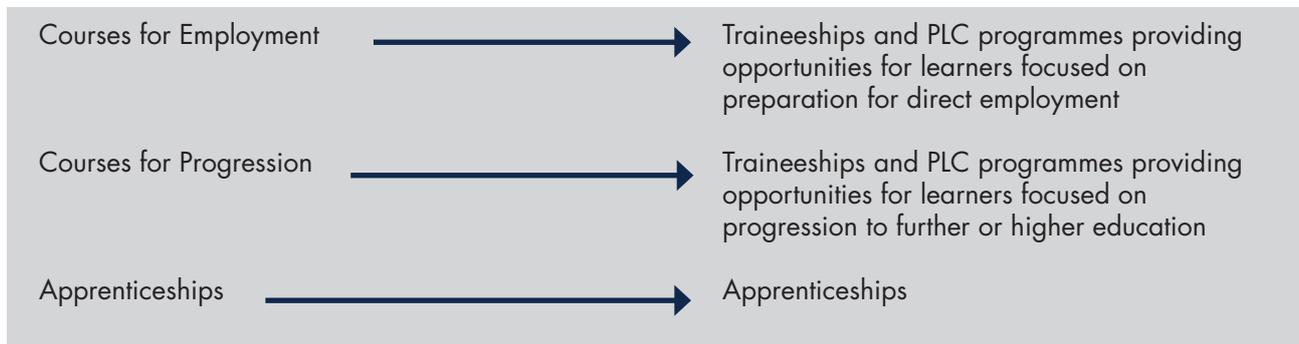
2.1 TERMINOLOGY

Learners and the general public are largely oblivious to the general programme types and funding structures that have evolved in the FET sector in Ireland. The naming of programmes does very little to inform the learner about what they will achieve or who the programme is for. Yet it is based on these traditional course categories that FET provision is structured, funded and delivered throughout the country.

Taking a fresh approach and looking at what FET offers through the eyes of the prospective learner, the team at Kerry ETB agreed that what it offered – leaving legacy programme names aside – was:

- 1** Courses for Employment
- 2** Courses for Progression
- 3** Apprenticeships

These three course types can be overlaid on the terminology/course categories used nationally within the FET sector as follows:



A decision was made that staff within Kerry ETB would cease referring to programmes as traineeships or PLC programmes. Instead, courses would henceforth be either for employment, progression, or apprenticeships. This was the first of seven key recommendations outlined.

2.2 Seven Key Recommendations

1. Classify Kerry ETB's current level 5 and 6 full-time provision as follows: Courses for Employment, Courses for Progression and Apprenticeships.
2. Establish a dedicated course promotion/recruitment function managed collectively by the Principals of the two PLC Colleges and the Manager of the Training Centre under the guidance of the Director of FET (later streamlined to one Principal for all campus locations that were originally PLC Colleges).
3. Current staff would continue to deliver full-time level 5 and 6 programmes and apprenticeships in line with their existing terms and conditions. In addition, Communities of Best Practice to be established across campuses.
4. Establish a centralised planning and review schedule for full-time level 5 and 6 provision and apprenticeships.
5. Complete a review of existing facilities to ensure standardisation of approaches to meet needs.
6. Separate access and provision of learner income support from course choice.
7. Implement a centralised approach to employer engagement and work experience placements.

One final guiding principle in the reorganising of FET provision in the county was that part-time and evening provision should not erode core full-time day programmes.

2.3 STRATEGIC APPROACH

Addressing these seven key recommendations in 2019 involved:

- Submitting a detailed proposal to SOLAS on Kerry ETB’s vision for an integrated College of FET.
- The ETB’s core team, consisting of the CEO, Director of FET and the then Principals of the two PLC colleges, and the ETB Training Centre Manager, met weekly.
- SOLAS established a team dedicated to supporting the Kerry ETB core team in the planning and implementation of the pilot. See section 3.8 for more details about how this SOLAS team was instrumental in effecting positive changes at the systems level.
- Examining and itemising the practicalities inherent in each of the recommendations in preparing for the establishment of Kerry College.
- The PLC Principals and Training Centre Manager facilitating internal communications with staff in the Colleges and the Training Centre, explaining the integration process, objectives, timelines, etc.
- Holding a Kerry ETB FET Staff day on 4 April 2019, at which a significant part of the agenda was set aside to elaborate the vision and strategic direction for this new entity. Members of the SOLAS management team attended the day and provided important input and endorsement to the initiative.
- Establishment of Communities of Practice (COP) to enable staff working in common areas to plan and work together, supported by MS Office 365.
- The rollout of a “pilot” for September 2019 enrolments involving a specific number of courses (Figure 7) trialling new processes and procedures.
- Significant consultation and communication with a wide variety of stakeholders.

| Pilot Project Locations and Courses 2019/2020 | | |
|---|--|---|
| Clash Road Tralee Campus (PLC College) | Listowel Campus (PLC College) | Monavalley Tralee Campus (Training Centre) |
| Courses Based on the Office Administration Award | | |
| Legal Administration | Medical Administration | Medical Administration |
| Office Administration | Office Administration | |
| Courses Based on the Office Administration Award | | |
| | Hairdressing | Hairdressing |
| | | Beauty Therapy |

Figure 7: Pilot Project Locations and Courses 2019/2020

Stakeholder Engagement/Consultation Process

The core team recognised the need to facilitate dialogue while providing clear leadership and strategic direction to stakeholders such as staff who naturally have a vested interest in the future direction of FET provision within the ETB. The senior management teams in each of the Colleges and the Training Centre also provided important leadership and vision in shaping the future of Kerry College.

Learners, past and present, had unique insights to contribute, and the input of employers in the county was sought.

SOLAS demonstrated real partnership throughout this process, meeting on several occasions with Kerry ETB's CEO and Director of FET and providing direct support to the initiative by establishing a support team dedicated to liaising with Kerry ETB to implement any system changes, where required.

Principal Officers at the Department of Education, then the new Department of Further and Higher Education, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS), were also engaged with throughout.

Various meetings were held with representatives from staff unions at the national and local level, and their support was invaluable.

Finally, the members of the Board of Kerry ETB and the respective boards of management at the PLC Colleges and Training Centre in question were hugely supportive of the process. These members were directly impacted by the formation of a single Governance Board – the former boards of management being effectively disbanded. As some members retained membership on the new Governance Board, their guidance and expertise will prove to be invaluable in supporting the transition.

Rollout of the Pilot

Following consultation with the staff and management at the colleges/centre, SOLAS, staff unions, etc., a pilot for this new integrated FET approach was scoped out for implementation from September 2019. The pilot would address the following:

- 1.** Immediate introduction of the new local title – Kerry College of Further Education and Training (Kerry College).
- 2.** Re-classification of traditional course names/descriptors to the following:
 - a. Apprenticeships – old and new
 - b. Courses for Progression – primarily focused on preparing learners for progressing to higher education based on the traditional PLC programme model
 - c. Courses for Employment – primarily focused on preparing learners for progressing to employment based on the traditional Traineeship model
- 3.** The following course areas to be classified as courses for employment and their duration/timetable standardised across all campuses in which these courses were delivered:
 - a. Hairdressing (39 weeks)
 - b. Beauty Therapy (54 weeks)
 - c. Office Administration (39 weeks)

Traditionally these courses were delivered throughout the three locations. Where they had been delivered in a PLC College, the courses were reclassified from PLC programmes to courses for employment. For these course areas, staff involved in the delivery of each programme would work together to refine course content to ensure new standardised courses were promoted and delivered.

- 4.** Establishment of the new course promotion and recruitment office in Tralee (Admissions Office).
- 5.** Establishment of a centralised application and registration process.
- 6.** Development of integrated planning meeting schedules, etc.
- 7.** Commencement of the process for communicating this new approach to internal and external audiences. It was critical to get the message out to schools and, in particular, guidance teachers in a timely fashion. Informing employers and industry bodies in the region was also essential.

Results of the Pilot

In addressing the progress of the pilot, many results/outcomes became clear.

Firstly, the structure and delivery of the three identified programmes (page 26) offered across the campus sites were standardised. This was a hugely significant achievement given that:

- A.** Staff had come together for the first time to work together on developing a common programme for each of the three subject areas. Learners studied the same modules and took the same assessment regardless of which campus they had enrolled in. A programme of integrated planning and scheduling for these courses was developed by the team for future rollouts.
- B.** This team had succeeded in harmonising the curriculum and weekly delivery hours for each programme, which previously would have been delivered with vastly differing contact hours each week. The annualised delivery hours were also standardised, with adaptations made to the number of work placement hours/weeks. Now each of these courses would have on average 30% of the programme allocated to work placement, some of which would take place during summer holiday periods.
- C.** All the learners enrolled on these programmes, regardless of whether they were studying in a campus formerly a PLC College or a Training Centre, would now experience equity when it came to fees and income supports. In every campus, the same system⁴ applied: no fees, learners could avail of a training allowance, and their course materials and kit would be provided.

All staff involved in this pilot showed commitment to and engagement with the process, and even when faced with challenges, they worked through them, always bringing their focus back to what was best for the learner.

Further success from the pilot was securing new premises for the integrated course promotion, recruitment and admissions function. This was located at Denny Street in the centre of Tralee, adjacent to the campus of what was formerly known as the PLC College. Expressions of interest were sought from staff for roles within the Admissions Office.

⁴ Previously, had they been studying such courses in the "PLC Colleges", they would have had to pay fees, buy their own kit, where necessary, and seek a grant from SUSI, for example. And had they been studying those same courses in the Training Centre, none of those conditions would have applied; no fees, free kit, training allowance.

By the end of the pilot, Kerry College of Further Education and Training had now come into existence. The new brand has been well received by the staff, learners and general public. Its name has now been abbreviated to Kerry College, which makes it user-friendly for the web, online searches and social media; identifiable and branded with the region/county it serves; and represents “one single entity, one common organisation”.

Employment | Progression | Apprenticeship



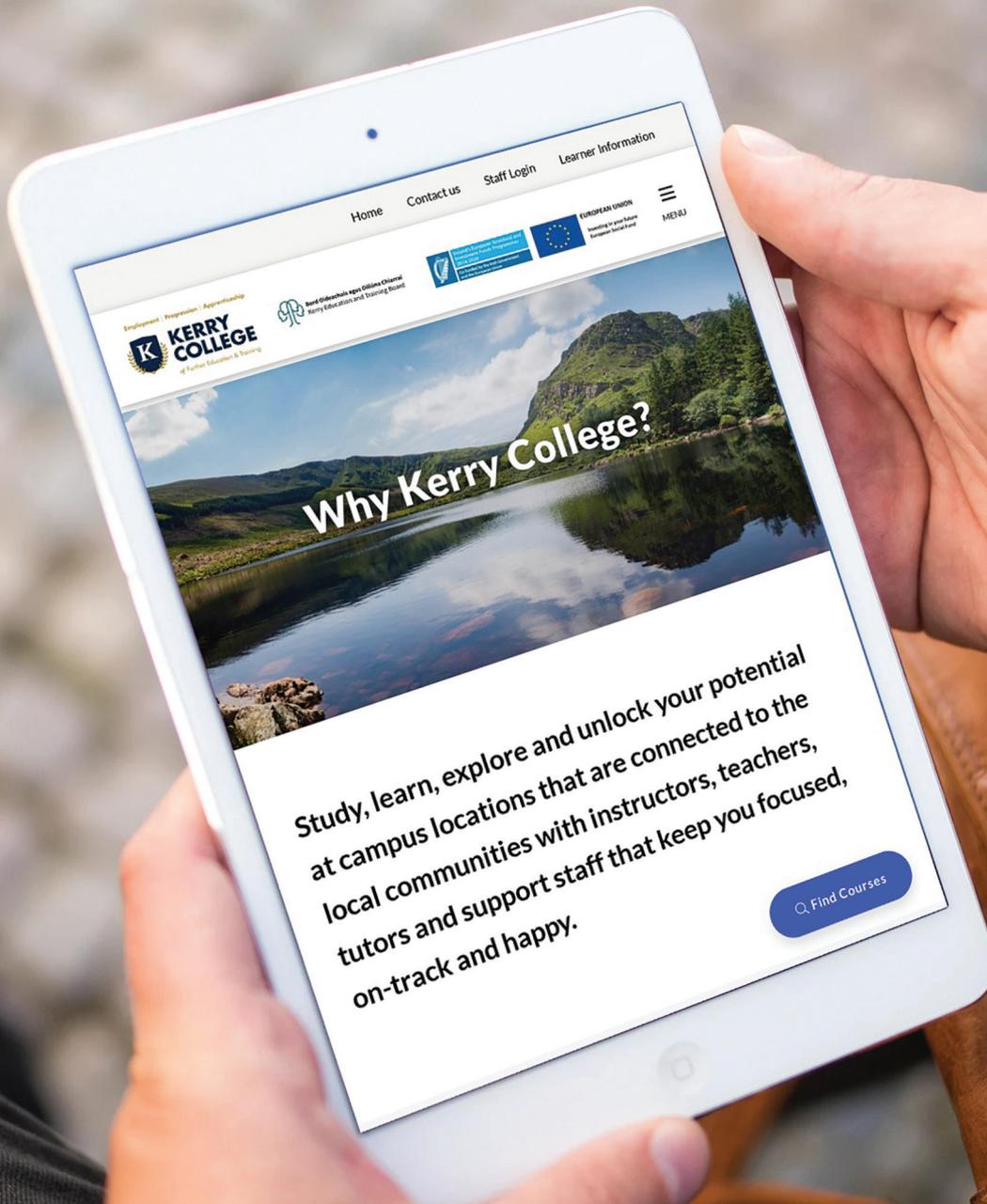
Figure 8: New Kerry College Logo and Brand

Out of the pilot phase, as implemented during the 2019/2020 academic year, Kerry ETB now had a:

1. New, single identity for its full-time FET provision at level 5 and 6 and apprenticeships.
2. New terminology and a new way of communicating with learners about its course offering.
3. New standardised programmes for three discipline areas delivered consistently across its campus locations.
4. Three successful and active Communities of Practice.
5. New promotions, recruitment and admissions office.
6. New website www.kerrycollege.ie.
7. Revised, centralised admissions process.
8. Equity of financial support⁵ across all courses.
9. Joined up, campus-wide IT systems capable of recording student attendance and prompting payment of training allowances.
10. Programme of information about Kerry College and its transformed offering and services to rollout to schools, guidance counsellors and local employers.

⁵ Regardless of whether studying on a course for employment or a course for progression, learners could apply for the financial support that best suited their circumstances.

3: A PROFILE OF KERRY COLLEGE 2021



3.1 GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Establishing a New PLC Roll Number

One of the first steps in establishing Kerry College in 2019/20 was to realign all traditional “PLC provision,” i.e. courses for progression, to a single Roll Number 76494H. All returns to DFHERIS, deriving from courses for progression (i.e. PLC), were aligned to this single centralised Roll Number 76494H, regardless of campus. Furthermore, provision was fully separated from second-level at all campus locations throughout the county.

Establishing a Governance Board

The next stage in the evolution of Kerry College was to create a single governance body, which would necessitate the dissolution of the three former Boards of Management.

At its meeting on 1 October 2019, the Board of Kerry ETB formally agreed on the name Governance Board for this new governance body. The Kerry College Governance Board was established per Section 44(11)(b)(ii) of the Education and Training Boards Act 2013.

A. Terms of Reference for the Governance Board

It was envisaged that the Governance Board would support the management team of Kerry College in decision-making, efficient management of resources (financial, buildings, etc.), effective planning and review of priorities to enhance overall college performance in line with Kerry ETB’s Strategy Statement. Additional areas of responsibility would include risk management, child protection, health and safety, internal controls, oversight of promotion and marketing, recruitment of learners etc.

Key components of this board’s work would comprise the preparation, implementation, review and reporting of Kerry College’s strategic performance and objectives, to align with strategic documents such as:

- Kerry ETB Strategy Statement (2018–22)
- SOLAS policy
- FET Service Plan (annual)

The board’s role involves decision-making and information sharing in line with the provisions of the ETB Act 2013, Section 12 and 13.

B. Membership

In accordance with Section 44(2) of the ETB Act 2013, membership of the Governance Board would consist of no more than 12 members.

The Board of Kerry ETB, at its meeting on 1 October 2019, agreed to the following:

- 3 ETB Board members
- 6 Kerry College Staff Nominees
- 3 Business/Industry Nominees

In respect of the six staff nominees, there was provision for two staff nominees from the Clash Road and Denny Street Campuses in Tralee, two staff nominees from the Listowel Campus and two staff nominees from the Monavalley Campus in Tralee. Gender balance was taken into consideration for board membership.

It was agreed that the Director of FET would serve as secretary to the Governance Board for the first year of its establishment, or until such a time that the Kerry College Governance Board and Kerry ETB Board had formally approved a replacement.

C. Meeting Schedule

The inaugural meeting of the Kerry College Governance Board was scheduled for 28 November 2019, and there were to be four/five meetings of the board annually.

D. Review

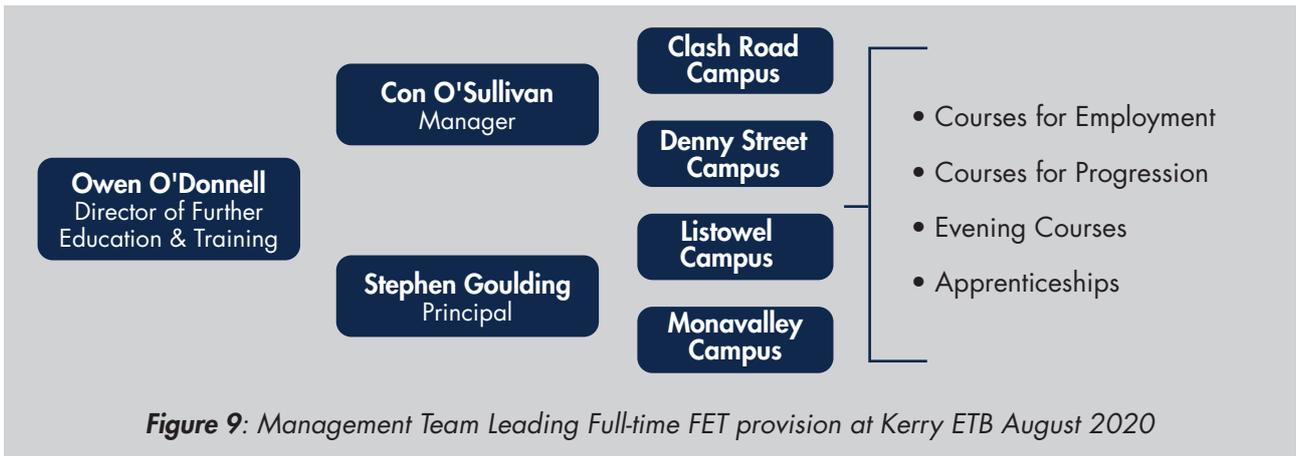
An annual review of the composition of board membership conducted in December 2020 had recommended the inclusion of a learner on the board, so the number of business/industry nominees was reduced to two to facilitate this inclusion.

A subsequent review took place in June 2021 following the expansion of the college's campuses and provision. The most significant development during that time was the inclusion, in September 2020, of the Outdoor and Education and Training Centre (OETC) in Cappanalea, Killorglin, as the new fifth campus renamed – Kerry College Killorglin Campus. Further changes to the composition of the board were agreed to become effective from 1 September 2021. The board at that time would now comprise:

- 3 ETB Board Nominees, including the chairperson
- 4 Staff Nominees (reduced from six):
 - 2 teachers – elected by the teachers employed at Kerry College
 - 1 instructor – elected by the instructors employed at Kerry College
 - 1 member of support staff, to include administrative staff, personal assistants, caretakers, cleaners and general operatives – elected by staff in these categories employed at Kerry College
- 1 Learner Nominee (to rotate between campuses annually)
- 4 Business/Industry Nominees, to include one nominee from the Outdoor Education and Training Centre (OETC) sector

Gender balance is to be taken into consideration for Board membership, with 40% female and 40% male membership recommended.

A further change implemented from 1 September 2021 was that the Kerry College Principal and Manager would serve as co-secretaries to the Governance Board.



New Management Structure

Where previously there had been two PLC Principals (one in Tralee and one in Listowel) and a Manager of the Training Centre in Tralee, the management structure was streamlined in August 2020 following the retirement of one of the PLC Principals. A single Principal was appointed with responsibility for full-time FET provision at the campuses at Clash Road in Tralee, Denny Street in Tralee and the Listowel campus.

As mentioned in the previous section, the Kerry College Senior Management team evolved further in September 2020 with the addition of the Kerry College Killorglin Campus (Outdoor Education and Training Campus). A local manager manages this campus and reports directly to the Director of FET.

3.2 QUALITY ASSURANCE

The changes implemented at Kerry College have had a wide-ranging positive impact on the quality of FET provision in Kerry ETB.

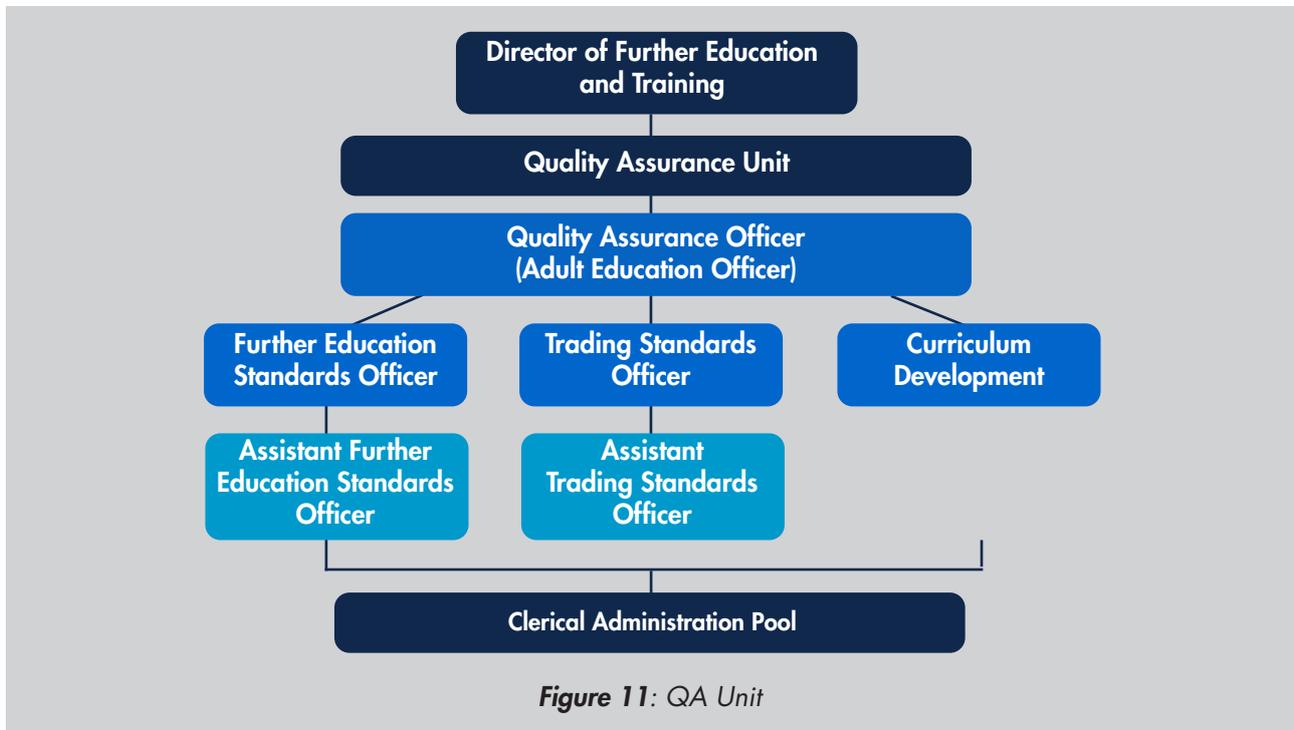
Impact of Changes on Quality

With its goal of achieving consistency across all locations delivering the same programme, in terms of contact hours, programme content, assessment, etc., Kerry College has made huge strides in supporting:

- **A Single Quality Assurance System**
There is a standardised and integrated approach to assessment, course planning, internal and external validation throughout all campus locations. External Authentication reports highlight the benefits of standardisation as encouraging a commonality of approach.
- **Communities of Practice**
In establishing COP, staff across all campuses are collaborating and sharing best practices which reinforces the drive for quality improvement and keeping the learner at the focus.
- **Standardised Programme Delivery**
 - o There are now standardised programme specifications for a range of courses, building on those that were included in the pilot.
 - o There is no local deviation in timetabling (in terms of contact hours) for courses delivered from different campus locations. All learners get the same experience no matter where they study.
 - o Assessments and assessment schedules are standardised, again removing the possibility that some learners might have greater or lesser demands from assessment depending on location.
- **Standardised Learner Experience**
Regardless of which campus a learner attends, there is consistency of experience.
- **Introduction of SAP-based Financial System for all Campuses**
In line with the drive to remove inequities from the system, this financial system has streamlined learner payments and had a positive impact on budget management.
- **Centralised Course Recruitment Team for School Visits**
Communication with learners has been vastly enhanced with the removal of competing teams from separate Kerry ETB FET centres visiting schools to recruit learners for their programmes/courses. Now learners, their parents, guidance counsellors, etc., are clear about what Kerry College offers, how they can apply and what financial and other supports are available to them.
- **Procurement of Additional Student Support Services**
With this new single entity, it is now possible to achieve economies of scale and build consistency of practice in the delivery of additional supports to students such as medical and other health-related supports, guidance and counselling, special educational needs, and IT.

Quality Assurance Unit Structure and Staffing

The following chart shows how the Quality Assurance (QA) Unit in Kerry ETB is structured.



In supporting the quality of all FET provision, the QA Unit has been instrumental in developing and rolling out standardised QA systems and processes across the FET pillar and engaging with QQI and a range of other awarding bodies. In particular, the Unit is responsible for the development and publication of a learner handbook, assessor handbook and the Kerry ETB QA Handbook, which covers:

1. Governance and management of QA of programmes and related services
2. The development of programmes
3. Learner access to programmes and their subsequent transfer and progression
4. Blended learning
5. Assessment of learners
6. Learner supports
7. The management of information and data
8. The publication of information
9. Engagement with external parties involved in education and training
10. Self-evaluation, monitoring and review of programmes internally and externally

With a focus on achieving the highest levels of academic integrity and standardised practices, the Unit regularly collates and provides feedback from external authenticators and other relevant sources to:

- QA Governance Board (FET Managers)
- Communities of Practice
- All Teachers and Instructors at QA Briefing Sessions

It also supported the rollout of Turnitin across Kerry College from 2020 onward.

Highlighting Best Practice

QQI showcased some of the changes introduced by Kerry College in the September 2019 edition of its QQI Insights Series, a series that focuses on quality and qualifications in Irish education and training.

In spotlighting best practice in governance in QA, it was noted that:

"One ETB has appointed an independent chairperson to its Quality Council, the overarching unit responsible for overseeing the quality assurance of its FET provision. To date, this approach has proven beneficial as the ETB considers that it brings greater rigour to decision-making and challenges the organisation to improve. This ETB is also considering the potential of an FET Student Quality Council, with rolling representation of FET learners and alternating locations with a view to maximising its inclusivity" (QQI 2019).

Quality improvement in terms of consistency of learner experience throughout Kerry ETB FET campus locations was also recognised in the same issue:

"One ETB has recently transformed two former colleges of further education and a former training centre into a three-campus college of further education and training. Single programme specifications in specific disciplines have been developed by communities of practice comprising staff across each service to be adopted across the campuses. The initiative seeks to provide greater clarity for learners (including through the establishment of a central learner recruitment function providing a single point of contact and information) and a consistent learner experience. Additional benefits to the ETB include reduced duplication, clearer and more consistent branding/marketing, and increased collaboration among staff" (QQI 2019).

3.3 CENTRALISED PLANNING

One of the seven recommendations, as identified under section 2.2 of this report, was the establishment of a centralised planning and review schedule for full-time level 5 and 6 provision and apprenticeships.

It was agreed that for this new fully integrated FET College model to work, it was essential to have centralised planning and coordination between the campus management under the guidance of the Director of FET.

Centralised planning in this context encompasses:

- Course commencement schedules
- Course promotion and branding
- Course content and duration
- Work experience and employer engagement



Figure 12: *QQI Insights, September 2019, Featuring Examples from Kerry College*

This change in process, and specifically why the change was needed, was communicated directly to all staff. Staff were receptive to the change when it was understood how it would benefit the learners. They could also see the numerous other benefits that would result from coordinated and centralised planning. Keeping the entire staff informed throughout the process was prioritised and resulted in fewer perceived disadvantages and reduced resistance to change.

The QA Unit established a new centralised course development and approval process, underpinned by best practices in QA. A management study visit to South West College in Omagh, Northern Ireland (2019) with representatives from SOLAS also assisted greatly in shaping the vision for embedding centralised course planning at Kerry College. A planned visit to Edinburgh College scheduled for March 2020 had to be postponed owing to Covid-19. It is planned to re-schedule this visit for 2022.



Figure 13: *Study visits to FET Colleges in Omagh and Edinburgh (to be rescheduled)*

3.4 RECLASSIFICATION OF COURSES

As has been addressed briefly in Section 2.1, it was clear to the team at Kerry College that the use of traditional terminology such as PLC programmes and traineeships to describe and classify courses needed to be addressed as part of the change process.

Such terms did little to inform the learner of the exact purpose of the course. Further, the classification could often discriminate unintentionally, presenting hidden pitfalls to learners who were unaware, for example, that a course classified as a PLC programme was typically self-funding and as such the learner would have to bear the cost of fees and providing course materials. The same course, delivered from a different centre and classified as a traineeship, on the other hand, would load the learner with no such financial burdens and came with a trainee allowance, though the learner would have to register first with the DSP. The learner on the PLC programme meanwhile was being subjected to means-testing for a SUSI grant to avail of financial support.

To make the pathway into and through further education more transparent, seamless and fairer for learners, Kerry College decided to classify full-time provision at levels 5 and 6 on the NQF Framework as follows in future.

- **Apprenticeships**
- **Courses for Employment:** Any course at level 5 or 6, for which a learner is qualified to perform the role and secure a job with that qualification would henceforth be classified as a “Course for Employment”, although a learner could indeed opt to progress his or her studies to higher education using the qualification gained. Learners would not have to pay any fees to enrol on one of these courses.
- **Courses for Progression:** Any course that provides learners with a qualification that enables them to apply for a course at an Institute of Technology, a TU or University, in Ireland or abroad. The qualification upon completion would typically not enable a graduate to work in the sector without completing further study, for example, level 5 Nursing Studies.

The fees for courses for progression have all been standardised at €130, regardless of subject matter. Kerry ETB is in active engagement with SOLAS re the possible removal of all fees as they pose a possible barrier to entry and the funding model for these courses has changed significantly since the introduction of the traditional fees charging approach (circular letter 36/95 etc.). Fees charged largely supported course-related costs such as books, uniforms, student services etc. Current funding from SOLAS provided sufficient funding to meet all such costs negating the need to levy learners for same.



Impact of Course Re-categorisation

As set out in section 2.3, in the 2019/20 academic year, three course areas were identified for the pilot: Office Administration, Beauty Therapy and Hairdressing. These courses were all to be categorised as “Courses for Employment”, for which no fees would be charged or levied. In 2019/20, the learners enrolled on all these courses were not returned as PLC learners as the staff were paid from SOLAS FET funding, as agreed with SOLAS (more detail is provided about the consequences of not returning those learners in PLC returns in the next section on Staffing, section 3.5).

In 2020, additional courses areas underwent the programme specification review process. These were Healthcare, Childcare, Animal Care and Arts and Crafts. On completion of the programme specification review process, the following courses were re-categorised as additional courses for employment for 2020/21:

- o Healthcare Support
- o Early Childcare Care and Education
- o Advanced Early Childhood and Education (L6)
- o Special Needs Awareness and Assisting (L6)
- o Special Needs Assistant/Personal Assistant
- o Personal Training, Strength and Conditioning
- o Carpentry and Joinery (Pre-Apprenticeship)
- o Hotel and Catering – Professional Cookery
- o Building Construction (Pre-Apprenticeship)
- o Animal Care Assistant

All these courses are focused on preparing learners for direct entry into employment on course completion. A key difference between 2019/20 and 2021/22 was that the learners enrolled on these teacher-led courses were returned as PLC learners to DFHERIS i.e. aligned to the Roll Number 76494H, as was agreed with SOLAS. The progressive nature of this re-categorisation of courses was the fundamental building block in creating a fully integrated FET College.

Below is a selection of screenshots from Kerry College's website, which demonstrates the new way in which it classifies for the learner what the focus of each course is.

Apprenticeship

Course for Employment

Course for Progression

3.5 STAFFING

It was recommended that the current staff would continue to deliver full-time level 5 and 6 programmes and apprenticeships in line with their existing terms and conditions and that COP should be established across campuses.

Staff Grades

In 2018, there were three different grades of staff delivering full-time FET programmes. These grades included teachers and tutors working in the PLC Colleges and instructors working in the Training Centre. It was decided that henceforth there should be just two grades – teacher and instructor – phasing out the tutor grade in Kerry College. There were a very small number of tutors teaching skills-based courses, which would become categorised as courses for employment.

As all tutors were on fixed-term contracts at that time, Kerry ETB sought sanction to replace those posts with instructors and advertised for instructors for those roles when contracts came due for renewal.

The ETB recognised the importance of ensuring staff were reassured that their existing terms and conditions of employment would remain intact and unchanged throughout the change process.

Significant resources and time were invested in effective communication with staff, and this was supported by ongoing engagement with the relevant staff unions during 2019 and 2020. SOLAS supported Kerry ETB in communicating the vision, attending the staff day in April 2019. It was important that both staff and their unions understood the rationale for change and had confidence in the change process.



Communities of Practice

Through the pilot project, a model for developing COP were established with instructors, teachers and, at the time, tutors delivering in common areas across the different campuses. On several occasions, these staff came together to plan delivery and assessments, and to share resources.

The COP, or teams of practitioners, that formed as part of the pilot for office administration, hairdressing and beauty therapy continue to plan and work collaboratively. The next set of courses scheduled for standardised delivery led by staff COP are:

| | | | | |
|----------------------|------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Course Area | Childcare | Art, Craft and Design | Healthcare | Animal Care |
| Lead Location | Listowel | Clash Road, Tralee | Monavalley, Tralee | Listowel |
| Course Focus | Employment | Progression | Employment | Employment |

Figure 15: Next Courses for Standardisation

Department/SOLAS Returns, Staff Allocation and Allowances

PLC Colleges are allocated a staffing resource based on the number of PLC enrolments returned during the previous year. This has long posed a barrier to many colleges to transition PLC programmes that are employment-orientated to becoming traineeships, which involve significantly more industry placement, typically 30% of programme content. The concern is that, should a PLC programme such as beauty therapy become a traineeship, then any learners enrolled on that course would cease to be counted towards the allocation of teachers and the college would face a reduced allocation in the subsequent year.

In the discussions with the SOLAS and DFHERIS, the ETB's core team explained this impediment and an agreement was secured that, in terms of the former PLC College campus locations, Kerry College would not face any reduction in teacher allocation resourcing or negative consequences for allowances or management posts as a result of reclassifying PLC programmes to traineeships.

Having teased this out during the pilot, in 2020/21 if a course is teacher-led, regardless of whether it is a course for employment or a course for progression aligned to roll number 76494H, it is returned to the Department under what would have been the traditional PLC numbers. Any instructor-led course is returned to SOLAS under the normal traineeship approach. Learner numbers overall have grown because the offering is more transparent. Kerry College makes its annual return to SOLAS and DFHERIS in the normal way, without any impact on teacher allocation.

Learning from the Pilot

There were significant learnings from the pilot. For example, in year 1 (2019/20), learners on the teacher-led office administration and hairdressing courses were not included in the PLC returns. This was because these courses were reclassified as courses for employment, although taught by teachers.

In the initial discussion re the pilot, SOLAS agreed with the ETB's management and the Teachers' Union of Ireland that there would be no diminution of resources or other unintended consequences resulting from the reclassification of traditional PLC programmes as courses for employment. However, returning learners on these courses as trainees, rather than PLC learners, reduced the PLC returns for that year, despite teachers being fully engaged in delivering. Furthermore, it led to a reduced teacher allocation in 2020/21. If not addressed, this anomaly could negatively impact management posts allocations etc., across each campus aligned to roll number 76494H.

In 2020 this anomaly was highlighted to SOLAS, with SOLAS committing to addressing the matter. Accordingly, in 2020/21, all teacher-led/delivered courses aligned to roll number 76494H were included in the traditional PLC returns.

In 2020/21, staff on all teacher-led courses at Kerry College Clash Road Tralee, Denny Street Tralee, Listowel and Killarney continued to be paid from SOLAS FET funding, regardless of whether they taught courses for employment or courses for progression. Learner numbers for all teacher-led courses were returned to DFHERIS under PLC returns (see figure 16). There was no difference in the treatment of staff pay.

| PLC Learner Returns made to DFHERIS for 20/21 | |
|---|------------|
| Total on Courses for Progression | 492 |
| Total on Courses for Employment | 268 |
| TOTAL | 760 |

Figure 16: PLC Learner Returns for Kerry College 20/21
Academic Year

3.6 MARKETING, PROMOTION AND RECRUITMENT

During the review in 2018, the ETB determined that the individual college/centre approach to marketing, promotion and recruitment for full-time courses at levels 5 and 6 and apprenticeships resulted in confusion for internal and external audiences and was driving internal competition. It was also hugely cost-inefficient in terms of marketing spend and duplication of effort.

In addressing these issues, the first step was creating the single entity, as discussed in previous sections. The next step was to establish a dedicated course promotion/recruitment function to meet learners' needs. Thus, in 2019 the Kerry College Admissions Office was established.

Overall Remit

This function or unit has responsibility for all promotion, enrolment of learners, admissions, interview scheduling, registrations and statistical data, etc. It is officially termed “Kerry College Admissions Office” and is located in a prominent position in the centre of Tralee. From this base, a team takes centralised responsibility for the promotion of all courses and recruitment of all learners for all the Kerry College campuses.

This single, unified approach to promotion of full-time FET programmes to schools, employers and the general public is much more efficient in terms of the use of resources and also provides more transparent and cohesive information to all stakeholders.

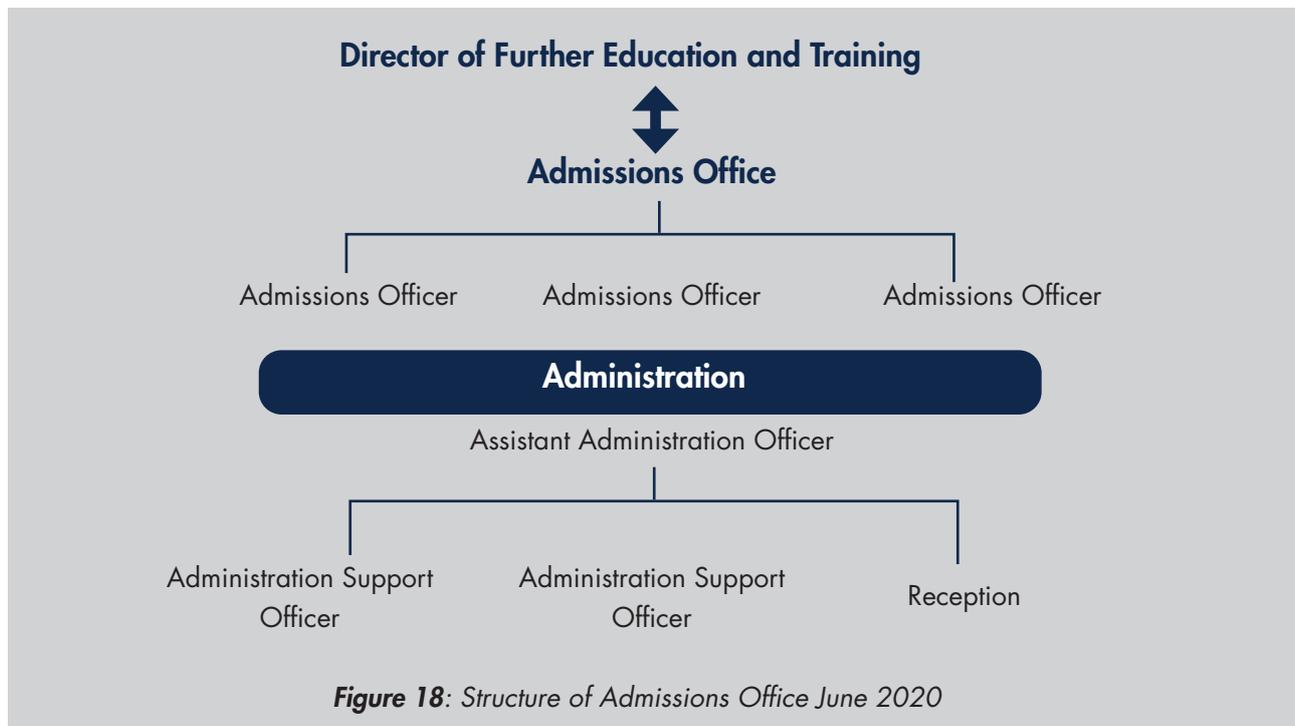
The centrally managed recruitment process allows for better support to learners throughout the application cycle and improved data capture for reporting purposes. The office is responsible for gathering and managing learner and programme data and inputting into the national Programme Learner Support System (PLSS) database, from which course information is extracted for publication on fetchcourses.ie.



Figure 17: Kerry College Admissions Office

Structure of Admissions Office

The establishment of the dedicated course promotion and recruitment function has relieved the local campuses of this work and helped in building a consistent Kerry ETB FET brand for internal and external audiences. Located centrally in Tralee but with outreach clinics in other towns and campus buildings, this Admissions Office is staffed as follows:



The Admissions Office has responsibility for three core areas:

1. Marketing, Promotion and Information
2. Course Recruitment
3. PLSS/Registrations

1. Marketing, Promotion and Information

As referenced earlier, the approach to course promotion and marketing up to 2018 was fragmented and centralising these functions was essential. The Admissions Office takes full responsibility for promoting all full-time courses delivered at each Kerry College campus, under the new course re-classifications. This includes all aspects of promotion, i.e. traditional media, social media, school visits, employer engagements, trade events, conferences, etc.

2. Course Recruitment

The Admissions Office is responsible for the recruitment of learners and applications. For 2019/20, it processed circa 9,093 applications (excluding apprenticeships) for Kerry College.

The principle underpinning the approach of the Admissions Office is that there is “one door, no wrong door”. When a learner or parent/guardian contacts the Kerry College Admissions Office, it endeavours to ensure their

FET course needs are addressed in an effective, consistent, and efficient manner without the need for the learner or parent/guardian to contact another advice service.

Office staff deal with online applications, learner appointments, walk-ins and general queries by phone and email. They support staff and learners internally, providing advice on appropriate progression routes, as well as external referrals of clients from the DSP, for example.

They carry out the screening process required for entry to some courses, for example, assessing learner eligibility or education profile, and supporting learners with accessing training allowances or applications for a SUSI grant or Back to Education Allowance (BTEA). Where interviews, medicals, colour vision tests or aptitude assessments are required, this office facilitates those aspects of the application. They are the point of contact for both the learner and the respective Kerry College campus.

Kerry College advertised during the Summer of 2021 for two staff based at the Admissions Office to carry out the role of **FET Access and Information Pathways Officer**. This was in addition to a number of other management roles advertised for Kerry College at this time. These new FET Access and Information Pathway Officers will ensure that potential learners receive the best possible advice on FET course options, pathways through the NFQ levels (within FET and to higher education) and potential career options. In addition, Kerry ETB was selected as a pilot with a neighbouring ETB to explore using the Central Applications Office (CAO) function for FET programme applications (NFQ 5, 6 and apprenticeships). The Admissions Office and the centralised approach to enrollments will be critical in addressing the CAO process in Kerry College.

Employment | Progression | Apprenticeship

Clash Road Campus | Denny Street Campus | Listowel Campus | Monavalley Campus | Cappanalea Campus

KERRY COLLEGE
of Further Education & Training

BORD OIDEACHAIS AGUS OILÚNA CHIARRAI
KERRY EDUCATION AND TRAINING BOARD

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Adult Education Officer Permanent Contract
Initial Duties: Management of Kerry College Admissions Office

Adult Education Officer Permanent Contract
Initial Duties: Management of Kerry College Outdoor Education and Training Campus

Grade V x 2 Posts 2 Year Fixed Term Contracts
Initial Duties: Further Education and Training Access and Information Pathways Officer

Kerry College is Kerry Education and Training Board's (Kerry ETB's) fully integrated College of Further Education and Training (FET) with campuses in Tralee, Listowel, Killarney and Killorglin.

Kerry College incorporates the provision of the former Training Centre, Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) Colleges and the Outdoor Education and Training Centre. Operating with a "one door no wrong door approach", Kerry College offers c. 180 courses (NFQ Levels 5 and 6) including courses for employment, courses for progression and apprenticeships.

Application forms and full descriptions may be obtained from www.kerryetb.ie/opportunities or by contacting the Kerry ETB, HR Department on 066 7121488
Please return completed application form/s by email only to jobs@kerryetb.ie
No CV's. Only official application form will be accepted.
Applications must be received not later than 12 noon, Tuesday, 24th August 2021

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COUNTY KERRY IS OUR CAMPUS
www.kerrycollege.ie

KERRY EDUCATION AND TRAINING BOARD IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES EMPLOYER

Figure 19: Job Advertisement Summer 2021

3. PLSS/Registrations

Once an applicant has been processed and registered by the Admissions Office, the individual campus manages course delivery and learner experience. However, the Admissions Office monitors course outputs and learner outcomes and maintains responsibility for uploading information to PLSS.

Kerry ETB is accountable to SOLAS for how it performs against targets set in the Strategic Performance Agreement. There are significant reporting duties attached with this and also with the delivery of FET programmes. Therefore, having data collected and managed centrally by the Admissions Office takes a substantial administrative burden away from local campus management teams.

Admissions Clinics

The Admissions Office team delivers admissions clinics from Denny Street, Tralee, and onsite at Kerry College campuses. Clinics are also provided at ETB FET Centres in Listowel, Kenmare, Dingle, Killorglin and Killarney.

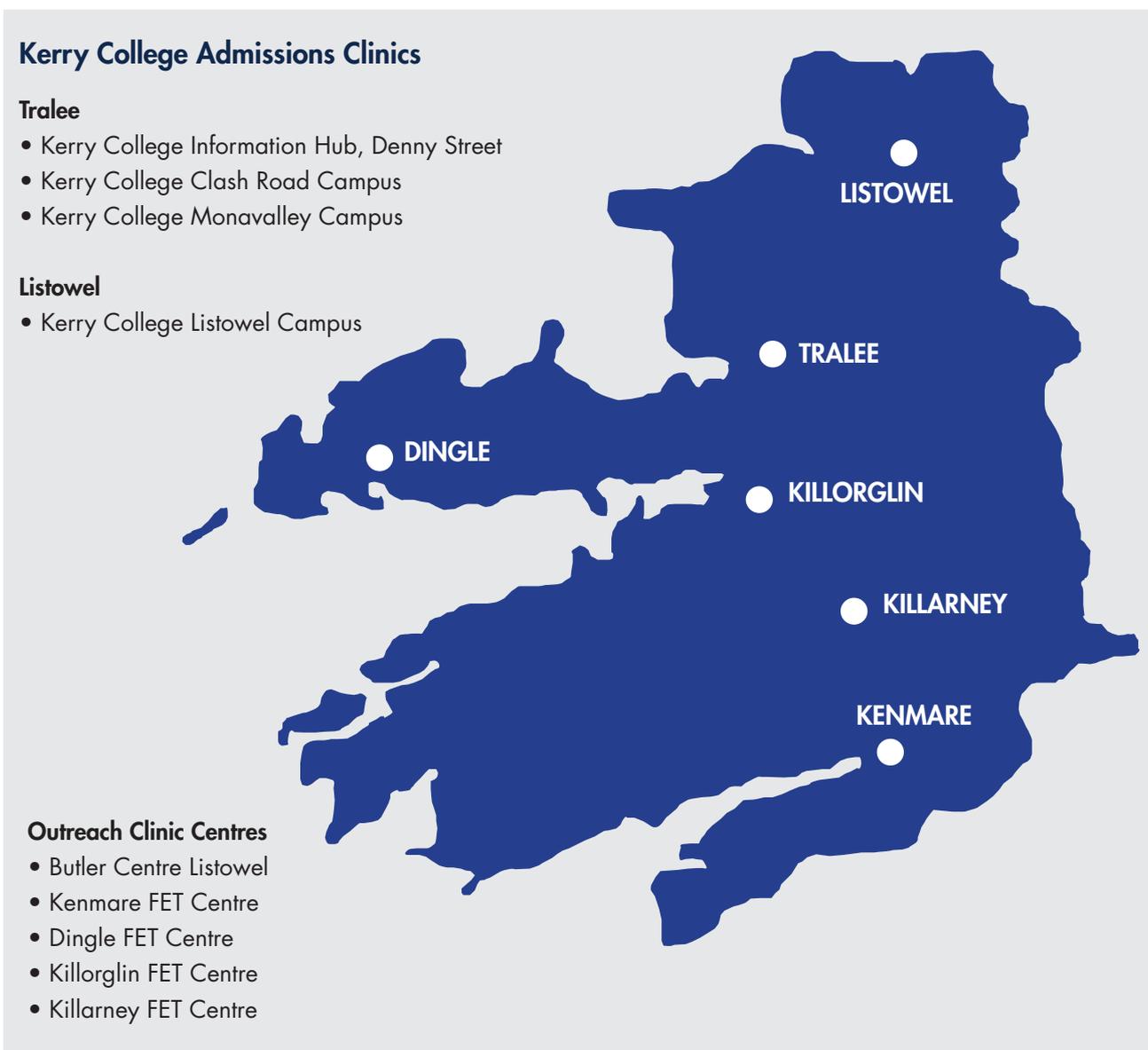


Figure 20: Kerry College Admissions Clinics

3.7 BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES

In order to achieve the aim of consistency of learner experience across all campus locations, it was recommended that a review of existing facilities be carried out.

Full-time level 5 and 6 provision and apprenticeships are currently delivered from a number of locations, and generally, facilities meet the course requirements and are well maintained. However, the move to a more integrated delivery model for these courses provides an opportunity to enhance facilities and create, where possible, “centres of excellence”.

In those centres, the facilities for courses focused on employment should match the standards, processes and equipment that one would expect to find in a top-class industry setting. One example of this “centre of excellence” is the establishment of a new industry-standard beauty and spa therapy course in Tralee – **Kerry College of Beauty**.

As Kerry College moves to a fully integrated FET model, investments in existing facilities will be made where necessary, subject to available resources, and new facilities will be acquired subject to need and available resources.

For example, Kerry College currently rents buildings on the south campus of the Munster Technological University (former Institute of Technology Tralee), where its beauty therapy courses and centre of excellence is now located. Negotiations are ongoing to allow Kerry ETB to purchase the 24-acre south campus site from the Munster Technological University (formerly Institute of Technology Tralee), facilitating further expansion of FET and other provision at that site.

In Listowel, a building is being purchased which will enable all full-time FET provision to be delivered from an entirely separate location from the second-level school where PLC provision was formerly co-located. It is planned that this new state-of-the-art facility will open to learners in September 2022.

Future Priorities

Having successfully separated PLC provision from second-level provision during its first phase of development, it now prioritises acquiring and upgrading facilities so that all campus locations and environments are suitable for adult learners and fit for a modern college experience.

3.8 SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS

Grants and Financial Support

As outlined above, prior to the reclassification of courses at Kerry College, learners were treated differently in terms of access to financial support and fees payable depending on the centre or college they enrolled in.

Choosing to study Beauty Therapy at a PLC College, for example, meant that the learner would have to pay fees and would incur the expense of buying his or her own kit and materials. For financial support, he or she would have to apply for a SUSI grant, on the basis of means-testing, or seek BTEA if unemployed. By contrast, that same course was available for free through the Training Centre, where the learner would be provided with their kit for free as well as a training allowance, not means-tested. Furthermore, the facilities at the Training Centre might often be superior to those at the PLC College by virtue of the capital funding available to the centre and not the PLC sector at the time.

It was clear that learner income support needed to be decoupled from course type and location (PLC versus Training).

Grants and FET Training Allowances

These are the grants and allowance schemes available for jobseekers moving from Social Welfare to training or education.

- **Back to Education Allowance (BTEA):** You can apply for the BTEA if you are hoping to attend a PLC College or an Institute of Education on a full-time basis. The weekly allowance is available to those in receipt of unemployment benefit, one-parent-family payment or disability allowance and it is not means-tested.
- **SUSI – Student Universal Support Ireland:** If you are hoping to attend a PLC College, you may be able to get a student grant to help with living expenses while you are in education. This grant is means-tested.

Learners attending traditional FE/PLC Colleges qualify for a SUSI income support grant as per Section 7 (d) of the Student Support Act 2011:

“(d) an educational institution in the State that receives a grant out of moneys provided by the Oireachtas, pursuant to a scheme administered by the Minister, for the provision of courses of education and training known for the time being as post-leaving certificate courses...” (Government of Ireland 2011).

- **FET Training Allowance:** Training courses provided by ETB Training Centres are free (except for evening courses) and you may be paid a training allowance for the duration of your course. You can also claim an accommodation allowance if you need to live away from home for the duration of the course or a travel allowance. You may qualify for a free childcare place for your child.
- **Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS):** This scheme is open to anyone who is over 21 years of age, who is unemployed and who has been in receipt of certain social welfare payments for a least six months. Courses are full-time and range from basic education and training up to level 6 on the NFQ.

This table looks at these financial supports from the perspective of the course type.

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Apprenticeship | Employer sponsor and training allowance pre 2016, post 2016 employer sponsor |
| Traineeship | Training allowance, if eligible |
| PLC Courses | SUSI Grant, if eligible |
| | BTEA, if unemployed; VTOS, if unemployed and over 21 |

Figure 21: Financial Support by Traditional Course Type

With the establishment of Kerry College, the need for a new common student support system became very apparent. Kerry ETB and SOLAS began addressing the need to separate the learner, and their course choice, from the array of income supports available. For the new, fully integrated Kerry College, the following was proposed:

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Apprenticeship | Employer sponsor and training allowance pre 2016, post 2016 employer sponsor |
| Courses for employment | SUSI Grant, VTOS allowance, BTEA or Training Allowance paid if eligible No course fees for any participants Registrations fee may apply |
| Courses for progression | SUSI Grant, VTOS allowance, BTEA or Training Allowance paid if eligible Registration fee may apply |

Figure 22: Financial Supports by New Course Classification

In 2011, the Students Support Act’s reference to SUSI grants for PLC in Section 7(d) stated that these grants were to be known for the time being as being for post leaving certificate courses. Kerry College and Kerry ETB take the view that as part of the review of the student grant system, there needs to be an equalisation of income supports for all students attending fully integrated FET Colleges, as is envisaged in the SOLAS FET Strategy 2020–2024.

In April 2021, Kerry ETB, as a provider of FET services, submitted a request to reform the student grant system. This submission was part of a public consultation process led by DFHERIS. A copy of the ETB's submission is included in appendix 5.

Kerry ETB advocates for a single FET (full-time) learner income support scheme to replace the existing training allowance, SUSI grant, BTEA and VTOS allowance schemes. This new scheme could be similar in nature to the traditional traineeship allowance scheme, but not predicated on registered unemployment status. The new scheme needs to be mapped to the realities of the integrated FET College provision on a full-year basis with a continuous intake model, as opposed to the traditional academic year model.

System Changes Implemented During Pilot

All ETBs and FET Colleges will be familiar with PLSS, which is the Management Information System (MIS), developed by ETBI and SOLAS and used nationally to record learner details, programme details, course scheduling, outcomes and outputs data.

Since Kerry ETB was in a pilot project and was the only ETB using the new course designation, it was not feasible to modify PLSS throughout as it would have confused other ETBs’ scheduling and reporting activities. However, the pilot-support team at SOLAS did make changes to FARR. Now FARR includes a dedicated section for scheduling and reporting on outcomes and outputs for courses for employment and courses for progression.

The team at SOLAS together with Kerry ETB created a “Tracker” based on the pilot, which identified all the courses that Kerry College ran. The Tracker assigned a PLSS number to each course, mapped each of those courses to the traditional designation of either PLC or training, and identified its new designation of either being a course for progression or a course for employment.

| Column1 | Column2 | Column3 | Column4 | Column5 | Column6 | Column7 | Column8 | Column9 | Column10 | Column11 | Column12 |
|------------------------------|---------|---|--|--------------------------|-----------|------------|--------------------|--------------------|---|--------------|----------|
| Campus (Select from list) | NCC Ref | Course Title | Current Programme Category (Select from list) | Transfer to Programme | SAP (Y/N) | SAP Code | Learner Payment | SUSI List (Y/N) | School/ College Name (If yes for SUSI) | Pilot Y/N | |
| Monavalley Campus | 303565 | Accounting Technicians Ireland - First Year | Specific Skills Training | Employment | Y | KY1TR08586 | Y | Y | Kerry College of Further Education & Training | Y | |
| Monavalley Campus | 301239 | Traditional Stonewall Construction OPW | Specific Skills Training | Employment | Y | KY1TR4R8 | Y | N | | Y | |
| Monavalley Campus | 307225 | Outdoor Activity Instructor | Traineeship Training | Employment | Y | KY1TR564 | Y | Y | Kerry College of Further Education & Training | Y | |
| Monavalley Campus | 307223 | HEALTHCARE SUPPORT | Traineeship Training | Employment | Y | KY1TR597 | Y | Y | Kerry College of Further Education & Training | Y | |
| Monavalley Campus | 301238 | Traditional Stonewall Construction | Specific Skills Training | Employment | Y | KY1TR4R8 | Y | N | | Y | |
| Monavalley Campus | 300819 | Digital Media Production Skills | Traineeship Training | Employment | Y | KY1TR50055 | Y | N | | Y | |
| Monavalley Campus | 304241 | Pharmacy Sales Assistant | Traineeship Training | Employment | Y | KY1ET595 | Y | Y | Kerry College of Further Education & Training | Y | |
| Monavalley Campus | 300916 | Broadcast Production Skills | Traineeship Training | Employment | Y | KY1TR50022 | Y | N | | Y | |

Figure 23: Screenshot of Tracker Used by Kerry College and SOLAS

Widening Eligibility for Learner Financial Supports

The SOLAS team was a vital partner in widening access to all learner supports, regardless of course type. Take, for example, the Healthcare course that runs at Monavalley campus, which is a course for employment (or a traditional traineeship). As a traineeship under normal circumstances, this course wouldn't have been considered eligible for a SUSI grant, even though it leads to a NFQ level 5 major award. The SOLAS team reviewed Kerry College courses such as this, and once they were satisfied those courses met all of the eligibility criteria for a SUSI grant, they communicated that information to SUSI. This ensured that learners on Kerry College courses for employment (previously deemed traineeships) were entitled to apply for a SUSI grant, should they so wish. They are also entitled to apply for a training allowance, once they are deemed eligible by the DSP, and they are also eligible to apply for BTEA and VTOS, likewise subject to eligibility. This was a very significant development.

For some families, parents and learners, there may remain a stigma attached to signing onto the live register. Having that as a criterion for participation on a course may put potential applicants off that course. The option to apply for a SUSI grant means that the training allowance, BTEA or VTOS – all dependent on the applicant being registered as unemployed – are no longer the only financial supports available for courses for employment.

This works in reverse also where a learner on a course for employment (previously designated as a PLC Programme) now becomes eligible to apply to the DSP for a training allowance. For example, learners on the Medical Administration course, a former PLC programme running in Listowel, would never have been considered eligible for a training allowance. The SOLAS team understood that Kerry College was trying to remove barriers to participation built into legacy systems. Arising from the pilot project and liaison with all stakeholders, a learner can now avail of the financial support that best suits their particular circumstances. If, as in this case, the learner knows they would be eligible for a training allowance, they can now enrol on the course and once approved by the DSP and in receipt of the F103 form, he or she will receive a training allowance for the duration of the course.

Building the Integrated Attendance/Payment System at Kerry College

The core teams from Kerry ETB and SOLAS had numerous meetings with representatives from DFHERIS, DSP, ESBS ETB Payroll Shared Services (responsible for the Core HR learner payment system), Flexitime (responsible for the Trainee Apprentice Clocking System (TACS), i.e. electronic learner attendance system) and Ernst and Young. The option to avail the full range of financial supports was first made available to learners participating in the three programmes being integrated as part of the pilot. In 2020, the full breadth of financial supports was made available to all Kerry College accepted applicants. System changes put in place by SOLAS enabled Kerry College to register a course for employment on PLSS, whether it was previously a traineeship or a PLC programme. This allowed courses to be identified for TACS (attendance) and Core HR (centralised payment system). In other ETBs at present, it is not possible to choose a PLC course that is supported by a training allowance.

Further, the SOLAS team worked with Kerry ETB to enable them to record financial and course records on SAP, which was a first for any ETB in the country.

September 2020 Onwards

In 2020, all incoming learners (circa 1,425) received a student card that synced with TACS, enabling their attendance to be recorded on a clock-in/clock-out basis. Furthermore, Kerry College was able to identify whether a learner was in receipt of a training allowance or not. Those in receipt of a training allowance were recorded on Core HR and were paid their training allowance within one week of commencing their programme. This was a major achievement and the result of a lot of hard work and cooperation by many staff at Kerry ETB and partner agencies such as Flexitime, DSP and Card Logic.

Fee Structure

Previously, fees for some courses delivered at PLC Colleges could be well in excess of €1,000, depending on the type of materials, kit and uniform required for participation in the course. The learner was obliged to pay his or her own fees. Very often, the courses with higher fees were those that were skills-based, preparing the learner for employment. Kerry ETB radically overhauled the fee structure for its courses under the new classification model.

By separating provision from learner income support, Kerry College was able to introduce the following fee structure from 2020/2021:

| Courses for Employment | Courses for Progression |
|---|--|
| No course fees and no registration fees | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registration fee of €130 (Circular Letter 13/2011) Government levy⁷ of €200 applies (programme participant contribution). Refundable to medical card holders and those in receipt of a grant, BTEA or VTOS |

Figure 24: Fee Structure 2020/2021

Section 10 of Circular Letter 36/1995 *Scheme for payment of grants to enable PLC charges to be abolished* advises of costs that may be borne by students.

Kerry ETB decided not to request payments from learners on courses for employment as to do so would have led to inconsistent treatment of learners and possibly the disadvantaging of some learners. Learners enrolling on the traditional traineeships were never charged fees and, with the move to the new course categorisations, traditional traineeship and PLC programmes with a focus on preparing learners for direct employment were all re-categorised as course for employment (2019/20 and 2020/21, detailed above).

Kerry College could not charge some learners fees for courses for employment and other learners no fees. Hence the decision was made that no fees would be charged for courses for employment in 2020/21. As set out, this is to ensure parity and remove barriers to participation.

⁷ The Government Levy refers to a payment of €200 (per circular letter 13/2011) made by each eligible PLC learner. This payment was correlated to the enhanced PLC capitation grant, i.e., this levy was netted off annually against the enhanced capitation grant. The enhanced capitation grant traditionally was allocated to providers to cover the cost of equipment, materials and general overheads for the running of the PLC programme.

In 2020/21, all courses for employment were advertised and recruited as having no fees or levies attached. As indicated earlier in this report, Kerry ETB is in active engagement with SOLAS to remove fees from all courses so that there will be no difference in the treatment of learners enrolling.

Career Guidance and Counselling Support

Kerry ETB currently provides guidance and counselling to FET learners in three ways:

- 1.** It receives an allocation for Guidance and Counselling posts through the traditional teacher allocation model. These guidance counsellors serve the needs of full-time learners in some of the Kerry College campuses, i.e. those campuses that evolved from being PLC Colleges.
- 2.** It employs adult guidance counsellors and information officers as part of the Kerry Adult Guidance and Information Service. Their remit is to serve the needs of all other adult learners and prospective learners on both full- and part-time courses.
- 3.** It has access to third party services and advice.

SOLAS FET strategies address the need to develop an integrated FET guidance service for learners and students. In the context of Kerry College, the provision of guidance and counselling is significant, and future changes to the current approaches will be informed by national policy and the outcome of a local review of guidance and counselling provision across all FET in Kerry ETB.

Other Supports

The following is a non-exhaustive list of other supports provided to learners at Kerry College. The local campus manages these supports, and best practice is shared between campuses:

IT Support and IT Workshop: includes induction and training in using MS Office 365 applications, accessing the college's virtual learning environment etc.

Special Educational Needs Support: including assessment of individual needs, access to scribes, assistive technology, examination/assessment, accommodation, provision of a personal assistant or sign language interpreter, support with making an application to SOLAS' Fund for Students with Disabilities etc.

Academic Supports: includes study skills and time management supports; strategies for critical thinking, note-taking and comprehension skills; assignment writing and referencing; exam preparation, revision aids and exam techniques; and subject-specific support through tutorials and one-to-one workshops.

English Language Support for speakers of other languages

Extra-Curricular Activities: are offered through a wide variety of clubs and societies.

Pastoral Support: Each campus has a Learner Support team that meets weekly to plan supports for learners presenting with difficulty. A referral system determines the work of the team. For example, staff can refer learners they have concerns about, or a learner can self-refer. The respective team involves Campus Management, Guidance, Learning Support and staff.

Each campus has access to a therapeutic counselling support team offered on a needs basis since September 2021.

Each campus has a guidance counsellor, a front line response and support to learners through progression advice encompassing higher education options, employment opportunities, and life decisions.

Ongoing wellbeing talks and interventions relevant to the learner cohort are provided through themed weeks, invited speakers and networking with local organisations

3.9 EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

Employer engagement is a key component of integrated FET provision. Current employer engagement is addressed on an individual campus basis, but plans to centralise the process are under development.

While individual campuses continue to engage with employers, such employer engagement needs to be addressed in an integrated manner with a view to establishing clear brand recognition. Kerry College's Principal and Manager, under the guidance of the Director of FET, are planning to implement the employer engagement process in an integrated manner. This will involve the establishment of a dedicated college-wide employer engagement function.

The centralised course promotion and recruitment resource/admissions office will assist with the establishment of the brand recognition with employers. In addition, work experience placement will be managed via a centralised approach.

Identified Actions

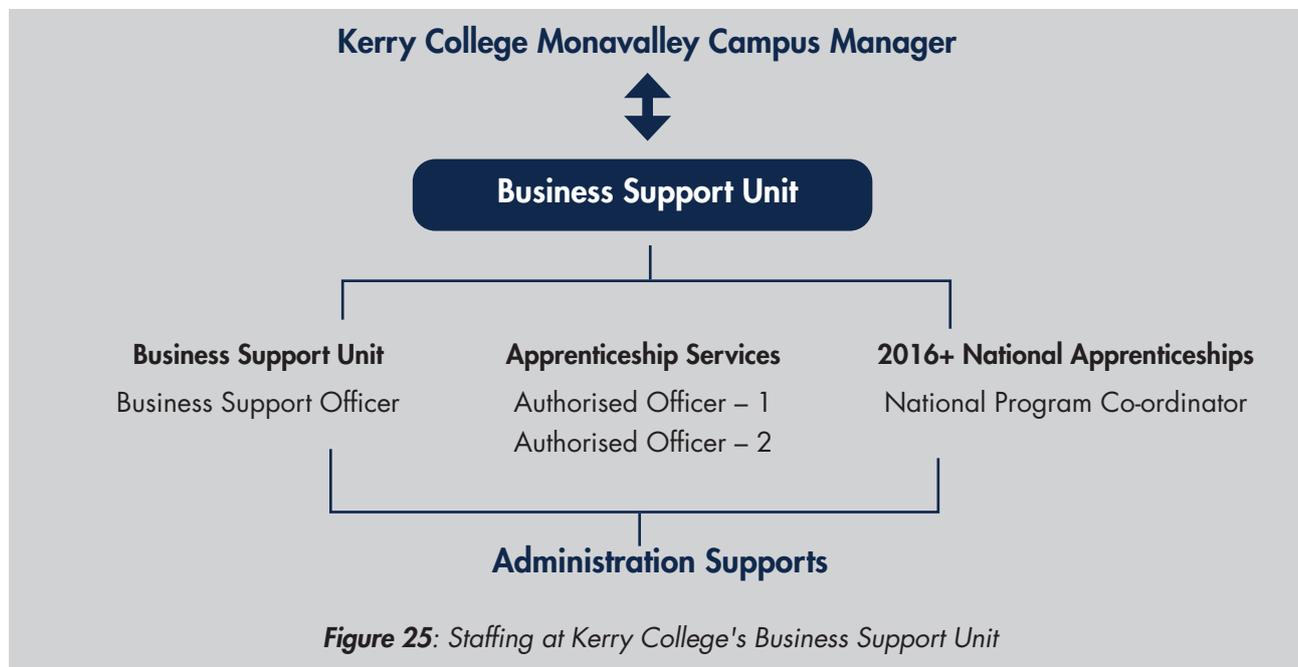
The core team identified the following four actions necessary to progress this initiative:

1. Review current approach to employer engagement
2. Centralised employment engagement function to be explored
3. Review current approaches to work placement
4. Centralised approach to work placement to be explored

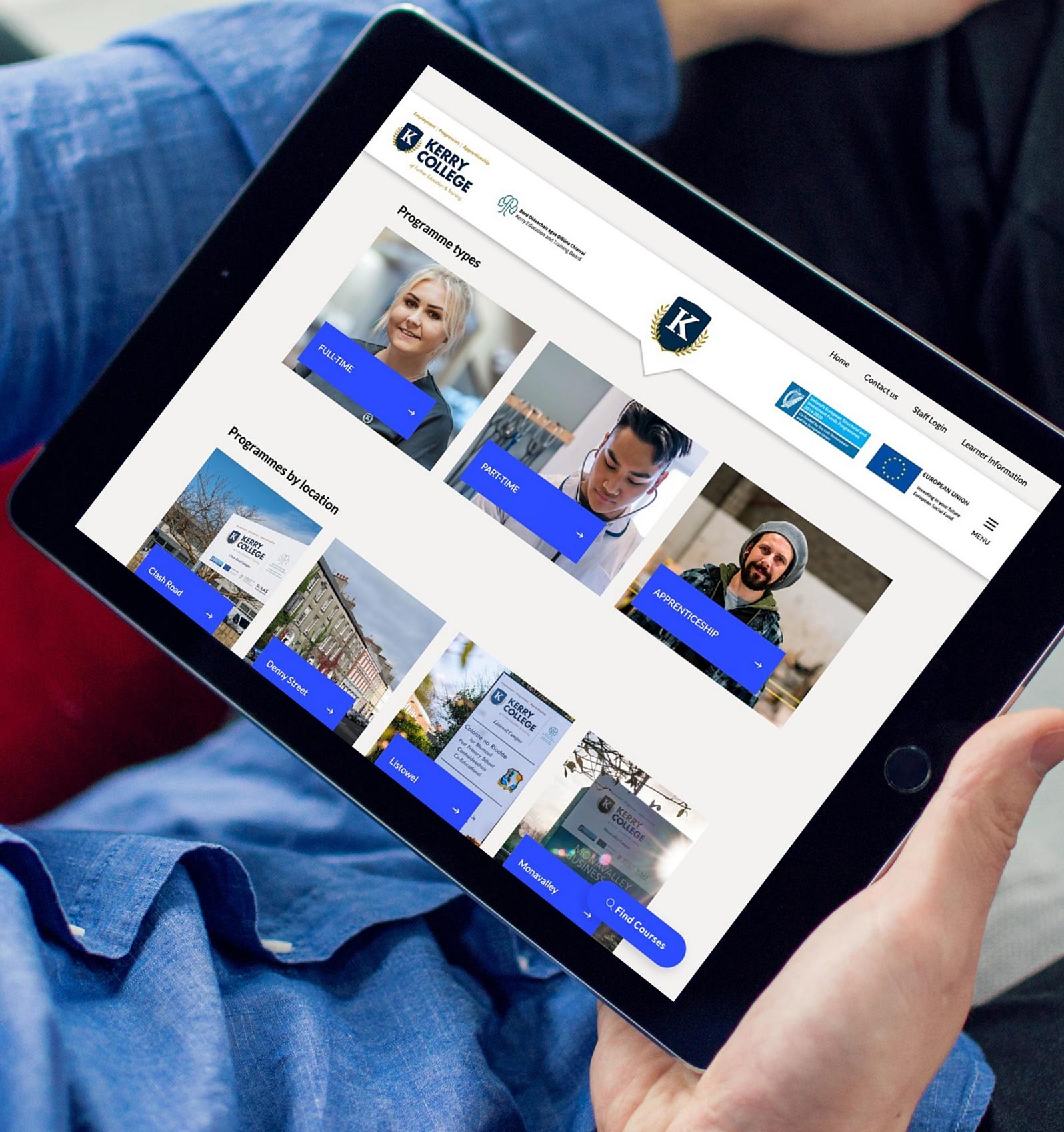
Business Support Unit

A Business Support Unit has been established at Kerry College to facilitate the flexible upskilling of employees and meet the needs of business owners and managers.

This unit was responsive to the needs of businesses as they emerged from government-mandated shutdowns arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, with the provision of courses such as: Principles of Hygiene and PPE; Infection Prevention and Control; Stay Safe for the Hospitality Sector; Managing Compliance for COVID-19. County Kerry has significant involvement in and dependency on tourism. The needs of this industry are further served with a Kerry College part-time “Supervisory Management” course specifically for the hospitality and tourism sector. Programmes such as these are delivered free of charge to eligible applicants under the Skills to Advance initiative.



4: FUTURE PLANS/PRIORITIES



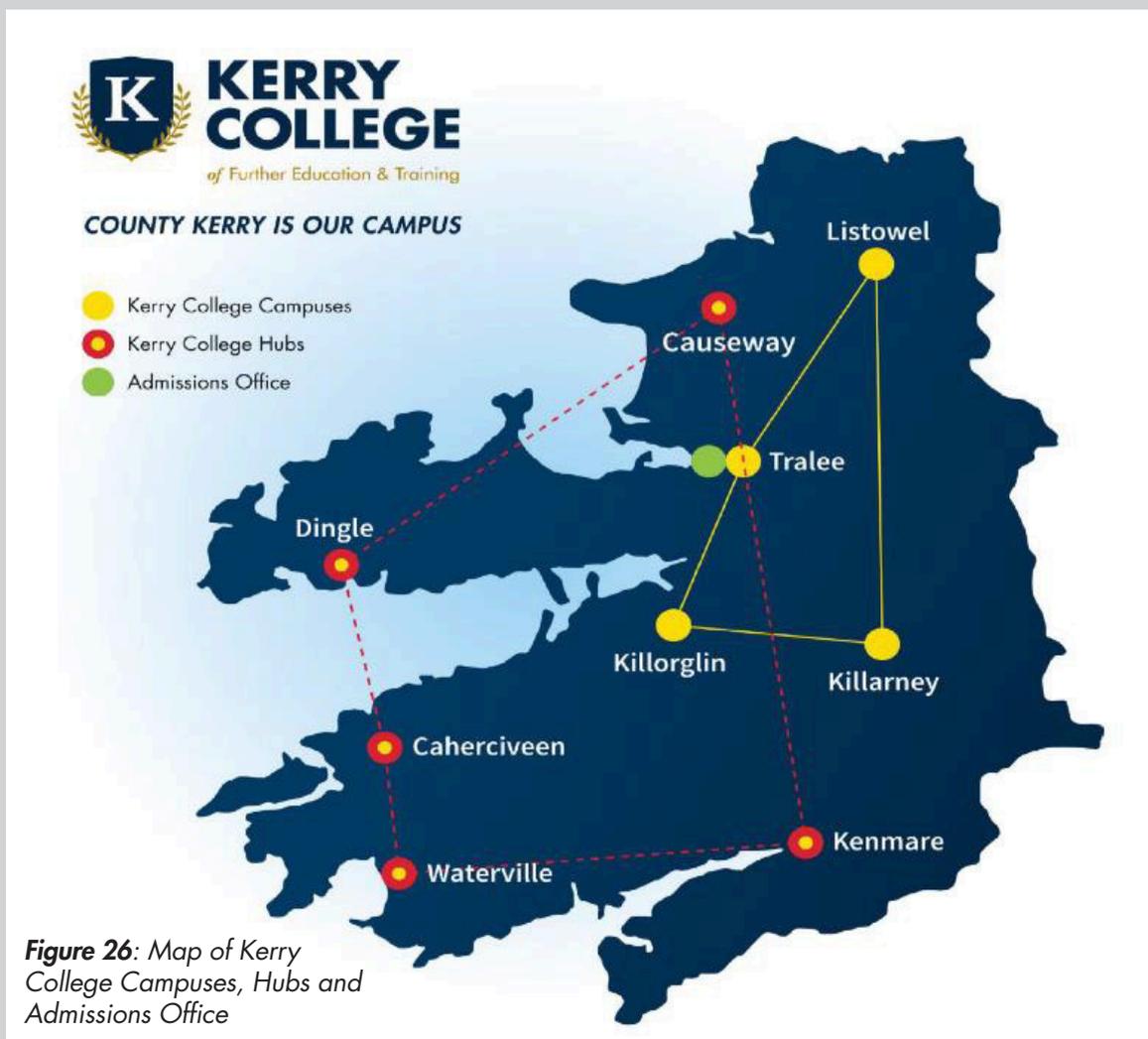
Further expansion of Kerry College continues, and it includes priorities such as:

2021

- Restructuring senior management roles in Kerry College, with consideration given to revising titles for some roles.
- Establishment of the Kerry College Killarney Campus.
- Realignment of all outdoor provision to the Kerry College Killorglin Campus (Outdoor Education and Training Campus)
- Expansion of course provision by:
 - extending/developing offering in apprenticeships, courses for progression and courses for employment, with particular emphasis on expanding provision at level 6 of the NFQ.
 - including provision at level 4 of the NFQ, formerly core VTOS provision in Listowel and Tralee.
 - expanding part-time provision.
 - transitioning Kerry College away from the traditional night classes model to the evening training provision model.
- Establishment of FET Access and Pathways Information Resource for Kerry College aligned to the Admissions Office.
- Revisions to www.kerrycollege.ie and college prospectus.
- Completion of an independent review of the Kerry College “pilot” with SOLAS.
- Establishment of a centralised Kerry College employer engagement function.
- Development a three-year Strategy Statement for Kerry College.
- Enhancements to Kerry College student services and facilities:
 - Integration of IT infrastructures and systems across all campuses.
 - Roll out of Kerry College ID card to all students/learners.
 - Review and expansion of Kerry College Clubs and Societies.

2022

- Integration of provision at the five Kerry ETB FET Centres/Hubs into Kerry College. These centres are located at Kenmare, Caherciveen, Waterville, Dingle and Causeway (see hubs on map below), where they focus on building foundation and bridging skills at levels 3 and 4. Each College Hub will have an “anchor” NFQ level 5 and possibly NFQ level 6 course based on local needs, expertise, etc.



- Rollout of the “FET Pathways Options” module to post-primary schools and transition year classes throughout the county.
- Inclusion under the Kerry College brand of provision at level 4 of the NFQ, formerly core VTOS provision in Killarney and Killorglin.
- Development a three-year Strategy Statement for Kerry College.
- Enhancement of progression links with higher education, e.g., Munster Technological University, University College Cork, University of Limerick.
- Establish a Kerry College Green Campus status in line with the Kerry ETB Sustainability Strategy 2020–2022.

2023+

- Continue work on embedding Kerry College brand recognition.
- Expand outreach provision at the five College Hubs now branded under Kerry College, with a continued emphasis on progression pathways from level 3 and 4 courses to courses at Kerry College campuses.
- Greater alignment between Kerry College and Youthreach, Specialist Training Provision and Literacy Service.

Progressing the planned developments for 2021 and 2022 are subject to the ongoing pandemic-driven restrictions and associated challenges.

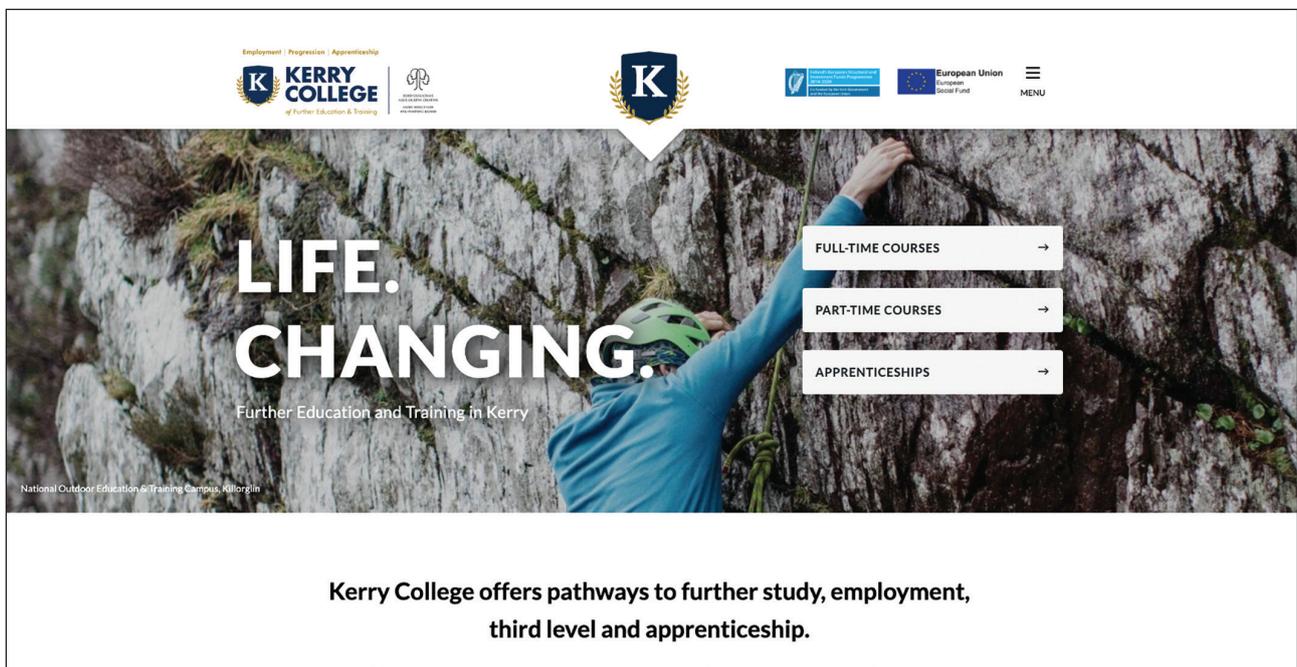
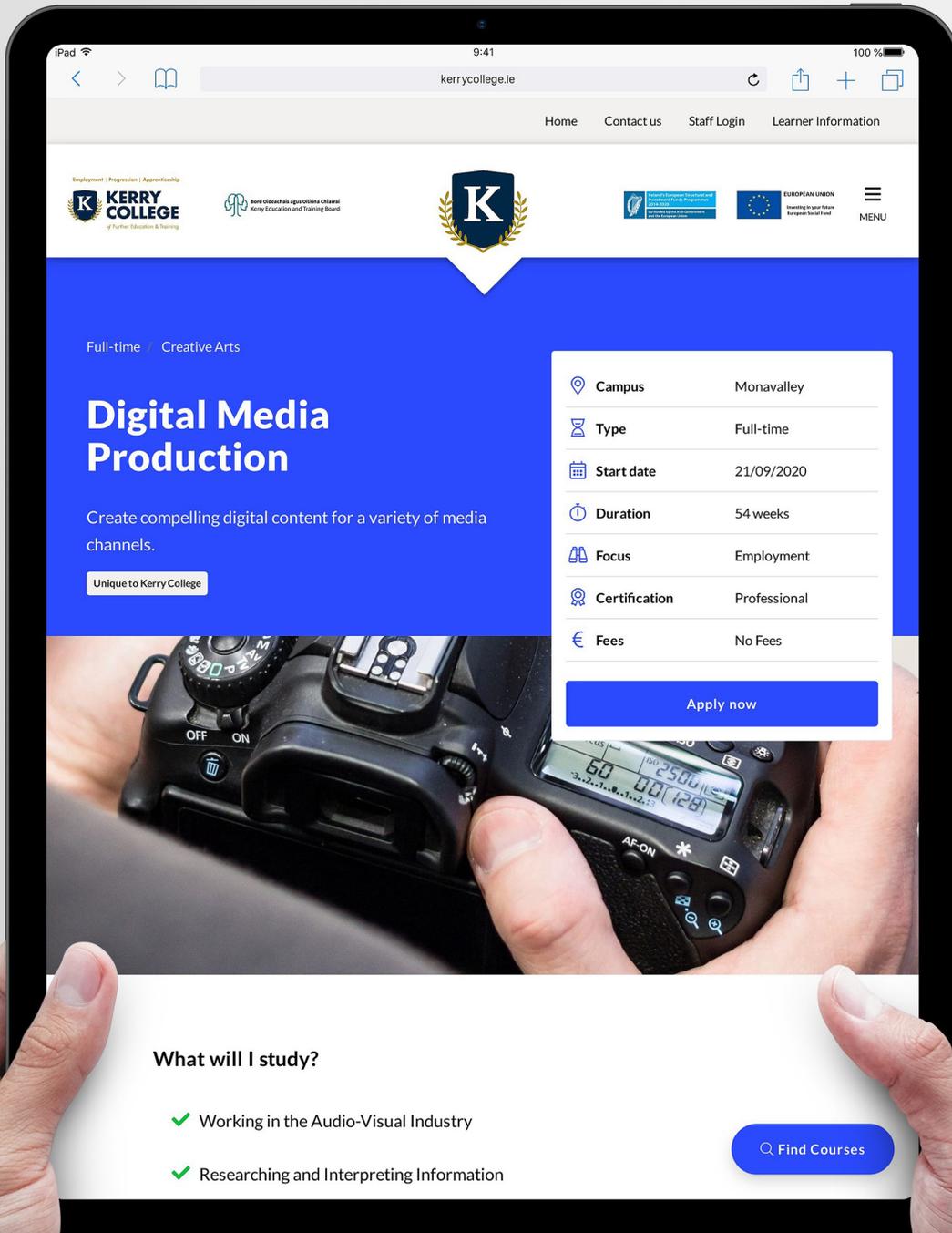


Figure 27: Screenshot of Homepage – Kerry College Website

CONCLUSION



The establishment of Kerry ETB in 2013 and the integration of the training function were key structural reforms for the sector. Since then, significant time has been spent on the establishment/transfer and transition phases. The creation of Kerry College now, in many ways, represents the transformation phase of full-time level 5 and 6 provision and apprenticeships, and although it requires continual review, it is evolving as a robust model for integrated provision. Essentially, Kerry ETB has strategically realigned its FET provision based on learner and employer needs and separated actual provision, where possible, from historical terminology and a legacy approach.

It has proven a risk worth taking to establish a single entity and a new brand, to replace the identity of the existing college and centres. Some would say it was an imperative. Kerry College has been extremely well received as a brand and an entity within the county. The name has currency, as evidenced by statistics from website use. In May 2021, 71% of website visitors typed the words "Kerry College". An analysis of traffic to the domain www.kerrycollege.ie during that month showed that there were approx. 5,400 weekly users and over 8,500 sessions.

In addition to good brand awareness, other documented outcomes include:

- a better learner experience for all with positive feedback received
- very positive feedback from guidance staff at post-primary schools
- significantly increased levels of staff togetherness and integration
- more efficient deployment of learner support services such as medical, SEN, IT and counselling across all campuses
- cost efficiencies across a wide range of areas, not least in terms of marketing spend
- the introduction of a unified SAP-based financial system for all campuses
- a centralised approach to procurement for all Kerry College campus locations
- rationalisation in terms of governance with the establishment of a single Kerry College Governance Board
- integration of Kerry College Campus IT infrastructures and systems with the recruitment of dedicated IT technicians for the college



There has been valuable learning too from the process, some of which includes:

- meeting the challenges posed in establishing the new course admissions office and the roll out of the new website under very tight timelines.
- the importance of time spent by management with staff involved in the process, in order that they understand the rationale for change and share the vision.
- people are way more receptive to change than we give them credit for.
- they want to be part of something that is bigger and better, are excited to feel that they are leading the way and are part of something new (once they are reassured that their terms and conditions won't be eroded).
- the need for timely and open stakeholder consultation and ongoing communication.
- an understanding that although the rationale for change may be evident to all involved, you must act on that change for it to be meaningful.
- how the long and deeply embedded legacy of systems such as PLC (which grew out of the second-level model) can stymie progress in evolving new roles, grades and management functions essential to run an integrated FET college.
- recognition that the requirement to sign onto the live register in order to avail of financial supports – such as the training allowance– may pose a barrier to entry. Other financial support options must be made available that do not involve the requirement to sign onto the live register.
- how to best meet the learners' training and academic needs with a diversity of pedagogical backgrounds and industry experience among staff.

Kerry College continues to change minds both in Kerry and nationally about what successful, integrated FET provision can look like and achieve. With circa 180 programmes (see appendix four) and circa 4,000 learners and apprentices spread across five campus locations, it is proud to identify as a model for the “FET College of the Future”.

SOLAS (2020) heralded the FET College of the Future as “the evolution of FET facilities and provision into a distinct integrated college of FET that can serve as a beacon of community-based learning excellence.” Kerry College has gone on that journey, evolving into an integrated college that continues to extend its network throughout the community of county Kerry.

Eight characteristics of the FET College of the Future are put forward by SOLAS (2020). Here’s how Kerry College has actualised each of these characteristics.

| SOLAS FET College of the Future | Kerry College |
|--|--|
| Consolidation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FET centres and campuses integrated into a single entity |
| Dual Outcome Focus | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Courses for Employment and Courses for Progression established |
| Access Pathways | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater emphasis on progression pathways planned, i.e. greater alignment to Youthreach, Specialist Training, FET Centres/Hubs |
| Consistent Learning Supports | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deployment of additional student/learner support services, i.e. medical, counselling, etc., across each campus |
| Flexible Learning Opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicated Kerry College Admissions Office and Course Recruitment function Online/blended learning courses available with staggered start times |
| Green Campus | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drive for Green Campus status aligned with Kerry ETB’s Sustainability Strategy 2020–2022 |
| Institutional Structure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of a single Kerry College Governance Board under Section 44 (ETB Act 2013) Establishment of a centralised Kerry College dedicated employer engagement function |
| Community Response | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicated Kerry College Admissions Office and Course Recruitment function, with outreach clinics countywide Planned expansion of Kerry College: six campuses and five hubs Planned review and expansion of Kerry College Clubs and Societies |
| Financial Autonomy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unified SAP based financial system in place for all campuses Centralised approach to Kerry College procurement |

Kerry College adheres to the vision for FET as set out by SOLAS (2020) in its FET Strategy 2020–2024, which states that:

FET will provide pathways for everyone. It will empower learners to participate fully in society and to become active citizens and drive vibrant and diverse communities. FET will become the smart choice for school leavers, employees looking to up-skill and learners at all stages of their lives, with future FET colleges recognised as dynamic, modern and high-quality learning environments. FET will prepare people for work and successful careers, facilitate progress through tertiary education, and equip its graduates for a lifetime of continual learning and development. In five years, FET will have grown its profile, with FET colleges serving as beacons of learning within communities which are widely recognised as a major driver of Ireland's next critical phase of economic and social development.

Kerry ETB and the management team at Kerry College look forward to continuing this transformational journey in making Kerry College a beacon of learning in the community, and we are happy to share what we have learnt and achieved over the last number of years in integrating FET provision.

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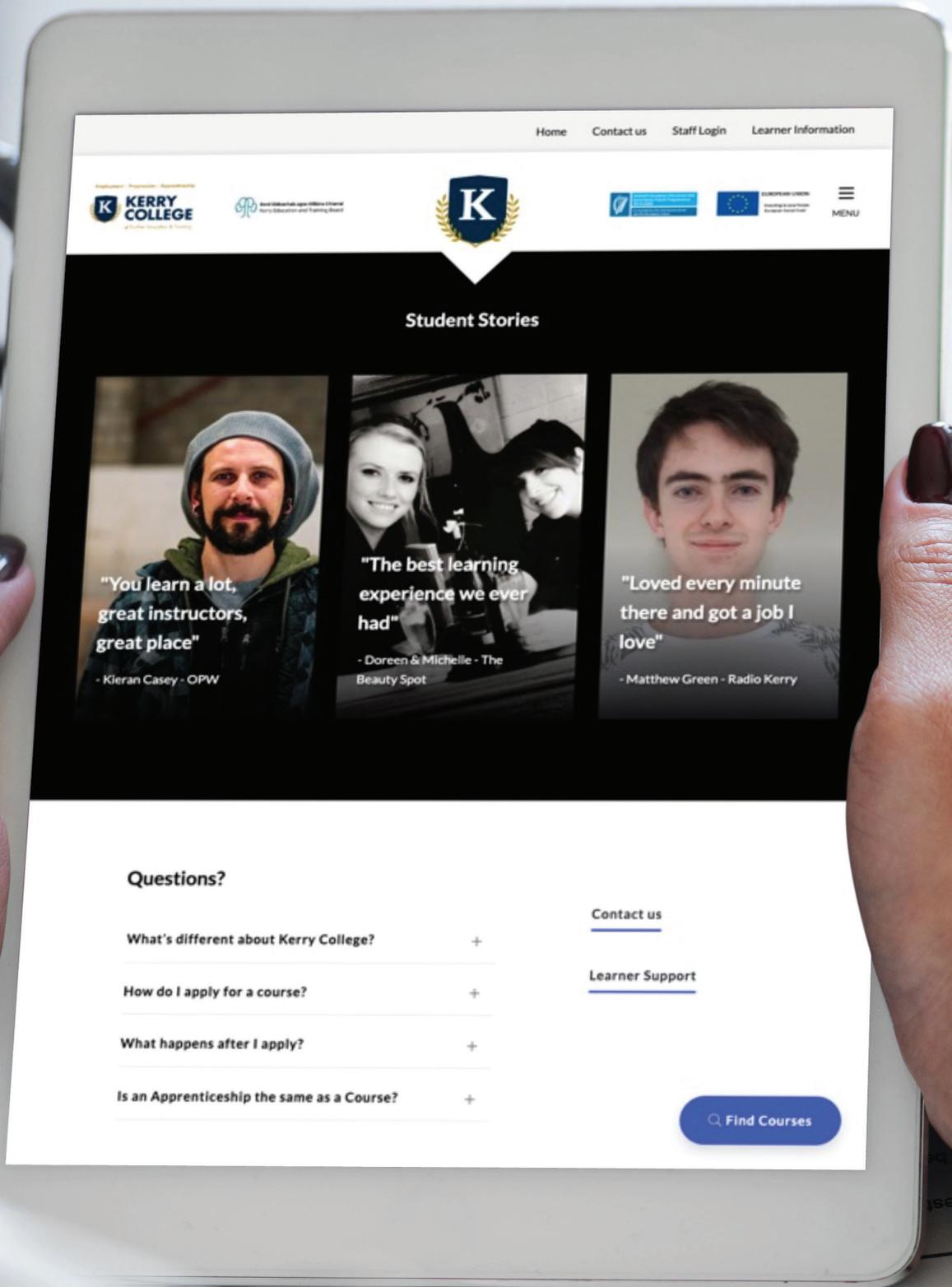
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APPENDICES



APPENDIX 1:

INDICATIVE GOALS, TARGETS AND ACTIONS FROM SOLAS CORPORATE PLAN

SOLAS GOAL 1 Align skills provided through FET courses with those required by the labour market to improve individuals' employment prospects and lifelong learning needs.

THREE-YEAR TARGETS

10,000 LEARNERS PER ANNUM

An increase of 10,000 people a year securing certification in required skills for identified potential business sectors.* This increase relates to each year for three years from 2018.

30,500

30,500 new apprentice and trainee registrations from 2017-2019, with an increase in registrations from circa 6,000 in 2016 to 12,400 in 2019.

New strategic-performance agreements with all 16 ETBs, integrated with the FET planning process.

ACTIONS

1.2 Develop agreed skills targets using outputs from improved FET data, the strategic pilots' projects, programme evaluation, research and improved planning processes. These would be developed with the National Skills Council, regional forums and employers as a key component of the FET strategic agreements and service planning with ETBs.

1.3 Carry out skills and labour-market research to inform decisions on FET provision by SOLAS.

SOLAS GOAL 4 Agreed goals, targets and timelines will be set out in individual ETB strategic performance agreements with SOLAS.

THREE-YEAR TARGETS

Connect policy, strategy and actions with an enhanced, knowledge-based, integrated, outcomes based planning model.

Align new funding model to all national and regional objectives.

ACTIONS

4.2 Develop a funding model to support FET innovation and continual improvement, with funding targeting those programmes which achieve their objectives and value for money.

4.4 Review current funding approach, together with the Department of Education and Skills, to ensure it is aligned with the Action Plan for Education 2016 - 2019 and the FET strategy.

APPENDIX 2:

PROPOSAL TO SOLAS

KERRY EDUCATION AND TRAINING BOARD Apprenticeships, Courses for Progression and Courses for Employment National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) levels 5 and 6

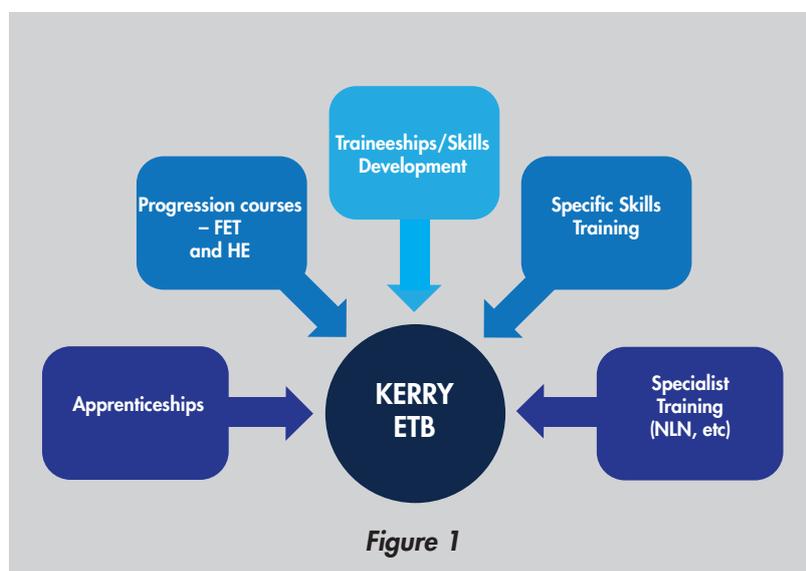
Background

Kerry Education and Training Board was established on July 1st 2013 and is a statutory provider of education and training courses in County Kerry. On January 1st 2014 the training function was integrated into the newly established ETB as part of phase 1 of this national process.

Currently the ETB provides many education and training courses across County Kerry to meet the needs of learners on a full time and part time basis at levels 1–6 on the NQF.

This paper seeks to address a future model for the delivery of full time courses at NQF levels 5 and 6 and apprenticeships in the context of a full integrated FET model at local Kerry ETB level i.e. completing the transition from FE&T to FET. In this paper we are setting out a possible model for FET that will change in a strategic manner the Kerry ETB full time courses (NQF levels 5 and 6) and apprenticeships provision structure to reflect the new reality.

In addressing this proposed future model, it is important to be clear of the current approach. Currently full time courses at NQF levels 5 and 6 and apprenticeships provided by Kerry ETB are delivered via an integrated yet disparate model i.e. planning centrally but delivery being driven by legacy separate systems and demands. The following diagram (figure 1) summarises Kerry ETBs current full time courses at NQF levels 5 and 6 and apprenticeships.



The above full-time courses at NFQ levels 5 and 6 and apprenticeships are currently delivered by:

- Kerry ETB Training Centre – Apprenticeships, Traineeship, Specific skills.
- Post Leaving Certificate Colleges – PLC courses at levels NQF levels 5 and 6.
- Specialist Training – National Learning Network under contract from Kerry ETB.

In planning current provision each area of FET delivery is endeavouring to meet enrolment targets which are aligned to funding and staff allocations. The establishment of the new Strategic Performance Agreements with SOLAS has placed even greater emphasis on such targets etc. Central Government policy and publication such as the action plan to expand apprenticeships and traineeships 2016-2020, the SOLAS Corporate Plan 2017–2019 etc. are key drivers of the current local planning and delivery process.

Figure 2 Summarises Kerry ETB’s agreed targets for the current Strategic Performance Agreement 2018–2020 with SOLAS.

| Target | National Sectoral | Target |
|---|---------------------------|--|
| 1) More learners securing employment from provision which primarily serves the labour market | 10% over 3 years | 22% over 3 years, equating to 545 learners securing employment in 2020 |
| 2) More learners progressing to other further or higher education courses from provision which is primarily focused on this purpose | 10% over 3 years | 15% over 3 years, equating to 1,110 learners progressing to other courses in 2020 |
| 3) Increase in the rate of certification on courses primarily focused on transversal (social mobility) skills development | 10% over 3 years | 83% over 3 years, equating to 320 completers certified in 2020 |
| 4) Increase in adults seeking FET level provision engaging in lifelong learning (LL) interventions | 10% over 3 years | 10% over 3 years, equating to 8,783 starting relevant LL programmes in 2020 |
| 5) Increase in learners securing relevant qualifications in sectors where employment growth/skills needs have been identified | 10,000 learners per annum | 477 per annum or a 48% increase |
| 6) New apprenticeship and trainee registrations in the period 2017 to 2019 | 30,500 over 3 years | 830 over 3 years, almost doubling the current level of provision |

Figure 2

Observations based on current approach

In recent months the current Kerry ETB model for the delivery of full-time courses at NFQ levels 5 and 6 and apprenticeships have been reviewed. As part of this review a number of items of risk and concern with the current model have been identified including:

1. Current full-time courses at NFQ levels 5 and 6 and apprenticeships are advertised under the Kerry ETB name but on an individual centre/college approach which in our view leads to confusion for internal and external audiences.
2. The current approach drives internal organisation competition in terms of the recruitment of learners which is not healthy.
3. The costs associated with promotion and recruitment are driven by a disparate approach with little, if any economies of scale being achieved i.e. costs for separate media adverts, brochures etc.
4. Real concerns from a Quality Assurance perspective arising from the allocation of direct tuition hours to students/trainees pursuing the same QQI award i.e. significant variances of course durations in weeks and hours of direct instructor/tutor/teacher lead delivery for the trainees and learners for the same QQI award. This is currently a serious concern.
5. A lack of integrated planning and sharing of resources by staff delivering similar courses in different locations for the ETB.
6. Significant differences in resourcing of facilities leading to the same qualification across colleges/centres leading to a varied student/trainee experience.
7. Vastly different requirements for students/trainees to pay fees etc. across centres/colleges for the similar programmes.
8. A disjointed approach to employer engagement, work experience programmes etc. with separate colleges/centres managing these relationships individually.

The above results in an overall fragmented approach in the context of the goal of achieving an integrated FET service for Kerry ETB.

Future Model for a fully integrated delivery of full-time courses at NFQ levels 5 and 6 and apprenticeships

In proposing a model for the future fully FET integrated delivery of full time courses at NQF levels 5 and 6 and apprenticeships the following areas were addressed:

- a. Current full time provision at levels 5 and 6
- b. Promotion, Branding, Recruitment etc.
- c. Staffing
- d. Centralised Planning

| Apprenticeships | Traineeships | Progression Courses |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer sponsor required. • Promoted to all, school leavers, unemployed etc. • Develop pre apprenticeship provision. Possible conversion of some current PLC to pre apprenticeship PLC review referenced same • Traditionally, delivered by the Kerry ETB Training Centre | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on Industry required certification • Promoted to all, school leavers, unemployed etc. • At least 30% work based • School Leaver: Trainee Allowance • Unemployed: Trainee Allowance • Traditionally, delivered by the Kerry ETB Training Centre | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QQI Certification • Focused on progression to Higher Education • Promoted to all, school leavers, unemployed etc. • School Leaver: SUSI Grant • Unemployed: Back to Education Allowance • Traditionally delivered by the Post Leaving Certificate Colleges, Tralee, Listowel and Killarney |

Figure 3

Over the years some of the Post Leaving Certificate Courses have addressed training needs and likewise some of the current traineeships have provided for progression to third level etc. While the terms Apprenticeships, Traineeship and Progression courses have been used in figure 3 a more appropriate notation may be:

- Apprenticeships – traditional and new.
- Courses for employment- Traineeships and PLC courses focused on precreation for employment.
- Courses for progression – courses providing opportunities for the learner to progress to further or higher education in their respective area.

In the context of this paper, the above notation will be used i.e. apprenticeships, courses for employment and courses for progression. Courses classified as “Courses for Employment” will entail as work experience element similar to the traditional work experience element for the traditional Traineeship.

Recommendation: Kerry ETBs current full-time provision at NFQ level 5 and 6 to be classified as follows in future, apprenticeships, courses for employment and courses for progression.

b. Promotion, Branding and Recruitment

As referenced earlier in this paper the current approach to course promotion and recruitment is fragmented. In the context of restructuring same for a fully integrated FET provision for full time level 5 and 6 NQF provision and apprenticeships, consideration needs to be given to the establishment of a centralised course promotion and recruitment function. Essentially this centralised function would be resourced to take responsibility for the promotion of the courses using the following notation:

- Apprenticeships
- Courses for employment
- Courses for progression

This centralised promotion and recruitment would be located in a new office on Denny Street and would encompass the traditional Training Centre course promotion/recruitment function and the PLC course promotion/recruitment function.

Promotion of these courses centrally would entail all aspects of promotion i.e. traditional media, social media, school visits, employer engagements, trade events, conferences etc.

In addition, it is suggested that for branding purposes a common name is agreed for what was traditionally the Post Leaving Certificate and the Training Centre. The proposed new name is Kerry College of Further Education and Training with campuses in Tralee, Listowel, Killorglin and Killarney, figure 4 depicts same:

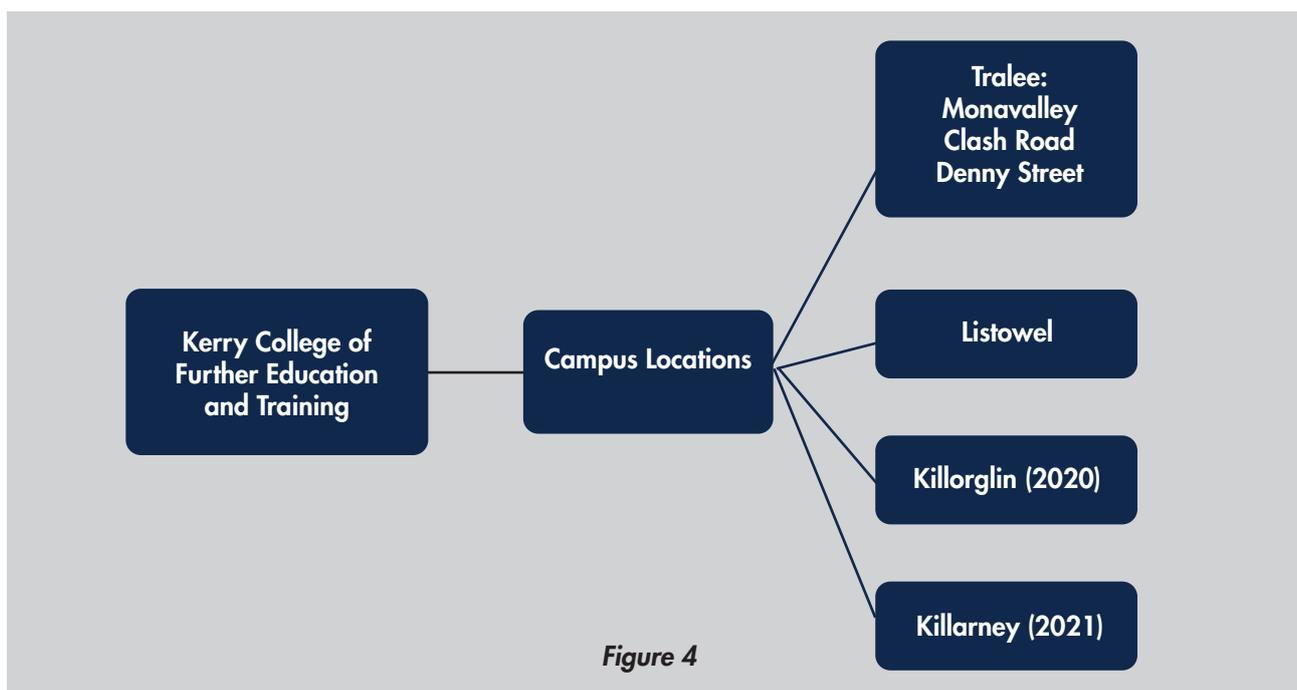


Figure 4

Another alternative name for consideration is Kerry College(s) of Further Education and Training. The work plan of this centralised courses promotion/recruitment function would be managed collectively by the PLC Principals and Training Centre Manager under the guidance of the Director of FET.

The establishment of the dedicated course promotion and recruitment function would relieve the College and Training Centre of this work at local level and help in building a consistent Kerry ETB FET brand for internal and external audiences.

A centralised portal will have to be developed for course recruitment process. This centralised portal will essential involve a Kerry College of Further Education and Training interface to fetchcourses.ie.

Recommendation: The establishment of a dedicated course promotion/recruitment function managed collectively by the PLC Principals and Training Centre Manager under the guidance of the Director of FET.

c. Staffing

The current staff grades involved in the delivery of full-time level 5 and 6 NFQ provision and apprenticeships are Instructors, Teachers and Tutors. Each of these staff categories has agreed terms and conditions attached. While engagement with the relevant unions would be required, in the absence of a single agreed grade for the delivery of full-time level 5 and 6 NFQ provision and apprenticeships, the current staff will continue with the delivery in line with their terms and conditions.

Communities of best practice will be established with Instructor, Teachers and Tutors delivering in common areas in the different campuses are brought together on a number of occasions annually to plan delivery, assessments, share resources etc.

Recommendation: For the delivery of full-time level 5 and 6 NFQ provision and apprenticeships, the current staff will continue with the delivery in line with their terms and conditions. Communities of best practice to be established across campuses.

d. Centralised Planning

An absolute essential for this new fully integrated FET model for the delivery of full-time level 5 and 6 NFQ provision and apprenticeships is the need for centralised planning between the Training Centre Manager and the PLC Principals under the guidance of the Director of FET. Centralised planning in this context encompasses:

- Course commencement schedules
- Course promotion and branding
- Course content and durations
- Work experience and employer engagement

A schedule for centralised planning and review meetings will be developed and agreed.

Recommendation: The establishment of a centralised planning and review schedule for of full-time level 5 and 6 NFQ provision and apprenticeship.

e. Buildings and Facilities

Currently our full-time level 5 and 6 NFQ provision and apprenticeships are delivered from a number of locations. Generally, facilities meet the course requirements and are well maintained. However, the move to a more integrated delivery model for our full-time level 5 and 6 NFQ provision and apprenticeships would provide an opportunity to enhance facilities and create, where possible “centres of excellence” where facilities for courses focused on employment match industry standards and requirements, for example, the establishment of a new industry standard beauty and spa therapy course centre in Tralee.

It is envisaged that with the move to a fully integrated FET model for full-time level 5 and 6 NFQ provision and apprenticeships, a review of existing facilities will be carried out and investments will be made where necessary, subject to available resources.

Recommendation: Complete a review of existing facilities to ensure a standardisation of approach to meet needs.

f. Learner/Trainee Income Supports

Figure 5 summarises the current income support for apprentices/trainees and learners.

| | |
|---|--|
| Apprenticeship | Employer sponsor and training allowance pre-2016, post-2016 employer sponsor |
| Traineeship | Training allowance, if eligible |
| Post Leaving Certificate Courses | SUSI Grant, if eligible |

Figure 5

For the new fully integrated FET for full time level 5 and 6 NQF provision and apprenticeships the following (Figure 6) is proposed.

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Apprenticeship | Employer sponsor and training allowance pre-2016, post-2016 employer sponsor |
| Courses for employment | SUSI Grant, VTOS allowance, Back to Education allowance or Training Allowance paid if eligible. Registration fee may apply |
| Courses for progression | SUSI Grant, VTOS allowance, Back to Education allowance or Training Allowance paid if eligible. No course fees for any participants. Registration fee may apply |

Figure 6

With the creation of the new local identity, Kerry College of Further Education and Training it is proposed that all of the courses for progression and courses for employment will be registered in the traditional manner as PLC courses and Traineeships would have been registered with SOLAS. This will allow for a group pursuing courses for employment or progression to be comprise of learners with the following income supports:

SUSI Grant, if applicable, Dispersed VTOS Payment, if applicable, Training Allowance, if eligible, Back to Education Allowance, if eligible etc.

Essentially the composition of the class for delivery is being separated from the income support.

Recommendation: Separate provision form learner income support.

g. Employer Engagement

Employer engagement is a key component of any integrated FET provision. Current employer engagement is addressed on an individual centre/college basis. With the establishment of the Kerry College of Further Education and Training, local identity employer engagement will be addressed via a centralised planning process. While individual campuses will engage with employers, such employer engagement will be addressed in an integrated manner with a view to establishing clear brand recognition. The Training Centre Manager and the PLC Principals under the guidance of the Director of FET will plan and implement the employer engagement process in an integrated manner. The centralised course promotion and recruitment resource will assist with the establishment of the brand recognition with employers. In addition, work experience placement will be managed via a centralised approach.

Recommendation: Centralised approach to employer engagement and work experience placements.

h. The rollout of a “pilot” for September 2019 enrolments

Following consultation with internal centres/college management, SOLAS etc. a “pilot” for this new integrated FET approach will be rolled out for September 2019. The “pilot” will address the following:

- 1.** Immediate introduction of the new local title – Kerry College of Further Education and Training.
- 2.** Re classification of traditional course name/descriptors to the following:
 - a. Apprenticeships – old and new
 - b. Course for Progression
 - c. Course for Employment
- 3.** The following course areas will be classified as course for employment:
 - a. Hairdressing
 - b. Beauty Therapy
 - c. Office Administration
 - d. (Traditionally these courses were delivered across the centre/colleges. For these course areas the staff involved in the delivery of the programmes will complete their work in refining the course content to ensure that a newly agreed and standardised course is promoted)

4. Establishment of the new course promotion and recruitment office in Tralee.
5. Establishment of a centralised application and registration process.
6. Development of integrated planning meeting schedules etc.
7. Commence the process for the communication of this new approach to internal (ETB Board, Staff etc.) and external audiences. For external audiences, the establishment of a schedule for school visits, guidance teacher information sessions and employer engagement functions is critical.

Figure 7 summarises the timeline for the rollout of the pilot.



Figure 7

Conclusion

The establishment of the ETB and the integration of the training function were key structural reforms for the sector. Over the past five years a lot of time has been spent on the establishment/transfer and transition phases. This proposal, while requiring continual review in many ways represents the transformation phase of full-time level 5 and 6 NFQ provision and apprenticeships are Instructors for Kerry ETB. The “pilot” will roll out in September 2019 with further roll out based on the new course notations of apprenticeships, courses for progression and courses for employment in 2020. Essentially, we are strategically realigning our provision based on learner and employer needs and separating actual provision, where possible from historical terminology and a legacy approach.

Implementation Phase

1. Finalise course content for the pilot courses

Course content for Beauty Therapy, Hairdressing and Office Administration to be finalised with Teachers/Instructors/Tutors involved with the delivery – timeline for completion for same is Friday, February 1st 2019.

2. Premises for the New Course Promotion and Course Recruitment Office

Lease re new course recruitment office to be addressed at Kerry ETB Board meeting January 22nd 2019. Department of Education and Skills to be sought.

3. Internal Communications re Pilot

Director of FET to meet with centre managers and principals with Management teams to outline proposal. This will be followed by meetings with the wider staff in each of the three colleges/centres.

4. Staffing/Resourcing the new Course Promotion and Course Recruitment Office

Expression of interest to be sought from PLC re course recruitment and promotion role (this will be addressed after the completion of the engagement by the Director of FET with the management and staff of the 3 colleges/centres).

5. Review feedback form SOLAS and relevant Staff Unions

Continue engagement with SOLAS and the staff unions re the proposal. Liaise with Kerry ETB Heads of HR re staffing matters etc.

6. Publish Timeline for the implementation of the Pilot

Finalise timeline for the implementation phase for this proposal – Target date for finalisation of same Friday, February 1st 2019.

7. Address Course Fees etc. for Pilot Courses – PLC

Traditional PLC course fees for pilot areas (Beauty Therapy, Hairdressing and Office Administration) are to be suspended with immediate effect. These courses are all involved in the Pilot and all course access matters need to be aligned with the current practice for traineeship re fees etc.

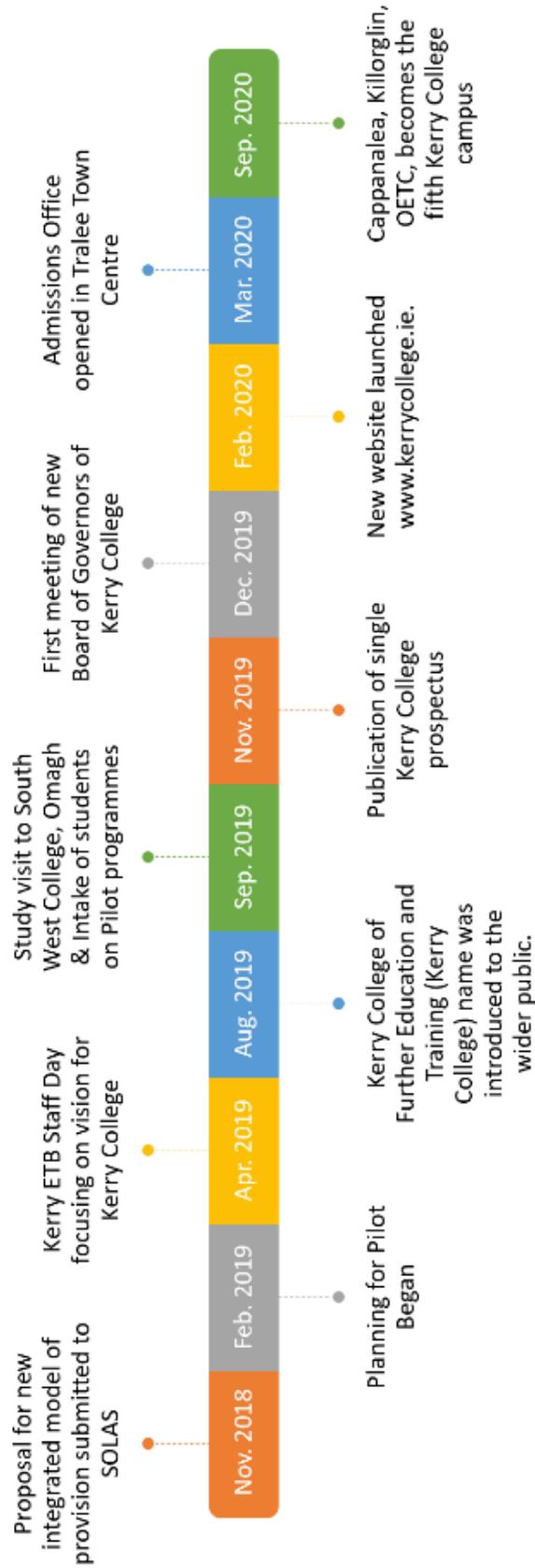
Timeline

| | Feb 2019 | March 2019 | April 2019 | May 2019 | June 2019 | July 2019 | Aug 2019 | Sep 2019 |
|---|----------|------------|------------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|
| Task | | | | | | | | |
| Finalise Courses Content – Pilot | | | | | | | | |
| Finalise Lease for new Course Recruitment Office | | | | | | | | |
| Fit out of the new Course Recruitment Office | | | | | | | | |
| Staffing of the new Course Recruitment Office | | | | | | | | |
| Development of new Kerry College PR and Branding Plan | | | | | | | | |
| Development of new Kerry College Enrolment Registration Portal | | | | | | | | |
| Roll out of the new QA Processes | | | | | | | | |
| Development of New Kerry College Website | | | | | | | | |
| Internal Communications | | | | | | | | |
| External Communications | | | | | | | | |
| Implementation of the Pilot | | | | | | | | |

APPENDIX 3:

KEY MILESTONES IN PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF PILOT

Key Milestones in Planning & Implementation of Pilot



APPENDIX 4:

COURSES ON OFFER AT KERRY COLLEGE

At Clash Road, Tralee, Campus

| Programme/ Course Name | National Programme Category | Kerry College course for.. |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| Office Administration | Traineeship Training | Employment |
| Business Studies | PLC Progression | Progression |
| Personal Training and Nutrition | PLC Progression | Progression |
| Sports and PE Pre-Teaching | PLC Progression | Progression |
| Sport, Recreation and Exercise | PLC Progression | Progression |
| Software Development | PLC Progression | Progression |
| Business Management | PLC Progression | Progression |
| Special Needs Awareness and Assisting | PLC Employment | Employment |
| Advanced Early Childhood Care and Education | PLC Employment | Employment |
| Legal Administration | Traineeship Training | Employment |
| Applied Science | PLC Progression | Progression |
| Pre-University Law | PLC Progression | Progression |
| Engineering and Electronic Technology | PLC Progression | Progression |
| Beauty Therapy | Traineeship Training | Employment |
| Music Technology | PLC Progression | Progression |
| Pre-Garda Studies | PLC Progression | Progression |
| Hotel and Catering | PLC Employment | Employment |
| Tattoo Artistry | PLC Progression | Progression |
| Music Performance | PLC Progression | Progression |
| Carpentry and Construction Studies (Pre-Apprenticeship) PLC | Progression | Progression |
| Animation | PLC Progression | Progression |
| Animal Care Assistant | PLC Employment | Employment |
| Early Childcare Care and Education | PLC Employment | Employment |
| Office Management (Level 6) | PLC Employment | Employment |
| Pre-Teaching and Education Studies | PLC Progression | Progression |
| Multimedia with Graphic Design | PLC Progression | Progression |
| Special Needs Assistant/Personal Assistant | PLC Employment | Employment |
| Journalism | PLC Progression | Progression |
| Art, Craft and Design (Portfolio Preparation) | PLC Progression | Progression |
| Physiotherapy Assistant Studies | PLC Progression | Progression |
| Professional Cookery | PLC Employment | Employment |
| Computer Games Design and Development | PLC Progression | Progression |

At Denny Street Tralee, Campus

| Programme/ Course Name | National Programme Category | Kerry College course for.. |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| Applied Social Studies | PLC Progression | Progression |
| Pre-Emergency Care Studies | PLC Progression | Progression |
| Advanced Social Care with Counselling Studies | PLC Progression | Progression |
| Nursing Studies | PLC Progression | Progression |
| Healthcare Support | PLC Employment | Employment |
| Nursing Studies with Maternity Care Skills | PLC Progression | Progression |

At Listowel Campus

| Programme/ Course Name | National Programme Category | Kerry College course for.. |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| Business with Marketing/Administration | PLC Progression | Progression |
| Healthcare Support | PLC Employment | Employment |
| Photography | PLC Progression | Progression |
| Special Needs Awareness and Assisting | PLC Employment | Employment |
| Applied Social Studies | PLC Progression | Progression |
| Early Childhood Care and Education | PLC Employment | Employment |
| Social, Health and Community Studies – Healthcare Support | PLC Employment | Employment |
| Engineering and Electronic Technology | PLC Progression | Progression |
| Nursing Studies | PLC Progression | Progression |
| Art, Craft and Design (Portfolio Preparation) | PLC Progression | Progression |
| Office Administration | PLC Employment | Employment |
| Hairdressing | Traineeship Training | Employment |
| Animal Care Assistant | PLC Employment | Employment |
| Medical Administration | PLC Employment | Employment |
| Advanced Early Childhood Care and Education | PLC Employment | Employment |
| Pre-University Arts | PLC Progression | Progression |

At Monavalley, Tralee, Campus

| Programme/ Course Name | National Programme Category | Kerry College course for.. |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| Deciding Your Future | Bridging and Foundation Training | Employment |
| RPEL National Tour Guiding | Recognition of Prior Learning | Employment |
| Skills to Compete – Marine Angling Guiding | Specific Skills Training | Employment |
| Accounting Technicians Ireland – First Year | Specific Skills Training | Employment |
| Accounting Technicians Ireland – Second Year | Specific Skills Training | Employment |
| CAD – Computer Aided Draughting and Design | Specific Skills Training | Employment |
| Introduction to Radio Broadcasting | Specific Skills Training | Employment |
| Skills to Compete – Bus Driving – D Licence Code Y23 | Specific Skills Training | Employment |
| Skills to Compete – Civils for Fibre Installation | Specific Skills Training | Employment |
| Skills to Compete – Coded Pipe Welding | Specific Skills Training | Employment |
| Skills to Compete – Construction Ground Work Skills | Specific Skills Training | Employment |
| Skills to Compete – Digital Photography | Specific Skills Training | Employment |
| Skills to Compete – Diploma in Software Development (Full Stack) | Specific Skills Training | Employment |
| Skills to Compete – Fibre Installation Technician | Specific Skills Training | Employment |
| Skills to Compete – Food Preparation and Cooking (Culinary Arts) | Specific Skills Training | Employment |
| Skills to Compete – Heavy Goods Vehicle – Artic | Specific Skills Training | Employment |
| Skills to Compete – Heavy Goods Vehicle Driving – Rigid | Specific Skills Training | Employment |
| Skills to Compete – ICDL | Specific Skills Training | Employment |
| Skills to Compete – Inland Angling Guiding | Specific Skills Training | Employment |
| Skills to Compete – Manual and Computerised Payroll and Bookkeeping | Specific Skills Training | Employment |
| Skills to Compete – National Tour Guiding | Specific Skills Training | Employment |
| Skills to Compete – Reception and Clerical Skills | Specific Skills Training | Employment |
| Skills to Compete – Regional Tour Guiding | Specific Skills Training | Employment |
| Skills to Compete – Welding Intermediate | Specific Skills Training | Employment |
| Surf Instructor and Beach Lifeguard Training | Specific Skills Training | Employment |
| Traditional Stonewall Construction | Specific Skills Training | Employment |
| Traditional Stonewall Construction OPW | Specific Skills Training | Employment |
| Broadcast Production Skills | Traineeship Training | Employment |

At Monavalley, Tralee, Campus cont.

| Programme/ Course Name | National Programme Category | Kerry College course for.. |
|---|--|---------------------------------------|
| Digital Journalism and Radio Broadcasting | Traineeship Training | Employment |
| Digital Marketing and Sales | Traineeship Training | Employment |
| Digital Media Production Skills | Traineeship Training | Employment |
| Ecology and Practical Fieldwork Skills | Traineeship Training | Employment |
| Hairdressing | Traineeship Training | Employment |
| Healthcare Support | Traineeship Training | Employment |
| IT Support Technician | Traineeship Training | Employment |
| Marine Engineering | Traineeship Training | Employment |
| Medical Administration | Traineeship Training | Employment |
| Overhead Lines Operative | Traineeship Training | Employment |
| Pharmacy Sales Assistant | Traineeship Training | Employment |
| Wind Turbine Maintenance | Traineeship Training | Employment |

The following apprenticeships are also based out of the Monavalley Campus:

Electrical Phase 2

Plumbing Phase 2

Motor Mechanic Phase 2

Carpentry and Joinery Phase 2

Metal Fabrication Phase 2

Mechanical Automotive Maintenance Fitter (MAMF) Phase 2

Stone Masonry Phases 2, 4 and 6

Commis Chef Full (All Phases)

Agri Mechanics Phase 4 and 6 (with Institute of Technology)

Electrical Phase Phase 4 and 6 (with Institute of Technology)

Carpentry and Joinery Phase 4 and 6 (with Institute of Technology)

At Killorglin Campus (Outdoor Education and Training Campus)

| Programme/ Course Name | National Programme Category | Kerry College course for.. |
|--------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| Outdoor Activity Instructor | Traineeship Training | Employment |
| Advanced Outdoor Activity Instructor | Traineeship Training | Employment |

APPENDIX 5:

KERRY COLLEGE PILOT – POSSIBLE REFORM OF THE STUDENT GRANT SYSTEM

Student Grant System

Kerry Education and Training Board (Kerry ETB), as a provider of further education and training services, is delighted to provide input on the student grant system as part of this public consultation process.

In particular our feedback relates to the following element of the review:

7. To consider current supports available to Further Education and Training (FET) Learners undertaking traineeships, apprenticeships and level 5 and 6 programmes (i.e. courses that are not PLC courses) with a view to exploring whether a common cross FET student financial support system can be incorporated into the student grant scheme.

In September 2019, Kerry ETB established Kerry College of Further Education and Training (Kerry College, www.kerrycollege.ie) as a pilot initiative with the support of SOLAS. This integrated FET College incorporated the previous provision of the traditional 'Training Centre' and 'Post Leaving Certificate Colleges' in Co. Kerry. As part of this process, Kerry ETB looked at and addressed the need to separate the learner, and their course choice, from the array of possible income supports i.e. PLC SUSI grant, training allowance, Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS⁸) allowance, Back to Education allowance (BTEA) etc.

Students attending traditional FE/PLC Colleges can qualify for a SUSI income support grant as per Section

7 (d) of the Student Support Act 2011; (d) an educational institution in the State that receives a grant out of moneys provided by the Oireachtas, pursuant to a scheme administered by the Minister, for the provision of courses of education and training known for the time being as post-leaving certificate courses...

Apprentices and Trainees in Training Centres can receive the following income supports:

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Apprenticeship | Employer sponsor and training allowance pre-2016, post-2016 employer-sponsor |
| Traineeship | Training allowance, if eligible |

With the establishment of Kerry College, an integrated FET College, the need for a new common student support system became very apparent. Essentially as current student (learner) income supports (for Traineeships and PLC courses) were being defined by course type and location.

⁸ The VTOS allowance reference is referring to learners attending full time National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) level 5 and level 6 courses

In the integrated FET College, learners, whose income support was traditionally defined based on their course choice (Traineeship/PLC), are now fully integrated i.e. a class group may contain learners in receipt of a training allowance, SUSI grant, VTOS, BTEA allowance etc. The following course terminology is applied across Kerry College and Kerry ETB:

- Courses for progression (NQF levels 5 and 6) – focused mainly on progress to Higher Education

In 2011 the Students Support Act's reference to SUSI grants for PLC in Section 7(d) stated that these grants were to be known for the time being as post leaving certificate courses. In our view, as part of the review of the student grant system, there needs to be an equalisation of income supports for all students attending fully integrated FET Colleges – as is envisaged in the SOLAS FET Strategy 2020–2024. Kerry ETB advocates for a single FET (full-time) learner income support scheme to replace the existing training allowance, SUSI Grant, BTEA, and VTOS allowance schemes. This new scheme could be similar in nature to the traditional traineeship allowance scheme, but not predicated on registered unemployment status. The new scheme needs to be mapped to the realities of the integrated FET College provision on a full-year basis with a continuous intake model, as opposed to the traditional academic year model.

We are available to provide additional information, should this be required.



BORD OIDEACHAIS
AGUS OILIÚNA CHIARRAÍ

KERRY EDUCATION
AND TRAINING BOARD