



Fast Track into Information Technology

Provider Quality Report, Tech Apprenticeships

Date: April 2025

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Glossary of Terms, Abbreviations and Acronyms

AC	Academic Council
AHEAD	Diversity and inclusion organisation
ARR	Academic Risk Register
Computer Networking Associate	FIT validated statutory apprenticeship
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
Cybersecurity Apprenticeship	FIT validated statutory apprenticeship
DAFPD	Director of Academic Affairs and Programme Development
ETB	Education and Training Board
FIT	Fast Track into Information Technology CLG
IER	Independent Evaluation Report
LMS	Learning Management System
PAWL	People, Analytics and Wellbeing Lead
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Software Development Associate	FIT validated statutory apprenticeship
TEL Unit	FIT's Technology Enhanced Learning Unit
TLA Strategy	FIT's Teaching Learning and Assessment Strategy 2022-2025
ToR	Terms of Reference
WLO	Workplace Learning Officer
WM	Workplace Mentor

1.0 Introduction

FIT received quality assurance system approval with Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) in 2017 through the QQI-assigned process of provider re-engagement. QQI QA approval aimed to ensure that FIT has the appropriate quality assurance system and structures embedded to carry out and oversee the approved quality system. This report intends to give a focus and purpose to the structures and systems enhancement made in recent years, which coincided with and were impacted by the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic.

In summary, FIT's quality assurance system ensures:

- Integrity of programme development processes,
- Integrity of assessment and verification processes so that awards made to apprentices are consistent with the award standards,
- Monitoring of the quality of programmes, primarily through the experience of apprentices and the feedback from independent evaluation,
- Dissemination of good practices,
- Stakeholders address quality issues quickly.

URL of published QA procedures: <https://fit.ie/tech-apprenticeship-policies-and-procedures/>

FIT's Senior Management Group approved this report at its meeting on 03/04/25.

Signed



Andrew Finn

Director of Academic Affairs and Programme Development

1.1 Enhancements of FIT's Quality Assurance System

In June 2017, FIT concluded the re-engagement exercise with QQI. Specifically, this process involved FIT compiling a robust series of quality assurance policies and procedures readied at that stage to inform and monitor the future provision of apprenticeship-type training programmes. FIT completed this exercise in tandem with the initial validation process with QQI for the *Software Development Associate (6M0579)* and *Computer Networking Associate (6M20577)* apprenticeship programmes. This process provided an opportunity for FIT to present the differing facets of the quality assurance system, which were enhanced and developed for the provision of apprenticeship programmes in anticipation of the national roll-out from August 2018 onwards. Shortly after the re-engagement exercise, FIT launched another apprenticeship programme in the discipline area of cyber security titled the *Cybersecurity Apprenticeship (6M20709)*. The Independent Evaluation Panel Reports for these programmes that encompassed the re-engagement exercise listed some conditions for naming award titles, limits to the validation periods and restricting apprentice numbers early on. Specific recommendations noted themes around the requirement to monitor staff closely, the supervision of apprentices in the workplace setting, and the requirement to delineate roles in the on-the-job work-based elements formally.

As of April 2025, FIT's three active apprenticeship programmes have all come through a successful process of programme revalidation. FIT is currently applying to QQI for an extension of the scope of the provision to include a permanent capacity to deliver programme modes not only in person but via blended modalities. With this in mind, FIT's quality assurance system has continued to develop and broaden in line with a continually growing apprentice population.

1.2 Specific Re-Engagement Process IER Conditions and Recommendations

Relevant Core QA Guideline	Condition / Specific Advice from Panel Report	Action(s) Taken	Status
The programme objectives and outcomes are clear and consistent with the QQI awards sought.	IER Condition 1: <i>The award title to be changed to conform to QQI policy before the programme is validated.</i>	The condition was satisfied following the issuance of the Independent Evaluation Report in August 2017 and prior to the rollout of the programmes in August 2018.	Complete, August 2017

There are sufficient qualified and capable programme staff available to implement the programme as planned.	IER Condition 2: <i>The duration of validation is limited to three years of intakes.</i>	Due to the onset of the Coronavirus pandemic, QQI granted an extension of one year to the programme validation of FIT's three apprenticeship programmes, which have all been subsequently revalidated for a five-year term.	Complete
There are sufficient qualified and capable programme staff available to implement the programme as planned.	IER Condition 3: <i>The number of learners is limited for the first three years to 150 per intake per year in total.</i>	For the initial validation period, apprentice enrolment did not exceed 150 apprentices per intake in any given year.	Complete
The programme is well managed.	IER Recommendation 1: <i>The Panel recommends that the processes in place to monitor the performance of staff (who are employed by the contract training partners) delivering programmes should be documented within FIT's QA policies.</i>	Tutors appointed by an Education and Training Board (ETB) collaborative provider for off-the-job training are subject to ongoing FIT Learning Management System monitoring. Also, each tutor's output goes through internal verification with the ETB and separately with FIT. Each role within FIT's QA and governance system has associated and documented Terms of Reference applicable to all tutors regardless of their ETB contracting arrangements.	Ongoing
The learning environment is consistent with the needs of the programme's learners.	IER Recommendation 2: <i>The Panel further recommends that the supervision of mentoring within the workplace must be underpinned by clear quality assurance documentation, that clearly establishes the roles and responsibilities to be fulfilled by all parties.</i>	Since the point of initial validation in 2017, FIT instigated a new Workplace Learning Officer (WLO) role to monitor the work-based performance of apprentices in training. This key role assists in training new Workplace Mentors (WM) and an approved employer's successful onboarding of the apprentice. There are Terms of Reference for both the WLO and WM roles.	August 2018

The learning environment is consistent with the needs of the programme's learners.	IER Recommendation 3: <i>The Panel recommends that the existing guidelines for FIT Training and Placement Officers be strengthened to include more on supervision of learner assessment (validity, reliability) and learner support.</i>	In addition to the WLO and WM roles, in 2019, FIT appointed a panel of technically competent ICT Assessors to assess the apprentice workplace logbooks and transversal skills journal throughout the programme. Terms of Reference are available for the ICT Assessor role.	Ongoing
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Table 1

1.3 Update on Other Quality Initiatives

FIT has led numerous quality assurance and enhancement initiatives for the past six years. Enhancement themes covered governance and quality management, staff recruitment, teaching learning and assessment, learner support, and information and data management. The initiatives listed in *Table 2* don't include a record of all improvement and enhancement activities; instead, the outline details a series of activities demonstrating FIT's continual commitment to improving the Tech Apprenticeship delivery.

	Quality Initiative	Issues being addressed by this initiative	Update on status	QA reference
1.	Response to COVID-19 pandemic.	In early 2020, to ensure continuity of provision through and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic, FIT, like other providers, pivoted from an in-person instruction model to a scenario that initially accommodated fully online learning. FIT submitted a COVID contingency plan to QQI to support delivery at that time.	Moving well past the point of mitigation measures, FIT has submitted an intent to QQI to seek a permanent increase in the scope of provision to QQI, including the scope for blended learning.	On behalf of FIT, AF submitted the FIT contingency document to QQIQA@QQI.ie on 06/04/2020.
2.	Building and maintaining a permanent mechanism for surveying the apprentice experience and sentiment toward the programmes.	In June 2022, building upon previous years of effort to establish apprentice sentiment to the programmes, FIT moved to a more regular series of survey issuance, now four times per calendar year.	The outcomes of this activity are communicated in a close-the-loop fashion by the People, Analytics and Well-Being Lead to the FIT Registrar. The survey outcomes are also regularly shared with FIT's Academic Council (AC).	-Raw survey detail -Summary reports to Academic Council.

3.	Instigation of class representative/feedback loop system.	In September 2022, FIT instigated a more formalised class representative system, aiming to appoint one apprentice from each intake cohort to share acute and sometimes practical matters as they arise.	The system has worked well and acted as an early warning system for issues that could have gone unnoticed. However, even with class representative role training, FIT has found that the quality of the issues reported relies on the strength of the appointed class rep in communicating in a clear and timely fashion. Recently, FIT has begun to rotate the nominated class rep twice for each intake.	-Record of meetings with Class Representatives.
4.	Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy 2022.	In 2022, FIT published an inaugural <i>FIT Teaching Learning and Assessment Strategy (TLA Strategy)</i> , which detailed the key goal of leveraging technology to enhance the apprentice learning experience. The TLA Strategy also set out the future adoption of a defined pedagogical framework for delivering Tech Apprenticeship programmes by all stakeholders.	Since 2022, all FIT Tech Apprenticeship activity has taken the lead from the TLA Strategy. In early 2026, FIT anticipates revisiting the TLA Strategy to inform practice for the next five years.	https://fit.ie/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/U.-FIT-Teaching-Learning-Assessment-Strategy.pdf
5.	Tip Sheet for Employers on Being Disability Inclusive in Apprenticeships.	In March 2021, AHEAD and FIT embarked on a diversity and inclusion collaboration based on shared learning experiences. FIT approached AHEAD to build on previous in-house activities, exploring ways to increase access and inclusion to the workplace by enabling people with disabilities to gain a foothold in employment via a tech apprentice pathway.	This document is published on the FIT and AHEAD Websites and is continuously circulated widely by FIT to pertinent stakeholders.	https://www.ahead.ie/news-apprenticeship-employers-guide?utm_source=website&utm_medium=link&utm_term=ahead-site-tip-sheet&utm_content=fit-site-link-ahead-tip-sheet-download-2023-09&utm_campaign=disability-tip-sheet
6.	Updates to Quality Assurance policies.	In response to the adoption of FIT's Teaching Learning and Assessment Strategy in 2022, FIT updated the suite of Tech Apprenticeship policies, which included a specific policy on the shape and form of all FIT QA policies. Consequently, this instigated an update to the livery and section headings of all existing QA policies and procedures.	The revision history of each FIT QA policies and procedure notes the various update changes made since the point of revalidation.	https://fit.ie/tech-apprenticeship-policies-and-procedures/

7.	Instigation of TEL Unit.	In 2024, FIT constituted a new Technology Enhanced Learning Unit within FIT's operating governance, which advises on all aspects of technology-enhanced learning, interoperability of ICT systems and the production of high-quality digital resources.	At this stage, two staff members, including FIT's Senior Learning Technologist and Digital Learning Resources Coordinator, direct their work in the context of FIT's TEL Unit. The TEL Unit has a defined Terms of Reference.	-TEL Unit ToR.
8.	Construction of FIT's Video Recording Suite.	In 2024, FIT constructed a permanent video recording suite that elevates FIT's ongoing capacity to create engaging learning materials and marketing resources.	The TEL Unit and wider FIT colleagues now regularly use the recording suite.	N/A
9.	Adoption of a new Learning Management System.	In 2024, FIT launched a new Learning Management System integrating a CRM, Moodle, Plagiarism.org and Big Blue Button's Virtual Classroom Environment.	Rollout of the learning management system is ongoing.	N/A
10.	Production of new policies to support blended learning practice.	In 2024, in anticipation of FIT's interaction/approval by QQI of FIT's permanent approach to blended learning, FIT produced a series of new policies to support future delivery. These new policies include a Tutor Recording Policy, Intellectual Property and Copyright Policy, Digital Learning Resources Policy and a Virtual Classroom Policy.	Blended learning policies all live on FIT's website FIT.ie	https://fit.ie/tech-apprenticeship-policies-and-procedures/

11.	Increased staff resourcing.	From 2019-2024, FIT has steadily grown the FIT team responsible for delivering the Tech Apprenticeship initiative. This targeted growth ensured that FIT could deploy the quality assurance system and engage proactively in ongoing enhancement activity. Defined Terms of Reference for each role cement the rationale for this staffing growth.	As of March 2025, overall staffing is noted on FIT's Tech Apprenticeship Organisational Structure.	Tech Apprenticeship organisational structure is outlined in the Appendix.
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Table 2

1.3.1 FIT Reflections on Quality Initiatives Deployed

Since 2020, there has been a turbulent operating environment for Tech Apprenticeship programmes due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent slow return to normalised delivery arrangements, which have coincided with recruitment retrenchment in the technology and related sectors. Also, FIT is aware of several disruptive generative AI technologies that increasingly impact service providers in the technology ecosystem. Still, during the past five years, FIT has moved at pace to future-proof the active programmes through their revalidation processes and the quality initiatives 1-11 noted in *Table 2*. In terms of quality initiatives deployed, FIT has focused efforts on items that directly and measurably improve the apprentice experience on these programmes. Recent changes to QQI regulations for blended and fully online providers have also provided insight into stress testing measures for ICT infrastructure in use. More recent quality initiatives focused on FIT being positioned to meet these broadening regulatory requirements.

1.4 What has Worked / Not Worked

FIT regard the adoption of the FIT Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy in 2022 as an indispensable framework that describes FIT's evolving approach to delivery. Most importantly, the Strategy sets out FIT's vision to adopt a defined and consistently deployed pedagogical framework across Tech Apprenticeships with the broader aim of using best-in-class technologies to deliver outstanding learning experiences for apprentices in training. Separately, building on FIT's longstanding approach to disability inclusivity, efforts instigated have led to innovative collaboration with Ahead¹ and the formalising of strategies for managing disability in work-based settings. One area that requires further attention is the processes that yield feedback through the class representative system. FIT intends to critically review these processes during the next twelve months. In addition to reviewing these processes as part of FIT's Action Plan² to increase the scope of delivery for blended learning, a comprehensive review of FIT's Learning Management System is underway³.

¹ <https://www.ahead.ie/>

² Document aligned to FIT's application with QQI to increase scope of provision for blended learning.

³ LMS review commenced in March 2025.

2.0 Academic Council Activity

FIT's Tech Apprenticeship Academic Council is FIT's leading academic governance entity. However, other academic structures have specific focus areas, including the Examination Board and Programme Board.

2.1 Academic Council Mission

The purpose and mission of the Academic Council is to oversee and ensure the quality and standards of academic governance. The Academic Council is a Coordinating Provider (FIT) subcommittee and oversees educational matters such as curriculum, education provision, academic policy, and compliance with national regulations.

2.2 Academic Council Meeting Frequency

Following QQI's approval of FIT's quality assurance system, FIT established an Academic Council in **March 2019**. Since this time, there have been meetings in each active calendar year. When considering the makeup of this important forum and ensuring adequate separation of the executive function of FIT and academic matters, FIT appointed an independent Chairperson to direct the functions of the Academic Council. Each sitting of the Academic Council has an agenda, a detailed presentation report and an associated Academic Risk Register that is updated regularly. For efficiency, the presentation report utilises extracts from various other reporting mechanisms, such as details from apprentice surveys, internal verification processes and varied monitoring reports. Minutes of previous meetings are shared with the agenda of the following session. There have been eighteen meetings between March 2019 and February 2025. The meeting quorum comprises four members, and the quorum has been met on each sitting occasion.

	Academic Council Meeting Date	Number of Committee Members in Attendance (quorum comprises four members)
1.	15/03/2019	04
2.	20/07/2019	10
3.	20/11/2019	11
4.	18/03/2020	08
5.	10/07/2020	06
6.	22/10/2020	11
7.	19/02/2021	12
8.	25/06/2021	10
9.	19/11/2021	04
10.	26/01/2022	13

11.	17/06/2022	13
12.	03/03/2023	08
13.	07/07/2023	14
14.	03/11/2023	12
15.	24/03/2024	04
16.	07/06/2024	10
17.	11/10/2024	15
18.	28/02/2025	13

Table 3

2.3 Academic Council Standing Agenda Items

FIT's Academic Council convenes each meeting using a standard form agenda. This outline has developed over time and includes references to a broad base of academic matters but includes ad-hoc agenda items occasionally.

Academic Council Example Agenda	
1.	Chair's welcome introduction/opening statement/Terms of Reference
2.	Matters arising from the previous meeting
3.	Active apprentice overview
4.	Revalidation activity
5.	New programme development activity
6.	Blended learning/LMS updates
7.	Academic Risk Registrar
8.	A.O.B

Table 4

3.0 Feedback Received, Issues Identified and Actions Taken

FIT has a full-time People, Analytics and Wellbeing Lead responsible for collating apprentice feedback on behalf of FIT. Apprentices can provide feedback to their Class Representatives, input into a regular apprentice survey of experiences, or speak directly to FIT in a one-to-one scenario facilitated by FIT’s People, Analytics and Well-being Lead.

3.1 Summary of Feedback from Apprentices

Providing timely and well-specified apprentice feedback is critical for FIT in responding to issues emerging at any given juncture. With this in mind, a central theme of FIT’s programme inductions is to reinforce the avenues to provide feedback and to detail what supports are available to apprentices throughout their training. General feedback is circulated to FIT’s apprenticeship team to close out on any issues identified insofar as practical and provided to FIT’s Academic Council in a summary report format for their consideration. Sensitive feedback relating to an apprentice’s own circumstances is shared on a need-to-know basis. *Table 5* lists recent emerging feedback themes ranging from apprentice experience to technical content, tutor support, and assessment processes. A recent Class Survey report detailed in the Appendix provides a view of the form of reporting FIT provides to the Academic Council. This report was presented at FIT’s November 2024 Academic Council meeting.

	Primary Apprentice Feedback Theme (last twelve months)	Programme Area	Summary of Actions Taken
1.	Issues with the logistics of attending off-the-job training.	Apprentice experience.	Where possible, FIT has facilitated apprentices to attend training facilities closer to their home addresses or to study via a virtual classroom.
2.	Managing participation in the programme—cost of living crisis.	Apprentice experience.	Many apprentices have conveyed issues with managing their participation in a programme in the context of the cost-of-living crisis.
3.	Apprentice on-the-job workload toward the programme end.	Apprentice experience.	When apprentices feel overburdened with their workplace workload and notify FIT of this, it triggers a series of inputs with the employer and Workplace Mentor.
4.	Managing worries about post-programme employment.	Apprentice experience.	Since early 2023, apprentices nearing graduation have become anxious about their post-programme employment potential due to a recruitment retrenchment in the technology and related sectors. FIT consistently requests employers to discuss their future employment with apprentices during the latter stage of the programme.

5.	Commentary on the technical content of modules.	Technical content.	Where issues are noted regarding the technical content of modules, the FIT TEL Unit interacts with the tutor to ensure they have access to the required resources. If a deficiency in content is covered, the TEL Unit notes this to FIT's Registrar, who documents this and corrective actions to the Collaborating Provider.
6.	Support and feedback offered by tutors.	Tutor support.	Class representatives regularly provide FIT with a critique of their experiences in off-the-job training. This insight details examples of high-quality practices but sometimes also poorer practices. In the latter scenario, FIT will engage with the tutor to understand the issue better and advise the tutor on potential approaches. In the context of an apprenticeship initiative, the provision of timely, useful, and motivating feedback is imperative for apprentices to inform themselves of their own progress.
7.	Timings of assessment and access to aligned resources.	Assessment.	During the past twelve months, FIT has received feedback from a few apprentices about not receiving preparatory resources to complete specified assessed elements in good time. In these instances, FIT has sought an extension to assessment submission deadlines and reverted to the Collaborating Provider to ensure this issue does not materialise on a second occasion.
8.	Tutor preparedness or style of delivery.	Technical content.	Aligned with queries on the technical content, FIT engages with a Collaborating Provider if an apprentice notes any issue with tutor preparedness or style of delivery during off-the-job delivery elements. FIT's stated pedagogical framework for delivering these programmes ensures that tutors must provide apprentice opportunities to collaborate, have discussion, practice, inquiry and observation. Central to FIT's engagement in these matters is establishing that delivery features all of the aforementioned activity points. In the past twelve months, where feedback has been provided that required tutor delivery improvements, FIT has monitored these.
9.	Quality of work placement.	Apprentice experience.	Issues identified by FIT that relate to an apprentice's exposure to relevant work-based tasks during the past twelve months were escalated to the Workplace Learning Officer and the Registrar. Following discussions with employers in these instances, FIT agreed upon an individual learning plan that specified the activities

			apprentices would be engaged in the forthcoming period and ensured apprentices understood who to seek specific support from.
11.	Overall experience on a Tech Apprenticeship programme.	Apprentice experience.	The Apprentice Survey Instrument provides a series of quantitative-style questions for apprentices about their experiences while active in a programme during the last year. The Appendix lists an outline of these responses. Where apprentices noted negative sentiment was provided and the apprentice chose to identify themselves in the survey response, FIT followed up with the individual to close out where feasible in their query.

Table 5

Dates Academic Council Received Summaries of Apprentice Feedback			
Each FIT's Academic Council session notes an active apprentice overview as a standard agenda item for <u>each</u> meeting session. Matters detailed in <i>Table 5, items 1-11</i> are discussed when presenting this agenda item. In addition, the People, Analytics and Wellbeing Lead presents a regular outline of apprentice feedback.			

Table 6

3.2 Summary of Issues and Risks Identified through QA Activities

In the FIT context, the Registrar, under the guidance of the Director of Academic Affairs and Programme Development, is responsible for the functional Tech Apprenticeship quality assurance system. Maintaining the quality assurance system includes but is not limited to fulfilling the statutory registration process relating to employers and apprentices and managing internal verification, external examination, and the examination board processes.

The presentation report provided to each sitting of the Academic Council ensures that issues are identified using data generated from ongoing quality assurance activities. However, to keep a constant focus on ongoing issues and risks, each meeting of the Academic Council consists of a standing agenda item related to the Academic Risk Register, which is presented at each meeting (16 of 18 meetings to date) and updated regularly by the Director of Academic Affairs. The Registrar identifies quality assurance issues from data inputted on quality assurance reporting. It is important to note that each session for the Academic Council from 2019-2025 has deliberated upon the Risk Register and the associated ramifications for the operation of the Tech Apprenticeship initiative. This period included managing continuity of provision through the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and beyond. Utilising an Academic Risk Register has proven to be an effective tool for documenting and highlighting issues related to the quality of provision identified through the reporting structures of the programmes. FIT's last Academic Council meeting convened on 28/02/2025, and *Table 7* lists the issues and risks notified at that session.

	Risk Owner	Risk Description	Issues/Risk Assessment/Criticality	Current Status	Summary of Actions Taken / To be Taken
1.	TA Team	Ensuring an adequate supply of participating and registered employers in all locations for the 2025 intake schedule.	Absolutely essential.	High risk—significant factor for 2025 activity, plan now ready for the next six months January-June.	Statutory Reg Process: The FIT team will continue to build employer scale/capacity for onboarding.
2.	DAFPD	Managing the lead time to commence programmes with Delivering Partners to include budget discussions.	Important.	High risk, due to some delays with employer readiness.	Collaborating Provider MoU: Within the confines of the MoU agreement, FIT will continue to manage the lead time for programme intake starts.
3.	PAWL	Ensuring adequate supply of eligible apprentices in regional locations.	Very important.	Stable at this juncture, but challenges exist in regional locations.	Statutory Reg Process: FIT team will continue to process candidate applications across the ROI.
4.	DAFPD	Availability of suitability qualified tutors with digital learning competencies and experience.	Absolutely essential.	Stable at this juncture.	Tutor TOR and Competency Profile: DAFPD will continue to engage with ETBs on availability capacity as per FIT's Off-the-Job Tutor TOR and Competency Profile.
5.	DAFPD	Adoption of new QQI guidelines for blended and or fully online programmes.	Very important.	Stable at this juncture, LMS implementation is ongoing.	Regulatory Item: Activity ongoing throughout the continued rollout of Tech Apprenticeship.
6.	DAFPD	Completion of QQI self-evaluative exercise for blended and online provision.	Important.	Stable.	Increase in Scope of Provision: DAFPD is currently engaged with QQI on this matter.
7.	Registrar	Close out of Employer and <u>revised</u> Delivering Partner MoUs signing.	Important.	Stable at this juncture, though there are three DP MoU's still to be received back to FIT.	Collaborating Provider MoU: Work is ongoing to receive the updated version of these documents.
8.	Registrar	Ensuring an adequate gender balance.	Moderately important.	Low risk but requires further effort.	Access and Inclusion: Ongoing efforts by FIT and partners to increase the female participation rate.
9.	Registrar	Completion / fulfilment of statutory registration processes.	Absolutely essential.	High risk.	Statutory Reg Process: FIT continues to assist participating employers through these processes.

11.	Registrar	Apprentice attrition/withdrawal rate.	Important.	Stable at this juncture.	Managing Programme Outcomes: The Registrar will monitor the apprentice attrition rate in light of continued employer retrenchment.
12.	Registrar	Managing reassessment.	Important.	Stable at this juncture.	Module Assessment: The Registrar will monitor apprentice reassessment requirements on an ongoing basis.
13.	Registrar	Managing the loss of participating employers.	Absolutely essential.	High risk.	Statutory Reg Process: The FIT team will ensure registered apprentices are verifiably deregistered in matters related to active programme redundancy.
14.	Various	Actioning stakeholder feedback in a timely way.	Important.	Stable at this juncture.	Apprentice Feedback Processes: People, Analytics and Well-being Lead will continue monitoring apprentice feedback received in all forms and close the loop with the Registrar as required.
15.	Various	Managing non-compliance with programme requirements.	Absolutely essential.	High risk.	Regulatory Item: DAFPD and Registrar to engage with stakeholders where necessary regarding acute or ongoing issues related to non-compliance with programme requirements.
16.	DAFPD	Lack of budget capacity for effective promotion.	Very important.	High risk.	Programme Promotion: FIT team to continue building varied promotional materials/collateral.
17.	DAFPD	NAA Approvals for new programme development.	Important.	Stable at this juncture.	Programme Development: DAFPD to complete the upcoming Data Analytics Associate apprenticeship validation process.

Table 7

Academic Council Access to Quality Reporting

Each FIT's Academic Council session notes an overview of the Academic Risk Register as a standard agenda. Matters detailed in *Table 7, items 1-17*, are discussed when presenting this agenda item. Meetings that utilised extracts from various reports and the Risk Register include meetings convened on 20/07/19, 20/11/19, 18/03/20, 10/07/20, 22/10/20, 19/02/2021, 25/06/21, 19/11/21, 26/01/22, 17/06/22, 03/03/23, 07/07/23, 03/11/23, 07/06/24, 11/10/24, and the 28/02/25. *Table 7* lists a series of seventeen actions in a summary format, which have been discussed with the Academic Council. No Academic Council meeting to date has included dissenting voices relating to addressing these items, many of which are ongoing items associated with the monitoring and maintaining of the FIT quality assurance system.

Table 8

3.3 Summary of Issues Identified through Activity Reports

Tech Apprenticeship activity reports are generated on an ongoing basis, include attendance and engagement reporting and separately ongoing and summative outlines of apprentice module outcome performance and programme experience feedback. Each sitting of FIT's Academic Council is provided an overview on active apprentice population status in terms of onboarding frequency, apprentice feedback and challenges arising. FIT's Examination Board holds responsibility for the final ratification of apprentice module-level grades and the overall classification of an award, provided an apprentice has met the minimum requirements. Examination Boards convene on a regular basis and include participation from FIT, Collaborating Providers and External Examiners. Each Examination Board meeting has a defined agenda and intake reporting, with minutes generated for each session. There is a healthy overlap between the Examination Board and Academic Council membership.

In the past two years, FIT's three active apprenticeship programmes progressed through their first revalidation processes. Data captured for these exercises was made available to the Independent Evaluation Panels conducting the reviews and highlighted at various Academic Council sessions. Notably, the analysis of this data provided a series of issues that arose in the initial rollout of the programmes and implications for the revised programmes in revalidated format, showing that FIT has taken measures based on the various data capture exercises.

	Summary of Issues Identified	Summary of Actions Required as a Result
1.	Apprentice Feedback: Modify the technical content of some modules.	Appropriate changes were made through the process of revalidation.
2.	Access Arrangements: Identified the need to continue developing RPL processes for those with a broad base of prior qualifications.	Ongoing activity to support candidates in the live application process.
3.	Access Arrangements: Feedback from candidates details the need to provide a solid level of supports in the recruitment process.	Ongoing activity to support candidates in the live application process.

4.	Access Arrangements: Feedback from stakeholders indicates the requirement to put additional resources towards promotional activities in creating a more equal gender balance.	During 2024, FIT recruited a full-time social media resource tasked with increasing FIT's social media footprint.
6.	Teaching, Learning and Assessment	Various items as outlined in <i>Table 2</i> .

Table 9

3.4 Summary of Issues Academic Integrity and Award Standards

Since 2018, the Academic Council has been made aware of some cases of suspected plagiarism, which were managed through the provisions of *FIT's Academic Impropriety and Assessment Malpractice Policy*.

3.4.1 Academic Integrity

FIT's policy aims to manage minor and moderate cases of academic impropriety differently from more serious instances. Persistent or severe cases of plagiarism, collusion, falsification, cheating, personation, and deceit have not been detected to date. At programme induction, FIT inform all apprentices of the seriousness of engaging in malpractice. However, FIT is conscious of the recent advancements in generative AI technologies used to create written content. With this in mind, and for each new apprenticeship intake, FIT is now leveraging a product (Pliagiarism.org) that assesses all assessment submissions made to FIT's LMS. In the future, FIT anticipate taking additional measures as this product is utilised more at scale. Specifically, FIT anticipate a likely increase in the detection rate of suspected cases of plagiarism, which will need to be investigated.

	Summary of Issues Identified	Summary of Actions Required as a Result
1.	A low volume of minor and moderate plagiarism cases has been detected since 2018.	Specific instances are managed through implementing the associated FIT policies.

Table 10

3.4.2 Award Standards (evidenced through assessment)

Tech Apprentice assessment documentation goes through a robust and documented internal verification and peer review process, which is undertaken by each participating Collaborating Provider prior to a similar process undertaken by FIT at given junctures. External Examiners sample and review assessment documentation from across all multisite locations. This process has provided ongoing reassurance regarding the fairness and consistency of assessment rendered since the programme's outset. Associated External Examination reports document these observations. FIT has noted to the Academic Council membership that no issues have been notified as a cause for concern relating to module grades and overall awards ratified by the Examination Board.

4.0 Information on Validated Programmes

The information noted in this section is related to programmes that commenced in 2023 but were finished by the end of the calendar year 2024. All FIT's apprenticeship provisions are two years in duration.

4.1 Programme Metrics (as per QQI's designations)

Software Development Associate Apprenticeship		
1.	Number of courses offered (intakes)	06
2.	Total number of apprentices registered	67
3.	Total number enrolled on course	67
4.	Total number of apprentices who completed their course	62
6.	Total number of apprentices who achieved a full QQI Award⁴	50 (75% of total)

Table 11 Details six intakes that progressed to the certification point in 2024. FIT is currently processing another forty-five apprentices ATM from four other courses (intakes) that do not feature in these metrics.

Computer Networking Associate Apprenticeship		
1.	Number of courses offered (intakes)	02
2.	Total number of apprentices registered	17
3.	Total number enrolled on course	15
4.	Total number of apprentices who completed their course	14
6.	Total number of apprentices who achieved a full QQI Award⁵	10 (67% of total)

Table 12 Details two intakes that progressed to the certification point in 2024. FIT is currently processing another fifteen apprentices ATM from one other course (intake) that does not feature in these metrics.

Cybersecurity Apprenticeship		
1.	Number of courses offered (intakes)	03
2.	Total number of apprentices registered	31
3.	Total number enrolled on course	31
4.	Total number of apprentices who completed their course	27
6.	Total number of apprentices who achieved a full QQI Award⁶	21 (68% of total)

Table 13 Details three intakes that progressed to the certification point in 2024. FIT is currently processing another eleven apprentices ATM from one other course (intake) that does not feature in these metrics.

⁴ Advanced Certificate in Computer Programming.

⁵ Advanced Certificate in Computer Networking.

⁶ Advanced Certificate in Cybersecurity.

4.2 Validated Programmes for Withdrawal

FIT does not intend to withdraw any currently active apprenticeship provisions in the coming years. All programmes are placed at level six on the National Framework of Qualifications. *Section 1.1* noted the initial validation 6M major award codes. Following extensive and recent revalidation activities, FIT’s active provision with updated 6M major award codes include:

1. Software Development Associate—Advanced Certificate in Computer Programming 6M22227.
2. Computer Networking Associate—Advanced Certificate in Computer Networking 6M22229.
3. Cybersecurity Apprenticeship—Advanced Certificate in Cybersecurity 6M22768.

5.0 Continuous Professional Development

Within the context of delivery arrangements for the Tech Apprenticeships, there are several external stakeholders, including but not limited to employers and their Workplace Mentors, ETB collaborating providers and statutory and regulatory entities. Continuous professional development (CPD) activities occur regularly, and FIT staff attend events hosted by organisations such as SOLAS, National Apprenticeship Office, and QQI. However, FIT also organises a series of ongoing CPD activities for stakeholders to continually enhance its apprenticeship provision. *Table 14* details a sample of these activities undertaken with internal and external stakeholders during 2024 and early 2025.

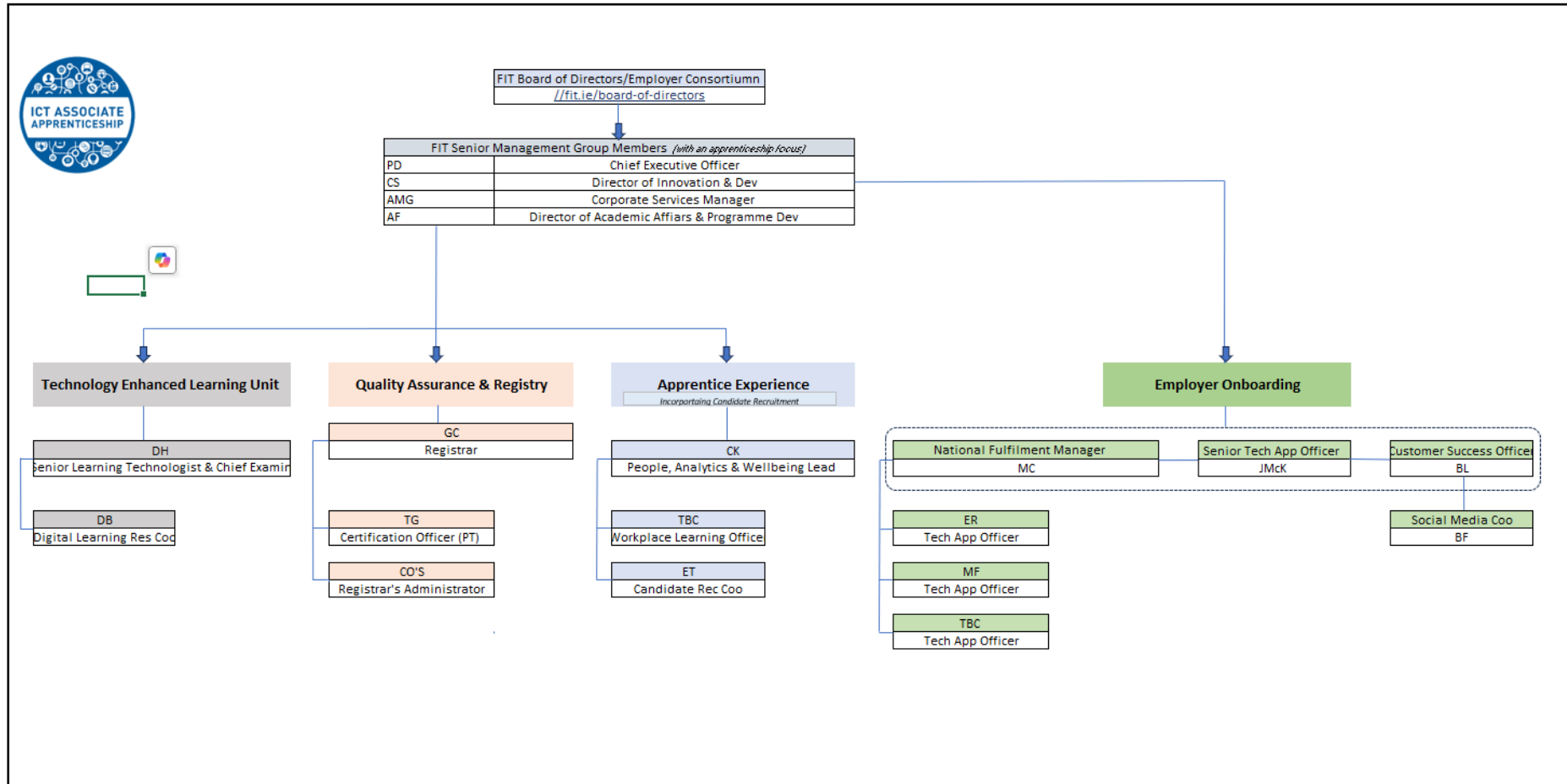
	Name of event/programme	Date Attended	Attended by
1.	Cybersecurity and GDPR awareness training.	Completed online in the months of January and February 2025.	All FIT staff.
2.	Public Duty Training as part of FIT’s town hall event.	18 April, 2024.	All FIT staff.
3.	Customer relationship management system training	Completed group and one to one training in the months of January and February 2025.	All FIT staff.
4.	Learning Management System training.	January and February 2025.	Staff within the Tech Apprenticeship Team who have required access to the platform.
5.	Learning Management System training. (external stakeholders)	October 2024; January 2025; February 2025; March 2025.	Tutors and ICT Apprentices.
6.	Tutor Training via community of practice.	February 2024; May 2024; July 2024; November 2024; March 2025.	TEL Team and Tutors.

7.	Workplace Mentor Training.	April 2024; July 2024; September 2024; November 2024; January 2025; February 2025; March 2025.	Workplace Mentors.
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Table 14

APPENDIX

FIT Organisational Structure—Tech Apprenticeship April 2025



Academic Council- October 2024

An overview of the sentiment to the programmes



Educational Training Board Sentiment

- Delivery is intense but once a rhythm is found, it works well
- 80% report effective schedule delivery
- Revalidated programmes are working well, as they create continuity
- Resources support from Dean & Daire
- Wellbeing support available
- Digital submission of end-of-year documentation
- 75% satisfied with FIT communication pre-programme commencement
- 100% satisfaction with FIT communication post programme commencement
- Challenge: Finalizing apprentice numbers for start dates



Employers Sentiment

- *Off-the-job Training:*
 - Solid Foundation
 - Soft Skills Development
 - Not always applicable
 - 70:30 split
- *FIT Communications:*
 - 77% satisfied with recruitment communications
 - 79% satisfied with operations communication
 - Set date for programme commencement required
 - Improvement of FIT's communication required post apprenticeship commencement
- *On-the-job Training:*
 - Willing to enhance technology learning





Apprentices Sentiment

- *Off-the-job Positive Feedback:*
 - 37% acknowledge peer to peer interactions
 - 21% report course content
 - 66% agreed content is easily understood
 - 69% agreed content has practical relevance
 - 62% receive feedback from tutors following assessments
 - 53% satisfied with off-the-job experience
- *Recommended Changes/Challenges:*
 - Lab demonstrations
 - Variety of teaching approaches, i.e. notes and videos
 - A lot of course content for time allocation
 - Travelling to exam centres
- *On-the-job Positive Feedback:*
 - 70% report positive experience
 - 60% meet mentor at least once per week
- *Feelings that describe their experience:*
 - Interested, Enthusiastic
 - Determined, Attentive and Proud



Class Representative Meeting- September 2024

- *Cybersecurity:*
 - CompTIA Certification available
 - Tutor engagement
 - Access to labs at the start of module
- *Computer Networking Associate:*
 - Packet Tracer vs hands on access
- *Software Developer Associate:*
 - Some industry certs have limited resources such as SQL.

Testimonials

- *“For me, the main benefit of taking part in the apprenticeship as someone who requires reasonable accommodations is the engagement from FIT. They have gone further than was required and have assisted not only with the reasonable accommodations, but also with regular meetings to help me with organisation and planning”*- Software Developer Apprentice with the Civil Service.
- *“I got hands-on experience in the role and industry I want to be in and was treated like part of the team rather than the newbie”*- Software Developer Apprentice with Salesforce.
- *“The tutors really care about the success of the class. They are genuinely happy to see you do well in assessments. They bring decades of professional experience with them to the lessons and the CompTIA syllabus is probably the most useful ICT exams you can do”*- Cybersecurity Apprentice with the Civil Service.
- At the Sligo Tech Summit in September three apprentices and one employer spoke highly of their experience.
- At the World Skills in the RDS two out of eleven tech apprentices who were nominated for the 2024 Apprentice of the Year Award spoke about their positive experience on the apprenticeship.
- At the Employers Information Session with AMTCE three former cybersecurity apprentices spoke about their experience on the apprenticeship programme.

