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# TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN A CHANGING WORLD

Building up competences for  
inclusive, green and digitalised  
vocational education and training

# IRELAND

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# **Teachers and trainers in a changing world**

## **Ireland**

Building up competences for inclusive, green and digitalised vocational education and training (VET)

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## CHAPTER 1. Introduction

Vocational Education and Training (VET) is commonly known as the Further Education and Training (FET) Sector in Ireland. Close to € 1 billion is invested annually into FET by the Irish government through An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna (SOLAS). Most of this funding is channelled through 16 Education and Training Boards (ETBs) who deliver FET provision. FET offers a wide variety of programs to a wide range of learners, some of the main programs include apprenticeships <sup>(1)</sup>, traineeships <sup>(2)</sup>, Post Leaving Cert (PLC) <sup>(3)</sup>, community and adult education courses as well as core literacy and numeracy services <sup>(4)</sup>. FET courses are provided through the ETB network <sup>(5)</sup> as well as other local providers including online provision through the SOLAS' eCollege <sup>(6)</sup>.

The structure of VET in Ireland is different from a lot of other European countries, 92% of young adults in Ireland have completed upper secondary education. In 2019 Ireland reached full enrolment in secondary education for both 6-14-year-olds (100%) and 15-19-year-olds (93%). Most upper secondary education students in Ireland (98%) are enrolled in general programmes and the remaining 2% are enrolled in vocational programmes (Leaving Certificate Applied). Most students who enrol in vocational programmes (FET) do so at the post-secondary non-tertiary level. Enrolment rates at this level peak at 14%, among 18-year-olds (Marie-Helene, 2019). Many FET courses are offered to learners over 16 years of age, however FET provision is different from other EU countries in that it is not categorised in specific IVET or CVET classifications. Some FET programs are aimed at early school leavers (Youthreach, Pre-apprenticeship) but these programs are generally classified as bridging courses with a focus on progression to other higher level FET courses.

The pandemic has, like in every country altered the learning and practitioner experience, with a significant range of provision across FET being shifted to online or blended platforms. Although significant advances were achieved in this space, progressing the Future FET vision in digital transformation, this also presented challenges as well as changes in assessment. The overall staffing framework

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(1) <https://apprenticeship.ie/>

(2) <https://www.solas.ie/programmes/traineeship/>

(3) <https://www.plccourses.ie/>

(4) <https://www.nala.ie/>

(5) <https://www.etbi.ie/>

(6) <https://www.ecollege.ie/>

across the FET system presents a number of specific issues for action at a national level. The Qualifications and Quality Authority (QQI) in Ireland completed a report on the impacts of this early into the pandemic.

Although progress has been achieved in this area to date, the implementation of the FET Strategy will further progress the professional development agenda to support the key strategic pillars of building skills, fostering inclusion and creating pathways.



## CHAPTER 2. Types of teaching and training professionals

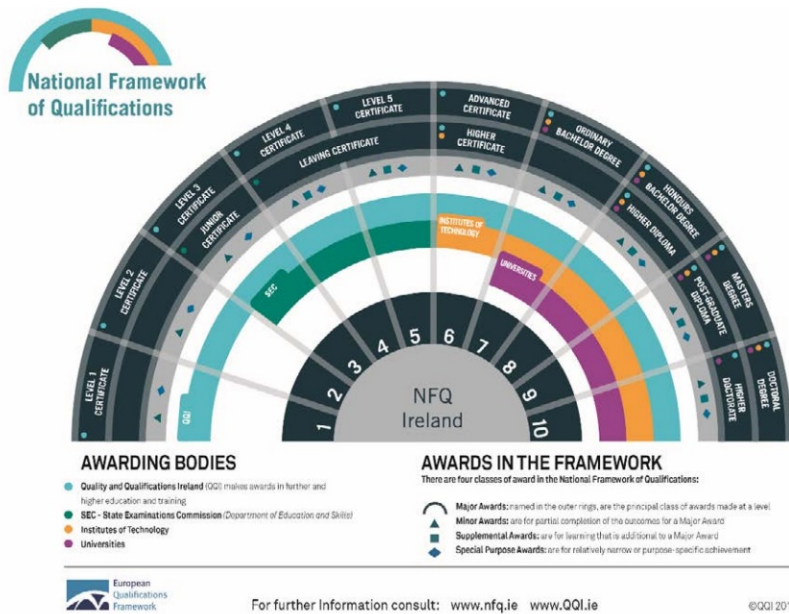
This chapter highlights that Ireland does not separate IVET from CVET and incorporates VET along with adult education and training, up to EQF Level 5, as Further Education and Training (FET). Nonetheless, since 2016, the formal apprenticeship system was expanded to include an ever-growing number of programmes at tertiary level, these are now offered right up to Level 10 on the Irish National Framework of Qualifications.

### 2.1. Main types

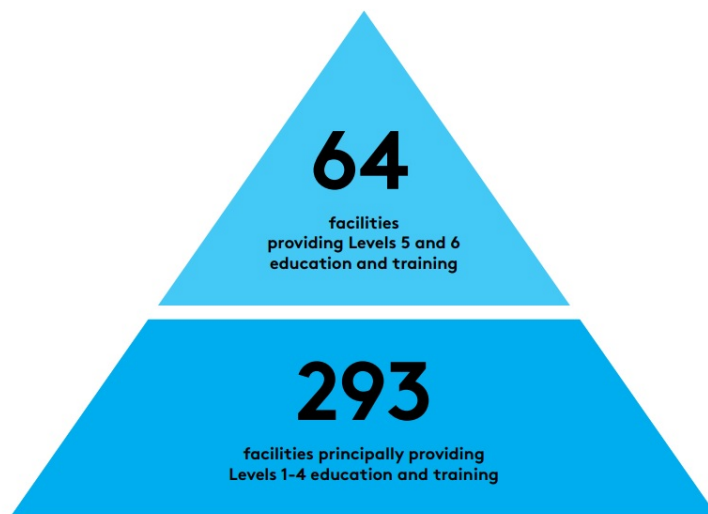
#### 2.1.1 Country-specific definition of IVET/FET

As indicated above, Ireland does not separate IVET from CVET and incorporates VET along with adult education and training into what is defined in Ireland as Further Education and Training (FET), which is available for everyone, offering provision to learner as early as age 16 with no upper age limit.

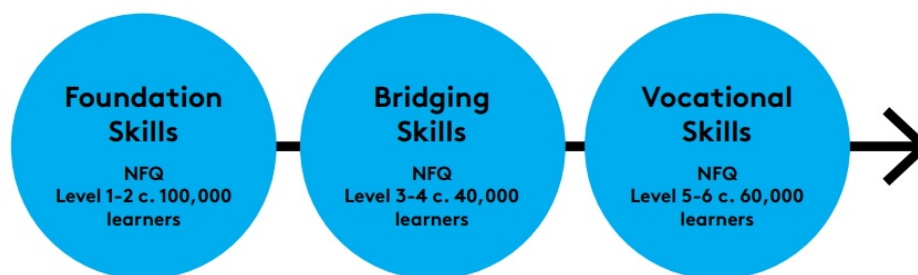
FET offers the opportunity to engage in learning in virtually every community in Ireland regardless of any previous levels of education and a pathway to progress as far as any individual wants to go. Serving around 200 000 unique learners each year, FET provides a continuum of learning opportunities from Level 1 to Level 6 of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) as set out below, focused on both core and specific skills development, accompanied by a range of learner supports to facilitate the active inclusion of all citizens.



With the exception of statutory apprenticeships, the maximum length of a FET course is one year, although some provision carries a two-year option with a distinct award at the end of each year.



FET provides a diverse range of programmes and supports designed to meet the needs of individuals at different stages of the learning pathway.



### 2.1.2 Main types of teaching and training professionals

As indicated above, Ireland does not separate IVET from CVET and incorporates VET along with adult education and training into what is defined in Ireland as Further Education and Training (FET), which is available for everyone, offering provision as early as from 16 years of age with no upper age limit.

Although there are a large number of individual job titles in the sector, close to half of the ETB workforce involved in FET can be categorised within six key job roles:

(a) FET Teachers

From 2015 the skills survey of FET staff (SOLAS, 2017) across the three high-level job categories of learning practitioner, manager and support/administration staff there were:

- (b) 2 937 skills profile respondents in learning practitioner roles (66.6% of all responses)
- (c) 591 skills profile respondents in management roles (13.4% of all responses)
- (d) 544 skills profile respondents in support/ administration roles (12.3% of all responses)
- (e) 335 skills profile respondents in other roles (7.6%) of all respondents.

The 'other' category was generally used by respondents who typically appeared to be looking for a one-to-one match with their job title, rather than being able to select the closest-matching job role. This encompassed a mix of staff in administration or support jobs (e. g. caretakers, administrators, clerical officers), plus a considerable number of respondents who defined their job role in relation to specific teaching/training areas (e.g. art tutors, drama teachers, ESOL tutors, first aid instructors, hair and beauty teachers).

Further detail on this may be available in due course, which may also be supported by the enabling theme of the FET Strategy in Staffing, Structures and Capabilities.

## 2.2. VET schools

FET provision is primarily delivered by the 16 Education and Training Boards in Ireland. However, there are also approximately 25 community and voluntary sector schools funded by SOLAS to deliver FET courses, while a range of other organisations are also funded to deliver specific services across the FET system.

## 2.3. Teaching and training professionals by type of VET school

As mentioned above in the main FET provision is offered to adults, however there are certain aspects of FET provision which have varying specific requirements for teaching. These include Youthreach, which is a programme offered to young people from the age of 16.

FET is delivered to adults by Education and Training Boards (in training centres and Further Education Colleges voluntary secondary and community comprehensive school settings).

To be eligible for registration as a teacher in Further Education (FE), a person must have a primary degree, together with a recognised FE teaching qualification. Other conditions exist for other practitioners in the FET system, there are differences across the roles. Details of the further education teacher qualifications accredited by the Teaching Council are provided in Chapter 3. Teachers registered with the Teaching Council, including those in FET, are eligible for a range of professional development services provided for primary and post-primary teachers.

## CHAPTER 3.

# Teaching and training professionals in school-based settings

### 3.1. Legislation

There are various structures and contracts in the FET sector, some require compliance with regulation or legislation, these are dependent on the type of provision, e.g. Youthreach Supervisor or Apprenticeship Instructor, for example. In other instances, providers (e.g. ETBs) secure the teaching and training services of personnel who they deem competent and capable of delivering the programme.

### 3.2. Qualification and competence requirements

The qualifications and competence requirements vary greatly depending on which area of FET personnel are employed. Under the Teaching Council Regulations 2016, any person who meets the degree qualification requirements outlined therein is eligible for conditional registration for a period of three years. A current list of further education programmes accredited by the Teaching Council can be found on the teaching council website <sup>(7)</sup>. A person who applies to be entered on the register based on qualifications as a teacher in the further education sector shall satisfy the Council that he or she has obtained qualifications or criteria listed in Annex 1.1. In the more theoretical programmes, newly qualified teaching staff are often employed. In FET training centres and the apprenticeship areas, there is a requirement for specific qualifications as well as at least 5 years of industry experience to deliver certain programmes. This policy is to ensure that personnel are delivering programmes that are current and relevant to the workplace.

A detailed analysis of FET Teaching competency was conducted by the Economic and Social Research Institute 'FET: Past, Present, Future', (McGuinness et al., 2014). This research recorded the views of FET stakeholders in Ireland on the specific skill requirements of FET practitioners. The consensus was those who deliver FET programmes needed a teaching qualification as well as relevant industry expertise. As a result of this a pedagogical qualification is now a

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(7) <https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/teacher-education/initial-teacher-education/professional-accreditation-of-programmes/review-accreditation-2011-to-2020/completed-reviews/cycle-1-review-accreditation-reports.html>

requirement for all teachers entering employment in the second level schools and colleges of further education in Ireland that are in receipt of State funding.

In recent years there has been an increase in participation of FET staff in upskilling their pedagogical and andragogical skills through participation in various Higher Education programmes. This occurs mainly where those personnel were not already qualified teachers (pre-2013).

### 3.3. Initial training programmes

There are several pathways to become a VET teacher/trainer in Ireland, which do constitute initial training programmes (ITP). Some complete an undergraduate degree in teacher education or a post-graduate qualification in teacher education with relevant work experience. Others apply to the teaching council with qualifications that are measured to an equivalent standard to the standards required. The teaching councils' conditions of approval for FET teaching is detailed in Annex 1.1.

In most instances the route taken depends on the VET programme, for example PLC teachers are not required to have a VET qualification, but they do need a teaching qualification which can be obtained through an initial education programme or a consecutive programme. There are several FET specific teaching qualifications accredited by the Teaching Council of Ireland which are considered initial training programmes. These include for example:

- (a) Professional Diploma in Education (Further Education), Adult Training and Education Studies, NUIG – NFQ Level 8;
- (b) Graduate Diploma in Adult & Further Education, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick – NFQ Level 9;
- (c) Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Learning and Teaching, National College of Ireland, Dublin – NFQ Level 9;
- (d) Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Teaching in Further Education & Adult Education, Waterford Institute of Technology - NFQ Level 8;
- (e) Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching in Further Education, Waterford Institute of Technology – NFQ Level 9;
- (f) Higher Diploma in Further Education (HDFE), NUI Maynooth – NFQ Level 8;
- (g) Professional Diploma in Education (Further Education), Marino Institute of Education – NFQ Level 8;
- (h) BSc in Education and Training (Further, Adult and Continuing Education), Dublin City University – NFQ Level 8;
- (i) Professional Diploma in Education (Further Education), Mary Immaculate College – NFQ Level 8;

- (j) MA in Socially Engaged Art (Further, Adult and Community Education), National College of Art and Design.

Many qualified teaching staff in FET are qualified post-primary teachers. In addition to personnel who are qualified post-primary teachers, there are those who have come from industry and have upskilled by undertaking one of the FET teaching qualifications. In some instances, teaching personnel undertake a Train the Trainer type training, such as the QQI Level 6 component Certificate in Training Delivery and Evaluation (6N3326) (QQI, 2017), or the QQI Level 6 Training and Development Special Purpose Award (6S3372) (QQI, 2016) and this is sufficient to meet the requirements of the post. There are some limited sections of FET where Newly Qualified Teachers are supported through the National Induction Program for Teachers.

### 3.4. Requirements for continuous professional development

There is no national mandatory requirement currently for engagement by FET teachers in CPD. Even those FET teaching staff who are registered with the Teaching Council are not required to complete a minimum number of hours of CPD to maintain their registration. The Teaching Council is one of the very few professional regulatory bodies in Ireland to not require members to engage in a minimum number of CPD hours per annum to maintain their professional registration. The Teaching Council has issued a National Framework for Teachers' Learning (CPD), called Cosán (COSAN, 2020), which acknowledges that teachers are committed to professional learning. Cosán acknowledges the teacher professional learning can take many forms including formal, informal, personal, and professional and an element of the purpose of the framework is to reassure both the teaching profession and the public that teachers are engaging in lifelong learning. A teacher-led process has been adopted where no official record of participation in ongoing professional development is logged. However, while practices vary across providers of FET, some FET providers have a requirement for all staff to engage in a minimum number of hours of continuing professional development annually.

The skills profile survey carried out by SOLAS in 2015 and subsequent consultations provide evidence that the FET sector has a strong professional development culture. Most FET staff (84%) undertake some form of professional development at least every two years. However, support and administration staff (64%) are significantly less likely than learning practitioners (88%) or managers

(89%) to have engaged with professional development. Staff in the sector are very well disposed to seminars, workshops and other forms of professional development that offer the opportunity for professional exchange, especially when sessions are highly interactive. FET teaching staff, in particular, seek increased access to development opportunities through formal networks (e.g. professional bodies) and local groupings of shared interest – on both a formal and ad hoc basis.

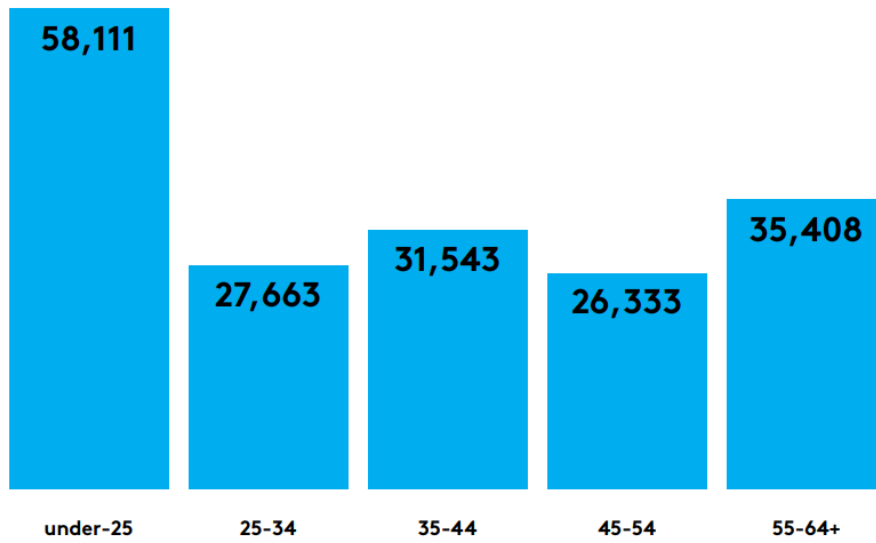
Consultations across the sector (which are also ongoing) reflect to date development needs of FET staff highlighted across priority areas including:

- (a) working with and supporting FET learners;
- (a) vocational upskilling and reskilling;
- (b) employer engagement;
- (c) quality assurance;
- (d) technology enhanced learning;
- (e) information and communications technology;
- (f) management and leadership.

### 3.5. **Data on teachers and trainers in school-based settings**

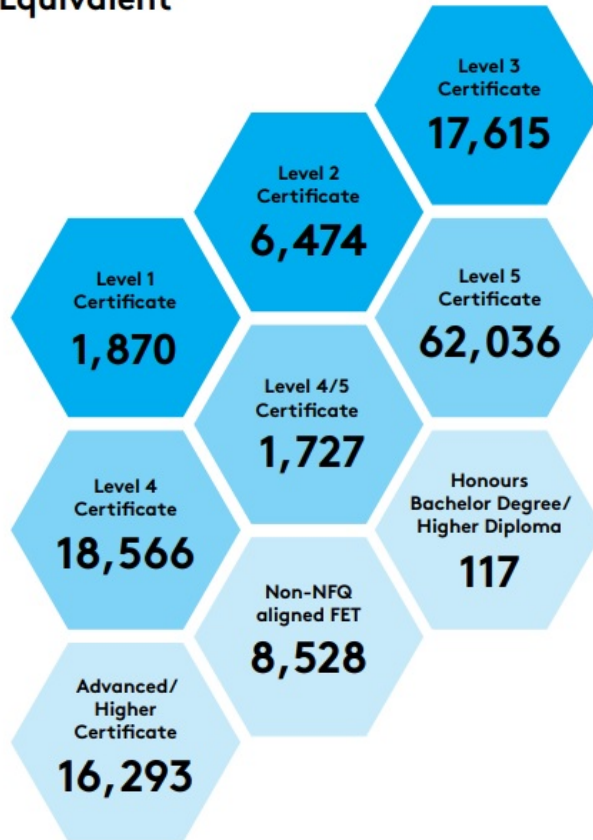
In considering the profile of the learners in FET and the levels of learning, it is important to reference the FET system reports which have been published for the periods of 2018, 2019 and 2020. It should be noted the charts shown, referring to 2019 do not include apprenticeship. Additional detail on apprenticeship is referenced further below.





Enrolments were primarily concentrated among the under-25s, representing approximately one third of all enrolments in 2019.

## Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) or Equivalent<sup>5</sup>



This sets out the landscape for the professional development aspects for the FET system.

There is currently a lack of structured and comprehensive information nationally on the numbers and profile of delivery personnel in the FET sector. In 2015 the FET Professional Development Unit in SOLAS conducted a Skills Profile of the FET workforce to provide detailed information on the demographic, qualifications and skills of staff involved in delivering, managing, or supporting FET programmes nationally. This was also intended to collect data about the skills needs of those who deliver FET. The skills profile of FET teaching staff is based on survey responses from 4,400 FET practitioners and some of the main findings are as follows:

- (a) just over half (54%) of skills profile respondents work full-time, more than a third (38%) are part-time and 8% are sessional or occasional;

- (b) nearly three-quarters (74%) of skills profile respondents are female and a quarter (26%) are male;
- (c) the FET workforce is characterised by extensive experience and long service within the sector;
- (d) the FET sector has a highly qualified workforce;
- (e) two-thirds of staff (67%) are qualified to either Level 8 or Level 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ);
- (f) the FET workforce is relatively confident in terms of ‘soft’ skill areas such as communication skills, teamwork and customer service, as well as the core teaching/training skill areas;
- (g) confidence levels are lower in other skill areas such as quality assurance, technology enhanced learning, dealing with challenging behaviour, etc.
- (h) the confidence levels of learning practitioners in technical skill areas are, in general, not related to whether or not the practitioner holds a teaching qualification.

Qualitative responses to the skills survey indicate wide-ranging development needs in areas such as contemporary professional practice, subject- and course-related expertise, and technology and systems to support the modern learning process and environment. The (non-published) outputs from this research assisted SOLAS and its ETB partners in developing the CPD strategy and appropriate responses. It identified priority needs to assist with future workforce and personnel development planning. Further information from SOLAS is expected to be developed and published in 2022.

Currently, the most complete, reliable data source on the number of teachers/trainers employed in FET and/or VET in Ireland comes from the Quarterly National Household Survey <sup>(8)</sup> (QNHS) by the Central Statistics Office (Ireland's national statistics institute). The QNHS captures data on two relevant occupations:

- (a) VET and industrial trainers (which includes instructors, tutors, and other trainers);
- (b) further and higher education teaching professionals (which includes teachers on PLC courses: this category also includes all third level lecturers – not just those relevant to apprenticeships). Work based tutors are qualified craft persons, working in their chosen trades. They are therefore not captured in the data on trainers.

The Further Education Support Service (FESS) also provide data (on official request) on the numbers of FET personnel who attended the various national, regional, and local CPD events.

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<sup>(8)</sup> <https://www.cso.ie/en/qnhs/>

## CHAPTER 4. Training professionals in work-based settings

### 4.1. Definitions

Primarily this area probably relates more to on the job apprenticeship settings, where employers are assigned also as assessors. Apprenticeship and Traineeship programmes are the main VET (FET) programmes in Ireland with a substantial work-based element. Post-leaving certificate courses and other types of VET generally occur in a classroom-based setting although they can include a work based learning element. Of note, apprenticeship in Ireland requires employment from day 1.

### 4.2. Legislation

SOLAS is the statutory authority for craft apprenticeships in Ireland and employers approved for apprentices are subject to the operating guidelines in SOLAS. Rules governing apprenticeship are also set out in the Industrial Training Act 1967.

#### 4.2.1. Apprenticeships

Apprentices are part of the employed population in Ireland. Both the apprentice and the employer sign a SOLAS Apprenticeship registration form. As part of their responsibilities, employers must employ a suitably qualified and relevant craftsman who has been approved by SOLAS to act as:

- (a) the workplace assessor. The assessor must have completed the SOLAS assessor and verifier programme provided by the education and training boards. This course lasts approximately one day and is not aligned with the national framework of qualifications;
- (b) the workplace tutor. The tutor must be competent and qualified (a holder of a national craft certificate (7) EQF 5) to train apprentices.

The tutor and assessor can be the same person provided they hold the relevant qualification. Education Training Boards have the responsibility to ensure that all apprenticeship tutors comply with the qualifications required to deliver the apprenticeship programme. As part of the regular review process of any apprenticeship programme, the employer or relevant training provider may identify any upskilling or professional development which will be required to deliver the updated programme. Training practitioners may request CPD for reasons related to evolving teaching practice, or to upskill using modern machinery or technology

to deliver updated curricula. Other factors include changes to industry/statutory regulations or updates to materials and consumables used on training programs and the environmental impacts and the importance of sustainable work practice. ETB's allow individuals to apply for a training role with a craft qualification and post apprenticeship employment and then to undertake a relevant degree while in employment.

#### **4.2.2. Traineeships/other training**

Trainers on other types of FET training programmes are generally required to hold a technical qualification at a level (NFQ 6 or 7) that is one step above the programme being delivered. In addition, they must also hold a minimum amount of relevant work experience, typically minimum of 5 years. Increasingly however there is a demand for these trainers to hold a pedagogical qualification.

#### **4.2.3. Other trainers**

There are no statutory requirements for FET trainers to hold formal qualifications in Education. However, certain awarding bodies (e.g. Quality and Qualifications Ireland, City and Guilds, industry training standards such as SafePass) may stipulate that those delivering substantial portions of the training on any given programme hold minimum qualifications.

There has been a mentoring role of tutors in the workplace throughout the history of apprenticeships in Ireland, but less so in the work-based elements of other non-apprenticeship programmes such as Traineeships and PLCs. This is mainly due to the duration of the work placement. In many FET programmes the work placement element is relatively short (1-4 weeks), whereas the apprenticeship model requires a 50 minimum % of the programme to be work based, (with traineeship 30%), thereby facilitating the learner and workplace personnel to develop a mentoring or supportive relationship over time.

### **4.3. Provisions for continuous professional development**

Legislation and regulation govern the qualifications of certain teaching and training staff in the FET sector. In relation to apprenticeships, teaching/training staff are expected to be qualified in the field and have at least five years industry experience. In 2016 with the publication by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) of the policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training <sup>(9)</sup> FET providers submitting programmes for validation need to identify the

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<sup>(9)</sup> [https://www.qqi.ie/Publications/Publications/Initial\\_Validation\\_policy\\_7\\_10\\_13.pdf](https://www.qqi.ie/Publications/Publications/Initial_Validation_policy_7_10_13.pdf)

qualifications and/or experience of personnel who will be involved in the delivery of validated programmes.

#### 4.4. **Data on trainers in work-based settings**

The provision of CPD for workplace personnel who supervise, mentor and/or assess learners in the workplace is a more recent development, particularly in relation to the post-2016 apprenticeships. More recently this is a consideration in the current development of the new Early Learning and Care programmes. Some ETBs including Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board and Dublin & Dún Laoghaire Education & Training Board have started CPD provision for workplace mentors and supervisors on a range of non-apprenticeship courses.

## CHAPTER 5. Partnerships between schools and companies

### 5.1. Examples of practice

There are many examples of partnerships between FET providers to support teachers and trainers. Some of these include:

#### 5.1.1. SharePoint CPD Cascade Training at Limerick Clare ETB

A cascade model of CPD using a train the trainer's approach was trialled in 2015 to introduce StaffConnect to all FET Staff in LCETB. StaffConnect is a branded SharePoint site used as LCETB's communication and collaboration platform enabling the sharing of information and collaboration across LCETB. A key goal was ensuring that all staff could use the StaffConnect site in their day-to-day work, including accessing and submitting relevant forms, downloading key resources as well as sharing resources and collaborating on documents and presentations. An extensive FET-wide staff CPD initiative was delivered using a cascade training model, which involved upskilling 22 FET staff members, who in turn delivered CPD in their centres and across the service. A common curriculum and training materials were devised by the FET development team. Registration was managed through Survey Monkey and coordinated by the learning technology development officer. A total of 45 sessions took place involving more than 350 staff in locations across Clare and Limerick. All sessions were organised with the input and support of the centre management. Evaluations with both participants and trainers suggest that this is an effective model to deliver CPD related to largescale systems roll-out.

#### 5.1.2. ETBI Digital Library

The ETBI Digital Library is intended to provide access to digital resources that support teaching and learning practices and to enhance the educational experience for learners. The Digital Library will offer resources for supporting learning as well as providing a support tool for teachers, trainers, and instructors.

The objectives of the Digital Library are:

- (a) to provide cost-effective, shared resources to all ETBs
- (b) to improve learner access and experience,
- (c) increase the quantity, quality and comprehensiveness of online educational resources
- (d) to ensure these resources are easy to discover and retrieve for learners and staff in ETBs.

The key benefits of a Digital Library for the ETB sector will include:

- (a) availability of resources for new programme development
- (b) providing access to distributed learners (over a distant geographical area in the case of national apprenticeships),
- (c) facility to leverage a range of diverse and up to date learning resources required for programmes in a cost-effective model for the sector.

### **5.1.3. Donegal ETB Youthreach Training Week**

Donegal ETB's Youthreach programme <sup>(10)</sup> holds an annual Training Week every August for teaching staff. The Youthreach programme in the region involves six centres and 180 learners. The county coordinator consults with staff throughout the year on their training needs. Professional development needs are also identified via feedback from staff during the Youthreach Quality Framework sessions. The availability of courses on offer is flexible to meet the changing needs of learners. Each member of staff has a development record for all training they participate in. Examples of training carried out to date: Positive Classroom Management Using Restorative Practice Principles, Using Minecraft to Teach Maths, Teen Coaching Challenging Behaviour.

More examples are detailed in Annex 2.

## **5.2. Cooperation between VET schools and companies**

There are currently no formal contract agreements for CPD of teaching staff between FET providers and companies providing work-based learning. However, there are several industry liaison committees and jobs advice bureau's operating through the ETB network. These committees engage with FET teaching staff in professional development activities. There are also a range of activities organised which include site visits to local industry/plants operating, specific skills training, information seminars and innovation workshops to promote and foster enterprise education. Teaching staff are encouraged to engage in these activities and be aware of national skills bulletins from the National Skills council <sup>(11)</sup>. Depending on the program and the professional development activity, trainers must coordinate their CPD activities with the needs of their students and the course calendar. For example, on phased training programs such as PLCs or Traineeships, teaching

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<sup>(10)</sup> <https://www.education.ie/en/Learners/Information/Youthreach/>

<sup>(11)</sup> <https://www.regionalskills.ie/national-skills-updates/>



staff can upskill during on-the-job phases when students are engaged in work practice in company.

### 5.3. Hybrid teachers and trainers

In some instances, tutors are recruited on a contract basis from industry to deliver specialised modules of curriculum on specific courses. This tends to be on specific courses on the topics of: IT, Renewable Energy, Sport and Leisure Environmental Training (EPA regulations) and digital media. There is currently no policy around CPD for these contract staff due to the specialised nature of the role, it is not feasible for a one size fits all approach, as each trainer has different parameters and there is a broad variation in hours of delivery.

### 5.4. Data on cooperation and hybrid teachers

There is currently no comprehensive data on partnerships between schools and enterprises and hybrid teachers/trainers. The director of Organisational Development & Support in SOLAS is currently working with ETBI to develop a new integrated professional development system that will hold data relating to funding and planning around professional development for FET staff and partnerships with local enterprise.

## CHAPTER 6. National and EU-funded projects and initiatives

### 6.1. Digital skills for remote and blended teaching

To support FET practitioners in remote teaching and in the assessment of remote learners in recent years, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic, the Further Education Support Service (FESS) has developed a suite of resources and supports. These include:

- (a) Two specific skills courses in partnership with H2 Learning, namely the Reimagining your course <sup>(12)</sup> - the move to blended learning course and the Reimagining your assessment <sup>(13)</sup> for remote learner's course. These have proved to be extremely popular with FET staff and staff continue to have access to the materials from the courses. Since their launch there have been 1228 bookings for these courses and related activities.
- (b) An Introductory Guide to Blending a Course: Strategies for Blended Delivery, handbook with Liz Hogan, Blended Learning Expert which provides a step-by-step guide to blending a course.
- (c) 21 online clinics to support FET practitioners in blending their programme are offered. These one-hour sessions, offered in the late afternoons to facilitate attendance, provided an opportunity for FET practitioners to pose questions and seek advice from the FESS facilitators and from other participants in the clinic. These informal sessions allowed the facilitators to respond to the queries raised by participants by demonstrating relevant digital tools and equipment. To-date, 421 participants have booked into these clinics. As assessment is a key focus at this stage in the academic year, additional online clinics have been made available to focus on remote teaching but the assessment of remote learners.
- (d) A dedicated webpage containing supports and resources for remote teaching and learning and in addition, the development of a suite of short video tutorials on using some digital tools. This bank of nine resources will be expanded over time.

Across the FET sector teachers and trainers have access to varying levels of devices, platforms, and internet access, which is challenging in the current

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<sup>(12)</sup> <https://fess.ie/reimagining-your-course-the-move-to-blended-learning-21-september>

<sup>(13)</sup> <https://www.fess.ie/reimagining-your-assessment-for-remote-learners-live-workshop-25-march>

pandemic. From the clinics offered by FESS some teachers and trainers had to rely on using the phone to contact learners and mail material out to them via the postal system. It is not only teachers and trainers who had issues in relation to teaching and assessing remotely, in many instances there were issues with learners having access to devices and sufficient internet speeds and, particularly at the lower levels on the NFQ, some learners did not have the capacity or the technology to engage with learning online.

## 6.2. Green skills for sustainability

Ireland has received € 915 million in grants from the EU Recovery and Resilience Facility. Ireland submitted its National Recovery and Resilience Plan on 28 May 2021 to the European Commission. Ireland's National Recovery and Resilience Plan has been arranged under three distinct priorities:

- (a) Advancing the Green Transition;
- (b) Accelerating and Expanding Digital Reforms and Transformation;
- (c) Social and Economic Recovery and Job Creation.

The Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science's 'Programme for Government' commitments include the creation of a comprehensive Green Skills Development Plan, ensuring that learners are equipped with the environmental awareness and green skills that can drive future change. The plan will also build capacity for green apprenticeships. The new Green Skills Action programme will include a skills focus on areas such as nearly-zero energy building, retrofitting and specific skills for bricklaying, carpentry, electrics, plastering and plumbing. Green skills training modules will be made available to 60 000 further education and training learners.

There is a growing focus on green skills and environmentalism through FET, including courses in sustainable energy, sustainable development, wind turbine engineering and retrofitting. Each ETB will develop its own professional development initiatives and activities for staff so that they can deliver on the Green Skills Action Plan.

In 2017 SOLAS conducted research on the extent of sustainable development related provision in the Further Education and Training sector in relation to Teaching and Instructing Staff, it was found that many existing teachers and trainers had little to no on-site implementation experience of the new standards to be applied in building construction. Trainers in this sector are usually employed based on trade-related qualifications, and as the majority have been employed in education prior to the implementation of new building standards, they may

therefore have limited awareness or experience of the changes that are occurring on-site. Availability of funding for CPD was also cited as an issue. The QualiBuild project <sup>(14)</sup>, which is Pillar 2 of the EU Build Up Skills Initiative <sup>(15)</sup>, is attempting to address this shortcoming. A Train the Trainer course was designed in 2018 and is now being run through Institute of Technology Blanchardstown (ITB). The course aims to address the knowledge gap that exists with current trainers. Delivery is through a blended learning approach which includes site visits. The intention is to upskill 100 trainers in this area over the next 4 years. It is also plans to develop a proposal for a system of CPD for craft trainers. The report detailed key CPD recommendations, the first was to initiate a CPD plan, with provision for teacher substitution teaching staff who are engaged in ESD in ETBs. Part of this plan is to encourage ETBs to give teaching staff release periods to upskill in industry work practice. Another key recommendation is to facilitate teaching staff in ETBs to participate in the blended learning course leading to the Certificate in Training in Low Energy Buildings, available through QualiBuild <sup>(16)</sup>. A number of ETBs are now leading in the area of Near Zero Energy Building (NZEB) and retrofitting training, supported by SOLAS.

### 6.3. Preventing early leaving from VET

Due to COVID 19, Further Education and Training institutions were forced, overnight, to move all their provision online as facilities closed and restrictions on movement were put into action. Teaching and learning continued remotely by email, VLE, digital communications platforms, online video channels and collaborative file-sharing software. Learning practitioners reverted to telephone calls, text messages and mail in order to keep in contact with students and to support them to stay engaged with their learning. 'Feedback from learners on what worked well during this period consistently commended the availability and responsiveness of teaching staff, the lengths to which practitioners went to keep learners engaged in their learning, and the level of support and flexibility they received' (QQI, 2020).

Even pre-COVID SOLAS and Education Training Boards Ireland (ETBI) partnered with the Association for Higher Education Access & Disability (AHEAD), who work to create inclusive environments in education and employment for people with disabilities. Universal Design for Learning in Irish Further Education

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<sup>(14)</sup> <https://www.igbc.ie/projects/qualibuild/>

<sup>(15)</sup> <https://www.buildup.eu/en>

<sup>(16)</sup> <http://www.qualibuild.ie/train-the-trainer/train-trainer-application-form/>

and Training (UDL) provides an evidenced based framework to help teaching practitioners to lower these barriers for everybody, especially diverse learners. Whether that be those with disabilities, with low literacy skills or with other work and family pressures to juggle. UDL is a set of principles and guidelines that aim to support all learners by using a variety of teaching methods to reduce barriers to learning. By applying the principles of UDL in FET programmes, accessibility, variability and the flexibility that addresses learners' strengths and needs are built-in, thereby accommodating most learners' preferences, differentiations, and variabilities (Design & Education, 2021)

## CHAPTER 7. National surveys of teaching and training populations

In 2015 SOLAS conducted a FET skills profile survey, this information provided a snapshot of the FET workforce as it stood. This was one of the largest research professional development exercises ever undertaken in Ireland focusing on the FET workforce development. Inputs were provided across the full range of FET staff. The 16 ETBs vary considerably in terms of size, organisational structures and the range of services they provide. Despite this, there are striking similarities across the sector in the structure of the workforce, its skills profile and its development needs. Details of this report can be found in the FET Professional Development Strategy 2014-19 (SOLAS, 2017).

## CHAPTER 8. Conclusions

Significant progress has been made in the area of Professional Development since 2017, this is set to continue in line with the ambition set out in the FET Strategy 2020-2024.

The impact of the pandemic has shone a light on both digital innovation across teaching, training and instructing as well as areas for action which will need careful consideration in the years to come.

There is no doubt that all teachers, trainers, practitioners and professionals are extremely committed to the system and through more detailed data, engagement and the implementation of the FET Professional Learning and Development Statement of Strategy 2020-2024, the real potential to expand and strengthen this impact will be realised.

## List of abbreviations

AHEAD	Association for Higher Education Access
CPD	continuing professional development
ESOL	english for speakers of other languages
ETB	Education and Training Board
ETBI	Education and Training Boards Ireland
FESS	Further Education Support Service
FET	further education and training
ITABE	intensive tuition in adult basic education
LCETB	Limerick and Clare Education Board
NFQ	national framework of qualifications
PLC	post leaving certificate
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
TEL	technology enhanced learning
UDL	universal design for learning
VLE	virtual learning environment



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## Annex 1. The Further Education Support Service

The Further Education Support Service offers a broad range of supports and resources to the FET sector as a whole and is detailed below:

- (a) The FESS is part of the QA Network which comprises representation from all 16 ETBs and is coordinated by ETBI. Needs in relation to CPD are identified in this forum and FESS respond to the identified needs by developing appropriate supports and resources. In addition, needs are also identified through involvement with various FET providers, links with FET providers at a local level, involvements with national organisations and HE institutions, etc. Occasionally surveys are conducted to ascertain need, but the sector know that identified needs that are brought to the attention of FESS are responded to with appropriate CPD and or other supports and resources. As the FESS team have vast experience in the sector, we also identify needs based on our knowledge of the sector and the changing FET landscape. Identified needs are analysed by the team and measures to address the needs are prioritised to address the most pressing and biggest needs first.
- (b) FESS provide CPD and other supports in technical, pedagogical/didactic, transversal, pastoral, industry-related and other areas. These supports have included comprehensive training programmes at national, regional, and local level that are tailored to the needs of the participants. CPD has been offered in relation to the theoretical and technical considerations of delivering and assessing programmes of education and training. Active teaching and learning methodologies have been a consistent theme of CPD provision. CPD opportunities have been offered across a range of transversal skills such as project management, time management, etc. In addition, CPD opportunities have focussed on pastoral issues such as well-being in FET, UDL, dealing with LGBTIQ+ learners in the FET environment, etc. FESS have also linked with industry to offer externships whereby those teaching in some industry-related areas such as hospitality, IT and healthcare were provided with the opportunities to meet with employers, discuss what employers are looking for in FET graduates, have a behind-the-scenes look at how the industry works, etc. FESS have partnered with many HE institutions to provide pre-service as well as post-graduate input for student teachers and teachers engaging in post-graduate or lifelong learning opportunities.
- (c) Mentoring for teachers and trainers; FESS provide ongoing support via email, phone and face-to-face to FET personnel. FET personnel can contact any of

the five support officers with queries or to discuss issues arising from the delivery and assessment of their programmes. FESS Support Officers (SOs) are regionally based teachers with vast experience and therefore are well positioned to provide support to teaching and training staff. In many instances FESS SOs have developed links or relationships with many of the teaching and training staff in their regions and those teaching and training staff feel that the FESS service is accessible to them. Generally, providers do not have a formal mentoring process in place, though it appears that mentoring happens more informally across the sector where more experienced personnel support and mentor new staff.

- (d) Validation and recognition of competences acquired on the job and in non-formal settings; Certificates of attendance are available for CPD events, this facilitates individuals to take responsibility for keeping records of their own CPD. In 2019 the collaborative partnership of FESS and the Department of Adult and Community Education (DACE), at Maynooth University (MU), developed a Level 9 certified blended PD course for FET staff in Programme Design and Validation. To-date the first 17 students from the pilot group successfully completed the course, there are currently 46 students undertaking the current iteration and applications are open for a further iteration of 40 places in September 2021. The delivery of the course began in January 2020 but had to be moved to complete online delivery from March 2020. Despite the challenges of online delivery during the current pandemic, 17 students successfully completed the course. It is expected that further FESS/HE collaborations may result in additional certified CPD opportunities.

- (e) Modes of CPD provision

Until March 2020 CPD for FET practitioners was primarily provided on a face-to-face basis. FESS utilised the network of Education Centres as locations to deliver many of the National CPD programmes. On a regional and local basis events were often delivered based on specific requests from providers and as a result the programme of CPD was tailor made to each individual iteration depending on the request. Prior to March 2020, the non-face-to-face delivery of CPD was mainly in the form of pre-recorded or other online supports and resources. Since March 2020 all CPD has moved to online delivery including some synchronous and asynchronous delivery. Online delivery of CPD is much more challenging for a variety of reasons:

- (i) in many instances participants and indeed FESS SOs had device or internet connectivity issues because of working remotely
- (ii) learning how to use the different digital tools and platforms was challenging, often in the absence of targeted training

- (iii) planning, development and preparation of materials and activities for delivery online requires a completely different instructional design approach from face-to-face delivery
- (iv) engagement with CPD participants is challenging as participants adjust to the new online environment and the increased workload that it generated
- (v) the absence in the online environment of the benefits of the networking opportunity provided in the face-to-face environment has been commented on by many CPD participants

To support FET practitioners in remote teaching and in the assessment of remote learners during the Covid-19 pandemic, FESS developed a suite of resources and supports. These include

- (a) two bespoke courses in partnership with H2 Learning, namely the Reimagining your course - the move to blended learning course and the Reimagining your assessment for remote learner's course. To date
- (b) an Introductory Guide to Blending a Course: Strategies for Blended Delivery, handbook in conjunction with Liz Hogan, Blended Learning Expert which provides a step-by-step guide to blending a course;
- (c) from September 2020 – April 2021, 21 online clinics to support FET practitioners in blending their programme were offered, with 421 participants having booked into these. These one-hour informal sessions provided an opportunity for FET practitioners to pose questions and seek advice from the FESS facilitators and from other participants in the clinic, their queries were addressed through discussion and by demonstrating relevant digital tools and equipment. Clinics on remote teaching and assessing learners remotely continue to be offered.
- (d) a dedicated webpage containing supports and resources for remote teaching and learning and in addition, the development of a suite of short video tutorials on using some digital tools. This bank of resources will be expanded over time.
- (e) FESS is managed by a Steering Committee comprised of representatives from 6 ETBs. Generally, there is a manager who directs the day-to-day work, but this role is not filled currently. FESS SOs manage their own work on a day-to-day basis, responding to requests from the sector and from national and other organisations.

The below table provides some detail on provision available in 2019.

**Table A 1. FESS National Professional Development Listing for 2019**

Exploring Liberating Structures
Active Learning & Teaching No. (2)
Active Learning & Teaching No. (3)
An Approach to blending a Course
An Approach to blending a Course
Building Personal Resilience with Spark
Continuing to explore the shift in Programme Development
External Authenticator 2-day training
ETBI EA briefing session
Exploring Liberating Structures
Externship Visiting Programme
Integration of Programme Delivery and Assessment activities
Introduction to Local Assessment
Introduction to Local Assessment
Introduction to Project Management
Quality Assuring Blended Learning
Restorative practice in FET
TEL in FET Mentor Training
Unpacking learner feedback

**Table A 2. FESS Regional/local topics for professional development**

Assessing Learner Evidence in FET for QQI Certification
CPD on alternative approaches to assessment for remote learners
Devising assessment instruments consistent with QQI standards
EA supplemental training including apprenticeships and targeted training for the role of the EA
Evaluating reviewed and updates AISs
Exploring the development of learning outcomes
Exploring the role of the IV and EA
Feedback to Learners on summative assessment tasks
NFQ, QQI awards, award structure, exemptions
Programme development workshops for various programmes
QQI and the role of FESS in supporting the FET sector
QQI consultation on new awards
QQI related issues
Quality Assuring Assessment
Quality Assuring Blended Learning

## 1.1 Teaching Council Conditions of Approval for FET Teaching

- (a) An undergraduate degree in teacher education which:
- (i) combines the acquisition of expertise and knowledge along with other initial teacher education components including school placement, foundation studies and professional studies;
  - (ii) is accredited by the Council for the purposes of further education teaching.
  - (iii) is at level 8 or higher on the NFQ; and
  - (iv) has a ECTS weighting of at least 240 credits of which teacher education studies is assigned a
  - (v) minimum of 60 credits.
- or
- (b) 2. A post-graduate qualification in teacher education which:
- (i) (a) includes school placement, foundation studies and professional studies;
  - (ii) (b) is accredited by the Council for the purposes of further education teaching;
  - (iii) (c) is at level 8 or higher on the NFQ;
  - (iv) (d) has a ECTS weighting of at least 60 credits; and
  - (v) (e) is commenced following the award of an undergraduate degree at Level 8 or higher on the NFQ which has a ECTS credit weighting of at least 180 credits.
- or
- (c) a post-graduate qualification in teacher education which:
- (i) (a) includes school placement, foundation studies and professional studies;
  - (ii) (b) is accredited by the Teaching Council for the purposes of further education teaching;
  - (iii) (c) is at level 8 or higher on the NFQ;

- (iv) (d) has a ECTS weighting of at least 60 credits;
- (v) (e) is commenced following the award of an undergraduate degree or equivalent at level 7 or higher
- (vi) on the NFQ which has a ECTS credit weighting of at least 180 credits; and
- (vii) either
  - an appropriate additional qualification,
  - certified accreditation of prior learning based on a minimum of three years' experience in a workplace or instructional setting which is relevant to the candidate's qualifications such as may be recognised by the Council as suitable for the purpose of registration as a teacher under this route.

or

- (d) a qualification or qualifications which in the opinion of the Teaching Council meets or meet the criteria for registration under Route 2: Post-Primary.

or

- (e) qualification or qualifications which, in the opinion of the Council is or are of an equivalent standard to the standards required under paragraphs 1, 2, 3 or 4 set forth above, having conducted an assessment of that qualification in accordance with the General System.

## Annex 2. Examples of best practice

### 2.1 Champions Group in Limerick Clare ETB

The Moodle Champions Group was formed in 2014 to support a consistent and coherent approach to the adoption of Moodle across the FET Service. The champions group organises and promotes the use of Moodle across all FET programmes, centres and colleges and consists of key staff who lead on the adoption and use of Moodle across the range of full-time and part-time education and training programmes in Limerick and Clare. The group also acts as a very successful professional network, sharing best practice and resources. It coordinates the adoption and use of new technologies and resources by sharing experiences of pilot initiatives. Currently Limerick City VTOS programme is piloting the use of ePortfolios and digital badges while Limerick College of Further Education pilots the use of a new plagiarism plugin.

### 2.2 Leadership and management development in Tipperary ETB

The establishment of Tipperary ETB in 2013 brought with it new relationships and challenges. The focus of the work at that time was on addressing day-to-day management of education provision; there were great difficulties in finding time and space for strategic thinking, future planning, or leadership. Tipperary ETB devised a solution which was to provide professional development in organisational leadership and management.

The objectives were to provide:

- (a) time and space for leaders to learn about thinking and planning strategically;
- (b) an environment where peers could share experiences and knowledge;
- (c) a community of learning to enable the deepening and strengthening of professional relationships across the organisation.

It was agreed that the following issues needed to be addressed:

- (a) relevance to participants' work;
- (b) a balance of real-world practicality and some theoretical underpinnings;
- (c) provision at realistic times;
- (d) a recognised qualification for those who were interested in qualification;
- (e) facilitation by excellent teachers.



More than 20 members of senior management have participated in either one or two units with the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM): 'Becoming an Effective Leader' and 'Managing Stress and Conflict in the Organisation'. It is intended that a third unit, 'Developing Critical Thinking', be completed in the first term of the 2016/17 academic year.

## 2.3 Kerry ETB Train the Trainer Programme

The programme was developed to address a gap in standardised FET practitioner induction and accredited CPD. The course was open to adult education officers, teaching colleagues and staff across further education. Staff training needs were identified via SurveyMonkey and course evaluations, staff meetings and feedback on the Results Approval Panel report. The course had a particular focus on staff who were not eligible for a postgraduate qualification in FET. The course contained all the requirements of the train the trainer course but also included units on adult learners and assessment techniques. Learners (practitioners) benefitted from an in-depth induction which incorporated ETB ethos and ethics and how both impact on daily practice. Participating staff gained the equivalent of a QQI Level 6 award. The course Content included: theory of training and adult learning, the role of the trainer, training needs analysis and programme design, preparing for training delivery, delivery and assessment and evaluation of training.

## 2.4 Online CPD resources at the Further Education Support Service

In 2015 the Further Education Support Service (FESS) established a project designed to encourage FET teachers and trainers to support each other's CPD nationally by developing and sharing resource lists on the FESS website [www.fess.ie](http://www.fess.ie). The resource lists cover QQI Levels 2–6, identify themes and topics from QQI components and suggest relevant websites, books, leaflets, organisations, etc. The strength of the initiative is that it has facilitated teachers and trainers to share resources that they find useful and store them in one accessible location. The sharing of information is an important CPD activity for teachers and trainers as it validates and recognises practitioners as contributors to the professional development of others. The resource lists are of particular benefit to the professional development of those who are teaching programme modules for the first time or for teachers looking for new ideas. To date almost 200

resource lists have been uploaded to the FESS website and new resources are being developed on a continual basis

FESS provide a broad range of CPD initiatives and included in this are the activities included in the Externship Visiting Programme. This programme is based on partnerships with industry in areas such as Healthcare, Hospitality, IT, etc where teaching and training staff are afforded the opportunity to meet with personnel from the industry relevant to the programme on which they are teaching. Each of these is generally a daylong event and is organised so as to allow for input from the industry professionals on both the industry and what they expect from graduates but also there is the opportunity to see where learners may ultimately be working, the processes and procedures in the industry and generally getting a behind-the-scenes view of the industry related to the programme that they are delivering. The industry personnel give of their time for free as they see the benefits of linking with those teaching future employees. Most FET programmes have a work placement element and employers across all sectors facilitate this. Learners sometimes are required to complete assessments during the work placement and employers and workplace supervisors have been facilitating this and providing relevant reports throughout the history of FET provision.

## 2.5 Continuing professional development calendar in the City of Dublin ETB

The Curriculum Development Unit (CDU) is a support unit within the City of Dublin ETB (CDETb) which works in partnership with the ETB head office, schools, colleges, and centres to support a coordinated approach to continuing professional development. The CDU supports staff as essential contributors to the development of a flourishing learning community in CDETb and in the broader national and international educational community. This is achieved through initiating, developing, exchanging, implementing, supporting, or managing educational initiatives, projects and support services.

Since 2005/6 the unit has developed and managed a continuing professional development calendar which is published twice a year. Themes for the calendar are informed through:

- (a) proposals from staff;
- (b) evaluation forms from previous CPD sessions u consultation with management following inspections, evaluations, etc.
- (c) national and organisational priorities as identified by DES, QQI, SOLAS, Teaching Council, etc.
- (d) local, national, and international projects e.g., pilot projects, Erasmus+, etc.

- (e) City of Dublin Education and Training Board Continuing Professional Development Policy.

## 2.6 Information and communications technology, Link Teachers Network at City of Dublin ETB

The ICT Link Teachers Network has been meeting since early 2011. The aim of the network is to promote the integration of ICT teaching and learning. CDETb link teachers are teachers nominated by principals and heads of centres with representatives from all CDETb schools, colleges, and centres. The network provides an important space for innovation, dialogue, showcasing and sharing practice. Teachers are invited to participate in a 'show and tell'. The response from teachers is excellent and presentation topics are diverse. Topics have included Tellagami; Google Classroom; online register using Excel and Google Drive; video tutorials using Camtasia; StudyStack and Guidance Site for Students. Link teachers are encouraged to share what they have learnt at the network meetings with management and peers on their return to their own college/centre.

## 2.7 Quality assurance good practice seminars at Kildare Wicklow ETB

KWETb identifies tutors who are proven, through QQI external authenticators' reports, to excel in their programme delivery. These tutors are then invited to present to colleagues at several seminars on quality assurance. The educational development officer organises the seminars and invites tutors and coordinators from across Kildare and Wicklow ETB. Seminars consist of presentations from high performers within the ETB and external authenticators who have unique ideas to share, for example the use of video conferencing for assessments. The benefit of the session with the high performing staff member is that participants break up into smaller groups and have opportunities to discuss their own technical areas of interest; the sessions are specific as opposed to broad-ranging, general, CPD topics. Afterwards staff implement the changes in their teaching and measure effectiveness. Success is measured by the number of students who return self-reflection and evaluation forms.

## 2.8 Integrated Literacy Training at Galway and Roscommon ETB

The integrated literacy training is aimed at FET tutors with little or no literacy teaching background, e.g. cooperation-hours tutors, tutors in the prison, Youthreach tutors, training centre instructors. Tutors and instructors are given clear guidelines and shown techniques on how to integrate literacy in the classroom to help learners who are having difficulty in accessing texts. The training incorporates the use of plain English and literacy friendly worksheets; teaching to different learning styles; how to use the language experience approach; and how to develop more formal writing. Feedback has been very positive, with tutors requesting follow-up sessions to cover TEL (technology enhanced learning); specific spelling and writing strategies; adapting and creating materials; and how to simplify texts. A booklet has been created specifically for craft instructors in training centres based on this work.

## Annex 3. Additional professional services for FET Staff

### 3.1 Teacher education at primary and post-primary

The Department of Education and Skills (DES) (now the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science and the Department of Education respectively since 2020) funds and supports programmes to increase the quality of teaching and learning at primary and post-primary levels. These programmes include teacher training programmes, continuing professional development and supports for principals and teachers in their work. This is done through the teacher education programmes, education centres and support services for teachers at primary and post-primary level. The management of this process is supported by engagement through various steering committees, the provision of policy support as well as liaison with the Teaching Council, the Inspectorate, and other sections of DES on a range of issues. A national network of 21 education centres for teacher education is supported and appropriate groups, bodies and institutions are funded to design, develop, and deliver professional development programmes. Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) The PDST is a cross-sectoral support service which offers professional development support to primary and post-primary teachers and school leaders. The work of the PDST contributes to school improvement by providing high-quality professional development on curricular and educational issues, fostering reflective practice and ongoing development among teachers and school leaders.

### 3.2 Centre for School Leadership

The Centre for School Leadership (CSL), located in Clare Education Centre, was established by DES in partnership with representative bodies, for an initial three-year pilot period. DES has committed to an investment of €3m for this pilot. The CSL will become a centre of excellence for school leaders, and the partnership will have many benefits for the profession in terms of the quality of training programmes, coordination of provision and increased accessibility. The centre's responsibilities will cover the continuum of professional development for school

leaders, from pre-appointment training and induction of newly appointed principals, to continuing professional development throughout careers.

### 3.3 Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT)/ National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA)

The WIT/NALA accreditation project was established in 1997 as a partnership between the Department of Adult and Continuing Education in WIT and the NALA. The project designs and delivers nationally recognised programmes for adult and further education practitioners including the Higher Certificate in Arts in Literacy Development, the BA in Adult Education, and the BA (Hons) in Adult Education. In 2016 c.180 FET practitioners are anticipated to attend WIT/NALA programmes.

National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE) The NCGE is an agency of the Department of Education and Skills, with responsibility to support and develop guidance practice in all areas of education, including FET, and to inform Department policy in the field of guidance. One of the statutory functions of the NCGE is to organise and deliver continuing professional development for guidance staff practitioners. In relation to FET, the NCGE coordinates the annual professional development programme for the staff of the Adult Education Guidance Initiative nationally. The professional development programme is organised for and is tailored to specific guidance roles in FET and the guidance service as a whole and caters for a range of related areas including positive psychology, peer support and information exchange, guidance development and future skills needs.