

Theme 5:

Continuing Vocational Education and Training in Ireland

**Draft Report prepared by FÁS on behalf of CEDEFOP in
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CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN IRELAND

0501: INTRODUCTION TO CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

There is not a sharp distinction in Ireland between initial and continuing vocational education and training. Rather, Government policy makes a distinction between programmes for young persons and students, programmes for the unemployed (whether young or older) and programmes for persons in employment. These distinctions in particular concern Government responsibility and funding. For the purpose of this report, the focus of CVET will be on training for those who are, or who have been active in the labour market. It includes training received by those in work (excluding apprenticeship) or who have left the active work force either through unemployment, family concerns, disability, etc. and are seeking re-entry through training. Other forms of adult education in Ireland primarily comprise re-entry by adults to further education i.e. education and training which occurs between second and third level education, re-entry by adults to higher education, community education and self-funded night-class provision.

Employers generally provide training on the basis of their own requirements and needs. It is usually provided either in-house or on a commercial basis by a large number of predominantly private institutions. Government helps and encourages employers to meet their training responsibilities primarily through Enterprise Ireland and FÁS (the National Training Authority) which has the role of encouraging, advising and assisting companies to meet their training needs.

Continuing vocational education and training and general adult education is also provided for in the form of second-chance and further education and training. The main providers of such education and training at national level are Vocational Education Committees (VECs), FÁS and a range of sectoral training agencies such as Fáilte Ireland (hospitality and tourism), TEAGASC (agriculture) and An Bord Iascaigh Mhara (Fisheries).

The Further Education sector (comprising Vocational Education Committees (VECs) and some secondary schools, comprehensive schools and community schools/colleges and a variety of adult learning and education centres) provide a broad range of programmes including adult literacy, second chance education for unemployed persons, post-leaving certificate programmes for school leavers and adults, prison education and traveller education. FÁS (The National Training Authority) provides a comprehensive range of continuing vocational training courses for unemployed people. Ireland also has a growing community education sector which comprises a large variety of groups some of whom offer continuing vocational education and others who offer more general, non-vocational education. This voluntary sector works mainly in disadvantaged areas and focuses on issues of inclusion as they affect marginalised groups in the community.

Traditionally there has been little integration between education and training provision in Ireland in terms of progression routes, assessment and certification. A

number of weaknesses have been identified that have resulted in the demand for the introduction of changes. These changes include the need for:

- The introduction of more flexible hours
- Provision for a wider age group
- The introduction of clear progression routes
- Wider access at varying levels
- An integrated and transparent accreditation system of qualifications.

The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI), established in 2001, set out to address these needs through the development of a national framework of qualifications which has as one of its main tasks, the promotion and facilitation of access, transfer and progression throughout the span of education and training provision.

Developments in community education have impacted positively in the overall provision of adult education, namely:

- In reaching large numbers of learners often in disadvantaged areas.
- In pioneering new approaches to teaching and learning in non-hierarchical settings.
- In taking the 'lived' experience of participants as a starting point.

One of the key policies underpinning the Government's policy on adult education is the implementation of a national adult literacy strategy as a top priority, with a target to reach 113 000 adults by 2006. The principles underlying this form of provision are to address the low literacy level of the Irish adult population identified in the International Adult Literacy Survey¹ and the large numbers of Irish adults who have not completed upper second-level education. The priority areas under this form of provision comprise a National Adult Literacy Programme as the top priority followed by a Back to Education Initiative (BTEI). An ICT Basic Skills programme for adults as part of the BTEI is the third government priority. The promotion of workplace literacy is also a Government commitment.

The remainder of this section presents statistics on the participation of persons in adult learning in Ireland. The first Table is based on the European Employment Strategy (EES) figures for lifelong learning and comes from the EU Labour Force Survey. The remaining Tables are based on the results of the 2003 life-long learning module which was included in the Irish Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS) 2003. Up to 1997, questions were asked about participation in education/training in Annual Labour Force Surveys, however these were dropped with the introduction of the QNHS and were only re-introduced in 2003. Thus there is a gap in the figures between 1996 and 2002.

¹ "Literacy Skills for the Knowledge Society" in International Adult Literacy Survey, Paris: OECD

Proportion and gender break-down of adult (25-64) population participating in Education and Training in the previous four weeks.

Total in Education/Training	1996	2002	2003
Ireland	4.8	7.7	9.7
EU Average	5.7*	8.4	9.7
Gender			
Ireland - Female	4.8	8.8	11.0
EU Average - Female	5.5*	9.2	10.4
Ireland - Male	4.8	6.5	8.4
EU Average - Male	5.9*	7.9	8.9

Source: Eurostat²

* estimated

Lifelong learning refers to persons aged 25-64 who stated that they received education or training in the four weeks preceding the survey. There was a significant increase in lifelong learning rates since 1996. In 2003, 9.7% of the EU population aged 25-64 had received education and training in the previous four weeks, up from 5.7% in 1996. Ireland's rate rose at a faster pace during this period and by 2003 had reached the EU average rate of 9.7% - up from 4.8% in 1996. Participation in lifelong learning among Irish women is higher than the EU average for women and noticeably higher than that for EU and Irish men.

The lifelong learning module in the QNHS was asked of all persons aged 15 and over concerning their participation in learning over the previous 12 months. Unlike the Labour Force Survey, it included informal learning.

Number and gender of Irish population aged 15 and over participating in lifelong learning by type of learning, 2003.

Type of learning	Numbers('000)	Males	Females	Total Population
Formal	523.4	251.1	271.4	3 123.8
Non-Formal	419.9	195.3	224.6	3 123.8
Informal	1 357.3	608.9	748.4	3 123.8

Source: CSO QNHS, Second Quarter 2003. Lifelong learning module

In the second quarter of 2003, just under 17% (523 400) of all persons aged over 15 reported that they had received formal education (i.e. regular education through schools, colleges and universities) in the twelve months prior to the survey. Almost 44% (1.357 300) of all persons aged 15 and over reported that they had received informal education/training (i.e. non-taught learning including self-learning with the purpose of improving skills/knowledge), with non-formal education/training (i.e. organized learning activities outside the regular education system) accounting for 13.4% (419 900).

As can be seen in the Table below, young people in the age group 15 – 24 accounted for 78% of all persons in receipt of formal education in the twelve months preceding the survey. The vast majority of these were students – 381 000. Excluding all persons

² All the statistics used in the Table are taken from the eurostat website. See <http://europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat>

aged under 25 makes little difference to the pattern. Persons most likely to have received formal education/training were still those in the younger age group – 51% (57 900) of the remaining participants were aged 25 - 34.

Table 3: Number ('000) of Irish adult population age 15+ participating in lifelong learning by type and age

Age	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-59	60-64	65+	25-65+
Formal	409.9	57.9	29.1	17.6	4.6	1.9	2.5	113.6
Non-Formal	90.0	108.1	98.4	73.3	23.0	12.5	14.5	329.8
Informal	314.0	292.2	261.8	212.4	84.7	60.4	131.9	1043.4

Source: CSO QNHS, Second Quarter 2003. Lifelong learning module. Derived from Tables 1a,4a & 6a.

The vast majority (73.5%) of those in receipt of non-formal education described their usual situation as 'at work'. Persons aged 25 – 44 were more likely to receive this form of education. Two-thirds of persons in employment, in receipt of non-formal education, cited "job-related" as the main reason for participating in their most recent taught activity, however only 40% of these undertook this activity 'only/mostly during paid hours'.

050101: National definitions and boundaries

There is not a sharp distinction in Ireland between initial and continuing vocational training. Rather, Government policy makes a distinction between programmes for young persons and students, programmes for the unemployed (whether young or older) and programmes for persons in employment. These distinctions in particular concern Government responsibility and funding.

For the purpose of this database, the focus of CVET will be on training for those who are, or who have been active in the labour market whereas IVET focuses primarily on young persons who have not significantly engaged with the labour market, excluding apprenticeship. CVET includes any work-related training and vocational education undertaken after initial training and work experience, and second-chance education and training. It is not always possible to accurately disaggregate trainees into those who have worked prior to entry to a course. In this context, it is assumed that those aged over 25 have previously worked and are consequently receiving Continuing Vocational Education.

There is also no single system in Ireland delivering either IVET or CVET but rather a range of organisations who deliver programmes both for young people who have just completed their compulsory education and for those who wish to upgrade their skills having completed initial education and training. It is the status of the trainee that determines whether the education/training is initial or continuing rather than the system itself.

The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) was established on a statutory basis in 2001, with a view to developing a comprehensive framework of qualifications which will include all awards made in the state. Two Awards Councils

were also established; the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) and the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC).³ The NQAI has developed a 10-level outline Framework of Qualifications comprising awards from Foundation (Level 1) to Doctoral Level (Level 10). FETAC makes awards for all learning in further education and training programmes at Levels 1 – 6. The awards at Levels 1 – 6 are available for both CVET and IVET (depending on the status of the trainee. The main award available from HETAC for CVET and IVET is at Level 6 – Advanced Certificate.

050102 Development of Adult Learning

In Ireland, VET policy falls mainly within the remit of two Government Departments (Ministries) – The Department of Education and Science (DES) and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE). The Minister of Education and Science is responsible for policies and the development of national programmes for vocational education and training in schools and colleges at second level and at further and higher level. The Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment has responsibility for policies to upgrade the skills and competencies of the adult population within a framework of lifelong learning.

Up until 1997 limited resources were invested in adult education. In 1997 the government, in response to the findings from an OECD report that 25% of Irish adults didn't have basic literacy skills, decided to invest heavily in literacy provision and in adult education generally. In 1998, the Government published a Green Paper with proposals for developing Adult Education⁴. This was followed by the publications of the White Paper on Adult Education 2000⁵ and *Learning for Life*; the Report of the Taskforce on Lifelong Learning 2002⁶. Together these documents provide a blueprint for the development of adult education in Ireland. The establishment of the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) has subsequently impacted significantly on the development of adult education.

The White Paper on Adult Education reflected on the role of adult education in society. The key goal of the White Paper was to set out a comprehensive policy for the future structure and development of adult learning and training in Ireland. The White Paper marks the adoption of lifelong learning as the governing principle of educational policy. It also highlights the fact that there is now official recognition by the state that its educational commitment extends to include not only those people in school and college but also that part of the population which has left the initial education system.

The White Paper on Adult Education recommended the establishment of a National Adult Learning Council (NALC) whose remit would be to co-ordinate the many bodies with an interest in adult learning, and to provide a range of support services for

³ Awards for learning at post primary level continue to be made by the Department of Education and Science and the Universities and Dublin Institute of Technology continue to make their own awards.

⁴ *Adult Education in an Era of Lifelong Learning*, Green Paper on Adult Education, Department of Education and Science. Dublin. The Stationer Office, 1988

⁵ *Learning for Life*, White Paper on Adult Education, Department of Education and Science. Dublin. The Stationery Office, 2002

⁶ *Report of the Taskforce on Lifelong Learning*, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. Dublin, The Stationery Office, 2002

adult learning providers. While the NALC Council has been created (March 2002), it has not yet been established on a statutory basis nor has its executive arm been appointed and this has slowed down developments. At local level, the White Paper recommended the establishment of thirty-three Local Adult Education Boards along with the appointment of a national team of thirty-five Community Education Facilitators.

In terms of prioritisation, Government policy is to give particular attention to disadvantaged groups and persons with low educational attainment. For example, in the further education sector, the White Paper on Adult Education makes provision for a major investment in adult literacy. In addition, the Back to Education Initiative is providing a major expansion of part-time options principally aimed at persons with less than upper secondary education.

The policies outlined in the White Paper were complemented by the work of the *Task Force on Lifelong Learning* which was established by the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment in collaboration with the Department of Education and Science under the National Partnership Agreement of 2001-2002 (see below). The focus of the Task Force on Lifelong Learning was on the labour market aspects of lifelong learning and concentrated on the key themes of:

- Developing and implementing a National Framework of Qualifications
- Ensuring basic skills for all
- Providing comprehensive guidance, counseling and information
- Addressing delivery, access and funding measures
- Providing better opportunities for workplace learning, and learning for workers.

A third development which has impacted significantly on adult education in Ireland was the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act, 1999 which established the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI). The remit of the Authority encompasses further and higher education and has three main functions.

- To establish and maintain a framework of qualifications based on standards of knowledge, skill or competence to be acquired by learners regardless of where, when or how such learning takes place whether in institutions or colleges of education and training, or in the workplace or the community.
- To facilitate lifelong learning through the promotion of access, transfer and progression for all learners including those who have special needs.
- To establish and promote the maintenance and improvement of the standards of awards of the further and higher education and training sector, other than in the universities and to liaise with bodies outside the state for the mutual recognition of awards at transnational level.

As part of this national framework two awards Councils have been set up under the provisions of the Act; the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC), and the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC). The role of these

Councils is to determine the standards of knowledge, skill and competence to be acquired by learners for awards that they make at their respective levels.

Within the labour market context, government policy on training has been set out in the annual National Employment Action Plans developed in the context of the European Employment Guidelines. Ireland's three-year national partnership agreements, involving Government, social and community partners, have all included agreed policies in relation to education and training. In Partnership 2000, lifelong learning was given strong emphasis. In the subsequent agreement, the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness, this theme was developed considerably and resulted in the Task Force on Lifelong Learning which reported in 2002. The most recent Programme for Government – Sustaining Progress, makes a commitment to carrying out a fundamental review of training and employment supports to ensure that they focus on the needs of the most marginalised and disadvantaged groups to help them to progress to the open labour market. There is also a commitment to introduce new supports for those experiencing severe employability barriers including a training fund of up to €2,500 per person.

Ireland's employment and human resource development programmes form a major part of the National Development Plan 2000-2006. The Employment and Human Resources Development Operational Programme (EHRDOP) sets out the range of programmes and services to be provided with the objective of promoting economic growth, improving access to employment opportunities, addressing skills and labour shortages and tackling social exclusion. As well as the traditional goals of VET policy, the Programme emphasises a number of horizontal objectives; rural development, poverty, the environment, equality and North South co-operation. Therefore, the Programme gives an additional focus to the achievement of results in these areas.

Given the deadline of June 2006 for the implementation of the national framework of qualifications, and the range of groups contributing to the development of the debate on various aspects of vocational education and training policy, it is probable that over the next number of years all VET programmes and services will undergo further change in order to provide improved access, better progression and more transparent, and more transferable, accreditation.

050103: Evaluation

A small number of evaluations of CVET have been undertaken in Ireland. Most relate to the training of unemployed persons, but a couple consider training of the employed.

The aim of the evaluations of CVET for the unemployed have been to assess the extent to which such training helps individuals to obtain employment and/or increase their income levels. A number of such studies have been conducted by researchers from the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) and University College, Dublin over the last decade.⁷ The most recently published study was conducted for the Mid-Term Evaluation of the Employment and Human Resources Development

⁷ Investing in People: The Labour Market Impact of Human Resource Interventions Funded under the 1994-1999 Community Support Framework in Ireland, Denny, K. et al, ESRI, 2000.

Operational Programme 2000-2006.⁸ The study compared the employment outcomes of persons trained by FÁS under this Programme with a quasi-control group of the population in 2000 and 2001. Using a statistical (probit) model, the analysis found that five of the eight FÁS CVT programmes included in the study had a statistically significant impact on employment prospects. It also found that the remaining three FÁS CVT programmes had a positive impact on progression (i.e. to further education, training or FÁS employment programme) prospects.

The earlier study by Denny et al⁹ also assessed the impact of FÁS CVT programmes on the wages of participants. That analysis suggested that the effects of programme participation on wages of those at work two years later were quite limited. FÁS' main specific skills training programme had a significant positive impact on wages of persons aged over 25 years. However, there was no statistically significant impact for other programmes.

In relation to the training of employed persons, an evaluation of the main funding support scheme for companies during the 1990s (the Training Support Scheme) was published in 1995.¹⁰ The evaluation was based on a survey of 323 firms that had participated in the Training Support Scheme (TSS) in 1992, and a comparison group of 116 firms that had not. The study found that TSS-aided firms engaged in substantially more training than did non-participant firms. However, this impact was only statistically significant for small firms employing less than 20 persons. The study therefore recommended a greater concentration on small firms, and FÁS subsequently changed the conditions of the scheme to give such a greater focus.

One evaluation of the impact of company-funded CVT has been conducted.¹¹ This study used the Irish data from the EU-wide CVTS survey in 1993 to measure company training activities. It then re-surveyed the same companies in 1997 to gather information on their business performance in 1995. This data was used in a regression framework to estimate how the training provided in 1993 influenced productivity growth between 1993 and 1995, controlling for other influences. The study distinguished two broad types of training (general and specific) and found a statistically significant positive impact of general training on company productivity. No significant impact was found for specific training.

In addition to the formal evaluations cited above, state-funded CVT programmes are subject to on-going monitoring – most explicitly within the context of Ireland's Operational Programme for Employment and Human Resources Development 2000-2006. Structures have been set up under the Programme involving six-monthly reporting of activity, results and expenditure on the large majority of state-funded CVT programmes. These reports are considered by a Monitoring Committee representative of Government, social partners, the European Commission and other interests.

⁸ Employment and Human Resources Development Operational Programme 2000-2006, Mid-Term Evaluation, Fitzpatrick Associates, DETE, Dublin, 2003.

⁹ Investing in People, *ibid.*

¹⁰ Enterprise-Related Training and State Policy in Ireland: The Training Support Scheme, O'Connell, P. and Lyons, M., ESRI, 1995.

¹¹ Measuring the Returns to In-Company Training in Irish Enterprises, Barrett, A. and O'Connell, P., ESRI, 1998.

050104: Planning and forecasting

There are a number of mechanisms for skills anticipation in place in Ireland. The principal education and training organisations carry out their own forms of future assessment, and the Expert Group on Future Skill Needs and the FÁS/ESRI (Economic and Social Research Institute) Manpower Forecasting Programme provides a research and co-ordination mechanism at national level. Increasingly, the requirements of the National Qualifications Authority are demanding that training/education organisations align their courses in a systematic manner to identified needs.

Forfás is the national board responsible for providing policy advice to government on enterprise, trade, science, technology and innovation in Ireland. Under the aegis of Forfas, the Expert Group on Future Skill Needs (EGFSN) was established in 1998 by the Government in the context of increasing concerns about labour and skill shortages in Ireland. The Group reports jointly to the Ministers of Enterprise, Trade, Employment and Education & Science. It comprises representatives of the social partners, Government Departments, industrial development organisations and education/training bodies. It thus represents a unique collaboration between the enterprise and education sectors. The EGFSN's objectives are to:

- Identify the skills needs of different sectors and to advise on the actions needed to address them;
- Develop estimating techniques that will assist in anticipating the future;
- Advise on the promotion of education and continuous training links with business at national and local levels;
- Consider strategic issues in developing partnerships between business and the education and continuous training sectors, in meeting the skills needs of business;
- Advise on how to improve the awareness of job seekers of career sectors where there are demands for skills, of the qualifications required, and of how they can be obtained.

The Group has undertaken research on a wide range of skill areas including ICT, engineering, biotechnology, construction, pharmaceuticals, e-business, research and the labour market as a whole. Its recommendations have been very influential in increasing public investment in ICT and other scientific fields.

The main objective of the FÁS/ESRI Manpower Forecasting Programme is to develop a system which can be used to provide information on the changing pattern of occupations and to identify possible variations in skill requirements across broad occupational areas of the economy. The information is of considerable value to FÁS in determining medium-term strategies and in planning training provision. The forecasts are of assistance to government in more effectively planning its employment and education policies, and in achieving greater coherence between these two areas.

The Skills and Labour Market Research Unit in FÁS is designing a database with the objective of collating all available information regarding the supply and demand of

skills at national level. The aim of the database is to facilitate the analysis and forecasting of the labour market at skills level. The data currently included in the database comprises:

- Employment data
- Education provision, participation and output
- First destination of third level students
- Work permit/visa data
- Job Vacancies
- Job seeker data

Education and training organisations use a mixture of formal consultation, informal feedback and research to identify future skill needs. FÁS has a representative Board of Management and advisory committees in a number of sectors to inform it of sectoral needs. It also undertakes, through its research department, studies of future skill needs. At local level, decisions on training course mix are based on a variety of local data including course demand from the public, expected recruitment demand from new or expanding companies, the success of existing courses in terms of job placement and the views of various local organisations including social/voluntary organisations and chambers of commerce.

050105 Alternative modes of delivery

New modes of delivery and new learning environments have been developed in recent years to make adult learning more accessible in Ireland. The main developments are outlined below.

05010501 Open and distance learning

There is widespread recognition of the need to develop more flexible forms of delivery of education and training. Open and distance learning can remove some of the geographical and time barriers faced by many potential learners by mobilising information and communication technologies, including internet access and video/telephone conferencing. Improvements in communications infrastructure, increases in the capabilities of personal computers and accessibility to computers by reducing hourly rates or, free-of-charge in the case of public libraries, make it an increasingly viable mechanism for learning.

Barriers to increased use of open and distance learning include the fact that, notwithstanding the positive developments recorded above, many people do not have regular access to the internet. In addition, the development costs of creating suitable open learning programmes should not be underestimated. It is also important to recognise that to be fully effective, open and distance learning methods of delivery need to be supplemented by support mechanisms that allow direct teacher-learner contact.

There are currently two main providers of distance education opportunities in Ireland; the National Distance Education Centre (OSCAIL) and the Open University. The number of students on under-graduate courses enrolled in the National Distance Education Centre has increased over recent years. In 2003, over 3,500 adults located in Ireland were pursuing Irish university qualifications with OSCAIL. The Centre is based in Dublin City University and has a network of study centres located in universities, institutes of technology and other educational institutions throughout the country. It was established as a collaborative structure. Courses are designed,

developed and delivered under the direction and guidance of multi-disciplinary course teams, including academics drawn from Irish universities and higher education institutions, relevant professionals drawn from business and industry and specialists in curriculum and instructional design and in distance teaching. Examples of e-learning opportunities include undergraduate programmes in nursing, information technology and arts and postgraduate programmes in the management and application of information technology, accounting and the management of internet systems.

The Open University is one of the largest providers of part-time higher education in the UK. The Open University in Ireland has 46 staff in the Belfast Regional Centre, 7 in the Dublin Enquiry and Advice Centre and 393 part-time tutors supporting over 8 500 local students.

The Department of Education and Science commissioned the production of a TV series in literacy awareness and tuition for adults for the first time in 2000. The fifth such series “*Read Write Now*” was broadcast on National TV (RTE 1) in October-December 2004 in the form of 12 half-hour programmes. The broadcasts were supplemented by a national free-phone helpline provided by the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA), along with learner workbooks and resource packs. A weekly average of 130 000 people watched the programme. Videos of the series are sent free of charge to literacy courses, public libraries, training centres and video outlets.

During the 1980s and 1990s, FÁS in partnership with the NUI (National University of Ireland) Maynooth and NUI Galway, developed a series of distance learning, Training of Trainers, programmes. The programmes were designed at foundation, certificate, diploma and degree level. The programmes were initially designed with the needs of FÁS instructors in mind but have since been expanded and are currently aimed at vocational teachers, trainers, educational consultants, human resource specialists and those practicing or planning a career as trainers in the educational, industrial, commercial, voluntary and community sectors. Programme delivery combines open learning, self-instructional modules along with attendance at workshops and written and practical assignments.

05010502 E-learning

The FÁS eCollege (www.fas-netcollege.com) offers on-line flexible learning opportunities to employers, employed and unemployed persons. There are currently over 50 courses available, with 31 certification options. Content can be delivered in a variety of formats tailored to individual learning styles in a location of choice. The range of courses available includes Business Skills, Programming and Web Design, Office Applications, Technical Support and Personal Development Skills courses. The courses are available for a fee, or free of charge to certain groups such as the unemployed.

Recently, emphasis has been placed on developing regional access and support services and further enhancing the courseware content of FÁS eCollege. There are now approximately 100 local access centres in the country providing support services to e-learning clients. In 2003, 4 403 persons followed FÁS eCollege courses.

The Centre for Teaching and Learning in University College Dublin (UCD) has developed a website to support their academic staff to continually develop and

improve their skills and knowledge in the areas of teaching, learning, curriculum design and student assessment. The website is both a resource and a research centre for the study and support of third level teachers.

In August 2003, a private institution, Hibernia College (www.hiberniacollege.net), was approved by the Department of Education and by the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) to provide an 18 month diploma course for graduates who wish to become primary school teachers. The course will use on-line content, live tutorials and face-to-face classes. However this development has created a controversy among the governing bodies of some of the traditional teacher training colleges and the primary school teachers' union who argue that a part-time on-line course cannot be the equivalent of a university accredited, full-time programme.

The 2003 Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development in Ireland (CIPD) survey on e-Learning¹² in Irish organisations looks at the coverage of e-Learning in Irish organisations. The following are the main findings from the survey:

- Of the 275 respondents to the survey, 44% use e-Learning in some shape or form;
- There is significant variation by organisation size, sector, nationality of ownership, type and status; e-Learning usage and scope all increase with organisation size;
- The electronic, chemicals and public sectors are the leading users; US subsidiaries (almost 60%) are higher users than Irish owned organisations (40%);
- Two-thirds of respondents rate the internet as a method of training and development to be reasonably effective; but they continue to make much greater use of traditional methods, and to rank these far higher in terms of effectiveness;
- There is a recognition of the emerging effectiveness of Blended-Learning.
- E-Learning is used mainly for IT (86%) and technical skills (64%) training and much less so for “soft” skills training. IT staff top the list (almost two-thirds) followed by technical, clerical/administrative and professional staff.

05010503 New Learning Environments

There are approximately 320 public libraries in Ireland. Following a process of consultation and research, a report, *Branching Out: A new public library service*¹³, was launched in 1998. The report took a positive view of the potential of the library service to deliver benefits to the public in terms of:

- Enhanced access to information using information and communications technology.

¹² eLearning in Irish Organisations, A study of eLearning in the Republic of Ireland, Survey Report November 2003, O'Donnell, D and Garavan, Thomas N, Department of Personnel & Employment Relations, Kemmy Business School, University of Limerick.

¹³ *Branching Out – A New Public Library Service*. Department of the Environment and Local Government. Dublin, 1998. ISBN 0-7076-6174-9

- Enhanced access to lifelong education through library collections and services.
- New avenues for social inclusion based upon the provision of information-based skills training.

Acting on the recommendations of the report, the Department of the Environment and Local Government allocated funding for the installation of public access Internet facilities in every library in the country.

Another form of new learning environment can be found in the trade union centres for the unemployed. There are currently 37 Centres in the Irish Congress of Trades Unions' (ICTU) Network of Centres for the Unemployed. Over the past number of years, services in the Centres have expanded in response to local needs, and many Centres have begun offering more intensive training opportunities to workers seeking to re-train or to up-skill, and to unemployed people seeking to access or return to the open labour market. Given the current low unemployment rate, Centres are finding that many or most people who remain out of employment actually face multiple employment barriers, which must be addressed before they will be able to access employment in the open labour market.

FÁS and the National Centre for Partnership and Performance (NCPP) have initiated a joint-action project called *Implementing a Learning Strategy in Irish Organisations* in both public and private sector organisations. The project aims to find insights into how organisations learn, and how they use their learning to improve their processes and meet changing business needs. The action project draws on theory and practice to explore models for integrating learning in organisations. It shows how learning can support and enable change and how change can be a catalyst for learning. Phase 1 of the project involved the production of a background paper detailing key literature on learning in organisations; Phase 2 involved undertaking an action research project with a group of organisations. Each organisation examined its existing learning structures and activities and initiated new learning activities. In this way it was possible to identify interventions that can help other organisations to implement a learning strategy. Phase 3 will focus on disseminating and mainstreaming actions to a wider range of organisations in order to help them prepare for the workplace of the future. Phases 1 and 2 were completed in 2004.

This initiative links with a number of current national policy priorities. Firstly, a significant element of the FÁS strategy is to promote the central role of learning in organisations. Secondly, the NCPP is engaged in examining, through the network of strategic alliance partners, good examples of learning for *partnership* within organisations. Additionally, the establishment of a National Forum on the Workplace of the Future offers an opportunity to engage in a systematic analysis of the preconditions for changing workplaces so that they can become more competitive, more responsive to new employment preferences, more participative in decision making structures and more readily adaptive. The focus will be on promoting the workplace as a learning environment.

05010504 : Flexibilisation and differentiation

There is currently no policy as such on flexibilisation and differentiation in Ireland. However, the increase in part-time 3rd level provision makes CVET at this level more

flexible as do part-time course run by FÁS, Fáilte Ireland, the VECs and the other Further Education providers. Many of the qualifications available in the Further Education sector are modularised and allow students to accumulate units towards full qualifications, for example the FETAC Foundation Level and Level 1 and Level 2 certificates (see 0503). It is also likely that the requirements of the National Qualifications Authority, to promote access, transfer and progression, will lead to increased flexibilisation and differentiation in the future.

0502: PUBLICLY PROMOTED CVET FOR ALL (INCLUDING STATISTICS)

Publicly Promoted CVET for All in Ireland comprises three main categories of provision namely; training at community level, literacy training and part-time and evening classes. Public authorities fund or co-fund training activities in respect of literacy training and a proportion of community training and evening classes are self-funded. While there is no comprehensive database of statistics for participation in such CVET available nationally, AONTAS – The National Association of Adult Education, collects relevant statistics on an ongoing basis.

Participation in Publicly Promoted CVET for All

Scheme	Numbers	Date	Source
Literacy	30 672	2003	Dept of Education and Science
Community Education	30 000 Womens' groups	2000	AONTAS
Back to Education – Formal Strand BTEI – Community Strand BTEI Total	9178 657 9 835	Sept 2003	Dept of Education And Science
Night-time/Evening courses in second level schools, colleges	152 258	2002	Dept of Education and Science, Statistical Reports
Part-time enrolments in third level courses in institutions aided by the DES	34 965	2002	Dept of Education and Science Statistical Reports

Literacy

One of the key recommendations of the White Paper on Adult Education was the implementation of a national adult literacy strategy with a target to reach 113 000 adults by 2006. The following statistics provide indicators for participation in adult literacy training in Ireland for the period to June 2002.

Participation rates by gender in Adult Literacy Training 2003

Gender	Number	%
Male	12 542	41
Female	18 093	59
Total	23 973	100

Source: Department of Education & Science

Distribution of Participants in Adult Literacy Training according to Age, 2003

Age	15 - 24	25 - 34	35 - 44	45 - 54	55 - 64	65+
%	20	24	22	14	6	14

Source: Department of Education & Science

By the end of 2003, 30 672 persons were receiving literacy tuition on a weekly basis – nearly 60% of these people were female. Over one-half of all participants were aged 25 – 44. The majority (51%) of learners had completed their primary certificate only and 87% of participants had completed less than upper second-level education.

Part-time Courses for Adults

Part-time, adult education and training courses are held in VEC schools and colleges and in community and comprehensive schools. They cover a wide range of subjects from technical, academic and practical subjects to personal development. They would not all fall under the remit of CVET so the figures should be regarded as indicative as opposed to definitive. The majority of these courses are self-funded, evening courses.

Number of part-time students enrolled in adult education in vocational, community and comprehensive Schools.

Adult Education 1996 - 2002						
Year	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	00-01	01-02
Female	97 326	96 627	97 857	101 378	106 364	111 587
Male	36 647	35 232	35 945	39 031	38 899	40 671
Total	133 973	131 859	133 802	140 409	145 263	152 258

Source: Department of Education & Science, Statistical Reports, 1996 – 2002, Tables 3.9

The numbers participating in part-time education have increased by 12% from 133 973 to 152 258 over the period 1996 to 2002. The gender distribution has remained constant throughout the period with women accounting for 73% of the participation rate.

Part-time provision also takes place in universities – Higher Education (HEA) colleges and in the Institutes of Technology (ITs). The courses undertaken tend to be at Degree and Diploma and Certificate level. The following statistics reflect the total population and refer to students undertaking third-level education some of whom would be undertaking CVET.

Number of students enrolled in part-time third-level courses in institutions aided by the Department of Education and Science

Part-Time Enrolments in Third-Level Courses 1996-2002						
Year	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	00-01	01-02
HEAs	8 426	n.a	10 927	11 305	11 313	13 826
ITS	12 561	13 157	13 836	16 504	17 700	18 040
Other	1 808	n.a	3 001	3 660	3 252	3 097
Total	22 795		27 764	31 469	32 265	34 965

Source: Department of Education & Science, Statistical Reports, 1996 – 2002

Community Education

The Community Education sector has emerged as an important strand of the Adult Education Service catering to learners at all levels from pre-foundation up to third-level. There were an estimated 30 000 participants in 2000.¹⁴ Initially, the sector worked with minimal government support but over the past number of years public support has increased substantially. There are currently about 135 Community Development projects and 50 Local Community and Family groups supported by the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. Many of these are involved in the provision of education.¹⁵ The Department of Education and Science has recently increased funding to this sector through the Back to Education Initiative (See 05031). While this Initiative is delivered primarily by the Vocational Education Committees (VECs), 10% of places are allocated to community-based providers. 63 projects accessed the first BTEI Community Strand in 2001 and in the first nine months of 2003, 657 persons participated.

BTEI participants classified by strand and gender, January – September 2003

Area	Participants	Male %	Female %
Formal Strand	9178	25	75
Community Strand	657	23	77
National Total	9835	25	75

Source: Department of Education & Science. BTEI – Report on Implementation

050201: Target Groups and Provision

Literacy Training

The target groups for literacy training include individuals, family groups comprising parents and their children, travellers, non-nationals, and unemployed people participating in social employment programmes.

The Vocational Education Committee (VEC) Adult Literacy Scheme is operated by the 33 VECs in Ireland. The objective of the scheme is to allow people with literacy difficulties to gain access to literacy education. Each VEC employs Adult Education Organisers (AEOs) to manage the overall delivery of adult education in their schemes, and Adult Literacy Organisers to manage the literacy aspect of the service. Literacy tutors are employed to teach class groups and volunteers are trained to provide free 1:1 tuition. The VECs and the AEOs regularly liaise with the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA), a voluntary organisation that is concerned with national co-ordination, training and policy development.

Learners and tutors interact on an equal basis in the VEC Adult Literacy Scheme and classes focus on the needs of the learner as an individual. Each participant has his/her own trained literacy tutor and before his/her first class, the tutor and participant decide on which area to focus and classes are designed accordingly. There is no set course and classes are usually around two hours long per week.

¹⁴ *Learning for Life*, White Paper on Adult Education, Department of Education and Science, 2000. Pg. 117

¹⁵ *Community Education 2004*, AONTAS (Irish National Association of Adult Education), 2004.

NALA is funded by the Department of Education and Science. It advises on quality and provides training for staff across a range of agencies particularly the VECs, FÁS – the National Training and Employment Authority, Fáilte Ireland (Hospitality), Teagasc (Agriculture), and Employment and Welfare Services. NALA also commissions research and has an extensive network of contacts with similar agencies in other countries.

The Department of Education and Science commissioned the production of a TV series in literacy awareness and tuition for adults for the first time in 2000. The fifth such series “*Read Write Now*” was broadcast on National TV (RTE 1) in October-December 2004 in the form of 12 half hour programmes. The broadcasts were supplemented by a national free-phone helpline provided by NALA, and learner workbooks and resource packs. The series also has its own website which works as a support to the programme. A weekly average of 130,000¹⁶ people watched the programme. Videos of the series are sent free of charge to literacy courses, public libraries, training centres and video outlets.

Literacy has been identified as one of the key areas needing specific attention for a large number of people in Ireland and while the number of clients catered for has increased over the past number of years, this number is still less than 5% of Irish adults who experience literacy difficulties.

Self-funded Part-time Courses for Adults

Self-funded part-time courses are targeted at the adult population generally. The courses which take place – particularly in the second level schools and VEC further education colleges, are not confined to continuing vocational education and training. Provision includes personal and social development, hobby and leisure courses as well as courses of an academic or practical nature and second-chance courses. Provision in third level institutions includes primary degrees, diplomas and certificates and these too are targeted at the adult population generally as well as at those pursuing continuing vocational education and younger students who are engaged in IVT.

The duration of this provision depends on the course being attended. Hobby and leisure and self development courses can be of short duration – one evening/morning a week over three months while the academic/vocational courses are more long term and can take a number of years for a student to attain certification. The pedagogy also reflects the course being attended with a more informal, learner-centred approach being used in self development courses while a more formal approach tends to be used on academic courses.

The qualifications attained on the third-level degree, diploma and certificate courses are the same as those offered on full-time courses. Such qualifications do not constitute either an initial or continuing vocational education qualification rather the qualification reflects the status of the students. If they are school leavers, the qualification is an initial qualification, if they are older and have reasonable work experience, the qualification could be considered continuing.

¹⁶ *Read, Write, Now*, TV Series 3, Evaluation Report, McSkeane, Liz, NALA, Sept 2003

One of the main weaknesses concerning part-time provision at third level concerns fees. While funding for full-time learners undertaking primary degrees, diplomas and certificates does not require the payment of tuition fees, this is not the case for part-time students. The Report of the Taskforce on Lifelong Learning, 2002 recommends that the “fee barriers which deter participation of adults in flexible part-time courses should be removed, and that a grant in lieu of fees scheme should be introduced for part-time participants in publicly funded further and higher education and training institutions ..” To date this recommendation has not been implemented.

Community Education

Community education evolved in Ireland in the early 1980s driven mainly by self-directed women’s groups. These groups developed in urban working-class areas which were badly affected by high rates of unemployment and which had to cope with high levels of poverty and youth dependency. Alongside these groups, the community education movement developed in a range of other disadvantaged contexts focusing on issues of inclusion as they affected marginalised groups such as travellers, people with disabilities, rural small-holders and the elderly.

Community education provides for learners at all levels – from pre-foundation up to third level. Provision is wide and varied and is not confined to CVET. What differentiates community education from general adult education is its ethos and the methodologies it employs. Key characteristics of community education include:

- Its problem-solving flexible focus based on trust
- Its process – rather than employing a syllabus focus, participants are engaged from the start as equal partners in identifying needs, designing and implementing programmes and adapting them on an ongoing basis
- Its promotion of personalised learning and flexibility within the environment of a learning group
- Its commitment to match curriculum and pedagogy with the needs and interests of the learners.

Community education does not necessarily lead to formal accreditation although some programmes offer it at varying levels. Mechanisms to accredit prior and experiential learning are currently being developed by the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) which will benefit adult learners. Awards will become more flexible to fit with the non-linear way in which adults progress through education and will be more relevant to community-based learners. The new National Framework of Qualifications should also allow progression routes to be developed from the community education sector itself into formal education and also within the community sector itself.

The strengths of community education were acknowledged in the White Paper on Adult Education¹⁷ - it reaches large numbers of learners who are often in disadvantaged areas; it pioneers new approaches to teaching and learning in non-hierarchical settings and it takes the lived experience of participants as a starting point. However, one of the main weaknesses of the sector arises from the lack of coherent structures at national and local level, which can provide for greater co-

¹⁷ *Learning for Life*, White Paper on Adult Education, Department of Education and Science, 2000

ordination of the service. While the Community Education Facilitators were in place by late 2003 and the National Adult Learning Council (NALC) established, NALC is still not established on a statutory¹⁸ basis as recommended by the White Paper on Education (see 050102).

050202 Providers

Publicly promoted CVET is mainly offered by public institutions.

Adult Literacy Services are provided by the Vocational Education Committees (VECs) and funded by the Department of Education and Science.

Provision for self-funded part-time courses for adults takes place in second level Vocational Education Committee (VEC) schools and colleges and in community and comprehensive schools. Provision also takes place in third level institutions such as the institutes of technology and universities.

Community education is provided by a range of institutions including schools, training agencies, universities, community centres, churches and others who make premises and resources available locally, supported by the VEC in the area.

There are no specialised institutions that only provide CVET in Ireland.

050203: Access

Literacy

Access to literacy programmes is free and available during the day or in the evenings. It can be accessed by any adult in need of such training either through a group or on a one to one basis. Programmes are available nationwide. Family literacy groups involving both adults and their children are running successfully and a number of open learning centres are being piloted along with literacy groups for migrant workers and travellers.

A wide range of media are used to promote the service including church announcements, local radio, posters, leaflets etc. The TV literacy awareness programme (see 050201) “*Read Write Now*” attracted a weekly average viewing of 130 000 viewers in October – December 2004. Referral networks with FÁS, Local Employment Services, Partnerships, Health Centres, welfare and community groups, playgroups, schools and school parent committees, libraries etc are being expanded and strengthened. A national referral directory on adult literacy services has been published and disseminated.

Self-funded Part-time courses for Adults

Access to self-funded, part-time courses depends on the course being pursued. Many courses held in second-level schools and colleges are open to all. The certificate, diploma and degree courses in third-level institutions usually have matriculation requirements (similar to those for students pursuing such courses on a full-time basis). All courses are fee-paying. The media used in promoting such courses include

¹⁸ Community Education 2004, AONTAS, The National Association of Adult Education, Dublin. Pg 14.

national and local radio, leaflets, national directories on adult education and college prospectuses.

Community Education

Community education is free and open to all – traditionally, women and disadvantaged or marginalised people have been interested in becoming involved in it. Access is facilitated by the provision of childcare facilities where possible and supports to learners such as individual mentoring of participants. Time, location and programme content are flexible and learner-centred thus increasing access. Some community education groups give small allowances to learners. Other groups provide such services as transport and/or the provision of materials.

050204 : Quality Assurance

The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) was established under the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999 in order to develop a comprehensive framework of qualifications. Two awards councils were also established under the Act - the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) and the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC). The NQAI launched the National Framework of Qualifications in 2003. This is a ten-level outline Framework of Qualifications comprising awards from Foundation (Level 1) to Doctoral Level (Level 10). The role of the Councils is; to develop policies and criteria for the making of further/higher education and training award; the validation of such awards and, to implement such policies. (See 050101). Providers apply to either of these Councils for validation of a programme of education or training. Such programmes can take place in institutions, in the workplace or in the community and be either full-time or part-time. Ensuring the quality of the awards is central to the tasks confronting the Councils. The awards made should be fully recognised both nationally and internationally. The Councils also provide for progression and transfer of students to Institutes and Universities. Regarding publicly promoted CVET, the accredited courses/programmes would largely fall under the remit of FETAC.

FETAC has constructed a common framework which identifies the policies and procedures which a provider must develop to quality assure the programme(s) which they want validated by FETAC. Agreement of a provider's quality assurance system must take place before the provider can avail of FETAC accreditation. Applications from providers for registration through quality assurance agreements will start in January 2005.

Quality assurance is only obligatory for publicly promoted CVET programmes that offer accreditation. While many programmes do not offer accreditation, it is considered important that providers can demonstrate the quality of their provision and considerable work has been done in this area. Regarding literacy training, a user guide on the evolving Quality Framework for Adult Basic Education (ABE), published by NALA, was launched in September 2002. This builds on an earlier trans-national project supported by Socrates in partnership with Belgium, England and Queen's University, Belfast which led to the publication of the Framework setting out the principles and key areas of a quality process. It was piloted during 2000 and 2001 and is currently being mainstreamed across the country.

AONTAS – The National Association of Adult Education is currently working with a number of its women’s network members to develop a Quality Assurance Framework for women’s community education. A draft framework should be ready for testing towards the end of 2004.

0503: TRAINING FOR UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE AND OTHERS VULNERABLE TO EXCLUSION IN THE LABOUR MARKET

Training for the unemployed in Ireland is provided under the same framework as training for other categories of job-seekers. At national level, it is mainly provided by FÁS, and at sectoral level by the other state agencies mentioned previously, namely Fáilte Ireland (hospitality), Teagasc agriculture), etc.

05031: Target groups and provision

A. CVET for unemployed people

FÁS, through its training centres and external training (contracted-training), coordinates a number of measures aimed at preparing the unemployed for entry to the active labour force. Most measures target both short-term and long-term unemployed persons, both young and old. Thus training carried out by FÁS provides both Initial and Continuing Training, depending on the status of the trainee. It is not possible to accurately disaggregate trainees into those who have worked prior to entry to a course. In this context, it is assumed that those aged over 25 have worked and are consequently receiving Continuing Vocational Training.

The two Tables below give details of the numbers of participants who took part on relevant FÁS courses/programmes during the periods 1995, 2000 and 2002 according to age. The three different categories of course/programmes which are included here are Foundation Training courses, Skills Training courses and Employment Programmes. Apprenticeship training, Community Youth Training Programmes, Community Training workshops and Vocational Preparatory Training programmes are excluded as these are considered part of Initial Vocational Education and Training.

Foundation courses comprise four different types of training programmes namely Alternance (Return to Work - which is primarily aimed at ‘women returners’ and older workers), the Local Training Initiative, Linked Work Experience and the Skills Foundation Programme - originally aimed at younger, unemployed persons. The emphasis on these programmes is the development of soft skills - personal development and confidence building, and interviewing skills. Fairly basic levels of technical skills’ development are included on the programmes. Participants proceed to further training courses or employment depending on their skills at the conclusion of the programme.

The Skills Training courses also comprises four programmes – Specific Skills Training, the Job Training Scheme, Enterprise Programmes aimed at older,

experienced workers and Traineeships which are primarily aimed at younger, unemployed people. These programmes focus on developing specific job-related skills and the objective of the programmes is to enable participants to proceed directly in to the labour market.

Employment programmes are active labour market interventions designed to provide employment opportunities for long-term unemployed people, lone parents and disabled people. They currently comprise three programmes; the Community Employment programme, the Social Economy Programme and the Job Initiative Scheme. These programmes were not all running concurrently throughout the period. The aim of these employment programmes is to support the community by improving social and economic activities at a local level and to provide employment opportunities for long-term unemployed people and those experiencing social exclusion (mainly lone parents and people with disabilities).

FÁS CVET Numbers of participants on FÁS programmes by Age and Type of Training Course/Employment Programme

1995				
Age	Foundation	Skills	Employment	Total
15-24	2 046	9 631	10 545	22 222
25-34	370	2 512	16 595	19 477
35-49	928	1 892	20 137	22 957
50-64	323	468	7 091	7 882
65+	1	1	52	54
Total	3 668	14 504	54 420	72 592
2000				
15-24	2 573	5 384	3 278	11 235
25-34	1 097	2 885	12 630	16 612
35-49	1 799	2 485	23 723	28 007
50-64	961	1 062	12 149	14 172
65+	12	11	105	128
Total	6 442	11 827	51 885	70 154
2002				
15-24	2 851	4 365	687	7 903
25-34	1 462	2 463	8 411	12 336
35-49	2 105	2 232	19 362	23 699
50-64	1 202	1 066	12 425	14 693
65+	21	13	164	198
Total	7 641	10 139	41 049	58 829

Source: FÁS

The most noticeable feature in both Tables is the increase in proportions of those aged over 25 (and thereby considered to be receiving Continuing Vocational Education and Training) taking part in the programmes over the time period 1995 – 2002. At an overall level, the share of those aged over 25 increased from 70% in 1995 to 87% in 2002.

The proportion of participants aged over 25 on the foundation courses increased from 44% in 1995 to 73% in 2002. This increase took place mainly in the Skills Foundation

Programme where participation of those aged over 25 increased from 3% in 1995, to 50% in 2000 and to 61% in 2002.

Regarding the Skills Training courses, the distribution of participants aged over 25 increased from an overall level of 33.3% in 1995 to 57% in 2002. The increase is mainly accounted for by a change in age distribution on the Specific Skills Training courses where the proportions aged over 25 increased from 32% in 1995 to 43% in 2000 and 59% in 2002. The distribution of those aged less than 25 years on the Traineeships increased from 59% in 2000 to 62% in 2002.

FÁS CVET: Proportion of participants by Age and Type of Training Course/Employment Programme

1995	%	%	%	%
Age	Foundation	Skills	Employment	Total
15-24	56	66	19	30
25-34	10	17	30	27
35-49	25	13	37	32
50-64	9	4	14	11
65+				
Total	100	100	100	100
2000				
15-24	40	46	6	16
25-34	17	24	24	24
35-49	28	21	46	40
50-64	15	9	24	20
65+	1			
Total	100	100	100	100
2002				
15-24	37	43	2	13
25-34	19	24	21	21
35-49	28	22	47	40
50-64	16	11	30	25
65+				
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: FÁS

As will be shown later, the shifts in the proportions aged over 25 participating on these programmes, are mainly accounted for by an increase in the number of Irish women aged 25 – 49 taking up training in order to return to the labour market during the period of the ‘Celtic Tiger’.

Over the period 1995 – 2002 no major changes in age patterns took place on the employment programmes. The vast majority of all participants on these programmes were aged over 25.

While the overall numbers participating on these programmes decreased over the period, the number of participants aged over 25 (and therefore considered to be undertaking CVET) on the training programmes, increased from 6 495 in 1995 to 10 564 in 2002.

FAS CVET: Numbers of participants aged over 25 participating on Training Courses (excluding Employment Programmes)

Date	Foundation	Skills	Total
1995	1622	4873	6495
2000	3869	6443	6829
2002	4790	5774	10564

The Table below gives details of participants on the FÁS programmes by age and gender. The most noticeable feature is the change in gender composition over the period. In 1995, overall male participation was 60% but by 2002 this had decreased to 44%. The increase in female share was concentrated in the age group 25 - 34 where it increased from 43% in 1995 to 72% in 2002 and in the age group 35 – 49 where the female share increased from 34% to 60%.

Overall, in 1995, of the 72 592 participants on these FÁS programmes, 60% were male and 40% female. By 2000, the situation had shifted noticeably, the female share had increased to 56% of the 70 154 participants and remained at this level in 2002. The main increases in female share occurred in the age groups 15 – 49. Throughout the period, the female share in the older age groups – age 56+, was substantially smaller than the male share.

FÁS CVET: Number and proportion of participants on FÁS programmes by age and gender

1995 Age	Foundation		Skills		Employment		Total		% Total	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
15-24	1 104	942	4 383	5 248	5 718	4 827	11 205	11 017	50	50
25-34	283	87	1 128	1 384	6 975	9 620	8 386	11 091	43	57
35-49	877	51	1 303	589	5 514	14 623	7 694	15 263	34	66
50-64	307	16	318	150	1 059	6 032	1 684	6 198	21	79
65+	1			1	4	48	5	49	9	91
Total	2 572	1 096	7 132	7 372	19 270	35 150	28 974	43 618	40	60
%	70	30	49	51	35	65			%	%
2000 Age	Foundation		Skills		Employment		Total		% Total	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
15-24	1 511	1 062	2 758	2 626	2 723	555	6 992	4 243	62	38
25-34	717	380	1 387	1 498	9 721	2 909	11 825	4 787	71	29
35-49	1 504	295	1 565	920	12 660	11 063	15 729	12 278	56	44
50-64	869	92	772	290	3 304	8 845	4 945	9 227	35	65
65+	11	1	7	4	10	95	28	100	22	78
Total	4612	1830	6489	5338	28418	23467	39519	30635	56	44
%	72	28	55	45	55	45			%	%
2002 Age	Foundation		Skills		Employment		Total		% Total	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
15-24	1 733	1 118	2 208	2 157	460	227	4 401	3 502	56	44
25-34	1 021	441	1 140	1 323	6 684	1 727	8 845	3 491	72	28
35-49	1 692	413	1 345	887	11 185	8 177	14 222	9 477	60	40
50-64	971	231	711	355	4 018	8 407	5 700	8 993	39	61
65+	17	4	10	3	28	136	55	143	28	72
Total	5434	2207	5414	4725	22,375	18,674	33,223	25,606	56	44
%	71	29	53	47	55	45				

Source: FÁS

The gender break-down in the Foundation programmes remained constant over the time period with female participation averaging 70%. The gender break-down on the Skills Training courses was more evenly divided throughout the period but registered an increase in female participation in 2000. The gender break-down on the Employment programmes changed more dramatically. In 1995, approximately two-thirds of participants were male but by 2000, female participation had increased to 55% and this remained the situation in 2002. The increase in female share occurred in the groups up to age 49.

With regard to duration of unemployment, on the foundation and skills courses, the majority of participants were less than 6 months unemployed prior to taking up their programme. The length of period of unemployment decreased during the period. Whereas in 1995, 69% of trainees on foundation programmes were less than 6 months employed, by 2002, nearly three-quarters of trainees were less than 6 months employed prior to taking up training. The same situation applied to trainees on skills training courses. This probably reflected the improving labour market environment. The situation is reversed for the employment programmes where the majority (93%) were unemployed for over a year prior to taking up the programme in 2002. This is due to employment programmes being targeted at the long-term unemployed.

FÁS CVET: Proportion of Participants on FÁS programmes according to duration of unemployment

1995	Foundation	Skills	Employment
<6 Months	69	63	23
6 – 11 Months	8	14	7
1Year+	23	7	70
Total	100	100	100
2000			
< 6 months	67	69	7.5
6 – 11 months	9	11	0.5
1 Year+	24	20	92
Total	100	100	100
2002			
< 6 Months	74	76	6
6 – 11 Months	10	12	1
1 Year +	16	12	93
Total	100	100	100

Source: FÁS

B. CVET for young unemployed

The FÁS Traineeship programme, run in co-operation with employers, is an occupational skill development programme, targeted at new labour market entrants and unemployed persons and, as such, may form part of either initial or continuing vocational education and training. It should be noted that the majority of participants are aged under 25 and therefore by our definition are in receipt of initial vocational training – 62% of course participants were aged under 25 in 2002. However, the other third were aged over 25 and thus classified as CVT participants. The Traineeships are developed in consultation with the relevant social partners in each of the occupations concerned. Traineeships cover a wide range of different occupations outside the traditional craft occupations which are covered through apprenticeship. The courses

lead to certification by FETAC. The off-the-job training component takes place mainly in FÁS training centres located throughout the country. Workplace training provides planned and structured training, which is carried out under normal operational conditions. Trainees are assigned a mentor who supervises on-the-job training to an agreed workplace training plan which allows the trainees to build on the skills learned in the FÁS Training Centre.

Specific skills training courses provided by FÁS cover a wide range of skills (business, computers, engineering, services, etc) designed to meet the needs of unemployed jobseekers both young and old. In 2000, 57% of course participants were aged over 25 and this had increased to 60% in 2002. The courses are planned through labour market research and ongoing contact with industry requirements. The duration of these full-time courses is usually about 4 – 6 months and they take place in FÁS Training Centres located throughout the country or on the premises of contracted external providers of training. The content varies according to the course and the pedagogy is usually learner-centred. Trainees completing these courses receive a FETAC Certificate.

The Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS) provides second chance education and training for adults age 21 or more who have been receiving an unemployment payment for at least 6 months. Lone parents, dependent spouses and persons with disabilities who satisfy these criteria are also eligible. The courses are held in VEC Further Education Centres throughout the country. They are full-time and require 30 hours study a week to include Maths and English. The programme is of 1-2 years duration and participants may choose from a range of options including Foundation Level, and Levels 1, 2 or 3 within FETAC or subjects in the Junior or Leaving Certificate or a portfolio approach to certification. Local referral networks are in place linking VTOS with Social Welfare and FÁS Employment Services. In 2002, €46.814m was provided to fund 5,701 persons availing of the programme.

Total VTOS Participation on 1 January 2003

	Female	Male	Total
Numbers	3 821	1 880	5 701
%	67	33	100

Source: Department of Education and Science

Total VTOS Participation by Age on 1 January 2003

Age	F:21-24	M:21-34	M:25-39	F:25-39	F:40+	M:40+	Total
	709	304	1 775	792	1 337	784	5 701
%	12.44	5.33	31.13	13.90	23.45	13.75	100

Source: Department of Education and Science

A total of 82% of course participants in January, 2003 were aged 25 and over. Males aged over 25 accounted for 45% of the total cohort while females aged 25 plus accounted for 37%.

Fáilte Ireland (formerly known as CERT), the State Tourism Authority, is the national body responsible for training and development in the Irish tourism sector. As part of its remit, it provides training in hotel, catering and tourism skills for unemployed

adults to enable them to take advantage of job opportunities on offer. The courses include:

- Culinary Skills (cooking)
- Bar Skills
- Accommodation Skills
- Restaurant Skills
- General Assistant
- Reception Skills

The courses are generally short (13 – 16 weeks) and are run directly by Fáilte Ireland who bears the total costs of operation along with the payment of training allowances. Trainees receive an allowance equivalent to what they would receive in unemployment payments including payment for dependents where applicable. They also receive a transport allowance and an accommodation allowance (where necessary). Participants receive a certificate from FETAC. In 2002 a total of 2 322 adults participated on these Fáilte Ireland programmes including 1 115 participants on skills training 804 on Return to Work, 196 Long-term unemployed, 87 on Day Release and 120 International.

C. CVET for Long-Term Unemployed

FÁS runs a major programme for the long-term unemployed known as Community Employment. The programme provides part-time employment of one years' duration for the long-term unemployed and other socially disadvantaged groups (e.g. persons with disabilities and lone parents). Employment is provided by a wide range of voluntary and community (non-profit) organisations. The work carried out includes physical/environmental improvements, assistance in hospitals, personal services, community advice, and sporting, artistic and theatrical activity. Although most of the programmes consist of work, there is also increasing provision for training. This takes two forms; structured, project-based training and core skills training. The core skills module is accredited by FETAC. Although targeted at the most difficult-to-employ group, Community Employment has been successful in providing work and training to many persons. This, in turn, has enabled a significant minority to gain 'normal' employment, or proceed to further education or training.

The Job Initiative is a FÁS programme designed to assist long-term unemployed persons to prepare for work opportunities in the open labour market. The programme achieves this by providing participants with work experience, training and development opportunities on community projects. Participants work a 39 hour week, at the going rate of pay, for three years. During 2002, a total of 3 074 people participated on this scheme.

D. CVET for People with Disabilities

FÁS training courses and employment programmes are open to people with disabilities and in 2002 approximately 8% of participants had been in receipt of a disability payment during the month prior to commencing on a FÁS programme¹⁹. Additional training for persons with disabilities is carried out by Specialist Training Providers located in 55 training centres nationally. Training was provided for 1 419

¹⁹ 2003 Follow-Up Survey of FÁS Participants, Sen Roshin, Planning & Research, FÁS, May, 2003. Pg. 16

persons in 2003.²⁰ The Back To Education Initiative (BTEI) detailed in F below is also (but not exclusively) utilised by people with disabilities. The National Training and Development Institute (NTDI) is Ireland’s largest non-Government training organisation with more than 50 purpose-built training and employment units nationwide catering for over 4 500 students each year. The majority of the NTDI’s student body is made up of people with disabilities. The organisation offers over 40 different vocational programmes which are designed to lead either directly to jobs or to progression to further education and training. The courses come within five broad categories:

- Access and progression programmes
- IT and Business Studies
- Arts and Media
- Hospitality and Services Industries
- Industry and Craft Skills

Certifying bodies include FETAC, FÁS, City & Guilds, Fáilte Ireland, Teagasc, and the European Computer Driving Licence. Specialist training delivery for people with disabilities is centre-based, employer-based or delivered through distance learning. No fees apply to any NTDI courses. Students must be aged over 16. Depending on the previous experience of the trainee, the training may constitute either initial, or continuing vocational education and training.

E. CVET for Ethnic Minorities and/or Linguistic Minorities

Travelling people are found throughout Ireland – they live a nomadic life, often with considerable hardship. Traveller Training Workshops are run by Vocational Education Committees (VECs) with funding provided by the Department of Education and Science and participants also receive a training allowance. The training offered “provides a range of skills to trainees and endeavours to break the cycles of illiteracy and social deprivation and thereby enable them to become self-reliant and self-supporting members of society” (Eurydice, 1999). The workshops encourage participants to engage in the Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate Applied Programmes (secondary school certificated programmes) and to network with other providers within the context of a localised approach. The skills training covers industrial machinery, dressmaking, cooking, typing, wood and metal work and other crafts. Trainees may be engaged in either IVET or CVET.

Significantly more females than males take up these programmes; the majority age cohort participating is the 25 – 44 age group with a significant fall off after this age.

Traveller Training Centre participants by age and gender

Age	15-17	18-19	20-24	25-44	45-49	50+	Total	%
Male	113	17	13	25	3	2	173	12
Female	166	60	140	324	46	72	808	82
Total	279	77	153	349	49	74	981	100

Source: Employability Pillar Progress Report (January – December 2003)

²⁰ *FAS Annual Report, 2003, FAS, Dublin*

There are no specific continuing vocational educational and training courses for linguistic minorities in Ireland. Training and employment programmes and courses are open to all eligible candidates. From time to time, if necessary, modules on English language may be included on programmes. The Community Employment Programme (mentioned in C above) and the Back To Education Initiative (BTEI) detailed in F below, also attracts participants from ethnic and linguistic minorities.

F. CVET for Older Workers

FÁS courses are open to all unemployed people – both young and older and may therefore constitute either initial or continuing vocational education and training. However, FÁS runs two training courses particularly utilised by older persons – Return to Work for Women (see G) and Enterprise Training. The Enterprise Training programme is designed to help unemployed persons start their own business. Normally, persons on the course have the technical skills and experience required of their business, but need training in aspects such as planning, marketing, finance and business law. Course duration is generally 12 weeks and courses take place in FÁS Training Centres.

The Community Employment Programme and the Job Initiative Scheme (see C above) are also programmes which are particularly utilised by older workers.

The Department of Education and Science, Back to Education Initiative (BTEI) part-time measure comprises a range of second-chance educational and training options for adults to help them re-enter the labour market or upgrade their skills within it, with increased emphasis on flexibility of delivery and with a particular focus in the areas of ICT and technical training.

The priority is the one million adults with less than upper second level education. Tuition is free for means tested welfare recipients. Provision includes FETAC Foundation level, and Levels 1, 2 and 3. It also includes subjects in the Junior and Leaving Certificates. Courses are generally provided by VECs in their Further Education Colleges throughout the country. However, only 30% of provision may be targeted at those who have already achieved exam grades of at least 5D's in the Leaving Certificate and such provision must be directed at addressing targeted skills such as computing, language and child-care. In 2002, 6 000 places were made available under the BTEI. This increased to nearly 10 000 in 2003 and will increase on a phased basis with a view to having 20 000 extra places each year by 2006.

Total No. of BTEI (Part-time Programme) Participants classified by Age and Gender January – September 2003

Age	15 –24	25 –34	35 –44	45-54	55 –64	65+	Total	%
Male	488	894	491	422	264	186	2 745	28
Female	1 226	1 671	1 917	1 287	638	471	7 210	72
Total	1 714	2 565	2 408	1 709	902	657	9 955	
%	17	26	24	17	9	7	100	100

Source: Department of Education & Science. BTEI – Report on Implementation

Note: In a small number of cases, age profile was duplicated as an entry on Implementation Reports

The above Table, indicates that close to 10 000 individuals took part in courses under the BTEI (Part-time Programme) of which just over one-quarter were men and nearly

three-quarters were women. The relatively low rate of male participation suggests the need for specific strategies to attract men into further education and the formal learning process. This affirms patterns in other programmes that aim to address the educational needs of men with low or no qualifications. The age profile shows provision for participants ranging in age from 16 to 65 plus. Approximately 16% of take-up is accounted for by those in the 55 plus age groups. Provision is presently mainly addressing the educational needs of those between 25 and 54 years of age.

Analysis of participants' economic status reflects that the majority of participants on whom information was provided were unemployed - 42%; 11% were employed part-time and 19% were not in the labour market (figures not shown). A significant proportion of those unemployed (42%) were unemployed for over three years.

Unemployed Participants classified by length of time unemployed pre-BTEI activity

Months Unemployed	<6 Months %		6-11 %		12 - 23 %		24-35 %		36 + %	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Gender										
Total by Gender	3.1	9.3	3.5	8.0	4.9	11.2	3.8	11.4	11.1	30.9
National Total	12.4		11.5		16.2		15.3		42	

Source: BTEI Report on Implementation, Department of Education and Science

Note: Data was presented in respect of 97.4% of participants who were unemployed pre BTEI activity

The Table below provides some indication of the educational level of participants prior to commencing a course under the BTEI (Part-time Programme). It shows that the majority of participants, 69.2%, had less than upper second level education on entry to their chosen course.

Participants classified by Education Level prior to BTEI activity

Education Level	Male %	Female %	Total %
Primary Only	9.0	28.8	29.8
Lower Secondary	8.9	30.5	39.4
Upper Secondary (completed)	4.0	16.1	20.1
Apprenticeship	0.3	0.2	0.5
PLC	0.2	1.7	1.9
Third Level (non degree)	0.8	2.5	3.3
Primary Degree or above	0.7	1.8	2.5
Other Training	2.0	5.9	7.9

Source : BTEI Report on Implementation, Department of Education and Science. Note: In a small number of cases information on more than one education level achieved was provided by participants

G. CVET for “Women Returners”

The new Gateway for Women initiative was launched by in November 2002.

Gateway is a tailored response to the individual needs of women returning to work

and addresses issues experienced by women returnees in gaining access to and participating in training and employment. The overall aim of the initiative is to:

- Create access points that could harness the potential of women returners
- Establish a strategy to encourage women to participate in the workforce

The project was piloted in four regions during 2002 – 2003 with plans for its extension to other regions in 2004. The initiative is funded by FÁS and the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform under the Equality for Women Measure and is supported by the Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC), the Irish Congress of Trades' Unions (ICTU), the National Women's Council of Ireland and Northside Partnership, Dublin.

The FÁS Return to Work for Women programme is aimed at women who have been out of the workforce for some time (usually to look after children) and now wish to return to work. The programme is typically of 12 weeks duration and provides social and interpersonal skills development, confidence-building and up-dating of skills as required. Trainees either proceed to work or further training after the course. In 2002, 1 570 persons participated on this programme.

Fáilte Ireland also provide courses for women returning to the workforce. Return to Work Programmes are run widely throughout the country, often in conjunction with local community-based organisations. The programme is typically 6 – 8 weeks and takes place on a part-time basis. Participants receive an allowance. In 2002, 804 persons participated on this programme.

050302: Providers

The providers of CVET for the unemployed have been referred to in section 05031 above. At national level, CVET for the unemployed is mainly provided by FÁS and by the Department of Education and Science through the Vocational Education Committees (VECs). Fáilte Ireland is the provider for the tourism sector and the National Training and Development Institute provides training for people with disabilities.

050303: Access

A. Access to CVET for Unemployed People

FÁS provides a wide range of training courses of an industrial and commercial nature for unemployed and redundant workers, persons wishing to update their skills and other persons entering the labour market. Thus training carried out by FÁS provides both Initial and Continuing Training, depending on the status of the trainee. The courses are designed to equip participants with skills that will enhance their prospects of securing employment and progressing in their careers. Persons seeking training are interviewed by the local FÁS Employment Service office and are directed to appropriate courses. No fees are payable. The programmes are both full-time and part-time and their duration is usually 4 – 6 months. Costs for all day courses are borne by FÁS. Training allowances, equivalent to social welfare rates, are paid to trainees. Accommodation costs are subsidised for trainees who must live away from home during the course. Transport costs are subsidised for trainees who have to travel three

miles or more from their residence to the place of training. FÁS provides support for the childcare costs of persons who wish to undertake FÁS vocational training (excluding apprenticeships, distance learning programmes and night training). The rates paid are a contribution towards the costs of childcare and payment is made directly to the childcare provider on behalf of persons who attend either full-time or part-time training programmes. The contribution does not cover the full cost of the childcare provision.

B. Access to CVET for Young Unemployed People.

Access to FÁS Traineeships and FÁS Specific Skills Training is the same as in A above – FÁS Courses for unemployed people.

The Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS), delivered by Vocational Educational Committees (VECs), enables certain unemployed people (adults age 21 or more who have been receiving an unemployment payment for at least 6 months), lone parents and people with disabilities to take up full time education/training at vocational educational centres around the country. There are no fees payable and books and materials are provided. Funds are provided by the Department of Education and Science to VECs for childcare support to encourage parents to take part in VTOS for the unemployed. The funds provide for direct provision of crèche facilities in centres, or in rented premises, including staff, equipment/ refurbishment, rental, insurance and other overheads, and the purchase of places on existing community or commercial crèches. Trainees receive an allowance in lieu of welfare entitlements.

The Fáilte Ireland training courses are open to people who are registered as unemployed or are a mature adult wishing to return to the workforce. They need to be aged 17 years (18 for the Bar course) by the time the course starts. The courses are available year-round and are full-time, usually lasting between 3 – 4 months. Training is free and participants receive a weekly training grant, a weekly travel allowance and free lunch and refreshments.

C. Access to CVET for Long-Term Unemployed

Community Employment Programmes are active labour market interventions designed to help long-term unemployed people re-enter the active workforce by breaking their experience of unemployment through a return to work routine and by assisting them enhance and develop both their technical and personal skills. Generally, participants need to be aged 25 years or over and be in receipt of unemployment or lone-parent payments for a minimum of one year. These restrictions are reduced for members of the travelling community; persons with disabilities and refugees. The programmes are part-time and participants are paid a weekly wage. Their payments include a personal allowance and a child/dependent allowance if applicable. Participants may also retain some secondary benefits. They can also engage in other part-time work outside the time spent working on the project.

The Job Initiative is open to persons who are aged over 35 years, who have previously been unemployed for 5 years or more, and are in receipt of an appropriate social welfare payment over that period. Participants are paid the rate for the job and operate a 39 hour week. The child dependent portion of any social welfare payment may be

retained for 13 weeks, or alternatively, the participant may qualify for Family Income Support if they have children. Medical cards can be retained for three years. Entitlements to holidays, sick leave, maternity leave, grievance and disciplinary procedures and taxation apply, as in other full-time jobs.

D. Access to CVET for People with Disabilities

Access to FÁS training courses for people with disabilities is the same as access to FÁS Courses for unemployed people (see A above).

The National Training & Development Institute (NTDI) has developed a system of training delivery which enables students to reach their potential in a manner which takes account of personal, social and environmental requirements. This system is delivered by a multi-disciplinary team of some 575 teachers, trainers, curriculum development officers, psychologists, counsellors and employment support staff. All programmes are designed to meet individual needs so that each student can achieve their vocational goals at their own pace and within a lifelong learning framework. No fees apply. There are no formal entry requirements although students must be aged over 16. A comprehensive range of additional supports is also available such as career planning and individual counselling programmes, personal and social skills, literacy and numeracy.

In addition to programmes at NTDI's countrywide network of centres, students can avail of employer based training with host companies and distance learning which enables people, particularly with mobility difficulties, to study from home.

E. Access to CVET for Ethnic and/or Linguistic Minorities

Access to Traveller Training Workshops is the same as access to FÁS Courses for unemployed people (see A above).

There are no specific continuing vocational educational and training courses for linguistic minorities in Ireland. Training and employment programmes and courses are open to all EU citizens including the new member states.

F. Access to CVET for Older Workers

The access requirements and provision for older workers on FÁS courses are as those for all FÁS courses (see A above).

The Back To Education Initiative (BTEI) is intended to make further education provision more accessible. High priority is given to increasing participation by individuals and groups who experience particular and acute barriers to participation in education and training, including adults with less than upper-second level education, long-term unemployed, lone parents, people with disabilities, people for whom English is not the mother tongue who require literacy and language supports. Tuition is free for means tested welfare recipients. There is a fee reduction of 30% of tuition costs for unwaged adults with less than upper second level education. All others pay fees. A flexible approach to address timing of provision, entry and admission criteria; delivery methods; assessment and validation of learning; accumulation and transferability of credits, is encouraged.

G. Access to CVET for “Women Returners”

Priority on the Gateway for Women programme is given to women returning to work. However, prior work experience is not required for access. Participants do not need any qualifications and do not need to be in receipt of social welfare payments.

The access requirements and provisions for “women returners” on FÁS courses are as those outlined in A above.

The Fáilte Ireland Return to Work courses are provided on a part-time basis. They are held in Fáilte Ireland training centres and outreach centres and temporary centres located throughout the country. Childcare provision is dependent on the centre attended, however provision is limited. Trainees receive an allowance equivalent to what they would receive in unemployment payments. This includes payment for dependents where applicable. They also receive a transport allowance and an accommodation allowance (where necessary).

050304: Quality Assurance

One of the gaps in the provision of vocational education and training in Ireland until recently was the absence of a unified comprehensive framework for validation and certification. The Qualifications (Education and Training) Act (1999) established the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI). The remit of the Authority encompasses further and higher education and has three main functions.

- To establish and maintain a framework of qualifications based on standards of knowledge, skill or competence to be acquired by learners regardless of where, when or how such learning takes place whether in institutions or colleges of education and training, or in the workplace or the community.
- To facilitate lifelong learning through the promotion of access, transfer and progression for all learners including those who have special needs.
- To establish and promote the maintenance and improvement of the standards of awards of the further and higher education and training sector, other than in the universities and to liaise with bodies outside the state for the mutual recognition of awards at transnational level.

The national framework of qualifications is a new development and is not just an amalgam of previous awards and systems. It is an outcomes based approach to the recognition of learning. It is “a framework for the development, recognition and award of qualifications in the State, based on standards of knowledge, skill or competence to be acquired by learners” (Qualifications Act, 1999).

On 11 June 2001, the remaining parts of the Act were enacted and the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) and the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) were established. The remit of the two new awarding Councils is to make national certification available for all education and training in the State, other than awards made in respect of primary and second-level education, the Dublin Institute of Technology and the Universities.

The two awards Councils have three principal functions:

1. The establishment of policies and criteria for the making of awards and the validation of programmes;
2. The determination of standards of knowledge, skill or competence to be acquired by learners, before an award may be made by a Council or recognised by a Council, and
3. The making and recognition of awards where persons have achieved the required standards as set out.

Members of the Councils are drawn from a wide spectrum including learners and providers of further and higher education and training and the social partners.

Under the terms of the Act, any provider can apply to either of these Councils for validation of a programme of education or training regardless of where it is provided. Such programmes can take place in institutions, in the workplace or in the community and be either part-time or full-time. Ensuring the quality of awards is central to the tasks confronting the Councils. The awards made should be fully recognised both nationally and internationally. The Councils also provide for progression and transfer of students, with full recognition for their studies to date, to Institutes and Universities.

FETAC's remit includes validation of further education and training programmes and the establishment of quality assurance mechanisms. The validation of prior and experiential learning, work-based learning and community and private sector education come under its aegis. It supercedes the functions of the National Council for Vocational Awards and has taken over the certification functions of the main training institutions, FÁS – Training and Employment Authority, National Tourism Certification Board, Teagasc – Agriculture and Food Development Authority and the Fisheries Board, thus bringing together former certification agencies under one banner. The courses and programmes described in this chapter all have FETAC recognised certification.

0504: CVET AT THE INITIATIVE OF ENTERPRISES OR SOCIAL PARTNERS

In recent years, continuing vocational education and training (CVET) in Ireland has moved to a more prominent place on the political agenda than it occupied in the 1980s and 1990s. One reason for this change in emphasis has been the growing awareness in Government, among employers and in trade unions that in a FÁS-changing world economy, Irish companies would need to become more responsive to change and become more competitive and that Irish workers would require on-going education and training to keep their skills up-to-date and relevant.

The CVTS2 Survey of Ireland²¹ found that 79% of companies carried out some training in 1999. Nearly all companies employing 50 or more persons trained. Training was most prevalent in manufacturing and financial/business services,

²¹ Company Training in Ireland, Fox, R, Doyle, M, FÁS, 2001

whereas construction and transport/communication companies were less likely to train. Even taking account of size and sector, overseas subsidiaries were more likely to train.

About one-quarter of a million employees attended formal training courses during the year accounting for 41% of all employees. Employees in larger companies were more likely to receive formal training. Overall, a higher proportion of females than males attended training courses. Employees spent 1.4 million days on training courses; the equivalent of 2.4 days per employee. There was a tendency for managers/professionals and clerical/services workers to be more likely to receive training, whether formal or otherwise, than craft and other manual workers.

Health/safety/environmental protection training was the most commonly provided type of training course. This amounted to 20% of all training course time. The other two major areas were computing/IT (17%) and machine operation/quality control (16%).

The remainder of this section presents statistics on the participation of employed persons in education/training in Ireland in 2002. It is based on the results of the 2002 Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS)²². In considering the results of the survey, a distinction must be drawn between two definitions of employment. The ILO definition (which is increasingly the recognised definition) classifies someone as employed if they carry out paid work for one hour or more during the survey week. The Principal Economic Status (PES) classification is based on respondents' personal assessment of their situation (e.g. working, student, unemployed).

Percentage of Employed (ILO, 25-64) Receiving Education/Training by Age Group

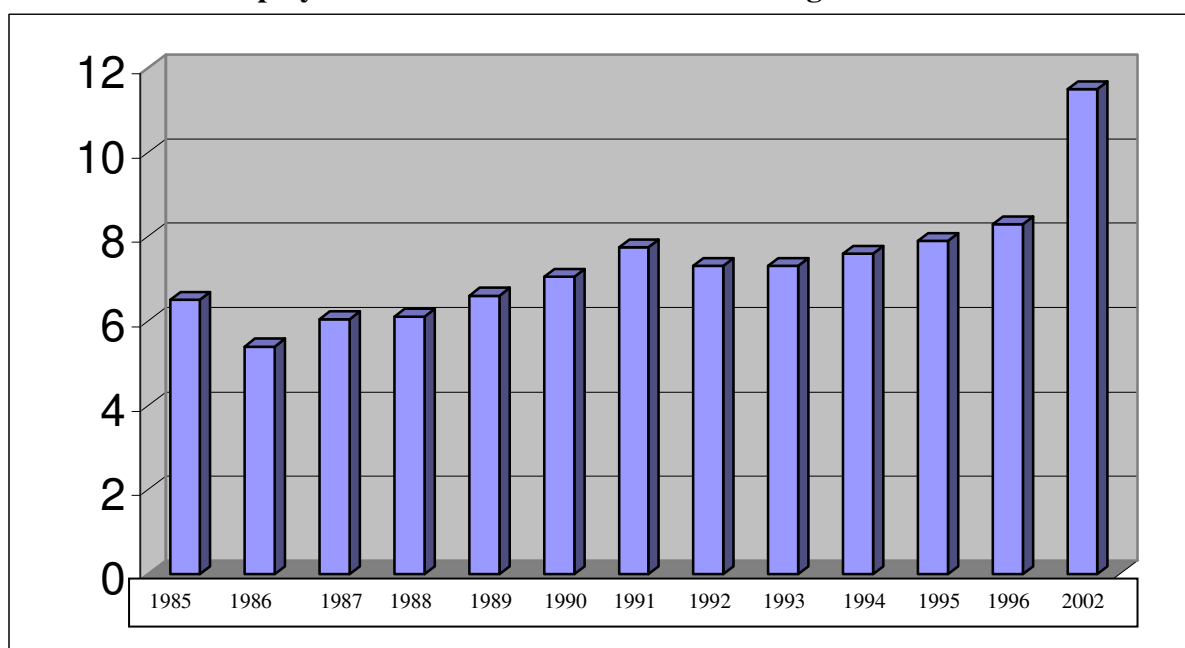
Age Group	1991	1996	2002
25-34	6.5	8.4	10.1
35-44	4.7	6.5	8.9
45-54	3.0	3.9	7.0
55-64	1.5	1.7	4.1
Total 25-64	4.6	6.1	8.3

Source: Participation of the Employed in Education/Training 2002. *Results from the QNHS 2002*. Fox, Roger, FÁS, Dublin, Ireland

The percentage of the employed aged 25-64 receiving education/training has risen from 4.6% in 1991, to 6.1% in 1996 and 8.3% in 2002. The increase has been spread across all age groups. The largest increase has been for the older age groups, even though they remain at a lower rate overall. A longer-term perspective is supplied in the Figure below, (it contains a mixture of PES and ILO-based data). It shows that a steady increase in participation rates has taken place over the two decades with a particularly rapid increase during the 'Celtic Tiger' years.

²² Participation of the Employed in Education/Training 2002. *Results from the Quarterly National Household Survey 2002*, Fox, Roger, Planning and Research, FÁS, Dublin, Ireland.

% of Employed who Received Education/Training 1985-2002



Source: 1985-1996 data from *Training of the Employed in Ireland: Trends and Comparisons*, R. Fox, 1998.
 Note: From 1991 based on ILO employment status, prior to that PES. Includes all age groups.

The following Table shows the number and percentage of all employed persons receiving education/training by age group and gender. Considering only persons aged 25-64, 113,100 received Education/Training in 2002.

Employed Persons (PES) Receiving Education/Training by Gender and Age Group, 2002

Age Group	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
15-24	23 800	16.8	14 100	12.7	38 000	15.0
25-34	21 700	8.1	26 300	11.7	47 900	9.7
35-44	16 200	6.8	19 800	11.7	36 000	8.8
45-54	10 100	5.0	12 500	9.7	22 700	6.9
55-64	3 600	3.2	2 900	5.7	6 500	4.0
15-64	75 400	7.8	75 600	11.0	151 000	9.2

Source: Participation of the Employed in Education/Training 2002. Results from the QNHS 2002. Fox, Roger, FÁS, Dublin, Ireland

Two features stand out from the Table; female participation in education/training was much higher than male, and younger age groups were more likely to receive education/training than older persons. This was particularly the case for men, where participation rates for those aged 45 plus were 5% or less. Conversely, rates among

females were 10-13% for all age groups up to age 54. Overall, as the figures show, the female rate of 11% was 41% (3.2 percentage points) higher than the male rate, so that despite there being 280,000 more males employed than females, there were the same number of males and females receiving Education/Training. The rapid decline in male participation across the age groups is very striking. Males, it seems, are much more likely to receive education/training while young, but, when older, are very much less likely to receive education/training.

From ILO-based figures, it is possible to distinguish between employees and others (i.e. the self-employed and owner/managers).

Percentage of Employed Persons (ILO) 25-64 Receiving Education/Training by Status and Gender

	Male	Female	Total
Employees	7.9	11.3	9.5
Self-Employed/Other	2.5	7.0	3.3
All Employed	6.4	11.0	8.3

Source: Participation of the Employed in Education/Training 2002. *Results from the QNHS 2002. Fox, Roger, FÁS, Dublin, Ireland*

Overall, participation rates of self-employed/other were significantly lower than those of employees. This was particularly the case for males. As a much higher percentage of males were self-employed, their lower participation rates had a greater negative impact on the overall average of all employed persons. It was also found that the higher rates of participation of employees compared to non-employees applied to all age groups, for both males and females.

The Table below presents the results according to gender and main sector. Overall, the percentage of employed persons (ILO-basis) aged 25-64 receiving ET varied from 2.4% in agriculture to 16.3% in the education sector. In general, the rate of participation in education and training was much higher in the (mainly white-collar) private services sectors, such as financial and business services, and the public services, such as public administration/defence, education and health (all over 10%). The largely public sector, electricity, gas, water, also had a participation rate greater than ten percent. Manufacturing had a below-average rate of 7.1%, while construction, wholesale/retail and hotels/restaurants all had low rates of 4%.

Education/Training of Employed (ILO, 25-64) by Sector and Gender

Sector	Males		Females		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Agriculture	1 600	1.9	600	5.9	2 200	2.4
Manufacturing	10 700	6.7	5 600	7.9	16 300	7.1
Electricity, Gas, Water	1 100	12.0	300	16.7	1 400	12.7
Construction	5 500	4.2	900	12.3	6 400	4.6
Wholesale, Retail	3 400	3.7	4 800	5.8	8 200	4.7
Hotels, Restaurants	1 300	4.4	1 800	4.4	3 100	4.4
Transport, Storage, Communications	3 600	4.8	2 200	9.8	5 800	6.0
Financial	2 700	11.1	4 300	13.7	6 900	12.3
Other Business	7 100	9.7	6 100	10.2	13 300	10.0

Services						
Public Admin, Defence	5 900	13.3	5 500	14.9	11 400	14.1
Education	4 300	13.7	12 000	17.6	16 200	16.3
Health, Social Work	3 200	11.1	16 300	14.4	19 400	13.7
Other Work	1 700	5.3	3 200	9.8	4 900	7.6
Total	53 000	6.4	64 500	11.0	117 400	8.3

Note: Fisheries, and Mining, Quarrying, Turf, are not shown in the table as the Numbers receiving ET in these sectors was negligible.

Regarding gender differences, it is clear that the male-female differential persisted even within sectors. In other words, the male-female differential was not solely due to the fact that female employment was more concentrated in the services sectors.

The following two Tables show the disaggregated proportions of employed persons receiving education and training in Public and Private sectors.

Education/Training of Employed (ILO, 25-64) in the Public Sector by Sector and Gender, 2002

Sector	Males		Females		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Electricity, Gas, Water	1 100	12.0	300	16.7	1 400	12.7
Public Admins. Defence	5 900	13.3	5 500	14.9	11 400	14.1
Education	4 300	13.7	12 000	17.6	16 200	16.3
Health, Social Work	3 200	11.1	16 300	14.4	19 400	13.7
Total	14 500	12.7	34 100	15.5	48 400	14.5

Source: Derived from Participation of the Employed in Education/Training 2002. Results from the QNHS 2002. Fox, Roger, FÁS, Dublin, Ireland

Education/Training of Employed (ILO, 25-64) in the Private Sector by Sector and Gender, 2002

Sector	Males		Females		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Agriculture	1 600	1.9	600	5.9	2,200	2.4
Manufacturing	10 700	6.7	5 600	7.9	16 300	7.1
Construction	5 500	4.2	900	12.3	6 400	4.6
Wholesale/Retail	3 400	3.7	4 800	5.8	8 200	4.7
Hotels/Restaurants	1 300	4.4	1 800	4.4	3 100	4.4
Transport, Storage, Communications	3 600	4.8	2 200	9.8	5 800	6.0
Financial	2 700	11.1	4 300	13.7	6 900	12.3
Other Business Services	7 100	9.7	6 100	10.2	13 300	10.0
Other Work	1 700	5.3	3 200	9.8	4 900	7.6
Total	37 600	5.4	29 500	8.2	67 100	6.3

Source: Derived from Participation of the Employed in Education/Training 2002. Results from the QNHS 2002. Fox, Roger, FÁS, Dublin, Ireland

The following Table presents the results by main occupational group and gender.

% Employed (ILO-Basis, 25-64) Receiving Education/Training by Occupational Group and Gender

Occupation	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Managers	10 300	5.3	8 600	11.2	19 000	7.0
Professionals	10 000	11.4	14 300	18.1	24 300	14.6
Assoc. Professionals	6 400	11.5	14 000	17.5	20 300	14.9
Clerical	3 500	8.6	13 300	10.0	16 700	9.6
Craft	7 300	4.6	700	7.3	8 100	4.8
Personal Services	4 400	8.0	6 200	8.8	10 600	8.4
Sales	2 400	6.6	3 300	5.7	5 700	6.0
Operatives	5 700	4.7	1 100	3.5	6 800	4.4
Other, Unskilled	2 900	3.9	2 800	5.7	5 800	4.7
Total	53 000	6.4	64 500	11.0	117 400	8.3

Source: Participation of the Employed in Education/Training 2002. *Results from the QNHS 2002. Fox, Roger, FÁS, Dublin, Ireland*

Professionals and associate professionals (sub-degree third-level holders) are most likely to undergo education and training. In both these groups 15% of employed persons received education/training during the four prior weeks, with females much more likely than males to be receiving - 18% compared to 11%. The next highest rate of participation was clerical (9.6%) followed by personal services (8.4%). Manual workers, whether craft (4.8%) or operatives (4.4%), were low participating groups.

It is a common finding of surveys of employee training that training participation is skewed towards higher-educated employees.

Employees (ILO-Basis, 25-64) obtaining Education/Training by Education Level

	Males		Females		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Primary/None	2 800	2	3 000	5.1	5 800	2.9
Lower Secondary	6 100	3.8	4 200	5.3	10 300	4.3
Upper Secondary	10 300	5.8	11 600	7.9	22 000	6.8
Further Education/Training	6 500	5.8	7 600	9.5	14 100	7.3
Third-Level	26 100	12.2	36 800	17.6	62 900	14.9
Total	53 000	9.6	64 500	11.00	117 400	8.3

Note: A further small category 'Other/Not stated' was excluded from the statistics above. Hence, The total is not the sum of the categories shown.

One-half of all employees receiving education/training were third-level graduates (62 900 out of 117 400) – even though third-level employees made up only 30% of all employees (422 700 out of 1.413 600). Someone with third-level education was twice as likely to be receiving education/training than someone with a Leaving Certificate, and four times more likely than someone with primary-level education. These differences were marginally less for females, though still very large.

050401: Measures to guarantee provision in enterprises

There is no legal entitlement to education/training leave in Ireland – it is at the discretion of the employer. However, some of the bigger organisations provide paid release for employees to participate in approved courses. Unpaid leave for up to three years is prevalent in the public service, particularly among teachers. The Task Force on Lifelong Learning report²³ noted that a majority of its members were of the view that a strong case exists in principle for the introduction of a learning leave entitlement which would be underpinned in law. However, employer representatives on the Task Force expressed strong opposition to the introduction of statutory paid learning leave.

The recent Enterprise Strategy Group report²⁴ notes that participation in education/training is significantly underdeveloped. It states that employees need to be encouraged to up-skill, broaden their skills and renew existing skills to keep pace with change. There are particular problems in relation to the needs of those with lower-level educational qualifications working in lower-level occupations. The establishment of a 'One-Step-Up' initiative is recommended to apply to the whole workforce, but with particular attention to those with low-level qualifications. The focus of the programme should be on providing transferable skills enabling employees to progress to the next level on the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) framework. It suggests that the process should follow a loop of diagnosis (of needs and opportunities), participation in learning, followed by further diagnosis.

In a recently published report – The Irish Labour Market Review 2004, FÁS has recommended the introduction of paid learning leave for low-skilled, low-qualified, employees.

050402: Measures to support training in SMEs

Currently financial subsidies are provided to reduce the costs of training to companies in various circumstances. FÁS, Skillnets, County Enterprise Boards, Enterprise Ireland and Fáilte Ireland all provide financial subsidies either on the basis of a particular type of company (e.g. high-growth potential), size of company, (e.g. micro), type of skill (e.g. ECDL), sectoral grouping (e.g. food) or type of employee (e.g. low skill operatives in declining industries).

²³ *Report of the Taskforce on Lifelong Learning*, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Dublin, The Stationery Office, 2002.

²⁴ Enterprise Strategy Group, 2004, *Ahead of the Curve – Ireland's Place in the Global Economy*

FÁS, the National Training Authority, provides a range of supports to different sectors of industry. One of the major forms of support, in operation until 2002, was the Training Support Scheme (TSS). This Scheme provided financial grants to SMEs (up to 150 employees) seeking to improve the skills of all levels of employees within a company. In 2002 a total of 2 133 companies were supported under this Scheme in relation to the training of 10 316 employees. Alongside the TSS (which in 2002 covered companies in the commercial, financial and transport sectors), FÁS operated a Construction Training Incentive Scheme for companies in the Construction sector – 34 710 employees were trained under this Scheme in 2002.

FÁS' main current programme to provide financial support for employee training is the Competency Development Programme (further details are in 050403). This programme is focused on the needs of employees in priority skill areas. While still at an early stage, the Programme has the potential to deliver a large impact in up-skilling the workforce. There is a particular need for the up-skilling of low-skill employees and employees in traditional industries.

The Excellence through People (ETP) Programme is Ireland's national standard for human resource development. FÁS manages this voluntary initiative that aims to improve a company's operation through staff training and improving employee communication and involvement in the company. Ireland and Britain are the only two countries in the world to have developed a recognised national standard in this area. There has been a steady increase in the number of companies holding the Excellence through People Award – 234 at the end of 2002.

The FÁS Cluster Programme aims to assist small businesses in the services sector develop their competitive edge by strengthening their capabilities in management-related areas. The Programme is targeted at companies in the early years of their development. It was piloted in three of the FÁS regions – Dublin, the Southwest and the Southeast. Thirty-one companies participated all of which had less than 50 employees and whose turnover was less than 4m euro. The pilot was completed in April 2004 and a second phase of the pilot has since commenced.

There are four phases to the Programme:

1. Diagnostic Assessment – this consists of a training needs analysis and preparation of a training plan conducted by a FÁS Training Advisor in conjunction with the company.
2. Cluster Programme – based on the recommendations of Phase 1, participating companies are offered up to twenty days consultancy over a six to twelve month period. This is based on the needs of the company and is usually in the areas of Finance, Marketing, Industrial Engineering and Quality Control. Additional disciplines can be added if required.
3. Return on Training Investment (ROTI) measures the effects of training and is designed to provide a focus and direction to help decide on future HRD in the company.

4. Benchmarking. Companies who reach the final stage of the programme are introduced to a benchmarking exercise which is a systematic and analytical examination of a company's operations.

Enterprise Ireland (www.enterprise-ireland.com) is a government organisation charged with assisting the development of Irish enterprises. It aims to work in partnership with client companies to develop sustainable competitive advantage, leading to a significant increase in profitable sales, exports and employment. Its clients are companies in manufacturing and internationally-traded services. It provides services in the human resources development area including training and development programmes. It also provides financial supports for the following five distinctive categories of business:

- Exploring New Business Opportunities
- High Potential Start-Up Companies
- Existing Company Expansion
- Building International Competitiveness
- Research and Development

The pilot enterprise-led training networks programme, operated by Skillnets Ltd., (www.skillnets.com) has made a significant contribution to in-company training over the last few years. Skillnets was established on an initial three-year pilot basis to address the problem of low investment in training in small and medium enterprises in Ireland. It comprises an enterprise-led approach to training and development through flexible training delivery methods among those enterprises that previously had difficulty accessing or benefiting from training. Skillnets, which represents employer, employee and Government organisations, is funded under the National Training Fund. Between 1999 – 2001, a total of 58 networks were supported with funding of over €11 million, involving 4 000 companies and 13 000 employees. The second round, 2002 – 2005, will see €15 million being invested. Fifty-five networks involving 2 400 companies are involved and it is projected that more than 14 000 people will have received training by the end of the programme.

Companies can customise training to their specific needs. In each training network, companies come together to decide what training they need, how, where and when it will be delivered. This approach is particularly appropriate for small and medium-sized businesses that may lack the time, expertise or money to develop training customised to their specific needs and directly relevant to their size and industry sector. Between 1999 – 2001, over 75% of participating companies were SMEs and in the 2002 – 2005 round, over 83% are SMEs.

Many of the networks are sector-based – this was not a requirement imposed by Skillnets but a trend that emerged from the companies themselves - and are located throughout the country. Other networks are made up of companies getting together to bring training into their area and make it accessible to the local industry.

The results of an evaluation are presented in the Skillnets final report 1999-2002²⁵. The report notes that:

²⁵ Skillnets: Final Report of the Training Networks Programme 1999-2002. (2003)

- Training in small firms participating in the programme is now more of an ongoing and integral part of their operation rather than merely an option.
- Training is based on real and clearly identified company needs and, since it is led by the firms themselves, it is completely linked with work. It is triggered by the demands of work, and happens increasingly on the job.
- As a result of this close link with processes, training tends to become flexible, delivered as and when it is needed (many times at weekends) to achieve specific results.
- Definitions of skills become less generalised and more focused and precise. Several networks have defined core competencies for skill and functional areas linked to a process of continuous training and certification.

FÁS and Enterprise Ireland recently commissioned a study²⁶ of management skills in SMEs on behalf of the Expert Group on Future Skill Needs. The study concludes that “serious deficiencies permeate the Irish SME sector, and that these deficiencies have a substantial negative impact on the economic performance of the sector. As the SME sector dominates the indigenous part of the economy, this has major national economic implications”. As management development is the main tool available to improve management capabilities in SMEs, the report argues that it deserves to be accorded a high policy priority.

The report emphasises that the principal problem in SME management development is not the financial cost but the perceived cost-benefit. Employers need to be persuaded of the benefits of management development and this can be achieved by making training courses much more relevant and accessible to SME managers.

050403: Measures to Support Training for Enterprises in Specific Economic Sectors

FÁS - the National Training Authority is involved, in co-operation with industry representatives, in the identification of sectoral training needs and the development of suitable training programmes in response, supported by financial incentives. In 2003, FÁS commenced a new Competency Development Programme aimed at raising the competency level of targeted employees in particular occupations within specific sectors. The programme provides a training subsidy to enhance the competencies of specific members of a company’s workforce. The programme is open to firms whose employment level is 250 employees or less in the private sector. The following sectors are within the scope of the programme:

- Business related Services
- Chemicals
- Clothing, Footwear and Textiles
- Construction
- Contract Cleaning Services
- Engineering/Electronics
- Film and TV
- Food and Drink

²⁶ McIver Consulting/Tansey, Webster, Stewart, SME Management Development in Ireland, 2004 (forthcoming)

- Logistics/Software/Transport
- Motor
- Printing, Paper and Packaging
- Retail/Wholesale

Within the above sectors, priority is given to those individual employees who require up-skilling, cross-sectoral skilling and portable skills development. For identified skill needs under the programme, financial subsidies will be provided to reduce the cost of approved training courses. The training courses can be delivered by commissioned training and, where this is not an option, by open-market training.

The Construction Skills Certification Scheme was developed by FÁS in consultation with specialist working parties representing specific occupational groups and with the support of the Construction Industry Training Committee. A feature of the scheme, which has been endorsed by the Construction Industry Federation (CIF), Local Authorities and the Irish Congress of Trades' Unions (ICTU), is that it provides for the reinforcement of competencies at five yearly intervals.

The aims of the scheme are to:

- Promote the delivery of training and certification for specific non-craft occupations (plant operator, roofer, construction operative, scaffolding).
- Raise standards of health and safety awareness in order to reduce risks and accidents throughout the industry.
- Promote the use of skilled operatives within the construction industry and provide certification for international recognition.

Operatives who reach the standards as determined by the scheme are eligible to apply for registration which is valid for 5 years. Over 2,000 registration cards were issued in 2002.

Teagasc (www.teagasc.ie), the National Agriculture and Food Development Authority provides a range of services, which include advice, research, education and training, to the agricultural and food industries in Ireland. In addition to offering third-level and vocational courses for young people, Teagasc provides training for food industry personnel in food safety, quality, process and product development. Teagasc has a resource of over 200 teachers and trainers operating from 8 colleges and 80 local training centres and research centres.

To meet the need for continuing education in the sector, Teagasc provides a comprehensive range of adult training programmes at local offices in each county. Each year over 10,000 farmers and/or their partners participate in courses ranging from 12.5 hours up to certificate level. A modular approach, with standardised syllabi and assessment procedures, are used for all adult training programmes. The courses are nationally accredited by FETAC and participants have the option of accumulating modules and progression to FETAC awards. Agricultural Courses include:

- 100 Hour Basic Agricultural Courses
- 80 Hour Farm Management Courses
- Advanced 120 hour Courses in Dairying, Tillage, Drystock etc.
- Rural Viability Modules
- Technology and Business Modules

- Diversified Enterprise Courses
- Information Technology Courses
- Environment/Food Safety Courses
- Discussion Groups

Because of the major shift towards part-time farming, Teagasc is currently developing e-learning courses for part-time farmers. It is planned to establish an e-College in the near future.

Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) (www.ibm.ie) is the Irish State agency with responsibility for developing the Irish Sea Fishing and Aquaculture industries. BIM provides a range of services including advisory, financial, technical, marketing and training supports to all sectors of the Irish seafood industry. It provides training in three broad categories – catching, fish farming and seafood processing. The training that BIM carries out provides both initial and continuing training and in 2002 a total of 1,867 persons attended BIM courses.

An Bord Altranais (www.nursingboard.ie) is the statutory regulatory body for the nursing profession in Ireland and is responsible for both initial and continuing education and training for the sector. With regard to continuing vocational education and training, post-registration (i.e. post initial training qualification) courses fall into two categories.

Post-Registration Category 1 courses include in-service training/education, seminars, study days, conferences and refresher courses. In 2002, 213 Post-Registration Category 1 courses were approved.

Post-Registration Category 2 courses are specialist courses and exclude those courses leading to registration. The courses must have a minimum duration of 6 months. Examples in 2002 include: Nursing Diploma in Safety, Health and Welfare at Work; Higher-Diplomas in Public Health Nursing, Palliative Care Nursing, Community Intellectual Disability Nursing, and Cognitive Behavioural Psychotherapy. MSc/Graduate Nursing Diplomas in Addiction and Substance-Related Difficulties, Child and Adolescent Mental Health, Community Mental Health and Acute Mental Health.

The Garda College (www.garda.ie) is the main centre for training the Irish Police Force. Training is delivered through five schools which provide a broad range of (mainly continuing) training and development programmes for senior management level down to student gardai (initial training). The five schools are management training, promotions training, in-service training, specialist training and student/probationer training.

Training for Teachers is supported by the In-Career Development Unit (ICDU) in the Department of Education and Science. The ICDU was established in 1994 to develop, manage, monitor, fund and evaluate a national programme of in-service training for teachers/tutors/management at first, second and further education levels. The in-service programme is designed to meet the professional development needs of teachers generally and the particular needs of teachers/tutors involved in:

- New subjects, programmes and revised curricula in schools
- School management, including planning
- Special education and learning support (formerly remedial)
-

The in-service programme is provided through Teacher Training Colleges, universities, agencies and organisations outside the Department who act in accordance with criteria laid down by ICDO. Current priorities include:

- Continued enhancement of the Primary Curriculum Support Programme.
- Co-ordination of the extensive range of support programmes at 2nd level and the development of a structure of ongoing local/regional support.
- Expansion of specialist training in the Special Needs area.
- Leadership Development for schools.

There are a multiplicity of private, professional institutes who provide substantial support and training, on a commercial basis, to different sectors in the country. These institutes frequently act as training providers and some are licensed to act as accrediting bodies.

050404: Social partner based schemes to support non-job related training.

Diversity in the workplace

Developing the multicultural workplace is a project that was approved for funding under the European Social Fund's Equal Initiative. The project proposal was prepared by a Development Partnership – Interact –which is comprised of representatives of the Irish Congress of Trades Unions (ICTU), Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC), FÁS and Integrate Ireland (formerly the Refugee Language Support Unit in Trinity College, Dublin (TCD).

The project seeks to address some of the barriers at enterprise level that will ensure the establishment of effective supports for both the employers of non-Irish nationals and the non-Irish national employees themselves and consequently develop the conditions that will enable the Irish labour market to support a multi-cultural workforce. The project has two related elements of language support and multiculturalism/diversity support.

Literacy has been identified as one of the key areas needing specific attention for a large number of employed people. To assist in addressing this problem, the National Adult Literacy Association (NALA) has been working with companies at workplace level to develop suitable programmes in this area. NALA also have many other such initiatives involving a mix of organisations (including VEC schools and colleges, FÁS Training Centres and employees associations, Trade Unions and local development organisations).

0505: CVET AT THE INITIATIVE OF THE INDIVIDUAL (STATISTICS)

In Ireland there are no specific surveys or registers that provided information on what type of CVET is undertaken by individuals at their own initiative.

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AONTAS – The National Association of Adult Education

<http://www.aontas.com>

Bord Iascaigh Mhara – The Irish Sea Fisheries Board

<http://www.bim.ie>

Department of Education and Science

<http://www.irlgov.ie/educ>

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment

<http://www.entemp.ie>

Educational Research Centre

*<http://www.erc.ie>

Enterprise Ireland

<http://www.enterprise-ireland.com>

Expert Group on Future Skills Needs

<http://www.skillsireland.ie>

Fáilte Ireland

<http://www.failteireland.ie>

FÁS – Training and Employment Authority

<http://www.fas.ie>

FETAC – Further Education and Training Awards Council

<http://www.fetac.ie>

HEA – Higher Education Authority

<http://www.heai.ie>

HETAC – Higher Education and Training Awards Council

<http://www.hetac.ie>

IBEC - Irish Business and Employers Confederation

<http://www.ibec.ie>

ICTU – Irish Congress of Trades' Unions

<http://www.ictu.ie>

IVEA – Irish Vocational Education Association

<http://www.ivea.ie>

Leargas – The Exchange Bureau
<http://www.leargas.ie>

NCGE – National Centre for Guidance in Education
<http://www.ncge.ie>

NCPP – National Centre for Partnership and Performance
<http://www.ncpp.ie>

NQAI – National Qualifications Authority of Ireland
<http://www.nqai.ie>

Skillnets Ltd.
<http://www.skillnets.com>

Teagasc – Agriculture and Food Development Authority
<http://www.teagasc.ie>

