

**LCETB FET**  
Integrated  
Guidance  
Strategic  
Framework

2016-  
2020

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**lcetb**

Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna  
Luimnigh agus an Chláir  
*Limerick and Clare  
Education and Training Board*

**Further Education & Training Division**

# INTRODUCTION

Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board (LCETB) is a statutory education and training body formed through the amalgamation of the three former VECs (Limerick City, County and County Clare), and the two former FÁS Training Centres in Raheen and Shannon. In 2015, the LCETB FET provision served over 25,000 beneficiaries across 300 locations in the region.

Information and Guidance is an essential component of FET provision. The LCETB Integrated Guidance Strategic Framework was developed within a rich policy context, and has been informed by national and EU Guidelines for guidance provision. The European Guidelines for Lifelong Guidance Systems and Policy Development (2015) provides indications to policy makers on how to develop holistic career guidance systems. The SOLAS Strategy 2014-2019 Section 10 also outlined the requirements of the new guidance services, with the ultimate goal that 'Everybody who engages with FET, whether employed or unemployed or wishing to engage with FET for the purpose of learning, can access a high quality career guidance, counselling and labour market information service.' The Ireland's National Skills Strategy 2025 (2016) also highlighted the need for Career Guidance services to be reviewed and strengthened. The NCGE Guidance Strategy is near finalisation and provides a framework for the delivery of guidance in ETBs nationally.

At regional level, the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board FET Strategic Framework 2015-2020 put guidance at the core of its Access and Progression first strategic priority, highlighting the need for an integrated FET educational and careers guidance strategy. These guiding documents point to the need to enhance the integration of guidance into all strands of delivery, as a pivotal support function within the FET sector. The focus is on maximising limited resources, avoiding duplication, collaboration, maintaining and enhancing the quality of information and guidance provision in LCETB as a regional organisation.

In this context, LCETB embarked on a consultative process to develop an Integrated Guidance Strategic Framework. This involved the formation of an Integrated Guidance Planning Team in 2015 to include guidance staff from AEGI and the PLC sector, Training centres, VTOS, BTEI, Youthreach. Several meetings took place to exchange ideas and highlight priorities for the provision of quality guidance in all LCETB FET provision going forward. The Editing Team drafted a document, which was amended and agreed by the Integrated Guidance Planning Team, and the LCETB FET Senior Management Team.

This Framework provides an agreed working definition on 'what is FET Career Guidance', its unique context and remit. It also highlights the key guidance activities in FET (including part-time, PLC, Youthreach, etc). A Vision and Mission statement for Integrated FET Guidance in LCETB were also agreed, with five Strategic Themes with associated aims. Finally, the document highlights the key outcomes expected from the implementation of this strategy in LCETB FET Division.

# WHAT IS FET GUIDANCE?

Following consultation meetings, the LCETB Integrated Guidance Team adopted the following working definition for Career Guidance to inform its planning discussions:

**CAREER GUIDANCE** refers to services and activities intended to assist individuals, of any age and at any point throughout their lives, to make educational, training and occupational choices and to manage their careers (OECD 2004). There are 3 aspects to such services:

- **Career counselling**, conducted on a one-to-one basis or in small groups, in which attention is focused on the distinctive career issues faced by individuals.
- **Career education**, as part of the curriculum, in which attention is paid to helping groups of individuals to develop the competences for managing their career development.
- **Career information**, provided in various format (increasingly, web-based), concerned with information on courses, occupations and career paths. This includes labour-market information.

In its 'Career Guidance: A Handbook for Policy Makers' (2010), the OECD later introduced new elements to this definition: Labour Market goals and Social equity goals. FET Guidance has the challenge of addressing both of these goals in a balanced and learner-centred way.

The SOLAS Further Education and Training Strategy 2014-2019 defines FET, and highlights the diversity of the target groups for guidance services.

- FET provides education and training and related supports to assist individuals to gain a range of employment, career personal and social skills and qualifications at levels 1-6 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) or equivalent;
- It is aimed at job seekers, early school leavers, labour market returners, employees, those interested in a new career direction, those wishing to access second chance education, those wishing to re-engage in learning;
- It is aimed to prepare early school-leavers and others for higher education;
- It is aimed to help people to lead fulfilling lives, supporting some of the hard-to-reach individuals and groups to achieve their potential and reducing the costs to society of exclusion.'

The diversity of the FET target groups is reflected in the range of tailor-made Information and Guidance services offered by ETBs. While addressing labour-market goals, ETBs have a unique role in addressing social and educational exclusion. FET guidance has a particular remit around promoting access to education and training, and supporting individuals to overcome barriers to participation and progression. Learners are empowered by developing the skills and knowledge they need to effectively manage their career holistically, throughout their lives. This responsibility is shared by all FET staff and supported by the expertise and flexible approach of qualified guidance staff.

# LCETB FET INTEGRATED GUIDANCE VISION, MISSION AND CORE VALUES

FET Guidance covers a range of individual and group activities delivered at the pre-entry, entry, ongoing, pre-exit, exit and post-exit stages of the learner's journey:

## Information-Giving;

## Educational and Career Guidance;

## Career Management Skills;

- The identification of strengths and aptitudes; interests; values; personality traits and matching those strengths to available opportunities in the workplace or in training
- Researching and understanding work, careers and education and training options and making appropriate decisions
- Developing a plan and work towards achieving their goals.
- Sign-posting options for learners

## Competence Assessment;

- Measuring an individual's competencies, including the use and interpretation of appropriate tests, and explaining to a client the results of an assessment and its implications.

## Raising awareness about labour-market trends and opportunities;

- Supporting learners to match their skills and aspirations to suitable available employment
- Supporting learners in employment to develop their skills to progress within their professional careers

## Teaching of Decision-Making skills;

- Supporting learners to become self-directed in making informed vocational, educational, career, social and personal decisions across their lifespan

## Supports;

- Supports to sustain learner participation, retention, and progression.

## Advocacy;

- Supporting learners to have their educational needs met and/or actively promoting educational needs of learners.

## Counselling;

- Available on a limited basis within some FET Guidance services: appropriate onward referrals are made.

## OUR VISION

All FET learners will have access to appropriate, relevant and quality guidance, delivered by an integrated service, which is adequately resourced.

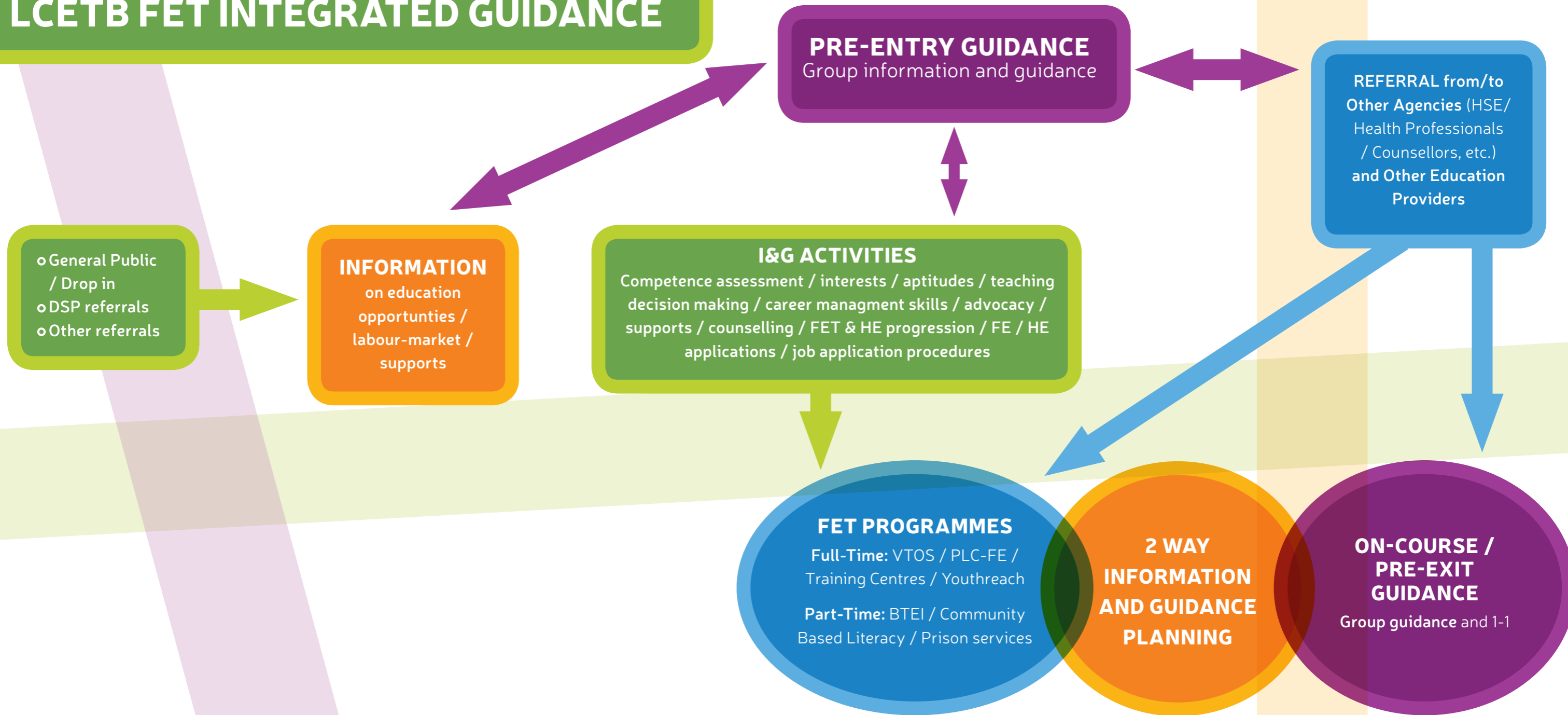
## OUR MISSION

LCETB FET Guidance provides quality, impartial information, guidance and support, which empowers people to plan and manage their own educational, training, occupational and personal life choices.

## OUR CORE VALUES

- Person-centred service
- Impartial service
- Professional service
- Transparent service
- Flexible/adaptable service
- Accessible service
- Confidential service

# LCETB FET INTEGRATED GUIDANCE



## THEME 1 - PRE-ENTRY GUIDANCE

This is about supporting potential learners to make informed choices about relevant educational and career pathways. This includes providing quality initial assessment and information on programme requirements, in order to promote successful outcomes for learners, and contribute to the quality of courses.

### AIMS

1. To contribute to the development of **quality learner-centred admissions practices** across the LCETB FET Division.
2. To enhance the capacity of frontline and teaching staff to **offer appropriate pre-entry information and initial assessments** to all potential LCETB FET learners.
3. To support the development of **pre-entry programmes for career exploration** for groups.
4. To explore **all methods of delivery of pre-entry information and guidance** (group or one to one basis, or through the use of technologies).
5. To continue to develop up-to-date **pre-entry resources**, using various methodologies including ICT.

## THEME 2 – ON-COURSE GUIDANCE

This is about providing on-course information and guidance to LCETB FET Learners to help them make informed choices, complete courses and progress towards work or further education and training. This will be achieved through team work and collaboration with other LCETB FET colleagues, with a view to integrating guidance into all LCETB FET programmes.

### AIMS

1. To **deliver on-course guidance** on a group and one-to-one basis to build learners' capacity to understand the career development process and to make informed progression choices.
2. To play a leading role in the **planning and development of careers education programmes**.
3. To establish **formal mechanisms for guidance staff to input into programme planning**.
4. To work in collaboration with teaching staff/instructors to **identify learners in need of additional support**, in order to ensure timely and tailored intervention.

## THEME 3 – CAPACITY BUILDING

This is about building the capacity of the LCETB FET Division to meet the information and guidance needs of LCETB FET learners, so that all learners have access to the same quality standards of information and guidance provision.

## AIMS

1. To **maintain professional standards** through relevant and regular CPD opportunities for guidance staff.
2. To build the **capacity of FET staff to deliver frontline information and guidance, and careers education modules** in line with FET policies.
3. To **increase staff use of ICT-based tools** to support access to and availability of information and guidance services.
4. To develop a **virtual space for online LCETB careers information and resources** to enable learners to be more self-directed in their information search.

## THEME 4 - TEAM WORKING, PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

This is about ensuring that Information and Guidance (I&G) is integrated into all planning and delivery of LCETB FET provision. Internally, it is about promoting greater collaboration between all LCETB FET staff, particularly those with a guidance role, as well as with other LCETB FET staff. Externally, it is about establishing relevant linkages with employers, community partners, other education providers and stakeholders in order to enhance learners' opportunities for their career and/or life choices.

## AIMS

1. To further **develop the LCETB FET Integrated Guidance Team**, representative of all full-time and part-time programmes, to lead the integration of I&G into all FET provision.
2. To **promote awareness among relevant stakeholders** (staff, general public, learners, partner agencies, other education providers, community organisations, etc) about the range of LCETB FET Information and Guidance services available.
3. To **proactively engage with LCETB FET staff and programme managers at the planning stage** to ensure the integration of guidance into all programmes.
4. To **identify and build on existing I&G best practices** and integrated systems in place in the FET Service (e.g use communities of practice to share new ideas and resources)
5. To continue to **develop networks with key partners** (Intreo, SICAP, Higher Education Providers, employers etc) through referral protocols and other collaborative initiatives.
6. In accordance with NCGE/DES/DSP guidelines, to **standardise information and guidance policies and procedures** (including referral protocols).
7. To continue to **access up-to-date relevant information on education and training opportunities, labour-market trends, learners supports/grants available** through national, regional and local partnerships.

## THEME 5 - MEASURING OUR IMPACT

This is about using both quantitative and qualitative data to evaluate I&G work, in relation to:

- learners progression in terms of educational, vocational, employment, social and personal outcomes.
- effective integration of quality information and guidance into all FET provision.

### AIMS

1. To **develop regular consultation and evaluation mechanisms with LCETB FET learners** to assess the impact of the I&G service on their learning and progression outcomes (e.g. through the use of testimonials, evaluation forms, etc.)
2. To carry out **regular consultations and evaluations with LCETB FET relevant staff, programme Coordinators/ Managers, and other stakeholders** (NCGE, SOLAS, DES, Intreo, etc), and use feedback to enhance organisational procedures that embed guidance into all FET provision.
3. To **enhance feedback loop mechanisms between guidance staff** and programme staff to ensure effective two-way communication and better integration of I&G into programme planning.
4. To contribute to the development and implementation of an **LCETB-wide progression tracking system**, including cross-referral procedures, roles and responsibilities.
5. In line with national directives, to explore the **use of national databases** (NCGE, PLSS, etc) by all LCETB guidance staff, in order to collate data on all aspects of the I&G activities in LCETB.

## KEY EXPECTED OUTCOMES

1. **Information and Guidance is embedded** into all LCETB FET provision.
2. **LCETB FET learners take increased responsibility** for the planning and management of their own education and employment choices.
3. **Career Management Skills are better understood** by all stakeholders (learners, staff, partners);
4. Relevant **information for I&G work can be accessed efficiently** across the FET Service.
5. **A central online portal for LCETB careers information and resources** is developed and used by all relevant stakeholders.
6. **Increased collaboration** between all LCETB FET guidance staff.
7. **Ongoing and supportive working relationships** between programme manager, teaching staff and guidance staff ensure timely guidance interventions for learners, and relevant feedback on key issues and trends.
8. **Teaching and frontline staff understand their role around I&G**, and appropriately support learner progression.
9. All FET stakeholders and partners **understand the remit of the LCETB FET Guidance**.
10. Increased **learner retention**.
11. Improved **progression outcomes** for FET learners.
12. **Appropriate referral systems** are in place into and out of the FET Guidance Service.





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