



FET
PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT
ACTION PLAN



2019-2021



Bord Oideachais & Oiliúna
LUIMNIGH & AN CHLÁIR
LIMERICK & CLARE
Education & Training Board

INTRODUCTION



Staff are the most valuable resource in the Further Education and Training Division and it is essential that we actively recruit, develop and retain the best people. Through this Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board FET 'Professional Development (PD) Action Plan' 2019-2021, we seek to build on the commitment, expertise and the professionalism of FET staff and to develop a strong learning culture within the organisation.

This Action Plan, which was developed between June and December 2018, has been informed by and responds to a number of international, national and local strategies and policies. At European level, Education and Training (ET) 2020 recognises that learning practitioners are at the heart of quality education and training and that well-resourced strategies, spanning both initial education and career-long professional development, are necessary to recruit, retain and develop high-quality practitioners.

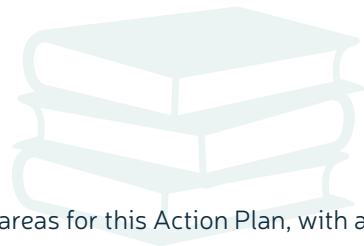
At national level, the publication of the SOLAS Further Education and Training Professional Development Strategy 2017-2019 was an important moment in the development of the Irish Further Education and Training Sector. The strategy was informed by the first national FET Skills Profile, in which almost 50% of FET staff participated. The ensuing strategy set out to "collectively renew and further embed a strong professional development culture across the ETB network by building on existing good practice throughout the sector and developing a professional development framework and structures to support ETBs in meeting the FET needs of learners, employers and communities".

Seven priority areas were identified in the SOLAS strategy, which are now an integral part of this FET Action Plan. These are - Working with and Supporting FET Learners; Vocational Upskilling and Reskilling; Enterprise Engagement; Quality Assurance; Technology Enhanced Learning; Information and Communications Technology and Management and Leadership.

This FET PD Action Plan has also been informed at local level by Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board's FET Strategic Framework (2015-2020). One of the key strategic priorities of that framework is Quality Teaching and Learning. It is about how to promote a culture of continuous improvement and organisational learning in the FET Division so that staff, learners, enterprise and communities have confidence in the quality and relevance of FET in Limerick and Clare.

A number of other corporate and FET Division frameworks and action plans have also been developed, all of which place a strong emphasis on professional development. These are: FET Technology Enhanced Learning Action Plan; FET Integrating Language, Literacy and Numeracy Framework; FET Enterprise Engagement Framework; FET Information, Recruitment and Guidance Framework; Quality Improvement Plan and Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board Strategy Statement 2017-2021. This PD Action Plan ties together the threads of these various documents to ensure that the FET Division enables and supports staff in centres and support services across the FET Division to avail of professional development opportunities in the priority areas identified.

Since the amalgamation process, the FET Division has understandably focused its professional development activities on the introduction of new systems and procedures, and the roll-out of national policies. However, what emerged from the discussions during the PD planning process was a wish to refocus our PD efforts in the area of Teaching and Learning, and to develop common FET-wide policies and procedures on professional development. Ultimately, the expected impact of this plan is the enhanced quality and relevance of our provision and improved outcomes for learners.



The PD planning group identified four priority areas for this Action Plan, with a series of actions, output and indicators under each. The four priority areas are:

- 1. Strong Commitment to Professional Development for all FET Staff**
- 2. Professional Development for Teaching and Learning**
- 3. Professional Development Structures and Systems**
- 4. Transparent and Consistent Professional Development Policies and Procedures**

It is hoped that this Action Plan demonstrates the value the FET Division places on the commitment, expertise and professionalism of all staff and that it contributes to fostering a culture where staff are encouraged and supported to be proactive in their own development, and to feel positive in their roles. Crucially, this plan is targeted at all FET staff, inclusive of learning practitioners, managers, support and administration staff.

We would like to thank all those involved in the development of this Action Plan (see appendix 1) and in particular Maud Baritaud, FET Research, Planning and Evaluation Officer, who facilitated the process.

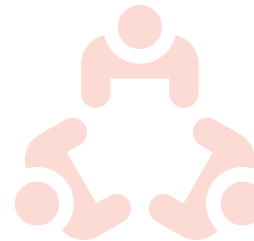
Paul Patton
Director of Further
Education and Training

Tara Robinson
FET Professional
Development Officer

THE PLANNING PROCESS

In order to develop this plan a Professional Development Action Planning group was formed in June 2018. The group consisted of 18 members from full and part-time provision in the FET Division. The process was facilitated over 4 meetings.

The aim of the group was to develop a 3-year Professional Development Action Plan which would guide the FET Division's work in this area and ensure maximum stakeholder ownership. The process was designed to ensure that the plan was not an isolated document but was consistent with and integrated with key local and national policies, strategies and frameworks.



The starting points for our action planning process were the following:

- Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board FET Skills Profile Report of 2015 completed by 52% of our staff;
- SOLAS Professional Development Strategy;
- Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board FET Strategic Framework and various other FET action plans;
- A 2018 Professional Development Baseline Survey in centres and support services.

WHAT IS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT?

We believe that professional development can be defined as any activity that develops an individual's skills, knowledge, expertise and other characteristics.

Echoing the SOLAS PD strategy we envisage that the model of professional development for the FET Division to be 'individually embraced, organisationally driven and strategically directed'.



OUR VALUES

WE BELIEVE THAT:

Inclusive and Equal

ALL FET staff, from support and administration staff, to learning practitioners and management, should be able to avail of relevant professional development opportunities on a regular basis.

Accessible

It is necessary to identify and remove barriers to participation in professional development making it accessible to all FET staff.

Quality and Relevance

A systematic approach to the management and delivery of professional development, from needs identification through to planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation is essential. Professional Development planning at both organisation and centre level should be responsive and aligned with identified needs.

Proactive

Staff must be proactive in their own learning; engaging in regular critical reflection, articulating their development needs and embracing opportunities for professional development.

Structure and Transparency

Clear and transparent structures, policies and procedures are necessary to ensure optimum staff engagement in professional development.

Embedded

A commitment to professional development and learning should be embedded in the organisational culture of the FET Division.

WHO IS THIS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN FOR?

A categorisation of FET staff was conducted at national level by SOLAS as part of the national PD Strategy development process. The following broad groupings are intended to help classify the almost 54 separate job roles identified during the FET skills profiling exercise:

Support and Administration: roles include administrators, support staff, clerical staff, guidance staff, information officers, training standards officers, ancillary, general assistants, caretakers and development staff.

Learning Practitioner: roles include teachers, tutors, trainers, instructors, resource workers, adult educators and facilitators.

Management: roles include senior managers, managers, assistant managers, co-ordinators, adult education officers, principals, directors and deputies.

Critically, this Professional Development Action Plan is inclusive of all staff in the FET Division whether full or part-time and regardless of role or location.



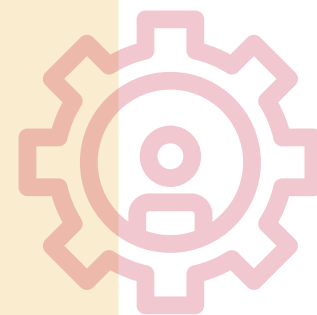
STRONG COMMITMENT TO PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL FET STAFF

THEME
1

This is about the FET Division recognising and promoting the value and importance of professional development for all FET staff, including learning practitioners, managers and support and administration staff.

ACTIONS

1. Make a series of recommendations **to ensure professional development is a core element of all FET centres' planning.**
2. Work with our Head Office to **ensure the corporate induction programme** includes a comprehensive FET element.
3. **Develop a FET Induction process** with clear timeframes and content.
4. Work with the FET Steering Group, Head Office and SOLAS/ETBI **to identify and address barriers to participation of all FET staff to professional development.**
5. Collaborate with our Head Office and SOLAS/ETBI to **develop a programme of professional development activities** in the areas of *Working with and Supporting FET learners; Vocational Upskilling and Reskilling; Enterprise Engagement; Quality Assurance; Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL); Information and Communications Technology (ICT); Leadership and Management; Self-Care for FET staff.*
6. **Review funding mechanisms** for all types of professional development opportunities, and manage a centralised FET professional development budget to deliver the professional development programme.



This is about taking a strategic and organisational approach to building on the expertise and professionalism of FET Staff, and equipping them to meet the constantly evolving needs of society and the economy. This will ensure our provision remains of the highest quality and relevant to the needs of learners and stakeholders.

ACTIONS

1. **Build the capacity of all FET staff involved in teaching and learning** to support them to work effectively and creatively with our diverse priority groups, using relevant methodologies.
2. Work with the FET Implementation Teams and PD Working-groups to build the capacity of FET staff to:
 - a. **Use digital technology to enhance learning** (see PD actions in TEL Action Plan).
 - b. **Engage with enterprise and maintain industry currency** (see PD actions in Enterprise Engagement Framework).
 - c. **Integrate Language, Literacy and Numeracy into all FET provision** (See PD actions in Integrating Language, Literacy and Numeracy Framework).

d. Implement an effective quality assurance system across all FET provision.

e. Deliver frontline information, recruitment and guidance, and maintain IRG staff professional standards (See PD actions in FET Integrated Guidance Framework).

3. Work with SOLAS to develop a **strategy for the vocational/subject matter reskilling and upskilling of FET learning practitioners.**
4. Capture and promote the professional qualifications and expertise of FET staff.
5. **Pilot subject-specific Communities of Practice (CoP)** to promote them as a way to support learning practitioners and share best practice.
6. **Build links with partners locally, regionally and nationally** to enhance professional development opportunities for all FET learning practitioners.
7. Produce a development plan for **participation in EU projects.**



THEME 3

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRUCTURES & SYSTEMS

This is about the structures and systems needed to implement the professional development action plan, to identify needs, plan and deliver professional development activities across the FET Division.

ACTIONS

1. **Set up a professional development Implementation Team**, including representatives from full-time and part-time FET provision, Head Office, FET Support Staff and FET Implementation Teams, who will lead the implementation of the action plan.
2. **Map out roles and functions of existing informal and formal FET professional development structures** and identify duplication/gaps.
3. **Use findings from mapping exercise to review existing FET professional development structures**, in order to ensure effective needs identification, professional development solutions, planning and delivery, and evaluation of effectiveness.
4. **Use data from local and national FET skills profiles and competence frameworks** to inform professional development planning in the FET Division.
5. **Develop and use a range of needs identification processes**, at individual, FET provision and organisation levels to reflect on their needs.
6. **Develop a matrix** to categorise the professional development activities available to all FET staff, and use it as a reference tool allowing individuals to reflect on their needs.
7. **Develop an annual FET Professional Development Workplan**, including a professional development budget, based on analysis of needs identified for the FET Division.
8. **Use a range of appropriate approaches to respond to the needs** identified, considering internal and external professional development, both formal and informal, accredited and non-accredited, mentoring, online and blended solutions, etc.

THEME 4

TRANSPARENT AND CONSISTENT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

This is about ensuring a coherent, consistent, transparent and effective approach to professional development in the FET Division.

ACTIONS

1. **Work with our Head Office to ensure alignment with organisation-wide professional development policies and procedures**, resulting in a consistent approach to professional development in the FET Division, and increased participation in professional development by all FET staff.
2. **Link with SOLAS/ETBI to contribute to the development of national policies and procedures**, and roll out as appropriate.
3. **Develop guidelines for designing effective professional development activities**, from planning to delivery and evaluation.
4. **Develop feedback mechanisms** to review effectiveness, share learning and identify change of practice from participation in professional development activities.
5. **Develop and resource a Professional Development Management & Tracking System** to record, track and badge staff professional development.
6. **Conduct annual reviews** of the Professional Development Implementation Group work plans to develop continuous improvement plans, linking all relevant FET professional development opportunities, including QA.

IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING & EVALUATION OF PLAN

This Action Plan is a living document guiding the design and development of professional development infrastructure and initiatives in the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board FET Division. It is intended to review and update the plan as required.

A PD Implementation Group chaired by the FET Professional Development Officer will be set up and meet regularly in order to:

- provide leadership and make decisions on implementation priorities;
- implement monitoring and evaluation activities to show evidence of change/impact of action plan;
- identify barriers to implementation and report to FET Steering Group;
- review progress and suggest changes as appropriate;
- nominate sub groups to manage specific projects, events pilot projects etc.

Progress on the implementation of the Professional Development Action Plan will be reported to the FET Steering Group and through the Chief Executive (CE) Reports and FET Division Annual Reports.



APPENDIX 1

The PD Action Planning group consists of representative of the broad range of FET provision and support services across Limerick and Clare.

MEMBERSHIP

Maud Baritaud (Group Facilitator)	Maire Kerrane
Eimear Brophy	Triona Lynch
Colin Cummins	Emma Maher
Josephine Dempsey	Lorraine O' Leary
Mary Dunne	Lorraine O'Donoghue
Geraldine Fallon	Sile O' Riordan
Mary Flanagan	Paul Patton
Shelagh Graham	Karl Quinn
Marion Hanrahan	Tara Robinson, FET PD Officer
Alan Hogan	

References

Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Rethinking Education: Investing in Skills for Better Socio-Economic Outcomes

Solas Further Education And Training Professional Development Strategy 2017-2019

Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board Further Education and Training Division Strategic Framework 2015-2020

Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board Strategy Statement 2017-2021

FET Technology Enhanced Learning Action Plan, Fet Integrating Language Literacy and Numeracy Framework, FET Enterprise Engagement Framework, FET Information Recruitment and Guidance Framework, Quality Improvement Plan

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