

College of FET Partner Voice Survey Report 2025

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Introduction

The College of FET has always had a vibrant and extensive reach to community partners within the region. In recent years apprenticeship and traineeship offerings have also increased significantly and this collaboration, including a mix of craft apprenticeships and consortium-led apprenticeships (Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board (ETB) as a coordinating or a collaborating provider, is now the largest in Ireland.

‘Partnerships for seamless transitions’ is a key priority embedded in the [CFET Strategic Framework 2022-2025](#)

This priority aims to provide access, seamless transitions and progression opportunities for all FET learners. This process is implemented by continually engaging with the many categories of collaborating partners in the region:

With **employers** to address skills gaps in the region;

With **Higher Educational Institution and Post-primary partners** around curriculum development and supportive transitions;

With **local Community partners** to promote a culture of lifelong learning;

With **Internal partners** by integrating supports within College of FET campuses;

With **European Partners** to inform organisational development and expand upskilling opportunities for learning practitioners, managers and learners.

In late 2024, a College of FET Collaborating Partners Working Group was formed to develop a process to capture best practice, thereby supporting the enhancement and strengthening of partner relationships and collaboration.

The survey aimed to gather feedback from community partners on the strengths, challenges and opportunities in their collaboration with the College of FET

The feedback, once collated and reviewed would ensure the delivery of even greater value to the organisations we work with and to all learners involved.

In April 2025, over 200 groups and individuals working in collaboration with the college of FET were invited to complete the newly developed [College of FET Partner Survey](#)

A total of **85 community and external partners** replied to the survey before the closing date in September 2025



The survey remained live until May 2025 after which time all feedback data was considered and reviewed by relevant Management teams before completing a [College of FET Collaborating Partner Closing the Loop Survey 2025](#)

By completing this Closing the Loop exercise, participants confirmed the process of documenting and sharing best practise with relevant stakeholders along with detailing agreed actions to address areas for improvement highlighted by Partners

This College of FET Partner Voice Survey Report documents examples of where successful collaborations have been reported by respondents and also details the follow-on actions that have been undertaken to ensure partners know their feedback has been considered and responded to.

Key Findings identified by Respondents

The key Strengths & Benefits, challenges and suggestions for improvement of partnerships identified in the feedback received are outlined below:

Strengths and Benefits

Strong Relationships: Many respondents praised the positive and effective working relationships with FET staff, describing them as obliging, professional, and highly supportive.

Recognition & Inclusion: Partners value the recognition and involvement in shaping curriculum and participating in events like job fairs and career days.

Access to Learners: There is appreciation for access to learners and graduates with relevant and current skills.

Support for Upskilling: Several noted the benefit of support for employee training and upskilling.

Community Impact: FET programmes are seen as vital to small communities, especially for health, well-being, and social inclusion.



Challenges

Communication Gaps: Several respondents cited poor or inconsistent communication, including lack of follow-up on commitments (e.g. 40-hour support approval).

Administrative Burden: Increasing bureaucracy and complex registration systems (especially FETCH and PLSS) were flagged as barriers, particularly for vulnerable groups such as:

- Young people
- People with disabilities
- Older learners

System Limitations:

- non-inclusive forms (e.g., only “male/female” gender options).
- Lack of flexibility in course duration and hours.
- Limited capacity to innovate due to restrictions on numbers and programme formats.

Under-resourcing: Some noted a lack of access to capital funding, equipment grants, or adequate administration support to meet increasing demands.

Suggestions for Improvement

Quarterly Update Meetings: Regular check-ins to plan courses,

Dedicated Point of Contact: Streamline communications through consistent liaisons or coordinators.

Greater Consultation:

- Involve partners in policy development, curriculum planning, and strategic decision-making.
- Recognition of community partners' expertise and inclusion in co-design processes.

Enhanced Access & Inclusion:

- Adapt systems to be more youth-friendly and accessible to those with additional needs.
- Design curriculum tailored to specific target groups (e.g., neuro-diverse learners, ex-offenders).

Community Engagement:

- Host open days, expand partnerships with Men's Sheds, and explore community of practice forums.

Collaborating Partner Survey 2025 Closing the Loop

In September 2025, a '[Closing the Loop' Survey](#) was circulated to Management with responsibility for Community and External based programmes.

This survey requested management to outline how challenges and areas of improvement as identified by respondents would be addressed.



Actions to Address Feedback

Identified Actions (planned and already completed) outlined by 'Closing the Loop' Survey respondents have been mapped to key areas of activity as outlined below

Meetings/contacts have been held or are being arranged with partners to discuss hours allocation, registration concerns, variety of programmes on offer, planning, importance of maintaining communication registration issues, funding, suitable programmes, concerns about accredited courses etc.

Registration sessions with learners from community groups have been planned in association with our partners in advance of classes starting.

Development of Formal dedicated point of contact for community groups with an assigned Adult Educator that partners can liaise with, regarding new classes and other issues that may come up during a programme.

Circulation of Complete list of tutors with their subject areas made available so that targeted programmes can be arranged.

Networking/exchange event to be organized in 2026 as part of an initial discussion around possibly setting up an East Limerick Community education network.

Invitation extended to partners to share ideas on how to make registration easier. Also, partners have been encouraged to discuss any ideas /options for Service users with full-time staff. that may Staff have briefed on this.

Respondent also noted that any ideas for actions are discussed with internal management teams

Suggested Improvements to the Survey

Management were asked how the Collaborating Partners Survey could be improved.

Their feedback included:

'a very effective tool in gathering feedback from community partners.'

'I think the Collaborating Partner Survey was a great step to understanding the needs to our partners and listening to their feedback.'

One respondent suggested adding a locational question to identify partners more readily

Conclusion

The feedback gathered through both the Collaborating Partner and Closing the Loop survey reflects the strength that exists in College of FET partnerships as the College's ongoing commitment to collaboration, transparency and continuous improvement. Actions taken demonstrate responsiveness to partner feedback, while the suggestions provided will help refine future iterations of the survey process.