



County Dublin Vocational  
Education Committee

Coiste Gairmoideachais  
Chontae Átha Cliath

# QUALITY ASSURANCE INFORMATION AND RESOURCE PACK

## FOR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

ISSUE DATE: MAY 2007



AN FOINN  
OIDEACHAIS  
AGUS EOLAIOCHTA

DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION  
AND SCIENCE



NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN





## A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

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County Dublin VEC's Quality Assurance proposal for Community Education was approved by FETAC – the Further Education and Training Awards Council – in Spring 2007.

This 'Guide for Community Education Partners' is an important part of the implementation of our Quality Assurance procedures, clarifying partners' responsibilities, supporting existing good practice and providing resources for improvement and development. The booklet aims to inform and support our partners in the implementation of policies and procedures as required within our Quality Assurance system. These policies and procedures will complement Service Agreements already in place between your organisation and County Dublin VEC.

Detailed listing of our Quality Assurance policies and procedures can be accessed in the Adult and Further Education of the County Dublin VEC website, [www.codubvec.ie](http://www.codubvec.ie). This guide is complemented by a booklet 'Guidelines for Tutors on FETAC- Accredited Programmes'. A handbook for learners will be produced later in 2007. These resources can be obtained from the Community Education Facilitator in your area.

This booklet was developed by our Community Education Facilitators – Michelle Donovan, Seamus Hughes, Siobhan Lynch and Eileen Uhlemann - with the support of Marie Rooney, County Co-ordinator, and many thanks are due to them for their work in developing and improving the quality of our service to our learners.

**Pat O'Connor**  
*Chief Executive Officer*



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## COUNTY DUBLIN VEC

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County Dublin Vocational Education Committee is one of the largest of the thirty-three Vocational Education Committees in the Country. The Committee's education remit extends from Balbriggan in the north of the county to Lucan in the west, to Shankill in the South and encompasses such areas of high density population as Swords, Lucan, Blanchardstown, Tallaght and Clondalkin. It is unique in that it straddles the entirety of both Fingal and South Dublin Counties and all of Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown County with the exception of the old borough of Dun Laoghaire.

The Committee provides a wide range of education services in these areas. This service ranges from providing full-time education in twenty-two Post Primary schools, eight Youthreach Centres and four Traveller Education Centres, to part-time provision for adults in numerous schools and community based centres.

### ***County Dublin VEC Mission Statement***

Our mission, in County Dublin VEC, is to be the leading provider of integrated education services which enable young people and adults to fulfil their potential in a positive learning environment.

We will promote equality, innovation and partnership in the delivery of our services.



## VEC MAP



County Dublin VEC  
City of Dublin VEC and Dun Laoghaire VEC

★ Town  
● County Dublin VEC Centres and Colleges



## SERVICES PROVIDED BY COUNTY DUBLIN VEC

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Contact details for these services can be found on page 78.

### ***Community Education***

Community Education has developed in a number of different ways throughout County Dublin VEC. Through the Community Education strand we support

- ▶ Local voluntary groups who provide adult education classes in their own communities.
- ▶ A diverse range of community development projects and other agencies/community groups who target the most marginalized in society and provide support services and education for them outside of the formal education sector.
- ▶ In areas with no community groups/agencies the VEC stimulates community activity by becoming the direct provider of community-based education.

This support comes in the form of tutor hours and grants and technical support from the Community Education Facilitator. Technical support would include advice on the development of new community based learning groups, quality assurance in education provision, accreditation and certification issues, funding and grants available to community groups, sharing good practice from the sector.

### ***County Dublin VEC vision for Community Education***

County Dublin VEC is committed to building the capacity of both individuals and groups to engage in diverse, innovative, accessible and flexible community education with the aims of empowering people to work individually or collectively to bring about positive change in the wider community.



## ***Community Education Facilitators***

Community Education Facilitators are involved in the promotion, development and nurturing of community based learning groups. They provide technical, administrative and educational support to both new and existing groups and agencies. They can be contacted through the Local Adult Education Services.

## ***Adult Guidance Service***

The Adult Education Guidance Service offers advice, guidance, and information on education, training and careers. The Information Service is available to those seeking to access or engaged in adult learning. The Guidance Service is available to those participating in our adult education programmes.

The service aims to enable adults to pursue goals and determine learning paths by providing comprehensive information on adult learning opportunities in a friendly relaxed atmosphere. The service is confidential and free of charge.

## ***Adult Literacy Service***

County Dublin Adult Literacy Service aims to assist adults with reading and writing difficulties. There are eight Adult Basic Education Centres based in Blanchardstown, Clondalkin, Dundrum, Lucan, Swords, Balbriggan and Tallaght, which cater for over 2500 adult learners. This service is provided free of charge.

## ***V.T.O.S. - Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme***

The Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme is a special initiative designed to cater for the education and training needs of those who are unemployed and/or in receipt of a Social Welfare payment for at least six months. All our VTOS programmes lead to certification and offer the Junior Certificate, Leaving Certificate or FETAC accreditation. Participants can also avail of a wide range of Post Leaving Certificate courses that are available throughout the county.



## ***BTEI – Back to Education Initiative***

The Back to Education Initiative (BTEI) provides part-time programmes for adults and young people who wish to combine return to learning with family, work and other commitments. Under the BTEI, County Dublin VEC offers a wide range of part-time, flexible and innovative education opportunities. Tuition is free for those with less than upper 2nd level education (Leaving Cert or equivalent).

## ***F.I.T. (Fast Track to Information Technology)***

FIT offers unemployed adults the opportunity to enter the I.T. industry at a professional level. FIT programmes have been developed in conjunction with representatives of the I.T. industry. Students participating can access training in a variety of the I.T. industry's key disciplines (e.g. teleservices, software testing, programming and PC maintenance).

## ***ESOL***

County Dublin VEC, through its five Adult Education Services, provides a wide range of ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) programmes. Programmes on offer vary in length and content and address the varied needs of those wishing to work on their language skills. Both free and fee-paying programmes are available. Eligibility for free classes depends on language needs and status.

## ***Senior Traveller Training Centres***

County Dublin V.E.C. provides education and training opportunities for Travellers in four locations in the County. The Training Centres try to redress educational and social disadvantage and to empower Travellers to progress to further training and employment. There is no upper age limit and National Certification is also an option.



## ***Youthreach***

Youthreach is a programme of education, training and work experience for early school leavers provided in an out of school setting. The aim of the programme is to develop the core skills required by young people, 15 to 20 years of age, to access second chance further education and employment.

## ***Schools and Colleges of Further Education***

Post-primary provision consists of 22 schools/community colleges, including two Colleges of Further Education and four Gaelscoileanna. Three other community colleges are scheduled to open over the next two years. The Colleges of Further Education and six of the other community colleges provide post-leaving certificate courses and other courses for adults on a full-time and part-time basis.

## ***Psychological Support Service***

The Psychological Support Service (PSS) addresses the special needs of schools and centres in the scheme. Its aim is to help the student resolve behavioural, motivational, emotional, and cognitive difficulties and to provide professional support to teaching staff regarding referred students or other professional concerns. The primary client of the PSS is the student and no intervention is carried out until the student has been met and counselled regarding the nature and operation of the service. No further action is taken until the student chooses to participate in the proposed intervention.

## ***Youth Services***

County Dublin VEC Youth Services support voluntary youth groups, local youth projects and youth services to provide educational, developmental and recreational programmes for young people. It works in partnership with youth clubs, youth sports groups, community youth projects, local drug task forces and voluntary youth organisations.



## FETAC

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**FETAC**, the Further Education and Training Awards Council, was set up in 2001 by the Minister for Education and Science under the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999. It is the single national awarding body for the further education and training sector in Ireland. FETAC awards are designed to provide access to employment and to further and higher education and training.

### ***FETAC Modules and Awards***

Courses leading to FETAC awards are made up of **modules** or **components**.

For each module/component in which the required standard has been achieved, a candidate gains a **credit** or a **Minor Award**.

Modules/components at Levels 1, 2 and 3 are assessed by means of portfolio/collection of work and are not graded but are judged either 'Successful' or 'Referral'.

Modules/components at Levels 4, 5 and 6 are graded as follows:

- ▶ Distinction: 80% - 100%; Merit: 65% - 79%; Pass: 50% - 64%

To obtain a FETAC **Major Award** (formerly known as a full certificate), certain numbers and combinations of modules/components must be successfully completed.

The **Level 1 Certificate** is awarded to learners who achieve a minimum of **four** of the required certificate components.

The **Level 2 Certificate** is awarded to learners who achieve a minimum of **six** of the required certificate components.

The **Level 3 Certificate** is awarded to learners who meet the required standard in a minimum of **eight module credits**, comprising **three core modules** (Communications, Mathematics, and Personal Effectiveness or Personal and Interpersonal Skills) and **any five elective** modules, which may be drawn from the list of approved modules.

The **Level 4 Certificate** is awarded to learners who achieve the required standards in a minimum of **eight module credits**, comprising **four core modules** (Communications, Mathematics, Information Technology Skills, and Personal



Effectiveness or Interpersonal and Interpersonal Skills) and **four elective modules** which may be drawn from the list of approved modules.

The **Level 5 Certificate** is awarded to learners who reach the required standard in a minimum of **five vocational** modules (including mandatory and elective modules), **two General Studies** modules (one of which must be Communications) and **1 Work Experience** module.

The **Level 6 Advanced Certificate** is awarded to learners who reach the required standard as listed in the specification for that award. Learning at Level 6 includes advanced vocational/occupational skills, which may be vocational specific and/or of a general supervisory nature, and require detailed theoretical understanding. All FETAC (NCVA) Level 6 awards are currently on pilot, and the requirements of each award differ.

Credits may be accumulated over a period of time. In general, each module carries a value of 1 at its own level, 0.5 at level above, and 2 at the level below (except for Level 6 modules). For example, a module completed at Level 4 is worth one credit at Level 4, then it will have a credit value of 2 in a Level 3 award, and it will have a credit value of 0.5 in a Level 5 award. At Levels 1 and 2, five credits may be carried from one level to another.

There are limits and exceptions to this general guideline. For details, please refer to the current version of "FETAC Guide to NCVA Awards" on the FETAC website ([www.fetac.ie](http://www.fetac.ie)).

## ***NATIONAL FRAMEWORK OF QUALIFICATIONS***

The diagram opposite illustrates the National Framework of Qualifications, which allows qualifications to be compared both nationally and internationally. It includes awards gained in schools, the workplace, the community, training centres, colleges and universities, from the most basic (Level 1) to the most advanced (Level 10). The award-types are listed in the outer rings of the diagram and on the NQAI website [www.nqai.ie](http://www.nqai.ie). Awarding bodies whose awards are included in the framework are shown as coloured bands extending across the levels of the framework as appropriate. FETAC awards are placed at levels 1 -6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.



# AWARDS IN THE FRAMEWORK

- KEY**
- FEAC - Further Education and Training Awards Council
  - SEC - State Examinations Commission (Department of Education & Skills)
  - HEAC - Higher Education Awards Council
  - DET - Dublin Institute of Technology
  - Universities

### new framework awards

\*All the awarded level certificates have passed as level 8 awards. This can be seen from the award level assessment table available to the public. This statement does not preclude the possibility of reaching higher level certificates (programmes being implemented now).

\*\*A range of awards available to study with us has been added at level 8 (Higher Diploma, Higher Diploma, Advanced Diploma, Graduate Diploma in Business Administration, Higher Diploma in Business Administration, Higher Diploma in Business Administration, Higher Diploma in Business Administration).





## AWARD EQUIVALENTS

All FETAC awards have been placed on the National Framework of Qualifications ([www.nfq.ie](http://www.nfq.ie)):

National Framework of Qualifications Levels	FETAC Award	Other Awards
Level 1	Level 1 Certificate	
Level 2	Level 2 Certificate	Primary Certificate
Level 3	Level 3 Certificate	Junior Certificate, Intermediate Certificate, Group Certificate, National Foundation Certificate (NCVA)
Level 4	Level 4 Certificate	Leaving Certificate, National Vocational Certificate Level 1 (NCVA)
Level 5	Level 5 Certificate	Leaving Certificate, National Vocational Certificate Level 2 (NCVA)
Level 6	Level 6 Advanced Certificate	Higher Certificate (HETAC/NCEA), National Vocational Certificate Level 3 (NCVA)
Levels 7	None	Higher Education awards only
Levels 8	None	Higher Education awards only
Levels 9	None	Higher Education awards only
Levels 10	None	Higher Education awards only



## HIGHER EDUCATION LINKS FROM FETAC CERTIFICATION

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FETAC have two schemes to facilitate learners who have achieved FETAC (NCVA) Level 5 and 6 certification to progress to Higher Education courses:

- (1) the Higher Education Links Scheme** links specific FETAC Level 5 Certificates and Level 6 Advanced Certificates to reserved places on a variety of higher education courses, mainly in the universities and DIT. There is a quota of reserved places on each course (but not all courses have places available under this scheme).
- (2) the Pilot Scheme** offers places on almost all courses in the participating Higher Education institutions (mainly the Institutes of Technology and private colleges) to holders of **any** FETAC Level 5 Certificate or Level 6 Advanced Certificate.

In each case, applicants submit their third-level applications to the Central Applications Office in the normal way (closing date 1st February each year, late applications 1st May). Points are calculated on applicants' best eight module credits.

Further details of these schemes can be obtained in the Guide to FETAC Higher Education Links, entitled 'Progression from FETAC to Higher Education Courses', which is published each year by FETAC and is on their website at [www.fetac.ie](http://www.fetac.ie) (and click "Higher Education Links").



## QUALITY ASSURANCE

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**QUALITY ASSURANCE** is a system of policies and procedures which a provider undertakes to implement in order to maintain and improve the quality of its programmes. The system required by FETAC covers

- ▶ Communications
- ▶ Programme Development, Delivery and Review,
- ▶ Equality
- ▶ Staff Recruitment and Development
- ▶ Access, Transfer and Progression
- ▶ Fair and consistent Assessment of Learners,
- ▶ Protection for Learners
- ▶ Self-Evaluation of Programmes and Services.

All providers wishing to offer programmes leading to FETAC awards must submit a proposed quality assurance system to FETAC for approval. County Dublin VEC's integrated Quality Assurance System was agreed by FETAC in 2006, and an additional application for Community Education (similar to the integrated system except for the inclusion of partner responsibilities) was approved early in 2007. The details of our QA policies and procedures can be viewed in the Adult and Further Education section of the County Dublin VEC website [www.codubvec.ie](http://www.codubvec.ie).

### ***What does Quality Assurance mean to Community Partners who want to deliver FETAC programmes?***

Community groups can develop their own Quality Assurance system and submit it to FETAC for evaluation and become a registered FETAC centre in their own right. Please contact the CEF for further information or check out the FETAC website [www.fetac.ie](http://www.fetac.ie)

If you are not in a position to do this you can offer FETAC programmes in agreement and partnership with County Dublin VEC.



In this case you do not have to develop all of the above policies and procedures required by FETAC.

However if you request funding from the VEC to provide FETAC programmes in a community location we will need your help to put a number of the policies and procedures in place on our behalf. These policies and procedures will complement Service Agreements already in place between your organisation and County Dublin VEC.

**The chart below highlights in green the procedure areas that are of joint responsibility to implement in order to provide FETAC programmes on an outreach basis.**

Policy area:	Number of Procedures	Will community providers need to have procedures in place?	Who is Responsible for putting procedures in place
Communication	3	Yes  Communication with Learners	County Dublin VEC / Community provider
Equality	2	Yes  If the group recruit the learners who participate in the programme they will need to have a policy in relation to Equality and provide training/information to their staff.	County Dublin VEC / Community provider
Staff Recruitment and Development	6	No, as the tutors are recruited by County Dublin VEC	County Dublin VEC



Access, Transfer and Progression	4	Yes if the community provider recruits the learners themselves then they have responsibility to put procedures in place.	County Dublin VEC / Community Provider
Programme Development, Delivery and Review	9	Yes if the community provider wants to develop FETAC programmes to suit their learner's needs.	County Dublin VEC / Community Provider
Fair and Consistent Assessment of Learners	11	VEC tutor will be trained and aware of VEC procedures in relation to assessment of learners however we will need your support to implement some procedures.	County Dublin VEC Community provider involved in only 3 out of 11 procedures
Self Evaluation of Programmes and Services	6	No Community providers will be given opportunity to give feedback as part of evaluation process.	County Dublin VEC only
			County Dublin VEC 38 procedures Community Providers 10 procedures



## ***Why do community providers have to be involved?***

Community groups are independent of the VEC and when working in partnership with the VEC to offer FETAC programmes many groups have maintained responsibility for aspects of the programme for example:

- 1.** Some community groups enrol/register the learners to participate in the programme. In this case you have a responsibility along with County Dublin VEC to put some of the procedures in place in relation to how the learner accesses programmes as well as transfers and progresses from the programme when it is over.
- 2.** Many community groups provide the room and equipment in which to hold the programme. In this case it is important that you help us to implement some of the procedures in relation to how you ensure the health and safety of staff and learners on your premises and how we ensure facilities and resources are appropriate.
- 3.** Other groups may want to develop a FETAC programme to meet the needs of their group so you will need to help us put in place the procedures which describe how the learner's needs are identified, how the programme is designed, delivered and reviewed.
- 4.** As the programme is being delivered in the community it is important that there is a secure location for assessment work and records to be stored on your premises. Other records also need to be maintained for example interview and application records, evaluations and programme reviews.

## ***How can this be done?***

We are conscious that while having procedures and policies in place is important this should not add to your workload dramatically. So we have devised some guidelines to help you understand what is required and some ways to ensure the procedures are in place without causing undue pressure. Please see attached resources and guidelines.



## POLICY IN RELATION TO COMMUNICATION

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It is the policy of County Dublin VEC to have clear, effective and open communication with learners, staff and others who have an interest in the work we do.

### *How Does This Affect Community Partners?*

In some cases the partner will be in direct contact with the learners as they will be working with them in relation to other matters. County Dublin VEC will need your help **to ensure that learners are able to give feedback on their experiences** when we are delivering a programme on an outreach basis. This information is used to make improvements to the programme in the future.

### *This can be achieved in a number of ways:*

- ▶ The partner can carry out an evaluation of the programme and give us a copy of the evaluation sheets when they are complete. A Student Review and Reflect Form and a Learner Evaluation Form are provided on pages 32 and 33.
- ▶ We can ask the tutor to carry out the evaluation at the end of the programme and return them to us.
- ▶ If you prefer you can use a focus group to get feedback from learners. The notes can be compiled into a feedback report and a copy given to the VEC for our records.
- ▶ As part of the Quality Assurance system we will keep such records for up to 5 years.

*There are useful website addresses provided in the appendix which provide other ideas about why and how to get feedback from learners.*



## POLICY IN RELATION TO EQUALITY

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County Dublin VEC is committed to providing and promoting an environment where all individuals are treated with respect and dignity irrespective of race, gender, disability, religion, age, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or membership of the Traveler Community.

### *How Does This Affect Community Partners?*

FETAC programmes should be delivered in a manner that accommodates diversity, combats discrimination and promotes equality of opportunity. In some cases the community partner and some of their staff will be in direct contact with the learners as they will enrol them and support them throughout the programme. Partners will be supported to **ensure that they also are committed to combating discrimination and accommodating diversity so that learners are not discriminated against for any reason while in outreach locations.**

### *This can be achieved in a number of ways:*

- ▶ You can develop and display an **Equality policy** for your organisation. Guidelines for developing an Equality Policy and a sample Equality Policy are provided on pages 40 to 43.
- ▶ An **equality action plan** can be developed to show how you implement equality actions. Guidelines for developing an Equality Action Plan and a sample Equality Action Plan are provided on pages 44 to 45.
- ▶ You and your management committee can keep up to date with equality legislation- [www.equality.ie](http://www.equality.ie). Know what **discrimination** is and the **9 grounds of discrimination** covered in the legislation. For more information on discrimination see page 47.



- ▶ A representative from a minority group could be on the management committee or sub committee in order to keep equality on the agenda.
- ▶ Use the information provided in this pack or [www.equality.ie](http://www.equality.ie) to develop guidelines for your employees on Equality.
- ▶ County Dublin VEC tutors will have access to training on equality and diversity and the CEF will support you to access equality training for your staff and management.

*To assist you information regarding equality and useful websites is included in the appendix.*



## POLICY IN RELATION TO ACCESS TRANSFER AND PROGRESSION

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It is the policy of County Dublin VEC to ensure that processes are in place to facilitate access to our programmes and that supports exist to enable students to make informed choices regarding transfer and appropriate progression pathways.

### *How Does This Affect Community Partners?*

Some community partners register/enroll learners for FETAC programmes and have a responsibility **to ensure that learners have adequate information about the programme in order to make an informed choice, regarding transfer and progression options open to them.**

### *This can be achieved in a number of ways:*

#### **Information provision:**

- ▶ The partner can produce brochures/flyers about the programme so that learners can make informed choices. Page 50 gives examples of the sort of information that should be on promotional materials.
- ▶ A briefing/information session can be held for potential learners.
- ▶ Where demand is higher than the number of places available or when previous experience is required to access a programme it is advisable to have a transparent application process. The CEF can advise/participate in interviews for FETAC programmes to ensure that selection procedures, entry requirements are fair and transparent. To help prove that selection procedures are fair interview records should be kept in case of appeals.
- ▶ A Learner Handbook/Induction is useful for ensuring learners have access to information. Page 52 provide examples of information that can be included in a Learner Handbook or at the Learner Induction stage.

**Facilitating Diversity:**

- ▶ The programme content/delivery can be adapted and specific supports can be put in place to facilitate individuals or groups with special needs to successfully participate, transfer and progress. Let us know in advance about the special needs of groups/individuals by providing us with a profile and a request for supports. Guidelines on Facilitating Diversity are provided on page 55 and 56. A copy of the "Request for Additional Supports Form" can be found on page 57.

**Recognition of Prior Learning:**

- ▶ Although this area is not well developed yet there is some information provided on page 54 and on the FETAC website.

*Website information regarding matching non E.U. qualifications with Irish qualifications and Recognition of Prior Learning is included in the appendix.*



## POLICY IN RELATION TO PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT, DELIVERY AND REVIEW

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County Dublin VEC is committed to develop, deliver and review a range of programmes and services that respond to the needs of learners and in doing so we will promote equality, innovation and partnership.

### *How Does This Affect Community Partners*

Some partners identify the learner's needs and request a programme based on these needs and many programmes are delivered in community locations therefore the partner has a role to play in the development and delivery of FETAC programmes.

### **Procedures in relation to Programme Development can be achieved in a number of ways;**

#### ***a. Identifying learners needs:***

- ▶ Partners can identify the needs of the target group by having an open day or a focus group to identify needs, by attending local area meetings or consulting with representative bodies, for example, traveller groups, women's groups, disability groups etc. Information on how to help partners identify learner's needs is provided on page 60.
- ▶ Evaluation sheets and programme reviews also provide valuable feedback which can be used to develop future programmes.
- ▶ The local Adult Education Guidance Service are also available to meet learners and identify their educational needs. Contact details for your local Adult Education Guidance Service are on page 81.

#### ***b. Programme design:***

- ▶ When it is possible to do so the CEF will assist you to design programmes and register them with FETAC through the VEC or to access programmes already designed by County Dublin VEC.



**c. Programme delivery:**

- ▶ Tutors will have access to training through County Dublin VEC. Feedback or queries about programme delivery are always welcome. Contact the AEO or the CEF. A Programme Evaluation Form for community partners is available on page 36.

**d. Keeping records of attendance, progress and certification.**

- ▶ Enrolment/Registration Forms can be completed by the CEF/Co-ordinator / partner/tutor and returned to the VEC before the course starts. A copy of an enrolment form is provided on page 53.
- ▶ The partner must provide a secure location for assessment related work.

**e. Health and safety:**

Partners can ensure that the premises are maintained in such a way as to ensure the health and safety of all staff and learners.

This can be achieved by for example:

- ▶ Ensuring a Health and Safety statement is developed and displayed. See page 63 for guidelines on developing a Health and Safety Statement and a sample Health and Safety Policy.
- ▶ Carry out a simple Risk Assessment on a regular basis. See pages 67-69 for guidelines on carrying out a Risk Assessment and a sample Risk Assessment Form.
- ▶ Keeping up to date with Health and Safety directives and legislation. Monitor [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie) on a regular basis for details on new legislation etc.
- ▶ Attending Health and Safety training and keeping records.
- ▶ The VEC may use selection criteria when using temporary premises in the community.

**f. Programme review:**

A programme review can be carried out at the end of the programme to ensure it is meeting the intended needs. This can be achieved by;

- ▶ Carrying out an evaluation at the end of the programme and providing a copy of the evaluations to the VEC. It can be agreed in advance if this is to be carried out by the partner or the tutor. See page 33 – Learner Evaluation Form.
- ▶ Using an external evaluator to get feedback from the group about the programme and what could be improved in the future. A feedback report can be made available to the VEC for our records.

**g. Provision and maintenance of learning resources:**

Partners can ensure in so far as is reasonable that learners have access to premises, facilities, and resources especially those with a disability or whose mother tongue is not English.

This can be achieved by for example:

- ▶ Producing brochures, leaflets, flyers and resources in other languages depending on the budget or by getting the help of a translator.
- ▶ Providing English classes or additional support for those whose mother tongue is not English. Contact the ESOL Co-ordinator County Dublin VEC for further information. Contact details are provided on page 81.
- ▶ Providing special equipment or making physical adaptations to premises for those with disabilities.



## POLICY IN RELATION TO FAIR AND CONSISTENT ASSESSMENT OF LEARNERS

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County Dublin VEC will implement fair and consistent assessment of learners. We will develop processes to monitor progress, give feedback and assist learners to achieve their specific learning outcomes.

### ***How Does This Affect Community Partners?***

In the most cases the tutor is responsible for the implementing the assessment procedures on behalf of County Dublin VEC. However they will need your support to implement a small number of procedures.

#### **Procedures in relation to Fair and Consistent Assessment can be achieved in a number of ways;**

##### ***a. Co-ordinated planning of assessments:***

- ▶ The tutor will inform you of the dates for assessments and will need your help to ensure that the room is available and there are no disturbances during an assessment.

##### ***b. Security of assessment related processes and materials:***

- ▶ It is essential that partners can provide a storage area i.e. a lockable box/drawer in a filing cabinet for storing the learner's work for the duration of the programme. If the tutor is taking the assessments off your premises they will give you a receipt. In this case they will need you to check the names on the assessments and sign them in and out.

##### ***c. Reasonable accommodation:***

- ▶ The partner in many cases will already be familiar with the special needs of individuals/groups. It is important that we are informed if there is likely to be any special assessment methods or equipment required. Ideally a



profile of the special needs of the group can be provided to the CEF/Coordinator by the partner in advance. Guidelines on Reasonable Accommodation and examples of good practice are provided on page 72-73. A copy of the Request for Additional Supports Form is provided on page 57.

***d. Learner Appeals:***

- ▶ The learner has a right to appeal an assessment result which they consider to be unfair. In the event that a learner goes directly to the partner to make an appeal we have attached a copy of the appeals procedure in the appendix for you to follow if the need arises. A copy of the appeals procedure is provided on page 75.

***e. Storage of Certificates and Portfolios:***

- ▶ Generally a presentation of FETAC certificates is held in the registered VEC centre at intervals. In the event that the learner does not attend that presentation they will be contacted to come to the centre and collect their certificate. If the certificate and/or portfolio are not collected they will be returned to the partner who can arrange for them to be collected at their centre.



## RESOURCE MATERIALS

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### ***Communications***

- Page 33    Learner Evaluation Form
- Page 36    Evaluation Form for Community Partners

### ***Equality***

- Page 40    Guidelines for developing an Equality Policy
- Page 43    Sample Equality Policy
- Page 44    Guidelines for developing an Equality Action Plan
- Page 45    Sample Equality Action Plan
- Page 47    What is Discrimination?
- Page 48/49    The nine grounds of discrimination

### ***Access Transfer and Progression***

- Page 50    Information Provision: What information should be provided to learners?
- Page 52    Learner Induction/Handbook
- Page 53    Copy of Community Education Enrolment Form
- Page 54    Guidelines on Recognition of Prior Learning
- Page 55    Facilitating Diversity – Guidelines on supports that can be put in place
- Page 57    Request for Additional Supports Form



### ***Programme Development, Delivery and Review***

- Page 60 Guidelines on Identifying Learner's Needs
- Page 63 Guidelines for Developing a Health and Safety Policy and Statement
- Page 66 Example of Health and Safety Policy
- Page 67 Guidelines for developing Risk Assessment as part of Health and Safety Statement
- Page 69 Copy of Risk Assessment Form

### ***Fair and Consistent Assessment of Learners***

- Page 72 What is Reasonable Accommodation?
- Page 74 Good practice in relation to providing Reasonable Accommodation
- Page 75 Appeals Process

### ***Acknowledgements***

Equality Policy and Action Plan- [www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk)

Equality Authority of Ireland-9 grounds of discrimination –[www.equality.ie](http://www.equality.ie)

FETAC- Guidelines on quality assurance in Further Education –[www.fetac.ie](http://www.fetac.ie)

Health and Safety Authority – Health and safety Statement-[www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie)





# RESOURCES FOR COMMUNICATIONS PROCEDURES



## STUDENT'S REVIEW AND REFLECT FORM

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### *EVALUATE YOUR OWN LEARNING:*

**Name**

### *Some Questions which might help*

**1. What have I learned ?**

**2. What things have I done that I am pleased with ?**

**3. What challenges did I take up ?**

**4. What did I enjoy ?**

**5. What questions have I that I did not ask ?**



## COMMUNITY EDUCATION PROGRAMME EVALUATION REPORT

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*(To be completed by the student/ learner)*

### **Rationale**

It is critical that students/ learners have an opportunity to give feedback and their opinions on the course they have completed. This gives all of the staff involved in education the opportunity to learn from our students and improve our services to them. Tutors should discuss the evaluation in great detail with students, ensuring everyone feels comfortable about filling it in. Students/ learners should be offered the opportunity to fill it in themselves in written or visual form or where feasible a tutor or third party could act as a scribe.

**Name of centre/school/group:**

**Course Title**

**Day**

**Time**

**Tutor's Name**

**Date**



*Please answer the following questions:*

*How did you hear about this course?*

*Was the course what you expected? Please give details.*

*Did the course go at a good pace for you? Were the classes too fast or too slow or at a good pace for you?*

*What did you enjoy most about the course?*

*What did you enjoy least about the course?*

*What helped you to take part in the course?*

*What made it difficult for you to take part in the course?*



**Do you have any ideas about how we can make the course better?**

**Did anyone speak to you about other courses or opportunities?**

**Was the location of the course good? Were the rooms clean and tidy?**

**Do you think that this course has helped or will help in any of the following ways?**

	A LOT	A LITTLE	NOT AT ALL
To increase my chances of gaining other education/ training opportunities	m	m	m
To increase my employment opportunities	m	m	m
To mix with other people	m	m	m
To make new friends	m	m	m
To increase my self confidence	m	m	m
To develop new skills	m	m	m
Can you think of any other way the course has helped you?	m	m	m

**Optional:**

Name of Student:

Date:



## COMMUNITY EDUCATION EVALUATION FORM REPORT

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*(To be completed by community education partners)*

### ***Rationale***

County Dublin Vocational Education Committee is committed to engaging with our community education partners in open and clear communication. We invite your comments and reflections on your experience of working alongside County Dublin Vocational Education Committee. We will be issuing this document annually. However you are welcome to copy and return this when you feel it would be useful.

***Please answer the following questions:***

**1. Name of your Organisation:**

**2. Name of your County Dublin Vocational Education Committee contact:**

**3. Details of your relationship with the local adult education service (briefly detail financial and non-financial supports)**



- 4. What aspects of the relationship between your organisation and County Dublin Vocational Education Committee are working well?**

- 5. What aspects of the relationship between your organisation and County Dublin Vocational Education Committee require improvement?**

- 6. Do you have any specific support requirements (e.g. would you like additional support in accessing Other Sources of Funding) which you feel County Dublin Vocational Education Committee could help you access?**



**7. If you are receiving financial support to run specific programmes, please answer the following additional questions:**

- (a) How many learners started and finished the programme(s)?

- (b) Please detail reasons learners left the programme(s)?

- (c) Please detail the efforts your organisation made to follow up on learners who left the programme(s)

- (d) Was there any impact on individuals or the community as a result of the programme(s)?

**8. Any other comments.**



# RESOURCES FOR EQUALITY PROCEDURES



## THE EQUALITY POLICY

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It is recommended that the starting point for any organisation to address fairness should be an equality policy with an action plan to back it up.

A good equality policy will;

- State the organization's values on equality and how they will be put into practice.
- Show your staff and potential learners that you are serious about equality and helps them to understand what behaviour you expect from them, what is not acceptable and what they can expect from you.

### *How should the Equality Policy be developed?*

To be effective the Equality Policy must have the support of everyone in the organization. When developing the policy you should involve staff at all levels particularly co-ordinators, tutors and management committees. You could also consult with learners to ensure the language used is clear and easily understood by them particularly learners whose mother tongue is not English or whose literacy levels are low.

### *What should be included in your equality policy?*

Your equality policy should relate to the size and nature of your organization. If your organisation is a two/three person operation with 10/12 learners it is not necessary to have a complex policy.

1. The **opening section** will normally contain a statement of:
  - Your aim "to encourage, value and manage diversity";
  - Your commitment to providing equality for all;
  - Your organisation's wish to recruit staff and learners that is representative of the community you operate in.



2. You should then **identify the areas of discrimination that you will counter** – usually based on legislation. There are nine grounds of discrimination currently covered by legislation but there may be other grounds relevant to your organization or local circumstances:

- Gender;
- Marital Status;
- Family Status;
- Sexual orientation;
- Religion;
- Age;
- Disability;
- Race;
- Membership of the Traveller Community.

For further information on the 9 grounds and what they mean please refer to page 45.

3. You can then **state that “you will ensure an environment in which all people are able to give their best, that is free from harassment and bullying and that all decisions will be based on merit”**.



4. Finally your equality policy may describe how you will ensure that this is the case.

What actions will you take or what procedures will you put in place to ensure equality for all; for example you could ensure equality by;

- Having an equality action plan with clear measurable objectives and targets.
- Communicating the equality policy to all.
- Providing training and guidance for all.
- Putting procedures for dealing with harassment and bullying in place.
- Putting fair and transparent procedures in place for staff and **learner** recruitment, selection, promotion, training, discipline and grievance.
- Putting fair and transparent procedures in place for monitoring staff and **learner's** performance.
- Reviewing these procedures on a regular basis.
- Reviewing and updating the equality policy regularly.

Larger organizations often choose to have separate Anti- Bullying, Anti-Harassment and/or separate Recruitment and Appraisal policies and procedures. Smaller organizations may find it easier to have one policy covering all of these areas.

For further information about what is meant by discrimination and the nine grounds of discrimination please see page 49.



## SAMPLE EQUALITY POLICY

(Company name) is committed to eliminating discrimination and encouraging diversity. Our aim is to ensure that our staff and learners will be representative of all sections of society and that they will feel respected and able to give their best.

We aim to ensure equality and fairness to all staff and learners and not to discriminate on the grounds of Gender, Marital Status, Family Status, Sexual orientation, Religion, Age, Disability, Race, membership of the Traveller Community.

Selection for employment and training or any other benefit will be on the basis of ability and/or clear selection criteria. All employees and learners will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential.

### *We will ensure that our equality policy is effective by:*

- Having an equality action plan with clear measurable objectives and targets.
- Communicating the equality policy to all.
- Providing training and guidance for all.
- Putting procedures for dealing with harassment and bullying in place.
- Putting fair and transparent procedures in place for staff and **learner** recruitment, selection, promotion, training, discipline and grievance.
- Putting fair and transparent procedures in place for monitoring staff and **learner's** performance.
- Reviewing these procedures on a regular basis.
- Reviewing and updating the equality policy regularly.

Breaches of our equality policy will be regarded as misconduct and will lead to disciplinary action.

Signed by:

Date:

Manager (Company Name)



## EQUALITY ACTION PLAN

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### *What is an Equality Action Plan?*

An equality action plan backs up your equality policy and goes into detail about what will be done, by when and by whom in relation to equality.

#### **A good equality action plan:**

- Focuses attention on the key tasks/actions listed in your policy;
- Enables equality to be tackled like any other management task;
- Demonstrates that you take equality seriously and strengthens your policy by showing exactly how you intend to implement it;
- Becomes part of the objectives and responsibilities of named individuals within management;

#### **The equality action plan should involve:**

- Setting dates on when you will do the actions listed in the policy such as monitoring performance, reviewing procedures, providing training and guidance on equality.
- Describe how these actions will be done and by whom.
- Describe how you will deal with harassment and bullying – (both preventing and dealing with it) or make reference to another policy where it is covered.
- Describe how you will ensure that recruitment, selection, promotion, training, disciplinary issues and grievances are dealt with in a fair and transparent way. You can make reference to another policy where some or all of these issues are covered.
- Consider setting targets, for example, if you find that you are not recruiting many learner's from minority ethnic groups you could set a target to increase the number of learners to 10% in one year by changing the way you advertise courses to attract more people from minority ethnic groups. Or you could set about interviewing more disabled people to ensure a higher degree of participation of people with disabilities in courses or in staff team. Quotas are unlawful and you must be careful that targets are not misunderstood and used as preventative measures.
- Consider whether positive action measures are appropriate
- Consider when developing your action plan what will be your measure of success and how and when you will review the overall effectiveness of your policy.



## SAMPLE EQUALITY ACTION PLAN

**Organisation Name:**

**Equality Action Plan (Year)**

ACTION FROM EQUALITY POLICY	IMPLEMENT ACTION	WHO	BY WHEN	REVIEWED ON AND BY
No form of bullying or harassment will be tolerated	Develop and communicate anti bullying / harassment guidelines for learners/tutors.	Programme co-ordinator / manager	July	Centre manager  Date:
Provide training and progression opportunities for learners and staff.	Identify training needs  Identify progression opportunities for learners.	Centre manager  Programme co-ordinator	September	BOM  Date:  Centre manager  Date:
Have fair and transparent recruitment and access procedures	Develop and implement recruitment and selection procedures for all posts and courses.	Centre manager	November	BOM  Date:



ACTION FROM EQUALITY POLICY	IMPLEMENT ACTION	WHO	BY WHEN	REVIEWED ON AND BY
Recruit 10% of tutors and learners from ethnic minority groups.	Advertise tutor positions and new courses in different languages in local newspaper.  Match qualifications to Irish qualifications.	Centre manager	September	BOM Date:
Put in place fair and transparent procedures for dealing with disciplinary and grievance issues.	Develop guidelines for tutors and learners and communicate via staff and learner handbook	Programme co-ordinator/manager	December	BOM Date:
Put in place fair and transparent procedures for monitoring staff and learners performance	Develop guidelines for manager about performance appraisal  Develop guidelines for tutors to help ensure fair assessment methods	Programme co-ordinator/manager	December	BOM Date:

## DISCRIMINATION

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### *What is meant by “Discrimination” ?*

Discrimination is defined as the treatment of a person in a less favourable way than another person is, has been or would be treated in a comparable situation on any of the nine grounds which exists, existed, may exist in the future, or is imputed to the person concerned. The instruction to discriminate is also prohibited.

- Indirect discrimination - happens where there is less favourable treatment in effect or by impact. It happens where people are, for example, refused employment or training not explicitly on account of a discriminatory reason but because of a provision, practice or requirement which they find hard to satisfy. If the provision, practice or requirement puts people who belong to one of the grounds covered by the Acts at a particular disadvantage then the employer will have indirectly discriminated, unless the provision is objectively justified by a legitimate aim and the means of achieving that aim are appropriate and necessary.
- Discrimination by Association - this happens where a person associated with another person (belonging to a specified ground) is treated less favourably because of that association

### *What are the nine grounds of discrimination ?*

The legislation prohibits discrimination on the following nine grounds:

- **The gender ground:** A man, a woman or a transsexual person (specific protection is provided for pregnant employees or in relation to maternity leave);
- **The marital status ground:** Single, married, separated, divorced or widowed;
- **The family status ground:** A parent of a person under 18 years or the resident primary carer or a parent of a person with a disability;
- **The sexual orientation ground:** Gay, lesbian, bisexual or heterosexual; (The Court of Justice in PSV held that discrimination against a transsexual constituted discrimination on the grounds of sex.)
- **The religion ground:** Different religious belief, background, outlook or none;



- **The age ground:** This applies to all ages above the maximum age at which a person is statutorily obliged to attend school;
- **The disability ground:** This is broadly defined including people with physical, intellectual, learning, cognitive or emotional disabilities and a range of medical conditions;
- **The race ground:** A particular race, skin colour, nationality or ethnic origin;
- **The Traveller community ground:** People who are commonly called Travellers, who are identified both by Travellers and others as people with a shared history, culture and traditions, identified historically as a nomadic way of life on the island of Ireland.

*Reference: Employment Equality Act - 1998 and 2004 - [www.equality.ie](http://www.equality.ie)*



# RESOURCES FOR ACCESS, TRANSFER AND PROGRESSION PROCEDURES



## INFORMATION PROVISION

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It is very important that the current or future learner is provided with information that will help them to participate successfully in a programme. More information needs to be provided to participants in higher level programmes i.e. level 4 upwards.

### *What information could be provided?*

- 1.** Programme content and structure: what topics will be covered during the programme and in what order? This information can generally be found on the FETAC module descriptor.
- 2.** Programme duration: What dates will the programme start and finish? Will there be any bank holidays or days off?
- 3.** Award title(s), award type and framework levels of the awarding body: What level is this programme? FETAC level 1,2,3,4 or 5? Where does this level award fit into the national qualifications framework? This is important because the learner will be made aware of the level of work involved in this award from the beginning- for example if it is a level 5 award then the work load is likely to be at the same level as a Leaving Certificate course. If it is a level 3 award then it is likely to be less stressful! A copy of the national qualifications framework appears on page 11 of these guidelines.
- 4.** Entry Requirements: What previous qualifications or experience if any does the learner need before they can be accepted onto the programme? This should be clearly stated to ensure access criteria are clear and transparent. Will "Recognition of Prior Learning" be considered? If yes where will the learner find out more about R.P.L? Recognition of Prior Learning is explained on page 52 of these guidelines.

### ***How and when will this information be provided to learners?***

This will depend on the nature of the organization and their target group however numbers 1 – 4 of the list above (i.e. entry requirements, course content and structure, award level etc.) will need to be included in the course brochure or promotional material. If the target group is returning to education it may be more appropriate to distribute the information and explain these details at an open morning to recruit learners for a programme. The communication method is important as it must be appropriate to your target group. For example a website may be a convenient place to display your promotional material but if your target group does not have access to computers it is not an appropriate form of communication.

### ***Information that can be provided by County Dublin VEC***

- Assessment: How will the learner be assessed during the programme? Who will be assessing their work? How many assignments will be required if any? How will the learners work be stored? How will their work be marked?
- Reasonable Accommodations available: Describe in what circumstances a programme can be adapted to meet the special needs of a learner. Who should the learner contact if they require adaptations to a programme? What supports are available for learners with special needs? What equipment is available for learners with disabilities? What services in the community can be contacted for additional supports should they be required.
- How Learner will give and receive feedback on learning progress: Will there be one to one feedback meetings with tutors or will there be comments on the learner's assignments from the tutor to let them know how they are doing? How will the learner give feedback on their satisfaction with the programme?
- Learner Appeals: How will the learner be able to appeal an assessment result?
- Fees, grants and associated regulations: How much will it cost to complete the course or programme? Are there any grants available to learners and how can they access them? Are there any support agencies that can help with information on grants etc?
- Transfer and progression opportunities: Describe the transfer options available to learners who would like to transfer to other programmes. What are the progression opportunities for those who complete the award/programme? Are there any agencies that can help identify progression routes for learners? Give examples of how ex-learners have progressed in further education or employment.



- Protection for learners: What will happen if the organization cannot continue to deliver the programme for any reason? Are there arrangements in place to refund fees or to transfer to other providers to complete the course?

### ***Learner Induction***

When providing higher level FETAC programmes, many organizations will have an induction programme for learners when most of the information below can be communicated to learners. It is often communicated in a Learner Handbook or a series of Learner Handouts. Where this is not an option the organization could have an Induction Checklist. The Induction Checklist helps to ensure consistency by listing the information that all learners are to receive verbally from their tutor or the centre manager and is signed off by the tutor and the learner when complete.

***All information provided to learners should be in a format appropriate to the learners needs. It should be adapted or communicated in a way that suits learners with special needs, disabilities or whose mother tongue is not English.***

### ***General Information that can be provided***

- List of services available in the centre and how to access them: There may be other services available to the learner which might help them to participate fully in the programme for example counselling and guidance services, study groups, mentoring, computer facilities including internet access, literacy service, and English classes for foreign nationals, childcare, employment support services.
- Health and Safety information: What is the provider's policy in relation to Health and Safety, accident reporting, fire safety, manual handling etc?
- Equality: What is the provider's policy in relation to equality and fairness, bullying, harassment etc?
- Learner rights and responsibilities: What do you expect from the learner and what can they expect from the provider and their staff?
- General information – events of relevance to learners.



## COUNTY DUBLIN VOCATIONAL EDUCATIONAL COMMITTEE ADULT EDUCATION SERVICE

### Community Education Enrolment Form All information is confidential

NAME OF CENTRE/SCHOOL:

NAME:

ADDRESS:

HOME PHONE NO. \_\_\_\_\_ MOBILE NO. \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE TICK APPROPRIATE BOX

 MALE FEMALE

AGE BAND

18-20

21-24

25-34

35-44

45-54

55-64

65+

ECONOMIC STATUS

 EMPLOYED PART-TIME EMPLOYED FULL-TIME UNEMPLOYED NOT IN LABOUR MARKET ON A TRAINING SCHEME

DETAILS OF COURSE/s YOU ARE ENROLLING ON:

Name of course	Day	Time
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

**Have you attended a previous course(s) in this centre/ school.**

**Do you have any suggestions for a future course(s):**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**THANKYOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO FILL THIS IN.**



## RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING:

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According to FETAC “Recognition of Prior Learning refers to the process of recognition of the knowledge, skills and competence a learner already has howsoever acquired. It is a relatively new concept in education and training in Ireland and is recognized as essential to the promotion of life long learning”.

### ***Entry to a programme:***

County Dublin VEC is responsible for establishing RPL procedures with regard to entry to a programme. An individual may be granted entry to a programme on the basis of prior learning experiences.

### ***Exemptions/credits from programme requirements:***

County Dublin VEC is responsible for establishing RPL with regard to granting exemptions/credits from programme requirements. A learner may be granted an exemption from some programme requirements on the basis of prior learning experiences. For example learners who already hold any FETAC minor award should be granted an exemption toward a major award if the minor award they already have is a requirement.

Exemptions/credit can also be made using other recognized awards for e.g. City and Guilds etc, but the applicant must supply the original of the relevant certificate in order for the exemption to be granted. It is the responsibility of County Dublin VEC (the provider) to grant exemptions in accordance with FETAC guidelines.

Applicants can also be granted exemptions from parts of a programme based on uncertified learning experience/prior knowledge. However the applicant will have to present evidence to demonstrate how he or she meets the relevant programme requirements. They will not be exempt from assessment as the learning involved in work/life experience cannot be formally recognized until they are assessed.

## FACILITATING DIVERSITY

County Dublin VEC and their community partners are required to facilitate individuals or groups with particular needs to access and participate successfully in programmes as well as successfully transfer or progress from one programme to another.

Supports and adaptations can be provided in keeping with the provider's capacity to deliver and the objectives of the programme. The supports are targeted at learners who, were it not for the issue that creates the need for special interventions e.g. nine grounds of discrimination (see page 39) would be expected to participate successfully.

### ***Supports/adaptations to help ensure access to programmes:***

Selection procedures and entry requirements can be adapted or special supports can be put in place at entry level to ensure individuals or groups with particular needs can gain access to a programme. For example, positive action with regard to entry/selection procedures would help ensure that individuals with particular needs (e.g. members of the traveller community or foreign nationals) are accepted onto a programme. Providing guidance and support to target groups with particular needs to help match them to a programme would increase participation of individuals with special needs.

### ***Supports/adaptations to help ensure participation in programmes:***

Programme content and delivery can be adapted or specific supports can be put in place to ensure successful participation, transfer and progression for individuals or groups with particular needs.

Suggested adaptations and supports available could include:

- Needs analysis – formal needs identification- to identify the times, locations, days, supports and other adaptations required to suit a group or individual with particular needs.



- Provision of learner induction programme would help to ensure individuals with special needs have sufficient information to succeed.
- Individual learning/training plans tailored to suit the needs of the individual.
- Adapting programme materials and assessment methods.
- Access to a counselling service would provide additional support.
- Provision of additional study skills sessions for those who need additional support.
- Mentoring system- where one learner undertakes to support another.
- One to one additional tuition.
- Regular constructive feedback on assessments.
- ESOL support for those whose mother tongue is not English.
- Literacy support where poor literacy levels are an issue.
- Physical adaptations to premises to facilitate access and participation.
- Provision of childcare where childcare costs are a barrier to participation.
- Provision of transport where lack of suitable transport is a barrier to participation.
- **Reasonable accommodation** for people with disabilities. (For information on Reasonable Accommodation see page 69)



## REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL SUPPORTS FORM

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### ***REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION***

***DATE: TUTOR:***

***COURSE:***

***LOCATION:***

***DESCRIBE THE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT WILL PREVENT THE LEARNER/GROUP FROM SUCCEEDING:***

***PLEASE DESCRIBE THE SUPPORT THAT WOULD HELP THE LEARNER/GROUP TO SUCCEED:***

***PLEASE DESCRIBE ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT THAT WOULD HELP LEARNER TO SUCCEED:***





# RESOURCES FOR PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT, DELIVERY AND REVIEW PROCEDURES



## IDENTIFYING NEEDS

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### ***ANALYSIS: THE STUDY WE DO IN ORDER TO FIGURE OUT WHAT TO DO***

#### ***What is needs assessment?***

Needs assessment has been defined as the process of *measuring the extent and nature of the needs* of a particular target population so that *services can respond* to them. Needs assessment is, therefore, a valuable tool for informing the planning process.

It is important to be clear about *whose needs* are the focus of the needs assessment. Ultimately, needs assessment should focus on the *needs of the target population* rather than on the needs of *service providers*. or the grants available

#### ***Why do needs assessment?***

A good needs assessment process will:

- Identify the needs of a target population in a particular area;
- Help you to prioritise the needs.

### ***Consider the following when planning a needs assessment survey:***

- *Who* is the assessment attempting to inform, influence, or persuade?
- *What* purpose is the needs assessment intended to accomplish? What are my reasons for choosing to do this survey?
- *Whose* needs are to be assessed? Who will be asked? How many will be asked?
- *What questions* need to be asked?
- *How* will the information be used?
- *What resources* are available to do needs assessment? For example, an assessment survey can be done by one person, acting alone. But generally speaking, a needs assessment survey will be more useful if it is designed and carried out by a group. So try to assemble a small group of interested people to help. How much time will be needed to do the survey, from start to finish?
- *Pilot(Try out)* the survey with a test group. Revise if necessary.

### ***Components of a Needs Assessment:***

Along with doing a survey you may also include the following in your needs assessment:

- A review of the existing sources of information relevant to your target population;
- A profile of existing services and description of client profile;
- The views of your target population;
- The views of relevant practitioners and service providers;
- Analysis and interpretation of the survey results in order to draw conclusions;
- Taking action through prioritising the identified needs, appraising the options for meeting those needs, and implementing an action plan including allocation of resources;
- Monitoring and evaluation to check that the changes you have implemented are having the desired effect of meeting the needs of your target population.



## ***Needs Assessment Strategies for Community Groups and Organisations***

### **1. Existing Data Approach**

Already existing statistical data is used to obtain insights about your target population. You could use information from the census, labour surveys, local development plans to prepare an assessment report for the community.

### **2. Attitude Survey Approach**

Information is gathered from a representative sample of community residents about issues of importance to your target population. Information is collected by personal interviews, telephone surveys, hand-delivered questionnaires or mail questionnaires.

### **3. Key Informant Approach**

Community leaders and decision makers who are knowledgeable about the community identify priority needs and concerns. They may complete a questionnaire or they might be interviewed.

### **4. Community Forum**

A public meeting is held during which time the participants discuss what some of the needs facing the community are, what can be done about these needs.

### **5. Focus Group Interview**

A group of people are selected for their particular skills, experience, views, or position and are asked a series of questions to gather their opinions.



## HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Health and Safety Authority have an excellent website [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie). Under free "Publications" you will find a document called "Guidelines on Risk Assessments and Safety Statements". There are also free copies of Information Sheets relevant to your organisation for example "Prevention of trips and falls in the workplace", A Short Guide to Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 and "Improving Safety Behaviour at Work, 2004".

### *What is a Health and Safety Statement?*

A comprehensive safety statement is a practical tool for reducing accidents and ill health at work. For small businesses the statement should be simple and straightforward. The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 requires that an organisation produce a written programme to safeguard:

- The safety of and health of employees while they work.
- The safety and health of other people who might be at the workplace, including customers (learners), visitors, and members of the public.

Writing down the safety statement and putting in place the organisation and arrangements needed to implement and monitor it show to staff, and anyone else, that hazards have been identified and risks have been assessed, eliminated or controlled.

### *Six steps to be followed in developing a safety statement:*

- 1. Draw up your Health and Safety Policy:** The Health and Safety Policy is a clear statement of how an organisation manages its work place safety. It should include a commitment to comply with all relevant Health and Safety legislation and provide a framework for continuous improvement by setting targets and objectives. It should be signed by senior management and communicated to all staff.

*An example of an organisation's Health and Safety Policy is provided on page 66.*



- 2. Identify the hazards** i.e. in a small organisation the hazards are normally few and simple. A hazard means anything that has the potential to cause harm e.g. chemicals, electricity, gas, working on ladders, poor housekeeping for examples spillages or a flex from computers on the ground can cause trips and falls etc.

Hazards are normally identified under different categories such as Physical Hazards, Health Hazards, Chemical Hazards, Biological Agent Hazards and Human Factor Hazards. For further detailed information on these hazards refer to [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie) "Guidelines on Risk Assessments and Safety Statements" (pages 10 to 28).

- 3. Assess the risk:** Risk assessment is the careful examination of what in the work place could cause harm to people so that you can weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm. **A risk** is the chance, great or small, that someone will be harmed by the hazard together with the severity of the harm suffered. Risk also depends on the number of people exposed to the hazard. To help identify hazards and put risks into perspective an employer can check records of accidents, insurance claims and ill health as well as relevant standards covering hazards and manufacturers instructions for information sheets for chemicals and equipment. **Identify who might be harmed.** As well as employees you must consider learners, customers, the public, visitors, contractors etc.
- 4. Decide what precautions are necessary to prevent injury.** The Health and Safety legislation includes guidelines on how to assess the potential risks and the appropriate safeguards. Check out the [www.hsa.com](http://www.hsa.com) website for further information on the legislation "Health and Safety at Work Act 2005".

Your aim is to make all risks small by adding to your precautions. Improving Health and Safety need not cost a lot. If you find that something needs to be done, ask yourself:

- Can I get rid of the hazard altogether? if not,
- What safety precautions are necessary to control the risk?

Controlling the risk: Controlling the risk means that **you do all that is reasonably practicable to ensure a hazard will not injure anyone. This is a legal requirement also.**



**5. Record and communicate your findings.** The safety statement is the place to record the significant findings of your risk assessment. This means writing down the more significant hazards and recording your more important preventative measures and conclusions. Keep and display the written document so that it can be produced for the HSA inspector or it can be useful to demonstrate that you have taken reasonable precautions should you become involved in any action for civil liability. Communicating the findings can be done as part of induction training for learners and employees or as part of regular ongoing Health and Safety training.

**6. Review your Health and Safety Policy and Risk Assessment:**

Monitor your safety measures on a regular basis to ensure they are working effectively. Carry out another risk assessment on a regular basis or if you bring in new machines, substances or procedures that could lead to a new hazard and add precautions to your risk assessment if necessary.



## EXAMPLE OF A COMPANY'S POLICY DECLARATION ON HEALTH AND SAFETY

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To all employees:

As your employer, we are required to comply with the safety and health legislation that applies to this company. With this in mind we have carried out risk assessments of all our key operations and processes in all the workplaces we control. We have discussed these risk assessments with all relevant employees and worked with the safety committee in preparing this safety statement.

This statement sets out the safety and health measures we are implementing to protect everyone who works here.

The Board of ( ) has endorsed this statement and gave the responsibility to implement it. I am committed to ensuring that the safety and health measures set out in our safety statement are met.

The health and Safety manager/representative (name) , will give advice and information on how to comply with this safety statement but everyone, especially if you are in management or supervisory position, is responsible for ensuring compliance where they work.

We expect all employees to co-operate with us so that we can achieve our target of avoiding accidents. Consultation on health and safety matters, between senior managers and all employees, will be carried out through the safety committee, which you have selected.

You must play your part and comply with the safety and health rules for your area.

- Work safely and think of others as you do.
- Know and understand the risk assessments in your area.
- Report health and safety problems to your supervisor.
- Know who your safety representative is and contact him or her with any health and safety enquiries you may have.

Signed; (name)

Manager

Date

## GUIDELINES FOR RISK ASSESSMENT

### **Hazards and risks**

Look only for hazards which you could reasonably expect to result in significant harm under the conditions in your workplace. Use the following examples as a guide:

- Slipping/tripping hazards (e.g. poorly maintained floors or stairs)
- Fire (e.g. from flammable materials)
- Chemicals (e.g. battery acid)
- Moving parts of machinery (e.g. blades)
- Work at height (e.g. from mezzanine floors)
- Ejection of material (e.g. from plastic molding)
- Pressure systems (e.g. steam boilers)
- Vehicles (e.g. fork-lift trucks)
- Electricity (e.g. poor wiring)
- Dust (e.g. from grinding)
- Fume (e.g. welding)
- Manual handling
- Noise
- Poor lighting
- Low temperature

### **Who might be harmed?**

There is no need to list individuals by name –

Just think about groups of people doing similar work or who may be affected, e.g.

- Office staff
- Maintenance personnel
- Contractors
- People sharing your workplace
- Operators
- Cleaners
- Members of the public.

#### **Pay particular attention to:**

- Staff with disabilities
- Visitors
- Inexperienced staff
- Lone workers.

*They may be more vulnerable.*



***Is the risk adequately controlled or do you need to do more?***

Have you already taken precautions against the risk from the hazards you listed?

For example, have you provided:

- adequate information, instruction and training?
- Adequate systems and procedures?

***Do the precautions:***

- meet the standards set by a legal requirement?
- comply with a recognized industry standard?
- represent good practice?
- reduce risk as far as reasonably practicable?

If so, then the risks are adequately controlled, but you need to indicate the precautions you have in place. You may refer to procedures, manuals, Company rules, etc., giving this information.

***Responsible persons***

You can list individuals by name and job title. It should be clear who is responsible for controlling the risks.

From [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie)



## RISK ASSESSMENT PRO FORMA

### REFERENCE [WWW.HSA.IE](http://WWW.HSA.IE)

Company name

Company address

Area/department/activity

Assessment review date

List hazards and risks here:	List groups of people who are especially at risk from the significant hazards
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Signed  Date

Assessment undertaken by

List required controls here or note where the information may be found	Responsible persons:
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Signed  Date





# RESOURCES FOR FAIR AND CONSISTENT ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES



## REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

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### *What is Reasonable Accommodation?*

A provider is obliged to take appropriate measures to enable a person who has a disability:

- To have access to programmes;
- To participate and advance in programmes;
- To progress to further training;
- unless the measures would impose a disproportionate burden on the provider.

### *What are “appropriate measures”?*

They are effective and practical measures to adapt the provider’s place of delivery including adapting premises and equipment, delivery times, distribution of tasks or the provision of training or integration resources.

The provider is not obliged to provide any treatment, facility or thing that the person might ordinarily or reasonably provide for him or herself.

### *What is “disproportionate burden”?*

In determining whether the measures would impose a disproportionate burden, account is taken of:

- The financial and other costs entailed;
- The scale and financial resources of the provider’s business; and
- The possibility of obtaining public funding or other assistance.



### ***Good practice in relation to providing Reasonable Accommodation:***

In facilitating access and participation, good practice for providers and partners would include:

- Communicating to County Dublin VEC the need for reasonable accommodation for a group or individual. Partners could use the Request for Additional Supports Form page 57.
- Having guidelines on Reasonable Accommodation for tutors/assessors/learners.
- Adapting equipment for learners with disabilities.
- Getting regular feedback from learners to allow them to request further supports. See page 32/33 "Learner evaluation sheet".
- Providing staff training on reasonable accommodation and supports available.
- Where financially feasible adapting premises- wheelchair accessible facilities.



## GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES IN RELATION TO REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

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Depending on the nature of the group appropriate measures to enable people to demonstrate their achievement of the standard being assessed could include:

- Modified presentation of assignment briefs/examination papers for example – enlarge the print, use background colours and print that suit the learner.
- Scribes/readers, practical assistants
- Use of sign language and other appropriate communication methods.
- Rest periods and extra time to complete exams, assignments etc.
- Compassionate consideration- providers could have procedures which enable learners prevented from participating in assessment due to exceptional circumstances for e.g. physical injury or illness, bereavement etc.
- Adaptive equipment – Video/Camera recorders, Tape recorders, Dictaphones.
- Assistive technologies- examples include:
  - alternative keyboards,
  - light-writers,
  - accessibility options in Windows,
  - alternative mice,
  - touch-screens,
  - joystick mice,
  - large monitors,
  - screen readers,
  - reading and writing software,
  - webcam head control pointers.

For further information on disabilities and the types of assistive technologies that can help see [www.gateway2at.org](http://www.gateway2at.org) – AT for educators and employment.



## APPEALS

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Learners are entitled to appeal their results to FETAC. The appeal must be in writing and must be within three weeks of the issue of the statement of results. All appeals must be made through the Centre.

FETAC charge €19.00 per appeal which is collected by County Dublin VEC and forwarded to FETAC

Only evidence that has previously been presented by the learner can be part of an appeal. There can be no new evidence submitted.

It is the responsibility of each centre to ensure that all appropriate assessment evidence as required by the module descriptor is available for the appeal. Any evidence not available will be assumed not to have been completed.



## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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Access	Refers to a learner's ability to avail of appropriate opportunities to enter and succeed in programmes leading to awards, with recognition of learning already achieved.
Award	That which is conferred, granted or given by an awarding body and which records that a learner has acquired a standard of knowledge, skill or competence.
Award Type	Refers to a class of named awards sharing common features and level. These include Major, Minor, Supplemental and Special Purpose award types. Different award types reflect different purposes of award and allow for the recognition of all learning achievement.
Completion Rate	The number of learners who complete a programme of education and training expressed as a percentage of the number of learners who commenced the programme concerned.
Credit	A measure by which diverse learning achievements can be recognised; credit systems complement the Framework and the achievement of awards. Opportunities for credit accumulation enhance recognition of learning.
Evaluation	The process of comparing a provider's application for agreement of its quality assurance against FETAC criteria.
Evaluator	A person working for FETAC in the evaluation of a provider's quality assurance system against FETAC criteria for agreement.
Evidence	Material generated by the application of a procedure which demonstrates its effectiveness.
First Provider	A person or body which organises or procures all or part of a programme, part or all of which is provided by another provider.
Further Education and Training	Education and training other than primary or post primary or higher education and training.
Learner	A person who is acquiring or who has acquired knowledge, skill or competence.



Major Award	This award type is the principal class of awards made at each level of the National Framework of Qualifications. At most levels, such award-types capture a typical range of achievements at the level.
Minor Award	This award type provides recognition for learners who achieve a range of learning outcomes, but not the specific combination of learning outcomes required for a major award. This recognition will have relevance in its own right.
Monitor	A person who verifies that quality assurance procedures are being implemented as agreed. The monitor may be working on behalf of the provider (local monitoring) or FETAC (national monitoring).
National Framework of Qualifications	The single nationally and internationally accepted entity through which all learning achievements may be measured and related to each other in a coherent way and which defines the relationship between all education and training awards. The Framework has 10 levels, reflecting all learning from introductory to doctorate levels.
National Monitoring	The process which FETAC will operate to ensure that providers' quality assurance systems are effective in maintaining and improving the quality of validated programmes.
NQAI	The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland, sometimes referred to as the Authority, established in 2001 arising from the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999, with responsibility to establish and maintain the national Framework of Qualifications. For further information, see <a href="http://www.nqai.ie">www.nqai.ie</a> .
Peer Review	The involvement in a self evaluation of a programme of a person from another provider, in further or higher education and training, capable of giving an informed view on the success of the programme and able to contribute to its improvement.
Programme	a learning experience designed and offered by a provider, within the state, based on predetermined national standards and leading to a FETAC award.
Programme Review	The process whereby the provider reflects on its programme(s) to ensure its continued relevance. A review will be conducted more frequently but less formally and on a smaller in scale than a programme self evaluation. The findings of reviews will contribute to a self evaluation.



Progression	Refers to a learner's ability to move to another programme leading to an award at a higher level of the Framework, having received recognition for knowledge, skill or competence acquired.
Protection for Learners	Arrangements put in place by providers, offering programmes of three months duration or more, to protect the interests of learners in the situation where a programme ceases unexpectedly.
Provider	A person who, or body which, provides, organises or procures a programme of education and training.
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning i.e. recognition of learning that has taken place but not necessarily been assessed or measured prior to entering a programme. Such prior learning may have been acquired through formal, non-formal or informal routes.
Quality Assurance	The system(s) put in place by a provider to maintain and improve the quality of its programme(s).
Second Provider	A person or body which provides all or part of a programme part or all of which is organised or procured by another provider.
Self Evaluation	The process whereby a provider, with the involvement of learners and an external evaluator, evaluates the quality of its programme(s) and services. The findings of a self evaluation will be published in a standard format.
Special Purpose	This award type is made for specific, relatively narrow, purposes – often for Award certification of competence in specific occupational areas.
Supplemental	This award type is for learning which is additional to a previous award. Award They could, for example, relate to updating and refreshing knowledge or skills, or to continuing professional development.
Transfer	Refers to a learner's ability to move from one programme leading to an award to another, including at the same level of the Framework, having received recognition for knowledge, skill or competence acquired.
Validation	The process through which FETAC evaluates a programme of education and training, to ensure that the proposed programme provides the learner with the opportunity to reach the standards of the award to which the programme is intended to lead.



## SOME USEFUL WEB SITES

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**County Dublin VEC** [www.codubvec](http://www.codubvec) includes a section on Adult and Further Education with information on and resources for implementation of FETAC Quality Assurance policies and procedures.

**FETAC:** [www.fetac.ie](http://www.fetac.ie) includes the Directory of FETAC Awards, Assessment Regulations and Guidelines, NCVA Module Descriptors and a range of policy documents.

**Further Education Support Service** [www.sfe.ie](http://www.sfe.ie) – examples of best practice, resource materials for modules at levels 3 – 6, guidelines for the external examining process and for internal verification, on-line tutorials. On-line video resources and stand-alone presentations are being developed and will be available through the website on an ongoing basis.

**Irish Vocational Education Association** [www.ivea.ie](http://www.ivea.ie). Support for VEC's in implementing FETAC policies.

**National Qualifications Authority of Ireland** [www.nfq.ie](http://www.nfq.ie). Information on the National Qualifications Framework and on international recognition of awards.

**National Adult Literacy Agency** [www.nala.ie](http://www.nala.ie). Links to many literacy-related websites

**Basic Skills Agency (UK)** [www.basic-skills.co.uk](http://www.basic-skills.co.uk)

**Irish National Association of Adult Education** - [www.aontas.ie](http://www.aontas.ie)

**Higher Education and Training Awards Council** [www.hetac.ie](http://www.hetac.ie)

**Qualifications Recognition Ireland** [www.qualificationsrecognition.ie](http://www.qualificationsrecognition.ie). The Irish centre for the recognition of international qualifications



## SOME USEFUL WEB SITES

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**Health and Safety Authority** [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie).

**The Equality Authority** [www.equality.ie](http://www.equality.ie).

**The Manager's Toolkit** [www.hrtoolkit.gov.bc.ca](http://www.hrtoolkit.gov.bc.ca) . This site aims to provide managers and supervisors with the tools required to perform human resource functions

Guides to disabilities and assistive technologies that can help learners can be found on the following websites:

**AT for educators and employers** [www.gateway2at.org](http://www.gateway2at.org) .-

**The Central Remedial Clinic** [www.crc.ie](http://www.crc.ie)

**Enable Ireland** [www.enableireland.ie](http://www.enableireland.ie)

**Headway Ireland** [www.headway.ie](http://www.headway.ie)



## CONTACT DETAILS

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**County Dublin VEC Head Office**, 1 Tuansgate, Belgard Square East, Tallaght, Dublin 24. Ph: 4529600

The County has five Local Adult Education Services, through which contact may be made with the Adult Education Officers, the Adult Education Guidance Service and the Community Education Facilitators..

### ***West County Dublin (Lucan/Clondalkin)***

Lucan Institute of Further Education (L.I.F.E. Centre)

Esker Hill, Lucan, Co. Dublin

Ph: 6283910 Fax: 6283589 E-mail: [mmclvec@eircom.net](mailto:mmclvec@eircom.net)

### ***North West County Dublin (Blanchardstown/Clonsilla/Mulhuddart)***

Blanchardstown Adult Education Service

Old Garda Station, Main Street, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15

Ph.: 8212829 Fax: 8212702 E-mail: [ba\\_ec@eircom.net](mailto:ba_ec@eircom.net)

### ***North County Dublin (Rush/Skerries/Balbriggan/Swords)***

Fingal Adult Education Service

17A North Street, Swords, Co. Dublin

Ph.: 8408946 Fax: 8404392 E-mail: [adulthoodeducationwords@eircom.net](mailto:adulthoodeducationwords@eircom.net)

### ***South West County Dublin (Tallaght/Knocklyon/Ballyboden)***

Tallaght Adult Education Service

The Enterprise Centre, Rear of Bryan S Ryan, Main Road, Tallaght, Dublin 24

Ph.: 4515733 Fax: 4525961 E-mail: [learn@taladed.ie](mailto:learn@taladed.ie)

### ***South County Dublin (Dundrum/Stillorgan/Rathfarnham)***

Dundrum Adult Education Service

1B Ballinteer Road, Dundrum, Dublin 16

Ph.: 2989283 Fax: 2963931 E-mail: [info@sdae.codubvec.ie](mailto:info@sdae.codubvec.ie)



## ADULT LITERACY CENTRES

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### **BLANCHARDSTOWN**

Adult Basic Learning for Everyone (ABLE)

Adult Education Centre, Main Street, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15

Ph.: 8212600

### **CLONDALKIN**

Clondalkin Adult Basic Education Scheme

Care of Old V.E.C. Building, Monastery Road, Clondalkin, Dublin 22

Ph.: 4670043

### **DUNDRUM**

South Dublin Adult Learning Centre (SDALC)

4 Glenville Terrace, Dundrum, Dublin 14

Ph.: 2964321

### **FINGAL**

Fingal Adult Literacy Scheme

17A North Street, Swords, Co. Dublin

Ph.: 8408946



### **BALBRIGGAN**

Balbriggan Adult Education Service, 69-71

Drogheda Street, Balbriggan, Co. Dublin

Ph.: 8417763

### **LUCAN**

Lucan Adult Basic Education Scheme

Lucan Institute of Further Education, Esker Hill, Lucan, Co. Dublin

Ph.: 6280029

### **TALLAGHT**

Basic Education Services Tallaght (BEST)

Adult Education Centre, Mountain Park, Old Bawn, Tallaght, Dublin 24

Ph.: 4147187

### **JOBSTOWN**

Jobstown Adult Education Network,

Kiltalawn House, Jobstown, Tallaght, Dublin 24

Ph.: 4628523

