

Financing adult learning database

Name of the instrument - Local language	Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme
Name of the instrument - English translation	Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme
Scheme ID	296
Country	 Ireland
Reporting year	2020
Type of instrument	Grant for individuals
Sub-type of instrument	Lump-sum support
Type of entry	Single instrument
Short description	<p>The Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS) is targeted at unemployed persons over 21 years of age. Its primary target groups are the longer-term unemployed. It aims to give participants education and training opportunities which will develop and prepare them to go into paid employment or on to further education opportunities leading to paid employment. If eligible, participants receive a training allowance in place of their welfare payment as well as travel and meal allowance and can access childcare supports under the Childcare Employment and Training Support scheme under the Department of Social Protection.</p>
Level of operation	National
Name of a part of the country	Not applicable
Name of the region (for regional instruments)	Not applicable
Name of the sector (for sectoral instruments)	Not applicable
Relevance	Key instrument
Legal basis	Not applicable
Objective(s) and	The VTOS Scheme provides a range of courses to help

target(s)	people who are unemployed re-enter the workforce. The courses are full-time and are usually delivered over two academic years on a full-time basis of 30 hours per week.
Year of implementation	1989
Operation/management	The delivery of the grants is through the regional ETB boards. The overall national target and budget is set through SOLAS.
Eligible group(s)	Aged 21 years or over and unemployed, targeted at long-term unemployed (over 6 months)
Group(s) with preferential treatment	Eligible applicants must be over 21 years and are: Getting Jobseeker's Benefit or Jobseeker's Allowance or signing for credits for at least 6 months (156 days) or Getting One-Parent Family Payment, Disability Allowance, Illness Benefit or Invalidity Pension for at least 6 months (156 days) or Getting Blind Pension, Deserted Wife's Allowance/Benefit, Widow's, Widower's or Surviving Civil Partner's Contributory Pension, Widow's, Widower's or Surviving Civil Partner's Non-Contributory Pension or Prisoner's Wife's Allowance for at least 6 months (conditions may apply in the case of these payments) or A dependent spouse, civil partner or cohabitant of an eligible person A person who received statutory redundancy but who has not been in receipt of a qualifying payment for the required period.
Education and training eligible	Courses are provided by Education and Training Boards (regional). Courses range from basic education and training to advanced vocational training and there is a wide choice of subjects. The courses are full-time, about 30 hours a week (for example, 6 hours a day for 5 days) and can last up to 2 years. Many courses lead to qualifications such as the Junior Certificate, Leaving Certificate and awards at Levels 3, 4, 5 and 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.
Source of financing and collection mechanism	National Training Fund and Exchequer B5 ETB Grants Allocation
Financing formula and allocation mechanisms	Participants receive income support. VTOS participants are allocated a VTOS training allowance at the same rate as their jobseeker's payment. There are no fees for VTOS courses (including books and materials). Further allowances for meals, travel, and childcare depending on individual circumstances.
Eligible costs	The VTOS training allowance receive a monthly rate that is the same as their jobseeker's payment. Beneficiaries who are under 25 move from an age-related reduced rate and receive a maximum allowance of 203 per week.
Volumes of funding	2019: EUR 71 722 823 2018: EUR 69 784 551 2017: EUR 73 742 944
Beneficiaries/take up	2019: 7 721 2018: 8 076 2017: 7 966
Organisation responsible for monitoring/evaluation	Department for Education and Skills

Most relevant webpage - in English	https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/education/returning_to_education/...
Most relevant webpage - local language	https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/education/returning_to_education/...
Recent changes	<p>No recent amendment</p> <p>Recent changes in response to COVID-19</p> <p>No changes</p>
Sources	<p>SOLAS Annual Report 2018: https://www.solas.ie/f/70398/x/c755bd73ba/solas-annual-report-english.p...</p> <p>SOLAS, Further Education and Training Plan 2019: https://www.solas.ie/f/70398/x/47454f2b77/15083_solas_fet_services_plan...</p> <p>SOLAS, Further Education and Training Plan 2018: https://www.solas.ie/f/70398/x/71b0ff2871/final-version.pdf</p> <p>SOLAS, Further Education and Training Plan 2017: https://www.solas.ie/f/70398/x/924499afc0/fet-services-plan-2017.pdf</p> <p>Citizens Information, VTOS scheme overview: https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/education/returning_to_education/...</p>