

Further Education and Training (VET) Funding Model Review

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE

 IRELAND

Timeline

2022 Implementation

2023 Implementation

2024 Implementation

2025 Implementation

ID number 45194

Background

An outcome-based funding model for further education and training (FET) was the key objective of the first FET strategy 2014-19. The second FET strategy, Future FET: Transforming Learning 2020-24, commits to providing easier access and simplified pathways to learners, in addition to a consistent learner's experience and a more powerful identity for VET, which are only possible via a modified funding approach.

The current model is largely driven by established costs and an overly complex 34-programme structure, on which a micro-budgeting and funding allocation system is based. Education and training boards (ETBs, statutory FET providers) are required to predict demand by estimating learner numbers whereas the new funding system is to be driven by the previous years' activity.

This approach will ensure that all 16 ETBs have more autonomy and flexibility and strategically deliver FET that meets the needs of their regions.

Objectives

To devise a FET funding system that is 'future-proofed', transparent, operationally effective for both, funders and FET providers, offering value for money for the Irish taxpayer, and able to ensure inclusion and equal access to FET for everyone.

Description

The process of review started in 2019 with the agreement on the guiding principles and approach. An international expert panel was appointed, with an internal funding model review advisory group and data modelling working group established to support the panel's work.

The review panel had to review the existing approach to funding ETBs to deliver FET by SOLAS in terms of its effectiveness in delivering on national objectives, facilitating ETB flexibility and autonomy in responding to regional needs, ensuring sustainability and quality, and driving performance. In addition, the Panel had to identify and consider options how that approach could be developed to reflect the core principles that must underpin the

future FET funding. Lastly, it had to make recommendations on an appropriate future approach to funding the sector, and on an implementation timeframe with moderating mechanisms to ensure a smooth transition avoiding any sudden or significant changes to current funding levels.

A detailed engagement plan was designed to ensure robust consultation with all stakeholders at crucial stages throughout the review process. Although the consultation process was initially stalled by the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, consultations quickly moved online; the consultation process lasted from February 2020 till March 2021. Consultation included bilateral meetings, written submissions, an anonymised survey, focus groups and detailed pilot workshops with the stakeholder groups.

The following took part: Department of Education and Skills, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DEPR), Department of Employment and Social Protection (DEASP), ETBs and national representative group ETBI, Adult Learning Association (AONTAS), Teachers Union of Ireland (TUI), Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC), ETB pilot projects. National survey took place in June 2020, learner focus groups in January 2021 and final report consultations in June-July 2021. In February-March 2021, the expert panel tested some initial modelling and assumptions in a pilot with nine ETBs.

2022 Implementation

In June 2022, the final Funding Review report was announced by the Minister for Further and Higher Education Research Innovation and Science (DFHERIS). The Minister also announced the setup of an implementation group for the new funding model, with representatives from DFHERIS, the DEPR, SOLAS, the ETBs and learner, staff and employer representatives. The group started its work.

2023 Implementation

During 2023, a steering group, chaired by SOLAS, was convened to oversee the implementation of the new funding model.

2024 Implementation

The work of the steering group continued towards the implementation of the new funding model.

2025 Implementation

The work of the implementation of the FET funding model is ongoing. SOLAS, as the national agency for Further Education and Training, states in its published Corporate Plan (p. 43):

Reform Funding and Financial Systems: One of the barriers which has held back FET transformation has been the lack of consistent financial systems across ETBs. In 2024, all ETBs will finally move across to a single financial system, and we are working with ESBS to set up this new financial system to support the implementation of the new FET funding model. This is a big and critical piece of work that must support the work to align funding and performance, and to replace legacy programmes. By the end of the lifetime of the corporate plan (2024-2026) it will facilitate the full and final implementation of all recommendations of the FET funding model review.

Bodies responsible

- Further Education and Training Authority (SOLAS)
- Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS)
- Cavan Monaghan Education and Training Board (CMETB)
- City of Dublin Education and Training Board (CDETb)

- Donegal Education and Training Board (DETB)
- Dublin Dun Laoghaire Education and Training Board (DDLETB)
- Galway Roscommon Education and Training Board (GRETB)
- Kerry Education and Training Board (KETB)
- Kildare Wicklow Education and Training Board (KWETB)
- Kilkeny Carlow Education and Training Board (KCETB)
- Laois Offaly Education and Training Board (LOETB)
- Limerick Clare Education and Training Board (LCETB)
- Longford Westmeath Education and Training Board (LWETB)
- Louth Meath Education and Training Board (LMETB)
- Mayo Sligo and Leitrim Education and Training Board (MSLETB)
- Cork Education and Training Board (CETB)
- Tipperary Education and Training Board (TETB)
- Waterford Wexford Education and Training Board (WWETB)

Target group

Learners

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices

Young people (15-29 years old)

Young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs)

Learners with migrant background, including refugees

Learners at risk of early leaving or/and early leavers

Learners with disabilities

Adult learners

Older workers and employees (55 - 64 years old)

Unemployed and jobseekers

Persons in employment, including those at risk of unemployment

Low-skilled/qualified persons

Learners from other groups at risk of exclusion (minorities, people with fewer opportunities due to geographical location or social-economic disadvantaged position)

Education professionals

Guidance practitioners

Entities providing VET

VET providers (all kinds)

Other stakeholders

Social partners (employer organisations and trade unions)

National, regional and local authorities

Thematic categories

Governance of VET and lifelong learning

Optimising VET funding

Engaging VET stakeholders and strengthening partnerships in VET

Subsystem

IVET CVET

Further reading

[Further Education and Training Funding Model Review](#)

Related policy developments

2025 Completed

Advanced Manufacturing Training Centre of Excellence (AMTCE) Opens in Dundalk, Ireland's Border Region with Northern Ireland

The AMTCE is part of LMETB's FET provision as a centre of excellence, delivering a range of learning options with world class facilities for Industry 4.0 standard, funded by SOLAS as the national agency for FET.

 IRELAND

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2025 Implementation

Learner Support Framework in Further Education And Training (FET) and National Charter for Universal Design

The position paper of this policy is underpinned by a Universal Design (UD) approach and aligns with the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty.

The Framework to implement the policy outlines the enhancement of the overall learner experience within FET by:

 IRELAND

Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2025 Implementation

Further Education and Training Colleges of the Future (CotF): Capital Call

The National FET Strategy defined that CotFs should have the following characteristics:

 IRELAND

Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2025 Completed

The Action Plan for Apprenticeship 2021-25

Ireland's Action Plan for Apprenticeship 2021-25 was launched in 2021 by the Ministers for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science and the Minister of State for Skills and Further Education.

 IRELAND

Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2024 Completed

Green Skills for Further Education and Training (FET) Roadmap 2021-2030

The policy roadmap 'Green Skills for FET 2021-30' sets a strategic direction for green skills initiatives throughout the Irish FET sector and points to key areas for the FET Sector in the transition to a green economy.

 IRELAND

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2025 Implementation

QQI and ETBs: Evolving Quality Assurance following Inaugural Review: Quality Dialogue Meetings and Annual Quality Reporting (AQR)

The external review is conducted by review teams. National and international external reviewers are selected for their expertise in one or more specific areas, providing perspectives from education and training, quality assurance, learner voice, community and industry.

 IRELAND

Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2023 Completed

Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science Strategy 2021-23

DFHERIS funds and creates policy for the higher and further education and research sectors. It also oversees the work of the State agencies and public institutions operating in these areas.

 IRELAND

Type of development

Strategy/Action plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2021 Approved/Agreed

Transforming Learning 2020-24: Ireland's National Further Education and Training Strategy

The FET strategy 2020-24 was developed in consultation with the FET sector and other key stakeholders. Consultation was wide-ranging and included bilateral meetings, regional workshops and a public call for submissions.

 IRELAND

Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2025 Completed

Strategic Performance Agreements for FET System National Targets 2022-2024

Each SPA set out plans for the development and innovation of the VET system and include each ETB's contribution to the national FET system targets agreed with the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS).

Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

“ … ” **Cite as**

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). Further Education and Training (VET) Funding Model Review: Ireland. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2025 update) [Online tool].

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