

Barriers to participation in VET

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE

 IRELAND

Timeline

2020 **Completed**

ID number 35677

Background

This research was commissioned by SOLAS to address the Active inclusion policy in FET in Ireland as detailed in the FET strategy 2014-19. This policy development is to ensure equality of opportunity and access to FET and equal treatment of learners by identifying strategies to address psychological, social and economic barriers to the participation of groups experiencing socio-economic exclusion/distance from the labour market.

Objectives

The main objective was to identify, prioritise and propose solutions to the barriers to participation in FET faced by the long-term unemployed (those unemployed for over 12 months).

Description

This report contributes to the development of the evidence-based FET, in policy and practice, by providing the voice of the stakeholders, learners from some of the most vulnerable groups in society, educators, and employers.

In summary, the main challenges for reducing barriers to FET are: the lack of information and clarity around individual courses; the role of SOLAS and FET in general; addressing the negative socio-cultural attitudes towards FET; improved awareness of, and barriers to, FET, with particular reference to long-term unemployed individuals and other vulnerable individuals; course availability and accessibility; lack of fundamental skills (ICT, literacy and numeracy); greater clarity regarding social welfare entitlements; improving course availability and content; better engagement with employers; better engagement with educators and improved support for educators; and clarifying subsequent progression pathways to employment and/or higher education for learners.

Addressing these main issues would clarify what impact attending a FET course would have for the learner, allow educators to more effectively carry out their duties and enable employers access to a better educated and a more highly skilled workforce that meets their needs. Addressing these barriers in a systematic and engaged way may reduce many of the issues encountered by the long-term unemployed, the under 25 NEETs, and other main target groups, including people with disabilities and migrant populations. The findings

presented advance the potential for: revisions to the approaches taken in the organisational structure of the FET programmes; the dissemination of accurate and appropriate information through the right communication mediums and to the right audiences/ cohorts; and the reduction of economic barriers to participation in FET.

These suggestions also consider the needs of the most vulnerable groups. The report also proposes mechanisms, which support excellence in teaching and learning in the FET programme as this applies to 'active inclusion'. Cumulatively, they focus on reducing motivational and dispositional barriers for potential learners from these groups, enabling the most disadvantaged and vulnerable to fully participate in society through improved access to education and employment. This has the potential to promote and implement FET policies on access and participation, which are more efficient and effective in meeting the needs of its primary target groups.

2020 Completed

The study was completed.

Bodies responsible

- Further Education and Training Authority (SOLAS)

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

Adult educators
Guidance practitioners

Entities providing VET

VET providers (all kinds)

Thematic categories

Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Providing for individuals' re- and upskilling needs
Lifelong guidance
Ensuring equal opportunities and inclusiveness in education and training

Subsystem

Further reading

[Report on barriers to VET](#)

Related policy developments

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

“ ... ” **Cite as**

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). Barriers to participation in VET: Ireland. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2025 update) [Online tool].

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/35677>