

# The External evaluation of VET programmes and consequent measures

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE

 IRELAND

## Timeline

2017 Implementation 2018 Implementation 2019 Implementation  
2020 Implementation 2021 Implementation 2022 Completed

ID number 28296

## Background

The SOLAS corporate plan 2017-19 details, under goal 3, a systematic review of FET provision through a series of programme evaluations and developing programme improvement plans.

## Description

Various FET programmes (some of which include VET) have undergone external evaluation. For example, in 2017 the post-leaving certificate (PLC) programme underwent an evaluation by Ireland's Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI). Based on the recommendations arising from the evaluation, SOLAS established a PLC programme improvement advisory committee to develop an improvement plan. Actions to be implemented under this plan include:

- (a) the readjustment of the balance between PLC programmes that aim to train learners in job or sector specific fields (e.g. hairdressing), those with a focus on transition entry to third level education (e.g. art) and those that aim to provide learners with the prerequisites to enter apprenticeship training. The readjustment is determined by SOLAS in conjunction with the Department of Education and Skills and the Education and Training Boards (ETBs) as part of the annual service planning process;
- (b) the submission of a labour market justification for PLC programmes to SOLAS every three years for review. The first submission commenced in 2018. Other FET programmes to be evaluated include: the Youthreach programme (education for early school leavers); the vocational training opportunities scheme (VTOS); specific skills training, evaluation of FET provision at levels 3 and 4; and the Back to education initiative (BTEI).

### 2017 Implementation

Post-leaving certificate (PLC) evaluation research continues – draft findings presented to the SOLAS board.

### 2018 Implementation

The post-leaving certificate (PLC) programme was evaluated and the results of the

The post-leaving certificate (PLC) report was published and the evaluation of the Youthreach programme was commissioned.

### **2019 Implementation**

In 2019, the evaluation of the Youthreach programme report was published. Additionally, the evaluations of the vocational training opportunities scheme (VTOS), specific skills training, FET provision at levels 3 and 4 and the Back to education initiative (BTEI) were commissioned.

### **2020 Implementation**

The evaluations of the 2020/21 VET programmes have been delayed due to the pandemic and the availability of staff and learners to complete the fieldwork.

### **2021 Implementation**

The evaluations of VET programmes will resume in Q2 of 2022. However, it must be noted that VET provision has encountered considerable disruption during the pandemic and this will be factored into any conclusions/recommendations on programme evaluations conducted during this timeframe.

### **2022 Completed**

Since the publication of the External Evaluations of PLC and Youthreach programmes and the SOLAS programme recommendations, the Implementation Plan of the National FET Strategy Transforming Learning 2020-24 incorporate the sectoral recommendations under the strategic priorities and enabling themes of the national FET strategy.

## **Bodies responsible**

- Further Education and Training Authority (SOLAS)
- Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI)

## **Target group**

### **Learners**

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices  
Young people (15-29 years old)  
Learners at risk of early leaving or/and early leavers  
Learners with disabilities

## **Thematic categories**

### **Governance of VET and lifelong learning**

Further developing national quality assurance systems

## **Subsystem**

IVET CVET

## **Further reading**

[The SOLAS response to the findings of the evaluation of the national post-leaving certificate](#)

(PLC) programme

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Post-leaving certificate (PLC) outcomes report 2019

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Evaluation of the national Youthreach programmes

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The SOLAS response to the findings of the evaluation of the national Youthreach programme

## Related policy developments

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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.

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**Type of development**

Regulation/Legislation

**Subsystem**

IVET CVET

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“ … ” **Cite as**

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). The External evaluation of VET programmes and consequent measures: 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/28296>