

# Public and Stakeholder Consultation on National Further Education and Training Strategy 2025-2029

**POLICY DEVELOPMENT****STRATEGY/ACTION PLAN** **IRELAND**

## Timeline

**2025 Design****ID number 50969**

## Background

The previous national Further Education and Training Strategy Transforming Learning came to its conclusion at the end of 2024

SOLAS (An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna) was established in 2013 as the state agency with responsibility for further education and training (FET) in Ireland. As part of its remit, SOLAS is required to prepare and submit a strategy in respect of FET every five years to the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.

The next FET strategy will run from 2025-2029 and set out the strategic priorities and policy direction of the Further Education and Training sector.

## Objectives

SOLAS, mandated by government, undertakes a wide-ranging strategy consultation process with its partners in the Education and Training Boards and stakeholder groups including enterprise, learners, other government departments and agencies, second level education providers and representative groups, to help set out a clear vision for future growth, transformation and development in the next FET strategy 2025-2029. The findings from public consultation will also inform the design and development of the FET strategy.

The stakeholder and public consultation process outlined the context and background of the public consultation, which included references to megatrends that impact on the FET sector:

- Climate action
- Digital Transformation
- Global disruption
- Ageing population
- Artificial intelligence (AI)

The ambitions of the FET sector were also outlined in the consultation:

- To become an OECD world-class skills leader
- Increase lifelong participation rates

- Meet Ireland’s future workforce and skills needs, particularly for the intermediate skills needs to drive the productivity gains of small and medium enterprises (SMEs)
- A driver of equality and social inclusion
- Consistent quality of learner experience
- Support the needs of learners, with both vocational and technical provision and pathways and progression routes to higher education (HE).
- To provide agile responses to rapidly changing environments

All feedback from all consultation processes will shape the strategic direction of the FET sector for its next iteration of the FET strategy 2025-2029 and beyond.

## Description

The stakeholder consultation process, which included both workshops and bilateral meetings commenced in Q4, 2024. The public consultation opened on 31st January 2025 and was published by both the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science and SOLAS. The closing date for the consultation was the 21st February 2025.

### 2025 Design

To develop the next national FET strategy 2025-2029, stakeholder and public consultation commenced.

## Bodies responsible

- Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS)
- Further Education and Training Authority (SOLAS)

## Target group

### Entities providing VET

Companies  
Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)  
VET providers (all kinds)

### Other stakeholders

Social partners (employer organisations and trade unions)  
National, regional and local authorities

### Other

The wider public and any other public interest organisation

## Thematic categories

### Governance of VET and lifelong learning

Coordinating VET and other policies  
Optimising VET funding  
Engaging VET stakeholders and strengthening partnerships in VET

### Modernising VET offer and delivery

Reinforcing work-based learning, including apprenticeships

## Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

### European and international dimensions of VET

VET internationalisation strategies

## Subsystem

IVET CVET

## Further reading

[DFHERIS: Public Consultation to inform the development of the Further Education and Training Strategy \(2025-2029\)](#)

[SOLAS: Strategy Consultation 2025-2029](#)

## Related policy developments

### 2025 Legislative process

#### **National Training Fund (NTF): Legislation to unlock EUR 1.5b surplus for capital, innovation and research to upskill/reskill employed and unemployed**

The National Training Fund (Amendment) Bill 2025 was published in October and is at the fifth (final) stage of the lower house of the Irish Parliament.

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##### **Type of development**

Regulation/Legislation

##### **Subsystem**

IVET CVET

### 2025 Design

#### **Public Consultation on Tertiary Education Strategy to Identify the Objectives and Outputs of Further Education and Training in Tertiary Education**

Respondents to the public consultation were asked to consider a number of questions, which were:

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##### **Type of development**

Strategy/Action  
plan

##### **Subsystem**

IVET CVET

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2025 Completed

## The National Skills Council (NSC): new partnerships and first strategic advice to government, following OCED Report on Ireland's Skills Strategy

A review was conducted in partnership with the OECD. The review concentrated on four areas:

- balance in skills;
- lifelong learning;
- innovation;
- governance.

The report identified four priorities:

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### Type of development

Strategy/Action  
plan

### Subsystem

IVET CVET

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### “ ... ” Cite as

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). Public and Stakeholder Consultation on National Further Education and Training Strategy 2025-2029: Ireland. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2025 update) [Online tool].

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