

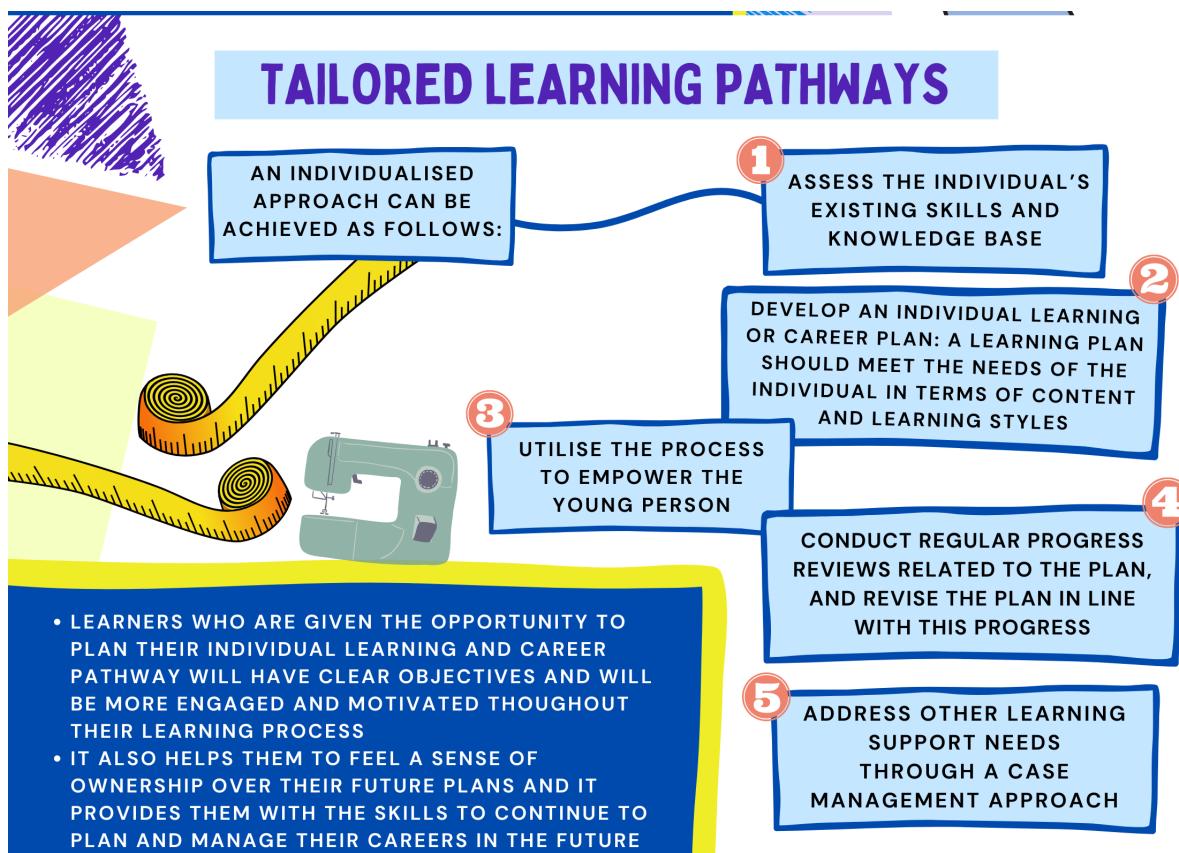


# Tailored learning pathways

## Problem statement

### Addressed problem: "One-size-fits-all"

A 'one-size-fits-all' approach cannot be used for young people at risk of leaving education early, or for those who have already done so. They need individualised educational responses. This refers to the content of the learning and the way it is delivered, as well as any additional learning support. This can help to ensure that learners are following a pathway that suits their interests and learning styles, as well as helping to tackle any barriers they face.



## Beneficiaries

 Early leavers from education and training

 Low-performing learners

Young people who have already dropped out and are returning to education, as well as young people who are at risk of dropping out.

## Addressing the problem

### How can a tailored approach be achieved?

An individualised approach can be achieved through:

- Establishing individual learning or career plans
- Ensuring needs-based learning support is provided
- Establishing individual health or well-being plans
- [Implementing a case management approach to support students' non-educational needs](#)
- [Mentoring / Coaching](#)

An individualised approach also relies on flexible learning pathways, in order to [tailor learning provision](#).

The following tips are given as advice to policy-makers and practitioners involved in the design and delivery of such measures. The information is based on Cedefop research into successful measures as well as other relevant evidence.

### 💡 **Tip 1: Develop an individual learning or career plan**

Establishing an individual learning plan which outlines personalised learning objectives, means that young people can be given a tailored learning experience. The learning objectives should be clear, realistic and measurable, so that the learner understands what is required to achieve them and can measure his/her achievements against them.

A learning plan should meet the needs of the individual in terms of both content and learning styles. It could cover for example: subjects to study as part of a learning programme; academic support to be provided; long-term goals for the student; post-secondary plans and how the young person can prepare for these. Similarly, a career plan is a way of identifying learning and development that needs to be undertaken in the transition towards or through working life. It may set out a career objective as well as short-term career goals, and identify potential barriers to progression.

An individual learning plan or career plan is formulated together with the teacher/trainer or other support staff (e.g. counsellor, mentor). It is important that the staff involved in preparing these plans have been given training in how to develop them. Sometimes the young person's parents may be involved.

### 💡 **Tip 2: Assess the individual's existing skills and knowledge base**

An individual learning or career plan should be formulated based on an initial

assessment of the young person's profile and existing skills, and should build on these. This assessment might look at, for example, the level of basic skills of the learner, prior learning and work experience, as well as motivation. It should also identify an individual's needs, for example in terms of learning support. A self-assessment by the learner might form part of this process.

Taking this kind of holistic approach to the development of the plan and basing it on an in-depth individual assessment, rather than providing 'directional' guidance (offering a number of options and asking the young person to choose one) is more likely to have success with this target group.

Undertaking this kind of initial assessment can help to ensure that the learning programme offered (in terms of level and content) is suited to the young person. It also means that the learner's pathway within that programme can be tailored to their needs.

### **💡 Tip 3: Tailor the plan to the young person**

A learning / career plan should take account of the young person's individual circumstances as well as his/her existing talents, competences and skills, strengths and weaknesses. It is important for example to take account of any basic skills that are lacking and ensure that these are tackled in the early stages of the learning pathway. It should set out realistic learning objectives and clear goals and should also cover how the individual's support needs will be addressed. For instance, for young people with a high record of absence, the individual plan could address how the lost learning time will be made up.

### **💡 Tip 4: Utilise the process to empower the young person**

It is important that any individual plan is developed in conjunction with the student. There should be some freedom for the young person to decide what and how they will learn, for example opportunities to choose work-based options.

The initial assessment can be an empowering process for the young person. Helping them to identify existing skills and competences, and possibly how these pertain to the curriculum, can help to boost their self-awareness, confidence and self-esteem. This is particularly important for young people who have never achieved a formal qualification, or who have been led to see themselves as a 'failure' in a formal educational context.

### **💡 Tip 5: Conduct regular reviews of progress against the plan**

Once the plan has been agreed, ongoing support should then be provided by a

teacher/trainer, mentor, careers adviser, counsellor or other support person. This ongoing support means that the learning objectives can be regularly reviewed to assess progress. There should be periodic opportunities to provide one-to-one feedback on progress in relation to the plan, and if necessary to revise the plan in line with this progress.

## **Tip 6: Ensure the young person is committed to the plan**

For any individual plan to succeed, it is important that the young person is committed to achieving the targets and goals set out. This commitment can be achieved in a number of ways, including through a positive relationship with the staff member responsible for reviewing the plan, as well as regular opportunities to hear feedback on their progress.

Contracts can also be used as a way of setting out an individualised learning pathway and support plan which formalises the commitment from the young person. A contract might include, for example, objectives for the young person, together with details of the help and support he/she is entitled to receive. It may also refer to financial support the young person will receive whilst participating in the contract. Signing the contract can be a commitment from the young person to meeting his/her obligations as set out in the contract, e.g. regular attendance, timely completion of assignments, etc.). Having the contract in place sets out a two-way agreement, outlining the expectations of the young person and the organisation supporting him/her and can help to secure the young person's buy-in to fulfilling these expectations.

## **Tip 7: Address other learning support needs**

It is important to ensure that any learning support needs are addressed in order to enable a young person to achieve the objectives set out in his/her learning plan. These support needs could relate to any learning difficulties such as dyslexia, or to language needs in the case of migrant children for example. Learners who are often absent need support to develop a plan to make up the lost learning time. It is also important to foresee alternatives to suspension or expulsion, including onsite supports with multidisciplinary teams.

For young people facing complex barriers to learning, an individual health or well-being plan, or an integrated education and health plan may be required. Similarly to learning and career plans, a health plan should be based on an initial assessment and should take account of the physiological needs (e.g. sleep, hunger) of the student, as well as his/her social and psychological needs. It should aim to achieve the best possible health for the young person, whilst at the same time maximising engagement in learning provision. A health plan should be regularly monitored. Ideally, parents should be engaged in the process, together with the young person, a staff member from the learning provider, and if appropriate a health professional.

## Expected outcomes

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Giving young people the opportunity to steer their own educational pathway through the development of individual learning and career plans and clearly setting-out learning objectives, is a way of increasing their engagement and motivation. It also helps them to feel a sense of ownership over their future plans and to feel in control of their own situation. Furthermore, if they are actively involved in developing the individual plan, this will give them skills to continue to plan and manage their careers in the future.

Ensuring provision is needs-based and addresses the additional support needs of the young person can break down barriers to learning. This is likely to contribute to increased motivation, attendance and ultimately success rates.

The following outcomes can be expected at different levels:

INDIVIDUAL	INSTITUTIONAL	SYSTEM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Defined learning career goals</li><li>Positive attitude to learning and education and training</li><li>Improved education outcomes</li><li>Improved well-being</li><li>Better understanding of education options</li><li>Lower absenteeism</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Provision better meets needs of learners, in particular at-risk groups</li><li>Improved satisfaction amongst learner cohort</li><li>Improved morale / commitment amongst learner cohort</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Reduced drop-out</li><li>Improved success rates for learners</li><li>Improved career progression for learners</li><li>Improved integration of learners from minority / high-risk groups</li></ul>

## Related protective factors

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**Education achievement and attendance**



**Inclusive environment**



## Positive view of education and training compared to low-paid jobs

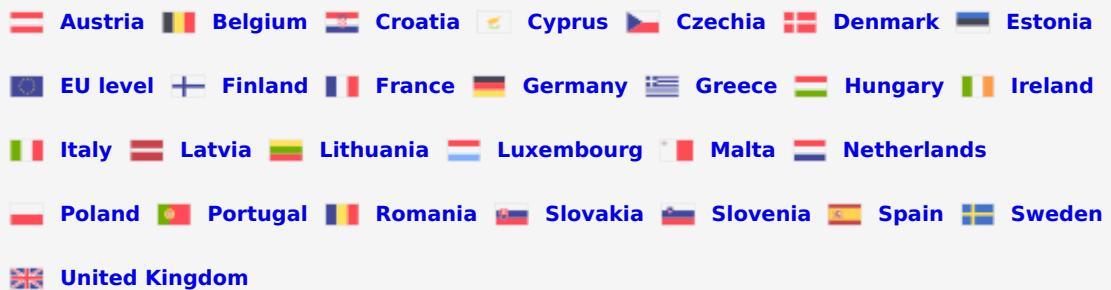
## Related resources

### Statistics and data

#### Statistics and data

### Links between ELET policies and language support policies for students whose mother tongue is other than the language of instruction

In most countries in Europe policies for language support for students whose mother tongue is other than the language of instruction is not directly linked to policies for tackling early leaving.



### Good practices

#### Good practice

### Second chance schools - France

*Écoles de la deuxième chance*

#### Good practice

### Second Chance School of Matosinhos

The Second Chance School of

French second chance schools (E2Cs) offer training programmes which incorporate individualised learning paths tailored to the needs of each participant.



Matosinhos in Portugal offers a unique education and training programme. Learners design their own training plan which includes vocational training, artistic training, personal and social development and educational support.



## Orienta4YEL

Supporting educational and social inclusion of young early leavers and those at risk of early leaving through mechanisms of orientation and tutorial action.

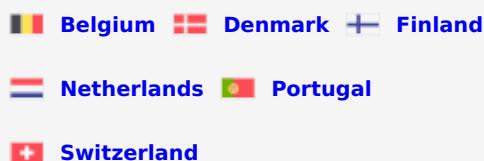


## Tools



## DIDO - Dropping-in the dropouts toolkit

The DIDO toolkit contains practical tools aimed at preventing dropout in adult education.



## Publications



## Bringing it all back home:



## Immigrant background and

## An innovative approach to the provision of tailored education and training for young people

The Irish ABLE programme offered a flexible curriculum. Students' interests were taken into account both for content and delivery, in order to develop a tailored, relevant course for each individual.

Read more about this programme [here](#)



Ireland



### Recommendations on inclusive education

*Based on the COFACE Disability S.H.I.F.T. guide for a meaningful inclusion of persons with disabilities and their families. COFACE Families Europe is a pluralistic network of civil society associations representing the interests of all families.*

According to article 24 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), signed and adopted by the European Union and all its Member States, and of its General Comment No. 4, State parties must ensure the realisation of the right of persons with disabilities to education through an inclusive education system at all levels, including pre-schools, primary, secondary and tertiary education, vocational training and lifelong learning, extracurricular and social activities, and for all students, including persons with disabilities.

## expected early school leaving in Europe: evidence from PISA

This technical brief analyses the relationship between immigrant status and educational expectations in PISA. Migration flows from outside and within the EU have increased in recent years, and this has raised the attention of policy makers and the general public, with special interests on the implications that those flows can have on, among other, the education system and the labour markets.



### School achievement and changes in inclusive vs exclusive support

*Review of 50 years supporting students with intellectual disabilities and special educational needs in Sweden*

Sweden's education system has seen a shift towards more segregated support for students with intellectual disabilities since the mid-1990s, despite its reputation for inclusivity. The study reveals that inclusive approaches were more common before the 1990s but have since given way to more specialised solutions.





## Report on the digital transformation in blended learning environments

*European Expert Network on Economics of Education (EENEE) analytical report*

This report aims to highlight the contribution of blended learning to social inclusion through flexible educational pathways as part of a whole-school approach. Blended learning combines traditional face-to-face instruction with digital and online methods, offering a range of benefits such as improved student performance, increased engagement, and support for diverse learning needs, including those with special educational needs (SEN).



## Second chance schools and their impact on youth

*Analysis of the profile of youth in second chance programmes and their impact on educational and labour transitions*

The article analyses the profile of youth participating in second chance programmes in Spain.



## Teaching basic skills: Literacy

*New EC teaching guide for literacy*

The European Education and Culture



## Tutors' relational professionalism

*Facilitating innovation in a formalist pedagogical culture*

The Italian education system is largely formalist, but a case study of a vocational education and training (VET) programme shows that personalised approaches can be introduced.



## Second chance schools as socio-educational organisations

*Characterisation, offering, functions and mission*

The article examines the characteristics and processes of the second chance schools, their educational, labour, and social functions, and their mission and institutional identity.



## Teaching basic skills: Mathematics

*New EC teaching guide for mathematics*

The European Education and Culture

Executive Agency of the European Commission has published a new set of thematic guides for teaching basic skills. These guides support the European Commission's Basic Skills Action Plan, and aim to boost teaching and learning, support educators and enable supportive environments.

 **EU level**

 Publications

## **Teaching basic skills: Science**

*New EC teaching guide for science*

The European Education and Culture Executive Agency of the European Commission has published a new set of thematic guides for teaching basic skills. These guides support the European Commission's Basic Skills Action Plan, and aim to boost teaching and learning, support educators and enable supportive environments.

 **EU level**

 Publications

## **Teaching basic skills: Citizenship**

*New EC teaching guide for citizenship*

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 **EU level**

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## **Teaching basic skills: Digital skills**

*New EC teaching guide for digital skills*

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 **EU level**

## Quick wins

★ Quick win

### Promote the development of individual learning plans

Developing individual learning plans with students helps to secure their ownership and commitment to participating in their chosen learning pathway. They can also be a way of encouraging learners to work towards achieving their goals.

 Denmark  Ireland

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Source URL: <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/en/tools/vet-toolkit-tackling-early-leaving/intervention-approaches/tailored-learning-pathways>