

# Leaving School?

Information on some  
Post-School Options for  
School Leavers and other  
Adults with Disabilities

**FURTHER EDUCATION  
AND TRAINING**



## Post-school options

Many students, including those with disabilities, leave school and proceed to attend further education and training programmes.

## What are the Further Education and Training Options?

Further Education and Training programmes offer a wide variety of life-long education and training options to anyone over 16 years. Further Education and Training (FET) helps people get skills and qualifications for employment, career, personal development, and social purposes. These courses provide a broad range of options to meet the diverse needs of learners. These courses are for school leavers and those looking for second-chance and life-long education options. Some of these courses can offer a stepping stone to those who want to progress to higher-level qualifications.

### FULL-TIME OPTIONS

- ▶ Post Leaving Certificate (PLC)
- ▶ Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme
- ▶ Youthreach
- ▶ Apprenticeship
- ▶ Traineeships
- ▶ Specific Skills Training
- ▶ Specialist Training for People with Disabilities
- ▶ Blended Learning
- ▶ Bridging & Foundation Training
- ▶ Local Training Initiatives

### PART-TIME OPTIONS

- ▶ Back to Education Initiative
- ▶ Adult literacy
- ▶ Community Education
- ▶ Evening Training
- ▶ English for Speakers of Other Languages
- ▶ Skills for Work

### ONLINE OPTIONS

Further Education and Training is also available online through SOLAS eCollege [www.ecollege.ie](http://www.ecollege.ie), and through the NALA Write-On programme [www.writeon.ie](http://www.writeon.ie).

You can read some more about these FET options later in this pamphlet.

## Where is Further Education and Training available?

These courses can be available in local schools, colleges and centres throughout the Country run by the regional Education and Training Boards (ETBs)<sup>1</sup>, as well as through other local providers. See [www.fetchcourses.ie](http://www.fetchcourses.ie) or [www.onestepup.ie](http://www.onestepup.ie) for details of courses or programmes and the locations of the colleges and centres. Some courses are available online.

**SOLAS** is the national Further Education and Training Authority and has responsibility for the strategic direction and funding of the further education and training programmes.

## What are the standards of learning in Further Education and Training?

Learning standards range from levels 1 through to level 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). To put this in context, Level 3 corresponds to a Junior Certificate, levels 4 and 5 to a Leaving Certificate and an honours degree is at Level 8. It is possible to build on a qualification to move up to the next level.

## Are there supports for students with disabilities in FET?

FET Colleges and Training Centres may provide additional assistance for people with disabilities on mainstream FET Courses. Specialist Training Courses for people with disabilities are also available.

Additional supports can be provided including assistive technology (equipment and/or software) and personal or academic support. You should contact the course provider to establish what supports are possible and appropriate and may be available.

PLC students may apply for student support grants from Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI). Learners on Youthreach and VTOS courses may also be eligible for certain training and expense allowances subject to certain conditions – further information is available from the course provider or from INTREO.

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<sup>1</sup> These include Colleges of Further Education, former FÁS centres, and ETB schools and colleges (former vocational schools and colleges)

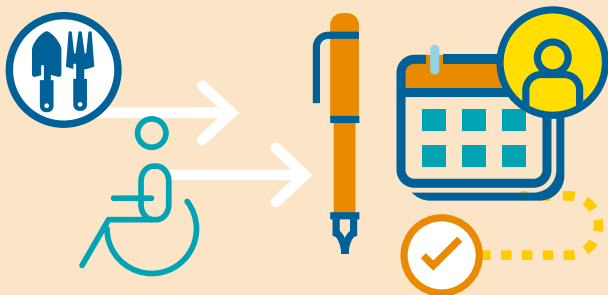
## Specialist Training options for People with Disabilities

Specialist Training (at NFQ level 3 to 5) is provided for some people with disabilities who require a greater degree of support in pursuing suitable vocational training options and who cannot avail of the mainstream options. This offers support in individualised training and progression plans, literacy and numeracy support and individualised career planning. Other features of this training may include additional training duration, adapted equipment, and enhanced training content. Further information is available from your local ETB or the Specialist Training Providers and published on [www.fetchcourses.ie](http://www.fetchcourses.ie).

## Where can I get more information about Further Education and Training courses and supports?

Information is widely available. The following sources will be helpful.

- ▶ **School Guidance:** Students in school will get information and guidance about FET courses from their school guidance services. Talk with your school's Guidance Counsellor, or your Year Head.
- ▶ **INTREO:** This is the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection service offering a single point of contact for all employment and income supports. Staff in local INTREO offices provide information for job-seekers about further education and training options and about social welfare payments for people pursuing FET courses.  
[https://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/Intreo\\_home.aspx](https://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/Intreo_home.aspx)
- ▶ **Adult Education Guidance Service (AEGS):** Information and guidance about Further Education and Training is provided for adults, and those who have left school early, by the AEGS under each ETB. Adults with disabilities, who have difficulties in engaging in learning, are one of the priority groups supported by this guidance service.  
<https://www.ncge.ie/ncge/aegi-contact-details>
- ▶ **Website Information:** Details of FET courses are available on the Further Education and Training Course Hub website [www.fetchcourse.ie](http://www.fetchcourse.ie) and [www.onestepup.ie](http://www.onestepup.ie). Information about apprenticeships is also available on [www.apprenticeship.ie](http://www.apprenticeship.ie). Qualifax, the National Learners' Database [www.qualifax.ie](http://www.qualifax.ie) and the Careers Portal [www.careersportal.ie](http://www.careersportal.ie) will provide information and guidance.
- ▶ **Direct Contacts:** Course information is available on individual College and ETB websites [www.etbi.ie](http://www.etbi.ie) or by contacting the course provider directly.



The **Citizens' Information Board** network of local offices and website [www.citizensinformation.ie](http://www.citizensinformation.ie) provide information on State schemes and entitlements including FET and supports for people with disabilities

**AHEAD**, the Association for Higher Education Access and Disability [www.ahead.ie](http://www.ahead.ie) has published online a Guide to Disclosure for people with disabilities who are starting further or higher education studies.

There may be **fees and other costs** for participation on FET courses. Further information is available from the course providers.

## Can I proceed to Higher Education from FET?

Yes, students who achieve certain awards in FET may also progress to higher NFQ level awards in further education and in higher education. Holders of certain level 5 or 6 NFQ awards may apply through the Central Applications Office (CAO) for admission to the first year of higher education programmes, subject to admission criteria. Where you plan to progress from FET to a particular field of studies in higher education, you should first check with the FET provider that the course leads to an award which will meet the higher education admission criteria.

The **Higher Education Links Scheme (HELS)** sets out how learners can progress from FET to Higher Education. Details are published on the Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) website [www.qqi.ie](http://www.qqi.ie).

## More about the Full-time options

### ▶ **Post Leaving Certificate (PLC)**

PLC courses provide vocational skills for employment (such as courses in tourism, catering, business, or health care). PLCs also provide opportunities for progression to other studies. They cater for learners aged 16 and over who have completed their Leaving Certificate and for adults returning to education. Most courses are of one-year duration but some last two years. Certification is generally at NFQ levels 5 or 6.

### ▶ **Youthreach**

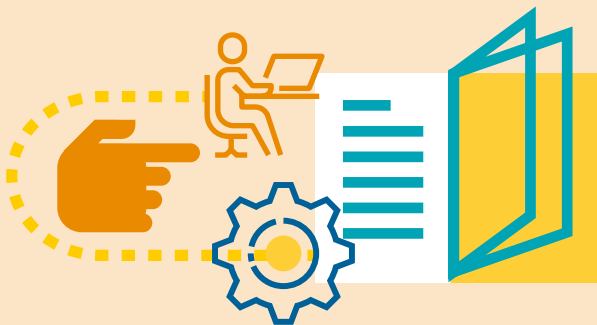
Youthreach programmes usually provide two years' integrated education, training and work experience for early school leavers without any qualifications or vocational training. Programmes vary, but are typically certified at NFQ levels 3 to 5.

### ▶ **Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS)**

The Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme provides for second chance education/training courses of up to two years' duration for those aged 21 or over, including people with a disability, who have been unemployed for at least six months. VTOS aims to give education and training opportunities which prepare learners for paid employment. The courses are provided at NFQ levels 3 to 6.

### ▶ **Apprenticeship**

Statutory apprenticeship programmes comprise on-the-job and off-the-job education and training for employed people. Their aim is to develop apprentices with the competence to meet the needs of industry and the labour market. These programmes are accredited at award levels, ranging from Level 5 to Level 8 on the NFQ. Examples of apprenticeships include Electrical, Electrical Instrumentation, Electronic Security Services, Plumbing, Motor Mechanics, Pipefitting, Accounting Technician, Insurance Practice and Financial Services.



### ▶ **Traineeships**

Traineeships typically take from 4 to 9 months to complete and provide occupation-specific training and integrated formal training and workplace coaching with a host employer. All programmes lead to accreditation at levels 4 to 6 on the NFQ. Examples of traineeships include: Beauty Therapist, Outdoor Activity Instructor, Business Systems Service Technician, or Software Developer.

### ▶ **Specific Skills Training**

Specific Skills Training courses typically take over 6 months to complete and are designed to meet the needs of industry and commerce across a range of occupations leading to accreditation at levels 4 to 6 on the NFQ. Examples of courses include Computer Applications & Office Skills, Retail Skills and Health & Beauty.

### ▶ **Specialist Training for People with Disabilities**

Specialist training is provided for individuals who require more intensive support than would be available in non-specialist training provision.

### ▶ **Bridging & Foundation Training**

These training courses provide personal development, career planning, and confidence building as well as basic occupational/vocational skills for people who are unemployed and have difficulty in getting a job. They can be of short or long duration and are accredited at levels 3 and 4 on the NFQ.

### ▶ **Local Training Initiatives**

These are community based training programmes to help learners find employment. They may include work experience and lead to accreditation at levels 3 to 5 on the NFQ.

## More about the Part-time Options

### ▶ **Back to Education Initiative (BTEI)**

The Back to Education Initiative funds part-time further education programmes for adults and young people giving them an opportunity to return to learning. These courses lead to certification at NFQ level 3 to 5. It supports people, including those with disabilities, who experience barriers to participation and find it more difficult to engage in the formal learning process.

### ▶ **Adult Literacy programmes**

Many adults, including people with disabilities, need help with reading, writing, numeracy and ICT skills. Adult literacy programmes focus on learning outcomes at NFQ level 1 to 3.

### ▶ **Community Education**

Community education is for adults who wish to return to or continue their education. Its focus is on people who experience disadvantage or have been out of education for some time – including people with disabilities. A range of courses are provided to meet the diverse needs of learners.

### ▶ **Evening Courses**

Part-time evening courses of up to 30 hours' duration over 10 weeks provide short up-skilling modules for both unemployed and employed persons. Examples of courses include Welding, Computers, Door Security and Supervisory Management. Courses generally lead to accreditation at levels 4 to 6 on the NFQ.

## More about the Online options

### ▶ **SOLAS eCollege**

Further education courses in business, project management, information technology and basic computer literacy are available through online and distance training courses on [www.ecollege.ie](http://www.ecollege.ie). It is available free for unemployed people and for a fee to employees and employers.

### ▶ **NALA Write-On**

This website [www.writeon.ie](http://www.writeon.ie) provides online help to improve your reading, writing and number skills. It may lead to awards at Levels 2 to 4 on the NFQ.



## National Council for Special Education (NCSE) Publications

The following NCSE publications may also be of assistance and are all available on the NCSE website – [www.ncse.ie](http://www.ncse.ie).

- ▶ Information Pamphlet on Higher Education (NCSE 2018)
- ▶ Information Pamphlet on Rehabilitative Training and Adult Day Services (NCSE 2018)
- ▶ Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs to make Successful Transitions: Guidelines for Schools (NCSE 2016)
- ▶ Planning for Life after School: Guidelines for Students with Special Educational Needs and their Parents/Guardians (NCSE 2016)
- ▶ Post-School Education and Training: Information on Options for Adults and School Leavers with Disabilities (NCSE/NDA 2014)
- ▶ What Works in the Provision of Higher, Further and Continuing Education, Training, and Rehabilitation for Adults with Disabilities? A Review of the Literature (NCSE 2013)
- ▶ Moving to Further and Higher Education: An Exploration of the Experiences of Students with Special Educational Needs (NCSE 2013).



## Useful contacts and information sources<sup>2</sup>

Agency/Service Name	Full Web address
<b>AEGS</b> Adult Education Guidance Service	<a href="https://www.ncge.ie/ncge/aegi-contact-details">https://www.ncge.ie/ncge/aegi-contact-details</a>
<b>AHEAD</b> The Association for Higher Education Access and Disability	<a href="http://www.ahead.ie">www.ahead.ie</a>
<b>Aontas</b> The National Adult Learning Organisation	<a href="http://www.aontas.com">www.aontas.com</a> <a href="http://www.onestepup.ie">www.onestepup.ie</a>
<b>Apprenticeship</b>	<a href="http://www.apprenticeship.ie">www.apprenticeship.ie</a>
<b>Careers Portal</b> Career guidance website	<a href="http://www.careersportal.ie">www.careersportal.ie</a>
<b>Central Applications Office</b>	<a href="http://www.cao.ie">www.cao.ie</a>
<b>Citizens Information Board</b>	<a href="http://www.citizensinformation.ie">www.citizensinformation.ie</a>
<b>Education and Training Boards</b>	<a href="http://www.etbi.ie/etbs/directory-of-etbs/">www.etbi.ie/etbs/directory-of-etbs/</a>
<b>Further Education and Training Course Hub</b>	<a href="http://www.fetchcourses.ie">www.fetchcourses.ie</a>
<b>Higher Education Links Scheme</b>	<a href="http://www.qqi.ie">www.qqi.ie</a>
<b>INTREO</b> Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection – local guidance and employment service	<a href="http://www.welfare.ie">www.welfare.ie</a>
<b>National Adult Literacy Agency</b>	<a href="http://www.nala.ie">www.nala.ie</a> <a href="http://www.writeon.ie">www.writeon.ie</a>
<b>National Council for Special Education</b>	<a href="http://www.ncse.ie">www.ncse.ie</a>
<b>NFQ</b> National Framework of Qualifications	<a href="http://www.qqi.ie">www.qqi.ie</a>
<b>Qualifax</b> The National Learners' Database	<a href="http://www.qualifax.ie">www.qualifax.ie</a>
<b>SOLAS</b> National Further Education and Training Authority	<a href="http://www.solas.ie">www.solas.ie</a> <a href="http://www.college.ie">www.college.ie</a>
<b>Student Finance</b>	<a href="http://www.studentfinance.ie">www.studentfinance.ie</a>
<b>Student Universal Support Ireland – SUSI</b> Student grant schemes	<a href="http://www.susi.ie">www.susi.ie</a>

<sup>2</sup> This is a list of some helpful sources of additional information. The NCSE may have had no involvement with these organisations and cannot vouch for them or their staff. Due caution should always be exercised in providing information to third parties, particularly where children or vulnerable adults are concerned.