Bord Oideachais & Oiliúna
LUIMNIGH & AN CHLÁIR

LIMERICK & CLARE
Education & Training Board

**COLLEGE OF FURTHER
EDUCATION & TRAINING**

ESOL and Migrant Learners Framework

February 2022

Contents

Glossary of Acronyms

Acronym	Definition	Description
AISS	Active Inclusion Support Service	Promotes the engagement of underrepresented groups of learners with FET and ensures supports are in place as early as possible in the learning journey.
CERFL	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages	The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is an international standard for describing language ability. It describes language ability on a six-point scale, from A1 for beginners, up to C2 for those who have mastered a language.
CELTA	Certificate in English Language Teaching	Initial teacher training qualification for teaching English as a foreign or second language. Provided by Cambridge English Language Assessment
CLIL	Content and Language integrated learning	Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is an umbrella term describing both learning another (content) subject such as healthcare or engineering through the medium of a foreign language and learning a foreign language by studying a content-based subject.
DELTA	Diploma in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages	DELTA is an English language teaching (ELT) qualification for experienced Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) and Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL).
DFHERIS	Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science	It funds and creates policy for the higher and further education and research sectors and oversees the work of the state agencies and public institutions operating in these areas
EFL	English as a Foreign Language	Learning English in a non-English Speaking country
ESL	English as a Second Language	Learning English in a country where English is the official or dominant language.
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages work-related settings.	Learning English as a second or additional language to achieve functional competence in personal, social and
ETBI	Education and Training Boards Ireland	Representative body for the 16 Education and Training Boards
EU	European Union	Union of countries working together to promote peace and develop a unified European economy and monetary union, while breaking down barriers and combatting discrimination
EQF	European Qualifications Framework	The EQF is a common European reference framework that links countries' qualifications systems together, acting as a translation device to make qualifications more readable and understandable across different countries and systems in Europe. It has two principal aims: to promote citizens' mobility between countries and to facilitate their lifelong learning.
FCE	First Certificate in English	General English qualification at B2 level on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages awarded by Cambridge University.
FET	Further Education and Training	Post-compulsory education and training programmes provided up to Level 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation	The EU's primary law regulating how private citizens' data is controlled and processed by companies and organisations – came into force on 25th May 2018.
IAT	Initial Assessment Tool	A tool used to assess a learner's suitability for a particular course at point of entry.

Glossary of Acronyms

Acronym	Definition	Description
IHREC	Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission	The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission is Ireland's national human rights and equality institution. An independent public body that accounts to the Oireachtas, the IHREC's mandate was established under the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 (IHREC Act 2014).
ILO	Intended Learning Outcomes	Statement stating what a learner will achieve upon successful completion of a particular unit or topic of study
IRGS	Information Recruitment and Guidance Service	Information, Recruitment and Guidance Service which provides learners and potential learners with the support, information and guidance to enable them to make decisions regarding education, training and career choices
MIPLOs	Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcomes	Minimum knowledge, skills and competency a learner must obtain and demonstrate in order to successfully achieve a QQI accredited award.
NARIC Ireland	National Academic Recognition Information Centre Ireland	NARIC Ireland provides advice on the academic recognition of a foreign qualification by comparing it, where possible, to a major award at a certain level on the Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).
NFQ	National Framework of Qualifications	10 level system used for the development, recognition and awarding of qualifications in Ireland.
PL&D	Professional Learning and Development	An ongoing process of professional skills development, upskilling and reskilling
PLSS	Programme and Learner Support System	Management information System designed to provide an integrated approach to the collection of key data on Further Education and Training programme outputs, outcomes and performance across the 16 Education and Training Boards.
PSD	Public Sector Duty	The Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty ('the Duty') places a statutory obligation on public bodies to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and protect the human rights of those to whom they provide services and staff when carrying out their daily work.
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland	Independent state agency promoting, maintaining and developing the Irish National Framework of Qualifications.
RRP	Refugee Resettlement Programme	Programme providing up to 20 hours of tuition per week to newly arrived Programme Refugees over 52 weeks
SOLAS	An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna/Further Education and Skills Service	SOLAS manages, co-ordinates and supports the delivery of Further Education and Training programmes and services by Education and Training Boards.
TESOL COP	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages Community of Practice	TESOL Communities of Practice (COP) is the ETB's professional learning community, where TESOL members develop and share their expertise on English language teaching and learning
UDL	Universal Design for Learning	Universal design for learning (UDL) is a teaching approach that works to accommodate the needs and abilities of all learners and eliminates unnecessary hurdles in the learning process. This means developing a flexible learning environment in which information is presented in multiple ways, students engage in learning in a variety of ways, and students are provided options when demonstrating their learning.

01 | ESOL and Migrant Learners Framework

Introduction

In 2019, Ireland had one of the highest percentages of foreign-born residents among EU Member States at 17 per cent[1]. Most migration to Ireland is from within the EU.15. Excluding Luxembourg, Cyprus and Ireland have the highest proportion of residents born in other EU Member States at 13 per cent in 2019. Ireland also had the seventh lowest proportion of foreign-born residents born in non-EU Member States. Census 2016 shows there were 535,475 non-Irish nationals living in Ireland, or 11.6 per cent of the usually resident population[2].

In 2020, there were over 197 different nationalities enrolled in the FET sector, approximately 78% Irish and 22% non-Irish. English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) was one of the most popular courses among non-Irish learners, accounting for 58% of all non-Irish learner enrolments in 2020[3]. It also highlighted that 42% of Migrants are attending mainstream FET provision.

There has been a rapidly growing demand for English language support from new migrants in FET, including formal ETB responsibility for refugees and asylum seekers, with around 20,000 learners availing of this ESOL provision each year. This is critical in helping migrants to integrate within communities and to secure and sustain employment. *A focus must be placed on linking this support to wider FET pathways, which can also develop their other core and technical skills, and facilitate entry into work or progression to higher education. FET must continue to develop this response, mainstreaming good practice and using assessment toolkits, which have been the result of recent research around this theme, and ensuring that recognition of prior learning plays a more prominent role.* SOLAS FET Strategy 2020 – 2024.

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[1] Source: Eurostat. Note that 'foreign-born' are typically first-generation immigrants and may consist of both foreign nationals and foreign-born nationals of the host country. In Ireland, estimates from Census 2016 microdata indicate that just over 62,000 recorded their place or birth as Northern Ireland. This is about 1.3 per cent of the population resident in Ireland in April 2016.

[2] https://www.esri.ie/system/files/publications/BKMNEXT403_0.pdf

[3] https://www.solas.ie/f/70398/x/aca0d6d647/non-irish-nationals-in-fet.pdf

Scope of this Framework:

This Framework covers Migrant Learners whose first language is not English and who are accessing a wide range of FET courses, including ESOL. It covers both ESOL provision and the provision of supports for Migrant learners attending broader FET provision.

Aim:

This policy aims to provide a framework for the development of structures to support the planning and delivery of inclusive, effective teaching, learning and assessment to Migrant Learners who are accessing a wide range of FET courses, including ESOL. The Framework will cover:

- Provision Planning
- Access and initial Assessment
- Assessment and Accreditation,
- Curriculum and Materials Development
- Staff Development.

ESOL Context:

In 2018, research carried out by SOLAS "English language provision and language assessment for low-skilled and unemployed migrants. Recommendations for good practice at NFQ levels 1-3 in ETBs" recommended that[4]:

A national framework for publicly funded ESOL should be devised, within the broader context of the Further Education and Training Strategy. The national framework should include specific actions in relation to provision, assessment and accreditation, curriculum and materials development and staff development.

Furthermore
There is a need for a designated ESOL framework in each ETB, incorporating all existing provision, which would be managed and coordinated across the ETB.

In line with recommendations from the above research, this framework recognises ESOL as a distinct area of expertise. ESOL standards, pedagogy, assessment and awards should be specific to English language education.

Broader FET Provision Context:

While initial language assessment has always been a requirement, this framework should facilitate and support the fair and consistent application of initial assessment and the development of pathways to support ESL entry requirements. With the CAO website now including information on options available to Post-Leaving Certificate applicants through Further Education and Training since January 2022, applicants will now have to demonstrate CERFL proficiency at B2 for access to Level 5 courses for those whose first language is not English. In addition, some vocational courses also require a level of language competence within former Training Centres, e.g. Guarding skills at level 4 – a standard assessment approach for these courses would be beneficial.

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[4] https://www.solas.ie/f/70398/x/7a61ee6ee9/english-language-provision-and-language-assessment.pdf

Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board FET Division

Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board, as a state authority, has a mandate to provide education and training for migrant learners including refugees and asylum seekers. The authority has a long history of delivering education and training to this target group and our work in this area includes:

- ESOL Provision within FET.

- Migrant learners accessing mainstream FET provision.

- AMIF Project provision to Post Primary Learners

- Migrant Specific Guidance through AMIF Project.

- Supports to Direct Provision Centres.

- Irish Refugee Resettlement Programme.

02 | Summary of Relevant Policies

Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty

Under the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty, public bodies must, in the performance of their functions, have due regard for the need to eliminate discrimination.[5] Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board's Assessment of Equality and Human Rights issues (2021)[6] involved an assessment of the key equality and human rights issues experienced by identified groups that are relevant to the functions of the ETB. Appendix 1 outlines our assessment of the Situation, Experience and Identity of migrant learners covered under this Framework.

UN Sustainability Goals

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. They recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests[7]. Our ESOL and Migrant Learner Framework fits under Goal 4[8] Quality Education – to Ensure Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Promote Lifelong Learning Opportunities for All and Goal 5[9] – to Achieve Gender Equality and Empower All Women and Girls.

Integration Policy - Ireland

There has been significant attention paid to integration policy in recent years due to the increased flow of migrants and refugees to the European Union. The ESRI[10] 2020 Monitoring Report on Integration is the seventh in a series of Integration Monitors published since 2011. The Monitor aims to measure the integration of immigrants into Irish society in four key domains or policy areas: employment, education, social inclusion and active citizenship.

In Ireland, our overall approach to integration policy, as set out in our national Migrant Integration Strategy 2017-2020, is built on mainstreaming. That is, migrants access public services on the same basis as citizens, with additional supports provided for specific groups based on identified need. The primary focus of the strategy is on ensuring the equitable provision of public services within a mainstreamed system therefore government departments

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[5] Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014, http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2014/act/25/section/42/enacted/en/html

[6] https://lcetb.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/LCETB_PSD_Assessment_Report.pdf

[7] https://sdgs.un.org/goals

[8] Goal 4 | Department of Economic and Social Affairs (un.org)

[9] https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal5

[10] https://www.esri.ie/system/files/publications/BKMNEXT403_0.pdf

and agencies are key to service delivery, but not the only actors. An important method of delivering the Migrant Integration Strategy is also working with non-governmental delivery partners. The strategy specifically recommends *"the inclusion of a language component in education and training programmes for unemployed migrants with poor English proficiency"*[11].

Integration Policy - EU

The Commission Action Plan on the Integration of Third Country Nationals (June 2016) underlines that education and training are among the most powerful tools for integration, as they provide the gateway to employment and social inclusion. *"Language integration programmes should be provided at the earliest stage possible after arrival, adapted to each person's linguistic competence needs, and combining language learning with learning of other skills and competences or work experiences."* Appendix 2 outlines the EU Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy[12] within which both education and language are critical to the successful integration of new communities.

- Basic knowledge of the host society's language, history, and institutions is indispensable to integration; enabling immigrants to acquire this basic knowledge is essential to successful integration.

- Efforts in education are critical to preparing immigrants, and particularly their descendants, to be more successful and more active participants in society.

The upskilling of low-skilled and low-qualified migrants is also included in the New Skills Agenda for Europe. The 'Skills Guarantee' - renamed 'Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults' – aims to help adults acquire minimum levels of literacy, numeracy and digital skills and/or acquire a broader set of skills by progressing towards an upper secondary qualification or equivalent.

Anti-Racism

A new Anti-Racism Committee established in December 2019 was tasked with developing a new action plan against racism within one year, focusing on concrete actions that can be taken[13]. An interim Report to the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth Anti-Racism Committee was published on 30 November 2020. This report highlighted Education as being one of the key areas of public policy with a role to play in combatting racism. *"Education, while it cannot on its own eliminate racism, is crucial for addressing it as well as being a key site for its reflection and reinforcement. It has historical, current and ongoing effects for minority ethnic groups reflected in their experiences of access, participation and outcomes. The engagement of the relevant departments and professional bodies is vital in mobilising the education sector to play an active part in combating racism".*[14]

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[11] https://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Migrant_Integration_Strategy_English.pdf/Files/Migrant_Integration_Strategy_English.pdf

[12] Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the EU | European Website on Integration (europa.eu)

[13] https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/6bedb-action-plan-against-racism-for-ireland-to-be-drawn-up-by-new-independent-anti-racism-committee

[14] https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/132151/ed3f39e2-4aa1-4991-aa06-52beae8310db.pdf#page=null

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (CEFR) is one of the best-known and most used Council of Europe policy instruments. Launched in 2001 the CEFR provides a system for defining levels of proficiency to measure language learners' progress. The Council of Europe stresses that the CEFR is a framework of reference, not a normative instrument. The CEFR defines proficiency in six ascending levels arranged in three bands (A1 and A2, B1 and B2, C1 and C2 in relation to three kinds of language activity: reception (listening and reading), production (speaking and writing) and interaction (spoken and written). The contexts in which language is used (social, vocational, academic) are also differentiated (Council of Europe Language Policy Unit, 2001).

Qualification Recognition

The EU European Council Recommendation on Upskilling pathways (2016) which gives a commitment to ensure that *"the beneficiary will have the opportunity to have the skills she or he has acquired validated and recognised"*. Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) has a range of responsibilities, including facilitating the recognition of qualifications gained outside the State. An online international qualifications database is maintained, (NARIC Ireland Foreign Qualifications)[15] which lists certain foreign qualifications and provides advice regarding the comparability of a qualification to one gained in Ireland. Individuals whose qualifications are not listed in the database may apply to the qualifications recognition service, part of Quality and Qualifications Ireland, to have their qualification recognised.[16]

A more general issue is recognition of foreign qualifications. *"Stakeholders in this study called for further efforts from Irish professional bodies, and increased promotion of Quality and Qualifications Ireland, as part of Action 43 (ibid.). In some instances, where qualification requirements in Ireland for a given profession differ from those in other countries, re-training or bridging programmes may be required." (ESRI)* [17]

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[15] https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/Search?searchtype=recognitions
[16] https://www.qqi.ie/what-we-do/the-qualifications-system/national-academic-recognition-information-centre
[17] https://www.esri.ie/system/files/publications/BKMNEXT403_0.pdf

03 | Themes to be addressed under this Framework

Initial ESOL Assessment

Many newly-arrived migrants have very low levels of ability in English. *"One of the main interventions developed with the newly-arrived is assessing their language capabilities and assigning them to appropriate level language training. This type of provision may also assess the level of other key competences, such as mathematics and ICT usage, and provide corresponding initial courses."*[18] In December 2021, SOLAS, ETBI and CMETB launched research, guidelines and a toolkit to support Initial and Ongoing Assessment of English Language Competency of Migrant Learners in Further Education and Training[19]. The SOLAS research project was designed to develop good practice guidelines and toolkit to support the initial and ongoing assessment of the English language competency of migrant learners and to provide a universal definition of ESOL literacy for application within the Further Education and Training (FET) sector. The main outputs from this research project are a set of eight guidelines on initial and ongoing assessment, a standardised toolkit which operationalises the guidelines, along with a universal definition of ESOL literacy.

As mentioned earlier, since January 2022, the CAO website now includes information on options available to Post-Leaving Certificate applicants through Further Education and Training. Applicants will now have to demonstrate CERFL proficiency at B2 for access to Level 5 courses for those whose first language is not English. While initial language assessment has always been a requirement, this framework should facilitate and support the fair and consistent application of initial assessment and the development of pathways to support ESL entry requirements.

ESOL Literacy

Our Cores Skills provision delivers much of our ESOL delivery within Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board. A number of distinct groupings of learners tend to emerge through the initial assessment process, one of which is ESOL Literacy i.e. those learners who have little or no literacy in English and who may not have literacy skills in another language. ESOL literacy is defined in the previously referenced guidelines from SOLAS, ETBI and CMETB as *"an umbrella term used to describe a migrant learner who is new to literacy (and possibly also new to ESOL) and has little or no reading or writing literacy skills in English and/or their own native language, while their spoken English language competency may range from pre-A1 to C2 on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)"*.

Language skills foster, among others, social inclusion, and access to education and employment. Within this context, non-literate or low-literate migrants have specific educational needs, as they must learn a second language while either learning to read and write for the first time or developing basic literacy competences in an alphabet or writing

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[18] https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/6124_en.pdf
[19] https://library.etbi.ie/ld.php?content_id=33929121

system sometimes different from the one they will have learned initially. The Council of Europe have developed a *Reference guide on Literacy and Second Language Learning for the Linguistic Integration of Adult Migrants (LASLLIAM)* to complement the Common European Framework for Languages (CEFR) and the CEFR Companion Volume below and up to the A1 level for non-literate and low-literate adult migrants.[20] The guide aims to support language educators, curriculum designers and language policymakers in their endeavour to design, implement, evaluate and improve curricula tailored toward the specific needs of the target learners. A conference to launch the reference guide will be held in June 2022, when it will also become available online.

ESOL Certification

Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board offers a range of full and part-time provision certified in the main by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). Although extensively referenced by ESOL practitioners, there is currently no provision in Ireland for relating curricula and English as a Second Language awards offered through the NFQ/ QQI to the CEFR.

The majority of employers view internationally recognised English Language exams such as Cambridge as having a higher status, as they are felt to reflect the learning needs of language learners more accurately than national awards accredited through QQI. In 2018, a report developed by ETBI and SOLAS, which outlines recommendations for good practice in ESOL noted, *"ETBs reported that they are not able to access these international examinations for cost reasons"*[21]. Publicly funded ESOL provision in Ireland has developed in the absence of any overall national strategy or policy initiative. This creates an impediment for migrants exiting our QQI programmes in accessing employment where a CEFR aligned qualification is required.

Under the AMIF Project "Realising Potential" access to CEFR aligned certified provision has been facilitated over the lifetime of the project. While some elements of the AMIF were delayed in 2020 (the closure of the Cambridge Assessment Centre in UL meant that learners were unable to sit their exams in June 2020 as originally planned) alternative arrangements were put in place in 2021 to ensure the outcomes of the project have been met.

This lack of a coordinated approach to English language provision for adult learners in Ireland has been raised as a policy issue in Monitoring Reports on Integration since 2012. It is also recognised as being a policy priority in the Migrant Integration Strategy going forward (Department of Justice and Equality, 2019a), but implementing and coordinating this may prove difficult. A shift to online (e-learning) for adult learning, particularly of language skills, potentially offering classes via Zoom or an online platform may offer potential in Ireland: this is already happening in some other OECD countries (OECD, 2020).[22]

Supporting Migrants Participation in Broader FET

In 2020, there were over 197 different nationalities enrolled in the FET sector, approximately 78% Irish and 22% non-Irish. English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) was one of the most popular courses among non-Irish learners, accounting for 58% of all non-Irish learner enrolments in 2020[23].

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[20] https://www.coe.int/en/web/lang-migrants/laslliam

[21] https://www.solas.ie/f/70398/x/7a61ee6ee9/english-language-provision-and-language-assessment.pdf

[22] https://www.esri.ie/system/files/publications/BKMNEXT403_0.pdf

[23] https://www.solas.ie/f/70398/x/aca0d6d647/non-irish-nationals-in-fet.pdf

The Action Plan to Expand Apprenticeship and Traineeship in Ireland 2016-2020 has a focus on attracting less well-represented groups into programmes, while the National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015-2019 includes ethnic minorities among its target groups.

Our own Framework in the Integration of Language, Literacy and Numeracy highlighted the need for both integration of language into curriculum and the provision of supplemental ESOL classes as required for Migrant Learners attending broader FET provision.

Guidance

One of the strategic objectives in the Limerick Integration Plan 2017–21. Belonging to Limerick: Connecting People and Communities is *"to provide guidance to asylum seekers from the moment of arrival to maintain and enhance their skills and capacities in order to aid their long term integration prospects"*.[24] Migrant learners face particular challenges in integration, especially where they have weak networks and a low knowledge of the receiving country language and culture. These challenges can be especially strong for young migrants and women, who frequently have weaker education and labour market outcomes. Immigrant communities with overrepresentation of low-skilled workers are especially affected by education disengagement, unemployment, and under-employment, temporary and precarious employment. Access to individualised and group educational guidance support for the target group is required. The Recommendation on Upskilling Pathways recognised that effective delivery of the initiative is based on three things, effective outreach, guidance and support measures.

Under the AMIF "Realising Potential" Project, the FET division have been providing access to targeted, migrant specific educational guidance for adult migrants including providing assistance in recognition of prior learning and qualifications achieved in their country of origin. From an individual perspective, access to both individual and group migrant specific guidance through the project has responded to three needs:

I   increasing their knowledge of the Irish Education System, culture, language, education, social security, health systems and labour market to develop basic skills and knowledge;

II   developing structured career planning by increasing awareness of their own skills, preferences, values, motivations and by fostering self-directed career planning;

III increasing the motivation of individuals to pursue education and training opportunities linked to specific career choices and validate previous educational experience and qualifications;

The model of providing migrant specific guidance and support is used in some UK colleges. For example *South and City College, Birmingham* visited by one of our TESOL colleagues as part of an EU project, have a person within their learner support structure dedicated to providing specific Asylum seeker and refugee advice and support.[25]

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[24] https://www.limerick.ie/sites/default/files/media/documents/2018-05/06%20-%20Limerick%20Integration%20Plan%20 2017-2021%20-%20Presentation%20at%20May%20Meeting.pdf

[25] https://www.sccb.ac.uk/school-leavers/student-support

Promoting Diversity, Anti-Racism and Intercultural Learning

One of the key skills required by learning practitioners in our increasingly diverse FET community is to foster learners' inclusion, tolerance and intercultural awareness. Promoting intercultural education and providing training on intercultural competences are crucial for all our Learning Practitioners. Concepts such as Identity and Culture impact on the learning process. Providing guidance and supporting learners' inclusion, tolerance and intercultural awareness through non-formal, informal and experiential learning activities based on Universal Design for Learning Principals both in the ESOL classroom and across our broader FET provision reaps benefits, not least of which is the avoidance of possible conflicts arising from cultural differences and misunderstanding.

Addressing Issues of Gender, Race, Class and Trauma in the ESOL Classroom

Within the ESOL classroom, addressing Issues of gender, race, class and trauma in the ESOL classroom is particularly important when working with newly arrived learners, many of whom have experienced great distress and confront obstacles in adjusting to a new cultural environment.

Universal Design for Learning

SOLAS, the Further Education and Training Authority, launched guidelines for implementing Universal Design for Learning [UDL] in the Further Education and Training (FET) sector in Ireland in June 2021. These guidelines aim to reduce the barriers to learning for all learners across the entire further education and training sector and are of particular relevance to our ESOL and Migrant Learners. Importantly, while UDL is a critical component of inclusive education, it is not in itself – inclusive education. UDL is an important consideration when designing an inclusive education system because it supports a *"whole person approach" and learning-friendly environments. UDL is not sufficient to ensure inclusive policy or practices. For an inclusive education system to be comprehensive it must provide a continuum of support measures. UDL fits within the practices and/or services that are available to all students to promote and support learning success (Universal Measures). In addition to these, selective and additional measures must also be available, including the provision of reasonable accommodations* [26] .

All learners bring their own unique variability to their learning. Given the diversity of FET Learners, an inclusive approach to enhancing the educational experiences of all learners, including learners with disabilities, learners from unemployment blackspots and ESOL and migrant learners is essential. UDL principles provide an appropriate model, with their emphasis on design practices that cater for diversity.

The history, priorities and experiences of our ESOL and Migrant Learners in moving to Ireland may bring additional complexities to their learning profile. A key feature of UDL is to consider barriers to learning prior to designing the course or lesson. For ESOL and Migrant learners, some of these barriers include literacy, lack of prior experience, cultural factors and age[27]. Universal design for learning principles and practices can help practitioners address variability in their learner cohorts and reduce barriers to learning by building flexibility, accessibility, learner voice, and choice in the fabric of the learning interactions they design.[28]

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[26] https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/sites/default/files/universal_design_for_learning_final_8.09.2021.pdf

[27] https://universaldesignaustralia.net.au/udl-support-migrants-refugees/

[28] https://www.solas.ie/f/70398/x/6154fce37c/udl-for-fet-practitioners.pdf

04 | ESOL and Migrant Learners Framework

Priority Work Areas

- Provision Planning
- Access and initial Assessment
- Assessment and Accreditation,
- Curriculum and Materials Development
- Staff Development.

Provision Planning

- Maintain and enhance the external Partnership Working Group emerging from the AMIF Project past the lifespan of the project in order to enhance joint planning, recruitment and championing of referral services and external supports available to ESOL and Migrant learners.

- Develop a central point of contact for ESOL training information and advice and signpost to other available services for this group.

- Work with provision coordinators and the existing TESOL Group to review existing ESOL provision delivered at various levels across campuses and in the community.

- Liaise with community groups and the DSP to coordinate waiting lists and offer a centralised waiting list in order to minimise waiting time.

- Measures will be developed to address the waiting period, e.g. learners who may have to wait for a face-to-face in one location might have access to online provision while they wait for face to face delivery.

- Link with provision coordinators and teaching staff on the integration of language skills into mainstream provision within the ETB.

- Work with local education centres to explore the possibility of ETB FET providing integrated ESOL CPD for teachers within local post primary schools.

- Work with core skills and the AISS to develop access routes to supplemental language provision for migrant learners attending mainstream FET provision.

- Networking and building relationships with external agencies including training providers; residents and community organisations and community partners.

- Developing and supporting Pathways from School to FET for Migrant learners through the provision of educational guidance.

- Highlighting any identified gaps in training provision and working with the ESOL and Migrant Guidance Counsellor, Research, Innovation and Quality Team and local partners to address these gaps.
- Build in opportunities for incorporating the ESOL and Migrant learner voice into provision plaining and review cycle through support and active engagement with learners.

Access and initial Assessment:

- Lead and Support the implementation of consistent initial assessment for learners accessing provision up to level 4 - to include ESOL and Migrant learners who are below level 1 to enable them to engage.
- Develop a consistent initial ESOL assessment strategy for learners applying to Level 5 provision who are coming through the CAO portal link.
- Explore the possibility of offering centralised, face-to-face and blended or online, English language provision for Migrant learners accessing mainstream Level 5 and Level 6 FET provision.
- Lead and Support the development of FET wider induction resources for ESOL and migrant learners.
- Building on learning from the AMIF project, develop and coordinate a "Pathways from School to FET" ESOL Provision under Core Skills targeting ESOL and Migrant learners in Post Primary Schools.
- Coordinate the work of the Migrant Specific Guidance Counsellor in respect of specific skills based education and training requirements for ESOL and Migrant learners in the reception centres.

Assessment and Accreditation:

- Lead and Support the implementation of consistent initial assessment for learners accessing provision at Levels 1 – 4.
- Develop a consistent initial ESOL assessment strategy for learners applying to Level 5 provision who are coming through the CAO portal link.
- Participate and contribute to national groups that are looking at CEFR alignment of ESOL qualifications and disseminate finding across our TESOL Community of Practice.
- Building on the learning from the AMIF project, develop pathways to CEFR aligned certification where required.
- Participate and contribute to national groups that are looking at migrant specific educational guidance and disseminate finding across our IRGS and TESOL Communities of Practice.
- Reflect UDL principals in the ESOL assessment processes, enabling learners interact with learning and in expressing what they have learned.

Curriculum and Materials Development

- Highlighting any identified gaps in training provision and working with the Migrant Specific Guidance Counsellor, Research, Innovation and Quality Team and local partners to address these gaps.

- Work with provision coordinators and Guidance Service to develop a suite of induction resources targeting Migrant and ESOL learners including translation of resources and development of key "how to" videos in different language.

- Work with the Migrant Specific Guidance Counsellor to ensure Migrant Learners are able to access and utilise the online international qualifications database NARIC Ireland Foreign Qualifications[29] that lists certain foreign qualifications and provides advice regarding the comparability of a qualification to one gained in Ireland.

- Develop resources and curricula to increase ESOL and Migrant Learners knowledge of the Irish Education System, culture, language, education, social security, health systems and labour market.

- Develop structured career planning by increasing awareness of ESOL and Migrant Learners own skills, preferences, values, motivations and by fostering self-directed career planning;

- Explore the development of Vocational bridging ESOL options for ESOL and Migrant Learners. These can be used in situations where a learner is working towards a vocational award or employment e.g. an ESOL or Migrant Learner attending Healthcare at level 5 who hasn't the developed skills in ESOL for Healthcare. This could be expanded to language to cope with the level 5 course (or employment e.g. ESOL for healthcare, ESOL for catering.

- Increase the motivation of ESOL and Migrant Learners to pursue education and training opportunities linked to specific career choices and validate previous educational experience and qualifications;

- Support good RPL practices for migrant learners including supporting Migrant learners qualifications are not listed in the NARIC database to apply to the qualifications recognition service, (part of Quality and Qualifications Ireland), to have their qualification recognised.[30]

- Working with Core Skills Provision and AISS, develop a suite of supplemental ESOL provision that can be accessed by migrant learners attending mainstream FET to enable them to succeed.

- Work with the TESOL Community of practice to enhance the resources and delivery of ESOL Literacy provision.

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[29] https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/Search?searchtype=recognitions
[30] https://www.qqi.ie/what-we-do/the-qualifications-system/national-academic-recognition-information-centre

Staff Development

- Work with the PL&D Coordinator and the TESOL Community of practice to support and enhance the knowledge, skills and competencies of the team including Universal Design for Learning, ESOL Literacy, Language for Work, Online and Blended Learning Design for ESOL, Boundaries and Self Care etc.

- Facilitate the sharing of best practice and work with the TESOL Community of Practice on development of resources including induction resources for new staff and migrant learners.

- Provide access to training to support the roll out of new projects including initial ESOL assessment guidelines, etc.

- Explore approaches to developing skills of wider pool of staff including areas such as Language and CEFR Awareness, CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning), Language for Work, Inclusion, diversity and anti-racism etc.

- Ensure the IRGS and the TESOL Communities of practice are kept up to date with changes influencing their work with ESOL and Migrant learners.

- Ensure programme complies with both national and local policies, strategies and procedures including Health & Safety, Child Protection and Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding.

Implementation

The implementation of the framework will be overseen by an implementation group comprising:

- Director of FET
- Provision AEO
- Innovation, Development and Quality Manager
- PD Coordinator
- Core Skills Managers
- TESOL Community of Practice
- AISS AEO

APPENDIX 1 | Public Sector Duty Statement for ESOL Framework

Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board takes a values-led approach to its work to fulfil its obligations under Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014[31]. The Duty requires public bodies to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity, and protect human rights for employees and service users, and across all function areas.

The ETB has identified the values of Respect, Inclusion, Social Justice and Empowerment as motivating our concern for equality and human rights:

- *Respect:* Respect is about mutual empathy, integrity, fairness, and kindness. It involves listening to, and consideration of the perspectives of the diversity of our students/learners, staff and the wider community.

- *Inclusion:* Inclusion is about recognising, valuing and harnessing the richness of difference. It involves a recognition that diversity brings opportunities for innovation that enrich the learning environment and workplace

- *Social Justice:* Social justice is about ensuring equality of outcome by providing access to opportunities and resources to enable full participation by all in economic, social, political and cultural life. It involves prioritising a focus on individuals and groups experiencing inequality and those who are marginalised.

- *Empowerment:* Empowerment is about enabling individuals, groups and communities to have the personal and social power to influence decisions affecting their lives and the life of their communities.

Our assessment of equality and human rights issues (2021)[32] involved an assessment of the key equality and human rights issues experienced by identified groups, which are relevant to the functions of the ETB. The identified groups are:

- Those covered by the nine grounds under equality legislation: gender (including gender identity), civil status, family status (including lone parents, carers), age, sexual orientation, disability, race (including nationality, skin colour, and ethnicity), religion, and membership of the Traveller community; and

- Those at risk of poverty and social exclusion.

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[31] https://lcetb.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/LCETB_PSD_Action_Plan.pdf
[32] https://lcetb.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/LCETB_PSD_Assessment_Report.pdf

The assessment involved an examination of the situation, experience, and identity of the above named identified groups. In doing so:

- The situation of the group refers to disadvantage in the level and quality of resources the group can access, such as education and training services, as well as employment opportunities.

- The experience of the group refers to the quality of the group's engagement with wider society, including their engagement with public services, both as employees and service participants.

- The identity of the group refers to the manner in which the group gives expression to its identity and the specific needs that arise from diverse identities, such as needs arising from one's ethnicity, level of ability, gender identity expression.

In 2020, there were over 197 different nationalities enrolled in the FET sector, approximately 78% Irish and 22% non-Irish. English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) was one of the most popular courses among non-Irish learners, accounting for 58% of all non-Irish learner enrolments in 2020[33]. Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board FET Division recognises that people's personal characteristics and circumstances can have a significant impact on their journey and experience of settling in Ireland. The section below sets out the core equality and human rights issues that have most relevance to the ESOL Framework.

Situation

- Migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers face particular barriers to accessing education or training, including uncertainty or short-term nature of their visa or residential status; lack of recognition of their existing qualifications; and the limited availability of English language classes.[34]

- Children and young people can arrive with their families through the asylum dispersal process and through refugee resettlement, programmes or they may arrive unaccompanied. Some of these children will have had traumatic experiences in their formative years. The Department of Education Strategy of school placement in age appropriate classes can have particular impact on younger learners with little or no English.

- Many younger people may also have missed significant amounts of education, which can be challenging, particularly if they have to learn a new language. The Framework recognises that children and young people may require additional support to access the services they need and opportunities to participate in society.

- Many minority ethnic/national groups and particularly those of Black ethnicity experience more negative outcomes in employment and occupational attainment.[35]

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[33] https://www.solas.ie/research-lp/fet-statistics/

[34] Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (October 2019). Ireland and the Convention on Racial Discrimination, Submission to the United Nations Committee on Racial Discrimination on Ireland's Combined Fifth to Ninth Periodic Report. Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, Dublin.

[35] IHREC and ESRI (2018) Ethnicity and Nationality in the Irish Labour Market,

- Difficulties in obtaining recognition of foreign educational qualifications pose a barrier to labour market integration and may lead non-Irish nationals to situations of under-employment and over-qualification.[36]

- Among refugees and asylum seekers in 2020, 36.5% of learners reported they had a primary and below education level, and 15.2% reported they had a lower secondary education when enrolling in a FET course. In contrast, only 13.7% reported they had a post-secondary non-tertiary education and 13.9% reported a third level education.[37]

- Ethnic minorities/non-EU nationals are one of the groups found to be at higher risk of experiencing disadvantage across multiple housing dimensions (discrimination in accessing accommodation, quality of accommodation (including for example over-crowding), and risk of becoming homeless).[38]

  - Many Roma adults have low levels of literacy (in their mother language) which is a compounding barrier when they are trying to access supports, information and services through English.[39]

- Refugee and asylum seeking women can face particular challenges, which limit or prevent their integration. Women's experiences in their country of origin and during their asylum journey, such as gender-based violence, can create fear of how they will be treated and can influence their mental health. Women can also be particularly isolated for a number of reasons, including lack of confidence; disrupted or no previous access to education; less time available, due to other caring responsibilities or lack of childcare; and family opposition to socialising, learning or working. The Framework will seek to ensure that the particular needs of women refugees and asylum seekers are better understood, and that appropriate action is taken to enable their participation.

- 79% of Roma in Ireland have experienced discrimination in seeking employment.[40]

- Migrant communities in Limerick live mostly in the city in private rented accommodation; therefore, they can be cut off from the support of community development and youth organisations and projects, located mostly in the suburbs in Regeneration areas.[41]

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[36] Ibid.

[37] https://www.solas.ie/research-lp/fet-statistics/

[38] Discrimination and Inequality in Housing in Ireland June 2018 Raffaele Grotti, Helen Russell, Éamonn Fahey, Bertrand Maître.

[39] Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre (2018). The National Roma Needs Assessment. Pavee Point and Department of Justice and Equality.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Data from Area Profiles and needs assessments conducted by the ETB Youth Team, to inform the UBU Youth Scheme: Your Place Your Space.

Experience

- Black (non-Irish) people are five times more likely to experience discrimination when seeking employment in Ireland when compared to White Irish people, and they are over two and a half times more likely to experience discrimination when in employment.[42]

- Discrimination is high in multiple domains (employment, service provision) for minority ethnic groups (Black, Asian and especially Irish Travellers), and people with minority religions.[43]

- Children and young people can arrive with their families through the asylum dispersal process and through refugee resettlement programmes or they may arrive unaccompanied. Some of these children will have had traumatic experiences in their formative years. The Department of Education Strategy of school placement in age appropriate classes can have particular impact on younger learners with little or no English.

- Reading scores are significantly lower for immigrant post-primary students who speak a language other than English in the home compared to Irish nationals, regardless of whether they are first or second-generation immigrants.[44]

- Many younger people may also have missed significant amounts of education, which can be challenging, particularly if they have to learn a new language. The Framework recognises that children and young people may require additional support to access the services they need and opportunities to participate in society.

- Maintaining language support for migrant students is very important. In order to plan effectively, policymakers need to know what proportion of students at primary and secondary level require English language tuition, what the budget requirement is and how effective English language tuition is (see Actions 29 and 33 in the Migrant Integration Strategy)

- Just under half of adults born in Ireland believe some cultures to be superior to others. This negative attitude is more common in Ireland than across a ten-country sample of the EU (40%).[45]

- Muslim women are three times more likely to suffer from verbal and physical violence in public spaces than Muslim men are.[46]

- Direct Provision for asylum seekers is not in the best interests of children and impedes the lives of families.[47]

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[42] The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (April 2019) Submission to the Universal Periodic Review of the UN Human Rights Council - Second Cycle Mid-Term Review.

[43] IHREC and ESRI (2017) Who Experiences Discrimination in Ireland.

[44] https://www.esri.ie/system/files/publications/BKMNEXT403_0.pdf

[45] The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (April 2019) Submission to the Universal Periodic Review of the UN Human Rights Council - Second Cycle Mid-Term Review

[46] Carr (2016). Islamophobia in Dublin: Experiences and how to respond. The Immigrant Council of Ireland.

[47] IHREC (2014) Submission of the Irish Human Rights Commission to the UN Human Rights Committee on the Examination of Ireland's Fourth Periodic Report under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

Identity

■ People with a minority ethnic identity have specific customs, traditions, and language. There are specific needs arising from this diversity that need to be considered to ensure they can fully access and participate in supports, services, and wider society.

■ The potential and impact of RPL for enabling inclusion is of particular relevance to migrant learners who may have acquired skills through non-formal learning in their country of origin and now wish to have these recognised and certified in Ireland.

■ People seeking safety because of their Lesbian, Gay, and Bi-sexual, Transgender or Intersex (LGBTI) identity can face particular challenges within the asylum process and as refugees. Experiences in their country of origin and during the asylum journey can have a significant impact on wellbeing. They may also find it difficult to be open about their LGBTI identity with other people, authorities or services.

■ Unfamiliarity with language commonly used in Ireland to describe LGBTI identity can also prevent people articulating their identity or accessing support services and specialist advice. The Framework will seek to ensure that the issues faced by refugees and people claiming asylum on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity are understood, and that they are able to participate in society.

Our Assessment, as well as our experience of implementing ESOL provision, has highlighted the needs of some refugees and asylum seekers in particular. This does not diminish recognition of the needs of all those who have protected characteristics or specific vulnerabilities. The Issue of intersectionality can also give rise to experiences of multiple and compounding discrimination and inequalities.
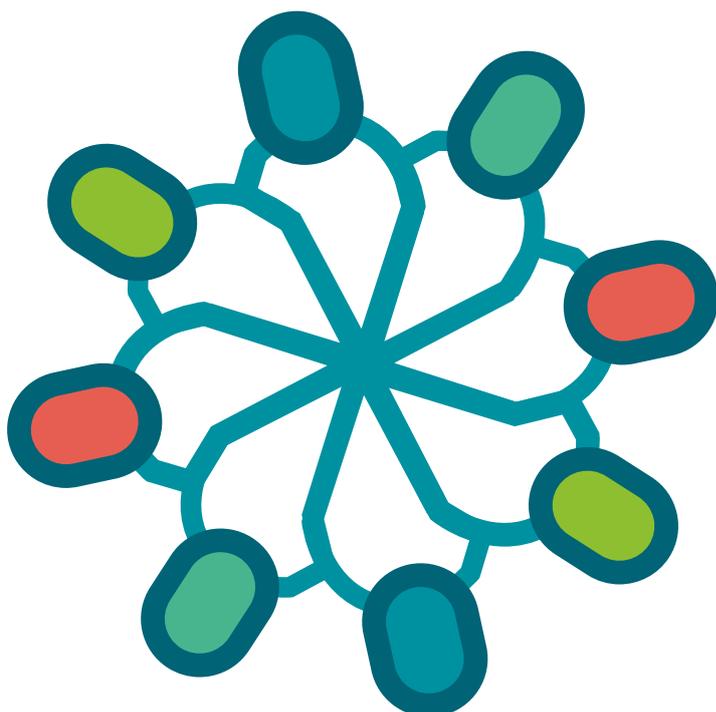
APPENDIX 2 | Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the EU[48]

1. Integration is a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of Member States.

2. Integration implies respect for the basic values of the European Union.

3. Employment is a key part of the integration process and is central to the participation of immigrants, to the contributions immigrants make to the host society, and to making such contributions visible.

4. Basic knowledge of the host society's language, history, and institutions is indispensable to integration; enabling immigrants to acquire this basic knowledge is essential to successful integration.

5. Efforts in education are critical to preparing immigrants, and particularly their descendants, to be more successful and more active participants in society.

6. Access for immigrants to institutions, as well as to public and private goods and services, on a basis equal to national citizens and in a non-discriminatory way is a critical foundation for better integration.

7. Frequent interaction between immigrants and Member State citizens is a fundamental mechanism for integration. Shared forums, inter-cultural dialogue, education about immigrants and immigrant cultures, and stimulating living conditions in urban environments enhance the interactions between immigrants and Member State citizens.

8. The practice of diverse cultures and religions is guaranteed under the Charter of Fundamental Rights and must be safeguarded unless practices conflict with other inviolable European rights or with national law.

9. The participation of immigrants in the democratic process and in the formulation of integration policies and measures, especially at the local level, supports their integration.

10. Mainstreaming integration policies and measures in all relevant policy portfolios and levels of government and public services is an important consideration in public policy formation and implementation.

11. Developing clear goals, indicators and evaluation mechanisms are necessary to adjust policy, evaluate progress on integration and to make the exchange of information more effective

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[48] Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the EU | European Website on Integration (europa.eu)

Notes

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