




Bord Oideachais & Oiliúna
LUIMNIGH & AN CHLÁIR
LIMERICK & CLARE
Education & Training Board

**COLLEGE OF FURTHER
EDUCATION & TRAINING**

.....

Learner Support Framework



A woman with dark hair, wearing a grey patterned jacket, stands behind a desk and points at a computer monitor. A young woman with blonde hair in a ponytail, wearing a blue hoodie with 'PERKY 23 TRACK AND FIELD' printed on it, sits at the desk looking at the screen. The monitor displays a website with the word 'Communities' in large green letters. The background features a blue wall with a white circular logo and a framed picture. A desk lamp is visible in the upper left corner.

An outline of the structures and processes, which Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board's FET Division has put in place to ensure all College of FET learners (and potential learners) receive the necessary information, advice, guidance, and support required to ensure their successful participation and engagement with FET provision appropriate to their needs and aspirations.

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Purpose

The purpose of this framework is to outline the structures and processes, which Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board's College of FET has put in place, to ensure all learners (and potential learners) receive the necessary information, advice, guidance and support required to ensure their successful participation and engagement with FET provision appropriate to their needs and aspirations.

Aim

- To provide a Learner Support Service involving initial and ongoing guidance and learner support for individual learners to enable them to successfully participate and complete their learning programmes.
- To outline the roles and responsibilities associated with the management of, and participation in, learning support for all learners¹.
- To ensure that Learner Support is recognised as a whole-service responsibility, embracing initial contact by learners with any member of Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board's College of FET staff through telephone, face-to-face, leaflets, letters, brochures, social media and web contact.
- To outline recommended procedures and practices for successful provision of learning support at each stage of the learning journey.

¹ FET Learners may be over or under 18 years of age, depending on the required eligibility for the provision being offered, and our target groups include older people, the unemployed, minority ethnic groups, low income family members, those with low skills levels, adults with disabilities and carers.

Outcomes

- Provide effective programme information and guidance at application stage to ensure that applicants are fully aware of the entry requirements and time commitment needed to complete programmes.
- Ensure that information, advice and guidance are effective and timely, and ensure that learners are on a programme that helps them develop new skills and knowledge.
- Ensure learners are supported to achieve their learning goals.
- ETB staff identify learners' support and additional learning needs quickly and accurately through effective initial assessment, where appropriate, leading to the provision of high quality and effective support to help learners achieve as well as they can.
- ETB staff are aware of and plan for individual learners' diverse needs in teaching or training sessions and provide effective support, including making reasonable adjustments for learners who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Identify when learners are at risk of leaving a programme and provide them with suitable support.
- Use information about learners' prior achievement and personal barriers to learning to plan provision.

Roles and Responsibilities

- **Information, Recruitment and Guidance Support Service (IRGSS):** provides confidential and impartial information, advice and guidance to all learners from initial contact via the recruitment process, whilst on a Further Education and Training programme, through to progression into employment/other education and training routes². PLC (Post-Leaving Certificate) Guidance Counsellors are responsible for the needs assessments and the operation of the PLC Fund for Learners with Disability.
- **Active Inclusion Support Service (AISS):** provides supports to registered learners in respect of device equity, access to counselling and Disability Needs Assessments for Non-PLC learners. They also support the delivery of supplemental provision through a network of on-campus Learning Hubs.
- **On-Course Learning Support Staff:** provide a Learner Support Service for all individuals who are on one of our Further Education and Training programmes. We operate an 'open door' policy for learners to speak to their provision coordinator or learning practitioner in respect of their learning support needs. Where staff cannot provide the expertise needed, we support learners to find the appropriate supports internally or externally.
- **All ETB FET Division Staff:** Learner Support is recognised as a whole-service responsibility embracing initial contact by learners with any member of Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board's College of FET staff through email, telephone, face-to-face, leaflets, letters, brochures, social media and web contact.

² Applicants from across our target groups (older people, minority ethnic groups, low income family members, those with low skills levels, adults with disabilities and carers, ESOL and migrant learners) are encouraged to review their chosen course outline, so they fully understand the skills and/or supports they may need for successful course participation.



Provision Planning

- The ETB College of FET provides a range of curriculum provision covering ability levels from Pre-Foundation to QQI Level 6, in addition to industry specific micro-credentials and certification. College of FET learners encompass a full range of age groups, modes of attendance, learning needs, ability and motivation.
- Provision Coordinators to brief **IRGSS** on new programmes to enable **the latter** to provide accurate information and guidance to learners.
- Provision Coordinators to advise **IRGSS** on changes which may impact on learner decision making, i.e. new awarding body specifications increasing complexity of portfolios etc.
- Where possible, provision to include access to study skills and confidence building programmes that can be engaged with by existing learners. This can be planned in conjunction with **AISS** and **On-Course Learning Support Staff**.

Initial Contact

- Initial contact with the ETB College of FET can come through a range of access points, often in response to a marketing/recruitment campaign. Some of the contacts include direct referrals from Education Welfare Officers, Pathways Adult Educators, Department of Social Protection, school guidance counsellors, probation services, learning networks or through an existing learner progression request. Other contacts can be made through FETCH Courses <https://www.fetchcourses.ie/>, the College of FET Website, collegeofFET.ie, interactions with our Social Media channels, direct emails and phone calls to various College of FET campuses, or by accessing the IRGSS FREEPHONE number 1800 70 70 77, or the IRGSS email address coursechoices@lcefb.ie

Pre-Entry Information, Advice and Guidance

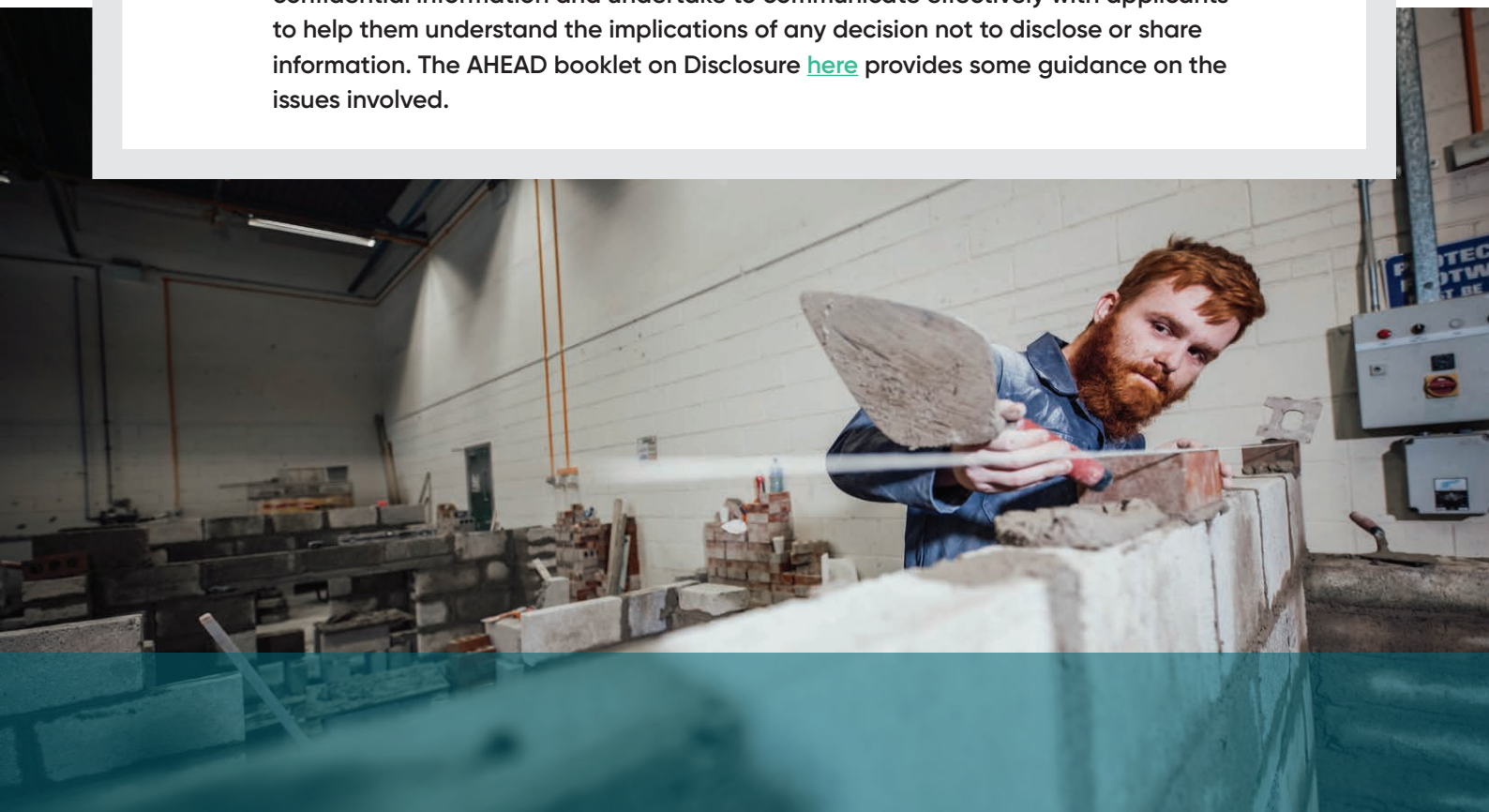
- *'Pre-Entry Information, Advice and Guidance'* is an umbrella term for support that helps learners make informed decisions (for example, about programme choice and certification if required, progression plans, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), etc.). **IRGSS** provides ongoing guidance, which also supports the learner's motivation to continue with a programme.
- Pre-Entry information and advice on a particular programme offering is available through the contact details listed on the provision course instance through the FETCH course widget on the College of FET Website, collegeofFET.ie, or on fetchcourses.ie.
- Pre-Entry information, advice and guidance is available via telephone, e-mail and face-to-face by contacting the IRGSS FREEPHONE number 1800 70 70 77 or the IRGSS email address coursechoices@lcefb.ie.

Pre-Entry Information, Advice and Guidance (cont'd)

- Learners will be provided with up-to-date and accurate information to help them to make informed choices about learning opportunities, including enrolment procedures and entry requirements for each programme. This detail will include information on:
 - Programme Content and Induction
 - Entry Requirements
 - Supports
 - Awards
 - Attendance
 - Assessment
 - Resource Requirements, including technology/devices required for participation where relevant (including ETB College of FET Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) and Device Equity processes)
 - How to Progress to other programmes
 - Information about Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)
 - What data is collected as part of the enrolment process, who this is shared with, and for what purpose.

Inclusive Practice During the Admission/Registration Process

- Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board's College of FET welcomes enquiries and applications from everyone with an interest in the ETB's programmes.
- Our Information, Recruitment and Guidance Support Service ([Guidance | College of FET](#)) offers impartial advice and guidance to ensure all applicants are supported in making programme choices appropriate to their demonstrated ability to achieve.
- Applicants applying for a place are asked to declare any disability, long-term physical health or mental health need, or additional learning support need; this can be done at any point in the learning journey, including as part of the pre-entry guidance process. Information is given in confidence and is only used for the purpose it is gathered.
- Staff will respect decisions made by applicants about the disclosure or sharing of confidential information and undertake to communicate effectively with applicants to help them understand the implications of any decision not to disclose or share information. The AHEAD booklet on Disclosure [here](#) provides some guidance on the issues involved.





Inclusive Practice During the Admission/Registration Process (cont'd)

- Learners are reminded that whilst the ETB aims to accommodate the needs of learners with disabilities, and those with a long-term physical or mental health need, it may not be able to do so if it has not been informed of access requirements in advance. Such instances are rare and every effort will be made to meet learner's requirements. Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board's College of FET will make sure all reasonable adjustments are made to accommodate and promote a successful learning outcome.
- Provision and/or Information, Recruitment and Guidance Staff will meet with the applicant to discuss their individual support requirements in the context of the needs of the programme. They will give an overview of the types of supports available and explain the process of registering for supports.
- Where required as part of Access, Transfer and Progression, Provision and/or Information, Recruitment and Guidance Staff will meet with the applicant to undertake initial assessment in respect of Language, Literacy, Numeracy and/or Digital Skills where evidence of achievement at a particular level is required for entry to a particular programme. This includes aptitude tests, trainability tests and RPL evidence can also be included as evidence for Access, Transfer and Progression.
- Where a learner does not meet the access requirements for a particular provision type, they will be referred by relevant Provision Staff to the Information, Recruitment and Guidance Support Service to discuss alternative pathways to enable progression.



On Entry/Registration

- All learners will receive a formal **induction** as part of their FET programme. The induction will be organised by the provision coordinator and/or provision staff. It aims to provide learners with necessary information about the specific College of FET campus, its facilities and regulations, and an introduction to all aspects of their programme of study; thereby laying and facilitating social interaction between learners and staff teaching on their programme of study. At a minimum, the induction will provide learners with the necessary information required in relation to:

- **Campus Orientation**

- Welcome on behalf of the ETB's College of FET and the Provision.
- Introduction to key members of teaching and campus staff.
- Identification of key locations/campus map.
- Introduction to and information about IRGSS, AISS and other support services and facilities, including the Learning Hub.
- Overview of Quality Assurance.
- Health & Safety.

- The FET Learner Charter including the following learner policies:

- [FET Learner Code of Conduct](#)
- [FET Anti-Bullying Policy](#)
- [FET Learner Disciplinary Procedure](#)
- [FET Learner Complaints Procedure](#)
- College of FET Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) Process
- College of FET Device Equity process

- Programme Detail including:

- Provision Calendar/Timetables.
- Programme structure.
- Aims and programme learning outcomes.
- Certificate and Component learning outcomes.
- Teaching methodology and assessment strategy.
- Teaching methods.
- Assessment methods, assessment criteria and assessment timetable.
- [Referencing Handbook for the Further Education and Training \(FET\) Sector](#)
- [Academic Writing Handbook for Learners in the Further Education and Training \(FET\) Sector](#)
- Technology requirements (including BYOD and Device Equity).
- Identification of key programme resources.

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- Induction sessions shall normally be delivered by a combination of provision, IRGSS, AISS and other campus staff, through a number of media (presentations, workshops etc.) and with the support of various resources (presentation software, overheads, online resources etc.) as appropriate.

On Entry/Registration (cont'd)

- Once registered, College of FET learners can apply for supports registering with the AISS (Active Inclusion Support Service) through [Learner Supports | College of FET](#). Information is given in confidence and only used for the purpose it is gathered. Appropriate internal referrals are made for learners who require:
 - **Supports for Learners with a Disability:** learning support due to a diagnosed disability, an ongoing physical or mental health condition, or a learning difficulty;
 - **Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment:** reasonable examination accommodations due to a diagnosed disability, an ongoing physical or mental health condition, or a learning difficulty;
 - **Device Equity Supports:** access to computers or technology support to help learners participate in their chosen programme;
 - **Learning Supports:** support with reading, writing, maths, study skills, digital skills or in improving their English language skills;
 - **Educational Guidance:** access to career or educational advice and information;
 - **Psychological Counselling:** access to the learner counselling service.

Supports for Learners with a Disability or Long-Term Physical or Mental Health Need

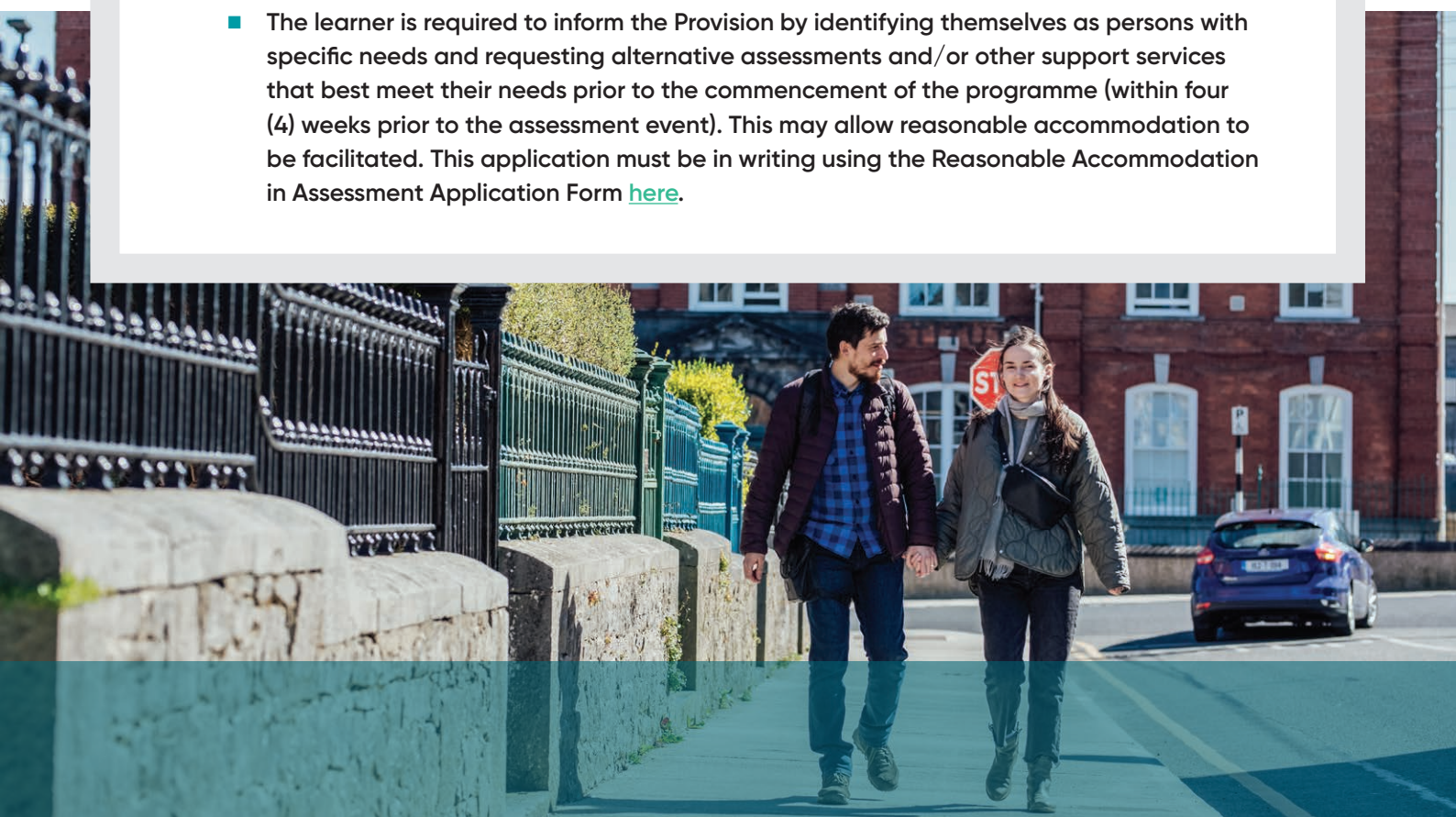
- The ETB College of FET aims to create an environment where a disability or health need (including a mental health need) is not a barrier to learning and all individuals have the opportunity to achieve their full potential.
- The ETB College of FET is mindful of equality legislation, including the *Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act, 2014 (IHREC Act 2014)*, the *Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015*, the *Equal Status Acts 2000-2018*, the *Education Act, 1998*.
- The code of practice for the governance of Education and Training Boards includes Equality/ Diversity as one of the core Principles of Quality Customer Service for customers and clients of ETBs. *Ensure the rights to equal treatment, established by equality legislation, and accommodate diversity, so as to contribute to equality for the groups covered by the equality legislation (under the grounds of gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller Community).*
- The Equal Status Act, 2000 (Section 4) requires education and training establishments to provide reasonable accommodation to meet the needs of learners who have a disability (Government of Ireland, 2000).
- To be eligible for support under the Fund for Learners with Disabilities, **FLD** (PLC – Post-Leaving Certificate only) or the **AISS** Learner Support Fund, a learner must meet the following conditions:
 - have a verifiable disability – (eligibility criteria for support)
 - meet the nationality and residency criteria as outlined
 - be a participant on a full-time, approved course * (to access the SOLAS FLD Only)
 - have a verified need for specific supports to enable attendance on their chosen programme.

Supports for Learners with a Disability or Long-Term Physical or Mental Health Need (cont'd)

- ETB Staff (PLC Guidance or AISS) will undertake a needs assessment with the learners in the context of the programme they have applied for and a Learning Educational Needs Summary Report will be developed in collaboration with the learner. This information is shared in confidence with relevant coordinators and teaching staff and other essential staff on a strictly 'need to know' basis with the permission of the learner in order to provide Reasonable Accommodation for Learning.
- The learner will be advised if Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board's College of FET is unable to offer an adequate level of appropriate support. Learners are reminded that whilst the ETB aims to accommodate the needs of learners with disabilities and those with a long-term physical or mental health need, it may not be able to do so if it has not been informed of access requirements in advance. Such instances are expected to be rare and every effort will be made to meet learners' requirements. Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board's College of FET will make sure all reasonable adjustments are made to accommodate and promote a successful learning outcome.

Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment

- Applications for Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment are covered by the Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment [Full Time Procedure](#) or [Part Time Procedure](#)
- In the context of assessment, reasonable accommodation is the term for the adaptation of assessment as necessary to cater for the needs of learners whose personal situation means that the assessment would otherwise be unfair, e.g. learners with a disability, and/or other learners covered by equality legislation. The grounds include learning difficulty; deaf or having a hearing impairment; blind or visually-impaired; physical difficulty (including mental health and/or behavioural difficulties, along with physical difficulties); and any grounds covered by current legislation.
- The learner is required to inform the Provision by identifying themselves as persons with specific needs and requesting alternative assessments and/or other support services that best meet their needs prior to the commencement of the programme (within four (4) weeks prior to the assessment event). This may allow reasonable accommodation to be facilitated. This application must be in writing using the Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment Application Form [here](#).



Device Equity Supports

- The ETB College of FET operates a 'Bring Your Own Device for Learning' guideline to facilitate and promote learners bringing a personal mobile device to ETB College of FET campuses for use in their education and training and/or using a computer/mobile device for remote learning. The Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) Guideline, like all BYOD programmes in an education setting, imposes a financial cost on learners and their families.
- Much of our provision will only function if learners have access to appropriate technological resources and ICT skills support to enable them to engage with their learning. Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board's College of FET as part of its Public Sector Duty is committed to ensuring, as far as reasonably possible, that all our learners have access to the same learning outcomes. Our Device Equity Guidelines establish a framework for the BYOD Guidelines to provide this for all our learners.
- If learners are unable to provide a device that meets their programme requirements, they can register for Device Equity Supports with the **AISS**. The on-campus Learning Hub will then liaise with the learner and the relevant teaching staff to identify the most appropriate way to address the issue in the context of the programme structure in order to ensure the learner has access to the technical resources required up to and including the loan of a device.

On-Course Learning Supports

- All provision have processes and/or staff in place to provide support for learners in relation to their reading, writing, maths, digital skills, or in improving their English language skills.
- Referrals through **AISS** are made directly to these Learning Support Staff who provide access to supplemental and tailored learning support classes in Specific Areas to identify additional strategies for independent learning and assist with specific skills areas.
- On certain provision types, these supports are provided in conjunction with Core Skills provision.
- On-Course Learning Support Staff provide ongoing communication/contact/study skills with identified learners and liaise with the course coordinator and learning practitioners as required.
- Throughout the programme, learners are kept informed of activities and assessment requirements through briefs distributed in class, programme noticeboards, and where available, through a VLE. Upon receiving notification of final results, learners are informed of their right to appeal their grade in accordance with Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board's College of FET Appeals Policy.



Guidance Counselling

- **IRGSS** provides impartial careers and education information to adults who wish to return to education and training, or are already registered on a FET programme within any College of FET campus - to make informed educational, career and life choices.
- Guidance is provided both in group settings and on a one-to-one basis for those who require further supports - to identify clients' own lifelong learning and career plan.
- The IRGSS team's work with learners incorporates career classes, Guidance Interviews, attendance at career exhibitions, open days, and support agencies. The service may incorporate:
 - Personal and Social Development encompassing developmental skills crucial to learners' education and careers e.g. self-awareness, decision-making skills, planning, coping strategies.
 - Educational development including such areas as programme choices, QQI Level, motivation and learning, study skills, learning-related problems, and psychometric testing.
 - Vocational information and guidance, including areas such as employment rights and duties, job opportunities, vocational education and training, further education, job and interview preparation, career research and career/ programme information.

Psychological Counselling

- Access to mentoring and counselling is integrated as part of the Learner Mentoring Initiative within our Youthreach provision.
- FET Learners outside of Youthreach can access up to six (6) funded psychological counselling sessions with My Mind. Funded and supported by **AISS**, these supports are designed to offer brief intervention approaches to learners who self-refer, often with the support of a guidance counsellor or provision coordinator.

Pre-Exit/Progression Planning

All full-time provision include elements of work experience, work shadowing, and work practice which help in preparing learners to progress to employment or further and higher education.

IRGSS and Provision Coordinators work with learners to enable them to make transitions to further and higher education, training and employment.

IRGSS works with learners to engage with career interview preparation, attendance at career exhibitions, open days, funding and grants, CAO applications, and engagement with support structures such as access officers and other agencies around progression.

Plans are in place to address the follow-up with former learners regarding progression routes and destinations.

Compassionate Consideration

Learners can apply for Compassionate Consideration to defer an assessment or to repeat an assessment activity, if they feel that extenuating circumstances may have prevented or may prevent them from undertaking/completing a specific assessment activity. Extenuating circumstances are situations or events which unexpectedly interfere with a learner's ability to complete or sit an element of assessment. Extenuating circumstances under which compassionate consideration may be considered are outlined in the ETB's College of FET [Compassionate Consideration Procedure](#)

Learner Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework

Each of our College of FET campuses have a learner mental health and wellbeing team, and operate within the College of FET Learner Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework designed to support the ETB's College of FET; providing leadership and resources to promote and support Learner Mental Health and Wellbeing. It will do this through engagement with stakeholders, nurturing effective partnerships and promotion of initiatives to promote and support the Mental Health and Wellbeing of the FET Community.

Integration of Language, Literacy and Numeracy Framework

The College of FET Framework for the Integration of Language, Literacy and Numeracy is a FET-wide framework designed to enhance structures and resources at individual campus and provision level to support an inclusive learning environment. It gives a commitment to ensure that programme-related language, literacy, and numeracy supports are inbuilt into our vocational provision and that learners have access to specialist language, literacy, and numeracy supports as required.

ESOL and Migrant Learner Framework

This framework covers migrant learners whose first language is not English and who are accessing a wide range of FET programmes, including ESOL. It covers both ESOL provision and the provision of supports for migrant learners attending broader FET provision. The framework provides 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 programmes, including ESOL. The framework covers Provision Planning, Access and Initial Assessment, Assessment and Accreditation, Curriculum and Materials Development, and Staff Development.





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