

# GUIDANCE IN VTOS

# RESOURCE HANDBOOK



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The writing and editing team were Linda Darbey (Project Officer, NCGE), Helen Keogh (National Co-ordinator VTOS), John McCarthy (Director NCGE) and Síle Sheehy (Project Officer, NCGE).



## GLOSSARY

ACCS	Accumulation of Credits and Certification of Subjects
ADM	Area Development Management Ltd
AEO	Adult Education Organiser
AHEAD	Association for Higher Education Access and Disability
ALCE	Adult Literacy and Community Education
AONTAS	Irish National Association of Adult Education
APL	Accreditation of Prior Learning
BTEA	Back to Education Allowance
BTEI	Back To Education Initiative
BTWA	Back To Work Allowance
CAO	Central Applications Office
CDVEC	City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee
CE	Community Education
CGLI	City and Guilds of London Institute
DES	Department of Education and Science
DSCFA	Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs
DSW	Department of Social Welfare
ECDL	European Computer Driving Licence
EGSA	Educational Guidance Service for Adults
ESF	European Social Fund
ESRI	Economic and Social Research Institute

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FÁS	Training and Employment Authority
FETAC	Further Education and Training Awards Council
FIT	Fast-Track Information Technology
HEA	Higher Education Authority
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HETAC	Higher Education and Training Awards Council
IBEC	Irish Business and Employers' Confederation
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IFA	Irish Farmer's Association
IGC	Institute of Guidance Counsellors
INOUE	Irish National Organisation for the Unemployed
ISME	Irish Small and Medium Enterprises Association
IoT	Institute of Technology
LCA	Leaving Certificate Applied
LCVP	Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme
LES	Local Employment Service
NALA	National Adult Literacy Agency
NCAD	National College of Art and Design
NCEA	National Council for Educational Awards (now HETAC)
NCGE	National Centre for Guidance in Education
NCVA	National Council for Vocational Awards (now FETAC)
NDP	National Development Plan
NTCB	National Tourism Certification Boards

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NUI	National University of Ireland
PLC	Post-Leaving Certificate
RCSI	Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland
RSA	Royal Society of Arts
UCAS	University and Colleges Admissions System
VEC	Vocational Education Committee
VTOS	Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme

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## FOREWORD

The Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS) is a very successful initiative of the Department of Education and Science that provides second chance education and training opportunities for unemployed adults, assisting them in progression to employment, and further education and training. For many years the VTOS course co-ordinator has played a key guidance role in encouraging adults to learn and helping them to manage their learning. Similarly tutors on VTOS programmes have been a great source of inspiration to aid participants through the many challenges that returning to education presents. The Department has been conscious of the need to support the co-ordinators and tutors in their respective guidance roles, and to complement their work through additional provision of adult educational guidance. The White Paper on Adult Education: *Learning for Life* paid significant attention to the provision of a national adult educational guidance service. The development of this service has been a priority since 1999. At present there are 19 pilot projects operating nationally under the Adult Educational Guidance Initiative (AEGI) providing a guidance service for VTOS, literacy and community education participants. This will be expanded further in the coming years with the aim of having a comprehensive service in place by the end of 2006.

This publication, jointly produced by the National Co-ordinator VTOS and staff of the National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE), is intended to support the guidance roles of the VTOS co-ordinators and tutors. It also aims to clarify the nature of guidance provision in VTOS, the planning of such provision, and the role of the adult education guidance worker within AEGI.

Finally, I would like to compliment the staff of NCGE and the National Co-ordinator VTOS for their initiative in developing this useful publication.

Willie O'Dea TD

Minister of State, Department of Education and Science.

## INTRODUCTION

Ask people working in adult education *what* (meaning *what subject*) they teach and they will frequently respond by saying that they *work with adults*. This response tends to arise from their sense – and the daily reality - that their role as co-ordinators and/or tutors goes beyond delivering information and developing knowledge, skills and attitudes in relation to particular subjects. They are conscious of the fact that they find themselves, on an on-going basis, being called upon to respond to the adult learner as a whole person, with her/his educational, career and personal needs and challenges.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the VTOS programme where VTOS staff – co-ordinator, tutors, administrative staff and support services – strive to enable the individual learner to reach her/his potential on a whole range of fronts, educational, vocational and personal. This approach inevitably implies a guidance role for VTOS staff - in the broad sense of *guidance* as described in Section 2 of this handbook. Staff find themselves responding to personal issues as they impact on the educational or vocational goals of the VTOS participant or engaging in advocacy on behalf of a participant with a local or national agency that holds the key to her/his career progression.

The significance of the guidance role of adult educators has long been recognised.

In addition to the development of alternative courses and awards to meet the education and training needs of unemployed people, there is a growing realisation throughout Europe that what many participants require is provision which combines education and training with guidance and counselling which may contain elements of social work and psychological care as well as guidance in relation to educational activities (European Bureau of Adult Education 1987). In a very real sense the guidance provision, where it exist, is what integrates the different elements of a programme and it is the element of the programme that should provide a continuity of concern for participants after they have left a course.

(Keogh 1993, p.23)

Guidance is an intrinsic aspect of a holistic approach to working with learners on a VTOS programme. It is, explicitly or implicitly, a part of the work of all staff.

### **Origins of the Handbook**

This handbook is a response to the need identified by VTOS staff for a publication which would address the issue of guidance in VTOS, particularly in a context where the VTOS centre does not have the services of a guidance counsellor. Custom and practice on the ground in VTOS centres has led to the development of a *theory-in-use* in relation to guidance on VTOS. Guidance is viewed as a holistic activity which supports all aspects of a VTOS participant's life and which is a key feature of how all staff work with learners in a VTOS centre.

Many VTOS co-ordinators, along with other VEC personnel and members of the wider adult education and training community, have contributed their experience and expertise to the development of this handbook. It is intended for use in VTOS centres within the context of the development of the Adult Educational Guidance Initiative (AEGI) of the Department of Education and Science. Through this Initiative adult educational guidance is currently being provided to participants in VTOS, literacy and community education in 19 project sites nation-wide.

### **Overview of the Handbook**

The handbook is intended to support all who provide guidance in a VTOS context – the co-ordinator, the tutors, the administrative staff, the services staff and, where s/he is part of the VTOS team, the guidance counsellor.

**Section 1** gives a general overview of the VTOS programme and covers topics such as eligibility, financial matters, learning options and support services. It is intended mainly for use by people joining the VTOS staff team.

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**Section 2** describes adult educational guidance in terms of its aims and objectives. The current guidance roles of VTOS co-ordinators, tutors and guidance counsellors are outlined along with the key stages of adult educational guidance in VTOS. The final part of Section 2 gives the steps in planning a guidance programme for VTOS and includes an indicative timeframe for stages of the first-time development of a VTOS guidance programme.

**Section 3** deals with the recruitment stage of VTOS and describes the most common approaches to recruitment in VTOS centres. Information and contacts in relation to reaching specific VTOS-eligible groups are provided. The section concludes with a list of the questions asked most frequently by people considering joining a VTOS programme.

**Section 4** covers the induction stage of VTOS. It describes the information needs of adults returning to learning on VTOS and makes suggestions on record-keeping. The range of learning options available through a VTOS programme is set out. The section concludes with a description of the role of guidance at the *induction* stage of VTOS.

**Section 5** describes the on-going educational, career and personal support that a guidance programme can provide for participants *during* their time on a VTOS course. It concludes with a useful discussion on *referrals*.

**Section 6** outlines the issues, strategies, skills and information involved in providing guidance for VTOS participants in relation to *progression* to employment, to further education and training and to higher education.

**Section 7** provides information on the options available to VTOS personnel for developing and updating their guidance skills. It covers initial training courses, on-going professional development, local in-service courses and national courses.

Finally, **Section 8** provides a list of resources– books, tests, videos and websites – on aspects of guidance. VTOS centres might wish to consider purchasing/borrowing a number of the resources described.

Each section concludes with a bibliography and extensive appendices. For ease of use, the number on each appendix refers to the sub-section within each section to which the appendix relates.

### **Format of the Handbook**

The handbook is presented in loose-leaf binder format. This is intended to underline its 'interactive' nature, in the sense that it is expected that each VTOS centre will add in its own local material and also regularly update the appendices as new and/or revised information emerges from national and local sources.

### **Using the Handbook**

It is also intended that the loose-leaf binder format of the handbook will encourage flexibility in the way in which it is used in a VTOS centre. The handbook is intended as a resource book to be used as appropriate, by staff and participants, as the various stages of a VTOS programme unfold over the year.

VTOS staff are encouraged to 'deconstruct' the handbook. They may wish to photocopy sections for staff and participants. They may wish to discard, replace or re-write parts of sections/sections that do not meet their particular needs in relation to the



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provision of guidance for VTOS participants. They may wish to invite the VTOS participants to contribute to sections in the form of text and/or appendices.

It is suggested that the VTOS co-ordinator organise a staff development day to introduce the handbook to the VTOS team. Where an AEGI (Adult Educational Guidance Initiative) project is operating within her/his VEC area the VTOS co-ordinator might involve the guidance provider from the AEGI in any such training. The involvement of AEGI personnel would provide an excellent opportunity for a whole-centre discussion of guidance in VTOS.

### **Updating the Handbook**

In addition to on-going updating of the *Handbook* in each VTOS centre, it is envisaged that the National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE) will update certain aspects of the *Handbook*, as required.

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# SECTION 1

# BACKGROUND

## SECTION 1

### BACKGROUND

#### OVERVIEW

This section is aimed mainly at new VTOS co-ordinators. It covers the topics most frequently raised by an adult considering joining a VTOS programme: eligibility, financial matters, childcare support, courses available, and expected outcomes.

#### 1.1 What is VTOS?

VTOS (Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme) is a scheme that enables unemployed adults to return to learning at a range of different levels from foundation level, and Junior Certificate, through Leaving Certificate and FETAC/NCVA Levels 1 and 2. To date the majority of VTOS participants have received certification from the National Council for Vocational Awards (NCVA) which is now the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) of the National Qualifications Authority Ireland (NQAI).

The objective of VTOS is the provision of a range of learning opportunities designed to meet the education and training needs of unemployed people. The scheme aims to provide them with vocational education and training opportunities which will enable them to progress to employment directly or via further education and training post VTOS. The scheme was launched on a national basis by the Department of Education and Science (DES) in 1989 to replace the Education Opportunities Scheme (EOS), first piloted in two Vocational Education Committee areas (City of Limerick and Co Dublin) in 1986. There are currently 5,000 places on the scheme and in 2000-2001 the scheme was fully subscribed.

VTOS is funded by the Department of Education and Science under the National Development Plan (2000-2006). Growing from 289 full-time participants in 1989, VTOS had expanded to 5000 full-time participants in 1994/95, and now stands at 5,300 in 2001. The programme is delivered locally by the 33 Vocational Education Committees (VECs) in adult education centres and in schools and colleges. The courses that operate under VTOS usually coincide with the academic year, viz., September to June, although a number of VECs operate VTOS on a roll-on roll-off basis with a continuous intake and departure of participants throughout the year. In addition, a number of VECs offer short taster/induction courses in the third term of the academic year to enable prospective participants to sample a variety of learning activities so that their needs, wishes and wants can be identified prior to their starting a full-time VTOS course in September.

## 1.2 Eligibility for VTOS

Since the launch of VTOS in 1989 there has been a steady broadening of eligibility criteria and in 2001 the following people are eligible to participate on a full-time basis on a course offered by a VEC under the VTOS umbrella:

- anyone aged 21 or over and in receipt of one of the following social welfare payments for at least six months:
  - unemployment benefit
  - unemployment assistance
  - one-parent family payment
  - disability payment
- anyone aged 21 or over and who has been signing for credits for at least six months
- a dependent partner of those who meet the above eligibility criteria.

## 1.3 Where are VTOS Courses Located?

VTOS courses are located in dedicated adult education centres that form the majority of the 107 VTOS centres countrywide or in schools or colleges offering

Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) courses. For convenience the term *centre* will be used to refer to the location of VTOS courses throughout the handbook.

#### 1.4 Course Delivery

Participation on a VTOS course is either in a *core* or *dispersed* mode. The former means that they are in what is termed a *core group* where all the participants are VTOS participants. *Dispersed mode* means that VTOS participants learn in groups made up of VTOS and other participants. The vast majority of VTOS participants in dispersed mode participate in PLC courses.

**See Appendix 1.4 for a list of VTOS centres and co-ordinators.**

#### 1.5 Payments while on a VTOS Course

- VTOS courses are provided free of charge and those who qualify for the scheme continue to get their social welfare payment or, in the case of unemployed people, get a training allowance from the VEC in lieu of a social welfare payment.
- The VTOS training allowance is paid at a standard rate. So if a participant is on a reduced payment before joining VTOS (perhaps because of means assessed against her/him) s/he will be entitled to payment at a higher rate while on VTOS.
- If a participant is transferring from an unemployment payment, s/he will be paid a training allowance at a rate equivalent to the maximum rate of unemployment benefit, including appropriate increases due for a qualified adult and dependent children.
- Payment is normally made by cheque or paypath by the VEC each week.
- If a participant is receiving a One Parent Family Payment, a Disability Allowance or Blind Person's Pension, s/he will be paid at the maximum rate of her/his current social welfare payment in the normal way.

- ❑ If a participant intends returning to the second year of a course in autumn, her/his VTOS allowance will continue to be paid over the summer and it is also paid during Christmas and Easter holidays.
- ❑ The training allowance is not means tested so a participant may work without affecting her/his payment but income from work will be taxed in the normal way. VTOS participants should be aware that changes in income might affect their rent or mortgage supplement.
- ❑ A VTOS participant retains entitlement to any secondary benefits s/he may already have e.g. Christmas Bonus, Fuel Allowance, Butter Vouchers, Diet Supplement, Rent or Mortgage Supplement. The *Fuel Allowance Form* must be stamped by the local social welfare office.
- ❑ VTOS participants may also be in receipt of rent allowance.
- ❑ Participants will be paid a small allowance for meals while on the VTOS course and may also qualify for an allowance towards the cost of travel to and from the VTOS centre. Meal and travel allowances are not paid during the holiday period. Some VECs do not pay these allowances for days when the participant is absent from the course.
- ❑ If registered as unemployed, a participant will not have to 'sign on' at the local social welfare office while on the course.
- ❑ If a participant qualifies for "credited contributions" they will continue to be awarded while s/he is on the course.
- ❑ If a participant is signing for unemployment "credits only" s/he may qualify to participate in the scheme but will not receive an allowance.
- ❑ If a participant is getting an unemployment payment with an allowance for a spouse/partner, the latter may also participate in VTOS. However the spouse/partner will not qualify for a payment while on VTOS but may receive a meal and travel allowance where appropriate.
- ❑ If a participant was in receipt of one of the social welfare payments (or a combination of them) for 12 months or more immediately prior to starting the VTOS course, an extra weekly allowance of £25 is payable since September 1999. This increase is also payable if a participant has been 12 months on

Youthreach or on a Senior Traveller Training Centre programme before joining VTOS.

## **1.6 Childcare**

Childcare support is available in the majority of VTOS centres. Arrangements differ from VEC to VEC, depending on participant and local circumstance. The VEC may make a payment to a crèche of up to £60 per week per child where the crèche is recognised under the 1991 Childcare Act and has a tax clearance certificate from the Revenue Commissioners. If the cost of childcare is more than £60 the participant must pay the balance.

Some VECs provide childcare on their own premises which may be run by/with the assistance of a FÁS Community Employment (CE) scheme. In addition, participants on accredited Childcare courses within VTOS or PLCs often work in the crèche as part of their required work experience.

Alternatively, a relative or neighbour who is minding up to three children at home may provide the VTOS participant with childcare. S/he does not have to be registered as a crèche, but must present a PPS tax number (formerly RSI number) to receive payment which comes directly from the VEC.

Note: Each Health Board has a list of recognised crèches.

## **1.7 Fees, Books and other Course-Related Expenses**

VTOS courses are provided free of charge to all people who meet the VTOS eligibility criteria as set out above. Books and materials are generally provided free of charge when a participant is in a core VTOS course. Where the participant is attending a VTOS course in dispersed mode, usually on a PLC course, s/he generally presents pro forma or actual invoices for the books and materials s/he



needs to participate in a course. The VTOS co-ordinator then provides the money to cover the invoices.

In some VTOS centres, a book loan scheme is in operation and books revert to the centre at the end of the participant's course. Expenses for study trips relevant to the course are paid for, as are outings to theatres, museums and concerts. Examination fees and CAO (Central Applications Office) application fees are also paid by the VTOS centre.

Up to 2001 attendance on VTOS courses has been full-time, Monday to Friday, generally for five to six hours per day. Under the Back-to-Education Initiative (BTEI) of the White Paper on Adult Education – Learning for Life (Government of Ireland, 2000) part-time participation on VTOS learning activities will be funded for people who are VTOS-eligible and for a broader category of people who do not have upper-secondary education. It is proposed that learning opportunities will be offered on a modular or sandwich basis during the day, in the evening or at the weekend.

## 1.8 What is the Content of a VTOS Course?

VTOS provision focuses on the development of job-related skills, including technological and business skills and includes modules on personal development. Up to 2001, the majority of VTOS participants have carried out their studies within the context of courses assessed and accredited by FETAC/NCVA ranging from the National Foundation Level award to the Level 2 award. A smaller number of participants pursue Junior Certificate and/or Leaving Certificate courses, often mixing and matching subjects and levels in a *portfolio of certification*.

VTOS courses are wide ranging in content and accreditation and include:

- Basic education courses in literacy, numeracy, study skills, personal development and, generally, practical subjects such as woodwork or art.

Basic level courses are not available in all VTOS centres and they usually involve one-to-one or small group sessions;

- ❑ Foundation courses leading to Junior Certificate or the National Foundation Level award of FETAC/NCVA;
- ❑ Leaving Certificate courses based on a range of subjects, almost always including English;
- ❑ PLC courses at FETAC/NCVA Level 2 offering vocational preparation and training in a range of designated areas such as business, engineering, construction, secretarial, catering, agriculture, art, craft and design, computers, media studies. VTOS participants in these courses would generally join with the Leaving Certificate or equivalent standard;
- ❑ Portfolio courses where participants 'mix and match' from a range of subjects and levels in a VTOS centre to put together their own learning package;
- ❑ Enterprise courses where participants develop business ideas and the skills of running a business in the supportive environment which may involve participation in mini-company or a practice company or may be based on 'real' business activities.
- ❑ Courses provided at local level to suit the particular requirements of local industry or business. These courses include FIT (Fast-Track Information Technology) courses and tele-services courses;
- ❑ Individual learning activities to meet the needs of individual participants and which may involve courses offered by a range of providers in an area.

In addition to the above, the majority of VTOS participants also receive tuition in Information and Communications Technology (ICT), where such learning is not part of their chosen course.

## 1.9 Expected Outcomes

**Each person has his/her own reason for starting on a course under the VTOS umbrella. Many have reached some watershed in their own personal,**

educational or working lives and may be excluded from the benefits of the current vibrant Irish economy through low levels of education and vocational skills. VTOS provides them with a meaningful opportunity of exploring for themselves the learning possibilities available to them. It provides the first and vital step for many on the pathway to resuming structured learning through post-primary education and beyond. VTOS providers seek to enable participants to raise their general educational level as well as develop specific vocational skills. In the process many VTOS participants have become self-directed and self-reliant, have discovered unexpected talents and abilities within themselves, have achieved their goals, have unlocked new worlds of opportunity, have been enriched and, in turn, have enriched their own families and communities (Keogh and Downes 1998).

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## SECTION 2

# GUIDANCE IN VTOS

## SECTION 2

## GUIDANCE IN VTOS

*OVERVIEW*

This section provides an introduction to Adult Educational Guidance (AEG). It describes Adult Educational Guidance (AEG) in terms of aims and activities. The guidance roles of the VTOS co-ordinator, tutors and guidance counsellor are explored. The key stages of AEG in VTOS are presented. The final part of the section is intended to help the VTOS co-ordinator, tutors, guidance counsellor and support staff to plan a guidance programme for participants.

## PART I – ADULT EDUCATION GUIDANCE

**2.1 What is Guidance?**

Guidance refers to a range of activities designed to assist people to make choices about their lives and to make transitions consequent on these choices (DES 2000).

**2.2 What are the aims of Adult Educational Guidance?**

- ❑ To help the individual to review all options and if appropriate, to identify learning / training objectives;
- ❑ To help the individual to manage her /his educational, vocational and personal development and interrelate these;
- ❑ To help the individual to cope with the vocational and personal implications of learning/ training;
- ❑ To provide continuity of support across modules and tutors / trainers;
- ❑ To support the individual in long term-planning.

### 2.3 *Which Kinds of Activities are Entailed in AEG?*

In the context of adult education the range of activities includes:

- ❑ Information - providing adult learners with objective and factual data on education and training courses, occupations, labour market, entitlements;
- ❑ Assessment - helping adult learners to obtain a structured understanding of their own development;
- ❑ Advice - making suggestions based on the adviser's own knowledge and experience;
- ❑ Counselling - helping adult learners to explore their thoughts and feelings on their present situation, the choices open to them, and the consequences of those choices;
- ❑ Referral – this includes two types of activity: i) referral of an adult learner by the guidance worker to other qualified helpers outside the centre; ii) adult learner referrals to the key guidance worker by tutors, co-ordinator, and support staff. The voluntary participation in counselling of the referred adult learner must be respected by all concerned;
- ❑ Teaching/Careers Education - providing a programme of planned experiences to develop in adult learners the skills and knowledge to make decisions and transitions e.g. job search;
- ❑ Placement - helping adult learners to achieve entry to a particular job or course;
- ❑ Advocacy - negotiating with companies, agencies, institutions on behalf of clients, especially those for whom there are barriers to access;
- ❑ Feedback - giving feedback to providers about the unmet needs of the adult learner;
- ❑ Follow-up - contacting former adult learners to see what has happened to them and what further needs they may have;

- ❑ Networking - building links with employers, relevant agencies and institutions to enhance guidance work with adult learners;
- ❑ Managing guidance activities into a coherent programme;
- ❑ Innovating systems change - supporting change in curricula, institutional and guidance practice to maintain and improve the quality of guidance provision.

The National Adult Guidance and Counselling Service proposed under the NDP (Government of Ireland 1999) will include personal, educational and career guidance and will cover the pre-entry, entry, on-going and pre-exit stages. According to the White Paper on Adult Education (Department of Education and Science 2000), it will be under-pinned by the following principles:

- ❑ Learner / client centredness;
- ❑ confidentiality;
- ❑ impartiality;
- ❑ equal opportunities;
- ❑ accessibility;
- ❑ transparency;
- ❑ empowerment.

Guidance is a two-way process and this underpins all interactions in the guidance relationship. There will be four levels of service:

- a. provision of a coherent information base which can be self-accessed by learners, allied with a help-line;
- b. initial consultations with a trained adviser to help clarify needs, indicate appropriate pathways and / or referral;
- c. more specialised support such as counselling ( career, educational, or personal) and assessment;
- d. referral to psychological services where needed.

The first two levels (a) and (b) will constitute a foundation level of service which will be available to all. The next two levels (c) and (d) will be provided free to



participants on adult literacy, VTOS and Youthreach programmes and to participants entitled to free fees or a reduction in fees through the *Back to Education Initiative*. For the remainder, it is envisaged that fees will be charged should they wish to avail of the specialised support.

## 2.4 Why Educational Guidance in VTOS?

Because of the changing nature of work, the job market is more volatile, work practices are changing, contract work is more common, demand for higher skills is increasing, job mobility is common and technology is changing the world of work. Participants on VTOS courses are emerging from a period of short/long term unemployment. They need guidance before, during and after their course but will also be faced with the challenge of managing transition from one job to another in the future, upgrading skills and making adjustments in their personal lives to accommodate these changes. Within adult and continuing education, guidance is now seen as an essential tool in the overall strategy of equipping people to deal with on-going change in their lives. Guidance on its own cannot solve all problems, of course, but it can help to make the labour market more accessible and equitable for unemployed people.

## 2.5 Guidance Roles in VTOS

**Guidance provision within VTOS varies from VEC to VEC and from centre to centre even within the same VEC. The situation can range from one of *minimal* provision to one of *substantial* provision. The guidance roles in VTOS are as follows:**

### a. VTOS co-ordinator

**In a small number of cases, the VTOS co-ordinator has a guidance qualification and provides guidance for VTOS participants in her/his centre. More typically, the VTOS co-ordinator will have developed front-line guidance skills on the job over a number of years or through**

**involvement in a course on educational guidance. In the majority of cases the VTOS co-ordinator will be involved, in co-operation with staff, in drawing up guidelines and procedures on approaches and boundaries in guidance within the VTOS centre. Some VTOS co-ordinators have participated in the NUI Maynooth/NCGE course on *The Educational Management of Adult Guidance*.**

**b. VTOS Tutors**

VTOS tutors provide learning support for participants in their own subject areas and offer more general study and personal support on an on-going basis to participants. Where a tutor identifies a VTOS participant as having personal issues of a serious nature, s/he will refer the matter to the VTOS co-ordinator, in a general or a specific way with the approval of the participant. Where a participant has requested confidentiality, the tutor will make a judgement based on the welfare of the participant. In addition to their graduate degrees, some tutors will have completed a certificate, diploma or master's programme in adult education, where adult guidance may have been one of the modules on offer. However, in general, the majority of tutors would not consider that the skills they exercise in working with adults, who bring a very wide range of prior experiences to their learning activities, are actually guidance skills.

**c. Support Staff**

Administrative staff in a VTOS centre will very often participate in staff development days where guidance is a topic for discussion and they will generally be aware of the role they play in supporting participants in their return to learning in the centre. Very often, a member of the administrative staff in a centre will be the first person with whom a prospective participant makes contact and as such s/he can have a "make or break" impact on the person's decision to return to learning.

Services staff often find themselves in this position also.

#### **d. Guidance Counsellor**

A small number of stand-alone VTOS centres with *core groups* have the services of a guidance counsellor. The person may have a qualification in relation to guidance in post-primary schools or s/he may have a qualification in adult guidance. S/he may deliver guidance across one or more VTOS locations and may be in any one VTOS centre for a limited time per week.

Where a VTOS programme is located in a school or college the participants in core and/or dispersed VTOS modes are likely to be able to avail of the service offered by the guidance counsellor(s) in that school in the same way as PLC and other participants do. It is possible, however, that an already stretched service may not be in a position to meet all the needs of all the VTOS participants in the school or college. In addition, the guidance counsellor's training and experience may lie more in the area of working with adolescents than with adults and, consequently, s/he may need up-skilling to work effectively with adults, particularly adults who may have particular personal, social, academic and vocational needs arising from prior education experiences and unemployment.

## **2.6 Skills used in Providing Guidance**

Many people contribute to the guidance process e.g. VTOS co-ordinator, guidance counsellor, tutors, administrative staff and services staff. They employ a range of skills in the provision of guidance to participants such as:

- ❑ active listening;
- ❑ questioning;
- ❑ contract setting;
- ❑ clarifying and summarising;
- ❑ assertiveness;
- ❑ communication;

- ❑ building rapport;
- ❑ challenging;
- ❑ target setting;
- ❑ identifying next steps.

There are four other general skills that are necessary to give an effective service. These are:

- ❑ telephone techniques;
- ❑ record keeping;
- ❑ reception skills;
- ❑ client/customer care.

## 2.7 Key Educational Guidance Stages for Adults Returning to Learning on VTOS

The adult participant returning to learn on a course under the VTOS umbrella benefits from guidance *before, during and on completion* of learning activities.

### a. Before Entry to a VTOS Course

A potential VTOS participant will be helped enormously if a guidance service is available to her/him *before* the start of any course. Adults need to know and understand the choices available to them so that they can match their individual needs and wishes against the options. The guidance worker must be alert and open to the very particular needs of adults returning to learning on a VTOS course. Many of them will find it difficult to express their needs; they may lack up-to-date information on options and may have a limited view of their options. They may have a range of anxieties about returning to learning which need to be addressed before they can make a decision to do so.

**b. On Entry to a VTOS Course**

Once adults start on a new course/training, they need help to handle the big changes in their lives which they encounter in those first vital weeks. Clear information and support are vital to assist their transition to being a VTOS participant. Goals need to be set which are attainable within a certain time frame. Lack of support may mean that adults 'vote with their feet' and leave the course/training in the early weeks.

**c. During the VTOS Course**

During any return to learning, the adult participant needs help and support to deal with the ongoing changes, the unforeseen pressures at home, in the community and on the course, and the increasing demands of the learning activities. Set goals need to be reviewed and, perhaps, adjusted. Pressures arising from deadlines and examinations will need to be handled.

**d. Before Completing a VTOS Course**

As the VTOS course/training is nearing completion, adults need once again to review set goals and objectives and check against options available for progression.

**e. On Completing a VTOS Course**

VTOS provides for tracking of participants once they leave the scheme itself. Many centres provide a 'continuity of care' in the form of a callback service that supports former participants in further learning and up-skilling.

**2.8 Characteristics of an Effective Educational Guidance Service**

No matter what the situation, the demands on a guidance service in a VTOS centre are enormous. Most providers of educational guidance for adults will agree in broad terms about the main definitions and objectives. However, each provider

has to be aware of existing limits/boundaries at local and national level, the current and future social and economic trends and of cultural traditions and diversity within the community.

The characteristics of an effective guidance service are outlined in the training manual produced by the National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE), NUI (National University of Ireland) Maynooth and Marino Institute of Education (MIE) 1999. These characteristics could also be applied to an educational guidance service *within* VTOS.

They are:

- ❑ independence;
- ❑ accessibility and user friendly setting;
- ❑ up –to- date information;
- ❑ efficient and fast referral system;
- ❑ comfortable and private facilities for interviews;
- ❑ good publicity;
- ❑ trained and efficient staff;
- ❑ administrative and clerical back-up;
- ❑ effective communication with education and training agencies;
- ❑ effective communication with other agencies e.g. employers, community groups;
- ❑ credibility with these agencies;
- ❑ a system for feeding back information about learner needs.

## 2.9 Adult Educational Guidance in Ireland

**At present Adult Educational Guidance is at a development phase in Ireland. Eleven projects nation-wide were selected by the Department of Education and Science in 2000 to operate a two-year pilot programme and a further eight projects have been selected to commence in September 2001. The aim**

of the projects is to address gaps in provision and provide a comprehensive guidance service for adults on VTOS, community education and literacy programmes by encouraging local partnerships. The Initiative is being funded by the DES through the NDP (2000-06) with the assistance of the European Social Fund (ESF).

Whatever the level of educational guidance available in a VTOS centre, there can be no debate about the vital role of guidance in enabling VTOS participants to achieve their potential through their return to learning. More than 100 stories were written by VTOS participants and published in *VTOSpells Success* (Keogh and Downes 1998). These stories bear ample testimony to the major role of the strong on-going support and guidance provided by co-ordinators and tutors in the successful outcomes achieved by the writers.

## 2.10 Research on AEG in Ireland

Research on AEG in Ireland is limited. In 1998 NCGE wrote a report on *Guidance in Adult and Continuing Education* (McNamara 1998) highlighting that guidance for adults was one of the most neglected areas of adult education. The report contains an account of research on the guidance needs of adults attending education courses in post-primary schools and colleges (including VTOS participants). It found that:

- ❑ 80% of participants choose the *course* first, with 20% choosing the *institution* first;
- ❑ 60% wanted guidance both *before* and *after* decision-making;
- ❑ 75% wanted *one-to-one* delivery of a guidance service;
- ❑ over 80% of both participants and providers wanted a *local* service;
- ❑ 44% of participants preferred *weekday evenings*, with a further 24% opting for *weekday mornings* as their preferred time to avail of a guidance service;

- between 55% and 65% of participants were willing to *pay* while the remainder (mainly VTOS participants) said “no” or “unlikely” about their willingness to pay any price;
- when asked to identify the *one* element of guidance that would be most helpful to them, participants gave *information* in the form of booklets on course content and, to a lesser extent, on careers as their priority unprompted response. Providers, while agreeing with the participants, also felt that counselling was very important;
- when asked to choose the *most important of five selected elements* (information, assessment, referrals, advice and counselling) participants opted for information (64%), counselling (20%), and advice (10%) while providers identified counselling (35%) and information (45%);
- providers interpreted the preference by participants for information as reflecting a lack of knowledge by them about the guidance function and further, providers felt that vocational and educational guidance cannot be divorced and that both should be made available to participants.

## 2.11 Guidance Outcome Measurement

The outcomes of adult educational guidance may be measured in several ways. From the point of view of the providing institution/agency, it will be considered successful if there is a high rate of participant retention on courses, if concrete results in either jobs or training placements emerge and also if participants gain entry to third-level or further education courses. However, the individual client while achieving success in these placements, views the whole process in a different way by rating intangible benefits very highly such as increased self-confidence, the ability to make more informed decisions, and increased self-respect (Healy 1997).



## 2.12 Ethical Practice Guidelines

CDVEC (City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee) has published a set of *Ethical Practice Guidelines* (CDVEC 1999) for guidance counsellors and psychologists working within the CDVEC which is also be available to other guidance counsellors. The *Guidelines* are designed to give operational expression to a code of ethics and to highlight “duty of care” issues in working with clients. They aim to reduce the risk of liability for negligence or malpractice on the part of the practitioner by adhering to agreed procedures for working with clients. The “practice implications” of the guidelines (e.g. competence and record keeping) will be of interest to all guidance counsellors. Further information available from the Psychological Services, CDVEC, 25 Temple Road, Dublin 6, telephone 01-4971442.

## PART II – DEVELOPING A GUIDANCE PROGRAMME IN VTOS

### 2.13 Introduction

Planning is a crucial part of the work of any organisation. It helps management and staff to clarify the current position of the organisation, identifies where it wants to go and how it is to get there. For guidance to be an effective force in an organisation it is important that it is planned for, taking into account the strengths and limitations of the organisation in terms of its resources and the environment in which it operates. A guidance programme plan should address the following:

- ❑ The rationale for a guidance programme plan;
- ❑ The goals of the guidance programme;
- ❑ How the goals will be achieved;
- ❑ How the achievement of the goals will be determined.

The earlier sections of this section outlined a definition of guidance for the purposes of VTOS, guidance roles within VTOS, and the key educational guidance stages for adults returning to learning on VTOS. These will assist in establishing the needs of VTOS participants and how the guidance programme plan can meet these needs.

### 2.14 What is Guidance Programme Planning?

A guidance programme plan is a plan that describes how a VTOS centre can address the guidance needs of participants. It is an integral part of the centre's educational programme and should form part of the overall plan for a VTOS centre. It is developmental by design and includes sequential activities organised and implemented by staff who have a guidance role. The programme addresses the needs of all participants by helping them to acquire competencies in

educational/vocational and personal development, knowledge of self and others, and in vocational planning and exploration.

A guidance programme addresses the following questions:

- a. What is the rationale of a VTOS centre's guidance provision? (AIMS)
- b. Who are the priority groups (participants, staff) who will benefit from the provision? (TARGET GROUPS)
- c. Which learning outcomes are intended for the target groups? (OBJECTIVES)
- d. How are these learning outcomes to be achieved? (GUIDANCE LEARNING ACTIVITIES)
- e. What resources are available to support the learning outcomes? (RESOURCES)
- f. What the important deadlines that need to be considered in planning the programme? (MILESTONES)
- g. How are the achievement of learning outcomes assessed? (REVIEW)

**a. Aims**

The rationale for a centre's guidance programme can be derived from a variety of sources, contexts and persons, for example:

- ❑ The definition of guidance, roles in guidance and the key educational guidance stages for adults returning to learning on VTOS as outlined in the previous section of this chapter;
- ❑ The current guidance provision;
- ❑ *Learning for Life: A White Paper on Adult Education* (Department of Education and Science 2000);
- ❑ The centre's mission statement, vision and fundamental aims as per development plan;
- ❑ The specific social and economic environment in which the centre operates which influences the life choices of participants;

- The views of stakeholders (co-ordinators, tutors, participants, guidance counsellors, DES, social welfare system, employers);
- The demands of the local/regional, national, social and economic environments.

Broadly the main aims of AEG in VTOS (determined from the above sources) include:

Helping the participant to:

- i. manage the transition to learning;
- ii. manage learning;
- iii. progress from programme to work, training and/or further education.

Other aims can be determined by examining each of the above sources in more detail.

## **b. Target Groups**

In VTOS the target group is adults who wish to return to learning with a view to employment or further education. Choices need to be made around resources available for guidance provision in each centre and what the guidance priorities are for the target group. These choices can be assisted through examining the aims of the guidance programme for the group(s).

## **c. Objectives**

The next step is to translate the needs of guidance in a particular setting into a number of objectives. In setting objectives the centre must take into account what is possible within existing available resources.

Objectives are participant-centred and make explicit the purpose of the guidance programme. They also act as criteria against which the accomplishment of objectives may be judged. Objectives can be

categorised into knowledge, skills and attitudes. In general, learning objectives include competencies such as to understand, identify, acquire, demonstrate, become aware, know, develop, compare and contrast, etc. There are usually a number of objectives related to each aim.

Objectives should be:

- ❑ Realistic;
- ❑ Clear;
- ❑ Specific;
- ❑ Timed;
- ❑ As concrete as possible;
- ❑ Measurable;
- ❑ Achievable.

For example, objectives in relation to 'knowing about stress' could be:

- i. Participants will be able to outline in class the symptoms of stress;
- ii. Participants will be able to discuss with peers how they cope with stress.

#### **d. Guidance Learning Activities**

Learning activities describe how the objectives are to be achieved.

Examples of guidance learning activities include:

- ❑ Individual counselling;
- ❑ Group counselling;
- ❑ Classroom activities (presentations, video, computer, role play, discussion);
- ❑ Using ICT (software, internet);
- ❑ Work visits;
- ❑ Work shadowing;

- ❑ Work experience;
- ❑ Test activities;
- ❑ Writing a career plan;
- ❑ Careers library research;
- ❑ Consultation with staff;
- ❑ Consultation with external experts.

#### e. Resources

Resources describe the personnel, equipment, materials, physical locations and finance required for the performance of the learning activities and the management of the guidance programme. These include:

- ❑ VTOS co-ordinator;
- ❑ Tutors;
- ❑ Guidance counsellor;
- ❑ Administrative staff;
- ❑ VEC Psychological Service;
- ❑ Adult learners;
- ❑ Classroom;
- ❑ Printed, software, video, test materials;
- ❑ ICT, video;
- ❑ Community (workplace, referral, etc).

#### f. Milestones

A timeframe needs to be established for the development of the programme and for its review. The programme components outlined above require a significant time input by VTOS staff and the development of a guidance programme for VTOS for the first time would take approximately one year to complete (refer to Table 1, page 19).

### **g. Review**

Review is a very important part of the guidance programme. It examines how well the objectives of the programme plan have been achieved. A review requires the collection of evidence to demonstrate whether the goals or objectives of the programme plan have been met. In relation to staff with guidance roles in VTOS, there is a need to know: (i) the extent to which the learning objectives have been achieved, (ii) the factors that facilitated or hindered that achievement, and (iii) to identify unplanned outcomes, unmet needs, and possibly new/emerging target groups. This will help the centre in forward planning so that the guidance programme plan remains relevant to the needs of its target group. There are different ways in which the review may be undertaken:

- ❑ Soliciting the views of centre participants;
- ❑ Development of a summary report of programme activity with a critical analysis by staff with a guidance role;
- ❑ Follow-up or tracking studies of the target group.

The review should be an on-going activity on an informal basis and an annual activity on a formal basis.

If after conducting a review it is found that some objectives have not been achieved some of the following questions could be asked:

- ❑ Was the objective reasonable?
- ❑ Was the time frame allowed for the objective reasonable?
- ❑ Was the learning activity appropriate?

Once the source of the difficulty has been determined a number of actions can be taken:

If the objective was unreasonable:

- ❑ Change the action plan to make it reasonable;

- ❑ Abandon that particular objective if no change of action plan will make it reasonable.

If the objective was reasonable and other factors were identified:

- ❑ Introduce alternative learning activities;
- ❑ Allow a longer time frame for meeting the objective.



**TABLE ONE:** INDICATIVE TIMEFRAME FOR STAGES OF THE FIRST TIME DEVELOPMENT OF A VTOS GUIDANCE PROGRAMME

STAGES OF GUIDANCE PLAN	YEAR 1			YEAR 2		
	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
1. Developing Rationale / Aims	✓					
2. Target Groups	✓					✓
3. Developing Learning Objectives	✓	✓	✓			✓
4. Developing Learning Activities		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5. Identification of Resources		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6. Review				✓	✓	✓

Some of the activities overlap in the timeframe and some are continuous during the timeframe. The pace at which the programme develops depends on the management and staff time available and their commitment to its achievement.

## 2.15 Benefits of a Guidance Programme

There are many benefits to planning a VTOS guidance programme. A guidance programme is not a series of random events and activities. It is a statement of aims, objectives, and desired outcomes for participants and staff of an organisation accompanied by a description of the guidance learning activities and the resources required to deliver these activities. There is a review mechanism to ensure that the programme continues to be relevant to its target group, to identify changing circumstances both inside and outside the centre that may change the objectives of the programme, and to identify resource needs to assist the adaptation to change.

The benefits of guidance programme planning include:

- Allowing the centre to identify and target priorities;
- Giving direction to the purpose of the guidance provision;
- Enabling all parties to identify how the aims and objectives of the guidance programme support the overall aims and objectives of the VTOS programme;
- Allowing staff working in guidance to respond to changes and developments both inside and outside the centre;
- Giving ownership of the programme to all the parties concerned;
- Enabling the centre to review its progress in relation to the aims and objectives it has set out.

Guidance programme planning:

- Facilitates a greater understanding of the various roles all VTOS staff have to play in the guidance programme;
- Permits the identification of the guidance needs of participants on VTOS.

## 2.16 Starting the Guidance Programme Planning Process

This section will examine the considerations that need to be taken into account in starting the guidance programme planning process in a VTOS centre. The initiator

of the planning process will vary from one VTOS location to another depending on the staffing of the programme.

**a. Involving Staff**

Whether it is the VTOS co-ordinator or the guidance counsellor or both who start the planning process involving all staff is very important as it is crucial to the success of the plan. Involving staff such as tutors, administrators and services staff, all of whom have a role to play in the guidance process, ensures their participation and support and it reduces the possibilities of the guidance programme being marginalised. All staff can help to generate ideas, support the implementation of the plan and have skills to offer which are crucial to the success of the programme. Groups made up of various staff members to generate ideas can be convened to discuss the guidance programme plan and how it fits into the overall function of the VTOS centre.

**b. Establishing Needs, Priorities and Roles in the Guidance Programme**

Establishing needs and priorities in the guidance programme is an essential part of planning. Answers to questions in relation to how the needs and priorities of the programme are established and by whom, are needed in order to commence planning.

A needs assessment allows for the difference between the current and desired status of the guidance service to be clarified. It provides a technique by which the discrepancies between what is and what ought to be can be identified. Forming a group to discuss the guidance programme plan as mentioned above can be a first step in establishing the needs, priorities and roles in the guidance programme. Other methods of establishing the guidance needs of participants include:

- ❑ Asking the participants themselves;
- ❑ Asking centre partners – employers, VEC psychological support service;

- ❑ Asking past participants of VTOS;
- ❑ Review of data from existing participant records;
- ❑ Review of research in relation to the needs of participants returning to education/vocational training;
- ❑ Review of research and theories on life span development to gain an understanding of the needs and developmental stage of the young adult.

The *needs assessment* can be conducted by interview (time consuming but allows for the in-depth collection of information), questionnaire and focus groups.

At this stage it is important to consider the current guidance provision in the centre. A SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) can be a useful method of reviewing the current guidance provision in a centre. It summarises both the internal and external position of an organisation. It helps to identify the factors that contribute to the achievement of the organisation's work and also to identify possible blocks or obstacles to the work. Strengths and weaknesses are primarily within the organisation (presently) and opportunities and threats are primarily outside the organisation and concern the future.

<b>SWOT ANALYSIS OF GUIDANCE PROVISION</b>	
<b>Strengths</b> - what the guidance service is doing well	<b>Weaknesses</b> - what the guidance service is not doing well
<b>Opportunities</b> - the events that are favourable to the guidance service	<b>Threats</b> - the events that will present challenges to the guidance service

Once the guidance needs and factors affecting provision within the centre have been identified it is important to prioritise the needs that are going to be addressed, how and by whom. Prioritising is a value judgement made by the centre in terms of its overall mission, the needs identified, the resources available, and the local, national, social and economic environments in which the centre operates.

### c. Moving the Plan Onwards

When the programme is drafted it is suggested that it be circulated to staff for comment. The programme can then be refined and presented to the overall staff.

### d. Review cycle

The guidance programme needs to be updated annually and reviewed every two/three years. The need to redesign the guidance programme may become evident from the results of reviews and from changing social and economic conditions. Thus, the plan may need to be redefined in terms of additional

needs and new priorities. It may become evident through reviews that certain guidance learning activities are more effective than others or that outcomes have become redundant through the passage of time.

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## **SECTION 3**

# **ENCOURAGING ADULTS TO JOIN VTOS**

## SECTION 3

### ENCOURAGING ADULTS TO JOIN VTOS

#### OVERVIEW

This section describes general recruitment approaches to attract adults to join a VTOS programme. It gives ideas on how to reach specific groups e.g. Community Employment participants, persons with disabilities, refugees, ex-offenders. The most frequently asked questions at the recruitment stage of VTOS are outlined.

#### 3.1 General Recruitment Approaches

Reaching out to adults who have been out of the education system for an extended period, who may be demoralised by unemployment and other life experiences, who may have had negative memories of their initial education and training and who may have literacy challenges, requires sensitivity and skills. No one approach works in isolation. A multiplicity of outreach and recruitment activities is required. To date, approaches and activities in relation to attracting adults to VTOS include the following:

##### a. Word of Mouth

VTOS co-ordinators report that one of the most successful approaches to recruiting participants is word of mouth. Existing and past participants who have participated in a VTOS course and have had a good personal, academic and vocational experience are a very powerful advertisement for a VTOS centre. Much activity under this heading happens unconsciously and in an

unstructured way, but a number of co-ordinators have engaged current and past participants in a structured, systematic way to reach would-be participants through radio broadcasts, newspaper features, 'tell-a-friend' activities, and open days.

### **b Signage**

Many VTOS centres use good quality, attractive signs to enhance their local profile and to advertise what they have on offer under the VTOS programme.

### **c Brochures**

Good brochures and posters for distribution in public places are essential.

Many centres supplement the brochures developed centrally by the DES by brochures or leaflets highlighting the particular learning activities on offer in their own VTOS centre. Public information points are invaluable in places such as the local post office, library, health centres, women's groups, outreach centres, shopping centres/local pubs, shops, Garda stations, schools, colleges, adult education centres, resource centres, youth information centres, FÁS offices, Citizens' Information Centres, church doors and especially the local social welfare offices where unemployed people are signing on.

Brochures/leaflets should be placed in all these public places.

**d Leaflet Drops**

Some co-ordinators use the special service offered by An Post to deliver brochures/leaflets to houses in identified areas in a city, town, village or rural area. Others piggyback on milk/newspaper deliveries. Others have been assisted by existing participants to make leaflet drops in their home areas.

**e Information Stands**

Many co-ordinators erect an information stand in social welfare office and/or local shopping centres for a number of weeks in spring - usually after Easter and again in August/September. Many have also found that staffing an information stand at career exhibitions, education roadshows, school and college open days or, indeed, any local exhibition, has reached new audiences.

**f Media**

The local media are used effectively in the majority of VEC areas. Newspaper articles, features, regular columns, letters to the editor, radio interviews, regular slots on radio are often used in tandem with awards ceremonies, brochure/leaflet drops, exhibition stands and radio and newspaper advertisements. Local radio reaches a wide audience and literacy levels are not a major factor in the communication.

### **g Open Days**

A number of VTOS co-ordinators have run very successful open days in tandem with local radio and newspaper advertisements and features. The current VTOS participants are actively involved in setting up the days and they act as hosts, presenters, speakers for information sessions, radio interviews and centre/school-based exhibitions.

### **h Educational Directories/Literature**

**VTOS courses should be included in any local educational and other directories published in an area.** The possibility of taking display advertisements in such directories should be explored. VTOS should feature in literature directed at the general public from the local VEC, adult education organisers, local resource centres for the unemployed, local trade union branches, INOU (Irish National Organisation for the Unemployed), Aontas (National Association for Adult Education), National Social Services Board, local authorities, Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs (DSCFA), National Adult Literacy Association (NALA), Teagasc, FÁS, Irish Farmers' Association (IFA), teaching organisations.

### **i Taster Courses**

Some VECs provide short-term taster courses, from one to three months' duration, in spring/early summer so that those considering a return to education can sample a range of learning activities, generally on a part-time

basis. The intention is to enable a prospective VTOS participant to experience a return to learning in a relaxed setting without the pressures of full-time attendance and a final commitment to participate in a course. The taster course should also assist the prospective participant in deciding what courses/learning activities s/he would like to pursue on a VTOS or, possibly, other course. The most successful taster courses combine practical, academic, personal development and guidance activities with a view to maximising the effectiveness of the taster course in terms of the participant arriving at decisions about returning to learning.

In the absence of a guidance counsellor in a centre guidance is generally provided by the VTOS co-ordinator and tutors in taster courses. It has a key role to play in such courses in relation to analysis of the learning needs of the participant, and the participant's decision making about options for future learning on a VTOS or other course.

## **j Redundancy Situations**

In a number of areas VTOS co-ordinators have approached the human resources managers in companies where redundancies are about to happen with a view to offering learning opportunities on a VTOS course. In the mid-90s, in the case of a number of high profile redundancy situations, the DES in co-operation with the then Department of Social Welfare (DSW) waived the six month qualifying period for entry to a VTOS course and enabled workers who

had been made redundant to join a VTOS course immediately they registered with the local social welfare office.

#### **k Links to Local Education and Training Activities**

Making strong links to local education and training activities in which VTOS-eligible people may participate is a useful approach to recruitment. A number of VTOS co-ordinators use opportunities presented by workshops, class inputs, talks, presentations, question and answer sessions to reach out to people in local part-time and full-time learning activities provided by the range of local agencies, women's groups, literacy schemes, FÁS-run Community Employment schemes, home-school-community liaison networks. Some co-ordinators provide joint information sessions with the local branch of the Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC), Youth Information Centres and Citizens' Information Centres.

### **3.2 Reaching the Hard-to-Reach through VTOS**

Certain groups of adults have not, to date, participated to any great extent in VTOS although they are eligible to do so. Many centres find the gender balance on the VTOS courses very different to the initial start-ups of 1989 when two-thirds of participants were male. In 2001 the reverse is the situation, and two-thirds of participants are female. There is concern at national level and in VTOS centres that the number of men on VTOS courses, particularly older men, is declining. Another concern is the fact that the pre-course education levels of VTOS participants have



been rising, with the number of participants who already have a Leaving Certificate or higher qualification on entry in 2000-2001 standing at 27% in core groups and 48% among participants in dispersed mode.

A further concern is the number of VTOS eligible people who do not progress to VTOS from:

- ❑ basic education as provided by the VEC literacy schemes throughout the country;
- ❑ FÁS Community Employment schemes where participants could benefit from further education and training;
- ❑ part-time community-based provision.

However many VTOS eligible people will not be in a structured education or training activity. These groups include:

- ❑ people who have been unemployed for an extended period;
- ❑ people who have never been in employment;
- ❑ people with personal difficulties, such as low self-esteem;
- ❑ people with a physical and/or sensory disability;
- ❑ people with a learning disability;
- ❑ people with mental health challenges;
- ❑ people with low levels of initial education;
- ❑ people with poor experiences of initial education;
- ❑ people with literacy challenges;
- ❑ refugees;

- ❑ ex-offenders;
- ❑ people with or recovering from, addictions.

Research (McGivney 1996, NALA 1998) indicates that adults in the above groups face many barriers to participation. The barriers include:

- ❑ *Dispositional* : these relate to the attitudes of the adult towards education and training and her/his views of her/himself as a learner. Negative attitudes may arise from prior experiences of education and training and structured learning may be perceived as having no relevance to the adult's life;
- ❑ *Informational* : these relate to the availability of appropriate, understandable information through a range of local and national media. They also relate to the adult's perceptions of the people who make the information available;
- ❑ *Institutional* : these relate to the entry requirements, application procedures, induction procedures, needs analysis procedures, course timing, teaching and learning processes and assessment procedures of the institution and to the learning supports and other supports offered to the learner;
- ❑ *Situational* : these relate to the life situation of the adult and include age, mental and physical health, learning ability, length of initial education and training, literacy levels, position in the labour market, income, location (urban or rural), access to transport, domestic care responsibilities (child or elder care).

At the outreach and recruitment stages in VTOS, the co-ordinator will encounter all of these barriers, *dispositional, informational, institutional and situational*. The tendency on the part of providers is to be aware of the *dispositional* and *situational* barriers and, sometimes, to “blame” the non-participant adult for not participating in a course. However, the barriers are not just participant-related, they are also provider-related in terms of how information about courses is made available to prospective participants and in terms of how accessible what is provided by the institution is for prospective, albeit reluctant participants.

Adults who could but do not, participate in VTOS may be reached in a number of settings and ways. The settings outlined below give an indication of where non-participant adults may be reached and of the agencies who work with them directly.

### 3.2.1 Basic Education/Literacy Courses

*The International Adult Literacy Survey: Results for Ireland* (Morgan et al 1997) showed that approximately 25% of the Irish population, or 500,000 adults aged 16-65, scored at the lowest level of literacy, viz., Level 1. People with Level 1 literacy skills are, at best, able to perform only the simplest reading tasks, which typically require a reader to locate a single piece of information in a text, when there is no distracting information and when the structure of the text assists the search. In comparison, Sweden had 6% and Britain had 21% of the population at Level 1. Age was seen to be a big factor in literacy level, with 17% of those aged 16-25 at Level 1 while in the oldest group surveyed, those aged 55-65 years, it was 44%. Part of the explanation here is that younger age groups are relatively better educated and

have, in general, had longer uninterrupted initial education and training. There were no great differences in the overall levels of literacy between men and women. Individuals who are currently unemployed were more likely to score lower than people in employment and those on higher incomes were also likely to score higher.

Currently there are approximately 17,000 adults participating in the 123 literacy schemes nation-wide, funded by the DES and delivered locally by the VECs. Since September 1998 Adult Literacy Organisers (ALOs) have been employed on a full-time basis by VECs and referral networks have been established on an area basis, involving FÁS, Local Employment Services (LES), Community Employment, Area-Based Partnerships, Social Welfare, health agencies, the Garda, probation services, schools, youth services and information centres.

In the interests of providing progression routes for literacy participants VTOS co-ordinators need to establish good links with the ALOs of the local literacy schemes.

In some cases, VTOS and the local literacy scheme may share the same building.

NALA (National Adult Literacy Agency) is at 78 Lower Gardiner Street, Dublin 1, telephone 01-8554332, fax 01-8555475, email [nala@iol.ie](mailto:nala@iol.ie), web-site <http://www.nala.ie>.

### **3.2.2 Community-Based Education and Training**

Community-based education and training courses have been identified as being successful in reaching the target groups which are not generally reached by

education and training offered in more traditional settings. VTOS co-ordinators and guidance counsellors need to establish strong links with community-based education co-ordinators and tutors through promotion visits, invitations to open days in the VTOS centre, inputs and workshops with the learners in the community, exchanges of tutors, joint activities, community-based VTOS taster/feeder courses.

### **3.2.3 Community Employment Schemes**

Community Employment (CE) Schemes administered by FÁS provided community employment opportunities for 36,000 people by the end of 2001. Many VTOS co-ordinators have made close links with CE schemes in their local area to the extent that vital services are provided in many VTOS centres by community employment workers who also participate in education and training activities in the VTOS centre, as part of the CE scheme. For many of these community employment workers moving on to a VTOS course is seen as an appropriate progression pathway. Where the VTOS co-ordinator does not work so closely with a CE scheme, networking with the manager of the scheme in the local area has enabled the co-ordinator to make valuable links with participants and to present to them the learning options provided by the VTOS programme in the area.

### **3.2.4 Area-Based Partnerships**

In 1992, Area Development Management Limited (ADM) was set up as an independent company designated by the government and the European Commission to support local economic and social development throughout Ireland. ADM funds the 38 local area-based partnerships in the country.

The Area-based Partnerships implement action plans to counter disadvantage in their areas. The partnerships are comprised of the social partners, the statutory agencies, public representatives and the voluntary and community sector. ADM also provides funding for community childcare projects under the Pilot Childcare Initiative of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. Each Area-based Partnership Company has an education co-ordinator with a role to support education and training at all levels for marginalised groups in the area through working with existing providers and through the identification of gaps in provision which existing providers or the Area-based Partnership might fill.

The education co-ordinator is a key person with whom the VTOS co-ordinator needs to establish a good working relationship. The education co-ordinator will have links with the most marginalised in an area and will be able to assist the VTOS co-ordinator in making appropriate responses to their education and training needs through possible adaptation and development of the existing VTOS provision.

Contact ADM for a list of Area-based Partnership Companies and Education Co-ordinators. ADM is located at Holbrook House, Holles Street, Dublin 2, telephone 01-2400700, fax 01-6610411, website <http://www.adm.ie>.

### 3.2.5 People with Disabilities

Approximately 616 people in receipt of a disability payment were participating in VTOS in January 2001. The Report of the Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities – *A Strategy for Equality* published in 1996, established that there were 360,000 people, or approximately ten percent of the population, with a disability in Ireland. Of this number, 27,000 (7.5%) have a learning disability. There are some 60 organisations (some of whom have several branches) providing a wide range of day services for adults and children with a learning disability. These organisations aim to provide real opportunities for learning and development for people with a disability and ultimately to facilitate each person to realise her/his full potential and to participate fully in her/his own community.

At present FÁS is extending and developing its provision to include persons with disabilities as certain responsibilities under the *NRB* (National Rehabilitation Board) have been passed to FÁS since April 2000. FÁS now provides a career guidance and job-seeking service, operates employment supports, manages labour market programmes and services for people with disabilities.

To improve VTOS provision for people with disabilities the VTOS co-ordinator needs to establish contact with agencies and organisations that work with people with disabilities in their local area.

### 3.2.6 Refugees/Asylum Seekers

The number of asylum seekers in 1997 was 3883 rising to 4626 in 1998 and 10,938 in 2000. Nigerians and Romanians together make up more than half the applications up to the year 2000 (Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform 2001).

Once a person is registered as a refugee, s/he can apply for a VTOS course if s/he meets the usual eligibility criteria. An asylum seeker waiting for a decision on her/his application to be granted refugee status is not eligible to join a VTOS course.

There is a range of agencies working with refugees and asylum seekers in Ireland. Various voluntary organisations provide language classes in addition to legal advice and support services. If a VTOS co-ordinator wishes to support refugees and those who have been granted asylum on a VTOS course, s/he may wish to make contact with one or more of the agencies/organisations working with refugees. The various agencies working with refugees and asylum seekers can be found in Appendix 3.2.6.

### 3.2.7 Ex-Offenders

It is possible for prisoners to take various courses and examinations while in prison. This education service is co-ordinated by the local VEC in whose area the prison is located. Courses may be on personal development, practical subjects, basic education or academic subjects. Certification ranges from Junior Certificate,



Leaving Certificate, NCVA/FETAC awards (especially Foundation and Level 1), City & Guilds and RSA (Royal Society of Arts) awards to Open University certificates, diplomas and degrees.

Many of the VEC personnel (approximately 165 whole-time equivalent teachers) who work in the prison education service also work in centres that provide personal development, education and training for prisoners on release. Therefore, prisoners often have contact with the same education and training personnel *before* and *after* release, a factor that greatly facilitates their continuing with structured learning. In the first few months after release, this support is vital in providing guidance for the ex-offender. VTOS co-ordinators should make links with VEC and other personnel who work with prisoners and ex-offenders with a view to enabling them to access a VTOS course or a VTOS taster course on their release. Time in prison is counted as part of the six month eligibility period for entry to VTOS.

Examples of post-release projects/courses can be found in the Appendix 3.2.7.

### **3.2.8 Older Men**

Some VTOS centres have reached older men through pubs, sports clubs, community centres, community clubs, calling at homes. Some VTOS co-ordinators have run pre-VTOS courses on an outreach basis to involve older men in structured learning. The content and processes of such courses have to be specifically tailored to the needs of the target groups. Information technology courses appear to be almost universally popular.

### 3.3 Most Frequently Asked Questions in relation to VTOS at the Recruitment Stage

The most frequently asked questions by VTOS applicants at the Recruitment Stage are presented below.

#### General Questions

- ❑ What is VTOS?
- ❑ Who is eligible for it?
- ❑ How do I qualify for it?
- ❑ Is there any way around it if I don't meet all the requirements?
- ❑ What makes VTOS different from other programmes under the Back to Education Allowance?

#### Questions in relation to Financial Matters

- ❑ The most important thing for me is financial help. Can I afford to go on VTOS?
- ❑ How much will it cost?
- ❑ What assistance am I entitled to?
- ❑ Who will look after my child while I am on the course?
- ❑ Is there any form of financial assistance to help pay towards crèche/child minder facilities?
- ❑ Is there a crèche at the VTOS centre?
- ❑ Can I still hold on to my medical card?
- ❑ Can I get assistance to buy the books and materials that I need for VTOS?

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- ❑ Can I get a maintenance grant while on VTOS?
  - ❑ If I am living in rented accommodation will I be entitled to rent allowance?
  - ❑ If I'm on a VTOS programme can I still work while on this?
  - ❑ Is there a limit on the amount of money I can make with a job while on the course?
  - ❑ Do I keep all my secondary benefits?
  - ❑ Can I hold on to my Lone Parents Allowance?
  - ❑ Will I get any money during the holidays?
  - ❑ Will I be taxed on the money from a job?
  - ❑ Will there be tax on my allowances if I work?
  - ❑ Can I get someone to help me with budgeting for the year?
  - ❑ Will I be entitled to a travel allowance?

### **Questions in relation to Personal Matters**

- ❑ How will going back to education benefit me?
- ❑ Who will look after my child?
- ❑ Is there a crèche or childminding facilities at the VTOS centre?
- ❑ How long is the course - what hours do I have to be there each day?
- ❑ Will there be anybody of my own age on the course, or will they just be out of school?
- ❑ I never liked school so will I like the VTOS course?
- ❑ What happens if I don't fit in, who can I go to?

### Questions in relation to Educational Matters

- ❑ Where do I go to find out about courses?
- ❑ I can't read, is there any point?
- ❑ When do I apply to get on VTOS?
- ❑ Are there many forms to fill in?
- ❑ What is a mature student? What does that mean? What age requirements are there?
- ❑ How do I choose a course that is suitable for me?
- ❑ I don't understand the difference between PLC courses and other qualifications - what are they?
- ❑ Can I get a qualification if I do a part-time course?
- ❑ Do I need to know computers?
- ❑ How do I link to other courses?
- ❑ What is the difference between certificates, diplomas and degrees?
- ❑ If I can't manage the study, can I get help?
- ❑ What happens if I choose the wrong course, and want to change courses?
- ❑ What kind of a person do I need to be for that course?
- ❑ Are there any special qualities I need for that course?
- ❑ Will there be exams? Do I have to pay for them?
- ❑ How many people will be on the course?
- ❑ Will there be a lot of homework?
- ❑ Do I have to attend everyday?

### 3.4 Guidance at the Recruitment Stage

The focus of guidance at this stage is mainly providing information and support to address the concerns and sometimes fears of the potential learner, and to provide responses to these through describing the benefits that previous learners gained from participation in the programme. A good knowledge of the destinations of previous participants and of the difficulties they had to overcome is very useful in this respect. Some of the guidance given may result in potential learners seeking immediate solutions other than VTOS participation. It is essential that the guidance provided is impartial and that the potential learner's needs are paramount, rather than the needs of the centre.

It may be useful to refer potential participants to the *VTOSpells Success* publication.

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## APPENDIX 3.2.6 AGENCIES/ORGANISATIONS WORKING WITH REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

### **The Refugee Agency**

9 Marlborough Court

Marlborough Street

Dublin 1

Tel: 01-8787200 Fax: 01-8787232

**Role** - co-ordinates arrangements for the admission, reception and resettlement of refugees admitted to Ireland under specific Government decisions.

### **Access Ireland** (Refugee Social Integration Project)

Richmond Business Campus

North Brunswick Street

Dublin 7

Tel: 01-8780590 Fax : 01-8780591.

**Role** - promotes the integration of refugees into Irish society so that their positive contribution to life in Ireland is identified.

### **The Association of Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Ireland**

1 The Mews

213 North Circular Road

Dublin 7

**Role** - to defend the human rights of all refugees, rally Irish public opinion in favour of the rights of refugees.

### **The Refugee Applications Centre**

Timberley House

79/83 Lower Mount Street

Dublin 2

Tel: 01-6028000

**Role** - houses the Asylum Section of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Eastern Health Board's Refugee Unit, and the UNHCR office.



**Interact Ireland**

Language and Training Project  
Richmond Business Campus  
North Brunswick Street  
Dublin 7  
Tel: 01-8072400

**Role** - to promote the integration of refugees into Irish society through the development and provision of language training programmes to meet vocational and community needs.

**Irish Refugee Council**

40 Lower Dominick Street  
Dublin 1  
Tel: 01-8730042  
Fax: 01-8730088  
22026  
E-mail: [refugee@iol.ie](mailto:refugee@iol.ie).

35/36 Arran Quay  
Dublin 7  
Tel: 01-8724424  
Fax: 01-8724411

1 Bank Place  
Ennis  
Co. Clare  
Tel/Fax: 065-

**Role** - acts as an advocacy body for asylum seekers and provides practical support such as referral and educational services and free legal advice service to asylum seekers. It also hosts a collection of specialist documentation on various issues concerning asylum seekers, refugees and human rights in Ireland, Europe and overseas. It provides information to the media, NGOs, student and youth organisations, and the academic community.

**UNHCR Refugee Applications Centre**

Timberley House  
79/83 Lower Mount Street  
Dublin 2  
Tel: 01-6028181

**Role** – internationally entrusted with protecting refugees and promoting durable solutions to their problems. Provides protection and assistance to groups of refugees fleeing combinations of persecution, conflict and widespread violations of human rights. In Ireland, ongoing training and support is provided to officials of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. Some limited financial support is provided to the Irish Refugee Council.

**The Vincentian Refugee Centre**

St. Peter's Church  
Phibsboro  
Dublin 7  
Tel: 01-8389708

**Role** - works mainly with asylum seekers, providing English language classes, a drop-in centre (since January 1999), and advice and assistance. The service also provides speakers from the refugee community for local schools and community groups.

**The Refugee Information Service**

10 Arran Quay Terrace  
Smithfield  
Dublin 7  
Tel: 01-8786442

**Role** - an advice and information service based on the community information services' model for the refugee and asylum-seeking community.

**The Eastern Health Board Refugee Unit**

Timberley House  
79/83 Lower Mount Street  
Dublin 2  
Tel: 01-6028000

**Role** - provides income support and emergency accommodation and assist with application for medical cards for newly-arrived asylum seekers. There is also a GP service, a health screening service and a psychological service provided.

**Refugee Trust**

4 Dublin Road  
Stillorgan  
Co. Dublin  
Tel: 01-2834256 Fax: 01-2835155

**Role** - a non-governmental agency for the relief of hardship. It promotes and co-ordinates research into programmes for refugees. Projects have been run in Bosnia, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Turkey, Rwanda and the Sudan.

## **SECTION 3.2.7.....AGENCIES/ORGANISATIONS FOR EX-OFFENDERS**

### **The Pathways Project**

1a Parnell Court  
Granby Row  
Dublin 1  
Tel: 01-8726499 Fax: 01-8726194  
Email: [pproject@iol.ie](mailto:pproject@iol.ie)

**Role** - co-ordinated by the City of Dublin VEC is a post-release centre for ex-offenders which offers them support, information, guidance and counselling on employment, training and education courses and provides information and advice on accommodation and social welfare. There is a wide variety of classes at the centre which help participants to prepare for employment or training, increase their skill levels, gain confidence and enhance their self esteem.

### **The Dillon's Cross Project**

St. Joseph's Hall  
Dillon's Cross  
Cork  
Tel: 021-503237 Fax : 021-503279  
E-mail: [cpreduc@iol.ie](mailto:cpreduc@iol.ie).

**Role** - the project aims to enable ex-prisoners integrate into society by bridging the initial gap on release. A number of courses and services are provided to them to enable them to integrate into society.

### **FÁS**

FAS D'Olier Street  
Dublin 2  
Tel: 01-6124852/4800 Fax: 01-6798240.

**Role** - offers the services of a liaison officer for ex-prisoners. Generally, the officer works with prisoners pre-release and assesses their needs and aptitudes through the education unit in the prison.

**The P.A.C.E. Project**

Care and Education of Offenders  
7 Upper Leeson Street  
Dublin 4

Tel: 01-6602870

.A.C.E. Prisoners' Aid  
Priorswood  
lonshaugh Road  
Dublin 5  
el: 01-8474296.

**Role** - is a voluntary organisation which runs probation projects for the care, education and training of prisoners. It liaises with the Probation and Welfare Service, FÁS and the City of Dublin VEC.

**The Bridge Project**

Probation & Welfare Service  
Smithfield Chambers  
Smithfield  
Dublin 7

Tel: 01-8733722

Probation & Welfare Service  
125 Parnell Street  
Dublin 1

Tel: 01-8780901.

**Role** - a community-based sanction available to the courts for dealing with serious offenders. It is an alternative to custody and those attending may be facing a charge or on probation. The project is aimed at young adult male offenders in the age group between 17 - 26 years. To date, over 70% of offenders on the Bridge Project have stopped offending.

**The Educational Trust**

1a Parnell Ct  
Granby Row  
Dublin 1  
Tel: 01-8721576

**Role** - to help recently released paramilitary prisoners complete their education and enter the workforce. It aims to provide former republican prisoners living in cities and near the border with grants to pay for education and training. A similar trust now operates in Northern Ireland and both groups share resources and some personnel. Funding is mainly coming from the EU Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation (SPPR)

## **SECTION 4**

# **THE INDUCTION STAGE OF VTOS**

## SECTION 4

### THE INDUCTION STAGE OF VTOS

#### *OVERVIEW*

This section is closely linked to Section 3 as some of its content may be relevant to the recruitment stage. Induction training concerns the general type of information and support required by learners in the first weeks of the VTOS programme. This includes: basic information on financial considerations, the learning options available, e.g. Junior Certificate, Leaving Certificate, Post-Leaving Certificate, codes of behaviour and practice, learner agreement, participant registration and record keeping.

#### **4.1 What is the induction stage of VTOS?**

Induction concerns the early information and support needs of adult learners who are just joining the VTOS programme. Induction training should be group based with a facility for individual discussion. The development of a reference booklet outlining participants' options, rights and responsibilities will greatly assist the induction process.

#### **4.2 Who is the VTOS Participant?**

The single biggest step an adult returning to learning may take is to come through the door of the VTOS centre in the first place. S/he may have been out of work and out of education for a good deal of time and may be unfamiliar with courses, certification and career paths. S/he will bring a lifetime's experience of living and not just employment, training or educational needs. Many adults returning to learning on a VTOS programme will have family commitments. All will have complex guidance needs.

The status passage involved in making the transition to being a mature student will present a big challenge for most adults entering VTOS. They may have to overcome old fears of schooling and of learning. They will have to become familiar with the culture and practices of the VTOS centre. They will have to adapt to the constant presence of the other participants on VTOS. They may encounter financial difficulties. Deciding between learning options may be challenging. Balancing the demands of family and friends with the demands arising from being a mature student may prove stressful. Women, especially, still have to juggle the priorities of family life and that of education. Men appear to be better able to segregate home and study and to devote themselves more single-mindedly to their education and this includes both their social and academic lives (Maynard and Pearsall 1994). Because women are pulled, or are willing to allow themselves to be pulled, in so many directions, they juggle their various roles as best they can - that of worker, learner, parent, partner, friend and homemaker (Redding and Dowling 1992).

Some co-ordinators have included open sessions or discussions for VTOS participants as part of the course work to deal with such issues as relationships with partners, children and all other relevant persons involved; parenting tips and basic skills on coping with children; time management as it affects course work and home issues. In many cases responses and possible solutions have been found within the group itself.

The impact of unemployment on spouses and partners, lone parents, families (especially children), neighbours and the community generally, must be kept in mind at the induction stage of VTOS. All of these issues have implications for the adult returning to learning on VTOS courses.

### **4.3 Goals of Adults Returning to Learning on a VTOS Course**

The majority of those who return to learning on a VTOS course wish to raise their education levels and develop vocational skills with a view to getting employment

directly or going on to further or higher education before going into employment. A small number of applicants see education as an end in itself and see VTOS as a means of getting the educational qualifications they missed out on in their initial education.

For an insight into the minds and hearts of adults returning to learning, two publications stand out. *VTOSpells Success* (Keogh and Downes 1998) is a collection of profiles/stories which are “living documentaries of ordinary people undergoing an extraordinary experience of self-transformation, self-discovery and personal fulfilment through returning to formal learning as adults”. These stories provide an insight into the impact of VTOS on the lives of unemployed people. They are not just stories of academic learning and achievement - they celebrate many other aspects of the VTOS courses - cultural and sporting activities; personal development, and development of talents and self-esteem. In short, they are a celebration of life lived to the full after years of exclusion.

*A Degree at Last* (Martin and O'Neill 1996) published by Aontas in celebration of the *Year of Lifelong Learning* contains 12 stories of choice, challenge and change, for mature students.

Clear, specific information on the VTOS centre arrangements needs to be given, preferably in a booklet, to participants, on the first day in relation to the following key financial matters:

- ❑ social welfare payments;
- ❑ transition from social welfare to training allowances;
- ❑ any additional training allowances;
- ❑ meals and travel allowance and any travel arrangements made by the VTOS centre for participants;
- ❑ supplementary benefits;
- ❑ rent allowance;



- ❑ how and when payments will be made to students;
- ❑ childcare provision and/or funding;
- ❑ books and materials;
- ❑ examination fees;
- ❑ funding of extra-curricular activities;
- ❑ financial penalties, if any, to be incurred through lack of attendance at the VTOS centre.

Given prospective participants' understandable fears about loss of income, it is vital that the above information be presented in the booklet in a clear, easy-to-understand way, that the information is gone through with the participant on an individual basis or as part of a group induction and that participants are afforded an opportunity of clarifying issues arising.

The booklet should also contain information on the following:

- ❑ Co-ordinator's name, location and telephone number/extension;
- ❑ Names of tutor staff members and the areas/subjects they teach;
- ❑ Names of administrative staff members and their areas of responsibility;
- ❑ Names of services staff and their areas of responsibility.

Information should also be presented, in the same booklet on the following matters:

- ❑ transferring to VTOS e.g. social welfare etc;
- ❑ office hours;
- ❑ course attendance requirements;
- ❑ arrangements for notification of absences;
- ❑ book and materials management requirements;
- ❑ student support arrangements;
- ❑ childcare arrangements;
- ❑ study support arrangements;
- ❑ arrangements for other supports – guidance, referral etc;

- ❑ library facilities and services;
- ❑ canteen facilities, if available;
- ❑ student cards/personal number;
- ❑ centre regulations in relation to parking;
- ❑ centre regulations in relation to smoking;
- ❑ complaints procedures;
- ❑ appeals procedures.

Information should also be presented on the following:

- ❑ code of practice in relation to general computer usage – floppy disks, computer games, viruses' etc;
- ❑ code of practice in relation to Internet and email usage;
- ❑ code of practice in relation to usage of centre equipment and resources in general.

While the booklet will be given to participants in the first days of attendance at the centre, it is essential that the co-ordinator and tutors work through it with participants over an extended induction period.

#### **4.4 Records**

A VTOS centre should keep good participant records, with a paper-based or electronic record for each participant containing her/his application form, social welfare details, registration form, general documentation and academic records. In general, the initial application form should be as simple as is consistent with getting the necessary basic information to enable the co-ordinator to follow-up the applicant, as a detailed application form may discourage people with literacy challenges.

The returns required by the DES and other agencies in relation to the overall VTOS group in a VEC area will indicate the kinds of information that should be collected in the registration form, viz.,

- ❑ gender;
- ❑ age;
- ❑ social welfare status;
- ❑ length of time on social welfare payment or signing for credits;
- ❑ education and training level on entry to VTOS;
- ❑ reasons for joining VTOS;
- ❑ personal goals;
- ❑ academic goals;
- ❑ vocational goals;
- ❑ proposed course of study;
- ❑ fears, if any.

This material will also be useful for monitoring and helping participants, reviewing their progress and as a research tool to be used to help future participants. A copy of a sample application form and learner agreement, can be found in Appendices 4.

#### 4.5 Learning Options for VTOS participants

**VTOS participants choose from a range of learning options that are determined by the size, location of the VTOS centre and the specialist skills and particular interests of the VTOS staff. A participant may choose to follow a particular course or to put together their own particular package from a range of courses. The following certificates are available in the majority of VTOS centres.**

##### 4.5.1 Foundation Level

Many VTOS centres provide learners with opportunities at Foundation Level (certified by the NCVA/FETAC up to 2001) across a range of areas including communications, personal development, practical work, information technology etc.

##### 4.5.2 Junior Certificate

There is a broad range of subjects (29) available at Junior Certificate. Most subjects are taken at a common level but it is possible to take Irish, English and Maths at Foundation Level also. The following is the list of subjects examined at Junior Certificate level: Irish, English, Maths, History, Geography (both available as European Studies Project options also), Latin, Greek, Hebrew Studies, Classical Studies, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Science, Science with Local Studies, Home Economics, Music, Art, Craft and Design, Materials Technology (Wood), Metalwork, Technical Graphics, Technology, Business Studies, Typewriting, Environmental and Social Studies.

##### 4.5.3 Level 1 NCVA/FETAC

The *Level 1* award applies to the same areas of study as the foundation level award, see section 4.5.1 above.

#### 4.5.4 Leaving Certificate

There have been many changes in second-level education in recent years, one of the greatest has been the Leaving Certificate programme, which is of two years duration but now has three separate options:

- a. the Established Leaving Certificate;
- b. the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA);
- c. the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP).

##### a. Established Leaving Certificate

- Two subjects are available at three levels - Irish and Maths which can be taken at Foundation, Ordinary and Higher Level. All other Leaving Certificate subjects are available at Ordinary and Higher Level.
- The following is the list of 32 subjects available: Irish, English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Latin, Greek, Hebrew Studies, Classical Studies, Maths, Physics, Chemistry, Physics and Chemistry, Biology, Applied Maths, Accounting, Business, Economics, Economic History, Engineering, Technical Drawing, Construction Studies, Agricultural Science, Agricultural Economics, Home Economics (Scientific and Social), Home Economics (General), History, Geography, Art (including Crafts), Music and Musicianship;
- Revised syllabuses have been made available in recent years and subjects have been made more relevant to participant needs and where applicable, the vocational orientation has been increased.

##### b. Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA)

The LCA is a distinct, self-contained two-year Leaving Certificate programme aimed at preparing participants for adult and working life.

It recognises the talents of all participants and provides opportunities for development in terms of responsibility, self-esteem and self-knowledge. It is an innovative programme in the way participants learn; in what they learn and in the way their learning achievements are assessed.

The two-year programme consists of four half-year blocks called Sessions. Achievements are credited in each of these Sessions.

Courses are offered in three main areas:

- ❑ **Vocational Preparation** which focuses on preparation for work, work experience, enterprise and communications;
- ❑ **General Education** which gives participants general lifeskills, including the arts, social education, leisure and languages;
- ❑ **Vocational Education** which is concerned with the development of mathematics and information technology and the practical skills necessary for specialist areas such as tourism, business, horticulture, engineering and technology.

A unique feature of the LCA curriculum is the fact that information technology, the arts and leisure and recreation are required courses for all participants.

Each course consists of a number of modules. A module generally represents a half-year's work and there is provision for some choice of modules. Choice also exists in relation to Vocational Specialisms (practical courses relating to certain areas). Two courses are selected from a wide range of Vocational Specialisms which include:

- ❑ Agriculture/Horticulture;
- ❑ Hotel Catering and Tourism;
- ❑ Engineering;
- ❑ Technology;
- ❑ Office Skills and Retail Distribution;
- ❑ Community Care;
- ❑ Construction/Manufacturing;
- ❑ Craft and Design;
- ❑ Information Technology;
- ❑ Hair Care;

- ❑ Leisure Studies.

Student tasks provide the students with the opportunity of applying the knowledge and skill acquired during the course work. Students complete nine tasks over the two years - they can be written, audio, video, artefact etc. plus a report on the process of completing the task. They are assessed by external examiners.

Final exams are taken in each of the following areas:

- ❑ English and Communication;
- ❑ Two Vocational Specialisms;
- ❑ Mathematical Applications;
- ❑ Language (Gaeilge Chumarsaideach and Modern European Languages);
- ❑ Social Education.

Orals and written/aurals are held in all languages including English and Communication. A practical and a written exam are held in each of the Vocational Specialisms.

Students receive a Leaving Certificate on completion and it is awarded at three levels - Pass 60-69 credits; Merit 70-84 credits and Distinction 85-100 credits. A maximum of 100 credits can be accumulated over the two-year course under three headings:

- ❑ Satisfactory completion of modules 40 credits
- ❑ Performance of student tasks 27 credits
- ❑ Performance in the final exam 33 credits.

Those who achieve less than 60 credits or who leave before the end of the programme receive a Record of Experience.

### c. Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP)

The LCVP strengthens the vocational dimension of the Leaving Certificate by linking subjects into vocational groupings. In addition, students take three Link Modules - Enterprise Education, Preparation for Work and Work Experience. These modules sharpen the vocational focus of the other subjects. The vocational dimension raises awareness of work and further study and prepares students for it. Students realise their potential for self-directed learning, for innovation and for enterprise.

Students must take between five and seven Leaving Certificate subjects, one of which must be Irish, plus the Link Modules. The core of the LCVP includes the following elements which students must take:

- ❑ two Leaving Certificate subjects from one of the Subject Groupings;
- ❑ a modern European language from Leaving Certificate or a Vocational Language Module;
- ❑ three Link Modules.

The subject groupings are of two types: (1) Specialist Groupings - subjects which naturally complement each other such as Accounting and Business or Engineering and Technical Graphics. (2) Service Groupings - subjects that complement each other in a commercial context such as Agricultural Science and Business. A typical LCVP student might study:

- ❑ Business and Home Economics as the two Leaving Certificate subjects from the subject (service) groupings;
- ❑ French and Irish as the modern European languages from Leaving Certificate;
- ❑ English and Maths to make up six subjects;
- ❑ And, instead of a seventh Leaving Certificate subject, the three Link Modules.



LCVP students receive the same certificate as established Leaving Certificate students. In addition their Certificates include an additional statement of the results of the Link Modules (Pass, Merit or Distinction).

### **Link Modules**

All third-level colleges offer points for the LCVP Link Modules in place of a sixth Leaving Certificate subject as follows: Universities and DIT - Distinction 50 points, Merit 40 points, Pass 30 points. Institutes of Technology: Distinction 70 points, Merit 50 points, Pass 30 points.

Less time is taken to cover a Link Module than would be necessary for a Leaving Certificate subject - usually two or three classes per week in comparison to four or five. Some of the activities involved in the Link Modules such as organising and running mini-companies, visits to businesses/enterprises, take place outside school hours.

### **d. PLC Courses**

PLC courses provide general skills, including interpersonal skills, which train people for all kinds of work as well as vocational skills for particular jobs and they lead to certification by the NCVA/FETAC under the NQAI. Work experience is an essential part of PLC courses. Courses cover art and craft, business, computing, all types of engineering, construction and interior design, multi-media, sport and leisure, tourism, catering, beauty therapy, childcare, care of the elderly, and community care, equestrian studies, tele-services.

In addition to accreditation by the NCVA/FETAC, accreditation for PLC courses also comes from professional bodies such as those for: accountancy (IATA, IATI, ACCA, CIMA); banking (Institute of Bankers); long established accreditation such as Pitman, City & Guilds (C&G), Royal Society of Arts (RSA); those for beauty therapy (ITEC, CIBTAC, CIDESCO); childcare (NNEB, CACHE); Montessori teaching (St. Nicholas Montessori); Computer

Aided Draughting (CAD); horsemanship (BHS); fashion (RODEX); Marketing Institute of Ireland (MII); some UK universities such as Thames Valley for media production management, University of Wales for interior design.

#### **4.6 Guidance at the Induction Stage**

The early days and weeks of the VTOS course are critical in setting the scene for the continued participation of the student in learning. There is much anticipation and expectation on part of the participant and this represents a significant learning opportunity. It is essential that the guidance team plans this particular phase and are thoroughly familiar with the course booklet. There is nothing more confusing and unhelpful to the participant than too many cooks with different interpretations of the same recipe. It is critical that each member of the guidance team knows and complements each other's role and the boundaries of their contributions to student support. These have to be explained clearly to participants. The induction stage concerns engaging people in the learning process, especially taking into account their affective needs. Icebreakers, group trust building exercises, self-awareness, self-introduction are useful methods. It is also important building on these methods to move students to analyse the knowledge, skills and experiences they have gathered to date in life-wide learning. This can be effectively done through informal group discussion where participants identify and describe the knowledge, skills and behaviour of their everyday life in order to build up a positive image of their strengths. The students set the agenda of this exercise. In addition the group should lead its examination of the learning skills they feel they need in order to undertake the VTOS course, again identifying from their daily life their existing strengths e.g. reading the newspaper, remembering what they saw on television, able to tell a story (gossip!). One of the guidance team skilled in groupwork and in the field of lifeskills and learning skills analysis is best placed to deliver these exercises.

It will be also essential for the VTOS co-ordinator or the guidance counsellor, where there is one, to help the student to establish her/his literacy levels and to choose

relevant learning experiences from the menu offered by the centre in accordance with her/his needs, education and vocational goals. Many UK studies show that there can be problems associated with taking up a new life of study which impinge on personal relationships. It may be that partners are unable or unwilling to adjust at that time (Maynard and Pearsall 1994; Wray 1996). Students attending higher education courses in NUI Maynooth as adult learners said that university was a major contributor to the development of these problems (Fleming and Murphy 1998) leading to a suggestion that adults as well as other students need support for many kinds of learning - not all of them academic.

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# **APPENDICES 4**

## APPENDIX 4.5b Sample Learner Agreement

Dear Student

Welcome to ..... We are very glad that you have decided to join us. We want you to enjoy your course, work hard and to progress successfully to employment, higher education or to a higher level course whichever meets your needs. To progress successfully it is essential that we work together. In order for you to be successful:

### The Institute will:

- ? Treat you fairly in accordance with the Institute Equal Opportunities Policy
- ? Allocate you a personal tutor
- ? Provide informed, impartial, supportive and timely guidance and counselling and careers advice
- ? Provide initial assessment of your needs in Communication, Application of Number and Information Technology
- ? Agree with you an individual programme of study which will include a schedule of all coursework to be assessed
- ? Ensure a high quality of teaching and access to adequate physical resources
- ? Provide a comprehensive induction to the Institute and your programme of study
- ? Provide adequate information about financial help available to you and how to apply for it
- ? Provide information about the support available for all students
- ? Ensure that you are informed of the rules of the Institute
- ? Provide all necessary information on matters of Health and Safety as they apply to you
- ? Provide information on social, cultural and recreational activities
- ? Provide feedback on all work and assignments within an agreed time
- ? Provide access to work experience programmes where relevant
- ? Provide opportunities for you to make your views known
- ? Allow you to make a complaint on any issue and ensure you receive a response in line with the Institute complaints procedure

### You are expected to:

- ? Apply yourself, to the best of your ability, to all aspects of your course
- ? Adhere to the rules of the Institute
- ? Attend all classes and inform your tutor of any absences
- ? Complete all work and assignments you are set within the agreed time
- ? Attend all meetings and review sessions with your personal tutor
- ? Treat the staff and students of the Institute with respect
- ? Respect all property within the Institute and ensure the return of all the Institute's books, equipment and materials
- ? Adhere at all times to the health and safety regulations, advice and procedures provided by the college either through written notice or directly by your teachers, in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order (1978) and subsequent legislation
- ? Complete entry forms for external examinations and assessments when they are due
- ? Pay examination or course fees when due
- ? Inform the Institute of any changes in personal information (e.g. your address)
- ? Ensure that non-urgent appointments, part-time work and outside activities do not conflict with your studies
- ? Notify the Institute in writing if you decide to leave before your course ends

- ? Treat your personal information with confidentiality and respect in accordance with the current legislation
- ? Provide the opportunity for you to join the Student's Union

### LEARNER AGREEMENT

STUDENT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

Student initials

I have read and agree with the statements shown on the other side of this form

I have received a copy of the Student Charter

I have received a copy of the Student Handbook/Course Handbook

I have been informed about issues relating to Health and Safety

I have received information on student support services

Review Dates

Signed Personal Tutor

Signed Student

First review to be carried out within six weeks and once per term/semester thereafter.

My Personal Tutor's name is: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact point: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed Personal Tutor: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## **SECTION 5**

# **GUIDANCE THROUGHOUT VTOS**

## SECTION 5

### ***GUIDANCE THROUGHOUT VTOS***

#### **Overview**

During any course or training, ongoing help and support is required to enable the individual to adapt to her/his life as a learner. Adults will quickly drop out of a learning programme if their needs are not being met or if it fails to provide the essential learning, financial, welfare and child supports required. For adults, returning to learning can be a daunting and huge undertaking, especially for those deciding to return to learning on a VTOS course. Participants on VTOS may have had negative encounters with learning and may have been unemployed for some time before joining a VTOS course. It is crucial, therefore, that they are supported in taking the step that can in effect, change their lives. This is where the guidance provision in VTOS has an important role to play. Participants on VTOS need ongoing educational, career and personal support. Educational supports include study skills, examination techniques and time management. Career support includes vocational preparation through work experience and guidance and personal support includes personal development and counselling.

This section will focus on describing some of the ongoing supports that guidance can provide to VTOS participants under each of the headings - educational, career and personal.

## 5.1 EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE

### 5.1.1 Study skills

The majority of mature participants need support in relation to study skills mainly because of their having been out of the formal education system for some time. For participants on VTOS the problem may be further compounded by family commitments, poor time management, lack of concentration and focus and never having mastered studying in the first place! Another challenge that may arise for many is that of adjusting from experience-based learning to academic-based learning.

The first weeks of the first term are crucial and are often a make or break time for mature participants returning to learning. Juggling family commitments with studying is not an easy task and for some it may prove too much. It is important then that guidance is available to enable VTOS participants to make the transition to structured learning. Participants can be helped to develop their study, time management and relaxation skills. This will help them to work efficiently, to switch off when they are not working and to keep things in perspective.

It may be a good idea to talk to VTOS participants in a group enabling them to learn from one another and to realise that they are not alone and have concerns and difficulties in common. This may be a source of relief to many. Issues to be discussed with the group include the main challenges presented by the course work and studying, feelings and thoughts about studying, and what participants find hardest about studying. Topics should include practical measures which facilitate studying such as where and how to study, and why there is a need to study.

Useful information booklets on studying and study skills and these include:

- CDVEC booklets on study skills for VTOS participants. CDVEC published two very useful books on study skills in 1995, one for the students and the other for the teacher. The student book deals with staying the pace on a VTOS

course by maintaining motivation, handling stress and managing time. It also has chapters on memory, reading, note-taking and writing. The teacher's book outlines the study skills programme as a process. It identifies negative experiences of participants such as lack of time/structure to discuss ideas and problems, being overwhelmed with work and paper, group interaction problems, worry about bad memory, and generally feeling unable to cope. The book also has chapters on group work, confidence building and evaluation and it contains a useful bibliography.

- The National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE) Study Supplement. The NCGE Study Supplement while originally for second-level students provides a very useful guide for both VTOS participants and staff. It outlines effective study habits and provides background material on study which could be used by the guidance counsellor, co-ordinator or tutors for VTOS participants. It outlines good practice in relation to a number of important dimensions:
  - Where to study;
  - How long and when;
  - Reading textbooks;
  - Taking notes;
  - Listening;
  - Preparation for exams;
  - The examination.

It also supplies a good reference section with copies of transparencies for use in teaching sessions and summary handouts for participants.

- *Stress in Young People: What's new and what can we do?* (McNamara 2000) contains a very useful chapter with practical advice and suggestions on study skills and time management. The chapter also covers examinations and stress.

### 5.1.2 Time Management

Time management is an important skill for all learners. For participants on VTOS who may have other commitments outside the course, managing time is important. Much time will be spent adapting to the demands of the course and working on course work and assignments, participating on course placements and engaging on extra-curricular activities. Poor time management is associated with a sense of attempting to catch up on yourself most of the time, not getting things done, feeling out of control, and procrastination (McNamara 2000 p171). Time management is about prioritising and doing things that *need* to be done. The guidance provider can help participants by facilitating a discussion on time management, where participants may learn about successful strategies employed by others, including the facilitator. Discussions should cover issues such as, *what* is important, setting goals and writing a plan on how to achieve goals. Participants might also be asked to keep a record of their daily activities so that they can examine how they manage their time.

Useful books on time management include:

- *How to Manage your Study Time* (1994) by Roger Lewis.
- *Perfect Time Management* (1999) by Ted Johns.
- *Study Time Management* (1996) by Lynn Underwood.

### 5.1.3 Examination techniques

The examination process for mature students can be very daunting, especially for those who may have encountered failure through examinations in the past. It is important to tell students that feeling tense before an examination is normal and that there are many ways of dealing with this tension effectively, e.g., by planning and studying for the examination! Participants can be encouraged to construct a study timetable and keep to it. Ways of dealing with examination stress on the day should also be discussed such as through relaxation and dealing with negative thinking. Participants should also be provided with practical examination tips such as reading the paper carefully before answering and taking their time while answering the paper.

Useful references include:

- *Passing Exams: A Guide for Maximum Success and Minimum Stress* (1999) by Dawn Hamilton.
- *Student's Guide to Passing Exams* (1997) by Richard Burns.
- *Coping with Exams and Tests* (1998) by Peter Corey.

## 5.2 Personal Supports

### 5.2.1 Interpersonal skills

Juggling course work with family and other responsibilities can challenge a VTOS participant's stamina and commitment to her/his learning programme. Participation in workshops on interpersonal skills and how to reduce conflict at home and/or with friends will assist the participant in dealing appropriately with conflicts as they arise. Gender differences in relation to conflict resolution might be discussed in a group. Assertiveness training might be addressed in active workshops. Negotiation skills are also important in that they assist participants in managing the range of relationships in their lives. Teaching negotiation skills can help participants to:

- ❑ Look at a situation from a different perspective;
- ❑ Find out what the other person wants
- ❑ Express themselves clearly
- ❑ Find common ground
- ❑ Compromise
- ❑ Enable everybody to win

Useful reference books include:

- *Interpersonal Communication: Pragmatics of Human Relationships* (1993) by Aubrey B Fisher.
- *Handbook of Interpersonal Skills Training* (2000) by Bob Wall.
- *Interpersonal Communication and Human Relationships* (1983) by Mark L Knapp.

### 5.2.2 Individual Counselling

During their time on a VTOS course participants may need personal, educational and career counselling for a variety of problems that may be affecting their study. Counselling is a process that facilitates self-understanding and clarifies future decisions, actions and goals. It is an activity that enables participants to explore their thoughts, feelings and behaviours. There are many definitions of counselling, focusing on the process, the relationship, the content or the counsellor attributes or a combination of these factors. Whatever the definition of counselling favoured, it is imperative that the participant in a counselling session feels safe to explore his/her thoughts and feelings with the counsellor. Thus, most counselling approaches would argue that a crucial variable in determining successful counselling is the counsellor's attributes. Counsellor attributes that facilitate the counselling process include empathy, genuineness and unconditional positive regard. The counselling relationship should be client-centred and characterised by an atmosphere of mutual trust. Since clients vary and each comes with his/her own needs, background and set of experiences it is important that counselling is tailored to suit the individual and not vice versa.

The CDVEC conducted a survey into the nature, seriousness and frequency of personal issues raised in counselling and the specific counselling needs of adults in VTOS and other courses (CDVEC 2001). The main findings highlighted the seriousness of the difficulties presented by adults and the high proportion of time devoted to individual counselling by guidance counsellors in CDVEC. Most of the guidance counsellors reported that a wide range of issues was being presented to them, especially in the personal and relationship areas. Predominant issues, which required referral to the CDVEC Psychological Service, included suicidal tendencies, sexual abuse, violence/physical abuse, rejection, sexual harassment, loss/bereavement.

It is evident from the survey that the provision of guidance and counselling services to enable adults to gain optimum benefit from a return to learning, is a vital aspect of any learning programme.

### 5.2.3 Group Counselling

Group counselling has the advantage of covering a particular issue with a group of people over a course of a session in which other members of the group can learn from one another. Clearly it is more efficient to present information to a group on one occasion than it is to present it individually. The use of group methods is further justified by the presumed universality of career needs. Group counselling can be utilised in the educational, career and personal domains of guidance. In the section on educational supports, group work as a guidance tool has been highlighted for discussions on study skills and examination techniques.

Some uses of groups for guidance purposes are as follows (Herr and Cramer 1996):

- ❑ Information dissemination – providing information about the world of work;
- ❑ Teaching;
- ❑ Practice – role-playing, and other activities that allow individuals to practice career related behaviours;
- ❑ Attitude development – attitudes are learned and can be unlearned in a group situation;
- ❑ Exploration – because many adults are in the exploratory stage of career development group activities can enhance that exploration;
- ❑ Counselling.

While group work has a number of benefits and advantages it is important to note that leading a group requires special skills which the guidance provider must have developed before engaging in the process.

## 5.3 Vocational Supports

### 5.3.1 Work Experience

Work experience can be a valuable experience for adult learners, especially for those who have not been employed before or for an extended period of time. Work experience helps an adult to gain a better understanding and insight into the



demands of the workplace. Many important skills can be learned by the adult learner on work experience, e.g., communication skills, working in a team, common work practice and ethos. Work experience can also help to clarify the adult learner's goals and decision-making regarding future career choice. For work experience to be a successful experience for adult learners, good preparation is essential. Many VTOS participants will need to develop their existing work-related skills and will benefit from a discussion on what they would like to get from participation in the work experience. It is also important that VTOS staff be available to adult learners for advice and consultation *during* their work experience programme. After the work experience has taken place, it is important that adult learners are given an opportunity of discussing and sharing their experiences. They must also be enabled to review what they have learned and experienced.

The NCVA (now FETAC) guidelines and module descriptor for work experience provide a useful framework for structuring work experience in VTOS.

A manual developed by VTOS Newbridge as part of a Leonardo da Vinci Programme pilot project on personalising learning contains very useful worksheets to assist participants prepare for, learn from and review work experience in the performing arts. Many of the worksheets would be of use in other areas of work.

### 5.3.2 ICT in Guidance

In recent years the rapid growth in the use of ICT in guidance and, specifically, the use of the Internet has created a challenge for education providers and providers of guidance. The idea of using the Internet and its technologies such as the World Wide Web and email as tools and supports for the provision of guidance is still new to many.

#### **Why use computers and the Internet in guidance?**

Guidance providers can help participants to make decisions about their lives with assistance from ICTs. Information on higher education courses, on jobs and on the guidance process and profession itself can be accessed through the Internet. This

creates new opportunities – and challenges – for the guidance providers and participants alike.

### **What are computers used for in guidance?**

#### **Self-awareness**

This category includes all websites, which seek to enable the learner – guidance provider and/or participant - to answer the questions “Who am I? What are my abilities, interests, values, skills, temperament, learning style?” (Offer 1997, p12). These sites usually include self-assessment inventories and psychometric tests containing these questions. However, it is unusual for internet sites to concentrate solely on self-awareness issues. Sites usually combine self-awareness and *opportunity* awareness.

#### **Opportunity Awareness**

Information retrieval systems characterise this category of site or activity within a site. The resources available under this heading are numerous and wide-ranging. Occupational information can be obtained by on-line access to a relevant database via the Internet or by direct on-line access to the web sites of employers, large and small.

#### **Decision Awareness**

This category of website involves learners becoming aware of their own decision-making styles, the variety of factors they use in decision-making, and the application of these to a particular decision.

#### **Implementing Decisions**

This category of website involves job-seeking skills and transition learning. Internet sites concentrating on this category enables users to learn skills such as planning and job-search that facilitate implementation of the decisions they have made.

### ***Useful Internet sites***

<http://www.cao.ie>

<http://www.careerstorm.com>

<http://www.careersworld.com>

<http://www.careerseurope.com>

<http://www.careerperfect.com>

<http://www.counseling.org/gc/cybertx.htm>

<http://www.fas.ie>

<http://www.gradireland.com>

<http://www.heai.ie>

<http://www.igc.ie>

<http://www.ncea.ie>

<http://www.ncge.ie>

<http://www.ncva.ie>

<http://www.qualifax.ie>

<http://www.stepstone.ie>

<http://www.topjobs.ie>

### **What are the critical factors for the effective use of computer-assisted guidance by participants?**

Sampson (1997) suggested a three-step model for the role of the guidance provider in assisting learners/users to make effective use of computer assisted guidance.

### **Screening**

The guidance provider needs to answer the following questions:

- ❑ Do all users have equal amounts of the affective and intellectual capacity needed for using computer-assisted guidance?
- ❑ Does the software provide the assessment, instruction or information that the learner actually needs?
- ❑ Is the appropriate level of guidance support available?

- ❑ Does the learner's reading ability match the reading ability requirements of the software?
- ❑ Has the learner the necessary maturation to use the software effectively?
- ❑ Does the learner have the physical and intellectual ability to use the hardware?
- ❑ Has the learner the emotional intelligence/maturity to understand the software and respond accurately and consistently to the software's request for information?
- ❑ What is the learner's state of readiness for decision making?

### Orientation

The guidance provider needs to ask the question what level of support does the participant need in order to use the Internet effectively? The user readiness of a participant can be rated as either high (requiring little or no assistance), moderate (requiring some assistance) or low (requiring substantial assistance). The user readiness of a participant will determine where the Internet service will be provided. For instance, participants with little or no experience of the Internet will need substantial assistance, therefore the service should be provided in a classroom where assistance is readily on hand.

### Follow-up

Computer-assisted guidance, group work, career classes, career videos and work experience are learning experiences facilitated by the guidance provider. It is always good practice for the guidance provider and the participant to assess what has been learned – particularly where the computer-assisted guidance and other approaches have been used by the learner in a self-directed manner. The following questions might be posed:

- ❑ Have the learner's needs been met?
- ❑ What are the outstanding concerns or worries?
- ❑ How useful has the learning experience been?
- ❑ What feedback arises for the guidance provider?

## 5.4 Referrals

Referral arises in the case of a participant who is presenting in the VTOS centre with an issue/problem that is outside the scope of the expertise of the guidance providers available in that centre. The guidance provider may refer the participant to the psychological service of the VEC or other relevant agency or organisation if s/he deems the presenting problem to be outside the scope of his/her expertise.

The guidance provider in this situation must weigh up the situation carefully and assess her/his reasons for making the referral. Initially, referrals to the key guidance provider in a VTOS centre may come from the VTOS participant him/herself or from other staff members. It is important that both VTOS staff and participants are aware of the key guidance provider's role so that inappropriate referrals are kept to a minimum.

This section will examine guidance provider-initiated referrals and referrals to the guidance provider, highlighting issues pertinent to both in the context of VTOS.

### Guidance Provider Initiated Referrals

The American School Counselor Association's *Ethical Standards for School Counselors* is a useful starting point for a discussion on guidance provider initiated referrals. The work of the school counsellor is similar to that of the guidance counsellor in the Irish context.

**“The school counselor makes appropriate referrals when professional assistance can no longer be adequately provided to the counselee. Appropriate referral requires knowledge of available resources” (ASCA 1992).**

This statement highlights when referral should occur, viz., “when professional assistance can no longer be adequately provided to the counselee.” It also

highlights the need to be aware of the potential referees. In making referrals, VTOS guidance providers must be aware of the areas of their expertise and where their limitations lie. Referral and the reasons for it must be thought out carefully by the guidance provider. It must consist of an honest evaluation of the expertise of the guidance counsellor/VTOS co-ordinator / tutor and be in the client's best interest. Two issues that may be faced in referring clients to other professionals include premature referral (where the guidance counsellor/co-ordinator/tutor may be avoiding additional work) and treating clients for too long (where the guidance provider / co-ordinator / tutor may be investing his/her self-worth in his/her ability to 'cure' a client).

The *referral suggestion* is one of the most important parts of the referral process. When the guidance provider makes the referral suggestion to the client s/he may be faced with one of two responses, viz.,

- The participant may feel rejected;
- The participant may reject the referral.

In both these situations the sensitivity and communication skills of the guidance provider come into play. It is important that the guidance provider assesses the participant's readiness and is able to demonstrate to her/him that the referral is appropriate to her/his needs, before the referral suggestion is made. It may also be useful to discuss the potential referral with the prospective referees before the referral suggestion is made to the participant (Baker 2000, p209-211). In the context of VTOS, referrals may be partial in that the guidance provider may still support the participant whilst he/she is attending the appropriate agency or person. The guidance provider may also be the VTOS co-ordinator in this process.

In the study *Issues and Needs in Adult Guidance and Counselling in CDVEC* the percentage of personal and relationships cases referred to the CDVEC Psychological Service by guidance counsellors in the CDVEC was 16.8% for the year 1998-1999. The predominant issues in the personal and relationship cases

referred, included: suicidal tendencies, abuse, harassment and bereavement (CDVEC 2001, p48-49). The guidance counsellors dealt with the majority of counselling cases, referring only the really serious ones to the psychologists. Some of the guidance counsellors expressed reservations about their competence in the area of counselling.

### **Referrals to the Guidance Counsellor**

Where the services of a guidance counsellor are available in a VTOS centre the guidance counsellor has the responsibility of ensuring that the VTOS co-ordinator, tutors and participants are aware of his/her role and areas of expertise. The guidance counsellor could hold an induction session in the VTOS centre where s/he introduces VTOS participants to his/her area of work and to the tasks s/he performs. The guidance counsellor should inform VTOS staff of the services that s/he provides through staff meetings and/or an in-service programme. This induction process – for participants and staff - will ensure that inappropriate referrals (such as disciplinary cases) are not a drain on the guidance counsellor's resources and time. The complementary guidance roles of all VTOS staff, including the guidance counsellor, should be clearly identified in the Guidance Programme Plan (see Section 2).

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## SECTION 6

# PROGRESSION FROM VTOS

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### PROGRESSION FROM VTOS

#### Overview

On completion of a VTOS course, be it of one or two years' duration, participants have many options from which to choose their next step. Progression information is a key requirement for a VTOS participant. Section 6 outlines the issues, strategies, skills and information involved in providing progression guidance for VTOS adult learners in relation to:

- Progression to employment.
- Progression to further education and training.
- Progression to higher education.

#### 6.1 Progression to Employment

Many VTOS participants will opt for employment after their VTOS course - a job, self-employment or work on a Community Employment scheme. They may opt to work full-time, part-time or on a seasonal basis.

**Direct employment is possible with the Leaving Certificate, with LCVP, with NCVA Level 2 awards and with a range of qualifications in information technology. It should be borne in mind that LCA is accepted for training in the Garda College. The Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC) and the Irish Small and Medium Employers (ISME) are very supportive of LCA and employers have been represented at all stages of the programme development. Institutions offering the programme have initiated local links with employers and other social partners. Equivalence has been set by the DES with 60 Credits in LCA as the equivalent of six Grade Ds at ordinary level in the established Leaving Certificate.**

In VTOS centres where graduates have been particularly successful in gaining employment in the local area the VTOS co-ordinator has almost always established very good connections with local employers through work experience placements, through invitations to open days and award ceremonies, through involving local employers in simulated interview sessions for participants, through working with employers to enable participants who may have taken up a job before s/he has achieved certification to continue their study and to take the assessments as appropriate and through on-going public relations activities which highlight the VTOS centre and the achievements of the participants in the local press and radio.

### Sources of Information for Progression to Employment

#### **i. Employment Trends**

Reports from the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, and the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI). Both these agencies have useful web-sites.

#### **ii. Employment**

Local Employment Services (LES); Area-Based Companies; FÁS Placement Services; Job Clubs; Voluntary Work Agencies; Community Employment; Jobs Initiative; STEP; Job Assist; Centres for the Unemployed/Community Groups.

#### **iii. Career Information**

Career exhibitions/talks, leaflets, media reports - radio, TV and Tele-text; newspaper articles; videos; visits to training centres; work experience; GAIRM; Bord Altranais; BIM; Accountancy bodies; Forbairt; Forfás; IDA; Jobfinder Ireland; Institute of Guidance Counsellors' Annual Calendar of Events; *Irish Times E&L* supplement weekly on Tuesdays and college supplements in August, September, January; *Irish Independent* college

supplements and job advertising sections of local and national newspapers (usually on Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays); Computer-assisted Guidance: List of Internet Sites (see Section 5 and Section 8); speakers from professional bodies, industry, apprenticeships, employers, unions (local and national), IBEC, Forbairt, Small Firms Association.

#### iv. Self Employment

**With the upturn in the economy the emphasis on self-employment as an option for VTOS graduates has receded somewhat. A small number of VTOS participants each year participate in courses designed to assist them in setting up their own business and many of these participants go on to trade through their own business when they leave the VTOS course.**

#### v. Community Employment

Community Employment (CE) schemes which are managed by FÁS enable VTOS graduates to find their feet in the world of work. Those who are aged over 21 years and have been unemployed for more than one year may participate on a CE scheme for one year at an average of 39 hours per fortnight. Those over 35 years and over three years unemployed may participate for up to three years. Information available from your local FÁS office and/or on FÁS web-site at <http://www.fas.ie>

### 6.2 Progression to Further Education and Training

On completion of a one or two-year course a number of VTOS graduates will want to continue in education or training, in a PLC (Post-Leaving Certificate) course, in another further education course or in a training course offered by any of a range of providers including FÁS, CERT, and Teagasc. In 2000, 12% of participants progressed to further education, while 4.5% progressed to a training course.

### **i. Progression to Further Education**

Information on progression to further education is available from local and other colleges offering PLC courses; from providers of part-time adult education; from NCVA/FETAC, NCEA/HETAC, NQAI; NCGE; Learnet.

#### **a) Further Education Provision – Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) courses**

Participants can progress directly to a PLC course (usually leading to an NCVA/FETAC Level 2 award) from a VTOS course where they have taken Leaving Certificate, LCVP or LCA. In a small number of PLCs there are specific requirements set by professional bodies that the Leaving Certificate Applied may not meet. Check with the local PLC provider for further details.

#### **Note**

It should be noted that participants who have already completed a two-year VTOS programme are not permitted to have a third or more years under the scheme, except in exceptional circumstances such as entry with very low levels of basic education. However, they may be able to join the PLC course under the BTEA (Back to Education Allowance) of the DSCFA. Participants should check out this possibility with the local Social Welfare office. See page 22 for details of the BTEA which also permits VTOS graduates to go on to higher education in an institute of technology (IoT), a college of education or a university.

### **ii. Progression to Training Courses**

#### **a) Sources of Information**

Information on training courses may be had from FÁS local training centres and FÁS local offices; Teagasc offices and colleges; Bord Iascaigh Mhara; CERT; Local Employment Services (LES); the National Disability Authority (NDA).

## **b) FÁS Training Courses**

FÁS, the Training and Employment Authority which was established in 1988, has as part of its brief the operation of training and employment programmes, the provision of an employment service, an advisory service for industry and support for co-operative and community-based enterprise. This section will deal with the training and employment programmes.

### **□ Registration**

Applicants for a FÁS course must register with the local FÁS Employment Services Office. The applicant discusses the best options and her/his name is put on a waiting list and s/he will be called for interview for a suitable course. A list of the 53 local offices is available from FÁS.

### **□ Training Centres and Courses**

FÁS has 20 training centres throughout the country and through this network over 170 different training courses of an industrial and commercial nature are provided. Course details and information may change throughout the year so it is best to link into the local FÁS Employment Services Office / Training Centre or website.

### **□ Costs**

FÁS covers all training costs. A training allowance is paid to trainees who are on full-time day courses. Trainees can keep their full-time social welfare supplementary benefits while on a course.

### **□ Part-time Courses**

Part-time courses are run in many FÁS training centres. All part-time courses have to be paid for by the participant. Fees vary from approximately £100 for most courses held once a week for

ten weeks to the bi-weekly European Computer Driving License (ECDL) course at approximately £300 which is run over ten weeks. Courses run in blocks for autumn, spring and summer terms in the evening time to facilitate those working during the day.

Courses are related to business, engineering, desk-top publishing, computing, computer-aided draughting and design, supervisory management skills, retail sales and stock control, construction skills, start your own business and jewellery stone setting.

□ **Certification**

Both the full-time and part-time courses are FÁS certified or FÁS/joint body (such as City & Guilds) certified at various levels.

c). **FÁS Apprenticeships**

The entry requirement for FÁS standards-based apprenticeships has been set at 25 credits in the case of applicants who have taken the LCA. Minimum entry requirements include the applicant to be 16 years old with at least a grade D in any five subjects at Junior Certificate Level (or in an equivalent examination). Mature applicants over 25 may be considered if they have had a minimum of three years work experience in an area relevant to the apprenticeship and are successful at an assessment interview. Typical careers to which those who successfully complete the FÁS apprenticeship courses can aspire include: electrician, carpenter and joiner, instrumentation crafts person, aircraft mechanic and printer-carton maker.

The IoTs provide the educational component for many of the industrial apprenticeship programmes under FÁS (or the apprenticeship/craft programmes of CERT). They are not third-level courses and apprentices are usually on block release from their employers for



periods of some weeks at a time. Employers provide the on-the-job training. Standards-based Apprenticeships apply in the following five trades:

- *Furniture*: wood machinist, cabinet maker;
- *Construction*: plasterer, brick/stone layer, painter/decorator, construction plant fitter, plumber, electrician, carpenter/joiner, floor/wall tiller;
- *Engineering*: sheet metal worker, refrigeration craftsperson, aircraft mechanic, metal fabricator, toolmaker, instrumentation craftsperson, fitter;
- *Motor*: vehicle body repair, agricultural mechanic, heavy vehicle mechanic, motor mechanic;
- *Printing*: carton maker, originator, bookbinder, printer.

Once the apprentice has passed specific tests and assessments and has achieved certain pre-set standards of skill and competence, s/he is then awarded a National Craft Certificate that is recognised in Ireland, in the EU and in some other countries. The National Craft Certificate also has recognition for progression to further training and education.

The FÁS website is at <http://www.fas.ie>.

#### **d) CERT Training Courses**

CERT, the Irish tourism training agency, provides training courses in tourism and hospitality and these courses while mainly full-time are also provided on a part-time basis. Training costs are covered by a CERT scholarship, which also includes a weekly payment which is not means-tested. Courses are open to school-leavers, those looking for work or those coming back to the workforce as mature workers.

CERT courses leading to a FETAC qualification of a minimum of one year's duration are held in IoTs or in CERT training centres may be of interest as progression routes for VTOS participants. Courses are at National Certificate (Elementary, Craft and Advanced) and at National Diploma level. A listing of all courses available at this level, where they are available, start date, closing dates for application and minimum entry requirements are set out on a chart available from CERT. Application is through CERT except where otherwise stated even though some of these courses are located in third-level colleges such as the IoTs.

Other courses at third-level for this industry (such as management courses) are in the CAO system.

□ **Accreditation**

All the National Certificate and National Diploma qualifications are awarded by FETAC and are EU recognised.

□ **Alternative Route to Qualifications**

**Industry Qualification Scheme**

As an alternative to full-time training, a person can train on the job to achieve a National Elementary Certificate in cookery, restaurant, bar and accommodation skills. Details available from the Industry Qualification Scheme, CERT House, Amiens Street, Dublin 1, telephone 01-8556555. This involves training at your own pace on the job for a minimum of six weeks.

**e. TEAGASC Training Courses**

Teagasc courses are designed for those going back to their own farms or for those seeking employment in farming, horticulture or in the agricultural business area. Graduates of Teagasc courses find work as farm managers, unit managers, and supervisors in horticultural and

agricultural businesses, technicians and as technical representatives with agri-business companies and organisations. Some applications are through CAO and others are dealt with directly by Teagasc. Courses are designed to provide the expertise needed to respond to changing technology, changes in economic conditions and in market demands. Courses have a high practical, hands-on content and knowledge and skills learned are put into practice so that trainees learn by doing.

❑ **Agricultural Colleges**

Training courses are provided in 14 colleges and 45 local training centres. See the Teagasc web-site for courses on offer.

Teagasc awards are made at certificate and diploma level.

❑ **Teagasc Training Courses for Women**

Teagasc is now providing courses specially designed for women and their numbers are increasing in all courses. They make up almost half of all farm labour in Ireland.

Further information from any college/centre or from Education Division, Teagasc, 19 Sandymount Avenue, Dublin 4, telephone 01-6688188, fax 01-6688023, email [pr@hq.teagasc.ie](mailto:pr@hq.teagasc.ie).

**Note**

The establishment of the NQAI and FETAC will have a major impact on the source and range of qualifications available in the further education and training sector in the near future.

### 6.3 Progression to Higher Education

Progression to higher education in an institute of technology, a college of education or a university was chosen by 13% of VTOS graduates in 2000.

#### i. Sources of Information for Progression to Higher Education

The *Guide for Mature Students: Entry to Full-Time Third-Level Courses* published annually by the Department of Education and Science (DES) is a good source of initial information for all mature students on colleges/courses, places reserved, entry requirements, closing dates and financial data.

*Applying to College or University as a Mature Student* (Aontas 1997) is also a useful source of information about progression to higher education.

Information may also be had from:

- ❑ Local and national college brochures;
- ❑ College Admissions Officers,
- ❑ Access Officers;
- ❑ Mature Student Officers;
- ❑ CAO handbook;
- ❑ HEA;
- ❑ NCEA/HETAC;
- ❑ QualifaX;
- ❑ Careersworld;
- ❑ UCAS Handbook.

#### 6.3.1 Higher Education Institutions

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Ireland include the university sector, the institutes of technology (IoTs), the colleges of education, other NCEA/HETAC-designated institutions such as colleges of theology and philosophy, colleges of art

and design, the college of hotel management and, in recent years, independent private colleges offering mainly business, law, communications and computing courses. The Higher Education Authority (HEA) is the planning and development body for the HEIs.

i. Universities

There are eight universities in the Republic of Ireland, four of which are constituent colleges of the National University of Ireland (NUI). These are UCC/NUI Cork; UCD/NUI Dublin, UCG/NUI Galway; and NUI Maynooth. The NUI also has three recognised colleges – the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI), St. Angela's College of Education Sligo and the National College of Art and Design (NCAD). The other four universities are the University of Dublin (TCD), the University of Limerick (UL), Dublin City University (DCU) and the Pontifical University (outside the system of state funded higher education).

**a) Qualifications Available in the University Sector**

The universities offer degrees at Bachelor, Master and Doctorate level in the arts and humanities, science and the technological, medical and social sciences. Some of the universities have introduced semesterisation and modularisation of courses rather than terminal examinations to provide students with greater flexibility. Universities award their own degrees, using external examiners to ensure consistency in standards.

**ii. The Institutes of Technology, Tipperary Institute and DIT**

The technological sector includes 14 institutes of technology located at Athlone, Blanchardstown, Carlow, Cork, Dublin (DIT), Dundalk, Dun Laoghaire, Galway, Letterkenny, Limerick, Sligo, Tallaght, Tralee and Waterford and, in addition, Tipperary Institute. Courses in these

institutes are accredited by NCEA / HETAC under the NQAI. The DIT comprises six constituent colleges/faculties and awards its own degrees. Other designated institutions of NCEA/HETAC include a great range of colleges such as the National College of Ireland (NCI), a wide range of religious colleges, the Garda College, the Institute of Public Administration, and some of the independent private colleges.

□ **Qualifications in the NCEA/FETAC designated Institutions**

The level of programmes provided goes from apprenticeships/craft courses to certificates, diplomas, degrees and post-graduate degrees.

The *National Certificate programmes* are broad foundation courses that are practically and professionally oriented. They are qualifications in themselves or can be used to progress to further study. They are of two years' duration and almost half of the students in the IoT sector are at this level. On completion of a national certificate at merit/distinction level or with a pass level and one year's satisfactory employment, students may proceed to *National Diploma*. It is also possible to go directly onto National Diploma courses in first year (ab initio) for a three year course. More than a quarter of all students in the IoT sector are following diploma courses.

From a National Diploma students may progress (with the same conditions applying as for transfer from National Certificate level) onto a degree programme. It should be noted that like national diplomas, some degree programmes are also ab initio. The vast majority of courses in the institutes of technology are accredited by NCEA/HETAC. This ladder system provides good working

qualifications as well as the possibility of improving qualifications on a part-time/full-time basis.

### iii. Colleges of Education

Colleges of Education provide a three year Bachelor of Education in primary teaching. Four colleges are in Dublin - St. Patrick's College, Church of Ireland College, St. Mary's (Coláiste Mhuire) and Froebel College - and Mary Immaculate College is in Limerick. Two other colleges of education, St. Angela's Sligo and St. Catherine's, Sion Hill, Dublin, offer a Bachelor of Education degree in Home Economics. The University of Limerick offers a Bachelor of Education in Physical Education, materials and construction, materials and education and physics and chemistry.

A list of third-level institutions is available on the HEA website (<http://www.heai.ie>).

### 6.3.2 Entry to Higher Education

The majority of VTOS graduates wishing to progress to higher education on completion of a VTOS course of one or two-years' duration seek entry through the non-standard entry route, mainly on the grounds of mature years, viz., over 23 years of age on January 1<sup>st</sup> of year of entry to higher education.

Application for almost all full-time under-graduate courses is made through the CAO system. See the CAO website for a list of colleges in the CAO system.

### 6.3.3 Selection Procedures for Mature Students Seeking Entry to Full-time Higher Education Courses

Access for mature students to colleges of higher education varies from institution to institution.

**i. Age**

A candidate is normally considered to be a mature student if they will be 23 years of age on January 1<sup>st</sup> of year of entry or re-entry to an approved course e.g. 23 years on or before January 1, 2002 for admission in autumn 2002. This age requirement seems to be fairly standard for all colleges but there can be variations even in the one college between faculties - there is no age specified for medicine in NUIG and both Athlone and Letterkenny IoTs have specified age limits for entry to nursing.

**ii. Closing Date**

Normally CAO applications have to be in by February 1<sup>st</sup> and an application fee is payable. However a number of institutions require mature students to make direct application to the college.

**iii. Application Procedure**

Mature students have to fill out pages 3 and 4 of the CAO form in addition to pages 1 and 2 which all school leavers complete. On page 4, they should give a short CV covering education, work experience, achievements, interests and motivation. Students should be aware that *some* colleges do not allow mature students to make a late application or to change their minds.

A number of colleges have now appointed a Mature Student Officer or an Access Officer and it is vital to contact that officer or the Admissions Officer in advance.

**iv. What Criteria are used by Colleges for Mature Student Entry?**

Third-level colleges use a great variety of criteria by which to assess mature students for entry. Statements by colleges in relation to entry



criteria include the following (Department of Education and Science 2000);

- ❑ *every application is looked at on an individual basis;*
- ❑ *students must have the ability to pursue and profit/benefit from a course;*
- ❑ *previous education taken into account;*
- ❑ *students will be considered on their own merits taking their work and life experiences into account.*

Adults seeking entry to full-time third-level courses need the following information:

- ❑ What previous learning/courses have they taken that will entitle them to the NCEA's (HETAC) Accumulation of Credits and Certification of Subjects (ACCS) scheme or the Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) scheme.
- ❑ How do they rate in relation to other schemes/qualifications?
- ❑ Which would the college prefer?
- ❑ How their aptitude tests/interviews/previous accredited/non-accredited learning experience rates;
- ❑ What is important in their employment record;
- ❑ How to improve their chance of a place.

Most colleges use several procedures for the selection of mature students. This often means that applicants are trying to meet all the criteria and there can be duplication of effort and costs for the applicant.

The quota of places varies from unspecified up to ten percent per year of student intake generally, with Blanchardstown IoT and St. Patrick's Drumcondra setting a high target of 30% over a five-year period. Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art Design & Technology and Limerick Institute

of Technology state that they *particularly welcome* applications from mature students. The Church of Ireland College of Education states that they offer places to mature students *as required* whereas other colleges state that they actively advertise for them (St. Patrick's College Thurles).

#### v. Higher Education Links Scheme

VTOS participants who have achieved an NCVA Level 2 Award may avail of the Higher Education Links Scheme. For students on PLC courses places on selected courses are allocated on the basis of achievement in the NCVA Level 2 awards. The participating institutions are mainly the IoTs, the DIT (six colleges) and, in addition, the NCI and the Tipperary Institute. Particular course modules from an NCVA-accredited course may be required for some third-level courses, e.g. a maths module or a specific language module.

Places are awarded on the basis of students' performance in the NCVA Level 2 Certificate - three points for a distinction (80%), two for a merit (65%) and one for a pass (50%) and students are ranked on the basis of their cumulative scores.

Approximately 2000 places were reserved for entry in September 2001 on over 250 courses in the participating institutions and application is made through CAO.

*The Guide to the Higher Education Links Scheme* is published annually. Details from NCVA (FETAC), Marino Institute of Education, Griffith Avenue, Dublin 9, telephone 01-8531910 or 8372211.

Though universities and colleges of education do not formally recognise an NCVA/FETAC Level 2 Award for standard entry, mature

students who have one are certainly in a position to show that they are capable of successfully returning to learning.

**vi. VTOS Participants *Under 23 Years of Age Seeking Entry to Higher Education***

VTOS participants *under 23* years of age on January 1<sup>st</sup> of the year in which they intend going to higher education, must apply to CAO in same way as 18-year olds who have just completed Leaving Certificate. The CAO provides an application pack including a handbook, an application form and information on how to apply. February 1<sup>st</sup> is the normal closing date for Irish and EU nationals but there is a late closing date of May 1<sup>st</sup>, as long as the applicant does not list courses which require aptitude tests or portfolios for entry. These courses are called *restricted courses* and application has to be in by February 1<sup>st</sup>. A CAO fee is payable. Offers of places are normally made from mid-August into September.

A points system operates once there is more demand than places on a course. Leaving Certificate results are taken from the best six subjects in a single sitting of the examination, calculated by giving a set number of points for each grade. Applicants are then ranked according to their points. The points level for any course is set by the number of applications for the course, the points scored by the candidates in the examination and the available number of places on the course.

If VTOS participants intend using their Leaving Certificate examination results as a *means of entry* to third-level, they need to ensure they have the necessary subjects for college entry - in other words, the basic minimum entry requirements without which no applicant can be enrolled. In addition, they will need to meet the faculty requirements in terms of particular subjects and, lastly, they will need to meet specific

course requirements in terms of subjects and grades. Applicants who are ineligible for entry because of failure to meet basic college matriculation requirements, faculty requirements or course requirements are excluded no matter how high their points.

Particular attention should be paid to the present situation for entry to CAO courses as it relates to NCVA/FETAC-accredited courses, LCVP, LCA, Foundation Level Maths and Foundation Level Irish.

## **vii Access and Foundation Courses**

### **a) The ACCS Scheme**

In 1989 NCEA published a document on the *Accumulation of Credits and Certification of Subjects (ACCS)* that allows students to follow programmes for individual subjects in modular courses offered in any of the NCEA designated institutions. Certificates are issued on a subject basis on the successful completion of one or more subjects and they simultaneously accumulate credits towards a higher level NCEA award (National Certificate, National Diploma and Bachelor Degree awards).

### **b) Prior Experiential Learning**

In addition to this, further work was done to establish a system whereby credit is given for other types of learning outside the regular education system. In 1993 an NCEA policy document was published entitled *Prior Experiential Learning* (NCEA 1993). This aimed to award credit for learning done outside a college environment before enrolment on a course, in full-time employment, community work or work in the home. The learning is assessed and may entitle students to exemptions from subjects in National Certificate or Diploma or degree courses approved by the NCEA (HETAC).

**c) Foundation Certificate**

In 1998 NCEA published a document setting out the situation in relation to the Foundation Certificate. The course leading to this award lasts for one academic year or modular part-time equivalent of such. The first part of the course consists of core subject: mathematics, communications, information technology and study skills. The second part consists of elective subjects, designed to provide a foundation in particular areas such as science, engineering, cultural studies, humanities or business studies.

The Foundation Certificate is designed as one of the minimum entry requirements for admissions to National Certificate and ab initio National Diploma or Degree Courses.

Further information is contained in the NCEA's Directory of Approved Courses in Higher Education, which is published annually (NCEA 2000).

**d) University Certification of Access Courses**

Up to now universities have provided their own certification for their Access Courses/Foundation Courses/Return to Learning Courses. Examples here are TCD, NUI/UCC, NUI/UCD, NUIM and NUIG. However in November 1999 the Senate of NUI decided to grant matriculation to all students who completed an NUI Approved Access Course. The situation concerning other ACCESS courses, including the NCEA Foundation Certificate, is still under discussion by the universities.

### e) Access Officers

Most HEIs have appointed an Access Officer while some provide a monitoring system. Other colleges employ mature student tutors or have ex-students in to talk to the students. A number of current Access Officers are former VTOS co-ordinators. It is very important for the VTOS co-ordinator to make good contacts with local colleges. S/he may be able to have an input into admissions criteria and policy generally by being pro-active and providing a good liaison between mature student/disadvantaged student, local needs and college admissions policy.

### 6.3.4 Progression to Part-time Education/Distance Education

Under the provisions of the *White Paper on Adult Education: Learning for Life* VTOS graduates should be entitled to have their fees remitted when they enter part-time higher education courses offered by higher education institutions in the Republic of Ireland. This will enable many VTOS graduates to participate in higher education courses without having to move away from their local area during term time.

#### i. Age

Entry to part-time evening courses in universities and institutes of technology is generally open to those aged 20 or older.

#### ii. Availability of Part-time Courses

Almost all HEIs produce a guide to their part-time courses. The IoTs provide a vast range of courses with varying qualifications, as does the DIT in its six colleges. The independent private colleges as well as the institutes of theology and philosophy also have evening courses.

Most part-time courses are held in the evening but there is a growing trend in providing morning courses also.

### iii Distance Education

Distance learning allows students to study at a time to suit them, in a place to suit them, and at a pace that suits them with a wide range of subjects and levels to choose from. Many courses require access to a computer and to the Internet. Distance education has great potential, especially for those living in rural areas where travel can be a big obstacle to course attendance.

Aontas produced a *Directory on Distance Learning* in 1999 (Aontas 1999). The directory provides a selected list of distance education courses available in Ireland and is divided into two categories - by course provider based in Ireland and abroad. While the list is extensive there are always new courses coming on stream and so it could be useful to link it with the International Centre for Distance Learning web site at <http://www.icdl.open.ac.uk>.

### iv. Course Providers

The largest course providers in Ireland are *Oscail*, the National Distance Education Centre at DCU, Dublin 9 (telephone 01-7045481) and the *Open University*, Holbrook House, Holles Street, Dublin 2, telephone 01-6785399.

- a) **Oscail** has approximately 3,500 students from all over the country studying for diplomas and degrees at undergraduate level and post-graduate levels. Because there are no entry barriers to distance learning for adults, it enables students to study at their own pace by taking various modules. The initial option to enter Oscail's diploma/degree programmes involves taking a compulsory non-credit module of eight weeks. This introduces students to the course extent.

- ❑ BA: One of Oscail's most popular programmes is the Bachelor of Arts which requires a pass in 12-credit modules studied between February and November over a number of years. This involves eight hours study per module per week with a choice of taking from one to four modules a year. Each student has to register with one of six colleges around the country and the courses are awarded through DCU, NUI Maynooth, UCG/NUI Galway, UCC/NUI Cork, TCD and UL.
- ❑ Once you have registered with Oscail, you are assigned to a study centre but tutorials may also be held in other venues.
- ❑ Oscail also has programmes in science, nursing, accounting.

Under the provisions of the White Paper on Adult Education remission of fees for the courses run by Oscail should be available to VTOS graduates.

- b) The Open University** is the other big provider of distance learning. There are students enrolled on diplomas, advanced diplomas, degrees and postgraduate courses. Subjects include, arts and social science, computing, information technology, environmental science, child development, psychology, adult and continuing education, language and literacy, law, business management.



### 6.3.5 Financial Support for VTOS Students Progressing to Higher Education

Finance is a major issue for mature students.

#### i. Back To Education Allowance Scheme (BTEA)

The Back to Education Allowance (BTEA) of the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs (DSCFA) enables VTOS graduates to retain their social welfare payments as a third-level allowance while participating in a recognised, full-time higher education course in a university, IoT or other eligible institution.

To qualify a student must be:

- at least 21 years of age (24 for third-level post-graduate courses) and must also be in receipt of one of the following Social Welfare payments for at least six months (156 days):
  - unemployment assistance or benefit;
  - one-parent family payment;
  - farm assist.
  - carer's allowance

**or**

- be at least 18 years of age and getting one of the following social welfare payments for at least six months (156 days):
  - blind person's pension,
  - disability allowance,
  - invalidity pension
  - unemployability supplement

From September 2001 the BTEA scheme is being extended to the 18 to 20 year old group, in receipt of:

- unemployment assistance/benefit
- one parent family payment for at least six months

**and**

- who have been out of formal education for two years or more

A student must be in receipt of one of these payments *immediately prior* to starting the higher education course.

- The course must be a full-time day course approved for Higher Education Grant (HEG) or for European Structural Fund (ESF) purposes or have NCEA (HETAC) recognition;
- Time spent on VTOS, FÁS training courses or Community Employment (CE) schemes can be counted to make up the six months qualifying period;
- The student is responsible for getting a place on a relevant course;
- Once the place has been secured, s/he should then fill out the BTE1 form available from the local Social Welfare Office or from the Information Service, Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs.
- Completed application forms should be returned as follows :-
  - those on unemployment assistance/benefit to local social welfare office;
  - those in receipt of one parent family payment or blind person's pension to the Pensions Services Office, College Road, Sligo;
  - those in receipt of disability allowances, invalidity pension, unemployability supplement or carer's allowance to Social Welfare Services Office, Ballinalee Road, Longford.
- BTEA is not an unemployment payment, is not means tested and is paid at a standard rate. If a person has been on a lower rate of payment or benefit, the BTEA will be paid at the maximum standard rate of unemployment benefit. Similarly, those on one-

parent family payment, disability allowance or blind person's pension will be paid at the maximum rate of her/his current social welfare payment;

- The allowance will include increases for a qualified adult and child(ren) where applicable;
- BTEA is payable in the same way as current social welfare payments;
- BTEA is paid for the duration of the course including all holiday periods e.g. Christmas and Easter, but is also paid June through September if the course continues into the next academic year;
- BTEA is not means tested so a student can work without affecting the BTEA allowance, but will have to pay tax on earnings as normal. S/he may work unlimited hours but must maintain her/his full-time student status. S/he may also receive any maintenance grant for which s/he is eligible without affecting the BTEA allowance. However, any additional income may be assessed as means for rent/mortgage supplement;
- S/he is still entitled to any secondary benefits for which s/he is eligible e.g. fuel allowance, butter vouchers, rent/mortgage supplement, Christmas bonus under the Supplementary Welfare Allowance Scheme;
- Each student must provide a certificate from the college s/he is attending to confirm registration, commencement and attendance at the course. This must be done before the BTEA can be paid;
- If a student is getting an unemployment payment, s/he will not be required to 'sign on' at her/his local social welfare office for the duration of the course;
- With regard to post-graduate degrees, if the primary degree was obtained while participating in the Back to Education Allowance Scheme and the postgraduate course commences in the

academic year immediately following the year in which the primary degree is obtained, then the six month (156 day qualifying) condition may be waived for such students;

- ❑ If a student qualifies for credited contributions, credits will continue to be awarded while on BTEA;
- ❑ If a student is signing for unemployment credits only, while they qualify to participate in the scheme they will however not receive an allowance while on BTE;
- ❑ Students who already hold a third level qualification will find it very difficult to pursue an equivalent qualification on a BTEA. Similarly those who have a postgraduate qualification are only considered for BTEA in very exceptional circumstances;
- ❑ A student on a BTEA allowance can go to a UK college if a relevant qualification is not available here.

Further information in Leaflet SW70 available from Social Welfare Offices.

## ii. Fees and Grants

There are no fees for students studying for their first full-time undergraduate qualification in publicly funded and other designated institutions/colleges. This applies to both school leavers and mature students. The White Paper on Adult Education (Department of Education and Science 2000) proposed that fees for part-time higher education courses be remitted for people with a range of social welfare payments.

The student may qualify for a Higher Education Grant of the Department of Education and Science. Information from: DES Student Support Service at 01 8734700 (afternoons only).

- A person is considered to be a mature student for the purpose of a grant if he/she is at least 23 years on January 1<sup>st</sup> of the year of entry/re-entry to an approved course of third level education in an approved institution;
- Those wishing to pursue certificate and diploma courses should apply for a grant to their local VEC and those wishing to pursue degree courses should contact their local authority (county council, corporation);
- Applicants for a grant must satisfy the provisions of the means test. Eligibility is normally calculated by comparing the reckonable income of the applicant in the year ending April 5<sup>th</sup> of the year in which s/he enters the course with the means test tables of the scheme of that year;
- A mature student is considered to be dependent on his/her parents if s/he ordinarily resides at home with his/her parents. In such cases, the reckonable income of the parents must also be assessed;
- Mature students studying for a certificate or diploma of one, two or three years duration in an institute of technology may also be eligible for free tuition and a maintenance grant subject to a means test. These are ESF- aided programmes that provide qualifications for middle level technicians or for higher technical and business skills;
- Since December 1998, it has been decided that mature students who qualify for a grant receive the higher non-adjacent rate of grant support. The figure for 2001 was £1,882.

Further information is available from the Student Support Unit, Department of Education and Science, Floor 6, Apollo House, Tara Street, Dublin 2, telephone 01-8734700, extension 2430 or from 0506-21363, extension 1250/1251.

### iii. Student Loans

Most financial institutions such as credit unions and banks look favourably on applications for loans for education purposes. Students should shop around for the best rates and conditions.

## 6.4 Guidance for Progression from VTOS

The guidance process does not end for adult learners when they have finished their course/training under VTOS. It is important that they continue to receive guidance during the progression stage and that they are welcome to call back for advice at any time. The guidance provider / co-ordinator / tutor can facilitate the adult learner's transition to further study or employment by:

- ❑ providing information on choices;
- ❑ organising visits to colleges/employers;
- ❑ inviting in former students to talk about their experiences studying/employment;
- ❑ inviting in the Access Officer from local and other colleges to meet with prospective students;
- ❑ inviting in prospective employers are invited to talk about their organisation;

Adult learners should have some insight about the progression stage from the information provided to them over the course of their study in VTOS. Indeed many of them will have participated in work experience placements and thus have information about the world of work and the skills and competencies that are required.

Adult learners may also need assistance in developing some of the required skills, and workshops should be held on job-search skills, writing cover letters and CVs, interview and self-presentation skills, aptitude tests and selection procedures, personal development and team-working skills, etc. The workshops should include time for role-plays and for adult learners to talk about the transition and what it will mean to them and their families. Many will feel reassured hearing that others have the same fears and expectations.

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## SECTION 7

# VTOS STAFF DEVELOPMENT IN GUIDANCE

## SECTION 7

### VTOS STAFF DEVELOPMENT IN GUIDANCE

#### Overview

A guidance counsellor working in a VTOS centre has at her/his disposal a network of information and support for developing her/his guidance skills and keeping up to date with developments in the area of guidance. Where the VTOS co-ordinator and tutors are the main providers of guidance to VTOS participants they have a range of options for developing and updating their guidance skills, viz.,

- Initial training courses in guidance;
- Ongoing professional development;
- Local in-service courses funded by the Department of Education and Science;
- National courses funded by the Department of Education and Science.

#### 7.1 Guidance Networks

The guidance service in VTOS needs support and strong networks, locally and nationally, to provide the best service for the VTOS participant. The providers themselves need to link into services already available in the public, private and voluntary sector across education, training, employment, and personal guidance and counselling. They also need to keep their own skills updated. Because their remit is so broad, there may be need for some specialisation at local level which helps to formalise a system already in existence or to develop new systems. The *Educational Management of Adult Guidance Training Manual* supplies an outline of the key activities and benefits of Networking (see Appendix 7.1).

A thematic group on adult education guidance has been formed within the IGC (Institute of Guidance Counsellors) the professional body in this field. Another organisation has been recently established for guidance providers working in the labour market area - The Irish Institute of Adult Guidance Counselling. Contact Breda Long at 021-4320428.

## **7.2 Outline of Courses Available**

### **7.2.1 Initial Training Courses – Guidance and Counselling**

The following are courses recognised by the Department of Education and Science as initial training courses in guidance and counselling.

#### ***Higher Diploma in Guidance and Counselling***

Applied Psychology Department

UCC / NUI Cork

Tel: 021 4902135

The Higher Diploma in Guidance and Counselling is a one-year full-time course. Eligible applicants include graduates who have had relevant experience in teaching or community work or other persons deemed suitable by virtue of their training and experience. Applicants are selected on the basis of their curriculum vitae, referees' reports and interview.

#### **Higher Diploma in Arts: School Guidance and Counselling**

Education Department

NUI Maynooth

Co Kildare

Tel: 01 7083656

The Higher Diploma in Arts: School Guidance and Counselling is a one-year full-time course. The course is open to graduates of the NUI and those who hold an equivalent qualification. Preference will be given to those with teaching experience. Selection is on the basis of application and interview.

***Graduate Diploma in Guidance and Counselling***

Education Department

University of Limerick

Limerick

Tel: 061 202701

The Graduate Diploma in Guidance and Counselling is a two-year part-time programme. Candidates must have a degree in education / an appropriate degree and a higher diploma in education/equivalent professional teaching qualification. Selection is made on the basis of application and applicants may be required to attend for interview.

Masters Degree in Counselling

Marino Institute of Education

Griffith Avenue

Dublin 9

Telephone: 01 8057700

The Masters Degree programme is run over three years part-time with the option of continuing to do a fourth year to specialise in guidance and counselling. Entry requirements include a primary degree, Higher Diploma in Education. Selection is made on the basis of application and interview.

**Master in Education (Guidance and Counselling)**

School of Education

Trinity College Dublin

Dublin 2

Tel: 01 6081723

The guidance and counselling programme is offered as part of the two-year full-time Master in Education programme. Entry requirements include an honours degree/equivalent qualification and two years teaching experience/Higher Diploma in Education/ a degree in history, philosophy, psychology, administration or health sciences where the holder wishes to relate her/his field of competence to the practice of education. Selection will be made on the basis of application form, references and an interview.

### 7.2.2 Professional Counselling Training Courses

The following is a list of courses that are recognised as professional counselling training courses by the Irish Association for Counselling and Therapy (IACT). All of them provide opportunities for those who wish to develop their skills on a personal and/or professional basis.

Diploma in Counselling  
Social Studies Department  
Trinity College Dublin  
Dublin 2  
Tel: 01 6081985

Masters in Counselling Psychology  
Psychology Department  
Trinity College Dublin  
Dublin 2  
Tel: 01 6081886/1489

Diploma in Counselling  
Northside Counselling Service  
Coolock Development Centre  
Dublin 17.  
Tel: 01 8484789

Certificate in Gestalt Counselling

**The Irish Gestalt Centre**

**5 Abbey Street**

**Howth**

**Co. Dublin**

Tel: 01 8397960

Diploma in Counselling

Tivoli Institute

24 Clarinda Park East

Dun Laoire

Co. Dublin

Tel: 01 2809178

Diploma in Counselling

**The Counselling Centre**

**7 Fr. Matthew Street**

**Cork**

Tel: 021 273995

Diploma in Humanistic and Integrative Counselling

**Institute of Creative Counselling and Psychotherapy**

**82 Upper Georges Street**

**Dun Laoire**

**Co. Dublin**

Tel: 01 2802523

Higher Diploma in Counselling  
Department of Applied Psychology  
**UCC / NUI Cork**  
Cork  
Tel: 021 4902135

Other professional counselling courses are available in the various higher education institutions. For further information contact the education/psychology/adult education/continuing education departments of the higher education institutions. When examining the literature concerning available courses it is important to look for information on course recognition/accreditation.

### 7.2.3 Post-professional Training Courses

Masters in Science: Educational Guidance and Counselling  
School of Education  
Arts Building  
TCD  
Telephone: 01 6081723

The MSc. in Educational Guidance and Counselling is a two-year part-time course. Entry requirements include five years' experience of working in guidance and counselling. Selection is made on the basis of application and interview.

Masters Degree in Counselling  
Department of Applied Psychology  
UCC / NUI Cork  
Cork



**Telephone: 021 4902135**

The Masters Degree in Counselling is a two-year part-time course. Applicants must have a Higher Diploma in Guidance and Counselling/Higher Diploma in Gestalt Therapy/Higher Diploma in Psychology or equivalent and must have been working in a counselling/cognate area for not less than one year.

**7.2.4 Local In-service Courses**

Funding is available annually from the In-Career Development Unit of the Department of Education and Science through the National Co-ordinator VTOS for the provision of locally developed in-service courses on issues and topics of relevance to the professional development of VTOS personnel and to the development of the VTOS programme locally. Notice of the availability of funding and application forms are sent in January each year to Adult Education Organisers (AEOs) and VTOS co-ordinators by the National Co-ordinator VTOS.

Accordingly, VTOS co-ordinators in co-operation with the local AEO are in a position to arrange in-service courses of varying duration on the topic of guidance in their local area, independently or in association with a local or other third-level institution.

**7.2.5 National Courses funded by the Department of Education and Science****Educational Management of Adult Guidance**

NCGE, with funding from the Further Education Section of the Department of Education and Science and in association with the Education Department of NUI Maynooth, runs a course in the Educational Management of Adult Guidance in which a number of VTOS Co-ordinators have participated. This course is now in its third cycle and it is proposed to run it for a fourth cycle (2001-02). The course runs over five two-day sessions from December – May. Successful completion of the course leads to a NUI Maynooth Certificate in the Educational Management of Adult Guidance.

### 7.3 Recognition

The White Paper on Adult Education (Department of Education and Science 2000) recommends a widening of existing mechanisms in the education sector for recognition of education and training qualifications that are new to the sector. It recommends that recognition be given for the accreditation of the prior learning of many practitioners in adult education who have considerable expertise and experience, but lack formal qualifications. It also suggests that those who are working in adult education but who lack a qualification should be enabled to get certification through in-work education, block-release and in-service opportunities. It further recommends a Forum for Practitioners of Adult and Community Education and the development of organised and well recognised mechanisms for in-service training and career progression.

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# **APPENDICES 7**

## APPENDIX 7.1.....GUIDANCE NETWORKS

### Guidance Networks

The term 'Guidance Network' is used to describe the formal partnership arrangements which exists between guidance providers to offer the most effective guidance service to clients. It does not refer to informal networking and personal contacts, although these practices are in themselves very important. In some instances, guidance organisations will work together for specific purposes, and this in turn may initiate the development of a more formalised network.

A network is usually formed by a group of guidance providers from a variety of organisations who:

- have common areas of interest
- shared aims and objectives
- wish to develop their service to clients through an exchange of information and experience
- establish new and effective working links with agencies who may have previously been unknown to them. A characteristic of a guidance network is that it will result in more effective joint working practices for both practitioners and their organisations.

#### Activities of a Network

The key activities of a guidance network are:

Avoiding duplication:

- establishing systems of collection and circulation of information
- creating an awareness of the services of other guidance practitioners
- enabling the operation of effective client referral systems.

Organising collaborative staff development:

- sharing resources and expertise
- improving working relationships and trust amongst practitioners.

Developing a local co-ordinated approach to guidance issues:

- collaborative working on specific projects which will benefit members and their clients of common concern
- identifying gaps in provision
- enabling a joint feedback and representation to providers and appropriate local and national bodies
- joint decision-making which encourages complementary policies.

Improving the quality of guidance services delivery:

- establishing an agreed Code of Practice
- effective use of resources
- setting quality standards.

### **Benefits of Networking**

Organisations who participate in guidance networks will recognise the following benefits for membership:

- exchange of information, knowledge and ideas with other members
- sharing good practice
- efficient use of resources
- collaborative staff development
- opportunities for joint-working projects
- mutual support
- effective referral systems
- joint marketing and publicity
- participation in joint promotional events
- pressure group support.

Clients will benefit from:

- a comprehensive guidance service
- effective systems of referral
- easy access to guidance services
- a quality delivery of guidance services.

These and other benefits of networking have been generally accepted in research materials and reinforced by organisations and individuals actively involved in the networking process.

## **SECTION 8**

# ***RESOURCES***

## SECTION 8

### RESOURCES

#### OVERVIEW

This section provides a list of publications, tests, videos and websites that are available for those with a guidance role in VTOS. It is by no means exhaustive but may provide a useful starting point.

#### 8.1 Publications

Douglas, Arlene and Séamus O'Neill, (2000). *The Essential Work Experience Handbook*, Dublin: Gill & Macmillan.

Duddy, Joseph and Richard Keane, (2001). *Student Yearbook and Career Directory*, Dublin: Student Yearbook Ltd.

Herr, Edwin L and Stanley H. Cramer, (1996). *Career Guidance and Counselling Through the Lifespan*, 5<sup>th</sup> Ed. New York: Longman.

Ivey, Allen E., Bradford Ivey, Mary and Lynn Simek-Morgan, (1996). *Counselling and Psychotherapy: A Multicultural Perspective*, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed. Massachusetts: Allyn & Bacon.

Kelleher, Roisin, (2001). *Courses and Careers Calendar*, Cork: Aisling Publications.

Kennedy, Eugene and Sara C. Charles, (1990). *On Becoming a Counsellor : A Basic Guide for Non Professional Counsellors*. Malaysia: Newleaf..



O'Brien, Hanna and Gerard Blanche (2001). *Issues and Needs in Adult Guidance and Counselling in CDVEC*. Dublin: CDVEC.

NCGE, (1998). *Guidance in Adult and Continuing Education*. Dublin: NCGE.

Watts, A.G. and John McCarthy, (1998). *Training in Community Based Guidance*. Dublin: NCGE.

## 8.2 Tests

When considering the tests below it is important to keep in mind whether they are standardised or not.

What does the term 'standardised test' imply?

It implies that:

- ❑ There are standard/fixed conditions for administration and scoring;
- ❑ It has been constructed by professional test makers in line with best practice for estimating reliability and validity;
- ❑ It has been administered to a representative sample (standardisation group) from the population for whom the test is intended;
- ❑ Norms are computed from the raw scores produced by the test.

Norms are used for interpreting the scores of subsequent test takers. Inferences can be made from the test scores of good quality standardised tests.

Non-standardised tests are usually constructed by an individual in an informal manner. The availability of such tests is increasing with developments in computer software. Either anecdotal evidence or no evidence is provided as to their usefulness. When purchasing such tests, it is a case of *buyer beware*. When using such tests to help adult learners make decisions there is a professional responsibility on the administrator to point out that these tests have not been standardised.

**GENERAL – PERSONAL INVENTORY AND JOB OPPORTUNITIES**

<b>Test</b>	<b>Target group</b>	<i>Features</i>	<i>Distributor</i>	<b>Cost</b>
Hollands SDS: Form CP	Adults	Assesses career interests and abilities. Links interests to jobs	Psychological Assessment Resources, Inc	\$158
Hollands SDS: Form E	Adults with limited reading skills	Assesses career interests and abilities. Links interests to jobs	Psychological Assessment Resources, Inc	\$124
Adult Directions Multimedia	Adults	Career suggestions based on user's likes/dislikes. Information on over 700 careers. Articles on employment and training issues	CASCAiD	£189 pa
Careerscape Multimedia	Age 13 up	Careers information on over 700 careers Articles on employment, education and training. Subject link articles	CASCAiD	£45 pa
CareerSphere Website:	Age 13 up	Careers information on over 700 careers Articles on employment, education and training.	CASCAiD	See <a href="http://www.cascaid.co.uk">www.cascaid.co.uk</a> for more information
PATHFINDER	Age 16 up	Psychometric test of interests and a job suggestion programme. Matches interests, abilities, skills and work style preferences to occupations	JIG-CAL	£175 for a stand-alone license for use up to 4 computers (pa)
FEATS	Young people and adults	Helps make decisions on personal ability, interests, preferred learning style and motivation.	NFER-NELSON	Contact 0044 1753 850333 for pricing
Odyssey	Students and adults	Information on over 640 occupations and general careers information. Identifies preferred work environment.	JIG-CAL	£110 for a stand-alone license (one) – (pa)

**PERSONALITY ASSESSMENT**

16 Personality Factor (PF)	Adults	Questionnaire made up of 16 primary factors. Five forms available according to reading level of respondent.	NFER-NELSON	0044 1753 827317
PIN-POINT	Adults	Focuses on identifying 11 personality dimensions valuable in the workplace	NFER-NELSON	0044 1753 827317
Occupational Personality Profile (OPP)	Adults	Measures nine core traits relevant to occupational assessment 15-20 administration time		

**SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS / LEARNING DIFFICULTIES**

Assessability	Post 16 students with special educational needs and older people with learning difficulties	Uses pictures, sound and video and offers assessments in literacy and numeracy. Attributes and abilities in verbal memory and logical reasoning assessed. Measures basic skills and a range of cognitive abilities	NFER-NELSON and SEMERC	0044 1753 827317
Skillscape	Post 16, adult returners	2 levels of difficulty – literacy and numeracy skills assesses suitability for further education	NFER-NELSON	0044 1753 827317
Dyslexia Screening Tests	16 years and over	Dyslexia screening test Indicates the need for further testing. Yields a profile of strengths and weaknesses - useful guide for determining type of intervention.	The Psychological Corporation	00 44 20 74244517

### 8.3 VIDEOS

Accessing third-level education in Ireland	AHEAD
CAO/CAS Video	CAO
Job Interviews for School Leavers	Classroom Video
My Names Not Down	Youthstart and DES
FÁS Opportunities	FÁS
Engineering a Career	FÁS
PLCs	Dublin CDU/CDVEC
The Real World: Guide to Interview Techniques	An Post
The Right Track	DES
Training for Adults	CERT
Work Experience	Trotman

## Guidance Related Web Sites

(Compiled by the NCGE and the NCTE – Updated 14/02/00)

Irish Organisations	
An Bord Altranais: The Irish Nursing Board	<a href="http://www.nursingboard.ie">http://www.nursingboard.ie</a>
ASTI	<a href="http://www.asti.ie">http://www.asti.ie</a>
Central Applications Office (CAO)	<a href="http://www.cao.ie">http://www.cao.ie</a>
CERT – The State Tourism Training Agency	<a href="http://www.cert.ie">http://www.cert.ie</a>
Department of Education and Science	<a href="http://www.irlgov.ie/educ">http://www.irlgov.ie/educ</a>
Enterprise Ireland	<a href="http://www.enterprise-ireland.com">http://www.enterprise-ireland.com</a>
FÁS	<a href="http://www.fas.ie">http://www.fas.ie</a>
FORFÁS	<a href="http://www.forfas.ie">http://www.forfas.ie</a>
Higher Education Authority	<a href="http://www.hea.ie">http://www.hea.ie</a>
IBEC	<a href="http://www.ibec.ie">http://www.ibec.ie</a>
IDA Ireland	<a href="http://www.idaireland.com">http://www.idaireland.com</a>
Information Society Commission	<a href="http://www.infosoccomm.ie">http://www.infosoccomm.ie</a>
Institute of Guidance Counsellors	<a href="http://kola.dcu.ie/~igc">http://kola.dcu.ie/~igc</a>
International Education Board of Ireland	<a href="http://www.iebi.ie">http://www.iebi.ie</a>
International English Language Centre Ireland	<a href="http://homepage.eircom.net/~englishlc">http://homepage.eircom.net/~englishlc</a>
INTO	<a href="http://www.into.ie">http://www.into.ie</a>
Irish Defence Forces	<a href="http://www.military.ie/">http://www.military.ie/</a>
Léargas	<a href="http://www.leargas.ie">http://www.leargas.ie</a>
National Adult Literacy Agency	<a href="http://www.nala.ie/">http://www.nala.ie/</a>
National Centre for Guidance in Education	<a href="http://ireland.iol.ie/ncge/">http://ireland.iol.ie/ncge/</a>
National Centre for Technology in Education	<a href="http://www.ncte.ie">http://www.ncte.ie</a>
National Council for Vocational Awards	<a href="http://www.ncva.ie/">http://www.ncva.ie/</a>
National Parents Council Post Primary	<a href="http://www.npcpp.ie">http://www.npcpp.ie</a>
Pavee Point Travellers Centre	<a href="http://homepages.iol.ie/~pavee">http://homepages.iol.ie/~pavee</a>
ScoilNet	<a href="http://www.scoilnet.ie">http://www.scoilnet.ie</a>
Teagasc	<a href="http://www.teagasc.ie/">http://www.teagasc.ie/</a>
The Arts Council	<a href="http://www.artscouncil.ie">http://www.artscouncil.ie</a>
The Economic and Social Research Institute	<a href="http://www.esri.ie">http://www.esri.ie</a>
TROCAIRE	<a href="http://www.trocaire.org">http://www.trocaire.org</a>
TUI	<a href="http://www.tui.ie">http://www.tui.ie</a>
William Glasser Institute Ireland	<a href="http://indigo.ie/~irti/index.htm">http://indigo.ie/~irti/index.htm</a>
Irish Resources	
Calendar of Career Events	<a href="http://kola.dcu.ie/~calendar">http://kola.dcu.ie/~calendar</a>
CAO On-line Application System	<a href="http://www.scoilnet.ie/cao">http://www.scoilnet.ie/cao</a>
CareerNet	<a href="http://www.iol.ie/careernet/">http://www.iol.ie/careernet/</a>
Careers World	<a href="http://www.careersworld.com">http://www.careersworld.com</a>
CollegesWeb	<a href="http://www.collegesweb.com/">http://www.collegesweb.com/</a>
DORAS Directory	<a href="http://www.doras.ie">http://www.doras.ie</a>
Gaelscoileanna	<a href="http://www.iol.ie/gaelscoileanna">http://www.iol.ie/gaelscoileanna</a>
GAIRM	<a href="http://www.fas.ie">http://www.fas.ie</a>
Irish Internet Yellow Pages	<a href="http://www.nci.ie/yellow">http://www.nci.ie/yellow</a>
Irish Jobs Page	<a href="http://www.exp.ie">http://www.exp.ie</a>

Jobfinder	<a href="http://www.jobfinder.ie">http://www.jobfinder.ie</a>
Orange Jobs	<a href="http://www.orangejobs.com/">http://www.orangejobs.com/</a>
Qualifax	<a href="http://kola.dcu.ie/~qualifax">http://kola.dcu.ie/~qualifax</a>
TAPS – Technology Awareness Programme	<a href="http://www.it-tallaght.ie/taps/index.html">http://www.it-tallaght.ie/taps/index.html</a>
The Irish Times	<a href="http://www.ireland.com">http://www.ireland.com</a>
<b>Irish Higher Education Institutions</b>	
All Hallows College	<a href="http://www.allhallows.ie/">http://www.allhallows.ie/</a>
American College Dublin	<a href="http://www.acdireland.edu/">http://www.acdireland.edu/</a>
Ballsbridge College of Further Education	<a href="http://www.iol.ie/~bbcoll/">http://www.iol.ie/~bbcoll/</a>
Bray Institute of Further Education	<a href="http://www.iol.ie/~bife/">http://www.iol.ie/~bife/</a>
Coláiste Mhuire, Marino (Institute of Education)	<a href="http://www.naisa.com/marino.htm">http://www.naisa.com/marino.htm</a>
Cork Institute of Technology	<a href="http://www.cit.ie/">http://www.cit.ie/</a>
Dublin Business School	<a href="http://www.dbs.edu/">http://www.dbs.edu/</a>
Dublin City University	<a href="http://www.dcu.ie/">http://www.dcu.ie/</a>
Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies	<a href="http://www.dias.ie/">http://www.dias.ie/</a>
Dublin Institute of Technology	<a href="http://www.dit.ie/">http://www.dit.ie/</a>
Dundalk Institute of Technology	<a href="http://www.dkit.ie/">http://www.dkit.ie/</a>
Froebel College of Education	<a href="http://aoife.indigo.ie/~froebel/">http://aoife.indigo.ie/~froebel/</a>
Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology	<a href="http://www.gmit.ie/">http://www.gmit.ie/</a>
Griffith College Dublin	<a href="http://indigo.ie/~griffith/">http://indigo.ie/~griffith/</a>
Institute of Technology, Athlone	<a href="http://www.ait.ie/">http://www.ait.ie/</a>
Institute of Technology, Blanchardstown	<a href="http://www.itb.ie/">http://www.itb.ie/</a>
Institute of Technology, Carlow	<a href="http://www.itcarlow.ie/">http://www.itcarlow.ie/</a>
Institute of Technology, Sligo	<a href="http://www.itsligo.ie/">http://www.itsligo.ie/</a>
Institute of Technology, Tallaght	<a href="http://www.it-tallaght.ie/">http://www.it-tallaght.ie/</a>
Institute of Technology, Tralee	<a href="http://www.ittralee.ie/">http://www.ittralee.ie/</a>
Irish School of Landscape Painting	<a href="http://indigo.ie/~swebb/">http://indigo.ie/~swebb/</a>
L S B College	<a href="http://www.lsb.ie/">http://www.lsb.ie/</a>
Letterkenny Institute of Technology	<a href="http://www.lvit.ie">http://www.lvit.ie</a>
Limerick Institute of Technology	<a href="http://www.lit.ie/">http://www.lit.ie/</a>
St. Louise's School of Nursing	<a href="http://homepage.tinet.ie/~stlou/">http://homepage.tinet.ie/~stlou/</a>
Mary Immaculate College	<a href="http://www.mic.ul.ie/">http://www.mic.ul.ie/</a>
Mater Dei Institute of Education	<a href="http://www.materdei.ie/">http://www.materdei.ie/</a>
Milltown Institute of Theology & Philosophy	<a href="http://www.milltown-institute.ie/">http://www.milltown-institute.ie/</a>
National College of Art and Design	<a href="http://www.ncad.ie/">http://www.ncad.ie/</a>
National College of Ireland (NCI)	<a href="http://www.ncirl.ie/">http://www.ncirl.ie/</a>
National Distance Education Centre	<a href="http://www.dcu.ie/ndec/index.html">http://www.dcu.ie/ndec/index.html</a>
National University of Ireland, Galway (NUIG)	<a href="http://www.ucg.ie/">http://www.ucg.ie/</a>
National University of Ireland, Maynooth (NUIM)	<a href="http://www.mav.ie/">http://www.mav.ie/</a>
Portobello College, Dublin	<a href="http://www.portobello.ie/">http://www.portobello.ie/</a>
Queens University, Belfast	<a href="http://www.qub.ac.uk/">http://www.qub.ac.uk/</a>
Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland	<a href="http://www.rcsi.ie/">http://www.rcsi.ie/</a>
Senior College Ballyfermot	<a href="http://www.scb.ie/">http://www.scb.ie/</a>
Senior College Dun Laoghaire	<a href="http://www.scd.ie/">http://www.scd.ie/</a>
Senior College Rathmines	<a href="http://www.cdvec.ie/">http://www.cdvec.ie/</a>
Senior College Sallynoggin	<a href="http://www.scs.dife.ie/">http://www.scs.dife.ie/</a>
Shannon College of Hotel Management	<a href="http://www.shannoncollege.com/schm.htm">http://www.shannoncollege.com/schm.htm</a>

St. Angela's College of Education, Sligo	<a href="http://ireland.iol.ie/~stang/">http://ireland.iol.ie/~stang/</a>
St. John's College, Waterford	<a href="http://ireland.iol.ie/~patb/">http://ireland.iol.ie/~patb/</a>
St. Patrick's College (Pontifical University)	<a href="http://www.may.ie/pontifical/main.html">http://www.may.ie/pontifical/main.html</a>
St. Patrick's College of Education, Drumcondra	<a href="http://www.spd.dcu.ie">http://www.spd.dcu.ie</a>
Tipperary Rural and Business Development Institute	<a href="http://www.trbdi.ie/">http://www.trbdi.ie/</a>
Trinity College (University of Dublin)	<a href="http://www.tcd.ie/">http://www.tcd.ie/</a>
University College Cork (NUI)	<a href="http://www.ucc.ie/">http://www.ucc.ie/</a>
University College Dublin (NUI)	<a href="http://www.ucd.ie/">http://www.ucd.ie/</a>
University of Limerick (UL)	<a href="http://www.ul.ie/">http://www.ul.ie/</a>
University of Ulster (at Belfast)	<a href="http://www.ulst.ac.uk/">http://www.ulst.ac.uk/</a>
Waterford Institute of Technology	<a href="http://www.wit.ie/">http://www.wit.ie/</a>
Waterford School of Nursing	<a href="http://www.iol.ie/~ronniest/">http://www.iol.ie/~ronniest/</a>
West of Ireland Schools of English	<a href="http://www.wiseireland.com/">http://www.wiseireland.com/</a>
<b>International Organisations</b>	
Australian School Counsellors	<a href="http://www.acr.net.au/~counsellors/">http://www.acr.net.au/~counsellors/</a>
Careers Research and Advisory Centre	<a href="http://www.crac.org.uk/">http://www.crac.org.uk/</a>
Educational Resources Information Centre	<a href="http://www.accesseric.org:81/">http://www.accesseric.org:81/</a>
EUropean Employment Services (EURES)	<a href="http://europa.eu.int/jobs/eures">http://europa.eu.int/jobs/eures</a>
European Commission Representation in Ireland	<a href="http://www.cec.ie">http://www.cec.ie</a>
National Association of Careers and Guidance Teachers (UK)	<a href="http://www.nacgt.org.uk/">http://www.nacgt.org.uk/</a>
School Counsellors Association of Newfoundland	<a href="http://www.stemnet.nf.ca/Organizations/SCAN/">http://www.stemnet.nf.ca/Organizations/SCAN/</a>
The Open University	<a href="http://www.open.ac.uk">http://www.open.ac.uk</a>
UCAS – UK College Applications:	<a href="http://wwwucas.ac.uk/">http://wwwucas.ac.uk/</a>
UK Department of Education and Employment	<a href="http://www.open.gov.uk/dfee/dfeehome.htm">http://www.open.gov.uk/dfee/dfeehome.htm</a>
UK Institute of Career Guidance	<a href="http://www.icg-uk.org/">http://www.icg-uk.org/</a>
<b>International Resources</b>	
BBC Education Page	<a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/education">http://www.bbc.co.uk/education</a>
British University Information	<a href="http://www.cvc.ac.uk">http://www.cvc.ac.uk</a>
Canadian Resource	<a href="http://crc.ipunet.com">http://crc.ipunet.com</a>
Career Perfect	<a href="http://www.careerperfect.com/">http://www.careerperfect.com/</a>
Career Resource Centre	<a href="http://www.careers.org/">http://www.careers.org/</a>
CareerMosaic	<a href="http://www.careermosaic.com/">http://www.careermosaic.com/</a>
Careersoft	<a href="http://www.careersoft.co.uk">http://www.careersoft.co.uk</a>
Eccdis – UK Course Discover	<a href="http://www.eccdis.co.uk">http://www.eccdis.co.uk</a>
ESTIA	<a href="http://www.estia.educ.goteborg.se/">http://www.estia.educ.goteborg.se/</a>
Embark.com	<a href="http://www.embark.com/">http://www.embark.com/</a>
Guideline Career Services	<a href="http://www.guideline-careers.co.uk/">http://www.guideline-careers.co.uk/</a>
JIG-CAL	<a href="http://www.jig.ed.ac.uk">http://www.jig.ed.ac.uk</a>
My Future - US Online Career Advice site	<a href="http://www.myfuture.com">http://www.myfuture.com</a>
Onlineprofiles.com	<a href="http://www.onlineprofiles.com/">http://www.onlineprofiles.com/</a>
Progressions	<a href="http://www.progressions.co.uk">http://www.progressions.co.uk</a>
Prospects	<a href="http://www.prospects.csu.co.uk">http://www.prospects.csu.co.uk</a>
The Assessment Network	<a href="http://www.assessment.co.uk/">http://www.assessment.co.uk/</a>
The Riley Guide Employment Opportunities	<a href="http://www.ddm.com/jobguide/index.html">http://www.ddm.com/jobguide/index.html</a>
US Careers Resource Centre	<a href="http://www.uscareers.com/">http://www.uscareers.com/</a>



<b>ADULT GUIDANCE RELATED SITES</b>	
AONTAS	<a href="http://www.aontas.com">http://www.aontas.com</a>
Basic Skills Agency (UK)	<a href="http://www.basic-skills.co.uk">http://www.basic-skills.co.uk</a>
British web resources re careers information (based on Italian site)	<a href="http://www.aiuto.net/uk.htm">http://www.aiuto.net/uk.htm</a>
Combat Poverty	<a href="http://www.cpa.ie">http://www.cpa.ie</a>
Consumer's Association of Ireland	<a href="http://www.consumerassociation.ie">http://www.consumerassociation.ie</a>
Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs	<a href="http://www.welfare.ie">http://www.welfare.ie</a>
Eircom Learning Site	<a href="http://www.eircomlearning.ie">http://www.eircomlearning.ie</a>
Infosites (Ireland) guidance links	<a href="http://www.infosites.net/education">http://www.infosites.net/education</a>
Institute of Careers Guidance (UK)	<a href="http://www.icg-uk.org">http://www.icg-uk.org</a>
Irelands On-line Guidance to Day and Evening Courses	<a href="http://www.absoluted.com/education">http://www.absoluted.com/education</a>
Learning Direct (UK initiative)	<a href="http://www.learningdirect.org">http://www.learningdirect.org</a>
Mental Health Association of Ireland	<a href="http://www.mensana.org">http://www.mensana.org</a>
National Rehabilitation Board (NRB)	<a href="http://www.nrb.ie">http://www.nrb.ie</a>
National Social Service Board	<a href="http://www.nssb.ie">http://www.nssb.ie</a>
Nottingham university (worldwide careers links)	<a href="http://www.unn.ac.uk/academic/hswc/careers/links.html">http://www.unn.ac.uk/academic/hswc/careers/links.html</a>
The Guidance Council (UK)	<a href="http://www.guidancecouncil.com">http://www.guidancecouncil.com</a>
The Learning Exchange	<a href="http://www.learningexchange.co.uk">http://www.learningexchange.co.uk</a>
The Life Long Learning Agency (UK)	<a href="http://www.lifelonglearning.co.uk">http://www.lifelonglearning.co.uk</a>

# **APPENDICES 8**

## APPENDIX 8a Identification of Needs Form

### SAMPLE

#### IDENTIFICATION OF LEARNING SUPPORT NEEDS ON THE BASIS OF INITIAL ASSESSMENT GIVEN ON ENTRY

KEY SKILLS ASSESSMENT		
Level sufficient at entry?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/> Evidence:
If NO - outcome of initial assessment:		

Details of support required:
Action:
Signed Student: _____ Signed Lecturer/Personal Tutor: _____

#### IDENTIFICATION OF ADDITIONAL NEEDS

Details of support required:
Action:
Signed Student: _____ Signed Lecturer/Personal Tutor: _____

**LEARNING PATHWAY**

COURSE TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_ YEAR: \_\_\_\_\_

START DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ END DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**COURSE DETAILS (MAIN PROGRAMME)**

Subjects/Units	Lecturer's name	Level	Start Date	End Date	Hours per week	Date/Grade Achieved
<b>TOTAL</b>						

**KEY SKILLS**

Subjects/Units	Lecturer's name	Level	Start Date	End Date	Hours per week	Date/Grade Achieved
<b>TOTAL</b>						

**SUPPLEMENTARY PROGRAMME**

Subjects/Units	Lecturer's name	Level	Start Date	End Date	Hours per week	Date/Grade Achieved
<b>TOTAL</b>						



## APPENDIX 8d Progress Review Form

### SAMPLE

#### PROGRESS REVIEW

Student name: \_\_\_\_\_

Personal Tutor: \_\_\_\_\_

Programme: \_\_\_\_\_

Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Review date: _____	
Personal Tutor's Comments:	Student Response:
Agreed Student Action:	
Signed Student: _____	Signed Personal Tutor:

