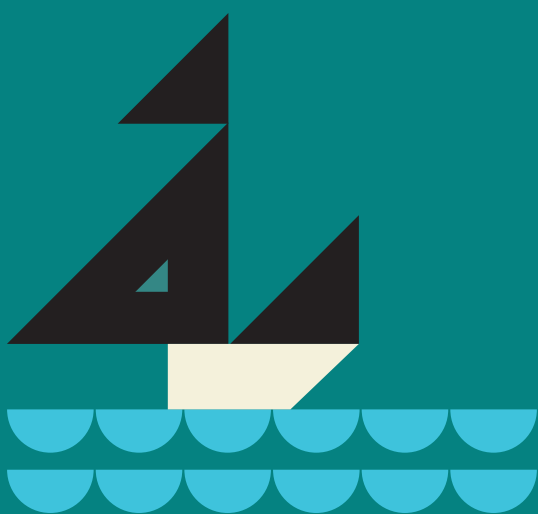


1,2,3 of **Policy**

Linking your
Erasmus+
Vocational
Education and
Training Project
to National and
European Policy





Erasmus+ Policy Series

What is policy?

Policy is the set of values and objectives that guide the work of organisations and bodies. This includes, for example, the Irish Government and the European Union.

Why is policy important?

Policy is important because it tells us what certain organisations and bodies plan to achieve and how they will be guided in their work.

Take Government policy for example: Government policy tells us what the Government's priorities are and what it plans to accomplish. It sets out the commitments it is making on a range of different issues.

For example education and training, employment, mental health, the rights of people with disabilities, migration and so forth.



National Policy



National VET Policy

Our Government has a number of important policy documents that set out what it plans to do in the field of VET in Ireland. The main policy documents are:

Further Education and Training Strategy (2014-2019) was the Government's first five-year strategy in the field of Further Education and Training (FET). The overall aim of the Strategy was to develop a world-class integrated system of FET in Ireland that promotes economic development whilst meeting the needs of all citizens. The Strategy has five main goals:

SKILLS FOR THE ECONOMY: FET will address the current and future needs of learners, jobseekers, employers and employees. It will contribute to national economic development

ACTIVE INCLUSION: FET provision will support the active inclusion of people of all abilities in society with special reference to literacy and numeracy

QUALITY PROVISION: FET will provide high quality education and training programmes and will meet the appropriate national and international quality standards

INTEGRATED PLANNING AND FUNDING: FET provision will be planned and funded on the basis of objective analysis of needs and evidence of economic and social impact

STANDING OF FET: ensure a valued learning path leading to agreed employment, career, developmental, personal and social options.

Statement of Strategy- FET 2021-2023

The Government launched a three-year Strategy for the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science in 2021. This Strategy sets out several of the department's ambitions including their aim to:

- Implement a new 10-year Strategy to improve literacy, numeracy, and digital skills
 - Reform skills training and invest in upskilling and reskilling opportunities
 - Overhaul the Apprenticeship system and develop a new plan to increase apprenticeship registrations to 10,000 each year
 - Implement a new Access Plan for higher education and review the Student Grant Scheme
 - Develop initiatives to ensure that the Irish workforce has the right skills in the aftermath of the pandemic
-

National Skills Strategy 2025 - Ireland's Future sets out the Government's plans for improving and using skills for sustainable economic growth. It aims to ensure increased access to high quality and relevant education and training and skills development opportunities.

Objectives of the strategy include, but are not limited to:

- Education and training providers will place a stronger focus on providing skills development opportunities relevant to the needs of learners, society and the economy
- The quality of teaching and learning at all stages of education will be continually enhanced and evaluated
- People across Ireland will engage more in lifelong learning
- There will be active inclusion measures to support participation in education and training and the labour market.

Future FET: Transforming Learning was launched in 2020 and sets out a five-year roadmap for the further education sector that is built around three pillars:

- Building skills
- Fostering inclusion
- Creating pathways

This Strategy aims to address the economic and societal challenges that will be faced in the coming years in the post-Covid era.

Pathways to Work (2021-2025) is the government's national employment services strategy and follows on from Pathways to Work (2016-2020). The aim of this Strategy is to assist people back to work as the economy and labour market recover from Covid-19.

This Strategy is a key part of the Economic Recovery Plan and has five strands of action:

- Working for Jobseekers
- Working for Employers
- Working for Work
- Working for All- Leaving No one Behind
- Working with Evidence

Action Plan for Jobs (2018) outlines the Government's joined-up approach to maximising employment across Ireland. Aims of the 2018 Plan include:

- Ireland's enterprise base remains successful amid the uncertainty of Brexit
- All parts of the country achieve their potential in terms of job creation
- Those entering, re-entering and in the workforce have the incentives and skills needed to prosper
- Ireland's enterprise base remains successful with a focus on competitiveness, productivity and innovation.

The Plan includes reference to the Regional Skills Fora and their role in linking companies with higher education, further education and training institutions, encouraging collaborative solutions to skills needs.

Apprenticeship Action Plan (2021-2025) was launched in April 2021. The Irish Government aims to increase the footprint of apprenticeship within the education landscape over the coming five years to ensure that apprenticeships are open and accessible. Some key elements of this plan include:

- Deliver 10,000 apprenticeship registrations annually over a five-year period
 - Increased support for employers to engage with apprenticeship schemes
 - Better information for learners seeking information about apprenticeships
 - A central National Apprenticeship Office to bring together existing expertise across the system
 - A National Apprenticeship Alliance to include the voices of all stakeholders.
-

How does your Erasmus+ project link to national policy?

The projects and activities that take place as part of Erasmus+ can help to achieve national policy objectives in VET. For example:

- Erasmus+ prioritises projects focused on inclusion (National Skills Strategy, FET Strategy)
- Erasmus+ projects can develop new and innovative ways to ensure that VET provision is meeting the needs of learners, employers, workers, and jobseekers (National Skills Strategy, Pathways to Work, Action Plan for Jobs).



European Policy



European VET Policy

Like our own Government, the EU also has several important policy documents in the field of VET. These documents set out the EU's priorities and commitments on VET in Europe. Some of the main policy documents are:

Europe 2020 is the EU's plan to promote smart, sustainable and inclusive economic growth. It sets targets for employment, research and development, climate/energy, education, social inclusion, and poverty reduction.

EU VET policy and Covid-19 recovery efforts was an agenda put forward by the European Commission in 2020 to guide Covid-19 recovery efforts in the field of employment and social policy.

These efforts include:

- The **Commission Communication on a European Skills Agenda** for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness, and resilience. This Communication puts forward 12 EU actions aiming to support partnerships for skills, upskilling, reskilling, and empowering lifelong learning.
 - There was also a proposal from the **Commission for a Council Recommendation on vocational education and training** for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness, and resilience. This proposal seeks to ensure that VET equips both the young and old workforce with the skills to support the Covid-19 recovery and the green and digital transitions in a socially equitable way. This was adopted by the Council in 2020.
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Recommendation on VET

In 2020, the Council of the European Union adopted a **Recommendation on VET** for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness, and resilience. This Recommendation replaces EQAVET- European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training.

This Recommendation has a few aims:

- To place focus on the increased flexibility of vocational education and training
 - To increase opportunities for work-based learning, apprenticeships, and improved quality assurance.
-

Osnabrück Declaration 2020 was established to promote vocational education training as a facilitator of recovery and to allow transitions to digital and green economies. It sets out new policy actions for the period of 2021-2025. Some commitments include:

- Promoting resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET
 - Establishing a new lifelong learning culture emphasizing the relevance of C-VET and digitalisation
 - Fostering the sustainability of VET
 - Developing a European Education and Training Area and international VET.
-

The New Skills Agenda for Europe (2016) sets out 10 actions to make the right training, skills and support available to people in the EU. The actions are designed to:

- Improve the quality and relevance of training and other ways of acquiring skills
 - Make skills more visible and comparable
 - Improve information and understanding of trends and patterns in demands for skills and jobs to enable people make better career choices, find quality jobs and improve their life chances.
-

The European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) is a framework for the transfer, recognition and accumulation of an individual's learning outcomes with a view to achieving a qualification. It aims to:

- Make it easier for people to get validation and recognition of work-related skills and knowledge gained in different systems and countries, so they can count towards vocational qualifications
 - Make it more attractive to move between different VET systems around Europe, and the qualifications they offer
 - Increase the employability of VET graduates and the confidence of employers that each VET qualification requires specific skills and knowledge.
-

How does your Erasmus+ project link to European policy?

The projects and activities that take place as part of Erasmus+ are an important way of helping to achieve the aims and objectives of the EU policies listed above. Just some examples:

- Erasmus+ prioritises projects that address the issue of inclusion (Europe 2020)
- Erasmus+ supports people to spend time abroad to train and upskill (The Osnabrück Declaration)
- Erasmus+ projects provide opportunities for different organisations to collaborate in order to develop new methods to improve information, quality and relevance of training (New Skills Agenda for Europe 2016)
- Erasmus+ provides opportunities to gain knowledge and skills in different systems and countries (linked to ECVET).

Connections between national and European policy

We can see that our own Government and the EU want to realise similar things in VET. For example:

- Social inclusion and equality of opportunity
- Providing quality teaching and learning in VET
- Ensuring needs-based provision of VET
- Improving the standing of VET and its attractiveness to employers.

Your Erasmus+ VET project can develop new and innovative ways to achieve the priorities that are set out in national or EU policy, helping to make positive changes in VET, be that at a local, national or international level.

Get in touch

For support with your Erasmus+ project in Ireland contact the Léargas Programmes Support & Development Team:

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