

01-November-2010

A Chara,

As you may be aware the aim of the Back To Education Initiative is to offer flexible learning opportunities to young people and adults. The BTEI commenced in County Clare in March 2003. Since then upward on 2000 students have registered for a wide variety of courses under the auspices of the BTEI.

Submissions have now been requested from the Further Education and Development Unit of the Department of Education & Skills for the forthcoming year. To ensure that the County maintains and improves on its current quota, I am inviting you to participate in this year's submission.

If you are interested in making a submission for courses, application forms are available on Co. Clare VEC's website www.clarevec.ie or on www.clarelearningnetwork.org.

I would appreciate if you would forward the following documentation to me either by hardcopy at the Adult & Community Education Centre, Clonroad Business Park, Ennis, or by email, mryan@clarevec.ie before Friday November 26th 2010.

- a) Completed Proposed Course Sheet(s).
- b) Short explanation supporting your proposals (less than a page).
- c) If you have already participated in the BTEI previously a short outline of the benefits to the participants.

In difficult circumstances, I would encourage that your supporting proposals be as persuasive and as strong as possible.

If you would like to discuss your proposal or any aspects of the BTEI with me, I would be more than glad to meet you. I can be contacted on 065-6897644.

Yours sincerely,

Mike Ryan
BTEI CO-Ordinator.



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**BACK TO EDUCATION INITIATIVE
(BTEI)
PART-TIME PROGRAMMES**

GUIDELINES FOR THE FORMAL STRAND

Section 1 - Introduction

Since its launch in 2002, the Back to Education Initiative (Part-time) has made a major contribution to building the capacity of the formal education sector to meet the changing needs of individuals, communities and society. Part-time programmes under the Back to Education Initiative (BTEI) are designed to build on existing full-time and part-time provision under:

- Adult Literacy Services
- Community Education
- Youthreach
- Senior Traveller Training Programmes
- Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS)
- Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) Courses
- Self-funded night-classes in second-level schools and other centres

Part-time programmes under the BTEI provide:

- young people and adults with an opportunity to return to learning
- a re-entry route for those in the workplace who wish to upgrade their skills in line with emerging needs
- a chance to combine education and training with family, work and other responsibilities.

The top priorities of part-time programmes under the BTEI are to address the following issues:

- The low literacy levels of the Irish adult population
- The large number of Irish adults (1.1 million aged between 15-64 years) who have not completed upper second level education, of whom 529,600 have not completed lower second level education
- The inflexibility of the Irish education system, with its predominant emphasis on full-time provision, time specific entry and exit opportunities
- The difficulties in combining family, personal and work responsibilities with learning opportunities
- The problems in engaging with hard-to-reach groups

Section 2 - Aim and Objectives

The overall aim of the BTEI is to:

Increase the participation of young people and adults with less than upper second level education in a range of flexible learning opportunities.

More specifically the BTEI seeks to:

- Offer a wider range of choices, which are appropriate to the particular circumstances of learners
- Expand provision of courses leading to certification or accreditation at FETAC Level 3 and Level 4 or equivalent
- Offer a bridge from literacy to other programmes
- Increase participation in ICT skills training
- Promote greater synergy between different forms of provision
- Increase participation of the hard-to-reach client groups (see Section 3)
- Develop work based education and training so that people in employment can attend part-time courses and gain qualifications
- Address the skill needs of those in employment, not in the labour market, unemployed or under-employed
- Target specific skill needs as outlined in the National Skills Strategy.

Section 3 - Target Groups

Part-time programmes under the BTEI are intended to make further education more accessible generally. A high priority is to target the individuals and groups that experience particular and acute barriers to participation and are more difficult to engage in the formal learning process. These include:

- Adults and young people aged over 16 who left school with low or no formal qualifications or low literacy levels
- The long-term unemployed and those at risk of becoming long-term unemployed, especially those in the older age groups
- Those not in work but not eligible to be on the Live Register
- Those in the workplace with basic skills needs
- Disadvantaged women who have particular experience of barriers to participation
- Disadvantaged men, including those experiencing rural isolation
- Lone Parents and others with caring responsibilities that may prohibit their participation in full time courses
- Travellers
- Homeless People
- Substance Misusers
- Ex-offenders
- People with Disabilities
- People for whom English is not the mother tongue, who require literacy and language supports

Section 4 - Guiding Principles

A set of broadly agreed principles make explicit the values underpinning the BTEI and should be evident in any proposal to set up a programme. These are:

- Learner Centredness
- **Equality**
- **Accessibility and Inclusiveness**
- **Recognising and Accommodating Diversity**
- **Quality Assurance**
- **Local Consultation and an Area-based Approach**
- Innovation

4.1 Learner Centredness

Learner centredness places the learner at the centre of the learning process. The learner is supported by teachers, other learners and associated services in pursuing his/her learning objectives, *'learning as construction rather than instruction'*. Participatory models for identifying and adapting provision to learner needs are central to this process.

4.2 Equality

Equality legislation is designed to counter discrimination on the grounds of gender, marital status, family status, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion, race and membership of the Traveller community. Applied to education, the principle of equality requires that all learners be afforded the opportunity of reaching their potential in their social, cultural, political, economic and other roles. Accordingly, those providing programmes under the BTEI are expected to develop a pro-active strategy or proofing mechanism to target and prioritise those most at risk, e.g. setting out an Equality Checklist. This will assist in optimising learner access to, participation in and benefit from relevant programmes, and in counteracting barriers arising from differences of socio-economic status, gender, ethnicity and disability.

4.3 Accessibility and Inclusiveness

The principle of access and inclusiveness means that barriers to participation are removed. Under the BTEI, providers are asked to make determined efforts to meet the needs of learners for whom existing provision of long-cycle full-time courses is unsuitable and who need to combine their return to learning with family, workplace and other responsibilities. Where necessary, this will mean targeting resources at those on the margins. Geographical considerations are important in this respect.

A flexible approach to the timing of provision, entry and admission criteria, delivery methods, assessment and validation of learning, accumulation and transferability of credits and learning and other supports is encouraged.

4.4 *Recognising and Accommodating Diversity*

The principle of recognising and accommodating diversity implies a strong commitment to addressing difference and inter-culturalism, in terms of both access and service provision. Therefore, programmes should reflect and respect the cultural background of the participants they serve. Engagement with learners in regard to programme choice, content and delivery methods is essential to ensure that course participants are motivated to join and complete programmes that are relevant to their needs.

4.5 *Innovation*

Innovative approaches are important to effectively target groups whose needs are not adequately met by the existing system. Examples of innovation can include systematic outreach and recruitment strategies, partnership initiatives, distance learning, e-learning, workplace learning, community education models, flexible delivery, disciplines covered, teaching approaches and methodologies adopted.

4.6 *Local Consultation and an Area-based Approach*

Planning on a local basis, in consultation with all relevant actors and providers is essential in order to identify needs, avoid duplication and ensure that priorities are addressed. This must take account of existing local services and involve dialogue on an ongoing basis between education and training providers. In addition, the proposed programmes should be part of a coherent area-based approach to provision and be compatible with the relevant local, county and regional plans of the Local Development Agencies¹, County and City Development Boards, FAS, Adult Education Boards etc

4.7 *Quality Assurance*

Quality assurance implies a proactive quality strategy, fostering a culture of self-appraisal and review. This should include a focus on team development including release of staff for in-service training; relevant and holistic supports for participants; follow-up of participant progression; fair and appropriate assessment and certification procedures; effective networking with other agencies and monitoring and evaluation. It will also involve compliance with the reporting arrangements developed specifically for the BTEI programme.

¹ Local Development Agencies: Partnership Companies and Community Partnerships (POBAL)

Appendix 1: Guidelines for Completion of Application

General

Please refer to the BTEI (Part-time) Guidelines before completing this application (available at www.education.ie).

Section 3

The information presented in this section should underpin the complete suite of programmes proposed in Section 4 and should not be presented on a course per course basis. The information presented in this section should not exceed 8 typed pages.

Section 4

All programmes proposed for each location should be listed together in Section 4.

Please note the following:

Row 1: State the **Location** i.e. Name of Centre/Scheme and Address of proposed programmes.

Column 2: State the programme to be provided, listing similar programmes for each location together. Please note that detail on the different components to be offered within a particular programme or field of learning is not required at this stage. For example, the term 'Basic Education' may be used for courses at FETAC Levels 1, 2 & 3 offering Communications, Mathematics, IT Skills & Personal Development and the terms Business / Administration / Childcare / Health may be used to denote programmes offered in those areas.

Column 3: State name of body providing certification **and** level at which certification will be offered.

Column 4: State the total number of participants for the programme presented in Column 2.

Column 5: Insert number **1** in this column for each group for whom provision is proposed. Where a group commenced in 2010 and are continuing activity, please also insert the letter 'C'.

Column 6: State the total number of Tutor Contact Hours (tuition hours) in respect of programme shown in Column 2.

Column 7: State the total number of BTEI Participant Contact Hours in respect of the total number of participants shown in Column 4.

Column 8: State type of centre / scheme where delivery will take place, using codes listed in **Table 1** below.

Column 9: State the target group to whom the programme will be provided, using codes listed in **Table 2** below.

Please provide the total of Columns 4, 5, 6 and 7. Where more than one Section 4 page is being submitted, please provide a sub-total for each page and an overall total in respect of these columns.

Table 1: Codes for Centres / Schemes		Table 2: Codes for Target Groups			
Further Education College	FEC	One-Parent Family	OPF	Disadvantaged Men	DM
Further / Adult Education Centre	FAEC	Early School Leavers	EL	Disadvantaged Women	DW
V.T.O.S.	VTOS	Travellers	T	In Work	IW
Adult Literacy Scheme	ALS	Unemployed	UN	Mixed	M
Youthreach	YR	Persons with a Disability	DS	Where there is a mix of up to four target groups identified, the relevant codes may be listed. Where there is a mix of <u>more than four target groups identified</u> , please record as M	
Senior Traveller Training Centre	STTC	Substance Misusers	SM		
Community & Comprehensive School	CC	Second Language Speakers	ESOL		
Secondary School	SS	Homeless	HL		
Special School	SPS	Ex-offenders	EXO		
Community Location	CL	Rural	R		
Other	O				