

# **Training / Educational Options for Unemployed People**

## **Education and Training Boards (ETBs)**

- 1<sup>st</sup> July 2013 the 33 Vocational Educational Committees (VECs) were dissolved and replaced by 16 Education and Training Boards (ETBs).
- ETBs are statutory education authorities which have the responsibility for education and training and a range of other statutory functions.
- ETBs manage and operate second level-schools and further education colleges.
- ETBs also pilot a range of adult and further education centres delivering education and training programmes.

## **SOLAS**

- Solas was formally established on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2013 and operate under the aegis of the Department of Education and Skills.
- Solas is responsible for planning, funding and driving the development of a new, integrated Further Education and Training service.

## **INTREO**

- The new Intreo offices are now the first point of contact for jobseekers and are the gateway for unemployed learners seeking training support.
- Intreo is 'A one-stop shop for employment services and income supports'.
- Intreo offer help and advice on employment, training and personal development opportunities.
- Intreo personalise support to help you enter the workforce

## **Pathways to Work**

- Pathways to work is the government's policy statement on labour market activation.
- It is focussed on those who have been out of work for a year or more.
- The Department of Social Protection offers more regular and ongoing engagement with people who are unemployed
- Greater targeting of activation places and opportunities.
- Incentivising the take-up of opportunities

## **Youthreach**

- Only targets 15 to 20 year olds who have no formal qualifications

## **Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS)**

- VTOS is an educational opportunities scheme for welfare recipients (Unemployed, Lone Parents etc)
- VTOS is operated through local ETBs and is aimed at unemployed people who were early school leavers and are now aged 21 and over.
- The aim of VTOS is to give unemployed people education and training opportunities which will develop their employability.
- VTOS will prepare people to go into paid employment.
- VTOS courses are full time and will last for two years.
- VTOS courses generally are 6 hours per day 5 days per week.
- VTOS courses have **no** course fees. Course books and materials are also free.
- VTOS courses certify at differing levels from Junior Certificate up to level 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.
- To qualify for a VTOS scheme you must be at least 21 years of age and in receipt of unemployment payment or signing for credits for 6 months.
- Persons in receipt of Jobseekers Benefit (JB) or Jobseekers Allowance (JA) will receive a training rate appropriate to their current payment.
- Lunch and travel allowances are payable from the VEC dependant on circumstances. There may also be contributions for childcare.

## Post-Leaving Certificate (PLC)

- The PLC is designed for people that have finished their secondary education and wish to develop vocational and technological skills and become employable.
- PLC courses take place in schools, colleges and community education centres.
- PLC courses are full time and last between 1 and 2 years.
- PLC cover diverse areas including: business, electronics, engineering, computing, sports and leisure, journalism, tourism, marketing, etc.
- PLC offer a mixture of practical work, academic work and work experience.
- PLC are designed as a step towards skilled employment.
- Many of the one-year PLC courses offer Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) accreditation at level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications, while other more advanced courses may offer QQI at level 6, which can lead to further studies at third level.
- Fees and Charges for PLC Courses: **€200 = Participant contribution**
- You do not have to pay the contribution if you hold a full medical card, are eligible for a student grant or are getting Back to Education Allowance or a VTOS allowance
- Course Charge: Colleges offering PLC courses usually also have a 'course charge' to cover such expenses as books, uniforms, student services, professional registration fees and exam fees. The amount varies from college to college.

## Back to Education Allowance (BTEA)

- If you are unemployed, getting a One-Parent Family Payment or have a disability, you may be able to pursue approved second or third-level education courses through the Back to Education Allowance scheme.
- Persons who receive **a Statutory Redundancy payment may now apply for the Back to Education Allowance immediately.**
- Back to Education – 2 Options
- **2<sup>nd</sup> Level Option**
- You must be at least 21 years of age and in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance or Jobseeker's Benefit for at least 3 months.
- **3rd Level Option:**
- You must be at least 24 years of age and you must be getting a social welfare payment for at least 9 months immediately before you start the course.
- **N.B.** Back to Education Allowance is not payable during the summer months. You may be eligible for Jobseeker's Allowance or Jobseeker's Benefit.
- Rates: You will now get a rate equal to your previous Social Welfare payment. It will include any increases for a qualified adult and qualified children that you may be entitled to.
- Back to Education Allowance is payable in the same way as your current social welfare payment. If you are currently getting an unemployment payment and qualify for participation in the scheme, you will no longer be required to sign on at your local social welfare office. You will continue to receive credits while on the course.
- Although you are not entitled to a maintenance grant, you must still submit an on-line grant application form to SUSI to get payment of the student contribution and tuition fees.

## Solas Training Courses

- From 1 January 2014, the FÁS training division will be transferred on a phased basis to the 16 Education and Training Boards (ETBs) which replaced VECs.
- If you are unemployed or redundant or if you wish to update your skills or change your career, there is a wide range of SOLAS courses available to assist you.
- There are many courses available under 3 different types of training.
- **1. The Traineeship Programme** provides training and relevant work experience
- **2. Specific Skills Training** allows people who have lost their job or who are changing job to learn new job-related skills.

- **3. Apprenticeships** provide on-the-job training with an employer. An apprenticeship generally lasts for 4 years, during which time you will spend 3 different periods in off-the-job training in a Solas Training Centre
- A training allowance may be paid if you take part in the **Traineeship Programme** or **Specific Skills Training**. To qualify you must be getting a qualifying payment, such as Jobseeker's Allowance or Jobseeker's Benefit.
- **Maximum Rates for full-time training courses**

Age 18 – 26 years           =           €160 Max

Aged 26 +                    =           €188 Max