



Seirbhísí Fostaíochta agus Tacaíochta do Chuardaitheoirí Poist. Employment and Support Services for Jobseekers

An Roinn Coimirce Sóisialaí
Department of Social Protection



Jobseeker Information

This Jobseeker Information booklet tells you about our supports and services that can help you in your job search.

The first part of the booklet gives you practical advice on CVs, job letters and interviews. The second part tells you about allowances, schemes, grants and other supports that may help you in your job search.

Job Seeking Supports

- Intreo
- Preparing Your CV
- Filling out an Application Form
- Writing a Cover Letter
- Developing your Job Interview Skills
- Jobs Through Social Media
- Useful Jobs and Recruitment Websites
- Putting your CV on the Jobs Ireland Website

Pathways to Work

- Your Pathways to Work
- EURES Network
- Employment Supports
- Training Supports
- Income/Enterprise Supports
- Start Your Own Business
- Disability Supports
- Other Supports
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Intreo

What is Intreo?

Intreo is a one-stop shop for all employment and income supports. You can get job-seeking advice, information on vacancies and income support all in the one place.

What can Intreo offer?

- Expert help and advice on employment, training and personal development opportunities.
- A focus on you and your needs to help you enter the workforce.
- Self-service kiosks where you can get information and guidance on employment and training opportunities.
- Access to information on job vacancies through www.welfare.ie or www.jobsireland.ie. Jobs Ireland has information about jobs in Ireland and across Europe.
- Information about the Department of Social Protection's income supports. These include jobseekers' payments, back to work and back to education payments, one-parent family payments and others.
- Help with any questions you may have about your jobseeker or any social welfare payments.





Preparing your CV

Your Curriculum Vitae (CV) should give a clear summary of your education, work experience, achievements and abilities. An employer will decide whether to interview you based on your CV.

What goes into a CV?

- Your name, address, email and phone number.
- A personal profile – this is a short paragraph giving the highlights of your qualifications, experience, specific skills and abilities. (More on personal profiles on page 4).
- Your education and qualifications.
- Positions you have held, starting with your most recent job. Include the company names and addresses and the dates you worked for each employer.
- Relevant experience – describe your specific duties and responsibilities in bullet-point format. Make sure the experience you describe is relevant to the job you are applying for.
- Any certificates or specific skills you may have such as computer skills (for example, Word or Excel), a clean driving licence and so on.
- Any significant achievements (these could relate to sports, arts, fund-raising for charities – anything that shows you have worked to reach a goal).
- Any voluntary or community work you may have done.
- Your interests or hobbies (it's up to you whether you include these).
- Names of referees and contact details. If you prefer, you could simply say 'References Available on Request'.





Preparing your CV

Does layout matter?

Yes. Your CV should look attractive. It should be easy to read, well spaced and no more than two pages.

Put headings, qualifications, names of employers and positions held in **bold print** to highlight them.

Use the same font and size throughout. For example, this booklet uses the Arial font with the main text in 12 point size and the headings in 14 point.

Make sure there are no spelling mistakes.

Should I include a Personal Profile?

A personal profile is a short paragraph that goes near the top of your CV. It tells the interviewer at a glance what you have to offer and what type of position you are interested in. If you are applying for different jobs, you can adapt your CV to suit the jobs concerned.

Think of the personal profile as a way to sell yourself to a prospective employer. Use positive, key words to emphasise your experience, skills or abilities.

What if there are gaps in my employment?

If there are gaps in your employment history, try to give positive details of how you used your time during the gaps. For example, you may have taken a year out to travel, worked as a volunteer on a particular project, returned to college to study, and so on. It's best if you can give good reasons for the gaps rather than leave questions for the reader.

Useful websites

These websites have tips, advice and sample CVs which you can adapt to create your own CV.

- www.career-advice.monster.ie
- www.cvtips.com
- www.ec.europa.eu/eures/home.jsp?lang=en
- www.europass.ie
- www.jobsearch.about.com
- www.recruitireland.com
- www.writeon.ie
- www.youtube.com





Filling out an application form

Some employers prefer you to fill out an application form either instead of, or as well as, sending in your CV.

- Read through the whole form and the instructions before filling in any sections.
- It's a good idea to write the questions and your answers on a sheet of paper first. This way you can correct any mistakes you might make before you fill in the form.
- Follow any instructions on the form such as using black ink or writing in block capitals only.
- Answer all parts of every question. If the question does not apply to you, write 'not applicable' or 'N/A'.
- Write clearly so the reader can understand your answers.
- Check spellings, punctuation and grammar.
- Read the completed form again before you send it to make sure you have answered all the questions.
- Keep a copy of the completed application form so you can look at it before an interview.





Writing a cover letter

A cover letter is the letter you send with your CV. It should give the reason you are applying for the job and – briefly – your qualifications and relevant experience. There could be many people applying for the same job so your cover letter is an opportunity to make your application stand out from the rest. Your letter should make an employer want to consider you for the job.

Do you really need a cover letter?

Yes. Your cover letter is your first opportunity to introduce yourself as a possible candidate for the job.

Can I send the same letter with every job application?

This is not a good idea. Anyone can send a standard cover letter and hope for the best, but you have a much better chance of being considered for an interview if you show you are really serious about working for the company. Do some research. Look up the company's website to find out more about the business. Say why you are interested in working for that particular company. Address your letter to a specific person whenever possible and make sure to spell names correctly.

What should I say in my cover letter?

Be concise and stick to relevant facts. Say which job you are applying for and why your experience makes you a good fit for the position. Refer to the areas of your CV that match the job requirements (that is, your qualifications and relevant experience).

How much should I say in my cover letter?

Cover letters should be clear and to the point. Keep the letter to one page if possible but definitely no longer than two pages.

How can I make my application stand out?

Highlight your strengths. Prospective employers want to know why they should consider you for this position above anyone else. Mention anything you achieved in your current or most recent jobs that would impress an employer such as increased sales by 25%, reduced costs by 10%, reduced absenteeism by 5% and so on. Show how your skills, talents and experience would be a valuable addition to the company.





Writing a cover letter

Is it okay to ask about salary?

Only mention your salary requirements in your cover letter if a prospective employer asks for them. It is best to leave salary discussions until an interview.

How should I end the letter?

Be proactive. Say that you look forward to hearing from the employer and that you are available for interview whenever suits them. Give your email, home, work and mobile numbers and make sure you are available. Keep your phone close to hand and check your emails regularly.

Useful websites

These websites have useful tips and sample cover letters that you can adapt for your own cover letter.

- www.career-advice.monster.ie
- www.jobsearch.about.com
- www.office.microsoft.com/en-ie
- www.tcd.ie/Careers/students/jobsearch
- www.writeon.ie





Developing your Job Interview Skills

An interview is your chance to sell yourself to a prospective employer. Prepare well and stay calm.

Before the interview

- Be clear about why you want the job and make sure you understand the job description.
- Research the company so you can show a good knowledge of what the company does.
- Know your CV. It creates a bad impression if you're not able to elaborate on qualifications, interests and experience.
- Dress suitably. Presentation is very important.
- Arrive at least 15 minutes early.
- Take the interview seriously no matter how informal it may seem.

At the interview – do's

- Make eye contact with the interviewer(s) and greet them politely.
- Concentrate on the question being asked and answer it carefully. Direct your answers to the whole panel if it is a panel interview.
- Stress your experience, strengths, achievements and qualifications, but make sure to relate them to relevant questions. Give examples and remember to include skills that you gained outside paid work.
- Be honest about why you want the job. If you are leaving a job, be positive about the reasons for your decisions.
- Try to present your weaknesses as strengths. Focus on the positive.
- If you need time to think about your answer, say so and take the time. If you're not sure of the meaning of a question, ask for clarification.
- Have your own questions ready to ask. Your questions should show your interest in the role.
- If your questions are answered during the interview and you can't think of any more to ask at the end of the interview, simply say "I think you have covered all things that I wanted to know".





Developing your Job Interview Skills

At the interview – don'ts

- Don't ramble or talk about things that are not relevant.
- Don't make up an answer. If you don't know the answer to a question, say so.
- Don't rely solely on your CV to do all the talking – tell them what you'd like them to know about you. Also, don't give one-word or very brief answers. This is your chance to sell yourself.
- Don't criticise colleagues, employers or managers, past or present.
- Don't give up halfway through if you feel you are not doing well.

Questions you might be asked at interview:

1. Can you talk us through your CV?
2. Why did you leave your last job?
3. Why do you wish to leave your current position?
4. What were you doing in your last job?
5. What did you like / dislike about your last job?
6. What have you been doing since your last job?
7. What are your greatest strengths / weaknesses?
8. How do you handle stress or pressure?
9. Can you describe a difficult situation at work and how you overcame it?
10. What is your biggest accomplishment?

Useful websites

These websites offer advice and tips on how to prepare for interviews and the types of questions asked.

- www.career-advice.monster.co.uk
- www.ehow.com
- www.wikijob.co.uk
- www.writeon.ie
- www.youtube.com



Looking for Jobs through Social Media

Social media sites like Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter can help you find a job and connect with people who can help you develop your career. But it's important that the information you post online matches the information on your CV. You should also consider who may have access to your online data.

Here are some ways to use your online presence to support your job search.

Facebook

Most people use Facebook to connect with friends or people they know, but you can also use your public Facebook page for networking. Some companies have even created Facebook applications for career searches. The following are examples of useful job seeking Facebook apps.

Jobvite – this application matches your profile information to jobs in other networks. Companies and job seekers can target each other.

<https://apps.facebook.com/jobvite>

BeKnown – this app is an easy way to search for and apply for jobs without leaving Facebook. It also lets you keep your personal Facebook information private.

www.monster.ie/beknown.htm

BranchOut – this career networking app lets you browse your friends on Facebook to see where they have worked. You can browse and share jobs that people in your career network have posted. Employers can post jobs for free. You can also import your LinkedIn profile to BranchOut so that you have a professional profile on Facebook. (More on LinkedIn on page 11).

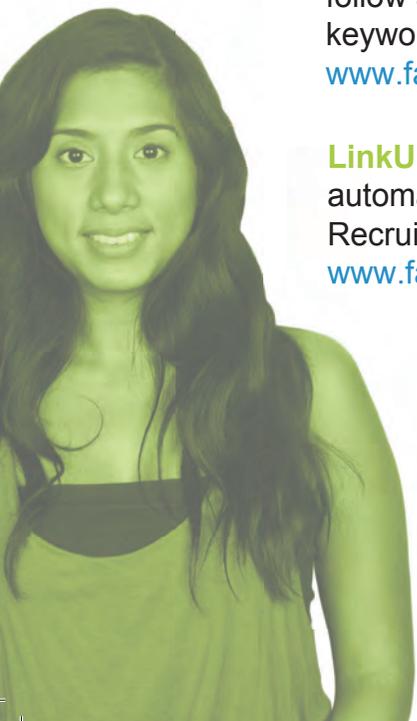
www.facebookjob/branchout.htm

CareerBuilder – with this app information such as your location and career interests are used to send you relevant and up-to-date job and internship postings. You can follow a link directly from the job listing to apply for it. You can also search by keyword, location and category.

www.facebookjobsearchgroups/g/careerbuilderapp.htm

LinkUp – this app tells you about currently available jobs. Companies can automatically publish jobs from their corporate websites to their Facebook Fan pages. Recruitment and advertising agencies are also using this app.

www.facebookjobsearchgroups/g/linkup-facebook-app.htm





Looking for Jobs through Social Media

LinkedIn

This professional social network is very useful when you are looking for work. Here are some of the ways you can use it for your job search.

- **Personal Profile** – this is the most important feature of LinkedIn. You can upload your education, career details, skills, expertise and interests for employers to see.
- **Company Search** – this is one of the best ways to use LinkedIn. You conduct a search on a company and hopefully find people who are connected to other people you know. You then ask your personal contact to connect you.
- **Find Jobs** – this feature lets you search for jobs on LinkedIn and also suggests jobs in which you may be interested.
- **Job Postings** – employers can post jobs on the site.
- **Email** – you can send an email to everyone in your LinkedIn network.
- **Blog Link** – you can link your blog post to your LinkedIn profile. Every time you post a new blog, Blog Link updates your profile so people can see what you were writing about. The updated post also goes out in the weekly update emails to your connections.
- **Endorsements** – friends, colleagues and past colleagues can endorse your work skills and experiences and this will be visible to potential employers.
www.linkedin.com/jobs

Useful Apps for Jobseekers to download

- CPL Jobs App for [iPhone](#) and [Android](#)
- EURES Jobs for [iPhone](#)
- FÁS Courses App for [iPhone](#) and [Android](#)
- Find a Job in Ireland App for [iPhone](#)
- Glassdoor App for [iPhone](#)
- Jobseeker App for [iPhone](#) and [Android](#)
- LinkedIn App for [iPhone](#) and [Android](#)
- Monster.ie App for [iPhone](#) and [Android](#)





Looking for Jobs through Social Media

Twitter

Twitter lets you connect with other users based on your common interests. Here are some ways to use it for job searches.

- **Basic networking** – you can link with people who share your interests.
- **Job Postings** – you can follow recruiters and job sites on Twitter to see their job postings (for example, [@socialmediajob](#)).
- **Connecting** – if you follow someone on Twitter, read their bio thoroughly. If they work somewhere you might be interested in, or if you think they can connect you to others, you can get in touch with them.
- **Companies** – Twitter tools like Twellow can search people's bios and the URLs on their bios. www.twellow.com
- **Twitter Job Search** – compiles all jobs on Twitter worldwide. Simply type in the job and location you are looking for. www.twitjobsearch.com
- **JobAngels** – follow this for job listings and to help other job seekers. ([@jobangels](#)).
- **JobDeck** – download this free app to easily search social media for job listings, track the latest job search trends and connect with contacts across Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook and more. www.tweetdeck.com/jobdeck
- **Tweecal** – use this to search for jobs on Twitter by keyword and location. www.twitter.com/Tweecal
- **Twitireland** – is a directory of Twitter users in Ireland. www.twitireland.com





Useful Job and Recruitment Websites

Job Websites

Jobs Ireland
Public Jobs

www.jobsireland.ie
www.publicjobs.ie

Recruitment Websites

Active Link	Community and Voluntary	www.activelink.ie
Adecco Group	All Sectors	www.adecco.com
Career Builder	All Sectors	www.careerbuilder.ie
Career Jet	All Sectors	www.careerjet.ie
Construction Jobs	Construction	www.construction-jobs.ie
CPL Healthcare	Health	www.cplhealthcare.com
eFinancial Careers	Finance	www.efinancialcareers.ie
Finance Jobs	Finance	www.financejobs.ie
FRS Recruitment	All Sectors	www.frsrecruitment.com
Glass Door	Information Technology	www.glassdoor.com
Graduate Recruitment	Graduate	www.gradireland.com
Grafton Recruitment	All Sectors	www.graftonrecruitment.com
Green Jobs	Green Jobs	www.greenjobs.ie
Hays	All Sectors	www.hays.ie
Headhunt International	All Sectors	www.headhunt.ie
Hotel/Catering	Hotel Catering	www.hoteljobs.ie
Indeed	All Sectors	www.indeed.ie
Irish Jobs	All Sectors	www.irishjobs.ie
Jackie Brown Medical	Medical	www.jackiebrowmedical.ie
Job Search	All Sectors	www.jobsearch.ie
Manpower	All Sectors	www.manpower.ie
Monster	All Sectors	www.monster.ie
Noel Recruitment	Industrial	www.noel.ie
Osborne Recruitment	All Sectors	www.osborne.ie
Prosperity Recruitment	Media and Marketing	www.prosperity.ie
Recruit Ireland	All Sectors	www.recruitireland.com
Reed Recruitment	All Sectors	www.reedglobal.ie



These are a sample of recruitment websites available in Ireland. Any links from this document to external web sites are provided as a matter of convenience only and should not be taken as an endorsement of the contents or practices of those external web sites.



How to put your CV on the Jobs Ireland Website

You must have an email address to use this service

1. Log onto www.jobsireland.ie
2. Click on 'Signing Up' on the top right hand side of the screen. You must sign up (register) if you want to send your CV to an employer.
3. A 'New Jobseeker Registration Form' will appear on the screen. Complete the form – the fields highlighted in yellow must be filled in. Once filled in, click on 'Request Registration'.
4. You will be given a username and a password. It is important to keep these safe as you will need them each time you log on to the system.
5. Click the login button to enter the Jobs Ireland menu page.
6. Once you have entered the system, it is a good idea to change your password to one that you will remember. Click on 'User Info' and follow the instructions to change your password.
7. Click on 'Your CV'. Your CV template will appear on the screen and you can start to fill it in. The fields highlighted in yellow in each section must be filled in. After filling in your details for each section, press the 'save' button at the lower end of the screen. As well as saving your details, this option will bring you back to the main template. You will then have to save your details on this page as well. Scroll down to the end of the page, enter your password in the lower left-hand side of the screen and then press 'Save CV'.

Please remember:

Signing up to use the CV service does not mean that you are formally registered with Intreo/Employment Services. To register with Intreo/Employment Services please call into your local office. For more information please visit www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/Employment-Services-Offices.aspx





Your Pathways to Work

Services and supports to help you in your job search

- You will need a Personal Public Service Number (PPSN) to register with Intreo/Employment Services. Your PPS number is a unique reference number that helps you access financial supports, public services and information. Only the Department of Social Protection can provide you with a PPS number.
- **Employment Services** – you can access details of job vacancies registered with the Department of Social Protection (DSP) at any Intreo Centre and Employment Service Office and on the Jobs Ireland website, www.jobsireland.ie or on the touch screen kiosks in any local Intreo/Employment Service Office. If you have registered with Intreo/Employment Services, you can use Lo-Call 1890 800 024. You can find the list of the Intreo/Employment Service offices on www.welfare.ie
- **A Guidance Interview** – this is an interview with an Employment Officer/ Case Officer about employment opportunities, training courses and other Services options which may help you find work.
- **Local Employment Services (LES)** – provides access to the full range of services and facilities that are available to help jobseekers. For example, LES staff can support you through guidance interviews, by providing information, by helping you to develop a career plan and in identifying job opportunities. They can also assist you in identifying training & educational supports to help you enter or re-enter employment.

Services are provided both to jobseekers referred to the LES through the Department's activation processes & also to jobseekers who engage directly with the service. The LES is delivered, under a contract arrangement, on behalf of DSP. For more information visit www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/Local-Employment-Service.aspx

- **Job Clubs** – provide a drop-in-service, one-to-one meetings and formal workshops to help job seekers to assess their options, take steps towards reaching their career goals, and explore and follow-up on employment opportunities. This service will enable you to take positive steps towards realising your career plans and to explore and follow-up employment opportunities.

For example, staff will help you to prepare your CV, improve your interview skills and identify job opportunities. The service is delivered through workshops and individual 'one to one' support sessions. Job Clubs also provide a 'drop-in' service, to enable you to use the facilities of the Job Club when searching for or following up employment opportunities.

Services are provided both to jobseekers referred through the Department's activation processes and also to jobseekers who engage directly with the service. Job Clubs are delivered, under a contract arrangement, on behalf of the DSP. For more information visit: www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/Jobs-Clubs.aspx

Touch Screen Kiosks – Intreo/Employment Services offices have easy to use touch screen kiosks where you can find and print information on jobs and training.





EURES Network

The International Employment Services of the Department of Social Protection

is part of the EURES (European Employment Services) Network established by the European Commission to assist the free movement of workers between the European Economic Area (EEA)¹ Countries.

Finding a job in Europe

If you are looking for a job in Europe, you can use EURES to:

- access a database of jobs across Europe;
- access information on living and working conditions in each country; and
- include your CV in a European database which can be viewed by European employers.

This service is free of charge.

EURES has a network of more than 800 EURES Advisers across Europe. They provide information, guidance and placement to both jobseekers and employers interested in the European job market.

The advisers have specialised knowledge in the practical, legal and administrative issues relating to working in another country. They can also access a network of advisers in 32 European countries who can respond quickly to specific recruitment enquiries.

Want more information?

EURES Advisers are located in Intreo/Employment Services Offices throughout Ireland.

You can also contact the EURES Coordination Unit by:

Phone: (01) 673 2702
Email: eures@welfare.ie
Web: www.eures.europa.eu



¹ Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.



Employment Supports

JobBridge

JobBridge is the National Internship Scheme that provides work experience placements for interns for either 6 or 9 months. The aim of the Scheme is to help break the cycle where jobseekers are unable to get a job without experience, either because they are new entrants to the labour market after education or training or they are unemployed workers who want to learn new skills.

To qualify for JobBridge, you must have been claiming one of the following for a total of 3 months (78 days) or more in the last 6 months:

- Jobseekers Allowance
- Jobseekers Benefit
- One Parent Family Payment
- Disability Allowance
- Signing for credits

The Department of Social Protection will pay you an allowance equivalent to your current social welfare payment plus an additional €50 a week while you are on the scheme. For more information, please see www.jobbridge.ie

Community Employment

Community Employment (CE) is a part-time employment programme which helps long-term unemployed people to re-enter the active workforce by breaking their experience of unemployment through a return-to-work routine.

The programme will help you to develop both your personal and work skills. There are two options. A part-time integration (1 year) option and the part-time job scheme (up to 3 years) option. You work an average of 19.5 hours each week. To qualify, you must have been getting certain social welfare payments for 12 months or more.

For more information on CE programmes, please visit www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/Community-Employment.aspx

Tús

Tús is a community work placement initiative which provides short term working opportunities in community and voluntary organisations for unemployed people in both urban and rural areas. Participants work 19.5 hours a week for 12 months. They are paid an allowance equivalent to their social welfare payment plus a weekly €20 top-up. The Department of Social Protection chooses the participants for the scheme.

For more information, please visit www.welfare.ie





Employment Supports

Work Placement Programme

Anyone who is unemployed can apply for the Work Placement Programme (WPP). This is split into two categories: WPP 1 for graduates and WPP 2 for non-graduates. If you are a graduate with a level 7 qualification, you can apply for both streams.

The placements are unpaid and voluntary. However, if you are receiving certain social welfare payments, you may be allowed to keep your payment while you are on the scheme. For more information, please visit

www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/Work-Placement-Programme_holder.aspx

Gateway - local authority work initiative

Gateway is a 22 month paid work placement with a local authority. You will work 19½ hours each week. You will receive a payment equivalent to your Jobseeker's Allowance and earn an extra €20 per week, subject to a minimum weekly payment of €208. To be eligible for Gateway you must be in receipt of a Jobseeker's payment for at least 24 months (560 days) and currently be in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance.

The Department of Social Protection chooses the participants for the scheme so there is no need to apply.

For more information, please visit www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/Gateway.aspx

Rural Social Scheme (RSS)

The RSS provides income support for farmers and fishermen and women who are receiving specific social welfare payments. In return, those participating on the RSS provide certain services that benefit rural communities.

For more information, please visit

www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/Rural-Social-Scheme.aspx

Skills to Work

Skills to Work is a new jobs campaign which brings together key Government initiatives to support jobseekers access the training and work experience they need and to help and encourage businesses employ people currently on the Live Register.

Jobseekers can get information from an online tool by answering a series of simple questions, this tool:

- Directs jobseekers to information on what education, re-skilling or work experience options are available to them in areas of new and emerging employment opportunities.
- Directs employers to information on incentives available to hire a new employee who is currently on the Live Register, offer a work placement or access skills training.
- Provides information on additional opportunities and government supports available to help people get back to work and to help businesses grow.

For more information about skills to work please visit www.skillstowork.ie





Training Supports

Momentum

This initiative provides free education and training placements to allow jobseekers who have been unemployed for 12 months or more to gain skills and access work opportunities in growing sectors.

Momentum will provide eligible jobseekers with:

- Access to a range of quality education and training projects,
- Links to identified job vacancies and employers,
- Work placement and support, and
- Relevant industry and NFQ (National Framework of Qualifications) Certification.

For more information on Momentum courses, please visit www.momentumskills.ie

Skillnets

Skillnets funds the Job Seekers Support Programme (JSSP) which is for unemployed people. It combines training with work placement. For further information please email info@skillnets.com or visit www.skillnets.ie

Springboard

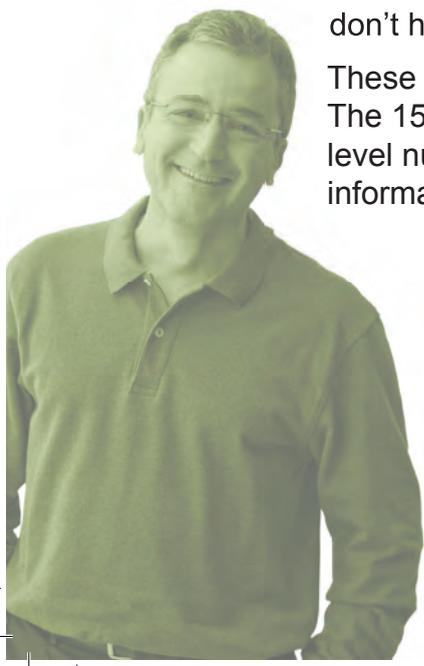
This higher education initiative offers you a choice of free, part-time courses, from certificate, to degree, to post-graduate and masters level. Springboard offers courses in sectors such as Information and Communications Technology (ICT), the medical devices sector, bio-pharma, pharmachem and green energy.

For further information on Springboard, please visit www.springboardcourses.ie

The ICT Skills Programme

If you are a Level 8 (or equivalent) college graduate and you are interested in retraining in Information and Communications Technology (ICT), you may be eligible for a one year post-graduate Higher Diploma Conversion Programme where you don't have to pay for tuition.

These Programmes focus on computing, programming, software and data analysis. The 15 programmes on offer will be for NFQ Level 8 jobseekers with high level numerical skills and an underlying aptitude for programming. For more information on the ICT Conversion Programmes, please visit www.ictskills.ie





Training Supports

Education and Training Board (ETB) Courses

Vocational Educational Committees (VECs) and FÁS Training Centres have merged to form 16 ETBs around Ireland. Courses that were previously offered by the VECs and FÁS are now offered by ETBs. These include full-time and part-time courses designed to improve your ability to get a job or, in some cases, to lead to further education. Guidance counsellors and information officers are available to offer you career and educational guidance, information and support.

ETB full-time courses

These are available at ETB Community Colleges, ETB Further Education and Training Colleges, ETB Adult Education Centres and outreach locations around the country.

- **Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) courses:** These are aimed at school leavers and adults, including people who are unemployed. They lead to awards at levels 5 and 6 of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). Some courses also offer industry certification. You may be eligible for a grant from Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI) or the Back to Education Allowance from Department of Social Protection.
- **Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS):** This scheme leads to awards at NFQ levels 3 to 5 or to the Leaving Certificate. Courses last two years. You must be over 21 and have been getting a social welfare payment for more than 6 months. People made redundant may also be eligible for VTOS.
- **Youthreach:** If you are an early school leaver aged 15 to 20, this scheme will give you the opportunity to gain major awards at NFQ levels 3 to 5 so you can progress to further education, training, higher education or employment. The courses last two years. You will be paid a training allowance instead of social welfare. You may also get a childcare allowance.

ETB part-time courses

These are available at ETB Community Colleges, ETB Further Education and Training Colleges, ETB Adult Centres and outreach locations around the country.

- **Back to Education Initiative (BTEI):** This scheme is for people aged 17 and older, especially unemployed people and those without a Leaving Certificate. The aim is to help you gain skills so you can progress to further education, training, higher education or employment. The courses lead to awards at NFQ levels 1 to 6. These courses are free if you do not have a Leaving Certificate or if you get a means-tested social welfare payment.
- **Adult Literacy and Basic Education:** This programme can help you if you have difficulty with reading and writing, are over 16 years of age and are not in full-time education. There are courses in reading and writing, numbers and computers to help you build your confidence and move on to further education when you feel ready. The courses lead to awards at NFQ levels 1 to 3.





Training Supports

- **Community Education:** This gives adults, particularly those returning to education, the opportunity to study in their own community. Local community groups decide what courses are to be run. Often, the themes relate to citizenship and community development. Some of the courses may lead to NFQ awards.
- **Night Classes:** These range from hobby classes to professional courses. You must pay for these courses yourself.

Courses in ETB Training Centres (full-time & part-time)

These centres offer the types of courses that used to be available in FÁS Training Centres and are aimed mainly at unemployed people. The courses lead to awards at NFQ levels 3 to 6 and, in some cases, may lead to industrial certification. If you are eligible for one of these courses, you will get a training allowance; travel, accommodation and meal allowances; kit and training materials; and a childcare subsidy, if relevant. You will not have to pay course fees or exam fees.

- **Traineeships:** These offer training for specific occupations and are supported by industry. They combine training centre and on-the-job training. These traineeships lead to major awards mostly at NFQ levels 5 and 6. Successful trainees may also get an industry recognised certificate which gives access to specific occupations in designated sectors.
- **Specific Skills Training:** These day courses are designed to help you learn new skills or update your existing skills.
- **Apprenticeships:** This is the traditional way to learn a trade such as carpentry or pottery. Apprenticeships generally last four years and combine training on-the-job and in training centres.
- **Community Training Centres:** These offer training and related services to young people aged 16-21 who have no Leaving Certificate or Junior Certificate and who would like to gain a qualification.
- **Specialist Training Provision:** Specialist Training Providers in 47 centres country-wide to deliver training courses to people with disabilities who require more intensive support than would be available in non-specialist training provision.
- **Local Training Initiatives:** The Local Training Initiatives programme is for 18-25 year olds and targets specific groups that may experience barriers accessing employment or mainstream training and education programmes.

For more information on ETBI, please visit www.etbi.ie/





Training Supports

Solas Training

Once registered with Intreo/Employment Services, you can apply for a range of Training Programmes. If you are receiving a social welfare payment, you will get a training allowance.

You can also apply for a Solas evening course. If you are receiving a social welfare payment or signing on for credits with the Department of Social Protection, you can do an evening course for free.

For further information on Solas courses, please visit www.fas.ie

Back to Education (BTE) Programme

This programme supports you to take part in educational and personal development courses (at second or third level) that will help you find a job.

To qualify you:

- Must have been accepted onto a qualifying course,
- In general must be over 21 or over 24 for post graduate courses, and
- Must be receiving certain social welfare payments.

There are five BTE programmes and these are outlined as follows:

1. Second-Level Option

You can attend a second-level course of education at any secondary, community, comprehensive or vocational school. The course must be full-time and lead to a certificate recognised by the Department of Education and Skills or approved by FETAC, for example, Junior Certificate, Leaving Certificate, Post Leaving Certificate or a City and Guilds Certificate.

2. Third-Level Option

You can attend a third-level course at any university, third-level college or institution, so long as the course is a full-time day course and is approved by the Department of Education and Skills for student grant purposes and/or is recognised by HETAC.

3. Post-Graduate Option

The postgraduate option of the BTE programme is only for people who wish to take a postgraduate course of study that leads to a Higher Diploma (H.Dip) qualification in any discipline, or a postgraduate Diploma in Education (Primary or Secondary teaching). Other postgraduate qualifications including Masters are not recognised under the BTE programme.





Training Supports

4. Education, Training and Development Option

Under the Education, Training and Development Option you may continue to get your Jobseeker's Allowance or Jobseeker's Benefit while attending certain courses of education, training or development. Your Social Welfare Local Office may make special signing-on arrangements so that you can attend your course.

5. Part-Time Education Option

The Part-Time Education Option (PTEO) allows you to keep your Jobseeker's Allowance or Jobseeker's Benefit while you attend a part-time day or evening course of education or training. Your Social Welfare Local Office must be satisfied that the course is likely to improve your chances of getting a job.

For further information on the above programmes and options, please visit www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/Back-to-Education-Supports.aspx

NALA's Distance Learning Service

NALA's Distance Learning Service is a free service available to any person including those with literacy and numeracy difficulties, as well as those wishing to gain qualifications for their existing knowledge. Users can work alone on www.writeon.ie or they can request a NALA Distance Learning Tutor to call, email, or skype them once a week at a time of the learner's choosing and work to support their learning needs at Levels 2 and 3 on the National Framework of Qualifications for Ireland.

Learners can set up a free learning account on www.writeon.ie and then select awards such as Career Preparation, Health and Safety Awareness, Mathematics, Communications, Digital Media and Internet Skills. These awards include topics such as CV writing, interview preparation and even involve a free mock interview conducted over the telephone. For more on this, Freephone NALA on 1800 20 20 65 or Freetext 'learn' to 50050.





Income/Enterprise Supports

If you are aged 18 or over and unemployed, you may be paid either Jobseekers Benefit (JB) or Jobseeker's Allowance (JA). Both payments are paid by the Department of Social Protection (DSP).

Jobseeker's Benefit

Jobseeker's Benefit (JB) is a weekly payment to people who are out of work and who are covered by social insurance. To qualify for Jobseeker's Benefit (JB) you must:

- Be fully unemployed or unemployed for at least 4 days out of 7.
- Be under 66 years of age.
- Have enough social insurance (PRSI) contributions.
- Be capable of work.
- Be available for and genuinely seeking work.

Jobseeker's Benefit is not means tested. The duration of Jobseeker's Benefit depends on the number of PRSI contributions you have made. People with 260 or more PRSI contributions paid will receive JB for 9 months and people with fewer than 260 PRSI contributions paid, will receive JB for 6 months. For more information please visit www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/Jobseeker%27s-Benefit.aspx

Jobseeker's Allowance

You may get Jobseeker's Allowance (JA) if you don't qualify for Jobseeker's Benefit or if you have used up your entitlement to Jobseeker's Benefit. To get Jobseeker's Allowance you must:

- Be fully unemployed or unemployed for at least 4 days out of 7.
- Be over 18 and under 66 years of age.
- Be capable of work.
- Be available for and genuinely seeking work.
- Satisfy the means test.
- Meet the Habitual Residence Condition.

Family Income Supplement (FIS)

FIS is a weekly tax-free payment for employees on low pay, with at least one dependent child. To qualify for FIS, your average weekly family income (after tax has been taken out) must be below a certain limit (based on your family size) and you must be working at least 19 hours per week or 38 hours per fortnight. Talk to a Case Officer at your local Social Welfare Office to see if you can get this additional payment. For more information on FIS, please visit www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/Family-Income-Supplement-FIS---SW-22.aspx





Income/Enterprise Supports

Part-time Job Incentive Scheme

This scheme allows some long-term unemployed people to take up part-time work for less than 24 hours a week and qualify for a weekly payment instead of a Jobseeker's payment. If you qualify for this scheme, you may also qualify for Family Income Supplement. The part-time work must be likely to last at least two months.

Continued Child Payment

If you have been in receipt of Jobseekers Benefit, Jobseekers Allowance or have been on a Community Employment Scheme for 12 months or more and you then enter into full-time paid employment or self-employment which is likely to last 4 weeks, you can keep the child portion of your payment for 13 weeks.

Jobseeker Allowance and Self-Employment

Self-employed people may apply for the means-tested Jobseeker's Allowance (JA) if their business ceases or if they are on low income as a result of a downturn in demand for their services. They must satisfy the means test in order to qualify for JA.

Short Term Enterprise Allowance

The Short Term Enterprise Allowance (STEA) gives support to you if you want to start your own business. To qualify you must be getting Jobseeker's Benefit (JB) and have paid 104 PRSI contributions. The allowance replaces your JB with a weekly payment of a similar amount for up to either 6 or 9 months depending on your JB entitlement.

Back to Work Enterprise Allowance (BTWEA)

If you are long-term unemployed and qualify for this payment, this can help you be self-employed while still being able to keep a social welfare payment for two years. You would get your full social welfare payment in the first year and three-quarters of it in the second year.

To qualify, you must set up a business that a Local Integrated Development Company or a Facilitator has approved in writing, and be in receipt of one of the qualifying payments for at least 12 months.

Benefit of Work Ready Reckoner

The Benefit of Work Ready Reckoner is a useful tool if you are in receipt of a Jobseeker's Payment and looking to take up work. It gives you rough comparison of what your current social welfare payment is versus what you would get paid if you took up fulltime work

To use the Benefit of Work Ready Reckoner tool please log on to <http://bow.welfare.ie/en>

For further information on the above programmes please log on to www.welfare.ie





Start your Own Business

Setting up your business

You can set up a business as a sole trader, as a partnership or as a limited company. The type of structure you choose depends on the kind of business you are running, with whom you will be doing business and your attitude to risk.

Sole trader: It is relatively simple to set up as a sole trader but, if your business fails, your personal assets such as your home could be used to pay your creditors (these are the people to whom you owe money). You must register as a self-employed person with the Revenue Commissioners. If you want to use a business name, you must register this with the Companies Registration Office (CRO) at www.cro.ie.

Partnership: This is where two or more people agree to run a business in partnership with each other. The partnership agreement should be drawn up by a solicitor. The partners are jointly responsible for running the business and, if the business fails, all partners are jointly responsible for the debt.

Limited company: If you set up your business as a limited company, the business is a separate legal entity. If the company gets into debt, the creditors generally only have a claim on the assets of the company. The company must be registered with the CRO and the company reports and accounts must be returned to the CRO each year.

Funding

Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) provide a range of financial supports to help with the set up or growth of small businesses employing up to 10 people. The funding depends on:

- the sector of the economy in which the business operates or intends to operate; and
- the size or proposed size of the business.

You cannot backdate grant support to cover money already spent setting up or expanding the business.

For more information please visit www.localenterprise.ie/.

Enterprise Ireland supports High Potential Start-Up (HPSU) companies. These are start-up businesses with the potential to develop products or services for sale on international markets and create 10 jobs and €1 million in sales within four years of starting up.

- **Innovation Voucher**

These vouchers, worth €5,000, are available to help start-up companies to work with a registered college or knowledge provider in Ireland or Northern Ireland to explore a business opportunity or solve a technical problem. The HPSU must be registered with the Companies Registration Office (CRO).





Start your Own Business

- **New Frontiers Entrepreneur Development Programme**

This programme is run in partnership with the Institutes of Technology. It supports entrepreneurs with innovative business ideas who are planning to establish and run their own company. These supports include mentoring, incubation space and a €15,000 scholarship payment to speed up the development of the business and to give the entrepreneur(s) the skills and contacts needed to successfully start and grow a company.

- **Competitive Feasibility Fund**

This funding helps start-up companies or individual entrepreneurs to investigate the viability of their business or business idea. Competitions to award this funding are held throughout the year.

- **Mentor Grant**

This grant is to pay an experienced business mentor to help you in the start-up phase of your business or advise you on specific areas of your plan.

For more information please visit www.enterprise-ireland.com/en/funding-supports/

National Digital Research Centre (NDRC)

This centre helps entrepreneurial teams to transform solid business ideas into commercially viable start-ups. One of the programmes within NDRC is LaunchPad, LaunchPad provides emerging start-up businesses with:

- hands-on mentoring to guide development;
- 12 weeks working alongside other start-ups, innovators and investors;
- weekly workshops and networking with experts;
- micro-seed investment of up to €20,000;
- the opportunity to pitch to investors at a special end-of-year event.

For more information, please visit www.ndrc.ie/.

Useful Links

www.dit.ie/hothouse/
<http://ie.wayra.org/>
<http://dogpatchlabs.com/>
www.frontline.vc/
www.deltapartners.com/
www.kernelcapital.ie/
www.enterpriseequity.ie/
www.meetup.com

<https://angel.co/seedcamp>
www.ucd.ie/innovation/
www.rubiconcentre.ie/
www.launchbox.ie/
www.ryanacademy.ie/
www.healthxl.co
www.kickstarter.com
www.indiegogo.com
www.f6s.com





Disability Supports

Employee Retention Grant Scheme

This scheme helps keep you in employment if you get an illness, condition or impairment that affects your ability to do your job. The grant is given to employers to retrain you for another job in their organisation or help you to continue in your regular work by introducing some changes to your work equipment or elsewhere.

Supports for people with disabilities looking for work

Supported Employment Programme / EmployAbility Service

This programme helps people with disabilities to get and keep a job. If you have a disability and wish to take up paid employment or you need help finding a job, this service can help you. It provides supports such as job coaches who help you find suitable work.

Workplace Equipment Adaptation Grant

This grant provides funding for an employee with a disability to make their workplace equipment more accessible.

Personal Reader Grant

This grant provides funding for a personal reader to help a blind or visually impaired person in their work for up to 640 hours a year.

Job Interviewer Interpreter Grant Scheme

This grant provides funding for an interpreter to accompany a person with a speech or hearing impairment to a job interview.

For further information on the above programmes please log on to www.welfare.ie





Other Supports

Supplementary Welfare Allowance

If you have low or no income you may be eligible for a Supplementary Welfare Allowance. This is a weekly payment to help with your rent or mortgage interest payments or for urgent or exceptional needs. There are conditions associated with this allowance so it is best to check with your local Social Welfare Office to find out if you qualify.

Signing-off the Live Register to take up a job or training for a short time

If you sign off the Live Register to take up work for a short period or to go on a short training course, there is now a fast track system in place where you can sign on quickly and receive benefits after your work or course finishes.

It is important that you tell your local Social Welfare Office before you take up work or training.

Supports for people returning to work, looking for work or working part-time

If you are unemployed and getting either Jobseeker's Benefit or Jobseeker's Allowance you can accept an offer of part-time work and you may still be able to qualify for your Benefit for the days you are unemployed. Working part-time is allowed, providing that you are:

- Unemployed for at least 4 days out of the 7-day social welfare employment week,
- Genuinely seeking full-time employment, and
- Available for work in respect of the days that you are unemployed.

For more information, please visit www.welfare.ie

JobsPlus

The JobsPlus incentive aims to encourage employers and businesses to focus their recruitment efforts on those who have been unemployed for over 12 months and are in receipt of a Jobseekers payment or signing for credits.

Further information is available at www.jobsplus.ie





General Information/Useful Websites

E-College	www.ecollege.ie
Careers Portal	www.careersportal.ie
FETAC	www.fetac.ie
Graduate Ireland	www.gradireland.com
Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed Money Advice and Budgeting Service	www.inou.ie
National Adult Literacy Agency	www.mabs.ie
National Consumer Agency	www.nala.ie and www.writeon.ie
Psychometric Tests	www.itsyourmoney.ie
Qualifax	www.shl.com
The Citizens Information Board	www.qualifax.ie
Vocational Education Committee (VEC)	www.citizensinformationboard.ie
	www.vec.ie

Labour Market Information

You can get information on skills, jobs and training in Ireland, Europe and Internationally on <http://lmi.fas.ie/>

How to check that your qualifications are recognised in Ireland

Qualifications Recognition (part of Quality and Qualifications Ireland), can help you get academic recognition in Ireland of any foreign qualifications you may have. The service offers advice and information on how you can compare foreign qualifications to an award on the Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

You can download the Qualifications Recognition application form from www.qualrec.ie

Where can I find information on wages and employment rights?

The following are website links to various agencies with relevant information:

Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation www.enterprise.gov.ie

National Employment Rights Authority www.employmentrights.ie

Voluntary Work

You can take up voluntary work while signing-on. This can help you gain new skills and increase your chances of getting a job.

Under the Social Welfare Voluntary Work Option you can take up voluntary work in a community organisation and keep your Jobseekers Allowance/Benefit. To avail of this option you must be available to take up work and genuinely seeking work.

Further information is available on www.welfare.ie and www.volunteeringireland.com

This booklet is intended as a guide only and is not a legal interpretation. We have provided links to external web sites for your convenience only. This does not mean that we support or approve them.



www.intreo.ie

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