



Considering ESOL from the national policy perspective

Expert presentation from SOLAS

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The FET sector is diverse.

- In 2020, there were over 197 different nationalities enrolled in the FET sector, approximately 78% Irish and 22% non-Irish.
- Among the non-EU learner enrolments,
 - ✓ 36.9% were nationals of Asia,
 - ✓ 34.2% were nationals of Africa,
 - ✓ 16.5% were nationals of the Americas,
 - ✓ 11.6% were nationals of Europe,
 - ✓ 0.7% were nationals of Oceania.



The importance of the English language for successful integration

“Knowing the language is crucial for successful integration... key to social cohesion, active participation in society and key to understanding and accepting national culture.”

OECD in the Economic Survey of Ireland (2008)

ESOL provision is generally referenced as meeting the English language tuition needs of migrants who have come to live in Ireland, with reference to the specific contexts relevant to their community, personal, and vocational needs, as well as to their academic needs.



Refugees and Asylum Seekers

FET plays an important role in **supporting** refugees and asylum seekers who may be distant from the labour market and/or lacking core skills (e.g. English language skills) necessary to progress into other FET or Higher Education courses or enter the labour market.



Refugees and Asylum Seekers

In 2020

- 855 learner enrolments reported their residency status as asylum seekers and 1,165 as refugees in the FET sector.
- Among those learners who reported a nationality, 97.5% reported they were non-Irish.⁵
- Approximately half of refugees and asylum seekers enrolled in FET reported they were nationals of the geographic region Asia, whereas 39.7% reported they were nationals of the geographic region Africa.



Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Among refugees and asylum seekers,

- 52% of learner enrolments were female and 48% were male.
- This nearly even gender distribution differs from the higher proportion of females (61.1%) in the population of FET learner enrolments in 2020.



Refugee Resettlement Programme

- ❖ In 2015, as part of Ireland's response to the migration crisis in central and southern Europe, the Government established the Irish Refugee Protection Programme (IRPP).

Under this programme

- ❖ the Government committed to accepting refugees into the State, primarily through a combination of the EU Relocation Programme and the UNHCR-led Refugee Resettlement Programme, which is currently focussed on resettling refugees from Lebanon and Jordan.



Refugee Resettlement Programme cont.

- ❖ SOLAS fund English for speakers of other languages training for migrants through the 16 education and training boards.
 - This includes, for example, English Language training for children and adults in the Emergency Reception and Orientation Centres established by the IRPP.
- ❖ A confident use of the English language is a key component of preparing refugees to enter the workforce and adults are provided with English language classes by the local ETBs in their resettlement area.
- ❖ Applicants are assessed by ETB staff so as to identify the extent, if any, of their current language levels in English, whether written or spoken.

The Migrant Integration Strategy



(Department of Justice and Equality, 2017)

- Sets out the Government's commitment to the promotion of migrant integration as a “key part of Ireland's renewal and as an underpinning principle of Irish society”.
- The Strategy highlights that “migrants (should) have language skills sufficient to enable them to participate in economic life and in wider society”.



Migrant Integration Strategy cont.

SOLAS will, through its funding and reporting requirements, require the Education and Training Boards to ensure that their Further Education and Training courses provision meet the specific needs of migrants.

- Specific needs such as
 - language acquisition,
 - knowledge of the Irish working environment,
 - interview skills,
 - c.v. preparation etc.

This provision will be either directly on their principal courses or through part time modular provision parallel to the learners' participation on their principal courses as appropriate

Adult Literacy Programmes- ESOL- 2020/2021

Part-Time Provision	Beneficiaries 2020	Planned Beneficiaries 2021	Funding Allocation for 2020	Funding Allocation for 2021
ESOL	16,274	15,580	€3,418,012	€4,182,531
Refugee Resettlement (ESOL)	1,207	1,201	€2,567,432	€1,987,481
Total L&N Related Part-Time Provision	17,481	16,781	€5,985,444	€6,170,012



FET provides a mechanism for the inclusion of Non-Irish nationals

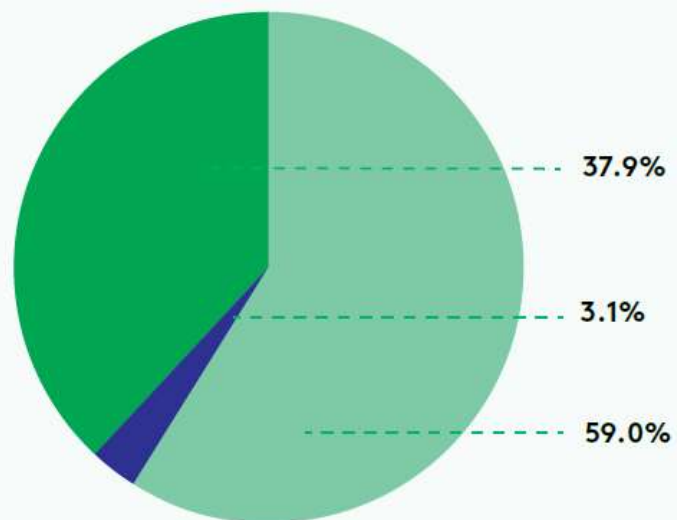
- ❖ ESOL was one of the most popular courses among non-Irish learners, accounting for 58% of all non-Irish learner enrolments in 2020.
- ❖ The unemployment rate among non-Irish nationals was significantly higher than among Irish nationals in 2020, with 37.8% of non-Irish nationals reporting they were unemployed upon enrolment in a FET course. This compared to 27.4% of Irish nationals reporting they were unemployed upon enrolment in a FET course.
- ❖ Among non-EU nationals, the unemployment rate (40%) was approximately 4% higher than among UK (35.7%) and EU nationals (35.5%).



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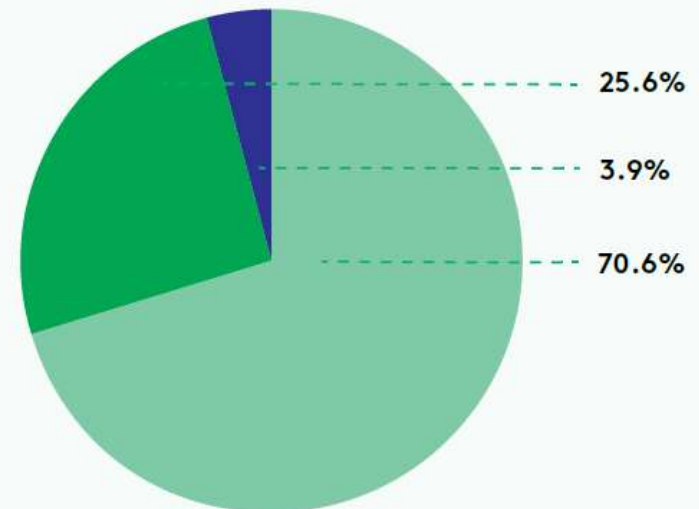
- ❖ Among non-Irish nationals, 3.3% more learner enrolments reported they were engaged in home duties than among Irish nationals. Approximately, twice as many non-EU nationals reported they were engaged in home duties (11.8%) upon enrolment compared to EU (5.4%) and UK (6.6%) nationals.
- ❖ The share of non-Irish nationals reporting they were inactive prior to enrolment was 10% lower than among Irish nationals who reported they were inactive prior to enrolment. However, among Irish nationals, 9.4% reported an inactive status as retired, whereas among non-Irish nationals, only 1.7% did.

Irish Nationals

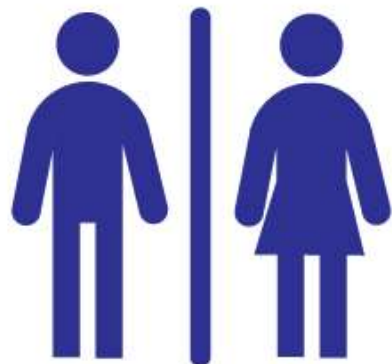


Full-time Online Part-time

Non-Irish Nationals



Full-time Online Part-time



Among Irish learner enrolments, 61% were female and 39% were male, whereas among the non-Irish learner enrolments, 64.5% of FET learners were female and 35.5% were male. Therefore, there was a slightly higher proportion of females among non-Irish nationals, than among Irish nationals.



Programme Category

Among Irish nationals

- learner enrolments are concentrated in PLC, Community Education, Adult Literacy groups and BTEI groups.

Among non-Irish nationals

- Enrolments are concentrated in ESOL, PLC, BTEI Groups and Adult Literacy Groups.



Programme Category

- The ESOL programme accounts for 58% of enrolments among non-Irish nationals.
- Within the ESOL programme, over 95% of enrolments are non-Irish nationals.

This emphasises the important role FET plays in English language acquisition among non-Irish nationals, many of whom may have lower levels of English language skills.



Programme Category: EU nationals

Among EU nationals,

- the highest concentration was among those with a third level education (26.9%) and
- the second highest was among those with an upper secondary level education (26.4%).

Among those with third level education,

- 42.9% were enrolled in ESOL courses,
- 12.3% in Adult Literacy groups, and
- 11.7% in BTEI groups.



Programme Category: non-EU nationals

For non-EU nationals with a primary and below education level,

- 61.1% were enrolled in ESOL courses,
- 16.4% in Adult Literacy groups, and
- 6.2% in the Refugee Resettlement programme.

Among non-EU nationals with a third level education,

- 44.3% were enrolled in ESOL courses,
- 12.3% in BTEI groups, and
- 11.4% in Adult Literacy groups.



Programme Category: non-EU nationals

Therefore, the percentage of enrolments in ESOL courses was **higher** among those learners that reported a primary and below education level than compared to those learners that reported a third level education.



Other tangible outputs from FET Sector

There has been a rapidly growing demand for English language support from new migrants in FET, including formal ETB responsibility for refugees and asylum seekers, with around 20,000 learners availing of this ESOL provision each year.

SOLAS, 'Further Education and Training Strategy 2020 – 2024 (2020), p.47

SOLAS Learner Support Team worked with Cavan and Monaghan ETB to develop Good Practice Guidelines for Initial Assessment of English Language Competency for Migrant Learners with English Language needs.

English language provision and language Assessment for low-skilled and unemployed migrants – recommendations for good practice at NFQ levels 1-3 in Education & Training Boards



- Published by SOLAS and Education & Training Board Ireland in March 2018
- The implementation of recommendations relating to provision of classes is being progressed via SOLAS / ETB Strategic Performance Agreements.



**The report provides 24 recommendations
ranging across the following 6 thematic
areas:**

1. General Recommendations
2. Funding and Eligibility
3. Assessment
4. Curriculum Development and Programmes
5. Accreditation
6. Staffing

Initial and Ongoing Assessment of English Language Competency of Migrant Learners in Further Education and Training

Part 1: Research Report



Part 2: Guidelines

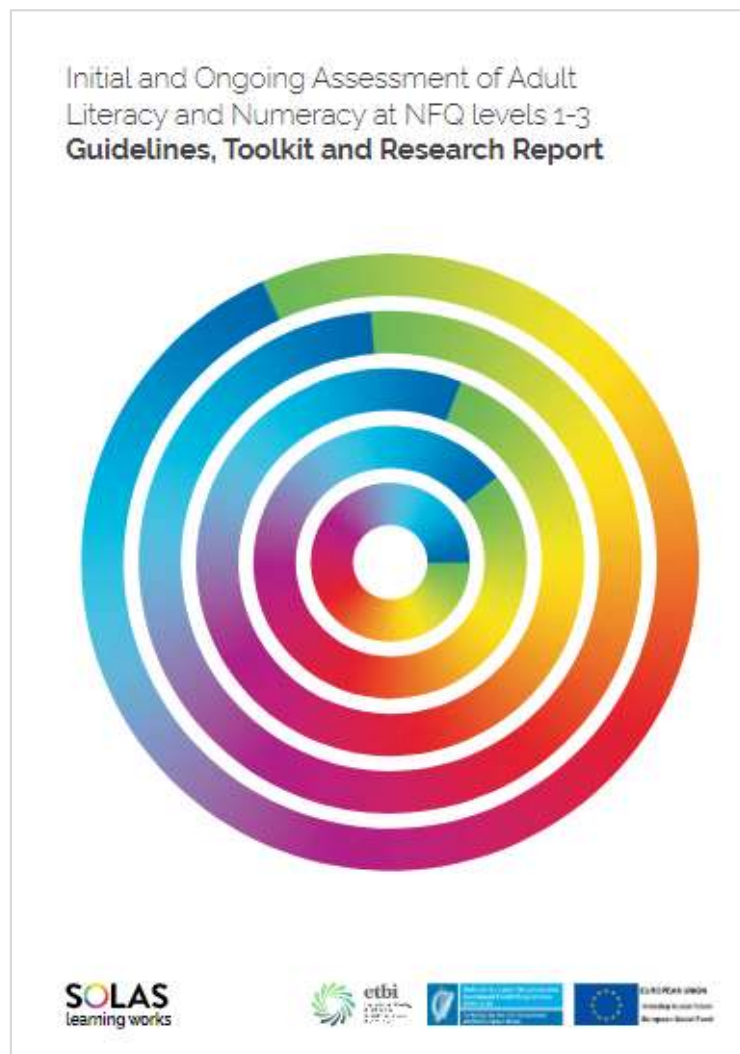


Part 3: Toolkit




SOLAS
learning works

Initial and Ongoing Assessment of Adult Literacy and Numeracy at NFQ levels 1-3



Guidelines, Toolkit and Research Report

SOLAS
learning works



“Language ... empowers us to develop our thinking, expression, reflections, critique and empathy, and it supports the development of self-efficacy, identity and **full participation** in society” (Primary Language Curriculum)



OECD


“Knowing the language is crucial for successful integration...
key to social cohesion, **active participation in society** and
key to understanding and accepting national culture.”

(OECD in the Economic Survey of Ireland (2008))





What is participation really?

- We hear a lot about full participation – what does it mean?
- How can Initial and Ongoing Assessment guidelines and toolkit help participation?



Migrants who want to learn / improve their English
language competence don't have time to waste....

- 
- Pressures on adult learners generally
 - Competing demands for their time
 - Uncertain outcomes in employment after a programme
 - In certain cases mental health issues / other trauma

- 
- Fit for purpose assessment system allows for appropriate placement in class according to skill level across a range of indicators
 - Removes trial and error
 - Helps sustain motivation
 - Get us more swiftly and securely to “full participation”



Participation is...

- Being able to show as much of yourself as you wish in different situations
- Being confident to put forward ideas at work / in your community
- Sharing a joke / funny observation with friends
- Assertively challenging bullying behaviour



Participation is...

- Understanding nuance
- Eavesdropping on the chats you overhear between your children and their pals
- Effectively advocating for a loved one in a busy hospital ward
- Doing work that matches your skills and ambitions
- And so much more....

Participation is



learning works



- Thank you!

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