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ABSTRACT

Ireland's vocational preparation and training (VPT) program was evaluated to determine its effectiveness in achieving the general/specific objectives specified in Ireland's national development plan, responsiveness to local needs, outcomes, and future challenges. The data collection activities were organized in three phases as follows: exploratory phase (examination of all relevant monitoring material and records/databases, meetings with key individuals/stakeholders, literature review); field work (face-to-face meetings/interviews with 19 principals and 39 teachers/course coordinators from a sample of schools delivering VPT, nationwide survey of 460 VPT participants, telephone survey soliciting literature/information on VPT in schools); and analysis and consolidation. Special attention was paid to the following: program implementation; VPT's responsiveness to local needs; impact indicators; certification; and future challenges. Ireland's VPT program was concluded to be maintaining high levels of contact with employers and meeting many of its participants' needs; however, confusion of definitions of the VPT program's various components made it difficult to ascertain VPT's full impacts. Localized examples of excellence were identified and incorporated into a model of good practice. (Contains 39 tables/figures and 18 references. Appendixes constituting approximately 25% of this document contain the following: interview instruments; glossary of main certifying bodies; and table detailing VPT provision and certification.) (MN)

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European Social Fund

PROGRAMME EVALUATION UNIT

Evaluation Report

Vocational Preparation & Training Programme

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Located in the Department of Enterprise and Employment, the European Social Fund Programme Evaluation Unit reports jointly to that Department and the European Commission.

Vocational Preparation and Training Programme

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Preface

This report is an evaluation of the Vocational Preparation Training Programme (VPTP). It is important at the outset to clarify what the Vocational Preparation and Training Programme and its various components are, as their complexity will already be apparent to those involved in their implementation.

The programme is a composite measure currently divided under the following headings: VPT1, VPT2/PLC and more recent inclusions, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) and the proposed Leaving Certificate Applied Programme (LCAP).

Detailed descriptions of each sub-programme and its evolution are provided in Chapter 2. It is important to state the that the main focus of this report is on VPT2 which is implemented through Post Leaving Certificate courses (PLCs). This focus is due mainly to the magnitude and developing importance of these particular courses responding to educational/industrial demands. In view of the gradual demise of VPT1 and its amalgamation within the developing senior cycle, a relatively small section of the report is devoted to this particular programme.

The Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) is an emerging course designed to accommodate students who aim to complete their Leaving Certificate but facilitating diversity within the new Senior Cycle. The development of the LCVP is outlined in the following chapters.

The Leaving Certificate Applied Programme is also a new development resulting from the restructuring of the senior cycle. This programme is also described. Issues relating to the ongoing development of the senior cycle and its implications are outlined in Chapters 1 & 2.

The report, as the first of a series of evaluations, is primarily concerned with understanding the VPTP and, secondly, assessing the effectiveness of the VPTP in achieving the general and specific objectives set down in the Operational Programme. The emphasis is on the practical aspects of the Vocational Preparation

and Training Programme in schools and centres, captured under the following headings:

- ☆ **Implementation of the Programme**
- ☆ **Response to Local Needs**
- ☆ **Impact Indicators**
- ☆ **Certification**
- ☆ **Future Challenges**

The emphasis, for the most part is on the 'customer', i.e., the recipient of the training. This theme will be expanded on in later sections.

Chapter 1

Framework For The Evaluation

The complexity of the Vocational Preparation Training Programme is a recurrent theme throughout this report. This complexity can be attributed to any number of factors including the actual magnitude of the programme, the diverse target groups which it serves and current activity in terms of development and expansion of the programme. There are also a number of other factors which need to be highlighted and explained in order to proceed effectively with this report. This section presents these as a framework for the evaluation. It does so under the following headings:

- ☆ **An Overview of Recent Developments in Education Policy**
- ☆ **The Regional Education Councils (RECs)**
- ☆ **The Irish Education Structure**
- ☆ **A Definition of Irish School Types**
- ☆ **National Demographic Trends**
- ☆ **Literature Review**

An Overview of Recent Developments in Educational Policy

There have been a number of developments in recent years which have begun to influence educational policy and its formation. These were captured in the Government's Green Paper 'Education for a Changing World' (1992), reiterated in publications since and will be incorporated into the White Paper on Education due for publication in late 1994. The general theme is one of change and adapting to change. The entire thrust of the Green Paper has potential implications for VPTP but the objectives specifically pertinent are those related to:

- ✧ Broadening Irish education to equip students more for life, for work in an enterprise culture, and for citizenship of Europe.
- ✧ Training and developing teachers to equip them for a constantly changing environment

- ✧ Ensuring gender equity in the education system.

- ✧ Creating a system of effective quality assurance.

Related to the last point, the Green Paper refers to the inspectorate as being the main vehicle for quality assurance at second level, indicating that it has a key role in evaluating the school system. The Report on the National Education Convention (a consultative forum organised by the Department of Education to discuss the issues in the Green Paper) also acknowledged the importance of the inspectorate in enhancing the quality of the education system. It was emphasised that adequate groundwork would be necessary to prepare schools for such a change in the role of the inspectorate. The forthcoming White Paper on Education will set out the proposed future role of the inspectorate. The Department of Education's Position Paper on the Regional Education Councils, discussed below, indicates that the educational support duties currently carried out by the inspectorate would in future be the responsibility of the Regional Education Councils. Quality assurance and evaluation of educational outcomes would be the responsibility of the national inspectorate.

The National Development Plan 1994-1999

Similar themes are reinforced in the National Development Plan for Ireland 1994-1999. It states that the restructuring of the VPTP aims to achieve three complementary policy objectives:

1. To address the strong criticism of academic bias in educational provision for 16-19 year age group.

2. To improve retention rates in education if unemployment and disadvantage are to be tackled effectively.

3. To address the needs of the significant number of students for whom the current structure of the Leaving Certificate is unsuitable.

Development of the Leaving Certificate Programme

There have been a number of significant developments in the second level system launched recently in line with the objectives contained in the National Development Plan. The main thrust behind this restructuring is to encourage and facilitate students to remain in full-time education after the end of the compulsory period.

Research indicates that the Leaving Certificate does not meet the demands of the total cohort on the grounds of academic bias. Hence, it was deemed necessary to address this. All new developments are based, to some extent, on a restructuring of the traditional Leaving Certificate programme, which is the final State examination that second level students sit before leaving school. It is perceived almost exclusively as a means of entry into third level education, rather than a qualification for employment or as an end in itself. The exam has a strong academic/examination focus and research indicates that for this reason it is unsuitable for one in four students. For example, Leaving Certificate results for 1993 produced failures of 20% and more in subjects such as chemistry, Irish, history and biology at ordinary level.

Recent developments focus on addressing the issue of the Leaving Certificate and its limitations. These developments essentially follow the same theme, i.e., that of providing alternative, recognised and respected options targeted at the significant group who are less academically oriented than the traditional Leaving Certificate group. The emphasis on *recognised* and *respected* is fundamental, as image is highly important. Students and indeed parents will be slow to respond to programmes that are labelled with connotative titles. Hence, the whole issue of the packaging of new programmes is crucial for their success.

The following are the programmes included in the ESF funded drive to overhaul the Leaving Certificate Programme:

1. The Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (the original version and the revised version which will shortly be piloted).

2. The Leaving Certificate Applied Programme.

The policy underlying these programmes is to strengthen the vocational dimension within the framework of a unified Leaving Certificate to include a broader base of technical subjects. The Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme first proposed such extension, to include a compulsory European language. The Leaving Certificate Applied Programme is the other option which is to provide curricular opportunity beyond the narrow band of the Leaving Certificate. This restructuring is based on a target of up to 30% of senior cycle students following vocational options, starting on a phased basis in 1994 and reaching the target level by 1999.

The Regional Educational Councils

In the context of the debate on the Green Paper on Education, the Minister for Education proposed in March 1994 the establishment of eight Regional Educational Councils (RECs). These would represent a new development which is currently being considered. It is envisaged that the RECs would take over the planning, co-ordination and delivery of many education activities currently performed by the Department of Education or local Vocational Education Committees (VECs).

The RECs - Essential Criteria

According to the Department of Education's 'Position Paper on the Regional Education Councils', it is imperative that the new structures should meet the criteria outlined in Figure 1.

Figure 1 *The Regional Education Councils - Development Criteria*
(1) Enhancement of the quality of education '...they should make an unambiguous and clearly visible contribution to the enhancement of the quality of education in their areas of jurisdiction. ....In essence, the new structures should have the capacity to provide, in a cost effective manner, a unique added value to the delivery of education in their areas - and to be seen to do so;...'
(2) Effective partnership '..they should function as an effective partnership between national Government, the providers of education, parents and the local community interests including the business sector and locally elected representatives;'
(3) Realisation of national objectives '..their activities should be consistent with overall national educational policy and objectives as laid out by the Minister of Education and contribute to the realisation of these policies and objectives. These objectives include the promotion of equality within the educational system in terms of both access and outcomes and ensuring quality and relevance;'
(4) Acceptability '..they should elicit a broad level of acceptance from schools and communities and reflect the diversity within the Irish school system - including the rights of the minority communities.'
(5) Transparency in decision-making '..they should contribute to enhancing transparency in decision making - particularly in regard to resource allocation.'
(6) Accountability '..the new structures should enhance the public accountability of the education system.'

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The RECs, if agreed and established, would have a significant role in the management of the VPTP. This might also serve to release the Department of Education from its current involvement and responsibility for the detailed administration of services in relation to the VPTP. Essentially many of the recommendations outlined in Chapter 9 could quite appropriately be included in the remit of the RECs.

The Irish Education Structure

The Vocational Preparation Training Programme is delivered in second level schools. The Irish education system at post primary level centres around two cycles and two landmark examinations: the Junior Certificate and the Leaving Certificate. The compulsory schooling period currently extends to the age of fifteen years, by which time a student will usually have completed the Junior Certificate examination. Students who remain in school after the Junior Certificate usually go on to complete the senior cycle and obtain a Leaving Certificate. Until recently the senior cycle has been structured as a two year programme. This is being extended and a three year option has been developed as part of the restructuring of the senior cycle. This now includes an optional Transition Year[1].

Bearing in mind the above structure of second level schooling, where does the VPTP fit in?

- VPT1 is to be assimilated into the newly restructured senior cycle programme in the form of the Leaving Certificate Applied Programme.

- VPT2 has essentially become the Post Leaving Certificate Programme which forms an exclusively post second level category within the education system. The majority of participants on PLC courses will therefore have completed their Leaving Certificate.

A Definition of Irish School Types

The Irish second level system has a number of different school titles and management structures which have developed over time. There are three categories or types of school within the second level system:

1. The Transition Year is a one year full-time programme taken on completion of the Junior Certificate, immediately prior to commencing the Leaving Certificate programme.

1. Secondary Schools.

2. Community & Comprehensive Schools.

3. Vocational Education Schools/Community Colleges.

Originally, there were just two types of school - vocational schools giving a two year technical/vocational type course and the traditional secondary school offering a five year programme up to Leaving Certificate level. With the advent of free education in the 1960's, the vocational school programme was extended to offer the full range of Leaving Certificate subjects. Similarly, many secondary schools began to offer technical subjects such as woodwork and metal work. This in effect blurred the original distinction which existed between the schools.

Differences still exist in the management structures of the schools. The secondary schools are mainly owned and run by religious orders and report directly to the Department of Education. Vocational schools and Community Colleges are owned and managed by local Vocational Education Committees (VECs) to whom they report.

Vocational Education Committees were established under the 1930 Vocational Education Act. Since that time, the VECs have played the major role in the expansion and development of vocational education throughout the country. There is a Vocational Education Committee for each county and for twelve of the larger cities and towns, 38 in total. Each VEC represents a cross-section of educational, cultural, industrial and commercial interests. The committee appoints a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who directs the organisation and administration of the system.

Community and Comprehensive schools are in a sense a hybrid of the original dual system and they provide a combination of the academic and technical attributes of the secondary and vocational schools respectively. The concept of 'community' refers to the community dimension, i.e., providing community education initiatives in the form of adult education, venues for local community groups to meet, etc.. The Community Schools are owned and managed by a partnership of religious orders and VEC, both being trustees of the school. They report directly to the Department of Education.

Vocational education was traditionally provided by VECs in Vocational Schools. However, the development of Comprehensive and Community Schools, the growing consensus on the need for a balanced comprehensive curriculum at second level, and the massive growth in Vocational Preparation and Training Programmes funded by the ESF have all contributed to the growth in the range of providers at this level.

Vocational Schools and Community Colleges are the main providers of the Vocational Preparation and Training Programme on behalf of the Department of Education and 80% of VPTP provision is in these schools. The remaining 20% of provision is dispersed through Community and Comprehensive and Secondary Schools. The trend appears to be that more and more VEC schools are moving from providing second level education to providing further education in the form of Post Leaving Certificate courses. These courses are an intermediate stage between second and third level education. These schools are essentially 'post second level centres', providing a varied range of Post Leaving Certificate programmes.

The Green Paper refers specifically to the PLC courses as 'after-school' programmes. It places them as a category on their own and refers to certification and progression within the education sector, for example progression from PLC to third level education. *(Education for a Changing World, Green Paper, p.15)*

National Demographic Trends

A consistent theme running through the evolution of VPTP since 1984 is the steady increase in the numbers participating in the programme. The possible reasons for this expansion are discussed elsewhere in this report, but all the indications are that this expansion is to continue into the next decade. It is important to view this in the light of the current demographic situation and predicted trends for the future.

The number of students in primary education increased steadily over the period 1965 to 1987, the peak year. The numbers have been declining since then and this decline is projected to continue over the next decade. Pupil numbers are already down in primary schools and entry levels to post primary are starting to fall as of the 1993/94 academic year.

The Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) referred to this as a 'drastic' fall in the numbers of children in the population. In reference to the changing demographic pattern they refer to the number of children under 15 falling 'dramatically' over the next 10 years and of the 'radical' and 'profound' impact of these changes on Irish education and society as a whole. *(ESRI Medium Term Review: 1994 - 2000, April 1994).* The key point in the ESRI report is that the fall in births which we have experienced since 1981 is only part of the story; the trend is still downwards and there will be even greater reductions over the next ten years. By the year 2003 the ESRI expects that the number of pupils in second level education to have fallen by 25%. By the same year, it estimates that there will be 23% fewer children under 15 in the population than there are now.

The following figures are referred to as dramatic:

938,000 of school going age (4 - 18 years) in 1991

776,000 of school going age (4 - 18 years) in 2000

668,000 of school going age (4 - 18 years) in 2005

It is important to see this trend in terms of possible implications for rationalising the school system, possible schools amalgamation or even closure and the ultimate effect on the quality of education. Certainly, in terms of VPTP, the decline will inevitably hit mainstream second level first and progress to 'after-school' or Post Leaving Certificate and so on to third level. The following table gives the projections for the year 2001 from the Department of Education comparative to 1965 and 1991. It is interesting to note the projected doubling of the VPTP figures, although there is no indication of the breakdown between LCVP, LCAP or PLC.

Table 1
Comparative Projections of Student Numbers

School Type	*1965*	*1991*	*2001*
Primary	505,000	553,000	421,000
Second Level	143,000	318,500	304,000
Vocational Training *	-	28,500	60,000
Third Level	21,000	70,000	100,000
Total	669,000	970,000	885,000

** Mainly VPTP with dispersed special programmes such as VTOS.*

This projected increase in take-up of VPTP must not be taken in isolation. Coupled with the declining demographic trend we need to consider the fact that more and more students are staying on at school to complete the senior cycle.

> *'Currently, over 93% of 16 year olds, 75% of 17 year olds and about 50% of 18 year olds are in full time education. Some 73% of those who enter second level complete the senior cycle. Almost 40% of this age group now proceed to third level education, compared with 20% in 1980, while a further 20% follow a post second level vocational training programme within the school system'.*
>
> *(Source: Education for a Changing World)*

Literature Review

There is limited accessible literature pertaining exclusively to VPTP. In fact considering the size and importance attached to the programme, especially in terms of planned expansion, it is interesting that there is such a dearth of published material on the subject. Apart from private research, a number of significant chapters in educational texts written by those involved in the implementation of VPTP or Curriculum Development Units, there is a notable lack of comprehensive literature. These 'chapters' and indeed all sources of information referred to are referenced in the bibliography. It has to be said that media coverage of the Post Leaving Certificate courses has been quite extensive in recent years. This coverage is essentially portraying the PLC course as an alternative further education option for school leavers. This is largely driven by marketing campaigns promoted by the schools/colleges themselves.

The Department of Education commissioned two descriptive surveys of the VPT programme. The first of these was based on the 1984 participants and the second, completed in 1990 was based on participants for the school year 1987/88. Both were carried out by the ESRI.

The ESRI Survey of School Principals and Participants in relation to the Vocational Preparation and Training Programme 1987/88

At the time of the second ESRI survey the VPTP was divided into two distinct programmes VPT1 and VPT2. VPT1 is described as 'a self contained one year whole-time programme of Vocational Preparation and Training for those who have completed the junior cycle. It is designed as a basis for entry into the further year of vocational training VPT2. All those who have completed the senior cycle are

designated VPT 2 regardless of whether they have completed a VPT1 programme or not.' This is essentially distinguishing VPT2 as an independent programme, i.e., completion of a VPT1 is not a prerequisite for VPT2 participants, as had been originally intended.

It is interesting to note that the ESRI report contains no coverage of expenditure and only one mention of the ESF funding of the VPT programme. It is important also to highlight the time lapse of 6/7 years since the survey was actually carried out. This is significant in terms of the developments within the VPTP that have occurred since that time. It is also significant that there have been no evaluations of the programme in the interim.

The following is a brief summary of the salient findings of the ESRI survey captured under the following headings:

- ☆ **Survey Participants' Profile**
- ☆ **Gender Breakdown**
- ☆ **Course Designation**
- ☆ **Post Programme Performance**
- ☆ **Certification**
- ☆ **Qualitative Issues**

Survey Participants' Profile

In 1987/88 an estimated 21,000 students participated in VPTP, 13,000 female and 8,000 male. There were twice as many students on VPT1 as VPT2. The numbers were very similar in 1988/89 but there is a significant difference in the VPT1/VPT2 breakdown between the two years (see Table 2 below).

Table 2
VPT1 - VPT2 Enrolment 1987/88-1988/89

	VPT1	*VPT2*
1987/88	67%	33%
1988/89	47%	53%

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This reversal occurred because the Department of Education *reclassified* the VPT participants. From 1988/89 all students who completed the senior cycle prior to attending a VPT programme are classified as *VPT2* participants. This categorisation applies regardless of whether or not they had completed a VPT1 programme, i.e., completion of VPT1 is no longer a prerequisite for participation in VPT2.

Gender Breakdown

Approximately two thirds of all VPT participants were female and this proportion was even greater amongst VPT2 participants.

Course Designation

The report classifies VPT course subjects into 9 designations. 'Commerce' was the most frequently offered designation on both VPT1 and VPT2. There is no precise explanation of what constitutes commerce but the indications from this research suggest that this is largely secretarial/business studies.

Post Programme Performance

The survey indicates that principals' perception of how the students fared post programme appears to be considerably more optimistic than the picture presented by participants. Principals indicated that 56% of VPT participants got a job on completion whilst 37% of participants reported gaining employment. The main sectors in which they were employed were Commerce and Distribution, Manufacturing and Public Utilities and Personal Services. Some 19% of participants reported that they were continuing their education either at third level or second level. The majority were attending Regional Technical College or the Dublin Institute of Technology with very few attending Universities. The report suggests that VPT participants have considerably better job prospects than those who enter the labour market straight from second level education without having completed a VPTP, although it does not distinguish between VPT1 and VPT2 in this context.

Certification

According to the ESRI report, the 'Department of Education' Certificate of Attendance was the most frequently offered certificate for VPTP back in 1987/88. Some 34% of schools indicated that they provided opportunity for students to obtain certificates from Irish/international certifying bodies. This category was not broken down any further. There is evidence that principals were not entirely satisfied with certification provision for VPTP; 74% indicated that some form of

national certification of achievement should be provided for accrediting VPTP participants. The results indicate that the majority of programme participants valued their certificates.

Qualitative Issues

The report suggests that there was broad agreement between the participants and principals regarding the aims of the VPTP. Involvement by local employers is reported as being 'extremely high' with FÁS and trade unions involved to a lesser extent. Involvement was usually in the form of 'work experience/placements/ sponsorship and a large proportion gave guidance/advice/counselling classes'.

The principals expressed some concern in relation to the Department of Education. When asked to assess the help that they had received from the Department in running VPT, the majority said it was 'inadequate'. A large proportion indicated the need for more support in terms of resources, time allocation, finances, training and backup. The majority of principals indicated that they were in favour of re-introducing 'the grant'[2] on the grounds that it is a motivating factor encouraging students to do the course.

Education and Training Policies for Economic & Social Development (NESC No. 95. October 1993)

This report was a response to the Government's Green Paper on Education and the Culliton Report (1992). It set out to examine, in a comparative context, how differences in physical productivity and value added are linked to the standards of human capital and training. This is presented as a means of identifying changes which will be required in education and training policies in order to achieve competitive international standards and skill levels. The report includes a review of vocational education in a comparative perspective and inevitably includes VPTP. A number of salient issues are highlighted which facilitate a framework for this evaluation. These are outlined below.

The **first** is that of certification and the lack of standardisation in assessment and certification procedures. This issue is addressed in Chapter 5 of this evaluation.

2. *'The Grant' refers to the training grant that had been allocated to VPTP students pre 1988. It was withdrawn in 1988 and VPTP students since then receive no State allowance whilst participating in the programme.*

The **second** is that 'VPT programmes were not introduced as formal vocational preparation schemes based on an analysis of labour market needs, but were part of the Department of Education's response to the social guarantee provision for early school leavers.' Due to the fact that the programmes are largely funded by the European Social Fund there was some concern expressed that they 'were more fund-driven than driven by the requirements of the labour market'.

The **third** is the fact that some confusion has been generated by the complexity of 'VPT2'. It points out that the PLCs are seen to represent an unofficial further education sector. However, there are no specific arrangements made regarding teacher training or retraining to accommodate this. Similarly, there is no common approach to curriculum design, assessment and certification. As a result there is little scope for a national system of quality control.

The report also highlights that there is substantial evidence of sexstereotyped choices, specifically in relation to PLCs. It has to be stated, however, that since publication of this report, a number of the above issues are being addressed in recent developments, including that of the National Council for Vocational Awards (NCVA). These issues are explored thoroughly in later sections.

Chapter 2

Description of the Vocational Preparation & Training Programmes

Vocational Preparation Training - Evolution Through To The Present

The aim of this section is to provide a overview of what constitutes Vocational Preparation Training in Ireland today. This will provide a framework for the evaluation of the programmes and this report. A more detailed description of the many facets of the VPTP can be found in the second part of this chapter. The focus here is on the evolution of the Vocational Preparation and Training Programme in its many guises, through to the current shape which comprises VPT. The literature source for this chapter is the variety of papers and chapters written on the subject of VPTP since its inception. These are cited where appropriate and are listed in the bibliography.

The Evolution ...

The issue of early school leavers, in particular those who leave school with limited or no formal qualifications, has been a source of concern both in Ireland and the European Union generally since the expansion of second level education provision in the 1960's. In 1977, an initiative known as the Pre-Employment Course was launched in a climate of rising unemployment. In the first year of the new programme, 1977/78, 80 vocational schools participated with enrolments of 1,800 students. This one year, full-time course was designed primarily for students who were likely to leave school on reaching the school leaving age of 15 years to seek employment. Due to the economic climate of the time there were limited job opportunities. This situation rendered the early school leaver particularly vulnerable to the shrinking demand for unskilled labour.

The literature implies the success of the Pre-Employment Course, indicating that the take-up confirmed that there was a strong demand for a shorter more job relevant alternative to the Leaving Certificate programme. This success is anecdotal as no research on post programme performance was undertaken. The

programme was confined to vocational, community and comprehensive schools. Up to 1983, when the programme ended, about 120 schools had been involved (Kellaghan and Lewis, 1991). This paved the way for the introduction of the Vocational Preparation and Training Programme (VPTP) in 1984.

The Vocational Preparation and Training Programme *evolved* from the Pre-Employment Course and was presented as part of the Department of Education's response to the social guarantee provision for early school leavers.[3] It was originally aimed at Priority Group 2, those who leave at or about Junior Certificate standard. This is now best known as VPT1 and was 65% funded by the European Social Fund and 35% funded by the Department of Education in the 1990 to 1993 period.

This evolution of the VPT was facilitated by the extension of aid from the European Social Fund to the secondary sector in 1984 and later that year the Minister for Education announced her endorsement of the VPTP. She announced that secondary schools would be permitted to introduce the new course and that it would replace the Pre-Employment Course.

VPT1

VPT1 was originally introduced as a one year full-time programme with three curricular areas: vocational studies, preparation for working life and general studies. This was designed as a one year whole-time preparation for work or as a basis for entry into a further year of Vocational Training, VPT2.

In 1984 - 1985, its first year of operation, a total of 322 schools and approximately 15,000 students, participated in VPT1. By 1991-1992, this figure had fallen to 240 schools serving 5,879 students (NCVA, 1992). As mentioned in the preface, the demise of VPT1 is apparent in these declining numbers. Coupled with its demise or perhaps as a move to address this, there is evidence of expansion of its definition to such an extent that in some schools VPT1 has and is being referred to as Transition Year. There has also been a reclassification of the programme by the Department of Education.

3. The 1983 EC Council Resolution on Vocational Training Policy aimed to facilitate access for unemployed school leavers to full-time programmes of basic training and work experience. This has come to be known as the Social Guarantee and was launched in Ireland in 1985. The Social Guarantee is aimed particularly at two groups of school leavers: those without any qualifications, the main Priority Group 1 (PG1), and those who leave at or about Junior Certificate standard, Priority Group 2 (PG2).

VPT2

In 1985, a second year, VPT2, was added to the Vocational Preparation and Training Programme. The aim was to serve older students at a higher educational level than VPT1 but still below the Leaving Certificate level. VPT2 was introduced as a continuation of VPT1, i.e., students did a year of VPT1 and then progressed to VPT2 or employment, apprenticeship, etc..

In theory there can be, was and is movement from VPT1 to VPT2, but in practice VPT2 has become almost exclusively a Post Leaving Certificate option and there is an expectation on the part of the providers that students will have obtained the Leaving Certificate. VPT2 is commonly known as Post Leaving Certificate Courses; in fact VPT2 terminology is not used at all by either the providers or recipients. The term PLC was coined by the VECs in 1988/89. The reason for this change of name was largely one of status or perception of the PLC courses. VPT2 could in fact be deemed a misnomer as it has no relation to VPT1! There are a number of exceptions to this rule; for example, in the case of CERT courses, students can do a VPT1 foundation level CERT course and then progress to VPT2, i.e., the next level up in terms of CERT courses. This is one of a few surviving examples of the original VPT1 - VPT2 concept.

The next section of this chapter provides a further expansion on VPT1 and the PLCs. It also includes a description of the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) and the Leaving Certificate Applied Programme (LCAP) which are the other programmes now included under the expansive umbrella of VPTP.

The Reality of VPT Today

VPT has now been in existence for over a decade. In that time the courses provided within the framework of the programme have evolved in a variety of ways. This evolution has, in most cases, been localised and driven by factors that are not necessarily nationally determined. Examples of such factors include response to demands or needs in local communities; efforts to increase numbers in schools where local populations are declining; moves to build up a school's reputation; emulating practice observed in other areas, etc.. In many cases impetus came directly from within a school and/or its locality and not directly from the Department of Education. It is only in recent years with the development of the National Council for Vocational Awards (NCVA) that a continuous and systematic means of co-ordination has been introduced in relation to the PLCs.

This evaluation aims to capture a picture of VPTP in its many guises and provide a preliminary review of the impact of the programme. It is important to reiterate that this report is the first in a series of evaluations of VPTP. It is something of an action research project in that the VPTP is currently in a state of flux. Obviously, this process could not be stalled in time for the sake of an evaluation. Hence, the report endeavours to present a picture of the current state of play, highlight the issues at stake and suggest areas for improvement to be incorporated into the development of the programme and related policy.

Description of the Vocational Preparation and Training Programmes

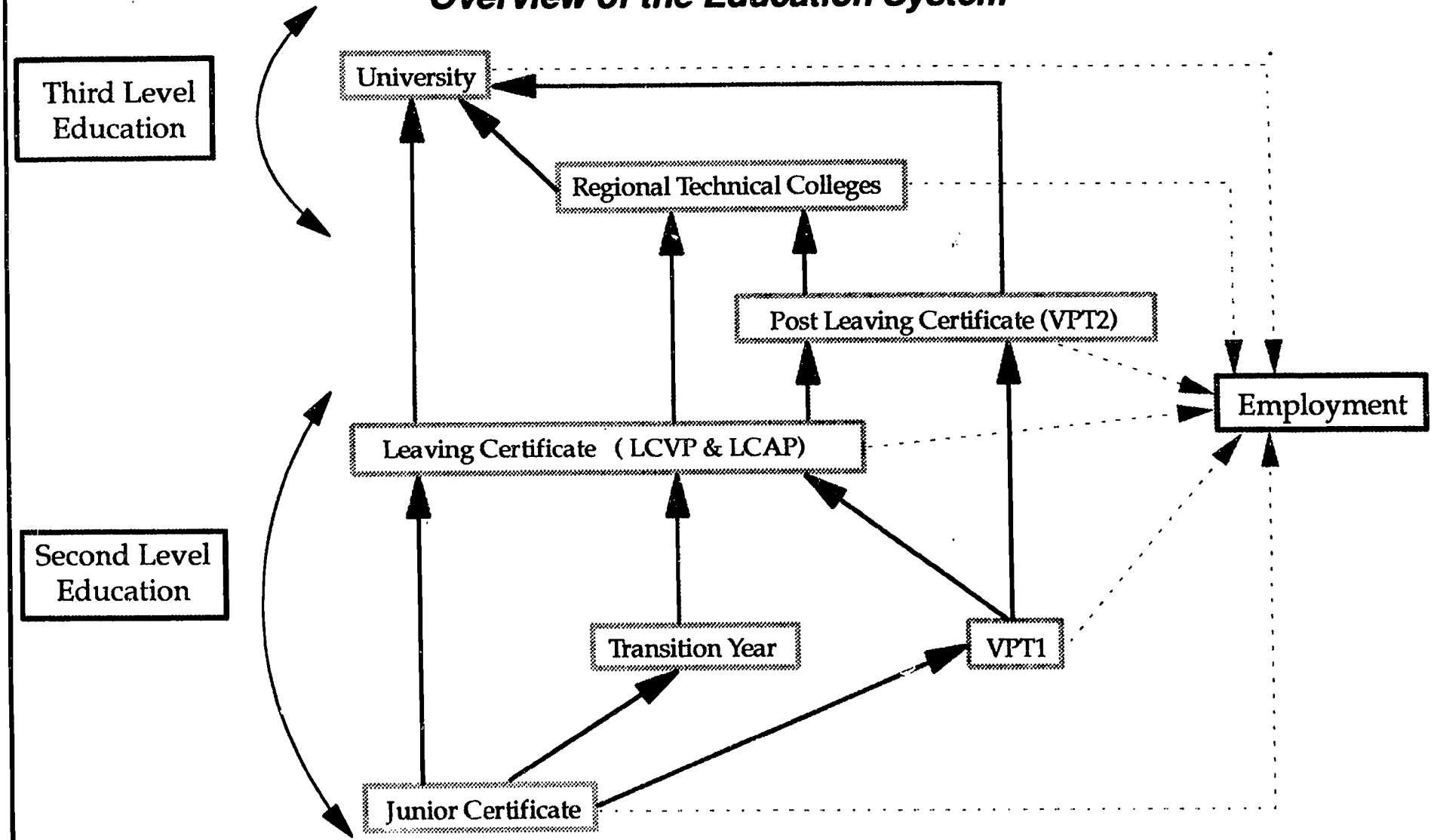
This section provides a description of the various VPTP components. It is important in terms of the clarity of definition to state that the time frame adopted is Spring 1994. This is in order to address the complexity of the programme description and to allow for the current developments and proposed restructuring of the programme. For ease of this description, the VPTP is divided into its two main components, i.e., VPT1, which includes LCVP and LCAP, and Post Leaving Certificate courses. Figure 2 presents a framework of the various components of the VPTP within the context of the overall education system.

Each component of the VPTP is described under the following headings:

- ☆ **General Description of the Programme**
- ☆ **Structure of the Programme**
- ☆ **Target Group**
- ☆ **Certification**

The Vocational Preparation and Training Programme is part funded by the European Social Fund. The basic objective of the entire programme is to provide appropriate vocational training for young people in the 15 - 19 age group who have completed compulsory schooling, but whose skills are inadequate for the labour market due to the impact of economic or technological change. The programme aims at preparing students for the world of work.

Figure 2
Overview of the Education System



A key and constant feature within the programme is an approach which is designed to enable training centres to respond flexibly to the needs of the locality. Programmes of vocational study are designed to be sufficiently broadly based to allow entry into a series of possible occupations. A range of vocational designations and modules is available for schools to choose from (e.g., business studies, engineering, construction, electronics, craft and design, science, services, horticulture, tourism, media studies, etc.). Centres are also given the opportunity to adapt a general programme to suit their particular needs, or to devise a suitable new one.

The Vocational Preparation and Training Programme is provided by second level education institutions. Schools are required to apply for approval from the Department of Education in order to run these programmes. This approval process involves submitting a description of the proposed programme to the Department on an annual basis. It is difficult to ascertain definitively what the approval process entails. It appears to be based on an identification of the market conditions of the locality, the school's proposed syllabus, inclusion of the required modules, estimated class numbers and teaching provision. A course is not approved once and for all; the approval has to be re-applied for each year.

VPT1

As outlined earlier, VPT1 is in a state of flux. The programme is changing to include the latest developments resulting from the current restructuring of the Leaving Certificate programme. VPT1, in its original form is currently being provided by some schools, but the plan for the future is to incorporate VPT1 into the new Leaving Certificate programmes. The incorporation process is to be phased over the next few years. The primary purpose of the original VPT1 is to provide students with vocational training to enhance their employment prospects. The emphasis is on general skills, positive attitudes towards training, adaptability and initiative, as well as on the development of specific vocational skills. In order to describe the programme it needs to be subdivided from its composite form into the three distinct programmes, i.e., LCVP, LCAP and what remains of the original VPT1. Descriptions of the LCVP and the LCAP therefore follow the description of VPT1.

Structure of the Programme

VPT1 consists of at least 800 hours full-time training, including work experience of at least 200 hours but not more than 400 hours. It is structured into three main components as follows:

- ☆ Vocational Studies = 40%
- ☆ Work Experience and Preparation for working life = 25%
- ☆ General Studies = 35%

Target Group

The target group is young persons, principally 15 - 18 years old, who are proposing to enter the labour market on completion of their schooling.

Certification

On completion of VPT1, participants are awarded a certificate of participation by the Department of Education and often some local certificate, for example, from City of Dublin VEC (CDVEC). In some cases participants receive awards from CERT depending on course designation.

The Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP)

LCVP is a new two year whole-time programme which forms part of the Department of Education's vocational training provision at second level. The *original* Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme was sanctioned in September 1989. This was a two year course designed to give participants a grounding in a specific technological area.

The LCVP is based on the Leaving Certificate syllabi with required add on modules in construction, engineering and technical drawing. It is designed to allow trainees to qualify for the award of a Leaving Certificate, while giving them the skills which facilitate access to a range of occupations in the engineering and construction fields.

The Department of Education has established a steering group for the development of the LCVP, representing the Department of Education, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) and the NCVA. This steering group has developed the content of the Link Modules and is identifying resources required for implementing the programme.

This revised LCVP will begin piloting in September 1994 with a view to nationwide launch in September 1996. This pilot will involve 60 schools who have not run an LCVP before and 20 schools who have run the 'original' LCVP. The number of students taking this option in 1992/93 was approximately 9,200 and this is projected to increase to 12,700 in 1994/95. By 1999 it is estimated that one Leaving Certificate student in three will be taking this programme. It is proposed that extensive staff development and training will be a feature of the pilot programme. A four-day Training of Trainers network seminar is planned for August 1994 for those who will conduct the in-service training which is due to commence in September 1994.

Between 1989 and 1993, the LCVP was fully co-funded. For the 1994 to 1999 period, the programme will be part funded, in that only the marginal cost will be involved, i.e., an extra 0.25 of a teacher based on 20 participants and a once off equipment grant. The Department of Education received sanction from the Department of Finance to finance the balance for the 1994 - 1999 period.

Structure of the Programme

The LCVP student will pursue a programme comprising the following:

- a Continental Language;
- three mandatory link modules:
    - Enterprise Education;
    - Preparation for Work; and
    - Work Experience.
- Irish;
- two Leaving Certificate subjects from subject specific groupings - Specialist Mode, e.g., Engineering and Technical drawing, or Services Mode, e.g., Home Economics and Business Organisation;

- at least one other Leaving Certificate subject.

Almost 50% of the time spent on LCVP is devoted to skill training related to employment, with a further 25% on relevant workbased experience.

Target Group

The LCVP is for those students in the 15 - 18 year age group who have completed compulsory schooling but who need vocational training to enhance their prospects of gaining employment or, where appropriate, progression to further education and training.

Certification

It is envisaged that the new LCVP link modules will be assessed and certified by the NCVA. The NCVA is currently working on this area.

Additional Comments

Schools receive an equipment grant based on an approval system devised by the inspectorate. Equipment is purchased in a bulk order scheme managed by the Department of Education and schools approved for the LCVP receive a once off delivery of an itemised list of equipment necessary for the delivery of LCVP. Schools are required to indicate that they will have a class of at least 20 pupils before approval is granted. This class of 20 can be dispersed through the traditional Leaving Certificate, classes coming together when appropriate for the *link* or *add-on* modules. The difficulty in managing such a programme is obvious and is discussed later.

It is important to highlight that the LCVP is currently in development mode, as is the entire senior cycle. The revised LCVP will be an expansion of the original programme to include business, art and home economics. The addition of these new subjects is designed to increase the appeal of the programme to female participants. The overall aim is to bring young people into the new technological age. The restructured programme is designed to enhance the overall vocational orientation of the Senior Cycle curriculum in line with the recommendations of the Culliton Report and recent OECD reports. It is designed to serve better those pupils and schools for whom the present Leaving Certificate is too restrictive. In

summary, it is largely a customised Leaving Certificate programme with three mandatory 'link modules'.

The Leaving Certificate Applied Programme

The LCAP is a new programme and is still in development mode, again in line with the restructuring of the senior cycle. It is provided for under the Community Support Framework (CSF) 1994-1999.

The Leaving Certificate Applied Programme was announced by the Minister of Education in September 1993 as a means of providing for the needs of those students for whom the traditional Leaving Certificate is inappropriate. It is packaged as a new vocationally oriented stream that will involve significant amounts of work experience and community involvement. This programme builds upon the existing Senior Certificate[4] and VPT1 courses. Detailed proposals for the programme are being prepared by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. Certification will be offered through the framework of the existing Leaving Certificate. The aim is that it will form a distinct programme with a separate identity to the Leaving Certificate. The development of the LCAP is being undertaken by the NCVA, the NCCA and the Department of Education.

Post Leaving Certificate Courses (VPT2)

As mentioned previously, the definition of VPT2 has evolved over time. The programme was originally designed in the mid-1980's to encourage students to stay on at school. VPT2 is currently aimed at those students who have completed a senior cycle programme or a VPT1 course but who need to further develop their vocational skills to enable them to secure employment commensurate with their general level of education.

In practice, VPT2 has become a Post Leaving Certificate option and is frequently seen as a 'bridging' course to higher education. The Department of Education adheres to the original nomenclature (VPT2) in all its reference material but these courses are most commonly known as PLCs. They are designed to offer young people an opportunity to acquire further skills and training in a variety of subject areas including, secretarial studies, art, design, equestrian studies, horticulture, greenkeeping, journalism, to name but a few. These courses present a worthwhile opportunity providing progression into third level courses and/or as a direct entry into employment.

4. The Senior Certificate is an experimental programme which has been running since 1986 in approximately 82 selected schools. It is a two year senior cycle programme which is taken as an alternative to the Leaving Certificate. It was developed over a period of six years by the Curriculum Development Centre, Shannon with joint funding from the Department of Education and the ESF. This programme is being incorporated into the LCAP.

Target Group

This programme is designed to serve older students who have completed senior cycle education and have achieved formal qualifications (usually at Leaving Certificate level, but possibly VPT1) and who need vocational training and experience.

Structure of the Course

The emphasis is on vocational skills (40%-50% of time), work experience (30%-40%) and less on general skills (10%-20%). Each PLC course is full-time of one, two and sometimes three years duration. As the Department of Education makes clear in its documentation on PLCs, every effort should be made to secure work experience placements relevant to the vocational skills training being followed by students. It also indicates that each programme must include at least 40 hours of training broadly related to new technologies. Development of courses is ongoing in response to changing educational and industrial needs. The NCVA has made recommendations on the requirements for certification which could involve some changes in the components.

Certification

As with the other VPT courses, participants receive a certificate of participation from the Department of Education on completion of the programme. There is a variety of other certificates awarded by a plethora of bodies ranging from the Department of Education, the Marketing Institute of Ireland, Business & Technology Education Council (BTEC), City & Guilds of London, Royal Society of Arts, to name but a few. A significant amount of certification of PLCs is mainly provided by overseas bodies with a substantial portion in the form of external validation from the UK. (See Appendix 2). The important area of certification is explored in detail in Chapter 5. This includes recent developments within the NCVA.

Additional Comments

There are no fees for PLC courses but in most cases students pay anything from £50 to £500 for materials and registration with professional bodies such as the Marketing Institute of Ireland. There is a fee of £25 per student for

assessment/certification by the NCVA. Admission to PLC courses is by interview and normally students are required to have a minimum of five passes in their Leaving Certificate. This will vary depending on demand and course level.

There has been a considerable increase in the number and diversity of courses offered by the nationwide Post Leaving Certificate delivery institutions in recent years. This is concentrated at level 2/3 in terms of recognised certification and accreditation. These levels refer to the Occupational Levels as defined by the European Union and they will be explained in detail in Chapter 5. The trend suggests that each year more and more students are opting for places on PLCs in Senior Colleges and VEC schools all over the country.

Secretarial and allied business studies courses are by far the biggest areas of PLC courses but new and diverse courses are being developed continuously. Secretarial studies includes options such as legal/medical studies, receptionist, tourism, etc. This achieves the twofold aim of broadening course options to attract students and responding to changes in the job market.

The growth of the PLCs has taken place within the context of a post second-level or further education framework. As mentioned earlier, the term has been coined in recent years (1988/89 approximately) to denote a certain genre of course that has developed in second level schools. The reasons cited for this include:

- shortage of places in Universities, RTCs and the DIT. Research indicates that each year approximately 20,000 students are refused places in the CAO/CAS systems (the selection process for Universities, RTCs and the DIT). PLCs are filling the emerging niche.
- demographics;
- the necessity to develop alternative innovative and marketable services within the education system;
- the development of particular teaching expertise in schools;
- serving the needs of the community.

Vocational Preparation and Training from the Perspective of the Operational Programme

The Operational Programme for Human Resources 1994-1999 highlights the restructuring of the VPT programme in response to identified needs. This restructuring is based on a target of up to 30% of senior cycle students following vocational options, starting on a phased basis in 1994 and reaching this level by 1999. The restructuring is based on three complementary policy objectives:

1. The need to improve retention rates in education.

2. The need to address the strong academic bias in educational provision for the target group.

3. To address the need to provide alternative education programmes.

Key elements of the restructuring strategy in the period 1994-1999 are:

- curricular reform to improve retention rates in education;
- the development of entrepreneurial, technological, business and language skills to improve competitiveness and promote job creation; and
- expansion of the LCVP and introduction of the new LCAP within a three year senior cycle to provide for a structured development of an extended range of vocational options, while also slowing down the growth in the size of the labour force.

The expansion of senior cycle education and training to three years duration should result in a once-off, but permanent reduction in the size of the labour force of the order of 35,000 phased over the period 1996 to 2000. It is anticipated that there will be an additional ongoing reduction in the size of the labour force resulting from improved retention rates in education which could be as high as 9,000 annually. This is largely dependent on the degree of success achieved in implementing this objective.

Chapter 3

Methodology

This chapter provides an outline of the objectives of this evaluation. The research design is based on the desired achievement of these specific objectives. The overriding aim of the evaluation is to assess the impact of the Vocational Preparation and Training Programme on participants and the economy. This aim can be broken down into the following key objectives:

1. An assessment of the impact of the VPT Programme on the participants, in terms of meeting their needs.

2. An assessment of the impact of the VPT Programme on the employer in terms of responsiveness to local labour market skill needs and fluctuation within industry.

3. An exploration of certification in terms of developments, progress to date and strategy for the future.

4. An examination of the delivery mechanisms currently in place; how the VPTP is delivered; what are the systems/mechanisms in place to ensure the successful implementation of the programme in schools?

5. An examination of the decision making processes related to design, development and implementation of the VPTP.

6. The identification of performance indicators for the VPT programme which will capture the impact on participants and the economy.

The following is an outline of the methodology designed to meet the above objectives for the evaluation. For the purpose of this evaluation a multi-faceted approach was adopted. The aim was to glean as much information as possible including all relevant sources in the research. The results of this have been compiled into summary form, thematically giving voice to all the views held by those who have to implement the programme on a daily basis. The focus is on:

1. Stakeholders in the form of the Department of Education which administers the measure.

2. Stakeholders in the form of Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and VEC officials who manage the implementation of VPT in their schools.

3. First hand deliverers of the VPTP, i.e., School Principals and teachers of the VPTP.

4. Programme participants, i.e., the students.

The range of research tools utilised included structured interviews with groups 1 and 2, questionnaires with 3 and a nationwide survey of participants. (See Appendix 1 for copies).

A random sample of 19 schools nationwide was generated based on lists of schools provided by the Department of Education. The sample consists predominantly of VEC schools, where 80% of the VPTP takes place. The remainder included Community and Comprehensive and Secondary schools. In each case the school principal received a preliminary letter explaining the nature of the research and access to his or her school (i.e., teachers and students) for a day was requested. This initial letter was followed up with a phone call to confirm arrangements. In every case principals agreed willingly to the process. A significant benefit of the approach is that all fieldwork was carried out by the same researcher. This guaranteed consistency of approach and richness of information not always accorded to research of this nature.

The research approach was presented to the Department of Education at the outset of this evaluation. The ESF Programme Evaluation Unit also highlighted the scope for collaboration during the course of the evaluation research. This was proposed in the interest of continuous improvement, co-operation between the Evaluation Unit and the ESF section in the Department of Education and maximisation of resources. The Department of Education indicated that all schools would be briefed prior to the field work. The research activity involved a three phase process as outlined below:

Phase 1 - Exploratory Phase

This phase was largely exploratory to facilitate the development of a framework for the evaluation. The aim was to clarify the issues to be highlighted in the evaluation. The emphasis during this phase was on accessing the following information:

1. A description of the Vocational Preparation and Training Programme from an Operational Programme perspective.

2. A description of the VPTP from the Department of Education perspective, including the objectives of the programme and the practical considerations that influence policy.

3. An examination of all relevant monitoring material held in the Department of Enterprise and Employment, e.g., Prepared papers for the Monitoring Committee, the School Leavers Survey and any other monitoring of post programme performance of VPT participants.

4. An examination of records/databases on activity and expenditure held by the Department of Education.

5. An exploration of developments and issues relating to certification. This was achieved in part through a series of consultations with the National Council for Vocational Awards.

6. An exploration of links with industry and mechanisms in place for curricular response to labour market trends.

This phase involved the following activities:

- Meetings with key individuals/stakeholders in key organisations. These included the Department of Education, the Department's Inspectorate, the VEC and the NCVA.

- Literature review.

- An analysis of relevant available data, e.g., the results of the School Leavers Survey in respect of the VPTP sub-sample.

Phase 2 - Field Work

This stage involved an in-depth exploration of the VPTP based on a consolidation of the information collated in Phase 1. The methods used in this stage were structured face to face interviews and a survey of participants. The research tools, i.e., the structured interviews and the survey of participants questionnaire, are at Appendix 1. The design was based on the prime objective of this evaluation, i.e., the elicitation of information relating to the VPTP under the following headings:

- ✧ Data and data gathering systems, including school records, pupil numbers and gender breakdown.
- ✧ Design, development and implementation of the VPTP at school level.
- ✧ Delivery mechanisms and in-service provision for course co-ordinators and teachers of the VPTP.
- ✧ Response to local needs and the role of the employer.
- ✧ Assessment & Certification.
- ✧ Challenges for the future.

Following is an outline of the research activity.

1. Meetings/interviews with a *sample* of schools delivering the VPT programme. The aim was to explore the dynamics of successful implementation of the programme in schools. Examples of good practice were actively explored through the structured interview medium. The target groups were the school principals and VPTP teachers/course co-ordinators. Nineteen schools were visited during this phase and nineteen Principals and thirty nine course co-ordinators/teachers participated in the structured interviews.

2. A nationwide survey of VPT participants. Over 460 students took part in this survey. The survey consisted of a questionnaire focusing on the following areas:

    - ☆ Demographics
    - ☆ Quality of the VPTP
    - ☆ Work Experience

- ☆ Guidance & Counselling Provision
- ☆ Feedback & Participant Commentary

Students were given a class briefing by the researcher prior to completing the questionnaire. During this briefing they were informed of the nature of the research and the value of their input and feedback. They were guaranteed confidentiality and a facility to ask questions relating to the purpose of the research. Students were then requested to complete the questionnaire and return it there and then to the researcher. (See Appendix 1 for a copy of the survey questionnaire).

3. A telephone survey was also carried out soliciting any literature and information on the VPTP in schools.

Phase 3 - Analysis and Consolidation

This, the final phase, involved analysis of all material collected for consolidation in this report. Various methods of analysis were used including:

- ✧ Statistical analysis of the Survey of VPTP participants. Software known as Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for this purpose.
- ✧ Preliminary statistical analysis of the results of structured interviews with teachers and co-ordinators.
- ✧ Thematic and content analysis of structured interviews with Chief Executive Officers within the VEC.
- ✧ Thematic and content analysis of structured interviews with School Principals.
- ✧ Consolidation of a series of consultations with the Department of Education and the NCVA.

The results of the fieldwork are presented in Chapter 6. Conclusions and Recommendations on the entire evaluation are presented in Chapter 9.

The aim of the research undertaken as part of this evaluation was to conceptualise and understand the VPTP and the mechanisms for change currently inherent in the programme. This particular evaluation is not oriented toward statistical modelling or estimation of total population; hence the results are suggestive of trends in the VPT programme.

Chapter 4

Activity and Expenditure

This chapter provides an outline of expenditure relating to the Vocational Preparation and Training Programme. All analysis is based on details and figures contained in the Final Claims and Monitoring Returns submitted by the Department of Education to the Department of Enterprise and Employment.

Expenditure on the VPT programme increased in line with the financial projections throughout the last Community Support Framework. This pattern is expected to continue through the 1994 - 1999 period. However, the projected expansion is much larger, in that numbers are expected to *double* between the years 1994 and 1999. According to the National Development Plan, the numbers are expected to increase from 30,648 in 1993 to 31,962 in 1994, eventually reaching the 60,000 mark in 1999.

Table 3
Outline of Expenditure on the VPTP 1990-1993
£000s

	Total	*ESF*	*Exchequer*
1990			
OP Forecast	50,174	32,613	17,561
Actual	44,530	28,944	15,586
1991			
OP Forecast	50,644	32,931	17,733
Actual	50,644	32,931	17,733
1992			
OP Forecast	63,795	41,477	22,318
Actual	61,675	40,089	21,586
1993			
OP Forecast	79,211	51,487	27,724
Actual	74,687	48,546	28,141

The reader will note that the VPTP is presented as a composite measure, i.e., it is impossible to distinguish from these tables VPT1, VPT2 or LCVP specific information. This is true of all records and material related to the final claims

procedure. The Department of Education maintains that this phenomenon is in the interest of flexibility and easing the administrative workload of the final claims procedure. However, in view of the diversity of the VPTP it means that there is a lack of transparency in the data available. This issue is a recurrent theme throughout this report and is discussed in detail in Chapter 9.

Table 4 below gives a breakdown of participant numbers over the 1989 - 1993 CSF. Expenditure is included to emphasise the expansion of the programme over the period. This expansion is the most significant aspect of the VPTP. There is a steady increase in both numbers and expenditure over the years with dramatic expansion projected for the future. This issue is discussed further in relation to Tables 9 &10.

Table 4
VPTP Participation & Expenditure 1990-1993

	Participant Numbers	*Total Expenditure £*
1990	23,257	£44,530,417
1991	28,446	£52,888,763
1992	30,056	£61,675,844
1993	32,400	£74,686,912

The actual figure 'participant numbers' is an annualised average and forecasts are based on the same formula which is as follows:

$$\frac{\text{(Start Figure x 2) + End Figure}}{3} = \text{Annualised Average}$$

This method of calculating numbers is used on all Department of Education measures. The explanation for this method is that funding is based on the calendar year, whereas educational activity is based on a September to June 'year', therefore necessitating the development of a method to allow reports on activity from two academic years.

Table 5 outlines the VPT programme by school type and number of pupils per school. The VEC schools are the predominant provider of VPT.

Table 5
*1988 - 1991, VPTP Breakdown by School Type**

	Vocational	*Community & Comprehensive*	*Secondary*	*Total*
1988/89				
No. of schools	200	46	136	382
No. of pupils	14,226	1,724	3,015	18,965
1989/90				
No. of schools	200	46	126	372
No. of pupils	14,659	1,686	2,754	19,099
1990/91				
No. of schools	195	49	123	367
No. of pupils	16,055	1,733	2,694	20,502

* *Excludes LCVP.*

Table 6
1993/94 VPTP Participation By School Type

	Vocational	*Community & Comprehensive*	*Secondary*	*Total*
LCVP	20% (6,655)	4% (1,359)	6% (2,017)	30% (10,031)
VPT1	7% (2,308)	4% (1,456)	7% (2,539)	18% (6,303)
VPT2	47% (15,838)	3% (900)	2% (671)	52% (17,409)
Total	73% (24,801)	11% (3,715)	16% (5,227)	100% (33,743)

Table 6 provides the breakdown of 1993 VPTP Participant numbers by school type. This highlights the dominant role of the VEC schools in relation to the VPTP, i.e., close to 75% of provision takes place in VEC centres. This is especially significant in relation to PLCs. It is important also to note the inclusion of the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) as a discrete group, involving 30% of VPTP provision. In the past these figures were lost in the composite measure of the VPTP. Indeed VPTP has been presented as a composite measure for all final claims to date. As the components such as LCVP develop as significant and discrete programmes the need to isolate the relevant data becomes even more apparent.

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For 1993/94 the VPT programme target was 27,000 trainees at a cost of approximately £60.44m. This was exceeded; in fact the total number of participants enrolled on VPTP was 33,734. Table 7 gives an indication of the Department of Education's *estimated* places for VPTP 1994/95. This serves to accentuate the proposed expansion of LCVP.

Table 7
VPTP Estimated Places For 1994/95

VPT1	*VPT2*	*LCVP*	*Total*
9,105	23,494	12,692	45,291

Recording Systems

Recording information for the VPTP for the purpose of monitoring and final claims is achieved through:

1. The VECs who co-ordinate the activities of the 249 vocational schools around the country. The VECs report directly to the Department of Education.

2. Approximately 200 second level schools, co-ordinated directly by the Department of Education. These second level schools comprise Community and Comprehensive and traditional second level schools.

All information is returned to the Department of Education where it is consolidated to give the financial and physical indicators for the VPTP. The system is driven by cost and teaching hours are used as the basis of the cost calculation rather than the actual cost per trainee. *(See 'Recording Systems' ESF PEU, April 1994)*.

Gender Breakdown

Table 8 outlines the gender breakdown of VPTP participants for the years 1990-1993. These figures are based on annualised averages derived from the Department of Education final claim forms. These figures appear balanced but it must be emphasised that this is a *composite* picture. The figures in Table 8 include VPT1, VPT2, PLCs and LCVP. There is no way of isolating which is which. Research suggests that the bulk of VPT1 and LCVP participants are male whilst the

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PLCs are approximately 70% female. By aggregating all this raw data and then subjecting it to annualised averaging undermines the transparency of the final result.

Table 8
Gender Breakdown of VPTP 1990 - 1993

	Male	*Female*	*Total*
1990	10,466	12,791	23,257
1991	13,572	14,874	28,446
1992	15,503	14,553	30,056
1993	17,012	15,388	32,400

Trends since 1989

The Vocational Preparation and Training Programme has been in operation since 1984. This report is largely concerned with the operation of the programme under the first Community Support Framework 1989 - 1993 and development for the period 1994 - 1999. However, it is important to indicate the trends since the programmes inception. In 1984/85, the first year of VPT, there were 17,000 participants on the programme, then consisting only of what is now referred to as VPT1. The following year, 1,220 participated on the new VPT2 with 17,740 on VPT1. By 1988/89, overall numbers were at similar levels with a total of 18,965 participants. No breakdown between VPT1 and VPT2 is available for this year, but the figures for the following year in Table 9 demonstrate the growth in VPT2 and decline in VPT1. At this stage, VPT2 had become a mainly post Leaving Certificate programme. 1989/90 also saw the development of LCVP. The following table outlines developments in participant numbers over the 1989 to 1994 period, broken down by VPT1, LCVP and VPT2. These figures are based on the academic year, rather than annualised averages.

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Table 9 VPTP Trends 1989 - 1994			
Year	*VPT1 Participant Numbers*	*VPT2 Participant Numbers*	*Total*
1989/90	(VPT1) 6,685 (LCVP) 2,834	12,414	21,933
1990/91	(VPT1) 6,403 (LCVP) 6,678	14,099	27,180
1991/92	(VPT1) 6,260 (LCVP) 8,980	15,739	30,979
1992/93	(VPT1) 5,475 (LCVP) 9,244	17,030	31,749
1993/94	(VPT1) 6,102 (LCVP) 10,031	17,610	33,743

Building on the theme of expansion, Table 10 below indicates the proposed allocation and numbers for the VPTP measure as outlined in the Operational Programme for Human Resources for the period 1994 - 1999. This expansion will be a direct result of the restructuring of the VPTP and the Leaving Certificate programme. For example, the projected increase in numbers to 1999 is to incorporate the anticipated increase in the number of students taking LCVP and LCAP. These restructuring plans as described in The National Development Plan are outlined in Chapter 1.

Table 10 Proposed VPTP Allocation Human Resources Operational Programme 1994-1999			
Year	*Allocation £000s*	*Estimated Numbers (Annualised Averages)*	*Estimated Throughput*
1994	48,995	31,962	23,532
1995	50,231	33,214	23,912
1996	48,363	34,567	22,634
1997	48,178	40,234	19,374
1998	58,206	52,800	26,934
1999	62,409	60,700	34,134
Total	316,382	253,477	150,520

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In terms of financing, the VPTP the programme was 65% funded by the ESF during the first Community Support Framework (CSF). It was fully co-financed over the period. The proposed intervention rate for the 1994 - 1999 period is 75% for VPT1 and VPT2 with additional resources to be provided by the Exchequer. As regards the LCVP, only approved elements of the programme will receive funding. This is due to the fact that a large portion of the programme is classed as mainstream Leaving Certificate education. The result of this is that while a 25% increase in expenditure is anticipated, participant numbers will increase by 90%.

Throughput, i.e., the numbers who complete VPT programmes, is expected to decrease by 18% by 1997 and then increase again by 76% between 1997 and 1999. The reasons for this variation in throughput are unclear, but must stem from the composite nature of the programme with varying durations for the different programme components. However, lack of information on the projected numbers on each of the elements of the VPTP make it impossible to reconcile the figures.

Chapter 5

Certification

This chapter focuses on certification and includes current provision in relation to the VPTP and developments for the future. The aim is to give an overview of the issues relating to certification in the context of this evaluation. The results of the fieldwork phase of the research process relating to certification and in particular recent development activities of the National Council for Vocational Awards are presented in Chapter 6.

VPTP Certifying Mechanisms and Structures

Certification can be referred to as the quality assurance system for training and vocational education. To date the certification systems in place for the VPTP have been diverse and varied. This is because there has been no formal or national system of accreditation or certification on which centres could rely.

The VPTP was introduced to schools with limited guidelines and, as described earlier, the programme took on a life of its own. As localised development of courses expanded, the need for accreditation and certification at a variety of levels, particularly Post Leaving Certificate, became apparent. In the absence of a national framework or directive, schools sought and established their own means of certification over the years. This implied a high degree of local autonomy to schools and VECs. The tendency has been to seek recognition from such validation bodies as the City and Guilds of London, the Royal Society of Arts (RSA), the Institute of Directors, Pitmans, BTEC, etc.. These bodies outline their own programmes and syllabi, their examination approaches and fees, as well as their standards and expectations of centres. A detailed glossary of the main bodies pertinent to the VPTP for the 1993/1994 academic year is provided in Appendix 2.

Current Certification Provision

At present each trainee who successfully completes the VPT programme is awarded a certificate of participation by the Department of Education. This is usually supplemented by locally based assessment and accreditation. The diversity is

significant with some schools striving for high levels of accreditation to validate their courses. Other schools run with the basic 'certificate of attendance' which has little or no chance of competing with more recognised certification in the race for employment and further education. There are some programmes which are of a joint nature between the Department of Education and some of the specialised training agencies, e.g., CERT.

The bulk of VPTP courses at present receive any or all of the following certification:

- VEC Certificate of Participation.
- Department of Education Certificate of Participation.
- NCVA certificate (from July 1994 only).
- Certification from other professional bodies, e.g., Royal Society of Arts, Pitman, BTEC, City & Guilds, etc., depending on the school and the particular course in question (see Appendix 2 for a detailed explanation).

The issue of certification is fundamental to the VPTP. Awareness of the need for a national, independent certifying authority to integrate the certification of the vocational education and training systems has been growing over the last few years. The accelerated development of PLCs coupled with the growing competitive environment of vocational training set the scene for the development of a national body to address the issue. In this context the National Council for Vocational Awards (NCVA) was set up in October 1991. This was largely seen as a response to the wide range of vocational programmes which have emerged, and for which there was no comprehensive certification system.

The Role of The National Council for Vocational Awards (NCVA)

The NCVA was established by the Minister for Education in 1991 to develop a comprehensive assessment and certification system for a wide range of vocational programmes with particular reference to the education sector. Such vocational programmes include amongst others the Vocational Preparation and Training Programme(s).

The NCVA comprises a Chairperson and 14 members including representatives from the social partners (IBEC and ICTU), school management, FÁS, parents' organisations, the Department of Enterprise and Employment and nominees of the Minister for Education. Its terms of reference are outlined in Figure 3.

Figure 3 *Terms of Reference of the NCVA*	
(a)	Subject to the approval of the Minister of Education: (1) to structure courses in vocational/technical education and training, as provided by the education system, on a modular basis; (2) to develop an appropriate framework of levels of qualification for these courses; (3) to develop modular courses for the core modules of such courses to be applied at a national level; (4) to review and approve regional specific modules as proposed by Regional Co-ordinating Groups; (5) to establish guidelines, criteria and standards for the assessment of participants performance by individual course providers.
(b)	To monitor compliance with criteria and standards through an ongoing review of national returns on performance and the auditing of individual course providers on a targeted/sampling basis;
(c)	To certify participants performance based on the outcome of assessment by course providers subject to compliance with assessment criteria and standards;
(d)	To accredit the awards of others bodies;
(e)	To act as National Agency for the recognition of vocational qualifications obtained in other member states of the EU.

The NCVA has initiated work on the development of a comprehensive system of certification and validation for all education and training programmes in the second and post second level education sectors. It is envisaged that a comprehensive system will be phased in during 1995 and 1996. The Council's tasks include that of certifying the performance of participants in this element of vocational education provision, accrediting the awards of other bodies, subject to certain criteria and acting as a national agency for the recognition of vocational qualifications (below third level) obtained in other EU member states. The NCVA proposes a framework of vocational qualifications at three levels for programmes within its remit. This is within the overall context of a five level framework of vocational qualifications in line with EU practice. (See Figure 4).

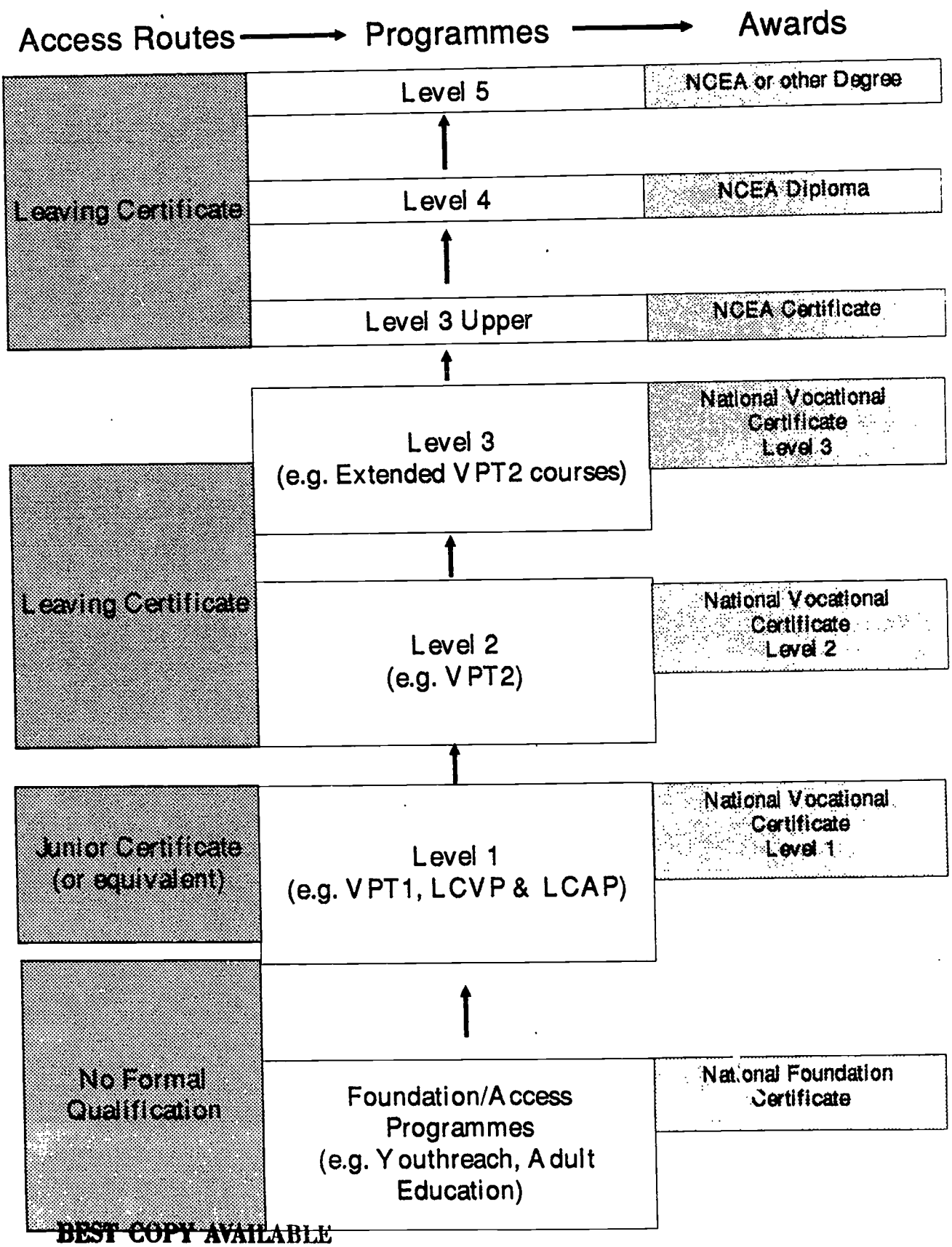
This framework proposes:

1. Provision for progression to levels four and five through the system operated by the National Council for Educational Awards for the RTCs;

2. the structuring of programmes on a modular basis allowing credits to be accumulated towards full certification.

Figure 4

NATIONAL CERTIFICATION LEVELS



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The provision with which the Council is currently most directly concerned is the post second level Vocational Preparation and Training Programme, i.e., the PLCs. The bulk of this activity is concentrated at Level 2. (See Figure 4).

The NCVA has established five boards of study to examine courses in the following areas:

1. Art, Craft and Design.
2. Business and Administration.
3. Science, Technology and Natural Resources.
4. Services, Leisure and Tourism.
5. Communications, Performing Arts and General Studies.

Recent Developments in Certification Provision

Since its establishment, the Council has undertaken a challenging work programme giving priority to Post Leaving Certificate Courses at Level 2. There are currently over 30,000 participants in various vocational programmes which come under the remit of the NCVA. Of these, approximately 18,000 are on PLC courses. Up to recently there has been no coherent national system of assessment and certification for these programmes and this has had significant implications for the participants, for course providers, for employers and for the national education and training infrastructure.

The NCVA intended to have certification and assessment procedures in place for a certain number of PLC courses in 1993 with inclusion of a wider range of courses by 1994. Certification was provided on a pilot basis for approximately 3,000 participants at National Vocational Certificate Level 2 in June 1993. It was anticipated that 10,000 would receive NCVA certification at this level in July 1994. This number is now estimated more realistically at 7,000. This is due to operational difficulties exacerbated by a trade union dispute earlier this year.

NCVA - Work in Progress

National Foundation Certificate

Work has begun on developing a system for a National Foundation Certificate which will certify programmes for early school leavers, for example. This will be piloted in late 1994 and is expected to be launched nationally in 1995.

National Vocational Certificate Level 1

As regards Level 1, including LCVP and LCAP, future developments are dependent on policy relating to the senior cycle structural changes devised by the Department of Education. The NCVA may provide certification for the mandatory link modules within the LCVP. The remaining five Leaving Certificate subjects will come under the traditional Leaving Certificate system. The LCAP is currently at development stage for introduction on a pilot basis in September 1995.

National Vocational Certificate Level 2

As mentioned previously the bulk of the NCVA's work to date has been in relation to level 2 certification for the PLC courses. This has been explored in detail earlier in this chapter.

National Vocational Certificate Level 3

As regards Level 3, an NCVA working party recently circulated a consultation report and is awaiting a response to this. Activity is at a developmental stage, but is based on working with professional bodies to move forward with Level 3 certification. In relation to pathways for progression, the NCVA is currently engaged in discussions with the Dublin Institute of Technology, the Regional Technical Colleges and the National Council for Educational Awards on this topic. These talks are at preliminary stages and developments are expected towards the end of 1994. It is anticipated that proposed new certification and qualification arrangements will establish more structured access and pathways for progression between Vocational Preparation and Training Programmes and higher education. This will have implications for PLCs, some of which are striving to achieve

recognition at Level 3. RTC and DIT courses are currently approved by the NCEA at Level 3 (National Certificate) and upwards (National Diploma and Degree).

Accreditation

The NCVA is currently considering the issue of accreditation of the certification of other bodies. To date the Council has accredited two CERT courses at Level 2, but as yet no other bodies have been included. The NCVA's current priority is to streamline its own certification systems in order to have benchmarks for equivalence. This is in preliminary stage, as are discussions and developments in relation to accreditation of prior learning.

The European Context

The Council is actively pursuing and maintaining lines of communication with EU bodies e.g., OECD, CEDEFOP and other EU programmes; however, these activities are exploratory at present.

Concluding Comments

The establishment of the NCVA represents a major development in the VPT sector. The NCVA has taken on a formidable task working intensively over the past year in order to achieve its aims. It is important to emphasise that this is an ongoing process and this evaluation intervenes at something of a crucial time in the NCVA's drive to provide a comprehensive system of national certification. Coupled with the timing of this study there have been one or two unforeseen events which have impeded progress for the NCVA. The most important of these is trade union action which adversely affected work in progress between October 1993 and March 1994. This union activity impeded the developments for school based assessment by barring teachers from submitting modules to the NCVA. The demands were for pay and recognition of the extra work for teachers to meet the NCVA's requirements. As a result of this union action the number of individuals being awarded level 2 certification will be 7,000 rather than the original target of 10,000. This drop can also be attributed to the fact that a number of schools are going for records of achievement rather than full awards for summer 1994. Records of achievement are acknowledgements of modules completed within a given course programme. This allows for recognition of completed course elements in cases where schools are not yet ready to provide full NCVA certification. These issues, amongst others, will be addressed further in Chapter 6.

The National Education and Training Certification Board (NETCB)

Building on the theme of a comprehensive system of certification, discussions are in progress for the establishment of a National Education and Training Certification Board. This is in response to the need to have a single Certification Board to provide for foundation level education/training such as Youthreach, VPT1 and apprenticeships, through the PLCs up to diplomas in the RTCs and the DIT. It is anticipated that such a board would include under its umbrella the activities of the NCVA and the NCEA as well as the certifying activities of FÁS and other vocational training agencies. An ESF supported allocation of approximately £11 million is sought for activity in this regard. However, developments in relation to the NETCB are very much embryonic at present and this issue is addressed later in this report.

Chapter 6

Results of Fieldwork

This chapter provides a description and exploration of the results of the fieldwork phase of this research. In the interest of clarity the chapter is divided into four sections. Section 1 concentrates on the results of the Survey of PLC participants in the schools sampled. Section 2 concentrates on results pertinent to VPT1 participants. Section 3 focuses on results pertaining to LCVP. Finally, Section 4 provides a thematic overview of the results of structured interviews with CEOs, school principals, course co-ordinators/teachers and guidance counsellors.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the objective of this research was to gather information to form a clear description and develop an understanding of the VPTP. The focus was on implementation of the programme and gaining an understanding of the VPTP at all levels, with a particular focus on the participant. The research design facilitated a case study cum survey approach. The benefit of this approach was twofold:

1. The researcher spent time in each school. The amount of time ranged from a half day to two days duration. This allowed for detailed meetings and structured interviews with principals, course co-ordinators, teachers, guidance counsellors and, most importantly, the students themselves.

2. There was 100% return of all survey material as the 'captive audience' co-operated fully in the research.

Profile of the Schools Visited

A nationwide sample of 19 schools took part in this research. Of the schools visited, 80% were Vocational Schools and Community Colleges; the remaining 20% were Secondary and Community and Comprehensive schools. The majority of schools visited were comparatively large, i.e., all have over 250 pupils and 50% have over 600 pupils. Some 75% of these schools provide mainstream second level education as well as VPTP. The remaining 25% are referred to as 'Centres of Further Education' as they are devoted solely to the provision of Post Leaving Certificate courses. These schools have altered their names to Post Leaving

Certificate Colleges, Colleges of Further Education or Senior Colleges to distinguish themselves as being Post Leaving Certificate centres. The majority of these PLC centres have a significantly large number of students, in most cases, over 1,200.

Section 1 - Survey of Post Leaving Certificate Participants

The results of the survey of participants were statistically analysed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). These results are presented under the following theme headings:

- ☆ **Student Profile**
- ☆ **Work Experience**
- ☆ **Career Guidance**
- ☆ **Assessment & Certification**
- ☆ **Where to next?**
- ☆ **Participants' Commentary/Challenge for the Future**

Student Profile

The survey of participants included 469 VPTP students nationwide; 14% of these were VPT1 participants and these will be discussed in Section 2. The remaining 86% were participants in Post Leaving Certificate courses.

These students were current 1993/94 participants in a variety of PLC programmes ranging from secretarial courses through various specialised courses such as Journalism & Publishing and Horticulture, Greenkeeping to Animation studies. Table 11 provides a summary of the range of courses from which the sample was drawn. The courses are clustered together under generic headings for the purposes of both clarity and confidentiality.

Table 11 *Breakdown of PLC Course Participation*	
Course Cluster	***Percentage Participation***
Secretarial	32%
Pre-Nursing & Childcare	12%
DTP & Computing	18%
'Media'	6%
Art & Design	9%
Engineering	5%
Enterprise	3%
Health & Leisure	15%

Of the PLC students who participated in the survey, 27% were male and 73% were female. This is interesting in the light of Table 11 where approximately 44% of course type could be deemed gender specific in terms of traditional stereotyping (12% - Pre-Nursing & Childcare and 32% - Secretarial). This is worth noting in the light of Department of Education figures which indicate a very balanced uptake of VPTP in terms of gender. This survey suggests a higher incidence of female participation on PLC courses.

Table 12 provides a breakdown of PLC participants by age. It is interesting to note the high proportion of participants in the 19-20 age group (43%), and those over 20 (19%). Of those who were over 20 years, 64% were female and 36% were male (see Table 13). These figures may have implications in relation to the target group which will be addressed in Chapter 9.

Table 12 *Age Breakdown of PLC Course Participation*	
Age Bracket	***Percentage Participation***
17-18 years	38%
19-20 years	43%
Over 20 years	19%

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Table 13 Age Breakdown by Gender		
Age Bracket	*Male*	*Female*
17-18 years	19%	81%
19-20 years	30%	70%
Over 20 years	36%	64%

This factor taken in conjunction with Table 14, which presents a picture of what current participants were doing *prior* to VPTP, provides an indication of the profile of VPTP participants at PLC level. In summary, PLC participants tend to have completed their Leaving Certificate (68%), some having also completed another course, ranging from another PLC to a third level degree (16%), or spent some time in employment or seeking employment. This may explain the large numbers taking part in PLC compared with other 'programmes' within the VPTP and highlights the diverse target audience.

Table 14 What Survey Participants Were Doing Prior to PLC	
Pre PLC	*Percentage*
Leaving Certificate	68%
Employed	8%
Unemployed	6%
Another Course	16%
Other	2%

In terms of the students' decision making process in selecting a particular PLC course to apply for, 68% indicated that the course that they are currently on was their first choice. The remaining 32% indicated that they had considered other avenues before ending up in their current situation. Other avenues considered included:

- 35% considered Third Level or other professional training. In these cases we can safely assume that they were not accepted to their chosen course or professional training or declined or deferred an offer for any number of reasons.

- 31% considered other PLC courses and perhaps were not accepted or were diverted to their present course. This sometimes is a result of the selection process where expectations on aptitudes are revised. Availability is often a factor where competition for places on a particular course is high and unsuccessful applicants are diverted to the next best option.

- 23% indicated that their current course was their first and only choice irrespective of all other options available.

- 2% indicated that they had considered employment.

- The remaining 9% indicated that they had considered 'other' options such as longhaul travel, emigration, etc..

In response to the question 'what prompted you to choose the particular course?':

- 31% indicated that their choice was based on furthering their career and getting a qualification.

- 33% indicated that they chose the course out of interest.

- 10% wished to use it as an entry to further education.

- 7% were using the course as a way of gaining experience.

- 12% were using it to facilitate their entry into their chosen profession, e.g., pre-nursing.

- The remaining 7% chose their current course on the basis of it being of recognised high quality.

This quality issue is a recurrent theme in the case of PLCs. The competition is pervasive and students' perception of courses is a crucial factor in determining the success or failure of a course, i.e., will it run again next year?

It is interesting that the vast majority of students who participated in this research were unaware that their course was being part funded by the ESF. In some cases the teachers were also oblivious to this fact.

Work Experience and Response to Local Needs

Work experience, in its many guises, is an integral part of any VPTP. This was outlined earlier in the description of the VPTP. Work experience varies from school to school and course to course. The majority of courses have a work experience element of some sort. This varies from a simulation activity such as spending time in the school office to structured and lengthy block periods within industry. In terms of the survey of participants the results indicate that 64% of PLC participants had spent some time on a work placement while 9% had not. The remaining 27% responded that they were to do work experience later in the year.

The majority of work placements or work experience, 72%, were provided by the service industry. Table 15 below provides a breakdown of the duration of this activity.

Table 15
Duration of Work Placement

Time Frame	*Percentage*
One week block	10%
Two week block	31%
Three weeks	14%
Four weeks	12%
Part Time (one day a week or more throughout the year)	33%

Participants highlighted a variety of benefits which they believe they had gained from their time in industry. The most cited and valued learning was 'job reality', getting the opportunity to see the reality of employment and developing and using their skills in an appropriate environment. Some 14% valued the opportunity to use equipment, computers and machinery and develop their skills in this area. Other learning benefits cited include handling customers or patients (8%).

As part of the survey participants were requested to provide feedback on how their work placement could be improved for future students. Table 16 below presents the response to this section:

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Table 16 Suggested Improvements To Work Placement	
Suggested Improvement	*Percentage Response*
Extend time & quality of the placement	33%
Provide financial assistance, e.g., travel expenses, lunch money, pay etc.	8%
Make the placement more practical & related to the students learning	25%
Combination of the above	6%
Other (including better preparation for the placement on both the part of the students and the employer)	13%
Placement could not be improved	15%

Career Guidance

The results of the survey of participants indicates that career guidance/counselling is included in the programme. In response to the question 'Have you had career guidance during the last year?' 64% of students said that they had. Some 32% indicated that they had not received any career guidance during the last year. The remaining 4% indicated that it had not happened yet.

Those 64% who had received some form of career guidance during the last year were requested to rate the quality of this service. Table 17 presents the results of this section.

Table 17 Quality Rating of Career Guidance Received	
Rating	*Percentage Response*
Very Useful	70%
Not So Useful	15%
Useless	15%

Those that rated the counselling/guidance highly indicated that this was because it was relevant for them, 43%, and informative, 26%. Those that rated the quality of counselling/guidance low, cited that they did so due to its lack of relevance, 25%. The remaining comments, i.e., 6%, come under the 'other' category.

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Assessment & Certification

The issue of assessment and certification is a dominant one in this report. Chapter 5 provides a description of developments to date in this area. The issue is expanded in the next section with regard to the input by school principals, course co-ordinators/teachers. This section focuses on the participants' perception and understanding of certification. Tables 18, 19 and 20 provide a picture of how participants interpret the issue. It is important to highlight that this section was the one most likely to evoke questions from participants. There was a significant lack of understanding of the meaning of assessment and certification and who the accrediting or certifying bodies were.

Table 18
How Are You Assessed On This Course?

Mode of Assessment	*Percentage Response*
Exams	10%
Practical/project assessment	14%
Exams plus other methods of assessment	74%

Table 19
Who Assesses Your Course Work?

Assessor	*Percentage Response*
Teacher	28%
Outside Agency/Body	19%
Teacher plus external	53%

When asked what qualification or certification will you receive at the end of the course they was a multiplicity of response. Students were often completely unaware of the qualification or certification that they would receive and had to ask teachers. Table 20 depicts the range of certification and awards for participants. It is interesting to note the NCVA plus category which is largely made up of certification by bodies such as the RSA, Pitman, BTEC *coupled* with the NCVA. (Appendix 2 provides a detailed explanation of Certifying Bodies).

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Table 20 Certification Of Courses	
Certifying Body	*Percentage Response*
Royal Society of Arts	16%
City & Guilds	2%
BTEC	5%
VEC Certificate	1%
Other (including Pitman, other examining boards etc.)	10%
NCVA	20%
NCVA plus any of the above*	46%

Note: *See Figure 5, p.59 for student quotes relating to certification.*

In some cases, students indicated concern at the timing of demands put on them in order to comply with NCVA guidelines. This can be explained by the drive to bring everything into line for NCVA certification in 1994. The NCVA was striving to have all schools briefed on the necessary requirements in order to achieve Level 2 awards in summer 1994. Some schools struggled to achieve this as they did not receive the necessary syllabi or in-service until the middle of the school year. Hence this placed extra or tighter demands on teachers to comply with requirements and ultimately this affected students. NCVA in-service provision and course materials were available in September/October 1993. Details of assessment were available in December 1993 and in-service on assessment were held in February/March 1994. However, bearing in mind the number of teachers involved and the significant task of information dissemination, uniform standards were not achieved by all concerned. This should be seen in the context of NCVA developments and work in progress. This also serves to explain why some schools have opted for 'records of achievement' rather than full certification from the NCVA for 1994, whilst retaining their original links with other bodies.

Where to next?

This section focuses on the student plans as to where to go next? This is important in terms of our understanding of what PLCs are preparing the participant for. It is also useful as precursor to a follow-up study of past participants, as what

individuals plan to do is a useful indicator of what they actually go on to do. This then gives an valuable insight into possible routes or pathways from the VPTP.

Table 21 presents a picture of where to next? We can see at a glance that there is almost an equal balance between those planning to go on to further education and those planning to seek employment. Many students will take minimum risk, trying for both options and ultimately going for the one they prefer, if they get the choice, or settling for what materialises, if not. It is interesting that only 8% of students expressed an interest in enterprise or the possibility of setting up their own business.

Table 21
Where To Next For PLC Students?

Destination	*Percentage Response*
Further Education or Professional Training	33%
Seek Employment	31%
Combination of the above	26%
Other (including emigration, setting up own business etc.)	10%

Participants' Commentary /Challenge for the Future

This final section concentrates on participant feedback and their vision for future improvements to the programme. The majority of respondents took time over this section and expanded beyond the demands of the questionnaire. Table 22 provides a summary outline of the thematic areas identified for improvement.

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Table 22 *Suggested Improvements For Future PLC Students?*	
Suggested Area For Improvement	*Percentage Response*
Longer Work Experience	3%
Quality of teaching, e.g., more expertise in specialist areas	8%
Expansion of activities, e.g., more practical work	14%
Financial Assistance including grants	23%
More Resources, i.e., equipment, computers etc.	15%
Combination of any of the above	21%
No improvements	6%
Other (including career guidance)	10%

From the table we can deduce that a major proportion of desired improvements is captured under the generic title 'resources' with 38% expressing the need for additional funding including grants and improved equipment. This is reinforced by the 'combination' category at 21%. When we break this down, it is largely made up of improving course quality and providing more resources and a student allowance. Table 23 presents the most salient issues in terms of whether or not participants actually referred to them.

Table 23 *Continuous Improvement Issues Referred to by Participants*	
Issues	*Yes*
Provide more resources i.e., equipment, buildings, computers etc.	33%
Provide a student allowance	31%
Improve course quality, i.e., more activities, longer work placement, improving teaching methods, certification, etc.	26%

It is interesting that PLC students seem marginally more concerned with 'quality' of course in terms of resources and teaching methods and certification rather than with grants. This is a significant re-focusing since the ESRI survey of 1988/89.

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Quotes from Students

The following is a selection from the many comments received from students.

Figure 5 *Selection of Quotes from PLC Students*
Improvements
'Better computer equipment, so that less time is wasted.' 'Keep updating the equipment.' 'Better facilities, more computer equipment, students treated like adults.' 'An adopted attitude, as that in a college - more and better organisation.' 'Equality for all students.'
Certification
'Better certification at the end of the course and that it would be internationally recognised.' 'The NCVA requirements came far too late in the year, forcing us to do a rush job on everything.' 'Better direction early on in the course instead of constantly changing deadlines and requirements during the year.' 'To be recognised by all third level colleges throughout the country, so that we can attend university without having to leave the country,'
General Comments
'More social aspect and facilities for students e.g., student groups and unions.' 'I think the college needs to realise that we are third level students and would appreciate being treated in a manner befitting our age group.' 'We should get a grant like third level students, as we are also third level students.'

Section 2 - Survey of VPT1 Participants

At first glance, the facts imply that VPT1 is in a state of demise. However, on closer examination we can see that the programme is better described as being in a state of change. This change is largely driven by the current restructuring of the senior cycle.

By all accounts the original VPT1 addressed a need and addressed that need very effectively. Many past participants went on to work or apprenticeship, as was the aim. Some used the year as a 'transition year' and stayed on to complete the Leaving Certificate. This information is largely anecdotal as there were no formal records or means of tracking individuals.

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As mentioned previously, 14% of the VPTP participant sample comprises VPT1 students. The results of the survey serves to present a snapshot of VPT1 from the current participants' perspective. These results are presented again under the following theme headings:

- ☆ **Student Profile**
- ☆ **Work Experience**
- ☆ **Career Guidance**
- ☆ **Assessment & Certification**
- ☆ **Where to next?**
- ☆ **Participants' Commentary/Challenge for the Future**

Student Profile

The majority of participants surveyed were male, 85%, and had just completed their Junior Certificate prior to VPT1, 97%. Table 25 below provides a breakdown by gender and age.

Table 24
Age Breakdown of VPT1 Participants

Age Bracket	*Percentage Response*
15-16 years	66%
17-18 years	34%

Table 25
VPT1 Participant Breakdown by Gender and Age

Age Bracket	*Male*	*Female*
15-16 years	84%	16%
17-18 years	86%	14%

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In terms of what prompted students to take part in VPT1:

- ☆ 41% indicated that they were interested in the course options.
- ☆ 28% indicated that they had no choice in the matter.
- ☆ 17% indicated that they did it for the work experience or employment opportunity.
- ☆ 14% indicated that they did it to further their education.

Some 36% indicated that they were selected onto the course by means of an interview with their teacher. The remaining 74% were selected on the basis of their Junior Certificate results. It is interesting to note that 88% indicated that VPT1 was their first choice with the remaining 12% indicating that they would prefer to continue with the Leaving Certificate programme.

It is also interesting to note that the majority of VPT1 survey participants struggled to give a title to the course they were on. Quite a few claimed that they were in transition year and very few referred to the label 'VPT1'.

Work Experience

The majority of VPT1 participants had work experience, (94%). The remaining 6% indicated that they had not, as yet. As with PLCs, the majority of work experience took place in the service sector (71%).

Table 26
Duration Of Work Placement

Time Frame	*Percentage*
One week block	30%
Two week block	3%
Four week block	8%
Part time (one day a week or more throughout the year)	59%

Participants highlighted a variety of benefits which they believe they had gained from their time in industry. As with PLC students, the most cited and valued learning was 'job reality' with 56% valuing the opportunity to see the reality of employment and developing and using their skills in an appropriate environment. Similarly, some 19% valued the opportunity to use equipment, computers and machinery and develop their skills in this area. Again, the remaining learning benefits cited include; handling customers or patients 8%, a combination of the above, 7% and other, 10%.

As part of the survey participants were requested to provide feedback on how their work placement could be improved for future students. Table 27 below presents the response to this section:

Table 27
Suggested Improvements To Work Placement

Suggested Improvement	*Percentage Response*
Extend time & quality of the placement	42%
Provide financial assistance, e.g., travel expenses, lunch money, pay etc.	13%
Make the placement more practical & related to the students learning	4%
Combination of the above	4%
Other (including better preparation for the placement on both the part of the students and the employer)	30%
Placement could not be improved	7%

It is interesting to note that the majority of participants desired an increase in the duration and quality of work experience.

Career Guidance

The majority of VPT1 participants had not received any career guidance, i.e., 65%. The remaining 35% had received career guidance and ratings of this are presented in Table 28.

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Table 28 Quality Rating of Career Guidance Received	
Rating	*Percentage Response*
Very Useful	74%
Not So Useful	13%
Useless	13%

Those that rated the counselling/guidance highly indicated that this was because it was relevant for them, 29%, and informative, 29%. Those that rated the quality of counselling/guidance low cited that they did so due to its lack of relevance, 19%. The remaining comments, i.e., 24% come under the 'other' category.

Assessment & Certification

VPT1 students were requested to respond to questions relating to assessment and certification. They struggled with this section, even more so than their PLC counterparts. Again, there was a significant lack of understanding of the meaning of assessment and certification. The following tables provide an indication of the VPT1 response:

Table 29 How Are You Assessed On This Course?	
Mode of Assessment	*Percentage Response*
Exams	14%
Practical/project assessment	52%
Exams plus other methods of assessment	34%

In all cases, assessment was carried out by the class teacher. When asked 'what qualification or certificate will you receive at the end of the course?' there was a multiplicity of response. Students were often completely unaware of the qualification or certification that they would receive and had to ask their teacher. Table 30 depicts the certification anticipated by VPT1 participants. It is interesting to note that 10% of VPT1 participants were convinced that they were on a Leaving Certificate programme.

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Table 30 VPT1 Certification	
Certifying Body	*Percentage Response*
Leaving Certificate	10%
City & Guilds	17%
VEC Certificate/Department of Education Certificate of Participation	64%
Other	7%
No Qualification/Certificate	2%

Where to next?

This section focuses on the student plans as to where to go next. Again, this section is important in terms of our understanding of what VPT1 is preparing the participant for. It is also useful as a precursor to a follow-up study of past participants. As mentioned earlier what individuals plan to do is a useful indicator of what they actually go on to do. This then gives a valuable insight into possible routes or pathways in and from VPTP.

Table 31 presents a picture of where to next? We can see at a glance that the majority (55%), anticipate continuing their education and they were aiming to go on and do their Leaving Certificate thus negating the notion that they were on a VPTP to prepare them (immediately) for work. The fact that a large proportion of current VPT1 students wish to remain in full time education bodes well for the LCVP/LCAP which may be the most appropriate route for this target group. Almost all students had difficulty indicating what course they were on and many called it transition year.

Table 31 Where To Next For VPT1 Students?	
Destination	*Percentage Response*
Further Education, i.e., the Leaving Certificate	55%
Seek Employment	28%
Combination of the above	5%
Apprenticeship	4%
Other (including travel, emigration, setting up own business, etc.)	8%

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Participants' Commentary/Challenge for the Future

This final section concentrates on participant feedback and their vision for future improvements to the VPT1 programme. Table 32 provides a summary outline of the thematic areas identified for improvement. We can deduce that a major proportion of desired improvement is related to work experience, 26%, and provision of more practical work, 33%. It is interesting to note that VPT1 students seem significantly more concerned with quality issues in terms of teaching methods, practical activity and work experience than with grants. Perhaps for this group, this indicates that they are truly ensconced in the second level system, hence do not consider the issue of grants.

Table 32
Improvements For Future VPT1 Students?

Suggested Area For Improvement	*Percentage Response*
Longer Work Experience	26%
Expansion of activities e.g., more practical work	33%
Financial Assistance including grants	7%
More Resources i.e., equipment, computers etc.	4%
Combination of any of the above	10%
No improvements	16%
Other (including career guidance)	4%

Section 3 - LCVP

Following is a summary of research findings relating to the LCVP. It is important to emphasise that the research in this regard was restricted due to current developments with regard to the programme. The Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme is described in detail in Chapter 2. The programme is undergoing restructuring and is currently being piloted in its new form. Schools struggle with the definition of LCVP. The majority of schools visited provide the programme in 'dispersed mode', i.e., LCVP students are dispersed amongst 'normal' Leaving Certificate students, often totally oblivious to the fact that they are categorised as LCVP students. The reason for this is largely numerical in that there are not

enough LCVP students of a particular subject area to warrant forming one specific class; hence students are dispersed amongst other classes. This factor made it difficult to access students for participation in this survey.

There is also the recurring issue of profile and prestige. There appears to be a label attached to being a LCVP or indeed a VPTP student with connotations of low grade or weak stream, etc.. Schools overcome this by renaming courses or incorporating them under a more acceptable heading.

All these issues are important and warrant further consideration in the light of future plans for LCVP.

Section 4 - Summary Results of Structured Interviews

This section presents the results of the structured interviews with the following individuals involved in VPTP provision:

- ☆ Chief Executive Officers (7)
- ☆ School Principals (19)
- ☆ VPTP Course Co-ordinators/teachers (33)
- ☆ Guidance Counsellors (6)

These were face to face interviews of approximately 45 minutes duration and Appendix 1 contains a copy of the structured interview format. The results were analysed thematically and are presented under the following headings:

- ☆ **Implementing VPTP**
- ☆ **The Role of the Course Co-ordinator**
- ☆ **Teaching the VPTP**
- ☆ **In Career Development**
- ☆ **Work Experience and Response to Local Needs**
- ☆ **Assessment & Certification**

☆ **The Future of the VPTP**

The results in this section refer to PLCs specifically, unless otherwise stated.

Implementing Post Leaving Certificate Courses

The majority of schools visited provide PLC courses ranging from one or two classes to as many as ten to twelve classes across the range of possible course titles. (See Appendix 2 for a detailed list of course titles). Systems vary from school to school depending on such factors as the size of the PLC operation; length of time involved in the provision of the VPTP; number and commitment of teachers involved; popularity of courses, etc.. Some schools have been running VPTP in its many guises since the 1970's whereas others have only recently incorporated courses into their curriculum. In the majority of schools visited the VPT1 provision or participant rate was invariably smaller than that of the PLC. This issue will be expanded on in the next chapter.

The deciding factors in setting up and running a particular PLC include in descending order of citation:

- ☆ Response to a local need - 57%
- ☆ Following on a tradition within the school - 23%
- ☆ Development of the school - 9%
- ☆ Maintaining student numbers - 8%
- ☆ Maximising the expertise of teachers - 3%

Principals were asked how they judge the success of a course, i.e., what criteria do they consider as contributory to the success of a particular course. This facilitates an understanding of the driving forces behind the PLC concept and may help explain its phenomenal growth and development. The response, to a certain extent mirrors the figures above in that success criteria cited include:

- ✧ **Student Numbers**
  'Popularity of a course' or a large number of applications, recurring year after year. This criterion is dependent on student perception of the course profile and is fundamentally linked to all other criteria listed below.

- **Relevance to industry and employment prospects.**
  Access to work experience and placement. This is inextricably linked with recognised certification and ultimately respect and recognition for a course.

- **Preparation of the student for further education.**
  Again, this is linked with recognised certification and ultimately respect and recognition for a course.

- **Quality of Teaching which works to building up all of the above.**
  Commitment to making things work.

All schools indicated a drop out rate of approximately 25%. The reasons given include:

- students taking up a late offer of a third level place at an RTC, university or another PLC course;

- students taking up employment, often as a result of work experience on the PLC course;

- students realising that a particular PLC career choice is not for them and opting for another area;

- lack of motivation.

The majority of schools demand an annual fee from students. This is to cover administration, materials, registration with certifying bodies and examination fees. This can range from £50 - £500 depending on the school, course type, etc..

In terms of how VPTP is perceived by the providers the benefits of the programmes for the students are outlined below:

- 45% believe that the VPTP plays a significant role in facilitating the transition from school to work;

- 37% believe that the VPTP plays a significant role in helping students mature;

- 13% believe that the opportunity to gain work experience provided by the VPTP is a valuable benefit;

- the remaining 5% say the additional qualification gained on the VPTP is a benefit to students.

The Role of the Course Co-Ordinator

The course co-ordinator is roughly defined as the individual, usually a teacher, who co-ordinates the running of a particular PLC or VPT1. In schools that provide a number of diverse courses there is usually a course co-ordinator per course or course cluster. In some schools the course co-ordinator is an A-Post holder[5]. This means that he or she is granted the position in accordance with their role and receives certain salary and timetable benefits. This is not always the case and in some schools the course co-ordinator carries out his/her duties alongside the *normal* teaching requirements.

In the majority of schools, whether A-Post holder or not, the role of the course co-ordinator is a demanding one and many teachers work long hours and give of their spare time to address the inherent challenges. The role as described by the teachers/principals surveyed includes the following activities:

1. *Co-ordinating work experience*

This involves making and maintaining contact with employers; obtaining placement for students; visiting the students in the work place; actively seeking employer feedback on students performance both verbally and in most cases also in the form of a written assessment. This can be a considerable task, sometimes dealing with placements for hundreds of students and building and maintaining rapport with hundreds of employers. Some course co-ordinators maintain a database of employers and work to maintain long-standing and worthwhile links with local industry. In those schools where links with local industry have been cemented there is often a 'recruitment consultant' role for the course co-ordinator. He or she will be known as the contact/liaison between school and industry. Local employers will ring the course co-ordinator if they have a vacancy and he/she will endeavour to select a suitable number of candidates for interview.

2. *Curriculum/Course Development*

This involves review of the course curriculum, ideally to ensure its relevance to industry and maximise the benefits for the students. Course co-ordinators spend time keeping up to date in the ever changing world of PLCs. This is achieved by a

5. An A-Post is a specific position within the teacher job description grading system. A school achieves an A-Post based on the number of students enrolled. The age profile of the students also play a role in determining whether a school gets an A-Post. There is a points system based on these factors and an equation to calculate qualification for an A-Post. We can assume that the more pupils and the greater the age profile the more likely a school is to achieve an A-Post.)

variety of means, including reading, networking, attending conferences/trade shows, talking to industry, talking to students, etc.. This activity has to be seen in the context of the typical PLC course; many are specialist areas, e.g., horticulture, greenkeeping, animation, pre-nursing, leisure, etc. Pre NCVA the onus was on course co-ordinators and teachers to design and develop individual syllabi. In many areas this is still the case. There is also the issue of competition with schools keen to maximise and maintain the profile of their courses and this necessitates constant adaptation, development and change. Essentially this is a full time quality assurance job.

3. *Additional Activities*

A number of additional activities must also be included in the role of the course co-ordinator although these are not exclusive to the co-ordinator per se. These include teaching and participation in the running of the school; career guidance/counselling and referral; personal counselling, at times.

Teaching the VPTP

Teachers were requested to describe their role as teachers of the VPTP. For those teachers who were previously involved in 'traditional' secondary school teaching, this involved comparing the two types of teaching role. There were marked differences in style and perception of these roles. Some 10% of teachers interviewed have come straight from industry hence do not have previous experience of the 'traditional' teaching role.

Teachers of the VPTP see their role as facilitators rather than a teachers. They see themselves as motivating students and working with them rather than the traditional 'chalk and talk' style of delivery. Teachers cite that while retaining the traditional methods, they are using a variety of teaching methods to facilitate learning. These include project and practical work, group activities, work simulations, etc.. Teachers of the VPTP have to do a lot of planning and research and do not always have a set text book answer or approach. Keeping up to date is a challenge and this applies to course material, technology and responding to the needs of employers. This is imperative in terms of preparation for the world of work and for maintaining a leading edge.

In terms of PLCs specifically, in most schools the teacher pupil relationship is less formal and everyone is on first name terms. In a lot of cases teachers indicated that there is scope to empower students to work on their own, at their own pace and manifest ownership of their work. Students respond positively to this in the main and it is an important element in preparing them for the transition to work. It is also worth noting that the majority of teachers indicated limited parental involvement in PLC course implementation. The reasons given were mainly related to the age of the students and the fact that they perceive themselves as having finished school and as part of the third level system. Hence many teachers deem it inappropriate and unnecessary to involve parents, as is the norm in second level education.

There was a general consensus that the role is much more demanding but more interesting and rewarding (though not necessarily financially) than traditional second level teaching. There is pressure to deliver as the customer is more discerning and competition is a constant factor. The majority indicated satisfaction in their roles; indeed many were energetic and passionate about their particular subject area.

The majority of teachers (79%) indicated that their main source of support in their role as teachers of the VPTP was other teaching staff within their school. Teachers of the VPTP are more inclined to work in teams and have meetings than traditional teachers. This is due to the nature of the role of the VPTP teacher and the framework in which they operate. Some 9% indicated that their sole source of support was themselves. Some 6% indicated that training was a source of support while the remaining 6% used employers and professional networks to provide support.

When asked what support or additional support they need teachers cited the following:

- ☆ 18% indicated financial resources.
- ☆ 42% indicated resources and equipment.
- ☆ 30% indicated training, in-service and networks.
- ☆ 10% indicated feedback from students.

In-Career Development

The issue of in-career development or training of trainers is a topical one at present. The results of this research activity indicate that 83% of teachers interviewed received some form of training in the last year. This training comprised mainly NCVA in-service, training by other certifying bodies and 'other' which includes special training initiatives taken by the Department of Education and training organised and often funded by teachers themselves. It not surprising that such a high proportion of the in-service can be attributed to the NCVA as the field work for this report coincided with a significant in-service drive by the NCVA to get certification at Level 2 up and running for summer 1994.

It is worth noting that in many cases specialist 'teachers' from industry will be contracted to deliver components of a course. While these individuals are experts in a given specialty they may not have had formal training in the area of delivery or teaching methods.

Work Experience and Response to Local Needs

Work experience forms an integral part of any VPTP programme and this has been addressed earlier in this section from the students' perspective. In terms of the Operational Programme and objectives of VPTP, 'response to the needs of local industry' is regarded as fundamental.

The majority of the PLC courses are responding to some industrial need, although this not always local. Where there is active involvement of local industry this is more apparent. Some 97% of teachers indicated that they have contact with local employers. Specific examples of good practice in this regard are presented in the Model of Good Practice which is outlined in Chapter 8. In terms of contact with other State agencies this is largely confined to FÁS, although only 24% of schools indicated any contact with FÁS. Some schools have contact with local trade unions and local Chambers of Commerce and invite guest speakers from these and other organisations to talk to students. This is usually dependent on the energy and commitment of course co-ordinators to arrange and encourage such activity.

The majority of VPTP students complete a work experience module and spend some time in industry. This is arranged either by the course co-ordinator (54%), the student (33%) or a combined effort on both parts (13%). The aim of the work

experience module is to provide practical experience for students, an opportunity to build up their Curriculum Vitae and ultimately prepare them for employment. The work experience is usually monitored by the course co-ordinator or teacher. This involves visits to the work place which provides a useful forum for meeting with employers and building rapport. Some 86% of work experience is assessed by the employer. This usually involves completion of an assessment form by the employer. This is based on his/her observation of the student. This 'employers report' is used as reference material by the student and the school.

Such activities are an opportunity to build links with employers, examples of which are developed further in Chapter 8, although it has to be said that some courses, e.g., Pre-Nursing, are preparing the student exclusively for further professional training.

Certification and Assessment

The issue of certification is a volatile one at present. Current provision was discussed in Chapter 5. This section provides an outline of the views of those interviewed during the fieldwork.

It is important to state that the timing of this evaluation coincided with probably the most crucial development stages on the NCVA. This is important in that this is likely to have had some influence on these results, which centre around the development of the NCVA. As can be expected, there are various teething problems that are inherent in any change process, especially one so large as the provision of national certification.

The consensus of all those interviewed is a commitment to the ideal of national certification. Concerns lie with how it is designed and implemented. Interviewees were required to indicate what they believed were the challenges currently facing the NCVA. These challenges are captured under the following headings:

1. **Quality Assurance (41%)**

2. **Recognition (47%)**

3. **Combination of the above (12%)**

1. *Quality Assurance*

There is significant recognition for the endeavours of the NCVA. However, 41% of those interviewed expressed the view that the most significant challenge facing the NCVA was that of quality assurance. Quality assurance specific to certification can be explained in terms of the administration, organisation of the NCVA activities, the service that it provides to schools and outcomes from programmes.

Many schools have successfully implemented NCVA assessment and certification systems. However, in some cases schools have been late in either receiving and/or disseminating information on requirements, sometimes well into the school year when courses are up and running. In other cases there have been gaps in assessment and certification provision for a number of courses. This has impeded the implementation of a full and comprehensive system of certification process for summer 1994. This has also presented a significant challenge to teachers and students in terms of workload, shortened work time and tightened deadlines. Such is the 'teething phase' that presents the NCVA with a considerable task to continue with the required work programme in order to consolidate activities in this regard. This issue must also be seen in the light of the operational difficulties which hampered the NCVA's activities in early 1994.

The current cost relating to certification can be considerable for students. In many cases they have to pay for registration and exams in sterling to a plethora of bodies when this could and should be managed nationally by a single certifying body. The current NCVA annual fee is £25.00 per student for full NCVA certification. This represents a manageable sum by comparison.

2. *Recognition*

Recognition refers to the validity of certification and accreditation provision, in terms of employers' and students' perceptions. Some 47% of interviewees cited international recognition as the single most important challenge facing the NCVA.

The historical development of the PLCs, which has relied on the commitment and energy of teachers to design and build courses, has produced a formidable phenomenon. Many schools have invested energy and time in designing and developing modules and courses. They have sourced accreditation from a variety of recognised certifying/accrediting bodies recognising the gap in adequate provision

nationally. The challenge currently facing the NCVA is to match this provision in terms of employer/client recognition. This is not the case for all schools, especially those relatively new to the PLC arena. These new schools stand to reap the benefit of previous endeavours and recent NCVA achievements in this regard. Indeed they are in the comfortable position of being able to avail of an 'off the shelf' pack that provides them with guidelines and a syllabus. Other schools are loath to relinquish the results of their years of localised hard work and are retaining original systems in tandem with recent national developments.

3. *Combination of the above*

The concepts of quality assurance and recognition of certification are closely linked as mentioned in the Green Paper and 12% of those interviewed also held this view. They indicated that the significant challenge facing the NCVA is to achieve its aims whilst providing a quality service that is recognised and valued.

Quite a few PLC courses are between Levels 2 and 3 or even at or beyond Level 3. Such schools are currently cautiously viewing the developments in certification. They await developments at Level 3 and will withhold decision making until their confidence in the national system is assured.

The issue of pathways to further education is also important. As a result of the localisation of certification, schools have developed links with Third Level Colleges mainly in the UK, but in some cases in Ireland, e.g., DIT and Tallaght RTC. Individual and local agreements or *arrangements* have been made for progression from PLC to third level. Diversity is apparent with limited standardisation. This issue is discussed further in Chapter 9.

The Future of the VPTP

Interviewees were asked to articulate the single most significant challenge facing the VPTP for the future. The response to this question was varied but the three main themes emerging are described below:

Challenge 1. Recognition for PLC courses

There needs to be recognition for PLC courses. At present to a certain extent they operate in limbo between mainstream second level and third level education. The majority of PLC courses are delivered in traditional VEC schools, alongside mainstream post-primary classes. This presents problems in terms of the PLC client group that schools are provided for. (See age profile in Table 12). Schools are striving to enrol and retain students at PLC level for various reasons and hence are doing their utmost to guarantee success. This has implications for other related issues of perception and where the PLC course actually fits into the education and training system.

Challenge 2. Certification

A significant challenge facing the VPTP and in particular the Post Leaving Certificate courses, is certification. This issue has been discussed earlier and will be developed further in the Chapters 8 and 9. Suffice to say that schools are conscious of the importance of recognised accreditation and certification in terms of the future and indeed the survival of the VPTP in a highly competitive environment.

Challenge 3. Responding to Change

A third challenge highlighted is the continuous change facing the education system. This change is described by survey participants in terms of demographic change, technological change and attitudinal change in the main. The crux is that there needs to be continuous renewal and updating of systems including teaching systems, evaluation systems and resources. Schools need to be pro-active in responding to all aspects of change in order to provide a quality service. This is deemed imperative for their survival.

Chapter 7

Monitoring of Post Programme Performance

To date there has been no *exclusive* national monitoring of the VPTP participants' post programme performance. In the 1992 survey initial efforts were made to include VPTP specific data in the Annual Survey of the Economic Status of School Leavers. The aim of the School Leavers Survey is to provide a representative picture indicating economic status of students, approximately one year after leaving school. The survey has been carried out each year since 1980 by the ESRI. It is co-ordinated, published and funded by the Department of Enterprise and Employment and the estimated cost of this exercise is £40,000. The Department of Education makes a contribution to the cost of the survey to fund specific areas of interest to the Department, such as VPTP. Additional funding was received from the ESF under the Innovatory Projects heading, specifically related to the VPTP research.

Methodology

The field work for the survey is carried out by the ESRI. They select a national sample of all students leaving second level education in a given year. This sample is based on the estimated number of leavers which is provided by the Department of Education. Each category of school leaver is included in the sample and a weighting is applied to gross these figures up to a national representation. For example the 1992 survey was based on a national sample of 2,243 school leavers from an estimated total of 66,900 students who left second level education in 1992 and were interviewed in May/June 1993. Whilst this sample includes VPT1 and VPT2 (PLC) participants there is no indication of precisely what proportion of the sample they make up.

The School Leavers Survey is regarded as a valuable exercise and its results are referred to more and more by an ever increasing audience. However, the value of the survey is currently undermined by a number of limitations, some of which have been highlighted in the past and others which are specifically related to the VPTP and the context of this report. These limitations are outlined below.

1. *Restricted Sample*

The survey endeavours to include a representative sample of 'school leavers' within its fieldwork. To date this has included those who have left school with no qualification, with the Junior Certificate only or with the Leaving Certificate. This is restrictive in that there is no facility to isolate VPTP participation in any form, be it VPT1, VPT2 or LCVP from the survey results. The validity of the survey results is therefore undermined since they are based on a sample that could be contaminated by unidentifiable VPTP activity where the experiences of the former participants will be of a different order to those of the traditional school leaver. From the point of view of this and any other evaluation of VPT, this also means that there is no useful VPTP specific data published within the survey.

While the Department of Education made available the raw data related to VPTP for the purposes of this evaluation, the lack of transparent VPTP information in the published document remains an issue. This had been recognised in recent years and the need for the explicit inclusion of VPTP within the framework of the School Leavers Survey has been highlighted. The magnitude of the issue takes on even greater significance in the light of the restructuring of the Leaving Certificate Programme. Unless there is clear and adequate inclusion of the 'VPTP' and related issues within the survey, the results will be rendered less and less meaningful.

Efforts were made in the 1993 survey to address the VPTP phenomenon. In this issue of the survey the definition of a school leaver has been expanded to include either no qualifications or a combination of the following qualifications:

- ☆ Junior Certificate
- ☆ Junior Certificate and VPT*
- ☆ Leaving Certificate
- ☆ Leaving Certificate and VPT**

The survey also makes a point of specifying that 'a second level school leaver is defined as a person who left full-time education in a Secondary, Vocational, Community or Comprehensive School aided by the Department of Education, in the course of the school year 1991/92'. This implies that it includes all possible courses within the VPTP umbrella. Unfortunately, the survey does not specify the nature of the VPTP qualification; there is no description or explanation of the VPTP

and what constitutes the programme. However, we can assume on the basis of the results that * refers to VPT1 and that ** refers to VPT2. This is an *assumption* and it still leaves us unsure as to the nature of VPT2. This evaluation report constantly highlights the diversity of these programmes, something which is not accounted for in the School Leavers Survey. There is a substantial difference between students who have completed a VPT1 programme after Junior cycle and those who have completed a VPT2 Programme after the Senior cycle.

2. *Clarity of Categories*

Following on from the above theme, it is impossible to discern the VPTP categories in all related discussion items or tables mentioned within the 1993 survey. For those classed as leaving school with a VPTP, there is no way of identifying whether this is a VPT1, VPT2 or Post Leaving Certificate. This is further compounded by the diversity of the potential PLC courses. Indeed, there is a general lack of clarity in terms of the survey categorisations relating to VPTP. In a sense the survey fails to grant adequate recognition to the role that VPTP plays in the second level education system. This failure is increasingly significant both in terms of numbers and policy relating to VPTP.

3. *Presentation of Results*

It is interesting to note that the survey endeavours to clarify what constitutes a 'student' in tables presenting status of survey respondents; the term *student* 'relates to those who were in a school, college or training centre other than a second level school aided by the Department of Education'. This appears to be a means of isolating the Post Leaving Certificate category which is prone to inclusion in the third level sphere. This serves to emphasise that PLCs are classed as second level education, despite the fact that by all accounts they portray themselves as a post second level option. Hence, as most PLC courses take place in second level schools, these are included in the school leaver figure. To date the survey makes no distinction between those leaving school with a Leaving Certificate solely and those with a Leaving Certificate *and* one, two or three years in addition on a PLC course. While the survey does take account of participants on manpower schemes, e.g., FÁS sponsored training courses, there is no specific category for VPT2 or PLCs. While some efforts have been made to address these issues in the 1992 survey the results are rendered virtually inconclusive due to the lack of clarity in this regard.

It is important to state that the School Leavers Survey is published by the Department of Enterprise and Employment. The ESRI provides the results of the field work and the Planning Unit within the Department compiles and writes up the actual report. The structure and design of this report has endured over the last ten years and fails to incorporate developments in the education sector. This is an important fact in that the Planning Unit is working in isolation, to produce a report pertaining to a section of the education system which is currently undergoing considerable restructuring. Bearing in mind the complexity of the VPTP alone, as seen in this evaluation, the magnitude of the task is understandable.

Future Developments

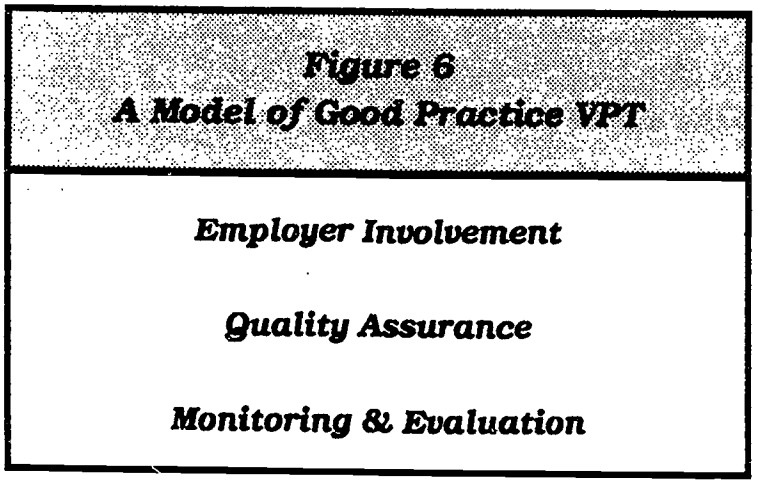
The estimated total of school leavers was 66,900 in 1992. In 1993/94, the throughput of those receiving training on the VPTP programme is estimated at 23,532. This is approximately one third of the number of those who left school the previous year. It is envisaged that this VPTP throughput will increase to 23,912 in 1995 and will rise substantially over the National Plan period to over 34,134 in 1999. This anticipated increase is dramatic and is discussed elsewhere in this report. This expansion of the VPTP and related restructuring of the Leaving Certificate Programme has significant implications for the value and relevance of the School Leavers Survey. It is crucial that the survey recognises and operates within the changing context of the education system.

The National Plan indicates that arrangements have been put in train for analysis of VPTP outcomes as part of the Annual School Leavers Survey. These arrangements need to take account of this analysis; otherwise the annual survey, a potentially invaluable monitoring exercise, will be rendered useless.

Chapter 8

A Model of Good Practice

This chapter presents a model of good practice for Vocational Preparation and Training. There are numerous examples of excellence that exist nationwide and the aim of this section is to present these as realistic and achievable. The model is based on *actual* activity observed in schools during the field work stage of this research and it is designed to link into the recommendations outlined in the next chapter.



Employer Involvement

As mentioned throughout this report, response to local needs is an integral part of the VPTP. This *response* takes on many guises, ranging from limited involvement of local industry to examples of good practice in this regard. The focus here is on the examples of good practice which are outlined below. The aim is to build constructive links between education and industry as highlighted in the Government's Green Paper 1994. The thesis is that schools have to work at building and maintaining these links and that this is best managed as a business strategy.

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Observed Examples of Good Practice

- **Schools** developing and working to maintain strong links with employers. This is achieved by regular contact and visits to employers on the part of course co-ordinators. Visits coincide with student placement which increases the profile of the placement and encourages employers to complete work place assessment forms. This activity is taken seriously by the student and school and ensures face validity with the employer. It is usually co-ordinated by one teacher to guarantee consistency and rapport building with the employer. Simple but very effective initiatives, such as inviting employers to lunch or drinks as a mark of appreciation for their input have been adopted by some schools. Actively seeking employer involvement, whilst difficult, proves very worthwhile.

- **Schools** providing a service to local industry e.g., market research projects, graphic design and printing service, etc.. These joint ventures involve students utilising their newly acquired skills to provide a genuine service to employers.

- **Schools** viewing the employers as customers, informing them and making them aware of developments in education. There is the example of 'Education in Partnership with Employers', a brochure designed by one particular school. This brochure explains the employer's role and potential for schools and industry to work together. The emphasis is on the potential for a symbiotic relationship to exist between school and employer.

- **Schools** providing courses/training facilities for employers, e.g., computer and information technology training. The benefits of this activity are two-fold, in that schools provide a valuable, cost-effective service to local industry and it also facilitates rapport building.

- **Schools** involving local industry in the design and development of PLC courses. Inviting employers to provide guest lectures and to have an input into the evaluation of a particular course.

- **Schools** setting up employer feedback groups to actively seek employer views and ideas.

- **Schools** achieving teacher placement or secondment within industry.

- **Schools** informing employers and students of developments in certification by providing literature on the subject. (The NCVA has also produced a leaflet specifically designed to inform students of certification and its importance).

Quality Assurance

The concept of quality and quality assurance has been mentioned in the Green Paper, the Department of Education's proposal for the Regional Education Councils and has gained considerable mention in this research. Essentially, quality is a global concept, dependent on the entire education system. Quality is something that results from effective systems and strategy and needs to be considered at all junctures of the process. For example, administration, initial teacher training, in-career training of teachers, strategic allocation of resources, assessment, certification, research planning and evaluation all impinge on the quality of education and training. True quality is not just a check at the end of a process to reassure ourselves that we have been successful; it is an integral part of all aspects of a process from concept to customer. A number of examples of quality initiatives were observed in schools. These are outlined below.

Observed Examples of Good Practice

- **Schools** building teams of teachers to manage the VPT programmes. These teams work together, meeting regularly and holding feedback sessions to evaluate their performance and the success of a course. These regular meetings within staff groups facilitate a team effort rather than lone achievement.

- **Schools** or VECs setting up Support Units and Curriculum Development Units to provide a service in terms of design and development of courses, seminars and training events for teachers and support in general administration of a programme.

- **Schools** or VECs providing evaluation and monitoring services. The focus is on the concept of Total Quality Management and how this can be applied in schools. Some schools track and monitor post programme performance and actively seek constructive feedback from students.

Monitoring & Evaluation

The issue of quality and quality assurance has been addressed above. Monitoring and evaluation form an integral part of any quality assurance system. Examples of excellence in this regard have already been mentioned. It has to be said that these examples are rare. This highlights a significant area to be targeted for ongoing development which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 9

Conclusions & Recommendations

The overriding aim of the evaluation stated at the outset was to assess the impact of the Vocational Preparation and Training Programme on participants and the economy. This aim was broken down into key objectives which form an appropriate framework for the conclusions. It is important to state that due to the complexity of the VPTP there are many issues with considerable overlap.

1. *An assessment of the impact of the VPT Programme on the participants, in terms of meeting their needs.*

The results of this report suggest that, whilst the VPT Programme is certainly meeting many of the needs of participants, it is difficult to ascertain the full extent of its impact. This is largely due to the structure of the VPTP, as a composite measure. This fact presents scope for confusion and lack of transparency. The research phase of this evaluation was impeded by confusing definitions and lack of precise information. This confusion is also experienced to a certain extent by the programme participants. It is difficult for them as *customers* to get clear benefits from a programme when sometimes they do not even know that they are on a specific programme.

It is also difficult to target resources effectively at a specific need, or to monitor and evaluate programmes properly on the basis of a composite measure. Bearing in mind that the various components of the VPT run in the same centres and are delivered by the same teachers, there is considerable scope for sharing of resources. Examples include equipment provided under LCVP used by VPT1; VTOS[6] funded equipment or computers used for PLC, etc.. The sharing of equipment and resources is not necessarily an issue for concern, but the clear identification of the target audience and the implications for quality assurance are crucial.

It is clear that the VPT1 component of the programme is quite distinct from the PLC component. However, the LCAP and the LCVP which are being developed and piloted respectively at present are less distinctive. These programmes are designed

6. *VTOS - Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme for unemployed adults over 21 years. This training is provided by the VEC in vocational schools.*

to occupy the gap between VPT1 and the PLCs. The reader may well have experienced some difficulty in distinguishing between the two earlier in this report. This is understandable as there are many similarities between the programmes which provide scope for confusion.

2. *An assessment of the impact of the VPT Programme on the employer in terms of responsiveness to local labour market skill needs and fluctuation within industry.*

The results indicate that there are localised examples of excellence evident in this regard. These are captured and incorporated into a model of good practice in the previous chapter. This evaluation concentrated for the most part on the providers and participants. All the schools visited indicate that they have some contact with employers, who are constantly being approached with requests to provide work experience from a plethora of programmes. Some 94% of VPT1 students took part in work experience; the figure was 64% for PLC students, with 27% expecting to take part later in the year. The anecdotal data available from schools suggests that many VPT/PLC students gain employment as a result of the work experience element of their course. However, this needs to be monitored formally.

In 1993 the ESF Programme Evaluation Unit carried out a nationwide survey of employers exploring attitudes to training and training activity in a representative sample of Irish business. There is a section of the survey devoted to exploring the links between educational establishments and industry. It is important to emphasise that the survey focuses on the employers' viewpoint and is general across all aspects of education and was by no means specific to VPT. The results indicate that a significantly large proportion of employers, 45%, have no contact at all with their local educational establishments. The highest exclusive contact is with the Regional Technical Colleges and 12% of employers reported that they maintain this type of contact. Some 20% indicated that they had contact with a combination of establishments including RTC's and either secondary schools, VEC and/or universities. The nature or purpose of this contact can be broken down as follows:

Recruitment	17%
Seeking Advice/Research & Development	5%
Further Education for Employees	6%
Placement/Work Experience	9%
Tours/Talks etc.	3%

Combination of the above	13%
Other	2%
No Contact	45%

These results are interesting in view of the fact that the need for effective employer - education links have been highlighted in the Green Paper. These results coupled with the results of this research suggest that the VPT and in particular the PLCs are a unique area of further education which rely heavily on the nurturing of effective links with industry.

3. *An exploration of certification in terms of developments, progress to date and strategy for the future.*

Chapter 5 and part of Chapter 6 are devoted to the issue of certification. It is a crucial aspect of VPT, with significant achievements to date and much development still in progress.

The NCVA has undertaken a considerable task and has been working to have Level 2 up and running by summer 1994. Approximately 7,000 students have received awards at this level. Whilst this is a desirable achievement it has placed considerable pressure on schools to conform to NCVA standards within a restricted space of time. The majority of schools surveyed are on stream with NCVA developments. However, many are currently maintaining their originally sourced links with other certifying bodies. This is a fail-safe measure adopted by schools until they feel confident and secure to commit fully to the national system.

The current cost related to certification can be considerable for students in terms of paying for registration and exams to a variety of bodies. The current NCVA total fee is £25.00 per student. This is more cost effective for the customer, the student, than having to pay out a series of payments to a variety of different accrediting/certifying bodies.

There are so many developments in relation to certification that there is much scope for at worst ignorance and at best confusion amongst programme providers, participants and ultimately the employers. The results of this research indicate that programme participants surveyed are unclear on the issue of certification. There needs to be targeted marketing campaigns to inform both students and

employers of the developments in certification. The NCVA is currently planning action in this regard.

4. An examination of the delivery mechanisms currently in place, i.e., how the VPTP is delivered; what are the systems/mechanisms in place to ensure the successful implementation of the programme in schools?

The VPTP is a significant programme, characterised by an active bottom-up approach that has, to a certain extent led to the programme taking on a life of its own over the past decade. This bottom-up approach results from the particular VPTP policy emphasis on responding to local needs. Essentially VPT is driven by this dominant bottom-up approach that has not as yet been complemented by a comparable top-down system of co-ordination and quality assurance.

This emphasises the theme of quality and the need for a quality assurance system within the schools and indeed the educational system as a whole, as proposed in the Government's Green Paper on Education. The notion of quality assurance is fundamental and is a thread that runs through or should run through the entire system. It impinges on all aspects of the programme including design, development, teaching, in-career development, resources, assessment, certification, post programme performance and evaluation.

The Green Paper refers to the role of the inspectorate as being the main vehicle for quality assurance at second level, indicating that it has a key role in evaluating the school system. The inspectorate's role is to inspect the education system. Currently, this role is largely based on a traditional system which is subject bound and hence does not necessarily lend itself to effective evaluation of a programme as varied as the VPTP. A clear challenge is therefore presented to the Department of Education in transforming the inspectorate to effectively perform this new function.

There is something of free rein in schools, responding to local needs and constantly designing and developing courses. While this can be excellent, there is potential for adverse impact, especially in terms of duplication, lack of cohesive standards and quality assurance. There needs to be co-ordination, but not necessarily control. This is imperative in view of the expansion and proposed development of the VPTP. This could be achieved effectively through in-career development, networking, and other initiatives which could be taken at central level.

The results of this research indicate that the students, especially the PLC students, are discerning and demand high standards of teaching, equipment and resources. Parents must also be acknowledged as a formidable force, in that they play a significant role in influencing students' decision making processes.

The results suggest that the majority (83%) of teachers interviewed have had some training in the past year. This can, in the main, be attributed to NCVA activity and concerted efforts to get systems up and running for Level 2 certification in 1994. However, the results suggest there is less evidence of VPTP specific career development for teachers. The Department of Education has recently established an In-Career Development Unit which will direct all in-service training activities associated with the first and second level education including Vocational Preparation and Training Programmes. It is anticipated that the establishment of this In-Career Development Unit with its structures and controls will bring a whole new dimension to VPT in-service.

5. *An examination of the decision making processes related to design, development and implementation of the VPTP.*

The impetus behind VPTP to date has been largely localised. There are examples of excellence, drives to innovate, etc., as indicated in the Model of Good Practice. The results of this research indicate that providers rely on each other and their own individual networks or teams to provide the information, support and energy to drive forward development. This bottom-up approach is most noticeable in relation to the development of the PLC courses.

The current restructuring of the Leaving Certificate Programmes is being driven by the Department of Education and has implications for the development of the VPTP in terms of the LCVP and the LCAP. The Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme is described in detail in Chapter 2. The programme is undergoing restructuring and will be piloted in its new form from September 1994. It would be a positive development if the results of this pilot were made available for analysis and evaluation. Any recommendations could then be incorporated into future developments of the programme.

The issue of quality also relates to the status of the PLC courses and where they fit into the current schema. This theme has been highlighted a number of times in this report in terms of the evolution of the PLC courses. It appears they have

emerged in response to or by creating a need and are now a formidable force in further education. The results indicate that quite a few schools have become dedicated specifically to the provision of PLC courses and many have been attracting a significantly large number of students. Many of these students consider themselves 'third level' and an estimated 35% have chosen a PLC course as a second choice to recognised third level education. Essentially the PLCs are seen to represent an unofficial further education sector A significant proportion of these students (19%) are over twenty years of age. This can be explained, to a certain extent, in terms of the number of VTOS students that are dispersed throughout the PLC classes. However, the issue of the status of PLC courses remains. In the context of projected reduced numbers in the relevant age groups, it seems likely that in the absence of a clear status in the education system, the PLC colleges may simply disappear as the universities and RTCs begin to compete for students.

It would seem that if a clearer top-down rationale for the constitution of VPT programme were provided, then local providers would be in a better position to assess the impact of their work. This is particularly significant in the light of current developments in the senior cycle and changes in the education system.

6. The identification of performance indicators for the VPT programme which will capture the impact on participants and the economy.

General impact indicators for the Vocational Preparation and Training Programme should include participation rates, drop-out rates, gender, placement/relevant placement, progression, certification and training of trainers. There are also other important measure specific indicators including those related to curricular reform. The VPTP is currently changing and responding to change in the education system.

One of the most cited benefits of VPTP relating to this research is the 'maturing of the students'. This is a qualitative and thereby less tangible indicator but nevertheless one that should be explored. Methods of reporting on this should also be developed.

Equal Opportunities

The results of this research indicate that there is a significantly larger number of female than male participants on PLC courses. The opposite is the case for VPT1 which has predominantly male participation. This could be a result of the traditional stereotypic subject choice available under each component of the VPTP. The PLC sector has a high proportion of secretarial/business type courses, whereas the VPT1 courses have a high proportion of woodwork, technical drawing, engineering, electronics, etc.. There is a need for more research to ascertain the reasons for this gender imbalance and endeavour to address it.

Also, the results indicate that there is scope for discrimination on more general terms against certain students entering third level. For example, those students who do not attend the appropriate PLC college have less chance of being accepted to certain third level institutions, e.g., Ballyfermot Senior College has specially devised pathways to Tallaght and Athlone RTCs. This is the exception rather than the rule at the moment. Indeed, in terms of progression, it appears that in some instances it is easier to obtain a place in a university in Paris or London than in Ireland.

Building on this theme and linking into the restructuring of the Leaving Certificate Programme, there is also potential for adverse equal opportunity implications. While it is generally agreed that there is a need to expand the Leaving Certificate programme and to provide for the needs of the wider population of students, it is important to view this in the context of current perceptions of the Leaving Certificate. As mentioned earlier, the Leaving Certificate is perceived as being a crucial milestone in a student's life - it is the passport to third level education and/or a job. The status of the traditional Leaving Certificate is high, especially amongst parents and employers. What implications does this have for the LCVP and the LCAP? Will these programmes be perceived as worthwhile and comparable or will they be perceived as having lower status in schools? Bearing in mind that the purpose of the restructuring of the senior cycle is to integrate vocational education and training into the mainstream, these issues are particularly important, lest we end up discriminating against a large portion of the population who opt for these new programmes in the future.

Recommendations

The specific recommendations emerging from this research are set out below. These recommendations are intended to build on the Model of Good Practice outlined in the previous chapter and to improve what has been, overall, a successful VPT Programme. However, it is highly significant that these recommendations come at a time when the VPTP is under considerable development. This should reinforce their value and impact in that the time is certainly ripe for their implementation. The proposed introduction of the Regional Education Councils provides scope for the inclusion of many of these activities within its brief.

1. *Clarity of VPTP Definition*

Define the VPTP clearly, breaking it down as a composite measure into the two distinct programmes which it comprises:

- **Programme 1**
  to include the remains of the original VPT1 and the various Leaving Certificate Programmes: LCVP and LCAP; and

- **Programme 2**
  The Post Leaving Certificate courses.

This new definition would be a significant action from a number of perspectives captured under the three headings outlined below:

- ☆ **Policy Planning**
- ☆ **Monitoring and Evaluation**
- ☆ **Targeting of Funding**

Policy Planning

Firstly, it would alleviate the confusion that currently surrounds the VPTP in terms of nomenclature, objectives and target groups. This applies to all aspects or components of the VPTP. However, it is particularly pertinent in relation to the LCAP and the LCVP which are especially prone to confusion. This may well be a

result of the development phase that they are currently going through. However, it is imperative that these two components are clearly and distinctly defined. Alternatively, the possibility of combining both the LCVP and the LCAP might be explored.

Secondly, this definition would facilitate effective linkage into the NCVA levels 1 and 2. It would also facilitate decision making in relation to PLCs and clarification of their status. It would also serve to address the profile issue in terms of targeted communication campaigns to market each of the above programmes. This would include expansion of the Leaving Certificate as being the one and only route to success.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This recommendation also has significant importance in terms of effective monitoring and evaluation. This new definition would provide much needed transparency in terms of activity and expenditure data, as well as indicators relating to impact such as certification and post programme performance. It would therefore impact on quality assurance both at local and national levels, in that programme specific information could form an important feedback mechanism.

Targeting of Funding

Finally, this definition would allow for easier allocation of funding or at least easier identification of areas to target in this regard.

Overall, this first recommendation is a crucial one and one which in effect, impinges on all others that follow. It forms the basis for building quality assurance into all aspects of the VPTP.

2. *VPTP Information Provision*

Clarify the status of the LCVP, the LCAP and the PLCs and market them as discrete programmes with a worthwhile place in the vocational education framework. This requires targeted marketing campaigns designed to inform parents, students and employers.

3. *Certification*

Provide a quality system of national certification with agreed, formal and recognised pathways for progression.

While local efforts and initiatives have in the majority of cases been efficient, there is a danger that we will end up with a mish mash of certification with nothing consistent and standardised. The way forward is to build on existing good practice and maximise this to a national framework within the greater European context.

The onus is currently on the NCVA to achieve the above objective and significant activity is under way in this regard. However, as mentioned in Chapter 5, the formation of the NETCB is also being considered. This would involve an amalgamation of the NCVA and the NCEA, with the certifying functions of the training organisations. Irrespective of the implementing body, the necessary activities required to ensure a quality system of certification remain constant and the body in question should satisfy the criteria outlined in Figure 7.

Figure 7 *Good Practice Criteria for Certification Systems*
Must be flexible and able to respond to change.
Must have a strong research capacity and be pro-active.
Must be adequately resourced, staffed and researched.
Must offer control with flexibility.
Must be accessible, rigorous and consistent.
Must allow for diversity and facilitate progression.
Must include balanced employer representation.
Must communicate developments to students and industry.
Must be independent and objective.
Must monitor and evaluate effectiveness.

It is vital that the business community is aware of developments and recognises certification. A pointed marketing campaign is needed to inform the business world; otherwise all efforts are in vain.

Focus should be on the needs of the student. The emphasis here is on quality systems of certification. This links into the method of course approval which must be rigorous and standardised. Essentially students are the victims of current delays in implementing quality certification arrangements.

In the event of the NETCB being established, total integration or amalgamation of the NCVA and NCEA is needed to provide pathways of progression. These pathways should facilitate movement through levels. This could provide alternative routes to third level, accumulation of modules, accreditation of prior learning, etc.. This should also include the notion of comparability and transnationality.

4. *Monitoring of Post Programme Performance*

Develop an effective system of monitoring post programme performance with the capacity to link into international systems.

The School Leavers Survey is a key route to effective monitoring of post programme performance and was discussed in Chapter 7. The restrictions in terms of utility and transparency currently inherent in this annual exercise were outlined. It is important that these are addressed. The areas that require immediate improvement are:

- Maximum analysis and use of VPT related raw data.
- Longitudinal use of the data.
- User-friendly presentation of results.

As mentioned above, the whole issue of transparency is crucial. There is a considerable amount of information and data being collected relating to the VPT programme which is currently difficult to access and decipher. There is much scope for useful application of the wealth of data that is available.

This links into the issue of continuous improvement of the Department of Education's Information Technology system. It is important that the Department avails of available funding to streamline IT systems. This is fundamental as it impacts on all aspects of the programn es implementation. This is expanded below.

5. *Quality Assurance*

Develop a quality assurance system and a quality ethos for VPTP.

A quality system is not devised overnight; it takes time and requires the identification of appropriate performance indicators. Quality is a nebulous term in that it is both an attitude and a measure. To develop a system of quality assurance necessitates ongoing, planned research and development. Quality assurance is inextricably linked with all the recommendations outlined here, from definition of the VPTP components, through administration of the programme to certification, monitoring and evaluation.

The PLCs, by their very nature and evolution, are almost always at the mercy of the discerning pupil and/or the job market. This ensures that there is an inherent model of continuous improvement. The majority of schools are highly aware of change and the need to change and hence systems, some sophisticated, some not, are in place to monitor and evaluate performance. These systems need to be formalised and linked into objective setting.

On a national policy scale there is a potential role for the inspectorate, the NCVA and indeed the RECs in fulfilling the quality assurance role. This role is outlined in the remit of the Inspectorate as detailed in the Green Paper. The terms of reference of the NCVA as detailed on p.41 refer to the role of...

> *'monitoring compliance with criteria and standards through an ongoing review of national returns on performance and the auditing of individual course providers on a targeted/sampling basis.'*

The Position Paper on the Regional Educational Councils also indicates a quality assurance role under 'Enhancement of the Quality of Education' (see p.4 of this report). The evidence indicates that the concept of quality assurance is included in the role of each. It is beyond the scope of this report to comment on the nature of this role; suffice it to say that evaluation of activity in this regard would be a worthwhile exercise.

6. *Equal Opportunities*

Monitor the VPTP for gender equity and equal opportunity. The signs are that currently there is a female bias evident in the PLC courses. This needs to be explored and addressed.

All schools/centres should actively pursue an equal opportunities policy to promote equality of opportunity. This should include recording of progress in implementing this policy in an annual report and monitoring by the Department of Education.

7. *Links with Industry*

Develop and launch awareness campaigns targeted at industry detailing the importance and benefits of active links with education.

This does not relate exclusively to the provision of work experience. Schools need to maximise on the relationships with employers and to encourage their active involvement in programme design and development. There is also a need for inclusion of employers in the formal evaluation of programmes. Information exchange is the key activity, especially in relation to developments in certification provision and the value of training programmes to their industry, in terms of providing future human resource expertise.

8. *Recording Systems*

Recording Systems and the monitoring process need to be simplified and effectively computerised at every stage. This necessitates a common IT system for compiling data at all levels of the education system. This would serve to maximise on the data collected, something which is neglected under the present system. It is worth noting in this context that the final claims for VPT invariably are the last to be submitted by the Department of Education to the Department of Enterprise and Employment. This will, unless addressed, cause delays in payments to all agencies involved in the Human Resources Operational Programme.

The Department of Education had technical assistance made available from the European Commission to assist the development of systems to collect information on ESF aided activity and expenditure, specifically within the Department. The sum allocated was 840,750 ECUs but most of this sum has not yet been drawn down due to stoppage at the feasibility stage of this project. The Department of Education has indicated that it is reluctant to proceed with this project. The reasons given are lack of clarity concerning the exact nature of changes in the education structures. Certainly there is considerable change afoot. However, it is anticipated that the forthcoming White Paper on Education coupled with the proposed establishment of the Regional Education Councils will provide a way forward. However, it is important to acknowledge a realistic timeframe for developments in this regard. As regards the RECs, if their establishment is agreed, it is practical to assume that it would be at least eighteen months before these would be up and running. In the meantime there is a great deal of information collected; the challenge is for the Department of Education to tap into it and make it available in a user friendly and transparent way. An example of this is The School Leavers Survey, mentioned earlier. All such data and information can serve for policy development and programme improvement.

9. *Evaluation*

Develop formal and rigorous methods of evaluation, follow-up and monitoring beginning at individual school level.

Some schools are introducing in-house systems of evaluation and this needs to be formalised and developed. There needs to be constant review in order to ensure that training is relevant and leads to employment or progression to further training. This must begin at school level and extend to a nationwide system of evaluation.

Appropriate evaluation is an essential part of any quality assurance system. However, lack of evaluation continues to surround VPT programmes rendering an impression of reactivity rather than one of proactivity. Evaluation can only be effective if the programme is broken down into its two distinct component parts.

Concluding Remarks

This report serves as a snapshot of activity at a given moment in time. There is a possibility that this research might be contaminated by the current state of affairs regarding developments in certification and the Leaving Certificate programme. Such developmental activity is not part of the normal course of events and this needs to be recognised in the light of the results of this research. However, while it is by no means exhaustive, this report serves to highlight clear development areas for the VPTP.

The second level education system is currently undergoing significant restructuring. The Government's White Paper is imminent, due for publication later in 1994. The Regional Education Councils are currently under consideration. All these factors will have implications for the VPTP and the successful addressing of recommendations of this report. In the light of this a series of follow-up evaluations are proposed for inclusion in future work programmes of the ESF Programme Evaluation Unit:

1. In-depth evaluations of each component programme within what is now referred to as VPTP.

2. A survey of employers focusing on their knowledge and attitude to certification and specific vocational training programmes.

3. A survey of post programme performance of VPT participants, taking account of developments under the school leavers survey.

4. A comparative study of VPT from a European context.

In view of the significant change being experienced and expected in the second level education system, the value of meaningful research is immeasurable. This is a time for important decision making in relation to many aspects of the national education system. Such decisions are serious in terms of human capital and impact on the lives of students, the jobs and livelihoods of teachers. They can only be made confidently and effectively if they are based on comprehensive, objective and research-based information. This evaluation is but the first in a series of evaluation research, in an ever expanding and important area of the education system.

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Appendix 1

Structured Interview (Teachers)
For Use In Fieldwork For The Evaluation Of The Vocational Preparation & Training Programmes

Section 1: General			
Type Of School:			
Geographic Location:			
Section 2: Data			
Total Number of Pupils in the class			
VPT1 VPT2 (i.e. PLCs) LCVP			
Have any of your students left since the beginning of the course?		Yes	No
How many students have left?			
What reason if any, did they give for leaving?			
Section 3: Implementation of VPT - Design, Development & Implementation of VPT			
Name of course that you teach: (See syllabus)			
How many years has the course been running?			
What prompted you to set up this particular course?			
How are participants selected to come on this course?			
How many teachers are involved in the provision of this VPTP course?			
Section 4: Delivery Mechanisms			
How would you describe your role as a teacher of VPTP?			
How would you describe the role of the course co-ordinator?			
Curriculum Development Seeking work placements Monitoring work experience Personal counselling of students Vocational Guidance Other			
What percentage of time is spent on each of the above activities, approximately?			
What training, if any, have you had in the last year?			

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Teacher Training in the last year	
Training Course (Type)	Comment

How would you assess the impact of this training?

What was the most useful learning for you?

What learning methods do you use in the provision of VPTP?

Learning Method	*Yes*	*No*
Individual Project work		
Group activities e.g. projects etc.		
Role Play		
Work simulation		
External visits/activities other than work placement		
Other		

How many of your students have been on work placement?			
Give an example of a typical work placement:			
How was it accessed?			
Duration:			
Assessment by the employer?	Yes	No	

What is your own main source of support in relation to role as a teacher of VPT?

What other support, if any do you need?

Section 5: Local Needs

Who do you have contact with in relation to the activity in this course?

What is the nature of this involvement?

Local Involvement

	Yes/No	*Nature of the involvement*
Employers		
Local FAS		
Local Trade Unions		
Parents		
Chamber of Commerce		
Other (e.g. local community)		

Section 6: Assessment

What methods of assessment do you use on this course?

Methods of Assessment

Method	*VPTP1*	*VPT2*	*LCVP*
Examination			
Project Work			
Continuous Assessment			
Peer Assessment			

Who carries out the assessment?	
What training has been provided in relation to assessment?	
Who delivered the training?	
How long did the training last?	

Do students have an input into the assessment systems?	Yes	No
Do employers, who provide workplacement have an input into the assessment process?	Yes	No
What is the nature of this input?		

Section 7: Certification

What certification applies to this course?

Methods of Certification

Method/Awarding Body	*VPT1*	*VPT2*	*LCVP*

Which of the above is the most recently acquired certification?	
How did your school achieve this certification?	

What in your opinion are the main challenges currently facing certification?

Section 8: Vision for the Future of VPTP

What, from your own experience, are the two foremost benefits of VPTP?
1.
2.

What do you see as being the single biggest challenge facing you in relation to VPTP in the next year?

Any other points or comments that you might like to make?

Thank you very much for your time and input!

Structured Interview (Principals)
For Use In Fieldwork For The Evaluation Of The Vocational Preparation & Training Programmes

Section 1: General

Name and Type Of School:	
Geographic Location:	
Principal:	

Section 2: Data

Total Number of Pupils in the school at present?

1993/1994 VPT Participants

Programme	Numbers	Male	Female
VPT1			
VPT2 (i.e. PLC's)			
LCVP			

How do you keep a record of student numbers? (i.e. do you have a computerised system?

Is this linked to the Department of Education?	Yes	No

Section 3: Implementation of VPT - Design, Development & Implementation of VPT

What course designations are you currently providing: (Brochure?)	
What course is the most recent addition to your curriculum?	
What prompted you to set up this particular course?	
Which of the above courses do you believe to be the most successful?	
What makes it so successful?	
Which course is the least successful?	
What do you believe, in particular impedes its success?	

Section 4: Delivery Mechanisms

How many teachers in total in this school?

Male	Female	Total

How many teachers have you currently involved in the provision of VPTP?

Male	Female	Total

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How many course coordinators are there in this school?		
Male	**Female**	**Total**

What do you believe to be the role of the coordinator?	
What training if any have these teachers had in the last year?	

Teacher Training in the last year

Training Course	*Number attended*	*Comment*
How would you assess the impact of this training?		
What contact, if any, do you have with the Department of Education?		

Section 5: Local Needs

Who is involved in VPTP activity within your school?
What is the nature of this involvement?

Local Involvement

	Yes/No	*Nature of the involvement*
Employers		
Local FAS		
Local Trade Unions		
Parents		
Local Community		
Chamber of Commerce		
Other (e.g. local community)		

Section 6: Assessment

What methods of assessment do you use in relation to VPTP?

Methods of Assessment

Method	*VPTP1*	*VPT2*	*LCVP*
Examination			
Project Work			
Continuous Assessment			
Peer Assessment			
Who carries out the assessment?			
What training has been provided in relation to assessment?			

Section 7: Certification

What certification applies to the courses run in this school?

Methods of Certification

Method/Awarding Body	*VPT1*	*VPT2*	*LCVP*

Which of the above is the most recently acquired certification?	

How did your school achieve this certification?

What is your vision for the future of certification?

Section 8: Vision for the Future of VPTP

What, from your own experience, are the two foremost benefits to the students of doing a VPTP?

What do you see as being the single biggest challenge facing you in relation to VPTP in the next year?

Any other points or comments that you might like to make?

Thank you very much for your time and input!

VPTP EVALUATION - STUDENT INPUT

PLEASE TICK YOUR RESPONSE AS APPROPRIATE

1. What Age Are You? ____

2. What Sex Are You? M ____ F ____

3. What Were You Doing Immediately Before This Course?

Leaving Certificate	____
Another Course	____
Working	____
Unemployed	____
Other, Please Specify	____

4. What Course Are You On Right Now?

5. What Prompted You To Choose This Particular Course?

6. Was It Your First Choice? Yes ____ No ____

7. What Other Courses/Activities Did You Consider?

8. How Were You Selected Onto This Course?

Interview	____
Leaving Cert Results	____
Other, Please Specify	____

9. Have You Done A Work Placement As Part Of This Course?

Yes	____
No (then go to question 15)	____
Not Yet (then go to question 15)	____

10. What Company Was Your Work Placement With?

11. How Long Did Your Work Placement Last? ____

12. What Did You Learn From The Work Placement?

13. What Did You Like About This Placement?

14. If You Were To Do Your Placement Again How Could It Be Made Better For You?

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15. What Aspect Of Your Course Do You Find Most Useful?

16. What In Particular Makes This So?

17. Have You Had Any Career Counselling During The Last Year?

Yes	
No (then go to question 20)	
Not Yet (then go to question 20)	

18. How Would You Rate The Career Counselling That You Have Received?

Very useful	
Not so useful	
Useless	

19. What In Particular Makes You Rate As You Did Above In Question 18?

20. How Are You Assessed On This Course?

Exams	
Practical Assessment	
Project work	
Other, please specify	

21. Who Assess Your Course Work?

22. What Qualification/Certification Will You Get At The End Of This Course?

23. What Are You Going To Do When You Finish This Course?
Please tick the following options as appropriate:

1.	Further education	
2.	Try and get employment in an area related to the course	
3.	Travel/emigrate	
4.	Try and set up your own business	
5.	Other, please specify	

25. What Improvements Would You Like To See For Future Students On This Course?

ANY OTHER COMMENTS THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO ADD, USE THIS SPACE!!!

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOU TIME AND ENERGY!

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Appendix 2

Glossary of the Main Certifying Bodies

City and Guilds of London, the Royal Society of Arts (RSA), The Pitman Examination Institute, and the British Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) are currently the most common international examining and certifying bodies related to VPTP. These bodies outline their own programmes and syllabi, examination approaches and fees, as well as standards and expectations of centres. Rigorous monitoring and validation procedures grant their certificates and diplomas recognised status. This coupled with representation from British industry on the boards, as advisers and researchers facilitates their acceptability with employers. A glossary of the main certifying and accrediting bodies pertinent to VPTP is provided below.

British Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC)

The British Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) is a UK body, offering vocational type qualifications. These qualifications operate at different levels ranging from a first certificate, which can be the equivalent of A-Levels through to diplomas and Higher National Diploma (HND) level. HNDs usually allow for transfer into year 2 or 3 of a degree programme. Schools and colleges can apply to become a registered college with BTEC; this is the most complex route. Alternatively schools can apply for the franchise of particular courses. Whatever route is taken there is a large amount of preparatory work necessary on the part of a school to comply with BTEC requirements. BTEC approved courses are an accepted route to further higher education in Britain.

City and Guilds of London

City and Guilds (C & G) is a registered charitable, non-profit making UK certifying authority. C & G provides awards in skills training.

Pitman Examination Institute

Pitman is a UK examining body which certifies business, secretarial and clerical type training. Pitman is now a part of City and Guilds.

Royal Society of Arts (RSA)

The RSA has a network of centres around the UK and Ireland. These centres run examinations for RSA bi-lingual, retailing, tourism, computer literacy and information technology, enterprise and language certificates and diplomas. The examining procedures involve practical and centre based exams and evaluation using the moderatorship system.

CERT

CERT is the national tourism training agency. It is responsible for the co-ordination and provision of recruitment, education, training and placement for the hotel catering and tourism industry. VPTP courses of this nature are provided by CERT within second-level schools.

The following table provides a listing of VPT course provision and relevant certification. This list is based on the results of information gathered in the course of this research and a telephone survey of VPT providers. This survey was carried out in April/May 1994. The listing does not purport to be exhaustive but provides as comprehensive as possible an overview of current provision.

List of VPT Provision & Certification

NAME OF SCHOOL	COURSE DESIGNATIONS	CERTIFICATION
CITY OF DUBLIN VEC		
Ballyfermot Senior College	Art, Design & Mixed Media	CDVEC Cert.
	Art, Design & Crafts	CDVEC Cert.
	Art, Graphics & Printmaking	CDVEC Cert.
	Art, Design & Three Dimensional Studies	CDVEC Cert.
	Animation Studies	CDVEC Cert.
	Dip in Classical Animation Production	CDVEC Cert.
	Dip in Computer Animation, Graphics & Multimedia App	CDVEC Cert.
	Clay Animation Production	CDVEC Cert.
	Dip in Business & Finance	National Dip British Business & Technology Education Council
	Dip in Business & Finance	Higher National Dip BTEC
	Secretarial Studies & Computing	Euro Institute of Office Tech, Royal Society of Arts, Pitman Examining Body
	Dip in Computer Apps & Related Studies	City & Guilds, RSA
	Combined Dip in Transport Mgmt, International Trade & Business Studies	Chartered Institute of Transport, Institute of Commercial Management, RSA
	Dip in Computer Aided Design & Apps	Dept. of Education Cert.
	Preliminary Engineering	Senior Coll Examination
	Dip in Computer Aided Design	C&G
	Foundation Course in Electronics, Electrical & Computer Apps	Senior Coll Examination
	Electrical/Electronic Engineering	
	Dip in Social Care	Higher National Dip BTEC
	Dip in Social Care	National Dip BTEC
	Pre Nursing Studies (incorporating Social Studies)	Cert. in Manual Lifting & Handling of Patients
	Community & Childcare (incorp Pre-Sch studies)	Irish Pre-Sch & Playgroup Association Preliminary Cert.
	Hotel, Catering & Tourism Skills	CERT
	Hotel & Catering Mgmt	Dublin Examining Inst, EIOT, RSA
	Dip in Hotel Reception & Tourism Studies	Shorthand & Commercial Inst C&G
	Tourism Reception & Craft Retailing	CERT
	Dip in Television Operations & Production	C&G
	Dip in Radio Production & Journalism	Higher National Dip BTEC

	Dip in Broadcasting & Journalism	National Dip BTEC
	Dip in Print Journalism & Media Mgmt	Higher Nat. Dip BTEC RSA
	Print Media & Journalism	Dept. of Education Cert.
	Popular Performing Arts	D of Ed Cert.
	Rock Sch: Popular Music Performance	Curriculum Dev Unit of CDVEC
	Progressive Traditional & Folk Music Performance	CDU of CDVEC
	Audio Engineering & Multi Media Production in the Music Industry	CDU of CDVEC
	Dip in Music Mgmt	Higher National Dip BTEC
	Training Based Enterprise Development Prog	CDVEC
	Access Course to Education & Training	CDVEC
Colaiste Dhulaigh	European Languages & Business Administration	CDVEC, Pitman, London Chamber of Commerce, RSA, English Speaking Board
	Outdoor Education 'Centre Mgmt'	CDVEC, ISA - Irish Sailing Ass
	Shackleton Outdoor Education	Course extern is ISA Coach Examiner
	Hotel, Catering & Tourism	CERT
	Communications 3 yr course - Foundation, Intermediate & Advanced	CDVEC, RSA
	Secretarial & Computer Studies	CDVEC, EIOT, RSA, English Speaking Board
	Business Studies	CDVEC, EIOT, English Speaking Board, RSA, London Chamber of Commerce
	Marketing with a Language	Marketing Institute of Ireland, London Chamber of Commerce
	Applied Laboratory Science	Dept. of Ed Cert.
	Architectural Studies	Dept. of Ed Cert.
	Electronic Servicing	C&G
	Engineering Science & Technology	Internal Exam monitored externally
	Dip in Advanced Computer Aided Design	C&G (Portfolio & Project Work)
	CERT Preliminary Course	CERT
	Applied Social Studies	Internal & External assessment & examinations - External Examiner appointed by Mater Dei Institute of Education
	Art & Design	Final assessment involves External Examiner from NCAD
	Journalism - Foundation & Advanced	CDVEC, C&G
	Advanced Electronics Technology (Servicing)	CDVEC, C&G

	Theatre Studies	Professional assessment, Exams with London Academy of Music & Dramatic Arts
	Communications & Media Production	Continuous assessment by external assessor, Examination by CDVEC
Colaiste Ide Senior Coll	Accounting Technician -2 yrs Foundation Admission	CDVEC, Institute of Accounting Technicians of Irel., Dept of Ed
	Architectural Studies 1,2 (2 part)	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, C&G
	Association Football: Career Mgmt	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, FAI -Football Association of Ireland, SAT - Scholastic Apptitude Test
	Health, Fitness & Leisure Mgmt	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, ITEC - International Therapy Examination Council, ILAM - Institute of Leisure & Amenity Mgmt, RLSS - Royal Life Saving Federation
	Mgmt Skills (Sport & Recreation)	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, C&G, ILAM, IASA-Irish Amateur Swimming Ass
	Equitation Studies & Leisure Mgmt 1,2 (2 parts)	CDVEC, Dept. of Ed, C&G, British Horse Society
	Business & Computers (Apps)	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, EIOT, C&G
	Business & Computers (Mgmt)	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, EIOT, C&G
	Electronic, Electrical Technology	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, C&G
	Electronics & Electrical Engineering 2	CDVEC, Dept of Ed
	Principles of Engineering Science	CDVEC, Dept of Ed
	Computer Programming Yr 1, Yr 2	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, C&G
	Hotel, Catering & Tourism (CERT)	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, CERT
	Food Technology- National Cert.	CDVEC, Dept of Ed
	Portfolio Prep/Art & Design 1&2 (2 parts)	CDVEC, Dept of Ed.
	Fashion & Textile Design (Portfolio)	CDVEC, Dept of Ed.
	Fashion & Business Administration	CDVEC, Dept of Ed.
	Secretarial Skills for the 1990s	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, EIOT, Pitman
	Dip in International Trade 1,2 (2 parts)	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, Chartered Institute of Transport, Irish Exporters Association
	Travel & Tourism Standard Dip, Advanced Dip	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, IATA - International Air Transport Association, UFTAA - United Federation of Travel Agents Association Geneva, CERT, Pitman
	Pharmaceutical Technician Dip Course Yr1	CDVEC, Dept. of Ed
	Dip in Information Technology	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, C&G
Crumlin Coll of Business & Technical Studies	CDVEC, C&G, Institute of Commercial Mgmt	CDVEC, C&G, Inst of Commercial Mgmt
	Business Studies & Computer Apps	CDVEC, ICM
	Computer & Business Information Systems	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, LCC, C&G

	Sales & Marketing Studies	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, LCC
	Marketing	CDVEC, CIM -Commercial Institute of Marketing
	Advertising & Design	CDVEC, LCC, C&G
	Accounting Technician -Foundation, Intermediate & Technician Stage	CDVEC, AAT- Association of Accounting Tech -Level 1,2,3
	Secretarial Computer Apps	CDVEC, Dept of Ed
	BiLingual Secretarial & Tourism Studies	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, EIOT, RSA, Pitman, ICM
	Reception Studies & Tourism	CDVEC, Pitman, ICM
	Secretarial & Reception Studies	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, Pitman
	Hotel & Catering Studies	CDVEC, CERT
	Catering & Tourism Studies	CDVEC, CERT
	Hairdressing & Cosmetic Studies	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, ITEC
	Dip in Beauty Therapy	CDVEC, Confederation of International Beauty Therapy & Cosmetology Comite Internationale D'esthetique et de Cosmetologie ITEC
	Cert. in Executive Business Studies/Supervisory Mgmt	CDVEC, Irish Mgmt Institute, C&G, Pitman
	Practical Small Business Mgmt	CDVEC
Inchicore Vocational Sch	Administration & Legal Studies	CDVEC, Dept of Ed
	Child Care & Pre Nursing	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, C&G
	Computer Studies-HND BTEC option	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, C&G, BTEC
	Computer Apps- HND BTEC option	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, C&G, BTEC
	Leisure & Recreation: Environment	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, C&G, ILAM
	Leisure & Recreation:Sports & Leisure Mgmt HND BTEC	BTEC, CDVEC, Dept of Ed, C&G, ILAM
	Leisure & Recreation:Tourism HND BTEC	BTEC, CDVEC, Dept of Ed, C&G, ILAM
	Theatre: Art & Design	CDVEC, Dept of Ed
	Theatre: Performance	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, G Hall
	Theatre: Stagecraft, Production	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, G Hall, LAMDA
	Theatre: Directing Skills	CDVEC, Dept of Ed
	Dip in Nursery Nursing National Nursery Examination Board	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, NNEB
	Social Studies	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, GCE-A
	Pre-Accountancy: Accounting Tech (AAT)	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, AAT (option)
	Languages-German/French Hindi	CDVEC, Dept of Ed
	Technical Studies	CDVEC, Dept of Ed
	Laboratory Techniques	CDVEC, Dept of Ed

	Antiques & Antique Restoration	CDVEC, Dept of Ed
	Skills & Personal Competency Access Course	CDVEC, Dept of Ed
St. Peter's Coll	Art/Drama, Portfolio Preparation	CDVEC, Dept of Ed
	Business Studies 1,2 (2 parts)	CDVEC. Dept of Ed, BTEC, HND
	Child Care	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, C&G
	Computer Studies 1,2 (2 parts)	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, C&G, BTEC HND
	Design Studies	CDVEC, Dept of Ed
	Garage Mgmt/ Transport Engineering	CDVEC, Dept of Ed
	Horticulture	CDVEC, Dept of Ed
	Marketing Year 1&2	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, RSA (CLAIT) (Computer Literacy & IT)
	Public Relations & European Business Studies	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, RSA (CLAIT)
	Secretarial Studies	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, RSA
	Community Care	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, C&G
Liberties Vocational Sch	Childcare (Foundation)	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, C&G
	Dip in Nursery Nursing NNEB	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, NNEB
	Care of the Special Child	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, Central Remedial Clinic
	Hotel Catering & Tourism (CERT)	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, CERT
	Interior Design 1,2 (2 parts)	CDVEC, Dept of Ed
	Performance- Level 1,2,3	CDVEC, Dept of Ed
	Communication- TV & Radio Prod 1,2,3	CDVEC, Dept of Ed
	Craft & Design (Foundation Studies)	CDVEC, Dept of Ed
Plunkett Coll	Accounting Studies - ACCA Accounting Studies -CIMA	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, ACCA - Chartered Association of Certified Accountants, CDVEC Dept of Ed, CIMA - Chartered Institute of Mgmt Accountants
	Accounting Technician	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, IATI
	Business Mgmt & Administration	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, AIIS -Irish Institute of Secretaries & Administrators
	Carpentry/Joinery Studies - Pre Apprenticeship	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, C&G
	Construction & Building Maintenance	CDVEC, Dept of Ed
	Crafts & Design	CDVEC, Dept of Ed
	Intensive European Languages for Business	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, RSA
	Motor Vehicle Maintenance PreApprenticeship	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, C&G
	PreTechnology Course in Science/Engineering	CDVEC, Dept of Ed
	Timber Technology & Utilisation	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, Ins of WS - Institute of Wood Science
	Course in Footballing Skills	CDVEC, Dept of Ed

	Trainee Instructor in Outdoor Education	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, AFAS
Whitehall Hse Senior Coll	Business Information Systems	CDVEC, C&G
	Language Secretarial Course	CDVEC, Pitman
	Computer Bi Lingual Secretarial Course	CDVEC, Pitman, C&G
	General Secretarial Course	CDVEC, Pitman
	Tourism/Languages Secretarial Course	CDVEC, Pitman, C&G
	Caring for the Elderly	CDVEC, Pitman, BTEC
	Desktop Publishing & Commercial Studies	CDVEC, Pitman, C&G
	Advanced Secretarial Course 1,2 (2parts)	CDVEC, Pitman, C&G
	Insurance & Banking	CDVEC, Pitman, C&G
	Entrepreneurship	CDVEC, Pitman, C&G
	Dip in Social Care	CDVEC, Pitman, BTEC
	European Studies	CDVEC, Pitman, C&G
	Executive Assistant	CDVEC, Pitman, C&G
	PC Specialist Training	CDVEC, Pitman, C&G
Marino Coll	International Business Studies	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, Pitman
	Broadcasting	CDVEC, Dept of Ed
	Computer & Business Studies	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, Pitman
	Drama & Dance	CDVEC, Dept of Ed
	Hotel Catering & Tourism (CERT)	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, CERT
	Legal Secretarial	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, Pitman
	Medical Reception	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, Pitman
	Dip in Nursery Nursing	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, NNEB
	Nursing Studies	CDVEC, Dept of Ed
	Photography	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, C&G
	Receptionist Skills	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, Pitman
Rathmines Senior Coll	Secretarial Studies - Bi Lingual	CDVEC, Dept of Ed
	Secretarial Studies - Legal	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, RSA
	Secretarial Studies - Receptionist	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, RSA
	Secretarial Studies Computers	CDVEC, Dept of Ed
	Business & Computers Studies	CDVEC, Dept of Ed
	International Marketing & Languages	CDVEC, Dept of Ed
	Financial Mgmt & Banking	CDVEC, Dept of Ed
	Accounting Technician	IATI
	Public Relations -PRII	Public Relations Institute of Irel
Ringsend Technical Institute	Amenity Horticulture & Ground Maintenance	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, C&G
	Electronic Technology	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, C&G
	Marine Technology	CDVEC, Dept of Ed

	Engineering Technology	CDVEC, Dept of Ed
	Security Studies	CDVEC, Dept of Ed
Pearse Coll	Communications	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, C&G
	Draughting & Design	CDVEC, Dept of Ed
	Languages for Travel & Tourism	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, Pitman, RSA
	Amenity Horticulture	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, LCC
	Retail Mgmt & Business Studies	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, LCC, RSA
	Holistic Health Studies	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, IHCA -Irish Health Culture Association
	Business Studies & International Trade (Dip in International Trade)	CDVEC, Dept of Ed, IEA
	Personnel Administration for Trainee Managers	CDVEC, Dept of Ed
Ballsbridge Coll of Business Studies	Business Skills, Computers & Languages Cert Course	CDVEC
	Business Linked Commercial Course	CDVEC
	Admin Course in Auctioneering/Estate/Valuer	CDVEC
	Business Administration Course in Marketing, Advertising & Mgmt	CDVEC
Ballyfermot Vocational Sch	Eco Technology	CDVEC
	Motor Mechanics	CDVEC, C&G
	Sound Technology/Music	CDVEC
Colaiste E. .na, Cabra	Business Studies- Marketing	CDVEC
	Engineering Technology	CDVEC, C&G
	Cert. in Secretarial & Business Studies	CDVEC, Pitman
St Kevins Coll Clogher	Adventure Skills/Outdoor Pursuits	CDVEC
	Mechanical Engineering Technician	CDVEC, C&G
	Science/Engineering Careers	CDVEC
	Media Production	CDVEC
Colaiste Chonghaile	Interior Design/Restoration Skills	CDVEC
	Travel & Tourism	CDVEC, CERT
Pobalscoil Iosolde	Journalism & Publishing Course	Dept of Ed, Pitman,, Commercial Examining Board of Ire, RSA C&G
	Secretarial & Business Studies Course	Dept of Ed, EIOT, Pitman, RSA
DUN LAOIRE INSTITUTE OF FURTHER EDUCATION		
Senior Coll Dun Laoire	Office & Computer Skills	ICM, RSA, Pitman
	Commercial Office Practices	ICM, RSA, Pitman
	Secretarial Studies	ICM, Pitman, RSA
	Bi Lingual Secretarial Cert.	ICM, Pitman, RSA
	Receptionist Skills	ICM, Pitman, RSA

	Executive Secretarial Cert.	ICM, RSA, Pitman
	Dip in Secretarial Studies	ICM, Pitman, RSA
	Accounting Technician	IATI, RSA, Pitman, Institute of Linguists
	Auctioneering, Estate Agency & Valuation	Institute of Professional Auctioneers & Valuers
	Business Studies - Cert. - ICM	ICM, RSA, Pitman
	Business & Secretarial Studies - Cert. - ICM	ICM, RSA
	Business Studies - Dip - ICM	ICM, RSA
	Marketing, Marketing & Languages	Marketing Institute of Ire, RSA, Pitman, Institute of Linguists
	Dip in Marketing	MII
	Aestheticienne Dip	CIBTAC, RSA, Pitman
	Diplome Internationale CIDESCO	CIDESCO
	School of Hairdressing & Beauty Care	Dept of Ed, C&G, Pitman, RSA
	Preliminary Cert. in Apps Programming; Apps Programming Cert.	C&G, RSA, Pitman
	Advanced Computer Technology	Joint Examining Board, Teacher/ Trainer Cert. in IT
	Dip in Information Technology	RSA
	Teachers Dip in Typing/Word Processing/IT	Joint Examining Board
Dun Laoire Community Coll	Dip in Public Relations	PRII, C&G
	Dip in Business Mgmt & Security Studies	UK Institute of Mgmt
	Data Processing for Computer Users	C&G, Dept of Ed - Leaving Cert in selected subjects
	Business Computing	C&G
	Computer Aided Draughting & Design	C&G
	Customising AutoCAD 3D AutoCAD Drawing Desktop Publishing	C&G
	Financial Services; Cert./Dip in Financial Services	UK Institute of Commercial Managers
	Dip in Intemational Trade	IEA
	Business Studies	RSA, Pitman
	Engineering Science & Technology	Dun Laoire Institute of Further Education
	Introduction to New Technology	C&G, RSA
	General Reception	RSA
	The Medical Secretary	EIOT, RSA, Pitman
	Nursing Studies	Dept of Ed - Leaving Cert Biology; Health Science Cert.
	Food Science & Quality Assurance	Elementary Cert. in Food Science & Quality Assurance

	Tennis Coaches & Administrators Course Year 1,2	Tennis Ireland; United States Tennis Association Sports Science Cert.
	Marine Technology & Seamanship	Irish Sailing Association, Dept of Marine Cert, First Aid Cert
	Soccer Skills & Coaching Course	FAI
	Media Print & Radio Techniques	C&G
	Tourism Mgmt Course	University of Wales
	Computer Programming & Maintenance	C&G
	Advanced Autocad	C&G
Senior Coll, Sallynoggin	Art & Design	Dept of Ed
	Arts & Crafts	C&G, Dept of Ed
	Photography	C&G
	Product & Package Design 3 Dimensional	Dept of Ed
	Fashion	C&G
	Costume Design for Film & Theatre	Dept of Ed
	Ballet & Contemporary Dance	International Dance Teachers Association, Dept of Ed
	Practical Community Care Skills	C&G
	Dip in Child Care	NNEB
	Hotel Catering & Hospitality Studies	Dept of Ed, CERT
	Travel & Tourism	Dept of Ed, ICM, RSA, C&G, Pitman, TIMAS - Travel Industry Multi Access System
	Fitness & Leisure Mgmt	Dept of Ed, CERT, C&G, ILAM, ITEC Aerobics & Gym Instructor, RSA, Pitman, National Sports Ass
COUNTY DUBLIN VEC		
Coll of Commerce Dundrum	Drama & Theatre Studies	Dept of Ed, NCVA, Coll Dip
	ACCA Foundation Stage	ACCA
	Travel & Tourism	Dept of Ed, Coll Dip, CERT, NCVA, ICM, Pitman
	Child & Community Care Course	Coll Dip, NCVA, Irish Red Cross First Aid Cert., Dept of Ed, Pitman, C&G
	Pre Nursing Course	Dept of Ed, First Aid Cert., NCVA, College Dip
	Dip in Business Studies with Computer Apps	Dept of Ed, Coll Dip, ICM
	Dip in Information Technology	NCVA, Dept of Ed Coll Dip, Dublin Examining Institute, Commercial Examining Board of Ireland, ICM, Pitman
	Accounting Technicians Course with Computer Apps	Dept of Ed
	Dip in International Trade	Dept of Ed, College Dip, NCVA

	Secretarial Studies with Cert./Dip in Financial Studies	NCVA, Dublin Examining Institute College Dip, Dept of Ed, ICM, UK, Pitman
	Executive Secretary	NCVA, Dublin Examining Institute College Dip, Dept of Ed, Pitman
Dundrum Coll Sydenham Road.	Equine Studies	NCVA, BHS
	Art & Design	NCVA
	Archaeology Heritage & Tourism Studies	NCVA, CERT
	Engineering or Construction Technology	NCVA
	Sport/Leisure Studies	NCVA, Dept of Ed, C&G
	Information Technology	NCVA
Grange Community Coll	Pre Nursing Course	College Cert., First Aid Cert. Red Cross a Hospital Cert., NCVA, Lifting Seminar Attendance Cert.
	Engineering Technology	NCVA, Co Dublin VEC Cert.
	Secretarial & Computer Apps with a Language	Commercial Examinations Board of Ireland, EIOT, Pitman
Greenhills Coll	Pre Engineering	NCVA
	Tourism Studies	CERT, NCVA
Deansrath Community Coll	Secretarial & Computer Studies	CDU, Pitman (next yr NCVA)
St. Tiernan's Community Sch, Parkvale	Information Technology	Pitman, GCE
	Financial Services	Pitman, GCE
	International Secretarial & Business Skills	Pitman, GCE
Senior Coll Stillorgan	Cert. in Marketing	MII
	Modern Office Studies	NCVA, C&G
	Art Foundation	NCVA
	Travel & Tourism	IATA
	Cert./Dip in Legal Studies	ICM
St. Finians Community Coll	Secretarial Computer Studies & Language Course	Commercial Examining Board of Ireland, Pitman, RSA
Collinstown Park Community Coll	Hotel Catering & Tourism Awareness	CERT
	Tourism Awareness with Secretarial Skills	CERT, C&G
	Computer & Business Studies with Electronics	C&G
	Business Studies with Secretarial Skills & Languages	ICM, C&G
Donahies Community Sch, Kilbarrack	Computer Science	NCVA, C&G, External Committee consisting of Computer Science people from Glasgow University, UCD, & Computer Firms
	Secretarial & Business Studies	NCVA

Greendale Community Sch	National Cert. in Business Studies - Industrial Relations/ Human Resource Mgmt	YEAR 1 NCIR VPT2 YEAR 2 NCIR
	Business Studies & Office Information Sys	NCVA, Dept of Ed Pitman RSA
	Advanced Dip in Computer Apps	NCVA, C&G, Pitman
	National Cert. in Business Studies - Office Information Systems	Year 1 NCEA VPT2 Year 2 At RTC Athlone
	National Cert. in Construction Studies	Year 1 NCEA VPT 2 Year 2 At RTC Athlone
	Drama Studies	C&G
Riversdale Community Coll	Computer Aided Engineering & Design	NCVA, C&G
	Secretarial & Business Administration	NCVA
	Retail Studies	NCVA, C&G
CITY OF CORK VEC		
Coll of Commerce	Executive Secretary	EIOT, LCC, RSA
	Receptionist/Tourism	EIOT, LCC, RSA, ICM
	Receptionist/Retail Marketing	EIOT, LCC, RSA, Professional Business Communication Consultancy
	Medical/Dental Receptionist	EIOT, RSA
	Linguistic Secretary/Tourism	EIOT, RSA, ICM
	Secretary Computer Studies	EIOT, RSA, Cambridge Examining Board
	Secretary/Accounting Technician	IATI Foundation Exam, EIOT, RSA
	Secretary/Legal & Insurance	Chartered Insurance Inst EIOT RSA
	BiLingual Secretary	EIOT, Pitman, RSA. LCC, Irish/German Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Paris Chamber of Commerce
	Post-graduate course Teachers Dip in Commercial Skills	Dept of Ed, J.E.B., Gregg
	Senior Secretarial Studies	RSA
	Advanced Secretarial Studies	RSA
	Course in Materials Mgmt (2yr)	Institute of Purchasing & Materials Mgmt
	Mgmt Training & Cert. in Supervision of the Irish Mgmt Institute	IMI -Irish Mgmt Institute
	Dip in International Trade	IEA
	Higher National Dip in Business & Finance	Manchester Municipal Univ
	Commercial Computing	C&G, RSA, ICM, Cambridge Examining Board
	Institute of Accounting Technicians in Ireland	Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland
	Retail Distribution Mgmt	ICM,UK

	Dip in Security Studies & Business Mgmt	ICM, C&G, International Institute of Security
	Dip in Business & Human Resource Mgmt	ICM
	Foundation Course in Banking & Insurance	Irish Institute of Bankers, Chartered Insurance Institute of London
	Cert./Dip in Financial Services	ICM,UK
	Institute of Professional Auctioneers & Valuers Cert. in Estate Agency Practice	Institute of Professional Auctioneers & Valuers
	Dip in Business Studies of the Institute of Commercial Mgmt	ICM,UK
	Marketing Institute of Ireland (3 part)-Cert. of Marketing; Dip in Marketing; Graduateship in Marketing.	MII
	Social & Community Care (Pre Nursing)	An Bord Altranais
	Nursery Nurse	NNEB
	Montessori Dip	St. Nicholas Montessori Assoc
	Pre Sch Child Care	Nursery Dip Examination of the St. Nicholas Montessori Training Centre London
	Foundation Course in Hotel Catering & Tourism Skills	CERT, Dept of Ed
	*Introduction to Catering	CERT
	Fashion Design & Tailoring	C&G
	Course in Knitted Textiles & Fashion Merchandising	C&G
	Beautician Dip	CIBTAC, ITEC, CIDESCO
MacSwiney Community Coll	Office Skills (Secretarial Studies)	Commercial Examination Board of Ireland, RSA, Pitman, LCC
	Control Technology	NCVA (from this year) Previously Eurotechnet, School Cert., C&G, Cambridge Examining Board
	Computers Graphics & Design	NCVA (from this year) Previously School Cert.,
	Hotel Catering Tourism	CERT, Dept of Ed
Scoil Stiofain Naofa	Greenkeeping	NCVA, C&G
	Tourism & Heritage Mangement	City of Cork VEC, Dept of Ed, CERT, C&G, RSA, Order of Malta
	Leisure & Recreation Mgmt	City of Cork VEC, Dept of Ed, C&G, ILAM, FAI, Irish Basketball Association, Badminton Union of Ireland
	Media Techniques, Journalism & Radio Competence	C&G
	Music (Mgmt & Sound)	City of Cork VEC, Dept of Ed, NCVA, C&G, Royal Associated Board

	Course in Youth Leadership Skills	C&G, YMCA
	Processing Techniques in Food Science	City of Cork VEC, Dept of Ed, Southern Health Board, C&G, RSA
	Engineering Skills & Technology	City of Cork VEC, Dept of Ed, C&G
	Dip in Dance	City of Cork VEC, Dept of Ed, Imperial Society of Teachers of Dance, RSA
	Computers & Electronics	City of Cork VEC, Dept of Ed, C&G
	Business Studies with French, German or Italian	City of Cork VEC, Dept of Ed, RSA
	Amenity & General Horticulture	Dept of Ed, City of Cork VEC, C&G, National Examinations Board for Horticulture & Agriculture UK
	Carpentry	City of Cork VEC, Dept of Ed, C&G
	Art & Design	City of Cork VEC, Dept of Ed
	Marine Leisure Mgmt	Irish Yachting Association, Royal Yachting Association, Dept of the Marine, C&G
Scoil Eoin Naofa	Building Construction	Dept of Ed
	Furniture Restoration	Dept of Ed
	Electronics Technology	C&G
	Art & Craft Technology	Dept of Ed
	Science Laboratory Technology	Dept of Ed
	Motor Maintenance & Engineering Skills	Dept of Ed
	Import Substitution Studies	Dept of Ed
	IT Office Equipment Repairs & Maintenance	Dept of Ed
	Hairdressing	Dept of Ed, (C&G in the future)
	Computer Programming & Business Studies	Dept of Ed, C&G
	Tourism & Travel Studies	IATA, UFTAA, Joint Sch/ Cork Kerry Tourism Board
	Interior Design Studies	Dept of Ed
COUNTY CORK VEC		
Scoil le Gairm Oideachas Cobh	Apprentice Foundation/Applied Technology Course	NCVA, Dept of Ed, C&G
	Business Studies Course	EIOT, Dept of Ed, C&G, RSA
Rossa Coll, Skibbereen	Sport & Recreation	NCVA, ILAM, Badminton Union of Ireland, FAI, Irish Basketball Assoc, RSA, Red Cross Assoc, Irish Sailing Assoc
	Business Studies Secretarial	NCVA, RSA
	*Hotel Catering & Tourism	CERT, RSA

Mannix Coll, Charleville	Business & Secretarial Course	Dept of Ed, NCVA, RSA
Colaiste Ghobain	Secretarial Course	NCVA
Vocational Sch, Kinsale	Business Studies Course	NCVA
St. Brogan's Vocational Sch	Secretarial	LCC, RSA, Private Agencies
	AgriRural Tourism Awareness	CERT
Colaiste Eoin Technical Coll, Youghal	Electronics	C&G
	Business Technology	NCVA, Dept of Ed, (Edupak Kilkenny), RSA, LCC
Colaiste Choilm, Ballincollig	*Vocational Studies & Preparation for Working Life & General Studies	Dept of Ed
Bishop McEgan Coll	Modern Secretarial & Business Technology	Dept of Ed
Colaiste Treasa, Kanturk	Business Studies -Secretarial	NCVA, RSA
Colaiste Chairbre Dunmanway	*Engineering	VPT 1 Courses are all Certified by the Dept of Ed & some of them are also Certified by the NCVA
	*Building Construction	
	*CAD Drawing	
	*Computers	
	*Electronics	
	*Business Maths	
	*Communication Studies	
	(*Work Experience, Mini Enterprise, Job & Self Evaluation)	
	Typing	VPT2 Courses certified by Dept of Ed
	Shorthand	
	Computers (wordprocessing, database & spreadsheets)	
	Domestic Science	
	French	
	Office Practice	
	Communication Studies	
	Business Maths	
	(Work Experience, Job & Self Evaluation)	
Clonakilty Community Coll	Hairdressing & Beauty care	Dept of Ed, C&G
	Secretarial Studies	NCEA, LCC, RSA
	Hotel & Catering & Tourism Studies	Dept of Ed, CERT
Davis Coll, Mallow	Secretarial	NCVA, RSA
	Applied Technology	NCVA

Colaiste an Chraoibhin Fermoy	Business & Office Technology Skills	NCVA, Dept of Ed, EIOT, RSA, LCC, Pitman
	Performing Arts -Theatre Performance	NCVA, Leinster Sch of Music & Drama
St. Colman's Community Coll, Middleton,	Modern Secretarial & Business Technology Course	Dept of Ed, NCVA, RSA, London Secretarial Examinations Bureau Ire
	Hotel Catering & Tourism Skills	CERT, NCVA
St. Fanahan's Coll, Mitchelstown,	Business Studies/Secretarial	NCVA, RSA, LCC
CITY OF GALWAY VEC		
Post Primary Sch, Fr. Griffin Road	Computer & Electronic Technology	NCVA, C&G
	Secretarial/Office Technology Course	Dept of Ed, EIOT, RSA, Pitman, C&G
	Control Technology	NCVA, Dept of Ed, C&G
Community Coll Moneenageisha	*Hotel & Catering Studies	Dept of Ed
	Catering & Tourism Skills	CERT
	Sport & Administration	Dept of Ed
	Secretarial Studies	Dept of Ed, Pitman, Edupak
	Business Studies Computer Apps	Dept of Ed, Edupak, Pitman, C&G
	Media Production Studies DTP/Print	Dept of Ed, C&G
	Media Production Studies Journalism	NCVA, Dept of Ed, C&G, Pitman
	Media Productions Studies Presentations & Multimedia	Coll Cert., C&G
COUNTY GALWAY VEC		
St. Michael's Vocational Sch, Ballinasloe	Pre Nursing	Co. Galway VEC, NCVA from next year
	Secretarial & Business Studies	Dept of Ed, NCVA, CERT, Commercial Examining Board of Ireland, Pitman
	Engineering Technology	NCVA, Dept of Ed, Co. Galway VEC
St. Brigid's Vocational Sch Loughrea	Information Technology Course	Dept of Ed, C&G
Sch of Professional Studies, Athenry	Course in Health Science	Dip in Health Science from Coll, First Aid-Order of Malta
	Secretarial Course	RSA
St. Benin's Vocational Sch, Glenamaddy	Secretarial & Tourism Course	Dept of Ed, Commercial Examining Board of Irel, RSA
St. Killian's, New Inn, Ballinasloe	Equestrian Business & Science Studies	Irish Cert. in Equestrian Science NCVA, BHS
COUNTY KERRY		

Causeway Comprehensive Sch	Secretarial Science Studies	Dept of Ed, EIOT, Shorthand & Commercial *Institute of Ireland* Pitman, RSA
Tralee Community Coll	Art Craft & Design	NCVA, Co. Kerry VEC
	Accounting Technician	IATI
	Cabinet making/Furniture Restoration	Not this year, No Certification Probably NCVA next year.
	Hotel Catering & Tourism	CERT, NCVA
	Secretarial	Dept of Ed, Roscommon Examining Institute, RSA
	Computer Studies	NCVA, Pitman, C&G
COUNTY CARLOW		
Carlow Vocational Sch, Kilkenny Road, Carlow	Art & Design	NCVA, C&G
	Accounting Technician	IATI
	Child Care	NCVA, C&G
	Dip in General Reception	RSA
	Engineering -PLC (CAD/CAM)	NCVA, C&G, School Cert.
	Health Science	NCVA, C&G
	Senior Secretarial Course	Dept of Ed, Pitman, RSA, School Cert.
	TV & Video Techniques	C&G
Muine Bheag Vocational Sch	Secretarial	Dept of Ed, NCVA, RSA, Pitman
	Food Preparation & Service	Dept of Ed
	Engineering	Dept of Ed, C&G
Tullow Community Sch	Secretarial (2 Courses)	NCVA, Dept of Ed, RSA, Pitman
COUNTY LOUTH		
O'Fiach Coll of Further Ed	Engineering Studies	NCVA, C&G
	Nursing Studies	NCVA, Dept of Ed, RSA, First Aid
	Bi Lingual Secretarial Studies	RSA
	BTEC National Dip in IT	BTEC National Dip
	Catering Studies (CERT 2)	CERT, Dept of Ed
	Art Craft & Design	NCVA, Dept of Ed
	Secretarial Studies	RSA
		Students may also repeat 1 or 2 Leaving Cert. subjects on these courses
St. Laurences Coll of Further Education Drogheda	Secretarial & Business	Dept of Ed, NCVA, CDU, Pitman, RSA
	Computer Apps	C&G, NCVA next year
	Computer Aided Engineering	Dept of Ed, CDU, C&G

	Pre Nursing	NCVA, CDU
	Construction Technology	Dept of Ed, CDU, NCVA, C&G
	Motor Vehicle Technology	NCVA, CDU, Dept of Ed, C&G
	Art Craft & Design	Portfolio preparation Dept of Ed, CDU
	*Hotel Catering & Tourism Yr 1/Hotel Catering & Tourism Yr 2 VPT 2	CERT, Dept of Ed, NCVA
	Accounting Technician	IATI
	BTEC National Dip in Engineering	BTEC
	Travel & Tourism	CERT
	Travel & Tourism	IATA, UFTAA
COUNTY CLARE		
Vocational Sch Ennis	Tourism/Reception	Dept of Ed, C&G, RSA
	Senior Secretarial Course	Dept of Ed, RSA
	Executive Secretarial Course -Bi Lingual	Dept of Ed, RSA, C&G
Kildysart Vocational Sch	Secretarial Course	Dept of Ed, RSA
Ennistymon Vocational Sch	Recreation & Leisure Services	C&G, National Sporting Bodies RSA, Associated Examining Board
	Secretarial Skills Course	Dept of Ed, EIOT, LCC, RSA,
	Intensive Secretarial Skills Course	Irish & British Examining Boards
Kilrush Community Sch	Business Administration	NCVA, RSA
BRAY VEC		
Bray Senior Coll/St Thomas Community Coll	Secretarial Studies & Information Technology	NCVA, Coll Cert., Pitman, RSA
	Bi Lingual Secretarial Course	NCVA, Coll Cert., Pitman, RSA
	Legal Secretary	NCVA, Coll Cert., Pitman, RSA
	Medical Secretary	NCVA, Coll Cert., Pitman, RSA
	Advanced Secretarial Studies	Dept of Ed, RSA, Coll Cert. leading to Teachers Dip in Typewriting
	Stenograph Court Reporting	Bray VEC Dip, American NSRA Examination in Stenography
	Accounting Technician IATI	IATI
	Art Portfolio Preparation Course	Monitored by NCAD, Coll of Marketing & Design & other Colls
	Ceramic/Craft Design Course	Monitored by NCAD, Coll of Marketing & Design & other Colls
	Nursing Studies	NCVA
	Childcare/Nursery Studies	NCVA, Irish PreSch & Playgroup Association (Introductory Cert.) Irish Red Cross, C&G
	Community Care	NCVA, Irish Red Cross
	Computer Aided Design	Bray Senior Coll, C&G

	Dip in Computer Aided Design	Bray Senior Coll, NCVA, C&G
	Travel & Tourism	ICM
COUNTY WICKLOW		
Arklow Community Coll	Secretarial	CDU, Dept of Ed, RSA
	Accounting Technician	IATI
Scoil Chonglais, Baltinglass	Business & Office Technology	NCVA, Dept of Ed, Pitman, Edupak
St. Kevins Community Coll Dunlavin	Secretarial	Dept of Ed, NCVA, Pitman
Abbey Community Coll Wicklow	Secretarial & Tourism	NCVA, Pitman, RSA, Student may do Leaving Cert Maths if they have not done it previously
NORTH COUNTY TIPPERARY		
Nenagh Vocational Sch	Hotel Catering & Tourism Skills	Dept of Ed, CERT
	Business Administration Secretarial	Dept of Ed, RSA
	Business Administration Financial	Dept of Ed, RSA
Vocational Sch Thurles	GAA Coaching	GAA
	Business Administration Secretarial	Dept of Ed, Tipperary NR VEC RSA
	Business Administration Financial	Dept of Ed, Tipperary NR VEC RSA
Templemore Vocational Sch	Computer, Secretarial & Business Studies	Dept of Ed, NCVA, RSA
Roscrea Vocational Sch	Secretarial & Business Studies	Dept of Ed, RSA
St. Josephs Coll Borrisoleigh	Computerised Business Apps	Dept of Ed, EIOT, Shorthand & Commercial Institute of Ireland, LCC, RSA
SOUTH COUNTY TIPPERARY		
Central Techn Inst Clonmel	Art Craft & Design	Portfolio monitored by Art Colls, Tipperary SR VEC, NCVA, C&G
	Computer Apps	NCVA, RSA, LCC
	Computers in Business	NCVA, RSA, LCC
	Technical Studies	C&G
	Tourism Studies	CERT, NCVA
	Secretarial	NCVA, RSA, LCC
St. Ailbes Tipperary	Secretarial/ Computers	NCVA from this year, Dept of Ed, RSA
	Accounting Technician	IATI
Vocational Sch Carrick-On-Suir	Secretarial/Computers	NCVA
	Hotel Catering & Tourism	CERT, NCVA
	Construction Studies	Dept of Ed
Cashel Vocational Sch	Secretarial/Computers	NCVA, Tipperary SR VEC

Cahir Vocational Sch	Secretarial/Computers	NCVA, Dept of Ed, Shorthand & Commercial Institute of Ireland
Cappawhite Vocational Sch	Secretarial/Computers	NCVA
	Control Technology	NCVA
Scoil Ruain, Killenaule	Secretarial/Computers	NCVA, RSA
COUNTY CAVAN		
Cavan Coll of Further Studies	VEC Cert. in Office Studies - BiLingual Secretary	Co. Cavan VEC, Dept of Ed, RSA, Pitman, LCCI
	VEC Cert. in Office Studies- Legal/Medical Secretarial	Co. Cavan VEC, Dept of Ed, RSA, Pitman, LCCI
	VEC Cert. in Office Studies-General Secretarial	Co. Cavan VEC, Dept of Ed, RSA, Pitman, LCC
	RSA Dip in Reception	RSA
	VEC Dip in Computer Apps/ Advanced Secretarial	Dept of Ed, RSA, Pitman, LCC . C&G
	Computer Studies Apps/ Programming	C&G, Pitman External Assessors
	Computer Studies-Apps/Information Processing Apps/Business Studies	EIOT, RSA, Pitman, C&G
	Dip in Computer Studies	C&G, RSA, Pitman, External Assessors
	Accounting Technician Foundation Year	IATI
	Accounting Technician Admission Year	IATI
	Nursing Studies/Secretarial Studies	UKCC, RSA
	Child Care	C&G
	BTEC National Dip in Caring Services	BTEC
	Foundation Cert. in Marketing	MII
	Health Studies, Recreation & Leisure	C&G
	BTEC National Dip in Leisure Studies	BTEC
	Hairdressing & Beauty Care	C&G
	Media Techniques & Journalism	C&G
	BTEC National Dip in Travel & Tourism	BTEC
	Horticulture	Co. Cavan VEC
COUNTY DONEGAL		
Letterkenny Vocational Sch	Computer Secretarial & Business Skills Course	Dept of Ed, NCVA
	Pre Nursing	Assessment
	Control Technology	NCVA
	Engineering Technology	NCVA
Ballyshannon Vocational Sch	Computer Apps	NCVA, RSA
	Secretarial/Computing Studies	NCVA, RSA
	Tourism Studies	CERT

COUNTY KILDARE		
Curragh Post-Primary Sch	Secretarial & Computers	NCVA, Dept of Ed, EIOT, Pitman
Rathangan Post-Primary Sch	Secretarial & Computer Studies with Languages	NCVA, Dept of Ed, EIOT, CERT, RSA, School Cert.
Kildare Vocational Sch	Secretarial & Tourism Studies	NCVA, Dept of Ed, CERT, RSA
	Furniture Making & Interior Design	NCVA, C&G
	Pre Nursing	NCVA, RLSS, Irish Red Cross (Leaving Cert Biology)
St. Farnan's, Prosperous	Secretarial	Dept of Ed, NCVA, EIOT
Newbridge Vocational Sch	Secretarial & Languages	NCVA, Pitman, School Cert.
St. Brigid's, Athy	Secretarial, Computing & Information Processing with Tourism	NCVA, Dept of Ed, EIOT, RSA
	Design including 2D & 3D Autocad	NCVA, C&G
	Hotel Tourism & Catering	CERT, NCVA
COUNTY LEITRIM		
Ballinamore Vocational Sch	Secretarial/Computer Course	Dept of Ed, Commercial Examining Board of Ireland, EIOT
Carrick-on-Shannon Vocational Sch	BiLingual Secretarial	Dept of Ed, Pitman
Drumshanbo Vocational Sch	Secretarial Services/Information Technology	Dept of Ed, RSA
	Equestrian Science	BHS, Co. Leitrim VEC
COUNTY LIMERICK		
Limerick Senior Coll (Sch of Commerce)	Interior Design	NCVA
	BiLingual Secretarial Skills	RSA, Paris Chamber of Commerce
	Dip in Information Technology	RSA
	Secretarial/Business Administration	RSA
	Dip in Nursery Nursing	NNEB
	Fashion Design	C&G
	Dip in Travel & Tourism	University of Wales
	Hairdressing	C&G
	Accounting Technician	IATI
	CIMA- Stage 1	Chartered Institute of Mgmt Accountants
	Foundation Cert. in Marketing with a Language Stages 1&2	MII
	Cert. in Hotel Catering & Tourism	CERT, NCVA
	Dip in Health Science	City of Limerick VEC (Internal/External Assessment)
	Preliminary Course in Building Environment	C&G
	Secretarial Skills	RSA

	Preliminary Course in Art & Design	Preparation of Portfolio
	Introduction to Illustration	Preparation of Portfolio
	Dip in Reception	RSA
Vocational Sch, Hospital	Secretarial & Business Organisation	Commercial Examining Board of Ire, Shorthand & Commercial Institute of Ireland, RSA
Vocational Sch Kilmallock	Business Administration	RSA
Vocational Sch Newcastlewest	Business Administration	RSA
	Pre-Foundation Art & Design	Preparing Portfolio Co. Limerick VEC
Abbeyfeale Vocational Sch	Business Administration	RSA
Cappamore Vocational Sch	Business Administration	RSA
	Woodcraft (some VTOS people on this course- getting travel grants, however it is classed as a VPT2 course)	School Cert.
St Mary's Community Coll Croom	Childcare	NCVA, C&G, Cert. in First Aid
	Sport & Recreation Studies	NCVA, C&G
	Business Administration & Tourism Awareness	NCVA, CERT, ISTS-Irish Shorthand Typing Society LCC, RSA
	Engineering/Building Technology	NCVA
	Pre Nursing Studies	NCVA
Drumcollogher Community Coll	Hotel Catering & Tourism Skills	CERT, NCVA
	Organic Horticulture	NCVA, IORFGA- Irish Organic Farmers & Growers Association
Shanagolden Vocational Sch	Business Administration	RSA
COUNTY LONGFORD		
Longford Vocational Sch	Secretarial & Computer Apps	NCVA, RSA, C&G Examination Institute
	Hairdressing & Beautician Course	Dept of Ed, C&G
	Computer Aided Draughting & Design Course	NCVA, Dept of Ed, C&G
Granard Vocational Sch	Computer & Business Studies Course	EIOT, Dept of Ed, RSA, Pitman
COUNTY MAYO		
St. Brendan's Coll Belmullet	Secretarial/Computer Apps	RSA
Davitt Coll Castlebar	**Secretarial/Computer Apps	Course held in Castlebar Adult Education Centre
St. Louis Community Sch Kiltimagh	Secretarial	NCVA, Pitman
	Pre Nursing	NCVA
	Childcare	NCVA
	Construction	NCVA

	Tourism	CERT, NCVA
Moyne Coll, Ballina	Secretarial/Computer Apps	NCVA, Dept of Ed, Pitman
	Accounting Technician & Computing	IATI (Possibly Dept of Ed/ C&G)
	Arts Crafts & Design	Portfolio Preparation
Crossmolina Vocational Sch	Secretarial/Computer Apps	NCVA, Dept of Ed
Mount Scoil Muire agus Padraig	Secretarial	Dept of Ed, NCVA, Pitman
Westport Vocational Sch	Secretarial Skills & Dip in IT	NCVA, RSA
	Hairdressing	C&G
	Catering & Tourism	CERT, NCVA
Castlebar Adult Ed Centre (The courses this Coll does are part-time & are directed at adults, some participants are VTOS persons. The only ESF money received is Leader funding)	**Secretarial/Computer Apps (Davitt Coll course)	Dept of Ed, NCVA, Commercial Examining Board of Ireland, Shorthand & Commercial Institute of Ireland
COUNTY MEATH		
Dunshaughlin Community Coll	RSA Dip in General Reception	NCVA, RSA, C&G, Coll Cert.
	NCVA Cert. in Business Studies	NCVA, RSA, C&G, Coll Cert.
Trim Vocational Sch	Office Procedure & Computer Apps	Commercial Examining Board of Ireland, C&G
Longwood Vocational Sch	Secretarial, Reception & Business Admin	NCVA, Co Dublin VEC, Dept of Ed, Pitman
Navan Community Coll	Secretarial Reception & Business Admin	NCVA
	Hotel & Catering Studies (CERT)	CERT
COUNTY MONAGHAN		
Monaghan Institute of Further Education & Training	Computer Apps, Business Studies	BTEC
	BiLingual Secretarial	NCVA, Co. Monaghan VEC, Dept of Ed, RSA
	BTEC Cert. in Business Administration	BTEC
	Engineering Technology	NCVA, Dept of Ed, Co. Monaghan VEC
	BTEC National Dip in Computer Studies	BTEC
	Information Technology	Dept of Ed, NCVA, RSA, Co. Monaghan VEC
	Hotel Catering & Tourism Studies	Dept of Ed, NCVA, CERT
	Media Studies	Dept of Ed, NCVA, Co. Monaghan VEC
	Theatre Studies	Dept of Ed, NCVA, Co. Monaghan VEC

	Advanced Art Crafts & Design	Dept of Ed, Co. Monaghan VEC, NCVA
	Hairdressing	Dept of Ed, NCVA, Co. Monaghan VEC
	Healthcare & PreNursing	Dept of Ed, NCVA, Co. Monaghan VEC
	Sport & Recreation Studies	NCVA, Dept of Ed, Co. Monaghan VEC, Civil Defence National Sporting Bodies
	Dip in Economic Science	Trinity Coll Dublin, University of London
	Equestrian Science	Co. Monaghan VEC, Irish Cert. in Equitation Science/BHS
	Food Science Technology	Dept of Ed, Co. Monaghan VEC, NCVA
	Contemporary Music	Dept of Ed, Co. Monaghan VEC, NCVA, Royal Irish Academy of Music
	Accounting Technician	IATI
	Healthcare & Childcare	Dept of Ed, NCVA, Co. Monaghan VEC
	Leisure & Tourism	ITEC, NCVA, BTEC, Civil Defence Nat Sporting Bodies
Beech Hill Coll Monaghan	Secretarial with French	NCVA, Dept of Ed, Co. Monaghan VEC, RSA
	BTEC National Dip in Computer Apps	BTEC, NCVA
	Healthcare PreNursing	Dept of Ed, Co. Monaghan VEC, NCVA
	Arts & Crafts & Design	Dept of Ed, Co. Monaghan VEC, NCVA
	Hotel Catering & Tourism	Dept of Ed, NCVA, CERT
	Leisure Mgmt	NCVA, BTEC, Civil Defence National Sporting Bodies
	Business Studies	BTEC, NCVA
COUNTY OFFALY		
Edenderry Coll of Further Studies	Hotel & Catering	NCVA, C&G
	Office Admin & Computer Technology	RSA
	Computer Aided Draughting Technology	Dept of Ed, C&G
Tullamore Vocational Sch	Secretarial	Dept of Ed, Co. Offaly VEC, Commercial Examining Board of Ireland
Banagher Vocational Sch	Secretarial & Business Studies	Dept of Ed, CERT, Pitman
	*Hotel Catering & Tourism	CERT
COUNTY ROSCOMMON		

Roscommon Vocational Sch	CERT 2	CERT, NCVA
	Business Studies/ Secretarial	Dept of Ed, NCVA, RSA
Ballaghadereen Vocational Sch	Secretarial	NCVA, Commercial Examining Board of Ireland
Castlerea Community Sch	Secretarial	Pitman, C&G, RSA
	*VPTP 1	Dept of Ed
Boyle Vocational Sch	Business/ Secretarial	NCVA, Commercial Examining Board of Ireland
	Tourism Awareness	CERT
COUNTY SLIGO		
Sligo Municipal Tech Inst	Secretarial	NCVA, Dept of Ed
	*Engineering/Construction	(C&G optional)
Corran Coll, Ballymote	Secretarial	Dept of Ed, RSA
	*Engineering & Construction	Work Experience-No Exams
North Connaught Coll Tubbercurry	Pre Nursing	NCVA
	CERT	CERT, NCVA
	*PreEmployment VPT1	School Cert.
COUNTY WATERFORD		
Central Technical Inst Waterford	Animation Studies	
	Art Craft & Design	Portfolio Preparation
	Beauty Care Health & Fitness	CIBTAC, CIDESCO, ITEC, C&G
	Health Science	
	Accounting Technician	IATI
	CERT Catering & Tourism Skills	CERT
	Computers in Engineering	C&G
	Computers in Engineering (Level 3)	C&G
	Engineering & Electronics (Level 2)	C&G
	Computing & Accounting	Dept of Ed, RSA, Pitman, C&G
	Interior Design & Furnishing	
	Tourism & Leisure	Dept of Ed, CERT
	Travel & Tourism	ABTA Cert. in Travel
	Information Technology/Commercial Apps	Independent Assessment Agencies
	Plant Maintenance	
	Book Illustration & Creative Writing	NCVA, C&G
	Writing as a Career	NCVA, Dept of Ed, RSA
	Secretarial & Accounting Skills	Dept of Ed, RSA, Pitman, C&G
	Secretarial & Reception Skills	Dept of Ed, RSA, Pitman, C&G

	*Pre Employment Course (Building, Engineering, Catering, Services, Craftwork, Horticulture)	Work Experience
Technical Coll Dungarvan	Executive Secretarial	NCVA, LCC, RSA, Pitman
	BiLingual Secretarial	NCVA, LCC, RSA, Pitman
	Health Science & Nursing Studies	Dept of Ed, NCVA, Co. Waterford VEC
	Foundation Engineering	NCVA, C&G
	Hairdressing/Beauty Care	Dept of Ed, NCVA
	Hotel Catering & Tourism	CERT
	Accounting Technician	IATI
COUNTY WESTMEATH		
Athlone Community Coll	Core Studies in Engineering/Science	RTC Athlone, (This course is intended for students who wish to do a course in either Science or Engineering at Athlone RTC afterwards)
	Business Studies Linguistic Secretarial	Dept of Ed, NCVA, Pitman, RSA
	CERT 2 Hotel & Catering	CERT, NCVA, Dept of Ed, Pitman
	Business Computing & Accounting	IATI, NCVA
	Community & Health Services Nursing Studies	NCVA, Order of Malta Lifting Techniques Cert.
Mullingar Community Coll	National Cert. in Business Administration	NCVA, Dept of Ed, Pitman, RSA
	Hairdressing	Dept of Ed, C&G
	Pre Nursing	Co. Westmeath VEC
	Tourism Awareness	CERT
	Art & Design Foundation Portfolio Preparation	NCVA
	Dip in Beauticianship	CIBTAC
	Physical Education & Sports Therapy	NCVA, Co. Westmeath VEC
	Core Studies in Engineering/Science	RTC Athlone
	Computer Apps	Co. Westmeath VEC
Moate Business Coll	Secretarial & Language Skills	Dept of Ed
	Creative Drama/ Theatre Studies	Co. Westmeath VEC
	Tourism & Travel Studies	ICM
	BTEC National Dip in Social Care	BTEC
	Dip in International Trade	IEA
	Community Care	Moate Business Coll, C&G AEB Health Hygiene & Safety Cert, Order of Malta First Aid Cert.
	HDip in Administrative & Secretarial Procedures	RSA, NVQ-National Vocational Qualification, Pitman
	Dip in Information Technology	RSA

	Rural Tourism	Moate Business Coll, CERT Teagasc
	Computer Apps	Co. Westmeath VEC, Commercial Examining Institute, Pitman, RSA
COUNTY WEXFORD		
Wexford Town Vocational Sch	Senior Secretarial & BiLingual Computer Course	Pitman Institute of Chartered Secretaries & Administrators
	Business Studies/Information Technology	Pitman Institute of Chartered Secretaries & Administrators
Adamstown Vocational Coll	Business Studies/Secretarial	NCVA, Dept of Ed, RSA
	Accounting Technician	IATI
Bunclody Vocational Coll	Secretarial & Business Studies	Dept of Ed, Roscommon Examinations Bureau, Pitman
Gorey Community Coll	Office & Computer Skills	NCVA, School Cert.
	Hotel Catering & Tourism	NCVA, CERT, School Cert.
	Nursing Studies (2 classes)	NCVA, CDU, School Cert.
	*Hotel Catering & Tourism	CERT, School Cert.
	*Engineering & Wood Science	School Cert.
New Ross Vocational Coll	Secretarial/Business Studies	Dept of Ed, Roscommon Examinations Bureau
	Computers & Engineering	Dept of Ed, Roscommon Examinations Bureau
Enniscorthy Vocational Coll	Secretarial/Business Studies	School Cert (NCVA from next yr)
Kilmuckridge Vocational Coll	Business Studies/Computers	NCVA, RSA
Bridgetown Vocational Coll	Secretarial/Business Studies	NCVA, Pitman
	* Denotes VPT 1 Courses	

Other Evaluations Completed by the European Social Fund Programme Evaluation Unit

Preliminary Review on Community Employment (June 1995)

Report on the Impact of Evaluations (May 1995)

Evaluation Report on Training and Employment Grants (February 1995)

Survey of Micro Enterprise (July 1994)

Thematic Evaluation on Women's Training Provision (April 1994)

Thematic Evaluation on Recording Systems (April 1994)

Thematic Evaluation on Impact Indicators (April 1994)

Thematic Evaluation on Training of Trainers (March 1994)

Survey of Employers (December 1993)

Follow-Up Evaluation on the FÁS Specific Skills Training Programme (December 1993)

Follow-Up Evaluation on the FÁS Industrial Restructuring Programme (December 1993)

Evaluation of Certification Systems (December 1993)

Evaluation Report on FÁS Enterprise Measures (June 1993)

Evaluation Report on the Human Resources Sub-Programme of the Tourism Operational Programme (June 1993)

Evaluation Report on the Middle Level Technician and Higher Technical and Business Skills Programmes (June 1993)

Evaluation Report on the Advanced Technical Skills Programme (December 1992)

Evaluation Report on the FÁS Industrial Restructuring Programme (December 1992)

Evaluation Report on the FÁS Specific Skills Training Programme (December 1992)

Copies and further information available from the European Social Fund Programme Evaluation Unit, Davitt House, 65A Adelaide Road, Dublin 2. Telephone: 6614444 Extension 3355.