

## **Appendix 10**

### **Memorandum of Understanding (JFERG)**

**Memorandum of Understanding**  
**on**  
**Joint Engagement with Certain Aspects of Further Education**  
**Provision**  
**Between**  
**Joint Managerial Body**  
**And**  
**Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools**

**June 2014**

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## **1. Preamble**

The further education and training landscape in Ireland has undergone significant changes in recent years with the amalgamation and dissolution of former agencies and structures and the establishment of new entities; namely the amalgamation of the VECs and the establishment of 16 new Education and Training Boards (ETBs); the establishment of Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) bringing together the awards and qualifications functions of FETAC, HETAC and the NQAI; the dissolution of FÁS and the establishment of the further education and training authority SOLAS.

In addition, a DES review of FET services (December 2013), reconfigured resourcing, communication and lines of responsibility for all school-based providers of FET.

In this context, there presents a set of challenges to minority non-commercial providers of FE such as schools in the voluntary secondary, community and comprehensive sectors. Chief among these are sustainability and, indeed, viability, of school providers in these sectors in light of the scope and scale of the other majority school based provider, the ETB sector.

Engagement with DES policymakers and leadership of the relevant new bodies has led to the emergence of a common theme: the new bodies such as SOLAS and QQI do not have the capacity to engage with stand-alone, small scale, not-for-profit providers of FE such as JMB and ACCS schools and it is strongly recommended that an alignment of such providers be created which could (a) engage with SOLAS, DES, QQI and indeed ETBI in a coherent and unified manner and which (b) may eventually be recognised by the relevant statutory agencies as being the co-ordinating and governance entity for quality assurance, including programme development, in this sector.

This Memorandum of Understanding is intended to outline the key parameters of an alignment between ACCS and JMB in support of their FE providing schools which would underpin future engagement with relevant statutory bodies and support agencies such as FESS until this relationship is reviewed by both management bodies.

## **2. Purpose and Scope**

This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the JMB and ACCS provides an agreed framework for engagement between the two organisations in the area of FE provision and quality assurance of such provision in the sector

In summary, the purpose of the MoU is to:

- (i) clarify relationships
- (ii) provide clarity on the strategic and operational aspects of the organisations' relationship;
- (iii) establish structured arrangements for reporting and communications;
- (iv) facilitate improved mutual and external support between both organisations.

This MoU is not exhaustive in its identification of responsibilities. It does not limit any additional actions or policies being implemented between the two organisations nor does it limit any reductions. It also does not supersede any specific agreements between the two organisations in relation to particular work areas.

The JMB and ACCS recognise that it may become necessary to modify this MoU during its lifespan. It will be reviewed annually and amendments may be made as deemed necessary through negotiation and agreement with both parties.

The parties to this Memorandum are committed to the pursuit of these objectives and will work in partnership to support the achievement of related outputs and outcomes.

### **3. Proposed Core Joint Activities**

It is proposed that an overarching Joint Further Education Representative Group (JFERG) be established, comprising equal representation from JMB and ACCS and with the authority to co-opt specialist advisors.

This JFERG will have authority to represent JMB and ACCS FE-providing schools in negotiations and discussions with DES, SOLAS, QQI, FESS and ETBI.

The Group will report regularly to, and take instruction from, the General Secretaries of ACCS and JMB and their Councils as appropriate.

The Group will meet initially with each of the statutory and support agencies and the DES in order to establish working relationships and to define the scope of future engagement.

A list, with explanatory notes, of such functions as are agreed with DES, SOLAS and QQI will be appended to this MoU once approved by each management body.

Similarly, any functions or authority shared-with or assigned to JFERG by SOLAS, DES or QQI will be so appended.

In the event of a relevant statutory agency sharing or assigning other functions to JFERG, the leadership of each management body will consult with the Group around the resources necessary for the implementation of such functions.

Decisions on resourcing will be made by the leadership of each organisation and communicated to the Group. It is proposed that resourcing to carry out delegated functions will be positively received and responded-to in light of each organisation's scale of provision and capacity to provide such support.

Support for FE-providing schools in all sectors is provided-for by the Further Education Support Service. It is proposed that regular FESS updates and briefings will henceforth be provided jointly to JMB and ACCS (a) electronically and (b) by way of seminar.

Existing and future functions will demand a high standard of coordination. It is proposed that the management bodies explore the possibility of providing a joint, part-time facilitator for communication and liaison-support and that the Group will be assigned a recording secretary for the purposes of generating minutes of their meetings and for dealing with correspondence. It may also be required from time to time to source and fund external specialist services in areas such as

Programme Development and the management bodies agree to positively consider such joint resourcing as required.

#### **4. Communication Arrangements**

Regular communication is a normal part of the day-to-day relationship between JMB and ACCS and both organisations undertake to be flexible and open to requests for information and meetings as they arise.

More formally, the leadership of both organisations will be kept informed of developments by their JFERG representatives by way of written minutes of meetings and copies of all communications between JFERG and any agencies.

#### **5. Right to Separate Representation and Action**

While this agreement sets out arrangements for joint representation and action, both ACCS and JMB retain the right to act and be represented as distinct entities in any engagement with the State or its agencies in the area of provision for further education.

It is, however, agreed that in such instances, the General Secretaries would communicate with each other on their intention to so do.

#### **6. Signoff and Review Process**

This MoU is jointly signed by General Secretaries of ACCS and JMB and takes effect from the date on which it is agreed and signed by the two parties.

This agreement will be for an initial period commencing on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2014. It will be reviewed annually and amendments may be made, as deemed necessary, through negotiation and agreement with both parties.

**Signed on behalf of the Joint Managerial Body:**

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**Date: .....**

**Signed on behalf of the Association of Community and  
Comprehensive Schools:**

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**Date: .....**

**Memorandum of Understanding**  
**on**  
**Mutual Co-operation on Further Education Provision**  
**Between**  
**The Joint JMB/ACCS Further Education Representative Group**  
**(JFERG)**  
**And**  
**Education & Training Boards Ireland**  
**(ETBI)**  
**2016**

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**1. Preamble**

The further education and training landscape in Ireland has undergone significant changes in recent years with the amalgamation and dissolution of former agencies and structures and the establishment of new entities; namely the amalgamation of the VECs and the establishment of 16 new Education and Training Boards (ETBs); the establishment of Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) bringing together the awards and qualifications functions of FETAC, HETAC and the NQAI; the dissolution of FÁS and the establishment of the further education and training authority SOLAS.

In addition, a DES review of FET services (December 2013), reconfigured resourcing, communication and lines of responsibility for all school-based providers of FET.

In this context, there presents a set of challenges to non-commercial providers of FE such as schools. Chief among these are our adaptability to new structures, a need for greater coherence of provision at local level, alignment with national high-level goals and, indeed, the long-term viability of school providers in all sectors.

Engagement with DES policymakers and leadership of the relevant new bodies has led to the emergence of a common theme: the new bodies such as SOLAS and QQI do not have the capacity to engage with stand-alone providers of FE and it was strongly recommended that an alignment of JMB and ACCS providers be created which could engage with SOLAS, DES, QQI, FESS in a coherent and unified manner.

To this end, an overarching Joint Further Education Representative Group (JFERG) was established in 2014, comprising equal representation from JMB and ACCS and with the authority to co-opt specialist advisors.

JFERG has delegated authority to represent JMB and ACCS FE-providing schools in negotiations and discussions with DES, SOLAS, QQI and FESS.



The Group reports regularly to and takes instruction from, the General Secretaries of ACCS and JMB and their Executive/Council as appropriate.

The overarching aim of the Group is to establish working relationships with the relevant stakeholders in Adult and Further Education and to define the scope of future engagement with each.

## **2. Purpose and Scope**

This Memorandum of Understanding is intended to outline the key parameters of a cooperative relationship between JFERG and ETBI in mutual support of their FE providing post-primary schools.

In summary, the purposes of the MoU are to:

- (i) clarify relationships
- (ii) establish structured arrangements for communication
- (iii) facilitate improved co-operation between ETBI and JMB/ACCS in the areas of Adult and Further Education

This MoU is not exhaustive in its identification of possibilities for co-operation. It does not limit any additional actions or policies being implemented between the organisations nor does it limit any reductions. It also does not supersede any specific agreements between the organisations in relation to particular work areas.

The parties recognise that it may become necessary to modify this MoU during its lifespan. It will be reviewed annually and amendments may be made as deemed necessary through negotiation and agreement.

The parties to this Memorandum are committed to the pursuit of the objectives outlined above and will work in partnership to support the achievement of related outcomes.

## **3. Relationships**

JMB/ACCS and ETBI are committed to developing and supporting a quality Adult and Further Education Service with Access and Certification as key benchmarks of that provision.

JMB/ACCS and ETBI mixed-provision settings (co-located post-primary and FE schools) share a range of similar characteristics and challenges and have much to learn from each other.

In light of the State's newly established 'National FET Strategy', legacy relationships emerging from a different local and national educational landscape are no longer appropriate and it is hoped that co-operation will be of mutual benefit to all providers within our three sectors.

FET provision in our country is historically-rooted and extremely complex. Enhanced relationships between providers can support greater coherence, diversity and quality in the interests of learners and this Memorandum is intended to underpin an improved degree of shared mutual understanding, openness and co-operation in the achievement of these ends.

## **4. Communication**

Regular communication is already a normal part of the day-to-day relationship between JMB, ACCS and ETBI and each organisation undertakes to be flexible and open to requests for information and meetings as they arise.

This Memorandum provides for the establishment of closer and more regular lines of communication between JMB/ACCS (as JFERG) and the Further Education Unit of ETBI in the areas of adult and further education.

Along with electronic and other distance means of communication, it is intended that a face-to-face meeting between the ETBI FE Unit and JFERG will take place on a twice-yearly basis to discuss issues of common interest and to explore possibilities for mutual support.

More formally, the leadership of all three organisations will be kept informed of developments by their adult and further education representatives by way of written minutes of meetings and copies of all communications between JFERG and ETBI.

## 5. Co-operation

JMB/ACCS commend the ETB sector for the level of support offered in the areas of programme sharing and development, to providers from outside their sector.

In light of the reconfiguration of the ETB sector, ETBI and JFERG will engage around possibilities for encouragement of the programme-sharing initiative into future years.

It is accepted by both parties that enhanced communication on a regional and/or local level can improve the service to learners by identifying FET needs in response to national and local identified priorities, communicating better with prospective learners and streamlining data-sharing. We will work together to achieve greater coherence in these areas and to provide a greater choice for learners.

On occasion, post-primary FE providers will find it much more beneficial if they work and negotiate together towards a common aim in their dealings with statutory agencies. Both parties agree to remain open to such possibilities and to discover synergies where these exist.

Each of the 16 ETBs has representation from education stakeholders such as JMB and ACCS. Community and comprehensive Schools each have representatives from their local ETB. JFERG and ETBI agree to maintain communication with all relevant ETB members in the interests of strengthening Adult and FE provision in all our schools.

Adult, special interest and BTEI provision are also provided by ETB, voluntary secondary and community & comprehensive schools. Opportunities for mutual co-operation in these areas of provision will also be identified and will be given appropriate attention.

JFERG and ETBI will explore possibilities for enhancing continuing professional development and will identify where opportunities for training (for example in adult education co-ordination and/or programme development) may be provided on a common-delivery basis.

## 6. Right to Separate Representation and Action

While this agreement sets out areas for mutual cooperation and communication, all parties retain the right to act and be represented as distinct entities in any engagement with the State or its agencies in the area of provision for further education.

## 7. Signoff and Review Process

This MoU is jointly signed by General Secretaries of ETBI, ACCS and JMB and takes effect from the date on which it is agreed and signed by the parties.

This agreement will be for an initial period commencing on 1st August 2016. It will be reviewed annually and amendments may be made, as deemed necessary, through negotiation and agreement with both parties.

**Signed on behalf of Education & Training Boards Ireland:**

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**Signed on behalf of the Joint Managerial Body:**

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**Signed on behalf of the Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools:**

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**Date:** .....