

JOINT IPS/ETBI EDUCATION STRATEGY 2016 - 2018



IRISH PRISON SERVICE | CREATING A BETTER ENVIRONMENT



etbi
Education and Training
Boards Ireland
*Boird Oideachais agus
Oiliúna Éireann*



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1 INTRODUCTION

Prison Education in Ireland is delivered in partnership between the Irish Prison Service (IPS) and Education and Training Board Ireland (ETBI). This strategy statement details how the IPS and ETBs will work together to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of education within Irish prisons.

The provision of a broad-based, flexible, relevant education service is designed to cater for the complex educational needs of persons in custody, covering a wide spectrum from Basic Education to Third Level programmes. It balances the need for practical, up-to-date accredited learning and learning for personal development within a philosophy of Second Chance, Continuing or Adult Education.



2 MISSION, VISION & VALUES



EDUCATION MISSION

The provision of a programme that is quality assured, learner-centred and that facilitates life-long learning while helping persons in custody respond to their sentence through personal development and positive renewal



EDUCATION VISION

A prison education service based on self-respect and respect for others, within a safe, supportive learning environment.



OUR VALUES



TEAM WORK

TEAM WORK | We achieve more by working together than we can as individuals working alone



INTEGRITY

INTEGRITY | We must always have the courage to do the right thing, the decent thing even when no one else is watching



POTENTIAL

POTENTIAL | Everyone has the potential to be a better person and we actively seek to provide staff and those in custody with opportunities to realise and achieve this



SAFETY

SAFETY | We actively contribute to maintaining an environment in which staff and those in our custody feel emotionally and physically safe and ultimately, contribute to a safer community



SUPPORT

SUPPORT | We actively seek to provide supports to staff and support rehabilitation of those in custody

3 OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

This strategy statement reflects and acknowledges:

- The unique nature of prison education in terms of the target population and the environment in which education is delivered. The IPS plays a critical role in facilitating the effective delivery of education in Irish prisons by the ETBs.
- The significant role education has to play in helping persons in custody cope with their sentences, in improving their employability and their life chances. Education helps to prepare persons in custody for release by providing them with accredited education and personal development.
- The aim of ETB teachers to support persons in custody to develop a desire for lifelong learning.
- The particular features of Education Centres in providing a relatively normalised environment within prisons. Education Centres contribute to a positive living and working environment in prisons for both persons in custody and prison staff.

3.1 HOW EDUCATION IS DELIVERED IN PRISONS

The ETBs provide a programme of education that is quality-assured. This programme includes accredited courses and personal development. It caters for a wide range of education needs from basic education to third level. It balances the need for practical, up-to-date certification and personal learning, within a philosophy of Second Chance, Continuing or Adult Education.

The education service provided by the ETBs aims to assist persons in custody to cope with their sentences, to prepare for life after release, to develop an appetite and capacity for lifelong learning and to achieve their full potential as learners. It also aims to promote the importance of prison education.

3.2 THE POLICY CONTEXT

The Policy context is drawn largely from documents which include “Education Policy in Prisons and Places of Detention” (1984), the Whitaker Report (1985), the Council of Europe Recommendations “Education in Prison” (1990), “The Management of Offenders, A Five Year Plan” (1994), the Strategy Statements for the Prison Education Service (2008-2013 and 2013-2016), and the IPS three-year Strategic Plan 2012 to 2015.

The IPS accepts and supports the two overall themes of The Council of Europe Report “Education in Prison” (1990) in that:

“Firstly, the education of prisoners must, in its philosophy, methods and content, be brought as close as possible to the best Adult Education in society outside: and secondly, education should be constantly seeking ways to link prisoners to the outside community and to enable both groups to interact with each other as fully and as constructively as possible” (Council of Europe, 1990, p.14).

3.3 THE PRISON CONTEXT

The IPS acknowledges that delivering education in the secure custodial environment that is prison presents a unique set of challenges. The vital importance of security in prisons means that this imposes restrictive conditions on how education is delivered in prisons. Where possible, the IPS will seek to make these restrictive conditions less severe.

A reduction in overall numbers imprisoned in recent years, combined with the success of the Community Return and Community Support Schemes, has resulted in a residual population in prison with specific and resource intensive needs. For instance:

- Persons in custody with mental health issues find themselves in a custodial rather than a therapeutic environment and there has been a significant rise in such committals in recent years.
- Persons in custody who do not speak English as a native language and who make up a significant proportion of the population in Cloverhill Prison.
- Persons in custody on restricted regimes present significant challenges, in the context of timetabling and scheduling of education.
- Women in custody, young people, learners with Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD's), Travellers and other distinct groups have needs which demand that general services are tailored to meet those needs.

Citizens with a history of educational disadvantage face significant challenges in getting work. Those with a history of imprisonment and educational disadvantage face even greater challenges¹.

Poor literacy skills, a history of previous educational failure and/or negative educational experience often combine to create powerful barriers to engaging with education centres in prisons. As such, the IPS believes that the curriculum offered in prisons must be broad, flexible and at the same time attractive enough to counteract the previous negative experiences of those in custody.

The Department of Education and Skills² stresses the role of non-accredited learning in enabling adults to return to the learning process at their own pace and in facilitating them to explore their full potential. The IPS acknowledges the value of non-accredited programmes and their inclusion in the prison education curriculum.

1 Department of Education and Skills, 2000, 'Adult Education'.

2 Department of Education and Skills, 'Community Education Programme - Operational Guidelines for Providers'.

4 STRATEGIC ACTIONS



**SUPPORTING THE PRISON
EDUCATION SERVICE**



**ACCREDITED AND NON-ACCREDITED
EDUCATION AND DIGITALISATION**



CONSULTATION AND INTEGRATION



SERVICE QUALITY BENCHMARKING



Training Unit - AM -The Crushed Bull - Oil on Daler Board - 36 x 46 cm

The following tables provide details of each of these strategic actions.

STRATEGIC ACTION 1

SUPPORTING THE PRISON EDUCATION SERVICE		
1.1	School Detail	The IPS recognises the vital role of the School Officer in facilitating the effective performance of the Education Centres in prisons. As such, IPS will engage with the ETBs to agree a method of officer selection and subsequent training for the role of School Officer.
1.2	Staffing Reviews	The IPS undertakes to do its utmost to ensure the needs of education centres are fully considered in staffing allocations following any reviews.
1.3	Attendance System	The IPS will devise and implement an integrated reporting management information system which will record completions, engagement, academic records of those in custody and the enrolment process. This management information system will also facilitate timetabling and scheduling.
1.4	Monitoring	The IPS commits to engaging with the ETBs in devising an agreed set of objectives for the quantitative and qualitative measurement of prison education. This will include an examination of participation rates, progression, certification/ accreditation and compliance with stated aims.
1.5	Initial Assessment	The IPS will agree a structure to collect information about the previous educational experience of persons in custody in order to identify each person's abilities, needs and aspirations.



STRATEGIC ACTION 2

ACCREDITED AND NON-ACCREDITED EDUCATION, DIGITALISATION		
2.1	Qualifications	<p>The ETBs will deliver appropriate QQI-accredited programmes (see Appendix II for current QQI list) and programmes accredited by other bodies.</p> <p>The ETBs will ensure the quality assurance of all programmes delivered</p> <p>The IPS will consult with the ETBs in the development of courses specifically relevant to prison education, in particular at levels 1 and 2.</p> <p>The ETBs will facilitate participation in higher education programmes (e.g., Open University)</p>
2.2	Digitalisation	<p>The IPS recognises the challenges inherent in the digitalisation of both education and society in general and the need to keep pace within a prison setting. There is a clear need for a particular focus on developing digital skills relevant to life back in society and to education so that those in custody are not further marginalised as a result of being in prison.</p> <p>As such, IPS will endeavour to provide appropriate resources in this area and seek to lessen, to the greatest extent possible, the critical security requirements in the provision of these facilities to persons in custody. The provision of in-cell E Learning will be examined as a means of extending education services to those on restricted regimes.</p>
2.3	Non-Accredited Constructive Activity	<p>The IPS recognises the key role of non-accredited activities and adult guidance services in the personal development of persons in custody and as an effective change agent and commits to supporting these activities.</p> <p>The IPS will work in cooperation with the ETBs in devising a means of measuring non-accredited activities, where appropriate. This process will include examining the possibility of in-house validation of certain non-accredited activity and ensuring the quality of non-accredited activity.</p>

STRATEGIC ACTION 3

CONSULTATION AND INTEGRATION		
3.1	Ongoing Consultation	The IPS commits to ongoing consultation with the ETBs regarding education service delivery to persons during custody and in preparation for their release and to agree a structure for this consultation. The consultation process will explore a closer alignment between the school day, school year and the prison regime.
3.2	Integration	<p>The IPS acknowledges that it is entirely appropriate and necessary that prison education centres work in cooperation with prison management and the following services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work and Training Service • Psychology Service • Chaplaincy Service • Probation Service • Drug/Alcohol Addiction Services • Healthcare • Integrated Sentence Management (ISM) • Community Based Organisations funded by IPS and Probation Service • Adult Guidance Services <p>The IPS will facilitate the ETBs in playing an active role in the sentence management of persons in custody, through participation in multi-disciplinary fora, contributing to initiatives such as the Incentivised Regimes process and input into the development of effective release planning and appropriate further educational placements on release.</p>
3.3	Work / Training	The IPS will examine methods of ensuring closer integration (to further enhance existing initiatives) between prison education and the work and training areas in the prison, in order to ensure that these are complementary, to eliminate duplication and to provide for the seamless progression of those in custody between the two areas.
3.4	New Builds	On all new capital builds and renovations, the IPS will consult with the ETBs to ensure infrastructural resources meet statutory and accreditation standards for education and are suitable for purpose.
3.5	Policy Formation	In the context of IPS policy formation that has the potential to impact on the teaching staff and education service delivery, the IPS will ensure appropriate consultation with the ETBs and Head Teachers, through the Coordinator of Education and/or the Care and Rehabilitation Directorate.

STRATEGIC ACTION 4

SERVICE QUALITY BENCHMARKING		
4.1	Quality Assurance, Consultation and Implementation	<p>The IPS commits to ongoing consultation with all relevant stakeholders in agreeing, establishing and implementing a comprehensive, relevant, professional and objective quality assurance process for education provided to persons in custody in Irish prisons.</p> <p>Assessment criteria and timelines will be developed and agreed with the ETBs.</p> <p>The IPS will ensure that the quality assurance process satisfies both the requirements of the IPS and those of relevant external agencies and will take account of ETB quality assurance systems.</p> <p>The quality assurance process will contain an agreed mechanism to capture non-accredited activities in the Education Centres</p> <p>The quality assurance process will have an agreed mechanism to capture the views of those in custody regarding the quality and range of subjects available to them.</p>



APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1

CATALOGUE OF QQI QUALIFICATIONS AVAILABLE TO PRISONERS

Major QQI Awards Currently Available in Prisons:

Level 1 - Communications P1CO0

Level 2 - General Learning P2GL0

Level 3 - General Learning 3M0874; Information & Communication Technology 3M0877, Employability Skills 3M0935

Level 4 - General Learning 4M2010; Information & Communication Technology Skills 4M0855

Level 5 - Applied Social Studies 5M2181; Business Studies 5M2102; Sport, Recreation and Exercise 5M5146, Multimedia Production 5M2146





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