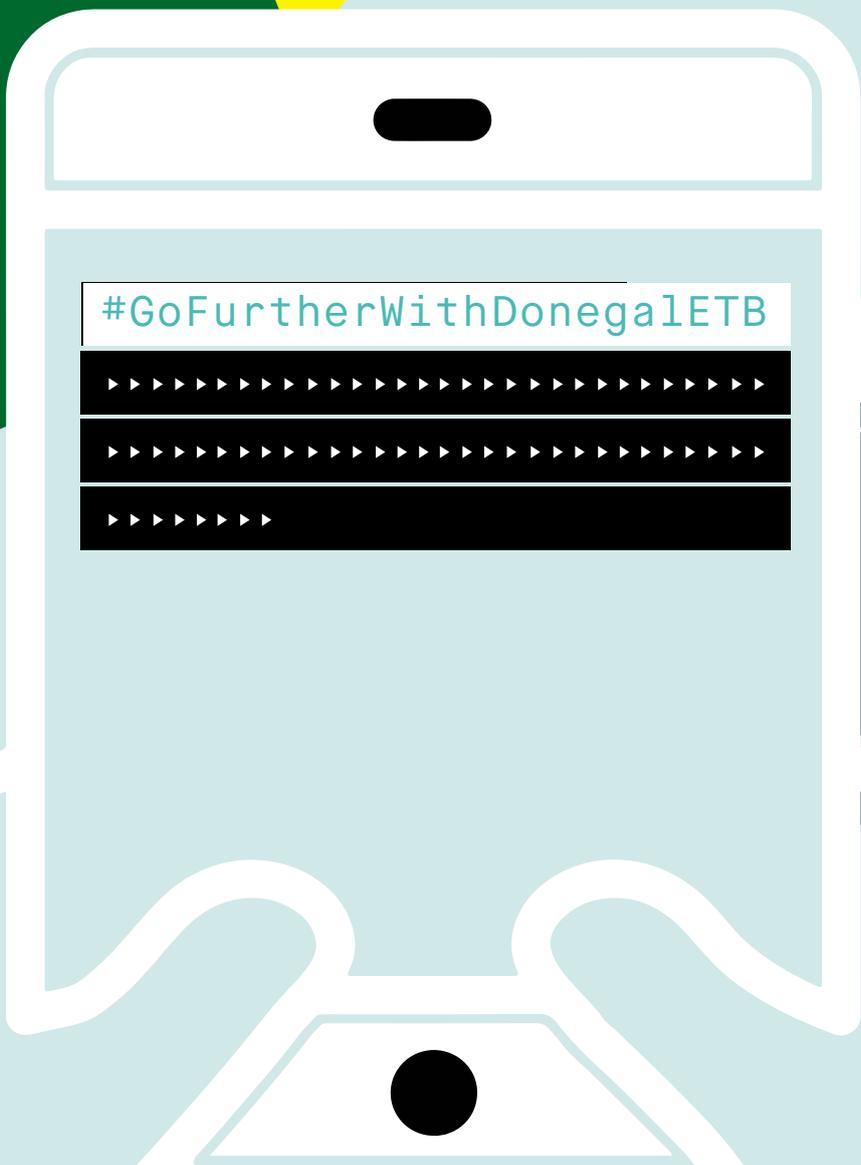


# Further Education and Training (FET) Options for School Leavers

–  
#GoFurtherWithDonegalETB

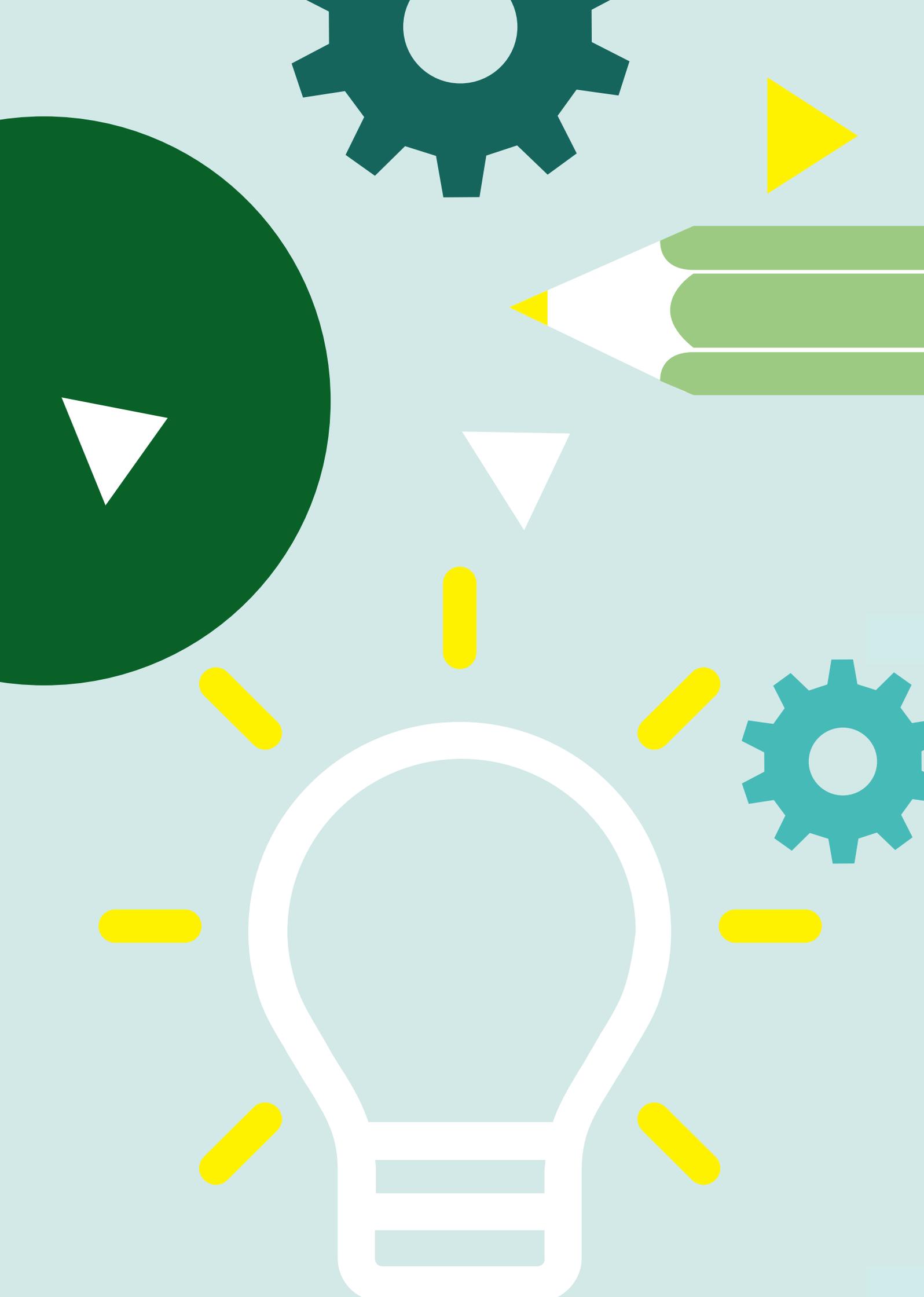
A white smartphone graphic with a black camera lens at the top and a black home button at the bottom. The screen displays the hashtag #GoFurtherWithDonegalETB and three rows of black bars representing text, each with small white arrows pointing right.

#GoFurtherWithDonegalETB



**etb**

Bord Oideachais agus  
Oiliúna Dhún na nGall  
Donegal Education and  
Training Board



## ► What's your next move?

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Are you about to leave school or have left recently and are wondering what next or where do I go from here?

Have you thought about Further Education and Training **(FET)**? Did you know that Donegal ETB, as the largest **FET** provider in Co Donegal, offers a comprehensive range of options on your doorstep?

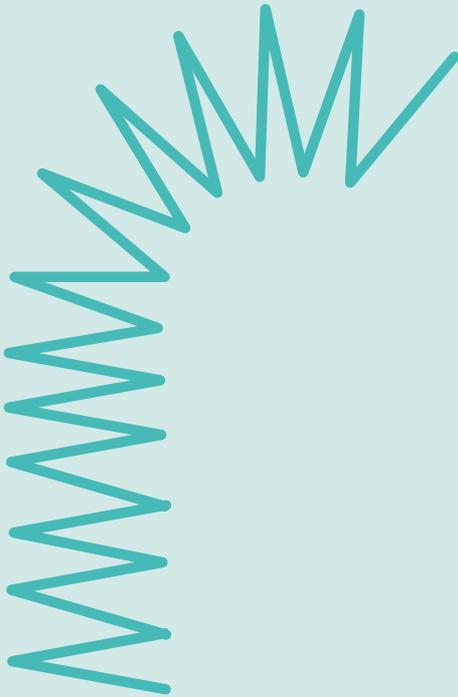
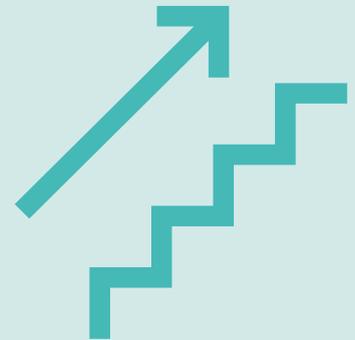
If you want to earn while you learn or fast-track your way into employment or need a stepping stone into third level with nationally and internationally recognised qualifications, then consider applying for an apprenticeship, Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) course, specific skills training course or traineeship.

# ► 10 Reasons to study with us



**LOW OR NO  
COURSE FEES**

Progression to  
Employment  
and/or Degree  
Courses in Third  
Level Institutions



**FLEXIBLE LEARNING  
FOR THE CHANGING  
EMPLOYMENT MARKET**

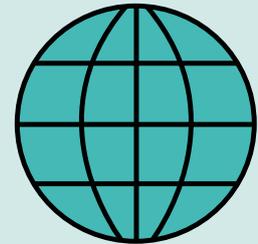


**CAREER  
GUIDANCE**



**EARN WHILE  
YOU LEARN**

S M A L L  
**CLASS  
SIZES**

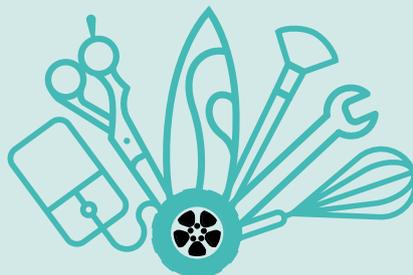


**RANGE OF NATIONAL  
AND INTERNATIONAL  
CERTIFICATION**



**STUDENTS OF ALL  
AGES CATERED FOR**

**VARIETY OF  
LEARNING AREAS**



**QUALIFIED,  
EXPERIENCED AND  
DEDICATED STAFF**

## ▶ What is an apprenticeship?

An apprenticeship is a full-time training programme that takes between two and four years to complete depending on the trade or occupation being undertaken.

An apprenticeship is a programme of formal education and training. It combines learning in a place of work along with learning in an education or training centre. It is an “earn while you learn” model of training. Craft Apprenticeships include traditional trades such as Electrical, Plumbing and Motor Mechanic to name but a few, and these apprenticeships are delivered in 7 stages over a four year cycle. Since 2016, the range of apprenticeships has increased significantly and now include apprenticeships in industries such as ICT, Insurance, Finance, Accountancy, Hospitality and the list goes on.

**“I chose an apprenticeship as I could see it was the practical subjects I had a flare for at school. Although I achieved enough points to go down the CAO route, because I had a great interest in cars, a motor mechanics apprenticeship seemed the best option for me. I did check the CAO for options through the third level route but nothing was available with as much to offer someone looking to work in the motor trade. I’m really enjoying my apprenticeship so far. It’s great being able to study your trade in which your job is guaranteed while also getting a salary in comparison to the ever-distant end to college and the uncertainty of a job when you graduate. A person with an apprenticeship always has the ability to get a job in a country of their choice as they are recognised worldwide. From going down the apprenticeship route I have found that the third level route is not the only option and, in some cases, not the best option for everyone.”**

—  
Finnian Ward, Motor Mechanic Apprentice  
with Cormack Ward Car Sales

Why should I consider an apprenticeship?

—  
Apprenticeships offer you the chance to gain skills, experience and qualifications while earning a wage. You have the opportunity to gain practical work experience and qualifications without incurring a student loan and at the same time build your employment network and the quality of your CV.

What does it cost to do an apprenticeship?

—  
The cost to do an apprenticeship is very minimal. In fact, the model is ‘earn while you learn’ and so you are paid for the duration of your apprenticeship even when away from the employer in an education or training centre. Apprentices pay a student fee when attending their off-the-job training in a Higher Education Institute. This fee will generally equate to the amount of time the apprentice spends in the Higher Education Institute.

Where can I do an apprenticeship?

—  
As the apprenticeship is a combination of on and off the job training, with at least 50% of the time spent with an employer, you will do part of your apprenticeship with an employer and other elements with Training/Education Providers. The location of the Training/Education providers is dependent on the craft or occupation chosen.

When can I apply for an apprenticeship?

—  
You have to secure employment with an approved employer as an apprentice and meet the eligibility criteria for your chosen apprenticeship before you can be registered as an apprentice. You can be registered and commence the traditional craft apprenticeships any time of the year. However, intake for the new apprenticeships launched post 2016 usually takes place just once a year.

## ▶ What is a PLC?

PLCs are full-time one year courses that offer a mixture of practical work, academic work and work experience. Post Leaving Certificate courses adopt an integrated approach, focusing on technical knowledge, core skills and work experience. Almost half of the time spent on a PLC is devoted to knowledge and skill training related to employment, with a further quarter spent on relevant work-based experience.

### Donegal ETB offers 9 QQI Level 5 PLC courses in:

- Animal Care
- Art, Craft and Design
- Business Administration
- Business Studies
- Construction Technology
- Early Childhood Care and Education
- Health Service Skills
- Nursing Studies
- Sports, Recreation and Exercise

**“I came to Finn Valley College to do the QQI Level 5 Business Administration PLC; my previous school was large so I could not believe the difference in individual attention I received. I have gained in confidence and practical skills. I have grown immensely as a person and I am now looking forward to moving onto third level college with the confidence I have gained.”**

—  
Maria Coyle, Business Administration PLC student,  
Finn Valley College

#### Why should I consider a PLC?

—

PLCs are designed as a step towards skilled employment and, as such, they are closely linked to industry and its needs.

#### What does it cost to do a PLC?

—

A registration fee of €100 applies to all students. Non-medical card holders must also pay a QQI exam fee of €50.

#### Where can I do a PLC?

—

Donegal ETB's **FET** Service offers PLCs in three locations – Killybegs (St Catherine's Vocational School), Letterkenny (Errigal College) and Stranorlar (Finn Valley College)

#### When can I apply for a PLC?

—

You can apply for a PLC anytime from November each year for starting the following September. You can apply through the school, online through <https://www.donegaletb.ie/further-education-training/course-finder/> or through the CAO - <https://www.cao.ie/> (from November each year).

## ▶ What is Specific Skills Training?

Specific skills training courses are full-time courses ranging from six to forty weeks duration. They are designed to provide students with a range of employability related skills and formal vocational qualifications to facilitate those entering the labour market for the first time and for those wishing to update or acquire new skills.

**Donegal ETB offers specific skills training courses at Levels 3, 4, 5 and 6 through QQI or other industry recognised accreditation in a range of areas including:**

- Bus Driving
- Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) Driving
- Horticulture
- Multimedia
- Software Developer
- Surf Instructor and Beach Lifeguard
- Welding

**“I studied Metalwork at school and quickly realised that I really enjoyed it. I knew I wanted to improve my knowledge and skills so started researching courses. I came across the Welding course in Gweedore - it was the perfect fit for me and it was free! Welding is a skill I can take anywhere in the world and I know I have a bright future ahead.”**

—  
Adam Cassidy, Welding student,  
Gaoth Dobhair Training Centre

**Why should I consider specific skills training?**

—  
Specific skills training give participants the opportunity to develop cutting edge skills and knowledge making them more skilled, more employable and enhancing their career options and enables employers to access a pipeline of talent and students.

**What does it cost to do specific skills training?**

—  
Specific Skills Training courses are free and you may be paid a training allowance for the duration of your course. You can also claim an accommodation allowance if you need to live away from home for the duration of the course or a travel allowance.

**Where can I do specific skill training?**

—  
Donegal ETB's **FET** Service offers specific skills training in a number of locations around the county including its Gaoth Dobhair and Letterkenny Training Centres.

**When can I apply for specific skills training?**

—  
You can apply for specific skills training at various times throughout the year. You can apply online through [www.donegaletb.ie/further-education-training/course-finder/](http://www.donegaletb.ie/further-education-training/course-finder/) (use the skills word such as welding or surf as your Keyword) or through the CAO  
— [www.cao.ie/](http://www.cao.ie/).

**Specific skills training is co-funded by the Government of Ireland and the European Union.**



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland



Có-mhainithe ag an  
Aontas Eorpach  
Co-funded by the  
European Union

## ▶ What is a Traineeship?

A traineeship is a programme of structured training which combines learning in an education and training setting and in the workplace aiming to improve employment outcomes for participants and increase retention and productivity within industry.

### Donegal ETB currently offers the following traineeships:

- Beauty Therapist
- Business & Professional Administration
- Communication Systems Installation
- Data Scientist
- Donegal Weaving
- Engineering Operations
- Hairdressing
- Healthcare Support
- Intellectual Disability Studies with Special Needs
- International Trade with Business
- Network Planner
- Outdoor Activity Instructor

**"After completing my Leaving Certificate I was really unsure about what I wanted to do - I didn't see the point in signing up to do a four year degree when I was really unsure about the career path for me. I took some time to think about my options and always had an interest in Make Up and Beauty. When I realised Donegal ETB offered the Traineeship in Beauty Therapy which is ITEC certified, it made sense - this was the course for me. The theory and practical elements of the course were really enjoyable, I loved every minute of it, I even won student of the year award and secured a job offer from my placement provider. However, I plan to travel to Australia and now I have a qualification that is recognised worldwide."**

—  
Tara Harley, Beauty Therapist Traineeship

#### Why should I consider a traineeship?

—  
Traineeships enable students to develop cutting edge skills and knowledge on-the-job, making them more skilled, more employable and enhancing their career options.

#### What does it cost to do a traineeship?

—  
Traineeships are free and you may be paid a training allowance but some fees may apply. For example with the Beauty Therapist Traineeship, students are responsible for purchasing their own makeup kit costs which generally cost around €350.00 (a payment plan can be arranged in this case). You can also claim an accommodation allowance if you need to live away from home for the duration of the course or a travel allowance.

#### Where can I do a traineeship?

—  
Donegal ETB provides traineeships in a variety of locations across the county.

#### When can I apply for a traineeship?

—  
You can apply for a traineeship at various times throughout the year. You can apply online through <https://www.donegaletb.ie/further-education-training/course-finder/> or through the CAO - <https://www.cao.ie/> (from November each year).

Traineeships are co-funded by the Government of Ireland and the European Union.



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland



Có-mhainithe ag an  
Aontas Eorpach  
Co-funded by the  
European Union

## What do Guidance Counsellors think?

There are so many benefits to choosing a **FET** route after completing the Leaving Certificate. Whether it is earning as you learn with an apprenticeship, testing the water in a job area with a traineeship or completing a PLC course that will equip you with great transferable skills for the workplace or college. There are so many excellent options and pathways to choose from.

—  
Rory White,  
Guidance Counsellor, Finn Valley College,  
Stranorlar

With the national media recently focusing on the large dropout rate from many IT and university degrees, we need to accept that Higher Education is not suited to every school leaver. We need to encourage more students to consider Further Education and Training (**FET**) courses as it offers an attractive, alternative route to employment, training and indeed Higher Education. From a financial point of view, it is also a much safer pathway, which reduces the risks associated with losing your SUSI grant for a year (or more) if you should drop out of Higher Education.

—  
Liam Harkin,  
Guidance Counsellor, Carndonagh  
Community School

Every year I highlight to my Leaving Certs the benefits and opportunities that arise from **FET** courses in Donegal. There is something for everyone, no matter what their interest or ability and our students have used this route very successfully into employment and higher education. We are very fortunate to have Finn Valley College in our locality offering three excellent PLC options for students from the Finn Valley area.

—  
Eithne Sproule,  
Guidance Counsellor, St Columba's College,  
Stranorlar

## What do Principals think?

Young people completing their Leaving Certificate need to look at all progression options available to them and this includes giving serious consideration to what Further Education and Training (FET) can offer them. Third level is not the only progression option out there and it's not for everyone - we have to move away from thinking about progression options after the Leaving Cert in these terms only. Apprenticeships, Traineeships, PLCs and other options provide excellent pathways into qualifications and skills which are highly sought after by employers and can often be completed within a much shorter timeframe and at considerably less expense to the student and their family, than third level.

—  
Michéal Ó Giobúin,  
Principal, Coláiste Ailigh, Letterkenny

As a Principal of a school which is a provider of further education (PLC) I have seen at first hand the enormous benefits of the courses both in their own right as nationally recognised courses with excellent qualifications but also as gateway courses to higher education and direct employment where students can use the qualifications they receive along with the skill-set they develop for future career progression. In an age of higher education drop-out and college course choice overload Post Leaving Certificate courses offer a great platform for students as they prepare for the next stage of their life-long learning.

—  
Alan Thompson,  
Principal, Finn Valley College, Stranorlar

The benefits of choosing a FET route after completing the Leaving Certificate are vast and rewarding. The opportunity in earning as you learn with an apprenticeship, testing the water in a job area with a traineeship or completing a PLC course that will equip you with great transferable skills for the workplace or college. For too long our system wrongly has suggested that immediate entry into 3rd level was the only option. The costs were often prohibitive and put unnecessary pressure on families. With the many dynamic options available to our unique students. There are so many excellent options and pathways to choose from. We as a school are extremely proud that 23% of our student graduates chose the apprentice pathway in 2018.

—  
John Gorman,  
Principal, Rosses Community College

When considering pathways after a Leaving Certificate, young people should give serious consideration to all opportunities available to them including those opportunities in Further Education. As well as developing education and working from a knowledge based programme, students in Further Education develop transferable skills particularly through work experience and placements. They learn on the job, put theory into practice and as a result are very aware and very capable for positions as they arise. In my experience those who go through the Further Education system gain great experience and are directly employable as a result.

—  
Fiona Temple,  
Principal, Mulroy College, Milford

As Principal of a large school, I am delighted to see an increasing interest in Further Education and Training (FET) as an option after the Leaving Certificate. For too long, a small but significant group of students have had limited success in our academic, exam-led school system simply because their practical skills and abilities were undervalued with no viable educational pathway to harness their capabilities. The expansion of apprenticeships and traineeships into newer occupations such as ICT is to be welcomed and should go in some way towards paving the way for these skilled based opportunities to sit comfortably as an option alongside a direct progression to higher education. Gaps in our workforce, the forgotten middle skills jobs, the

high drop - out rate at third level and associated costs offer a niche that FET can comfortably fill.

—  
Margaret O Connor, Principal, Loreto Community School, Milford

It is important that students and parents consider Further Education and Training (FET) as a possible pathway for progression. Graduates from apprenticeships, FET courses and Post-Leaving Cert (PLC) courses are rated highly by employers in areas such as team-working, commercial awareness and entrepreneurial skills. Feedback from employers is that they are most satisfied with FET graduates' computers skills; their ability to work effectively with others; verbal communication; numeracy; and written skills.

In terms of personal attributes, employers rate highly FET students' work ethic; reliability; positive attitudes and ethical and social awareness. Many of the FET courses on offer now have increased participation in work placements and engaged learning opportunities. The modes

of assessment used often have increased focus on student project work and problem solving which is so relevant in the employment context.

—  
Dr Martin Gormley, Director of School, Donegal ETB

## What do industry leaders think?

We at Mooney Boats, Killybegs feel Traineeship programmes are incredibly valuable to our industry because the knowledge offered on the course is directly relevant to our business. This means potential young people who have completed a traineeship have an immediate advantage when it comes to getting employment. As far as growth opportunities and employment prospects go; Enterprise Ireland reported that the engineering sector grew rapidly in 2018, and this is growth that we see here in Killybegs, not only with ourselves but with the local companies who work here. The growth we are experiencing first hand is forecast to continue and with this kind of industry growth, job prospects and the opportunities for personal development will grow also.

—  
Lee Mooney,  
Managing Director, Mooney Boats Ltd, Killybegs

Inishowen Engineering have been working in partnership with Donegal ETB for over 20 years and have been looking for a course to encourage new entrants into the Engineering sector – Donegal ETB's Traineeship fits the bill perfectly as it gives people the basic entrance skills to develop Welders, Fabricators, CNC Operatives and develop general engineering skills. We would strongly encourage young people to consider Traineeships as their next option after their Leaving Cert.

—  
Michael McKinney,  
Managing Director, Inishowen Engineering Ltd.

Donegal ETB currently offers an extensive range of Further Education and Training (FET) programmes for school leavers. These programmes have been designed in collaboration with local employers and address current and future industry requirements. The programmes have the advantage of being very practical and typically class sizes are reasonably small ensuring the students receive significant personal attention from the experienced and competent tutors. Upon successful completion, students will have the knowledge, skills and competencies to gain employment or progress to higher education programmes delivered locally and nationally.

—  
Dr Oran Doherty, Former Manager, Regional Skills Forum, North West

Today, employers are embracing a broad range of qualifications from school leavers that include practical traineeships, apprenticeships and other industry focused part-time courses that provide graduates with employer-ready skills. Enterprise Ireland is working closely with employers and education providers to develop industry-leading education and training opportunities for those entering the workforce, and for upskilling. School leavers should consider multiple pathways to achieve their career aspirations and be encouraged that there are more choices than ever before.

—  
Aidan McKenna,  
Regional Director, North East & North West Region, Enterprise Ireland

I admire Donegal ETB's **FET** programmes as I see this as a great opportunity for people to learn while working on the job. I love training people in my kitchen that have little or no experience and watch them develop into skilled chefs that can travel anywhere in the world.

—

Chris McMenamin,  
former Head Chef, Harvey's Point Hotel,  
Donegal Town

Our members are consistently keen to recruit job ready people with the right skills and attitude for the modern workplace. The Further Education and Training courses and programmes provided by Donegal ETB are informed and designed in collaboration with local industry and employers and offer school leavers with new opportunities and more diverse pathways to their future career. The practical courses and personal attention given to each student will ensure that the employer will benefit from an employee with job ready skills, knowledge and attitude and the student can start on their chosen career path with confidence.

—

Toni Forrester,  
CEO, Letterkenny Chamber of Commerce.

On the job learning or work based learning is such a very good option. As an employer, MEANit Web Design Agency would prefer to have people learn on the job than coming in with a degree. In many cases it takes a mix of on the job and in the class learning. It is not ideal for all careers, however for most careers, this is a great option and the one that is favoured in so many other countries. Donegal ETB is delivering on a promise to introduce us to 'work ready' enthusiastic young people, who add value to our business. Our first port of call when recruiting will be with Donegal ETB.

—

Michael MacGinty,  
Sales Director,  
MEANit Web Design Agency, Letterkenny

Employers within the ICT/FinTech sector are embracing a broad range of qualifications from school leavers that include practical internships, apprenticeships, industry-related part-time courses providing graduates with relevant work-ready skills. There are multiple pathways for school leavers to success and choosing the option/courses after completing the Leaving Certificate offers an attractive earn as you learn, alternative route to employment, training and indeed Higher Education. Pramerica are proud to engage with all levels of Academia, promoting all routes for school leavers into education and employment so they can enjoy the benefits and opportunities within the ICT/FinTech sector.

—

David Roche, Director FinTech Services & Head of Corporate Social Responsibility,  
Tata Consultancy Services



## Contact us

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**Further information on our FET courses can be found at <https://www.donegaletb.ie/further-education-training/course-finder/>**

**You can apply online for many of Donegal ETB's FET courses through [www.donegaletb.ie/further-education-training/course-finder/](https://www.donegaletb.ie/further-education-training/course-finder/) or through the CAO - <https://www.cao.ie/options> (from November each year) or apply directly to our centres:**

**Traineeships/Specific Skills Training:**

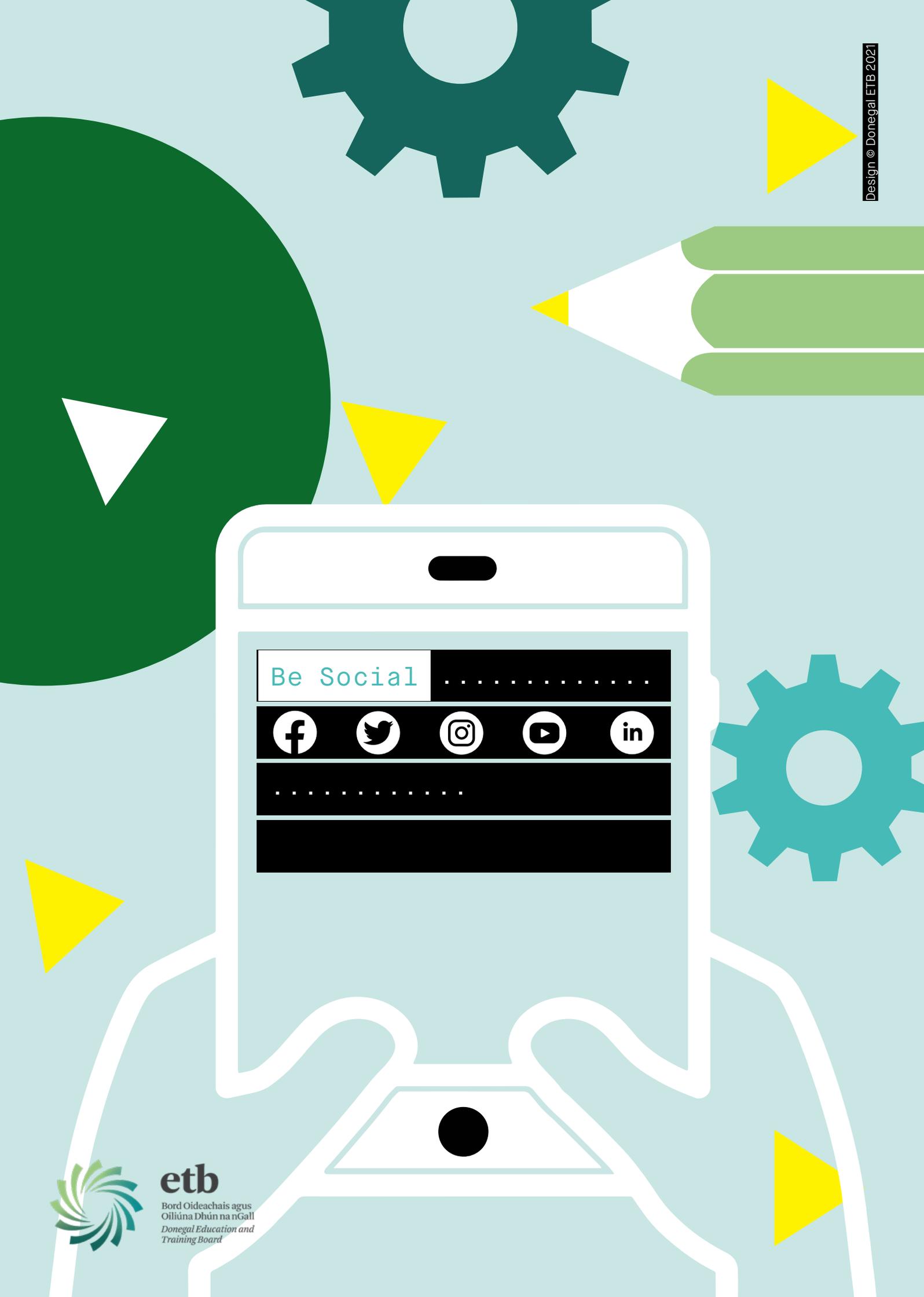
— Tara McGuire, Recruitment Officer, 074 91 20500,  
[coursesdonegaltc@donegaletb.ie](mailto:coursesdonegaltc@donegaletb.ie)

**PLCs:**

— Michelle O'Reilly, PLC Coordinator, Errigal College,  
Letterkenny: 074 9121047, [michelleoreilly@donegaletb.ie](mailto:michelleoreilly@donegaletb.ie)  
— Kathleen Boland, PLC Coordinator, Finn Valley College,  
Stranorlar: 074 9131684, [kathleenboland@donegaletb.ie](mailto:kathleenboland@donegaletb.ie)  
— Sharon Stevenson, PLC Coordinator, St. Catherine's Vocational School,  
Killybegs: 074 9731491, [sharonstevenson@donegaletb.ie](mailto:sharonstevenson@donegaletb.ie)

**For further information on apprenticeships please contact:**

— Lorraine Murray, Senior Training Advisor, 074 9120506,  
[lorrainemurray@donegaletb.ie](mailto:lorrainemurray@donegaletb.ie)  
— Claire Lernihan, Senior Training Advisor (Acting), 074 9120587,  
[clairelernihan@donegaletb.ie](mailto:clairelernihan@donegaletb.ie)  
— Aidan Guthrie, Administrator, 074 9120594,  
[aidanguthrie@donegaletb.ie](mailto:aidanguthrie@donegaletb.ie)  
— [www.donegaletb.ie/feature/programmes/apprenticeships/](https://www.donegaletb.ie/feature/programmes/apprenticeships/)  
— [www.apprenticeships.ie](https://www.apprenticeships.ie)



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