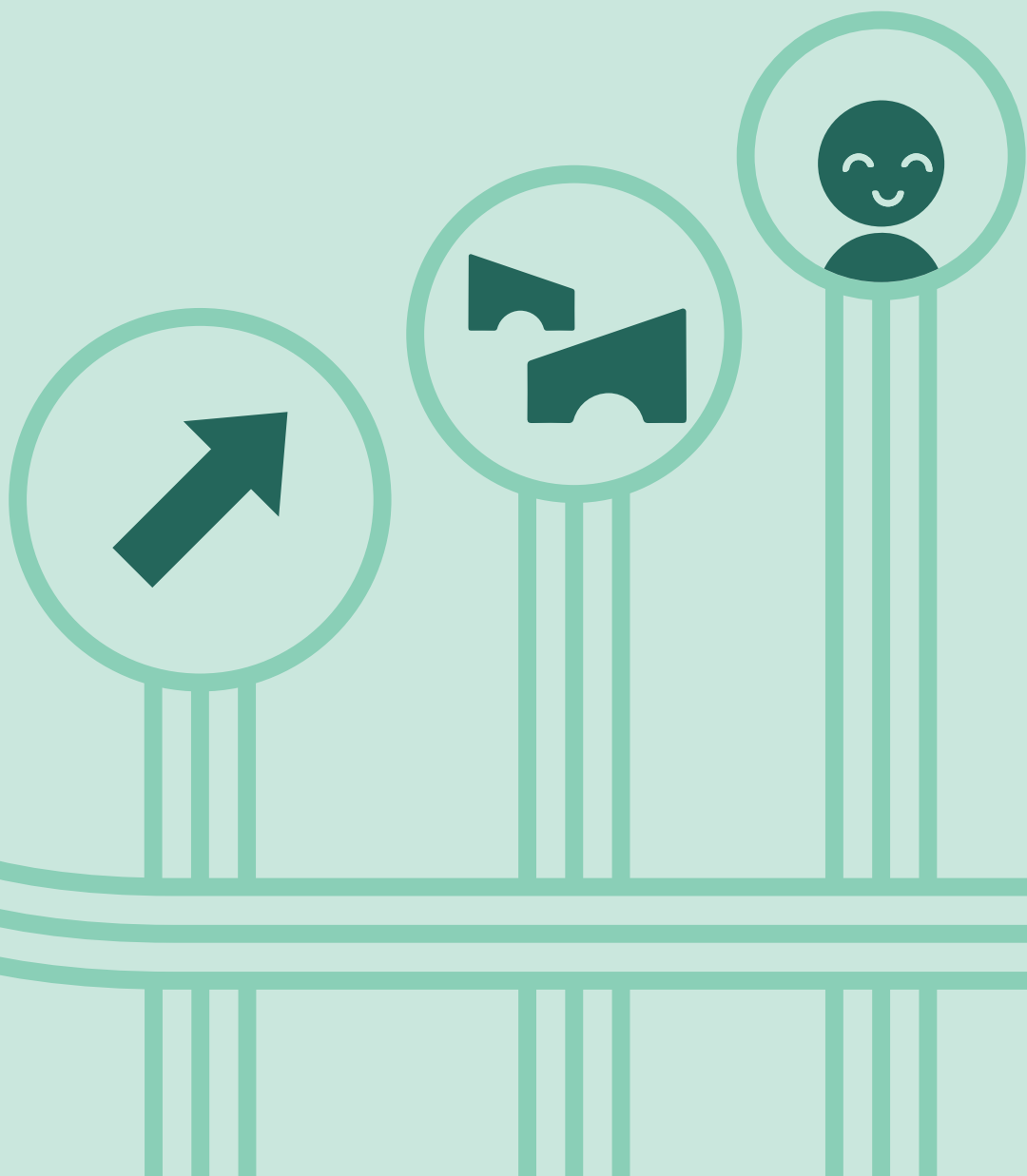


Skills to Advance



New Policy Initiative: Skills to Advance

A new policy in Further Education and Training aimed at developing the skills of people in employment has been launched by SOLAS and the Department of Education and Skills working closely with Education and Training Boards (ETBs) around the country. Skills to Advance will enable targeted skill development for vulnerable groups in the Irish workforce, particularly those who have lower skills levels and who need more opportunities to advance in their working lives and careers, to sustain their employment and to avail of emerging job opportunities. The policy also supports small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) who need some assistance to invest in and develop their workforce.

This policy draws on a **vision** of the workplace in Ireland where:

Upskilling during one's working life is considered normal practice and has a direct correlation with enhanced job security, higher earnings and autonomy at work for employees.

Indigenous and multinational firms systematically invest in the development of their staff and benefit through improved productivity and competitiveness of their employees, the economy and industry.

The Skills to Advance policy was developed in response to the evolving skills and training needs of employees and industry. In particular it seeks to address the specific skills needs of target groups including supporting the development of soft skills and digital skills, responding to the changing nature of jobs and skills, supporting enhanced productivity in Irish SMEs and driving effective regional development.

Targets

It is planned that by 2021:

Over 40,000 workers will be engaging in this state supported upskilling initiative.

4,500 SMEs will be supported to thrive and grow and Ireland will further enhance its competitiveness on the European and global stage.

Three primary target groups

1. Employees in all parts of the workforce whose skill level is below level 5 on the national framework of qualifications. Such employees can access upskilling opportunities at level 5 or below free-of-charge across relevant further education and training provision. There will be a particular focus on employees who are in jobs with a low skill requirement, 50+ years of age, and in sectors/occupations at risk of economic displacement.
2. All small and medium sized enterprises and other organisations with limited capacity to identify and meet skills development needs of their employees in lower skilled work. The policy will particularly focus on lower skilled workers at risk of displacement. Employers will be supported to develop their training expertise including identifying the upskilling needs of their workforce and in providing training solutions.
3. Industry sectors with particular skills needs, arising from emerging opportunities or as a result of economic vulnerabilities. Support to upskill and reskill employees in lower skilled work will be provided to employers of all sizes in industry sectors which are experiencing particular changes in work practices, technology and markets.

Access Routes

Education and Training boards (ETBs) will provide three access routes to relevant FET provision for employees and employers as follows:

Route 1 – Direct employee access – where employees access further education and training in ETBs directly by enrolling for relevant development options.

Route 2 – Access via enterprise engagement – where employees can access further education and training through their employer partnering with an ETB to identify and develop training solutions.

Route 3 – Regional initiatives – where employees participate in further education and training as a result of a particular identified regional skills development initiative related to vulnerabilities in employment and emerging work opportunities.

Promotion of Skills to Advance:

A promotions and communications campaign has also commenced including a series of launch events and meetings with employers, employees and representative bodies, regional skills fora and other key stakeholders. We look forward to collaborating with you on rolling out this new Skills to Advance initiative.

Policy link

http://www.solas.ie/SkillstoAdvance/Documents/SupportingWorkingLives_EnterpriseGrowth_policyFramework_Sept2018.pdf