



INTENSIVE TUITION
IN
ADULT BASIC EDUCATION
Revised April 2012

KEY AREA GUIDELINES

- **Project Co-ordination Guidelines**
- **Assessment Guidelines**
- **Education Guidance Guidelines**

IVEA Intensive Tuition in Adult Basic Education: Key Area Guidelines

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SECTION 1

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SECTION 2

ITABE Pilot Programme

The aim of the programme was to provide participants, in groups of 6 – 8 students, with an opportunity to access 6 hours of tuition per week over a 14 week period as opposed to the average of 2 hours per week currently provided.

A number of these projects were allocated to each of the 33 VECs. The allocation process was based on statistical data submitted to the Department of Education and Science as part of the national annual reporting structure for VEC adult literacy services.

This was a joint project led by the IVEA, in partnership with NALA, with the co-ordination of the project provided by County Dublin VEC.

The ITABE project was supported by an Advisory Group comprising of representatives of the Department of Education & Science, The Irish Vocational Education Association, The VEC Literacy Forum, The National Adult Literacy Agency and the National Centre for Guidance in Education.

The Need for Guidelines

Through the evaluation process for the ITABE Pilot Programme the need was identified for guidelines in a number of key areas of the project. The ITABE National Advisory Group made a recommendation to the Department of Education & Science to develop these guidelines using the unused funds from the original pilot project and a structure to carry out this work was agreed in August 2006.

Following an application process 9 Vocational Education Committees were selected to develop and pilot the guidelines over the autumn term 2006.

The Three Key Areas

Project Co-ordination

“In tandem with the provision of a Resource Worker for local adult literacy services, clear guidelines indicating the role and responsibilities of project co-ordinators should be developed and adopted across the VEC sector.”

Recommendation from the ITABE Pilot Programme Evaluation Report

Assessment Procedures

“Clear operating guidelines and training in the use of assessment materials must be a feature of future ITABE programmes.”

Recommendation from the ITABE Pilot Programme Evaluation Report

Education Guidance

“To facilitate improved co-operation between the ALS and the AEGS clear guidelines to support AEGS involvement in ITABE programmes should be developed. These guidelines should be accompanied by the development of an awareness training programme through which staff members of both the ALS and AEGS can gain a greater understanding of the interdependency of their respective services and the potential for future development.”

Recommendation from the ITABE Pilot Programme Evaluation Report

SECTION 3

ITABE PROJECT CO-ORDINATION GUIDELINES

Background

The inclusion of specific co-ordination hours in each ITABE local project is crucial to the success of the programme. This is especially so given the current staffing levels within local VEC Adult Literacy Services.

It should be noted that Adult Literacy Organisers (ALOs) are responsible for the effective operation of local ITABE projects, within the appropriate VEC management structure. The role of the ITABE Co-ordinator is to support the ALO in the management of the project or projects.

In order to maximise the benefit of having a specific co-ordinator for ITABE it is necessary to define the role and for participating VECs to make every effort to ensure a certain level of uniformity across the sector.

For this reason the following guidelines have been developed.

Flexible Approach

Timing of Co-ordination Hours

While the 25% of tuition hours allocated to co-ordination for groups of 6 – 8 learners can be divided into an average number of hours per week over the period of the tuition project this is not the most efficient way to allocate the hours. Timing of the co-ordination hours should take into account peak times during the lifetime of the project and hours should be allocated accordingly.

Core Tutor

In keeping with good practice and to maximise contact with learners the possibility of the ITABE Co-ordinator also acting as Core Tutor should be explored. Given the extended period of tuition each week it would be best if a team teaching approach was used.

It is recommended that the ITABE Co-ordinator is not the sole tutor.

Recruitment

Planning

- Recruitment for ITABE projects should be planned in advance by the ALO in keeping with annual development plans and local planning procedures.

Raising awareness

The ITABE Co-ordinator may-

- take active part in raising awareness amongst existing Adult Literacy Service (ALS) students of the availability and benefits of the programme.
- assist the ALO in the distribution of promotional material relating to the ITABE programme.

Training & Development

Training

It is essential that the ITABE Co-ordinator avail of any training directly related to intensive tuition if and when it becomes available.

Networking

The value of networking with other practitioners is self-evident and ITABE Co-ordinators must be encouraged and facilitated to create links with people in similar positions across the country.

Assessment & Evaluation

Administering the ITABE Assessment

Carrying out assessments and evaluations is a major element of the ITABE Co-ordinator's role.

The role of the ITABE Co-ordinator in the assessment process is-

- to ensure learners are aware of the assessment process before it takes place
- to ensure active participation by the learner in completing the assessment checklists
- to carryout the assessment process with each learner and at the appropriate times
- to maintain assessment records
- to inform the learner, tutor/s and ALO of the assessment outcomes
- to work with the student and tutor/s to develop an appropriate curriculum taking into account assessment outcomes and student goals

Recording outcomes

The ITABE Co-ordinator should record assessment and evaluation outcomes on the forms provided and store them in keeping with procedures set down by the local VEC and ALS.

Agreeing use of assessment outcomes

It is the responsibility of the ITABE Co-ordinator to make learners aware of the purpose and process of assessment and evaluation. They should know exactly who will have access to their results and for what purpose. For example summary data will be collected to provide statistical returns to the Department of Education & Science.

Curriculum Planning

Planning Sessions

The ITABE Co-ordinator should assist the learners and relevant staff members to develop individual learning plans and support the tutors in designing session plans.

Programme Development

The ITABE Co-ordinator should submit to the ALO a programme outline at the outset of the programme/course.

Support

Under the supervision of the ALO the ITABE Co-ordinator should-

Liaise between staff members

To facilitate an integrated approach to intensive tuition provision it is necessary for the ITABE Co-ordinator to liaise between appropriate staff members (for example the AEGS) on behalf of the learners .

Provide support to tutors

The ITABE Co-ordinator should ensure an appropriate level of support is provided to tutors, especially in the areas of curriculum development and resource identification.

Provide support to learners

Often where a number of tutors are involved in an intensive tuition programme the ITABE Co-ordinator will be the person within the ALS with whom learners have most frequent contact, especially if the co-ordinator is also the core tutor. For this reason the Co-ordinator should ensure that 1:1 support is provided to learners as needed.

Record Keeping & Reporting

Keeping records

The ITABE Co-ordinator should maintain all records relating to the ITABE project/s for which they are responsible.

Reporting

The ITABE Co-ordinator should provide reports in keeping with local and national requirements.

SECTION 4

ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE GUIDELINES

Background

The use of a variety of assessment material by local adult literacy services (ALS) to ascertain learner strengths and weaknesses assist in the development of a learning plan and provide statistical data in relation to literacy levels was commonplace when Phase 1 of the ITABE Pilot Programme was implemented. In order to provide data to examine indications of the efficacy of intensive tuition it was necessary for adult literacy services participating in Phase 1 of the ITABE Pilot Programme to use a common system to measure skills and knowledge in the key areas of listening & speaking, reading, writing and numeracy.

In the absence of an assessment process and materials common to all participating ALS it was decided that a sub-group of the ITABE National Advisory Group would develop an assessment instrument to be piloted as part of the ITABE programme.

A key factor in the development of the assessment material was the need for it to be in keeping with good practice guidelines for adult literacy provision. This meant the assessment could not take on the form of a standardised test but rather must be a negotiated statement of the learner's perceived ability supported, where possible, by the informed judgment of the ALO and tutor/s.

A number of other factors contributed to the format and design of the assessment instrument –

- the lack of any appropriate standardised test developed for use in adult literacy work.
- the timeframe for the development of the assessment tool, briefing the services on its use and implementation of pre-course assessments.
- the need to include the student in the assessment process as an active participant in the direction of his/her learning.
- the potential to use the informed judgement of ALO and tutors to support the assessment process.

Taking all of these factors into account led to the development of a series of checklists mapped to National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) levels 1 - 3 and broken down into 3 further sub-levels (stages). The FETAC statements were closely linked to the NALA Mapping the Learning Journey framework and this ensured clear links in relation to levels and standards across the three frameworks – FETAC, MLJ and ITABE.

Purpose

Diagnose learner strengths and weaknesses

The primary purpose of the ITABE assessment process is to identify and record learner strengths and weaknesses within the four skills and

knowledge based categories - speaking & listening, reading, writing and numeracy.

It is accepted that the model of adult basic education provision operated by adult literacy services equally values other areas of development such as fluency, independence and transferability, as means to improve social participation. This model also values progress made in soft skills essential to both social interaction and the improvement of skills and knowledge.

Given the restrictions imposed by time and the absence, and in many opinions inappropriateness, of summative assessment statements to measure soft skills, these improvements are recorded as part of the qualitative data gathered within the evaluation process.

Assist in curriculum development / lesson planning

Given the fact that the summative measurement of skills and knowledge requires the use of the same pre and post course statements it is logical that if progress is to be measured some of the gaps identified should be addressed through the tuition programme.

This need not dictate the curriculum for the project. The agreed curriculum should address the expressed and assessed needs of the participating learners and relevant gaps identified through the ITABE assessment process can be embedded into the planned learning outcomes.

Monitor progress

Again it must be borne in mind that the assessment checklists only measure progress in the specific areas for which they were designed - speaking & listening, reading, writing and numeracy. In addition it should be noted that measuring progress in relation to each of the checklist statements can only take place if opportunities to improve identified weaknesses are included in the course activities.

It is recommended that progress made in areas of learning other than those measured through use of the Assessment Pack should also be documented and may be submitted with assessment documentation.

Provide a common reference point

There is a need to provide a common reference point when attempting to capture a national picture of needs and progress. Therefore the use of the same assessment materials, even bearing in mind the need for the interpretation of results, can provide that commonality, especially where the materials are mapped to the NFQ.

Generate statistical data

In order to generate a national picture of the benefits of intensive tuition it is necessary to use a measurement system which can be related to national (NFQ) education levels.

Staff Roles

Adult Literacy Organiser (ALO)

The role of the ALO in the assessment process for ITABE is-

- to ensure the Co-ordinator understands and is capable of administering the assessment process
- to ensure all participants are aware of the purpose and process of the assessment
- to ensure active participation by the learner in completing the assessment checklists
- to supply any information impacting on the assessment outcomes (informed judgement)
- to ensure the assessment takes place at the appropriate times
- to make the AEGC aware of assessment outcomes where they might inform AEGS input into the programme
- to take part in the development of an appropriate curriculum based on assessment outcomes and student goals

ITABE Co-ordinator

The role of the ITABE Co-ordinator in the assessment process is-

- to ensure learners are aware of the assessment process before initial assessment takes place
- to ensure active participation by the learner in completing the assessment checklists
- to carryout the assessment process with each learner and at the appropriate times
- to maintain assessment records
- to inform the learner, tutor/s and ALO of the assessment outcomes
- to work with the student and tutor/s to develop an appropriate curriculum taking into account assessment outcomes and student goals

Group Tutor

The role of the tutor in the assessment process is -

- to supply any information impacting on the assessment outcomes (informed judgement)
- to be aware of the assessment outcomes
- to take part in the development of an appropriate curriculum based on assessment outcomes and student goals

Adult Education Guidance Service (AEGS)

The role of the AEGS in the assessment process is-

- to supply any information impacting on the assessment outcomes (informed judgement) where the learner has been referred through the AEGS
- to be aware of the assessment outcomes
- to take part in the development of an appropriate curriculum based on assessment outcomes and student goals (where appropriate)
- to be cognisant of assessed learner abilities when designing or delivering educational guidance either in a 1:1 setting or in groups

Assessment

The ITABE Assessment Pack must be used by all participants in the ITABE Programme.

Timing of the assessment

ITABE Initial assessments should be carried out preferably before the commencement of the tuition period and no later than three weeks into tuition. The potential inaccuracy of these assessments where the student is new to the service is acknowledged. However, it must be remembered that the assessment outcomes are not exam results nor are they for the purpose of accreditation; therefore the pre-course results can be reviewed for greater accuracy.

Role of informed judgment

In using a checklist approach to agree a common perception of abilities the informed judgment of appropriate staff members should be combined with the learner's input to form a picture.

Evidence

The assessment process under the ITABE programme aims to identify a working skills level for each learner and, unlike summative assessment for accreditation purposes, there is no requirement to provide evidence when claiming abilities. Co-ordinators and learners may discuss how they know an ability has been achieved but this is not a necessary feature of the process.

Administering the assessment

- The checklists (Listening & Speaking, Reading, Writing and Numeracy) should be used as appropriate as part of the assessment for all participating students.
- Assessments should be administered on a one-to-one basis and should not be simply distributed as a group exercise. One-to-one completion of the checklists by the ITABE Co-ordinator and learner will allow for clarification of terminology used and use of informed judgment.
- Where the ITABE assessment materials have been used to measure a learner's abilities within 4 months prior to commencement of a new tuition period the post-course 'scores' from the previous programme may be used as pre-course scores for this phase.
- Where the ITABE assessment has not been used within 4 months of the commencement of tuition a pre-course assessment must take place.
- Since the identification of evidence to support statements is not required Co-ordinators should not encourage excessive discussion around each statement.
- The individual student Progress Summary sheets should be stored in keeping with local **confidentiality** procedures. In the context of this project they should be used to assist in the completion of the Project Progress Summary sheet and to assist in the provision of Adult Education Guidance, where appropriate.
- Individual Student Progress Summary sheets and the completed assessment material should be retained by the local service. They

should **NOT** be forwarded to the Intensive Tuition in Adult Basic Education (ITABE) National Co-ordinator unless specifically requested.

- Upon completion of the project the **Project Progress Summary** sheet **must** be retained locally or until requested by the National ITABE Co-ordinator.

Analysis & Use

Capturing a 'snapshot'

Having completed each checklist the learner should be involved in the decision as to what level and stage is indicated.

It should be remembered that the outcome of these assessments simply provide a 'snapshot' of skills level and it should be clear from the grouping of 'ticks' on the checklist the general level of ability.

In this respect the post course outcomes may not entirely accurately reflect the overall progress made. This is especially true where the learner is new to the service and informed judgment was not a contributing factor to the pre-course assessment.

Recording outcomes

Pre and post course outcomes should be recorded on the forms provided and stored in keeping with procedures set down by the local VEC and ALS.

Agreeing use of assessment outcomes

Learners should be made aware of the assessment purpose and process. They should know exactly who will have access to their results and for what purpose.

SECTION 5

ADULT EDUCATION GUIDANCE GUIDELINES

Background

An important feature of the ITABE project is the opportunity for greater co-operation between the Adult Literacy Service (ALS) and the Adult Education Guidance Service (AEGS). It is acknowledged that ALS staff has for some time provided a level of frontline guidance to learners and will continue to do so. The involvement of the AEGS in planning and supporting ITABE programmes can contribute to an even greater learning experience for learners and assist in the development of progression routes.

The purpose of these guidelines is to place a structure on the process of interaction between the two service elements - ALS & AEGS.

Purpose of AEGS Involvement

Adult Education Guidance involvement in the ITABE Programme should be -

- To provide appropriate information and guidance support to ITABE participants in relation to educational, personal, and career progression options.

Guidance Model

The model adapted should be negotiated between the ALS and AEGS and be approved through the appropriate management structures. Any new or modified model must comply with local VEC policies and procedures. The level of involvement by AEGS staff in the design and delivery of appropriate guidance provision in ITABE should be a matter of negotiation between the two services.

The possibility of using a frontline model of guidance provision should be examined, such as, AEGS meeting with ITABE literacy tutors to ensure exchange of relevant information throughout the programme.

Subject to the availability of resources, in addition to scheduled group guidance, one-to-one guidance sessions should be made available to participants as appropriate to their needs. A minimum of two group guidance sessions is recommended, followed by one-to-one guidance for individuals as required. The identified needs of the participants and issues such as whether the group is a first time ITABE programme or a follow-on ITABE course, will inform the number of hours for guidance delivery to each group.

AEGS input into tutor training to create and ensure guidance awareness for literacy staff involved in the provision of ITABE programme.

Local Area Plan (LAP)

In order to take active part in the planning process (LAP) and to ensure guidance advice and materials are appropriate to the ITABE learners, a system of information exchange between the ALS and the AEGS must be agreed. The ALO and Guidance Counsellor should agree the type of information and depth of detail required by each service to ensure the programme is appropriate to the learners' needs and abilities. The Guidance Counsellor should attend meetings with the ALO and / or ITABE Co-ordinator and /or ITABE tutors during the course of the programme to ensure exchange of relevant information throughout the programme.

The provision and delivery of the guidance programme to ITABE should be agreed as part of the Local Area Plan between ITABE and AEGS. In preparation for the LAP, ALS and AEGS should consider the inclusion / development of the following;

- Discussion and consultation between the ALS and AEGS on each ITABE groups guidance needs
- Sharing of information about the needs of the ITABE group prior to guidance provision to include:
 - Levels of ability
 - Learning goals
 - Educational background
 - Accreditation where appropriate
 - Skills areas under development
- Sharing of information on the guidance programme to be delivered to include;
 - Recognised Prior Learning (RPL)
 - Motivation/ decision making
 - Educational/ vocational experiences / hopes
 - Personal goals (outside but including skills base)
 - Information & advice
- Agree a standard referral procedure, including follow-up and feedback system between both services
- Agree a scheduling of the group and one to one guidance sessions
- Carry out an annual review to reflect on-going practice and provision as identified by the ALS

Planning

The overall responsibility for the planning and delivery of local ITABE programmes is the responsibility of the ALO within the management structure for the VEC Adult Education Service. In addition the AEGS should be involved in the planning process of ITABE programmes at as early a stage as possible. This will facilitate a cohesive approach to the design of the programme, timetabling and agreement of the role of the Guidance Counsellor throughout the delivery period.

The agreed Local Area Plan should comply with VEC policies and procedures and be approved through the appropriate management structures and signed off on by the AEO/EO/CEO.

SECTION 6

Additional Recommendations

Co-ordination

- The need for appropriate literacy experience and understanding of assessment processes should be taken into account when appointing ITABE Co-ordinators.
- Support should be provided both nationally and on a VEC basis to ITABE Co-ordinators to assist them in the implementation of local projects.
- ITABE Co-ordinators should be supplied with contact details for colleagues working in similar projects across the country to facilitate the sharing of expertise and VECs should ensure they provide networking opportunities to Co-ordinators where more than one position exists.

Assessment

- ALOs and ITABE Co-ordinators should be encouraged and facilitated to take part in any training offered in relation to the administering of the ITABE Assessment Pack.

Inservice Training

- ALOs and AEGS should be encouraged and facilitated to take part in regular inservice training to improve the integration of the two elements of the Adult Education Services.

Annual Review

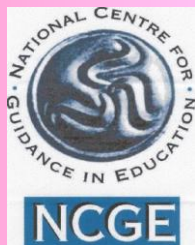
- An annual review should be carried out by the VECs, ALS and AEGS to inform the ITABE Application and Statistical Returns to reflect on going practices and provision.



**Irish Vocational
Education
Association**



**National
Adult Literacy
Agency**



**National
Council
for Guidance
in Education**

