



gretb

Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna
na Gaillimhe agus Ros Comáin
*Galway and Roscommon
Education and Training Board*

Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board

Annual Report 2020

Funded by:



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna
Department of
Education and Skills



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Message from the Cathaoirleach of Galway and Roscommon ETB



As a result of the pandemic, 2020 has been truly a remarkable year and has highlighted the flexibility, ingenuity, and resilience of our staff. As Chairperson of the Board, I am enormously proud of the way GRETB's management, staff, students, and learners, faced and successfully overcame the many issues which were presented as a result of Covid-19. These included moving over 22,00 students to online or blended learning over a matter of weeks, supporting over 2000 staff to work remotely, reconfiguring premises, changing assessment methodologies and techniques, providing training in new IT platforms and health and safety protocols, splitting classes, re-adjusting timetables, procuring PPE and IT equipment, to name but a few of the many challenges faced in 2020.

Covid-19 has shown us the huge role schools and centres play not only educating and training, but also in nurturing and supporting our young people. Throughout the year GRETB schools and centres were very mindful of the challenges in terms of the additional stress and mental health considerations brought about by the pandemic for some students and learners. During this time GRETB continued to provide holistic and pastoral care supports for students and learners, through wellbeing initiatives and student welfare supports.

Supporting students with special needs and those at risk of educational disadvantage was very important for GRETB during 2020. Additional resources were supplied, summer courses for special needs students were offered in some schools, devices and IT equipment was provided for learners most in need, and the school meals programme continued to operate when schools were closed.

The ongoing work of GRETB in these incredibly trying times, continues to encourage and inspire. I wish to congratulate the management and staff, for the fantastic commitment you have displayed to ensure the students and learners in the Galway and Roscommon region have continued to receive education, training and support services throughout the pandemic.

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow Board, Committee, and Board of Management members for their contribution and dedication to the governance of GRETB.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh go léir.

Cllr Michael Maher

Chairperson

Foreword from Chief Executive



Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board (GRETB) is pleased to present our Annual Report for 2020. The year was marked by the COVID 19 worldwide pandemic which developed rapidly throughout the year. Measures taken by the government to contain the virus greatly affected how GRETB functioned in 2020.

GRETB undertook a range of measures to mitigate against the effects of COVID 19, including putting in place the required safety and public health measures for our staff, students, learners and beneficiaries. These measures included remote learning, working from home, minor works to reconfigure schools, centres and offices, new cleaning and sanitising regimes, providing sanitising and PPE materials. Notwithstanding the impact of COVID 19, GRETB continued to carry out its vital role in education and training. Great credit is due to our staff and students for their positive response to the many challenges posed by this worldwide pandemic.

This report provides an opportunity to thank each member of the Board for their active co-operation in promoting the mission of Galway & Roscommon ETB in so many ways – serving on Interview Boards, participating in Boards of Management, in Consultative Committees, attending Regional and National Meetings. I would like to express my formal appreciation to the Principals, Deputy Principals and Co-ordinators for the progressive manner in which they lead their schools and centres; the teachers for the quality of their work both inside and outside the classroom; the Adult and Further Education and training staff, for their commitment to quality in a time of great change for the sector; the non-teaching staff for their dedication, commitment and loyalty; the parents for their unfailing support; the Boards of Managements, the various Committees, who give so generously of their time in promoting the work of GRETB.

I wish to acknowledge the officials of the Department of Education, Department of Further & Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, SOLAS, Department of Children & Youth Affairs, Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Music Generation National Development Office, Léargas and all of our other funders for their support and co-operation in expanding the work of GRETB.

Finally, I also wish to acknowledge the retirements of long serving members of staff and wish them health and happiness in their retirement and to thank them for their service to the learners in our care.

Mr. David Leahy

Chief Executive

Board of Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board

CHIEF EXECUTIVE – MR. DAVID LEAHY

BOARD MEMBER	Nominating Body
Ms. Bernadette Costello	Bodies specified by the Minister
Ms. Nora Fahy	Bodies specified by the Minister
Dr. Michael Hannon	Bodies specified by the Minister
Ms. Mary Mullarkey	Bodies specified by the Minister
Mr. Tomás O Nidh	Bodies specified by the Minister
Cllr. Michael Crowe	Galway City Council Nominee
Cllr. Noel Larkin	Galway City Council Nominee
Cllr. Terry O'Flaherty	Galway City Council Nominee
Cllr. Aisling Dolan (Resigned 2020)	Galway County Council Nominee
Cllr. Colm Keaveney	Galway County Council Nominee
Cllr. Michael Maher (Chairperson)	Galway County Council Nominee
Cllr. Peter Roche	Galway County Council Nominee
Cllr. Thomas Welby	Galway County Council Nominee
Cllr Geraldine Donohue	Galway County Council Nominee
Cllr. Shane Curley	Galway County Council Nominee
Cllr. Laurence Fallon	Roscommon County Council Nominee
Cllr. Marty McDermott (Resigned 2020)	Roscommon County Council Nominee
Cllr. Kathleen Shanagher (Deputy Chairperson)	Roscommon County Council Nominee
Cllr. John Cummins	Roscommon County Council Nominee
Mr. Daniel Cronin	Staff Representative
Ms. Jean Beswick	Staff Representative
Mr. Sean Harnett	Parents' Representative
Ms. Marie Lough (Resigned 2020)	Parents' Representative
Ms. Ann Cassidy	Parents' Representative

Dates of GRETb Board Meetings 2020

11th February	24th March	12th May	9th June	8th September	13th October	10th November	8th December
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Board Members' Attendance

Board Members Attendance – January to December 2020

Register of Attendance and Frequency of Board Meetings 2020									
Board Members' Name	11.02	24.03	12.05	09.06	08.09	13.10	10.11	08.12	Meetings Attended
Cllr Noel Larkin	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	7/8
Cllr Michael Crowe	X	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	x	x	4/8
Cllr. Terry O'Flaherty	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	7/8
Cllr. Kathleen Shanagher	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	8/8
Cllr. Marty McDermott	X	X	Resigned						0/2
Cllr. Laurence Fallon	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	7/8
Cllr. Michael Maher*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	8/8
Cllr. Aisling Dolan	X	✓	✓	✓	Resigned				4/4
Cllr. Colm Keaveney	X	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	6/8
Cllr. Thomas Welby	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	6/8
Cllr. Shane Curley	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	7/8
Cllr. Peter Roche	X	X	X	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	4/8
Ms. Jean Beswick	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	8/8
Mr. Daniel Cronin	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	7/8
Ms. Marie Lough	✓	✓	✓	✓	Resigned				4/4
Mr. Sean Harnett	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	6/8
Ms. Bernadette Costello	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	7/8
Mr. Tomas O Nidh	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	7/8
Ms. Nora Fahy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	x	6/8
Ms. Mary Mullarkey	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	7/8
Dr. Michael Hannon	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	7/8
Cllr. John Cummins					X	X	x	x	0/4
Cllr. Geraldine Donohue					✓	✓	✓	✓	4/4
Ms. Ann Cassidy					✓	✓	✓	x	3/4

*Cllr Michael Maher is a member of ETBI Reserved Members Forum

The Board has established two Committees in accordance with Section 45 of the 2013 Act; the Audit and Risk Committee and the Finance Committee. The purpose of these two Committees is to assist the Board with its consideration of issues relating to audit, governance, risk management and finance, however, the Board of GRETB maintains responsibility for, and makes the final decisions on all these areas. Both the Audit and Risk Committee and the Finance Committee met four and five times, respectively in 2020.

Audit & Risk Committee

Register of Attendance and Frequency of the Audit & Risk Committee Meetings						
Committee Membership 2020		6 th March	22 nd May	11 th September	4 th December	Meetings Attended
Ms. Martina Moloney (Chairperson)*	External Member	√	√	√	√	4/4
Mr. Gerry Finn*	External Member	√	√	√	√	4/4
Br. James Mungovan*	External Member	√	X	X	X	1/4
Ms. Marie Lough	Board Member	√	√	Resigned		2/2
Ms. Mary Coyne	External Member	√	√	X	√	3/4
Cllr. Laurence Fallon	Board Member	X	√	√	√	3/4
Cllr. Noel Larkin	Board Member			X	√	1/2

Finance Committee

Register of Attendance and Frequency of the Finance Committee Meetings							
Finance Committee Membership		5 th February	13 th March	22 nd May	18 th September	4 th November	Meetings Attended
Ms. Mary Mullarkey (Chairperson)	Board Member	√	√	√	√	√	5/5
Cllr. Michael Maher	Board Member	√	√	√	√	√	5/5
Cllr. Michael Crowe	Board Member	X	X	X	X	√	1/5
Ms. Bernadette Costello	Board Member	√	X	√	√	√	4/5
Mr. Ivor Gleeson	External Member	√	√	√	√	√	5/5
Mr. Charlie Notely	External Member	√	√	X	X	X	2/5

In addition to the Audit and Risk, and the Finance committees, the work of the Board is also supported by the following committees;

- Further Education, Apprenticeship and Training,
- Youthreach,
- Petersburg Outdoor Education and Training Centre,
- Youth and Arts,
- Boards of Management in GRETb schools.

Governance

Governance Structure

Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board (GRETB) is a local statutory, education and training authority. GRETB has a Board which is established in accordance with Section 30 of the Education and Training Boards Act 2013. The Board consists of 21 members, of which 12 members are elected by the local authorities; 2 members of staff; 2 parent representatives and 5 members with a specialist knowledge of education and training.

Functions of the Board

The functions of the Board, known as reserve functions, are set out in Section 12 of the Education and Training Board Act 2013 (see summary below):

- A request to the Minister for a name by which the Board may describe itself for operational purposes,
- The appointment of a Chief Executive,
- The suspension of a Chief Executive,
- The establishment of a scholarship,
- The giving of an opinion as to persons with whom the Chief Executive must consult in the preparation of a strategy statement,
- The adoption of a Strategy Statement,
- The adoption of an Annual Report,
- The acceptance of gifts or being constituted as a trustee,
- A decision to authorise the attendance by a member at a conference, seminar, meeting, or event,
- In relation to an ETB Committee (i) the establishment or dissolution of the Committee (ii) the determination of the terms of reference and the regulation of the procedures of the Committee (iii) the appointment or removal from office of a member (including the chairperson) of the Committee, and (iv) the confirmation of an act of the Committee,
- In relation to a Finance Committee and an Audit and Risk Committee: (i) the establishment of those Committees (ii) the appointment and removal of a member (including the Chairperson) of those Committees, and (iii) the receipt of a report prepared by each of those Committees and the determination of what action (if any) should be taken because of the findings of any such report,
- The adoption of an annual Service Plan,
- The power to borrow money,
- The keeping of accounts,
- The acquisition, holding and disposal of land, or any interest in land.

All other functions, known as executive functions, are the responsibility of the Chief Executive.

Code of Practice for the Governance of ETBs

The Board adopted the new Code of Practice for the Governance for Education and Training Boards which was issued in 2019 and is being implemented across the organisation.

GRETB compiled with its obligations under tax law, the public spending code, is committed to adherence to procurement policies and has prepared and is implementing a Corporate Procurement Plan. Each year the Chairperson of the Board submits a confidential statement to the Minister of Education.

Board's Role in Respect of Financial Statements

Section 51 of the Education and Training Boards Act 2013 requires the ETB to keep in such form and in respect of such accounting periods as may be approved by the Minister for Education and with the consent of the Minister for Finance and the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, all proper and usual accounts of the monies received or expended by it. In preparing the accounts, the Board is required to:

- (a) apply the standard accounting policies for the preparation of ETB financial statements
- (b) make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- (c) disclose and explain any material departures from the standard accounting policies

The Board is responsible for keeping proper books of account which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Board and which enable it to ensure that the Financial Statements comply with section 51 of the Education and Training Boards Act 2013. The Board reviewed the effectiveness of the system of internal control in the organisation as part of the process of approval for the annual accounts (for further details see GRETB's Financial Statements 2020 which will be available on the website www.gretb.ie once they have been audited). The Board considers that the Financial Statements 2020 of GRETB give a true and fair view of the financial position of GRETB as at 31 December 2020. In accordance with the Code of Governance for ETBs, the Chairperson's Report for 2020 (which included the Statement of Internal Control) was submitted to the Minister.

Risk Management

The Board through GRETB's Risk Management Policy, is committed to the implementation of a coherent, effective, and efficient framework for managing risks. The Board confirms that it carried out an assessment of the principal risks in GRETB in 2020. These risks and the mitigating measures associated with same, are documented in GRETB's Corporate Risk Register. Risk management and the mitigating measures are also reviewed by the Audit and Risk Committee at all their meetings.

Public Sector Duty

GRETB established a working group in March 2020 to develop a statement of values, to assess the equality and human rights issues as relevant to its function, and to put in place a plan of action for the implementation of the Public Sector Duty. GRETB have identified 6 values which underpin our Public Sector Duty, these include Dignity, Autonomy, Participation, Inclusion, Social Justice, and Environmental Justice. GRETB has set out a statement of priority and statement of process under each of these values. GRETB assessed the equality and human rights issues relevant to its function and in December conducted a validation of these issues by a Civic Society Panel. A plan of action for 2021 is now in place for the implementation of the duty.

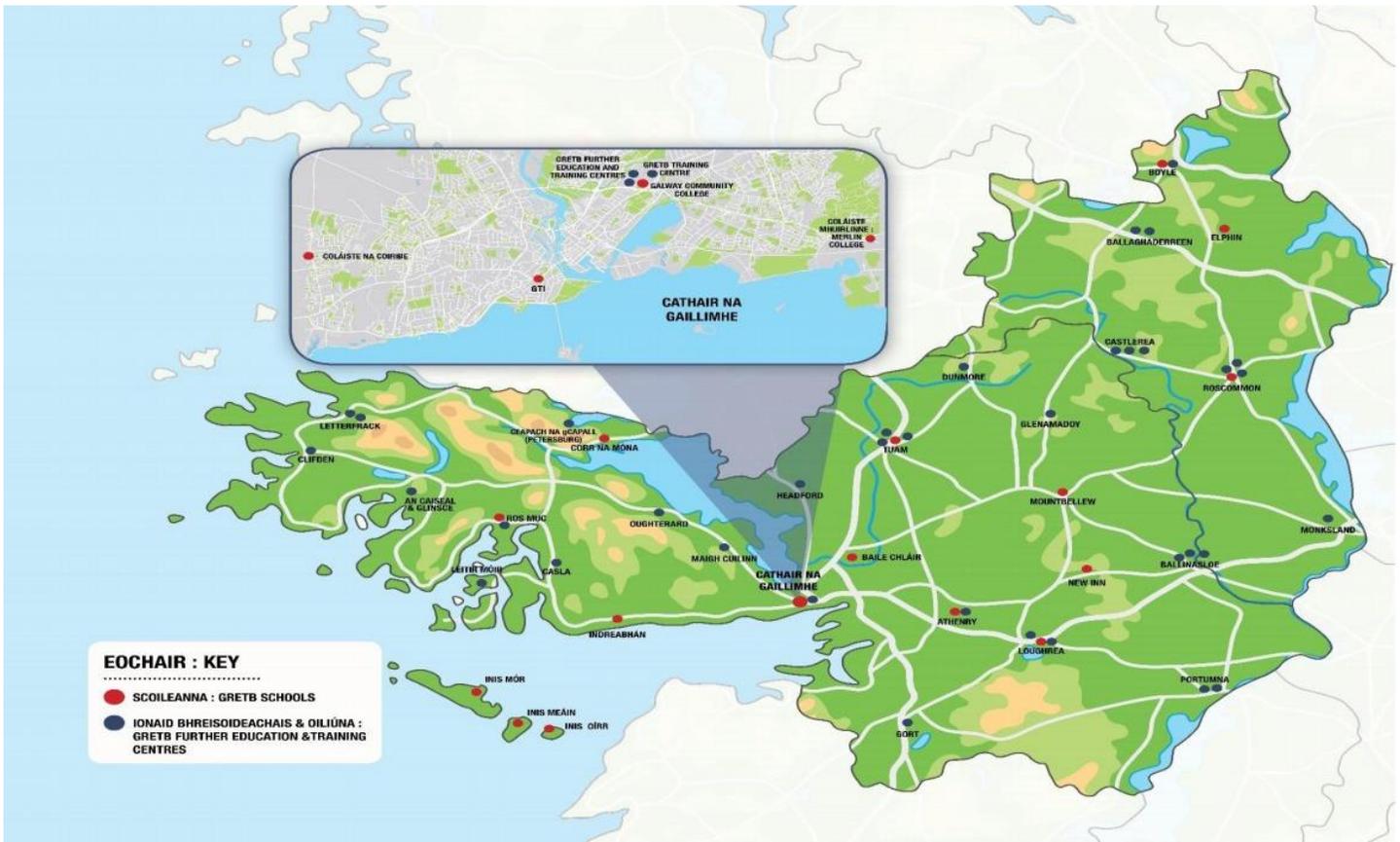
Protected Disclosures

In accordance with Section 22 of the Protected Disclosures Act, 2014, GRETB confirms that no protected disclosures were received during the period from January to December 2020.

Profile of Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board

GRETB provides a wide range of education services across Galway and Roscommon. We cater for a diverse population with different educational, social, and cultural needs. We provide educational services to a population of over 322,000 (CSO 2016). These services include community national schools, post-primary schools, further education and training, and community-based education programmes and training. GRETB runs and manages Petersburg Outdoor Education & Training Centre, an Education Unit in Castlerea Prison, and an Education Centre for refugees in Ballaghaderreen. GRETB is the lead partner for three Music Generation projects (County Galway, Galway City and Roscommon) which are being rolled out in the region. In accordance with the Education and Training Boards Act 2013, GRETB is also responsible for supporting the provision, coordination, administration, and assessment of youth work services in counties Galway and Roscommon.

GRETB is the second largest ETB in the country, in terms of geographical area, and includes three islands. County Galway has the single largest and most populous Gaeltacht area in the country. Promoting Gaeilge is an essential element of GRETB's core service. We have eight Coláistí lán-Ghaeilge/Gaeltachta and several of our Further Education and Training Centres in Connemara operate through Irish.



GRETB Schools and Further Education & Training Enrolment Figures

Service	Locations	Participants	Beneficiaries*
Primary Level	2	80	
Second Level	20	6,127	
Further Education & Training (FET) including PLC	41	11,260	15,273
Adult Education/Evening Classes in Schools	3		1,830

* Beneficiaries refers to the total number of places taken up in the year. This is calculated by adding enrolments as on 1st Jan 2020 and all subsequent enrolments throughout the year.



Community National Schools	Enrolment 2020/2021*
Lecarrow Community National School	16
Cuan na Gaillimhe Community National School	64
Total	80

* Enrolment figures at 30/09/2020



Post Primary Schools (excluding PLC)	Enrolment 2020/2021*
Abbey Community College, Boyle	438
Archbishop McHale College, Tuam	265
Clarín College, Athenry	604
Coláiste an Chreagáin, Mountbellew	77
Coláiste an Eachréidh, Baile Átha an Rí	252
Coláiste Bhaile Chláir, Claregalway	1174
Coláiste Chilleáin Naofa, New Inn	162
Coláiste Cholmcille, Indreabhán	103
Coláiste Ghobnait, Inis Oírr, Oileáin Árann	31
Coláiste Mhuirlinne/Merlin College, Galway City	660
Coláiste na bPiarsach, Ros Muc	60
Coláiste na Coiribe, Galway City	608
Coláiste Naomh Éinne, Cill Rónáin, Oileáin Árann	39
Coláiste Naomh Eoin, Inis Meáin, Oileáin Árann	32
Coláiste Naomh Feichín, Corr na Móna	74
Elphin Community College, Roscommon	143
Galway Community College, Galway City	269
Roscommon Community College	513
St Brigid's College, Loughrea	623
Total	6,127

* Enrolment figures at 30/09/2020

Adult Education/Evening Classes in schools 2019/2020:

1,830

**FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING 2020**

Programme Category	Distinct Learner	Beneficiaries*
Apprenticeship Training	467	467**
Adult Literacy Groups	1244	1833
Blended Training	238	243
BTEI Groups	1795	2815
Community Education	1407	2245
Community Training Centres	33	33
ESOL	811	1113
Evening Training in FET	368	384
FET Cooperation Hours	334	1082
ITABE	41	41
Justice Workshop	61	64
Local Training Initiatives	127	140
Other Funding	78	84
PLC	2498	2697
Skills for Work	180	206
Skills to Advance	192	208
Specialist Training Providers	128	141
Specific Skills Training	433	465
Traineeship Employed	17	17
Traineeship Training	202	226
Voluntary Literacy Tuition	16	16
VTOS Core	357	461
Youthreach	233	292
Total	11,260	15,273

*Beneficiaries refer to the total number of participants on programmes from the 1st January 2020 to the 31st of Dec 2020.

**There were 850 apprentices registered with employers in the GRET region.

In addition, GRET had over 2,500 regular participants on Music Generation programmes, 230 participants in GRET's Music School and over 12,000 beneficiaries from Youth Service, Adult Guidance Service and grants provided in the region.

Vision, Mission, Core Values & Strategic Goals

GRETB Strategy Statement 2017-2021 was influenced by key national strategies in education, such as the Department of Education’s Action Plan for Education 2016–2019 and the FET Strategy 2014-2019. GRETB’s vision, mission, values and strategic goals and priorities for the period were identified.



GRETB’s Strategy Statement sets high level objectives for the organisation under four strategic goals, which are in line with national strategies on education:

1. Improve the learning experience and success of learners
2. Improve the progress of learners at risk of disadvantage, those with special needs or with lanugage, cultural or social differences
3. Provide high quality education and training programmes
4. Ensure our organisational infrastructure (people, process and structure) is efficient and effective

Strategy Statement 2020

The following actions were either commenced or delivered during 2020 in line with GRETb’s Strategy Statement and the adjustments which were required to same because of the pandemic.

Strategic Goal 1: Improve the learning experience and success of learners

Priority 1.1: Provide responsive and innovative programmes

- Provided online and blended approaches, and innovative responses in the delivery of programmes in primary, post primary and FET in line with national guidelines during 2020.
- Provided responsive CPD for staff in the ever-emerging digital applications to facilitate online learning. Developed and delivered a ‘Getting Ready to Teach online’ course for staff to ensure learners have access to high quality resources when learning online.
- Digital Literacy Skills courses (level 1–3) offered to address the impact of social isolation and to support students online learning.
- GRETb commenced the ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) Software Apprenticeship in March 2020.
- GRETb provided online upskilling to 15 staff in customer service to staff for a local IT company.
- Developed and delivered a blended Infection Prevention and Control programme that ran 8 times in 2020 with over 150 learners.
- GRETb’s Arborist Apprenticeship was validated by QQI (Quality & Qualifications Ireland). In October 2020, the first employers and apprentices were registered, while off the job training was scheduled for April 2021.
- Transitioned Music Generation Programmes and GRETb School of Music to online learning.
- In October 2020, the first class of plumbing apprentices returned to the GRETb in over 10 years.
- The second intake of the Auctioneering Apprentice started in Athenry, and Accountancy Technician Apprenticeship commenced second cohort of apprentices in GTI.
- All PLC courses delivered by GRETb in 2020 operated successfully in hybrid mode supported by innovative training provided by GRETb TEL/GRETb TEL Champions in colleges and centres.
- A new certificate in facilities management was developed and delivered by GRETb for employees as part of the Skills to Advance programme.
- Inclusion of Youthreach Tuam in ‘Full Steam Ahead’ national pilot project with National Youth Council of Ireland and Science Foundation Ireland.

Priority 1.2: Provide relevant knowledge and skills for lifelong learning, personal development, progression and employment.

- Continued to expand Music Generation programmes with new music Hubs opened in Galway City, Clifden and Ballinasloe. Music Generation Roscommon had the second highest percentage increase in growth in participants nationally in 2020.
- New apprenticeships introduced in ICT, Arborist and Plumbing.
- Schools continued engagement in Young Scientists, Young social innovators, Young Philosopher’s, Gaisce programmes.
- Established progression programmes for Youthreach learners, including Childcare Traineeship in Roscommon and Level 4 Security Skills in Tuam.

Priority 1.3: Promote positive learning experience and environment

- Ran several wellbeing initiatives for staff, for example, “Tea with TEL”, online yoga, mindfulness, workout classes, online cookery classes and a “Steps Challenge” in HQ.
- Work progressed on The KeepWell Mark project which is being piloted in HQ.
- Planet Youth Project continued their extensive gathering and analysis of data on well-being of young people and the impact of Covid.



- Provided online Community Education courses throughout Covid19 lockdown to engage older learners isolated due to Covid.
- GRETB Employer Engagement ran a series of webinars for local employers on developing skills for change.
- The Training Centre arranged information sessions with Galway Samaritans Outreach for all apprenticeship and in-centre classes as well as external learners on mental health & wellbeing and will continue in 2021.
- Extra online provision provided for students with additional needs in small groups and/or one-to-one.
- High-risk staff and students afforded opportunity to continually work/ study from home during Covid-19.
- High-risk students virtually included in group classes where possible.
- Developed student welfare teams in schools. Coordinated targeted student welfare responses to specific individual needs during the pandemic, for example, students identified as being at risk of perpetual non-attendance/ early leaving.
- Continued provision of wellbeing programmes for all students and access to pastoral care/counsellors.
- Employee Assistance details regularly communicated to all staff.
- Learner feedback surveys used widely within GRETB to assist in identifying needs and applying interventions as necessary and appropriate. These survey reports indicated high levels of satisfaction amongst learners with supports offered by GRETB.

Priority 1.4: Provide technology enhanced learning environments

- Wifi upgraded in a number of schools and centres in 2020.
- Servers replaced in 6 schools.
- Training provided on platforms to teach and work remotely (Teams, Zoom, Moodle, SharePoint, OneDrive) and specific courses on how to teach remotely provided for a range of staff.
- Devices provided for staff and disadvantaged learners to work and learn remotely.
- Assigned TEL Champions to support FET staff and learners in use of online technologies. “TEL Hour” to support staff also rolled out in FET Centres.
- Resources on TEL SharePoint and Wriggle Connect made available to staff.
- Teacher reassigned to support TEL in schools with the specific remit to engage with schools in the development, implementation and utilisation of enhanced learning strategies and platforms.
- Supported the use of technology as a communication tool for students, learners, and parents in the provision of examination results, attendance, easy access pay systems and updates
- Reviewed and updated ICT policies and procedures in light of remote working and learning
- Set-up specific MS Teams forums for subject teachers including Career Guidance.
- Visualisers distributed across FET to enhance the learning experience.
- Enhanced GRETB FET Moodle as the virtual learning environment for FET.
- Distribution of over 500 laptops to disadvantaged learners in 2020 was a hugely positive intervention.

**Strategic Goal 2:
Improve the progress of learners at risk of disadvantage, those with special needs or with language, cultural and social differences**

Priority 2.1: Promote equality and active inclusion

- Public Service Duty - values statement completed, assessment of Equality and Human rights issues researched, validation of these issues by Civic Society panel was completed and an Action Plan for Public Service Duty was developed.
- Devised structures to ensure those most in need were provided with school meals throughout school closures.
- Continued the embedding of core values in schools. GRETB Schools Ethos Coordinator appointed.
- Provided ICT hardware, software, applications, and assistive technologies for students/learners with disadvantage / specific needs.
- Admissions Policies in compliance with the requirements of the Education Act 1998, the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 and the Equal Status Act 2000 were written, approved by Boards of Management of all schools, and adopted by the Patron.
- A one-year education residency scholarship awarded to 30 students from throughout Ireland, 'Bliain ar Oileán', in three GRETB schools on the Aran Islands, funded by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
- European Small Islands Federation (ESIN) included Island Education among its areas of focus since 2018 and progressed during 2019 at the AGM which was attended by GRETB Director of Schools. This initiative was followed up with a research paper re islands Education published by ETBI, [ETBI Journal of Education](#).
- Obtained SOLAS funding for students with disabilities.

Priority 2.2 Provide accessible and flexible education and training programmes

- Restructured school timetables to accommodate online learning during school closures and once reopened, staggered start and finish times implemented to enhance safety measures.
- Apprentices' classes in the Training Centre were split to start at 7am, with a 2nd class remaining until 7pm.
- An extensive number of programmes were adapted and made available online or blended during 2020, for example Post Leaving Cert courses.
- The Turas Centre concluded its initial pilot phase in 2020/2021 academic year and underwent an evaluation by the School of Education in NUIG. The centre provides a programme of alternative education for young people aged 12 to 15 whose mainstream school placement has broken down or who find themselves out of school because of disengagement, expulsion, school refusal or other circumstances.
- Despite Covid 19 restrictions – 18 learners completed Explore training, which focuses on face-to-face training on basic digital skills.
- Additional supports provided to students with disabilities.

Priority 2.3: Provide high quality inclusive education with improved learning outcomes

- GRETB supported and encouraged innovative structures, methodologies, and assessment techniques in schools/centres to ensure continuous improvement, inclusive attainment, and quality of learning outcomes.
- The Maths for Trades books were launched nationally in 2020. These books were first developed in GRETB and are a great resource for apprentices.
- Maths is offered to all PLC learners in GTI.
- QQI Completion rates in 2020 exceeded those in 2019 in PLC. With 72% successful completion
- Collaborated with external agencies such as Cheshire homes, Brothers of Charity, Department of Justice, Galway Travellers Movement, Simon Community, Local Employment Networks and Cope to ensure high quality inclusive learning.

Priority 2.4: Improve the transition of learners at critical stages in the education and training system



- Established a Working Group - Supporting DEIS Learners Transitioning to FET. All DEIS schools and relevant stakeholders are represented.
- Supported the Debenhams staff who were made redundant by delivering 4 online workshops on transitioning into new employment.
- Developed specific MS Teams Guidance Counsellor forum to support the sharing of good practice in schools in relation to student transitions.
- Provided online primary, post primary and adult education in the EROC Centre in Ballaghaderreen and engagement with local schools to facilitate educational transitions.
- Adult Guidance Service provided online support to new and existing FET learners during the pandemic.
- Developed GRETB supported progression programmes for Youthreach Learners in Tuam and Roscommon.
- Progression rates from GTI to NUIG in 2020 increased; 82 progressed to Arts, 7 to Health Science, 43 to Business, 7 to Science/Engineering and 10 to Law. GRETB/NUIG/GMIT FET to HE working groups have been hugely successful in increasing progression rates from FE to HE. Progression rates are forecast to increase again in 2021 with more places being made available to FE graduates.
- Adults Literacy Service offered one-to-one support over Zoom to learners in FET with job applications, CVs and preparation for online interviews.

Strategic Goal 3:

Provide high quality education and training programmes

Priority 3.1: Promote quality assurances in our education and training programmes

- Engaged with NCCA (National Council for Curriculum Assessment) supporting research and development in curriculum and assessment.
- Engaged with all school staff regarding the importance of quality provision and delivery in school curriculums throughout the pandemic.
- Established a formal governance structure across the Quality Assurance function for FET including the Quality Council and Programme Approval Board.
- Analysis of External Authentication reports with areas of best practice shared. Professional development initiatives delivered to aid continuous improvements in this area.
- Adaptation of Youthreach Centre Evaluation and Improvement Plan process (CEIP) to an online platform.

Priority 3.2: Support staff in the pursuit of quality teaching and learning standards

- CPD provided for staff in the use of ICT/ online platforms/ health and safety.
- MS Teams forums established in all subject areas for the sharing of good practice across schools.
- Appointed TEL Champions in FET and Schools.
- Supported staff in implementing the requirements of the voluminous number of directives on calculated grades, opportunity to sit examinations, and gain reflective certification.
- GRETB continually communicated support and commendations to all management, staff and students/learners for their innovation, adaptability, flexibility, and resilience throughout Covid-19 pertaining to the continued quality of teaching and learning during an unprecedented year.
- IT tutor developed E-portfolios to facilitate excellence and standardisation in online and blended learning.

Priority 3.3: Increase the use of quality data, analysis, research and evaluation to inform service delivery and identify emerging issues

- Students and learners were surveyed extensively by GRETB in 2020 to assess their level of engagement with remote learning, any related difficulties, welfare needs, wellbeing, access to PPE/IT equipment. Results used



to inform structural changes in service delivery, budget allocations, SEN allocations, IT support and procurement.

- Staff were also surveyed on remote working and related issues. Data gathered used to inform management on supports required.
- Required data was gathered in relation to Return to Education/Work forms, in turn the information received facilitated the identification and needs of high-risk students/staff allowing appropriate alternatives to be put in place in a timely fashion.
- A survey on the recruitment process was conducted in 2020 and based on the outcome several actions were agreed.
- Collated, reviewed, and measured state exam results (calculated grades) against national norms.
- Reviewed Management Leadership Learning (MLL), Whole School Evaluation (WSE) and Child Protection Inspection (CPI) reports and shared experience at Principals Professional Forum (PPF).

Priority 3.4: Promote leadership, innovation, continuous improvement and sharing of knowledge

- Significant upskilling of staff in use of IT platforms e.g., Teams, Zoom, LogMeIn etc.
- Staff encouraged and supported to engage in leadership programmes.
- Two staff members were nominated for awards by the Regional Skills Forum for their outstanding contributions to local industry with, with one staff member winning her category.
- MS Teams subject specific forms enabled the sharing of good practice across school and gave opportunity for staff to showcase innovation.
- Staff encouraged and supported in the application of Covid-19 related posts e.g., Lead Worker Representatives, Health and Safety and TEL provision.
- GRET schools and school leaders participated in nationally mandated and provided CPD, from PDST (Professional Development Service for Teachers); JCT; Teaching Council; CSL; NAPD; ETBI (LSSU) COGG; NEPS (National Educational Psychological Service); Droichead; and other relevant services.
- Monthly Principal & Deputy Principal Professional Forums occurred; key task groups were established involving Principal & Deputy Principals with subject/ issue expertise.

Strategic Goal 4:

Ensure our organisational infrastructure (people, processes, and structure) is efficient and effective

Priority 4.1: Ensure GRET has the capacity to successfully meet the current demands and to influence the future direction of the sector

- Managers participated in ongoing health & safety, risk assessment, critical incident briefings and group planning sessions re Covid 19 related issues.
- Implemented Return to Work/School/FET protocols.
- GRET worked with Universities from which participants in Professional Master of Education (PME) programmes undertake teaching placements in GRET schools and continued to formalise agreements regarding Garda Vetting.
- Parent and learning council advisory provided to schools on request.

Priority 4.2: Enhance our internal and external communication systems

- Developed a new website for GRET.
- Provided timely communication for learners, students, parents, and guardians regarding the ever-changing status in relation to education programmes during the pandemic.
- Continued engagement with the Regional Skills Forum.



- School organisational chart templates provided to schools demonstrating line management, leadership responsibilities towards improving internal school communications.
- Supported the use of technology as a communication tool for staff, students, learners, parents, and guardians.
- Utilised many marketing opportunities to communicate and promote learner/student achievements within their communities during the pandemic, for example, large graduation signs as part of virtual graduations, online videos on social media.

Priority 4.3: Provide the best possible teaching, learning, and working environments while maximising resources

- Clarin College, Athenry relocated to new state of the art school in Sept 2020.
- Large extension project in Roscommon Community School completed.
- Coláiste an Chreagáin & Coláiste na bPiarsach - construction of a new science lab commenced at both sites.
- Abbey Community College - construction of a new ASD unit and refurbishment of an existing area commenced.
- Non-ETB School projects managed by GRETB - S.N. Baile Clár – large extension completed, Scoil Fhursa N.S - large extension and refurbishment of existing building under construction.
- Funding for major extensions secured in St Brigid's College, Loughrea, St Killian's College, New Inn and Coláiste Cholmcille, Indreabhán.
- Engaged with the DE on progressing new school for Coláiste an Eachréidh, Athenry and additional accommodation for Archbishop McHale College, Tuam.
- Plumbing workshop in GRETB Training Centre was completed and first class started in October 2020.
- A number of additional small works and summer works projects were completed in GRETB schools and centres during 2020.
- Transferred to Payroll Shared Services in June 2020.
- Learner Payments (apprentices and trainees) transferred to new national payment system.

Priority 4.4: Ensure best practice in corporate governance throughout GRETB

- Training for Board members on Governance provided by Crowe Consultants.
- School Bank Accounts closed.
- Purchasing cards rolled out in schools.
- Self-assessment completed by Board, ARC and Finance Committee members.
- Child Protection (CP) training was provided remotely to all new GRETB staff as part of their induction.
- Child Protection training was provided remotely for GRETB Board members and school Board of Management members.
- Reviews of Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessments undertaken by schools.

Financial Statements 2020

Financial Statements 2020 - Please note that GRETB's Annual Financial Statement for the year ended the 31st of December 2020 is subject to audit by the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) at the time of publication of GRETB's Annual Report for 2020. GRETB's financial statements 2020 will be available on the website, www.gretb.ie once they have been audited.



Financial data in relation to the following are included in the Annual Financial Statement:

- Details of non-salary related fees paid in respect of Board Members analysed by category of fees
- Aggregate details of compensation of key management analysed by the following categories including management compensation in total;
 - o Salaries and short term employee benefits
 - o Post-employment benefits
 - o Termination benefits
- Key management compensation if any
- Details of the number of employees whose total employee benefits (excluding employer pension cost) for the reporting period fell between €0 and €59,999 and within each pay band of €10,000 and €60,000 upwards and an overall figure for total employer pension contributions.

Appendix 1

Centres for Further Education and Training

FURTHER EDUCATION & TRAINING	ADDRESS
Athenry	Station Road, Athenry, Co. Galway.
Ballaghderreen	Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon.
Ballinasloe	Sarsfields Road, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway.
Casla	Casla, Co. na Gaillimhe.
Cashel & Glinsk (North Connemara)	Cashel, Connemara, Co. Galway.
Clifden	Galway Road, Clifden, Co. Galway.
Dunmore	Tuam Road, Dunmore, Co. Galway.
Galway City	ABE, New Dock Street, Galway.
Galway City	BTEI, Tuam Road, Galway.
Gort	Ennis Road, Gort, Co. Galway.
Headford	Main Street, Headford, Co. Galway.
Loughrea	Barrack Street, Loughrea, Co. Galway



Moycullen	An Fuarán, Moycullen, Co. Galway
Oughterard	Camp Street, Oughterard, Co. Galway
Portumna	St. Bridget's Road, Portumna, Co. Galway
An Spidéal	Media Centre, Spiddal, Co. Galway
Tuam	BTEI Weir Road Tuam, Co. Galway
Tuam	ABE, Chapel Lane, Tuam, Co. Galway
Turas	Tuam Road, Galway
Breacadh	Casla, Co. na Gaillimhe
GRETb Training Centre	Mervue Business Park, Galway
Petersburg OEC	Clonbur, Co. Galway
VTOS – Boyle	Boyle, Co. Roscommon
VTOS – Castlerea	Castlerea, Co. Roscommon
VTOS – Galway City	Tuam Road, Galway
VTOS – Letterfrack	Letterfrack, Co. Galway
VTOS – Roscommon	Roscommon, Co. Roscommon
VTOS – Rosmuc	Ros Muc, Co. na Gaillimhe
VTOS – Tuam	Tuam, Co. Galway
Youthreach – Ballaghaderreen	Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon
Youthreach – Ballinasloe	Ballinasloe, Co. Galway
Youthreach – Galway City	Tuam Road, Galway
Youthreach – Letterfrack	Letterfrack, Co. Galway
Youthreach – Portumna	Portumna, Co. Galway
Youthreach – Roscommon	Roscommon, Co. Roscommon
Youthreach – Tuam	Tuam, Co. Galway