



**North South Education and Training  
Standards Committee for Youth Work  
Progress Report  
September 2018 - August 2020**

**Date: August 2020**

## **Introduction**

This report sets out to capture the progress made on the key objectives of the North South Education and Training Standards Committee (NSETS) throughout the period between September 2018 and August 2020.

Since 2006 the contract for the delivery of the administration on NSETS was held by the Department of Education and delivered by the Youth Council in Northern Ireland. September 2018 marked the beginning of the new contractual arrangement for the administration of NSETS between the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) and the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI). A new Development Officer (DO) was contracted by NYCI to provide the administrative and development Support to NSETS for the two-year period.

This report outlines the progress made by NSETS during this time under the following headings:

### **Governance and Operational Matters**

- Terms of Reference
- Financial Management
- Website Development
- Committee Meetings
- Reconstitution of Membership

**And**

### **Endorsement and Quality Work**

- Endorsements of Youth Work Programmes
- Endorsement Panel Recruitment
- Annual Monitoring of Endorsed Programmes
- Review of NSETS Endorsement Criteria
- Individual Recognition Protocol
- Impact of COVID-19 on Endorsed Programmes
- Joint Education and Training Standards (JETS)

## **Governance and Operational Matters**

*In order to carry out its role effectively, a number of governance and operational issues were identified for action by NSETS.*

### **Terms of Reference**

One of the priority actions of NSETS was the redrafting and finalisation of the NSETS Terms of Reference. This required consideration and input from both Departments North and South and by the membership of the NSETS Committee. The final version was approved and adopted in April 2019. See ToR on NSETS website -

<https://www.youth.ie/programmes/projects-initiatives/nsets/#Terms-of-Reference>

**Future Action Required:** ToR to be reviewed periodically as agreed by the Committee and both Departments.

### **Financial Management**

In order to cover the immediate costs arising out of the work of NSETS, one off matched funding from both Departments was applied for and secured. The Development Officer then developed a five-year budget forecast of expected operational costs of NSETS which was presented to the Committee. Following this a number of financial 'options' in relation to the financing of these operational costs was presented and a subsequent decision was taken in October 2019 to seek to cover these costs from HEI's using a 'cost recovery model' on an annual basis. In December 2019 the first invoices were issued to endorsed programmes. Throughout the two-year period the DO has ensured monitoring of finances by presenting a quarterly budget report to the NSETS Committee outlining all financial activity.

**Future Action Required:** Ongoing monitoring of the financial situation of NSETS.

### **Website Development**

NSETS Committee requested the development of a new NSETS website. It was agreed that it would be hosted by the National Youth Council of Ireland. The DO developed the content and worked with NYCI on the design of the website. The content included a current list of endorsed programmes including their time period of endorsement and the details of each HEI. The website went live in May 2019 <https://www.youth.ie/programmes/projects-initiatives/nsets/>. HEI's were contacted and asked to promote this website through links with their programmes.

**Future Action Required:** Increased efforts to communicate and promote the work of NSETS are required going forward.

### **NSETS Committee Meetings**

During the period of September 2018 to August 2020, NSETS Committee held eight meetings. The agenda, meeting minutes and accompanying papers and reports were prepared by the DO and signed off by the Co-Chairs. A number of sub-committees were also formed to progress specific areas of work, including finance, annual monitoring, reconstitution of membership, individual recognition/workforce development issues and the review of the Criteria and Procedures.

**Future Action Required:** Ongoing support of the work of the committee and sub committees.

### **Reconstitution of Membership**

The NSETS committee recognised the importance of reconstituting its membership of the committee in line with its Terms of Reference. It was decided to begin this process with the filling of vacancies in the employer and youth worker categories in the southern membership. Role descriptions and eligibility criteria were developed and a process of advertising the online application process resulted in a number of applications. The sub-committee shortlisted these applications and the Committee and DCYA formally approved these selections in March 2020. Two new youth worker representatives and an employer representative received an online induction session in May 2020, attending their first meeting in June 2020.

**Future Action Required:** It was agreed to commence the work to consider the reconstitution of Northern membership in the latter half of 2020.

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## **Endorsement and Quality Work**

*In order to fulfil its functions as the body with responsibility for the professional endorsement of Youth Work Education Programmes a number of areas of work were identified for action in relation to Endorsement.*

### **Endorsements of Youth Work Programmes**

A five-year schedule of endorsements was presented by the DO for approval to the Committee in October 2018.

Endorsements:

Endorsements were carried out on six programmes in four HEI's within the two-year period:

- Maynooth University - BSocSc Community and Youth Work and MSocSc Community and Youth Work. The Panel visit was carried out in March 2019 and approval was granted at June 2019 committee meeting.
- University College Cork - Bachelor of Social Science (Youth & Community Work) and Post Graduate Diploma in Youth Work. The Panel visit was carried out in April 2019 and approval was granted at June 2019 meeting.
- Youth Link/Moorlands College - BA Applied Theology (Youth and Community Work). The Panel visit was carried out in January 2020 and approval is incomplete/pending.
- TU Dublin Blanchardstown Campus - BA (Hons) in Community Development and Youth Work Programme. The Panel visit was carried out in March 2020 and approval was granted at March 2020 committee meeting.

For each endorsement a similar three stage process was followed.

1) The formation of a panel, individual review of the submission of evidence, collation of observations, pre-meeting establishing lines of enquiry and preparation of questions for each stakeholder group.

2) A panel visit conducted over a full day with meetings conducted with a range of stakeholders.

3) A panel report prepared detailing the summary of findings, and any conditions and recommendations. Final approval being granted by the Committee and communicated to the HEI.

### *Additional Endorsement Work - Extensions and New Applications:*

Carlow IT - A one-year extension was requested in relation to the BA (Hons) Youth & Community Work Course. This course received NSETS endorsement in 2014 and was due again for endorsement in 2019. A decision had been taken, due to low numbers of applicants, to discontinue the course, with a possible newly designed course incorporating mental health to be offered in the future. The DO carried out a site visit in November 2018 and issued a report recommending the extension which was approved at the December 2018 committee meeting.

Dundalk IT – A one-year extension was requested in relation to the BA Community Youth Work. This course was due to be endorsed in May 2020, however due to the governmental restrictions arising from the COVID-19, a decision was taken to delay the endorsement visit until May 2021.

GMIT - A request was received in November 2019 from Galway Mayo Institute of Technology for professional endorsement of its new programme the BA in Community Development and Youth Work. A draft submission was received and reviewed by the DO in May 2020 and communications are ongoing regarding the final submission of evidence.

**Future Action Required:** GMIT endorsement to be carried out in 2020 and DkIT in 2021. Mid-way review of University of Ulster to be done in 2021 and in MU and UCC in 2022.

### **Endorsement Panel Membership**

Following the committee's discussion at the October 2018 NSETS meeting on the importance of recruiting panel members for the forthcoming endorsement work of the committee, it was agreed that whilst it is important to recruit a variety of new members, it was decided to primarily focus on extending panel membership from the constituent members of the committee. This would ensure that there are experienced members of the panels, particularly during this time of transition for NSETS.

A recruitment process was established and an induction session was designed and delivered to seven new panel members in February in Dublin and five new members in Belfast in June 2019.

**Future Action Required:** A new round of recruitment and induction of panel members is to be progressed in 2020/2021.

### **Annual Monitoring of Endorsed Programmes**

The NSETS monitors programmes in order to retain a view on whether they continue to operate in accordance with the requirements for professional endorsement. The annual monitoring had been discontinued in recent years and so two new online surveys (undergraduate and postgraduate) were developed by the DO for this purpose. They were sent in October 2019 to the four HEI's with seven programmes, comprising of four undergraduate and three post graduate programmes. The results were presented to the NSETS Committee in December 2019.

**Future Action Required:** Annual Monitoring survey and report to be completed in each quarter four going forward.

### **Review of NSETS Endorsement Criteria**

The NSETS Criteria and Procedures document was last updated in 2013. A decision was taken in 2019 by the members of the NSETS Committee to prioritise the review and updating of this criteria and procedures, for completion in 2020. The purpose of the review is to update the document and to ensure that the criteria and procedures are current, they reflect the contemporary nature of youth work, and are fit for purpose. In order to begin this review process the DO carried out a desktop review of relevant reports, policy, research and other materials relating to NSETS and professional endorsement. There was also an extensive consultation process undertaken with key stakeholders in the sector. The consultation consisted of a Chair of NSETs and the DO hosting three regional consultation meetings, with participation from students, practitioners, employers and educators and a widely circulated on-line survey. Two focus group meetings were also held with young people currently engaged in youth work. The report of the findings from this review and consultations was presented to the NSETS committee in March 2020.

**Future Action Required:** The committee is to progress the updating of the content in quarter four 2020 using online meetings and sub- groups.

### **Individual Recognition Protocol**

The aim of this modified protocol is to allow the application by TU Blanchardstown, to grant NSETS endorsement to a defined number of suitable graduates from their BA (Hons) in Community and Youth Development. This process will serve as a pilot initiative, for consideration to extension to other HEI's who have current NSETS endorsement, and graduates of their programme prior to endorsement status.

**Future Actions Required:** The protocol needs to be finalised by sub-group members and put forward for approval to the NSETS Committee.

### **Impact of COVID-19 on Endorsed Programmes**

Following the restrictions imposed due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, university and college campuses were closed down on the 12<sup>th</sup> of March 2020 in the Republic of Ireland and on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March in Northern Ireland. This resulted in all face to face teaching being cancelled along with the closure of campus library and other facilities. NSETS endorsed Youth Work Programmes, along with other programmes of study, made a series of rapid adjustments to their teaching practice and put arrangements in place in order to facilitate the continuation of their students learning. The DO carried out a review in April of the arrangements with each endorsed programme and remained in contact regarding impact of changes on NSETS endorsement criteria.

**Future Action Required:** Monitoring of the impact of continued disruptions due to Covid-19 to be continued.

### **Joint Education and Training Standards (JETS)**

The DO and Chairs have attended a total of four JETS and one DO meeting with Joint Education and Training Standards Committee (JETS) across the two year period. The meetings have resulted in finalisation of JETS Terms of Reference, and work completed on the Mutual Recognition Protocol. Consultations relating to the updating of the National Occupational Standards was coordinated. Shared learning and coordinated approach to cross jurisdictional issues were addressed, including the updating of criteria and procedures and approaches to annual monitoring. Coordination of approaches to the application of criteria in relation to Covid-19 were also managed through JETS.

**Future Actions Required:** Development of JETS website, continued coordination of changes due to COVID and agreement on mutual and individual recognition protocols.

## Summary of Key Achievements for NSETS Sept 2018-Aug 2020

<p><b>Operational and Governance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Terms of Reference updated and approved</li> <li>• New financial Procedures agreed and implemented</li> <li>• New NSETS website developed and promoted</li> </ul>	<p><b>NSETS Committee</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 committee meetings held</li> <li>• 3 vacancies in the southern membership of committee filled</li> <li>• 3 new committee members inducted</li> <li>• 12 new endorsement panel members recruited and inducted</li> </ul>	<p><b>Endorsement Work</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 youth work programmes endorsed</li> <li>• 2 extension requests reviewed and approved</li> <li>• 1 new application for endorsement reviewed</li> </ul>
<p><b>Review of Criteria</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desktop review of information on revision of NSETS endorsement criteria completed</li> <li>• 5 consultation workshops held on revision of NSETS endorsement criteria</li> <li>• Report produced and presented on the findings from the review</li> </ul>	<p><b>Annual Monitoring</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Annual Monitoring process developed:</li> <li>• 2 online questionnaires created</li> <li>• 7 programmes completed monitored</li> </ul>	<p><b>Individual Recognition Protocol</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sub-Committee formed to address issues</li> <li>• New 'Individual Recognition Protocol' developed and drafted for approval</li> </ul>
<p><b>Covid 19</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis report produced of the impact of COVID-19 on endorsed programmes</li> <li>• Ongoing monitoring and communication with endorsed programmes on the impact of Covid.</li> </ul>	<p><b>JETS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 Joint Education and Training Standards (JETS) and 1 DO's meeting attended</li> <li>• Work completed on JETS ToR and Joint Protocols.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Communications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion of NSETS work</li> <li>• Responses to queries</li> <li>• Update presentation to The Professional Association of Lecturers in Youth and Community Work</li> </ul>

## **2018-2020 NSETS TIMELINE of KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

**September 2018** – New Contract begins with DCYA and NYCI for the Administration and Development Support to NSETS

**October 2018** – First meeting of NSETS under new arrangements

**November 2018** – Visit to Carlow IT re extension request

**December 2018** – NOS Consultation held in NI

**January 2019** – JETS Meeting

**February 2019** – Induction of new panel members

**March 2019** – Panel visit to Maynooth University.

**April 2019** – Panel visit to University College Cork. NSETS ToR approved

**May 2019** – New NSETS website goes live

**June 2019** – MU and UCC endorsements approved

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**September 2019** – Individual Recognition Protocol drafted

**October 2019** – Financial procedures approved

**November 2019** – Call for expressions of interest to join NSETS. Consultations on Criteria Review

**December 2019** – Annual Monitoring Survey Report Presented

**January 2020** – Consultations carried out on Criteria Review. Panel visit to Youthlink /Moorlands

**February 2020** – Report on Review of Criteria Produced

**March 2020** – Panel visit and approval for TU Dublin Blanchardstown. Extension granted to DkIT

**Apr 2020** – Analysis of new arrangements in relation to COVID-19

**May 2020** – Induction session provided to three new members of NSETS committee. Draft submission received from GMIT and feedback provided

**June 2020** – Meetings held with NYA. Report prepared re. endorsement of YouthLink/Moorlands