

Programme and Learner Support System Data Protection Statement

In connection with your application for, and subsequent programme of study on, further education and training (FET) programme funded through SOLAS, it will be necessary to process personal data (which may be held on paper, electronically, or otherwise) about you and third parties such as your next of kin. It is important that all personal data is treated in an appropriate and lawful manner, in accordance with applicable data protection laws. The purpose of this notice is to make you aware of how such personal data will be handled in this context. You agree to make third parties whose personal data or information you disclose aware of the terms of this Data Protection Statement.

What is PLSS?

The Programme Learner Support System (PLSS) is a joint project between SOLAS (the National Further Education and Training Authority) and Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI).

PLSS is a suite of software applications that are designed to provide an integrated approach to the collection and processing of personal data of users of PLSS and FET programmes funded through SOLAS, and the outputs, outcomes and performance of such programmes. FET programme providers include those entities listed in Appendix 1.

Who collects your data?

When you apply to attend a FET programme funded through SOLAS, personal data and information that you provide will be held by one or more of the following entities (each a "data controller" further details of which are available in Appendix 3):

· SOLAS · Your FET programme provider such as your Education Training Board (ETB) · ETBI · Higher Education Authority · Department of Education and Skills · Quality and Qualifications Ireland · Department of Social Protection · Revenue Commissioners

Each data controller is committed to ensuring that the personal data of its learners are handled in accordance with the principles set out in the Data Protection

Acts 1988 and 2003 (the "DP Acts"). If you have any queries about how your data are processed please contact [\[insert details\]](#).

What data will be collected?

When you apply for a FET programme funded through SOLAS, you will be asked to provide personal data and information about yourself. The personal data will include your PPSN, first name, surname, name as per your birth certificate or passport, address, date of birth, gender, nationality, whether you are in receipt of a Department of Social Protection (DSP) payments and/or employment details for those of you that are in employment and/or attended higher education, whether you have previously attended a FET programme funded through SOLAS. PLSS will record the course you enrolled in and your award (if any).

Each of the data controllers will process personal data and information that you provide and, in some instances where relevant, information provided to them by third parties such as other Governmental/public sector bodies (see more about this below).

Sensitive information about you such as ethnic or cultural background, living circumstances may be requested by a data controller listed below, which you may freely decide to give or not – this is an entirely optional disclosure. If you provide this information, the data will be retained, in aggregate form, for statistical and research purposes and to compare the progress of such groups with other groups. Such statistics and research will assist in identifying gaps in the system and assisting in the development and implementation of appropriate policies (e.g. equal opportunity policies) and interventions for future learners. If you decide to provide this information you are giving your explicit permission for the data to be processed for these purposes. Further details of the data to be processed are listed in Appendix 2.

Why and how do we process the information you provide?

It is necessary to process personal data you provide in connection with your application to and attendance on a FET programme funded through SOLAS. By submitting your application you acknowledge that such personal data may be processed for those purposes, including:

1. To contact you about the application.
2. To administer the application and to assess your eligibility for a FET programme funded through SOLAS in a particular academic year.
3. To follow up with you after the application is received, as required.
4. Maintenance of your learner record (including personal and course details).
5. Management of course processes (including commencement, completion, progressions).
6. Providing advice and support through the FET provider Guidance Services, where available.
7. To contact you after the course completion in order to measure course impact in relation to your further education and training participation and/or employment.
8. To track, evaluate and assess the outcomes of the FET programme.
9. To comply with European Union monitoring and reporting requirements.

Each of the data controllers undertakes to maintain your personal data in secure conditions with appropriate technical and organisational measures to protect it from unauthorised access or use. The data held on your PLSS record will be disclosed to relevant staff of the relevant data controllers and the FET programme provider and SOLAS on a need-to-know basis. All staff are made aware of the procedures they must follow to ensure your data is appropriately protected. It may also be made available to affiliated entities, agents, service providers, advisers and data processors and other Governmental, regulatory and/or public sector bodies.

SOLAS is required under the Further Education and Training Act 2013 (among other things) to assist in the co-ordination and provision of training by others and conduct research into the functions of SOLAS. This might include tracking involvement in, conducting impact evaluations on and assessing outcomes of FET programmes funded through SOLAS. Accordingly, pursuant to agreed protocols and arrangements, SOLAS may provide to and receive from other Governmental, regulatory and/or public bodies (including those listed in Appendix 3), limited and specific types of data about you or provided by you in your application for a FET programme. For example FET providers are required to disclose some of your personal data to SOLAS for statistical purposes. In addition, if you are attending an European Union co-funded programme the Department of Education and Skills is required to provide some of your personal data to allow monitoring, reporting and evaluating programmes to which they provide funds.

To support efficient processing of the application, a FET programme provider may need to check the accuracy of personal information you provide with external data sources. For example, if you have achieved certifications previously from another institution, the FET programme provider may need to contact the other institution(s) for confirmation of any qualifications obtained. The current list of such institutions/agencies is set out in Appendix 3.

Retention of Data

Each data controller will keep your personal data for the purposes of on-going administration, audit, and review, but only for as long as is necessary to meet the purposes set out in this notice. Each data controller will keep historical data that is no longer required for these purposes for a set time before disposal according to its data retention policy.

Your Rights

You may request, in writing, a copy of your information held by each of the data controllers. Please write to the Data Protection Compliance Officer at the relevant data controller [\[details can be found here\]](#) together with payment of the applicable fee (currently €6.35). You may be asked to prove your identity before your request is met. If you believe there may be inaccuracies identified in the information held about you, then you can contact [\[the relevant the Data Protection Compliance Officer\]](#) to have such corrected, to block certain uses or object to the processing of your personal data.

Your Queries

If you have any queries about this notice or how your data are processed please contact [\[insert details\]](#)