

What is VTOS?

VTOS is a program designed to help the long-term unemployed return to full time education without losing their social welfare benefits.

VTOS will help the participants make the transition back into paid employment or back to further education eventually leading to paid employment.

Participants will make new friends, and acquire valuable educational qualifications in an adult-friendly environment. We offer a range of courses from basic to more advanced levels and we particularly welcome people who may not have had the opportunity to progress through secondary school.

What courses are available?

Leitrim VEC provides a range of courses designed to meet the education and training needs of unemployed people.

At this college, we offer three full time courses over one or two years:

Business / IT Course; Traditional Irish Music, Media Engineering.

Who is eligible?

VTOS Participants must be over 21 years of age and be in receipt of one of the following social welfare payment for at least 6 months (156 days):

- Unemployment Benefit
- Unemployment Assistance
- One-Parent Family Payment
- Invalidity Pension
- Disability Allowance
- Disability Benefit*

Persons signing for credits for at least six months, and the Dependent Spouse of an eligible person are also eligible.

(* People receiving Disability Benefit should first contact their local Social Welfare Officer about exemption/entitlement to the continuation of their Disability Benefit Payment)

The following categories are also eligible to apply for VTOS provided they are at least 21 years of age and can satisfy the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs that they have not been engaged in work for at least six months, and are in receipt of one of the following payments:

- Blind Persons Pension
- Deserted Wife's Allowance
- Deserted wife's Benefit
- Widow/er's non-contributory pension
- Widow/er's contributory pension
- Prisoner's Wife's Allowance

What about Money Matters?

VTOS participants retain their social welfare benefits. Students come off the unemployment register and do not have to sign on again while on VTOS. Payments are made by the VEC while on VTOS.

An Education Training Allowance (€20) is paid to participants who are at least 12 months in receipt of a Social Welfare payment before they start VTOS.

Participants retain their entitlement to any secondary benefits e.g. Fuel Allowance, Christmas Bonus, Rent Allowance.

There is no charge for these VTOS courses.
Books, materials are provided free of charge.
Examination fees are paid for.

A nominal Lunch Allowance of €4 per week is also paid as well as a Travel allowance to participants who have to travel more than 3 miles to the VTOS centre.

(Students continue to receive allowances during the summer months).

You can work part-time during your time off at evenings and weekends without loss of benefit..

How do I apply?

Application forms can be obtained by contacting Mayo Sligo and Leitrim ETB, St. Georges Terrace, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim. Tel: (071) 9620024 or email: aflynn@leitrimvec.ie

You can also contact Mr Sean Wynne, Deputy Principal and VTOS Co-ordinator at Drumshanbo VS.

Before you start VTOS you will need to inform your local office of the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs. The Carrick-on-Shannon number is (071) 9650070.

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Please contact ETB Office to confirm updated details on VTOS