



# Fund for Students with Disabilities

**Guidelines (V.1/2020) for  
Education and Training Boards - Further Education Institutions**

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# PART A – PURPOSE OF THE FUND AND LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

## A1 - Introduction

The purpose of the Fund for Students with Disabilities (FSD) is to provide funding to further education institutions to assist them in offering supports and services to eligible students with disabilities so that they can participate on an equal basis with their peers. The Fund has been in place since 1994 and since 2003 has been managed by the Higher Education Authority on behalf of the Department of Education and Skills. The Fund operates in addition to the legal framework supporting the rights of students with disabilities to access further education. The Fund for Students with Disabilities for further education transferred to SOLAS in 2020.

These guidelines provide the following:

- The purpose of the FSD and legal obligations
- How to apply - eligibility and expenditure requirements
- Guidance on services and accommodations
- Eligibility criteria for support
- Allocation of funding
- Reporting requirements

## A2 - Legal Obligations of Service Providers

Education and Training Boards and further education institutions should be aware of the protections afforded to students with disabilities under the Equal Status legislation. For the purposes of the Equal Status Acts 2000-2015, Education and Training Boards are service providers and are prohibited from discriminating against any person seeking to access a course<sup>1</sup>, benefit or facility on the grounds of disability or any of the eight other discriminatory grounds.

Section 4 of the Equal Status Act prescribes that for the purposes of the Act, discrimination includes a refusal or failure by the provider of a service to do all that is reasonable to accommodate the needs of a person with a disability by providing special treatment or facilities, if without such special

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<sup>1</sup> Any course provided by the Institution, whether full-time or part-time

treatment or facilities it would be impossible or unduly difficult for the person to avail himself or herself of the service. A refusal or failure to provide the special treatment or facilities shall not be deemed to be reasonable unless such provision would give rise to a cost, other than a nominal cost, to the provider of the service in question. The meaning of nominal cost will depend on the size and resources of the organisation.

Under the principle of vicarious liability, the institution has legal responsibility for the conduct, during their employment, of individual teachers, lecturers and other staff members. The institution is also vicariously liable for discrimination by agents acting on their behalf.

The reasonable accommodation duty is only triggered where there is actual or constructive knowledge of the service user's disability. Where a service user chooses not to comply with a request for medical evidence/certification of the disability, this may relieve the service provider from their duty to reasonably accommodate.

### **A3 - Purpose of the Fund for Students with Disabilities**

The purpose of the Fund for Students with Disabilities (FSD) is to provide resources to colleges/schools of further education for the delivery of key services and supports for students with disabilities on full time courses. The FSD aims to support the personal, educational and professional development of the participating student and contribute to the achievement of their full potential.

The FSD operates firmly within the context of the wider education policy landscape in Ireland, which emphasises the importance of the system being one in which students of all backgrounds can succeed within the mainstream, including those with disabilities. The FSD is designed to complement rather than substitute for the core system. The funding of the delivery of services and accommodations resourced by the FSD is underpinned by key principles including the shared understanding that the purpose of funded services is to support the development of independent learning; inclusive education environments and an overarching commitment to continuous evaluation and improvement of services so as to deliver best practice supports for students.

## A4 - Planning the delivery of services and supports for students with disabilities

It is recommended that Education and Training Boards develop an annual service delivery plan for students with disabilities. Such a plan provides an over-arching, coordinating framework for further education colleges/schools as a whole and will support the achievement of best outcomes for the student group. The Plan provides the opportunity to identify all resources available to the college/school from both within and externally that are available to deploy in supporting students with disabilities. Internal resources include existing human resources and facilities; external sources include the FSD, in addition to other educational institutions and NGOs with which collaboration can take place (see Appendix 5 for Useful Links). It is recommended that a draft plan should be prepared in advance of the academic year and then be finalised following circulation and discussion with key stakeholders.

The plan should set goals, agreed actions and targets, as appropriate, for the following key areas:

- Completing assessments of need;
- Reasonable accommodations that can be made within existing academic/teaching & learning practice, at little or no cost, that can provide a solution to a learning need for a student with a disability. Examples could include; teachers using a range of teaching pedagogy that is inclusive including multi-media, making session notes available online in advance of classes, or facilitating the recording of classes
- Integration of technology into service delivery, including equipment, software, learning management systems (e.g. Moodle) and online applications, drawing on best practice elsewhere. For example, the development of study skills for students with dyslexia is a common support for these students and would benefit from integration into the curriculum. In addition, study skills is an area ripe for delivery using online resources. Training of students in the use of Assistive Technology should also be addressed in the plan
- Strategies for service delivery that enhance rather than hinder development of independent learning and, where possible, the general independence of the student
- Identification of externally delivered services and accommodations (e.g. Irish Sign Language, transport) and the requirements for putting a service plan in place
- Specialist support and resources (external) that the college can link with for students with high or complex needs
- Gaps in staff knowledge and expertise associated with the service plan and how they will be addressed through staff training and development.

## PART B – FUNDING ALLOCATION: ELIGIBILITY AND EXPENDITURE RULES

### B1 - Fund Allocation

Allocation of the FSD funding will be through the FAR4 process. FSD funding requests will form part of the annual bid (request for funding) process submitted to SOLAS by ETBs. FSD funding requests will be captured under FET provision supports in the FAR4. The funding 'Mid-Year Review' through the FAR4 process facilitates change requests to funding allocated and/or new funding requests. ETBs will manage funding allocation to PLC further education institutions for services and accommodations required for students with disabilities. Colleges/schools will assess the eligibility of the student for FSD support at local level using the criteria set out in these guidelines. Each ETB will develop their own processes in line with the 'SOLAS Fund for Students with Disabilities Guidelines for Education and Training Boards (V.1/2020)' to manage the Fund for Students with Disabilities.

### B2 - Assessment of Need

Prior to requesting supports and services, PLC Further Education college/school must complete and document an 'Assessment of Need' in collaboration with the student (see Sample Template in **Appendix 1 – Form 1a**).

The assessment of need document must be completed for each student included in the FSD Return and should be maintained by the PLC Further Education institution for verification and audit.

The Assessment of Need is the source document that determines the supports and accommodations that will be requested on the student's behalf. Students' participation in the assessment process is essential. It should be noted however that the document is an ETB/ college document and the ETB/college is ultimately responsible for decisions on the most appropriate support plan to meet the needs of the student.

**All information provided by students must be held in compliance with data protection legislation.**

In addition, supporting documentation must be retained in compliance with retention of records and audit trail guidelines.

### **B3 - Disclosure of Need**

The initial decision around disclosure rests with the individual. Where a student discloses to the college/school, they should be advised per the provisions of the Data Protection Acts 1988-2018, as to any relevant third-party dissemination and **should be requested to expressly consent or dissent to same in writing.**

### **B4 - Compliance with Data Protection Requirements**

Students must also be informed of the Data Protection implications of providing their personal data. They should be informed that:

- personal data collected as part of the application process may be processed for the purposes of coordinating, monitoring and evaluating the operation of the FSD and to comply with audit requirements;
- this personal data may include special category data e.g. personally sensitive data where they choose to share that data,
- the legal basis for collecting the data and how long their data will be retained for; and
- their data may be shared with third parties (must be listed) such as SOLAS for the purposes of auditing and monitoring of the Fund.

Where a student discloses to the institution, they should be advised per the provisions of the Data Protection Acts 1988-2018, as to any relevant third-party sharing and should **be requested to provide their explicit consent to same in writing.**

### **B5 - Who is eligible for support under the Fund?**

To be eligible for support under the Fund for Students with Disabilities, a student must meet the following conditions:

- have a verifiable disability – please refer to **Part D** of this document (eligibility criteria for support)
- meet the nationality and residency criteria as outlined in **Appendix 2**
- be a participant on a full-time, approved course (see **B9**)



- have a verified need for specific supports to enable attendance on their chosen course.

## **B6 - Eligible expenditure**

Funding can be used to provide supports and accommodations in any of the following categories:

- a. Assistive technology equipment and software (including student training)
- b. Non-Medical Helpers (e.g. personal assistants, notetakers)
- c. Academic/learning support
- d. Deaf supports (Sign Language Interpreters, Speedtext)
- e. Transport support
- f. Examination supports
- g. Supports outside the academic year
- h. Work placements.

Institutions are required to comply with European and national procurement guidelines when procuring services or accommodations in relation to the FSD, and where appropriate, explore opportunities to procure services or accommodations using a 'shared service' approach.

## **B7 - Ineligible expenditure**

The Fund does not cover expenditure on any of the following:

- assessment or diagnosis of a disability
- any medical equipment, assistance or support
- services that can reasonably be expected to be provided by the institution (e.g. counselling service) or by another agency (e.g. HSE)
- course-related equipment, materials or software (i.e. applicable to all students on the course)
- support or assistance provided outside the academic year, or periods during the academic year when the college is closed
- subsistence, mileage and accommodation costs for personal assistants, note-takers, speed-text operators or ISL interpreters
- staff training and development
- policy work or research
- student accommodation (i.e. on-campus or off-campus)
- salaries of staff in disability or access services involved in administrative work.

## **B8 - Financial and Data Requirements**

### **Financial period for Fund**

The financial period for the FSD is the calendar year 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> December. Disbursement of funding to ETBs will be through the tranche payments process.

SOLAS is required to take account of any portion of the FSD tranche not expended by the ETB on 31<sup>st</sup> December each year in the transfer of funding to that ETB for the following year.

### **Financial Reporting Requirements**

Record-keeping and financial reporting for the FSD are necessary to establish the ongoing position of ETB/colleges regarding the allocation of the fund locally and to inform national policy. Financial reporting by the ETB on the FSD allocation and expenditure will be through the FAR4 process under 'Provision Support Funding'. Data is also required on the types of cost items for which funding is allocated to students. To support these objectives each ETB in receipt of FSD funding is required to complete and submit to SOLAS an **Annual Return – Form 3a - see Appendix 4**. See **Appendix 3 - Form 2a** sample template (College/School Annual Return) which is designed to assist each college/school in receipt of FSD funding facilitate the completion of Form 3a by the ETB.

## **B9 - Eligible courses under the Fund**

The eligible courses under the FSD are full-time approved Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) courses of at least one-year duration in Ireland.

Note: the legal obligations of the FE college to service-users on courses falling outside the criteria for the FSD remain in force.

Repeat students are covered by the FSD provided they are repeating a year of study and continue to meet the other relevant eligibility criteria as set out in **PART D and Appendix 2** of this document. In the case of students who may be repeating e.g. a module or exam only, institutions have discretion to consider exceptional circumstances e.g. students with particular or specific high needs on a case-by-case basis.

## **B10 - Funding Request Documentation**

Each ETB may determine the funding request documentation to be used within their ETB, however the documentation should at least include the following:

### For each FSD request

- A data protection statement consent signed by the student
- Assessment of need form (see sample template Form 1a – Appendix 1)
- Evidence of Disability as specified in **Part D – Table D.1.**

The documentation will enable the total number of eligible students and also details of specific requests for personal assistants, ISL and incremental travel costs to be captured. These variables will inform the funding allocation. Allocations can be used to fund eligible expenditure as set out in **B6**. Each ETB will manage the process in line with their procedures for disbursement of funds relating to FSD.

**Note: SOLAS reserves the right to ask for supporting documentation associated with particular funding requests, including a copy of the Needs Assessment, Evidence of Disability, proof that the student meets the residence/nationality criteria and confirmation of registration/participation on an approved course. This may be requested as part of an audit, site visit or grant assurance process.**

## **PART C – GUIDANCE ON SERVICES AND ACCOMMODATIONS**

This section provides information on the types of services and accommodations that fall within the expenditure scope of the FSD.

SOLAS strongly recommends that ETBs take a strategic approach to disability support and plan, on an ongoing basis, for the delivery of services and accommodations. Section A4 above provides guidance on the development of an annual service delivery plan. Such a plan will help to ensure that disability services are as effective as possible in supporting the participation in and completion of the students on their chosen course of study.

Only costs associated with the delivery of services and accommodations directly to eligible students are covered under the FSD. Developmental costs are not eligible.

In cases where colleges or ETBs or Further Education Colleges/Schools employ personnel to deliver supports, the contractual relationship and the rights and duties embodied within are strictly between the individual employee and the ETB or college/school.

### **C1 - Assistive technology equipment and software**

Assistive Technology is defined as any item, piece of equipment or product system whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified or customised/custom-built, that is used to increase, maintain or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.

Assistive technology can be critical in supporting and developing independent learning for students with disabilities, and assistive technology skills learned and utilised in education can be very effectively transferred into other environments, such as the workplace. The provision of adequate training for students who are allocated assistive technology is critical to ensure maximum benefit for

the student and overall value-for-money. Training on assistive technology for eligible students is allowable expenditure under the Fund. Training for staff is not considered eligible.

## **C2 - Non-Medical Helper**

Non-Medical Helper such as a personal assistant (PA) or notetaker provides help to students with disabilities who require help with the logistical and personal care requirements associated with attendance on a course of study. Funding can be used to provide the service to a student during a college's normal operating hours and, if required, to assist the student with commuting to and from college. In general, personal assistance is only provided to students with physical/mobility disabilities and blind/visually impaired students who require such assistance to participate in their chosen course of study. However, it is recognised that students with non-physical disabilities e.g. Asperger syndrome may also require non-medical help and assistance during their studies.

Many students with severe physical/mobility disabilities may require a personal assistant for the entire period each day that the student is in college/school. Other students may only require personal assistance at certain times of the school/college day. Blind students may require personal assistance for a short period at the beginning of the academic year, until they have familiarised themselves with their surroundings. As the independence of the student is compromised using a personal assistant, the service should **only** be provided when necessary, and after the full range of options have been explored. Decisions associated with the engagement of a personal assistant are with the college/school, taking account where appropriate of the student's wishes/preferences.

In relation to non-medical helper supports that may be required outside the normal academic year (e.g. during summer months), these may be considered eligible under the Fund in the case of students with particular or specific high needs who may require access to facilities or services outside the normal academic year, to support their academic progression and completion.

### **Notetakers**

Students with disabilities that affect their ability to record class notes may be eligible for note-taking support. A range of alternative solutions are increasingly in place in education which can reduce the need, partly or fully, for the traditional note-taking approach. Lecturers making notes available to students in advance, preferably online, reduces the need for dedicated notetakers. Recording of lectures or the use of products such as the *LiveScribe* pen are other options. College/School access/disability services should explore all options before recommending the provision of a note-

taker. Note-taking is not a substitute for a student's full participation in each class. Note-taking support can be provided during academic contact hours only.

### **C3 - Academic Learning Support**

Funding is not available for the provision of tutorials that are a direct substitute for core teaching where the student is not prevented because of their disability from participating in core lectures or class-wide tutorials. The college/school should be satisfied that any subject-specific tutorials for which funding is being sought have been identified as part of an assessment of needs as reasonable accommodation resulting from the impact of a student's condition/disability.

### **Study Skills Support**

Study skills are important for all students, including students with disabilities. For this group, the development of skills, tools and techniques that minimise or eliminate any barriers presented by the learning environment is critical to success and progression to further study and beyond. In addition to Assistive Technology, study skills support is the most common category of support required by students with learning difficulties. This includes, memorisation, mind mapping, taking notes, writing skills, personal learning strategies. It can be delivered in small groups or individually, and there are an increasing range of online applications/tutorials available. Both study skills support and specialist learning supports may also be needed by students with mental health difficulties, autistic spectrum conditions and those with multiple disabilities.

### **C4 - Deaf Supports**

#### **Supports such as Irish Sign Language Interpreters and Speedtext**

Irish Sign Language (ISL) is an official recognised language under Irish Sign Language Act 2017 and is regarded as the first language of its users (the deaf community). ISL interpreters translate between English and the language and vice-versa. ISL can be provided during academic contact hours only.

*Speedtext* is an electronic class synopsis and note-taking system using two laptops, one for the Deaf or hard-of-hearing person (for real-time display) and the other for the specially trained operator (for input). A speed-text operator is trained in condensing language, thus transmitting the meaning of the

points discussed, not the actual word-for-word transcription. Speedtext is not a verbatim service. It is primarily for Deaf/hard-of-hearing person who have a good command of the English language. Speedtext can be provided during academic contact hours only.

## **C5 - Transport Supports**

Some students with disabilities have extra travel costs to pay to get to and from college. Funding is available for this purpose for students with physical/mobility difficulties or blind/visually impaired students. Only in exceptional cases are travel costs for students with other types of disabilities eligible under the FSD.

Travel costs can be funded only in cases where an eligible student must, because of their disability, incur additional transport costs in attending the college beyond those costs faced by any student commuting from the same residential area. The funding contribution is limited to the incremental element of the costs relating to one single or return journey per day.

In relation to transport supports that may be required outside the normal academic year (e.g. during summer months), these may be considered eligible under the FSD in the case of students with particular or specific high needs who may require access to facilities or services outside the normal academic year, to support their academic progression and completion.

College/school personnel should be satisfied that the need to avail of the proposed transport and incur additional expenses for the student to participate equitably is supported by the diagnosis in the assessment of disability.

## **C6 - Examination Supports**

In line with the overall principles of the Fund, supports to students with disabilities should be mainstreamed as much as possible within a college/school. This also applies to examination supports or accommodation. However, if specific high-level supports are required for examinations these may be considered eligible under the FSD.

## **C7 - Supports Outside the Academic Year**

In line with the categories of ineligible expenditure outlined in B7, support or assistance provided outside the academic year, or periods during the academic year when the institution is closed, are not covered by the FSD.

However, institutions have discretion to consider cases e.g. students with particular or specific high needs who may require assistance to be able to access facilities or services outside the normal academic year to support their academic progression and completion.

## **C8 - Work Placements**

Work placements are an increasing feature of many programmes. Students with disabilities undertaking such placements as part of their studies may continue to be supported under the FSD in respect of the categories of eligible expenditure outlined in B6. Institutions and employers should work together to identify any particular student needs that may need to be accommodated by an employer in hosting a student as part of their work placement.



## PART D – ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR SUPPORT

This section applies to eligible students for which a funding request is being made for the first time. The criteria set out in this section are specifically associated with the Fund for Students with Disabilities and FE colleges/schools should not assume that the same criteria apply in other contexts, e.g. obligations under law.

Funding can be requested for eligible students who have provided evidence of disability documentation that meets the criteria for the Fund as set out below. Education and Training Boards are responsible for ensuring that each Further Education college/school collects and screens the documentation to establish that it meets the criteria for funding and such documentation should be retained on-file by the institution.

Acceptable evidence of disability documentation is a report that meets the criteria as set out in table D.1. Providers of reports must be appropriately qualified professionals and members of professional/regulatory bodies. Reports should be signed and on headed notepaper.

**A General Practitioner own diagnosis of a disability/condition is not acceptable as evidence of disability for the purposes of the Fund.**

Please also note the following:

- Where a funding request is based on needs arising from more than one disability, appropriate evidence of disability documentation for each disability must be provided by the student and retained on file by the FE college/school
- All FE colleges/schools should advise students and relevant third parties that any medical reports or professional opinions compiled by third parties in support of an application should only contain details relevant to the disability being outlined
- Disability documentation which has been completed in a language other than English can be submitted, along with an English translation. This translation must be conducted by an individual/organisation that is completely independent of the student.

**Table D.1 Evidence of Disability Eligibility**

Disability	Evidence & Eligibility Criteria	Age of Report
<b>Autistic Spectrum Disorder</b>	A report from a <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultant Psychiatrist</li> </ul> OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Psychologist</li> </ul> OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neurologist</li> </ul> OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paediatrician providing a diagnosis of autism</li> </ul>	No age limit
<b>Attention Deficit Disorder</b>  <b>Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder</b>	A report from a <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultant Psychiatrist</li> </ul> OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Psychologist</li> </ul> OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neurologist</li> </ul> OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paediatrician providing a diagnosis of ADD/ADHD</li> </ul>	No age limit
<b>Blind/Vision Impaired</b>	A report from one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ophthalmologist/Ophthalmic Surgeon providing a diagnosis of severe reduction in vision that cannot be corrected with standard glasses or contact lenses. The diagnosis must be in relation to Best Corrected Visual Acuity or Field of Vision</li> <li>• A letter from the National Council for the Blind Ireland confirming registration</li> <li>• A letter from the principal from a school for the Blind confirming attendance.</li> </ul>	No age limit

Disability	Evidence & Eligibility Criteria	Age of Report
<b>Deaf/Hard of Hearing</b>	A report from one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An audiogram from a professionally qualified Audiologist and/or ENT Consultant, indicating moderate to profound bilateral hearing loss (i.e. above 40dB)</li> <li>• A letter from the principal from a school for the Deaf confirming attendance</li> </ul>	No age limit
<b>Developmental Co-ordination Disorder (Dyspraxia/Dysgraphia)</b>	A report from a <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Psychologist</li> </ul> OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Occupational Therapist</li> </ul> OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neurologist diagnosing Developmental Co-ordination Disorder (Dyspraxia)</li> </ul>	No age limit
<b>Mental Health Condition</b> (For example, Bipolar Disorder, Schizophrenia, Clinical Depression, Severe Anxiety, Severe Phobias, OCD, Severe Eating Disorders and Psychosis).	A report from a <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultant Psychiatrist</li> </ul> OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specialist Registrar</li> </ul>	Less than five years
<b>Neurological Condition</b>	<u>Neurological Conditions:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neurologist</li> </ul> OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• another relevant Consultant</li> </ul> <u>Speech &amp; Language Disabilities:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speech and Language Therapist</li> </ul>	No age limit

Disability	Evidence & Eligibility Criteria	Age of Report
<b>Significant Ongoing Illness</b>	<p>A report, diagnosing a significant ongoing illness such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diabetes Type 1: Endocrinologist or paediatrician</li> <li>• Cystic Fibrosis: Consultant respiratory physician or pediatrician</li> <li>• Gastroenterology condition: Gastroenterologist</li> <li>• Other: Consultant/Consultant Registrar.</li> </ul>	Less than five years
<b>Physical/mobility</b>	<p>A report from an</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orthopaedic Consultant</li> </ul> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• other relevant specialist diagnosing a significant physical or mobility difficulty.</li> </ul>	No age limit
<b>Specific Learning Difficulties (Dyslexia or Dyscalculia)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The report of a psycho-educational assessment by a Psychologist</li> </ul> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• by an assessor (PATOSS accredited) diagnosing a Specific Learning Difficulty.</li> </ul> <p>Students applying to the Fund may be asked for their latest assessment scores/educational reports to assist institutions in determining the appropriate level of support.</p> <p>All tests used in the assessment must be valid, reliable and age appropriate.</p>	No age limit

*Table D.1 Evidence of Disability Eligibility*

## PART E – ALLOCATION OF FUNDING

### E1 - Allocation of funding

A funding allocation will be made to each Education and Training Board in line with the FAR4 process. Any disbursed funding unspent at year end will be deducted from the following years funding amount to be disbursed.

### E2 - Confirmation of student registration

All students benefiting from the FSD must be registered on PLSS in advance of the fund expenditure.

### E3 - Monitoring of new process and checks

SOLAS may carry out checks, as part of the monitoring of the localised approach in ETBs. This will include requesting copies of locally held documentation associated with funding requests, and on-site visits/audits.

## PART F – REPORTING REQUIREMENT

### F1 - Financial reporting requirements

Record-keeping and financial reporting for the FSD are necessary to establish the ongoing position of FE colleges/schools regarding the allocation of the FSD locally and to advise national policy. Data is also required on the types of cost items for which funding is allocated to students, therefore, an end of year report should be submitted to SOLAS by the ETB using **Form 3a** (see **Appendix 4 - Form 3a**). Where there is more than one college as a beneficiary of the FSD in an ETB, a consolidated end of year report should be submitted. To support the completion of the annual FSD return by the ETB **Form 2a – see Appendix 3** has been developed for use by PLC Colleges/Schools to assist in annual FSD returns process.

## **F2 - Document retention**

Source documentation from which the final claims and indicator data returns are prepared must be retained in the event of an inspection by the following:

- SOLAS
- Department of Education and Skills
- Comptroller and Auditor General.

## Appendix 1

### FSD - Needs Assessment Form – Sample Template

FUND FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES - NEEDS ASSESSMENT FORM												
Student PLSS ID Number _____						PLSS - NCC Ref Number _____						
Course Title _____										Form 1a - PART 1		
Nature of Disability		Type of supports/Assistance Required										Cost €
Nature of Disability	<i>Please tick</i>	Academic /Learning Support		Assistive Technology Equipment & Software		Deaf Supports		Examination Supports	Non-Medical Helpers	Transport Supports	Work Placements	Cost €
		Non-medical helper support	General study support	Hardware	Software	Irish Sign Language (ISL) interpreter	Speed Text	Specify	Personal assistant	Specify	Specify	
Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)	<input type="checkbox"/>											€
Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)	<input type="checkbox"/>											€
Blind /Vision Impaired	<input type="checkbox"/>											€
Deaf/ Hard of Hearing	<input type="checkbox"/>											€
Developmental Co-ordination Disorder (Dyspraxia/ Dysgraphia)	<input type="checkbox"/>											€
Mental health condition	<input type="checkbox"/>											€

Appendix 1 – FSD – Needs Assessment Form Template continued – Form 1a – PART 2

Nature of Disability		Type of supports/Assistance Required										Cost €
Nature of Disability	<i>Please tick</i>	Academic /Learning Support		Assistive Technology Equipment & Software		Deaf Supports		Examination Supports	Non-Medical Helpers	Transport Supports	Work Placements	Cost €
		Non-medical helper support	General study support	Hardware	Software	Irish Sign Language (ISL) interpreter	Speed Text	Specify	Personal assistant	Specify	Specify	
Neurological Condition												€
Significant ongoing illness												€
Physical/ mobility												€
Specific Learning difficulties (Dyslexia or Dyscalculia)												€
											<b>Total €</b>	
Note:												
<b>FSD Application Decision Outcome</b>								<b>Student PLSS ID Number</b>	<b>PLSS - NCC Ref Number</b>			
Approved				Not Approved				0	0			
<b>Outcome Approved (in line with SOLAS Fund for Students with Disabilities Guidelines for ETBs V.1/2020) by:</b>												
<b>Signature:</b> _____						<b>Date:</b> _____						
<b>Print name:</b> _____						<b>Position:</b> _____						

College/School retains this form with supporting evidence of disability



## Appendix 2

### Residency, Nationality and Immigration Criteria

#### Residency

To be eligible for support under the FSD, a student must be legally resident in Ireland for at least 3 of the 5 years up to the day before her/his approved course commences in an approved institution. If the student does not qualify at the beginning of his/her course, it is possible for her/him to meet this requirement during her/his studies. This should be reviewed at the beginning of an academic year.

#### Nationality

To qualify the student must be either:

- an Irish national,
- a national of another EU Member State, the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland.

#### Immigration Status

If one of the nationality categories above does not apply, then the student will need to have:

- been declared a refugee under the Refugee Act 1996 (as amended), **or**
- admitted to Ireland as a Programme Refugee, **or**
- permission to remain in Ireland as a family member of a refugee under section 18 of the Refugee Act 1996, **or**
- been granted subsidiary protection under the European Communities (Eligibility for Protection) Regulations 2006, **or**
- permission in writing to enter and reside in Ireland under Regulation 16 of the European Communities (Eligibility for Protection) Regulations 2006, **or**
- permission to remain in the State as a family member of a European Union, EEA or Swiss citizen under the European Communities (Free Movement of Persons) Regulations 2006 and 2008 and EU Directive (EU Treaty Rights provisions), **or**
- permission to remain because of marriage or civil partnership with an Irish national or because you are the dependent child of such person, **or**
- humanitarian leave to remain granted before the Immigration Act 1999 came into effect, **or**
- permission to remain in Ireland following a decision not to deport under section 3 of the Immigration Act 1999.

## Appendix 3

### College/School Annual Return – Sample Template



#### FUND FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES - COLLEGE/SCHOOL ANNUAL RETURN

Year

Fund for students with disabilities to be administered in line with SOLAS FSD guidelines for ETBs (V.1/2020).

Form 2a

Form to be completed where applicable by FE PLC College/School and returned to ETB

School/College	TYPE OF SERVICES AND ACCOMMODATIONS FUNDED																
Insert College/school name here	Academic/Learning Support		Assistive Technology Equipment & Software		Deaf Supports		Examination Supports		Non-medical Helpers		Transport Supports		Work Placements		Total		
Disability Supported	Number of Students Funded	Actual Spend	Number of Students Funded	Actual Spend	Number of Students Funded	Actual Spend	Number of Students Funded	Actual Spend	Number of Students Funded	Actual Spend	Number of Students Funded	Actual Spend	Number of Students Funded	Actual Spend	Number of Students Funded	Total Actual Spend	
Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)																0	€0.00
Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)																0	€0.00
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)																0	€0.00
Blind /Vision Impaired																0	€0.00
Deaf/Hard of Hearing																0	€0.00
Developmental Co-ordination Disorder (Dyspraxia/ Dysgraphia)																0	€0.00
Mental health condition																0	€0.00
Neurological Condition																0	€0.00
Physical/mobility																0	€0.00
Significant ongoing Illness																0	€0.00
Specific Learning difficulties (Dyslexia or Dyscalculia)																0	€0.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>€0.0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>€0.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>€0.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>€0.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>€0.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>€0.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>€0.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>€0.00</b>	

Return form by:

Return form to:

I confirm that, in accordance with the guidelines governing the Fund for Students with Disabilities for ETBs (V.1/2020), that the funds allocated were used for the stated purpose and that evidence has been received and retained for further inspection as required, in relation to each case included in the above categories.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Print name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Position:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

# Appendix 4

## Annual ETB Return

### FUND FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES - ANNUAL ETB RETURN



Year

Fund for students with disabilities to be administered in line with SOLAS FSD guidelines for ETBs (V.1/2020). Form 3a - PART 1

Form to be completed where applicable by ETB and returned to SOLAS @ year end

ETB <i>Insert ETB name here</i>	TYPE OF SERVICES AND ACCOMMODATIONS FUNDED															
	Academic/Learning Support		Assistive Technology Equipment & Software		Deaf Supports		Examination Supports		Non-medical Helpers		Transport Supports		Work Placements		Total	
Disability Supported	Number of Students Funded	Actual Spend	Number of Students Funded	Actual Spend	Number of Students Funded	Actual Spend	Number of Students Funded	Actual Spend	Number of Students Funded	Actual Spend	Number of Students Funded	Actual Spend	Number of Students Funded	Actual Spend	Number of Students Funded	Total Actual Spend
Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)															0	€0.00
Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)															0	€0.00
Blind /Vision Impaired															0	€0.00
Deaf/Hard of Hearing															0	€0.00
Developmental Co-ordination Disorder (Dyspraxia/ Dysgraphia)															0	€0.00
Mental health condition															0	€0.00
Neurological Condition															0	€0.00
Physical/mobility															0	€0.00
Significant ongoing illness															0	€0.00
Specific Learning difficulties (Dyslexia or Dyscalculia)															0	€0.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>€0.0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>€0.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>€0.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>€0.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>€0.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>€0.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>€0.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>€0.00</b>

Appendix 4 - Form 3a continued on next page

Appendix 4 - Form 3a continued

FUND FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES - ANNUAL ETB RETURN

Form 3a - PART 2

Year  Fund for students with disabilities to be administered in line with SOLAS FSD guidelines for ETBs (V.1/2020).

ETB <i>Insert ETB name here</i>	TYPE OF SERVICES AND ACCOMMODATIONS FUNDED															
	Academic/Learning Support		Assistive Technology Equipment & Software		Deaf Supports		Examination Supports		Non-medical Helpers		Transport Supports		Work Placements		Total	
PLC College/School Funded	Number of Students Funded	Actual Spend	Number of Students Funded	Actual Spend	Number of Students Funded	Actual Spend	Number of Students Funded	Actual Spend	Number of Students Funded	Actual Spend	Number of Students Funded	Actual Spend	Number of Students Funded	Actual Spend	Number of Students Funded	Total Actual Spend
															0	€0.00
															0	€0.00
															0	€0.00
															0	€0.00
															0	€0.00
															0	€0.00
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															0	€0.00
															0	€0.00
															0	€0.00
															0	€0.00
															0	€0.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>€0.0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>€0.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>€0.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>€0.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>€0.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>€0.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>€0.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>€0.00</b>

I confirm that, in accordance with the guidelines governing the Fund for Students with Disabilities for ETBs (V.1/2020), that the funds allocated were used for the stated purpose and that evidence has been received and retained for further inspection as required, in relation to each case included in the above categories.

FET Director Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Print name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Return form to: FETOPS Unit (PLC), SOLAS, Block 1, Castleforbes House, Castleforbes Road, Dublin. D01 A8N0. plc@solas.ie



## Appendix 5

### Useful Links

#### **AHEAD**

The Association for Higher Education Access and Disability is an independent non-profit organisation working to promote full access to and participation in further and higher education for students with disabilities and to enhance their employment prospects on graduation.

<http://www.ahead.ie/>

#### **Student Finance**

This website provides useful information on financial support for further and higher education.

<http://www.studentfinance.ie/>

#### **DARE**

The Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) is a college and university admissions scheme which offers places at reduced points to school leavers with disabilities.

<http://www.accesscollege.ie/>

#### **Enable Ireland**

Enable Ireland's mission is to work in partnership with those who use our services to achieve maximum independence, choice and inclusion in their communities.

<http://www.enableireland.ie/>

### **National Council of the Blind Ireland (NCBI)**

NCBI, the national sight loss agency, is a not for profit charitable organisation which provides support and services nationwide to people experiencing sight loss.

<http://www.ncbi.ie/>

### **Chime – the National Charity for Deafness and Hearing Loss**

Chime’s mission is to limit the impact of deafness and hearing loss through promoting accessibility, creating supportive communities, and enabling personal choice and community participation.

<https://www.chime.ie/>

### **Aspire**

The Asperger Syndrome Association of Ireland, aim is to support people with Asperger Syndrome (AS) to lead full and independent lives.

<http://www.aspireireland.ie/>

### **Dyslexia Association**

The Dyslexia Association of Ireland (DAI) aims to promote the understanding, treatment and prevention of the problems which can be associated with dyslexia, a specific learning disability.

<http://www.dyslexia.ie/>

### **The Irish Wheelchair Association**

The Irish Wheelchair Association is a driving force for change, development and enhancements in the quality of life of people with disabilities in Ireland.

<http://www.iwa.ie/>

### **Irish Association of Supported Employment**

IASE is a national voluntary organisation which was established in February 1994 with the aim of promoting and developing supported employment at a national level.

<http://www.iase.ie/>

### **Disability Federation of Ireland**

Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI) is the national support organisation for voluntary disability organisations in Ireland who provide services to people with disabilities and disabling conditions.

<https://www.disability-federation.ie/>