



Role Specification

Title:	Programme Director – FET College of the Future
Duration:	4 year fixed term
Grade:	4
Unit:	FET College of the Future Programme Unit Executive
Reporting to:	Executive Director for Transformation

Background

The ***Future FET: Transforming Learning*** strategy set out an ambitious vision for the development of further education and training (FET), with core aims of easier learner access; simplified pathways; a more consistent high quality learner experience; and a stronger identity. To drive success, a ***FET College of the Future*** concept was set out which would combine capital development, staffing and structural reform and a more harmonised approach to FET provision and funding.

The launch of the strategy was followed by the announcement of significant capital investment via the National Development Plan for the first time since an integrated FET system was created in 2013. A total of **€281million** has been allocated to FET over the period 2022-2025. A range of capital funding strands, with associated policy and procedures, have been established to support emergency works, devolved grants and apprenticeship expansion, ensuring compliance with the Public Spending Code and consistency with the capital funding system for higher education (HE). A major call was also launched in January 2022 to support strategic infrastructure upgrade and major capital development projects in line with key FET College of the Future goals of ***consolidation, integration and specialisation*** within FET and ***collaboration*** with HE.

A dedicated team within SOLAS, led by a Programme Director, will oversee the ramp-up and roll-out of this major FET capital expenditure programme. The team will prioritise, manage and drive delivery of a pipeline of projects to ensure strategic and effective deployment of the capital budget available. Ensuring successful realisation of the FET College of the Future also requires the building of capacity and more systematic approaches at ETB level, both in relation to capital development and also in interdependent and critical areas of staffing, structure and provision reform. The team will therefore also link to an external network of 16 change managers across ETBs to drive and coordinate the change and reform required.

The Role

SOLAS is therefore seeking to appoint a Programme Director on a four-year fixed term contract within the Transformation Division to drive the delivery of the FET College of the Future through capital investment and wider reform across ETBs. The postholder will have direct responsibility for FET capital development and funding, including prioritisation and progression of specific capital projects; sectoral targets for the climate action agenda; supporting ETBs in the development of FET estates strategies; and supporting associated capital, staffing, structure provision reform across ETBs via an external change management network.

Key Tasks/Responsibilities

This is a senior professional role with leadership and management responsibilities. The successful candidate will be expected to demonstrate excellent project management, technical and contractual experience in the field of infrastructure planning, reform, procurement, and delivery. The ability to engage with stakeholders and counterparties at a senior level; drive and manage change; and lead and develop the team are also key aspects of the role.

Key tasks and responsibilities include:

- Creation of a pipeline of projects under the two categories of the recent FET College of the Future capital programme call, i.e. large scale projects, strategic upgrade projects
- Provide recommendations and/or decisions, as appropriate, in relation to capital project selection and approvals, ensuring a strong governance and value-for-money approach whilst aligning with FET strategic priorities
- Lead and support ETBs in the development of their FET estates strategies
- Lead and support ETBs in building capabilities and driving change in relation to essential capital, staffing, structural and provision reform, by working in partnership with a new network of 16 change managers within each ETB and with the FET Strategy Implementation team within SOLAS.
- Lead the development of a sectoral climate action plan to address the government commitments made in this area
- Support development of the infrastructure to support further digital transformation across FET settings.
- Provide oversight of, and support to, ETBs through the planning, procurement, and delivery of major and minor capital reform projects, monitoring compliance throughout the project lifecycle in line with the SOLAS/DFHERIS oversight agreement, and meeting all SOLAS assessment and reporting obligations.
- Support ETBs delivering reform in accordance with terms and conditions of funding and the transformation agenda
- Further develop programme and project governance and planning structures in partnership with DFHERIS and ETBs in line with best practice, ensuring clarity of roles and responsibilities between stakeholders.
- Create and manage stakeholder relationships and ensure that the integrity and reputation of SOLAS is held in high regard.
- Active monitoring and reporting on programme budgets, costs and progress against schedule, as well as risks and oversight of control measures
- Procurement and active performance management of external multi-disciplinary advisors, including ongoing communications and reporting.
- Undertake and/or commission compliance monitoring checks to ensure that projects are being procured and delivered in accordance with requirements
- Chair project team meetings and represent SOLAS as required at liaison committees, quarterly governance meetings with DFHERIS, and other key project meetings.

- Prepare reports, recommendations, board papers and presentations.
- Actively engage with the SOLAS senior leadership team on resource planning and the development and delivery of the SOLAS strategy and business plan objectives.

Requirements:

Essential

- Third level degree (or equivalent) or higher
 - o in architecture, engineering, construction, programme/project management, business, or a related discipline.
- Chartered membership of a relevant professional institution.
- Project/Programme management qualification (desirable).
- Knowledge of Project Ireland National Development Plan 2040, and the Climate Action Plan 2021, FET Strategy 2024 with understanding of the consequent implications for infrastructure development, procurement and delivery.
- Knowledge of Public Spending Code and Capital Works Management Framework
- Knowledge of key issues and management strategies associated with climate change/sustainability, environmental, social and governance factors on building projects.

Desirable

Preferably 10+ years' relevant programme or project management experience relating to the delivery of major reform projects.

Relevant experience will address the principal responsibilities above and may include:

- Oversight of planning and delivery of reform programmes or portfolios
- Recent experience of implementing sustainable, social and environmental management initiatives in project procurement and delivery is desirable.
- Management of project budgets; and implementation of IT solutions for tracking programme management
- Recent experience working with major forms of public sector contracts
- Project Team Leader experience, especially in leading and directing external advisors