

Chief Executive Officer  
of each Vocational Education Committee.

21<sup>st</sup> January, 2005.

Circular Letter No. F10/05

## Commencement of Vocational Education (Amendment) Act, 2001

Dear Chief Executive Officer,

The Vocational Education (Amendment) Act, 2001 itself provides that the Minister may bring its provisions into effect through commencement orders. The Minister has already made a number of commencement orders. Further Sections have been commenced by order on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2004, which are described below. This Circular Letter has been published on the Web and may be accessed at [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie).

This Circular Letter should be distributed in the normal way.

Any queries regarding the implementation of this Circular Letter should be addressed to the undersigned, Noreen Bevans or Oliver Hughes in Tullamore. (Tel: 0506-24336, Fax: 0506-25347).

J Kelly  
Post Primary  
(e-mail) [Jerome\\_Kelly@education.gov.ie](mailto:Jerome_Kelly@education.gov.ie)

## **VOCATIONAL EDUCATION (AMENDMENT) Act, 2001**

### **Section 9 (1): Functions of Vocational Education Committees**

Section 9 (1) sets down the functions of VECs, which supplement those conferred on committees under the Vocational Education Acts. These additional functions comprise:

- the planning and co-ordination of the provision of education and ancillary services in educational institutions established by a VEC;
- reviewing the provision of education and vocational education and training in the VEC area and advising the Minister on such provision;
- assessing whether the manner in which the VEC performs its functions is economical, efficient and effective;
- adopting and submitting to the Minister an Education Plan and a Service Plan;
- where appropriate, making all reasonable efforts to consult with school management, students, parents, staff members and anybody else likely to be affected by the VEC in the performance of its functions, or anybody with a particular interest or experience in relation to the education and training provided by the VEC;

Section 9(1) also stipulates that each VEC, in as far as is practicable, must co-operate with other VECs, schools and education providers in relation to the vocational education area of that committee as it considers appropriate.

### **Section 25: Service Plan**

Section 25 obliges each VEC to adopt and submit to the Minister an annual Service Plan providing for the services it proposes to provide and an estimate of the income and expenditure of the committee for the forthcoming year. If a VEC fails to submit a Service Plan, the Minister may require the VEC to submit it within a given period. If a VEC fails to comply with this direction, the Minister may direct the CEO to prepare and submit such a Plan.

If the Minister is of the opinion that a Service Plan does not comply with the policies and objectives of the Government or the Minister, he or she may direct the VEC or the CEO, where appropriate, to make particular modifications to the Plan.

### **Section 26: Amendment of Service Plan**

This section provides that where the Minister varies the expenditure limit of a VEC, he or she may require the Service Plan to be amended in a particular way or direct the VEC to adopt and submit an amended Service Plan.

### **Section 29: Annual Report of a Vocational Education Committee**

Section 29 requires that each VEC will prepare and submit to the Minister an annual report on the services provided by it, and anything else the Minister considers appropriate. Copies of the annual report must be made available by the VEC to members of the public.

### **Section 30: Education Plans**

Section 30 provides that every 5 years, or such other period as may be directed by the Minister, each CEO must prepare and submit to his or her VEC an Education Plan setting out the prioritised objectives of that VEC, and the measures to be used in achieving those objectives.

In preparing the plan each CEO must consult with the staff of the VEC, students, their parents and anyone else who will be affected by the plan or has an interest in it. The Education Plan must also comply with directions of the Minister and have regard to the financial resources likely to be available to the VEC.

When the Education Plan is adopted, it must be given to the Minister and the management of each institution under the authority of the VEC. It must also be made available to the public. The CEO must review the implementation of the Plan on an annual basis and submit a report on this to the VEC and the Minister. A VEC may amend its Plan in the light of such reviews.

### **Section 32: Finance Subcommittee**

This section provides for the establishment by each VEC of a Finance Sub-committee. The introduction of a designated Finance Sub-committee will ensure that at least some of the VEC Members must, with the CEO of the VEC, monitor the income and expenditure of the VEC. This allows Members of the VEC to take a proactive role in the management of the VECs financial affairs but also provides an additional safeguard to ensure that VECs operate in an effective manner and within their budgetary constraints. In carrying out its work, the Finance Sub-committee will have regard to the Service Plan agreed under section 25.