Recruitment for Facilitator Panel (Occasional Hours): AONTAS

Purpose of Role:

To support effective group facilitation at AONTAS events, including the National Further Education and Training (FET) Learner Forum.

Description

AONTAS are the National Adult Learning Organisation of Ireland, founded in 1969 and passionately working ever since to make education equal and accessible for all. Backed by our robust research and focused community work, we advocate and lobby for quality education for all adults and raise awareness of the impact of adult learning on people's lives and on society. We work on behalf our members, who connect with all communities across the island of Ireland. Our members and adult learners inform all our research and campaigns for social change.

The AONTAS Research Team ensures that the organisation has a strong evidence-base for advocacy and informs national policy and practice in the field of adult and community education.

Learn more at www.aontas.com

Our Vision: A world where the pursuit of learning for all adults is valued, equal, and strengthens communities

Our Mission: To advocate for empowering adult learning that drives social equality, justice, and collective action across the island of Ireland

The National FET Learner Forum:

AONTAS are responsible for delivering the National FET Learner Forum. The National FET Learner Forum (NFLF) is a Learner Voice project designed to bring together adult learners from across Ireland to ask their views on their FET experience. The purpose of the Forum is to ensure that FET is responsive to the needs of adult learners today and will continue to be in future. The SOLAS FET Strategy 2026–2030 explicitly recognises a goal to "place learners at the heart of decision-making by strengthening the learner voice throughout the system".

The National FET Learner Forum consists of a series of in-person events held across Ireland in collaboration with Education and Training Boards. The Forum offers all learners a safe space to share their voices, one where all voices are respected. At all times, AONTAS aim to create inclusive learner spaces, to enable the free expression of views, to listen to learners, and to facilitate stakeholders to act upon learners' expressed views. Learner participation is entirely voluntary.

Independent facilitators, trained by AONTAS, support focus group participants to engage in dialogue, to reflect on their experiences in Further Education and Training, and to share their ideas and proposals.

AONTAS utilise Learner Voice reports as a vital evidence base to influence national policy. The AONTAS Research Team records and transcribes all learner contributions. AONTAS analyse the resulting data and compile a regional report for the participating Education and Training Boards. At the conclusion of Forum events for the academic year, the Research Team collates all regional report findings and publishes an overarching, synthesis report: Learner Voices Across Ireland. Diverse stakeholders have highlighted how Forum insights have influenced policy discussion and changes to practice, notably facilitating resource allocation during the Covid-19 pandemic and the involvement of learners in ETB policy development.

AONTAS Facilitator Panel

AONTAS facilitators support focus group participants to reflect on their experiences in Further Education and Training.

AONTAS are seeking to increase our panel of facilitators who provide services to support effective group facilitation/ focus group discussion at AONTAS' National Further Education and Training (FET) Learner Forum events nationally. Please note that the National FET Learner Forums take place throughout the academic year, but primarily mid-week morning/ afternoons in Autumn and Spring, on an as-required basis.

To learn more about AONTAS' National Further Education and Training (FET) Learner Forum, please click here

Check out our video on what to expect at a Forum event here

Key Tasks

Facilitation

- To effectively facilitate focus group discussions at National FET Learner Forum events with adult learners across Education and Training Boards (ETBs) in Ireland
- To ensure maximum participation, engagement and discussion of participants in a respectful, democratic and meaningful manner
- To employ a range of creative facilitation techniques that support meaningful engagement
- To provide detailed notes on the topics discussed in focus groups relevant to ongoing research at AONTAS

At all times, operate to the highest professional, ethical and performance standards. This list of tasks is not exhaustive and may vary from time to time, to provide for change as applicable to the Facilitator role.

Measures of Success

- Effective engagement with group participants
- Positive feedback and evaluation from group participants
- Detailed written documentation of discussion sessions

Role Description

The National FET Learner Forums take place throughout the academic year, but primarily mid-week morning/ afternoons in Autumn and Spring, on an as-required basis.

AONTAS will invite expressions of interest in facilitation from the facilitator panel.

Payment is on an occasional hours basis (€50/hr for 3 hours). Travel expenses covered. Overnight stays are included when necessary.

Requirements

Essential

- A bachelor's degree in social policy, education, human rights, equality or a relevant area, or ability to demonstrate relevant work experience in given areas.
- At least 3 years proven experience in group facilitation
- Expertise in engaging diverse groups of adult learners
- Capacity to travel to a range of locations across Ireland as required.
- Proven ability to work collaboratively and to meet deadlines within a team setting

Desirable

- Knowledge of further/adult/community education.
- Qualification/training in facilitation or adult education.
- Experience working in a non-government organisation.
- Access to a vehicle and a full clean driver's license.

Personal Characteristics

- Commitment to social justice
- High level of empathy and emotional intelligence
- High level of professional responsibility and integrity
- Communicates effectively with learners/practitioners and stakeholders in a constructive, respectful and approachable manner

Excellent opportunity to engage with adult learners and practitioners and to contribute to national research aiming to support educational equality in Ireland.

To apply:

Please complete the short Microsoft Survey below outlining your key skills and experience.

https://forms.cloud.microsoft/e/VEuaCmfTr0

In addition, please send a copy of your CV to Karyn Farrell at kfarrell@aontas.com

Closing date for applications is **Wednesday 25th November 2026** at 5pm

Interviews will take place online via Zoom on the week commencing **7th December 2026**

AONTAS is an Equal Opportunities Employer