

**ADULT EDUCATION AND TRAINING: ISSUES EMERGING
FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION
SECTOR AND WORK ORGANIZATIONS**

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DECLARATION

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

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DEDICATION

***I DEDICATE THIS THESIS TO MY MUM, EILEEN, AND
TO THE MEMORY OF MY DAD, PADDY. YOUR
LOVE AND ENCOURAGEMENT WILL
ALWAYS BE APPRECIATED AND
REMEMBERED.***

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ABSTRACT

ADULT EDUCATION AND TRAINING: ISSUES EMERGING FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR AND WORK ORGANIZATIONS

Marie Morrissey

The central purpose of this thesis is to analyse and discuss a number of selected issues that are relevant to adult students within the higher education sector and work organizations. A specific objective of the higher education sector should be to facilitate lifelong learning through the provision of adult education and training. There is a need for workers to up-date their knowledge and skills, and in relation to work organizations, adult education and training should be seen as important and necessary from the perspective of employees and employers. There is therefore a need for work organizations to invest in, and support employees adult education and training. The education and training of adults must be seen to occupy a central rather than a peripheral role within the higher education sector and work organizations. There is also a need for the higher education sector and work organizations to recognize and develop adequate and appropriate support structures in order to facilitate and increase adult education and training.

In this thesis, there is both a European Commission and Irish perspective to the review of the literature. Relevant publications are reviewed in the context of adult education and training within the higher education sector and work organizations. To broaden the context of the research work, three themes emerged from the review of the literature, and they are seen as central to an understanding of the dynamics of educational provision for adult students, and are integrated as core issues throughout this work. The three themes are paid educational leave, Access courses and adult educational guidance.

The methodology employed in this research work involved a combination of questionnaires and interviews. Data was collected from graduates in two higher education institutions, from work organization representatives and Access Officers. The results were analysed using both a quantitative and qualitative approach.

The thesis concludes with key recommendations relevant for future developments in the context of adult education and training.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

BA	Bachelors of Arts
CEC	Commission for the European Community
DES	Department of Education and Science
DCU	Dublin City University
ECJ	European Court of Justice
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
EUCEN	European Universities Continuing Education Network
HEA	Higher Education Authority
IBEC	Irish Business and Employers Confederation
IFWEA	International Federation of Workers' Educational Association.
ILO	International Labour Organization
ITs	Institutes of Technology
MBA	Masters of Business Administration
MRD	Masters of Rural Development
NACCEG	National Advisory Council for Careers and Educational Guidance
NCEA	National Council for Educational Awards
NUIC	National University of Ireland, Cork
NUID	National University of Ireland, Dublin

NUIG	National University of Ireland, Galway
NUIM	National University of Ireland, Maynooth
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PCW	Programme for Competitiveness and Work
PESP	Programme for Economic and Social Progress
PPF	Programme for Prosperity and Fairness
REGSA	Regional Educational Guidance Service for Adults
RTCs	Regional Technical College
SIACE	Scottish Institute of Adult and Continuing Education
SO	Scottish Office
SOED	Scottish Office Education Department
TCD	Trinity College Dublin
UDACE	Unit for the Development of Adult Continuing Education
UL	University of Limerick
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VEC	Vocational Education Committees

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this introductory chapter is to set the scene for the contents of this thesis. This chapter opens by giving the rationale behind the research work and the objectives for the thesis will be outlined.

Clarification and definitions of some key concepts that will be central to the research work will be given next. This will be followed by a brief introduction to the relevant literature in the field from the perspective of issues related to adult workers, work organizations and the higher education sector.

The thesis is structured around three themes which will be integrated into the chapter: they are paid educational leave, Access courses for adults in higher education and adult educational guidance within the higher education sector. The chapter goes on to explain the methodology chosen in relation to the research studies that were undertaken, and concludes with an outline of the contents of the eight chapters.

Rationale Behind the Research Work

The central purpose of this thesis is to analyse a number of selected issues that are relevant to adult students within the higher education sector and work organizations. The background that led me to undertake this research work was as follows. Firstly, my interest in the area of adult education and training. Secondly, in my view, during the 1970s and for perhaps parts of the 1980s, there was a lot of emphasis and intervention by

the European Commission in the education and training of young people, but adult education and training was not a mainstream activity of the European Commission. The need for research was confirmed by Field (1996, p. 15) who acknowledges that adult education has been the subject of a limited number of European Commission policy overviews, and by McIntyre (2000, p. 100) who indicates that research on adult education and training has been overshadowed by research on school education. Thirdly, it was also my belief that one of the objectives of the European Commission in conjunction with national Governments, should be to develop more specific objectives in the field of adult education and training, and that workers' right to this provision should be an integral part of both national and international discussions. Fourthly, from a national perspective, it was my view that perhaps a peripheral role was being ascribed to adult education and training issues within work organizations and I was interested in researching this issue.

Having taken the four factors of the last paragraph into consideration, the opinion of Rudd (1985, p. 65) was noted, whereby the ideal topic for a research student involves three characteristics: it is interesting, it is manageable and it contains scope for original work. Taking into account the three issues, I identified the following three objectives for this thesis:

1. To review and discuss the policies and relevant documentation of the European Commission in the context of adult students, the higher education sector and work organizations.
2. To review and discuss relevant Irish education and training policies and documentation in the context of adult students, the higher education sector and work organizations.
3. Taking into consideration the emphasis ascribed to adult education and training, to examine to what extent the European Commission

and Irish publications and recommendations are being transformed into worthwhile practices for adult students within the higher education sector and work organizations.

As stated, a number of themes were also identified, the purpose of which would enable me to focus more clearly on the issues that would be relevant to the review of the literature and the research studies that would be undertaken.

Some Key Definitions

It is important to point out that in an analysis of the literature, various terms and concepts are used in relation to adult students and adult education and training, and at this introductory stage of the work, clarification is required. In defining adult students, the word 'mature' is often substituted for the word 'adult', while the student part refers to the people engaged in an organized course of learning usually under the direction of an education and training institution. In defining adult or mature students of eligible age for entry into higher education institutions, the position is very diverse, a point made by Tight (1996, p. 55). There are differences in what constitutes maturity or an adult student in education and training, although it could be argued that adults in the context of education and training should mean any person who has reached statutory school leaving age. Skilbeck and Connell (2000, p. 37) notes that mature age entry usually refers to those students who after an absence from the formal education system, embark as adult students on higher education courses. However, it must be noted that the variable age distinction that exists within countries and institutions for admitting adult students into the higher education sector has made it difficult for researchers to produce reliable findings, and this age issue continues to cause disparities in adult

participation trends within the higher education sector. This latter point, and the need to be cautious in interpreting participation trends in adult education and training has been confirmed by Tight (1996, p. 130), Lynch (1996, p. 82) and by Skilbeck and Connell (2000, p. 38). In relation to the term higher education in this thesis, this is defined as a third level institution (university and non-university) which in addition to providing courses for traditional type students, also provides courses for adult students.

Of particular relevance also to this work is what counts as adult education and training? The foundation document in Irish adult education, the Murphy Report (1973, p. 1) defines adult education as “the provision and utilization of facilities whereby those who are no longer participants in the full-time school system may learn whatever they need to learn at any period of their lives”. The definition cited eleven years later in the Kenny Report (1984, p. 9) made it clear that adult education refers to any form of education that takes place after an adult has completed their uninterrupted full-time education. Fourteen years later, this was the same definition used in the first Irish Green Paper on Adult Education in 1998 (*Adult Education in an Era of Lifelong Learning*) (p. 16), and this was meant to encapsulate provision for adults in the further and higher education sector and post-initial education and training undertaken by adults. Therefore adult education can be seen to involve education and training taking place in a variety of settings, such as educational and training institutions and workplaces. These types of settings are also noted in the first Irish White Paper on Adult Education (*Learning for Life*) (2000) which defines adult education as “systematic learning undertaken by adults who return to learning have concluded initial education or training” (p. 27).

In the literature review, terms such as 'recurrent education', 'permanent education', 'post-compulsory education', 'continuing education and training', 'lifelong learning' and 'lifelong education' are used. For example, European Commission documentation tends in general to use the terms 'continuing education and training', 'lifelong learning' and 'lifelong education', although there is some overlap in the different concepts used.

The concept of lifelong learning was initially promoted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) during the 1970s, but Edwards (1997, p. 187) is of the opinion that this discourse about lifelong learning is placed firmly within the domain of adult education. In 1997, the European Universities Continuing Education Network (EUCEN) (p. 6) notes that the concept of lifelong learning was taking the lead in discussions about new educational needs. However, Knapper and Cropley (1985, p. 15) puts forward the view that the term lifelong learning is problematic as it is used in different ways by various researchers, but it is generally linked to concepts such as continuing, recurrent and lifelong education. In policy terms at national and international levels, according to Merrill (1999, p. 10), the concept of lifelong learning refers largely to adult education learning, policy and practice. Robertson (1995, research interview cassette) indicates preference for the term lifelong learning within higher education institutions and workplaces, and feels that this distinction is useful as it captures the richness of adult education and training. Duke (1996, p. 76) sees the term adult and continuing education as being more appropriate. The Irish Higher Education Authority (HEA) have always supported the concept of lifelong learning, as has other international bodies such as the Organization for Economic, Co-operation and Development (OECD) and UNESCO. Indeed, in 1998 the Irish Green Paper on Adult Education was most timely

in analysing how a new policy on adult education could become part of a national programme of lifelong learning in Ireland, while the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness (PPF) (2000, p.113) saw the need to develop lifelong learning in work organizations.

While this research work concentrates on the higher education sector, there is according to Tight (1996, p. 57) no generally accepted legalistic definition of what is meant by higher education or even of the more specific term 'university'. A EUCEN publication (1997, p. 6) states that there is no clear-cut European definition of university continuing education, and it can be difficult to find a clear and unanimous definition of university continuing education at national levels. Indeed the frontiers between initial and continuing education are more difficult to draw as university continuing education could be said to operate informally under the category of lifelong learning. In the 1970s, the Murphy Report (1973, p. 43) felt there was no formal national definition of continuing adult education in Ireland, and thus it could operate informally under the category of lifelong learning. The Irish Universities Act of 1997 (p. 985), makes it a specific objective of a university to facilitate lifelong learning through the provision of adult and continuing education, while Fitzgerald (1999, p.1) is of the opinion that the concept of lifelong learning is taking root in Irish higher education institutions.

The relationship between education and vocational training poses a question of principle as to whether we should distinguish between the two. The European Court of Justice judgement (Gravier and Casagrande), did according to Lonbay (1989, p. 374) give a wide interpretation of the term vocational training whereby it was seen as "Any form of education which prepares for a qualification, for a particular profession or employment and

which provides the necessary training skills for such a profession, trade or employment is vocational training, whatever the age and level of the training of the student". In Britain, the turning point in the relationship between education and training was according to Field (1988, p.66) the Ruskin College speech given by Prime Minister Callaghan in 1976. The outcome of this speech was for Esland (1998, p. 41) an attempt at a closer alignment of education and training. From an Irish perspective, O'Sullivan, (1992, p. 336), feels that the sharp dichotomy of education and training has never been a feature of official discourse on learning opportunities for adults in Ireland. While the traditions of education and training have grown up separately, the European Commission has maintained the link between education and training as being of key significance. Garavan (1997, p. 41) is of the opinion that both concepts can be characterized as distinct, but in some ways, there are elements common to both of them in that education and training are essentially concerned with learning. For Garavan (1997, p. 42), training can be seen as learning by doing, whereas education is more synonymous with learning by thinking.

Adult Workers and Higher Education: The Parameters

Brugia (1997, p.4) indicates that continuing adult education and training in the workplace must be seen as essential, and society and the work environment obliges everyone to constantly up-date their knowledge and skills throughout their lives. The Irish Government White Paper on Adult Education (2000, p.17) expresses the point that education and training in the workplace is necessary in order for workers to gain intrinsic satisfaction from work, and suggests that it is in the interests of employees and employers that support for learning should be available.

In relation to the higher education sector, a factor that has according to

Gleeson (1996, p. 85) placed adult education and training high on political agendas concerns the transition from an elite to a mass system of higher education. During the 1980s, the 1990s and 2000, some Government publications highlighted the importance of adult education and training for employees. This was evident in documents such as the Green Paper in Education (*Education for a Changing World*) (1992), The Culliton Report (1992), the Programme for Competitiveness and Work (PESP) (1994) and the White Paper on Adult Education (2000). In addition, the need for the involvement of employers, increasing institutional and work organizations co-operation and the provision of adequate support structures, such as the provision of Access courses and adult educational guidance were also cited as essential in endeavouring to increase adult participation in adult education and training. However, despite various recommendations, Walshe (1999, p. 117) is of the opinion that Ireland pays less attention to catering for adult students than other countries. The need to increase participation of adult students, as a key issue for Irish higher education institutions was expressed at a Millennium Conference on Higher Education (O'Dea, 2000), and this same point was reiterated by the Chairman of the Irish HEA (Thornhill, 2000). The need for appropriate structures for the development of adult education and training in the workforce was also referred to in the PPF (2000, p. 106).

Brugia (1997, p. 4) states that national Governments have a role to play as they are the central authorities with the power to establish politically and legally a right to adult education and training. According to Field (1999, p. 128), flexibility of employment has been the hallmark of Government policy towards training for those at work. Keep and Mayhew (1999, p. 117) rightly maintains that there has been a significant increase in part-time employment and this trend should also enable workers to participate in

education and training programmes.

Closely allied with participation is investment, and Keep and Mayhew (1999, p. 125) also makes the point that many work organizations see education and training not as an investment but as a cost. There is a need for work organizations to invest in and support employees adult education and training, as educational and training qualifications, or the lack of them, determine to a large extent the life chances of people. Therefore, the rationale for investment in adult education and training should not be based entirely on economic considerations, but also on the importance of learning in creating a more democratic society.

The Three Research Themes

The following themes emerge from the literature as central to our understanding of the dynamics of educational provision for adult working students, and they will be integrated as core issues throughout this work.

1. Paid Educational Leave. Brugia (1997, p. 4) makes the point that just as there is a need for workers to participate in education and training, there also needs to be a firm commitment to education and training within work organizations. Work organizations must invest in and support employees adult education and training, and this brings into question the provision of paid educational leave as a factor in endeavouring to increase the participation of adult students in the higher education sector. Paid educational leave is one vital part of a system of adult education and training, and must be considered in relation to other aspects of adult education and not in isolation from them.

2. Access Courses. In relation to Irish adult education, going back to the

1980s, the Kenny Report (1984, p. 146) first made reference for the need within the higher education sector for the provision of Access courses for adult students. The need for this provision continued to be highlighted throughout the 1990s, and has now been identified as a necessary and important component in relation to the participation of adult students within Irish higher education. However, from a European Commission perspective, this issue has not been documented to any significant extent.

3. Adult Educational Guidance. Closely allied to Access course provision is adult educational guidance. From a higher education perspective, adult educational guidance is underdeveloped, and is an issue that has not been greatly addressed within Irish adult education, and to a lesser extent by the European Commission. The work in this thesis will therefore lead me to investigate developments in relation to adult educational guidance in the context of adult students in the higher education sector.

Methodology

In addition to a substantial review of the literature from both the European Commission and Irish perspectives, a series of research studies were undertaken. The contents of the Methodology chapter will provide a comprehensive account of the various research studies, the methods adopted and data analysis. The following is therefore a synopsis of the research studies undertaken:

Adult Graduates Research Studies. In 2000, a questionnaire was administered and interviews were undertaken with adult course participants at two universities, namely the National University of Ireland, Galway (NUIG) and Dublin City University (DCU). There were three parts to this aspect of the research work. Firstly, a questionnaire was administered in

both universities in order to gather data on issues relevant to adult education and training from the perspective of adult workers and the higher education sector. A total of one hundred and nine questionnaires were distributed, with a percentage response of seventy six per cent. In endeavouring to obtain further data on the issues mentioned, I undertook the second aspect of the study in 2000 which involved conducting a series of six in-depth interviews with graduates at both universities. This involved a total of forty five pages of transcripts. The third aspect of the research was undertaken in DCU in 2001, and the purpose of this study involved a follow-up to obtaining further data in relation to some relevant questions. Fifty two questionnaires were returned for this aspect of the study.

Work Organizations Representative Research Studies. Two studies were undertaken under this heading. In 2000, twenty four questionnaires was administered and was later followed by a series of seven in-depth interviews with work organization representatives. The purpose of the questionnaire and the interviews was to gather data on issues relevant to work organization from the perspective of adult workers in relation to education and training. The interviews resulted in a total of forty six pages of transcripts.

Access Officers Research Study. This research study involved undertaking telephone interviews with eighteen Access Officers in institutions of higher education in 2002. The purpose of this study was to assess the current provision of Access courses within institutions of higher education and some other relevant issues. In addition, the views of Access Officers in relation to adult educational guidance issues were also sought in the interviews.

Outline of Chapters

The sequence of the eight chapters will be as follows:

Chapter 1. Introduction

This chapter gives background information to the research issues that form an integral part of the thesis. The rationale behind the work and the research objectives will be identified. Clarification and definitions of relevant terms will be discussed. A brief introductory discussion on the relevant literature and themes applicable to the research will be a component of this chapter.

Chapter 2. Adult Education and the European Commission: The Emerging Policy Framework

The chapter will focus on a review of the literature of European Commission documentation, and will assess the impact of the European Commission in adult education and training, taking into consideration the higher education sector, work organizations and the identified themes.

Chapter 3. Adult Education and Training in Ireland

There will be an Irish perspective to this chapter, and the literature review will concentrate on a critical examination of publications and policies addressing adult education and training, the higher education sector and work organizations. The contents will also incorporate the identified themes.

Chapter 4. The Three Research Themes

This chapter will focus on a review of the literature on the three research themes that are integrated into the thesis. The themes in order of discussion are paid educational leave, Access courses and adult educational guidance.

Chapter 5. Methodology

As part of this thesis, different research studies were undertaken. The purpose of this chapter will be to discuss and analyse the various methodological issues that were reflected upon, and seen as essential and appropriate in shaping the research studies pursued, and in the analysis of the results. The implications at the methodological level for the research work is also considered.

Chapter 6. Results and Discussion: Graduates and Access Officers

The contents of this chapter will focus on the results and a discussion of the questionnaires administered and the interviews undertaken with graduates in both the NUIG and DCU. The chapter will also incorporate the results from the Access Officers on Access courses and adult educational guidance issues.

Chapter 7. Results and Discussion: Work Organizations

This chapter will concentrate on the results and a discussion of the questionnaire administered and the interviews undertaken with work organization representatives.

Chapter 8. Conclusions and Recommendations

The contents of this chapter will provide a summary of the main issues that has emerged within the chapters. Taking into consideration the objectives of the research study and the identified themes, key points will be highlighted. Based on the literature review and the research data that has been obtained from the studies undertaken, I will provide key recommendations relevant for future developments in relation to adult education and training issues.

CHAPTER 2

ADULT EDUCATION AND THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION: THE EMERGING POLICY FRAMEWORK

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to review policy developments in relation to adult education and training from the perspective of the European Commission. This chapter will address issues relevant to adult education and training in the higher education sector and work organizations. Within the contents of the discussion, it will be obvious that in the 1970s and for parts of the 1980s, adult education and training did not have a high status within the European Commission. The chapter will therefore deal briefly with the period pre-1980s, and in greater detail with the period subsequent to this.

Discussion

According to Clarke (2000, p. 69) responsibility and authority for vocational training was assigned to the European Commission through the Treaty of Rome in 1957. Field (1998, p. 5) believes that vocational training was the first area to be considered a legitimate matter of European Commission concern. For example, in relation to vocational training, Article 118 of the Treaty states (European Commission, p. 3):

The Commission has the responsibility to promote
co-operation between member states in the area of basic and
advanced vocational training.

Within the Treaty, no reference was made to education, and the point of education not being covered in the Treaty of Rome has been referred to by some researchers. For example, both Preston (1991, p. 46) and Field (1994, p. 54) indicates that under the 1957 Treaty, education was outside the

Community's competence. Interestingly Field (1994, p.54) also makes the point that the European Union was able to develop its higher education programmes only by claiming that its higher education was also a form of vocational preparation which could therefore be treated as training rather than education. Coolahan (1997, p.2) is of the view that there is no harmonised European Union legislation on education and it is the responsibility of the member states.

It is important at this stage that some consideration be given to the European Court of Justice which has in the past been called upon to make some education and training decisions. The European Court of Justice believes that access to courses of vocational training and education falls within the scope of the European Commission. Lonbay (1989, p. 369) notes that the European Court of Justice on examining the scope of vocational training in relation to various judgements, for example, Gravier and Casagrande, limited it to include higher education, as is evident in the following quotation by Lonbay (1989, p. 374):

...any form of education which prepares for a qualification for a particular profession, trade or employment or which provides the necessary training and skills for such a profession, trade or employment is vocational training, whatever the age and the level of training of the students and even if the training programme includes an element of general education.

The contents of the above quotation is appropriate to adult education. Lonbay (1989, p. 374) notes that in a subsequent court case (Blaizot versus the University of Liege), the European Court of Justice confirmed that training could be received at universities. The inclusion of higher education, as agreed in the European Court of Justice judgements in the area of education and training can thus be seen as important in European Union policy developments. The European Commission as a result of this European Court

of Justice ruling considers university education as belonging to the domain of vocational training (Crooks and O'Dwyer, 1990, p. 97). Field (1994, p. 21) states that based on a series of judgements from 1985 onwards, the European Court of Justice concluded that the European Commission not only had the right to intervene in education and training, but that it had also been right to interpret vocational training as encompassing the whole of higher education. Clarke (2000, p.73) notes that the effectiveness of the European Commission's education and training activities depended on its ability to overcome legal, administrative and regulatory barriers. However, Field (1998, p. 54) argues that in the Treaty of Rome and the subsequent Single European Act, the Unions' competences were constrained by the lack of reference to education.

Preston (1991, p. 19) indicates that the distinction between education and training at the European Community level is blurred, while Field (1994, p. 3) makes the point that the European Commission has not clarified its interpretation of the terms education and vocational training. In relation to both issues, Field (1994, p. 3) defines education as normally being regarded as a wide ranging process of academic development of the individual whose outcomes are relatively open, whereas vocational training tends to be seen as relatively narrowly focused around the vocational skills needed to undertake specific tasks in the workplace. Field (1994, p.4) does acknowledge that this solution is not always satisfactory and believes that this distinction although useful, is not completely appropriate, ignoring as it does the often permeable boundaries between education and vocational training. The European Commission therefore views all of higher education as vocational training.

Esland (1998, p. 28) agrees with the cited views of Preston (1991) and Field (1994), and puts forward the idea that the line between education and training has become increasingly unclear. While education and training are often linked in everyday usage and used interchangeably, they have been perceived quite differently according to Esland (1998, p. 29). Education has usually been

perceived as essentially concerned with the broad development and understanding of the individual, while training has usually been construed in terms of the narrow instrumental requirements of specific tasks, detached from their wider significance and context. For Esland (1998, p. 29), the concepts of education and training are therefore based on different sets of values, but in practice these differences may not be apparent. McKenzie (1995) thus questions whether education and training can be seen as related processes. Commenting on both terms, McKenzie (1995, p. 41) believes that it is essential that education retains an independent role as the training environment has become increasingly dominated by business values.

1970s: Policy Developments

Adult education and training issues were only of indirect importance in the early years of the European Community. To illustrate this statement, it was not until 1971, that the Education Ministers of the European Economic Community started to meet, and it was actually four years later, that the first policy initiative on education and training occurred when the European Parliament in 1975 stressed the importance of the Community's activity in the field of education and training. The following year, 1976, a resolution set out the objectives for the first Community action programme in the field of education. An Education Committee, representing the Commission, as well as individual Ministers of Education and advisory bodies were established, and their role was to co-ordinate and report on developments. Of importance was that this Resolution (No. 38/1, p. 1) adopted at this 1976 Meeting, provided the formal basis for all subsequent European Commission education measures.

When exactly the European Commission began to take an active interest in education and training issues for adults is open to question and different views have been expressed by various researchers. For example, D'Iribarne (1994, p. 4) is of the opinion that in the period 1969 to 1974, the Heads of Governments of member states, backed by the European Parliament, decided

to make efforts to achieve co-operation in the field of education. Borchardt (1995, p. 73) feels that it was only in the 1970s that closer educational co-operation between the member states was introduced, while Mulcahy (1992, p.179) indicates that it was not until the mid-1970s that the European Commission turned its attention to education. Field (1994, p. 43) suggests that during the 1970s, education and training was not seen to have a high profile, was restricted in scope, there were no significant debates and policies were not forthcoming. In a subsequent publication, Field (1998, p. 25) also notes that up until the early 1970s, relatively minor interest was ascribed to education and training.

1980s: Policy Developments

During the 1980s, as a result of economic, social and political factors, education and training issues seemed to be gradually attracting a little more attention than was the case in the 1970s. This statement is confirmed by Preston (1991, p. 18) and Field (1994, p.9) who indicates that it was only from the 1980s that education and training became one of the European Community's important policy sectors and started to acquire significant practical consequences. Subsequently, Field (1998, p. 38) notes that more energy was devoted to education and training. Other researchers such as for example, Borchardt (1995, p. 72) is of the view that co-operation intensified in the mid 1980s, and Tuijnman (1996, p. 26) feels that there was expansion of adult education and training during this period. Finegold (1999, p. 31) makes the point that in the 1980s, education and training reform became a major issue in member states. It must be remembered that during this period, adult education in Ireland had a low profile, and despite the seminal Murphy Report on adult education in 1973, the subsequent Kenny Report in 1984, also on adult education, and the establishment of the Higher Education Authority in the early 1970s, there were few notable developments, and the recommendations proposed in the context of adult education were not implemented to any significant extent.

Parker and Purser (1991, p. 166) feels that in the 1980s, the European Commission aimed to foster co-operation between higher education institutions and work organizations in the member states, while respecting the diversity of education and training systems. Elsewhere, Tuijnman (2000, p. 26) is of the opinion that it was during the 1980s that adult education expanded in Europe. However, during the early 1980s, reviewing the literature confirms that to a large extent from a European Commission and Irish perspective, education and training developments were more geared towards young people. For example, in 1981, the European Commission according to D'Iribarne (1994, p. 6), linked education to social policies in order to show that the priority in European education policy was a general and vocational education which was closely geared to the problems of youth unemployment.

The main purpose of the 1987 Single European Act was to increase the powers of the European Parliament and set 1992 as the target date for a single market within the Community. While Field (1998, p. 54) believes that in this Act, the European Commission competences were constrained by lack of reference to education, Preston (1991, p. 17) notes that with the completion of the Single European Act, it was obvious that education and training must play a central role in the overall development of the European Union. Watters (1993, p. 54) points out that the creation of the Single European Market would increase the responsibility of each member state to develop a highly skilled workforce.

In order to meet the challenge of preparing for 1992 (single European market) and beyond, in 1989, the European Commission set out objectives in the document entitled *Education and Training in the European Community: Guidelines for the Medium Term 1989-1992* (CEC, 1989 (a)). The aim of this publication included the need for continuous learning and equality of access to education and training. At that time, the European Commission's intentions were becoming clearer, and according to Crooks and O'Dwyer (1990, p. 62) were evident in the following quotation:

The new Commission has therefore decided to place education and training at the forefront of its priorities, to spearhead a new Community-wide commitment to invest in people, in their skills, their creativity and their versatility. Without investment in the present and future workforce, Europe's capacity to innovate, to compete and create wealth and prosperity for all its citizens will be severely impaired.

It seems that a major part of developing a Europe of skills as identified in this 1989 European Commission document, would be through adequate continuing education and training. The need to improve higher education and workplace collaboration was stressed, and adult education and training programmes needed to take account of new and relevant needs of workers, and also provide the existing workforce with opportunities for education and training, thereby acquiring new qualifications and skills.

An optimistic view of developments in the European Commission is evident in the work of some researchers. For example, Preston (1991, pp. 55, 46) suggests that since 1987, initiatives within education and training have developed, and was also of the opinion that the European Commission gave education and training a high priority in a new Community wide commitment to invest in people. Tuijnman (1996, p. 30) feels there was expansion in adult education and training during the 1980s, while Parker and Purser (1991, p.166) agrees that in 1989, the European Commission decided to place education and training at the forefront of its priorities. An example of this is the Charter of Fundamental Social Rights of Workers (1989 (b)). Of importance is that this Charter (1989 (b), p. 471) indicates that workplaces should within their own sphere of competence, set up continuing education and training systems enabling a person to undergo re-training, more especially through leave for education and training purposes and to improve or acquire new skills, particularly in the light of technical developments. Although not

specified, this leave could be interpreted to be paid educational leave. Preston (1991, p. 53) notes that the European Commission was encouraging greater links between education and training agencies, with the needs of training of small size enterprises being given particular priority. In relation to this latter issue, the Council Resolution in 1989 (89/C148/01, p. 1) also had in its contents the need to extend access by employees to continuous training particularly those in small organizations. While in general there was a limited emphasis on the importance of work organizations and institutional links by the European Commission, Preston (1991, p. 54) notes that there was a need to improve university and work organizations collaboration so as to ensure that training programmes were designed to take account of new skills needs. For the effective implementation of adult continuing education and training, there must be co-operation between education and training institutions and work organizations. However, the reality of this depends on the development of integrated policies and coherent strategies, issues which failed to be adequately addressed by the European Commission.

1990s Onwards

Memorandum on Higher Education

Of particular importance to this thesis was a development in 1991 when the European Commission undertook to issue its first Memorandum on Higher Education. The Memorandum, entitled *Memorandum on Higher Education in the European Community* (CEC, 1991), drew mainly on the discussions which took place in preparing the Memorandum and which involved experts in higher education, industry and European Union Ministers. Field (1996, p. 20) argues that this Memorandum was significant in terms of its implications for adult continuing education, and was a publication that was welcomed by individuals and organizations involved in adult education, training and the higher education sector.

What then are the key aspects of this Memorandum (CEC, 1991) that are relevant to this research work? It was obvious that developments in higher

education and training could not be considered in isolation and they should form part of a coherent approach to the field of post-compulsory education and training, a point previously expressed by the European Court of Justice in 1989. Other issues that this 1991 document confronted in the context of continuing education were access, participation in higher education and institutional and workplace co-operation.

The document (CEC, 1991, p. 20) in its section on continuing adult education referred to the importance of re-training and up-grading the education and training qualifications of the workforce. Evident within this acknowledgement was the need for more involvement of adults and a firm commitment required for the development of continuing education and training within work organizations. At institutional level, it stipulates that there was a need to create awareness of the importance of adult education and training, strengthen existing structures or create new structures for education and training, and analyse education and training needs in work organizations (CEC, 1991, p. 21).

Of significance too was that this Memorandum (1991, p. 17) also refers to a new student population, and used the term mature students within a framework of continuing education. Such a group of students would it was argued require a great diversity of provision in terms of both full and part-time courses, a distinction that Clancy (1988, 2000) disagrees with. However, it was through the part-time provision route that according to the Memorandum (CEC, 1991, p.12) workers would see their needs as being better served. From the perspective of the Memorandum (1991, p. 17), the task of higher education institutions would therefore be to fit these into what it refers to as a post-secondary structure. Similar to recommendations contained in for example, the Irish Green and White Papers on Adult Education (1998, 2000), the promotion of continuing education would therefore require new structures at institutional level, and an increased level of participation in higher education could be brought about by enrolling a greater proportion of adult students in continuing education.

Of notable importance too is that for the first time, this European Commission Memorandum (1991, p.16) points out that for a successful growth policy for higher education, action must be taken at the point of entry, and lists as key the provision of what it refers to as access or preparatory courses. For the implementation of such a provision, a review of access policies into higher education would also appear necessary within member states, a recommendation also included in the 1980s in the Kenny Report (1984, p. 146) on adult education. In relation to resources, the Memorandum (p. 17) did mention that extended participation obviously needed an accompanying financial commitment and that the member states would need to review financing structures to better reflect new priorities. The reference to enlarged student body can be interpreted as referring to mature students, and in relation to higher education institutions, there is also a challenge for them in providing a variety of courses which could cater for adult students needs.

Also of interest in this Memorandum (CEC, 1991, p. 18) was its focus on workforce provision and higher education. It noted that the education and training requirements of the workforce have not been catered for since within work organizations, employees cannot always be released from work responsibilities and more flexible training arrangements were therefore required. While no reference was made to paid educational leave as such in the Memorandum, it could be argued that the contents of this latter sentence may be seen to have implications for this issue.

The 1990s saw further initiatives aimed at strengthening aspects of education and training within the European Commission. A new Treaty was signed in 1992 by national Governments at Maastricht. This Maastricht Treaty came into effect two years later (1994) and amended the original treaties setting up the European Communities, dating back to the 1950s, and brought them together into a single text, namely the Treaty on European Union. Clarke (2000, p. 70) makes the point that added impetus was given to the European Commission training policies with the signing of the Treaty on European

Union, which amended the Treaty of Rome. Field (1994, p. 54) maintains that with the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty, the European Commission started to handle higher education within the framework of its education policy. The pursuit of largely economic goals of European integration are set out in the Single European Act, but these may according to Tuijnman (2000, p. 33), be expected to produce a 'knock-on effect' with respect to adult education.

Articles 126 and 127

When the Maastricht Treaty was signed, Articles 126 and 127 in the Treaty laid the basis for more co-operation in the field of education and training. Article 126 stipulates that:

The Community shall contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging co-operation between member states, and if necessary, by supporting and supplementing their action, while fully respecting the responsibility of the members states for the content of teaching and the organization of education systems, and their cultural and linguistic diversity.

This quotation seems to indicate a unified and integrated approach to education and training policy at European Community level. Article 126 also specifies the importance of such issues as the promotion of co-operation between educational institutions and the improvement of continuing education and training. Thus according to Field (1996, p. 20), Article 126 of the Treaty gave the European Commission for the first time competence in the field of education. However, elsewhere Field (1994, p. 53) puts forward the view that much will remain the subject of interpretation, for example, what precisely a contribution amounts to is uncertain, and it is unclear how decisions over what is deemed necessary will be arrived at, nor by whom. The CEC document (1997, p 31) makes the point that Article 126 of the Treaty limits the European Union's avenues of action as regards the organization of

education and training systems, which clearly falls within national competence. Article 126 thus formally established the competence of the European Commission for education, a provision that was lacking in the initial Treaty.

Article 127 states:

The Community shall implement a vocational training policy which shall support and supplement the action of the member states, while fully respecting the responsibility of the member states for the content and organisation of vocational training.

On Article 127, Field (1994, p. 53) feels that this was more ambitious in empowering the European Commission to act, not least in requiring it to implement a vocational policy which shall support and supplement the action of the member states. Another view offered by Clemenceau (1994, p. 17) is that Article 127 lays down that the European Community is responsible for implementing a vocational training policy to support and supplement the policies of member states, whereas previously the action of the Community involved establishing general principles for a common vocational training policy. Clemenceau (1994, p. 17) also maintains that vocational training policy must pursue some goals which includes the need to facilitate adaptation to changes in the workplace through improving and facilitating access to continuing training. However, Clarke (2000, p. 70) believes that Article 127 certainly defined the community responsibility for vocational training in more explicit terms.

It must also be noted that both articles (126 and 127) did according to Field (1994, p. 52) specifically preclude the European Commission from seeking to harmonise different national systems and emphasised the responsibility of member states for their content and organisation of education and training systems. Borchardt (1995, p.72) is of the opinion that under the Treaty on

European Union, both general education (Article 126) and vocational training (Article 127) were explicitly covered in the European Union Treaty, and puts forward the point that the European Community's task was confined to promoting co-operation between the members states in education and training.

In relation to the Maastricht Treaty, Bartlett et al. (2000, p. 28) feels that it extended the competency of the European Commission with regard to education and training policies. Considering the low status ascribed to adult education not only in Ireland, but also during the 1970s and for parts of the 1980s by the European Commission, both articles of the Maastricht Treaty did to some extent endeavour to give the European Commission a greater basis for the development of education and training policies and enabled it to take a more active role.

During the 1990s, the European Commission produced White Papers which it felt would set the framework for policy making well into the twentieth first century. The importance of adult education and training issues were as will be evident in the next sections recognized to some extent in the publications.

1993: The White Paper: Growth, Competitiveness and Employment, the Challenges and Ways Forward into the 21st Century

In 1993, the European Council Meeting in Copenhagen invited the European Commission to present the *White Paper: Growth, Competitiveness and Employment, the Challenges and Ways Forward into the 21st Century* (CEC, 1993). The Commission established the general framework for its analysis in this White Paper, drawn up on the initiative of the then European Commission President, Jacques Delors. According to Tuckett (1995) (research interview cassette) this was a key document in that it made the case for the need to integrate both the education and training components. Of importance is that aspects of chapters of this publication focused on education and training and were singled out as one of the areas vital in promoting growth and competitiveness. D'Iribarne (1994, p. 4) suggests that this 1993 White Paper

declared the necessity of adapting the educational and training systems in order that they might respond to the challenges of technological changes. Ruberti (1994, p. 9) saw an aim of the 1993 White Paper as finding ways of introducing a new dynamism into the systems of employment within the Community, with the term "systems of employment" being taken as covering education and training protection.

It must be pointed out that later another European Commission publication (CEC, 1997, p. 31) made the point that education and training systems would not develop satisfactorily without a firm partnership with work organizations. The importance of establishing links and co-operation between higher education institutions and workplaces has also been referred to by Rizenberger (1995) and Robertson (1995) (research interview cassettes).

Overall, the contents of the White Paper (CEC, 1993, p. 120) could be seen to reflect a positive attitude by the European Commission, and its recognition that education and training systems would have an important role to play in the process of co-operation between higher education institutions and employers. This could best be achieved by integrating the education and training dimensions into the strategic plans of work organizations. However, the White Paper (1993) failed to elaborate on how this could be implemented. In relation to the university sector, the White Paper (CEC, 1993, p. 120) made the point that the universities must be given the resources needed to play their particular role in developing continuing education and training, but were also vague in relation to resource implications.

1996: The European Year of Lifelong Learning

In 1995, Decision No. 2493 (1995, p. 45) of the Council of the European Commission and the European Parliament having regard in particular to Articles 126 and 127 agreed to establish 1996 as the "European Year of Lifelong Learning". While in itself a positive development, its background was based on a previous proposal in the 1993 White Paper (CEC, 1993, p.

122) and was initially referred to as the “European Year of Education”. It was possible that this designated year would be seen as a signal for clarification of the essential requirements and the long-term objectives in the fields of adult education and training in the European Community. The interests of adult students were according to Peck (1998, p. 68) being seen to be supported in 1996, and the year would aim at promoting education and training for this group.

Taking into consideration my previous analysis on the relationship between education and training, in the publication “European Year of Lifelong Learning”, Cresson (1996, p. 1) remarks that for the first time, a European Year was being devoted to education and training and that both were seen to be pivotal in the process of adaptation to change. The importance of the idea of adopting a lifelong approach to learning and training was according to the Irish White Paper on Training (1997, p. 29) manifested in the decision to designate 1996 as the “European Year of Lifelong Learning”. Within Decision No. 2493 (1995, p. 45) in which the “European Year of Lifelong Learning” was agreed, it was indicated that it was essential to ensure that education and training would be accessible to everyone. However, this 1995 document failed to elaborate on how this could be developed, even though lifelong learning is the common umbrella under which all kinds of learning should be united.

Another European Commission publication (CEC, 1997(a)), p. 107) noted that lifelong learning holds the potential to change the public’s understanding of adult education, and provides an awareness that education and training are continuing processes. In an overall assessment of the “European Year of Lifelong Learning”, an optimistic view of the year was noted by the European Commission in a communication (CEC, 1997(b)), (europa.eu.int/scadplus/leg/en/cha/c11024.htm) in which lifelong learning was now seen to have become central to policy debate throughout the European Union. In the opinion of the European Commission, the year set out to promote lifelong

learning by alerting the public to the need and desirability of continuous learning. The European Commission was also of the view that it would have a major political impact at European level by putting lifelong learning centre stage, and the European Commission's contribution to the debate was marked by a broad concept embracing a "cradle to the grave" approach. While it must be acknowledged that the "European Year of Lifelong Learning" did to some extent highlight lifelong learning from an international perspective, an analysis of the activities during the year did not result in any significant developments at European Commission level.

1996: White Paper: Education and Training: Teaching and Learning Towards the Learning Society

The previously referred to Articles 126 and 127 of the Maastricht Treaty, were the basis on which the European Commission built the 1996 White Paper (CEC, 1996). According to the Irish White Paper on Training (1997, p. 29), this 1996 publication builds on the previous European Commission document three years earlier, *Growth Competitiveness and Employment, the Challenges and Ways Forward into the 21st Century*, which stressed the importance of education and training within Europe. Bartlett et al. (2000, p. 33) are of the view that this publication was the one most focused on the development of a learning society. This second European Commission White Paper during the 1990s could be seen as part of a process designed simultaneously to provide an analysis, and to put forward guidelines for action in the fields of education and training. The Irish White Paper on Training (1997, p. 29) made the point that this 1996 European Commission publication provided a framework for action by member states in the field of education and training.

Field (1998, p. 185) feels that in the latter part of the 1990s, the European Commission had embraced a radical and reforming approach to the existing education and training systems within Europe. Field (1998, p. 72) also maintains that this 1996 White Paper also represented the European Commission's first policy statement based on the responsibilities it was

assigned for education and training under the Maastricht Treaty. However, Education Ministers in the European Community were according to Field (1998, p. 76) critical in their views of this publication, although the document (CEC, 1996a) had as its purpose the need to identify the options available to the European Union in education and training, analyse educational needs and issue recommendations for future action (p.3). This publication suggestions, guidelines and aims were obviously intended to support and supplement education and training policies, the responsibility for which rests first and foremost at national level. In fact, what the European Commission was reiterating was that each member state should have the responsibility to promote the development of adult education and training.

Similar to the 1993 White Paper, this new document (CEC, 1996, p.24) also acknowledged that member states must consider the link between education and training as being of key significance, and each is responsible for developing the structure, organisation and content of their education and training systems. The White Paper (CEC, 1996) considered a number of key areas, some of which I identify as relevant to this research work. In relation to access to education and training, the conclusions of both the Essen (1994) and the Cannes (1995) European Councils (p. 17) stressed the need to develop adult education and training. Yet, according to the 1996 White Paper (CEC, p. 17), there has been no signs of much progress in recent years and there had been no significant developments to spur a training drive for the benefit of adult workers. Hence, it is thus necessary to make urgent changes to help improve workers' access to adult education and training.

While the Council of Europe is not a brief of this research work, the point must be made that in 1992, the Council of Europe (p. 159) drew attention to the need to promote adult educational guidance within the higher education sector, even though the Council failed to elaborate on how this initiative could be developed. According to Bartlett et al. (2000, p. 29) the European Commission first gave a commitment to educational guidance for young

students and adults in 1963. This was followed up with a recommendation in 1966 advocating that member states should promote educational guidance. However, in terms of the European Commissions own activities, it was guidance for young people that progressed during the 1970s, 1980s and for parts of the 1990s. In fact, the European Commission in aspects of publications has a tendency to refer to support structures in helping adult students to enter higher education institutions, but are quite vague in what are support structures and the institutional and financial implications that may be involved.

Within this 1996 White Paper (CEC, 1996, p. 34), an appropriate educational guidance service is seen as one that promotes access to information. In strengthening adult education and training, the White Paper (CEC 1996, p. 15) points out that students must be able to enter institutional systems more easily and indicates that two conditions would appear to be necessary. Firstly, adequate information and guidance, and secondly, access to training. In relation to the first condition, this White Paper does not elaborate on the adult educational guidance issue, while the second condition was defined as open access serving individual aptitudes and need, but with no practical ideas on ways of achieving this. Bartlett et al. (2000, p. 34) notes that the White Paper (CEC, 1996) appears to be based on the belief that better information about learning opportunities would possibly lead to the enhancement of skills. These authors (Bartlett, 2000, p. 32) are of the view that it is difficult to assess precisely the European Commission's approach towards adult educational guidance policy, and in a previous publication by Rees and Bartlett (1999, p. 23), they put forward the point that in most members states of the European Union, adult educational guidance has traditionally been the Cinderella of guidance services.

Another issue raised in the 1996 White Paper and of relevance to this thesis was the need for co-operation between education and training institutions and workplaces. Within the contents of this publication (CEC, 1996, p.19) it is

indicated that education must be opened up to the world of work, and adapting and improving education and training systems must be strengthened through co-operation between educational institutions and workplaces, points that also have been documented by Gallacher (2000, p. 1). This positive co-operation would according to the White Paper (CEC, 1996, p. 22) be reflected in continuing education and training. However, it must be noted that this 1996 White Paper failed to elaborate specifically as to where this co-operation could be reflected, but indicated that education and training strategies in the context of work was therefore a central preoccupation.

Regarding new and future developments, the White Paper (CEC, 1996, p.25) recommends that by giving greater autonomy to those responsible for and involved in education and training, education and training systems could adapt better to meet modern working needs. This necessary autonomy would need to be part of the process of closer links between the worlds of education and work, making it possible to promote continuing training (CEC, 1996, p. 37).

It is also interesting to note that although the 1996 and the 1993 White Papers ascribed importance to continuing education and training, both publications failed to mention paid educational leave or make any reference to this issue. Previously, in the latter part of the 1980s, the European Community issued a Community Charter of Fundamental Social Rights of Workers. Within the contents of this 1989 document (CEC, 1989, p.3), the importance of work organizations recognizing the need for workers to undergo continuing training through leave was mentioned. Reviewing the literature has confirmed that from a European Commission perspective, the issue of paid educational leave has not been addressed to any significant extent. O'Halloran (1996, p.2) is of the view that a negative attitude at European Commission level towards this area had been evident. Luttringer and Pasquier (1980, p.417) points out that in OECD countries, discussions on paid educational leave occurred in a somewhat haphazard fashion. Six years later, the OECD

(1986, p. 111) put forward the view that the assessment of the actual impact of paid educational leave in Europe was extremely difficult. O'Halloran (1996, p. 2) asserts that the right to paid educational leave could have been established by the European Commission, and that the ideal opportunity to start the debate on which paid educational leave could be established as a new social right for workers in Europe was during the 1996 "European Year of Lifelong Learning". Despite O'Halloran's (1996) hopes, an analysis of the European Commission review of the literature reveals no obvious discussions on this issue during the "European Year of Lifelong Learning".

The White Paper (CEC, 1996, pp. 26, 47) also notes that expenditure on education and training was severely affected by economic issues, and this was seen to be particularly true in the case of work organizations who in a recession would possibly have to cut back their spending in this area. While the European Commission would have no intention of interfering with internal decisions of the member states, a point previously referred to in this work, at the same time it felt that priority should be given to investment in education and training (CEC, 1996, p. 30). This White Paper (1996, p.47) also proposes support measures at European level in education and training, but within the document reference to this support issue was vague.

In an address to a conference during the "European Year of Lifelong Learning", Bruton (1996) rightly points out that there were many areas that needed to be addressed, and in particular refers to the statement in the Conclusion Section of the White Paper (CEC, 1996) which summed up the position of education and training in the European Community (Bruton, 1996, p. 4):

All too often education and training systems map out career paths on a once-and-for-all basis. There is too much compartmentalisation of education and training systems and not enough bridges, or enough possibilities to let in new patterns of lifelong learning.

1990s Onwards: Other Relevant Education and Training Publications from the European Commission

During 1996, a paper presented by the European Association for the Education of Adults (p.1) was also critical of the existing European Commissions policies on education and training. This organization recommended policies which could secure a European perspective and increase participation levels in adult education and training, a recommendation which also came a year earlier from the Euro-Delphi Survey (1995, p. 35). Indeed it was assumed that this could best be achieved by identifying those groups excluded or marginalised, removing specific barriers experienced by adults and the implementation of practical measures needed to overcome these obstacles. However, again as with previous European Commission documentation, no discussion is pursued on the identification of the barriers or how they could be addressed.

In 1997, a European Commission publication entitled *Accomplishing Europe through Education and Training* (CEC, 1997 (c)) was a report of a study group that was established by the European Commission in 1995. According to Coolahan (1997, p. 3) the proceedings were the outcome of the group's ideas and contributions. An analysis of this publication indicates that it is in the main orientated towards young people, and although it felt there was a need for a fundamental transformation of education and training systems (CEC, 1997 (c), p. 50), there is a limited reference to the area of adult education and training. Of importance within the document (CEC, 1997(c)), p. 24) is the point that European education and training systems must show greater flexibility and adaptability (CEC, 1997, p. 24). This publication (CEC, 1997(c), p. 91) puts forward the idea that education and training have always had two aims. Firstly, education should be easily accessible, and as inexpensive as possible, if not free and secondly, education should provide equal opportunities. The view being expressed was that lifelong learning would provide awareness that adult education and training

are continuing processes and the facilitation of adult educational guidance would be a requirement for institutions (p. 25).

A point of significance highlighted in the *Report of Access to Continuing Training* (CEC, 1997 (d)) ([Europa.eu.int./scadplus/leg/en/cha/c11037.htm](http://Europa.eu.int/scadplus/leg/en/cha/c11037.htm)) is that it is up to work organizations to take responsibility for the continuing training of their employees. While recognizing that there has been some progress on access to continuing training (p. 5), this same publication (p.2) acknowledges that there are problems of access to training for small work organizations and their employees. It indicates that one of the main practical instruments of training at work organization levels concerns the establishment of training plans, and that the size of the organization often determines whether or not there is a training scheme. Of importance is the matching up of training needs to individual worker requirements, and this therefore raises three questions. Firstly, how to stimulate training by work organizations, secondly, how to enable workers to access their training requirements and thirdly, what opportunities there are for individuals to organize their training on their own initiative.

Another issue of importance within this Report on *Access to Continuing Training* (CEC, 1997(d), p.2) concerns a reference to what is referred to as training leave. It is recognized that there is no uniform acceptance of such schemes within member states, employees training needs assessments are inadequate (p.4) and training resources are diverse (p.5). Of notable interest in the context of adult education is that this same Report (CEC, 1997 (d), p.5) acknowledges that the probability of having access to training decreases sharply with age, but indicates that there is a trend within member states to target those least qualified, and measures to give easier access to vocational training such as educational guidance are organized, by for example, third level institutions (p.3). However, the reality of adult educational guidance within the higher education sector is an issue that has not been deemed to be significant or ever developed by the European Commission.

A point documented in this same publication (CEC, 1997 (d)) is the need for closer co-operation being established between educational and training organizations and adjusting provision to the specific requirements of local work organizations (p.3). However, how this is to be developed is not elaborated on within this publication. While recognizing that access to continuing training within members states is insufficient, the European Commission within this publication (p.5) proposes that efforts should be made to reduce inequalities in order to facilitate access to training within work organizations.

In the context of the knowledge society, the European Commission *Agenda 2000* (CEC, 1997 (a), p.1) proposes making education and training fundamental objectives of the European Commission's policies. This process is directly linked to the aim of developing lifelong learning, and the European Commission's determination to promote knowledge, irrespective of age or social circumstances for its people through access to education and training. This same publication (p.3) in recognizing the need to make reality of the idea of lifelong learning, as stipulated during the "European Year of Lifelong Learning", feels that the European Commission policies in the field of education and training must support those adults wishing to receive training. Documented (p.6) also was the importance of strengthening co-operation with education and training institutions and work organizations, and an approach for partnership put forward in this document (p. 9) was that it would lead to co-operation between providers.

The scale of social and economic changes in Europe and the rapid evolution of the knowledge society, which demands a fundamentally new approach to education and training provided the background to the next publication of the new Millennium. In 2000, the European Commission presented the *Memorandum on Lifelong Learning* in response to the Lisbon European Council, also held in 2000. The aim of this Memorandum was to launch a European wide debate on a comprehensive strategy for implementing lifelong

learning at individual and institutional levels, and in all spheres of public and private life. This document (europa.eu.int/comm/education/life.index.html) recognizes that an objective of importance for lifelong learning is the promotion of vocational skills in order to adapt to the demands of the knowledge society. The European Commission and the member states have defined lifelong learning as all purposeful learning activity, undertaken on an on-going basis with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence. Similar to the 1993 and 1996 White Papers that I have previously referred to, this 2000 Memorandum contains some key and relevant messages for a future strategy in the context of lifelong learning. The need to introduce innovations in education and training by developing effective methods for the continuum of lifelong learning was seen as important. This publication also recognizes that lifelong learning is no longer just one aspect of education and training; it must become the guiding principle for provision and participation across the full continuum of learning contexts. Above all, education and training systems must adapt to the new realities of the twentieth first century and that lifelong learning is an essential policy for the development of citizenship, social cohesion and employment.

From the perspective of adult educational guidance, the need to ensure that adults could access information and advice about learning opportunities, and to match lifelong learning as closely as possible to the needs of the people, which must be regularly updated, was evident in various aspects of the *Memorandum on Lifelong Learning* (2000). Despite this point, Bartlett et al. (2000, p. 28) are of the opinion that a key problem within the European Commission has been the difficulty in putting in place the required provision of a European Commission wide information, advice and guidance service.

Further criticism of this issue were evident at an international meeting in 2001, whereby the absence of adult educational guidance, the lack of action in this field and scant information on developments were commented on (Eskilstuna, March 2001).

Conclusion

Despite some efforts by the European Commission, overall, adult education and training was seen to a significant extent as having a peripheral rather than a central role. This was particularly evident during the 1970s and for parts of the 1980s, as much of the education and training activities by the European Commission were largely symbolic. During this period the European Commission failed to sufficiently recognize adult education and training as having a high priority and status, and the education and training of young people seemed to be deemed a priority matter.

From the latter part of the 1980s onwards, I have shown that adult education and training began to play a more central role, and the European Commission seemed to be gradually developing a more positive interest in education and training. This was evident in European Commission publications which marked the beginning of gradual discussions on adult education and training issues by some researchers. Some documents encompassed higher education, while Article 126 dealt with education, and Article 127 focused on vocational training. The influence that the European Court of Justice exerted over the legal definitions of education, training and higher education has been documented.

Many researchers writing on European Commission adult education and training issues, tend in general to agree that adult education and training occupied a much more central role during the latter part of the 1980s and into the 1990s. This was particularly evident when at the beginning of the 1990s, the publication of the *Memorandum on Higher Education in the European Community* (CEC, 1991) emphasized that initiatives, reforms and action were still needed at national and international levels to ensure equality of opportunity in adult education and throughout the working life of adults. Indeed throughout this chapter, the issues of adult and continuing education, access, adult educational guidance, the role of the higher education sector and

greater co-operation between higher education institutions and workplaces were all cited as areas that needed to be addressed by the European Commission, and which would have significant consequences for the future provision of adult education and training. However, the European Commission has also been vague in its approach to the implementation and implications of policies.

The 1993 European Commission White Paper (CEC, 1993) indicated problems within the European Commission in relation to education and training systems. It was recommended that future measures must be based on the concept of lifelong learning and continuing education and training, and the need for closer liaison between institutions and workplaces. In many respects, this White Paper (CEC, 1993) was significant in indicating that changes were required at both national and international levels.

European Union Ministers of Education designated 1996 as the "European Year of Lifelong Learning". The main purpose of the year was aimed at highlighting the importance of adult education and training approaching the twentieth first century, although many of the issues to emerge from this year had already been referred to within some European Commission and national publications. A central theme that emerged during the year was that more positive action within member states was needed in addressing issues relevant to lifelong learning.

The 1996 European Commission White Paper (CEC, 1996) issued in the 1990's acknowledged the links between education and training as being of key significance. This document placed emphasis on continuing education and training and aspects of this publication were critical that despite European Commission recommendations, progress in many areas in relation to adult education and training had been slow. This White Paper, CEC (1996) is broad, since it takes a European wide-view, and its analysis in terms of for example, the emergence of the knowledge based society and the changing

nature of work reflects the challenges facing European society. The imperative to increase investment in education and training, and to view this as a lifelong process is articulated within the publication, but how this is to be achieved in member states is vague. The importance of co-operation between providers of education and training and work organizations was identified as important in the European Commission *Agenda 2000* (CEC, 1997(a)), and the need to introduce innovations for the effective implementation of adult education and training was documented in the *Memorandum on Lifelong Learning* (2000).

Because of different national traditions of education and training policies, there is diversity of current educational and training practices within higher education institutions in the member states. In relation to the issues that have been raised in this chapter, it is evident that some developments could be seen as part of a decisive trend towards the Europeanisation of aspects of adult education and training. However, while the influence of the European Commission could be seen to be important, nevertheless, individual countries remain responsible for shaping and developing the structure, organisation and content of their adult education and training systems. The establishment of a more unified system, linking both the higher education sector and work organizations in the provision of adult education and training is an issue which will need to be addressed by the European Commission. Within the European Commission, adult education and training also requires the implementation of a strategic and systematic approach, if the reality of lifelong learning is to be developed.

CHAPTER 3

ADULT EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN IRELAND

Introduction

Various reports have been produced by the Irish Government in relation to adult education and training. Within the contents of or in aspects of the publications, there are various issues that are seen as relevant to this research work. The purpose therefore of this chapter is to examine and discuss selected documentation in relation to Irish adult education and training issues from the 1960s onwards. In addition, the chapter will review the works of some relevant researchers who have also written on issues relevant to Irish adult education and training.

Developments: The 1960s - 1980s

In discussing adult education policy during the 1960s, consideration must first be given to the Commission on Higher Education set up in 1967. This Commissions' terms of reference were (p. xxviii):

Having regard to the educational needs and to the financial and other resources of the country, to inquire into and to make recommendations in relation to university, professional, technological and higher education generally.

Adult education was marginal to its terms of references (p. 658), although aspects of the report refers to adult education, and it is argued that the needs of those who were prevented by circumstances from attending courses of

higher education at the usual age should receive special consideration in their latter years when these circumstances might no longer be an obstacle.

It was evident that the Commission on Higher Education (1967) favoured provision by agents other than the universities to meet adult education needs and continued to conceive of adult education as marginal to the main task of universities. The Commission on Higher Education (1967, p. 663) recommended that what was being referred to at that time as 'New Colleges', which were established in the early 1970s, offer a fresh approach to the question of vocationally orientated adult courses. This report suggested that the award of qualifications through such courses would provide a form of higher education, somewhat different from the traditional form of university education and no less excellent of its kind. It was therefore evident that the Commission on Higher Education Report (1967) envisaged that the 'New Colleges', subsequently to be named Regional Technical Colleges (RTCs), and later Institutes of Technology (ITs) would have potentialities for expanding adult education provision. The Steering Committee on Technical Education Report (1967, p. 11) saw the long term function of the RTCs as educating for trade and industry over a broad spectrum of occupations. However, at that time the main concern of the RTCs was with providing courses that would fill the gaps in the industrial manpower structure, particularly in the technical area.

At the beginning of the 1970s, the peripheral role ascribed to adult education was highlighted in the report of the first Advisory Committee on Adult Education. This wide ranging report, referred to as the Murphy Report (after the Chairman) or the *Report of the Committee on Adult Education* was presented to the Government in 1973. The Murphy Report (1973, p. 40) suggested that adult education provision should not be a peripheral area of

concern and indicates that an urgent consideration for all institutes of higher education was how to respond adequately to the demands by adults for courses leading to qualifications. The Murphy Report (1973, p.40) recommended that institutes of higher education extend their services to cater for the increasing demand for adult courses.

Another relevant recommendation in the Murphy Report (1973, p. 122) was that it was essential that in order to implement a comprehensive and much needed adult education system in Ireland, there should be a firm commitment by the Irish Government to the development of adult education. Of particular interest here was that this was the first documented stated need for the introduction of the necessary legislation to give effect to such recommendations, and the establishment of a separate section with the Department of Education with responsibility for adult education was also seen as a requirement.

It should also be noted that a year prior to the ILO Convention in 1974, the first Irish reference to paid educational leave was made in the Murphy Report. It was suggested (Murphy Report, 1973, p. 24) that there must be flexibility in education regulations whereby an adult may combine work with education, and that an adult education structure in Ireland must envisage supporting legislation which guaranteed educational leave for all types of workers. As the first major report on Irish adult education, the Murphy Committee can be seen to have set the agenda for future planning and developments in adult education.

The Irish Higher Education Authority (HEA) established in 1971, under the HEA Act was given overall responsibility for university education in Ireland. In order to monitor trends, research was seen as essential by this

Authority, and the first major report on the higher education sector was published by Clancy and Benson in 1979. In their report, the researchers dealt with full-time higher education, with brief reference being made to higher education for adults, mainly from the perspective of part-time courses. A relevant extract from this HEA Report (1979, p. 34) states:

The justice of allowing those who have failed to qualify for third level education to try again later in life along a route more appropriate to their adult experience, as well as the related concept of education as a recurring process throughout one's life-time has gained increasing acceptance in principle, if not in practice. The obstacles to this type of education in Ireland includes the absence of attractive and appropriate educational provisions and a set of negative attitudes to formal education among a large section of the adult community. Yet, the findings of the present educational survey testify to the pressing need for second chance education if our society is serious about providing equal educational opportunities.

With the gradual emergence over time of new manpower needs and future technology developments, this quotation makes it clear that attitudes towards adult students would have to change. Higher education institutions would certainly have to adopt more flexible policies in order to cater for diverse needs of the adult student population, as in the words of Clancy and Breen (1979, p. 35), "...the present level of adult part-time courses in higher education is totally regrettable and inadequate to meet the needs". In later works, Clancy continued to be a strong opponent of the part and full-time distinction in relation to adult students from a higher education perspective. This was evident in subsequent reports (Clancy (1988, p. 74 and Clancy 2000, p. 2), whereby

he reiterated that this rigid distinction of terms should be abolished. What is interesting of course is that so little happened in the intervening years and Clancy's 2000 report largely reiterates points that he and Benson made in 1979.

The White Paper on Educational Development (1980) devoted a chapter to adult education. The chapter (p. 91) indicates that adult education activities would be promoted and developed as resources allowed in accordance with the general guidelines set out in the recommendations of the 1973 Murphy Report. It is significant that it was seven years after its publication before the first reference to the Murphy Report was made in a Government publication. In relation to the higher education sector, this White Paper (1980, p. 74) highlights the fact that changing circumstances, such as the establishment of the RTCs, points to the need for flexibility and diversification of courses for adults within colleges.

In relation to the theme of paid educational leave, while the Murphy Committee (1973) made brief reference to paid educational leave, it was not until 1980 that a Working Group was established, whose brief was according to Roberts (1981, p. 15), to advise the Irish Government on the question of the ratification of the 1974 ILO Convention. This Working Group recognized that everyone has a right to education and they saw their task as formulating proposals that would allow the Irish Government to accept the principle of paid educational leave. However, this Working Group was aware that implementation could not be instant, but rather would be phased in over an indefinite number of years.

A point emerging from the paid educational leave Working Group (Roberts, 1981, p. 15), was the need at least to make an urgent start on this issue. It is possible that this Working Group may have considered that the means by which

paid educational leave might be provided would be a combination of collective agreements and legislation, dealing with elements such as the conditions under which paid educational leave may be granted, the quantifying period of service and the number of workers who might be released at any one time. The Working Group went on to recommend that no courses should be excluded from paid educational leave. In their endeavours to assess the actual position in this country in regard to paid educational leave, this Working Group recommended the need to ascertain the availability of paid educational leave, a suggestion that did not materialize.

A very relevant question that this Working Group had to consider was what, if any, legislation existed which provided for paid educational leave? It must be noted that two Education and Training Acts were seen as relevant at that time, namely the Vocational Education Act (1930) and the Industrial Training Act (1967). While taking into consideration that the main motivation in the 1930 Act was the obligation to provide courses in education and training for young people, nevertheless the Working Group observed that the powers that were available under the Act could also be used to develop a range of courses for adults. Using these courses as a framework could have been seen to possibly provide a basis for paid educational leave in this country. A provision contained in the 1967 Act, enabled AnCO (the Industrial Training Authority) to provide for training in industry, and also provide or secure the provision for such courses or other facilities for the training of people employed in the industrial area.

The Working Group felt the need to approach the Vocational Education Committees (VEC's) (established under the 1930s Act) and the National Council for Educational Awards (NCEA) (a statutory certification body established in 1977) regarding paid educational leave. Within those

organizations, it seems that on a positive note, there was a readiness to participate and a willingness to consider the avenues of expansion that would be required in the event of an increased participation of adults in education and training. However, the availability of funds would obviously be important and in this regard, the Department of Education would have a role to play.

The Working Group considered that there was legitimate grounds for the provision and implementation of paid educational leave in Ireland, and recommended that the Government ratify ILO Convention 140 (1980, p. 18):

Considering the need for continuing education and training, related scientific and technological developments and the changing patterns of economic and social relations calls for adequate arrangements for leave for education and training to meet new aspirations, needs and objectives of a social, economic, technological and cultural character, and considering that paid educational leave should be regarded as one means of meeting the real needs of individual workers in a modern society, and considering that paid educational leave should be conceived in terms of a policy of continuing education and training, should be implemented progressively in an effective manner.

While this quotation certainly highlighted the emerging education and training needs for the country, despite the efforts by the Working Group, there were no notable developments on the issue of paid educational leave. However, the then Minister for Labour, Liam Kavanagh (1981, p. 5) agreed with the Working Groups' views that the changing nature of employment and the work process was making access to education and training essential for workers and that the right to educational leave played a vital part in creating that access. The fact that the ILO Convention 140 had not yet been ratified did not according to

Kavanagh (1981, p. 5) imply opposition to paid educational leave, but he felt that further work should be done before formal ratification could take place. Kavanagh (1981, p. 5) also makes the point that the existing informal schemes for public servants were in the form of staff being released with pay, some study provision being given and possibly a reimbursement of course fees. In fact, what was really being referred to here were part-time courses that some civil servants pursued outside working hours in a range of education and training institutions. Highlighting the fact that successive Irish Governments had indicated acceptance of the principle of paid educational leave, Roberts (1981a, p.8) was of the opinion that they had been constrained by economic and political circumstances, and that for any progress to be achieved, the involvement of education and training institutions, employers, trade unions and the Government was essential, as was the provision of adequate resources.

It must be noted that there were no further developments on paid educational leave in the 1980s, with the exception of a brief reference in the National Economic and Social Council Report (1985, p. 182) that pointed out that the 1974 ILO Convention on paid educational leave should be ratified by the Irish Government, thereby resulting in possibly increasing adult education participation. However, nothing came of this suggestion.

The next significant development in adult education was the establishment of an advisory body in 1981, whose brief was to prepare a national development plan for adult and continuing education. This committee's work subsequently led to the publication three years later of the Kenny Report (1984), referred to also as the *Commission on Adult Education: Lifelong Learning Report*. The term adult education as defined in the report, referred to any form of education that takes place after a person has completed uninterrupted full-time education. In fact, in the Foreword to the Kenny Report (1984, p. 6), the Chairman of the

Commission (Kenny) epitomised the whole thrust of the Report in his statement: "This Report is about lifelong learning in which adults through continuing education would have the opportunity for fulfilment as individuals". Perhaps the most important statistic to emerge from the Kenny Report (1984, p. 113) and one highlighted at that time, was that almost three quarters (73%) of the adult population had never participated in any form of adult education. The fact that adult education was not an administratively distinct sector of the educational system but involved a diversity of agencies, methods of learning and clientele was a problematic theme running through this 1984 report.

Of particular interest in the same year about the Programme for Action in Education, 1984-87 (1984, p. 32) was that it was the first Government document to suggest that links between higher education and work organizations would need to be intensified as such co-operation between institutions and workplaces would be beneficial to both. However, this latter report did not elaborate on how this could be pursued.

In relation to the theme of Access courses, the Kenny Report (1984) was the first adult education publication to recognize the need for such courses. One of the recommendations (Kenny Report, 1984, p. 146) argued that Access courses should be provided by educational institutions and should be recognized by higher education institutions as satisfying entry requirements. It must be noted that this idea first emerged in an 1978 NCEA Discussion Document that recommended a foundation certificate, but the colleges under the auspices of the NCEA at that time, which were mainly the RTCs were involved in the development of their mainstream courses, and this proposed foundation programme did not take place until later (Halpin, 1995, p. 25). In fact it was not until 1986, that the NCEA approached this issue again, and the need for the development of Access courses was placed on the agenda of a joint

NCEA/AONTAS Conference (Athlone, 1986). Two relevant recommendations emerged from the Conference. Firstly, that the NCEA institutions should be encouraged to promote the concept of Access courses on the model of the foundation certificate already mooted by the NCEA in 1978. Secondly, that the foundation certificate should be as flexible as possible, with two streams, one orientated towards the humanities and one towards technology. Despite both recommendations, there were no significant developments on the provision of Access courses, until the appointment of Access Officers from the mid 1990s onwards.

In relation to the theme of adult educational guidance, during the 1970s and 1980s, the issue of adult educational guidance was not highlighted to any significant extent. This latter statement is confirmed by the fact that in the two major adult education reports that had been published, only a brief reference was made to this issue. This occurred first in the Murphy Report (1973, p. 75) where it was recognized that there was an urgent need for an adult educational guidance service in helping adults in identifying their course needs. The second reference came eleven years later, when a recommendation in the Kenny Report (1984, p. 149) was the provision of an adult educational guidance service. As was the case with many of the recommendations of these reports, nothing happened in relation to adult educational guidance.

Developments: The 1990s.

At the beginning of the 1990s, it is important to take into consideration a point that was made two years previously by Clancy (1988, p. 74) who noted that adult education within the higher education sector was underdeveloped and undervalued in Ireland. This view can be supported by the fact that despite the publication of the Murphy (1973) and Kenny (1984) reports, there was a low status ascribed to adult education in this country. There was also evidence of

a dearth of research concerning adult students within the higher education sector, Access courses, adult educational guidance provision and paid educational leave.

In the early 1990s, the most regular contributor to the debate on paid educational leave was Carey (1990, p.12) who was critical that successive Irish Governments had not implemented the ILO Convention which was approved in principle by the Government in 1979. Carey (1990, p. 12) had a number of recommendations, one of which was that paid educational leave should be included in the next Government programme. He argued the cost factor would not be that prohibitive as the end result would be a better educated worker. Another recommendation by Carey (1990, p.12) was that pilot projects on paid educational leave should be established, a suggestion which had previously come from the 1980 Working Group, but never implemented. Carey (1990, p. 12) was of the view that the pilot studies findings should be followed by a Government commissioned report; my review of the literature has not found any further reference or developments to the proposed pilot studies that were recommended by Carey (1990).

In 1991, the Irish Government produced its Programme for Economic and Social Progress (PESP). Of particular interest is that the PESP (1991, p. 14) felt that higher education institutions have a key role to play in adult education and training of the workforce, and in this respect, co-operative arrangements needed to be strengthened and enhanced. A theme running through the PESP (1991) document was that adequate provision for adult education and training of employees needed to be developed, as training provision for those at work was low (p. 32). The PESP (1991, p. 32) also indicates that the extension of access to and participation in adult education and training was an essential means of improving the quality of the workforce.

The influential Culliton Report (1992, p. 53) made the point that education and training were a most critical element of policy affecting not just industry but overall economic welfare. The Culliton Report (1992) did recognize that there had been significant developments in Irish education, but it was nevertheless felt that the education and training system was not meeting societal needs. The following statement indicates Culliton's thinking (p. 53):

Nevertheless, it is clear to us that present education and training arrangements need to be changed in the direction of greater applicability to present economic and employment conditions and to the nation's development needs.

Of importance is that the Culliton Report (1992, p. 54) acknowledged, as did previously in 1988 the Galvin Report (p. 29), that training for those at work was deficient and that a constraint was the capability and willingness of work organizations to invest in upgrading the skills of their employees. It is evident that the analysis clearly suggests that training programmes needed to become a priority as the existing Government provision of training for those at work was inadequate, and radically new structures were required to improve the situation. However, what precisely the new structures may involve, how they would be developed and pursued, and the financial implications were never elaborated on.

Three years later, O'Connell and Lyons (1995) were critical of several recommendations in the Culliton Report which were seen to be general in nature, and fell short of defining a strategic approach to Government intervention. O'Connell and Lyons (1995, p. 69) puts forward the point that in this country, policy formulation in relation to training was suffering from an information deficit as information was lacking as to who needed training

in work organizations, how costs would be shared, and how the Government could intervene and help.

The publication of a Green Paper on Education was mentioned in the PESP (1991, p. 66) and this was finally published in 1992. In line with international trends and resulting from social, economic and demographic factors, a central theme running through this document was the need to increase participation of adult students in education and training. Two of the six key educational aims stated in the Green Paper (*Education for a Changing World*) (1992, p. 5), can be seen as central to this research. Firstly, the need to establish greater equity in education, particularly for those seen as educationally disadvantaged. Secondly, the need to broaden access to education so as to equip adults more effectively for life and for work. Many of the policies being proposed in this Green Paper on Education were worthwhile, in that education and training should be a continuum and that access should be on a lifelong basis (Green Paper, 1992, p. 207). Certain proposals to achieve these goals were outlined. For example, the Green Paper (1992, p.187) indicates that the need for Access courses was likely to increase, as in line with international trends, it was predicted that increasing numbers of adult students would enter higher education. The development of Access courses was seen therefore as one of the initiatives necessary to make it easier for adult students to proceed to higher education. As a follow-up to the Green Paper (1992), in the same year, a Symposium (Maynooth, 1992) welcomed the emphasis in the Green Paper (1992) on the eventual provision of national Access course opportunities for adults, and felt it was responding to the emerging demand as a means of preparing greater numbers of adults for entry into higher education.

Regarding the relationship between the higher education sector and the workforce, the Green Paper (1992, p. 202) rightly points out that in the face

of the technological changes that were occurring, a major challenge for higher education institutions was the provision of continuing education and updating the skills of the existing workforce. Higher education institutions should it was suggested be encouraged to develop courses specifically aimed at meeting the education and training needs of workers. Of significance is that the approach to training proposed in the Green Paper (1992, p. 111) was based on the fact that the relationship between education and training needed to be strengthened in order to ensure that the providers of education and training programmes could obtain information on the nature, scope and extent of skills required for economic growth and development.

Regarding policy developments in adult education and training, what was being recommended in the Green Paper (1992, p. 113) was in fact bringing elements of vocational education and training together into a more cohesive system, which would include employers and which would provide more opportunities for adults to develop their vocational skills. An essential feature of such a system would be a co-ordinated set of national arrangements for the provision of vocational education and training programmes. In relation to the advantages of educational institutions and workforce links, the Green Paper (1992, p. 200) rightly argues that collaboration would carry benefits for those involved, and could promote mutual understanding between workplaces and higher education institutions as partnership between institutions and work organizations would provide post-experience training and education on a flexible basis.

The Programme for Competitiveness and Work (PCW) was produced in 1994. Its significance in relation to adult education and training, is that the PCW (1994, p. 32) does acknowledge that the link between the skills levels of the workforce and competitiveness was increasingly becoming recognized, and the extension of access to and participation in continuing education and training was

also important. The analysis within the PCW Report (1992) clearly suggests that it was now perceived as vital that attention be focused on achieving an improvement in the levels of education and training of those in employment. A theme running through the Culliton Report (1992) was that responsibility for the training of the employed rested with work organizations themselves, and in this context, the Irish Government would need to encourage an increase in the level of investment in both on-the-job and off-the-job training of employees. Similarly, the PCW (1994, p. 32) also recognized that work organizations must play an important role in developing educational and training programmes and with an appropriate mix of on-the-job and off-the-job training. The PCW (1994, p. 32) was of the view that support for the training of people at work would need to be increased on a work organization led basis, and for this to be effective, it needed to be matched by Government support for such training; this latter point was not elaborated on within the PCW (1994). The PCW (1994, p. 67) went on to indicate that higher education institutions have an important contribution to make to continuing education and training of the workforce. Accordingly, the PCW (1994, p. 68) points out that links between workplaces and the higher education sector would need to be strengthened as such integration between both workplaces and higher education institutions was vital.

Built on the foundation provided by the Green Paper on Education (1992), the long-awaited White Paper on Education (*Charting our Education Future*) was published in 1995. However, after the publication of the Green Paper (1992), and prior to the publication of the White Paper (1995) there was extensive consultation between the various interest groups in education and training through the mechanism of the National Education Convention held in 1993. Field (2000, p. 216) is of the view that the 1993 National Education Convention led to new thinking on the issue of adult education and training, while Skilbeck

(2001 p. 136) believes that the Convention in itself constituted a powerful agenda for change. A year later, the Report of the National Education Convention (1994, p.104) certainly recognised that one of the central problems in adult education up until now had been the lack of coherent policy and it was clear that a policy framework for adult education was essential. This latter statement was nothing new as over twenty years previously, the need for such a policy was documented in the Murphy Report (1973, p. 122). The National Education Report (1994, p.101) also went on to refer to the question of structures and indicates that the development of provision for both employment education and training had not taken place in a national context. This Report (National Education Convention, 1994, p.101) was rightly critical in putting forward the case that in adult education, there was little long-term planning, no coherent policy for development, and constant tension and frustration as groups sought access to limited resources. Indeed many of the issues emerging from this publication, such as the lack of a structure for adult education and the lack of planning had also been noted in the Kenny Report (1984).

Skilbeck (2001, p. 136) rightly notes that the future development of higher education within the White Paper on Education (1995) was not treated as a separate topic, but was integral to a framework of lifelong education. In this context, in the White Paper on Education (1995, p. 75), adult education and training was seen as an integral part of the framework for the future development of education. The objective would be to maximise access to courses for adults who needed to update their occupational skills, irrespective of their educational and training attainments. What was being proposed (White Paper, 1995, p. 218) was the need to publish a comprehensive White Paper on Training, which it was felt would address the continuing training needs of the workforce. In the meantime, the future approach to adult education policies would need to involve a number of important considerations, all of which are

relevant to this work, and which are as follows (White Paper on Education (1995, p.77):

- the recognition of the central importance of adult education for up-dating knowledge and skills and for overcoming disadvantage suffered during initial education
- the promotion of lifelong learning and continuous retraining and updating of skills
- improving co-operation between providers and employers in the identification of the present and future skills and competencies
- the facilitation and encouragement of access by adults to continuing education and vocational training to the greatest extent possible
- a more integrated approach by the education and training agencies.

Regarding adult and continuing education within the higher education sector, the White Paper on Education (1995, p. 93) indicates that initiatives would be developed to further facilitate participation by adults students within available resources. While this was an important statement, the publication failed to elaborate further on resources, an issue that was also lacking in the Green Paper on Education (1992). On the initiatives, flexibility of course structures was recommended as having the potential to facilitate access and enable adult students to study for qualifications, while remaining in full-time employment (White Paper, 1995, p. 93). The Report of the National Education Convention (1994, p. 92) had previously indicated that additional measures needed to be provided at targeting disadvantaged groups to participate in higher education. A year later, the White Paper on Education (1995, p. 77) argued that future adult education policies needed to encourage access by disadvantaged adults to higher education. Despite this statement however, the White Paper on Education (1995) failed to address the provision of Access courses, and researchers such as Lynch and O'Riordan (1996, p. 8) were

critical of this omission in the context of some of the educational principles identified such as equality and pluralism.

It must be acknowledged that to some extent, and especially in the latter part of the 1990s, the HEA began to see Access courses as an important aspect of adult education. On addressing this issue in the mid 1990s and in its vision for the future, the HEA organized a Conference (Access Courses for Higher Education) (HEA, 1995), the main purpose of which was to identify how Access courses might contribute in addressing and overcoming barriers that affect adult students seeking entry to higher education. Of particular interest was a point highlighted by the HEA Chairman (Lindsay, 1995, p. i) who believes that in developing the concept of Access courses, higher education institutions needed to be careful that they would not be drifting into an additional and costly foundation year for the higher education system. On this latter statement, the provision of Access courses for adult students remained up until the mid 1990s largely peripheral to higher education institutions activities in general. Lack of progress in relation to Access courses was stressed by Walters (1996, p. 22) who called for the provision of nationally recognized Access courses, while Lynch and O’Riordan (1996, p. 107) indicates that while there was some provision for Access courses in this country, they had developed on an *ad hoc* rather than a planned basis.

Since the publication of the Murphy and Kenny Reports (1973, 1984) in which brief reference to the provision of adult educational guidance was made, this issue did not appear to be deemed important, and it was not until the 1990s that the issue did re-emerge, and its importance from the perspective of adults was expressed by an adult education organization and individuals. For example, in the early 1990s, AONTAS (Brady, 1991, p. 4) as one of its priorities, expressed the need for the development of a comprehensive adult educational

guidance service, and five years later, with no obvious progress, this same agency continued to lobby for this provision (Brady, 1996, p.8). Keogh (1996, p. 24) points out that for adult students, educational guidance in this country was either limited or non-existent. Similarly, Lynch and O’Riordan (1996, p. 96) feels that the absence of proactive policies, such as the provision of educational guidance services within higher education institutions, had made it difficult for the economically and socially disadvantaged students to enter the higher education sector.

Despite the recommendations on paid educational leave by Carey (1990, p.12) in the early 1990s, no reference to this issue can be found in Government publications of the 1990s. I agree with Comiskey (1996, p. 4) who points out that considering the major changes in education and training that were happening internationally, the issue on the implementation of paid educational leave had still not developed in this country. In the same year, O’Connor (1996, p.1) identified paid educational leave as becoming a very important area and could best be achieved in co-operation between workplaces and individuals. In 1996, O’Halloran’s (1996, p. 2) thinking was that the Irish Government should ratify the ILO Convention, and open discussions on the issue which would be beneficial to workers and employers.

Two publications, the White Paper on Training (1997) and the Green Paper on Adult Education (1998) taken together seemed to constitute a comprehensive framework and focus for national developments as we approached the twentieth first century.

Taking the contents of the White Paper on Training (1997) first, it deals with all aspects of training and maps out the need for significant changes in the approach to training by individuals, workplaces and providers. Of importance

is the acknowledgement in the White Paper on Training (1997, p. 31) that employees development should include training, education and learning as its main components, with each interacting and facilitating the other elements. For each work organization, the thinking behind them should be to continuously develop opportunities for workers to develop their skills and knowledge. The analysis in this publication clearly suggests that Irish work organizations had yet to fully realize the changing circumstances which they were facing in relation to investment in the education and training of workers.

One of the key policy objectives in the White Paper on Training (1997, p. 14) is a commitment to improving the level of training and promoting equal opportunities. A theme also running through the contents was that for work organizations, the effectiveness of investment in staff education and training would depend on the way it was integrated with the other functional areas of the business in which it operated. Another thread running through the White Paper on Training (1997) was that many firms were spending little on training of their workforce, they had not adopted a modern approach to this need, and showed a tendency for many small and medium type enterprises to under invest in training.

A section of the White Paper on Training (1997, p. 58) focused on barriers to training within this country. The main obstacles documented, and in which it would seem to be correct was that too many work organizations were still seen to perceive training expenditure as an element of costs rather than as an investment, and three related barriers were documented (p. 58). Firstly, the size of a large majority of work organizations posed problems as it could be difficult to release staff from small companies for training without disrupting work schedules. Secondly, some small and medium sized organizations tended to lack the financial resources required for staff to undertake courses. Thirdly,

Government support for training was poor, and from this obviously arises the issue of Government investment in training.

In 1997, the first Minister of State, Willie O'Dea, with responsibility for adult education in this country was appointed. The following year saw the publication of the overdue and first Green Paper in the history of the state on adult education. It is important to note that very few of the recommendations in previous publications had been implemented into adult education at the time of the publication of this Green Paper on Adult Education (1998), and there was at this stage no overall policy for the development of adult education and training within the country. Walshe (2000, p. 203) remarks that adult education has been marginalised to some extent in Ireland by the concentration on the schooling of young people. However, the publication of the Green Paper on Adult Education (1998) tended to show the need for positive developments in the field, and this was most evident in the depth of the contents and the emerging recommendations.

What is significant within the contents of the 1998 Green Paper on Adult Education is that it firstly stresses the need to promote awareness and debate on the key role of adult education in meeting the challenges which confront society entering a new Millennium. Secondly, it emphasises the need to place adult education within the context of overall educational developments in Ireland and the European Union. Thirdly, it outlines the need to set out a basis for a national policy on adult education, and to propose mechanisms for the co-ordination and mainstreaming of the sector as a key component within an education system which would promote access and participation on a lifelong basis. In addition, the Green Paper on Adult Education (1998, p. 6) also proposes an approach which would recognize adult education as a component of an overall lifelong education system, and as a key contributor to social and

economic cohesion through education and training opportunities. Again it has to be noted, that many of these points were not new, and as I have already indicated in this chapter, are rather a re-statement of issues that have been evident for some time.

As part of the support structures in helping to increase participation for adult students within the higher education sector, the need for the provision of Access courses is recognized and stated in the Green Paper on Adult Education (1998, p.74). Two key relevant recommendations made are the development of higher education Access courses for adult students, and the importance of higher education institutions working closely together in the provision of such courses (p. 80).

In relation to adult educational guidance, it is interesting that the first Green Paper on Adult Education (1998) devoted little attention to this issue, and acknowledged that there was no system of educational guidance in place (p. 104). While no major analysis of the issue is offered, the establishment of a national comprehensive system of adult educational guidance to meet adult needs was a brief recommendation within this publication (p. 106).

Field (2000, p. 216) puts forward the view that this country lacked a coherent system for the education and training of adults, and in the view of this researcher, has had implications for the development of adult educational guidance. McNamara (1998, p.1) indicates that taking into consideration the concept of lifelong learning, there was an urgent and growing need for adult educational guidance services in Ireland, and feels that the development of this service needed to be addressed within a clear policy framework.

In the late 1990s, some further publications still continued to cite the

inadequacy of adult educational guidance in this country. For example, the Final Report and Recommendations of the Commission on the Points System (1999, p. 109) refers to the lack of educational guidance for adult students in applying for higher education courses. This Commission does support the establishment of a comprehensive educational guidance service for adults, and a recommendation was that in an era of lifelong learning, this service for adult students should be provided (p. 109). The absence of educational guidance for adult students has also been shown by Fleming and Murphy (1999, p. 56), and these authors recommends that it should be an essential service for adult students. Inglis and Murphy (1999, p. 91) also highlights that lack of educational guidance was poorly rated by adult students, and in their recommendations (p. 100) points to the need for an adult educational guidance service. Lack of adult educational guidance as a problem in education provision was also referred to by the Irish Businesses Employers Confederation (IBEC) (1999, p.23).

Throughout the Green Paper on Adult Education (1998, p. 81), there was considerable emphasis on the up-grading of qualifications of the workforce, and the document does indicate that in successive partnership agreements, for example, the PESP (1991), the Government and the social partners have attached importance to re-training the workforce, and outlined some developments in this area. To highlight what was being proposed, it was recommended that new pathways should be created between work, education and training by developing closer links with the provider institutions and employers. Closely allied to the issue of education and training of the workforce was the realization in the Green Paper on Adult Education (1998, p. 82) of the need to explore the feasibility of putting in place a programme of paid educational leave in association with employers. However positive the thinking may have been behind this, the document failed to discuss or analyse how this could proceed,

or any possible developments that may emerge.

Developments: 2000 Onwards

Some publications relevant to the contents of this research were published by the Government at the beginning of this new Millennium. The Programme for Prosperity and Fairness (PPF) (2000), was followed some months later by the subsequent White Paper on Adult Education (*Learning for Life*) (2000).

The former publication (PPF, 2000) was based on a series of agreements between the Government and the social partners and covered a wide range of issues, including according to Field (2000, p.215) broad plans for Irish education and training. The PPF (2000) devotes a section to lifelong learning, and a theme running through the PPF (2000) was that the education and training partners must be committed to improving the quality of education and training provided in educational institutions and workplaces. Of interest too within the PPF (2000, p.7) was the need to promote the development of the adult learning sector, the need to support maximum participation in education and training programmes by adults, and the need to ensure that the education and training courses responded to their needs. Evident also was the need to promote a lifelong learning culture in the workplace, and putting in place the appropriate structures to support a strategic framework for the promotion of learning (PPF, 2000, p. 106). The PPF (2000, p. 111) also highlighted the importance of institution and workplace co-operation.

It was acknowledged within the PPF (2000, p. 24) that training must be better targetted at job related and individual needs, and this would result in training needs being better defined and analysed, a need that is lacking in this country in the context of adult education and training. Brief reference had been made to the higher education sector within the PPF (2000 p. 28), and it was

indicated that it would be a matter for each institution to develop their own plans which would include the expansion of training programmes.

While the White Paper on Adult Education (2000) was not published at the time of the completion of the PPF (2000), it was nevertheless felt that a strategic framework for lifelong learning could be developed in this forthcoming paper. Of particular importance was that the White Paper on Adult Education (2000, p. 146) gave recognition to the need for the provision of Access courses. At the end of the 1990s, the Points Commission Report (1999, p. 121) indicated that some Access courses were already in place for adult students in some third level institutions, although Osborne and Leith (2000, p. 6) confirms that most Access courses in this country were in their infancy. It was when Access Officers started to be recruited from the mid 1990s onwards, that the higher education sector began to take a more proactive stance on the provision of Access courses. In the White Paper on Adult Education (DES, 2000, p. 171) it was proposed that a National Access Officer would be employed to support the work of Access Officers (p. 171). This latter appointment had also been a recommendation of the Commission on the Points System (1999, p. 140) and the Access Made Accessible Group (HEEU, 2000, p. 13) in order to support and co-ordinate the current initiatives within the higher education sector. It was also envisaged that a further role for the National Access Officer, yet to be sanctioned, would be to advise the HEA and the Department of Education and Science on related Access courses policy issues (Commission on the Points System, 1999, p. 140).

Since the appointment of Access Officers, an important development was the establishment of an Action Group on Access to Third Level Education. Within the terms of reference of this Group (Press Release, 2000, p.14) was the need to develop a co-ordinated framework to promote access by adult students to

higher education and to make recommendations accordingly. The role of the higher education sector and the integration of Access courses into the mainstream of all institutions' operations and objectives, together with the desirability of appointing a National Access Officer were defined as areas that the Action Group would address (p. 15).

The previously referred to Access Made Accessible Group, established during the late 1990s and early 2000, is a national network of Access Officers from the higher education institutions, and their main brief is to provide a forum for discussions on issues related to access in the context of Access courses. A recommendation of the Report of the Action Group on Access to Third Level Education (2001, p. 51) is that higher education institutions should establish Access courses of varying contents and duration. Another recommendation (p. 52) was that Access courses should be described as such, only if successful completion confers eligibility on an adult to be offered a place in a higher education institution. These are issues that the Access Made Accessible Group are now addressing.

In relation to adult educational guidance, the Report of the Action Group on Access to Third Level Education (2001, p. 90), cited the lack of a coherent information and educational guidance service for adults as a barrier. In an analysis of priorities, the White Paper on Adult Education (2000, p. 23), refers to the need to develop supporting services such as adult educational guidance, and the purpose of this development is defined as improving access to information (p. 19). In the context of adult education, the range of adult educational guidance activities should according to the White Paper on Adult Education (2000, p. 156) include course information, advice, placement, course assessment, establishing links with employers and with education and training agencies.

A co-ordinated approach to adult educational guidance from a higher education perspective would be beneficial to employers and adult students. The National Centre for Guidance in Education, established in 1995, is an organization that according to McCarthy (1998, p. ii) is charged with supporting guidance practice in all educational settings. However, this organization needs to urgently address the issue of adult educational guidance from the perspective of the higher education sector, as the emphasis to-date has been more focused on education and training guidance outside the higher education sector.

While paid educational leave as a systematic incentive to workers to undertake on-going education and training was acknowledged in the PPF, this issue was not discussed to any significant extent within the White Paper on Adult Education (2000). Within the publication, paid educational leave does briefly appear as one of the preferred means of providing on-going education and training for the workforce (White Paper on Adult Education, 2000, p. 77), but little further elaboration is offered in this context. Another point made in the White Paper on Adult Education (2000) is that this issue would undoubtedly surface in the context of the future work of the proposed Task Force on Lifelong Learning, and that any developments would need to incorporate a specific equality strategy in relation to employer supporting male and female access to continuing education and training (p. 130).

In relation to the development of work organizations and higher education links, the White Paper on Adult Education (2000, p. 9) recognizes that a lifelong learning policy requires learning opportunities to be provided over a lifespan, and the development of greater links with work organizations from the learning perspective was seen as necessary. The need to direct an increasing level of attention to the continuing education and training needs of those at work was also seen as important (p. 123) and it was proposed to encourage the

establishment of partnerships between education and training providers and workplaces (p.17). Further in the publication the need for interaction between education and training providers and work organizations was seen as beneficial (p. 128).

Field (2000, p. 224) believes that the 2000 White Paper on Adult Education would be used to promote an expansion of what he refers to as mature student entry into the higher education sector. The Task Force on Lifelong Learning feels the need to address the development of linkages between work organizations and education and training providers (White Paper on Adult Education, 2000, p. 131), and support such developments through the proposed Local Adult Learning Boards (p.189). The relationship, and the effects of these initiatives in relation to the Local Adult Learning Boards remains to be seen.

In another 2000 publication (Partnership 2000 for Inclusion Employment and Competitiveness, p. 22), the point is made that education policies must take account of priorities in the White Paper on Adult Education (2000) thereby providing a continuum of education for adults. Of importance also is that it recognizes that mechanisms within work organizations needs to be developed for the implementation of training policies and up-grading the qualifications of the workforce (p.38). Another point documented in the publication (p. 39) is that there must be a commitment on the part of employers and employees to not alone seek, but also to recognize the central role of education and training in work organizations. This Partnership (2000) publication correctly sees the need to support staff in adult education and training, and ensure that this is fully integrated into work organizations programmes for staff development.

A number of other reports that have been produced by the Government and researchers during the beginning of this Millennium have dealt with issues

central to this research.

For example, the development of skills of the Irish workforce through education and training has been examined in the National Development Plan 2002-2006 (2000, p. 94). Of significance is that this Plan does recognize the need to expand adult education and training opportunities. If access to this lifelong learning is to become a reality, the National Development Plan 2002-2006 notes that the expansion of education and training opportunities for adults needs to be accompanied by measures to meet the educational guidance needs of the adult participants, and co-operation with agencies should form a vital part of this (p. 102).

Interestingly, a relatively recent publication by Skilbeck (2001) has been critical of aspects of the Irish higher education sector, and from an international perspective, a theme that is highlighted in this report is that Irish universities have as yet, not sufficiently mobilised themselves either individually or collectively to achieve maximum impact. To highlight this point, he notes that there is a need to continually up-grade skills and provide suitable programmes of study for adult students in the higher education sector (Skilbeck, 2001, p. 139). The anticipated drop of over one third (36%) in school leavers numbers from 1998 to 2012 poses an immediate challenge for the provision of increased adult education within the higher education sector (Skilbeck, 2001, p. 142). The fact according to Skilbeck (2001, pp. 139, 143) that there is a need to recognise and support stronger moves towards adult students, indicates that there are definite challenges for partnerships involving employers and education and training agencies.

The focus of a study by McGill and Morgan (2001) is in the main on educational disadvantage among adults in both the North and South of Ireland. However,

both authors notes that the international literature on improving access to higher education suggests that a number of interventions can assist in promoting access for adults (McGill and Morgan, 2001, p. 47). According to the authors, an increase in diversity in higher education is reflected in the provision of adult educational guidance (p. 48), special entry access programmes may be of particular value in ensuring access (p. 49) and fruitful partnerships should be identified (p.51).

In 2000, the Department of Education and Science launched a project to develop pilot adult educational guidance in eleven areas in the country. While this was a welcome initiative, the scheme did not involve the higher education sector (Report of the Action Group on Access to Third Level Education (2001, p. 91) and the absence of adequate educational guidance support for adults in this sector was a major gap in provision (p. 111). A relevant recommendation of the Action Group on Access to Third Level Education (2001, p. 92) was the development of collaboration between higher education institutions and work organizations in the provision of Access courses.

Conclusion

This review of the literature has examined a series of policy documents, publications and the views of researchers associated with issues relevant to this thesis. A theme that has been evident in the contents of the discussion is that the education and training of adults must occupy a central rather than a peripheral role within higher education institutions and within work organizations. There is therefore a responsibility on work organizations and higher education institutions to respond to the education and training needs of adult students.

In the 1960s, the Commission on Higher Education issued the first report that

addressed adult education provision in the context of the higher education sector. The appointment in the 1970s and 1980s of two separate advisory bodies in adult education, which resulted in the Murphy (1973) and Kenny (1984) reports were at that time seen as significant Government interventions in adult education. However, despite the recommendations in relation to various aspects of adult education and training, I have argued that there were few notable developments during the 1970s and 1980s. Indeed, my analysis during this period of subsequent Government produced documents, specific education and training publications, and the views of various researchers continued to an extent to reiterate many of the same education and training issues.

During the 1990s, there was a gradual interest being ascribed to the importance of adult education and training in the workforce. This was evident, in for example, Government publications such as the PESP (1991), the PCW (1994) and the White Paper on Training (1997). This latter report mapped out the need for changes in the approach to training by work organizations, employees and by the providers of adult education and training. The Culliton Report (1992) took the view that responsibility for training rested with work organizations themselves, and it concludes that there was little evidence that work organizations in this country were providing adequate education and training for their employees. O'Connell and Lyons (1995) were also critical of work organizations from the perspective of training. It is evident in most of the publications that I have referred to that the changes required have yet to be reflected in the allocation and targetting of adequate resources. Indeed, the financial implications of proposed developments in the context of adult education and training have never been adequately addressed by successive Governments in this country.

The Green and White Papers on Education (1992, 1995) included aspects which

addressed adult education and training. These subsequently culminated in the publication of the first Green and White Papers on Adult Education (1998, 2000) which have been seen to signal to some extent, a positive development for a sector that has for far too long remained underdeveloped and underresourced by successive Governments. What is clear is that in particular, the latter two publications provided a clear basis for the development and enhancement of all aspects of adult education and training, and sets out an agenda for a strategic and comprehensive approach to adult and training in the years ahead.

In the first relevant publication of the new Millennium, the PPF (2000) included brief reference to issues such as education and training of the workforce, developing a learning culture in the workplace and institutional and work organization co-operation. A number of Government reports, and also some researchers writing on education and training issues have given a good insight into and addressed the barriers faced by adult students. Indeed, the proposals unveiled in the White Paper on Adult Education (2000) adopts as Government policy, measures previously suggested by some researchers to remove barriers which stand in the way of adult students. For example, a point in the White Paper on Adult Education (2000) and one that was stressed most notably in the 1990s (Brady, 1991, 1996; Keogh, 1996; Lynch and O’Riordan, 1996; Walters, 1996) was the need for the provision of Access courses and educational guidance services for adult students. While the issue of Access courses was first documented in 1984 in the Kenny Report, there were no significant developments on this issue until the Government, in conjunction with the higher education sector decided to recruit Access Officers from the mid 1990s onwards. However, the provision of adult educational guidance has not been recognized to the same extent, and is an important issue that must be addressed.

I have shown based on the contents of publications such as the Green Paper on

Education (1992), the PCW (1994), the Green Paper on Adult Education (1998) and the PPF (2000) that there is a need for strengthening relationships and co-operation between the higher education sector and work organizations. This is lacking within the Irish system of adult education and training and is an issue that needs to be addressed. Workers must have access to adult education and training, and the higher education sector, in conjunction with work organizations will have to continually recognize and facilitate the importance of learning throughout working life.

CHAPTER 4

THE THREE RESEARCH THEMES

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a review of the literature in relation to the three selected themes that are integrated into the thesis. In addressing the first theme, it is necessary to define paid educational leave as decided at the 1974 International Labour Organization Conference, and this will be followed by a discussion of the importance of paid educational leave and the implications associated with it. In an understanding of the second and third themes, namely Access courses for adults and adult educational guidance from the perspective of the higher education sector, the chapter will provide information relevant for an understanding of both themes.

1. Paid Educational Leave

The subject of paid educational leave arose at a time in the 1970s when the OECD concepts of lifelong learning and recurrent education were beginning to be developed. Field (1988, p. 63) is of the opinion that whether as practice, policy or aspiration, paid educational leave was very much a creation of the 1970s and was an exciting concept often inspired by broader philosophies of recurrent education or lifelong learning. According to the International Federation of Workers' Educational Association (IFWEA) (1981, p.9), paid educational leave is one vital part of a comprehensive system of continuing education and training, and this Association was of the view that it should be considered in relation to other aspects of adult education and not in isolation from them. Charnley (1975, p. 113) also feels that paid educational leave

must be seen as part of a system of continuing adult education. McCarthy (1989, p. 6) makes the point that paid educational leave has never been considered as a medium for investment in people, while O'Halloran (1996, p.6) expresses the view that the ILO Convention is as relevant today as when it was adopted in the 1970s.

At this initial stage, it is first necessary to define what exactly is paid educational leave? At the 59th Session of the General Conference of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) held in Geneva in 1974, Convention No. 140 concerning paid educational leave was adopted, and requested OECD countries to formulate and apply a policy designed to promote the granting of paid educational leave. It must be noted that the first recorded ILO definition of paid educational leave appeared as:

Leave granted to a worker for educational purposes for a specified period during working hours with adequate financial entitlements. Countries adopting the Convention commit themselves to formulate and apply a policy designed to promote, by methods appropriate to national conditions and practice, and by stages as necessary, the granting of paid educational leave for the purpose of training at any level, general social and civic education as well as trade union education (ILO, 1974, p.2).

From this ILO definition, it is obvious that this leave may be brief or extended, the educational and training contents may be vocational or general education, may be provided in-house by employers or from outside sources, and may involve full or part-time study.

Based on this initiative taken by the ILO in 1974, it was predictable

that both national and international discussions involving the European Commission would recognize the importance of paid educational leave throughout an adults working life. In order to enable workers to adapt to the new challenge of using paid educational leave, two basis conditions would according to the ILO (1974, p. 4) have to be fulfilled. Firstly, people needed to be given time off from their work, and secondly, they needed to be paid while attending courses. However, some views have been put forward by researchers in relation to aspects of paid educational leave. For example, Roberts (1981, p. 23) maintains that the two conditions of the ILO Convention that I have just referred to could be seen as complementary. McCarthy (1989, p.7) suggests that differences between general and vocational education has and would continue to be increasingly blurred in the future as general education for certain groups may be regarded as vocational.

Charnley (1975, p. 65) suggests that the definition adopted by the ILO left many questions open, and at the time may have possibly caused some tension between employers and employees. For example, on an analysis of the definition, it has to be correctly noted that the ILO Convention says nothing about when leave is to be granted, how often it can be taken, how long a specified period constitutes or what adequate financial entitlements means? Other researchers, such as Field (1988, p.69) indicates that the original debate on paid educational leave in the 1970s revealed considerable confusion about what precisely the term was intended to cover. For Luttringer and Pasquier (1980, p. 418), the provisions in legislation on paid educational leave are very general in scope, as the concept of paid educational leave is a wide ranging one covering any leave granted to a worker for educational purposes in the employers time and without prejudice to job security, whether it be on the employers initiative or at the workers request, and regardless of whether the education or training in question was carried on inside or outside the work

organization. The perspective adopted by both Killeen and Bird (1981, p. 7) was that paid educational leave was anything which satisfied the conditions whereby an adult employee was given leave from their employment to undertake any form of education and training. Here it should be noted that both authors used the words education and training, as does Bryant (1983, p. 55) who saw paid educational leave as:

The granting of leave by employers, with adequate financial support provided by them to allow adult employees to attend education and training courses primarily during working hours and to retain normal employment rights.

According to Charnley (1975, p 19) such leave being granted under statutory provision can be regarded as meaning that an individual could take educational leave as a right. If such an interpretation of the right implies the right of the individual to decide when to take paid educational leave, then according to Charnley (1975, p. 19) such instances are rare. Von Moltke and Schneevoigt (1977, p. 21) believes that the provision of leave is made under a variety of conditions relating to its duration, the purpose of the study, the organization and the content of the learning situation, the categories of persons eligible for it and who meets the cost.

The question can also be asked if the right to education does not imply a right to paid educational leave? While education is a right of all members of society, it should be guaranteed by society and not necessarily within the framework of employment. Therefore, the question of paid educational leave could be examined primarily in terms of the right to education. However, the discussions at the ILO Convention in 1974 led to the deletion of the notion of a 'right' and this word does not appear in the adopted version of the 140 Convention.

Another divergence that must also be considered is in relation to financing. The definition of paid educational leave implies that leave should be granted without loss of earnings or financial entitlements. The main question here is whether full or part financial compensation should be offered, and the need to define paid educational leave in more flexible terms, which would take into account the diversity in national practice had also to be considered. This would possibly permit ratification of the ILO proposal and encourage member states to introduce paid educational leave although, the phrase “financial entitlements” left the door open for total or partial compensation for loss of earnings. On the other hand, it has to be pointed out that the concept of full compensation was retained in the ILO recommendation whereby workers during their participation in a paid educational leave scheme should maintain their standard of living by continued payment of wages, and other benefits, or by adequate compensation. Indeed, the ILO definition could also be seen as too ambitious and perhaps priority should be given to training linked with employment as a right of workers.

In theory, paid educational leave does offer the means for workers to obtain continuing education and training. Despite this principle, any discussions on paid educational leave is not free of controversy and each of its components could be open to a variety of interpretations. Field (1988, p. 64) documents that a number of changes from the perspective of adult education and training have altered profoundly the context in which any discussions on paid educational leave must be placed, and thus it is important not to undermine the importance of paid educational leave. Field (1988) cites a more diverse labour force, and this researcher would also include the emphasis on adult education and training and up-dating of qualifications from the perspective of paid educational leave. Therefore, any paid educational leave scheme should involve from a work organizational perspective, employers and

employees. In addition, the implementation of an effective paid educational leave scheme should also involve Governments and educational and training institutions working in conjunction with work organization in the provision of relevant courses.

2. Access Courses

In the 1980s, researchers writing on Access courses such as Evans and McCulloch (1989, p. 16) make the point that in education circles, the term 'access' has a much wider meaning, and what in their view seems to be happening is that the term 'Access courses' is being applied to a variety of types of courses. Hence a distinction needs to be maintained between those courses, a point that Tight (1993, p. 63) also makes. Thus according to Evans and McCulloch (1989, p. 21), Access courses are by definition, designed to prepare students, usually non-standard students for admission to higher education, a definition which Tight (1996, p. 132) concurs with. Connelly (1991, p. 41) agrees that Access courses focuses only on progression to higher education, and Williams (1997, p. 42) points out that the discourse now on this issue prioritizes groups historically excluded from higher education.

An analysis of European Commission documentation on this issue shows that it does not define Access courses in the context of adult students. In relation to Irish adult education, Lynch and O'Riordan (1996, p. 8) notes that since the publication of the Irish White Paper on Education in 1995, some attempts have been made to define Access courses. However, perhaps unaware to Lynch and O'Riordan (1996), in 1992, the Irish Green Paper on Education (p. 187) had previously defined Access courses as designed to assist particular categories of students to move confidently into higher education, through for example, providing the necessary foundation knowledge in particular subjects, familiarising them with the most effective learning techniques, and ensuring

that they have the necessary skills and approaches to maximise the benefit they receive from their studies. In relation to particular categories of students, Access courses are beneficial to the educationally disadvantaged, but they are also important for adults who may be educationally advantaged, but who have been away from the learning environment for some time.

Of importance is a point made by the Commission on the Points System (1999, p. 121) who had reservations about the use of the title 'Access courses' and to avoid misleading potential applicants, feels that higher education institutions should not use this title, unless there is a guaranteed access to a third level course on successful completion of an Access course. Interestingly, a recommendation within this publication (p. 121) was that courses which are described as Access courses, but which do not guarantee access to higher education should be renamed in a manner reflecting their higher education status, namely preparatory or foundation courses. In the 1980s, the latter two titles were a recommendation in the Kenny Report (1984, p. 146). Spackman (1995, p. 73) is of the opinion that Access courses are about gaining access to higher education, and of importance for Woodrow (1988, p. 318) is that a good working definition of Access courses must be flexible, but not restrictive.

While McGivney (1993, p. 40) and Merrill (1999, p. 47) recognises the importance of Access course for adult students, Woodrow (1998, p. 320) cites three interesting key common characteristics of Access courses. Firstly, Access courses are targetted towards those groups traditionally under-represented in higher education, a point that researchers such as Williams (1997, p. 42) concurs with. Secondly, they are developed and delivered by a process of collaboration mainly between the further and higher education sectors, and thirdly, by offering a clear progression into higher education courses, they

provide not just a preparation but also a route into higher education.

Some key components of Access courses have also been identified by O’Fathaigh (1995, p. 6). For O’Fathaigh, such courses must impart knowledge in subject areas and provide the skills that the adult student needs in order to succeed in higher education. O’Fathaigh (1995, p. 17) also suggests that it is necessary to highlight a distinction between Access courses which are designed with the purpose of increasing eligibility into higher education, and courses which provide direct entry into a recognized higher education course. Regarding Access courses which provide eligibility for a course of study, a variety of different providers could be involved, and O’Fathaigh (1995, p. 17) believes that if consistency is to be achieved with this kind of programme, course recognition could be sanctioned through a national framework. In connection with courses offering direct entry, in the view of O’Fathaigh (1995), as all institutions of higher education have national links, then each educational institution itself could be best served by providing these direct entry type courses.

Lynch and O’Riordan (1996, p. 9) have reservations about the two types of Access courses mentioned by O’Fathaigh (1995) and feels that such courses are defined in terms of one criteria, namely exit routes, and this does not provide an adequate framework for the definition and classification of such courses. The latter researchers hold the view that there is a wide range of additional criteria which can be used when classifying Access courses, and they cite the following issues which should be taken into consideration: selection methods, target groups, course size, content and methodology, assessment and funding. While Kelly (1990, p.8) welcomes Access courses as a selection mechanism for adult applicants, Tight (1996, p. 132) who is critical of aspects of Access courses, nevertheless feels that they have indeed enabled

adults to pursue courses in higher education, but they have yet to have a major impact upon the social make-up of higher education. This statement will be an issue that will be pursued further in this research work. Criticism of aspects of Access courses have been identified by Tight in publications in 1988 and 1993, but are certainly not valid in the context of current Access courses. For example, Tight (1993, p. 65) shows that Access courses concentrates on a limited range of academic disciplines in the social sciences and humanities, a statement that Merrill (1999, p. 47) too agrees with. It is true that this tended to be the case in the past, but is not now a valid argument, taking into consideration the increasing range of disciplines and subjects offered on Access courses.

According to the Report of the Action Group on Access to Third Level Education (2001, p. 91) there is a trend for some higher education colleges to recognize only their own Access courses, and in this publication (p. 92) was a recommendation on the need to explore co-operation between higher education institutions in the provision and recognition of Access courses. However, this I understand is an issue that is being addressed by Access Officers within the higher education sector.

3. Adult Educational Guidance

In a challenge for this new Millennium, the European Universities Continuing Education Network (EUCEN) (2000, p. 7) states that the higher education sector must improve its adult educational guidance services. In the same year, both Skilbeck and Connell (2000, p. 6) shows lack of educational guidance as a barrier to student access and progression, and the Action Group on Access to Third Level Education (2001, p. 90) suggests that this issue is the second most frequently cited barrier for adults students. McGivney (1998, p. 186) is of the belief that a disturbing number of adult students within the higher

education sector receive little or no substantial educational guidance prior to commencing courses, an issue that is pursued further in this research work.

It was in the early 1970s that the need for adult educational guidance was first recognized by Rogers (1971, p. 36), and this researcher showed that in adult education, guidance is essential, and if formally incorporated into a course could be valuable in reducing feelings of inadequacy which some adults can sometimes feel and which are a barrier to learning. Over twenty years later, a Scottish Report (Scottish Office, 1993, p. 8) shows that inadequate educational guidance for adults had been identified as a barrier to pursuing learning opportunities for adult students within the higher education sector. Connelly (1998, p. 224) is of the opinion that educational guidance has progressed in recent years, and changes have been happening against a background of increasing competition between course providers in the post school sector.

There is currently no national policy on adult educational guidance within the Irish higher education sector, and this is an issue that has and continues to be peripheral to the activities of higher education institutions. Thus, this absence in higher education institutions of adult educational guidance provision is a deterrent to many potential and existing students. Higher education adult students have been identified by McNamara (1998, p. 1) as a group requiring adult educational guidance services, and according to a Scottish Office Report (1993, p. 35), there has been a growing recognition of the need for guidance support for adult learners in the higher education sector. Blair et al. (1993, p. 51) expresses the view that adult students in higher education colleges were less likely than younger students to receive educational guidance, and these same authors (Blair et al., 2000, p. 13) indicates that community education colleges catering for adult students appeared to be more successful than higher

education institutions in supplying the kind of guidance which adult students requires. If maximum benefit is to be obtained from the resources that should be available for adult students and adult education, there is therefore a need to develop effective provision of adult educational guidance within the higher education sector. This must concentrate on individual clients, helping them to make informed choices, based on assessment of their own experience, skills, knowledge, motives and opportunities.

In relation to work organizations, Cooper (2000, p. 264) believes that educational institutions and work organizations needs to invest in adult educational guidance, and also support and help adult learners in this essential service. The importance of educational guidance for workers has also been documented by Harrison (1998, p. 238) who acknowledges its significance in the context of adult education. There is therefore a need for higher education institutions to raise awareness among employers about the importance of adult educational guidance. For Clayton (2000, p. 6) collaboration between education and training institutions and work organizations is essential if adult educational guidance is to be effective, and this same author (p. 9) recommends that employers have a role to play here, particularly in helping to facilitate workers to return to education and training. However, Bartlett and Rees (1999, p. 84) are of the opinion that the provision of adult educational guidance services remains patchy and inadequately resourced, a point that is examined in this research work.

In the context of definitions, similarly to what I have already discussed in relation to Access courses, Cooper (2000, p. 263) notes that like many terms now widely used, educational guidance has been interpreted in various ways and uses. Elsewhere, Cooper (1990, p. 17) defines educational guidance as the process of enabling individuals to evaluate their own development, identify

learning needs and choose the most appropriate way they can meet them in the light of their own circumstances.

From an Irish perspective, the White Paper on Adult Education (2000, p. 156) defines guidance as a range of activities designed to assist people to make choices about their own lives and to make transitions consequent to these choices. Indeed, this definition bears some resemblance to the definition put forward by Bissell and Southwood (1994, p. 66) and Bartlett et al. (2000, p. 17) in that it comprises a range of processes designed to enable individuals to make informed choices relating to learning and work. For McCarthy (1998, p. ii) educational guidance in the context of education in Ireland denotes a range of interventions to assist career, educational and personal decision making.

Adult educational guidance as defined by the Unit for the Development of Adult Continuing Education (UDACE) (1986, p. 7) is seen as the process of helping an adult to make effective choices about learning needs and ways of meeting them, and recommends that any comprehensive adult educational guidance service should include the following main activities: informing, advising, enabling, counselling, assessment and feedback. The Scottish Council for Research in Education (1993, pamphlet) also has an appropriate definition whereby it defines adult educational guidance as any information, advice or support which helps adults make choices about education, training and employment, and which helps them while undertaking courses. Advice, support and information has been highlighted also by Watt (1997, p. 133) as a key to guidance. Adult educational guidance needs according to Blair et al. (1993, p. 48) to be client centred, confidential and readily accessible, while Clayton (2000, p. 1) also feels that educational guidance should be client-

centred and impartial. To be effective, adult educational guidance would need to be comprehensive and objective in its approach, and on this point, the UDACE (1998, p. 99) were of the opinion that this comprehensive service would assist adult students to evaluate their own educational and vocational developments, assisted by appropriately trained adult educational guidance personnel.

Another approach to defining educational guidance is according to Connelly (1995, p. 4) in terms of the demands which clients make at some points in relation to a programme of study. This pragmatic approach distinguishes between four stages of guidance, each with overlapping concerns. Firstly, the pre-entry guidance, which focuses on assisting adults to choose an appropriate course of study, something in the view of Blair and Tett (1998, p. 158) which is of great importance for adult learners. Secondly, induction in which guidance is concerned with helping adult students to settle into a course, develop good learning habits and become familiar with the learning environment and support services. Thirdly, on-going guidance is more varied and can include arrangements for personal and financial support as well as help with course related problems. Fourthly, pre-exit guidance is concerned with providing information and assistance for adults moving on from a course to other forms of study or employment. In its broadest sense, adult educational guidance can therefore be seen to include education, training, personal and vocational guidance.

The question of who needs adult educational guidance must also be considered? It is true to state that the needs of the adult student population is extremely diverse, a point that Teeling (1999, p. 12) agrees with. Adults who do require access to educational guidance services are often those who have terminated their education early, or who according to Teeling (1999, p. 14) are from

disadvantaged socio-economic groups. This view is echoed by the Scottish Institute of Adult and Continuing Education (SIACE) (1989, p. 8) and Chisholm (1994, p. 48). Alexander and Steward (1988, p. 3) suggests that the unrepresentative pattern of adults in adult education is due to the lack of educational guidance, and feel that the failure of adult educational guidance has a potentially powerful function in the legitimization of continuing socio-economic and educational inequalities (p. 33). Also of importance is a point noted by McGivney (1998, p. 181) who is of the opinion that the provision of good quality adult educational guidance can help to reduce adult student drop-outs within the higher education sector.

Adults returning to learning are often initially confused by the range of education and training options available, and learners can have limited access to the varied options on offer or lack the confidence to make initial contacts without the support of trained staff. Similarly, Eagleson (1991, p. 275), rightly points out that some adults, particularly those seeking education or training for the first time since leaving school, have no clear idea of either their own skills or capacities, or the opportunities available to them. In the opinion of Connelly (1995, p. 7), some adults experience difficulty in approaching educational providers for advice, and there are both psychological and practical barriers to be overcome such as low expectations of what adult educational guidance can offer.

Conclusion

What I have tried to illustrate in this chapter are the differing and often incompatible positions within the debates on the issues of paid educational leave, Access courses and adult educational guidance. I have felt the need to clarify definitions in order to set the context for this work. Participation in higher education for adult students remains in particular skewed by social class,

with the lower social class groupings continuing to an extent to be under-represented (Lynch, 1996, p. 87; McDonagh, 1996, p. 23). While the factors underlying this phenomenon go in many respects beyond the educational system, there is need for targeted interventions at the higher education level. In order to embed the concept of adult education and training into the education and training system, much work needs to be done in relation to the provision of paid educational leave. Since this concept originated in the 1970s, there has been controversy, and implications on paid educational leave have been evident from the perspective of employers, employees and the Government.

The importance of Access courses and adult educational guidance provision must be developed in order to become an integral part of an adult education and training system. Thus the provision of Access courses and adult educational guidance services must be seen to have an important role to play within the higher education sector. The main aim of adult educational guidance should be client focused and meet the individual's educational, training and vocational needs. I have also shown that Access courses and adult educational guidance inevitably raises a wide range of issues, and this was evident in the different and often conflicting expressed views of researchers.

CHAPTER 5

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

According to Anderson and Arsenault (1998, p. 6) research in education is a disciplined attempt to address questions through the collection and analysis of primary data for the purpose of description, explanation and generalization. For Gomm and Woods (1993, p. viiii), educational research can take an array of forms, ranging across a variety of topics and employing diverse types of data and techniques of analysis.

In a discussion of research methodology, the first question to ask is what is educational research? Various researchers have given definitions and I selected the one expressed by Bassey (1999, p. 39):

Education research is critical enquiry aimed at informing educational judgements and decisions in order to improve educational action.

This definition was I felt appropriate as it is the type of research in education undertaken by educationalists and is itself educational because of its stated intention to inform.

Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to describe the methodological procedures considered and used in this thesis involving respondents at the National University of Ireland, Galway (NUIG), Dublin City University (DCU), work organization representatives and Access Officers. The contents of this chapter will contain information on the different stages in the methodology process that were considered and selected.

In the early stages of the research work, considerable reflection was required to establish a realistic focus for the thesis. In addressing this issue, I had to take into consideration the objectives of the different aspects of the research work, and in addition some recommendations by different authors on what should a methodology chapter contain. Silverman (2000, p. 234) indicates that the methodology chapter should include information on the subjects studied, the research instruments used, the procedures used in applying these instruments to the subjects and data analysis. Regarding questions for the methodology chapter, Silverman (2000, p. 235), also shows that it is important to ask how the researcher went about the research, what overall strategy was adopted and why, and what design and techniques were used and why? Having consulted the contents of what a methodology chapter should contain in other books, for example, Reaves (1992); Oppenheim (1992); Punch (1998); Scott and Usher (1999) and Silverman (2000), it was obvious that certain key issues and questions were emerging from various authors and these needed to be addressed. In summary, these included for example, study design, the methods used to gather data, why these methods were chosen, the advantages and limitations of the methods selected, the subjects selected, data analysis issues and the methods for the analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data.

In a design of any research study, a researcher must develop a plan for selecting a sample. This chapter will also include a description of the subjects chosen and the reasons for selecting the subjects, together with the importance of ensuring that questions asked were relevant to the purpose of the different research studies.

Another question that had to be considered was how to gather the data? According to Bassey (1999, p. 40), empirical research means the kind of research which focuses primarily on data collection, and it is where

questions are asked of people, observations are made of events and descriptions taken by researchers to systematically collect data, analyse, interpret and draw conclusions. The use of two research techniques, namely questionnaires and interviews as data collection instruments meant that both quantitative and qualitative research was used, and as these two methods have unique characteristics, their advantages and limitations will be discussed. The importance of the need to undertake pilot studies for the subsequent administration of the main questionnaires and in undertaking interviews will be explained. In order to maximise the response rate, the different strategies used for following up on the questionnaires will be referred to.

Interpretation of results is a key issue in data analysis. Consideration had to be given to what was felt to be the most appropriate data analysis strategy and what methods would be most effective in the presentation of this aspect of the work. It was therefore necessary to gain an understanding of quantitative and qualitative research methods and to establish how effective their combination would be in analysing the data. A separate section of this chapter will focus on the issues surrounding the analysis of data.

The discussion in this chapter will follow the step by step stages of the research methodology as they occurred, and will be centred around the following research studies: 1) Graduates Questionnaires; 2) Graduates Interviews; 3) Work Organization Representatives Questionnaire; 4) Work Organization Representative Interviews and 5) Access Officers Interviews.

Initial Stages of the Research

In the initial stages of this research work, a thesis proposal indicating the areas that the researcher was interested in was submitted to the supervisor.

On reading through the contents, it was felt that the proposed study was comprehensive and a recommendation from the supervisor was that the issues for researching needed to be reduced considerably. In order to select which issues and themes should be addressed, it was decided to undertake a preliminary questionnaire survey involving both quantitative and qualitative data. The main purpose of this initial survey was to firstly, identify and prioritize some of the issues that would possibly be an integral part of the larger research studies, and secondly, to identify possible research implications.

The most obvious consideration involved in the selection of subjects for any study is to get people who would be able to supply the information required. In selecting the sample for this initial study, it was decided to target three different groups of adult part-time students, aged twenty three years and over, who were in employment and who were participating in the final year of under and postgraduate courses at the NUIG. The three part-time degree courses selected were the Masters of Business Administration, the Masters of Rural Development and the Bachelor of Arts. They were chosen for the following three reasons. Firstly, the researcher was aware that most of those participating on the courses were working in full time employment. Secondly, based on their age and work experience, the students should be competent to provide the information that was required. Thirdly, the researcher would have access to the students participating on the three courses.

At this preliminary stage of the research work, it was felt that a questionnaire would be sufficient and was the most appropriate method of gathering the initial data. It was also felt that eighteen questions, which would consist of open and closed questions would supply sufficient

information. Following analysis, I would be in a stronger position in identifying, in conjunction with the review of the literature, some of the issues and themes that would form an integral part of the thesis.

In February 1999, a total of 45 questionnaires were administered between the three courses. Following some class visits, within a month of distributing the questionnaires I had received a total return of 32 questionnaires (71%). The quantitative elements of the questionnaires were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, while the qualitative aspect focused on selected themes.

The findings of this preliminary questionnaire will not be discussed in this chapter, but it is important to point out that the results were valuable in helping to identify and prioritize areas of research for the thesis and was therefore from the research perspective worthwhile. Of particular importance was that the preliminary survey findings confirmed the need to reduce the study and concentrate on examining a number of key themes. The three themes selected were: Access courses, adult educational guidance and paid educational leave. Another significant benefit was that this preliminary study, in conjunction with the on-going review of the literature search, lead me to modify and refine some of the original research ideas. It also enabled me to develop more specific ideas about what the thesis work would contain and formulate my interests into specific research hypotheses.

Research Selection and Sample

Gill and Johnson (1991, p. 144) notes that methodological choices do not seem to be made in the ways frequently suggested in conventional methodology textbooks, and the most important condition for differentiating among the various research methods is to try to identify the type of

research questions to be asked. Gall et al. (1996, p.165) recommends that in designing a study, a researcher must develop a sound plan for selecting a sample, collecting and analysing the data. Much of the work by Chisnall (1992) on methodology procedures constantly emphasizes the importance of planning and taking into consideration relevant issues in designing a study. For example, Chisnall (1992, p. 128) highlights the importance of establishing the educational level of the population being surveyed in order that the population sample cannot misunderstand the questions.

A question that had next to be considered was how should the representative sample be drawn, how large the sample should be and the population from which the individuals would be selected? Punch (1998, p. 193) makes the point that sampling is important in both quantitative and qualitative research. Strauss and Corbin (1990, p.190) indicates that in quantitative forms of research, sampling is based on selecting a portion of a population to represent the entire population to which one wants to generalize. In contrast, and in relation to qualitative sampling, Mason (1996, p. 91) points out that obtaining a sample that is representative of a wider population involves trying to select those which are representative of the total empirical population which the researcher wishes to study, in the sense that the sample displays characteristics such as age, gender or class in a population of people, in similar proportions and patterns to the total population about which generalizations are to be made.

The idea of sample is linked to that of population (Robson, 1999, p. 135) and Van Dalen (1979, p. 130) makes the point that no specific rules on how to obtain an adequate sample have been formulated as each situation presents its own problems. Cohen and Manion (1994, p. 89) also notes that in order to conduct an adequate survey, there is no clear-cut answer, for the correct sample size depends upon the purpose of the study and the nature of the

population under scrutiny. In deciding on the subjects for the different studies that would be undertaken, it was felt that the target population had to be accessible and competent to participate in the study. In relation to this latter statement, Gall (1996, p. 220) informs that the initial step in sampling is to define the target population and in doing so, accessibility must be taken into consideration.

Taking into consideration the objectives of the different research studies, the following were the subjects selected. Firstly, those completing one of the following part-time courses at the NUIG: Masters of Business Administration, Masters in Rural Development, Bachelor of Commerce Degree, Diploma in Rural Development and Diploma in Systems Analysis. Subjects completing the M.Sc. in Education and Training Management and the Diploma in Further Education and Training in DCU also participated. Secondly, work organization representatives. Thirdly Access Officers within the higher education sector. In relation to the respondents on the seven courses within the NUIG and DCU, the questionnaire was administered when the course participants were at the end of their course. However, by the time some of them filled in the questionnaire, and in particular participated in the series of interviews, they were graduates, hence the term graduates is used in relation to the results.

Research Instruments

Strangor (1998, p. 33) makes the point that one of the goals of science is to organise relationships into explanatory principles such as theories, and theories are tested in the form of research hypotheses. There are according to Bassey (1999, p. 81) three major methods of collecting research data: asking questions, observing events and reading documents. In particular, I found Bassey's (1999) advice useful whereby it was recommended to work out one's own methods based on one's own research questions (p. 81). It was

decided that the two research techniques that would be used in this thesis would be questionnaires and interviews as both techniques are extensively used in educational research and a range of educational problems can be investigated.

In relation to the survey, this is the most commonly used descriptive method in educational research and is also used to describe research that involves administering questionnaires or interviews. Gall et al. (1996, p. 289) notes that the main purpose of a survey is to use questionnaires or interviews to collect data from participants in a sample about their characteristics, experiences and opinions in order to generalize the findings to a population that the sample is intended to represent. The survey can also be further differentiated in terms of scope, and the collection of information can involve one or more data gathering technique, which as previously stated in this research work would be the administration of questionnaires and the undertaking of a series of interviews. In designing the questionnaire, I had to take into account the two prerequisites to the design of any survey that were identified by Cohen and Manion (1994, p.85), namely the purpose of the enquiry and the population which it is to focus on.

The Questionnaire as a Research Method

The term 'questionnaire' has been used in different ways. For example, Oppenheim (1992, p. 100), indicates that some practitioners would reserve the term exclusively for self-administered and postal questionnaires, while others would include interview schedules under the general rubric of questionnaires. For Gall et al. (1996, pp. 288) the questionnaire is a widely used method in educational research, and this researcher defines questionnaires as documents that ask the same questions of all individuals in the sample, and in which respondents record a written response to each questionnaire item.

Taking into consideration the views of methodology researchers such as for example, Bassey (1999), Scott and Usher (1999) and Gillham (2000), the choice of questionnaires for this thesis was made mainly on their appropriateness to the objectives of the research work, and as a method of data collection, were seen to have the following three advantages. Firstly, the questionnaires could be administered to the participants in the different studies by the researcher. Secondly, some of the questionnaires would be anonymous. Despite the difficulty in follow-ups with anonymous questionnaires, it was felt that if the questionnaire was anonymous, some of the survey population may be more willing to give accurate and perhaps more information as anonymity would be assured. Thirdly, there could be a choice of question types such as open, closed and multiple choice questions.

However, despite the advantages cited, the questionnaire method was not without its limitations and the following five factors had also to be taken into consideration. Firstly, questionnaires cannot probe deeply into respondents' opinions and feelings and restricts the researcher from exploring differences of interpretation. Despite this latter statement, it was nevertheless felt that the series of interviews that would be undertaken would enable the researcher to explore some issues further. Secondly, there is always the danger that the respondents may misinterpret questions. Thirdly, subjects may be reluctant to give answers or may give incomplete answers. Fourthly, the responses from questionnaires can be low. Fifthly, with anonymous questionnaires, follow-ups can be difficult.

Having considered the method of collecting the data, the next step was to design questionnaires which would be both quantitative and qualitative in nature. What is to be measured should according to Oppenheim (1992, p. 100), be contained in the questionnaire specification. This then poses the question as to what is research design? Research design refers to the basic

plan or strategy of the research, and the logic behind it which will make it possible and valid to draw conclusions from it. According to Oppenheim (1992, p. 6), research design is concerned with making problems researchable by setting up the study in a way that will produce specific answers to specific questions, and that good research design should make it possible to draw valid inferences from the data in terms of generalization. Three uses of research design is distinguished in the literature by Punch (1998, p. 66). Firstly, at the most general level, it means all the issues involved in planning and executing a research project. Secondly, at its specific level, the design of a study refers to the way a researcher guards against and tries to rule out alternative interpretations of results. Thirdly, between these two is the general idea of design as situating the researcher in the empirical world and connecting research questions to data.

Anderson and Arsenault (1998, p. 170) states that to develop valid questionnaires, a researcher must clearly identify general information. For example, what types of information is required and from whom? I also had to remember that the type of questions that would be asked had to be determined by the objective of the particular question. Reaves (1992, p. 105) emphasizes that it is important that the researcher ensures that the questions asked will give useful answers, and the recommendations by Punch (1998, p. 38) that questions do four main things were taken into consideration. Firstly, they organize the study and give it direction and coherence. Secondly, they keep the researcher focused during the study. Thirdly, they provide a framework for writing up the research work, and finally they point to the additional data that will be needed. The advice given by Scott and Usher (1999, p. 68) on the need for questions not to overlap and the avoidance of imprecise and awkward questions was also taken into consideration.

Denscombe (1998, p. 88) is of the opinion that different methods are better suited to different circumstances and questionnaires are no exception as opinions, attitudes, views and beliefs can be investigated using questionnaires. Questionnaire and interview questions can be constructed in different ways and in this research work, this was a point that had to be considered in relation to the different studies that would be undertaken. For example, where the closed form would be used, this would permit only pre-specified responses, and the main disadvantage is that responses would be restricted. To eliminate this problem, the researcher decided to allow the respondents the opportunity to expand on some of the closed and multiple choice questions. This it was felt would be also of additional data value and be justified by giving some qualitative material. The main disadvantage in using open questions is the danger that some questions may be left unanswered as more time and effort on the part of the respondents is required, although Reaves (1992, p. 107) recommends that in the early stages of research, open questions are to be preferred. From the perspective of interviews, Cohen and Manion (1989, p. 313) lists an advantage of open questions as flexible, and this allows the interviewer to probe so that they may go into more depth if they wish. Interviews can also result in unexpected or unanticipated answers, which may suggest hitherto unthought of relationships or hypotheses.

In drawing up the questionnaire, some factors that Gall et al. (1996, p. 294) mentions which helps to influence questionnaire return rates were considered. These mainly included in the schedule of questions, the avoidance of technical terms and organising questions into a logical sequence.

Pilot Testing

A proper pilot study is according to Gillham (2000, p. 42) where a researcher simulates the main study. Litwin (1995, p. 60) is of the opinion that one of

the most important and necessary stages in the development of a new survey involves trying it out on a small sample population and this is a critical step in assessing the practical application of the survey instrument. For Gall et al. (1996, p. 65), a pilot study involves a small-scale testing of the procedures that a researcher plans to use in the main study and revising the procedures based on what the testing reveals. Oppenheim (1992, p. 47), is of the view that piloting helps with procedural matters such as the wording and ordering of question sequences. Similarly, Litwin (1995, p. 60) also indicates that pilot testing almost always identifies errors and they can range from typographical mistakes or often ambiguous instructions. Hence, the pilot testing allowed me the opportunity to redesign possible problematic parts of the survey before it was actually used in the main survey.

Graduates Questionnaires

The purpose of the graduates questionnaires was to gather information on issues relevant to adult education and training from the perspective of work organizations and the higher education sector. Before proceeding with this aspect of the study, it was first necessary to undertake a pre-test study, and in April 2000, a pilot test study of the graduates questionnaire was conducted with the purposes of providing a means of detecting mistakes and to eliminate any ambiguities or misunderstandings in the questionnaire. It was important that the pilot testing would ensure that the questions asked would produce answers in a form which could be quantified and help to establish a method of presenting the data. This pilot-testing therefore formed the basis for the impending research work.

Another question that had to be considered was whom should the pilot testing be conducted on? Oppenheim (1992, p. 62) believes that respondents in pre-test studies should be as similar as possible to those in the main enquiry.

This was also the opinion of Gall et al. (1996, p. 298) who notes that piloting should include a sample of individuals from the population in which the researcher plans to draw respondents from, and that for quantitative and qualitative research studies, two or three participants may be sufficient (p.65). Taking the views of Oppenheim (1992) and Gall et al. (1996) into consideration, and not losing sight of the objectives of the research studies, it was decided that six final year NUIG, adult students in employment and attending some of the higher education courses in which the sample would be drawn from would be selected for pre-testing. This consisted of two students participating on the MBA course, two on the Bachelor of Commerce Degree course, and two on the Masters of Rural Development. In addition, one working adult who had the previous year completed a postgraduate degree course (Masters of Business Administration) at the NUIG participated. Six of the seven questionnaires were returned within three weeks.

The pilot questionnaire had a total of 43 questions and was divided into four parts: 1) General information 2) Educational background 3) Education and training - work related and 4) Current employment and education and training details. An extra page was included at the back of each questionnaire, the purpose of which was to give the respondents an opportunity if they wished, to make any further comments. It was felt that the pilot questionnaire was clear and long enough to capture all the relevant evaluative data to suit the purpose of the study.

The pre-testing respondents communicated to the researcher that the questionnaire was comprehensive, well structured and relevant to the study. However, there were two main reservations expressed. Firstly, three respondents expressed comments that the questionnaire had a lot of questions (43). Secondly, two respondents felt that open-ended questions can be time

consuming for respondents to answer. I took into consideration the feedback from the pilot testing and addressed the comments in consultation with my supervisor. Regarding the first point, it was felt there was a need to include all the questions as they were seen as essential and relevant. In relation to the open questions, it was also decided not to reduce them as the qualitative data provided by the respondents would be of additional research value and beneficial to the thesis. The pilot testing also enabled me to test out categories and themes. Resulting from the pre-testing study, some minor alterations (e.g. rephrasing and re-arranging questions) were made, but the structure of the final version of the graduates questionnaire still contained 43 questions. Gall et al. (1996, p. 295) refers to the importance of coding and in order to help with follow-up procedures, each questionnaire distributed had the abbreviation of their course title on top of the page (e.g. MBA and MRD). Overall, I felt that the pilot testing was effective and helped to give the graduates questionnaire (Appendix 1) study a good foundation to build upon.

A covering letter was designed to accompany the questionnaire. This letter was brief, yet sufficient to convey the necessary information about the purpose of the study and request responses. A returned addressed envelope accompanied each questionnaire.

Administration of the Graduates Questionnaires

Towards the end of the final course term (May, 2000), I approached the five course co-ordinators at the NUIG and got approval to administer the questionnaires. While each questionnaire had a covering letter, I was nevertheless anxious to address each group of course participants, with the main purpose of endeavouring to get a good response. This class address enabled me to explain the purpose of the study, clarify any questions that

the participants may have on aspects of the questionnaire, and specify the need to return their questionnaire by the closing date stipulated on the stamped addressed envelope.

During May 2000, a total of sixty four questionnaires was distributed to the following five groups of under and postgraduate students at the NUIG:

1. Masters of Business Administration (17 questionnaires)
2. Masters of Rural Development (13 questionnaires)
3. Bachelor of Commerce (18 questionnaires)
4. Diploma in Rural Development (10 questionnaires)
5. Diploma in Systems Analysis (6 questionnaires) (only 6 students were in full time employment).

By the end of May/early June 2000, I had received sixteen questionnaires, and through the co-operation of some lecturers, a further twenty two questionnaires were returned. It was obvious from the course codes which courses had the highest number of responses. At this stage, there was a need to do a random check to establish who had returned their questionnaire. As the questionnaire was anonymous, two types of follow-up techniques were used. Firstly, I undertook to consult a random sample of survey participants by telephone. This task was made possible by I having access to the telephone numbers of most survey participants. Secondly, personal contacts was used for a very small number of the study participants who were known to me.

By June 2000, I had succeeded in contacting thirty four of the study participants. The results to this aspect of the follow-up procedures varied. For example, it was found that of the thirty four contacted, seventeen had indicated they returned their questionnaire. Eleven informed me that they had overlooked or had not the time due to commitments to fill in the

questionnaire. All eleven gave an assurance that they would return their questionnaire within a ten day period. In discussions with the six other study participants, it emerged that they had mislaid/lost their questionnaire. In endeavouring to increase the response rate, the six participants received another questionnaire, accompanied by a covering letter, slightly different from the original letter, but again re-emphasising the importance of completing the questionnaire.

The DCU survey was also undertaken in May 2000. The questionnaire was the same as for the NUIG participants, and only appropriate alterations had to be made for the DCU covering letter. Through the co-operation of the staff of the School of Education Studies, DCU, twenty five questionnaires were distributed to the students on the M.Sc. Course in Education and Training Management, and a further twenty questionnaires to the participants of the Diploma in Further Education and Training. I requested that the completed questionnaire be returned to the School of Education Studies, DCU within a two week period. Follow-ups to the questionnaires was done with assistance from the staff of the School of Education Studies, and a total of thirty five questionnaires had been returned from the DCU study participants. The percentage response from the NUIG was 75% and from DCU 78%, which made a total response of 76%.

In 2001, the Head of the School of Education Studies, DCU, commissioned a research study. This questionnaire study involved graduates who had completed part-time courses at DCU, and the purpose of the research was to gather data on issues of concern to part-time adult education students and DCU. In order to gather more data on some issues relevant to my research work, it was agreed by the Head of the School, who was also the research supervisor, to include six questions in this questionnaire.

The Interview as a Research Method

Scott and Usher (1999, p. 108) makes the point that interviewing is an essential tool of the researcher in educational inquiry. In conjunction with the research supervisor, it was felt that a number of interviews should be conducted, the purpose of which would be to gather some more data on issues relevant to this thesis. In considering this task, Mason (1996, p. 39) indicates that a researcher should ask why use interviews and why might a researcher want to interact with people to generate data? The answers to these questions were addressed and it was felt that people's knowledge, views, understandings, interpretations, experiences and interactions are meaningful properties and would supplement the data from the questionnaires. Kane (1997, p. 51) feels that the benefit to a researcher using both interviews and questionnaires was that these methods tell you what people say, do and think, and the emphasis could be on descriptive and contextual data identification which could be compiled in an attempt to elaborate themes for further consideration. Elsewhere, Denscombe (1998, p. 114) is of the opinion that the one to one variety is the most common form of interview and this method was deemed appropriate for this aspect of the research work.

Reaves (1992, p. 109) defines the interview as consisting of one person asking another person questions and recording the respondent's answers. When the interviewer is asking a standard set of fixed questions, the interview is also seen as a survey. Similarly, Gall et al. (1996, p. 289) defines interviews as consisting of oral questions by the interviewer and oral responses by the research participants. Cohen and Manion (1994, p. 271) notes that while interviews are used for gathering data, a common denominator is the transaction that takes place between seeking information on the part of the interviewer and supplying information on the part of the interviewee. A benefit within the face to face interviews that would be

used in this research was one acknowledged by Robson (1999, p. 229) whereby this method offers the researcher the possibility of modifying one's line of enquiry following up interesting responses.

The purpose of the interviews that I would be undertaking would be to combine quantitative and qualitative research, and the decision to conduct a series of interviews was taken based on the following three advantages. Firstly, interviews would enable me to gain access to objective data, to determine facts and also to ascertain opinion, attitudes and trends through respondents offering descriptive accounts. Secondly, I believed that the interviews would broaden the research, throw up new dimensions, suggest new ideas and hypotheses. Thirdly, interviews could be used as an instrument of data collection, which would supplement the data that had been collected from the questionnaires. According to Walker (1989, p.79), the most significant research findings emerges from points at which different methods have complemented each other. Some of the advantages of interviews that Cohen and Manion (1994) documents were also seen as applicable to this research. For example, both researchers (Cohen and Manion, 1994, p. 272) refers to interviews being used as a means of gathering information and to test hypotheses and which can be used in conjunction with other research methods. However, the advantages of the interview method were offset by some limitations, the main one in this thesis being that the interview could not provide anonymity for the respondents.

The structure of all the interviews involved a pre-determined sequence and wording of questions to be asked of each of the respondents. It was the opinion of Denscombe (1998, p. 112) that structured interviews involved tight control over the format of the questions and answers. Follow-up aspects to the questions would allow probing by beginning with the same initial questions, but asking different questions based on the respondents answers.

An advantage in the opinion of Fielding (1993, p. 136) is that the interview allows certain questions to be asked the same way each time, but the interviewer is free to alter the sequence and to probe for more information. Gall et al. (1996, p. 309) indicates that in quantitative research studies, the interview generally is structured to expose all respondents to a nearly identical experience, while in qualitative research, the researcher's goal is to help respondents express their view of a phenomenon in their own terms.

Graduates Interviews

In relation to the duties of interviewers, Chisnall (1992, p. 145) refers to the need to secure valid and reliable answers to questions, which would provide the raw material which is processed into survey findings. It was therefore deemed important for all the interviews undertaken that questions needed to be carefully worded and presented so that they would lead to answers which would give information that would be useful to the objectives of the interviews, as the wording, sequence and presentation of questions can fundamentally influence the responses given. Hence this called for the need to undertake pilot testing. Hall and Hall (1996, p. 165) stresses the need for pilot interviewing, and it has previously been mentioned that Oppenheim (1992, p. 62) recommends that pre-testing respondents should be similar to those in the main enquiry, a view that Chisnall (1992, p. 145) also concurs with. In September 2000, two recent graduates of the NUIG were selected to act as pre-testers, and it was felt that both were suitable to undertake this task, as one pre-tester had completed the Diploma in Rural Development and the second a Masters of Business Administration Degree. This pilot testing resulted in the identification of some minor problems that needed to be observed when interviewing (e.g. more probing of answers).

Six graduates who had participated in the questionnaire survey were selected for the in-depth interviews, which consisted of twenty three questions

(Appendix 2). Four of the graduates who had participated in different courses at the NUIG, and two graduates from DCU comprised the respondents. In order to have gender balance, three males and three females were selected.

The six interviews were undertaken during October 2000. A mutually agreeable time in Galway and Dublin was arranged between the interviewer and interviewees. Interviews inevitably have a sense of formality (Bassey, 1999, p. 81) and Oppenheim (1992, p. 67) indicates that for the contents of interviews to be examined in detail, it is essential that they be recorded. I felt recording would be beneficial in the transcribing of the transcripts for data analysis purposes, and the interview participants were informed beforehand that their interview would be taped. During the course of the interviews, some notes, based on the respondents answers were made. The purpose of this exercise enabled me as the interviews progressed to investigate some further relevant issues based on the contents of the respondents answers.

Work Organization Representatives Questionnaire

This aspect of the research methodology was work organization focused. The objective of this part of the research was to gather information on adult education and training issues from employers who had responsibility for staff education and training within work organizations. It was decided to be consistent with this aspect of the study and to continue using both questionnaires and interviews as data collection methods for the work organization representatives.

Chisnall (1992, p. 120) emphasises the importance of pilot testing through all stages of research studies. With this statement in mind, the work organization questionnaire consisting of 26 open and closed questions was

designed (Appendix 3). The pre-testers for this aspect of the study were two employers who had agreed to participate in the main study. Based on their feedback, some alterations were made. For example, the main reservations expressed by both pilot-testers was that employers may find that some of the information that I required may not be readily available or may take time to find out. Concern was also expressed that there may be some reluctance on respondents to answer some questions. This was particularly relevant to Questions 3, 6 and 7 of the work organization questionnaire, but as the questions were seen as important, it was decided not to omit them.

Regarding participants for the main aspect of the study, it was decided to target work organizations which had employees participating in either the NUIG Bachelor of Commerce or the Masters of Business Administration degrees. As stated earlier in this chapter, seventeen questionnaires were sent to the Masters of Business Administration course participants and eighteen to the Bachelor of Commerce participants, which made a total of thirty five participants between the two courses. The next task that I had to undergo was to identify which work organizations participants were working in. Of the thirty five participants between both courses, only three were ineligible to participate, leaving it necessary to establish the work organizations of thirty two participants. While some of the work organizations of the course participants were known to the researcher, it was mainly through the course co-ordinators of both courses that it was possible to establish where twenty nine of the thirty two graduates worked. When the work addresses were eventually matched with the graduates, it was noted that in five cases, the same organization was an employer of more than one graduate. Therefore the total number of organizations that could be targetted for this part of the study was twenty four.

Within each work organization, initial contact was made with the most

appropriate person to fill in the questionnaire, namely the person with responsibility for staff education and training/staff development. In some cases, the work organization representatives were prepared to participate in the questionnaire study, provided their work organizations name would not be identified. This request was adhered to. During November 2000, twenty four questionnaires were distributed, and a covering letter was attached to each questionnaire, explaining the purpose of the study, and requesting responses by the closing date stipulated on the stamped addressed envelope.

By the closing date, seven questionnaires had been returned. In order to increase the response rate, a follow-up procedure involving telephone calls was undertaken. When the results of this aspect of the study were being analysed, eighteen returned questionnaires out of twenty four, yielded a response rate of seventy five per cent.

Work Organization Representatives Interviews

As a follow-up to the questionnaires, seven in-depth interviews were undertaken with work organization representatives in December 2000. The objective of this aspect of the research was to gather more data on issues relevant to adult education and training in seven work organizations. The importance of pilot-testing, as already acknowledged in this chapter was also deemed necessary for this aspect of the study, and the interview was pre-tested by two personnel involved in staff education and training in two work organizations. The main reservation expressed by both pre-testers was the need to keep the interviews relatively short. Taking this recommendation into consideration, the slightly modified interview questions comprised ten structured questions (Appendix 4).

Prior to undertaking the interviews, the researcher made initial contact by telephone to the work organizations. The purpose of the telephone calls was

to explain the purpose of the interview and request co-operation. Each interview was taped, and in all work organizations, a request was also made that the organizations identity not be revealed in the interview transcriptions or in the thesis, a request that has been respected. In my opinion this seemed to have been made on the basis of aspects of the information that the respondents were revealing to me.

Access Officers Interviews

Similar to the previous research studies that I have referred to, many of the factors that were seen as important for questionnaires and interviews were also considered and implemented for the Access Officers study. The purpose of this part of the research work was to gather information from Access Officers within the higher education sector on issues related to Access courses and adult educational guidance. In January, 2002, this telephone questionnaire was directed at the Access Officers in seven universities and eleven IT Colleges, and the questionnaire consisted of 14 structured questions (Appendix 5). The seven university participants were as follows: DCU, NUI Cork, NUI Dublin, NUI Galway, NUI Maynooth, TCD and UL. The following were the eleven IT participants: Athlone, Blanchardstown, Carlow, Cork, Galway, Letterkenny, Limerick, Mayo, Sligo, Tallaght and Waterford.

Analysis of Data

It was evident in an analysis of the methodology literature that different researchers make different epistemological assumptions about the nature of scientific knowledge and how to acquire it. If a researcher chooses one set of assumptions, they will conduct one type of educational research, if another set is chosen, a different type will be conducted. These two types of research have been given labels, namely positivist and post-positivist research, and both labels emphasize the epistemological assumptions of each type of

research. While both terms appear in research literature, it is according to Gall et al. (1996, p. 28) now more common to use the terms quantitative and qualitative research respectively. These terms emphasize the fact that the two types of research differ in the nature of the data that is collected, but both approaches have helped educational researchers make discoveries.

Hammersley et al. (1999, p. 25) are of the view that as the range of strategies that can be used to pursue educational research is very wide, the common way of conceptualizing this diversity is the distinction between quantitative and qualitative approaches, although Hammersley (1999, p. 84) makes it clear that the distinction between these two approaches is not clear-cut.

What then is meant by quantitative and qualitative research and what is the distinction between them? Regarding quantitative research, Hammersley et al. (1999, p. 84) defines quantitative research as being subject to different definitions:

- a) The search for causal relationships conceptualized in terms of the interaction of 'variables', some of which are seen as the cause of other variables and b) the design and use of standardized research instruments (tests, attitude scales, questionnaires, observation schedules) to collect numerical data.

For Punch (1998, p. 58) the key concept in quantitative data is quantity and numbers are used to express quantity. Quantitative data are numerical and measurement turns data into numbers and its function is to help make comparisons. Reviewing the literature in general shows that quantitative analysis of data is more prevalent, and the reason for this trend is that conclusions based on carefully selected quantitative data usually are regarded as generalizations. A quantitative research study requires the ability to use sampling techniques to create a research design and to conduct

analyses. Therefore quantitative research relies on quantitative data and methods of data analysis to study representative samples in order to make broad and well-grounded generalizations. Elsewhere, Maykut and Morehouse (1994, p.2) remark that quantitative research is based on observations that are converted into discrete units and that can be compared to other units by using numerical analysis.

While quantitative data has been defined as empirical information in the form of numbers, in contrast, according to Punch (1998, p. 59), qualitative data can be defined as empirical information but not in the form of numbers. Qualitative research in education has roots in many academic disciplines and they include not only the social sciences, but also the humanities and interdisciplinary studies. Chisnall (1992, p. 157) notes that qualitative research has grown significantly and it has become a term used to describe several specific kinds of research, for example, exploratory and unstructured research, interviewing, attitude and opinion research.

For a definition of qualitative research, the one offered by Denzin and Lincoln (1994, p. 2) has been documented by some methodology researchers, as for example, by Punch (1998, p. 60):

Qualitative research is multi method in its focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

The essence of qualitative research is that it is diagnostic in that it seeks to discover what may account for certain kinds of behaviour, seeks a deeper understanding of factors, it probes, observes, reflects and intrinsically it is subjective. The theoretical orientation of many qualitative researchers means

according to Silverman (2000, p. 128) that they are more concerned with the processes through which texts depict reality than with whether such texts contain true or false information. Punch (1998, p. 139) expresses the view that a dominant feature of present day qualitative research is its diversity, while according to Bryman (1988, p.61), the fundamental characteristic of qualitative research is its express commitment to viewing events, actions, norms and values from the perspective of the people who are being studied. Therefore the data that qualitative researchers typically deals with are verbal descriptions and such data cannot be subjected to counting or measurement and are not susceptible to statistical analysis.

Dey (1993, p. 14) is of the opinion that qualitative research has become associated with research approaches emphasizing unstructured methods of obtaining data such as interviewing and that it should be a product of unstructured methods of social research. Gall et al. (1996, p. 543) points out that one of the main characteristics of qualitative research is its focus on the intensive study of specific instances, that is cases of a phenomenon. Qualitative research is sometimes referred to as case study research, with a case study done to shed light on a phenomenon, which is the process, events, persons or things of interest to the researcher. Strauss and Corbin (1990, p.20) indicates three major components of qualitative research, namely, the data, coming from various sources, the different analytical or interpretive procedures used to arrive at findings or theories and the written and verbal reports. For Hammersley et al. (1999, p. 50) the chief features of a popular approach to qualitative research has a focus on natural settings, an interest in meanings, perspectives and understandings, an emphasis on process and inductive analysis and grounded theory. The views that Hammersley et al. (1999) expresses have also been cited by Woods (1998, p. 2). The validity of qualitative research rests upon three main features, namely the unobtrusive measures to ensure data reflects the scene studied, respondent validation and triangulation.

Considering that both quantitative and qualitative research is conducted to investigate educational issues, several questions arose which I had to take into consideration in the analysis of the results. I had to address if both methods could be combined in the same study? Would one approach be better than the other, would they complement each other in some way and would they produce conflicting findings? Some other questions noted by researchers had also to be considered from the perspective of the data analysis. For example, Silverman (2000, p. 13) indicates that the researcher must ask to what extent are both methods or a combination of both appropriate to the nature of the research questions being asked? Mason (1996, p. 168), makes the point that a researcher should also ask what is the purpose and mode of integration, and the key question for integrating methods, namely on what basis generalizations can be made from the research?

Some researchers are of the opinion that quantitative research is best used to validate relationships and themes in samples and populations, while qualitative research is best used to discover relationships and themes at the case level. Quantitative research could then be seen to play a confirmatory role and qualitative research a discovery role. The use of the two approaches is endorsed by Biddle and Anderson (1986, p. 239), who maintains that it is inappropriate to compare the relative efficacy of these two traditions, namely quantitative and qualitative research, since each has different purposes, and these are the generation of insights on the one hand, and the testing of hypotheses on the other. Both methods can complement each other by playing the respective roles of discovery and confirmation and have helped educationalists make discoveries. Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 18) also confirms that the two types of methods can be used effectively in the same research study whereby qualitative methods can give the intricate details of

phenomena that are difficult to convey in quantitative methods.

The tension between quantitative and qualitative methods apparent in social research has been highlighted by Dey (1993, p. 13). This researcher remarks that on the one hand, qualitative data is often presented as richer and more valid than quantitative data. On the other hand, it is often dismissed as too subjective because assessments are not made in terms of established standards. In practice, this implies an unnecessary polarization between the different types of data. Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 191) in indicating that both methods can be combined, emphasize that the quantified findings must be integrated into the theory and made part of the theory itself through the paradigm. Punch (1998, p. 139) points out that the paradigm debate and diversity have not been a typical feature of quantitative research and in general, quantitative research has been mainly and usually implicitly based on positivism.

The situation in qualitative research is quite different with several different paradigm positions and much paradigm discussion and debate. By comparison with quantitative research, qualitative research is multidimensional and pluralistic with respect to paradigms. Punch (1998, p. 61) states that the types of data that a researcher finishes up with should be determined primarily by what one is trying to find out and considered against the background of the context, circumstances and practical aspects of the particular research work. Four important points about quantitative and qualitative research have been put forward by Silverman (2000, p. 12). Firstly, qualitative research involves a variety of different approaches. Secondly, some quantitative research can be properly criticized or found insufficient, while the same may be said about some qualitative research. Thirdly, in these circumstances, it is sensible to make pragmatic choices between research methodologies according to the research problem. Finally,

doing qualitative research should offer no protection from the rigorous, critical standards that should be applied to any enterprise concerned to sort 'fact' from 'fancy'. Taking into consideration the views expressed by various researchers on both quantitative and qualitative research, it was decided that in this thesis, quantitative in partnership with qualitative data would be valuable for data analysis purposes.

In undertaking the data analysis of the quantitative and qualitative research, consideration had also to be given to the two important factors which are fundamental to all research activities, namely validity and reliability. Both Dey (1993, p. 14) and Litwin (1995, p. 33) points out that whatever measures are chosen, validity and reliability must be considered.

What then is the definition of both terms? Reaves (1992, p. 79) indicates that reliability means repeatability and consistency, and measurement has validity when it reflects what the researcher intends to measure. According to Chisnall (1992, p. 166), validity refers to the extent to which an attitude scale is free from both random and systematic error, and measures what it is supposed to measure or what it is believed to be capable of measuring, whereas reliability concerns the consistency of a method of measurement. For Hammersley et al. (1999, p. 26) there are two overarching criteria in terms of which educational research, both quantitative and qualitative should be assessed, namely validity and relevance. Previously, Hammersley (1990, p. 57; 1992, p. 67) defined the term validity as meaning truth and interpreted as the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers, and reliability as the degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions.

Hammersley et al. (1999, p. 27) also indicates that there are three steps in

assessing the validity of research claims. Firstly, how plausible it is and whether it can be judged as very likely to be true given existing knowledge. Secondly, whether the researcher's judgement of matter relating to the claim is accurate, given the nature of the phenomena concerned and the circumstances of the research. This is called assessing credibility. Thirdly, if it can be concluded that if the claim is neither sufficiently plausible nor credible to be accepted at face value, evidence shall be required. It is therefore when examining the evidence and in assessing its validity that its plausibility and credibility is judged.

In relation to relevance, this issue is according to Hammersley et al. (1999, p. 28) neglected in educational research and there are two aspects of relevance that needs to be distinguished. Firstly, the importance of the topic which must be related to the issue of importance, however remotely to an issue of importance to the intended audience. Secondly, the contribution of the conclusions to existing knowledge. Here the research findings must add something to our knowledge of the issue to which they relate.

Focusing back to when the questionnaires were being constructed, I felt that it would be helpful in relation to the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the analysis, if the recommendation given by Scott and Usher (1999, p. 68) whereby questions be pre-coded was considered. According to Litwin (1995, p. 53), coding is the process of going through each of the respondent's questionnaire and looking for conflicting answers, missing data and other variations from the desired responses. Punch (1998, p. 204) explains that coding is the starting activity and it is the foundation for what comes later, although this researcher indicates that the literature on coding is confusing. On the one hand, coding is analysis, and on the other hand, coding is the specific and concrete activity which starts the analysis. It is the view of Punch (1998, p. 204) that both are correct in the sense that coding both

begins the analysis, and also goes on at different levels throughout the analysis. I decided to adopt a typical qualitative approach which according to Scott and Usher (1999, p. 85) may include classifying or coding interview transcripts by either inferring from the words being examined what is significant, or from the repeated use of words or phrases which indicates that a pattern is developing. By the time the themes have been identified and refined to the point where they could be applied to the text, a lot of interpretative analysis had already been done, as coding is analysis, according to Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 56).

Cohen and Manion (1994, p.101) notes that prior to coding, it is important to check questionnaires and both researchers refers to this as 'editing'. I found that on checking through all the returned questionnaires, post-coding was also required, as some respondents, had in some questions, included a combination of more than one answer. According to Litwin (1995, p. 55), the most common data problem that occurs in survey research is that respondents skip items either intentionally or by mistake, and such items have to be coded as missing data and a decision taken as to how to treat them in the analysis. In both the graduates and work organizations questionnaires, this problem cited by Litwin (1995) was evident in some of the respondents responses, while Gillham (2000, p. 65) refers to them as 'unclassifiable' elements. Punch (1988, p. 209) feels that comparison is fundamental to all systematic inquiry, and it is in quantitative research that comparison is built into all stages of quantitative inquiry.

The preliminary copy of the results from the questionnaires showed a few errors, and on checking the data against the questionnaires, corrections were made. There are a number of standard and effective methods used for presenting quantitative data, and in this research study, the quantitative data is presented in percentage form.

The value of selecting categories and themes has been documented by various researchers. For example, Faulkner et al. (1998, p 100) makes the point that there are no hard and fast rules about analysing data and most researchers recommend the physical sorting of the data into categories. Elsewhere, Mason (1996, p. 5) recommends that qualitative research should involve self-scrutiny by the researcher, be systematically and strategically conducted, yet flexible and contextual in undertaking the qualitative aspects of the study.

Taking the recommendations of various researchers into consideration, the following steps were undertaken in the preliminary and primary analysis work. Initial steps involved examining in a structured way the data in each of the unstructured questions in the questionnaires, and in the interviews, which resulted in a total of eighty two pages of transcription. This it was felt was necessary in order to impose order on and organize the data so that meanings, categories and themes began to emerge. According to Denzin and Lincoln (1998, p. 185), qualitative studies ultimately aim to describe and explain at some level a pattern of relationships, which can be done only with a set of specified categories. For Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 65) categories have conceptual power because they are able to pull together around them other groups of concepts or sub-categories and can be named based on the researchers professional reading (p. 68).

Consideration was given to a point made by Gillham (2000, p. 63) whereby in open questions, a researcher has two judgements to make about categorizing answers. Firstly, what categories do they seem to fall into and secondly, what categories are going to be useful or necessary for research purposes? With both questions in mind, I was aware of the importance of not only examining the contents of the respondents answers, but also the need to identify and highlight key words and points. This task gradually resulted in the identification of common categories and themes that emerged

from the contents. Interconnections, comparisons, contrasts and irregularities were also noted. Hutchinson (1988, p.135) indicates that by doing this, the analyst distinguishes similarities and comparisons. This preliminary examination of the data was helpful in leading me to undertake the primary analysis, whereby the quality of the descriptive data embodied in the answers lead to progressive focusing and helped to organize emerging categories and themes of the data in a systematic way. The procedure recommended by Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 134) was found useful whereby once the researcher identifies a set of themes, the next step is to identify how these are linked to each other in a theoretical model.

Wolcott (1990, p. 33) recommends that in qualitative research, a researcher should begin sorting by finding a few categories sufficiently comprehensive to allow all the data to be sorted. In the organization by category, there is not according to Woods (1999, p.30) one master framework and what categories a researcher decides must depend on the objectives of the study.

Hammersley et al. (1999, p. 77) suggestion was found to be useful whereby that in order to compare qualitative data, it would be necessary to identify categories which leads to key characteristics being identified, and that the test of the appropriateness of such a method is to see whether most of the material can be accommodated within one of the categories and as far as is possible, within one category alone. Because of the variety of information that can be gathered in each question, Wright (1990, p. 99) refers to researchers's categories as categories which are identified and created by the researcher themselves. The development of researchers own categories and themes as recommended by Wright (1990) was an approach that I had to take into consideration based on what was generated from the data and relevant to the research work. For Gillham (2000, p. 65) there are two problems with answers to open questions that make categorization difficult, and both were of concern to this researcher. Firstly respondents sometimes don't give all

the information asked, and secondly, some respondents don't fit into the categories the researcher has extracted. There are always some 'loose-ends' 'unclassifiable' elements which have to be reported. This was a problem that I experienced, and hence are reported in the results and discussion as 'unclassified'.

According to Woods (1999, p. 38), a common mode of organizing derives from the identification of a common theme throughout the material. Ely et al. (1997, p. 150) refers to the search for themes as one of the most frequently mentioned analytic approaches used by qualitative researchers, and by theme is meant a statement of meaning that runs through all or most of the pertinent data. In undertaking this task, the recommendation given by Gall et al. (1996, p. 559) in relation to themes was also taken into account, whereby the researcher picks out what was learned from each of the respondents and that each point can be treated as a data chunk using a theme system. This approach, involving themes and categories can be identified as interpretational analysis. This method did help to achieve insights and was the selected process of examining data closely in order to find and construct categories and themes that could be used to describe and explain the phenomenon being studied. One of the most critical steps of interpretational data analysis is developing a set of categories followed by themes that adequately encompass and summarize the data. It was therefore necessary to engage in further categorization and look for comparisons and similarities.

Diversity in the analysis of qualitative research has been highlighted by some researchers and was an issue that had to be considered also. Coffey and Atkinson (1996, p.14) notes that there is variety in techniques because there are different questions to be addressed, while according to Miles and Huberman (1994, p 9), the different techniques are often interconnected,

overlapping and complementary. Denzin and Lincoln (1994, p. 359) indicates that different techniques can be applied to the same body of qualitative data, illuminating different aspects. In the data analysis, it was deemed important that the data be studied carefully in order to identify significant phenomena and then determine which phenomena share sufficient similarities that they could be considered instances of the same concept, which are the basic building blocks of theory. This process of category development would seem to be consistent with the principles of grounded theory, and seeks to generate theory from data in which the categories are grounded in the particular set of data collected. Furthermore, the categories can help to explain the phenomena and describe them.

This last paragraph then leads on to the question of what then is grounded theory? Grounded theory as a qualitative research approach was developed by Glaser and Strauss, and is one that is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents. A look at the history of grounded theory which started in the 1960s, when both Glaser and Strauss were involved in individual or collaborative work up to their publications in the 1990s (e.g. Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Glaser, 1992, 1993, 1994) shows its importance in a variety of research contexts. Denzin and Lincoln (1994, p. 204) points out that grounded theory is probably the most widely employed interpretive strategy in the social sciences today. For Punch (1998, p. 163), grounded theory is not a theory but a method, an approach and a strategy, and in the opinion of this author, grounded theory is best defined as a research strategy whose purpose is to generate theory from data. Grounded means that the theory will be generated on the basis of data and the theory will therefore be grounded in data. The essential idea in grounded theory is that theory will be developed inductively from data, and that data analysis approaches based on categorization are valuable in attempts to find and conceptualize regularities in the data.

According to Punch (1998, p. 218), the outcome of grounded theory analysis is an abstract but grounded concept (the core category), the development of which constitutes a substantive theory of the phenomenon being studied. In grounded theory, the researcher starts with data generated from some initial research question and the objective is to discover and develop theory grounded in what is central in the data. The core category is elaborated through its interconnection with the other first order concepts in the data. The objective is to construct abstract theory about the data, which is grounded in the data, and as the concepts which the theory will use are not brought to the data or likely to be obvious in the data, they must therefore be inferred from the data by induction. This inductive inference is the process of abstraction.

One of the features of the validity of qualitative research is triangulation and this was deemed to be important in the research studies undertaken. In qualitative research, a means of validating accounts and observations is through triangulation where a combination of different methods can be used. Silverman (2000, p. 177) has defined triangulation as the attempt to get a 'true' fix on a situation by combining different ways of looking at different findings. For Woods (1999, p. 4), triangulation strengthens an account of different methods, and an important dimension which Fielding and Fielding (1986, p. 31) adds to the discussion on triangulation is that outcomes which reflect a person's interaction with their environment are a more valid index of success. Elsewhere, Cohen and Manion (1994, p. 233) notes that triangulation attempts to explain more fully the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint and by doing so, making use of both quantitative and qualitative data. I felt that the adoption of a triangulation approach would have greater validity and reliability than a single methodological approach to an issue.

It was also decided that quotations would form an integral part of the

qualitative data, as quotations carefully chosen can play an important part in reports based on qualitative data. According to Coolican (1990, p. 235):

The final report of qualitative findings will usually include verbatim quotations from participants which will bring the reader into the reality of the situation studied. The quotations themselves are selections from the raw data which 'tell it like it is'. Very often comments just stick with us to perfectly encapsulate people's position, on some issue which they appear to hold.

Conclusion

It is evident that the views of various researchers about what social science research can achieve and how it should be pursued are diverse and debatable. Educational research needs to be subjected to careful methodological assessment, and the contents of this chapter has focused on the step by step methodology procedures used for the research studies that were undertaken at the NUIG, at DCU, with work organization representatives and Access Officers. In considering the most appropriate methods to be used for different aspects of the research studies undertaken, the researcher felt it beneficial to consider the views and recommendations of various methodology researchers.

The survey is one of the most important sources of primary data in educational research and can be used for the collection of data by means of questionnaires and interviews. From the initial preliminary study to the main research studies, I felt that it was important not to lose sight of the purpose of the research studies being undertaken. With this in mind, the research strategy involved employing different methods appropriate to the various stages of the study. The importance of the selection of methods and procedures, and the analysis of the data with a view to the provision of useful

and valid information had to be carefully considered.

In creating a research design, various issues had to be taken into account. Both questionnaires and interviews have been shown to be essential tools of researchers in educational enquiry. The combination of two methods, namely questionnaires and interviews were the primary source of research for the different research activities undertaken. Information was given on the different population samples chosen which was based on study relevance, objectives and practical considerations. It has been indicated that there are no specific rules on how large a sample should be and that the correct sample size depends on the purpose of the study.

The various stages and issues involved in the construction and administration of the questionnaires and the undertaking of interviews have been discussed. Open, closed and multiple type questions were used and their advantages and limitations were explained. In determining the design of the research, the question contents were organised and a sequence and wording of the questions was determined by means of a schedule. The pilot tests that were undertaken were effective and provided an opportunity of reviewing questions and possible survey implications. This resulted in some minor adjustments to some of the questionnaires and interview questions. In order to increase questionnaire returns, various follow-up procedures were adopted. The graduates survey questionnaires had a 75 per cent returns from the NUIG and 78 per cent from DCU, which made a total response of 76 per cent. A 2001 survey in DCU added further data to the 2000 graduates study. The return of eighteen out of twenty four questionnaires from the work organization representatives survey resulted in a return rate of 75 per cent. Six graduates in-depth interviews and seven work organization representatives interviews supplemented the data from the questionnaires.

Regarding the issue of Access courses and adult educational guidance, a telephone questionnaire was done in conjunction with the Access Officers in the seven universities and eleven IT colleges.

A section of the chapter discussed the analysis of the data and empirical research was the type of research which focused primarily on data collection. The process of analysis and interpretation of the results was done through the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. It was shown that both methods complement each other, and from the perspective of this thesis, were seen to be effective in an analysis of questionnaires and interviews. The common features of quantitative and qualitative data analysis, and the potential strengths and weaknesses of both methods were discussed. Qualitative research seeks to generate theory from data and both the questionnaires and interviews sought a balance in quantitative and qualitative data, the former approach with the aim of getting information that could be quantified in a numerical basis. The qualitative approach to data analysis involved the use of categories and themes and this method allowed categories and themes to emerge from the raw data. This involved a process of scanning for categories and themes within the contents.

Reliability and validity are of prime importance in data analysis, and are two key criteria through which any research study can be assessed. From the perspective of the research work, it was essential and necessary that the research findings be valid and reliable, and the importance of validity and reliability in data analysis has been discussed. The means of validating respondents accounts is through triangulation, and I showed that triangulation was a means of using more than one method to gather information about a particular phenomenon. Grounded theory shares some similarities with other modes of carrying out qualitative research. It has been shown that grounded theory is a general methodology for developing

theory that is grounded in data systematically gathered and analyzed.

Grounded theory is both a strategy for research, and as a way of analysing data through the study of the transcripts and questionnaires, was a process by which the researcher became more grounded in the data which helped to develop concepts of how the phenomenon being studied really works. The use of quotations were also seen as effective in the data analysis.

The next two chapters will focus on the results and a discussion of the research studies that were undertaken.

CHAPTER 6

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: GRADUATES AND ACCESS OFFICERS

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to report on and discuss the research findings from the graduates and the Access Officers. In relation to the graduates, the contents will focus on the findings from the questionnaires administered and the interviews undertaken with course participants in both the NUIG and DCU. In the 2000 study, a total of one hundred and nine questionnaires were administered and the percentage response was seventy six. In the 2001 DCU study, fifty two questionnaires were returned. The purpose of the six in-depth interviews with respondents in both the NUIG and DCU was to supplement the data from the questionnaires. In addition, eighteen Access Officers in the higher education sector were asked to participate in a telephone survey in relation to Access courses and adult educational guidance issues, and the findings from this aspect of the research will be integrated into the contents.

The questions and findings concerning the central themes and related issues of this research will be reported on and integrated into the discussion, in which questions are grouped together.

A copy of the Graduates Questionnaires is to be found in Appendix 1, the interview questions in Appendix 2, the Access Officers questions in Appendix 5 and the interview transcripts in Appendix A.

Previous Educational Characteristics of the Respondents

Questions 1 to 7 of the Graduates Questionnaire and 1 and 2 of the Interviews were introductory, with the purpose of gathering some information on the educational/training characteristics of the respondents. The heading selected for the nine questions was “General Information and Educational/Training Background of Graduates”.

Keep and Mayhew (1999, p. 121) indicates that gender and age can play an important role in determining access to education and training, and on that point, I obtained a more precise picture of the situation. On the issue of gender in my study (Question 1) (Questionnaire) (N = 84), NUIG, had an equal proportion of male and female participants (50%), while DCU had a higher proportion of females (72%). Lynch (1996, p. 81) documents that overall women are under-represented among mature women entrants. In contrast, Brady (1996, p. 7) notes that the majority of adult education participants have been women, and in a study by Fleming and Murphy (1998, p. 24), slightly over half (55%) were females. Hamilton (2001, p. 6) shows a 50:50 gender balance and McDonagh (1996, p. 41) a 52% female as opposed to a 48% male participation rate. In the two courses sampled in my study, there is no problem of under representation of female adult students.

While the adult student population is defined simply by age, the typical age profile of the adult student is generally in the younger age range, and this point is supported by some researchers such as McDonald (1983, p. 2), Merrill (1999, p. 25) and Bourgeois et al. (1999, p. 86). In my study (Question 2) (Questionnaire) (N = 83), the 30-39 age group were prominent (48%), a finding that was previously noted in the early 1990s

by Morrissey and Irvine (1991, p. 248). Later, Lynch (1996, p. 83), McDonagh (1996, p. 22), Woodbyrne and Yung (1998, p. 42) shows more participants in the twenty three to thirty age group. Hodgins et al. (1997, p.11), although not referring to specific ages, indicates that those in higher education were 'typically young adult students'. Elsewhere Fleming and Murphy (1998, p. 23) in their study provide further supporting evidence in that over three quarters (80%) of the adult participants were under the 45 age range, and Hamilton (2001, p. 6) shows the majority of part-time adult participants in the 35 - 39 age group. In my study, those in the age range 40 - 49 had the next highest participation rate (29%). My analysis and indeed that of the researchers that I have just documented, therefore confirms that the adult students who participate in higher education are generally in what can be categorized as the 'younger' age range, i.e. under fifty years of age.

Questions 3 to 7 (Questionnaire) sought to establish the second and third level educational background of the participants and qualifications already obtained. Over three quarters (82%) were holders of the Leaving Certificate Examination (Question 3) (N = 83), with the remainder possibly having entered on the basis of mature years. Inglis and Murphy (1999, p. 83) also shows that the majority (75%) of respondents in their study within a higher education institution had obtained a Leaving Certificate, as has McDonagh (1996, p. 42) who refers to a figure of 51%. Lynch (1996, p. 91) further reports that a majority of the adult participants in higher education have a Leaving Certificate.

However, O'Connell and Lyons (1995, p. 18) are of the view that this country has had a high proportion of its adult population with qualifications below secondary level, and only 40% of the adult population have attained a

Leaving Certificate standard. A subsequent IBEC (2000, p. 3) report has shown an increase to this figure, with less than 50% of working adults having secured Leaving Certificate standard, and a similar figure of 51% was put forward later by Wagner (2001, p. 57).

My survey sought to obtain information on the highest educational level of the respondents. Of interest in my study is that not only had a large proportion of the graduates obtained the Leaving Certificate, but over three quarters (86%) had previously attended a third level institution (Question 4) (Questionnaire) (N = 80). In Question 1 of the Interviews, all six respondents were previous participants at a third level institution, while Lynch (1996, p. 91) highlights that a significantly majority of mature students had post-secondary qualifications. Being educationally advantaged is a key determining factor for further participation in education, a point that has also been confirmed by Skilbeck and Connell (2000, p. 38). This evidence is supported in my study, where I have shown that the adult students who enrolled on the courses had a certain standard of previous education (i.e. Leaving Certificate level and other qualification(s)). This indicates that for the most part, adult part-time courses in higher education are dominated by those with certain levels of education.

Regarding the type of third level colleges previously attended (Question 6, Questionnaire) (N = 80), the university sector predominated (69%), while the Regional Technical Colleges, as they were known to some of the respondents, and teacher training colleges had the same overall percentage (12%) respectively. Four of the Interview respondents (Question 2) had attended a university, and the other two an RTC, although Lynch (1996, p. 81) cites part-time higher education adult students as being more strongly concentrated outside the university sector than full-time adult students.

Regarding the previous qualifications of the graduates (Question 7) (Questionnaire) (N = 64), over half (60%) were prior to enrolling on their course, holders of a degree level qualification, with 6% having a postgraduate qualification. The results from the education and training background of the respondents in my study confirms that prior to enrolling at one of the two universities, the majority of respondents had already attended a higher education institution and completed their course of study. This latter statement also confirms that adult students who participate on adult courses tend in general to have a higher education qualification, a point that Wagner (2001, p. 59) also supports.

Previous Work-Related Education and Training

Questions 8 to 14 of the Questionnaire had "Previous Work-Related Education and Training" as its heading. The purpose of the seven questions was to gather data from the graduates regarding issues relevant to education and training and work since they commenced their first job. These questions could also be taken into consideration in my discussion on paid educational leave. Exactly, half (50%) of the NUIG respondents were working for twenty years or less, while just over one third (36%) of DCU respondents had work experience of the same duration (Question 8) (N = 65). From a work organization relevance perspective, Question 9 (N = 82) sought to establish since commencing their first job, and before undertaking their current course, whether the respondents had pursued any type of education and training course or courses previously? If their answer to this question was 'yes', following on from this, Question 10 asked if the course or courses were relevant or not to their work? Over three quarters (85%) (N = 70) had pursued some type of education and training course since commencing their first job. The finding from Question 9, may to some extent support what Drudy and Lynch (1993, p. 262) have been saying, in

that the adult participants of courses were most likely to have had a positive view of their own schooling and this resulted in continuous studies, while elsewhere Brunt (1999, p. 220) documents that those who had already education and training qualifications were more dominant on adult education courses. From a work relevance perspective, in my study, over three quarters (88%) of the respondents indicated that the course or courses they pursued were relevant to the work they were doing within their work organization at the time.

In response to Question 11 (N = 70) on the type of institutions previously attended, some respondents had cited more than one course and institution, and in some instances, it was not known to me if the course or institution could be categorized as 'higher' or 'non-higher' education. This I found was particularly applicable to the respondents who had studied in other countries. From the course names that could be identified, I discovered that almost half (49%) (N=70) pursued a course or courses within higher education institutions. Most of the courses were either at undergraduate or postgraduate levels, and were undertaken mainly in the university sector and the RTCs, although in the mid 1990s, Halpin (1996, p. 63) was critical that the opportunities for obtaining qualifications for part-time study at the RTCs had been exceptionally limited.

Despite Clancy's (1988, p 74; Clancy 2000, p. 2) views on the concept of part-time education, I would argue that this type of provision is seen as more appropriate to adult working students. With this latter statement in mind, the purpose of Question 12 (Questionnaire) was therefore to establish if the course or courses the graduates had previously pursued were undertaken on a part or full-time basis. My findings shows that the majority (82%) (N=76) of the graduates had previously participated in a

part-time mode of study. This firstly contradicts sharply the view that has always being put forward by Clancy in his work, and secondly, reinforces the importance of part-time study for adult working students. Researchers such as Halpin (1996, p. 61), Lynch (1996,p. 79) and Hodgins (1997, p. 53) also supports the view that there is an increasing demand for part-time higher education for adults, and too in the opinions of Brady (1996, p. 10), Hamilton (2001, p. 7) and Bourgeois et al. (1999, p. 91) is a particularly attractive type of provision.

The purpose of Question 13 (Questionnaire) was to establish if the respondents completed the course or courses what type of qualifications did they obtain? The results are shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1. TYPE OF QUALIFICATION(s) OBTAINED SINCE COMMENCING WORK.

QUALIFICATIONS	N=70	OVERALL	NUIG	DCU
CERTIFICATE	28	40%	17 (45%)	11 (34%)
DIPLOMA	16	23%	9 (24%)	7 (22%)
DEGREE	8	12%	6 (16%)	2 (7%)
CERTIFICATE + DIPLOMA	12	17%	2 (5%)	10 (31%)
DIPLOMA + DEGREE	4	6%	4 (10%)	1 (3%)
CERTIFICATE + DEGREE	1	1%		1 (3%)
NONE OF THE ABOVE	1	1%		

While previous qualifications might be seen as important for stimulating further entry into higher education from a work organization perspective, it is evident from the contents of this cited Table 1, that some respondents were the holders of more than one type of qualification, and hence this led to the cited combination of qualifications. Even though I found that the majority of the respondents had obtained a certificate, some respondents undertook more than one course, and had a combination of either a certificate and diploma, a degree and diploma, or a certificate and degree. These findings confirm that a significant proportion of the respondents

had previously participated in some form of higher education, and it was possible that adult education may have also been seen as a route to enhanced vocational, career life chances.

As a follow-on to Question 13, the unstructured Question 14 (Questionnaire) asked the respondents if they did not complete a course or courses to indicate the reason or reasons for non-completion. This question was only applicable to three respondents, with each of them indicating what can often be three common reasons applicable to adult students: 'health and family reasons', 'work pending' and the final respondent cited 'pressure of work'. These findings in many respects relate to the fact that often part-time courses tend to be longer in duration than full-time courses, and in general adult students usually have more commitments and responsibilities than the younger students.

To conclude these two sections, in general, women are in most cases slightly over-represented in higher education and the respondents were mainly in the 'young' age group. Over three quarters had obtained the Leaving Certificate. Of interest was that since commencing their first job, the respondents recognized the importance of adult education, and this was evident in the fact that 85% had pursued some form of education and training course, with 88% reporting a work organization course relevance. The majority of the respondents favoured part-time provision and this contradicts Clancy's view of the part-time concept.

Relationship of Current Employment to Education and Training Courses

In the Graduates Questionnaire, Questions 15 to 18 and 21, and Questions 3 and 6 of the Interviews had as their heading "Current Employment-Education/Training Related". The purpose of those questions was to obtain

data on the graduates current employment and related education and training issues. In Question 15, information was firstly sought on how long the graduates had been employed with their present employer? Thirty eight per cent had been employed for 1-5 years, just over half (52%) between 6-15 years, 4% between 16-20 years, and the remainder (6%) had over 21 years service.

A view put forward by Bourgeois et al. (1999, p. 90) is that it can be difficult to discuss issues concerning the social background of adult students in higher education, and in addition to the lack of statistics, they also make the point that it is too more difficult to analyse the social background of adult students as the usual indicators such as income bracket and profession do not suffice (p. 89). Elsewhere, Hodgins et al. (1997, p. 12) also notes that there is a paucity of data on the socio-economic background of adult education students. However, taking into consideration the connection between social class and education, I deemed it important to endeavour to establish the current occupational title of the respondents and this was sought in Question 16 (Questionnaire). The socio-economic classifications as described by Chisnall (1992, p. 84) were used. Three different occupations categories emerged (N=84): 1) Professional (this included professions such as teaching, nursing, engineering/consultants) (29); 2) Administration/technical/management (53) and 3) Farmers (2) (these were employed in rural/agricultural development type work). Four responses from the Interviews (Question 3) fell into the professional category, with 2 respondents working in Administration. Despite the point put forward by Bourgeois et al (1999, p. 90), my findings confirms and are consistent in what Tight (1991, p. 96), Lynch (1996, p. 87), Walters (1996, p. 21) and McDonagh (1996, p. 23) have shown whereby the majority of adult students in higher education come from a middle class background (i.e. they

are from a household of professionals, employers, managers and salaried employees) and that significantly fewer come from a working-class background (i.e. of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled manual occupations).

In Questions 17 of the graduates and 3 of the Interview respondents, seventy one per cent (N = 75) indicated that they worked in organizations employing fifty people or less, the remainder (29%) had a workforce ranging from one hundred to one thousand.

The purpose of Question 18 (Graduates) (N = 83) was to establish whose decision it was for the graduates to enrol on the course they were now completing, the results of which are shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2. DECISION TO ENROL ON THE COURSE

DECISION	N = 83	OVERALL	NUIG	DCU
OWN DECISION	73	88%	40 (83%)	33 (94%)
EMPLOYER	2	2%	1 (2%)	1 (3%)
WORK COLLEAGUE/ FRIEND	8	10%	7 (15%)	1 (3%)

Table 2 shows that for the majority of the DCU respondents, and for a lower percentage of the NUIG respondents, the decision to enrol was their own.

While employers should encourage adult education and training within the workforce, the results in my study shows that respondents were not influenced to any significant extent by their employer. However, I must

point out that the results here could be interpreted to mean that while employers may have given the participants encouragement to pursue the course, the main decision to enrol came from the majority of the respondents themselves. This also points out for the continuous need for employees to take some responsibility for their own education and training, a view that had been previously documented elsewhere by both Rizenberger and O'Dwyer (1995, research interview cassette).

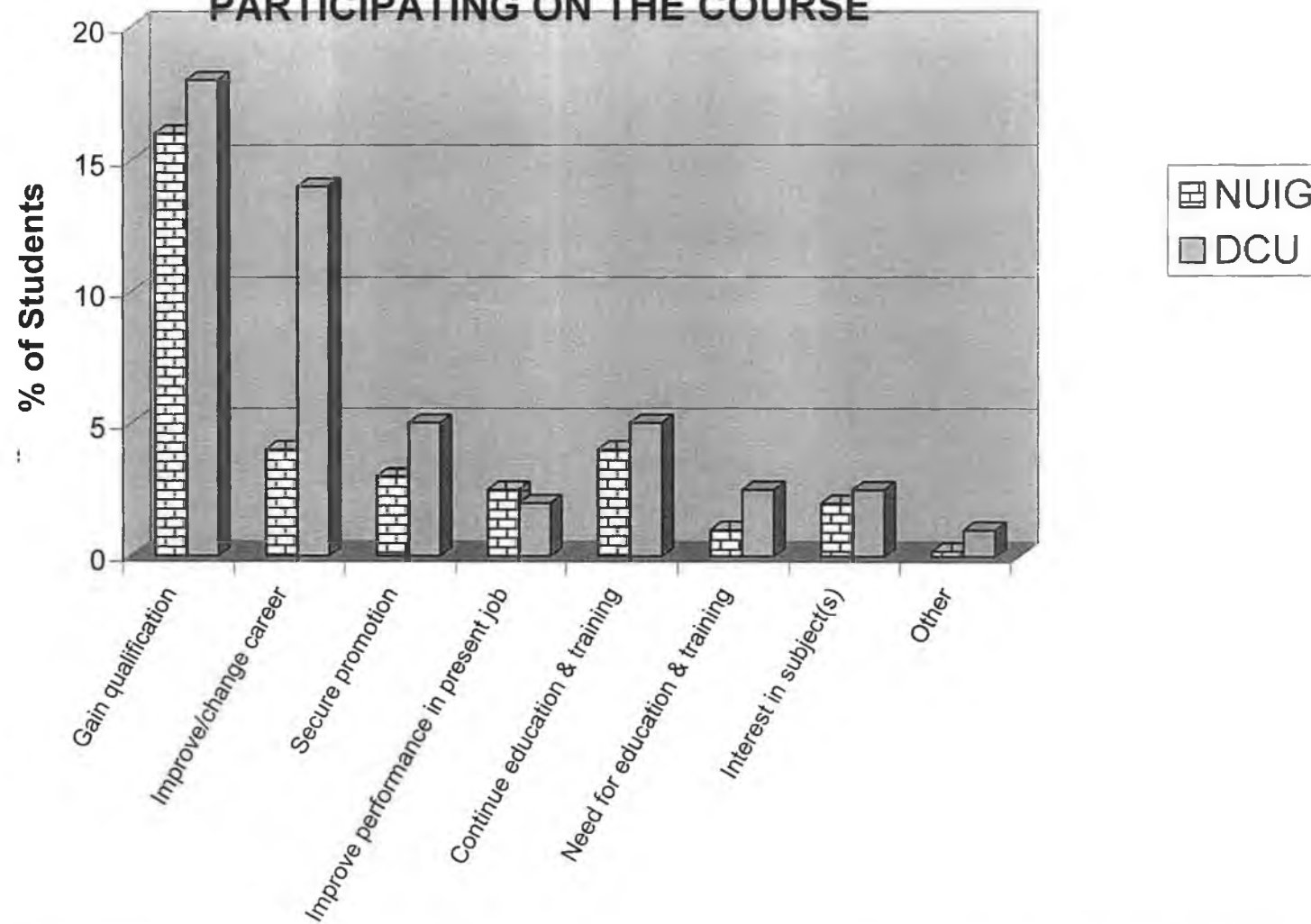
The purpose of Question 21 (Questionnaire) and 6 (Interview) was to establish if the course the respondents had pursued was relevant to their work within their current work organization. It has emerged in my research work that the vocational aspects of courses are deemed important by employers in relation to employees participation in education and training. Equally important is course relevance in the context of paid educational leave issues. Tight (1991, p. 96) found that adult education students who work participates in courses in higher education institutions that are closely related to their jobs. My findings also provides evidence to support what this latter researcher has documented in that over three quarters (84%) (N = 80) found that the course was relevant to their work, while five of the six interview respondents also stated 'yes' to this question. Keane, Fayne and Ni Scolai (1998, p. 25) documents the importance of course needs from an organizational, occupational and individual level, and it is possible that those three levels are to an extent a deciding factor in an adult worker participating in a course that is part or full funded by an employer.

The word 'motivation' is synonymous with adult students participation in higher education, and different motivational factors or a combination of them can have a part to play in their decision to enrol. Yet, Slowey (1988, p. 310) makes the point that motivation is part of an extremely complex

decision making process, and the broad summary categories used to analyse interview and questionnaire responses must seem crude to those who actually work with adult students. However, of particular interest in this research work was the need to establish what motivated the graduates to enrol on their selected course. Questions 20, 29, 30 and 31 (Questionnaire) and Questions 4, 5, 12, 13 and 14 (Interview) therefore had “Motivational Factors/Participation Incentives” as their heading, while Question 20 of the Questionnaire (N = 26) and Questions 4 and 5 of the Interview asked respondents to list the principal factors which motivated them to pursue the course they undertook. The results are illustrated in Figure 1 (next page). Of the eight itemized answers classified, there were two main reasons cited by the graduates, the first one was to ‘gain a qualification(s)’ and the second to ‘improve/change career’. On item 8 of Question 20, graduates were given the opportunity to state what were the other factor or factors that motivated them to pursue the course? In the analysis (N=21), while the responses varied, three categories were created: 1) ‘employers recommendation’ (2); 2) ‘dissatisfaction with job’ (2); 3) ‘self-fulfillment’/‘improvement’, ‘personal development’, ‘underachievement’/‘update learning’ (15). One respondent listed ‘career change’, and one other respondents answer was irrelevant to this Question.

My findings are not at all inconsistent with the observations of Fleming and Murphy (1998, p. 27), who shows that 41% of respondents indicated the need to improve their job prospects as their main motivational factor. Career-related were also the principal motivational factors cited by part-time adult students for entering higher education for Lynch (1996, p. 93), McDonagh (1996, p. 23), Hodgins (1997, p. 48) and Harrington (2001, p. 19), although Knowles (1998, p. 68) argues that from an andragogy perspective, while adults are responsive to some motivators such as better

FIGURE 1
MOTIVATING FACTORS FOR
PARTICIPATING ON THE COURSE



jobs and promotion, the most potent motivators are internal pressures such as the desire for increased job satisfaction and self-esteem.

While the adult students in this study were working full-time, I had to take this engagement for their motivations for enrolling into account. The results to the motivational factors to enrol are indeed to some extent varied. There is also a consensus from the researchers that I have just cited in relation to motivation, for example, McDonagh (1996) and Harrington (2001), and from my own research findings, that the importance of an adult continuing their education in order to gain a qualification for employment and for what could be termed vocational reasons featured significantly. What must also be noted is that the adult students in my study were in the younger age group and the major reason given by the respondents for enrolling were broadly vocational reasons, points that Bourgeois et al. (1999, p. 94) too acknowledges. This result perhaps also recognizes the motivational importance that adults are ascribing to education and training from a work organization perspective.

Another closely related issue to Questions 20 (Questionnaire) was Question 29 of the Questionnaire and Questions 12 and 13 of the Interviews. The purpose of the three questions was to establish if the graduates as a result of having pursued the course successfully would receive any type of monetary reward? Over a quarters (29%) (N=41) indicated they would receive promotion within their work organization, while over one third (37%) (N=43) specified a salary increase. Within Question 29 (Questionnaire), respondents were asked if citing 'other incentive(s)' to their answer, to state what they were. Of those who responded to this part of Question 29 (N = 27), and of the answers that could be categorized, the following two categories were created: 1) 'career progression'/'better

employment'/'wider opportunities' and 2) 'increase in qualification allowance'. One respondent cited 'promotion' which was already listed in the question, while seven others gave miscellaneous answers which included for example, 'family business', 'course not linked to employment' and 'depends on arbitration results'. Three of the Interview respondents (Question 12) indicated that since successfully completing their current course they had received no promotion, no salary increase, or any other type of incentive. Regarding the other three respondents, one did receive promotion as a financial award, in addition to promotion. The second respondent indicated that as a result of obtaining a qualification, salary was at the time at a negotiable stage. This question was not applicable to one respondent due to a recent career change.

Question 13 (Interview) focused on the Interview respondents views of employees being rewarded for additional qualifications by employers? Five of the respondents argued that qualifications achieved while in a job should be recognized and rewarded by employers. One of the respondents had some reservations about this question, and to an extent linked responsibility with salary:

Well in terms of the job I now hold, my view is that the salary relates to the responsibility that I carry in terms of my work and don't relate to my own qualifications.

Closely allied to the issue of incentives, was Question 14 (Interview). Four of the respondents indicated that the work organization they were working in would benefit from the qualification they achieved, hence highlighting the vocational relevance of the courses pursued. However, having done a previous course, as an example, one respondent was critical of an employer and felt that the gains were what were classified as 'sort of

peripheral':

I remained in the organization for about two years after I completed the course. So the gains that the organization would have made were only sort of peripheral. The organization took no steps to use or to make use of the extra qualifications that I gained despite continued efforts on my behalf to do so. In other words, I felt that in the organization I was an underutilized resource.

The results from Question 14 (Interview) indicates that despite the respondents being successful in achieving a qualification that was relevant to their work, incentives in the form of a salary increase and/or promotion varied within work organizations. Tight (1996, p. 76) notes that one of the main qualities that employers look for in candidates for promotion, is in addition to a certain standard of education, extra qualifications. Taking into consideration the time, effort and commitment that was required by the respondents to undertake the different courses, this course incentive issue may need to be addressed by work organizations if they are to motivate staff to participate in education and training courses. However, having made this latter statement, there is another issue to be considered in that there is always the possibility of an employee leaving a job after having pursued a course and achieved a qualification that has been sponsored by their work organization. This I am now aware is a matter that has become of increasing concern to employers, and is an issue I address in the subsequent chapter.

Questions 30 and 31 (Questionnaire) endeavoured to establish if participation on the university course had been beneficial to the respondents employment and personal development, and if the respondents employer expressed any interest in the course pursued. Over three quarters (80%) (N = 22) in both

universities felt that the course pursued had been beneficial to their employment and personal development, confirming the point I made earlier of course relevance to work organizations.

In relation to the attitude of their employer within their work organization, respondents were asked to comment on their answer. In an analysis of the various replies (N= 43) to this question, two categories were created. The first was 'supportive employers' and the second was 'non-supportive employers'. The former included employers who were cited by the respondents as being 'supportive'; 'interested'; 'pleased that employee was undertaking the course' and 'interested in progress'. Those cited phrases resulted in 24 respondents expressing one or more of those views. The second category had 16 respondents who expressed negative comments in that their employer showed some of the following: 'no interest'; 'vague interest in course'; 'expressed resentment' and 'lack of support'. Two respondents answers were not relevant to this question. Another respondent could be categorized into the first and second category due to the following comment:

Asks how I am getting on. Interested in the subjects that I take.
Not interested in financing me though.

To conclude this section, despite the need to increase the participation of adult students in the higher education sector, it is still an undeniable fact that the majority of participants come from a middle class background. Of particular importance was that while most of the respondents indicated that the course being pursued was relevant to their work, the decision to enrol in the higher education course came mainly from the employees themselves. This finding points to the fact that employees themselves are taking responsibility for their own education and training, which is good. There

was also evidence that there were different factors that motivated the respondents to enrol on the course, with career and work related vocational reasons featuring significantly.

Paid Educational Leave

The following section examines the data emerging in relation to a theme being pursued in this work - paid educational leave. Questions 19, and 22 to 28 (Questionnaire) and Questions 7 to 11 (Interview) had as their heading "Paid Educational Leave". The purpose of these questions was to establish what provision was made within the respondents work organization on course funding/sponsorship and education and training leave related issues.

Walters (1996, p. 23) notes that a key determinant in participation in higher education is the lack of financial support, and in the opinion of Egan (2001, p. 115) is a major barrier to participation.

It must be pointed out that when this survey was undertaken, the course fees in both institutions were in the region of one and a half to two thousand pounds. The purpose of Question 22 (Questionnaire) was to inquire if employers covered any course costs associated with the respondents course participation. The findings are shown in Table 3.

**TABLE 3. COURSE COSTS COVERED BY EMPLOYERS
TOWARDS EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

COSTS	(N = 79)	OVERALL	NUIG	DCU
FULL FEES	24	30%	13 (30%)	11 (31%)
HALF FEES	12	15%	9 (21%)	3 (9%)
TRAVEL EXPENSES	2	3%	16 (36%)	2 (6%)
COURSE TEXTS	30	38%	4 (9%)	14 (40%)
FULL FEES AND COURSE TEXTS	5	6%		3 (9%)
NONE OF THE ABOVE	6	8%	2 (4%)	2 (5%)

In another question (21) (Questionnaire), over three quarters (84%) indicated that the course they were pursuing was relevant to their work, yet the findings from Table 3 shows that less than half (45%) had either full or half fees paid by their employer.

In the interviews with the Graduates, the responses to Question 7 (Interview) indicated that three of the respondents had their full fees paid, two had fee remission arrangements due to an institutional agreement, while one respondent had half fees paid for. Indeed, fees and other course-related costs are usually more significant for part-time students, because they benefit to a lesser extent from grants, and the results from Question 23 (Questionnaire)

indicated that over a quarter (28%) (N = 82) took out a loan to help defray course costs.

In the 2001 DCU study (Question 19), the respondents were asked if they received any paid educational leave and 46% stated yes, but over half (54%) (N = 52) indicated they received no leave. A follow-on to this question (19b), asked respondents to indicate which if any, forms of financial assistance they received with course fees, costs, etc. In relation to course fees, the results showed that 46% had their full fees paid, while 14% (N = 50) had half fees paid.

While the decision not to enrol in higher education can be due to a number of factors, if there is no sponsorship from employers, lack of finance is generally the greatest barrier to the non-participation of adult students, and this obstacle has been cited more than any others by various researchers. Indeed, from the perspective of adult students, a continuous and contentious issue within Irish higher education has been the injustice of a Government system that requires part-time adult students to pay for courses. From an obstacle perspective, Brady (1996, p. 10) is adamant that this represents yet another blow to part-time adult students. Walshe (2000, p. 135) highlights that the non-abolition of fees was one of the most controversial decisions affecting part-time adult students in higher education in this country during the nineties. Elsewhere, Woodley et al. (1987, p. 127), Scott et al. (1996, p. 235), Bourgeois et al. (1995, p. 95) and Woodbyrne and Yung (1998, p. 48) have documented the cost of fees borne by adult students, and for Drudy and Lynch (1993, p. 270), items such as books, materials, transport and other essentials all involve considerable costs to the adult participants. On the one hand, the White Paper on Adult Education (2000, p. 127) stresses the importance of education and training for workers,

yet on the other hand, successive Governments has failed to abolish fees for part-time adult students.

The cost of course fees to adult students is also a common barrier cited by researchers such as Walters (1996, p. 23) and Skilbeck and Connell (2000, p 37). The European Commission literature in relation to education and training does not document to any significant extent the issue of course fees for adult students. In fact, the European Commission has always seen the responsibility of education and training costs mainly as a concern of each member state, and their individual policies arranged in conjunction with national education and training institutions.

Another aspect in relation to paid educational leave is financial leave and financial entitlements, both of which have been addressed as far back as 1974 at the ILO Convention in Geneva. From an Irish perspective, in the 1990s this issue was addressed by the Irish Federation of Workers Educational Association, and later in the Irish White Paper in Adult Education (2000, p. 77) who acknowledged that paid educational leave is one of the preferred means of providing on-going education and training for the workforce. Finch (2000, p. 18) also notes that financial support should be available for employees learning, and stressed that this could be done in conjunction with Governments, a point that Brady (1996, p. 10) also concurs with.

Question 8 of the Interviews tried to establish what were the respondents views on employers covering employees education and training costs? On analysis of the statements, the overall conclusions from the six respondents was that employers should have a responsibility to cover education and training costs, or at least make a financial contribution. One respondent saw the benefits to employers:

I think it is very important that employers should see the benefits in the long run of paying for their staff to go off and do courses.

Another respondent felt that at least some contribution should be made:

It is vital that employers covers costs or at least contribute to employee education and training. Even if skills are not directly applicable, this helps with motivation and loyalty. Staff development is a worthwhile pursuit for any organization.

The purpose of Question 24 (Questionnaire) was to establish if participants received their full salary while undertaking the university course. Over three quarters (86%) (N=80) received their full salary; this finding was applicable to respondents in both institutions.

Questions 25 and 26 of the Questionnaire were closely related, and their purpose was to establish, if time off to attend the course was given and if it affected their holidays or salary entitlements. Over half (56%) (N= 73) received time off work to attend their course, and the numbers receiving this time off work was higher for the NUIG participants (65%). The explanation for this may have been that the NUIG respondents had further to travel; many of the participants were travelling from outside the County of Galway, whereas the DCU participants were in general more concentrated within the Dublin catchment area. One of the respondents in Question 9 (Interview) travelled one hundred miles and was the recipient of full travel costs, and in contrast, another respondent travelled fifty miles twice a week and received no travel funding, and stated:

As for time off, I just left early when I had to go to UCG. I just took the time off, but I do not know officially how much time off I was entitled to, and I did not want to make this an issue for discussion.

One fifth of the respondents in Question 19 (Questionnaire) lived outside a fifty mile radius of the institution they were attending.

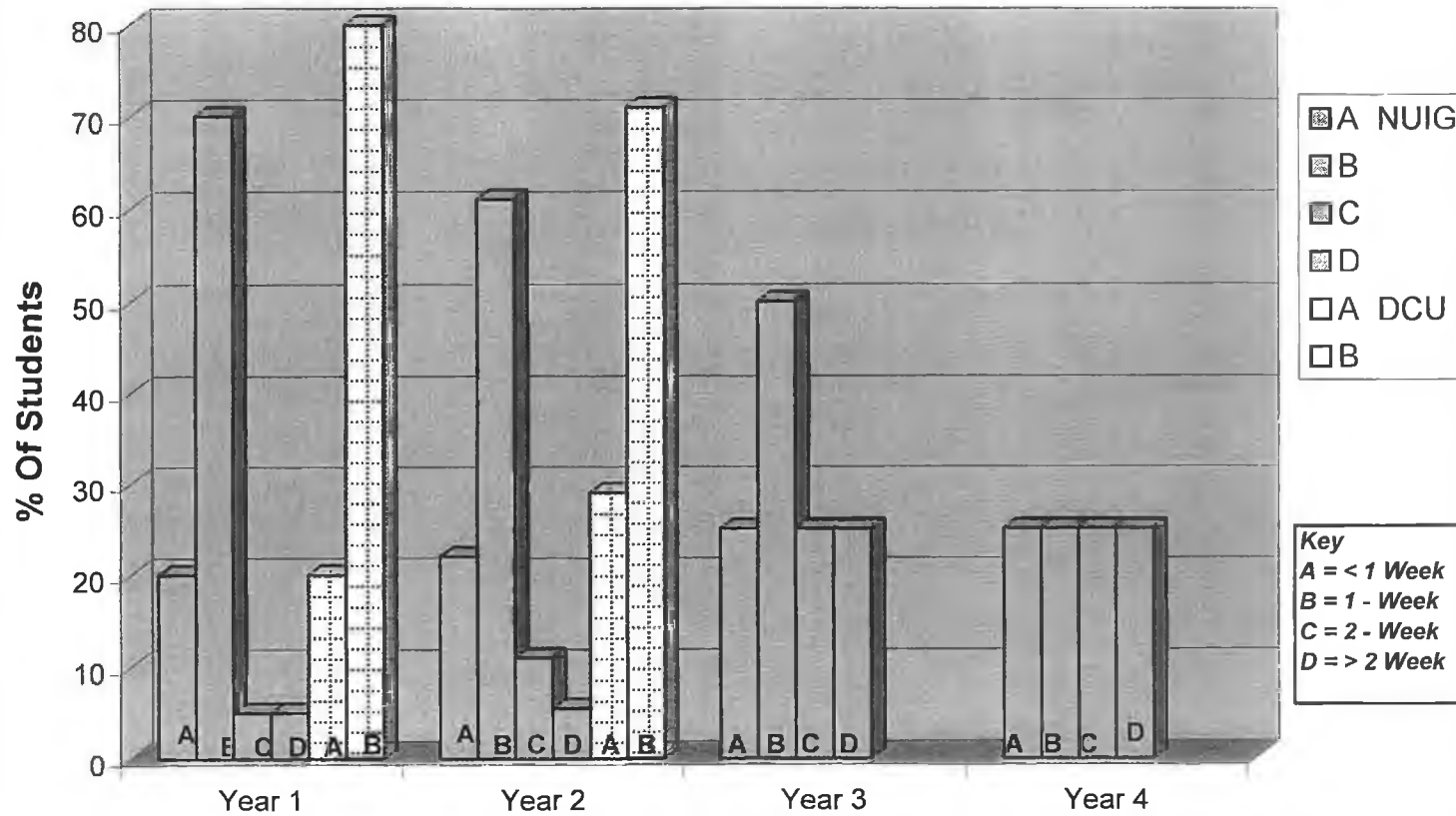
The purpose of Questions 27 and 28 (Questionnaire) was to establish the importance that is ascribed to study leave provision for the respondents within their work organization. Almost half the respondents (49%) (N = 70) received study leave. Regarding the amount of study leave that was granted for the course pursued, the results in Figure 2 (next page) shows that the pattern is varied, and the trend was for most respondents to receive one week of study leave for each year of the pursued course.

The purpose of Question 10 (Interview) was also to get respondents views on study leave provision within their work organization. Answers to this question, and the amount of study leave granted varied depending on the work organization where the respondents worked. One respondent was on study leave during part of the course, and was entitled to a matter of days in relation to the first year of the course. Another respondent was granted three weeks leave for each of the three years of the course, while another respondent received one week in first year and a maximum of two and a half weeks in the second year. Two weeks was given to another respondent, while another received one week for each year of the course. One respondent did not specify the amount of time due to the flexible system that is experienced within this individuals work environment:

There is no actual policy on that and nothing written in the organization as to what you are entitled to. Again, its about negotiating with my Manager. I can take the time when it is appropriate.

Question 11 (Interview) was a follow-up to the previous question and asked

FIGURE 2
AMOUNT OF STUDY LEAVE GRANTED BY EMPLOYERS



what were the respondents' views on the amount of study leave that was granted? 'Not satisfied' with the amount of leave granted was evident in three responses, and of concern too were 'informal arrangements' within their organizations. The need for "more formal arrangements" was stipulated by one of those respondents. "Study leave being minimal" was expressed by two respondents, and only one respondent communicated "study leave satisfaction - in that it worked well for me". In contrast, a respondent who had been a participant on a higher education course for the same organization in the 1970s remarked "that there had not been much developments in this area".

In relation to paid educational leave, in my study it is evident that some employers saw their employees' participation on courses as important. Some employers were sponsoring employees' course fees, travel and books, and were generous in ensuring that salary or holiday entitlements were not affected by their course participation. However, it is also evident from my study that paid educational leave needs to be integrated into the education and training policies of work organizations. What did emerge also was that some study leave existed, but the extent of this varied. Study leave should not be directed at examinations only, but should also be considered in the context of other relevant course work requirements, such as assignments, projects and dissertations, particularly if the work organization sees the vocational and occupational relevance of the courses being pursued by employees.

O'Halloran (1996, p. 2) expresses the point that the European Commission has a negative attitude to the issue of paid educational leave. From an Irish perspective, this negative attitude has also been evident by successive Governments, despite the recommendations from contributors such as Carey

(1990, p. 12) and O'Halloran (1995, p. 1) to paid educational leave. While it is true to state that my findings indicates some developments in an *ad hoc* way within work organizations to paid educational leave, my results also shows that aspects of this are still seen as being peripheral to adult education and training in this country. In the context of work organizations, the Government needs to recognize and promote paid educational leave and in particular, provide adequate resources for its effective implementation.

Staff Development in Relation to Education and Training and Barriers

Questions 33 to 37 (Questionnaire) and Questions 16 to 18 (Interview) had as their heading "Employees Education and Training Development". The purpose of Questions 33, 34 and 35 (Questionnaire) was to establish if within the respondents work organization, there was a specific person with responsibility for staff education and training, the interest expressed in the participants current course by the person(s) with this brief, and the respondents views of the attitude within their work organization towards employees education and training development. In Question 33, over one third (35%) (N = 27) had a member of staff with responsibility for employees education and training. In the two universities, 68% of the NUIG and slightly less (61%) of the DCU respondents had no personnel for this purpose within their work organization. Over half (58%) of the NUIG and 53% of the DCU (N = 27) respondents to Question 34 (Questionnaire) indicated that within their work organization the person assigned for this purpose had expressed no interest in their current course participation. Three of the Interview respondents revealed in Question 17 that they had not within their work organization a person with specific responsibility for employees education and training. Such a staff member existed for two respondents, while another respondent indicated that "this was a new post within the company". Two of the respondents in Question 18 (Interview)

however felt that the appointment of a person with responsibility for education and training would be beneficial to staff, but with one highlighting 'resources' as a problem.

When asked in Question 35 (Questionnaire) (N = 44) their views on the attitude of the specific staff member towards employees education and training, and taking into consideration the number of respondents who indicated in Question 33 (Questionnaire) that they had a person with responsibility for employees education and training, it emerged that respondents were in many cases referring to their 'boss/manager' and not a person solely responsible for this brief. Taking into account the views expressed, I selected three categories: 'positive', 'negative' and 'diverse' to highlight examples. In relation to 'positive views', this category consisted of 19 respondent who expressed comments such as 'interested', 'supportive', 'very supportive', 'committed', 'encouragement'. The following quotations reveals some of the positive remarks cited:

Employer is very supportive of anybody within the workplace pursuing any form of further education, e.g. time off, fees, and material paid for.

Our organization has a very open policy on staff development, all staff are supported both financially and with study leave.

Given that I work in the third level education sector, the attitude is as I would expect support in terms of furthering ones qualifications. This is manifested in terms of fees and leave support.

Supportive and offers assistance where necessary.

Regarding the negative reactions, this consisted of 16 respondents who used terms such as 'no interest', 'sad', 'poor', 'shocked', 'lack of financial study

leave support' and 'low priority'. Examples to illustrate these negative aspects included:

At no time has my employer addressed this issue. I feel she needs to address this and encourage her staff to avail of education and training.

I have been shocked by the lack of commitment or interest in self-development, education and training.

I feel that my employer has no interest in education and training if it might involve paying fees.

We are free to pursue education and training, but our Board of Directors does not encourage it. They feel we should pay for this ourselves as it adds value to our personal education.

The final category consisted of what could be classified as 'diverse views' for nine respondents and included contrasting situations and recommendations. In contrast to a previously reported positive view reported in this analysis from a respondent in a higher education institution, another respondent in another higher education institution made the point:

Training and development is only now becoming an issue at our institution.

One respondent made a comparison between different categories of staff:

Nurses in the hospital I work in receive very little if any money or study leave, whereas other members of staff, i.e. clerical and paramedics receive much more.

Other expressed comments were:

There is a political niche within the organization I am employed in, therefore I do not see myself within the niche. I would not be eligible for promotion or provision of education and training.

Staff who are at the top level are encouraged to develop further. However, unless you are on the ladder as in full time permanent, your efforts are not recognized or you are excluded from other training programmes.

The responsibility for education and training lies ultimately with the employee. There needs to be more of an interest shown by employers on the needs training requirements of employees (financial and time supports).

In the 2001 DCU survey in which respondents were asked how would they describe their employers attitude to their participation in a DCU part-time adult programme (Question 18), almost three quarters (74%) (N = 50) expressed either 'very supportive' or 'supportive'.

While adults students motivations for enrolling are important, equally important is the need to discuss the barriers that may be encountered by adult students. Previously in this chapter, I have documented the financial barrier, as this is particularly relevant to the context of paid educational leave.

In Questions 32 and 36 (Questionnaire), respondents were asked if their participation created any difficulties from a work and home perspective, and what they saw as the main barriers/obstacles affecting staff in their employment participating on education and training courses? Less than half (43%) (N = 75) 'experienced difficulties at work' and 59% (N = 80) mentioned 'home issues'. In Question 36 (N = 78), the results showed some respondents indicating more than one barrier/obstacle and five categories were created: 'time'; 'finance'; 'lack of interest'; 'work/family pressures' and 'lack of incentives'. The 'time' category had the highest number of respondents (28) and the issues ranged from 'time off to travel to college', 'time off for study purposes' and 'getting off early from work'. In

relation to 'finance, this was indicated by 18 respondents and related to 'course financial costs' (course fees, books, travel expenses) and the reluctance of employers to sponsor staff on courses. In the third category, 'lack of interest' was cited by 12 respondents and related to 'employers reluctance to show interest in courses', 'lack of company policy', 'lack of management co-operation' and 'lack of vision'. Nine respondents cited the fourth category of 'work/family commitments', while seven respondents related remarks for the fifth category such as 'lack of any reward' and 'no recognition or incentives for course competition'. Four of the respondents gave irrelevant answers to this question.

Question 16 of the Interview schedule also asked respondents to reflect back on their course, and what were, if any, the barriers or obstacles that they experienced. Categories selected by four respondents were: 'work-family/home commitments'; 'personal commitments'; 'time constraints'; 'course workload and money'. The fifth respondent, cited 'heavy, demanding workload'. Interestingly, the final respondent volunteered the following noteworthy barriers/obstacles in relation to the educational institution that the individual worked in:

The main obstacles and barriers were those which were put up by the organization that I worked in and I speak about the organization in a formal sense. The barriers were substantial there in so far as getting my work done and getting time off. The barriers were substantial in getting access and being allowed to do the course. On the other side of that I got quite a lot of informal support from the people I worked regularly with on a daily basis and that counteracted it to some extent.

The barriers and obstacles documented in this study are varied, but are

nevertheless in general the ones more commonly applicable to part-time adult students, and one or more of them have been echoed by researchers such as MacDonald (1983, p. 7), Skilbeck and Connell (2000, p. 39), Walters (1996, p. 23), Lynch and O’Riordan (1996, p. 101) and Hodgins (1997, p. 60).

Question 37 of the Graduates Questionnaire asked respondents what suggestions they had that could improve employees participation in education and training courses within their work organization. Their responses (N = 48) varied and five categories were created: 1) ‘financial support’; 2) ‘time off’; 3) ‘flexibility within the workforce’; 4) ‘recognition by employer’ and 5) ‘course promotion’. Fifteen respondents cited ‘financial support’ and this referred in general to employers being prepared to cover course costs. ‘Time off’ was cited by seven respondents and this related to time off to attend/travel to lectures or study leave. ‘Flexibility within the workforce’ was expressed by eight respondents, and this was related to time off in that there was a need for employers to create greater flexibility within the workforce by allowing staff more time off for course purposes. ‘Recognition by employers for course achievement’, in that ‘seeing benefits of course’ and ‘opportunity to share what is learned’ was stated by nine respondents, while in the final category ‘course promotion’, six respondents referred to the need to ‘promote’, ‘advertise’ and ‘increase course profile’. Two other respondents cited other issues which were ‘course similar to the OU’ and ‘more part-time courses’. The final respondents indicated:

Access to short term i.e. certificate, diploma, degree stages of courses directly relating to work. I think less daunting to take on a one year certificate course with the option of progressing than committing to five years part-time in order to gain a degree.

In conclusion to this section, I have found that some work organizations are recognizing the importance of education and training by having a person with responsibility for staff development. Evidence of this development was where in my findings I reported that slightly over one third (35%) of respondents indicated that they had a person within their work organization with this specific brief. However, the quotations cited have shown that while some support was evident, there was also mixed responses in relation to the interest taken within work organizations in relation to course participation. I have also highlighted the barriers experienced by the respondents from a home and work perspective, and are ones generally applicable to adult students such as time, work and family commitments.

Access Courses and Adult Educational Guidance

Questions 38 and 39 (Questionnaire) and 19, 20 and 21 (Interview) had as their heading and joint themes "Access Courses and Adult Educational Guidance Provision". In Questions 38 (Questionnaire), almost half (47%) (N = 51) of the respondents felt that had an Access course been available it would have been beneficial to them. However, a slightly higher percentage (53%) felt that the provision by the university of such a course would have made no difference to them. In the 2001 DCU survey (Question 24), almost three quarters (74%) (N = 51) indicated an Access course would not have been helpful.

Some of the positive and negative views expressed were:

Access courses are, if properly accredited, an excellent way of continuing education.

.....there is a need to provide Access courses for participants with no experience of third level to give them an idea of what is needed.

I was not fully aware of the obligations and course content when I began. I may have made a different choice if I was fully aware.

I am unsure if they would have been beneficial for me, but as a facility they would be of assistance to many people.

I feel that the financial burden is sufficient, without having to pay for another course.

The time factor may have prevented me from participating in other courses.

In Question 19 (Interview), four of the respondents expressed positive views on Access courses, one felt not competent to discuss the issue, while another had a negative attitude towards such provision. One positive respondent felt that “they did not personally need to undertake an Access course”, but nevertheless believed “that such a course could be useful to adults who have been out of the learning environment for some time”. Another positive response indicated that “such a course would be ideal in preparation and readiness for further courses”. A respondent working in an educational institution and supporting the provision of Access courses, was obviously critical of higher education institutions on this issue:

All colleges have done badly with access for both young and adult students. Adults particularly at undergraduate level need every encouragement they can get. I think that the university could do an awful lot more for them.

On this latter point, the results from my research with Access Officers, will shortly show that there have been some developments in this area.

With regard to adult educational guidance, it became evident that on analysis

of the data, some respondents were not fully aware of what precisely was the purpose of an adult educational guidance service. Indeed, Preece (1999, p. 84) has made the point that the notion of guidance itself is a relatively new phenomenon, and only recently has the role of educational guidance been seen as part of the higher education providers responsibility, and in the opinion of McGivney (1993, p. 34), has not always been available in institutions. This latter remark will be explored further in my survey findings in the next section of this chapter.

The findings from Question 39 (Questionnaire) showed that for over a half (52%) (N = 70), an adult educational guidance service would have made no difference to the respondents while in the university. This question also gave the respondents an opportunity to comment on their answer (N = 35) and two categories were selected to highlight relevant points: 1) 'beneficial' and 2) 'not beneficial'. Over half the respondents to this part of the question (23) indicated that such a service would 'be beneficial' as is evident in the following comments:

A badly needed resource for adults returning to learning to help steer them through the range of education courses that can be more beneficial to them.

Once in the university it is too late - its before entering a programme you need guidance. Part-time students who work full time barely have time to attend lectures and fulfill course work requirements. Other services don't get a look in.

Seven respondents expressed the view that an adult education guidance service would not be beneficial. Some of the comments included:

As a reasonably mature students, I feel I knew what I wanted and where I wanted to go.

Having previously pursued a part-time third level course, I was aware of the commitment required.

In addition to the 'beneficial' and 'non beneficial' responses, one respondent was of the view that while such a service would not have been beneficial to the individual, it may be beneficial to others:

I don't think I would have used such a service. I work in a related capacity myself. I do believe that many of my colleagues would have appreciated some support in that regard.

Two respondents stated in some way that "they did not know if such a service would be useful", while two others expressed that "they were not clear on what such a service was".

Question 20 of the Interview questions also tried to establish the views of the respondents on adult educational guidance. Four respondents were in favour of such a provision, one felt not competent to discuss this issue, and one had a negative view of such a service at Masters level, but this latter respondent felt that "it could be beneficial to students starting a course for the first time". One of the respondent who had completed an undergraduate course felt no need to undertake an Access course, but in relation to adult educational guidance stated:

I think to have somebody there in the college in a guidance capacity would be important. This would be a good development for mature students. Some students I believe would avail of the service, but it would have to be adult focused.

Another positive remark was:

Yes, that is important in light of an overall strategy which

should be developed for adult education.

In another related area, Question 21 of the Interview schedule sought to establish what were respondents views on both Access courses and adult educational guidance being organized by the universities in conjunction with employers? Five of the respondents indicated that 'this would be a good development' and some positive remarks cited were:

This would be a good thing, but would require the co-operation of employers. I suppose its something to be thinking about for the future, but would involve a commitment from both the college and employers.

It would be a worthwhile development. It would be good for adults to have the option of this service.

Yes, links with employers both at access and guidance level should be encouraged.

As I said, it should be coherent and both parties could contribute to its implementation and development and in the long term this initiative could work with support from both sides.

It could be concluded from the findings on the provision of Access courses and adult education guidance services, that some respondents reacted positively to their provision. Both types of provision being organized in conjunction with work organizations and higher education institutions could be interpreted to be a positive development. However, such provision needs to be fully integrated into the higher education sector and for their effective development needs to be an integral part of the adult education system. Both services can be beneficial to adult students if they are purpose designed to meet not just the educationally disadvantaged adults, but also those adults who have been away from the learning environment for some time, views

shared by Snaith et al. (1998, p.3) and Hodgins et al. (1997, p. 74).

Recommendations for the provision of Access courses for adult student are not recent in this country. Indeed, their importance have been evident in the 1980s, in the Kenny Report (1984, p. 146) and in later years by Cregan (1993, p. 33), O’Fathaigh (1995, p. 22), Clancy (1995, p. 113), Lynch and O’Riordan (1996, p. 31), Brady (1996, p. 9) and Skilbeck and Connell (2000, p. 38). However, it was not until the latter part of the 1990s, that Government funding became available for the appointment of Access Officers. The European Commission has not placed any significant emphasis on Access courses and it took until the Memorandum on Higher Education (1991, p. 16) to acknowledge that action must be taken at the point of entry, whereby it briefly indicates that the provision of Access courses would be a positive development in this direction.

In relation to adult educational guidance, of interest is that two European Commission publications, the 1996 White Paper (CEC, 1996, p. 34) and the publication, *Accompanying Europe through Education and Training* (CEC, 1997, p.25) acknowledged that adult educational guidance would help adult students entry into education and training, and in particular the latter cited publication, indicated that this should be a requirement of institutions. Despite these points, I concur with the views of Rees and Bartlett et al. (1999, p. 23) that adult educational guidance has a low status within member states, and as will shortly be evident in this chapter too, within the Irish higher education sector.

Access Officers and Adult Educational Guidance Survey

During the course of this research work, I was of the opinion that it was possible that some developments were occurring in relation to the provision

of Access courses for adult students within the higher education sector. I was therefore interested in researching to what extent this may be happening, and this led me to undertake a survey within seven universities and eleven IT colleges. The surveyed university institutions were as follows: DCU, NUI Cork, NUI Dublin, NUI Galway, NUI Maynooth, TCD and UL. The following were the Institutes of Technology participants: Athlone, Blanchardstown, Carlow, Cork, Galway, Letterkenny, Limerick, Mayo, Sligo, Tallaght and Waterford. In addition to Access course issues, I also had another purpose in mind in undertaking this aspect of the research work. I was interested in researching adult educational guidance issues, and I felt that the Access Officers would be the most appropriate people to provide the answers to the 14 structured questions involving Access courses and adult educational guidance issues.

Question 1 sought to establish in what year the Access Officers were appointed by their institution? The results showed that the university sector were more progressive than the IT colleges, with the seven universities making appointments between the years 1994 to 1998. Developments were slower within the IT colleges, with seven of the institutions having recruited in the period 1999-2000, and the four remainder (Athlone, Blanchardstown, Letterkenny and Sligo) approving appointments in 2001. In seeking responses to Question 1, I have to point out that while I was able to establish the year of appointment of the Access Officer in the Cork IT, I subsequently discovered that I would be unable to involve this institution for the remainder of the survey questions, due to an internal college issue.

Taking into consideration the need for Access courses, this progressive, although long overdue development in the appointment of Access Officers as indicated in Question 1, and acknowledged also by Aungier (1999, preface),

has been as a result of a combination of funding from the Government, the Higher Education Authority and the respective institutions.

With this latter statement in mind, Question 2 sought to establish if the Access Officers were appointed on a full or part-time basis? My findings showed that within the seven universities and the ten IT colleges, all were full-time appointments. This result therefore shows that the higher education institutions surveyed, now finally recognizes the importance of Access courses and the work that can be undertaken by Access Officers.

Access courses are mainly driven by a commitment to equality of educational access. I was of the opinion that the initial brief of Access Officers may have possibly been based on a recommendation in the White Paper in Education (1995, p. 100), published around the time that some Access Officers were being recruited, whereby there was emphasis on the provision of Access courses for school leavers to enable them to subsequently participate in higher education. This latter point was also acknowledged by Walshe (2000, p. 122). Taking into consideration the emphasis on adult students in this research work, the purpose therefore of Question 3 was to establish if the Access Officers were providing courses for adult students within their institutions and/or school leavers who are educationally disadvantaged? My findings found that six of the universities were providing Access courses for adult students. The seventh university (DCU) indicated that an Access Officer would shortly be recruited for adult students. The exceptions within the IT colleges were Limerick and Blanchardstown, although both respondents communicated that adult students would eventually be targetted for their Access courses.

Question 4 sought to establish what type of adults the Access Officers felt

that Access courses should be targetted at? In relation to this question, I was trying to establish if the Access Officers would use the term 'educationally disadvantaged' or a similar term which in my view seems to be used when referring to Access courses and Access course students. While the precise words used by the respondents differed, nevertheless what did emerge was that all respondents to Question 4 used in one way or another, words that I categorized as 'educationally disadvantaged'. The importance of this group being targetted at were evident in two responses:

Definitely people who are at an educational disadvantage are in need of Access courses (IT).

For any adult student aspiring to go to third level but who have had limited educational opportunities, Access courses are essential (University).

While the perception of Access courses tend to be for those educationally disadvantaged, I argue that they can also be of benefit for adults who have been away from the formal learning environment for some time. I was therefore interested to find out if this latter group of adults would have been identified by any of the respondents in Question 4. As this group were not referred to, I deemed Question 5 appropriate, whereby I wanted to establish if they agreed with my view by asking if they felt that adults who have been away from the formal learning environment for a period of six years or more could also benefit from Access courses? The results from this question revealed mixed views. Four of the university respondents felt that adults who had been away from the learning situation could benefit from Access course. In the view of one university Access Officer:

I deal with early school leavers and adults, many of who come from deprived areas and some who don't, and would come under the group of having a relatively good education, but

worried about returning to learning.

The other three university respondents expressed a positive view of this group being catered for. One respondent, possibly concerned about declining enrolments remarked:

In some but not all of our undergraduate courses, we are currently experiencing our numbers going down. If we were to put on an Access programme for this group too, it may help recruitment and also prove worthwhile to those adults you describe.

Another university respondent noted:

At present, our regulations do not tell us specifically what type of adult students to direct our courses at, although it is assumed that preference is given to those with a poor education and who are unemployed, but wish to return to learning.

When questioned further on this issue, I discovered that the university in question does recruit some adults who have been away from the learning environment and who have a certain standard of education.

I found that there was less support within the IT colleges to this question of targetting educationally advantaged adults, although one respondent communicated:

I suppose they also have needs, but in our college we give first choice to the socially and economically disadvantaged students, but there is nothing stopping me from taking on interested adults with a high standard of education.

To some extent, the results from Question 5 supports my point for the need for Access courses to be extended to cater for adults who have been away from the learning environment but not necessarily educationally disadvantaged.

Different titles are ascribed to Access courses for adults within the higher education sector and from the range of titles used, it may not always be clear to adults that their aim should be on successful completion to provide entry into a higher education course. Therefore, the purpose of Question 6 was to establish the titles that were being used within the higher education institutions for the courses that they were providing for adults. The results to this question varied considerably. For example, I found the title 'Foundation' was most prominent in the ITs (e.g. Sligo, Athlone, Galway, Mayo and Tallaght). Terms applicable to the universities included Access Programmes (NUIG, NUIMaynooth), Access Courses (UL) and within the Trinity Access Programme, Pre-University Foundation Course is used.

Of particular significance to the responses that emerged from Question 6 was that the courses were being provided in a range of disciplines, and this ranged from the Humanities, Sciences, Engineering and Technology. For example, Sligo and Athlone IT colleges, provides a Foundation Course in Communications, Maths and Computers. Galway and Mayo Institutes offers Foundation Courses in Science and Technology.

Taking into consideration the emphasis being ascribed to adult workers participating in education and training courses, Question 7 asked the respondents if they felt that it would be beneficial in their role as Access Officer to work with work organizations in recruiting adult students to participate in Access courses in their institution? Based on the responses to

this question, it was clearly evident to me that this issue did not seem to have been considered or addressed by any of the Access Officers in both the universities and the ITs. When probed further, thirteen of the respondents replied 'yes' to this question, which included six of the university respondents. Four IT responses could be categorized as 'not sure', while the remainder (3 ITs) expressed in some way a sentence that indicated that it was an issue that right now they could not respond to as they were relatively new in their post. This I felt was an acceptable answer, as the universities were ahead of the IT colleges in appointing Access Officers. Of the positive university responses, I deemed the following three noteworthy:

Yes, a very good idea. In this catchment area, there is a lot of industry. One of the things I would like to be able to do is to go out and establish the real learning needs of workers say in the factories.

If I did this, I believe that I could approach Management here and at least I would have numbers to go on. In here, you always need figures to convince them to run courses and I would see this as very important if the university wants to increase their intake of mature students.

If for example, Boston Scientific wanted some of their staff to pursue courses, we would be willing to work with them. I have not thought about this, but it would be worth considering and might lead to some collaboration.

However, one negative university respondent remarked:

This would not work here and I don't think that the university would gain much from such liaison. I have a responsibility to organize the courses and recruit the students and I do not think there would be anything to be gained from trying to work with the corporate sector.

Based on the response to Question 7, Question 8 revealed that no collaboration was taking between work organizations and any of the higher education institutions surveyed. This result also confirms that there is a need for discussions on the benefits to be gained for work organizations and the higher education sector working together in the provision of Access courses, not only for the educationally disadvantaged, but also for those adults who are educationally advantaged and want to participate in higher education.

Aungier (1999, p. 11) notes that student guidance services have been established at Irish universities from the 1970s onwards. While this is true, I was nevertheless of the opinion that adult educational guidance services were not being provided within the higher education sector. I therefore asked the Access Officers in Question 9 to confirm if there was an educational guidance/counselling service within their institution? All the respondents replied 'yes' to this question, confirming the point that I have just noted by Aungier (1999, p. 11).

However, the purpose of Question 10 was to establish if there was a designated adult educational guidance service being provided for adult students? With the exception of one IT institution (Waterford), all responded 'no' to this question. While the concept of an educational guidance service for adults had existed for several years in the Waterford IT, it is now the only higher education college that has an adult educational guidance service. My findings in the Waterford IT established that the need for the Regional Educational Guidance Service for Adults (REGSA) was identified through what were the needs for adult learners participating on Access courses. Under the REGSA initiative, a comprehensive adult education guidance service, incorporating trained adult guidance personnel provides information

and guidance, both of which are intertwined. In the opinion of the IT respondent in Waterford:

This model of good practice has proved to work well here.

The results to Question 10 confirms what I assumed, and what has also been indicated in the Report of the Action Group on Access to Third Level Education (2001, p. 90), whereby the lack of a coherent educational guidance service for adult students is the second most frequently cited barrier for adult students, and this particularly applies to the higher education sector. Elsewhere, Fleming et al. (1999, p. 56) puts forward the point that the absence of adult educational guidance for adult students within higher education is a serious handicap.

Of interest in the 2001 DCU study (Question 26), was that almost all respondents (98%) (N = 52) did not make use of the guidance service offered by the university. The fact that this university did not have a designated adult educational guidance counsellor was to some extent possibly responsible for this response, as in Question 27, over half (52%) (N = 50) indicated that a specific adult guidance counsellor would have been of use to them. Another university institution also rated poorly the lack of adult educational guidance (Inglis and Murphy, 1999, p.91). However, what did emerge from the seven IT and the five university Access Officers respondents to Question 10 was that they were anxious to point out that the adult students had access to the educational guidance/counsellor(s) as part of the overall guidance provision within their institution. In the view of one IT respondent:

They are told at the beginning of a course that we have guidance counsellors and they should feel free to approach them.

However, a more realistic adult requirement view was expressed by the sixth

university respondent:

From my experience the needs of mature students are totally different from the school leavers and I do think that they should have access to their own counsellor. The reality is that they do not want to be seen sitting outside an office waiting with other students, who would be much younger and have totally different types of problems.

In the seventh university institution, it was stated:

There are developments in this area for one guidance counsellor being assigned for adult students.

Taking into consideration the importance of part-time provision for adult students and the timing of courses, Question 11 asked the Access Officers if adult students have access to the guidance counsellors during evening and week-end attendance in their institutions? With the exception of the Waterford IT, all respondents replied 'no' to this question. This result therefore confirms that adult educational guidance services within the higher education sector are practically non-existent for part-time adult students, and within their adult education provision, adult educational guidance is seen to have a peripheral as opposed to a central role.

As a follow-on to this response, Question 12, asked if they felt that there should be a separate adult educational guidance service provided for adult students within their institution? With the exception of the Waterford IT who provides such a service, all respondents replied yes. When asked to elaborate on their response, some interesting comments emerged:

This is a very important issue that must be addressed within theinstitute. But the problem at the moment is funding (IT).

I agree, if we are serious about adult education here, this is a service that we should and must lobby to establish here (IT).

I am very aware of the needs of mature students but I am not a trained counsellor and I know that X cannot always be here at the time the mature students come to lectures (university).

While we say the door is always open, the reality is it is not now that I have thought about your question as our staff only work day time hours (university).

Questions 13 sought to establish if the Access Officers felt that there should be a qualified adult educational guidance counsellor dealing with adult students only. All respondents replied 'yes' to this question. One IT respondent communicated:

In the light of developments here in lifelong learning, I think that our college here will have to become more aware of the needs of mature students and guidance in its various forms will need to be taken on board.

The final question, 14, sought to establish the views of the Access Officers, this time on collaboration between their institution and work organizations in relation to adult educational guidance. Similar to the responses to this question from the perspective of Access courses, it again became evident that this issue was not ever considered by any of the Access Officers. However, the responses succeeded in me obtaining some views and practical implications were identified by four IT and one university respondents: 'resources' (2 respondents), 'staffing' (2 respondents) and 'unsocial working hours' (1 respondent). In addition, nine respondents (four universities and

five ITs) reiterated in some way that this could be a good development. In the words of one IT respondent:

While in theory it could be useful, its implementation from a practical point, would need a lot of work and monitoring.

Another university respondent echoed the point:

An obvious way to support this would be to ensure that adequate counsellors would be employed to undertake this work.

Two other respondents (2 university) made statements that I categorized as 'unnecessary' and 'impossible to develop'.

The survey findings from the Access Officers, shows that for the majority of the colleges, adult educational guidance is underdeveloped within the higher education sector. The exception to this is the Waterford IT.

However, I must point out that in the institutions surveyed, all respondents were eager to stress that there is a guidance service for adults. My results do show that the guidance services that are being provided are not specific to adult students. Aungier (1999) supports my findings that educational guidance is integrated with the work of counsellors assigned to younger age students, and that there is in general no adult educational guidance system within the higher education sector in this country.

The educational guidance needs of adult students can and do differ significantly in many respects from younger students, and there is therefore a need for designated adult educational guidance counsellors. Similar to Access courses, adult educational guidance would also be of help to those adults away from the learning environment, but who are educationally advantaged. This view has been supported by some other researchers, an example is Hodgins et al. (1997, p. 74) who sees such provision as been

important for those with a gap in their education. An equally important and supportive point that can be extracted from McGivney's 1993 work, is that adult educational guidance is essential for adult returning to education, and in particular for those who have been away from the learning environment for some time. Elsewhere this point has also been endorsed by Snaith et al. (1998, p.3).

The importance of co-operation between work organizations and institutions is an issue that needs to be addressed. From the perspective of adult educational guidance, there were implications expressed by some of the respondents in this study for this to develop. However, I nevertheless believe that collaboration in relation to adult educational guidance would be beneficial to adult workers participating in higher education.

Aspects of the contents of Government publications such as Green Paper on Adult Education (1998), the White Paper on Adult Education (2000) and the 1996 Higher Education Equality Unit Conference, all stress the need for an integrated adult education guidance service within the higher education sector. It is worth noting that the Irish Adult Education Guidance Initiative, which has received assistance from the European Commission which forms part of the National Development Plan 2000-2006, has been given a role to support projects aiming to provide adult educational guidance. While the fund will support the development of models of good practice, it regrettably is not targetted at the higher education sector.

From a European Commission perspective, adult educational guidance is an issue that has not been deemed important. While Bartlett et al. (2000, p. 29) indicates that the European Commission first gave a commitment to guidance to young students in 1963, elsewhere in his same publication, these authors

(p. 32) are of the view that it is nevertheless difficult to assess precisely the European Commission's approach towards adult educational guidance policy. I must point out that notable exceptions have been the reference in the 1996 White Paper (CEC, 1996 p. 34) that adult educational guidance would help to facilitate adults entry into education and training, while the publication, *Accompanying Europe through Education and Training* (CEC, 1997 (c), p. 2) recognizes that adult educational guidance should be a requirement for institutions, but fails to elaborate on how this could develop. In aspects of the *Memorandum on Lifelong Learning* (2000) (europa.eu.int/comm/education/life.index.html), it notes that from the perspective of adults, educational guidance is necessary. I would support the point put forward by Bartlett et al. (2000, p. 28) that a key problem within the European Commission has been the difficulty in putting in place the required provision for adult educational guidance.

Co-operation Between Higher Education Institutions and Work Organizations

Questions 40 to 43 (Questionnaire) and Questions 15, 22 and 23 (Interview) had as their heading "Higher Education Institutions and Work Organization Issues". The purpose of those questions was to gather data from the respondents on education and training issues relevant to employees from a higher education and work perspective. In a study by Woodley et al. (1987, p. 104) adult students were very positive in their support of courses pursued, while Inglis and Murphy (1999, p. 49) also found adults students satisfied with their higher education courses undertaken. Question 40 (Questionnaire) sought to establish what ratings the respondents would give the course they had completed in meeting their current work needs. On analysis (N = 81), four different categories were created: 1) 'Excellent/very good'; 2) 'adequate'; 3) 'room for improvement' and 4)

‘adequate, but room for improvement’. A higher percentage (88%) of respondents in DCU found that the course they pursued was ‘excellent/very good’, while the findings for the same category in relation to the NUIG was exactly one third (33%). Less than half (44%) of the NUIG participants found the course from a work relevance perspective ‘adequate’. The open ended aspect to Question 40 gave respondents the opportunity to comment on their answer (N = 37). I found that from an analysis perspective it was difficult to categorize the individual responses, as the comments expressed related to numerous and diverse institutional type issues, and in some instances, personal/institutional type remarks were cited. The positive and negative comments expressed ranged from examples ascribed to the two higher education institutions, and consisted of reference to ‘specific departments’; ‘course lecturers’; ‘lectures’; ‘modules’ and ‘course organization’.

Question 41 (Questionnaire) asked respondents how satisfied they were with the quality of the course pursued for their work? Based on the responses (50), three categories were created: 1) ‘excellent’/‘very satisfied’/‘very good’; 2) ‘satisfied’/‘fairly satisfied’/‘reasonably satisfied’/‘good’ and 3) ‘not satisfied’. In relation to the first category, 19 respondents expressed one of the terms used, 28 cited one of the terms in the second category, while 3 respondents fell into the third category.

In Question 15 of the Interviews, two of the respondents expressed positive views of their course, while four had mixed reactions. An analysis of the positive comments were as follows: “that the courses in the universities in general seemed to be well planned”, “there was quality in delivery” and “course contents focused on topics of relevance”. The negative comments that the analysis revealed “poor quality of lecturing” and “poor course content”.

I now turn in Question 42 (Questionnaire) to find out if the respondents felt that the university in which they attended their course were providing the type of courses that were relevant to the requirements of their workforce. Over half (65%) (N = 74) indicated 'yes' to this question. In the unstructured aspect to this question, in both institutions, recommendations varied, with the NUIG respondents citing:

NUIG needs to revitalise its course offering - look at the other universities.

I do not think that NUIG does enough to push itself to business/ companies in the region.

Courses must be related to the industry.

Easier access like week-ends, etc. would be better.

Given today's advances in processes and technologies, a new view should be applied to courses in general.

In relation to DCU:

Yes, though choice is limited. Maybe could be expanded to specialized courses in areas of interest, especially, in relation to disability.

If there were more courses available at sub-degree level, there would be better use made of DCU by my colleagues, some of whom have not got primary degrees.

In making the point that institutions of higher education had a key role to play in education and training of the workforce, the PPF (1991, p. 14) indicates that co-operative arrangements should be strengthened and enhanced, a point that Hodgins et al. (1997, p. 80) too shares. Such collaboration would according to the Green Paper on Adult Education (1992, p. 200) carry considerable benefits for those involved.

Question 22 (Interview) also asked respondents if they felt that the NUIG and DCU were currently providing the type of course that were relevant to the requirements of their workforce, and what were their views on this issue.

In an analysis of the views representing the two institutions, two of the respondents felt that 'their university was providing courses relevant to the requirement of their workforce'. Another two respondents were 'not sure of the range of courses available' within their respective universities.

However, one of those respondents did state that "the course pursued was relevant". Two respondents had negative reactions and one stated:

No and this is an issue that I feel strongly about and I can really comment on. There is a need for employers to approach the institutions and request specific courses geared towards the needs of our staff. For this to happen, the staff needs have to be identified and this is where I feel that some person with this brief, like an educational officer could do this and then based on the requirements of staff approach colleges. On the other hand, colleges should approach employers and inform them, publicize their courses that are available. I do not think that your institution does this to any great extent, all I see are paper advertisements. This is fine, but before pursuing a course, people need more information and this is where I believe the colleges are falling down and I am not just talking about NUIG. I know there are career days. I say some advertised recently but they seem to be focusing on the younger students who are just doing Leaving Cert.

This quotation highlights the need for employers and higher institutions to collaborate in endeavouring to publicize and provide courses that are relevant to the requirements of the workforce.

The purpose of the final question in the Questionnaire (43) and Question 23 in the Interview schedule was to establish if the graduates felt there were any university/employment links/initiatives that they would like to see developed between their university and their workplace. From the questionnaire respondents, three quarters (75%) (N = 59) indicated that they would like to see further links developed. In the unstructured aspect to the questions, respondents were given the opportunity to comment on their answer (N = 37), but as this was an open question, very diverse opinions were, and in some cases more than one comment expressed.

The following were some of the NUIG statements: "Rural development courses must be closely linked"; "need to publicize/advertise what is available for adults"; "inform companies"; "more interaction between employers and the University"; "greater emphasis on practical work problems"; "distance learning programmes based on the Open University system"; "correspondence courses"; "study skills needs to be slotted into mainstream syllabus and enhanced status would improve attendance"; "shorter highly specific modules but built to an overall qualification"; "funding"; "NUIG should try and communicate with places of work - find out what the needs are in relation to education in their workplace"; "I would suggest more employment links between companies and NUIG"; "more liaison with industry - go out and about and find what is required"; "more interaction with banks"; "more contact with outside community"; "courses relevant to the West of the country".

In relation to DCU, the following comments were expressed: "initiatives in IT would be welcomed"; "advice on career/training development"; "there are always opportunities to develop links between organizations"; "would like to see certificate and diploma brought on an outreach basis"; "distance

learning”; “modular courses in outreach centres”; “information officer from DCU should visit and inform of courses available and offer information services for people considering study”.

The final question (23) of the Interviews also set out to establish the views of the respondents on this issue also. Five of the six respondents expressed the need for more institution/employment links. For example, statements included:

I think that universities could do an awful lot more.

Yes I think that the university needs to take responsibility, to be continually sampling, see what are the needs out in the workplace and to continually cater for them. For this to be achieved, I think the College needs to be proactive in doing that.

I think the biggest challenge is there is so much information out there, there are so many courses,, but yet there are many people that don't know what courses there are, what is there and that they can access. I mean it goes back to this point of Access courses and guidance and what you said earlier about linking.

Some researchers, for example Robertson and Ritzenberg (1995, research interview cassette) have recommended the establishment of co-operation between higher education institutions and workplaces. In 1984, the Programme for Action in Education (p. 32) emphasized that links between providers and work organizations needed to be intensified, and the Green Paper on Adult Education (1998, p. 81) also laid emphasis on closer links between workplaces and higher education institutions. A point expressed by Lynch and O'Riordan (1996, p. 10) was the need for the development of

links as a way of breaking down barriers between adult students. Skilbeck and O'Connell (2000, p. 38) also saw the need for establishing partnerships among providers of education and training courses, and this point has featured significantly in my own research findings.

Conclusion

In the past, learning was about education and to some extent it happened before work. Training could be seen as necessary prior to work and later in the workplace. However, the world of education and training has changed dramatically, and the lifelong learning era has created opportunities and demands for adult education and training to move centre stage.

My findings shows that the adult students who participated in the higher education courses are generally in the younger age adult group. Not only had a large proportion of the respondents in my study obtained the Leaving Certificate, but over three quarters (86%) had previously attended a higher education institution, and 60% had already obtained a degree. My study confirms that those most likely to participate in adult education in the higher education sector can therefore be classified as 'educationally advantaged'.

Regarding the socio-economic background of the participants, I have shown that in general adult students who participates in higher education tend to come from middle class backgrounds. Taking into consideration the reservations that have always been expressed by Clancy (1988; 2000) in relation to part-time adult education, I showed that this mode is most appropriate for adult participants, and in my study, 82% of the respondents had previously participated on part-time courses.

Considering the relevance of the courses pursued to the respondents work,

further course participation was seen as a route to enhanced career and vocational opportunities. This was particularly evident in the list of motivational factors whereby vocational reasons featured significantly. My results showed that the respondents were not influenced to any significant extent by their employer to participate in the course, and the primary decision to enrol came mainly from the employees themselves. This latter point proves that employees are taking some responsibility for their own education and training.

From the contents of my discussion, paid educational leave is an issue that needs to be addressed by the Government. Considering the relevance of the course to the respondents work, I documented that less than half (45%) of the respondents had either full or half fees paid by their employer. An integral part of paid educational leave should be study leave provision. My findings showed that almost half (49%) of the respondents received this leave, although in varying amounts. Of notable importance was that there have been some developments in relation to work organizations having a person with responsibility for staff education and training developments, with slightly over one third (35%) of respondents indicating this.

The discriminatory aspect of part-time students being subjected to course fees has been highlighted in the discussion. Some respondents expressed problems balancing the demands of work, family and the course, barriers generally applicable to adult students. I and other researchers have shown that within publications, lack of Access courses and adult educational guidance have been identified as barriers in relation to adult students within the higher education sector. Despite various recommendations, my findings showed that there have been developments in relation to the provision of Access courses for adult students within the higher education sector. This

has been most evident in the appointment of Access Officers in the seven universities and the eleven IT colleges surveyed. I have argued that organizational policies within higher education institutions must provide Access courses and adult educational guidance not only for those adults who are educationally disadvantaged, but also for those adults who are educationally advantaged, but away from the formal learning environment for some time. Hence, the Government and the higher education institutions needs to focus more on support structures as an entry route for adult learners.

Adult educational guidance services should be an essential component within the higher education sector. This service is necessary before selecting a course and during the programme of study. However, despite various recommendations, I have highlighted that this is very much underdeveloped within the higher education sector. There is therefore a need for a clear and strategic national framework to be put in place to develop adult educational guidance within the higher education sector.

There was evidence within the contents that co-operation between higher education institutions and work organizations could be beneficial in the context of adult education and training of workers. My findings showed that this is not happening to any significant extent. There is plenty of scope for the development of co-operation between the higher education sector and work organizations, and this could lead to models of good practice in the area of adult education and training. Respondents were generally positive about the surveyed course they undertook, although some dissatisfaction with issues, mainly internal, did feature.

In conclusion, my findings have indicated that there are several issues that

needs to be addressed by the higher education sector, work organizations and the Government from the perspective of adult students. I will therefore focus on relevant recommendations in the final chapter.

CHAPTER 7

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: WORK ORGANIZATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to report on and discuss the work organization research findings. This aspect of the research was work organization focused and involved the administration of a questionnaire and the undertaking of in-depth interviews. In order to gather data on education and training issues relevant to work organizations, twenty four organizations were targetted and eighteen responded to the questionnaire. As a follow-up to the questionnaire study, seven work organization representatives that had involvement in employees education and training were interviewed. The objective of the seven interviews was to gather more information that would supplement the data in the questionnaire aspect of the research work. The related themes will be integrated into the discussion, and survey questions are grouped together.

It is important to note that in relation to the questionnaire and interviews, the work organizations requested in many cases that their company name not be divulged in the research work. This has been adhered to in this aspect of the research work.

In relation to the representatives in the work organizations that participated in the interviews, in some cases, the interview questions were not always asked in the structured order that I had devised. This was due to the fact that the responses I received often lead on to another relevant, but not sequential question in the interview list of questions.

A copy of the Work Organization Questionnaire is to be found in Appendix 3, the Work Organization Interview questions in Appendix 4, and the Work Organization Interview Transcripts are in Appendix B.

General Background Information on the Work Organizations

The purpose of the first three Questions (1-3) of the Work Organization Questionnaire was to attempt to get some background information on the organizations that participated in the study, and the three questions were classified under the heading “Work Organization Background Details”. As general background information to the eighteen work organizations that responded (Question 1), thirteen were situated in Galway City or the surrounding areas, and five were situated over a thirty mile radius of Galway City, making the respondents located in both rural and urban areas. For analysis purposes in the questionnaire study (N = 18), two categories were created, although in some work organizations there was some overlap in the work undertaken and/or services provided by the two categories selected. The first category comprised fourteen work organizations that were involved in production and/or provided services to the public. The second category, also provided a service to the public and involved five institutional type organizations. The number of years the work organizations (Question 2) (Questionnaire) (N = 17) were in their region varied: four organizations were providing employment for five years and under, one organization was an employer for fifteen years, while five organizations had given from sixteen to twenty five years employment. Seven organizations had been employers for between twenty six and fifty years, while the longest work organization was in existence for over one hundred years. One organization representative did not respond to this question, but I was able to establish that the company was in the region for twelve years.

Question 3 (Questionnaire) was to identify the approximate number of employees over twenty three years of age. The reason for selecting this age was that this was the age stipulated for participating in the graduates questionnaires and interviews, and it is generally the age for defining entry for adults/mature students to many of the courses within the higher education sector. The representatives that participated in the work organization questionnaire and interviews were informed that the questions would concern employees over twenty three years of age. In relation to Question 3 (N = 17), the following results emerged. The smallest organization had 40 employees; three had between 125 and 150; 5 between 300 and 600; 5 between 700 and 820, and 3 organizations had over 1,000 respectively (these last three figures were based on branches situated in different parts of Ireland). The respondent who did not answer the question on the number of years their organization was in existence also did not respond to Question 3.

Regarding the work organizations representatives that were interviewed, six were based in County Galway, one was situated outside of the county making the respondents here located also in both rural and urban areas. All had a workforce of one hundred and fifty or more, and were at least twelve years providing employment.

In summary, as background information, different work organizations in both urban and rural areas participated in this aspect of the study, and the length that the organizations had given employment varied.

Employers Views on Education and Training Needs in the Organization

Going back to the 1980s, the Galvin Report (1988, p. 44) cited inadequate resources and lack of commitment by employers towards the education and training needs of workers within the workforce. In the latter part of the

1990s, the Irish White Paper on Training (1997, p. 50) expressed concern that employers investment in training was not being done in this country within a strategic development perspective. The importance of education and training in the workforce has also been documented in the White Paper on Adult Education (2000, p. 76).

The next five Questions (4 to 8) (Questionnaire) and Questions 1 to 4 and 6 (Interviews) were classified under the heading of “Work Organization - Education and Training Provision”. The purpose of those questions was to gather data on the work organizations policy on education and training. Question 4 (Questionnaire) sought to establish if within the work organizations, employees education and training were seen as having a central or a peripheral role. As a follow-up, Question 5 (Questionnaire) asked respondents if they had within their work organization a written education and training policy? The results to both these question (4 and 5 Questionnaire) showed that well over three quarters (83 %) (N=15) indicated that within their work organization, employees education and training was seen as having a central as opposed to a peripheral role. The importance of the central role that was being ascribed within the work organizations was emphasized in the fact that almost three quarters (72 %) (N=18) of respondents indicated that within their work organization they have a written education and training policy.

The purpose of Question 1 (Interview) was to establish the importance of the provision of continuing education and training for staff within their work organizations. The responses expressed by the seven respondents indicated that this was deemed to be important, and supports what Hodgins et al. (1997, p. 47) found with employers whereby interest was described as ‘high’ or ‘very high’. The following comments provides some evidence of this in my

findings:

From an organizational perspective and in the context of helping our staff to develop qualifications, it is important.

I would say that continuous education is very important to us.

This company has been extremely active in pursuing and promoting education and training.

The findings from the questions in this last paragraph seems to show that employers are to some extent now recognizing the importance of education and training for employees. My results are also supported by an IBEC study (2000, p. 7) who showed that eight out of ten work organizations had a training programme/plan in place, while Winch (2000, p. 3) notes that the value placed on education and training is fundamental to the value placed on work.

A key function of work organizations should be to invest in education and training as part of their overall organization strategy. Of relevance here is a study in this country involving 583 work organizations that showed that less than half (45%) had a budget for education and training (IBEC, 2000, p. 7). In this same IBEC (2000, p. 7) study, 61% of work organizations indicated that expenditure on training had increased in 1998 over previous years, with only a small percentage (5%) reporting a decrease in expenditure. This study also reported (IBEC, 2000, p. 7) that forty work organizations (5% of the respondents), identified no expenditure on training; 95% of these work organizations had less than one hundred employees.

The purpose of Question 6 (Questionnaire) was to ask respondents to indicate, if there was within their work organization an annual budget

allocated for employees education and training programmes? The majority of respondents (94%) (N=17) indicated that there was a budget. In the unstructured part of Question 6, respondents were asked to elaborate on the amount of money that was allocated for this purpose in the year that the survey was undertaken. However, of the seventeen respondents who replied to the first part of this question, only seven work organization representatives specified an amount. I can only assume that there may have been some reluctance to divulge the amount, or perhaps some respondents may not have been aware when filling in this questionnaire of the amount of money allocated for this purpose. Taking into consideration the length the work organizations that responded to this question were in existence, and the number of staff over twenty three years of age, Table 4 highlights the amounts identified by the seven work organizations for the year 2000.

**TABLE 4. AMOUNT OF MONEY ALLOCATED FOR STAFF
EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMMES.**

Number of years work organization in existence	Number of staff over 23 years of age	Amount allocated in £
50	600	400,000
39	300	25,000
25	500	16,000
28	6000	600,000
15	600	24,000
12	-	160,000
25	800	1,000,000

While only seven respondents specified the amount, five others respondents indicated one of the following: 'depends on training needs analysis'; 'various'; 'confidential'; 'can't disclose'; 'varies - depends on needs'.

Another aspect to this issue of funding was where respondents were asked to elaborate on any views they may have on Question 6 (Questionnaire). Five respondents replied, and the following statement may confirm what I have stated about work organizations reluctance to disclose figures:

Not permitted to disclose figures, other than there is a sizeable budget allocated to HR - covers in-house programmes, educational assistance and miscellaneous programmes. Each department then is allocated a budget for specific needs.

Another respondent indicated:

I am unable to give full details here as part of the training is on-going.

One respondent made a vague statement 'various', and when asked to elaborate commented:

For training and education the department would have an annual budget of over 3 million plus each branch and department of the organization would have their own budget.

Another respondent indicated:

There is a central fund from which training is charged.

In Question 1 (Interview), all respondents indicated that education and training was important within their work organizations, and all seven pointed out that funding was available for this purpose. One respondent stated:

Last year we paid out sixty thousand pounds for evening courses for about fifty people.

The organization in question had a workforce of over one hundred and fifty.

Within another work organization, it was stated that:

The company is very much behind delivering money to people in the company to pursue education and training, and this has always been a very strong point within the company here.

Another respondent indicated that £25,000 pounds was allocated for this purpose, and this organization has a staff of over approximately 250.

It can be concluded from the respondents that staff education and training seems to be seen as important within the work organizations surveyed, and in their confirmation of this, some work organizations were prepared to divulge the amount of money that was allocated for this purpose. While the White Paper on Training (1997, p. 50) estimates that expenditure on training averaged 1.5% of total labour costs for all work organizations, nevertheless

Table 4 in my study has shown that the amount of funding varied, and that the number of staff as illustrated in this Table is not a reflection of the amount of money earmarked (e.g. two work organizations - 600 employees - 400,000 and 24,000 pounds respectively) for education and training purposes. The Galvin Report (1988, p. 15) makes the point that the longer established (twenty years and over) work organizations spend considerably more than younger work organizations on staff development, while the White Paper on Training (1997, p. 49) also shows that work organizations employing more than fifty people, engaged in training to a significantly greater extent than those employing less than fifty. Elsewhere, Keep and Mayhew (1999, p. 116) notes that small firms are less likely to train their employees than the larger ones.

Robertson (1995, research interview cassette) feels that management in work organizations have a responsibility for creating a learning environment in the workplace, and liaison between employers and employees is needed.

Taking into consideration the importance that each of the work organizations ascribed to education and training for their employees, Question 7

(Questionnaire) sought to establish if the respondents knew how many of their employees, over twenty three years of age, were at the time of the survey, participating in any type of education and training courses. Almost three quarters (71%) indicated 'yes' to this question, and the follow-up unstructured aspect to this question (N = 11), asked respondents to state the approximate number who were participating within their work organization. Eleven organizations responded, and the results based on the size of the organizations workforce are shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5. APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES PARTICIPATING ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMMES (2000)

Number of employees in work organization	Number of participants on education and training programmes.
800	60
600	150
500	30
800	70
820	112
600	600
40	4
700	500
150	10
125	15
800	100

From the findings in Table 5, eleven work organizations were able to state the number of employees participating in courses. It is important to note that one work organization had all of its 600 employees involved in a course, but this was a compulsory internal work course. Two respondents indicated that despite having a person with responsibility for employees education and training within their work organization, they were nevertheless unable to confirm the numbers participating due to the following explanations:

The information is available, but currently not being collated.
Impossible to quantify for the whole organization as training is both central, local and on-going.

Role of Work Organizations in Course Provision and Needs Analysis

A point expressed in the PPF (2000, p. 24) was that training must be better targeted at job related and individual needs, and it appears that overwhelmingly work organizations view both internal and external courses as relevant to their needs. Question 8 (Questionnaire) was divided into three structured and three unstructured questions. The purpose of the first (N=18) and second (N=17) structured questions was to ask respondents if their work organization organized internal and external courses for employees? Over half (51%) organized the former and 49% the latter type courses. The third structured aspect to the question asked if they felt that the internal and external courses were meeting the needs of their workforce and 94% (N = 18) indicated 'yes'.

Regarding the unstructured aspects to Question 8 (Questionnaire), based on the responses to the provision of internal and external courses, respondents were asked to indicate the type of courses provided. On an analysis, the range of courses varied, and in most cases, taking into consideration what was known to this researcher about the type of work the different work organizations were involved in, the courses could be seen as relevant to the needs of the workforce. While the work organizations surveyed in the questionnaire were satisfied with both the internal and external courses provided, a small percentage (6%) indicated that their courses were not meeting their workforce needs.

It can be concluded that to some extent work organizations see external and internal courses as relevant to their needs, but this is not surprising in relation to courses that they would plan and organize internally. Employers are prepared to invest in courses on the basis that they are seen as relevant to the employee work, and most importantly that the work organization will gain

from the course investment.

One of the problems in work organizations is that the education and training needs of workers is not being analysed to any significant extent. This point is also acknowledged in the PPF (2000, p. 24) where it is noted that education and training needs must be better defined and analysed, and the job and individual needs taken into consideration. I was therefore interested in establishing in the second interview question if and how work organizations analyses the education and training needs of their workforce. Four respondents indicated that documentation on various courses provided by several types of institutions is received and circulated on an internal basis (e.g. staff room, notice boards, e-mails, home based internet pages). In elaborating on this issue, one work organization representative cited 'interest' and 'relevance' as a criteria for assessing needs. The use of 'spread sheets' was used in another work organization to assess needs. When questioned further on this, the respondent indicated "that this contains information on what education and training their employees have received in the previous six months, and what type of courses should in the future be pursued if the need was relevant to the organization". This organization also referred to a 'performance management plan' for each employee, and an IBEC (2000. P. 35) study reported that four per cent of work organizations used this method to identify training needs. When questioned on the effectiveness of this plan in my study, the following emerged:

In this company the performance management plan includes development objectives, and these are like short term or critical training and education needs which would be more long term and continue for a longer period of time. About how effective this is, we find that as long as the managers co-operates with it, it is an extremely effective system and it works well.

In the third and fourth work organization in which respondents were interviewed, the Personnel Department/staff development officer advertises courses internally, and indicates that sponsorship is available for courses which are seen as relevant to the needs of the organization. In this two way process, one work organization stated that “supervisors, in conjunction with the Personnel Department and individual staff members have a role to play here in assessing what are the relevant courses, and that staff must be proactive and take the initiative to get involved in their own learning”. The previously referred to IBEC (2000, p. 8) study acknowledged that eight out of ten respondents undertook education and training courses under their own initiative.

In the other three work organizations they were to some extent more focused on specific needs analysis. For example, in one organization it was stated:

We are big into needs analysis and this is done for all workers in relation to education and training requirements.

Built into this respondents analysis, was psychometric testing in which the results of this are taken into account in their needs analysis. In another work organization, needs analysis was in the form of a questionnaire and interview, both of which are deemed appropriate methods according to Keane, Fayne and Scolai (2001, p. 77).

Of interest is the seventh interview respondent who feels strongly that work organizations do not have the tools to identify what people need with any degree of accuracy. Within this work organization, it emerged that they have an education and training chart for their needs analysis. On the chart is a section where the organization and the employees selects courses. This happens at two levels and this is where matching is important, and where the

training is matched to the employees current work requirements. Regarding the first level, the following example was given:

This person is going off to do a course. The qualification he gets is clearly relevant in a practical way to the employees current position. His manager is satisfied with the course he wants to do and signs the form.

Regarding the second level, it was stated that:

The qualification is clearly relevant to the organization, but not to the employees current job.

In this quotation, there is clearly a distinction being made about what are this organizations requirements and the employees current position in the work organization. From an needs analysis perspective, this employer is making a decision at two levels and in this respondents view:

The employer is trying to make a profit.

This respondent also highlighted an example where the matching of needs was an important issue for the organization:

Three employees went off to DCU to do a degree course in IT in their spare time. They were motivated, and two got on very well, while one was mediocre. Now the problem is that I have the three on my staff and I have no use for IT specialists. The core problem is that the course did not fit into what the company wanted and the training is not matched. You must get the match right.

The results to this section shows that there are different methods used for informing employees within work organizations of education and training courses, and the importance of course relevance to the organization was seen

as important. Of interest is the respondent who focused on matching, and feels that work organizations needs to be more specific in matching employees education and training requirements taking into consideration the individuals work. My findings also indicate that the identification of needs analysis needs to be developed using more of the specific methods of doing this such as interviews, questionnaires and focus groups.

Equality of Access - Employers Support for Employees Education and Training

There were three parts to Question 3 (Interview), and the purpose was to establish if in regard to the participation of employees in education and training programmes, whether work organizations made a distinction between permanent and contract/part-time workers, men and women and educational and social backgrounds?

Regarding the first aspect of the Question 3 (Interview), in the view of Keep and Mayhew (1999, p. 117) there has been a significant increase in part-time and contract employment. Elsewhere, White (1996, p. 69) documents that the largest category of employment, namely part-time does reduce access to education and training, and such employees are more likely to have to fund their own courses. Rizenberger (1995, research interview cassette) stresses the need to look at the issues of part time/contract workers in relation to education and training. In my study I found that the contract work aspect of the question was not applicable to four work organizations due to they either not having staff on this type of work, or where they had, they were on a probation period within the organization. One organization respondent stated "in order to receive sponsorship for relevant courses, staff must be permanent within the organization". In another organization, sixty to seventy per cent of staff were classified as 'permanent' and only this category were eligible for

course sponsorship, while in another organization some contract workers would be on long term contract and no distinction was made for education and training purposes.

For Keep and Mayhew (1999, p. 120) gender can be an important factor in determining access to education and training, and can also be an example of discrimination in the workforce. Elsewhere, the Euro Delphi-Survey (1995, p. 35) also indicates that participation levels in adult education could be increased by not excluding participants due to gender. In my study, I found that in the second part of Question 3 (Interview), all respondents indicated that no distinction was being made between men and women for education and training purposes. What can be drawn from this response is that legislation from an equality perspective is being implemented in the work organizations surveyed.

The European Commission's White Paper on Education and Training (CEC, 1996, p. 2) documents that everyone must be able to seize their opportunities for improvement in society and for personal fulfilment, irrespective of their social and educational backgrounds. This point has also been a central theme of many publications on adult education such as the Green and White Papers on Adult Education (1998, 2000). Regarding the educational background of workers for course participation in my study, the third aspect of Question 3 (Interview) found that two work organizations would not take this issue into consideration as a criteria for course participation. One work organization respondent stated that "participation has more to do with ability and job relevance". However, in one of the work organizations, a distinction was made between categories of workers and what was termed 'lower level workers', 'would pursue more in-house type courses, while those at managerial levels, educational background would be taken into consideration

for course participation that the organization would pay for’.

The views of two other work organization respondents were:

We would very much encourage all workers to undertake courses.

We encourage all staff to avail of the opportunity and I say to them to better yourself.

While the respondents views are in general encouraging, it is still a recognized fact that the educationally disadvantaged are to an extent under-represented in adult education and training, a point that I have documented in a previous chapter.

The purpose of Question 4 (Interview) was to establish what criteria was used for selecting staff within their work organization for participating on education and training courses? What emerged from all respondents was that this involved discussions with the employee and a member of personnel that would have as their brief employees education and training development. What I also found was that managers or section heads were regularly consulted regarding the relevance of courses to the employees work. This was evident in the following comment:

I would speak to their manager first and establish the importance to him and us of the course that they would express interest in.

I find that this is very important as I often find out from Managers that he or she would also see the need for training in a particular area. They may say to me that X could do with re-training. I would see this as observation evidence from the Manager. I and the Manager would later discuss the applications with the member of staff in question. So in a way while I would

make the final decision from a financial point of view, I work quite closely with managers.

Question 5 (Interview) sought to establish what respondents felt motivated their staff to participate in education and training courses? Based on the responses, three categories were selected and it emerged that some respondents had cited more than one motivational factor. The first category consisted of 'Job promotion'/'need to up-date skills'/'gain qualifications' and this featured for 4 respondents. The second category had 'course sponsorship' and 4 respondents cited this. The third category was 'an interest free loan' and this was applicable to one respondent. Of interest with this latter respondent, was that this interest free loan was being given by their work organization to employees who pursued courses that were not relevant to their work, and on successful completion they received half their course fees back. The results from Question 5 do indicate that employers are aware that motivational factors such as course sponsorship and gaining a qualification are important from the perspective of participation.

As a follow-on to this, Question 6 (Interview) tried to establish what respondents felt were the reasons within their work organization for staff not participating on courses, and what does their organization do to encourage them to participate? Seven respondents were eager to point out that course costs were not factors due to either full or part fees being paid by their organization. On analysis it was obvious that this was the work organizations way of facilitating staff to participate on courses. However, various reasons were cited for non-participation and were categorized as 'family responsibilities and commitments'; 'commitments to courses'; 'the time factor' and 'course workload'. Those stated reasons are generally applicable to the issues of non-participation by part-time adult students. When

questioned as to what their work organizations do, if anything, to encourage employees to participate in education and training courses, it seems that in general the decision lies with the employees themselves, and the work organization would not pursue the matter significantly due to issues such as family responsibilities and, or lack of motivation.

The findings here shows that while some sponsorship is available, unless a course is compulsory such as health and safety legislation requirements, employees have to be to some extent proactive and accountable for their own learning. Eight out of ten employer respondents in the IBEC (2000, p.8) study indicated that they encouraged employees to undertake education/training under their own initiative.

Paid Educational Leave

According to the White Paper on Adult Education (2000, p. 77) paid educational leave is one of the preferred mean of providing on-going education and training for the workforce. The next four questions, 10 to 13 (Questionnaire) were classified under the heading of "Paid Educational Leave". The purpose of those questions was to establish the attitude of work organizations to paid educational leave issues. Question 10 (Questionnaire) concentrated on course fees and related course expenses, and the results are shown in Table 6.

TABLE 6. COSTS BORNE BY THE WORK ORGANIZATIONS FOR STAFF EDUCATION AND TRAINING COURSES

FULL FEES (N = 16) 89%	HALF FEES (N = 2) 11%
TRAVEL EXPENSES (N = 12) 86%	ASSISTANCE WITH BOOKS (N=10) 80%

In relation to the question of course costs, one work organization was very specific in their policy:

The organization will reimburse up to a maximum of £1,000 pounds per employee but will not exceed 75% of total cost. Employees who are studying for a Masters Degree will be reimbursed up to a maximum of £2000 pounds but not exceeding 75% of total cost of the course.

The results in Table 6 shows that well over three quarters of respondents indicated that their work organization pays full fees for their employees, with only 11% stating they pay half fees. The IBEC (2000, p. 35) study indicates that just over half (53%) of employers offered financial support in the form of full or half fees being paid for their employees. The importance and availability of financial support towards learning within the workplace has been noted by Winch (2000, p. 18), while Raffe (1998, research interview cassette) expressed the view that employers will only invest in employees education and training based on what gives them returns, a point that has been evident in my discussion.

It must be noted too that within the contents of the Interview transcripts,

employers felt that sponsorship of courses was important to employees participation and non-participation. In the words of one respondent:

I know that if we did not pay the fees for the different courses a lot of them would not be doing the courses. If staff and we see here that the course is helping them in their work, we will pay the cost of enabling them to attend the college.

Time off work for education and training purposes, is an issue that is relevant to paid educational leave and was addressed in Questions 11 and 12 (Questionnaire).

TABLE 7. TIME OFF FROM WORK FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING COURSES

TIME OFF WORK TO TRAVEL/ ATTEND CLASSES (N = 17) 82%	TIME OFF TO STUDY (N = 17) 82%
TIME OFF WORK DOES NOT AFFECT HOLIDAY ENTITLEMENTS (N = 18) 100%	TIME OFF WORK DOES NOT AFFECT ANNUAL LEAVE (N = 18) 100%

Respondents to Question 13 were asked if they have a policy within their work organization on the amount of study leave that is granted to employees for course study purposes. Over three quarters (83%) (N = 18) stated that they have a policy. The unstructured aspect of Question 13 asked respondents to elaborate on the amount of time given to employees, and on analysis (N = 13) the answers varied. Five employers did not elaborate on the amount of time that was given. Of the thirteen work organizations who did respond, two

categories were selected: 'one week or less' and 'two weeks and over'. Three work organizations gave two weeks or slightly over. Ten organizations gave one week or less and fell into the first category. On further analysis of this first category, there were distinct differences in the amount of time given. In two organizations, 'one day of study leave per examination' was allowed. Another organization representative remarked "that the amount of time given depended on the certification aspect to the course". The example given to this was:

For a staff member pursuing a certificate course, no time is allowed, for a diploma course, four days is granted, and this increases to eight days if staff are pursuing a degree course.

In contrast, another work organization gave inadequate leave, and for a three hour examination gave three hours study leave, and for a two hour examination allowed two hours.

In relation to the latter respondents comment, it is interesting to note that this work organization indicated it saw education and training of its workers as having a central role, the organization had a written education and training policy, and at the time of the survey seventy employees were participating on courses. While this work organization could be seen to be expressing a lot of interest in the education and training of its workers, this organization did not address to any significant extent or see important study leave provision.

Another organization representative specified the following:

½ day examination (1.5 days leave) 1 study day leave + ½ day for examination.

1 full day of examinations (3 days leave) 2 days study leave + day for the examination.

2 full days of examinations (4 days leave) 2 days study leave + 2 days for examination.

While it can be difficult to measure the benefits of investing in the education and training of workers, nevertheless the cost of this is of considerable importance for work organizations. The results from Questions 10 to 13 (Questionnaire) shows that employers who responded are funding either full or half fees for their employees. This is in itself good and is a motivational factor for encouraging workers to participate in education and training. In relation to travelling expenses, where required, over three quarters of employers were assisting with this, and over three quarters (80%) helped with the cost of course books. Elsewhere, in a study by Fleming and Murphy (1998, p. 38), they found that the financial burden of part-time higher education for adult students was eased by respondents who received course travel expenses. In my study, I did find that the work organizations, were also generous with 'time off/to attend classes' and 'time off work' did not affect employees holiday entitlements or annual salary.

While my findings showed that over three quarters (83%) revealed that they had a policy within their work organization on the amount of time that was given for study purposes, there were variations in the amount of time given by different organizations. One week or less was the trend for the majority of the work organization representatives, although this was being done on a very *ad hoc* basis. It seems that employers are meeting to some extent aspects of paid educational leave, and I make this point taking into consideration the size of the workforce of the organizations that I have previously documented. It is also important to point out that the size of an organization can often determine to what extent different aspects of paid educational leave can be given to employees, and with small organizations there can be staff and

financial implications.

In the context of paid educational leave, there is another issue that is of particular concern to employers. On the one hand, it is evident in my findings that employers see the need to sponsor employees participation on courses, and this seems to be applicable to where courses are relevant to the particular work organization requirements. On the other hand, and closely related is that where course fees are paid for by employers, the employers are rightly concerned about staff remaining on with the organization after successful course completion. This latter point was an issue that I found for example, that three employers referred to in the work organization interviews. One organization indicated that in the past they had experience of staff leaving after they had invested in their education. To overcome this problem, they now have a specific Training Agreement and employees must sign this before they participate on a course; this refers to courses of longer than three months duration. The procedures adopted in this work organization is as follows:

If any of our workers leave within three years of finishing a two three or four year course, they must pay us back the tuition costs. It is our way of getting our people to put back what they have learned or I should say to put into practice the knowledge they gained.

The second organization representative made the point that they also have a company policy that makes it necessary, except in exceptional cases for workers to remain with the organization for a period of time. When asked to elaborate on this, I found that there were not 'stay on' requirements for short courses, which were defined as two or three days. Courses that lasted for six months or longer came under this requirement, although there was a degree

of flexibility in this organization regarding how much would be paid back, taking into consideration the duration of the course.

The third respondent indicated that this is an issue that they now have to address as they have lost out money on staff who have left during or after courses. In this work organizations view:

This can be a waste of company money and we have just recently discussed this matter at our Board Meeting.

Concern about the issue of employees leaving the work organization after the employer has invested in a course, has also been documented in the White Paper on Adult Education (2000, p. 76), and the point is made that employers may end up carrying the training costs of personnel who are 'poached' by other work organizations.

Issues Relevant to Employees Education and Training in the Workplace

Adults who undertake courses, for example a certificate, a diploma or a degree at an institute of higher education are often concerned in knowing if within their work organization there will be any incentives on successful course completion? Therefore, Question 14 (Questionnaire) concentrated on the incentives, if any, within the work organizations for employees on successful course completion. Ten work organization representatives responded to this question with less than half (43%) indicating that employees on course completion would be promoted, and exactly one third (33%) would receive an increase in their salary. In relation to the section of Question 14 which had 'other incentive(s)', two respondents replied and 'education awards' and 'awards for education qualifications undertaken while working' were cited. Two further respondents felt that Question 14 was not applicable to them. There were four individuals who did not respond to any of the structured

issues in this question, but elaborated in the unstructured part of their questionnaire:

It depends on the qualifications achieved and the role of the employee. There is not always an automatic promotion/salary increase on the successful completion of a programme. However, it does occur in many cases.

Not directly - completion of courses will assist employees when they seek promotion but no guarantee.

On completion there is no specific reward. However, the fact they are currently studying or completing studying a course opens up positions if internal positions become available to them depending on the interview.

It depends on the course and the individuals role. We do not operate on a 'points prizes' principle.

The European Commission *Memorandum on Higher Education* (CEC, 1991, p. 18) is of the view that the education and training requirements of the workforce has not been catered for within work organizations. Therefore, the purpose of Questions 15, 16 and 17 (Questionnaire) was to gather further data on issues relevant to employees education and training provision within the work organizations. Question 15 asked respondents if there was a staff member within their organization who has specific responsibility for the development/promotion of employee education and training. Over three quarters (83%) (N = 18) answered 'yes' to this question. Those who gave the 'yes' response proceeded to Question 16, which was divided into four parts: a) length in post; b) job capacity; c) qualifications and d) post duties). Twelve work organizations had a person employed in this capacity from two to five years, and over three quarters (85%) stated the person with this brief was employed in a full time capacity. Of those who had a person with this brief

and who elaborated on their answer, eight were the holders of a primary degree and seven had postgraduate qualifications also (e.g. MBA, M.A's), while others held various qualifications, not just in education and training, but more relevant to the particular environment in which they were working at the time of the survey.

In the final part of this question respondents were asked to elaborate on the main duties and responsibilities assigned to those post holders within their work organization. Identified duties and responsibilities included 'liaising with relevant personnel in relation to individual and organizational needs'; 'education and training needs analysis'; 'staff needs assessment and evaluation'; 'the identification and promotion of courses'; 'co-ordination' and 'budgets'. In relation to the duties of one post holder, the following was stated:

Co-ordinates the expansion of the resources available in the learning centre which will provide access to courses on a wide range of subjects for all employees, at a time and a pace which matches their individual work schedules and learning needs.

Of interest in this latter quotation, is the issue of matching the learning needs, which I have previously referred to. My findings in this section do indicate that work organizations are to some extent recognizing the need for having personnel to deal with staff education and training.

In contrast, in Question 15 (Questionnaire), 17% of the respondents indicated that there was not within their work organization a person with specific responsibility for the development/promotion of employee education and training, and Question 17 was applicable to them. The purpose of this question was to ask respondents if a member of staff, who in addition to

their other work duties, had a brief within their organization for employees education and training? Three out of eighteen respondents answered 'yes'. When asked if there were any plans for the employment of a person with this specific brief, all three respondents indicated that they had no specific plans for the employment of a specific person with responsibility for employees education and training.

Employees and Higher Education Issues

Questions 9, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24 and 25 (Questionnaire) and Questions 7 and 8 of the Interviews had as their category "Institutions and Work Organization Issues". The purpose of Question 9 (Questionnaire) was to ask respondents if there were any education and training institutions that they worked with in the provision of employee education and training courses. Less than a quarter (21%) (N = 18) indicated 'yes'. As a follow-on, Question 19 (Questionnaire) asked whether their organization were aware of the type of courses that were being provided by the NUIG. Over three quarters (82%) (N = 17) indicated that they were aware of the type of courses being provided.

In order to extract more specific information, it was decided in this aspect of the questionnaire to focus on one institution (NUIG) and two courses, as the work organization questionnaire was filled in by employers who had employees who were participants in the Bachelor of Commerce Degree Course or the Masters of Business Administration Degree Course at the NUIG. Three questions were asked in relation to both courses (Question 20) (Questionnaire). There was no liaison between seventy five per cent (N = 16) of work organizations, ninety four per cent (N = 16) had no input into the course contents/requirements, or in any matter in relation to the applicants that applied from their work organization.

From the comments of the respondents there is evidence of a need for a working relationship between the providers of education and training courses, and in this case, the NUIG and work organizations in the context of adult education. However it is also possible that within institutions of higher education there may be some reluctance and concern from some academic staff about involving work organizations too much in course issues. On the other hand, taking into consideration the importance that should be ascribed by employers towards employees education and training, the point could also be made that personnel with specific responsibility for employees education and training in work organizations should not necessarily be excluded from working with higher education staff, and this would be particularly applicable to issues such as course relevance, selection criteria and modes of delivery. There was some evidence of this in the following quotation:

More discussions with our organization on courses needed.

There should be a network between the College and the organization in guiding course content and suiting our needs and in directing staff towards the most appropriate course of study.

I would welcome contact.

Question 21 (Questionnaire) asked if respondents felt that the Bachelor of Commerce and/or the Masters of Business Administration courses were meeting the needs/requirements of their workforce. Exactly three quarters (75%) (N = 8) stated 'yes'. However, others remarked:

I don't know because I do not know what is currently covered in either of these courses.

Possibility - but course was not assessed yet by company: University should do this with assistance from employers/employees.

Two respondents indicated that 'they were not familiar with the courses'.

What constitutes a good higher education course that is relevant to the requirements of the workforce was asked of the respondents in Question 23 (Questionnaire). The fifteen who responded had diverse views, and the following quotations are some of the comments expressed:

One that provides a thorough understanding of the theories behind concepts, while at the same time makes direct links into the business world.

The course should be presented by someone with experience relevant to the organization world. Also flexible in terms of lecture time, work time, etc.

The course should cover all aspects of the individuals preparation for the workplace not just the academic aspect.

Relevant to the business and flexible entry requirements that takes account of relevant experience.

One that insists on practical experience in the workplace as a prerequisite.

One with work experience in relation to the job.

Takes into account current business priorities and encompasses current up-to-date business thinking.

Relevance to work of the staff member, certification, recognition of prior learning, module format, up-to-date material, local delivery.

Meets both business needs and the persons personal development needs.

Courses that provides well educated and well trained staff.

From the cited quotations it is evident that different work organizations had expressed different views. Issues such as 'relevance to the organization'; 'work

experience'; 'up-to-date information'; 'modular structure' and the 'development of the individual' were some of the opinions that were extracted from the answers to the unstructured Question 23 (Questionnaire).

Based on the replies to Question 23, the purpose of Question 24 (Questionnaire) was to establish what type of institution(s) respondents felt were providing the type of courses that were relevant to the requirements of their workforce? Fourteen respondents answered this question and were divided into the following categories (even though some respondents referred to more than one type of institution): Universities (4), Galway Mayo Institute of Technology (4); Institutes of Technology (4), Private Service Providers/Others (Irish Management Institute/FAS) (2). Two respondents stated:

The type of institute should be flexible with reference to hours. Courses available at weekends to allow normal work hours to be maintained.

Strong industry links, good applied courses and tutors from industry as well as academic.

Another respondent who named institutions remarked:

Both NUIG and the RTC have provided excellent courses.

Staff have expressed satisfaction with both. Also the Open University is a firm favourite because of the flexibility it allows the student.

In the Interview responses to Question 7, the GMIT and the NUIG were the two institutions cited most. An analysis of the transcripts showed some contradictory remarks being expressed by some work organization respondents. Two work organization respondents felt that 'the GMIT were

providing courses that were relevant to their organizations work requirements', and in the view of one respondent "had a wider range of course than those provided by the NUIG". Hodgins et al. (1997, p. 82) notes that over one third (35%) of employers lacked sufficient information on courses from NUIG. However, another respondent remarked that "NUIG was more popular as it was seen as a university" and "there was more status" ascribed within this respondents work organization to pursuing a university course. Geographical location of the GMIT and the NUIG was mentioned as a factor by a respondent, and the type of courses of offer and which are relevant to the workforce was a deciding factor by another respondent.

In addition, respondents also referred to staff participating on courses in a range of other locations in Ireland. Correspondence/distance/open learning courses were also popular among employees, and in the words of one respondent:

Staff here avail of correspondence type courses like the Open University courses and open learning. From the feedback that I receive they like the structure of the courses and they can do it in the form of modules.

Another respondent remarked:

Some of our staff are not prepared to do a course during week nights and this may be for very valid reasons. They find it more convenient to study from home with the OU.

What has emerged from aspects of the findings in this section is that flexibility in course provision is of concern to employers, and this particularly applies to part-time study provision. Another point is that work organizations sees distance education/open learning forms of provision as being attractive, and

this was particularly evident in the two respondents who cited Open University courses.

The importance of increasing institutional working relationships between work organizations and the higher education sector has been documented in publications such as the European Commission White Papers (CEC, 1993, p. 118; CEC, 1996, p. 19) and by Preston (1991, p. 53), who indicates that the European Commission is encouraging greater links between education and training institutions and work organizations. The PPF (2000, p. 114) also referred to the importance of this issue and felt that both could benefit from co-operating. Butler (2001, p. 121) also acknowledges the importance of co-operation from the perspective of work organizations and institutions, and the need for the Government to support this development. There is evidence from my findings that this is not happening to any significant between the NUIG and the employers who had employees participating on the two selected courses.

Taking into consideration the contents of this last paragraph, Question 25 (Questionnaire) gave work organization respondents an opportunity to establish specific links/relationships/initiatives that they would like to see developed between the NUIG and their work organization. Of interest was that over three quarters (80%) (N = 15) stated they would like to see developments in these areas, and when asked to elaborate, some relevant suggestions emerged:

Opportunities to tailor courses to industry-specific needs.

Much more co-operation in the selection of courses. More in-company courses provided by the university. This would appeal to the staff.

More in-service training provided by the university.

It would be desirable to have a link person in NUIG and to have

information on courses circulated to the Board on a regular basis. More diploma and certificate courses for staff further down the organization.

Open days, local information days.

In my opinion, the GMIT has stronger links with industry, although they need to get even closer and see what we really need rather than making assumptions.

Question 8 (Interview) asked respondents if they felt there was a need for the education and training institutions to liaise with employers regarding education and training needs within their workforce. A “working relationship with the GMIT” was mentioned by one respondent. This involves “a two way process with the GMIT and the organization, namely the person with responsibility for education and training and appropriate personnel in the institution”. An example of this liaison was as follows:

The GMIT do try and meet our needs. To give you an example, we had demand recently for a mechanical engineering course for some staff. We had some starting on that course on a Friday/ Saturday and one evening a week. The GMIT ran that course in conjunction with us and with some other companies in the area. They do actually try and meet our needs and demands. If there is a course that is not there and they find there is interest, they do try and accommodate us and put on the course.

This respondent also went on to indicate that “collaboration taking place between the NUIG and the organization would be seen as a positive development”.

Another work organization respondent had been involved in liaising with both

the NUIG and the GMIT. In relation to the former, this was done in relation to a postgraduate course, and with the GMIT on a diploma course. Three respondents indicated that no liaison had taken place between higher education institutions and themselves, and they would like to see this developed in particular areas. For example, one respondent remarked:

I would say that new insights into learning has given rise to new ways of thinking about education and training and no where is this more relevant than in the workplace. I would consider that a good working relationship with colleges that provide adult education courses, would be of tremendous importance to us here.

However, due to the specific nature of the courses that were required within one work organization, one respondent felt that working with higher education institutions regarding courses would not be beneficial:

We have approached universities and technical colleges but because of what we do is quite specialist and specific in nature, this is something that they are not anxious to do for understandable reasons. While they may have the staff with the qualifications and experiences in say the universities, I would think if we went looking at the curriculum vitae of the individuals who could help us with courses, I would suspect that we have ourselves the people with the experience more closely related to what we are trying to do.

In general, the results from this aspect of the research indicates and confirms what has been stated by researchers such as Gallacher (2000, p. 1) and Clayton (2000, p 6) that co-operation between work organizations and higher education and training institutions is necessary and needs to be addressed. From the perspective of the NUIG, Hodgins et al. (1997) produced some

relevant findings that deserves mention. This study (Hodgins et al., 1997, p. 83) notes that employers requested greater liaison and consultation, and it was felt that closer liaison could help fine tune delivery of adult education. Elsewhere, these researchers (p. 84) also showed that personnel within the NUIG were also aware of the need to consult closely with employers, and that they needed to discuss the educational needs of work organizations in relation to adult education, and how the university could meet these needs in terms of appropriate content, structures and modes of delivery (p. 85).

The European Commissions *Memorandum on Higher Education* (CEC, 1991, p. 16) was the first publication to recognize that at the point of entry to higher education, there was a need for the provision of Access courses. Later another European Commission publication, *Education and Vocational Training* (CEC, 1997 (d), p. 91) acknowledged that adult educational guidance should be a requirements of education and training institutions. The importance of collaboration in relation to adult education guidance has also been documented by Blair and Tett (1998, p. 156), and these authors were critical that adult educational guidance was not offered in many higher education institutions (p. 158). The purpose of Question 22 (Questionnaire) was to seek the views of work organization representatives to the provision of Access courses and adult educational guidance services. Over three quarters (88%) (N = 17) indicated that both would be beneficial to their staff, but a higher percentage (94%) (N = 17) favoured the provision of adult educational guidance. In relation to Access courses, a recommendation from the Report of the Action Group on Access to Third Level Education (2001, p.92) was the need for collaboration between higher education institutions and work organizations in the provision of such courses.

The final question (26) (Questionnaire) and the two questions on the

Interview schedule (9, 10) were categorized under the heading “Millennium Education and Training Issues’. The purpose of Question 9 (Interview) was to establish from respondents what within their work organization were the main issues in relation to education and training for employees that they felt needed to be addressed in the new Millennium. As a follow-on, Question 10 (Interview) asked how within their work organization they proposed to address the issues expressed. It was indicated by a number of respondents that most of the courses that are available during the day are geared towards ‘young/traditional’ students and the number of places reserved for adults on day courses is limited. It was felt that in dealing with this issue, higher education institutions should take into consideration the amount of workers that participates in shift work and increase the number of places available for adults on day time courses. Hodgins et al. (1997, p. 54) documents the need for a flexible blend of part-time day or evening classes and weekend blocks, or a flexible blend of different time-table options.

In further analysis of the responses to Question 9 (Interview), it was evident that there were three other issues that were of concern to employers. The first one was the need to have more distance/open learning courses, and this need was to some extent based on employers being concerned with giving too much time off to pursue a course during working hours. In the view of one respondent:

The courses that necessitates people getting time off is a problem. If we had much more distance learning provided by the colleges it would be better and it would be much more flexible than the courses that we find the GMIT do.

When this respondent was asked in Question 10, (Interview) how he proposed to deal with this issue, it emerged that it had been discussed with the GMIT

teaching staff:

When we bring it up, the GMIT lectures agree with us and.....

I understand that there are many technological problems that
needs to be sorted out and money is an issue too.

In my study (Question 18, Questionnaire), I found that distance/open learning was a popular format of studying for 64% of respondents, while Hodgins et al. (1997, p. 54) also found that distance education was popular by 50% of employers as a learning mode.

The second issue that arose was concern with employers about employees remaining with the work organization when they had been funded to partake in a course they successfully completed. In the words of one respondent:

We have had cases of staff leaving us after we had funded
them to go to college. This can be a waste of company investment
in their education.

When asked how this issue would be addressed, recommendations were being pursued making it necessary to remain in the workforce for a period of time to be decided on, or in the event of leaving, paying back the cost of the course.

The third issue concerned the Government and lifelong learning in the context of the workplace. In the opinion of one respondent:

The Government must take responsibility for lifelong learning
and not be leaving it to employers only. The Government will
have to assist us employers in retraining of staff.

When questioned as to how this issue would be addressed, it was stated:

Firms like myself and others who encourage and promote lifelong

learning will have to get together and lobby, but I do not know if we will get anywhere.

Another respondent on the lifelong learning issue and funding remarked:

The Government have this lifelong learning policy that the Minister for Education is talking about. I have approached the Department of Education and Science and some senior civil servants and asked them to explain to me that since my staff are now entitled to lifelong learning, supposed to be funded by the Government, can you tell me what is available and where can I apply?

When questioned on the response to this query, the respondent stated:

The answer could not be more vague. They talked about some sort of social fund, it seems to be for the unemployed, but what has that to do with people working in industry and in the context of lifelong learning, I have no idea, nor does anyone else seem to have an idea yet anyway.

Another respondent in indicating that more money needed to be invested in lifelong learning, also remarked:

Employers and the Government are not working closely enough and this is something that we as employers should focus on.

In the final question (26) of the Questionnaire (N = 14), an analysis the respondents remarks encompassed a range of issues. 'Increased 'funding'/'budgeting availability' was seen as important for four respondents and 'the need for information technology courses' was mentioned by three respondents. Issues that were integral parts of other responses (7) related to

‘accessibility’, ‘staff needs’, ‘co-operation and institutional/work organization interaction’ and ‘ability to adapt to change’:

Making education more accessible to people with huge work commitments who also have to balance family commitments. Many needs across all staff categories needs to be identified and addressed as appropriate.

Staff need help on a regular basis in dealing with change. In the current economic environment people need to be able to adapt to the demands of change.

It can be concluded from the last three questions (26 Questionnaire and 9, 10 Interview) that the responses are very relevant to education and training from the perspective of employees and employers. The Government and employers role is also called into question in the responses, together with the provision of adequate resources.

Conclusion

This work organization aspect of the research involved respondents in both urban and rural areas. Most respondents, over three quarters, indicated that they saw employees education and training as having a central as opposed to a peripheral role within their work organization. There was further evidence of this whereby almost three quarters (72%) indicated they had a written education and training policy, 71% had staff participating on courses, and 94% had a budget for this purpose, although there was as to be expected, variations in the amount of funding that was allocated for staff education and training. The importance of education and training was also acknowledged and evident in the interview respondents comments. The findings in my survey clearly shows that employers are to some extent recognizing the importance of staff education and training.

Needs analysis in relation to education and training is important, and in endeavouring to establish the methods adopted for this purpose, I found that different work organizations had different ways of undertaking this task. It emerged that only one organization respondent addressed the importance of matching education and training to the individuals work requirements. While resources for education and training purposes are diverse, there are also inadequacies in the analysis of education and training needs. I showed that some organizations have seen the need to employ personnel for dealing with staff development.

From the perspective of paid educational leave, employers were in general prepared to sponsor courses, that were relevant to the workforce requirements. However, there were differences within work organizations on whether courses were full or part funded, with 89% of respondents indicating that they pay full fees for their staff. For employees course participation, course sponsorship, together with the need to gain additional qualifications were seen as important motivating factors to the employers. I showed that some work organizations were more progressive than others in relation to study leave provision, but this was being done very much in an *ad hoc* way, and is an issue that should be an integral part of paid educational leave.

In the context of work organizations investing in staff to participate in education and training courses, some respondents expressed concern regarding staff leaving the work organization having gained a qualification. In order to address this issue, some work organizations have now felt the need to introduce course agreements, whereby on an employee leaving the employment, the employee would be required to reimburse the work organization for some or all of the course fees.

In relation to adult education and training in the workforce and the higher education sector, there is need for much more co-operation in relation to issues such as the identification of course requirements for work organizations, needs analysis, course contents and modes of delivery. This point was further echoed whereby three quarters of respondents identified this as an area that needed to be developed, and this was specific to the NUIG. Hodgins et al. (1997) also concurred with some of the findings I document in relation to the NUIG.

In an era of lifelong learning, workers must take responsibility for their learning and be proactive in endeavouring to participate on relevant education and training courses. Part-time adult education and training courses must be developed at both national and local levels. The findings showed that respondents had staff participating on courses in different geographical locations and in different institutions. Many employers expressed a preference for distance/open learning type courses, and the Open University was mentioned by several respondents as an attractive choice for some of their employees.

Concern was expressed by some respondents about the lack of Government funding and its lack of commitment to lifelong learning in the workplace. There is clearly a need for the Government to give a commitment to funding work organizations, and employers need to become much more proactive in securing funding for education and training purposes.

In conclusion, it is essential that education and training is a strategic initiative within all work organizations, and in which all employees should be given the opportunity to participate. Workplaces should offer learning opportunities as lifelong learning is inherent in work and work is inherent in learning. Based

on the findings in this chapter, some recommendations will be put forward in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Chapters

The central purpose of this thesis was to analyse a number of selected issues that were relevant to adult students within the higher education sector and who were in full-time employment. The following three objectives were identified for the thesis. Firstly, to review and discuss the policies and relevant documentation of the European Commission in the context of adult students, the higher education sector and work organizations. Secondly, to review and discuss relevant Irish education and training policies and documentation in the context of adult students, the higher education sector and work organizations. Thirdly, taking into consideration the emphasis ascribed to adult education and training, to examine to what extent the European Commission and Irish publications and recommendations are being transformed into worthwhile practices for adult students within the higher education sector and work organizations.

Central to our understanding of the dynamics of educational provision for adult working students, three themes emerged and they were integrated as core issues throughout this work. Firstly, was the issue of paid educational leave which is one vital part of a system of adult education and training for workers. Secondly, the provision of Access courses has been identified as an important component in relation to the participation of adult students within the higher education sector. Thirdly, the provision of adult educational guidance in the higher education sector is also important in the

context of adult education and training.

Within the contents of the opening chapter 1, I focused on some key definitions that I felt were of particular relevance to this thesis. While Fitzgerald (1999, p.1) is of the opinion that the concept of lifelong learning is taking root in Irish higher education institutions, a term also supported by the Higher Education Authority, my experience would concur with the opinion of Edwards (1997, p. 187) who notes that the discourse about lifelong learning is placed firmly within the domain of adult education. There were various, but similar definitions given of adult education in publications such as in the 1970s in the Murphy Report (1973), in the 1980s in the Kenny Report (1984), and in the 1990s in the Green Paper on Adult Education (1998). In particular, I would recommend the definition given in the first White Paper on Adult Education (2000, p. 27) as most appropriate to my research, in that it indicates systematic learning undertaken by adults who return to learning having concluded initial education or training. This concept, is therefore intended to encapsulate provision for adults in further and higher education, post-initial continuing education and training, and other systematic learning taking place in a variety of educational settings, such as educational and training institutions and workplaces.

While the terms education and training features in this work, the relationship between education and training poses a question as to whether we should distinguish between the two, and different views have been expressed about this issue by researchers such as Esland (1998, p. 29) and McKenzie, (1995, p. 41). The European Commission maintains the link between both as being of key significance, and I showed that the European Court of Justice exerted some influence over the legal definitions

of both terms. From an Irish perspective, O'Sullivan (1992, p. 336) notes that the dichotomy of education and training has never been a feature of official discourse on learning opportunities for adults. Whether this traditional education and training dichotomy was ever valid, the White Paper on Adult Education (2000, p. 76) believes that there is a consensus in the adult education field that it is no longer so now.

In chapter 2, I posed the question as to when exactly the European Commission started to take an interest in education and training issues for adults? There was evidence of different views being expressed from different researchers such as Mulcahy (1992), Borchardt (1995) and Field (1994 and 1998). On this question, it can be concluded that in the 1970s, little interest was ascribed to this issue from the perspective of adult education and training.

I indicated that for part of the 1980s, possibly as a result of economic, social and political factors, adult education and training issues gradually seemed to be attracting a little more attention than was the case in the 1970s. Researchers such as Tuijnman (1996) and Finegold (1999) noted some interest being expressed by the European Commission. However, my analysis would suggest that to a large extent for much of the 1980s, while there was some attention being devoted to adult education and training, developments were more geared towards young students. My point is reiterated by D'Iribarne (1994) who believes that the European Commission linked education to social policy in attempting to address the problems of youth unemployment. Therefore, during the 1970s and for some of the 1980s, education and training within the European Commission could be seen as having a peripheral rather than a central role, was *ad hoc*, disjointed and largely symbolic.

From around the mid to the latter part of the 1980s, the European Commission gradually began to show more of an interest in adult education and training. This was evident in various publications, or aspects of publications that addressed adult education and training and related issues. Of importance within the *Memorandum on Higher Education* (CEC, 1991) was that it indicated that reforms and action were required to ensure adult education throughout the working life of adults. Of notable significance was that this was the first European Commission document to refer to the need for higher education institutions to take action at the point of entry, and saw the provision of Access courses as necessary. Equally important was that this publication addressed employees education and training, and felt that initiatives were needed for workers to ensure better education and training opportunities throughout their working life. In this context, was the need to have co-operation between workplaces and higher education institutions. While in many respects from this 1991 Memorandum, the European Commission could be seen to be ascribing some importance to the area of adult education, I nevertheless felt the Memorandum was vague in its approach to the implementation and the implications of policies it referred to within its contents.

Taken together, there was evidence of many of the same issues being addressed in the 1993 and 1996 European Commission White Papers. The 1993 White Paper (CEC, 1993) indicates that a major problem was based on attitudes towards education and training. The second White Paper (CEC, 1996), while placing emphasis on education and training, was critical that despite European Commission recommendations, progress in many areas of education and training was slow. Indeed it was possible that both publications could be seen as an attempt by the European Commission to address issues relevant to adult education and training, and in some

respects, were significant in documenting that adult education needed to be more responsive to the needs of workers. However, as I see it, the European Commission again failed in both publications to adequately address resource implications required to bring about the changes proposed in both White Papers.

Based on a proposal contained in the 1993 White Paper (CEC, 1993, p. 122), the European Commission designated 1996 as the “European Year of Lifelong Learning”, and this was an opportunity for the European Commission to clarify what it saw as the long term objectives in the field of adult education and training. How effective this year was from a European perspective is questionable, and in my view, this year was mainly seen as a symbolic gesture that has had little significant impact on adult education and training.

The European Commission while acknowledging the need for adult education and training, failed to address to any significant extent the issues of paid educational leave and Access courses. In relation to adult educational guidance, during the 1970s and 1980s, it was guidance for young people that progressed, and adult educational guidance in the view of Rees and Bartlett (1999, p. 23) was known as the Cinderella of guidance services. This trend has in my experience and findings continued to the present time, and the lack of adult educational guidance is particularly applicable to the higher education sector. In the 1996 White Paper (CEC, p.15), brief reference was made to adult educational guidance whereby it was acknowledged that this was an important service that would strengthen adult education and training. Yet, the lack of developments in this area were again evident in 2001, whereby a Conference on Adult Learning (Eskilstuna) commented on the lack of action in this field, and that scant

developments bears out the need for more concerted efforts to provide this service. The European Commission *Memorandum on Lifelong Learning* (2000) (europa.eu.int/comm/education/life.index.html) does not go into a discussion on how innovations in education and training should be defined, but indicates the importance of adult educational guidance.

Regarding Irish adult education and training dealt with in chapter 3, from the perspective of paid educational leave and adult educational guidance, it is interesting that reference to both issues was first made in 1973 in the Murphy Report. Eleven years later, the Kenny Report (1984) acknowledged the need for Access courses and also adult educational guidance in the context of adult students. In 1984, the Programme for Action in Education (1984-87) noted that co-operation between work organizations and education and training institutions needed to be intensified, but failed to elaborate on how this could be achieved.

Towards the latter part of the 1980s, two reports highlighted some issues of particular concern to adult education and training. Firstly, in 1988, Clancy (p. 74) noted that adult education within the higher education sector was underdeveloped and undervalued in this country. Secondly, the Galvin Report (1988, p. 29) expressed concern that there was an unwillingness of work organizations to invest in up-grading the skills of their workers. Both of these comments may have had to some extent played a part in the publication of subsequent reports, and also in some researchers communicating concern on some issues relevant to adult education and training.

Carey (1990, p. 12) was critical that successive Irish Governments had failed to implement the 1974 ILO agreement on paid educational leave. In

1991, the Programme for Economic and Social Progress, in expressing concern about the education and training needs of the workforce, suggested that higher education institutions have a key role to play in this area, and the importance of co-operation taking place between this sector and work organizations was deemed necessary. The Culliton Report (1992) and O'Connell and Lyons (1995) noted that education and training requirements were inadequate. The Green Paper in Education (1992) showed that Access courses were necessary, higher education institutions had a role to play in the provision of courses for the workforce, and co-operation between higher education institutions and work organizations would be beneficial to both. The Programme for Competitiveness and Work (1994) also noted that co-operation between work organizations and the higher education sector needed to be strengthened and such integration was vital. In the White Paper on Education (1995), adult education and training was seen as an integral part of the framework for the future development of education. During the 1990s, the Higher Education Authority in its vision for the future, finally began to recognize the importance of Access courses. Comiskey (1996, p. 4) and O'Halloran (1996, p. 2) expressed concern regarding developments on paid educational leave. Of significance in the White Paper on Training (1997) was that no reference was made to paid educational leave, although it was noted that work organizations should be continuously developing opportunities for workers to develop their skills and knowledge. The Green Paper on Adult Education (1998, p. 82) only made brief reference to paid educational leave, indicating that there is a need to explore the feasibility of putting this in place in association with employers. A key recommendation made in this latter publication concerned the development of Access courses, but little attention was given to adult educational guidance. During this period, McNamara (1998, p.1) in identifying areas where guidance was required, includes adult education

within the higher education sector and notes that there is a growing and urgent need for this service.

At the beginning of this new Millennium, the PPF (2000) highlighted issues such as institution workplace co-operation and the need to develop a learning culture in the workplace, taking into consideration the identification of education and training needs analysis. Of significance within the White Paper on Adult Education (2000) was that it gave some recognition to the need for the provision of Access courses (p. 146) and adult educational guidance services (p. 23). The White Paper on Adult Education (2000) also notes the need to direct more attention to the needs of the workforce, and the establishment of co-operation between education and training providers and workplaces (p. 17). Equally important was the need for a commitment on the part of employers and employees to recognize the central role of adult education and training in work organizations (White Paper on Adult Education, 2000, p. 39). The Report on the Action Group on Access to Third Level Education (2001) noted the absence of adult educational guidance (p. 111), and recommended the development of collaboration between higher education institutions and work organizations in the provision of Access courses (p. 92). In suggesting interventions that could benefit adult students, McGill and Morgan (2001) also recognizes the importance of Access courses (p. 49) and adult educational guidance (p. 48).

Chapter 4 concentrated on a review of the literature of the three research themes. In relation to the first theme, paid educational leave, I showed that this issue first arose during the 1970s, and from the 1974 ILO definition perspective, paid educational leave was seen as leave granted to a worker for educational purpose for a specified period during working hours with

adequate financial entitlements. As relevant as this definition may be, it nevertheless has left many questions open, and researchers such as Luttringer and Pasquier (1980) and Field (1988) have had reservations about aspects of the definition. However, an analysis of the definition indicates that the ILO Convention says nothing about how often leave can be taken, when and how long a specified period constitutes, or what adequate financial entitlements means.

Another divergence I noted was that paid educational leave states that “leave should be granted without loss of earnings”, but this was changed to “adequate financial entitlements”. While in theory paid educational leave does offer the means for workers to obtain education and training, any discussion on paid educational leave is not free of controversy, and each of its components could be open to a variety of interpretations. I would agree with the point noted by O’Halloran (1996, p. 6) in that paid educational leave is now very relevant in the context of adult education and training.

I showed that Access courses are by definition designed to assist particular categories of students to move into the higher education system and provide them with the necessary foundation knowledge in particular subjects, familiarising them with the most effective learning techniques and ensuring that they have the necessary skills to maximise the benefit they receive from their higher education studies. Of importance for Woodrow (1988, p. 318) is that a good working definition of Access courses must be flexible, but not restrictive, and for O’Fathaigh (1995, p. 6) the Access courses must impart knowledge in subject areas and the skills needed to succeed in the higher education system. In relation to particular categories of students, while there is a tendency to associate Access courses with groups traditionally excluded from higher education, such as the

educationally disadvantaged, in my view, such courses could be of benefit to adult students who may not be educationally disadvantaged, but who have been away from the learning environment for a period of years.

The third theme is adult educational guidance. At the beginning of the new Millennium, the European Universities Continuing Education Network (EUCEN) (2000, p. 7) indicated that the higher education sector must improve its adult educational guidance service. This view was supported by researchers such as McNamara (1998, p.1) and Skilbeck and Connell (2000, p. 6). In the context of definitions, Copper (2000, p 263) notes that adult guidance is interpreted in various ways and uses. Elsewhere, Cooper (1999, p. 17) in defining educational guidance, sees it as the process of enabling individuals to evaluate their own development, identify learning needs and choose the most appropriate way they can meet them in the light of their own circumstances. In the context of my thesis, I would agree that adult educational guidance is any information, advice or support which helps adults make choices about education, training and employment, and which helps them while undertaking higher education courses. Equally important according to Blair et al. (1993, p. 48) is that adult educational guidance should be client centred, confidential and readily accessible.

Within the contents of chapter 5, the methodological procedures considered and used in the different research studies were discussed. Throughout the discussion, the views of various methodology researchers were taken into consideration. The discussion also focused on the step by step stages of the research methodology. Interpretation of results is a key issue in data analysis, and consideration was given to what was felt to be the most appropriate data analysis strategy. The following were the five research

studies that were undertaken: 1) Graduates Questionnaires; 2) Graduates Interviews; 3) Work Organization Representatives Questionnaire; 4) Work Organization Representatives Interviews and 5) Access Officers Interviews.

Chapter 6 reported on and discussed the findings from the questionnaires that were administered to the graduates and the interviews undertaken. The participants in both studies were involved in courses at the NUIG and DCU. This chapter also reported the findings from the interviews conducted with Access Officers in the higher education sector on the provision of Access courses and adult educational guidance issues.

I showed that the adults who participated on the higher education courses had already achieved a certain standard of education. Evidence of this was where over three quarters (86%) of respondents had already attended a higher education institution. By and large, the present education and training system still caters well for those who are educationally advantaged, and adults with more education are participating in courses leading to certification. Part-time provision for adult workers is important, with over three quarters having already participated in this mode of study. While there were some variations in the motivational factors for course participation, vocational reasons from the perspective of the respondents employment were identified as important. However, course respondents were not influenced to any significant extent by their employer to participate on the course they pursued.

Taking into consideration the importance of course relevance to an employees participation on courses, I showed that some employers were recognizing the importance of aspects of paid educational leave and this was evident in for example, course fees being paid by some employers and some

study leave provision being granted.

The findings from the Access Officers showed that within the higher education sector since the latter part of the 1990s, there have been developments in the provision of Access courses for adult students. However, taking into consideration that the majority of the respondents in my study could be classified as educationally advantaged, in the main they felt there was no need for them to avail of an Access course. In relation to adult educational guidance, there was clear evidence that this is under-developed in the higher education sector, and the main reason for this is in my view that in most institutions there is no designated adult education guidance service.

The work organization questionnaire and interviews featured in Chapter 7. There was evidence that work organization representatives saw adult education and training as having a central as opposed to a peripheral role within the work organizations surveyed. This was further confirmed whereby the majority (94%) of respondents had a budget for this purpose. However, there was evidence that some education and training issues needs to be addressed by employers as much is being done in an *ad hoc* way. While different types of needs analysis was been undertaken in the work organizations, the methods adopted varied, and the conclusions that can be drawn is that there is need for a more focused form of needs analysis in endeavouring to ascertain and match the relevant education and training needs of employees. This is important especially in the context of employers being prepared to sponsor courses that are relevant to the employees work. I showed concern being expressed by employers in relation to investment in education and training courses and staff turnover.

There was clear evidence from the findings that employers would like to see more co-operation developed between themselves and the higher education institutions in relation to issues concerning adult students. This need for such co-operation was echoed by many researchers and in the Skilbeck Report (2001).

The need to develop more distance, open learning modes of instructions was seen as a preference for adult working students by many employers. There was also evidence that some employers were critical of the Irish Government in their lack of a commitment to funding adult education and training in the workplace.

Recommendations

Accepting that there is a diversity of national traditions in adult education and training policies within member states of the European Union, and while individual countries are responsible for shaping and developing the structure and organization of their education and training systems, the European Commission nevertheless needs to take a much more proactive role in adult education and training. Despite publications and some recommendations being issued by the European Commission in relation to adult education and training, assessment of policy implementation and follow-through is however weak within the European Commission. The European Commission's publications and recommendations have not had any significant impact at national level, and in the interest of adult workers, the European Commission needs to be much more at the forefront in relation to adult education and training activities, as to-date there has been a tendency for the Commission to be vague in its approach to the implementation of policies and resource implications.

There is in particular a need for the European Commission to address and incorporate into the mainstream of policy making two issues, both of which are being ascribed a low status. Firstly, the education and training needs of adult workers is continuously changing, and the European Commission must now embark on legislation regarding paid educational leave. Secondly, adult educational guidance needs to be developed and incorporated into the higher education sector. Mechanisms in conjunction with national Governments must be put in place to finance both of these issues.

At national level, the Irish Government must play a more proactive role in adult education and training, as they have the power to establish politically and legally a right to adult education and training in the workforce.

The Government must recognise that there are fundamental foundation blocks which must be put in place in building an effective adult education and training system within an overall framework of lifelong learning. The diverse interests of adult education and training requirements in the workforce has created challenges which must be met, but what is missing in Government policy is an explicit recognition of the central role of part-time higher education for adults in the future development of higher education as a whole. Indeed, the lack of commitment by the Government to adult education and training is evident in that many of the recommendations in the White Paper on Adult Education (2000) have not two years later been implemented.

In the context of this research work, there are three issues that needs to be addressed by the Government, higher education institutions and work organizations in this country. Firstly, an adult education and training structure in this country must support and implement legislation which

guarantees educational leave for all workers. If paid educational leave is to become a reality, the concept of a right on the part of every worker to a certain amount of adult education and training will have to be developed, and this could have a major impact on the uptake of education and training by those who have not traditionally availed of it. The Government needs to put in place a statutory programme of paid educational leave, and needs to invest adequate funding and support all work organizations in the education and training of their workers. Paid educational leave must be put into practice on the basis of shared responsibility between all sizes of work organizations and the Government. To ensure the support of adults who undertake courses relevant to their work, the Government in conjunction with work organizations needs to standardize schemes of study leave based on the duration of courses and course requirements. Paid educational leave also needs to cover the right to payment of course fees, if courses are seen as relevant to the work organization and employees.

Secondly, one of the briefs of the Task Force on Lifelong Learning was to implement the development of linkages between work organizations and education and training institutions (White Paper on Adult Education, 2000, p. 131). To-date, as I see it, there have been no noteworthy developments in this area, and I recommend that this be acted upon as there is a need for the higher education sector and work organizations to co-operate in relation to education and training issues from the perspective of workers. This calls for much more consultation and dialogue. Such co-operation could be beneficial in the context of facilitating the achievement of lifelong learning objectives in work organizations, identifying and analysing the education and training needs of adult workers and endeavouring to provide relevant higher education courses. This co-operation could also be useful in the identification and provision of flexible and suitable modes of delivery and

support structures such as adult educational guidance. Higher education institutions have a special contribution to make to adult education and training, and should themselves therefore become learning organizations open to its environments, and enter into mutually beneficial working relations with work organizations. It is crucial that the Government adequately supports such co-operation with the higher education institutions and work organizations in order to progress and develop adult education and training.

Thirdly, to-date, the provision of adult educational guidance has not been deemed an important issue by the Government, and the higher education sector needs to recognize that this is an institutional and attitude barrier. A more proactive approach to adult educational guidance is needed. This requires thinking of this issue in an adult student centred way, in order for it to become an integral part of adult education within the higher education sector. For this to be achieved, the Government needs to make a clear commitment to the provision of adult educational guidance, and in conjunction with higher education institutions, needs to designate separate adult educational guidance services for adult students.

In relation to the higher education sector, over the last number of years in many institutions there has been changes in the terms used for adult education, and these include for example, continuing education, lifelong education and lifelong learning. Taking into consideration demographic trends, higher education institutions must change more into institutions of lifelong education, training and learning, and recognize that provision needs to adopt an adult centred approach and serve a lifelong education society. Higher education needs to be seen as a sector embedded in adult education and training and provide modes of study relevant to the needs of

adult workers. This sector therefore needs to play a more proactive role in adult education and training, and there needs to be more of a consistent approach regarding the role that higher education should play in the framework of lifelong learning.

The world of work is undergoing profound changes, and employers must realize that the education and training requirements of adults are now different to what they were in the past. As the adult education and training agenda gathers momentum, the involvement of employers in the education and training of their employees will be essential in creating a lifelong learning culture in the workplace. While this is happening to some extent, there needs to be more of a commitment to education and training within work organizations. This could be achieved more by integrating the education and training dimension into the strategic plans of work organizations. There is also a need for effective dialogue between employers and employees, as employees within work organizations should have an individual responsibility to ensure that his or her education and training needs are addressed and fulfilled. This calls into question the need for incorporating into work organizations more specific training needs analysis. There is a need for work organizations to invest and support adult education and training of its employees and see education and training as an investment and not as a cost. These recommendations are designed to enable both employers and employees to participate in work related learning opportunities, and to make the necessary investments of time and finances commensurate with the benefits they will receive. The costs of employees education and training is obviously an important consideration within work organizations. The role of the Government is also called into question here, and there is an urgent need for the Government to provide grants for work organizations to assist them with the education and training requirements of workers.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS - GRADUATES

INTERVIEW 1. GRADUATE

INT. Before undertaking the course you have recently completed, did you previously attend any type of education and training course or courses?

RES. Yes, I did attend UCG, as an undergraduate student and I did some part-time night courses.

INT. Can you tell me the name of the other institutions that the part-time courses you undertook were in and if you completed the courses, what type of qualifications did you obtain?

RES. I did my course, that is the primary degree at UCG, and I did two, no it was three other courses, two were at the Galway RTC. The one other course was also at UCG, and this was a very short language course, actually beginners German. By the way my primary degree was a B.Comm as you asked about qualifications. This was a degree, and the two other courses in the RTC were in business and computers. I think I got certificates for both of them and nothing as far as I can recall from the language course at the University.

INT. I would now like to ask you some questions in relation to your work? What is the name of the organisation where you work? ?

RES. I work in _____

INT. How long have you been employed in your current job?

RES. About fourteen years.

INT. What is your current role within the organization?

RES. I am employed in an advisory capacity with responsibility in the area of business and technology.

INT. How many are employed in your organization?

RES. I am not too sure, but I think when I checked this not too long ago there was about two hundred and twenty overall.

INT. In relation to the course you have recently completed, I have listed a number of possible motivational factors that may have motivated you to participate

on the course. Can you look at the factors in front of you and tell me if it was one or a combination of them that motivated you to participate. Of course, it may have been another factor or factors, so please feel free to elaborate on this issue of course motivation. The factors as you can see are 1) to gain a qualification(s); 2) to improve or change career; 3) secure promotion; 4) improve performance in present job; 5) to continue the educational and training process; 6) need within your employment for education and training; 7) interest in a subject or subjects.

RES. Well the list is certainly comprehensive and clearly dwells on some of the reasons. I would definitely say that to gain a qualification was very important to me. I mean an additional qualification to my primary degree, as I feel the day of having one qualification after second level is not enough and there is tremendous importance on postgraduate qualifications in society today. I also felt that within my employment, it was up to me to get out and further my education and this would improve my chances of a change in career and possibly getting out and getting more money at the end of the day. So, certainly some of them apply to me and of course, there was the last one you have listed of interest in subjects.

INT. In relation to the course you have recently completed, was it relevant to your work within your organization and if so, can you elaborate on how your course participation was applicable to your employment.

RES. There is a lot of importance today on business degrees, IT, and my work is business centred. The course was of importance to my work. Thinking back now, there were some aspects not too relevant, but again they were probably relevant to others in my class. I suppose the issue of relevance depends on the type of work you are involved in.

INT. So you found that the course, or at least aspects of it was relevant to your work within the organization. Can you elaborate more on this issue of course relevance and in what way was it applicable to your work?

RES. Prior to the course, and as part of my work schedule I would have done some work that was a component of the course. During the course, I learnt different work approaches and methods and concepts. As a result I feel that I am in a better position to approach my work differently and certainly in a more organized manner. I am sure there are other things, but right now I just cannot think of them.

INT. Regarding the cost of attending the University course, did your employer cover any of the following costs on the list in front of you. These are 1) full fees; 2) half fees; 3) travel costs and 4) did you get any assistance with books?

RES. My full fees were paid by my employer. All of the other items were not paid for. Travel costs were high as I had a distance to travel of fifty five miles

twice a week, sometimes maybe three times a week to Galway. The question of books payment never arose with my boss. I believe that there is a perception that when you employer covers fees, everything is included, but this is not so, and books are expensive. I know someone else who came to the company recently and they are now doing a course and they told me if they get their examinations they will be refunded their fees, but no they will not get any assistance towards the other items you have listed.

INT. What are your views of employers covering employees education and training costs?

RES. I think it is very important that employers should see the benefits in the long run of paying for their staff to go off and do courses. Now, I do know that this is not always the case, and it very often depends on the length you are in the company, the demand for courses and how much money is available for this purpose. There is also the possibility that if the employer pays for a course, that when the course is completed the person will leave the company. This is understandable but does create problems for the employer who may have agreed to fund fees and then staff leave after the course to perhaps take up a better position. This does happen.

INT. Leaving on obtaining a qualification, is always a possibility and this is an issue that all employers have to agree happens from time to time. I would now like to ask you some questions in the area of educational leave in relation to your current employment. Firstly, how far did you have to travel from your work or home to attend the University and did your employer give you time off work to attend or travel to the University?

RES. As I said, I had to make a round trip of over fifty five miles to the college. As for time off, I just left early when I had to go to UCG. I just took the time off, but I do not know officially how much time off I was entitled to, and I did not want to make this an issue for discussion.

INT. To the second part of the question, did your time off work affect your salary or holiday entitlements?

RES. Salary or holidays, no. I got my full salary and holidays. There was not a problem, at least as far as I was concerned. I was entitled to my annual holidays during the course. Why should my participation on the course affect my holidays anyway? There is a relevance matter here again, maybe if the course was not so relevant, it may be a different situation. I do know that this can be a problem for some people.

INT. Regarding study leave, how much study leave did you get for each year of the course you have just completed?

RES. Let me think about this. Well, I took days coming up to the course work dates and I took in first year about a week and maybe a few days extra. Yes, I did but some of them would be between examination time. I certainly took two weeks last year. When I say I took time off, I would have taken some half days too, mainly coming up to examinations or if some work had to be submitted. The maximum would have been about two and a half week.

INT. What are your views on the amount of study leave that you took and as a follow-up to what you have said, is there within the organisation, a policy on the amount of time staff get for study leave? I am interested in hearing your views on this question, because earlier I noted that you said that you did not want to discuss the study leave issue of entitlements.

RES. As someone who has been through a number of courses, I am not satisfied with the study leave system. No, there are no formal arrangements, that I am aware of. Most of it seems to be in an informal manner and probably depends on the course that one is pursuing. Indeed, this does cause work problems, and there is a certain amount of resentment towards people taking leave for examinations.

INT. So within the organization where you work, there are no formal arrangements regarding study leave? Do you agree that there should be some formalized arrangements if the organization is serious about staff education and training? What are your views on this issue?

RES. Well, I have explained to you the time I took off, but it really depends on the working relationship you have with your boss, but I would say it would be much better if the company stipulated in writing some type of formal arrangements on this issue. It certainly needs to be looked at with so much importance on learning and relearning. Getting back to your question, I could have done with more study time as I had a heavy work load, but I suppose everyone says this about all courses, regardless what level or stage they are at. When you put me thinking about this question, there are others, how many I do not know in my company doing other courses too. But you never get to hear or ask about most of their arrangements. They do not work with me or are accountable to me, but I reckon that they may have some type of in-section arrangements between their section supervisor.

INT. So you would say that within the organization there is a certain amount of educational leave arrangements in existence, but not stipulated in written form and its at the discretion of each section or department to assess individual situations.

RES. That seems to be the position.

INT. In relation to your current employment, has your employer recognized the qualification you received from the NUI, Galway in the form of promotion, salary increase or any other type of incentives? In answering this question, could I ask you to please elaborate on your answer?

RES. To-date, the answer is no. I have got nothing but there was never a mention that I would receive an increase in salary or promotion. If I get promotion, which was on my agenda when I started the course, my degree and other qualifications would be taken into consideration. Thinking back about what you asked me earlier about what influenced or encouraged me to do the course, yes promotion would have been on my agenda. During the course, there was never a discussion on any of the possible perk options and the fact that my fees were paid was very helpful and that in itself was great. For your information, at the moment the company is undergoing some financial problems in our Celtic Tiger Economy. In response to your question, promotion, certainly within the next couple of months will not happen unless I change jobs.

INT. What are your views on staff being rewarded for additional qualifications by employers?

RES. They should be.

INT. Could you elaborate more on your answer please?

RES. Certainly, and as I have gone through a course, I believe effort and indeed more so successful effort should be rewarded. Having said this, I know of other people in some semi-state and private firms that have received bonuses for doing even primary degrees, but it depends on the company. I know the banks are very good for rewarding their staff. Workers should be pressing for course benefits in the form of salary increases, particularly if the course is of use to their job. Any award has to be beneficial to both the individual and the company and effort should be rewarded.

INT. Part of your last answer now brings me on to the next question. Now that you have completed the course, in what way do you think your organisation has or will benefit from the qualification you have achieved from UCG, or what we now call the NUI, Galway?

RES. Well, I suppose that I learned a lot from the course. Some of it was not too relevant and geared to my work, but a lot of it was of relevance in different ways.

INT. Can you elaborate more on your answer please? Could you give me some examples?

RES. The contents of the course were business, management, technology orientated. Since I completed the course I have been able in some ways, although in a very limited way to apply aspects of the learning to my work. In fact, I was doing some things I learned on the course before, but now I approach things in a different way and put more importance on such things as organizational, behavioural and managerial skills. To answer your question, yes, I think the company has benefitted overall but people would not be aware of this within my

immediate working environment and day to day work. I certainly see improvements or rather changes to my work and indeed attitude to work. I feel I have the ability and capability to do a lot more, but this requires a lot of effort on my part and if my efforts are not recognized what is the point of doing it. The boss did show interest in the early stages of the course and nobody apart from close colleagues who may have done courses, asks you what you have learned? To an extent, there is a lack of interest.

INT. In relation to what you have said, what do you think needs to be done in order for employers to recognize the value of courses and help workers to be given the autonomy to implement new ideas and developments, that they would have learned from a course?

RES. This is something I would need to think about from the company point of view. I feel that the main problem often lies with those in authority. There is quite often resentment if someone like me comes up with too many new ideas or initiatives, just because I have gone to the University and done a Masters course. The problem is that often those in authority may not be as qualified as those they are supervising. This is I think where the problem lies. They may be very experienced and good at their jobs but don't have much qualifications. They often would have gone into jobs say after the Leaving Cert.

INT. Were you satisfied with the quality of the course you have completed?

RES. Yes and No.

INT. Could you elaborate more on your answer please?

RES. In fairness, the course seemed to be well planned but the work load was heavy. As you know and I think most of the class had full time jobs. The contents focussed on many relevant topics and certainly had an international approach when the various subjects were studied. The quality was ok and overall I would say that I was satisfied. I am sure in every course there is always room for improvements. I know from speaking to some other people who have done an MBA courses, the emphasis is much the same, at least in Ireland as far as I know because there are a lot of external business schools and universities now offering MBA and other courses too.

INT. Reflecting back to the course you have just completed, what if any, were the barriers or obstacles that you experienced while participating on the course?

RES. One of the problems that I experienced was trying to combine my work with home responsibilities and care for my family. This was not easy. There was also the promotional question you mentioned earlier, and the reluctance by management to as yet acknowledge my contribution, time and efforts in the form of promotion.

After all, I was trying to combine a full weeks work into four days and this was very demanding. I would also say that not enough time is allowed for study leave and this was a problem. Even though I mentioned earlier that I took time off, there is a limit to the amount one can take as I was conscious of my other work colleagues having to fill in on occasions. You feel that when you are undertaking a course, you have a responsibility not to impose too much of your work on others.

INT. Today, there is a lot of emphasis on continuing education and training within the workforce. Is there a person within your organization who has responsibility for staff education and training programmes and if so, how important a role do you think that individual has to play in relation to the promotion of staff education and training programmes within your organisation?

RES. The answer to that question is no. We do not have any person and as far as I am aware, there are no plans for such a person.

INT. Now that you have told me that there is not a person with responsibility for staff education and training employed within your organisation, do you think that your organisation would benefit from the appointment of such a person, or even if a suitable and competent person within where you work was delegated to that role? In answering the question, if you agree, could I ask you to indicate in what way this appointment would be beneficial to the staff.

RES. Most definitely someone with a clearly defined role and who would support, encourage and show an interest in staff development issues. This would be a positive development with some much emphasis on updating of skills and knowledge and relearning. I do not know if that would require someone in a full-time position, but certainly a part-time person, or someone within the company with an interest and correct experience could be trained to do the job. Yes, this is something that staff should try to promote.

INT. In what way do you think that staff could encourage developments in this area?

RES. I don't know. I am not too sure how we could approach this issue.

INT. What are your views on the University providing an Adult Access Course prior to the commencement of courses?

RES. I personally did not feel the need to have to undertake an Access Course but having said this I think this type of course could be useful to adults who have been out of the learning environment for some time. As I said earlier, remember when we were talking before you started taping, I do not really know much about this issue to talk about it, but I hear it often on the radio, but never gave it much attention.

INT. What are your views on the University providing an Adult Education Guidance Service?

RES. Again, I was well aware that I wanted to undertake the Masters course and I did not feel I needed guidance, but I feel that this adult service could be beneficial to other students, particularly if starting a course for the first time, but not at Masters level.

INT. What are your views on both the Adult Access Courses and the Adult Education Guidance Services being organized by the University in conjunction with employers?

RES. This would be a good thing, but you would require the cooperation of employers. I suppose its something to be thinking of for the future but would involve a commitment from both the college and employers and staff to do this.

INT. How could you as an employee support this possible development?

RES. Possibly by getting the views of other staff that have been through courses and finding out how they feel about guidance and access. Very often when you finish a course, you get your degree or whatever, and issues like what you are asking me about don't seem important. You are finished with the University, at least for a while.

INT. Do you think that the NUI, Galway is currently providing the type of courses that are relevant to the requirements of your workforce? What are your views on this question?

RES. No, and this is an issue that I feel strongly about and I can really comment on. There is a need for employers to approach the institutions and request specific courses geared towards the needs of our staff. For this to happen, the staff needs have to be identified and this is where I feel that some person with this brief, like an educational officer could do this and then based on the requirements of staff, approach colleges. On the other hand, colleges should approach employers and inform them, publicize their courses that are available. I do not think that your institution does this to any great extent, all I see are paper advertisements. This is fine, but before pursuing a course, people need more information and this is where I believe the colleges are falling down and I am not just taking about UCG. I know there are career days. I saw some advertised recently, but they seem to be focussing on the young students who are just doing Leaving Cert. Maybe the person with the guidance brief could help here.

INT. From your experience of having recently completed a University course, are there any University-employment links or initiatives that you would like to see developed between NUIG and the workforce?

RES. Yes, I suppose that there are and it is always necessary to look to the future. We have to be optimistic.

INT. Can you elaborate on this question and tell me what type of links or initiatives you would like to see developed please?

RES. Well previously we talked about the guidance person. This could be a function of this individual. In another question you asked, I was telling you about the role I believe that a person designated for staff courses could play between the colleges, and this person could work in conjunction with employees and employers. There is always room for improvement and developments in this area and I think yes, links should be encouraged and promoted. While in theory this would be a good idea to develop on-going links, its practicability would obviously depend on cooperation, commitment and a willingness.

INTERVIEW 2. GRADUATE

INT. Before undertaking the course you have recently completed, did you previously attend any type of educational and training course or courses?

RES. Well, when I left school I did. I was at Athlone RTC and did my first year there. I got my exams. I got the bank during the following summer. So then I left college to join the bank. I did Stage A and Stage B which gives you a certificate in Financial Services so it was part time so it was not really a formal education like it was where you go to classes a couple of nights a week, then you did an exam in the evening. It was more work related. I would consider the B. Comm. now more outside of my work as opposed to an integral part of my work.

INT. You have now answered most of my second question where you have told me the name of the institution. Even though you did not finish the RTC course, did you get a certificate from having done first year there?

RES. I think I have a certificate in Accountancy from the Athlone RTC.

INT. You told me you obtained a certificate in the bank examination. Could you have continued if you wished and done other courses in the area of financial services which you referred to?

RES. Yes, you could go on and do a diploma and degree, but I made the choice not to do that.

INT. I would now like to ask you some questions in relation to your work? I am obviously aware of the organization where you work, but how long have you been employed there and what is your current job?

RES. I am in my current job about one year with the bank. I am an assistant manager in charge of business banking. What that involves is essentially looking after our commercial business customers and with particular relevance to lending.

INT. How many are employed in the organization?

RES. By organization, that would be the whole of the Republic. I would have to check this, but in this branch there are about thirty people.

INT. And would there be many at the moment within this branch pursuing any type of courses?

RES. One girl has commenced the Evening B.Comm. Degree. There are courses on the Euro. AIB completely upgraded its system two years ago so people are still being trained in terms of how to use the system and there is on-going training in customer services.

INT. In relation to the course you have recently completed, I have listed a number of possible motivational factors that may have motivated you to participate on the course. Can you look at the factors in front of you and tell me if it was one or a combination of them that motivated you to participate. I am aware that it may have been another factor or factors, so please feel free to elaborate on this issue of course motivation.

RES. Well, my main motivation was I suppose to gain a qualification, the initial one there. I always wanted a degree. After doing the two years with the bank exams I did not want to pursue a fixed degree. The B. Comm. was something I would have had in the back of my mind so when it was advertised a friend of mine rang me and we took it from there.

INT. At the beginning of the interview, you mentioned, just a moment I have it written down here, yes, that you would have seen the B.Comm as more outside of your bank work. There is a schedule question on my interview sheet where I am going to ask if in relation to the course you have recently completed, was it relevant to your work within your organization and if so, can you elaborate on how your course participation was applicable to your employment?

RES. Yes, parts of it were in particular. The accounting procedures were because I am constantly looking at separate accounts for customers for financial information so that was particularly relevant. The whole economic course was relevant to Europe and a lot of time was spent on Europe and the single currency. In terms of interest rates, I would have spent a lot of time with customers discussing things like that. I had a lot of information that even when I pick up the paper today I can still rely on it because I have the background knowledge. Report writing, presentations, interpersonal skills, yes, the range of what we learned was very good.

INT. In relation to the cost of attending the University course, I want to ask you if your employer covered any of the following costs on the list in front of you.

RES. AIB, paid my full fees. That was it.

INT. Would the organization pay travel costs for staff attending courses who would not be working at this branch or in Galway city, but working in a branch say outside a radius of twenty miles or more?

RES. I don't think so. I don't know what their view is on it. The bank has recognised fees that will fund courses. Essentially the reason why they would fund courses is that they believe a staff member would make a better contribution to the organisation. So in terms of people wanting to undertake a B. Comm., I would say the bank could take the view of we will pay your fees and after that it is up to you. They do give you a reward system as well.

INT. And what about book costs?

RES. No, we buy them.

INT. So what you have said would be the general trend within AIB of covering employees education and training costs.

RES. Yes and I believe its good.

INT. I would now like to ask you some questions in the area of educational leave in relation to your current employment. I know you did not have far to travel from your work to attend the University, but was your employer cooperative in facilitating you to leave early on weekdays?

RES. I was based in Galway. I live in Galway and I work in Galway so it was no more than a ten minute journey. Actually my management were hugely co-operative. If I had to go to college it was never a problem. OK there were times when I missed because there was something on. Sometimes, it would be said "----- we would like you to go to that", but it was never an issue or it never was a difficulty.

INT. The other part of that question was did your time off work to attend the University affect your salary or your holiday entitlements?

RES. No. Annual holidays or study leave is at the discretion of your manager. I think that is the way the bank works its branches.

INT. You have referered to study leave which is actually the next question. How much study leave did you get for each year of the course you have just completed?

RES. First, second and third year I got three weeks. Three weeks for each year.

INT. In contrast to other organizations, that was very good. Did the three weeks include examination days?

RES. The way we structured or exams was that we had six exams every year

and they went usually Monday, Friday, Monday, Friday, Monday, Friday and I got the three weeks off. Then I took four weeks for my finals.

INT. What are your views on the amount of study leave that was granted?

RES. It was fine. It worked well for me. I cram everything at the last minute and it worked well. Given the way the college was flexible enough in that it structured our exams over a three week period, so the time between any two exams was sufficient to give you time to cram, so given that I wasn't working I could totally concentrate on study.

INT. I now want to focus on a question to which you briefly referred to earlier in the interview. In relation to your current employment, has your employer recognized the qualification you received from the University in Galway in the form of promotion, salary increase or any other type of incentive or incentives?

RES. I have got two promotions in the past two years. Whether it was that my work experience to date had left me in position that I was suitable for promotion and the fact that I was doing a degree helped. I don't think it was a disadvantage. It certainly helped me. But whether it was the main factor, no it wasn't certainly the main factor. In getting promotion I would say it was my own track record, but yes the course had not done me any harm.

INT. Since you now have a B.Comm. there is obviously an increase in salary with your promotion?

RES. There is a reward. I think the reward was about £2,500 for the degree. That was a financial reward.

INT. What are your views on staff being rewarded for additional qualifications by employers?

RES. Well in terms of the job I now hold, my view is that the salary relates to the responsibility that I carry in terms of my work and don't relate to my own qualifications. I would never say I have a degree so therefore I should be paid more than somebody else who has the same title as me. In terms of the responsibility that I do on a day to day basis, I feel yes, maybe that should earn me more money or the bank should give me more money based on the responsibility but not just for the fact that I have a degree.

INT. So you make a distinction between work responsibility and a qualification. Do you think that employers should give recognition for a diploma or degree achieved while working?

RES. Yes, some form of reward should be given but I do not think responsibility should be linked to a qualification.

INT. Now that you have completed the course, in what way do you think that your organisation has or will benefit from the qualification you have achieved?

RES. My own view is that firstly, I am a much better informed individual in terms of today's economic environment in which Ireland operates versus Europe or the UK. In terms of dealing with customers, I am far more professional. I have good information which has come from a knowledgeable background so therefore talking to the customer I can at least be knowledgeable in what I am talking about. Secondly, again dealing with customers, our consumer, the bank customer is becoming more professional and they are being more educated. Now historically the bank would not have been filled with graduates. It would have been people who had started off within the organisation and moved their way upward. So, I can now turn around and say I have a B.Comm. Therefore, I have the work experience so I am in a better position to talk to them than perhaps someone who has just come up through the system. So in terms of the organisation I would say they have a better person to deal with customers.

INT. In connection with the course, were you satisfied with the quality of the B. Comm course you completed?

RES. In certain instances I was, but I thought in some instances the quality of the lecturers or the quality of the content we got was poor enough. Some stuff was excellent and some stuff was poor. I would have got through all of that or we would have discussed that within a focus group or with the Course Director. So given that we were paying good money and we were all mature individuals, I thought that some of the lectures that we got were just not great.

INT. When or how often were you and your group given the opportunity to express your views on any aspects of the course?

RES. It was at the end of the four year cycle we were brought together in terms of focus groups in three different groups. We were allowed to comment on all of our experiences or what we felt should be done differently.

INT. Course feedback and evaluation is I believe necessary and beneficial to individuals, departments and indeed should be to the college also. Do you think that as a group you should have been given the opportunity to express your opinions on the course, say for example, after the end of each year.

RES. Yes, we could do that to some extent.

INT. Reflecting back to the course you have completed what if any, were the barriers or obstacles that you experienced while participating on the course?

RES. Yes, no doubt of that over four years, but the first two years I found easy enough. They were not difficult to get through in terms of the contents that we were covering. I loved the content of the course and I enjoyed it. The last two years were tough enough as there was an awful lot more assignments, an awful lot more research and work had to go into it. I did learn to cope with it but I was glad to be at the end of it at the end of four years. The second two years were very difficult. There was a lot of stuff to get through. It was at times difficult to study at home or particularly to do assignments, so I used to come into the office at weekends and after work as it was quite in the office. It was a more formal environment than working at home. Certainly the last two years were tough but it was just time management rather than content or work pressure. I was lucky enough. I am not married and I don't have kids so I did not have any outside pressures apart from the course and work.

INT. Today, there is a lot of emphasis on continuing education and training within the workforce. Is there a person within your organisation who has responsibility for staff education and training programmes and if so, how important a role do you think that individual has to play in relation to the promotion of staff education and training programmes within your organization?

RES. Yes, the bank has a Training and Development Department. We have trainers within each business unit. For example, the Galway business unit would be Galway City and County, all the branches within the area. They look at the job roles within each branch and say who is trained in terms of the different job roles. They need to be more people trained to cover holiday or sick leave but then that is undertaken at the local training centres here in Galway. That is all very much job specific. There are some courses as well for personal development and a chance for them to work in terms of developing skills in terms of presentation and they feel more involved in the organisation. They may not be necessarily for people who have been given promotion throughout the year but who may feel that they are at a lower level within the organisation. This gives them an opportunity to get to meet the powers that be, present their story and may motivate them. The Training and Development Department in conjunction with branches arranges courses. I think by giving staff study leave, by paying their fees and giving them a reward system if they do undertake outside courses is important.

INT. Regarding the organization's education and training section that you mentioned, can I ask you on that point was there much interest shown by that department in the course that you as a staff member pursued at the University? For example, would they ask you to comment on the merits of the course, how relevant you found subjects, where improvements could be made, what difficulties you may have experienced.

RES. No. The Training and Development Department, the two times I was in contact with them, I used to have to send off my results every year and they would send me on the cheque to pay my fees. When I got my diploma and when I got my degree I wrote off to them looking for the reward. They did send me a form to fill out in terms of how I felt the course was and was it beneficial to me. It was just a report to fill out to go back. Now again as you move up in the organization there are candidates selected to go on course. Once you have your primary degree, you can go on and do a Masters.

INT. So there were no discussions between you and the Training and Development Department in relation to the advantages and disadvantages of the course you were pursuing.

RES. Not really.

INT. On that point, can I ask you how are staff within the organization selected for courses like the Masters? Is seniority a criteria?

RES. I don't know how the selection process actually takes place. For bank funding yes, Now I don't know if there is an official line on this. People said to me when I finished doing the degree would you go on and do a Masters and I said "I am going to take a break for a year or possibly two years and I might start the MBA in the next cycle round in the University here". Now AIB has I think some sort of affiliation with the IMI and they send senior management on that course. I do know that if you have the possibility of going further in the organisation that is the type of candidate that they would send. Again, the MBA is a big financial commitment for the bank so they would be looking for people who would be heading towards senior management. Some of the staff would put themselves forward for courses.

INT. Getting away for a while from the organization, I am going to focus on a particular type of course which I have earlier spoken to you about. What are your views of the University providing an adult Access Course prior to the commencement of courses? Would you have found this course useful to you before you commenced your studies at the University?

RES. From my own point of view, I was scared about going into the course. I had not had any formal education for ten years and it was petrifying to say well, will I be able to study? You know when they gave us an essay to do what do they expect of us back? But again it was a good crew of about thirty or forty in the class initially. We supported each another. Some lecturers were great. I remember at the first assignment saying to the lecturer "Look I don't know where to start". She said "this is the way you follow it". I did learn how to study myself. I did learn some good study techniques with the colleagues that were in the class with me. So

in terms of myself, looking back I did not need an Access Course, I did not need to be refreshed. I don't know if other people would find it beneficial.

INT. Despite what you have said about your initial experience at the beginning of the course where you said you were worried, did and do you still feel that an Access Course would not have been beneficial to you?

RES. Not for me. It would not have been beneficial.

INT. What are your views on the other issue I spoke to you about prior to the interview, namely the University providing an Adult Education Guidance Service? Do you think it would have been beneficial to you or indeed your colleagues on the course?

RES. Certainly I think to have somebody there in the College in a guidance capacity would be important. This would be a good development for mature students. Some students I believe would avail of the service but it would have to be adult focussed.

INT. What are your views on both the Adult Access Courses and the Adult Education Guidance Services being organized by the University in conjunction with employers?

RES. It would be a worthwhile development. It would be good for adults to have the option of the service. That is all I can say.

INT. Do you think that the National University of Ireland, Galway, is currently providing the type of courses that are relevant to the requirements of your workforce and what are your views on this question?

RES. It is hard to know. The B. Comm is relevant for me in terms of being relevant for the work I do and I know you asked me to elaborate on this point earlier in our conversation. For me the B.Comm. course was fine. Now to go on and do an MBA, again it would be a recognised qualification within the bank. There would be nothing unusual about doing an MBA given that the bank is an administration area.

INT. If I can intervene here, could you be more specific in relation to the question where I am trying to establish if courses that you are aware of in NUIG are relevant to the requirements of your workforce. Are you aware of other bank staff in other branches pursuing other types of courses within the University and do you know the range of courses that are on offer?

RES. To answer your question, I don't know the full range of courses the University has to offer so in terms of what I did I was satisfied. Human resource,

management, that is something that is important regardless what sector you are in. This is an area I actually see as relevant for the University.

INT. From your experience of having completed the B.Comm course are there any University employment links or initiatives that you would like to see developed between the University and AIB?

RES. Well, I am not sure because the work that goes on in the bank is very much job specific. I don't think it is up to our bank and the University to forge links. I think the bank within its own terms of reference needs to forge links in terms of developing its own staff to provide the necessary skills that require them to do the job. I think that is something that is more of an internal issue rather than going out to the University. I would certainly recommend that people should go and earn a third level qualification.

INT. Regarding the main point of the question on the issue of links being established between the bank and the University, how important would you feel about collaboration in the areas of the selection of relevant courses for bank staff, course contents, course requirements, bank staff selection criteria, those type of issues?

RES. To put a definite link on it I would say our bank and the University should form relationships for specific purposes like what you suggested.

INT. Have you in mind any other areas of collaboration?

RES. Not really, well I cannot think of any right now.

INTERVIEW 3. GRADUATE

INT. Before undertaking the course you have recently completed, did you previously attend any type of educational and training course or courses?

RES. I did yes, I did a diploma in UCG in 1977 and one in distance learning from Maynooth on counselling.

INT. You have now answered my next question in telling me the institutions where you undertook the courses. I presume that you completed the courses and can you tell me what type of qualifications did you obtain?

RES. I received a diploma in rural development practice especially set up for the organization staff and I was supported by my employer to do that course.

INT. I would now like to ask you some questions in relation to your work? What is the name of the organization where you work?

RES. -----

INT. How long have you been employed in your current job?

RES. Two and a half years.

INT. What is your current role within the organization?

RES. Rural development advisor in accounting.

INT. How many are employed in your organization?

RES. Approximately thirty.

INT. In relation to the course you have recently completed, I have listed a number of possible motivational factors that may have motivated you to participate on the course. Can you look at the factors in front of you and tell me if it was one or a combination of them that motivated you to participate. It may have been another factor or factors, so please feel free to elaborate on this issue of course motivation.

RES. To gain a qualification was one that was a reason, to change career and secure promotion, to continue the educational and training process, yes, need within employment for education and training. Yes I would say yes to the lot of them, they were all important to me.

INT. In relation to the course you have recently completed, was it relevant to your work within your organization and if so, can you elaborate on how your course

participation was applicable to your employment.

RES. It was yes.

INT. In what way do you see it as applicable to your employment?

RES. My job is to keep abreast of policy, schemes and grant aid agencies, new opportunities and who is responsible for what. People come to me, such as groups, individuals, so you have to have a broad knowledge of what agencies, who might deal with what and what are the latest developments.

INT. My next question is related to course costs. While you were attending the University for the course you have recently completed, did your employer cover any of the following costs on the list in front of you: 1) full fees; 2) half fees; 3) travel costs and 4) gave assistance with books.

RES. My fees were paid in full. As I told you where I came from, which was about one hundred miles to Galway and back my travel costs were paid. I got no assistance with books.

INT. What are your views of employers covering employees educational and training costs?

RES. Yes, I feel that they should pay for courses. That is my view.

INT. Can you elaborate more on this issue please?

RES. I cannot really. I just feel that employers should see any type of education as being of importance and courses should be paid for.

INT. I would now like to ask you some questions in the area of educational leave in relation to your current employment? How far did you have to travel from your work or home to attend the University and did your employer give you time off work to attend or travel to the University?

RES. From my home, one hundred miles to Galway. My employer gave me time off work to go to the College on Friday, but Saturday was my own time.

INT. Did your time off work to attend the University affect your salary or holiday entitlements?

RES. No it did not affect either.

INT. Regarding study leave, how much study leave did you get for each year of the course you have just completed.

RES. Well as I did not have to do Year one, I do not know what was offered as I went straight into Year two and two weeks is allowed.

INT. What are your views on the amount of study leave that was granted?

RES. It was not enough. Not enough time for study for the theoretical and practical components of the course.

INT. Related to this question, I would like to get your views on the amount of study time if any that was given to the courses you indicated you took in the 1970s in Galway and later in Maynooth and which were relevant to the work you were doing at that time in the same organization. Did you feel that the study leave if you can recall back was adequate?

RES. It was not and related back to the previous answer in practice there was not enough study time.

INT. Taking into consideration the length of time that you are working with the organization, you said about thirty years, and the fact that you have done some courses in the 1970s and 1990s that was of relevance to the work you have and are doing, there still does not seem to be any formal arrangements regarding the issue of study leave for staff pursuing courses? What are your views on this seeing you were not satisfied with the amount of study leave given?

RES. Yes, that is true. There has not been too much developments in this area but this will have to change with emphasis on re-training, education and courses.

INT. In relation to your current employment, has your employer recognized the qualification you received from this University in the form of promotion, salary increase or any other type of incentive or incentives?

RES. Monetary, no as I am at the top of my scale. If I was not at the top of my scale, I think I would get two increments for a Masters degree.

INT. What are your views on staff being rewarded for additional qualifications by employers?

RES. This is very important. They should be rewarded. In my case I told you I cannot receive a monetary reward, but certainly something in the form of promotion should be offered and the bonus would probably encourage them to get involved in other courses. It would be a nice gesture on the part of employers.

INT. Now that you have completed the course, in what way do you think your organization has or will benefit from the qualification you have achieved?

RES. Yes, it will benefit, but it depends on what use I put into it. It depend on the right time slot, and it does not always happen that way, and that can be my own fault because a suitable location where I could put what I know into practice can involve going there and I do not always and indeed may not want to go there.

INT. Could you elaborate more specifically on how the organization in your case could benefit based on what you have said in the last answer about location. Are you saying that where you are employed at present, you cannot put into practice a lot of what you learned, but by going elsewhere to another centre or department, you could.

RES. Yes, in a way I do put what I have learned into practice, at least some of it, but yes, I would have to move locations and get involved in other areas of work and that is not always possible. There are several issues that must be taken into consideration.

INT. Could you elaborate please on some of the issues that you are referring to?

RES. They are several and varied.

INT. Were you satisfied with the quality of the course you have completed?

RES. I am not too sure. Maybe in a way it is that I deal with a lot of the topics myself and its not that I know it all, I don't know it all, but there was certainly repetition from other courses. My judgement of it is not good or bad. Its ok but some lectures were very good.

INT. Reflecting back to the course you completed, what if any, were the barriers or obstacles that you experienced while participating on the course?

RES. Yes, its nearly impossible, There is a time factor, there is work and then there are family commitments. It is really a big problem.

INT. Today, there is a lot of emphasis on continuing education and training within the workforce. Is there a person within your organisation who has responsibility for staff education and training programmes, and if so, how important a role do you think that individual has to play in relation to the promotion of staff education and training programmes within your organization?

RES. There are training and education officers who deal with this area of staff development. This a whole new issue and a whole new position paper out on it. A group has been set up within the organization combining staff and management and a position paper has in fact just been printed in the last couple of weeks. A certain fund has been set aside and allocation for the different grades within the organization. There is a board or committee in charge drawn from management and staff, so there is a definite budget allocated every year to that.

INT. Regarding the position paper you have just referred to within your organization, could you tell me more about the contents of this document? For example, what lead to this initiative, what type of reaction is there to the paper and what are your views on this position paper and its relevance to the question about education and training officers that you referred to within the organization?

RES. Yes, within the organization, not alone is there a position paper it is policy now. My memory of reading it is that a certain amount of money is being allocated. I took some interest in it but not in any great detail as it does not affect me directly. I would need to study it in greater detail in order to answer your question and I know you want me to be more specific.

INT. Allright. For my own research work, I would be interested in seeing the document.

RES. That can be arranged.

INT. What are your views on the University providing an Adult Access Course prior to the commencement of courses?

RES. I know very little about that type of course.

INT. The provision of Access Courses is a development that has gradually being taking place within the higher education sector, not only the Universities, but some of the Institutes of Technology, formerly RTC are now providing such courses. The courses are targetted at young entrants, mainly from lower socio-economic groups and also adult students who may be contemplating going to third level and who may have been away from the learning situation for some time. They are foundation type courses. Based on what I have said, would you see such courses as important for adult learners within your organization?

RES. While I have listened to what you said, I still feel I would need to think about this. I don't know is my answer just now.

INT. Another development in Irish education is the gradual realization of the importance of the provision of Adult Education Guidance Services. Would you be prepared to make some comments on this issue. For example, do you think that such a service would be of benefit to adult learners, do you feel that they need guidance in courses and subject choices?

RES. Again, I don't feel competent to discuss this but I am sure adult guidance has to be of help to some adults. For me, I knew what I wanted to do in the course, but for others, they may need help in making up their minds. It has to be of benefit otherwise the colleges as you said earlier would not be thinking or considering providing this service.

INT. Do you think that the Access Courses and Adult Guidance Services could be organized by the University in conjunction with employers?

RES. I don't know. I am not sure.

INT. Do you think that the University in Galway is currently providing the type of courses that are relevant to the requirements of your workforce and what are your views on this question?

RES. Yes. How specific can one be.

INT. Obviously the course you have done last or at least aspects of it are relevant to the work you are involved in. My question is asking you if you think the University in Galway is providing sufficient and relevant courses to meet the requirements of your workforce? For example, should more courses be provided, should there be more liaison between the organization and the course co-ordinators or another delegated person within the University in trying to provide suitable courses?

RES. Based on the particular role I am in at the present time and this is about to change, there is now more specialization in the organization I am now in.

INT. From your experience of having recently completed a University course, are there any University-employment links or initiatives that you would like to see developed between the National University of Ireland, Galway and your workforce?

RES. Yes, in our job we should always be thinking ahead and be contemplating other options and other issues and even debating concepts. In our organization, there is always a need for stimulation, think tanking, brain storming and debate and I think that within the organization there is not enough of that. We should always be ahead because of the clients that we are dealing with and that should apply to all national bodies. People can get bogged down in getting day to day jobs done. I would have a problem of a philosophical base of the work we do as it affects society and I am not too sure if anyone has a philosophical grasp of what we do and where we are going. Everything we do in the organization is policy driven. I absolutely think there should be more connections with Universities where people have time to think on the consequences of what people are doing even in an abstract way because in our work we always have practical emphasis in our work. There is a huge need all the time for that debate, questioning with Universities and this should be ongoing. I think the Universities should be more outgoing.

INTERVIEW 4. GRADUATE

INT. Before undertaking the course you have recently completed, did you previously attend any type of educational and training course or courses?

RES. Yes I did. Several years ago before between 1970 and 1973 I attended the RTC in Waterford? That was my one course previously to doing the degree.

INT. You have told me the name of the institution where you undertook the course. What type of qualification did you obtain?

RES. The qualification I obtained was a third level qualification called electronic engineering technician. I achieved an National Council for Educational Awards certificate in electronics.

INT. I would now like to ask you some questions in relation to your work? What is the name of the organization where you worked and how long have you been employed there?

RES. It is an educational institution and I have worked there for exactly twenty five years.

INT. What was your role within the organization and how many are employed in the organization?

RES. There are over a thousand employed there. Regarding my work, I was an engineering technician but my role somewhat varied from my duties. My duties changed quite a lot over the years and moved away from the area in which I was initially trained. That was one of the reasons why I decided to further my education.

INT. In relation to the course you have recently completed, I have listed a number of possible motivational factors that may have motivated you to participate on the course. Can you look at the factors in front of you and tell me if it was one or a combination of them that motivated you to participate. It may have been another factor or factors, so please feel free to elaborate on this issue of course motivation.

RES. The reason why I did the course was to change my primary activity from what I was doing to teaching. I realized some time ago that I really wanted to teach and I felt that there would have been a position available within the organization I was working in to teach. As it turned out there was not, and as teaching was my primary objective or to gain teaching, I ended up leaving that employment to do some.

INT. In relation to the course you have recently completed, was it relevant to your work within your organization and if so, can you elaborate on how your course participation was applicable to your employment?

RES. I think it was applicable in a sort of peripheral sense in that it enabled and helped communication. It exercises the brain obviously, but it had no direct application. Its direct application was to be applied outside of the role I was in.

INT. I would now like to focus on the cost of attending the University course and ask you if your employer covered any of the following costs on the list in front of you.

RES. I got no assistance with fees other than what members of staff were entitled to according to their work contract. I paid registration fees, for example. I got no help with books and as far as time was concerned I was allowed one week off every year to study.

INT. I will come to the study time later as this is an issue that I have scheduled for in the interview questionnaire. But before doing this can I ask you what are your views of employers covering employees education and training costs?

RES. It is vital that employers cover costs or at least contribute to employees education and training. Even if skills are not directly applicable this helps with motivation and loyalty. Staff development is a worthwhile pursuit for any organization.

INT. In relation to your employment, I have a schedule question here in which some of the answers are obvious to me. For example, I know you did not have to travel far to attend the lectures and therefore there was not a need for time off work in the evenings for this purpose. Your holiday and salary entitlements would not have been affected either?

RES. That is correct.

INT. I would now like to concentrate on a question which you referred to earlier and that was the issue of study leave. How much study leave did you get for each year of the course you have completed?

RES. For each year of the course I got five days each year for study and that did not include examination days.

INT. What are your views on the amount of study leave that was granted?

RES. My view on study leave is that it was a postgraduate course but there was a substantial part of it taught. So study leave would have been applicable. I felt that

the study leave that I got was the very very minimum acceptable requirement from the University. Quite frankly it was not enough or adequate because study eats into a huge amount of time outside of working hours and there was no substantial relief from duties at the time either.

INT. Due to the fact that you were working in an educational environment and as a member of staff pursuing a course, do you feel that the amount of study time given by the University for course purposes is an issue that should be addressed?

RES. I do so because first of all I feel that an educated staff has a huge amount of benefits to give back to the organization. I believe that the organization itself gains eventually with culture. Also the organization gains in a sort of peripheral application of what a person learns. There is no learning without benefit of some kind, and especially I think to employers even if it is as simple as helping somebody to communicate or to communicate their views or their ideas.

INT. In relation to your employment within this institute, did your employer recognize the qualification you received from the institution in the form of promotion, salary increase or any other type of incentive or incentives?

RES. The answer is no to all of those questions?

INT. What then are your views on your answer to those questions and do you think that staff within the institution should be rewarded for additional qualifications obtained?

RES. My views on my answers are very very strong. Yes, rewarded financially and punctionally. An organisation should endeavour to give the member of staff an outlet for newly required skills. Also, an organisation should endeavour to utilise to maximum benefit the skills and abilities available to it.

INT. Now that you have completed the course, in what way do you think your organization has benefitted from the qualification you have achieved?

RES. I remained in the organization for about two years after I completed my course. So the gains that the organization would have made were only sort of peripheral. The organization took no steps to use or to make use of the extra qualifications that I gained despite continued efforts on my behalf to do so. In other words, I felt that in the organization that I was an underutilized resource.

INT. Were you satisfied with the quality of the course you have completed?

RES. Yes, a very high quality and a high standard. However, I completed the course with a view to changing professions rather than progressing within the same one.

INT. Could you elaborate more on the quality of the course?

RES. As I have said, the course was of a high standard, well structured and I had an interest in different components of the course. It was a course that appealed to me.

INT. Reflecting back to the course that you have completed, what if any were the barriers or obstacles that you experienced while participating on the course.

RES. The main obstacles and barriers were those which were put up by the organization that I worked in and I speak about the organization in a formal sense. The barriers were substantial there in so far as getting my work done and getting time off. The barriers were substantial in getting access and being allowed to do the course. On the other side of that I got quite a lot of informal support from the people that I worked regularly with on a daily basis and that counteracted it to some extent.

INT. Today there is a lot of emphasis on continuing education and training within the workforce. Was there a person within the organization who had responsibility for staff education and training programmes and if so, how important a role do you think that individual had to play in relation to the promotion of staff education and training programmes within the organization?

RES. At the time there was nobody in particular who could be contacted with regard to education and training. There is now.

INT. Now that there is some person there, how important a role do you think the individual must play in the promotion of education and training programmes within the organization?

RES. In light of the nature of the organization in which I worked for which was an educational establishment, its own product is applicable to its staff. I feel that first of all the organization should make information readily available to all the staff of what is going on there. They should encourage people to find courses and areas which are applicable to their work and encourage them to participate in those courses.

INT. What are your views on the National University of Ireland, Galway providing Adult Access Courses prior to the commencement of courses within the University?

RES. I think Access Courses would be very very beneficial. I think when adults who have been out of the field of education for some time come back into it there can be a huge cultural shock, the mind set has changed somewhat. I think an access course would be ideal in moulding the mind back into a sort of preparation and readiness for further courses.

INT. What are your views on the University providing an Adult Education Guidance Service?

RES. Yes that is important in light of an overall strategy which should be developed for adult education. I don't feel that adults, for example, should be assessed on exactly the same criteria as for day students. I think that both the adults partaking in the education and the course administrators could do with guidance and help in that area.

INT. In relation to the two issues I have referred to, what are your views on both the adult access courses and the adult education guidance services being organized by the University in conjunction with employers?

RES. Of course, yes. I think that there should be a coherent and a mutually beneficial agreement there.

INT. Can you comment more on what you have just said about the being coherent and an agreement that would be mutually beneficial?

RES. As I said, it should be coherent and both parties could contribute to its implementation and development and in the long term, this initiative could work with support from both sides.

INT. Do you think that NUI, Galway is providing the type of courses that are relevant to the requirements of your workforce and what are your views on this question?

RES. No I don't think so. I think the University might for day students and it depends on what area of the workforce that day students go into. Day students need to come out with a certain flexibility, but adult students who are already in the workplace needs to be able to enhance their skills and apply them in their place of work and the University is not catering for that.

INT. Based on the response to this question, what recommendations would you have for the NUI, Galway?

RES. Is it recommendations on any issue for adults?

INT. Yes, for example, how should they go about change as we approach the Millennium? What type of courses do you think are required? What do you think about the involvement of competent employers in course provision and coordination?

RES. You must provide courses that would enable adults or those in the workforce to integrate work projects. Also course formats and assessment formats

should allow for slower but more mature thinking. This is needed and this could be done in conjunction with employers.

INT. From your experience of having recently completed a University course, are there University employment links or initiative that you would like to see developed between the National University of Ireland, Galway and the workforce?

RES. Yes. I think that the University needs to take responsibility, to be continually sampling, see what are the needs out in the workplace and to continually cater for them. For this to be achieved, I think the College needs to be proactive in doing that.

INT. So you don't see the College as proactive in this area? What do you think needs to be done?

RES. At the moment the College is not proactive. No. If the College is learning very much from the workplace, in my opinion it is not acting on it. If there is some action there, it is not of value. My attitude at a very basic level is that I am extremely disappointed with the attitude of the University. Especially because the University teaches a management strategy at a high level to students and flies in the face of that strategy as far as its own application is concerned.

INTERVIEW 5. GRADUATE

INT. Before undertaking the course you have recently completed, did you previously attend any type of educational and training course or courses.

RES. Immediately after leaving school I undertook to do a B.A. in UCG followed by a Higher Diploma in Education. On the completion of that I started straight into work and I remained out of education until 1979. In 1979 I returned for a further year to do a diploma in remedial education. In 1981, I did a year at the Kings Inn and prior to beginning this course I also did psychology and philosophy.

INT. You have referred to the second question where I wanted to know the name of the institutions where the courses you pursued were undertaken. You have also informed me of the qualifications you obtained. The third question I would like to ask you is in relation to your work here. The name of the organisation is DCU. How long have you been employed in your current job?

RES. This is my second year with DCU. Technically I am on study leave from my teaching position.

INT. What is your current role within the institution?

RES. Initially I started here to work in the area of pluralism in education with Peter McKenna and I undertook some lecturing duties. Currently I am still involved in lecturing both the Diploma and Masters level courses. I am also doing some administration work.

INT. In relation to the course you have recently completed, I have listed a number of possible motivational factors that may have motivated you to participate on the course. Can you look at factors in the list in front of you and tell me if it was one or a combination of them that motivated you to participate. Of course, it may have been another factor of factors, so please feel free to elaborate on this issue of course motivation.

RES. A combination of them.

INT. Could you elaborate more please on your answer?

RES. Well not everything. I would say not everything. Certainly in relation to promotion and at the time, I certainly had not thought of a career change.

INT. So, career change was not a factor.

RES. Career change was not, but as the course progressed, some of the factors listed, though not in my initial thinking of pursuing the course, possibly came into focus.

INT. In relation to the last course you have recently completed, was it relevant to your work within your organisation. If so, can you elaborate on how your course participation was applicable to your employment, which in your case was within your school for one year of the course, and for the second year, your work within DCU. How did you find the Masters course applicable to your work within both institutions?

RES. Certainly. I was working as a teacher of English and Classics in a second level school and would have been involved at I suppose quasi-management level. Yes, it would have been a great benefit to me personally but also to the school. I think more to the point was that the school was involved with the Department of Education and DCU at the time I undertook the course in the whole area of positive discipline. I undertook an examination if you like how the school coped with change in the whole area of discipline and deciding a new discipline strategy within the school, so it was very very focussed.

INT. Right. The next question I would like to focus on is the cost of attending the University course. Can I ask you if your employer covered your fees in full or half fees?

RES. No, there was no funding whatsoever either from the Department of Education directly or from the school, but indirectly because it was part of the project which involved my school and the Department of Education. DCU did cover one of the modules in first year.

INT. As part of this question, you have told me you did not have far to travel for lectures, but did you get any assistance with books from the school?

RES. Again, not directly but there was some funding available through the combined DCU and Department project.

INT. What are your views on employers covering employees education and training costs?

RES. I think that it caused a certain amount of tension within our school. I don't know if you are aware of it, but in our particular Masters class, there were people from industry, from nursing, from education, and for some people their courses fees were covered entirely. For others there was no cover whatsoever, so it caused a certain tension I think within the group.

INT. But what are your views on employers covering the costs of relevant courses for staff?

RES. Personally I am not sure that it is the responsibility of any one body to provide funding. For myself, I did not necessarily undertake this course for a career change. It was for my own personal satisfaction and that is the reason why I did the course. I would not feel justified in taking money.

INT. In your answer I observed that you now referred to personal satisfaction which could be classified as a motivational factor. Getting back to the question we are discussing, how would you feel about your employer paying course costs that was directly relevant to your work?

RES. Yes, if my employer agreed to my attendance on the course.

INT. That is your view. Now in relation to educational leave within your employment which was the school we are concerned with in this case, and DCU, you did not I understand have far to travel from either your home or work to attend the course.

RES. About three miles. Quite close.

INT. Based on the time you finished school, getting time off early to attend the University was not an issue.

RES. No. Lectures were on Wednesday afternoon and the school was on a half day.

INT. Did your participation on the course in DCU affect your salary?

RES. It did affect my salary indirectly because coming up to examination time or where for example action research had to be submitted, I would have looked for time off and I actually covered my own substitution.

INT. As a follow up to this question, regarding study leave, how much leave did you get for each year of the course you have completed. You have just told me you took time when you were involved in the action research.

RES. We were talking about a matter of days in relation to the first year. In relation to the second year I was on full study leave for the year. I was paying for substitution.

INT. What are your views on the amount of study leave that is granted to teachers pursuing courses where examinations would be in the Summer and teachers may not have reached their holiday period depending on what sector of the educational

system that they are working in?

RES. I think that principals have a very very difficult job because as you know children are not going to wait until tomorrow. Somebody has got to be there and take charge. I am not sure, but perhaps it is the function of the Department of Education to provide some form of substitution costs. Certainly there would have been support from my principal but he was not in a position to offer me any kind of financial support for substitution.

INT. In relation to your current employment, has your employer recognized the qualification you received from DCU in the form of promotion, salary increase or any other type of incentive or incentives? While I am aware that the Department of Education gives a little monetary reward for additional qualifications, in your case if you are to return to the school, will the qualification, namely the Masters be recognized for promotional purposes or will there be any other types of incentives?

RES. I have already an honours degree so the difference between a Masters qualification and an honours degree, is something like two hundred pounds,

INT. Any what about promotion opportunities?

RES. Yes, I think had I been in the school last year it would have made a huge difference. There were lots of posts available, but I was not there.

INT. What are your views on staff being awarded for additional qualifications by employers?

RES. I think as I said earlier in the interview if it is relevant to the position that you hold within the company. If you have been sent to do a course then I would agree that a person should be awarded in some way.

INT. Now that you have completed the course, in what way do you think your organization has or will benefit from the qualification you have achieved?

RES. I think that is something that is extremely difficult to measure particularly within a teaching environment. Particularly with regard to this course, it just gives you such a whole different approach to education. One of the things that I found when I was teaching would have been my whole understanding of the pressure the students were under at examination time. I could see things from their perspective. I think it lends far greater understanding and an empathy than perhaps I might not have had.

INT. So in relation to the school, you would say that it is difficult to measure the benefits of having pursued the Masters course.

RES. Yes. The ability to analyse situations, to reflectively evaluate my role and to understand the theory underlying many situations which arise at all levels of the organization and should benefit both my organisation and myself.

INT. Were you satisfied with the quality of the Masters course you completed last year?

RES. Very interesting question given that they are now my current employers. On the whole I was extremely satisfied. We had a marvellous leader in Peter McKenna, and in my own situation, I had Gerry McNamara as my tutor in the first part of the course and I have to say the support was fantastic. There were elements of the course that did not come up to scratch and I think that even in the last year things have changed as a result of people talking about the course.

INT. Reflecting back to the course what, if any were the barriers or obstacles that you experienced while participating on the Masters?

RES. For me going back to such a demanding course, and it is a very very demanding course would have been a constraint of time. I have a family with two children and I found that I was not available or as available as I might have been in the past. Now I think they gained in other ways because of the fact that I was through study or whatever. But huge time constraints. I was lucky in that I had support at home and as I said already that I did not have to travel very far, but I would say time and money were problems.

INT. Today, there is a lot of emphasis on continuing education and training within the workforce. My question to you is to establish if within the school or DCU there is a person who has responsibility for staff education and training programmes, and if so, how important a role do you think that individual has to play in relation to the promotion of staff education and training? I know that within the first and second level sectors, in-service courses are arranged, but what about one teacher having responsibility for this area, say a post of responsibility for in-service courses.

RES. Within the school, there is no definite position to support staff. I suppose there is a philosophy within the school that people are very much encouraged. The Principal and Vice-President have completed a Masters degree in the last year or so. There are possibly out of a staff of thirty five, there are ten members of staff who have Masters degrees.

INT. Do you think that there should be a person with responsibility for encouraging staff education and training programmes and would staff benefit from the appointment of such a person.

RES. I am not sure about that because there is no huge monetary gain. I think

when people do undertake a course like I have undertaken, they are doing it for themselves and usually that reason is related to their teaching and improving their teaching, but so whether its necessary, I am not sure.

INT. What are our view on the University here providing an Adult Access Course prior to the commencement of courses?

RES. I would say that we fall down very badly in that respect. We in DCU are part of the BITE Initiative which is a link with Ballymun and a lot of lip service is paid to the whole notion of access. When you hear senior management within the University talking about it, you get the impression that you know there are loads of people just outside the gates clamouring to get in.

INT. I would agree from speaking with you that it is obvious from research studies that all colleges have done badly with access for both young and adult students. Just in relation to this question, what are your views on the provision of Access Courses for adult students?

RES. I think access is about much more than just providing, opening the gates for people. I feel very strongly on this coming from a disadvantaged school, one that was recognized as disadvantage. Adults, particularly at undergraduate level, need every encouragement they can get.

INT. In relation to the access course provision, from a DCU staff perspective and from your experience of dealing with adult students on courses here within DCU, do you think that adults would benefit by such courses? For example, the certificate course you have within the School of Education Studies on further education.

RES. Within the Education Studies Department we do have a certificate in further education as you stated and also a diploma in further education. In fact the student you met going out that door is one of my students on the certificate course and the benefits are absolutely unbelievable. You see people who have so little confidence in the beginning. I have another student at the moment and I ring her every Wednesday just to make sure she is coming in and one or another of us is available every Wednesday to make sure that she is comfortable and that she is happy with staying on the course. But as you know we are a small department and we can offer that kind of service. Were we to expand I am not sure that we could continue?

INT. So from your experience as a staff member, you would support the provision of Access Courses for adults?

RES. Absolutely. The duration of such courses may be a moveable feast as some adults need more help than others. Yes, very much on a departmental basis. Within our own department we do see the benefits, but even each year if we just take in one

cohort, we are talking at the moment about taking two in the cert and diploma each year and we could not possibly offer that kind of service. I think it is needed. Like they would say to themselves "The most threatening thing is coming in though the gates of the University". That threat does not necessarily recede, it can return with a vengeance after the first assignment is completed if it has not gone their way. I think that the University could do an awful lot more for them.

INT. What are your views on the University providing an Adult Education Guidance Service?

RES. It is not something that I ever gave any serious thought to. Indirectly again our own students tend to progress as a result of this. Whether that is coming from the confidence or qualifications, I am not sure. And we are moving in the direction. As you know the Head of the Department here is very interested in the whole area of adult guidance. We have appointed an Adult Education Officer within the University. He is based here and works fairly closely with us. So things will change and there may be movement on that through time.

INT. What are your views on both the Adult Access Courses and the Adult Education Guidance Services being organized by the University in conjunction with employers? For example, do you think that this could be achieved by the Adult Education Officer working with employers?

RES. Yes. Links with employers both at access and guidance level should be encouraged.

INT. So through time, do you think that there may be developments in both areas here?

RES. Yes.

INT. Do you think that DCU is currently providing the type of courses that are relevant to the requirements of your workforce? In your case you will be referring to schools, but if you can please give your views on organizations that you may be aware of.

RES. I think of all the Universities in Ireland, it probably is. I would say that it is extremely up-to-date with regards to what is needed. If you are talking about the whole area of business, computing and engineering, then it is up-to-date. If you are talking about more people skills, I am no sure. There is still a lot of leeway in relation to teaching and learning methodologies.

INT. Is there a person within DCU who liaises with organizations in the Dublin region and endeavours to establish what are the educational and training requirements of workplaces?

RES. I really don't know.

INT. From your experience of having recently completed the University course, are there any University employment links or initiative that you would like to see developed between the University and the workforce?

RES. Coming from the teaching side I do think that there is a rational behind collaboration between Universities and second level or first level institutions. There is a strong link between my own particular institution and DCU in educational studies work, and we work very closely together with my bosses here. I think that Universities could do an awful lot more. There is a lot of talent out there within the second level that can be tapped into. Universities should not tell organizations like schools how to do things, but help, support and encourage collaboration wherever positive.

INTERVIEW 6. GRADUATE

INT. Before undertaking the course you have recently completed, did you previously attend any type of educational and training course or courses?

RES. I did. As a full time student I did a B.A. and a Higher Diploma as well in UCD. That was a long time ago. I would have finished back in 1989.

INT. You have answered part of my second question in naming the institution where you undertook the courses and the qualifications you obtained. I am now going to ask you some questions in relation to your work? What is the name of the organisation, where you work and how long have you been employed in your current job?

RES. The name of my organisation isand I am employed there for four months.

INT. How many are employed in your organization and what is your current role within the organisation?

RES. I am co-ordinator of services to the unemployed within the city catechment area which the organisation focuses on. There are approximately twenty employed there. Sorry, that would be incorrect. There would be about forty people working there.

INT. You have told me you are only four months in your current employment. How long were you in your previous employment and was it a different organization?

RES. I was there for about nine months, but it was within the same organization?

INT. In relation to the course you have recently completed, I have listed a number of possible motivational factors that may have motivated you to participate on the course. Can you look at the factors in front of you and tell me if it was one or a combination of them that motivated you to participate? It may have been another factor or factors, so please feel free to elaborate on this issue of course motivation.

RES. The one which it was was number two, to improve or change career. That was my priority when I came on to the course. I also had an interest in the subjects. These were the two main motivating reasons. Subsequently, securing promotion has come as a result of the course and also improved my performance in the present job has also been added on to it. But my initial motivation was to apply for

a new job.

INT. In relation to the course, was it relevant to your work within your organisation? If so, can you elaborate on how your course participation is applicable to your employment.

RES. It is.

INT. Can you tell me in what way?

RES. The organization I work in is obviously related to education and training. The area that I am involved is about enabling people who are long term unemployed or who could potentially move into long term unemployment and providing a gateway for them into education, training or job placement. The Local Employment Service is therefore for people who are long term unemployed or in danger of becoming so. The service tries to provide a gateway into employment either directly or through helping clients get the relevant education or training required. This core element of the course which I am currently doing provides some skills that are necessary to help me organise myself and to understand a lot of the theory and then obviously to try to apply the theory. There are a whole range of areas that are relevant. I have benefitted greatly from the peer learning/interaction with colleagues on the course and also through policy raising issues, areas which I would not have been exposed to. Maybe its educated me that way as well. I am able to see the sort of bigger pictures and then I am able to apply it into local situations and compare different local situations. The course creates a different framework. So as a practitioner, I just feel that anything that I tend to do on the course I can apply it in my daily job and reflect on that. The course helps me to look at how I am operating and thus I try to improve myself.

INT. I would now like to focus on the cost of attending the University course and ask you if your employer covered any of the following costs on the list in front of you?

RES. Fees. My current employer, well the same organisation contributed to half my fees. Regarding travel, I did not travel very far so that is not an issue. The cost of books. Because some of the material is related to my job that I am doing at the moment, I can actually buy some books through an account that I have. I am allowed to do that and this is not an issue for me.

INT. What are your views on employers covering employees' education and training costs?

RES. Well I think it depends on the organisation. I think its very important to have a core group of people who are going to progress within a company. You have to have this and companies must invest in people, must train them so that they are able

to change and adapt to a range of situations as the organization grows and as the needs of the organization changes. I do think it important that companies provide for education and training costs. It is also important for helping to keep the person in the organization. I think that they have an obligation to the employee as well in assisting them in education and training. Costs are one thing, but really supporting the time factor that is involved as well for somebody doing a course is also needed. You need assistance, you need understanding that if you doing a particular course that some time will be given during the course of the year when papers must be in or whatever else. There needs to be a certain amount of understanding and goodwill between employer and employee. When the organization is busy, the time given could be put back into the organization. Its a give and take situation.

INT. In your answer, you have referred to some issues that form part of my next questions. In relation to the area of educational leave, in addition to your current employment, you can refer to your previous employment as you have worked for the same organization. One part of the question is where I am trying to establish if you had far to travel from your home or work to attend the University and you have indicated in the course of our conversation that you do not have far to travel.

RES. On that point, there is no written policy within the organization on people getting time off to travel for classes, but I think that because the organization I am in is primarily involved in assessing training for people, there is a greater understanding and a give and take situation. They know you will make up for the time at a future date. The culture is already there within the organization.

INT. Regarding study leave, how much study leave did you get for each year of the course you undertook?

RES. There is no actual policy on that and nothing written in the organization as to what you are entitled to. Again its about negotiating with my manager. Again due to the fact that I have got additional work in, it is not a difficulty getting time off to study. I can take the time when it is appropriate.

INT. Obviously, there is a flexible system within the organization and this facilitates how much study leave you need to take and when you can take it?

RES. Correct.

INT. In relation to your current employment, will your employer recognize the qualification from DCU in the form of promotion, salary increase or any other type of incentive or incentives?

RES. It is not written down that when you get a particular qualification that you automatically go up in terms of your salary. What it does do is that it enables me

to negotiate my salary. I came in on an incremental scale and with the qualification I will be pressing to get to the top of that increment on the scale. Having the qualification puts me in a better bargaining position, but it does not have an automatic effect. I can indicate that the course has enabled me to contribute a lot more to the development of the service that I am involved in.

INT. Based on what you have told me within your organization, the onus is on you to negotiate for increments and your argument sounds convincing based on the aim of the organization and the work and course you are involved in. Your answer now brings me on to my next question which is to ask you what are your views on staff being rewarded for additional qualifications by employers?

RES. I would agree that they should be rewarded. If the course they are doing makes them able to perform better in their work, they should automatically be entitled to something.

INT. In what way do you think your organization has or will benefit from the DCU qualification?

RES. I would see it in terms of the way that I approach things. The way that I think about how to organize things would now be a lot different than it would have been before. I have become more politically aware of how to handle situations. Also in terms of progress and getting things done I just have a more organized and focussed way of doing things. I am able to achieve more.

INT. Do you think your organization has acknowledged that?

RES. Yes, I think my organization has acknowledged that. My manager has acknowledged that.

INT. Obviously, you have a lot of support at management level and within the organization?

RES. Yes. I have a lot of support because of the way things are being done. I have learned the importance of keeping stakeholders informed and encouraging participation. This leads to greater success within the organization that I work in.

INT. Are you satisfied with the quality of the course here in DCU?

RES. Overall, I am. I would have to make a distinction with the term quality. I am very pleased with all that the course has helped me to achieve. It's been a catalyst for me to change my job, to get progression in the job that I am in. In the quality element there are a lot of positive things. I would say generally, yes its quality in terms that some of the lectures and lecturers are very good and very interested and very approachable. I generally find that with this particular University as the

Department is small and that you can meet people and you can get things sorted out . In terms of delivery, I found the course good and the staff very approachable from an adult perspective. They do generally understand that people have other lives. They are fairly flexible that way. There is quality in the delivery most of the time but I would say that there is quality at another level.

INT. Can you elaborate on what you mean?

RES. The department is small and between last year and this year we have been put around various departments and buildings, We have literally been in lecture rooms with drilling and knocking and banging on the walls and that element of it is not particularly good. But as regards the course quality, generally the course has been delivered in a fairly consistent and quality manner.

INT. I will come back to an aspect of this issue at the end of the interview. I know want to ask you what have you found, if any were the barriers or obstacles that you experience while participating on the course?

RES. First in any relationship you have to have an understanding partner because effectively I look at how I have been in the last two years and I have not only changed complete directions from where I was, but I have come to working in a totally different sector. Within the space of nine months, I have changed and got a promotion within the area while doing the course. There has been a whole range of things, etc. and they would have an impact.

INT. Today, there is a lot of emphasis on continuing education and training within the workforce. Is there a person within your organisation who has responsibility for staff education and training programmes and if so, how important a role do you think that individual has to play in relation to the promotion of staff education and training programmes within your organization?

RES. No.

INT. As there is not a person with responsibility for staff education and training programmes employed within your organisation, do you think that the organization would benefit from the appointment of such a person and if so, in what way would it be beneficial to the staff?

RES. Yes, I think it would obviously be of benefit maybe if somebody on the team had responsibility. The organization could not employ somebody, one individual as the organization is too lean. It would be beneficial to the organization, yes, but its just down to resources and funding.

INT. What are your views on the University providing an Adult Access Course

prior to the commencement of courses?

RES. Well I think to some degree they have, they do provide an induction week. I remember that we had an induction period particularly for people with no computer skills. They tried to give them an introduction to computers just to get people up to speed in the two weeks. That was useful on the certificate that I went for.

INT. From your experience, did you and your colleagues find it beneficial?

RES. Definitely. Yes this is one of the things which I found just from talking to people on the course. I had a background in report writing so I had been able to apply that skill in University. Now there were other people who were on the course who had come from trades and other backgrounds who are great practitioners but might not have the skills in the likes of report writing and writing the way Universities would judge you. So I think it would be very important to look at a number of areas. For example, some people have IT needs, others have writing skills needs, which I think is a very basic point. You would think people might have such skills but they do have difficulty when it comes to reports and writing essays.

INT. What are your views on the University providing an Adult Education Guidance Service?

RES. Yes, I think that would be very useful. I will tell you the reason why. When I first heard about courses, I had to decide between here, that is DCU and Maynooth college. I had been accepted in both of them, but Maynooth was too far away and DCU was in contact with an organisation that I was doing some work with. I came here instead of Maynooth. In a way I was not quite sure if this was the course that I needed but it led me from a certificate course on to further study. I was lucky to find that link. I think that there is a need for adult guidance provision for people going into courses.

INT. Related to my last two questions, I want to ask you what are your views on both the Adult Access Courses and the Adult Education Guidance Services being organized by the University in conjunction with employers?

RES. Yes, I think it would be good.

INT. Can you tell me why you think both services would be beneficial? Earlier in the interview you referred to access into education and training as being important within your organization, so in what way would you see the organization on both issues playing a part.

RES. They would be good in that a service would be provided for people who could be assisted in finding what skills they have and what needs updating. A team

within an organization could be looked at to find what needs up-dating.

INT. Do you find that DCU is currently providing the type of courses that are relevant to the requirements of your workforce and what are your views on this question?

RES. Let me think about that.

INT. For example, do you and your employer know the range of courses that are available here in DCU?

RES. I know about some of them, but to be honest with you I would really only know about the courses that would be related to the education side. The other courses I would not know about in any great detail. Technology is important.

INT. In relation to this question of courses and relevance to organizations, is there much contact with your organization and DCU regarding course requirements?

RES. No, not as far as I am aware.

INT. Are there any University employment links or initiatives that you would like to see developed between DCU and the workforce?

RES. I am sure there are but I cannot think of them at the moment. I think the biggest challenge is there is so much information out there, there are so many courses, there are so many things happening, but yet there are many people that don't know what courses there are, what is there and that they can access it. I mean it goes back to this point of access courses and guidance and what you said earlier about linking.

INT. By your response, I take it that University and workforce links should be on-going?

RES. Yes.

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS - WORK ORGANIZATIONS

INTERVIEW 7. ORGANIZATION REPRESENTATIVE

INT. Today there is a lot of emphasis on continuing education and training. How important is the provision of continuing education and training for staff within your organization?

RES. We see it as very important and we very much further education and training within the company. Staff are given the the opportunity to undertake courses. To give you an example, we pay out about sixty thousand pounds a year. This is company sponsorship for courses. Last year we paid out sixty thousand pounds for evening courses for about fifty people. We believe that as employers we must try and promote courses and we feel that we are doing just that. Within the company, there is competition for jobs, that is externally and internally. The staff are well aware of this and further education would be seen as important in their progress within the company. Even though we provide the sponsorship, we feel that the staff must be pro-active themselves and get involved.

INT. How does your organization assess what are the educational and training needs of your staff?

RES. This is a two way process involving us and staff. What we do is we advertise in July about the sponsorship that is available and we provide information on the type of courses that we receive. A lot of the courses are repeated but there are new ones every year. This advertising or publicity is done through the internal notice boards, the e-mail and our in-house internet. From July until the courses being in September and October, we have a very busy period where people make inquiries, it can be a very busy period where our offers of sponsorship are taken up. We help the staff but the staff must also be pro-active themselves and they must take the initiative to get more involved in their own learning, but we do facilitate them as part of the company policy. People make inquiries as they know sponsorship is offered for relevant courses.

INT. Can I stop you here for a moment please, because in this question I am trying to establish how the organization assesses what are the educational and training needs of the staff. So here I am focussing and putting the emphasis on your organization assessing staff educational and training needs.

RES. During the year I would have received the prospectus from the various

institutions, this usually happens by July. We would meet with the Company Directors and ask them to identify what courses they feel that we as a company should sponsor. Based on our discussions with those people, we then advertise as I have told you. What we do is we go the various areas in the company and answer questions or give advice on courses to the staff. At that stage, all staff would have a list of the various courses and information would have been available to the staff through the systems I mentioned earlier. When courses are advertised, we get information on them and look at their relevance. Supervisors would also do this. We also get information sent to us in the post. The staff often ask or in many cases would know what course they would like to do. They would ask questions on what they should do, the relevance of it and what may result from it when the course is finished. In many cases, they would know the benefits of a course because some of their work colleagues might have done a particular course. We find that the courses do not change that much from year to year. The staff and us know what the courses are but we would give them information on the relevance. Each year of course, there are some new courses that appear and we would tell them about them too. From our point of the organization, we would often see a new course advertised and would think that the course would be suitable for individuals in certain sections. The supervisors would also do this and may request more specific information and look at it in greater detail. This is the type of assessing we do. In the end, the deciding factor is the person themselves. We will help, encourage and facilitate them.

INT. You referred to an annual budget of sixty thousand pounds and I would like to know if all your staff who express interest in participating on a course get to do the course that year?

RES. Generally, they do. We try to facilitate all.

INT. With regard to the participation of staff in continuing education and training programmes, within your organization, do you make a distinction between:
a) permanent and contract workers; b) men and women and c) educational and social backgrounds?

RES. In answering the first part of your question, all employees that we sponsor to pursue education and training courses must be permanent members of the organization. We don't make a distinction between men and women.

INT. What about educational and social background?

RES. We do not look at a persons social background but we would not look really at their educational background either. This would be done when they apply for a

position with us. If a course was of importance to them, and they identified a particular course and they felt it was relevant and approved by their supervisor, they could attend and we would have no problem sponsoring it and encouraging them, provided it was relevant to the organization. We would not force them just because they may have a short educational background.

INT. Would you encourage people with limited educational experience to pursue courses even if the course was of interest to them but not on your list of sponsorship courses.

RES. Yes, we would try but really it would depend on the course and its relevance to the work they are doing or would be doing, but relevance to the work would be an important factor in getting sponsorship. Again we find that some of them would want to do it anyway and maybe they would see a course as helping to improve their work chances and get into another area of production. Some people in the organization sometimes request to be put into another line of work just to get some experience and they often do this after their normal days work. If they like what they are doing, they may decide it will be necessary to do a particular course and get a qualification in order to move to another section.

INT. My next question on my list is to find out what criteria is used within the organization for selecting staff to participate on education and training courses? Here now the emphasis is on the selection process.

RES. The way it works is like this. It involves staff and the supervisors and us. In a way this is a three way process. The staff know that there is company sponsorship for courses. As I said they hear about this via the internal communication process and they fill in a designed form stating their objectives for doing the course and objectives for the course is very important to us in the selection process. Staff would speak to their manager or supervisor. They would enrol themselves on the course or night class. This would in many cases be done after having spoken to various people who may have done a course before. They could discuss their intentions with the supervisor. They would go and register in the college and pay for it themselves to the college in question. On completion of the course year, that is if they passed their exams, they would be reimbursed by the company. We don't wait for the course to finish, say a diploma or a degree course, it is done on a yearly course basis. That is what we do, but the staff must make their requirements known to us. As I said earlier they must be proactive and let us know their interests and that they are available for courses. These are essentials that we look for. It is up to them to look after their development to an extent and that is why the sponsorship is there and the process, selection process involves them and us. I would say that ninety nine per cent of the forms received are approved by the

manager. The manager has to a great extent responsibility for further education as they know the individuals better than we do.

INT. What happens if a course is oversubscribed?

RES. Yes, this is a problem and it does happen. A typical example is the quality course where there were twenty places overall. What we do is let the staff enrol themselves and its a first come, first serve basis.

INT. What do you think motivates your staff within your organization to participate on education and training courses?

RES. For job promotional prospects I would say. We do have internal posts here and staff would do internal interviews. To be successful in getting a lot of jobs that are within the company they would need to have done a courses or more as there is a lot of competition in here. The Interview Board will probably give a post to the person who has done courses and have a qualification, but that too depends on the type of job. The staff knows that themselves. What really motivates them I believe is that a lot of the staff realize that if they want to get on they must compete and have to go out there and get that qualification. They know themselves that there is competition in here and that I believe motivates them. That is the main reason.

INT. I would know like to know what you think are the reasons within your organization for staff not participating on education and training courses and what does your organization do to encourage them to participate?

RES. Promotion is a factor, yes and to get off the production line. They need to do courses to get of this section of the company. We do encourage them a lot and they know that the company will sponsor them. The money is available for relevant courses that will give them some opportunity to apply for promotion, but it is up to them. The courses are advertised and they know what they are. This is a large company and there is only so much that can be done. The initiative must come from themselves.

INT. On this question, I am trying to establish why you think some staff do not participate even though they are aware that courses will not cost them money due to you sponsoring staff?

RES. I suppose that there many reasons and cost is not a factor. I do know that family responsibilities would be a reason as most courses would require a lot of course work and this can be very demanding on some of our staff. Some would not

be prepared to undertake courses for this reason. I feel that they would be unable to commit themselves to a course, no matter how long or short. This does not mean that they will not take up the offer later. Then there are others who are perhaps satisfied with the work they are doing and have no desire to take on courses.

INT. In relation to the last sentence, this brings me to the other part of my question where I am trying to find out what does your organization do to encourage your staff to participate on courses?

RES. There is a certain amount of competition in the company for particular jobs and that would apply to all companies I would say. Our workers know that there is sponsorship for courses. However, the workers have to have the initiative too to decide what they want to do in the further education line. They must be proactive and we can encourage them which we do anyway, promote courses and support them as best we can.

INT. What institution or institutions does most of your employees who participate on courses attend and why do you think such institution or institutions are selected?

RES. At the moment I would say that most people go to the GMIT.

INT. From your experience, why is this institution selected?

RES. Because of the the type of courses that the staff here seems to be after. The other main college in the city, the NUI, does not seem to have the courses that they need and if they do they are on during the day in the University. Our staff cannot get the time off naturally. The courses at the University also seem to be too advanced.

INT. What you have said about the NUI, Galway courses would also be relevant to GMIT in that many of their courses are also on during the days as well as some evening courses. So are you saying that the GMIT evening courses are much more relevant to your staff?

RES. That is true, but some of the classes at the University, we find are too advanced for the majority of staff. That is why I believe the GMIT is chosen. Sorry I forgot to mention the Open University.

INT. Why do you think the Open University is selected for courses?

RES. Again it is because of the wide range of courses that are available. Like the

GMIT they are more relevant to the staff and they have a lot of courses at different levels.

INT. Do you think that the geographical location of the GMIT is a factor that is taken into consideration by your staff and management in course choice selection?

RES. Yes, it may be a factor, but I would think the type of courses on offer at the GMIT and OU are the main reasons and the deciding factor for our staff.

INT. What are the courses that there is a demand for within your organization?

RES. Quality courses are extremely popular as is quality assurance, quality control, mechanical engineering, information technology, introduction to statistics, certificate and diploma in supervision. A lot of people here are doing diplomas in personnel management and business, computers. They would predominantly be the ones.

INT. Regarding the point you mentioned on relevance of subjects, can I ask you if you would have much discussions during the course year with staff about the course subjects, contents, relevance to work, college problems, issues like that.

RES. Not really. Even though we are interested in staff getting involved in further education, because of the size of our workforce, we would not have the time for getting into details about courses for each participant. Even though we are committed to staff development opportunities, this would be a time factor in getting involved with specific courses. Having said that, there would be need to intervene now and again and staff are told that if they have problems to come to us. There is one example that comes to my mind, that is the quality courses which are very much in demand here. We may have ten or twelve participants on this type of course at a time. Between themselves, the staff on the courses would discuss it and comment on the pros and cons. They would probably discuss it with their supervisor. If there is a problem with a course or a staff had a problem, they would come to me and discuss it with me. They are told that when they undertake a course if they have problem to bring it to our attention and we will try to help. To give an example of this, last year there was a problem with a course paper. I had to liaise with the course tutor. But we don't get too involved in the college student problem. We think it is important for the staff to sort it out themselves at least first with the college. This is also good for them and it is in their own interests to do this.

INT. I have a question on my sheet that is very much related to some of the comments that you have already answered. You referred to the instance of getting in contact with the College on a particular issue. Do you think that there is a need

for the educational and training institutions to liaise more with employers regarding needs within their workforce and what are your views on this question?

RES. Is it liaising about courses, is that what you mean?

INT. Yes, for example, course coordinators or liaison officers in relation to such issues as identifying your staff needs, course organization based on your work needs, course requirements and modes of delivery.

RES. Yes. This is very important. We do have a relationship with the GMIT. There is an industrial liaison officer working there. We do meet with him regarding our course requirements. The GMIT do try and meet our needs. To give you an example, we had demand recently for a mechanical engineering course from some staff. We had some starting off on that course on a Friday, Saturday and one evening a week. Now the GMIT ran that course in conjunction with us and with some other companies in the area. They do actually try and meet our needs and demands. If there is a course that is not there and they find there is interest, they do try and accommodate us and put on the course. They are very good in that respect. They seem to liaise with companies in our area. They will put on a course if there is enough people interested.

INT. Does the GMIT come to you or do you go to the GMIT?

RES. It is very much a two way approach. If we have a particular course need, we do go to them. On the other hand, if they have a request for a course, they would come to us and say that they have had a request from another company to put on such a course and we are thinking of running the course, would you be interested or would you have any people who may be interested? We would then put out notices to see what feedback we would get. That is how it works.

INT. Seeing that there is another third level institution in the City that provides courses, have your organization approached the University or has the University approached the organization regarding staff courses requirements?

RES. As far as I am aware no, at least not recently.

INT. Would your organization be interested in collaborating with the NUI, Galway or do you feel that the college should approach the organization? What are your views on this issue of collaboration?

RES. Yes, I think it would be a good thing. It should be a two way process, but

someone would have to start this. The courses they would be providing would have to be relevant and at the moment the Open University and the GMIT are our main suppliers for the reasons that I have given about the courses and the subjects and range.

INT. I noticed in your questionnaire that you did not refer much to NUI, Galway. What are your views on the University?

RES. It is just because our relationship is more with the GMIT and they meet our current needs more so than the University.

INT. Within your organization, what do you think are the main issues in relation to education and training that needs to be addressed in the Millennium?

RES. Within the company we have staff who are involved in shift work and evening work. When they took the jobs they knew that this was a condition of their employment and they accepted the jobs under the circumstances. Now we have emphasis on further education and because of the hours they work they cannot enrol in courses. We are aware that some of those staff would be interested in pursuing some courses. Most of the courses that are available during the day are very much geared towards younger students and there is preference being given to such students for places.

INT. On that point, there are courses now in which a limited number of places are reserved for adult or mature students.

RES. I agree with you there, but this is the problem we see in that only a small number of places are reserved and there are many and perhaps an increasing number of students looking for places. So the possibility of members of our staff getting on day courses is poor and because of their shift work requirements they cannot do courses in the evening. We have talked about this within the company and feel that the colleges should try and put on more courses or allow more adult students into courses with the day students during the day. This would be of help to our staff and I am sure staff in other companies too where shift work is part of the company procedures.

INT. The shift work point you make is an important issue for consideration. So from your organization point of view, you feel there is a need for the institutions to increase their intake of adult students into their day courses. On this issue, can I ask you the final question which is how do you propose to address the issue you have referred to. For example, has your organization done anything about this? Have you approached any of the institutions and put forward your organization's reason

for this requirement?

RES. No, we have not but we have discussed it with various managers. Having said that, we do know that the GMIT is aware of this from our organization, and hopefully based on your question regarding the Millennium, perhaps this is something that we will be able to achieve through time.

INT. Are there any other issues.

RES. I am sure there are but I would probably have to think a bit more deeply, but that is the one I would that springs to my mind immediately.

INT. One final question I would like to ask you concerns the study leave arrangements that you have within the company. I noticed in the questionnaire that in relation to that question, that you indicated that for a three hour examination you would give three hours study leave and for a two hour examination, you would give two hours leave making a total of four or six hours. On the point of the limited, and indeed very bad study leave provision for your staff, and considering what you have told me about the importance of education and training in your organization, has this been an issue with your staff and from a managerial point of view, have you any intentions of increasing this?

RES. Interestingly enough the staff have not complained about this or said anything about it to managers that I am aware of as this study time would have come up at some meeting at some stage. No, to your answer, but perhaps this is something that the company will have to review. People doing a degree or the MBA could have more time organized between their manager and at the discretion of their manager, and that would very much be based on their job performance and how they would have performed throughout the year. If they were working a lot of overtime and we don't get paid overtime as we are salaried, then the manager could make a judgement on that and say "Look this person has given a lot to the company, we must now go half way". We did have a situation like that recently and I went back to the manager saying that it is your decision, if you feel that the employee has performed well and deserves the extra time for exams. But the basic rule is what ever length the exam is they get the equivalent in time.

INT. What would have been the maximum that would have been given in the individual case you mentioned.

RES. This would have been three days. Maybe this is something that we will have to be a bit more concerned about as I think it is an issue that will arise.

INTERVIEW 8. ORGANIZATION REPRESENTATIVE

INT. Today there is a lot of emphasis on continuing education and training. How important is the provision of continuing education and training for staff within your organization?

RES. I think it is a very essential part of work that peoples skills are updated whether they are mental or manual, because you mentioned staff. Education and training and needs developing is very important in such areas as developing communication skills, developing leadership qualities, supervisory courses and that would be to lower level type workers, for example on the shop floor. Then at the other end of the scale there would be staff and management, for whom similar courses would be important but a different type of course geared towards them would be promoted. When I was filling in your answers in the other part of the study you sent to me, I gave a figure of £25.000. My answer to this question is yes, I would see training and education as essential for all of our staff, regardless of where or what they work at.

INT. On this question, do you sponsor your staff to participate in courses?

RES. If the course is in-house we do pay. If the course a member of our staff is doing, is related to the work that they are doing, the company will pay for them when they pass their exams. If a staff member is doing a professional qualification, and takes it upon themselves to do that, but is not related to work we do not pay. Certainly some of our staff are doing courses and the course they are doing is work related, at least some of it is and we would fund their fees. So there is a mixture of practices going on. We do give some study leave time, time off for exams. That was one of the questions I answered for you in the questionnaire that you sent us.

INT. How does your organization assess what are the educational and training needs of your staff?

RES. We do that. I will give you an example and that would be in relation to information technology courses for both managers and for office staff and certainly for the line managers and supervisors. With this new working laws, parental leave, different shift work, there is a need for updating information and we would see information technology as being very important. That is one way we would have

for assessing what staff needs are.

INT. You have mentioned information technology. But can you tell me how precisely you assess what are the educational and training needs of your staff?

RES. The company would get a list of courses from the different colleges in the region and indeed outside of the county. These would be courses of various kinds, some of which we know would not be of particular interest to the staff. The courses that we think would be suitable would be circulated and this would be done through notice boards within the company. Certain courses would be encouraged like IT and if of benefit to the individual and the company, we would sponsor them to attend. But the course would have to be of benefit to them and us and they obviously would have to be interested in the course and have the time to do the necessary work. So there would be no screening as such, it would depend on the interest shown.

INT. With regard to the participation of staff in education and training programmes within your organization, do you make a distinction between a) permanent and contract workers; b) men and women and c) educational and social backgrounds? Firstly, what about permanent and contract workers?

RES. We do have both types of workers and the contract workers would be on different types of contract work such as fixed and short term contracts. As we have contract workers, the organization does not make really a distinction between a permanent and contract worker for course purposes as many of our contract workers would be on long term contracts. If staff are going to be there or it is assumed that they are going to be there for a relatively long period of time, courses that they need would be offered to them, or at least they would be given the opportunity to go on them.

INT. What about men and women and are educational and social backgrounds of both taken into consideration in course participation?

RES. Relative to the department that they work in, the training and education opportunities are equal. Social background and educational background would differ at management level and the lower level. People working at factory floor level, at least some of them would have left school early, very early in some cases, even though they would have accumulated a lot of experience. Because of this there are chances for people to do courses, a lot of them would be in-house type courses because there are opportunities for them to move up to supervisory positions, line managers, team leaders, those type of posts. There are opportunities for them alright because they would be assessed on their skills and

courses. At managerial level, and for other categories of workers working in different areas of the firm, social background would not be an issue, but educational background would be taken into consideration.

INT. What criteria is used within the organization for selecting staff to participate on education and training courses?

RES. In undertaking this task, we take into consideration all of our staff. I believe that we cannot and should not make distinctions between different categories of staff. There must be equality and not discrimination. I spoke earlier about IT and gave you this as an example. For other types of courses, any individual can if they wish express interest in any course that is offered either internally or outside of the company. Naturally, we would ask them or check with their supervisor the reason behind selecting a particular course. The relevance to them and us would have to be considered. Relevance would be an important factor for selection. Another I would say would be interest and obviously if the person comes to us, they obviously have an interest in a course. Naturally, they assume we will pay for the course. We will do this, if it is relevant. Basically what happens is this. The individual comes to us, expresses interest in a course, informs us of the location and if we and the supervisor see it as beneficial we would agree to sponsor the course. So really, I would say that the selection is based on the individual worker, or at least the initiative would come from the worker or supervisor, or this could be a recommendation from the supervisor. In most cases, we have agreed to sponsor most of the workers who come to us. That is our system and we have had no complaints, at least since I came here.

INT. What do you think motivates your staff within your organization to participate on education and training courses?

RES. I would say that a lot of it is for self improvement. They see it as a way forward within the organization themselves and perhaps the way for better prospects in the organization or in another organization. They realize the need to do courses and acquire qualifications. They know that organizations are looking for people with more and more qualifications on their cv's and just not a basic primary degree is not enough, they want more. There is competition and staff have to prove to us that they are up to it, that they are ambitious and capable of doing courses. This is the perception that is in our company. Depending on the type of course, if it is academically structured and they would have a greater understanding of the organization and what is behind it, that is the structures, strategies that are needed the policies, the processes. Courses actually broaden their understanding, makes them more aware and they see things as a whole rather than as separate units.

INT. What do you think are the reasons within your organization for staff not participating on education and training courses and what does your organization do to encourage them to participate?

RES. I would say that from a company point of view, we do our best to encourage and facilitate people to undertake courses. This would apply to both the courses within the company and the ones provided by colleges outside. Based on the course they are doing, and if it is relevant we do support them in a financial way. So, I believe that as a company we are not to be held responsible for our staff not participating. I would say from experience that it is due to a combination of factors such as family responsibilities, many of our staff are young and pursuing a course certainly outside of work will create enormous pressure for them. This type of pressure would not apply so much to some of the on site courses we offer as they are less demanding than undertaking say a degree or a diploma. As I said, we do support them financially, but family and other personal issues I believe are reasons.

INT. Can you tell me what does your organization do to encourage staff to participate in education and training programmes?

RES. Well as I said, we help them financially. That is a big help. If staff don't participate or may not want to, there is very little we can do. As a company, we do our best by advertising courses and that include new ones that come to our attention. Education and training at workers level, and particularly outside courses have to be their own choice and this often requires a big commitment from them.

INT. What type of institution or institutions does most of your employees who participate on course or courses attend and why do you think such institutions(s) are selected?

RES. The staff here attend the NUIG and the GMIT. They also go to ICE and the IPA courses. They would be the main centres. Others would have in-house courses provided by staff from various institutions such as the ICB, or in some cases FAS. Where they go seems to depend on the area of work that they are involved in.

INT. From your experience here, which of the institutions do you think are providing the type of courses that are relevant to your requirements?

RES. This is difficult to say because they are all providing courses that our staff find as relevant either to their work or self-development, otherwise they would not be attending them. I would say that all the colleges have their own particular courses

and staff have the choice and opportunity to select where they want to go. We would from time to time recommend a particular college if we found that the course was particularly applicable to their work. If they are interested in doing the diploma in personnel, NUIG, is out, as the GMIT is doing it. This is a very practical and applicable qualification to have and get and there is double accreditation from it. In personnel management, they are all looking for graduates now with experience and the IPA qualification is very good. From my experience NUIG, were very good in giving me my primary degree, but because of what I am interested in, the GMIT were able to respond to my requirements in a course I undertook in personnel management.

INT. Do you think there is a need for the educational and training institutions to liaise with employers regarding needs within their workforce and what are your views on this question?

RES. Yes, it should occur.

INT. Can you elaborate more on how you think it should be done. Is or has there been collaboration between colleges and your organization?

RES. No, there has been nothing like that. No collaboration of any sort. Thinking about the issue, I feel that we have been at fault here. We should have made approaches to the colleges and that I feel would be beneficial to the staff, but it would apply mainly to staff who are in certain posts here. People who would be interested in furthering their education. It could be done and should be done. Then again, may be the University for example, could approach us.

INT. Within your organization, what do you think are the main issues in relation to education and training that needs to be addressed in the Millennium?

RES. I think the problem is that staff here have the selection of courses available to them. When they have done the course, they don't get the opportunity to put into practice all that they have learned. Work experience and what you have learned can be very separate. If you are working in another direction, it is very hard to get the position that staff are in to another career. What I am saying is there is very little practical experience to be gained and I think this is a problem. You have to let the practical experience be integrated with the professional experience. The practical experience is limited and that is a problem that we would need to look into.

INT. How do you propose to address this issue within the organization?

RES. I feel that perhaps or I do think that the Government should have a greater role to play as it is within their interests to have a workforce that is educated, flexible and that is committed to learning and to put that in place. This I feel needs to be done in secondary school as its too late when they have left school. It must be done early in the educational system. They must begin to see that their education is not in itself an aid, that it is to do with living for life. They must realize that they must continue their education when working, they must develop their work skills if they are to be successful. This is not promoted enough in the schools.

INT. You have mentioned the Government. I want to ask you how you think the Government could help?

RES. I feel that more money should be put into the training and education. Employers should be telling the Government what sort of skills and training they need in the future. We know, or at least should know where we are going in terms of our long term strategies. We need more money invested into this area and I believe that as employers we have enough power to influence and convince the Government of our needs. We don't do enough talking about this and we must work together and put the necessary structures in place for educating our workforce. We should be talking much more with the Government. As employers we have a role to play and we know where they are going in terms of long term strategies, demands and needs. These are the ones that the Government must look to for advice. Employers and the Government are not working closely enough and this is something that we as employers should focus on and must work together on this.

INT. Are there any other issues you feel should be addressed?

RES. Again, I would say the Government must work more closely with us. More money must be put into courses, we can do so much, and we can identify what the problems are, but we must convince the politicians locally and in Dublin of looking after our workforce.

INTERVIEW 9. ORGANIZATION REPRESENTATIVE

INT. Today there is a lot of emphasis on continuing education and training. How important is the provision of continuing education and training for staff within your organization?

RES. Traditionally as an organization this company has been extremely active in pursuing and promoting education and training, in particular third level education for its employees. Ninety seven per cent of the staff here are educated to leaving certificate level and seventy per cent have third level degrees. The company is very much behind delivering money to people in the company to pursue education and this has always been a very very strong point within the company.

INT. How does your organization assess what are the educational and training needs of your staff?

RES. This is done. What happens here is that the training department basically assesses twice a year by means of training needs analysis.

INT. Can you elaborate more on this training needs analysis and how it is done?

RES. We send our spread sheets to each of the organization's managers and ask them to fill in various details and pieces of information. We show them what training and education their employees have received in the previous six months, what type of training they have not received or completed and if this is still a valid need that they should pursue. This is carried out at the beginning of a six monthly period. We also have a performance management plan for each employee.

INT. Could you please tell me what is the performance management plan and how it works in the organization? How effective is this plan in relation to assessing education and training needs?

RES. In this company the performance management plan includes development objectives and these are like short term or critical training and education needs which would be more long term and continue for a longer period of time. About how effective this is, we find that as long as the managers cooperate with it, it is an extremely effective system and it works well. In general most managers do

cooperate with it, but some don't see it as too important at times. This is because, not because that they may not be good at their work, but may have other business deadlines or other needs that they may have to meet, they are very good business managers but that bit of coaxing or proding is often required. But in general, it works well from our point of view.

INT. With regard to the participation of staff in education and training programmes within your organization, do you make a distinction between permanent and contract workers?

RES. Yes. Approximately sixty to seventy per cent of our staff would be permanent workers. Only permanent would be valid or be allowed to apply for tuition refund which is basically where the company will pay for their third level education or continuing education.

INT. Do you make a distinction between men and women participating on courses?

RES. No distinction.

INT. Regarding participating in education and training courses, do you take into consideration the educational and social background of workers?

RES. It should not be. It is up to the individual manager to decide if they will approve a course and to my knowledge social background or educational background has never been discussed or has been an issue. We would not look or pry into their social background and it would not be suggested just because they may have come from a socially deprived background and perhaps have left school early. It has more to do with someones ability and the relevance to their job. No this would not be recognized, sorry suggested, but there is a discussion with each employee at least once a year regarding where do you see yourself going, what would you like to do. When this discussion takes place it is up to them to say and tell us what they would like to do? It is up to the employee to tell us what they want to do. This is in a way also helping us to identify needs analysis for our staff. From our experience, it seems to work well.

INT. What criteria is used within the organization for selecting staff to participate on education and training courses?

RES. I have more or less told you how we go about staff participating on courses. Of course, information is available to them through various sources and they see

courses advertised on the papers, the web site. I, for example, check the internet and any information that is relevant is passed on to managers, and other appropriate persons within the organization. When the employee expresses interest in a course, he or she will inform the manager, and if it is agreed, the employee registers with the college. They are then sponsored. Their fees are paid at the beginning of the course. If they were to fail their exam. the company allows them the chance to repeat. Then if they do not pass, we would look at they repaying the fees.

INT. But what criteria would you use to select staff if a course was over-subscribed. For example, would length of service and previous course record be taken into consideration?

RES. Oversubscribed to courses has not been a problem, at least not yet. It would be based on the interest of the workers. Interest in the course I would say would be the main importance. Length of time in the company and having done other courses would be taken into consideration too, particularly for higher degree courses, but as I said, interest must be shown and come from the worker.

INT. What do you think motivates your staff within your organization to participate on education and training courses?

RES. One of the motivating factor that I would see is that the company would sponsor courses as the fees can be extremely prohibitive and fees are very expensive. That is definitely a motivating factor for the employees who undertake courses. The second one is that as an organization the company has always believed in personal fulfilment and people can sees further education as aspirational and would in my view be another motivation factor.

INT. What about incentives being given to staff who successfully completes a course? Do you find that this could be a motivating factor?

RES. No. In this company we do not have such a scheme for courses and staff know this. They know that they will not get say ten per cent more just because they have got a degree. They get sponsorship to attend the courses and as the courses are as I said, well most courses are extremely expensive and that in a way is an incentive for them to get their course sponsored.

INT. What do you think are the reasons within your organization for staff not participating on education and training courses and what does your organization do to encourage them to participate?

RES. I would say that the main reasons are the time and commitment involved.

These are big issues for all workers I believe. On a personal level, I am involved and responsible in organizing courses for people, and also due to the fact that I can relate my own situation to them. My own situation as I told you I am involved in a third level course at the moment and I can relate my own experience that I am currently coping, or trying to cope with. It does cause chaos and can disrupt the family and does put you under pressure. These are the main reasons certainly from my personal point of view and I could say from other employees within the company too. I believe that the course details need to be explained to employees when they are taking on courses, but in most cases, they are well aware of the commitment they are undertaking when they take up a course. But the high sense of achievement is very much worth it when you are doing something worthwhile and the fact that we pay for courses is our way of helping them.

INT. Taking into consideration what you have said, what does the organization do to encourage staff to participate in education and training courses?

RES. We inform them. This is important. We have as I told you the spread sheets analysis in which we monitor what courses they have attended and is of value to us. By they not attending, there is very little we can do. We can and do speak to staff and encourage them to undertake a particular course. If it is 'in-house', it is easier for them to participate, but courses in say the GMIT or the University they just may not want to attend. As you know, we do pay for courses that are of relevance to their work.

INT. What type of institution or institutions does most of your employees who participate on courses attend and why do you think such institutions are selected?

RES. Mostly GMIT or UCG. They tend to stay with something local.

INT. Why do you think both colleges are selected?

RES. We have such a broad variety of staff within the company and it depends on the type of course they are interested in. For electronic courses, it would be the GMIT. But for people pursuing courses such as the MBA, B.Comm. they would naturally go to UCG. I think UCG is more popular because it is seen as a University, it has degree status whereas the GMIT is still seen as an institute and does not have the status that Universities are seen to have. This is a perception in the company. Because the people in the company would be of an older age group they would be going for a third level education and would want a degree from a University and would see it as status. I also think that there is a lot more evening courses available in UCG. What is available in the GMIT is courses that last for

eight weeks or ten weeks, that type of thing. There are courses that you can take to a cert level, but UCG would be seen to be more for getting a B.Comm. or some other qualification.

INT. In connection with courses at NUIG and the GMIT, for many years now, the GMIT have a wide range of evening courses too on offer and each year the range of courses increases and students have the opportunity to undertake certificate, diplomas and in some courses, degrees. In differentiating between the two colleges you are saying that the reason the University is chosen is because of status.

RES. Yes, that is true. I still think that UCG have a wider range of courses that would be of interest and more relevant to our staff, at least a lot of them and this is a well known fact within the company. But we do have great involvement with the University and GMIT.

INT. On this point, when you mentioned the involvement, this brings me on to another question I have for you. Can you tell me about the involvement you have with both institutions?

RES. We have great involvement with both the University and GMIT.

INT. Can you tell me in what way?

RES. Well for example, with UCG we liaised with the organization of the M.Sc. degree in computing as we have six people of staff who are pursuing the M.Sc. course in computer science. I know that one of our senior engineering managers collaborated with lecturers down there to decide what sort of content should be included in the Masters degree. So there is involvement. With the GMIT we liaise with a Diploma course.

INT. So do you think that there is a need for the educational and training institutions to liaise more with employers regarding needs within their workforce?

RES. Yes, this is necessary and beneficial to all parties concerned. It happens as I said with some courses, but I think it if were to happen much more it would be excellent. I certainly would benefit from it personally working in training and education if people would do that. There is a lack of knowledge on what is available. I know it is advertised in papers such as the Advertiser, but it is not always what I am thinking of on a Thursday night when they see the paper. It should be much more in the workplace, even though I check out the papers to see what courses are on offer. I check the UCG web page to see what courses are on offer but if I knew more about what is available in Ireland, say in distance learning,

that would be very beneficial to me in my work.

INT. Based on what you have said, you see a need for the institutions to market their courses more. Do you think that organizations should approach the institutions and specify what are requirements of their workforce?

RES. Yes, that could happen but if the course expertise is in those centres, they should get involved more with companies. It would be excellent, and they should come and tell us about their courses. Maybe they do approach other companies?

INT. A question that I would like to ask you relates to a previous interview that I recently conducted with an organization. During the interview I was informed that there is a liaison officer in the GMIT and this person liaises with some organizations regarding staff course needs. As you have stated, some of your staff participate in courses at the GMIT, can I ask you if this person has being in contact with you or have you based on your responsibility within the organization and location to the GMIT contacted this officer?

RES. No and no person had contacted me during my involvement with this company. It has not happened to me within this company. The person is obviously or perhaps visiting other companies in the region, but it has never happened here. I have never been approached, but I would see as I have said to you already it as been beneficial to me in my work and the staff could also see it as being beneficial to them. It is something that definitely I would like to see happening.

INT. Within your organization, what do you think are the main issues in relation to education and training that needs to be addressed in the Millennium?

RES. I don't think that continuing education and training is a big issue.

INT. Could you please elaborate more on what you have said about continuing education and training not a big issue from an organization perspective?

RES. What we are finding in this company is that the newer employees that we are hiring for different roles and new types of businesses tend to be quite highly educated. When they come in here they usually have degrees. They seem to like training on the job they are doing rather than pursuing evening education courses. That is a generalization, but I think that continuing education and training is very much provided for on this site.

INT. Right. How do you propose to address this issue then?

RES. We must provide for as much technical training as we can. The technical training has and must continue to have priority here. We try to deliver as much in-house courses here. We usually have a different course every month. We find that such courses are much more cost efficient as they save on travel and accommodation for a large number of people. Having said this, we are obviously restricted by the fact that you are depending on at least twelve people in a class to make it cost efficient. Sometimes we find that there may be only two people on the site who would want to do a particular course.

INT. But what you have told me relates to staff participating on courses, and although you said it is not a big issue for the organization, based on what you have said just now seems to be an issue that needs to be addressed regardless of whether it is within the company or your staff participating on courses outside.

RES. Yes, I agree it does involve our staff in training and education programmes, but the point I wanted to get across is that the emphasis for us is to ensure the development of in-company courses and more money set aside for this purpose.

INTERVIEW 10. ORGANIZATION REPRESENTATIVE

INT. Today there is a lot of emphasis on continuing education and training. How important is the provision of continuing education and training for staff within your organization?

RES. Before I answer I want to clarify that what I am saying will be based on the company views to this issue. We do encourage the workers to get involved in courses. Our reason for doing this is there are a lot of different types of workers here and all have specific skills and competencies requirements, many of which must be developed further, particularly in the field of work that I told you about and I know you have an idea of what we do here.

INT. How does your organization assess what are the education and training needs of your staff?

RES. There is a very specific and straightforward approach to doing this. We are big into needs analysis and performance review. When we are carrying out appraisals, which is compulsory, we also incorporate and build into this review needs analysis and we find out from the workers if they would be interested in doing a course. Based on the response, we discuss the courses and this would include for example, the length, the location and what they would get at the end of the course for themselves and ourselves here. There is very much personal achievement for them and a work benefit for them and us also.

INT. Based on what you said about needs analysis, is this done for all workers in relation to education and training requirements?

RES. Yes, but only after they have been here for six months and we see that they are performing satisfactory. The first six months is the probation period.

INT. How effective do you find this is in identifying the educational and training needs of your workers?

RES. From my experience it is a very good analysis, as you can establish their interests, availability and what this could mean to their future with us while they are here. Goals are important here and are set within departments, and equally so is their educational development.

INT. With regard to the participation of staff in education and training programmes within your organization, can I ask you if you make a distinction between three types of workers that you see identified on the sheet you have on the table?

RES. We do not have any contract workers. All our staff are permanent after a six months probation period. During the first six months, they are not eligible to undergo training, unless they want to do it themselves, but this would have nothing to do with us. The next one, definitely not as legislation dictates we must treat all the same.

INT. What about educational and social backgrounds?

RES. We would very much encourage all workers to undertake courses and we do like to see as many workers as possible doing courses and we do encourage them, even though you must remember that our people are educated to at least leaving certificate or equivalent level and have an employment history. I must say that there has to be a willingness on the workers to get involved in courses and we can not dictate and tell them to do so unless it is a company course requirement.

INT. The next question is what criteria is used within your organization for selecting staff to participate on education and training courses?

RES. It is based on the individual needs analysis and our appraisal system. Actually, I forgot to mention that we also have psychometric testing. We do not have the expertise here to do this, but we have an external consultant who does this for us and the results of this are taken into consideration when we do the needs analysis and performance appraisal. I must say I find it works well.

INT. What then do you think motivates your staff within your organization to participate on education and training courses?

RES. Without any doubt it is the fact that we pay for them. I know that if we did not pay the fees for the different courses a lot of them would not be doing the courses, even though some of them as you know are short-term courses. But when I look at the costs, I find that some of the short courses can be just as expensive as the longer ones, mainly I think because they are so intense and we are probably, I should not say probably but we are paying for things such as lunches and in some cases accommodation and this is build into the course cost.

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INT. In relation to this issue, when a member of staff pursues a course, say and gets a diploma, does your company stipulate that they must remain within the organization for a specific period of time?

RES. Yes. We do have a policy on this. It is a Training Agreement.

INT. Can you elaborate on what this Agreement stipulates?

RES. It is very specific and when our staff do courses they are made very aware of this agreement and I have to ensure that the regulations are very clear to them. I told you that we have a budget for courses that are relevant to us here and if any of our workers leave within three years of finishing a two, three or four year course they must pay us back all the tuition costs. This is the way it works and they all know that. It is also our way of getting our people to put back what they have learned or I should say to put into practice the knowledge they gained. I think it is not an unrealistic agreement. We did have cases before of people leaving and we found that we had no alternative but to draw up this Training Agreement after we had invested in their education. I must say that the staff here don't have any problems with this as they see it as a very fair and acceptable agreement.

INT. In relation to the last issue and the Training Agreement that they sign, is there any guaranteed incentive to the workers if they successfully complete a course, in the form of promotion or some other form of incentive?

RES. No, there is not guaranteed opportunities although they would have a good possibility of progressing to a higher level within the company that is promotion, based on satisfactory service. Again, this is something that is discussed at our appraisal and of course any qualifications obtained while working with us would certainly be considered and would help their promotional prospects.

INT. What to you think are the reasons within your organization for staff not participating on education and training courses and what does your organization do to encourage them to participate?

RES. There is very little we can do really. I find that and this particularly applies in the performance appraisal that some of them just want to work the thirty nine hour week and are not interested in doing a course or even in having any type of responsibilities. Its a matter of come in, do the work and go home. We cannot make it compulsory to do a course, but having said this there is a legal requirement on us for all staff to have done a course on say safety within the

workplace and this would be done at an early stage in their probationary period.

INT. In my next question, can you tell me what type of institution or institutions does most of your employees who participates on courses attend and why do you think such institutions are selected?

RES. A lot of the staff here go to the nearby GMIT. Some also do other courses by distance learning in colleges such as in Dublin and the university here.

INT. You just mentioned that a lot of staff go to the GMIT here. Why is the GMIT popular?

RES. Apart from the GMIT being close to us, I find that the courses they offer are relevant to our work requirements and in particular their technical and engineering type courses. We are also into research and development and they can help us here also.

INT. In relation to my next question, do you think there is a need for educational and training institutions to liaise with employers regarding educational and training needs within their workforce and apart from giving me your views on this, can I ask if this is happening in particular in relation to the GMIT, where you have indicated that they can offer courses that are relevant to the requirements of some of your workforce?

RES. We have a very strong relationship with the GMIT. Not so in the beginning, but certainly this has developed over the past three to four years. We have meetings with them during the year. Usually a course co-ordinator or someone involved with the course teaching, meet with us, and they know precisely that we are very interested in engineering, technical, business and management type courses. They are very good to us and I must say try to facilitate us where possible.

INT. Regarding your liaising with them, is this just in relation to say numbers that would be enrolling in the different courses or time-table?

RES. Yes, these would be addressed, but also they value our views on what we would like our people to get from the different courses and this is where we can identify this at our needs analysis meeting, which is an integral part of the appraisal system for the staff here. They would discuss college related things such as the topics of the programme, numbers, project proposals, and how this could be applied to the workers work here. We might also find and we have found

that some or aspects of courses might be too theoretical and we would have recommendations about making it more practical to the needs of the workers. We see them as being very supportive and any new course they offer, they would also inform me. I do think they really value our input, not just for new courses, but ones they review. I am aware that they have to abide by their college course regulations and we take this into consideration if changes cannot be made. They are academics, I am not, but they very much value my opinions and that fact that I have done a lot of courses. Unfortunately, the university is not as helpful and there attitude is there is the course, take it or leave it.

INT. Within your organization, what do you think are the main issues in relation to education and training that needs to be addressed in 2000 plus?

RES. Without any doubt we need to have more distance learning courses. We are, but we have to be a very competitive company as we are a global leader in our field. While we encourage our people to go on courses, there is the problem always of getting the work done either before hand or later. It is fine for the courses that the staff here can do in the evenings or at week-ends. We have no problem here. This in a way is the good thing about the GMIT courses in Galway. The courses that necessitates people getting time off is a problem. If we had much more distance learning provided by the colleges, it would be better and it would be much more flexible than even the courses that we find the GMIT do. Take middle-management for example. This year we have had some who wanted to do a Masters in Engineering and I can think of two in particular in which the course would be very relevant to their work. I have checked out the courses in your institute and they are run during working hours, mainly on Fridays and Saturday. The one in Limerick can be done in a series of blocks, but it is difficult to release some people from here during the day, because of the type of work they do.

INT. So on the one hand you support and encourage staff to participate on courses, but on the other hand, based on what you have just said to me about the two employees who were interested in doing a Masters, you express concern about their absence during working hours, even though you say that the course would be relevant to their work.

RES. Yes, I agree, and that is why I feel that we need a lot more courses that can be undertaken outside working hours. This is something I am constantly discussing with the GMIT here.

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INT. Based on what you have said to me about distance learning, from a company perspective, how do you propose to address this issue?

RES. I and Tony have also mentioned it several times to our colleagues in the GMIT. I must say that many of them agree with us, and I know that there are a few courses in the GMIT that provide this method of learning, but they are courses that we do not have a demand for based on the work we do here. I understand that in the GMIT some academics are addressing this. When we bring it up the GMIT lecturers agree with us and I recall the term that one of them used was 'the learning methods of the future'. I understand that there are many technological problems that needs to be sorted out and money is an issue too.

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INTERVIEW 11. ORGANIZATION REPRESENTATIVE

INT. Today there is a lot of emphasis on continuing education and training. How important is the provision of continuing education and training for staff within your organization?

RES. From an organizational perspective and in the context of helping our staff to develop qualifications, it is important. Now, I must be very careful also in what I say to you because it might look good for me to sit here and say yes, we do a very good job in ensuring that our staff acquire qualifications that are very necessary in a technological and to use the term life-long era, but this issue is like anything in an organization in which moderation would apply.

INT. So you are saying that you see education and training as important and necessary within your organization?

RES. Yes, on two levels. One that the staff gets some form of fulfilment from the course and they feel they have achieved something worthwhile. On the other level, that we as a company will benefit from the learning.

INT. This then brings me on to my next question where I am trying to establish how your organization assesses what are the education and training needs of your staff?

RES. I take responsibility for this in my own job. Quarterly, we have a staff development meeting and it is done at this.

INT. Can you elaborate further on this issue as I am trying to establish in a more specific way how you go about this?

RES. As I said we meet all our staff on quarterly occasions during the year. At the review meetings, I will discuss various issues relevant to the company with them and this can range from timekeeping to performance. One of the issues I take on board at the meetings is their continuing educational development. I would have my records from previous meetings and would know their qualifications and what courses they would have attended. I then try to establish if they would be interested in doing a course and before I would discuss the type

of courses, I would seek to find out their interest in doing a course and explain that it could help them make career advancements later if they remain with us. I find that the quarterly meetings can be very beneficial to them and me in identifying if they want to undertake a course.

INT. When you meet, do you undertake an educational and training needs analysis with the staff?

RES. Yes, this in part of what I do when I meet with my staff. Its my way of establishing their interest in a course. Before they meet with me, approximately two weeks beforehand, I distribute a questionnaire to establish their training and education requirements. I would have this in front of me when I meet with them, and in the meeting discuss the contents. So the needs analysis is in the form of a questionnaire and interview.

INT. For the next question, can I ask you to look at the questions in Question 3 with regard to the participation of staff in education and training programmes. Do you make a distinction between a, b and c?

RES. On a) we do not have many contract workers, only a few, so they are short-term workers. On b) no difference, in fact we find that there are more women on some courses than men and equality must be implemented and c) we encourage all staff to avail of the opportunity and as I say to them, "better yourself".

INT. What criteria is used within the organization for selecting staff to participate on education and training courses?

RES. Nothing more than what I have said to you about the questionnaires and meetings I hold.

INT. In my next question can you tell me what do you think motivates your staff to participate on education and training courses?

RES. Well, I think motivation is an important factor because if they are not motivated in the first place they will not be interested in discussing courses.

INT. While I agree with you that motivation is very important from the perspective of adult students, I am trying to establish more precisely what would be the motivating factor or factors whereby an employee would enrol on a course?

RES. Two factors come to mind. The first one would be that there is no

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cost involved to them. If staff and we see here that the course is helping them in their work, we will pay the cost of enabling them to attend the college, or in some cases, there is no attendance required, only tuition costs. In addition to the cost of the course, we give them where relevant travelling expenses and a meal allowance and that is not bad. I do not know how we compare with other companies, but that is the way it is in here.

INT. You mentioned a second factor?

RES. Yes, shortly after they complete a course, a long course of a years duration or more, and pass of course, we do give them two options. One is three days extra holidays in the year they finish the course, the other one is a week-end break in a location in Ireland of their choice. I know its small, but that is all we can afford, but it is our way of giving them encouragement to enrol on courses.

INT. In relation to both factors, do you have a company policy that makes it compulsory for workers to remain with your organization for a period after they have completed a course successfully?

RES. Yes, based on our regulations they must remain on with us for a time, although they can go to work in any of our other branches.

INT. Can you elaborate more on the regulations that you have?

RES. This depends on the length of the course. For example, for a course involving two or three days, we would not require them to sign on the staff development application form. But for longer courses such as the ones that involve six months, a year or longer, we have different time regulations and this depends on the length of the course. To be more precise, say someone doing a degree at night for three years, as you know we pay for them to attend and they would be expected to remain with us for four years. A similar situation would apply to a diploma course, because the diploma course could be spread out as long as the degree courses. We have also to use our own initiative on the issue, because sometimes a member of our staff may have to leave for personal reasons and we have to take each case and assesses it individually and it may not always be possible to pay back the costs of the course. Up until now, it has not been a major issue for us as the staff in general seem very appreciative of what we do for them in furthering their education.

INT. Next question. What do you think are the reasons for staff not participating on education and training courses and what does your organization do to

encourage them to participate?

RES. My experience tells me that some have not got the time. Its fine sometimes if the course is in company time and if there is not much homework involved. But if a course is demanding and requires a lot of discipline and long hours of study, it is not attractive to some and no amount of persuading will change their views. Others have a lot of commitments when they go home from here.

INT. What type of institution or institutions does most of your employees who participates on courses attend and why do you think such institutions are selected?

RES. I would say, even though I would have to look up the numbers, staff here avail of correspondence type courses, like the open university courses and open learning. From the feedback I receive, they like the structure of the courses and they can do them in forms of modules. I know some of the correspondence courses start in October and November and run until the following October. They can study during the long winter nights and also they have the Summer as well. That is attractive to some of them and they find that they can as they go along make improvements to their area of work. Nearly everything they learn has to be of use to us here. This even applies to our short in-service courses we run for a day or two on first aid or safety in the workplace.

INT. What about the other institutions?

RES. Again, my records shows, the OU certainly as a first choice. Some are attending courses that some of the over-seas colleges are offering here and some do go to the university, the vocational school and the GMIT.

INT. Do you think that here is a need for the educational and training institutions to liaise with employers regarding needs within their workforce and what are your views on this question?

RES. Yes, and vice versa.

INT. Is this happening within your organization?

RES. No.

INT. How would you like to see this developed?

RES. I will give you an example and it relates to what is happening in this city. A few months ago, the two main third level institutions in this city advertised a series of courses in the local papers. There was a good variety of courses, some of which would be of vocational use to us here and were for adult students. What I did notice was that about a month after the closing date, many of them were re-advertised. Now I ask the question, why do the main institutions in this city have to re-advertise courses? I would think I am correct in saying that they failed to get the required numbers to apply and this would probably be essential in order for the courses to be run. One of the courses that I remember was a Bachelor of Business Degree, and this was being offered by the GMIT. I remember that they indicated that it was being accredited by HETAC and offered part-time, with the first two years geared towards a diploma. It was felt that the course was uniquely designed to fit into a workers's busy schedule by allowing them to receive instructions in the subjects on Friday afternoons and Saturdays and to work in industry the rest of the week. So what is my point. It is this and its getting back to the question. Based on the time schedules we have here, it is impossible for us to release staff on a Friday afternoon. What we could do would be to allow a few staff members time off on a Monday and say a Tuesday and they could then undertake the course. I do not think that when the GMIT and I am using this one as the example, put on courses that they think of this, and they tend to go and put on courses at the week-ends. So the timing of courses, is one area where they could cooperate with us and possibly create greater flexibility.

INT. Thanks for this point. What other ways do you see that cooperation could be beneficial?

RES. All the colleges have a policy of lifelong learning. In connection with the course that I mentioned, the college indicated that the course would provide theoretical and practical preparation for a career in business. My point here is that they have a policy on lifelong learning and see the course as providing practical and theoretical knowledge. Do they know what our lifelong learning requirements might be? They have no idea. So maybe this has something to do with the reason why they have to re-advertise courses.

INT. So you would see need for more cooperation between work organizations and colleges in relation to adult education?

RES. Definitely yes.

INT. I am coming near the end of the interview and I want to ask you what within your organization do you think are the main issues in relation to education

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and training that needs to be addressed?

RES. The Government must take responsibility for lifelong learning and not be leaving it to employers only. The staff here are lucky, as we pay for them. Every year I notice that the fees are going up and up and this applies to the courses here in this country and abroad. We are now seen as one of the most expensive countries in Europe. The Government will have to assist us employers in retraining of staff. It is assumed that we make large profits, but the reality is that our staff development budget has to be distributed among other activities too in the company.

INT. Any other issue?

RES. Well, that would be my main concern.

INT. How do you propose to address the issue of the Government taking responsibility?

RES. Firms like myself and others who encourage and promote lifelong learning will have to get together, and lobby, but I do not know if we will get anywhere. There is an election coming up, but I do not think that this will be a priority issue for them, or any governmental party for that matter.

INTERVIEW 12. ORGANIZATION REPRESENTATIVE

INT. Today there is a lot of emphasis on continuing education and training. How important is the provision of continuing education and training for staff within your organization?

RES. While I would say that a lot of workers, myself included would agree that we learn a lot through our work experiences, I would also say that continuous education is very important to us.

INT. Can you please elaborate a bit more on your answer?

RES. This interest in learning is evident in the courses that some staff do at different learning institutions. Some go to the technological college in Athlone, there are some doing programmes with the OU and a good few are back in NUIG, as they went to college there in the first place. There are quite a few doing postgraduate courses at UL also. Some of the UL courses are very much orientated to the work that some of our staff undertake. So they are scattered all over the place. Based on my experience here working with X for ten years now, I would say that a lot of them would not be studying if we did not provide financial support for them.

INT. How does your organization access what are the educational and training needs of your staff?

RES. I monitor the courses advertised, and I get one of my staff to contact the colleges and get more information on their courses. You see from the file I showed you that we have collected over the years a lot of brochures from different colleges. I then check the course contents. I always request two copies of the brochures, one is kept here and the other is put in the staff room. That way the staff can have access to them. Any courses that are new, they are also put in a separate shelf and there are a lot of new courses every year and this is good. I also avail of the e-mail to inform staff of courses that may be particularly relevant to different sections of the workforce. I also attend a lot of the open days and find this very beneficial as it gives me the opportunity to talk to staff at the different stands.

INT. More precisely, how do you assess the education and training needs of the staff here?

RES. I do this in the form of a questionnaire. In March or April, and the reason for doing this at that time of the year, is that I am finding that a lot of colleges are advertising early in the year and the closing dates are often before the summer holidays. This type of information I also pick up at the information days. Getting back to the questionnaire, take this one for example, I sent this out in April and asked the staff in the different divisions if they are interested in doing a course in October, as a lot of them start around this period, although I often wonder why courses cannot commence starting at different periods. I have to do this also at that time of the year in order to get numbers and ensure that there is sufficient money there. So then its very much finding out who want to do this or that course, when it takes place, how long such a course will take, what will it cost and what will be the returns for us having assisted them financially to partake.

INT. Would you mind looking at the list in front of you for the next question. In relation to the first part, do you make a distinction between permanent and contract workers regarding pursuing courses?

RES. We do not have any contract workers, except a few consultants that do work for us.

INT. What about men and women participating on courses?

RES. Not a problem here and why would we make a distinction?

INT. Educational and social backgrounds?

RES. To be a permanent member of staff, our recruitment policy looks mainly for graduates, or also those who would have a lot of experience and be proficient in different areas of the business. Not all our administration staff would be graduates, but those at senior level would be and we would have financial accountants and PR personnel also.

INT. What criteria is used within the organization for selecting staff to participate on education and training courses?

RES. When the questionnaire comes back, and I am finding that each year the number of questionnaires is increasing, I check them and see what are the courses that the staff are interested in. I would speak to their Managers first and

establish the importance to him and us of the course that they would express interest in. I find this very important as I often find out from Managers that he or she would also see the need for training in a particular area. They may say to me that X could do with re-training. I would see this as observation evidence from the Manager. It also happens that a staff would first approach their Manager and inform them about a course that they would like to do. I and the manager would later discuss the application with the member of staff. So in a way while I would make the final decision from a financial point of view, I work quite closely with Managers, who are in more direct contact with the staff in their different sections.

INT. Is this procedure what you would regard as an education and training needs analysis in the organization?

RES. Yes, in a way. That is what it is.

INT. What do you think motivates your staff within your organization to participate on education and training courses? ~

RES. I would say that they realise that the nature of work in the knowledge era is fundamentally different now to what we have traditionally known it to be. They also realize that management tries to promote learning and create a learning society within the workplace. Thus, the importance of possessing additional qualifications would be important for their career progression.

INT. Is there anything else that you think that motivates your staff to participate on courses.

RES. An incentive is that we provide financial help with their studies. What happens is as follows. A staff applies for the course, and we pay half fees if we see it as beneficial to the organization. The amount that has to be paid varies from course to course. When the staff member receives the qualification, be it a degree, which many do, or it could be a diploma we reimburse them for the half of what they pay.

INT. Regarding the next question, what do you think are the reasons for staff not participating on education and training courses and what does your organization do to encourage them to participate?

RES. I often think it is because many of them have been through college for a number of years, mainly three to four years, and they are possibly tired of studying. We do however monitor the courses they do on a yearly basis and if I

find that any staff have been with us for over ten years and not done a course, I mention this to them and try to find out if they would be interested in going back to do a course, only if its a short course. That is a good indicator for me and I would also stress the importance of doing a course and in particular what they as individuals could gain from the course, and the importance of the course to their work here. That is as far as we go. Just another point, I monitor course outcomes closely here. If I find that a staff was unhappy with the course, I would question some things such as why they felt that the course or the training given did not work well. This would also help me in deciding if and where this course should be undertaken in the future.

INT. So you would be concerned about the vocational aspect of a course?

RES. Very much.

INT. For the next question, based on your position here, I am concentrating on institutions and in the course of our discussion you mentioned earlier that some staff attend the university, the UL and the OU. Why do you think those institutions are selected?

RES. The colleges are selected by not just me, but a Manager also in cooperation with the staff member that is interested in a course. I distribute information about courses that would be beneficial to them from the different colleges. I also distribute information about other type of courses, which I would see as leisure type such as do it yourself learning type courses. Many of these type of courses would be held in different places in the city, not just the university or the GMIT. The reason I think that there is a demand for certain colleges is based on the type of courses they offer and there is a demand here for doing distance type learning and correspondence courses, so its very much based on preference for the business course that the OU and the UL offers. Some of our staff are not prepared to do a course during week nights and this may be for very valid reasons. They would find it more convenient to study from home with the OU, although I know they do have to put in attendance at tutorials, which I think is often optional. I do know others like the contact on a much more regular basis with other students in the course and go to NUIG. So its really a matter of preference.

INT. Do you think there is a need for the educational and training institutions to liaise with employers regarding needs within their workforce and what are your

views on this question?

RES. Yes.

INT. Can you elaborate on your yes answer please.

RES. Look at it this way. When I get the information from the colleges on different courses, I find that at times I could do with more information on the course and I may not always be able to get to information days or evenings. I was interested myself last year in doing a course, and I had to ring in this case, the IPA. Now I am not complaining about the brochures they send out, but some of them I find could explain more about the courses. I think it would be very useful if there were information sessions in companies and businesses from the different colleges. I cannot see why the colleges here cannot do this, it may be more difficult for colleges in other parts of the country to do this, but I think it would be very useful and we would be delighted here to have different staff from different colleges come in and address us. We would see this as very much part of our learning organization.

INT. In your role as manager with responsibility for education and training here, would you like more cooperation between colleges and employers?

RES. Yes, and it would be of value not only to us but also the colleges. We here would certainly like to be more involved with them - someone has to make the beginning. I hope they would feel likewise. Your opening question was very direct when you mentioned the importance of training and education. I would say that new insights into learning has given rise to new ways of thinking about education and training and nowhere is this more relevant than in the workplace. I would consider that a good working relationship with colleges that provide adult education courses, would be of tremendous importance to us.

INT. What type of issues would you see as important in your discussions with the colleges?

RES. I am sure there are many and they would have some for us. Immediately what comes in mind is the timing of courses. I am fully convinced that colleges do not give any thought to the timing of courses. The patterns of work have changed dramatically over the last couple of years. More people are doing part-time work, job sharing and one week on, one week off. I would say that courses

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needs to be more flexible and cater for the changing work circumstances for individuals.

INT. Again in your own role, how would you see this liaison developing between yourselves and the colleges?

RES. A start would be a meeting and take it from there. I would hope that the colleges would feel as we do about this, but it may be difficult to do say in connection with the OU because they are not locally located.

INT. Within your organization what do you think are the main issues in relation to education and training that needs to be addressed?

RES. Not an easy one to answer right now.

INT. There must be some issue or issues that would be of concern to you in your role with responsibility for education and training of your workers?

RES. One that comes to mind is staff remaining with us. Now while we do not have a high staff turnover, which is good from our point of view, we have had cases of staff leaving after we had funded them to go to college. We have still lost out money here as some would have left during courses. In our area of work, there were a lot of better paid jobs out there and they jumped to them. This can be a waste of company investment in their education and we have just recently discussed this matter at our Board Meeting.

INT. How do your propose to address this issue?

RES. We did not come to any final decision on this, but recommendations were made, such as making it compulsory to remain in the workforce for a period of time to be decided on, or in the event of leaving, paying back the cost of the course. I hope you appreciate that I cannot discuss them with you right now as this is a Management issue. What I will say is that it is being dealt with and I know that other business have addressed this and come up options. This is something we will also do.

INT. I question whether an organization can make it compulsory for staff to remain on in an organization, even though they sponsor them to participate on courses?

OR 6

RES. Yes, you have a valid point and we are aware that there are legal issues to be addressed here. This is why I am reluctant to say too much on this issue.

INTERVIEW 13. ORGANIZATION REPRESENTATIVE

INT. Today there is a lot of emphasis on continuing education and training. How important is the provision of continuing education and training for staff within your organization?

RES. I would say that we put a lot of money into education and training. But you must remember that we are working in a very technical environment here. Take a B.A. in Management that you could do at the Irish Management Institute or in one of the universities. That is a very general in nature course, there are many questions that open up on a course like that. We would not generally fund a course like that. We would see this as something that a person does in their spare time and I would have many questions regarding the funding of this type of course. Staff work here long days, the work is demanding and I would have even concern with staff doing courses in their spare time that would not be relevant here, and what load that would put on them in addition to their work here. And that would be even right across the company. It is something we would enter into very slowly.

INT. While you say that you put a lot of money into training, yet you express concern regarding staff pursuing courses?

RES. Yes, and I also think finance here. In terms of our day time spending, we would see that as something a person would do in their spare time. If you look at some of the courses on offer out there, and if you are going to fund the courses, you have to match the person in the organization and what they do. For example, they may be working in stores or planning and they may have a few years experience with us and they have a reasonable hope of reaching a supervisory role. They go along and do an IMI certificate in supervisory management which we would fund if they were successful, but they would do it in their spare time. They may then go on and then do a diploma and a degree and before you know it they want to go and do an MBA course. The problem here is first of all the person who is going to do all of this is probably a fairly committed worker. Yet the person in reality is sitting here in the organization just about maybe going to get promotion and might make it to general supervisory level. There is huge problems in training that person to a level that does not match.

INT. How does your organization assess what are the education and training needs of your staff?

RES. The first thing is in terms of identifying the people that you are going to invest money in and there are problems. We do not have the tools to identify what these people need with any degree of accuracy.

INT. Do you think that needs analysis from the perspective of education and training is then required?

RES. Whatever analysis tools you use, I have not seen any convincing ways of identifying what our people need. For example, saying to a group of six peers I am going to send you on an MBA and I am not going to send the other five is a problem. What I do here is that I use assessment techniques where I will assess the job, and what I need. Then I will look at what the individuals already have and look at the gap. All the time I am thinking and looking at gaps. I will fill the gap if it adds value which exceeds the cost and I will agree.

INT. Is this then the criteria that you use within your organization for selecting staff to participate on education and training courses?

RES. I would say that we have a problem of identifying people and you may even identify a person but they may not be as successful as they progress up this management role say. But probably more than anything else is you ability to deliver as an organization. Today you see this guy or women and you send them off to do a course and they may even be doing very well. However, by the time they get to degree MBA level, you are looking for a box to put them into in the organization that uses these skills. But the chances of having a box that just matches that person at the right place in the organization with the skills may not happen.

INT. In relation to a, b and c. in front of you,

RES. The first one is not really relevant here, and there is no difference between men and women for b. What do we do with different educational backgrounds? In one sense this is how education is organized in Ireland. You are looking at Government and industry funding for education, both at two different ends. Then you also have what we call specific and general training. If you look at it from an employer trying to make a profit we would see general training as lying much

more at the end and which is more heavily funded from the government in that we are going to train them for the Leaving Certificate and create a pool of labour. But that pool is a very general kind of pool and is not at all specific. I would say the training we provide internally is largely the specific training and that does require more funding. Take for example, the cleaner. What happens is that they could go off and do a course at an appropriate level, the next level at what they are at. We would fund them to do this in their own times, we would have a look at what they intend to do, and if it would produce a benefit to the organization. We would also give them a very small amount of time off, three days in preparation for their exam.

INT. You have just mentioned about the Government funding. What is your view on Government funding given to education and training in the workplace?

RES. I think because an industry like ours, are reasonably specialized industries, any training we need to develop and advance really we have to do ourselves.

INT. Just to focus more on the questions I have here, do you think there is a need for education and training organizations to liaise with employers regarding education and training needs in the workplace?

RES. No, any training that we need we have to do ourselves. We feel that by asking the universities or colleges to provide courses would not work for us here. We have to do it ourselves. In general they would not have the knowledge really so we largely have to provide the specific skills type training ourselves. By far the best training is what we do ourselves as what we require is not available out there. I believe that the level of expertise is not there in the academic environment and what I am thinking of is the technical colleges and the universities.

INT. Have any of the higher education colleges approached you and asked what are your education and training requirements, or have you approached them?

RES. Yes, we have approached universities and technical colleges trying to get them to up-skill, to take on some of what we do, but because of what we do is quite specialist and specific in nature, this is something that they are not anxious to do for understandable reasons. While they may have the staff with the qualifications and experiences in say the universities, I would think if we went looking at the curriculum vitae of the individuals who could help us with courses, I would suspect that we have ourselves the people with the experience more closely superior and related to what we are trying to do.

INT. So you are saying that here the emphasis is on your own specialist experts who are competent to provide the courses you require?

RES. Yes. More companies are providing their own in house training and the problems they are having is having to get access to government funding with this idea of lifelong learning. Unless the organization bears the costs themselves, it is hard to see how you can get the Government to fund courses, unless huge resources are put into Government funding.

INT. So you are critical of Government funding in relation to education and training?

RES. Yes. very much so.

INT. Within your organization, what do you think are the main issues in relation to education and training that needs to be addressed in 2000 plus?

RES. From my experience I would say that for example in relation to Denmark where I have some staff that they are much more ahead of us in terms of technical training. Their state funding training programme is vastly ahead of ours in Ireland. When you look at the Irish education system, I would say that for me the key problem is the basic education of the people coming in, not very targetted, but they are coming in with most of the general skills that we need. There are some people coming in but also studying at some of the technical colleges and doing further education courses.

INT. What then do you think motivates your staff to participate on education and training courses?

RES. I would say that most people are trying to up-date their skills. Our in-house training takes place on two important levels. On one level, in my section three employees went off to DCU to do a degree course in IT. A pretty good course. They did this in their spare time, they were motivated and two got on very well, while one was mediocre. Now the problem is I have the three on my staff and I have no use for IT specialists right now. I find that the IT section does not have any further requirements for these people either. So these are people who spent a lot of time studying and doing the course in their spare time. The core problem is that the course did not fit into what the company wanted. That is the first level and the training is not matched. You must get the match right. The second level is the training that is related to what we are doing here and focusing in on their job.

OR 7

INT. Regarding the importance of matching that you have referred to, is this then taken into consideration in the identification of courses requirements?

RES. It works like this. Here you see this chart. You can see where the individual selects what they want to do, and here you see where the company selects. By looking here at our spare time study form and you can see it happens at two levels. For example, it shows you that this person is going off to do this course. The qualification he gets is clearly relevant in a practical way to the employees current position, and this is where I am putting in the level. His manager is satisfied with the course he wants to do, and he and me signs the form. The employees qualifies for an interest free loan, exam leave and sufficient time to travel to the class, sit the exam and study leave which is a maximum of three days per year.

INT. Is three days what is given for study leave in the organization?

RES. Yes, except for within our scheme we have extra study days for financial qualifications as this was introduced at the beginning of the study leave provision. I do object to this as I think it is unfair to those who get three days study leave, which is not bad.

INT. What about the other level that you refer to?

RES. Yes, now to the other level. The qualification is clearly relevant to the organization, but not to the employees current job. The course would be of development to the employee. They would qualify for an interest free loan, and two days exam leave is given. They get no study leave and on successful completion of their studies they get half their fees back. The manager here is making a decision at two levels.

INT. You refer to the employees current position. As you know, people are changing jobs now more frequently than in the past. Do you not think that a qualification gained, although not relevant to the employees work now, could at a later time be of use to you within the organization?

RES. Current is used because if you take the example of the three I spoke about who did the IT course at DCU. They took the view that the IT industry was growing and they know they would have more opportunities of working in the IT area than as a technical trainer in our organization. The problem is the employer who is trying to make a profit and that has to be considered.

INT. Within your organization, what do you see as the main issues in relation to education and training that needs to be addressed in 2000 plus?

RES. I see a difficulty with getting training in the organization funded by the Government.

INT. How do you propose to address this issue?

RES. The Government have this lifelong learning policy that the Minister for Education is talking about. I have made many inquiries and approached the Department of Education and Science and some senior civil servants and asked them to explain to me that since my staff are now entitled to lifelong learning, supposed to be funded by the Government, can you tell me what is available and where can I apply?

INT. What was the response?

RES. The answer could not be more vague. They talked about some sort of social fund, it seems to be for the unemployed, but what that has to do with people working in industry and in the context of lifelong learning, I have no idea, nor does anyone else seem to have any idea yet anyway. So they have been talking about lifelong learning, but nothing else has come out of it that I know of anyway. The in-company training is now the big issue.

APPENDIX 1

GRADUATES QUESTIONNAIRES

May 2000

Dear Course Participant,

I am currently pursuing a research study for a postgraduate course at Dublin City University. My area of research involves looking at aspects of adult education and training from the higher education perspective and within work organizations.

Enclosed you will find an anonymous questionnaire. The questionnaire relates to adult course participants who are in full-time employment. I would therefore be grateful for your cooperation and willingness to answer the questions.

I would like to analyse the results of the survey as soon as possible, and would appreciate if I could have the completed questionnaire returned to me by the date specified on the enclosed stamped addressed envelope.

Thank you for your cooperation with this research study.

Yours sincerely,

Marie Morrissey.

**QUESTIONNAIRE TO ADULT COURSE PARTICIPANTS AT THE
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND, GALWAY AND DUBLIN CITY
UNIVERSITY.**

Where a _____ is provided for your answer, please tick (✓) as appropriate.
Where additional space is provided it would be helpful if you could give details.

PART 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Gender: Male _____ Female _____
2. Age group:
under 23 _____
23 - 29 _____
30 - 39 _____
40 - 49 _____
50 - 59 _____
60 + _____

PART 2: EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

3. Are you the holder of the Leaving Certificate Examination?
Yes _____ No _____
4. Before you undertook your present course, did you previously attend a
third level institution? Yes _____ No _____
5. If your answer to Question 4 was NO, please go to Question 8.
6. Which of the following third level colleges did you attend?
University (including UL and DCU (former National Institutes of Higher
Education) _____
Regional Technical Colleges/Institutes of Technology _____
Teacher Training College _____
Other third level college(s) (please name) _____

7. If you completed your third level course, which of the following third
level qualification(s) did you obtain?
Undergraduate qualification _____ Postgraduate qualification _____
Certificate _____

PART 3: EDUCATION AND TRAINING - WORK RELATED

8. How long have you been employed as a full or part-time worker?

less than one year _____ Years (number) _____

9. Since commencing your first job (since leaving school/college), have you pursued any type of education and training course(s) before undertaking your current course?

Yes _____ No _____

10. If your answer to Question 9 was YES, were some course(s)

related to your work Yes _____ No _____

not related to your work Yes _____ No _____

Please name the course(s) pursued

11. What was the name of the institution(s) where you undertook the course(s)?

12. Did you pursue the course(s) as a

full-time student Yes _____ No _____

part-time student Yes _____ No _____

13. If you completed the course(s), which of the following qualifications did you obtain?

Certificate _____ diploma _____ degree _____

14. If you did not complete the course(s), please state the reason(s) for non-completion.

PART 4: CURRENT EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION AND TRAINING DETAILS

15. How long have you been employed with your present employer?

less than 12 months _____

One year or more (please state number of years) _____ years

16. What is your current occupational title?

17. What is the approximate number of employees in your place of work? _____

18. Was the decision to enroll on the current University course

Your own decision _____

Your employer _____

A work colleague/friend _____

Other (please specify) _____

19. Approximately how many miles do you have to travel from your place of work or home to the University course you are currently pursuing? _____ miles

20. From the following list, tick in order of priority, the five principal factors which motivated you to pursue the course you are currently undertaking:

1 Gain qualification(s) _____

2 Improve/change career _____

3 Secure promotion/higher salary _____

4 Improve performance in present job _____

5 To continue the educational and training process _____

6 Need within your employment for education and training _____

7 Interest in subject(s) _____

8 Other motivational factor(s) - please specify

21. Is the course you are currently pursuing relevant to your work? Yes _____ No _____
22. Does your current employer cover the cost of any of the following:
- | | |
|-----------------------|-------|
| Full fees | _____ |
| Half fees | _____ |
| Travel expenses | _____ |
| Assistance with books | _____ |
| None of the above | _____ |
23. Did you have to take out a loan to help you pursue the current course?
Yes _____ No _____
24. Do you receive your full salary while you are pursuing the current course?
Yes _____ No _____
25. If required, in the current course, do you get time off from your work (evenings/week-end) to attend/travel to the University for lectures/tutorials? Yes _____ No _____
26. Does your employer in your current employment, grant you leave to sit examinations without it affecting your
annual salary Yes _____ No _____
holiday entitlements Yes _____ No _____
27. Do you get study leave while you are undertaking the current course? Yes _____ No _____
28. If you get study leave, how much study leave is granted by your employer for each year of your current course?
- Year 1: less than one week _____ 1 week _____ 2 weeks _____ Over two weeks _____
- Year 2: less than one week _____ 1 week _____ 2 weeks _____ Over two weeks _____
- Year 3: less than one week _____ 1 week _____ 2 weeks _____ Over two weeks _____
- Year 4: less than one week _____ 1 week _____ 2 weeks _____ Over two weeks _____
- N.B. If over two weeks, please specify the amount of time _____

29. On successful completion of the course, do you expect to receive in your present employment

promotion Yes ____ No ____

salary increase(s) Yes ____ No ____

neither of the two ____

other incentive(s) (please state) _____

30. At this stage, do you feel that your participation on the current University course has been beneficial to

your employment Yes ____ No ____

your personal development Yes ____ No ____

31. Does your employer express interest in the course you are currently pursuing?

Yes ____ No ____

Please comment on your answer.

32. Does your participation on the current University course create any difficulties for you?

at work

Yes _____ No _____

at home

Yes _____ No _____

Please comment on your answer.

33. Within your place of employment, is there a person with responsibility for the development of staff education and training? Yes _____ No _____

34. If your answer to Question 33 was YES, does that person express interest in the course you are currently pursuing? Yes _____ No _____

35. What are your views on the attitude of your employer/staff development officer for education and training, towards the provision of education and training for staff within your place of work?

36. What do you see as the main barriers/obstacles affecting staff in your employment participating on education and training courses?

37. What suggestions do you have that could improve staff participation in education and training courses within your place of work?

38. Do you feel that had the University provided Adult Access Courses, their provision would have been beneficial to you while in University? Yes _____ No _____
would have made no difference to you while in University? Yes _____ No _____
Please comment on your answer.

39. Do you think that had an Adult Education Guidance Service being available to you it would have been beneficial to you while in University? Yes _____ No _____
would have made no difference to you while in University? Yes _____ No _____
Please comment on your answer.

40. Overall, in meeting the needs of your work, what rating would you give the course you are currently pursuing?

Excellent _____ Very Good _____ Adequate _____ Room for improvement _____

Please comment on your answer.

41. How satisfied are you with the quality of the current course you are pursuing for your work?

42. Do you find that the National University of Ireland, Galway/Dublin City University is providing the type of courses that are relevant to the requirements of your workforce?

Yes ____ No ____

Please comment on your answer.

43. Are there any further University/employment links/initiatives that you would like to see developed between the National University of Ireland, Galway/Dublin City University and your place of work? Yes ____ No ____

Please comment on your answer.

If you wish to make any further comments on education and training within the workforce, please use the additional page overleaf.

**ADDITIONAL QUESTIONNAIRE ADMINISTERED TO DUBLIN CITY
UNIVERSITY GRADUATES**

Q. 18. How would you describe your employer's attitude to your participation in the programme?

Very supportive _____ Supportive _____ Neutral _____
Unsupportive _____ Very Unsupportive _____

Q. 19. Did you receive any paid educational leave? Yes _____ No _____

Q. 19b Please indicate which if any, forms of financial assistance you received to help with course fees, costs, etc.

Q. 24. Would a foundation course/back to study course have helped you prior to commencing? Yes _____ No _____

Q. 26. Did you make use of the Careers and Guidance Service in DCU? Yes _____ No _____

Q. 27. Do you believe that a designated adult guidance counsellor in the University would have been of use to you? Yes _____ No _____

APPENDIX 2

GRADUATES INTERVIEWS

**INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE FOR GRADUATES WHO COMPLETED
COURSES AT THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND,
GALWAY AND DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY**

1. Before undertaking the course you have recently completed, did you previously attend any type of educational and training course or courses?
2. If you attended, can you tell me the name of the institution(s) that the course or courses were undertaken in. If you completed the course or courses what type of qualification(s) did you obtain?
3. I would now like to ask you some questions in relation to your work?
What is the name of the organization where you work?
How long have you been employed in your current job?
What is your current role within the organization?
How many are employed in your organization?
4. In relation to the course you have recently completed, I have listed a number of possible motivational factors that may have motivated you to participate on the course. Can you look at the factors in front of you and tell me if it was one or a combination of them that motivated you to participate. It may have been another factor or factors, so please feel free to elaborate on this issue of course motivation.
The factors are: 1) to gain a qualification(s); 2) improve or change career;
3) secure promotion; 4) improve performance in present job; 5) to continue the educational and training process; 6) need within your employment for education and training; 7) interest in subject(s)

5. If it was not any of the motivational factor(s) that I have just mentioned, could you elaborate on the motivational factor(s) that influenced you to enrol on the course.
6. In relation to the course you have recently completed, was it relevant to your work within the organization? If so, can you elaborate on how your course participation was applicable to your employment.
7. Did your employer cover any of the following costs on the list in front of you while attending the University: 1) full fees; 2) half fees; 3) travel costs; 4) assistance towards the cost of books.
8. What are your views on employers covering employees education and training costs?
9. I would now like to ask you some questions in the area of educational leave in relation to your current employment.
How far did you have to travel from your work/home to attend the University and did your employer give you time off work to attend/travel to the University?
Did your time off work to attend the University affect your salary/holiday entitlements?
10. Regarding study leave, how much study leave did you get for each year of the course you have just completed?

11. What are your views on the amount of study leave that was granted?
12. In relation to your current employment, has your employer recognized the qualification you received from NUIG/DCU in the form of promotion, salary increase or any other type of incentive or incentives?
13. What are your views on staff being rewarded for additional qualifications by employers?
14. Now that you have completed the course, in what way do you think your organization has or will benefit from the qualification you have achieved?
15. Were you satisfied with the quality of the course you have completed?
16. Reflecting back to the course you have completed, what if any, were the barriers or obstacles that you experienced while participating on the course?
17. Today, there is a lot of emphasis on continuing education and training within the workforce. Is there a person within your organisation who has responsibility for staff education and training programmes, and if so, how important a role do you think that individual has to play in relation to the promotion of staff education and training programmes within your organisation?
18. If there is not a person with responsibility for staff education and training employed within your organization, do you think that your organization would benefit from the appointment of such a person and if so, in what way would it be beneficial to the staff?

19. What are your views on the University providing an Adult Access Course prior to the commencement of courses?
20. What are your views on the University providing an Adult Education Guidance Service?
21. What are your views on both the Adult Access Courses and the Adult Education Guidance Services being organized by the University in conjunction with employers?
22. Do you think, that the NUIG/DCU is currently providing the type of courses that are relevant to the requirements of your workforce and what are your views on this question?
23. From your experience of having recently completed a University course, are there any University-employment links or initiatives that you would like to see developed between the NUIG/DCU and the workforce?

APPENDIX 3

WORK ORGANIZATION QUESTIONNAIRE

November, 2000

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am currently pursuing a research study for a postgraduate course at Dublin City University. My area of research involves looking at aspects of adult education and training from the higher education perspective and within work organizations.

Enclosed you will find a questionnaire which is targetted at adult workers, aged twenty three years and over in your work organization. The questions consists of a combination of open and closed, and due to the nature of some questions, it may take time to extract the required information. I can assure you that the information you provide will be treated in a confidential way and will only be used for the purpose of this thesis.

I would like to analyse the results as soon as possible, and would appreciate if you could have the completed questionnaire returned to me by the date specified on the enclosed stamped addressed envelope.

Thank you for your cooperation in filling in this questionnaire.

Yours sincerely,

Marie Morrissey.

**QUESTIONNAIRE TO ORGANIZATION REPRESENTATIVES ON
CONTINUING EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN THE WORKFORCE**

Where a _____ is provided for your answer, please tick (✓) as appropriate.
Where additional space is provided, it would be helpful if you could give details.

1. Name of your organization/company _____
2. How many years is the organization in existence? _____
3. Please indicate the number of employees in your organization: (approximate number over 23 years of age) _____
4. Within your organization, do you see staff education and training programmes as having
a) a central role _____ b) a peripheral role _____
5. Does your organization have a written education and training policy?
Yes _____ No _____
6. Within your organization, is there an annual budget allocated for staff education and training programmes? Yes _____ No _____
If your answer to this question was 'Yes' how much money is allocated annually for this purpose? _____
Please elaborate on any views you may have to Question 6.

7. Do you know how many of your employees in your organization are currently participating on any type of education and training programme(s)?
Yes _____ No _____
If so, can you give the approximate number? _____

8. Does your organization organize any of the following type of course(s) for staff:

a) internal course(s) (in-company) Yes _____ No _____

If 'Yes', please indicate the type(s) of internal course(s) provided

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

b) external course(s) Yes _____ No _____

If 'Yes', please indicate the type(s) of external course(s) provided

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

c) Are the internal and external courses meeting the needs of your workforce?

Yes _____ No _____

Please elaborate on your answer.

9. Are there any education and training institution(s) that you work in conjunction with in the provision of staff education and training course(s)?

Yes _____ No _____

If your answer was 'Yes', could you name the institution(s)?

10. Does your organization cover any of the following costs for staff who are participating on education and training courses?
full fees _____ half fees _____ travel expenses _____ assistance with books _____
11. Does your organization give time off work to employees for any of the following:
a) to travel/attend classes/lectures/tutorials (if required) Yes _____ No _____
b) time off to study Yes _____ No _____
12. Does time off work to employees to travel/attend to classes
a) affect their holiday entitlements Yes _____ No _____
b) affect their annual salary Yes _____ No _____
13. Do you have a policy within your organization on the amount of study leave that is given to employees for course study purposes? Yes _____ No _____
If your answer was 'Yes' can you elaborate on the amount of time given to employees.
14. On successful completion of course(s), does your organization reward staff in the form of any of the following:-
a) promotion _____
b) salary increase(s) _____
c) other incentive(s) _____ Please elaborate

15. Is there a person within your organization who has specific responsibility for the development/promotion of staff education and training programmes?

Yes _____ No _____

If there **is not** a person within your organization who has specific responsibility for the development/promotion of staff education and training programmes, please go to Question 17.

16. If your answer to Question 15 was 'Yes', can you answer the following questions:

- a) how long has this person been working in this role _____
- b) is this a full time position _____ a part-time position _____
- c) what are the qualification(s) of this person?

- d) what are the main duties and responsibilities of this post

17. If you **do not** have a person with responsibility for the development of staff education and training programmes, would you please answer the following questions:

- a) is there a person within the organization who has not the title of staff education and training officer, but who in addition to their other work, organizes/promotes staff education and training programmes?

Yes _____ No _____

If your answer to 17 (a) was 'Yes',

- b) what are the qualification(s) of this person?

- c) is your organization satisfied with the role that this person is playing within the organization in the area of staff education and training?

Yes _____ No _____

- d) has your organization any immediate plans for the employment of a staff education and training officer? Yes _____ No _____

Please comment on your answer.

18. Which of the following modes of course delivery do you think are most appropriate to the requirements of your workforce?

- a) distance learning/open learning _____

- b) attendance at institutions (regular attendance for lectures/classes) _____

19. Overall, in meeting the particular needs of your workforce, is your organization aware of the type of courses that are provided by the National University of Ireland, Galway? Yes _____ No _____

20. A staff or staff members within your organization, recently completed either the Bachelor of Commerce Degree or the Masters of Business

Administration Course. Has your organization ever being contacted by the National University of Ireland, Galway (e.g. Course Co-ordinators) regarding

a) the co-ordination/liaison of course(s)? Yes _____ No _____

b) input into course contents/requirements? Yes _____ No _____

c) selection of applicants Yes _____ No _____

What are your views on a, b and c of Question 20?

21. Do you think that the Bachelor of Commerce course and/or the Masters of Business Administration course provided by the National University of Ireland, Galway, are meeting the need/requirements of your workforce? Yes _____ No _____

Please comment on your answer.

22. Would you think it beneficial to your organization and the staff if the National University of Ireland, Galway
- a) collaborated with your organization in the provision of Access Courses for entry into the University? Yes _____ No _____
- b) collaborated in the provision of an Adult Education Guidance Services Yes _____ No _____

Please comment on your answers.

23. What in your view constitutes a good third level course that is relevant to the requirements of your workforce?

24. Based on your answer to Question 23, what type of institution(s) do you think are currently providing the type of course(s) that are relevant to the requirements of your workforce?

25. Are there any further links/initiatives that you would like to see developed for your workforce between the National University of Ireland, Galway and your work organization? Yes ____ No ____
Please comment on your answer to this question.

26. What do you think are the main issues that needs to be addressed in the area of staff education and training within your work organization in the new Millennium?

If you wish to make any further comments on staff education and training, please use the additional page overleaf.

APPENDIX 4

WORK ORGANIZATION INTERVIEWS

INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE TO ORGANIZATION REPRESENTATIVES ON CONTINUING EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN THE WORKFORCE

1. Today there is a lot of emphasis on continuing education and training.
How important is the provision of continuing education and training for staff within your organization?
2. How does your organization assess what are the educational and training needs of your staff?
3. With regard to the participation of staff in education and training programmes within your organization, do you make a distinction between
a) permanent and contract workers; b) men and women; c) educational and social backgrounds?
4. What criteria is used within the organization for selecting staff to participate on education and training courses?
5. What do you think motivates your staff within your organization to participate on education and training courses?
6. What do you think are the reasons within your organization for staff not participating on education and training courses? What does your organization do to encourage them to participate?

7. What type of institution or institutions does most of your employees who participates on courses attend and why do you think such institution(s) are selected?
8. Do you think there is a need for the educational and training institutions to liaise with employers regarding needs within their workforce and what are your views on this question?
9. Within your organization what do you think are the main issues in relation to education and training that needs to be addressed in the Millennium?
10. How do you propose to address the issues?

APPENDIX 5

ACCESS OFFICERS INTERVIEWS

**TELEPHONE INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE TO ACCESS
OFFICERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS.**

- Q. 1. Can I ask you in what year were you appointed by your Institution?
- Q. 2. My next question is to establish if your appointment is on a full or part-time basis?
- Q.3 In your role as Access Officer, do you provide Access Courses for
adult students Yes No
school leavers who are educationally disadvantaged
Yes No
- Q.4 In relation to adults, what type of adults do you think your Access Courses in your institution should be targetted at?
- Q.5. Taking into consideration your answer to the previous question, my next question concerns another group of adults. Do you think that adults who have been away from the formal learning environment for a period of six years or more could also benefit from Access Courses?

Q.6 In relation to the term Access Courses for adults, you are probably aware that different titles are used in different higher education institutions. Within your own institution, can you tell me what is the title that you use?

Q. 7. To-day there is a lot of emphasis on workers participating in education and training courses. Do you think that it would be beneficial if you in your role as Access Officer worked with work organizations in the recruiting adults to participate in Access Courses in your institution?

Yes No

Q. 8 (Based on the response), is there currently any form of collaboration taking place between your institution and work organizations?

Yes No

Q. 9. Is there an educational guidance/counselling service for students within your institution?

Yes No

Q. 10. Is there a separate adult educational guidance service being provided for adult students?

Yes No

Q. 11. Taking into consideration the number of adults who attend your institution in the evenings and possibly at week-ends, do the adult students have access to the guidance counsellors during the periods in which the students are in the colleges?

Yes No

Q. 12. Do you feel that there should be a separate adult educational guidance service provided within your institution to cater for the adult students who attend?

Yes No

Q. 13. Do you think that there should be a qualified adult educational guidance counsellor dealing with adult students only.

Yes No

Q. 14. Do you think that there should be collaboration between your institution and work organizations regarding adult educational guidance?

Yes No