Foreword

NCGE / Euroguidance Ireland is delighted to publish this summary report on the development and pilot of the **Euro-Quest** resource for schools.

A key component of the role of Euroguidance Ireland within NCGE is the promotion of educational mobility and the support of guidance counsellors in developing their mobility guidance counselling skills in support of learners.

This Euro-Quest resource, for Transition Year (TY) students, was developed in direct response to requests from Guidance Counsellors for such a resource.

On behalf of NCGE, I wish to express my sincerest thanks to all of the schools who were involved with this process. From the initial developmental phase, through participation in focus groups and piloting the delivery of the modules in schools.
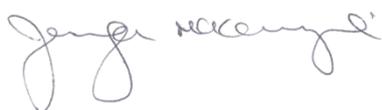
Each and every school principal, guidance counsellor, TY Co-ordinator and subject teacher involved exuded professionalism and showed a dedication and commitment to their students' development.

It has been our honor to work with these schools over last number of years.

Finally, I must acknowledge the interest and dedication of the NCGE / Euroguidance Ireland staff and our external consultants in the development of this resource.

The final comments from Guidance Counsellors and students on the benefits of the programme have paid justice to the time invested.

Is mise le meas

Jennifer McKenzie

Director, NCGE

Contents:

1. Introduction

The **National Centre for Guidance in Education** (NCGE) is an agency of the Department of Education and Skills with responsibility to support and develop guidance practice in all areas of education and to inform the policy of the Department in the field of guidance.

See - www.ncge.ie

NCGE hosts the **Euroguidance Centre** in Ireland which is part of the Euroguidance network of 42 centres in 34 countries across Europe promoting educational mobility - helping guidance counsellors and individuals to better understand the opportunities available to European citizens throughout Europe.

See - www.euroguidance.ie / www.euroguidance.eu

Between 2016 and 2018 Euro-Quest was created and developed by NCGE / Euroguidance Ireland, in partnership with school staff. It was piloted directly with students in 15 schools across Ireland over the academic year 2018/2019. It is intended that following this review of the Euro-Quest pilot that the fully developed resource will be made available to all post primary schools in the academic year 2019/2020.

1.1 Background to Euro-Quest

Mobility Guidance Counselling (MGC) Module

See - https://euroguidance.ie/cpd-mobility-guidance-counselling

With a growing number of students going abroad to study, either as part of an Erasmus+ exchange or for the entire duration of their degree; in 2015 NCGE / Euroguidance Ireland designed a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) module to support Guidance Counsellors in developing the skills they need to support learners in their quest to study, work or volunteer abroad. Since 2016 this **Mobility Guidance Counselling (MGC)** module has been provided by NCGE/Euroguidance Ireland to Irish Guidance Counsellors. This online course explores the process of mobility preparation, induction and re-integration and contains resources that assist the Guidance Counsellor in empowering learners to make informed choices about learning mobility.

The process is based on a model initially developed by Soren Kristensen PhD, a Swedish expert in Youth Mobility and includes information on the practical, linguistic, cultural and mental preparation learner should undertake prior to going abroad. It addresses the issue of contracts between hosting and sending institutions, supports for learners while abroad and underscores the importance of re-integration for learners on their return home.

The success of this module prompted a request for further resources. Guidance Counsellors who had completed the MGC module found it stimulated their interest in finding out more. Amongst their feedback was a request from them that the topic of mobility guidance might be developed into a unit of study made available **directly** to learners. The Euro-Quest programme is a result of that feedback.

1.2 Euro- Quest content overview

See - https://euroguidance.ie/euro-quest

Euro-Quest is a free to use blended learning resource for Transition Year students (aged 15-17 years) aimed at raising students' awareness of mobility in education and employment in Europe and providing students with the motivation and tools to research opportunities to study and work abroad. Euro-quest provides an overview of Europe, highlights the study, training and apprenticeship opportunities available, provides information and suggestions about living and studying abroad and empowers and encourages students to research courses available. The resource contains online and classroom- based materials alongside self-directed research assignments which encourage students to explore the possibility of studying/training in another European country. Euro-Quest is further supported by a Student Workbook and a Whole-School Guidebook (for teachers and Guidance Counsellors) providing an inter-curricular collection of websites, suggestions, tips, activities and assignments intended to reflect delivery in the context of a **Whole School Guidance** approach.

Euro-Quest was designed to be integrated into the Transition Year curriculum through Guidance and it offers the opportunity for cross-curricular links with many other subjects, with Europe as the common theme between them. The programme is designed in four modules and can be delivered by the Guidance Counsellor, in collaboration with the TY Coordinator and/or Transition Year teachers working together.

- **Module 1 – An Overview of Europe.** An overview of the origins and development of the European Union and an exploration of what it means to be an EU citizen, including the right to travel, study and work in other EU member states

- **Module 2 – Why Study in Europe?** An exploration of opportunities to study abroad – including Erasmus+, undergraduate studies in European universities, scholarships, apprenticeships and the availability of funding supports

- **Module 3** – **Living in Europe** Preparation for a period of learning mobility - understanding culture and diversity, tips for studying abroad, the importance of making friends, dealing with homesickness and language acquisition

- **Module 4** – **Where would you like to go?** Students are invited to complete a Careers Interest Assessment and research courses which interest them. Students are encouraged to research potential destinations, gathering information on the educational and cultural settings in different countries; individually or in groups, and present their findings in written or oral form to peers and staff.

More detail on the breakdown of the modules is contained in the appendix.

Euro-Quest **aims to[1]:**

- ✓ develop an awareness of the benefits of European citizenship
- ✓ develop an awareness of the benefits of studying abroad for a period of time
- ✓ motivate students to consider a period of study in Europe
- ✓ develop an understanding of available opportunities for travelling and studying as European students in the future
- ✓ foster positive attitudes towards other cultures and also foster positive cultural exchanges
- ✓ develop research skills that will enable students to explore both study and career opportunities abroad

[1] These aims of Euro-Quest were developed in accordance with the NCGE Whole School Guidance Framework which provides an outline of the Areas of Learning and Competences developed as a result of the whole school guidance programme. The Guidance Learning Outcomes of 'Developing Myself', 'Developing My Learning' and 'Developing My Career Path' refer to the "development of self -awareness and self- knowledge, knowledge of learning and work opportunities, and applying this knowledge to make effective transitions and decision making" (pg16). Some examples of how the module content of Euro-Quest fits with the Whole School Guidance Framework (WSGF) are outlined in TABLE 1 on the next page.

Euro-Quest Learning Outcomes

On completion of the programme, students will be able to:

- ✓ demonstrate knowledge of Europe and the European Union
- ✓ reflect on personal attributes and strengths to identify careers that will suit the individual
- ✓ show an appreciation of the cultural diversity that is inherent to Europe
- ✓ demonstrate key skills in information processing and evaluating online resources in order to identify appropriate opportunities
- ✓ demonstrate key skills in researching, communication and presenting future aspirations

TABLE 1 - How module content fits with the NCGE: A Whole School Guidance Framework (2017)

Euro-Quest	WSGF Areas of Learning	Knowledge, Skills and Competences
Living in Europe Cultural challenges, including culture shock and preparing for cultural exchanges.	**Developing Myself** Developing and maintaining self -esteem and a positive self-concept. Interacting effectively with others. Developing and growing throughout life.	Identify and describe personal qualities, strengths, interest, attitudes and values. Recognise the importance of tolerance, respect and openness when meeting others with different abilities and from diverse backgrounds. Evaluate one's coping style for dealing with change and transition. Avail of opportunities & career experiences to develop one's potential.
Why Study in Europe? Understand the benefits of studying abroad and consider other students' experiences of studying in Europe. Reflect on aspirations for studying abroad.	**Developing My Learning** Making educational choices in line with career aspirations	Investigate educational/apprenticeship, training/work opportunities. Explore subject choice requirements for further/higher education, training and employment.
Where would you like to go? Reflect on attributes and personal strengths. Discover their interests through careers interest assessment. Research options for studying abroad. Compare content, duration of study, tuition fees and qualifications.	**Developing my Career Path** Using career related information and sources appropriately. Managing career development and decision making.	Describe the importance and ways of accessing career related information. Recognise the importance of knowing if career related information is from a reliable source, up-to-date and accurate. Identify how to access information sources. Explore different career/occupational search tools and resources. Analyse & synthesise career related information in line with Career aspirations.

2. The development process

In response to the requests from Guidance Counsellors who completed the online Mobility Guidance Counselling module, NCGE considered that:

- the statistical uptake of Irish students availing of the opportunity to study in Europe needs to increase[1]
- Transition Year would be the best time for students to consider studying abroad as there are fewer pressures for academic and state examinations and students could have time to reflect on their future learning.
- it could become an option within the Transition Year programme with flexibility in planning
- NCGE was not aware of other courses in TY of this nature promoting awareness of educational mobility
- an online programme with interactive content could be the most efficient way to reach TY students
- a workbook would accompany this online content for the further consolidation of learning and to ensure a blended learning approach

Beginning in late 2016 initial programme content was devised and created by NCGE / Euroguidance Ireland, in partnership with selected guidance practitioners, to give real life examples and concrete information and advice about living abroad and adjusting to cultural differences.

Further content was developed over 2017; with a workbook drafted to supplement the online resources and the addition of an end of year assignment - encouraging students to research course options and showcase what they had learned from the course.

The team involved in the development of Euro-Quest, 2016-2017, included internal management and staff of NCGE /Euroguidance Ireland; working in collaboration with an external IT consultant and an external guidance expert.

A formal approach to further developments was compiled and communications planned for recruiting pilot participant schools in early 2018.

1 The national Foreign languages strategy 2017-2026 which aims to " increase the number of (Irish) participants in Erasmus+ by at least 50%"….

3. Pilot Programme - Phase 1 (2018)

February 2018.

Further to an earlier invitation to schools to participate issued by NCGE / Euroguidance Ireland, in late February 2018 an online **'Euro-Quest Development Survey'** was sent out to 23 school Guidance Counsellors and Transition Year Coordinators **(hereon referred to as 'Pilot Participants')** who expressed an interest in participation. Pilot Participants were asked to provide feedback on both the initial proposed online resource and the proposed initial Student Workbook including:

- o   overall content and appearance
- o   navigation
- o   interactivity
- o   use of multimedia
- o   in programme resources and links to external websites
- o   the relevancy of student question sets

16 responses were received. Sample suggestions for improvement focused on the IT delivery elements of the programme, including the quality of the audio and visual elements. Some participants felt that the content was age appropriate whilst others felt it might be more suitable to 3rd or 5th year students. Participants also provided general comment on the proposed content of the Student Workbook.

March 2018

In March 2018 an **initial focus group meeting** with a number of Pilot Participants was held in NCGE to further discuss any issues arising from initial testing and to provide feedback on the 'Euro-Quest Development Survey' responses received. It also facilitated a workshop to discuss how Euro-Quest could be improved and developed.

May 2018

In May 2018 a **second focus group meeting** was held with a number of Pilot Participants in NCGE. This meeting was a briefing session, informing Pilot Participants further about the purpose and proposed delivery of the Euro-Quest Transition Year pilot programme. It served as an additional workshop to discuss how Euro-Quest could be improved and developed.

September 2018

In early September 2018, **a third and final focus group meeting** was hosted by NCGE with a number of Pilot Participants **(hereon referred to as 'Euro-Quest Leaders')**. *An online meeting was facilitated for those who could not attend on the day*. NCGE delivered a short presentation on the final proposed layout of the pilot programme and facilitated a final workshop discussion to elicit final feedback from Euro-Quest Leaders.

3.1 Summary of feedback - Phase 1

Overall, the initial draft of Euro-Quest was very positively received; it was seen as a new course which had a *fresh* approach with novel ideas and good quality materials. TY Co-coordinators in particular complimented the fact that Euro-Quest has the potential to be cross-curricular and is not rigidly structured within time limits. Euro-Quest was further revised by NCGE /Euroguidance Ireland based on the feedback generated from Phase 1 of the pilot. A key additional element, a Whole-School Guidebook (for teachers and Guidance Counsellors) was added to the resource as a direct result of the feedback arising through Phase 1.

During Phase 1 NCGE / Euroguidance Ireland also sought feedback from other relevant external stakeholders; for example meeting with the International Office of one University to discuss the ideas and content of the programme. In this context, Euro-Quest was viewed as a valuable medium to encourage students to think about educational mobility in higher education, while still in post-primary school.

4. Pilot Programme - Phase 2 (2018/2019)

15 schools agreed to pilot the resource directly with students over the 2018/2019 academic year. These schools were located across 11 counties: Clare, Dublin, Galway, Kildare, Laois, Leitrim, Monaghan, Roscommon, Tipperary, Waterford, and Westmeath. Participating schools represented a mix of school types including DEIS (a national programme, classifying schools, aimed at addressing the educational needs of children and young people from disadvantaged communities) , voluntary secondary, community, mixed and single-sex and fee paying , with small and large school populations in urban and rural areas.

In-school coordination was undertaken by the designated 'Euro-Quest Leaders'. The course materials were provided through two dedicated pilot web pages (one for staff and one for students) and included access to the online modules alongside a downloadable student workbook and staff

guidebook and accompanying planning and evaluative surveys. In advance of this phase of the development process Euro-Quest was further restructured and refined and new material added to meet the needs of the students and staff participating in the pilot.

Phase 2 online elements:

- ***The 4 x online Modules themselves***
- ***Student Workbook*** (two versions; one for print and completion offline and one editable PDF)
- ***Staff Whole School Guidebook***
- In advance of course participation students were requested to complete an online ***Student Pre course Survey.*** Following completion of the course students were similarly requested to complete an online ***Student Post Course Survey.***
- In advance of course delivery 'Euro-Quest Leaders' were requested to first complete an online ***Euro-Quest Participation Information Form.*** This provided NCGE/Euroguidance Ireland with some basic information relating to the individual schools' proposed approach to delivery.
- Following course delivery Euro-Quest Leaders and / or relevant additional school staff were requested to complete a number of online ***Post Module Surveys.***
- Following course delivery Euro-Quest Leaders were requested to complete an online ***Post Course Feedback Survey***
- On student completion, Euro-Quest leaders could populate online and print off (if required) a customisable ***Euro-Quest Student Certificate Template*** to add to a student's TY Portfolio

Phase 2 offline elements:

- In promoting a whole school guidance approach, schools involved in the pilot were first asked to complete a ***School Pilot Participation Agreement.*** This required the signatures of the 'Euro-Quest Leader' and the School Principal. The agreement outlined the school's overall role in the pilot and the role of NCGE / Euroguidance Ireland in supporting the school throughout the pilot.
- NCGE / Euroguidance Ireland issued ***separate letters to the 'Euro-Quest Leaders' and School Principals*** outlining their respective roles and providing a ***Checklist*** of required activities.
- In support of students participating in the pilot and in meeting data protection requirements, NCGE / Euroguidance Ireland requested the completion of a ***Parent / Guardian Consent Form.***

Between September 2018 and May 2019:

- o 553 individual students completed (or part completed) the student pre course Survey
  i.e. 553 students commenced the course
- o 40 staff members returned detailed individual post module surveys
- o 9 Euro-Quest Leaders returned detailed post course feedback surveys
- o 206 individual students completed (or part completed) the additional student post course Survey

Phase 2 support visits:

To support the schools participating in the pilot, NCGE / Euroguidance Ireland coordinated with the schools to provide an "informal support visit". There were support visits to each of the 15 schools to meet with Guidance Counsellors, TY Co-coordinators, subject teachers (if appropriate) and students. These informal support visits provided an opportunity for the schools to discuss what they felt was useful / not- useful, easy/difficult, or issues delivery issues such as IT factors etc.

The schools were a broad mix of fee-paying and public schools (religious, community and vocational), in urban and rural locations and male, female and mixed gender. The visits varied considerably in length of time, staff spoken to and whether or not the NCGE / Euroguidance Ireland visitor met groups of students. The visits provided the opportunity for NCGE/Euroguidance Ireland and each school to discuss issues like: What is working well; what is not working so well; what the school did to deliver Euro-quest that had not been considered before; what do students think - from their general comments.

Schools reported continual fluctuation in attendance in TY due to the various activities of the year; hence final post course survey completions did not reflect the initial completions on commencement. Furthermore schools reported that they piloted the Euro-Quest programme with different TY groups, but not all of the TY students in each school.

4.1 Summary of feedback - Phase 2

NCGE / Euroguidance Ireland measures the outcome of the Euro-Quest pilot in the following areas:

1. Learning outcomes for students on completing the Euro-Quest programme.
2. Evaluation feedback from staff and students on the content and delivery mechanisms of the programme.

As Transition Year is the mid-way between the Junior and Senior Cycles, the age of students may vary across schools. The majority of students who indicated their ages on the pre course survey were between 15-17 years. A very small number of students indicated they were 14 or 18 years.

To ascertain if and what the students learned from completing the modules, a series of similar but not identical questions were asked in the pre and post course student surveys. The analysis of these responses is based on the responses provided by the students and provides some understanding of the learning outcomes.

Below is a summary of the responses received.

Survey Title	Question	Yes	No	Maybe
Pre Course Survey	**Have you ever thought about studying or training or doing an apprenticeship abroad?**	**49.6%**	**50.4%**	
Post Course Survey	**Having completed the Euro-Quest course, would you consider studying or training or doing an apprenticeship in Europe?**	**58%**	**16%**	**26%**

Survey Title	Question	Yes	No	Maybe / Not yet
Pre Course Survey	**Do you know about CAO or PLC courses or Apprenticeships which have study opportunities in Europe?**	**8.7%**	**91.3%**	

Survey Title	Question	Yes	No	Maybe / Not yet
Post Course Survey	Would you consider the idea of doing a full time course in an Irish University, IoT or PLC / CFE college in Ireland which contains some PART-TIME study in Europe?	61.5%	17.5%	21%
Post Course Survey	Have you considered Erasmus+ study abroad options for CAO courses?	39.3%	25.4%	35.3%

Survey Title	Question	Yes	No	Maybe
Pre Course Survey	Do you know that qualifications are transferrable across Europe?	28%	72%	
Pre Course Survey	Have you ever heard of "Erasmus" or "Erasmus+"?	31%	69%	
Pre Course Survey	Have you ever heard the phrase educational mobility before?	5.8%	94.2%	

Survey Title	Question	Yes	No	Maybe
Post Course Survey	Would you recommend this course to next year's Transition Years?	76.2%	8.8%	15%
Post Course Survey	Having completed the Euro-Quest course, has it changed your view in general of studying abroad?	64%	16%	20%

Some reasons students gave <u>FOR considering</u> options abroad in the post course survey:

- o It would be an experience that you would never forget and you will also meet new people and learn about their culture
- o Loads of different courses there I didn't know about
- o I feel that I have a lot more options than I thought there were and there is a lot more than just studying abroad such as learning a new language meeting new people and experiencing a new culture also there is a lot more financial aid. I also didn't know that some schools make you go out to another country and I find that very interesting
- o I have found out that this helps you to settle and so you won't feel alone and homesick
- o Yes because I never really thought about going abroad but it has changed my mind about studying abroad
- o I don't feel that it is as scary as it was before

Some reasons students gave <u>for NOT considering</u> options abroad in the post course survey:

- o I wouldn't mind but I get homesick easily and I would miss my friends
- o No, I'd miss too many matches
- o I would get to learn and experience new things but then it could be difficult to get around when you don't really know people
- o Parents do not want us to go away

Evaluation feedback from school STAFF on the content and delivery mechanisms for the programme:

Staff who piloted the Euro-Quest programme with their TY Students provided feedback on various aspects of the modules, from content to visuals, graphics and time and organisation involved to complete the modules. Overall feedback was positive, both in terms of the existing content and scope for improvement(s). Below are examples of some of the feedback received from staff.

- I think this is a fantastic programme providing students with invaluable information, as many students have a very limited knowledge of Europe. Most students had never thought of what Europe can do for them from an academic point of view and were surprised by the possibilities presented to them in the course.

- It was user friendly
- It is never too early to inform students about future opportunities but for many TY students college seems so far away
- The real-life experience of the speakers was very interesting. Students could relate to their stories.
- The Euro-Quest programme has certainly achieved its aim of making students aware of opportunities in Europe
- The back-up material was top class
- The exercises, such as *Take Your Temperature*, made students think
- It prompted further debate
- It was really useful to have discussions which normalise homesickness and to develop awareness of cultural differences alongside discussing practical details re visa, insurance, passport, accommodation etc.

Suggestions made:

- Organise visits by previous Erasmus students to schools offering the Euro-Quest programme to make it more "real".
- Organise a full day CPD for the teachers who will deliver the programme, or at least to the main Euro-Quest teacher.
- A shorter version would be ideal in a Modern Foreign Language class in 5th and/or 6th Year.
- Some modules could be shortened and repetition reduced. It is quite lengthy for an 8 week TY module.
- Provide additional clarity on which modules are appropriate for a cross-curricular approach
- Delve into the information on studying abroad earlier (rather than information on the EU)

4.2 School Visits

As part of Phase 2 there were 16 visits to the 15 participant schools by two NCGE/Euroguidance Ireland staff (one school being visited twice).
Below is a summary of the feedback received.

The challenges of delivery:

Schools commented on the packed Transition Year programme in every school and the limitations of time allocated to trialing Euro-Quest. Most schools have at least 20 subjects on their TY curriculum. Apart from the mandatory core subjects such as Irish, English and Maths, there are subjects such as Chinese, Japanese, Polish, Song Writing, Sustainable Living and many others. Hence, very few of the 15 schools had more than 8 classes assigned to the Euro-Quest course (either in Guidance or other subjects) and none had a chance to trial Euro-Quest continuously without class cancellations or reduced class numbers due to the frequent absence of Transition Year students for various school related projects (e.g. on work experience, visits to exhibitions such as Higher Options, Zeminar, Young Scientist Exhibition, educational trips, fundraising and volunteering activities and school sports matches).

Access to computer room:

Timetabling of the programme varied in the schools and was, in some cases, incorporated within subjects already set on the timetable. The availability of the schools' computer rooms for specific TY classes was limited in some cases which affected the delivery of the online element of the Euro-Quest.
However, schools reported resourceful ways to address the lack of access to the computer room such as creating an opportunity for classroom discussion using the student workbook and school guidebook as discussion prompts, requiring the students complete an online activity for homework , coordinating a module with a subject teacher during their timetabled class in the computer room.

Simultaneous delivery of modules:

The cross-curricular nature of Euro-Quest lends itself to the sharing of modules across subjects to allow the Guidance Counsellor to focus on Module 4. More than one module can be delivered at any time by different staff through different subjects. This was something which staff needed to reconsider, as three guidance counsellors commented that when doing it again, they would start Module 4 earlier, even if other members of staff were teaching on Modules 1, 2 and 3.

The idea of students completing the Interest Assessment earlier came up in at least four schools, as staff felt it was too late to do this in Module 4.

Innovative ideas:

In their feedback at the school visits (in addition to the online STAFF survey feedback already highlighted), schools indicated how they saw other opportunities including to link this resource with other subjects and programmes in TY such as:

- Linking it to the European Ambassadors Programme
- Involving it in a French week held in school
- Voicing the intention to start with Module 4
- Linking Euro-Quest to TY trips to Europe e.g. TY trips to the European Parliament in Brussels
- One school is using One Note to monitor students' access to and usage of Euro-Quest
- Next year, GCs will enlist the help of the language teachers

Students considered the barriers and their fears:

From their general comments, students indicated that they had never thought of learning opportunities abroad before and some did not know that studying abroad was an option to think about before making CAO choices. Some students noted that their concerns would include distance from home, getting accommodation, the cost of living and not knowing the language of the other country.

Some of the key concerns students had in class discussions (which were borne out in the STUDENT online surveys also) included the issues of money, homesickness, being away from home, the unknown and not being able to understand things if they don't have the language. One interesting and useful insight gained during the visits was the absence in Euro-Quest of anything to do with sport. Some students would not consider a study experience in Europe because they were afraid that they might lose their place on the local sports team.

Time:

Most schools said that the course needed to be condensed. Due to the prevalent 8 or 10 week cycle in schools where subjects are rotated for a third of the year, there are approximately 8 classes of Guidance in the TY timetable. As repeated many times verbally and in the feedback from staff, time constraints meant that most schools only did Modules 1 and 2 and looked briefly at the others. One school felt that 7/8 weeks per module was a bit tight.

Urban/Rural differences

There was a marked difference between the responses from rural and urban schools with regard to the time it takes to travel and the distance from home. For example, students from one school located near Dublin airport had no issue with travel time compared to a school on the west coast where students said it took a day to get to an airport and there was a lot of waiting time in airports. Therefore, for students in rural schools with a 3 to 5 hr travel time to an airport, Euro-Quest was more of a challenge to deliver. Psychologically, rural students had more increased concerns about being 'away from home' and expressed fears that if 'anything happened', their parents would not be able to come and get them quickly, and similarly that it would take a long time for them to return if anything happened at home.

In rural DEIS schools where financial costs were the primary issue, many students who rarely visit Dublin, let alone the airport, were the hardest to engage.

General knowledge

There was also a noticeable contrast in how knowledgeable the students in the fee-paying schools were about the advantages of studying in Europe through Higher Education and how this was not so strong in the rural DEIS schools in the pilot, where a high proportion of students were intending to do apprenticeships or Further Education courses and were not so interested in study periods abroad. The guidance counsellors in these schools said that their parents would not encourage the students to go to college in Dublin because of the cost and most will go to the local PLC or do an apprenticeship.

Limited access to IT devices

The Guidance Counsellor in one DEIS school pointed out that teachers can't assume that students have access to computers at home, nor can many of them print at home. Some families do not have televisions and that is the choice of the family. With that point in mind, the Euro-Quest suggested class plans and the introductory section of the Guidebook ensured that the 'flipped classroom' model was offered as *optional*. For the students who do have access to personal devices, there were difficulties in some schools in accessing the online Euro-Quest resources.

HE/FE/Apprenticeships

In two DEIS schools, the Guidance Counsellors emphasised that the majority of students seemed interested in apprenticeships or further education courses in PLCs and that there was a slight increase in study abroad options in the local PLCs.

Languages

In two schools, the Guidance Counsellors emphasized that since there has been an increased emphasis on STEM through information to schools, students have opted to drop languages if they are not a requirement for STEM courses. They are looking at teaming up with language teachers to maintain and increase language take-up in their schools because they perceived that STEM advertising is pulling students away from choosing languages to study.

Varied delivery methods

One of the schools which seemed to have the most access to a computer room did a full screen presentation of most of Module One in the computer room. Overall, it seemed that Modules Two and Four were the two modules which were best suited to computer room delivery. The second half of Module Two was the section where there were a lot of videos and blogs and students worked better when they could select them at random to listen to. Module Four was the individual research section which necessitated access to computers, either in school or at home.

Communication with schools

During the year, NCGE –Euroguidance remained in contact with schools via email and telephone conversations to provide continued support.

Appreciation of Euro-Quest

Staff who delivered the pilot programme noted that they were extremely impressed with the depth and breadth of Euro-Quest and its variety and flexibility. The fact that it is so adaptable, with the new additions to the workbook and guidebook, staff expressed their gratitude that they have enough material available so they can cope at short notice in a mainstream classroom if they cannot get access to a computer room. They commented that the reflective questions in the workbook fit in very well with the new "Classroom- Based – Assessment" system coming on stream in many subjects with the emphasis on reflective assignments. Staff also appreciated the multiplicity of choice in the optional questions at the end of each key section. Guidance Counsellors who were involved said that much of Module 4 was also suitable for 5th Years in the future.

5. Next Steps

Following the completion of both pilot phases, NCGE/Euroguidance Ireland reviewed all of the relevant feedback and an internal report was prepared in order to inform the next steps in the development of Euro-Quest.

This included:

- a detailed analysis of the changes and edits needed to module content
- necessary changes to the ICT elements of delivery
- consideration of the examples and ideas from school staff for inclusion in the guidelines within the school guidebook and student workbook
- committing to engaging further with QQI/Europass on the additional promotion of the Europass CV in schools

NCGE / Euroguidance Ireland considered this a successful pilot and subsequently committed to further developing the Euro-Quest online resource to be available for schools during the 2019-2020 academic year.

NCGE / Euroguidance Ireland will continue to monitor, evaluate and review the Euro-Quest module to ensure it remains fit for purpose in supporting students to consider learning opportunities abroad.

Appendix - Euro-Quest content in detail

This transition unit is designed to give students an opportunity to explore the idea of studying abroad for a semester, an academic year, or for an entire degree. It begins with an overview of Europe, the European Union and the Erasmus+ programme. It looks at the benefits of studying in Europe and examines practical issues and challenges a student may face while living and studying in a new country. Students will also explore the advantages, disadvantages, practicalities and demands of living in a host country. Students are presented with resources and tools in order to research options for studying across Europe. These include research tools for discovering courses of interest, language learning initiatives and other resources. It is in four units or modules the essentials of which are summarised below:

Module One: An Overview of Europe

Students are invited to gain an overview of the European Union, understand citizenship of the European Union and how they, as Irish citizens, identify as European, gain an understanding of the right, as EU citizens, to live, work, study and travel in any EU member state, gain an overview of the benefits of studying abroad including personal development, language learning, and the benefit to future career opportunities when participating in a period of time living/studying abroad. They will participate in brainstorming activities and small group discussions in relation to the diversity of European culture and also reflect on Ireland's own specific cultural identity/identities. They will complete workbook exercises and online quizzes to test their knowledge and consolidate learning.

Module Two: Why Study in Europe?

Students may consider the opportunities of studying abroad for a semester, an academic year, or an entire degree, consider other students' experiences of studying in Europe, learn about the Erasmus+ programme and what it can offer, reflect on their own motivation to study abroad and participate in small group discussions and also personal written reflections in relation to their aspirations for studying abroad.

Module Three: Living in Europe

Students will consider cultural challenges, learn how to cope with culture shock and homesickness, discover ideas for making friends in the host country, find resources for learning new language skills, explore the practical details of a cultural exchange, such as visa requirements, insurance fees and accommodation costs and participate in workbook exercises and small group discussions.

Module Four: Where would you like to go?

Students can participate in online self-assessment tools to match potential careers to their personal strengths, reflect on their own attributes and personal strengths, identify and research careers of interest and understand the qualifications necessary to obtain the skills needed. They may also compare course content, duration of study, tuition fees and qualifications, research options for studying abroad a particular qualification which has captured their interest, compare content, duration of study, tuition fees and qualifications, gather and create a folder of images, ideas, destinations within countries and expectations and compare and deliver a presentation on a selected course and study abroad option together with information on a potential destination.

Culminating Project:

On completion of the course, the students will have reflected on their own aspirations to study abroad and will research and prepare a report on both countries and courses of potential interest. Students are invited to showcase their research individually or in groups, in written or oral form or both. These could take the form of reports, wall charts, portfolios, posters, power point presentations, oral presentations, interviews and many others.