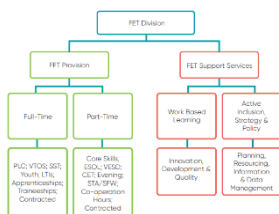Bord Oideachais & Oiliúna
LUIMNIGH & AN CHLÁIR
LIMERICK & CLARE
Education & Training Board

FURTHER EDUCATION & TRAINING

QUALITY ASSURANCE
NEWSLETTER

Inside this issue

Welcome to the eight edition of the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board Further Education and Training Quality Assurance newsletter.

The covid-19 pandemic continues to impact all aspects of our lives, and in particular for us the teaching, learning and assessment environment. The contingency measures to mitigate the impact of the covid-19 pandemic continue to be in place for this academic year - extension of scope of provision to allow for online and blended learning, the modification of rules for award (specifically in relation to work experience), and alternative assessment and authentication processes.

There have been significant developments in recent months in terms of the Inaugural Review of Quality Assurance, the publication of the Learner Charter, Curriculum Developments, additional roles and personnel within Innovation, Development and Quality etc., and we hope that this newsletter captures these for your information. As always, for any further information or queries please feel free to contact any member of staff, either directly or via qa@lcetb.ie

Alan Hogan
FET Manager,
Innovation, Development and Quality

Innovation, Development and Quality

The establishment of Innovation, Development and Quality has been a significant recent development within the Further Education and Training Division of Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board.

Innovation Development and Quality is the integration of the support functions of Quality Assurance, Curriculum Development, Professional Development, Technology Enhanced Learning, Monitoring and Evaluation, and the development and management of 2016+ apprenticeship programmes, currently the National Hairdressing Apprenticeship. This integrated approach provides the opportunity to deliver a coordinated, strategic, effective

and integrated support service, aligned to the achievement of the key priorities of the FET Division Strategic Framework, supporting the delivery of quality teaching and learning across the FET division.
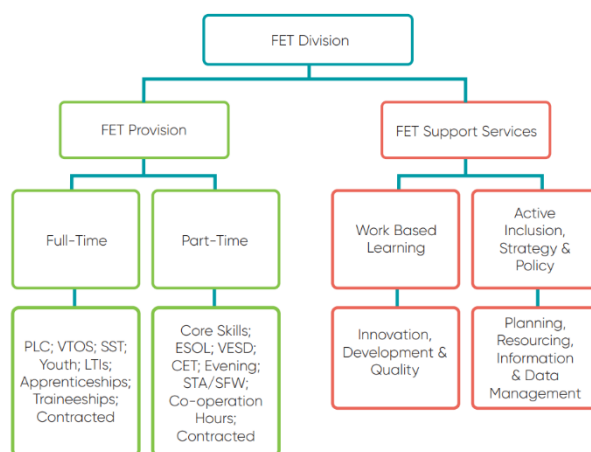
Some important developments over recent months have included the following

- ➢ Establishment of leadership roles within Innovation, Development and Quality, and we congratulate the following on their recent appointments:
  - Quality Assurance Officer, Policies, Procedures, Supports and Stakeholder Engagement – Patsy Hogan
  - Quality Assurance Officer, Curriculum Development, Teaching, Learning and Assessment – Máire Lynch
  - Quality Assurance Officer, Evaluation, Monitoring, Communication and Analytics – Anna Chatzi
  - Online and Blended Learning Officer – Hanorah Lyons
  - Professional Learning and Development Coordinator – Tara Robinson
  - National Hairdressing Apprenticeship Coordinator – Eamonn Gardiner
- ➢ Formation of a new area within the TEL Support Service, that of Online and Blended Learning, to support the organisation capacity to lead the development and support of online and blended programme development. Cohen Ambrose has joined Hanorah as Online and Blended Learning Support Officer.
- ➢ Recruitment of three Quality Assurance Support officers, each with regional areas of support assigned.
  - ○ Leanne Stafford – County Clare provision responsibilities
  - ○ Aisling Holian Lawlor – College of FET, LCFE Mulgrave St. Campus responsibilities
  - ○ Eimear King – Limerick City provision responsibilities
- ➢ Victoria Hook, QA Support Officer, with QA responsibilities for County Limerick Provision and also Colleges of FET Raheen Campus and Shannon Campus.
- ➢ Recruitment of Recognition of Prior Learning Support Officer Caroline Goode – to support Patsy in the quality assurance policies and procedures function, developing and establishing RPL processes across curriculum and provision.
- ➢ Recruitment of Curriculum Development Support Officer Monica Greaves – to support Máire in the curriculum development function in the review/revision/consolidation of existing legacy curriculum alongside the development of new curriculum (apprenticeships, new validations, traineeships).
- ➢ Recruitment of Professional Learning and Development Support Officer Patricia Noonan to support Tara in the Professional Learning and Development function in actioning SOLAS FET PD Strategy and implementing Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board Professional Development Action Plan.
- ➢ Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board are Coordinating Provider of the National Hairdressing Apprenticeship. Recently recruited Quality Assurance Support Officer (Enda O'Callaghan) and TEL Support Officer (Lorraine Hickey) have initial responsibility within this programme.
- ➢ The Innovation, Development and Quality Organisation Chart can be viewed on StaffCONNECT **here**

Our organisation leads the way in the Inaugural Review process nationally

As an organisation that is looking to excel and lead the way within the Further Education Sector in Ireland, we have committed ourselves to develop our quality culture even more in order to continually assure the confidence of our learners and partners. This can only happen by promoting transparency and public awareness, and the Inaugural Review process has proven to be an invaluable process in helping to achieve this.

The Inaugural Review process is the start of a 5-year cyclical review process and was initiated with the publication of QQI's **Policy for the Inaugural Review of Quality Assurance in Education and Training Boards** in October 2019, and then was followed by an extensive and comprehensive process of planning, communication, consultation, drafting, design, and approval, resulting in the publication of the ETB's Provider Profile and Self-Evaluation Report in December 2020.

A very useful online resource, created for the QAIR process, and available to all is at - **Inaugural Review of Quality Assurance | Learning and Skills**

Glen McMahon, Review Team Chair, communicated some key highlights at the process' final session:

- The panel agreed that Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board is a learning organisation, with a culture of **openness and transparency**
- Senior management's **commitment** to the mission statement and values of the organisation
- A learner-centred approach, a **commitment from staff** focused on the learner's journey

- Commendation of the establishment of the ETB's QA Support Service and the evidence of this **QA support throughout** from learners, co-ordinators, second providers etc.
- Evidence of **pro-active collaboration** with other ETBs and stakeholders
- **Active Inclusion Support** highly recognised by the panel

Currently we are at the stage to receive the Final Report. The final report will initiate a 3-month process in which we are required to agree on our action plan and communicate it to QQI. Then, QQI will be expecting our annual Follow-up Reports. These reports, along with a continuous reporting and dialogue process will help us remain on our action plan targets.

Given the stage we currently are, many staff members will continue to engage with the process as their contribution is vital to the formation of our organisation's QA action plan. Quality Assurance will continue to use all available channels to inform all staff on the progress of the process and ask for staff's contribution and feedback.

Commenting following completion of the virtual visit, Paul Patton, Director of Further Education and Training, said: "*We look forward to the detailed report and working with QQI to implement the recommendations and to continuously evolve and improve our Quality Assurance system to achieve our Core Purpose – to provide relevant and innovative Further Education and Training opportunities that address the needs and aspirations of our learners, local communities and employers. My sincerest thanks again to all the staff who participated in the planning, development, and implementation of this very important process.*"

New challenge: Learner Voice

Early this November we participated once again at the Aontas "Learner Voice". All learners, across the organisation were given the opportunity to give their feedback. Their voice is heard loud and clear as this year we were able to tailor Aontas' questionnaire to our needs. This element is very useful to us as we are able to get feedback on certain areas, unique to our own ETB, and use it to our organisation's and learners' benefit.

This exercise, along with the Inaugural Review's recommendations, have highlighted the importance and imperative need for a systematic reporting of the learners' feedback across the organisation. This will allow learners to provide constructive and insightful feedback as the organisation is required to understand what is working best for them. This is a perfect way to maintain high quality standards for all learners in all provisions across the organisation.

Having all these in mind, a new working group will be formed shortly. The group's task will be to gather all activities on learners' feedback across all campuses and commence the discussion on best practices and lessons learnt. This is going to be a great start, by recognising what is working well for us and how we are going to improve things further. This group will work on a learners' feedback system, across Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board, reflecting the needs and particularities of each provision. At the same time, this system will have to be consistent to extract useful results from our learners' population and help us with our decision-making across our College of FET Campuses.

QUALITY ASSURANCE GUIDELINES WEBSITE

If you do not know your CAS from your PATD or your DA from your MIPLO, then the QQI Glossary of Terms is the resource you need

There is nothing more frustrating than trying to read a work email or attend a meeting and spend half of the time trying to figure out what all these acronyms mean.

A new resource by QQI is finally here to put all these worries to rest. An up-to-date document titled: *Glossary of Terms / Acronyms used in QQI* is now available to all staff on StaffCONNECT [Quality Assurance – Communication – National and International Publications | QQI Documentation]

QQI Glossary of Terms

This document includes all QQI related abbreviations from awards, programme, programme structures and content, QQI programme documentation related terms, to the education and training organisations' and awarding bodies, quality assurance related and English language education terms.

This glossary document not only is a must-have document for every new staff member, it is also a valuable resource for all staff. It not only assists as a refresher to terms that are not frequently used, it can also be helpful to staff who change positions and consequently areas of work.

Learner Charter
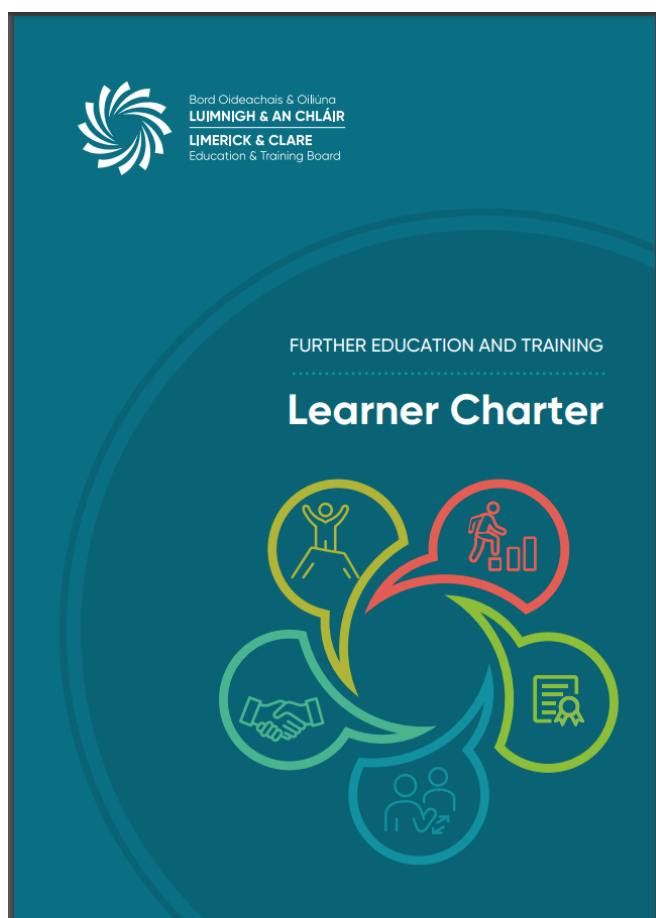
Our Learner Charter has been recently launched. This resource is a complete and user-friendly guide for every learner enrolling on any FET course.

This Further Education and Training Learner Charter sets out the values of Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board, and provides a framework that allows learners, our staff, and learning practitioners to know and understand their respective responsibilities. It is based on the principle of collaboration and co-operation between FET learners and staff.

The Learner Charter contains weblinks to referenced resources. To ensure FET staff and learners always have access to the most up-to-date version of the Charter and associated policies, PDF versions of the document should not be circulated or printed. Staff and learners should instead always use the dedicated website for access -

https://learningandskills.ie/charter/

## QA Support Service Team – Sharing Ideas and Best Practice

Remember to join the growing network in our QA team. Learning Practitioners have been providing great support to each other on this platform and we would love to see it grow.

FET DIV The Learning Network - Sharing Ideas and Best Practice

Quality Assurance on StaffCONNECT

Programmes, Policies, Procedures, Assessment Resources, Certification - all in one place on **StaffCONNECT | Quality Assurance.**
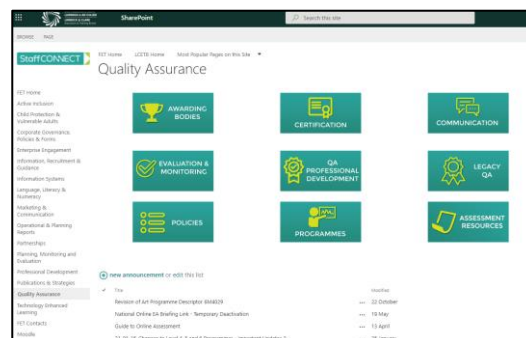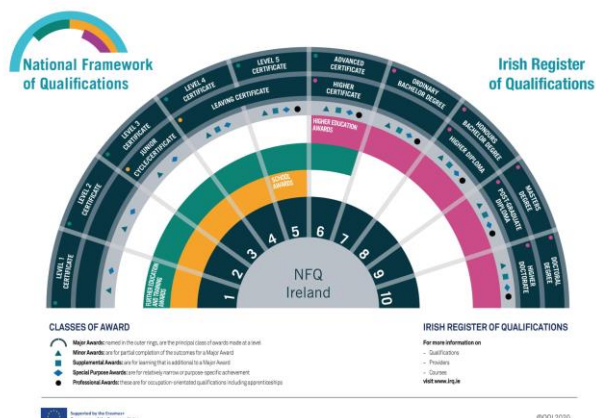

@LimClareETB_QA on Twitter

The **@LimClareETB_QA** Twitter page provides regular news and information updates on Quality Assurance in education and training - local, national and international.

Updated National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) Fan Diagram

Established in 2003, the Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) is a 10-level, single national entity through which all learning achievements may be measured and related to each other.

In late 2020, following consultation with QQI's (Quality and Qualifications Ireland) key stakeholders, the Framework was updated to reflect changes in recent years across the education and training landscape:

- Junior Cycle Reform
- The Technological Universities Act
- Institutes of Technology enabled to make their own awards
- The future inclusion of the awards of Listed Awarding Bodies in the Framework
- Development of Professional Award Type Descriptors at NFQ Levels 5-9
- The launch of the Irish Register of Qualifications

These updates will explain the changed relationships between different levels of the NFQ and different education and training awards.

The new diagram (as seen above) can be also found in this link -
https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/National-Framework-of-Qualifications-(NFQ).aspx

A printed copy of the updated NFQ fan will soon reach your classrooms!

LearningandSkills.ie QA Webpage

Quality Assurance | Learning and Skills

Reminder!

Always check StaffCONNECT for the latest version of your Programme Module Descriptor and the Assessment Templates.


We would like to wish our friend and colleague, Hanorah Lyons, the very best of luck in her new role as *Blended and Online Learning Officer*. She will be very much missed in QA but we look forward to still working with her in her new role.

The QA door is always open here for you Hanorah! ☺

New MS Form for RPL Programme Applications:
The Application to use a Module and/or Major Award for the Purposes of RPL Certification
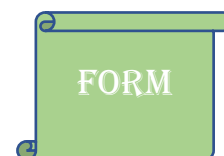
This Form must be completed for Programme Governance oversight if a Provision is planning to use a module(s) and/or Major Award for the purposes of certifying learners for RPL (Recognition of Prior Learning). If your Provision does not already have approval to deliver the module(s) and/or Major Award, this form must be completed.

Submission of this form does not mean that approval to deliver the module(s) or Award in the traditional manner is implied. Please use the *Programme Application Request Form* for all applications that involve class delivery in the usual manner.

POINTS TO NOTE

Preparation for QQI Portfolio Submission

A RESOURCE FOR ASSESSORS TO USE WHEN PREPARING PORTFOLIOS FOR SUBMISSION

THESE POINTS ARE THE MOST COMMON ISSUES HIGHLIGHTED AT IV AND EA

ATTENTION TO DETAIL WHEN TRANSFERRING RESULTS FROM QQI LEARNER MARKING SHEET TO MODULE RESULTS SUMMARY SHEET

CLEAR EVIDENCE OF CORRECTIONS AND FEEDBACK TO LEARNERS

CHECK SIGNATURES ARE PRESENT ON ALL REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

ADHERE TO THE CALENDAR AND DATES ISSUED BY YOUR CENTRES

ORGANISE HARD COPY EVIDENCE ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF THE PORTFOLIO SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION/SHORT-TERM EXTENSION/COMPASSIONATE CONSIDERATION ARE INCLUDED

ORGANISE ONLINE EVIDENCE ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF THE PORTFOLIO SUBMISSION CHECKLIST FOR THE PLATFORM YOU ARE USING

ASSESSOR FOLDER CONTAINS ALL REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION AS PER PORTFOLIO SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

Review of Feedback from Certification Process

Each certification period, following Results Approval and Appeals, a review of feedback from Internal Verification and External authentication is collated. Reported to the Limerick and Clare ETB Quality Council, this review is an important part of our quality improvement cycle.

Developed by QASS Support Officers, this useful "Points to Note" guide is a helpful reminder of the major themes and issues highlighted at IV and EA processes.

The guide can be found on StaffCONNECT in Quality Assurance/Assessment Resources:

21_12_01_Points to Note for QQI Submissions.pdf (sharepoint.com)

Quality Assurance Governance

Governance and oversight of all Quality Assurance matters within the FET division is carried out by our Quality Council and associated sub-groups.

Meeting regularly throughout the year, this mechanism ensures that all Quality Assurance aspects related to the design, development, approval, implementation, monitoring and review of the Further Education and Training provision offered by the ETB. It protects, maintains and develops the standard of Education and Training programmes and related activities. The details of meetings, membership, schedule, agendas and minutes are all available to view on **StaffCONNECT | Quality Assurance | Communication | Quality Assurance Governance**
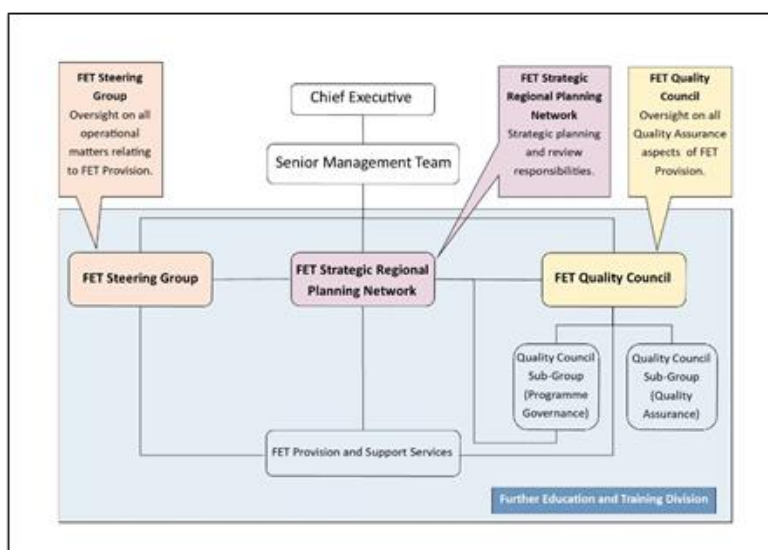
Covid-19 Contingency Measures for Teaching, Learning and Assessment

QQI's Contingency Planning for Teaching, Learning and Assessment arrangements have been extended to incorporate the academic year 2021-2022, expiring 31st August 2022. The **Guidelines and Procedures for Covid-19 Contingency Planning of Assessments V1.4** document has been updated to reflect this extension.

This document also contains information on the contingency modification of CAS Awards and the Work Placement Forms (WP Forms 1-5). **As in the previous academic year, these Forms must be submitted where modifications to the structure of certain awards have been implemented**. It is preferable to submit one form per Provision.

The WP Forms and associated information are available in the **Covid-19 Contingency Modifications to CAS Awards** folder on StaffCONNECT.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Some of the current developments:

- Writing of Printed Textiles 5N3846, VTOS Ennis Campus
- Writing of modules – L3 History (certified) and Introduction to CAD (non-certified) Core Skills O Connell Avenue Campus
- Writing of a revised version of Business English 4N1108 – for Vocational Areas
- Standardisation of L1 and L2 Programme Modules into one version for use across the organisation
- Development of Cx (Customer Experience) Special Purpose Award L6
- Development of new micro credential Sustainability in the Workplace L5 under Skills to Advance, with SOLAS and other ETBs
- Development of the Early Learning and Care (ELC) Programme for roll out in September 2022
- Development of a range of Traineeships with Raheen Campus and Shannon Campus
- Successful validation of two QQI F-gas modules for delivery in Shannon Campus, the first ETB to get validation nationally.

A reminder to complete the **Programme Module Revision Form** to request a review of your Programme Module.

Interpreting QQI's Core QA Guidelines

QQI has published a new resource to assist providers in interpreting the QQI Core Statutory (QA) Guidelines (April 2016) in relation to governance and the management of quality.

It explains key aspects of governance that should be considered when designing, evaluating, reviewing or renewing governance arrangements, and is aimed at imparting to providers a consistent understanding of the key concepts and aspects of effective governance structures while avoiding a one-size-fits-all approach.

You can download a copy of this document here. **Interpretation and Practical Application of the QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines Section 2.1 Governance and Management of Quality.pdf**

QASS Professional Development Training

→ *Internal Verifier*, *Academic Writing and Referencing* **and** *Exam Writing Training* are available, where there is demand, for all centres. Please contact qa@lcetb.ie if there are a number of staff looking for this training and we will accommodate where possible.

→ *QA Induction for New Staff*: This training is held twice per academic year with the next sessions due to take place in February 2022. Further communication on how to register for this training will be sent out by the Professional Development Support Service in the New Year.

→ **New for 2022!** *RPL Staff Professional Development*

An exciting new professional development opportunity is currently under development and will be available to staff in early 2022. Watch out for the updates from the Professional Development Support Service for more information on the course content and how to register.

→ Two workshops are coming up through Professional Learning and Development (both will be recorded):

- *Practical steps to create effective surveys* – **1st December**, 12.00 - 13:00 - Register Here
- *Practical steps to analyse surveys' results* - **10th December,** 12.00 - 13:00 - Register Here

Any member of staff in need for questionnaire/survey/interviews and/or statistical analysis assistance, please contact Anna Chatzi, anna.chatzi@lcetb.ie

Academic Writing Handbook and Referencing Handbook

Both of these handbooks, developed in conjunction with ETBI and FESS, are an invaluable resource.

Handbooks are available on the learningandskills.ie Quality Assurance webpage for easy access by staff and learners.
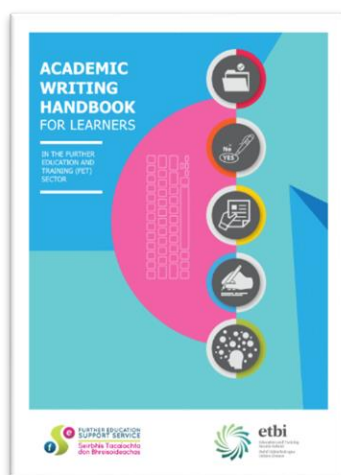
LearningandSkills.ie Quality Assurance Academic Writing Handbook

LearningandSkills.ie Quality Assurance Referencing Handbook
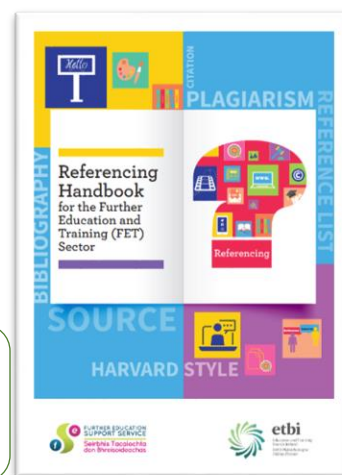
The National Hairdressing Apprenticeship: Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) of the QQI Level 6 Advanced Certificate in Hairdressing

RPL allows learning that has taken place in all areas of life to be formally validated. In other words, previous life experiences can lead to a formal qualification on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). RPL gives value to all previous relevant learning, no matter where or how this learning has occurred.

In particular, RPL of the Level 6 Advanced Certificate in Hairdressing is a process whereby the RPL applicants can achieve this major award by providing evidence of achievement of the programme learning outcomes over the span of their hairdressing careers. This learning can be experiential or certified but for this particular industry, it is primarily experiential and considers evidence from work, hobbies, community involvement, family life, volunteering, etc.

The qualification that can be achieved via RPL is equal to the one that can be gained by 'traditional' apprentices who learn both on-the-job (in the salon) and off-the-job (in the FET College/Centre). The estimated timeframe for achievement of the award via RPL is six to nine months.

The pilot group of nine RPL applicants began their RPL journey with a workshop held on Monday 20th September where they were formally inducted into the RPL pilot group by the NHA team. These applicants were invited to participate in the pilot, as they were part of the first group of trained workplace mentors for the programme. The commitment from the NHA team during validation of the programme was that the workplace mentors would be afforded the opportunity to get their qualification before their first apprentices graduated.

Each RPL applicant has been:

- Assigned an RPL Mentor who is providing 1:1 support and guidance (Caroline Goode, RPL Support Officer, QA Support Service)
- Given access to the NHA customised Moodle site, HairApp and support from the TEL Support Service (with thanks to Sheila Mc Donald and Lorraine Hickey)
- Provided with the opportunity to participate in a specially developed IT Skills for Hairdressers course (with thanks to Máire Kerrane and Elaine Griffin, College of Further Education and Training, O'Connell Avenue Campus who are facilitating this)
- Each applicant will also be supported with addressing any identified skills gaps through participation in short bridging courses as needed.

In January 2022 the nine RPL applicants will each participate in two of three practical Skills Demonstrations on-site in the salon in the College of Further Education and Training, Ennis Campus, with the third taking place in March. Following on from this there will be final reflective pieces written to complete their RPL Portfolios.

This pilot project will conclude with an in-depth evaluation capturing feedback from all stakeholders. Feedback from the evaluation will form the basis for a review of the entire process and once any amendments have been made, the final RPL Toolkit to inform and support Certification of the Level 6 Advanced Certificate in Hairdressing via RPL, will be rolled out to all Collaborating Providers of the NHA nationally.

We look forward to providing further updates on this exciting project in future editions of this newsletter.

Interview with Irene Clancy, College of Further Education and Training, Ennis Campus, about her recent experience in RPL

In February 2021, three members of staff embarked on a journey to acquire certification through the RPL (Recognition of Prior Learning) process. RPL is the recognition of people's prior certified/non-certified learning and experience to acquire certification. With the support of Patsy Hogan (QA Officer) as their RPL Mentor and Patricia Chan (Teacher) as their RPL Assessor, all three received their Level 6 Specific Purpose Tour Guiding Award in August 2021. In a recent interview, Irene Clancy (Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board staff member) shared her experience of the process.

QA: How did you become involved in this project and had you heard of RPL before your involvement?

Irene: *Initially I contacted QA to inquire about the possibility of using a qualification I had from LIT as an exemption to get the Regional Tour Guiding badge. The qualification I had allows one to work as a tour guide, but I personally wanted the badge as I know that it is well recognised in the industry. When I first found out it wasn't a straightforward exemption process I decided not to pursue it, but then Patsy contacted me as two more staff members were interested in gaining the qualification also, through RPL so I decided to go for it.*

QA: How did you find the application process?

Irene: *I found the application form very easy to complete. Patsy went through the form with us at our first meeting and answered any questions we had.*

QA: Did you find it challenging to put together your portfolio?

Irene: *The mapping exercise was quite challenging and if one was new to the concept of learning outcomes, it could be quite daunting. I found it an interesting exercise and I ended up using a combination of RPEL and RPCL. The mapping template Patsy gave us was a very helpful tool. I had finished my course in LIT in 2019 so the course information was still available online and the content quite fresh in my memory. I think it would be more difficult if one had to map back to courses completed a long time previously.*

QA: Were you happy with the process?

Irene*: Yes, I was very happy with the process and the support I got from Patricia and Patsy was brilliant. The fact that we could meet online was so convenient. Patricia really helped us to bring our individual work together and guided us to ensure we had all LOs covered. There were three of us working towards the same qualification so it was great as we could bounce ideas off each other and yet at the same time we all had different experiences to use as part of our evidence.*

QA: Did you find using Teams worked well for this project?

Irene: *Teams worked well but I did find it a learning curve getting used to the different functions. Connectivity could be an issue at times, but it was not a major problem. It was a great platform for us to be able to work on our own individual portfolios but also interact with one another via chat etc.*

QA: Any advice for other staff members considering RPL? Would you encourage other staff members to apply?

Irene: *I would for sure encourage people to apply but to be aware that there is work involved in gathering the evidence and putting together the portfolio. It is amazing how much experience from your work/social life you can use to achieve certification, so it is definitely worth exploring the option. Be prepared to put time to one side to work on your portfolio. It shouldn't be seen as a quick route to gaining certification but is well worth the effort.*

QA: Thank you so much for your time and congratulations on your achievement.

Irene: *Thanks Victoria. Can I also take this opportunity to thank Patsy and Patricia for all their help and support throughout the process?*

If any member of staff is interested in pursuing a qualification via RPL please contact qa@lcetb.ie

QA SUPPORT SERVICE CONTACT DETAILS

Alan Hogan
FET Manager
Innovation, Development and
Quality
alan.hogan@lcetb.ie
086 858 6910

Máire Lynch
QA Officer
maire.lynch@ lcetb.ie
086 143 7472

Patsy Hogan
QA Officer
patsy.hogan@ lcetb.ie
086 143 7473

Anna Chatzi
QA Officer
anna.chatzi@ lcetb.ie
061 578139

Bernie Kelleher
QA Administrator
bernie.kelleher@ lcetb.ie
065 671 6342

Victoria Hook
QA Support Officer
victoria.hook@ lcetb.ie
086 6063446

Leanne Stafford
QA Support Officer
leanne.stafford@ lcetb.ie
083 0138834

Caroline Goode
QA Support Officer
caroline.goode@ lcetb.ie
087 1249243

Enda O'Callaghan
QA Support Officer
enda.ocallaghan@ lcetb.ie

Eimear King
QA Support Officer
eimear.king@ lcetb.ie
03361437472

Aisling Holian Lawlor
QA Support Officer
aisling.holianlawlor@ lcetb.ie
086 8887271

Monica Greaves
QA Support Officer
monica.greaves@ lcetb.ie
087 6407648

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