



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

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FURTHER EDUCATION & TRAINING

QUALITY ASSURANCE NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the Ninth Edition of the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Newsletter.

Key Features of this issue



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4th VPL Biennale



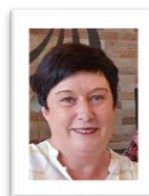
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1. QUALITY ASSURANCE GOVERNANCE

Governance and oversight of all Quality Assurance matters within the Limerick and Clare ETB College of FET is carried out by the 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 Further Education and Training provision offered by the ETB are considered. 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 Governance¹](#)

Quality Council Membership

In response to recommendations from the Inaugural Review of Quality Assurance, the membership of the ETB Quality Council has broadened to include the appointment of external stakeholders. The following members have been appointed to the Quality Council since June 2022.

Further Education and Training Quality Council		
Name	Title	Role
Bonnie Boyle	Learner Representative	Member
Catherine O'Sullivan	Director, ACCS/JMB Further Education Support Unit	Member
Geraldine Brosnan	Director of Student Life, Mary Immaculate College	Member
Joe Leddin	Mid-West Regional Skills Manager	Member

Inaugural Review of Quality Assurance – Action Plan

As part of the Inaugural Review of Quality Assurance process, following on from the external panel and the subsequent publication of the Review Report², Limerick and Clare ETB were required to prepare and submit an Inaugural Review Action Plan³ to QQI. The action plan responds to each of the 29 recommendations from the review panel and details the planned actions and associated timeline for the completion of each of these actions.

The Quality Assurance Support Service, through the Quality Council and its associated subgroups, are working with internal and external colleagues to implement the action plan as agreed.

Annual Quality Reporting Process

Following on from the implementation of the Inaugural Review of Quality Assurance process, QQI are implementing a standard process for provider quality monitoring – Annual Quality Reporting. This annual report will contain the following

- Links to policies and procedures that have not been already included or have been amended since being in the ETB's Self-Evaluation Report as part of the review process.
- Updates on each of the recommendations in the Inaugural Review and declared actions, with links to updated policies as appropriate
- Updates on any Planned QA Objectives/actions additional to the findings of the Inaugural Review Report,
- Additional Themes and Case Studies, demonstrating QA enhancements and impacts arising from the review process and implementation of the review report recommendations.

¹ <https://limerickandclareetb.sharepoint.com/:f:/r/sites/fetdivision/QAS/Communication/Quality%20Assurance%20Governance>

² <https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2021-12/limerick-clare-etb-review-report.pdf>

³ <https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2022-04/limerick-and-clare-etb-action-plan-2022.pdf>

Quality Assurance Agreements

Limerick and Clare ETB have recently signed Memorandums of Understanding with five schools and centres, to provide Quality Assurance to their provision of Further Education and Training.

These centres are Voluntary Secondary and Community Comprehensive Schools

- Kilrush Community School
 - Mary Immaculate School, Lisdoonvarna
 - St. Joseph's Secondary School, Spanish Point
 - Scoil Mhuire, Ennistymon
- and
- HSE Disability Services, Limerick.

These centres now come fully under Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board Quality Assurance processes and procedures, with assigned QA Support Officers as liaison and support.

QASS recently conducted a two-day Quality Assurance induction session with the schools and centres.



Figure 1: Máire Lynch, QA Officer, presenting at the QA Induction session

Updates to Provision QA Arrangements

Kilmallock Town Campus provision have aligned their individual provision centre numbers to one campus number. Where formerly an independent centre number existed for part-time, and another for full-time, both of these centres have now amalgamated to one campus number for all provision in Kilmallock Town Campus.

Similarly in Ennis Campus, the two separate centre numbers for PLC and for VTOS provision have now amalgamated into one centre number for all full-time provision in Ennis Campus.

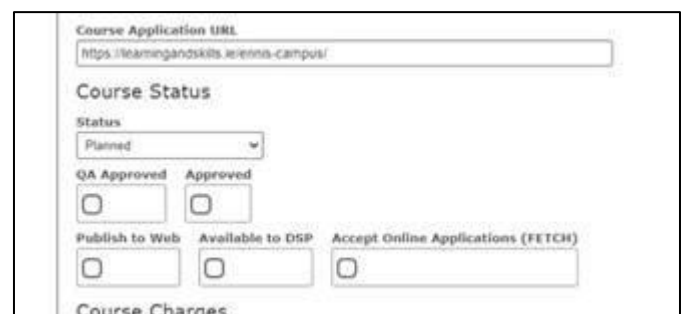
Cappamore Campus has been established as a new satellite centre for the delivery of City and Guilds provision. The creation of the ETB level City and Guilds Super Centre has significantly streamlined the process of addition of satellite centres for local programme delivery.

National Course Calendar QA Approvals Process

As agreed through the ETB's governance mechanism of Strategic Regional Planning Network and Quality Council, a QA Approval Process has been enabled on the PLSS National Course Calendar.

This QA Approval Process will ensure that a number of QA Approval checks are applied before the course is approved and ensure that consistencies of course details and that appropriate governance is applied. This will ensure that, across all provision in the College of FET, a consistency of Learner Information is available to prospective learners and stakeholders "All relevant programme and award information is made available to prospective and current learners" ⁴

Approval process documentation are all available in [StaffCONNECT | Quality Assurance | Policies | NCC QA Approval](#)⁵



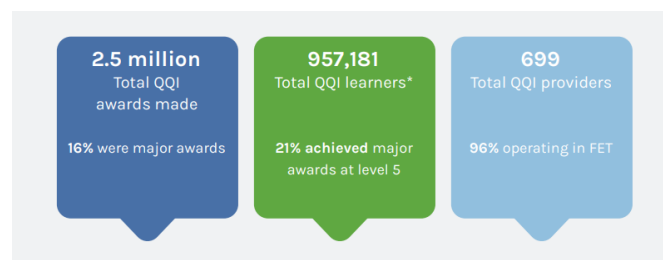
⁴ <https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/media/file-uploads/Core%20Statutory%20Quality%20Assurance%20Guidelines.pdf>

⁵ <https://limerickandclareetb.sharepoint.com/:f:/r/sites/fetdivision/QAS/Policies/NCC%20QA%20Approval>

2. PUBLICATIONS

The latest in the QQI Data Series has just been published as part of QQI's celebration of its tenth anniversary.

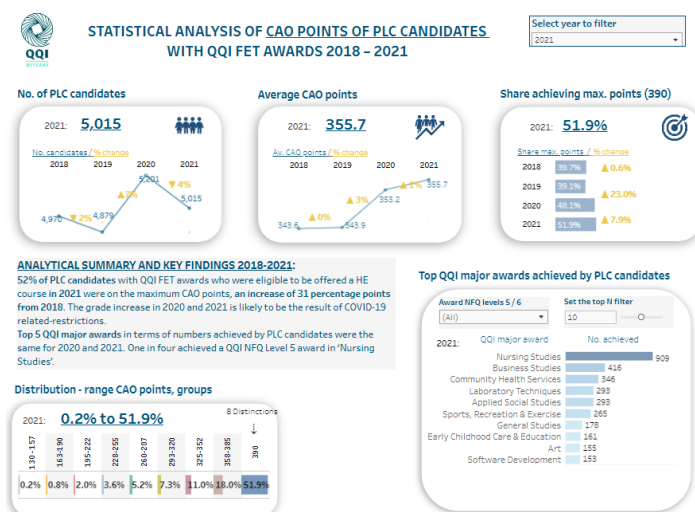
In 'QQI awards and related provision - Looking back over the past 10 years. Responding to the changing needs of learners and the labour force – our role 2012-2021',⁶ QQI look back at QQI certification data for the past decade to reveal the trends and shifts in the demand for QQI awards and the related provision of programmes.



From FE to HE: performance of PLC candidates with QQI FET awards

"On average there are 12,000 CAO applicants who present QQI Awards in further education and training (FET) to the CAO each year. From these, an average of 5,000 learners per year are eligible to be offered a HE course on the basis of their CAO points. New analysis of QQI Award certification data has provided an insight into how, and in what subject areas, PLC students might be progressing to higher education through their QQI Award."⁷

Detailed information is available in the interactive graphic. This contains data about the CAO points of PLC learners who had achieved QQI Awards in further education and training (FET) between 2018 and 2021.



ETBI FET Digital Library

The ETBI FET Digital Library provides access to digital resources that support teaching and learning practices and to improve the educational experience for learners. The Digital Library offers resources for supporting learning as well as providing a support tool for teachers, trainers, and instructors.

[Home - ETBI FET Digital Library - LibGuides at Education and Training Boards Ireland, ETBI⁸](https://library.etbi.ie/home)



⁶ <https://www.qqi.ie/news/new-report-qqi-awards-and-related-provision-2012-2022>

⁷ <https://www.qqi.ie/news/from-fe-to-he-performance-of-plc-candidates-with-qqi-fet-awards>

⁸ <https://library.etbi.ie/home>

3. REMOTE AND MIXED MODE LEARNING

QA Governance of Remote and Mixed Mode Learning within Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board

As QQI has extended contingency arrangements until June 2023, it means that Provision can continue to deliver classes online, following the guidelines. For the academic year 2022-23, all Provision will be able to offer two modes of online learning – Remote Learning and Mixed Mode Learning.

Remote Learning is the replacement of **all** physical face-to-face (on campus) learning experience with synchronous online learning experience. Programme Modules suitable for fully online remote delivery would be modules with no practical skills requirement e.g., Personal & Professional Development (5N2985).

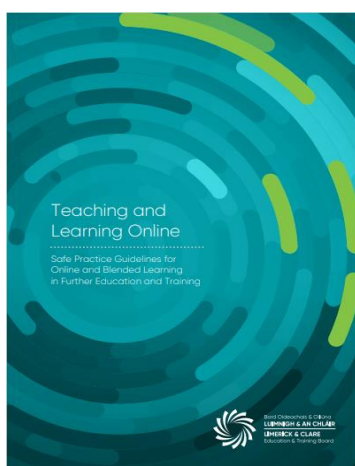
Mixed Mode Learning is a **combination** of physical face-to-face (on campus) learning experience and synchronous online learning experience. Programme Modules with examinations, practical skills requirements or assessment would be more suitable for mixed-mode delivery e.g., Infection, Prevention & Control (5N3734).

The following are important points related to requests for Remote and Mixed Mode Learning:

1. Provision Management compile a list of all approved modules to be delivered through Remote and Mixed Mode formats. If there are multiple instances of a module, one entry will suffice if all delivery is the same. All submissions will be included at Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Governance) meetings and Quality Council meetings for local QA oversight, as stipulated by QQI.

Two documents must be submitted:

- [Provision Request for Remote or Mixed Mode Delivery MS Form⁹](#) which is only for instances of Remote and or Mixed-Mode Learning.
 - Excel document – List of Modules – Record of Delivery. This is submitted with the MS Form and was sent to all Provision Co-ordinators and Managers.
2. The 02_Module Outline Template should be completed by Learning Practitioners to plan which sessions will be online and on campus. This template is retained by Provision and included with the Assessor Folder as per normal practice. Such templates retained by Provision may be subject to QA monitoring.
 3. Learners will also need to be informed of the course schedule. Information on this was also sent to all Provision Co-ordinators and Managers
 4. This process will be ongoing throughout the academic year as Provision schedule classes. Therefore, it is important to remember to submit any new applications as they arise, using the MS Form above.



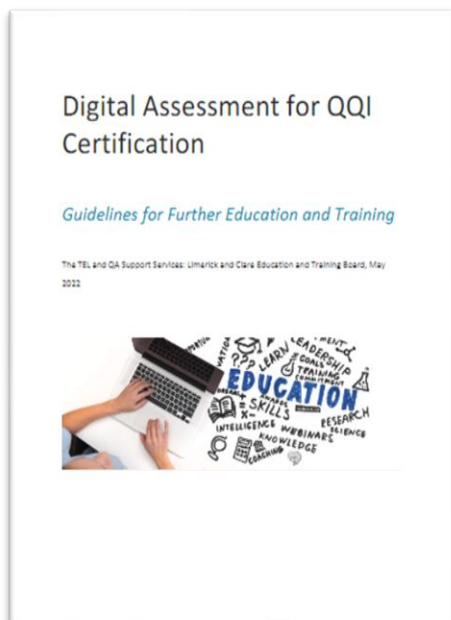
This guide, developed by Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board's Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Support Service, aims to provide guidance and support for all, particularly those who are new to teaching and learning online. It was designed to provide useful, clear and concise guidance.

Learning Practitioners are required to complete the "Remote Teaching and Learning Course" if delivering classes via remote or mixed mode delivery.

⁹ <https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=AUCH-6T78U-H7eyW1KtSwzb60tjeWpDmW0EEjBBo0NUMFQ2RFpNVjRaQjVHMIFONUhFMDY2Q1gyRi4u>

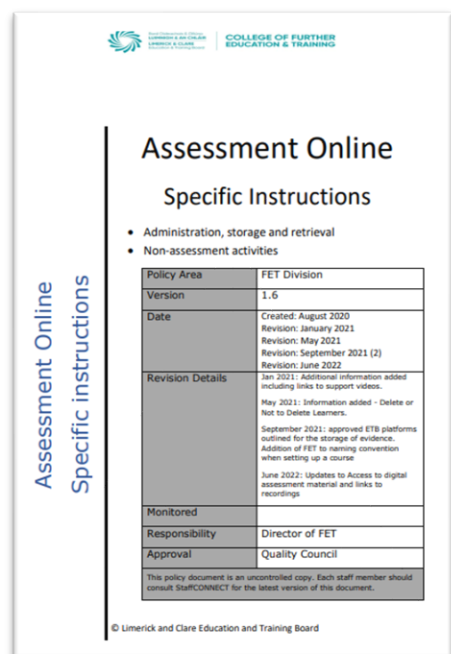
4. GUIDELINES FOR ASSESSMENT

Assessment Guidelines for QQI Certification

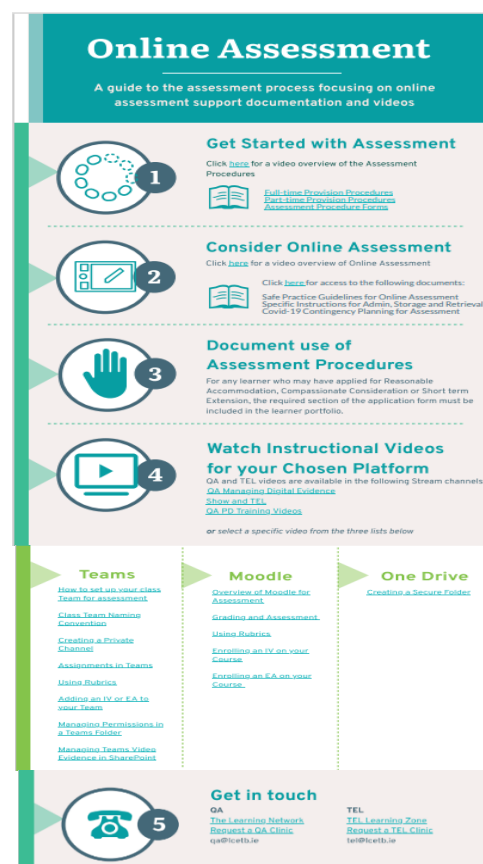


This document has been drafted following an extensive consultation process with all stakeholders and is a collaborative project between the QA and TEL Support Services. These guidelines apply only to assessment presented for QQI certification through digital means and contain a detailed Roadmap on how the organisation will move through the digital assessment process over the next number of years.

[Digital Assessment Guidelines¹⁰](#)



The *Assessment Online Specific Instructions* have been updated. This document gives specific instructions in relation to administration, storage and retrieval of assessment material. This is a working document and will be amended to reflect any updates with technology.



The QA Support Service and the Technology Enhanced Learning Support Service have developed a suite of instructional videos to support assessors in the organisation and storage of digital evidence. You can find these videos on the FET DIV TEL Learning Zone Team, by searching on Stream or using the hyperlinks in the Online Assessment document seen on the right. This interactive PDF can be found on StaffCONNECT in the Assessment Resources section on the QA site.

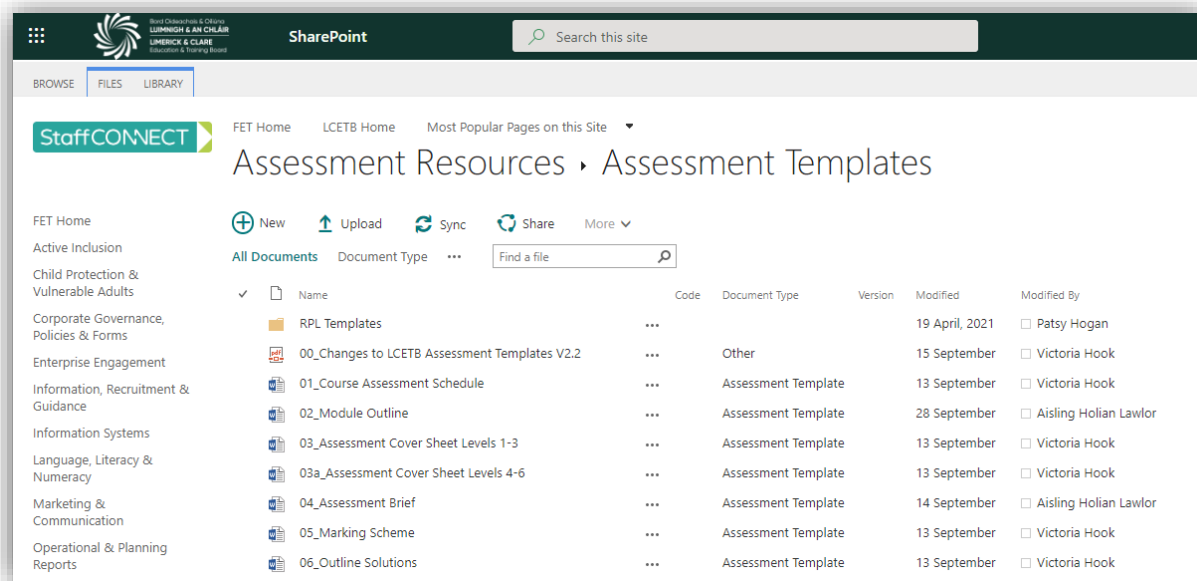
¹⁰ <https://limerickandclareetb.sharepoint.com/sites/fetdivision/QAS/Templates/Guidelines%20for%20Assessment/Digital%20Assessment%20Guidelines%202022.pdf>

Assessment Template Modifications and Updates

There is now ONE set of Assessment Templates for all three delivery modes (On Campus, Mixed Mode or Remote) and one set of Assessment Templates for RPL portfolios.

All updated templates can be found on StaffCONNECT in

[StaffCONNECT](#) | [Quality Assurance](#) | [Assessment Resources](#) | [Assessment Templates](#)¹¹



IMPORTANT!

Assessment Templates and accompanying Guideline Document have been updated and are available on StaffCONNECT

RPL Assessment Procedure Update

Following consultation and feedback the Assessment Procedure for Recognition of Prior Learning has been updated and is now available on StaffCONNECT with versions for full-time and part-time Provision. The procedure was revised under QA Governance structures and approved by the Quality Council in June 2022.

Accompanying the procedure are a new set of forms and these can be found in the *Assessment Procedure Forms* folder in the Assessment Resources section on StaffCONNECT. [Assessment Resources - All Documents \(sharepoint.com\)](#)¹²

The development of this new RPL Procedure was based on the learning and experiences of RPL practitioners in Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board and serves to better support all staff who have a role in RPL. The QA Support Service would like to thank all those who contributed to its development.

¹¹

<https://limerickandclareetb.sharepoint.com/sites/fetdivision/QAS/Templates/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2Ffetdivision%2FQAS%2FTemplates%2FAssessment%20Templates>

¹² <https://limerickandclareetb.sharepoint.com/sites/fetdivision/QAS/Templates/Forms/AllItems.aspx>

5. PROGRAMME AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Programme and Module Descriptor Updates

Module Title	Module Code	Version Number	Update
Working in Hairdressing Co Clare version	3N0500	2.2	Corrected Assessment Plan for Blow Drying Hair module
Employment Skills Co Clare version	3M0935	2.5	Codes corrected for 3 Hairdressing Modules
Door Security Procedures Limerick City version	4N1114	2.0	Code corrected in footer
Guarding Skills Limerick City version	4N1118	2.0	Code corrected in footer
Word Processing Co Limerick version	4N1123	2.1	Correction in Learner Marking Sheet 2
Workplace Safety Co Limerick version	4N1124	2.1	Reviewed Indicative Content and Marking Sheets
Combined Materials	5N0764	2.1	Indicative Content revised
Special Needs Assisting	5N1786	2.2	Section 6 Special Requirements - updated Section 11c Assessment Requirements – updated Appendix 1 Verification of tasks undertaken – new
Mathematics	5N1833	4.1	Revised Marking Sheet
Web Authoring	5N1910	2.1	Revised LO8 and Indicative Content
Hairdressing Theory & Practice	5N3345	4.1	Footer corrected. Examination structure revised to correspond with national version
Work Practice	6N1947	2.2	Updated work placement to read 240 hours
<i>Ongoing - Removal of Occupational First Aid module 5N1207 from Programme Descriptors</i>			

Level 3 IT Modules

Following requests from Provision and being cognisant of the ongoing QQI Broad Standards Review for Levels 1-4, the process of reviewing and updating the suite of IT modules at Level 3 has commenced.

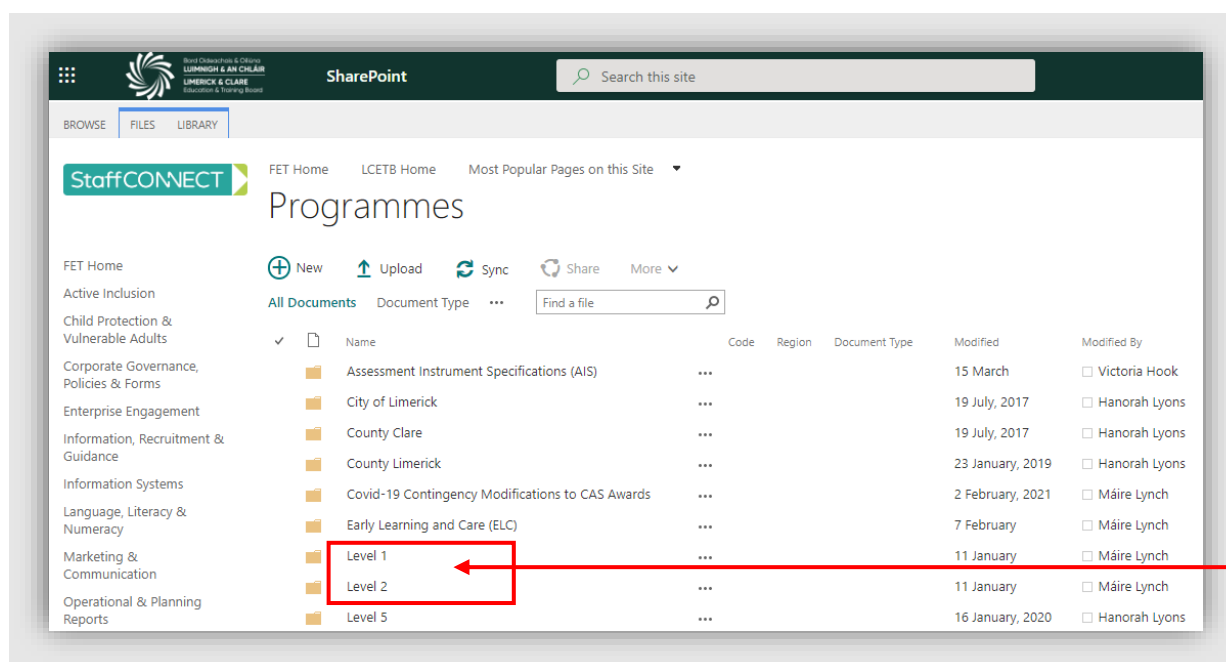
Working Groups have been formed to review nine modules with a timeline for completion of December 2022.

Level 3 Module Descriptors for Review	
3N0588 Word Processing	3N0551 Desktop Publishing
3N0931 Internet Skills	3N0542 Spreadsheets
3N0550 Database	3N0792 Media Expression
3N0552 Digital Media	3N0791 Digital Photography
3N0881 Computer Literacy	

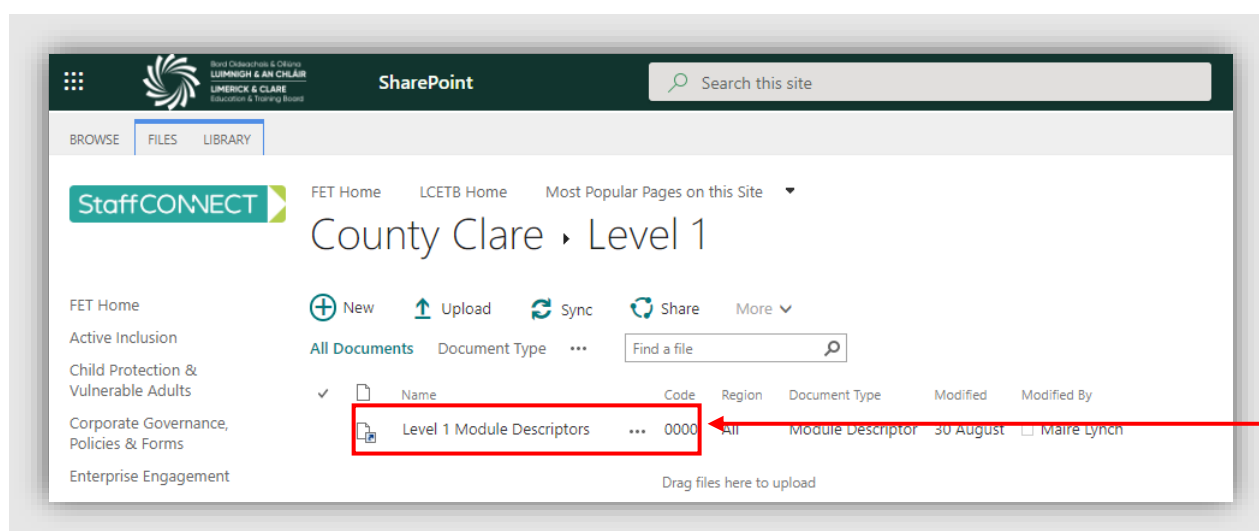
To request changes or updates to module descriptors please complete the [Programme Module Revision Form](#) which is available to download in [StaffCONNECT | Quality Assurance | Programmes](#) ¹³

¹³ <https://limerickandclareetb.sharepoint.com/sites/fetdivision/QAS/Programmes/Forms/AllItems.aspx>

Level 1 and Level 2 Modules



The Level 1 and Level 2 module descriptors finalised last year are now the only versions to be used. There is a folder for both Level 1 and Level 2 descriptors on StaffCONNECT. There is a link to these folders in each regional folder.



Please Note:

With regard to approval to deliver the modules, all centres with previously approved permission to deliver the Level 1 and Level 2 programmes (P1GL0, P1CO0 and P2GL0) need to note that there are some new modules included in the current list on StaffCONNECT as this recent development process endeavoured to have all the Level 1 and Level 2 modules available within Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board.

If Provision plan to deliver any Level 1 or Level 2 modules that they have not previously delivered, then Provision are required to apply for programme approval to deliver the module.

National Programme Development and Validation Initiative

A two-day workshop of the Quality Network was held recently in Athlone to progress plans around a national shared programme development and curriculum review process. This workshop was facilitated by ETBI and included representation from the QA Strategy Group, ETBI, QQI and ETB QA management.

There were three deliverables agreed in advance and conscious of the need to move quickly on issues in this area, an ambitious timeline of December 2022 was proposed for agreement. These included

- (1) revising templates and the process currently in use for the QQI programme validation application process
- (2) agreeing a sectoral approach for the process of programme review and revalidation
- (3) developing a process for the sharing of validated/revalidated curricula between ETBs.

The area of Devolved Responsibility and its implications for ETBs was also discussed throughout the two-day event.

Walter Balfe (Head, Awards Directorate, QQI) noted that programmes are in need of refreshment and also highlighted interesting statistics from certification records, illustrating the large amount of learner awards from current programmes concentrated in a few vocational areas. He noted that both QQI and ETBs need to have a more agile and responsive programme development and validation process and praised the amount of cross sectoral work that is already being done across this area by ETBs.

Colin Cummins (Director of FET, Tipperary ETB) as chair of the Quality Network noted the huge amount of collaboration and sharing that is already evident within the ETB sector. This approach is what the sector hope to follow and build on throughout this development and review process, in order to bring more economies of scale to the sector and utilise the vast amount of experience and knowledge already evident.

Summary of New Programmes Developed and in Development in Limerick and Clare ETB

SKILLS TO ADVANCE QQI MICRO CREDENTIALS	
Validated	Awaiting Validation
L4 Environmental Sustainability Awareness (for all FET Learners)	L5 Lean Practice for Sustainable Business
L5 Environmental Sustainability in the Workplace	L5 Resource Efficiency for a Sustainable Workplace
	L5 Building Digital Business Skills

NEW QQI PROGRAMMES IN DEVELOPMENT
Level 3 Minor Award History (Exploring our Past)
Level 3 Special Purpose Award - Family Learning – With KCETB and LCETB as lead Providers
Level 5 Special Purpose Awards - Fgas (Fluorinated Gases) Category II, III and IV
Apprenticeships in Beauty and Barbering with Limerick and Clare ETB as the National Coordinating Provider

REVALIDATION OF QQI PROGRAMMES
Level 6 Digital Media Production (submitted to QQI)
Level 6 Advanced Certificate in Hairdressing (for September 2023)

NEW QQI PROGRAMMES VALIDATED
Level 5 Special Purpose Awards - Fgas (Fluorinated Gases) Fgas Handling in Large RACHPT&T Systems Category I Handling Fgas in Mobile Air Conditioning Systems in Certain Motor Vehicles
Level 6 Special Purpose Award - Customer Experience (Cx)

Level 6 Special Purpose Award in Customer Experience (Cx)

Following an extensive development process, Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board has recently had the Level 6 Special Purpose Award in Customer Experience (Cx) approved for validation by QQI.

A day long virtual site visit by a QQI appointed external panel took place at the beginning of September. The panel commended the innovative nature of the programme development, the collaboration between the Employer Engagement and Quality Assurance support services and engagement with local industry partners to develop a programme that will serve the needs of industry in this vocational area.

The award consists of three 15 credit modules which work in tandem to equip learners with the skills and knowledge of best practice methods, strategy frameworks and tools to effectively implement Cx concepts and practices in the workplace.

The QQI PAEC will be meeting on the 1st of December, after which we will receive a formal certificate of validation. This will enable the programme to be offered from January 2023. Provision wishing to deliver this programme will apply through the usual programme approval process.

Congratulations to the programme development team which comprised of staff members Hanorah Lyons, Victoria Hook and Máire Lynch and Subject Matter Experts Laura Tighe and Stephen Ruschitzko.

6. QQI COVID-19 CONTINGENCY ARRANGEMENTS 2022-2023

QQI's Policies and Standards Committee agreed to extend the Covid-19 Contingency Arrangements to the end of June 2023, to include all certification by this date.¹⁴ QQI intends to gather feedback on the use and impact of these temporary modifications to inform future planning and decision making.

This extension of temporary modifications is intended to respond to exceptional circumstances related to Covid-19 and all staff are advised to carefully read the updated Guidelines and Procedures document.

[Covid-19 Guidelines and Procedures for Contingency Planning of Assessments V1.5¹⁵](#)

The updates between the previous v1.4 and the revised v1.5 Contingency Planning of Assessments are clearly mapped out in "Revisions to the Guidelines and Procedures for the Covid-19 Contingency Planning of Assessment"

[Revisions to Covid-19 Guidelines and Procedures¹⁶](#)

The Covid-19 related extension of the temporary modifications to the Common Awards System (CAS) has also been extended i.e. where the Level 4 Career Preparation and Planning module and Level 5 and 6 Personal and Professional Development modules were included in the Work Experience/Work Practice pool of modules in certain awards. The list of impacted CAS awards is available in the [Covid-19 Contingency Modifications to CAS Awards¹⁷](#) folder. This flexibility is subject to internal quality assurance and approval by the Quality Council (Programme Governance) Sub-Group. Therefore, any Provision intending to deliver modified awards must complete the WP Forms as before with WP 5 Form being applicable this year.

¹⁴ <https://www.qqi.ie/guidance-for-education-and-training-providers>

¹⁵ [https://limerickandclareetb.sharepoint.com/:b:/r/sites/fetdivision/QAS/Templates/Covid-19 Guidelines and Procedures for Contingency Planning of Assessment.pdf](https://limerickandclareetb.sharepoint.com/:b:/r/sites/fetdivision/QAS/Templates/Covid-19%20Guidelines%20and%20Procedures%20for%20Contingency%20Planning%20of%20Assessment.pdf)

¹⁶ [https://limerickandclareetb.sharepoint.com/sites/fetdivision/QAS/Templates/Covid-19 Revisions%20to%20Guidelines%20and%20Procedures%20Document.pdf](https://limerickandclareetb.sharepoint.com/sites/fetdivision/QAS/Templates/Covid-19%20Revisions%20to%20Guidelines%20and%20Procedures%20Document.pdf)

¹⁷ <https://limerickandclareetb.sharepoint.com/:f:/r/sites/fetdivision/QAS/Programmes/Covid-19%20Contingency%20Modifications%20to%20CAS%20Awards>

7. CERTIFICATION SUMMARY

QQI Certification Data - June, August & October Certification Analysis 2022

Region	Total Number of Learners	Total Number of Portfolios	Total Number of Portfolios (EA)	Major Awards	Grade Changes (EA)	Appeals
LCFE Mulgrave St. Campus	1322	6564	2398	211	18	14
Ennis & Scariff Campus	459	1290	699	47	16	1
Kilmallock Road Campus	124	457	107	48	1	0
Shannon Campus	378	453	122	239	0	0
O'Connell Ave Campus	154	328	114	26	16	0
Croom Campus	50	290	151	41	1	0
Raheen Campus	122	160	75	32	0	0
Kilrush Campus	27	134	65	12	5	0
Limerick Prison Service	69	119	119	0	0	0
Kilmallock Town Campus	118	127	105	32	1	0
Ennistymon Campus	8	58	58	2	0	0
Shanagolden Campus	6	26	0	2	0	0
Mary Immaculate College	7	32	32	0	1	0
LCEN	113	135	2	3	0	0
Watch House Cross Campus	3	7	7	0	0	0
Total:	2,960	10,180	4,054	695	59	15

Planning for 2023 Certification Period

Estimate Sheets and Authentication Calendars are available on StaffCONNECT and have been shared with Provision.

As contingency arrangements for assessment remain in place for 2022/2023 academic year, the practice of Risk Categorisation sampling for External Authentication will remain in place.

Based on the Risk Categorisation and in consultation with the Provision Co-ordinator, the QA Support Service will categorise modules from the Estimate Sheets into **Category 1 – Requires EA**, **Category 2 – May require EA** and **Category 3 – Portfolios go straight to RAP**. External Authentication will focus on modules from Category 1 and Category 2. This sampling strategy will ultimately result in approx. 10-20% of all class groups being externally authenticated.

Category 1 – Requires EA	Category 2 – May require EA	Category 3 – Portfolios go straight to RAP
Practitioners new to teaching QQI modules	Practitioners new to Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board but not QQI	Experienced practitioners who do not fall into Cat 1 or Cat 2 and who have been through multiple IV and EA periods with no issues identified
Practitioners teaching a module for the first time or modules that are outside their subject area	Practitioners teaching modules where issues were identified in previous authentication period.	
Programmes or modules that have been identified at centre level as requiring external feedback		
Programmes or modules that have not been EA'd within the last two years		
Modules that are being certified through RPL		
Practitioners teaching remotely for the first time		

Feedback from External Authenticators following June Certification Period

To further ensure the quality of the External Authentication process, all External Authenticators (EAs) employed in the Further Education authentication process during the June certification period, including the Appeals Process, were surveyed post authentication. This was in addition to the feedback submitted as part of their EA Reports and it facilitated a deeper reflection and analysis of their experience after the event. They were asked to comment on their experience of the EA process with Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board, the strengths of the process along with suggestions for improvement.

Comments included:

I had no concerns with the process and the measures in place. All was communicated effectively by the QA Dept. in relation to what to expect and what was important in relation to this particular round of EA work.

All material and systems were organised well. One area that was problematic was accessing Teams for an external person outside of Limerick and Clare ETB.

Everything was very well organised, and the designated contact responded swiftly and efficiently to queries.

I found the Appeals process to be very well organised, both in terms of advance communication and information given to examiners, and also the organisation of the actual appeals on the day. It was all very straightforward and worked very well

Recommendation from Results Approval Panel

The October 2022 Results Approval Panel made a recommendation to QASS to remind all assessors about the importance of marking all learner's work in-line with QQI's grading classifications for levels 4-6 on the NFQ:

- Pass: The learners' work has **met** the minimum standard required (50% - 64%)
- Merit: The learner's work has **exceeded** the minimum standard required (65% - 79%)
- Distinction: The learner's work has **substantially exceeded** the minimum standard required (80% - 100%)

It is important to remember these classifications when reviewing and making judgements on learner evidence. QQI's grading statements for NFQ levels 4-6 should also be considered.

Distinctions should only be awarded for 'distinct' pieces of work where learners have demonstrated **in-depth** understanding, expressed ideas **clearly** and **comprehensively** and have provided **coherent**, **detailed** and **focused** evidence.

See: [Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers \(qqi.ie\)](https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2021-10/quality-assuring-assessment-guidelines-for-providers-revised-2013.pdf)¹⁸

¹⁸ <https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2021-10/quality-assuring-assessment-guidelines-for-providers-revised-2013.pdf>

8. QUALITY ASSURANCE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

QA Induction for New Teaching Staff

If a member of teaching staff has not previously attended a Quality Assurance Induction Training and is new to delivery of QQI-based modules, attendance at this training is required.

This Quality Assurance Induction Training has been delivered in different models and formats in recent years. Delivery of content is still via the two-part model. This puts less pressure on those attending to absorb all the information in one go. The gap between the Part 1 and Part 2 sessions allows for reflection on and use of the learning from Part 1. Teaching staff should then be ready to learn/recap how to prepare assessment instruments when it comes to Part 2.

All are required to attend Part 1, delivered via Online Remote delivery. Teaching staff then choose the most appropriate session for Part 2. If teaching staff are delivering across different levels, then it is recommended to attend Part 2 for Levels 4-6. Links to sign up will be sent to all Provision Co-ordinators/Managers/Principals. There are opportunities on the day to ask questions and attendees can always correspond with the QA team after the event. The sessions will be delivered either over MS Teams or face-to-face. Delivery mode is dependent on numbers and/or room availability.

Please note: Part 1 and Part 2 of Induction have been delivered in September and early October. These sessions will be delivered again in February/March of 2023. Dates and times will be advertised via communication from the Professional Learning and Development Support Service.

Session	Content	Online or F2F
Part 1 Attendance required by all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of the Assessor • Overview of QQI and Quality Assurance in LCETB • Standards • Preparing for Assessment 	Online Remote – MS Teams
Part 2 Levels 1-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing Briefs for your own module • Giving Feedback 	Face-to-face
Part 2 Levels 4-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing Briefs and Marking Schemes (For your own module) 	Face-to-face

QA Academic Writing and Referencing Workshop

The Academic Writing and Referencing Workshop takes place on the 16th November 10am -12pm. This face-to-face workshop is for any learning practitioner who wants to develop, or refresh, their understanding of academic writing and referencing.

Feedback from External Authenticators, assessors and learners has indicated the need for this training. The session will be closely aligned to the content of the FET Academic Writing and Referencing Handbooks. It is primarily aimed at those delivering modules at NFQ Levels 4, 5 and 6.

Introduction to Recognition of Prior Learning for Mentors and Assessors

This new badged RPL professional development course was developed internally by the QA Support Service in collaboration with the Professional Learning and Development Support Service. The first group participated in the training in Feb/March 2022 and it was a great success with very positive feedback from the group. All six sessions were online via MS Teams.

The course is currently in its second round of training with 15 participants from across Limerick and Clare ETB and two colleagues from Tipperary ETB. Limerick and Clare ETB are delighted to share learnings with ETB colleagues and in the first round of the course two colleagues from Kilkenny and Carlow ETB attended the course.

Following evaluation and feedback from participants on the first course, class duration was extended from 2 hours to 2.5 hours, with two of the sessions delivered face-to-face.

The next round of the course will be in the spring of 2023 and further details will be issued in the Professional Learning and Development Support Service emails. The sessions will run every Thursday afternoon for six weeks from 23rd February to 30th March, 2pm to 4.30pm.



Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) – 4th VPL Biennale Event 2022

The 4th Validation of Prior Learning Biennale took place in Reykjavik, Iceland on May 19th and 20th 2022. Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board attendees at this event were Alan Hogan, Patsy Hogan and Caroline Goode. This event was hosted by the Education and Training Service Centre (ETSC- Iceland) in partnership with the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Skills (CEDEFOP), the UNESCO Institute for lifelong learning (UIL) and The Nordic Network for Adult Learning.

The Biennale was for policy makers, researchers, practitioners and all other stakeholders that are involved in VPL. The focus of this event entitled *Building a common ground* was on validation in different contexts and pathways of work and life, exploring Validation processes from around the world and looking at how to make these processes an integral part of policies and services in support of lifelong learning.



Figure 2: Alan, Caroline and Patsy pictured at the event with Siobhán Magee from FESS and Andrina Wafer from QQI

Validation gives value to all forms of learning irrespective of where, how or when it has occurred. It is a powerful contributor to social inclusion, empowerment, employability, and lifelong learning. Experts from around the world shared their experiences, knowledge and ideas on Validation of Prior Learning (VPL) as an essential element of lifelong learning.

There were 250 attendees from 27 countries in attendance and a number of others attended online. Experts from around the world shared their experiences, knowledge and ideas on Validation of Prior Learning (VPL) as an essential element of lifelong learning.

Over the course of the two days, there were a number of key speakers, discussions and workshops, which focussed on five main themes:

- Validation and Working Life
- Validation and Education/Training
- Validation and Social Sustainability
- Validation and Personal Development
- Research Stand - current activity in the field



On Tuesday 11th October, Alan, Patsy and Caroline participated in a Show and TEL sharing their learning and takeaways from the event which is available to view in the FET DIV TEL Learning Zone, Show and TEL Video Channel: [Show and TEL 2022 Recording](#)



9. NATIONAL HAIRDRESSING APPRENTICESHIP

Certification of the First Graduates of the National Hairdressing Apprenticeship

The National Hairdressing Apprenticeship (NHA) www.hairdressingapprenticeship.ie established a qualification flagship standard in Ireland for the hairdressing industry. The programme was validated by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) in September 2019 and is a NFQ Level 6 Advanced Certificate. Recognition of Prior Learning is central to the ethos of the programme and in this context is available via three discrete and complementary processes for relevant cohort needs: Non-standard entry into Stage 1, Advanced Entry into Stage 2 and Certification of the Major Award.

Recognition of Prior Learning leading to certification of the Major Award has huge value in recognising the lifelong learning and experiences of hairdressers who previous to this would not have had the opportunity to avail of a formal qualification in their field.

This validation process is the first of its kind in the Further Education and Training and Apprenticeship sector in Ireland, whereby a process of identifying, documenting, assessing and certifying prior experiential learning leads to the certification of a major award. Formally validating all forms of applicant prior formal, non-formal and informal learning, the process outlined makes these learning and skills transparent and creates a means whereby these skills are formally recognised on the National Framework of Qualification (NFQ) purely through a validation process.

The innovative and ground-breaking nature of this project within the Further Education and Training sector in Ireland is significant. This pilot project is the first of its kind in Ireland, in which an RPL process has been developed and implemented for applicants to achieve certification of a major award. This project showcases significant innovation in the approach to certification of major award qualifications, in particular those leading to apprenticeship qualifications.

Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board has completed this process with a pilot group of eight applicants, with all applicants having successfully completed the process and been issued Level 6 Advanced Certificates in Hairdressing from QQI.

The recognition of prior learning applicants, all experienced hairdressers, have completed the validation process in approximately nine months, as distinct to the three years required for the programme of education and training.

Evaluations of the process have been very positive from all stakeholders, namely the pilot group, the RPL mentors and assessors, and the next step is to make minor refinements to the validation processes and procedures before making the RPL Toolkit available to collaborating providers of the National Hairdressing Apprenticeship to roll-out within their local FET College/Centre.



Figure 3: RPL graduates with their RPL Assessor Mary O'Flynn in the FET College, Ennis Campus



Figure 4: Deirdre O'Sullivan (EA), Caroline Goode (RPL Mentor), Mary Ryan, Majella Nolan, Catherine Finn and Thomas Downes, four of the RPL graduates

10. FEATURED ARTICLE: INTERVIEW WITH NHA RPL GRADUATE CATHERINE FINN

In September 2021, eight applicants commenced their Recognition of Prior learning (RPL) journey, participating in a pilot RPL process to achieve the Level 6 Advanced Certificate in Hairdressing. This is the first recognised hairdressing qualification in Ireland, developed by Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board and validated by QQI in 2019.

This pilot cohort went through for certification in August 2022. They received their provisional results and participated in a review and evaluation session in July 2022. This validation process is the first of its kind in the Further Education and Training sector in Ireland. The pilot cohort of RPL for the major award are the first to achieve the Level 6 Advanced Certificate in Hairdressing qualification.

Interview with Catherine Finn owner of *The Hair Shop* salon who is one of the eight successful RPL Graduates.

“It was disheartening after 40 years of hairdressing that I could only say I had a leaving cert qualification.”

QA: Tell me a bit about yourself and your education to date.

CF: I am originally from Athlone where I started my hairdressing career nearly 40 years ago. Back then salons spoke about education only, the training was done in the workplace, and for years I was just trained in the workplace. I moved to Limerick and continued my training in Limerick in Hugh Campbell’s salon. I opened my own business in Castletroy, Limerick 26 years ago.

QA: Do you feel you received good training in the hair salons?

CF: Yes, very much so. I feel I have given back the experience I received while working and training on the job in hair salons. I would have been always passionate about training and upskilling my staff over the years in my salon. Back then, salons did not have structured training, and all training was on the job. I always felt there was something missing and it was a hairdressing apprenticeship, a structured training programme that would be invaluable to all apprentices.

As a member of the consortium Steering Group, I work closely with Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board on the RPL Process. During the process my initial feelings were “what about us hairdressers working years in industry and our need for qualifications”. I believe this RPL process is for hairdressers and will give them an equal opportunity. I was thrilled to enrol in the RPL Hairdressing process.

QA: What goals did you have in mind?

CF: I wanted to enrol in a process that was worthy of the award and recognised the experience hairdressers have for years in the industry. “I wanted to be recognized and seen as an

educated professional”. In previous years schools never spoke about hairdressing as it was not on the CAO.

QA: How would you describe what type of a learner you are?

CF: I am a practical person and need to do the task and write things down. I like to print and read my assignments to process them.

QA: Did you find the support and encouragement was good at further education level?

CF: Yes, I found the support and encouragement was great. The bridging courses were widely available. The group support and IT support were invaluable for me. “Nobody felt we were inadequate”. I knew bridging courses would be needed. It also focused me on learning and keeping my skills up to date. Keeping staff trained and upskilled is so important. I feel the hairdressing apprenticeship has raised the bar in terms of standards in hairdressing.



QA: What did you enjoy about doing the RPL process?

CF: The assignments I enjoyed. Researching for my assignments and realising how much experience I had to date. In addition, my computer skills improved.

QA: What would you have found daunting about the RPL experience?

CF: Timelines and assignments came together. Keeping up with the timeframes. I put myself under pressure and spent a lot of time improving my IT skills.

QA: Would you consider getting the hairdressing qualification through RPL as one of your greatest achievements to date?

CF: Most definitely I consider RPL of the hairdressing award to be one of my greatest achievements to date. Now when I am filling in education forms, I feel I can tick more than the leaving certificate box. It was disheartening after 40 years of hairdressing that I could only say I had a leaving cert qualification. I feel the pathways that lead out of this RPL process to be exciting.

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



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