

**Early Learning and Care
Phase 1 Consultation
November 2020
Childcare (early childhood) Service Providers**

17/11/2020

ELC Programme Development Group

DDLETB

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Introduction

This information pack accompanies the phase 1 consultation on the draft sharable curriculum that is being designed for the ETB network as part of the ELC programme development project led by Dublin and Dun Laoghaire Education and Training Board.

Background context

Review and deactivation of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) awards

As a result of a review of the Childcare awards in further education and training, QQI took the decision to deactivate the ECCE major awards at levels 4, 5 and 6 and their associated minor awards¹. To replace them, QQI established a project to develop new award standards for Early Learning and Care at Levels 5 and 6.

New ELC standards

In 2019, QQI published the new Professional Award-type Descriptors at NFQ Levels 5-8: Annotated for Early Learning and Care (PATD for ELC). These new ELC awards standards replace the existing ECCE standards at Levels 5 and 6. The new standards provide a totally new framework for developing new ELC programmes leading to new ELC awards. Note that there is no provision for a new ELC award at Level 4 as Level 5 is the minimum professional qualification for entry to the sector.

You can find out more about the Professional Award-type Descriptors (PATD) Annotated for NFQ Early Learning and Care (ELC) Awards, November 2019 [here](#). Note that this document was open to consultation prior to its publication in 2019 and is therefore not the subject of this consultation.

Some of the conditions attached to the new awards as determined by QQI may be of interest to you. These include:

- New awards as follows:
 - Level 5 Certificate in Early Learning and Care
 - Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care (Level 6)
- The Level 5 and Level 6 certificates to be the equivalent of one full-time academic year each. (Part-time course options can be available.)
- Each learner must complete 150 hours of professional practice placements per annum (full-time equivalent), in a minimum of two settings: (1) one working directly with children from birth to 2 years 8 months, and (2) one working with children aged from 2 years 8 months to 6 years with an appropriate balance between these two settings.

¹ QQI has produced a list of the awards that are due to be deactivated. You can access it [here](#).

- All childcare service providers with whom a learner undertakes professional practice placement must be currently registered with TUSLA and enter a formal written agreement with the course provider on respective roles and responsibilities
- Professional practice placement supervisors will be suitably qualified at one NFQ level above that of the learner being supervised or have appropriate experience/alternative qualifications (further guidelines on this are to be developed).
- Workplace supervisor involvement in assessment.

Sharable curriculum Project led by DDLETB

In agreement with ETBs and QQI, DDLETB is leading the development of a sharable curriculum for the new ELC programmes for use by the ETB network. A curriculum team was appointed in September 2020. The team comprises nine early childhood subject matter experts seconded from their teaching roles in seven ETBs. They are supported by a programme development team from DDLETB and Further Education Support Service (FESS).

The role of the curriculum team is to carry out research to support the development of the programmes, draft the shared curriculum consistent with the PATD for ELC, consult with stakeholders, and provide the final curriculum for inclusion in each ETB's programme validation application to QQI.

Engagement with stakeholders

Research with childcare (early childhood) service providers, graduate learners and ETB teachers and trainers was carried out in September 2020. This initial research informed the first draft of the programme learning outcomes, the proposed curriculum structure and the draft module learning outcomes.

Consultation Phase 1, November 2020, focuses on the draft programme learning outcomes, proposed curriculum structure and draft module learning outcomes.

Consultation Phase 2, Early 2021 will focus on the draft modules, including content, teaching and learning and strategies, assessment strategies and other programme-related requirements.

Validation of ELC programmes

Each ETB will apply to QQI for validation of their own ELC programme/s, incorporating the shared curriculum into the context of their own settings. Validation is a regulatory process, whereby it is determined that a provider's programme of education and training meets the criteria for validation and that a QQI award can be offered in respect of it. It is anticipated that validation will be achieved by summer 2021 for a period of five years.

Note: Curriculum and quality frameworks such as Aistear and Siolta, and current Acts are referred to as national frameworks, regulation and legislation in the programme and module learning outcomes below. Greater detail on frameworks, regulation and legislation will be available in the course content, which will be available for consultation at a later stage.

Draft Programme learning outcomes

Proposed Level 5 Programme Learning Outcomes

1	Explore a range of learning and theoretical perspectives on child development to contribute to the holistic development of the child in line with national frameworks.
2	Conduct child observations and assessments, informed by theory, to promote the holistic development of the child and to enhance professional practice in the ELC setting.
3	Summarise and apply essential legislation, regulatory frameworks and guidelines which currently and historically underpin the ELC sector.
4	Participate in the implementation and review of a range of centre-based policies, procedures, and practices to ensure continuity of routines and experiences for children across a variety of childcare settings.
5	Contribute to the development and implementation of curricular approaches, partnering with families and other stakeholders, using a range of theoretical and practical pedagogical approaches in line with national frameworks and ELC regulations to support the holistic development of children.
6	Contribute to the planning, implementation and review of inclusive play-based learning opportunities informed by theories of play in childhood, in both indoor and outdoor environments to support children's holistic development.
7	Contribute to the planning, implementation and review of various types of inclusive creative arts experiences for children through different mediums including digital learning experiences to promote children's holistic development.
8	Provide a nurturing and inclusive ELC environment for children to meet their holistic needs.
9	Engage in effective communication and teamwork with children, colleagues, families and other stakeholders in the ELC setting.
10	Demonstrate professional practice in partnership with stakeholders and the broader community of the ELC setting while working under supervision.
11	Engage in pedagogy and professional practice that supports an inclusive and anti-bias approach to the early learning and care of children.
12	Engage in reflective practice using self-evaluation methods to support the development of personal and professional practice.

Proposed Level 6 Programme Learning Outcomes

1	Analyse a range of psychological, sociological and learning theories and perspectives in child development.
2	Utilise child development observations and assessments to promote the holistic development of Child/Children in the ELC setting
3	Examine how social policy and social systems both nationally and internationally impact on the collective rights of children and their families
4	Contribute to development and implementation of a range of policies, procedures and practices consistent with legislative and regulatory requirements to ensure continuity of experiences for children across a variety of childcare settings.
5	Lead curriculum planning, implementation and review to include a range of inclusive activities and experiences both child-led and adult-initiated in line with national frameworks and best practice guidelines
6	Utilise inclusive play opportunities in both indoor and outdoor environments to promote children's holistic development
7	Lead various types of inclusive creative arts experiences for children through different mediums to promote children's holistic development
8	Implement principles and practices of holistic health, care, well-being and safety of all children, informed by national & international guidelines and best practice, in the ELC environment
9	Facilitate and promote effective communication and teamwork in partnership with stakeholders in the ELC environment
10	Promote collaborative, ethical, inclusive work practices with all stakeholders.
11	Explore the significance of the supervisory and leadership role to promote best practice and professionalism in Early Learning and Care settings
12	Engage in reflective practice to inform personal and professional development and practice of self and others

Proposed curriculum structure

Proposed curriculum structure for Early Learning and Care

Level 5 Certificate in Early Learning and Care 120 FET credits	Advanced Certificate (Level 6) in Early Learning and Care 120 FET credits
Professional Practice Placements in Early Learning and Care (25 Credits)	Advanced Professional Practice Placements in Early Learning and Care (25 Credits)
Legislation, Regulations and Children's Rights (15 Credits)	Sociology and Social Policy in Early Learning and Care (15 Credits)
The Developing Child (25 Credits)	Developmental Psychology (25 Credits)
Curriculum, Play and Creative Studies (25 Credits)	Curriculum and Pedagogy (25 Credits)
Understanding and Assisting Children with Additional Needs (15 Credits)	Supervision and Leadership in Early Learning and Care (20 Credits)
Holistic Care of Children (Birth to Six Years) (15 Credits)	Inclusive Early Learning and Care (Elective) (10 Credits)
	Administration in the Early Learning and Care Sector (Elective) (10 Credits)

Proposed modules in Professional Practice Placements at levels 5 and 6

Note: 1 FET credit = 10 hours of typical learner effort

Module Title:	Professional Practice Placements in Early Learning and Care
Level:	5
Credits:	25
Purpose of this Module:	The purpose of this module is to equip the learner with knowledge, skills and competence to work in a professional capacity, under supervision, to understand the occupational role of an Early Learning Care professional and the ELC sector
Minimum Intended Module Learning Outcomes	
On completion of this module, a learner will be able to:	
1	Engage in professional practice informed by theory and observations of experienced practitioners necessary for education, training and employment in the ELC sector
2	Work under supervision demonstrating the required competence, values and work practices to build reciprocal, responsive and respectful working relationships with all stakeholders in the best interest of babies, toddlers and young children.
3	Identify current legislation, regulations, frameworks and policies related to the ELC sector to inform and support routines, transitions and procedures in ELC settings.
4	Apply professional knowledge, practice and skills in collaboration with all stakeholders that consistently promote a democratic inclusive and anti-bias approach to early learning and care of children, families and communities.
5	Engage in essential research and report writing skills necessary for education, training and employment in the ELC sect
6	Engage in self-reflection and evaluation of own practice in partnership with experienced practitioners to inform and enhance self-development and professional practice working with babies, toddlers, young children and all other stakeholders

It is proposed that this module will comprise of classroom hours and 150 hours of professional practice placement.

Module Title:	Advanced Professional Practice Placements in Early Learning and Care
Level:	6
Credits:	25
Purpose of this Module:	To equip the learner with knowledge, skills and competence required to to engage in an advanced personal and professional capacity to work independently as part of a team in ELC settings, in line with legislation, policy and frameworks with an emphasis on the management of relationships with all stakeholders
Minimum Intended Module Learning Outcomes	
On completion of this module, a learner will be able to:	
1	Engage in advanced practices of professionalism underpinned by theory, observations and feedback from experienced practitioners required for education, training and employment in the ELC sector.
2	Work effectively in a team leadership role demonstrating supervisory and mentoring skills that support the work of others in ELC settings.
3	Lead on the delivery of good practice which illustrates knowledge and understanding of own role and responsibilities informed by current legislation, regulations and frameworks relevant to ELC settings.
4	Demonstrate intrapersonal, interpersonal and self-awareness skills in the management of relationships and interactions with all stakeholders and the community while working in the ELC sector.
5	Use the appropriate skills and expertise necessary for research, report writing and use of technology to maintain ethics and integrity for both study and work-related practices.
6	Demonstrate through reflective practice individually and collectively the required competence, values, attitudes and work practices to work effectively with babies, toddlers, young children and all other stakeholders in the ELC setting.

It is proposed that this module will comprise of classroom hours and 150 hours of professional practice placement