



QQI

Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

Independent Evaluation Report on an Application for Validation of a Programme of Education and Training leading to CAS Award(s)

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Provider details

Provider name	NCU CLG (NCU), Glin Centre, Glin Road, Coolock, Dublin 17
Date of site visit	8 November 2022 (Virtual meeting)
Date of report	11 November 2022

Section A. Overall recommendations

Programme Title	Professional Homecare Support
FET Credits	120 FET credits
Recommendation <i>Satisfactory OR Satisfactory subject to proposed conditions OR Not Satisfactory</i>	Satisfactory

Section B. Expert Panel

Name	Role	Affiliation
Ann Dunne	Chairperson	Retired, formerly Further Education and Training Development Officer, City of Dublin ETB.
Naomi Pasley	Subject Matter Expert	Lecturer in Nursing Hibernia College
Ken Hogan	Subject Matter Expert	Nurse Tutor (Mental Health) CNME Sligo, Leitrim, W. Cavan & CNME Donegal
Carol Quinlan	Subject Matter Expert	Quality Assurance Officer Cork ETB
Kevin Devine	Report Writer and Panel Member	Retired, formerly Deputy Principal, College of Further Education Ballyfermot. City of Dublin ETB.

Section C. Principal Programme

Names of centre(s) where the programme(s) is to be provided	Maximum number of learners (FT)	Maximum number of learners (PT)
NCU Training Glin Centre	N/A	20 per intake

Proposed Duration and Enrolment					
	First Intake Date	Duration	Intakes per Annum	Enrolment i.e., learners per Intake	
			Maximum	Minimum	Maximum
Full-Time	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Part-Time	Q1 2023	27 weeks	10	12	20

Panel Commentary on proposed enrolment:

The date of first enrolment is subject to validation approval. The proposed enrolment is feasible as learner demand is based on demographic age trends and appropriate healthcare employment opportunities in healthcare settings and in the lone home environment.

Brief synopsis of the programme (e.g., who it is for, what is it for, what is involved for learners, what it leads to.)**The Purpose**

The purpose of this programme is to provide a dedicated programme of learning targeted to Professional Homecare Support. For many years NCU Training have worked closely with homecare support agencies providing education and training. This time working with industry stakeholders has given NCU a great insight into the competencies required to work effectively as a healthcare worker in the homecare support sector.

The Structure

The programme structure was carefully considered and reviewed at length following the stakeholder consultation process. The key consideration for employers is ensuring employees had the minimum HSE requirements to begin working directly with service users and that this training could be achieved in as timely a manner as possible.

Another consideration in setting the programme structure was ensuring that NCU created a programme of learning that had a healthy work/study/life balance as the majority of learners would be in employment for the duration of the programme. The programme is designed to help the learners to be personally effective learners. To achieve this the programme was carefully mapped, integrated and reinterpreted to create a bespoke programme specifically targeted to the Homecare Support Sector.

The programme incorporates the integration of the communications module which means that the communications learning outcomes are achieved organically throughout the programme by integrating the assessments with other assessment instruments in the programme. In addition to the communications module being integrated, there are two NCU certified components embedded into the programme that are designed to address the learning gaps for the Homecare Support Sector in the currently available CAS awards.

The Assessment

One of the key features of the programme is the assessment and how all assessments have been targeted to developing the essential competencies to operate as an effective Professional Homecare Support Worker. Each assessment instrument has been carefully considered to emulate a realistic work scenario. Similarly, the ethos of the assessment development for this programme of learning is to put the end service user at the centre of the service. Person Centred Planning is emphasised throughout all the assessments in the programme

The Vision

The vision of NCU Training is to create a programme of learning that puts a professional lens on the role of a Homecare Support Worker in Programme Title: Professional Homecare Support This is a sector that is growing at an exponential rate due to an ageing population in Ireland. There is a strong need to ensure that there is a benchmarked programme of learning that sets out the high standards required to work as a Professional Homecare Worker.

Target learner groups

- The target cohort for this programme is private and public sector homecare support workers.
- Workers who are currently employed in Homecare Support but who are not fully qualified.
- Potential employees who wish to enter the Homecare Support Sector

Certificate available to learners on completion of this programme (i.e., one of Major, Special Purpose, Supplemental or Component Certificate)

Major

Linked certificate: (if the programme leads to a component certificate (i.e., it does not lead directly to a major, Special Purpose or supplemental award)**Certificate Code****Certificate Title**

N/A

N/A

Components on offer in this programme

Component code	Component Title	Mandatory or Elective
5N2706	Care of the Older Person	Mandatory
5N2770	Care Skills	Mandatory
5N0758	Care Support	Mandatory
5N3741	Health Related Cleaning Skills	Mandatory
5N3734	Infection Prevention & Control	Mandatory
4N1119	Handling Food Hygienically	Mandatory
5N1356	Work Experience	Mandatory
4N1989	Customer Service	Mandatory
5N0690	Communications	Mandatory

Panel Commentary on awards on offer in the programme

The provider has grouped the components into 3 modules. The purpose of this was to create opportunities for micro-accreditation within the overall major award programme, to create

opportunities for integration and to avoid learning outcome repetition and over-assessment in the programme.

Approved countries for provision	Ireland
Delivery mode: Full-time/Part-time	Part-time

The teaching and learning modalities
Classroom / Face to Face – c. 50%
Workplace – c. 15%
On Line – c. 35%

Summary of specifications for teaching staff		
Role	Profile	WTE
Programme Development Manager	3rd level qualification QQI level 7 or 8 AND Teaching and learning qualification QQI level 6 or above	0.5
Academic Standards Quality Office	3rd level qualification QQI level 7 or 8 AND Teaching and learning qualification QQI level 6 or above	0.3
Administration/ Learner Supports	Experience using the VLE or LMS at NCU Training to support	1

Learning Activity	Ratio of learners to teaching staff
Directed Learning; E-learning (directed);	Blended learning using traditional classroom 20:1 Blended Learning using live virtual classroom 12:1
Group Discussions; Group Discussions/Interactions; Lectures / Classes; On the job Training; Practical Sessions; Practical/workshop/Laboratories/studio sessions;	Blended learning using traditional classroom 20:1 Blended Learning using live virtual classroom 12:1

Work experience; Workshops	<p>Blended learning using traditional classroom 20:1</p> <p>Blended Learning using live virtual classroom 12:1</p>
Work Experience/Simulated Work environment	<p>Blended learning using traditional classroom 20:1</p> <p>Blended Learning using live virtual classroom 12:1</p>
Self-Directed Learning; E-learning (self-directed);	484 hours out of total learner effort of 700 hours

Panel Commentary on programme outline, physical resources and staffing:

To date the provider has relied on contract staff as tutors but intends to recruit three full time permanent tutors with suitable qualifications and experience to deliver and assess this major programme.

The programme outline is satisfactory as all learning outcomes in all components are covered across the 3 modules presented. Physical resources are satisfactory with specific validation requirements and teaching and learning materials and equipment resourced and provided for.

The programme will be supported by the management team, and an assigned programme coordinator.

Section D. Other noteworthy features of the application

The Provider – NCU CLG

The provider was trading as NCU Training since 2003 and was registered with QQI under that name until June 2022. The organisation is now registered with QQI as NCU CLG since the company is now a company limited by guarantee.

Part 1A Evaluation of the Case for an Extension of the Approved Scope of Provision (where applicable). Having examined appropriate QA / Governance procedures, comment on the case for extending the applicant's Approved Scope of Provision to enable provision of this programme. (Especially relevant for move to online delivery / assessment)

N/A

Part 1. Evaluation against the validation criteria

This includes QQI's 12 validation criteria and sub-criteria, as well as the supplemental CAS-specific criteria. All of the criteria are copied below in grey panels.

The panel should complete this section with commentary against each criterion to support the recommendation given in the 'Satisfactory?' column i.e. Yes, No, or Partially.

If 'Yes', there should be a comment citing the evidence for this finding. Likewise, there should be an explanation as to why the panel have concluded that the criterion has either not been met or only partially so.

<p>Core Criterion 1</p> <p>The provider is eligible to apply for validation of the programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The provider meets the prerequisites (section 44(7) of the 2012 Act) to apply for validation of the programme. b) The application for validation is signed by the provider's chief executive (or equivalent) who confirms that the information provided is truthful and that all the applicable criteria have been addressed. c) The provider has declared that their programme complies with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.¹
<p>CAS Criterion 3 – FIELD OF LEARNING</p> <p>a. The provider's approved scope of provision must encompass the programme's field of learning subject to units (4.2) and (4.3) of Core policies and criteria for the validation by QQI of programmes of education and training.</p>

Evaluation against the criteria

Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment (Reference criteria where necessary)
PG 24740 - Professional Homecare Support	Yes	<p>The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.</p> <p>The evidence to support this conclusion is as follows:</p> <p>The provider, NCU CLG (NCU), has established procedures for quality assurance under section 28 of the 2012 Act and QQI has approved NCU's QA procedures in December 2018.</p> <p>NCU has established procedures for access, transfer and progression under section 56 and these procedures are documented in their QA documentation and summarised in the programme descriptor.</p> <p>PEL arrangements are in place to protect learners in accordance with section 65 of the 2012 Quality and Qualifications Act.</p>

¹ This criterion is to ensure the programme can actually be provided and will not be halted on account of breach of the law. The declaration is sought to ensure this is not overlooked but QQI is not responsible for verifying this declaration of enforcing such requirements.

		<p>The provider's Training & Business Development Manager has signed the application to confirm that the information provided is truthful, that all the applicable criteria have been addressed and the programme complies with the necessary requirements.</p> <p>In discussion with the panel the Training and Business Development Manager assured the panel that he was authorised to sign the document on behalf of the NCU Board of Directors and the panel accepts this assurance.</p>
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Core Criterion 2

The programme objectives and outcomes are clear and consistent with the QQI awards sought

- a) The programme aims and objectives are expressed plainly.
- b) A QQI award is specified for those who complete the programme.
 - (i) Where applicable, a QQI award is specified for each embedded programme.
- c) There is a satisfactory rationale for the choice of QQI award(s).
- d) The award title(s) is consistent with unit 3.1 of QQI's *Policy and Criteria for Making Awards*.
- e) The award title(s) is otherwise legitimate for example it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.
- f) The programme title and any embedded programme titles are
 - (i) Consistent with the title of the QQI award sought.
 - (ii) Clear, accurate, succinct and fit for the purpose of informing prospective learners and other stakeholders.
- g) For each programme and embedded programme
 - (i) The **minimum intended programme learning outcomes** and any other educational or training objectives of the programme are explicitly specified.²
 - (ii) The minimum intended programme learning outcomes to qualify for the QQI award sought are **consistent with** the relevant QQI awards standards.
- h) Where applicable, the **minimum intended module learning outcomes** are explicitly specified for each of the programme's modules.
- i) Any QQI minor awards sought for those who complete the modules are specified, where applicable.

For each minor award specified, the minimum intended module learning outcomes to qualify for the award are consistent with relevant QQI minor awards standards.³

CAS Criterion 1 – LINKED CERTIFICATE SPECIFICATION (minor programmes only)

- a. The minor programme prepares a learner to meet the relevant part of the requirements for the linked certificate specification.

CAS Criterion 2 – PURPOSE STATEMENT

- a. The compound programme is consistent with the relevant award specification's purpose statement.
- b. The minor programme is consistent with the relevant minor award(s) specification's purpose statement and that of the linked certificate specification.

CAS Criterion 4 – EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES

- a. The minimum intended compound programme learning outcomes are consistent with the applicable award standard (non-minor award) and the minimum intended module learning outcomes are consistent with the applicable minor awards standards.
- b. The minimum intended minor programme learning outcomes are consistent with the applicable award standard.
- c. The minor programme's minimum intended programme learning outcomes must also be consistent with the linked certificate specification.
- d. The programme leading to a compound award cannot be completed unless the learner has acquired, and where appropriate, is able to demonstrate, its expected learning outcomes (those of the compound award itself in addition to those of the required minor awards). The demonstration of the acquisition of minimum intended outcomes defined in a), b) and c) as applicable should suffice for this.

² Other programme objectives, for example, may be to meet the educational or training requirements of a statutory, regulatory or professional body.

³ Not all modules will warrant minor awards. Minor awards feature strongly in the QQI common awards system however further education and training awards may be made outside this system.

Evaluation against the criteria

Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment (Reference criteria where necessary)
PG 24740 - Professional Homecare Support	Yes	<p>The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.</p> <p>The evidence to support this conclusion is as follows:</p> <p>The aims and objectives of the programme are clearly expressed in Sections 6.1 and 6.2 of the programme descriptor and are consistent with the QQI award chosen - Health Service Skills 5M3782.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The minimum intended programme learning outcomes (MIPLOs) are explicitly specified as evidenced in Section 6.7 and are mapped to the relevant QQI standards in the major and minor awards. • In Section 6.7a the MIPLOs are mapped to the teaching and learning opportunities which will be provided to facilitate a learner to achieve the MIPLOs and to evidence their achievement through the assessment tasks required by the programme. <p>The panel is satisfied that the MIPLOs and associated minimum intended module learning outcomes (MIMLOs) are logical and coherent and are consistent with the Level 5 award Health Service Skills 5M3782 standards.</p>

Core Criterion 3

The programme concept, implementation strategy, and its interpretation of QQI awards standards are well informed and soundly based (considering social, cultural, educational, professional and employment objectives)

- a) The development of the programme and the intended programme learning outcomes has sought out and taken into account the views of stakeholders such as learners, graduates, teachers, lecturers, education and training institutions, employers, statutory bodies, regulatory bodies, the international scientific and academic communities, professional bodies and equivalent associations, trades unions, and social and community representatives.⁴
- b) The interpretation of awards standards has been adequately informed and researched; considering the programme aims and objectives and minimum intended programme (and, where applicable, modular) learning outcomes.
 - (i) There is a satisfactory rationale for providing the programme.
 - (ii) The proposed programme compares favourably with existing related (comparable) programmes in Ireland and beyond. Comparators should be as close as it is possible to find.
 - (iii) There is support for the introduction of the programme (such as from employers, or professional, regulatory or statutory bodies).
 - (iv) There is evidence⁵ of learner demand for the programme.
 - (v) There is evidence of employment opportunities for graduates where relevant⁶.
 - (vi) The programme meets genuine education and training needs.⁷
- c) There are mechanisms to keep the programme updated in consultation with internal and external stakeholders.
- d) Employers and practitioners in the cases of vocational and professional awards have been systematically involved in the programme design where the programme is vocationally or professionally oriented.
- e) The programme satisfies any validation-related criteria attaching to the applicable awards standards and QQI awards specifications.

Evaluation against the criteria

Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment (Reference criteria where necessary)
PG 24740 - Professional Homecare Support	Yes	<p>The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.</p> <p>The provider sets out in Section 4.1 a clear rationale for the programme and demonstrates that there was a systematic process of programme development.</p>

⁴ Awards standards however detailed rely on various communities for their interpretation. This consultation is necessary if the programme is to enable learners to achieve the standard in its fullest sense.

⁵ This might be predictive or indirect.

⁶ It is essential to involve employers in the programme development and review process when the programme is vocationally or professionally oriented.

⁷ There is clear evidence that the programme meets the **target learners'** education and training needs and that there is a clear demand for the programme.

		<p>In discussions with the panel the provider outlined the consultations that were held with stakeholders during the development process. The relevant stakeholders included a number of companies providing employment in the homecare support sector which supports evidence of employment opportunities for graduates. Market research also indicated support for the programme from regulatory bodies such as the HSE and HIQA.</p> <p>There was consultation with learners and potential learners through informal drop-in open sessions held in the NCU centre. The provider confirmed that it was normal practice to obtain learner feedback at regular intervals on existing programmes.</p>
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Core Criterion 4

The programme's access, transfer and progression arrangements are satisfactory

- a) The information about the programme as well as its procedures for access, transfer and progression are consistent with the procedures described in QQI's policy and criteria for access, transfer and progression in relation to learners for providers of further and higher education and training. Each of its programme-specific criteria is individually and explicitly satisfied⁸.
- b) Programme information for learners is provided in plain language. This details what the programme expects of learners and what learners can expect of the programme and that there are procedures to ensure its availability in a range of accessible formats.
- c) If the programme leads to a higher education and training award and its duration is designed for native English speakers, then the level of proficiency in English language must be greater or equal to B2+ in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR⁹) in order to enable learners to reach the required standard for the QQI award.
- d) The programme specifies the learning (knowledge, skill and competence) that **target learners** are expected to have achieved before they are enrolled in the programme and any other assumptions about enrolled learners (programme participants).
- e) The programme includes suitable procedures and criteria for the **recognition of prior learning** for the purposes of access and, where appropriate, for advanced entry to the programme and for exemptions.
- f) The programme title (the title used to refer to the programme): -
 - (i) Reflects the core *intended programme learning outcomes*, and is consistent with the standards and purposes of the QQI awards to which it leads, the award title(s) and their class(es).
 - (ii) Is learner focused and meaningful to the learners;
 - (iii) Has long-lasting significance.
- g) The programme title is otherwise legitimate; for example, it must comply with applicable statutory, regulatory and professional body requirements.

Evaluation against the criteria

Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment (Reference criteria where necessary)
PG 24740 - Professional Homecare Support	Yes	<p>The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.</p> <p>In discussion with the panel the provider explained that many prospective learners will approach NCU informally in the first instance. In many cases the prospective learner may be advised to take up a single module first or may be directed to a local Level 4 programme in a local</p>

⁸ Each of the detailed criteria set out in the Policy and criteria for access, transfer and progression in relation to learners for providers of further and higher education and training must be addressed in the provider's evaluation report. The detailed criteria are (QQI, restated 2015) arranged under the headings

- Progression and transfer routes
- Entry arrangements
- Information provision

⁹ http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf (accessed 26/09/2015)

		<p>college. The panel is satisfied that the procedures operated by the provider in respect of entry requirements are appropriate but the panel considers that the entry requirements should be more clearly specified.</p> <p><i>Recommendation 1 – The provider should revise the programme descriptor to explicitly state what the entry requirements are and this information should be published for prospective learners.</i></p> <p>The panel considers that the formal process for assessing English language skills which applies to other NCU programmes should be established by the provider for learners to participate in this programme.</p> <p><i>Recommendation 2 – The provider should explicitly state in the programme documentation minimum specific English language requirements and their measurement for learners whose first language is not English, and this information should be published for prospective learners.</i></p>
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Core Criterion 5

The programme's written curriculum is well structured and fit-for-purpose

- a) The programme is suitably structured and coherently oriented towards the achievement by learners of its intended programme learning outcomes. The programme (including any stages and modules) is integrated in all its dimensions.
- b) In so far as it is feasible the programme provides choice to enrolled learners so that they may align their learning opportunities towards their individual educational and training needs.
- c) Each module and stage is suitably structured and coherently oriented towards the achievement by learners of the intended *programme* learning outcomes.
- d) The objectives and purposes of each of the programme's elements are clear to learners and to the provider's staff.
- e) The programme is structured and scheduled realistically based on sound educational and training principles¹⁰.
- f) The curriculum is comprehensively and systematically documented.
- g) The credit allocated to the programme is consistent with the difference between the entry standard and minimum intended programme learning outcomes.
- h) The credit allocated to each module is consistent with the difference between the module entry standard and minimum intended module learning outcomes.
- i) Elements such as practice placement and work based phases are provided with the same rigour and attentiveness as other elements.
- j) The programme **duration** (expressed in terms of time from initial enrolment to completion) and its **fulltime equivalent contact time** (expressed in hours) are consistent with the difference between the minimum entry standard and award standard and with the credit allocation.¹¹

CAS Criterion 8 – SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

a. Where the expected learning outcomes require compliance with supporting standards (e.g., occupational standards or competence standards) this compliance is systematically demonstrated in the application for validation.

CAS Criterion 10 – OTHER CAS CRITERIA

a. The programme complies with the 87.5% Rule

There is a lower limit to the volume of learning at the award's NFQ level involved in a programme leading to a CAS compound award. The lower limit is 87.5% of the minimum credit requirements for the compound award. For example, if the minimum credit requirement is 120 FET credits, then at least 105 FET credits must be at the award's NFQ level.

b. The minor programme complies with the Compound Award Rule

The compound award rule concerns the threshold beyond which an application for the validation of a programme leading to a compound award (e.g., a major award) must be made.

A provider applying for validation of one or more minor programmes must ensure that the set of minor awards accessible through the proposed minor programmes together with those accessible through its QQI validated minor programmes does not overlap with the certification requirements of any QQI compound award by more than the FET credit limits below.

The limits for major awards are: • NFQ level 3: 45 FET credits • NFQ level 4: 70 FET credits • NFQ level 5: 90 FET credits • NFQ level 6: 90 FET credits Limits for other compound awards are not automatic but QQI may require a provider to apply for the validation of a programme leading to a particular compound award

¹⁰ This applies recursively to each and every element of the programme from enrolment through to completion.

In the case of a modular programme, the pool of modules and learning pathway constraints (such as any prerequisite and co-requisite modules) is explicit and appropriate to the intended programme learning outcomes.

¹¹ If the duration is variable, for example, when advanced entry is available, this should be explained and justified

where the provider wishes to access compound award components that amount to more than 75% of the compound award's credit allocation.

Evaluation against the criteria

Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment (Reference criteria where necessary)
PG 24740 - Professional Homecare Support	Yes	<p>The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.</p> <p>The programme is a Level 5 programme consisting of nine modules. There is a consistency and coherence between the relevant award standards, the MIPLOs and MIMLOs.</p> <p>The programme is suitably structured and coherently oriented towards the achievement by learners of the intended programme learning outcomes. The components are grouped into three modules in the delivery and assessment of the programme. These units are well thought out and follow a logical structure which is fit for purpose.</p>

Core Criterion 6**There are sufficient qualified and capable programme staff available to implement the programme as planned**

- a) The specification of the programme's staffing requirements (staff required as part of the programme and intrinsic to it) is precise, and rigorous and consistent with the programme and its defined purpose. The specifications include professional and educational qualifications, licences-to-practise where applicable, experience and the staff/learner ratio requirements. See also criterion 12 c).
- b) The programme has an identified complement of staff¹² (or potential staff) who are available, qualified and capable to provide the specified programme in the context of their existing commitments.
- c) The programme's complement of staff (or potential staff) (those who support learning including any employer-based personnel) are demonstrated to be competent to enable learners to achieve the intended programme learning outcomes and to assess learners' achievements as required.
- d) There are arrangements for the performance of the programme's staff to be managed to ensure continuing capability to fulfil their roles and there are staff development¹³ opportunities¹⁴.
- e) There are arrangements for programme staff performance to be reviewed and there are mechanisms for encouraging development and for addressing underperformance.
- f) Where the programme is to be provided by staff not already in post there are arrangements to ensure that the programme will not enrol learners unless a complement of staff meeting the specifications is in post.

Evaluation against the criteria

Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment (Reference criteria where necessary)
PG 24740 - Professional Homecare Support	Yes	<p>The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.</p> <p>The evidence to support this conclusion is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The qualifications and experience required for teaching and other staff delivering the programme are set out in Sections 3.2 and in Section 7.6a, for each module, in the programme descriptor.

¹² Staff here means natural persons required as part of the programme and accountable (directly or indirectly) to the programme's provider, it may for example, include contracted trainers and workplace supervisors.

¹³ Development here is for the purpose of ensuring staff remain up-to-date on the discipline itself, on teaching methods or on other relevant skills or knowledge, to the extent that this is necessary to ensure an adequate standard of teaching.

¹⁴ Professional or vocational education and training requires that teaching staff's professional/vocation knowledge is up to date. Being qualified in a discipline does not necessarily mean that a person is currently competent in that discipline. Therefore, performance management and development of professional and vocational staff needs to focus on professional/vocational competence as well as pedagogical competence. Professional development may include placement in industry, for example. In regulated professions it would be expected that there are a suitable number of registered practitioners involved.

		<p>In discussions with the panel the provider confirmed that it was intended to recruit additional tutors to support the programme.</p> <p>It was also noted in discussions that most teaching staff had a qualification in Nursing, Healthcare or Social Care. The programme descriptor does not state the explicit qualifications required for tutors.</p> <p><i>Recommendation 3 – The provider should revise the programme documentation in respect of qualifications for teaching staff to explicitly state the award type and discipline area as well as the level required.</i></p> <p>Work experience is an important part of the programme and the role of the workplace supervisor is critical. The panel understands from the documentation and from discussions with the provider that NCU have well-established working relationships with a number of healthcare employers.</p> <p>The panel considers that the provider should develop and include in the programme documentation some support material to assist the workplace supervisor. This should be in the form of a handbook and should include guidance and criteria in appraising learner performance.</p> <p><i>Recommendation 4 – The provider should produce and include in the programme documentation a Supervisor’s Handbook.</i></p>
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Core Criterion 7

There are sufficient physical resources to implement the programme as planned

- a) The specification of the programme's physical resource requirements (physical resources required as part of the programme and intrinsic to it) is precise, and rigorous and consistent with the programme, its defined purpose and its resource/learner-ratio requirements. See also criterion 12 d).
- b) The programme has an identified complement of supported physical resources (or potential supported physical resources) that are available in the context of existing commitments on these e.g., availability of:
 - (i) suitable premises and accommodation for the learning and human needs (comfort, safety, health, wellbeing) of learners (this applies to all of the programme's learning environments including the workplace learning environment)
 - (ii) suitable information technology and resources (including educational technology and any virtual learning environments provided)
 - (iii) printed and electronic material (including software) for teaching, learning and assessment
 - (iv) suitable specialist equipment (e.g., kitchen, laboratory, workshop, studio) – if applicable
 - (v) technical support
 - (vi) administrative support
 - (vii) company placements/internships – if applicable
- c) If versions of the programme are provided in parallel at more than one location each independently meets the location-sensitive validation criteria for each location (for example staffing, resources and the learning environment).
- d) There is a five-year plan for the programme. It should address
 - (i) Planned intake (first five years) and
 - (ii) The total costs and income over the five years based on the planned intake.
- e) The programme includes controls to ensure entitlement to use the property (including intellectual property, premises, materials and equipment) required.

Evaluation against the criteria

Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment (Reference criteria where necessary)
PG 24740 - Professional Homecare Support	Yes	<p>The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.</p> <p>There are special validation requirements arising from the specification of two components</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Infection Prevention and Control ○ Health Related Cleaning Skills <p>In Section 3.4 the provider describes the resources available including resources that are necessary for the Infection Prevention and Control module.</p> <p>The provider states in the descriptor that there are adequate resources for the delivery of the module Health Related Cleaning Skills and the delivery of handling skills</p>

		<p>in general. In the discussion with the panel the panel were able to view photographs of the facilities.</p> <p>The panel are satisfied that the necessary resources are in place.</p> <p><i>Recommendation 5 – The provide should include photographs as evidence of the facilities in the programme descriptor.</i></p>
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Core Criterion 8**The learning environment is consistent with the needs of the programme's learners**

- a) The programme's physical, social, cultural and intellectual environment (recognising that the environment may, for example, be partly virtual or involve the workplace) including resources and support systems are consistent with the intended programme learning outcomes.
- b) Learners can interact with, and are supported by, others in the programme's learning environments including peer learners, teachers, and where applicable supervisors, practitioners and mentors.
- c) The programme includes arrangements to ensure that the parts of the programme that occur in the workplace are subject to the same rigours as any other part of the programme while having regard to the different nature of the workplace.

Evaluation against the criteria

Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment (Reference criteria where necessary)
PG 24740 - Professional Homecare Support	Yes	<p>The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion</p> <p>Based on a review of the programme documentation together with the discussions with the provider, the panel is satisfied that there is a well-established culture of supporting learners.</p> <p>The programme descriptor includes many examples of policies, procedures, checklists and toolkits designed to help support and inform learners. These include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 6.8 – The provider sets out in this section the Language, Literacy and Numeracy supports. • Section 3.3 – The provider states “At NCU Training we have been driving a change to Universal Design for Learning with all our programmes and have been supporting our tutors to develop the skills to support learners with UDL.” • Section 5.1 – In this section the provider provides links to a number of online resources providing support for new learners and information on virtual learning. • Section 6.10 – There is a New Learner Experience Committee.

		Based on discussions with the provider the panel notes with approval that the provider intends to appoint a programme coordinator when the programme has been established.
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Core Criterion 9**There are sound teaching and learning strategies**

- a) The teaching strategies support achievement of the intended programme/module learning outcomes.
- b) The programme provides authentic learning opportunities to enable learners to achieve the intended programme learning outcomes.
- c) The programme enables enrolled learners to attain (if reasonably diligent) the minimum intended programme learning outcomes reliably and efficiently (in terms of overall learner effort and a reasonably balanced workload).
- d) Learning is monitored/supervised.
- e) Individualised guidance, support¹⁵ and timely formative feedback is regularly provided to enrolled learners as they progress within the programme.

Evaluation against the criteria

Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment (Reference criteria where necessary)
PG 24740 - Professional Homecare Support	Yes	<p>The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.</p> <p>The panel is satisfied that the teaching strategies support the achievements of the programme learning outcomes by the learners.</p> <p>The panel discussed the delivery of the programme in some detail with the provider and it was noted that the programme will be delivered through Blended Learning consistently for all cohorts. The relative proportions of the different modes of delivery are set out in the descriptor.</p> <p>The panel considers that the blended learning strategy is well written and reflects the advice given by previous validation panels. The VLE platform (Google Classroom) is easy to navigate and provides all the elements referred to in the strategy. It is clear that a significant amount of work has been done to develop this.</p> <p>The panel considers that there is a need to set out definitions for some of the terms used to describe the learning in the programme and to use these terms in a consistent way in the documentation.</p>

¹⁵ Support and feedback concerns anything material to learning in the context of the programme. For the avoidance of doubt, it includes among other things any course-related language, literacy and numeracy support.

		<p>For instance, the term “Blended Traditional Face to Face class” is used in the descriptor. The panel considers that this term is confusing and should be clarified among other terms.</p> <p><i>Recommendation 6 – The provider should review any recorded material to ensure it can support positive learner engagement.</i></p> <p>The panel were able to access some samples of on-line material. The panel are satisfied that the platform is fit for purpose and the presentation of the material makes it easily accessible to learners.</p> <p>Some of the material reviewed were recorded lectures. In the opinion of the panel while recorded material is very valuable in delivering content it is essential to take measures to ensure that students will be fully engaged. These measures may include reducing the time of lecture to “bite-size” pieces, ensuring the audio is of a high quality, changing voices at intervals, using music/videos and so on.</p> <p><i>Recommendation 7 – The provider should review any recorded material to ensure that learners will be engaged with it.</i></p>
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Core Criterion 10

There are sound assessment strategies

- a) All assessment is undertaken consistently with *Assessment Guidelines, Conventions and Protocols for Programmes Leading to QQI Awards*¹⁶
- b) The programme's assessment procedures interface effectively with the provider's QQI approved quality assurance procedures.
- c) The programme includes specific procedures that are fair and consistent for the assessment of enrolled learners to ensure the minimum intended programme/module learning outcomes are acquired by all who successfully complete the programme.¹⁷
- d) The programme includes formative assessment to support learning.
- e) There is a satisfactory written *programme assessment strategy* for the programme as a whole and there are satisfactory module assessment strategies for any of its constituent modules.¹⁸
- f) Sample assessment instruments, tasks, marking schemes and related evidence have been provided for each award-stage assessment and indicate that the assessment is likely to be valid and reliable.
- g) There are sound procedures for the moderation of summative assessment results.
- h) The provider only puts forward an enrolled learner for certification for a particular award for which a programme has been validated if they have been specifically assessed against the standard for that award.¹⁹

CAS Criterion 5 – CERTIFICATE REQUIREMENTS

- a. The compound programme ensures the certificate requirements are satisfied for each learner before the (non-minor) certificate is requested in respect of a learner on the basis of completion of the programme.
- b. The satisfaction of the certificate requirements is a necessary but insufficient condition for the (non-minor) certificate to be requested.

CAS Criterion 6 – ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

- a. The programme only puts forward an enrolled learner for certification for a particular award if they have been specifically assessed against the standard determined by QQI for that award—this applies separately to each award including minor, major and special purpose awards. Assessment of the achievement of minimum intended outcomes defined in 7.4 a), b) and c) as applicable should suffice.

Evaluation against the criteria

Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment (Reference criteria where necessary)
PG 24740 - Professional Homecare Support	Yes	<p>The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.</p> <p>The panel is satisfied that NCU's standard policies and procedures for assessment are based on the principles of fairness, consistency, authenticity and transparency and</p>

¹⁶ See the section on transitional arrangements.

¹⁷ This assumes the minimum intended programme/module learning outcomes are consistent with the applicable awards standards.

¹⁸ The programme assessment strategy is addressed in the Assessment Guidelines, Conventions and Protocols for Programmes Leading to QQI Awards. See the section on transitional arrangements.

¹⁹ If the award is a QQI CAS compound award it is not necessarily sufficient that the learner has achieved all the components specified in the certification requirements unless at least one of those components is a capstone component (i.e., designed to test the compound learning outcomes).

		<p>apply to the programme. There is an external examining system in place to ensure that assessments standards are met.</p> <p>The provider has established sound procedures for the moderation of assessment and the reliable certification of results. The provider confirmed that reasonable accommodations are made available to those learners who need them.</p> <p>The panel makes a number of recommendations in respect of assessment.</p> <p>The panel considers there are a number of discrepancies in the assessment materials and resources between Section 6.12, Section 7.8a for each module and the related marking sheets.</p> <p><i>Recommendation 8 – The provider should review and revise the assessment information provided in the descriptor to ensure accuracy throughout.</i></p> <p>The panel commend the provider in the creative integration of the assessment of nine modules over three units. The panel are satisfied that, overall, the assessment strategy is satisfactory and that all necessary areas are covered in the summative assessment strategy.</p> <p>The provider will need to ensure that the programme assessments align with the categories in the QQI results database which is based on individual component assessments. The panel are satisfied that this can be done with some minor amendments.</p> <p><i>Recommendation 9 – The provider should review the descriptions of and the weightings of integrated assessments to ensure that results will align with the QQI results database.</i></p> <p>.</p>
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Core Criterion 11**Learners enrolled on the programme are well informed, guided and cared for**

- a) There are arrangements to ensure that each enrolled learner is fully informed in a timely manner about the programme including the schedule of activities and assessments.
- b) Information is provided about learner supports that are available to learners enrolled on the programme.
- c) Specific information is provided to learners enrolled on the programme about any programme-specific appeals and complaints procedures.
- d) If the programme is modular, it includes arrangements for the provision of effective guidance services for learners on the selection of appropriate learning pathways.
- e) The programme takes into account and accommodates to the differences between enrolled learners, for example, in terms of their prior learning, maturity, and capabilities.
- f) There are arrangements to ensure that learners enrolled on the programme are supervised and individualised support and due care is targeted at those who need it.
- g) The programme provides supports for enrolled learners who have special education and training needs.
- h) The programme makes reasonable accommodations for learners with disabilities²⁰.
- i) If the programme aims to enrol international students it complies with the *Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students*²¹ and there are appropriate in-service supports in areas such as English language, learning skills, information technology skills and such like, to address the particular needs of international learners and enable such learners to successfully participate in the programme.
- j) The programme's learners will be well cared for and safe while participating in the programme, (e.g., while at the provider's premises or those of any collaborators involved in provision, the programme's locations of provision including any workplace locations or practice-placement locations).

Evaluation against the criteria

Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment (Reference criteria where necessary)
PG 24740 - Professional Homecare Support	Yes	<p>The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.</p> <p>As set out in the comments under Core Criterion 8 the provider has established procedures and provided resources to inform, guide and care for learners.</p> <p>The panel considers that additional information needs to be provided for prospective learners and this is dealt with in the comments under Core Criterion 4.</p>

²⁰ For more information on making reasonable accommodations see www.AHEAD.ie and QQI's Policies, Actions and Procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression for Learners (QQI, restated 2015).

²¹ See Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Students (QQI, 2015)

Core Criterion 12

The programme is well managed

- a) The programme includes intrinsic governance, quality assurance, learner assessment, and access, transfer and progression procedures that functionally interface with the provider's general or institutional procedures.
- b) The programme interfaces effectively with the provider's QQI approved quality assurance procedures. Any proposed incremental changes to the provider's QA procedures required by the programme or programme-specific QA procedures have been developed having regard to QQI's statutory QA guidelines. If the QA procedures allow the provider to approve the centres within the provider that may provide the programme, the procedures and criteria for this should be fit-for-purpose of identifying which centres are suited to provide the programme and which are not.
- c) There are explicit and suitable programme-specific criteria for selecting persons who meet the programme's staffing requirements and can be added to the programme's complement of staff.
- d) There are explicit and suitable programme-specific criteria for selecting physical resources that meet the programmes physical resource requirements, and can be added to the programme's complement of supported physical resources.
- e) Quality assurance²² is intrinsic to the programme's maintenance arrangements and addresses all aspects highlighted by the validation criteria.
- f) The programme-specific quality assurance arrangements are consistent with QQI's statutory QA guidelines and use continually monitored completion rates and other sources of information that may provide insight into the quality and standards achieved.
- g) The programme operation and management arrangements are coherently documented and suitable.
- h) There are sound procedures for interface with QQI certification.

CAS Criterion 7 – SPECIAL VALIDATION REQUIREMENTS

- a. The programme complies with the special validation requirements from the relevant certificate/component specifications.
- b. Where special validation requirements relate to facilities or staff or other factors that vary with centre, there are arrangements to ensure that the conditions are met as necessary at each centre involved with the programme.

Evaluation against the criteria

Programme	Satisfactory? (yes, no, partially)	Comment (Reference criteria where necessary)
PG 24740 - Professional Homecare Support	Yes	<p>The panel has evaluated the programme having regard to the criterion and sub-criteria and recommends that QQI can be satisfied that the programme meets this criterion.</p> <p>The evidence to support this conclusion is the programme documentation supported by presentations to and discussions with the panel.</p> <p>The panel discussed with the provider the need for a process of review and monitoring of the new major programmes. The provider confirmed that such mechanisms are in place for programmes with non-QQI certification and can be used as a model for the QQI programmes.</p>

²² See also QQI's Policy on Monitoring (QQI, 2014)

		<p><i>Recommendation 10 – The provider should establish mechanisms for the review and monitoring of QQI programmes.</i></p> <p>The panel considers that the programme documentation could be improved by a review to ensure consistency of terminology between the website, the programme descriptor and the various information sources such as programme handbook used by the provider.</p> <p><i>Recommendation 11 – The provider should review all programme documentation and website content to ensure terminology is consistently used.</i></p> <p>There are special validation requirements arising from the specification of two components</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Infection Prevention and Control ○ Health Related Cleaning Skills <p>These requirements are addressed in the comments under Core Criterion 7.</p>
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Part 4 Overall recommendation to QQI

Principal programme:

Select one	
Satisfactory	Satisfactory (meaning that it recommends that QQI can be satisfied in the context of unit 2.3) of Core policies and criteria for the validation by QQI of programmes of education and training;
	Satisfactory subject to proposed special conditions (specified with timescale for compliance for each condition; these may include proposed pre-validation conditions i.e., proposed (minor) things to be done to a programme that almost fully meets the validation criteria before QQI makes a determination); ²³
	Not satisfactory.

Reasons²⁴ for the overall recommendation

The provider is a well-established provider that has complied with all QQI QA procedures.

This programme responds to a demand for qualified homecare workers in healthcare and has been developed in a coherent and systematic way.

The provider has taken a creative approach in integration of curriculum and assessment in the programme with the addition of two external learning packages which complement the QQI modules.

On that basis the panel is making an overall recommendation to QQI of “Satisfactory”

In addition, the panel makes a number of recommendations to further enhance the quality of the programme

Commendations

NCU is to be commended for taking a creative approach in the integration of curriculum and assessment in the programme.

NCU is to be commended for encouraging and supporting the teaching staff to adopt Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles to facilitate learning.

NCU is to be commended for developing a Blended Learning capability and incorporating Blended Learning into its QA procedures.

²³ Normally an application that fails to meet the criteria in any of its aspects will be considered as not satisfactory. Nevertheless, so as to ensure that the validation process will not be implemented unreasonably, if an independent evaluation finds that a programme virtually meets the validation criteria but needs some minor modifications, the independent evaluation could conclude “Satisfactory subject to recommended special conditions” where the special conditions prescribe the defects that require to be corrected.

²⁴ Give precise reasons for the conclusions organised under each of the 12 criteria (for the programme and each embedded programme and any modules proposed to lead to QQI awards) citing supporting evidence. If any criteria or sub-criteria are not met by the application this must be stated explicitly giving precise reasons with evidence. A “Not Satisfactory” recommendation may be justified if any one of the applicable criteria or sub-criteria are not demonstrated to be satisfied.

The inclusion of a focus on lone working is very appropriate to the learner cohort and is to be commended

The quality of the documents presented facilitated evaluation by the panel.

Recommendations for improvement to the provider

Recommendation 1 – The provider should revise the programme descriptor to explicitly state what the entry requirements are and this information should be published for prospective learners (Core Criterion 4).

Recommendation 2 – The provider should explicitly state in the programme documentation minimum specific English language requirements and their measurement for learners whose first language is not English, and this information should be published for prospective learners (CC4).

Recommendation 3 – The provider should revise the programme documentation in respect of qualifications for teaching staff to explicitly state the award type and discipline area as well as the level required (CC6).

Recommendation 4 – The provider should produce and include in the programme documentation a Supervisor's Handbook (CC6).

Recommendation 5 – The provider should include photographs as evidence of the facilities in the programme descriptor (CC7).

Recommendation 6 – The provider should define clearly the terms used to describe the learning and use the terms in a consistent way (CC9).

Recommendation 7 – The provider should review any recorded material to ensure it can support positive learner engagement (CC9).

Recommendation 8 – The provider should review and revise the assessment information provided in the descriptor to ensure accuracy throughout (CC10).

Recommendation 9 – The provider should review the descriptions of and the weightings of integrated assessments to ensure that results will align with the QQI results database (CC10).

Recommendation 10 – The provider should establish mechanisms for the review and monitoring of QQI programmes (CC12).

Recommendation 11 – The provider should review all programme documentation and website content to ensure terminology is consistently used (CC12).

Detailed Corrections

The panel draws the attention of the provider to some corrections that should be made in the programme descriptor

- The credit value of the Handling Food Hygienically (4N1119) module should be 5 credits not 10 and this should be changed throughout the documentation as should the totals that include the incorrect credit value. This requires changes to the programme descriptor in the following sections, 2.1.3, 2.1.4, 6.13.
- Section 6.3 and 6.6 should include the Communications module.
- Section 7.5 the total of hours is 254 not 264

Recommended special conditions of validation

There are no special conditions.

Part 5

5a Declarations of evaluators' interests


All panel members have declared that they have no conflict of interest in this validation.

5b Chair sign-off

This report has been agreed by the evaluation panel and is signed on their behalf by the chairperson.

Panel chairperson: Ann Dunne

Date: 11/11/2022

Signed: 

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Appendix 1 - Programme structure

Programme Module Number and Title	Status Mandatory /Optional M/O	Mode/s of delivery	Component Title/s	Component Code/s NFQ Level	Credit Value/s	Directed	Self- Directed	Assessment Technique/s	Assessment Weighting/s	Indicate when in the programme assessment is due
Module 1: Core	M	Blended	Care of the Older Person	5N2706	15	84 hours (32%)	170 hours (68%)	Learner Record	10%	All assessment must be completed no later than the end of the 3-week assessment completion period
			Care Skills	5N2770	15			Assignment	20%	
			Care Support	5N0758	15			Project	20%	
								Workplace Simulation	50%	
Module 2: Health & Hygiene	M	Blended	Health Related Cleaning Skills	5N3741	15	72 hours (30%)	176 hours (70%)	Learner Record	20%	All assessment must be completed no later than the end of the 3-week assessment completion period
								Assignment	10%	
			Infection Prevention & Control	5N3734	15			Project	20%	
				4N1119	5			Workplace Simulation	50%	
								Exam	10%	

Programme Module Number and Title	Status Mandatory /Optional M/O	Mode/s of delivery	Component Title/s	Component Code/s NFQ Level	Credit Value/s	Directed	Self- Directed	Assessment Technique/s	Assessment Weighting/s	Indicate when in the programme assessment is due
			Handling Food Hygienically							
Module 3: Employment Skills	M	Blended	Work Experience Customer Service	5N1356 4N1989	15 10	60 hours (32%) Work Place- ment 60 hours (32%)	67.5 hours (36%)	Learner Record Assignment Project Workplace Simulation	10% 20% 20% 50%	All assessment must be completed no later than the end of the 3-week assessment completion period
Integrated throughout			Communications	5N0690	15	Integrated	Integrated	Integrated		Integrated

