



Early Years Childcare Awards Pre-review Consultation Document

Background

QQI has a suite of further education and training award standards at NFQ Levels 1-6 known as the **Common Awards System (CAS)**. CAS was introduced at Levels 1 and 2 in 2008, at Level 3 in 2010 and Levels 4-6 from 2011. Its development brought consistency to the FET awards system, including a prescribed award structure and a credit accumulation and transfer system. The introduction of CAS also provided the basis for the introduction of programme validation in FET.

QQI's Policy for Determining Award Standards indicates that review of standards will take place **'from time to time as necessary'**. It also allows for provider led award development and for broader structures within CAS. In 2017 QQI published a discussion document on its approach to the review of award standards in FE and HE. The feedback received has been published as the Consolidated Feedback on the Review of QQI award standards.

Review of FET standards in Early Childhood Care and Education at levels 4-6.

QQI is keen to ensure that childcare qualifications are fit for purpose and that education and training providers programmes are validated to ensure they meet the specific and evolving needs of the sector. In this context, QQI is undertaking a review of childcare awards at levels 4-6 (linked below). This is to be done in the context of a broader review of the Common Award System (CAS) which QQI has also commenced.

Table 1: Certification data 2012-2018

Level	Award Code	Award Title	Credit Value	No. Providers	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018 to date
4	4M2014	Early Childhood Education and Care Support	90	23	0	38	35	28	35	17	21
5	5M2009	Early Childhood Care and Education	120	104	149	2314	2582	2602	2511	2296	1931
6	6M2007	Early Childhood Care and Education	120	69	15	657	1341	2376	2129	1841	1329

More detailed information on provision (providers and locations) can be seen at <http://infographics.qqi.ie/>.

[4M2014 Early Childhood Education and Care Support](#)

[5M2009 Early Childhood Care and Education](#)

[6M2007 Early Childhood Care and Education](#)



The process and the findings from the early years award standards review will help inform the CAS reform, enhancement and development. Alignment with higher education is important. Key areas to be reviewed include, but are not limited to:

- work experience/work practice
- Aistear and Síolta
- special/additional needs
- school aged childcare

Review Process

The review process commenced in Q2 2018 with data gathering and is expected to be finalised by Q1 2019. A draft Terms of Reference is attached in appendix 1.

To help guide and inform the review, QQI is seeking the views of providers, learners and other interested parties. Some particular questions and proposals are listed below.

Award titles

Level 4 Early Childhood Education and Care Support 4M2014

Level 5 Early Childhood Care and Education 5M2009

Level 6 Early Childhood Care and Education 6M2007

The current award titles will have to undergo a change to distinguish the revised award from the current awards. Suggestions for new titles are welcome.

Level 4

- The major award is not well used. We propose to cease offering the major award in Early Childhood Education and Care Support due to the low certification numbers. If you have any views on this please explain.
- As an alternative, we propose to create a Level 4 Special Purpose award containing two minors, Child Development and Play and Child Care and Safety. What are your views?

Level 5:

Major award structure:

- What are your views on the structure of the award and have you any recommendations for change?

Proposed changes:

- We are considering introducing a capstone module in childcare – what are your views?



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- (A Capstone Module is a module that requires evidence of integrated learning involving the expected learning outcomes specified by all the minors required to qualify for the relevant major award).
- Work experience/work practice will be rebadged specifically for childcare so learners will have to complete work experience/work practice in a Tusla registered setting.
- Transversal skills (communications, teamworking etc); should these remain the same or do you recommend changes?

Elective Pool :

Changes:

- Occupational First Aid (5N1207) will be removed as it is no longer recognised by the HSA
- Childminding Practice (5N1766) will be removed as it does not relate to an ECCE environment. What are your views?
- Other components listed in the elective pool: please provide any feedback you wish to give on the purpose, credit value, learning outcomes, supporting documentation and specific validation requirements. All comments welcome.
- Are there new components which you think may be pertinent to early years care and education at level 5 and should be included in the structure of the major award.

Level 6:

Major award structure:

- What are your views on the structure of the award and have you any recommendations for change?

Proposed changes:

- We are considering introducing a capstone module in childcare – what are your views?
- (A Capstone Module is a module that requires evidence of integrated learning involving the expected learning outcomes specified by all the minors required to qualify for the relevant major award).
- Work experience/work practice will be rebadged specifically for childcare so learners will have to complete work experience/work practice in a notified ECCE setting.
- Transversal skills (e.g. Communications, Team leaderships); should these remain the same or do you recommend changes?



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- Particular components – please provide any feedback you wish to give on the purpose, credit value, learning outcomes, supporting documentation and specific validation requirements. All comments welcome.
- Are there new components which you think may be pertinent to early years care and education at level 6?

Note on Assessment: The next version of standards will not specify which assessment techniques and percentages are required in each component. Assessment is the responsibility of the provider and each provider will be required, in their programme validation application, to provide information on how assessment will be carried out and to provide examples of assessment briefs.

Post review

A plan (including timelines) will be put in place to ensure a smooth transition from the existing award standards (which will be withdrawn at a date to be determined) to the new standards. This will allow time for providers to get familiar with the new standards and to have their programmes validated/revalidated.

QQI published a new programme validation policy in 2016. The policy is now fully operational across the Higher Education (HE) sector and is currently in the process of being implemented across the Further Education and Training (FET) sector. The new policy promotes and provides for a more rigorous approach to the development of programmes. Changes in awards and standards have an impact on validated programmes and can lead to programme review or new programme validation.