LONGFORD WOMEN'S LINK

LINKING WOMEN IN THE PURSUIT OF JUSTICE AND EQUALITY

LONGFORD WOMEN'S LINK CLG

QQI QUALITY ASSURANCE MANUAL

V3 Dec 2023

Contents

List of Abbreviations

Glossary of terms and Definitions available in Appendix 12.1

Acronym	Meaning
CE	Community Employment
CEN	Community Education Network
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CRM	Customer Relationship Management
DEASP	Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection
DCA	Director of Corporate Affairs
DP	Director of Programmes
EA	External Authenticator
EE	External Self-Evaluation Evaluator/External Evaluator
ELC	Early Learning and Care
ETB	Education and Training Board
ETM	Education and Training Manager
FET	Further Education and Training
FOI	Freedom of Information
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulations
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
IV	Internal Verifier
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
LCDPs	Local Community Development Projects
LWL	Longford Women's Link
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NFQ	National Framework of Qualifications

PEL	Protection of Enrolled Learners
PPSN	Personal Public Service Number
QA	Quality Assurance
QAS	Quality Assurance System
QBS	QQI Business System
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
RAP	Results Approval Panel
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SETU	South East Technological University
TOR	Terms of Reference
WCE	Women's Community Education
WE	Work Experience
WP	Work Placement
WPS	Workplace Supervisor

Chapter 1 Governance and Management of Quality

This chapter outlines the structures in LWL governance and management of quality assurance as a provider of further and community education and training. It is aligned to Core Guideline 1 of the QQI Core QA Guidelines.

1.1 Provider Profile

Longford Women's Link CLG (LWL)is a dynamic social enterprise which was founded in 1995 and links women with the resources to make their community safe and equal. LWL identifies and addresses key inequalities that prevent women in Longford achieving their full social/economic potential and our work provides real and tangible opportunities for women and their families. We provide services to approximately 1000 women and children in Longford/Midlands each year, enabling women to access a wide range of programmes and supports yielding real benefits for their families and the wider community. We provide women-centred services (Domestic Violence Support, Education, Training, Childcare, Counselling, Female Entrepreneurship, capacity-building and local/national advocacy). LWL has been a QQI-approved centre since 2006, delivering a range of accredited and non-accredited programmes at its Community Education Facility in Longford Town. It is an outreach centre for IT Carlow (South East Technological University (SETU)) and has previously been an outreach centre for UCD and Maynooth University as well as being a Community Partner of An Cosan. Over 400 learners access education and training programmes at LWL each year. LWL places the learner at the core of its work which is underpinned by the principles of Women's Community Education and the belief in the transformative nature of education for both the individual and society.

LWL's Integrated Service Delivery model (Figure 1.1) is driven by the recognition that disadvantage is complex and no one single intervention generally, is enough to provide a solution to a series of interwoven issues.

Figure 1.1: LWL Integrated Service Delivery Model
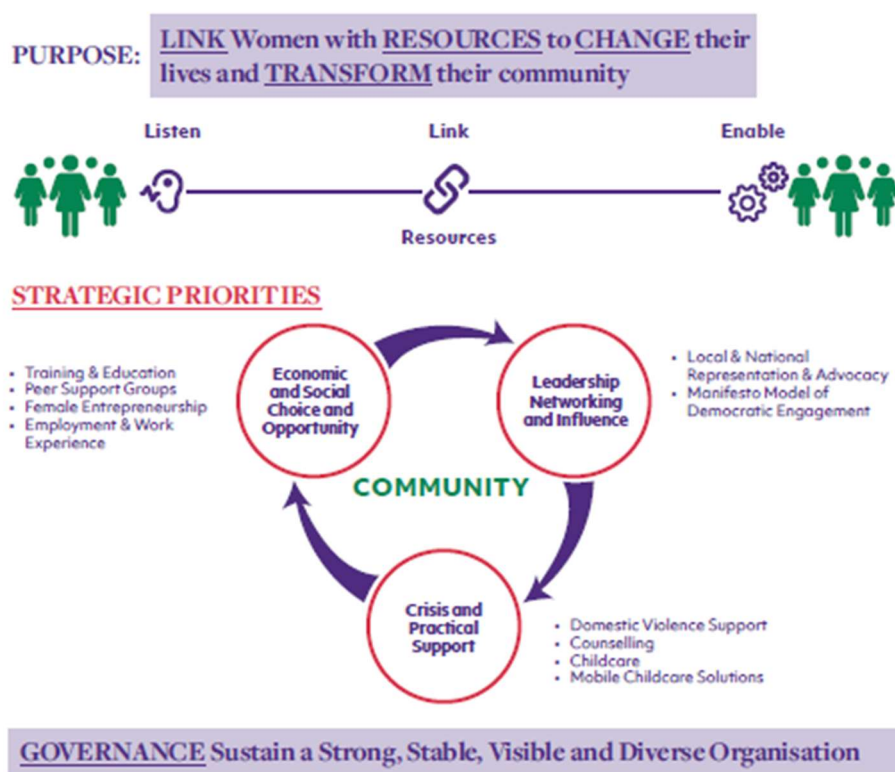
LWL publishes a Strategic Plan every 5 years, which sets out goals, strategic priorities and actions. The plan is prepared in consultation with the Board of Trustees, internal and external stakeholders including learners and tutors.

LWL also publishes an annual report which provides information on the annual achievements, activities and finances of the organisation.

Annual financial statements are also published.

1.1.1 Vision, Mission and Values

Vision
A world where every woman can determine her own life journey, where the voice, expertise and experience of women is heard, respected and celebrated in every aspect of our lives and all women can fulfil their potential, in a safe, just and equal society.

Mission
To help ensure that *Women in Longford can fulfil their potential in a safe and equal society.* This is underpinned by a commitment to the delivery of high-quality accredited adult education and training which enables learners to achieve their educational goals and realise their potential. As a social change organisation, we are committed to fairness, equality and progression for all our learners. The wider vision and values of the overall organisation are presented in our Strategic Plan.

Values

Our values are core to our education and training delivery and reflect how we interact with learners, tutors and stakeholders. They are underpinned by a commitment to the principles of Women's Community Education.

Welcoming:

Our aim is to provide a warm and friendly welcome for all women whatever their background, experience, needs or the story they wish to share with us

Respectful:

Our approach is to form mutually respectful relationships where we take time to listen and establish trust and understanding through our conversations and our actions

Diversity & Inclusion:

We are a learning organisation, committed to diversity and inclusion which involves questioning our thinking and always being open to new ways of working and engaging with women.

Solidarity:

The solidarity of women is crucial to real change. We believe in solidarity between women in all their diversity, through enabling, collaboration and participation and providing a safe space for women to have their say and be themselves.

Our policies and procedures are underpinned by these values.

1.2 Current Provision

LWL Education and Training delivers part-time programmes within the following categories:

- Early Years Education and Care
- Special Needs Assisting
- Health and Safety
- IT
- Retail Skills
- General Learning

All of our programmes are delivered in our centre or live synchronous classes delivered using Zoom.

Synchronous Online Learning; Tutors and Learners gather at the same time and virtual place interacting in "real-time"

Programmes are accredited by:

- QQI
- PHECC

A full list of QQI programmes is presented in Table 1.1

Table 1.1: LWL QQI-approved programmes

Award Code	QQI Code	Award Title	Type of Awards	Level
6M21471	6M21471	Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care	Advanced Certificate (Major)	6
5M21473	5M21473	Certificate in Early Learning and Care	Certificate (Major)	5
4M1998	PG11937	Retail Skills	Certificate (Major)	4
3M0874	PG11179	General Learning - Learning for Everyday Living	Certificate (Major)	3
3M0877	PG11243	Using Information and Communication Technologies in Everyday Life	Certificate (Major)	3

1.3 Delivery of Education and Training at LWL

LWL adopts an equal opportunities approach to learning and provides a number of access and delivery options. Further details on our RPL policy are presented in Chapter 3.

Programmes are delivered on a part-time basis at our Community Education Facility in Longford Town. LWL has also been delivering programmes online since March 2020 as part of our Covid-19 response and implemented specific measures to support this e.g., Tutor guides for online delivery, laptop loan schemes.

1.3.1 Learner Profile

As a women's centre, the majority of our learners are women. LWL specifically targets women from the following groups:
- LWL service users
- LWL employees, including CE participants
- Women employed or seeking a career in early childhood education
- Long term unemployed
- Women working in the home

1.4 Governance Policy Statement

LWL is committed to having in place a strong and robust governance structure that oversees all aspects of our delivery of a quality education experience and ensuring separation of responsibilities between those who develop material and those who approve it, while maintaining academic integrity. The governance structure is designed to reflect both the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education & Training) Act 2012 and 2019 as well as the Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (QQI, 2016). The governance structure reflects the changing further education and training landscape and provides the framework within which we monitor, review and update our processes as well as ensuring oversight.

The governance structure is designed to ensure that academic and commercial areas are governed separately, and that academic decision-making is independent of commercial considerations or the undue influence of the Board of Trustees. Robust academic governance is key to the implementation of our quality assurance system. Programmes are only included in the academic calendar if funding/fees are in place. The Academic Council ensures that there is independent QA decision-making without the influence of Senior Management–to this end, there is a requirement for at least two qualified and experienced external members on the Academic Council to ensure external oversight in relation to academic decisions

Our governance structure is presented in Figure 1.2. (An organisation chart is available at Appendix 12.2). The governance structures presented in Figure 1.2 are designed in such a way to reflect the size of the team and to ensure that there is minimal overlap between committees. There are clear pathways of communication which have been streamlined to ensure efficiency and transparency and the pathways are reflected in the Terms of Reference of each committee.

Figure 1.2 LWL Governance Structure
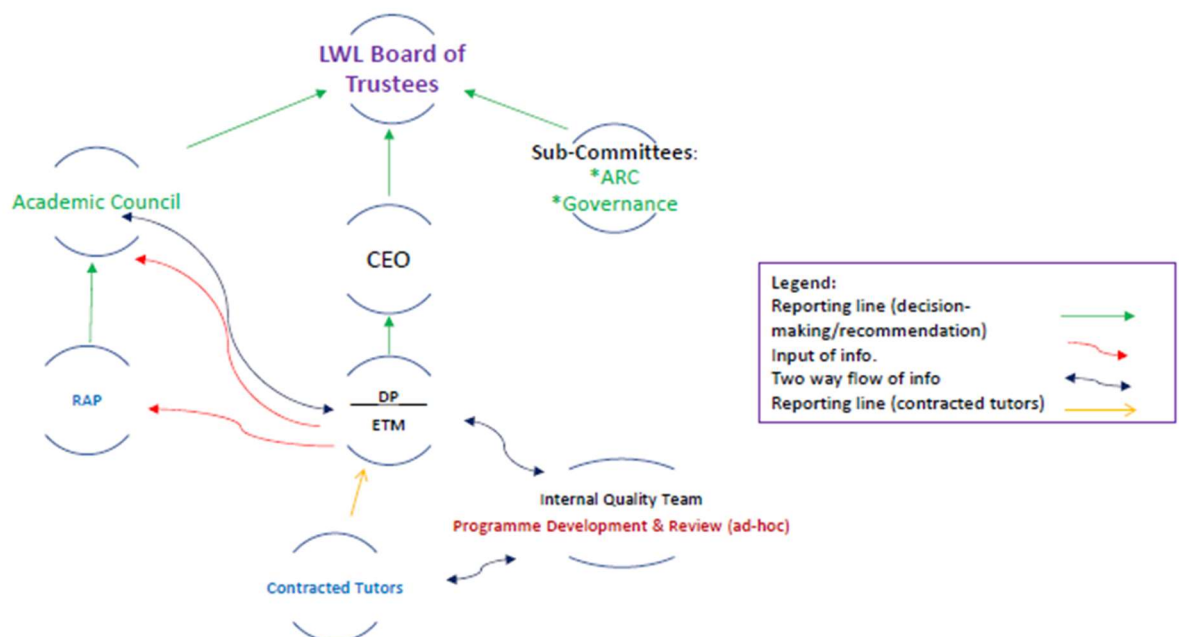
1.4.1 LWL Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees has ultimate responsibility for the Governance of LWL. LWL is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity:
- LWL CRO Number is 241515
- LWL CHY Number 11744;
- RCN: 20032937

The Board of Trustees meet ten times per year. LWL is in full compliance with the Charities Governance Code and submits an annual report to the Charities Regulator.

There are three sub-committees reporting to LWL's Board of Trustees:
- Academic Council
- Governance
- Audit & Risk

Each governance unit has its own Terms of Reference which:
- Defines the role
- Outlines membership
- Defines the scope /responsibilities
- Defines the meeting procedures and governance structure

1.4.2 Organisation Structure

The Senior Management Team Group consists of the CEO, the DP and the DCA who oversee the activities of the organisation. The CEO reports to the Board of Trustees. The staff team involved in Education and Training numbers six, including a full-time Education and Training Manager (ETM).

The ETM oversees the delivery of education programmes at LWL and is responsible for ensuring all QA requirements are in place and both implemented and monitored. The ETM is also responsible for Tutor recruitment and/or contracting and for overseeing all aspects of the Education and Training Service and reports to the DP.

Please see the Organisation Chart 2022 in Appendices 12.2

1.5 Corporate and Academic Governance

LWL manages its business and financial planning internally via performance monitoring and monthly reporting by the CEO to the Board of Trustees and externally through reporting requirements of funders and fulfilling all statutory requirements.

Within the Education & Training Department, an annual budget is prepared by the CEO and a work plan for the year agreed by the CEO, the DP and the ETM. All departments at LWL report their monthly activities to the CEO who in turn updates the Board of Trustees at the monthly board meetings.

In terms of the separation of corporate and academic governance, LWL does not implement a programme of education and training without the required financial resources in place. The

CEO, the DP and ETM meet to assess the financial viability of new programmes, with the CEO making the decision based on the financial resources available. A costing template is used (see procedure financial viability). If the required financial resources are in place, approval of the delivery of new education and training programmes lies with the Academic Council, of which the CEO is not a member in order to maintain separation of corporate and academic governance.

1.6 Risk Management

LWL's aims to minimise exposure to risk and takes steps to identify, evaluate and manage risk in order to mitigate against it. LWL recognises that a certain degree of risk may be necessary in order to achieve its mission and vision, however these degrees of risk are only accepted if they are fully understood and mitigating measures established.

LWL's Risk Register is continuously under review as an agenda item on the Board of Trustees monthly meetings as well as being reviewed annually and is included in Appendix 12.3 LWL's Risk Management Policy is also a key supporting document as part of this process.

From the perspective of the Education and Training Department, quality assurance risk is addressed through internal verification and external authentication, internal review of programmes and tutor/learner codes of conduct, which are presented in Chapter 6 and 11 LWL is an outreach centre for IT Carlow (SETU) and these programmes are delivered under the QA of IT Carlow (SETU). LWL has also signed a Progression Agreement with IT Carlow (SETU).

Our approach to PEL is presented in Chapter3 under Protection of Enrolled Learners.

1.7 Academic Governance

The Academic Council is the academic authority within LWL and has delegated authority from the Board of Trustees to oversee academic standards and quality of programme delivery.

The Results Approval Panel maintains oversight of assessment outcomes and formally reviews and approves results data prior to submission for certification.

Figure 1.3 LWL Quality Assurance System Map
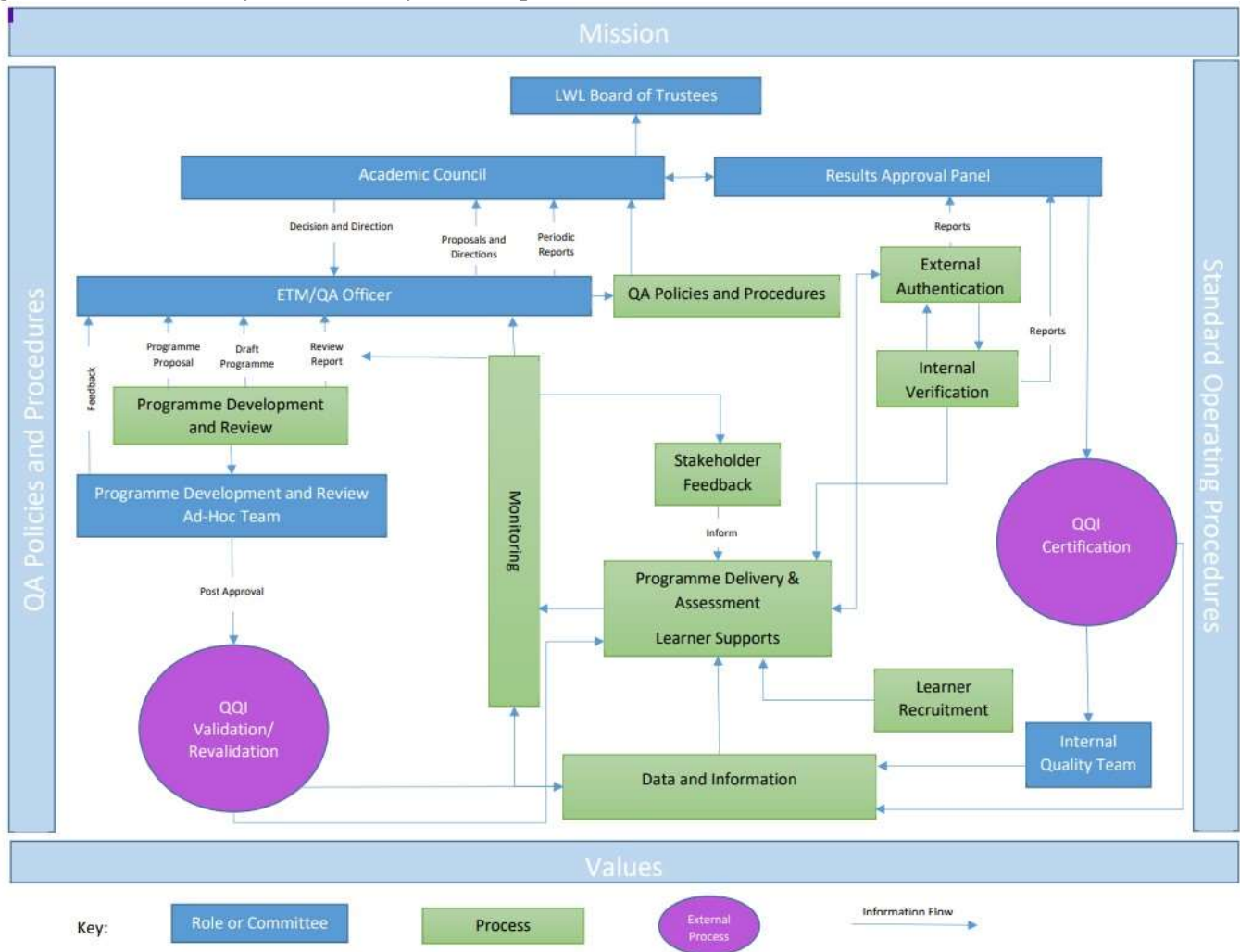
1.8 Terms of Reference

1.8.1 Terms of Reference of the Academic Council

Terms of Reference	LWL Academic Council
Associated policies	Chapter 1 Governance
Approved by	Board of Trustees
Version number and approval date	V1 052022
Document owner	Education and Training Manager
Review date	April 2023

Role
The Academic Council is the academic authority in LWL and has delegated authority from the Board of Trustees to oversee matters relating to education and training and protecting learner interests. It maintains oversight of academic standards and quality of all programmes.

Membership and Tenure
Members are appointed by the Board of Trustees and serve for no more than 3 years. • A minimum of two external members (one of whom serves as Chair) • Member of the Board of Trustees • Education and Training Manager • A tutor • Learner/recent graduate (not more than 2 years) • Secretary (internal LWL staff member, administration duties only, no voting rights) Subject to approval by the Board of Trustees, the Academic Council may appoint additional members or set up ad hoc sub-committees if needed.

Selection Criteria for External Members
• External members are appointed by the Board of Trustees and must have appropriate academic qualifications, experience of the further education sector in the community sector and be familiar with our QA system. There must be a minimum of two external members, one an appropriately experienced individual with knowledge and experience in the FET sector and the other a community representative with appropriate experience and interest • The third should be an appropriately experienced individual with knowledge and experience in online learning.

Responsibilities
• Advises the Board of Trustees on academic planning • Approve academic policies and significant changes to the QA system • Approves the appointment of external authenticators and external evaluators overseeing the self-evaluation process. • Ratifies the membership of the Results Approval Panel • Maintain oversight of academic standards   • Maintain oversight of the quality of public information related to programmes and quality assurance

- Confirm compliance with conditions of validation
- Reports to Board of Trustees on any substantive concerns about quality or standards.
- Make recommendations for staff and tutor development
- Consider and approve teaching, learning and assessment strategies
- Review proposals for programme development
- Consider and approve programme validation/revalidation applications prior to submission
  - Consider and approve programme reviews and self-evaluation reports and monitors the implementation of agreed recommendations.
  - Consider Results Approval Panel reports and agree recommendations
  - Consider any relevant feedback from the Internal Quality Team
- Maintains oversight of PEL arrangements

Note: The Education and Training Manager recuses themselves from decision making if new programmes are developed and they were involved in the development of the programme.

Meetings

- The Academic Council meets quarterly with dates for meetings agreed in advance on an annual basis.
- The Education and Training Manager issues an agenda and supporting documents agreed with the Chair to members at least 5 working days in advance.
- A quorum is at least 75% of members (to include the Chair/nominee) and the external members
- Issues for discussion are usually determined by consensus. If consensus is not possible, the issue is decided by a majority of the members present voting and, in the case of an equal division of votes, the Chair has the casting vote.
- Members of the Senior Management Team may be invited to join the meeting to discuss specific items.

Administrative Support

The Education and Training Manager liaises with the Academic Council Secretary and provides administrative support and maintains minutes, reports and all other documentation:
o   Drafting agendas and supporting papers in consultation with the Chair
o   Preparing meeting notes and information.
o   Writing up minutes/action plans and distributing them to members, and members of the Senior Management Team and the Board of Trustees in a timely fashion.

Governance and Authority

- The Academic Council reports to the Board of Trustees

Supporting Documents

- Meeting Agenda
- Report Template

All documents for this committee are stored in the Education and Training Folder (Academic Council) on the LWL server

Report Schedule			
Report/document received	From	Frequency	Presented by
Results approval panel report	Results approval panel	After each Results approval panel meeting	Education and Training Manager

1.8.2 Terms of Reference of the Results Approval Panel

Terms of Reference	Result Approval Panel (RAP)
Associated policies	• Chapter 1 Governance • Chapter 6 Assessment
Approved by	Academic Council
Version number and approval date	V1 052022
Document owner	Education and Training Manager
Review date	April 2023

Role
To maintain systematic oversight of assessment outcomes and trends and formally review and approve results data prior to submission for certification and issue to learners.

Membership and Tenure

Members are appointed by the Academic Council and serve for no more than 3 years.
 	
     • Chairperson (external member)
     • Education and Training Manager (Internal Verifier)
     • Tutor
     • CE Supervisor
 	
Occasional Members
 	
The Chair may invite occasional members e.g., the External Authenticator to present their report or to attend all or a particular section of the meeting as appropriate. Occasional members do not have voting rights on the approval of results or participate in the decision-making process.

Responsibilities
• Review assessment results comprehensively and thoroughly and confirm that they are quality assured • Consider reports from the Internal Verifier and External Authenticator • Make appropriate decisions regarding the outcome of the assessment, verification and the authentication process. • Confirm that assessment procedures are adhered to, and appropriate evidence and records are available • Arrange for any suspected irregularities to be notified to the appropriate person/body • Make recommendations for corrective action • Review the implementation of agreed corrective actions/recommendations from previous meetings • Sign off the approved results prior to requesting certification from QQI

Meetings
- Meetings are convened as required for certification.   - All members must be present. In the unlikely event of an emergency event alternate members are available to participate to facilitate the process, while still meeting the requirements of the membership.   - Majority decision-making. The chair has the casting vote if there is an equal number of votes cast.   - Members must carry out their roles without bias and make their determinations based on the information provided to the Panel.   Meeting agenda standing items: - Consideration of internal verification report   - Consideration of external authentication report   - Approval and sign-off of results   - Follow up on previous recommendations   - AOB

Administrative Support
The Education and Training Manager;   - Provides administrative support and maintains minutes, reports and all other documentation: - Drafts agendas in consultation with the Chair   - Writes up with RAP report and arrangements for the Chair to sign it.   - Submits the RAP report to members, to the Academic Council and the Board of Trustees

Governance and Authority
The Results Approval Panel reports and makes recommendations to the Academic Council and produces an agreed report following each meeting which is considered by the Academic Committee.

Review
This term of reference is reviewed by the Academic Council every two years at a minimum

Supporting Documents
- Meeting Agenda   - Report Template

Report Schedule			
Report/document received	**From**	**Frequency**	**Presented by**
IV report	Education and Training Manager	At each meeting	Education and Training Manager
External Authenticator	External Authenticator	After each certification cycle	Education and Training Manager
RAP Report	To the Academic Council	After each certification cycle	Chairperson of the RAP
RAP Report	Board of Trustees	After each certification cycle	RAP Board member.

1.9 Management of Quality

1.9.1 Quality Policy Statement

LWL has overall responsibility for ensuring our education and training programmes and associated supports meet the required quality assurance standards. In order to achieve this, we commit to strategic planning, resourcing and creation of a culture that facilitates continuous improvement and ensures that all of our work is underpinned by these commitments. It is essential that all members of our education and training team along with senior management are committed to the ownership of our QA system and its implementation. Our overall aim is the continuous improvement of our programmes and associated supports with the well-being and support of our learners at the core of all of our education and training activities.

1.9.2 Embedding a Quality Culture at LWL

There is a clear commitment to ensuring quality at all levels of LWL. The Board of Trustees, the Academic Council and senior management lead by example by ensuring quality is given high priority in LWL.
We make sure that the users of our QAS have easy access to the information they need e.g. the Learner and Tutor Handbooks are key documents which make all parties aware of their roles and responsibilities.

Both learners and tutors are represented on the Academic Council as well as external representative which ensures independent oversight (and consultation) on policy development as well as programme improvements and implementation.

The role of each staff member and tutor in assuring quality is set out clearly in their role description All staff and contract tutors are given a copy of the QA manual prior to induction and the key points are discussed during induction.

We also provide ongoing training for staff/contract tutors in the use of the QAS via the tutor meetings (Internal Quality Team) and support and supervision meetings.

1.10 Scope of LWL's Quality Assurance System (QAS)

LWL's QAS is applicable to all elements of our education and training provision as well as all parties associated with our provision – governance sub-committees, tutors, learners and external advisors. LWL is compliant with all relevant legislation including:
1. Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012
2. Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Amendment Act 2019
3. QQI Core Statutory Guidelines 2016
4. General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
5. Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005

6.   Employment Equality Acts 1998–2015
7.   Equal Status Acts 2000-2015

1.10.1 Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees has ultimate responsibility for the QAS while the Academic Council maintains oversight of implementation for the QAS. The ETM coordinates the implementation of the system on a day-to-day basis, maintains quality assurance documents and reports to the Academic Council in relation to its effectiveness. Tutors have a defined responsibility for implementing the QAS which is written into their role description and discussed at induction.

1.11 Evaluating the Effectiveness of LWL's Quality Assurance

LWL reviews the QAS every two years to ensure its effectiveness - this involves using the input from an external expert in keeping with our commitment to external oversight and the production of a quality report. In addition, LWL conducts ongoing internal monitoring and evaluation as part of our internal structures as well as Academic Council oversight.   This is documented in Chapter 11.

1.12 The Learner Voice in Quality Assurance

LWL's learners have a key role to play in ensuring the quality of our provision. We make it as easy as possible for them to let us know what they think and what we could do better. We are committed to acting on their feedback in a meaningful and transparent way. We have a learner as a member of our Academic Council and the ETM maintains appeals and complaints registers. We also invite, consider and act on feedback following programme delivery, programme review and evaluation while maintaining an open-door policy.

Chapter 2 Documented Approach to Quality Assurance

This chapter is aligned to Core Guideline 2 of the QQI Core QA Guidelines.

2.1 Policy Statement

All policies are developed with regard to QQI statutory quality assurance guidelines, are learner-centred, and focused on achieving the LWL mission to helping support our learners to achieve their full potential. QA policies and procedures at LWL are designed and implemented to inform staff, tutors, learners and other stakeholders of our commitment to quality in our provision of education and training and apply to all of our further and community education programmes. The design of robust, documented policies and associated procedures to assure the quality and standards of our provision.

- Designing the QA documents that make up our QA system to be consistent, accessible and easy to read with all references and cross references correct and easy to follow.
- Regular reviewing of the documents that make up our QA system to ensure that they continue to be fit for purpose, appropriate for our context and informed by, and aligned to, relevant and current QQI QA guidelines.
- Documented arrangements for monitoring, evaluating, and reviewing all our QA documents. Adoption of a robust approach to document control and standardisation in supporting the QA system.
- All staff, committee members, tutors and learners are given comprehensive induction training on the QA system and their role and responsibility for implementing it.
- Publication of our QA Manual and accompanying Policies & Procedures on the LWL website once approved by QQI.

2.2 Definition of QA Policies and Procedures

Policy

A *policy* is a statement or series of statements which set out our position and commitments on a particular area of education and training provision. It shows that we are aware of our obligations in the area and our commitment to delivering on these obligations. Policies set out what the approach is to a given area (for example programme development). Policies are relatively high-level documents setting out the 'why' we do something and the principles that inform the approach. They are the basis of our standard operating procedures.

A *policy:*

- Is written for all stakeholders, internal and external to inform them of our position on a particular aspect of our role.
- Sets out broad parameters.
- Is available to all stakeholders on our website.
- Has the understanding and backing of governance and senior management.
- Informs the learners of what they should expect from us
- Informs staff and independently contracted tutors what is expected of them.
- Provides a protection and support to staff and tutors in carrying out their work.

Procedures

Policies are supported by procedures that are written with a level of detail that make it clear how something is done (would a new person in the role know what to do based on the detail contained in the procedure?). A *procedure* describes a process intended to deliver all or part of a policy commitment. Our procedures set out the way in which we implement our policies. For example, our learner appeals procedure outlines a step-by-step process as to how the learner can appeal an assessment result, detailing who is responsible, how the process works and the order in which it happens. Our procedures are process-driven and managed by the ETM and associated staff/tutors.

A *procedure*:
- Is written to be easily available to and understood by those who operate the process or engage with it
- Addresses the practicalities of the process – definitions, purposes, responsibilities, actions, supporting and reference documents, the 'how', 'when' and 'by whom'
- Is designed with the intention of delivering quality and consistency
- Must be capable of being monitored i.e., records and / or indicators will be generated which should show if the procedure is being followed and, crucially, if it is effective
- Evolves over time as improvements are identified and implemented.

2.3 Development of QA Policies and Procedures

The development and amendment of policies and procedures is driven by a number of factors:
- Legislation
- QQI Guidelines
- Stakeholder Feedback
- External Reviews or Self-Evaluations
- Best practice within the FET sector

The ETM drafts new procedures and discusses them with the Director of Programmes. They are then presented to the Academic Council and if approved are presented and noted at the LWL Board of Trustee meetings, in order to ensure all policies align with LWL's mission and strategic goals.

Policies and procedures are written in plain English and must be consistent with LWL's goals as well as being in line with QQI Guidelines. Figure 2.1 presents the development of policies and procedures at LWL.

Figure 2.1 - Development of Policies at LWL

Policy need identified via QA Governance → Education and Training Manager drafts policy

If not endorsed, policy returned for further consultation

Policy presented to the Director of Programmes for endorsement → Endorsed policy presented to the Academic Council for approval

Approved policy presented and noted at LWL Board of Trustees meeting. → Policy published

2.3.1 Document Design and Use

LWL designs our QA documentation based on the following principles:
- Use of Plain English – clear, concise, accessible language that is easily understood
- Use of visuals and graphics where possible to present information flows and support narrative
- Tailored messages to suit the specific audience
- Clear numbering and filing of documents – all documents are identifiable by name, version number and date

2.4 Document Control

Effective controls are vital in order to ensure consistent approvals, reviews and updating of documents. It also facilitates ease of use, accurate status of revisions and archiving.

2.4.1 Naming Convention for QA Documents

LWL recognises that descriptive file names are an important part of organising, sharing, and keeping track of data files. We follow the following convention:
- Files are consistently named
- File names are short but descriptive (<25 characters)
- We avoid the use of special characters or spaces in a file name
- We use capitals and underscores instead of full stops, or slashes
- We use the date format DDMMYYYY
- We include a version number in the file name

2.4.2 Format and Presentation of QA Documents

- We maintain our QA documents in electronic format for ease of use and access. The electronic format makes revision and version control easier to manage and reduces the need for emails and paper.
- We use a system of hyperlinks across QA documents to ensure that if a QA procedure or document is updated, the change is consistent across all sources of information.
- QA documents are version controlled and the version number and date are visible on QA documents.
- The QA manual, procedures folder and handbooks have an index of content. That is followed by an introduction to LWL and our ethos. Related documentation, policies and procedures are referred to throughout each document.

2.5 Document Tracking

We use a QA tracker to manage our QA documents. The ETM logs updates to documents on this tracker and uses it to record all amendments and version updates. The version number and month/year of update is listed on all amended documents, forms, for tracking/version reference.

2.6 Document Reviewing

- We invite all users of our QA system to help us maintain and enhance the system and LWL practices by bringing out-of-date or unused documents to our attention. We use this feedback to ensure that policies and procedures are fit for purpose and achieving what they are designed to achieve.
- We adopt a team approach to reviewing policies, taking into consideration our integrated approach to the work of LWL and its mission. Policies change and flex as necessary, while adhering to QQI QA requirements. All documents are live, and updated based on feedback, recommendations or changes in legislation or guidelines.
- LWL logs all changes in an Excel spreadsheet as a record of amendment and includes a documented review schedule which is a useful tool for embedding continuous improvement

development. As outlined above, we also have a QA Document Register which is an Excel file to track and record all QA documents and version control.

2.7 Updating QA Documents

As with the development of policies and procedures at LWL, there are also several factors that influence the updating of our QA documents, including:

- Changes in legislation
- Introduction of new programmes or modes of delivery
- Changes to QQI requirements/specific QQI validation requirements
- Change in structure/infrastructure/process
- Feedback from staff, tutors, learners and other stakeholders
- Recommendations from QQI panels
- Results of self-evaluation/internal and external monitoring
- Feedback from our external authenticator, external evaluator or other external consultant/subject matter expert
- Changes to our risk profile
- Health & Safety requirements

The ETM is responsible for ensuing all documents are up to date.

2.8 Documenting the QA System

LWL's core QA document is our QA manual which is a live document that is constantly under review and changing in order to meet the needs of LWL and our stakeholders. All documents are available to relevant parties either on our website or, for internal documents such as tutor handbooks, are available on shared online folders.

2.8.1 Access to QA Documents

- The QA Manual is available on the LWL website
- Internal documents e.g. Company Handbook are available on the LWL Server - for internal staff only
- Learner and Tutor Handbooks and the QA Manual are available to tutors on Google Workspace (and can be shared with learners).
- Learner Handbooks are emailed to learners.
- All documentation is also available from the ETM in hard and soft copy format.

2.8.2 LWL Quality Assurance Manual

This is LWL's overarching QA document, which presents our approach to implementing the QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance guidelines. It is organised in single subject chapters as per the Section 2 of the QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016):

- Governance and Management of Quality
- Documented Approach to Quality Assurance
- Programmes of Education and Training
- Staff Recruitment, Management and Development
- Teaching and Learning
- Assessment of Learners
- Supports for Learners
- Information and Data Management
- Public Information and Communication
- Other Parties Involved in Education & Training
- Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

2.9 Elements of LWL's QA System

LWL's QAS covers both the governance and academic spheres and all policies are presented in our QA Manual (section 2.5.1.). The elements of the system in its entirety are as follows:
- LWL's QA Manual - the core QA document
- LWL's QA Procedures
- LWL Risk Register
- Role Descriptions
- Terms of Reference
- Learner and Tutor Handbooks
- LWL Company Handbook
- QA Document Register – Excel File to track all QA documents
- Reference documents that provide pertinent details for consultation e.g. QQI QA Guidelines, Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012)
- Support documents we use to implement procedures e.g. internal verification, learner survey form
- Visuals e.g. organisation chart, governance chart
- List of Abbreviations
- Glossary of Terms: An alphabetical list of terms we use with the definitions for those terms

2.9.1 Learner and Tutor Handbooks

We regard the learner and tutor handbooks as key QA documents. They are updated incorporating feedback of users and issued with a new version number and date. Learner Handbooks are available to all learners and are sent by email and contain the following information:
- General introduction to LWL, its mission and values
- LWL Programme Information
- LWL Policies and Procedures
- Assessments
- Standards of behaviour
- Access, Transfer and Progression

Tutor Handbooks are emailed to tutors prior to their induction meeting and are available in Google Workspace and include:

- General introduction to LWL, its mission and values
- Tutor Induction
- Code of Practice for Tutors
- LWL QA and Assessment
- Online Delivery of Class
- Data Protection
- Contracting Process
- Relevant Forms

2.9.2 LWL Company Handbook

The LWL Company Handbook is a guide to all of the internal policies, procedures and standards within the organisation. It outlines all of the roles and responsibilities of staff and supports the delivery of a professional and quality service to all users of LWL services including learners. Upon commencing employment with the organisation, all staff must sign a declaration to confirm that they have read the handbook and are agreeing to adhere to all of its requirements.

Chapter 3 Programmes of Education and Training

This chapter is aligned to Core Guideline 3 of the QQI Core QA Guidelines.

3.1 Policy Statement

LWL is committed to developing, delivering and reviewing a range of programmes and supports that respond to the needs of our learners and of the community we serve. We achieve this by constantly inviting and acting on feedback from a wide range of stakeholders and strategic networking within our sector.

We use a systematic approach to design, development, approval and delivery of programmes, with separation of decision-making in the academic and operational process. If the programme is designed to lead to an award on the NFQ we ensure that the programme is consistent with the QQI award standard and is in line with QQI validation processes. It is our policy to facilitate learner entry and to promote transfer and progression pathways.

3.1.1 Definitions

- "A programme of education and training is a process by which a learner acquires knowledge, skill or competence and includes a course of study, a course of instruction and an apprenticeship." QQI Policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training validation of programmes of education and training, 2017, p.5

- **Access -** the process by which learners may commence a programme of education and training having received recognition for knowledge, skill or competence required
- **Transfer -** the process by which learners may transfer from one programme of education and training to another programme having received recognition for knowledge, skill and competence acquired; and
- **Progression -** the process by which learners may transfer from one programme of education and training to another programme at a higher level on the NFQ

3.1.2 Responsibilities

- The Academic Council maintains oversight of programme design and approval, delivery, quality, and resources and our access, transfer and progression procedures
- The ETM manages the programme development process and programme delivery and reports to the DP and the Academic Council.
- The DP ensures the operational model and processes support continuity of business and conform to all relevant standards, guidelines and regulations.

3.1.3 Procedures Associated with this Policy

- Setting up a new programme
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)
- Work Placement
- Professional Practice Placement for ELC

3.2 Needs Analysis

We are constantly assessing the training needs of the community we serve and are proactive in seeking out education and training opportunities that respond to the needs of our learner profile and that provide personal and professional development opportunities for them. We encourage members of the Board of Trustees, the senior management team, the Academic Council, staff, tutors, past and present learners, LWL service users and members of the local community to suggest new programmes.

If the ETM considers that a suggested programme fits with our mission, values and strategy and may be viable, the ETM discusses this with the DP. The ETM then completes a Programme Proposal Form and presents it to the CEO who considers the rationale for providing the programme from a strategic, commercial and resource perspective and decides whether to progress the proposal to the Academic Council, or not. The proposal must be backed up by supporting data resulting from networking with community actors, stakeholder engagement e.g., employer engagement in identifying skills needs, feedback collected from a range of sources, knowledge of our sector and planned changes. The proposal details the following;

- The rationale for providing the programme and the associated financial, time and human resource costs
- How the proposed programme meets national and/or local skills, training, or educational needs.
- The gap/s the programme is intended to address
- The learner profile/target group and the anticipated number of applicants.
- Data on programmes already available to the target group/ similar programmes offered by other providers.

The Academic Council considers the proposal from an academic and quality perspective. If the proposal is approved and the decision is made to progress the programme, the CEO ensures that that the design process is properly resourced and supported.

3.3 Programme Design and Development, Approval and Validation

Reference

- *QQI Policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training validation of programmes of education and training 2017*
- *Guidelines For Preparing Programme Descriptors For Further Education and Training Programmes Leading to QQI CAS Awards Revised October 2013*

3.3.1 Principles of Programme Design

- Programmes are developed based on evidenced need
- Programmes are designed using learning outcomes
- Programmes must align with the relevant award standards and and the requirements of the proposed level of award on the NFQ
- Programmes must comply with requirements of access, transfer and progression

If the proposal is approved:

- The CEO allocates a budget for programme design.
- The ETM appoints a Programme Development and Review Team and a programme leader who must be a subject matter expert and have experience of programme design.
- The ETM agrees the Terms of Reference with the Team.
- The DP supports the ETM and the process, and ensure that necessary resources and skills are available.

The following are addressed as part of the design process:

- The teaching and skills expertise required
- The teaching and learning strategy appropriate to the programme context and programmes aims
- Entry requirements
- Arrangements for RPL
- Assessment strategy designed to meet the needs of the programme and the learner profile.
- Formative and summative assessment
- The human, physical and academic supports and resources needed
- Programme materials
- The timetable rationale and structure
- Transfer and progression opportunities ensuring, where possible, that graduates have the opportunity to transfer or progress, should they wish to do so, either immediately or at a later date.
- Learner supports
- Risk and mitigating measures
- Implications for the LWL QA system
- Protection for Enrolled Learners (if applicable)

The Programme Development and Review Team draws up a programme descriptor which includes a programme outline, presentation materials and assessment materials (assessment briefs, marking schemes, lesson plans and programme and assessment timetables). The use of this descriptor by tutors during delivery helps to ensure consistency in delivery.

3.4 Programme Approval

All programmes are considered and approved by the Board of Trustees and Academic Council before we submit them to QQI for validation. The Programme Leader presents the programme descriptor to the Academic Council who considers the programme from an academic perspective. The Academic Council progresses it to the Board of Trustees with a recommendation. The Board of Trustees is ultimately responsible for approving programmes. The Board of Trustees and/or the Academic Council may make suggestions for amendments and, if agreed, the Programme Leader makes the required amendments.

Figure 3.1 Programme Design and Development.
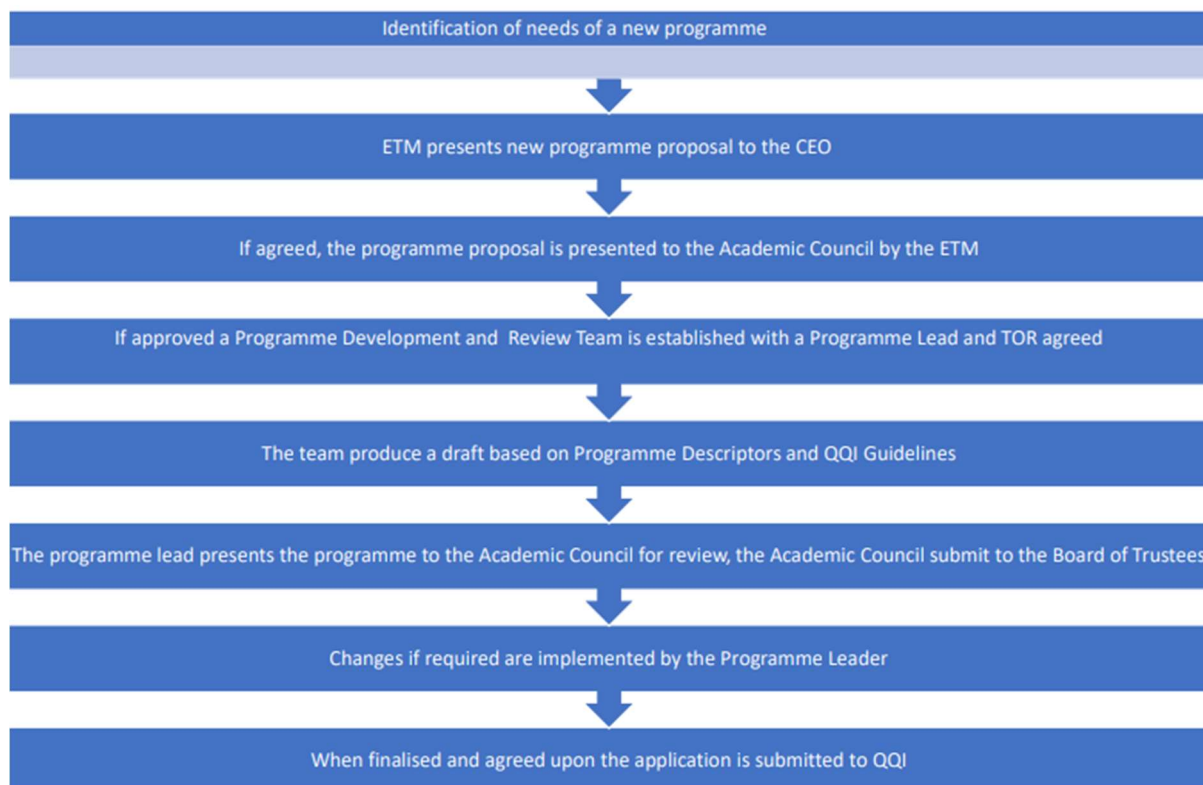
3.5 Programme Validation

'*Validation is a quality assurance process intended to ensure that a proposed programme can enable a learner to acquire and demonstrate the necessary knowledge, skill or competence to justify the award(s) being offered in respect of that programme*' (QQI)

As part of the design process, we ensure that the programme is consistent with the QQI award standard and in line with QQI validation policy and guidelines. Information relating to making a validation application to QQI is available on the QQI website and the Programme Development and Review Team use the application templates provided by QQI to help us present our applications and programmes consistently and systematically, taking care to ensure that all the criteria are addressed, and all template sections completed.

We facilitate external reviews of a validated programme if asked to do so by QQI. As part of our monitoring and review processes we check that we are meeting the conditions of validation as stated in the certificate of validation issued by QQI.

Validation of a programme by QQI is for a maximum period of five years and automatically lapses unless we renew it through revalidation. We arrange for the revalidation of continuing programmes

every five years (unless otherwise advised by QQI) in accordance with the QQI policies, procedures and guidelines

3.5.1 Submitting an Application for Validation

- The Programme Development and Review Team produce a draft application for validation based on the programme descriptor and on the QQI guidelines for validation prevailing at the time
- The ETM double-checks that the final drafts are compliant with our agreed QA procedures and QQI guidelines/requirements and asks a colleague to proof-read and format the documents being submitted to QQI, checking for clarity, consistency of language and terminology
- The CEO signs-off on the application before the ETM submits it via the QHub and arranges for the fee to be paid.

3.5.2 Minor Modifications to Programmes

Minor amendments such as updates to support materials can be approved by the programme development and review team. Ordinarily, significant amendments will only be considered within a programme self-evaluation or revalidation process. No amendments to any aspect of a programme are permitted without consultation and finally signed off by the ETM or the Academic Council.

3.5.3 Differential Validation

QQI validation of the original programme can inform the QQI validation of the derived programme and this can simplify the QQI validation process for the derived programme. QQI validation of a derived programme that relies on the QQI validation of the original programme is referred to as differential validation.

LWL may decide to submit for differential validation, this will be based on a Curriculum Sharing Agreement with the organisation who has agreed to share and the approval of the Academic Council. Policies and procedures for approvals and protocols are followed taking into consideration the Curriculum Sharing Agreement and ongoing management and maintenance of the programme.

3.5.4 Validation of programmes with a Community Partner

LWL may decide to work with a Community Partner/s to validate a programme and share resource. A MOU will be put in places setting out the terms of the arrangement. Policies and procedures for approval and protocols are followed.

3.6 Programme Planning and Delivery

The ETM coordinates and manages programme planning and delivery. When a decision is taken to offer a programme, the ETM:

- Allocates an appropriately qualified tutor from the tutor panel and agrees the arrangements with the tutor
- Checks and approves the scheme of work and the lesson plans submitted by the tutor in advance
- Updates the programme fact sheet
- Makes arrangements to promote the programme by email, social media, local media and appropriate networks. All information is checked by the ETM prior to publication.
- Monitors the level of applications on an ongoing basis
- Updates the Tutor Pack on the Google Workspace ensuring that all the necessary documents are available and up to date.
- Gives the tutor access to the Tutor Pack on the Google Workspace which contains the following;
  - Programme Descriptor
  - Scheme of Work and lesson plans
  - Assessment Briefs and Mark Sheets
  - Programme and Assessment Timetable
  - Details of reasonable accommodation arrangements (if any)
  - Attendance Register
  - Learner one to one Meeting log
  - Assignment receipt forms
- All other documentation is available in the Tutor Folder, filed in sub folder Forms.
- Arrange availability of a suitable training room and examination hall (if needed) and book the room/s via the online shared calendar
- Liaises with the facilities team and checks room set-up, hospitality requirements, training materials, resources and equipment are in place and in working order.
- The tutor is responsible for ensuring all documentation is updated and submitted with the tutor pack and learner assignments at the end of each programme module.

Please refer to setting up a new programme procedure.

3.6.1 Pre-Programme Meeting

The ETM and the tutor meet in advance and use the following *Pre-Programme Meeting Agenda* as a guide for their meeting

Pre-Programme Meeting Agenda

- Room allocation
- Lesson Plans
- Updates to the Tutor Folder
- Arrangements for reasonable accommodation
- Timetable
- Assessment
- Arrangements for work placements (WE tutor only)

Figure 3.2 Programme Planning and delivery
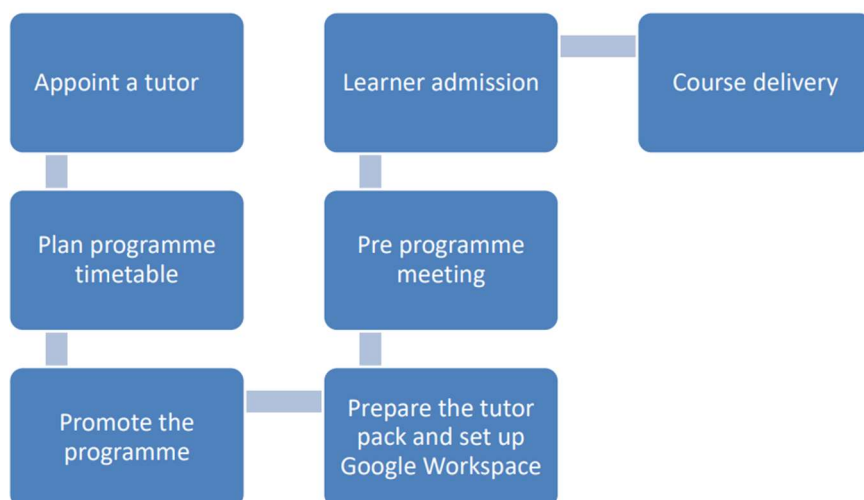
3.7 Access, Transfer and Progression

Making it easy for learners to access our programmes is a basic tenet of our mission. We ensure that entry arrangements are clear, the decisions on how we allocate places are transparent, and we treat all applicants in a fair, equal and consistent manner. We do our best to accommodate all applicants who meet the stated entry criteria for a programme. We have a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) mechanism in place to facilitate applicants who do not meet traditional entry criteria but who have achieved equivalent learning outcomes from informal/non-formal/experiential learning scenarios including learning outside the formal education system – workplace learning, life experience etc.

3.8 Entry Requirements

We specify entry requirements for each programme which are appropriate to the programme type and NFQ level. We publish details of the entry requirements which are agreed at validation on our website and in programme fact sheets. Applicants can gain entry by either meeting the entry requirements for the specific programme or by RPL

3.9 Capacity to Succeed Statement

All programmes have a *Capacity to Succeed* statement, a clear statement of the competencies needed to participate on the programme and what is required of a learner who can expect to successfully complete the programme. In programmes where we use technology-enhanced learning or where there is a mandatory work placement, the statement makes the implications of this clear to learners. In programmes we offer to learners whose first language is not English, we set out clearly what level of English they need to gain entry to the programme.

3.10 English Language Proficiency Requirements

Competence in written and spoken English is an entry requirement for most programmes. Applicants whose first language is not English are required to have an appropriate score in an approved examination in English language and we ask them to submit evidence of this when they are applying. We accept an IELTS test score of 6 which indicates that a person is 'competent', meaning they can

cope in a classroom situation even though there may be some mistakes or misunderstandings with language.

If an applicant does not have a test result from an approved test centre, the ETM can refer applicants to Longford Westmeath ETB, Further Education Centre, Church Street, Longford which can facilitate the test.

3.11 Transfer and Progression

The provision of suitable transfer and progression outwards from our programmes that meet the needs of our learners is central to what we do and what we aspire to. We facilitate transfer and progression in line with our validated arrangements. Insofar as possible, we design our programmes so there are appropriate transfer and progression opportunities for graduates of our programmes available in LWL and the providers we collaborate with. However, this is not always possible, and we also advise our learners about suitable opportunities available to them from other further or higher education institutes who offer programmes leading to awards on the NFQ in related areas.

The Programme Development and Review Team research transfer and progression options when they are developing the programme. This involves networking and consulting with other providers, and the options are written into the programme descriptor which is agreed with QQI as part of the validation approval process e.g. we have a progression agreement with IT Carlow (SETU) to facilitate entry to programmes in early childhood education.

Information on transfer and progression routes are included in our programme fact sheets and on our website. We explain the concept of transfer and progression in the learner handbook and the tutor discusses it at induction, talking through the NFQ and how it applies to the specific programme.

The ETM invites learners to meet on a one-to-one basis to discuss their specific queries/plans in relation to transfer and progression. We facilitate and support learners who are applying for entry to other programmes by providing transcripts, academic reference and any other relevant documentation as they need it.

3.12 Recognition of Prior Learning

Definition:

 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a process by which prior learning is valued in formal education. It can allow a learner gain admission to a programme of study. Or to gain exemptions/credit from some parts of a programme, based on demonstrated learning that they may have achieved through another programme of study.

3.12.1 Policy

We facilitate, in as much as we can, entry to and successful participation on our programmes. We offer RPL for entry to programmes. We document RPL arrangements in respect of each programme

as part of the programme design process. We retain records of prior learning and copies of certificates in the RPL/Exemptions File.

3.12.2 RPL for Entry
If an applicant does not meet the standard entry criteria, the ETM contacts them to explain RPL and to explore if this route of entry is an option for them. If it appears to be, the ETM encourages them to apply. The RPL applicant must be able to demonstrate learning based on what they achieved through another programme of study, and must submit evidence with their application to verify this.

Please refer to the RPL procedure.

3.12.3 Exemptions
We also facilitate learners in gaining exemptions if they have already achieved certification for modules of a programme which leads to a major award. Applicants for exemptions must submit the original award certificate (not a copy) to the ETM who retains a copy and returns the original immediately to the applicant. The exemption is processed through the IV, EA and QBS. The certificate must have been achieved in a timeframe in line with QQI guidelines.

3.12.4 RPL for ELC
LWL facilitate RPL in line with the recommended practice set out in the Differential Validation Sharing Agreement with LWL and Dublin Dun Laoghaire ETB (DDLETB) and LWL RPL policy and procedures. Please refer to the RPL Procedure and the RPL Took kit provided by DDLETB.

3.13 Work Placements
Work placement is an important element of the learning experience and is an essential part of some programmes. Learners are responsible for sourcing their own work placement and are advised to so do so before the start of the programme.

Once the learner secures work placement the tutor contacts the work placement supervisor, going through the work placement requirements/guidelines and lets the supervisor know that the tutor is the point of contact for queries/issues.

We have a step-by-step procedure that helps to assure the quality of work placements and workplace assessment.

Please refer to the work placement procedure.

3.13.1 Professional Practice Placement for ELC
This policy include additional criteria for the teaching and support staff involved in the provision of Early Learn and Care 6M21471. LWL is committed to ensuring that all criteria for staffing and management of these awards is as per our Curriculum Sharing Agreement with Dublin Dun Laoghaire Education and Training Board (DDLETB) and have updated our procedures accordingly.

LWL is committed to ensuring that learners on these programmes will have access to professional practice placements in Tusla registered early learning and care (ELC) settings as specified in the *Professional Award Type Descriptors at NFQ levels 5 – 8: Annotated for QQI Early Learning and Care (ELC) Awards.* All criteria for professional practice placements for these awards is as per our

Curriculum Sharing Agreement with Dublin Dun Laoghaire Education and Training Board (DDLETB) and our procedures have been updated accordingly. For ELC learners, please refer to Professional Practice Placement for ELC procedure.

3.14 Protection of Enrolled Learners (PEL)

The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012, Section 65, mandates that providers must have specific protection for enrolled learners (PEL) in place for each programme of 3 months duration or more where fees have been paid by, or on behalf of, the learner. As a provider of such programmes LWL is committed to complying with this section of the Act and to protecting our learners. In order to meet the requirements of PEL, LWL has PEL insurance in place for all programmes longer than 3 months.

Reference Documents

- Protection of Enrolled Learners: Protocols for Implementation of Part 6 of the 2012 Act

- Guidelines for Providers 2014, Operating Principles for PEL Arrangements of Providers

- Protocols for Protection of Enrolled Learners - Guidelines for Providers

Responsibilities

- The Academic Council maintains oversight of PEL arrangements and reviews the arrangements annually
- The CEO and DP are responsible for ensuring that the PEL arrangements we have in place meet our statutory obligations.
- The ETM is responsible for managing and reporting on PEL arrangements

Chapter 4 Staff Recruitment, Management and Development

This chapter is aligned to Core Guideline 4 of the QQI Core QA Guidelines.

4.1 Policy Statement

LWL is committed to providing the very highest standards in Women's Community Education (WCE). In order to ensure this, we aim, at all times, to recruit staff and tutors who demonstrate skills, attributes, awareness and understanding of their subject area and are committed to LWL's mission and vision. LWL adopts a systematic approach to a fair and transparent recruitment and professional development of staff and tutors.

Our recruitment and selection procedures for staff and contracted tutors are detailed on our Company Handbook and are based on all relevant and current legislation and regulation

LWL is committed to providing a supportive environment that allows staff and tutors to carry out their work effectively, with clear communication channels and access to appropriate and necessary resources.

4.1.1 Responsibilities

- The Academic Council maintains oversight of staffing in relation to education and training provision and makes recommendations to the Board of Trustees.
- The CEO is responsible for overall recruitment and management of staff in LWL.
- The DCA is responsible for the HR function in LWL
- The DOP is responsible for Education and Training Department and provides direction and leadership to direct reports.
- The ETM is responsible for the recruitment and management of tutors.

4.1.2 Procedures Associated with the Policy

- Tutor Induction
- Recruitment of Tutors
- Monitoring Tutor Performance

4.2 Key Principles of Recruitment and Selection

Recruitment and selection of LWL staff are informed by the following key Principles

- Equality and Diversity - LWL is committed to equal opportunities for all, both as an employer and as a service provider, and believe in the vital contribution of diversity and difference to

the effectiveness of the organisation. LWL offers equal opportunities in terms of recruitment, promotion, training and access to opportunities for professional development.

- Consistency and cautiousness - All LWL appointments are made on the basis of the careful and consistent application of the principle of merit and adherence to LWL guidelines. LWL interviews focus on candidate's skills, talents, qualifications and capacities/experience for the job in question and the questions are designed around the job criteria.

- Respect and Dignity - All LWL appointments are conducted in a fair and just manner and all candidates are treated with respect and dignity. LWL ensures that all interviewers are familiar with our equality policy and that, on any occasion where we use the services of external interviewers, they will be familiarised with the organisations equality/diversity policies as well as our commitment to valuing diversity.

- Comprehensive Opportunity - LWL recruitment advertisements are continuously conveyed in a positive equal opportunities context avoiding discriminatory language and images and by advertising internally and externally LWL ensure competition is open to the widest field. LWL displays equal opportunities on all advertisements and other information material.

- Fairness and Equitability – LWL recruitment and selection process strives at all times to be fair and equitable. LWL will accommodate the needs of the candidate where possible.

- Accountability – LWL understands the importance of accountability, and this is achieved by having a recruitment and selection process with related documentation and by being open to appropriate scrutiny and review. LWL archives the notes from interviews and the marking criteria are kept for an appropriate period following the interview process. All LWL interview related paperwork is stored in accordance with LWL Privacy Statement.

- Consistency, Transparency and Quality – LWL Recruitment and selection processes are consistent, transparent, professional and timely. LWL aim continuously to improve both the recruitment and selection policy and procedures by committing to on-going monitoring of our equality/diversity measures to identify the emergence or existence of barriers that might adversely impact applicants.

4.2.1 Selecting on Merit
- The appointment must be based on merit assessed in relation to the selection criteria and description of the position.

- Where equal merit occurs between an external and internal applicant, preference will be given to the internal applicant.

4.2.2 Ensuring fairness and accountability
- Selection and recruitment policy, guidelines and associated documentation are available to all employees and applicants.

- Accountability for recruitment and selection sits with the Chair of the selection panel.

4.2.3 Recruitment of Contract Tutors

LWL employs a small number of tutors however we also contract tutors under an Independent Tutor Contract as many of our tutors are self-employed and wish to retain this status. All tutors engaged in this way must sign an Independent Tutor Contract and provide copies of their Tax Clearance and insurance certificates to us in advance. They undergo the same induction process as staff tutors. All programmes delivered by contracted tutors are under LWL's QA course calendars and examination/assignment dates are decided on by the ETM. The ETM also completes an induction process with contracted tutors.   Please see the recruitment of tutors procedure.

The ETM monitors the performance of contracted tutors according to our *Monitoring of Tutor Performance* procedure and addresses any issues or concerns.

4.2.4 Recruitment of Early Learning and Care (ELC) 5M21476 and 6M21471 Staff

LWL is committed to ensuring that all criteria for staffing and management of the Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care 6M21471 and Level 5 Certificate in Early Learning and Care 5M21473 NFQ 5 & 6 as per our Curriculum Sharing Agreement with Dublin Dun Laoghaire Education and Training board (DDLETB) and have updated our procedures accordingly. Please refer to recruitment of tutors procedure for allocated staff – Programme Management Staff, Tutors and the Programme Teaching Team, Support Staff, Professional Placement Monitors and Professional Placement Supervisors.

4.3 Staff Development

- LWL believes the key to a quality service, staff retention and a strategic approach to valuing diversity and promoting equality is staff competence and training.
- LWL is committed to the provision of training, information and briefings in relation to equality and diversity for staff at all levels of the organisation. The training is organised in a manner that is accessible to all employees.
- LWL is committed to introducing a proactive and flexible approach to job orientation programmes that address different employee needs.
- Tutors are continuously supported and encouraged to upskill, heighten their awareness of WCE, familiarise themselves with LWL QA manual and avail of any given opportunity to scaffold their learning.   LWL is quick to adapt and identify any extra supports required by the tutors such as mentoring, IT, specific information and training.
- LWL believes staff development plays a vital part in the overall running of LWL's Education and Training department. Thus, time given to the development of LWL Tutors has a knock-on successful effect on the delivery of quality education and training, the tutors and the learner's progression.
- LWL encourage tutors to engage with training opportunities and Communities of Practice, for example engage with Aontas and the many opportunities for upskilling and broadening of skill sets and knowledge offered to the CEN network of which LWL is an active member.
- Please refer to 4.7 Training and support for staff and tutors.

4.4 Tutor Panel

- LWL maintains a tutor panel. The panel is made of qualified tutors, who have been appointed, having successfully gone through our recruitment process

4.5 Tutor Qualifications

Essential qualifications and experience

- Tutors must be/have been practitioners in the relevant sector
- Relevant qualification in the subject area at minimum Level 7 on the NFQ
- Teaching/training qualification, from a recognised body for example minimum qualification of QQI level 6 Train the Trainer.

Programme-specific qualifications and experience

- There are programme-specific requirements for each programme to ensure that tutors have the qualifications and experience required to meet the needs of the learner profile and the subject matter specific to that programme.

Desirable qualifications, experience and attributes

- Knowledge and appreciation of the theory of adult and community education, in particular Women's Community Education.
- Experience of online training delivery
- Proactive approach to developing and supporting others
- Strong interpersonal skills – ability to build key relationships

4.6 Induction of Staff and Tutors

The DP oversees induction of staff and the ETM is responsible for induction of tutors. Tutor induction involves the ETM meeting with the tutor in a face-to-face meeting to discuss the programme, the contents of the tutor handbook and the QA documentation

Induction Topics
- Programme details and requirements
- The QA Manual and system and the tutor role and responsibilities in implementing it
- Learner Handbook
- Tutor Handbook
- Facilities Orientation – including passwords, door codes, Fire Safety.
- Completion of required documentation e.g. signed contracts etc.
- Training on the use of IT systems and the use of Zoom for online teaching (if required).
- Support and Supervision Meetings
- Assessment marking and methods

Please refer to the tutor induction procedure.

4.7 Training and Supports for Staff and Tutors

- The ETM organises biannual Support and Supervision meetings with tutors where updates and changes to programmes are discussed and agreed, training needs are identified and discussed, LWL encourage and shares CPD opportunities with tutors. Any changes to the QA Manual which impacts on the work of tutors are also highlighted and discussed.

- The ETM hosts regular Internal Quality Team meetings also known as the Tutor Meeting at least 3 times per year usually following submission of results to QQI This is an opportunity to reflect on practices as a collective, share developments and build a team network.
- LWL encourages and facilitates tutors to engage in communities of practice and to avail of training opportunities which will enhance their role as a tutor. e.g. we are active member of the Aontas CEN network and avail of training opportunities for example Assessment training, Google Workspace training.
- Tutors have a responsibility to keep current with regulations and legislation in their area of expertise.
- Less experienced tutors are provided with mentoring support for an interim period of 6 months. This is ongoing support provided by the ETM.

4.8 Tutor Handbook

Each new tutor receives a copy of our Tutor Handbook in advance of induction and we ask that they read it before they meet the ETM. This document along with supporting documentation, e.g. QA manual, provides a comprehensive overview of LWL, our training provision and all the relevant information our tutors need to know to ensure a high-quality experience for the learners and themselves as tutors.

4.9 Company Handbook

Our Company Handbook applies to all LWL staff and is given to staff at induction. It covers employee rights and responsibilities, disciplinary and grievance procedures, procedures in relation to bullying, harassment and dignity at work, data protection and health and safety.

4.10 Performance Monitoring

We regard performance monitoring as a vital tool for developing tutors' professional skills and confidence, and for quality enhancement. The ETM evaluates tutor performance on an ongoing basis. This enables us to monitor whether tutors are performing to the required standards, to identify support and training needs and to take action in the case of poor performance. We have a documented procedure for monitoring tutor performance. If a tutor's performance continues to not meet our standards, the tutor will not be re-engaged.

Monitoring Tutor Performance Procedure.

4.11 Tutors Role in Quality Assurance

Our tutors play a key role in ensuring the quality of our programmes and supporting our learners and we value and facilitate their input into our QA system

- The ETM informs the tutors about updates to the QA Manual at Internal Quality Meeting (tutor meeting), and Support and Supervision meetings.
- Tutors must be familiar with the QA Manual and the tutor and learner handbooks
- Tutors are involved in the design and updating of the tutor handbook
- Tutors are represented on the Results Approval Panel and the Academic Council.
- We ask for tutors' feedback on the ease-of-use and the value of the QA system when we are reviewing it.
- Tutors are included in the Programme Development Team Ad hoc team based on their area of expertise.

4.12 Contingency Plan for Tutor Absence

In the case of unavoidable delay or absence, we expect tutors to give as much advance notice as possible by contacting the ETM by email and phone. If the ETM is not available, they must contact the DP.

If possible, the ETM arranges for a qualified tutor from our panel to cover for the absence. If this is not possible, the class is rescheduled or cancelled, and learners are informed.   For short term absences, the class date is rearranged, in consultation with the ETM, tutor and learners.

Chapter 5 Teaching and Learning

This chapter is aligned to Core Guideline 5 of the QQI Core QA Guidelines.

5.1 Policy Statement

Our aim is to achieve excellence in teaching and learning and support our learners through innovative and responsive provision and strong partnerships. We aim to secure and use resources effectively and efficiently to sustain high quality learning and create a socially inclusive environment for learners, tutors and staff.

The learner is at the centre of teaching and learning in LWL. The tutor is central to providing a quality service that meets the needs of the learner and the QAS. We focus on providing a teaching and learning environment that enables learners to achieve the best possible learning outcomes and where the content of programmes is both engaging and challenging.

LWL is committed to providing a high-quality educational service to all its learners within a safe and secure environment. LWL works to ensure that the needs of all its learners are met. Both tutor and learner feedback are integral to our self-monitoring process. Learner feedback is requested at the end of every module and information gathered is used to monitor teaching and learning performance in conjunction with Chapter 4 and Chapter 7. Successful learners, through the completion of prescribed assessments receive QQI awards.

Teaching and Learning Strategy: LWL works under the guidelines of Women's Community Education (WCE). This is a unique and distinctive approach that enables and empowers women to make choices about their lives by being:

- Based on on-going social analysis of gender equality and social inclusion issues
- Based on commitment to women's safety, growth, and well-being
- The creation of space for feelings as well as dialogue
- Based on peer support as well as Staff support

At LWL:
- We place the learner at the heart of all we do
- We show fairness, courtesy, and mutual respect
- The quality of our teaching and learning is key to our and our learners' success
- Working together and collaboratively we get the best results
- We empower our learners to achieve their potential through teaching and learning

5.1.1 Responsibility

- The Academic Council maintains oversight of teaching and learning strategies and activities and the effectiveness of the teaching and learning environment.

- The ETM is responsible for ensuring teaching and learning strategies are implemented and ensures that appropriate learner and tutor resources and supports are in place.

5.1.2 Procedures Associated with this Policy
- Monitoring Tutor Performance
- Recruitment of Tutors
- External Facility
- Learner Laptop Loan Scheme
- Handling Learner Complaints
- Learner Appeals
- Using Zoom for class delivery

5.1.3 Associated Policies
- LWL Health Safety and Welfare Statement (see appendix 12.5)
- Supports for Learners
- Assessment of Learners
- Protection of enrolled learners

5.2 Common Awards System (CAS)

Informed by participative evaluation and self-evaluation LWL provide a wide range of programmes leading to QQI Common Awards System (CAS), awards. Programmes may lead to full (major) awards or component (minor) awards.

Figure 5.1 National Framework of Qualifications
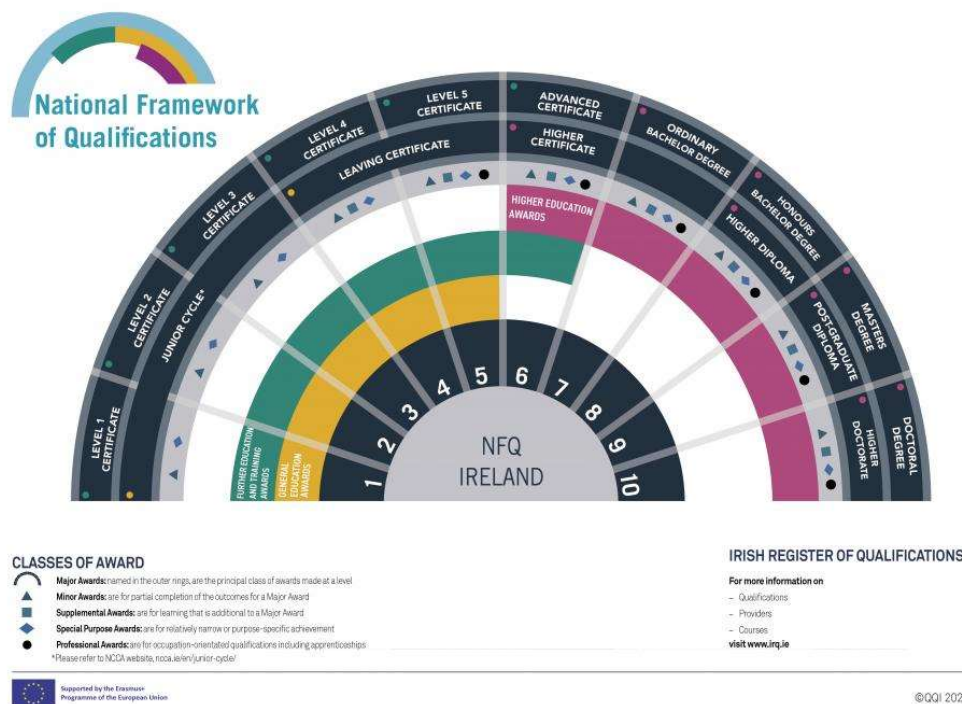
The National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) is a system of ten levels. The NFQ provides a way of relating qualifications obtained outside Ireland to the nearest comparable qualification in Ireland.

5.3 Progression

- LWL offers learners the opportunity to progress with their education. Learners studying at QQI level 3 can progress to QQI level 4. QQI Level 5 Early Childhood Care and Education learners can progress to QQI Level 6 Early Childhood Care and Education.
- LWL has a progression agreement with IT Carlow (SETU), which offers learners the opportunity to progress up to Degree and Masters level in Early Years Study and also additional third level courses with An Cosan Virtual Community College.

5.4 Training Facility – Training environment

- LWL maintain a dedicated training facility comprising of 3 training rooms, plus a break room and patio area for learners and tutors. The facility also offers secure storage of learner assignments. Each room is equipped with projector, tutor computer and a whiteboard or inter-active board.
- Maintenance checks are carried out on all equipment on a regular basis. Our facilities team ensure that our training facility is maintained to a very high standard on a daily basis.
- If we plan to use an off-site training facility, the ETM assesses the facility for suitability for training, ensuring all regulations and LWL QA standards are met using our assessing external facility procedure

5.5 Tutor Handbook/Scheme of Work (Training Resources)

- A Tutor Handbook is supplied to each tutor and must be read prior to commencement of teaching.
- Each tutor is also provided with a tutor pack which is the Scheme of Work, at the start of each programme. The scheme of work contains:
  - Tutor Contract (for independent contract tutors):
  - QQI Programme Module Descriptor:
  - Assignment briefs
  - Learner Registration forms
  - Sign in Sheet/Attendance sheet
  - Class One to One Meeting Attendance Log
  - Learner One to One Meeting Forms
  - Assignment Receipt form with names.
  - Tutor results form with learner names: *The tutor updates results for each learner to this is form which is provided electronically. The form also includes formulas which calculates the result and updates the grade. The form should be printed off, signed and updated to the tutor pack on submission for Internal Verification when it has been updated.*
  - Supervision Report
  - Work Experience Learners Letters
  - Assessment Extension
  - Guidelines for presentation of an assignment

- Learner Course Survey
- Tutor reflection

Soft copies are preferable however the ways this may be delivered are:
- Emailed to the tutor
- Hard copy folder is given to the tutor.
- Made available on Google Workspace.

5.6 Learner Handbook

A Learner Handbook is:
- Emailed to the learner or
- Made available to the learner on LWL Google Workspace.

5.7 Synchronous Online Learning

Tutors and learners gather at the same time and virtual place and interact in "real-time".
- Synchronous 'live' teaching is available to learners, using Zoom to facilitate remote synchronous participation.
- Guidelines and best practice for delivery of class via Zoom is outlined in the Tutor Handbook.
- It is recognised that access to suitable devices maybe an issue; a free laptop loan scheme is available to learners while they study with LWL. See Supports for learners policy and Laptop Loan Scheme procedure for further information. Tutor laptops, with the necessary software are also available to our tutors which are encrypted and comply with GDPR.
- LWL uses Google Workspace to provide a central point for sharing documentation and information for tutors and learners.
- LWL ensures that tutors are provided with the necessary development and support systems to function effectively in line with support for tutors handbook.
- LWL ensures compliance with any Intellectual Property and Copyright legal obligations.
- Each Zoom user has a responsibility to ensure they understand and comply with Data Protection and data security requirements.

5.7.1 Internet Etiquette for Synchronous Learning

Using Internet etiquette allows you to respect the other attendants while providing a setting in which the training can run as smoothly as possible. It is imperative that all attendants show mutual respect for each other. When learners wish to ask a question, it is preferable to use the option to raise hand.

Microphones: When participants are not speaking the microphone should be muted. The tutor has the option to mute participants microphones.

Cameras: Using cameras can affect broadband width use so it is advisable that cameras are switched off in the main, however cameras should be on:

- during small group meetings
- during welcome time and closure
- when speaking

- when asked to

Class Recordings: The tutor has the option to record a class if delivered by Zoom. Agreement must be made between all learners and the tutor. If anyone does not consent to the recording, the class is not recorded. The learner has the option to switch off their camera and their microphone. The recording may be paused to encourage class discussion. Recordings of class are shared with the learners. Recordings are deleted when all assignments are received by tutor.

Guidelines of the use of Zoom for tutors are listed in the tutor handbook.

Please refer to the using Zoom for class delivery procedure.

5.8 Learners with Disabilities

LWL has a statutory responsibility to ensure its teaching, learning and assessment practices are accessible to learners with disabilities. LWL accommodates learners where possible. Please refer to the reasonable accommodation procedure for further information.

5.9 Submission of Assignments

Submission of assignments is by hard copy in line with Chapter 6. For further information see assessment for learner achievement policy.

5.10 Academic Standards

All programmes learning is subject to the core quality assurances processes that underpin all of LWL programmes, including validation, ongoing monitoring and periodic revalidation. It is the responsibility of LWL to ensure the arrangements for the delivery of programmes and provision of support and assessment of learners while ensuring that the academic standards of all awards are in accordance with LWL standards.

- LWL ensures that quality assurance systems to monitor and /or moderate standards are fit for purpose across all learning environments we offer.
- LWL ensures its curriculum development, instructional design and assessment practices are subject specific and learner centred. LWL encourages interaction and learner input. LWL allocates the necessary hours to a programme to ensure both the learners and tutors have a positive and relevant experience in the teaching environment.
- Work based learning as part of work practice modules require the supervisor of the workplace to update a supervisors report. Tutors are available to engage with workplace supervisors to discuss learner progress. Please refer to Chapter 3 Work Placement.

5.11 Learner Information/Support

(See also Chapter 4 Supports for Learners)

Prior to the commencement of a learning programme:

- Learners are emailed with information on the class start time, the delivery method, where to download any software required and a soft copy of the Learner Handbook, along with programme information and details of the tutor who forwards the class link.
- The ETM can assist learners with any issues they have and help identify solutions.

In line with supports for learners policy.

- A formal one to one meeting is organised with the learner and the tutor, this is a dedicated space for the learner to ask questions, gain clarification and guidance on their course work. This is via Zoom or face to face and is organised between the tutor and learner. It can be recorded if the learner wishes and the tutor agrees. The Learner One to One Meeting form

is updated during this meeting and shared between the tutor and the learner. Learners are asked to share their one-to-one form in one of their assignments.

- Tutors work with learners in a manner that fosters their self-esteem supporting and giving feedback in a positive way wherever possible. Learners are also encouraged to engage with their tutors, this reflects the WCE approach and ethos.

- Small group discussion is encouraged during classes. Break out rooms are utilised during class time to facilitate this.

5.12 Learner Feedback

- At the end of every programme learners are provided with a survey in hard copy in face-to-face classes and through Google Forms in Synchronous online classes. The learners are asked a variety of questions – the QQI programmes are the basis for these questions which focus on the learner experience, opportunities for progression and comments/suggestions for improvement. The feedback from the learner surveys is gathered by the ETM, presented at the Academic Council/Programme Review team where relevant and then used to develop and improve subsequent programmes and also to recognise good quality learning experiences. A master copy of the learner survey is stored in the LWL Forms Folder.

5.13 Learner Complaints

- ETM deals with feedback and complaints and tries to resolve issues in a fair, timely and constructive manner, immediately and informally if possible. If this is not possible, the learner can submit a formal complaint in writing.

- The ETM follows our documented *Handling Learner Complaints* procedure when handling complaints.

- We let learners know how and when they can make a complaint in the learner handbook.

- We make it as easy as possible for learners to let us know if they are not satisfied and urge them to bring any concerns to us at the earliest possible opportunity, so that they can be resolved quickly.

- We log details of complaints on our Complaints Register and retain records of correspondence which are reviewed as part of our monitoring and evaluation processes.

- The Complaints Register is available at Academic Council meetings. Information on Learner Complaints are outlined within the learner handbook with more information available in Handling Learner complaint procedure.

5.14 Learner Appeals

Learners are made aware of results appeals with their results letter. The appeals process is documented in the learner appeals procedure.   Please also refer to Chapter 6 Assessment of Learners, 6.14 Learner Appeals.

5.15 Staff Professional Development.

- All tutors are qualified and experienced in their respective fields in line Chapter 4 Staff Recruitment, Management and development. Tutors are supervised in line with monitoring tutor performance procedure. LWL ensures tutors are provided with opportunities to develop their academic and technology enhanced learning skills and digital competences where necessary.

5.16 Contingency Plan for Tutor Absence

- Please see Chapter 4 - Contingency Plan for Tutor Absence

Chapter 6 Assessment of Learners

This chapter is aligned to Core Guideline 6 of the QQI Core QA Guidelines.

6.1 Policy Statement

LWL implements a fair and consistent assessment of learners. We develop and review our assessment strategies, methodologies, instruments and processes on a continuous basis to ensure that learners achieve the specific learning outcomes as set out in the programme descriptor. This policy is achieved by;

- Providing information to learners and tutors at all stages
- Adapting a co-ordinated approach to planning of assessment
- Ensuring security of assessment and related records, processes and materials
- Ensuring consistency of marking between assessors
- Internally verifying and externally authenticating assessment evidence
- Providing formative and summative feedback to learners
- Facilitating learners who wish to recheck or appeal the assessment result or the assessment process
- Formally approving our results

As part of the assessment framework, LWL has put in place an authentication process. The purpose of the authentication process is to ensure fairness, consistency and validity of assessment and of the outcome of assessment. The authentication process ensures that QQI receive accurate and quality assured learner results.

Our assessment policy and procedures are designed to be consistent with QQI assessment policy and designed to meet the following QQI guidelines.
- Quality Assuring Assessment, Guidelines for Providers, Revised 2018
- FETAC Guidelines for Internal Verification
- Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for External Authenticators.
- QBS Quick Guide for Certification V1.

6.1.1 Responsibility

- The Results Approval Panel maintains oversight of our assessment processes, approves results and makes recommendations for corrective action to the Academic Council.
- The ETM has overall responsibility for assessment and is also the Internal Verifier (IV).
- The External Authenticator (EA) is responsible for moderating assessments and results presented, ensuring they meet the required standard.
- Tutors are responsible for ensuring all assessment activities are carried out per agreed assessments and also act as the internal assessors.

6.1.2 Procedures associated with this Policy

- Reasonable Accommodation for Assessment
- Compassionate Consideration

- Internal Verification
- External Authentication
- Results Approval
- Learner Appeals
- Handling Learner Complaints
- Work Placement
- Professional Practice Placement for ELC

Figure 6.1 Overview of the Assessment Process

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│        ETM and Tutor agree assessment        │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                     ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│          Learner completes assessment        │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                     ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│           Tutor corrects assessments         │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                     ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Assessments submitted for Internal Verification │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                     ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  External Authenticator authenticates assessments │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                     ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Results Approval Panel approve results for certification │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                     ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│         Results submitted to QQI on QBS       │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                     ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Learners advised of results and of the appeals process │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                     ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│          QQI issue certificates to LWL        │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                     ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Certificates are distributed to learners by LWL │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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6.2 Information to Learners and Tutors

- The learner handbook is emailed to all learners in advance of the start of the course. This has information on assessment, submissions and appeals.
- The ETM is available to support and inform both tutors and learners about all aspects of assessment and certification.
- The tutor distributes and provides an assignment overview by talking through the assessment and timetable with learners including exams and work practice if required.
- The tutor gives an assessment brief to the learners for each piece of assessment. The tutor uses our standard template when designing the brief.
- The assessment criteria are set out on the brief so that the learner understands where marks can be lost or gained.
- Learners are also notified of the following:
  - Any additional requirements, expected input from learners etc.
  - Assessment schedules.
  - Results appeals process – advised with results letter.
  - Assignment guidelines.

The ETM makes a tutor pack available on the Google Workspace. The tutor must return the completed tutor pack with the corrected assignments when submitting results to the ETM.

The ETM is available to advise tutors in relation to assessment and QA procedures around assessment

Assessment is addressed in detail in the tutor handbook and tutors must be familiar with QQI Quality Assurance Assessment Guidelines for Providers 2013 (updated 2018) on which our QA procedures are based.

6.3 Co-ordinated Planning and Design of Assessment

- The tutor and the ETM agree the assessment schedules before a programme starts.
- The tutor draws up the assessment briefs and marking schemes in line with module descriptor and submits them to the ETM for approval before it is shared with learners. This is completed no later than 2 weeks into the course.
- If there is an examination, the ETM ensures that a suitable room is available. 'Do Not Disturb' notices for exams are available in the training facility for tutors use.
- Arrangements for reasonable accommodation are coordinated by the ETM with the tutor in line with reasonable accommodation procedure.
- The ETM is responsible for the upload of learner information to QQI QBS and works to resolve queries with learners and/or QQI.
- Dates for submission of corrected assignments are set out by the ETM, in coordination with the tutor.
- The ETM is responsible for Internal Verification process, the ETM carries out this role.
- The ETM coordinates with the External Authenticator to arrange a suitable date to carry out the External Authentication process.
- Workplace supervision: The workplace supervisors who assess the learners in the workplace as part of the work experience/practice module are briefed and guided by the tutor who is responsible for supporting the workplace supervisors. At the start of the placement, the tutor coordinates with the workplace supervisor and goes through the guidelines and guides them with regard to assessing the learners as outline in the Work Placement procedure.

6.3.1 Professional Practice Placements for ELC

LWL is committed to ensuring that all criteria for staffing and management of these awards is as per our Curriculum Sharing Agreement with Dublin Dun Laoghaire Education and Training Board (DDLETB) and have updated our procedures accordingly.

LWL is committed to ensuring that learners on these programmes will have access to professional practice placements in Tusla registered early learning and care (ELC) settings as specified in the *Professional Award Type Descriptors at NFQ levels 5 – 8: Annotated for QQI Early Learning and Care (ELC) Awards.* All criteria for professional practice placements for these awards is as per our Curriculum Sharing Agreement with Dublin Dun Laoghaire Education and Training Board (DDLETB) and our procedures have been updated accordingly. For ELC learners, please refer to Professional Practice Placement for ELC procedure.

Please refer to Professional Practice Placement for ELC procedure.

6.4 Security of Assessment Related Processes & Materials

LWL recognises the need for a secure assessment process in order to protect learners' personal details in compliance with GDPR. A secure assessment process also ensures that assessments are correctly sorted and processed and that examinations are conducted correctly and to the high standard LWL strives to achieve

- Learners submit assessments to LWL in hard copy and must sign the Assignment receipt form. A date and time to submit assignments is arranged with the tutor and coordinated with reception in LWL.
- Tutors must store assignments securely when they have them in their possession. This is detailed in the tutor handbook
- All learner assignments and related materials are stored in a secure (lockable) room in LWL when the tutor returns the marks assignments.
- All assignments, materials and learner correspondence including notes, letters, and emails relating to and belonging to learners must be returned by the tutor to the ETM to go to LWL's safe storage, with designated access.
- Electronic material is stored under the guidelines of LWL GDPR Policy on our Education and Training folder in our secure Public Server, on Salesforce and Google Workspace.
- Relevant tutors supervise exams and retain and verify an exam attendance sheet, which is submitted with tutor pack.
- Relevant tutors ensure exam material is signed by both themselves and the learner when handed in at the end of an exam.
- Receipt system is in place for all assessment material received by hard copy.
- Learners must sign a verification of authorship form for each assignment.
- Plagiarism is a serious academic offence and while it may be easy to commit unintentionally, it is defined by the fact not the intention.
- A confidentiality policy is signed by each tutor as part of their induction.

6.5 Reasonable Accommodation

- In the context of assessment, reasonable accommodation is the term for the adaptation of assessment as necessary to cater for the needs of learners whose personal situation means that assessment would otherwise be unfair e.g. learners with a disability. We encourage

learners who have a specific or additional need to let us know at the earliest opportunity and we do our best to accommodate them and support them in assessment.

- We have a documented reasonable accommodation procedure which we follow and helps to ensure that any accommodation provided is done so in a fair and impartial manner and neither advantages or disadvantages the learner or other learners.

These adaptations of assessment or reasonable accommodation may include:

- Allow additional time for exams
- Provide an accessible teaching and learning location.
- Allow personal assistant/academic assistant to attend class

Reasonable Accommodation for Assessment Procedure

6.6 Extensions on Submission Date Requests

- Learners can submit for an Extension in the following instances:
    - To extend their start date – i.e. defer their place. Only one deferral is permitted.
    - To extend their completion deadline

    If a learner cannot meet the submission date, the tutor advises the learner to contact the ETM to request and extension.

- An extension request should be submitted to the ETM, who formally responds to the request.
- To extend a completion deadline the longest extension available is 2 weeks. Assessments are marked without penalty due to the extension of time. However, it may mean that the learner is included in the next assessment submission to QQI.
- It is the responsibility of the learner to meet the new agreed submission date

6.7 Compassionate Consideration.

Learners can apply to defer an assessment on the ground of compassionate consideration, such as illness, or bereavement, to be allowed to complete/submit the assessment activity on another occasion, if they feel that extenuating circumstances may have prevented or may prevent them from undertaking/completing a specific assessment activity. In such cases, supporting relevant evidence/documentation must accompany the application

Compassionate Consideration Procedure for further information.

6.8 Repeats

Learners are given one opportunity to repeat examinations or resubmit an assignment, where a learner received an unsuccessful grade in the overall component on a first attempt in an assessment activity.

A learner cannot repeat:

- To improve their grade
- If they have failed one of the assessments but pass the overall component.

Examination re-sits depend on timetabling, the nature of the activity and the practical and /or operational issues involved.

6.9 Consistency of Marking

LWL has a process in place that ensures that tutors mark and grade assessments in a consistent and fair manner, in line with national standards. The following are the measure to ensure consistency:

- Trainer Induction includes guidance on marking and grading.
- Detailed marking schemes show clearly how the assessment evidence is to be marked and graded.
- We ask the External Authenticator (EA) for feedback on the standards of marking and grading by recording any observations in their report to further improve practice.
- All tutors are advised to keep up to date with QQI guidelines
- Less experienced tutors are provided with mentoring support for an interim period of 6 months. This is ongoing support provided by the ETM.
- The ETM organises training in marking and grading if gaps are identified.

6.10 The Authentication Process

6.10.1 Internal Verification

The purpose of the Interval Verification is to ensure accuracy of assessment has been applied across a range of assessment activities, including checking/monitoring the accuracy of assessment results to ensuring learner evidence exists and that results are grades are correctly computed and recorded. Internal verification should take place on a sampling basis and is documented in the Internal Verification report.

The ETM acts as our internal verifier and follows our documented Internal Verification Procedure

6.10.2 External Authentication

LWL has a process in place to ensure an independent and authoritative confirmation of fair and consistent assessment of learners in accordance with national standards and in compliance with QQI quality assurance.

LWL is committed to ensuring all learners assessment results have been validly marked and are in compliance with the stated requirements.

The purpose of external authentication is to:

- Check and confirm that the assessment evidence presented for authentication has been fairly and consistently assessed and is valid.
- Verify that the results presented meet the national standards for the award

Please refer to the External Authentication procedure.

The Academic Council approves the appointment of an External Authenticator who meets our selection criteria on the recommendation of the ETM, who is responsible for sourcing the authenticator and maintaining evidence of suitability.

We do not contract the services of the same external authenticator for more than three successive certification periods.

6.10.3 External Authenticator Profile
- An external authenticator (EA) must have technical/subject matter expertise appropriate to the award/area/field of expertise that they assess.
- Have relevant experience in the delivery and assessment of programmes or currently work in the industry or field of learning being assessed.
- Experience of external authentication and/or external examining.
- Be familiar with QQI Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers, revised 2018.
- Agree to engage in LWL induction briefing.
- EAs must display the ability to interact positively with assessors, and LWL staff members.
- EAs must be proficient in administration, IT, time management and report writing.
- Understanding and appreciation of our context, approach and learner profile.
- EAs must be available to LWL at the pre-scheduled agreed times.
- EAs must be independent of LWL – i.e. must not be engaged in any other work or services provision to LWL.

External Authentication Procedure

6.11 Results Approval

The purpose of our results approval process is to formally review and approve results data and to confirm the integrity of our assessment results before we submit them to QQI for certification and issue them to learners. This process ensures that appropriate decisions are taken regarding the outcome of our assessment and authentication processes.

- The Academic Council establishes a Results Approval Panel (RAP), with members as outlined in the RAP Terms of Reference
- Following the Internal Verification and External Authentication processes, the RAP meet.
- The RAP considers the IV and the A reports. It confirms that results are fully quality assured and makes the final decision with regard to the outcomes of the assessment process. It also agrees corrective actions if needed.
- The RAP report is formally signed off by the Chairperson.
- The RAP Chairperson signs off on all results prior to submission to QQI.
- The RAP chairperson reports to the Academic Council.

Results Approval Procedure
Results Approval Panel TOR

6.12 Issue of Results to Learners

When results are approved by the Results Approval Panel, the ETM submits the results for certification via the QBS, QQI's secure online system.

As soon as possible after results are approved the ETM makes the results available to learners by post, by issuing them with a *Provisional Statement of Results* which is downloaded from the QBS. The covering letter which accompanies the results reminds the learner about the LWL appeals policy.

6.13 The issue of QQI Certificates

- When the ETM receives the award certificates from QQI, a record of the receipt is maintained.
- The QQI Certificates are stored in a secure place until distribution.
- The ETM contacts the learners by email/text and lets them know when they can collect their certificates and assignments at LWL reception.
- Learners must sign at reception to verify receipt of the certificate and assignment.
- The ETM issues the certificates for Community Employment, TUS & other scheme participants to the participants supervisor or manager.
- Copies of certificates are not kept by LWL. If an award certificate is lost, QQI can provide either a Record of Awards or a Replacement Certificate. There is a €100 fee for a replacement certificate. Learners must apply online directly to QQI via the QQI website for a replacement certificate and must supply proof of identity.

6.14 Learner Appeals

Learners have the right to appeal their results and they are advised of this in their results letter. All queries, requests for feedback, appeals are dealt with by the ETM and any associated policies, forms etc. are issued to the learner as outlined in the following:

- o LWL Learner Handbook
- o LWL Tutor Handbook
- o LWL QA Manual.

If Learners wish to appeal their result, the Learner Appeals Procedure is emailed to the learner by the ETM.

If the learner has a complaint, they must refer to Learner Complaints policy that is in Chapter 7 Supports for Learners, along with the associated procedure.

6.15 Formative and Summative Feedback

- One to One meeting: LWL provides the opportunity for the learner and tutor to meet on a one-to-one basis to discuss progress to date and address any questions the learner may have and review work to date. The meeting happens towards the last quarter of the programme. The meeting is documented, this documentation is included with the assignment submission. The tutor also maintains a One-to-One attendance record.
- Interaction with the tutor. The learner interacts regularly with the tutor outside of normal class time and this is also documented in an informal one to one log and submitted with the assignment by the learner
- Written feedback is also provided by the tutor during correction of the assignments, throughout the assignment.

6.16 Dealing with Academic Misconduct/Plagiarism

- Academic misconduct/plagiarism is unacceptable and must be avoided. Plagiarism is a serious academic offence and while it may be easy to commit unintentionally, it is defined by the fact not the intention.

- Plagiarism means that a learner has used the ideas or words of another person without giving them explicit credit. The 'other person' can be a published or non-published author, a colleague or a person who completes assignments for others, or an internet source. The following are examples of plagiarism in assessments or presentations

    o Directly copying notes from a book or other published material.
    o Copying other people's work.
    o Paraphrasing notes from a book or other published material.
    o Using pictures found on the internet.
    o Using statistics without quoting the source

- When a learner is given an assessment or a presentation to research and submit/present they must investigate the topic themselves, explore the subject in depth so as to form their conclusions. The learner must reference to where they have read the information contained in their work.
- All leaners must sign the Authorship Statement in their assignment to confirm that the work submitted is their own work with the exception of the content which has been clearly referenced.
- Plagiarised work receives no marks if there is reasonable evidence to suspect that a learner has plagiarised third party content and passed it off as their own.
- LWL reserves the right to spot check assessments and ask the learner to defend their submission in a meeting with the tutor.

Academic Misconduct/Plagiarism procedure

Chapter 7 Supports for Learners

This chapter is aligned to Core Guideline 7 of the QQI Core QA Guidelines.

7.1 Policy Statement

Longford Women's Link CLG (LWL) believes that individual supports for learners is intrinsic to the programmes that we offer and is committed to providing appropriate supports, taking into account resources and infrastructure. LWL links learners with external supports where appropriate and practicable.   LWL provides a service that welcomes, encourages and engages with learners in a positive and constructive manner.   Supports for learners are monitored through feedback on an ongoing basis and updated to reflect the expanding and up to date approaches required in order to meet learners needs. As part of LWL's Integrated Model of service delivery, LWL is committed to ensuring that reasonable accommodation is given to all Learners experiencing any difficulties in the duration of their time with us including compassionate consideration. Reasonable accommodation is administered in a fair and consistent manner amongst Learners.

7.1.1 Responsibility
- The Board of Trustees is responsible for ensuring that adequate resources are provided to support learners
- The Education and Training Manager (ETM)coordinate and manages supports for learners and monitors their effectiveness.
- Tutors monitor the supports and resources while delivering programmes and bring any issues to the attention of the ETM.
- All staff have responsibilities, directly and/or indirectly, in supporting learners

7.1.2 Procedures Associated with the Policy
- Learner Laptop Loan Scheme
- Reasonable Accommodation for Assessment
- Compassionate Consideration
- Handling Learner Complaints

7.1.3 Information for Learners
We make details of learner supports available in:

- Learner Handbook
- Tutor Handbook
- Website
- Programme information
- Induction

7.2 Resources and Supports

- One-to-one tutor support where learners have scheduled time to discuss issues and concerns with their tutors and get individualised feedback. Learners may request additional assistance if necessary.
- Reasonable accommodation and compassionate consideration
- Counselling and Domestic Violence Victim support.
- Induction on their first day of class, where learners are made aware of key information regarding coursework, learner supports, assessment dates, and policies.
- Tutors provide guidance on academic writing, which is appropriate to the level of the programme, including appropriate layout, language and referencing, providing clear guidance to learners on presentation of assignments.
- We provide assistance and information on potential career pathways, progression routes and third level institutes. We refer learners to the adult guidance services provided by the local ETB.
- LWL is also the lead sponsor of the Community Employment Childcare scheme in County Longford. Learners who are part of this scheme have the added supports of the CE Supervisors during work placement roles

7.3 Learner Laptop Loan Scheme

Learners who do not have access to a laptop they need to allow them to fully participate can apply to borrow a laptop through our Learner Laptop Loan Scheme. This includes but is not limited to:

- Medical card holders
- Learners in receipt of DEASP payments
- Learners with additional needs (e.g. disability, educational, physical, language, intellectual, sensory, mental health)
- Membership of a minority ethnic group
- Specific target group engaged with LWL (e.g. learners in direct provision, learners experiencing homelessness, refugee/asylum seekers, victims of domestic violence)
- A learner who has been extremely impacted by COVID 19

Applicants apply under our documented Laptop Loan Scheme procedure. Learner Laptop Submission forms are available on request from the ETM

Learner Laptop Loan Scheme Procedure.

7.4 Reasonable Accommodation

Learners can apply for Reasonable accommodation. In the context of assessment, reasonable accommodation is the term for the adaptation of assessment as necessary to cater for the needs of learners whose personal situation means that assessment would otherwise be unfair e.g. learners with a disability.

Special accommodations for assessment are implemented in a fair and impartial manner and will neither advantage or disadvantage the learner or other learners.

Reasonable Accommodation for Assessment Procedure

Further information is also documented under Chapter 6 Reasonable Accommodation

7.5 Compassionate Consideration

Learners can apply for Compassionate Consideration to defer an assessment i.e. to be allowed to complete/submit the assessment activity on another occasion, if they feel that extenuating circumstances may have prevented or may prevent them from undertaking/completing a specific assessment activity. In such cases, supporting relevant evidence/documentation must accompany the application

Compassionate consideration Procedure

7.6 Learner Complaints

LWL is committed to maintaining a positive learning environment for all, to open communication between staff, tutors and learners on issues of concern, and to responding promptly when a grievance or complaint is raised by a learner. We provide a forum for learner complaints to be resolved in accordance with principles of natural justice, fairness and equality, promptly, fairly and confidentially. We foster a learning environment where the informal resolution of issues is the norm and expect that the majority of grievances are resolved informally. Our aim is to ensure that grievances and complaints are resolved amicably in so far as possible and to the mutual satisfaction of both the complainant and the respondent. Our complaints procedure is designed to ensure the necessary degree of independence from any earlier decision making and provide for arbitration independent of any conflict of interest. We do not accept anonymous complaints. All complaints are handled as set in our documented procedure for handling learner complaints.

Handling Learner Complaints Procedure

7.7 Monitoring and Evaluation

- Tutors monitor the adequacy of learner supports during delivery and speak to the ETM regarding specific requests or needs.
- We ask learners for feedback on learner supports in our learner feedback forms at the end of each programme module.
- A learner survey is carried out every two years requesting learners perspectives on their overall impression of learning resources and supports. Finding and recommendations are reported to the Academic Council.
- The ETM monitor the effectiveness of resources and supports and reports to the Academic Council.

Chapter 8 Information and Data Management

This chapter is aligned to Core Guideline 8 of the QQI Core QA Guidelines.

8.1 Policy Statement

In compliance with the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 and other legislative guidelines such as GDPR, this Information and Data Policy is provided to protect the related resources of LWL. LWL administration duties are performed in a professional manner ensuring both privacy and GDPR is at the forefront of all procedures.

All procedures within the LWL Information and Privacy Statement are developed in compliance with the terms and conditions dictated by:
• Internal Quality Assurance procedures
• Contracting agreement/s
• Mandatory compliance from external bodies

8.1.1 Responsibility
* The Board of Trustees has ultimate responsibility for information and data management which is informed by the CEO
* The DCA is responsible for ensuring LWL is compliant with all regulatory and statutory requirements, eg Health and Safety, GDPR.
* The DCA has responsibility for ensuring that all information and data management systems are accurate and in line with and comply with relevant requirements.
* The DP and the ETM, with specific regard to Education and Training, ensures that all data is managed in line with core LWL policy.

8.1.2 Statement Associated with this Policy
* LWL Privacy Statement

8.2 Handling Learner Information

The learner is placed at the centre of LWL practice and their information is treated with the utmost respect and dignity. LWL places the highest importance in the handling of learner information and has adopted appropriate physical, technical and organisational measures to protect personal information of learners.
The following outlines LWL's policy on handling information with special emphasis on record keeping and confidentiality.

* To continue the delivery of a quality service with a community education approach to all learners.
* To continue a collaborative approach by increasing communication between LWL, its staff and tutors.
* To provide tutors with good understanding and knowledge of the organisation, its principles and its approach.

- To ensure tutors are briefed, supported and updated to understand and integrate principles of best practice in relation to record keeping
- To provide transparency in relation to LWL confidentiality policies and procedures.
- To develop a coordinated system of record-keeping, this protects the rights of employees, learners, tutors, stakeholders, and other service users.
- To provide transparency, accountability and enable easy access to information when required.

8.3 Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 1997, 2003 & 2014

The FOI Act was established to provide openness, transparency, and accountability giving all individuals a legal statutory right to:

- Access official information held by a body to which FOI legislation applies.
- Have their information edited where incomplete, incorrect or misleading.
- Obtain reasons, decisions or information documented affecting the individual stance (subject to exemptions)

8.4 Implications for Practice

LWL have a legal obligation to provide information if a person under the FOI 2014 Act exercises their rights to access to their records and seek information recorded about them.

8.5 Personal Data and Your Rights

Learners have rights over their personal data, and they are in control of how their information is used. These rights are not absolute, and some qualifications and restrictions do apply. In summary their rights are:

- The Right to withdraw consent
- Right of access
- Right to rectification
- Right to be forgotten
- Right to restrict processing
- Right to object
- Right to refuse automated decision making and/or profiling
- Right to portability

Learners also have the right to seek compensation through the courts in the event that their data privacy rights have been infringed for further details please see LWL Privacy Statement Appendix 12.4.

8.6 Definition of a Record

A record constitutes a piece of evidence about the past, especially an account kept in writing or some other permanent form. It is defined as "any memorandum, book, plan, map, drawing, diagram, pictorial or graphic work or other document, any photograph, film or recording (whether of

sound or images or both), any form in which data (within the meaning of the Data Protection Act, 2018) are held, any other form (including machine-readable form) or thing in which information is held or stored manually, mechanically or electronically and anything that is a part or a copy, in any form of any of the previously mentioned or is a combination of two or more of the previously mentioned" (Freedom of Information Act, 2014).

8.7 The Impact on Your Work-Record-Keeping

Record keeping plays a vital part in the overall running of LWL as it enables the organisation to both plan and reflect. Both these practises are essential when it comes to the delivery of a quality community education system that meets the needs of the wider community and supporting the upskilling of diverse employment sectors.

Record Keeping includes the following:

- Recording of all information relating to learners in any written, recorded or electronic form.
- Recording details of all assignments, results and all correspondence to and from learners.
- Recording details of telephone conversations if relevant.
- Recording hand over instructions between tutors.
- Recording of one to one meetings.
- Recording learner course feedback and reviews.
- Recording learner progression paths

A helpful rule of thumb is to assume that the service user/learner may read the record if he/she makes a request to do so.

It is important to consider the following when recording a learners information

- Is it objective? (No personal opinions)
- Is it fair?
- Is it relevant?
- Is it valid?
- Is it accurate?
- Can you stand over it? (Bearing in mind a record can be used as evidence in the event of a complaint or claim).

8.8 Record-Keeping Best Practice

LWL is committed to ensuring that best practice is adhered to at all times when it comes to LWL Record Keeping.

- Record keeping situations are recorded within an appropriate **timeframe** to avoid loss of information.
- **Integrity** is maintained at all times.
- Separate **facts** from **opinions**
- **Facts**- either observable behaviour (directly witnessed or video evidence) or verifiable facts (there is a record).
- **Opinions-** interpretations, assessments, evaluations, judgments. Opinions should be highlighted accordingly and evidence-based.

- **Accountability-**the writer of the report and the organisation is accountable for all recorded information.

- **Transparency** - record should be easily obtained, clear and legible.
- Considering the nature of a record keeping such as assignment feedback **Positive constructive feedback** is vital to ensure that the learner can scaffold their learning further.
- **Clear Direction** should be given in any record keeping situation that involves the learner being directed to improve and develop.

Case Example
Tutor writes: "I think that this essay lacks relevant content"
It could be considered merely an opinion that the essay is poorly written, however, if further detail was added then the report would contain evidence to support the claim.
Tutor writes: "This essay lacks detail relevant to the content. See P.2 : the introduction outlines that Vygotsy and Piaget will be discussed and compared. While they are briefly discussed no comparison is evident, see comments on P. 3.4,6

8.9 Managing Payment Transactions
All payment transactions for courses are handled directly through the administration at LWL. Tutors are not permitted to accept payment from learners. Currently, the primary methods of payment are by cash, cheque, bank transfer or card payment.

8.10 Tutor Responsibility
Tutors are responsible for the development and delivery of programmes; this is outlined in the Tutor Handbook. All tutors complete and return a tutor folder with corrected assignments to the ETM within 2 weeks of the end of each programme.

8.11 Insurance
LWL carries its own Public Liability, Employer Liability and Professional Indemnity Insurances.
LWL contract tutors also carry their own professional insurance.

8.12 Social Media

8.12.1 LWL Social Media and Networking Guidelines
LWL staff may use social media or social networking sites including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, YouTube or Instagram in the course of their work. LWL recognises that online social media tools allow staff to engage with learners and the public in a positive way. In light of this fact the below guidelines outline the approach you should take to using social media and social networking when representing LWL.

8.12.2 LWL Social Networking Guidelines
- **Before setting up any social media tools on behalf of LWL, please seek approval from the CEO.**

- **Don't forget your day job.** You should make sure that your online activities do not interfere with your job or commitments to LWL service provision.
- Use a **common sense business approach** when interacting with people on-line on behalf of LWL. You are representing the company.
- Use official **LWL logos** on social media sites where applicable. If unsure check with your manager.
- **Respect** copyright, fair use and financial disclosure laws.
- **Try to add value.** Provide worthwhile information and perspective. LWL's brand is best represented by its people and what you publish reflects LWL's brand.
- Be mindful that what you publish is public for a long time.
- **Don't** provide LWL's, a staff members or learners confidential information and never discuss LWL business performance or other sensitive matters publicly.
- **Respect your audience**. Don't use ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, or engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable in LWL's workplace. You should also show proper consideration for others' privacy and for topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory—such as politics and religion.

8.13 Branding

LWL has its own logo for all business documents and promotional material. The LWL logo is used on official documents and promotional materials only. Second providers or any other parties are not permitted to use any of the LWL branding on email correspondence or any other form of correspondence.

8.14 Salesforce

Salesforce is the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system used by LWL to store contact information, enquiries, course waitlists and courses booked.

Tutor allocation, class attendance lists and details of the course are maintained, along with copies of funding applications for individuals, fees paid, class dates, attendance, surveys and copies of previous certificates if applicable.

8.15 Google Workspace

Google Workspace is used as a sharing platform for course material and forms with LWL, tutors and learners. Once the course is complete the relevant folder is deleted.

8.16 QQI Certification and Retention of files

For QQI programmes it is necessary to collect learner PPS Number and your Date of Birth for certification purposes – the following guidelines apply in this instance:

- (QQI Memo 5 October 2018) - QQI has a range of statutory functions detailed in the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012. One of those functions is to make awards to learners who complete a programme validated by QQI. To make these awards, QQI requires a Personal Public Service Number (PPSN), name, date of birth and relevant results of each learner. This information is transferred by the provider, Longford Women's Link CLG, to QQI through QBS. In this transaction, the provider is acting on behalf of the learner with whom we have entered into an appropriate legal arrangement

(including consent for data collected) that permits the transfer of this data. QQI receives the data and retains it in the pursuit of its statutory function.

- Restriction on the use of the Personal Public Service Number (PPSN) as stated above, QQI requires LWL to provide QQI with the PPSN of each learner enrolled on a validated programme in order for QQI to make an award to that learner, and to retain a record of each award made to each learner. QQI retain this data so that a learner can confirm with it at any point that such an award was made. We are not permitted to process this data, for example by accessing it or by storing it, except for the single purpose of registering the learner with QQI for the purposes of the relevant award.

- The PPSN should not be processed by LWL for any other purpose and should remain on file for up to **2 years**, at which point it is securely destroyed. If information is kept on file for longer than 2 years, this is because of funder requirements e.g. BTEI funded programmes.

8.17 Your Security, Our Priority

Our security procedures protect data from being misused, misplaced, or accessed, changed or disclosed by unauthorised people. Your data can only be accessed by authorised persons to provide you with training and training related services. We normally retain data on our database Salesforce. This is to allow us to provide a quality ongoing training service and may be a compliance requirement by an awarding body or funding authority.

8.18 Measurement of Progression

- Learner and class information is updated to Salesforce.
- Reports generated enable LWL to plan, monitor progression of learners working towards major awards, plan programmes that meet the needs of learners, employers and the community and evaluate the outcomes.
- This information is inputted to the Academic Council meetings, Board Meetings and reports to funders as well as supporting the monitoring of completion rates, progression on the CE Scheme, year-end reporting and key performance indicators (KPIs).
- All information is reported in quantitative statistics with case studies used from time to time where appropriate.
- QQI provide statistical information on awards on an annual basis which is also used as a reference for reporting.

Chapter 9 Public Information and Communication

This chapter is aligned to Core Guideline 9 of the QQI Core QA Guidelines.

9.1 Policy Statement

LWL is committed to providing accurate and up to date information to prospective, current and former learners as well as staff, tutors, stakeholders and the general public on training programmes and services offered. Programme information provided includes programme title and description, level, duration and dates, cost and eligibility requirements. All information is easily accessible and checked for accuracy prior to publication. We publish our quality assurance evaluation reports and provide links to QQI reports, which have been published on our behalf on our website as soon as they are available.

Effective communication and consultation methods are essential to our goal. Through listening and responding, we develop and fortify good relationships with learners, employees and stakeholders alike. In order to achieve this, we promote and encourage open, honest and transparent dialogue. Communication is a two-way process where feedback from consultations is viewed as essential, and where outcomes of dialogue are acted upon in a timely and professional manner.

Ensuring we communicate in an open, honest and transparent manner is very important for us, for our learners and for all our stakeholders. It is equally important that we listen to what our learners and stakeholders are saying to us and make is easy for them to communicate with us. This is how we build strong, mutually beneficial relationships. We use plain language that informs the users and encourages them to approach us. We design documents with the user in mind.

9.1.1 Responsibility
- The DP is responsible for the quality of public information and communication
- The ETM checks and approves all information for accuracy before publishing

9.2 Communicating with Applicants/Prospective Learners
We provide pre-entry information to applicants to help them make an informed decision about enrolling, on our website, via Facebook and in programme brochures/fact sheets. We aim to respond to all queries within 24 hours.

We provide details of:

• Entry requirements.

• Content.

• Demands of the programme.

• Learner supports and reasonable accommodation.

• Assessment processes including appeals.

• Fees.

9.3 Communications with Learners

- **Learner Handbooks:** A soft copy of the learner handbook is provided to all learners by email. Each tutor also has a soft copy of the learner handbook. Pre-consultation in advance of training is completed via telephone, email, and/or face to face meetings; this eliminates the risk of ambiguity in relation to the desired goals/outcomes of a given programme.
- We also work with the supervisor or manager of the learner if the learner is enrolled by an employer or a CE Scheme.
- Our primary way of communicating is through our website and social media platforms which provides information, awarding bodies, level, cost and contact information:

  - www.lwl.ie
  - Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/LWL-Education-Training-tel-043-3341511-199937606722332

- Email mailing list which is GDPR complaint. A subscribed mailing list from Salesforce is also used to promote courses in LWL.
- **Local and National Media:** Information is published in our Local Newspaper, the Longford Leader and on our local radio station, Shannonside.
- Programme Fact Sheet/Brochures are also circulated.
- LWL provides extensive information to learners in advance of programmes including outlines, awarding body, level, dates, times and cost, collaboration with other providers.

Enquiries are logged in Salesforce and details are forwarded by LWL Reception to the ETM, if the ETM not available to take the call or meet the enquirer. All enquiries are followed up and closed off on Salesforce once complete and then linked to a contact in Salesforce.

9.4 Publication of Quality Assurance Evaluation Report

We are committed to publishing our quality assurance documents and key findings from quality evaluations in an easily accessible format and location on our website as soon as practicable after the evaluation event and in line with QQI requirements.
We publish;
- Our quality assurance manual
- Learner Handbook
- Self-evaluation reports
- QQI Monitoring Reports

Chapter 10 Other Parties Involved in Education and Training

This chapter is aligned to Core Guideline 10 of the QQI Core QA Guidelines.

10.1 Policy Statement

LWL ensure that all professionals who are contracted to and associated with LWL agree to perform to high professional and ethical standards. We approach the selection of contractors, external experts, committee members, examiners, and panellists with due diligence and in compliance with the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012.

LWL, as a community educator, strongly align our training model to the Women's Community Education ethos: this means that programme delivery is heavily influenced by LWL's interactions with the community. LWL respond to needs identified within our community and put appropriate programmes in place. This compliments the core values and vision of the organisation and is reflected in our integrated approach when working with learners.

LWL recruits and selects staff, tutors, external contractors that facilitate achievement of LWL strategic goals and who also demonstrate the skills and attributes that are consistent with our academic philosophy and culture. Recruitment and selection of staff, tutors, and external contractors comply with all legal requirements, and with relevant equal opportunity legislation, affirmative action and human resource management principles, policies and guidelines adopted by LWL. This policy applies to all staff and fixed term contracted trainers.

10.1.1 Responsibility
- The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for governance of the organisation and delegates academic oversight responsibility to the Academic Council.
- The Academic Council approves the appointment of External Authenticators and External Evaluators and maintains oversight of academic standards.
- The ETM is responsible for the recruitment and management of tutors, External Authenticators and External Evaluators and working with all stakeholders.

10.2 Contracted Trainers, Expert Panellists, Committee Members and External Evaluators

LWL ensures that each professional selected has the relevant skills, qualifications, and experience to deliver QQI programmes and to ensure that the programme aims and learning outcomes are met in line with the National Standards for the module and level being taught. The selection process is aimed at ensuring that the contractors and other professionals that we employ commit to the Company Vision/Mission and contribute to the process of continuous improvement.

Our tutors while academically qualified, they are also experts in practice. This means that they are best placed to facilitate quality and knowledge-based programmes. This results in a double dividend for the learner gaining a tangible understanding of both theory and practice. Furthermore, External Authenticators bring a similar level of knowledge and expertise. The Academic Council, again reflective of LWL practise, includes inputs from internal and external expertise together with a strong learner and tutor voice.

For further information on Tutor/Staff recruitment protocols, please refer to Chapter 4 in this document, for information on EA recruitment please see as outlined in Chapter 6 and for External Self-Evaluation Evaluators please see Chapter 11.   Terms of Reference for the Academic Council and the Results Approval Panel are documented in Chapter 1.

10.3 External Stakeholders:

Other external stakeholders that we interact with during the course of our business include (but not limited to) the following

- Community Employment Schemes
- MBE Skillnet
- Private Companies
- Local Community Development Projects (LCDPs)
- Other Private Training Providers
- Other State Training Providers
- Longford Childcare Committee

We expect these companies/stakeholders to demonstrate compliance with all relevant legislation thus ensuring the safety, welfare, and wellbeing of all learners. An independent contractor contract is drawn up and must be signed by the independent contract tutor prior to the start of a course.

External Site: Should an external site be used to deliver class a full assessment for suitability is carried out by LWL to ensure the proposed facility is fit for purpose, see Chapter 5.

10.4 Consultation with Employers/Stakeholders

- Consultation with employers and other stakeholders is a useful exercise during the programme development stage.

- LWL frequently consults with employers regarding programme development (to ensure vocational appropriateness). This usually involves consultation and development of a proposal suitable to the needs of learners.
- LWL has fostered long-term associations with organisations such as Aontas and the Community Education Network (CEN), An Cosán Virtual Community College and IT Carlow (SETU).
- The relationship with IT Carlow (SETU) has developed and a Progression Agreement has been established to facilitate progression pathways for LWL Learners.
- Aontas are the National Adult Learning Organisation, and their role is to advocate for the rights of adult learners to access lifelong learning opportunities in Ireland. LWL was represented at Board Level in Aontas with LWL CEO, formerly holding the role of chair. The ETM is currently on the Board of Directors. We regularly contribute and help inform the advocacy and policy work of Aontas. Learners attending LWL have ongoing opportunities and are given a platform to give a voice to adult learners in Ireland. For further information visit www.aontas.com.
- LWL is also represented on the RPL Practitioners Board by the ETM.
- An Cosán Virtual Community College offer short unaccredited modules and also offer accredited qualifications with the option to progress to a Certificate, Higher Certificate or BA Degree. This offers choice and access to more diverse training opportunities to learners attending LWL. LWL staff and learners have also engaged with An Cosán blended learning programmes. For further information visit https://www.ancosan.ie/higher-education/

- LWL is also a participant and founding member of Aontas CEN Community of Practice which focuses on QQI reengagement and works directly with QQI to ensure a strong and informed reengagement practice.

- LWL refer learners to our local ETB Adult Guidance service, further details are available at https://www.lwetb.ie/adult-guidance/

Chapter 11 Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

This chapter is aligned to Core Guideline 11 of the QQI Core QA Guidelines.

11.1 Policy Statement

The purpose of this policy is to outline the structure LWL has in place to self-evaluate, monitor and review its administration, operations and management of education and training. This applies to validated programmes and the QAS. LWL recognises the importance of self-evaluation, monitoring and review and the need to ensure that such mechanisms are embedded into the QAS, allowing for continuous improvement in all aspects of programme provision.

11.1.1 Responsibility
- The CEO is responsible for the overall management of LWL
- The Academic Council is the academic authority in LWL and has delegated authority from the Board of Trustees to maintain oversight of self-evaluation, monitoring and review processes and review and approve reports.
- Programme Development and Review Team is responsible for development and review of programmes.
- The ETM is responsible for the coordination of Self-evaluation, monitoring and review processes.
- The DP ensures the operational model and processes support continuity of business and conform to all relevant standards, guidelines and regulations

11.1.2 Procedures Associated with this Policy
- Monitoring Tutor Performance
- Self-Evaluation

11.2 Assignment of Responsibility/Frequency

- Self-Evaluation:
    - QQI states (QQI, 2016) that review and monitoring of quality education and training programmes and services play an essential part in the provision of a quality assurance system. QQI recommends a self-evaluation as the correct process as it supports external evaluation and guarantees the delivery and continued successes of a quality training service.
    - Self-evaluation incorporates the evaluation of all eleven core elements/chapters of Quality Assurance Manual and the procedures which underpin it and it focuses in particular on the quality of the learners experience, achievement, contributions and on findings from the many stakeholders engaging in the quality system.

- LWL carries out a self-evaluation by using appropriate quality measures associated such as the voice of the learner, monitoring completion of training, observing results, recording progression and observing the impact on the community and employment sector incorporating all aspects of the QAS and the associated procedures.

- The Self-Evaluation is carried out by an appropriately qualified expert, External Self-Evaluation Evaluator/External Evaluator (EE) who is independent of LWL, is recruited by the ETM and the DP and approved by the Academic Council. Please see the Self Evaluation Procedure.

- All programmes undergo self-evaluation in a 5-year rolling cycle in order to monitor their progression against validation objectives and the QAS.

- A Self-Evaluation Plan is developed by the ETM and submitted to the Academic Council for approval. Once approved the Self-Evaluation plan is implemented.

- Please refer to the Self-Evaluation Procedure

- LWL Management along with the ETM is responsible for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of our LWL programmes and the QAS and associated procedures.

- Continuous review of programmes plays a vital part in LWL's evaluation process. Both the Internal Verification (IV) and the External Authentication (EA) contribute to the evaluation process. Ensuring the integrity of assessment processes is monitored through the IV and EA Processes and approved by the Results Approval Panel according to LWL Quality Assurance.

- The Results Approval Panel (RAP) provides an opportunity to review the results of a given assessment period, and through consideration of the IV and EA reports, it supports the identification of any issues arising out of the assessment process and this in turn results in future recommendations and actions to be taken. This is documented in the RAP TOR.

- The Academic Council provides a vital contribution to the Academic integrity of the QAS and associated procedures in LWL, with expert input from external members of the council. The roles and responsibilities are outline in the TOR.

- The Programme Development and Review team is set up on an add-hoc basis, with subject expertise from the Tutor Panel.

- LWL provides ongoing time, resources, expertise and support to ensure that LWL education and training is continuously evaluated.

11.2.1 Ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation

Table 11.1 Ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation

Evaluation method	Who is monitoring	Frequency	Content Reviewed

Analysis or Learner Course Survey	ETM	Following each programme	Learner Feedback
Analysis of Tutor Reflections Form	ETM	Following each programme	Tutor Feedback
Analysis of the recode of Complaints	ETM	Quarterly	Complaints Register
Review any changes to documented risks. Add details of new risks identified	ETM and DP	Quarterly	Risk Register
Learner Attendance	ETM/Tutors	Ongoing	Attendance records updated by the tutors
Learner drop-out/early exit	ETM	Ongoing	Feedback from tutor and learner
Adequacy of facilities and resources	ETM/Facilities Department/DCA	Ongoing	Fit for purpose facilities and equipment
Monitoring of tutor performance	ETM	Ongoing	Learner feedback, complaints. Assessment results, learner attendance. Informal Communications with learner, IV and EA reports, tutor evaluations
Learner enrolment, retention, completion and progression statistics	ETM	Ongoing	Learner records

11.3 Learner Involvement in Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

- The voice of the learner is captured through feedback forms and surveys. This process allows LWL to evaluate what is working and what needs more attention. The learner's opinion is important to LWL and all feedback is taken on board when reviewing and planning programmes.

11.4 Tutor Involvement in Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

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- Tutors play an important part in self-evaluation, monitoring and review. Tutor feedback is considered extremely valuable and they are encouraged to provide feedback formally and informally throughout the whole process and also complete a tutor reflections form on completion of the programme. This all contributes to LWL's evaluation process.
- Please also refer to Monitoring Tutor Performance policy.

11.5 Acting on Findings

- LWL has a responsibility to act on findings from ongoing monitoring and review and self-evaluations.
- Findings may have an impact on programme development and review, or our QAS/Quality Assurance Manual and associated procedures
- Findings are discussed, where appropriate, for example with the CEO, DP. the Academic Council, the Internal Quality Team.
- Where necessary an action plan is drawn up and acted upon.

11.6 Self-Evaluation, Improvement and Enhancement

- Based on the findings and recommendations of the Self-evaluation report an action plan is developed by the ETM and DP and approved by the Academic Council.
- The report contains recommendations for improvement and development of programmes and services, and policies and procedures for the QAS system.
- It is the ETM's responsibility to ensure the action plan is carried out and reports back to the Academic Council.
- The ETM, the Academic Council and Senior Management sign off on the Self-Evaluation report and action plan implementation.

11.7 Methodology used in Self-Evaluations, Monitoring and Review

The methods used in the self-evaluation process includes one or more of the following:

- Self-evaluation plan
- QA tracking document (version control etc.)
- Definition of roles and responsibilities
- Checklists
- External Expertise
- Group Discussion
- Staff Interviews
- Team Meetings
- Focus Group interviews facilitated by a neutral/independent of LWL third party
- Gathering and collating information
- Summary information
- Evaluation report
- QQI Self-Evaluation
- Monitoring and review by management

Chapter 12 Appendices

12.1 Glossary of Terms

Term	Meaning	Definition
AC	Academic Council	The Academic Council maintains oversight of the quality of training, academic decision making and the protection of learners interest.
Award	An Award is a qualification conferred or granted by an awarding body/institute as evidence that a learner has acquired a particular standard, competence or skill in a named area.	There are four main categories of Award type in the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). Major Awards are the main type of Award at each NFQ level. Minor Awards are given for the single completion, all minor awards are linked to a major award and they provide a learner with an opportunity to build their knowledge towards a major award. Supplement awards is an award type that is in addition to a Major Award. Special purpose award is an award type developed for a specific purpose area of learning.
Awarding Body	An organisation that is empowered to make awards.	Awarding bodies design, set standards, requirements and validate programmes
Award Standards		Award standards describe the knowledge, competence skills a learner requires to pass.
BOM	Board of Management	The Board of Management are the highest level of authority ensuring that the organisation is regulated effectively and are responsible for demonstrating accountability to stakeholders.
CEO	Chief Executive Officer	The Chief Executive Officer is the highest ranking manager in a company and are responsible for manging the overall operations, resources and communicating with the BOM.

CE	Community Employment	The Community Employment (CE) Programme is designed to support unemployed people into employment and further training. It is also a key resource to the community and voluntary sector.Community Employment also offers on the job training and an opportunity to participate in training QQI/Industry
Charities Governance Code	Charities Governance Code	The Charity Governance Code is the standard set by the charity regulator for managing and controlling a charity.
CRM	Customer Relationship Management	Customer relationship management is a process in which a business or other organisation administers its interactions with customers and clients.
CPD	Continuing Professional Development	Continuous Professional Development is a combination of approaches, ideas and techniques to support employee to manage their learning and development.
DEASP	Department of Employment, Affairs and Social Protection	The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection is a department of the Government of Ireland, tasked with administering Ireland's social welfare system. It oversees the provision of income support and other social services. It is led by the Minister for Social Protection who is assisted by two Ministers of State.
DCA	Director of Corporate Affairs	The DCA report the CEO and is responsible for facilities and general administration and has business partnering role within the Senior Management in relation to People, Governance and Finance.

DP	Director of Programmes	The DP has responsibility for Early Years Care, Training and Education, Community Employment, Community Development (Groups) and ahs business partnering roles within Senior Management in relation to People, Governance and Finance.
Delegated Authority	A delegated authority is a legal authority granted from one party to another.	Authority delegated to providers of education and training to make awards as per section 52 and 53 of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012.
EA	External Authenticator	External Authenticator (EA) provides independent evidence of a fair consistent assessment of learners and ensures marking is valid, reliable and compliant with the award requirements and meets the National Standard for the award.
EE	External Self-Evaluation Evaluator/External Evaluator	The External Evaluator (EE) is independent of the programme and evaluates and compares quality programmes to that of similar programmes ran elsewhere. The EE provides constructive feedback and provides improvement recommendations.
ETM	Education and Training Manager	The Education and Training Manager coordinates all training programmes delivered by the organisation and ensures that all training is ran effectively and professionally.
ELC	Early Learning and Care	This refers to the new Advance Certificate in Early Learning and Care 6M21471 and Level 5 Certificate in Early Learning and Care 5M21473 NFQ Levels 5 and 6.

GDPR	General Data Protection Regulations	General Data Protection is a European Data protection law with mandatory rules on how organisations manage, gather and store personal data.
ICT	Information Communication Technology	Information Communication Technology is the use of digital technology for communications, everyday usage of digital technologies includes mobile phone, email, internet etc
IT Carlow	Institute of Technology Carlow	Institute of Technology Carlow is one of the largest technology colleges in Ireland, with campuses in Carlow, Wexford and Wicklow, and part-time provision elsewhere in Ireland. It is a founding constituent institute of South East Technological University (SETU) since May 2022
IV	Internal Verifier	Internal Verification (IV) is the process where the training providers planning, management and operational procedures and assessment processes are evaluated and monitored internally.
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators	Key performance indicator, a quantifiable measure of performance over time for a specific objective. KPIs provide targets for teams to shoot for, milestones to gauge progress, and insights that help people across the organization make better decisions.
Learning Outcomes	Learning Outcomes	All Awards in NFQ are named Learning Outcomes. Learning Outcomes describe at the end of a piece of training what a learner is expected to understand and apply.

LWL	Longford Women's Link	Longford Womens Link (LWL) is governed by the LWL Board of Trustees and delivers education and training services as part of our integrated model of service delivery, in response to emerging interests and an ever changing landscape of the wider community.
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding	Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is an agreement of understanding agreed by two parties. It sets the mutually accepted expectations of all involved
NFQ	National Framework of Qualifications	National Framework of Qualification is a 10 level system describing qualifications in the Irish education and training system. It is underpinned by quality assurance principles and sets out what each qualification says about what the learners understands and can do. It sets a qualifications pathway from one level to the next.
PEL	Protection of Enrolled Learners	The Protection of Enrolled Learners (PEL) is legal requirement put in place to protect a learners journey. It ensures that a learner who has been on a training course for more than 3 months can continue their training they have begun in the event that the programme stops running or is no longer ran by the provider for any reason.
Programme	Programme	A programme (of education and training) is process by which a learner gains knowledge, understanding or skill.
Provider	Provider	A provider is an organisation that provides, manages or procures a programme of education and training.

QA	Quality Assurance	Quality Assurance is a process used to ensure that a learning environment from teaching to research reaches a level of quality.
QAS	Quality Assurance System	The Quality Assurance System is a tool used to evaluate, measure and ensure the organisation performing to its quality assurance standards.
QBS	QQI Business System	The quality business system is a collection of the organisations policies and procedures which aims to ensure the quality of the organisations services are met.
QHub	QHub Platform	The QHub platform allows education and training providers to engage more easily with QQI. QHub currently supports business processes such as programme validation, revalidation and extension
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland	Quality and Qualifications is the national agency responsible for qualifications in Ireland.
RAP	Results Approval Panel	The Results approval Panel in line with assessment policy ensure that all QQI results are fully quality assured, approved and signed off before submission to QQI.
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning	Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a process where value/recognition is given to learning which has been previously acquired. The prior learning acquired can be certified or experiential.
TOR	Terms of Reference	Terms of Reference defines the purpose and structures of a project, committee, meeting, Negotiation, or any similar collection of people who have agreed to work together to accomplish a share goal, vision, objective, scope and deliverable (i.e. what must be achieved).

Validation	Validation	The process by which an awarding body establishes evidence that a learner has attained the desired level of compliance acquired to attain knowledge, know-how and competence or skill.
WP	Work Placement	A work placement is a limited period of time, usually forming part of a course of study, during which someone works for an organisation in order to get work experience.
WPS	Work Placement Supervisor	Work placement supervisors assess learners skills, knowledge and competences during their work-placements under stated criterion.

12.2 LWL Organisation Chart 2023

LWL ORGANISATION CHART 2023

Board of Directors

Audit & Risk Sub-Committee

Governance Sub-Committee

Academic Council

CEO
Tara Farrell

Director of Programmes
Kathleen Dowd

Finance Manager
Ethna Lee

Director of Corporate Affairs
Lindsay Clayworth

CSP Manager
Marissa Hebron

CSP Childcare Asst.
Sinead Keating
Catherine Reynolds

CSP Panel Workers

Childcare Manager
Ali McKeon

Asst. Manager
Una Mulvihill/
Marlene Conway

Play Leaders (4)
Paula Garry
Ewa Sienko
Marlene Conway
TBC

Play Leader (2)
Marie Grehan
Ibukunola Richards

Childcare Assistants (3)
Jenny Doherty
Kristina Janule
Charlotte Bonsu

AIM workers (2)
Lilia Maguire
Molly Sheridan

Crèche Cook
Sandra Flaherty

DEASP Supervisors
Siobhán McGoey
Kerrie Prendergast
TBC

DEASP Asst. Supervisor
Vacant

DEASP CE (30)
Childcare Asst.

DEASP CE (2)
TBC

DEASP CE (4)
Receptionists

DEASP CE (5)
Crèche Cooks

DEASP CE (1)
Bus Drivers

DEASP CE (3)
Cleaner

Admin Assistant
Caroline Mulvihill

Training & Ed. Manager
Pamela Latimer

Programme Mentor
Karen Reilly

SHE TEAM
Michelle Maher
Mairéad O'Shea

Independent Contractors

Programme Admin
Kathryn McGrath

Facilities Manager
TBC

Maintenance
Brendan Dowler

Housekeeping
Mary Mollaghan

Gardener
Alan Kenny

Receptionist
Alexandra Jitaru

Receptionist
Inga Smirnova

Receptionist (CE)
Deirdre Courtney

Receptionist (CE)
TBC

Housekeeping (CE)
Kevin Hegarty

Bus Driver/Gardener(CE)
David Fagan

Receptionist (Tús)
Vacant

Independent Contractors

Counsellor
Emily Cuddy

Counsellor
Kate Crinnigan

Counsellor
Jackie Greene

Counsellor
Noeleen Christie

Intern Counsellor
Vacant

DV Team Lead
Natalie O'Reilly

DV Specialist
Sonya Fitzmaurice

DV Specialist
Orla Smith

DV Specialist (
Inga Smirnova

Independent Contractors

DV Adolescent Counsellor
Loretto McGarry

BLACK Border   denotes Full Time   total = 32
RED Border   denotes Part Time   total = 63
NB: (excludes counsellors, vacancies & CSP Panel)
SHADOW   denotes temporary arrangement
e.g. maternity/parental leave cover
- - - - -   denotes business partnerships
————   denotes line management
————   denotes HR/Gov oversight

DCYA   DEASP   Tusla DSGBV   Tús   Phil/Programme
POBAL CSP   Core   CSVC   RSS

12.3 LWL Risk Register V2 May 2022

Risk Area	Identified Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Score	Ongoing Controls	Responsibility	Any Actions required now	Lead / owner of Action	Timeframe to Complete
Financial	Loss / reduction of core funding which may impact on the LWL's sustainability.	Medium	High	1	1 Maintain relationships with core funders and relevant Departments. Communicate regularly with core funders on how we are meeting their key objectives and report on the quantitative and qualitative outcomes achieved by the organisation. 2 Ensure quarterly, half yearly and annual reports and paperwork go to the relevant funder on time. Meet all funder criteria. 3 Communicate regularly with core funders on how we are meeting their key objectives and report on the quantitative and qualitative outcomes achieved by the organisation. 4 Reserves Policy in place and where necessary adjusted by agreement with the Board and in line with best practice. 5 In the event of a significant change to funding or loss of funding the Audit Committee and Management Team will meet to consider the consequences for LWL and make recommendations to the Board.	Board of Directors responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and in prevention and detection of fraud- Finance & Staffing subgroup in place to this end. Management & monitoring delegated to CEO	Reserves Policy revision and update	ARC	June 30th 2022
	Major fraud or error which may lead to financial instability.	Low	High	2	External Auditors prepare Audited Accounts and carry out an annual financial spot check 1 Robust written Financial Procedures in place 2 Disciplinary process included in LWL's Employee Handbook that includes fraud. 3 Company cheque books, Credit & card kept in the safe. Accessed only by Finance Officer, CE Finance Supervisor, Deputy CEO and CEO. Credit card can only be used by CEO Deputy CEO only 4 Second review of all payments, with two signatures on cheques. 5 Segregation Division of duties – Finance Officer & Finance Supervisor reconcile bank accounts and put online payments for approval. Payments approved by two of either Deputy CEO, CEO or a Director who is also a cheque signatory. 6 Directors insurance is in place and renewed annually. 7 Payroll & Finance packages utilised 8 Authorization limits in place. 9 Credit card usage policy contained in LWL Financial Procedures. Invoices received by CEO and reconciled by Finance Officer		Update of Policies	CEO (ARC approval and recommendation)	July 31st 2022
	Fundraising not carried out in accordance with required standards	Low	Medium	2	1 LWL is compliant with the Charities Governance Code and all Fundraising is carried out in line with code guidelines 2 LWL has opted to pursue earned income to generate independent income so fundraising activities are minimal				
	Organisational costs are too high for available income.	Low	High	2	1 Ongoing review of expenditure against individual service budgets is conducted to ensure best value for money and to ensure that expenditure does not exceed budget 2 Financial management controls ensure each invoice is tallied with a corresponding quotation and signed off by authorising manager, before payment is ma 3 Annual budgets in place and management Accounts including P&L for whole organisation prepared monthly and reviewed with board to track Income & Expenditure against budget. Mitigating action taking as required 4 Reserves Policy in place and where necessary adjusted by agreement with the Board and in line with best practice. 6 Only budgeted expenditure is spent except in exceptional circumstances and with approval from Board for expenditure over €5,000.				

Risk Area	Identified Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Score	Ongoing Controls	Responsibility	Any Actions required now	Lead / owner of Action	Timeframe to Complete
Human Resources	Lack of succession planning within the Board and in relation to new members joining	High	High	1	1 11 Board members in situ. LWL recognises that given the geographic location and the nature of the work, it can be difficult to attract directors with the requisite experience of the sector and of the core work of LWL. Therefore, LWL does not prescribe terms of office for directors, rather it has been agreed that once there is regular turnover via natural progression while at the same time, retention of experience that this is a good model for the LWL Board. LWL Board Handbook V.5 September 2019	Board of Directors responsible for employment and service users - Finance & Staffing subgroup in place to this end. Management & monitoring delegated to CEO			
	Reputational damage due to behaviour of Directors, Managers or Staff	Low	Med	2	1 Code of conduct in place and signed by all directors 2 Declaration of Conflicts of interest recorded at each board meeting 3 Declaration of interests on file for each Board member 4 Monitoring of work and being mindful of our advocacy and external dealings with key stakeholders 5 Social Media Usage polices in place		Need to implement	CEO	Sep-20
	Lack of commitment and or attendance at meetings by Board Members	Medium	High	2	1 Board Handbook and Induction Pack in place 2 Requirement to review membership of board after 3 consecutive absences				
	Lack of succession planning for CEO	Low	High	2	1 Deputy CEO Role in place 2 Senior Management structure provides for shared understanding of CEO & Deputy CEO roles		Recruitment underway	CEO/Board	01-Sep-22
	Over reliance on Key Roles	Medium	High	1	1 Succession plan is in place for key roles i.e. DV, Childcare & CEO		Succession plans required	CEO	Y/E 2022
	Employee Issues- Health & Safety issues, claims for injury, stress, harassment, unfair dismissal, low morale, reputational damage	Low	Low	3	1 Employee contracts in place and Job Specifications for each role 2 Company Handbook in place and regularly updated in line with changing Employment Law. Handbook includes the following 3 Disciplinary & Grievance procedures 4 Regular Support and Supervision meetings for all staff with line managers. External Support and Supervision for DV Specialists 5 Annual Review process in place for all staff 6 Health and Safety Policy and requisite Insurance in place 7 Training/Development budget for staff 8 Share leadership responsibilities and knowledge among management team 9 External HR support available to Senior Mgmt. and Board 10 All in staff meetings 11 Bullying and Harassment Policy & Procedure 12 Equality & Dignity at Work Policy 13 All staff are Garda Vetted 14 Covid19 Return to Work protocol in place				
	Service User Issues	Low	High	2	1 Compliant with Children First, CCTV in all Crèches 2 Complaints policy in place and available on Website 3 DV Complaints (if any) monitored and reported quarterly to TUSLA				
	Insufficient Volunteers	Low	Low	3	1 Volunteer recruitment and working policy in place				

Risk Area	Identified Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Score	Ongoing Controls	Responsibility	Any Actions required now	Lead / owner of Action	Timeframe to Complete
Operational	Programme Delivery Inability to meet identified needs of clients	Medium	High	2	1 All potential avenues for funding explored and all relevant funding streams applied for 2 Relevant upskilling and required staff training implemented as resources permit 3 Full cost recovery sought in all funding applications 4 Collaboration and joint venture initiatives explored and implemented as appropriate	Board of Directors responsible service delivery and for the provision of a fit for purpose physical environment . Day to day management delegated to CEO			
	Loss of physical equipment, furniture, Tech equipment, documents and files due to fire, flood , theft of other damage or complete loss of IT services due to computer or power failure	Low	High	2	1 Adequate Insurance is in place and all stakeholders indemnified 2 Fire Detection in place (upgraded 2019) 3 Disaster Recovery Plan in place 4 IT Backup system located in separate Tr&Ed Building with backup carried out every night 5 Office 365 and Salesforce Cloud Based Systems in place 6 Security Alarm in place, all offices locked in the evenings 7 Front , back and Tr&Ed doors locked and accessible by keypad 8 All key staff can work from home other than Childcare 9 All laptops are encrypted 10 HR Management system in place (ZOHO)				
	General security in and around the building	Low	High	2	1 CCTV in Situ 2 Opening and Lockup protocol in place and designated key holders recorded				

Risk Area	Identified Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Score	Ongoing Controls	Responsibility	Any Actions required now	Lead / owner of Action	Timeframe to Complete
Governance	Lack of direction or Strategic Planning	Low	Medium	2	1 Board of directors in place to guide LWL's work 2 Vision, Purpose and Strategic Priorities documented in LWL's Strategic Plan 2016 to 2021 3 Annual report produced an published on Website 4 All individual work plans link to LWL's Strategic Priorities 5 Annual work plan, linked to strategic plan prepared and agreed with board 6 Progress against previous work plan agreed reviewed with Board annually	Board of Directors responsible for Governance. Implementation of compliance procedures delegated to CEO			
	Compliance issues: Having adequate processes in place to ensure that all compliance and regulatory requirements are met	Low	High	2	1 External Auditors are responsible for all CRO returns 2 LWL is compliant with the Charities Governance Code 3 LWL is GDPR compliant. Data protection policy is in place. Key staff have attended GDPR external training and all staff have been briefed internally. Anonymised client records in Salesforce (cloud database). Confidentiality policy in place 4 Current Fire Certification is in place 5 Charities Regulator returns submitted annually 6 Child and Vulnerable Adults Safe Guarding Statement in place 7 Designated Liaison persons in place 8 Academic Council in place to ensure Academic Integrity - Internal Quality Committee in place to ensure requisite tutor/staff training		need to complete GDPR register Follow-up with engineer Review in light of Covid-19	Facilities Manager DV, Childcare & CSP Managers	Immediate 30/09/2020

1. INTRODUCTION

LWL is committed to respecting the privacy, and protecting the personal information of all individuals who share their information with us in the course of our work as well as individuals who use our website, communications and social media channels, in compliance with the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). This Privacy Statement sets out how we collect, use and store your personal information, (any information that identifies or could identify you). LWL is committed to upholding the rights of individuals in relation to the holding of personal data. GDPR requirements for data controllers means that data must be:

- Processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner
- Collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes
- Adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary
- Accurate and, where necessary, kept up-to-date
- Retained only for as long as necessary
- Processed in an appropriate manner to maintain security.

2. WHO WE ARE

LWL is a registered charity and social enterprise based in Longford Town, Co. Longford. We provide a wide range of services including childcare, domestic violence support, counselling and training & education to women and families in Longford. We are a 'data controller' and we are responsible for, and control the processing of, your personal information.

Address:

LWL CLG
Willow House
Ardnacassa Avenue
Longford
Co. Longford

Telephone: 043 3341511
Email: info@lwl.ie
LWL Charity No. CHY 11744
LWL Registered Charity No. 20032937
Company Registration No. 241515

3. YOUR INFORMATION – WHAT WE COLLECT, WHY AND HOW WE USE IT

Personal information collected by LWL may include details such as your name, email address, postal address, telephone number and bank details (suppliers/fee paying service users). LWL may also collect information from members of the public who get in touch with us, or attend one of our events. We use this information to keep you

informed about other events which may be of interest to you, to help improve our services and to keep a record of our communications with you. LWL also collects information such as D.O.B, social welfare status and PPS numbers from certain categories of learners as part of our obligations under the QQI certification process.

From time to time, we may invite selected individuals and organisations to attend specific events in relation to advocacy, training or networking. If you have requested information about a job or volunteering opportunity with LWL, we also collect that information so that we can fulfil your request. If you request information about one of our services or projects by phone, website, social media or in person at our centre, we collect this information so that we can make sure you receive the help/service you need.

3.1 WHAT DO WE USE YOUR INFORMATION FOR?

We use information for several purposes including:

- Awareness-Raising
- Advocacy and Campaigning
- Supporting the delivery of services to service users e.g. QQI Certification
- Financial procedures / Processing transactions
- Human Resources
- Fundraising

3.2 SENSITIVE PERSONAL INFORMATION

LWL takes additional precautions to safeguard sensitive information stored or processed on your behalf and treats this information with the utmost confidentiality. As per Data Protection legislation, some categories of personal information are more sensitive and can include information on people's health, race, ethnic origin etc. We will only process this information to deal with your enquiry or for training and quality monitoring or evaluating the services we provide. We will not share your information with anybody without your express permission except in exceptional circumstances. Examples of this may include: self-harm, or threat to others or in situations of child protection issues such as physical abuse or exploitation.

4. HOW LONG DO WE STORE YOUR INFORMATION?

If you have made a financial donation to LWL, we store financial records of donations for a period of 7 years, as required by Revenue for audit purposes. If a donor has requested to have their contact details removed before this date, this financial information is anonymised.

If you have applied for an employment or volunteering role with LWL we store all applications from candidates, along with interview records for 7 years.

5. LEGAL BASIS FOR USING YOUR INFORMATION

LWL processes all personal data lawfully, fairly, transparently and in line with the relevant EU GDPR legislation. LWL will only use your personal information if:

- o We have asked you and have a record of your express consent for us to do so;
- o We have a **'Legitimate Interest'** to do so in order to support our charitable purposes. Our use will be fair and balanced and never unduly have an impact on your rights.
- o We have a **contract** with you that we can only fulfil by using your personal information, e.g. to send you information that you have requested or if you have signed up to participate in an event;
- o We have a **legal obligation** to obtain information about you, e.g. we are required by law to keep records of donations that we receive for 7 years according to Revenue.

We will not unduly prioritise our interests as a charity over your interests as an individual. We will always balance our interests with your rights. We will only use personal information in a way and for a purpose that you would reasonably expect. We promise to always be open and honest with you about your information and how it is used.

5.1 WHAT THIS MEANS:

LWL operates on the basis that you are happy to stay in touch with us to find out about our work and how you can connect with us and therefore are content for us to keep and use your personal information for the lengths of time specified below. If you do not wish us to follow these general guidelines, please contact us and let us know.

We may contact you with information and updates about our services and/or ways that you might like to get involved or support us further. This may be by post, email, phone or text message, according to your preferences. We will also continue to ask whether you are still happy to hear from us and in which ways.

6. EMAILS

If you wish to opt out of our emails, which you can do via the unsubscribe link at the bottom of every email we send. You can also phone 043 3341511 or email info@lwl.ie to unsubscribe at any time.

You can always tell us to change your communication preferences and our use of your information at any time. You can do this at any time by phoning us on 043 3341511 or emailing info@lwl.ie

7. KEEPING YOUR INFORMATION SAFE

LWL takes looking after your information very seriously and have adopted appropriate physical, technical and organisational measures to protect your personal information. Your information is stored securely on our server in Ireland, which is maintained and updated by our IT service provider CTS. Our server is protected by a Firewall Wall, and VPN security. Access to the server is via user profiled access passwords. Backups are taken nightly in a separate building to support disaster recovery and business continuity. All laptops and desktop computers are encrypted and lock automatically after being idle for 4 minutes. LWL has a processing contract in place with CTS who GDPR compliant and there In relation to hard copies of information e.g. consent forms, parental forms etc., these are stored in secure cabinets and are only accessed by the appropriate staff. We have strict agreements/contracts in place with all external service providers to ensure the highest levels of security and safety. Finally, all LWL staff must sign a confidentiality agreement prior to commencing employment with us.

8. DATA PRIVACY ONLINE

8.1 OUR COMMUNICATIONS PLATFORMS

LWL works with individuals, groups, practitioners and service providers. We use our website and our social media platforms to communicate the work that we do and to share information about LWL news and events.

If you sign up for our mailing list via our website, you will from time to time receive notifications on our events, training and may also be invited to give feedback on our work.

8.2 WHAT DATA DO WE COLLECT ON OUR WEBSITE?

LWL's website uses cookies, small text files which are placed on your computer or device as you navigate a website. We use Google Analytics cookies to tell us about levels of activity on our website, for example which pages on the site are used more frequently. This information helps us to improve and enhance our website.

We do not collect any personal details about you using cookies. Any of the data or information that we gather using cookies is anonymised and only used to help us improve our website. We don't use it for other purposes, such as donations or advertising, and we won't share this information with others unless we are legally required to do so.

You can read Google's Privacy Policy here:
https://policies.google.com/privacy?hl=en

8.3 SUBSCRIBING TO OUR MAILING LISTS

If you would like to keep up to date with our work, you can subscribe our mailing lists to receive updates about our work and give your consent to be notified about upcoming events and initiatives. We use Salesforce, a third party email platform, to distribute our information.

When you subscribe to our mailing lists we ask you for your name, contact details and your area of work. Your data is held within this third party platform. Salesforce has its own security and privacy policy; separate to LWL's and holds its data in the USA. The GDPR does not require EU personal data to stay in the EU, nor does it place any new restrictions on transfers of personal data outside the EU. Salesforce state that their data processing addendum, which references their Binding Corporate Rules, Privacy Shield certification, and the European Commission's model clauses, will continue to help Salesforce customers legalize transfers of EU personal data outside of the EU.

8.4 HOW WE PROTECT YOUR PRIVACY

LWL is committed to respecting your privacy. Your data may be held within third party platforms which we use, including Salesforce and Mailchimp. All of these platforms have published up to date privacy policies to comply with the GDPR.

Access to those platforms and your data is strictly limited to relevant service managers who will have the necessary passwords.

8.5 OPTING OUT

If at any time you decide that you no longer wish to hear from us you can unsubscribe from our mailing list. At the bottom of our emails or other communication, you will be given the option to unsubscribe. When you click on this option we will remove your name from our mailing list.

You can also adjust the settings in your browser to decline cookies. This may have an impact on your experience of our website.

9. YOUR RIGHTS

9.1 RIGHT OF SUBJECT ACCESS

As part of our commitment to respecting your privacy you have the right to request details on the personal data we collect about you as you explore our website. This right includes information on who processed your data as well as when and why it was processed. You also have the right to request a copy of your personal data.

If you want to access your personal data or find out how it has been used by LWL please write to us at Willow House, Ardnacassa Avenue, Longford and include your name, contact information and details on what you would like to know. We will endeavour to respond to your request within 30 days.

Your Right of Access is among a number of individual rights provided for by data protection regulations. For more information on these rights please click here: http://gdprandyou.ie/

9.2 PERSONAL DATA AND YOUR RIGHTS

You have rights over your personal data, and you are in control of how your information is used. These rights are not absolute, and some qualifications and restrictions do apply. In summary your rights are:

- The Right to withdraw consent
- Right of access
- Right to rectification
- Right to be forgotten
- Right to restrict processing
- Right to object
- Right to refuse automated decision making and/or profiling
- Right to portability

You also have the right to seek compensation through the courts in the event that your data privacy rights have been infringed.

If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you may file a complaint with us or with the Data Protection Commissioners Office.
https://www.dataprotection.ie/docs/Home/4.htm

Contact Details for the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner Address: Data Protection Commissioner, Canal House, Station Road, Portarlington, Co. Laois.

Telephone: +353 57 8684800 / +353(0)761 104 800 / Lo Call No. 1890 252231 Email: info@dataprotection.ie

Changes to your personal information or preferences:
From time to time we may contact you to ensure that the information you have provided us with remains accurate and up to date.

Should you wish to change your preferences you can do this any time:

By Post:
LWL CLG
Willow House
Ardnacassa Avenue
Longford

By Email:
info@lwl.ie

By Phone:
043 3341511

LWL September 2019

12.5 Health Welfare and Safety Statement

Longford Women's Link CLG (LWL) is committed to ensuring the Health, Safety and Welfare of its employees, service users, contractors and any member of the public invited to use its facilities. The following principles govern the design, implementation and delivery of all LWL's services

1. Compliance with legal requirements.

2. Protection of the HS&W of all employees, services users, contractors and members of the public from unacceptable risks, will take priority over economic considerations and will not be compromised.

3. Consultation with designated HS&W employee representatives on the development and implementation of HS&W policies and procedures

4. Provision of the necessary information, training and resources to employees to ensure as is reasonably practical, a safe place of work where employees are competent to carry out their work duties responsibly.

5. Development of Company Policies and Procedures to support the conduction of all operations in a manner that safeguards HS&W at work and which minimises the risk of personal injury and/or asset losses.

In Ireland the Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act 2005 and subsequent regulations place a mandatory duty on Employers and Employees.

Statement of Employer Responsibility

Under Section 8(1) of the Act, every employer is obliged to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable the safety, health and welfare at work of his/her employees. Section 8(1) b requires employers to manage and conduct work activities, in such a way as to prevent, as far as reasonably practicable, any improper conduct or behaviour likely to put the safety, health and welfare at work of his/her employees at risk. Employers are also required to provide the information, instruction, training and supervision necessary to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare at work of his/her employees.

Statement of Employee Responsibility

It is the responsibility of all Company employees to report for duty in a fit manner free from all intoxicants (defined as drugs and alcohol) that may pose a risk to their own safety, that of their colleagues, service users or any person visiting the Company premises.

Section 13(h) (iii)places obligations on the employee to report to his or her employer or to any other appropriate person, as soon as practicable – any contravention of the relevant statutory provisions which may endanger the safety, health and welfare at work of the employee or that of any other person of which he or she is aware.

Signed _____   Date: 23rd February 2021

Tara Farrell, CEO