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QQI AWARDS STANDARDS.

Personal, Social and Learning to Learn (Core Competence)

December 2023

Foreword

The Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act 2012 requires QQI to 'determine the standards of knowledge, skill or competence to be acquired, and where appropriate, demonstrated, by a learner before an award may be made by the Authority'. QQI award standards are based on the level indicators and award type descriptors of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and are governed by QQI Policy for the Determination of Award Standards.

Based on systematic engagement with subject matter expertise and public consultation, award standards for certain broad fields of learning were developed for QQI awards at level 1-4 on the NFQ. These standards represent an elaboration of the generic descriptors of the NFQ. They should facilitate experts in particular fields of learning to create the link between their programmes' intended learning outcomes and the NFQ. Each award standard is cumulative, the statements of knowledge, skill and competence at NFQ levels 2, 3 and 4, build on the attainment of standards at lower levels, which are not necessarily reproduced at the higher level(s). The implementation and use of these standards is subject to QQI Policy and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes and QQI Policy for the Making of Awards. Whenever an award standard changes, programmes must be updated and validated against the new standards.

These standards are not programme specifications. It is through these, however, that the relationship between a programme, its component parts and the NFQ should be evident. The standards are a reference point and a point of comparison against which individual programmes may be justified.

They are intended to provide general guidance for articulating the learning outcomes associated with a particular field of learning. In designing programmes, providers must take cognisance of the standards for specific fields of learning where they generally relate to the programme being developed. It is, however, recognised that there is a significant growth in multi-disciplinary/inter-disciplinary programmes; there are emerging fields of learning; and in addition, within each field there is the vast spectrum of programmes possible based on a wide range of purpose. In this context, it is not possible to have a standard, or multiple standards, that cater for the complete range of programmes possible. It is therefore expected that the standards for specific fields of learning will be used as reference points for the design of programmes. In designing programmes, providers can draw from more than one standard.

In drafting the standards every effort has been made to ensure that they will provide for flexibility and variety in the design of programmes and therefore encourage innovation within an overall agreed framework. It is not expected that all programmes will include every learning outcome identified in a standard. It is, however, expected that many programmes will include learning outcomes that are not included in the relevant standard.

When designing a programme, each learning outcome in the standard should be considered. Where departure from these is necessary, it should be justified in the context of the specific orientation of the programme and other facts pertaining to it. Each programme provider should be able to demonstrate how the design and content of its own programmes has been informed by the standard.

The level descriptors of the Framework, the award type descriptors and consequently the standards for the specific fields of learning are divided into three different types of learning outcomes - knowledge, skill and competence. These strands are further subdivided into eight sub-strands. Each strand/sub-strand is important. The relative weighting of each strand in a programme will vary from programme to programme. The weighting will be determined by many factors, including for example, the practical nature of a programme, or otherwise.

Each strand/sub-strand should be addressed appropriately in every programme. Where a programme is multidisciplinary or inter-disciplinary in nature, the use of more than one standard may be necessary. In such cases, the scope, depth and balance of knowledge, skill and competence should be attended to.

The titles of awards made by QQI on foot of these award standards shall be consistent with QQI Policy on the Making of Awards with an exception in the case of major awards where the named award stem shall have the following form: 'Level X Certificate in Lifelong Learning in' [specialisation].

These standards are determined by QQI under section 49(1) of the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 2012.

AWARD STANDARDS – PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND LEARNING TO LEARN (CORE COMPETENCE) AT NFQ LEVELS 1 TO 4

Purpose	The purpose of this broad award standard is to enable design of a variety of programmes enabling the learner to develop the relevant personal, social and learning to learn knowledge, skill and competence.
	'Personal, social and learning to learn competence is the ability to reflect upon oneself, effectively manage time and information, work with others in a constructive way, remain resilient and manage one's own learning and career. It includes the ability to cope with uncertainty and complexity, learn to learn, support one's physical and emotional well-being, to maintain physical and mental health, and to be able to lead a health-conscious, future-oriented life, empathize and manage conflict in an inclusive and supportive context'. *
References	Please note that the above standard is aligned to the Key Competences for Lifelong Learning. This particular competence relates specifically to the "Core Competence in Literacy" European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, *Key competences for lifelong learning*, Publications Office, 2019 https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/291008
	Other references: *UNESCO (Bangkok) 2014, Asia Pacific* https://unesdoc.unesco.org/search/befa2a7f-77e4-487c-8e62-782994beaba2
	Essential knowledge, skills and attitudes related to this competence*
	'For successful interpersonal relations and social participation, it is essential to understand the codes of conduct and rules of communication generally accepted in different societies and environments. Personal, social and learning to learn competence requires also knowledge of the components of a healthy mind, body and lifestyle. It involves knowing one's preferred learning strategies, knowing one's competence development needs and various ways to develop competences and search for the education, training and career opportunities and guidance or support available.
	Skills include the ability to identify one's capacities, focus, deal with complexity, critically reflect and make decisions. This includes the ability to learn and work both collaboratively and autonomously and to organise and persevere with one's learning, evaluate and share it, seek support when appropriate and effectively manage one's career and social interactions. Individuals should be resilient and able to cope with uncertainty and stress. They should be able to communicate constructively in different environments, collaborate in teams and negotiate. This includes showing tolerance, expressing, and understanding different viewpoints, as well as the ability to create confidence and feel empathy'.
	*EU Council Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning, Official Journal of the European Union, 2018
	C_2018189EN.01000101.xml (europa.eu)

Note: The indicators at each level build on the skills from the previous one.
The outcomes at each NFQ level include those of all the lower levels in the same sub-strand unless stated otherwise.

KNOWLEDGE

NFQ	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4
Knowledge breadth	Elementary knowledge	Knowledge that is narrow in range	Knowledge moderately broad in range	Broad range of knowledge
Knowledge kind	Demonstrable by recognition or recall	Concrete in reference and basic in comprehension	Mainly concrete in reference and with some comprehension of relationship between knowledge elements	Mainly concrete in reference and with some elements of abstraction or theory
	The learner should be able to demonstrate:	The learner should be able to demonstrate:	The learner should be able to demonstrate:	The learner should be able to demonstrate:
Transitions and resilience	Awareness of: • change • uncertainty • everyday challenges • being resilient.	Basic knowledge of: • uncertainty • everyday challenges • resilience • changes in personal life, social life and learning pathways.	Knowledge of: • ways to cope with everyday changes, uncertainty and challenges • changes in personal life, social life and learning pathways.	Knowledge and understanding of: • ways to cope with changes, uncertainty and challenges • changes in personal life, social life and learning pathways.

Wellbeing	Awareness of: • wellbeing (physical, emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual) • importance of physical activity and benefits of taking part in activities outside work • personal boundaries.	Basic knowledge of: • wellbeing (physical, emotional, social spiritual and intellectual) • importance of physical activity and benefits of activities outside of work or college • personal boundaries.	Knowledge of: • wellbeing and care of physical, mental and social health • the search for fulfilment in life • importance of physical activity and benefits of activities outside of work or college • personal boundaries. Awareness of: • personal behaviour and character traits and social and environmental factors that can affect health and wellbeing.	Knowledge of: • wellbeing and care of physical, mental and social health • the search for fulfilment in life • how to adopt a sustainable lifestyle • importance of physical activity and benefits of taking part in activities outside work • factors that can affect health and wellbeing (personal behaviour, character traits and social and environmental factors) • personal boundaries and consent.
Emotions and Empathy	Awareness of: • personal emotions, thoughts, values, and behaviours.	Awareness of: • personal emotions, experiences and values and those of others • empathy (understanding and sharing others' feelings) • personal behaviours, including usual response to stress in familiar situations.	Understanding of: • personal emotions, experiences and values and those of others in familiar situations • empathy • personal behaviours, including usual response to stress responses familiar situations.	Knowledge and understanding of: • the role of different types of personal emotions, thoughts, values and behaviours, including stress responses in different situations • personal emotions, experiences and values and those of others in different situations • empathy.
Communication, and collaboration	Awareness of some of the core ways to communicate and work with others, for example on projects.	Awareness of a limited range of ways to communicate and work with others.	Knowledge of ways to communicate and work with others.	Knowledge and understanding of: • the need for different ways and strategies to communicate and work with others • how to adapt these to communicate in different situations (personal, social, learning and community settings).

Learning potential	Knowledge of one's potential to learn and progress.	Knowledge and belief in one's potential to always learn and progress.	Knowledge and belief in one's potential to always learn and progress.	Knowledge, understanding and belief in one's potential to always learn and progress.

KNOWLEDGE				
NFQ	**LEVEL 1**	**LEVEL 2**	**LEVEL 3**	**LEVEL 4**
Know-how and skill range	Demonstrate basic practical skills and carry out directed activity using basic tools	Demonstrate limited range of basic practical skills, including the use of relevant tools	Demonstrate a limited range or practical and cognitive skills and tools	Demonstrate a moderate range of practical and cognitive skills and tools
Know-how and skill selectivity	Perform processes that are repetitive and predictable	Perform a sequence of routine tasks given clear direction	Select from a limited range of varied procedures and apply known solutions to a limited range of predictable problems	Select from a range of procedures and apply known solutions to a variety of predictable problems
Self-awareness and control	Use basic self-awareness skills in routine structured contexts.	Use self-awareness skills in routine structured contexts.	Select and use self-awareness skills in routine, non-routine and semi structured contexts.	Select and use self-awareness skills in different situations.
Cope with change	Able to cope with routine change.	Able to cope with routine and non-routine change.	Able to cope with routine and unexpected change within a managed environment.	Able to cope with unexpected change and uncertainty within a managed environment.
Self-care	Use routine physical, mental and social healthcare skills under close supervision.	Use routine physical, mental and social healthcare skills with support.	Select and use routine physical, mental and social healthcare skills with support.	With support, select and apply appropriate physical, mental and social healthcare skills.

Communications and Collaboration Skills	Use basic communication and teamwork skills in highly structured situations.	Use basic communication and teamwork skills in structured situations.	Select and use communication and teamwork skills in structured situations.	Select and use appropriate communication and teamwork skills in different situations.
Critique	Use basic critical skills in highly structured situations.	Use basic critical skills in structured situations.	Select and use basic critical skills in structured situations.	Select and use appropriate critical skills in different situations.
Organising own learning	Able to follow a series of learning tasks.	Able to explore personal learning interests in structured situations.	Able to organise personal learning and show a limited range of planning in structured situations.	Able to use a limited range of different ways to plan, organise, manage and review personal learning.
Understanding learning process	With support, able to identify how learning was achieved.	With support, able to explore own learning progress.	Able to assess learning strengths and weaknesses within a managed environment.	Able to assess the learning experience and recognise own skills and knowledge gained through lifelong learning.
Using feedback to learn			Show how feedback supports progress of learning in familiar situations.	Show how feedback supports progress of learning in personal and social situations.
Exercise curiosity	Be curious in the learning process.	Be curious in the learning process.	Be curious and active in the learning process.	Be curious and actively involved with the learning process.
Use reflection to improve social skills			Reflect on developing skills to connect with others in personal life and in society.	Use a variety of reflection techniques to develop skills to connect with others in personal life and in society.

KNOWLEDGE				
NFQ	**LEVEL 1**	**LEVEL 2**	**LEVEL 3**	**LEVEL 4**
Competence context	**Act in closely defined and highly structured contexts**	**Act in a limited range of predictable and structured contexts**	**Act within a limited range of contexts**	**Act in familiar and unfamiliar contexts**
	With support, act safely in defined and structured situations.	Act safely with limited independence in predictable and structured situations.	Act safely and ethically in familiar situations.	Act safely and ethically in all situations.

KNOWLEDGE				
NFQ	**LEVEL 1**	**LEVEL 2**	**LEVEL 3**	**LEVEL 4**
Competence role	**Act in a limited range of roles**	**Act in a range of roles under direction**	**Act under direction with limited autonomy; function within familiar, homogenous groups**	**Act with considerable amount of responsibility and autonomy**
	Show a willingness to take part in highly familiar and fully supported social and civic activities.	Show a willingness to take part in social and civic activities.	Be assertive. Understand different viewpoints. Show respect for cultural and social difference and reflect on their implications for self and others.	Show respect for cultural and social difference and reflect on their implications for self, others and society.

KNOWLEDGE				
NFQ	**LEVEL 1**	**LEVEL 2**	**LEVEL 3**	**LEVEL 4**
Competence learning to learn	Learn to sequence learning tasks; learn to access and use a range of learning resources	Learn to learn in a disciplined manner in a well-structured and supervised environment	Learn to learn within a managed environment	Learn to take responsibility for own learning within a supervised environment
	Show a positive attitude and curiosity about the world.	Act with an open and positive attitude to learning.	Act with an open and positive attitude to the world and imagine new learning possibilities. Show ability to reflect on own learning.	Be open and have a positive attitude to the world and explore new learning possibilities. Show your ability to reflect on own learning.

KNOWLEDGE				
NFQ	**LEVEL 1**	**LEVEL 2**	**LEVEL 3**	**LEVEL 4**
Competence insight	Begin to demonstrate awareness of independent role for self	Demonstrate awareness of independent role for self	Assume limited responsibility for consistency of self-understanding and behaviour	Assume partial responsibility for consistency of self-understanding and behaviour
	Begin to show awareness of the importance of maintaining a positive attitude towards physical and mental well-being.	Show awareness of the importance of maintaining a positive attitude towards physical and mental well-being.	Make changes in personal and social life, and work and learning pathways, while making conscious sustainable choices and setting goals. Show a positive attitude towards: • staying physically and mentally healthy • making health-conscious choices.	Make changes in personal and social life, and work and learning pathways, while making conscious sustainable choices and setting goals. Show a positive attitude towards: • staying physically and mentally healthy • making health-conscious choices for the future.