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Widening Access from Further to Higher Education: The NCI Higher Certificate in Business



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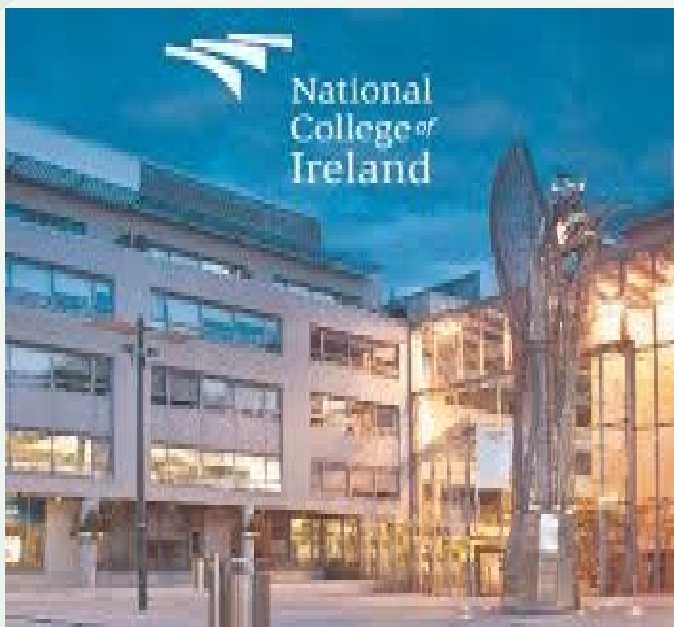
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Dearbhú Cáilíochta
agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann
Quality and
Qualifications Ireland

Quality in Higher Education: Sectoral Findings
& Enhancement Showcase

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NCI Higher Certificate in Business (Level 6)

The Higher Certificate in Business provides **life chances** as it leads to the development of knowledge and skills, but also self-esteem and self-confidence.

The revalidation of the Higher Certificate in Business provided the valuable opportunity to further **widen access** to those from Colleges/Institutes of Further Education.



Revalidation – Mission: Access

The Higher Certificate in Business was revalidated in 2023.

Key objectives of the revalidation was to support Government policy to extend and expand pathways and access opportunities to learners coming from Colleges/Institutes of Further Education.

In preparation for the revalidation the courses provided by Further Education Colleges/Institutes were researched and FE colleagues consulted with to evaluate the possibility of widening access to the Higher Certificate in Business in NCI.





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Skills & Access

The **practical skills and theoretical foundation** in business required to complete the Higher Certificate in Business were considered.

Fundamental changes were made to the programme schedule for Stage 1/Year 1 and Stage 2/Year 2 of the programme.

Year 1 objective - to embed key knowledge and skills required for business

Year 2 objective - to provide a solid foundation in the field of business.

Result: The revised structure provided for the development of key skills and knowledge, but also significantly for the widening of access for learners to the programme as admission to the programme would now be possible in both Year 1 and Year 2.

Widening Access & Pathways

Following the revalidation of the programme access to the Higher Certificate in Business has been widened to include:

- school leavers who apply under the CAO system, mature, and DARE/HEAR applicants
- applicants from FET/FETAC Level 5 will now be considered for entry to Stage 2 of the programme on successful achievement of 3 distinctions and the equivalent of 250 CAO points.





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Living Proof That Access Matters

The academic year 2023/2024 was the first year of the programme post-programmatic review.

Feedback shows that the students have enjoyed the modules and learning challenges presented. They have demonstrated a high level of success in completing the required assessments.

For the academic year 2024/25 there are very satisfactory numbers of students in both Year 1 and Year 2 of the programme.



Every Learner Matters – NCI's Mission



The Higher Certificate in Business makes an important contribution to implementing UNESCO's policy that **Every Learner Matters And Matters Equally** which is embedded in NCI's mission to widen access and participation at third level education.

The journey of inclusion continues.