



Dearbhú Cáilíochta
agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann
Quality and
Qualifications Ireland

QQI AWARDS STANDARDS.

Integrated Award Standards for Community
Development and Community Work at NFQ
Levels 5-6

March 2025





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.

The terms ‘community work’ and ‘community development’ are used interchangeably in these broad award standards. Both terms are understood as developmental activity which is comprised of both a task and a process. The task is social change leading towards the achievement of equality, social justice and human rights. The process is the application of principles of participation, empowerment and collective decision-making in a structured and coordinated way that contributes to social change.

Community workers, paid and voluntary, play a pivotal role in creating the conditions for transformative social change and the realising of rights. Community work/development practice is based on principles of participation, equality, social justice, human rights, sustainability and working collectively to analyse and act on social issues. The community work relationship is an empowering one, based on attention to both task

and process, collectively, challenging discrimination and prejudice and influencing policy to bring about transformative social change.

The revised QQI community development and community work award standards at NFQ levels 5-6 are the result of a year-long engagement process, based on cooperation and collaboration between stakeholders including community work organisations, further education and training (FET) providers and higher education (HE) community work educators, sectoral representatives and other subject experts. The Community Development Broad Award Standards Development Group was led by the All-Ireland Endorsement Body for Community Work Education & Training (AIEB). AIEB is recognised by QQI as a ‘peak body’ i.e. the relevant body to set standards in a sector.

These standards represent an elaboration of the generic descriptors of the Framework. They should facilitate experts in particular fields of learning to create the link between their programmes’ intended learning outcomes and the NFQ. 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, which range from highly practical to very theoretical. 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 drafting these award 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.

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

Purpose

It is intended that this new Integrated Broad Award Standards for Community Development and Community Work at NFQ Levels 5-6 will be used as reference to guide the development of FET and HE programmes, equipping the learner with the knowledge, skills and competence to:

1. understand the distinctive (transformational intent/social change) nature/ focus of community development practice underpinned by theoretical concepts, specific values, principles and processes.
2. engage in and contribute effectively to community development/ community work (initiatives/actions), under direction (of a professional community worker), in and with, a broad/diverse range of communities.
3. progress to further and/or higher education

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.



NFQ	LEVEL 5 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY WORK	LEVEL 6 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY WORK
KNOWLEDGE BREADTH	The learner should be able to demonstrate a broad range of knowledge	The learner should be able to demonstrate specialised knowledge within a broad area
KNOWLEDGE KIND	The learner should be able to demonstrate some theoretical concepts and abstract thinking, with significant depth in some areas	The learner should be able to demonstrate some theoretical concepts and abstract thinking, with significant underpinning theory
The Purpose, Values and Principles of Community Development/Community Work	Knowledge of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community development/community work as a distinct professional practice dedicated to transformative social change• The definition and purpose of community development/community work• Underpinning values, standards, and principles of collectivity, community empowerment, social justice and sustainable development, human rights, equality and anti-discrimination, critical consciousness, etc.• Role, task and responsibilities of community workers/community development workers• Key processes in community development including organising social change and reflective practice• Concepts of power, power relations, disempowerment and their impact on communities.	Knowledge of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community development/community work as a distinct professional practice dedicated to transformative social change• The definition and purpose of community development/community work• Underpinning values, standards, and principles of collectivity, community empowerment, social justice and sustainable development, human rights, equality and anti-discrimination, critical consciousness, etc.• The core role, task and responsibilities of community workers/community development workers• Core and some alternate processes in community development including organising for collective action for social change, empowering and participatory methods, and reflective practice• Concepts of power, power relations, disempowerment and their impact on communities.



Communities and Society	<p>Knowledge of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Definitions of community and concepts of society• Key contemporary issues relevant to community development practice and community work practice• Key social issues in Irish society e.g. poverty, inequality, discrimination and social exclusion and the impacts on groups and communities• Public administration including local and national legislation, and decision-making structures• Structures for engaging with and supporting community development/ community work (groups, networks, forums etc.).	<p>Knowledge of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Key concepts and definitions of community and of society• Social analysis of contemporary social issues in Irish society e.g. poverty, inequality, discrimination and social exclusion and the impacts on marginalised and minority groups and communities• Public administration including local and national legislation, social policy and decision-making structures• Structures for engaging with and supporting community development/community work (groups, networks, forums etc.)• Social and solidarity movements and their contribution to social change.
Policy and Sectoral Context of Community Development Work	<p>Knowledge of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• History of community development• Community work theory and key influencers including politics, policies and funding strategies• State responses to community development/ community work – local and national• National and international community development/ community work structures, movements and organisations• Community work standards.	<p>Knowledge of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• History and origins of community development• Social theory, key policies and legislation relevant to community work including inclusion, equality and human rights• Community work theory and key influencing factors including politics• State responses to community development/ community work – local and national, including funding strategies and mechanisms• National and international community development/ community work structures, movements and organisations• Community work standards and their application.



NFQ	LEVEL 5	LEVEL 6
KNOW-HOW AND SKILL RANGE	The learner should be able to demonstrate a broad range of specialised skills and tools	The learner should be able to demonstrate a comprehensive range of specialised skills and tools
KNOW-HOW AND SKILL SELECTIVITY	The learner should be able to evaluate and use information to plan and develop investigative strategies and to determine solutions to varied unfamiliar problems	The learner should be able to formulate responses to well-defined abstract problems
Teamwork and Communications	<p>Ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish positive relationships with different groups of people• Use appropriate language and terminology• Contribute constructively to a team setting• Recognise diverse views and opinions.	<p>Ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish and maintain positive relationships with different groups of people• Apply a range of interpersonal and communication skills effectively• Use appropriate and inclusive language and terminology• Contribute constructively in team and collective settings and support others to do so• Recognise diverse views and opinions and support constructive dialogue.• Community work standards and their application.



Accountability, Reflection and Critical Thinking Skills	Ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Define the importance of community development values, responsibility & accountability• Execute basic tasks effectively• Demonstrate understanding of basic terminology associated with evaluation processes• Recognise connections between community development theory and practice• Identify problems/challenges/issues common in community work practice• Reflect on your own practice and the role of self.	Ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrate a commitment to community development values, openness, honesty and accountability• Plan and undertake core tasks effectively• Demonstrate understanding of terminology associated with evaluation processes• Make connections between key aspects of community development theory and practice• Use critical thinking skills to suggest ideas and solutions to problems/challenges/issues in community work practice• Critically reflect on your own practice and the role of self.
Inclusion, Equality and Human Rights	Ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognise inclusive ways of working with groups• Recognise good practice in inclusive approaches• Show respect for difference and diversity• Recognise a human rights-based approach.	Ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work in and promote inclusive ways with groups.• Recognise and support good practice in inclusive approaches• Demonstrate solidarity and empathy• Demonstrate the value of, and respect and support for diversity• Work from a human rights-based approach.



Administration and Information Organising	<p>Ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Undertake basic administration of meetings• Use appropriate digital technologies to share information or data• Select a variety of appropriate digital communication tools to communicate in each situation• Gather and present information in appropriate and accessible ways• Recognise standards regarding ethics, GDPR and other relevant statutory compliance.	<p>Ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Undertake administration of meetings and some areas of project organising• Access and apply appropriate digital technologies to disseminate information or data• Identify and select appropriate digital tools to effectively communicate in different situations• Research, organise and present information and data in appropriate and accessible ways• Recognise and apply standards regarding ethics, GDPR and other relevant statutory compliance.
Community Development Work	<p>Ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify the processes involved in community profiles/needs assessments• Identify the processes involved in facilitating groups and discussions• Support engagement with relevant organisations and structures to support community development/ community work• Identify community development/ community work values to shape key areas of practice• Recognise policy guidelines that shape and influence practice.	<p>Ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support community profiles/needs assessments• Support facilitation of groups and discussions• Engage with relevant organisations and structures to support community development/community work• Identify and work with others to address barriers to participation• Apply community development/ community work values to shape their practice• Identify and work within policy guidelines that shape and influence practice.



General Workplace Skills

Ability to:

- Distinguish boundaries between worker roles and roles of community members
- Recognise and follow health and safety procedures
- Present and act in an appropriate manner
- Embrace new opportunities that develop new skills/competencies
- Contribute to general tasks within workplace environments.

Ability to:

- Distinguish and set boundaries between worker roles and roles of community members
- Recognise, follow and support others to follow health and safety procedures
- Present and act in an appropriate manner with good judgement and sensitivity
- Seek and embrace new opportunities that develop new skills/competencies
- Contribute to general and specific tasks within workplace environments.



NFQ	LEVEL 5	LEVEL 6
COMPETENCE CONTEXT	The learner should be able to act in a range of varied and specific contexts, taking responsibility for the nature and quality of outputs; identify and apply skill and knowledge to a wide variety of contexts	The learner should be able to act in a range of varied and specific contexts, involving creative and nonroutine activities; transfer and apply theoretical concepts and/or technical or creative skills to a range of contexts
	<p>Ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take responsibility for self within groups and the wider community• Demonstrate general work-related competence e.g., timekeeping, reliability, integrity, confidentiality, GDPR etc.• Undertake administrative tasks that contribute to the effective planning, implementation and reporting of community development work programmes• Review and suggest adaption to activities in response to needs or circumstances• Identify and use basic approaches/methods suitable to general community development work contexts• Support group facilitation.	<p>Ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take responsibility for self and appropriately relate to groups and the wider community in varied contexts• Demonstrate general and specific work-related competence e.g., timekeeping, reliability, reporting, integrity, confidentiality, GDPR etc.• Complete administrative and some organising tasks related to the effective planning, implementation and reporting of community development work programmes• Identify, review and flexibly respond to evolving needs or circumstances• Identify and apply a range of approaches/methods appropriate to specific community development work contexts• Demonstrate facilitation skills in routine, general contexts.



NFQ	LEVEL 5	LEVEL 6
COMPETENCE ROLE	The learner should be able to exercise some initiative and independence in carrying out defined activities; join and function within multiple, complex and heterogeneous groups	The learner should be able to exercise substantial personal autonomy and often take responsibility for the work of others and/or for the allocation of resources; form, and function within, multiple, complex and heterogeneous groups
	<p>Ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify appropriate boundaries with groups, colleagues, management and wider community • Prepare plans and reports • Follow appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures • Engage with different groups and communities • Work with others to plan and support learning and development activities with groups/communities safely and effectively • Communicate effectively and appropriately with groups and others as context requires • Take guidance and direction from experienced community workers and management • Organise oneself e.g. time-management, reliability, prioritising work, appropriate behaviour & demeanour. 	<p>Ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate appropriate boundaries with groups, colleagues, management and wider community • Plan, contribute to and report on work undertaken • Follow appropriate safeguarding and other key policies, procedures and codes of practice • Engage with different groups and communities to support their participation in community development activity • Plan and assist with learning and development activities jointly with groups/communities safely and effectively • Communicate effectively and appropriately with groups and others as context requires • Take guidance and direction from experienced community workers and management • Manage oneself in workplace e.g. time-management, reliability, prioritising work, appropriate behaviour & demeanour.



NFQ	LEVEL 5	LEVEL 6
COMPETENCE LEARNING TO LEARN	The learner should be able to learn to take responsibility for own learning within a managed environment	The learner should be able to learn to evaluate own learning and identify needs within a structured learning environment; assist others in identifying learning needs
	Ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognise areas for personal development and practice learning• Identify the value of reflective practice in relation to learning• Use reflective learning tools such as a diary/journal• Seek out opportunities for development and learning• Identify progression opportunities.	Ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify areas for personal development and practice learning• Source opportunities to effectively meet learning and development needs/gaps• Appreciate and engage in reflective practice processes in relation to own knowledge and practice• Identify and plan progression opportunities• Use appropriate reflective learning tools on an ongoing basis• Seek and value constructive feedback.



NFQ	LEVEL 5	LEVEL 6
COMPETENCE INSIGHT	The learner should be able to assume full responsibility for consistency of self-understanding and behaviour	The learner should be able to express an internalised, personal world view, manifesting engagement with others
	<p>Ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore and reflect on own personal attitudes and behaviours• Share insights on values in action• Recognise and express appropriate boundaries• Engage with appropriate supervision processes.	<p>Ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify ethical challenges that arise in (their) community development activity• Recognise their own personal power, limitations and personal challenges in their relationships with others• Connect community work values to actions that support collective social change• Understand the dynamics between their own personal values, actions and behaviours and their ability to engage effectively in community work activity.



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