



Guidelines regarding Qualification Requirements for participation in Early Childhood Care and Education Free Preschool Scheme

In addition to meeting the requirements regarding staff ratios, as provided for under the Child Care Regulations, the pre-school year Leader must hold a certification for a major award in childcare/early education at a minimum of level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications of Ireland (NFQ) or an equivalent recognised qualification in the childcare/early education field.

Interim measure

In recognition of the complex nature of educational attainment of staff within the early childhood care and education workforce in Ireland, in the first two full years of the scheme, where the pre-school year Leader has an award in early childhood care and education that includes significant content relating to early childhood education/early learning and child development and has at least two years experience of working in a position of responsibility with children in the 0-6 age range, she/he will meet the requirement.

Evidence

Valid evidence of staff members' certification and experience will be required at contract stage.

Some additional information on the qualification requirements for the Free Preschool Scheme is provided below in the form of questions and answers:

What is the National Framework of Qualifications and what is a Major Award?

The National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) is a 10 level Framework that incorporates qualifications from the very initial stages of learning to the most advanced. **A major award** is a qualification with a large volume of knowledge, skill and competence associated with it, which is recognised through the National Framework of Qualifications. This is distinct from smaller pieces of learning such as minor or component awards, which go together to make up a major award.

How do I know if my qualification is currently recognised through the National Framework of Qualifications as at least a Level 5 Major Award?

A list of the most common qualifications in childcare that are recognised through the National Framework of Qualifications as being at least a Level 5 Major Award is available at Appendix 1.

I have achieved certificates for minor awards at level 5 in early childhood care and education/childcare but I have not achieved a FETAC Level 5 or 6 Major award, can I still take on the role of leader?

In the start up phase of the new preschool scheme, where a practitioner can provide evidence that he/she has achieved an award in early childhood care and education that includes significant content relating to early childhood education/early learning and child development and has at least two years experience of working in a position of responsibility with children in the 0-6 age range, she/he will meet the requirement.

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What should I have completed in order to be awarded a FETAC certificate for the achievement of a major award in Childcare at level 5 or 6?

Information on the number and type of components that must be obtained in order to be awarded a major award FETAC Level 5 or Level 6 Certificate in Childcare qualification will be available through your Childcare Committee.

I have a childcare award made by a UK awarding body. How do I know if that is equivalent to a Major Award at Level 5 of the NFQ?

If you have an award made by a UK awarding body you will need to check the UK database of qualifications <http://www accredited qualifications.org.uk/index.aspx> to find out (i) the name of the awarding body that made your award (ii) the type of qualification you obtained and (iii) the level of the qualification in the UK framework of qualifications. You can then use the document at the following link http://www. qualificationsrecognition.ie/recognition/int_qual_databse/uk/documents/CrossBoundaries.pdf to establish how the level of this qualification compares with the Irish NFQ levels. You should include this information at contract stage. The OMCYA will then notify you whether or not this qualification is considered comparable to a Level 5 or Level 6 Major Award.

I gained my childcare qualification abroad. How do I find out if it is equivalent to a Major Award at Level 5 on the Irish NFQ?

If you have gained your qualification abroad, you should provide as much information on the qualification as possible to the OMCYA at contract stage, including the name of the awarding body and the institution in which the qualification was attained. Having checked that all other aspects of the application are in order, the OMCYA will then refer the information on the international qualification to the Irish authority which deals with the recognition of international awards. It will then provide advice to the OMCYA on the equivalence or otherwise of the qualification to an Irish Level 5 Major Award and the OMCYA will then notify you whether or not this qualification is equivalent to a Level 5 or Level 6 Major Award.

I have additional questions on the eligibility of my qualifications. Who do I contact?

You should direct any additional questions you have on these qualification requirements to the OMCYA to which you are making your application. It will be best placed in the first instance to discuss these with you.

Note: Services who qualify under the interim arrangements for the introduction of the free preschool year will have to be fully qualified to Level 6 in early childhood care and education/cognisant discipline by September 2012.

Appendix 1

Title	Awarding Body	NFQ Level
Certificate in Childcare	FETAC	NFQ Level 5
Certificate in Childcare	FETAC (NCVA)	NFQ Level 5

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Childcare Practitioner Traineeship	FETAC (FÁS)	NFQ Level 5
Advanced Certificate in Childcare Supervision	FETAC	NFQ Level 6
Supervision in Childcare	FETAC (NCVA)	NFQ Level 6
Childcare Supervisor	FETAC (FÁS)	NFQ Level 6

Appendix 2

UK Awards

**CACHE: Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education)
C&G: City & Guilds)**

Title	Awarding Body	Guided Learning Hours	NQF Level	NFQ Level
Level 3 Diploma in Pre-School Practice	CACHE	240	3	5
Level 3 Diploma in Child Care and Education	CACHE	870	3	5
Level 3 Diploma in Pre-School Practice	CACHE	240	3	5
Level 3 Diploma in Child Care and Education	CACHE	810	3	5
Level 2 Certificate in Children's Care, Learning and Development	C&G	210	2	4
Level 3 Certificate in Children's Care, Learning and	C&G	300	3	5

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Development				
Level 3 Award in Early Years and child care for playworkers	C&G	60	3	5
Level 3 Certificate in Health and Social Care – Children and Young People	C&G	240	3	5
Level 3 Progression Award in Early Years and Education	C&G	450	3	5

Open University

Title	UK Award Level	UK Credits	NFQ Level	ECTS Credits	AWARD TYPE
Certificate in Early Years Practice	C	60	6	30	Non-Major
Certificate in Supporting Learning in Primary Schools	C	60	6	30	Non-Major
Certificate in Working with Young People	C	90	6	45	Non-Major
Certificate in Youth: perspectives and practice	C	60	6	30	Non-Major
Diploma in Childhood and Youth Studies	I	120	7	60	Non-Major
BA in Early Years	I	300	7	150	Major: OBD*
BA (Honours) Childhood and	H	360	8	180	Major: HBD**

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Youth Studies					
Advanced Diploma in Child Development	H	120	8	60	Major: HD***

*Comparable to an Ordinary Bachelor Degree in the Irish NFQ (Level 7)

*Comparable to an Honours Bachelor Degree in the Irish NFQ (Level 8)

*Comparable to a Higher Diploma in the Irish NFQ (Level 8)

Appendix 3

Mandatory Component Minor Awards

What are the mandatory component minor awards?

The mandatory component minor awards for the FETAC (FAS) Certificate in Childcare at level 5 are:

Level 5 920505

<i>Requirement</i>	<i>Code</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Value</i>
All of the following components			
	354	Childcare Workplace Skills	1
	551	Child Development in Childcare	1
	552	Care Practice in Childcare	1
	553	Provision of Care in Childcare	1
	554	Health Care in Childcare	1
	555	Safety in Childcare	1
	556	Communications	1

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999	Information Technology	1
1 of the following components		
581	Children with Additional Needs	1
582	After School Childcare	1
583	Professional Child minding	1

The mandatory component minor awards for the FETAC (NCVA) Certificate in Childcare at level 5 are:

Level 5 Certificate in Childcare FETAC (NCVA)

Code	Title
D20005	Child Development
D20007	Early Childhood Education
D20153	Working in Childcare
D20159	Caring for Children (0-6 years)
G20001	Communications
W20008	Work Experience

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Advanced Certificate in Supervision in Childcare

Level 6 DCXXX

Requirement	Code	Title	Value
All of the following components			
	D30005	Child Development	1
	D30176	Early childhood Programmes	1
	D30177	Social and Legal Issues in Childcare	1
	D30178	Supervision in Childcare	1
A value of 1 from the following components			
	B10009	Computer Applications	0.25
	B10135	I Information Technology Skills	0.25
	B20001	Accounting - Manual & Computerised	0.5
	B20017	Marketing Practice	0.5
	B20028	Spreadsheet Methods	0.5
	B20032	Word Processing	0.5
	B20137	Bookkeeping – Manual & Computerised	0.5
	B20138	Payroll-Manual & Computerised	0.5
	D20001	Anatomy & Physiology	0.5
	D20003	Care Provision & Practice	0.5
	D20144	Food Preparation	0.5
	D20151	Customer Service	0.5

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D20153	Working in Childcare	0.5
D20165	Safety and Health at Work	0.5
D20174	Occupational First Aid	0.5
E20126	Performance Craft	0.5
G30001	Communications	1

Appendix 4

Qualification Requirements for Participation in ECCE Initiative

Title	Awarding Body	NFQ Level
Bachelor of Arts in Montessori Education (Saint Nicholas Montessori College)	HETAC*	NFQ Level 7
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Montessori Education (Saint Nicholas Montessori)	HETAC	NFQ Level 8

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College)		
Higher Diploma in Montessori Education (Saint Nicholas Montessori College)	HETAC	NFQ Level 8
Higher Diploma in Educational and Child Psychology	University College Cork	NFQ Level 8
Postgraduate Diploma in Child Care and Protection Studies	University College Cork	NFQ Level 9
Postgraduate Diploma in Curriculum Studies (Early Years Education)	University College Cork	NFQ Level 9
Postgraduate Diploma in Child Protection and Welfare	Trinity College Dublin	NFQ Level 9
Graduate Diploma in Professional Supervision (Education/Social Care)	University of Limerick	NFQ Level 9

*HETAC – The Higher Education and Training Awards Council

Non-Major Awards

Title	Awarding Body	NFQ Level	ECTS Credits
Diploma in Nursery Management	UCD	Minor NFQ Level 7	60

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