

Universal Pre-School Provision and the Higher Capitation Rate Update

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to set out clearly what criteria is being applied by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs in determining whether a pre-school leader can be considered eligible for the higher capitation rate payable under the universal pre-school scheme (all other conditions been met)

Criteria

To qualify for the higher capitation rate, the pre-school leader must hold a qualification in a relevant discipline at a minimum of a full Level 7 award on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and meet other conditions as set out by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

Determination of the relevance of a discipline is established by the examination of the content of the programme of learning which led to the qualification. This must contain the following elements¹:

- ✚ Child development birth to six years
- ✚ Early Childhood Learning Theory and Practice
- ✚ Child Health and Welfare 0 – 6 years

The programme must also have contained a significant supervised practicum in relevant early childhood care and education settings.

The only relevant discipline which fully complies with required content is Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)².

The following qualifications are not considered equivalent to an NFQ Level 7 qualification in early childhood care and education.

- ✚ Qualifications (whether at Level 7, 8, 9 or 10 on the NFQ) in Social Studies³.
- ✚ Diploma in Nursery Management awarded by UCD
- ✚ Bachelor degree plus a Higher Diploma in Education
- ✚ Bachelor of Masters degree where the thesis is on an aspect of early years development

Where a graduate in a different discipline (whether at Level 7, 8, 9 or 10 on the NFQ) also has qualifications in ECCE at Levels 5 and 6 (or equivalent) on the NFQ, this not considered equivalent to a Level 7 qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE).

Deferred Decisions

AMI awards are not yet aligned with the NFQ. A decision on whether the 2 year award qualifies an individual is deferred pending the outcome of the alignment process that is currently underway.

Primary qualified teachers. Teachers with this qualification are trained to teach the primary curriculum to children aged 4 to 12. A decision on whether this qualification covers the core competencies required to work with younger children has been deferred.

Qualifications obtained outside Ireland

Qualifications obtained outside Ireland should be recognised through the qualification recognition system set up by the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland. The onus is then on the individual to provide course transcripts showing the course content and to prove that the qualification covers the competences and skills required by an advanced practitioner

Options for graduates in other disciplines

For a graduate in a different discipline to qualify for the higher capitation rate, the only option may be undertake further graduate level study. The person who wishes to pursue this should contact their preferred college offering ECCE courses to look at options available including recognition of prior learning.

¹ Further detail in relation to these core knowledge areas is available in *Quality Childcare and Lifelong Learning: A model framework for Education training and professional development in early childhood care and education in Ireland* (Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, 2002)

² Titles of courses may vary but should all specify Early Childhood as the core focus to the qualification.

³ Qualifications that come into this category include Social Care Practice, Social Studies, Applied Social Care, etc.