

Case Study:

Experience of Developing Micro Credential Programmes

Innopharma Education

Pauline Flusk, February 2024

Context

In line with the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science's (DFHERIS) national objective to develop new pathways for learners from further education to higher education, Innopharma Education offers a range of micro credential programmes designed to meet current and future skill needs. With a focus on the Pharma, Medtech, Food Science and Digital Transformation Industries these short bite-sized programmes ranging from 6 weeks to 5 months in duration will allow learners to develop the skills for entry to employment in high tech manufacturing sectors and/ or to continue their lifelong learning journey into higher education.

Development Stage

Innopharma Education has a tight relationship with industry, lectures are delivered by industry lecturers & that input along with accreditation at a national level by QQI drove the appropriate structure & design of modules. The aim has been to offer more than learning a new technical process - its about enabling learners to keep up as technology increasingly changes the workplace.

Being aligned to the NFQ pathways & designed as short, stackable programmes makes it easy for learners to start at a level suitable to their academic needs & progress from one NFQ level to the next. Level 6 programmes are delivered in conjunction with the AMTCE (Advanced Manufacturing Training Centre of Excellence) that site within the Louth Meath Education Training Board (LMETB). There is a Level 7 micro credential programme delivered by Innopharma Education & it's envisaged that several additional pathways will be developed for roll out on a national basis.

- [Level 6 Certificate in Operational Excellence \(25 ECTS\)](#)
- [Level 6 Certificate in Supply Chain \(20 ECTS\)](#)
- Level 6 Certificate in Transversal Skills (5 ECTS)
- [Level 7 Certificate in Operational Excellence and Sustainability in Supply Chain \(30 ECTS\)](#).

Challenges Overcome

Removing the barriers & recognizing that learners are starting from different points and have different needs engages people in the idea of lifelong learning. People mid-career who maybe never did their LC or need to upskill now have endless possibilities!

- Flexibility - deliver learning in discrete small units, at a time and pace that supports work life balance
- Accessibility - weekly classes are delivered online (live recorded) with monthly face-to-face classes
- Partnerships - find a way to make study affordable using government funding
- Create building blocks - start small, grow in confidence, continue learning

Impacts Achieved

Since the first micro credential launched in March 2023, they have proven to be a huge success with classes oversubscribed. Specific sector needs are being met with learners from many of Irelands leading industry names signing up & from a wide range of roles. Learning shapes access to quality jobs and employment outcomes & some students have moved to new roles, gained promotions or more responsibility as a result. Many have chosen to progress onto another micro credential or the next level of study. Its a win-win for everyone!

"it gave me the confidence to go for an operator role – I found it really beneficial career-wise"