

Consultation on Draft Award Standards in Healthcare at NFQ Level 5



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1 Introduction

Under the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 (as amended), Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) is required to establish the standards of knowledge, skill or competence to be acquired by learners before an award can be made by QQI or by a provider to which authority to make an award has been delegated.

QQI is undertaking a comprehensive reform of its award standards in healthcare at Level 5 of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). This initiative responds to evolving national and international policy contexts, sectoral demands, and a pressing need to renew the Common Awards System (CAS), which has underpinned vocational qualifications at this level for many years. The reform aims to ensure that QQI's healthcare award standards remain fit for purpose by meeting - and balancing - occupational and workforce requirements; evolving service delivery models; providers' need to design innovative and responsive programmes; and the expectations and needs of learners seeking to pursue awards in this field.

This paper:

- outlines the rationale for reform
- proposes a suite of draft award standards designed to better reflect contemporary healthcare practice, enhance workforce readiness and support responsive programme development
- invites stakeholder feedback on the draft standards.

2. Policy and Sectoral Context

International Drivers

Across OECD countries, health and social care sectors are experiencing unprecedented growth. Employment in these sectors now outpaces other industries, driven by demographic shifts, ageing populations, and technological innovation. The OECD's [*Health at a Glance*](#) (2024) report highlights the increasing demand for health workers and the need for upskilling and reskilling to meet future challenges.

National Imperatives

A wave of recent policy and regulatory developments highlights the sectoral imperatives for a well-qualified healthcare workforce and provides further impetus to reform QQI's awards standards in healthcare.

- [*Working Together for Health – A National Strategic Framework for Health and Social Care Workforce Planning*](#) (Department of Health, 2017) states that in order to 'provide for a strategic approach to workforce planning in the education component of the health labour market ... it is essential that educational and training courses continue to provide health and social care professionals with the core competencies which are required for their future profession'
- The [*Projections of workforce requirements for public acute hospitals in Ireland, 2019–2035*](#) (ESRI, 2022) indicate that 'changes to skill-mix¹ may help address the recognised need to reorientate acute workforce delivery to reduce reliance on non-consultant hospital doctors (NCHDs) and increase the share of nursing and health and social care professions (HSCPs)...'
- In the area of homecare:
 - Leading Healthcare Providers, Skillnet, published a [*Green Paper on Home Support Workers. A Stakeholder Consultation on a Career Pathway for Ireland's Home Support Workers*](#) (Skillnet, 2024) and a White Paper on [*Advancing a Home Support Worker Career Pathway*](#) (Skillnet, 2024). Key areas of focus include developing a competency framework, advancing digitalisation, reviewing current qualification requirements, and identifying future skills and core practical competencies.
 - The Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA), responsible *inter alia* for setting standards for health and social care services, consulted on [*Draft-National-Standards-for-Home-Support-Services.pdf*](#) (HIQA, 2024).
- In 2025, the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI) published a revised [*Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Nurses and Registered Midwives Incorporating the Scope of Practice and Professional Guidance*](#) (NMBI, 2025) to reflect changes across the professions, the healthcare system, and wider society, while supporting registered nurses and midwives in delivering the highest standards of care.

¹ Skill-mix refers to the mix of education, training, skills and experience within a professional group (Taskforce on Staffing and Skill Mix for Nursing, 2018).

- The Department of Health has also launched [Sharing the Vision - A Mental Health Policy for Everyone: Implementation Plan 2025–2027](#) (Department of Health, 2025), outlining key outputs for mental health services over the next three years. Rooted in a lifecycle approach, the policy places individuals at the centre of care and aims to strengthen service provision across the continuum - from mental health promotion and prevention to early intervention and specialist services.

These publications collectively signal that QQI's healthcare award standards must be more responsive to workforce planning priorities, evolving service models and competency frameworks. They underscore the need for standards that support flexible, future-oriented qualifications aligned with policy objectives.

3. Reform of the Common Awards System (CAS)

The Common Awards System (CAS) has supported the development and recognition of further education and training awards for many years. However, many CAS award specifications are now dated and in need of reform. In 2023, following an extensive consultation exercise, QQI published an [Outline Action Plan for Review and Renewal of QQI Common Award Standards](#). The Action Plan identified a demand for:

- a leaner stock of award standards that avoids overlap in learning outcomes and assessment
- awards that can be accumulated progressively by learners
- less prescriptive award standards that allow greater flexibility in programme design

It outlined QQI's intention to develop and maintain reformed award standards that:

- constitute a national award and for which there is a demonstrable and enduring need
- specify expected standards of learning outcomes to the level of detail necessary to support the development of education and training programmes that are both relevant and nationally comparable
- are determined centrally at the major level and for associated non-major awards
- ensure that award standards include transversal skills to be integrated into the design and delivery of approved programmes

The Action Plan also signalled that priority would be given to key areas of demand when scheduling reviews. Given the high volume of major, minor and special purpose awards, it identified FET award standards at NFQ Levels 5 and 6 in healthcare as a priority for inclusion in the review schedule.

4. Healthcare Standards Development Process

In order to better understand the relevance and currency of QQI's existing award standards in healthcare, we conducted a national survey focusing on the current suite of major award standards:

- [Health Service Skills](#) (5M3782)
- [Healthcare Support](#) (5M4339)
- [Nursing Studies](#) (5M4349)

- [Community Care](#) (5M2786)
- [Community Health Services](#) (5M4468)

Drawing on 214 individual and collective submissions, respondents emphasised the need to update and align CAS healthcare awards - and the programmes leading to them - with contemporary service models, technologies and professional practice.

Key recommendations:

- Rationalise the suite of CAS healthcare awards, updating content and eliminating duplication.
- Increase hours for practical training and work-based learning to strengthen readiness for real-world healthcare settings.
- Enhance flexibility in award design and structure to accommodate diverse learner profiles and evolving sectoral requirements.
- Develop a streamlined set of major healthcare awards that incorporate essential practical competencies and transversal skills, addressing broader workforce needs and improving employability.

In February 2024, QQI hosted an interactive webinar on the quality of, and demand for, this suite of awards. Participants highlighted the need to embed essential skills, including digital competence, relevant work experience, and critical dispositions (e.g., care, empathy, cultural competence), with NFQ Level 5 articulated as a minimum expected standard.

In light of this feedback and taking account of wider national and international policy developments, QQI established an Advisory Group to oversee the review and rationalisation of the CAS healthcare award standards, including representatives from the Department of Health, the Health Service Executive (HSE), the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA), relevant professions, employer bodies, and education and training providers.

The review encompassed consideration of:

- the extent to which the current suite of QQI awards standards meet current and projected skills demand
- the relevant healthcare occupations to be supported by QQI qualifications, e.g. healthcare assistant etc.
- the range of occupational settings where QQI qualifications are expected to be used, e.g. hospital, nursing home etc.
- the essential knowledge, skill and competence requirements for identified occupations and any unique setting specific requirements
- the necessary transversal skills requirements

5. Proposed Award Suite

Arising from the review and the work of the advisory group, QQI is consulting on the following suite of draft awards:

1. Draft **Broad Award Standards** for Essentials of Healthcare Assistance and Person-centred Care (NFQ Level 5)

2. Draft **Defined Award Standards** for Healthcare Support Essentials (Major award, NFQ Level 5: ESCO 5321.1) and the associated embedded awards
3. Draft **Defined Award Standards** for Pre-Nursing Studies (Major award, NFQ Level 5: ESCO 5321.1) and the associated embedded awards

What are QQI Award Standards?

Award Standards are a support tool for providers of programmes leading to QQI awards included in the Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). When providers apply to QQI to validate a programme of education and training, they must be able to demonstrate how the design and content of their programmes maps to the three strands and eight sub-strands of knowledge, skill and competence that inform how awards are included in the NFQ (see Table 1).

Award standards provide a reference point for providers on how each strand and sub-strand should be interpreted in the context of a particular discipline. They are designed to provide a high-level reference point and support disciplinary experts to interpret and maintain alignment with the NFQ in their programme development activity.

NFQ Strands	Corresponding NFQ Sub-strands
Knowledge	Breadth
	Kind
Know-how and Skill	Range
	Selectivity
Competence	Context
	Role
	Learning to Learn
	Insight

Table 1: NFQ Strands and Sub-strands of Knowledge, Know-how/Skill and Competence

What are QQI Broad Award Standards?

QQI's broad award standards are intentionally written at a general level to allow flexibility and diversity in programme design within an agreed disciplinary framework. The indicators within these standards serve as guidance for developing and articulating programme learning outcomes at the appropriate NFQ level.

Programmes are **not required** to map to every indicator across the strands and sub-strands. Instead, developers may select, contextualise and adapt the most relevant indicators when formulating programme learning outcomes. This approach enables broad award standards to accommodate programmes of different sizes and leading to various classes of award (major, minor, special purpose, etc.). Such standards can support programmes that are:

- highly practical and applied **or** strongly theoretical

- broadly focused **or** highly specialised
- multi-, inter- or trans-disciplinary in nature

QQI broad award standards thus seek to support innovation, local relevance, and responsiveness to emerging needs.

What are QQI Defined Award Standards?

Defined award standards apply to awards that are clearly specified in scope and purpose, with explicitly articulated learning outcomes. They are used where there is an agreed need for a national award that ensures consistency in expected outcomes across all programmes leading to that award. These standards provide a common benchmark for quality and comparability, supporting coherence in provision while maintaining transparency for learners, providers, employers and other users of qualifications.

How do the Proposed Defined Award Standards differ from CAS Awards?

The defined award standard presented in this document represent an evolution of the approach to award standards as manifested in the Common Awards System. They share some similarities with existing CAS awards insofar as they include specified learning outcomes and have a compound structure. However, they differ from traditional CAS awards in a number of important respects:

Common Awards System		Defined Award Standards in Healthcare Support Essentials and Pre-Nursing Skills
Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major awards normally* comprised of 8 minor (component) awards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major awards comprised of differing numbers and classes (e.g. special purpose/minor) of embedded awards, appropriate to the needs of the relevant awards
Volume	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor (component) awards normally* 15-FET credits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embedded awards of differing credit volume, appropriate to the needs of the relevant awards
Residual Credit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major awards normally include an element of “residual credit”. Residual credit is where part of the credit value for the major award can be obtained through the achievement of CAS minor awards, which may be at the NFQ Level above or below 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major awards are comprised only of specified embedded awards. There is no element of “residual credit”

* There are some exceptions within specific CAS awards

Common Awards System		Defined Award Standards in Healthcare Support Essentials and Pre-Nursing Skills
Learning Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large number of closely prescribed learning outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A reduced number of more flexibly-expressed learning outcomes that can accommodate different contexts and means of demonstrating the same standard
Transversal Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some key skills (e.g. communications) assessed and awarded as standalone minor awards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrated across the standards
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment techniques and weightings specified in the award specification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The assessment strategy is not specified in the award standard. This is programme-specific and is developed by the provider as part of the programme design.

Table 2: Differences between awards in the Common Award System and the Defined Award Standards in Healthcare Support Essentials and Pre-Nursing Skills

Draft Broad Award Standards for Essentials of Healthcare Assistance and Person-centred Care (NFQ Level 5)

The proposed broad award standards for Essentials of Healthcare Assistance and Person-centred Care (NFQ Level 5) are included at Appendix 1.

These standards are designed to guide the development of diverse programmes that equip learners to deliver safe, person-centred care under supervision; contribute effectively to team-based practice; and combine core technical competencies with empathy, cultural awareness and ethical judgement to meet needs across the lifespan. Underpinned by principles of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), they establish a common benchmark for award standards linked to relevant occupational contexts, enabling providers to adapt curriculum and assessment to different settings while maintaining a consistent national framework.

Draft Defined Award Standards for Healthcare Support Essentials (Major award, NFQ Level 5: ESCO 5321.1)

The proposed defined award standards for the award of Healthcare Support Essentials (Major award, NFQ Level 5: ESCO 5321.1) and the proposed embedded awards are included at Appendices 2-5, 12, 15 & 16.

These awards are intended to equip the learner with the relevant knowledge skills and competence to provide person-centred care in a variety of healthcare settings, promoting best practice rooted in holistic, diverse and cultural care across the lifespan.

Draft Defined Award Standards for Pre-Nursing Studies (Major award, NFQ Level 5: ESCO 5321.1)

The proposed defined award standards for the award of Pre-nursing Studies (Major award, NFQ Level 5: ESCO 5321.1) and the proposed embedded awards are included at Appendices 6-16.

These awards are designed to provide a foundational understanding of pre-nursing studies, integrating holistic care and professional responsibilities in a variety of healthcare settings. They are also intended to equip the learner with the relevant knowledge skills and competence to provide person-centred care in a variety of healthcare settings, promoting best practice rooted in holistic, diverse and cultural care across the lifespan.

Defined Award Standards: Structure and Composition

These awards have been developed to support learners to perform effectively in roles such as Health Care Assistant, Home Support Worker, Primary Care Assistant, etc.

The proposed structure of these awards has been designed to respond to feedback from occupational stakeholders seeking a more comprehensive standard of knowledge, skills, and competence among individuals entering the workforce, while maintaining flexibility for learners.

In addition to full programmes that lead to the major award and its associated embedded awards, **each embedded award may be offered as a standalone or target award in its own right**. This means that programmes leading exclusively to embedded awards - whether minor or special purpose - can be validated independently and delivered discretely.

This structure is intended to benefit learners seeking **flexible pathways**, as well as those interested in **targeted upskilling** or recognition of achievements at different stages of their education or career.

10. Implementation

Subject to the outcome of the consultation, it is anticipated that the proposed award standards will be finalised by Q2 2026. Providers will be able to apply to validate programmes against the new standards following publication of the final versions.

If that timeline is achieved, it is intended that from January 2027, QQI will no longer accept applications for programme validation against the following CAS major awards:

- [Health Service Skills](#) (5M3782)
- [Healthcare Support](#) (5M4339)
- [Nursing Studies](#) (5M4349)
- [Community Care](#) (5M2786)
- [Community Health Services](#) (5M4468)

The awards listed will be deactivated and learners will no longer be certified with these major awards or any minor (component) awards exclusively associated with these major awards from January 2030.

11. Consultation

QQI invites feedback on the proposed standards, including on:

- the structure and content of the broad and defined award standards
- any implications or challenges for programme design, validation or the certification of awards
- any implications for learners, providers, employers or other stakeholders

Responses may be submitted via our online response forms:

1. [Draft Broad Award Standards for Essentials of Healthcare Assistance and Person-centred Care at NFQ Level 5 online response form](#)
2. [Draft Defined Award Standards \(DAS\) for Healthcare Support Essentials at NFQ Level 5 online response form](#)
3. [Draft Defined Award Standards \(DAS\) - Pre-Nursing Studies at NFQ Level 5 online response form](#)

Alternatively, responses can be emailed to: consultation@qqi.ie.

The deadline for consultation responses is **28 November 2025**.

Your feedback will inform the finalisation of the standards and planning for their implementation.

Appendices



Appendix 1: Draft Broad Award Standards for Essentials of Healthcare Assistance and Person-Centred Care

Purpose	<p>The <u>International Standard Classification of Occupations</u> (Unit Group 5321, pp 254) outlines that healthcare assistants provide assistance, support and direct personal care to people in a variety of healthcare settings such as hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, aged care facilities, as well as community and domestic settings. They generally work in support, or under delegation, direction and supervision, of health professionals. They support multi-disciplinary teams in the delivery of high-quality care.</p> <p>These standards are designed to guide the development of diverse programmes that equip learners to deliver safe, person-centred care under supervision; contribute effectively to team-based practice; and combine core technical competencies with empathy, cultural awareness and ethical judgement to meet needs across the lifespan. Underpinned by principles of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), they establish a common benchmark for award standards linked to relevant occupational contexts, enabling providers to adapt curriculum and assessment to different settings while maintaining a consistent national framework</p>
Context	<p>The choice of healthcare strategies, plans, and interventions is highly dependent on care context, which is wide ranging. The role of the healthcare assistant can vary according to the place or location and the needs of the person they are caring for.</p> <p>Education and training programmes designed to meet this award standard should be appropriate to context/s in which learners will work.</p>

English Language Proficiency	Learners must be able to communicate effectively with colleagues in the workplace through speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Detail information can be found here .		
Practice Placement	Professional practice placements of minimum 240 hrs (6-week placement) will be an integral part of programmes leading to major award(s) derived from this broad award standard. Providers must specify (in writing as part of the application for validation) the intended learning outcomes for the practice placement and the strategy for the quality assurance and assessment of the achievement of those outcomes by learners.		
	NFQ Level Descriptors as per the NFQ Grid of Level Indicators		
Generic NFQ Level Descriptors	Knowledge (Breadth and Kind) Broad range of knowledge Some theoretical concepts and abstract thinking, with significant depth in some areas.	Skill (Range and Selectivity) Demonstrate a broad range of specialised skills and tools Evaluate and use information to plan and develop investigative strategies and to determine solutions to varied and unfamiliar problems.	Competence (Context; Role; Learning to Learn; Insight) 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. Exercise some initiative and independence in carrying out defined activities; join and function within multiple, complex and heterogeneous groups. Learn to take responsibility for own learning within a managed environment.

			<p>Assume full responsibility for consistency of self- understanding and behaviour.</p> <p>Respond constructively to undue pressures to take on tasks not within role or where training has not been given.</p>
Core Learning Domains	DRAFT Broad Award Standards for Essentials of Healthcare Assistance and Person-centred Care		
Roles and Responsibilities in Safe Healthcare Settings	Knowledge of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A broad range of knowledge relating to holistic person-centred care including a range of role specific legal requirements and practice guidelines relevant to the provision of safe person-centred care in a variety of healthcare settings. E.g., knowledge of Irish Healthcare System Key regulations, standards, policies, procedures and guidelines pertaining to healthcare e.g., HIQA standards and awareness of HIQA inspections, GDPR rights, legal 	Be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and utilise the relevant regulations, standards, policies, procedures and guidelines pertaining to their speciality, and describe their role in terms of aligning to the above regulations, standards, policies, guidelines and procedures. 	Competence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate a range of safe care practices in line with standards, policies, procedures and guidelines in order to provide a holistic person-centered care Complete role appropriate risk assessments Maintaining accurate documentation and records of care Demonstrate reporting care or concerns effectively Escalating care appropriately Health promotion.

	<p>obligations, safeguarding, rights to care and support, open disclosure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsibilities in carrying out your role in line with the above including safety and health at work. Employment law, risk assessment, confidentiality, consent, Assisted Decision Making Act etc. Relevant reporting structures Documentation and report writing including risk reporting and maintaining care records. 		
<p>Fundamentals of Holistic, Person-centred Care</p>	<p>Knowledge of:</p> <p>What constitutes essence of care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empathy, communication skills, compassion Ethics of care Empowerment, autonomy, advocacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equality, Diversity and Inclusion [EDI] [Plurilingualism and pluriculturalism] Empathy, compassionate communication and care, trust building. Privacy, dignity, respect, choice 	<p>Be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectively use interpersonal skills in person-centred care Communicate with variety of people including persons with cognitive impairment Work effectively within a care team Contribute effectively to the assessment, and planning of holistic, person-centred care Build trusting relationships with the person, family, and colleagues. 	<p>Competence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate non-judgemental, holistic approach Empathy, compassion and respect Demonstrate pluricultural repertoire including plurilingualism Demonstrate effective compassionate communication skills Demonstrate care and support that promotes the fundamentals of holistic, person-centred care Demonstrate capacity to care Trust building Promoting well-being.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empowerment, autonomy, independence and advocacy • Models of care including contemporary approaches to care E.g., human rights-based approach, age friendly Healthcare systems, United Nations Convention on the Rights for People with Disabilities. 		
<p>Holistic, Person-centred Care Provision and Practice</p>	<p>Knowledge of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care provision and practice context • Care Planning • Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) • Care support, basic nutrition and hydration, washing, dressing activities of daily living etc. • Physical, emotional, mental and social care needs • Non-pharmacological care interventions • Medical conditions that impact on function, health and wellbeing • Knowledge of current guidelines for administering medication • Assistance required as appropriate to speciality E.g., with household tasks, with Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) etc. 	<p>Be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver safe, holistic, Person-centred care in an individualised way, in conjunction with ADLs while considering functional abilities i.e., contribute to assessing function, and potential for rehabilitation, encouraging and supporting progress towards independence. • Adapt communication where necessary based on individuals' unique needs. E.g., communication assistive technology, non-verbal individual cognitively impaired. • Work with the families and carers of the person to 	<p>Competence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate knowledge, skills and attitude within a range of varied and specific practices i.e., ability to address a range of health (including mental health) and social needs of the person; recognising and responding to individualised health and social care needs that impact function, health, well-being with an understanding of how these affect care requirements. • Demonstrate competences necessary for meeting the needs of the service users in mental health. E.g., demonstrate effective compassionate communication skills based on individuals' unique needs.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functional abilities and potential for rehabilitation and functional gains • Communication or cognitive deficits and strategies • Understanding frailty, falls prevention • Safety risks • The life continuum. 	<p>provide care and access within given communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise the individual needs of dying persons and their families and exercise respectful care practices after death. • Provide social supports and access to socially inclusive activities within the persons environment. • Adapt within your role to unforeseen scenarios and or circumstances. E.g., responsive behaviours, outbreaks or emergency situations, monitor deterioration, care escalation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates a caring disposition and the ability to ensure that the welfare of the service user is always a key consideration. • Demonstrate flexibility to deal with the unexpected situations. • Demonstrate situational awareness [perception of the changing environment and the understanding of what is required to make informed decisions and take appropriate action]. • Demonstrate ability to complete role appropriate risk assessments and implement risk minimisation within the care environment.
Personal and Professional Development	<p>Knowledge of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflective models and practice • Debriefing – post incident care • Employee Assistance Programmes • Self-advocacy • Emotional Intelligence, self-awareness, self-regulation, self-management, self-care • Time management and prioritising • Compassionate communication • Role appropriate accountability • Health & wellness 	<p>Be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working as part of an interdisciplinary team • Manage record-keeping • Ensure care is aligned to meet the highest standard of best practice • Self-reflect on own practices, strengths, areas for improvement • Be open to constructive feedback 	<p>Competence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate reflective practice • Cultural awareness • Act safely and ethically in all situations • Take appropriate responsibility for your own learning [CPD] and actively take up learning opportunities to contribute to the implementation of an integrated, sustainable, and equitable system of long-term care.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership and management styles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gain access to supports within role scope • Goal plan within realistic expectations of personal growth and career progression • Problem solving skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate professionalism within a healthcare environment • Compassionate communication when dealing with families, colleagues and building trusting relationships for the best outcome for the person. • Contribute to building awareness and skills in a range of healthcare settings that support equality, diversity and inclusion • Demonstrate motivation to fulfil the role and contribute to improving the holistic, person-centred care. • Demonstrate job seeking skills.
Communication, Information Sharing and Teamwork	Knowledge of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variety of communication skills • Necessary digital skills. E.g., documenting, recording and reporting • Information management and critical thinking • Teamwork concept, features, types and roles • Impact of teamwork within diverse healthcare environments. 	Be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply a range of interpersonal and communication skills effectively • Establish and maintain positive relationships with different groups of people • Use digital devices/tools as required • Apply problems solving skills 	Competence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate a range of effective communications skills required within a healthcare environment • Demonstrate appropriate digital skills relevant to healthcare [role appropriately] • Demonstrate effective teamworking skills • Accurately report on care and support provided within the role scope.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate clearly and compassionately with a range of people • Effectively report care updates, concerns or escalations to appropriate colleagues. 	
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Appendix 2: Draft Defined Award Standards for Healthcare Support Essentials (Major Award, NFQ Level 5: ESCO 5321.1²)

Award Title	Healthcare Support Essentials
Teideal as Gaeilge	[To be translated]
Award Class	Major
Level	NFQ Level 5 EQF Level 4
Credit Value	120 FET Credits

Purpose

This award is intended to equip the learner with the relevant knowledge skills and competence to provide person-centred care in a variety of healthcare settings, promoting best practice rooted in holistic, diverse and cultural care across the lifespan.

Qualification Requirements

Learners are eligible for the major award following the successful completion of the Special Purpose Award (SPA) in Fundamentals of Healthcare + 3 Minor Awards as outlined below:

Award Class	Requirement	Defined Award Standard Title	Credit Value	NFQ Level
Major	1 SPA + 3 Minors	Healthcare Support Essentials	120	5
SPA	Mandatory	Fundamentals of Healthcare	45	5
Minor	Mandatory	Safe Care Practice	30	5
Minor	Mandatory	Personal and Professional Development	30	5

² European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO). The ESCO taxonomy is a system created by the European Commission to classify skills, competences, qualifications, and occupations. It has two main parts: the Occupations pillar and the Skills & Competences pillar, which includes knowledge, skills, and competences. The Occupations pillar is also linked to the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) to help organise job roles in a clear and structured way. For more information please see: <https://esco.ec.europa.eu/en/classification>

Award Class	Requirement	Defined Award Standard Title	Credit Value	NFQ Level
Minor	Elective	<i>One Elective from the Pool of Electives below</i>	15	5
Pool of Electives				
Minor	Elective	Mental Health Care Skills	15	5
Minor	Elective	Intellectual Disability Care and Support	15	5
Minor	Elective	Palliative Care Skills	15	5

Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcomes	
Knowledge Breadth & Knowledge Kind	<p>Demonstrate knowledge and practical application of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • relevant statutory, regulatory, healthcare standards and guidelines • and evidence-based practice <p>that support safe and effective work practices across a variety of healthcare settings.</p>
	<p>Demonstrate knowledge and practical application of effective, individualised non-pharmacological care interventions informed by an understanding of a range of chronic diseases and medical conditions that impact function, health and well-being.</p>
Know How & Skill Range	<p>Demonstrate a broad understanding of care principles and models that promote holistic, person-centred care and well-being, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effective risk assessment • and use of appropriate communication strategies with diverse audiences <p>in the healthcare environment.</p>

Know How & Skill Selectivity	Provide empathetic, holistic, and culturally sensitive care, to foster or support social inclusion and encourage independence in healthcare settings.
	Deliver safe, individualised person-centred care that addresses the functional impact of health conditions, supports well-being across the lifespan, and incorporates preventative strategies to enhance quality of life.
	Apply appropriate, knowledge-based practice and judgement when responding to both routine and unfamiliar care situations within their scope of practice.
	Identify signs of deterioration and situational risk, ensuring timely and appropriate escalation for safe care.
	Foster holistic, person-centred care by communicating and collaborating effectively with individuals, families, multi-disciplinary care teams and relevant stakeholders.
Competence Context	Support high-quality care practice within a range of diverse healthcare settings.
Competence Learning to Learn	Take responsibility for ongoing personal and professional learning including engaging in critical reflection.
Competence Role & Insight	Embody ethical and inclusive care practice within a range of diverse healthcare settings.
	Contribute to the safe and effective delivery of integrated, sustainable and inclusive, person-centred care within a range of diverse healthcare settings.

Access

To access programmes leading to the above awards, learners should have achieved the knowledge, skills, and competence associated with NFQ Level 4 in the areas of literacy, numeracy, digital skills, communication, and personal effectiveness.

Learners must be able to communicate effectively with colleagues in the workplace through speaking, listening, reading, and writing. This may be through a formal qualification or relevant life and work experience demonstrating equivalent learning.

Transfer

Achievement of this award will enable the learner to transfer to other appropriate programmes leading to awards at the same level of the National Framework of Qualifications.

Progression

Achievement of this award will enable the learner to progress to other appropriate programmes leading to awards at the next or higher levels of the National Framework of Qualifications.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Learners may be assessed based on their prior knowledge and experience. This must be conducted in accordance with the relevant policies and procedures of the provider.

Specific Validation Requirements:

- Garda Vetting.
- Access to clinical learning environment (work base learning) with up-to-date equipment, fixtures and fittings, cleaning agents and materials, disinfectants, antiseptics, sterilisers, waste disposal and personal protective equipment.
- Practical work experience/clinical placements min 240hrs³.

Sector-specific Requirements:

- CPR and use an automated external defibrillator (AED).
- Assisted Mobility Training (Safe People Moving and Positioning Training) in accordance with current legislation and workplace health and safety policies.

³ In certain cases, it may be appropriate to credit learners with 80 hours if they can demonstrate relevant experience in the Irish healthcare system in Ireland in the past 3 years. Evidence of this should be presented to providers.

Appendix 3: Draft Defined Award Standards for Fundamentals of Healthcare (Special Purpose Award, NFQ Level 5)

Award Title	Fundamentals of Healthcare
Teideal as Gaeilge	[To be translated]
Award Class	Special Purpose Award
Level	NFQ Level 5 EQF Level 4
Credit Value	45 FET Credits
Mandatory/Elective	Mandatory

Purpose

This award is intended to equip learners with relevant knowledge, skills and competence to work effectively in healthcare assistant roles across a range of healthcare settings, promoting best practice grounded in holistic, diverse and culturally responsive care across the lifespan.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion, learners will be able to:

1. Provide person-centred care that upholds confidentiality, privacy, dignity, and respect, while showing compassion, empathy and cultural awareness in all interactions with individuals from diverse backgrounds and across the lifespan.
2. Apply standardised assessment and care planning tools effectively to support the delivery of safe, consistent, and high-quality care that meets individual needs.
3. Demonstrate a range of appropriate communication skills along with the accurate use of medical terminology while maintaining timely, clear, concise, and accurate records to support safe and effective healthcare delivery.
4. Adapt care practices to meet the diverse needs of individuals in their Activities of Daily Living, drawing on an understanding of appropriate care models & approaches rooted in quality care that promote independence, well-being, and person-centred care across the lifespan.
5. Demonstrate an awareness of how illness, health status, wellbeing, and socio-cultural factors influence an individual's care needs, experiences, & responses, and apply this knowledge to deliver holistic and person-centred care.
6. Recognise the individual needs of dying persons and their families and exercise respectful care practices after death.

7. Apply non-pharmacological interventions tailored to individual health needs and identify when to escalate concerns or seek additional support in accordance with care protocols.
8. Demonstrate the knowledge, skill & competence required to accurately assess & monitor vital signs observations in accordance with best practice.
9. Explore the role and responsibilities of the healthcare assistant, including adherence to ethical principles, professional boundaries, and accountability in the delivery of safe, respectful, and person-centred care.
10. Build and maintain therapeutic relationships by advocating effectively for patients, practising self-regulation, and communicating sensitively when navigating challenging healthcare situations.
11. Explore the impact of nutrition on health and well-being across the lifespan, supporting individuals with diverse dietary needs.
12. Engage in reflective practice to enhance professional practice and personal development, fostering self-awareness and a commitment to continuous improvement.

Access

To access programmes leading to the above awards, learners should have achieved the knowledge, skills, and competence associated with NFQ Level 4 in the areas of literacy, numeracy, digital skills, communication, and personal effectiveness.

Learners must be able to communicate effectively with colleagues in the workplace through speaking, listening, reading, and writing. This may be through a formal qualification or relevant life and work experience demonstrating equivalent learning.

Transfer

Achievement of this award will enable the learner to transfer to other appropriate programmes leading to awards at the same level of the National Framework of Qualifications.

Progression

Achievement of this award will enable the learner to progress to other appropriate programmes leading to awards at the next or higher levels of the National Framework of Qualifications.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Learners may be assessed based on their prior knowledge and experience. This must be conducted in accordance with the relevant policies and procedures of the provider.

Specific Validation Requirements:

- Garda Vetting.

- Access to clinical learning environment (work base learning) with up-to-date equipment, fixtures and fittings, cleaning agents and materials, disinfectants, antiseptics, sterilisers, waste disposal and personal protective equipment.
- Access to an environment and equipment replicating the appropriate healthcare setting (classroom).
- Work-based learning hours to be set in the application for validation.

Sector-specific Requirements:

- CPR and use an automated external defibrillator (AED).
- Assisted Mobility Training (Safe People Moving and Positioning Training) in accordance with current legislation and workplace health and safety policies.

Appendix 4: Draft Defined Award Standards for Safe Care Practice (Minor Award, NFQ Level 5)

Award Title	Safe Care Practice
Teideal as Gaeilge	[To be translated]
Award Class	Minor Award
Level	NFQ Level 5 EQF Level 4
Credit Value	30 FET Credits
Mandatory/Elective	Mandatory

Purpose

This award is intended to equip learners with the relevant knowledge, skills and competence to effectively prevent and control infection in healthcare settings. It emphasises safe practices, the proper application of infection control procedures, and adherence to international and national guidelines.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion, learners will be able to:

1. Explain the principles, key policies, and guidelines for infection prevention and control, recognising the role of the infection control team and the healthcare assistant in a range of healthcare settings.
2. Describe common healthcare-associated infections, their modes of transmission, clinical features, and appropriate responses and preventive measures.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of antimicrobial resistance and blood borne viruses and the practical steps to prevent and manage them.
4. Demonstrate effective hand hygiene, personal protective equipment (PPE) usage, and aseptic techniques in accordance with infection control standards.
5. Demonstrate understanding and implementation of a range of cleaning, disinfection, and sterilisation procedures.
6. Adhere to relevant international and national guidelines and best practice when managing linen, waste, spillages, sharps and inoculation incidents while demonstrating an awareness of sustainability issues.

7. Use infection control records and relevant communication protocols to support safe, consistent and effective healthcare delivery.

Access

To access programmes leading to the above awards, learners should have achieved the knowledge, skills, and competence associated with NFQ Level 4 in the areas of literacy, numeracy, digital skills, communication, and personal effectiveness.

Learners must be able to communicate effectively with colleagues in the workplace through speaking, listening, reading, and writing. This may be through a formal qualification or relevant life and work experience demonstrating equivalent learning.

Transfer

Achievement of this award will enable the learner to transfer to other appropriate programmes leading to awards at the same level of the National Framework of Qualifications.

Progression

Achievement of this award will enable the learner to progress to other appropriate programmes leading to awards at the next or higher levels of the National Framework of Qualifications.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Learners may be assessed based on their prior knowledge and experience. This must be conducted in accordance with the relevant policies and procedures of the provider.

Specific Validation Requirements:

- Garda Vetting.
- Access to appropriate learning environment (work base learning) with up-to-date equipment, fixtures and fittings, cleaning agents and materials, disinfectants, antiseptics, sterilisers, waste disposal and personal protective equipment.
- Access to an environment and equipment replicating the appropriate healthcare setting (classroom).
- Work-based learning hours to be set in the application for validation.

Sector Specific Requirements:

- CPR and use an automated external defibrillator (AED).
- Assisted Mobility Training (Safe People Moving and Positioning Training) in accordance with current legislation and workplace health and safety policies.

Appendix 5: Draft Defined Award Standards for Personal and Professional Development (Minor Award, NFQ Level 5)

Award Title	Personal and Professional Development
Teideal as Gaeilge	[To be translated]
Award Class	Minor Award
Level	NFQ Level 5 EQF Level 4
Credit Value	30 FET Credits
Mandatory/Elective	Mandatory

Purpose

The award is intended to equip the learner with knowledge skills and competence to become an ethical, reflective, resilient and adaptable healthcare assistant.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion, learners will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a broad range of employability skills for the healthcare sector including professional expectations and requirements.
2. Model ethical and empathetic behaviour by engaging in activities that enhance perspective-taking and emotional literacy.
3. Explore and engage with a range of strategies to support ongoing personal and professional wellbeing and resilience to enhance professional boundaries.
4. Engage in reflective practice to support personal and professional development.
5. Take responsibility for ongoing personal and professional learning.
6. Demonstrate a broad range of essential professional competencies in real-world healthcare settings, applying best practices in patient care and workplace collaboration.

Access

To access programmes leading to the above awards, learners should have achieved the knowledge, skills, and competence associated with NFQ Level 4 in the areas of literacy, numeracy, digital skills, communication, and personal effectiveness.

Learners must be able to communicate effectively with colleagues in the workplace through speaking, listening, reading, and writing. This may be through a formal qualification or relevant life and work experience demonstrating equivalent learning.

Transfer

Achievement of this award will enable the learner to transfer to other appropriate programmes leading to awards at the same level of the National Framework of Qualifications.

Progression

Achievement of this award will enable the learner to progress to other appropriate programmes leading to awards at the next or higher levels of the National Framework of Qualifications.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Learners may be assessed based on their prior knowledge and experience. This must be conducted in accordance with the relevant policies and procedures of the provider.

Specific Validation Requirements:

- Garda Vetting.
- Access to appropriate learning environment (work base learning) with up-to-date equipment, fixtures and fittings, cleaning agents and materials, disinfectants, antiseptics, sterilisers, waste disposal and personal protective equipment.
- Access to an environment and equipment replicating the appropriate healthcare setting (classroom).
- Work-based learning hours to be set in the application for validation.

Sector Specific Requirements:

- CPR and use an automated external defibrillator (AED).
- Assisted Mobility Training (Safe People Moving and Positioning Training) in accordance with current legislation and workplace health and safety policies.

Appendix 6: Draft Defined Award Standards for Pre-nursing Studies (Major Award, NFQ Level 5: ESCO 5321.1)

Award Title	Pre-nursing Studies
Teideal as Gaeilge	[To be translated]
Award Class	Major
Level	NFQ Level 5 EQF Level 4
Credit Value	120 FET Credits

Purpose

This award is designed to provide a foundational understanding of pre-nursing studies, integrating holistic care and professional responsibilities in a variety of healthcare settings. It is also intended to equip the learner with the relevant knowledge skills and competence to provide person-centred care in a variety of healthcare settings, promoting best practice rooted in holistic, diverse and cultural care across the lifespan.

Qualification Requirements

Learners are eligible for the major award following the successful completion of the Minor Awards as outlined below:

Award Class	Requirement	Title	Credit Value	NFQ Level
Major	3 mandatory + 3 electives	Defined Award Standards for Pre-nursing Studies	120	5
Minor	Mandatory	Defined Award Standards for Anatomy, Physiology, Human Growth, Development & Biology	25	5
Minor	Mandatory	Defined Award Standards for Principles and Practice of Nursing Skills	25	5
Minor	Mandatory	Defined Award Standards for Pre-nursing Care Skills	25	5
Minor	Elective	Defined Award Standards for Child Health and Development for Pre-Nursing	15	5
Minor	Elective	Defined Award Standards for Holistic Care and Wellbeing of Older Adults	15	5

Award Class	Requirement	Title	Credit Value	NFQ Level
Minor	Elective	Defined Award Standards for Intellectual Disability Care and Support	15	5
Minor	Elective	Defined Award Standards for Maternity Pre-nursing Care Skills	15	5
Minor	Elective	Defined Award Standards for Operating Theatre Support Care Skills	15	5
Minor	Elective	Defined Award Standards for Palliative Care Skills	15	5
Minor	Elective	Defined Award Standards for Mental Health Care Skills	15	5

Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcomes	
Knowledge Breadth	Demonstrate a foundational knowledge relating to the role, responsibility care, dignity and wellbeing of individuals across the lifespan, in line with person-centred and evidence-informed practice across diverse care settings.
Knowledge Kind	Demonstrate a foundational understanding of the core theoretical principles that underpin nursing and healthcare practice, including health, illness, wellbeing, human development, communication, and professional accountability.
Know How & Skill Range	Demonstrate a range of practical, interpersonal and caring skills to provide holistic, safe and compassionate care in structured environments under appropriate supervision.
Know How & Skill Selectivity	Evaluate information, implement appropriate care strategies and care plans to support decision-making in routine care situations, recognising when to report changes in an individual's condition and responding appropriately within the limits of one's role.
Competence Context	Engage in care practices safely and effectively, using standard precautions, appropriate communication,

	and ethical awareness in line with relevant guidelines, workplace policies, and under supervision of registered practitioners.
Competence Role	Contribute to the planning, delivery, and evaluation of holistic, person-centred care by working collaboratively with the healthcare team and supporting individuals in maintaining their independence, dignity, and quality of life.
Competence Learning to Learn	Take responsibility for your own learning, reflecting on feedback and experiences to improve personal effectiveness and develop understanding of professional behaviours expected in healthcare settings.
Competence Insight	Reflect on personal values, attitudes, and learning experiences to contribute to the development of an inclusive, equitable, and sustainable care environments.

Access

To access programmes leading to the above awards, learners should have achieved the knowledge, skills, and competence associated with NFQ Level 4 in the areas of literacy, numeracy, digital skills, communication, and personal effectiveness.

Learners must be able to communicate effectively with colleagues in the workplace through speaking, listening, reading, and writing. This may be through a formal qualification or relevant life and work experience demonstrating equivalent learning.

Transfer

Achievement of this award will enable the learner to transfer to other appropriate programmes leading to awards at the same level of the National Framework of Qualifications.

Progression

Achievement of this award will enable the learner to progress to other appropriate programmes leading to awards at the next or higher levels of the National Framework of Qualifications.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Learners may be assessed based on their prior knowledge and experience. This must be conducted in accordance with the relevant policies and procedures of the provider.

Specific Validation Requirements:

- Garda Vetting.

- Access to a hospital/health care area with up-to-date equipment, fixtures and fittings, cleaning agents and materials, disinfectants, antiseptics, sterilisers, waste disposal and personal protective equipment.
- Practical work experience/clinical placements min 240hrs⁴.

Sector-specific Requirements:

- CPR and use an automated external defibrillator (AED).
- Assisted Mobility Training (Safe People Moving and Positioning Training) in accordance with current legislation and workplace health and safety policies.

⁴ In certain cases, it may be appropriate to credit learners with 80 hours if they can demonstrate relevant experience in the Irish healthcare system in Ireland in the past 3 years. Evidence of this should be presented to providers.

Appendix 7: Draft Defined Award Standards for Anatomy, Physiology, Human Growth, Development & Biology (Minor Award, NFQ Level 5)

Award Title	Anatomy, Physiology, Human Growth, Development & Biology
Teideal as Gaeilge	[To be translated]
Award Class	Minor Award
Level	NFQ Level 5 EQF Level 4
Credit Value	25 FET Credits
Mandatory/Elective	Mandatory

Purpose

This award is intended to equip the learner with a broad understanding of human biology, anatomy, physiology, and growth and development across the lifespan. Learners will gain the scientific and interpersonal skills necessary to apply biological principles in health, social care, and laboratory settings, demonstrating competence in analysing systems, supporting development, and promoting well-being.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion, learners will be able to:

1. Explain the structure and function of the human body and its systems, including the skeletal, muscular, nervous, circulatory, respiratory, digestive, excretory, endocrine, reproductive, lymphatic, and integumentary systems, highlighting their interdependence and roles in maintaining homeostasis.
2. Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of cellular biology, including the structure and function of animal and plant cells, major organelles, cellular metabolism, DNA/RNA processes, and principles of inheritance.
3. Identify the processes of human growth and development, from conception to old age, including physical, intellectual, emotional, and social changes, and evaluate the impact of genetic, environmental, and social factors on individual development.
4. Distinguish between normal and abnormal biological processes, such as benign and malignant growth, hormonal imbalances, and infections, and explain the role of the immune system, including both active and passive immunity.

5. Apply scientific knowledge and practical skills in a laboratory or field context, including microscopy, experimentation, microbiology, ecological surveys, and the use of safety procedures and laboratory documentation.
6. Discuss the principles and applications of genetics and biotechnology, including genetic engineering, mutation, blood group compatibility, and selective breeding in agriculture and healthcare.
7. Demonstrate effective interpersonal and reflective skills, including empathy, communication, self-awareness, and the ability to respond appropriately to the developmental and emotional needs of individuals across various care settings.
8. Analyse the interaction between psychological, biological, and environmental systems, and apply this knowledge to support well-being, learning, and social functioning in community, healthcare, or educational settings.
9. Demonstrate responsibility in observing ethical practices, maintaining accurate records, following safety protocols, and respecting the dignity and needs of individuals throughout their life stages.

Access

To access programmes leading to the above awards, learners should have achieved the knowledge, skills, and competence associated with NFQ Level 4 in the areas of literacy, numeracy, digital skills, communication, and personal effectiveness.

Learners must be able to communicate effectively with colleagues in the workplace through speaking, listening, reading, and writing. This may be through a formal qualification or relevant life and work experience demonstrating equivalent learning.

Transfer

Achievement of this award will enable the learner to transfer to other appropriate programmes leading to awards at the same level of the National Framework of Qualifications.

Progression

Achievement of this award will enable the learner to progress to other appropriate programmes leading to awards at the next or higher levels of the National Framework of Qualifications.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Learners may be assessed based on their prior knowledge and experience. This must be conducted in accordance with the relevant policies and procedures of the provider.

Specific Validation Requirements:

- Garda Vetting.
- Access to clinical learning environment (work base learning) with up-to-date equipment, fixtures and fittings, cleaning agents and materials, disinfectants, antiseptics, sterilisers, waste disposal and personal protective equipment.
- Access to an environment and equipment replicating the clinical setting (classroom).

- Work-based learning hours to be set in the application for validation.

Sector Specific Requirements:

- CPR and use an automated external defibrillator (AED).
- Assisted Mobility Training (Safe People Moving and Positioning Training) in accordance with current legislation and workplace health and safety policies.

Appendix 8: Draft Defined Award Standards for Principles and Practice of Nursing Skills (Minor Award, NFQ Level 5)

Award Title	Principles and Practice of Nursing Skills
Teideal as Gaeilge	[To be translated]
Award Class	Minor Award
Level	NFQ Level 5 EQF Level 4
Credit Value	25 FET Credits
Mandatory/Elective	Mandatory

Purpose

This award is intended to equip the learner with the knowledge, skill, and competence to understand the core principles of the nursing profession, apply the nursing process in a structured and person-centred way, and perform a range of foundational nursing care skills safely and effectively. The learner will also gain insight into the structure of the healthcare system, interdisciplinary collaboration, and the professional standards and ethical responsibilities associated with nursing practice.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion, learners will be able to:

1. Describe the historical and contemporary development of nursing, including its evolution as a professional and regulated discipline within Irish and international healthcare systems.
2. Examine the structure and functions of the Irish healthcare system, including primary, secondary, and tertiary care services, and evaluate describe the influence of European Union directives on healthcare provision and nursing practice in Ireland.
3. Explain the stages of the nursing process — assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation — and demonstrate their relevance to holistic and patient-centred care.
4. Interpret the Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Nurses, identifying the values, responsibilities, and boundaries that guide nursing practice.
5. Assist individuals with activities of daily living, including hygiene, nutrition, mobility, and elimination, using best-practice techniques and person-centred care principles.

6. Collaborate and communicate effectively within professional and interdisciplinary teams, using common nursing and medical terminology, working both independently and collectively to deliver inclusive, culturally responsive healthcare supports across diverse healthcare settings.
7. Identify the roles and functions of interdisciplinary healthcare team members and demonstrate an understanding of collaborative practice in supporting patient care across various settings.
8. Demonstrate an understanding of medication safety principles, including the importance of accuracy in drug administration and documentation, and the legal and ethical aspects of handling medications.
9. Demonstrate empathy, respect, and effective communication in all aspects of care delivery, recognising the psychological and emotional needs of patients and families.
10. Measure, record, and interpret key clinical observations, including temperature, pulse, respiration, blood pressure, and fluid balance, identifying deviations from normal ranges and appropriate responses.
11. Describe the principles of infection prevention and control, including the causes and transmission of common healthcare-associated infections, standard precautions, and procedures to minimise cross-infection risk.

Access

To access programmes leading to the above awards, learners should have achieved the knowledge, skills, and competence associated with NFQ Level 4 in the areas of literacy, numeracy, digital skills, communication, and personal effectiveness.

Learners must be able to communicate effectively with colleagues in the workplace through speaking, listening, reading, and writing. This may be through a formal qualification or relevant life and work experience demonstrating equivalent learning.

Transfer

Achievement of this award will enable the learner to transfer to other appropriate programmes leading to awards at the same level of the National Framework of Qualifications.

Progression

Achievement of this award will enable the learner to progress to other appropriate programmes leading to awards at the next or higher levels of the National Framework of Qualifications.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Learners may be assessed based on their prior knowledge and experience. This must be conducted in accordance with the relevant policies and procedures of the provider.

Specific Validation Requirements:

- Garda Vetting.

- Access to clinical learning environment (work base learning) with up-to-date equipment, fixtures and fittings, cleaning agents and materials, disinfectants, antiseptics, sterilisers, waste disposal and personal protective equipment.
- Access to an environment and equipment replicating the clinical setting (classroom).
- Work-based learning hours to be set in the application for validation.

Sector Specific Requirements:

- CPR and use an automated external defibrillator (AED).
- Assisted Mobility Training (Safe People Moving and Positioning Training) in accordance with current legislation and workplace health and safety policies.

Appendix 9: Draft Defined Award Standards for Pre-nursing Care Skills (Minor Award, NFQ Level 5)

Award Title	Pre-nursing Care Skills
Teideal as Gaeilge	[To be translated]
Award Class	Minor Award
Level	NFQ Level 5 EQF Level 4
Credit Value	25 FET Credits
Mandatory/Elective	Mandatory

Purpose

This award is intended to equip the learner with the knowledge, skill, and competence to deliver person-centred care to individuals across a range of healthcare settings, with a particular focus on supporting nursing care.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion, learners will be able to:

1. Demonstrate person-centred care practices in supporting individuals with activities of daily living, including hygiene, mobility, nutrition, and elimination, with dignity and respect for individual rights and preferences.
2. Assist individuals with complex care needs (including older persons, those with dementia, physical/sensory impairments, or chronic conditions) using safe, evidence-based, and ethically sound techniques.
3. Apply principles of infection prevention and control, including the use of personal protective equipment (PPE), hand hygiene, and environmental hygiene in accordance with standard precautions and organisational policies.
4. Support mobility and safe moving and handling procedures, using appropriate techniques and equipment, and adhering to current health and safety legislation and organisational protocols.
5. Observe, measure, and accurately record key clinical indicators, including temperature, pulse, respiration, blood pressure, and fluid intake/output, identifying deviations and reporting appropriately.
6. Respond to the emotional, psychological, and communication needs of individuals, demonstrating empathy, respect, and appropriate interpersonal skills in diverse care settings.

7. Demonstrate an understanding of the role of advocacy by recognising when and how to support individuals in expressing their needs, culture, beliefs, preferences, and rights at end-of-life, while recognising the care worker's own role and boundaries in the process.
8. Reflect on personal practice and the role of the healthcare worker within a multidisciplinary team, demonstrating understanding of professional conduct, confidentiality, ethics, and personal responsibility in a nursing support role.

Access

To access programmes leading to the above awards, learners should have achieved the knowledge, skills, and competence associated with NFQ Level 4 in the areas of literacy, numeracy, digital skills, communication, and personal effectiveness.

Learners must be able to communicate effectively with colleagues in the workplace through speaking, listening, reading, and writing. This may be through a formal qualification or relevant life and work experience demonstrating equivalent learning.

Transfer

Achievement of this award will enable the learner to transfer to other appropriate programmes leading to awards at the same level of the National Framework of Qualifications.

Progression

Achievement of this award will enable the learner to progress to other appropriate programmes leading to awards at the next or higher levels of the National Framework of Qualifications.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Learners may be assessed based on their prior knowledge and experience. This must be conducted in accordance with the relevant policies and procedures of the provider.

Specific Validation Requirements:

- Garda Vetting.
- Access to clinical learning environment (work base learning) with up-to-date equipment, fixtures and fittings, cleaning agents and materials, disinfectants, antiseptics, sterilisers, waste disposal and personal protective equipment.
- Access to an environment and equipment replicating the clinical setting (classroom).
- Work-based learning hours to be set in the application for validation.

Sector Specific Requirements:

- CPR and use an automated external defibrillator (AED).
- Assisted Mobility Training (Safe People Moving and Positioning Training) in accordance with current legislation and workplace health and safety policies.

Appendix 10: Draft Defined Award Standards for Child Health and Development for Pre-Nursing (Minor Award, NFQ Level 5)

Award Title	Child Health and Development for Pre-Nursing
Teideal as Gaeilge	[To be translated]
Award Class	Minor Award
Level	NFQ Level 5 EQF Level 4
Credit Value	15 FET Credits
Mandatory/Elective	Elective

Purpose

This award is intended to equip the learner with the knowledge, skill, and competence required to support the health, development, and care of children across a range of healthcare settings. It is designed to provide a foundational understanding of child-centred care within a pre-nursing context, integrating child development theory, holistic care practices, and professional responsibilities in clinical environments.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion, learners will be able to:

1. Analyse key stages of holistic child development, including physical, emotional, cognitive, language, and social milestones, and interpret how these stages influence nursing care planning.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of developmental theory, current legislation and standards to support the needs of children across different age groups in healthcare settings.
3. Evaluate the impact of family dynamics, cultural background, and social determinants (e.g., poverty, housing, parental illness) on the health and development of children.
4. Implement safe and appropriate care practices for children in clinical and community settings, including hygiene routines, nutrition, infection prevention, and response to illness.
5. Demonstrate effective communication skills with children and their families, using age-appropriate verbal and non-verbal methods to support comfort, trust, and emotional wellbeing.

6. Facilitate therapeutic play activities that promote healing, expression, and engagement in hospital or care settings, with awareness of the role of play in holistic recovery.
7. Interpret and apply relevant legal and ethical principles, including child protection, consent, confidentiality, and professional responsibilities in nursing care for children.
8. Reflect critically on personal practice, demonstrating professional accountability, teamwork, and a commitment to continuous learning in child-focused care environments.

Access

To access programmes leading to the above awards, learners should have achieved the knowledge, skills, and competence associated with NFQ Level 4 in the areas of literacy, numeracy, digital skills, communication, and personal effectiveness.

Learners must be able to communicate effectively with colleagues in the workplace through speaking, listening, reading, and writing. This may be through a formal qualification or relevant life and work experience demonstrating equivalent learning.

Transfer

Achievement of this award will enable the learner to transfer to other appropriate programmes leading to awards at the same level of the National Framework of Qualifications.

Progression

Achievement of this award will enable the learner to progress to other appropriate programmes leading to awards at the next or higher levels of the National Framework of Qualifications.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Learners may be assessed based on their prior knowledge and experience. This must be conducted in accordance with the relevant policies and procedures of the provider.

Specific Validation Requirements:

- Garda Vetting.
- Access to clinical learning environment (work base learning) with up-to-date equipment, fixtures and fittings, cleaning agents and materials, disinfectants, antiseptics, sterilisers, waste disposal and personal protective equipment.
- Access to an environment and equipment replicating the clinical setting (classroom).
- Work-based learning hours to be set in the application for validation.

Sector Specific Requirements:

- CPR and use an automated external defibrillator (AED).
- Assisted Mobility Training (Safe People Moving and Positioning Training) in accordance with current legislation and workplace health and safety policies.

Appendix 11: Draft Defined Award Standards for Holistic Care and Wellbeing of Older Adults (Minor Award, NFQ Level 5)

Award Title	Holistic Care and Wellbeing of Older Adults
Teideal as Gaeilge	[To be translated]
Award Class	Minor Award
Level	NFQ Level 5 EQF Level 4
Credit Value	15 FET Credits
Mandatory/Elective	Elective

Purpose

This award is intended to equip the learner with the knowledge, skill, and competence required to support the health, development, and care of older adults across a range of healthcare settings. It is designed to provide a foundational understanding of Care of Older Adults within a pre-nursing context, integrating holistic care practices, and professional responsibilities in a variety of healthcare settings.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion, learners will be able to:

1. Explore age-related issues such as healthy ageing, demographic trends, physiological and psychological processes of ageing, the social impact on older people, and attitudes towards ageing.
2. Analyse the role of nurses and statutory and voluntary agencies in enhancing the well-being of older people and promoting positive attitudes towards ageing.
3. Identify and adapt care practices to meet the diverse needs of older people, promoting empowerment and supporting independence as the primary goal.
4. Discuss challenges faced by older people living with chronic illness, mental illness, or dementia, and explore therapeutic approaches to improve their quality of life.
5. Recognise the individual needs of dying older persons and their families and exercise respectful care practices after death.
6. Evaluate the services available to older people, including education, retirement/workplace support, leisure activities, and lifelong learning opportunities.

7. Employ effective communication strategies with older persons, their families, and multi-disciplinary teams while advocating for empowerment, dignity, independence, and individualised person-centred, holistic care.
8. Explore a range of quality assurance standards and approaches to improve the provision of services for older adults and their families in a variety of healthcare settings.

Access

To access programmes leading to the above awards, learners should have achieved the knowledge, skills, and competence associated with NFQ Level 4 in the areas of literacy, numeracy, digital skills, communication, and personal effectiveness.

Learners must be able to communicate effectively with colleagues in the workplace through speaking, listening, reading, and writing. This may be through a formal qualification or relevant life and work experience demonstrating equivalent learning.

Transfer

Achievement of this award will enable the learner to transfer to other appropriate programmes leading to awards at the same level of the National Framework of Qualifications.

Progression

Achievement of this award will enable the learner to progress to other appropriate programmes leading to awards at the next or higher levels of the National Framework of Qualifications.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Learners may be assessed based on their prior knowledge and experience. This must be conducted in accordance with the relevant policies and procedures of the provider.

Specific Validation Requirements:

- Garda Vetting.
- Access to clinical learning environment (work base learning) with up-to-date equipment, fixtures and fittings, cleaning agents and materials, disinfectants, antiseptics, sterilisers, waste disposal and personal protective equipment.
- Access to an environment and equipment replicating the clinical setting (classroom).
- Work-based learning hours to be set in the application for validation.

Sector Specific Requirements:

- CPR and use an automated external defibrillator (AED).
- Assisted Mobility Training (Safe People Moving and Positioning Training) in accordance with current legislation and workplace health and safety policies.

Appendix 12: Draft Defined Award Standards for Intellectual Disability Care and Support (Minor Award, NFQ Level 5)

Award Title	Intellectual Disability Care and Support
Teideal as Gaeilge	[To be translated]
Award Class	Minor Award
Level	NFQ Level 5 EQF Level 4
Credit Value	15 FET Credits
Mandatory/Elective	Elective

Purpose

The award is intended to equip the learner with the knowledge, skill, and competence required to support individuals with intellectual disabilities through an integrated approach. It emphasises the importance of promoting dignity, choice, and inclusion while understanding the social and medical dimensions of care.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion, learners will be able to:

1. Define intellectual disability and explore its causes, levels, and the potential impact of multiple disabilities.
2. Differentiate between the medical and social models of care, identifying their advantages and limitations.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of the history, evolution, and current standards of services for individuals with intellectual disabilities in Ireland and internationally.
4. Recognise and address the holistic needs of individuals with intellectual disabilities, including their physical, emotional, social, psychological, and spiritual well-being.
5. Explore the impact of caregiving on families, providing strategies to support them effectively.
6. Collaborate with multi-disciplinary teams, including for example - physiotherapists, social workers, and psychologists, to deliver person-centred support, to promote and protect a person's dignity.

7. Advocate for progressive and quality-driven approaches to service delivery, ensuring adherence to standards and quality assurance frameworks.
8. Recognise the importance of continuous professional development (CPD) in promoting a holistic, person-centred care including the use of digital tools and technologies to support service delivery and empower service users.

Access

To access programmes leading to the above awards, learners should have achieved the knowledge, skills, and competence associated with NFQ Level 4 in the areas of literacy, numeracy, digital skills, communication, and personal effectiveness.

Learners must be able to communicate effectively with colleagues in the workplace through speaking, listening, reading, and writing. This may be through a formal qualification or relevant life and work experience demonstrating equivalent learning.

Transfer

Achievement of this award will enable the learner to transfer to other appropriate programmes leading to awards at the same level of the National Framework of Qualifications.

Progression

Achievement of this award will enable the learner to progress to other appropriate programmes leading to awards at the next or higher levels of the National Framework of Qualifications.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Learners may be assessed based on their prior knowledge and experience. This must be conducted in accordance with the relevant policies and procedures of the provider.

Specific Validation Requirements:

- Garda Vetting.
- Access to clinical learning environment (work base learning) with up-to-date equipment, fixtures and fittings, cleaning agents and materials, disinfectants, antiseptics, sterilisers, waste disposal and personal protective equipment.
- Access to an environment and equipment replicating the clinical setting (classroom).
- Work-based learning hours to be set in the application for validation.

Sector Specific Requirements:

- CPR and use an automated external defibrillator (AED).
- Assisted Mobility Training (Safe People Moving and Positioning Training) in accordance with current legislation and workplace health and safety policies.

Appendix 13: Draft Defined Award Standards for Maternity Pre-nursing Care Skills (Minor Award, NFQ Level 5)

Award Title	Maternity - Pre-nursing Care Skills
Teideal as Gaeilge	[To be translated]
Award Class	Minor Award
Level	NFQ Level 5 EQF Level 4
Credit Value	15 FET Credits
Mandatory/Elective	Elective

Purpose

This award is intended to equip the learner with the knowledge, skill, and competence required to assist midwives in providing holistic, individualised care to mothers, babies, and the family unit. Learners will understand the philosophy of maternity care and support safe, person-centred practices during the transition to motherhood, while promoting dignity, respect, and non-judgmental care.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion, learners will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the transition to motherhood and the philosophy of maternity care, including its impact on mothers, babies, and families, while promoting non-judgmental and individualised care.
2. Summarise the physical, emotional, and social needs of mothers during antepartum, intrapartum, and postpartum periods.
3. Evaluate the benefits and challenges of breastfeeding, while supporting individual choice.
4. Investigate infection prevention and control measures critical to maternity care settings.
5. Demonstrate an understanding of the grief process in cases of miscarriage, stillbirth, neonatal death, or maternal death, and show awareness of emotional needs of families, for example following the diagnosis of congenital abnormalities in their babies.
6. Apply safety and security procedures, such as identity tag checks and operational systems, to ensure the safety of infants.

7. Develop clinically relevant skills, including assisting with examinations, preparing clinical areas, and caring for specialised equipment.
8. Respond efficiently to emergency situations involving mothers or babies, including clearing airways, patient positioning, and reporting incidents.

Access

To access programmes leading to the above awards, learners should have achieved the knowledge, skills, and competence associated with NFQ Level 4 in the areas of literacy, numeracy, digital skills, communication, and personal effectiveness.

Learners must be able to communicate effectively with colleagues in the workplace through speaking, listening, reading, and writing. This may be through a formal qualification or relevant life and work experience demonstrating equivalent learning.

Transfer

Achievement of this award will enable the learner to transfer to other appropriate programmes leading to awards at the same level of the National Framework of Qualifications.

Progression

Achievement of this award will enable the learner to progress to other appropriate programmes leading to awards at the next or higher levels of the National Framework of Qualifications.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Learners may be assessed based on their prior knowledge and experience. This must be conducted in accordance with the relevant policies and procedures of the provider.

Specific Validation Requirements:

- Garda Vetting.
- Access to clinical learning environment (work base learning) with up-to-date equipment, fixtures and fittings, cleaning agents and materials, disinfectants, antiseptics, sterilisers, waste disposal and personal protective equipment.
- Access to an environment and equipment replicating the clinical setting (classroom).
- Work-based learning hours to be set in the application for validation.

Sector Specific Requirements:

- CPR and use an automated external defibrillator (AED).
- Assisted Mobility Training (Safe People Moving and Positioning Training) in accordance with current legislation and workplace health and safety policies.

Appendix 14: Draft Defined Award Standards for Operating Theatre Support Care Skills (Minor Award, NFQ Level 5)

Award Title	Operating Theatre Support Care Skills
Teideal as Gaeilge	[To be translated]
Award Class	Minor Award
Level	NFQ Level 5 EQF Level 4
Credit Value	15 FET Credits
Mandatory/Elective	Elective

Purpose

This award is intended to equip the learner with the knowledge, skill, and competence required to perform effectively as support staff in the operating theatre department, working under the guidance of a registered nurse.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion, learners will be able to:

1. Explore the principles of safe practice in the operating department environment, including infection prevention and control, patient dignity, and consent.
2. Demonstrate competence, under instruction, in preparing, positioning, and supporting patient's peri and post-surgical procedures, in line with evidence-based protocols.
3. Apply theoretical knowledge to assist in maintaining a sterile field, ensuring the integrity of surgical asepsis in collaboration with interdisciplinary team members.
4. Interpret and respond appropriately, of changes in patient condition during perioperative care, utilising knowledge of normal and abnormal physiology.
5. Communicate effectively and empathetically with patients, families, and healthcare professionals, adapting approach to meet the specific needs of the perioperative context.
6. Describe legal, ethical, and professional guidelines related to confidentiality, consent to treatment, dignity, respect, and accountability.

7. Implement accurate documentation and reporting procedures in accordance with best practice, ensuring continuity of safe and sustainable care and legal compliance.
8. Utilise reflective practice to identify areas for personal and professional growth in operating department support, incorporating feedback and clinical experience.

Access

To access programmes leading to the above awards, learners should have achieved the knowledge, skills, and competence associated with NFQ Level 4 in the areas of literacy, numeracy, digital skills, communication, and personal effectiveness.

Learners must be able to communicate effectively with colleagues in the workplace through speaking, listening, reading, and writing. This may be through a formal qualification or relevant life and work experience demonstrating equivalent learning.

Transfer

Achievement of this award will enable the learner to transfer to other appropriate programmes leading to awards at the same level of the National Framework of Qualifications.

Progression

Achievement of this award will enable the learner to progress to other appropriate programmes leading to awards at the next or higher levels of the National Framework of Qualifications.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Learners may be assessed based on their prior knowledge and experience. This must be conducted in accordance with the relevant policies and procedures of the provider.

Specific Validation Requirements:

- Garda Vetting.
- Access to clinical learning environment (work base learning) with up-to-date equipment, fixtures and fittings, cleaning agents and materials, disinfectants, antiseptics, sterilisers, waste disposal and personal protective equipment.
- Access to an environment and equipment replicating the clinical setting (classroom).
- Work-based learning hours to be set in the application for validation.

Sector Specific Requirements:

- CPR and use an automated external defibrillator (AED).
- Assisted Mobility Training (Safe People Moving and Positioning Training) in accordance with current legislation and workplace health and safety policies.

Appendix 15: Draft Defined Award Standards for Palliative Care Skills (Minor Award, NFQ Level 5)

Award Title	Palliative Care Skills
Teideal as Gaeilge	[To be translated]
Award Class	Minor Award
Level	NFQ Level 5 EQF Level 4
Credit Value	15 FET Credits
Mandatory/Elective	Elective

Purpose

This award is intended to equip the learner with the knowledge, skill, and competence needed to support individuals and their families following a life-limiting illness diagnosis in a dignified, inclusive, and holistic way. It is underpinned by the core values of compassion, care, and commitment, which support ethical principles and ensure the delivery of respectful, person-centred palliative care.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion, learners will be able to:

1. Explore the core principles and values of palliative care, including quality of life, holistic support, and psychosocial-spiritual needs of individuals and their families, in line with current legislation and the professional code of conduct and ethics.
2. Plan and implement empathetic, person-centred care strategies that uphold patient privacy, dignity, autonomy (right to refuse), and comfort in palliative contexts.
3. Recognise the physical, emotional, social, and spiritual needs of palliative care patients, and describe appropriate ways to support these needs.
4. Communicate sensitively and effectively with individuals, families, and multidisciplinary teams, demonstrating active listening, cultural competence, and emotional intelligence.
5. Employ therapeutic techniques to manage pain, symptom distress, anxiety, and end-of-life care, using evidence-based approaches.
6. Demonstrate an understanding of the role of advocacy in palliative care by recognising when and how to support individuals in expressing their needs, preferences, and rights at end-of-life.

7. Describe legal, ethical, and professional guidelines related to end-of-life care, including confidentiality, informed consent, advanced directives, and accountability.
8. Accurately document and report care plans, patient responses, and changes in condition in compliance with clinical governance standards and audit requirements.
9. Reflect on personal values, attitudes and learning experiences to support ethical decision-making and contribute to the development of an integrated, equitable, and sustainable palliative care system.

Access

To access programmes leading to the above awards, learners should have achieved the knowledge, skills, and competence associated with NFQ Level 4 in the areas of literacy, numeracy, digital skills, communication, and personal effectiveness.

Learners must be able to communicate effectively with colleagues in the workplace through speaking, listening, reading, and writing. This may be through a formal qualification or relevant life and work experience demonstrating equivalent learning.

Transfer

Achievement of this award will enable the learner to transfer to other appropriate programmes leading to awards at the same level of the National Framework of Qualifications.

Progression

Achievement of this award will enable the learner to progress to other appropriate programmes leading to awards at the next or higher levels of the National Framework of Qualifications.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Learners may be assessed based on their prior knowledge and experience. This must be conducted in accordance with the relevant policies and procedures of the provider.

Specific Validation Requirements:

- Garda Vetting.
- Access to clinical learning environment (work base learning) with up-to-date equipment, fixtures and fittings, cleaning agents and materials, disinfectants, antiseptics, sterilisers, waste disposal and personal protective equipment.
- Access to an environment and equipment replicating the clinical setting (classroom).
- Work-based learning hours to be set in the application for validation.

Sector Specific Requirements:

- CPR and use an automated external defibrillator (AED).
- Assisted Mobility Training (Safe People Moving and Positioning Training) in accordance with current legislation and workplace health and safety policies.

Appendix 16: Draft Defined Award Standards for Mental Health Care Skills (Minor Award, NFQ Level 5)

Award Title	Mental Health Care Skills
Teideal as Gaeilge	[To be translated]
Award Class	Minor Award
Level	NFQ Level 5 EQF Level 4
Credit Value	15 FET Credits
Mandatory/Elective	Elective

Purpose

The award is intended to equip the learner with the knowledge, skill, and competence needed to support and care for individuals in their mental health through using whole-person, compassionate care practices.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion, learners will be able to:

1. Describe the concept and core principles of recovery in mental health such as respect, compassion, equity, and hope, and identify contextual or environmental factors that can support or hinder a person's recovery journey.
2. Explain professional accountability and promote a culture of open disclosure to support patient safety within mental health services.
3. Identify internal and external recovery factors, such as hope, optimism, community supports and evaluate their impacts on individual outcomes.
4. Outline and employ a range of common holistic mental wellness strategies, used by individuals to maintain positive mental health.
5. Demonstrate respect for individual's dignity by applying sustainable practices in daily routines and using a variety of common holistic strategies to support and maintain positive mental health.
6. Apply a person-centred approach and contribute to the implementation of an individualised recovery care plan, by interpreting, empowering and responding with dignity to the unique needs and individual life contexts.

7. Demonstrate empathic and active listening skills, applying advanced communication techniques to support individuals in recovery.
8. Collaborate and communicate effectively within professional and interdisciplinary teams, working both independently and collectively to support delivery objectives, and deliver inclusive, culturally responsive mental health supports across diverse healthcare settings.
9. Recognise the importance of continuous professional development (CPD) in promoting a recovery-focused approach in mental health services, including the use of digital tools and technologies to support service delivery and empower service users.

Access

To access programmes leading to the above awards, learners should have achieved the knowledge, skills, and competence associated with NFQ Level 4 in the areas of literacy, numeracy, digital skills, communication, and personal effectiveness.

Learners must be able to communicate effectively with colleagues in the workplace through speaking, listening, reading, and writing. This may be through a formal qualification or relevant life and work experience demonstrating equivalent learning.

Transfer

Achievement of this award will enable the learner to transfer to other appropriate programmes leading to awards at the same level of the National Framework of Qualifications.

Progression

Achievement of this award will enable the learner to progress to other appropriate programmes leading to awards at the next or higher levels of the National Framework of Qualifications.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Learners may be assessed based on their prior knowledge and experience. This must be conducted in accordance with the relevant policies and procedures of the provider.

Specific Validation Requirements:

- Garda Vetting.
- Access to clinical learning environment (work base learning) with up-to-date equipment, fixtures and fittings, cleaning agents and materials, disinfectants, antiseptics, sterilisers, waste disposal and personal protective equipment.
- Access to an environment and equipment replicating the clinical setting (classroom).
- Work-based learning hours to be set in the application for validation.

Sector Specific Requirements:

- CPR and use an automated external defibrillator (AED).
- Assisted Mobility Training (Safe People Moving and Positioning Training) in accordance with current legislation and workplace health and safety policies.