



**Women's
Community Projects
(Mullingar)
Learner Handbook
2022/2023**

Welcome Note	4
Mission Statement	4
Equality Statement	5
Fees	5
Attendance	6
Induction	7
Fire Procedures	7
Health & Safety	7
IT Acceptable Usage Policy	8
Anti -Bullying Policy	20
Classroom Rules	8
Learners' responsibilities	9
Facilities, Services and Supports	9
Certification	9
Assessment	10
Portfolios	10
Examinations	10
QQI Deadlines	11
Late Submissions	11
The National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)	12
Initial Major Award - types	12
Quality and Qualifications Ireland	13
Exemptions/Recognition of Prior Learning	13
Academic Misconduct	13
Plagiarism and Referencing	14
The Authorship Statement	14

Reasonable Accommodation	14
Assessment Re-sits	15
Results	15
Appeals	16
Programme Cessation	16
Refunds	16
After Assessment Period	16
Complaints	16
References	16

Welcome Note

Dear Learner

Welcome to WCPM. You are now part of a community of people setting out on a journey of learning and personal growth. This handbook outlines the facilities and support available to you as a learner and outlines your role and responsibility for ensuring there is a positive learning environment for everyone in WCPM.

For ease of access, it is not possible to cover every detail in this booklet so if you have any queries at any time, please ask your tutor or a member of the Training & Education team. They will be very happy to assist you.

The Training & Education office is open Monday to Thursday from 9am to 5pm and Friday 9am to 4pm. The contact number is 044 9344301.

WCPM began in 1985 when Sr Finbarr, a Parish Sister, recognised that a place was required where women and their families could come together to socialise and learn new skills. The Project has evolved and has catered for the changing needs of the Community over the years. We have a busy Adult Learning department that offers QQI level 3, 4, 5 & 6 modules in General Learning, Healthcare, Childcare and Business Administration as well as non-accredited courses e.g., ESOL, Pilates, Sewing, Computers, Art, and Crafts, Flower Arranging and many more. We regularly host events e.g., International Women's Day, AONTAS Learning Festival, student Christmas parties, student's outings, and a yearly Award's Ceremony to mention a few.

Mission Statement

Our mission statement is to facilitate the empowerment of women and their families, through training, education, and community enterprise development.

Our aims

- To facilitate women and their families in identifying their needs and in developing their potential.
- To provide learning and training experiences which address the need identified.
- To be a catalyst for bringing voluntary and statutory organisations together.
- To promote and develop enterprise for women and men who have undergone training on the various projects.
- To provide childcare and pre-school facilities for children of learners participating on our training courses
- To access and review projects on an ongoing basis.

Equality Statement

Women's Community Projects (Mullingar) is committed to equality of opportunity in all its policies, practices, and services. diversity, combat discrimination, and promote equality of opportunities for everyone.

We shall ensure that no user of any of our services will receive less favourable treatment due to gender, civil status, family status, age, religion, disability, race or ethnic background.

It is our policy to conduct all programme activity in accordance with best practice and principles of all relevant equality legislation. All training and education programmes and their related services are delivered in a manner that seeks to accommodate and embrace

We endeavour to:

- Ensure that promotional teaching materials do not use discriminatory languages and where appropriate, reflect the diversity within the centre and broader community.
- Ensure that all learners are encouraged to participate in the diverse range of courses on offer.

If you feel you have been discriminated against in any way, please talk to the Training & Education Coordinator or a member of the training and education team.

Fees

- Prior to the commencement of the programme, learners agree to pay all fees in full
- Programme fees are reviewed on an annual basis and are subject to change.
- Programme fees are non-refundable once programme has commenced. Refunds will be given at the discretion of the Adult Education office if written notice is received no later than 48 hrs prior to start date of programme .
- All programmes are run subject to sufficient demand and the formation of a viable class cohort (which shall be determined at the sole discretion

of WCPM). A refund of any fees paid will be given to applicants if the programme does not proceed.

- If a learner withdraws from their programme before completion, full cost must still be covered.
- If there are any fees outstanding at the end of a component class, learner portfolios will not be processed with QQI and will only be kept at WCPM for a maximum of two months after the submission date.
- Payment of all fees can be made by cash, electronic funds, card payment or cheques made payable to Women's Community Projects (Mullingar) Association CLG.
- A full refund will be given if a course does not go ahead.

We will consider the circumstances of individuals who may, at certain times, find it difficult to participate in courses due to financial difficulties. Please speak to the Training and Education Coordinator if you wish to discuss any difficulties in relating to course fees.

Attendance

We expect full attendance from learners. Tutors will be monitoring attendance on an ongoing basis and are asked to bring any concerns to our attention as soon as possible. This will also include learners arriving late and leaving class early. Please ensure that you fill in the **Sign In sheets** for each day with your signature. We expect learners to be on time for classes and if you are more than 20 minutes late, your tutor may decide not to allow you to join the class. Weekly attendance records will be sent to employers who have sent participants to our courses. For any classes that may take place via Zoom, your tutor will be taking screenshots for attendance and your device camera must be switched on.

All learners **MUST** take responsibility for their attendance and punctuality and show commitment to their course of study. Absenteeism is the individual learner's problem, and it is their responsibility to catch up on work missed.

If you expect to be absent from a class, it is important that you inform your tutor in advance. In the event of unexpected absence, please inform the office on 044 9344301/adult.ed@wcpmullingar.ie.

If you decide to exit the programme at an early stage, please contact the Training & Education Department to discuss this.

Should a learner's attendance drop below the required 80% (75% for the four full day courses) attendance level, which may include certified leave, the

Training & Education sub-committee will review each instance on a case-by-case basis to determine if the learner can continue with the course and/or submit a portfolio for assessment. Learners are requested not to take holidays during courses.

Induction

Each learner will complete an induction at commencement of their course during which aspects of this handbook will be explained in more detail. The Training and Education Coordinator/Assistant Training and Education Coordinator inducts all learners at the outset of each programme. Induction includes an introduction to our organisation, the awarding body of the programme and full details of the programme commenced. The main supports/services are highlighted at Induction e.g., compassionate consideration for assessment, email and telephone support. Learners will be asked to sign a **Learner Induction Confirmation Form** to confirm that they understand this Handbook and they agree to abide by WCPM's terms. Please ensure you understand the details of what is contained in the Handbook before signing the **Learner Induction Confirmation Form**.

Fire Procedures

The centre has regular fire drills to promote safe evacuation procedures. All learners will be informed of the fire procedures during the learner induction period. Please make yourself aware of the fire exits nearest to you and if you have any further questions, please ask your Coordinator or a member of staff.

Quick checklist – Fire Procedures

- On hearing the alarm, walk to your nearest exit point.
- Close all doors behind you (where appropriate)
- Go directly to Fire Assembly point (cross in the Cathedral grounds)
- Please obey the requests of the Fire Wardens and staff members
- Do not re-enter the building until you have been authorised to do so.

Health & Safety

A current health and safety statement is displayed in the Centre. It is the duty of all users of the Centre to report any breach of the health and safety

guidelines. Please contact your tutor or the Programme Coordinator if you become aware of any issues.

IT Acceptable Usage Policy

We provide access to computers and to the internet to assist learners during class and to prepare for assessment and for these purposes only. All learners using the computer suite as part of their studies are required to sign an internet policy document. Upon signing the document, learners have agreed not to use the facilities and capabilities to conduct any business or solicit any activity that is in violation of the law. Wi-Fi access is not available to learners.

Anti -Bullying Policy

WCPM is committed to providing an atmosphere for learners that is free from threat or fear. We regard any bullying behaviour as unacceptable. Bullying behaviour when conducted by an individual or a group against another includes repeated aggression which may be verbal, psychological, physical, racial, sexual gestures or innuendo and cyber (phone text). Please talk to your Tutor/Programme Coordinator if you have any concerns about bullying in the Centre.

Classroom Rules

The following rules must be always adhered to.

- Learners are responsible for their own belongings.
- Learner's belongings must not be left in such a manner to block or cause injury to other people.
- Personal belongings must not be left in classrooms or corridors when your class is finished.
- No **food or drink** is allowed in any of the classrooms (bottled, plain or still water with a sport top is acceptable)
- Classrooms must be left tidy with chairs pushed in and scrap paper binned or shredded.
- Do not tamper with equipment.
- Please report faulty equipment to your Tutor or Course Coordinator.
- Phones must be **switched off or on silent/vibrate**. If you are expecting an important call, you must inform the Tutor before class.
- Learners must be courteous to each other and to all members of the centre.

- Offensive or intimidating behaviour in any form will not be tolerated.

Learners' responsibilities

- The training centre is a smoke free zone. Please use the Smoking Shed at the side of the building. No smoking allowed at the front of the building.
- The use of any device with a camera is prohibited in or around the childcare facility.
- Only childcare staff are allowed in the children's playground when children are outside playing.
- If you have children in the centre and are leaving for any reason, you must inform the Childcare department.
- If you witness or are involved in an accident within the Centre, you must report the accident to your Tutor or Programme Coordinator.
- Due to space restrictions, the car park facilities are limited to staff only.

Facilities, Services and Supports

- **Free** counselling services to all learners and their family (contact the Training & Education Coordinator).
- Canteen – tea, coffee and snacks are available to all learners at allotted times per class to facilitate social distancing. *Staff seating is the long table on the left as you enter the Canteen and learner's tables are on the right-hand side.* Hot drinks are not permitted outside the canteen unless in a paper takeaway cup with the lid on. **Remember:** only bottled water is permitted in the classrooms.
- Elevator
- 1 Computer Room
- Conference Room
- Meeting Room
- Childcare facilities available for children from the ages 24 months (Fees may apply)
- 1 large function room
- Friendly and helpful staff

Certification

Most of our longer courses are validated by QQI. In addition, we run shorter holistically designed personal development courses. Certification for QQI awards is usually completed 2/3 times per year – e.g., February, June, and December.

Assessment

All QQI courses delivered in the centre are assessed through a combination of written examinations, assignments, projects, learner records, oral presentations, skills demonstrations, and portfolios. Assessment techniques are used to demonstrate a range of the learning objectives in each subject area. Tutors will outline the specific assessment criteria required for the component you are studying and the schedule for each element of assessment.

Portfolios

All assessment material must be presented in a single project folder only, (one per module) unless specified by the Coordinator. The learner's name, PPS no. and module title should be clearly marked on the front. Ideally, a cover page with the following information should be displayed at the front of the portfolio:

- Your full name
- Module title
- Tutor's name
- Submission date

When submitting portfolios for assessment, please ensure the following:

- All your work is presented to a professional standard.
- All assignments and projects are typed in Times New Roman/Calibri, font size 12, 1.5-line spacing, with page numbering etc.
- Each piece of work has a cover page with your personal details on it and is accompanied with the tutor's brief, signed by you.
- All work submitted is relevant and appropriate to the brief.
- All work is correctly referenced, both in text and in a Bibliography
- Memory sticks must be clearly labelled.
- No plastic pockets accepted anywhere in the folder.

When you hand in your portfolio to the tutor or the office, please ensure you have received a written receipt.

Examinations

- All learners will be informed of exam/skills demonstrations with at least one weeks' notice.
- Learners are required to sign an Exam attendance sheet prior to their exam starting.
- Once the examination has started, learners will not be allowed to enter the room so be mindful of the start time of the exam and be early so you can be organised.

- During the exam, you must not communicate with any other learner. Please raise your hand to draw the attention of your supervisor if you require something.
- All personal belongings must be left at the back of the class. All phones must be switched off during the exam/skills demonstrations.

QQI Deadlines

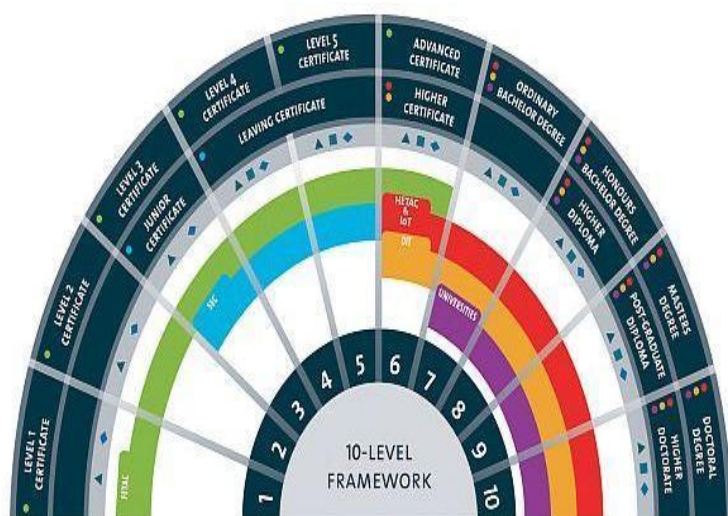
Learners who submit draft copies of their final assignments/project on time (according to the dates on the component brief) will receive feedback from their tutor. Only one draft can be submitted to tutors for feedback. Drafts may be submitted in hard copy or by email on or before the deadline date. To ensure fairness in assessment, all assessments must be submitted on/before the dates set out on the **component brief**. Assessment items submitted after the due date may be subject to a penalty unless an extension has been granted.

Extensions may be applied for through the Training & Education Coordinator and will only be granted subject to compassionate consideration and extenuating circumstances. Learners wishing to apply for a short extension must complete the application form and where feasible, provide appropriate evidence e.g., medical certificate. **Extension Applications must be made a minimum of one week in advance of the submission date.**

Late Submissions

Portfolios received one month after the submission deadline will be capped at a pass level. Portfolios received seven weeks after the above date will not be accepted for accreditation and learners will be asked to repeat the component. In exceptional compassionate circumstances, the Training & Education sub-committee will deal with each occurrence on a case-by-case basis. Exception to this rule will be components that require work placement and Garda vetting as a requirement. These may be allocated extra time by the Training & Education sub-committee.

The National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)



The Irish NFQ, established in 2003, is a framework through which all learning achievements may be measured and related to each other in a coherent way. The many different types and sizes of qualifications included in the NFQ, are organised based on their level of knowledge, skill, and competence. Because all NFQ qualifications are **quality assured learners can be confident that they will be recognised at home and abroad.**

Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) has responsibility to develop, promote and maintain the Irish NFQ. QQI also facilitates the recognition of foreign qualifications.

([http://www.qqi.ie/Pages/National-Framework-of-Qualifications-\(NFQ\).aspx](http://www.qqi.ie/Pages/National-Framework-of-Qualifications-(NFQ).aspx))

Initial major award-types

The Authority has determined the initial major award-types for each of the ten levels in the Framework, as follows:

- 10 Doctoral Degree
- 9 Master's degree and Post-Graduate Diploma
- 8 Honours Bachelor's degree and Higher Diploma
- 7 Ordinary bachelor's degree
- 6 Advanced Certificate and Higher Certificate
- 5 Level 5 Certificate
- 4/5 Leaving Certificate
- 4 Level 4 Certificate
- 3 Level 3 Certificate and Junior Certificate
- 2 Level 2 Certificate
- Level 1 Certificate

Quality and Qualifications Ireland

QQI (Quality and Qualifications Ireland) is a state agency established by the Quality Assurance and Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 2012 with a board appointed by the Minister for Education and Skills.

Their functions include those previously carried out by the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC); the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC); the Irish Universities Quality Board (IUQB) and the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI).

QQI modules are in different levels from 1 to 10. Assessment is done by way of assignments, exams, and portfolios. Your tutor will inform you of the assessment period for which the modules you are studying for will be submitted.

QQI fees, as outlined in the brochures, must be paid before assessment material will be accepted.

Exemptions/Recognition of Prior Learning

This is a flexible process designed to match the varied needs of applicants and facilitate their return to education. If you have any modules completed in the last five years, you may be able to apply for a credit for the related major award. WCPM has procedures in place for the recognition of prior accredited and/or experiential learning. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) can:

be used by the learner to gain entry to a second or higher education programme

gain credits towards an award: a learner may gain a credit towards an award using previous certification and/or attain an award

Please consult with your Training & Education Coordinator to discuss any prior learning you would like considered.

Academic Misconduct

We promote a culture which values and facilitates good academic conduct, and we have effective policies and procedures in place to help prevent, detect, combat, and deter plagiarism and any type of academic misconduct.

Plagiarism and Referencing

Plagiarism is copying information from books, websites, articles etc. without clearly identifying and referencing the origin and source of the data. **We require tutors and learners to use the Harvard system of referencing.** Your tutor will provide guidance in this area, and we also have a handout you can use for reference. Depending upon the severity of the breach of conduct, a learner may be removed from the programme and/or asked to resubmit the assessment evidence/resit an examination.

Plagiarism and Referencing

Definition:

*'To plagiarise is when you use the **ideas** or **words** of another person without giving them **explicit** credit. That 'other person' can be a published author, a person who completes assignments for others, or an internet source.*

Examples:

- *using a choice phrase or sentence that you have come across elsewhere.*
- *copying word-for-word directly from text*
- *paraphrasing the words from a text*
- *using text downloaded from the Internet.*

(The Open University, 2003)

All assignments will be accompanied by a **Plagiarism Declaration** signed by the learner to confirm the learner's understanding of the WCPM Plagiarism Policy.

The Authorship Statement

Each assignment must be accompanied by a signed Authorship Statement; this statement will confirm the learner's understanding of the Women's Community Projects (Mullingar) submission policies. No portfolio or folder will be marked unless it contains an Authorship Statement that is signed and dated by the learner.

Reasonable Accommodation

We have procedures in place to enable learners who have been prevented from undertaking an assessment activity or who feel their performance is seriously impaired because of exceptional circumstances to be allowed to complete the assessment activity on another occasion.

The following are examples of circumstances under which we would consider giving compassionate consideration to a learner:

- A physical injury or emotional trauma during a period four to six weeks previously
- A physical disability or chronic or disabling condition, or other incapacitating illness
- Recent death/ Terminal illness of a close family member
- Serious accident
- Domestic crisis
- Other extenuating circumstances.

Examples of supports include:

- Modified learner's notes, presentations, assignment briefs, examination papers.
- Readers and/or scribes
- Extra time
- Use of Assistive Technology
- Adaptive software

Please note this is only some of the support we provide, and each decision is on a case by case basis. To view our full Reasonable Accommodation policy, or for more information, please contact our Training and Education Coordinator.

Assessment Resits

Where a learner is unsuccessful on a first attempt in an assessment activity or failed to attend a scheduled assessment activity, we will provide the learner with **one** opportunity to repeat the assessment activity to achieve a pass grade. Opportunities to repeat an assessment activity are dependent on the nature of the activity and the practical and/or operational issues involved. This will be scheduled at the earliest possible time; however, this may have to be during the next available assessment period. Learners should be aware that exam fees may occur.

Results

When assessment marking is completed, a learner may ask for a result from their tutors. They will only be informed of whether they are successful or unsuccessful with the module.

After the certification period (tutors can confirm this approx. date with you before you finish), provisional results will be emailed or posted to you. It is very important that you carefully check your personal details shown on that sheet – spelling of names, PPS number, component, or major award etc. and contact the Training & Education office immediately if you find any errors. Corrections can be made free of charge within one week but after that period there is a cost with QQI.

Appeals

Learners may, on receipt of QQI module results appeal to the Training and Education Coordinator's office within 14 days (10 working days) for a review/recheck/remark. More information on our appeals procedure is available on request from the Training and Education Coordinator. Appeal Application Forms are available from the Training & Education Coordinator. A charge of €40 will apply per appeal (refunded of appeal fees if the appeal is upheld).

Programme Cessation

In the unlikely event of a course ceasing before completion, WCPM will make every effort to refund fees and/or find an alternative programme for learners.

Refunds

The following refund policy applies to all courses detailed in our prospectus: A full refund will be given to courses that do not go ahead. If a course goes ahead no refund will be given unless we have received a written notice of cancellation at least 48 business hours before commencement.

After assessment period

It is the policy of the centre not to return any portfolios to learners. Please ensure you have kept a digital/photocopy of all the work you submitted for your own personal use.

Complaints

If learners are unhappy with any other aspect of our service, please let us know. We have a complaints policy which can be used if the complaint cannot be resolved informally. We will do all we can to ensure that complaints are

resolved in a fair, timely and constructive manner. Please contact the Training & Education Coordinator for more information.

References

Please note that our Training and Education Coordinator can only provide references for a period of two years, post course completion.