



AIEB Recognition of Pre-Professional Community Work Education Programmes Guidelines

AIEB

ALL IRELAND ENDORSEMENT BODY FOR
COMMUNITY WORK EDUCATION & TRAINING

Introduction

Standards for, and recognition of, pre-professional community work education programmes¹ are key elements for ongoing development of the inclusive profession which the All-Ireland Endorsement Body for Community Work Education and Training (AIEB) seeks to promote and reinforce. The process and associated guidelines outlined here provide a practical step-by-step approach to AIEB recognition of pre-professional community work education programmes. This recognition is a key form of quality assurance. It is in addition to the accreditation that providers have already secured through the Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA), or the University involved. AIEB recognition also means that:

- the programme objectives, content and delivery reflect the *AIEB All Ireland Standards for Community Work* ²(from here on the *Standards*),
- the programmes have community work as their core concern,
- those who successfully complete such a programme at the level linked to the qualification, and have had the opportunity to acquire the associated understanding of community development and its values. (See also AIEB's Recognition Framework [in Appendix 2 below], which includes a list of indicative roles linked to the level for which recognition is given.)

In addition, AIEB recognition

- gives confidence to learners regarding the priority focus on community work as reflected in the *Standards*,
- ensures that learning outcomes have a clear community development focus,
- ensures that pre-professional programmes prepare learners for progression to professional qualifications,
- provides employers and potential sponsors with a clear indication of both standards and expectations of learners who graduate from the programme,
- gives a quality mark to providers which can be used to promote their education and training programmes with a variety of learners and organisations.

Recognised pre-professional education complements and can be a route to professional qualifications.

¹ This includes programmes delivered by Higher Education Institutions, Further Education Institutions, Education and Training Board (ETB) approved centres and community organisations at Level 5, 6 and 7 in the Republic of Ireland and Levels 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 in Northern Ireland. For AIEB recognition, programmes must be a minimum of 60 hours in length. Shorter initiatives can be included under the AIEB's CPD framework.

² *The All-Ireland Standards for Community Work* 2016, AIEB, <https://www.aieb.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/All-Ireland-Standards-for-Community-Work.pdf>

Background

The All-Ireland Endorsement Body for Community Work Education and Training (AIEB), seeks to promote and ensure standards in community work practice and education at all levels, in ways that reinforce the discipline and enhance the outcomes for all involved especially communities. AIEB provides professional endorsement for community work education and training, supports and promotes community work and community workers through the development and dissemination of standards, workforce initiatives, Continuous Professional/Practice Development (CPD), organisation of seminars and forums, and by undertaking research. AIEB's includes community work educators, practitioners, employers and funders.

AIEB is supported by Department Rural and Community Development (DRCD), is recognised in *Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Communities*³, DRCD's strategy for the community and voluntary sector. AIEB is a member of the QQI network of recognised professional endorsement bodies.

Research undertaken by AIEB in 2021 identified a wide range of community work education and training programmes at pre-professional levels, offered by a variety of providers leading to qualifications regulated by QQI in Ireland or the CCEA in Northern Ireland and Universities. A number of issues were identified, including inconsistent approaches to programme titling and content, clarity of progression opportunities, the extent to which the *Standards* informed programme design and content, and the community work qualifications and experience of staff delivering the programmes. These and other matters are addressed in the recognition process outlined below.

The Recognition process

The recognition process sets and assesses required standards in relation to the content and quality of pre-professional community work education programmes. In order for recognition processes to operate effectively, credibly and consistently across education and training provision, they need to be informed by agreed standards that build knowledge, skills and competence for the discipline, in our case in particular the *Standards*. The title needs to give a clear indication of the programme's focus on community work as outlined in the *Standards*. The programme needs to give priority in focus and content to community work principles and processes and associated contextual knowledge of the key issues facing communities and those who work with them today.

It is intended that this recognition process will:

- underpin and enhance the quality of community work education and training in line with the Standards across the island of Ireland,
- ensure a degree of consistency of learning across programmes at comparable levels,

³ *Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Communities: A Five-Year Strategy to Support the Community and Voluntary Sector in Ireland 2019-2024* <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/d8fa3a-sustainable-inclusive-and-empowered-communities-a-five-year-strategy/>

- strengthen the knowledge and skills of those active within communities,
- strengthen and enhance the status of community work as a profession and distinct discipline.

These are the three stages in the process:

1. **Application Form:** This form⁴ is completed by the provider and returned to the AIEB Secretariat. If you have any questions or would like advice or support in advance of completing the form, please contact the Secretariat at enquiries@aieb.ie.
2. **Submission Review:** This application is reviewed by an AIEB panel within two weeks of being received. If necessary, a meeting will be held to clarify some aspects.
3. **Decision:** The panel decision (a, b, or c below), with any associated conditions and recommendations, will be communicated to the applicant:
 - a) Full Recognition of a programme (5 years); maybe with recommendations for areas that could be developed. Where later modifications are made to programmes recognised by AIEB (e.g., a change in programme title or mandatory content) these should be communicated to AIEB to ensure their complementarity with the criteria and recognition decision.
 - b) Conditional Recognition of the programme (for 1 year), meaning that there will be some conditions to be met before the 5-year recognition is granted. These will be set out and once the provider has taken steps to meet these (usually by providing additional information) the panel will re-evaluate the application to decide if full 5-year recognition can be granted.
 - c) Advice to reapply indicating areas where a programme needs to be strengthened, or to consider alternative options where a programme may be more suited to another discipline or area.

Recognition applies only to the specific education and training programme for which it has been granted.

An appeals process is available and information on this will be provided for those seeking to engage with it.

The process outlined here will be reviewed after one year of operation, and all involved will be invited to contribute to that review.

The AIEB Secretariat will support education providers and will be the point of liaison before and during the process. They will coordinate the AIEB review panel and provide feedback on the outcome.

⁴This application form is in Appendix 1 at the back of these guidelines, and can be downloaded from the AIEB website www.aieb.ie.

APPENDIX 1

Please complete this form in full when applying for recognition of your programme. For further guidance contact the AIEB Secretariat at enquiries@aieb.ie

Application for Recognition of Pre-Professional Community Work Education Programmes⁵

Name of education and training provider/institution:	
Address of education and training provider:	
Name of contact person (Programme Coordinator/lead):	
Contact phone number:	Contact email address:
Details of: a) the programme title and b) the official qualification learners can acquire.	
Please indicate: a) the level at which you are applying to have the programme recognised, (see Appendix 2) b) Total course/programme time (hours) including project work.	

⁵ AIEB Recognition applies to Community Development Qualifications at the pre professional level. In Ireland, this applies to qualifications at levels 5, 6 and 7. In Northern Ireland this applies to qualifications at levels 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.

1	Background information	If you wish please add supporting information as an appendix
1a)	Aims, objectives and learning outcomes as set out in your programme materials.	
1b)	If the programme is validated, who validates it (e.g., QQI, CCEA or another awarding body) and at what level?	
1c)	Details of the delivery location as indicated in your programme materials.	
1d)	Please provide samples of the promotional materials for your programme including a weblink where available.	
2	Values and Principles	
	In what way is the programme informed by the All-Ireland Standards for Community Work and how does it promote the values outlined in them.	
3	Participants/Admission	
	What are the admission requirements if any? (please note selection processes are not a mandatory requirement for pre-professional education and training).	
4	Supports and Progression	
a)	Additional supports which are available for participants requiring them (e.g., access to technology, learning materials, library access or learning supports).	
b)	What progression opportunities/routes prospective students are made aware of?	

5	Content and Mode of Delivery	
a)	Details of the programme modules (both mandatory and optional modules) including length, as outlined in your programme materials.	
b)	What is the mode of delivery of the programme e.g., fulltime/part-time, in-person/online etc.	
6	Assessment	
a)	Outline how learners are assessed as presented in your programme materials (e.g., essays, reports, presentations, reflective logs, exams etc).	
b)	How do you present the overall outcome (e.g., simple pass, fail or graded)?	
7	Staff	
a)	Information on the qualifications and experience of the programme lead/coordinator/director and information regarding staff teaching core community development and associated modules.	
8	Monitoring and Evaluation	
8a)	How do you monitor and evaluate the programme?	
8b)	What are the mechanisms for learner feedback on the programme?	

APPENDIX 2

AIEB Recognition Framework for Community Development Qualifications			
Ireland		Northern Ireland	Indicative Employment Roles
Level		Level	Indicative Roles – initial examples ⁶
9	Professional Master's Degree (<i>endorsed professional community work qualifications</i>) Masters of Social Science in Community Work and Youth Work, fulltime/part-time, in-service, Maynooth University	7	Community Development Worker/Officer, Programme/Project/Organisation Coordinator/Manager
8	Honours Bachelor's Degree (<i>endorsed professional community work qualifications</i>) Bachelor of Social Science in Community Work and Youth Work, fulltime and part-time, in-service, Maynooth University Bachelor of Arts in Community Development and Youth Work, Technological University of Dublin, Blanchardstown Bachelor of Arts in Community Development and Youth Work, Atlantic Technological University, Castlebar	6	Honours Bachelor's Degree (<i>endorsed professional community work qualifications</i>) Bachelor of Science in Community Development, part-time Ulster University
7	Ordinary Bachelor's Degree Level 7 Certificate/Diploma/Special Purpose Awards	5	Grants/Funding Administration Support Worker/Progression to further study
6	Level 6 Major Award in Community Development/ Higher Certificates	4	Administrator Centre/Project Assistant Progression to further study
5	Level 5 Major Award in Community Development	3	Certificate in Community Development; Award in Community Development
4		2	Certificate in Community Development; Award in Community Development
3		1	Award in Community Development
			Supporting volunteering in/with communities. Progression to further study

⁶ This list will be added to over time.

