

NCGE
Lárionad Náisiúnta um Threoir San Oideachas

Guide to the Functions, Records, Rules and Practices
of the
National Centre for Guidance in Education



Freedom of Information
(Section 15 & Section 16) Reference Guide

November 2009



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1.1 Preface

Background

This ***National Centre for Guidance in Education FOI Sections 15 and 16 Reference Book – A Guide to the functions, records, rules and practices of NCGE (November 2009)*** is compiled in accordance with the Freedom of Information Acts 1997, as amended by the Freedom of Information Act 2003. All references in this manual to the Freedom of Information Act or Acts refer to the 1997 Act as amended by the 2003 Act.

The Freedom of Information (FOI) Acts, effective from 21st April 1998, establish three new statutory rights:

- a legal right for each person to access information held by public bodies;
- a legal right for each person to have official information relating to him/herself amended where it is incomplete, incorrect or misleading; and
- a legal right to obtain reasons for decisions affecting oneself.

The Acts assert the right of members of the public to obtain access to official information to the greatest extent possible consistent with the public interest and the right to privacy of individuals.

Purpose of Reference Book

This reference book has been prepared and published in accordance with the requirements of Sections 15 and 16 of the FOI Acts.

In accordance with **Section 15** of the Act, the purpose of this reference book is to facilitate access to official information held by the **National Centre for Guidance in Education**, by outlining the structure and functions of this organisation, details of the services we provide and how they may be availed of, information on the classes of records we hold, and information on how to make a request for information under the Freedom of Information Acts, 1997 and 2003.

Section 16 of the FOI Act requires us to publish a book containing:

- the rules, procedures, practices, guidelines and interpretations used by the body, and an index of any precedents kept, for the purposes of decisions under any enactment or scheme administered by us ‘with respect to rights, privileges, benefits, obligations, penalties or other sanctions to which members of the public are or may be entitled or subject under the enactment or scheme’ together with
- ‘appropriate information in relation to the manner or intended manner of administration of any such enactment or scheme.’

How to use this Reference Book

This book is divided into a number of parts:

Part 1 of the Book - **Access to Information** - explains how to access information from us under Act, and any fees that may arise.

Part 2 of the Book - the **“Our Role and Structure”** - gives a breakdown of NCGE’s internal structure and organisation under the following headings:

- **Role** – outlines the main work we do:
- **Structure** – gives details of our personnel structure.
- **Work we do** – provides a synopsis of our main activities.
- **Classes of records held** – details the classes under which we hold records.
- **Contact points**– how to contact us for assistance.
- **Rules and Practices** – this information is provided in accordance with Section 16 of the FOI Act as amended. Where we provide any scheme impacting on the public within the meaning of Section 16 of the Act, as outlined under the heading Purpose of Reference Book earlier, then the rules and practices that we use in delivery of this scheme are outlined or referenced under the Rules and Practices heading.

Appendix 1 – FOI application form to request access to records under the Act from NCGE.

Availability of this book Copies of this publication are available free to download from the homepage of <http://www.ncge.ie> or by phoning NCGE on 01-8691715/6.

1.2 How to get information

Routinely Available Information

General information about **NCGE** can be found on the Centre's website at <http://www.ncge.ie>. NCGE publications, reports and factsheets are available to download in PDF or Word format here. In addition, application forms for NCGE training programmes are available to download online. The online interactive newsletter **NCGE news** also aims to keep the National Centre's client base informed of its activities. It is distributed to approximately 2,600 email clients, including national libraries. An anniversary publication, **NCGE in Support of Guidance: Policy and Practice 1995-2005 (available online)**, serves as a record of NCGE's work over the first ten years of its existence.

Applications under the FOI Act

Under the FOI Act, anyone is entitled to apply for access to information not otherwise publicly available. Each person has a right to:

- Access to records held by us not covered by one of the exemptions in the Act.
- Correction of personal information relating to oneself held by us where it is inaccurate, incomplete or misleading.
- Access to reasons for decisions made by us directly affecting oneself.

The following records come within the scope of the Act:

- All records relating to personal information held by us irrespective of when created.
- All other records created from commencement date of the Act i.e. 21st April 1998.
- Any other records necessary to the understanding of a current record.
- Personnel records of serving staff created from 21st April 1995 and those created prior to that date where they are being used or proposed to be used in a way which adversely affects or may affect the person involved.

We will normally be obliged to respond to a request within 4 weeks. A week is defined in the Act to mean 5 consecutive weekdays, excluding Saturdays and public holidays (Sundays are also excluded, as they are not week days).

Applications under the FOI Act should be addressed to:

Freedom of Information Officer

NCGE, 1ST Floor,

42/43 Prussia St,

Dublin 7

Tel: 01 8690715/6

Fax: 01 8823817

Website www.ncge.ie

1.3 Compiling Your Application

- (i) Your application should be in writing and, if applicable, accompanied by the appropriate fee (see "fees" below). The relevant fee should be paid by cheque drawn on a bank in the Republic of Ireland, made payable to the **National Centre for Guidance in Education**.

You may use the form entitled 'Request for Information under the Freedom of Information Acts' which is widely available or OUR version of this form (see Appendix 1). This form is also available online at www.ncge.ie

If you are not using the form outlined above, then your application should indicate that the information is sought under the Freedom of Information Act.

- (ii) If you require a reply in a particular format i.e. photocopy, computer disk, etc. please mention this in your application.
- (iii) Please be as detailed and as specific as possible when compiling your application as this will assist us in dealing with it. It can also result in lesser charges being incurred on search and retrieval in cases where these fall to be paid. Where possible please try to indicate the time period for which you wish to access records e.g. records created between May 2003 and December 2003. If you have any difficulty in preparing your application our staff will be happy to assist you in this regard.
- (iv) You may be required to prove your identity, especially when seeking personal information, so you may, therefore, be asked to produce your Birth Certificate, Driving Licence, Passport or other form of identity.
- (v) Please include a daytime telephone number, if possible, so that you may be contacted quickly if it is necessary to clarify details of your request.

We are happy to provide assistance to members of the public who seek advice on making a request.

Assistance to persons with a disability

We are available to provide assistance to persons with a disability to exercise their rights under the FOI Act (e.g. accepting oral requests from requesters who are unable to read, print and/or write due to their disability, enabling the requester to inspect or have records explained to him or her).

FOI Decision Making in NCGE

The NCGE Director makes FOI Decisions in the National Centre for Guidance in Education. Any appeal must be made directly to the Information Commissioner (see details below).

We acknowledge receipt of FOI applications not later than 2 weeks following their receipt and forward them to the FOI Decision Maker for decision. The Decision Maker proceeds to deal with the request, liaise with the requester as appropriate and make a decision on the matter.

1.4 Rights of Review and Appeal

The Act sets out a series of exemptions to protect sensitive information where its disclosure may damage key interests of the State or of third parties. Where a Public Body invokes these provisions to withhold information, the decision may be appealed. Decisions in relation to deferral of access, charges, forms of access, etc. may also be the subject of appeal.

Details of the appeals mechanisms are as follows:

1.5 Review by the Information Commissioner

You may seek independent review of the NCGE decision from the Information Commissioner. Appeals in writing, and, if applicable, accompanied by the appropriate fee, (see under Fees below) may be made directly to the Information Commissioner at the address below:

Office of the Information Commissioner

18 Lower Leeson Street, Dublin 2

Tel: 01-6395689

Fax: 01-6395676

E-mail: info@oic.ie

Website: <http://www.oic.ie>

1.6 Fees

Application fees

A standard application fee of **€15** must accompany an FOI request made under section 7 of the Act for a record or records **containing non-personal information**.

A reduced fee of **€10** applies if the person making such a request is covered by a medical card.

The following requests/applications are exempt from application fees:

- (a) A request under section 7 for a record or records containing only personal information related to the requester.
- (b) An application under section 17 (right of amendment of records relating to personal information).
- (c) An application under section 18 (right of person to information regarding acts of public bodies affecting the person).

Review by Information Commissioner

A standard application fee of **€150** must accompany applications to the Information Commissioner for review of decisions made by public bodies under section 34 of the Act.

A reduced fee of **€50** applies if

- (a) the person bringing the application is a medical card holder or a dependant of a medical card holder or
- (b) the person is specified in section 29(2) i.e. a third party with the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner where a public body decides to release their information on public interest grounds.

The following applications to the Information Commissioner do not require an application fee:

- (a) An application concerning records containing only personal information related to the applicant.
- (b) An application in relation a decision under section 17 (right of amendment of records relating to personal information).
- (c) An application in relation to a decision under section 18 (right of person to information regarding acts of public bodies affecting the person).
- (d) An application in relation to a decision to charge a fee or deposit exceeding €25.00 under section 47 in respect of search and retrieval and photocopying of records (decisions in relation to the charging of fees or deposits for search and retrieval and/or photocopying of less than €25 are not subject to review by the Information Commissioner).
- (e) An application in relation to a decision to charge a fee under section 47(6A), or a fee of a particular amount under section 47(6A), on the grounds that the records concerned do not contain only personal information related to the requester or the requester is not a medical card holder or a dependant of a medical card holder.
- (f) An appeal of an internal review decision which is deemed to be refused because that decision was not made within the required time limits.

Search and Retrieval and photocopying fees

Fees may also be charged for search and retrieval of records as follows:

- In respect of personal records, fees in respect of the cost of copying the records requested will apply.
- In respect of other (non-personal) information, fees may be charged in respect of the time spent in efficiently locating and copying records, based on a standard hourly rate of €20.95.
- No charges shall apply in respect of the time spent by public bodies in considering requests.

A deposit may be payable where the total fee is likely to exceed €50.79. In these circumstances, we will, if requested, assist the member of the public to amend the request so as to reduce or eliminate the amount of the deposit.

Charges may be waived in the following circumstances:

- where the cost of collecting and accounting for the fee would exceed the amount of the fee; or
- where the information would be of particular assistance to the understanding of an issue of national importance; or
- in the case of personal information, where such charges would not be reasonable having regard to the means of the requester.

Section 47 of the FOI Act sets out the rules for applying search and retrieval fees. Fees are currently set as follows in accordance with Statutory Instruments Nos. 264 of 2003, 139 of 1998 and 13 of 1997:

- €20.95 per hour - search and retrieval
- €0.04 per sheet for a photocopy
- €0.51 for a 3½ inch computer diskette
- €10.16 for a CD-ROM
- €6.35 for a Radiograph (X-Ray)

2.1 NCGE's Role and Structure

Mission Statement

The mission of the National Centre for Guidance in Education is:

To develop and support quality lifelong and lifewide guidance provision in education and to establish and enhance collaborative efforts and best practice at local, national and international levels through being a dynamic resource centre for practitioners, policy makers and stakeholders.

The ethos of NCGE is enshrined in the principles that:

- All learners have a right to a quality and accessible guidance service
- All clients of NCGE have a right to receive a service of the highest professional standard and quality from the Centre

Our Policy on Confidentiality

We undertake to treat as confidential any information provided to it in confidence by individuals or others, subject to our obligations under law, including the Freedom of Information Act. If, for any reason, you wish that information provided to us should not be disclosed because of its sensitive nature, then you must, when supplying the information, make clear this wish and specify the reasons for the information's sensitivity. We will consult with you before making a decision on any Freedom of Information request received involving sensitive information which you may have supplied.

2.2 About NCGE

NCGE was established in June 1995 as a support agency to the Department of Education, to guidance practitioners in all education settings, and to educational institutions in the development of guidance services. The original terms of reference emphasised the Centre's role as a focal point for the further development of materials and other resources for guidance in education and as a centre through which mutual exchange of information on vocational information, and guidance provision and practice in other Member States of the EU can take place. The Terms of Reference were revised in 2003 and endorsed the Centre's developing role as an advisory body to the Department of Education and Science and its role in supporting the implementation of guidance policy. NCGE continues to act as a centre for the exchange of guidance information and practice at national and international level.

NCGE collaborates with professional bodies, management bodies, trade unions, parents and representative organisations in support of guidance practitioners in all sectors of education including:

- Support teachers in primary schools
- Guidance Counsellors in Post-Primary schools
- Careers Advisers working in third-level education
- Guidance counsellors working with adults in education
- Guidance in Youthreach and similar programmes

Funding

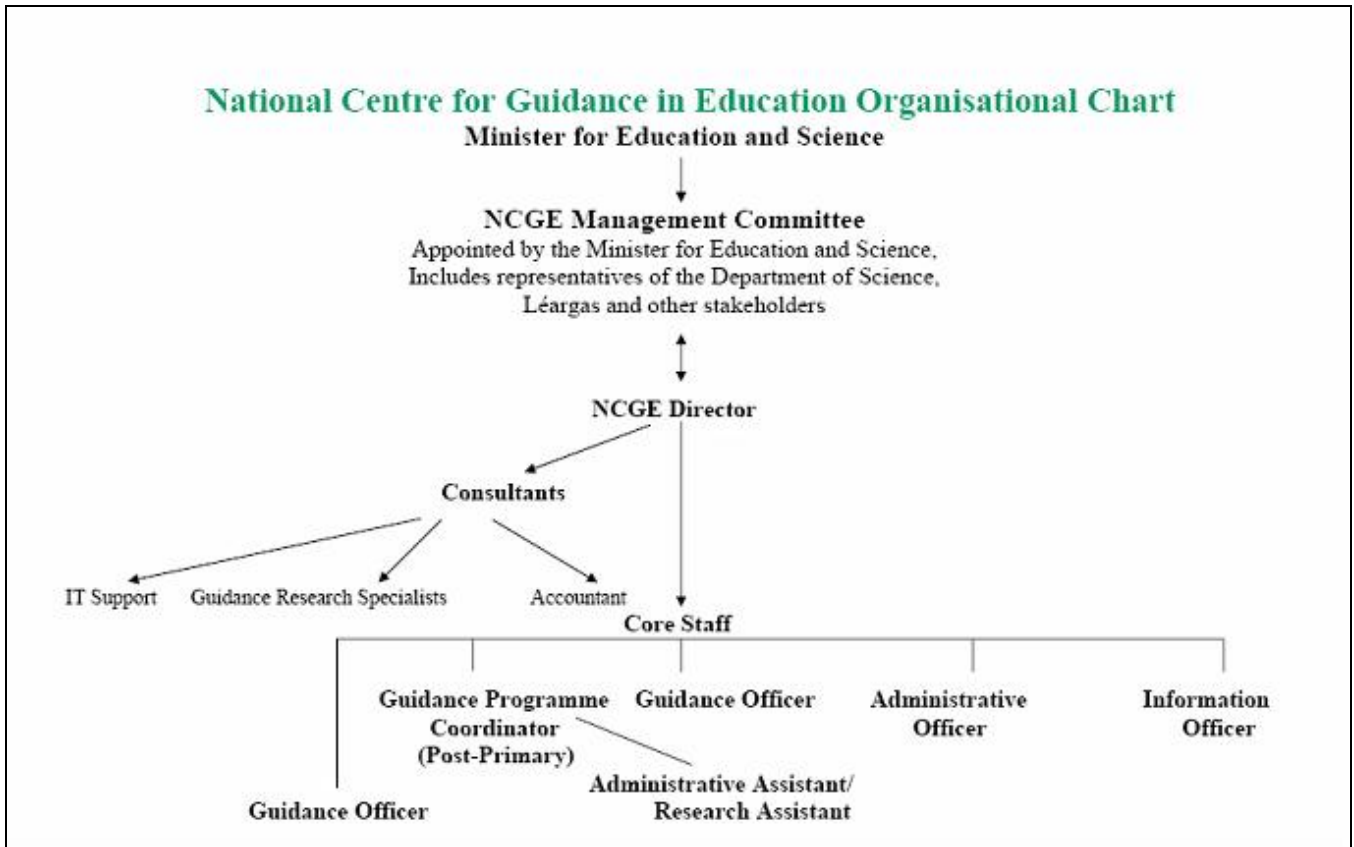
Funding for the work of NCGE initially came from the Post-Primary section of the Department of Education. Over time this funding line has broadened, reflecting the developing programme of the Centre, to include the International and Further Education sections of the Department. The European Commission provides additional resources through the transnational projects in which NCGE leads or acts as a partner. The funding from the Commission directly relates to project activity and must be matched by a proportionate amount of national resources. The success of this funding line is evidenced in the dovetailing of international concerns and national priorities in the area of guidance and the mutual benefit of guidance products and services that result.

Structure

NCGE reports to the Minister for Education and Science through its Management Committee. The Director (Acting) of NCGE is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the Centre. In addition to the Director (Acting) there are five core staff members. These

include the Guidance Programme Coordinator (Post Primary), two Guidance Officers, an Information Officer and an Administrative Officer. Consultants are engaged to manage accounting procedures, information technology and to assist NCGE in the delivery of aspects of its programme as the need arises. (See organisational chart below)

2.3 NCGE Organisational Chart



2.4 Work We Do

NCGE collaborates with the Department of Education and Science on guidance projects and informs the policy of the Department in the field of guidance. Of particular note has been NCGE's lead role in the establishment and ongoing development of the **Adult Educational Guidance Initiative**. 41 services are in existence almost nationwide, offering guidance on an individual and group basis to assist people to make the best choices for learning. NCGE facilitates the work of the services through monitoring and evaluation activities over the four phases of the Initiative. The Centre supports the projects through staff development, a framework for networking with other projects, induction and in-service training.

The Centre has also collaborated with the Department in the development of the first policy document on the definition and role of guidance in post primary schools and the development of guidelines and training in **Guidance Programme Planning** for post-primary schools.

Planning the School Guidance Programme (2004) was prepared in the light of the requirements of sections 9 (c) and 21 of the Education Act 1998. The publication aims to assist schools in developing their guidance plan as part of the overall School Plan. It is available online at www.ncge.ie

NCGE has an active input into the development and delivery of **national training programmes** in guidance. This input has been influenced by policy developments across Ireland and the EU, and by the many social and demographic changes that have taken place since 1995. The Centre in fulfilling its remit to support guidance counsellors in the area of **in-career development** has developed innovative and learner centred approaches to enable the guidance community respond to the many challenges now facing guidance in the 21st century, such as strategic planning, managing a guidance service, working with minority groups and providing guidance to adults. NCGE has rolled out a nationwide model of continuing professional development to assist schools in their guidance planning obligations - www.vle.ncge.ie.

NCGE's strategy from its establishment was informed by focused **research** and also by **surveys** and inputs from its broad client base. Reports and publications arising from this research and covering all guidance sectors are available to download on www.ncge.ie.

NCGE's support for guidance for social inclusion is exemplified in its work with European partners in the **Community Based Guidance Assistance Project**. The national impact of this project included the development in 1998 of the **Certificate in Non-Formal Guidance Skills**, accredited by, and still running in UCC. The Centre initiated the Youthstart project, whereby innovative training programmes in non-formal guidance were developed and delivered to Youthreach staff. In addition, the project included research on the provision of guidance and support services for early school leavers and young people at risk. The NCGE database, **Guidance and Support Services for Young People**, is a result of the extensive research. It is available online at www.ncge.ie

NCGE is represented on the **Youthreach Portfolio Group**, which was established by the Further Education section of the Department of Education and Science to meet the demand for professional support requested by directors of Youthreach centres. The Centre, through collaboration with a range of organisations such as the Emigrant Advice Network and AHEAD, has developed resource materials on disability issues, emigration, immigration and residency and interculturalism.

The National Centre undertakes pilot projects in the field of guidance with the assistance of EU funded programmes in education, training and employment and with EU partners. NCGE is a member of **Euroguidance** – a network of national resource centres throughout Europe whose aim is to assist transnational mobility of students and adults for education and training and to form links between the guidance systems of EU Member States. The Centre has a role in developing PLOTEUS, the European portal of learning opportunities. The valuable communication and sharing of practice between Euroguidance members contributes to the continuing development and progression of guidance methodologies and approaches across all education settings.

Another successful outcome of the Euroguidance relationship has been the **Academia** network, including NCGE's mobility project funded through the Leonardo da Vinci Programme on an annual call basis. This project, through its underpinning network of host organisations across Europe, provides guidance practitioners with an opportunity to undertake an exchange placement with another Member State.

Since 2003, NCGE has undertaken the role, on behalf of the Department of Education and Science, of providing a **guidance service for Irish students attending European schools**.

NCGE organises international **conferences and national seminars** on behalf of agencies such as the European Union, the Department of Education and Science and the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance among others. These events serve as valuable opportunities and fora to allow the pooling of best practice, common approaches and shared challenges among national and international providers and practitioners of training and guidance. The National Centre also contributes to national and international conferences and study visits by making presentations on education and guidance in Ireland.

The Centre's **publications** such as *NCGE news*, the *Guidance Counsellor's Handbook*, the *Adult Educational Guidance Handbook* and *Planning the School Guidance Programme* provide a rich resource of information, guidelines and examples of good practice for guidance practitioners.

As part of its collaboration with other agencies NCGE is a member of, and provides the secretariat to the **National Guidance Forum**. The National Guidance Forum was established in June 2004. It is a joint initiative of the Department of Education and Science and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. The Forum aims to facilitate collaboration between guidance providers and to make lifelong guidance a reality. In these roles NCGE has made a significant contribution to the proposal from the Forum for a National Learning Line and has collaborated with Forfas in coordinating a survey of the availability and dissemination of careers information on behalf of the Expert Group in Future Skills Needs.

2.5 Classes of Records

The main classes of records held in NCGE relate to all of the departments named.

Administrative Files

Accounts Files

Computer Files

Electronic Mail (email)

Financial Files

Maintenance/Technical Files

Materials/Stock Files

Minutes of Meetings

Miscellaneous (including books, journals, leaflets, videos, photographs, etc)

Personnel Files

Policy Files

Recruitment Files

Reports

Seminar/Workshop Files

Publications

Training Participants/Applicants Files

2.6 Contact Points

Office Location

National Centre for Guidance in Education

1st Floor

42/43 Prussia St

Dublin 7

Tel: 01-8690715/6

Fax: 01-8823817 **Other Fax:** 01-8690717

Website: www.ncge.ie

Staff Members

To be announced – 1st February 2009 – Director (Acting)

Linda Darbey - Guidance Programme Coordinator (Post-Primary)

Ursula Kearney – Guidance Officer (Adult & Non-Formal)

Hilary Lynch – Guidance Officer (Euroguidance, Career Related Learning and Special Needs)

Shivaun Gallagher - Information Officer

James Hogan – Office Administrator

Catriona Connolly - Administrative Assistant (Post-Primary)

Section 16 – Reference Book

Section 16 of the FoI Acts requires the publication of information regarding the rules, procedures and guidelines used by NCGE for any schemes we provide that impact on the public.

With regard to recruitment, NCGE is under the aegis of Léargas, and acts in accordance with Employment legislation. In terms of tendering NCGE acts in accordance with Public Procurement guidelines as directed by the Department of Finance.

Further details on the rules and practices of NCGE schemes:

1. CPD IN WHOLE SCHOOL GUIDANCE

Aims and Objectives

NCGE will be offering opportunities for guidance counsellors to avail of Continuing Professional Development in Whole School Guidance Planning. The next module will take place from February 2010 to May 2010. *Module 1: Reviewing Whole School Guidance* will be offered to assist guidance counsellors and their schools in engaging in the Whole School Guidance Planning Process.

At the end of this module the learner will be able to:

- Understand the nature and benefits of self reflective learning.

- Have an understanding of whole school guidance in their school context.
- Undertake a review of the current school guidance programme.
- Undertake a guidance needs analysis.
- Undertake a SCOT analysis of guidance in the school.
- Prioritise target groups and identified guidance needs.
- Apply self reflective learning to their day to day work.
- Facilitate a staff working group on school guidance planning.

1.2 Delivery

The Module will be delivered primarily through the internet. Training on using the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) will be provided. In addition, there will be three days of workshops for the Module at which attendance in full is essential. It is envisaged that the workshops will be held in a number of Education Centres around the country

1.3 Costs

A fee of €220 will apply.

1.4 Eligibility

To be a participant on the above module guidance counsellors will need to fulfil the following entry criteria:

- Be currently working in a post-primary school
- Be IT literate
- Have a qualification in guidance recognised by the Department of Education and Science as per Circular Letter PPT 12/05
http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobervlet/ppt12_05.doc
- Secure the approval of the school principal
- Access to a computer and the internet (preference will be given to schools with broadband)

IT requirements for accessing the Virtual Learning Environment

A PC with:

- Windows 2000 (Minimum), Windows XP (Preferred)
- Web Browser: Microsoft Internet Explorer 6.0 or Mozilla Firefox
- Internet Access: ISDN line (Minimum), Broadband (Preferred)
- RAM: 128 Megabytes (Minimum)
- Processor: 1 GHz (Minimum)
(this equates to a Pentium II or higher processor)

- Macromedia Flash: Version 7 (Minimum), Version 10 (Preferred)

1.5 Application Procedure

Applicants who achieve a place on the Module will have:

- Submitted a fully completed application form by post
- Fulfilled the above entry criteria
- Submitted their application form on time i.e. by the closing date

In the event of demand (eligible applicants) exceeding places on the module (the number of Centres is determined by NCGE's ability to support those Centres) random selection of applications will be used.

1.6 Location

The location of a Centre is determined by local demand (minimum of 12 participants).

1.7 Course Work

As the Module is intended to support the guidance planning process in the school there is no written examination at the end of the Module. There are however, a number of criteria that will have to be fulfilled in order to achieve HETAC certification. All learners are required to keep a learning journal (formative assessment) regarding their progress on the Module and this will be submitted in three stages to the Module Facilitator. Learners are also required to submit three reports of the work undertaken in respect of guidance planning in the school (summative assessment) and actively participate in Module activities i.e. readings and activities. In addition learners are required to attend all three workshops in full and use the VLE (formative assessment).

1.8 Assessment

Learners will be deemed to have met the required standard by achieving a mark of 50%. Learners will be advised of whether or not they have achieved the standard through a pass/fail mark.

To achieve a pass mark of 50% learners will be required to fulfil the summative and formative assessment criteria:

Summative Assessment

1. Final Report – 60%
2. Progress Reports – 40% (2 reports x 20% each)

Formative Assessment

1. Attendance at workshops
2. Completion of the Learning Journal
3. Access of the VLE

1.9 Appeals Procedure

Every support will be given to learners to ensure that they can complete the Module and its requirements. Learners will have the opportunity to discuss their results with the Module Coordinator/Module Facilitator so that they can obtain information on their overall performance. There is an appeals procedure if a learner wishes to appeal the assessment outcome of an assignment. The procedure is outlined in the learner handbook given to each participant at the beginning of the course.

Hard copies of assignments and documentation submitted by learners as part of the assessment process will be kept for two years following the Board of Examiners' meeting (the Module 3 Board of Examiners meeting). After that period the material will be destroyed. In the case of material submitted and stored online it will be removed from the environment twelve weeks after a learner has completed the Module.

1.10 Grievance Procedure

It is the policy of the NCGE that there is a rapid response to any grievances raised by learners. In general, learners are encouraged to approach the Module Coordinator to resolve problems that may arise. However, from time to time issues may arise that need more extended arrangements to ensure a satisfactory and effective solution. In such cases there is a grievance procedure and this is outlined in the learner handbook.

1.11 Advertising the Scheme

The CPD modules in Whole School Guidance Planning are advertised on the NCGE website www.ncge.ie, in the NCGE newsletter *NCGE news*, at conferences and through the Qualifax email bulletin.

2. ACADEMIA – European Exchange of Guidance Counsellors Mobility Project

2.1 Aims and Objectives

NCGE coordinates the Leonardo da Vinci funded Academia programme in Ireland. This is a long-running exchange programme enabling Irish guidance practitioners to share work practices and innovative ideas with practitioners in different countries. The programme involves guidance visits, presentations and work-shadowing.

2.2 Eligibility

Academia is open to guidance practitioners in educational sectors that satisfy the following criteria:

- Have a guidance/counselling qualification
- Work in a guidance role/guidance setting
- Have approval of the school principal/manager
- Have interest in the development of guidance
- Have intention to multiply the learning through guidance networks

Preference is given to applicants who have not travelled before as part of this exchange programme and also to those who have hosted their European counterparts in the past. NCGE makes an effort to select beneficiaries from the educational guidance sectors (adult, post-primary, non-formal education, third level).

Attendance of guidance counsellors on particular programmes is assessed according to the suitability of that programme to the setting in which the guidance counsellor is working.

2.3 Length of Exchange

Exchanges are one week in length and take place from February to May (the exact date depends on the host country).

3.4 Application Procedure

The application form can be downloaded online on the NCGE website www.ncge.ie. Applications have to be received by NCGE by the advertised closing date. Where a participant drops out, the place will be reallocated and consideration will be given to late applications first and, following on from that, applications from practitioners who have previously participated in Academia.

3.5 Funding

NCGE receives funding under the European Commission's Leonardo da Vinci programme to send a number of Irish guidance practitioners on a one week study visit to guidance services in other European countries. The bursary that each participant receives is regarded as a *contribution* to the costs of the exchange. It is the responsibility of the participant to keep their expenses to a minimum and to retain receipts for same. The participant receives 80% of the bursary prior to the exchange and the remaining 20% following submission of their report on the exchange and submission of all receipts for expense claims.

3.6 Advertising of Scheme

The Academia exchange is advertised on the NCGE website www.ncge.ie, in the NCGE newsletter *NCGE news*, at conferences such as Higher Options, through the Qualifax email bulletin and flyers to the branches of the Institute of Guidance Counsellors. Information about the programme in each country will be available on the Academia website in the October prior to the start of the exchanges. <http://www.academia-europe.eu/index/>

**Appendix 1 Sample FOI Application Form
(Section 7- Request for Access to Records held by the National Centre for Guidance in Education)**

Please use BLOCK letters

Details of Applicant

Surname: _____

First Name: _____

Postal Address: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Telephone Number(s):

Home: _____ **Business:** _____

For Office Use Only

Date FOI Request Received: _____

Identity Verified Content Confirmed

Form of identity produced:

Birth Certificate Driving Licence Passport

Other: _____

Before you are given access to personal information relating to yourself, you may be asked to produce your Birth Certificate, Driving Licence, Passport or other form of identity.

Form of Access

My preferred form of access is: *(please tick as appropriate)*

to receive copies of the records by post

other – (please specify) _____

Details of Request

In accordance with section 7 of the FOI Acts, I request access to records, which are:

(Please tick as appropriate) Personal Non-personal

(In the space provided **please describe the records as fully as you can**, as this will assist the National Centre for Guidance in Education's FOI personnel in dealing with your application. If you are requesting personal information, please state precisely in whose name those records are held. You will not normally be given access to the personal information of another person unless you have obtained the written consent of that person. **If you require more space to complete your description of records please attach a page.**)

I request the following records: _____

PLEASE SIGN HERE: _____

DATE: _____

Your application should be addressed to:

FOI Officer

NCGE

1st Floor, 42/43 Prussia St

Dublin 7

Tel: 01-8690715/6 Fax: 01-8823817

Website: www.ncge.ie

If you require any assistance in completing this form please contact the National Centre for Guidance in Education at the address above. The FOI Executive is also available to provide assistance to persons with a disability to exercise their rights under the FOI Acts (e.g. accepting oral requests from requesters who are unable to read, print and/or write due to their disability, enabling the requester to inspect or have records explained to him or her.)