



TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE NCGE MANAGEMENT OF GUIDANCE COMMITTEE

PREAMBLE

The National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE) was established under the aegis of Léargas The Exchange Bureau¹, a company limited by guarantee, in 1995, following the earlier establishment in Léargas of the Transnational Vocational Information and Guidance centre, under the EU's Petra Programme.

An NCGE Management Committee was appointed at that time by the Minister for Education for an initial three year period.

The NCGE is an integral part of the legal entity that is Léargas but has developed and operated under its own identity as NCGE.

In 2010 a new Management of Guidance Committee for NCGE has been established as a sub-committee of the Board of Léargas. The aims and objectives of NCGE have been revised and the separate roles and responsibilities of the Board and the Management of Guidance Committee have been further clarified.

AIMS OF THE NATIONAL CENTRE FOR GUIDANCE IN EDUCATION

The aims of NCGE are to:

- promote the implementation of best practice in guidance counselling in schools, centres for education, and adult education settings in accordance with the requirements of the Education Act 1998
- promote the implementation of best practice in guidance counselling in both formal and non-formal settings in accordance with national priorities

¹ Leargas The Exchange Bureau will be referred to as Leargas

- advise on policy and strategies for the promotion of a continuum of guidance in the context of lifelong learning
- provide advice, support, materials and resources for guidance counselling in education
- advise on high quality and relevant initial guidance counselling education and training and to provide Continuing professional development (CPD) for guidance practitioners
- organise the provision of guidance to Irish nationals in the European Schools
- contribute to the exchange of information on guidance counselling provision and practice with other guidance and employment services, through the National Resource Centre, (Euroguidance Centre) both in Ireland and in other Member States of the EU

In fulfilling its aims NCGE, as a constituent part of Léargas, is committed to working in collaboration and partnership with relevant stakeholders including the Department of Education and Skills, Directors of Studies, the Institute of Guidance Counsellors, the Adult Education Guidance Association of Ireland, Higher Education Authority, FAS, National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals and other Government Departments and National and Employer agencies where appropriate.

ACTIVITIES OF NCGE INCLUDE:

- Establishing a comprehensive archive of existing guidance materials available in Ireland.
- Providing professional development for guidance counsellors (ie. second level teachers with additional qualifications in guidance in accordance with Circular Ppt 12/05) through e-learning to support guidance planning in schools.
- Providing a range of guidance and careers education materials to support the work of guidance counsellors.
- Preparing, publishing and disseminating information relating to guidance.
- Undertaking and participating in programme development projects on guidance at national and transnational levels in accordance with Department priorities.
- Participating with other National Centres in the development of the European dimension of guidance provision.
- Establishing and maintaining communications and consultations with the Social Partners on issues related to Vocational Information and Guidance.

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE MANAGEMENT OF GUIDANCE COMMITTEE

The Management of Guidance Committee is a sub-committee of Léargas. The sub-committee will be responsible for the management of guidance policy, supports and delivery issues within the overall budgetary, governance and human resource framework determined by LEARGAS, The Exchange Bureau and set out below.

THE ROLE OF THE MANAGEMENT OF GUIDANCE COMMITTEE IS TO:

- Oversee and give strategic direction to the work of the National Centre for Guidance in Education in accordance with the aims of the Centre and the priority needs of the education system.
- Ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of the Centre in providing quality advice, professional development, materials and resources in guidance counselling to guidance practitioners in schools, centres for education and adult education settings.
- Manage and give strategic direction to the work of the Centre as a national focal point for the mutual exchange of information on guidance counselling practice with other guidance and employment services, both in Ireland and with other Member States of the EU.
- Provide for the operation of the Centre in compliance with statutory, administrative and public procurement requirements, and as appropriate with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies insofar as guidance policy, supports and delivery issues are concerned, and to ensure an appropriate reporting framework to Léargas insofar as the activities of the Centre, and budgetary, human resources and staffing issues are concerned.
- Report to the Department of Education and Skills on the operation of the Centre, and to provide a written report on an annual basis on the Centre's activities, including its efficiency and effectiveness in supporting best practice in guidance provision.
- Liaise on an on-going basis with the Department of Education and Skills on all matters of major policy concern which impact on the provision of guidance services to stakeholders or the effective operation of the Centre.

In particular, within the framework of accountability agreed with Léargas and set out below, the Committee will have specific responsibility for:

- prioritisation and approval of NCGE's programme of activities and budget plans
- approval of inputs concerning NCGE into Léargas strategic plans, annual reports etc.

- approval of terms of major contracts on behalf of NCGE, within the framework of accountability agreed with Léargas
- preparation of accounts and an annual report concerning NCGE's activities for Léargas for the Department of Education and Skills

While the Committee may consider and give advice and recommendations to Léargas and the Department on the following issues, these matters, subject to approval by the Department, remain a function of Léargas:

- appointment, remuneration and conditions of service of staff
- overall reporting, accounting and governance as a corporate entity
- accountability and audit framework for the overall entity
- major investments and capital projects
- agreement of leases and securing of premises
- significant acquisition, disposal and retirement of assets

FRAMEWORK OF ACCOUNTABILITY

STAFFING

Léargas will take part in the interview process with the NCGE Director for recruitment of staff and will make all appointments.

The contracts of employment to be used for staff deployed in NCGE will be in the form of contract approved by the Department of Education and Skills and the Finance and Audit Committee of Léargas

The terms and conditions of appointment of staff deployed to NCGE will be agreed by the Department of Education and Skills and Léargas.

REPORTING

The minutes of the Management of Guidance Committee will be circulated to the Board of Léargas.

The NCGE Director will be invited to present to and update the Board of Léargas on at least two occasions per annum or as required.

The NCGE Annual Report will be forwarded to the Board for adoption and inclusion in the Boards own report.

Reports from NCGE to the Department of Education and Skills will be copied simultaneously to Léargas.

Responses to Parliamentary Questions will be forwarded to Léargas for integration into Léargas responses unless otherwise indicated, when approval from the Executive Director is required prior to final submission.

GOVERNANCE

The Management of Guidance Committee will be responsible for the development of NCGE Strategic Plans, which will be forwarded for consideration to the Board of Léargas prior to submission to the Department of Education and Skills.

Annual budgets for the NCGE will be prepared with Léargas support and approved by the Management of Guidance Committee and the Board.

Any proposed significant projects costing on or more than, €10,000 will be flagged at the time the budget is being approved.

The Public Service rules in respect of procurement will be observed.

All requests for tenders will be forwarded to the Board of Léargas in advance for approval and Léargas will participate in short-listing tenders before a proposed winning tender is submitted to the Board for approval via the Management of Guidance Committee.

FINANCE

Monthly management accounts will be prepared by Léargas for approval by the Management of Guidance Finance Sub-Committee, comprising the Director of the NCGE, the Chair of the Management of Guidance Committee, the Executive Director and a representative of the Department of Education and Skills and by the Finance and Audit Committee.

Léargas will conduct a review of expenditure versus budget with the Director each quarter.

After the first such review each year any potential variances will be identified for approval by the Management of Guidance Finance Sub-Committee and the Board of Léargas.

Cheque requisitions within the overall approved budgetary framework, will be authorised with supporting documentation by the Director of NCGE and counter signed by the Executive Director of Léargas prior to processing by Léargas.

The terms for engagement of trainers, facilitators etc. will require approval in advance by the Executive Director.

ROLE OF THE NCGE DIRECTOR

The role of the Director of NCGE is to:

- develop and implement plans and strategies to achieve the aims of NCGE as established in its Terms of Reference
- lead, manage and support a team of dedicated professional and administrative staff
- ensure the effective financial and administrative management of NCGE

On a day to day basis, the job will include:

- planning and prioritising the work of NCGE staff.
- planning and implementing national and international guidance projects.
- planning and controlling the budget expenditure of the Centre
- chairing Advisory and Working Parties set up by NCGE
- liaising with Department of Education and Skills and other relevant bodies.
- progressing the objectives of the NCGE through interaction with working groups and committees
- effective representation of NCGE at conferences, seminars and events

The Director may be required from time to time to travel both nationally and internationally.

The Director will report to the Management of Guidance Committee and to Léargas.

17 November 2011