

## Whole School Guidance Planning Programme – CPD for Guidance Counsellors

The National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE) developed the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) *Whole School Guidance Planning* programme in collaboration with key stakeholders in 2004.

### Programme Aims

The aim of the programme is to assist guidance counsellors and schools in meeting the requirements of Sections 9c and 21 of The *Education Act (1998)*.

The programme aims to equip guidance counsellors and schools with the knowledge, skills and competences to undertake the guidance planning process. It takes into account the uniqueness of each school and the context in which each guidance counsellor operates. The programme will enable guidance counsellors to:

- Identify and maximise the school's resources for guidance.
- Plan a whole school approach to guidance.
- Develop a plan based on the needs of your school.
- Interact with other guidance counsellors and share information on practice.
- Develop new skills and reflective practice.
- Learn at your own time, pace and location.

The programme enables the Centre to address its remit in assisting schools to implement guidance programme planning and to facilitate the career development of guidance practitioners in response to current and emerging needs.

### Programme Delivery

The programme consists of three modules and each module is typically of 12-14 weeks duration:

Module 1 – *Reviewing Whole School Guidance*

Module 2 – *Action Planning*

Module 3 – *Evaluation*

The programme is delivered through a **blended learning** approach i.e. a combination of workshops and e-learning. This form of delivery was chosen as it was recognised that guidance counsellors and schools have access to computers and the internet and it affords guidance counsellors and schools the opportunity to participate in a module at their own time, pace and location. Workshops reinforce the support and learning opportunities provided to guidance counsellors via the e-learning platform.

Workshops and course content are facilitated using an **action research** approach and guidance counsellors are expected to develop reflective practice as part of the process. Learners will be

encouraged to reflect on, review and evaluate their practice as well as the current school guidance programme. More information on action research is available from the website [www.jeanmcniff.com](http://www.jeanmcniff.com).

### **Programme Requirements**

A number of criteria have to be fulfilled in order to successfully complete a module and receive HETAC accreditation. Guidance counsellors need to:

- Attend all three workshops in full.
- Use the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).
- Submit two Progress Reports and a Final Report at specified intervals throughout the programme. Each Progress Report should be no more than 1000 words long and the Final Report should be no more than 2000 words long.
- Submit a Learning Journal at specified intervals throughout the programme.
- Achieve a pass mark (over 50%)

### **Programme Accreditation**

On successful completion of the programme (i.e. all 3 modules) guidance counsellors will receive a HETAC *Special Purpose Certificate in Whole School Guidance Planning*. This award is a level 8 award of the National Framework of Qualifications ([www.NFQ.ie](http://www.NFQ.ie)). Guidance counsellors who successfully complete a module on the programme will receive a HETAC *Single Subject Certificate*. This Certificate is not an award but will indicate the title of the module and the ECTS credits (10 for each module) attached to each module.

### **Eligibility to participate**

To take part in the programme a guidance counsellor should:

- Be currently working as a guidance counsellor in a post-primary school.
- Have a qualification in guidance recognised by the Department of Education and Skills as outlined in *Circular Letter PPT 12/05*. Guidance counsellors with qualifications other than those listed will need to provide evidence that the Department has approved their qualification for working in a post-primary school.
- Have good IT skills i.e. be able to use Microsoft Word, Email and the Internet.
- Have the approval of the school Principal.
- Have access to a computer and the internet (preference will be given to schools with broadband).

Those who wish to participate in Module 2 must have successfully completed Module 1: Reviewing Whole School Guidance or submit a portfolio to NCGE demonstrating that (s)he has achieved the learning outcomes for Module 1.

### **IT skills**

The Virtual Learning Environment is an easy to navigate website. Participants should, however, be comfortable using email and writing reports using Microsoft Word or similar applications. NCGE communicates with learners through email and learners should check their emails regularly for updates

### **Support to Learners**

The programme team provides support to learners on an ongoing basis. In addition as the programme follows an action research approach all learners are encouraged to choose a critical friend from the group to support their participation on a module. Guidance counsellors who have participated on a module to date have indicated that the support of peers at each of the workshops has been a huge benefit of participating in the programme.

### **Centre Location**

Centre locations are chosen based on the preferences of the majority of applicants, the availability of suitable facilities and the location's accessibility. Applicants are asked to specify their location preference on the application form.

### **Substitution/Cover**

Appropriate cover for those taking part in the programme should be organised at school level. Information on this is provided in **Circular letter PPT01/03**

### **Module fee**

The fee for participating on a module is €220.

### **Feedback from previous participants**

*Excellent presentation of materials... Good advice re do-ability and a very positive 'can-do' approach*

*I feel much more comfortable and capable of progressing*

*I have greater confidence in my work and role as a guidance counsellor*

*Very practical and very engaging.*

*The various approaches/methodologies are excellent and very friendly presenters.*

*Group discussion was very effective. I learned so much from the other guidance counsellors*

*I feel I have a plan for developing a guidance plan – previous to this I felt quite lost*

*I am more organised in my work and I am beginning to get to grips with my guidance plan – it is less frightening.*