

write on for work

Guidelines for
web-based basic
skills support
in organisations
that help people
into work



NALA

National Adult Literacy Agency
Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Litearthachta do Aosaigh

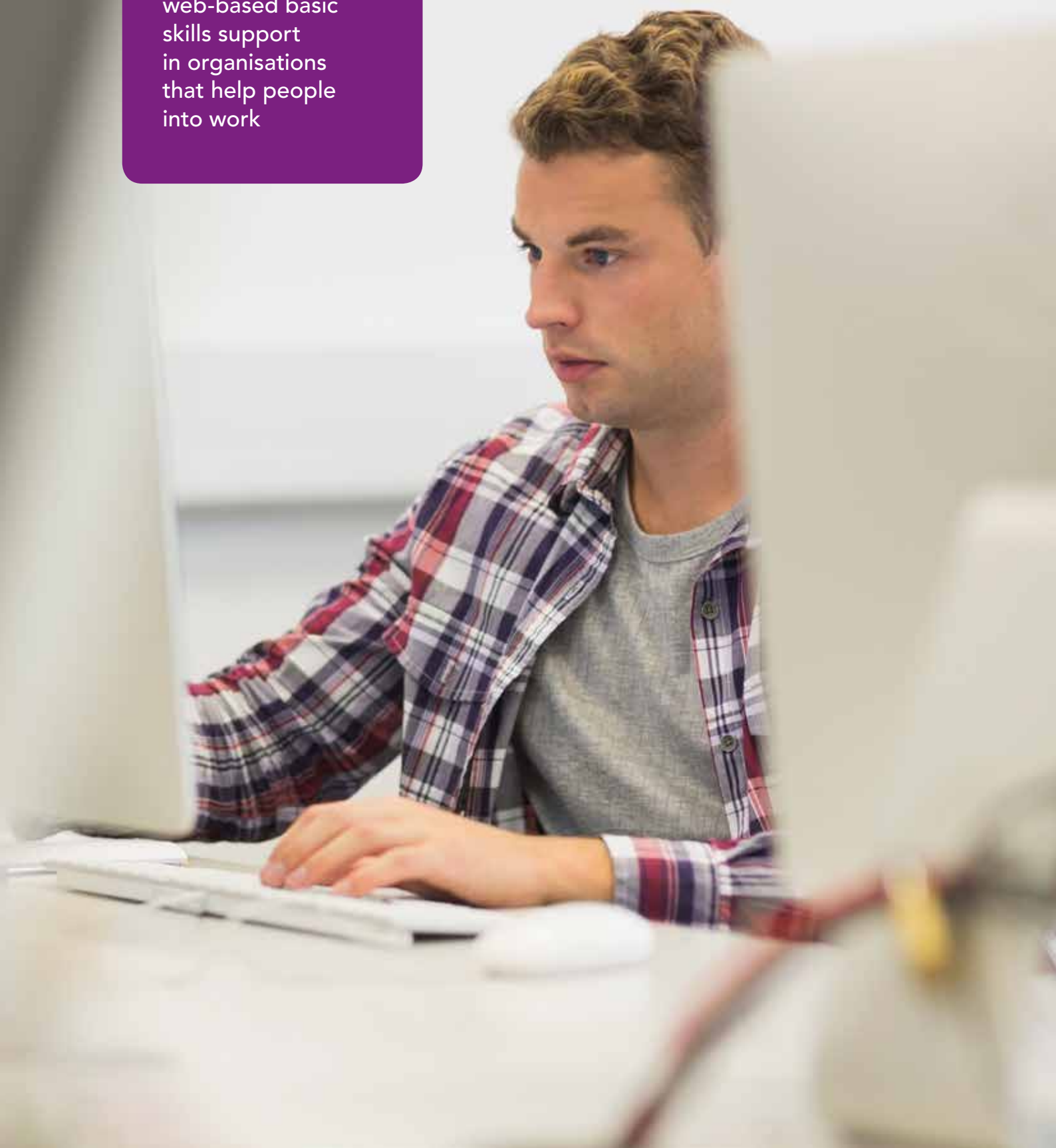


Table of contents

Guidelines for web-based basic skills support in organisations that help people into work	3
--	----------

Introduction	4
---------------------	----------

The Guidelines

Guideline 1 - Become literacy-aware and literacy-friendly	13
--	-----------

Guideline 2 - Put literacy on the learning agenda	14
--	-----------

Guideline 3 - Carefully assess learner's work skills	15
---	-----------

Guideline 4 - Integrate employability skills throughout the activation process	17
---	-----------

Guideline 5 - Make literacy meaningful to individual learners	19
--	-----------

Guideline 6 - Make technology the means and the end	20
--	-----------

Guideline 7 - Build opportunities for accreditation	21
--	-----------

Guideline 8 - Chart progress and outline next steps	22
--	-----------

At a glance: www.writeon.ie supports for the stages of activation	23
--	-----------

List of acronyms and abbreviations	25
---	-----------

Glossary of terms	32
--------------------------	-----------

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Test your literacy awareness	30
--	-----------

Appendix 2 - 14 Steps to Accreditation	31
---	-----------

Appendix 3 - Centre Registration Process	32
---	-----------

Appendix 4 - Terms and conditions of using www.writeon.ie	33
--	-----------

Appendix 5 - www.writeon.ie for current employability and activation programmes	34
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Guidelines for web-based basic skills support in organisations that help people into work.

Supporting literacy, numeracy and ICT in organisations

Guideline 1 - Become literacy-aware and literacy-friendly

Guideline 2 - Put literacy on the learning agenda

Integrating literacy, numeracy and ICT in activation programmes

Guideline 3 - Carefully assess learners' work skills

Guideline 4 - Integrate employability skills throughout the activation process

Guideline 5 - Make literacy meaningful to individual learners

Guideline 6 - Make technology the means and the end

Guideline 7 - Build opportunities for accreditation

Reviewing progress

Guideline 8 - Chart progress and outline next steps

Introduction

There is a strong correlation between low literacy, low educational attainment and unemployment. On the flip side, many activation programmes are designed on the assumption of people having stronger literacy and numeracy skills than exists in the population. This limits the opportunities for people who are unemployed with literacy and numeracy difficulties. NALA is compiling these guidelines with a view to enhancing labour market activation programmes to better serve these people.

What are these guidelines?

Unemployed adults who have gaps in their basic skills or no qualifications often take a long time to get back into jobs. These guidelines show how NALA's Distance Learning Service and website, www.writeon.ie, can help you to support someone to improve their basic skills and job prospects.

Who are the guidelines for?

The guidelines are for staff who work with unemployed adults who need help getting a job and who have gaps in their basic skills. They will be of particular interest to staff of local partnerships, local development companies and local employment services. The guidelines are also relevant for Department of Social Protection (DSP) frontline staff and other service providers working in the area of employment activation.

There are nine guidelines in this book.

- Guidelines 1-2 show how DSP, local partnerships and other organisations can use NALA's services to become more accessible to people with gaps in their basic skills.
- Guidelines 3-7 show how staff delivering activation support programmes can use www.writeon.ie to develop and certify basic skills while supporting employability skills.
- Guideline 8 will also be useful to staff in DSP offices who review the DSP Personal Progress Plans (PPPs) developed for the unemployed.

NALA's services are free to learners. Our Distance Learning Services are also free to member organisations. The website, www.writeon.ie, can support an individual throughout the activation process: from initial assessment to accreditation and progression to further education or work. Our website has a range of learning options at QQI Levels 1 to 4 that allow adults to take control of their learning and work independently. Our tutors can help people working at different levels on a wide variety of topics and qualifications.

Here are a few examples of how we can help you.

Example 1

A busy Local Employment Service (LES) prepares people for employment through a 2-week course

- » Individuals' literacy, numeracy and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills can vary widely. www.writeon.ie supports tutors to manage a multi-level group.
- » People can complete an online employability award at Level 3 that complements and enhances LES provision.
- » Literacy, numeracy and ICT skills practice are integrated throughout all awards. This may be helpful for adults with qualifications who may have gaps in these skills.
- » Becoming familiar with the resources on www.writeon.ie lets adults continue online learning after they have left the LES.

Example 2

A small training provider copes with a range of programmes with increasing demands on limited staff and structures

- » The skills checker on www.writeon.ie lets learners select their level and interests, supported by the tutor.
- » Learners work on their own, supporting each other as needed.
- » The tutor addresses issues one-to-one or in small groups if issues are common to several people.
- » www.writeon.ie provides the quality assurance for QQI accreditation to be completed and verified online (and credited to the learning provider). The website also offers progression paths.

Example 3

An inner city job club has a drop-in facility for career preparation that helps unemployed adults with family care demands

- » www.writeon.ie allows a blended learning environment to function smoothly and respond to diverse needs and schedules.
- » Learners' work is stored in their account on www.writeon.ie and can be easily retrieved with a personal password. Learners can access their accounts at home and continue working independently outside the job club.
- » www.writeon.ie motivates adults to work towards accreditation.
- » A tutor facilitates learning, as required, either with the individual or with small groups.

Why are literacy and numeracy important for work and for unemployed adults?

People who have missed out on schooling and getting qualifications are at high risk of becoming long-term unemployed. This means they don't get the satisfaction of working and earning a living, and society misses out on their contribution to our collective wellbeing.

Research by the Economic and Social Research Institute and NALA has shown that making appropriate activation strategies available to those with literacy and numeracy needs is very worthwhile.¹ The study found that providing 'work-specific training for people with literacy and numeracy needs helps enhance employment prospects – up to three times the average.' The study points to the highly successful, cost-effective nature of activation strategies that integrate adult learning and preparation for employment.

Ireland has set specific targets for raising the level of skills that adults bring to the workplace. The goal is to reduce the number of people with qualifications at or below Level 3 from 27 percent to 7 percent of the potential workforce by 2020. This means providing support with adult learning, especially with the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communications technology. According to the OECD Adult Skills Survey 2013, an estimated 550,000 people need to improve their skills in one or more of these areas².

The government has a 50-point plan to fight long-term unemployment, and the Further Education and Training Strategy 2014-2019 (SOLAS, 2014)³ prioritises unemployed people. Increasingly, the goals in relation to learning and work are being addressed together⁴. NALA's online learning platform – www.writeon.ie – can help achieve these goals.

1 Kelly, E., McGuinness, S., and O'Connell, P. (2012) Literacy, Numeracy and Activation among the Unemployed, Dublin: ESRI & NALA.

2 Central Statistics Office (2013). PIAAC 2012: Survey Results for Ireland from the OECD's Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies. Dublin: Stationery Office. See also <https://www.nala.ie/literacy/literacy-in-ireland>

3 SOLAS is the Further Education and Training Authority and the strategy can be accessed at <http://www.solas.ie/docs/FETStrategy2014-2019.pdf>

4 See Sweeney, J. NESC (2013). A Strategic Review of Further Education and Training and the Unemployed – A Review for the Department of Education and Skills.

Literacy awareness

We suggest you check your own awareness about literacy and numeracy by trying the test in Appendix 1 (page 30). This may tell you that there is more to basic skills than the mechanical processes of reading, writing, spelling, maths and using information technology.

Dealing with text and numbers today extends across a wide range of media and contexts far beyond simple pen-and-paper exercises. Technological developments mean we are all continually adding to our literacy skills.

Literacy is socially situated. This means it varies from one situation to another.

Literacy involves listening and speaking, reading, writing, numeracy and using everyday technology to communicate and handle information. It also has aspects of personal development – social, economic, emotional.

Adult literacy work starts with the needs of the individual. It is concerned with improving skills and knowledge, but also with developing self-esteem and confidence.

Adult literacy enables people to understand and reflect critically on their circumstances with a view to exploring new possibilities and initiating constructive change.

NALA (2014), Literacy-aware Guidelines for Intreo Staff, Dublin: NALA

Making sure that literacy needs are fully taken into consideration in every aspect of the activation process is a skilled task and crosses over more than one area of responsibility. It begins with the initial contact with each person who comes through the Department of Social Protection (DSP) and continues until someone moves into work or further education and training (FET).

If you are working in an activation programme, it will be helpful for both you and the people you are supporting to be clear about different aspects of basic skills needed for work.

NALA provides literacy awareness training that can be specially matched to your work context: DSP frontline staff; advice and guidance workers; case workers; Local Employment Services (LES); job clubs; Education and Training Boards (ETBs); SOLAS, and adult learning and employment workers.

Our website, www.nala.ie, contains a wide range of resources and our freephone and freetext facilities offer support and information for providers as well as those with unmet learning needs.

To get more information about any aspect of NALA's work or to find the best learning support for you or someone else:

Organisations should:	Phone	NALA on 01 412 7900
	Email	info@nala.ie
Individuals should:	Phone	NALA on 1800 20 20 65
	Freetext	'LEARN' to 50050
	Log onto	www.writeon.ie

How can www.writeon.ie help adult learners?

Since 2008, adult learners have been able to improve their literacy, numeracy and IT skills online using www.writeon.ie. Each learner has a personal learning account with a unique password. They can choose to learn at a time and place that fits their lifestyle and there is no limit to the frequency and duration of online learning sessions.

Each person's learning is tracked and stored. Ultimately, it can be submitted for recognised QQI awards at Levels 2 and 3. There are also some learning opportunities at Level 4 for those who want additional practice at that level. The structured modules can be completed independently, with the support of a telephone tutor or within a face-to-face learning environment.

The website can also provide certification for existing sets of skills and knowledge for which a person has no recognised qualification. This is called recognition of prior learning or RPL.

An activation programme is a potential learning situation where www.writeon.ie can be combined with other forms of learning to support people with literacy, numeracy and ICT needs. These learning situations may include programmes run by a local development company or LES such as the Back to Education Initiative (BTEI), Local Training Initiatives (LTIs) and employability partnerships offering Level 3 courses where progression to Level 4 could be incorporated.

NALA can provide free training in the use of www.writeon.ie in how it can be blended into employability programmes and activation supports.

By far the best way to explore the potential of www.writeon.ie is to sign on as a user and complete the modules yourself⁵.

On the website's learning menu, you will find 12 awards at Level 2 and 14 at Level 3. Apart from these single awards, you can accumulate credits for the Certificate in General Learning at Levels 2 and 3. In addition, Certificates in Employability and ICT are available at Level 3.

⁵ See www.writeon.ie and the 14 Steps to Accreditation in Appendix 2



Table 1. QQI component awards available on www.writeon.ie

Level 2 Award Title	Level 3 Award Title
Reading	Communications
Writing	Mathematics
Listening and Speaking	Application of Numbers
Personal Decision Making	Functional Mathematics
Setting Learning Goals	Computer Literacy
Quantity and Number	Internet Skills
Pattern and Relationship	Digital Media
Shape and Space	Career Preparation
Data Handling	Health and Safety Awareness
Quantitative Problem Solving	Personal Effectiveness
Using Technology	Personal and Interpersonal Skills
Computer Skills	Managing Personal Finances
	Self Advocacy
	Event Participation

The following pages give you a brief overview of www.writeon.ie and some initial guidelines on how you can use it in the context of activation.

These guidelines are based on previous experience, and specifically on a successful partnership between NALA and Southside Partnership LES. In September 2014, 92 learning centres were registered to use www.writeon.ie, including nine ETBs, and a total of over 40,000 individual learning accounts. Appendix 3 and Appendix 4 show how organisations can register to use www.writeon.ie.



The Guidelines

Guidelines for web-based basic skills support in organisations that help people into work.

When a learner works on a learning module online, they are simultaneously developing and practising computer skills, using literacy skills and using a range of soft skills which are highly relevant for the workplace. These soft skills may include decision-making, problem-solving, self-management and motivation, organisational skills and planning. In a blended learning situation, the learner can also practice other employability-related interpersonal and communication skills in cooperation and collaboration with peers.

Below, we present some of the ways that www.writeon.ie can be used in activation programmes.

- **Guidelines 1-2** outline how DSP, local partnerships and other organisations can use www.writeon.ie to integrate awareness of literacy and numeracy into their processes.
- **Guidelines 3-7** are for people delivering activation programmes.
- **Guideline 8** will also be of interest to staff in DSP offices reviewing Personal Progress Plans (PPPs).

Guidelines for web-based basic skills support in organisations that help people into work

Supporting literacy, numeracy and ICT in organisations

Guideline 1 - Become literacy-aware and literacy-friendly

Guideline 2 - Put literacy on the learning agenda

Integrating literacy, numeracy and ICT in activation programmes

Guideline 3 - Carefully assess learners' work skills

Guideline 4 - Integrate employability skills throughout the activation process

Guideline 5 - Make literacy meaningful to individual learners

Guideline 6 - Make technology the means and the end

Guideline 7 - Build opportunities for accreditation

Reviewing progress

Guideline 8 - Chart progress and outline next steps

Below, we discuss each guideline in more detail and explore how www.writeon.ie can help in its implementation. However, these are suggestions only. How you use the website will vary from context to context and person to person.

Guideline 1

Become literacy-aware and literacy-friendly

Not everyone has the same degree of social or educational privilege and so some people approach DSP and the job market with fewer advantages than others. The activation process, and the programmes that are designed to meet the needs of longer-term unemployed people, allow for a new approach to unmet employability needs.

The use of www.writeon.ie puts a fresh face on learning in general and literacy in particular. Online learning allows people to leave behind much of the negative baggage they have carried since formal schooling and become part of a vast world of technology and lifelong digital learning.

Those who lack confidence in their basic skills can also lack self-esteem. They often come to the activation process with dread, unsure if they will be treated with understanding and respect. It is important that staff bear this in mind and are aware that every encounter can be a positive step in this new learning opportunity.

Staff who are literacy-aware will be conscious of their own attitudes and will take language and literacy into account in all signage, material resources and dealings with people. If you are to be really useful to someone, you need to understand the literacy context as thoroughly as possible. In this way, you can 'literacy-proof' the environment where people are welcomed and have their initial meetings with staff, and provide knowledgeable support.

DSP and other activation staff can use www.writeon.ie, literacy awareness training and NALA's guidelines for Intreo staff to build their understanding of what literacy is about and how it is constantly changing (for instance, it now includes multi-media communications).

You, too, can log on, get a password and try out what is available to an online literacy learner. Explore the frequently asked questions (FAQs), the help section, the multi-media resources and the links to various literacy guides for those working with adult learners. You can see for yourself the difference in learning at QQI Level 2 and Level 3 and so offer really useful advice and encouragement to new learners. It is a suggestion that you complete an award yourself so that you really understand the process.

NALA has some useful publications to help you become more literacy-aware. You can find these and other information on www.nala.ie.

Guideline 2

Put literacy on the learning agenda

Individual and group engagements with unemployed people provide opportunities to review past learning and identify skills that people may not even know they have. For example, someone may not know that personal and interpersonal skills are something that can be accredited and used to enhance their readiness for work. They may not know that texting is part of an accredited course they could complete online with tutor support.

The menu of awards on www.writeon.ie is a good base for discussing strengths and potential gaps in someone's skills. They provide the chance to raise the issue of literacy and numeracy, show that these are concerns for other adult learners also and that there is an accessible, unthreatening way to deal with these gaps. Some people who have skills but no qualifications may be motivated to know that www.writeon.ie will recognise their existing skills. A formal process for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is an integral part of www.writeon.ie.

Independent distance learning will not suit everyone but, where appropriate, people can be helped to sign up to the website and get a password. There is video guidance for this on the website. In addition, there is a 'voice' facility on the website which enables people with poor reading skills to become relatively autonomous in using the site.

Introducing www.writeon.ie early in the activation process allows staff to raise the issue of literacy levels and present resolutions that do not stigmatise the person. Ideally, this should be part of an introductory induction programme so that the positive experiences of addressing unmet literacy needs are maximised.

Guideline 3

Carefully assess learners' work skills

Accurately assessing an adult's work skills can be complicated. There are many opportunities for mistaken assumptions. For example, it is possible to have a Junior or Leaving Certificate and still have gaps in aspects of literacy and numeracy.

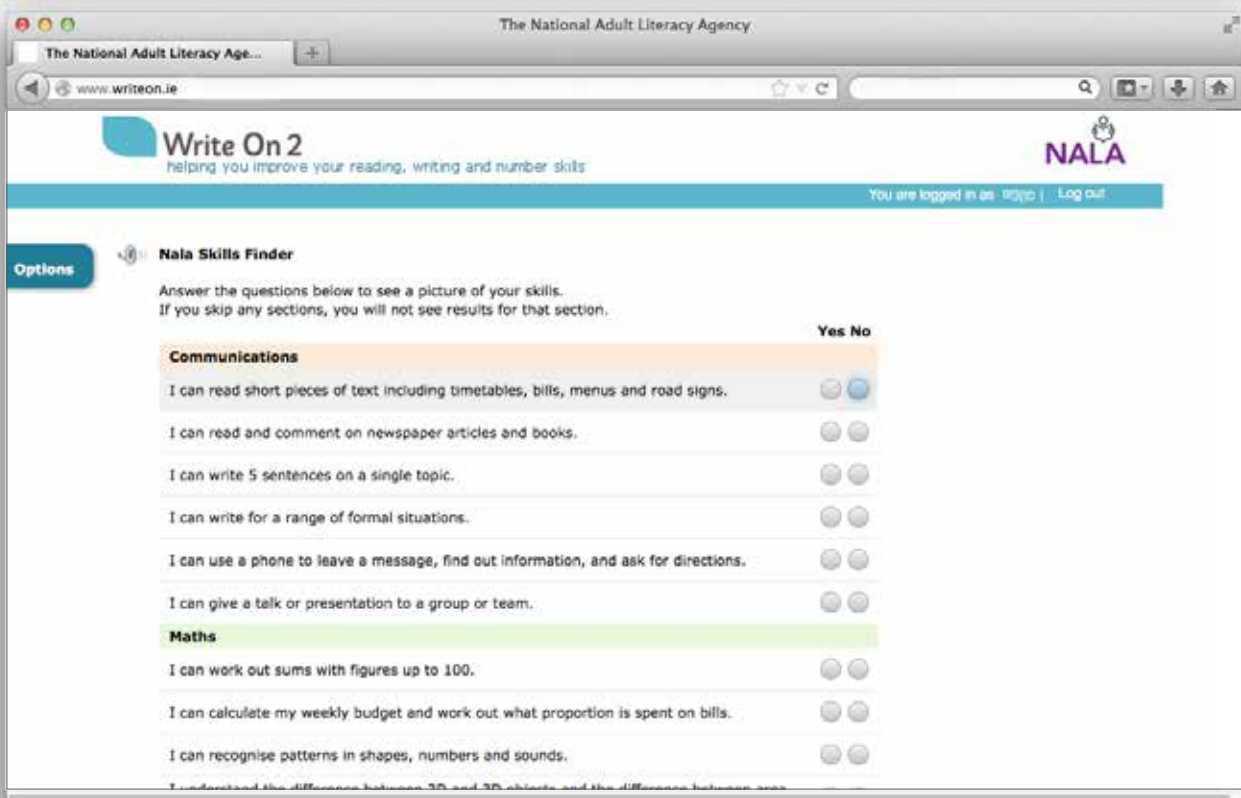
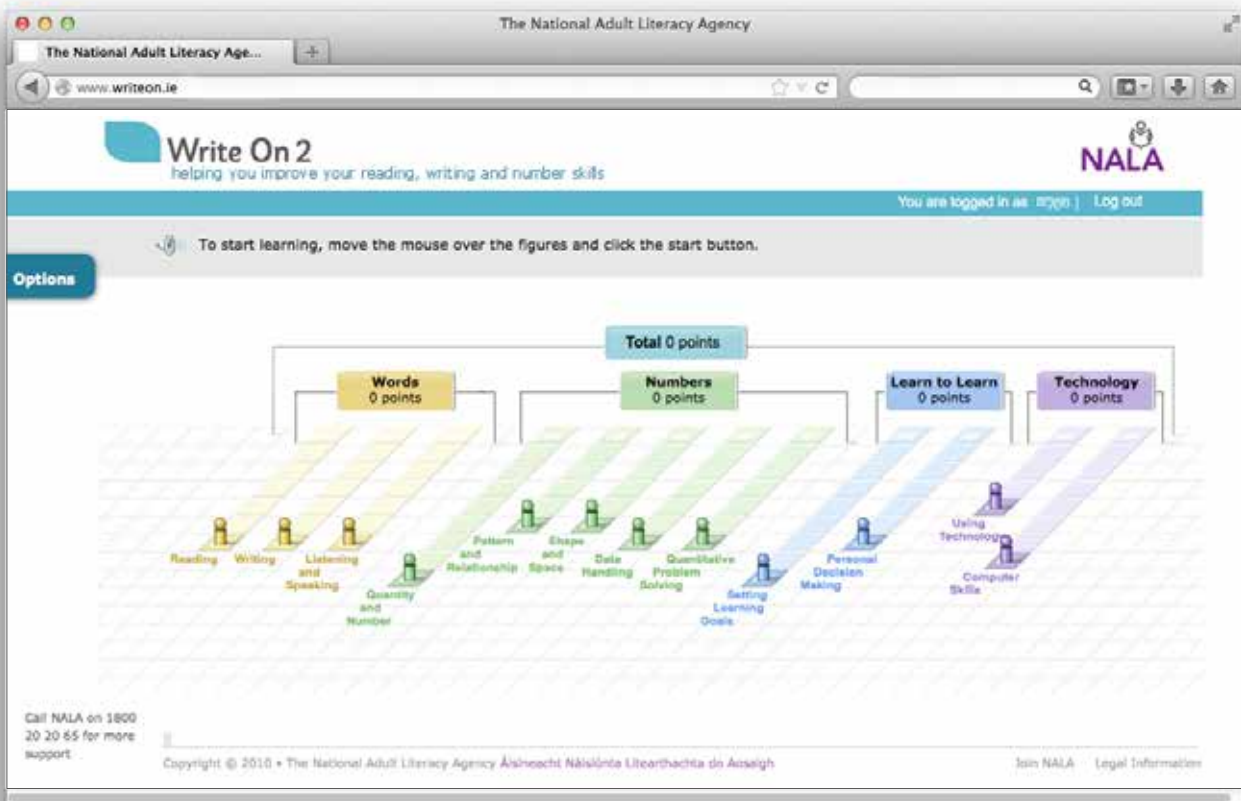
The website offers the adult learner the chance to get Level 3 Certificates in ICT and Employability. This can affirm and extend existing skills. The assessment process needs to be part of a conversation between the adult and whoever is helping them to build a Personal Progress Plan (PPP). This plan will become their map for the way ahead and needs to be as accurate and detailed as possible. Ideally, for basic skills, it should be a process negotiated between the adult and a literacy specialist to whom they have been referred.

The online skills checker on www.writeon.ie might be a useful tool in a negotiated initial assessment that aims to cover a wide range of skills for work. It will suggest whether someone should begin at Level 2 or Level 3 in a particular subject area. Often adults prefer to begin at the lowest level and build confidence through their success before tackling more difficult material. We all have gaps in our skills and this is a good approach that puts the learner in control of their progress. Learning is not just cognitive and the online learning approach allows learners to manage the individual and emotional aspects of learning that tutors and support workers can only guess at.

Each subject area on www.writeon.ie has an initial assessment tool that gives precise, contextualised guidance to make sure that the levels and content are accurately matched to the learner. NALA telephone tutors can support the learner with this assessment. It is then up to the learner to share this information with DSP and others.

Most Level 3 awards require the learner to create a portfolio where goals are set and progress recorded. This document is completed by the learner and contains comments from tutors and evidence of verification. As well as a portfolio for individual subjects, the site contains a planning tool that allows learners to develop their own learning plan and update it as they progress. Both the personal learning plan and the portfolios are relevant to the PPP.

“The online skills checker on www.writeon.ie might be a useful tool in a negotiated initial assessment that aims to cover a wide range of skills for work.”



Guideline 4

Integrate employability skills throughout the activation process

Employability refers to someone's readiness for work. Building a profile of this readiness to work is the purpose of activation. The profile includes qualifications, previous work experience and evidence of skills.

It also includes what are called 'soft skills' and these are less easy to measure. Soft skills cover attitudes and behaviours that make us sympathetic and effective employees or colleagues who understand the work role within the business context.

Unemployed adults already have many of these soft skills. They have learned to set goals, manage their time and resources, solve problems, be creative and think laterally when faced with unexpected difficulties. By affirming these existing skills for employability, you can help motivate an unemployed adult with low self-esteem. This affirmation should start from the beginning of the activation process. Our website, www.writeon.ie, builds on the adult learner's existing employability skills and accredits them in a way that can be shown to employers.

As well as the awards achieved, the process of online learning requires self-motivation, self-management and staying power. These traits are all relevant to the workplace. Both the content and the process of using www.writeon.ie are constantly developing employability skills and these can be highlighted and reinforced in the blended learning situation.

A number of modules on www.writeon.ie are directly relevant to job seeking in that they involve CV writing, interview practice and verification, job search skills, applying for jobs, letter writing, form filling and other exercises.

The website has a number of ways, including verified portfolios of work, that give evidence of both accredited learning and soft skills in the area of employability. The website provides a QQI Major Award at Level 3 in Employability.

“The website has a number of ways, including verified portfolios of work, that give evidence of both accredited learning and soft skills in the area of employability.”



Guideline 5

Make literacy meaningful to individual learners

Literacy is built into all learning at Levels 1, 2 and 3 and both QQI standards and www.writeon.ie reflect this. People who have been unemployed for some time may need to polish up skills that have been infrequently used, as well as learn new ones. Reading, writing, speaking and listening are embedded in all the modules on www.writeon.ie so learners can choose the topics in which they are interested. This is true of numeracy too where content can be related to family, sport, health, technology, money or work depending on the individual's interests.

As part of the blended face-to-face and online learning process, learners can have the support of a literacy tutor by phone or in person when needed. Learners can proceed at their own pace and systematically build their skills by working through the carefully staged programmes of study.

An online approach lets people address gaps in their particular skills set and every aspect of www.writeon.ie lets learners build and practise their literacy skills. Most importantly, an online approach dispels the stigma often associated with traditional adult literacy learning. The dread of errors made on paper is removed as the facility to 'try again' allows the learner to make repeated attempts with no sense of failure.

Research on NALA'S Distance Learning Service shows that male learners who are reluctant to tackle literacy issues in public have been reintroduced to learning through using www.writeon.ie. Either independently or with the support of a telephone tutor, men with unmet literacy issues have built up the confidence to join a group through initial work with a telephone tutor.⁶

The resource section of the website is a reservoir of multimedia materials on aspects of literacy, numeracy and IT including YouTube clips, puzzles, information and work sheets. These are all graded at various QQI Levels to allow learners and tutors to select the most appropriate materials. Learners find that they are almost seamlessly improving literacy, technology and specific subject areas without any of the negative associations of previous unhappy schooling.

⁶ Hegarty, A. and Feeley, M. (2010) *NALA Distance Learning Services: Providing effective stepping-stones for adult literacy learners*, Dublin: NALA.
Hegarty Ann and Maggie Feeley (2011) *Connected! - Improving literacy and computer skills through online learning*, Dublin: NALA.

Guideline 6

Make technology the means and the end

Employability, basic skills and technology are all interwoven in the content and process of using www.writeon.ie. The IT skills that are increasingly indispensable in the workplace and wider society are both the means of learning and the end result of learning using www.writeon.ie.

A video introduction tells learners how to use the website and there is a 'voice' facility that reads all text aloud, if users want this. Beginner readers can follow passages of text on screen while listening to a voice reading the text as they access items of news, current affairs, history and culture. This voice facility is also available as a support in the 'lessons' that lead to QQI awards.

Modules in computer skills, internet skills and digital media allow learners to build both knowledge and technical skills in mobile phone use, video making, screen grabbing, uploading files, emailing and generally managing the online communication and learning process. Learners create and gather information in their online portfolios and record and extend their goals in online personal plans.

In the blended learning process, tutors can expand learning to other online resources as the transferrable skills of online learning open up almost endless potential.



Guideline 7

Build opportunities for accreditation

Activation suggests movement and accreditation is one way to record and provide evidence of learners' progress. Online learning is an individualised process in terms of acquiring and accrediting new skills and knowledge. The employability service provider may choose the core modules but learners in a group can then choose different modules according to their needs and interests.

The reduced pressures afforded by online learning have been shown to remove barriers for adults and free them to proceed through the stages of learning towards accreditation. Getting the recognition of a national award is motivating and produces its own momentum.

Using www.writeon.ie makes the accreditation process easy for both learners and providers. The traditional administrative costs surrounding building and verifying portfolios of material for accreditation are minimised. Those providers who may struggle to match stringent QQI quality assurance demands around verification and progression gain significant support by using www.writeon.ie.

NALA provides this service free of charge for learners. However, this does not mean that organisations involved in blended learning that use www.writeon.ie lose any credit for the number of learners with which they work or their learning outcomes. In the context of output-related funding, www.writeon.ie offers activation service providers an effective and efficient way of reaching and verifying targets and accessing funding. (See Centre Enrolment Process and Terms and Conditions at Appendix 3 and Appendix 4.)

Guideline 8

Chart progress and outline next steps

Activation requires participants to provide evidence of their willingness to look for work and improve their work-related skills. The automated record-keeping and evidence collection that is built into the website facilitates this tracking of progress and achievement.

Learners control all records and decisions about their availability. The online process also empowers learners to participate in and to some degree direct the process of personal progression and planning.

Learners become adept at setting their own goals and recording progress by using the planning facility on www.writeon.ie. This is where they record their aspirations in terms of targets and timing. They can also seek tutor support in this process. As they move through areas of learning and set new goals they can update their personal records accordingly. Learners may decide to share these records with others as evidence of their activation activity.

This process of becoming an active participant in their own progress towards employment has the potential to redress the sense of powerlessness that many adults may feel when sent to an activation programme. Along with other activation programme skills development, they find that www.writeon.ie offers a concrete mechanism for taking control of their own learning and progress towards employability. Modules such as Self Advocacy and Personal Effectiveness are particularly relevant here.

In a report on activation in Ireland, the ESRI commented: 'We need to shift from a provider-driven system ... to a system that puts the unemployed client at the centre and responds to his or her specific education and training needs.' Using www.writeon.ie as part of a blended learning situation allows this vision to become a reality.

At a glance

www.writeon.ie supports for the stages of activation

Organisational issues	www.writeon.ie	Other supports
Preparation and Support		
Staff training and development Guideline 1: Become literacy-aware and literacy-friendly	Distinguishes between literacy levels; understanding the range of skills; CPD options; access resources; www.writeon.ie.ie Help section, FAQs	Literacy awareness and www.writeon.ie.ie training; NALA publications; www.nala.ie/tutorscorner Guidelines for Intreo staff (NALA)
Initial meetings; motivation / shared goals Guideline 2: Put literacy on the learning agenda	Menu of topics; options for learning; introduction to www.writeon.ie.ie; signing up - getting a password; Voice resource; video guide to site use	Accessible information for learners; contact details for support; meeting peer learning group
Activation programmes		
Initial planning - PPP Guideline 3: Carefully assess skills for work with learners	Online Skills Checker Individual module assessments; personal learning plan; learner decides level	NALA Freephone; Phone 1800 20 20 65 Text: LEARN to 50050 Telephone tutor support; Literacy specialists in ETB Adult Literacy Services.

Organisational issues	www.writeon.ie	Other supports
<p>Employability training</p> <p>Guideline 5: Integrate employability skills throughout activation process</p>	<p>Level 3 single awards</p> <p>Employability award;</p> <p>portfolio of employment preparation; soft skills; CV; telephone interview</p>	<p>LES expertise;</p> <p>employer networks;</p> <p>work experience;</p> <p>Employment mentor;</p> <p>job clubs; tutor support for portfolios</p>
<p>Basic Skills learning</p> <p>Guideline 6: Make literacy meaningful to individual learners</p>	<p>Level 2 and Level 3 single and major awards; flexibility about context: family; sport; health; money; work; technology; learner led content and pace</p>	<p>Telephone tutor</p> <p>Face to face tutor</p> <p>Peer support</p> <p>Links to local ALS</p> <p>Integrating Literacy: Guidelines for FET centres (NALA)</p>
<p>Digital literacy learning</p> <p>Guideline 7: Make technology the means and the end</p>	<p>Technology awards at Levels 2 and 3; integrated digital literacy process; uploading files; links to video resources; sending texts; email and video are all part of www.writeon.ie.ie</p>	<p>www.basicsskills.com</p> <p>www.jobsireland.ie</p> <p>www.inou.ie</p> <p>Access to www.writeon.ie staff and verifiers</p>
<p>Accreditation</p> <p>Guideline 8: Build in opportunities for accreditation</p>	<p>12 awards at Level 2</p> <p>14 awards at Level 3</p> <p>Major awards at Levels 2 and 3</p>	<p>www.qqi.ie</p> <p>NALA telephone support with evidence and accreditation</p> <p>Statements of evidence</p>
Accountability		
<p>Reviewing progress</p> <p>Guideline 9: Chart progress and outline next steps</p>	<p>Automated record keeping; staged progress through levels; personal online portfolio; shared only with learner consent</p>	<p>Tutor and LES advice and guidance;</p> <p>Liaison with ETB and FET;</p> <p>Tutor verification and support</p>

List of acronyms and abbreviations

ALS	Adult Literacy Service
BTEI	Back to Education Initiative
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CTC	Community Training Centre
DLS	Distance Learning Service
DSP	Department of Social Protection
ESRI	Economic and Social Research Institute
ETB	Education and Training Board
EU	European Union
FET	Further Education and Training
FETAC	Further Education and Training Awards Council
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IT	Information Technology
LES	Local Employment Services
LTI	Local Training Initiatives
NALA	National Adult Literacy Agency
PPP	Personal Progression Plan
QQI	Quality Qualifications Ireland
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SOLAS	The Further Education and Training Authority
VTOS	Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme

Glossary of terms

Term	Meaning
Accreditation	Accreditation is the formal recognition of what a student has learned. In Ireland, accreditation is usually linked to the National Framework of Qualifications
Activation	Refers to the public sector's work with jobseekers to help to support them get back into employment
Adult Literacy Service	A learning service run by the Education and Training Boards where you can talk to someone about a literacy or numeracy issue, be assessed and join a literacy or numeracy course or group. There are 16 Education and Training Boards in Ireland
Blended learning	This refers to a mixing of different teaching and learning modes or techniques. For example, a blended learning approach can combine face-to-face tuition with computer-based learning
Back To Education Initiative (BTEI)	This initiative provides part-time further education courses for anyone who has left full-time education. The initiative prioritises those with a Junior Certificate or someone with no qualifications
Community Training Centres (CTCs)	CTCs are organisations in communities that look after the training and employment needs of early school leavers, especially those aged between 16 and 21
Continuous Professional Development (CPD)	This is the way employees maintain or improve the knowledge, skills and personal qualities they need in their professional lives
Distance learning	Distance Learning occurs when learners and tutors are separated by space and / or time. For example, a student can follow an online course from their home while their tutor is in another location. NALA has a distance learning service (www.writeon.ie)
Employability	Refers to a person's readiness for work
Employability programmes	Refer to training or educational courses and supports designed to improve a person's readiness for employment and work
Employability skills	Refer to the range of skills you need to get a job. They include literacy, numeracy, ICT and personal development competences

Initial Assessment	The process for identifying learner needs, strengths, goals and barriers, finding a starting point for tuition, and for developing learning programmes
Intreo	Intreo is a public service. Intreo offices provide information for employment and income supports. You can get help if you are looking for a job, information on vacancies and income support all in the one place
Local Training Initiatives	These are initiatives that provide full-time work experience and training. They are run by local development companies, local employment services and community groups
Multi-agency partnership	This is where different organisations agree to share skills and expertise to achieve agreed objectives
Multi-level group	Refers to learners in a group with different needs, strengths and levels
Numeracy	A skill that involves the competent use of everyday mathematical skills and the confidence to manage the mathematical demands of real-life situations
Personal Progression Plan	A plan agreed by the Department of Social Protection and a jobseeker to prepare the jobseeker to find employment
Recognition of prior learning (RPL)	A process used to evaluate skills and knowledge acquired outside the classroom to recognise competence against a given standard or award
Skills Checker	This refers to a tool on www.writeon.ie developed by NALA. By answering a series of questions about their skills, learners can get feedback that identifies specific strengths and weaknesses and can inform learning plans
Stakeholder	A person or group with an interest (a stake) in the actions or policies of an organisation. A stakeholder may affect the actions or policies or be affected by them
Summative Assessment	Summative assessment is done at the end of a period of teaching and learning. It looks at how well learning objectives have been achieved. It also confirms whether learners' work meets standards for certification
Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme	The Vocational Training and Opportunities Scheme (VTOS) provides a range of courses to meet the education and training needs of unemployed people over 21 years of age
www.writeon.ie	An interactive learning website developed by NALA that provides assessment, learning programmes and supports, including the option of certification at Levels 2 and 3 on the National Framework of Qualifications

The Appendices

Appendix 1	
Test your literacy awareness	30
Appendix 2	
14 Steps to Accreditation	31
Appendix 3	
Centre Registration Process	32
Appendix 4	
Terms and conditions of using www.writeon.ie	33
Appendix 5	
www.writeon.ie for current employability and activation programmes	34

Appendix 1

Test your literacy awareness

Are the following statements about Irish adult basic skills in 2014 true or false?

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Ireland is above the EU average in adult literacy and numeracy | T | F |
| 2. Adults aged between 25 and 34 have the lowest levels of literacy | T | F |
| 3. 42% of adults score below Level 1 in the use of IT | T | F |
| 4. Over 550,000 adults (aged 16-65) are at or below Level 1 in literacy | T | F |
| 5. Level 1 is the equivalent of Junior Certificate | T | F |
| 6. Adults with unmet literacy and numeracy needs benefit least from activation strategies | T | F |
| 7. Men and women score much the same in literacy | T | F |
| 8. There are many types of literacy and they are constantly changing | T | F |
| 9. Literacy levels are not linked to earnings or job security | T | F |
| 10. Levels of basic skills needed for work are rising all the time | T | F |

Answers

1.F; 2.F; 3.T; 4.T; 5.F; 6.F; 7.T; 8.T; 9.F; 10.T.

Appendix 2

14 Steps to Accreditation

- Step 1:** Learners log on to writeon.ie.
-
- Step 2:** Learners select an area of study.
-
- Step 3:** Learners complete an initial assessment for each award they wish to work towards.
-
- Step 4:** The website shows an individual learning plan based on the outcome of the initial assessment.
-
- Step 5:** Learners complete learning if they need to. Those who pass the initial assessment proceed directly to Step 6. These learners are identified as Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) learners.
-
- Step 6:** Learners complete a summative assessment online.
-
- Step 7:** Learners complete additional assessment activities in an online portfolio for those outcomes that cannot be assessed by elearning alone. These activities involve real-world tasks with evidence uploaded into the portfolio.
-
- Step 8:** NALA verifies work and contacts learners to let them know they can apply for award.
-
- Step 9:** Learners fill in an online form, confirm they have completed the work on their own and submit the form for the award.
-
- Step 10:** NALA completes an internal verification process where learners' work is checked and verified to ensure it meets agreed standards and follows assessment procedures.
-
- Step 11:** NALA completes an external authentication process where an external authenticator reviews evidence provided by learners.
-
- Step 12:** Learners whose submissions have not been accepted can appeal the results.
-
- Step 13:** NALA approves the results and requests awards from QQI.
-
- Step 14:** NALA receives the awards, checks them and posts them to the learner or centre.
-

Appendix 3

Centre Registration Process

How to register your centre to use **www.writeon.ie.ie** for accreditation:

1. Centre must be member of NALA.
2. Corporate membership allows two named centres to use the website.
3. Additional centres can be added to a membership for €25.
4. Individual Centre - Group membership for €50.
5. Staff attendance at training in the use of **www.writeon.ie** is mandatory.
6. All centres need to complete a registration form providing contact details and acceptance of terms and conditions.

Appendix 4

Terms and conditions of using www.writeon.ie

- All passwords will be recorded and maintained securely by the named centre contact person.
- No learner's password will be revealed to another learner.
- Only one learner will access www.writeon.ie using any given password.
- The centre will try, as far as is practical, to ensure that submissions are the work of a single learner.
- The centre will make sure that all work submitted meets the required standard.
- The centre will make sure that all information supplied by learners is accurate.
- Centre-based tutors will make themselves aware of NALA's interpretation of QQI Learning Outcomes and support learners accordingly.
- Centres will make sure that their learners do not use insulting or inappropriate language while using the forum and chat functions.
- No accreditation fee shall be charged for any learner using www.writeon.ie.

Appendix 5

www.writeon.ie for current employability and activation programmes

Approach to www.writeon.ie	Programmes and applications	Action required and Actor/s
Independent learning by unemployed people	Work placements TÚS JobBridge Traineeship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Department of Social Protection supports and promotes approach » Build learning goals and learning time into placement agreement » Learner registers on www.writeon.ie » NALA supports learners and provides certificates direct to individuals.
Blending www.writeon.ie with course programme and processes	Employability programmes, LES / Partnership programmes and Local Training Initiatives Training for people with disabilities Education and Training Development courses; Community programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Provider registers to use www.writeon.ie, attends training and plans blended learning delivery » Learner registers on www.writeon.ie » NALA supports learning and accreditation process, including RPL (Recognition of Prior Learning) and provides reports and certificates to provider
Blending www.writeon.ie with course programme and processes	ETB programmes: Back To Education Initiative (BTEI), VTOS, Youthreach, Community Education, Adult Literacy Community Training Centre programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » ETB registers to use www.writeon.ie attends training and plans blended learning delivery » Learner registers on www.writeon.ie » NALA supports learning and accreditation process, including RPL (Recognition of Prior Learning), provides reports and certificates to ETB
Integrate literacy and blended learning using www.writeon.ie if required	Apprenticeships Specific skills courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Provider adopts approach of integrating literacy into programmes. See NALA's Integrating Literacy: Guidelines for FET Centres » NALA provides training and supports in integrating literacy, and on www.writeon.ie - if required as a support



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