

National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA)

Quality Assurance Manual

Policies and Procedures



National Adult Literacy Agency

Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Litearthachta do Aosaigh

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Abbreviations

AGS	Adult Guidance Service
CAS	Common Awards System
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
DES	Department of Education and Skills
DLS	Distance Learning Service
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
ETB	Education and Training Board
ETBI	Education and Training Boards Ireland
EU	European Union
FET	Further Education and Training
FETAC	Further Education and Training Awards Council
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
HEA	Higher Education Authority
LWN	Learn with NALA
NALA	National Adult Literacy Agency
NCVA	National Council for Vocational Awards
NCVO	National Council for Voluntary Organisations
NFQ	National Framework of Qualifications
NQAI	National Qualifications Authority of Ireland
PAYE	Pay As You Earn
PLSS	Programme Learner Support System
PPSN	Personal Public Service Number
PQASSO	Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations
QBS	QQI Business System
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
TTS	Text to Speech
VAT	Value Added Tax

Glossary of terms

Asynchronous eLearning

A self-paced learning experience that allows learners to go through courses at their own pace.

Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC)

FETAC is a former statutory awarding body for further education in Ireland. Established in 2001, FETAC acted as an awarding body under the Qualification (Education and Training) Act 1999. FETAC was the successor to the National Council for Vocational Awards (NCVA). In November 2012, Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) replaced the Council.

Formal assessment

Formal assessment uses standardised measures to assess how well a learner has mastered learning outcomes. Formal assessment in NALA is carried out through LWN and includes both initial, formative and summative assessment.

Formal learning

Formal learning refers to learning which takes place through programmes of study or training that are delivered by education or training providers, and which attract awards (NQAI, 2005, p.3).

Formative assessment

Formative assessment is a key part of teaching and learning. It does not contribute to the final mark given. It informs how the learning progresses by giving feedback.

Informal assessment

Informal assessment does not use standardised measures. It is used to measure performance and is used to inform what the tutor and learner will work on next.

Informal learning

Informal learning refers to learning that takes place through life and work experience. (It is sometimes referred to as experiential learning.) Often, it is learning that is unintentional and the learner may not recognise at the time of the experience that it contributed to his or her knowledge, skills and competences. (NQAI, 2005, p.3)

Initial assessment

Initial assessment is used to identify learner's strengths and gaps in skills and knowledge. Initial assessment takes place at the beginning of a learning programme in order to inform a starting point for learning.

National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)

The National Framework of Qualifications is a system of ten levels. Each level is based on nationally agreed standards setting out what a person is expected to know and be able to do following a process of learning.

Non-formal learning

Non-formal learning is learning that takes place alongside the mainstream systems of education and training. It may be assessed but does not normally lead to formal certification. Examples of non-formal learning are: learning and training activities undertaken in the workplace, voluntary sector or trade union and in community-based learning (NQAI, 2005, p.3).

PLSS

The Programme Learner Support System (PLSS) is an information technology system which is a joint initiative between SOLAS and the Education and Training Boards. NALA is also part of this system. PLSS has three main elements:

- fetchcourses.ie;
- the National Programme Database; and;
- the National Course Calendar.

The three databases provide a way to collect data on Further Education and Training Programme outputs, outcomes and performance.

QQI Business System (QBS)

QQI Business System (QBS) is the online service provided by QQI to facilitate the making of awards to learners. Authorised providers and centres can log into the QBS and enter learner, programme and result data. When it has been fully quality assured as valid and accurate, the provider can submit it for certification by QQI.

Recognition of prior learning (RPL)

RPL is a process by which prior learning is given a value. It is a means by which prior learning is formally identified, assessed and acknowledged. This makes it possible for an individual to build on learning achieved and be formally rewarded for it. The term 'prior learning' is learning that has taken place, but not necessarily been assessed or measured, prior to entering a programme or seeking an award. Prior learning may have been acquired through formal, non-formal, or informal routes (NQAI, 2005, p.2).

Registered LWN Centre

A centre that is registered with NALA to use LWN for certification. Current centres include ETBs, Disability Providers, Homeless organisations, Community Education Providers and Special Schools.

Summative assessment

Summative assessment demonstrates the extent of a learner's success in meeting the intended learning outcomes of a module or programme. Summative assessment determines the final mark given for the module. It is normally, though not always, used at the end of a unit of teaching. Summative assessment is used to quantify achievement, to reward achievement, to provide data for selection (to the next stage in education or to employment). For all these reasons the validity and reliability of summative assessment are of the greatest importance.

Synchronous eLearning

A type of eLearning that is done in real-time with a live instructor.

Learn with NALA (LWN)

NALA's eLearning website www.learnwithnala.ie/.

1. Governance and Management of Quality

1.1 Governance and Management of Quality Policy

Policy area	1. Governance and Management of Quality
Document reference number	NALA/GMQ02
Version	02
Document drafted by	NALA
Date policy adopted	07 September 2018
Date review adopted	07 December 2022
Date of next review	Q4 2025

NALA is committed to striving for excellence and assuring quality in all its activities. This policy aims to describe the quality assurance system and strategies in place in NALA in order to achieve high quality, and to monitor the effectiveness thereof.

Aim of policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure that:

- All NALA employees, Board members and ambassadors are aware of and support the agency's approach to quality.
- An appropriate quality assurance system (a set of quality assurance policies and procedures) is in place to realise the vision and mission of the agency.
- Structures are in place to monitor and review the effectiveness of such policies.

Who is covered by this policy?

This policy applies to the NALA Board, CEO, all employees and representatives.

Definitions

Quality: Quality and Best Practice is one of NALA's core values. At NALA Quality is interpreted as a way of saying how good or bad something is.

Quality Assurance: Quality Assurance is best described as 'making promises and providing evidence of keeping them'. Quality Assurance refers to the process of

evaluating/assessing the extent to which the individual/team/agency is delivering on its promises.

Roles and responsibilities

NALA's Board determines its strategic direction and ensures that it achieves its mission and goals whilst maintaining a high quality service to all clients.

The CEO, reporting directly to the Board, is the most senior quality manager. They are in attendance at Board meetings and the relevant subcommittee meetings. The CEO has responsibility and authority over all areas of the organisation. The CEO is also responsible for preparing materials for Board consideration and for preparing materials for every strategic planning process.

The Finance and Corporate Services Manager, Innovation Manager and Communications Manager are responsible for assuring quality is considered and applied to all areas of work carried out by their teams.

The Governance and Compliance Officer is responsible for co-ordinating the on-going update and review of all organisational policies and procedures by NALA's Board and subcommittees.

All NALA employees are responsible for assuring quality in their individual areas of work.

1.2 The Board

NALA's Board, working through the CEO, is ultimately responsible for quality assurance in NALA.

Make-up of NALA's Board

The Board is made up of four elected officers (chairperson, vice-chairperson, honorary secretary and honorary treasurer) and 10 elected non-officer members. The Board may co-opt up to two additional members.

Officers serve for two years and may be re-elected for a further two years. After four consecutive years as an officer, they must resign or seek re-election to the Board. Further

detail regarding nominating and electing Board members can be found in ‘Constitution and Procedural Rules’.

The members of the Board are entitled to fix the quorum necessary for the transaction of business and they have fixed the quorum at five.

Purpose and essential functions of the Board

The main purpose of a Board is to take overall responsibility for an organisation and how it operates.

The schedule of matters reserved for NALA’s Board’s consideration is as follows:

- Approval of NALA’s strategic plans and annual operating and capital expenditure budgets;
- Approval of Projects outside the scope of the strategic plan;
- Approval and oversight of Litigation;
- Appointment/Removal of Subcommittee Chairs and Members;
- Appointment/Removal of Auditors;
- Approval of borrowing/finance facilities
- Approval of contract with term exceeding one year or financial liability of NALA exceeding €60,000;
- Annual Review of Risk and Internal Control;
- Appointment/Removal of CEO
- Approval of new staff positions and;
- Approval of Policies

The Board of directors is ultimately responsible for NALA.

1.3 Literacy and Staff Policies and Governance Subcommittee

The Literacy and Staff Policies and Governance subcommittee support NALA’s Board in assuring quality by monitoring and supporting policy development and overseeing:

- the development and revision of NALA Staff policy
- literacy policy development
- the organisation’s governance and succession planning.

This responsibility is delegated to the subcommittee on behalf of NALA's Board. The subcommittee consists of no fewer than three directors appointed by the Board.

The main duties of the staff and policy subcommittee include, but are not limited to, the following:

Literacy, Policy and Provision:

- To identify and advise in relation to critical issues affecting Adult Literacy
- To make recommendations to the Board for approval regarding policy objectives priorities that can be achieved by NALA
- To monitor and recommend improvements to the processes by which members are included in the role of policy-formation in NALA
- To support policy and advocacy work in NALA
- To oversee development of collaborative partnerships with third parties.

NALA Staff Policies and Procedures:

- To advise the Board with respect to policies and procedures relating to the management of staff and volunteers
- On behalf of the Board to liaise with the CEO and Governance and Compliance Officer regarding amendments to appropriate policies and procedures for the working environment and development of staff.

NALA Staff:

- On behalf of the Board, review and consider the job descriptions for any new internal positions and make recommendations to the Board on same.

Governance and Succession Planning:

- Advising the Board on NALA staff policies and procedures, the composition and skills of the Board, and appropriate succession planning within the Board and within NALA.

Responsibility for advising the Board on all other matters of governance and compliance rests with the Audit, Risk and Finance Subcommittee.

Further detail relating the Literacy and Staff Policies and Governance is available in the Terms of Reference for the Literacy and Staff Policies, and Governance Subcommittee.

1.4 Audit, Risk and Finance Subcommittee

The Audit, Risk and Finance subcommittee assist NALA in its quality assurance efforts by ensuring that there is a framework for accountability; for examining and reviewing all systems and methods of control, both financial and otherwise, including risk analysis and risk management; and for ensuring that NALA is complying with all aspects of the law, relevant regulations and good practice.

As with the Literacy and Staff Policies and Governance Subcommittee, the Audit, Risk and Finance subcommittee is delegated to take these responsibilities on behalf of the Board. The subcommittee will consist of no fewer than three directors appointed by the Board. It is recommended that at least two of these directors should have recent and relevant audit, risk and finance experience and, or training should be provided by NALA. The chair of the Subcommittee will be appointed by the Board. The subcommittee meets at least four times per year.

The main duties of the Audit, Risk and Finance subcommittee include, but are not limited to, the following:

Compliance

- Review NALA's systems to ensure compliance with external legislation/ regulations and Governance Codes.

Financial Controls and Management

- Agree the principles of NALA's budgeting process and financial controls
- Oversee and approve the annual budget and Financial Statements for recommendation to the Board
- Monitor the financial activities, controls and budgets of NALA and to advise the Board regarding findings
- Advise on and monitor the progress of income-raising and resource allocation
- Investigate any proposed significant financial decisions and advise the Board accordingly

- Monitor NALA's banking arrangements, investment and reserve policies and determine the frequency of their review and recommend any modifications to the Board for approval
- Monitor the terms and performance of NALA's pension scheme and provide updates / findings to the Board for consideration.

External Audit

- Agree and recommend to the Board the framework for external audit
- Recommend the financial statements to the Board for signing by the Directors
- Monitor and review the external auditor's independence and the effectiveness of the audit process
- Advise the Board on any changes that ought to be made to the terms of engagement of the external auditors

Internal Audit

- Agree and recommend to the Board the organisation's internal control framework which comprises both operational and financial controls
- Review the effectiveness of the organisation's internal control framework
- Approve the annual internal audit plan that incorporates Health and Safety, investments, insurance, VAT and PAYE
- Review the findings of the internal audit activities and report on these to the Board

Risk and Risk Management

- Agree and recommend to the Board NALA's risk policy and risk management framework and frequency for review
- Investigate any financial or administrative matter which may put NALA at risk
- Annually review NALA's insurance policies to ensure that adequate cover is in place
- Ensure that the organisation has adequate procedures in place in relation to complaints mechanisms and protected disclosures and that these policies are both appropriately implemented and effective

Further detail relating the Audit and Finance subcommittee is available in the Terms of Reference for the Audit and Finance subcommittee.

1.5 Student Subcommittee

A key component in ensuring that NALA continue to deliver both quality and relevant services to learners is the appointment of the Student Subcommittee. NALA's Board delegates responsibility to the NALA Student subcommittee to gather and discuss adult literacy student issues and to feedback those issues to the Board. The subcommittee is composed of fourteen students. At least one student will be from NALA's Board, and be appointed by the Board.

The main aim of the Student Subcommittee is to gather and discuss adult literacy student issues and feed this back to the Board. The main duties are to:

- Identify and discuss adult literacy student issues as observed from their own experience and from consulting with students in their area.
- Review the issues that have come up together at meetings
- Guide and monitor the NALA Student Days and the NALA Student Development Fund
- Represent adult literacy students' issues and experiences.

Further detail relating the Student Subcommittee is available in the Terms of Reference for the Student subcommittee.

1.6 Education, Training and Assessment Subcommittee

The Education, Training and Assessment Subcommittee was established in June 2018 with the view to improving quality through the review of policies and procedures relating to education, learning, training and assessment at NALA. The ETA subcommittee is made up of seven members, which will consist of two NALA Board members, two students and the remaining members should bring expertise relevant to the remit of the subcommittee.

The chairperson of the Education, Training and Assessment Subcommittee will be appointed by the NALA Board.

Main duties of the ETA Subcommittee include but are not limited to the following:

- To perform specific roles as outlined in NALA's Quality Assurance Manual including programme development, assessment, validation, evaluation, appeals and feedback reports.

- To develop and subsequently keep under review NALA's various Learning, Training and Assessment Policies.
- To advise on and guide NALA's learner and practitioner service strategy and implementation in the context of NALA's Strategic Plans and relevant external strategies.
- To ensure that NALA's learner and practitioner strategy and services are underpinned by relevant NALA guidelines, national and international best practice.
- To explore, encourage and disseminate good practice and innovation in practitioner training, adult basic education assessment, accreditation and certification.
- To interact with the work of other NALA subcommittees to ensure timely and efficient consideration of business and subsequent decision-making.
- To interact with the work of other NALA subcommittees to ensure timely and efficient consideration of business and subsequent decision-making.
- To undertake any tasks as delegated by NALA's Board.
- Further detail relating to the ETA subcommittee is available in the Terms of Reference for the Education, Training and Assessment Subcommittee.

1.7 NALA Quality Assurance Philosophies and Strategies

Quality Assurance at NALA is viewed as a shared responsibility in that it is both centralised and decentralised. Whilst the Board and CEO play a major role in 'driving' the agency's quality assurance system, all members of the NALA are expected to strive for high quality in their activities. An ethos of individual pride and responsibility is encouraged in that responsibility for defining the quality of NALA's services rests with the individual staff and student ambassadors.

NALA's Strategic Plan

NALA's Strategy Statement 2022-2023 outlines NALA's vision is to create an Ireland where adult literacy is a human right, where everyone can develop their literacy, numeracy and digital skills, and where individuals can take part fully in society.

NALA's mission is to advocate for literacy as a human right and to collaborate with our partners to influence policy and practice to support the development of literacy, numeracy and digital skills.

All of which NALA will strive to achieve while retaining a focus on its core values, which includes Quality and Best Practice.

Appropriate Performance Indicators

Implementation plans are created in line with NALA's strategic plans. Staff members work with their line managers and the CEO to identify a number of key initiatives which will ultimately lead to the execution of NALA's strategy across the relevant period. Success indicators are included in the implementation plan, the purpose of which is to enable staff to clearly communicate the outputs of their work and ultimately the overall impact these outputs are having. Updates on the Implementation Plans are presented to NALA's Board at every meeting for discussion and review. The updates are used to indicate and monitor performance in relation to NALA's mission as well as to provide a central source of essential information for those responsible for the planning and management of the agency.

Frequent communication

Frequent communication is ensured by keeping staff fully informed of all quality assurance initiatives and developments at monthly staff meetings. The management team, consisting of the CEO, Innovation Manager, Communications Manager and the Finance and Corporate Services Manager also meet bi-weekly. A monthly e-zine is disseminated to both NALA staff and members which includes a broad overview of recent developments in NALA's work. NALA's Board and subcommittees meet up to seven times per year to review various organisational issues.

1.8 Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures

All NALA policy proposals must conform to a standard framework. This ensures essential information is consistently provided and is available to all those affected by the policy. Essential information includes when the policy was introduced, what it aims to achieve, and who has responsibility for its implementation.

A Policy Register, which is easily accessible and regularly updated, ensures all existing NALA policies are recorded on a central database. Proposals to introduce new or update existing policies and procedures require approval from the relevant subcommittee and ultimately the NALA Board before they can be considered as active.

Quality Assurance Policies have been developed in key areas in order to facilitate a high-quality environment for teaching and learning. The major policies are:

- NALA Assessment of Learners
- NALA Supports for Learners
- NALA Teaching and Learning Policy
- NALA Programme Approval, Development, Evaluation and Review Policy
- NALA Recruitment Policy
- NALA Training and Development Policy

Further policies will be introduced as considered necessary.

1.9 Review Procedure

The relevant subcommittee reviews NALA policies and its related procedures, where applicable, at the policy's scheduled review interval. Upon completion of this review, feedback is provided to the document author. The policy is updated to reflect the subcommittee's feedback and presented to NALA's Board at its next meeting.

A draft meeting agenda detailing policies which will require review in the upcoming year is presented to the subcommittees in their last meeting of the year, this meeting typically takes place in December. Following its approval, this annual agenda will be the basis for each individual meeting agenda in the following year. A copy of both new and revised policies is distributed to all NALA staff via the agencies SharePoint site.

All work conducted at NALA is open to peer review as resources permit.

QQI may also review NALA's Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures on occasion. NALA will carry out a self-evaluation of the programme and submit a report to QQI. Actions will be carried out following on from the QQI evaluation.

1.10 Trusted Charity Mark

In 2017 NALA received the PQASSO Quality Mark from the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), now known as the Trusted Charity Mark. The Mark is an externally assessed accreditation award which demonstrates achievement of the NCVO standards. This is an award which offers the charity, its funders and governing body external verification of the quality of an organisation. NALA is currently accredited until August 2023.

1.11 The Charities Governance Code

The Charities Governance Code (the Code), issued by the Charities Regulator under section 14(1)(i) of the Charities Act 2009, explains the minimum standards a charity trustees must meet to effectively manage and control the charity. NALA must declare its compliance with the Code on an annual basis to the Charities Regulator and this is included in our listing on the Charity Regulator's **public register**. NALA has declared its compliance with the Code, including the additional standards that apply to charities with high levels of income, complex organisational and funding structures and/or significant numbers of employees.

1.12 NALA Organisational chart

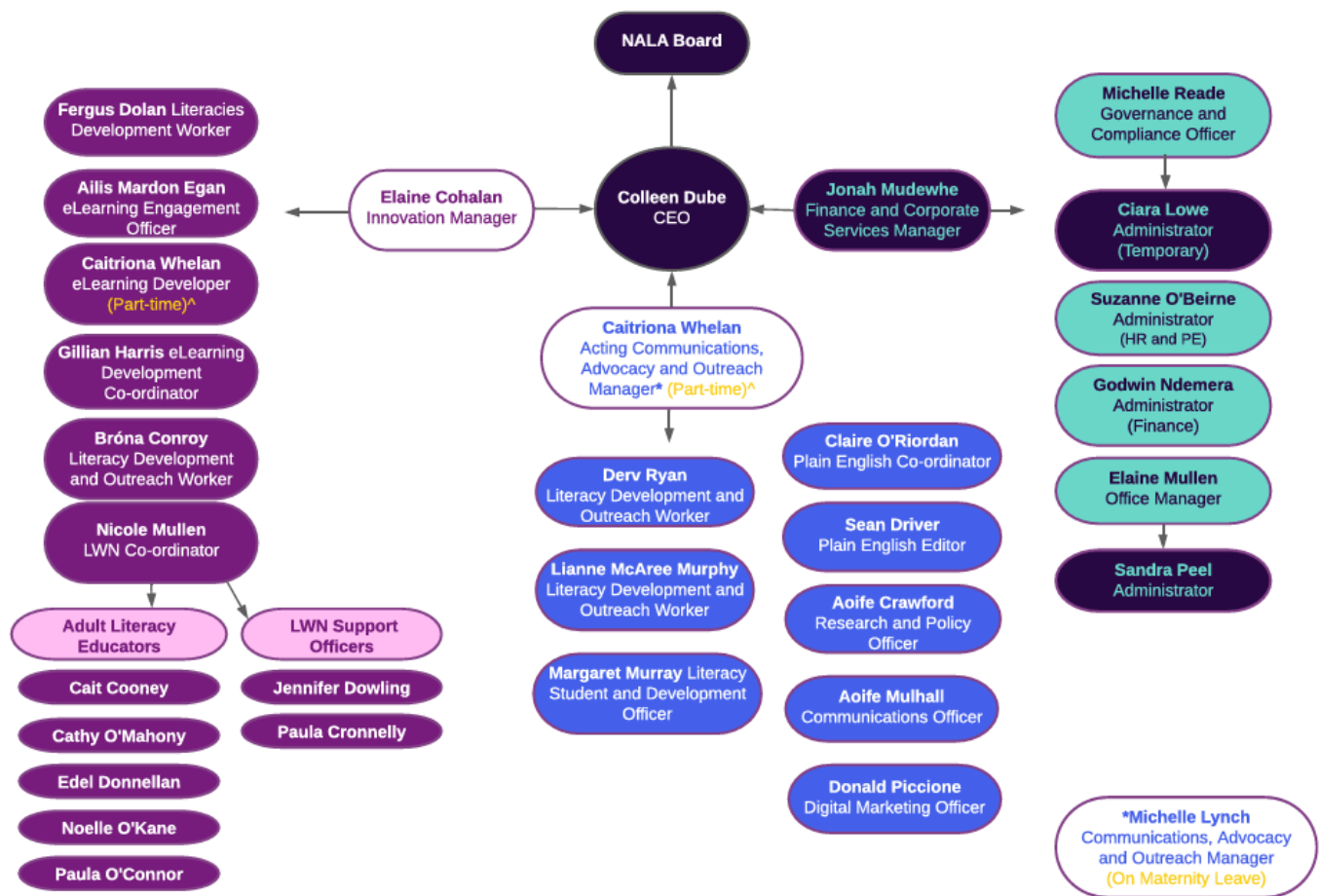


Figure 1-1 - NALA Organisational chart January 2025

1.13 NALA Board and Subcommittee chart

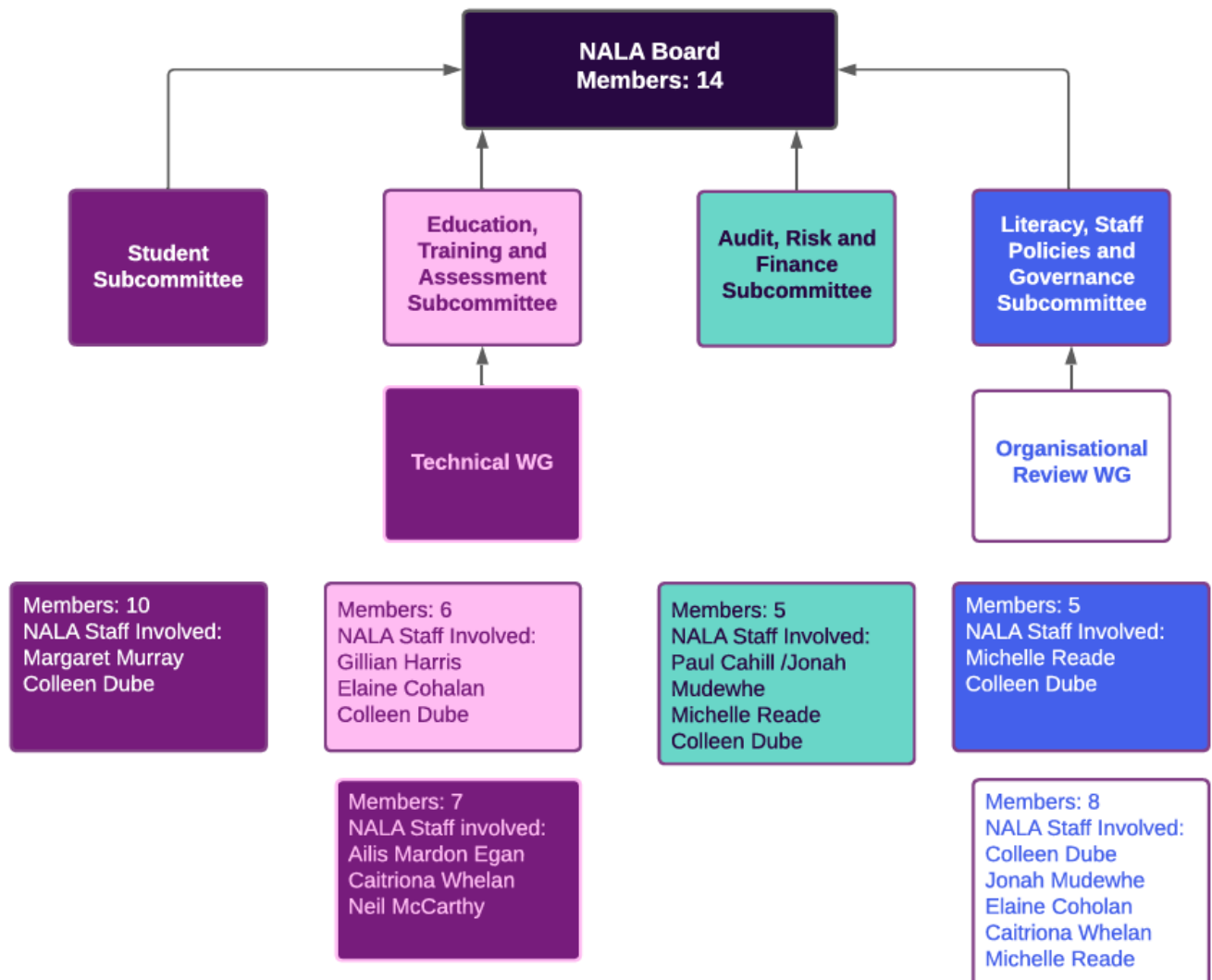


Figure 1-2 - NALA Board and Subcommittee chart August 202

2. Programme Approval, Development, Evaluation and Review

2.1 Programme Approval, Development, Evaluation and Review Policy

Policy area	2. Programme Approval, Development, Evaluation and Review
Document reference number	NALA/PADERP03
Version	03
Date policy adopted	27 June 2018
Date version 02 adopted	23 October 2019
Date version 03 adopted	22 November 2023
Date of next review	Q4 2026

Introduction

NALA is a provider of educational programmes, supports and training to adult literacy learners, adult literacy practitioners and other professionals. This programme approval, development, evaluation and review policy outlines the criteria for the approval and development of new programmes and the evaluation and review of all programmes within NALA. The purpose of the policy is to ensure that all programmes meet high quality standards and align with NALA's mission and strategic plan.

Programmes for adult literacy learners

Programmes for adult literacy learners are underpinned by a learner-centered approach to programme development and delivery. They are developed to ensure learners have flexible access to a suite of learning materials and assessment with the support of one-to-one tuition if needed.

Through Learn with NALA (LWN), NALA offers both a Tutoring Service for one-to-one tuition and an online learning service through a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). The VLE has programmes at levels 1 to 3 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). Programmes at level 2 and 3 lead to Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) national awards.

Programmes for practitioners and other professionals

Programmes for practitioners and other professionals are underpinned by a learner-centred approach to programme development and delivery. They are developed to ensure learners have flexible access to a suite of learning materials and resources to support them in developing their professional skills.

NALA offers both unaccredited synchronous (in-person or live online) and asynchronous (through Learn with NALA VLE) training for practitioners and other professionals.

Scope

This policy applies to all NALA programmes for adult literacy learners, adult literacy practitioners and other professionals.

Aim of policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure that programmes are designed to meet the needs of adult literacy learners, adult literacy practitioners and other professionals. The policy aims to ensure that NALA programmes are critically reflected upon and continuously improved upon through self-evaluation, monitoring and review.

Criteria for approval

NALA programmes must meet the following criteria to be considered for approval:

- **Alignment with NALA's mission and strategic plan:** New programmes must have an identifiable need, be in line with NALA's strategic plan, be sufficiently resourced, and have a clear set of objectives.
- **Academic quality:** New programmes leading to QQI awards must be developed to ensure that learners have achieved the minimum intended learning outcomes which are based on the knowledge, skills and competence framework of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).
- **Staffing:** The programmes must be developed and delivered by qualified and experienced staff. Staff developing and delivering online programmes must have expertise in the online environment.
- **Technological infrastructure:** NALA must have the necessary technological infrastructure to support online programmes, including a Learning Management System (LMS), technical support, and resources for both learners and staff.

Approval process

The Programme Approval Procedure sets out the steps involved in approving a new programme. In summary, the programme proposal:

- is drafted by the appropriate NALA staff with agreement from the CEO;
- is reviewed by the Education, Training and Assessment Subcommittee, and if it is an accredited programme, it will also be reviewed by the NALA Board; and
- will be reviewed against the criteria for approval and once approved the development of the programme can begin.

Development, monitoring, evaluation, and review process

The programme development, monitoring, evaluation and review processes in NALA are underpinned by the principles of good adult literacy work. Adult literacy learning is an active and expressive process. Learners have the right to explore their needs and interests, set their own goals and decide how, where and when they wish to learn. Learners' knowledge and skills are vital for the effective organisation of adult literacy work. Learners should have the opportunity to be involved in all aspects of provision. (NALA, 2012, p.23).

The Programme Development Procedure sets out the steps involved in developing a new programme. In summary:

- the programme development process will be carried out by experienced staff and will be reviewed at key points in the development; and
- the Education, Training and Assessment Subcommittee will review a sample lesson where relevant and will be involved in the review of QQI validated programmes.
- Regular evaluation is a key element of good adult literacy work. Programmes will be monitored on an ongoing basis and evaluations will take place at key points in the programme. There will be methods for gaining feedback from learners, practitioners and staff.

The Programme Monitoring, Evaluation and Review Procedure sets out the steps involved in monitoring, evaluating and reviewing a programme.

Roles and responsibilities

- **NALA staff** aim to make a positive learning experience for learners in a supportive and respectful learning environment. NALA staff will ensure that learners have the opportunity to provide ongoing feedback about NALA programmes.
- The **Innovation Manager** is responsible for ensuring that programmes follow procedures for approval, development, monitoring, evaluation and review. The Innovation Manager is responsible for reviewing recommendations from evaluation findings and ensuring that agreed recommendations are implemented to ensure ongoing improvement of the programme.
- The **Education, Training and Assessment Subcommittee** is responsible for reviewing new programme proposals, reviewing the development of new programmes and reviewing the outcomes from evaluations of programmes.

Conclusion

The programme approval, development, evaluation and review policy is designed to ensure that NALA programmes are of high quality and align with NALA's mission and strategic plan.

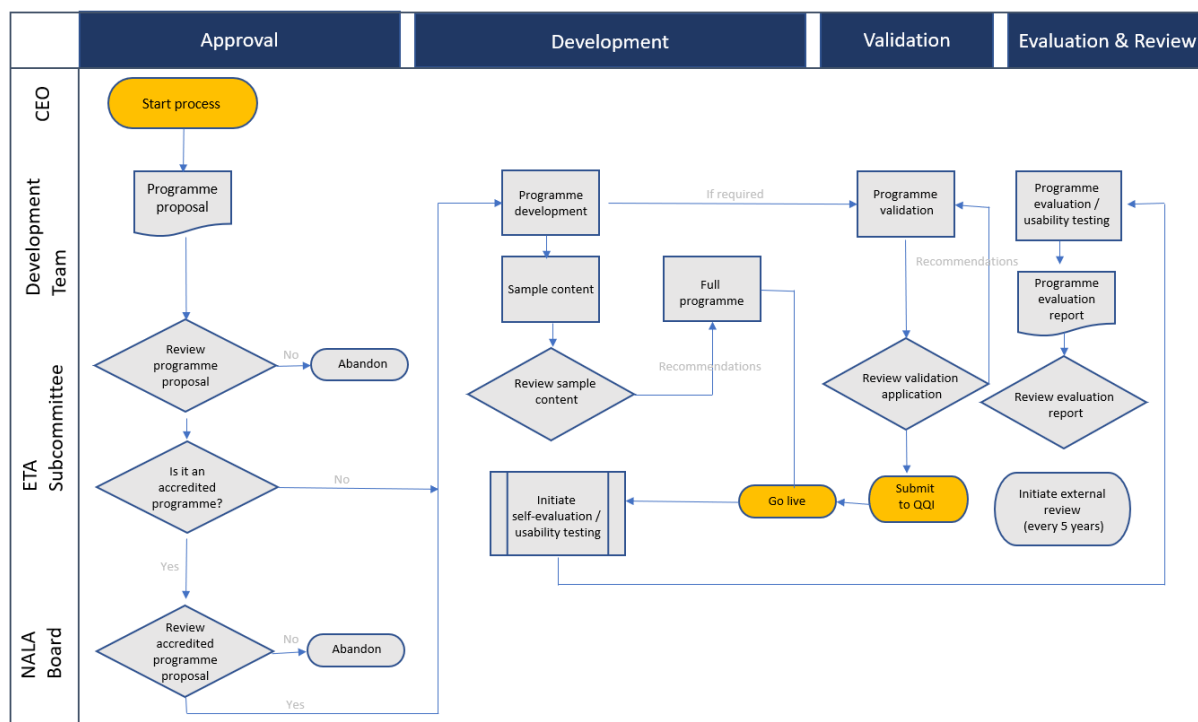


Figure 2-1 - NALA Programme approval, development, evaluation and review process

2.2 Programme Approval Procedure

Policy area	2. Programme Approval, Development, Evaluation and Review
Document reference number	NALA/PAP02
Version	02
Date policy adopted	27 June 2018
Date version 02 adopted	08 December 2021

NALA has procedures in place to ensure that a new programme:

- has an identifiable need;
- is feasible;
- is in line with NALA's strategic plan;
- is sufficiently resourced; and
- has a clear set of objectives.

A new programme idea can originate from a number of sources including:

- Learners
- Centres with potential learners
- Learn with NALA Team
- NALA Board or Subcommittees
- Government Policy
- Recommendations from evaluations

Programme proposal

Before a new programme is developed within NALA the idea will first be discussed by the Innovation Manager and relevant team members before being submitted to the CEO for approval. Once approved, the proposed programme idea can be progressed.

The eLearning Developer is responsible for writing a programme proposal (scoping paper) for Learn with NALA Programmes and the Tutoring Service Coordinator is responsible for writing a programme proposal for a Basic Learning Skills Programme (phone).

The programme proposal should cover the following:

- Rationale for development of programme including how it fits in with NALA's Strategic Plan.
- Suggested programme format including intended audience, programme level, module composition and mode of delivery.
- Details of programme validation considerations. Programmes leading to a QQI award must be validated prior to commencement of the programme. See **QQI Programme Validation**.
- Costings and timelines.
- Development process considerations such as:
 - Website design and site logic
 - Content type
 - Audience background and ICT skills
 - Accessibility
 - Assessment
 - Recognition of Prior Learning
 - Administration requirements and technical support
- Analysis of suitability of learning content for online delivery and assessment.
- Analysis of progression options for learners.
- Feedback from relevant stakeholders including:
 - learners;
 - Registered Learn with NALA Centres;
 - other centres with potential learners;
 - centres running similar programmes;
 - NALA staff; and
 - external experts.
- Analysis of the latest Government policy context such as:
 - Adult Literacy for Life
 - Further Education and Training Strategy
 - SOLAS reports
 - ESRI reports
 - Adult Skills Survey
 - National Skills Strategy

Programme proposal review

The Programme proposal is written by the eLearning Developer and is sent to be reviewed by the Education, Training and Assessment Subcommittee. The Subcommittee in turn make recommendations to the NALA Board. If the NALA Board approves the programme proposal, then programme development can commence.

2.3 Programme Development Procedure

Policy area	2. Programme Approval, Development, Evaluation and Review
Document reference number	NALA/PDP02
Version	02
Date policy adopted	05 September 2018
Date version 02 adopted	08 December 2021

NALA is committed to developing programmes for adult literacy learners where learning is an active and expressive process. Learners have the right to explore their needs and interests, set their own goals and decide how, where and when they wish to learn.

Roles and responsibility

The Innovation Manager has overall responsibility for the development of new programmes and for ensuring that programmes are evaluated and reviewed.

The eLearning Developer is responsible for managing the approval and development process for new Learn with NALA programmes. The eLearning Developer manages the programme development team of Learn with NALA Editors, Learn with NALA Authors, Instructional Designer and third-party system provider. The eLearning Developer is responsible for the self-evaluation process of Learn with NALA Programmes.

Programme development

Once the programme proposal has been approved by the NALA Board the development of the programme can commence. The eLearning Developer is responsible for the development of new Learn with NALA Programmes.

Programme development team

The programme development team may consist of the following:

- Learn with NALA Editors
- Learn with NALA Authors
- Instructional Designer
- Subject Matter Experts

The eLearning Developer and Finance & Corporate Services Manager are responsible for managing the hiring of the development team for Learn with NALA programmes and scheduling and managing their work.

Validation of new programmes

The programme proposal will detail whether the programme will be going forward for validation with QQI. See the current QQI policies and criteria in the **Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education and Training**. This contains:

- Core Policies and Criteria for the Validation by QQI of Programme of Education and Training
- Policies and Criteria for the validation of programmes leading to Common Award System (CAS) awards

Applications must include:

- Summary details of the programme;
- Detailed information on the programme using QQI's FET programme descriptor templates (Available from **Application for Validation FET** on the QQI website);
- Self-evaluation of the programme against the validation criteria;
- Fee cover note.

Programme applications must be submitted via QQI's **QHub** service.

The new programme must be validated by QQI prior to delivery. The process takes up to 25 weeks from receipt of application. QQI will validate a programme where a provider has satisfied it that an enrolled learner who completes the programme will acquire the necessary knowledge, skill or competence to justify an award of QQI being offered in respect of that programme. (**Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of**

Education and Training, p.18). If necessary, the validation process can be scheduled so the new programme is developed in time for the validation application.

Development of new programmes

The development of Learn with NALA programmes will be managed by the eLearning Developer. The eLearning Developer will assign work to the Learn with NALA Authors and Learn with NALA Editors and will assign delivery dates for the completion of content.

The development will include a detailed analysis of content for Learn with NALA including:

- Which learning outcomes can be assessed through the eLearning platform and which learning outcomes need to be assessed in the learner portfolio section or other means.
- The eLearning Developer creates an authoring plan which lists the number of screens needed and the timeframe for the development. This gives details of the number of interactions per learning outcome in each assessment and for the initial and summative assessments.
- Types of interactions most commonly used:
 - drop down menu
 - drag and drop
 - matching
 - single-choice
 - multiple-choice
 - hot spot
 - sequence
- Scenarios (for example: eating well, keeping fit, family day out, using the bank, staying safe at work).
- Details of the randomisation of assessments and whether assessment is required or feasible.
- Interface for the new programme including brand guidelines, colour for level and title.
- Updates for help videos and Guidelines for LWN staff.
- Learn with NALA Authors and Learn with NALA Editors follow the LWN Style Guide.

Internal review of new programmes

The Education, Training and Assessment Subcommittee carry out an internal review of the new programme to ensure impartial judgement on the standard and content of the new

programme. The Education, Training and Assessment Subcommittee has members external to NALA.

The subcommittee reviews the programme proposal. The subcommittee will review a sample lesson where necessary. The sample lesson is produced by the development team where there are multiple topics in the programme. Recommendations can then be fed into the development of the full programme.

The eLearning Developer and Innovation Manager are responsible for a review of the full programme before it goes live. When the new programme goes live an internal review (usability testing) of the new programme will take place.

The Education, Training and Assessment Subcommittee will also approve new programmes before they go forward for validation. The Education, Training and Assessment Subcommittee will request that a self-assessment report be prepared by the programme development team to show how the programme meets the validation criteria. This will form part of the application for validation. Once approved by the Education, Training and Assessment Subcommittee, the application can be submitted to QQI.

New Learn with NALA content procedure for existing programmes

The eLearning Developer is responsible for overseeing new content on Learn with NALA.

The following process is followed:

- The eLearning Developer gains feedback on content from learners, tutors and other stakeholders through questionnaires and focus groups.
- This feedback is analysed and where necessary a list of lessons and high-level objectives are prepared. If the lessons are linked to QQI levels the learning outcomes are followed.
- The list of lessons is approved by the Innovation Manager.
- The eLearning Developer creates an authoring plan which estimates the number of screens needed and the timeframe for the development.
- Learn with NALA Authors write draft content in the authoring system. Learn with NALA authors have support with writing learning content from the eLearning Developer.
- Learn with NALA Editors review the content, document any changes and make changes in the authoring system.

- The final review is done by the Learn with NALA editors, eLearning Developer and Instructional Designer.
- The eLearning Developer and Innovation Manager approve all content before it goes live on www.learnwithnala.ie.
- Learn with NALA Authors and Learn with NALA Editors follow the LWN Style Guide.

2.4 Programme Monitoring, Evaluation and Review Procedure

Policy area	2. Programme Approval, Development, Evaluation and Review
Document reference number	NALA/PMERP02
Version	02
Date policy adopted	05 September 2018
Date version 02 adopted	23 October 2019

Regular evaluation is a key element of good adult literacy work. NALA is committed to a policy of monitoring on an ongoing basis and self-evaluation at key points in the programme. Programmes will be reviewed every five years or sooner as needed.

Roles and responsibility

The Innovation Manager has responsibility for ensuring that programmes are evaluated and reviewed both internally and externally.

The TEL Officer is responsible for the self-evaluation process of LWN Programmes.

The LWN Coordinator is responsible for the self-evaluation process of Basic Learning Skills Programmes (phone).

The Education, Training and Assessment Subcommittee are responsible for monitoring evaluation and review findings.

Programme monitoring

Programmes in NALA are continuously monitored to ensure that the programmes meet the needs of learners with basic skills and to ensure that the quality of provision is monitored and enhanced. Information is recorded on NALA's learner database and is monitored by the LWN Coordinator.

Monitoring allows for any issues that arise to be dealt with in a prompt manner. As these are Distance Education Programmes it is important to have a number of ways for learners and tutors to make queries or to report any issues.

The channels include:

- Email: learn@nala.ie
- Call NALA on: Freephone 1800 20 20 80, Monday to Friday from 9.30 am to 5.30 pm. Outside of these hours individuals can leave a message and a LWN Support Officer will phone them back.
- Write to: National Adult Literacy Agency, Sandford Lodge, Sandford Close, Dublin 6.
- NALA Complaints Policy is available at: <https://www.nala.ie/publications/nala-complaints-policy/>

Any issues with the Basic Learning Skills Programme (phone) that cannot be dealt with by the LWN Support Officer are forwarded to the LWN Coordinator. (See figure 2.2 below). The LWN Coordinator will investigate the issue and will make contact with the individual who raised the query with a response.

Any issues with LWN that cannot be dealt with by the LWN Support Officer are forwarded to the TEL Officer. The TEL Officer will look at the issue, test it on LWN and if necessary it will be sent to the third party system provider to resolve. The TEL Officer or LWN Support Officer will make contact with the individual who raised the query with a response.

Ongoing or significant issues with LWN are reviewed and detailed in the Internal Verifier report twice yearly at the Internal Verification Meetings. Actions are assigned to staff members and are reviewed at the subsequent Internal Verification Meeting.

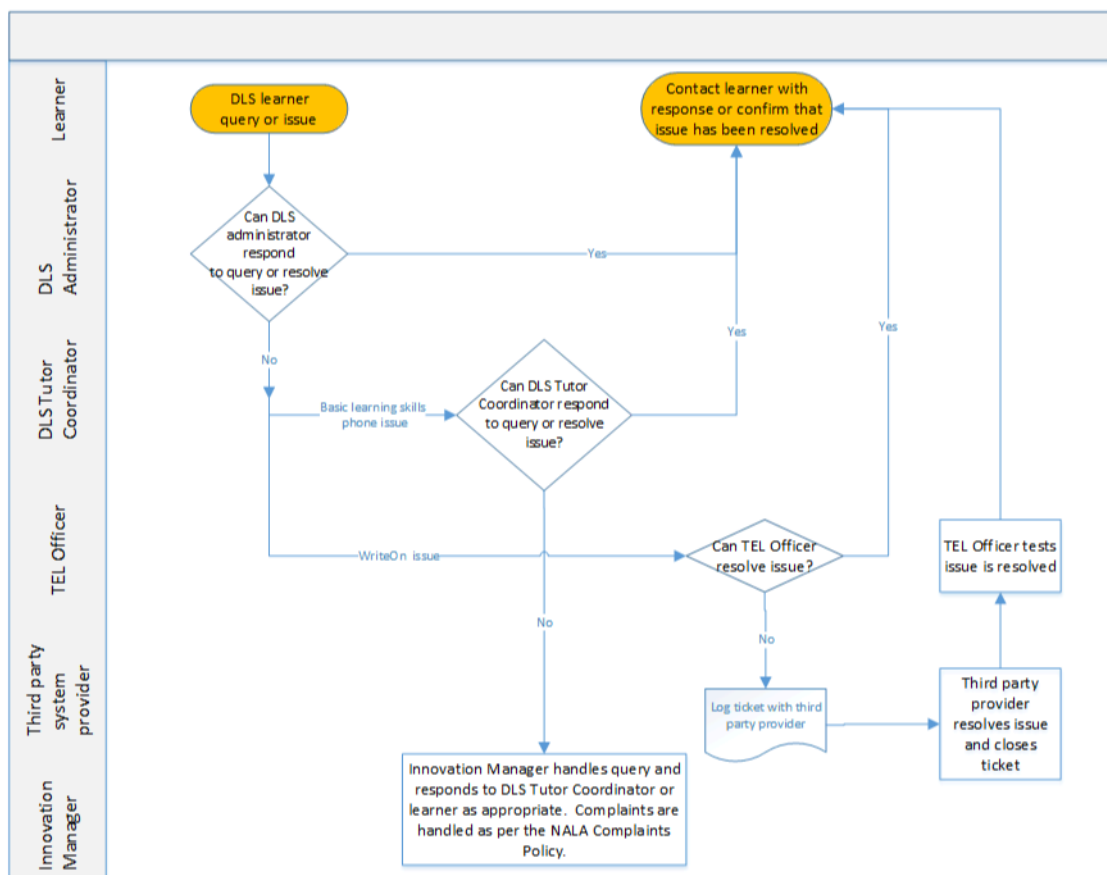


Figure 2-2 - LWN learner query or issue process

Programme self-evaluation

An annual report on LWN is written which details how our programmes supported learners in the past year and outline plans for the programmes for the following year. This is published in the NALA Annual Report which is available online at:

<https://www.nala.ie/?s=annual+report>

The NALA Strategic Plan is available online at: <https://www.nala.ie/?s=strategic+plan>

The Strategic Plan details the strategic objectives for NALA for the next three years.

Implementation plans are written at the start of each year and include the following:

- Goals for the year
- Initiatives and timelines
- Quarterly outcomes and impact measures

These implementation plans are reported quarterly to the NALA Board.

Further information on feedback from learners through phone interviews, questionnaires, usability testing and focus groups can be seen in the Learner Feedback Procedures below. (2.5 Learner Feedback Procedures).

Usability testing

Usability testing should take place within one year of a major redesign or new programme going live. The TEL Officer is responsible for ensuring usability testing takes place. Testing is done with a sample group of users to evaluate the programme and how it is used by learners. A usability report is written with recommendations to overcome any usability issues. Usability reports are published online.

Programme revalidation

Programmes are self-evaluated every five years. This is done to ensure that the programmes are kept up to date and are fit for purpose. This is done in accordance with **QQI Policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training**, p.25. (A new policy on revalidation is currently under review).

The main steps in an application for revalidation are:

- Self-evaluation by the provider of their programme
- Application to QQI
- Independent evaluation of the programme
- Determination of the application by QQI

Programme external evaluation and review

Programmes will be externally reviewed every five years or sooner as needed. The Innovation Manager has responsibility for ensuring that programmes are evaluated and reviewed. The Education, Training and Assessment Subcommittee can make recommendations for the external review of programmes. All evaluation findings will be reported to the Subcommittee. The evaluations and reviews of LWN are published online.

2.5 Learner Feedback Procedure

Policy area	2. Programme Approval, Development, Evaluation and Review
Document reference number	NALA/LFP01
Version	01
Date policy adopted	16 May 2018

NALA is committed to gaining feedback from learners to improve the quality and effectiveness of our programmes and services. NALA provide a number of feedback channels to learners to allow them to give feedback in a variety of ways. NALA believes that learners should take an active part in defining their learning needs and directing the content of study (**NALA 2012, p. 50**). NALA make sure that the views and experiences of adults with literacy and numeracy difficulties are heard and are used to guide and inform the quality of our work.

Roles and responsibility

The Innovation Manager has overall responsibility for ensuring feedback from learners takes place and recommendations are used to improve the service and inform practice.

The TEL Officer is responsible for gaining and monitoring feedback from LWN learners.

The LWN Coordinator is responsible for gaining and monitoring feedback from LWN phone learners.

Adult Literacy Educators are responsible for gaining feedback from LWN learners after each session and at the six-week review.

General LWN learner feedback

As Distance Learners are not in a physical centre it is important to ensure that learners have a wide range of ways that they can give feedback about the quality and effectiveness of Learn with NALA. The importance of feedback is highlighted in the **Learn with NALA Learner Charter** which is posted to all phone tuition learners and is also available on www.nala.ie and www.learnwithnala.ie.

Learners can give feedback about LWN through the following feedback channels:

- Email: learn@nala.ie
- Phone NALA: Freephone 1800 20 20 80
- Write to: National Adult Literacy Agency, Sandford Lodge, Sandford Close, Dublin 6.
- NALA Complaints Policy is available online at: <https://www.nala.ie/publications/nala-complaints-policy/>.
- NALA actively seek feedback from learners, tutors and other stakeholders on an ongoing basis.
- NALA organise questionnaires and focus groups for learners to provide feedback as part of the self-evaluation process and external evaluation process.
- NALA organise Student Days twice yearly for all literacy students. Workshops at these events have been used to gain feedback from students on Learn with NALA.

Learner feedback - phone tuition

Phone interviews

LWN actively gains feedback from phone learners every quarter. The LWN Coordinator is responsible for ensuring feedback is gained from LWN learners.

The process is as follows:

- LWN Coordinator appoints an evaluator.
- LWN Coordinator selects a list of phone tuition learners.
- The evaluator gains feedback from learners through phone interviews. using the NALA LWN learner Feedback Questionnaire (Appendix 5: NALA LWN learner Feedback Questionnaire).
- The evaluator writes a feedback report.
- The feedback report is analysed by the LWN Coordinator and presented to the Education, Training and Assessment Subcommittee.
- The LWN Coordinator gives feedback to the LWN Team and changes to the programme are agreed and recorded at the LWN Team meeting.
- The LWN Coordinator gives feedback to Adult Literacy Educators on a one-to-one basis.

Session review

Adult Literacy Educators gain feedback from learners at the end of each learning session and at the six-week-review. This is recorded on the learner database and is monitored by the LWN Coordinator.

Learner feedback - LWN

NALA gains feedback from LWN learners to improve the quality and effectiveness of the programme. The TEL Officer is responsible for ensuring feedback is gained from LWN learners. Feedback is gained using a variety of methods:

- Usability testing is used when new content is made available on LWN or there is a significant change to the design of the programme.

Focus groups and workshops are used to gain feedback on changes to the programme or to gain feedback before new content is developed (Appendix 6: LWN Feedback Questionnaire).

- Questionnaires are used to gain feedback from LWN learners.
- Evaluations are used at the end of each LWN training session to gain feedback from tutors and learners about LWN.

Sample templates for LWN:

- **LWN content Feedback Form Template**
- **LWN Content Feedback Workshop Template**
- **LWN Training and Webinar Evaluation Template**
- **LWN Usability Questionnaire Template**

2.6 NALA Complaints Policy

Policy area	2. Programme Approval, Development, Evaluation and Review
Document reference number	NALA/CP1.1
Version	1.1
Date policy adopted	February 2016
Date policy reviewed	26 October 2022
Policy to be reviewed	Q4 2025

Available online at: <https://www.nala.ie/publications/nala-complaints-policy/>

2.7 LWN Admissions Procedure

Policy area	2. Programme Approval, Development, Evaluation and Review
Document reference number	NALA/PADER/DLSAP03
Version	03
Date policy adopted	05 September 2018
Date version 02 adopted	29 June 2022
Date version 03 updated	November 2023

NALA is committed to working with adult literacy learners who wish to improve their literacy, numeracy and digital literacy skills. Learners can gain admission to a Learn with NALA programme (Learn with NALA Tutoring Service or Learn with NALA Online Learning Service) at any time during the year. No previous experience is necessary. Learners using Learn with NALA can use the Recognition of Prior Learning tool that is built into the initial assessment for Levels 2 and 3 on the Learn with NALA website.

Roles and responsibility

The LWN Coordinator is responsible for managing the admissions process. The LWN Support Officers are responsible for recording all learner contacts on the NALA learner database.

Admission requirements

Learners can start a programme at any time of the year. The programmes are flexible and learners can take a break and resume at a later stage. Learners can study online by themselves or work with an Adult Literacy Educator over the phone.

LWN Tutoring Service

Learners must meet the following requirements to access the LWN Tutoring Service:

- There is a minimum age of 18 years and there is no maximum age.
- The LWN Tutoring Service works with learners located in the Republic of Ireland.
- No previous academic experience is necessary. The LWN Tutoring Service is for adults who wish to work at Levels 1 to 3 of the National Framework of

- Qualifications (NFQ). Many learners have 'spiky profiles' where they are at different levels in different areas. Learners who are working at a higher level in another area can gain support from the LWN Tutoring Service at levels 1 to 3.
- Learners must have access to a phone (landline or mobile phone). The Adult Literacy Educator will contact the learner by phone at an agreed time each week.
- There is no charge for the programme. Everything is free.
- Learners must be able to carry out a conversation in English over the phone.
- Learners must have good organisational skills.
- Learners will be asked to supply their Personal Public Service Number (PPSN) and other details required for the Programme Learner Support System (PLSS).

LWN Online Learning Service

Content on LWN has been developed for adults and the majority of learners who use LWN are adults. Learners aged 16 or over can use LWN for certification.

Learners must meet the following requirements to use the LWN Online Learning Service:

- No previous academic experience is necessary. LWN has content at Levels 1 to 3 of the NFQ.
- Learners must have access to a computer, tablet or smartphone and must have access to the internet.
- There is no charge for the programme. Everything is free. Registered LWN Centres must not charge learners for using the programme.
- Learners who have a basic level of English may benefit from using LWN. There is text-to-speech audio on the majority of the text.
- Learners can access LWN for learning from any country in the world.

Learners must meet the following requirements to achieve certification on LWN:

- Learners must supply a valid PPSN if they wish to use LWN to gain certification.
- Learners aged 16 and over can gain certification through LWN.

- Learners can avail of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) tool that is built into the initial assessment at Levels 2 and 3 on LWN. If a learner gets 100% in the 'What do I already know?' section, then they can go straight to the 'End test'. If they get 100% in the 'End test' they have achieved this part of the award, because the system recognises what the learner already knows.

Admissions process

Learners can contact NALA in the following ways:

- Phone NALA at: Freephone 1800 20 20 80
- Email: learn@nala.ie

The LWN Support Officers give learners the following support:

- Information on learning options:
 - Information about **ETB Adult Literacy services** throughout Ireland
 - Information about Adult Guidance services throughout Ireland
 - Information about the LWN Tutoring and LWN Online Learning Services
 - Other relevant educational options
 - Information about online or printed materials that NALA can post to the learner
 - If the learner is interested in Learn with NALA, the learner is asked for a day and time that suits them to be contacted for an assessment. The learner is given the name of the Adult Literacy Educator (ALE) who will call them back for an assessment. (See Figure 2.3)
 - The ALE calls the learner to go through the initial assessment. If the learner is still interested in the LWN Tutoring Service or LWN Online Learning Service then they are assigned to an ALE. The learner chooses a time and day that suits them.
 - The ALE rings the learner at their preferred time every week. Sessions are normally once a week for 30 minutes. The learner can take breaks from sessions if needed and resume at any time.
- OR
- A learner can self-register for LWN programmes at: www.learnwithnala.ie
- OR
- A learner can apply for a Basic Learning Skills Programme or LWN Programme through the Further Education & Training Course Hub – www.fetchcourses.ie. Email notifications are sent to the LWN Support Officers who process the referral.

Free tuition

Learn with NALA courses are funded by SOLAS. There are no fees for learners taking part in LWN programmes. Access to all resources on the **Tutors Information Hub** are also free.

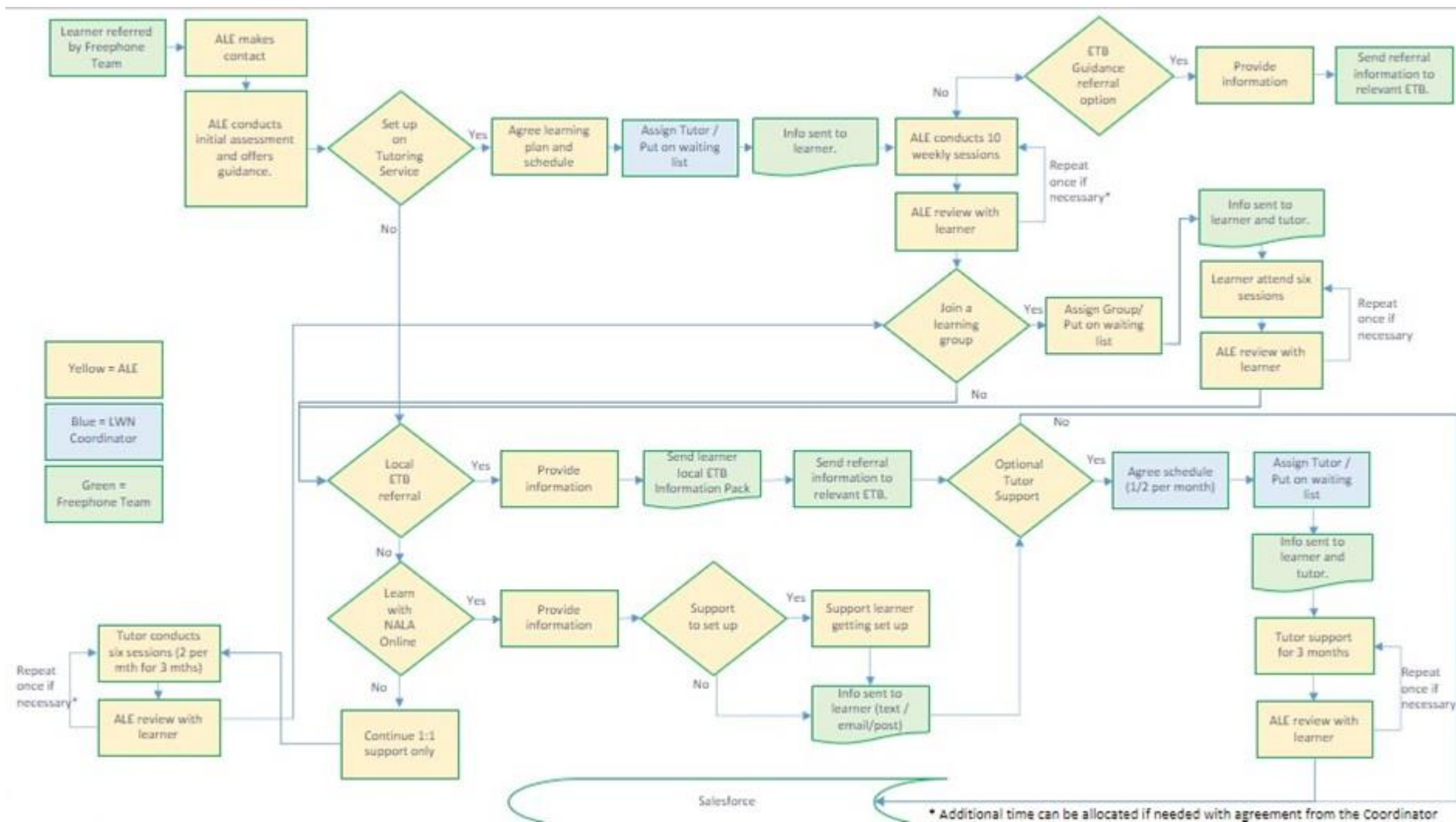


Figure 2.3 – LWN learner admissions process

3. Teaching and Learning

3.1 Teaching and Learning Policy

Policy area	3. Teaching and Learning
Document reference number	NALA/TLP02
Version	02
Date policy adopted	16 May 2018
Date version 02 adopted	09 March 2022
Date of next review	Q2 2025

NALA is committed to providing high-quality learning opportunities to adults who wish to improve their literacy, numeracy and digital literacy skills.

Adult literacy work in Ireland is developing and evolving all the time to meet the changing literacy, numeracy and digital literacy skills we need.

Teaching and learning processes in NALA are underpinned by the principles of adult education and good adult literacy work. NALA's work is based on five principles:

- Adult literacy work is based on a philosophy of adult education which is concerned with personal development and social action.
- Adult literacy learning is an active and expressive process. Students have the right to explore their needs and interests, set their own goals and decide how, where and when they wish to learn.
- Adult literacy work respects different beliefs, cultures and ways of being. An ethical code of trust and confidentiality underpins all aspects of the work.
- Students' knowledge and skills are vital for the effective organisation of adult literacy work. Students should have the opportunity to be involved in all aspects of provision.
- Adults learn best when the decision to return to learning is their own and the environment is supportive, relaxed and friendly. (**NALA, 2012**, p.23).

NALA promotes and supports quality teaching and learning. Key points in relation to teaching and learning are:

- the student-tutor relationship,

- the process of curriculum development,
- access to a range of tuition options, including certification,
- learning and development, and;
- assessment, review and evaluation ([NALA, 2012](#), p.47).

Quality teaching and learning allows for more successful outcomes, which can involve certification.

NALA works to improve the teaching and learning practices in adult literacy education.

This work involves:

- promoting a student-centered approach to Adult Literacy Work;
- running conferences and other events to highlight key issues in adult literacy and share literacy expertise;
- encouraging the integration of literacy into vocational education and training and workplace learning;
- developing teaching and learning resources;
- commissioning and sharing research;
- facilitating, listening to, and hearing students' voice; and
- supporting the professional development of teachers and other practitioners.

Aim of Policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure that students are provided with a supportive and respectful learning environment and high-quality teaching and learning opportunities that are based on research, are critically reflected upon and continuously improved upon through self-monitoring and evaluation.

Who is covered by this policy?

NALA's Teaching and Learning Policy is for:

- Learners who are using Learn with NALA (LWN): Independent learners, Learners working with NALA Adult Literacy Educators, Registered LWN Centre learners.
- LWN team: NALA Adult Literacy Educators, Learn with NALA Coordinator, Learn with NALA Support Officer, eLearning Development Coordinator, eLearning Engagement Officer, Innovation Manager.

Roles and responsibilities

The LWN team aim to make a positive learning experience for students in a supportive and respectful learning environment. The LWN team will ensure that students have access to high quality teaching and learning opportunities.

NALA will provide continuous professional development for the LWN team and the LWN team will be active in keeping their skills up to date.

NALA will also offer training events and conferences to adult literacy students, tutors and resource workers that will focus on innovative teaching and learning methods and demonstrate best practice and initiatives. NALA will research teaching and learning methods and make this research available to the LWN team and the wider community.

3.2 Online Learning Policy

Policy area	3. Teaching and Learning
Document reference number	NALA/OLP01
Version	01
Date policy adopted	03/05/23
Date of next review	March 2026

Introduction

The National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) is a registered charity and members-based organisation committed to making sure people with unmet literacy, numeracy and digital literacy needs can fully take part in society and have access to learning opportunities that meet their needs.

NALA is committed to providing quality online learning opportunities to adults who wish to improve their literacy, numeracy and digital literacy skills. NALA has been a provider of online learning programmes since 2008. These programmes are delivered through the eLearning website, Learn with NALA, which is hosted on Brightspace, NALA's Virtual Learning Environment.

This policy is informed by:

- **NALA's Quality Assurance policies and procedures,**
- **NALA's Guidelines for Good Adult Literacy Work,**
- **Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes.**

Online teaching and learning processes in NALA are underpinned by the principles of adult education and good adult literacy work as set out in NALA's Guidelines for Good Adult Literacy Work. Online courses offer flexibility to the adult learner and allow them to set their own goals and decide how, where and when they wish to learn. The online environment aims to be supportive and respectful.

NALA's Quality Assurance policies and procedures are informed by QQI's Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes (2018). The

NALA Compliance with Blended Guidelines Checklist details how NALA's policies and procedures adhere to these guidelines.

Aim of policy

The aim of this policy is to set out the scope and principles for online learning in NALA to ensure that adult learners, with unmet literacy, numeracy and digital literacy needs, have access to quality online learning that meets their needs.

Scope of policy

The online learning policy covers all online courses offered by NALA on the eLearning website Learn with NALA (LWN) (www.learnwithnala.ie).

Who is covered by this policy?

NALA's Online Learning Policy is for:

- Learners who are using Learn with NALA (LWN)
- NALA staff working on LWN

Definition of online learning

There are many definitions of online learning. NALA's definition is guided by NALA's Guidelines for Good Adult Literacy Work:

Online learning allows people to gain knowledge and skills through the internet and can be either synchronous or asynchronous. Online learning is a flexible way of learning that allows people to learn at their own pace and at a time and place that suits them. People can access educational materials, interact with instructors, complete assessments and gain certification online. Online learning uses a variety of teaching approaches to best suit the needs of the learner.

Principles

The principles of online learning in NALA include:

Quality assurance

- NALA is responsible for the academic standards and quality assurance of programmes delivered through online learning.

- NALA will ensure that policies and procedures in relation to quality assurance are appropriate for the online learning environment.

Programme design, delivery, accessibility and assessment

- NALA will ensure that teaching, learning and assessment strategies are specifically designed for online learning. (QQI (2018, section 4))
- Learners will have quality online teaching and learning opportunities that meet their needs.
- NALA will ensure that the online teaching and learning content is accessible to adults with unmet literacy, numeracy and digital literacy needs.
- NALA will ensure that course content follows accessibility standards, Universal Design for Instruction and Universal Design for Learning principles.
- NALA will ensure integrity of assessment through the internal verification process and features on the online system such as randomisation of questions and the use of assessment interactions that are not conducive to plagiarism.

Learner information, data security and support

- Learners will be provided with a supportive and respectful online learning environment.
- NALA will ensure that learners are supported to use the eLearning website through learner support information and LWN support services. (QQI (2018, section 5.1.1))
- NALA will ensure that the technical infrastructure supports online delivery and is reliable and scalable. NALA will ensure that technical support for programmes is in place. All technologies will be licensed by NALA.
- NALA will ensure security of learner's data and the integrity and reliability of its online learning and support systems in accordance with **NALA's Data Protection Policy** and Record Retention Policy.

Staff professional development in online teaching and learning

- NALA will ensure that all strategies and processes for the appointment, induction, training, professional development and appraisal arrangements for teaching and support staff are appropriate and specific to a blended or online learning environment. (QQI (2018, section 3.1.3))
- NALA will provide continuous professional development for the LWN team in the delivery, assessment and quality assurance of online learning.

Legal responsibilities

- NALA will ensure arrangements are in place for compliance with any legal, regulatory or statutory obligations required for an online learning context. (QQI (2018, section 3.1.4))

Required technology for learners

- Learners must have access to a desktop, laptop, tablet or smartphone to use Learn with NALA.
- NALA does not provide devices to learners but will give advice on where to access devices, such as in local libraries.
- Learners should ensure that the operating system for their device is up to date. D2L maintain up to date information about **browser support and platform requirements for the use of Brightspace**. The link to this up to date information is on the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page on Learn with NALA and is also included in the account creation email that is sent to all new learners.
- Learners may want to use headphones to use the text to speech function on Learn with NALA.

Roles and responsibilities

Learners

Learners will ensure that they adhere to the **Terms and Conditions** of using Learn with NALA including the learner:

- Agrees to the rules and code of conduct as set out in the Learner Charter.
- Meets the stated entry requirements for each course they are enrolled in.
- Agrees to receipt of automatic email notifications based on their activity on Learn with NALA.
- Agrees to being contacted with offers of support from NALA.

NALA

NALA will:

- Ensure that learners have access to quality online learning opportunities.
- Ensure that LWN is accessible to adults with unmet literacy, numeracy and digital literacy needs.

- Provide continuous professional development for NALA staff in the delivery, assessment and quality assurance of online learning.
- Ensure it has the technical infrastructure and technical support for online programmes.
- Ensure arrangements are in place for compliance with any legal, regulatory or statutory obligations required for an online learning context.
- Ensure that data is managed in accordance with NALA's Data Protection Policy, Record Retention Policy and any other policy or procedure that may be required to comply with the EU General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Acts 1988 to 2018.
- Strive to ensure that learners have a positive learning experience in a supportive and respectful learning environment.

Review

This policy will be updated as per the Governance and Management of Quality policy and the NALA policy review schedule. This policy will also be updated within six months of QQI's Statutory QA Guidelines for Providers of Programmes Supported by Digital Education.

Related documentation

- NALA Compliance with Blended Guidelines Checklist. Internal document available on request.
- National Adult Literacy Agency (Update due June 2023) Learner Charter. Available online at: <https://www.nala.ie/publications/nala-distance-learning-service-learner-charter/>
- National Adult Literacy Agency (2023) Quality Assurance Manual. Available online at: <https://www.nala.ie/publications/nala-quality-assurance-manual/>
- National Adult Literacy Agency (2022) Data Protection Policy. Available online at: <https://www.nala.ie/publications/nala-data-protection-policy/>
- National Adult Literacy Agency (forthcoming) Child Safeguarding Statement and Adult Safeguarding Statement
- National Adult Literacy Agency (2022) Leading the way in online learning. Available online at: <https://www.nala.ie/publications/leading-the-way-in-online-learning/>
- National Adult Literacy Agency (2021) LWN Terms and conditions. Available online at: <https://www.learnwithnala.ie/catalog?pagename=terms-and-conditions>

- National Adult Literacy Agency (2015) Review of the teaching and learning content on WriteOn.
Available online at: <https://www.nala.ie/publications/review-of-the-teaching-and-learning-content-on-writeon/>
- National Adult Literacy Agency (2014) ESOL Blended Learning Project Report.
Available online at: <https://www.nala.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/English-for-speakers-of-other-language-blended-learning-research-report.pdf>
- National Adult Literacy Agency (2012) Guidelines for Good Adult Literacy Work. Dublin: National Adult Literacy Agency.
Available online at: <https://www.nala.ie/publications/nala-guidelines-for-good-adult-literacy-work/>
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (2018) Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes.
Available online at: <https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/media/file-uploads/Statutory%20QA%20Guidelines%20for%20Blended%20Learning%20Programmes.pdf>
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland Guidelines for Providers of Programmes Supported by Digital Education. (Forthcoming) <https://www.qqi.ie/news/from-blended-to-fully-online-learning>

3.3 Academic Integrity Policy

Policy area	3. Teaching and Learning
Document reference number	NALA/AIP01
Version	01
Date policy adopted	23/10/24
Date of next review	Q4 2027

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the principles and values that NALA holds in relation to academic integrity for all Learn with NALA (LWN) programmes.

Introduction and context

NALA is committed to the provision of high-quality online learning opportunities, to adults in Ireland who wish to improve their literacy, numeracy and digital literacy skills. LWN programmes are at Levels 1 to 3 of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

NALA maintains high standards of academic integrity and promotes a positive culture of academic integrity amongst the whole LWN community.

This policy is informed by:

- **NALA's Guidelines for Good Adult Literacy Work**
- **QQI's Quality Assurance Guidelines for providers of blended and fully online programmes**
- NALA's Online Learning Policy

Scope

This policy and the related procedures apply to the whole LWN community, which includes:

- Learners working on LWN programmes
- NALA staff involved in supporting and assessing learners
- NALA staff involved in the design of curriculum and assessments on LWN
- Registered LWN Centre staff involved in supporting learners
- Anyone supporting learners, such as family, friends, support workers

What is academic integrity?

The National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN) refer to a definition of academic integrity as:

the commitment to, and demonstration of, honest and moral behaviour in an academic setting¹

NALA's definition of academic integrity is:

¹ Writing Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Academic Integrity. Available at: <https://writingcenter.unc.edu/esl/resources/academic-integrity/>

Academic integrity means being honest and fair in the work that you do on Learn with NALA. The whole Learn with NALA community is responsible for upholding academic integrity².

Academic integrity benefits the learner in that they can have confidence in their learning and their achievements on Learn with NALA. It promotes trust and respect in the learning process and the qualifications gained on Learn with NALA.

Academic integrity values

Academic integrity in NALA means being honest and fair in the work that you do on LWN and being responsible for upholding academic integrity. NALA's values associated with academic integrity are:

Honesty

If you are a learner, the work you do on LWN must be your own work. You can get support with learning from NALA Adult Literacy Educators (ALEs), tutors or others. However, the work that you do on the What do I already know Quiz (Quiz), End Test assessment and Portfolio assessment, must be your own work. You cannot get somebody else, or a piece of software, to do the work for you or help you to do it.

If you are supporting learners, you cannot do assessment work for learners, help them to complete the assessment or give them the answers to questions.

Fairness

If you are a learner, you must do your own assessment work and follow Portfolio assessment guidance outlined in the course.

If you are assessing learner work, you must do this in a fair and consistent manner.

If you are a LWN staff member, you must let learners know about academic integrity and what is expected from both learners and those supporting learners. If academic misconduct happens, you must follow the process in a fair and consistent manner.

² Definition adapted from material developed by ETBI (2023), A Learner's Guide to Academic Integrity. Available at: https://library.etbi.ie/ld.php?content_id=34423196

Responsibility

All members of the Learn with NALA community are responsible for acting honestly and fairly during teaching, learning and assessment on LWN.

Principles

The principles of academic integrity in NALA are as follows:

- There is a culture of academic integrity within the LWN community of learners, staff and those supporting learners.
- NALA ensures that learners and staff using LWN are aware of academic integrity and understand what it means and know how to uphold it. NALA provides resources to support both learners and staff.
- NALA ensures that academic integrity is considered and adhered to when designing programmes and assessment on LWN.
- NALA has procedures to address academic misconduct, and staff are supported to carry it out in a fair and consistent manner.

What is academic misconduct?

NALA has adopted the following definition of academic misconduct as taken from the European Network for Academic Integrity (ENAI) Glossary³:

Any action or attempted action that undermines academic integrity and may result in an unfair academic advantage or disadvantage for any member of the academic community or wider society.

NALA promotes academic honesty by creating awareness about academic integrity, its benefits and how to avoid academic misconduct. Learners will be able to carry this forward into their further studies, work or social situations.

Academic misconduct may be done intentionally or unintentionally. Learners can get support from others for learning and for working on the lessons on LWN. Learners can use Artificial Intelligence (AI) to learn new things, understand ideas and solve problems. However, learners must do the assessment themselves (Quiz, End Test and Portfolio assessment).

³ ENAI (2018), Glossary for Academic Integrity. Available at:
<https://www.academicintegrity.eu/wp/glossary/>

Some examples of academic misconduct on LWN are:

- Getting someone else to do your assessment.
- Getting someone else to help you with your assessment (collusion).
- Copying someone else's work and submitting it as your own (plagiarism).
- Using technology such as AI, or using a search engine, to do your assessment.
- Doing work for somebody else for their assessment.
- Giving someone the answers for the Quiz and End Test questions.
- Impersonating somebody else for an assessment or prompting someone during their assessment.

Academic misconduct procedure

There are processes in place to detect academic misconduct:

- Monitoring by the LWN Coordinator, Adult Literacy Educators and LWN Support Staff
- Internal verification process
- Reports on usage logs and Internet Protocol addresses (IP addresses)

If somebody suspects academic misconduct, then the following procedure is followed:

- The person who suspects academic misconduct reports it to the LWN Coordinator and gives information on where it has taken place and the reasons for suspecting academic misconduct.
- The LWN Coordinator investigates the claim and if they are satisfied that academic misconduct is likely to have taken place:
- The LWN Coordinator informs the learner, NALA staff or Registered LWN Centre of the suspected misconduct and gives them an opportunity to respond.
- If the LWN Coordinator is satisfied that a breach has occurred:
- The account of the user(s) involved are temporarily deactivated.
- Any award submissions in progress for the user(s) are withdrawn.
- A resolution will be determined which may include:
- Raising awareness of academic integrity and support for maintaining high standards and avoiding academic misconduct.
- The need for the learner to carry out the assessment again.
- Repeated and intentional academic misconduct will be treated with investigation and potential withdrawal of service.

- Details of the academic misconduct and the outcome are recorded on the LWN academic misconduct register.

Responsibilities

Learners must:

- Ensure that work is their own work
- Ask for support when needed
- Agree to the Terms and Conditions

NALA must:

- Oversee the academic policy and procedures for Learn with NALA
- Provide information and resources on academic integrity to learners and staff
- Support staff with their responsibilities in relation to academic misconduct

LWN staff must:

- Be aware of academic integrity policy and related procedures
- Make learners aware of academic integrity and its importance
- Uphold principles in a fair and consistent manner
- Follow procedures for any suspected misconduct

Glossary of terms

Academic integrity

Academic integrity means being honest, fair and responsible in the work that you do in an education setting. It is expected of learners and those supporting learners.

Academic misconduct

Academic misconduct is any action or attempted action that gives you an unfair academic advantage. It is also known as cheating.

Assessment

Assessment of portfolio work is a method by which tutors evaluate and grade the assignments of their learners. Assessment of Quiz and End Test questions is graded through the Learning Management System (LMS).

Collusion

Collusion is when two or more learners work together on assessments that were meant to be completed by one person only.

Learn with NALA community

The Learn with NALA (LWN) community is made up of learners working on LWN programmes, NALA staff, LWN Centre staff and others supporting learners.

Registered Learn with NALA (LWN) Centre

Registered LWN Centres are not-for-profit organisations who work directly with adults who have unmet literacy, numeracy and digital literacy needs. Centres who want to use LWN must become a Registered LWN Centre.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is taking someone else's work and passing it off as your own.

Impersonating

Impersonating is someone passing themselves off as someone else so they can complete the other person's assessment.

Internal Verification

Internal verification is a process that is used to monitor that all assessment procedures have been carried out as expected and that grades have been correctly recorded.

Internet Protocol address (IP address)

Every computer or device, connected to the internet, has a unique number called an IP address. It is used to identify a computer and allows users to send and receive data.

Resources

- ETBI (2023), A Learner's Guide to Academic Integrity. Available at:
https://library.etbi.ie/ld.php?content_id=34423196
- ETBI (2023), Academic Integrity: Frequently Asked Questions. Available at:
https://library.etbi.ie/ld.php?content_id=35132447
- NALA (2023), Online Learning Policy. Available at:
<https://www.nala.ie/publications/nala-quality-assurance-manual/>
- QQI (2021), Academic Integrity Guidelines, National Academic Integrity Network. Available at: <https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2021-11/academic-integrity-guidelines.pdf>
- QQI (2021), Academic Integrity National Principles and Lexicon of Common Terms. Available at: <https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2021-11/academic-integrity-national-principles-and-lexicon-of-common-terms.pdf>
- QQI (2024), White Paper on Academic Integrity. Available at:
https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2024-02/white-paper-on-academic-integrity_consultation_0.pdf
- Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA), Academic Integrity. Available at: <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/students/understanding-academic-integrity/what-academic-integrity#academic-integrity%C2%A0>

3.4 Designing Learning Materials Procedure

Policy area	3. Teaching and Learning
Document reference number	NALA/DLMP01
Version	01
Date policy adopted	16 May 2018

NALA is committed to the provision of high-quality learning materials for adults who wish to improve their literacy and numeracy skills.

High quality learning materials are:

- designed for distance education;
- based on the needs and interests of the learner;
- designed with the type of learner in mind – independent learners, NALA Distance Learners, Registered LWN Centre learners;
- mindful to promote equality and diversity (11. Equality and Diversity Policy)
- up to date;
- based on research; and
- critically reflected upon and continuously improved through self-monitoring and evaluation.

Roles and responsibilities

The Innovation Manager has overall responsibility for the quality of learning materials. The Innovation Manager is responsible for the learning content on LWN.

The LWN Coordinator is responsible for the learning content produced by the Adult Literacy Educators and for monitoring the materials used with LWN learners.

Adult Literacy Educators are responsible for designing quality learning materials for distance education.

The 'Distance Learner' Content Writer is responsible for writing content for the DLS monthly worksheet.

LWN Authors and LWN Editors are responsible for designing quality eLearning content for LWN.

Planning and writing learning materials for distance education

Before writing content or designing learning materials you should ask yourself the following questions:

- Who will be using the materials? Are they for general use or for an individual learner?
- Is there a specific context the materials will be used in? Will they be used for one- to-one distance learning, for a wider audience, or for www.learnwithnala.ie.
- How much do you know about your learner and their interests?
- Are there existing relevant materials? Look at:
- <https://www.nala.ie/tutors/>
- Is there a clear set of learning aims and objectives?

When designing learning materials you should consider the following points:

- Learning materials should show variety, suit different levels, be relevant and be enjoyable.
- Learning materials should be culturally appropriate and inclusive. They should promote equality and diversity and avoid bias and discrimination. (11. Equality and Diversity Policy).
- Learning materials are most useful when they reinforce and build on what the learner already knows and can do.
- Design materials for the appropriate level of literacy and numeracy and reference QQI levels where necessary. Keep in mind that some learners may have 'spiky profiles' and materials may include different levels to match this.
- Include extra supports for distance learning as the learner will not have a tutor beside them to explain instructions.

When designing a worksheet or content for distance learning you should:

- always state the purpose of the worksheet;
- define all terms on the worksheet, especially new ones;
- give an instruction so learners are clear what to do. Sometimes you might need to include an example on the worksheet;
- ensure the text is clear and concise. Use headings and do not use block text (all capital letters). Use bold text for emphasis instead of italics;
- be consistent throughout and use the same words in instructions;
- give hints and tips where appropriate;

- refer learners to other parts of the workbook or website where other relevant supporting information or progression exercise is available;
- ensure that there is not too much text on a page and leave some white space;
- think of the appropriate length of the worksheet or content for a website;
- provide feedback to the learner. On a worksheet you may provide the answer at the bottom of the page, or online you may provide instant feedback; and
- be aware of the National Disability Authority's accessibility guidelines.
 - for information: <http://nda.ie/Resources/Accessibility-toolkit/Make-your-information-more-accessible/>
 - for websites: <http://nda.ie/Resources/Accessibility-toolkit/Make-your-websites-more-accessible/>

Further information on designing numeracy learning materials or materials for ESOL learners, design consideration and sample worksheets and formats can be found in the NALA **Preparing Learning Materials** guide.

3.5 Distance learning materials

The Distance Learner monthly worksheet

'The Distance Learner' is a monthly worksheet (10 editions per year) which is available to all NALA Distance Learners and NALA members. *The Distance Learner* provides topical articles of interest and literacy and numeracy exercises to NALA Distance Learners to enable them to practice their literacy and numeracy skills and to keep these skills up to date after they have left Learn with NALA. 'The Distance Learner' is available to NALA members through the NALA e-zine, through the post to LWN learners and online at: <https://www.nala.ie/resources/131>

The 'Distance Learner' Content Writer is responsible for writing the content for 'The Distance Learner'.

The LWN Coordinator is responsible for monitoring the content and developing the monthly worksheet. 'The Distance Learner' Content Writer and the LWN Coordinator gain feedback and suggestions from learners for the content and development of the monthly worksheet.

LWN learner worksheets

Adult Literacy Educators create worksheets for their Distance Learners that are relevant to the needs and interests of their learners. The Adult Literacy Educators develop learner worksheets for their learners taking into account the learner's goals, needs and interests. The learner worksheets are stored on the learner session page on the learner database. The Adult Literacy Educator can email a worksheet to the LWN Support Officer and they will post the worksheet to the learner.

The LWN Coordinator is responsible for monitoring the quality of the LWN learner worksheets and giving feedback to Adult Literacy Educators.

LWN content

LWN learning content is based on the specific learning outcomes at QQI levels 1 to 4. The content is developed for adult literacy learners and uses real world examples to apply the skills being learnt.

The TEL Officer is responsible for the quality of learning content on LWN. LWN Authors are responsible for writing content for LWN. This content includes a mixture of learning methods including graphical explanation, interactive exercises and video demonstrations. LWN Editors are responsible for reviewing content for WriteOn.

3.6 New LWN Content Procedure

The TEL Officer is responsible for overseeing new content on LWN. The following process is followed:

- The TEL Officer gains feedback on content from learners, tutors and other stakeholders through questionnaires and focus groups.
- This feedback is analysed and a list of lessons and high-level objectives are prepared. If the lessons are linked to QQI levels the learning outcomes are followed.
- The list of lessons are approved by the Innovation Manager.
- The TEL Officer sends a change request to the third party system provider to make necessary design changes to LWN.
- The TEL Officer creates an authoring plan which lists the number of screens needed and the timeframe for the development.

- LWN Authors write draft content on the authoring system. LWN Authors have support with writing learning content from the TEL Officer.
- LWN Editors review the content, document any changes and make changes on the authoring system.
- The content is reviewed twice by LWN editors and then it is tested on the LWN Staging Site.
- The TEL Officer approves all content before it goes live on www.learnwithnala.ie.
- Details of any changes made to LWN are available on the third-party system provider ticketing system.
- LWN Authors and LWN Editors follow **Guidelines for Creating LWN Content** which considers factors such as plain English, Video and Text to Speech (TTS).
- LWN Authors and LWN Editors follow the **Style Guide for LWN**.

Research into teaching and learning

The LWN Team have access to NALA research on current teaching and learning practice in adult literacy and numeracy. Adult Literacy Educators have the opportunity to take part in this research which informs their practice. The NALA Research Officer attends LWN Team Training to update the LWN Team on the latest research. Research covers the following areas:

- research on numeracy practice;
- research on literacy practice;
- research on financial numeracy;
- research on strategies for motivating learners,
- research on CPD; and
- research on blended learning⁴.

4. Assessment of Learners

4.1 Assessment of Learners Policy

Policy area	4. Assessment of Learners
Document reference number	NALA/AL02
Version	02
Date policy adopted	13 April 2018
Date version 02 reviewed	13 April 2021
Date of next review	Q2 2025

Learn with NALA is committed to ensuring that learners are assessed regularly and constructively in ways which support the teaching and learning process. Assessment processes gather information and supply evidence of learners' progress towards their individual learning goals, including those which include working towards certification.

Assessment processes are underpinned by the principles of adult education and good adult literacy work (**NALA, 2012**). Learners are active participants in the assessment of their own learning.

Assessment processes are reliable, secure and provide learners with appropriate feedback on their progress.

NALA's assessment framework includes:

Formal assessment

Formal assessment leads to certification and is carried out through NALA's eLearning website Learn with NALA, learnwithnala.ie (formerly WriteOn). Learn with NALA offers learning and assessment opportunities at levels 2 and 3 of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

Informal assessment

Informal assessment supports the teaching and learning process and is carried out through Learn with NALA. Informal assessment does not lead to certification although learners may decide to aim for a qualification at another stage in their learning journey.

The assessment framework addresses the following inter-related components:

- Initial assessment
- Formative assessment
- Summative assessment
- Support for staff in implementing the assessment processes through distance learning in a fair and consistent manner

Aim of policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure that learners are provided with a range of assessment opportunities which include both informal assessment which supports the teaching and learning process and formal assessment which also leads to certification.

Who is covered by this policy?

NALA's Assessment of Learners policy is for:

- Learners and external tutors engaging in LWN
- All NALA staff who are in contact with learners and external tutors engaging in LWN

Roles and responsibilities

The LWN Team will ensure that learners are informed about assessment opportunities available to them and that assessments are secure, reliable and delivered in a timely manner. The LWN Team will ensure that learners are actively involved in their own assessment and that assessment is fair and consistent. NALA will respect learners' privacy and confidentiality at all times.

4.2 Assessment of Learners Procedures

Policy area	4. Assessment of Learners
Document reference number	NALA/ALP02
Version	02
Date policy adopted	13 April 2018
Date version 02 adopted	13 April 2021

These procedures relate to the designing, implementing and evaluating of learner assessments on Learn with NALA.

LWN works with individuals who want to improve their literacy, numeracy and basic digital skills. Learners can work online by themselves or work with a tutor over the phone or online. The programme is free and confidential.

Learners are assessed regularly and constructively in ways which support the teaching and learning process. Learners also have the option to be assessed to provide evidence of achievement that will support certification of their learning. Assessment includes formal assessment which measures how well a learner has mastered learning outcomes, and informal assessment which uses performance based measures which inform what the tutor and learner will work on next.

Methods of assessment

Assessment methods in LWN include both formal and informal assessment. Many learners who use LWN are motivated to join the service for personal development reasons, to help children with their homework and to gain promotion in work. Many learners want to address specific goals relating to literacy and numeracy in everyday life and are not concerned with gaining qualifications. While gaining a qualification is not a requirement of participation in LWN all learners are informed about their option to go forward for level 2 and level 3 certification through Learn with NALA.

Progression is a key element of LWN and learners can progress from Distance Learning tuition to Learn with NALA level 1, level 2, level 3 and level 4. Learners can gain a

qualification at level 2 and level 3 of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

Some learners work independently, and some learners work with the support of a NALA Distance Learning Tutor. Other learners use Learn with NALA in a Registered Learn with NALA Centre such as their local ETB or other community or education centre.

Formal assessment

Formal assessment uses standardised measures to assess how well a learner has mastered learning outcomes. Formal assessment in NALA is available at level 2 and level 3 on Learn with NALA and includes both initial, formative and summative assessment (Figure 4.1).

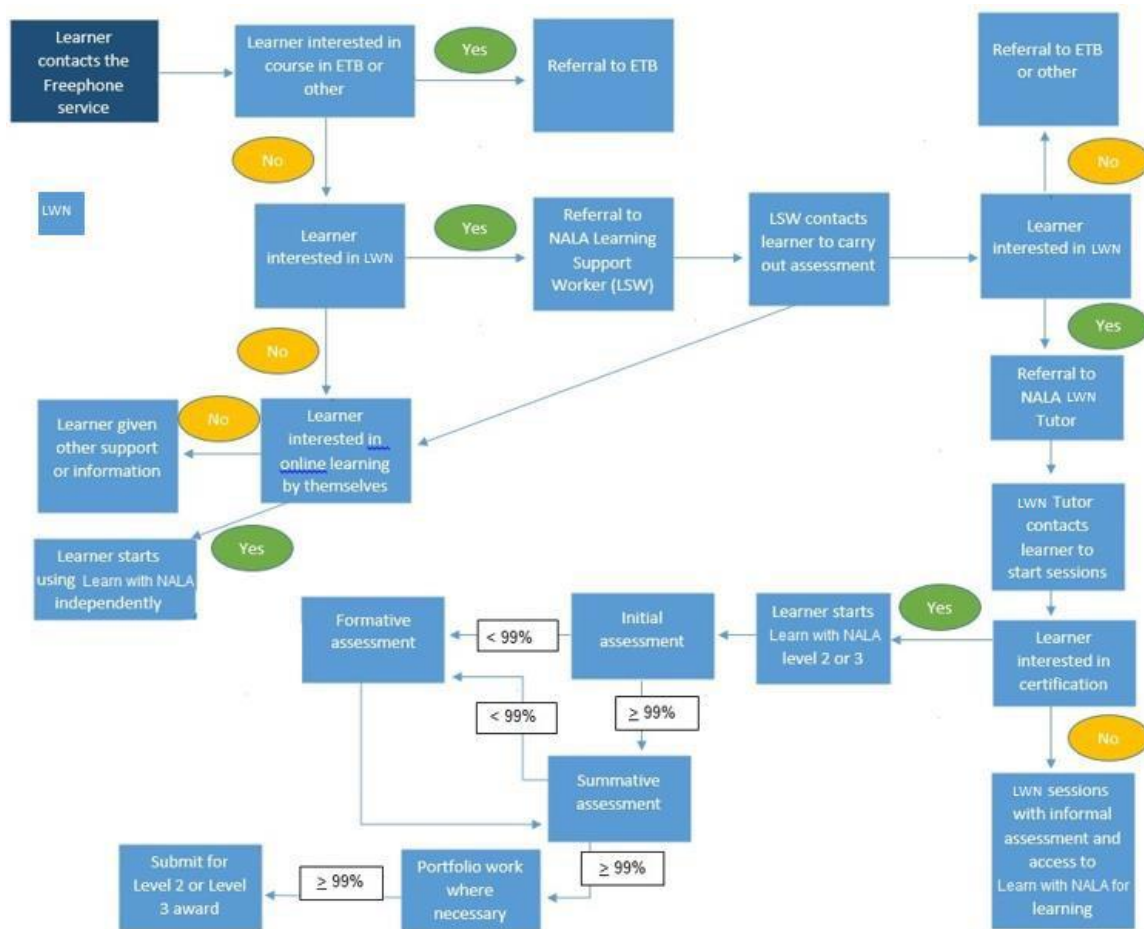


Figure 4-1 - Individual's journey through LWN including assessment

The migration of courses from WriteOn to Learn with NALA is taking place between 2020 and 2022. A list of available courses can be viewed on learnwithnala.ie. In total there are 12 minor awards available at level 2 and one Major Award in General Learning. There are 14 minor awards available at level 3 and the option of three Major Awards in General Learning, Information and Communication Technology and Employability Skills (Figure 4.2).

Level 2 qualifications:			Level 3 qualifications:		
Award Code	Award Title	Credits	Award Code	Award Title	Credits
M2C01	Reading	5	3N0880	Communications	10
M2C02	Writing	5	3N0929	Mathematics	10
M2C03	Listening and Speaking	5	3N0928	Application of Numbers	5
M2L12	Personal Decision Making	5	3N0930	Functional Mathematics	5
M2L13	Setting Learning Goals	5	3N0881	Computer Literacy	10
M2N05	Quantity and Number	10	3N0931	Internet Skills	10
M2N06	Pattern and Relationship	5	3N0552	Digital Media	10
M2N07	Shape and Space	5	3N0896	Career Preparation	10
M2N08	Data Handling	5	3N0532	Health and Safety Awareness	10
M2N09	Quantitative Problem Solving	5	3N0565	Personal Effectiveness	10
M2T10	Using Technology	5	3N0564	Personal and Interpersonal Skills	10
M2T11	Computer Skills	5	3N0921	Managing Personal Finances	10
			3N0553	Self Advocacy	10
			3N0585	Event Participation	5

Figure 4-2 - Learn with NALA Level 2 and Level 3 awards

Initial assessment on Learn with NALA

Initial assessment on Learn with NALA is an eLearning assessment called 'What do I already know?' It is used to assess learner's strengths and gaps in skills and knowledge. Initial assessment is available at level 2 and level 3 and comprises one question per learning outcome.

The pass mark for initial assessment is 99% and all questions are randomised. If the learner passes the initial assessment tasks they can move forward to the summative assessment which is called the End Test. If the learner does not answer all the questions in the initial assessment correctly they are directed to take the lessons associated with the questions they answered incorrectly. The learner can view whether they have passed the initial assessment by going into: My Progress and viewing Grades. This is indicated as either 'Pass' or 'Go to Lesson'. (Figure 4.3).

Learner, Involve Test
involvedtestlearner
[Print](#) [Help](#)


Maths level 3 N
2019

Unsuccessful

- Summary
- Grades**
- Content
- Login History
- System Access History

Grades Progress

Current Grade
Unsuccessful



Final Grade
Graded Items
Other Items

Task 21 Maths Level 3

66.67 / 100 | [Go to Lesson](#)

Feedback Last Modified: Sep 4, 2020 12:05 PM

Task 20 Maths Level 3

100 / 100 | [Pass](#)

Feedback Last Modified: Sep 4, 2020 12:03 PM

Task 19 Maths Level 3

100 / 100 | [Pass](#)

Feedback Last Modified: Sep 4, 2020 12:02 PM

Task 18 Maths Level 3

0 / 100 | [Go to Lesson](#)

Feedback Last Modified: Sep 4, 2020 12:02 PM

Task 17 Maths Level 3

100 / 100 | [Pass](#)

Feedback Last Modified: Sep 4, 2020 12:01 PM

Learner, Involve Test
involve_test_learner

 Print Help

Maths level 3 N

2019

Unsuccessful

Summary

Grades

Content

Login History

System Access History

Current Grade

Unsuccessful

Unsuccessful

Final Grade

Graded Items

Other Items

Task 21 Maths Level 3

66.67 / 100 | Go to Lesson

▶ Feedback

Last Modified: Sep 4, 2020 12:05 PM

Task 20 Maths Level 3

100 / 100 | Pass

Feedback

Last Modified: Sep 4, 2020 12:03 PM

Task 19 Maths Level 3

100 / 100 | Pass

Feedback

Last Modified: Sep 4, 2020 12:02 PM

Task 18 Maths Level 3

0 / 100 | [Go to Lesson](#)

Feedback

Last Modified: Sep 4, 2020 12:02 PM

Task 17 Maths Level 3

100 / 100 | Pass

► Feedback

Last Modified: Sep 4, 2020 12:01 PM

Figure 4-2 - Grades view showing initial assessment

Learn with NALA contains eLearning content where the learner practices those skills the initial assessment identified as needing further work. All questions are randomised. Learners do not need to do the lessons in the order that they appear on the Content screen. Once all lessons have been completed then the summative assessment is released for the learner to attempt.

the learner scores 99% or higher in the summative assessment they have passed the End Test. Some courses require portfolio work which can be done at any stage.

If the learner does not answer all the questions in the summative assessment correctly they are directed to re-do the lessons associated with the questions they answered incorrectly. The learner can view whether they have passed the summative assessment questions by going into: My Progress and viewing Grades. This is indicated as either 'Pass' or 'Redo'. (Figure 4.4)

The screenshot shows a user interface for a learner named 'Learner, Involve Test' with the username 'involveestlearner'. The course is 'Maths level 3 N' for the year '2019'. The overall status is 'Unsuccessful'. The page is titled 'Progress Summary' and has a 'Grades' section. A progress bar shows 'Unsuccessful' with a red bar. The main content area lists six assessment questions with their scores and 'Redo' or 'Pass' buttons. Each question has a 'Feedback' link and a 'Last Modified' timestamp.

Question	Score	Status	Last Modified
Question 6.2 Measurement	33.33 / 100	Redo	Dec 16, 2020 2:08 PM
Question 6.1 Measurement	0 / 100	Redo	Dec 16, 2020 2:08 PM
Question 5.2 Measurement	33.33 / 100	Redo	Dec 16, 2020 2:07 PM
Question 5.1 Measurement	66.67 / 100	Redo	Dec 16, 2020 2:06 PM
Question 4.2 Measurement	0 / 100	Redo	Dec 16, 2020 2:06 PM
Question 4.1 Measurement	100 / 100	Pass	Dec 16, 2020 2:05 PM

Figure 4-4 - Grades view showing summative assessment

Once you have completed the lesson or lessons again, you can make another attempt at the summative assessment. This time, though, you are only required to answer the summative assessment questions you didn't answer correctly in your previous attempt.

Learn with NALA portfolio assessment

Some learning outcomes on Learn with NALA cannot be assessed by eLearning content alone. These additional assessment activities are completed in the learner's 'Portfolio' on Learn with NALA. These activities involve real-world tasks with evidence uploaded into the portfolio or posted to NALA. These portfolio and paper assessments are initially assessed by the Registered Centre tutor if applicable and then assessed and verified by the by Learn with NALA Online Assessors.

There are 12 minor awards available at level 2, two of which require additional assessment. The level 2 Listening & Speaking assessment is assessed by the LWN Support Officer and the level 2 Writing assessment is assessed by the LWN Coordinator.

There are 14 minor awards available at level 3. There are 147 learning outcomes, 36 of which require additional assessment in the following awards:

- Communications
- Mathematics
- Application of Number
- Personal and Interpersonal Skills
- Personal Effectiveness
- Computer Literacy
- Digital Media
- Internet Skills
- Career Preparation
- Health and Safety Awareness

For Health and Safety Awareness learners are required to provide evidence that they have participated in a fire drill before they can receive an award. For Career Preparation learners take part in a mock interview over the phone with a Learn with NALA Online Assessor. The portfolio assessments are assessed by Learn with NALA Online Assessors and are reviewed as part of the internal verification process. Learn with NALA Online Assessors are trained in assessing Learn with NALA portfolio work and are informed by the Learn with NALA Online Assessor Guidelines.

Recognition of Prior Learning on Learn with NALA

Learn with NALA uses a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) tool that uses assessment to allow learners receive qualifications for what they have previously learnt but for which they have never received formal certification. This RPL tool is available at level 2 and level 3 and allows learners, who have skills but no qualifications, to get a formal qualification.

The RPL tool allows learners who receive 99% or higher on an initial assessment to move forward to the summative assessment of that module without having to do the eLearning assessments associated with that module. If the learner receives 99% or higher on the summative assessment then they can move forward to submit for the award or to the portfolio section if required.

If the learner achieves lower than 99% in the initial assessment the RPL tool recognises what the learner has answered incorrectly and points the learner to the relevant eLearning assessment on that module. The learner only has to complete eLearning assessments for learning outcomes which they did not pass in the initial assessment.

Informal assessment

Informal assessment in LWN is used to help identify learner's needs, strengths and interests. Informal assessment is used to measure performance and the achievement of individual learning goals. Informal assessment is used to inform what the Adult Literacy Educator and learner will work on next or to help identify other education programmes where the learner may progress to. Learners are actively involved in this process. This follows the principles outlined in the Guidelines for Good Adult Literacy Work (**NALA, 2012**) which states that learners have the right to set their own goals and be involved in all aspects of provision.

Informal assessment on Learn with NALA

Informal assessment is available on Learn with NALA at level 1, level 4 and in the Preparing for Level 3 section. Learners can use these informal assessments to assess their skills. The learning content is structured in the same way as for level 2 and level 3 awards. The learner gains feedback on the questions that they answered correctly or incorrectly. The learner can see their progress by viewing Content in the My Progress section.

Level 1

Informal assessment is available at level 1 on Learn with NALA. Learners who have completed all the lessons can get a NALA Certificate of Completion which is available in the Awards section. NALA hope to offer formal assessment at level 1 in the future. There are 12 courses available at level 1 in the area of words, numbers, learning to learn and technology. (Figure 4.5).

The lessons in these courses are all based on the learning outcomes of level 1 minor awards.

The screenshot shows a webpage for 'Learn with NALA' Level 1 courses. It features three distinct course cards, each with a video thumbnail on the left, a descriptive paragraph in the middle, and a teal 'Register now' button on the right. The first card is for 'Level 1 Computer Skills', the second for 'Level 1 Using Technology', and the third for 'Level 1 Writing'. Each card also includes a link for 'More information here' with a downward arrow icon.

Course Title	Description	Action
Level 1 Computer Skills More information here	This is a level 1 computer skills course that will help you develop your skills in using a personal computer. Once you are finished the course you can print out a Certificate of completion from NALA. This video will guide you on how to get started.	Register now
Level 1 Using Technology More information here	This is a level 1 course that will help you develop your skills in using technology in everyday life. Once you are finished the course you can print out a Certificate of completion from NALA. This video will guide you on how to get started.	Register now
Level 1 Writing More information here	This is a Level 1 writing course that will help you develop your skills in writing everyday words. Once you are finished the course you will receive a Certificate of completion from NALA. This video will guide you on how to get started.	Register now

Figure 4-5 - Learn with NALA Level 1 courses

There is also a 'Learn with NALA Help' course which has support information and instructions on using Learn with NALA and information on RPL and QQI awards. (Figure 4.6)

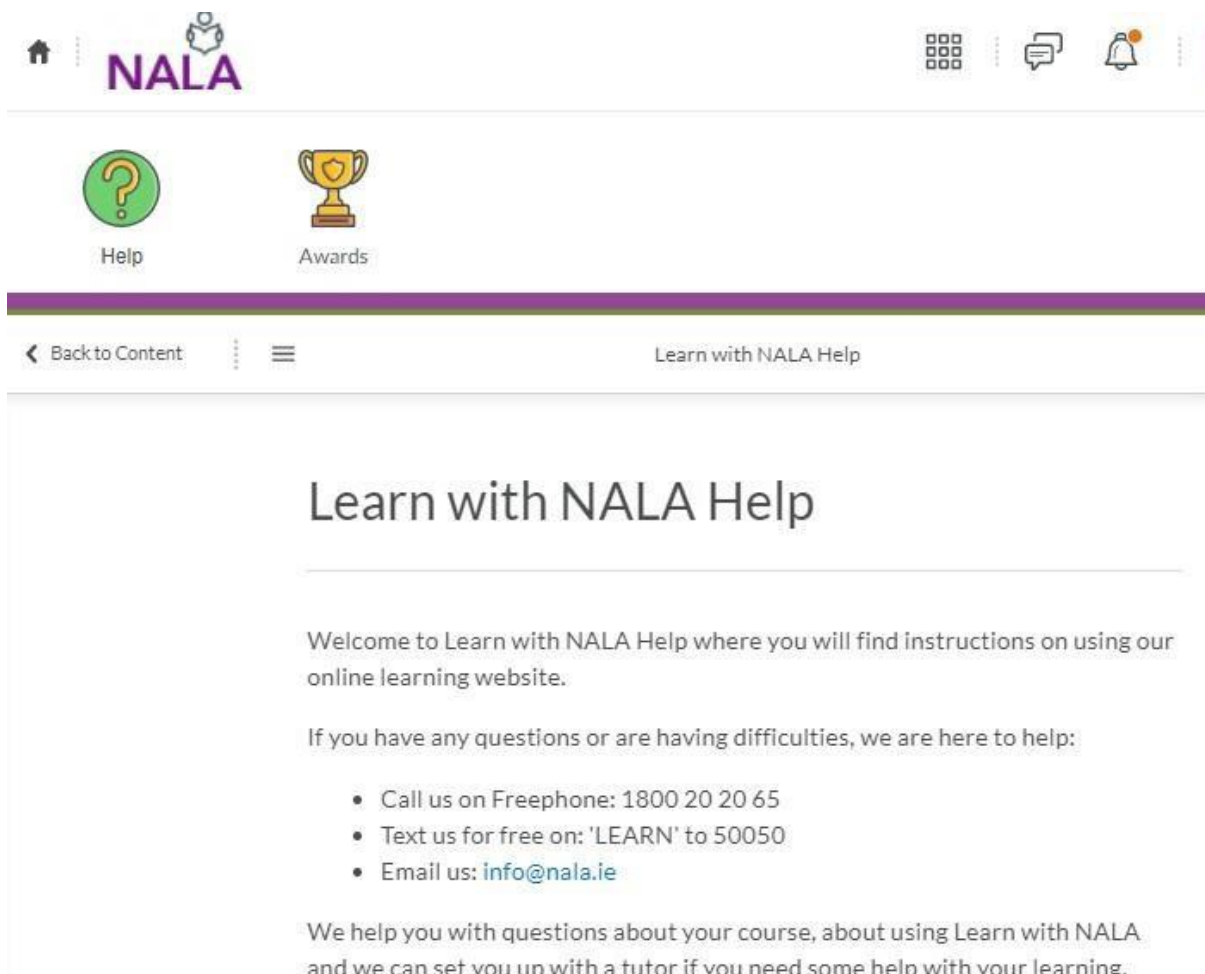


Figure 4-6 - Learn with NALA Help

Preparing for Level 3

Informal assessment is available in the Preparing for Level 3 section of Learn with NALA. Learners can receive a NALA Certificate of Completion. There are two courses in mathematics and communications which cover a range of topics.

Level 4

Informal assessment is available at level 4 on Learn with NALA. Learners can receive a NALA Certificate of Completion. Many of the learning outcomes at level 4 involve collaborative tasks and therefore are not suitable for formal assessment on Learn with NALA. There are three courses available at level 4 in Mathematics, Communications and Digital Media Technology. The lessons in these courses are all based on the learning outcomes of level 4 minor awards.

Learn with NALA Skills Checker

WriteOn had a skills checker which was available to use as a standalone tool from the homepage of WriteOn. The skills checker was used to assess skills in a variety of areas and the questions were linked to learning outcomes at level 2 and level 3. The skills checker made recommendations for the learner to study WriteOn courses at different levels. NALA have developed an online application called CITO which replaces the old skills checker on WriteOn.

Check In, Take Off (CITO) is a web application that allows learners to self-assess their literacy, numeracy and digital skills, explore their learning goals and find out about learning opportunities that would suit them. (Figure 4.7)

The CITO App uses real-world task-based assessments. Each task encourages the user to picture themselves in a situation and reflect on how well they could deal with the situation in terms of the specific skills needed. These tasks are linked to learning outcomes at levels 1 to 4.

Based on the user's self-assessment, the CITO App recognises a learner's existing skills and strengths, as well as identifying the skills that could be developed. Learners are then provided with information on relevant online and local face-to-face learning opportunities, such as NALA's Learn with NALA online course options or local course options provided by the Education and Training Boards.

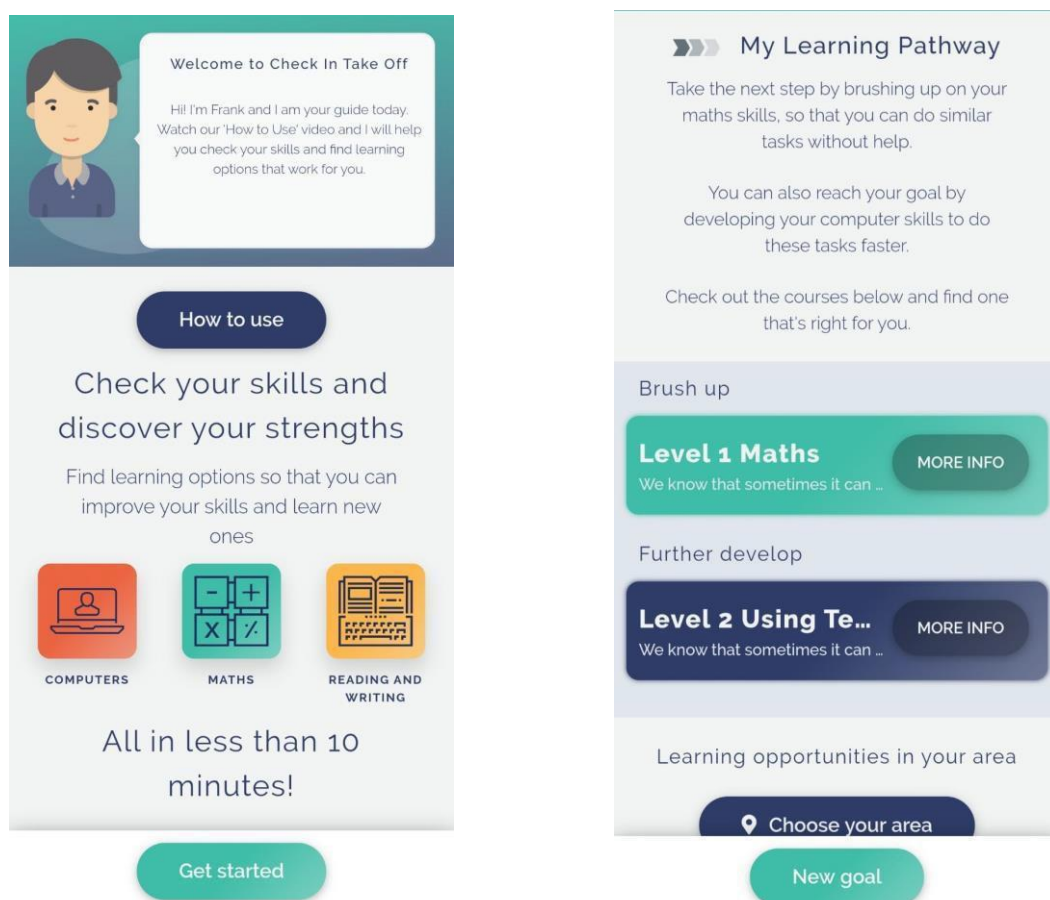


Figure 4-7 – Check In, Take Off application

Initial assessment with Adult Literacy Educator

Learners have the option to carry out an initial assessment with an Adult Literacy Educator. This is for learners who require more information than was offered on the first call to the NALA Freephone service or for learners who would like to participate in one-to-one (phone) tuition with a Adult Literacy Educator. This assessment is carried out typically within one week of the learner contacting the NALA Freephone service.

An Adult Literacy Educator contacts the learner to carry out the initial assessment. The assessment is designed for a phone conversation and it helps to identify the learners' needs, strengths and interests as well as their suitability to Distance Learning. The learner is informed about the option to work towards a level 2 or level 3 QQI accredited award. Adult Literacy Educator can also provide information on other educational options and other support information at this time if appropriate.

Adult Literacy Educators record relevant information on the Learner Assessment Form on NALA's learner database. The assessment system references learning outcomes at NFQ levels 2 to 3. This information is available to the learners Adult Literacy Educator. All information on the assessment form is reviewed by the LWN Coordinator.

Formative assessment with Adult Literacy Educator

Formative assessment gives the learner insight into their progress and allows them to reflect on their learning and to set further goals. After the initial assessment with an Adult Literacy Educator, the learner will commence sessions with their Distance Learning Tutor. The learner and the Distance Learning Tutor will work together to decide on learning goals for the next six weeks. The learning goals are set to be realistic and achievable within the six week timescale. Distance Learning sessions are divided into six week blocks. After six weeks a review takes place between the learner and the Distance Learning Tutor and the plan is reviewed and further goals are identified.

The Adult Literacy Educator, in conjunction with the learner, records relevant information on the Learner Session Form on NALA's learner database. The session form references learning outcomes at NFQ levels. A sample of information on the Learner Session Form is reviewed by the LWN Coordinator.

Summative assessment with Adult Literacy Educator

Summative assessment provides evidence of achievement of the learner's goals and whether he or she has achieved the learning outcomes of an award. Informal summative assessment takes place at the end of a block of teaching where the learning goals have been achieved. There is no limit on the length of time that a learner works with the service. Once the learner is benefitting from the service and is progressing sessions can continue. When a learner is ready to progress from the service a final review is done and learners can be referred to other educational services or courses. The Adult Literacy Educator, in conjunction with the learner, records relevant information on the Learner Session Form on NALA's learner database. All information on the Learner Session Form is reviewed by the LWN Coordinator.

4.3 Communication to learners about assessment

Learners are informed about assessment options available to them and the assessment process through various methods:

Freephone service

Information on assessment is available through the NALA Freephone service at 1800 20 20 80. The Freephone service operates throughout the year from Monday to Friday between 9.30 am and 5.00 pm. Outside of these hours learners can leave a message and a LWN Support Officer will call them back. The LWN Support Officer will let individuals know about the different learning opportunities and NALA assessments available to learners. Learners can also email learn@nala.ie.

Adult Literacy Educators

Adult Literacy Educators will explain how the phone tuition service works and the structure of assessment within the service.

Adult Literacy Educators typically work with learners once a week for 30 minutes. Adult Literacy Educators will let learners know about the different assessment opportunities available to them. Adult Literacy Educators and learners carry out assessments at the end of each session and a review at the end of each six week block. Adult Literacy Educators can support learners with knowing when they are ready for formal assessment.

Published material

NALA produces printed and online materials to assist learners and tutors in making informed decisions about assessment. These materials include:

- LWN prospectus
- Getting started on Learn with NALA information sheet
- Learn with NALA Learner Charter

Learn with NALA

Learners are provided with information about the assessment process on NALA's eLearning website Learn with NALA and through communication to Registered Centres.

- The Learn with NALA e-zine goes to all Registered Centres on a monthly basis and gives general updates about the platform and certification updates on Learn with NALA.
- Announcements about certification and submission deadlines appear on the Learn with NALA homepage.
- Learners are made aware of the assessment process through the website. A notification appears for learners beside their profile name when they log in. This can inform learners as to whether they have feedback on their portfolio work, have passed a grade item or have assignments to submit.
- Each courses has videos which explain what the course is about, how to navigate the course and how to perform assessment tasks on the course.
- There is general information in the Learn with NALA Help section with a list of support numbers and an email address to contact for help with general queries. There is also information on assessment, recognition of prior learning (RPL) and certification.
- Learners are made aware of the need to share data with Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) for accreditation purposes in the Learn with NALA [privacy policy](#).

NALA website

Information about Learn with NALA is available on the NALA website at:

<https://www.nala.ie/free-courses/learn-with-nala/>

There is information about assessment and how it works in the Learn with NALA Guide for Centre Tutors: <https://www.nala.ie/publications/learn-with-nala-guide-for-centre-tutors/>. This includes a number of links to videos explaining different aspects of Learn with NALA.

Learners can gain information about assessment procedures from NALA's Quality Assurance policies and procedures which are published at:

<https://www.nala.ie/publications/nala-quality-assurance-manual/>

Fetch courses

Information about NALA Distance Learning courses is available on the Further Education and Training Course Hub www.fetchcourses.ie.

4.4 Consistency of assessment

Assessment is an integral part of the Learn with NALA eLearning programme and is set up to ensure that the learner can demonstrate the appropriate learning outcome. All assessment results are recorded on the Learn with NALA administration system.

Some learning outcomes on Learn with NALA cannot be assessed by eLearning content alone.

Additional assessment activities are completed in the learner's online portfolio on Learn with NALA. Instructions on assessments are available to the learner in their online portfolio and support is available through the Freephone service if necessary. The portfolio assessments are assessed by Learn with NALA Online Assessors. Learn with NALA Online Assessors follow guidelines to ensure that all work is assessed fairly and consistently. The Internal Verifier oversees additional assessment activities.

Assessments are subject to the NALA internal verification process and an external authentication process.

4.5 Security of assessment

NALA will ensure that all learner material, including work produced for the assessment of teaching and learning and for certification is kept secure and confidential. All NALA staff adhere to the Information and Data Management Policy and Procedures (8. Information and Data Management) and have attended training on data protection. NALA staff adhere to the **Business Continuity Plan** which includes steps for the recovery of IT Systems.

Security of physical material

As per the NALA Organisational Handbook, all incoming post, including learner material, is opened and date stamped by the Office Manager, except where an item is marked as 'Private and confidential'. All learner material is passed to the appropriate staff and logged on the Learn with NALA administration system. Learner material such as homework is forwarded to the relevant Adult Literacy Educator. All Learn with NALA assessment material is kept secure in a locked filing cabinet in the NALA office.

Assessment material is reviewed by the Internal Verifier. All assessment outcomes are recorded on the Learn with NALA administration system. Learn with NALA Online Assessors have access to assessment outcomes for their learners on the Learn with NALA administration system and they can communicate these results to their learner. Learners can also contact the Freephone service to get an update on assessment.

Security of eLearning material

Learners create their own password on Learn with NALA which allows them access to their own Learn with NALA account and online portfolio. Learners have the ability to change their password from the login page.

Learners can view their own assessment work in their online portfolio. The Learn with NALA Online Assessor and other staff involved in the assessment process also have access to view this assessment work. Learners have access to information on their results on the grades view of the 'My Progress' section of their Learn with NALA account.

Information on learners' details, assessments, passwords and results are stored in the Learn with NALA administration system. Access to this is restricted and there are a number of different roles on Learn with NALA such as learner, Centre tutor, Verifier, NALA staff and Admin. These roles all have different levels of access.

Learn with NALA has a security certificate which means that the website is secure and information you send or get through the website is private.

4.6 Reasonable accommodation

NALA aims to support learners to assist them in achieving their educational goals. NALA implements the principles of equality and support for people with a wide range of needs. NALA adhere to the **Guidelines on the inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities in adult literacy services** (NALA, 2018). In so far as is possible, NALA will endeavour to assist learners who need special accommodation to carry out assessments. The reasonable accommodation will be implemented in a fair and impartial manner and will in no way advantage or disadvantage the learner.

Learners who are in need of special accommodation will be put in touch with the LWN Coordinator to see how best to accommodate their needs in assessment. The LWN Coordinator will also liaise with the learners' Adult Literacy Educator or registered Learn with NALA centre tutor if necessary to see how best to implement the reasonable accommodation. A Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment Application Form (Appendix 8: NALA Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment Application Form) is available and a log of all reasonable accommodation is kept by the LWN Coordinator on SharePoint. The log contains details such as their PPSN, award, assessment details, details of the reasonable accommodation, supporting evidence, action taken and the outcome.

Late submissions

Learners must submit assessments before the submission deadline, otherwise the assessment will go into the following round. A learner may contact the LWN Coordinator

about a late submission to request that it go forward for the current round. Details of reasons for this must be provided to the LWN Coordinator who will in turn inform the learner about the decision made. Details of the outcome will be stored in the Learn with NALA administration system. Further operational details can be found in the LWN Administration Guidelines.

4.7 Internal Verification process

NALA typically run two rounds of verification each year. The Internal Verification panel is made up of the Internal Verifier, a member of management, members of the LWN Team and a learner representative from the Student Subcommittee or the NALA Board. The Internal Verification panel is convened to review adherence to Quality Assurance procedures and to sample submissions. The Internal Verification panel has the following responsibilities:

- to verify agreed assessment procedures were followed;
- to verify that the evidence has been developed in accordance with the techniques and instruments agreed in the validated programme; and
- to verify that grades have been awarded in line with QQI requirements.

The Internal Verifier completes and signs the Provisional Learner Group Results form that is generated from QBS. Further operational details can be found in the LWN Administration Guidelines.

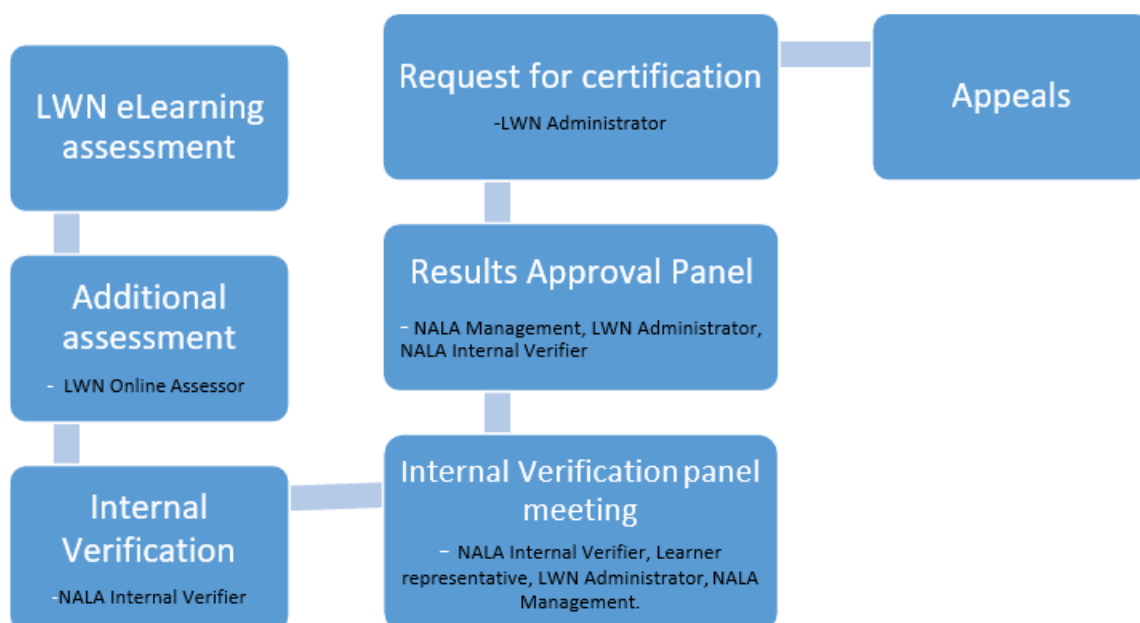


Figure 4-8 – NALA assessment process

4.8 External Authentication Procedure

Policy area	4. Assessment of Learners
Document reference number	NALA/AL/EAP02
Version	02
Date policy adopted	06 February 2019
Date review adopted	21 October 2020

External Authentication is a key process in the fair and consistent assessment of learners. This procedure provides the External Authenticator with a structure for carrying out their role and ensures that the process is done in a systematic coherent, professional and transparent manner.

In addition to this procedure the External Authenticator will also need to be familiar with the following documents:

- NALA Assessment of Learners Procedures
- **Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for External Authenticators (2015)**
- **Effective Practice Guidelines for External Examining (2015)**

- **QQI Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers (2013)**

Selecting the External Authenticator

NALA appoints independent External Authenticators to moderate results for all awards that are achieved through NALA's eLearning website courses.nala.ie.

The External Authenticators may be selected from the QQI external authenticator panel or through NALA's own selection criteria. This process is carried out every four years or earlier as necessary

In selecting appropriate External Authenticators NALA will ensure that the authenticators:

- Have technical and subject matter expertise within the appropriate award area or field of learning. Have a minimum of two years' experience of working in this field.
- Have a minimum of two years' experience of External Authentication.
- Have knowledge and experience of awards, assessment and standards.
- Have experience of delivering programme assessment in the field.
- Agree to undertake appropriate training and to attend appropriate briefings.
- Have the qualities necessary to interact with learners, assessors and senior staff members, as appropriate.
- Have administrative and IT skills. The External Authenticators will be accessing evidence through NALA's eLearning website courses.nala.ie.
- Can undertake to operate within the code of practice and guidelines issued by QQI, as appropriate.
- Are available to NALA at appropriate times.
- Are independent of NALA.
- Inform NALA of any potential conflict of interest that may compromise their role.

The LWN Coordinator (Internal Verifier) is responsible for appointing External Authenticators for NALA. Applicants will be required to attend for interview and once successful will be placed on the NALA External Authenticator panel. There will be two External Authenticators on the NALA panel at all times. Being placed on the panel does not guarantee employment during this period.

Currently there are two rounds of authentication each year. The External Authenticators are placed on the NALA panel for a period of four years. The External Authenticators can carry out up to four rounds of authentication within this period of four years. A new External Authenticator will be appointed after the four year period has passed or after four rounds of authentication. A period of four rounds must pass before previously employed External Authenticators can be employed again.

The Internal Verifier is responsible for training of the External Authenticators. This training will include training on the use of courses.nala.ie for authentication purposes. This training takes place one month before the first External Authentication and can be carried out face-to-face in NALA or through an online meeting.

External Authentication Training

The Internal Verifier is responsible for training of the External Authenticator.

This training will include:

- Introduction to NALA
- Learn with NALA and Learn with NALA Programmes
- Quality Assurance Manual
- Demonstration of learner journey through eLearning website
- Demonstration of the administration section of the eLearning website
- Details for authentication process
- Confirmation of arrangements prior to External Authentication visit.

This training takes place before the first External Authentication visit and can be carried out face-to-face in NALA or through an online meeting.

Timeframe for External Authentication

NALA typically run two rounds of verification each year. External Authentication takes place after the Internal Verification process and before the Results Approval process. In planning for External Authentication consideration will be given to the following:

- The other assessment related processes: internal verification, results approval, requesting certification and appeals
- NALA's key dates
- QQI certification deadlines and key dates

Location of External Authentication

External Authentication will take place in NALA, Sandford Lodge, Sandford Close, Ranelagh, Dublin 6, D06 YF65. All documentation and necessary equipment will be available to the External Authenticator. The External Authenticator will meet with staff and assessing tutors will be available remotely.

Items to be made available for the External Authentication process

- Relevant NALA staff will be available to the External Authenticator.
- Relevant award specifications and validated programme modules. The External Authenticator will require access to courses.nala.ie and to the Learn with NALA administration website.
- All relevant assessment instruments and appropriate supporting documentation, for example, mathematical set and NALA Assessment of Learners Procedures.
- All online assessment evidence on the learners' Learn with NALA account. All soft copy evidence will also be available to the External Authenticator. This evidence is grouped into folders on the External Authenticator's computer for ease of access.
- All physical learner assessment evidence.
- All learner assessment results are available to view on the Learn with NALA administration website.
- Learn with NALA Online Assessors names are available to view on the Learn with NALA administration website.

- Appropriate equipment to moderate assessment evidence produced in a multi- media format must also be provided, as appropriate.
- Print outs of the Level 2 and Level 3 decision lists which lists details of all the learners for the current round.
- NALA sampling strategy.
- Sample of Level 2 and Level 3 awards.
- Statistics spreadsheet with number of learners, number of awards and Learn with NALA Centres.
- Previous External Authentication reports.

Conducting External Authentication

The External Authenticator will work through the following stages of the process:

1. Confirm arrangements with NALA including the date of the visit, the numbers of learners and the number of awards.
2. Conduct the authentication process.
3. Moderate the assessment results by reviewing the learner evidence yielded by NALA's sampling strategy.
4. Report back to NALA by completing the NALA External Authentication report.
5. Send an invoice to NALA.

4.9 Learner appeals

Learners can appeal assessment results which they consider to be unfair. All LWN learners receive a copy of the LWN learner Charter¹ which informs learners of their right to make an appeal.

Information about appeals is also available on Learn with NALA and from NALA's Quality Assurance policies and procedures which are published on www.nala.ie.

All assessment results are verified and recorded on the Learn with NALA administration system. Learners are informed that results are not confirmed until the Internal Verification and External Authentication process has taken place. The results will then be communicated to learners. All learners who wish to appeal a result are put in touch with the Internal Verifier. The Internal Verifier will be responsible for informing the Education, Training and Assessment Subcommittee of any learner appeals.

NALA will acknowledge a learner appeal within five working days. If possible NALA will give a full response within 20 working days of receiving a learner appeal. A record of appeals is kept on the NALA complaints log.

4.10 Corrective action

NALA has a process to deal with errors, omissions and other actions which impact on the validity of the assessment processes. When an issue is identified a full investigation will take place. The Internal Verifier will be contacted and will take the necessary action to deal with the issue. The Internal Verifier will contact the appropriate party and will allow the appropriate party respond. The Internal Verifier will agree the action and this will be documented and sent to the Education and Training Committee. The Internal Verifier will notify QQI if necessary.

4.11 Results approval

NALA will ensure that all learner work is fully quality assured and approved prior to submission to QQI for certification. The Results Approval Panel has the following responsibilities:

- to confirm the results have been verified by NALA;
- to confirm that the evidence has been assessed in accordance with the techniques outlined in the award specification; and
- to confirm that the results presented are consistent with national standards for the award.

Once the Internal Verification and External Authentication processes are complete the Results Approval Panel carry out the results approval process. Once the results are approved the data can be submitted to QQI. The data is uploaded to the QQI QBS system. Further operational details on this can be found in the LWN Administration Guidelines. The Education, Training and Assessment Committee have oversight of this process.

The Results Approval Panel is made up of the Internal Verifier, a member of management and a member of the LWN Team. Once the results are approved the data can be submitted to QQI. The data is uploaded to the QQI QBS system. Further operational details on this can be found in the LWN Administration Guidelines.

4.12 Assessment feedback

NALA assesses learners regularly and constructively to support the teaching and learning process. Feedback is used to provide useful information on learner progress in meeting their own learning goals and in meeting national standards.

Feedback on informal assessment

Regular feedback is provided to learners taking part in Distance Learning sessions. Sessions take place over the phone or online. Sessions typically take place weekly, for 30 minutes, and can be arranged for a time to suit the learner. Time for feedback is built into each session in the form of a weekly review. This weekly review takes place between the learner and their Adult Literacy Educator and focuses on the teaching and learning content of the session and both the learner's evaluation and the tutor's evaluation of the session. The learner and the Adult Literacy Educator will then decide on what to work on next.

Sessions are divided into blocks of six weeks and an in depth six week review takes place after each block. The Adult Literacy Educator and learner focus on the learning goals for the past six weeks, whether the learner has made progress towards these goals and what has helped or hindered this. The Adult Literacy Educator and learner will decide on the learning goals to focus on for the next six week block. Adult Literacy Educators record

relevant information on the learning session form on NALA's learner database. This is reviewed by the LWN Coordinator.

Feedback on formal assessment – Learn with NALA

Feedback on assessment is built into the Learn with NALA platform. Learners get instant feedback on many of the assessments that they carry out on Learn with NALA. This empowers the learners to be in control of their own learning path.

Learners complete an initial assessment before they start an award at level 2 or level 3. The initial assessment has one question per learning outcome. After each question learners get feedback on the number of questions they got correct (Figure 4.9 & 4.10).

← Back to Content Task 1 Personal effectiveness L3

Task 1

Examples of healthy resources (5)

- ☒ Using the Internet to research a health topic
- ☒ Discussing health worries with a family member
- ☒ Going shopping for new shorts
- ☒ Making out a healthy eating plan with your doctor
- ☒ Phoning a helpline to talk about depression

Not an effective resource (1)

- ☐ Reading books to improve your awareness of health

You scored 4 out of 6

Figure 4-9 - Feedback on initial assessment on Learn with NALA Level 3

Task 1

These questions will ask you to play an audio button and type the numbers you hear in a blank box. There are 3 questions in this activity.

Question 1 of 3:

Click on the audio button to listen to some numbers. Type in the numbers you hear in the box.

0:02 / 0:02

13

0:02 / 0:02

22

Feedback:

You scored 1 out of 2 on this question.

Continue

Figure 4-10 – Feedback on initial assessment on Learn with NALA Level 2

When the initial assessment has been completed learners get feedback through the 'My Progress' section. (Figure 4.3)

Learners get instant feedback on their formative eLearning assessment on Learn with NALA. After each question the learners get feedback on the number of questions they got correct (Figure 4.11).

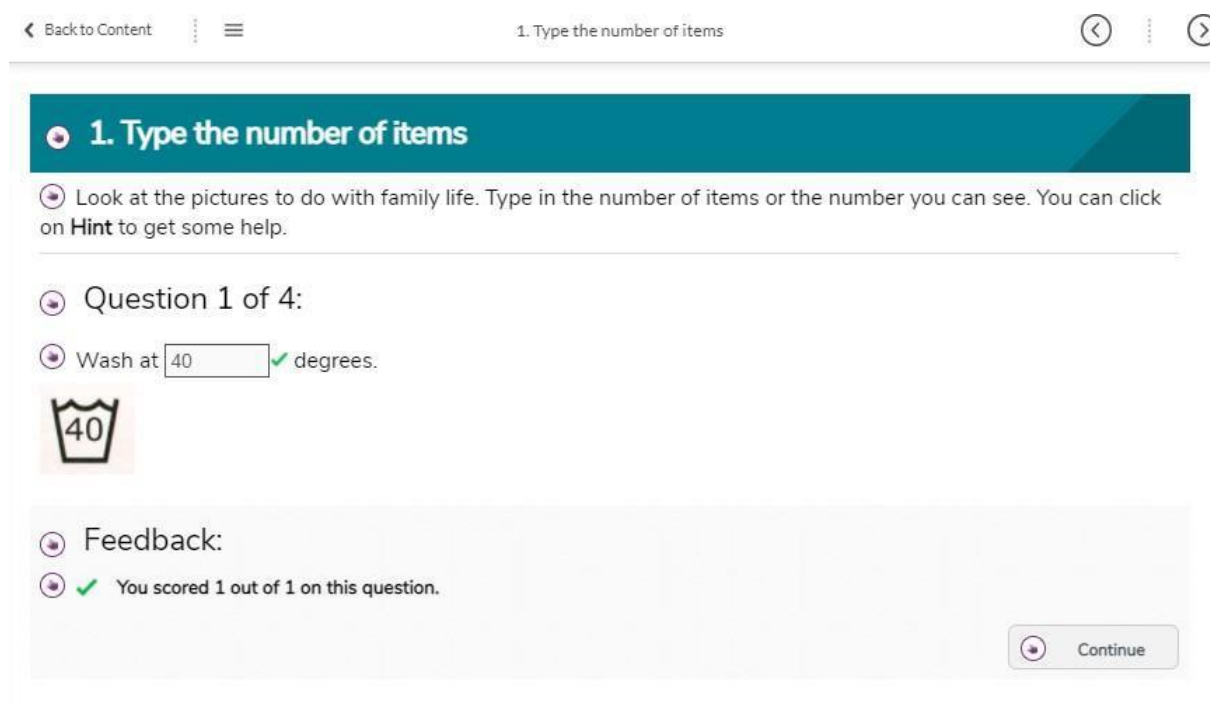


Figure 4-11 –

Feedback on formative assessment on Learn with NALA Level 2

They can hover over the incorrect answer to receive further feedback and in some instances they can also get a 'hint' to receive more information on the subject (Figure 4.12)

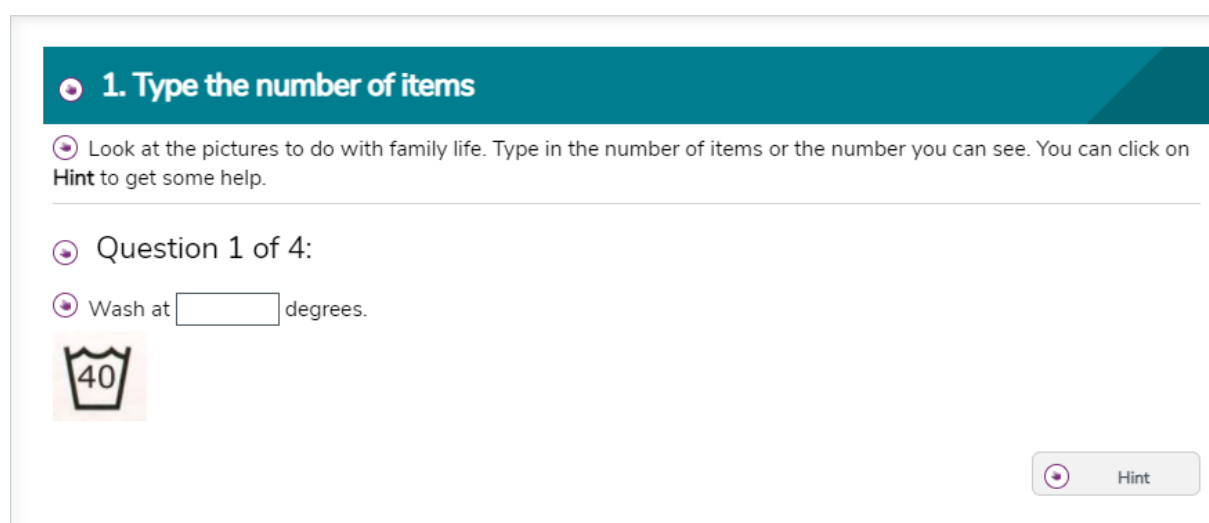


Figure 4-12 – Hint available on some questions on Learn with NALA

Learners also have access to an overview of their awards achieved on their Learn with NALA online account. The learner can see how many awards they have completed to date

for the current course they are working on and all the awards for all the courses they have worked on, on Learn with NALA. (Figure 4.13).

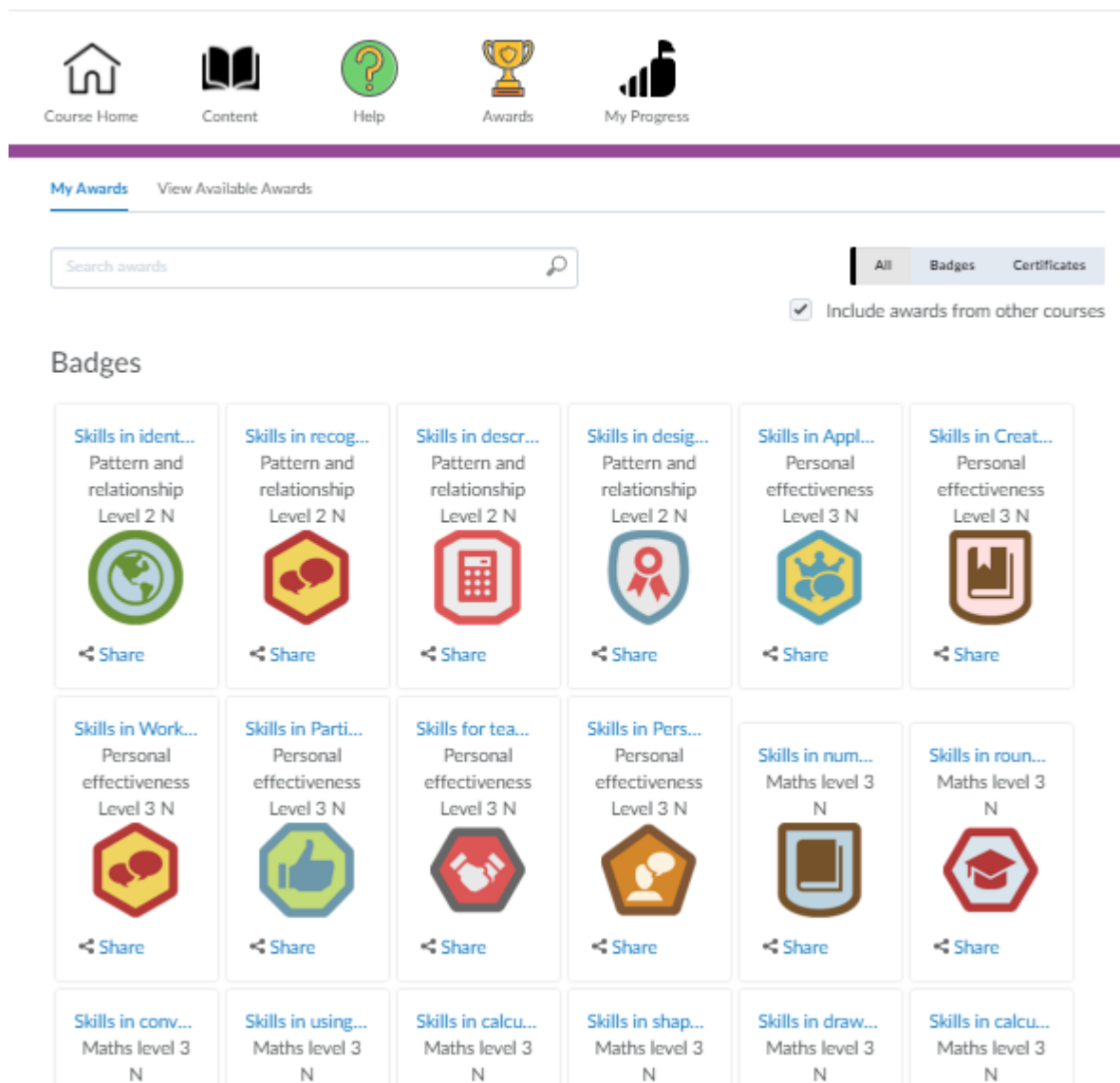


Figure 4-13 – Awards page on Learn with NALA

Learners also gain feedback on their portfolio assessments from their Learn with NALA Online Assessor. This feedback is specific to the individual piece of work on the portfolio and includes guidance on how the learner can improve the assessment. If suitable learners can also be offered sessions with a Adult Literacy Educator at this stage. If a learner is in aRegistered Learn with NALA Centre the Learn with NALA Online Assessor will provide feedback to the centre tutor about learner assessments.

4.13 Assessment review

NALA regularly review assessment materials to improve the learning experience. On Learn with NALA, this includes the review of assessment materials relating to content, learning outcomes and technological considerations.

The LWN Team and a learner representative are involved in the review of assessment materials on the learner portfolio. Changes made to the assessment brief on the portfolio section are recorded by the Internal Verifier in the minutes of the Internal Verification and External Authentication meeting.

The review of assessment materials related to changes in learning outcomes take place when required. The Preparing for Level 3 content on Learn with NALA was developed to ensure learners are supported in moving from level 2 to level 3 awards.

NALA carry out regular reviews of technological aspects of assessment. Developments on WriteOn included the use of video on assessments, the move to HTML5 to allow WriteOn to be accessible on multiple devices including tablets and smart phones. The move to the Brightspace platform in 2020 was taken in order to enhance the experience for learners, tutors and Registered LWN Centres, improve security, accessibility, feedback, the Recognition of Prior Learning system and scalability.

NALA will continue to carry out improvements to assessment to enhance the learning experience.

5. Supports for Learners

5.1 Supports for Learners Policy

Policy area	5. Supports for Learners
Document reference number	NALA/SL02
Version	02
Date policy adopted	07 February 2018
Date version 02 adopted	23 June 2021
Date of next review	Q2 2025

The National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) is committed to making sure that adults with literacy and numeracy difficulties can fully take part in society and have access to learning opportunities that meet their needs.

Learn with NALA (LWN) works with individuals who want to improve their literacy, numeracy and basic digital skills. Learners taking LWN online courses can work online by themselves or in a Learn with NALA registered centre. Learners also have the option to work with the LWN tutoring service where they will be supported by an Adult Literacy Educator. Learners come from many different backgrounds with a wide variety of learning goals, strengths, needs and interests. Support for the learner is built into all elements of the programme.

Aim of policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure that learners are supported throughout their engagement with Learn with NALA.

NALA's work is informed by the **Guidelines for Good Adult Literacy Work**, (NALA, 2012). This states that literacy learners are not to be the passive subjects of studies but rather should be actively involved in defining their own experience and in planning the action to be taken to address literacy difficulties in society.

Who is covered by this policy?

NALA's Supports for Learners policy is for:

- Learners engaging in Learn with NALA
- Adult Literacy Educators engaging in Learn with NALA
- Individuals who contact the NALA Freephone service
- All NALA staff who are in contact with learners and Adult Literacy Educators engaging in Learn with NALA

Roles and responsibilities

All NALA staff who are in contact with learners are responsible for ensuring that learners are informed about educational supports available to them and that NALA supports are delivered in a timely manner.

NALA will ensure that information and resources will be made available to learners on www.nala.ie and www.learnwithnala.ie.

NALA will respect learners' privacy and confidentiality at all times.

5.2 Support for Learners Procedures

Policy area	7. Supports for Learners
Document reference number	NALA/SLP02
Version	02
Date policy adopted	07 February 2018
Date version 02 adopted	23 June 2021

NALA Freephone service support

NALA has a Freephone service which supports individuals to gain information about educational options available to them. The NALA Freephone service also supports Learn with NALA learners. The NALA Freephone service aims to be polite and respectful to learners and aims to respect and protect learners' privacy and confidentiality.

The NALA Freephone service operates throughout the year from Monday to Friday between 9.30 am and 5.00 pm.

Learners can contact the NALA Freephone service in the following ways:

- Phone NALA at: Freephone 1800 20 20 80
- Email: Freephone@nala.ie

The NALA Freephone service gives learners the following support:

- Information on formal and informal learning options:
 - Information about Education and Training Board (ETB) **Adult Literacy services** throughout Ireland
 - Information about **Adult Guidance services** throughout Ireland
 - Information about Learn with NALA
 - Other relevant educational options
 - Information about online or printed materials that NALA can post to the learner
- Support with NALA's eLearning website www.learnwithnala.ie (Learn with NALA):
 - Access to LWN tutoring service
 - Technical and general support with Learn with NALA
 - Update on learning progress
 - Motivational support
- General enquires including literacy, numeracy and digital literacy support and information on progression pathways

The LWN Support Officer records relevant information on NALA's learner database. This is monitored by the Finance and Corporate Services Manager on a monthly basis.

Adult Literacy Educator - assessment

Learners have the option to carry out an assessment with an Adult Literacy Educator (formerly this was done by the Learning Support Worker (LSW)). This is for learners who require more information than was offered on the first call to the NALA Freephone service or for learners who would like to participate in tuition with an Adult Literacy Educator. Assessment is carried out typically within one week of the learner contacting the NALA Freephone service.

An Adult Literacy Educator contacts the learner to carry out the assessment. The assessment is designed for a non-face-to-face conversation and it helps to identify the learners' needs, strengths and interests. The learner is informed about their learning options. Adult Literacy Educators record relevant information on the learner assessment form on NALA's learner database. This is reviewed by the Tutor Coordinator on a weekly basis. Further operational information is available in the Guidelines for LWN Tutoring Service.

Adult Literacy Educator - tuition

Learners have the option to take part in tuition with an Adult Literacy Educator to improve their literacy, numeracy or basic digital skills. This can take place over the phone or online. Learners also have the option of working with an Adult Literacy Educator towards gaining certification using LWN online courses. Sessions are for 30 minutes and can occur weekly at a time to suit the learner, between 9 am and 9 pm. Adult Literacy Educators contact learners at an agreed time.

Learners and tutors share the planning and review of all aspects of the learning programme. Sessions are divided into blocks of 6 weeks and learning goals are reviewed after each block. Adult Literacy Educators record relevant information on the learning session form on NALA's learner database. A sample is regularly reviewed by the Tutor Coordinator. Further operational information is available in the Guidelines for LWN Tutoring Service.

NALA Student days

NALA holds annual student days for adults and young people who are:

- improving their literacy and numeracy in an adult education centre;
- improving their literacy and numeracy using Learn with NALA; and
- improving their English in an adult education centre.
- The student days give learners the opportunity to meet other learners, exchange ideas and attend workshops on relevant topics. The student days provide a forum for learners to speak and to give feedback on services and resources. Reports on student days are published and include recommendations and information on learner feedback.

Disability support

NALA aims to support learners with disabilities to assist them in achieving their educational goals. Learners with disabilities can include learners with learning difficulties, physical disabilities, mental health issues, ongoing illnesses or short term illness or injury. In so far as is possible, NALA will endeavour to assist learners to avail of our programmes and resources and to achieve their educational goals. There is cross organisational engagement with disability organisations. NALA adhere to the **Guidelines on the inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities in adult literacy services** (NALA, 2018). NALA staff will refer any additional learner support needs to the Tutor Coordinator.

Referral to other services

NALA works directly with learners who use Learn with NALA including the online courses and the tutoring service. Adult Literacy Educators can provide information on other educational options and other support information when necessary. This information can be provided to learners at any stage of their engagement with Learn with NALA and includes the following:

- Information about Education and Training Board (ETB) **Adult Literacy services** throughout Ireland
- Information about **Adult Guidance services** throughout Ireland
- Other educational courses such as those on **www.fetchcourses.ie**
- Additional support services

Resources

Learners and tutors have access to a wide range of NALA literacy, numeracy and digital resources. Many of these resources are produced in a variety of topics and in a range of formats to ensure that they are suitable for learners with different learning styles and can be accessed by learners with disabilities. All resources are available free of charge and can be accessed on **www.nala.ie/tutors/**. NALA can also post out a selection of resources to learners.

Learn with NALA, **www.learnwithnala.ie**, is NALA's eLearning website which is designed to help individuals improve their literacy, numeracy and digital skills.

Learn with NALA offers learning at level 1, level 2, level 3 and level 4 of the National Framework of Qualifications. It offers certification at level 2 and level 3. There are 12 minor awards available at level 2 and 14 minor awards available at level 3.

The website is free to use and learners can study at their own time and pace. Support with Learn with NALA is available to learners through the following:

- Call NALA on: Freephone 1800 20 20 80
- Learn with NALA help course and videos

Information pack

The LWN Support Officer posts out an information pack to learners who contact the NALA Freephone service. The LWN Support Officer records all materials posted out on the learner database. This information pack contains the following:

- Educational options information sheet
- Learn with NALA information sheet
- WriteOn learning support book
- Map and contact details for all the ETB Adult Literacy services in Ireland
- NALA pen

Learner pack

The LWN Support Officer posts out learner packs to all learners who are interested in joining Learn with NALA. This learner pack contains the following:

- **NALA Learn with NALA learner charter**
- NALA Learn with NALA journal
- NALA membership form with Freepost label

Learning materials – LWN

Adult Literacy Educators can select resources from NALA's extensive range of resources to use with their learners. Adult Literacy Educators can repurpose or design new materials for their learners. NALA have a **guide for preparing learning materials** which includes tips for preparing distance learning materials.

Adult Literacy Educators can email or post out necessary resources to learners. Adult Literacy Educators request these materials to be sent out through the materials request function on NALA's learner database.

Learning materials - General

NALA produces numerous workbooks and learning materials for adult literacy learners which are available to learners, tutors and the general public. These resources include the following:

- **The Distance Learner monthly worksheet**
- **Literacy and numeracy workbooks**
- Information on **getting started as a tutor**
- **Tutors Information Hub** has worksheets and videos from NALA publications and TV programmes. These resources are searchable by subject, level and award.

5.3 Feedback on services and resources

Feedback channels

Learners, tutors, NALA staff and stakeholders can give feedback by phone through the Freephone service, on Learn with NALA or by email to **freephone@nala.ie**. NALA also use questionnaires, feedback workshops and usability testing with learners and tutors to gain feedback on its services and resources. NALA surveys learners periodically to gain feedback on services and resources.

Student Subcommittee

NALA's Board delegates responsibility to the NALA Student Subcommittee to gather and discuss adult literacy student issues and to feedback those issues to the Board.

The Student Subcommittee is made up of fourteen students who give their time on a voluntary basis and meet seven times a year. At least one student will be from NALA's Board, and be appointed by the Board. Students on the Student Subcommittee must be individual members of NALA (either free individual members or have paid €25 for individual membership).

They must also be a:

- current adult literacy student; or a
- former adult literacy student who wishes to promote adult literacy issues and represent students.

NALA will ensure there is a good mix of current and past students on the committee.

6. Staff Recruitment

6.1 Staff Recruitment Policy

Policy area	6. Staff Recruitment, Management and Development
Document reference number	NALA/SR03
Version	03
Date policy adopted	07 September 2016
Date version 02 adopted	07 February 2018
Date version 03 adopted	01 June 2022

The Staff Recruitment Policy is available in Section D1 of the NALA Staff Handbook

7. Staff Training and Development

7.1 Staff Training and Development Policy

Policy area	7. Staff Training and Development
Document reference number	NALA/STD03
Version	03
Date policy adopted	13 March 2017
Date policy review adopted	07 February 2018
Date version 03 adopted	01 June 2022

The Staff Training and Development policy is available in Section G13 of the NALA Staff Handbook8.

8. Information and Data Management

8.1 NALA General Data Protection Regulation Policy

Policy area	8. Information and Data Management
Document reference number	NALA/GDPR02
Version	02
Date policy adopted	25 May 2018
Date version 02 approved	27 April 2022

The NALA Data protection policy is available at: <https://www.nala.ie/publications/nala-data-protection-policy/>

8.2 NALA Data Subject Rights Policy

Policy area	8. Information and Data Management
Document reference number	NALA/GDPR/DSR01
Version	01
Date policy adopted	27 April 2022

This policy is available online at: <https://www.nala.ie/publications/nala-data-subject-rights-policy/>

8.3 NALA Data Breach Policy and Procedures

Policy area	8. Information and Data Management
Document reference number	NALA/GDPR/DBP02
Version	02
Date policy adopted	25 May 2018
Date version 02 adopted	29 April 2022

This policy is available online at: <https://www.nala.ie/publications/nala-data-breach-policy-and-procedures/>

9. Public Information and Communication

9.1 Communication Policy

Policy area	9. Public Information and Communication
Document reference number	NALA/CP01
Version	01
Date policy adopted	16 May 2018
Date version 02 adopted	01 June 2020

The National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) recognises that effective and appropriate communication is important in achieving its aims and objectives. It is also important to its credibility as a publicly accountable organisation.

This policy sets out how the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) communicates information. It identifies the various channels of communication within NALA, their intended purpose and the roles and responsibilities of staff in accessing and using them.

The purpose of our Communications policy is to describe:

- our communications values;
- our approach to communications – internal and external;
- our target audiences;
- channels of communication we use;
- our core communications principles; and
- roles and responsibilities.

The communications policy is complemented by a range of policies, strategies and guidelines, including, but not limited to:

- NALA Communications Strategy (linked to our current strategic plan)
- NALA Standard Operating Procedure for dealing with media queries
- NALA Brand guidelines
- NALA Publications policy

- NALA Social Media policy
- NALA Style guide

Aim of policy

The aim of our policy is to reduce the risk to NALA of damaging or ineffective communication, and to ensure that staff are aware of how communication is best conveyed internally and externally, and who has responsibility for which aspects.

Who is covered by this policy?

NALA's communications policy is for all staff and is a foundation for everyone working with information and communications within the organisation.

Roles and responsibilities

NALA Board

- The Chair of the NALA Board is responsible for ensuring that Board members are kept up to date about NALA's work to ensure its aims are put into practice.
- NALA Board members are expected to be familiar with all NALA's work and activities but to refer complex or difficult questions to the NALA CEO.

CEO

- The CEO is responsible for the overall clarity and coherence of NALA's internal and external communications.
- The CEO seeks opportunities for good advocacy in order to promote the interests of NALA.
- The CEO works to create an internal culture of open, honest, efficient and transparent communications.

Management Team

- The Management Team has overall responsibility for ensuring that staff share information and knowledge through the best external and internal communications.

- Individual members of the Management Team ensure that their staff are thoughtful and consistent about their communications and are aware of the principles and guidelines available for different aspects of their work.

Communications Manager and Communications Officer

The Communications Manager and Communications Officer play a coordinating role in the Agency's internal and external communications and should be informed and involved in all Agency-wide decisions. The Communications Manager and Officer will then decide which information efforts and channels to use.

The Communications Manager and Communications Officer are responsible for:

- Ensuring that NALA offers clear and consistent messages about its objectives and its work.
- Setting the standard for and overseeing print and online communication from NALA.
- Promoting good and clear communications through the media, whether online, printed or broadcast.
- Ensuring that communication for attendees at NALA events, and at associated events, is appropriate and as clear as possible.
- Working with all staff to promote good internal communications between all staff.
- Ensuring that information is carefully and appropriately made available to the public.
- Promoting good internal and external communications by following high standards of clarity and integrity in all aspects of their work, as well as ensuring that members of staff follow specific guidelines, such as the Standard Operating Procedure for dealing with media queries, Social Media and Publications Policy.
- Managing the Agency's visual identity contained in the Agency's guidelines for logotypes, colours, fonts, graphic elements, profile images, language (plain English), graphical hierarchy and co-branding on online or printed matter, stationery, signage, the Web and other places.

Staff

All staff have a responsibility for maintaining good internal and external communications, for suggesting improvements wherever possible and for reporting breaches of the policy.

Our communication values

Our communication values are:

1. Honest

We must always communicate in an honest, timely and open manner and with courtesy and respect, while respecting confidentiality.

2. Responsible

Those most directly affected by any information must, whenever possible, be informed first.

3. Inclusive

We must actively listen to everyone who relies and works with us, encourage feedback and share information that will improve our performance and effectiveness.

4. Simple

The language we use must be clear, easily understood and in plain English.

5. Relevant

Information issued must be relevant to the target audience.

6. Professional

We must always communicate in a professional manner.

7. Coordinated

All external and internal communications should, as far as possible, be planned and carried out in harmony and with a common focus.

Our approach to communications

Communication is a two-way process and involves two or more parties giving and receiving information in dialogue with each other. This means listening to the other party, as well as delivering one's own message.

NALA's approach to efficient communication can be divided into two main strands – internal and external communication.

Internal communications

Efficient internal communication at NALA will ensure that different opinions are heard, and that the views and ideas of the staff are utilized. It should facilitate staff members' participation and pride in their own work, be used to achieve NALA's vision and mission, and increase work efficiency. Efficient internal communication also supports good external communication, in which the staff act as ambassadors for the agency.

Internal Communications include all the messages and information (whether verbal or written) passed within the agency, principally between members of staff, but also between the NALA Board, Student Subcommittee, NALA Members and staff, and to and from management and staff.

External communications

Efficient external communication will build trust and support for, and, increase awareness of, literacy and numeracy issues and responses, as well as NALA and its stakeholders' services and work. The external communication should convey accurate and comprehensive information. Whenever possible, external communication should always be preceded by internal information and support.

External communications include all the messages and information that NALA presents to different audiences, whether directly (through the website, e-mails, e- zines, research publications, workbooks, events, marketing and campaigns) or indirectly through the media and word of mouth. They also include the messages and information given to stakeholders, funders, suppliers and customers.

Our target audiences

All communications should be adapted to the target audience, that is, be based on the intended recipient's interests, knowledge and experience.

The target audience of the NALA's **internal communications** are:

- NALA staff (full time, part time and contract)
- NALA Board
- NALA Student Subcommittee
- NALA members (free and paid)

The target audience of NALA's **external communications** are:

- People with literacy and numeracy difficulties (and their family and friends)
- People who support people with literacy and numeracy difficulties (tutors, ALOs, FET directors and providers, SOLAS, ETBI and ETBs and others)
- Policy makers
- Organisations (public sector and industry: providing information to the public)
- Parents
- Students
- Public (including media: journalists and researchers)
- NALA funders and sponsors (DES, SOLAS and others)
- Others (EU bodies, interested parties)

Channels of communication we use

People choose to receive information in different ways, therefore we will use a range of channels to maximise the effectiveness of our communications.

In NALA, communications based on dialogue and interaction should be prioritised. Other channels should be specified in the annual staff implementation plans and the agency's Communications Strategy.

Channels may include:

- Dialogue
- Telephone calls
- Emails
- Meetings – individual, team, staff, working and advisory groups
- Staff intranet – SharePoint

- The NALA building and noticeboard
- NALA website
- NALA and stakeholder events and seminars
- The media
- E-zine
- Literacy Matters
- Annual Report
- NALA and stakeholder publications
- NALA social media accounts – Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, Twitter
- Word of mouth – shares, comments, blogs, online forums and reviews
- Paid communications, such as traditional or digital advertising

Our core communications principles

All communication is important and needs to be considered carefully.

External and internal communications will form part of strategic and business planning as well as project and team appraisals.

Good communications play a very positive role in the day-to-day operations of NALA, through the consideration of the content and the audience for any particular message or information to be disseminated.

Managers and staff will have a responsibility to foster good communications internally and externally, that encourages transparency, clarity of style and the sharing of best practice and expertise across the Agency.

Principles for managing internal communications:

Staff and Board members are informed of the most important information relating to the good management of the Agency such as strategic plan objectives, priorities and results, queries or complaints.

Regular exchanges through e-mail, meetings and telephone calls are thoughtful, respectful, efficient and well disciplined.

An informal exchange of information is encouraged through staff dialogue, meetings and staff development events.

Staff are asked on a regular basis (through the Staff Survey every year) about the efficacy of internal communications.

Principles for managing external communications:

To distribute high quality information about its plans, projects and programmes of activity, ensuring that key target audiences are well informed.

To reach out to target audiences, those in partner organisations and potential participants, where NALA is seeking to make a positive difference.

To provide background, financial, research and corporate information – principally through the website for a wide range of users.

To ensure that the visual identity of NALA, as shown through all its print and digital communications, is clear, coherent and expresses NALA's key values.

Legal requirements

Our communications will comply with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements. (8.1 NALA General Data Protection Regulation Policy).

Breaches of the Policy

Actions taken by staff in contravention of the Communications Policy will be dealt with by a line manager or CEO. Depending on the severity of the contravention, any internal or external matter will be reported to the Communications Manager and CEO. If, in either case, it is a matter which threatens the reputation of NALA or creates severe disruption then NALA's Disciplinary Code will be followed.

Review

The Communications Policy will be reviewed every three years as part of the cycle of reviewing NALA's policies and procedures.

Date of Approval

This Communications Policy was reviewed by the NALA Board in March 2018 and June 2020.

10. External parties involved in education and training

10.1 External Parties Policy

Policy area	10. External parties involved in education and training
Document reference number	NALA/EP02
Version	02
Date policy adopted	06 February 2019
Date review adopted	26 October 2022
Date of next review	Q4 2025

Collaboration with external parties is central to all of NALA's work. NALA is a membership organisation and there is extensive engagement with external parties and stakeholders throughout our work. NALA holds a number of events throughout the year which members attend and where they give feedback to the organisation.

Collaboration and partnership are embodied in **NALA's Strategic Plan 2020-2022**. One of the objectives of the Strategic Plan is to work in partnership, to add value to the delivery of the Further Education and Training (FET) Strategy 2020-2024 as it relates to literacy, numeracy and digital skills. NALA has extensive engagement with external parties to support the implementation of the FET Strategy.

NALA actively encourages the following:

- The sharing of good practice with external organisations and networks
- Collaboration with external education bodies on common issues
- Working with Registered Learn with NALA (LWN) Centres who wish to use LWN in a blended learning context
- Engagement with external institutions on research
- Attendance at relevant events and conferences and the facilitation of study visits
- **Aim of policy**
- The aim of this policy is to set out our approach to working with external parties.

NALA is committed to ensuring that our strategic alliances and partnerships are collaborative and influence positive change.

Who is covered by this policy?

NALA's External Parties Policy is for all NALA staff.

Roles and responsibilities

- It is the responsibility of all NALA staff to work with external parties in a collaborative and ethical spirit.
- Staff engaged in external relations aim to conduct themselves as ambassadors of NALA.
- It is the responsibility of management in NALA to provide guidance on managing external relations to ensure they are working towards achieving NALA's objectives as set out in NALA's Strategic Plan.

10.2 Registered LWN Centre Procedure

Policy area	10. External parties involved in education and training
Document reference number	NALA/RWOCP02
Version	02
Date policy adopted	12 December 2018
Date review adopted	March 2023
Date of next review	Q1 2026

Introduction

Learn with NALA (LWN) provides high quality, free, online learning and certification opportunities to individuals who wish to improve their literacy, numeracy and digital literacy skills through the eLearning website, www.learnwithnala.ie.

LWN learning content is based on the specific learning outcomes at levels 1 to 4 of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). LWN content is developed for adult literacy learners and uses real world examples to apply the skills being learnt.

LWN programmes at level 2 and level 3 lead to certification from Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). There is one programme leading to a QQI Major Award, available through LWN Level 2:

- Level 2 Major Award in General Learning, (12 minor awards available)

There are three programmes leading to a QQI Major Award, available through LWN Level 3:

- Level 3 Major Award in General Learning (14 minor awards available)
- Level 3 Major Award in ICT (14 minor awards available)
- Level 3 Major Award in Employability Skills (14 minor awards available)

Target audience

Learn with NALA's eLearning website, www.learnwithnala.ie is designed for use by adults (aged 16 and over) with unmet literacy, numeracy and digital literacy needs in the Republic of Ireland. It is used by:

- Individual adults who learn independently and engage directly with NALA for support.
- Individual adults, in a blended learning context, who are supported locally by Registered LWN Centre staff.

Centres who want to use LWN must become a Registered LWN Centre. Registered LWN Centres are part of a community of practitioners who contribute to the ongoing development of content on LWN.

Learn with NALA Registered Centres are not-for-profit organisations who work directly with adults who have unmet literacy, numeracy and digital literacy needs. They include:

- Adult Literacy Services in Education and Training Board (ETB) centres
- Organisations working with adults in marginalised communities
- Disability organisations working with adults
- Local community initiatives working with adults

In exceptional circumstances, and subject to capacity, other not-for-profit organisations can become LWN Registered Centres such as youth programmes, special schools and special classes attached to mainstream schools. Applications are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. In all cases, learners in centres must be aged 16 or over to set up accounts on the eLearning website. All centre registrations are subject to approval by NALA's Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

How to become a Registered LWN Centre

Centres who want to use LWN must go through an application and review, registration and set up process.

LWN Centre Application and Review

The applicant centre makes contact by phone or email or through the **Register your centre** form to register their interest in becoming a centre. During that initial contact, the centre is asked a number of questions including:

- 1) Organisation name, address, website address, status (Limited company / Partnership / State institution / Charity), sector (Education and Training Board (ETB) centre / Organisation working with marginalised communities / Disability organisation / Local community initiatives).
- 2) Main contact name, email address and phone number.
- 3) Profile of learners you are working with (aged 16+, aged under 16, unmet literacy needs, unmet numeracy needs, unmet digital literacy needs).
- 4) How your organisation hopes to use Learn with NALA.

The LWN Support Officers add the information to the 'Centre Leads' tab on the LWN Centre Set up file.

The Project Support Officer reviews the 'Centre Leads' tab form and arranges a phone call with the centre contact to:

- Discuss the centre specific needs including profile of learners and support staff, resources available including devices and broadband access.
- Discuss how the profile of the centre matches with the criteria for LWN centres
- Outline how LWN works in blended learning context including roles and responsibilities, availability of training and support.
- Talk through the registration process and timelines.

The Project Support Officer follows up within a week of the call with the centre to inform them on whether or not they can proceed to the registration stage.

If NALA cannot proceed with the centre registration due to capacity or the centre is not deemed to meet the criteria to become a registered centre, the Project Support Officer will outline alternative resources available from NALA such as workbooks, worksheets, YouTube videos and from other sources, such as SOLAS and ETBs.

Centre applications who wish to appeal this decision, can do so through the **NALA complaints process**.

LWN Centre Registration

Once a centre application is cleared to go forward to registration, the LWN Support Officers support the centre through the following four steps:

- 1) Complete the **Memorandum of Understanding** between NALA and the organisation.
The MOU includes contact details, responsibilities of both parties, details of data protection and consent. It also outlines the registered centre responsibilities in relation to administration, training and assessment. This is signed by the NALA CEO and the Registered LWN Centre authorised official. The MOU is reviewed every 5 years.
- 2) Complete the **NALA membership application process** (if the centre is not already an organisation member).
- 3) Submit a high-resolution logo for the centre for use on the eLearning website.
- 4) Submit a list of centre tutors' names and email addresses for set up on the eLearning website.

All centre registrations are subject to approval by NALA's CEO.

LWN Centre Setup

Once centre registration is complete, the LWN Development Working Group completes the technical setup of the centre on NALA's platform. This process is subject to capacity and can take up to three weeks.

In parallel, the Project Support Officer contacts the centre contact to arrange mandatory training.

Once the technical set up is complete and mandatory training has taken place, the Project Support Officer issues the centre contact with their learner registration link, follow-up training materials and details on how to get further support and training.

LWN Centre Training Options

LWN mandatory training includes the following:

- Introduction to NALA
- Introduction to LWN
- Demonstrations of how to use the website: registration, monitoring progress, submitting for awards, recognition of prior learning and other features.
- Certification process
- Technical information
- Access to further resources and support
- Question and answer session

Participants attending workshops get a chance to use LWN and to ask questions and share their experience of using LWN.

In addition to mandatory training NALA offers a range of training options, including:

- In-person training and monthly online webinars.
- Once-off webinars on specific themes based on identified needs. These are arranged in collaboration with the LWN Coordinator and include sessions relating to **NALA's quality assurance policies and procedures**, for example, learner feedback procedures, teaching and learning policy, assessment of learners, support for learners and so on.

The Project Support Officer advertises upcoming LWN training by email to Registered LWN Centres and through the LWN Centre ezine, the NALA member ezine and on **www.nala.ie**. The Project Support Officer is responsible for organising LWN training.

Roles and responsibilities

The **Project Support Officer** is responsible for managing the relationship with Registered LWN Centres. The Project Support Officer oversees the registration process, communicates updates to LWN

Registered Centres and is responsible for delivering LWN training to Registered Centres.

The **LWN Development Working Group** is responsible for technical issues and support, gathering LWN feedback and for informing the Project Support Officer of relevant technical updates for Registered Centres.

The **LWN Support Officers** are responsible for the administration of the centre registration process, for general support to Registered LWN Centres and for sending out certificates to Registered LWN Centres.

The **Applicant Centre Contact** is the point of contact between NALA and the centre during the application, review and registration process and is responsible for providing information and documentation to NALA for the purposes of completing LWN Centre Application and Review, LWN Centre Registration and LWN Centre Setup stages.

Membership of NALA

NALA is a publicly funded service and LWN is a publicly funded education resource. There is no cost to the learner for using LWN. NALA carries out all assessment and verification of learner work as well as the distribution of certificates to individuals and Registered LWN Centres.

To become a Registered LWN Centre the centre must become a member of NALA. The cost of membership is €50 for small organisations and €150 for large organisations. Membership lasts for one year. This represents a small contribution to the running of the programme. NALA is currently revising its membership policy and details about membership are subject to change. For the most up-to-date information about NALA membership, visit: <https://www.nala.ie/become-a-member/>.

Quality Assurance of assessment

The majority of assessment on LWN is done through the LWN eLearning platform. Registered Centre staff must ensure that assessments are the work of a single learner, work is not copied from other learners and that learners are not assisted by tutors in carrying out assessments.

Some outcomes which cannot be assessed through this eLearning platform are assessed through a range of additional assessments in the learner's portfolio on LWN. These

additional assessments are assessed by trained NALA LWN Online Assessors. NALA LWN Online Assessors give feedback to the Registered LWN Centre staff on the standard of the additional assessment work. The standard of work is also monitored by the NALA Internal Verifier.

The NALA Internal Verifier is responsible quality assurance of assessment and for dealing with any issues or queries with standards of assessment.

Standards

Information about standards expected for the additional assessments in the learner portfolio is given in the introductory text for each additional assessment activity.

Registered LWN Centre staff are expected to be familiar with this information. They should ensure that learner's additional assessments in the learner portfolio adhere to the following standards:

- All fields must be filled out in the portfolio. Where an answer is not possible the learner can put in a note to say that it is not applicable. Do not leave the field blank. For example in the Career Preparation additional assessment where it asks for work experience and you have not completed any you can say that it is not applicable. In the Personal and Interpersonal Skills assessment where it asks how many brothers and sisters you have and you have none, instead of leaving it blank say 'None'.
- All assessments should contain full sentences where possible.
- All sentences should have a capital letter at the start and a full stop at the end of the sentence.
- All assessments should contain correct spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- All lists should be consistent.
- Always use I (and not i) in a sentence.

Registered LWN Centre support

Registered LWN Centres have access to **NALA membership benefits** as well as a wealth of resources through LWN including access to:

- over 48 LWN modules from Level 1 to Level 4,
- a Skills Checker for learners to assess their skills,
- LWN help videos,
- resources such as latest news, games, reading texts, and;

- hundreds of **resources** that are searchable by level, award, subject and source. These pdf and video resources have been taken from NALA publications and TV series such as Read Write Now, Really Useful Guide, Putting Pen to Paper, Write On learning support book, Better Handwriting for Adults, Time for Learning, Clocking In to Clocking Out and the Safe and Well workbook.

Registered LWN Centres also get the opportunity to feedback into the development of LWN and influence the content of LWN to best meet the needs of their learners. The TEL Officer is responsible for gaining feedback from Registered LWN Centres.

Support with queries or issues

NALA is committed to building and strengthening our relationship with our Registered LWN Centres. As we are a Distance Learning Service there are a number of ways that Registered LWN Centres can access support.

Registered LWN Centres can:

- Phone NALA at Freephone number 1800 20 20 80, Monday to Friday between
- 9.30 am and 5.00 pm.
- Email **learn@nala.ie**

The following support is available to Registered LWN Centres and learners:

- Support with NALA's eLearning website **www.learnwithnala.ie** (LWN):
 - Technical support with LWN
 - Password issues
 - Advice on how to use LWN
- QQI queries
 - Certification
 - Submitting for an award
- General enquires including literacy and numeracy advice and information on progression pathways for learners

The LWN Support Officer records relevant information on NALA's database. This is monitored by the Communications Manager on a monthly basis.

Information updates

The TEL Officer is responsible for emailing Registered LWN Centres with updates on LWN. Updates will also be communicated through the NALA ezine and on www.nala.ie.

The following information will be communicated throughout the year:

- NALA Key Dates
- New content on LWN
- Major developments on LWN
- Upcoming LWN training

Information about site maintenance or upcoming submission deadlines are put on the front page of LWN.

It is important that Registered LWN Centres inform the TEL Officer about any technical issues or errors or any changes in contact details for the centre.

NALA QQI certification dates

Currently, NALA operate two rounds of certification each year. These are normally in June and December. The exact dates are decided each year after QQI issue their Certification Key Dates at: <https://www.qqi.ie/what-we-do/qqi-awards/certifying-qqi-awards-provider>

NALA informs Registered LWN Centres of the NALA Key Dates in the LWN ezine and on the LWN website.

Issuing certificates to Registered LWN Centres

The LWN Support Officer is responsible for sending out QQI certificates to Registered LWN Centres. QQI posts out certificates to NALA after each round of certification.

- The LWN Support Officer is responsible for carrying out a quality check on the certificates to make sure that all information is correct. The LWN Support

- Officer submits any changes that need to be made to certificates through **QHelp**.
- The LWN Support Officer contacts Registered LWN Centres to ensure that the NALA list of learners matches the Registered LWN Centre list of learners.
- The LWN Support Officer sends the certificates to a distribution company who then deliver the certificates to the Registered LWN Centres. On delivery, the Registered LWN Centre must sign for the certificates.
- The LWN Support Officer deals with any queries around delivery of certificates.
- The LWN Support Officer also posts out certificates to independent learners and NALA Distance Learners

11. Equality and Diversity Policy

Policy area	11. Equality and Diversity
Document reference number	NALA/ED02
Version	02
Date policy adopted	12 December 2018
Date version 02 adopted	02 September 2020
Date version 03 adopted	29 June 2022
Date of next review	Q2 2025

This policy is available online at: <https://www.nala.ie/publications/nala-equality-and-diversity-policy/>

Appendix 1: NALA Terms of Reference for Literacy and Staff Policies and Governance Subcommittee

Overall Responsibility

The overall responsibility of the Literacy and Staff Policies, and Governance Subcommittee (LSPG) is to take delegated responsibility on behalf of the Board for:

- monitoring and supporting literacy policy development
- overseeing the development and revision of NALA staff policies
- monitoring the organisation's succession planning
- Overseeing the governance of NALA*

*The LSPG's role in governance relates to advising the Board on

- NALA staff policies and procedures
- the composition and skills of the Board
- appropriate succession planning within the Board and within NALA
- the strategic planning development process, when required.

Responsibility for advising the Board on all other matters of governance and compliance rests with the Audit, Risk and Finance Subcommittee.

Main Duties

Literacy, Policy and Provision:

- Identify and advise in relation to critical issues affecting Adult Literacy
- Make recommendations to the Board regarding policy objectives and priorities that can be achieved by NALA
- Monitor the processes by which Members are included in the role of policy-formation in NALA and recommend improvements where necessary
- Support policy and advocacy work in NALA
- Oversee the development of collaborative partnerships with third parties
- Liaise where necessary with the CEO and other NALA staff on Literacy policy, advocacy and engagement with third parties.

NALA Staff Policies and Procedures

- Liaise with the CEO and Governance and Compliance Officer on internal policies and procedures relating to the staff and volunteers of NALA, including but not limited to; the working environment, training and development, and pay and employment conditions
- Advise the Board and make recommendations with respect to policies relating to the management of NALA, its Board, employees and volunteers.

NALA Staff:

- Review and consider the job descriptions for any new internal positions and make the necessary recommendations to the Board
- Review and consider NALA's overall staff resourcing and organisational structure, with particular regard to CEO and Management succession planning as and when required and make any necessary recommendations to the Board
- Review and make recommendations to the Board, as necessary, on any matters relating to the suspension or termination of service of an employee of NALA subject to the provisions of the law and/or their contracts.

Governance and Succession Planning:

- Regularly review the structure, size and composition (including the skills, knowledge, experience and diversity) of the Board and make recommendations to the Board with regard to any changes
- Ensure NALA has a strategy in place at all times and oversee the development of NALA's strategic plans when required
- Keep up to date and fully informed about strategic issues and commercial changes affecting NALA and the area in which it operates
- Review on an ongoing basis the effective operation of the Board and recommend periodic reviews of board effectiveness
- Review Directors attendance at meetings and where required address any issues of engagement
- Review and make recommendations to the Board, as appropriate, on any matters related to the continuation in office of any Director

- Consider the re-election of Directors under the annual election provisions of NALA's Constitution, having due regard to:
 - their performance and ability to continue to contribute to the Board
 - the knowledge, skills and experience required and
 - the need for progressive refreshing of the Board
 and make recommendations where necessary
- Be responsible for identifying and nominating for the approval of the Board, candidates to fill casual Board vacancies (vacancies that arise between AGMs):
 - Evaluate the balance of skills, knowledge, experience and diversity on the Board and identify suitable candidates to ensure they have such balance and have enough time to devote to the position
- Ensure NALA has procedures to ensure the necessary operational, legal and governance requirements relating to Director registration and management and are followed, reviewed and updated, as and when required, covering:
 - conflict of interest disclosures
 - formal letters of appointment, and
 - registration with regulatory bodies
- Work and liaise as necessary with all other Board Subcommittees.

The LSPG is authorised to obtain appropriate external legal and other professional advice in order to fulfil its responsibility to the Board.

Composition and Attendance

The LSPG must:

- consist of at least 4 members, 2 of whom are Directors of the Board
- elect a Chairperson from among its members
- allow the Chairperson of the Board to be a member, if requested
- allow any Board member to attend a meeting of the subcommittee.

The LSPG may decide to invite non-Board members to join the subcommittee to bring specific expertise or insights.

Members serve for three years and may be re-elected for a further three years. After six consecutive years as a member, they must retire.

After six consecutive years, if the other members of the subcommittee consider that it would be in the best interest of NALA for a member not to retire, they may make a recommendation for consideration by the Board to allow one further term.

The CEO and such other members of staff as the Chairperson may require, shall be in attendance at meetings.

Until otherwise agreed by the Board, a quorum shall consist of 2 members of the subcommittee.

Governance and Reporting

The LSPG Subcommittee may meet and adjourn as it thinks proper but must meet at least 3 times per calendar year.

The agenda will be reviewed by NALA's CEO and/or Finance and Corporate Services Manager and approved by the LSPG Chairperson in advance of each meeting.

Management are responsible for providing the LSPG with resources to carry out their functions.

Members of the subcommittee must declare if they have any conflicts of interest, either real, perceived or potential, with any of the matters on the agenda at the outset of the meeting or as soon as these conflicts become apparent.

If no Chairperson is elected, or, if at any meeting the Chairperson is not present within 15 minutes after the time appointed for holding it, the members present may choose one of their number to be chairperson of the meeting.

Questions arising at any meeting of the LSPG shall be determined by a majority of votes of the members present. Where there is an equality of votes, the Chairperson of the LSPG shall have a second or casting vote.

The LSPG will report back regularly to the Board. Minutes of each LSPG meeting will be submitted to each subsequent Board meeting for information. Items for consideration or adoption by the Board will be noted in the minutes.

Minutes must be signed by the chairperson of the meeting at which the proceedings were held, or by the chairperson of the next meeting.

Version Control

Version	Approved by Board	Date
1	Yes	24 June 2015
2	Yes	01 March 2021
3	Yes	29 March 2023
4	Yes	27 June 2024

Appendix 2: NALA Terms of Reference for the Audit, Risk and Finance Subcommittee

Overall Scope and Responsibility

The Audit, Risk and Finance Subcommittee (ARF) takes delegated responsibility on behalf of the Board for ensuring that there is a framework for:

- accountability
- examining and reviewing all systems and methods of control, both financial and otherwise, including risk analysis and risk management
- ensuring that NALA is complying with all aspects of the law, relevant regulations and good practice.

The existence of the Audit, Risk and Finance Sub-Committee does not diminish the overall responsibility of the Board for NALA's audit, risk and financial activities. The ARF provides the Board with a significant level of assurance that the important issues in each key area have been rigorously examined.

The ARF is authorised to:

- obtain appropriate external legal and other professional advice in order to fulfil its responsibility to the Board
- on behalf of the Board, investigate anything that threatens or adversely affects the accomplishment of NALA's aims and objectives, its assets, the reliability of all records and information, and its compliance with all relevant laws, regulations, policies and its governing instruments
- commission and examine reports on special investigations and advise the Board accordingly
- encourage a culture within NALA whereby each individual feels that they have a part to play in guarding the probity of NALA, and are able to take any concerns or worries about possible improprieties in matters of financial reporting or other matters to an appropriate member of the management team or in exceptional circumstances directly to the Chairperson of the ARF in confidence.

Main Duties

Compliance:

- Review NALA's systems and processes to ensure compliance with external legislation, regulations and Governance Codes.

Financial Controls and Management

- Agree the principles of NALA's budgeting process and financial controls
- Oversee and approve the annual budget and Financial Statements for recommendation to the Board
- Monitor the financial activities, controls and budgets of NALA and to advise the Board regarding findings
- Advise on and monitor the progress of income-raising and resource allocation
- Investigate any proposed significant financial decisions and advise the Board accordingly
- Monitor NALA's banking arrangements, investment and reserve policies and determine the frequency of their review and recommend any modifications to the Board for approval
- Monitor the terms and performance of NALA's pension scheme and provide updates and findings to the Board for consideration.

External Audit

- Agree and recommend to the Board the framework for external audit
- Determine the frequency of tendering for external auditing services
- Consider the tenders for external auditing services and recommend the external auditors to be engaged
- Review the draft financial statements, audit report, management letter and management's response
- If and as required, meet with external auditors to discuss and resolve any issues arising from the draft financial statements, audit report, management letter or management response

- Recommend the financial statements to the Board for signing by the Directors
- Monitor and review the external auditor's independence and the effectiveness of the audit process
- Advise the Board on any changes that ought to be made to the terms of engagement of the external auditors.

Internal Audit

- Agree and recommend to the Board the organisation's internal control framework which comprises both operational and financial controls
- Review the effectiveness of the organisation's internal control framework
- Decide on the necessity for, and frequency of, non-statutory audits or other specific internal financial and risk controls reviews.
- Consider tenders for non-statutory audits carried out by external auditors and recommend the external auditors to be engaged to the Board for approval
- Approve the annual internal audit plan that may incorporate health and safety, investments, insurance, VAT, PAYE or compliance with other legislation, regulation or governance code
- Review the findings of the internal audit activities, including those carried out by external auditors, and report on these to the Board
- Consider the findings of internal audits, management's response to any recommendations and make recommendations to the Board for approval
- Review, with the external auditor, any fraudulent or illegal acts, deficiencies in internal control or other similar issue, including reviewing the results of any related internal investigation
- Consider the appropriateness of executive action following internal audit reviews and to advise senior management on any additional or alternative steps to be taken and recommend same to the Board for approval.

Risk and Risk Management

- Agree and recommend to the Board NALA's risk policy and risk management framework and frequency for review
- Ensure that appropriate procedures are in place for identifying and mitigating the significant risks to which the organisation is exposed

- Annually review and recommend NALA's risk register to the Board for approval to ensure that the risks identified are still relevant and that they are being adequately managed
- Investigate any financial or administrative matter which may put NALA at risk
- Annually review NALA's insurance policies to ensure that adequate cover is in place
- Ensure that the organisation has adequate procedures in place in relation to complaints mechanisms and protected disclosures and that these policies are both appropriately implemented and effective.

The Literacy and Staff Policies, and Governance Subcommittee (LSPG) is responsible for advising the Board on staff policies and procedures, the composition and skills of the Board, and appropriate succession planning within the Board and within NALA. Responsibility for advising the Board on all other matters of compliance rests with the ARF.

Composition and Attendance

The ARF must:

- consist of no fewer than three directors of the Board. It is recommended that at least two of the directors should have recent and relevant audit, risk and finance experience or training should be provided by NALA.
- elect a Chairperson from among its members
- allow the Chairperson of the Board to be a member, if requested
- allow any Board member to attend a meeting of the subcommittee.

The ARF may decide to invite non-Board members to join the subcommittee to bring specific expertise or insights.

The CEO, Finance and Corporate Services Manager and such other members of staff as the Chairperson may require shall be in attendance at meetings.

Members serve for three years and may be re-elected for a further three years. After six consecutive years as a member, they must retire.

After six consecutive years, if the other members of the subcommittee consider that it would be in the best interest of NALA for a member not to resign, they may make a recommendation for consideration by the Board to allow one further term.

Until otherwise determined by the Board, a quorum shall consist of two members of the subcommittee, one of which must be member of NALA's Board.

Governance and Reporting

The ARF may meet and adjourn as it thinks proper but must meet a minimum of four times per calendar year.

The Agenda will be reviewed by NALA's CEO and/or Finance and Corporate Services Manager and approved by the ARF Chairperson in advance of each meeting.

Management are responsible for providing the ARF with resources to carry out their functions.

Members of the subcommittee must declare if they have any conflicts of interest, either real, perceived or potential, with any of the matters on the agenda at the outset of the meeting or as soon as these conflicts become apparent.

If no Chairperson is elected, or, if at any meeting the Chairperson is not present within 15 minutes after the time appointed for holding it, the members present may choose one of their number to be chairperson of the meeting.

Questions arising at any meeting of the ARF shall be determined by a majority of votes of the members present. Where there is an equality of votes, the Chairperson of the ARF shall have a second or casting vote.

If requested, the Finance and Corporate Services Manager will circulate draft minutes to the Chairperson of the ARF for review. These will then be circulated to all

ARF members and the CEO at its subsequent meeting for consideration and approval.

Approved minutes must be signed by the chairperson of the meeting at which the proceedings were held, or by the chairperson of the next meeting.

The ARF will report back regularly to the Board. Minutes of each meeting will be submitted to the subsequent Board meeting for information. Items for consideration or adoption by the Board will be noted in the minutes.

The Chairperson of the ARF, or the Honorary Treasurer will present the subcommittee's findings and recommendations at the subsequent Board meeting. In the absence of the Chairperson or Honorary Treasurer, a director member of the subcommittee may present.

Version Control

Version	Approved by Board	Date
1	Yes	24 June 2015
2	Yes	03 March 2021
3	Yes	28 June 2023
4	Yes	27 June 2024

Appendix 3: NALA Terms of Reference for the Student Subcommittee

Introduction and Review

These Terms of Reference (TOR) describe what the NALA Student Subcommittee (SSC) is about. An appendix at the end gives further information for members of the SSC but does not formally form part of these TOR.

A review of the TOR will be put on the agenda of the SSC at least every two years. The information in the Appendix may be updated by NALA, as necessary.

Overall Responsibility

NALA's Board gives responsibility to the SSC to gather and discuss adult literacy student issues and to feedback those issues to the Board. NALA wants to build awareness of the importance of literacy for a more inclusive Ireland. The SSC was set up in 2005 and is an important way NALA hears directly from adult literacy students.

Composition and Attendance

The SSC is a group made up of up to fourteen students who give their time on a voluntary basis.

Where possible, at least one student will be from NALA's Board. If there are no students on NALA's Board, another member of the Board must join the SSC.

Students on the SSC must be either a:

- current adult literacy student or
- former adult literacy student who wishes to promote adult literacy issues and represent students.

NALA will try to ensure there is a good mix of current and past students on the SSC.

The SSC nominates a person to be the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the SSC. Their names are then sent to the Board for noting.

Any NALA Board member may attend a SSC meeting, including those who are not members of the subcommittee. The Chairperson of NALA's Board must be allowed to be a member of the SSC if requested.

The quorum (the number of SSC Members that must be present for a meeting to go ahead) is five. One of the five present must be the Chairperson or the Vice-Chairperson.

An appointed NALA Staff Member attends all meetings. Other NALA Staff members may attend meetings on occasion and when agreed by the Chairperson.

A representative from the Adult Literacy Organiser's Association (ALOA) attends meetings to give advice. They are not considered a member of the subcommittee. They feedback agreed student issues to the ALOA.

Governance and Reporting

The Student Subcommittee may meet and adjourn as it thinks proper. It generally meets 7 times per year but must meet at least 5 times per calendar year.

Members of the SSC must declare if they have any conflicts of interest, either real, perceived or potential, with any of the matters on the agenda at the start of the meeting or as soon as these conflicts become apparent.

Questions arising at any meeting of the SSC shall be determined by a majority of votes of the members present. Where there is an equality of votes, the Chairperson of the subcommittee shall have a casting (second) vote.

The NALA Board member on the SSC reports back to the NALA Board. If there is more than one member of the SSC on the Board, the subcommittee must agree which of its members will bring the report. They present the minutes and bring any recommendations or suggestions for actions to the Board meetings.

A designated NALA staff member will be responsible for the administration of the SSC. The designated NALA staff member takes the minutes and ensures they are circulated to the SSC and to NALA's Board for their meeting.

Minutes of each SSC meeting will be submitted to each subsequent Board meeting for information.

Once approved by the SSC, the minutes must be signed by the chairperson of the meeting at which the proceedings were held, or by the chairperson of the next meeting.

Main Duties

The Student Subcommittee gathers and discusses adult literacy student issues and feeds back those issues to the NALA Board. The main duties are to:

- attend each of the meetings.
- identify, and discuss, adult literacy student issues. Issues can be from people's own experience and from consulting with students in their area.
- review the issues that have come up together at meetings.
- advise and make recommendations to NALA's Board.

Each student on the subcommittee has the role to:

- agree these Terms of Reference.
- read minutes of meetings before the meeting.
- inform the Chairperson if something is unclear.
- suggest changes to the minutes (which are called amendments) if something is missing, incorrect or not clear.
- agree the minutes of each meeting. This means that you think they are a fair representation of that meeting.
- respect decisions already made by the subcommittee and respect confidentiality.
- bring any feedback to meetings and use the meetings to discuss any problems.
- inform the designated NALA staff member or the Chairperson if you cannot make a meeting. If you miss two meetings in a row or three meetings in a year you may

be asked to give up your position on the Student Subcommittee depending on the reason for missing the meetings.

- guide and monitor the NALA Student Days and the NALA Student Development Fund.
- represent adult literacy students' issues and experiences (if asked by NALA and it suits you timewise). This could be with outside organisations and the media and will involve linking in with other members of NALA staff.

Length of Term

Students serve on the SSC for three years. Students then have the option of serving a further three years. After six years students retire.

There is one exception to this. If a student puts their name forward for election as Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson and is successful they can serve for three years in that position.

They can also go forward for a second term as Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson if they had only served one three year term before becoming Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson. Such a student would then have served a total of nine years on the SSC. After that they must retire.

Where it is agreed that the Chairperson would serve one or two years rather than three years (to have a rotating chairperson) the original Chairperson can remain on for the remainder of their three year term.

Version	Approved by Board	Date
1	Yes	October 2018
2	Yes	27 June 2024*

*Document can, and may be, plain English reviewed without requiring further Board approval.

Appendix 4: NALA Terms of Reference for the Education, Training and Assessment Subcommittee

Overall Scope and Responsibility

The Education, Training and Assessment Subcommittee (ETA) takes delegated responsibility on behalf of the Board to strategically review plans, policies and procedures relating to education, training and assessment at the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) in the context of:

- the identified needs of NALA's Practice and Innovation team
- NALA's Quality Assurance Manual for Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) assessment, accreditation and certification
- best practice
- national guidelines and strategies
- NALA's Strategic Plans.

Main Duties

- Perform specific roles as outlined in NALA's Quality Assurance Manual including programme development, assessment, validation, evaluation, appeals and feedback reports.
- Develop and subsequently keep under review the various Learning, Training and Assessment Policies for NALA.
- Advise on and guide NALA's learner and practitioner service strategy and implementation in the context of NALA's Strategic Plans and relevant external strategies.
- Ensure that NALA's learner and practitioner strategy and services are underpinned by relevant NALA guidelines, national and international best practice.
- Explore, encourage and disseminate good practice and innovation in practitioner training, adult basic education assessment, accreditation and certification.
- Interact with the work of other NALA subcommittees to ensure timely and efficient consideration of business and subsequent decision-making.
- Undertake any tasks as delegated by NALA's Board.

Composition and Attendance

The ETA must:

- consist of at least 4 members and a maximum of 8 members. 2 members must be Directors of the Board, 2 should be students and the remaining members should bring expertise relevant to the ETA's remit.
- elect a Chairperson from among its members.
- allow the Chairperson of the Board to be a member, if requested
- allow any Board member to attend a meeting of the subcommittee.

The ETA will consider the composition of the Subcommittee and shall propose nominees for the Board's consideration who have the skills and experience required for the remit of the subcommittee when a vacancy arises. NALA's CEO and, or other delegated NALA staff will have responsibility for liaising with prospective nominees, their confirmation and induction.

The CEO, Innovation Manager, eLearning Development Co-ordinator and such other members of staff as the chair may require, shall be in attendance at meetings.

Until otherwise agreed by the NALA Board, a quorum shall consist of four members of the Subcommittee.

Members serve for three years and may be re-elected for a further three years. After six consecutive years as a member, they must retire.

After six consecutive years, if the other members of the subcommittee consider that it would be in the best interest of NALA for a member not to resign, they may make a recommendation for consideration by the Board to allow one further term.

Governance and Reporting

The ETA may meet and adjourn as it thinks proper but must meet at least 3 times per calendar year. Meetings will be in person or virtually.

The agenda will be reviewed by NALA's CEO and/or Innovation Manager and approved by the ETA Chairperson in advance of each meeting.

Management are responsible for providing the ETA with resources to carry out their functions.

Members of the subcommittee must declare if they have any conflicts of interest, either real, perceived or potential, with any of the matters on the agenda at the outset of the meeting or as soon as these conflicts become apparent.

If no Chairperson is elected, or, if at any meeting the Chairperson is not present within 15 minutes after the time appointed for holding it, the members present may choose one of their number to be chairperson of the meeting.

Questions arising at any meeting of the ETA shall be determined by a majority of votes of the members present. Where there is an equality of votes, the Chairperson of the ETA shall have a second or casting vote.

Minutes must be signed by the chairperson of the meeting at which the proceedings were held, or by the chairperson of the next meeting.

The ETA Subcommittee will provide minutes of all ETA Subcommittee meetings for information at meetings of the NALA Board. The ETA Subcommittee will report principal recommendations and actions to the NALA Board.

The ETA Subcommittee will undertake a review of work carried out each year to reflect on the areas of focus for the Subcommittee and the impact that this had. This review will take place at the last meeting of each year and is detailed in the rolling agenda.

Version Control

Version	Approved by Board	Date
1	Yes	13 April 2018
2	Yes	24 June 2020
3	Yes	26 October 2022
4	Yes	27 June 2024
Next Review Due		Q2 2027 (unless required sooner)

Appendix 5: NALA LWN learner Feedback Questionnaire

1. Introduction

This interview is carried out over the phone. Brief explanation - what the feedback is for and overview of what the questions will be about

Consent: Y N

Do you have any questions you would like to ask me?

Name:	Name of LWN Tutor:
	Date completed:
Getting Started Q.1	
What was your experience of contacting the Freephone for the first time?	
How long did it take for your Adult Literacy Educator to contact you when you started? Did you find the Student Pack useful?	
Comment:	
Agreeing curriculum Q.2	
What kind of work are you doing with your tutor? How did you decide on what you would work on?	
Are you happy with the work that you are doing with your tutor?	

How do you find the six-week-review?

Comment:

Materials Q.3

What materials are you using?

Do you have any suggestions for improvements for learning materials?

Comment:

LWN Q.4

Are you using LWN?

If yes:

How do you find it?

Is there anything you really like about it?

Is there anything you don't really like about it?

Is there anything you would like to see more of (videos, Level 1 certification, be able to search for keywords, informal learning, other)?

Do you need any further support with LWN?

If no:

Is there a reason such as no computer/internet? Would you like to find out more about it?

Comment:

LWN Tutor Q.5

How would you describe your relationship with your LWN Tutor? What do you find helpful?

How does your LWN Tutor communicate with you (phone/online/social media)? Are you contacted on time each week?

Any other feedback you would like to give?

Comment:

Q.6 How would you rate the following?

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Learning Materials				
Freephone support				
LWN				
Tutor Support				
Q.7 Have you any suggested improvements for learning materials or for the service?				
Comment:				
Q.8 Outcomes (please tick as appropriate)				
Certification	Improved reading	Improved writing	Improved listening & speaking	Improved numeracy
Other				
Comment:				

Appendix 6: LWN Feedback Questionnaire

Example of feedback questionnaire used in gaining feedback on LWN Preparing for Level 3

WriteOn Preparing for Level 3
Feedback

NALA invites you to give your feedback on the new Preparing for Level 3 content on WriteOn. Your opinions will help us improve our service. Your answers are confidential and will not be shared outside the organisation.

1. Name the lesson(s) you looked at:

2. How easy is it to use the website and move between lessons?

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Extremely easy | <input type="radio"/> Not so easy |
| <input type="radio"/> Very easy | <input type="radio"/> Not at all easy |
| <input type="radio"/> Somewhat easy | |

3. How easy is it to move between screens within the lessons?

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Extremely easy | <input type="radio"/> Not so easy |
| <input type="radio"/> Very easy | <input type="radio"/> Not at all easy |
| <input type="radio"/> Somewhat easy | |

4. How easy is it to understand the words and language used in the lessons?

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Extremely easy | <input type="radio"/> Not so easy |
| <input type="radio"/> Very easy | <input type="radio"/> Not at all easy |
| <input type="radio"/> Somewhat easy | |

5. How do you find answering the questions in the lessons?

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Extremely easy | <input type="radio"/> Not so easy |
| <input type="radio"/> Very easy | <input type="radio"/> Not at all easy |
| <input type="radio"/> Somewhat easy | |

6. How helpful are the videos to learn new things?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Extremely helpful | <input type="radio"/> Not so helpful |
| <input type="radio"/> Very helpful | <input type="radio"/> Not at all helpful |
| <input type="radio"/> Somewhat helpful | |

7. How is the volume of the videos?

- ☐ Too loud
- ☐ Just right
- ☐ Not loud enough

8. How is the length of the videos?

- ☐ Too long
- ☐ Just right
- ☐ Not long enough

9. From the following features, tick those that you saw and provide a comment on what you thought.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crosswords | <input type="checkbox"/> Hints |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Proof reading exercises | <input type="checkbox"/> Calculator |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dictation exercises | <input type="checkbox"/> Learning Journal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> External links | <input type="checkbox"/> Text To Speech Audio |

How did you find these features (easy, difficult, worked ok, hard to follow)?

10. Overall what worked best on WriteOn?

11. Overall what did not work so well on WriteOn?

Appendix 7: NALA Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment Application Form

NALA REASONABLE ACCOMODATION IN ASSESSMENT APPLICATION FORM	
This request must be completed and must be submitted along with relevant evidence/documentation to the NALA Distance Learning Coordinator for approval.	
Part A: This section must be completed by the Learner	
Centre Name:	
Learner Name:	
Award/Course:	
Module:	
Learning Practitioner(s):	
Type of Assessment:	Assessment Number:
Details of reasonable accommodation you are requesting:	
Supporting relevant evidence/documentation included:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Details of supporting relevant evidence/documentation:	
Learner Signature:	
Date:	

**Part B: This section must be completed by the Programme Co-ordinator/
Tutor where the learner is working**

Programme Co-ordinator Name:		
<i>Details of relevant evidence/documentation</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Application:	Successful	Unsuccessful
<i>Adaptation of assessment details</i>		
Co-ordinator/ Tutor Signature:		
Centre/ School stamp:		
Date:		

NALA REASONABLE ACCOMODATION IN ASSESSMENT APPLICATION FORM	
Part C: (Office Use) This section must be completed by the NALA Distance Learning Coordinator and held in NALA <i>This section should accompany relevant assessment material when submitted.</i>	
Learner Name:	
Date of Decision:	
Outcome:	<div>Successful</div> <div>Unsuccessful</div>
If granted, details of assessment adaptation Confirmation to Learner /Tutor Date:	<div> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> </div>

Related documentation

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- NQAI (2005) Principles and Operational Guidelines for the Recognition of Prior Learning. Available online at: <https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/Principles%20and%20Operational%20Guidelines%20for%20RPL%202005.pdf>
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- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (2016) Core and Sector-Specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines. Available online at: <http://www.qqi-qaguidelines.com/>

The National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) is a charity and membership based organisation. We support adults with literacy, numeracy and digital literacy needs to access learning opportunities that meet their needs and to take part fully in society. NALA does this by raising awareness of the importance of literacy, doing research and sharing good practice. We also provide support through our online learning courses, tutoring service and by lobbying for further investment to improve adult literacy, numeracy and digital literacy skills.

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Rialtas na hÉireann
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