

Lifelong Learning: the role of the University (Reflections from an Irish example)



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A TRADITION OF INDEPENDENT THINKING

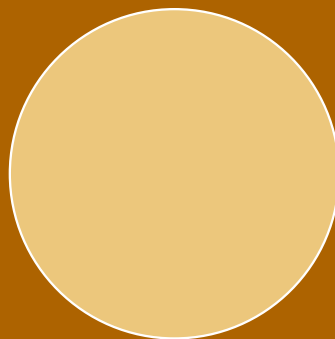




Strengths in the Irish System

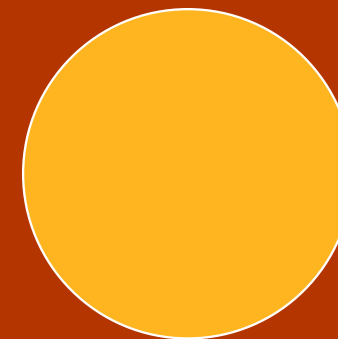


ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System)



Quality and Qualifications Ireland

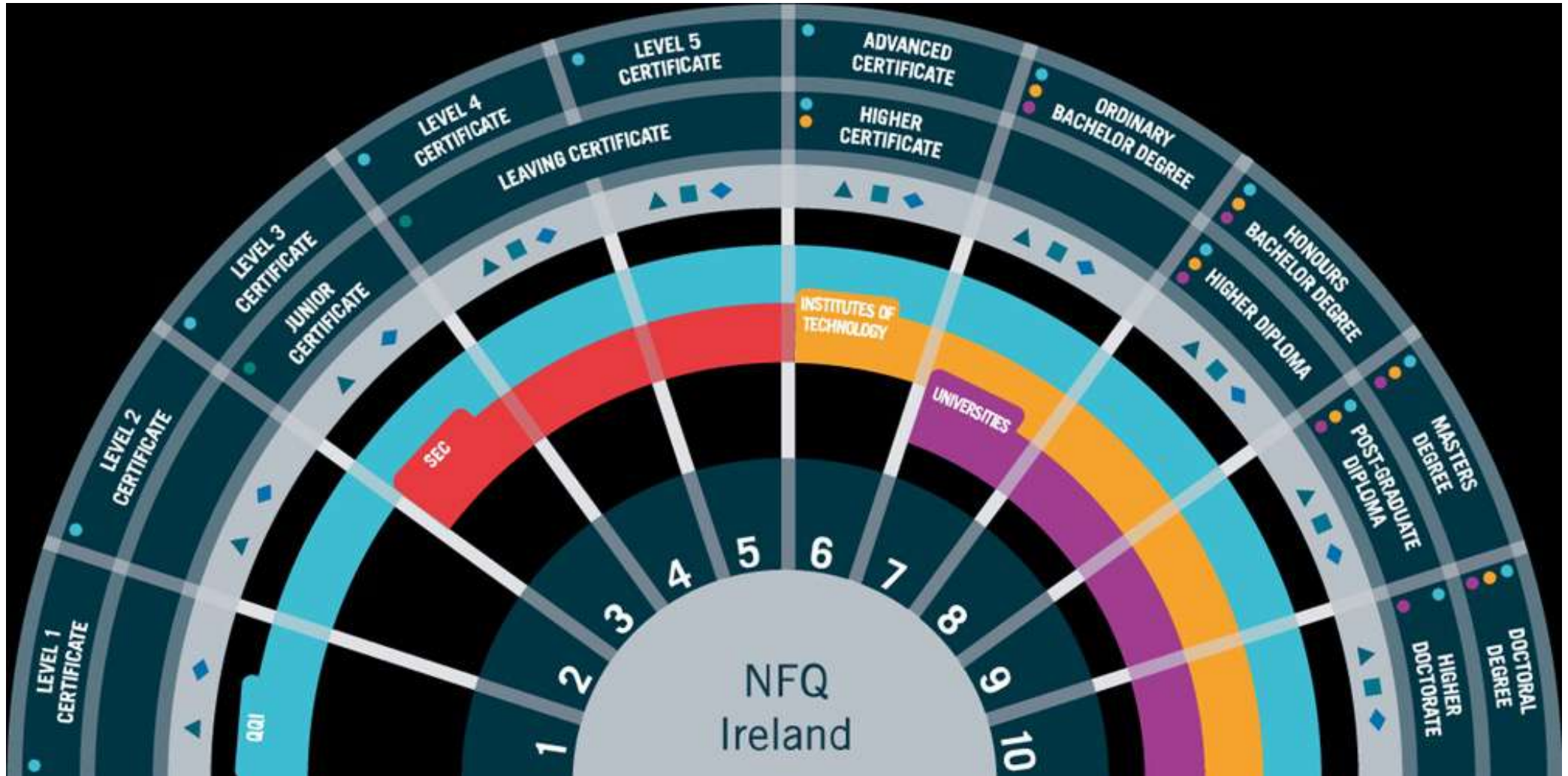
- QQI is the state agency responsible for promoting the quality, integrity and reputation of Ireland's further and higher education system.
- Ensuring that learners achieve qualifications that are valued nationally and internationally.
- Providing trusted information on the qualifications included on the National Framework of Qualifications.



National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)

- 10-levels,
- single national entity to measure all learning achievements
- Underpinned by quality assurance principles, it
- describes qualifications in the Irish education and training system
- Places learner at the centre



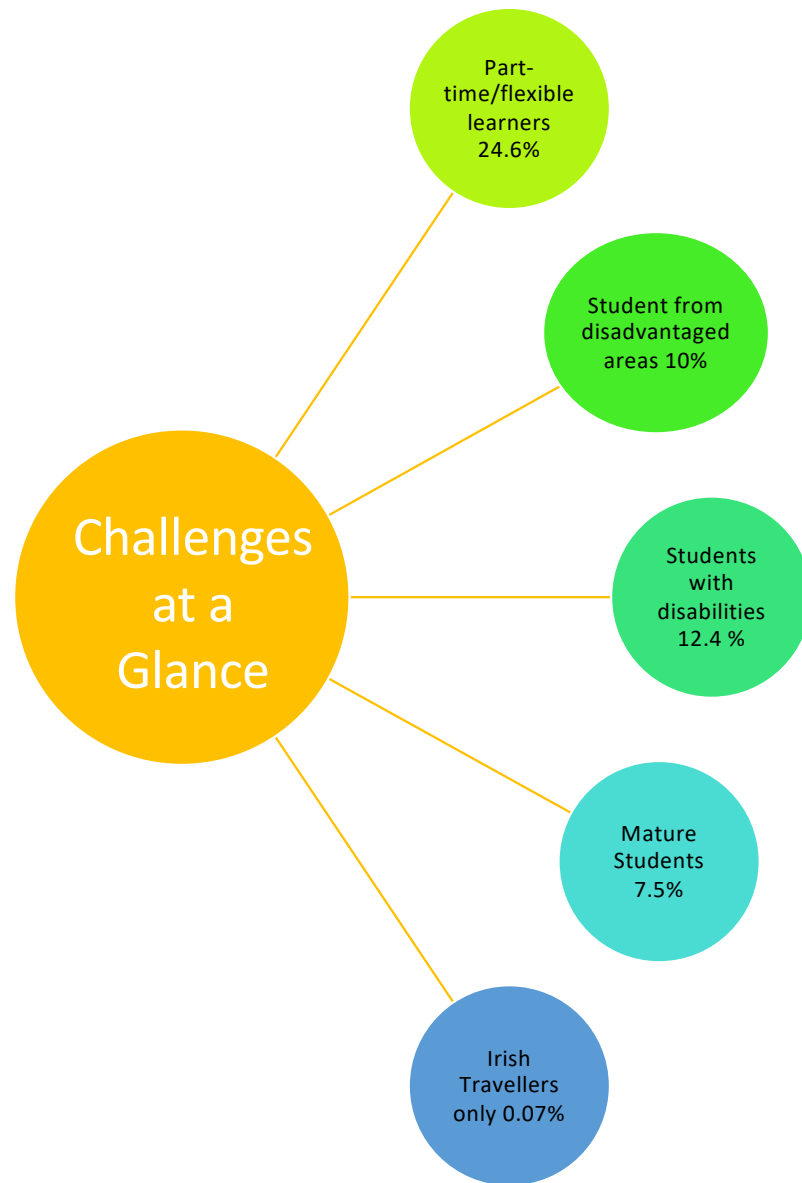


Challenges in the Irish System

Equity of access to higher education is a fundamental principle of Irish education policy.

Access Policy to ensure the diversity and social mix of Ireland's population.

'leave no one behind' SDG 4: to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.'

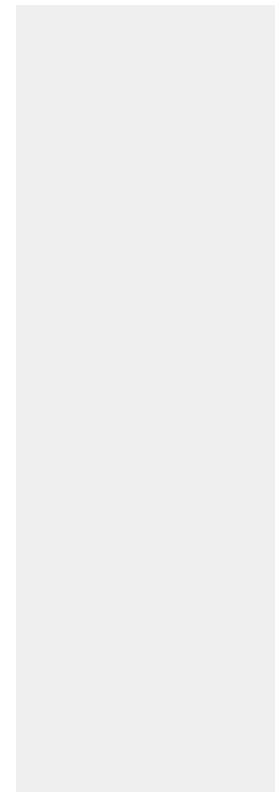


NATIONAL ACCESS PLAN

A STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN
FOR EQUITY OF ACCESS,
PARTICIPATION AND
SUCCESS IN HIGHER
EDUCATION 2022-2028

Two Key Objectives:

1. that the higher education student body, at all levels and across all programmes, reflects the diversity and social mix of Ireland's population, and
2. that higher education institutions are inclusive, universally designed environments which support student success and outcomes, equity and diversity





Student Centred Goals

Case Study ACE @ UCC

Being current and responsive is critical

- Learners have to be at the centre
- We have to be responsive
- We have to be flexible
- We have to respect autonomy
- We have to be relevant in addressing the issues of our time
- We have to offer pathways for progression



ACE @ UCC – Putting the Learner First

Partnership

Working in partnership with other stakeholders in our city is critical to our community engagement mission.

Relevant

Our 120+ programmes have to be relevant to addressing the challenges of our time.



Learner Centric

3,000 part-time learners a year are at the core of everything we do

Responsive

We have to respond to the learning needs of all those in our community

Flexible

We have to meet our learners where they are and deliver in a flexible manner



Leadership in the Community – Irish Traveller Women



Learning Neighbourhoods





UCC Sanctuary Scholars with UCC staff at a welcome day, organised by ACE.



ACE's Sanctuary Scholars



ACE's Ukraine Response

Putting Micro-Credentials into the Jig-Saw

Microcredentials in a European Context

Everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training and lifelong learning in order to maintain and acquire skills that enable them to participate fully in society and manage successfully transitions in the labour market.

European Pillar of Social Rights, 2017

Microcredential means the record of the learning outcomes that a learner has acquired following a small volume of learning. These learning outcomes have been assessed against transparent and clearly defined standards. Courses leading to micro-credentials are designed to provide the learner with specific knowledge, skills and competences that respond to societal, personal, cultural or labour market needs. Micro-credentials are owned by the learner, can be shared and are portable. They may be standalone or combined into larger credentials. They are underpinned by quality assurance following agreed standards in the relevant sector or area of activity.

European Commission, 2021

Microcredentials Overview: Irish Context

Proof of learning outcomes that
a learner has acquired
following a short learning
experience

Credit-bearing with range of 1-
30 ECTS at Levels 6-10 on
National Framework of
Qualifications

Micro-credentials may be but are
not normally awards

For anyone looking to learn in
bite sized pieces

Benefits of Microcredentials



Source: Ralston (2020;2021); Woods & Woods (2021)

ACE Microcredentials Pilot 2020-2022



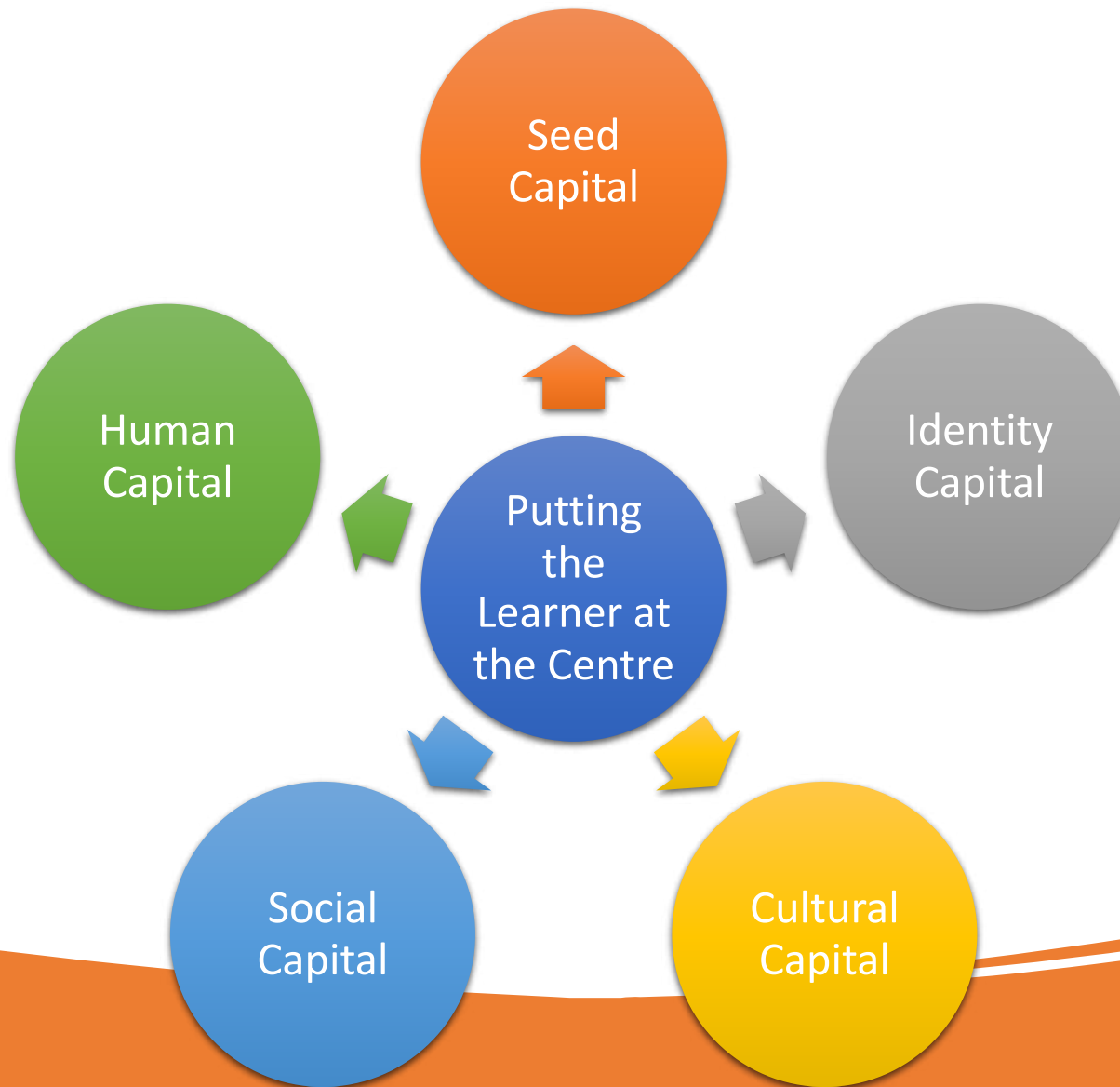
Key Principles of ACE Approach




ACE Approach to Design of Microcredentials



A Philosophy to Guide Change





What is Seed Capital?

- Seed capital represents the baseline off which the learner starts, but it also includes their capacity to accumulate additional capital and their opportunities to invest, with a reasonable chance of success, whatever capital they already have.

What is Identity Capital?

Identity capital is about the individual's self-esteem and dignity as a member of a community. This type of capital can be greatly enhanced through adult education, making the individual both a more self-aware and active contributor to the community.

— Ó Tuama (2016)

Existential
Threats:
Climate
Security
Health
Poverty
Migration
Food
Ecology



New World: communications, globalisation,
waning of conventions, traditions and norms.



Two New Worlds

Value in Cultural Capital

acknowledge the positive set of mutually beneficial resources and richness that is generated in complex and diverse societies.

recognise and validate cultural capital, regardless of where it has been earned;

everyone has an opportunity to extend cultural capital, in a reflexive way that allows them to identify their priorities, goals and ambitions



What is Social Capital?

‘the networks, together with shared norms, values and social trust that facilitate co-ordination and co-operation for mutual benefit, within and between groups’

- Tett and Maclachlan (2007)

‘breadth, depth and richness of networks’

- Kilpatrick et al (2003)

‘trust, networks, participation and norms of reciprocity’

- Jelenc Krašovec and Kump (2009)

‘knowledge required for active participation in the political, economic, and social life of their communities’

- Mayombe (2018)

What is Human Capital

- ‘the knowledge, skills, competencies and attributes embodied in individuals that facilitate the creation of personal, social and economic well-being’
 - Keeley (2007).
- Intrinsic wealth that resides in people’s ‘skills and knowledge’ that contribute to their ‘economic productivity’
 - Tan (2014)



Human Capital Investments

The World Bank (2020)

- 'human capital is often the only asset the poor have'
- is dependent on both 'better education and health'

Eurydice Report (2015)

- skills from formal educational 'may become obsolete if not maintained'
- Informal education 'a range of skills through varied life and work experiences'

Key Lessons to Takeaway

01



Take a holistic approach - avoid restricting to only skills for industry

02



Ensure you follow a demand-led & learner-centric approach

03



Don't take shortcuts – quality is key

04



Be realistic in what you can deliver

05



Leave no one behind