iScoil

Hosting a Blended Learning Centre

This document outlines useful information if your organisation is interested in hosting a Blended Learning Centre.

About iScoil

iScoil is an online learning service that offers accreditation and learning opportunities to young people aged 13-16 years who are not in mainstream education. Students are referred to iScoil from Tusla - The Education Welfare Service. As a registered QQI provider iScoil offers a variety of courses leading to a major award at Level 3. Our courses include Careers, Communications, Personal and Inter Personal Skills, Personal Effectiveness, Digital Media, Maths and Computers. iScoil students have access to online tutors and an individual mentor to offer direction, support and encouragement. Each day, students login to our virtual learning environment from their home or a Blended Learning Centre. We understand that all students learn differently, so we give each student an individual learning page that is updated daily by our online tutors. With the support of their online mentor, students work through various online tasks and submit work at their own pace. The work is reviewed and added to the student's online QQI folder at the end of each day. At the end of each term, QQI examiners assess the work and students gain accreditation. We believe that every young person has a right to education and our goal is to support students through accreditation and further progression.

What is a Blended Learning Centre?

iScoil works in partnership with local agencies and youth services nationally to provide Blended Learning opportunities for young early school leavers. Blended Learning Centres are youth friendly, safe spaces, where iScoil students login and receive a combination of instruction using digital online content from iScoil and face-to-face support from designated centre-based Support Staff. Students attend local Blended Learning Centres at set times and complete both online individual work and group work projects. Support Workers offer students much needed direction, encouragement and support.

Hosting a Blended Learning Centre enables the host agency to:

- Engage early school leavers in learning opportunities in your community.
- Achieve positive and measurable outcomes based on student accreditation and progression.
- Provide an alternative learning pathway to mainstream education.

iScoil Partners

iScoil partners with School Completion Projects, Youth Work Services, Garda Youth Diversion Projects and Solas.

Some examples of current Blended Centres are:

- Longford Regional Youth Service
- Moyross Community Development Centre, Limerick
- Kings Island Garda Youth Diversion Project, Limerick
- Ballinacurra Weston School Completion Programme, Limerick
- The Factory Youth Space, Limerick Youth Service Southill, Limerick
- Newbridge Youth Development Training Centre Co Kildare
- The Vault Youth Centre, Carlow Regional Youth Service
- The Fusion Project, GYDP Tullamore, Co Offaly
- Grange Resource Centre, Mullingar
- Bray School Completion Project, Wicklow
- The Block Project, GYDP, Portlaoise

Roles and Responsibilities

Collaboration between iScoil and partner agencies enables both parties to provide an effective blended learning experience for young people. Any partnership relies on clarity of responsibilities and expectations and we work together with local services and steering groups to achieve the best fit for each centre based on assessment of the needs of young people in their community. Since 2009, iScoil has worked with a range of different services and agencies and has gained considerable experience in identifying the key components that contribute to a successful blended learning centre. The following table outlines the roles and responsibilities for iScoil and the partner agency.

iScoil	Partner Agency
o Individual student log ins o Training for support workers o On-going support and advice o Online tutors and mentors o Weekly feedback to learners and centre o Online content o On-going assessment o Portfolio of learning outcomes o QQI accreditation	o Designated support worker o Computers and Internet access o Quiet, safe and student friendly environment o Timetabled weekly sessions o Copy of child protection policy o Appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding children online

The Support Worker Role

iScoil students often have a diverse range of complex needs. The face-to-face support and encouragement provided by Support Workers is a vital contributing factor to the successful engagement of each student. iScoil has spent a number of years working successfully with a wide range of partner agencies and this experience has enabled us to compile a list of responsibilities and recommended competencies. The table below outlines some of the key components for a Support Worker in a blended learning environment.

Responsibilities	Competencies
o Complete iScoil induction training o Agree an iScoil timetable with students o Monitor student attendance & engagement o Provide individual on-going support and encouragement to students o Provide regular feedback to iScoil on student engagement patterns o Provide student updates at the end of each term o Identify individual progression routes for students to further education and training o Facilitate group tasks o Identify student needs and work with iScoil to develop individual short and medium term goals o Provide feedback to iScoil on the content of individual learning pages	o Ability to build rapport with students o Student centred approach o Positive mind-set o Professionalism o Problem solver/ Solution focused o Excellent communication skills o Organisation skills o Teamwork

More Information

For more information on hosting a Blended Learning Centre please contact iScoil on 01 4537570 or 086 4162655. Or you can visit our website at www.iScoil.ie.

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