NICVA



NICVA Academy

Training for the voluntary & community sector

nicva.org

Welcome to the NICVA Academy

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NICVA

At NICVA Academy, we believe learning has the power to strengthen organisations, develop confident leaders, and support thriving communities.

Our training is created with and for the voluntary and community sector. We understand the realities organisations face and design practical, relevant learning opportunities that build confidence, skills and knowledge at every level.

Whether you are a trustee, senior leader, manager, frontline worker or volunteer, our training supports people to develop in their roles, improve their confidence and contribute to a strong vibrant sector.

We offer:

- → Open training sessions
- → Bespoke organisational learning
- → Accredited qualifications
- → Peer learning opportunities
- → Practical resources and support

Our approach is learner-focused, collaborative and grounded in real sector experience. Drawing on NICVA's wider work in policy, research and engagement, we combine practical expertise with up-to-date insight into the issues affecting the sector.

Training is delivered online and in person, providing flexible learning opportunities to meet the needs of organisations and individuals.



Learning with purpose →

Our approach

We design learning that is:

Practical and relevant > > Learner-focused > Inclusive and accessible > Collaborative and peer-led > Rooted in sector experience > Flexible and supportive > Focused on real-world application

Ways to learn ↓

Open Training Sessions

Short practical workshops delivered throughout the year online and in person.

Bespoke Training

Tailored learning designed around your organisation's needs, priorities and teams.

Accredited Programmes

Professionally recognised qualifications through ILM and OCN NI.

Peer Learning and Support

Opportunities to connect, reflect and learn alongside others across the sector.


Supporting
Communities

Who we support

We work with individuals and organisations across the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector. Our training supports people at every stage of their learning and leadership journey, including:

Leaders and managers > > Staff teams > Trustees and board members > Volunteers

Areas of learning

NICVA Academy provides learning and development opportunities across a wide range of areas relevant to the voluntary and community sector. We also work with organisations to design bespoke learning opportunities tailored to specific teams, priorities and organisational challenges.

Our training offer includes:

- Governance and trustee development
- Fundraising
- Leadership and management
- Coaching and mentoring
- Training and education
- Human resources
- Impact practice and evaluation
- Collaboration and partnership working
- Digital skills and confidence
- Finance and financial governance
- Communications and engagement
- Community development

Our Training Courses

"The facilitator was very warm and encouraging. The advice was specific and practical with lots of links and further resource support suggestions."

Lisa Dietrich -
Community Relations in Schools

"I feel better equipped to understand my role and the responsibilities it carries after completing the training. I appreciate the slides and links being shared as this means I can go back and review periodically."

Charlene Kearney -
NEXUS NI

"As a relatively new director to the Board of the North Coast Community Transport I feel more confident in my ability to fulfil my role and ensure that the organisation progresses in line with the governing rules and that our customers get the best possible service."

Frank Dick -
North Coast Community Transport

Governance

Governance for new, or nearly new, trustees

Good governance is essential for an organisation to have direction, plan ahead, be effective and meet legal requirements. This training will develop and improve your governance knowledge to ensure that your organisation is governed and led effectively.

Ideal for

Those who are newly elected/appointed onto the committee/board of a charity (the charity trustees).

Charity trustees who wish to understand more about their role on the committee/board and what is expected of them.

Content

- The role of the committee/board
- Legal duties of charity trustees and best practice considerations
- The principles of good governance
- Charity regulation

Duration: 3 hours

Governance

Trustee Annual Reporting

Charity trustees of registered charities are required to report annually to the Charity Commission on their charity's finances, resources and activities.

This training covers the reporting responsibilities of charity trustees under the accounting and reporting obligations under charity law. It provides an introduction to annual reporting to the Charity Commission, covering the annual monitoring return and required reports and accounts.

Ideal for

Charity trustees who want to understand their reporting responsibilities to the Charity Commission.

Content

- Annual Monitoring Return
- Trustee Annual Report
- Accounts
- Independent Examiner's Report

Duration: 3 hours

Financial reporting to the board

The board has an important role in the financial governance of its charity, so it needs to ensure that it has good financial reporting to it.

The financial health of a charity is the collective responsibility of all the charity trustees, so it is important that all charity trustees, and not just those with financial acumen, are assisted to understand the finances and financial procedures of the charity. Having appropriate and timely reporting on financial matters should help charity trustees to become more engaged in discussions around the finances.

Ideal for

The Treasurer, Chair of Finance sub-committee and/or other board members interested in improving governance.

Senior staff who report to board.

Content

- Setting and monitoring reserves
- Setting of budgets
- Reporting on variances in the budget
- Management accounts
- Reporting on grants and contracts
- Financial procedures policy
- Annual audit/independent examination
- Reporting to regulators and funders

Duration: 3 hours

Governance

Risk assessment made easy

Risk assessment is an important task that all organisations should be carrying out, regardless of size or nature. Having a process in place to record this work will help organisations to better manage both current and future risks.

This is a practical training session showing you how to carry out a risk assessment, action plan and record the results in a risk register. The templates used in the exercises can then be used in your own organisation so that you have both the skills and the tools to implement risk assessment.

Ideal for

Anyone involved in assessing or managing risk. Organisations without existing risk assessments in place.

Content

- Identify risks and carry out a risk assessment
- Carry out an analysis of risks and draw up an action plan to deal with them
- Monitor and review action plans

Duration: 3 hours

Being an effective chair

Governance in an organisation can ultimately be improved by having a good Chair so it is worthwhile investing time in helping your current Chair or prospective Chair to fulfil their role.

A good Chair can make such a difference to the overall effectiveness of the committee/board, which in turn should make the board a more attractive proposition for future trustees.

Ideal for

Current Chairs or prospective Chairs.

Content

- The role of the chair
- What makes a good chair
- Expectations of others
- Achieving better meetings through effective planning, communication and chairing

Duration: 3 hours

Fundraising

Fundraising basics and planning for fundraising

Whatever fundraising journey you are on, it's key to understand some of the basics principles around fundraising such as what is fundraising, why it's important, the role of a fundraiser, and how to start planning to raise vital funds.

Ideal for

Those new to fundraising or looking to build their understanding. Suitable for staff, volunteers and trustees involved in fundraising.

Content

- What fundraising is, the role of fundraisers, and who and why people give to your cause.
- The skills, resources and actions that should be in place to achieve success.
- The fundamental stages of planning for fundraising, the rules to consider, and how to begin creating a roadmap for securing financial support.

Duration: 3 hours

Building your Case for Support

Fundraising is competitive, so being prepared to communicate your appeal to donors and funders is a must.

Underpinning your fundraising activities, a Case for Support is a timing-saving tool summarising who you are, the cause you tackle, and effectively argues why you are a worthy investment for funders and donors.

Ideal for

Those new to fundraising or looking to build their understanding. Suitable for staff, volunteers and trustees involved in fundraising.

Content

- What do funders and donors want to know?
- What do you include in your Case for Support?
- Providing evidence to make a strong Case for Support
- Your budget, impact, social proof and other key information
- Ways to use your Case for Support in fundraising

Duration: 3 hours

Fundraising

A Practical Guide to Completing Funding Applications

Securing funds through funding applications can be crucial to an organisation's ability to deliver. But who are the funders, where can you find them, which ones should you select, and what do you need to consider before submitting your application?

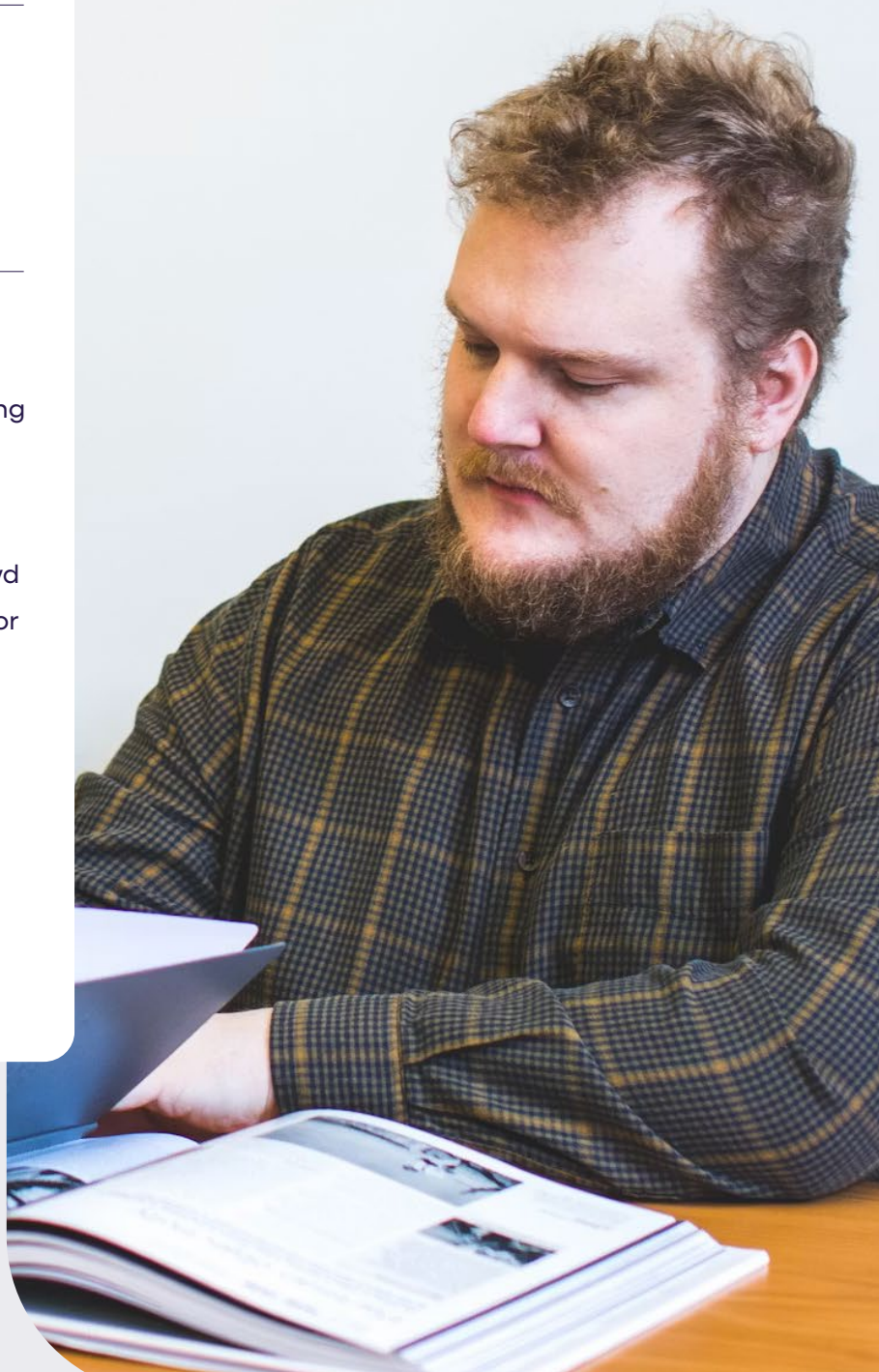
Ideal for

Those new to fundraising or looking to build their understanding. Suitable for staff, volunteers and trustees involved in fundraising.

Content

- Sources of funding
- How best to approach trust fundraising
- What to consider when selecting a funder
- Ideas to strengthen your written answers and stand out from the crowd
- Practice communicating your need for funding

Duration: 3 hours



HR

HR for Trustees

This session gives charity Trustees a clear understanding of their responsibilities as employers and the key HR issues they need to oversee. It covers essential areas like managing staff, handling employment matters, understanding HR data, and applying key policies such as discipline, grievance, and redundancy.

Ideal for

New trustees, those who have recently acquired HR responsibilities within their organisation or trustees wishing to update their knowledge.

Content

- Trustee oversight of essential employment matters across all stages of the employment life cycle
- Trustee line management responsibility
- HR Management information of relevance to the Board
- Trustee involvement in the implementation of HR policies such as discipline, grievance and redundancy

Duration: 2 hours

Boosting Motivation and Engagement in the Sector

This session explores what truly drives people at work and how leaders can create an environment where staff feel valued, motivated and committed. It focuses on practical strategies to boost engagement, even when budgets are tight.

Ideal for

Voluntary and community sector leaders, managers and trustees responsible for people management or organisational culture.

Content

- Why engagement and motivation matter in the voluntary and community sector.
- The role of leadership in driving engagement
- Practical strategies for recognition, wellbeing and development
- Tools and templates for building a culture of motivation and collaboration

Duration: 3 hours

HR

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)

This session unpacks the realities of EDI in the workplace – beyond the buzzwords – covering both the legal framework and the human impact. It explores how to create genuinely inclusive organisation while avoiding the risk of discrimination, harassment and performative practice.

Ideal for

Voluntary and community sector leaders, managers and trustees responsible for people management or governance.

Content

- Overview of equality legislation and recent case law in Northern Ireland
- The moral and business case for diversity and inclusion
- Understanding discrimination, harassment and vicarious liability
- Tackling unconscious bias and promoting inclusive leadership
- Everyday actions and policies that can build a culture of fairness and respect

Duration: 3 hours

Effective Performance Management

This session explores how to manage and develop people effectively, from setting clear expectations to handling under-performance fairly. It focuses on building a culture of accountability, open feedback and support that drives both individual and organisational success.

Ideal for

Managers, team leaders and trustees in the voluntary and community sector with responsibility for staff performance and development.

Content

- The purpose and value of performance management in the sector
- Setting goals, monitoring progress and giving effective feedback
- Managing under-performance and understanding “can’t” vs “won’t”
- Handling grievances and health-related issues during performance progress
- Legal considerations and lessons from case law

Duration: 3 hours

HR

Wellbeing and Worklife Balance

This session explores how organisations can support staff wellbeing and maintain healthy work-life balance in a demanding sector. It looks at practical, legal and cultural steps that help people stay motivated, health and effective at work.

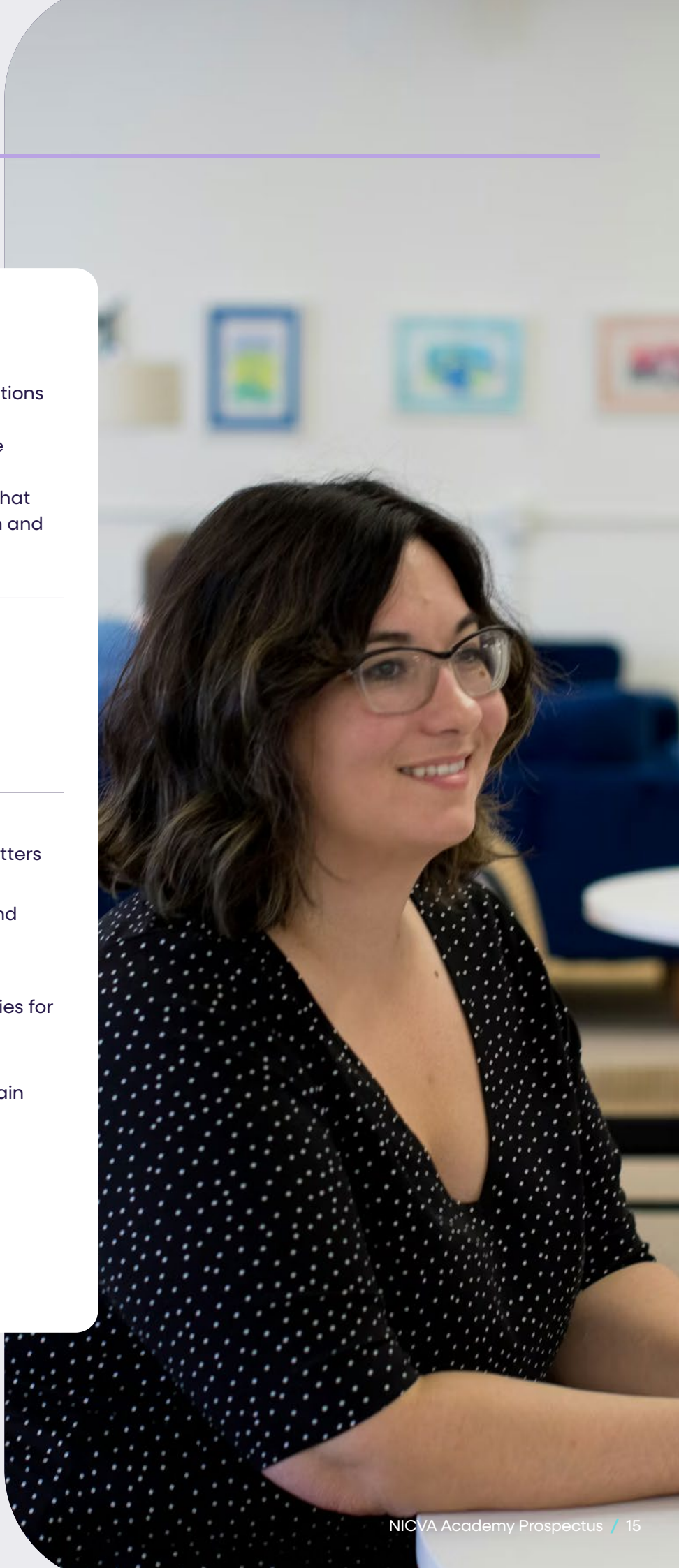
Ideal for

Leaders, managers and HR leads in voluntary and community sector organisations responsible for staff welfare, culture or engagement.

Content

- Why wellbeing and balance matters in the sector
- The impact of new legislation and 'Good Jobs' reforms
- Four key wellbeing pillars
- Practical support and case studies for managing stress and workload
- Building flexible, values-driven workplaces that attract and retain people

Duration: 3 hours



Impact and Collaboration

Getting started with impact practice

This session helps organisations understand the fundamentals of impact practice and how to begin applying it meaningfully in their work.

It will help participants move from understanding what they do to clearly articulating why they do it and the difference they make.

Ideal for

Voluntary and community organisations that are new to impact practice or would like to renew their approach to measuring and demonstrating impact.

Content

- What is impact practice and why it matters
- Demystifying the language around impact
- Introduction to the Impact Practice Cycle
- The power of storytelling in sharing impact
- Practical tips for realistic and proportionate impact measurement

Duration: 3 hours

Masterclass in collaboration

Through practical exercises, real-world examples, and peer learning, participants will explore how to build a collaborative culture, communicate a shared vision, and navigate the challenges of working across boundaries.

Ideal for

Leaders in the voluntary, community, and social enterprise sectors who want to strengthen their collaborative skills and drive impactful partnerships.

Content

- Strategies for building and sustaining effective collaboration
- Communication techniques for aligning goals and planning together
- Common pitfalls and how to avoid them
- Governance structures and long-term sustainability of joint efforts

Duration: 3 hours

Policy and Influencing

Campaigning and Influencing – An Introduction

This session explores how government policy and decision-making works in Northern Ireland, and how you can look to influence.

It introduces the basics of lobbying and campaigning, offering practical knowledge, ideas, and insights on how can advocate, including planning simple and effective campaigns.

Ideal for

Voluntary and community sector organisations, Community development staff, Frontline practitioners engaging with government or public services. Staff in a non-policy role but involved in advocacy or influencing. Anyone new to lobbying, campaigning, or policy work.

Content

- Understanding lobbying and campaigning: definitions and importance
- Structures of government and their remits
- Decision-making processes and routes to influence
- Using channels across the Assembly, Councils, Westminster, and beyond
- Putting together an influencing or campaign plan

Duration: 3.5 hours

Digital

Digital Empowerment

The Digital Empowerment Programme has been developed by CiviCode in partnership with NICVA. Participants will learn to develop sustainable digital strategies, strengthen cybersecurity, manage service providers, streamline operations, and leverage workflows, automation, and AI. They will also gain the skills to measure impact, create meaningful reports, and tell compelling data stories - all designed to help your organisation make a lasting difference.

Ideal for

Leaders and managers in organisations with an ambition to develop and a goal to build or refine their digital strategy. Participants need to have a minimum level of technical proficiency.

Content

- Developing and Implementing a Sustainable Digital Strategy
- Administering Your Organisation
- Managing Your Service Providers
- Operational Delivery
- Reporting with Impact
- Workflow, Automation, and AI

Duration: 18 hours (plus self study)

Accredited Learning and Qualifications

NICVA Academy offers a range of accredited qualifications designed to support professional and organisational development across the voluntary and community sector.

Our accredited programmes combine practical learning with reflective practice and real-world application, helping learners build confidence, knowledge and recognised qualifications.

"Completing the ILM Level 5 Diploma was a transformative experience that elevated my confidence as a leader. It deepened my understanding of leadership and management theory and enabled me to translate this knowledge into enhanced professional practice and a more profound, measurable impact."

Sammy Robinson –
Megain Nazarene

"The ILM Level 5 Coaching and Mentoring course was a genuinely valuable experience — well-structured, enjoyable, and thoughtfully designed. It challenged me to blend theory with practical application, pushed me out of my comfort zone, and ultimately helped me grow both personally and professionally."

Gavin Ferris –
Advice NI

"Completing the ILM Level 7 Certificate in Strategic Leadership and Management was a true turning point in my leadership journey. The programme challenged me to think differently, build confidence, and lead with clarity and intent. I loved every masterclass and felt genuinely inspired by the learning. While the assignments stretched me, the exceptional support from our tutor and the encouragement of my cohort pushed me through and made success possible."

Jayne McStay –
Rosie's Trust

Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM)



ILM qualifications are structured to develop leadership capability at different levels, from team supervision through to senior management. They focus on ensuring learners are not just studying leadership theories but are practically applying leadership concepts in their roles. This approach strengthens both confidence and competence.

Employers recognise ILM as a respected standard in leadership and management development and demonstrate that a person has invested in their professional growth, and has been formally assessed on their ability to lead and manage effectively.

Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM)

ILM Level 3 Award in Leadership and Management

This qualification introduces the skills and knowledge essential for becoming an effective and confident manager. This course focuses on developing leadership skills that reflect the motivation, and values of the leader and the organisation.

Assignment support provided.
5 minute presentation that is recorded.
A minimum of 2 assignments, approximately 1,000-1,500 words each.

Ideal for

New, or aspiring, managers without formal training or have management responsibilities but no qualifications that reflect experience.

Content

- Understanding Leadership – leadership styles, factors impacting choice of style, assessing your own leadership style, goal setting
- Presentation skills – planning and delivering a presentation on an aspect of leadership
- Effective teamwork – how to build and maintain a team
- Conflict Management – causes of conflict at work and strategies to deal with conflict
- Modules can be selected from ILM suite to suit organisational needs

Duration: 12 hours
(inc. assignment support)

ILM Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management

This qualification aims to enable practising and aspiring managers to develop a broad range of leadership and management skills and knowledge.

Assignment support provided.
4 assignments of approximately 1,500-2,000 words. 8-10 minute presentation that is recorded.

Ideal for

Practising or aspiring middle managers who manage staff or who are part of a team in a voluntary capacity.

Content

- How to manage your own continuous personal and professional development – goal setting, reflective practice
- Becoming an Effective Leader – key leadership competencies – delegation, motivation, leadership styles, Emotional Intelligence
- Improving Leadership Performance Through Action Learning – problem solving and decision making, conflict management, group dynamics
- Making Professional Presentations – planning, preparing and delivery a professional presentation

Level 5 Award and Certificate in Leadership & Management also available.

Duration: 41 hours
(inc. assignment support)

Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM)

ILM Level 5 Certificate in Effective Coaching and Mentoring

Learners will gain a critical understanding of the role and responsibilities of the workplace coach and mentor. The content also provides an Indepth overview of how coaching and mentoring can impact on an organisation.

Three assignments. Learners must complete 18 hours of coaching or mentoring practice. One hour of this practice must be recorded. Assignments are approximately 2,000-3,000 words long.

Ideal for

Managers or anyone in a position with responsibility of supporting staff and/ or volunteers. It is also designed to develop those planning to move into a development role as a coach and mentor.

Content

- Understanding the Skills, Principles and Practice of Effective Coaching and Mentoring within an Organisational Context
- Skills Practice - assess your own skills, behaviours and knowledge as a coach and mentor
- Planning, delivering and reviewing coaching in their organisation, and also their own further development as a coach and mentor

Duration: 24 hours (inc. assignment support)

ILM Level 7 Award/ Certificate in Leadership and Management

This Level 7 qualification enhances the senior leader's strategic skills, informs decision making and develops high-level leadership skills. The course covers making the best use of resources, understanding the need to innovate and optimise performance, constructing business cases, leading change implementation and evaluating the impact of that change.

Ideal for

Senior leaders in the voluntary and community sector wishing to invest in their professional development and gain a recognised qualification.

Content

- Developing leadership and management capability through enquiry
- Developing a high level business case
- Developing and maintaining a high-performance culture and optimising resources
- Developing strategic leadership and management capability

Duration: 30 hours (plus self study)

Open College Network NI (OCN NI)



OCN NI qualifications are structured to demonstrate that learners make a commitment to their professional development and their ability to meet the demands of their professional roles.

Employers recognise an OCN NI qualification as an investment in personal and professional growth and that learners are driven by a desire to enhance skills and gain recognition for their knowledge, skills and experience.

Open College Network NI (OCN NI)

OCN Level 2 Award in Community Development

Learners gain an understanding of what is community development, community group structures, collaboration. Community development standards and the application of CD values and processes.

Assignment support provided. Small groups from course will work together outside the classroom environment. 6 assignments. Approximately 1,500 words. Practical application of learning into the community via a community profile.

Ideal for

This qualification is appropriate for anyone involved or wanting to become involved in community development practice.

Content

- Understanding Community Development Practice - purpose and process of community development
- Community Learning for Social Change – Skills audit and reflective practice
- Governance and Organisational development - running meetings, organisational policies and procedures
- Community Learning for Change – barriers to community learning and participation
- Understand and Engage with Communities – CD structures, methods and ways to engage diverse communities.
- Legislation and policies and heir impact on communities - collaborative and cross sectoral work

Duration: 30 hours

OCN Level 3 Certificate in Learning and Development

The qualification provides an introduction to the skills and knowledge required to be able to offer effective training programmes to others. The course offers opportunities to design and deliver sessions that are tailored to the specific needs of your organisation or group.

5 assignments. Assignment support provided. 30 minute micro-teaching session that is recorded.

Ideal for

Those who wish to, or are currently, providing training to others as part of their role.

Content

- The principles and practices of learning and development
- Developing and preparing resources for learning and development
- Planning and preparing specific learning and development opportunities
- Facilitating group learning and development
- Reflecting on own practice in learning and development

Duration: 30 hours (inc. assignment support)

Peer Learning and Support

Alongside formal training, NICVA Academy supports opportunities for peer learning, reflection and connection across the sector.

This includes:

- Leadership insights
- Alumni opportunities
- Communities of practice
- One-to-one support
- Access to resources and guidance
- Signposting to wider support

Fees and Booking

Training costs vary depending on course length, content and level. Full pricing information is available on request and through the NICVA website. NICVA members receive a 30% discount on all training, including accredited programmes.

NICVA members save 30% on all training

Visit our training calendar and book online at
– **www.nicva.org**

NICVA

To find out more about NICVA Academy training, upcoming sessions or bespoke learning opportunities, please contact:

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