

Job Vacancy

Closing: 13 Nov 2020

## PROJECT MANAGER - REALISING THE POTENTIAL OF THE RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL) AND LIFELONG LEARNING IN IRISH HIGHER EDUCATION - A NATIONAL INITIATIVE IN COLLABORATION WITH ENTERPRISE



### About the Project

This innovative and ambitious collaboration between the Institutes of Technology, the Universities and TU Dublin seeks to build a consistent and coherent approach to recognition of prior learning (RPL) within and across the entire public higher education (HE) sector. Funded under the Irish Government's Human Capital Initiative (HCI) Pillar 3 (Innovation and agility), the project will see the HE institutions engineer a significant shift in RPL policy, procedure and practice, that has transformative potential for Ireland's education system to become an international leader in the field. The project will play a crucial role in delivering on a range of national and European policy objectives in lifelong learning and meeting skills needs.

Specifically, the project will build consensus among the HE institutional partners to develop and roll-out a National RPL Framework, that will encompass a shared national understanding of RPL, with agreed language, principles and reference points, in keeping with national quality assurance arrangements, the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), and QQI high-level policies on access and progression. The National RPL Framework, both during its development and after its roll-out, will unlock and embed a culture of lifelong learning, support effective HE-enterprise engagement in skills development, and shape the creation of a highly-skilled and dynamic workforce. To meet these objectives, the project will also require close co-operation with a diverse range of key national stakeholders, including national education agencies, QQI, the HEA and SOLAS; the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning (NFETL) and the RPL Practitioners Network; as well as employer and enterprise representative bodies, including Ibec and ISME who are already enlisted as enterprise partners of the project.

The chief academic officers of the participating institutions (Registrars/ Vice-Presidents Academic) will retain oversight of the project, and governance and management structures will include a Steering Group and a Project Network (comprising institutional leads from the 19 participating institutions). An organisational chart is included below.

The participating institutions, through their representative bodies, are now seeking to recruit a Project Manager who will drive and co-ordinate the initiative at national/ sectoral level, while harnessing regional/ local developments; and who will work to build consensus among the Project Network and key stakeholders, including enterprise, to ensure that the potential of RPL is realised in Irish HE and in the labour market.

## Job Description

**Job title: Project Manager for the National RPL project in Higher Education**

### Overview:

The Project Manager for the National RPL project in Higher Education plays a key role in implementation of this innovative and ambitious national collaboration. The post holder builds and manages engagement with participating higher education institutions, their representative bodies and a diverse range of key stakeholders including enterprise; supports and coordinates activities across the seven project work packages; monitors and drives delivery of key project outputs against key performance indicators; ensures project coherence and consistency; and supports the lead higher education institution (IT Carlow) in administering the project contract with the HEA.

### Reporting to:

Sponsoring bodies as represented by the Director of Academic Affairs and Deputy CEO, THEA; the Director of Learning and Teaching and Academic Affairs, IUA; and the Registrar and Deputy President, TU Dublin.

### Location of post:

Ordinarily at the offices of the Technological Higher Education Association, Dublin, in line with public health guidelines in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic. The post will involve travel nationally and occasional international travel to participate or present at events and conferences, when possible.

### Contract terms:

This is a full-time, contract post (4 years, subject to a period of probation and meeting on-going performance requirements) which offers an excellent career opportunity for a pro-active and dynamic professional, with an attractive remuneration package on offer for the right candidate. A secondment arrangement for existing public-sector employees may be possible, subject to concluding an appropriate agreement between THEA and the candidate's current employer.

### Main responsibilities:

- Lead the development, and drive the implementation, of the National RPL project in HE
- Maintain effective communications for the project, including
  - the organisation of national and regional events
  - the development and publication of enterprise and employee information and marketing materials
  - the development and production of HE institution and enterprise staff training tools and resources
  - website, social media, email information updates
- Act as primary liaison for project stakeholders HE institutions and their representative bodies, and a range of key stakeholders including enterprise, and other interested parties
- Provide the chief academic officers of the participating institutions (Registrars/ Vice-Presidents Academic) with regular, formal briefings on project developments and its progress.

- Ensure effective management of all aspects of the project including finance, research analysis, project monitoring and documentation, and regular reporting to the participating institutions, Steering Group, and sponsoring bodies
- Support project stakeholders in maintaining coherence between RPL policy and practice, and national and regional approaches to the project
- Initiate and manage, under the guidance of the Steering Group, and in collaboration with the Project Network, the commencement and completion of the seven work packages set out in the application documentation during the lifetime of the project
- Monitor and drive delivery of key project outputs against key performance indicators, including the creation of the National RPL Framework and the creation of an online RPL platform for Irish higher education
- Organise the recruitment of a Research Analyst at a later stage of the project, line manage the Research Analyst, and ensure that her/his work is fully integrated into and supports the overall objectives of the project
- Assist participating institutions, as appropriate, in recruiting their institutional leads and integrating them into the national project
- Act as secretariat to the Steering Group, Project Network and any other project working groups that are established
- Support the lead HE institution (IT Carlow) in administering the project contract with the HEA, including reporting requirements

### Requirements:

- Proven leadership ability and a strong results focus
- Strong project and programme management experience
- Familiarity with the operation of the higher education sector in Ireland and/ or abroad
- Proven experience in building positive relationships and collaboration with a range of diverse stakeholders within, between and external to institutions
- Excellent communication skills, both oral and written
- Good interpersonal skills and the ability to negotiate in a multi-stakeholder environment
- Good judgement and analytical skills
- An appropriate third-level qualification at NFQ Level 8 [or equivalent] or above

### Desirable:



Capacity to analyse data



Familiarity with lifelong learning and RPL policy in Ireland and internationally



Standards/Attention to detail



Analysis/Problem Solving



Planning/Organising and Work management



Leadership skills

### Key Competencies

Please forward a detailed but concise CV and covering letter, demonstrating the requirements and competencies listed above, by post or email by **13 November 2020** to:

Margaret Coen, Technological Higher Education Association, 1st Floor, Fumbally Square, Fumbally Lane, Dublin | D08 XYA5 | Ireland. Email: [margaret.coen@thea.ie](mailto:margaret.coen@thea.ie).

IUA, THEA AND TU DUBLIN RPL PROPOSAL  
ORGANISATIONAL CHART  
HUMAN CAPITAL INITIATIVE

