



NATIONAL FORUM
FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF TEACHING
AND LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION



National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education: 2017-18 Seminar Series

Aligning Language Assessments in Higher Education with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR): a Quality Assurance Approach



John Paul II Library, Maynooth University
Friday 8 June, 2018, 09:00 – 16:30

CONTEXT

The aim of this seminar is to provide expert guidance and training to language professionals in Higher Education on the alignment of language assessments to the CEFR. It builds on previous National Forum seminars on this theme, and follows on from the Department of Education's 10-year [National Strategy for Foreign Languages in Education](#), published in December 2017.

Among the goals of the strategy, *Languages Connect*, is the alignment of all language examinations, at all levels of the education and training system, with the CEFR. The strategy also reiterates and extends current [Teaching Council requirements](#) that all teachers of foreign languages provide evidence of a minimum language proficiency of B2.2 across all language skills.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



Dr Enrica Piccardo is an Associate Professor in the Department of Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning and Director of the Centre for Educational Research in Languages and Literacies at the University of Toronto, Canada. She is co-author of the recently published extended [CEFR Companion Volume](#) (Council of Europe, 2018) and coordinator of a European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) 'Qualimatrix' project: an online tool focusing on Quality Assurance in the use of the CEFR. She was also coordinator of the ECML 'ECEP' project and co-authored the related resource, *Pathways through assessing, learning and teaching in the CEFR*.



Dr Brian North is the former Head of Academic Development at the Eurocentres Foundation, Switzerland. He is co-author of the [CEFR](#) (Council of Europe, 2001) and of several related publications, including the prototype [European Language Portfolio](#), the [Manual for relating examinations to the CEFR](#) (Council of Europe, 2009), the [European Profiling Grid \(EPG\)](#) for language teaching competences and the [CEFR Companion Volume](#) (Council of Europe, 2018).

PROGRAMME

08.30 – 09:00 *Registration and coffee*

09:00 – 11:00 **Keynote lectures**

“Assessment in second language education: the CEFR as a compass”

Dr Enrica Piccardo

“Linking assessment to the CEFR: procedures and experiences”

Dr Brian North

11:00 – 11:30 *Coffee break*

11:30 – 13:00 **Hands-on workshop using the ECML ‘Qualimatrix’ tool**

The ‘Qualimatrix’ is an online, self-assessment tool, currently being developed as part of a project by the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML), to allow professionals to reflect on their own use of the CEFR in language teaching, curriculum design and assessment, or to provide guidance to those planning to implement the CEFR as part of their language curricula.

During this session, participants will be able to use the tool to self-evaluate the quality of current or planned assessment practices at their own institutions, and the alignment of those assessments with the CEFR. They will also have the opportunity to discuss and seek expert advice on particular challenges they face in implementing the CEFR in their own contexts.

13:00 – 14:00 *Lunch*

14:00 – 16:30 **CEFR-based assessment in the context of Irish Higher Education: examples of good practices, followed by round-table discussion (chair: Siobhán Donovan)**

“Semester abroad preparation using the CEFR and ELP”

Riana Walsh, Institute of Technology, Tallaght

“Challenges, opportunities and benefits identified in a CEFR implementation process across languages and degree programmes at the University of Limerick”
Michael Kelly, Jean Conacher & Marie-Thérèse Batardière, University of Limerick

“B2 or not B2? That is the question! Benchmarking exam performance of undergraduate Irish students to the CEFR”

Aoife Ní Ghloinn & Siuán Ní Mhaonaigh, Maynooth University

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Registration

Registration for this event is **free**. Please register online at [this link](#).

The closing date for online registration is **Friday 25 May 2018**.

The number of places available will be limited and early registration is advised.

Venue

John Paul II Library, South Campus, Maynooth University, Co. Kildare, Ireland. Get directions [here](#).

BYOD (Bring Your Own Device)

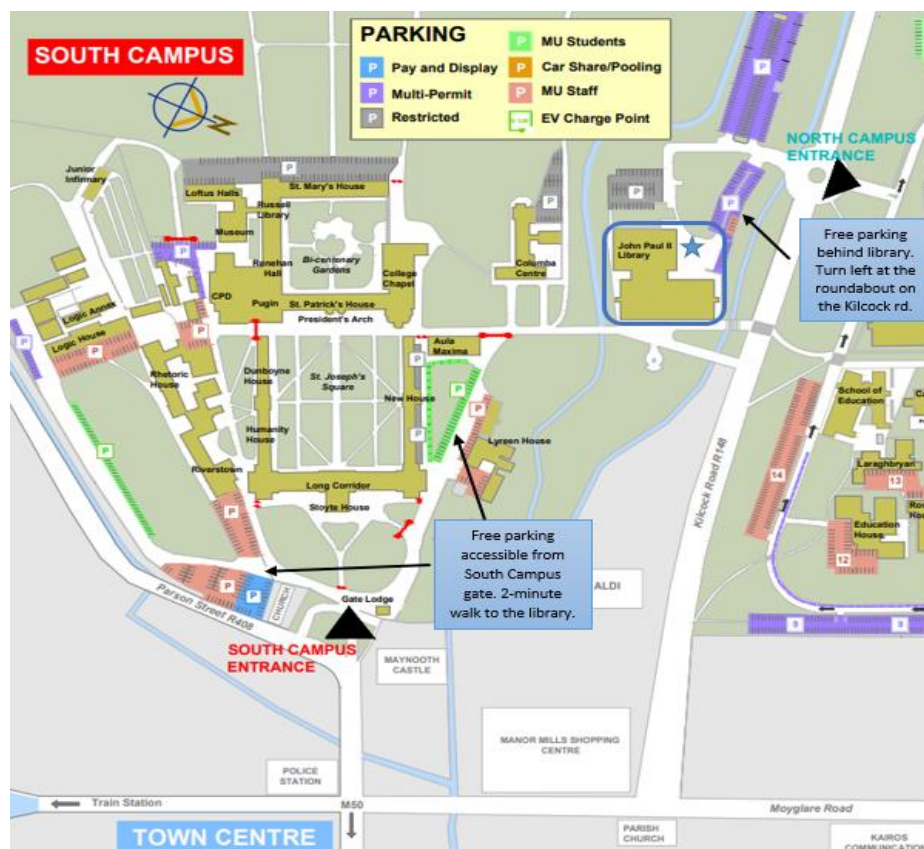
Participants are advised to bring a laptop or tablet to use during the hands-on session on the Qualimatrix, but computer access will be provided for those who do not bring a device.

Driving directions and parking

Maynooth University is located just 25 kilometres from the centre of Dublin city. Travelling by car, take junction 7 (signposted Maynooth/ Straffan/ Naas) off the M4 and follow the signs to Maynooth. Turn left at the traffic lights onto Main Street and continue straight to the South Campus.

Free parking will be available on the South Campus, accessible from the South Campus entrance, or in the library carpark, which is accessible from the Kilcock Road (see map below).

Note: Regular campus **parking restrictions will not be enforced** on the day of the seminar; therefore parking will be **free** in all staff and student carparks and **no permit will be required**.



Public transport

By train

Train timetables from Dublin City Centre to Maynooth (commuter rail, approx. 50 minutes) and from Sligo to Maynooth (intercity line) are accessible [here](#).

By bus

Dublin Bus timetable for Route 66 towards Maynooth (approx. 50-60 minutes) is available [here](#).

Dublin Bus timetable for Route 67 towards Maynooth (slightly longer route) is available [here](#).

Please note that all Dublin Bus fares are exact coins only; no change is given and bank notes are not accepted.

Bus Éireann also operates a number of daily services to Maynooth from Athlone, Ballina, Galway, Longford, Mullingar, Sligo, Tuam and Westport. Click [here](#) for more details.

Transport from Dublin airport

The nearest airport is Dublin airport, 33km north east of Maynooth, and about a 40-minute journey by car. There is an hourly shuttle bus between Dublin airport and Maynooth. Tickets can be purchased online [here](#).

Accommodation

Campus accommodation:

There is a range of guest rooms (€34 - €92 per night) available on the historic South Campus of the university, a 3-minute walk from the seminar venue. Availability may be limited and early booking is strongly advised. See <https://www.maynoothcampus.com/rooms/> for details.

The Glenroyal Hotel:

Located in the centre of the village, very close to the train station and bus stops and a 15-minute walk to the campus. See <https://www.glenroyal.ie>.

Contact details

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