

***National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education: 2017-18 Seminar Series***  
**Aligning Language Assessment 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 assessment 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

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**09:00 – 09:30** **Welcome and overview**

*Aoife Ní Ghloinn, Maynooth University & Siobhán Donovan, UCD*

**Introductory remarks**

*Anne Gallagher, Director of the Centre for Irish Language Research, Teaching and Testing, Maynooth University*

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**09:30 – 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*

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**11:00 – 11:30** **Coffee break**

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**11:30 – 13:00** **CEFR-based assessment in the context of Higher Education in Ireland: examples of existing promising practices**

“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”  
*Jean Conacher, Marie-Thérèse Batardière & Michael Kelly, University of Limerick*

“B2 or not B2? That is the question! Benchmarking the exam performance of undergraduate Irish students to the CEFR, through collaboration with a professional language tester”

*Aoife Ní Ghloinn & Siuán Ní Mhaonaigh, Maynooth University*

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**13:00 – 14:00** **Lunch**

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**14:00 – 16:30** **Workshop: Self-evaluation and discussion of assessment practices, based on the ECML ‘QualiMatrix’ tool, followed by plenary discussion**

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Introduction to the session

14:00 *Enrica Piccardo & Siobhán Donovan*

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**Step 1:** Self-evaluation of assessment practices and group discussion (see pages 4-9 below)

14:30 –  
15:30

**Step 2:** Reflect and report on this discussion via anonymous online survey at [www.menti.com](http://www.menti.com) (see page 10 below)

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15:30 **Step 3:** Presentation of survey results with plenary discussion

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16:15 Concluding remarks and seminar feedback

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