

Document Title	Access, Transfer and Progression
Policy Area	Area 3: Programmes of Education and Training
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Related legislation, policies, procedures, guidelines and local protocols	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016), QQI - Sector Specific Independent/Private Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016), QQI - Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 - European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), et. al (2015), Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) - QQI restatement Policy and Criteria for Access, Transfer and Progression in Relation to Learners for Providers of Further and Higher Education and Training (2003, Restated 2015), NQAI
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1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure fit-for-purpose learner Access, Transfer and Progression (ATP) opportunities in the context of SQT's programme provision.

2. SCOPE/APPLICATION

Whilst principles for ATP are applied to all SQT programmes, this policy is specific to the requirements of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act (2012). Such requirements specifically relate to admissions policies, including transfer from other programmes, and progression to higher award levels on the NFQ.

3. DEFINITIONS

- **Access** is the process by which learners may commence a programme of education and training having received recognition for knowledge, skill or competence required. There are two categories of access as follows
 - o Initial access - entry to the initial stage of a programme
 - o Advanced access - access to a post-entry stage of a programme (given the short duration of SQT programme, advanced access to programmes is not permitted).
- **Transfer** is the process by which learners may transfer from one programme of education and training to another programme having received recognition for knowledge, skill and competence acquired.
- **Progression** is the process by which learners may progress from one programme of education and training to another programme (usually from a lower to higher level).

4. POLICY

SQT is committed to having appropriate, fit for purpose, ATP policies and procedures in place in order to comply with the requirements of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act (2012). This policy has been informed by the QQI policy restatement "Policy and Criteria for Access, Transfer and Progression in Relation to Learners for Providers of Further and Higher Education and Training" (2003, restated in 2015). SQT commits to:

- Fair and equitable access to all applicants.
- Provision of clearly communicated and relevant information to assist learners in making informed decisions regarding programme selection.
- Transfer and progression opportunities in so far as is practicable, given the scale and scope of SQT's provision.
- Provision of an appeal for decisions relating to access, transfer and progression.

5. RESPONSIBILITY

Access, Transfer and Progression opportunities are considered and set out at the programme design stage by the Programme Development Team. The Director of Quality and Academic Affairs has ultimate oversight and responsibility for the application of this policy as approved by the Academic Council and validated by QQI.

6. ACCESS TO PROGRAMMES

Access (entry) to the initial stage of a programme is gained through:

- Meeting the minimum educational entry requirements or
- Assessment of recognition of prior learning (RPL) which is specific to each QQI programme¹.

Meeting the Eligibility Criteria

- Entry requirements are specified for each programme and are appropriate to the programme type and NFQ level.
- Decisions on allocation of places on programmes are transparent, and all applicants are treated in a fair, equal and consistent manner.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

- Recognition of Prior Learning mechanisms are in place to facilitate applicants who do not meet the minimum educational entry requirements but who have achieved equivalent learning outcomes from informal/non-formal/experiential learning scenarios (learning outside the formal education system – workplace learning, life experience etc.).
- Applicants who do not meet the educational entry requirements are required to complete the relevant application process outlined in [QAP3-4: Recognition of Prior Learning \(RPL\)](#).

6.1 Information Provision

All QQI programmes have clearly published entry requirements. These are documented and approved as part of the programme validation process and are available within programme brochures which are published on the SQT website. The following information is specified:

- The minimum educational requirement.
- English language entry requirements / recommendations.
- Requirement for entry via Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

¹ Refer to QAP3-4: Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

6.2 English Language Competency

All applicants are required to demonstrate a high level of competence in English Language. Learners whose first language is not English must provide evidence of equivalent competence in English Language of greater than or equal to B2+ in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

Evidence Accepted

1. **A recent International English Language Testing System certificate at the appropriate level (or equivalent, such as Duolingo online test).**
2. **A recent qualification (in the past two years) that has been taught and examined in English.**

Note: If these minimum criteria cannot be evidenced by the conventional means above, the learner may request that their own evidence be considered. Such evidence may be a letter of assurance from their employer that their level of English Language competency is sufficient for successful participation in the programme. The learner may discuss this with the relevant Programme Tutor who will make a judgement. The Programme Tutor may wish to seek guidance from the Director of Quality and Academic Affairs. If the learner does not accept the judgement, the learner may appeal the decision through SQT's Appeals Board. The decision of the Appeals Board is final.

6.3 Application Process

All applications are made directly to SQT. The Course Administration Manager endeavours to address queries from prospective learners and In-house Course Organisers. In cases where learners require additional information and/or need to discuss technical aspects of a programme, they are referred to the Programme Director or Tutor.

Learner numbers do not exceed those approved through the validation process. Places are allocated on a first come basis and a waiting list system operates where demand exceeds the places available.

7. TRANSFERRING BETWEEN PROGRAMMES

Transfers from one SQT programme to another are considered on a case by case basis. Specific exit pathways have been developed for SQT's suite of HE programmes ([7.1](#) below)

Any learner wishing to discuss an internal transfer should, in the first instance, raise the matter with the relevant Course Administration Manager who will outline the options available to them (if any). At this stage, the matter may be referred to the Director of Quality and Academic Affairs. Should the learner wish to proceed with a transfer, the Programme Director and Tutor consider the request and the learner is informed of the decision within 5 working days.

Transfer from an SQT programme to another college or institution is facilitated through the provision of transcripts of results to learners. Additional information is also provided on request.

7.1 Change of Programmes (Lean Six Sigma Level 7 and 8 Programmes only)

Where a learner, pursuing a QQI HET level 8 and level 7 award, through no fault of his/her own, is unable to complete their assessment, the exit pathway below is in place to facilitate this learner with an alternative QQI award.

7.1.1 Options for Level 7 Learners

The learner is given the opportunity to obtain a QQI HET level 6 award by completing an individual case study. The case study is assigned to the learner by the Programme Director along with a case study guide. The learner has up to 15 weeks to complete all assessments.

7.1.2 Options for Level 8 Learners

The learner is given the opportunity to obtain a QQI HET level 6 award as set out above or a level 7 award by submitting a project and storyboard within an agreed timescale (not to exceed 6 months). The following are examples of circumstances where a learner is unable to complete their project:

- Unforeseen Company closure/Redundancy/Role change
- Priority change by company management vis a viz project

A Request to Move to Alternative Award Form (F24) must be completed and signed by both the learners and their sponsoring company (if applicable). Such requests are reviewed by the Programme Director and Director of Quality and Academic Affairs.

8. PROGRESSION AND EXIT PATHWAYS

Progression to another programme of education and training is generally on the basis of successful completion of a stage or an award. Progression options are presented in each programme brochure.

9. APPEAL OF ACCESS, TRANSFER AND PROGRESSION DECISIONS

All decisions made by SQT in respect of access, transfer or progression are subject to appeal by the candidate within 5 working days of the decision. All appeals must be made in writing using the Non-Assessment Appeals Form (F49). The appeal will be processed in line with [QAP7-6: Academic Appeals](#). The decision of the Appeals Committee is final.

10. POLICY MONITORING

Responsibility	Frequency	Methods
Director of Quality and Academic Affairs – Document Update	Per QA audit schedule	- Review of documentation as per procedure set out in QAP2-1: Ongoing Review and Update of QA Documents.
Examination Board	Each Exam Board meeting	- Review of examination results for learners who accessed with standard entry requirements vs APEL (HET programmes).
External Examiner	In advance of Each Exam Board meeting	- Moderation of APEL application forms by External Examiner (HET programmes).

11. DOCUMENT CONTROL

Version No	Approval Date	Description of Revision	Originator	Approved By
2.0	1/3/19	Complete revision and new document format.	Director of Quality & Academic Affairs	Academic Council
3.0	Nov 24	Inclusion of 'Lean Six Sigma' reference to Section 7	Quality Committee	Academic Council

