

## QA 3.3 Learner Access Transfer and Progression

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# 1 LEARNER ACCESS TRANSFER AND PROGRESSION

## 1.1 Introduction

This policy has been guided by the following legal requirements:

- QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016)
- QQI Sector Specific Independent/Private Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016)
- Training and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012
- 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

The awarding bodies validation pack includes all the entry, progression, and recognition of prior learning (RPL) criteria. This information will be made available on all promotional material. The purpose of this policy is to ensure clarity, transparency and accountability for learner admission, progression, and recognition to Cenit College programmes.

## 1.2 Policy Ownership

This policy will be owned by the Academic Committee.

## 1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the appropriate process and procedures are in place to provide relevant access, transfer, and progression opportunities for learners within Cenit College. Cenit College will consider each learner's application in a fair and transparent manner.

## 1.4 Policy Scope

This policy applies to all Cenit College programmes. In accordance with the Quality and Qualifications Act 2012 and the QQI policy restatement (2015) this policy ensures provision is made specifically for admission policies, transfer to other programmes and progression to higher award levels on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

## 1.5 Responsibilities

**Programme Development Team:** Sets out the Access, Transfer and Progression opportunities on any programme that they validate.

**Quality Manager:** is responsible for any oversight.

**Staff:** All staff members involved in enrolment, transfer, and progression.

## 1.6 Policy Statement

Cenit Colleges policy for Access, Transfer and Progression is informed by QQI's Policy and Criteria for Access, Transfer and Progression in Relation to Learners for Providers of Further and Higher Education and Training [NQAI 2003, Restated 2015]. Cenit College is committed to ensuring we have all the correct policies and procedures in place to facilitate all learners in this manner. Cenit College will ensure all learners admitted to a programme of study in a fair, equitable and consistent manner. Such programmes of study will have clear progression and transfer criteria. Cenit College will monitor all its admission and retention data as part of its programme review.

In line with 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 (p.8)* to provide transparency and clarity for learners, Cenit College will ensure:

- it will inform learners commencing programmes of the name of the awarding body and the title, award-type and framework level designation of the award associated with that programme.
- for each and every programme, will publish in a standard and accessible format:
  - The arrangements for eligibility to enter, including a statement of the knowledge, skill and competence needed by the learner as a basis for successful participation on the programme.
  - Arrangements to assess learner's eligibility to enter.
  - Further selection arrangements, where these apply.
  - A statement of arrangements available for recognition of prior learning, for entry to each of their programmes, and for access to an award.
  - Possibilities for transfer and/or progression associated with the programme, including any relevant specific progression linkages.
  - Details of learning support available for specific learner groups such as learners with disabilities, or learners whose mother tongue is not English.
- all information and publicity documentation referring to a programme leading to an award will include a statement of the arrangements for entry, and a description of the transfer / progression possibilities into and out of the programme.
- any supplementary document (i.e., certificate or diploma supplement to promote transparency of an award) issued by providers with independent awarding powers will include information about:
  - The placing of the award in the national framework of qualifications – the name of the awarding body and the title, award-type and framework level designation of the award.
  - The transfer and progression opportunities associated with the award.

## 1.7 Access Policy

Entry is understood as being entry on initial access or by transfer or progression. Cenit College will ensure that:

1. Entry arrangements are clear, decisions on allocation of places on programmes are transparent, and all applicants are treated in a fair, equal and consistent manner. As part of the programme validation process all accredited programmes will have clear entry requirements. Non-accredited programmes will also have clear entry requirements. These entry requirements will detail the following:
  - Minimum academic standard required.
  - English language requirements (see 1.8.2 English Language Proficiency)
  - Professional certificate requirements (if applicable)
  - Recommended years of work experience in a related field (if applicable)
2. For every programme, the prospective learners will have an available statement of the knowledge, skill and competence needed as a basis for successful participation, and there is comparability in the factors defined for similar programmes.
3. For each programme, there is clear definition of the awards in the framework that are recognised as demonstrating eligibility for entry and, where relevant, the attainments required in these awards.

4. All applicants to Cenit College programmes will be interviewed prior to the commencement of a programme. These interviews can take place via electronic communications means.
5. Mature applicants (over 23 on Jan 1<sup>st</sup> of the year of entry into the programme) must apply directly to Cenit College and complete the interview process. The interview will consider the motivations for doing the programme, their suitability for the programme and any relevant qualifications they may already have along with their English language proficiency.
6. Applicants with international qualifications are expected to have their original transcripts translated to English and verified.
7. Cenit College will provide comprehensive information on the programme to enable the applicant to make an informed programme choice.
8. Applicants meeting the criteria but cannot be accommodated due to capacity will be invited to place their names on a waiting list.
9. All applicants are informed of their acceptance or non-acceptance to a programme as soon as possible.
10. A learner has the right to appeal non-acceptance to the programme.

## 1.8 Access Procedure

The following procedure relates to access to programmes:

### Application

1. Applicant completes the programme application form on the Cenit College website. The application form collects the following data: Name, Phone Number & Email Address
2. The information from the webform is systematically transferred to the programme applications section of the Administration system.

### Verification

1. The Programme Coordinator or the Learning Support Officer (the 'Interviewer') calls each applicant to interview them.
2. During the interview, the interviewer will provide information and answer questions about the programme, including access, transfer, and progression.
3. During the interview, the interviewer will confirm the following:
  - a. applicant's contact details are correct.
  - b. date of birth (to ensure learner is over 18)
  - c. nationality (Applicants will need to complete the Cenit College English Language Proficiency Test if:
    - they are a national of a country/ territory that is not on the list in Appendix A and
    - if they have not studied with us previously or
    - completed other qualifications through English. Proof of qualifications are required.

This English Language Proficiency Test will be emailed to applicants following the interview.

- d. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) – if applicable to the programme the evidence will be requested from the learner.
- e. Current and previous employment - if applicable to the programme the evidence will be requested from the learner.

4. The above information is added by the interviewer to the applicant's learner profile on the Administration system.
5. Where an applicant is asked to complete the English Language Proficiency Test and/or provide evidence of prior learning or employment, the Programme Coordinator / Learning Support will tick checkboxes on the applicant's Learner Profile. All the above must be completed at least 10 working days before the course start date.

## Registration

If a learner is eligible for a programme and is awarded a place.

1. The Programme Coordinator assigns the programme to their Learner Profile on the Administration system.
2. The Programme Coordinator sends the learner a self-registration link. This contains the information collected at the Application and Verification stages. The learner must check this information, update if required, and confirm.
3. When step 2 has been completed, Programme Coordinator adds the learner to their programme on my.cenitcollege.ie (Moodle).
4. The learner receives login information and instructions for my.cenitcollege.ie (location of the Learner Management system) via email.

If a learner is not eligible for a programme and therefore not awarded a place:

1. The Programme Coordinator / Learning Support Officer will notify the applicant by email of the decision, including the reason for not offering a place on the programme.
2. The applicant will be given the opportunity to appeal the decision within 10 working days of this notification. Details of the appeals process will be provided in the email.
3. If no appeal has been received within five (5) working days, the application information will be deleted from the Administration system Refer to QA3.8 Appeals.

## Initial Programme Access

1. When the learner initially accesses their programme on the Learner Management system the welcome message at the top of the course page tells them to complete the activities in the 'Getting Started section'. These are a) Accepting Policies b) Viewing the Learner Handbook.
2. The learner must read and accept Cenit College Policies and the Learner Handbook. Completing these actions unlocks the programme content, including live class links.
3. A record of the learner acceptance is systematically recorded on the Administration system.

### 1.8.1 Access Appeals Process

Learners have the right to appeal should they not be accepted to a programme. The process is as follows:

1. Appeals should be submitted to the Training Manager using the Appeals form, within 5 working days. The appeal submission should include:
  - a) A completed appeals application form (Appeals Form)
  - b) Verifiable evidence which addresses the appeal criteria
  - c) A fee of €50. In the event of a successful appeal, the fee will be refunded.
2. The Training Manager assesses the application for appeal to establish if it is complete and meets the grounds for an appeal. The learner will be notified if there are grounds for appeal or not.

3. Where the appeal is considered valid the appeal will be heard by the Appeals Committee. It is at the Chairperson of the Appeals Committee discretion, for learners to be in attendance. See QA1 Governance (Section 1.6.7) for details of the membership, roles, and responsibilities of the Appeals Committee.
4. The appeal will be considered impartially, (i.e. those reviewing the appeal will not have been directly involved in the original decision) and based on the written submission of the appellant.
5. The outcome of an appeal should be communicated in writing to an applicant within 15 working days from the date of the appeal was made unless exceptional circumstances arise.
6. A record will be maintained of the appeal which details, the decision, the rationale for that decision and any supporting evidence.
7. The outcome of the appeal is reported to the Academic Committee.
8. The applicant may communicate dissatisfaction with an outcome to the Managing Director whereupon any communication from the Managing Director is final.

### 1.8.2 English Language Proficiency

All applicants are required to demonstrate proficiency in the English language.

1. Applicants whose first language is not English must provide evidence of English language proficiency based on any one of the three criteria below:
  - a. they are a national of a country/ territory that is not on the list in the table below and
  - b. if they have not studied with us previously or completed other qualifications through English. Proof of qualifications are required.
  - c. Applicants are considered to be native English speakers through citizenship of the following countries where English is the majority language:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Antigua and Barbuda</li> <li>• Australia</li> <li>• Bahamas</li> <li>• Barbados</li> <li>• Belize</li> <li>• Canada</li> <li>• Dominica</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grenada</li> <li>• Guyana</li> <li>• Ireland</li> <li>• Jamaica</li> <li>• Malta</li> <li>• New Zealand</li> <li>• St Kitts and Nevis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• St Lucia</li> <li>• St Vincent and the Grenadines</li> <li>• Trinidad and Tobago</li> <li>• UK</li> <li>• USA</li> </ul>
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2. Where the applicant does not satisfy any of the above three requirements, they will be required to take the Cenit College English Language proficiency test. This English Language Proficiency Test will be emailed to applicants following the interview.
3. The Programme Co-ordinator will review the results and the learner will be informed within 1 working day of the proficiency levels and if it meets the criteria.
4. Applicants have a right to appeal and can do so by emailing Cenit College with their grounds for appeal within five working days of receipt of notification of failure to meet the English Language Proficiency for Programme entry requirements.

### 1.9 Transfer Policy

There are three types of transfers:

- Transfers into Cenit College programmes
- Transfers between Cenit College programmes
- Transfers from Cenit College to other institutions

## **Transfers into Cenit College programmes**

All transfers into any Cenit College programme will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Any relevant qualifications, knowledge, skills, and competencies will be taken into consideration. At all times the requirements for entry into each module/programme as per validation will be considered.

## **Transfer between Cenit College programmes**

These are called internal transfers. All internal transfers will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Transfers will only be available to learners on programmes that exceed 8 weeks duration. These transfers must take place within the first 5 days of the programme start date. Any relevant qualifications, knowledge, skills, and competencies will be taken into consideration. At all times, the requirements for entry into each module/programme as per validation will be considered. The learner should speak with the programme Coordinator who will work with the learner to consider their options. Once the learner decides to pursue an internal transfer, they must put their request in writing to the Programme Co-ordinator. The learner will be informed of the outcome in writing.

## **Transfers from Cenit College to other institutions**

In the instance of transfers from Cenit College to other institutions, Cenit College will provide transcripts and give the learner the best assistance and guidance possible to ensure they are making an informed decision.

### **1.9.1 Transfer Appeals process.**

Where a learner's transfer has been refused the learner has a right to appeal. This process is as follows:

1. Appeals should be submitted to the Training Manager using the Appeals form, within 5 working days. The appeal submission should include:
  - a) A completed appeals application form (Appeals Form).
  - b) Verifiable evidence which addresses the appeal criteria.
  - c) A fee of €50. In the event of a successful appeal, the fee will be refunded.
2. The Training Manager assesses the application to determine if there are any grounds for appeal. The applicant will be notified in writing of the outcome.
3. Where the appeal is considered valid the appeal will be heard by the Appeals Committee. It is at the Chairperson of the Appeals Committees discretion, for learners to be in attendance. See QA1 Governance (Section 1.6.7) for details of the membership, roles, and responsibilities of the Appeals Committee.
4. The appeal will be considered impartially, (i.e. those reviewing the appeal will not have been directly involved in the original decision), and on the basis of the written submission of the appellant.
5. The outcome of an appeal should be communicated in writing to an applicant within 15 working days from the date of the appeal was made unless exceptional circumstances arise.
6. A record will be maintained of the appeal which details, the decision, the rationale for that decision and any supporting evidence.
7. The outcome of the appeal is reported to the Academic Committee.
8. The applicant may communicate dissatisfaction with an outcome to the Managing Director whereupon any communication from the Managing Director is final.

### **1.10 Progression Policy**

Progression applies to the following instances:

- Progression to later stages of the same programme
- Progression to another programme
- Progression to another institution

### **Progression to later stages of the same programme**

All programmes require a pass at the earlier modules in order that a learner can progress to the later modules. In such cases, the learner must achieve a pass mark of 50% for QQI modules or such a mark that is deemed appropriate for other awarding bodies.

### **Progression to another programme**

Where learners wish to progress to another programme is generally on the basis that they have complete an award or stage of a progression pathway.

### **Progression to another institution**

This is generally on the basis that they have complete an award or stage of a progression pathway as determined by that institution. Cenit College will provide any transcripts that are required.

#### **1.10.1 Progression Appeals Process**

Where a learner's transfer has been refused the learner has a right to appeal. This process is as follows:

1. Appeals should be submitted to the Training Manager using the Appeals form, within 5 working days. The appeal submission should include:
  - a. A completed appeals application form (Appeals Form).
  - b. Verifiable evidence which addresses the appeal criteria.
  - c. A fee of €50. In the event of a successful appeal, the fee will be refunded.
2. The Training Manager assesses the application to determine if there are any grounds for appeal. The applicant will be notified in writing of the outcome.
3. Where the appeal is considered valid the appeal will be heard by the Appeals Committee. It is at the Chairperson of the Appeals Committees discretion, for learners to be in attendance. See QA1 Governance (Section 1.6.7) for details of the membership, roles, and responsibilities of the Appeals Committee.
4. The appeal will be considered impartially, (i.e. those reviewing the appeal will not have been directly involved in the original decision), and on the basis of the written submission of the appellant.
5. The outcome of an appeal should be communicated in writing to an applicant within 15 working days from the date of the appeal was made unless exceptional circumstances arise.
6. A record will be maintained of the appeal which details, the decision, the rationale for that decision and any supporting evidence.
7. The outcome of the appeal is reported to the Academic Committee.
8. The applicant may communicate dissatisfaction with an outcome to the Managing Director whereupon any communication from the Managing Director is final.

#### **1.11 Monitoring**

This policy will be monitored for effectiveness by the QA Manager as part of the annual QA audit. Monitoring mechanisms include:

- Learner Admission records for Access, Transfer and Progression learners
- Learner attendance records for Access, Transfer and Progression learners



- Transfer and Progression records for Access, Transfer and Progression learners

These records are maintained by the Programme Co-ordinator with oversight from the Training Manager.

### 1.12 Version Control

Version	Date	Description	Originator	Approved by
Version 1	14/02/2024	QQI Approval	QA	QQI
Version 1.1	21/11/2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inserted #9 in Access Policy</li> <li>• The decision to admit a learner must be based ultimately on an informed judgement that the applicant is competent to begin the course and successfully complete the course.</li> <li>• #10 Access Policy Replaced sentence with first come/first served with the following.</li> <li>• Should the numbers enrolling for a programme exceed available capacity, places will be offered to eligible applicants on agreed selection criteria. Applicants who cannot be accommodated due to capacity will be invited to place their names on a waiting list.</li> <li>• Added section 1.8.1 Appeals</li> <li>• Added Section 1.8.2 English Language Proficiency</li> <li>• 1.9.1 Transfer – Inserted Transfer appeals process</li> <li>• Added the following sentences to Transfers between Cenit College Programmes (Section 1.9). This replaces the existing timeline.</li> <li>• Transfers will only be available to learners on programmes that exceed 8 weeks duration. These transfers must take place within the first 5 days of the programme start date.</li> <li>• 1.10.1 Progression – Inserted Progression Appeals process.</li> </ul>	QA	Academic Committee

