



Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board

Access, Transfer and Progression Policy

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1 PURPOSE OF POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to establish the principles underpinning how Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board (WWETB) engage with and support learners as they access programmes, transfer between programmes and progress from programmes that run as part of WWETB's Further Education and Training (FET) provision. This policy sets out WWETB's approach to Access, Transfer and Progression (ATP) ensuring inclusivity and equality of opportunity for prospective and current learners.

2 SCOPE OF POLICY

This policy applies to all WWETB's Further Education and Training programmes.

3 DEFINITIONS

"**Access, Transfer and Progression**" describes the pathways available to Learners to enter and transfer between, and progress from programmes of education and training, which are the main route to achieving awards and qualifications.

Definitions include:

- **ACCESS** - the process by which learners may commence a programme of education and training having received recognition for knowledge, skill or competence required.
- **TRANSFER** - the process by which learners may move from one programme of education and training to another programme having received recognition for knowledge, skill and competence acquired.
- **PROGRESSION** - the process by which learners may advance from one programme of education and training to another programme.

4 POLICY STATEMENT

WWETB is committed to fair and consistent practices in enabling access to, transfer within and progression from its programmes of education and training.

WWETB's policy in this area is informed by the following policies:

- QQI Policy Restatement - 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)
- Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012
- Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016), QQI.

WWETB offers a high-quality training and education experience to a wide geographical spread of learners within Waterford and Wexford. In an open and transparent manner, WWETB seeks to provide access to a diversity of learners who meet the entry requirements of a programme and will work to eliminate barriers that may prevent learners from participating in the programme of their choice. WWETB is committed to ensuring access and reasonable accommodations for prospective learners who may have additional needs, where it is possible to do so. Appropriate learner supports and guidance are available throughout the duration of the learner's journey.

Learners will be encouraged to progress through the various stages of WWETB's accredited and non-accredited programmes by providing them with clear goals and transfer and progression paths between programmes.

WWETB undertakes to provide information on the possibilities for access, transfer and progression to learners and prospective learners in information and publicity documents and, where appropriate, in direct communication with them. The information provided will be up-to-date, accurate, free from unnecessary jargon and will enable potential applications and existing learners to make informed choices regarding what, when and where to study.

5 ACCESS

5.1 ADMISSIONS

Entry Requirements are specified for each course and are documented in related promotional materials with information on programme titles, awarding body (bodies), access routes and outline of content. Admission requirements will have a clear and consistent approach for all learners, based on:

- QQI component award specification
- National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) award level
- For both accredited and non-accredited courses, learner existing competencies and suitability for the course (e.g., English language and IT skills). In the case of international Learners where English is not their first language and depending on the programme onto which they wish to enrol, they may be required to demonstrate a sufficient level of English Language proficiency.
- Eligibility criteria of funding source

The overall aim is to ensure that new learners joining a course have the capacity to achieve the learning outcomes of the programme. Entry procedures are clear, consistent and transparent and all applicants are treated in a fair manner. Interview and/or assessment may form part of the entry procedure to ascertain eligibility for a course and to support potential learners in determining their educational needs and capabilities. Supports for the application process can be provided for those with disabilities/additional needs, e.g. vision/hearing impaired.

5.2 RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

WWETB values the life, formal learning and workplace experiences of learners and will recognise knowledge or experience previously gained in these contexts. This knowledge is evaluated by WWETB through the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process and may be used to gain access to a course where the prospective learner may not have the full qualifications required upon application. Any RPL requests are handled on a case-by-case basis, including recognition of QQI and non-QQI awards, plus matching programme learning outcomes against previously completed qualifications (including foreign qualifications). Refer to WWETB's RPL Policy document for further information and guidance. WWETB may request a learner to undertake a bridging studies programme or similar where it considers that such action will benefit the learner in terms of achieving their personal qualification/certification goals. Learners who are refused access to a programme will be given a full explanation on request and will be informed of WWETB's admission appeals process.

5.3 EDUCATIONAL SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

In order to deliver as accessible an educational provision as possible, WWETB will provide support and information on:

- both full-time and part-time programmes
 - title of the programme, awarding body, award name, level and type.
 - admission requirements, arrangements and selection criteria
 - course and award structure, delivery methods, locations and term dates
 - daytime and evening time provision where appropriate
- any fees and payment methods
- available grants and subsidised supports
 - subsidised childcare in conjunction with other government agencies
 - remuneration for participation on some courses in conjunction with other government agencies
- advice and guidance to ensure informed choice relating to all programmes
- all available learning supports. WWETB is committed to ensuring access for prospective learners who may have additional needs, where it is possible to do so.

5.4 APPLICANTS WITH DISABILITIES

WWETB welcomes applications from learners with disabilities and/or additional needs and in line with the Disabilities Act 2005 (Section 26) will take every reasonable action to ensure that specific supports are met and that all learners are able to participate in the programmes. A designated Access and Disability Officer is in place. WWETB encourages Learners to disclose their disabilities during the application process so that accommodations and supports can be put in place as quickly as possible. WWETB will ensure that all facilities are accessible to all Learners where possible.

5.5 INDUCTION

The purpose of induction is to familiarise new Learners with all aspects of their course and their new learning environment. Learners will receive an induction session upon commencement on the course where they will be introduced to their course teaching team, their fellow learners, receive their timetable, be informed of important policy and procedures, and be advised of other relevant programme information. Induction also provides learners with an opportunity to seek answers to questions they may have and enables WWETB to set appropriate expectations.

5.6 ADULT EDUCATION GUIDANCE SERVICE

To support access to programmes, WWETB offer a confidential service that provides information on adult education and training opportunities as well as one-to-one guidance to support people in making educational, career and life choices.

6 TRANSFER

6.1 NATIONAL FRAMEWORK OF QUALIFICATIONS

WWETB is committed to identifying appropriate transfer options to and from all programmes leading to awards from levels 1 through 6 on the NFQ. WWETB will provide current and prospective learners with all the information necessary to allow them to make informed decisions regarding their chosen programme of study and options for transfer. The NFQ framework in itself contributes to transfer and progression between levels, between award-types at the same level and between named awards.

6.2 TRANSFER BETWEEN SERVICES

WWETB learners may wish to transfer between Further Education services (QQI and non-QQI, refer to Section 5.2) with the full extent of WWETB provision including:

- Transfer from second-level studies to further education programmes
- Transfer from one further education programme to another where appropriate
- Transfer from one further education programme to the same in another location

In these situations, WWETB endeavours to support the transfer of the learner as efficiently as possible and in a way that does not impede their learning or their certification prospects. Transfer to an alternate programme is dependent upon the availability of places at the time of request and must adhere to the specified criteria of that validated programme. In the context of a learner transferring from a course with another provider, it may not always be possible to accommodate the transferring learner's application if the course they are transferring from is not running in the WWETB's suite of courses or in the applicant's first-choice location. It may be incumbent on the learner to provide proof of placement or acquired certification in order to process an application to transfer to a WWETB run course.

6.3 DATA TRANSFER

Transfer of data will only be done in the context of permission from the learner or their legal guardian and with due diligence in respect of General Data Protection Regulations.

7 PROGRESSION

WWETB endeavours to run all programmes with consideration for progression of learners, both in terms of their acquisition of knowledge, skills and competencies and in terms of progression routes and opportunities for further learning, development and employment. WWETB encourages learners to realise their full potential through seamless progression routes in a supportive environment. WWETB is committed to providing clear and unambiguous information of progression criteria and processes.

7.1 PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

At the point of the design and development of programmes, WWETB considers progression pathways both to its own programmes and to programmes in other institutions. The inclusion of embedded programmes and/or exit awards are also developed where relevant as this will support learners who for some reason cannot complete the entire programme, or who wish to exit with an award, which may be used for entry elsewhere.

7.2 VALIDATING PROGRAMMES AND AWARDS FOR CENTRES AND COLLEGES

As part of WWETB's formal Programme Approval process, centres and colleges will provide information on plans for appropriate progression and transfer routes for learners who complete a proposed course. This is to ensure that all programmes that are running within the service do so with cognisance of the routes to further education, higher education and employment for each learner and the local context and factors that impact on this.

7.3 AWARDS AND CERTIFICATION

All information and publicity documentation referring to a course leading to an award will include the official award title that can be achieved and its numerical position on the National Framework of Qualifications. Where further information of a course is given, it will outline viable progression options for a graduate of that course.

7.4 PROGRESSION TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Where progression routes include access to Higher Education courses, there will be due regard for the Central Applications Office (CAO) System. Colleges and Centres will, where possible synchronise assessment periods to allow graduates of WWETB courses access Higher Education by means of the CAO process.

Formal associations have been formed with local technological institutions such as Waterford Institute of Technology, Carlow Institute of Technology and Carlow College (St. Patrick's) to enable cooperative and efficient progression of WWETB learners onto relevant Higher Education courses.

7.5 SPECIFIC ATTAINMENT REQUIREMENTS

Where there is a requirement for specific attainment for certain progression routes (e.g., where the achievement of a Distinction in an award is required to facilitate access to a programme leading to an award at the next level), the WWETB centre and/or Adult Education Guidance Service will endeavour to provide this information to the learners.

7.6 EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT AND PROGRESSION

WWETB will endeavour to assist learner progression through training-based modes of courses through effective communication with stakeholder employers by designated WWETB personnel. WWETB will take great care to ensure that its function as a provider of professional training indicates a consistent standard of professionalism in line with industry expectation and where learners are falling short of that expectation, WWETB will make every effort to support the learner and the employer in achieving the desired outcome in relation to maintaining training standards.

7.7 MONITORING LEARNER PERFORMANCE

Programme co-ordinators, in conjunction with Further Education and Training Centre/Programme Managers, are responsible for monitoring the progress of their learners. WWETB will provide supports, where possible, to assist learners to progress in their studies in the event of personal, professional or academic difficulties.

7.8 PROGRESSION RATES

Annual statistics will be gathered relating to learner progression; full successful completion of award, partial completion, withdrawal rates and completion outcome (Higher Education, Employment, etc...). Progression rates may be used to assist the FET management team in:

- the planning of local provision, including widening provision for underrepresented and marginalised cohorts
- identifying the achievements of a diversity of learners
- identifying and investigating where progression rates are low

8 RELATED WWETB POLICIES

- Recognition for Prior Learning Policy
- Learner Support Policy (pending)
- Programme Approvals Policy
- FET Programme Data Management Policy (pending)