

Deferrals and Withdrawals Policy (LID-Pol-052)

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Department	Education Delivery
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Related Documents	LID-SOP-244 – Deferrals and Withdrawals Procedure LID-Pol-046 – Access, Transfer and Progression Policy LID-SOP-047 – Access, Transfer and Progression Procedure EDEL-Pol-054 – Protection of Enrolled Learner Policy EDEL-SOP-055 – Protection of Enrolled Learner Procedure

1. Purpose

This policy sets out the circumstances, principles, grounds, and criteria under which RCPI will allow a learner to defer a place on a programme, to temporarily suspend their studies on a programme, to defer some of their assessments and/or formal examinations during the academic year, or to permanently withdraw from a programme.

2. Scope

This policy applies to learners on RCPI education programmes.

3. Responsibilities

The Education Delivery Manager is responsible for the implementation of this policy.

4. Deferrals Principles

4.1 A learner may request a deferral of:

- an offer (prior to programme commencement)
- studies (post programme commencement)
- an exam or assessment

4.2 When considering a deferral request, RCPI is guided by a commitment to fairness, transparency, and the support of learner wellbeing. Deferrals are only permitted in exceptional circumstances, such as unforeseen personal, medical, or professional reasons that would significantly impair a learner's ability to undertake their studies or exam/assessment as planned. Each application for deferral is assessed on its individual merits, taking into account the evidence provided and the potential impact on both the learner and the programme.

4.3 The process requires the learner to formally request a deferral in writing by completing the [Deferral Form \(LID-F-053\)](#), stating clearly the grounds for their request and providing relevant supporting documentation. Applications are reviewed by the Education Delivery Programme Coordinator and Education Delivery Manager, who ensure decisions align with RCPI policies and the availability of future programme places or exam/assessment sitting.

4.4 A deferral of offer or studies, if granted, is typically valid for one academic year or until the next available intake of the programme, whichever is sooner. RCPI reserves the right to limit the number of deferrals and may attach conditions, such as payment of any outstanding fees or completion of a programme module, to secure the learner's place for a future intake.

- 4.5 Learners who defer from the programme will retain credit and assessment results for modules fully completed prior. It is not possible to retain grades or credits for partially completed modules.
- 4.6 Learners are advised that a granted deferral does not guarantee that the structure or content of the programme will remain unchanged, and they may be required to meet any revised entry or programme requirements upon enrolment.
- 4.7 A deferral of exam/assessment, if granted, is typically given to the next available re-sit date.

5. Withdrawals Principles

- 5.1 RCPI recognises that, in certain circumstances, a learner may need to withdraw from their programme of study. In supporting withdrawals, RCPI seeks to ensure that the process is handled with sensitivity, fairness, and transparency, prioritising the wellbeing of the learner while maintaining the integrity of the programme and RCPI requirements.
- 5.2 A withdrawal may be notified by a learner at any stage after programme commencement if they determine that they are unable to continue their studies due to personal, medical, or professional reasons. Notifications for withdrawal must be submitted in writing to the Programme Coordinator by completing the [Notification of Withdrawal Form](#).
- 5.3 The Programme Coordinator and Education Delivery Manager will review the withdrawal notification, ensuring the process has been fully adhered to and it aligns with RCPI policies and procedures. Learners are encouraged to seek guidance before making a final decision, as withdrawal may have implications for fees, academic credit, or eligibility for future admissions.
- 5.4 Learners who withdraw from the programme will retain credit and assessment results for modules fully completed prior to the withdrawal. It is not normally possible to retain grades or credits for partially completed modules. RCPI will inform the learner of any financial or academic consequences, including the possibility of refund eligibility or requirements for re-application should the learner wish to return in the future.
- 5.5 A formal confirmation of withdrawal will be provided, specifying the effective date and outlining any remaining obligations or next steps for the learner. RCPI reserves the right to require the return of any College property or materials as part of the withdrawal process.
- 5.6 By adhering to these principles, RCPI seeks to ensure that the withdrawal process is clear, equitable, and considerate of the diverse circumstances of its learners.

6. References

ENQA (2015) Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)
https://enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ESG_2015.pdf

Quality Qualifications Ireland (2016) Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines
<https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/Core%20Statutory%20Quality%20Assurance%20Guidelines.pdf>

Quality Qualifications Ireland (2013) Protection of Enrolled Learners (PEL): Protocols for the Implementation of Part 6 of the 2012 Act – Guidelines for Providers
<https://www.qqi.ie/Publications/Publications/Protection%20of%20Enrolled%20Learners,%20Protocols%20for%20the%20Implementation%20of%20Part%206%20of%20the%202012%20Act%20Guidelines%20for%20Providers.pdf>

Quality Qualifications Ireland (2015) Policy & Criteria for Access, Transfer & Progression in Relation to Learners for Providers of Further & Higher Education & Training
<https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/ATP%20Policy%20Restatement%20FINAL%202018.pdf>