

# Access, Transfer & Progression Policy

## Access, Transfer & Progression Policy

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose

This policy sets out the approach taken by Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board to Access, Transfer & Progression (ATP) in the ETB’s College of FET ensuring inclusivity and equality of opportunity for our prospective and current learners.

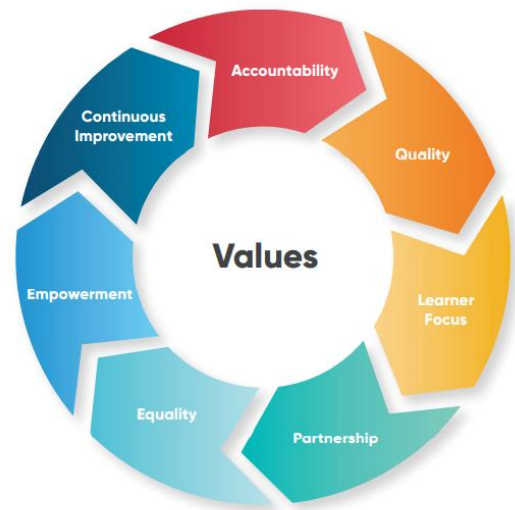
Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board’s College of FET is committed to widening participation and access to Further Education and Training, particularly for learners coming from under-represented and/or non-traditional routes<sup>1</sup>. This commitment is reflected in the ETB’s Vision Statement:

*Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board plays a leading role in the provision of high-quality lifelong education, training and enterprise skills needs. We achieve this by providing caring, effective, innovative, flexible and inclusive pathways for all our students and learners, which are reflective of the diverse needs of our community.*

Equality and diversity are fundamental to the work of the College of FET, and this is reflected in our core values, which are:

## 1.2 Our Core Values

- > We commit to facilitate the empowerment of the community we serve through inclusive, respectful, supportive and holistic education and training.
- > We commit to the highest standards of governance, ethical behaviour, integrity and accountability.
- > We commit to the delivery of accessible high-quality services, and to working in a progressive, innovative, sustainable and creative manner.
- > We commit to focus and respect the student/learner in the design, delivery and evaluation of our programmes and services.
- > We commit to work in a spirit of partnership, mutual respect, openness and transparency.
- > We commit to equality of opportunity and respect the rights, dignity and diversity of all our stakeholders.
- > We recognise and support the central role of our staff team and are committed to a culture of continuous professional learning & development and wellbeing.
- > We commit to adapt and respond to the ever-changing social and employment needs of our communities.



<sup>1</sup> [Learner Charter | College of FET](#)

### 1.3 Our Public Sector Duty Values

Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board has allocated responsibility for ensuring the implementation of the public sector duty to a sub-group of the ETB's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Working Group. The EDI Working Group is made up of staff from across the three divisions of the ETB who have taken responsibility for developing the Public Sector Duty Values Statement, the Public Sector Duty Action Plan, and undertaking the Assessment Phase of the Public Sector Duty within the ETB. A review of the ETB's assessment of Equality and Human Right issues was undertaken by civil society groups in June 2021.

This implementation process<sup>2</sup> is based on the ETB's Public Sector Duty Values Statement with the Values' Statements of Priority acting as benchmarks for the ETB's planning and review cycle.



#### **Respect**

Respect is about mutual empathy, integrity, fairness, and kindness. It involves listening to, and consideration of the perspectives of the diversity of our students/learners, staff, and the wider community.

#### **Inclusion**

Inclusion is about recognising, valuing and harnessing the richness of difference. It involves a recognition that diversity brings opportunities for innovation that enrich the learning environment and workplace.

#### **Social Justice**

Social Justice is about ensuring equality of outcome by providing access to opportunities and resources to enable full participation by all in economic, social, political and cultural life. It involves prioritising a focus on individuals and groups experiencing inequality and those who are marginalised.

#### **Empowerment**

Empowerment is about enabling individuals, groups and communities to have the personal and social power to influence decisions affecting their lives and the life of their communities.

<sup>2</sup> [Limerick & Clare ETB Public Sector Duty Implementation Process \(lcetb.ie\)](https://www.lcetb.ie)

## 1.4 Scope

This is an overarching policy, which applies to all Provision<sup>3</sup> and Support Services within Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board’s College of FET.

## 1.5 Implementation

The Quality Council of Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board’s College of FET is ultimately responsible for the implementation of this policy.

# 2 Access, Transfer & Progression

Access, Transfer & Progression describes the pathways available to learners to enter, transfer between and progress from programmes of education and training, which are the main route to achieving awards and qualifications. These terms are defined as follows<sup>4</sup>:

### 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 transfer 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 transfer from one programme of education and training to another.

## 2.1 Programme Credit Framework

Further Education and Training (FET) credits are utilised for FET programmes awarded directly by QQI, from Levels 1-6 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

QQI’s Policy for Determining Award Standards<sup>5</sup> states:

*“Every CAS certificate and component specification includes a FET credit value. FET credit is normally quantised to multiples of 5 FET Credits (50 hours of learner effort). Learner effort is based on the time taken by typical learners at the level of the award on average, to achieve the learning outcomes for the award. It includes all learning time involved including guided learning hours, self-directed learning and assessment”. (QQI, 2014)*

Framework Level	Major Awards Credit Values	Default Minor Award Credit Values	Other Permitted Minor Award Credit Values	Special Purpose and Supplemental Award Credit Value Ranges
1	20	5	10	
2	30	5	10	
3	60	10	5,20	→5 and ← 60
4	90	10	5,15,20	→5 and ← 90
5	120	15	5,10,30	→5 and ← 120
6	120	15	5,10,30	→5 and ← 120

<sup>3</sup> Apprenticeships have ATP policies and procedures particular to the individual programme and these supersede some sections of this policy document

<sup>4</sup> [Access, Transfer & Progression | Quality and Qualifications Ireland \(qqi.ie\)](https://www.qqi.ie/Access-Transfer-Progression)

<sup>5</sup> [gp-12-policy-for-determining-awards-standards.pdf \(qqi.ie\)](https://www.qqi.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/gp-12-policy-for-determining-awards-standards.pdf)

### 3 Legislative Context

Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board has a legal requirement to put in place procedures for Access, Transfer & Progression as set out in the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012.<sup>6</sup>

This ATP policy is designed to support implementation of Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board's ATP procedures and requirements as set out in:

- QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines<sup>7</sup>, 3.2 Learner Admission, Progression and Recognition:

*There are pre-defined and published regulations, which are consistently applied, covering all areas related to learner admission, progression, recognition and certification of awards. Access policies, admission processes and criteria are established and implemented consistently and in a transparent manner and in accordance with national policies and procedures for Access, Transfer & Progression (ATP).*

- QQI policy restatement: Policy and Criteria for Access, Transfer & Progression in relation to Learners for Providers of Further and Higher Education and Training<sup>8</sup>:

*This provides the basis for providers to establish, at local level, their own policies, and procedures for ATP. The policy states that providers are required to give learners clear information on pathways to, from and within programmes, and about awards and qualifications that may be achieved.*

#### 3.1 International Policy

- EQAVET – European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training<sup>9</sup> is a European-wide framework to support quality assurance in vocational education and training (VET).

EQAVET is based on a quality assurance and improvement cycle (planning, implementation, evaluation/assessment, and review/revision) and a selection of descriptors and indicators applicable to quality management at both VET-system and VET-provider levels.

- The 2020 EU Council Recommendation on vocational education and training for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience (supported by EQAVET):

*Vocational education and training programmes are based on modules or units of learning outcomes and validation mechanisms are in place allowing the transfer, recognition and accumulation of individuals' learning outcomes with a view to gaining a qualification, a partial qualification, as relevant in the national context. In initial VET the primary goal is to progress to a full qualification.<sup>10</sup>*

<sup>6</sup> [Qualifications and Quality Assurance \(Education and Training\) Act 2012 \(irishstatutebook.ie\)](https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2012/act/12/section/1)

<sup>7</sup> [Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines.pdf \(qqi.ie\)](https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2021-11/qi-20-policy-restatement-policy-on-criteria-for-atp-in-relation-to-learners-for-providers-of-fh-et.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2021-11/qi-20-policy-restatement-policy-on-criteria-for-atp-in-relation-to-learners-for-providers-of-fh-et.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1536&langId=en>

<sup>10</sup> [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32020H1202\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32020H1202(01)&from=EN)



### 3.2 College of FET Strategic Framework 2022 – 2025

Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board’s College of FET Strategic Framework 2022 – 2025<sup>11</sup>, in line with the national SOLAS FET Strategic Framework 2020 – 2024<sup>12</sup>, defines our purpose around Building Skills, Fostering Inclusion and Creating Pathways. The Framework outlines five key enabling priorities for Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board’s College of FET with *Priority 1* being:

<b>PRIORITY</b> <b>1</b>	<p><b>LEARNER-CENTRED APPROACH</b></p> <p><i>This is about recognising that each learner is unique and bring their own circumstances, strengths, needs, skills, past experiences and aspirations when they join FET. Our priority is to do right by all our learners. Placing learners at the centre of everything we do means listening to their perspectives to enhance the teaching and learning environments and outcomes, respond to their needs, and empower them to fulfil their potential.</i></p>	<p><b>Implementation Mapping</b></p> <p>1.1 Simplify FET pathways, and work collaboratively with key stakeholders to find solutions to address barriers to learner access and progression.</p> <p>1.2 Improve learners’ participation and transitions through integrated, consistent wrap-around assessments and supports throughout their learning journey.</p> <p>1.3 Raise awareness on the availability of quality information and guidance supports for all FET learners, to ensure they are in the right place, and make informed choices on their learning journey.</p> <p>1.4 Enhance our learner-centred approach to communication and marketing, with locally-focused marketing campaigns, and improved learner interface with the FET website.</p>	<p>1.5 Adopt universal design for learning (UDL) as a key approach to all teaching and learning activities.</p> <p>1.6 Embed digital skills across all FET provision, and champion digital inclusion in Limerick and Clare.</p> <p>1.7 Continue to develop mechanisms to recognise prior learning and certify experiential learning.</p> <p>1.8 Develop consistent and effective mechanisms to capture the learner voice. Use it to inform decision-making at Centre/College campus level, and FET management level.</p> <p>1.9 Commit to inclusive and intentionally diverse learning and working environments, where wellbeing and mental health are promoted, and the achievements of learners are celebrated.</p>
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### 3.3 Public Sector Duty Legislation

The Public Sector Duty is set out in Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014. It requires a public body, in the performance of its functions, to have regard to the need to:

- a) eliminate discrimination,
- b) promote equality of opportunity and treatment of its staff and the persons to whom it provides services, and
- c) protect the human rights of its members, staff and the persons to whom it provides services.

A public body is furthermore required to:

- ➔ set out in a manner that is accessible to the public in its strategic plan (howsoever described) an assessment of the human rights and equality issues it believes to be relevant to the functions and purpose of the body and the policies, plans and actions in place or proposed to be put in place to address these issues, and
- ➔ report in a manner that is accessible to the public on developments and achievements in that regard in its annual report (howsoever described)

<sup>11</sup> [Framework | College of FET](#)

<sup>12</sup> [solas fet strategy web.pdf](#)

## 4 Access

Access is the entry process by which learners may commence a programme of study within Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board's College of FET.

The College of FET is committed to *Fostering Inclusion*, as set out in its Strategic Framework 2022 – 2025.

### **Fostering Inclusion is about:**

- Widening access to FET for new groups of learners;
- Fostering an ongoing organisational commitment to strengthen our inclusive practices and policies;
- Valuing and recognising learning in all its forms and for all its purposes;
- Committing to inclusive and intentionally diverse learning and working environments;
- Providing consistent wrap-around learner supports throughout the learner journey;
- Capturing the Learner Voice;
- Championing digital inclusion.

The College of FET supports lifelong learning and seeks to provide access to programmes for all learners who meet the entry criteria and requirements of a programme, regardless of their life stage, personal circumstances, or geographic location.

The College of FET is committed to ensuring no artificial barriers are put in place to prevent potential learners participating in a programme of their choice.

### 4.1 Equality and Diversity

The College of FET environment is open, ethical and safe. We do not discriminate on the grounds of:

- |                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| > Gender             | > Age                                   |
| > Civil status       | > Disability                            |
| > Family status      | > Membership of the Traveller Community |
| > Sexual orientation | > Race                                  |
| > Religion           | > Socio economic status                 |

### 4.2 Entry Procedures

All programmes shall include clear and reasonable entry criteria which are published on <https://collegeoffet.ie/our-courses/> and indicate the pre-requisite learning for a programme as well as its intended learning outcomes.

Recruitment is aligned to **programme specific guidelines**. Where **programme specific guidelines are in conflict with the Funding Requirements then the Funding Requirements will take precedence. This is in line with section 21.3 a & b of the Further Education and Training Act 2013 where SOLAS may...“attach such other conditions (if any) as it considers appropriate to any such advance”**.

As courses are scheduled on the Programme Learner Support System (PLSS) through the National Course Calendar (NCC), the Quality Assurance Support Service (QASS) will monitor and QA approve all courses as part of a QA Approval Process<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> [Quality Assurance - NCC QA Approval - All Documents \(sharepoint.com\)](#)



There shall be clear and transparent entry procedures for all programmes.

**Important note regarding fees:** As part of Budget 2022, it was announced that the €200 annual fee will be abolished from the start of the 2022-23 academic year.

From January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, learners will no longer have to pay Campus Registration Fees and Exam Fees in relation to all Level 5 and Level 6 full-time provision. There will, however, still exist a contribution to Materials Fees but *up to a maximum of €200 per learner*.

The above is in line with Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board's *Inclusion* strategic objective and greater equity of access to FET Provision.

#### 4.2.1 Touchpoints for learners at the various stages of access

##### 4.2.1.1 Initial Contact

The College of FET is committed to ensuring equity of access, open and transparent communication and information via the various channels through which contact can be made. Initial contact with the ETB College of FET can come through a range of access points, often in response to a marketing/recruitment campaign. Some of the contacts include direct referrals from Education Welfare Officers, Pathways Adult Educators, Department of Social Protection, CAO Website, school guidance counsellors, probation services, learning networks or through an existing learner progression request. Other contacts can be made through FETCH Courses <https://www.fetchcourses.ie/>, the College of FET website, [www.collegeoffet.ie](http://www.collegeoffet.ie), interactions with our Social Media channels, direct emails and phone calls to various College of FET Campuses, or by accessing the Information, Recruitment & Guidance Support Service (IRGSS) FREEPHONE number 1800 70 70 77, or the IRGSS email address [coursechoices@lcteb.ie](mailto:coursechoices@lcteb.ie)

##### 4.2.1.2 Learner Management Information System Policy<sup>14</sup>

The purpose of this policy relates to a number of key areas associated with Learner Management Information Systems (LMIS) which include appropriate user access controls; adequate security and data protections (GDPR); verification of learner identity and unique identifier; maintaining accurate and up-to-date data; applicant and learner lifecycle management; and the efficient and effective use of learner management information systems in support of provision planning, operational delivery, and reporting requirements. The primary systems referenced are the national Programme and Learner Support System (PLSS) and a companion national course hub and online application website [www.fetchcourses.ie](http://www.fetchcourses.ie) (FETCH), and [www.collegeoffet.ie](http://www.collegeoffet.ie) with the FETCH widget embedded.

All FET Coordinators/Managers ensure that a well-defined and effective Local Business Process is instituted and documented across each Campus.

FETCH is to be used for >90% of all learner registrations to ensure that the ESF learner support data completion target rate of 95% is achieved.

Local Business Process instituted is to be effective in ensuring that the learner data collected and associated outputs and outcomes are entered in PLSS in a timely manner (target same day entries for most activities but within 5 working days).

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<sup>14</sup> [20\\_05\\_05\\_Learner\\_Management\\_Information\\_System\\_Policy.pdf](#)

#### 4.2.1.3 Pre-Entry Information, Advice and Guidance

'Pre-Entry Information, Advice and Guidance' is an umbrella term for support that helps learners make informed decisions (for example, about programme choice and certification if required, progression plans, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), etc.). IRGSS provides ongoing guidance, which also supports the learner's motivation to continue with a programme.

Pre-Entry information and advice on a particular programme offering is available through the contact details listed on the Provision course instance through the FETCH course widget on the College of FET website, [www.collegeoffet.ie](http://www.collegeoffet.ie), or on [fetchcourses.ie](http://fetchcourses.ie).

Pre-Entry information, advice and guidance is available via telephone, e-mail and face-to-face by contacting the IRGSS FREEPHONE number 1800 70 70 77 or the IRGSS email address [coursechoices@lcteb.ie](mailto:coursechoices@lcteb.ie).

All course applications must be made using the 'Apply Now' links in [www.collegeoffet.ie](http://www.collegeoffet.ie) campus pages and no locally devised application forms should be used by any Provision in Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board.

The Learner Charter page of the College of FET website<sup>15</sup> sets out what learners can expect from the ETB before enrolment on a programme/course and throughout the learning experience.

As well as information about enrolment procedures and entry requirements for each programme/course, learners can also expect information on:

- > Programme/course content and induction
- > Supports
- > Awards
- > Attendance
- > Assessment
- > Resource requirements including technology/devices required for participation where relevant (including the ETB's College of FET Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) and Device Equity processes)
- > How to progress to other programmes/courses
- > Information about Recognition of Prior Learning
- > What data we collect as part of the enrolment process, who this is shared with, and why.

In order to process applications to participate in a SOLAS funded Further Education and Training programme, Parental/Guardian consent is required for persons under 18 years of age.

#### 4.2.1.4 Admission/Registration Process

Where required as part of Access, Transfer & Progression, Provision and/or Information, Recruitment and Guidance Staff will meet with the applicant to undertake initial assessment in respect of Language, Literacy, Numeracy and/or Digital Skills where evidence of achievement at a particular level is required for entry to a particular programme<sup>16 17</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> [Learner Charter | College of FET](#)

<sup>16</sup> [assessing-literacy-and-numeracy-at-nfq-levels-4-6-toolkit.pdf \(solas.ie\)](#)

<sup>17</sup> [initial-and-ongoing-assessment-of-adult.pdf \(solas.ie\)](#)

There is a strong rationale for assessing literacy and numeracy skills up to QQI Level 3 in the first instance and, subsequently, any advanced language, communication and mathematical content that is embedded in the programme at Level 4, 5 or 6 should also be assessed.

Applicants are also at this point asked to declare any disability, long-term physical health or mental health need or additional learning support need (see Section 4.3 below, [Learners with a Disability](#)).

**English Language Requirement:** *Important Information for International Learners whose mother tongue is not English:*

In the College of FET, English language entry requirements are in place for all programmes of study at Levels 5 and 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). All applicants whose first language is not English<sup>18</sup> and who have not been educated through the medium of English must demonstrate CEFR<sup>19</sup> proficiency at B2 for access. An Irish Leaving certificate qualification achieved through English meets this requirement.

Non-evaluative briefing sessions, aptitude tests, trainability tests, Garda Vetting, and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) evidence (see [RPL for Access](#)) can also be included as evidence for Access, Transfer & Progression. These requirements must reflect the information given to potential applicants in FETCH Courses.

**Non-evaluative Briefing Sessions:** Non-evaluative briefing sessions are used in some Campuses for prospective learners to get to know more about their course and the Campus. It allows the learner to provide information that may not be easily conveyed in the application process through written documentation.

**\*Note:** Access to a number of work-based programmes, primarily traineeships, may require an additional interview between the employer providing the work placement and the potential candidate/ learner as part of the application process. This step will be clearly communicated to candidates as per of the pre-entry information, recruitment and guidance process.

**Access to Remote and Mixed Mode Programmes:** Remote and mixed mode programmes broaden access to programmes of education and training and increase the opportunities for lifelong learning. Remote and mixed mode programmes also require learners to have access to key technologies to enable participation on the programme including a device (either learner owned or loaned through the College of FETs Device Equity programme) and broadband connectivity. Full details on access requirements for remote and mixed mode programmes will be provided in our policies and procedures as they develop. The specific requirements to access a remote and mixed mode programme will be detailed in the programme entry requirements on [Home \(collegeoffet.ie\)](http://Home.collegeoffet.ie) and <https://www.fetchcourses.ie/>.

**Garda Vetting:** Learners on courses with clinical or other professional placements may be required to undergo Garda vetting procedures prior to commencing placements. If, as a result of the outcome of the Garda vetting procedures, a learner is deemed unsuitable to attend clinical or other professional placement, they may be required to withdraw from their course. Learners who have resided outside Ireland for a period of six months or more will be required to provide police clearance documentation from the country (including different states) or countries in which they resided. Learners who accept an offer will be informed of the

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<sup>18</sup> [esol\\_part3\\_toolkit.pdf \(solas.ie\)](#)

<sup>19</sup> [International language standards | Cambridge English](#)

procedures to be followed to complete the vetting process (as part of the learner orientation information).

**Learner Profile:** In the context of planning and funding, if an instance arises where programme-specific guidelines are in conflict with the ‘Funding Requirements’, then the ‘Funding Requirements’ will take precedence. This is in line with sections 21.3(a) and (b) of the Further Education and Training Act 2013<sup>20</sup> where SOLAS may “attach such other conditions (if any) as it considers appropriate to any such advance”.

**Demand for Places:** If demand exceeds supply of places on a particular course and all eligible candidates meet the minimum entry requirements, admission will be prioritised for those who most closely meet the target group for the particular Provision type. Where a learner does not meet the access requirements for a particular Provision type, or where a course is oversubscribed, they will be referred by relevant Provision staff to the Information, Recruitment and Guidance Support Service to discuss alternative pathways to enable progression.

#### 4.2.1.5 Access to courses for International Protection Applicants

Access to education, depends on some, or all of the following criteria;

- Learner nationality.
- Learner immigration status in Ireland.
- Learner length of time in Ireland.

If in doubt about what a person’s immigration permissions means, with regards to their rights to access ETB FET services, please refer to official Irish Government sites.

More information on the rights and entitlements of migrants and residents in Ireland is available at:

- [www.inis.gov.ie](http://www.inis.gov.ie) – Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (Department of Justice and Equality).
- <https://www.gov.ie/en/organisation/department-of-higher-education-innovation-and-science/> – Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.
- [www.gov.ie](http://www.gov.ie) – Provides access to a wide range of government services.
- [www.dbei.gov.ie](http://www.dbei.gov.ie) – Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation.
- [www.dfa.ie](http://www.dfa.ie) – Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade.
- [www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie) – Department of Social Protection.
- [www.citizensinformation.ie](http://www.citizensinformation.ie) – Public service information.
- [www.integration.ie](http://www.integration.ie) – Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration – with detailed list of support and cultural groups around Ireland.
- [www.irishrefugeecouncil.ie](http://www.irishrefugeecouncil.ie) – Irish Refugee Council.
- [www.susi.ie](http://www.susi.ie) – Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI).

The following table identifies the Permission Stamp holders who can work, and their eligibility to access Further Education and Training.

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<sup>20</sup> [Further Education and Training Act 2013 \(oireachtas.ie\)](http://www.oireachtas.ie)

Stamp	Work	FET
Stamp 0	No Unless specifically permitted	No
Stamp 1	Yes	No
Stamp 1A	Yes	No
Stamp 1G	Yes Graduate seeking employment under Third Level Graduate Scheme	No
	Yes Spouse/de facto partner of CSEP or HA	No
Stamp 2	Yes	No
Stamp 2A	No	No
Stamp 3	No	No
Stamp 4	Yes	Yes
Stamp 5	Yes	Yes
Stamp 6	Yes	Yes

Protection Applicants (Persons seeking Asylum) who are more than six months awaiting a decision who have a Labour Market Permission Letter and valid Temporary Residence Card (TRC) are eligible for FET.

ESOL Provision must be prioritised and made available to ESOL learners on a continuous basis with no waiting periods. If, however, due to unforeseen circumstances, **waiting periods** occur they must be no longer than six weeks in duration. Where potential for waiting periods is identified, or a waiting period occurs, SOLAS must be notified.

#### 4.2.1.6 Learner Induction

All learners will receive a formal induction as part of their FET programme. The induction will be organised by the Provision Co-ordinator and/or Provision staff. It aims to provide learners with necessary information about the specific College of FET Campus, its facilities and regulations, and an introduction to all aspects of their programme of study; thereby laying and facilitating social interaction between learners and staff teaching on their programme of study. At a minimum, the induction will provide learners with the necessary information required in relation to:

- Campus Orientation
  - Welcome on behalf of the ETB's College of FET and the Provision.
  - Introduction to key members of teaching and Campus staff.
  - Identification of key locations/Campus map.
  - Introduction to and information about IRGSS, AISS and other support services and facilities, including the Learning Hub.
  - Overview of Quality Assurance including Assessment Procedures to support learners, including: Compassionate Consideration, Short-term Extensions, Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment, Assessment Appeals, Examinations and Assessment Malpractice.

- Health and Safety.
- The FET Learner Charter including the following learner policies:
  - FET Learner Code of Conduct
  - FET Anti-Bullying Policy
  - FET Learner Disciplinary Procedure
  - FET Learner Complaints Procedure
  - College of FET Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) Process
  - College of FET Device Equity process.
- Programme Detail including:
  - Provision calendar/timetables.
  - Programme structure.
  - Aims and programme learning outcomes.
  - Certificate and component learning outcomes.
  - Teaching methodology and assessment strategy.
  - Assessment methods, assessment criteria and assessment timetable.
  - Referencing Handbook for the Further Education and Training (FET) Sector.
  - Academic Writing Handbook for Learners in the FET Sector.
  - A Learner's Guide to Academic Integrity<sup>21</sup>.
  - Technology requirements (including BYOD and Device Equity).
  - Identification of key programme resources.

Induction sessions shall normally be delivered by a combination of Provision, IRGSS, AISS and other Campus staff, through a number of media (presentations, workshops etc.) and with the support of various resources (presentation software, overheads, online resources etc.) as appropriate.

As part of induction, learners should be made aware of the range of supports available to them by registering through [Learner Supports | College of FET](#). Information is given in confidence and only used for the purpose for which it is gathered. Appropriate internal referrals are made for learners who require:

- Supports for Learners with a Disability: learning support due to a diagnosed disability, an ongoing physical or mental health condition, or a learning difficulty;
- Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment: reasonable examination accommodations due to a diagnosed disability, an ongoing physical or mental health condition, or a learning difficulty;
- Device Equity Supports: access to computers or technology support to help learners participate in their chosen programme;
- Learning Supports: support with reading, writing, maths, study skills, digital skills or in improving their English language skills;
- Educational Guidance: access to career or educational advice and information;
- Psychological Counselling: access to the learner counselling service.

#### 4.3 Learners with a Disability

The College of FET aims to create an environment where a disability or health need (including a mental health need) is not a barrier to learning and all individuals have the opportunity to achieve their full potential. The College of FET is mindful of equality legislation, including the

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<sup>21</sup> [Academic Integrity Handbook \(etbi.ie\)](#)



Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act, 2014 (IHREC Act 2014), the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015, the Equal Status Acts 2000-2018, the Education Act, 1998.

Applicants applying for a place are asked to declare any disability, long-term physical health or mental health need or additional learning support need; this can be done as part of the pre-entry guidance process and information is given in confidence and only used for the purpose for which it is gathered.

Staff will respect decisions made by learners about the disclosure or sharing of confidential information and undertake to communicate effectively with clients to help them understand the implications of any decision not to disclose or share information. The AHEAD booklet on Disclosure<sup>22</sup> provides some guidance on the issues involved.

To be eligible for support under the Fund for Learners with Disabilities (FLD) or the College of FET Learner Support Fund, a learner must meet the following conditions:

- have a verifiable disability – (eligibility criteria for support);
- meet the nationality and residency criteria as outlined;
- be a participant on a full-time, approved course (to access the FLD only);
- have a verified need for specific supports to enable attendance on their chosen programme.

Provision and/or Information, Recruitment and Guidance staff will meet with the applicant to discuss their individual support requirements in the context of the needs of the course. They will give an overview of the types of supports available and explain the process of registering for supports within the College of FET's Learner Supports Framework<sup>23</sup>.

The learner will be advised if the College of FET is unable to offer an adequate level of appropriate support. Learners are reminded that whilst the ETB aims to accommodate the needs of learners with disabilities and those with a long-term physical or mental health need, it may not be able to do so if it has not been informed of access requirements in advance. Such instances are expected to be rare and every effort will be made to meet learners' requirements. The College of FET will make sure all reasonable adjustments are made to accommodate and promote a successful learning outcome.

#### 4.4 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for Access

Learners may enter a programme at various stages or with exemptions where they have gained recognition of prior learning.

Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board shall ensure that all applicants are made aware of the potential benefits of RPL. Appropriate supports relating to participation in the RPL process shall be made available across the College of FET Campuses to eligible applicants.

##### 4.4.1 What is RPL?

*RPL allows learning that has taken place in all areas of life to be formally validated. In other words, previous life experiences can lead to a formal qualification on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). RPL gives **value** to all previous **relevant** learning, no matter where or how this learning has occurred.*

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<sup>22</sup> [A guide to Disclosure 2013.pdf \(ahead.ie\)](#)

<sup>23</sup> [Learner Supports | College of FET](#)

In line with Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board's [06 Recognition-of-Prior-Learning-Procedure V2.0.pdf \(collegeoffet.ie\)](#), RPL in the ETB involves awarding the RPL applicant recognition in the form of access or advanced entry to a programme, credits within a programme, exemption(s) from element(s) of a programme, or a full award. **RPL cannot be claimed for based on the completion of an element (or part) of a module.**

RPL can be based on prior certified learning (RPCL), prior experiential learning (RPEL) or be a combination of both.

**Recognition of Prior Certified Learning (RPCL)** is learning that has already been accredited by an awarding body (such as QQI) or other recognised universities, colleges/institutes. Prior certified learning can also include qualifications awarded by bodies abroad, such as, for example, the City & Guilds of London Institute.

Prior certified learning may entitle the applicant to access to a programme or exemptions from part of a programme.

**Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL)** (non-accredited learning) is non-formal and informal learning acquired through life or work experience. It can also be in the form of learning achieved from non-accredited bodies, or from certifying bodies outside of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). This type of learning has not been previously linked to an award on the NFQ.

RPEL may entitle the applicant to **access** to a programme (non-standard entry, such as not having a Leaving Cert), **advanced entry** (which is essentially an exemption from part of a programme, e.g., apprenticeship model) or **certification** (where RPEL is used to fully certify an applicant for a module(s) or a Major Award).

Not all applications for RPL will be successful but all applicants do have the right to appeal any decision in relation to RPL in line with Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board's [06 Recognition-of-Prior-Learning-Procedure V2.0.pdf \(collegeoffet.ie\)](#), Section 8: RPL Appeals.

The Information, Recruitment and Guidance Support Service will also be available to support and refer RPL applicants to Provision where an application for RPL isn't suitable/successful.

### **Foreign and UK Qualifications for Access**

The NARIC (National Academic Recognition Information Centre) Ireland Foreign Qualifications Database provides comparability advice and information on academic qualifications<sup>24</sup>. This information will help users understand their qualification in the context of the Irish education and training system by comparing foreign qualifications to an Irish qualification of a similar type and level on the Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

It can also help employers, funding agencies and education and training institutions to determine if an applicant holds the academic qualifications for a particular job, funding or course: [User Guide for NARIC database 010217.pdf \(qqi.ie\)](#).

NARIC is managed by QQI, but users must search the database themselves and download their own comparability statement.

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<sup>24</sup> [Recognition of foreign qualifications | Quality and Qualifications Ireland \(qqi.ie\)](#)

QQI also publish and maintain a guide to comparing qualifications in Ireland and the UK due to the regular mobility of learners and workers across the UK and Ireland. [Qualifications can Cross Boundries 2019.pdf \(qqi.ie\)](#) is a guide to comparing these qualifications.

## 5 Transfer

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.

Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board's College of FET is committed to supporting the transfer of learners between programmes/courses within the ETB, to another ETB, to a non-ETB provider or a Higher Education institution where:

- > A programme/course isn't meeting the learner's needs;
- > A learner is relocating to an area outside of the ETB;
- > A learner has personal circumstances requiring a transfer.

In all cases where a learner is transferring out of Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board, the ETB will endeavour to supply the learner with all required documentation, such as proof of time already spent in a programme of study, the programme content, learning outcomes and/or results from completed elements of the programme/course already submitted for certification.

Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board's College of FET will also accept learners from other educational institutions on referral or request and each application will be individually considered in line with the entry requirements of the programme/course the learner is seeking to transfer into.

Learners transferring into Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board's College of FET programmes of study are subject to the same entry requirements and can also avail of the same supports as all other College of FET learners who, from the outset, commenced a programme/course with the ETB from the formal start date.

Where a learner is transferring into a course that has already begun, they will not be required to repeat learning or assessments already completed and/or certified within another institution.

The Information, Recruitment and Guidance Support Service and/or Provision, will support all learner requests for transfers into and out of the ETB where possible and practical. The College of FET Learner MIS Policy, in the absence of a common local business process, details how transfers are to take place within PLSS to ensure a record is retained on both courses. I.e. the 'Switch Course' action is not to be used – instead either 'Finish on Course' or 'Finish and Refer' to be used.

## 6 Progression

Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board’s College of FET is committed to supporting learners to achieve their potential through progression pathways within and out of FET.

All full-time Provision includes elements of work experience, work shadowing, work practice which help in preparing learners to progress to employment or further and higher education.

The IRGSS and Provision Coordinators work with learners from all Provision to enable them to make transitions to further and higher education, training and employment.

IRGSS work with learners to engage with career interview preparation, attendance at career exhibitions, open days, funding and grants, CAO applications and engagement with and support structures such as access officers and other agencies around progression.

As stated previously, Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board’s College of FET Strategic Framework 2022 – 2025, defines our purpose around Building Skills, Fostering Inclusion and Creating Pathways.

### Creating Pathways is about:

- > Simplifying FET pathways;
- > Promoting FET as a valuable option;
- > Connecting FET learning with career and other meaningful outcomes for learners;
- > Supporting learners to make informed choices;
- > Playing a key role in the Tertiary Education landscape to create seamless transitions for learners.

The Framework also outlines five key enabling priorities for Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board’s College of FET with *Priority 5* being:

<b>PRIORITY</b>  <b>5</b>	<p><b>PARTNERSHIPS FOR SEAMLESS TRANSITIONS</b></p> <p><i>This is about creating partnerships that work to provide access, seamless transitions and progression opportunities for FET learners. It is also about working with community, industry and education partners to create a 'skills ecosystem' that supports the regional, sustainable economic and social development in the Mid-West.</i></p>	<p><b>Implementation Mapping</b></p> <p>5.1 Continue to strategically engage with employers and industry fora to identify and address skills gaps in the region.</p> <p>5.2 Develop our capability to engage with Higher Education Institutions and post-primary partners around key curriculum development initiatives, and to facilitate transitions from post-primary to tertiary education.</p> <p>5.3 Build on our unique local partnership models with</p>	<p>community groups to engage new learners and promote a culture of lifelong learning.</p> <p>5.4 Maximise the opportunities offered by integrated FET Campuses to promote internal partnerships and collaboration, and facilitate seamless transitions for learners.</p> <p>5.5 Explore the development of an international strategy to create links with European partners, in order to inform organisational development and expand upskilling opportunities for learning practitioners, managers, and learners.</p>
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## 6.1 Memorandums of Understanding with Higher Education Institutions

### **Progression Agreement to TUS - Technological University of the Shannon (formerly LIT)**

Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board has signed a collaboration agreement offering seamless learner progression to the Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest (TUS). This means learners who successfully complete a QQI Certificate Level 5/6 will be offered entry to TUS programmes based on this collaboration agreement. Learners who achieve a Major Award at Level 5/6 and apply through CAO for a programme of study at TUS, are guaranteed access to any Level 6 or Level 7 programme. A Major Award at Level 5 requires three Distinctions which will guarantee entry to any Level 8 programme.

### **Progression Agreement to Mary Immaculate College**

A bilateral agreement exists between Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board and Mary Immaculate College (MIC), offering graduates of four designated media programmes the opportunity to apply through CAO for entry to the BA (Hons) in Liberal Arts (MI002). To gain entry to the Liberal Arts Programme, learners must gain a full award with four Distinctions from a prescribed list of modules.

### **Mary Immaculate College Teacher Education Access Programme**

The Teacher Education Access Programme (TEAP) for Mature Learners is offered by Mary Immaculate College in partnership with Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board. It is designed for mature learners who wish to gain entry to the BEd (Primary Teaching) at MIC. The course is aimed at anyone over the age of 22 by 1<sup>st</sup> January on the year of application, who is interested in applying to the BEd (Primary Teaching) and who does not hold the minimum entry requirements. The programme is designed to offer participants an opportunity to obtain the pre-requisite entry requirements to the BEd programme. To help learners in this regard, Gaeilge at honours Leaving Certificate level will be offered. Options to study other Leaving Certificate subjects are available within Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board.

### **Progression Agreement to SETU - South East Technological University (formerly WIT)**

South East Technological University (SETU) offers preferential entry to learners who successfully complete a linked QQI FET course in partner Colleges of Further Education where Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board's College of FET is one such partner college.

### **Progression Agreement to ATU - Atlantic Technological University (formerly GMIT)**

Memorandum of Understanding with ATU allows advanced entry to year two of ATU programmes for Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board Level 6 graduates.



## 7 Conclusion

This Access, Transfer & Progression Policy should be read in conjunction with the other elements of the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) as approved by the Quality Council. It is a working document and is subject to a regular 6 monthly review from experience in implementing its procedures and in the light of feedback received from staff, learners, outside interests and new educational developments. All College of FET Staff are invited to recommend improvements arising from their experience. They can do so by informing their Provision Co-ordinator or contacting the Director of FET.