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Quality Assurance Handbook

SETANTA COLLEGE

Section 4: Access, Transfer and Progression



SETANTA
College

4.1 Policy and Procedures on Access, Transfer and Progression

4.1 Definition

"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 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 programme.

4.1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure appropriate Learner Access, Transfer and Progression opportunities for applicants to Setanta College.

4.1.3 Scope

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

4.1.4 Policy Statement

Setanta Colleges 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.

It is the policy of Setanta College, as far as is practicable, to admit all applicants who fulfil the minimum academic requirements for its courses and programmes. Setanta College publishes detailed admissions criteria, procedures and regulations for entry to all its programmes on an annual basis. Additional guidelines are published on the entry requirements for those seeking advanced entry onto a programme, and for those seeking additional supports or accommodations for reason of a disability or medical condition. All documentation is published on the Setanta College website and in the Setanta College brochure.

4.1.5 Procedure for Access

Entry Requirements

Learners wishing to enrol for an academic programme at Setanta College must have achieved at least the minimum requirement for entry onto the programme. The entry requirements for QQI approved Setanta College programmes are:

- The candidate is an active coach or participant in one or more of the fields of sports performance, strength and conditioning, health, fitness and wellness.
- Reasonable accommodations are in place for applicants with a disability that have indicated this in their application process. The Student services manager prior to the course commencement will contact the applicant to facilitate any specific requests or accommodations that are required. Notice will be then given to the tutors of the programme that the applicant has been enrolled in so they are can assist them with these special accommodations (please see policy on reasonable accommodation).

English Language Requirements

It is expected that all Learners applying for Setanta College programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate levels are able to speak, read and write English fluently, so they can play a full role in lectures, tutorials, seminar discussions and examinations. All applicants to Setanta College are informed of this requirement before registering for a programme.

In the case of international Learners where English is not their first language, they will be required to demonstrate a sufficient level of English Language proficiency.

Setanta College accept the following:

- a) IELTS (International English Language Testing System), or equivalent score of TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) normally IELTS 6.0 which must be dated within 2 years of enrolment onto programme.
- b) CEFR standard (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) B2+ which must be dated within 2 years of enrolment onto programme.
- c) Successful completion of major award at level 5 or higher mapped to the NFQ completed through English.

Applicants with Disabilities

Setanta College is committed to implementing a policy of equal opportunities for Learners with disabilities and supports the [AHEAD Charter for Inclusive Teaching and Learning](#) which is reflected in quality assurance policies and procedures.

Disability” is understood to mean: “a substantial restriction in the capacity of the person to carry on a profession, business or occupation in the State or to participate in social or cultural life in the State by reason of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or intellectual impairment.” Disability Act 2005, p.6.

The College will ensure, through the availability of Learner support services, that no Learner is disadvantaged by reason of having a disability, within reason and budgetary limitations. The College welcomes applications from Learners with disabilities and will take every reasonable action, within budgetary limitations, to ensure that specific requirements are met and that all

Learners are able to participate as fully as is practicable in the academic and social life of the College.

Types of Support available include:

- Time extensions for assessments
- Technological supports such as voice to text facilities
- Writing accommodations including spelling waiver
- Learning materials provided in accessible, modifiable electronic formats
- Alternative assessment formats, e.g. Viva Voce
- Extended individual tutorial support

The College encourages Learners to disclose their disabilities during the application processor following admission to the College. This is done by notifying the College administration staff. All Learners are encouraged to disclose their disabilities, as non-disclosure may limit access to appropriate procedures, accommodations and supports for the Learner. The College will ensure that all facilities are accessible to all Learners insofar as is possible. This includes physical accessibility to and within the buildings, as well as access to information. Please view the College's policy on Reasonable Accommodation for more detail.

4.1.6 Responsibility for Access

Overall responsibility for Learner access resides with the Academic Director of the College. The Learner Services Manager will act in an administrative capacity for the Academic Director for all matters pertaining to Learner Access and Admission.

4.1.7 Procedure for Transfer, Progression

Setanta College offers a range of awards on the National Framework of Qualifications. The National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) defines the relationship between awards: this in itself contributes to improved transfer and progression. The NFQ is based on the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) which allows for transfer and progression:

- between levels
- between award-types at the same level
- between named awards

Setanta College programmes are normally divided into stages and modules. Stages and modules are sub-programmes within programmes. Conceptually, a stage is a rung on a progression ladder. It may comprise a set of modules at a similar level. Typically, the National Framework of Qualifications level of the intended learning outcomes of constituent modules increases as a Learner progresses through successive stages of a programme. Even where modules are not taken in parallel, the stage concept is important for grouping modules with the same level (NFQ) of learning and requiring a similar level of maturity in the relevant discipline. Full-time Learners study all the modules in a stage in parallel, while part time Learners may study as little as one module at a time.

Accordingly, Setanta College has adopted an approach based on the principle that Learners achieving an award are eligible to progress to a programme leading to another award at the next level up where there is such an award in the same or a related field of learning and may be eligible to progress to a higher level than that. At the same time, where there is not an award at a higher level in the same or a related field of learning, the framework concept implies that Learners achieving an award are eligible for transfer to a programme leading to another award at the same level.

Where programmes are organised in stages, a Learner, to be eligible to progress to a particular stage, is normally required to demonstrate achievement of the minimum intended learning outcomes of all the preceding stages. This is elaborated in the programme assessment strategy. The approved programme schedule summarises the allocation of credits and grades, as well as any special progression requirements. Subject to any special conditions of the programme, there are three exceptions to the general requirement of passing all the required modules in order to progress to the next stage. These are:

1. Pass by compensation
2. Exemption from part of the programme (with or without the allocation of a grade and credit)
3. Eligibility to progress carrying the failed modules to be passed during the subsequent stage

Pass by compensation

Grades which are greater than or equal to 35% but less than 40% in the percentage system — or a 'D' grade in the alphabetic system — are awarded when a Learner has nearly (but not quite) demonstrated attainment of the relevant minimum intended learning outcomes for a particular assessment task. Performance in excess of the minimum at the first attempt in modules in a given stage (of at least 30 credits) may be used to compensate for the attainment of between 35% and 40% in another module in the same stage, provided no module in the stage has been failed outright. A pass earned in this way is referred to as a pass by compensation and is credit bearing.

Where a candidate is just below pass in each of a string of independent modules in the same stage, the results are reinforced. Consequently, it is justifiable to limit the number of independent modules that may be passed by compensation in a stage. Because modules can have different sizes, it is reasonable to express such a limit as a proportion of the total available credit rather than the number of modules. This latter point assumes that the confidence in the grade is increased in larger volume modules owing to compensation processes operating within the module. In a programme based on stages, subject to conditions 1 - 4 specified below, a module can be passed by compensation (using passes in other modules from the same stage) unless this is specifically precluded in the programme assessment strategy and approved programme schedule.

Compensation can be applied automatically. Accordingly, the programme and module assessment strategies take this into account. Specifically, they ensure that compensation is consistent with the requirement that minimum intended programme learning outcomes are achieved before an award is recommended. In the programme assessment strategy and

approved programme schedule, certain modules may be designated as not passable by compensation.

Compensation can only be applied in the following circumstances:

1. The Learner has been assessed for all stage modules and no module in the stage has been failed outright (F or below 35%).
2. The results of all modules in the stage are from first attempts.
3. In the case of full-time Learners, the results are from the same sitting (session).
4. The overall Alphabetic Grade Point Average is at least 2.0 or the stage-aggregate of credit-weighted excesses of percentage marks (over 40) is greater than or equal to twice the stage-aggregate of credit-weighted deficits of marks (under 40) and the potentially compensable results account for no more than one-third of the credit for the stage: *i.e.* 20 credits in a 60-credit stage or 10 credits in a 30- credit stage. Compensation may be applied only to enable a Learner to pass a stage (at the award stage, a Learner who passes by compensation remains eligible for honours etc.). Compensation does not change the result of the modules passed in that way. When reporting module passes by compensation (on the Europa’s Diploma Supplement), the actual result is returned, *e.g.* 37% or D, along with an indication that the module pass has been granted by compensation.

The policy of Setanta College is that all programmes should aim to meet the needs of Learners. This includes those Learners entering programmes through recognition of prior learning processes, as well as those transferring or progressing from programmes to further learning opportunities, whether immediately or at some later stage.

Setanta College has mapped its awards to the NFQ and provides the Learner and prospective Learners’ information on transfer into its programme and progression routes. This information is available on its website and in the Learner handbook for each programme.

Table 4.1 below outlines the College’s programmes and national framework of qualifications progression.

Programme Title	Credits	NFQ Level
Certificate in Functional Screening and Resistance Training	30	6
Certificate in Strength and Conditioning	60	6
Higher Certificate of Science in Strength and Conditioning	120	6
Bachelor of Science in Strength and Conditioning	180	7

Table 4.1 Setanta College programmes and national framework of qualifications progression

4.18 Responsibility for Access, Transfer and Progression

The Academic Director is responsible for monitoring compliance with the admissions process. This includes monitoring the effectiveness of the process in the selection of appropriate Learners for the programme and their ability to successfully complete the programme depending on the programme entry criteria. The Student Services Manager manages the admissions process under the supervision of the Academic Director.

4.1.9 Policy Control Sheet

Policy Area	Access, Transfer, Progression and Recognition
Policy Title	Access, Transfer and Progression
Approval Date	3/9/2019
Effective Date	3/9/2019
Review Date	1/9/2020
Relevant Supporting Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 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.
Monitoring Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Programme Board Meetings- External Examiner reports- Learner feedback- Tutor feedback- Stakeholder Feedback- Academic Council annual report- Programmatic Review report

4.2 Policy for Induction of New Learners

4.2.1 Definition

An induction programme is the process used to welcome new Learners to the College and prepare them for their programme of study.

4.2.2 Purpose

This document outlines Setanta College's policy and procedure with respect to the induction of new Learners.

4.2.3 Scope

This document applies to all new Learners enrolling on QQI programmes at Setanta College.

4.2.4 Policy Statement

It is Setanta College policy that all new Learners will receive an induction to Setanta College and their chosen programme of study.

The purpose of induction is to familiarise new Learners with all aspects of the College and their new environment and to provide opportunities to establish relationships with peers, staff and faculty. Induction provides Learners with an opportunity to establish answers to questions they may have and enables the College to manage expectations of Learners and set expectations of them appropriately.

4.2.5 Procedure for Induction

For each new programme intake, Setanta College conducts an onsite induction day and an online induction programme. New Learners to Setanta College will be provided with an induction pack which includes information regarding the Learner handbook, Setanta College's Quality Assurance Manual and programme specific material.

Onsite Induction Day

The onsite induction day will allow new Learners to meet with members of the College, and get a more precise understanding of the programme, structures, culture, mission, goals and operation of the College. In addition, new Learners will be briefed on:

- a) Welcome and Introductions to staff
- b) Background and Overall Introduction to Setanta College
- c) Setanta College programmes and awarding bodies
- d) Lecturing Staff Profile
- e) Learner Handbook
- f) Quality Assurance policies and procedures and who to contact
- g) Focus on programme and first module. Onsite dates and assessment schedule is provided to Learners.
- h) Specific induction sessions will be provided from IT services, the library, Learner services, and the programme administration teams. Information provided at induction is reinforced throughout the first week and an online induction is also provided. The

purpose of the online induction is to recap on any pertinent information that may have been missed in the previous assembly.

Online induction programme

- a) A key area of support is an online induction programme that Learners complete on the learning portal prior to commencing their studies. It provides them with the key skills required to study effectively online.
- b) The induction course is made up of the following sections:
- c) Unit 1: Course Overview
- d) Unit 2: Guide to your Setanta College email account - Your key communication tool with the College
- e) Unit 3: Guide to Setanta College Online Learning Portal - Where you do most of your learning
- f) Unit 4: Turnitin – How to check for any plagiarism issues and how to upload assessments
- g) Unit 5: Library- How to access the online library
- h) Unit 6: Yammer- How to use the online forum to communicate with staff and Learners.
- i) Unit 7: Survey Monkey Feedback – How to provide the College with feedback

4.2.6 Responsibility for Induction

The Student Services Manager is responsible for implementing this policy.

4.2.7 Policy Control Sheet

Policy Area	Access, Transfer, Progression and Recognition
Policy Title	Induction Policy for New Learners
Approval Date	3/9/2019
Effective Date	3/9/2019
Review Date	1/9/2020
Relevant Supporting Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012. - Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (April 2016) - Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes (QQI March 2018) - Policies and Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education and Training – QQI 2017 - HET and Apprenticeship Programme Validation Manual – QQI 2018 - Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), 2015.
Monitoring Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Induction surveys - Learner feedback - Tutor feedback

4.3 Policy and Procedures on Recognition of Prior Learning

4.3.1 Definitions

According to the [Principles and Operational Guidelines for Recognition of Prior Learning in Further and Higher Education and Training June 2005](#), republished by QQI in 2015, 'recognition' is a process by which prior learning is given a value. It is a means by which prior learning is formally identified, assessed and acknowledged. This makes it possible for an individual to build on learning achieved and be formally rewarded for it.

The term 'prior learning' is learning that has taken place, but not necessarily been assessed or measured, prior to entering a programme or seeking an award. Prior learning may have been acquired through formal, non-formal, or informal routes.

4.3.2 Purpose

The purpose of Setanta College having procedures for RPL, is in keeping with its policy on Access, Transfer and Progression, and to consider every Learner's application in a fair and transparent way.

4.3.3 Scope

The RPL policy applies to all Setanta College applicants seeking to use prior learning to:

- (a) Advanced entry to a programme
- (b) Granting of exemption from the need to complete one or more modules of a programme

4.3.4 Policy Statement

Setanta College is committed to ensuring relevant access to study and in that regard recognises that learning can be achieved in formal (e.g. certified qualifications) and is open to considering applications for Recognition of Prior Learning for entry to programmes. The policy in relation to RPL is designed to communicate Setanta College's commitment to RPL, but more importantly to convey a clear and consistent process that facilitates Learner mobility both from prior educational and training engagement.

Setanta College recognises **Certified Learning**, where a Learner has obtained an award from QQI or another equivalent designated educational awarding body, an applicant may gain access to the programme on the basis that he/she has already attained the prerequisite learning as part of another award. It is the responsibility of the Learner, to make a formal written application to the College requesting an exemption and/or advanced entry by supplying all appropriate supporting evidence i.e. transcript of results and module descriptor/syllabus including intended learning outcomes.

The request for exemptions or advanced entry will then be considered by the Academic Director the applicant will receive written confirmation of their decision.

4.3.5 Procedure for Recognition of Prior Learning

The process for RPL commences by contact being made by the prospective Learner with the admissions department. Following consultation with the College Registrar the prospective Learner is advised as to whether or not the advanced entry or module exemptions are likely to be granted.

Whether it is indicated that the request for exemptions are likely to be granted or not the prospective Learner may formally apply on the designated form for advanced entry or exemption and submit this form together with evidence of the prior learning claimed to the admissions department. The form and accompanying evidence are given to the programme leader who assesses the prior learning claimed against the learning outcomes of the stage or modules involved.

The Programme Leader confirms his or her decision to the admissions department and a form recording the decision and its basis is completed and signed by the Programme Leader and the College Registrar and passed to the admissions department. The admissions department then informs the prospective Learner of the outcome and of their right to appeal in limited circumstances. In the event of some or all of the application being rejected the prospective Learner has a right of appeal provided information can be made available by them which was not submitted with the original application.

An appeal must be lodged within seven days of the issuing of the original decision and must be made in writing to the admissions department. The process for the appeal follows that of the original application and the decision on appeal is final.

4.3.6 How and when to make an RPL claim

If the Learner wishes to make a claim for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in order to gain exemptions from certain modules of a programme of study, he or she must contact the College at admin@setantaCollege.com to request the application form. An application for admission to a course is completely separate from an application seeking exemptions on the basis of RPL and each application will be assessed individually on their merits.

The Learner must apply for RPL no less than one month prior to the commencement date of the course in Setanta College towards which they wish to claim credit and before the Learner has begun the programme of study.

4.3.7 Limitations on Credit

Credit provides a means of quantifying learning outcomes achievable in a given number of notional hours and at a given level. Learning outcomes are used to identify whether Learners have demonstrated through assessment, the minimum level of learning required to pass a module and thus gain the required credit. In this way, previous learning can be identified which can be assessed and 'credited' against an award. RPL is the process by which an applicant's previously accrued credit is assessed to determine whether it can be used to gain exemption from modules of a programme of study in Setanta College.

Setanta College is concerned to ensure that all Learners must meet a required standard on its awards and that all Learners are treated equally. Where RPL is being sought for the award of academic credit the College must make certain that the learning derived from prior certificated study is equivalent to that of the learning that might otherwise have been achieved by following the full programme of study. Consequently, it must be satisfied that the evidence submitted in support of an RPL claim meets the following criteria:

- **Validity.** The evidence must show that the prior learning for which the Learner is making a claim is relevant to the programme of study you have applied for at Setanta College. The Learner must be able to demonstrate that there is an appropriate match in both level and content between previous studies and the Setanta College module or modules for which he/she is seeking exemption.
- **Currency.** Prior learning must have been gained recently enough to be still of value. The time limits on learning will vary according to subject area but qualifications more than five years old are unlikely to be considered, without the inclusion of additional support.
- **Sufficiency.** The Learner must provide enough evidence to demonstrate fully the achievement of the credit being claimed.

It is the Learner's responsibility to submit evidence that their previous studies were taken at the same level as (or higher than) the Setanta College qualification towards which the Learner wishes to claim credit..

If previous studies are more than five years old but a Learner still wish to make a claim for RPL, the Learner should contact the College prior to making an application. A decision will be made on the basis of details provided on the best course of action for the Learner to take.

The maximum amount of credit that can be imported via RPL is one-third of the maximum course credits or one third of any one stage. For example, a 180-credit course can have a maximum of sixty credits recognised through the RPL process. This excludes any compulsory dissertation or thesis stated in the programme requirements for which exemption will not be granted. A fee of €50 per ten credit module (up to a maximum of €150) is charged in respect of each module for which an exemption is sought.

4.3.8 Responsibility for Recognition of Prior Learning

The Academic Director has the overall responsibility for ensuring that RPL is recognised as a valid method of entry to the relevant programmes and that procedures for RPL are made known to prospective Learners and individuals with responsibility for RPL.

The College Registrar is responsible for ensuring that information relating to programmes and arrangements for RPL is available to prospective Learners.

The External Examiner is responsible for reviewing a sample of RPL applications from Learners to ensure that Setanta College's principles and procedures for RPL are being applied consistently and appropriately.

4.3.9 Policy Control Sheet

Policy Area	Access, Transfer, Progression and Recognition
Policy Title	Recognition of Prior Learning
Approval Date	3/9/2019
Effective Date	3/9/2019
Review Date	1/9/2020
Relevant Supporting Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- National Qualifications Authority Ireland (2005) Principles and Operational Guidelines for the Recognition of Prior Learning in Further and Higher Education and Training. Republished by QQI in 2015- Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016), QQI.- Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), 2015.
Monitoring Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Programme Board Meetings- External Examiner reports- Learner feedback- Tutor feedback- Stakeholder Feedback- Academic Council annual report- Programmatic Review report