

Protection of Enrolled Learner Policy (ED-Pol-054)

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Department	Postgraduate Medical Education Centre
Owner/Responsible for Implementation	The Manager, Postgraduate Medical Education Centre (PMEC)
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Related Documents	PMEC-Pol-042 – Fees Policy ED-SOP-043 – Protection of Enrolled Learner (PEL) SOP PMEC-SOP-039 – Programme Set Up & Enrolment SOP

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out RCPIs approach to the Protection of Enrolled Learners (PEL), who are engaged in programmes of three months duration or longer. It is underpinned by principles of best practice and guidance provided by Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI). Legal requirements for providers of education and training pertaining to PEL are set out in the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012. This policy and associated procedure and PEL documentation demonstrate compliance by RCPI with statutory obligations.

2. Scope

This policy applies to RCPI staff involved in programme development, co-ordination and marketing of programmes. It also applies to learners enrolled in programmes in RCPI of three months duration or longer. Prospective learners and participants enrolling on programmes of less than three months duration are referred to [Fees Policy \(PMEC-Pol-042\)](#).

This policy applies to RCPI staff involved in development, co-ordination and marketing of education programmes

3. Protection of Enrolled Learners - Guiding Principles

3.1 Information for Learners

- 3.1.1 A Programme handbook must be available to prospective learners when a programme is advertised and include information in line with QQI Policy and Criteria for Making Awards (2017), QQI Protection of Enrolled Learners: Protocols for the Implementation of Part 6 of the 2012 Act Guidelines for Providers (2013) and QQI Policy and Criteria for Access, Transfer and Progression in Relation to Learners for Providers of Further and Higher Education and Training (2015).
- 3.1.2 This information must include the awarding body, title and type of award, level of award, ECTS credits where appropriate, entry requirements, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) arrangements, details of PEL arrangements. The Award title must be consistent with QQI's Policy and Criteria for Making Awards (2017).
- 3.1.3 Information relating to PEL must specify the arrangements that RCPI has put in place in the event that RCPI ceases provision of a programme. This information will be available to prospective learners prior to payment of programme fee.
- 3.1.4 The information for prospective learners must contain a statement that in the event of implementation of PEL arrangements, that learner data will be shared with QQI and/or an alternate provider if alternate provision arrangements have been agreed.
- 3.1.5 Information about programmes must be approved by the Programme Board prior to publication.
- 3.1.6 RCPI will notify the enrolled learner within 14 days in writing of any change in the programme information that has been provided.

3.2 Arrangements for Protection of Enrolled Learners

- 3.2.1 RCPI is committed to examining each programme to determine whether a refund of fees most recently paid or alternate provision arrangements best apply to protect enrolled learners.
- 3.2.2 Where the programmes contain specialised content and alternate provision arrangements cannot be made, a refund of fees most recently paid by, or on behalf of an enrolled learner, will be made.
- 3.2.3 RCPI commits to providing QQI with details of the PEL arrangements in place when submitting a programme for validation.
- 3.2.4 PEL arrangements will be activated in the following circumstances:
- a) RCPI ceases trading
 - b) RCPI ceases provision of the programme while learners are enrolled on a specific programme
 - c) Withdrawal by QQI of programme validation
- 3.2.5 In the unlikely event of a PEL arrangement being activated, RCPI will immediately notify QQI and alternate providers, if applicable. RCPI will then provide formal notification in writing to QQI and the alternate provider or relevant financial institution.
- 3.2.6 Activation of PEL arrangements must be in line with [Protection of Enrolled Learner Procedure \(ED-SOP-043\)](#)
- 3.2.7 Learner data will be shared with QQI and/or an alternative provider in the event that PEL arrangements are activated.

4. Publication of Information for Learners

Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 sets out legal requirements for providers of education in relation to Protection of Enrolled Learners. These provisions are in respect of programmes of three months duration or longer

The 2012 Act seeks to ensure that:

- Learners have the opportunity to complete a programme leading to an award
- Learners are refunded the fees most recently paid in the event that the programme ceases prior to completion
- Learners are provided with adequate and accurate information about the programme that they wish to pursue and about the protection in place for them in the event that the programme ceases prior to completion

How can learners be protected?

Providers of education have two options in the event of ceasing the delivery of a programme for any reason:

- Arrangements with at least two other providers to facilitate transfer of learners to another programme, or where this is not practicable
- Refund of programme fees if programme duration is three months or less or if fees have been paid within three months of starting the programme

In the unlikely event that RCPI ceases provision of the programme you are enrolled on, this is covered by arrangements under section 65(4) of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012, whereby RCPI will refund fees if programme duration is three months or less or if fees have been paid, by or on behalf of learners, within three months of starting the programme.

In the event of a PEL arrangement being activated your learner data will be shared with Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI).

RCPI will notify you, the enrolled learner in writing of any change in the information already notified to you within 14 days after becoming aware of that change.

5. Reference Documents

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>

Quality Qualifications Ireland (2016) Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines

<https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/Core%20Statutory%20Quality%20Assurance%20Guidelines.pdf>

Quality Qualifications Ireland (2017a) Policy and Criteria for Making Awards

<https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/Policy%20and%20Criteria%20for%20Making%20Awards.pdf>

Quality Qualifications Ireland (2017b) Policies & Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education & Training

https://www.qqi.ie/Publications/Publications/Initial_Validation_policy_7_10_13.pdf

Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012

<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2012/act/28/enacted/en/html>