



Quality Assurance Handbook
Chapter 6
Access, Transfer & Progression

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Procedure	Responsibility	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessments used Modules taught Fees 		
<p>Services information is circulated to the relevant heads of function and Registrar to review and update. This will include information on :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Admissions procedures Student Support services Library services IT services 	Head of Service Function	Full and Part-time prospectus, programme brochures
<p>Website</p> <p>When information for the prospectus is approved by each School/Head of function this information is uploaded to the College website</p> <p>Where appropriate QuercusPlus is updated to ensure that information is consistent - fees, assessments etc</p>	<p>Webmaster</p> <p>Admissions Office Fees Office</p>	<p>Website</p> <p>Course/Module reconciliation list</p>
<p>Student Handbook</p> <p>The Student Support officer convenes the services team in advance of the annual orientation schedule</p> <p>Each service provider reviews its section of the student handbook for currency and accuracy</p> <p>The handbook is signed off and published</p> <p>Publication is electronic and details are updated on public website and student portal</p>	<p>Student Support Officer</p> <p>Heads of service function</p> <p>Student Support Officer</p> <p>Student Support Officer</p> <p>Each Head of service function</p> <p>Webmaster</p>	<p>Student Handbook</p> <p>Public Website</p> <p>Student Portal</p> <p>USB key</p>
Monitoring		
Monitor (Job Title)	Frequency	Monitoring Method(s)
Registrar	Annually	<p>Review of all published material for accuracy, consistency and clarity</p> <p>Review of reasons for withdrawal of learners to ensure that information provision reflects expectation</p>

6.2 Entry Arrangements

Procedure	Responsibility	Evidence
General Enquiry Procedure for all Direct Applicants:		

All general enquiries received via the various routes available must be entered on the CMS system and be actioned within 3 working days.	Person taking enquiry	Record on CMS
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6.2.1 Admissions Procedure for Direct Applicants

Procedure	Responsibility	Evidence
Applications received online or by paper based application must be processed via the Direct Application process with a decision relative to the application communicated to the applicant within 2 working weeks (where an interview is not required) or within 3 working days of completion of interview where relevant.	Admissions office	Acknowledgements
Candidates who apply without the relevant application fee should be contacted and application fee should be requested to allow for progression of their application.	Admissions office	Applications records
All information regarding application decisions should be clearly recorded on the standard 'Application Review Proforma' which must be attached and held with the original application form.	Admissions Office/Programme Director	Applications review proforma
All external transfer learners and mature learners must attend an interview.	Admissions Office	Interview schedules
Places offered to learners will be considered accepted once their letter confirming acceptance is returned to the college along with the relevant deposit payment.	Admissions Office	
Places that may be offered on the strength of the application and need not go to interview should be processed in the same manner as other direct applications.	Admissions Office	

6.2.1.1 Interview Procedure

Procedure	Responsibility	Evidence
Where an interview is required relative to a candidate's application, the time date and location should be agreed and communicated to the candidate in advance by the Admissions Office.	Admissions officer	Interview notes Application form Application proforma
Interviews should where possible be completed by two members of faculty one of which should be the relevant course director or a nominated equivalent.	Admissions Officer	
Feedback and any decisions made relative to an interview must be recorded on the standard 'Applicant Interview Proforma' which must be attached and held with the original application form.	Admissions Officer	

Procedure	Responsibility	Evidence
The proforma should be completed and signed by one of the interviewing members of faculty but should record the names of both attending interviewers.	Admissions Officer	

6.2.1.2 Pre - Registration Phase of Admission Procedures

Procedure	Responsibility	Evidence
A Letter is sent to accepting learners enclosing registration details, registration form and requesting proof of eligibility for free fees (full time courses only)	Admissions officer	Copies of student correspondence

6.2.2 CAO Standard Applications

Procedure	Responsibility	Evidence
Application for full time studies from candidates who are EU Nationals, who are under 23 on January 1 st of the year they are due to commence studies and have not completed another third level course should apply for entry to their chosen course through the CAO. Further details can be found at www.cao.ie . Any queries relative to this process should be entered on the CMS system and actioned within 3 working days or directed to the CAO:	Admissions officer	CAO records CMS records

6.2.3 Procedures for evaluation of programmes for advanced standing

Advanced standing is a term which covers the situation where any learner graduating from a course offered outside of National College of Ireland is offered admission (usually to a year other than year 1) to an NCI programme on the basis of an agreement between NCI and another HEI. It will not be necessary for the individual academic credentials of the applicant to be re-approved by the Programme Director.

This process includes arrangements with international HEIs. Reference in these cases should be made to the NQAI database of international qualifications. See: <http://www.qualificationsrecognition.ie>. The academic culture of a country should be taken into account eg assessment systems used, teaching methodologies used in order to ensure that the learner is not disadvantaged if admitted to NCI.

6.2.3.1 Process

The proposal for considering a course for advanced standing should be brought to the attention of the Programme Director of the admitting programme. This proposal may come from the Admissions Office, International Office, Marketing Department or Academic School.

The Programme Director will review the programme and provisionally decide if there is a sufficient fit with the admitting programme. In order to consider the proposal, the Programme Director must be in possession of a full set of programme documentation detailing learning outcomes of the programme and of the modules that form the programme.

If the Programme Director considers that a sufficient fit does not exist between the programmes in question, s/he should consult with the Dean of School prior to rejecting it.

If a fit exists, a proposal to consider the programme for advanced standing will be considered by the Programme Committee. It is suggested that this become a standing item on the agenda for programme committee meetings.

The School Committee will approve on the recommendation of the Programme Committee any proposal for admission by advanced standing.

The Dean of School will report such approvals to Academic Council.

The Registrar will advise the HEI/organization of any successful or rejected applications for admission through advanced standing.

Such approvals will last for 5 years or less should the Programme Committee wish to review it.

6.3 Recognition of Prior Learning

Process:	Recognition of Prior Learning		
Document Name:	Policy & Procedure for Admission & Exemption of applicants using Recognition of Prior Learning		
Reference:	QASS- 6.ADMX	Version :	1.0
Purpose:			
Approved By:	Academic Council	Date Approved:	Nov 2010
Related Policies:	QASS-3PDDER.X: Programme Development QASS.4.ASS6: Module Assessment Strategies QASS.4.ASS11: Criteria for Granting Awards & Progression Eligibility		
FETAC Cross Reference	B5.X		

National College of Ireland greatly 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 the College through the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process. RPL may be used as a supplement or alternative to formal learning for programme admission or module exemption.

If successful, the applicant may be admitted to a programme and/or granted an exemption from a module or modules within a programme. RPL is determined by a process of matching learning outcomes from formal courses with learning outcomes achieved by experience or other formal learning

It is the responsibility of RPL applicants to provide sufficient evidence to enable such a determination to be made.

The implementation of the scheme is supported by Programme Directors, Programme Committees, Schools and the Admissions Office.

Overarching Principles

- Existing programmes, programme stages and modules have defined learning outcomes
- Existing programmes and modules have defined assessment strategies which outline the guidelines for RPL
- Assessment for RPL is governed by the assessment policies and regulations of the College and is therefore subject to the principles of external examination, peer review and second marking.
- Assessment for RPL will take place within the programme committee but will be subject to review and monitoring to ensure consistency. A quorum of 3 members of the programme committee should review this assessment.
- Assessment for RPL will be considered at assessment boards
- Selected staff have undertaken specialised training in these processes and will assist learners in the preparation of their portfolios and in the selection of courses.

- It is expected that employers will assist NCI staff in the Assessment/Evaluation processes and in the validation of portfolios via provision of reference or other methods as agreed with the learner at the beginning of the assessment process.
- Learners will require to be assisted by all involved, in articulating what they have learned – theory and practice – from their life/work experience and in clarifying their claims for creditable achievement.
- RPL will normally be considered for programmes of 60 credits or more. Programme Committees may recommend use of RPL for smaller volume programmes in the context of admission where the intended audience for the programme merits it.

Definition

Prior Experiential Learning or learning gained prior to enrolment on a course is defined as knowledge and skills acquired through life, work experience and study, not formally attested through formal certification.

Experience is an input and learning outcomes are the result of a successful learning process. Therefore, academic credit can be awarded only for achievement of learning outcomes, not for experience per se.

The achievement of these learning outcomes is dependent on the learner and the quality and duration of the experience; this can include experience gained as a result of involvement in employment, community activity, home duties, sport and other life/work experience.

Who is the scheme for?

Credit for Prior Learning is intended for those who have undertaken formal study in equivalent modules or programmes and by successfully completing those modules are exempted from taking a stage or modules at NCI.

Credit for Prior Experiential Learning is intended for mature students who may or may not have had structured formal education but who have learned from their involvement in employment, community activities, home duties, sport etc. This learning when evaluated both qualitatively and quantitatively might entitle them to credits, exemptions from a course of study or admission to a programme without having the formal academic entry requirements.

Such individuals might be in employment (including self-employed), unemployed, currently retired from employment or never have been in employment.

NOTE: Prior Experiential Learning is not to be confused with Concurrent Experiential Learning which is learning planned and structured into a course as a way of achieving certain of the learning outcomes for that course. A common form of Concurrent Experiential Learning would consist of a student being placed in employment in industry for a fixed number of weeks.

Quality of Learning

The criteria to be employed by academic staff when assessing prior experiential learning are of paramount importance in ensuring that adequacy and consistency of standards are maintained.

The learning should imply a conceptual as well as a practical grasp of the knowledge or competence required and be applicable outside the environment in which it was acquired. It must be emphasised that experience is not what is being evaluated but learning.

If credit is to be given to an applicant for prior experiential learning gained outside the College environment, the College must be satisfied that the applicant has already mastered learning outcomes of a subject or module on a particular course. Only those approved courses which have their individual subjects or modules described in terms of learning outcomes will be suitable for participation in this scheme.

For admission to a programme or exemption from a programme stage, the learner must clearly demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes of the level prior to admission. E.g. admission to stage 2 of a 3 year honours degree (level 7 of the NFQ) in Business will require the learner to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes associated with a Level 6 Higher Certificate in Business Studies or equivalent. Therefore the assessment that is set by the programme team, must refer to these learning outcomes. See appendix 1 for an example of how this might be expressed.

Quantity of Learning

To avoid fragmentation, applicants may gain only exemption from entire subjects on courses as a result of assessed prior learning.

The decision in relation to an applicant's eligibility for exemption from an entire subject on the basis of Prior Experiential Learning, lies with the assessor(s).

However, assessors should use the guideline that an applicant must meet a minimum of half the learning outcomes of a particular subject in order to gain exemption from that subject.

Normally applicants may not be exempted from more than half the subjects on a course. However, if a case arises where this may appear appropriate, the awarding body must be consulted in advance.

Where exemption is sought from a stage, learners should demonstrate that they have met the minimum stage learning outcomes as described in the programme validation document.

Who may assess

Appropriate standards must be maintained throughout the process of the assessment of prior learning. In order to achieve these standards, the College will organize workshops on the assessment of Prior Experiential Learning and it is expected that only those academic staff who have participated in these workshops will be involved in the assessment process within the College

Criteria for Determining Learning

In assessing whether learning gained from experience matches learning outcomes for a particular subject, attention should be paid by assessors to the following criteria:

The appropriate balance between theory and practical application

A common issue that arises with traditional learners is that, although they may have scored highly on examinations which concentrate on the theoretical principles of a subject, they are weak when it comes to the application of these principles. On the other hand, the common issue with experiential learners is that they can 'do' but because they have not really mastered the general principles that underlie a subject they cannot discuss the concepts embodying those principles in an analytical way.

Therefore, assessors should ensure that applicants being considered for credit or exemption on the basis of their prior learning have achieved the appropriate balance between applied and theoretical learning that is appropriate to the subject.

Transferability of learning

Learning acquired through prior experience must be transferable to contexts other than

that of the learning environment within which it was acquired. For example, the subject Accountancy on a particular course might list learning outcomes requiring a student to understand a range of accounting methods using different computing applications. However, an employee in an accounting firm might know how to complete the accounts in that firm only, or when a particular software package is being used. In such a situation this individual would be required to acquire further knowledge and skills before exemption from the subject could be granted.

Academic level of learning

When assessing learning gained from prior experience care should be taken to ensure that this learning is at the appropriate academic level.

Granting of Awards

If the learner is being admitted to the award stage of a programme or is being exempted from a module that contributes to the award classification of a programme, a grade or mark must be assigned to any prior learning in order for the learner to be eligible for an award other than at PASS.

If a grade or mark cannot be assigned, the learner will be eligible for a PASS award only. REF: Sectoral Convention 5: on Post Award Achievement required for an additional major award at the same level

Subject to the following conditions, a graduate holding a higher education and training award may present for and, if successful, achieve a further major award at the same level within the same generic area of study but involving the attainment of new learning outcomes (i.e. post award achievement).

If the area of specialisation of the post award achievement is not substantially different and/or if the associated credit is insufficient for the granting of a new major award, the applicant may be granted a minor, special purpose or supplemental award or a Single Subject Certificate (issued by a recognised institution of the Council or by HETAC).

The following table sets out the minimum volume of newly certified learning required of a candidate seeking to qualify for an additional major award at the same level within the same generic area of study. Please note that repeating learning substantially equivalent to previously certified learning is not included in the calculation of post award credit in the following table.

Award currently held	Additional award sought	Post award credit for newly certified learning
Higher Certificate	Higher Certificate	A minimum of 60 credits at level 6
Ordinary Bachelor Degree	Ordinary Bachelor Degree	A minimum of 60 credits at level 7
Honours Bachelor Degree	Honours Bachelor Degree	A minimum of 120 credits at least 60 of which are at level 8.
Master's Degree	Master's Degree	A complete programme

Pass by Compensation

A learner who receives a module exemption is not eligible to be considered for pass by compensation

Setting RPL assessment

Procedure	Responsibility	Evidence
The programme team agrees at validation, the RPL assessment for each module	Programme Director with Programme Team	Validation Document - Sample Assessment

<p>and stage of the programme as appropriate:</p> <p>This assessment is set subject to the principles of assessment as set out in Chapter 4 of the QA handbook</p> <p>The assessment will have criteria for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognition of prior formal learning • Recognition of prior experiential learning 		
<p>Assessment will be reviewed annually as part of the annual review process and amended as required as part of the overall module and programme assessment strategy. This will normally happen in June of the preceding academic year</p>	<p>Programme Director</p> <p>Module Owner</p>	<p>Annual Report</p>

Application Procedure

Procedure	Responsibility	Evidence
Applicants for admission to, and/or exemption from subjects/courses on the grounds of prior learning should make their applications in the first instance to the programme director	Applicant	
<p>In the case where application is based on formal learning, the applicant should include copies of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module descriptor of the module studied • Transcript of results <p>The programme director should evaluate this request in conjunction with the programme team in the case of specialized subject knowledge being required</p> <p>The decision of the programme team should be noted on the application form</p> <p>The student record should then be updated, noting the exemption(s) granted</p>	<p>Applicant</p> <p>Programme Director</p> <p>Admissions officer/Programme Director</p> <p>Admissions officer</p>	Applications for RPL
Schools should take account of the time needed for the evaluation of prior learning and for guidance for applicants in the applications process.		
<p>All applicants seeking credit for Prior Experiential Learning should be interviewed by academic staff and assigned an academic advisor. This process has three main objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that the applicant has selected the most suitable course for his/her needs. • To review the experience gained by the applicant so as to identify potentially creditable learning. • To advise the applicant on the preparation of a portfolio. 	Admissions officer	
The applicant should then be requested to produce, within an agreed period of time (typically four/five weeks), the portfolio describing the prior experience in the context of potentially creditable learning. Experience cited as undertaken while in employment should, where possible, be certified by the employer concerned.	Academic Advisor	Letter outlining requirements
If the learner is unable to provide a portfolio of assessment, s/he will be requested to undertake	Academic Advisor	Assessment criteria

Effectiveness Monitoring		
Monitor (Job	Frequency	Monitoring Method(s)

Procedure	Responsibility	Evidence
The portfolio, when received by the College, should be scrutinised by the assessor(s). This involves the identification and evaluation of prior learning encompassed in the portfolio. Tests or other assessment instruments appropriate to the applicant's needs may be used as required.	Assessor	Marking scheme
Having evaluated the learning gained, the assessors must now match this learning with the learning outcomes of the subject(s) from which the applicant may be exempted. Except where exemption is being sought from the award stage of a programme, no grade or mark should be allocated to the exempted subjects as the applicant's performance in examinations will be determined only on the basis of marks gained in other subjects which are examined in the normal way. For HETAC awards, if exemption is being sought for elements of an award stage, a mark must be assigned in order for the learner to achieve a honours classification	Assessor & second marker	Evaluation form
The evidence provided will be read and analysed by the assessor (s) to check for evidence of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valid - Does the evidence meet all or part of the outcomes or assessment criteria? Sufficient - Is the evidence sufficient proof of the outcomes or assessment criteria? Current - Is the evidence recent. The College normally would expect that students experience or qualifications had been gained within the last 5 years? Authentic - Is the evidence the students own work? All assessment under RPL for exemption/admission must be reviewed by the external examiner /external authenticator	Assessor & Second marker Assessor/Examinations office	External examiner reports (HETAC) External authenticator reports (FETAC)
Procedure	Responsibility	Evidence
the assessment associated with the module/programme		

Process of Evaluation

Title)		
Registrar	Annually - November	Review of sample applications in each category from application to documentation received, periods of time between communications and any correspondence from applicant/learner Review of progress of learner where experiential RPL applied for entry Review of cross section of assessors to ensure consistency Review reports by external examiners etc

6.4 Registration

Procedure	Responsibility	Evidence
Registration Phase of Admissions Procedure for New Learners		
<p>Registration Day for Full Time New Learners New learners registering with the college for the first time will have received information inviting them to registration and orientation days at the college. On registration day learners will be required to attend the college to fulfil a number of duties:</p> <p>Pay their learner services fees if they have not already done so through the CAO or online. Supply additional information on their parents occupational and socio economic background for the Department of Education and Science. Receive their Learner cards.</p> <p>In cases where a programme or a learner is funded by a third party, this is annotated on the learner record and the learner is registered</p> <p>For FETAC programmes: Registration takes place on the 1st evening of the programme with the assistance of programme staff</p> <p>Returning Learners Registration</p> <p>Learners are sent a change of details form along with Giro/Invoice for fees. They are asked to return the form, only if there are changes to be made to their details.</p> <p>Student Records office checks registered list of learners daily and pre-printed learner cards are sent by post as soon as status is changed to Registered.</p>	<p>Student Services office</p> <p>Fees office</p> <p>Programme Co-ordinator</p> <p>Student Services office</p>	

Procedure		Responsibility	Evidence
Off-Campus Learners Registration			
All Off-Campus registration is by post or online and it follows the same procedure as returning learners			
Monitoring			
Monitor (Job Title)	Frequency	Monitoring Method(s)	
Registrar	Annually - November	Review of sample applications in each category from application to documentation received, periods of time between communications and any correspondence from applicant/learner	

6.5 Facilitating Diversity

6.5.1 Admissions Policies

The procedures for CAO applicants outlined above apply to these policies:

6.5.1.1 Admissions Policies for Applicants from Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Areas.

NCI is a member of the HEAR (Higher Education Access Route) Initiative. The Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) is a college and university admissions scheme which offers places on reduced points and extra college support to school leavers from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

HEAR has been set up by a number of colleges and universities as evidence shows that socio-economic disadvantage can have a negative effect on how well a student does at school and whether they go on to college.

HEAR Applicants must meet a range of financial, social and cultural indicators to be considered for a reduced points place and extra college support.

6.5.1.2 Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme

LCVP Learners may apply for all National College of Ireland full-time day courses through the CAO system by 01 February annually.

NCI recognises the LCVP for admission purposes and results in the Link Modules element of the programme will be considered as follows:

Distinction	70
Merit	50

This is automatically computed by the CAO. The Link Modules may be used as one of the six subjects for overall points calculation but will not be considered as a subject for the purposes of minimum entry requirements.

6.5.1.3 Learners with a disability

Learners with a disability, learning or health difficulty may gain admission to National College of Ireland either through standard or non-standard entry. National College of Ireland (NCI) is committed to a policy of equal opportunity in education and to ensuring complete and equitable access to all facets of College life for students with disabilities as can be reasonably provided. Applicants with a disability applying for full time undergraduate courses at the College apply through the Disability Access Route to Education (DARE), a national supplementary admissions scheme which offers college places on reduced points to school leavers with disabilities. DARE has been set up by a number of colleges as evidence shows that disability can have a negative impact on educational attainment at second level. Full details on DARE are available on www.accesscollege.ie

Standard Entry

The term standard entry refers to learners who obtain, or expect to obtain, the necessary Leaving Certificate points and qualify for a place in a third level programme of their choice. Standard entry applications are processed through the Central Applications Office (CAO) and learners with a disability, learning or health difficulty are encouraged to disclose this information on their CAO application form. Learners who indicate a disability, learning or health difficulty in this way will receive a supplementary form in March which should be completed and returned to the CAO as requested. The returned form will be forwarded to the Learner Services Officer in National College of Ireland.

The purpose of this process is to alert National College of Ireland to the particular needs of learners who indicate a disability, learning or health difficulty on the CAO form, so that preparations can be made to provide the necessary supports and to make appropriate arrangements as required. ***Disclosure of a disability, learning or health difficulty will in no way affect a learner's application.***

Non-Standard Entry

National College of Ireland may admit **a learner when it accepts that a learner's disability, learning or health difficulty, prevented the learner from gaining the minimum entry points / requirements for a particular programme.**

Full-time Programmes

Applicants with a disability applying for full time undergraduate courses at the College apply through the Disability Access Route to Education (DARE), a national supplementary admissions scheme which offers college places on reduced points to school leavers with

disabilities. DARE has been set up by a number of colleges as evidence shows that disability can have a negative impact on educational attainment at second level. Full details on DARE are available on www.accesscollege.ie

1. NCI will ensure that general recruitment materials make explicit reference to DARE, and that these materials are available in appropriately accessible formats.
2. The Admissions Office will treat queries from applicants applying through DARE in the same way as all other applications.
3. Applicants with a disability applying for full time undergraduate courses at NCI apply to the CAO at www.cao.ie and indicate they have a disability/specific learning difficulty on the CAO application form. Applicants must then complete a Supplementary Information Form and submit specific disability documentation from an accepted consultant/ professional. This documentation must verify the disability and the impact of the disability on the applicant's education to date. Details on accepted consultants/ professionals and documentation required are available from www.accesscollege.ie
4. There are specific deadlines for applying to DARE. Closing dates are strictly adhered to and late applications are not accepted. Details of closing dates are available on www.accesscollege.ie
5. **To be eligible for DARE an applicant's disability must have had a significant impact** on his/her educational performance. **To assess an applicant's eligibility for DARE,** specific criteria have been developed to determine the significance of each disability and the impact on educational attainment. Applications are assessed by professionals in participating colleges who have expertise in, and knowledge of, the impact of disability on educational attainment. Eligibility criteria for DARE are available on www.accesscollege.ie
6. NCI admits applicants who are eligible through DARE through a process of reduced Leaving Certificate points. The points reduction for each programme is determined annually by the minimum entry points that are set following the Leaving Certificate results. The maximum points reduction for all programmes each year is 50 points.
7. Applicants who are eligible through DARE must meet minimum college and course entry requirements. Details of college and course entry requirements are available on www.ncirl.ie

8. Mature students (aged 23 years of age or more on January 1st of the year of application for study) and FETAC students do not compete on the grounds of Leaving Certificate points and, as such, are not eligible for DARE. There are different admissions routes for mature and FETAC students and details of these routes are available from the Admissions Office.
9. The Disability Support Service at NCI will, on the basis of the information received, and in conjunction with the relevant academic and administrative functions, put in place any reasonable accommodations that are deemed necessary to allow the student to participate fully in college life. After an offer has been made students will be invited to attend a Needs Assessment to discuss the details of any reasonable accommodations.
10. If required, appropriate orientation programmes for individuals or small groups of **students will be arranged, and will take place prior to the college's general orientation programme. The college's general orientation programme will also be inclusive of the requirements of students with disabilities.**

Part-time Programmes

A learner may be entitled to flexibility on minimum entry requirements if the College **accepts that a learner's disability, learning or health difficulty negatively impacted on the learner's ability to meet formal entry criteria** for a particular programme.

Individuals applying for part-time programmes apply through the standard National College of Ireland application form. If an individual due to her/his disability, learning or health difficulty, does not satisfy the minimum entry requirements for a particular programme, they are asked to write an accompanying letter requesting flexibility on the entry requirements. The letter should be addressed to the Admissions Officer and should introduce the learner and outline her/his educational history to date. Where appropriate any factors which may have caused an educational disadvantage should be detailed. National College of Ireland requests that all applications for flexibility on entry requirements are **accompanied by verification of a learner's disability, learning or health difficulty** and two references, one of which must be an academic reference. Please note that National College of Ireland will only accept verification from an Educational Psychologist or a Medical Consultant/Specialist. General Practitioner (G.P.) letters are not accepted as suitable medical evidence. Applications from these learners will be assessed by a Special Admissions Board and learners may be asked to attend for interview. Learners must satisfy college authorities that they are academically able for the programme they wish to pursue.

The Learner Services Officer will meet with all learners with a disability, learning or health difficulty (who accept a place with National College of Ireland) before the commencement of the academic year. The purpose of the meeting is to determine the level of support required and to advise on the availability of services. Learners who gain entry but elect not to disclose their disability on the CAO application form or the National College of Ireland application form are encouraged to contact the Learner Services Officer as soon as possible to discuss appropriate supports which can be provided.

Procedures for Direct Applicants as outlined above apply to the following:

6.5.1.4 BTEC (Business Training and Education Council) External Transfers

National Diploma (BTEC) graduates are eligible to apply for a place on Year 1 of the Higher Certificate in Business Studies course. The application process will include an interview. These learners can be eligible for free fees.

Higher National Diploma (BTEC) graduates are eligible to apply for a place on Year 2 of the Higher Certificate in Business Studies

6.5.1.5 Dublin Dockland Development Authority Special Entry Initiative (DDDA)

- 10% of full-time places are available for residents of the DDDA area.
- The Applicants family must be in receipt of social welfare payments.
- Evidence of residence in the DDDA area is also required.

Who can apply?

- Leaving Certificate and Mature learners living specifically in the Docklands Area.
- Entry Requirements are the same as those required by the Area Based Partnership Initiative
- Applications should be made directly to the National College of Ireland by 31st May annually

How to apply for special entry initiatives?

Applications should be made directly to the College. Applications can be made online at www.ncirl.ie Application forms may be requested from the Admissions Office, National College of Ireland, Mayor Street, IFSC, Dublin 1. Tel: 01 4498585. The deadline for the receipt of applications is the 31st May each year.

Admission Process for special entry initiatives

Applications will be screened to access that the learners meet the specific requirements. All Leaving Certificate Learners must meet the programme minimum Entry Requirements. Interviews will be set up for the months of May and June for all eligible applicants with relevant course directors or nominated faculty. Where possible interviews should be completed with a minimum of two members of faculty in attendance. If the applicant is successful, an offer letter will be sent in June.

6.5.2 Student Support Policies

The Disability Support Officer is the main point of contact for learners with a disability, learning or health difficulty. The Disability Support Officer works closely with faculty and staff to ensure that learners with disabilities, learning or health difficulties are fully supported, both personally and academically, while at college.

Disclosing a Disability, Learning or Health Difficulty

National College of Ireland recognises that disclosing a disability, learning or health difficulty is a personal and often difficult decision which can cause learners some concern. There is no obligation on a learner to disclose a disability, learning or health difficulty but disclosure is an important first step in receiving appropriate supports which are designed to help learners reach their full potential. The College strongly encourages learners to disclose information on their disability, learning or health difficulty to the Disability Support Officer before they apply to college or at any time during their studies. Disclosing a disability, learning or health difficulty at application stage will ensure that appropriate services are coordinated in advance of the academic year.

Benefits of disclosing a disability, learning or health difficulty

- The learner can discuss his/her specific needs with the Disability Support Officer to ensure appropriate services are provided.
- It may be possible for the College to apply for funding on behalf of the learner if the learner has a need for specific supports and/or assistance arising from the disability.
- A learner may benefit from more sophisticated and advanced supports than were available in second level education.
- Disclosure of a disability, learning or health difficulty will ensure that the College is responsive to the needs of other learners with similar difficulties.
- Disclosing a disability at application stage may entitle a learner to flexibility on entry requirements if NCI accepts that a **learner's disability, learning or health difficulty** prevented him/her from gaining the minimum entry points for a particular programme.

Procedure for disclosing a disability, learning or health difficulty

Procedure	Responsibility	Evidence
<p data-bbox="188 1330 416 1359">Code of Practice</p> <p data-bbox="188 1391 927 1671">The Code of Practice is a policy document which outlines the rights & responsibilities of the College in the delivery of support and the rights & responsibilities of the learner in the receipt of support. The Code of Practice must be signed by the learner before accommodations and/or supports will be provided. The Code of Practice also contains a confidentiality agreement and learners can state if they would like their information to remain private.</p>		

<p>Disclosure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners can disclose a disability, learning or health difficulty when they apply to study at NCI on the CAO application form (full-time learners) or on the NCI application form (part-time learners). • Disclosure of a disability will in no way affect a learner's application. • The Student Support Officer will meet with all learners with a reported disability who accept a place with National College of Ireland before the commencement of the academic year. • The purpose of the meeting is to assess the needs of the learner and to advise on the availability of services. Learners who gain entry but elect not to disclose their disability at application stage are encouraged to contact the Student Support Officer as soon as possible to discuss appropriate supports which can be provided. • NCI requests that learners inform the College of their disability, learning or health difficulty 4 weeks in advance of requiring accommodations. 		
<p>Confidentiality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any documentation or information presented in disclosing a disability, learning or health difficulty is held by the Student Support Officer and will not be disclosed to a third party unless authorised by the learner. • The Code of Practice contains a confidentiality agreement which must be signed by the learner before any personal information is released. In order to avail of particular supports disclosure of information may be necessary. • In such instances the supports will only be provided if the learner consents to have his/her details released and, at that stage, information will only be disclosed to individuals who are immediately involved in the delivery of support 		

Procedure	Responsibility	Evidence
<p>Needs Assessment</p> <p>The first meeting with the Learner Services Officer is an opportunity for the learner to learn more about the support services available at NCI. The Learner Services Officer will conduct a Needs Assessment to determine the level of support required and the accommodations which may need to be introduced. The Needs Assessment will focus on the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports provided at second level or other third level institutions • Information on disability, learning or health difficulty and possible impact on education • Study history 		

Procedure	Responsibility	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology skills • Report from Specialist/Educational Psychologist <p>Following the Needs Assessment learners will be provided with a copy of the Disability Code of Practice which must be signed before accommodations and/or supports will be provided. The Code of Practice also contains a confidentiality agreement and learners can state if they would like their information to remain private.</p>		
<p>Provision of Supports</p> <p>The purpose of the Needs Assessment is to determine the level of support required and the types of accommodations, academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids which may need to be introduced. The following guidelines are considered when deciding on appropriate supports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendations from a learner’s specialist. • Recommendations from advisory bodies such as AHEAD, National Council for the Blind etc. • Best practice in other third level institutions. • Previous supports which the learner has benefited from. • The learner’s preference for a particular support. • Supports which have benefited previous learners of National College of Ireland. <p>Learners must sign the Code of Practice which details the rules and regulations governing the provision of supports before accommodations, academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids are coordinated on the learner’s behalf.</p>		
<p>Report to Associate/Faculty</p> <p>Following the Needs Assessment and providing the learner has consented to have his/her information disclosed a report is circulated to faculty which details the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General information on the learner’s disability, learning or health difficulty. • Information on the learner’s experience of his/her disability, learning or health difficulty and how this impacts on his/her learning. • Information on the accommodations organised through Learner Services. • Information on the exam accommodations which will be introduced. • Suggested teaching strategies for faculty. 	<p>Student Support/Disability Support Officer</p>	<p>Reports to Faculty</p>
<p>Exam Arrangements (See also Reasonable Accommodations)</p>		

Procedure	Responsibility	Evidence
<p>National College of Ireland is committed to ensuring that all learners compete on an even academic platform while at college. Learners with a disability, learning or health difficulty, are entitled to apply for appropriate supports and arrangements for examinations. Alternative arrangements are offered so that learners with a disability, learning or health difficulty, can perform to the best of their ability during examinations.</p> <p>The Student Support Officer conducts a Needs Assessment with all learners with a disability, learning or health difficulty to determine appropriate educational supports and exam accommodations. Alternative arrangements for examinations are guided by the following conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verification of a learner's disability, learning or health difficulty, must be provided. National College of Ireland will only accept verification from an Educational Psychologist or a Medical Consultant/Specialist. General Practitioner (G.P.) letters are not accepted as suitable medical evidence. • Where appropriate National College of Ireland will endeavour to implement the recommendations from a learner's Educational Psychologist or Medical Consultant/Specialist. • While every effort will be made to meet the individual needs of every learner, it may not be possible to meet all requirements in every case. • Learners must contact the Student Support Officer a minimum of four weeks before examinations to avail of alternative accommodations. Late application may result in some or all of the accommodations not being provided. 	<p>Student Support Officer/Disability Support Officer/ Exams Officer Programme Co-ordinators Associate/Faculty</p>	<p>Schedule of assessment/examination accommodations</p>

Monitoring		
Monitor (Job Title)	Frequency	Monitoring Method(s)
Registrar	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review, subject to confidentiality of the process of student support from application to examination accommodations • Review of learner satisfaction with services provided • Review of faculty satisfaction with process

6.5.3 Learning Support

The objective of the Learning Support Tutor Service is to equip learners with the necessary skills to help them become more effective and efficient learners. Learning support at National College of Ireland is a fluid relevant Service, conceived to meet the individual needs of learners while addressing key issues in academic development.

Issues that can be addressed through Learning Support

Learners can seek advice or guidance on an extensive range of issues which include:

- Learning Styles
- Study Skills
- Note-taking
- Revision Techniques
- Exam Performance
- Referencing
- Project Writing
- Organisational Skills / Time Management
- Reading Skills
- Motivation
- Avoiding Procrastination
- Learning & Remembering
- Improving Concentration
- Thinking Critically
- Analysing Questions
- Reducing Exam Anxiety

In addition to individual sessions, telephone and on-line support, the Support Tutor can provide class or small group workshops upon request. Learners with dyslexia and other learning difficulties can benefit from a programme of tuition, which incorporates effective learning strategies, while working on some of the key academic challenges the learner may face in third level education.

Learners with Specific Learning Difficulties

The Support Tutor provides specialist tuition for learners with dyslexia and other learning difficulties. Learners can be screened for dyslexia and the Support Tutor can advise if difficulties are consistent with a dyslexic profile. Learners may be referred to an Educational Psychologist for a full assessment if appropriate. Learners with dyslexia and other learning difficulties benefit from the general support provided in addition to specific instruction in the following areas:

- Improving sentence structure
- Punctuation, grammar, hand-writing and spelling
- Building a more complete vocabulary
- Active reading (SQ3R technique)
- Mind mapping
- Proof reading

The Student Support Officer conducts a Needs Assessment with all learners with a reported learning difficulty. Following the Needs Assessment the Learner Services Officer may recommend a programme of tuition with the Support Tutor. For the initial appointment with the Support Tutor learners are asked to bring a copy of their course outline (with details of modules and assessments) and, if appropriate, a piece of writing the learner is currently working on.

Learners with dyslexia are encouraged to meet with the Support Tutor rather than receiving e-mailed comments on written work. Proof-reading and reviews of e-mailed essays and projects can be arranged but this is usually following at least one meeting to discuss a **learner's particular needs**. **A telephone appointment can be arranged for off-campus learners.**

Making an Appointment

Appointments to meet with the Support Tutor are organised by the Learning Support Officer and support is delivered through the following channels:

Individual Learning Support

Students can make an appointment to meet with the Support Tutor for advice on study skills and related matters. Appointments are typically one hour in duration and students are **requested to give a minimum of one week's notice when making an appointment.**

On-line Support

Students who are unable to make an appointment or who feel that an entire session is unnecessary can e-mail their query to the Support Tutor. As with individual appointments students are requested to e-mail their queries one week in advance of requiring feedback.

Telephone support

Off-campus students who are unable to meet with the Support Tutor can schedule a **telephone appointment. Students are requested to give a minimum of one week's notice** when making an appointment.

Workshops

The Support Tutor will also conduct 'hot topic' workshops relevant to specific classes or particular times of the year. If a class or group of students would like to request a workshop on a particular topic they are asked to contact the Learner Services Officer.

Cancellation

Students must give a minimum of 48 hours notice to the Support Tutor if they are unable to make an appointment. Failure to attend a maximum of 2 sessions without formal cancellation will result in a review of the service provided to the Learner.

6.6 Counselling Service

College life can sometimes produce a great deal of stress. The reasons for this can range from a heavy workload and imminent deadlines, to difficulties of a personal nature. The Counselling Service provides an opportunity for the learner to discuss any difficulties he/she may be experiencing with a qualified person. The counsellor will help by listening without judgement, offering new perspectives and working with the learner on suitable strategies to alleviate the situation.

Issues that can be addressed through the Counselling Service

The counsellor helps learners with a wide range of difficulties and common problems which are addressed through the Service include:

- Alcohol
- Anxiety
- Bereavement
- Confidence
- Depression
- Drugs
- Exam Anxiety
- Family Issues
- Loneliness
- Physical Abuse
- Procrastination
- Relationships
- Self Harm
- Sexual Abuse
- Stress
- Suicidal Thoughts

Cost to the Learner

The counselling Service is provided free of charge to all full-time registered learners at National College of Ireland. Part-time learners who wish to avail of the Service are advised to contact the counsellor directly and a fee for the Service will apply. Contact details are available from the Student Services Officer.

Confidentiality

The information shared in a counselling session is considered highly confidential and will only be disclosed to a third party in exceptional circumstances such as:

- When there is a risk of harm to the learner or others
- When there is a legal obligation to share information

Making an Appointment

The counsellor meets with learners on-site at National College of Ireland. Appointments are scheduled on Tuesday mornings between 9am – 1pm and Wednesday afternoons from 2pm – 7pm. The counsellor will meet learners outside these hours in emergency situations. Appointments to meet with the counsellor are organised by the Student Support Officer.

Monitoring		
Monitor (Job Title)	Frequency	Monitoring Method(s)
Registrar	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review, subject to confidentiality of the provision of these services and usage by learners • Review of learner satisfaction with services provided • Review of faculty satisfaction with process

6.7 Policy and Procedure for Protection of Learners – Cessation of Programmes

NCI is not subject to Section 43 of the Qualifications Act as NCI is a not for profit charitable organisation whose sole objective is the promotion of education. It is however, National College of Ireland's policy that should a programme commence, it will be offered to completion for the specific intake of students.

National College of Ireland			
Procedure Title:	Cessation of Programmes - Prior to commencement	Version: 1.0	Date: 17 th October 06
Purpose: To ensure that the policies in relation to the cessation of programmes are implemented -			
Staff Involved: Deans of School, Finance Office, Registrar, Admissions Office			
Method(s) used to carry out this procedure	Who does it	Evidence generated by this procedure	
Course application numbers are monitored daily	DOS/Registrar	Reports generated from system	

At least 5 days prior to the proposed start date for NQF Levels 5-6 and at least 2 weeks prior to the start date for course at NQF Levels 7-8; prospective students are contacted to advise if the required numbers for the class group are not materialising.	Admissions Office	Correspondence Records
Decision is made not to run the course	Registrar/HOS	Record of meeting notes
Prospective students are offered other options within NCI course offering	Admissions Office	Correspondence records
Prospective students not placed are given refund of any fees paid	Registrar/Finance Office	Refund records
Monitoring		
Monitor (Job Title)	Frequency	Monitoring Method(s)
Director of Quality Assurance	Twice annually	Review of correspondence Review of Survey of Student Satisfaction

National College of Ireland			
Procedure Title:	Cessation of Programmes – Post Commencement	Version: 1.0	Date: 17 th October 06
Purpose: To ensure that the policies in relation to the cessation of programmes are implemented -			
Staff Involved: Deans of School, Finance Office, Registrar, Careers Officer			
Method(s) used to carry out this procedure	Who does it	Evidence generated by this procedure	
Decision is made to cease running of the course	Registrar	Record of meeting notes	
Students are contacted by Registrar. If appropriate the students are met by Registrar	Registrar	Correspondence Records	
Registrar's Office contacts other institutions to facilitate transfer	Registrar	Correspondence Records	
Students are offered other options within NCI course offering	Registrar	Correspondence Records	
Students are offered guidance on transfers to other institutions	Careers Officer	Record of meeting notes	
Students not placed are given refund of any fees paid for that academic year.	Registrar/Finance Office	Refund records	
Certification is provided to students for any modules that have been completed if approved by the validating body	Registrar	Examination Board results Transcripts Certification returned to awarding bodies	
Monitoring			
Monitor (Job Title)	Frequency	Monitoring Method(s)	
Director of Quality Assurance	Annually	Review of correspondence Review of Survey of Student Satisfaction	

Appendix

Disability Support Services

Code of Practice for Learners with a Disability, Learning or Health Difficulty

Rights and Responsibilities of the Learner

Every learner with a documented disability, learning or health difficulty has a right to:

Equal access to programmes, services, jobs, activities and facilities offered at the College.

1. Reasonable and appropriate accommodations, academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids determined on a case-by-**case basis in accordance with an individual's** certified disability, learning or health difficulty.
2. Appropriate confidentiality of all information regarding a disability unless a learner has given written consent for that information to be disclosed.
3. Information, reasonably available in accessible formats.
4. Be treated with respect and dignity.

Every learner with a documented disability, learning or health difficulty has a responsibility to:

1. Meet qualifications and essential standards as determined by the College for programmes, services, jobs, activities and facilities.
2. Disclose a disability, learning or health difficulty in a timely manner when seeking an accommodation. National College of Ireland requests that learners inform the College of their disability, learning or health difficulty 4 weeks in advance of requiring accommodations.
3. Provide documentation from an acceptable professional source which verifies the nature and functional limitations of the disability, learning or health difficulty. Please note the following:
 - i. National College of Ireland will only accept verification from an Educational Psychologist or a Medical Consultant/Specialist. General Practitioner (G.P.) letters are not accepted as suitable medical evidence.
 - ii. Documentation must have been completed within the last 3 years.
 - iii. Documentation must identify a specific disability, learning or health difficulty.
 - iv. Documentation must identify functional limitations of the disability, learning or health difficulty.
 - v. Documentation must verify the need for requested services.
4. Follow National College of Ireland procedures for obtaining reasonable and appropriate accommodations, academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids.
5. Treat staff of the College with dignity and respect.

Rights and Responsibilities of National College of Ireland

National College of Ireland has the right to:

1. **Maintain the College's academic standards.**
2. Request that the learner provides documentation from an acceptable professional source which confirms the status of the disability, learning or health difficulty and which supports the need for accommodations, academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids.
3. Discuss a learner's **need** for accommodations, academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids with the professional source of his/her documentation, having obtained written consent authorising such disclosure and discussion.
4. In consultation with the learner, the College has the right to select from equally effective accommodations with consideration for cost and/or availability.
5. Deny a request for accommodation, academic adjustment and/or auxiliary aid in the following instances:
 - i. If the documentation does not identify a specific disability, learning or health difficulty.
 - ii. If the documentation does not identify functional limitations of the disability, learning or health difficulty.
 - iii. If the documentation does not verify the need for requested services.
 - iv. If the documentation is not provided within a timely manner (4 weeks in advance of requiring an accommodation, academic adjustment and/or auxiliary aid).
 - v. If the documentation is not completed by an acceptable professional source.
 - vi. If the documentation is not completed within the last 3 years.
6. Deny a request for an inappropriate or unreasonable accommodation including any that poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others, constitutes a fundamental alteration to a programme, or poses an undue financial or administrative burden on the College.

National College of Ireland has the responsibility to:

1. Ensure that College programmes, services, jobs, activities and facilities, when viewed in their entirety, are offered in the most integrated and appropriate settings.
2. Provide information regarding policies and procedures to learners with disabilities in accessible formats upon request.
3. Provide reasonable and appropriate accommodations, academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids for learners with disabilities upon request.
4. Maintain appropriate confidentiality of records and communication regarding learners with disabilities except when disclosure has been authorised by the learner.

Policy on Confidentiality for Learners with a Disability, Learning or Health Difficulty

National College of Ireland encourages learners to disclose information on their disability, learning or health difficulty to the Learner Services Officer before they apply to college or at any time during their studies. Such disclosure is encouraged so that NCI can work with the learner in ensuring that required accommodations are identified and facilitated. Any documentation or information presented in disclosing a disability is held by the Learner Services Officer and will not be disclosed to a third party unless authorised by the learner.

In order for a learner to avail of particular supports it may be necessary for the Learner Services Officer to disclose relevant information on that learner to individuals/departments

involved in the provision of those supports i.e. lecturers, library staff, IT department, Examinations Office etc. In such instances, information will only be disclosed to individuals who are immediately involved in the delivery of support and this information will be treated in the strictest of confidence. This information will only be released if the learner has authorised the College to do so. It should be noted however, that certain supports cannot be provided if a learner does not consent to have information regarding his/her disability, learning or health difficulty forwarded to relevant third parties.

Confidentiality Agreement

I have read the Code of Practice for Learners with Disabilities and understand the rights and responsibilities of the learner in receiving appropriate accommodations while at College.

I understand that all personal information will remain confidential unless I consent to have that information disclosed.

I understand that certain supports require disclosure of information to individuals/departments involved in the delivery of those supports.

I understand that my personal details will be retained by National College of Ireland for the duration of my time as a learner.

I do / do not want my information to be released to individuals outside Learner Services. I understand that the College will be unable to provide supports that require disclosure of information if I request that my information remains confidential.

Learner Name _____

Learner Number _____

Date _____

Signed _____

Witnessed by _____

Title _____