

<b>Document Title</b>	Protection of Enrolled Learners
<b>Policy Area</b>	Area 7: Supports for Learners
<b>Document Code (version #)</b>	QAP7-4 (V2.0)
<b>Applies to</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> All <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Specific ( <i>QQI HET Programmes</i> )
	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff only <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Learners only <input type="checkbox"/> Staff and Learners

<b>Document Owner</b>	Director of Quality and Academic Affairs
<b>Approved by</b>	Board of Directors

<b>Approval date</b>	17/10/24
<b>Effective date</b>	18/10/24

<b>Related legislation, policies, procedures, guidelines and local protocols</b>	<p>This policy has been designed with due regard to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016), QQI</li> <li>- Sector Specific Independent/Private Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016), QQI</li> <li>- Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012</li> </ul>
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## 1. PURPOSE

All QQI accredited programmes of education and training of 3 months duration or longer are covered by arrangements under section 65 (4) of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 (the “2012 Act”) whereby, in the event of SQT ceasing to provide the programme for any reason, enrolled learners may transfer to a similar programme at another provider, or, in the event that this is not practicable, the fees most recently paid will be refunded. The purpose of this policy is to outline how SQT complies with its legal obligations with respect to the Protection of Enrolled Learners.

QQI has developed protocols to facilitate providers in the fulfilment of their legal obligations regarding the Protection of Enrolled Learners (PEL). As summarised by QQI, the 2012 Acts seeks to ensure that:

- I. Learners have an opportunity to complete a programme leading to an award, or
- II. Learners are refunded the moneys most recently paid if a programme ends before they complete it, and
- III. 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 their completion. (Protection of Enrolled Learners: Protocols for the Implementation of Part 6 of the 2012 Act)

## 2. SCOPE/APPLICATION

This applies to all QQI accredited HET programmes.

## 3. DEFINITIONS

- **Enrolled Learner is a learner**<sup>1</sup> fully registered with the provider – application form accepted and required fee/part fee paid – for the purposes of completing an accredited programme of 3 months duration or longer<sup>2</sup>.

## 4. RESPONSIBILITY

- Oversight of this policy rests with the Board of Directors.
- The Senior Management Team are responsible for monitoring the policy including communication with the Higher Education Colleges Association (HECA) regarding the PEL scheme.

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<sup>1</sup> A Guide to Learner Protection of Enrolled Learners Part 6 of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 (2024), QQI

<sup>2</sup> Learners who fail to submit by the designated due date are considered terminated and are therefore no longer considered enrolled learners.

## 5. POLICY

SQT has fully committed to fulfilling its legal obligations in accordance with section 65(4) of the 2012 Act by putting in place arrangements for the protection of enrolled learners in the event SQT was to cease providing a programme (“Arrangements”).

SQT has learner protection arrangements in place with respect to enrolled learners on all QQI validated programmes, ensuring learners education at SQT is protected, and in accordance with the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012. This is facilitated through membership of the HECA PEL Scheme. The Arrangements provide for a number of scenarios in the event SQT ceased to provide a programme such as:

- the transfer of SQT’s learners to a programme being delivered by another college;
- the transfer of SQT’s learners to a similar programme being delivered by another college;
- a right of refund in accordance with the provisions of section 65(4)(b) of the 2012 Act;
- or a right, in certain circumstances, to enrol at one or more other colleges for the purpose of completing the learners’ respective programmes.

SQT makes the following information publicly available and accessible on its website and in other published material before enrolling learners or accepting any payment from, or on behalf of, an enrolled learner for an education and training programme:

- a) The name of the awarding body (or bodies) making the award.
- b) The title of the programme and the award to which it leads.
- c) Whether the award is recognised within the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), and if so:
  - I. The level of that recognition within the NFQ.
  - II. Whether the award is a Major, Minor, Special Purpose or Supplemental award as identified within the NFQ.
- d) Where the programme does not lead to an award, a certificate of completion or other similar certificate.
- e) Any relevant procedures for access, transfer and progression.

## 6. POLICY MONITORING

Responsibility	Frequency	Methods
Director of Quality and Academic Affairs – Document Update	Per QA audit schedule	- Review of documentation as set out in QAP2-1: Ongoing Review and Update of QA Documents.
Senior Management Team	Annual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Letters detailing PEL arrangements with alternate providers.</li> <li>- PEL Action Plan (based on QQI PEL Protocols).</li> <li>- Relevant reports generated by SQT concerning PEL.</li> </ul>

## 7. DOCUMENT CONTROL

Version No	Approval Date	Description of Revision	Originator	Approved By
1.0	1/3/19	New Document	Senior Management Team	Board of Directors
2.0	24/10/24	Reference to Lean Six Sigma removed in document scope	Senior Management Team	Board of Directors