



TITLE: EXIT AWARDS POLICY

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| Approved By | Academic Council | Date Approved | 20 May 2020 |
| | | Review Date | 20 May 2023 <i>or as required</i> |
| Superseded or Obsolete Policy / Procedure(s) | | Owner | |
| | | Office of the Registrar | |

1. Purpose of Policy

Exit Awards are programme pathways designed for, and incorporated within, a major award. All learners at Carlow College, St. Patrick's (hereafter Carlow College) are encouraged to complete their programme of study. However, the College understands that during the course of their degree, some learners may defer a year of study due to personal, financial or other reasons. In extraordinary circumstances, learners may formally exit from a programme prior to its completion due to academic failure of some elements of the programme or a decision to withdraw from the programme of study before the final assessment. The *Exit Awards Policy* is designed to articulate the process by which learners can apply for an Exit Award; provided such an Exit Award has been validated under the College's validation processes and provided they have attained the requisite minimum number of credits.¹

2. Definitions

Deferral: where a learner who officially requests to suspend their studies for one academic year; in extraordinary circumstances, a learner has the ability to request another deferral for one academic year. All deferrals are submitted to the Admissions Office and officially approved by the Office of the Registrar.

Exit Awards: linked to a specified major award, and are validated normally at Higher Certificate, Ordinary Degree, and Postgraduate Diploma levels as appropriate to the parent programme. The award will have been validated as part of the *ab-initio* major award validation process or it may be validated in its own right, or in some cases through programmatic review.

¹ This Policy relied extensively on the following policies: *Assessment and Standards* (Dublin: QQI, 2013); *Exit Awards Policy* (Dublin: IADT Dun Laoghaire, 2018); *Exit Awards Policy* (Dundalk: Dundalk Institute of Technology, 2017) and *Procedures in Relation to Exit Awards* (Athlone: Athlone Institute of Technology, 2018).

3. Scope of Policy

This Policy is applicable to all learners registered on a programme at Carlow College that has an embedded Exit Award (see Section 4.1).

4. Policy Statement

Learners that wish to terminate their studies prior to the completion of an entire programme may apply for an Exit Award provided a lesser award exists and the learner has successfully completed the requisite number of NFQ level credits. Exit Awards are intended for use in exceptional circumstances only and the decision to award them is a decision for the External Examination Board.

4.1: Conditions of Eligibility

Not every programme at Carlow College has an Exit Award. For a learner to apply for an Exit Award, the following conditions of eligibility apply:

1. The programme on which the learner has been registered must have a validated Exit Award in place:

| Carlow College Exit Awards (as of March 2020) | | | | |
|--|---|----------------------------------|---|--|
| Principal Programme Code | Principal Programme Title | Principal Programme Level | Exit Award Level Available | Exit Award Level Programme Code |
| PG23978 | B.A. (Honours) in Arts and Humanities | Level 8 | Embedded Level 7 Award – B.A. in Arts and Humanities after three years (180 ECTS) | PG23979 |
| PG23975 | B.A. (Honours) in English and History | Level 8 | Embedded Level 7 Award – B.A. in English and History (180 ECTS) | PG23977 |
| PG23972 | B.A. (Honours) in Social, Political and Communities Studies | Level 8 | Embedded Level 6 Award – Higher Certificate in Arts in Social, Political and Community Studies (120 ECTS) | PG23974 |
| | | | Embedded Level 7 Award – B.A. in Social, Political and Community Studies (180 ECTS) | PG23973 |

- The learner must have earned all credits relating to such award as follows:

| Exit Award | Level | Number of ECTS |
|--------------------------|-------|----------------|
| Higher Certificate | 6 | 120 |
| Ordinary Bachelor Degree | 7 | 180 |
| Postgraduate Diploma | 9 | 60 |

- The learner has met to discuss the Exit Award with the Programme Director of their programme.

4.2: Exit Awards Procedures

Exit Awards provide the opportunity for learners to formally exit from a programme prior to its completion due to academic failure of some elements of the programme or a decision to withdraw from the programme of study before the final assessment. The discussion to explore whether an Exit Award may be applied for, in the first instance, should take place between the Programme Director and the relevant learner.

Once this preliminary meeting has taken place, the learner can begin the formal steps to apply for an Exit Award by undertaking the following procedures:

- Complete and submit to the Programme Director the Exit Award Application Form (Appendix 1). This Form should be completed at least one month in advance of the External Examination Board Meeting (this normally meets in June).²
- The Programme Director, in consultation with the Programme Administrator, will conduct a preliminary check to ensure that a validated Exit Award is in place and that the learner meets the stated conditions of eligibility.
- If the learner does meet the stated conditions of eligibility, the Programme Director will submit the Exit Award Application Form to the Admissions Office to be put on the agenda of the relevant External Examination Board Meeting.
- At the External Exam Board Meeting, the Exit Award Application will be considered for approval. If approved, the Exit Award Application Form is completed and returned to the Programme Administrator to be retained with the learner's permanent record.³ The Office of the Registrar will notify the learner of the outcome of the Exit Award Application and notify the learner of the next available conferring date.
- Following the External Examination Board Meeting, the Admissions Office will submit the results for all award years to Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) for ratification; Carlow College send these results to QQI in June and October.
- After ratification, QQI send printed certificates to Carlow College.

² If the Exit Awards Application is submitted after the External Examination Board Meeting that normally sits in June, the application can be considered at the Internal Examination Board Meeting in August, however, the External Examiner will need to be present.

³ The learner's permanent record is on the Student Record Management System (SRMS). As such, once approved, the form will be uploaded on the learner's profile on the SRMS.

Please note that the Exit Award is automatically surrendered should the learner subsequently be conferred with the Principal Award. The learner obtaining an Exit Award cannot re-register on a related programme within the College (within one academic year).

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1: Learner Responsibilities

All Carlow College learners should, in the first instance, read this Policy and reach out to any number of our Carlow College support services for guidance should they be struggling (i.e. personally, financially, academically or other reasons). To begin the process of determining whether an Exit Award might be an option, the learner should schedule a meeting with their Programme Director to discuss all of their academic options (i.e. continue in the programme, defer for one academic year or exit the programme). If the learner determines that they are eligible to apply for an Exit Award, they can complete the Exit Award Application Form (Appendix 1) and commence the procedures for applying for an Exit Award. Exit Awards are intended for use in exceptional circumstances only and the decision to award them is a decision for the External Examination Board.

5.2: Programme Director Responsibilities

The Programme Director should provide the learner with all relevant information concerning the process for applying for an Exit Award. The Programme Director will also ensure that all applications are thoroughly checked, in consultation with the Programme Administrator, to ensure that the learner meets the stated conditions of eligibility before forwarding the application to the Admissions Office.

5.3: Admissions Office Responsibilities

The Admissions Office will ensure that all documentation, relevant to an Exit Award Application, is in order prior to the External Examination Board Meeting. If the Exit Award is approved, the Admissions Office will submit all relevant documentation to QQI.

5.4: Office of the Registrar

The Office of the Registrar is responsible for notifying the learner the outcome of their Exit Award Application and the next available conferring date.

5.5: Programme Administrator

Assist the Programme Director in checking the Exit Award Application and ensuring that the approved Exit Award Application Form is attached to the learner's permanent record.

5.6: External Examination Board Responsibilities

The External Examination Board has approval responsibility and must ensure that the Exit Award Application is completed in full and signed by the Chair of the External Examination Board Meeting.

6. Associated Documentation

- Appendix 1: Exit Award Application Form

7. Referenced Policies


- *Learner Admission, Recognition and Progression Policy*

- Admission Guidelines and Procedures for Internal / External Transfers and Advanced Entry
- Admission Guidelines and Procedures for Deferred Entry or Deferred Continuation of Studies

8. Monitoring and Review

The *Exit Awards Policy* will be approved by the Academic Council. The Office of the Registrar will monitor the *Exit Awards Policy* on an annual basis and formally review this policy every three years.

Appendix 1: Exit Award Application Form

| Exit Award Application Form | |  CARLOW COLLEGE ST. PATRICK'S | |
|--|--|--|---|
| <p>This form must be used for learners who wish to apply for an Exit Award. Exit Awards are intended for use in <u>exceptional circumstances only</u> and learners who are awarded an Exit Award may not immediately register (within the next academic year) on any follow-on programme within the College to the programme for which the Exit Award has been obtained.</p> | | | |
| Learner Name: | | | |
| Student ID #: | | | |
| Programme Title: | | | |
| Level of Exit Award Sought (<i>tick as appropriate</i>): | Level 6 Higher Certificate (120 ECTS) | Level 7 Ordinary Bachelor Degree (180 ECTS) | Level 9 Postgraduate Diploma (60 ECTS) |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Academic Year Achieved: | | | |
| Reason for the Request: | | | |
| Application Deadline: | | | |
| <p>Exit Award applications will be considered at External Examination Board Meetings in June and August provided they are received one month in advance of the Examination Board Meeting.</p> | | | |
| Student Declaration: | | | |
| <p>I understand that by applying for this Exit Award I cannot immediately register (within the next academic year) on any follow-on programme to the programme for which the Exit Award has been obtained. Furthermore, I understand that the Exit Award is automatically surrendered should the I subsequently be conferred with the Principal Award.</p> | | | |
| Student Signature: | | | |
| Date: | | | |
| Please return this form to your Programme Director. | | | |

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY**Date form received by the Programme Director:**

This form must be received at least one month in advance of the External Examination Board Meeting.

Does the programme have a validated embedded award?**Yes****No****Has the learner passed the requisite number of credits to receive the award?****Yes****No****For Completion at the External Examination Board Meeting****Level of Exit Award Sought (tick as appropriate):****Level 6 Higher Certificate (120 ECTS)****Level 7 Ordinary Bachelor Degree (180 ECTS)****Level 9 Postgraduate Diploma (60 ECTS)****Award Classification:****Overall Mark:****Programme Title of Exit Award:****Signature (Chair, External Examination Board):****Date:**