



## 5. Learner Access, Transfer and Progression - Access & Admission

All QQI programmes are offered by Dorset College on an academic year basis are on, or are formally aligned to the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and awards thereto.

### **Applicants can access Dorset College programmes through the following:**

1. Central Applications Office (CAO) and as mature students/learners (Please see individual programme admissions criteria);
2. Direct Applications;
3. Transfer from or progress to Dorset College programmes after completing programmes delivered by other providers through recognition of prior academic learning (RPL) and/or Recognised Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL).

### **Dorset College ensures the following:**

1. Admission to all programmes on the NFQ and validated by QQI are in accordance with QQI 'Policy and Criteria for Access, Transfer and Progression in Relation to Learners for Providers of Further and Higher Education' (QQI, Restated 2015); and
2. European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and RPL as well as RPEL is consistent with QQI 'Assessment and Standards' (QQI, Revised, 2013).

### 1.1 Access & Admission Higher Education

#### 1.1.1 Access

Dorset College provides transparent, fair and consistent information as to entry requirements to programmes through:

1. Marketing Brochures;
2. Dorset College Website [www.dorset-college.ie](http://www.dorset-college.ie)
3. Programme Document(s) which contain
  - a. Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcomes (MIPLOs);
  - b. Award which will be attained upon achieving the relevant MIPLOs.

#### 1.1.2 Admission

Dorset College has a variety of means of admitting applicants to programmes such as:

1. CAO Applicants (Standard and Non-standard);
  - a. Leaving Certificate results appropriate to the programme applied for;
  - b. QQI Award transcripts (where applicable);
  - c. Transcripts of any relevant completed study;
  - d. IELTS 6.0.
2. Direct Entry
  - a. Through our Admissions Office in person or via our website;
  - b. Leaving Certificate results equivalency as certified by NARIC Ireland;
  - c. IELTS 6.0.



3. Non-native speakers of English
  - d. IELTS 6.0 is required for all applicants including non-native speakers of English.
4. Mature Applicants
  - e. RPL and RPEL will be considered by the Admissions Lead.

### 1.1.3 Appeal

If a prospective learner's access to a programme is rejected the individual will be afforded a mechanism to appeal in writing stating the grounds of appeal to the Dean of Academic Affairs within 5 working days.

## 1.2 Access & Admission Further Education

### 1.2.1 Access

Dorset College provides transparent, fair and consistent information as to entry requirements to programmes through:

1. Marketing Brochures;
2. Dorset College Website [www.dorset-college.ie](http://www.dorset-college.ie)
3. Programme Documents(s) which contain
  - a. Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcomes (MIPLOs);
  - b. Award which will be attained upon achieving the relevant MIPLOs.

### 1.2.2 Admission

Dorset College has a variety of means of admitting applicants to programmes such as:

1. Direct Entry\*

Through our Admissions Office in person or via our website;
2. Non-native speakers of English

IELTS 5.0 is required for all applicants including non-native speakers of English.
3. Under 21

Leaving Certificate standard or appropriate QQI Qualification or equivalent for example Level 4 to gain entry to a Level 5 Further Education Programme with all details available on the Dorset College website and brochures.
4. Mature Applicants

RPL and RPEL will be considered by the Admissions Lead. Experience in a related field will be of particular relevance, for example healthcare.

### 1.2.3 Appeal

If a prospective learner's access to a programme is rejected the individual will be afforded a mechanism to appeal in writing stating the grounds of appeal to the Dean of Academic Affairs within 5 working days.

\*Leaving Certificate: Grade O6 is required for entry to Irish Nursing Degree Programmes and O5 for the UK.



## 1.3 Admission, Transfer & Progression – Higher Education

### 1.3.1 Procedures for Admission

Each application is assessed by the Admissions Department which the Admissions Lead oversees and ensures the following:

1. If the applicant meets all the specified entry criteria for access onto the relevant programme, the applicant is notified of their conditional offer via email;
2. If an applicant is considered as an RPL or RPEL application, it then follows that the appropriate procedures outlined below will apply.

Where the successful applicant accepts a place on a particular programme, in line with GDPR obligations, their personal details are recorded on our student information system, CLASS and they are advised of the relevant fees and Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB) obligations and/or requirements.

### 1.3.2 Transfer and Progression

Dorset College facilitates transfer and progression inwards and outwards from its programmes in line with our validated programmes and as stated on our website. Progression inwards and internal transfers require an assessment of suitability by the Admissions Lead who appraises: Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcomes (MIPLOs), Award Standard, Level and potential exemptions.

Outward progression is outside the control of Dorset College and rests with the receiving institutions but Dorset College will endeavour to support such learners by providing in a timely manner; transcripts and any other relevant documentation.

## 1.4 Admission, Transfer & Progression - Further Education

Outward progression is outside the control of Dorset College and rests with the receiving institutions but Dorset College will endeavour to support such learners by providing in a timely manner, transcripts and any other relevant documentation.

For courses such as Pre-Nursing Studies and International Studies (Pre-Masters) for example there are established pathways to Institutes of Technology, Universities, as well as Degrees through UCAS in the UK.

Full details of progression and pathways is provided in Dorset College Brochures and on the College website.

## 1.5 Admission & Induction

### 1.5.1 Induction

Prior to the commencement of each academic year successful applicants who have accepted their conditional offer will be invited to induction and will be provided with the following:

1. Academic Operations
  - a. Academic Calendar;
  - b. Timetable; and
  - c. Contact information for the programme management;
  - d. Moodle account; and
  - e. Office 365 - all learners are provided with an Office 365 account and learners e-mail to which the college will communicate directly with.
2. Facilities
  - a. General Facilities such as the canteen;
  - b. Library;
  - c. EBSCO;
3. Learner Handbook which contains relevant information on matters such as attendance, academic and non-academic support as well as the information above.
4. Programme Handbook which looks to curriculum structure, assessment schedule, award etc.

## 1.6 Recognition of Prior Learning General Principles

General Principles for Recognised Prior Learning Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is the generic term for learning assessment mechanisms such as Accreditation of Prior Learning or Advanced Academic Standing, which are used within Higher Education to describe the awarding of credit and/or exemptions to learners on the basis of demonstrated learning which has occurred prior to admission.

Dorset College recognise Prior Learning for the following:

- Gain access to the programme;
- Direct Entry or Advanced Entry into a programme;
- Exemptions from some parts of a programme.

RPL ensures the EU policy widening access to qualifications and lifelong learning approach is adopted by Higher Education Institutes and is embraced by Dorset College in line with the Education and Training Act, 2012 and reflective of the national commitment to widening participation in education and to give equal recognition to all learning.

### 1.6.1 Prior Learning encompasses

1. Formal Learning: programmes of study or training that are delivered by validated education or training providers and which attract awards;
2. Non-formal learning: which may be assessed but does not normally lead to formal certification for example community based learning;
3. Informal Learning: life and work-experience (experiential learning) and contributes to a learner's knowledge, skills and competencies.



## 1.6.2 Recognition of Prior Learning Eligibility

Dorset College recognises academic and non-academic prior learning.

- Recognised Prior Learning (RPL): academic and certified by an awarding body such as QQI, state recognised colleges or institutes or comparable foreign qualification which is certified;
- Recognised Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL): non-academic and non-certified, and can be non-formal and/or informal where the learning achieved, rather than the experience, is what is assessed by Dorset College.

### Recognised Prior Learning Eligibility

1. Dorset College's Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL and RPEL) policy recognises the learning that programme applicants have completed prior to enrolment on a programme OR relevant stage of a programme;
2. RPEL: Applicants must be over 23 years of age at the date of the application to be eligible for consideration;
3. Prior learning encompasses: formal, non-formal and informal learning and will be consistent and maintain the rigour of the NFQ and its awards;
4. Dorset College RPL/RPEL Policy and procedures should be clearly stated and documented and shall be available to all potential applicants via our website, brochures and related promotional materials;
5. Guidance and support will be provided by Dorset College Admissions Department and monitored by the Admissions Lead and where appropriate the Quality Assurance Lead;
6. There is no limit placed on the maximum credits allowed to be achieved via RPL in the non-award stages;
7. At award stages a maximum of 10 credits can be achieved via RPL and this shall not normally apply to mandatory subjects.

### 1.6.2.1 Appeal

If an RPL application is rejected an individual will be afforded a mechanism to appeal in writing stating the grounds of appeal to the Dean of Academic Affairs within 5 working days of the relevant outcome.

## 1.7 Recognition of Prior Learning Guidelines

When an applicant or learner presents prior certified learning the Admissions Team, who report to and are monitored by the Admissions Lead or to Quality Assurance Lead if an active learner, the decision will be based on the following:

1. Level of Prior Award on the NFQ
  - a. The prior certified learning upon which the application is based must be at the same level or at a higher level on the NFQ to which the learner is seeking an exemption in. For example if a learner is seeking an exemptions from a level 8 module their certified prior learning must be at level 8 or above to ensure the maintenance of standards and appropriate compliance with the NFQ and its award standards.
2. Comparison of Learning Outcomes
  - a. The learning outcomes must be sufficiently similar in nature to the module(s) the learner is seeking exemption from.
3. Currency of Prior Certified Learning
  - a. The Prior Certified Learning must have been achieved in a comparatively appropriate timeframe for example for computing within the past 3 years or in business within the past 5 years.

Note: a decision on RPL or APEL is subject to an appeal to the Dean of Academic Affairs within 5 days of the respective decision (Admissions Lead/Quality Assurance Lead)

## 1.8 Recognised Prior Learning Process

1. Applicants/Learners must submit their application on the appropriate form (found in the Learner Handbook, College website and Dorset College VLE Moodle);
2. Applications must be forwarded to the Admissions Department or if they are an active/current learner to the Quality Assurance Lead. Each application for assessment will include an assessment, as required, by an appropriate academic or Programme Leader.
3. Applicants must provide the following in support of their application;
  - a. Certificates;
  - b. Official Transcript(s) of Results; and
  - c. Modules with Minimum Intended Learning Outcomes (MIMLOs)
4. The applicant/learner must submit their application at least 14 days prior to the commencement of the programme/module to Admissions Lead or Quality Assurance Lead.
5. The Admission Lead or Quality Assurance Lead, as appropriate, will deliver an outcome within 10 working days from the application and if necessary the applicant/learner must attend class pending the outcome of the application to ensure no detriment is suffered if the application is refused and they need to undertake the module.
6. Possible Outcomes include:
  - a. Approval;
  - b. Approval with conditions;
  - c. Refusal;
  - d. Exemption- no % or grade shall be awarded and EX will be reflected on the learner's transcript. Note: Dorset College policy on Award Stage Exemptions;

### 1.8.1 Appeal

If an RPL or RPEL application is rejected the individual will be afforded a mechanism to appeal in writing stating the grounds of appeal to the Dean of Academic Affairs within 5 working days of the relevant outcome. This decision is final.

### 1.8.2 Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning Assessment

Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning involves the awarding of credit for learning experience which requires a demonstration that the learning experience has occurred for example by:

1. Submitting a Portfolio of Evidence; and/or
2. Attendance at an interview.

### 1.8.3 Portfolio of evidence

When applying for RPL, applicants are required to compile a portfolio of evidence demonstrating how they have achieved the learning outcomes of a module within a programme (if they are applying for an exemption) or how they meet the entry requirements of the programme.

This can be presented using the following:

- certified evidence of previous education (official transcripts of results etc.);
- case examples/ references from employers or co-workers;
- log books of work completed and any other documents deemed relevant.

This may be followed by an interview where the portfolio is discussed and verification may be **requested from employers etc. to ensure veracity and currency.**

### 1.8.4 Assessment

The College Admission Team who report to the Admission Lead, will assess the presented evidence as follows:

- for entry onto a programme, the evidence is assessed against the entry criteria;
- for advanced entry onto a programme, the evidence is assessed against the appropriate

level of the relevant award standards;

- for module exemptions, the evidence is assessed against the MIMLOs of the module(s);
- exemptions into Award stages shall only be considered in exceptional circumstances and

must be reviewed by the Admissions Lead if an advanced entry application or by the Quality Assurance Lead if an active learner.

The Admission Lead or Quality Assurance Lead, as appropriate, will deliver an outcome within 10 working days from the application and if necessary the applicant/learner must attend class pending the outcome of the application.



**Possible Outcomes include:**

- a. Approval;
- b. Approval with conditions;
- c. Refusal;
- d. Exemption- no % or grade shall be awarded and EX will be reflected on the learner's transcript. Note: Dorset College policy on Award Stage Exemptions;

### 1.8.5 Appeal

Every application is entitled to an appeal to the Dean of Academic Affairs within 5 working days of the outcome.

### 1.8.6 Transfer & Progression

The College facilitates transfer and progression both into and onwards from its programmes and commits to ensuring that its learners are fully informed of their transfer and progression options. To ensure this, the College will clearly articulate the transfer and progression criteria in the information it provides regarding programmes offered.

The stated transfer and progression options and criteria will not be exhaustive of every possible scenario. Instead, it will give broad-based transfer and progression options into and onwards of programmes at different NFQ levels that are typically available to learners.

The College is also cognisant that the transfer and progression onwards options that are not within the College are subject to the admissions policies of other institutes.

- Learners will be informed of their inward and onward transfer and progression options in the programme information provided to them of its programmes.
- The College will assist learners who wish to transfer and progress both inwards and onwards from its programmes. This will be done regardless of whether the transfer or progression is with the College or another education institute.
- Assistance may take the form of providing transcripts of results, providing academic references when transferring outwards. When prospective learners are transferring inwards they will be provided with all relevant programme information such as Award standards, availability of exemptions where applicable, Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcomes and the overall student/learner experience.