

Document Title/Reference	Policy for Protection of Enrolled Learners (PEL)
Purpose	To outline how the IPA will comply with its legal obligations in respect of the protection of enrolled learners.
Scope	Protection of learners enrolled on IPA undergraduate and postgraduate accredited programmes.
Definitions	Enrolled Learner: student fully registered with the Institute – application form accepted and required fee/part fee paid – for the purposes of completing an accredited programme of 3 months duration or longer.
Contextual Guidelines	Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012, Part 6 “Protection of Enrolled Learners”
Related IPA Policy	<i>Admissions Policy</i>
Audience & Communication	<p>Applicable to Whitaker School staff, DG, Board and all prospective and enrolled students.</p> <p>Policy for Protection of Enrolled Learners (PEL) will be made available on the Institute’s website and prospectuses.</p>
Policy Owner & Implementation	<p>The responsibility for this policy lies with the Head of the Whitaker School who, as appropriate, will work with Whitaker School staff, the Director General, IPA Board and IPA-UCD Strategic Management Committee to ensure compliance.</p> <p>The policy is approved by IPA Faculty.</p>
Key Implementation Actions	<p>Make learner and programme information accessible and available in published materials (prospectus) and on the website.</p> <p>Agree transfer pathways within IPA programmes & conditions for refunds.</p> <p>Conduct risk assessment activities during the programme design stage and programme evaluation stage.</p> <p>Make appropriate collaborative PEL arrangements in conjunction with Designated Awarding Body.</p>

<p>Monitoring, Review, Continuous Improvement</p>	<p>Consider analysis of environmental threats in annual corporate risk register.</p> <p>Policy review will be conducted every three years by the Head of the Whitaker School, taking into account national developments in PEL, analysis of current IPA financial and resource capabilities and risk assessment pertinent to PEL.</p>
<p>Revision History, Commencement Date & Date of Next Review</p>	<p>Commencement Date: 2017 Date of Next Review: 2020</p>

Policy for Protection of Enrolled Learners (PEL)

1.1 The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 contains provisions for the protection of learners enrolled in programmes of education and training (Part 6, S. 64-67). The legislation applies to all education providers (other than those specifically exempt under legislation) and to any course of 3 month duration or longer where fees have been charged.

QQI has developed protocols to facilitate providers in the fulfilment of their legal obligations with regard to PEL. As summarised by QQI, the 2012 Acts seeks to ensure that:

- (1) Learners have an opportunity to complete a programme leading to an award, or
- (2) Learners are refunded the moneys most recently paid if a programme ends before they complete it, and
- (3) 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 event that the programme ceases prior to their completion.

(Protection of Enrolled Learners: Protocols for the Implementation of Part 6 of the 2012 Act)

1.2 These protocols apply in various ways to different categories of provider, depending on their relationship with QQI and their exemption status as outlined in the relevant PEL sections of the Act.

The IPA, as a Recognised College of UCD, is legally obliged to fulfil the provisions relating to *all* providers. All providers regardless of their relationship with QQI must make certain categories of information available to learners (QQI Protocols 3.2 apply). Certain programme and award-related information must be available to learners prior to enrolling them or accepting payment for an education and training programme. All relevant providers (including public providers) shall, if requested, assist QQI in the accommodation of learners affected by the cessation of a programme (Protocols 3.6 apply).

1.3 The Institute undertakes to make the following information publicly available and accessible on its websites 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

1.4 The IPA will notify enrolled learners in writing of any change in the information notified to the learners within 14 days of becoming aware of that change.

1.5 If, and when requested, and in so far as is practicable, the IPA will assist QQI in the accommodation of learners affected by the cessation of a programme.

1.6 The Institute undertakes to strengthen public confidence by:

- (1) Having a refund policy in place, which will be communicated to students in their programme documentation and made publicly available on the website.
- (2) Making arrangements for the protection of enrolled learners known to the Designated Awarding Body, if collaborative arrangements are not already agreed and stated within the joint contractual agreements;
- (3) Minimising risk through appropriate control and monitoring activities, including
 - a) Designing and delivering programmes in accordance with contractual agreements with the Designated Awarding Body and in compliance with national Quality Assurance requirements and guidelines;
 - b) Fulfilling corporate governance and financial reporting and regulatory obligations;
 - c) Conducting risk assessment activities during the programme design stage and programme evaluation stage, and analysing environmental threats in the annual corporate risk register.