

6.5 Policy on Academic Awards and Conferring Procedures

6.5.1 Academic Awards Policy

ACADEMIC AWARDS POLICY OPEN TRAINING COLLEGE

1. Introduction

Open Training College (OTC) is a provider of programmes leading to QQI awards in accordance with the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). QQI is the awarding body for OTC Degree, Higher Certificate and Certificate programmes. This policy should be read in conjunction with (and is subject to) the relevant provisions of *College Conferring Procedures* and relevant supporting documents.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to inform stakeholders that the Open Training College on behalf of QQI, have the power to confer these awards on Students following the successful completion of a programme of study. The certification of awards provides evidence of qualifications attained.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all awards made by Open Training College on behalf of QQI. This policy applies to Dual and Joint awards delivered collaboratively with partner institutions, nationally and internationally.

4. Statement

Students are entitled to receive an award following the successful completion of a programme of study for which they are registered. The authenticity of awards is verifiable.

A student may elect to have their award conferred in person at a graduation ceremony or in absentia.

All reasonable adjustments will be made to allow students or staff with disabilities, or long-term illness, to fully participate in graduation ceremonies.

5. Definitions

The **National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)** is a system of ten levels used to describe the Irish qualifications system. The NFQ describes what students should know, understand and be able to do on the basis of a given qualification.

An **award** is an academic qualification (degree, diploma or certificate) conferred in recognition of the successful completion of a further or higher education programme of study, either at undergraduate or postgraduate level, and issued by a designated awarding body. The National Framework of Qualifications sets out the criteria for major and non-major awards. Non-major awards include, minor awards, special purpose awards and supplemental awards.

Major awards (Further Education) the principal class of awards made at a given NFQ level and reflect a significant volume of learning. The Framework contains different award types, major, special purpose and supplemental. In the Common Awards System (CAS), levels 1 – 6, are generally achieved through the accumulation of minor awards. A major award (often called ‘the full certificate’) typically gives eligibility for progression to learning opportunities at the next level on the Framework. A major award reflects a significant volume of learning and can be achieved for example, through successful completion of a further education and training (FET) programme. Major awards create opportunities for progression to higher education.

Major awards (Higher Education) are the principal class of awards made at a given NFQ level and reflect a significant volume of learning, e.g. Higher Certificate (NFQ, Level 6), Ordinary Bachelor Degree (NFQ, Level 7), Honours Bachelor Degree (NFQ, Level 8), Master’s Degree (NFQ, Level 9), Doctoral Degree (NFQ, Level 10).

Minor awards provide recognition for students who achieve a range of learning outcomes, but not the specific combination of learning outcomes required for a major award. While having relevance in their own right minor awards are always part of at least one major award. These awards will always be smaller in volume than the major award of which they are a part.

Special Purpose awards are made for specific purposes, e.g. Special Purpose Certificate in Academic Practice.

Supplemental awards are for learning which is additional to a previous award, e.g. Continuous Professional Development.

Programme is a set of modules, programmes, or programme options that lead to an award.

Certificate is a non-degree award granted upon successful completion of a prescribed programme of study.

Diploma is a non-degree award granted upon successful completion of a prescribed programme of study.

Degree is a major award granted upon the successful completion of a prescribed programme of study, i.e. Bachelor's, Master's or Doctorate.

Certification is the process of verifying and evidencing educational achievements and awards through the issuing of transcripts and parchments.

An award **parchment** is evidence of the academic qualification attained and is presented to successful candidates at a Commencement/Graduation ceremony.

A **transcript** is a document outlining the grades/marks obtained by a learner for their programme of study.

A **linked provider** is a provider that is not a designated awarding body but enters into an arrangement with a designated awarding body under which arrangement the provider delivers a programme of education and training that satisfies all or part of the prerequisites for an award of the designated awarding body (Ref. Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012).

A **graduand** is a student who has met the requirements for programme completion, but is yet to have the award conferred.

A **graduate** is a student who has successfully completed the requirements for a degree, and that degree has been conferred.

6. Awards

All awards granted by Open Training College on behalf of QQI are aligned with the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

6.1 Awards presented under special circumstances

Awards may be presented in the following special circumstances, consistent with the *Procedures for Conferral of Awards*:

a) Posthumous awards

A posthumous award may be made at a graduation ceremony if a student dies before the ceremony at which they would normally have been presented with their award. The award is usually presented to a member of the family or other appropriate person.

b) Awards where programme requirements are not fully satisfied

In rare and exceptional circumstances, approval may be given by the College Director for the conferral of an award at a graduation ceremony to a student who has died, or has become incapacitated, and has not completed all programme requirements.

6.2 Parchments

Open Training College, on behalf of QQI, issues parchments on the conferral of awards to its graduates.

6.3 Transcripts

6.3.1 Open Training College provides academic transcripts for undergraduate and postgraduate Students.

6.3.2 Open Training College will not issue an academic transcript to a third party without the written consent of the person named on the transcript.

6.4 Fees and Charges

6.4.1 Fees and charges will apply to aspects of a graduand's attendance at a graduation ceremony. Fees and charges relating to graduation ceremonies are detailed in the Conferring Pack.

6.4.2 All fees and charges must be paid in full prior to the graduand participating in their graduation ceremony.

6.4.3 There are no fees or charges for OTC staff participating in a graduation ceremony.

6.4.4 Fees and charges will be determined on an annual basis by the Corporate Services Manager.

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Audience:		Public access
Reference(s)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collaborative Award Policy ▪ Exit Award Policy ▪ National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) ▪ Descriptors for Minor, Special Purpose and Supplemental Award-Types, National Qualifications Authority Ireland ▪ Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012