

## **Section 1 – Overview of the Policy**

### **1.1 Policy introduction**

English Speaking Board (International) Ltd. (ESB) is recognised as an Awarding Organisation in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. As a regulated Awarding Organisation we are required by our regulators to have in place a document which outlines how we manage the withdrawal of units and qualifications.

### **1.2 Purpose of the Policy**

The purpose of this document is to outline the procedure to be followed by ESB and its recognised centres in the event of a qualification or unit(s) being withdrawn. ESB may consider the withdrawal of a qualification for any of the following reasons:

- Lack of learner registration
- Lack of demand from a sector
- Qualification subject matter is no longer relevant
- Qualification no longer meets the regulatory requirement
- Units and qualifications are owned by other Awarding Organisations who have decided to withdraw them
- Lack of progression to other qualifications
- Does not support the strategic direction of the Awarding Organisation

### **1.3 Communication of the Policy**

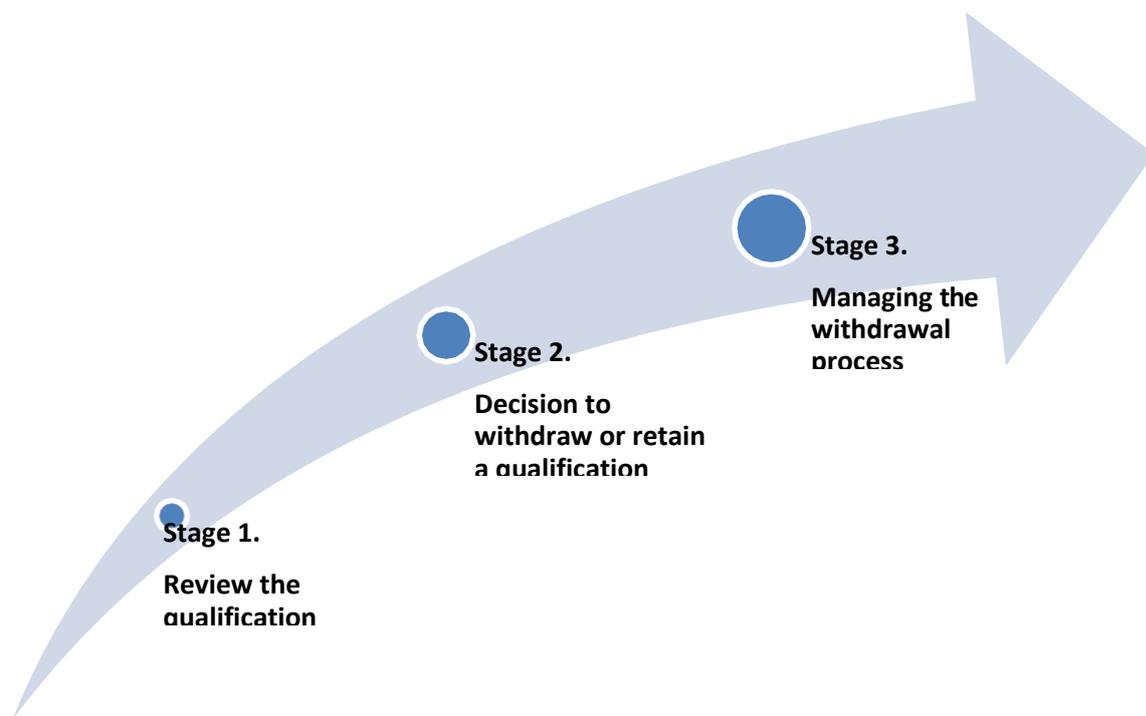
ESB's withdrawal policy must be widely communicated, owned, understood and adhered to by staff and associates, qualification regulators, centre staff and learners who use ESB's qualifications.

## 1.4 Review of the Policy

ESB will review this policy in accordance with its published timescales, to ensure its procedures and practices continue to meet legislative and regulatory compliance. It reserves the right to make ongoing changes in line with customer and stakeholder feedback, changes in its practices, actions from the regulatory authorities or external agencies or changes in legislation.

## Section 2 – Qualification withdrawal process

The withdrawal process will follow a three-stage process



## **Stage 1 – Review the qualification**

All current ESB's qualifications (as listed on the regulators' registers) will be reviewed by the Product Development and Validation Team (PDVT).

The group will consider:

- learner registrations
- revenue
- attainment levels
- qualification relevance
- regulatory changes
- market need
- optional pathway – part of a larger suite of qualifications
- whether it meets the needs of a specialist sector
- relates to a statutory requirement – i.e. licence to practice.

## **Stage 2 - Decision to withdraw**

The PDVT will provide a report to the SMT outlining their findings as well as making recommendations as to whether the qualification should be retained or be withdrawn. The SMT will either approve or decline the recommendations. Where the recommendation is to withdraw a qualification, PDVT will produce a withdrawal plan which will be signed off by the Responsible Officer. A written withdrawal plan will include:

- regulatory requirements
- how the interests of learners in relation to the qualification will be protected
- how the withdrawal will be communicated to the regulatory authorities, centres and learners
- detail of all deadlines including the last date for accepting registration and certification
- a rationale for the withdrawal
- possible alternatives
- any other relevant information

### **Stage 3 – Managing the withdrawal process**

A decision to withdraw a qualification will, in the first instance, be communicated to regulators. ESB will inform them of provision made to support learners, centres and purchasers throughout the withdrawal period and will supply them with a copy of its transition arrangements. Once the notification from the regulators has been received ESB will:

- notify regulators of the anticipated withdrawal of a qualification prior to informing learners, centres or purchasers of qualification, once confirmation has been received
- circulate a notice of intention to withdraw the qualification to all current active centres
- provide a full rationale for the withdrawal of the qualification
- publish the last date for learner registrations
- publish the last date for certification
- Provide contact details for further guidance
- reassure all current active centres that any registered learners will be allowed to complete their programmes using normal established precedents
- advise centres and learners on alternative qualifications
- amend publications i.e. website and fees list
- notify all internal staff and contractors of the changes

#### **ESB will send out a reminder communication to all centres:**

- three months before the end of registrations for the qualification
- three months before the end of certification for the qualification

Once a notification has been published, no further learners will be able to register for the withdrawn qualification.

## Policy Definitions

**CCEA:** Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment has responsibility for the regulation of qualifications taken by learners in Northern Ireland.

**Centre:** A Centre is an organisation approved by ESB to offer ESB qualifications.

**Customer:** An approved Centre.

**Examiner:** A representative from the Awarding Organisation who judges learners' performance against criteria.

**External Assessment:** An examination carried out and/or marked by an ESB examiner. **Internal Assessment:** An assessment carried out and marked internally by the Centre. **Learner:** An individual who is registered with ESB.

**Ofqual:** The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation regulates qualifications, examinations and assessments in England.

**Qualification Wales:** Qualifications Wales is the independent organisation responsible for regulating general and vocational qualifications in Wales.

**PDVT:** Product Development and Validation Team

**RPL:** Recognition of Prior Learning.

**RQF:** The Regulated Qualifications Framework. This replaces the Qualifications and Credit Framework and the National Qualifications Framework and provides a single, simple system for cataloguing all qualifications.

**SMT:** Senior Management Team

**SQA Accreditation:** Scottish Qualifications Authority Accreditation regulates approved awarding bodies and their accredited qualifications in Scotland.

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