

Qualification Withdrawal Policy

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Qualification Withdrawal 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outline the procedure to be followed by ESB and its recognised centres in the event of a qualification or unit(s) being withdrawn.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 registrations
- Lack of demand from a sector
- Qualification subject matter is no longer valid
- Qualification no longer meets regulatory requirements
- 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
- Policy changes

1.3 Communication of the Policy

ESB's Qualification Withdrawal Policy must be widely communicated, owned, understood and adhered to by ESB 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.

1.5 ESB Responsibilities

ESB recognises its responsibility to comply with all regulatory conditions and requirements. ESB is responsible for identifying qualifications for withdrawal, formulating a withdrawal plan, notifying regulators, centres [and centre users] and purchasers of its intention to withdraw qualifications. ESB will ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to protect the interests of learners in relation to qualifications and/or units which are to be withdrawn.

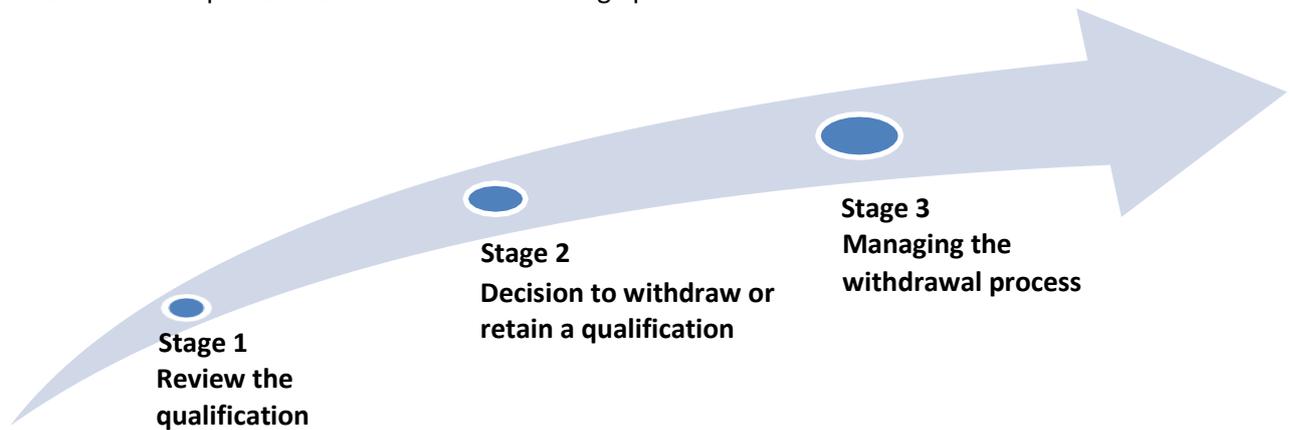
1.6 Centre Responsibilities

If a centre ceases to operate or withdraws from providing an ESB qualification, it must notify ESB and take all reasonable steps to protect the interests of its learners. Registered centres must ensure that learners are not disadvantaged and are allowed the opportunity to claim any unit/qualification certification to which they may be entitled.

Centres are required to comply with any written notifications issued by ESB with regards to the withdrawal of its qualifications. It is the responsibility of the centre to ensure that ESB's Qualification Withdrawal Policy is widely communicated, owned, understood and adhered to by centre staff and associates.

1.7 Qualification Withdrawal Procedure

The withdrawal procedure will follow a three-stage process:



Stage 1 – Review the qualification

All current ESB’s qualifications (as listed on the regulators’ registers) will be subject to an annual qualification review led by the Product Development Team (PDT).

The review will consider:

- learner registrations
- revenue and expenditure
- certifications and attainment levels
- qualification validity
- regulatory or policy change
- market need
- optional pathway – part of a larger suite of qualifications
- whether it meets the needs of a specialist sector
- whether it relates to a statutory requirement – i.e. licence to practice.

Stage 2 - Decision to withdraw

The PDT will provide a report to the Senior Management Team (SMT) outlining the findings of the review, as well as making recommendations as to whether the qualification should be retained or be withdrawn. The SMT, led by the CEO, will either approve or decline the recommendations. Where the recommendation is to withdraw a qualification, PDT 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

The 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 confirmation notification has been received from the regulators has been received ESB will:

- circulate a notice of intention to withdraw the qualification to all current active centres which will include the following:
 - a full rationale for the withdrawal of the qualification
 - the last date for learner registrations
 - the last date for certification
 - contact details for further guidance
 - reassurance to all current active centres that any registered learners will be allowed to complete their programmes using normal established precedents
 - advice to centres and learners on alternative qualifications
- amend publications i.e. website and fees list
- notify all internal staff and contractors

ESB will place a Qualification Withdrawal Notice on its website

- at the start of the academic year

ESB will issue 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

ESB will issue reminder communications via its website and ESB News publications:

- at timely intervals throughout the academic year.

Once the initial notification has been published, no further learners will be able to be 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.

PDT: Product Development 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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