



Exemptions for the Purpose of a Compound (Major/Special Purpose/Supplemental) Award

FETAC awards and other awards in the NFQ

QQI recognises awards previously awarded by FETAC and the other former awarding bodies FÁS, Fáilte Ireland, NCVA and Teagasc.

Some of these awards are mapped to CAS components and can be used to claim exemptions. This mapping is based on sufficient comparability between the learning outcomes of the two components. QQI published lists of these mappings and had set a deadline of 12 December 2015 for learners to avail of the exemptions. *See QHelp, Providers, Certification Queries, Common Award System (CAS) Exemptions*

Where former awards are not mapped to a CAS component, then direct exemption is not possible.

However, it is open to the provider to use assessment as a form of recognition of prior learning.

Following dialogue with stakeholders, and to address the difficulties caused by the December 2015 deadline, QQI is now changing the arrangements by which exemptions for CAS components can be gained.

Providers may use QBS to claim exemptions from CAS components for holders of FETAC awards but only under the following conditions:

- An exemption may only be claimed for the purpose of and at the time of achieving a compound award i.e. a major, special purpose or supplemental class award.
- From January 2016, only those awards which are no more than five years old, at the time exemption is sought, may be used to claim an exemption. *This means that in 2016, certificates dated before the equivalent month in 2011 cannot be used for the purpose of exemption. In 2017, the cut-off year will be 2012 etc.*
- A provider's responsibility for quality assuring assessment remains i.e. the provider should only claim exemptions where there is reasonable assurance that the compound award is merited. This is especially important where a learner is claiming multiple exemptions.
- CAS components achieved by exemption will be neutral in the calculation of the grade of the compound award.
- Holders of HET major awards at Levels 6 to 10 of the National Framework of Qualifications can be exempted from Communications at levels 5 and 6 where the provider is confident of the currency of the awards.



Awards that are not part of the NFQ

A learner holding an award which, though not part of the NFQ, is deemed appropriate by the assessing provider can seek recognition of that award through (1) exemption from a CAS component(s) or (2) through RPL.

- (1) Where such an award was previously recognised by FETAC e.g. ECDL, MOS, CACHE etc., an exemption against a CAS component can be claimed through QBS without reference to QQI. *See QSearch, Exemptions for the published list of these recognised awards.*

Providers may claim these exemptions using QBS, but only under the following conditions:

- an exemption may only be claimed for the purpose of and at the time of achieving a compound i.e. major or special purpose award.
- the provider has carried out due diligence checks to ensure that the previous qualification is genuine and appropriate for the requested exemption.
- From January 2016 only awards which are no more than five years old, as dated on the certificate, may be used to claim an exemption.
- CAS components achieved by exemption will be neutral in the calculation of the grade of the compound award.

NB These are the only awards which can be used for exemption purposes. Where a learner holding an award that is not on the published list seeks recognition of that award from a provider, the provider must use RPL.

QQI will no longer accept applications for exemption on a case by case basis.

- (2) **RPL**

RPL is primarily a form of assessment. As an assessment method, it is demanding on both the provider and learner. A provider must have the capacity to guide a learner through the RPL process of gathering sufficient, reliable and appropriate evidence to demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes.

It will be possible for the provider to give the learner a grade for the work assessed through RPL but the normal procedures for quality assuring validity of assessment outcomes must apply.