

Policy name: Programme Cessation and Suspension Policy

Approved: 25th November 2016

Revision 1 approved 10th March 2017

Revision 2 approved 9th November 2018

Revision 3 approved by Trinity Academic Council 13th May 2020

1. Context

- 1.1 Undergraduate and postgraduate programmes offered by the Royal Irish Academy of Music, hereinafter referred to as RIAM or the Academy, are delivered by RIAM and validated by the Designated Awarding Body, Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin, hereinafter referred to as Trinity. Such programmes have formal procedures for their suspension and cessation which are in accordance with the statutory requirements that govern awards, as stipulated by the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 This policy requires that due consideration be given to any decision to suspend or cease a programme of study. It outlines the deliberative processes that arrive at a decision in accordance with the provisions of the 2012 Act, which seeks to ensure that:
- (i) learners have every opportunity to complete a programme leading to an award; or
 - (ii) in the event that completion of a programme is not possible, that learners are refunded the monies they have paid for the year in which the programme is suspended/ceased, or that have been paid on their behalf in-line with the RIAM Refund for Students Policy; and that
 - (iii) learners are furnished with adequate and accurate information about the programme of education and training that they wish to pursue and the safeguards in place in the event that the programme ceases prior to completion by learners.
- 2.2 This policy forms part of a suite of policies which regulate the development, monitoring and suspension/cessation of programmes.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to RIAM's programmes validated by Trinity, at Level 7, 8, 9 and 10 of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), which includes undergraduate and postgraduate degrees.
- 3.2 Out of scope of this policy are programmes delivered by RIAM and certified by RIAM.

4. Benefits

- 4.1 Timelines, communications and potential refunds are dealt with pro-actively and fairly in relation to programmes that are suspended or ceased.
- 4.2 Protects the academic interests of all students studying on the programme (including those who have taken an agreed break from their studies) and those who have applied to study.

- 4.3 The quality of the learning experience is safeguarded during the period in which the programme is being withdrawn.

5. Definitions

- 5.1 **Suspension** is defined as the temporary discontinuation of a programme of study with the intention of recommencing it at a future date.
- 5.2 **Cessation** is defined as the permanent discontinuation of a programme of study.
- 5.3 RIAM's **Associated College Degrees Committee (ACDC)** is a governance committee whose terms of reference include ordinary academic matters with respect to new course proposals and/or changes to previously approved courses and monitoring activities and matters relating to monitoring of RIAM's institutional quality assurance as a linked provider.

6. Principles

- 6.1 The decision to suspend or cease a programme of study arises from an objective review of its rationale, academic standards and financial viability which is informed by the annual programme monitoring activities.
- 6.2 RIAM is committed to the delivery of the full programme of study on which students have been enrolled.
- 6.3 In cases where RIAM is unable to deliver a programme of study, due to unforeseen circumstances, learners will be provided with full details and timelines for the potential continuance of the programme, transfer to a similar course or a partial/full refund.

7. Policy

7.1 Suspension

- 7.1.1 A decision to suspend a programme should be made as early as possible, ideally before the course is open for recruitment but no later than the closing date for applications.

7.2 Cessation

- 7.2.1 Programmes which are to cease will be intended to be phased out on an annual basis over the full cycle of the programme.

8. Suspension and cessation of programmes procedure

- 8.1 Proposals for the suspension or cessation of a programme of study must be approved by the RIAM Board of Studies.
- 8.2 Notification of the suspension or cessation of a programme of study must be formally submitted to the next available RIAM ACDC to be subsequently noted by the Trinity Undergraduate Studies Committee or Graduate Studies Committee, as appropriate, prior to final approval by the Trinity Council.
- 8.3 Applicants on a programme which has been suspended or ceased after recruitment has commenced will be refunded their application fee, and deposit (where applicable) in accordance with the Refund Policy.

- 8.4 RIAM will endeavour to make reasonable accommodations for students who have commenced a programme of study, but who for valid reasons do not progress within the prescribed timeframe during which a programme is suspended or ceased to enable them to complete their studies towards the degree award for which they registered.
- 8.5 Trinity, as the Designated Awarding Body, is committed to the delivery of the full programme of study on which students have been enrolled.
- 8.6 All relevant providers, including public providers, have a duty to assist QQI in the accommodation of learners affected by the cessation of a programme if requested.

9. Responsibility

- 9.1 The RIAM Director is responsible for the implementation and operation of this policy.

10. Legislation and regulation

- 10.1 [Qualifications and Quality Assurance \(Education and Training\) Act 2012](#) and its [Amendment Bill 2018](#).
- 10.2 [Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area \(2005\)](#).
- 10.3 [Code of Practice for Provision of Education and Training to International Learners \(2015\)](#).
- 10.4 [National Framework of Qualifications \(NFQ\)](#).

11. Related Documents

- 11.1 Academic Programme Development and Review Policy.
- 11.2 Refund for Students Policy

12. Document Control

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