

Springboard+ 2018
Call Document: Questions and Answers

Courses and Skills Areas:

1. Are proposals limited to certain Skills areas?

Courses in all areas of demonstrated skills needs are eligible, particularly including new and emerging skills areas. However, all proposals must be evidence-based.

2. Will work placement be expected for employed participants?

Course proposals should also include plans for work placement. Almost 90% of Springboard+ courses approved in 2017 (excluding those in the Entrepreneurship skills category) included a work placement. However, where a Springboard+ course is a mixture of those in employment, Returners and those in receipt of a social protection payment it is accepted that a work placement may not be required for a participant who is in employment. See section 5.1 of the Call Document.

3. How can course providers identify Skills needs in their region/nationally?

Appendix 1 of the 2018 Call Document includes a list of relevant skills reports across a range of sectors that will be useful in analysing skills needs.

In addition, providers should engage with the Regional Skills Fora representatives. The details can be found here <http://www.regionalskills.ie/Contact-Us/>

4. Can courses be designed for a specific company?

No. Springboard+ does not provide company-specific training. However in developing courses it is essential that Providers engage with as many industry representatives as possible, and provide evidence of this in their submissions.

5. Will one-year full time ICT Skills Conversion Courses be funded?

Yes, but due to the expected decrease in demand for these courses priority will be given to more flexible 2 year options.

6. Are ICT conversion course proposals with several streams permitted?

Yes. Courses with specialist streams can be submitted. However the submission should provide evidence of demand and enrolment patterns to justify a multi-stream approach.

Eligibility of Applicants:

7. Who is eligible to participate on a Springboard+ programme in 2018/2019?

All courses are open to eligible applicants irrespective of their employment status. There are three categories of applicant:

- those in receipt of an eligible DEASP payment and the previously self-employed,
- Returners seeking to re-enter the workforce
- People in employment seeking to reskill or upskill

8. How do I verify the status of an applicant when assessing eligibility?

Please refer to Section 4 a) b) and c) of the Call document for this information.

9. Will there be a quota or reserved number of places for Unemployed/Returner applicants and how will this be applied?

In courses (except ICT conversion courses) where eligible applicants are a mix of all applicant categories, as outlined above, applicant categories 1 and 2 should form a minimum of 30% of the student cohort.

10. The Call document states that 30% of participants on courses must be from the unemployed, formerly self-employed and Returner target cohorts. What should a provider do if there are less than 30% of applications from these target groups but there is a waiting list of applicants from the already in employment category?

In such instances providers must liaise directly with the HEA *before* places have been offered.

11. Does the 30% threshold mentioned above apply to ICT conversion courses?

No.

12. Will the restrictions on previous applicants that were in place in 2017 apply in 2018 also?

Yes. Please refer to Section 4, page 8, of the 2018 Call document for the full information.

13. Can courses provide a follow on award from previous years or serve as foundation for such an award?

No. Courses must stand alone and provide participants with the required skills to transition or progress in the labour market.

14. How can I check if a 2018 applicant has enrolled on a Springboard+ course previously?

When an applicant submits an application to the provider, the provider will be able to see some details on the applicant if they have previously enrolled on a Springboard+ course. This includes the year they enrolled and the outcome of that programme (e.g. withdrew, completed). From this providers will be able to determine eligibility for

2018, having regard to the additional information provided in the Call document on eligibility.

Course Fees

15. Will employed applicants be charged a course fee?

For employed participants on courses NFQ L7-9, HEA will fund 90% of the course fee with Providers collecting the remaining 10% from participants. Level 6 courses are free to all eligible participants.

16. Who will collect the course 10%?

It will be the course providers' responsibility to collect any the 10% from the participants. Verification that the funding has been collected will form part of future audits by HEA.

17. Can employers pay the 10% on behalf of their employee?

A. Yes, either the employee or employer can pay the 10%

18. Is a 10% charge also being applied to Level 6 courses?

No. All level 6 programmes will be free to any eligible applicant.