



Springboard+ 2019

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 a job readiness element and/or work placement be expected for employed participants?

Yes, a job readiness element and/or work placement remain key components of all Springboard+ courses funded in 2019. Unemployed participants are still a major cohort of Springboard+ courses and must be supported in their efforts to re-join the workforce. Therefore, course proposals will be expected to include a dedicated job readiness/job preparation component. Almost 90% of Springboard+ courses approved in previous years included a work placement. See section 5.1 of the Call Document.

3. What about those courses with a large number of employed participants?

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 and instead, courses should include plans for a work-based project or a suitable alternative. See section 5.1 of the Call Document.

4. Will a job readiness element and/or work placement still be mandatory for ICT Skills Conversion Courses?

Yes. A work placement is mandatory for 1-year full-time ICT Skills Conversion courses and a work placement or credit bearing project is required for the 2-year part-time ICT conversion programme. See section 5.1 of the Call Document.

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

Appendix 1 of the 2019 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/>

6. 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.

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

Yes, however given the positive trends in the rate of employment it is anticipated that the demand for two-year part time courses will be greater and providers should consider this when devising courses.

8. 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.

9. Should providers still provide evidence from employers and/or Regional Skills managers?

Yes, individual references or letters of recommendation may serve to strengthen an application. Generic letters or those advocating for several different and distinct proposals may not be beneficial and should not be submitted. A template has been devised for the Regional Skills Fora Managers to outline their support for applications. Please see Appendix 4 of the call document.

Eligibility of Applicants:

10. Who is eligible to participate on a Springboard+ programme in 2019/2020?

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

11. 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.

12. Will the restrictions on previous applicants that were in place in 2017 and 2018 apply in 2019 also?

No, the requirement that former participants must be progressing to a higher-level award in the same skills area (ISCED) are no longer in place.

13. Are there any restrictions on former Springboard+ participants?

No, the requirement that former participants must be progressing to a higher-level award in the same skills area (ISCED) is no longer in place. Please refer to Section 4, of the 2019 Call document for the full information.

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

No strict quota will be enforced on providers. However, in courses (except ICT Skills Conversion courses) where eligible applicants are a mix of all applicant categories, as outlined above, course providers must ensure that applicant categories 1 and 2 are continued to be given priority over other employed or previous Springboard+ applicants and should aspire to form a minimum of 30% of the student cohort.

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

No.

16. 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.

17. How can I check if a 2019 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 2019, having regard to the additional information provided in the Call document on eligibility.

Course Fees

18. 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.

19. Who will collect the course 10%?

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

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

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

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

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