



Academic Quality Framework

English Language Policy

**Approved by Academic Council
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Table of Contents

1.	Key Definitions	3
1.1	International learner	3
1.2	Other definitions	5
2.	Policy Context	5
2.1	Institutional overview	5
2.2	Legal and regulatory context.....	6
3.	Purpose.....	8
4.	Scope.....	8
5.	Policy Statements	9
5.1	Principles	9
5.2	Assessment of English language proficiency requirements	10
5.3	Provisions of support and development of English for Academic Purposes (EAP)	10
5.3.1	Pre-sessional EAP supports - Bridging programmes (8-week duration)	10
5.3.2	Pre-sessional EAP supports - International Foundation Year Programmes (IFYP) (1-year duration).....	11
5.3.3	In-sessional EAP modules	12
5.3.4	In-sessional Academic Writing and Learning Centre	12
5.3.5	Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement	13
6.	TU Dublin Reference Documents.....	13

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1. Key Definitions

1.1 International learner

The [Technological University Dublin](#) (hereafter, TU Dublin) adopts the Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)'s [Policy on the Authorisation to use the International Education Mark](#) definition of an *international learner*. This defines an *international learner* as 'a person who is not an Irish citizen but is lawfully in the state primarily to receive education and training'. An *international learner* is further defined by the QQI's [Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Higher Education to International Learners](#), as one who:

- is in the state enrolled on a programme leading to an award included within the [National Framework of Qualifications \(NFQ\)](#);

OR

- is a learner outside the state enrolled on a programme leading to an award included within the NFQ.

The TU Dublin English Language Policy, as outlined here, encompasses the following inclusions and exclusions relevant to the definition of an *international learner*, in line with the aforementioned QQI code.

Categories of learners covered by this definition:

- EU/EEA students in the state undertaking programmes that lead to major or non-major awards that are included within the NFQ;
- Non-EU/EEA students in the state undertaking programmes leading to major or non-major awards that are included within the NFQ;
- Learners outside the state enrolled on programmes that lead to major or non-major awards included within the NFQ, whether offered in transnational education settings and/or through remote, fully online modes of learning.

Categories of learners excluded from this definition:

- Erasmus exchange students;
- Learners enrolled on study-abroad programmes that do not lead to awards included within the NFQ;
- Learners enrolled on continuous professional development programmes, and other professional training programmes, that do not lead to awards included within the NFQ;
- Citizens of Great Britain and Northern Ireland undertaking programmes that lead to major or non-major awards that are included within the NFQ.

1.2 Other definitions

Pre-sessional EAP programmes/modules

Pre-sessional EAP programmes/modules are those that are designed to develop an international student's ability to study at TU Dublin through the medium of the English language. Pre-sessional programmes/modules develop General English and Academic English proficiency, as well as facilitating acculturation to Irish academic life.

In-sessional EAP programmes/modules

In-sessional EAP programmes/modules are those that are designed to develop and further enhance an international student's ability to study at TU Dublin through the medium of the English language. In-sessional programmes/modules develop General English and Academic English proficiency, as well as academic study and research skills that may be applied to the development of discipline-specific knowledge and competences, and also facilitate acculturation to Irish academic life.

2. Policy Context

2.1 Institutional overview

TU Dublin is a publicly funded university, established in 2019 through the merger of three Institutes of Technology. The University's students (28,000+) and staff (3,000+) comprise more than 140 nationalities. As a [Designated Awarding Body](#), with the legal authority to make awards, TU Dublin provides an inclusive learning experience to students registering on a range of programmes, from NFQ Level 6 to Level 10. These represent foundation, undergraduate, postgraduate, and PhD levels of study, to students from all over the world.

A number of policies and associated operational procedures and processes exist to support the recruitment, admission, and retention of *international learners* registered for TU Dublin programmes. The [School of Tourism and Hospitality Management \(Faculty of Arts and Humanities\)](#) provides pre-sessional programmes to cater for the needs of *international learners* hoping to enrol on TU Dublin programmes. In-sessional support for academic writing for all TU Dublin students, inclusive of *international learners*, is provided by the [Academic Writing and Learning Centre](#), in addition to a suite of validated English for Academic Purposes (EAP) modules provided by [Language Studies](#) (Faculty of Arts and Humanities), which are available for incorporation into TU Dublin programmes. Validated English as Foreign Language (EFL) modules are also available.

This policy applies to all programmes of study leading to academic qualifications awarded by TU Dublin. These include programmes delivered under TU Dublin's collaborative provision arrangements, and service contracts, where such arrangements are in place. In the event of linked providers being involved in the delivery of English language supports to TU Dublin international students, the linked providers are required to document their own English Language Policy in alignment with the provisions of the TU Dublin policy as outlined in this document.

2.2 Legal and regulatory context

Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)

[QQI](#) is the state agency responsible for the promotion of quality, integrity, and the reputation of Ireland's Further and Higher Education system. It was established by the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012. This act was amended by the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2019 and is hereafter referred to as the 2012 Act as amended. The 2012 Act as amended set out the functions of the QQI. These include the requirements to establish codes of practice for the provision of programmes of education and training to

international learners, and to authorise the use of the International Education Mark by providers who comply with that code of practice.

International Education Mark

The [TrustEd Ireland](#) mark is a statutory quality mark forming part of a suite of legislative measures designed to protect *international learners*. It is intended to promote confidence, both nationally and internationally, in the quality of the Irish education system. The TrustEd Ireland mark is awarded to Higher Education and English language education providers who shall have demonstrated that they meet national standards for ensuring a quality experience for *international learners* from pre-enrolment, through to the completion of their programme of education and training.

Code of Practice

The definition of an international learner (**Section 1.1**) in this policy is as per the Code of Practice for the Provision of Programmes of Higher Education to International Learners. This code of practice is a supplement to the [Policy on Authorisation to Use the Higher Education Mark \(IEM\)](#), developed in line with the requirement of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 as amended. This code provides the basis for the development of a comprehensive policy framework for the provision of education and training to *international learners* by providers in Ireland. It also requires Higher Education providers to develop an English Language Policy as part of the authorisation process for the use of the IEM.

3. Purpose

This policy supports the admission and registration of suitably qualified international students, while also promoting diversity in the TU Dublin student body. The purpose of this policy is to outline TU Dublin's standards for the evaluation of the English language proficiency of international applicants to TU Dublin's programmes of study in an equitable and transparent manner. Complementing the existing TU Dublin suite of policies, procedures, and processes, this policy further encompasses the English language, and academic practical supports available to international students, in compliance with the QQI's Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Higher Education to International Learners, during their period of registration with TU Dublin. An overview of the procedures, processes, and policies pertaining to English language supports for students at TU Dublin, both prior to, and throughout a period of study at the university, is outlined.

4. Scope

- 4.1 The policy applies to all undergraduate and postgraduate academic programmes leading to TU Dublin Awards.
- 4.2 Prospective students are responsible for ensuring that their application fulfils all admission requirements, including English language proficiency test certification.
- 4.3 The Academic Affairs function at TU Dublin is responsible for the implementation and monitoring of this policy.

5. Policy Statements

5.1 Principles

TU Dublin policies and operational procedures support the recruitment, admission, and retention of *international learners* registered on undergraduate and postgraduate programmes of study. Language Studies (Faculty of Arts and Humanities) offers pre-sessional and in-sessional language supports to international students throughout the University. The Academic Writing and Learning Centre (an academic support unit within the university) provides additional English writing supports for all TU Dublin students, including *international learners*.

The principles of TU Dublin's English language policy are to:

- Ensure a transparent and equitable approach that supports the successful enrolment and engagement of *international learners* with their programme of choice;
- Support potential and existing international TU Dublin students in participating in, and benefitting from, the unique TU Dublin education experience, while also contributing to student body diversity and the University's talent pool;
- Outline the quality assurance and enhancement arrangements for English language programme approval and delivery for the promotion of English for Academic Practice for TU Dublin's *international learners*;
- Outline the English language supports provided to *international learners* prior to, and during, their period of study at TU Dublin;
- Facilitate the admission of *international learners* to TU Dublin programmes of study only when there is a strong likelihood of success of the international learner in completing their chosen programme. This necessitates recognising those potential

students who are unlikely to achieve success as a result of not meeting English language proficiency requirements.

5.2 Assessment of English language proficiency requirements

As English is the teaching language of the University, applicants are required to produce evidence of proficiency in accordance with the TU Dublin [English Language Requirements](#). This includes an International English Language Testing System (IELTS Academic) minimum required level of 6.0, with no less than 6.0 in each component, for entry into TU Dublin's undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Recognised equivalent [tests of English language proficiency](#) are also accepted.

Local derogation of this policy may apply to specific programmes. Such derogations should be contained in programme validation and review documents, and are approved by the TU Dublin's University Programme Board (UPB), a sub-committee of the Academic Council, and published to the TU Dublin website. Any such derogations are implemented only at the start of the recruitment cycle.

5.3 Provisions of support and development of English for Academic Purposes (EAP)

5.3.1 Pre-sessional EAP supports - Bridging programmes (8-week duration)

TU Dublin offers an [International Bridging Programme for Undergraduate Students](#) and an [International Bridging Programme for Postgraduate Students](#). These are designed to provide an entry pathway for potential students who fulfil the academic entry requirements for a programme, but who do not fulfil the English language proficiency entry requirement. To be admitted onto the Bridging programme, students must have an English language proficiency within a 0.5 IELTS band of the threshold

for their destination programme. Applicants to the Bridging programme will have a prior conditional offer for their chosen TU Dublin destination programme.

5.3.2 Pre-sessional EAP supports - International Foundation Year Programmes (IFYP) (1-year duration)

5.3.2.1 Standard IFYP

The [Standard IFYP](#) is a 60 ECTS Credits Special Purpose Award (NFQ Level 6 Certificate), validated and periodically reviewed in accordance with TU Dublin's Quality Framework Policies and Procedures as outlined in **Section 5.3.5**. The purpose of the IFYP is to provide an entry pathway for students who do not fulfil English language criteria, or discipline-specific academic criteria, for direct entry into first year of an undergraduate programme. Upon successful completion of the programme, learners progress into the first year of an undergraduate programme at TU Dublin, or they may apply to other Irish Higher Education Institutions. The minimum English language proficiency requirement for entry into this course is IELTS 5.0, with a score of no less than 5.0 in each component. Applicants to the International Foundation Year Programme are also offered a conditional place on their chosen TU Dublin programme, pending successful completion of the International Foundation Year Programme.

5.3.2.2 Extended IFYP

TU Dublin offers an [Extended IFYP](#) for students who do not meet the minimum English language requirements for entry onto the standard IFYP. This extended programme is also Special Purpose Certificate (NFQ Level 6) award which bears 60 ECTS credits, and is validated and periodically reviewed in accordance with the TU Dublin's Quality Framework Policies and Procedures as outlined in **Section 5.3.5**. The Extended International Foundation Year Programme comprises three semesters, including an

eight-week semester of full-time English language tuition (General English and Academic English), after which students on the extended programme join the standard IFYP for two semesters. The minimum English language proficiency requirement for this course is IELTS 4.5, with a score no less than 4.5 in each component. Applicants to the Extended IFYP are also offered a conditional place on their chosen TU Dublin programme, pending successful completion of the International Foundation Year Programme.

5.3.3 In-sessional EAP modules

Six English for Academic Purposes (EAP) modules (5 ECTS credits each) have been designed to provide opportunities for international students to develop proficiency in the application of the English language. All modules are benchmarked against CEFR levels ([Common European Framework of Reference](#) from B1/B2 to C2). The modules are validated by TU Dublin's Language Studies (Faculty of Arts and Humanities), through TU Dublin's Quality Framework Policies and Procedures, as outlined in **Section 5.3.5**. Any proposed changes to these, or other, modules related to EAP in the University, are considered as part of the continuing quality enhancement of TU Dublin modules and programmes, under the approved policies and guidelines of the University.

5.3.4 In-sessional Academic Writing and Learning Centre

The Academic Writing and Learning Centre is a student-oriented service administered under the auspices of TU Dublin's Student Services and Wellbeing. The purpose of this centre is to nurture and promote EAP academic writing skills for both undergraduate and postgraduate students. Services available to TU Dublin-registered students encompass individual writing consultations, group-based lectures, and webinars on a range of EAP writing-specific topics.

5.3.5 Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement

The IFYP and ECTS credit-bearing EAP modules are subject to the [TU Dublin Quality Framework Assurance and Enhancement Processes](#) and associated [Academic Affairs Policies](#). These framework policies and processes include the validation, approval of changes, review and management of these programmes and modules as described in the documents listed in **Section 6** below.

6. TU Dublin Reference Documents

- [Admissions Policy](#)
- [Making Changes to Programmes and Modules Process](#)
- [Management of the Quality Enhancement of Academic Programmes](#)
- [Programme Validation Policy](#)
- [Programme Review Policy](#)