

NCI English Language Policy

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate NCI's compliance with the 2023 [Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Higher Education to International Learners](#) (HE Code), specifically Section 5.5. This section requires that higher education institutions (HEIs) have an English Language Policy Statement that documents:

- The policy approach and process to the assessment of English language proficiency entry requirements.
- The institution's policy approach to the provision, support, and development of English for Academic Purposes (EAP).
- The institution's policy approach to the provision of English language supports for non-native English speakers prior to commencement and throughout their higher education studies.

This policy aligns with the requirements of TrustEd Ireland, a statutory quality mark launched in September 2024 as part of legislative measures to protect international learners. TrustEd Ireland is intended to promote confidence in the quality of the Irish education system and ensure that international learners receive a quality, consistent learning experience. While the scheme is voluntary, all providers wishing to recruit non-EU/EEA learners on programmes requiring immigration permissions/study visas must apply for authorisation to use the mark. The authorisation process is managed by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) and will be completed in 2025.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all international learners enrolling in higher education programmes at NCI. It sets out the institution's approach to ensuring English language proficiency and support mechanisms to facilitate learners' academic success.

NCI does not currently offer any credit-bearing and/or award programmes or modules for pre-sessional or in-sessional English for Academic Purposes (EAP).

3. Definitions

International Learner: An international learner is defined as a person who is not an Irish citizen but is lawfully in the State primarily to receive education and training. This includes a learner who is enrolled on a programme leading to an award included within the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ); a learner enrolled on an English language programme; or a learner outside the State enrolled on a programme leading to an NFQ award.

4. Policy Statement

As a HE provider committed to diversity, equity and inclusion, NCI will apply fair, transparent and consistent English language requirements and standards across our portfolio of programmes to support the successful engagement and achievement of our international learners throughout their academic journey.

4.1. High-Level English language Requirements

Minimum English language proficiency requirements for NFQ Levels 6-9 programmes are set as an overall IELTS Academic score of 6.0, with no less than 5.5 in any band, or an equivalent score in an accepted English language proficiency test. Some specific Level 8 and 9 programmes require a minimum IELTS Academic score of 6.5, often linked to professional/statutory body requirements.

An applicant who has been taught and examined through the medium of English in the following countries is exempt from NCI's English language requirements - Ireland, the UK, the US, Canada, Singapore, Australia and New Zealand, Ghana, Nigeria and South Africa. Applicants should note that they may still be required to show a recognised English language certificate for visa purposes with [the Irish Immigration authorities](#).

Details of the full entry requirements, accepted English language tests, and exemption criteria are outlined in the English Language Entry Procedure (LRN-01-SOP-PUB).

4.2. Commitment to English Language Support

NCI's programme English Language entry requirements are intended to ensure that learners admitted onto our programmes have an adequate level of spoken and written English to successfully engage with and complete their programmes of study. Following enrolment, NCI recognises that all learners, but particularly international learners whose first language is not English, may benefit from additional supports to assist them fully engaging in their programme as well as the NCI community of learners, in addition to achieving the best possible results in their assessments and final awards.

The following supports are offered:

- Pre-Arrival and Welcome Events are tailored to the needs of international Learners. Full details can be found on the NCI website at <https://www.ncirl.ie/international-student-support>
- Academic integrity and academic writing skills, including guidance in referencing; researching; studying; exam revision etc. are provided through the Academic Support Centre in the NCI Library as well as through weekly 'Get to Grips drop-in services', to core topics such as academic writing, reading, researching, studying, note-taking, exam revision and in general, a focus on

aiding a Learner in all manners of academic advancement. These are available to domestic and international learners.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Roles	Responsibilities
Applicants:/ Enrolled Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete their application for entry honestly • Produce relevant documentation to certify English Language abilities against published entry requirements and criteria. • Engage in learner support, academic integrity and academic writing activities throughout their journey in NCI as needed.
Admissions Office:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that minimum English Language entry requirements are published in a transparent and accessible manner for all programmes on the NFQ. • Evaluate that minimum English Language entry requirements are met through approved certification evidence by all relevant applicants prior to being accepted and enrolled on programmes. • Liaise with applicants and agents if evidence of certification is not provided or does not meet enrolment requirements. • Retain copies of English Language Certificates in the student records system.
International Office:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond to enquiries from applicants and engage with agents regarding NCI English language entry requirements. • Deliver pre-arrival and welcome programmes for international learners • Provide ongoing supports for international learners to enhance their engagement and success in NCI.
Academic Support Centre & Student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer a range of orientation programmes and activities for all learners to welcome and engage them in the NCI

Welfare and Engagement Team:	<p>community and support their success academically and culturally.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide targeted supports to international learners around academic integrity and academic writing skills at the request of students or programme directors. • Provide ongoing ‘Getting to Grips’ supports on academic writing and study skills.
Programme Directors & Quality and International Effectiveness Team (QIE):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure consistency in English Language requirements across NCIs portfolio of programmes at validation and revalidation with NCI, national and European standards. • Monitor evidence of the NCI domestic and international student experience within annual and cyclical programme monitoring processes.
Senior Management Team & Academic Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviews and approves any updates to the English Language Policy, ensuring continued compliance with sectoral and regulatory standards.

6. Compliance & Monitoring

Compliance with this policy will be overseen by the Quality and Institutional Effectiveness (QIE) Team, in collaboration with the Admissions Office and other relevant departments.

6.1. Monitoring & Review

- The QIE Team will ensure that English Language entry requirements are consistently applied across all programmes and align with national and international standards.
- The Admissions Office will track compliance with published English language requirements and maintain appropriate records of language proficiency certification.
- An annual review of English language entry requirements will be conducted, taking into account programme needs, learner feedback, and evolving regulatory or statutory changes.

6.2. Non-Compliance & Corrective Actions

- Any instances of non-compliance with this policy (e.g., enrolment of a Learner who does not meet the published English language criteria) will be investigated by the Admissions Office.
- Where required, corrective actions will be implemented, including:

- Additional verification of English proficiency documentation.
- Reviewing and updating processes to prevent further occurrences.
- Any necessary policy changes resulting from non-compliance issues will be approved by the Senior Management Team (SMT) and Academic Council.

6.3. Reporting & External Compliance

- Reports on compliance with English language entry standards will be submitted as part of NCI's annual quality assurance monitoring.
- Compliance with TrustEd Ireland and QQI Code of Practice requirements will be reviewed periodically.
- Outcomes of compliance audits may be reported to QQI or relevant regulatory bodies, where applicable.

7. Related Documentation

- English Language Entry Procedure LRN-01-SOP-PUB

8. Version Control

Reference Code	LRN-01-POL-PUB	Executive Owner	Registrar
Policy/Procedure Manager	Head of Student Admissions & Student Records	Approval Body	Academic Council
Date Approved	26/02/2025	Effective Date	26/02/2025
Date of Next Review	26/02/2028	Version Number	V1.1
Change Log:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● V1.0 Policy creation ● V1.1 International student definition 			