

07 Support Services for Learners

Version Control	2
7.1 Introduction	3
7.2 Learning & Disability Support Service	3
7.3 Learning Support Service	3
7.4 Medical Service	4
7.5 Counselling Service	4
7.5.1 <i>Confidentiality</i>	5
7.5.2 <i>Accessing the Service</i>	5
7.6 Student Assistance Fund	6
7.6.1 <i>Eligibility</i>	6
7.6.2 <i>Expenses Covered</i>	7
7.6.3 <i>Applying for the Student Assistance Fund</i>	7
7.7 Assistive Technology Support Service	8
7.8 Mathematics Development and Support Service	9
7.9 Computing Support Service	10
7.10 Library and Information Services	11
7.10.1 <i>Lending Service</i>	11
7.10.2 <i>Print Resources</i>	11
7.10.3 <i>Inter-Library Loans</i>	11
7.10.4 <i>Journal Depositories, E-Books and Online Databases</i>	12
7.10.5 <i>Services to Learners with Additional Needs</i>	12
7.10.6 <i>Off-Campus Service</i>	13
7.10.7 <i>User Education</i>	14
7.11 Career Development and employability Centre	15
7.11.1 <i>Working with Learners</i>	16
7.11.2 <i>Working with Academics</i>	17
7.11.3 <i>Working with Employers</i>	17
7.11.4 <i>Work Placement Programme</i>	17

7.12	International Office	17
7.12.1	<i>Pre-Arrival Communications and Support</i>	18
7.12.2	<i>Welcome Programme</i>	19
7.12.3	<i>Supporting International Students</i>	20
7.13	Student Experience	21
7.13.1	Sports Services	22
7.13.2	Orientation.....	23
7.13.3	Student Leaders (Peer Mentors).....	23
7.14	Recreation Service	23
7.15	Students' Union	24
7.16	Learner Representatives.....	24
7.16.1	<i>Terms of Reference.....</i>	25
7.16.2	<i>Nomination and Election Process</i>	25
7.16.3	<i>Involvement in Quality Assurance and Enhancement</i>	26
7.16.4	<i>Student Engagement.....</i>	27
7.17	Learner Feedback.....	27

VERSION CONTROL

Reference Code	LRN-POL-R07-PUB	Executive Owner	Registrar
Policy/Procedure Manager	Head of Student Support and Welfare	Approval Body	Academic Council
Date Approved	2018	Effective Date	2018
Date of Next Review	November 2026	Version Number	V1.1

Change Log:

- V1.1 June 2026 Reformatted into review template. Section 7.2 superseded by current published policies; content removed from body, pointers retained.
- V1.0 2018 Original, as published in the 2018 QA Handbook.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

National College of Ireland (NCI) believes that the most important first step to ensuring that college is as rewarding and enjoyable an experience as possible for all learners is to make sure the necessary support services can be accessed in a convenient and, where appropriate, confidential manner. The College's mission of improving access to Higher and Further Education means that providing exceptional support services to all learners is a top priority.

NCI provides a variety of supports to covering learning, health & welfare and financial needs. Services are provided to all full-time and part-time students, with an emphasis on mirroring the services for both groups. Where possible, supports are mainstreamed across the College, promoting an inclusive environment where all students can access all services irrespective of their individual needs.. The services are guided by a philosophy of empowerment, encouraging learners to become independent in their personal and academic lives, easing their transition into College and from College to career.

7.2 LEARNING & DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICE

Superseded. The content of this section has been superseded by the [Reasonable Accommodations Policy](#) and the [Procedure for Requesting and Implementing Reasonable Accommodations](#), effective 1 January 2026

7.3 LEARNING SUPPORT SERVICE

Learning support at National College of Ireland is provided to all students through a variety of means including online resources, drop in clinics, workshops, and online classes. Students can also avail of a weekly drop in learning support clinic where they can meet with a tutor to discuss their individual academic concerns.

7.3.1.1 Issues Addressed through Learning Support Service

Students can seek advice or guidance on an extensive range of issues, including but not limited to:

- Learning Styles
- Study Skills
- Note-taking
- Revision Techniques
- Exam Performance

- Referencing
- Project Writing
- Organisational Skills / Time Management
- Reading Skills
- Motivation
- Avoiding Procrastination
- Learning & Remembering
- Improving Concentration
- Thinking Critically
- Analysing Questions
- Reducing Exam Anxiety

The LSS works closely with faculty members to ensure that the support provided to students meets the needs of the students involved in each programme. For example, at the start of the academic year, the service liaises with individual lecturers regarding assessment strategies and inclusive learning and teaching strategies. In addition to this support provided prior to assessment, the service also works with faculty staff to ensure that support sessions are tailored to the needs of individual programmes. Typically, this tailoring is most effective in the first academic assignments, where students are supported in each component of assessment preparation, from conception, planning, structure, researching, referencing and proofing.

7.4 MEDICAL SERVICE

National College of Ireland provides a subsidised medical Service to all full-time & Springboard registered students. This is a comprehensive health Service which mirrors the Service a student could expect to receive from his/her General Practitioner. Students are charged €10 per appointment and the balance is paid by the College. Appointments are made by contacting the Hanover Medical Centre on (01) 6750040 or email reception@hanovermedical.ie

7.5 COUNSELLING SERVICE

The Counselling Service provides students with the opportunity to discuss any difficulties they may be experiencing with a specialist student counsellor in strict confidence. The counsellor helps by listening without judgement, offering new

perspectives and working with students on strategies that will help them through a wide range of difficulties, including but not limited to:

- Alcohol Dependence
- Substance Misuse and/or Dependence
- Bereavement
- Confidence
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Family Issues
- Loneliness
- Physical Abuse
- Procrastination and Motivation
- Relationships (Social and Sexual)
- Self-Harm
- Sexual Abuse
- Stress
- Suicidal Thoughts

The Counselling Service is provided free of charge to all full-time registered learners at NCI. Part-time learners who wish to avail of the Service are advised to contact the counsellor directly and a fee for the Service will apply.

7.5.1 Confidentiality

The information shared in a counselling session is considered highly confidential and will only be disclosed to a third party in exceptional circumstances, such as:

- When there is a risk of harm to the learner or others
- When there is a legal obligation to share information

7.5.2 Accessing the Service

Appointments to meet with the counsellor can be organised through Student Support or the learners can contact the counsellor directly. The counsellor meets with learners on-site at National College of Ireland. Appointments are scheduled at times that are convenient to the learners changing each semester as required. The counsellor will meet learners outside of hours in emergency situations.

7.6 STUDENT ASSISTANCE FUND

The purpose of the Student Assistance Fund (SAF) is to provide financial support to disadvantaged students who would be unable to fully benefit from third-level education without external support. The Student Assistance Fund is funded by the Irish Government and part-funded by the European Social Fund programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning (PEIL) 2014-2020.

The SAF is best described as a relief fund as opposed to a survival package. Students are encouraged to source additional supports outside the fund as typically the fund will ease a financial burden rather than totally alleviating the situation.

Currently the fund is broken into four parts:

1. SAF Emergency Payment (Full-time students) - This is a payment that the fund will make to a full-time student who is experiencing extreme financial difficulties to assist with the costs of going to college for the year.
2. SAF HEAR Payment – This is an automatic payment issued to full-time students from socio-economic groups who enter the college through the HEAR scheme.
3. SAF Standard Payment (Part-time students) – This is a payment issued to registered part-time students from one of the target groups as specified by the HEA's National Access Plan.
4. SAF Emergency Payment - A student can apply for an emergency payment from the fund to assist with urgent financial costs. This application can be made in addition to a SAF standard payment application and will be assessed on a case by case basis by the SAF Committee. Applications for this fund must be made in person by calling into the Learning and Teaching Office.

7.6.1 Eligibility

SAF is available to full and part-time learners who are participating on a course of no less than one year in duration and that leads to an undergraduate or postgraduate qualification. The categories below serve as an example of some of the instances in which a learner may be approved for funding.

Please Note: a learner is not automatically approved for funding because they fall into one of the categories listed below. Each application is reviewed on an individual basis and a decision is informed by the guidelines below.

- Learner must be experiencing considerable financial difficulty
- Learner is unable to meet daily living expenses
- Financial difficulties are negatively impacting on education
- Sudden or unseen expenses that a learner is unable to meet

- Learner is in financial difficulty due to bereavement in the family
- Learner is in financial difficulty due to family breakdown
- Loss of income from a student and/or parent/guardian
- Learner is from one of the target groups as specified by the HEA's National Access Plan

International Students are NOT eligible for SAF.

7.6.2 Expenses Covered

The following expenses are covered under the SAF:

- Books / Materials
- Transport
- Rent
- Child Care Costs
- Heating / Lighting
- Medical
- Disability

Please Note: Tuition Fees and Loans are not covered under the SAF.

7.6.3 Applying for the Student Assistance Fund

In order to apply a student must be registered and complete the Student Assistance Fund Application Form which is available on NCI360. At present part-time students must complete a paper based application form and return to the Educational Engagement Officer for review.

An application will then go into an online Review Queue for assessment by two members of the SAF Committee. They will be checking the documents, confirming the amount to be paid based on the guidelines and ensuring the application is eligible. The aim is to have this assessment done within 10 working days however sometimes if there has been a huge amount of applications this is not always possible.

If the application is incorrect (e.g. incorrect paperwork, not enough evidence) – the applicant will be emailed and advised what is required. If the applicant is deemed ineligible, they could be rejected at that stage.

If the applicant is approved their status on NCI360 will be changed to approved. Each month then the SAF Committee meet to discuss emergency financial applications and

to ratify that month's payments. Once this sign off is done by the Committee all names are sent to Finance for a cheque to be drawn up. This normally takes a week and the applicant will be emailed when the cheque is ready for collection.

To make an appeal a student must complete a Student Assistance Fund Appeal Form and return it to saf@ncirl.ie

7.7 ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT SERVICE

The aim of the Assistive Technology (ATSS) is to dismantle the barriers to education for students with disabilities by harnessing the potential of technology. The AT Service promotes independent learning by providing technology and tailored training to meet the needs of individual students.

ATSS works closely with the Disability Support Service to remove obstacles to learners' attainment and progression. Following the Educational Needs Assessment, ATSS will conduct an Assistive Technology Assessment to determine what combination of supports best suits the learner's needs. Through an Assistive Technology (AT) assessment, technology is identified and individual supports are coordinated that will assist the student in overcoming obstacles and make their learning environments more accessible. This is accomplished through a range of services and initiatives, including but not limited to:

- Weekly workshops on a wide variety of AT software
- Tailored One-to-one sessions
- Management of the College's Dedicated Assistive Technology Centre
- Creating awareness amongst staff & students in the area of disability and accessibility
- Promotion of peer-to-peer support
- Introduction and mainstreaming of inclusive AT processes within NCI

ATSS believes that raising awareness is a key factor in a learner's engagement and ultimate academic success. If faculty, staff and learners are not aware of how a student's disability impacts on their ability to learn then they will not understand how they can make situations more accessible for that student. As such, the service runs, as part of faculty induction day, awareness sessions for staff. As part of Student Orientation the ATSS introduces learners to the area of disability and accessibility and in particular the technology available within the Assistive Technology Centre. Mainstreaming the introduction of inclusive AT processes within NCI also encourages

students with disabilities or learning/health difficulties to become independent learners.

7.8 MATHEMATICS DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT SERVICE

The role of the Mathematics Development and Support Service (MDSS) is fourfold: first, the service is a complementary service, scaffolding the learning facilitated by our schools, through the provision of dedicated workshops and tutorials; second, the service is consultative, through representation on programmatic reviews and advising on module development; third, the service is collaborative, contributing and engaging nationally, through the Irish Mathematics Support Network, so as to disseminate best practice throughout the NCI with regard mathematics teaching; fourth, the service is a bridge, facilitating the progression of our incoming students by providing and delivering dedicated modules that cater for our Schools prerequisite needs.

A primary goal of the service is to empower students with confidence to take responsibility for their own mathematical learning through active involvement in service programmes. The service provides an informal environment for students who are experiencing difficulties or wish to improve their understanding of and confidence in mathematical concepts. In particular, the service offers student support through the promotion and hosting of relevant mathematical events at both undergraduate and postgraduate level, these include timetabled tutorials and workshops as well as one-to-one student support.

The service supports all programmes across the School of Business and School of Computing that contain a mathematical content. Tutorials and workshops are tightly coupled to programme module delivery and typically concentrate on those areas, as identified by module lecturers in consultation with the service, that students had been finding extra challenging. The tutorial/workshop environment offers students the opportunity to progress through module content at their own pace, ensuring those challenging concepts have been explored and given due time.

MDSS also provides support to Postgraduate students with respect to their final year dissertations and in particular their hypothesis formulation and testing. This support consists of a series of lectures in research methodology and in particular quantitative data analysis. Support of postgraduate students is provided on a one-to-one basis with supports being tailored for the individual research question.

A popular service provided to students is the services Examination Focused Workshops. These dedicated workshops typically begin four weeks before

examinations and run up to examination completion. The sessions concentrate on examination structure and those typical examination style questions, providing the student with as much exposure to past question style and techniques to assist in their solution.

7.9 COMPUTING SUPPORT SERVICE

The Computing Support Service (CSS), based in the School of Computing provides academic support for students in a variety of formats. Students can avail of one to one or small group support by contacting the Computing Support Tutor directly. A minimum of 2 hours of support workshops are scheduled as part of the weekly timetable of classes from Week 2 onwards. These sessions allow students to work on lab work and assignments outside of class time with the support of a tutor. Exam revision support is also provided toward the end of semester for modules with a terminal examination.

CSS can provide a range of supports to learners, including but not limited to:

- Online Support
- One-to-one Tutoring
- Small Group Tutorials
- Off Campus Support
- Examination Preparation and Revision
- Whole Class Tutorials

CSS is coordinated by one full time Computing Support Tutor (CST). Support is facilitated by both the CST and a number of part-time tutors. The team of part-time tutors consists of teaching assistants and associate faculty of the School of Computing. As the school provides a broad range of programmes with many modules it is necessary to have a flexible team of tutors with varying knowledge and skills to ensure that all technical modules can be adequately supported.

CSS has a dedicated page on the Colleges Virtual Learning Environment (Moodle). Students can find a schedule of extra classes and weekly workshops as well as past exam papers and revision material for their modules on this site.

7.10 LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES

The Library and Information Services of NCI are centralised in the Norma Smurfit Library, which provides learners, staff and corporate members with access to a wide network of information sources. A fully integrated library management system is in operation, which allows for the operation of an automated system of lending and self-service loans and returns. Users can also utilise specialist subject guides and request assistance with information requests and accessing current research. The library also operates a postal service to ensure all learners, whether full-time, part-time, distance or blended-learning, have equal access to the necessary resources for their programme.

7.10.1 Lending Service

The principal function of the Library is lending items from its print and multimedia collections. The print collection contains primary textbooks for all current programmes, supplemental texts in key subject areas, reference texts and 'desk-reserved' texts, which often feature as the required reading for a programme. The multimedia collection is for staff only and contains a range of resources that can be used as part of the teaching strategy for a programme and its constituent modules.

7.10.2 Print Resources

The library has several different print collections, depending on type of loan, which include main lending, reference collections and staff loan only. Books and reports held by the library are organised according to the Dewey Decimal Classification system, while current journals (periodicals) are arranged individually and alphabetically, with back issues bound together and arranged alphabetically. Journals may be photocopied but not borrowed from the Library. The library also operates a request service for high-demand items and desk-reserve service for theses and research reports.

Academic staff are involved in the acquisition process by submitting reading lists prior to the commencement of teaching and providing guidance regarding new publications in their area(s) of expertise.

7.10.3 Inter-Library Loans

The library offers an inter-library loan/document supply service to staff and students of NCI. The service can provide requested articles and the loan of books from a number of

different sources. The College has an account with the British Library Document Supply service so photocopies of requested articles and loans of codices can be obtained. Another means of obtaining articles is going direct to online publishers and downloading an electronic version of the text as requested. The ability to order from either online suppliers or the British Library gives the Library flexibility in terms of availability options. Requests for materials can also be submitted to other academic libraries in Ireland.

The library uses the British Library system to source books, and buys requested articles straight from the publisher. This service is available to academic staff and postgraduate students. Undergraduates can avail of the service where a case is made that the individual has exhausted all other means to obtain the item. In most cases this is a free service, but a fee may be charge depending on the price of the item in question.

7.10.4 Journal Depositories, E-Books and Online Databases

The library has twenty online platforms, which contain up to forty-five individual databases. The content of these databases cover the primary subject areas of the college, including computing, business, H.R.M., accounting, psychology and education. Particular database providers include Emerald, I.E.E.E., Ebsco and Proquest. Four e-book collections are also available. A discovery tool is provided to students to assist with searches of these online resources. In addition, NCI also has an online repository containing the research publications of staff and students and a database of past exam papers.

Online databases are now a key learning resource and information source as they enlarge the scope of the Library's collection and allow for greater equitable access for all cohorts of learners, in particular improving off-campus accessibility.

7.10.5 Services to Learners with Additional Needs

The library offers a number of services to students who have additional needs and have been assessed as eligible by the Disability Officer. These include

- Special borrowing privileges: Undergraduate, diploma and certificate students with special borrowing privileges are offered an extended loan period of six weeks.
- Alternative formatting: Students with certain needs sometimes cannot make full use of traditional print material. In these circumstances the library will try to acquire any core texts in an accessible, electronic format for students.
- The provision of adapted study desks for students who have physical disabilities

As the additional needs of learners with a disability or mental/health difficulty can be multifaceted, the library liaises closely with the Disability Officer to ensure the most suitable combination of supports is provided.

7.10.5.1 Texts in Alternative Formats

One of the most common requests from learners with additional needs is providing access to learning resources in alternative formats, in particular electronic versions that are compatible with portable reading devices and in formats that are compatible with assistive reading and annotation software. The library liaises directly with publishers to obtain copies of its print materials in suitable alternative formats.

7.10.5.2 Assistive Technology Centre

As part of the fully-integrated supports offered to learners with a disability or learning/health difficulty, NCI Library is the location of the College's Assistive Technology (AT) Centre. The AT Centre is testament to NCI's commitment to widening participation in higher and further education as the additional needs of eligible learners can be met so that they have equal access to the learning resources relevant to their programmes. This space allows the library to accommodate the individual requirements and additional needs of learners with a disability or mental/health difficulty in respectful and conscientious manner.

Cooperation between the library, the Disability Support Service and the Assistive Technology Support Service is crucial to the successful management of the AT Centre. Please refer to Section 7.8 above for full details about the AT services by NCI.

7.10.6 Off-Campus Service

Off-campus students are those students who attend classes at a range of centres around the country, and are not based at the main NCI building. During programme orientation, off-campus students are informed of the role of Library and Information Services, in particular the services available to them and how these can be accessed remotely.

Off-Campus students have full borrowing rights to the NCI Library. Students may request materials and communicate with the library staff via telephone, email or post. Off-Campus students can order copies of relevant journal articles or reprints held by the library and can request photocopies of journal articles. All print materials must be

returned to the NCI Library and return postage is payable by the student. Students also have full remote access to the library's subject portals, journal repositories and online databases.

7.10.7 User Education

NCI Library is actively involved in a number of information and education initiatives, each of which is intended to enhance the experience of a particular group of users. As users often have varying degrees of experience of accessing library and information services, it is important that the individual requirements of each user are taken into consideration at the initial point of contact.

The Library Help Centre was also established to assist students and academic staff with information literacy. The staff of this centre run library induction sessions for new students, group sessions for classes and one-to-one sessions for learners on online resource searching, academic writing, referencing, the literature review process, etc. The centre is also involved in the production of online and multimedia guides to the resources available to view on the library webpages. Academic staff may also avail of aspects of this service.

The library website is the primary source of information for all service users. As such, it provides a wide range of instructional guides and information documents on how to access the library and information services, how to reference correctly and how to undertake independent research. The website also contains subject resource guides, which direct learners to the learning resources most relevant to their programme.

The library helpdesk assists learners with practical issues related to accessing library and information services, i.e. locating books/journals, conducting relevant searches of online databases and journal depositories, copying learning resources for personal in accordance with copyright legislation, etc.

7.10.7.1 Student Education

As part of students' orientation programme, the library provides an induction session to all learners during the first half of their first semester. This induction session addresses the following:

- Accessing the Library
- Introduction to the borrowing service and brief explanation of the collections
- Demonstration of photocopying/printing services
- Brief outline of plagiarism policies and best-practices regarding referencing
- Library rules and regulations
- Distribution of user guides

The library also offers classroom-based sessions at the request of Programme Directors and/or Coordinators. These sessions are often used to address the subject-specific requirements of learners on particular programmes and to provide practical demonstrations on accessing particular library or information services.

The Learning Support Service (LSS) also facilitates student education. Learning Support Tutors provide tutorials on library and information resources as part of their programmes for developing independent learning skills and effective research techniques. Please refer to Section 7.4 above for further details about the integrated, cross-college supports offered by LSS.

7.10.7.2 Staff Education

All of the information and education initiatives aimed at learners can also be accessed by staff at NCI. In addition, staff can request specialist training in library and information technology as part of the College's professional development programme. This training is designed to encourage staff to utilise items from the case studies collection as part of their modules' teaching and learning strategies. Staff are also encouraged to direct learners to particular resources within the library as part of the independent learning activities and/or assessments for their modules.

7.11 CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYABILITY CENTRE

The Career Development and Employability Centre (CDEC) is committed to providing a confidential, student-centred career counselling, guidance and information service to NCI students. The CDEC:

- leverages an individual-first approach to create a unique student experience
- **connects students to opportunities and networks**
- **unlocks student potential through careers education and tailored skills development**

The CDEC operates according to the following principles:

- Employable students are NCI's best ambassadors

- Students' employability is most effectively enhanced through collaboration between the Careers Service, faculty, student services and support; and through student engagement with graduate recruiters and involvement in extracurricular activities or work experience;
- Learners can be empowered to manage their own careers effectively through effective careers education and guidance, and by facilitating independent learning and skills development
- The quantity, quality and diversity of opportunities available to learners can be increased by developing long-term collaborative relationships with, and by providing an excellent service to, employers

=

The service is focused on supporting students in developing and implementing realistic, informed career plans and facilitating the recruitment process for students and employers.

7.11.1 Working with Learners

The Career Development and Employability Centre (CDEC) provides a high quality, comprehensive careers education, information, guidance and job search consultancy for learners both whilst at College and in the 9 months following graduation, and will assist learners in areas including self-awareness, career exploration, career decision-making, and achieving career goals. The service focuses primarily on full time students.

The CDEC supports learners:

- assisting them with identifying their personal career goals and plans for further study through accredited career management skills modules offered as an elective in the School of Business, one-to-one, online small group and classroom workshops.
- assisting them in marketing themselves to employers and universities through professional skills training sessions on:
 - Writing CVs and Cover Letters
 - Preparing for Aptitude and Psychometric Tests
 - Completing Application Forms
 - Career Research and Choice
 - Interview Skills
 - Networking
- assisting learners who are interested in experiential learning opportunities to secure a work placement or internship as appropriate.

- proactively targeting and maintaining links with new and established employers.
- maintaining a comprehensive Careers Library online via moodle containing up to date information.

7.11.2 Working with Academics

The CDEC proactively works with Academic Staff and Faculty to enable them to make effective use of labour market information and graduate destination information in their academic planning and to integrate careers education into the curriculum.

7.11.3 Working with Employers

The CDEC maintains existing and develops new with employers to facilitate graduate recruitment, internships and the recruitment of experienced professionals by:

- delivering employer event programs, including on-campus presentations and recruitment, interview days, career breakfasts and careers fairs
- Enhancing the visibility of employers by marketing them to the college community, i.e. learners, alumni and faculty
- Assisting employers in advertising graduate opportunities, internships and opportunities for experienced professionals.

7.11.4 Work Placement Programme

NCI operates a Work Placement Programme for selected programmes. Programmes which include the Work Placement Programme, provide learners with the opportunity to integrate their theoretical studies with practical experience in the work environment.

In addition, the placement offers learners:

- The opportunity to gain a better understanding of the professional, commercial or industrial world
- Increased knowledge and ability to make realistic career decisions
- Support in developing of confidence, maturity and personal transferable skills

7.12 INTERNATIONAL OFFICE

The International Support team is made up of the International Officer, Assistant International Officer and International Peer Mentors. International Peer Mentors are

NCI international students who work part-time in a paid role, to help with the Welcome Programme and to organise social activities with students during the academic year.

We want International students' experience at NCI to be as exciting, inclusive and as successful as possible. We encourage students to join as many events as possible to make friends and to get to know their new home.

The International Peer Mentors organise a wide range of events and outings during the academic year to bring international together and help them explore everything Dublin has to offer. It is an opportunity for students to share their cultures with each other, learn about new customs and get more familiar with Ireland at the same time.

The International Peer Mentors coordinate the International Society to deliver student events and International Festivals such as Diwali, Chinese New Year, Holi and International Culture Day.

7.12.1 Pre-Arrival Communications and Support

To help students prepare for their journey to NCI and Ireland we communicate with them by email, social media and webinars three months prior to the start of their studies.

1. Welcome Email

This email is the first step in the student's journey in preparing to travel to NCI. We ask them to join our NCI International Freshers group for their intake, read the preparation guide, consider their accommodation and we also give a little information on Student visas.

2. Accommodation Email

This email gives more information on Accommodation and we will ask that students read the accommodation guide. We will also introduce the booking process for NCI On Campus accommodation and advise students to read the On Campus booking guide that is published on the website.

3. Careers Email

This email introduces the Careers service to students and the purpose of the email is to give students an overview of the service and the support they will can expect to receive.

4. Webinars

To support the email communications with students we offer Webinars that are scheduled in the three months prior to students arriving. The webinars allow students to get some more detailed information and ask questions about Accommodation, Careers and any Pre-Departure queries they may have. The webinars are repeated several.

5. Social Media

We invite students to join a Facebook Group for their intake as this allows students to connect with other new students and the international office prior to their arrival.

7.12.2 Welcome Programme

All new international students attend a Welcome Programme that is designed to give them the important information they need as a new student along with the opportunity for social events to help them settle into their new life in Ireland.

1. Airport Pick Up

Students who book the service are met by a driver at the arrivals hall in the Airport and brought directly to their accommodation in Dublin. The driver gives the Student a map and a letter confirming the date and time of their Welcome Meeting at NCI.

2. Welcome Meeting

The Welcome meeting is pre-scheduled for all students and compulsory to attend. It is led by an International Peer Mentor with a group of up to 15 new students. At this meeting students are given a Welcome Pack which includes letters they need as a new student. The welcome meeting includes a Campus tour and an optional city tour.

3. Induction Meeting

The induction meeting is pre-scheduled for all students and compulsory to attend. It is delivered by the International officer with a group of up to 60 students. At this meeting with cover all the information students need to help them succeed at their studies and to settle into their new life in Ireland.

4. The Essentials Meeting

The Essentials meeting is pre-scheduled for all students and compulsory to attend. It is delivered by the International Officer and Assistant international officer for up to 60 students. It covers the essential information international students need for their Student Visa, Bank Account, PPSN, re-entry visa and working in Ireland. We issue registered students their Student Visa letter at this meeting.

5. Accommodation Information Meeting

This meeting is optional and for students who are searching for Off Campus accommodation. It gives students information and tips for their search and the opportunity to meet other students who are also searching for accommodation.

6. Social Activities

A wide range of social are offered during the Welcome Programme and they include;

- Coffee & Chat
- Icebreaker Games
- Trips to areas in Dublin such as Howth, Pheonix Park, Portmarnock, Malahide and Glendalough
- International Student Freshers Night

7.12.3 Supporting International Students

The number of international students has grown significantly since 2015 with large intakes of new students in September and January each year.

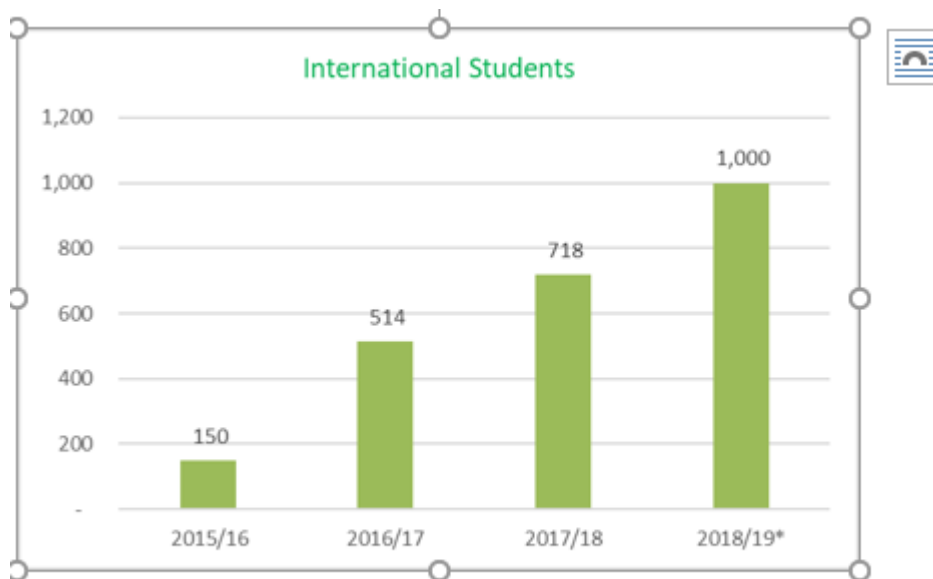


Fig 4 – Growth in international student numbers

The International Office supports students with their queries and letters to support their visa during the academic year. This service is offered with;

1. Drop-in service at the International Office

Students can drop in to the office Monday to Friday from 10am to 12noon and 2pm to 4pm.

2. Email

Students can also email their queries to Internationalsupport@ncirl.ie

3. Appointment

Students can arrange an appointment with the International Office for queries that require more time.

7.13 STUDENT EXPERIENCE

As well as providing academic supports to learners, NCI is committed to supporting the overall wellbeing of its students. A student’s social life, physical health and mental health are all intrinsic elements that contribute to a positive experience while studying at NCI. Creating a well-rounded student experience necessitates providing and promoting an innovative and participative service based on holistic supports and extra-curricular opportunities for the entire student body

The purpose of the Student Support and Recreation service at NCI is to, creating a well-rounded college experience. The role of the service is to encourage all students to get actively involved in extra-curricular activities.

NCI recognises values healthy lifestyles and recognises that positive wellbeing can impact the quality of the student experience. Therefore, the College believes a student-centred approach to wellbeing is the most effective and can be achieved through personal development and welfare initiatives designed to engage students in the college community and to reach out to the necessary services.

7.13.1 Sports Services

The college promotes the Wellness Concept which values a student's social, physical, psychological and spiritual wellbeing while at College.

7.13.1.1 Facilities

The college has links with a number of local sports and recreation facilities that students can avail of. Students should contact the Student Experience & Sport department. For details of how to book these facilities.

7.13.1.2 Gym

NCI links with a local gym in order to provide fitness options for students. Annual membership costs and conditions of membership may vary annually and can be confirmed with the Students' Union or Student Experience and Sport department.

7.13.1.3 Active Events

The college holds a number of events throughout the year to promote health and fitness. Events range from talks and charity events to a student/staff sports day. All students are welcome to participate in these events.

7.13.1.4 Mascot

The college mascot is the NCI Panther and takes the persona of "Paddy the Panther". The mascot represents all students and staff in the college and is symbolic of valour, courage and power. The accompanying motto "Strong As One" is designed to embody the nature of NCI; representing staff, faculty and students,

coming together to achieve the goal of a great education and positive college experience.

7.13.1.5 Awards

The annual Clubs & Societies Awards is held in semester 2. The awards recognise the achievements of the students throughout the year. Categories include (but are not limited to). Best New or Improved Club, Best New or Improved Society, Best Civic Contribution, Fresher of the Year, Best Athlete, Club Event of the Year, Society Event of the Year, Society Individual of the Year, Club Person of the Year, Society of the Year, Club of the Year, President's Award.

Nomination forms are provided by the Students' Union Clubs & Societies officer and the Student Experience and Sport department. Nomination deadline dates vary each year. Winners are selected based on a scoring system for the nomination form and interview. The Awards Committee's decision is final.

7.13.2 Orientation

The college holds varying orientation sessions for new students. Students should refer to communications from the college and the college website for information on these sessions.

7.13.3 Student Leaders (Peer Mentors)

Each year, a number of NCI students are trained to provide support for the student body. The Student Leaders are available throughout the year to aid students in any issues they have and direct them to the appropriate support. All Student Leaders are Garda vetted and required to sign a confidentiality agreement prior to starting their role.

7.14 RECREATION SERVICE

The Recreation Service (RS) is responsible for supporting and encouraging the growth and development of Clubs and Societies in partnership with the NCI Students' Union Clubs and Societies Officer. Clubs and Societies are at the forefront of student life on campus, and NCI is affiliated with National Governing Bodies such as FAI, IRFU, GAA, and the Board of Irish College Societies. RS represents all societies and encourages their nomination for the National Awards, which celebrate and reward the individuals who provide a brilliant quality of society activity.

NCI is also affiliated with the Student Sport Ireland (SSI). RS's external involvement with SSI encourages all Clubs and students to compete in domestic leagues and intercollegiate competitions. RS's involvement with industry peers provides opportunities for clubs and societies to participate at a higher level, which positively increases the College's profile.

To ensure that the College provides access to a range of sport and recreation facilities, the service has created a number of external relationships. SV Fitness is a key external stakeholder in providing gym and health club facilities for full time and part time students and the Dublin City Council and Dublin sports and recreation centres externally provide Clubs and Societies facilities for extra-curricular activity. Clubs and Societies have access to the NCI bus, which is booked by the service internally through the NCI Facilities Office. Additionally, Clubs and Societies have access to internal class rooms, theatre rooms, atrium, and external quad area, which is booked by the service through the NCI Commercial Office.

RS also recognises students' academic and sporting excellence through the Sports Scholarship Programme and Academic Wall of Excellence. The Wall of Fame also celebrates student leaders and achievers who have demonstrated innovation and determination while studying at NCI.

7.15 STUDENTS' UNION

The Students' Union represents the interests of and provides a source of support and guidance for all NCI students. The executive team is made up of 5 roles (President, Vice Presidents, Clubs & Societies Officer, Entertainments Officer, Communications Officer) and an Administrative assistant.

The Students' Union organises a number of events to promote the social college experience for students. Events are open to all students of the college. Any student experiencing difficulty with the Students' Union can report it to the Student Experience department.

7.16 LEARNER REPRESENTATIVES

NCI is fully committed to ensuring that learners' views on academic matters are heard and responded to. The College relies on Class Representatives to ensure we continually listen to and engage with learners to improve teaching, learning and assessment provisions, in addition to reviewing and enhancing the quality of the student experience at both the local School and larger institutional levels.

7.16.1 Terms of Reference

Representatives work in partnership with staff to improve the student experience for both current and future learners, while also ensuring that academic and support staff are continually listening to, engaging with and constructively responding to the views of learners.

In particular, Class Representatives have the following responsibilities:

- Consideration and referral of issues relating to the programme to the Programme Committee when necessary
- Referral of suggestions for specific changes to the programme to the Programme Committee for consideration
- Dissemination of information affecting learners within the scope of the Programme.
- Provision of responses to issues previously referred to the Programme Committee or School Committee

•
Through its Class Representative Liaison procedure, Class Representatives have the opportunity to directly discuss issues raised by learners with Programme Directors and Programme Coordinators. More complex or systemic issues can they be raised through the reporting structure outlined in Chapter 2 (2.7.6).

Each class year within a programme shall elect two representatives who will meet with the Dean of School and all relevant academic and support staff for consultations about learner views relating to programme content, delivery, assessment and development and to identify areas of concern for their respective class groups. This liaison will take place at least once a semester or more often as required. The election of the Class Representative is facilitated by the Student Services department.

7.16.2 Nomination and Election Process

Learner Services, in conjunction with National College of Ireland Students Union (NCISU), oversees the election and appointment of 2 Class Representatives for each full-time and part-time programme. The nomination and election of Class Representatives usually takes place between weeks 4 and 6 of the academic year.

Learners can be nominated in the following 3 ways:

1. A learner can nominate themselves
2. A learner can nominate a fellow learner with their prior consent
3. A member of staff can nominate a learner with their prior consent

Nominations are made by completing a nomination form, which outlines the roles & responsibilities of a Class Representative and the process for election. Nomination forms are available on the internet and from both Learner Services and NCISU.

The following conditions apply to the nomination process:

- The source of a nomination must remain confidential.
- A fellow learner must be aware that they are being nominated.
- All nominees will be asked to speak to the class briefly on why they would make a good Class Representative.

Learners then vote for their preferred Class Representative. The two individuals who receive the most votes are then elected to the position.

All Class Representatives receive training from the NCISU, which is supported by the Union of Students in Ireland (USI) and Student Partnership in Quality Scotland (sparqs). This training provides Class Representatives with information regarding the governance structures in NCI at the programme, school and college levels, and outlines their responsibilities in terms of reporting forward to the appropriate staff member or committee and reporting back to their fellow learners.

7.16.3 Involvement in Quality Assurance and Enhancement

Class Representatives are the foundation of learner representation at NCI and perform a crucial role in realising the College's long-term ambition of engaging students and staff as partners in learning and teaching. To ensure that Class Representatives play an active role in NCI's quality assurance and enhancement activities, they work closely with:

- Programme Directors to ensure that all relevant issues relating to the teaching, learning and assessment strategies of the programme are listened to and appropriate remedies promptly actioned.

AND

- Programme Coordinators to ensure that all feedback is formally reported and recorded, and all issues escalated to the relevant staff member as appropriate.

Class Representatives can also escalate issues to be discussed at Programme Committee, the central unit in each School's quality assurance system. Issues raised here that are impacting on the quality of a programme's teaching, learning and assessment provisions or that require immediate attention to ensure the continued quality enhancement of a programme can be referred to School Committee and, as appropriate, Academic Council.

7.16.4 Student Engagement

As one of the pilot institutions in the National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP), NCI places huge importance on improving student engagement and is committed to the long-term objective of installing students as partners in the development, delivery and evaluation of its education programmes. The primary aim of NStEP is to develop student capabilities to engage in quality assurance and quality enhancement within higher education institutions, and to design practical guidelines and resources to assist all higher and further education institutions in building effective engagement practices. NStEP identified 5 key outputs and NCI is the project lead for developing national guidelines on the "Role and Recruitment of Class representatives". NCI's involvement in NStEP and its lead role in the above project is testament to the importance it places on the Class Representative Liaison mechanism within its own quality assurance and enhancement system. Please refer to Chapter 5 (5.2.1) for further information about Student Engagement at NCI and the College's involvement in NStEP.

7.17 LEARNER FEEDBACK

Learner feedback features prominently in NCI's quality assurance and enhancement mechanisms. In particular, learner feedback forms a crucial component in programme reviews, both the annual iterations conducted by the School and those conducted as part of QQI's programme revalidation process. To obtain appropriate learner feedback regarding the teaching, learning and assessment strategies of its programmes, and the facilities and support services provided to learners, NCI operates an anonymous survey system. This system supplements the feedback provided via the Class Representative Liaison mechanism discussed in Chapter 2 (2.7.7). Please also refer to Chapter 3 (3.1.3.3) for further information about the role of learner feedback in Programme Reviews and in enhancing teaching, learning and assessment strategies at the school and college levels.

Services evaluations are carried out using our anonymous survey system in Week 3 of Semester 2. The primary objective of these evaluations is to provide each Service Unit

with both quantitative and qualitative feedback from learners, which can be used to inform annual reports, conduct reviews and to develop action plans to address emerging and/or recurrent issues. Evaluations are carried out for:

- Student Services
- Library and Information Services
- IT Services
- Catering
- Facilities

The survey system is managed by the Quality Assurance and Statistical Services Office. Any feedback provided by learners is anonymised and aggregated, and compiled in a report that is forwarded directly to the Head of the Service Unit in question. As feedback is sought from all learners, i.e. full-time, part-time, distance, block-delivery, etc. the survey questionnaire is altered appropriate to each cohort's circumstances.