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## Admission and Transfer Policy

### 1. Context

Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin, hereinafter referred to as Trinity, seeks to register students with a broad range of talents and the ability to engage with and benefit from the distinctive Trinity education.

This policy should be read in conjunction with (and is subject to) the relevant provisions of the [University Calendar](#), [the 2010 Consolidated Statutes of Trinity, College Dublin and the University of Dublin](#), and the [Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications](#).

Trinity as a designated awarding body has responsibilities to ensure that its linked providers have their own policies and procedures with respect to admission, transfer and progression.

Trinity operates within the national HEI infrastructure under the umbrella group of the Irish Universities Association (IUA) and is represented on a number of groups that set sectoral standards on admission criteria. These sectoral groups include:

- The IUA Registrar's Group
- The Admissions Officers Association
- The EU Qualifications Group
- The CAO (Central Applications Office) Operations Group

These groups may evolve over time or change in name, or other relevant sectoral groups may arise. Trinity's relationship to and policy alignment with such groups will be agreed by the relevant College officer – see 10.1. Trinity endeavours in all its functions to meet its obligations under the [Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty](#).

### 2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline Trinity's overarching framework for admission and transfer procedures.

### 3. Benefits

- 3.1 This policy supports the enrolment of suitably qualified students and the creation of a diverse student body.
- 3.2 This policy promotes lifelong learning and facilitates student mobility across different levels of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), the European Qualifications Framework (EFQ) and their equivalent frameworks in other jurisdictions.

### 4. Scope

- 4.1 This policy applies to all programmes delivered solely by Trinity.



- 4.2 The policy applies to programmes that carry academic credit.
- 4.3 The policy does not apply to programmes delivered by linked providers, as admission regulations for programmes validated by Trinity and delivered by linked providers are approved through the Trinity Programme Design and Approval Process. Linked providers are responsible for their own transfer arrangements.
- 4.4 For programmes delivered collaboratively with other institutions, procedures for admissions and transfers are specified in the relevant collaborative agreement.

## **5. Definitions**

- i. Direct applications are applications made directly to Trinity via the Trinity application system, and not through the Central Applications Office or another partner organisation such as Springboard.
- ii. “EU” fee status is fee status applied to students on the basis of residency in the European Union, as well as the European Economic Area, The Swiss Confederation and the United Kingdom.
- iii. Second level qualification refers to Leaving Certificate, A-levels, International Baccalaureate, US High School Diploma, and other equivalent examination systems resulting in qualifications equivalent to NFQ Level 5 and EFQ Level 4.
- iv. KPI stands for Key Performance Indicator – an objective measurement of performance indicating success or efficiency in a work process.
- v. A Linked Provider is a higher education provider that does not have the power to award degrees but provides a programme of education and training that satisfies all or part of the prerequisites for an award of the designated awarding body through arrangements with a designated awarding body.

## **6. Principles**

All higher education programmes at Trinity are aligned to the appropriate level of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and use the European Credit Transfer System. Procedures for admission and transfer are in line with national legislation and support Trinity’s strategic plans.

- 6.1 Trinity is committed to widening participation, non-discrimination and diversity in its student body, and the protection of the dignity of the student at all stages in the student lifecycle from application to graduation. As part of a broader commitment to widening participation, Trinity is supportive of alternative access routes. (Refer to Appendix for schedule of current alternative pathways for entry).
- 6.1 Trinity welcomes and supports applications from all appropriately qualified students irrespective of disability, social, cultural and educational backgrounds.
- 6.2 Trinity is committed to the highest academic standards in its academic programmes.
- 6.3 Trinity is committed to fair, transparent and consistent admissions practices and procedures.
- 6.4 Requests for the recognition of foreign qualifications will be processed in a fair and timely manner, as required under the European Standards and Guidelines and the Lisbon Recognition Convention.



## 7. Policy

- 7.1 Trinity recognises formal, informal and non-formal prior learning as relevant for admission to undergraduate programmes (level 7 and 8) and to postgraduate programmes (level 9). (Ref. [Recognition of Prior Learning Policy](#)).
- 7.2 The majority of undergraduate applicants who qualify for EU fee status are admitted through the [Central Applications Office \(CAO\)](#) in accordance with criteria agreed by the EU Qualifications Group and IUA Registrar's Group, except where different criteria have been specifically approved by University Council. Applicants' fee status is determined in accordance with eligibility criteria set down by the Higher Education Authority (HEA).
- 7.3 The majority of applications for admission to undergraduate full-degree programmes from applicants who do not qualify for EU fee status are assessed by the Academic Registry on behalf of the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies.
- 7.4 Applicants are admitted on the basis of meeting the published admission requirements. Details of admission requirements by country and qualification type are published on the [Trinity website](#) and prospectus and the "Entry requirements criteria for EU/EFTA/UK Applicants" compiled by the EU Qualifications Group and published on the CAO website. Requirements by course are listed on the relevant [course page](#), and for non-EU undergraduate applicants, Competitive Admission Bands and Subject Specific Requirement levels are set out in the [Admissions Guide for non-EU Students](#).
- 7.5 In respect of direct applications, Academic Registry will determine whether an applicant is offered a place with EU fee status or non-EU fee status at the point of offering admission, based on documentation provided by the applicant and in accordance with EU fee status eligibility criteria set down by the HEA and relevant sectoral policy. It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide sufficient documentation to demonstrate eligibility for EU status.
- 7.6 In the case of students admitted through the CAO with EU fee status, confirmation of their fee status will be subject to subsequent verification by Academic Registry. Such students may be asked to provide additional documentary evidence of their eligibility for EU fee status after admission, and in the event that they are found to be ineligible for EU fee status, they will be assigned non-EU fee status and charged tuition fees accordingly for the full duration of their course. Students correctly assigned non-EU fee status will continue in that status for the duration of their programme, i.e. their fee status cannot change due to accruing additional years of residency within the EU while registered as a Trinity student.
- 7.7 Applications for admission to postgraduate taught (PGT) programmes are assessed by members of the academic community, usually course Directors/Co-ordinators, for academic suitability to a programme. Academic recommendations on applications are then quality assured by the Academic Registry on behalf of the Dean of Graduate Studies to ensure that offers are being made to applicants that meet the entry requirements for that programme.
- 7.8 Applications for admission to postgraduate research (PGR) programmes are assessed by Postgraduate Research supervisors and/or Directors of Postgraduate Teaching and Learning for academic suitability to a programme. Academic recommendations on applications are then quality assured by the Academic Registry on behalf of the Dean of



Graduate Studies to ensure that offers are being made to applicants that meet the entry requirements for that programme.

- 7.9 All documentation in support of an application for admission must be submitted in the appropriate manner in order to be considered. Documentation in support of CAO applications must be submitted to the CAO in the manner specified in the CAO handbook and [www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie). Documentation in support of direct applications to Trinity, including non-EU undergraduate applications, postgraduate applications, applications for micro-credential courses and any other applications made through [my.tcd.ie](http://my.tcd.ie), must be submitted digitally and be uploaded to the application system. Hard copy documents are not accepted for direct applications, except where specified by Academic Registry.
- 7.10 Exemptions to the published admissions criteria may be approved by the Senior Lecturer / Dean of Undergraduate Studies or the Dean of Graduate Studies (as appropriate) where a sufficiently strong case has been made by the applicant, in the case of undergraduate applications, or the course director, in the case of postgraduate applications, that the applicant is in a position to succeed in and benefit from the programme for which they are applying. The Deans may delegate authority to approve certain exemptions in specific circumstances to the Academic Registry.
- 7.11 In relation to students seeking admission on the basis of foreign qualifications, Trinity will assess and verify that the qualifications are of the required grades and award level and are from suitably quality assured institutions by drawing on NARIC (National Academic Recognition Information Centre) databases (Ireland and others as required, including ECCTIS, formerly UK NARIC), the EU Qualifications Group and other relevant resources as needed.
- 7.12 The University has set KPI's that monitor turnaround times for all direct applications and these are reported and [published](#) on a monthly basis. All candidates who have been unsuccessful in their application will be informed of this by Academic Registry within a reasonable timeframe.
- 7.13 The University, in its absolute discretion, may refuse admission or rescind an offer of admission to an otherwise qualified applicant. This may include but is not limited to where:
- vi. the applicant has for any reason been excluded from a programme of study in the University;
  - vii. the applicant is currently indebted to the University;
  - viii. the applicant has been excluded from or had their enrolment cancelled in a course of study at another Higher Education Institution (HEI);
  - ix. the applicant is deemed a non-genuine temporary entrant;
  - x. the applicant is applying for admission to a course into which they have already been admitted and failed to progress;
  - xi. the applicant may prejudice the reputation, management, governance or discipline of the University;
  - xii. the applicant is considered a risk to the safety or wellbeing of students or staff of the University;
  - xiii. the applicant, or a third party working on their behalf, has engaged in dishonest and/or deceitful behaviour or has provided false, inaccurate, incomplete or misleading information in the process of applying for admission to the University or any other HEI;
  - xiv. the applicant would not be able to lawfully enter University premises for all or part of the duration of a programme by reason of a court order;
  - xv. information has come to the notice of the University which could have influenced



- the decision to offer admission if known at the time the offer was made;
- xvi. the offer has been issued due to administrative error or an error has been made in the assessment of the applicant's qualifications and they have been incorrectly deemed to meet the requirements for admission.
- 7.14 Trinity may from time to time be asked whether a prospective applicant is likely to be deemed eligible for admission, and may, in the interest of transparency, offer preliminary advice on eligibility in the absence of a full application. No such advice can be considered binding or in any way tantamount to an offer of admission.
- 7.15 Trinity recognises that it is not in the interest of an applicant to be admitted into a programme of study in which they are unlikely to be successful because of lack of English language competency, lack of academic preparedness or lack of other necessary skillsets, or in the case of a research programme, where there is no academic supervisor available to supervise the student. Admission criteria relating to English language competence are set out in the English Language Policy.
- 7.16 Students on programmes with clinical or other professional placements which require work or activities relating to children or vulnerable persons or provision of services to children or vulnerable persons will be subject to Garda vetting under the provisions of the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016, prior to commencing placements (Ref. Calendar Part II, Section II and Part III, Section I). Offers of admission to applicants onto specific programmes are made subject to certain vaccination requirements and/or certain negative blood test results (Ref. Calendar Part II, Section II and Part III, Section I).

### **Deferral - Undergraduate**

- 7.17 Trinity permits applicants who have fully accepted unconditional offers of admission into an undergraduate programme to seek to defer their place for one year (Ref. [Calendar Part II, Section I](#)). However, permission to defer is not guaranteed. Deferrals of more than one year will not be granted, and consecutive deferrals will not normally be granted.
- 7.18 Decisions on deferral requests for undergraduate courses are made centrally in the Academic Registry, except for deferral requests from mature students or requests to defer offers of Advanced Entry or External Transfer, where the relevant School/Department is consulted.
- 7.19 A deferral is not granted to an applicant who wishes to register in a course of study in another third level institution.
- 7.20 A deferral is not granted to an applicant who wishes to repeat the Leaving Certificate or equivalent with the intention of applying for a different course of study.

### **Deferral - Postgraduate**

- 7.21 The course director or co-ordinator has discretion to permit students who have fully accepted unconditional offers of admission on postgraduate taught or research programmes to defer to the next intake. Where a request to defer is granted this decision is communicated by the course director or co-ordinator to the Academic Registry. Deferrals of more than one year will not be granted, and consecutive deferrals will not normally be granted.



### **Transfer and Advanced Entry - Undergraduate**

- 7.22 Procedures are in place to allow students to be admitted into a higher year of an undergraduate programme, starting in either Senior Fresh or Junior Sophister year, if they have recently completed one or more years of another Trinity undergraduate programme or one or more years of an undergraduate programme in another HEI. In both cases, the Advanced Entry application process is used. Transfer into some programmes will not be considered if, for example, professional accreditation associated with that programme precludes such transfer, or other similar considerations apply.

Advanced Entry will only be considered where the following criteria have been met:

- xvii. There is capacity in the year of the programme into which transfer is sought;
- xviii. The student has successfully completed at least one year of another cognate programme within the past two years;
- xix. In cases of Advanced Entry into Senior Fresh year, students must also meet the requirements for admission into the Junior Fresh year of the programme, including the competitive requirements of the year cohort they are seeking to join (e.g. CAO points) based in their second-level qualifications.
- xx. In cases of Advanced Entry from another HEI, students must have a minimum grade from their prior HEI equivalent to II.2.

Where the above criteria have been met, the application for Advanced Entry will be passed by Academic Registry to the relevant academic units for decision. In cases of applications for Advanced Entry into Junior Sophister year, the academic unit may instead offer Advanced Entry into Senior Fresh year.

Where a student has been admitted by Advanced Entry or permitted to transfer to another course, they may be exempt from a certain number of credits based on prior learning from the programme from which they have transferred. This is not an automatic entitlement in cases of Advanced Entry or course transfer and would require a specific application for Credit Exemption by Recognition of Prior Learning - please see the [Recognition of Prior Learning policy](#) (section 7.13).

### **Transfer - Postgraduate**

- 7.23 Trinity does not permit postgraduate taught students to transfer from one Trinity postgraduate taught programme to another Trinity postgraduate taught programme.
- 7.24 Trinity may consider requests on a case-by-case basis from postgraduate research students who request a transfer from one research programme/project to another research programme/project.

### **Disability**

- 7.25 Trinity welcomes applications from prospective students with disabilities and is committed to making Reasonable Accommodations to enable students to fully participate in student life. Students with disabilities are encouraged to disclose their disability to the Trinity Disability Service. Trinity has a legal obligation to make reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities when applying to and studying in Trinity.





## **8. Recognition of Foreign Qualifications**

- 8.1 The EU Qualifications Group publishes a document annually that details the [entry requirements for EU/EFTA applicants seeking admission through the CAO](#). The document sets out the framework for equivalencies, conversions and accepted subjects and subject combinations of EU, EEA, Swiss and UK qualifications for entry to undergraduate degree programmes in Irish Universities. This document is ratified by the IUA Registrar's Group. Trinity will adhere to these equivalencies except where different equivalencies, conversions, accepted subjects or subject combinations have been specifically approved by Council.
- 8.2 For direct applications, the Academic Registry will use NARIC databases or other relevant resources (such as ECCTIS, formerly UK NARIC) to compare foreign qualifications against the published admission criteria, including the requirements of relevant professional bodies that apply to the specific programme and/or discipline. Any recommendations for changes to the recognition of foreign qualifications, including the requirements of relevant professional bodies, are to be submitted to the Senior Lecturer / Dean of Undergraduate Studies, or the Dean of Graduate Studies (as appropriate) for consideration (the Academic Officers with direct responsibility for undergraduate and postgraduate admissions respectively) who submit them to the Undergraduate/Graduate Studies Committee (as appropriate), and University Council for final approval. See the Recognition of Foreign Qualifications Procedure document.
- 8.3 All direct postgraduate applicants must, at the point of application, authorise Trinity to verify their prior qualifications with the institution(s) they attended.

## **9. Appeals**

- 9.1 An applicant can appeal a decision where the qualification they are presenting for admissions purposes is not recognised by the University or if the decision in relation to their application was not in line with Trinity's published criteria (see section 7.4, 7.11) or course-specific admission requirements. The appeal should be submitted to the Head of Admissions in the first instance and the outcome of that appeal can be escalated, if required, to the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies or the Dean of Graduate Studies, whichever is appropriate (Ref. Admissions Appeal Process).

## **10. Responsibility**

- 10.1 The responsibility for this policy lies with the Senior Lecturer / Dean of Undergraduate Studies and the Dean of Graduate Studies, as appropriate.
- 10.2 The Academic Registry has delegated responsibility for the assessment and administering of all undergraduate direct applications to the University from the Senior Lecturer / Dean of Undergraduate Studies.
- 10.3 The Academic Registry has delegated responsibility for administering and quality assuring recommendations on all postgraduate applications from the Dean of Graduate Studies.
- 10.4 Prospective students are responsible for ensuring that their application fulfils all admission requirements. This includes but is not limited to: attendance for examinations, interviews, auditions, completion of questionnaires and providing supporting materials, such as research proposals and certification (verifiable and authentic) of previous educational achievements, as relevant. Incomplete applications will not be processed nor will they be grounds for refunds.



of any application fees.

## **11. Related Documents**

- 11.1 The University Calendar, Parts [II](#) and [III](#)
- 11.2 [The 2010 Consolidated Statutes of Trinity College Dublin and the University of Dublin](#)
- 11.3 [Study at Trinity website](#)
- 11.4 [Policy and Criteria for Access, Transfer and Progression in Relation to Learners for Providers of Further and Higher Education and Training \(QQI Policy Restatement 2015\)](#)
- 11.5 [Recognition of Prior Learning Policy](#)
- 11.6 [Non-EU Collaborative and Transnational Educational Partnerships Policy](#)
- 11.7 [Assessment and Academic Progression Policy](#)
- 11.8 [Academic Awards Policy](#)
- 11.9 [National Vetting Bureau \(Children and Vulnerable Persons\) Act 2012](#)
- 11.10 [Procedure for Recognition of Foreign Qualifications](#)
- 11.11 [English Language Policy](#)
- 11.12 Schedule for Alternative Entry Routes
- 11.13 Trinity's Admissions Matrix
- 11.14 [CAO website](#)

## **12. Document Control**

- 12.1 Approved by: University Council
  - 12.2 Date policy approved: October 2016
  - 12.3 Date revised policy approved: 16 April 2025
  - 12.4 Date policy effective from: 29 August 2025
  - 12.5 Date of next review: Academic year 2027/28
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## **Schedule 1: Schedule of Alternative Entry Routes**

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Trinity aims to provide students from all backgrounds a pathway to higher education through the alternative entry routes below.

- HEAR – Higher Education Access Route
- DARE – Disability Access Route to Education
- QQI / FET Entry Route
- TAP – Trinity Access Programme, Foundation Course for Young Adults
- TAP – Trinity Access Programme, Foundation Course for Mature Students
- Mature Entry Route
- Advanced Entry Route
- University of Sanctuary Scholarships
- Recognition of Prior Learning
- Springboard Programmes through Tangent
- International Foundation Programme
- Feasibility Study for A-Levels (to cease after September 2025 CAO intake)
- Education Recruitment Agents
- Study Abroad Providers
- Transnational Education Partner arrangements such as Articulation arrangement, Dual and Joint Awards