



English Language Policy

1. Context

Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin (hereafter Trinity) aims for the highest standards of quality in all its admission related activities. A range of policies, procedures and processes exist to support recruitment, admission and retention of international learners in programmes of education and research in Trinity (refer §9.0). Trinity's Centre for English Language Learning and Teaching (CELLT) provides a range of pre-sessional and in-sessional programmes directed at the needs of international learners. Since 2016, Trinity has validated the International Foundation Programme delivered by Marino Institute of Education for international learners from countries where the secondary school leaving qualification does not allow students to qualify for direct admission into Trinity undergraduate programmes.

The International Education Mark (IEM) is one of a suite of measures designed to protect the interests of learners engaged with the Irish education and training system. The *Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Higher Education to International Learners* requires Higher Education providers to develop an English language policy, as part of the authorisation process for the IEM.

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.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline Trinity's fair, transparent and consistent requirements and standards for evaluating the English language ability of international learners applying for admission to Trinity, and to describe Trinity's policy and process for



English language support for international applicants in receipt of a conditional offer to study at Trinity and to international learners once they are registered.

3. Benefits

- 3.1 This policy supports the enrolment and admission of suitably qualified students and the creation of a diverse student body.
- 3.2 This policy complements the existing suite of policies, procedures and process that ensure the quality of international recruitment and engagement and specifically complies with the *Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Higher Education to International Learners (2023)*.

4. Scope

- 4.1 This policy applies to all programmes of study leading to academic qualifications awarded by the University of Dublin (degrees) and Trinity College Dublin (certificates and diplomas).
- 4.2 Trinity's Linked Providers¹ are required to document their own policy on English Language teaching which must align with this Policy.

5. Principles

- 5.1 Trinity seeks to register students with a broad range of talents and the ability to engage with and benefit from the distinctive Trinity education in order to create a diverse student body.
- 5.2 As an inclusive and responsible HE provider, Trinity operates a fair, transparent and consistent admission policy that supports the successful participation of international learners on their chosen courses.

¹ A Linked Provider is a higher education provider that do not have the power to award degrees but provide 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.



- 5.3. Trinity recognises that it is not in the interest of an applicant to be admitted into a programme of study on which they are unlikely to be successful because of lack of English language competency.

6. Definitions

- 6.1 An international learner is defined as ‘as a person who is not an Irish citizen but is lawfully in the state primarily to receive education and training’ (Refer to the ‘Policy on Authorisation to use the International Education Mark’, for detail on how the definition of an international learner is to be applied for the purpose of the International Education Mark).

7. Policy

7.1 Entry Requirements

- 7.1.1. Trinity requires international learners to meet certain minimum requirements in English language proficiency in order to ensure successful participation in its programmes. These requirements are approved by the University Council (CL/17/18 – 064; CL/19 -20/140.1); documented on the [Study at Trinity website](#), in the Country/Region Specific Information webpages and in the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Prospectuses [Prospectus - Study - Trinity College Dublin \(tcd.ie\)](#).
- 7.1.2. All applicants for whom English is not a first language and who have not been educated through the medium of English must present verifiable evidence of the required level of English language proficiency for their intended course of study as specified in the associated procedures to this policy, as outlined in Appendix 1.

7.2 Minimum Requirements for English Language Proficiency

- 7.2.1. Trinity’s minimum standard level of English language proficiency required for entry to a degree course leading to an undergraduate or postgraduate award shall normally be an overall score of 6.5 in the International English Language



Testing System (IELTS Academic) or equivalent. Some courses have higher requirement, full details are published on the [Study at Trinity website](#) and in the respective Undergraduate and Postgraduate prospectus, refer [Prospectus - Study - Trinity College Dublin \(tcd.ie\)](#).

- 7.2.2. Applicants who meet all of the admissions criteria other than the English language requirements receive a conditional offer. The conditions of this offer require achievement of minimum scores in specified English language proficiency tests (refer Appendix 1) or, as an alternative, successful completion of Trinity's [Pre-Sessional Programme](#) (PSP) (refer § 7.3).
- 7.2.3. To be eligible for the Pre-Sessional Programme, applicants must already hold a conditional offer from Trinity and present evidence of required minimum English language test scores. Students who successfully complete the PSP are eligible to register with Trinity, provided all the other conditions of offer are met.
- 7.2.4. Trinity's standard English requirements for undergraduate and postgraduate admissions are listed in Appendix 1 to this policy, as are the standard English requirements for entry to the [Pre-Sessional Programme](#) (PSP) for courses requiring an overall minimum IELTS score of 6.5 (or equivalent), and for courses requiring the higher overall minimum IELTS score of 7.0 (or equivalent).
- 7.2.5. The Centre for English Language Learning and Teaching has responsibility to provide a timely written response an international learner who is refused admission to the Pre-Sessional Programme based on evidence of their English language proficiency.
- 7.2.6. An applicant can appeal a decision where the English language qualification that they are presenting for enrolment into the PSP is not recognised by Trinity. The appeal should be submitted to the Admissions Officer in the first instance and that outcome of the appeal can be escalated, if required, to the



Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies or the Dean of Graduate Studies, whichever is appropriate.

7.3 English Language Learning Supports

- 7.3.1. The [Centre for English Language Learning and Teaching](#) (CELLT) is a fully integrated academic unit within the School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences, and is responsible for the delivery of a suite of English language programmes to eligible applicants and registered students, in Trinity.
- 7.3.2. The Pre-Sessional Programme is an intensive full-time ten-week course of English for Academic Purposes approved by the University Council as an entry pathway for international learners who need to fulfil the English language requirements of a conditional offer to study in Trinity. The Pre-Sessional Programme formally assesses the English language proficiency of eligible applicants to study in Trinity.
- 7.3.3. On successful completion of the programme, the Director of CELLT makes a recommendation to Academic Registry to accept applicants who achieved a required passing grade in the programme's assessment into their intended course of study.
- 7.3.4. Applicants who fail to successfully complete the PSP can appeal that outcome. The appeal should be submitted to the Director of CELLT in the first instance and that outcome of the appeal can be escalated, if required.
- 7.3.5. Trinity provides a range of induction opportunities that is tailored to the needs of its undergraduate and postgraduate international learners, including Visiting & Erasmus students. Details can be found on the [Orientation - Student Life - Trinity College Dublin \(tcd.ie\)](#) website.
- 7.3.6. Academic integrity is a core component of Trinity's orientation sessions and local inductions. In recognition of the different education cultures of international learners, the formal and informal content, advice and support shared is relevant and specific to the Irish higher education context and to



Trinity's academic culture, refer to the [Academic Integrity - Trinity Teaching and Learning - Trinity College Dublin \(tcd.ie\)](#) webpages.

- 7.3.7. Trinity provides dedicated language support for registered international learners through English for Academic Purposes (EAP) modules delivered by the Centre for English Language Learning and Teaching (CELLT). CELLT provides free semester-long, in-sessional not-for-credit modules in Academic Writing (Essays and Dissertations), Oral Fluency, and English for Specific Purposes. Advanced credit-bearing EAP modules are available to Postgraduate Research students as part of Trinity's structured PhD programme.

7.4 International Foundation Programme

- 7.4.1 The [International Foundation Programme](#) (IFP) is validated by Trinity and delivered by [Marino Institute of Education](#) (MIE). The IFP is a one year pre-undergraduate programme, leading to a Level 6 award on the [National Framework for Qualifications](#). It is intended to provide future undergraduates with the appropriate English language and discipline-specific academic and learning skills to prepare them to undertake undergraduate studies in Trinity or other Higher Education Institutions' in Ireland or internationally.
- 7.4.2 In respect of the *Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Higher Education to International Learners*, Academic Governance for the IFP rests with Trinity College Dublin and is overseen by the MIE Associated College Degree Committee. Specifically, Trinity Global Office manage the Marketing (§5.1.1) and Recruitment (§5.1.2); Academic Registry manage the Admission and Qualification Recognition (§5.2); and Trinity Teaching and Learning manage the academic quality, standard and recognition of the IFP (§5.6).
- 7.4.3 To be eligible for the IFP, applicants must meet the eligibility criteria for admissions and present evidence of English proficiency as outlined in Appendix 1 of this policy.



7.4.4 The Centre for English Language Learning and Teaching (CELLT) offer a dedicated four week [International Foundation Programmes pre-sessional programme](#) for all applicants with an offer for the International Foundation Programme.

8. Responsibility

- 8.1 The responsibility for this policy lies with the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies and the Dean of Graduate Studies, as appropriate.
- 8.2 Prospective students are responsible for ensuring that their application fulfils all admission requirements, including English language proficiency test certification as relevant.

9. Related Documents

- 9.1 [Admission and Transfer Policy](#)
- 9.2 [Education Recruitment Agent Policy](#)
- 9.3 [Recognition of Foreign Qualifications Procedure](#)
- 9.4 [Study Abroad Providers Policy](#)
- 9.5 College Calendar [Part II- Undergraduate](#); [Part III-Graduate Studies and Higher Degrees](#)
- 9.6 [Non-EU Admissions Guide](#)
- 9.7 [Code of Practice for the provision of programmes of Higher Education to International Learners \(QQI 2023\)](#)
- 9.8 [Policy on Authorisation to Use the International Education Mark \(QQI 2023\)](#)

10. Document Control

- 10.1 Date of initial approval: 10th May 2023
- 10.2 Date of next review: Academic Year 2025/2026



Appendix 1 Procedures for English Language Provision

Accepted English language proficiency tests

1. The following international English language proficiency tests are accepted by Trinity for the purpose of admissions:
 - Cambridge English Qualifications
 - Duolingo English Test
 - International English Language Testing System (IELTS Academic)
 - Pearson English International Certification
 - Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)
2. English language proficiency tests scores must be dated within two years at the time of application.
3. Minimum scores in these tests are benchmarked according to the descriptions of language proficiency contained in the Council of Europe's *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment* (CEFR).
4. International learners are expected to demonstrate evidence that they have already achieved a minimum of a B2 proficiency level (Independent User) and are equipped to operate through the medium of English as a Proficient User at C1 or C2 level during their academically challenging studies.
5. Specified High School/Secondary Examinations are accepted in lieu of English language proficiency tests.

English language requirements for international learners

6. Trinity's standard English requirements for undergraduate and postgraduate admissions are:
 - **Cambridge English Qualifications**
Minimum overall score of 180 on the Cambridge English scale, i.e. minimum Grade C in Advanced or Proficiency Certificate (UG and PG)
 - **Duolingo English Test**
Minimum overall score of 120, no individual sub-scores below 105 (UG and PG)



- **International English Language Testing System (IELTS)**
Minimum overall score of 6.5 (UG and PG), no individual band below 6 (UG only)
 - **Pearson English International Certification**
Minimum overall score of 63, no section scores below 59 (UG and PG)
 - **Test of English as a Foreign Language internet-based Test (TOEFL iBT)**
Minimum overall score of 90 with a minimum score in writing of 21 (UG) or 88 (PG).
7. Applicants who present any of the following High School/Secondary Examinations will not be asked to fulfil the English language requirements by a separate standardised English language proficiency test:
- Irish Leaving Certificate: a grade 6 or better in ordinary level English
 - French Baccalaureate, International Option: 12 with coefficient > 5, 14 with coefficient < 5
 - GCSE: a grade C/5 or better in English
 - US High School: a grade C in English taken in final year
 - International Baccalaureate: English A1, A2 or B: SL4 if presenting IB through English, HL5 if presenting through French or Spanish
 - Hong Kong, HKDSE: Level 4 or better in English Language
 - Malaysia, SPM: Grade C or better in English 1119
8. Any recommendations for changes to the levels, bands or sub-scores and concordances of these international English language proficiency tests are brought by the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies and Dean of Graduate Studies for consideration by Undergraduate/Graduate Studies Committee and University Council for final approval.
9. An applicant can appeal a decision where the qualifications they are presenting for admissions purposes is not recognised by Trinity. The appeal should be submitted to the Admissions Officer in the first instance and that outcome of the 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).

Pre-Sessional Programme English language requirements

10. Trinity's standard English requirements for entry into the Pre-Sessional Programme are:

- **Duolingo English Test**
 - Minimum overall score of 105, no individual sub-scores below 95
- **International English Language Testing System (IELTS)**
 - Minimum overall score of 6.0, no individual band under 5.5
- **Test of English as a Foreign Language internet-based Test (TOEFL iBT)**
 - Minimum overall score of 72, no skill under 17

11. For applicants with an offer in a course requiring an overall minimum IELTS score of 7.0 (or equivalent), the following minimum English language tests scores are required for entry into the Pre-Sessional Programme:

- **Duolingo English Test**

Minimum overall score of 120, no individual sub-scores under 105
- **International English Language Testing System (IELTS)**

Minimum overall score of 6.5, no individual band under 6
- **Test of English as a Foreign Language internet-based Test (TOEFL iBT)**
 - Minimum overall score of 90, no individual skill under 20

International Foundation Programme

12. To be eligible for the IFP, applicants must meet the eligibility criteria for admissions and present evidence of English language proficiency tests as follows:

- **Duolingo English Test**
 - Minimum score of 80, no individual sub-scores below 65, with a minimum sub-score of 80 in Literacy
- **International English Language Testing System (IELTS)**
 - Minimum overall score of 5.0, no individual band under 4.5, with a minimum score of 5.0 in Writing
- **Test of English as a Foreign Language internet-based Test (TOEFL iBT)**
 - Minimum score of 64, with a minimum of 16 in Writing.



13. Certain destination programmes require a higher level of English language proficiency, listed on the IFP's website. The following minimum English language proficiency test scores are required for these programmes:

- **Duolingo English Test**
 - Minimum score of 105, no individual sub-scores below 95
- **International English Language Testing System (IELTS Academic)**
 - Minimum overall score of 6.0, no individual band under 5.5
- **Test of English as a Foreign Language internet-based Test (TOEFL iBT)**
 - Minimum score of 72, with a minimum of 20 in Writing