English Language Policy

## 1.	Context

Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin (hereinafter 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 TrustEd Ireland (previously 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 TrustEd Ireland mark.

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 Providers[1] 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.

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[1] 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.

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 QQI '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 TrustEd 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[1] in order to ensure successful participation in its programmes, see Appendix 1. These requirements are approved by the University Council (CL/17/18 – 064; CL/19 -20/140.1; CL/23-24/223.1); 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

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[1] Programmes with professional requirements may be exempt from the Bands laid out in Appendix 1, to meet professional accreditation standards.

shall normally be Band B (Standard Entry) with 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).[2]

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 Band B (Standard Entry) with an overall minimum IELTS score of 6.5 (or equivalent), and for courses requiring the higher Band C (Higher Entry) with an 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 to an international learner who is refused admission to the Pre-Sessional Programme based on evidence of their English language proficiency.

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[2] Programmes wishing to amend their English Language Requirements from Band B (Standard Entry) to Band C (Higher Entry) will be required to get approval from the Under- or Post-graduate Studies Committee and Council. See approval process in the Programme and Curriculum Design and Approval Policy and the Abridged Process for PG Programme Admission requirements amendments.

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 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.

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 the outcome of that 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   Approved by: University Council

10.2   Date of initial approval: 10 May 2023

10.3   Date revised policy approved: 14 May 2025

10.4   Date policy effective from: 29 August 2025

10.5   Date of next review: Academic Year 2027/2028

Appendix 1 Procedures for English Language Provision

Accepted English language proficiency tests

1. All applicants to Trinity are required to provide official evidence of proficiency in the English language.

2. The following international English language proficiency tests are accepted by Trinity for the purpose of admissions:
    - International English Language Testing System (IELTS Academic)
    - Duolingo English Test[3]
    - Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)
    - Cambridge English Qualifications
    - Pearson English International Certification

3. English language proficiency tests scores must be dated within two years prior to the start of your course.

4. 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).

5. Applicants for postgraduate courses who have completed a primary degree through the medium of English may request an exemption from the requirement to present an English proficiency qualification. Exemptions will only be considered if the application is otherwise complete and submitted. The applicant must provide a formal document from the awarding institution clearly stating their prior degree was delivered wholly through English. Requests for exemption should be made to the course director/coordinator. Exemption requests approved by the course director/coordinator will be considered by the Admissions Team.

6. Specified High School/Secondary Examinations are accepted in lieu of English language proficiency tests.

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[3] If presenting Duolingo Test of English, applicants must share their test score with institution "Trinity College Dublin, The University of Dublin" from the Duolingo website.

English Language Requirements

7. The table below shows the standardised English proficiency tests accepted at Trinity, with scores required divided into bands. There are two distinct requirement bands: Band B (Standard Entry) and Band C (Higher Entry). Every course will be associated with one of these bands, as set out in the course proposal or subsequent approval by the Undergraduate/Graduate Studies Committee and University Council. Specific rationale must be advanced for a course to adopt the Higher Entry band. The band required depends on the course or programme you are applying for – please refer to the course/programme page to find out the relevant band.

8. Trinity's standard English requirements for undergraduate and postgraduate admissions are:

- **International English Language Testing System (IELTS)**
  - Band B (Standard Entry): Minimum overall score of 6.5, no individual band below 6.
  - Band C (Higher Entry): Minimum overall score of 7.0, no individual band below 7
- **Duolingo English Test**
  - Band B (Standard Entry): Minimum overall score of 120, no individual sub-scores below 100.
  - Band C (Higher Entry): Minimum overall score of 130, no individual sub-scores below 110.
- **Test of English as a Foreign Language internet-based Test (TOEFL iBT)**
  - Band B (Standard Entry): Minimum overall score of 90 with a minimum score in writing of 21.
  - Band C (Higher Entry): Minimum overall score of 100 with a minimum score in writing of 23.
- **Cambridge English Qualifications**
  - Band B (Standard Entry): Minimum overall score of 180 on the Cambridge English scale, i.e. minimum Grade C in Advanced or Proficiency Certificate, no individual score below 170.
  - Band C (Higher Entry): Minimum overall score of 190 on the Cambridge English scale, i.e. minimum Grade C in Advanced or Proficiency Certificate, no individual score below 180.
- **PTE Academic - Pearson English International Certification**
  - Band B (Standard Entry): Minimum overall score of 6369, no section scores below 59.
  - Band C (Higher Entry): Minimum overall score of 75, no section scores below 69.

9. The following 2nd level qualifications will also be accepted as evidence of proficiency in the English language:

Irish Leaving Certificate	A grade 6 or better in Ordinary or Higher Level English
GCSE	A grade C/5 or better in English Language
European Baccalaureate	English: 6 in your 1st language, or in 1st or 2nd Foreign Language
QQI/FETAC	Pass in Communications module (5N0690)
French Baccalaureate	Students presenting the OIB or International Option of the French Baccalaureate may satisfy the English language requirement by achieving a minimum of 12 (where the coefficient is greater than 5) in English Language and Literature. In cases where the coefficient is less than 5, a minimum result of 14 will be required.
International Baccalaureate	English A1, A2 or B: SL4 if presenting IB through English, HL5 if presenting through French or Spanish.
US High School Curriculum	A grade C in English taken in final year. This applies to students who have completed their full second level education at a US High School.
Hong Kong, HKDSE	Level 4 or better in English Language.
Malaysia, SPM	Grade C or better in English 1119.

10. 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).

International Foundation Programme requirements

11. To be eligible for the IFP, if progressing to a Trinity course with Standard Entry English language requirement (Band B) applicants must meet the eligibility criteria for admissions and present evidence of English language proficiency tests in Band A - Pre-sessional entry 1 as follows:

- **International English Language Testing System (IELTS)**
  Minimum overall score of 5.0, score in 5.0 for Writing and 4.5 in other bands
- **Duolingo English Test**
  Minimum overall score of 80, score 80 in Literacy and 65 in other sub-scores
- **Test of English as a Foreign Language internet-based Test (TOEFL iBT)**
  Minimum overall score of 64 and each individual section score of 16
- **Cambridge English Qualifications**
  Minimum overall score of 160, and no score below 150
- **Pearson English International Certification**
  Minimum overall score of 45, each section score of 40

12. To be eligible for the IFP, if progressing to a Trinity course with Higher Entry English language requirement (Band C) applicants must meet the eligibility criteria for admissions and present evidence of English language proficiency tests in Band A - Pre-sessional entry 2 as follows:

- **International English Language Testing System (IELTS)**
    Minimum overall score of 6.0, and each band score of 5.5
- **Duolingo English Test**
    Minimum overall score of 105, and each individual sub-score of 90
- **Test of English as a Foreign Language internet-based Test (TOEFL iBT)**
    Minimum overall score of 72, each individual section of 18
- **Cambridge English Qualifications**
    Minimum overall score of 170, and no score below 165
- **Pearson English International Certification**
    Minimum overall score of 59, each section score of 50 or better

Pre-Sessional Summer Programme English language requirements

13. Trinity's standard English requirements for entry into the Pre-Sessional Summer Programme are in Band A - Pre-sessional entry 3:

- **International English Language Testing System (IELTS)**
    Minimum overall score of 6.0, score in each band of 5.5
- **Duolingo English Test**
    Minimum overall score of 105, each individual sub-score of 90
- **Test of English as a Foreign Language internet-based Test (TOEFL iBT)**
    Minimum overall score of 72, each individual section of 18
- **Cambridge English Qualifications**
    Minimum overall score of 170, and no score below 165
- **Pearson English International Certification**
    Minimum overall score of 59, each section score of 50

14. 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 in Band A - Pre-sessional entry 4 are required for entry into the Pre-Sessional Summer Programme:

- **International English Language Testing System (IELTS)**
    Minimum overall score of 6.5, score in each band of 6.0
- **Duolingo English Test**
    Minimum overall score of 120, each individual sub-score of 100
- **Test of English as a Foreign Language internet-based Test (TOEFL iBT)**
    Minimum overall score of 90, each individual section of 21
- **Cambridge English Qualifications**
    Minimum overall score of 180, and no score below 170
- **Pearson English International Certification**
    Minimum overall score of 69, each section score of 59

English Language Requirements Bands Table

Trinity Bands	Course Entry	IELTS Academic	Duolingo English Test	TOEFL iBT	Cambridge Advanced or Proficiency	PTE Academic (Pearson)
Band A (Pre-sessional entry 1)	Trinity International Foundation Programme	5.0 overall 5.0 in Writing 4.5 in other bands	80 overall 80 in Literacy 65 in other subscores	64 overall 16 in each section	160 overall No score below150	45 overall 40 in each section
Band A (Pre-sessional entry 2)	Trinity International Foundation Programme specified higher requirements	6.0 overall 5.5 in each band	105 overall 90 in each subscore	72 overall 18 in each section	170 overall No score below 165	59 overall 50 in each section
Band A (Pre-sessional entry 3)	CELLT Pre-Sessional Summer Programme	6.0 overall 5.5 in each band	105 overall 90 in each subscore	72 overall 18 in each section	170 overall No score below 165	59 overall 50 in each section
Band A (Pre-sessional entry 4)	CELLT Pre-Sessional Summer Programme specified higher requirements	6.5 overall 6.0 in each band	120 overall 100 in each subscore	90 overall 21 in each section	180 overall No score below 170	69 overall 59 in each section
Band B (Standard entry)	UG & PG Standard requirements	6.5 overall 6.0 in each band	120 overall 100 in each subscore	90 overall 21 in each section	180 overall No score below 170	69 overall 59 in each section
Band C (Higher entry)	UG & PG Higher requirements	7.0 overall 6.5 in each band	130 overall 110 in each subscore	100 overall 23 in each section	190 overall No score below 180	75 overall 69 in each section