



English Language Policy

1. Context

Dublin City University (DCU) is committed to fair, transparent and consistent admissions processes.

All applicants to DCU are carefully assessed on the basis of published entry requirements and entry paths outlined on the DCU website and in relevant publications.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out DCU requirements and standards for evaluating the English language proficiency of prospective international learners applying for admission to a programme of study at DCU, and to describe the English language supports provided to international applicants in receipt of an offer to accept a place on their chosen programme of study at DCU.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all programmes of study at DCU leading to an award by the University that is included in the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) that admit international learners. In the context of this policy international learner refers to “a person who is not an Irish citizen but is lawfully in the State primarily to receive education and training” (see Section 6.1).

4. Policy Statement

4.1 Principles

- 4.1.1 DCU operates a fair, transparent and consistent admissions process, which aims to facilitate the successful participation of all learners, including international learners, in their chosen programme of study.
- 4.1.2 DCU will only admit a prospective international learner to their chosen programme of study once, having met all other entry requirements, they can demonstrate the level of English language proficiency required to support successful participation in that programme.

4.2 Entry Requirements

- 4.2.1 In addition to the DCU general entry requirements¹ and any programme-specific entry requirements², prospective international learners must also meet certain requirements in English language proficiency to gain admission to and ensure their successful participation in their chosen programme of study³.
- 4.2.2 Applicants whose first language is not English must provide evidence of equivalent competence in the English Language, either through their school leaving examination or matriculation examination, or by achieving the minimum standard in a recognised English language test.
- 4.2.3 Applicants have the right to appeal admissions decisions in accordance with the University's 'Admission's Appeals Policy'⁴.

4.3 Minimum Requirements in English Language Proficiency

- 4.3.1 The minimum requirements in English language proficiency for all learners, including international learners whose first language is not English, are approved by University Standards Committee (USC), a subcommittee of Academic Council.
- 4.3.2 Specific programmes of study may require higher minimum requirements of English language proficiency than the University's minimum requirements. This is typically considered and approved by USC at the time of the accreditation of the programme.

¹ [International Admissions - Undergraduate and Postgraduate](#)

² [Courses at DCU](#)

³ [English Language Requirements for Non-Native Speakers of English | Registry](#)

⁴ [DCU Admissions Appeal Policy](#)

- 4.3.3** The approved minimum requirements in English language proficiency are maintained and published by Registry⁵. This includes the list of accepted English language proficiency tests and the score required to meet the minimum requirements. Any approved programme-specific English language proficiency requirements are specified in the online prospectus page for that programme. All online prospectus pages are accessible to prospective learners via the DCU website ([‘Courses at DCU’](#)).
- 4.3.4** In exceptional circumstances, results in examinations other than those included in the list of accepted English language proficiency tests may be accepted as proof of competence in English language. This may include non-native speakers of English who have completed their education through the medium of English in a country where English is the official language. Such applications will be considered on a case by case basis.
- 4.3.5** Scores in an English language proficiency test must be achieved in one sitting. The English language certificate must be awarded within the two years prior to the start date of the selected programme of study.
- 4.3.6** EU/EEA applicants to an undergraduate programme who meet all entry requirements for their chosen programme of study, except the minimum requirement in English language proficiency, may receive a conditional offer.
- 4.3.7** All Non-EU/EEA applicants and EU/EEA applicants to a postgraduate programme who do not meet the entry requirements for their chosen programme of study, including the minimum requirement in English language proficiency, may receive a conditional offer, depending on the demand for places on that particular programme.

4.4 English Language Supports

- 4.4.1** DCU International Academy, on behalf of the University, delivers a suite of English language programmes, including a Pre-Sessional Programme (PSP).
- 4.4.2** The PSP is a five or ten week course in English for academic purposes for international learners who have received a conditional offer for their chosen programme of study. These learners have met all entry requirements except the minimum requirement in English language proficiency.
- 4.4.3** Upon successful completion of the PSP, the international learner will have satisfied the requirements attached to their conditional offer and will be admitted to their chosen programme of study.

⁵ [English Language Requirements for Non-Native Speakers of English](#)

4.4.4 International learners who have accepted an offer to study at DCU but want to practically comprehend the conventions, structures and register of academic English in advance of the commencement of their programme can apply directly to DCU International Academy to enrol on the PSP.

4.4.5 DCU also offers a range of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) modules through the School of Applied Languages and Intercultural Studies. These in-session modules are available to international learners who are attending DCU as part of the Study Abroad programme or are enrolled on a postgraduate research programme.

4.5 International Foundation Year Programme

4.5.1 The International Foundation Year (IFY) Programme is intended to provide international applicants in receipt of a conditional offer with the appropriate English language and discipline-specific academic skills so that they will meet the entry requirements, including the minimum requirement in English language proficiency, for their chosen programme of study.

4.5.2 The IFY Programme is accredited and quality assured by the Northern Consortium of UK Universities (NCUK) and is delivered by DCU International Academy.

4.5.3 Upon successful completion of the IFY Programme, the international learner will have satisfied the English language and discipline-specific academic skills requirements attached to their conditional offer and will be admitted to their chosen programme of study at DCU.

5. Roles & Responsibilities

The Vice-President for Academic Affairs/Registrar is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented for all programmes of study at DCU leading to an award by the University that is included in the NFQ that enrol international learners.

The following committees and units are responsible for specific approvals and procedures that support the implementation of this policy:

- Academic Council: responsible for the design, development, and approval of new programmes.
- University Standards Committee: approves the university's minimum entry requirements, including minimum requirements in English language, and requests for derogations to same.
- Registry: responsible for processing applications by prospective international learners for all programmes of study and advising the University regarding benchmarking entry requirements within the Irish Higher Education sector,

maintaining and publishing approved minimum requirements in English language proficiency, and monitoring and reporting on trends and offering expert advice on the admission of international learners.

- Office for the Vice-President for Academic Affairs (OVPA): responsible on behalf of the Vice-President for Academic Affairs/Registrar for the review of this policy and, where necessary, amendment and approval.
- DCU International Academy: delivers Pre-Sessional and International Foundation Year programmes.
- International Learners: responsible for ensuring that their application fulfils all entry requirements, including the minimum requirement in English language proficiency, and that all the necessary test certifications are provided in their valid form.

6. Definitions

6.1 International Learner

An international learner is defined in *Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 (as amended 2019)* as “a person who is not an Irish citizen but is lawfully in the State primarily to receive education and training” (Section 2.1).

In accordance with the Quality and Qualification Ireland (QQI) *Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Higher Education to International Learners*⁶ and in the context of this policy, international learner comprehends the following categories of students:

- EU/EEA students in the state undertaking a DCU programme that leads to a major or non-major award that is included in the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).
- Non-EU/EEA students in the state undertaking a DCU programme that leads to a major or non-major award that is included in the NFQ.
- Learners outside the state enrolled on a DCU programme that leads to an award in the NFQ, whether offered in a transnational education setting and/or through remote, fully online modes of learning.

In the context of this policy, international learner does not comprehend the following categories of learners:

- Erasmus exchange students.
- Learners enrolled on DCU study abroad programmes that do not lead to awards included in the NFQ.
- Learners enrolled on continuous professional development programmes, and other professional training programmes, which do not lead to awards included in the NFQ.

⁶ [QQI Policy Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Higher Education to International Learners](#)

- Citizens of Great Britain and Northern Ireland undertaking a DCU programme that leads to a major or non-major award that is included in the NFQ.

7. Glossary

- The European Union (EU) is a supranational political and economic union of twenty-seven member states that are located primarily in Europe. The EU countries are Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Republic of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden.
- The European Economic Area (EEA) includes European Union countries and Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway. It allows them to be part of the EU 's single market. Switzerland is not an EU or EEA member but is part of the single market.
- The National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) describes what learners need to know, understand and be able to do to achieve a qualification. It lists the main qualifications awarded at each level and pathways from one NFQ level to the next. The NFQ allows applicants to compare qualifications to help with their choice of programme or course, knowing that it will be recognised at home and abroad. All qualifications included on the NFQ are listed in the Irish Register of Qualifications.
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) is the national state agency responsible for promoting the quality, integrity and reputation of Ireland's further and higher education system.

8. Related Documentation

This policy should be read in conjunction with DCU's 'Admissions Appeals Policy,' 'Recognition of Prior Learning Policies' and Supplementary Admissions Policy.

- [DCU Admissions Principles](#)
- [DCU Admissions Appeal Policy](#)
- [Recognition of Prior learning for Research Degrees](#)
- [Recognition of Prior Learning Policy](#)
- [Supplementary Admissions Policy](#)


9. Contact

Any queries relating to this policy should be directed, in the first instance, to the Office of the Vice-President for Academic Affairs (OVPA).

10. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed as and when changes are required to ensure that DCU remains compliant with QQI's *Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Higher Education to International Learners*. The Office of the Vice-President for Academic Affairs (OVPAA) is responsible for the review of this policy.

11. Version Control

Policy Name	English Language Policy		 Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath Dublin City University
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End.