



UNIVERSITY OF  
**LIMERICK**  
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

**University of Limerick**

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE POLICY**

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the University of Limerick's fair, transparent and consistent requirements and standards for evaluating the English language ability of international learners applying for admission to UL, and to describe UL's policy and procedures for English language support for international applicants in receipt of a conditional offer to study at UL and to international learners once they are registered.

## 1.2 Scope

### 1.2.1 *To whom does the policy apply?*

This policy applies to all staff and students of the University of Limerick.

UL's Linked providers are required to document their own policy on English Language teaching, which must align with this policy.

### 1.2.2 *In what situations does the policy apply?*

This policy applies to all programmes of study leading to academic qualifications awarded by the University of Limerick.

### 1.2.3 *Who is responsible for ensuring that the policy (and any associated procedure) is implemented and monitored?*

The Provost/Deputy President is responsible for the implementation and monitoring of this policy.

Prospective students are responsible for ensuring that their application fulfils all admission requirements, including English language proficiency test certification as relevant.

## 1.3 Definitions

### 1.3.1 *International Learner*

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' and for whom English is an additional language. (Refer to QQI's [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).

## 2 Context

### 2.1 Legal and Regulatory Context

#### 2.1.1 *Quality and Qualifications Ireland*

Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) was established in November 2012 by the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012. The 2012 Act was amended subsequently by the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) Act 2019, and references to the legislation hereafter will be to the 2012 Act as amended. The 2012 Act as amended sets out the functions of QQI. These include the requirements to establish a code or codes of practice for the provision of programmes of education and training to international learners, and to authorise the use of the international education mark by providers that comply with a code of practice.

#### 2.1.2 *International Education Mark*

The [International Education Mark](#) (IEM) is a statutory quality mark and part of a suite of legislative measures designed to protect international learners. The new mark will be awarded to higher education and English language education providers who have demonstrated that they meet national standards to ensure a quality experience for international learners from enrolment through to the completion of their programme of education and training. It is one of a suite of measures designed to protect the interests of learners engaged with the Irish education and training system.

#### 2.1.3 *Code of Practice for the Provision of Programmes of Higher Education to International Learners*

The [Code of Practice](#) for Provision of Programmes of Higher Education to International Learners (the Code) supplements the Policy on Authorisation to use the International Education Mark (IEM) and has been developed in line with the requirement of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 (the 2012 Act).

The Code provides a basis for the development of a comprehensive policy framework for provision of education and training to international learners by providers in Ireland. It also requires Higher Education providers to develop an English language policy, as part of the authorisation process for the IEM.

## 3 Policy Statements

### 3.1 Policy Statement Principles

A range of policies and operational procedures exist to support recruitment, admission and retention of international learners in programmes of education and research in UL. The [School of Modern Languages and Applied Linguistics](#) and the [Language Centre](#) at UL provides a range of pre-sessional and in-sessional programmes directed at the needs of international learners.

The University of Limerick's English language policy seeks to:

- Ensure a fair, transparent and consistent admission policy that supports the successful participation of international learners on their chosen programme
- Admit applicants who have the ability to engage with and benefit from the distinctive UL education experience, in order to create a diverse student body
- Set out the quality assurance arrangements for English Language programme approval and delivery
- Set out how English language support is provided to international learners during their period of study at UL.
- Recognise 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 if they do not meet the required level of English language competency.

### 3.2 Language of Instruction and Assessment

The general language of instruction and assessment at the University of Limerick is English, unless the programme of study or module involves another language.

### 3.3 Assessment of English Language Proficiency

University of Limerick requires international learners to meet certain minimum requirements in English language proficiency in order to ensure successful participation in its programmes. The standard of English required for a programme is set at initial programme accreditation. This standard is reassessed periodically as part of the University's annual programme review or periodic programme review processes.

The University benchmarks its entry requirements and language proficiency standards with those of other Irish higher education institutions on an ongoing basis. Undergraduate entry requirements are evaluated annually and published in a sectorally agreed joint document "*the Entry Requirements for EU students presenting with qualifications (other than the Irish School Leaving Certificate Examination) is to provide a framework for comparisons of European Union (EU) and European Free Trade Association (EFTA) qualifications for entry to undergraduate Degree Programmes in Irish Universities*"

These language requirements are also applied to postgraduate and professional education programmes.

Applicants are notified of the English language proficiency requirements through publication of requirements on the University's website and in conditional offer letters.

The English language proficiency of an applicant is assessed through the provision of verifiable certification as set out from time and time and published on the University's website. Assessments other than those listed may be accepted on a case-by-case basis.

### **3.4 Provision of Support and Development of English for Academic Purposes**

Pre-sessional English classes are available to applicants who do not meet the English language proficiency requirements as set out in 3.3 above.

The English Language Preparation for University Programmes cater specifically for the language needs of applicants who intend to study for an undergraduate, study abroad or postgraduate degree at the University of Limerick who have reached the academic entry requirements for their chosen course but do not meet the English language requirements.

### **3.5 Quality Assurance Arrangements for English Language programmes**

International Foundation Programmes and credit bearing English Language modules are subject to the quality assurance arrangements for programmes of education and training as set out in the University's [Quality Manual](#).

Graduates of International Foundation programmes are awarded with a Certificate at Level 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications with 60 ECTS.

Pre-sessional and in-sessional English Language programmes which are not credit bearing are subject to the quality assurance procedures for programme development, delivery and evaluation of UL Language Centre.

## **4 Related Procedures for English Language Policy**

The procedures supporting this policy are managed by

- Academic Registry – Undergraduate Admissions
  - Central Applications Office procedures
  - AR Working guideline 1.2.2.2 EU and Non-EU Assessments.
- Graduate & Professional Studies Procedures
  - *Applications to Postgraduate and Professional Education Programmes*
  - *Undergraduate Non-EU Applications*
- AVP- Academic Affairs
  - *Procedures for programme accreditation (ref accreditation workflow support documentation)*

## 5 Related Documents

[Academic Programme Review Policy](#)

[Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures](#)

[QQI Code of Practice for the Provision of Programmes of Higher Education to International Learners \(QQI 2023\)](#)

[Policy on Authorisation to Use the International Education Mark \(QQI 2023\)](#)

[Entry requirements criteria for EU/EFTA/UK Applicants \(other than Irish Leaving Certificate\)](#)

## 6 Document Control

<b>Document Version</b>	1.0
<b>Document Owner</b>	Provost / Deputy President
<b>Approved by</b>	Academic Council
<b>Date</b>	6 March 2024
<b>Approved by</b>	Governing Authority
<b>Date</b>	30 April 2024
<b>Effective Date:</b>	30 April 2024
<b>Scheduled Review Date:</b>	30 September 2026