



English Language

1. Introduction

1.1 Policy Statement / Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline Mary Immaculate College’s fair, transparent and consistent requirements and standards for evaluating the English language ability of international learners for whom English is not a first language applying for admission to MIC. It also describes MIC’s policy and procedures for English language support for international learners once they are registered.

As a linked provider of the University of Limerick this policy aligns with the University of Limerick English Language Policy.

This policy also fulfils the requirements for an English Language Policy set out in principle 5.5 of the [QQI Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Higher Education to International Learners](#) (IEM Code).

1.2 Scope

1.2.1 To whom does the policy apply?

This policy applies to prospective students and enrolled students for whom English is not a first language.

This policy also applies to MIC staff who evaluate applications from prospective students whose first language is not English, to staff who provide English language programmes and staff who provide English language support to them.

1.2.2 In what situations does the policy apply?

This policy applies to all programmes of study to which international learners for whom English is not a first language are eligible to apply, which are provided by MIC leading to European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) and/or 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 Vice-President of Academic Affairs is responsible for the implementation and monitoring of this policy.

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

1.3 Related Documents

Code	Document Title	Revision
	2012 Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 Act	
	QQI Policy on Authorisation to Use the International Education Mark	
IEM 01	QQI Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Higher Education to International Learners	01
	Entry requirements criteria for EU/EFTA/UK Applicants (other than Irish Leaving Certificate) - CAO Annual Publication	
	MIC English Language Entry Requirements (MIC website)	
	MIC Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures	
	MIC Academic Programme Development: Standard Operating Procedure	
	University of Limerick Academic Programme Review Policy	
	Erasmus Charter	
	Common European Framework of Reference for Language	

1.4 Definitions

1.4.1 International Learner

Section 2(1) of the 2012 Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 Act as amended defines an international learner 'as a person who is not an Irish citizen but is lawfully in the state primarily to receive education and training'. (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 operational procedures exist to support recruitment, admission and retention of international learners in programmes of education and research in MIC.

MIC'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 MIC education experience, in order to create a diverse student body
- Set out the quality assurance arrangements for the approval and delivery of English Language programmes
- Set out how English language support is provided to international learners during their period of study at MIC.
- 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 Medium of Instruction and Assessment

At MIC, English is generally the medium of instruction and assessment (apart from programmes and modules focusing on a given language).

3.3 English Language Proficiency Requirements

MIC 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 College's periodic programme review processes.

The College 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)"* which provides 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.

3.3.1 Assessment of English Language Proficiency for Full Degree Applicants

Applicants are notified of the English language proficiency requirements through publication of requirements on the College's website, in specific programme information and in conditional offer letters.

The English language proficiency of an applicant is assessed through the provision of verifiable certification as published on the College's website. Applicant's proficiency test results must normally

have been issued within the two-year period prior to the start of their programme. The College may consider English proficiency tests other than those listed as meeting the English language requirements on a case-by-case basis.

Applicants may be required to demonstrate their competence in the English language by interview.

In cases where an international learner is unable to obtain English language proficiency test certification due to extenuating circumstances, e.g., due to conflict in their country, the International Office arranges the provision of English language testing with the Department of English Language and Literature, in consultation with the Vice-President of Academic Affairs and the relevant Dean.

Responsibility for Assessing English Language Proficiency Documentation

The responsibilities for assessing documentation supplied by international learners are as follows:

MIC Office	Applications Assessed
Admissions Office	EU applicants to degree programmes
International Office	Non-EU applicants for undergraduate programmes and taught postgraduate programmes
Research & Graduate School	EU and non-EU applications to postgraduate research programmes

3.3.2 Assessment of English Language Proficiency of Erasmus / Exchange Students

The English language proficiency for Erasmus / Exchange students is assessed by their home institutions which, in signing inter-institutional agreements with MIC, commit to sending students to MIC with a B2 [Common European Framework of Reference for Language](#) level or above.

3.4 Provision of English Language Programmes

In-sessional English Language Programmes

The Department of English Language & Literature at MIC provides two modules (6 ECTS each) that undergraduate (exchange) students can take: *English as a Foreign Language* and *English for Academic Purposes*.

Pre-sessional English Language Programmes

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 Department of English Language & Literature at MIC offers the following three modules as Special Purpose Awards, online or in-person, designed to meet the language needs of non-native speakers of English:

Programme	NFQ Level	ECTS	Entry Requirements
Certificate in English for Academic Purposes Pathway	6	6	CEFR B1 (IELTS 5.0) / CEFR B2 (IELTS 6.0-6.5)
Certificate in English for Academic Purposes	9	6	CEFR B2 (IELTS 6.0-6.5) / CEFR C1 (IELTS 6.5-7.5) / CEFR C2 (IELTS 8.0+)
Certificate in Advanced English for Academic Purposes	9	6	CEFR B2 (IELTS 6.0-6.5) / CEFR C1 (IELTS 6.5-7.5) / CEFR C2 (IELTS 8.0+)

3.5 Provision of Support

Prior to commencement, the MIC International Office outlines the support services that will be available to international learners when their programme commences including the Academic Learning Centre, which provides needs-based support to undergraduate and postgraduate students. The MIC International Office connects postgraduate international learners with the Academic Support Officer assigned to them, who runs workshops throughout the year and is available for one-to-one consultations.

3.6 Quality Assurance Arrangements for English Language Programmes

Credit-bearing English Language modules are subject to the quality assurance arrangements for programmes of education and training as set out in the College's [Quality Manual](#).

4. Document Control

Revision	Document History	Reviewed By ET	Approved By UR
0	Initial Release	ET2025#03	UR2025#02