NCAD English Language Policy

		This policy is effective from	March 2025
Approval body	Academic Council	**Approval date**	14 March 2025
Owner	Head of Academic Affairs	**Next review date**	March 2027

1. Purpose

NCAD admits students to programmes from NFQ level 6 to level 10 and at various stages within these programmes. Teaching at NCAD is primarily through the medium of English; applicants must demonstrate a high level of competence in the English language to be admitted.

The purpose of this English Language Policy is to outline NCAD's requirements and standards for evaluating the English language ability of all those seeking admission to the College and the College's English language supports for international applicants and learners. NCAD's approach to English language supports are appropriate to the scale of the College's population of non-native English-speaking international students; our unique, predominantly studio and seminar-based approaches to teaching and learning; and our disciplines, which are focused on Art and Design.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the NCAD Entry Requirements and other policies and procedures relevant to the admissions process. It also supports the College's compliance with the QQI Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Higher Education to International Learners.

NCAD is a Recognised College of the University College of Dublin (UCD). As a Recognised College, this policy has been adapted from, and aligns with, the UCD English Language Policy.

2. Definitions

2.1. International Learner

An international learner is defined by the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 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 frequently an additional language requirement for admission. This definition, as defined by QQI, includes international applicants and learners on their programme of study.

2.2. International Applicant

An international applicant is defined by NCAD as a person who is applying to be an international learner and is categorised as:

2.2.1. EU Applicants

An EU applicant encompasses EU/EEA/Swiss Confederation/United Kingdom applicants who are entitled to EU fees based on the criteria at https://www.ncad.ie/study-at-ncad/fees/

2.2.2. Non-EU Applicants

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V1	14 March 2025	N/A	N/A

A non-EU applicant is an applicant deemed not eligible for EU fees based on the criteria at https://www.ncad.ie/study-at-ncad/fees/

2.3. Native Speaker

The definition of a native speaker, within the context of this policy, is an applicant for whom English is their first language.

2.4. International Education Mark (IEM)

The International Education Mark (IEM) is defined as a statutory quality mark (TrustEd Ireland) and is part of a suite of legislative measures designed to protect international learners, as defined under the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012. It is awarded to Higher Education and English Language institutions who demonstrate that they meet the national standards to ensure a quality experience for international learners from pre-enrolment through to the completion of their studies.

2.5. Quality and Qualifications Ireland

Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) is the state agency responsible for promoting the quality, integrity and reputation of Ireland's further and higher education system.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all applicants and students of NCAD, including international learners to whom the IEM is applicable.

4. Principles

NCAD's Vision is Changing the world through bold and curious thinking, making and doing. Our five core values are bold and curious thinking, distinction, diversity, respect and relevance. In line with our vision and values, NCAD welcomes applicants from a wide variety of backgrounds.

Education in NCAD is through the medium of English. All applicants are required to demonstrate a high level of competence in the English language.

NCAD's minimum English language requirements apply to all applicants and all levels of study. These may be subject to change and are published at https://www.ncad.ie/study-at-ncad/international/english-language-requirement

5. Objectives

5.1. Support the selection of applicants who demonstrate the capacity to engage with and benefit from the unique NCAD educational experience, thereby promoting a diverse student community.

5.2. Recognise that it is not in the interest of an applicant to be admitted onto a programme of study on which they are unlikely to be successful if they do not meet the required level of English language competency.

5.3. Encourage English language competency by supporting students in achieving the level of English proficiency necessary for academic success.

5.4. Encourage inclusivity by creating an inclusive environment where all members of the College community are supported in their programme of study and feel comfortable communicating in English.

5.5. Provide resources and support services to assist individuals in improving their English throughout their studies at NCAD.

6. English Language Requirements

6.1. All applicants, whether international applicants or otherwise, must demonstrate English competency and meet minimum English language requirements.

6.2. For undergraduate entry, those presenting Irish school leaving examinations must have attained at least a grade H7/O6 in English in the Leaving Certificate. Applicants presenting other school leaving qualifications, attained through English, must meet the specified equivalent grade.

6.3. At graduate level, native speakers who have taken their prior undergraduate or postgraduate programme through English do not need to present further proof of English.

6.4. International applicants who are not native speakers must present proof of English competency through one of the acceptable English language tests [1] listed at https://www.ncad.ie/study-at-ncad/international/english-language-requirement. These requirements apply to undergraduate and postgraduate applicants (graduate taught and graduate research degrees).

6.5. The level of English required to demonstrate English language proficiency may be higher than the College minimum for some programmes. In these cases, the requirement will be detailed in the entry requirements for the programme.

6.6. Acceptable English language tests are reviewed for each academic session and will apply for entry in the relevant year. These may be subject to change and are published at: https://www.ncad.ie/study-at-ncad/international/english-language-requirement

7. English language supports

In-sessional supports are available for students who have met the minimum English language requirement for entry and who require additional English language support during their studies.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

8.1. NCAD Academic Council is responsible for approving admissions policies, procedures and processes that include this English language policy.

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[1] At graduate level, prior undergraduate or postgraduate programmes completed through English may meet the requirements

All policies and policy related documents and forms are subject to amendment. Please refer to the NCAD website for the official, most recent version.

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8.2. NCAD Academic Council is responsible for setting entry requirements for programmes, including English language competencies above the minimum requirements.

8.3. NCAD Academic Registry (Admissions) is responsible for ensuring that this policy is operated fairly and consistently in recruitment and student admissions, in line with the College's strategic aims, sectoral and legislative requirements in relation to the IEM.

8.4. Students are expected to actively engage in available language support services and take responsibility for their own language development.