

# TrustEd Ireland (International Education Mark) Frequently Asked Questions

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## Section 1 General FAQs

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### **1. What is the TrustEd Ireland (international education mark)?**

TrustEd Ireland (international education mark) is a new 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 (HE) and English language education (ELE) providers who have demonstrated that they meet national standards, ensuring a quality experience for international learners from pre-enrolment through to the completion of their programme of education and training.

### **2. What is the purpose of TrustEd Ireland (international education mark)?**

TrustEd Ireland is intended to promote confidence, both nationally and internationally, in the quality of the Irish education system. It will ensure that international learners enrolled on programmes with higher education (HE) and English language education (ELE) providers receive a consistent, high-quality learning experience.

### **3. Is TrustEd Ireland (international education mark) a voluntary scheme?**

TrustEd Ireland is a voluntary scheme. However, providers who wish to recruit non-EU/EEA/Swiss learners on programmes that require immigration permissions/study visas must be authorised by QQI to use the TrustEd Ireland mark following the closure of the Interim List of Eligible Programmes (ILEP).

#### **4. When can providers apply for TrustEd Ireland (international education mark) authorisation?**

The first Confirmation of Application window for HE and ELE providers opened on 2 September 2024 and closed on 27 September. Confirmed applicants will be given access to the application portal by 14 October. The closing date for receipt of applications in Application Window 1 is 28 March 2025. It is anticipated that Application Window 2 will open in late autumn 2025.

#### **5. Is there any advantage to submitting in Application Window 1 instead of Window 2?**

Yes. If a provider's application is not successful in Window 1, they can make a new application in Window 2 and complete assessment through to authorisation, if successful, before the Interim List of Eligible Programmes (ILEP) closes at the end of 2026.

#### **6. Which providers can make an application for the TrustEd Ireland mark and how should they select the appropriate pathway?**

The scheme is open to providers of higher education (HE) programmes that lead to qualifications included within the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), and providers of English language education (ELE) programmes. There are thus two pathways to TrustEd Ireland authorisation: a HE pathway and an ELE pathway. For more details, see QQI's Policy on Authorisation to use the International Education Mark: [policy-on-authorisation-to-use-the-international-education-mark\\_0.pdf \(qqi.ie\)](#)

#### **7. What pathway should a provider select if it offers both English language education (ELE) and higher education (HE) programmes?**

For the purpose of initial TrustEd authorisation, independent/private providers will be required to confirm whether they are primarily an ELE provider or a HE provider, taking into account the following factors: the total learner numbers enrolled on their ELE and HE programmes; the number of international learners enrolled on their ELE and HE programmes; turnover related to each category of education provision; and other relevant factors. Providers focused mainly on English language education provision should apply through the ELE pathway, while those focused on higher education provision should apply through the HE pathway. Contact QQI for further guidance [international.education@qqi.ie](mailto:international.education@qqi.ie).

#### **8. Will a provider that offers both ELE and HE programmes, and who has been authorised to use the TrustEd Ireland mark via the ELE pathway, also need to apply for TrustEd authorisation for its HE provision, and vice versa?**

Where an independent/private provider is authorised to use the TrustEd Ireland mark through the ELE pathway, but also provides some HE programmes to international learners, QQI expects that the provider will subscribe to the HE Code of Practice in relation to those learners. Following initial authorisation through the ELE pathway, QQI will arrange a

supplementary review of compliance with the HE Code on an agreed basis and timeline with the provider.

### **9. Why is there a single TrustEd Ireland brand although there are two pathways (HE and ELE) to TrustEd Ireland authorisation?**

The TrustEd Ireland brand is designed to convey a clear, simple and strong message: all authorised providers meet national standards for quality and are committed to protecting the interests of their international students. One brand ensures clarity for all stakeholders, especially as the TrustEd Ireland may grow to include other sectors in the future.

### **10. Are there any other eligibility requirements for prospective applicant providers?**

Yes, all providers must meet the following requirements:

#### **HE providers must:**

- have established quality assurance (QA) procedures.
- have established access, transfer, and progression (ATP) arrangements.
- have programmes/awards included within the National Framework of Qualifications
- comply with the HE Code criteria

#### **ELE providers must.**

- Have established access, transfer and progression (ATP) arrangements
- comply with the ELE Code criteria
- comply with the QA Guidelines for ELE criteria

Private/independent HE and ELE providers who are authorised to use the TrustEd Ireland mark will be required to participate in the statutory Learner Protection Fund.

### **11. What will be required from higher education (HE) and English language education (ELE) providers in the application process?**

HE and ELE providers applying for TrustEd Ireland authorisation will be required to comply with the respective Code of Practice: the HE Code and the ELE Code. ELE providers will also be required to demonstrate that their quality assurance procedures meet the criteria set out in QQI's Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for English Language Education Providers (QA Guidelines for ELE).

### **12. Do ELE providers need to submit documentation for each ELE programme they offer, or will a sample suffice?**

ELE providers are required to submit documentation for each ELE programme they offer.

### **13. Can a provider submit policy documentation that is not published on their website as part of their application?**

If the document is publicly available, a link to this should be included in the IEMAS. If a document is not published, an extract of the material can be included in the IEMAS or uploaded to Qhub.

#### **14. Can links to external file sharing platforms be used for documents?**

No, providers must submit all documents evidencing compliance through in the IEMAS or in Qhub

#### **15. How do providers submit evidence of compliance with criteria in the relevant Code of Practice?**

Please refer to the relevant guidance handbook for examples of the type of documents which should be used to evidence compliance with each criterion.

#### **16. Which providers are obliged to comply with the new statutory due diligence (capacity and capability) requirements when applying for TrustEd Ireland authorisation?**

QQI is responsible for undertaking due diligence assessments of all private/independent providers that engage with QQI on a statutory basis, unless they are exempted under legislation. This includes ELE providers, private/independent HE providers, and non-exempt linked providers. ELE providers will undergo Due Diligence assessment as part of their application to use the TrustEd Ireland mark. Private/independent HE providers with an existing relationship with QQI will be required to undergo Due Diligence assessment at a later date to be confirmed by QQI.

#### **17. What are the stages of the TrustEd Ireland (international education mark) application process?**

There are several stages in the application process. The process may be summarised as follows:

Step 1: Confirmation of Application

Step 2: Access to Application Portal

Step 3: Submission of Self-assessment IEM Application Statement (IEMAS) (ELE providers also complete due diligence assessment in parallel)

Step 4: Assessment Panel Assessment

Step 5: Engagement with Providers

Step 6: Site Visit (ELE provider applicants only)

Step 7: Assessors' Report

Step 8: Provider Feedback

Step 9: QQI Internal Governance (Approvals and Reviews Committee)

## Step 10: Decision on Authorisation

If a provider withdraws its application, will it receive a refund of the application fee?

If QQI deems a provider to have withdrawn during the screening stage, they will receive a refund of 80% of the application fee. No refund will be made if a provider withdraws its application once the assessment stage begins following the screening stage.

### **18. If a provider withdraws its application, will it receive a refund of the application fee?**

A provider may choose to withdraw from the IEM authorisation process during the screening stage. If a provider withdraws during the screening stage, it will be entitled to an 80% application fee refund, where applicable. The provider may then reapply in the next application window.

### **19. When are providers required to pay their application fee?**

Once a provider confirms their intention to apply, an invoice for the application fee is raised. Evidence of fee payment must be submitted along with the provider's TrustEd Ireland application.

### **20. How do QQI calculate the annual charge for TrustEd Ireland authorised providers?**

The TrustEd Ireland annual charge is banded to reflect the diversity in provider size. The annual charge for each band is calculated to meet the costs incurred by QQI for the management of the TrustEd Ireland scheme as follows:

- promoting the TrustEd Ireland scheme and brand
- maintaining and developing the HE and ELE Codes of Practice and QA Guidelines for ELE
- maintaining the integrity of the TrustEd Ireland scheme and brand
- monitoring of providers, including the mid-cycle self-assessment of authorised ELE providers
- running of the International Education Division

### **21. When is the TrustEd Ireland annual charge due to be paid?**

The first annual charge is due to be paid by a provider on the first anniversary of their TrustEd Ireland authorisation, e.g., if a provider is authorised on 5 November 2025, they will pay their first annual charge on 5 November 2026, and annually on this date thereafter.

### **22. Which QQI divisions are responsible for processing TrustEd Ireland applications?**

The International Education Division manages the assessment of the provider's IEM Application Statement (IEMAS): the Provider Governance and Risk Division manages the

due diligence assessment of ELE providers. Provider Governance and Risk also manage PEL charges.

**23. How can I contact the International Education Division (ELE Code and QA Guidelines assessment) and Provider Governance and Risk Division (Due Diligence assessment and PEL charges)?**

Providers can submit a query via the relevant email address below.

- [international.education@qqi.ie](mailto:international.education@qqi.ie);
- due diligence queries can be submitted to the Provider Governance and Risk Division at [duediligence@qqi.ie](mailto:duediligence@qqi.ie);
- PEL queries can be submitted to the Provider Governance and Risk Division at [learnerprotection@qqi.ie](mailto:learnerprotection@qqi.ie)

**24. Will some providers receive TrustEd Ireland authorisation ahead of others?**

Authorisation outcomes will be finalised and announced for all applicants at the same time once the assessment process for all providers in a given application window is complete.

**25. Will the Interim List of Eligible Programmes (ILEP) continue after providers have been authorised to use the TrustEd Ireland mark?**

The Interim List of Eligible Programmes (ILEP) is an interim measure pending the introduction of the TrustEd Ireland scheme. This list will cease to operate following the completion of Application Window 2 at the end of 2026. If your programme(s) is currently included on the ILEP, you must apply for and be authorised to use the TrustEd Ireland mark to continue to recruit non-EU/EEA/Swiss learners who require study permissions or visas. If you apply for the TrustEd Ireland mark, you will be required to comply with the Department of Justice in monitoring student compliance with immigration law. See section 2.5 and 2.6 of the Policy on Authorisation to use the IEM.

**26. Will providers who are currently authorised to recruit non-EU/EEA/Swiss learners who require study visas/permissions continue to be authorised to do so once the Interim List of Eligible Programmes (ILEP) closes?**

The ILEP is an interim measure pending the introduction of TrustEd Ireland. Once TrustEd Ireland is fully implemented, the ILEP will cease to operate and institutions will be required to hold TrustEd Ireland authorisation in order to recruit international learners requiring visas/study permissions. Transitional arrangements will be put in place to support providers in managing this change. All providers seeking TrustEd Ireland authorisation are expected to cooperate with the Department of Justice in monitoring student compliance with immigration law.

**27. Can providers continue to recruit non-EU/EEA/Swiss learners who require study visas/permissions if they apply for TrustEd Ireland authorisation in Window 2?**



Providers can continue to recruit EU/EEA/Swiss learners who require study visas/permissions if they choose to apply for TrustEd Ireland authorisation in Window 2 in late 2025. The ILEP will close in late 2026 following the second window authorisations.

### **28. TrustEd Ireland or International Education Mark - what should providers call the new scheme?**

The new scheme is called TrustEd Ireland, formerly known as the international education mark. TrustEd Ireland is the brand that will be promoted internationally, and TrustEd Ireland should be used by providers when referring to the scheme.

### **29. Will a providers' IEMAS be published?**

No, the providers' IEMAS will not be published, however, the assessment report and the provider's response will be published.

### **30. Will major managerial changes in the last 6 months before the IEMAS submission be considered in the assessment? Should we provide documentation for these changes?**

The current management structure, including any confirmed upcoming changes, should be provided in an organisational chart and described in the IEMAS. If any changes occur during the application process, please contact us at [international.education@qqi.ie](mailto:international.education@qqi.ie)

### **31. Can providers add infographics to the IEMAS?**

Infographics and links to infographics may be included in the IEMAS e.g. organisational charts.

### **32. What are the implications of applying for the TrustEd Ireland mark in the name of a group versus individual trading entities?**

If a group applies for the TrustEd Ireland mark, only the group name will be authorised to use the mark. Individual trading entities cannot use the mark authorised in the name of a group for marketing or immigration purposes. To allow each entity to use the mark, they must apply separately. This approach is consistent with ILEP guidelines.

## **Section 2 Higher Education Provider FAQs**

1. Can a private/independent provider make an application for TrustEd Ireland authorisation if they do not offer programmes to international learners?
2. What principles and criteria are HE pathway applicants required to comply with?



3. Who will assess compliance with the HE Code?
4. What happens if there is a perceived conflict of interest within the assessment team?
5. How can a provider communicate a perceived/potential conflict of interest with the assessment panel?
6. Who makes the final decision on TrustEd Ireland authorisation and what are the possible outcomes for a HE provider?
7. What is the threshold standard for HE code compliance for a HE provider to achieve TrustEd Ireland authorisation?
8. I am an ELE university campus company. What application pathway is most applicable?
9. What is the application fee for HE providers?
10. What is the annual charge for HE providers?
11. What categories of international learners are in scope for TrustEd Ireland (HE Pathway)?
12. Does the TrustEd Ireland application process include Erasmus + and study abroad learners?
13. Does the TrustEd Ireland application process include online and transnational learners?
14. Does the TrustEd Ireland application process include international learners enrolled on full or part time programmes who are normally resident in Ireland?
15. Are learners from Northern Ireland and Great Britain in scope for TrustEd Ireland?
16. How will ongoing compliance with the HE Code be monitored by QQI?
17. What is the timeframe, from submission of the IEMAS, to when the due diligence process will need to be completed for HEIs?
18. Are all statistics, for HE providers, to be based on 2022-2023?
19. Is it compulsory to use the IEMAS template?
20. When completing the student enrolment data section of the IEMAS, should we remove the countries we are not using to reduce the overall size of the report?
21. Do providers need to include data on learners who are in the country primarily for work?
22. With regard to the IEMAS template (section 3/column 5), do providers need to count links in the section and uploaded files?
23. Should the data year required for Aggregate enrolments of international learners be 2022-23 academic year or should it be the calendar year January-December, 2023?
24. What does QQI require in respect of IEMAS template Section 1.2 (second column) aggregate numbers?
25. On completion of the initial application process, will this need to be repeated on a cycle, i.e. every 2 years, 5 years?
26. How will the monitoring be managed for linked providers who do not report directly to QQI?
27. Will Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) be measured against each other, and will the number of students be considered in the assessment?
28. How does QQI intend to manage diverse interpretations of applications by different assessors?
29. Is there a list of exclusion questions for assessors to ensure consistency and avoid requesting information which is not included in the HE Code of Practice criteria?
30. How will providers understand how assessors are guided to interpret and evaluate the sufficiency of information provided as part of the IEMAS?
31. Should providers publish entry requirements on their website for international students enrolled outside of the CAO guidelines?

32. Are providers required to provide a listing of each individual programme regarding Criteria 5.1.1 (e)?
33. What is the definition of a recruitment agent?
34. What type of evidence would a HE provider submit for the due diligence checks carried out on recruitment agents (HE Code 5.1.2 (f))?
35. For section 5.1.2(e), HEI providers must include a termination clause if an agency does not comply with the principles of the London Statement. If an agreement does not meet this criterion, will there be a 24-month grace period to amend Agent-HEI agreements, similar to section 5.1.2(d)? Additionally, will this apply to partnerships and renewals as well?
36. What level of detail is expected regarding descriptions of practice placements?
37. Could you provide further clarification on what might be included when referring to international student queries and the structures for addressing them featuring in an institution's quality assurance procedures?
38. With regard to providing appropriate assistance to queries from international learners in the HE Code Section 5.1.1 (h)), if AI plays a role in this in terms of contact, should this be included in this section?
39. In relation to the criteria for international foundation year programmes, how should access feeder programmes offered outside the national jurisdiction be captured? (These may be constructed in multiple formats e.g. undertaking a course outside the jurisdiction that might lead to entry; taking a year of learning in a separate jurisdiction, transferring to Ireland for a programme of study with an award, and then resuming their study and exiting with an award in the separate jurisdiction.)
40. Should information provided to the learner on other costs (Section 5.3.2) also cover information provided or communicated by agents?
41. Do we have a definition for compulsory fees?
42. Can bank transfers be provided as evidence of a receipt? Are receipts required for additional charges?
43. Do you have a specific example for 5.5(d) with regard to other related costs?
44. Is there any guidance/template provided by QQI on maintaining a hardship fund (section 5.4.1(g))?
45. Are there particular assumptions about what constitutes "induction" in terms of format?
46. Is it sufficient to provide institution policy with one specific example of where this is delegated to the programme board?
47. Are providers required to have minimum requirements for English language proficiency in their English Language Policy Statement?
48. Should providers include all relevant information in the English Language Policy statement or include links to the information on the institution's website?
49. Can a provider include an English Language Policy Statement as part of their IEMAS that has not yet been approved by the institution's governance committee?
50. Is there a maximum word count for the English Language Policy Statement?
51. If a HE provider is required to have 80% compliance with the HE Code of Practice, is there a threshold for reaching compliance of the remaining 20%?
52. Is the evaluation of each criterion equal to the other or are some criteria more weighted than others?
53. Is the wording in screenshots included in the overall IEMAS wordcount?
54. What happens after a provider has submitted their IEMAS?

### 1. Can a private/independent HE provider make an application for TrustEd Ireland if they do not offer programmes to international learners?

The TrustEd Ireland quality assurance scheme is specific to HE providers offering programmes to international learners.

### 2. What principles and criteria are HE pathway applicants required to comply with?

- Conduct ethical marketing and recruitment
- Provide accurate information to international learners about the HE provider and its programmes, and the manner of its engagement with recruitment agents
- Implement fair, transparent, and consistent admission policies that encompass a provider's approach to qualifications' recognition and its obligations under the Lisbon Recognition Convention
- Publish an English language policy statement, including requirements relating to international foundation year programmes
- Communicate with international learners on fees, refunds, and subsistence in a transparent, accurate and accessible manner
- Maintain supports and services for international learners
- Ensure that quality assurance arrangements and the HE Code are applied in an appropriate fashion to international learners outside the state who are enrolled on programmes leading to awards included within the NFAQ, including learners enrolled on transnational and online programmes.

### 3. Who will assess compliance with the HE Code?

QQI will appoint a panel of three assessors to assess each provider's IEM application statement comprising:

**Chairperson:** A current or former holder of a senior leadership role within a higher education institution. They will have led similar national or international regulatory evaluations.

**Subject matter expert:** will have an evidenced track record of knowledge and experience working in international education, particularly in roles with responsibility for the welfare of international learners.

**Report writer:** will have good general knowledge of the Irish Higher Education context, including quality assurance requirements, and international education as it pertains to the general and academic needs of learners on academic programmes.

The panel will review the TrustEd Ireland application and make a recommendation to QQI's Approvals and Reviews Committee (ARC) on compliance and any conditions required.

### 4. What happens if there is a perceived conflict of interest within the assessment team?

The Assessment Panel selected for each assessment will be asked to declare any potential conflict of interest prior to selection. The HE provider will also be asked to declare any potential conflicts of interest that members of the Assessment Panel may have with the provider. Where a potential conflict arises during the process, the HE provider must declare this to the QQI executive within five working days. QQI may make adjustments to the Assessment Panel membership in such cases. QQI will have final approval over the composition of each Assessment Panel. For further information please see the HE Pathway Guidance Handbook.

### **5. How can a provider communicate a perceived/potential conflict of interest with the assessment panel?**

All communications should be made to QQI directly to [international.education@qqi.ie](mailto:international.education@qqi.ie)

### **6. Who makes the final decision on TrustEd Ireland authorisation and what are the possible outcomes for a HE provider?**

The Assessment Panel's final report, setting out its findings and recommendations, together with the HE provider's response to this report, will be submitted to QQI's Approvals and Reviews Committee (ARC) for a final decision. There are three possible outcomes:

- Authorised to use the TrustEd Ireland mark
- Authorised to use the TrustEd Ireland mark with conditions
- Not authorised to use the TrustEd Ireland mark.

The ARC reserves the right to impose conditions that have not been identified by the Assessment Panel, in addition to those identified by the Assessment Panel if that is the case.

### **7. What is the threshold standard for HE code compliance for a HE provider to achieve TrustEd Ireland authorisation?**

For the purpose of satisfying QQI that a HE provider complies with the HE Code and may be authorised to use the TrustEd Ireland mark, the HE provider:

- must be fully compliant with at least 80% of the HE Code criteria applicable to that provider
- ensure that an 80% compliance rate is demonstrated under each of the applicable principles.
- It is of note that not all 6 principles and the associated 63 criteria will apply to all providers.

### **8. I am an ELE university campus company. What application pathway is most applicable?**

This will depend on the nature of the corporate relationship between the campus company and the parent university, and the quality assurance arrangements that are in place regarding the campus company's English language education provision. If the company acts independently of the university's corporate governance and academic quality assurance

arrangements, then it should apply for TrustEd Ireland authorisation through the ELE pathway. Contact QQI for further guidance [international.education@qqi.ie](mailto:international.education@qqi.ie).

### **9. What is the application fee for HE providers?**

Please refer to the Fees and Charges document in the resources section of [www.qqi.ie](http://www.qqi.ie)

### **10. What is the annual charge for HE providers?**

Please refer to the Fees and Charges document in the resources section of [www.qqi.ie](http://www.qqi.ie)

### **11. What categories of international learners are in scope for TrustEd Ireland (HE Pathway)?**

For the purpose of TrustEd Ireland (HE pathway), there are three distinct categories of learner:

- EU/EEA/Swiss learners in the state undertaking programmes that lead to major or non-major awards that are included within the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ);
- Non-EU/EEA/Swiss learners in the state undertaking programmes leading to major or non-major awards that are included within the NFQ;
- Learners outside the state enrolled on programmes that lead to major or non-major awards included within the NFQ, whether offered in transnational education settings and/or through remote, fully online modes of learning.

In submitting their IEM Application Statement, HE providers should endeavour to provide accurate data on the learner numbers in these categories. Where a provider considers that it is unable to provide any of the requested data e.g., in relation to precise information on a learner's nationality, or a precise determination on whether an international learner is in the state primarily to receive education and training or is here for another purpose (e.g., on a work visa), this should be noted in its IEMAS. In such circumstances, the provider should provide as much accurate data on the above categories that it possesses, and, if possible, an estimate of the number of enrolled international learners whose precise categorisation is, in the provider's view, indeterminate.

### **12. Are Erasmus+ and study abroad programme learners included in TrustEd Ireland?**

The definition of an international learner, as set out in the HE Code, does not include learners on any form of study abroad, visiting student or exchange programme. Only learners that are enrolled on programmes that lead to awards that are included within the NFQ are in scope for TrustEd Ireland.

### **13. Does the TrustEd Ireland application process include online and transnational learners?**

HE and ELE providers authorised to use the TrustEd Ireland mark will be expected to apply their respective code of practice to the relevant categories of international learners and programme categories defined in section 3.4 of the Policy on Authorisation. For some HE providers, this may include learners outside the state who are enrolled on programmes that lead to major and non-major awards included within the NFQ, whether these programmes are offered in transnational education settings and/or through remote, fully online modes of learning.

**14. Does the TrustEd Ireland application process include international learners enrolled on full or part time programmes who are normally resident in Ireland?**

Yes, all international learners that are enrolled on programmes that lead to awards that are included within the NFQ are in scope for TrustEd Ireland.

**15. Are learners from Northern Ireland and Great Britain in scope for TrustEd Ireland?**

No, learners from Northern Ireland and Great Britain are not included in the scope of TrustEd Ireland. According to the definition used by TrustEd Ireland, an international learner does not include citizens of Great Britain and Northern Ireland who are enrolled in programmes leading to major or non-major awards within the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). This exclusion is in line with the Common Travel Area agreement between the UK and Ireland, which allows for the free movement of people between the two countries. As a result, these learners are not classified as international learners for the purposes of TrustEd Ireland.

**16. How will ongoing compliance with the HE Code be monitored by QQI?**

HE providers authorised to use the TrustEd Ireland mark will be monitored through the regular cycle of QA engagements with QQI, including, as appropriate, cyclical institutional reviews, annual quality reports (AQRs), and quality dialogue meetings (QDMs).

Linked providers of designated awarding bodies (DABs) who do not engage directly with QQI on statutory QA processes will engage directly with QQI on the TrustEd Ireland authorisation process. In this context, QQI will undertake the monitoring of the linked providers' compliance with the HE Code. QQI will establish a policy and process for IEM monitoring of linked providers ahead of the initial TrustEd authorisations.

**17. What is the timeframe from submission of the IEMAS to when the due diligence process will need to be completed for private/independent HEIs?**

Following authorisation, there will be a due diligence assessment of private/independent HE providers. The timeframe of this assessment is yet to be confirmed and may be triggered by, for example, an application to QQI for validation of a new programme. More information on due diligence requirements can be obtained from the Provider, Governance and Risk (PGR) division of QQI: [duediligence@qqi.ie](mailto:duediligence@qqi.ie).



**18. Are international learner numbers to be based on the 2022-2023 academic year?**

This will depend on which application window the provider chooses. The numbers should be based on the previous academic year. For example, for an application submitted in 2024, the numbers of international learners should be from the 2022-2023 academic year.

**19. Is it compulsory to use the IEMAS template?**

Use of the IEMAS template is not prescriptive but QQI would expect to see a similar format and coverage in the application. For further information, please see the HE Provider Handbook Section B3.

**20. When completing the student enrolment data section of the IEMAS, should we remove the countries we are not using to reduce the overall size of the report?**

Please use the IEMAS template published on the TrustEd Ireland resources section of the QQI website. Providers can submit the countries manually into this document and should only include the countries of their enrolled learners.

**21. Do providers need to include data on learners who are in the country primarily for work?**

QQI will not be collecting data on learners who are in the country primarily for work and who are studying part-time.

**22. With regard to the IEMAS template (section 3/column 5), do providers need to count links in the section and uploaded files?**

Yes, if you are including links to documents you should count them in the relevant IEMAS table. If you are uploading a supporting document to QHub you should clearly reference this in the relevant section of the IEMAS, using clear labelling conventions, and count them in the relevant IEMAS table.

**23. Should the data year required for Aggregate enrolments of international learners be 2022-23 academic year or should it be the calendar year January-December, 2023?**

Yes, HE providers are requested to submit data for 2022-23 for Application Window 1.

**24. What does QQI require in respect of IEMAS template Section 1.2 (second column) aggregate numbers?**

The provider should submit the percentage of overall learner numbers.



**25. On completion of the initial application process, will this need to be repeated on a cycle, i.e. every 2 years, 5 years?**

Following the successful completion of the initial TrustEd Ireland process, provider updates in relation to HE Code compliance will then be included in the QQI Annual Quality Reports and will form part of the CINTE review. If the HE Code of Practice is updated, a focused compliance assessment may be conducted.

**26. How will the monitoring be managed for linked providers who do not report directly to QQI?**

This will form part of a new monitoring policy that QQI are currently developing, which will be established by the time the first authorisations for the TrustEd Ireland scheme are announced.

**27. Will Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) be measured against each other, and will the number of students be considered in the assessment?**

The diversity among HEIs is recognised and institutions will not be assessed against each other but rather in terms of their compliance with the criteria in relation to their own context, including international learner numbers. The assessment will focus on the appropriateness of each institution's response to the criteria. It is essential that each institution demonstrates a basic level of quality and adherence to the criteria.

**28. How does QQI intend to manage diverse interpretations of applications by different assessors?**

Training for assessors will be provided and QQI will carry out an auditing exercise on assessment reports to ensure a consistent approach, which will contextualise each institution's specific setting and how they are operating within each Code of Practice principle. QQI is committed to ensuring fairness to applicants in this process.

**29. Is there a list of exclusion questions for assessors to ensure consistency and avoid requesting information which is not included in the HE Code of Practice criteria?**

QQI will train assessors on what is in scope. The assessors will not cover QA processes that are not relevant to compliance with the HE Code criteria and which are evaluated/monitored in a different QA process. This process will cover the HE Code of Practice only.

**30. How will providers understand how assessors are guided to interpret and evaluate the sufficiency of information provided as part of the IEMAS?**

The assessment panel will be composed of carefully selected and trained assessors who possess the necessary skills, expertise and experience to perform their tasks competently. Higher Education (HE) providers will have the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed composition of the panel to ensure there are no conflicts of interest or perceived

conflicts of interest. For further details, please refer to the *Handbook for Providers (HE Pathway)* and QQI's *Roles, Responsibilities, and Code of Conduct for Reviewers and Evaluators*.

### **31. Should providers publish entry requirements on their website for international students enrolled outside of the CAO guidelines?**

Yes, publishing entry requirements for international learners ensures transparency for students. It is important to clearly communicate these requirements to all categories of students.

### **32. Are providers required to provide a listing of each individual programme regarding Criteria 5.1.1 (e)?**

Please see section 11 of the Policy on Authorisation to use the IEM and 4.3 of the HE Code of Practice. Under section 79 of the 2012 Act as amended, QQI maintains a database, the Irish Register of Qualifications (IRQ), to provide authoritative information on the awards included within the NFQ, and on the programmes of education and training that lead to awards included within the NFQ. This database will indicate whether a provider of a programme is authorised to use the IEM. It will also include information on ELE programmes aligned to the CEFR, including programmes leading to proficiency examinations, where the providers of these programmes have been authorised to use the IEM. HE Providers should ensure that all the programmes they offer leading to awards included within the NFQ are uploaded onto this database.

With regards to HE Code of Practice Criteria 5.1.1 (e), providers are required to demonstrate that they are compliant with information for learner requirements, as set out in Section 67 of the 2012 Act as amended. Providers should submit evidence of their compliance and could, for instance, provide specific examples. However, they are not required to submit all programmes to demonstrate compliance for this specific criterion.

### **33. What is the definition of a recruitment agent?**

Please see Appendix 4 of the HE Code of Practice: A recruitment agent, recruitment partner or recruitment consultant is an individual or organisation commissioned by a higher education provider to advise prospective international students on its programmes and assist them with the application process.

### **34. What type of evidence would a HE provider submit for the due diligence checks carried out on recruitment agents (HE Code 5.1.2 (f))?**

Providers need to outline their due diligence process, including the committee structure responsible for approving agents. They should provide relevant documentation, such as sample anonymised due diligence process documentation and agreements, to demonstrate compliance. Other forms of evidence are also welcome. Documents can be redacted if necessary.

- 35. For section 5.1.2(e), HEI providers must include a termination clause if an agency does not comply with the principles of the London Statement. If an agreement does not meet this criterion, will there be a 24-month grace period to amend Agent-HEI agreements, similar to section 5.1.2(d)? Additionally, will this apply to partnerships and renewals as well?**

This criterion can be met within the two-year compliance period. This timeframe also applies to partnerships and renewals.

- 36. What level of detail is expected regarding descriptions of practice placements?**

The assessors will review the submitted evidence to ensure that learners receive comprehensive information before accepting a place on the programme. This includes clear details on the placement requirements and how they can be met. It is essential that learners understand what to expect when arranging and participating in placements.

- 37. Could you provide further clarification on what might be included when referring to international student queries and the structures for addressing them featuring in an institution's quality assurance procedures?**

The HE Code of Practice requires providers to have dedicated support services, clear communication channels, regular feedback mechanisms, and trained staff to address international student queries. These structures should be integrated into the institution's quality assurance processes to ensure effective support and continuous improvement.

- 38. With regard to providing appropriate assistance to queries from international learners in the HE Code Section 5.1.1 (h)), if AI plays a role in this in terms of contact, should this be included in this section?**

Yes, any service used in terms of the dissemination of information when answering queries from students should be identified in the IEMAS and should comply with the HE Code of Practice.

- 39. In relation to the criteria for international foundation year programmes, how should access feeder programmes offered outside the national jurisdiction be captured? (These may be constructed in multiple formats e.g. undertaking a course outside the jurisdiction that might lead to entry; taking a year of learning in a separate jurisdiction, transferring to Ireland for a programme of study with an award, and then resuming their study and exiting with an award in the separate jurisdiction.)**

These arrangements should be addressed in the Admissions and Qualifications Recognition section, as they constitute acceptable entry requirements for prospective international students seeking admission to certain programmes. They fall under section 5.2(a), which covers entry requirements that support successful participation. These programmes are recognised for admission purposes, whether or not they lead to a formal award.

Additionally, if there is an English language component in any of these programmes that prepares the student for study at the institution, this should be noted in the English language policy statement.

**40. Should information provided to the learner on other costs (Section 5.3.2) also cover information provided or communicated by agents?**

The approach to informing potential learners of costs should be evidenced regardless of the source. The assessors will want to know that learners have a clear understanding of all costs associated with studying at the institution.

**41. Do we have a definition for compulsory fees?**

There should be transparency for students on all compulsory costs that are going to be incurred. Although the HE Code of Practice does not define this term, it refers to any fees that an institution requires international students to pay during their time at the institution.

**42. Can bank transfers be provided as evidence of a receipt? Are receipts required for additional charges?**

There should be transparency to learners regarding all payment transactions. If receipts are only issued upon request, this policy should be clear to students.

**43. Do you have a specific example for 5.5(d) with regard to other related costs?**

Related costs can vary across institutions and programmes. There should be transparency for students on costs that they are going to encounter from the institution.

**44. Is there any guidance/template provided by QQI on maintaining a hardship fund (section 5.4.1(g))?**

There is no specific guidance/template regarding this criterion. The provider is required to demonstrate that the hardship fund is sufficient for the provider's context.

**45. Are there particular assumptions about what constitutes "induction" in terms of format?**

This will vary for each institution. The institution must consider if the induction/orientation they offer meets learner needs, that learners are made aware of everything they need to know, and how the induction is evaluated and updated, as needed.

**46. Is it sufficient to provide institution policy with one specific example of where this is delegated to the programme board?**

QQI considers this sufficient. However, the assessment panel may request additional examples if they deem it necessary.

**47. Are providers required to have minimum requirements for English language proficiency in their English Language Policy Statement?**

Please see section 5.5(a) of the HE Code of Practice: *HE providers shall have an English language policy statement for international learners that shall document the policy approach and process to the assessment of English language proficiency entry requirements. These requirements are set by the institution and inclusion of this information in the English Language Policy Statement is required to inform QQI of how providers address proficiency requirements.*

**48. Should providers include all relevant information in the English Language Policy statement or include links to the information on the institution's website?**

Providers should include all relevant information coherently in the English Language Policy Statement and not through a variety of links to the institution's website. Links may be included to support the content of the policy statement.

**49. Can a provider include an English Language Policy Statement as part of their IEMAS that has not yet been approved by the institution's governance committee?**

Providers are permitted to submit this as part of their IEMAS, however, the provider should note when the policy is due to be approved by the governance committee.

**50. Is there a maximum word count for the English Language Policy Statement?**

There is no maximum word count for this policy. Consideration should be given to minimum requirements, supports, partnership arrangements and corporate governance. The English Language Policy Statement should be transparent, should reflect an institutional approach to English language learners and should be specific to the minimum requirements in the HE Code of Practice. Please see section 5.5 of the HE Code of Practice.

**51. If a HE provider is required to have 80% compliance with the HE Code of Practice, is there a threshold for reaching compliance of the remaining 20%?**

In cases where the HE provider is either partially compliant or non-compliant with certain criteria, the HE provider should provide an established time-bound plan to achieve full compliance. This plan should be sufficient, realistic and/or timely to meet conditions for authorisation to use the TrustEd Ireland mark. Please see section B2.4 of the HE Handbook for further information on demonstrating compliance.

**52. Is the evaluation of each criterion equal to the other or are some criteria more weighted than others?**

The criteria are not weighted, and each criterion is equal.

### **53. Is the wording in screenshots included in the overall IEMAS wordcount?**

Text contained within screenshots is not to be included in the overall word count.

### **54. What happens after a provider has submitted their IEMAS?**

Please see section A2 of the TrustEd Ireland Handbook for HE Providers. The first stage is a screening for completeness of the IEM Application Statement (IEMAS), which will be carried out by the QQI executive. The second stage is a desk-based assessment of the provider's IEMAS, which will be undertaken by the Assessment Panel.

## **Section 3 English Language Education Provider FAQs**

1. What principles and criteria are ELE pathway applicants required to comply with?
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9. What is the application fee for ELE providers?
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11. What is the annual charge for ELE providers?
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15. Is there a review process for ELE pathway providers?
16. Where can I find an editable version of the IEMAS template?
17. Is there a sample of a completed IEMAS template for providers?
18. What is meant by Access, Transfer and Progression (ATP)?
19. What are the minimum requirements for ELE teachers?
20. Will the holder of a RELSA certificate be required to complete additional training?
21. Are secondary school teachers who are accredited by the teaching council to teach in the VEC (ETB) sector only eligible to teach young learners and teens for summer courses?



22. In Appendix 4 of the ELE Code of Practice, what would be acceptable as appropriate experience / qualifications for teachers who do not have a primary degree at Level 7 on the NFQ?
23. If a teacher carries out additional training in a school, is that training transferable to another TrustED Ireland authorised school and will there be a form of certification for this?
24. Will there be a list of accepted qualifications for ELE teachers?
25. How detailed should the ELT experience, including the current role, be listed on the staff list?
26. Do substitute teachers need to have the same qualifications specified in the guidelines?
27. Do QQI require official translations of teacher qualifications?
28. Can the academic manager who has a teacher development role be an external person employed on an ad hoc basis?
29. Is a senior teacher considered an academic manager?
30. What is the minimum requirement for academic managers?
31. What qualification is an academic manager required to hold if they are providing CPD?
32. Is an academic manager who is working at a centre with more than 10 classrooms permitted to teach?
33. Should each centre have an academic manager with a teacher development role?
34. Is a Master's in English accepted as a Level 9 on NFQ for a teacher development role?
35. What NFQ level is the DELTA qualification?
36. Are teachers and staff required to complete training on copyright compliance?
37. What is the academic manager to learner ratio?
38. Is the 160:1 ratio for total number of students or are the 160 at any given time?
39. Can the Centre Manager double up as a second academic manager when student numbers are over 160?
40. Regarding team members from different departments observing each other's work, is there a specific perspective they should adopt?
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42. What is the minimum number of formal observations and developmental ones that need to take place yearly?
43. Is there a per student space requirement for classrooms?
44. Is it correct that the ILEP now allows 16 in a class?
45. What is an acceptable timeframe for performance reviews?
46. What is a risk register and how should this be presented in a providers' risk assessment policy?
47. Do providers need to carry out a risk assessment for social programmes and events?
48. Are providers required to have a risk assessment report for the premises?
49. Can providers use internal end of course assessment exams instead of external exams if they meet student needs, for example, for visa renewal?
50. Do exit exams need to be linked to the syllabus?
51. Are providers required to have a written policy in place for assessment?
52. What is the difference between the curriculum and syllabus?
53. Is there a guideline for the ratio of student welfare officers to number of students?



54. Is a student welfare officer required to hold a psychology or counselling qualification?
55. How often should providers inspect homestay accommodation?
56. What happens when a provider does not have a sales and marketing team?
57. Is there a recommendation for the number of CPD observations in any given year?
58. Are providers required to undergo additional needs training?
59. If full compliance is required but not met, will the provider be given a reasonable opportunity to correct this?
60. How should the academic governance committee be structured?
61. What happens if the number of students is completely different from 2023 to 2024 and moving forward?

## **1. What principles and criteria are ELE pathway applicants required to comply with?**

ELE providers are required to comply with the principles and criteria set out in the ELE Code:

- requirements for premises
- operational, risk and human resources management
- programme design
- supports and services for international learners
- accurate information provision to international learners
- ethical marketing and recruitment
- enrolment, fees, refunds, and subsistence.

ELE providers are also required to demonstrate the suitability of their QA procedures by having regard to and meeting the criteria set out in the QA Guidelines for ELE:

- organisational structures
- management and governance of quality assurance
- academic management structures
- programme design
- supports and services for international learners
- staff supports and development

## **2. Who carries out the assessment of an ELE provider's application?**

QQI has appointed a specialist ELE consultancy, through a public procurement process on e-tenders, to carry out the desk-based assessments and site visit verifications of ELE providers who apply for authorisation to use the TrustEd Ireland mark. An assessment panel of two Assessors from the specialist ELE consultancy assessment team will be established to assess each ELE provider's International Education Mark Application Statement (IEMAS) and to carry out the site visit verification. In each case, the ELE provider will have the opportunity to comment on the proposed composition of the Assessment Panel to ensure there are no potential conflicts of interest. QQI will have final approval over the composition of each assessment panel

### **3. Will ELE providers receive a site visit inspection as part of the TrustEd Ireland (international education mark) application process?**

Yes, a site visit will be conducted to verify provider compliance with the ELE Code and meeting the QA Guidelines for ELE criteria. Please see the Guidance Handbook for ELE Providers for details of the site visit inspection.

### **4. Who will carry out the site visit inspection?**

Each provider will be assigned an Assessment Panel composed of a Lead Assessor and Co-Assessor to carry out the site visit. The Lead Assessor will be responsible for completing the final report, with contributions from the Co-Assessor.

### **5. Does the site visit include the providers' other centres in the state as well as the main centre?**

The first site visit will take place of the providers' main centre. A site visit of an additional centre will take place in the review stage of the process, which takes place every three years.

### **6. What happens if there is a perceived/potential conflict of interest within the Assessment Panel?**

The Assessment Panel selected for each assessment will be asked to declare any perceived/potential conflict of interest prior to selection. The ELE provider will also be asked to declare any potential conflicts of interest that members of the Assessment Panel may have with the provider. Where a potential conflict arises during the process, the ELE provider must declare this to the QQI executive within five working days. QQI may make adjustments to the Assessment Panel membership in such cases. QQI will have final approval over the composition of each Assessment Panel. Please see section A4.3 of the Guidance Handbook for ELE Providers for further details.

### **7. How can a provider communicate a perceived/potential conflict of interest with the Assessment Panel?**

All communications should be made to QQI directly at [international.education@qqi.ie](mailto:international.education@qqi.ie)

### **8. How long will it take to assess TrustEd Ireland applications?**

The assessment process is expected to take approximately 30 weeks, provided there are no delays.

### **9. Do ACELS recognised providers need to make an application for TrustEd Ireland authorisation?**

There will be no automatic transition from the existing ACELS scheme to the TrustEd Ireland scheme, although there will be a transition period during which ELE providers with ACELS

accreditation will have the opportunity to complete their TrustEd Ireland application and assessment process before the ACELS scheme is discontinued. Providers who are recognised by ACELS and interested in applying for TrustEd Ireland authorisation will be required to undergo the same application and assessment process as other ELE providers. The existing non-statutory ACELS scheme, which is currently overseen by QQI on an administrative basis, will be discontinued in due course once ELE providers with ACELS accreditation, and who wish to apply for TrustEd Ireland authorisation, have been afforded a reasonable opportunity to do so. ACELS providers who do not wish to apply for TrustEd Ireland authorisation will no longer have ACELS accreditation once the ACELS scheme is discontinued.

#### **10. What is the application fee for ELE providers?**

Please refer to the Fees and Charges document in the resources section of [www.qqi.ie](http://www.qqi.ie)

#### **11. Does the application fee for ELE providers include the due diligence assessment fee?**

Yes, the application fee for ELE providers includes the due diligence assessment fee, the assessment of compliance with the ELE Code and QA Guidelines for ELE criteria fee, and the site visit inspection fee. Please refer to the Fees and Charges document in the resources section of [www.qqi.ie](http://www.qqi.ie)

#### **12. What is the annual charge for ELE providers?**

Please refer to the Fees and Charges document in the resources section of [www.qqi.ie](http://www.qqi.ie)

#### **13. What are learner weeks and how do learner week numbers determine the application and annual charges?**

One learner week is defined as one learner enrolled on an ELE programme with an ELE provider of a minimum of 15 60-minute taught hours in one week. To calculate this, multiply the number of learners by the number of weeks of their programme of study. Please see examples of enrolment types in Appendix 3 of the Guidance Handbook for ELE Providers.

#### **14. Are ELE providers eligible to make an application for TrustEd Ireland authorisation if they offer short programmes to adult and teenaged learners from the EU?**

Yes, ELE providers offering ELE programmes to all international learners, including learners from the EU, are eligible to make an application for the TrustEd Ireland mark.

#### **15. How does the TrustEd Ireland scheme differ from other ELE accreditation schemes?**

The TrustEd Ireland scheme is significantly different from other accreditation schemes for ELE providers internationally: TrustEd Ireland authorisation identifies ELE and HE providers who demonstrate that they meet national standards to ensure a quality educational experience for international learners from pre-enrolment through to the completion of their programme. It will mark Ireland out as a destination of choice for international learners. It is a statutory scheme embedded in legislation. Please see the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012, as amended in 2019: [Revised Acts \(lawreform.ie\)](http://lawreform.ie)

- The TrustEd Ireland scheme is supported by the Irish Government. It is an important part of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science strategy Global Vision 2030, the Department of Justice immigration strategy and the forthcoming QQI strategy; it will have relevance for the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment as Education in Ireland will promote the TrustEd Ireland scheme, brand and authorised TrustEd Ireland HE and ELE providers; and the Department of Foreign Affairs will be involved in the promotion of TrustEd Ireland through its consular work.
- The TrustEd Ireland brand will be the same for HE and ELE providers, thus publicly strengthening the promotion of tertiary education providers in Ireland.
- TrustEd Ireland will attest to the quality of HE and ELE programmes and associated qualifications. Programmes and awards of TrustEd Ireland authorised ELE and HE providers will go on the Irish Register of Qualifications, a significant seal of approval of ELE programmes, thus supporting the international recognition of HE and ELE providers and awards in the international market.
- The assessment of a provider's capacity and capability to offer programmes of education due diligence evaluation is unique to the TrustEd Ireland scheme and does not exist in other international ELE accreditation schemes
- The assessment of a provider's compliance against the ELE Code of Practice and QA Guidelines is substantially more robust than international accreditation schemes.
- Alignment with the CEFR on a statutory basis is a substantial change in QQI policy and strongly positions the CEFR framework in the ELE sector.

## **16. Is there a review process for ELE pathway providers?**

ELE providers authorised to use the IEM will be subject to an assessment at least once every three years. In addition, ELE providers will be required to produce a self-monitoring report mid-cycle every 18 months.

## **17. Where can I find an editable version of the IEMAS template?**

The IEMAS template for both HE and ELE pathways can be found on the Resources section of the TrustEd Ireland section of the QQI website.

## **18. Is there a sample of a completed IEMAS template for providers?**

No, there is not a sample of the IEMAS template. The information contained within the relevant code of practice, statutory quality assurance guidelines for ELE and policy on

authorisation should be used to verify compliance. The ELE Handbook for Providers will also help you prepare your application.

### **19. What is meant by Access, Transfer and Progression (ATP)?**

Access, transfer and progression (ATP) relates to the institutional approach to helping learners access ELE programmes, transfer to other ELE programmes, or other programmes, and progress to other programmes, such as HE programmes.

Please see section 4.2 of the Code of Practice for ELE: *ELE provider must have established procedures for access, transfer, and progression under section 56 of the 2012 Act as amended. These procedures should be cognisant of the interests and needs of international learners, and reference, in an appropriate manner, the location in which information is provided by the ELE provider on the pathways for international learners to further study, employment, and residency (where applicable).*

Please also see examples of ATP in the context of ELE in section 4.2 of the ELE Code.

### **20. What are the minimum requirements for ELE teachers?**

Please see Appendix 4 of the ELE Code of Practice for full information. As well as a major award at Level 7 on the NFQ or equivalent, a teacher at a year-round ELE provider must also hold an award in English Language Teaching at a minimum of Level 6 on the NFQ or equivalent, consisting of a minimum of: 120 contact training hours; 6 (60-minute) hours of observed and assessed teaching practice with ELE students at 2-3 distinct CEFR levels; 4 (60-minute) hours of observation of experienced teachers at distinct levels, a minimum of 50% of which must be live lessons with ELE learners. Please see Appendix 4 of the ELE Code for further details in relation to teacher qualifications.

### **21. Will the holder of a RELSA certificate be required to complete additional training?**

In the case where teachers already employed by the ELE provider hold an ELT qualification that does not meet the requirements in section 1.1.2 (a) or (b) of Appendix 4 of the ELE Code of Practice, ELE providers must verify that similar training, as outlined in section 1.1.2 (b) of Appendix 4 of the ELE Code of Practice, has been put in place for the teacher. This training must be fully documented for each teacher.

### **22. Are secondary school teachers who are accredited by the teaching council to teach in the VEC (ETB) sector only eligible to teach young learners and teens for summer courses?**

Teachers employed in a junior summer centre are required to have completed one of the programmes listed in section 1.1.2 (a) – (d) of Appendix 4 of the ELE Code of Practice, as well as training in teaching ELE to young learners/teens. If teachers have not already completed a teacher training programme for teachers of young learners/teens, ELE providers must compensate for this by ensuring that induction procedures include upskilling sessions, for example, relevant approaches, materials, techniques and skills to help prepare

teachers to work with young learners and teens. Inductions must be fully documented and recorded for each teacher. Please see Appendix 4 of the ELE Code for more details.

**23. In Appendix 4 of the ELE Code of Practice, what would be acceptable as appropriate experience / qualifications for teachers who do not have a primary degree at Level 7 on the NFQ?**

This depends on the experience of the teacher and the context; it is the responsibility of the language centre to verify the teacher's suitability and experience. For example, if a teacher has experience and training working in an English language centre in another country teaching young learners, and begins to teach in Ireland, working with adults, then further training will be needed in the case of that teacher. Please see Appendix 4 of the ELE Code for further details in relation to requirements for ELE teachers.

**24. If a teacher carries out additional training in a school, is that training transferable to another TrustED Ireland authorised school and will there be a form of certification for this?**

Please see Appendix Four of the ELE Code of Practice for further information. This training will be required to be documented and verified by the provider, whether through a declaration or some form of documented certificate and can be accepted by other ELE providers.

**25. Will there be a list of accepted qualifications for ELE teachers?**

No, there is no list of accepted qualifications. Providers are required to ensure that teachers' qualifications meet the criteria set out in Appendix Four of the ELE Code of Practice. prior to their recruitment.

**26. How detailed should the ELT experience, including the current role, be listed on the staff list?**

Experience should include each role, institution and length of service. For further details please see Appendix 2 of the TrustEd Ireland Handbook for ELE providers

**27. Do substitute teachers need to have the same qualifications specified in the guidelines?**

Yes, substitute teachers are required to meet the minimum requirements for teachers.

**28. Do QQI require official translations of teacher qualifications?**

A provider is required to verify that teachers are suitably qualified. Therefore, an official translation of their parchment and transcript is essential to verify qualifications.

**29. Can the academic manager who has a teacher development role be an external person employed on an ad hoc basis?**

No, an academic manager with a teacher development role must be employed on a continuous basis by the ELE provider and must be based at the centre.

**30. Is a senior teacher considered an academic manager?**

Please see section 2.1 of Appendix 4 of the ELE Code of Practice for details. An academic manager is defined as a senior member of staff who is responsible for academic management at an ELE provider. This may mean management of an academic department or management of a part, or parts, of an academic department, such as academic administration, teacher training, teacher development, young learners and teens, groups and examinations.

**31. What is the minimum requirement for academic managers?**

Please see section 2.4 of Appendix Four of the ELE Code of Practice: *Academic managers who have a teacher development role within the organisation, whether they are the only academic manager or one of a team of academic managers, must have successfully completed an English language teacher training/development programme at Level 9 on the NFQ or equivalent.*

**32. What qualification is an academic manager required to hold if they are providing CPD?**

Please see Appendix Four of the ELE Code of Practice for full information. Academic managers who have a teacher development role within the organisation, whether they are the only academic manager or one of a team of academic managers, must have successfully completed an English language teacher training/development programme at Level 9 on the NFQ or equivalent.

**33. Is an academic manager who is working at a centre with more than 10 classrooms permitted to teach?**

Academic managers may be included on the teaching and training schedule to ensure currency of effective practice. However, once a centre has a minimum of five groups of ELE learners, the academic manager's teaching must be restricted to a maximum of five contact teaching hours per week. An academic manager's duties may include occasional substitution teaching hours, when required, up to a maximum of fifteen contact teaching hours in one week at any one time. Beyond this, another teacher must be recruited as needed, and the academic manager must return to delivering a maximum of five contact teaching hours per week.



**34. Should each centre have an academic manager with a teacher development role?**

Depending on the size of the provider, there may be one or more than one academic manager, but there must always be a minimum of one suitably qualified and experienced academic manager employed at the centre with responsibility for teacher development.

**35. Is a Master's in English accepted as a Level 9 on NFQ for a teacher development role?**

No, the Level 9 award must be in English language teaching. Please see section 2.4 (a) and (b) of Appendix 4 of the ELE Code of Practice: *Academic managers who have a teacher development role within the organisation, whether they are the only academic manager or one of a team of academic managers, must have successfully completed an English language teacher training/development programme at Level 9 on the NFQ or equivalent.*

**36. What NFQ level is the DELTA qualification?**

The Cambridge English Level 7 Diploma Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (Delta) is not on the NFQ. It is on the UK OFQUALS framework at Level 7, which is the equivalent of on the Irish NFQ.

**37. Are teachers and staff required to complete training on copyright compliance?**

Yes, staff should receive training in compliance with copyright permissions. Please see Section 2.3.6.a of the Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for English Language Providers: *It is the responsibility of the provider to ensure that all appropriate licences, e.g., copyright licences, are in place and displayed as required by the terms of the licence(s) at the centre. All staff members should be familiar with these and the provider is responsible for offering some training to staff members to ensure they are familiar with the requirements. The agency responsible for copyright licences is the Irish Copyright Licensing Agency: Home | Irish Copyright Licensing Agency (icla.ie) Please see Appendix 6 of the ELE Code of Practice.*

**38. What is the academic manager to learner ratio?**

Please see the ELE Code section 6.7 (c): *The number of dedicated full-time academic managers per centre is proportional to the number of enrolled learners at the centre at any one time during operational hours. A maximum ratio of 160 learners : 1 academic manager per centre is required.*

**39. Is the 160:1 ratio for total number of students or are the 160 at any given time?**

The 160:1 ratio is for the total number of students enrolled with the ELE provider.

**40. Can the Centre Manager double up as a second academic manager when student numbers are over 160?**

This will depend on the context and the capacity of the centre. The centre manager could take on the role of academic manager if they are qualified for this role and there is capacity for the centre manager to conduct this role successfully.

**41. Regarding team members from different departments observing each other's work, is there a specific perspective they should adopt?**

Please see section 2.6.4(b) of the QA Guidelines for ELE. Cross-organisational training is planned to help different members of staff understand structures and roles within the organisation, as well as specific areas, for example, training in programme and proficiency examination types for administrative and sales and marketing staff, and training in student recruitment for academic staff. Another example might be cross cultural communication skills training. Please also see section 2.3.3(a) of the QA Guidelines for ELE. Considerations on new programme developments are discussed at corporate management and academic management level, with inputs from sales and marketing management as required, as well as inputs from external stakeholders, such as HE providers in Ireland.

**42. What do the nature of the quality assurance observations entail and how often should they occur?**

Quality assurance observations should take place periodically, for example, at the beginning of a new programme or when a new teacher begins in their new role. This is also a useful way of measuring the quality of the experience for the student. Quality assurance observations should focus on the overall experience of learners at the centre, including, for example, lesson planning and teaching, learners' level, L1 mix and conditions in the classroom, such as light, acoustics and temperature.

**43. What is the minimum number of formal observations and developmental ones that need to take place yearly?**

There is no minimum requirement, as this depends on the level of the teaching experience, for example, a large cohort of new teachers would prompt more frequent observations.

**44. Is there a per student space requirement for classrooms?**

There is no requirement for this, however, the comfort of the student and teachers is paramount, and classrooms should not be overcrowded and should be fit for purpose. The Assessment Panel will evaluate space for learners as part of the overall learner experience in the lesson.

#### **45. Is it correct that the ILEP now allows 16 in a class?**

The current ILEP regulations allow up to 15 learners per group. Providers who apply for TrustEd Ireland authorisation will be permitted to have up to 16 learners in a group. All other current ILEP requirements stand. Please visit ILEP website for more information regarding the ILEP criteria. <https://www.irishimmigration.ie/coming-to-study-in-ireland/what-are-my-study-options/interim-list-of-eligible-programmes-ilep/>

#### **46. What is an acceptable timeframe for performance reviews?**

Please see section 2.6.8 of the QA Guidelines for ELE.

#### **47. What is a risk register and how should this be presented in a providers' risk assessment policy?**

A provider's risk management policy should be unique to each provider's context and the risks that are identified for the organisation. A risk register should itemise the risks that a business identifies and rate them either numerically or by range, for example, low/medium/high. It should include the likelihood of occurrence and the impact, if this occurrence should take place. This should also include a description on how the business will mitigate this risk. A risk management policy and assessment should be drafted to meet the specific providers needs and may include more than what is outlined here.

#### **48. Do providers need to carry out a risk assessment for social programmes and events?**

Please see section 2.5.4(d) of the Statutory QA Guidelines for ELE: *Events administrative procedures should include the formulation of risk assessments for each event, with appropriate staff, learner ratios, section 2.6.1: Events administrative procedures, including the formulation of risk assessments for each event, management of activities and tasks linked to the academic programme, management of attendance records at events and completion of reports as required.* Please also see section 6.3 Code of Practice for ELE: *Providers should ensure that there is a risk assessment policy and a risk assessment plan in place, and both are reviewed periodically to inform strategic risk planning. Risk management should include procedures to ensure that the provider is not engaged in activities or partnerships which may undermine the quality or integrity of ELE provision, or associated services, offered.*

#### **49. Are providers required to have a risk assessment report for the premises?**

Please see section 5 of the Code of Practice for ELE. Providers should ensure that all premises are suitable for the provision of English Language Education and associated services to international learners, and for all staff members to complete their work duties effectively.

#### **50. Can providers use internal end of course assessment exams instead of external exams if they meet student needs, for example, for visa renewal?**

The current ILEP requirements will remain in place until a provider is authorised to use the TrustEd Ireland mark. These include the requirement for all programmes to lead to an external proficiency award that is included on the ILEP. Following TrustEd Ireland authorisation, exams must meet learner needs. Please see section 7.2 of the ELE Code of Practice: *The assessment framework should include testing mechanisms that are fair, clear and accessible, and the principles of validity, reliability and impact are well considered. (d) The assessment framework is tailored to learner needs, e.g., higher education or employment, as appropriate.* Please also see section 2.4.2 of the QA Guidelines for ELE: *The provider's assessment framework establishes the provider's approach to assessment of learners in both external proficiency examinations, and in-house formative and summative assessments and is clearly and closely aligned to the intended learning outcomes of each programme, expressed in 'can do' descriptors from, or adapted from, the CEFR.*

### **51. Do exit exams need to be linked to the syllabus?**

Yes, according to the Quality Assurance (QA) guidelines for English Language Education (ELE) providers and the ELE Code, all assessment including exit exams should be linked to the syllabus. This ensures that the assessments are aligned with the learning outcomes and content covered during the course, maintaining academic integrity and relevance.

### **52. Are providers required to have a written policy in place for assessment?**

Policies for each criterion should be clearly established. Please see section 2.4.2 of the Statutory QA Guidelines for ELE and section 7 of the Code of Practice for ELE which states that there is a clear and well-designed programme framework in place, where the curriculum, syllabus(es), course programme(s) and assessment framework(s) are clearly and closely aligned to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), and which meets the needs of learners.

### **53. What is the difference between the curriculum and syllabus?**

Please see the Glossary of Terms in the Statutory QA Guidelines for ELE.

**Curriculum:** In this document, curriculum is taken to be the highest level of the hierarchy; it describes the focus of learning and overall learning goals and outcomes which are sequenced across a whole ELE programme. It defines the content plan or the whole study programme.

**Syllabus:** This is subordinate to curriculum and defines specific instructions and activities within the curriculum for a particular audience; it may be manifested as elements of language and skills, together with a course programme/scheme of work of learning outcomes or objectives of each lesson or learning unit

### **54. Is there a guideline for the ratio of student welfare officers to number of students?**

There are no specific guidelines for the ratio of student welfare officers to student numbers. Please see section 8.1 of the Code of Practice for ELE: *Providers should ensure*

*that there are suitably trained member(s) of staff responsible for learner support and welfare and have a Welfare Support Policy in place that is designed to support international learners in instances of emergency or hardship and section 2.5.3 of the Statutory QA Guidelines for ELE: Providers should ensure that academic managers and the student welfare officer are available to offer study advice to learners on an on-going basis.*

**55. Is a student welfare officer required to hold a psychology or counselling qualification?**

There is no requirement for student welfare officers to hold a specific qualification. Providers should ensure that student welfare officers are trained appropriately, including but not limited to, receiving in-house training and hold an in-depth knowledge of the organisation's' Welfare Support Policy.

**56. How often should providers inspect homestay accommodation?**

*Please see Appendix 5 of the ELE Code of Practice for ELE: Homestays should be visited and inspected by the ELE provider at least once every three years, and when a change of circumstances is identified by the homestay provider, e.g., when the household grows or when refurbishments are carried out. Each inspection is documented. Feedback is collected from learners about their experience with their homestay and negative comments may result in an inspection visit.*

**57. What happens when a provider does not have a sales and marketing team?**

Please see section 9 of the Code of Practice for ELE. Sales and marketing may be included as part of a staff member's role, or this may be the role of the school owner.

**58. Is there a recommendation for the number of CPD observations in any given year?**

A Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Plan should be established for all staff, including Academic, Administration, and Sales and Marketing teams. The amount of CPD required will vary based on the specific needs of the provider. According to Section 2.3.2 iv of the QA guidelines for ELE providers, it is recommended that CPD sessions be offered to teachers and trainers once a month. However, this is a guideline, and providers should tailor CPD offerings to meet their unique needs.

**59. Are providers required to undergo additional needs training?**

Providers are required to undergo additional needs training. Specifically, Section 2.6.4 of the QQI QA guidelines states that staff training and development should include training on identifying and supporting learners with additional needs. Similarly, Section 6.6.3 of the Code of Practice for ELE highlights the requirement for staff to receive training on supporting learners with additional needs to ensure inclusive and effective education.

**60. If full compliance is required but not met, will the provider be given a reasonable opportunity to correct this?**

Please see section B2 of the Guidance Handbook for ELE Providers and Appendices 1 and 2 for details on requirements for full and partial compliance with both the ELE Code of Practice and the Statutory QA Guidelines for ELE. The IEMAS enables the ELE provider to communicate the conclusions it reaches. The conclusions may also lead to a series of planned actions by the provider, based on the findings, which may be presented in the IEMAS as evidence of the provider's intent to achieve full compliance with the criteria in the ELE Code and to fully meet the criteria in the QA Guidelines at a determined future date, as permitted by QQI.

**61. How should the academic governance committee be structured?**

Please see section 6.2(d) of the ELE Code: *The academic governance committee may be made up of senior members of academic staff at the centre. However, where a provider's scale is such that it cannot support the separation of corporate and academic governance or an academic governance committee internally, alternative arrangements may be put in place to ensure objective oversight, such as the use of an external ELE expertise.*

**62. What happens if the number of students is completely different from 2023 to 2024 and moving forward?**

The application fee is determined using learner data from previous years. For Window 1 applications, the application fee is based on 2023 learner data. For Window 2 applications, the charge will be based on 2024 learner data.

**Section 4 IT/Application portal FAQs**

1. How can a provider submit their application for TrustEd Ireland?
2. How does a provider access the application portal on QHub?
3. What should I do if my username/password does not work for the QHub application portal?
4. Where can I find a step-by-step guide on how to use the QHub application portal?
5. Will it be permitted to use platforms, such as, MS Teams/Google drive as a platform to share supporting documentation with the review team?
6. Are providers automatically set up on QHub to facilitate submission of their IEMAS?
7. Can a provider add an additional contact to the QHub system?

**1. How can a provider submit their application for TrustEd Ireland?**

Providers must confirm their intention to apply by submitting a Confirmation of Application. They will be contacted once the application portal is open for submissions. Providers will be emailed a username and password, which they will use to log into the application portal, QHub. Please refer to the IT Handbook for providers for more information.



## **2. How does a provider access the application portal on QHub?**

Providers can access the application portal on QHub by going to the QQI website at [www.qqi.ie](http://www.qqi.ie). Please use incognito mode on your browser. Click 'Log-in' in the top right-hand corner, click the drop-down button QHub on the login page, and then click QHub again. This will bring you to the login section of the application portal. Please refer to the IT Handbook for providers for more information.

## **3. What should I do if my username/password does not work for the QHub application portal?**

Please ensure you are using incognito mode on your browser to log into the application portal, QHub. If you have issues logging in using your username or password, or have forgotten your username/password, please contact us at [international.education@qqi.ie](mailto:international.education@qqi.ie).

## **4. Where can I find a step-by-step guide on how to use the QHub application portal?**

An IT step-by-step guide has been developed for both Higher Education and English Language Education providers. This document can be found here (NEEDS TO BE LINKED)

## **5. Will it be permitted to use platforms, such as, MS Teams/Google drive as a platform to share supporting documentation with the review team?**

No, candidates must upload their IEMAS including links to evidence to the QHub system. Providers have the option to upload unpublished supporting documents to the QHub system if needed. They must, however, correctly reference the documents in the IEMAS and adhere to the labelling conventions.

## **6. Are providers automatically set up on QHub to facilitate submission of their IEMAS?**

Yes, providers who have submitted a Confirmation of Application will receive an email from QQI containing their log in credentials for QHub. This email is sent to the contact email addresses contained in the providers Confirmation of Application submission. The provider can use these logs in credentials to access the International Education Mark section of QHub.

## **7. Can a provider add an additional contact to the QHub system?**

Yes, it is possible to add or change contacts on QHub. If you wish to do this, please contact [international.education@qqi.ie](mailto:international.education@qqi.ie) with the name and email address of the contact you would like to be included.