



Dearbhú Cáilíochta  
agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann  
Quality and  
Qualifications Ireland



# Higher Education Pathway Assessment Report: University College Cork



## About this assessment

This report details the findings of the assessment conducted by an Assessment Panel on behalf of Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) of University College Cork's IEM Application Statement (IEMAS), which was submitted to QQI as part of the provider's application for authorisation to use the TrustEd Ireland mark. The desk assessment was conducted by the following Assessment Panel:

Name	Role	Affiliation
Prof Mark Rogers	Chairperson	Former Registrar, Deputy President and Acting President, University College Dublin, Ireland
Prof Alastair Robertson	Report Writer/Secretary	Interim Director of the Queen Mary Academy, Queen Mary University of London, United Kingdom
Yvonne Overdeest	International Education Expert	NVAO, The Netherlands
Nanshin Nansak	Learner	Atlantic Technological University, Ireland

## Outcome of the assessment

This assessment evaluates the provider's compliance with the criteria set out in the Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Higher Education to International Learners (HE Code). From the evidence provided by the provider in the self-assessment document, the IEM Application Statement (IEMAS), the Assessment Panel concludes that the provider should be:

Outcome	Please tick
Authorised to use TrustEd Ireland Mark	✓
Not Authorised to use TrustEd Ireland Mark	

Please see below a summary of the outcome by HE Code principle (5.1-5.6)

## 5.1 Marketing and Recruitment:

**Principle: HE providers recruit international learners in a transparent and ethical manner. In their marketing and promotional materials, they ensure that clear, accurate, transparent, accessible, relevant and up to date information is provided.**

5.1.1 (a) HE providers shall endeavour proactively to understand the information needs of prospective international learners.

5.1.1 (b) HE providers shall ensure that information provided to potential international learners about the institution and its provision is clear, accurate, transparent, accessible, relevant and up to date. This shall include information about the intended purpose of the provision e.g., to prepare a learner for further study or specific employment. Where necessary, it should also include information on associated immigration requirements, including requirements for learners requiring entry visas and/or immigration permission.

5.1.1 (c) Where applicable, information should also be provided on the professional accreditation status of programmes.

5.1.1 (d) Where applicable, information on practice placement requirements, and how these may be fulfilled, should also be made be known to prospective international learners.

5.1.1 (e) HE providers shall be compliant with information for learner requirements, as set out in Section 67 of the 2012 Act as amended. They shall confirm:

- (i) whether or not the successful completion of the programme entitles the learner to an award;
- (ii) the awarding body making the award;
- (iii) the title of the award;
- (iv) whether the award is one that is included within the NFQ;
- (v) the level at which the award is included within the NFQ;
- (vi) whether the award is a major, minor, special purpose or supplemental award, as identified within the NFQ;
- (vii) the procedures for access, transfer and progression that are in place, including the pathways for international learners for further study, employment, and residency, where applicable (see also section 4.2 above);
- (viii) details, where appropriate, of the arrangements in place for the protection of enrolled learners under Section 65 of the 2012 Act as amended (see section 4.5.2 above and Appendix Two of this code).

5.1.1 (f) HE providers shall ensure that information is provided in a way that is accessible to international learners and assists them in making informed decisions. This information should support international learners in understanding all matters related to a programme prior to enrolment. If provided in a different language, it is the responsibility of the HE provider to ensure that the information is clear, accurate, transparent, accessible, relevant and up to date.

5.1.1 (g) HE providers shall accurately represent their organisation and facilities in all marketing and promotional materials and ensure that no false or misleading information is issued.

5.1.1 (h) HE providers shall provide appropriate contact details for an appropriate person or persons to provide assistance with queries from international learners prior to enrolment.

5.1.1 (i) HE providers shall state the commencement dates for all programmes.

5.1.2 (a) Prior to enrolment, HE providers shall ensure the availability and provision of relevant financial information pertaining to the study and average subsistence costs of their programme provision, from the period of enrolment through to graduation.

5.1.2 (b) Prior to enrolment, HE providers shall ensure that the learner is made aware of any insurance requirements, e.g., medical or travel insurance, and of the availability of accommodation, and any accommodation services provided.

5.1.2 (c) HE providers shall have a written agreement with each education agent, recruitment partner or consultant that formally represents their programme provision.

5.1.2 (d) HE providers shall ensure that any contractual arrangements entered with an education agent, recruitment partner or consultant incorporate the principles of the London Statement. Existing contracts that do not incorporate these principles shall be amended appropriately within two years of the date of the HE provider's application for authorisation to use the IEM.

5.1.2 (e) The contract between the HE provider and education agent, recruitment partner or consultant shall include a termination clause in instances where the agent does not comply with the principles of the London Statement or is found to have acted in an unethical fashion to the detriment of international learners.

5.1.2 (f) HE providers shall conduct due diligence e.g., three reference checks, to verify the track record of education agents, recruitment partners or consultants, in relation to learner protection issues, prior to entering into a contractual agreement.

5.1.2 (g) HE providers shall ensure that all education agents, recruitment partners or consultants contracted to them are in possession of accurate and up to date information regarding the provider and its provision.

5.1.2 (h) HE providers shall have in place a transparent process for monitoring and reviewing the activities of education agents, recruitment partners or consultants including, where appropriate, feedback from applicants, to ensure that the education agent, recruitment partner or consultant is operating within the spirit of the HE Code and the London Statement.

5.1.2 (i) HE providers required to put in place arrangements for the protection of enrolled learners under Section 65 of the 2012 Act as amended shall do so prior to the recruitment of learners (see also section 4.5 and Appendix Two of this HE code).

## Summary

The University and the panel agree that 17 out of the possible 18 criteria associated with principle 5.1 Marketing and Recruitment are applicable to the institution. Further, the panel concurs with the provider's assessment of full compliance with all 17 applicable criteria of principle 5.1: Marketing and Recruitment.

The IEMAS provided extensive links to evidence compliance against these and other criteria and the associated commentary confirmed a structured and well considered approach to international education provision within the institution. Governance arrangements were clear and the recent appointment of a VP for Global Engagement should further ensure the appropriate infrastructure and supports are enhanced for international learners.

Evidence of a coherent and integrated approach to provision of information on the institution, programme structure fees and living costs was provided. Notably, UCC has developed the free online course Nurturing Bright Futures to support all students transitioning to University and includes dedicated information for international learners.

### Commendation 1

**Section 5.1:** The website is **commended** for its design, which enables (prospective) students to navigate the platform with ease and efficiently locate relevant information.

## Commendation 2

**5.1.1 (d):** The CV and interview support services provided for placement and career development are **commended** for their comprehensive guidance and effectiveness in preparing students for professional opportunities.

### Principle 5.2 Admissions and Qualifications' Recognition:

#### **HE providers operate fair, transparent and consistent admission policies that support the successful participation of international learners in their chosen programmes**

5.2 (a) HE providers shall clearly specify entry requirements for international learners that support the successful participation of the learners in their chosen programmes.

5.2 (b) HE providers' entry requirements shall clearly specify English language proficiency requirements for applicants whose first language is not English. These should include references to the benchmarks used in assessing proficiency requirements and, like other entry requirements, support the successful participation of international learners in their chosen programmes.

5.2 (c) HE providers shall adopt the principles, and follow the guidance, contained in the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC) and subsidiary texts in assessing the qualifications presented by international learners for the purpose of admission to their programmes. Qualifications should be assessed in an accessible and fair manner and within a reasonable timeframe.

5.2 (d) HE providers should recognise qualifications that are recognised for the purpose of access to programmes in an international applicant's own higher education system, unless a substantial difference can be demonstrated between the requirements for admission in the applicant's own higher education system and those of the Irish HE provider.

5.2 (e) HE providers shall provide a timely written response to international applicants who are refused admission.

5.2 (f) Where a HE provider decides to withhold recognition of a qualification from an international learner for the purpose of admission, the reasons for the refusal to grant recognition shall be stated, and information provided concerning possible measures the applicant may take to obtain recognition at a later stage. If a HE provider decides to withhold recognition of a qualification for the purpose of admission, or if no decision is taken, the applicant shall be able to make an appeal within a reasonable time limit.

5.2 (g) HE providers shall support QQI, as appropriate, in implementing its statutory function to facilitate the recognition outside the state of awards made in the state, including the home countries of their international learners.

### Summary

This section of the IEMAS provided comprehensive commentary and extensive relevant links to evidence compliance against the criteria and the associated commentary. The provider demonstrated well developed Admissions and Qualifications Recognition policies and processes with regards to international students.

The University and the panel agree that all seven criteria associated with principle 5.2 Admissions and Qualifications' Recognition are applicable. Further, the University and the panel agree that the provider is fully compliant with six of the criteria and partially compliant with criterion 5.2 (f) which pertains to provider decisions to withhold recognition of a qualification from an international learner

for the purpose of admission.

**Condition 1**

**5.2 (f):** With regards to addressing UCC’s current partial compliance against criterion 5.2 (f), the provider states in the completed HE Assessment Outstanding Queries report that a dedicated project led by the Academic Services Office and the International Office is underway to review and enhance application processing timelines to be implemented for the start of academic year 2026/27. A **timebound condition** against this criterion has therefore been added for this project to be implemented within 24 weeks of TrustEd Ireland authorisation.

**Recommendation 1**

**5.2 (e):** The panel noted that although the provider is compliant with 5.2 (e), “providers shall provide a timely written response to international applicants who are refused admission”, no timescales are stated although the provider did helpfully submit some examples in their completed HE Assessment Outstanding Queries report. It is therefore recommended by the panel that as part of the project outlined above, the provider develops a policy that explicitly states the response time to applicants within 24 weeks of TrustEd Ireland authorisation.

**Principle 5.3 Fees, Refunds and Subsistence:**

**HE providers provide all learners with clear, accurate, transparent, accessible, relevant and up to date information on all study costs, including subsistence and accommodation. HE providers shall inform learners about fees and other costs associated with undertaking a programme of study in Ireland**

5.3.1 (a) HE providers shall provide information on compulsory fees for the full duration of the programme from registration and admission to graduation or exit from the programme. Where fees may change, this shall be clear to applicants in the information provided.

5.3.1 (b) HE providers shall provide information on the collection or payment of fees, including sanctions for late payment and debt collection for moneys owed.

5.3.1 (c) HE providers shall establish a fees structure that supports the mission of the organization and reflects the costs associated with quality provision.

5.3.1 (d) HE providers shall ensure that there are no additional fees or unexpected charges that international learners have not been made aware of.

5.3.1 (e) HE providers shall issue a receipt to international learners upon receipt of payment of fees which will include a breakdown of fees paid.

5.3.1 (f) HE providers shall establish and publish a procedure on full and partial refunds. This procedure shall outline the conditions under which a refund will be granted e.g., a refused entry visa application, in the case of a non-EU/EEA Swiss learner.

5.3.1 (g) HE providers shall provide information on any financial supports or resources that exist within the organisation, or nationally, for international learners.

5.3.2 (a) HE providers shall provide information on the indicative costs of studying on their programmes e.g., the costs of textbooks, electronic resources, computer requirements, protective equipment.

5.3.2 (b) HE providers shall furnish prospective learners with general advice regarding the average cost of living e.g., accommodation, food, transport and medical care, for the programme duration.

5.3.2 (c) HE providers shall provide information on:

- (i) fees for accommodation services, if offered by the HE provider or other accommodation service providers;
- (ii) fees for complaints and appeals procedures as relevant e.g., rechecking of exam results.

5.3.2 (d) HE providers shall provide information on any other costs related to the provision of student services as considered relevant by the provider.

## Summary

This section of the IEMAS provided comprehensive commentary and extensive relevant links to evidence compliance against the criteria and the associated commentary. The provider demonstrated well-developed Fees, Refunds and Subsistence policies and processes with regards to international students.

The University and the panel agree that all 11 criteria associated with principle 5.3 Fees, Refunds and Subsistence are applicable. Further, the panel concurs with the provider's assessment of full compliance with all 11 applicable criteria of principle 5.3: Fees, Refunds and Subsistence.

Within this section of the IEMAS, the provider emphasised that financial resources and supports are available to all students, inclusive of international students.

### Recommendation 2

**5.3.1 (g):** Although the provider is fully compliant with this criterion, the panel did note, however, that not all financial support funds are available to all students and information on eligibility for international students requires quite thorough searching of relevant webpages. It is **recommended** that the provider reviews formatting of web pages to ensure financial support services and funds eligible for non-EU students are more clearly signposted within 24 weeks of TrustEd Ireland authorisation.

### Commendation 3

**5.3.2 (b):** The information provided regarding subsistence and student employment is exemplary, offering clear, detailed, and practical guidance to support students effectively and is therefore **commended**.

## Principle 5.4 Supports and Services for International Learners

**HE providers shall foster a supportive environment which supports the wellbeing and integration of all learners into the student body and ensures a positive learning experience for all learners**

5.4.1 (a) HE providers shall designate appropriate personnel to be responsible for inquiries about learner support issues from international learners e.g., course coordinator, counsellor, or international officer.

5.4.1 (b) HE providers shall offer information to international learners prior to their arrival to help them adjust to their new surroundings e.g., information on transport, banking, availability of accommodation and accommodation services.

5.4.1 (c) HE providers shall ensure that inductions offered to learners also meet the needs of international learners, including intercultural awareness. They should direct learners to services, supports and facilities relevant or appropriate to their programme of study. They should also remind international learners requiring entry visas and/or immigration permissions of their responsibilities under the Department of Justice's student immigration regime.

5.4.1 (d) The induction programme shall be provided to all cohorts of international learners who register or enrol at various times of the year, including learners who access programmes through advanced entry.

5.4.1 (e) HE providers shall provide information on appropriate learner supports and services to facilitate learner integration into the wider HE community.

5.4.1 (f) HE providers shall ensure that international learners are aware of opportunities to participate in, and be represented at, engagements between the provider and the learner body. Where possible, they should provide, in collaboration with learner representative bodies, information on national learner engagement initiatives and opportunities for international learners to avail of training opportunities.

5.4.1 (g) HE providers shall have mechanisms in place to support international learners financially in instances of personal or other emergency or hardship.

5.4.1 (h) HE providers shall facilitate and encourage feedback from international learners on the delivery of any supports and services. This includes informing learners about complaints processes for these services.

5.4.1 (i) Institutional approaches to quality assuring learner services and supports will include all learners, including international learners.

5.4.2 (a) HE providers shall offer induction that is accessible to all learners and, where appropriate, tailored to the needs of international learners. They shall provide full information and advice on all relevant institutional and academic policies.

5.4.2 (b) Induction shall be provided to learners and cohorts who enrol at different points during the year, including those accessing programmes through advanced entry.

5.4.2 (c) HE providers shall ensure the information provided at induction is easily accessible throughout the academic year and shall offer reminders of this information at key points during the year e.g., in the lead-up to examinations or submission of assignments.

5.4.2 (d) HE providers will include academic integrity as a core component of induction for all learners, including international learners. Recognition will be given in inductions to the different education cultures of international learners, and the content, advice and support they impart will be relevant and specific to the Irish higher education context. Formal and informal conversations about academic integrity should be held on an ongoing basis throughout the period of enrolment of all learners, including international learners.

5.4.2 (e) HE providers shall endeavour to integrate their international learners, through their inductions and through their policies, procedures, and services, into the wider learner community.

5.4.2 (f) HE providers shall continue to provide staff with training and support to facilitate an appropriate and effective delivery of programmes and services to international learners. This should include, where appropriate, training in intercultural competence and support for the development of English language education competence.

## Summary

This section of the IEMAS provided comprehensive commentary and extensive relevant links to evidence compliance against the criteria and the associated commentary. The provider demonstrated a comprehensive range of well-developed Support and Services for International Learners, including a range of academic mentoring and peer support networks.

The University and the panel agree that all 15 criteria associated with principle 5.4: Support and Services for International Learners. are applicable. Further, the panel concurs with the provider's assessment of full compliance with all 15 applicable criteria of principle 5.4: Support and Services for International Learners.

Regarding 5.4.1 (g), the provider stated in its original submission that it was partially compliant, however, the panel felt that the evidence provided meant that it was actually fully compliant. This point was queried by the panel during the Outstanding Queries process. In their response to this Outstanding Query, the provider confirmed that it was fully compliant and there had been an unchecked error in the original submission which had suggested partial compliance.

### **Recommendation 3**

**5.4.1 (g):** Although the provider is fully compliant with criterion 5.4.1 (g), the panel did note, however, that not all financial support funds are available to all students and information on eligibility for international students requires quite thorough searching of relevant webpages. It is **recommended** that, similar to the panel's recommendation under criterion 5.3.1 (g) above, the provider reviews formatting of web pages to ensure financial support services and funds eligible for international students are more clearly signposted within 24 weeks of TrustEd Ireland authorisation.

## Principle 5.5 English Language Policy Statement and International Foundation Year Programmes

**The English language supports provided by HE providers to international learners, including through the provision of international foundation year programmes, are underpinned by a coherent and transparent institutional policy approach.**

5.5 (a) HE providers shall have an English language policy statement for international learners that shall:

- (i) document the policy approach and process to the assessment of English language proficiency entry requirements;
- (ii) document, as appropriate, the institution's policy approach to the provision, support, and development of English for Academic Purposes;
- (iii) set out the institution's policy approach to the provision of English language supports to non-native English speakers prior to commencement and throughout the duration of their higher education programmes;
- (iv) document the arrangements, including, as appropriate, the quality assurance, credit and/or awarding arrangements, for different types of EAP programmes, such as:
  - pre-sessional programmes/modules,
  - in-sessional programmes/modules

5.5 (b) HE providers offering international foundation year programmes shall set out in their English language policy statement for international learners

- (i) the quality assurance, credit and/or awarding arrangements for these programmes,
- (ii) the corporate and academic governance arrangements in place where such programmes are provided in partnership with other entities e.g., a private English language education provider, other independent/private education provider or campus company.

5.5 (c) For compliance with this HE Code, an international foundation programme shall lead to one of the following awards included within the NFQ:

- (i) QQI preparation for undergraduate programmes, leading to NFQ Level 5 Special Purpose Award (foundation qualification)
- (ii) QQI preparation for postgraduate programme, leading to NFQ Level 8 Special Purpose Award (foundation qualification)
- (iii) equivalent programmes leading to awards that are included within the NFQ and validated by an Irish awarding body.

5.5 (d) Where HE providers currently offer international foundation year programmes that do not lead to awards that are included within the NFQ, they must secure programme validation/course approval for such programmes through an Irish awarding body within two years of the date on which they are authorised to use the IEM.

### Summary

The University and the panel agree that only one criterion associated with principle 5.5: English Language Policy Statement and International Foundation Year Programmes is applicable as the provider does not have any International Foundation Year programmes. Further, the panel concurs with the provider's assessment of full compliance with the applicable criterion of principle 5.5: English Language Policy Statement and International Foundation Year Programmes.

The provider's English Language Support Policy for International Students outlines the wide range of supports offered to meet international students' English language needs in order that they can meet necessary academic standards, engage in their studies and university life more generally and help prepare them for post-graduation. The provider's English Language support programmes are delivered by UCC's Language Centre. The panel note and **commend** the fact that the Language Centre is now part of the Vice President Global Engagement's portfolio to provide greater coherency for international student support.

### Principle 5.6 International Learners outside the State

**HE providers ensure that learners outside the state who are enrolled on their programmes receive quality learning experiences, where these programmes lead to awards that are included within the NFQ, and whether they are offered in transnational education settings and/or through remote, fully online modes of learning.**

5.6.1 (a) HE providers, having regard to their statutory quality assurance obligations, shall ensure that the academic quality, standard and recognition of their transnational education programmes are equivalent to the academic quality, standard and recognition of the programmes they provide within the state.

5.6.1 (b) HE providers shall apply the principles and criteria set out in this HE Code in an equivalent manner in transnational education settings, including in relation to the provision of learner support services.

5.6.1 (c) HE providers shall support QQI, as appropriate, in implementing its statutory function to facilitate the recognition outside the state of awards made in the state. This facilitatory function extends to awards included within the NFQ, where the programmes leading to these awards are provided outside the state.

5.6.1 (d) Linked providers who intend to offer transnational education programmes that lead to awards within the NFQ shall only do so with the agreement of the designated awarding body or bodies making the awards.

5.6.2 (a) HE providers, having regard to their statutory quality assurance obligations, shall ensure that the academic quality, standard and recognition of their remote online programmes are equivalent to the academic quality, standard and recognition of the programmes they provide through other teaching and learning modes.

5.6.2 (b) HE providers shall apply the principles and criteria set out in this HE Code in an equivalent manner in relation to learners outside the state enrolled on remote online programmes that lead to awards included within the NFQ, including in relation to the provision of learner support services.

5.6.2 (c) HE providers shall support QQI, as appropriate, in implementing its statutory function to facilitate the recognition outside the state of awards made in the state. This facilitatory function extends to awards included within the NFQ, where the programmes leading to these awards are offered as remote online programmes.

5.6.2 (d) Linked providers who intend to offer remote online programmes to learners outside the state that lead to awards within the NFQ shall only do so with the agreement of the designated awarding body or bodies making the awards.

## Summary

This section of the IEMAS provided comprehensive commentary and extensive relevant links to evidence compliance against the criteria and the associated commentary. The provider demonstrated a set of well-developed policies and processes with regards to International Learners Outside the State.

The University and the panel agree that six out of the eight criteria associated with principle 5.6: International Learners Outside the State are applicable. Further, the panel concurs with the provider's assessment of full compliance with all six applicable criteria of principle 5.6: International Learners Outside the State.

The provider provided strong evidence for ensuring equivalent student experience and its stated position that all students registered on UCC programmes will have access to all UCC facilities and support services including online access to the library. Online students and students outside the state are provided with additional support, depending on the context of the programme and the provider illustrated this through a helpful case study (BSc Environmental Science with Environmental Management, delivered in China).

## Summary of assessment outcomes

**This section provides for the Assessment Panel findings and outcomes by principle and criterion**

### **Overview of the provider's international profile and activities:**

UCC was founded in 1845 as Queen's College Cork. It is now one of the world's top 250 Universities (ranked 246 in the QS World University Rankings 2025-26). There are around 23,000 students, of which over 4100 are international representing 18% of the student body. International students come from more than 138 countries. There are approximately 3400 academic, research and administrative staff according to the UCC Institution Profile 2022/23 publication.

UCC has well established reputation in international education and support structures for international students. It is also rated first in Ireland for outbound student exchange opportunities (QS Europe University Rankings 2024/25). The University's current strategic plan (Securing our Future 2023-28) has a specific goal for global engagement, goal 3, which is "Grow UCC's international reach to amplify our global impact" and in 2023 appointed its first Vice President for Global Engagement to provide specific Executive oversight. To support the implementation of the strategic plan aims for global engagement, UCC, under the leadership of the Vice President for Global Engagement, developed its first Global Engagement Plan for 2024-28. The plan comprises four pillars: excellence, impact, partnership and citizenship which are informed by the University's values and mission.

UCC's international students are considered an integral part of the overall student community and have access to a full range of student support services. There are well established structures to support the international student community at UCC including student support services (academic and pastoral), social and extra-curricular opportunities.

For decades, UCC has had partnerships with peer institutions across the globe, both in terms of collaborative and transnational education. Its partner universities today span Europe, the Americas and Asia. UCC is an active partner in Erasmus (since 1987) and has strong links with North America; around 400 Junior Year Abroad students come to UCC for a semester or full year. For the last 80 years UCC has pioneered Adult and Continuing Education (ACE). UCC has a portfolio of 12 online programmes and a suite of microcredentials which are open to international students.

UCC's comprehensive IEMAS application demonstrates 100% compliance with five out of the six code Principles and their associated, applicable, criteria. For one principle, 5.2 (Admissions and Qualification Recognition, UCC was compliant with six out of the seven criteria and it has a dedicated project led by the Academic Services Office and the International Office underway to

review and enhance application processing timelines to be implemented within 24 weeks of TrustEd Ireland authorisation, in time for the start of academic year 2026/27 which will ensure compliance with the one outstanding criterion for this principle.

#### Recommended condition(s) for authorisation:

##### Condition 1

**5.2 (f):** With regards to addressing UCC's current partial compliance against criterion 5.2 (f), the provider states in the completed HE Assessment Outstanding Queries report that a dedicated project led by the Academic Services Office and the International Office is underway to review and enhance application processing timelines to be implemented for the start of academic year 2026/27. A **timebound condition** against this criterion has therefore been added for this project to be implemented within 24 weeks of TrustEd Ireland authorisation.

#### Commendations:

##### Commendation 1

**Section 5.1:** The website is highly **commended** for its design, which enables (prospective) students to navigate the platform with ease and efficiently locate relevant information.

##### Commendation 2

**5.1.1 (d):** The CV and interview support services provided for placement and career development are **commended** for their comprehensive guidance and effectiveness in preparing students for professional opportunities.

##### Commendation 3

**5.3.2 (b):** The information provided regarding subsistence and student employment is exemplary, offering clear, detailed, and practical guidance to support students effectively and is therefore **commended**.

**5.5 (a)** The panel note and **commend** the fact that the Language Centre is now part of the Vice President Global Engagement's portfolio to provide greater coherency for international student support.

#### Recommendations:

##### Recommendation 1

**5.2 (e):** The panel noted that although the provider is compliant with this criterion, "providers shall

provide a timely written response to international applicants who are refused admission”, no timescales are stated although the provider did helpfully submit some examples in their completed HE Assessment Outstanding Queries report. It is therefore **recommended** by the panel that as part of the project outlined above, the provider develops a policy that explicitly states the response time to applicants within 24 weeks of TrustEd Ireland authorisation.

**Recommendation 2**

**5.3.1 (g):** Although the provider is fully compliant with this criterion, the panel did note, however, that not all financial support funds are available to all students and information on eligibility for international students requires quite thorough searching of relevant webpages. It is therefore **recommended** that the provider reviews formatting of web pages to ensure financial support services and funds eligible for non-EU students are more clearly signposted within 24 weeks of TrustEd Ireland authorisation.

**Recommendation 3**

**5.4.1 (g):** Although the provider is fully compliant with this criterion, the panel did note, however, that not all financial support funds are available to all students and information on eligibility for international students requires quite thorough searching of relevant webpages. It is **recommended** that, similar to the panel's recommendation under criterion 5.3.1 (g) above, the provider reviews formatting of web pages to ensure financial support services and funds eligible for international students are more clearly signposted within 24 weeks of TrustEd Ireland authorisation

**Declarations of Assessment Panel**

This report has been agreed by the Assessment Panel and is signed on their behalf by the Chairperson.

Assessment Panel Chairperson: Prof Mark Rogers (Emeritus)

Date: 18/10/2025

Signed:



12<sup>th</sup> November 2025.



**Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh**  
University College Cork, Ireland

**Oifig an Uachtarán**  
President's Office

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Dear Dr Murray

### **Response Letter on Draft Report for International Education Mark Application**

University College Cork is pleased to receive its draft International Education Mark (IEM) Assessment Report which has been reviewed internally by the Working Group that undertook the self-assessment coordinated by the Director of Quality Enhancement, under the stewardship of Professor Ursula Kilkelly (Vice-President, Global Engagement).

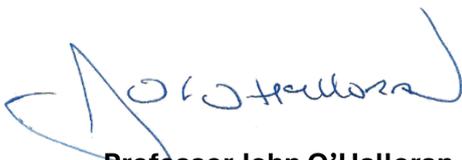
I would like to thank the Review Panel for their careful consideration of the application and supplementary evidence provided by the university. I am particularly pleased that existing good practices to enable international students to fulfil their potential at UCC has been acknowledged. The professionalism of our colleagues who interface with, and manage the international student experience, is a key strength in our overall strategic approach to Student Success and Global Engagement as articulated in our current Strategic Plan 2023-28 Securing our Future. Our recently launched Global Engagement Plan sets out the university's priorities and activities as a trusted provider of higher education and an ethical global collaborator guided by the UCC values. Achieving authorisation to use the TrustEd mark will further support our global ambitions and activities.

**Ollscoil na hÉireann, Corcaigh**  
National University of Ireland, Cork

The University undertook a thorough self-assessment in the preparation of its IEM application which was undertaken by a cross-university group of academic, professional support staff, including members of UCC's Global Engagement Team. The university considers that it had been overly strict in its self-assessment in the interpretation of criterion 5.2 (f) and 5.2 (e) and that consequently the draft report does not reflect established practice at UCC. Further information on the context of the self-assessment is provided in UCC's Factual Accuracy Response, along with relevant evidence which demonstrates that the university is fully compliant with both criteria. I should be grateful if this matter could be presented to the Academic Reviews Committee (ARC) for consideration.

I look forward to receiving the outcomes of the ARC and confirmation of UCC's authorisation for the TrustEd mark. Should you require any further information in respect of the Factual Accuracy Response and appended evidence please contact Ms Elizabeth Noonan, Director of Quality Enhancement in the first instance.

Yours sincerely,



**Professor John O'Halloran**

President.

*Copy to: Professor Stephen Byrne, Deputy President & Registrar  
Professor Ursula Kilkelly, Vice-President Global Engagement  
Elizabeth Noonan, Director of Quality Enhancement  
Mary Grennan, International Education, Quality & Qualifications Ireland*

**An tOllamh John O'Halloran PhD, DSc, MRIA  
An tUachtarán**

Professor John O'Halloran PhD, DSc, MRIA  
President

**Ollscoil na hÉireann, Corcaigh**  
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