

7.3 Protection and Support of International Learners

ICD is committed to ensuring that international learners benefit from a high-quality experience from enrolment to the completion of their respective programme. Our approach to ensuring our international learners receive a quality education and also quality pastoral care is made up of various components, described below.

The most culturally diverse college in Ireland:

ICD will ensure it maintains a culturally diverse learner population to ensure all international learners feel more at home in a diverse environment with peers who share similar experiences of travelling to study and live.

Legal protections and compliance:

ICD will be committed to ensuring:

- That all of our international learners are covered by national quality assurance and consumer protection guidelines.
- Continuous maintenance of protection of enrolled learner insurance
- Full compliance with the QQI 'Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners.'
- Tax compliance, as stipulated by section 3.1.2 of the QQI code of practice for international learners.

Membership of International Student Bodies/Associations:

- In tune with its pastoral responsibilities to international students ICD will regularly liaise with external bodies (e.g. ICOS) to receive feedback and advice on the requirements of international learners.
- ICD will explore with QQI the possibility to obtain the QQI's International Education Mark, as means of validating and ensuring our quality assurance and quality of education provision to international students.

Building and Maintaining Relationships with External Bodies

ICD will maintain relationships with any and all external bodies who can advise and assist ICD in ensuring ethical and effective student recruitment and the protection of all learners and the integrity of the Irish higher education and qualifications system vis a vis ensuring applicant's documentation is checked and verified to ensure programme entry requirements are met:

- Engagement with Education Ireland
- Engagement with the International Office of The Dept. of Education and Skills,
- Maintaining good relationships with the Irish Embassies/Consulates in countries across the world
- Liaising with Irish Embassies and Consulates

Ethical Recruitment of International Students:

Where marketing, recruitment and admissions are concerned ICD must operate in an ethical and transparent manner including:

- Processing inbound enquiries from prospective learners in a manner that treats all applicants equally and ensures all prospective learners are fully informed about ICD, its entry requirements, and its programmes
- Attendance at educational fairs/exhibitions to engage with international students directly in their home countries, which facilitates ICD in fully and transparently informing students about what we offer (rather than over-relying on intermediaries).
- Informing all prospective learners about programme entry requirements (skills, experience, qualifications, and English language proficiency)
- Only enrolling students once they satisfy entry requirements, as a means of protecting prospective students.

Assuring Quality Professional Agents Only are Used in Recruitment

If due diligence is not carried out, the system of agents can be fraught with issues and dangers, including, but not limited to:

- Agents recommending students to enrol on programmes that they are not suited to (e.g. entry requirement deficiencies)
- Agents forging documentation or providing forged documentation
- Agents not accurately representing a HEI to a prospective student
- Agents not accurately informing a HEI about a learner (e.g. their prior learning)

ICD will continuously engage with external bodies (e.g. QQI, ICOS, Education in Ireland) to ensure our policies and procedures for the use of agents in student recruitment are continuously enhanced and improved.

ICD will engage in due diligence processes before and after using any agent. This involves the Managing Director:

- **Prioritising Agents Who Have a Long-Term Relationship With ICD:** agents with a known quality track record of providing a quality and professional service to prospective students
- **Background Checks on Unknown Agents:** Doing background checks on any previously unknown agents to verify their track record and credentials
- **Verifying and Checking All Prospective Learner Prior Learning Certificates and Visa/Travel Documentation as Appropriate:** Ensuring that all prospective students (those recommended by agents and those not recommended by agents) provide ICD directly with certificates of prior learning and any other supporting evidence required as part of the applications process, including checking travel and visa documentation. The system that the Irish Authorities put in place through the Embassies and Consulates is of great assistance to mitigate against any spurious dealings at this stage, as they have the final say on the Bona Fides of an applicant. This should ensure that only genuine students would apply to ICD.
- **Access Requirement Checks, Ongoing Pastoral Care and Ongoing Monitoring of Student Progress:** It is important to state that agents do not recruit ICD students. Agents may recommend that a student apply to ICD. At that point, once a prospective student contacts

ICD, then, ICD carries out all necessary entry requirement checking and provides the student with information about travel/visa requirements, fees, learning outcome achievement as a necessity for progression, the demands of the programme, and the learning environment. For all successful applicants to ICD, whether following an agents' recommendation or not following any agent involvement, ongoing monitoring of all students' progress, including those recruited as a result of an agent's recommendation, is a matter of priority at ICD. For the purposes of providing pastoral care, ICD will continuously track students' progress both in integrating into Dublin life, in integrating into ICD education and progress through programme stages. Monitoring student progress is a part of internal monitoring of agents. If an agent recommends learners who complete programmes, this is a mark of quality, and vice versa. Ongoing monitoring of the progression and completion rates of students recommended by agents enables ICD to have ongoing evidence of the quality of the agent.

- **Discontinuing Relationships with Poor Quality Agents:** If an agent is found to recommend students who do not qualify (based on entry requirements) or to recommend students whose progress on a programme is not as expected, these are reasons for ICD to discontinue its relationship with that agent

Providing Clear and Accurate Information to all Prospective (International) Students

Clear, accurate and unambiguous information about all of our programmes – including NFQ level, component modules, commencement dates and professional accreditation and exemptions – will be provided on the ICD website at www.icd.ie, and information about PEL and ATP will be provided during the recruitment process after a prospective learner has initiated contact. The ICD website will also permit prospective learners to submit queries directly to the Registrar via a 'contact us' form-fill. Applicants will be made aware of attendance requirements for learners on student visas - and all relevant monitoring policies and sanctions - before, during, and after enrolment.

Providing Clear Information, Induction Training, & Pastoral Care to all Enrolled (International) Students:

All enrolled students will be provided with clear information, during induction, on all pastoral and academic supports and services, including the responsibilities of the Registrar and Programme Directors, the student resource centre, language supports, ICD's student counselling service, and more broadly on available integration opportunities including student clubs, sports-teams and seasonal events. Counselling services are provided by ICD through an independent and impartial external counsellor; referrals to the counselling service are available to all students who contact the ICD Student Liaison Manager and/or the Administration Office. The college also offers a specially-tailored academic induction which is aimed at explaining key academic regulations – such as those which relate to plagiarism and referencing – in a way which is accessible to learners from diverse nationalities. This induction also includes training in the college's virtual learning environment, Moodle.

English Language Supports

ICD will maintain a relationship with an external partner (e.g. the Centre for English Studies) to ensure English language supports are available to all enrolled learners on request. ICD will continuously explore the feasibility of providing English language supports 'in house', but will only provide same when such supports can satisfactorily meet or exceed the quality of externally sourced supports.

Providing INIS/GNIB and Pastoral Supports Specifically for International Students:

ICD's administration office will ensure it provides ongoing assistance, information, and advocacy to international students, helping them with the complex visa applications and renewals process (INIS/GNIB) on an ongoing basis, and providing students with up to date information regarding how to use the Irish systems of visa renewals.