

## English Language Policy (LID-Pol-260)

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<b>Department</b>	Training Education & Lifelong Learning
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<b>Approving Body</b>	Academic Board
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<b>Related Documents</b>	<p>Programme Development Policy (LID-Pol-026)</p> <p>Access, Transfer and Progression Policy (LID-SOP-046)</p> <p>Access, Transfer and Progression Procedure (LID-SOP-047)</p> <p>Admissions Policy and Procedure (LID-Pol-046)</p>

## 1. Context

The general language of instruction, assessment, feedback and administration at RCPI is English, unless the programme of study involves another language as approved by the Programme Board and Academic Board.

## 2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all learners admitted to Royal College of Physicians of Ireland (RCPI) programmes delivered through the medium of English possess the level of English language proficiency required to participate fully in their education, engage with academic content, complete assessments, and (where relevant), practise safely within clinical environments. English language competence is therefore regarded as an essential criterion for admission. The policy is therefore designed to:

- Protect academic standards
- Safeguard learner success and progression
- Ensure fairness and transparency in admissions
- Mitigate academic and clinical risk in health-related programmes
- Align with national statutory quality assurance requirements

## 3. Principles and Scope

Admissions criteria relating to English language proficiency shall:

- Be proportionate to the level and nature of the award
- Be benchmarked to national practice
- Be applied consistently
- Support learner success
- Protect academic integrity and, where relevant, patient safety

This policy applies to all applicants seeking admission on RCPI academic programmes delivered wholly or predominantly through English, including professional diplomas and postgraduate awards.

It does not apply to continuing professional development offerings, membership examinations and RCPI training programmes which are governed under separate policies.

#### 4. Responsibilities

- It is the responsibility of each Programme Board to determine the entry criteria for its programme, including English Language requirements.
- It is the responsibility of the Academic Board to approve Programmes for development and delivery.
- It is the responsibility of the Learning, Innovation and Development Manager to ensure compliance with this policy during the development of new programmes.
- It is the responsibility of the Education Delivery Manager to ensure compliance with this policy in the processing of applications for access or transfer.

#### 5. Minimum English Language Requirements

5.1 In line with this policy, each Programme Board will determine specific English Language Requirements reflecting the level and nature of award to be offered.

5.2 Notwithstanding 5.1 above, the Academic Board shall normally approve RCPI Programmes where candidates are required to evidence one of the following criteria:

A) Primary Qualification in English

A primary degree (Level 8 or equivalent) awarded by a recognised higher education institution where the medium of instruction and assessment was English.

**OR**

B) Professional Experience in an English-Speaking Health Setting

Evidence of current or recent (two years) employment in a health or clinical setting where English is the primary language of professional communication, documentation, and service delivery and where such employment is subject to English language verification by a state regulator.

OR

C) Standardised English Language Test

An IELTS Academic score of 6.5 overall, with no individual band score below 6.0, or an equivalent qualification recognised by the institution.

Equivalent tests may include OET, TOEFL iBT, PTE Academic, or other recognised assessments, benchmarked against IELTS 6.5 using internationally accepted concordance tables.

Where English language testing is used to demonstrate proficiency, results must normally have been obtained within the previous two years.

RCPI acknowledges that individuals may present for admission with atypical background or borderline compliance with the above requirements. In such cases, the admissions team may seek an interview (video, telephone, in-person) with a member of the Programme Board to determine whether they meet the English Language requirement for entry.

## 6. Equity, Fairness and Transparency

Admissions decisions will be made in accordance with RCPI admissions policies and procedures and in line with:

- RCPI Policies (Admissions, Transfer and Progression)
  - Access, Transfer and Progression Policy (LID-Pol-046)
  - Access, Transfer and Progression Procedure (LID-SOP-047)
  - Admissions Policy and Procedure (LID-Pol-046)
- Institutional Equality, Diversity and Inclusion commitments
- Principles of procedural fairness

## 7. Reference Documents

ENQA (2015) Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)

[https://enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ESG\\_2015.pdf](https://enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ESG_2015.pdf)

Quality Qualifications Ireland (2015) Policy & Criteria for Access, Transfer & Progression in Relation to Learners for Providers of Further & Higher Education & Training

<https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/ATP%20Policy%20Restatement%20FINAL%202018.pdf>

Quality Qualifications Ireland (2016) Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines

<https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/Core%20Statutory%20Quality%20Assurance%20Guidelines.pdf>

Quality Qualifications Ireland (2017) Policies & Criteria for the Validation of Programmes of Education & Training

[https://www.qqi.ie/Publications/Publications/Initial\\_Validation\\_policy\\_7\\_10\\_13.pdf](https://www.qqi.ie/Publications/Publications/Initial_Validation_policy_7_10_13.pdf)

Quality Qualifications Ireland (2018) Topic Specific Statutory QA Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes

<https://www.qqi.ie/Publications/Publications/Statutory%20QA%20Guidelines%20for%20Blended%20Learning%20Programmes.pdf>