



Dublin International Study Centre

ENGLISH LANGUAGE POLICY

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English Language Policy

Policy Purpose

1. This policy outlines the English language requirements, curriculum integration, and learner support structures for the International Foundation Year (IFY) at DISC. It also sets out the rules and regulations implemented by DISC to support and enhance the English language development of all learners enrolled at the Centre. The aim is to ensure that learners are equipped with the English language knowledge, skills and competences necessary for progression to, and success in, Irish higher education undergraduate programmes.
2. This policy is aligned with the following national and international frameworks and guidelines:
 - **TrustEd English Language Education (ELE) Code of Practice** – which sets out the specific requirements for English language provision, including policies on curriculum design, assessment practices, learner support, and teacher qualifications.
 - **QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines** – which provide overarching quality assurance principles for education and training providers in Ireland.
 - **The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)** – which provides a standardised framework for describing language proficiency across a neutral scale of language competences. This is also used to inform curriculum design and assessment.

Scope

3. This policy applies to:
 - All applicants and enrolled learners on the IFY programme
 - All academic and support staff involved in teaching and learning
 - All admissions and quality assurance teams

Entry Requirements and Language Verification

4. To ensure that all students admitted to the IFY are equipped with the English language skills needed for academic success, applicants must meet minimum proficiency requirements aligned to internationally recognised standards, including the CEFR. The table below sets out the minimum English language entry levels for the general IFY and for specific degree pathways:

Programme	Minimum Entry Level	CEFR Equivalent

General IFY Entry	IELTS 5.0	B1+
BA Humanities / BA Joint Honours	IELTS 5.5	B2
BCL Law / BBL Business & Law	IELTS 5.5	B2

Internal Assessment and Placement

- Upon arrival, learners complete a diagnostic assessment covering writing, reading and speaking skills to ensure that they are at the expected level and to identify any additional support requirements.

Learners who enter the programme with an English language proficiency below IELTS 6.0 are required to complete an English diagnostic test on entry. Following the diagnostic assessment, those who marginally meet the required proficiency threshold are provided with personalised language support classes to strengthen specific skills and ensure they are appropriately prepared for academic study.

Curriculum Integration of English Language Development

- The programme includes a structured range of measures to support learners in developing the academic English language knowledge, skills, and competence required to successfully progress to their chosen undergraduate degree programme. Central to this provision is the Academic English Skills (AES) module, a credit-bearing component of the programme designed to develop learners' academic reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills, with learning outcomes aligned to CEFR levels B2.2 to C1.

CEFR-Aligned Learning Outcomes

- To support learners in their academic development and ensure alignment with internationally recognised language benchmarks, DISC adopts the CEFR as the foundation framework from which the language outcomes are derived. The IFY programme is designed to support students in developing their English language skills to a level appropriate for successful participation in university-level study, progressing from a B1 starting point towards B2.2 proficiency by the end of the programme. The table below outlines the expected learning outcomes across key language skill areas, indicating progression from the initial level to the target exit level:

Skill Area	B1.2 Descriptor (Start)	B2.2/C1 Descriptor (Target)
Reading	Can understand factual texts on familiar topics	Can understand complex texts, including

		argumentation
Writing	Can write simple connected text on familiar topics	Can write clear, detailed text on complex subjects
Listening	Can understand main points in familiar contexts	Can understand extended speech and lectures
Speaking	Can deal with most situations while travelling	Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity in academic settings

Ongoing Support and Monitoring

8. DISC provides structured, and responsive support to help learners develop their academic English language knowledge, skills and competence within the domain of higher education. The following mechanisms are in place:
- AES tutorials for language development.
 - Support classes providing scaffolded support in reception and production across the four skills.
 - Formative and summative assessments with intended learning outcomes mapped to CEFR.
 - Individual feedback reports after each assessment cycle.
 - Targeted intervention plans where learners are not meeting agreed language milestones.

English Language Use in Centre: Rules and Regulations

9. As part of the IFY programme, all subjects are delivered exclusively in English. This provides conditions for effective language acquisition and is central to enabling learners to progress to higher education and experience a fulfilling learning experience at university.

To support this objective, all learners are expected to use the target language, i.e. English, at all times while on DISC premises and during any DISC-organised activities. This includes time spent in classrooms, common areas, at meetings and during all official excursions or programme-related events.

Rules and Procedures:

- Learners should speak English at all times within the Centre and during all DISC-organised activities. However, in cases of emergency or serious personal circumstances, this requirement will not be enforced.
- English is the language of instruction, discussion, and assessment across all

subjects and learning activities.

- Teachers and staff monitor, and encourage, the use of English throughout the Centre.
- Teachers model appropriate English.

Teachers/staff have the authority to ask a learner(s) to leave the classroom after two verbal warnings if a learner(s) refuses to adhere to DISC's English-only policy.

- All breaches of this regulation, where no mitigating circumstances apply, must be recorded by the relevant staff member in the Intervention Log, and a follow-up support plan will be arranged.
- Additional language support is available for learners who are struggling with fluency or confidence, with extra support classes provided based on weekly performance reviews and tutor feedback.

These measures are designed to be supportive rather than punitive. They are intended to promote immersion in an English-speaking environment, which is crucial for language development and overall success in the IFY programme.

Assessment and Progression Standards

10. Assessment within the IFY programme is designed to measure student progress in a transparent, consistent, and academically rigorous manner. English language development is integral to the overall curriculum, and the AES module contributes directly to progression outcomes. AES assessments are mapped to the CEFR framework so that learners are appropriately supported in developing the language skills and competences required for successful transition to undergraduate study:

- AES components are credit-bearing and contribute to progression.
- Assessments include presentations, essays, group work assignments, and examinations in reading, writing and listening.
- All assessment rubrics are aligned with the CEFR to promote transparency and consistency.

Learners must demonstrate proficiency at CEFR B2.2/C1 by programme completion to progress to university.

Staff Qualification

11. To enable teachers to fully support learners' development of academic English, DISC will:
 - Recruit and deploy teachers who hold an NFQ Level 8 degree and DELTA or CELTA (or equivalent).
 - Provide ongoing CPD in E(G)AP language teaching and assessment literacy.

Quality Assurance and Review

12. This policy is reviewed annually by the Head of Quality, with input from the Head of English, Deputy Director – Curriculum & Progression, and the Programme Manager. Interim quality checks are conducted each term to evaluate and ensure that practice is both aligned with CEFR standards and organisational requirements.

Evidence Base

Reviews are informed by triangulated evidence, including:

- Learner feedback (induction and module surveys, focus groups, informal feedback).
- Assessment data (pass and progression rates, CEFR attainment at exit, academic integrity incidents).
- Moderation and external reports (internal moderation records, External Examiner reports).
- Engagement indicators (attendance, participation in AES/support classes, use of intervention plans).
- Staff consultations (teacher feedback, line-manager reviews, CPD evaluations).
- Quality records (complaints and appeals records, reasonable accommodations applications, risk register items).
- Regulatory and sector updates (QQI communications, Department of Education guidance, ELE/TrustEd updates, partner-university feedback).
- Learner feedback
- Assessment data
- Staff consultations
- Updates from QQI or the Department of Education

Communication of Policy

13. This policy is:
- Available on DISC's website and VLE (Study Smart)
 - Distributed to learners during induction
 - Covered in staff training and quality assurance briefings

Document Control

Document name		English Language Policy	
Document owner		Amir Hussain	
Approved by		Academic Board	
Approval date		March 2026	
Next review date		August 2026	
Version		1,0	
Policy applies to		All students	
Related documents			
Version	Date	Update by	Details