



RCSI

English Language Policy Statement

RCSI DEVELOPING HEALTHCARE LEADERS WHO MAKE A DIFFERENCE WORLDWIDE

Document History

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1 Introduction

RCSI is ranked in the Top 50 in the Times Higher world ranking 2023 for 'International Outlook'. As one of the world's truly global education institutions, RCSI internationalises on many levels including through branch campuses, international students and faculty, mobility initiatives and international collaborations. RCSI has a diverse student body; in 2021-22 students of 97 nationalities attended RCSI. Therefore, the needs of international students are an important focus of pastoral and academic support service provision. The purpose of this English Language Policy Statement is to outline RCSI's comprehensive approach to supports in one of these areas i.e. English language proficiency.

This statement intends to demonstrate RCSI's adherence to Section 5.5 of *QQI's Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Higher Education to International Learners*. In doing so it:

- Clearly documents RCSI's policy approach and processes for assessing English language proficiency entry requirements.
- Details the institution's strategies for the provision, support, and development of English for Academic Purposes (EAP).
- Outlines the measures in place for providing English language support to non-native English speakers prior to and throughout their higher education programmes.
- Outlines the arrangements, including quality assurance, credit, and awarding mechanisms for various types of EAP programmes.
- For international foundation year programmes, specifies the quality assurance, credit, and awarding arrangements, as well as the corporate and academic governance structures in cases where these programmes are delivered in partnership with other entities, including private English language schools or independent education providers.¹

This statement applies to all university programmes that lead to awards included within the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), encompassing undergraduate and postgraduate programmes offered to international learners. It outlines a robust framework for English language across the university, supporting student success for all non-native English-speaking students. By setting out this policy statement, RCSI commits to supporting high standards of English language proficiency, fostering the learning environment for its diverse international student body.

2 English Language Proficiency Entry Requirements

Teaching in RCSI is through the medium of English; consequently, applicants are required to demonstrate a high level of English language competence.

Minimum Requirements – Undergraduate Programmes

RCSI utilises IELTS² (the International English Language Testing System) as a means of validating applicants' English language proficiency in line with NUI requirements. In such cases, applicants whose first language is not English must normally submit an Academic IELTS score of 6.5 with no individual band (reading, writing, listening and speaking) lower than 6.0. These scores demonstrate that the candidate's English language proficiency is borderline B2/C1 on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)³ for languages.

IELTS Certificates must be less than two years old at the time of admission. Equivalent scores in TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) are also acceptable.

¹ Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Higher Education to International Learners, QQI, July 2023

² <https://ielts.org/>

³ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/table-1-cefr-3.3-common-reference-levels-global-scale>



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Applicants graduating from programmes that are delivered entirely through English (e.g., International Baccalaureate or A-Levels) are not required to provide an IELTS certificate as part of their initial application. Applicants presenting A-Levels must hold a GCSE English grade C or above to meet RCSI's English language requirement.

Minimum Requirements – PG Programmes

English language requirements for Postgraduate programmes are published on the RCSI website: <https://www.rcsi.com/dublin/postgraduate/policies-and-guidelines/english-language-requirements>. Applicants who have completed (three or more years, cumulatively) of undergraduate/postgraduate full-time studies in the medium of the English language, and students registered with the NMBI, are exempt from these requirements.

Minimum Requirements – International College of Pharmaceutical Innovation (Suzhou)

For progression to year 2 of the UG programmes, students must normally achieve an Academic IELTS score of 6.0 (with no band <5.5) or TOEFL 60-78. Admission to PG programmes normally requires a CET6 score of >500 and a B in the speaking test, or IELTS 6.5 (with no band <6.0) or TOEFL 79-93. Exemptions from/alternatives to these requirements exist in certain circumstances.

3 Support & Development of English for Academic Purposes

RCSI is dedicated to enhancing the communication skills of its international learners, including its non-native English-speaking student population. Specific curricular provisions to support the development of English for Academic Purposes are made within programmes where this need has been identified. In such cases, this is provided through a holistic and embedded means taking an academic literacies approach to English for Academic Skills building in the early years of the undergraduate programmes.

Induction processes support the development of academic writing skills e.g. for international non-native English-speaking postgraduate students, the induction programmes delivered in a pre-sessional format includes provisions to support academic/scientific writing skills.

4 English Language Supports

Continuous language and communication skills support are provided, as required in Dublin, through RCSI's Language Learning Lab. This is both a virtual and physical space which encompasses a dedicated curated collection of flexible language learning tools for non-native English-speaking students. Ongoing management of technology-based, language and communication resources and laboratory learning environments is under the guidance of RCSI's dedicated Lecturer in Communications.

Learners wishing to access these facilities, or identified as potentially benefitting from support, are referred to this service through RCSI's Centre for Mastery: Personal, Professional & Academic Success ([CoMPPAS](#)) whose multidisciplinary team support students in achieving their academic and personal goals. Other referral routes include consultation with the Lecturer in Communications or via the Personal Tutor system.

5 Quality Assurance and Credit Awarded for English for Academic Purposes Programmes/Modules

Credit-bearing modules integrated within curricula are quality assured through the normal programme quality assurance mechanisms as set out in RCSI's Quality Framework. This includes a robust programme accreditation process, external examiners, student surveys etc. The RCSI Awards & Qualifications Committee oversees the end-to-end RCSI programme accreditation process, from application through to approval by the RCSI Medicine & Health Sciences Board and the Senate of the National University of Ireland (NUI). This accreditation process ensures the award of European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) credits, as appropriate. The policies and procedures for the accreditation of new degree programmes are designed to satisfy the degree-awarding requirements of RCSI and those of the NUI.



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6 International Foundation Year Programmes

The International Medical/Pharmacy Commencement Programmes (IMCP/IPCP) prepare international students for health sciences education and lead to the award of an RCSI/National University of Ireland (NUI) Certificate in Biomedical Sciences (NFQ Level 6) and Certificate in Biopharmaceutical Sciences (NFQ Level 6). These programmes are delivered in partnership with Munster Technological University (MTU) and Castel Education. Service level agreements (SLAs) exist between RCSI and MTU, and RCSI and Castel. Principal responsibility for the programmes rests with RCSI, with defined responsibilities delegated to MTU and Castel, as set out in these SLAs.

RCSI leads the design, development and validation of the programmes, delivers scientific and elective academic content (alongside MTU) and maintains ongoing executive oversight and academic governance of the programmes through regular executive and operational meetings. Students have access to the RCSI VLE.

MTU provides the teaching and learning infrastructure including both physical and virtual learning spaces and library spaces, in addition to student supports encompassing academic, disability and health services, and sport and gym facilities. MTU deliver English for Academic Purpose modules to develop knowledge of English language and discourse structure suitable for academic work and research.

Castel Education provides the English language teaching modules IELTS 1 and 2, which prepare students for the official IELTS examination and the English for Medical Studies 1 and 2 modules, which develop English language skills and vocabulary for a career and study in healthcare professions. Castel Education are responsible for the quality assurance of this English language component of the programmes. Castel monitors and maintains quality assurance processes for all elements of the English language teaching through its acquisition of, and maintenance of, national and international quality education standards. Castel was accredited by ACELS (the Accreditation and Coordination of English Language Services) in 2012 and Equals in 2017. Castel is obliged to uphold quality assurance processes for all components of the English Language Provision curriculum as part of ACELS and EAQUALS requirements.

RCSI Medicine & Health Sciences Board (MHSB) is the governing body for all RCSI educational programmes leading to NFQ awards. It exercises its oversight of these activities through the Academic Council. Academic Council is the senior academic and administrative forum. The RCSI Awards & Qualifications Committee (A&QC) is delegated authority from Academic Council for programme approval, validation and revalidation. Changes to existing programmes are evaluated by the A&QC against sectoral standards including the NUI regulations. Programmes are ultimately approved by RCSI's Medicine & Health Sciences Board and the NUI Senate.

The IMCP/IPCP Executive Committee includes staff from RCSI, MTU and Castel. It is chaired by RCSI and meets four times a year to oversee recruitment strategies, student numbers, progression numbers, student accommodation options and programme dates. The IMCP/IPCP Executive Committee ensures academic governance requirements are appropriately addressed through engagement with RCSI Registry and other stakeholders as appropriate. The academic regulations that apply to these programmes, are considered and approved through the IMCP/IPCP Executive Committee, with consultation as appropriate through RCSI Registry, and the party responsible for each, is defined and assigned.

IMCP/IPCP Operations meetings are chaired by RCSI and take place biweekly during the academic year. Membership includes key RCSI, MTU and Castel staff who collaboratively manage programme operations. The IMCP/IPCP Course Board meets six times a year; membership includes all teaching staff from MTU, RCSI and Castel. IMCP/IPCP Exam boards consist of Module Examinations Boards (MEBs) and Programme Progression and Award Boards (PABs). Membership of both includes external and internal examiners. Other key governance and quality assurance bodies include IMCP/IPCP joint academic workshops and the English Language Working Group (see Figure 1).



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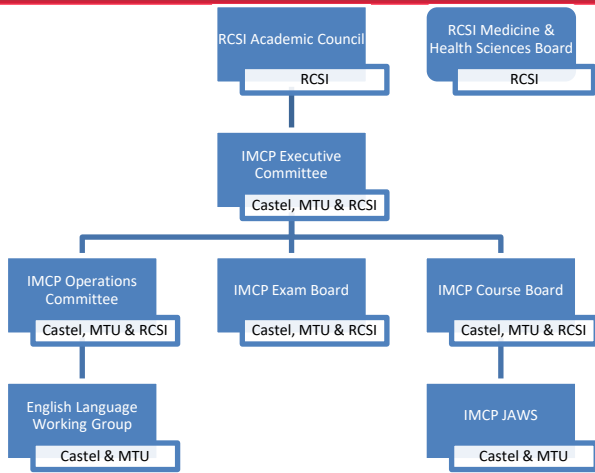


Figure 1: Key International Commencement Programme Governance Committees