

Policy name: English Language Policy

Approved by RIAM Governance Committee: 13th November 2023

Approved by RIAM Governing Body: 14th December 2023

Approved by Trinity Academic Council: 27th March 2024

1. Context

RIAM aims for the highest standards of quality in all its admission related activities. A range of policies, procedures and processes exist to support recruitment, admission and retention of international learners in programmes of education in RIAM (refer §9.0).

The International Education Mark (IEM) is one of a suite of measures designed to protect the interests of learners engaged with the Irish education and training system. The *Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Higher Education to International Learners* requires Higher Education providers to develop an English language policy, as part of the authorisation process for the IEM.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Lisbon Recognition Convention on Recognition of Foreign Qualifications.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline RIAM's fair, transparent and consistent requirements and standards for evaluating the English language ability of international learners applying for admission to RIAM, and to describe RIAM's policy and process for English language support for international applicants in receipt of a conditional offer to study at RIAM and to international learners once they are registered.

3. Benefits

- 3.1 This policy supports the enrolment and admission of suitably qualified students and the creation of a diverse student body.
- 3.2. This policy complements the existing suite of policies, procedures and process that ensure the quality of international recruitment and engagement and specifically complies with the

Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Higher Education to International Learners (2023).

4. Scope

- 4.1 This policy applies to all programmes of study at RIAM leading to academic qualifications awarded by the University of Dublin (degrees) and Trinity College Dublin (certificates and diplomas), which number the Diploma in Music, Bachelor in Music, Master in Music Performance, and Doctorate in Music Performance

5. Principles

- 5.1 RIAM seeks to register students with a broad range of talents and the ability to engage with and benefit from the distinctive RIAM education in order to create a diverse student body.
- 5.2. As an inclusive and responsible HE provider, RIAM operates a fair, transparent and consistent admission policy that supports the successful participation of international learners on their chosen courses.
- 5.3 RIAM recognises that it is not in the interest of an applicant to be admitted into a programme of study on which they are unlikely to be successful because of a lack of English language competency.

6. Definitions

- 6.1 An international learner is defined as an 'a person who is not an Irish citizen but is lawfully in the state primarily to receive education and training' (Refer to the 'Policy on Authorisation to use the International Education Mark', for details on how the definition of an international learner is to be applied for the purpose of the International Education Mark).

7. Policy

7.1 Entry Requirements

- 7.1.1. RIAM requires international learners to meet certain minimum requirements in English language proficiency in order to ensure successful participation in its

programmes. These requirements are approved by the University Council, are documented on the RIAM website [Entry Requirements \(Undergraduate\) | RIAM](#) & [Entry Requirements \(Postgraduate\) | RIAM](#) and in the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Prospectus [Third-level Applications | RIAM](#)

- 7.1.2. All applicants for whom English is not a first language and who have not been educated through the medium of English must present verifiable evidence of the required level of English language proficiency for their intended course of study as specified in the associated procedures to this policy, as outlined in Appendix 1.

7.2 Minimum Requirements for English Language Proficiency

- 7.2.1. RIAM's minimum standard level of English language proficiency required for entry to a degree course leading to a Diploma, Bachelor or Master award shall normally be an overall score of 5.5 in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS Academic) or equivalent. The requirement for the Doctor in Music Performance programme is IELTS 6.5 or equivalent, refer to Appendix 1.
- 7.2.2. Applicants who receive a conditional offer subject to English language requirements must fulfil the conditions of that offer through achieving minimum scores in specified English language proficiency tests.
- 7.2.3. English proficiency tests are standardized tests designed to evaluate a student's ability to use the English language. These tests typically measure the individual's knowledge and ability to use English in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. RIAM recognises several different types of English proficiency tests that are commonly used to assess an individual's ability in the English language, *refer to Appendix 1*.
- 7.2.4. An applicant can appeal a decision where the English language qualification that they are presenting for enrolment is not recognised by RIAM. The appeal should be submitted to the Admissions Officer in the first instance and the outcome of the appeal can be escalated, if required, to the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies or the Dean of Graduate Studies, whichever is appropriate.

7.3 English Language Learning Supports

7.3.1. RIAM provides a range of induction and orientation opportunities that is tailored to the needs of its undergraduate and postgraduate international learners, including Visiting and Erasmus students, most notably its English language conversation classes over the first 8 weeks of term.

7.3.2 In addition, RIAM's Tertiary Office is available to offer advice and support to international learners who have queries.

8. Responsibility

8.1 The responsibility for this policy lies with the Senior Staff Officer, Registry.

8.2 Prospective students are responsible for ensuring that their application fulfils all admission requirements, including English language proficiency test certification as relevant.

9. Related Documents

9.1 [Admission and Transfer Policy](#)

9.2 [Education Recruitment Agent Policy](#)

9.3 [Code of Practice for the provision of programmes of Higher Education to International Learners \(QQI 2023\)](#)

10. Document Control

10.1 Date of initial approval: 13th November 2023

10.2 Date of latest review: 27th March 2024

10.3 Date of next review: Academic Year 2026/2027

Appendix 1 Procedures for English Language Provision

Accepted English language proficiency tests

1. The following international English language proficiency tests are accepted by RIAM for the purpose of admissions:
 - Cambridge English Qualifications
 - Duolingo English Test
 - International English Language Testing System (IELTS Academic)
 - Pearson English International Certification
 - Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)
2. English language proficiency tests scores must be dated within two years at the time of application.
3. Minimum scores in these tests are benchmarked according to the descriptions of language proficiency contained in the Council of Europe's *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment* (CEFR).
4. International learners are expected to demonstrate evidence that they have already achieved a minimum of a B2 proficiency level (Independent User) and are equipped to operate through the medium of English as a Proficient User at C1 or C2 level during their academically challenging studies.
5. Specified High School/Secondary Examinations are accepted in lieu of English language proficiency tests.

English language requirements for international learners

6. RIAM's standard English requirements for undergraduate and postgraduate admissions are:
 - **Cambridge English Qualifications**

Minimum overall score of 165 on the Cambridge English scale, i.e. minimum Grade B2 First or Proficiency Certificate (UG and Masters)

Minimum overall score of 180 on the Cambridge English scale, i.e. minimum Grade C1 in Advanced or Proficiency Certificate (Doctorate)
 - **Duolingo English Test**
Minimum overall score of 95, no individual sub-scores below 90 (UG and PG)

Minimum overall score of 120/160, no individual sub-scores below 105 (Doctorate)

- **International English Language Testing System (IELTS)**
Minimum overall score of 5.5 (UG and PG), no individual band below 5 (UG and Masters)

Minimum overall score of 6.5 (Doctorate), no individual band below 6 (Doctorate only)
 - **Pearson English International Certification**
PTE Academic: Minimum overall score of 45, no section scores below 40 (UG and Masters)

PTE Academic: a minimum score of 58 to be eligible (with no section score below 55) (Doctorate)
 - **Test of English as a Foreign Language Internet-based test (TOEFL iBT)**

Minimum overall score of 46 with a minimum score in writing of 14 (UG and PG)

Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL iBT) Minimum overall score of 79 with a minimum score in writing of 21 (Doctorate Courses)
 - **Trinity College London**

Trinity ISE II (B2) with at least merit in each skill category (Undergraduate and Masters)

Trinity ISE III (C1) with at least merit in each skill category (Doctorate)
7. Applicants who present any of the following High School/Secondary Examinations will not be asked to fulfil the English language requirements by a separate standardised English language proficiency test:
- Irish Leaving Certificate: a grade 6 or better in ordinary level English
 - French Baccalaureate, International Option: 12 with coefficient > 5, 14 with coefficient < 5
 - GCSE: a grade C/5 or better in English
 - US High School: a grade C in English taken in final year
 - International Baccalaureate: English A1, A2 or B: SL4 if presenting IB through English, HL5 if presenting through French or Spanish
 - Hong Kong, HKDSE: Level 4 or better in English Language
 - Malaysia, SPM: Grade C or better in English 1119
8. Any recommendations for changes to the levels, bands or sub-scores and concordances of these international English language proficiency tests are brought

by the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies and Dean of Graduate Studies for consideration by the Undergraduate/Graduate Studies Committee and University Council for final approval.

9. An applicant can appeal a decision where the qualifications they are presenting for Admissions purposes is not recognised by RIAM. The appeal should be submitted to the Admissions Officer in the first instance and that outcome of the appeal can be escalated, if required, to the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies or the Dean of Graduate Studies, whichever is appropriate (Ref. Admissions Appeal Process).