Section 8 – Student Supports

Subject:	Procedures relating to Supports available to International Learners	
Date Approved by Board of Directors:		**July 2019**
Policy Version	1/2019	Date due for Revision	February 2024
Parent Policy	Policy on Supports available to International Learners	

INTRODUCTION

The College adheres to the Procedures set out below, but likewise it expects that International learners have to present evidence of entry qualifications which are equivalent to the required entry qualifications. Where appropriate, consultation on international equivalency levels will be sought by ICHAS's programme co-ordinator.

Commitments of the College to International Learners

The College:

- Designates the course co-ordinator to be responsible for inquiries about pastoral care issues from international learners.
- Offers orientation information prior to learners' arrival (e.g. Transport and accommodation services).
- Ensures that inductions offered to learners also meet the particular needs of international learners (including inter-cultural awareness).
- The induction programme is provided to all cohorts of international learners that register or enrol at various times of the year, including learners that access programmes through advanced entry.
- Provides information on all integration opportunities available to international learners and encourage learners to avail of those opportunities.
- Ensures that international learners are aware of opportunities to participate in, and be represented at, engagements between the provider and the student body.
- Have mechanisms in place to support international learners financially in instances of personal or other emergency or hardship.
- Facilitate and encourage feedback from international learners on the delivery of any supports and services. This includes informing learners about complaints processes for these services.

- Offers academic induction that is tailored to the needs of international learners. Inductions is provided to learners and cohorts that enrol at different points during the year, including those accessing programmes though advanced entry.
- Ensures the information provided at academic induction is easily accessible throughout the academic year and offers reminders of this information at key points during the year (e.g. In the lead up to examinations or submission of assignments)
- Ensures where possible and appropriate, that there is a balance of learners of different nationalities (including domestic learners) in different learning settings (e.g. Classrooms, tutorials, project-work etc.).
- Offers support to international learners with English as a second language within the learning environment.
- Ensures that staff are provided with training and support regarding intercultural competence to facilitate an appropriate and effective delivery of services to international learners

RESPONSIBILITIES

ROLE/ PERSON	RESPONSIBILITY
Learner	Supply the college with accurate and up to date information regarding the requirements for international students and ensure they have met their visa requirements prior to commencement.
Programme Co-ordinator	Supply the international applicant with all the necessary information

PROCEDURES

The College supports international applicants throughout their application and study phases of student life to help them get the most out of student life in Ireland. In compliance with the QQI Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Students, the College:

- provides information, advice and guidance on visas applications and immigration
- provides advice and guidance relating to all aspects of international student life
- delivers presentations and workshops on a range of practical issues at induction.
- Update international students on relevant issues through the Learning Management System and website/online services.
- ensures that information provided to potential international learners about the college and its provision is clear, unambiguous and up-to-date and shall include information about the intended purpose of the provision (e.g. to prepare a learner for further study or specific employment, etc.) in programme related material.
- Provides details of the arrangements for PEL where appropriate.
- Provides information regarding Access, Transfer and Progression in a way that is accessible to international learners.
- Provides accurate and clear information on the college´s organisational structure and facilities in all marketing and promotional materials.

- Provides contact details for an appropriate person(s) to provide assistance with queries from international learners prior to enrolment (normally the relevant Programme Coordinator)
- Provides clear information on attendance requirements as well as any sanctions for learners who do not fulfil these requirements and will include information on the process of expulsion.
- Provides the commencement dates for all programmes.
- Provides information on "foundation" programmes for entry into academic programmes (in particular higher education programmes) or transition to new academic cultures or disciplines.
- In advance of enrolment the College:
  - Ensures the availability and provision of all relevant financial information
  - Ensures that the learner is made aware of any insurance required or advised; e.g. Medical or travel insurance.
  - Clearly specifies entry requirements for international learners.
  - Clearly specifies English language proficiency requirements for applicants whose first language is not English.
  - Provides a timely written response to an international applicant who is refused admission.
  - Provides information on compulsory fees for the full duration of the programme from registration and admission to graduation or exit from the programme. Where fees may change, this shall be clear to applicants in information provided.
  - Provides information on the collection or payment of fees (including sanctions for late payment and debt collection for moneys owed).
  - Establishes a fees structure that supports the mission of the organisation and reflects the costs associated with quality provision.
  - Ensures that there are no additional fees or unexpected charges that international learners have not been made aware of.
  - Issues a receipt to international learners upon receipt of payment of fees which will include a breakdown of fees paid.
  - Provides information on full and partial refunds which will outline the conditions under which a refund will be granted (e.g. A refused visa application in the case of a non-EEA learner).
  - Provide information on any financial supports or resources that exist within the organisation, or nationally, for international learners.
  - provide information on the full cost of studying in Ireland.
  - Providers have to furnish prospective learners with information regarding the average cost of living (e.g. food, transport, medical care) for the course duration including information on:
    - accommodation services or for placement with a host family
    - Additional Fees as relevant (e.g. review of exam results, clinical supervision, personal therapy etc.).
    - Any other costs related to provision of student services as considered relevant.

Application Procedures for International Learners
- All applicants are interviewed by a senior member of Academic staff as per the Access, Applications & Admissions Policy and associated procedures (as set out in Section 5 of the QAE Manual).
- The fully completed application form has to be accompanied by verified copies of relevant qualifications (either second or third level as appropriate).
- Applicants whose first language is not English are required to provide evidence of English language competency in accordance with the requirements of the validated programme. ICHAS accept the following:
    - IELTS (International English Language Testing System), or equivalent score of TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) normally IELTS 6 at undergraduate level and IELTS 6.5 at postgraduate level, except where otherwise stated in validation documents.
    - Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL) or equivalent of C in the case of undergraduate applicants. In the case of postgraduate programme applicants are required to indicate a minimum score of to B2+.
    - Successful completion of major award at level 5 or higher mapped to the NFQ completed through English.

The application process verifies that those applicants requiring Visas to study in Ireland meet the requirements of the INIS services. Applicants are referred to the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Services (INIS) website (www.inis.gov.ie) for more comprehensive information at or prior to the point of application.

Linked Policies and Procedures

Linked Policies	Policy on Access, Applications and Admissions
	Policy on Supports available to International Learners
Linked Procedures	Procedures associated with Access, Applications and Admissions