



Dearbhú Cáilíochta  
agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann  
Quality and  
Qualifications Ireland



# Higher Education Pathway Assessment Report: Maynooth University



## About this assessment

This report details the findings of the assessment conducted by an Assessment Panel on behalf of Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) of Maynooth University's IEM Application Statement (IEMAS), which was submitted to QQI as part of the provider's application for authorisation to use the TrustEd Ireland mark. The desk assessment was conducted by the following Assessment Panel:

| Name               | Role                           | Affiliation  |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Prof Joanne Wright | Chairperson                    | Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education & Students), University of Sydney, Australia |
| Fiona Crozier      | Report Writer/Secretary        | International Higher Education Consultant, United Kingdom                      |
| Áine Ní Shé        | International Education Expert | Munster Technological University, Ireland                                      |
| Maria Malik        | Learner                        | Atlantic Technological University, Ireland                                     |

## Outcome of the assessment

This assessment evaluates the provider's compliance with the criteria set out in the Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Higher Education to International Learners (HE Code). From the evidence provided by the provider in the self-assessment document, the IEM Application Statement (IEMAS), the Assessment Panel concludes that the provider should be:

| Outcome                                    | Please tick |
|--|-------------|
| Authorised to use TrustEd Ireland Mark     | ✓           |
| Not Authorised to use TrustEd Ireland Mark |             |

Please see below a summary of the outcome by HE Code principle (5.1-5.6)

## 5.1 Marketing and Recruitment:

**Principle: HE providers recruit international learners in a transparent and ethical manner. In their marketing and promotional materials, they ensure that clear, accurate, transparent, accessible, relevant and up to date information is provided.**

5.1.1 (a) HE providers shall endeavour proactively to understand the information needs of prospective international learners.

5.1.1 (b) HE providers shall ensure that information provided to potential international learners about the institution and its provision is clear, accurate, transparent, accessible, relevant and up to date. This shall include information about the intended purpose of the provision e.g., to prepare a learner for further study or specific employment. Where necessary, it should also include information on associated immigration requirements, including requirements for learners requiring entry visas and/or immigration permission.

5.1.1 (c) Where applicable, information should also be provided on the professional accreditation status of programmes.

5.1.1 (d) Where applicable, information on practice placement requirements, and how these may be fulfilled, should also be made be known to prospective international learners.

5.1.1 (e) HE providers shall be compliant with information for learner requirements, as set out in Section 67 of the 2012 Act as amended. They shall confirm:

- (i) whether or not the successful completion of the programme entitles the learner to an award;
- (ii) the awarding body making the award;
- (iii) the title of the award;
- (iv) whether the award is one that is included within the NFQ;
- (v) the level at which the award is included within the NFQ;
- (vi) whether the award is a major, minor, special purpose or supplemental award, as identified within the NFQ;
- (vii) the procedures for access, transfer and progression that are in place, including the pathways for international learners for further study, employment, and residency, where applicable (see also section 4.2 above);
- (viii) details, where appropriate, of the arrangements in place for the protection of enrolled learners under Section 65 of the 2012 Act as amended (see section 4.5.2 above and Appendix Two of this code).

5.1.1 (f) HE providers shall ensure that information is provided in a way that is accessible to international learners and assists them in making informed decisions. This information should support international learners in understanding all matters related to a programme prior to enrolment. If provided in a different language, it is the responsibility of the HE provider to ensure that the information is clear, accurate, transparent, accessible, relevant and up to date.

5.1.1 (g) HE providers shall accurately represent their organisation and facilities in all marketing and promotional materials and ensure that no false or misleading information is issued.

5.1.1 (h) HE providers shall provide appropriate contact details for an appropriate person or persons to provide assistance with queries from international learners prior to enrolment.

5.1.1 (i) HE providers shall state the commencement dates for all programmes.

5.1.2 (a) Prior to enrolment, HE providers shall ensure the availability and provision of relevant financial information pertaining to the study and average subsistence costs of their programme provision, from the period of enrolment through to graduation.

5.1.2 (b) Prior to enrolment, HE providers shall ensure that the learner is made aware of any insurance requirements, e.g., medical or travel insurance, and of the availability of accommodation, and any accommodation services provided.

5.1.2 (c) HE providers shall have a written agreement with each education agent, recruitment partner or consultant that formally represents their programme provision.

5.1.2 (d) HE providers shall ensure that any contractual arrangements entered with an education agent, recruitment partner or consultant incorporate the principles of the London Statement. Existing contracts that do not incorporate these principles shall be amended appropriately within two years of the date of the HE provider's application for authorisation to use the IEM.

5.1.2 (e) The contract between the HE provider and education agent, recruitment partner or consultant shall include a termination clause in instances where the agent does not comply with the principles of the London Statement or is found to have acted in an unethical fashion to the detriment of international learners.

5.1.2 (f) HE providers shall conduct due diligence e.g., three reference checks, to verify the track record of education agents, recruitment partners or consultants, in relation to learner protection issues, prior to entering into a contractual agreement.

5.1.2 (g) HE providers shall ensure that all education agents, recruitment partners or consultants contracted to them are in possession of accurate and up to date information regarding the provider and its provision.

5.1.2 (h) HE providers shall have in place a transparent process for monitoring and reviewing the activities of education agents, recruitment partners or consultants including, where appropriate, feedback from applicants, to ensure that the education agent, recruitment partner or consultant is operating within the spirit of the HE Code and the London Statement.

5.1.2 (i) HE providers required to put in place arrangements for the protection of enrolled learners under Section 65 of the 2012 Act as amended shall do so prior to the recruitment of learners (see also section 4.5 and Appendix Two of this HE code).

## Summary

The panel concurs with the University's assessment that it is fully compliant with 17 out of the 18 fully or partially applicable criteria in Principle 5.1: Marketing and Recruitment.

5.1.1 (a)-(d): The International Office has overall responsibility for international marketing and recruitment but an integrative approach ensures that the whole student cohort benefits from the processes in place at the University to provide accurate and accessible information. The International Student pages of the website provide targeted information in this regard to both prospective and newly arrived students. This site also invites international students to participate in the Unibuddy platform to engage with current international student ambassadors who can chat with them about individual programmes and life as an international student at MU.

5.1.1 (e): The University's IEMAS application notes that 5.1.1 (e) (viii) regarding protection of enrolled learners is not applicable, which is why partial applicability was selected for this criterion.

5.1.2 (c)-(h): There is active and targeted engagement with both prospective and newly arrived international students which includes a series of informal feedback mechanisms. The feedback received is used to inform the next recruitment cycle and work is in place to enhance more formal feedback mechanisms, via an Enrollers' Survey, for newly arrived students.

According to the University's IEMAS application statement, "...this initiative aims to:

- Collect feedback from enrolled students about their experience accessing information and

navigating the admissions process.

- Identify strengths and areas for improvement in communication and service delivery.
- Use data-driven insights to refine marketing strategies and enhance the overall experience for future applicants”.

The University has undertaken this proactive measure as it believes that it reinforces its commitment to maintaining high standards in transparency and student engagement. The initiative will begin in September 2026; the panel supports the University in its implementation of this enhancement and encourages it to ensure that implementation is timely.

Agent contracts are renewed on an annual basis on the basis of a satisfactory annual review. As well as annual monitoring through the Agent Monitoring form, International Office staff endeavour, during their travels, to meet with agents in their own countries. Contracts with agents include a termination clause, although, to date, there has been no need to use this. Further improvements to the Agent Monitoring form are underway to seek and include student views on their experience with an agent if that is how they were recruited. The University expects these applicant feedback processes to be in place for the 2026 recruitment cycle.

The panel supports this enhancement and recommends that MU ensure that the processes are in place as expected (5.1.2 (h)).

### Principle 5.2 Admissions and Qualifications’ Recognition:

#### **HE providers operate fair, transparent and consistent admission policies that support the successful participation of international learners in their chosen programmes**

5.2 (a) HE providers shall clearly specify entry requirements for international learners that support the successful participation of the learners in their chosen programmes.

5.2 (b) HE providers’ entry requirements shall clearly specify English language proficiency requirements for applicants whose first language is not English. These should include references to the benchmarks used in assessing proficiency requirements and, like other entry requirements, support the successful participation of international learners in their chosen programmes.

5.2 (c) HE providers shall adopt the principles, and follow the guidance, contained in the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC) and subsidiary texts in assessing the qualifications presented by international learners for the purpose of admission to their programmes. Qualifications should be assessed in an accessible and fair manner and within a reasonable timeframe.

5.2 (d) HE providers should recognise qualifications that are recognised for the purpose of access to programmes in an international applicant’s own higher education system, unless a substantial difference can be demonstrated between the requirements for admission in the applicant’s own higher education system and those of the Irish HE provider.

5.2 (e) HE providers shall provide a timely written response to international applicants who are refused admission.

5.2 (f) Where a HE provider decides to withhold recognition of a qualification from an international learner for the purpose of admission, the reasons for the refusal to grant recognition shall be stated, and information provided concerning possible measures the applicant may take to obtain recognition at a later stage. If a HE provider decides to withhold recognition of a qualification for the purpose of admission, or if no decision is taken, the applicant shall be able to make an appeal within a reasonable time limit.

5.2 (g) HE providers shall support QQI, as appropriate, in implementing its statutory function to facilitate the recognition outside the state of awards made in the state, including the home countries of their international learners.

### Summary

The panel concurs with the University's assessment of full compliance against all 7 of the criteria in Principle 5.2: Admissions and Qualifications' Recognition.

Overall, MU ensures that, in relation to admissions requirements, it uses appropriate benchmarks and consultation with international academic standards, which are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure alignment with evolving standards and student needs. Admission requirements are established in collaboration with programme directors and faculty members thus ensuring that the necessary academic rigor and language proficiency demands of specific disciplines is maintained. Any changes to the general University Entry Requirements or English-language Entry Requirements must also be reviewed by APC and approved by Academic Council.

5.2 (a) & (b): MU's entry and English Language proficiency requirements are clearly specified, in particular on its website. However, the panel did note that information for prospective applicants in relation to entry requirements is, at times, provided in pdf format which could lead to issues with version control.

MU applies the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention through a blend of individual and institutional processes. Recognition decisions are made on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the specific details of each applicant's qualifications, while also following shared protocols with other higher education institutions to ensure consistency in the recognition of international qualifications. These protocols frequently involve collaboration with organisations such as NARIC, ECCTIS etc. The Admissions Office is responsible for assessing qualifications and determining whether an international applicant meets the entry requirements for their chosen programme. This office collaborates closely with the International Office and academic departments, to evaluate qualifications and ensure that all decisions align with the principles of the LRC's framework.

The application provided evidence of this adherence to the Lisbon Recognition Convention and clear consideration of qualifications at the application stage, including allocated responsibility at each point of the process (5.2 (c)).

The panel recommends:

**Recommendation 1**

**5.2 (a):** That MU use the website as the definitive source of information, including on the Lisbon Recognition Convention, rather than posting documents to it, to ensure version control of information, within 24 weeks of TrustEd authorisation (in time for the start of the 2026/27 academic year).

**Principle 5.3 Fees, Refunds and Subsistence:**

**HE providers provide all learners with clear, accurate, transparent, accessible, relevant and up to date information on all study costs, including subsistence and accommodation. HE providers shall inform learners about fees and other costs associated with undertaking a programme of study in Ireland**

5.3.1 (a) HE providers shall provide 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 the information provided.

5.3.1 (b) HE providers shall provide information on the collection or payment of fees, including sanctions for late payment and debt collection for moneys owed.

5.3.1 (c) HE providers shall establish a fees structure that supports the mission of the organization and reflects the costs associated with quality provision.

5.3.1 (d) HE providers shall ensure that there are no additional fees or unexpected charges that international learners have not been made aware of.

5.3.1 (e) HE providers shall issue a receipt to international learners upon receipt of payment of fees which will include a breakdown of fees paid.

5.3.1 (f) HE providers shall establish and publish a procedure on full and partial refunds. This procedure shall outline the conditions under which a refund will be granted e.g., a refused entry visa application, in the case of a non-EU/EEA Swiss learner.

5.3.1 (g) HE providers shall provide information on any financial supports or resources that exist within the organisation, or nationally, for international learners.

5.3.2 (a) HE providers shall provide information on the indicative costs of studying on their programmes e.g., the costs of textbooks, electronic resources, computer requirements, protective equipment.

5.3.2 (b) HE providers shall furnish prospective learners with general advice regarding the average cost of living e.g., accommodation, food, transport and medical care, for the programme duration.

5.3.2 (c) HE providers shall provide information on:

- (i) fees for accommodation services, if offered by the HE provider or other accommodation service providers;
- (ii) fees for complaints and appeals procedures as relevant e.g., rechecking of exam results.

5.3.2 (d) HE providers shall provide information on any other costs related to the provision of student services as considered relevant by the provider.

**Summary**

The panel concurs with the University's assessment that it is fully compliant with the applicable 10 out of 11 criteria pertaining to Principle 5.3: Fees, Refunds and Subsistence.

The panel was provided with the Fees and Grants Office Student User Guide and was able to confirm that it is the primary source of information about all aspects of fees and fee payment. This guide translates the information in the MU Fees and Grants Office policy document and presents it in a user-friendly and accessible format. The document, which is updated periodically, covers, for example, payment of fees, resit assessment fees, deferral/withdrawal/cancellation of registration; medical tuition fee waiver assessment and refunds and penalties for non-payment of fees. The information provided also differentiates between EU/non-EU and UG/PG students and provides advice accordingly.

5.3.1 (a)-(f): The Fees and Grants Office website is the only source of information on fees and grants in order to avoid the possibility of outdated information elsewhere. The office also has opening and contact hours as well as chat and email functions. The service provided by the office is monitored through feedback. Within this website is a dedicated page for international students.

5.3.1 (g) and 5.3.2: MU provides a range of resources and supports for international students, including a student emergency fund.

5.3.2 (d): MU states in its application that all information requirements are included in the preceding criteria of principle 5.3 and that it has no further matters on which information pertaining to fees, refunds, subsistence and student services is needed. It therefore states that this criterion is not applicable.

#### Principle 5.4 Supports and Services for International Learners

**HE providers shall foster a supportive environment which supports the wellbeing and integration of all learners into the student body and ensures a positive learning experience for all learners**

5.4.1 (a) HE providers shall designate appropriate personnel to be responsible for inquiries about learner support issues from international learners e.g., course coordinator, counsellor, or international officer.

5.4.1 (b) HE providers shall offer information to international learners prior to their arrival to help them adjust to their new surroundings e.g., information on transport, banking, availability of accommodation and accommodation services.

- 5.4.1 (c) HE providers shall ensure that inductions offered to learners also meet the needs of international learners, including intercultural awareness. They should direct learners to services, supports and facilities relevant or appropriate to their programme of study. They should also remind international learners requiring entry visas and/or immigration permissions of their responsibilities under the Department of Justice’s student immigration regime.
- 5.4.1 (d) The induction programme shall be provided to all cohorts of international learners who register or enrol at various times of the year, including learners who access programmes through advanced entry.
- 5.4.1 (e) HE providers shall provide information on appropriate learner supports and services to facilitate learner integration into the wider HE community.
- 5.4.1 (f) HE providers shall ensure that international learners are aware of opportunities to participate in, and be represented at, engagements between the provider and the learner body. Where possible, they should provide, in collaboration with learner representative bodies, information on national learner engagement initiatives and opportunities for international learners to avail of training opportunities.
- 5.4.1 (g) HE providers shall have mechanisms in place to support international learners financially in instances of personal or other emergency or hardship.
- 5.4.1 (h) HE providers shall 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.
- 5.4.1 (i) Institutional approaches to quality assuring learner services and supports will include all learners, including international learners.
- 5.4.2 (a) HE providers shall offer induction that is accessible to all learners and, where appropriate, tailored to the needs of international learners. They shall provide full information and advice on all relevant institutional and academic policies.
- 5.4.2 (b) Induction shall be provided to learners and cohorts who enrol at different points during the year, including those accessing programmes through advanced entry.
- 5.4.2 (c) HE providers shall ensure the information provided at induction is easily accessible throughout the academic year and shall offer reminders of this information at key points during the year e.g., in the lead-up to examinations or submission of assignments.
- 5.4.2 (d) HE providers will include academic integrity as a core component of induction for all learners, including international learners. Recognition will be given in inductions to the different education cultures of international learners, and the content, advice and support they impart will be relevant and specific to the Irish higher education context. Formal and informal conversations about academic integrity should be held on an ongoing basis throughout the period of enrolment of all learners, including international learners.
- 5.4.2 (e) HE providers shall endeavour to integrate their international learners, through their inductions and through their policies, procedures, and services, into the wider learner community.
- 5.4.2 (f) HE providers shall continue to provide staff with training and support to facilitate an appropriate and effective delivery of programmes and services to international learners. This should include, where appropriate, training in intercultural competence and support for the development of English language education competence.

**Summary**

The panel concurs with the University's assessment of full compliance with all 15 of the criteria in Principle 5.4: Supports and Services for International Learners.

5.4.1 (a) & (b): MU prides itself on providing a supportive and inclusive environment for all students and does not distinguish international students in this regard. A wide range of supports and services are available to students. The panel also noted the appointment of a Vice President for Students and Learning (VPSL) in 2024 with responsibility for all aspects of the student experience. The VPSL works closely with the VP International at Executive level to ensure coherence and integration between the two functions.

Comprehensive information is provided to international students pre and post-arrival at MU. The International Student page on the website clearly signposts information on multiple other university pages where relevant information may be found. This information is provided through websites, handbooks and also, pre-arrival, via webinars and Zoom calls to provide information on visas, finding accommodation etc.

5.4.1 (e)-(g): The International Office is key to ensuring that students are informed of opportunities and activities designed to help them integrate, from orientation and induction through to programmes of events. It also informs them of the various opportunities to be involved in student life. International students are also well-represented on the Postgraduate Feedback Council.

5.4.2 (f): Various development and training opportunities are open to staff under the overarching banner of Intercultural Awareness. It is expected that the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion module will be enhanced following the completion of the current action to develop a Race Equality Action Plan.

### **Commendation 2**

**5.4.1:** The panel commends MU for the enhancement of its governance structure through the appointment of a VPSL, which signals commitment to student/international learner wellbeing and institutional prioritization. It also commends the strong alignment between governance and the international strategy. (5.4.1).

## Principle 5.5 English Language Policy Statement and International Foundation Year Programmes

**The English language supports provided by HE providers to international learners, including through the provision of international foundation year programmes, are underpinned by a coherent and transparent institutional policy approach.**

5.5 (a) HE providers shall have an English language policy statement for international learners that shall:

- (i) document the policy approach and process to the assessment of English language proficiency entry requirements;
- (ii) document, as appropriate, the institution's policy approach to the provision, support, and development of English for Academic Purposes;
- (iii) set out the institution's policy approach to the provision of English language supports to non-native English speakers prior to commencement and throughout the duration of their higher education programmes;
- (iv) document the arrangements, including, as appropriate, the quality assurance, credit and/or awarding arrangements, for different types of EAP programmes, such as:
  - pre-sessional programmes/modules,
  - in-sessional programmes/modules

5.5 (b) HE providers offering international foundation year programmes shall set out in their English language policy statement for international learners

- (i) the quality assurance, credit and/or awarding arrangements for these programmes,
- (ii) the corporate and academic governance arrangements in place where such programmes are provided in partnership with other entities e.g., a private English language education provider, other independent/private education provider or campus company.

5.5 (c) For compliance with this HE Code, an international foundation programme shall lead to one of the following awards included within the NFQ:

- (i) QQI preparation for undergraduate programmes, leading to NFQ Level 5 Special Purpose Award (foundation qualification)
- (ii) QQI preparation for postgraduate programme, leading to NFQ Level 8 Special Purpose Award (foundation qualification)
- (iii) equivalent programmes leading to awards that are included within the NFQ and validated by an Irish awarding body.

5.5 (d) Where HE providers currently offer international foundation year programmes that do not lead to awards that are included within the NFQ, they must secure programme validation/course approval for such programmes through an Irish awarding body within two years of the date on which they are authorised to use the IEM.

### Summary

The panel concurs with the University's assessment of full compliance with 1 applicable criterion out of the 4 in Principle 5.5: English Language Policy Statement and International Foundation Year Programmes.

5.5 (a) MU's English Language Statement of Practice is the key document in which the University sets out its intentions in relation to English Language proficiency from application to graduation and is the means by which it demonstrates its full compliance with principle 5.5, criterion (a).

The panel was provided with the Statement of Practice document and noted the extent of the support provided to international students in relation to English language. These include pre-

sessional and in-sessional classes in English for Academic Purposes, as well as support for international applicants who are close to meeting the English language entry requirements. In these cases, a conditional offer of a place is made to the student, subject to meeting the English language requirements. These students are offered the opportunity to complete a pre-sessional English language course, following which they may sit one of the accepted English language tests. Subject to meeting the entry requirements following the pre-sessional programme, the student will be admitted to the University. The same pre-sessional course is also offered to all incoming international students who wish to further improve their proficiency and gain experience in academic writing in English, regardless of whether they have already met the English-language requirements.

In-sessional supports, including the provision of extra-curricular non-credit bearing courses in English for Academic Purposes are also offered and feedback is sought from students about the quality and extent to which it meets their needs.

### **Commendation 3**

**5.5 (a):** The panel commends the University on the range of English Language supports offered to international learners to help them progress on their programme of study (5.5 (a)).

MU does not offer Foundation Year programmes.

### **Principle 5.6 International Learners outside the State**

**HE providers ensure that learners outside the state who are enrolled on their programmes receive quality learning experiences, where these programmes lead to awards that are included within the NFQ, and whether they are offered in transnational education settings and/or through remote, fully online modes of learning.**

5.6.1 (a) HE providers, having regard to their statutory quality assurance obligations, shall ensure that the academic quality, standard and recognition of their transnational education programmes are equivalent to the academic quality, standard and recognition of the programmes they provide within the state.

5.6.1 (b) HE providers shall apply the principles and criteria set out in this HE Code in an equivalent manner in transnational education settings, including in relation to the provision of learner support services.

5.6.1 (c) HE providers shall support QQI, as appropriate, in implementing its statutory function to facilitate the recognition outside the state of awards made in the state. This facilitatory function extends to awards included within the NFQ, where the programmes leading to these awards are provided outside the state.

5.6.1 (d) Linked providers who intend to offer transnational education programmes that lead to awards within the NFQ shall only do so with the agreement of the designated awarding body or bodies making the awards.

5.6.2 (a) HE providers, having regard to their statutory quality assurance obligations, shall ensure that the academic quality, standard and recognition of their remote online programmes are equivalent to the academic quality, standard and recognition of the programmes they provide through other teaching and learning modes.

5.6.2 (b) HE providers shall apply the principles and criteria set out in this HE Code in an equivalent manner in relation to learners outside the state enrolled on remote online programmes that lead to awards included within the NFQ, including in relation to the provision of learner support services.

5.6.2 (c) HE providers shall support QQI, as appropriate, in implementing its statutory function to facilitate the recognition outside the state of awards made in the state. This facilitatory function extends to awards included within the NFQ, where the programmes leading to these awards are offered as remote online programmes.

5.6.2 (d) Linked providers who intend to offer remote online programmes to learners outside the state that lead to awards within the NFQ shall only do so with the agreement of the designated awarding body or bodies making the awards.

### Summary

The panel concurs with the University's assessment of full compliance with 3 applicable criteria out of the 8 in Principle 5.6: International Learners outside the state.

5.6.1 (a) & (b): Transnational Education (TNE) is limited to one partnership between MU and Fuzhou University in China to establish the Maynooth International Engineering College in 2007. Four undergraduate programmes are offered through this partnership, with the students receiving dual degrees from both institutions on graduation. MU's quality assurance processes are applied in full to the partnership and governance is the joint responsibility of both institutions. The IEMAS application provided evidence of MU's assurance that MIEC meets with principles in the HE Code in all applicable respects.

The panel requested and received further clarification about core modules, language of instruction, and equivalency assurance for dual degrees. MU clarified that 'core' modules refer to MU compulsory modules, which are all taught in English and aligned with MU policies. Non-core modules pertain only to FZU degrees. The panel suggests that, to ensure that students clearly understand which modules contribute to MU and which to Fuzhou qualifications, it might be useful to provide explicit student-facing clarification through orientation materials or module guides. This would enhance transparency and reduce potential confusion for international learners undertaking dual degrees.

The panel commends:

#### Commendation 4

**5.6.1 (a) and 5.6.1 (b):** The strong governance, policy alignment and quality assurance processes in place for TNE to ensure the equivalence of standards and the student experience and which enhance international academic credibility and consistency. (5.6.1 (a) & (b)).

MU has no linked providers and its online provision (one programme) is not marketed to international students.

The panel makes one recommendation:

**Recommendation 2**

**5.6.1 (a):** That MU provide further student facing clarification regarding core modules within 12 weeks of TrustEd Ireland authorization.

## Summary of assessment outcomes

**This section provides for the Assessment Panel findings and outcomes by principle and criterion**

### Overview of the provider's international profile and activities

There are currently over 15,000 students from more than 100 countries studying at Maynooth University. 15% of the current student population is postgraduate and 12% are international learners. The University's vision is 'to be a university of excellence, opportunity and impact' and to imagine and create better futures for all. Expanding internationalisation is one of the four pillars of the current (2023-28) Strategic Plan.

There is an international strategy, the key aim of which is to support the University's overall objectives (of which there are 10 key five-year goals including enabling significant and sustainable growth in international student numbers on taught undergraduate and postgraduate programmes) and which cites the following specific objectives:

- i) Enabling international engagement and mobility
- ii) Establishing key international partnerships
- iii) Grow and develop the international student community
- iv) Enabling an integrated approach to internationalisation.

The panel noted the strong link between the international strategy and the governance structure with the latter clearly supporting the former (see below and principle 5.4).

As internationalisation grows, the University's aim is to integrate international activities and structures across the institution. The intention is to create new, strategic partnerships with partners

and networks to enhance international student access to Maynooth. This is currently exemplified through membership of the ARQUS European University Alliance whose members have shared academic, scientific and cultural values.

There is a whole University approach to supporting international students but this is clearly strongly supported by the International Office which operates as a central 'hub' and which is led by the Vice President (VP) International. There has been further investment in the International Office through additional appointments, and further coordination with academic departments and service units with a view to enhancing the service provision for international learners. This includes improvements in response to feedback.

The whole university approach is manifested through structures that are in place to coordinate international provision and support. In particular, there is an Associate Dean (International) (AD(I)) in each faculty who leads international activities at that level and who provides a bridge between the faculty and the International Office. The AD (I)s are members of the International Office Strategy Management Team which ensures the implementation of the international strategy. In addition, the AD(I)s are members of other university committees thus ensuring an integrated approach to internationalisation through the governance structure. The appointment of a Vice President for Students and Learning (VPSL) in 2024 further integrates the focus on support and services for all students, including international learners. The panel found the support for international provision and students through the governance structure to be commendable.

There is one key TNE partnership offered through the Maynooth International Engineering College (with Fuzhou University). Students receive Maynooth and Fuzhou degrees on successful completion.

The panel appreciated the detailed IEMAS application and supporting evidence that was provided by the University. It was in full agreement with all individual compliance judgements and is of the view that MU should be authorised to use the TrustEd Ireland mark without conditions.

**Recommended condition(s) for authorisation:**

N/A

**Commendations:**

**Commendation 1**

**General:** The University's coherent and well-resourced internationalisation strategy that aligns with

institutional goals and is well supported by the governance structure.

#### **Commendation 2**

**5.4.1:** The effective governance structure which effectively supports international provision and learners and the recent enhancement of this structure through the appointment of a VPSL, indicating commitment to student/international learner wellbeing and demonstrating institutional prioritisation in this regard.

#### **Commendation 3**

**5.5 (a):** The range of English Language supports offered to international learners to help them progress on their programme of study.

#### **Commendation 4**

**5.6 1 (a) and 5.6.1 (b):** The strong governance, policy alignment and quality assurance processes in place for TNE to ensure the equivalence of standards and the student experience, which enhance international academic credibility and consistency.

### **Recommendations:**

#### **Recommendation 1**

**5.2 (a):** That MU use the website as the definitive source of information, including on the Lisbon Recognition Convention, rather than posting documents to it, to ensure version control of information, within 24 weeks of TrustEd authorisation (in time for the start of the 2026/27 academic year).

#### **Recommendation 2**

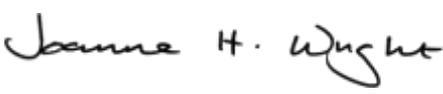
**5.6.1 (a):** That MU provides further student facing clarification regarding core modules in the MIEC partnership with Fuzhou University within 12 weeks of TrustEd Ireland authorisation.

### **Declarations of Assessment Panel**

This report has been agreed by the Assessment Panel and is signed on their behalf by the Chairperson.

Assessment Panel Chairperson: Joanne Wright

Date: 03/10/2025

Signed: 

Oifig an Leasuachtaráin do Chúrsaí  
Acadúla agus an Chláraitheora

Ollscoil Mhá Nuad

Maynooth University Office of the Vice-  
President Academic and Registrar



Date: 11/November/2025

To whom it concerns:

Maynooth University welcomes the report of the Assessment Panel for the TrustEd Ireland mark. We are grateful to the Assessment Panel for their careful consideration and review of our application. We consider the report to be comprehensive, thorough and fair.

We are pleased that the Assessment Panel recognise and support the proactive approach of our university in our commitment to maintaining high standards in transparency and student engagement.

Maynooth University also welcome the many commendations of the Assessment Panel, in particular:

- The University's coherent and well sourced internationalisation strategy that aligns with institutional goals and is well supported by the governance structure.
- The effective governance structure which effectively supports international provision and learners and the recent enhancement of this structure through the appointment of a VPSL, indicating commitment to student/international learner wellbeing and demonstrating institutional prioritisation in this regard.
- The range of English Language supports offered to international learners to help them progress on their programme of study.
- The strong governance, policy alignment and quality assurance process in place for TNE to ensure the equivalence of standards and the student experience, which enhance international academic credibility and consistency.

Maynooth University remains committed to maintaining student-centred governance, academic practices, and policies that align with the standards of QQI and the TrustEd Ireland framework, in support of an exceptional international learner experience.

We acknowledge the constructive recommendations outlined in the report and commit to their timely implementation:

5.2 (a): The MU use the website as the definitive source of information, including on the Lisbon Recognition Convention, rather than posting documents to it, to ensure version control of information, within 24 weeks of TrustEd authorisation (in time for the start of the 2026/2027 academic year).

5.6.1(a): That MU provide further student-facing clarification regarding core modules in the MIEC partnership with Fuzhou University within 12 weeks of TrustEd Ireland authorisation.

Over the coming weeks, the University will address and implement each of these recommendations.

Maynooth University wishes to thank the members of the Assessment Panel, especially the Chairperson, Joanne Wright, for their engagement with the assessment process. We congratulate them for their incisive report and for their very helpful recommendations which will be of great assistance in the years ahead. We also thank the members of the QHub Unit in Quality and Qualifications Ireland for their guidance and support throughout the assessment process.

Yours sincerely,



**Professor Ronan Farrell**  
Vice-President Academic & Registrar  
Leasuachtarán um Chúrsaí Acadúla, Cláráitheoir