



Dearbhú Cáilíochta
agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann
Quality and
Qualifications Ireland



Higher Education Pathway Assessment Report: Munster Technological 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 Munster Technological 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
Dr Achim Hopbach	Chairperson	International Higher Education Consultant, Austria
Majella Thomas	Report Writer/Secretary	Senior QA and Compliance Manager, RMIT, Australia
Dr Fabrizio Trifiró	International Education Expert	Times Higher Education / INQAAHE, United
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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 agrees with Munster Technological University (MTU) that 17 out of 18 criteria associated with Principle 5.1 Marketing and Recruitment are applicable. The panel concurs with MTU's assessment of full compliance with 16 out of 17 of these criteria.

MTU provides information to prospective international learners about its programmes, facilities and the range of supports and services via a range of communication methods. This includes the website, brochures and other printed materials, in-country education fairs, pre-departure briefings and MTU's network of agents. Clear, accurate, transparent, and easily accessible information is provided about programme aims and pathways to employment and further study, professional accreditation status, practice placement requirements (where applicable), the award itself and its place within the NFQ and study commencement dates. Information on the structure and requirements of work placements could be enhanced by the inclusion of guidance on visa-related work conditions that may affect student participation, and information on how this will be managed to enable international students to make informed decisions and adequately prepare for their placement experiences.

Recommendation 1:

5.1.1 (d): The panel recommends that MTU consider including specific information for international learners on any working restrictions that may apply to international students doing practice placements.

To support learners to make an informed decision about studying in Ireland MTU provides information on immigration requirements, financial obligations (including tuition and other fees), the cost of living, accommodation availability, insurance requirements and the university's contact details. As part of its preparation of the IEMAS, the university conducted an international student focus group and a gap analysis against the HE Code. As a result MTU has decided to implement a new process to provide regular insights into international student information needs. This will comprise a post-arrival survey (to understand any pre-arrival information deficits) and another survey close to the end of the academic year (April). The information gained from these will be used to improve engagement, communications, student support services, cultural integration initiatives, policy development, marketing and recruitment, and contribute to the annual international student recruitment agent review. The panel is confident that this plan will strengthen MTU's capacity to provide international learners with transparent and up to date information.

Recommendation 2:

5.1.1 (a): The panel recommends that MTU implement its planned international student surveys and put in place mechanisms to support a strong response rate within 24 weeks of receiving authorisation to use the TrustEd Ireland mark.

MTU's printed promotional materials for use by partners and at student recruitment fairs, and the relevant parts of the website are reviewed and updated annually under the International Office Review Process. As part of preparations for its application for the TrustEd mark the university conducted an audit of programme information which enabled MTU to identify areas for improvement and assure itself of alignment to the HE code. It is recommended that this is done on a regular basis to ensure changes continue to align with the Code and to support continuous improvement in the provision of information.

Recommendation 3:

5.1.1 (b): The panel recommends that MTU consider conducting an annual audit of programme and related information to provide assurance that its information provision is in compliance with the HE Code and to identify areas for continuous improvement.

MTU has a network of agents and an agreement with each agent. The university's due diligence process for agents is robust and comprehensive, with prospective agents required to complete a comprehensive qualification questionnaire that covers insurance and tax requirements, ethical student recruitment and counselling, recruitment methodologies and marketing activities relevant to the area in which they work.

Commendation 1:

5.1.2 (f): The panel commends MTU for its robust due diligence of education agents via its qualifications questionnaire.

MTU provides an agent training pack to its recruitment partners that is updated at least annually and has regular agent training sessions and in-country visits to ensure that agents are appropriately informed about MTU, its programmes and admission processes. MTU is currently partially compliant with 5.1.2 (h) which requires that agent review processes are in place. MTU has developed an agent review process which will commence in October 2025 and be stipulated in agent agreements. The review will assess recruitment performance, ethical compliance, adherence to the London Statement, student satisfaction, policy compliance, and operational efficiency. This reference to the principles of the London Statement will also strengthen compliance with 5.2.1 (e). The panel is confident that the provider's plans for compliance are feasible.

Condition 1:

5.1.2 (h): MTU must implement its planned annual agent review process for all agents within 24 weeks of receiving authorisation to use the TrustEd Ireland mark. The review should inform a decision to terminate the contract where the outcomes demonstrate a lack of compliance with the London Statement.

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

Seven of the seven criteria here are applicable to MTU and they are compliant across all criteria.

MTU clearly specifies entry requirements and English language proficiency requirements for programmes that are open to international students on its programme pages (national academic entry requirements), International Office pages (country specific requirements), published marketing material and at promotional events. It ensures all agents are informed of these at training sessions. New university-wide English language proficiency requirements are also set out in the *Policy on Proficiency in the English Language (International learners)* that will apply from 1 January 2026. To provide assurance that entry requirements support the successful participation of learners, MTU monitors programme performance data, including retention, attrition, student progression and completion statistics for each academic programme as part of standard programme quality assurance. Where this data shows anomalies, programme boards investigate, with further analysis occurring in the context of periodic programme reviews. This proactive approach to minimising international student withdrawal is to be commended.

Commendation 2:

5.2 (a): The panel commends MTU for its proactive approach to minimising international student withdrawal, including having identified ‘triggers’ which may signal the intention of a student to withdraw, alerting the International Office to intervene promptly to seek to address existing issues.

When assessing the qualifications of prospective international learners MTU adheres to the Lisbon Recognition Convention principles. MTU uses NARIC Ireland and ECCTIS (UK ENIC) international qualification comparison databases and national and international benchmarking to determine the equivalence of international qualifications with qualifications on the National Framework of Qualifications Ireland. MTU has a structured RPL policy. These, along with country-specific requirements are used to ensure fair and transparent assessment where there is a substantial difference.

Where applicants have been refused admission they are informed in a timely manner. Applicants are provided with the reasons for refusal as per the Standard Operating Procedure for the International Admissions Process. The sample refusal letter provided to the panel however, does

not provide information or links to information to support international applicants to make an appeal. In the refusal letter MTU should provide information, or links to information, on how the applicant may contest the decision, including: the basis on which applicants can appeal, timeframes, application forms (if relevant), sources of advice and support, any legal or regulatory texts and possible measures the applicant may take to obtain recognition at a later stage.

Recommendation 4:

5.2 (f): The panel recommends that MTU consider providing detailed information to support international applicants who wish to appeal the refusal to recognise a qualification for admission. This information should be easily accessible, and provide information on possible options, advice and support.

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 organisation 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

Eleven of the 11 criteria here are applicable to MTU, and they are compliant across all criteria.

MTU's provision of information on study costs, including subsistence and accommodation is clear, accurate, transparent, relevant and current. MTU has mechanisms in place, including annual reviews, to assure itself of the validity and transparency of information.

MTU fees for international students are published on the website, in the offer letter and at agent recruitment fairs and briefing sessions. To provide full transparency to prospective students MTU includes a statement that where programmes are of more than a year's duration, the tuition fee that applied in the first year applies in subsequent years unless students are granted a deferral or have a break of one year or more in their study.

In its offer letter MTU includes information on processes for payment of fees including payment deadlines, any additional fees or programme costs (textbooks, electronic resources, IT, etc), conditions for refunds and cost of living information. While acknowledging that full accuracy could be potentially challenging, the panel encourages the university to increase financial transparency and accessibility for prospective students by including these additional programme costs on the relevant programme pages.

Recommendation 5:

5.3.2 (a): The panel recommends that MTU consider including on its programme pages, clear, written information on indicative additional material costs, such as software licenses.

In 2022 MTU introduced a new single university tuition fee structure to replace and align the tuition fee structures from the preceding legacy institutions. This took a series of factors into account including legacy issues, market research and sector benchmarking among others. The pricing structure does not appear to have been reviewed since 2022. Non- EU students on the Kerry campus who require financial support or resources have access to the MTU benevolent fund. As noted in section 4, access to this fund will be expanded to all students in the 2025-26 academic year.

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 agrees with MTU that 15 out of 15 criteria associated with Principle 5.4 Supports and

Services for International Learners are applicable. The panel concurs with MTU's assessment of full compliance with 13 out of 15 of these criteria.

MTU provides staff and a range of support, services and facilities to support learner integration into the wider university and local community and assist students in their transition to study and life in Ireland and throughout their study. These include induction, financial support and academic integrity information and education.

MTU provides a general induction for all students, an international learner induction for all international intakes (September and January), and targeted induction sessions for specific cohorts (students with a disability, HEAR students, mature aged and advanced entry students). Students also receive course-specific orientation sessions. An international student canvas module provides practical information on living in Ireland for international learners, and information about student services and local services. Prior to arrival ICMP learners are provided with online information webinars and an online orientation and induction session.

Commendation 3:

5.4.1 (c): The panel commends MTU for its comprehensive approach to induction and the development and delivery of an international student canvas module to provide practical information for international learners.

Students experiencing financial hardship can access a short-term loan from the MTU Benevolent Fund, which is administered by the Pastoral Care Service and the Access Office. Students are provided with information about the Benevolent Fund during International and Programme Orientation sessions by student services/pastoral care teams. Currently the Benevolent Fund is in operation on the Kerry campus only, hence MTU is currently partially compliant with 5.4.1.g, which requires availability of such funds in general. In 2025/26 the fund will be accessible to all students regardless of location. The panel is confident that the provider's plans for compliance are feasible.

Condition 2:

5.4.1 (g) and 5.4.1 (i): MTU must ensure that the Benevolent Fund is made available across all campuses within 1 year of receiving authorisation to use the TrustEd Ireland mark.

Of note is MTU's new Global Citizen Ambassador programme, which commenced in September 2025. Student ambassadors help and advise new international students at orientation and support them in the post- arrival period. MTU reports that this peer-to-peer support assisted new students to settle in and engage more fully in student life on and off campus, and their role in encouraging new students to join and become active in the International Student Society was successful in

aiding the students' social integration.

As part of its preparation of the IEMAS, and to gain feedback from international students on their experience of supports and services, MTU conducted an international student focus group. As a result of this, MTU will implement new formal surveys to provide regular insights into international student experiences. Results will be fed into MTU's Strategic Implementation Plan Progress report which tracks progress on strategic targets derived from satisfaction KPIs via a centralised governance system. Satisfaction scores will feed into annual reports reviewed by the University Executive and Governing Body.

Recommendation 6:

5.4.1 (h): The panel recommends that MTU consider putting in place a systematic mechanism to capture international students' views as a key element of monitoring and assuring the quality of international learners' services and support.

Staff at MTU are encouraged to attend and participate in cultural training/workshops. MTU is considering whether these workshops will be mandatory as part of wider EDI strategies. There are also plans to include Cultural Training in staff induction to equip staff with the competencies to work in a multi-cultural university. MTU is encouraged to develop mechanisms to measure the effectiveness of this training.

Recommendation 7:

5.4.3: The panel recommends that MTU consider ensuring that all staff are trained in intercultural awareness and best practice in teaching and learning in international classrooms, including through the planned inclusion of Cultural Training in the Staff Induction programme.

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

Two of the four criteria here are applicable to MTU, and they are compliant across all criteria.

MTU has a *Policy on Proficiency in the English Language (International Learners)* that sets out English language proficiency requirements for entry to MTU programmes, the approach to provision of in-sessional English language supports for international learners of MTU, quality assurance, credit, awarding, and governance arrangements for the International Medical/Pharmaceutical Commencement Programmes (IMCP) of the Royal College of Surgeons, which are delivered by MTU in collaboration with Castel Education.

The IMCP programme provides a pathway for international students from a non-English speaking environment who wish to pursue a career in medicine, nursing or podiatric medicine. Students complete the two semesters (1 year) of the International Medical Commencement Programme at MTU before moving into their guaranteed destination programme at MTU (Nursing), University of Galway or RCSI. On completion of the IMCP, successful learners obtain an NFQ Level 6 Special

Purpose Award of *Certificate in Biomedical Sciences* (30 ECTS credits) awarded by RCSI/NUI.

Principal responsibility for IMCP rests with RCSI, with defined responsibilities delegated to MTU and Castel, as set out in Service Level Agreements (SLAs) between RCSI and MTU, and RCSI and Castel Education respectively. RCSI oversees the programme through regular executive and operational meetings and leads the programme validation processes. Both RCSI and MTU staff deliver scientific and elective academic content, while Castel Education and MTU staff deliver English language content. 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. Castel Education provides the English language teaching and a range of non-academic support services for the students.

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

Three of the eight criteria here are applicable to MTU, and they are compliant across all criteria.

MTU delivers a suite of flexible, online and blended learning programmes for students based in and outside of Ireland, concentrated at NFQ level 9. Since 2018/19 MTU has offered over 100 fully online programmes.

Online programmes are subject to the same quality assurance processes, and international learners have equivalent opportunities for learner representation in the governance, management and quality assurance of remote online provision. In 2023 Academic Council approved a Digital Learning Policy to support the design and delivery of digital learning. It requires staff designing and delivering online and blended programmes to consult with MTU's digital learning function to support consistency, compliance and quality, and where third party digital learning materials are used, they must be approved through MTU's quality assurance processes before embedding into courses or modules. The policy is aligned with QQI guidelines.

MTU has established processes to ensure compliance with the HE Code across each principle and where necessary, has put in place adaptations to ensure that students enrolled in online and blended learning programmes have access to equivalent experience and opportunities. This includes processes to ensure academic integrity, including detection and education measures, and a range of online modules to support academic integrity awareness and appropriate use of genAI

Recommendation 8:

5.6.2 (a): The panel recommends that MTU consider making the online course 'Gen AI Student Guidelines' compulsory for all students.

MTU has collaborative provision and joint awarding arrangements, including with international partners, under the legacy policies of the MTU (Cork) and MTU (Kerry) campuses. These aim to establish a clear quality framework for collaborative provision to ensure that all learners on collaborative programmes are treated fairly and equitably, and have equivalent opportunities for success.

Recommendation 9:

5.6.2 (a) and 5.6.2 (b): The panel recommends that MTU developing and put in place, within 24 weeks of receiving authorisation to use the TrustEd Ireland mark, an MTU-wide policy for

collaborative provision and joint awarding arrangements, including with international partners, replacing the legacy policies of the MTU (Cork) and MTU (Kerry) campuses.

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

MTU was established in 2021 through the merger of Cork Institute of technology (CIT) and the Institute of technology (IT) Tralee. It has 18,000 students, over 2,000 staff and six campuses centred in two locations in Munster, Cork and Tralee. MTU offers higher education major awards at all levels of the NFQ (from levels 6 – 10), as well as minor and special purpose awards. The University also offers joint awards with University College Cork and a number of cotutelle awards, mostly at doctoral level. The VP Engagement & International and the VP Academic Affairs and Registrar are responsible for the international learner experience. MTU's International Offices (IOs) and Graduate Studies Offices (GSOs) are the central hubs for all support services for MTU's international students. These provide core services to international students across the student lifecycle, with engagement being particularly intensive during the initial stage, application assessment, the pre-arrival period and the initial settling-in period. Once settled in, incoming international students tend to rely to a greater degree on standard, MTU-wide student support services.

In 2022-23, MTU had 2,164 international students, comprising 15% of all enrolments. Of these 925 (7%) are from EU countries, with the primary source markets being, Italy, Germany and Spain, and 856 (6.5%) are from outside of Europe, with the primary source markets being India, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia and China. 383 (29%) of MTU's international students were enrolled in fully remote online programmes. In 2024-25 there was 2% increase in international enrolments overall. MTU has collaborative international Medical/Pharmacy Commencement (IMCP/IPCP) programmes, which are international foundation year programmes leading to RCSI/NUI level 6 Special Purpose Awards. These are overseen by the RCSI and delivered on the MTU Kerry campuses in collaboration with Castel Education, a private provider of academic and professional training services to medical and allied health professionals which is part of the Cambridge Education group. In the 2024/25 year there are 85 students from Qatar, Oman and Saudi Arabia registered on the IMCP, and no active students in the ICPC.

MTU has an International Education Strategy Statement, 2025-2027 which sets out the university's

approach to international education and is driven by its institutional strategic plan and aligned with Global Citizens 2030 (Ireland's international talent and innovation strategy). The Statement aligns with MTU's vision, mission, values and strategic objectives and aims at ensuring that MTU is 'A responsible, international university with world-class ambition and a global hub of knowledge exchange in which staff, students and stakeholders will be enabled to engage in an open-minded, positive, collaborative, sustainable and respectful way.'

MTU has conducted internal and external gap analysis, finding areas for improvement which the panel commends and encourages MTU to conduct regularly in pursuit of continuous improvement.

Recommended condition(s) for authorisation:

Condition 1:

5.1.2 (h): MTU must implement its planned annual agent review process for all agents within 24 weeks of receiving authorisation to use the TrustEd Ireland mark. The review should inform a decision to terminate the contract where the outcomes demonstrate a lack of compliance with the London Statement.

Condition 2:

5.4.1 (g) and 5.4.1 (i): MTU should ensure that the Benevolent Fund is made available across all campuses within 1 year of receiving authorisation to use the TrustEd Ireland mark.

Commendations:

Commendation 1:

5.1.2 (f): The panel commends MTU for its robust due diligence of education agents via its qualifications questionnaire.

Commendation 2:

5.2 (a): The panel commends MTU for its proactive approach to minimising international student withdrawal, including having identified 'triggers' which may signal the intention of a student to withdraw, alerting the International Office to intervene promptly to seek to address existing issues.

Commendation 3:

5.4.1 (c): The panel commends MTU for its comprehensive approach to induction and the development and delivery of an international student canvas module to provide practical information for international learners.

Recommendations:

Recommendation 1:

5.1.1 (d): The panel recommends that MTU consider including specific information for international learners on any working restrictions that may apply to international students doing practice placements.

Recommendation 2:

5.1.1 (a): The panel recommend that MTU considers implementing its planned international student surveys and putting in place mechanisms to support a strong response rate within 6 months of receiving authorisation to use the TrustEd Ireland mark.

Recommendation 3:

5.1.1 (b): The panel recommends that MTU consider conducting an annual audit of programme and related information to provide assurance that its information provision is in compliance with the HE Code and to identify areas for continuous improvement.

Recommendation 4:

5.2 (f): The panel recommends that MTU consider providing detailed information to support international applicants who wish to appeal the refusal to recognise a qualification for admission. This information should be easily accessible, and provide information on possible options, advice and support.

Recommendation 5:

5.3.2 (a): The panel recommends that MTU consider including on its programme pages, clear, written information on indicative additional material costs, such as software licenses.

Recommendation 6:

5.4.1 (h): The panel recommends that MTU consider putting in place a systematic mechanism to capture international students' views as a key element of monitoring and assuring the quality of international learners' services and support.

Recommendation 7:

5.4.3: The panel recommends that MTU consider ensuring that all staff are trained in intercultural awareness and best practice in teaching and learning in international classrooms, including through the planned inclusion of Cultural Training in the Staff Induction programme.

Recommendation 8:

5.6.2 (a): The panel recommends that MTU consider making the online course 'Gen AI Student Guidelines' compulsory for all students.

Recommendation 9:

5.6.2 (a) and 5.6.2 (b): The panel recommends that MTU develop and put in place, within 24 weeks of receiving authorisation to use the TrustEd Ireland mark, an MTU-wide policy for collaborative provision and joint awarding arrangements, including with international partners, replacing the legacy policies of the MTU (Cork) and MTU (Kerry) campuses.

Declarations of Assessment Panel

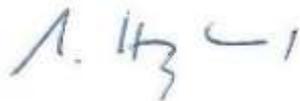
This report has been agreed by the Assessment Panel and is signed on their behalf by the Chairperson.

Assessment Panel Chairperson:

Achim Hopbach

Date: 3 October 2025

Signed:



MTU Response to the TrustEd Ireland Assessment Report

A. General Remarks

Munster Technological University welcomes the report of the TrustEd Ireland Assessment Panel, and we wish to express our sincere appreciation to the panel members for the care, diligence, and professional attention given to this review. We value the considered panel findings and recommendations presented in the report, which will greatly support us in enhancing the quality and standard of MTU's educational and service provision for international students into the future.

We are pleased to note the panel's commendations on our robust due diligence of education agents, our proactive approach to minimising international student withdrawals, our comprehensive approach to induction, and the international student Canvas module. Not least, these commendations reflect MTU's deep commitment to providing each and every international learner who joins the University community with an excellent learner experience where their well-being is cared for and they are comprehensively supported to realise their full academic potential. We root for our international students, and appreciate this recognition of our work on their behalf.

To further enhance the international learner experience, MTU commits to meeting the conditions outlined and implementing the plans outlined in IEMAS for achieving full compliance with all Higher Education Code criteria within the shortest possible timeframe.

We are also happy to engage with the recommendations in order to further enhance our services and supports for our international learners, and indeed all learners of MTU.

Our detailed responses to each individual condition and recommendation are set out below.

B. Detailed Responses to Conditions

Condition 1:

5.1.2(h): MTU must implement its planned annual agent review process for all agents within 24 weeks of receiving authorisation to use the TrustEd Ireland mark. The review should inform a decision to terminate the contract where the outcomes demonstrate a lack of compliance with the London Statement.

Response:

The formal Annual Agent Performance Review Process has now been implemented, and the first agent performance review is currently underway.

As outlined in the TrustEd application, a number of review criteria are used to assess agent performance. One of the most important criteria is student satisfaction, and one of the mechanisms for evaluating that is the new annual post-arrival student survey. This survey has now

also been implemented and is currently being administered to international students who joined MTU in the September 2025 intake.

Amongst others, students are asked to evaluate the agent they used across key performance requirements, such as furnishing accurate information about MTU, how helpful the student felt the agent was, the accuracy of information provided about arrival in Ireland and living in Ireland, and assistance with immigration matters.

In parallel with the student survey, agents are being assessed across the other criteria, including recruitment performance, ethical compliance, compliance with MTU Policies, and operational efficiency.

Where agents fail to meet the minimum standards, the appropriate follow-up actions will be identified and actioned. Actions could include additional training or performance improvement plans. Should serious breaches in contravention of the London Statement be identified, the agency contract will be terminated.

With the agent performance review process now operational, MTU considers that it is **now fully compliant with all 17 applicable criteria under HE Code Principle 5.1**, Marketing and Recruitment.

Condition 2:

5.4.1(g) and 5.4.1(i): MTU should ensure that the Benevolent Fund is made available across all campuses within 1 year of receiving authorisation to use the TrustEd Ireland mark.

Response:

In line with existing plans already outlined in IEMAS, discussions on the modalities for making the Benevolent Fund – or comparable emergency/ hardship fund – accessible to international students across all MTU campuses are underway in all relevant fora, including the University Executive. This fund will provide targeted, confidential support to non-EU students who encounter verified short-term financial hardship.

MTU will ensure this fund will be operational and available to all deserving applicants within 1 year of receiving authorisation to use the International Education Mark.

C. Detailed Responses to Recommendations

Recommendation 1:

5.1.1(d): The panel recommends that MTU consider including specific information for international learners on any working restrictions that may apply to international students doing practice placements.

Response:

MTU acknowledges and welcomes this recommendation. The University already provides comprehensive guidance to international students on Irish immigration requirements, visa permissions, and work entitlements through pre-arrival materials, orientation sessions, and the International Student Canvas module.

To provide some context on the status of work placement under current Irish immigration regulations, non-EU/EEA students normally hold Stamp 2 permission, which allows limited casual employment (20 hours per week during term time and 40 hours during designated holiday periods). However, this permission does not automatically extend to work placements unless the placement forms an approved, credit-bearing, and supervised component of the student's programme of study. Where a placement is an integral and assessed part of the programme, arranged or approved by MTU, and does not exceed 50% of the total programme duration, it is permitted under the student's immigration status and does not require a separate work permit. Any other form of work or internship outside these parameters would fall outside the scope of Stamp 2 permission.

All placements included in MTU academic programmes accessible to visa-bearing international applicants meet the conditions for inclusion in the scope of Stamp 2 permission. MTU ensures compliance with the relevant requirements by approving all placements through standard academic quality assurance processes, briefing international students on relevant immigration conditions, and liaising with placement providers to confirm that all work undertaken is within the permissions of Irish immigration law.

To ensure greater clarity for prospective international applicants on placement elements in MTU programmes, however, MTU will ensure that information relating specifically to *programme placements* is made clearer and applied consistently across all relevant publications, including programme handbooks, placement guidelines, and online resources. This will be undertaken collaboratively by the International Office, Academic Affairs, and the relevant placement offices.

These updates will further support international learners, placement coordinators, and host organisations in understanding the parameters within which international students may undertake work placements, thereby promoting compliance, transparency, and student success.

MTU acknowledges that external factors such as delays in the national immigration registration process are outside the University's control. Such delays can affect the timing of when international students receive or renew their immigration permissions. MTU continues to

advocate on behalf of its international students through the Technological Universities Association (TUA) and direct engagement with the Department of Justice to seek sector-wide improvements and more efficient processing timeframes for student immigration registrations.

Recommendation 2:

5.1.1(a): The panel recommend that MTU considers implementing its planned international student surveys and putting in place mechanisms to support a strong response rate within 6 months of receiving authorisation to use the TrustEd Ireland mark.

Response:

As noted in the response to Condition 1 above, the first formal post-arrival student satisfaction survey is currently underway. The post-arrival survey concerns itself primarily with the pre- and post-arrival periods including agent performance, orientation, and initial engagements with MTU services and social engagement.

The end-of-year survey planned for April is intended to gather a more holistic data set across the full academic year with a view to improving student experiences, informing policy by collecting feedback on academic and non-academic areas like accommodation, support services, and general well-being. The data gathered may feed into future internationalisation strategies and potentially curriculum development.

In line with best practice, both surveys will be refined every year to ensure comprehensiveness, improve clarity, and continually augment and support data-driven decisions.

Recommendation 3:

5.1.1(b): The panel recommends that MTU consider conducting an annual audit of programme and related information to provide assurance that its information provision is in compliance with the HE Code and to identify areas for continuous improvement.

Response:

MTU welcomes this recommendation. As a public provider, we are keen to ensure that public information about the University and its programme portfolio serves the information needs of any and all prospective learners, including international applicants, as well as our many other stakeholders, by being clear, accurate, comprehensive and up to date.

In the context of the ongoing development of the MTU website, we will seek to develop a suitable annualised mechanism for reviewing/auditing the quality of our public programme information to identify any compliance gaps and areas for enhancement, with particular attention on assuring continuing alignment with the HE Code and ESG Standard 1.8, Public Information.

Recommendation 4:

5.2(f): The panel recommends that MTU consider providing detailed information to support international applicants who wish to appeal the refusal to recognise a qualification for admission. This information should be easily accessible, and provide information on possible options, advice and support.

Response:

MTU is pleased to confirm that this recommendation has been adopted, and the University has improved on the information provided to international applicants on appealing a refusal to recognise their qualification for purposes of admission under the [MTU Admissions Policy](#). This enhancement strengthens MTU's lived commitment to fairness, consistency, and compliance with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and QQI's Access, Transfer and Progression (ATP) policy framework, and we are grateful to the assessment panel for their advice.

Detailed guidance is now included within correspondence issued to applicants at the point of decision. This information outlines the grounds and process for appeal, the documentation required, and the timeframe for submission.

To ensure accessibility and transparency, all international applicants who receive a refusal based on non-recognition of their qualification are being informed of their right to appeal, and directed to the appropriate appeal process and guidance at the time their decision is communicated.

As an additional point of information, the VP Academic Affairs & Registrar recently commissioned a general review of appeals processes across the MTU policy portfolio. Key findings and recommendations from this review have been presented to Academic Council for consideration at its meeting of 7 November 2025. Any revisions to the appeals framework which may potentially result from this review will take the needs of international applicants into account.

Recommendation 5:

5.3.2(a): The panel recommends that MTU consider including on its programme pages, clear, written information on indicative additional material costs, such as software licenses.

Response:

MTU acknowledges the absolute necessity for prospective students to have accurate and up-to-date information on the complete cost associated with an MTU programme, including significant costs for required ancillary materials such as lab equipment, art supplies or software, prior to making an application.

To ensure that additional material costs are systematically queried as a separate point of information on new programmes going forward, MTU's Marketing & Communication Function (MMCF) has now updated the 'Course Fee' section in the online form used by academic departments to transmit programme information for publication on the MTU website. This has now been amplified by the following text: "Please also outline any other mandatory course-related expenses, including uniforms or equipment, software licenses, and any third party fees."

Recommendation 6:

5.4.1(h): The panel recommends that MTU consider putting in place a systematic mechanism to capture international students' views as a key element of monitoring and assuring the quality of international learners' services and support.

Response:

MTU will complete the following annually:

1. Post-arrival international student survey in October/November. The post-arrival survey concerns itself primarily with the pre- and post-arrival periods including pre-arrival briefings, registration, orientation, agent performance where applicable, and initial engagements with MTU services and social engagement.
2. The end-of-year international student survey scheduled for April is intended to gather a more holistic data set across the full academic year with a view to improving student experiences, informing policy by collecting feedback on academic and non-academic areas like accommodation, support services, and general well-being. The data gathered may feed into operational enhancements, future internationalisation strategies and potentially curriculum development.

In line with best practice, both surveys will be refined every year to ensure comprehensiveness, improve clarity, and continually augment and support data-driven decisions. Survey findings will be included in annual reporting on international activities to the University Executive, as outlined in IEMAS.

Recommendation 7:

5.4.3: The panel recommends that MTU consider ensuring that all staff are trained in intercultural awareness and best practice in teaching and learning in international classrooms, including through the planned inclusion of Cultural Training in the Staff Induction programme.

Response:

MTU acknowledges and appreciates this recommendation, and plans to roll out relevant measures from January 2026 onwards. The planned approach will have a number of different strands, which will be delivered in a phased fashion through the Office of the VP People and Culture and the MTU's Teaching & Learning Unit (TLU), as appropriate.

The Intercultural Awareness Training Plan targeting existing staff encompasses the following elements:

1. Initial external training session delivered by the Irish Council for International Students (ICOS) to 20 targeted staff members each per faculty plus 20 staff in key University functions (central offices, staff unions). Start of delivery: January 2026;
2. Follow-on development of 'Train the Trainer' sessions to be delivered in-house by the Teaching & Learning Unit (TLU). Start of delivery: March 2026

3. Development of a digital Intercultural Training Module by the TLU in conjunction with the Department of Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL) and the eLearning Development Services Unit (EDSU), to be made available to staff through MTU's digital learning platform Canvas. Start of delivery: March / April 2026.

Delivery of the module is to be buttressed by an awareness-raising video campaign and development of a Digital Badge to incentivise engagement with the training resource.

4. Intercultural Awareness Day, to be organised once per semester (May/November) to celebrate diverse cultures, raise intercultural awareness, and promote further training opportunities across all campuses. Start of delivery: November 2026

In parallel, the Staff Induction Programme delivered by the TLU for new staff on an ongoing basis will include intercultural training elements going forward.

Recommendation 8:

5.6.2(a): The panel recommends that MTU consider making the online course 'Gen AI Student Guidelines' compulsory for all students.

Response:

MTU welcomes this recommendation, implementation of which is complete at this point.

The "GenAI Student Guidelines" online course has been made available to all MTU students via the Canvas Learning Management System, and completion of this course has now been designated as mandatory and has been communicated as such to all students. Students this semester were instructed by MTU's Faculty Deans to complete the course prior to undertaking their first continuous assessment.

The course provides an introduction to the responsible and ethical use of generative AI by students. As part of the course, students explore essential guidelines for harnessing the power of GenAI responsibly, gaining insight into the principles, practices, and frameworks that support ethical and effective engagement with AI in learning and assessment. Content areas include an overview of the risks and limitations of GenAI tools, the role of GenAI in learning, general guidance on appropriate use, acknowledging the use of GenAI, and relevant institutional regulations and policy.

Enrolment and completion data are centrally tracked to monitor engagement and compliance across all campuses and programmes. This ensures that every student receives the same consistent grounding with respect to the University's expectations and standards regarding the responsible use of generative AI in learning, teaching, and assessment.

Recommendation 9:

5.6.2(a) and 5.6.2(b): The panel recommends that MTU develop and put in place, within 24 weeks of receiving authorisation to use the TrustEd Ireland mark, an MTU-wide policy for collaborative provision and joint awarding arrangements, including with international partners, replacing the legacy policies of the MTU (Cork) and MTU (Kerry) campuses.

Response:

Based on scoping work carried out in previous years, development of an MTU-wide policy and procedures for collaborative provision and joint awards has been initiated and a small initial steering group formed.

Given the breadth of MTU's provision and the critical role of stakeholder engagement and collaboration to our institutional mission and identity, we intend to take a more comprehensive, risk-based approach than that encapsulated in the existing legacy procedures. Instead, we aim to create a coherent framework for collaborative provision which will encompass and regulate the whole spectrum of collaborative activities in the programme space, whether this be bespoke short professional development courses created in collaboration with industry, consortium degrees jointly developed and delivered by several Irish HEIs, or joint taught and research degrees up to PhD level with international partners institutions, including programmes leading to joint or multiple awards.

The extent of work and requisite consultations involved in bringing this vision to fruition makes it unlikely that a final draft of a new collaborative provision policy and procedures can be developed within a timeframe of 24 weeks. Having identified collaborative provision as a priority area for policy development, however, as a minimum we aim to bring an initial draft of the new policy to Academic Council by the end of the present academic year.