Higher Education Pathway Assessment Report:

Technological University of the Shannon

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 Technological University of the Shannon'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 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 Kingdom
Dhanushi Rodrigo	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

Seventeen of the 18 criteria here are applicable to TUS and they are compliant across all criteria.

TUS provides information to international learners on its programmes, facilities and the range of supports and services available via a range of communication methods. This includes the website, which has a dedicated page for international students, brochures and other printed materials (e.g. Global Student Guide and Global Student Handbook), the Goin' app, social media platforms (Instagram and LinkedIn), and TUS's Global Student blogs. TUS's network of agents and in-country offices across the globe also provide information directly and via events such as Q&A sessions and pre-departure briefings. Clear, accurate, transparent and easily accessible information about the programme aims, pathways to employment and further study, professional accreditation status, practice placement requirements (where applicable), the award and its place within the NFQ and study commencement dates.

Commendation 1
5.1.1 (b): The panel commends TUS for its proactive, multi-channel approach to providing accessible and responsive information and advice for prospective learners.

Information on placements could be enhanced through the provision of further information on working conditions for learners on student visas and whether placements are paid or unpaid.

Recommendation 1

5.1.1 (d): The panel recommends that TUS consider providing written guidance to international students on any visa-related work conditions to support students to make informed decisions and adequately prepare for their placement experiences.

The panel found that the Undergraduate Prospectus did not include information on international student entry requirements.

Recommendation 2

5.1.1 (f): The panel recommends that TUS consider adding respective international student entry requirements to its Undergraduate Prospectus.

To support learners to make an informed decision about whether or not to study in Ireland, TUS provides information on immigration requirements, financial obligations (including tuition and other fees), the cost of living, accommodation availability, insurance requirements, and contact details for TUS Global. The TUS Global Experience team is the primary point of contact for all international student queries. The panel noted, however, that while TUS provides clear information about fees and scholarships to international students for the upcoming year via a dedicated webpage, fee information on programme pages links to campus information – noting that there doesn't appear to be consistent information across campuses - and from there to the fee schedule for the current year. This page details additional charges such as academic registration fees, material fee charges, continuation fees and payment and refund timelines that don't appear on the international student finance page. There would be value in exploring a centralised approach to information provision, ensuring that potential students can easily access the correct information.

Recommendation 3

5.1.2 (a): The panel recommends that TUS consider reviewing the distribution of financial information over various webpages and explore ways to centralise or improve clarity and accessibility.

TUS has put in place mechanisms to assure, on an ongoing basis, the clarity, accuracy, transparency, accessibility, relevance and currency of information provided via its various communication channels. A dedicated staff member within TUS Global oversees all marketing activities to ensure alignment with university policies and accuracy standards, conducting an annual audit of marketing materials to verify their consistency, accuracy and relevance. Printed and digital materials, including the website, are regularly updated to reflect changes. In the 2024/25 academic year, TUS conducted a Global pre-arrival support feedback survey to assess the effectiveness of current approaches to information management and gain a better understanding of

the information needs of international students. While the survey yielded valuable information, the survey reach was only 4% of the international student population and thus could not provide robust information to support continuous improvement on a broader scale. It is recommended that TUS review the survey and its dissemination to ensure it focuses on students' pre-arrival needs and improves its response rate. This survey should be conducted on a regular basis to support continuous improvement.

Recommendation 4

5.1.1 (a): The panel recommends that TUS consider reviewing the pre-arrival support feedback survey for international students to understand the low response rate. Such feedback should be collected on a regular basis.

TUS engages education agents to support its recruitment and has put in place the TUS Global Agent Recruitment and Partner Policy to govern its activities in this area. TUS has a written agreement with each agent that incorporates the London Statement and sets out sanctions for non-compliance. Agents undergo a due diligence process to verify the track record of agents in relation to learner protection prior to entering into a contract, and a regular monitoring and review process ensures they continue to meet their contractual requirements, the required ethical standards and that they deliver value. Due diligence involves a questionnaire and three reference checks. However, the questionnaire does not sufficiently cover learner protection issues, and the reference checks are focused primarily on the quality of applications submitted and the volume of converted applications. There is not sufficient information to give confidence that the agent has a strong track record, strong ethical standards and a commitment to learner protection.

Recommendation 5

5.1.2 (f): The panel recommends that TUS consider reviewing its due diligence process for education agents to align with good practice and strengthen the role of student protection and commitment to student welfare through inclusion of these indicators.

TUS's education partner hub provides a centralised repository of approved TUS marketing materials for use by its agents. This is complemented by regular training sessions, both in-country and online, and regular in-country office visits.

Commendation 2

5.1.2 (g): The panel commends TUS for its education partner hub which provides updated information via a single access point so all information is made available to all agents in a timely

manner.

TUS's agent monitoring and review process is a performance-based review that draws on student feedback and application quality to determine agent quality. In its current form it does not encompass the full intent and spirit of the HE Code and the London Statement. The process could be enhanced by expanding the range of indicators for each agent to include for example, student success (tracking the students recruited by the agent through to completion), learner attrition rates, visa rejection/delay rates, student complaints, agent attendance at training sessions and adequacy of agent knowledge (through written and scenario testing).

Recommendation 6

5.1.2 (h): The panel recommends that TUS consider revising its annual monitoring and review process, including the TUS Global Agent/Recruitment Partner Policy 2025 – 2028, to fully encompass the intent and spirit of the HE Code and London Statement and align with best practice.

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 TUS and they are compliant across all criteria.

TUS clearly specifies entry requirements and English language proficiency requirements on the TUS Global webpage (including country-specific criteria) and programme pages. The TUS Global Admissions Policy sets out the process, roles and responsibilities, while the English Language Policy outlines the principles and process for evaluating English language competence and the relevant benchmarks (IELTS, CEFR, Duolingo, TOEFL, Pearson PTE). To provide assurance that entry requirements support the successful participation of learners, TUS Global tracks the progression and performance of international students and uses this data to adjust entry requirements where necessary.

The TUS Global Admission Policy sets out the process for qualification recognition. LRC and subsidiary texts guide TUS in its recognition decisions. Where a decision is made to withhold recognition of an applicant's qualifications, they are informed in a timely manner. TUS Global has put in place service standards to support the timeliness of assessing the qualifications of international students for admission, along with mechanisms to monitor adherence to these. TUS's data shows that it is meeting these standards and continues to seek to improve its metrics.

While TUS is to be commended for the timeliness of its response, the sample refusal letter provided to the panel (along with the Global Admission Policy and international admissions FAQs) does not provide enough information to support international applicants to make an appeal. TUS should seek to provide information in the refusal letter (or via a weblink) outlining how the applicant may contest the decision including: the basis on which applicants can appeal, appeal timeframes, application forms (if relevant), sources of advice and support, any legal or regulatory texts that may assist applicants, and possible measures the applicant may take to obtain recognition at a later stage.

Recommendation 7

5.2 (f): The panel recommends that TUS 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 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

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

TUS's information provision is generally clear, accurate, transparent, accessible, relevant and current. There are mechanisms to regularly check that information continues to meet the needs of learners and to assure TUS of the validity and transparency of published information. While the panel did not identify any major deficits in the way that information is delivered to international students, a number of recommendations are provided to support continuous improvement.

TUS fees for international students are published on the website and in all relevant marketing materials, brochures and communications. However, the fees listed on the TUS Global page are annual fees and do not reflect the full cost of the degree from admission through to graduation as required by the criterion. Full disclosure of both annual and total indicative costs in all

communications to applicants (website, printed and offer letter) would provide clarity to students, facilitate forward financial planning and ensure full transparency.

Recommendation 8

5.3.1 (a): The panel recommends that TUS consider providing international students with information on compulsory fees for the full duration of the programme from registration and admission through to graduation

TUS's Global non-EU Refund Policy requires that information on deposits paid by international students is set out in the offer letter. The offer letter provided to the panel did not reflect these requirements.

Recommendation 9

5.3.1 (f): The panel recommends that TUS consider ensuring that the provisions set out in the TUS Global non-EU Refund Policy are implemented.

Tuition and non-tuition-related fees at TUS are published annually in TUS's schedule. The schedule is not directly available on (or from) the fees page for international students, nor is it referenced in the offer letter. This means that prospective and current students may not be aware of the full spectrum of fees and costs associated with their studies prior to commencing and during the course of their studies. While TUS provides students with information via email at certain points during the academic year, the panel believe that providing consistent information across multiple channels would enhance transparency for international students and avoid confusion. All international students at TUS receive an email setting out comprehensive programme-specific requirements in advance of the programme commencement dates. This includes course requirements, essential equipment and any additional costs associated with the programme. TUS is encouraged to increase financial transparency and accessibility for prospective students by including these costs on the relevant programme pages.

Recommendation 10

5.3.2 (a): The panel recommends that TUS consider ensuring information on additional fees and charges, such as those for materials, software costs, health, safety and other costs, is transparent and easily accessible for both prospective and current international students on fee pages and programme pages and is reviewed annually. Where these costs may change, TUS should state indicative costs.

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

Fifteen of the 15 criteria here are applicable to TUS, and they are compliant across all criteria.

TUS provides staff and a range of support services and facilities to support students in their transition to student life in Ireland, and throughout their studies. This includes induction, financial support and academic integrity information and education. TUS's commitment to international learner support is evident through the appointment of dedicated 'TUS Global Student Experience Officers' on each of the two campuses. Functioning generally as an interface between international students and student services/management, these officers play an important role in spreading relevant information. Furthermore, they are actively involved in the induction programme.

Commendation 3
5.4.1 (a): The panel commends TUS's commitment to international learner support through the appointment of dedicated 'TUS Global Student Experience Officers' on each of the two campuses.

Commendation 4
5.4.1 (a): The panel commends TUS's creation of the Global Experience Team which the panel believes will provide good individualised support for international learners and support TUS in its TUS Global Internalisation strategy.

Once students arrive in Ireland, TUS provides a comprehensive induction and welcoming programme, which includes a dedicated airport collection service to welcome and transport students from Dublin Airport to Athlone and Limerick. Students have the opportunity to attend information sessions covering general student support services such as counselling, the student health unit, the careers and employability service, and the student union, and academic supports such as the library, learning support and academic writing. It also covers immigration requirements and an introduction to life in Ireland to support cultural integration. Students receive an academic induction from their faculty, and are enrolled in the TUS Global orientation programme, which is designed to provide them with the necessary support and guidance to enhance their college experience over the first seven weeks.

Notwithstanding the excellent introduction, TUS does not have mechanisms in place to assure itself of the effectiveness of its approach. The International Students Pre-Arrival Experience Survey does not provide insights on induction (academic or general). Student feedback on induction structure

and delivery, as well as on the information provided during induction, could be collected via a dedicated survey. Survey questions relating to induction could also be included and raised within internal periodic student surveys, focus groups or other mechanisms of student feedback collection.

Recommendation 11

5.4.1 (c) and 5.4.2 (a): The panel recommends that TUS consider putting in place mechanisms to measure the effectiveness of induction for international learners.

TUS Global does not facilitate any intakes outside of the September intake for all new programmes, although some international learners might still join at other points throughout the year. In these cases, students are provided with an online orientation programme, but do not receive a comprehensive induction to the full range of available services. While the Graduate School and Research Office (Additional Document 107) provides general information, there is limited clarity on how the Global Office collaborates with the Research Office to support international postgraduate students and ensure that information provided at induction is easily accessible throughout the year and that reminders are provided to students at key points.

Recommendation 12

5.4.1 (d) and 5.4.2 (b): While TUS Global does not facilitate any intakes outside of the September intake for all new programmes, the panel recommends that TUS consider putting in place measures to ensure that international learners who join at other points throughout the year receive a comprehensive induction to the full range of available services beyond simply providing an online orientation programme.

Recommendation 13

5.4.2 (c): The panel recommends that TUS consider placing greater emphasis on the integration of international research students as also highlighted in the CINNTE review and TUS's Strategic Plan.

As noted earlier, the International Student Pre-arrival Experience Survey focuses on pre-arrival experiences. The panel recommends that TUS explore mechanisms to facilitate and encourage feedback on the specific experiences that international students have with university supports and services throughout their study. This will support continuous improvement and drive the implementation and modification of processes and structures to ensure they can continue to adequately meet the specific needs of various cohorts of international students.

Recommendation 14

5.4.1 (h): The panel recommends that TUS consider putting in place a range of mechanisms to facilitate and encourage feedback from a broad range of international students across its campuses on the delivery of supports and services that go beyond the scope of the International Student Pre-Arrival Survey (focused on onboarding) and the TUS Global Survey (focused on TUS Global services and activities).

There are a small number of TUS staff who have undertaken training on intercultural awareness over the past four years, so there may be value in mandating training on this for all staff, or for selected cohorts, and developing mechanisms to measure the effectiveness of this. That said, the TUS compendium of approaches to internationalisation of the home curriculum, which aims to share best practice across TUS campuses in teaching, assessment and learning, is an example of excellent practice in supporting staff intercultural competence.

Recommendation 15

5.4.3: The panel recommends that TUS consider expanding the range of training and support programmes, including intercultural competence and support for the development of English language competence, available to academic and professional staff to facilitate effective and appropriate delivery of programmes and services to international learners.

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

Three of the four criteria here are applicable to TUS, and they are compliant across all criteria.

TUS's English Language Policy was approved by its Academic Council in 2024. Policy development was led by the Admissions, Transfer and Progression subcommittee and a range of staff were co-opted to the working group to ensure effective stakeholder representation and buy-in. The policy was benchmarked with those of other HEIs to ensure comparability.

The policy sets out in detail the parameters for the assessment of English Language Proficiency and includes reference to TUS's undergraduate and postgraduate entry requirements for EU/EFTA/UK applicant and international learners. It outlines how the English Language Preparation for TUS Programmes - which aim to cater specifically for the language needs of applicants who intend to study for an International Foundation programme, undergraduate programme, postgraduate degree programme or study abroad programme at TUS – operate and details the range of English language supports available for international students at TUS.

TUS offers a level 6 NFQ Certificate in Foundation Studies for International Students which is subject to TUS normal internal quality assurance processes and is validated in line with TUS's academic regulations.

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 does not agree with TUS that two out of eight criteria are applicable. The panel considers that no criteria are applicable to TUS.

TUS did not offer any remote online programmes that were accessible to learners outside the state in the 2022/23 academic year. In the 2023/24 academic year, TUS offered eight remote, fully-online Special Purpose Award programmes. Thirty-three of the students enrolled in these awards were based outside of Ireland. In the current academic year, 2024/25, seven of these awards are being offered and include learners outside the state. There are challenges for TUS in identifying whether these learners are international or non-international learners. TUS is continuing to explore options to support verification of the status of enrolled students to enable appropriate support to be provided to these students and ensure that TUS meets the relevant requirements of the Code in

relation to them.

TUS's online programmes align with QQI's Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended and Fully Online Learning Programmes and are subject to all of TUS's usual internal quality assurance policies and procedures, but with specific considerations for
online programmes. TUS is encouraged to continue to explore options to enable it to distinguish between international and non-international learners studying online outside of Ireland, and to apply the principles and criteria of the HE Code for those learners.

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

In 2021, TUS was designated as an awarding body and became the third technological university in Ireland. It has around 15,000 students, 1,800 staff across 5 campuses. In 2023, TUS launched its inaugural strategic plan 2023-2026 and in 2023-2024, it underwent a QQI Cinnte review, which noted that TUS had a strong quality culture. Since its establishment, TUS has put in place a new governance and management structure for the university as a whole and to support its international provision. This includes a Governing Body, Academic Council and executive functions. The Vice President for Internationalisation and Alumni is responsible for internationalisation and is supported in this role by the TUS Global office. The latter supports international students from pre-arrival through to arrival, induction and throughout their programme of study at TUS and beyond. In addition, TUS Global office is responsible for international recruitment and managing a network of in-country representative offices in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Mexico, for research and partnership opportunities, and mobility opportunities. In September 2023, TUS Global established the Global Student Experience Team to provide guidance for international students from orientation onwards and to support belonging and cultural integration.

TUS has 1,105 international learners comprising 7.6% of the student population. Of these, 5.5% (844) are non-EU learners, with the three major source countries being India, China and Malaysia, while 1.7% (261) are EU students, with Italy, France and Germany constituting the top three source markets. TUS does not offer TNE but is actively engaged in international collaborations with partners in China, Canada, Malaysia and India, and participates in the RUN-EU alliance as part of the European Commission European Universities initiative. The alliance involves 9 Higher Education Institutions across 7 member countries. TUS has a small number of online programmes with learners based outside Ireland on Special Purpose Award Programmes. TUS does not have

mechanisms or processes in place to distinguish if these online learners outside Ireland are international or non-international learners.

TUS's strategic plan aims to 'build and enhance relationships to drive the sustainable development of our region and to make an impact nationally and internationally'. It is implementing this via an internationalised curriculum, growing international research, partnership collaborations and transnational education. TUS has defined its objectives for international education in its Global International Strategy.

TUS has established appropriate structures to support its international provision and ambitions and has put in place mechanisms and processes to continuously improve in this area. It is well-placed, considering its organisational structure and the newly appointed Global Experience team, to meet the ambitions set out in the TUS Global Internationalisation strategy. Stronger mechanisms to support integration and coordination amongst its campuses and with the research office may further support this.

Considering that TUS offers a range of online learning programmes, albeit with limited student numbers, it is critical, in order to ensure that its provision to eventual international online learners meets the HE Code, that TUS establishes a data collection mechanism to distinguish between international and non-international learners.

Recommended condition(s) for authorisation:

N/A

Commendations:

Commendation 1
5.1.1 (b): The panel commends TUS for its proactive, multi-channel approach to providing accessible and responsive information and advice for prospective learners.

Commendation 2
5.1.2 (g): The panel commends TUS for its education partner hub which provides updated information via a single access point so all information is made available to all agents in a timely manner.

Commendation 3
5.4.1 (a): The panel commends TUS's commitment to international learner support through the

appointment of dedicated 'TUS Global Student Experience Officers' on each of the two campuses.

Commendation 4

5.4.1 (a): The panel commends TUS's creation of the Global Experience Team which the panel believes will provide good individualised support for international learners and support TUS in its TUS Global Internalisation strategy.

Recommendations:

Recommendation 1

5.1.1 (d): The panel recommends that TUS consider providing written guidance to international students on any visa-related work conditions that may affect student participation, such as restrictions on working hours (20h/week during term time) or the need for additional permissions, to support students to make informed decisions and adequately prepare for their placement experiences.

Recommendation 2

5.1.1 (f): The panel recommends that TUS consider adding respective international student entry requirements to its Undergraduate Prospectus.

Recommendation 3

5.1.2 (a): The panel recommends that TUS consider reviewing the distribution of financial information over various webpages and explore ways to centralise or improve clarity and accessibility to concentrate them at one place.

Recommendation 4

5.1.1 (a): The panel recommends that TUS consider reviewing the pre-arrival support feedback survey for international students to understand the low response rate. Such feedback should be collected on a regular basis.

Recommendation 5

5.1.2 (f): The panel recommends that TUS consider reviewing its due diligence process for education agents to align with good practice and strengthen the role of student protection and commitment to student welfare through inclusion of these indicators.

Recommendation 6

5.1.2 (h): The panel recommends that TUS consider revising its annual monitoring and review process, including the TUS Global Agent/Recruitment Partner Policy 2025 – 2028, to fully encompass the intent and spirit of the HE Code and London Statement and align with best practice.

Recommendation 7

5.2 (f): The panel recommends that TUS 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 8

5.3.1 (a): The panel recommends TUS consider providing international students with information on compulsory fees for the full duration of the programme from registration and admission through to graduation.

Recommendation 9

5.3.1 (f): The panel recommends that TUS consider ensuring that the provisions set out in the TUS Global non-EU Refund Policy are implemented.

Recommendation 10

5.3.2 (a): The panel recommends that TUS consider ensuring information on additional fees and charges, such as those for materials, software costs, health, safety and other costs, is transparent and easily accessible for both prospective and current international students on fee pages and programme pages and is reviewed annually. Where these costs may change, TUS should indicate indicative costs.

Recommendation 11

5.4.1 (c) and 5.4.2 (a): The panel recommends that TUS consider putting in place mechanisms to measure the effectiveness of induction for international learners

Recommendation 12

5.4.1 (d) and 5.4.2 (b): While TUS Global does not facilitate any intakes outside of the September intake for all new programmes, the panel recommends that TUS consider putting in place measures to ensure that international learners who join at other points throughout the year receive a comprehensive induction to the full range of available services beyond simply providing an online orientation programme.

Recommendation 13

5.4.2 (c): The panel recommends that TUS consider placing greater emphasis on the integration of international research students as also highlighted in the CINNTE review and TUS's Strategic Plan.

Recommendation 14

5.4.1 (h): The panel recommends that TUS consider putting in place a range of mechanisms to facilitate and encourage feedback from a broad range of international students across its campuses on the delivery of supports and services that go beyond the scope of the International Student Pre-Arrival Survey and the TUS Global Survey.

Recommendation 15

5.4.3: The panel recommends that TUS consider expanding the range of training and support programmes, including intercultural competence and support for the development of English language competence, available to academic and professional staff to facilitate effective and appropriate delivery of programmes and services to international learners.

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: 03/10/2025

Signed:

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Institutional Response

TUS welcomes the introduction of the TrustEd Ireland Mark awarded by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), which serves as a nationally and internationally recognised assurance of quality and credibility within Ireland's national qualification and regulatory framework, bringing recognition of the university's trustworthiness and reliability in the provision of education to international learners.

As President of TUS, I wish to acknowledge the invaluable guidance and support provided by QQI throughout all stages of the TrustEd Ireland application process, and to extend appreciation to the independent, expert, international review team for their rigorous and considered assessment, as evidenced in this comprehensive report.

TUS embraced the TrustEd Ireland process as a valuable and timely opportunity to engage with stakeholders across the university and beyond, fostering reflection and ongoing enhancement of our practices in the provision of international education. As a university in a phase of consolidation and growth, the process served as a constructive developmental exercise, strengthening the connections between TUS Global with a wide range of academic, professional, and support functions. The process also strengthened engagement with students, reinforcing TUS's commitment to a *'Students as Partners'* approach that values the learner voice and collaboration with students in the continuous improvement of the student experience. Collectively, these processes will further strengthen shared understanding and alignment across the university, contributing to the continued enhancement of our approaches to the provision of international education.

I am pleased that the Report finds that TUS is *'Fully Compliant'* with all applicable criteria of the *QQI Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Higher Education to International Learners.* TUS warmly welcomes the Report's commendations, which acknowledge the university's proactive and multi-faceted approaches to providing clear, accessible, and responsive information for prospective international learners; the effective use of the Education Partner Hub to ensure timely and consistent communication with international partners and agents; and the strong institutional commitment to learner support through the appointment of Global Student Experience Officers across campuses. TUS particularly values the recognition of the TUS Global Student Experience Team, which has been instrumental in supporting international students' engagement with university life, fostering connection, inclusion, and a strong sense of belonging. It recognises and affirms TUS's strategic and coordinated approach to individualised support and its alignment with the university's Global Internationalisation Strategy. Embedded before the

initiation of the TrustEd Ireland process, this initiative reflects TUS's ongoing commitment to an inclusive, supportive, and collaborative culture in alignment with our overarching University *Values*, and we are proud that this dedication has been recognised. TUS also welcomes the recognition of the *TUS Compendium of Approaches to Internationalisation of the Home Curriculum*, which aims to share best practice across TUS campuses and *"is an example of excellent practice in supporting staff intercultural competence"*.

The TrustEd Ireland process also represents a valuable opportunity for enhancement. TUS appreciates the report's considered and detailed narrative, which clearly outlines the context for the developmental and constructive recommendations. TUS fully accepts the recommendations and acknowledges their importance in supporting the university's ongoing quality and internationalisation objectives. TUS will develop an associated Action Plan to ensure timely follow-up and the effective implementation of appropriate measures, thereby maximising the benefit and impact of the TrustEd Ireland process and of these recommendations.

I would like to express my appreciation to the TUS team involved in the TrustEd Ireland process under the leadership of the Vice President of Internationalisation and Alumni and Vice President of Academic Affairs and Registrar and to warmly congratulate TUS Global on the outcome. I would also like to reiterate my thanks to the review team and to QQI. The authorisation for TUS to use the TrustEd Ireland Mark will play a pivotal role in strengthening confidence in the university's integrity, trustworthiness, and excellence in the provision of education to international learners.

Professor Vincent Cunnane
President, TUS