

TrustEd Ireland (International Education Mark) Frequently Asked Questions

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Section 1 [General FAQs](#)

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1. What is the TrustEd Ireland (International Education Mark)?

TrustEd Ireland (International Education Mark) is a new statutory quality mark and part of a suite of legislative measures designed to protect international learners. The new mark will be awarded to higher education and English language education providers who have

demonstrated that they meet national standards, ensuring a quality experience for international learners from pre-enrolment through to the completion of their programme of education and training.

2. What is the purpose of the TrustEd Ireland (International Education Mark)?

TrustEd Ireland is intended to promote confidence, both nationally and internationally, in the quality of the Irish education system. It will ensure that international learners enrolled on programmes with higher education (HE) and English language education (ELE) providers receive a consistent, high-quality learning experience.

3. Is TrustEd Ireland (International Education Mark) a voluntary scheme?

TrustEd Ireland is a voluntary scheme. It is of note that providers who wish to recruit non-EU/EEA/Swiss learners on programmes that require immigration permissions/study visas must be authorised by QQI to use the TrustEd Ireland mark.

4. When can providers apply for TrustEd Ireland (International Education Mark) authorisation?

The first application window for HE and ELE providers will open on 2 September 2024. Providers intending to apply in the first application window must confirm this by 27 September. Confirmed applicants will be given access to the application portal, where they can submit their application, by 14 October. The closing date for receipt of applications in the first application window is 28 March 2025. It is anticipated that a second application window will open in late autumn 2025.

5. Which providers can make an application for the TrustEd Ireland Mark and how should they select the appropriate pathway?

The scheme is open to providers of higher education programmes that lead to qualifications included within the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), and providers of English language education programmes. There are thus two pathways to TrustEd Ireland authorisation: a HE pathway and an ELE pathway. For more detail, see *QQI's Policy on Authorisation to use the International Education Mark*, [policy-on-authorisation-to-use-the-international-education-mark 0.pdf \(qqi.ie\)](#)

6. What pathway should a provider select if it offers both ELE and HE programmes?

For the purposes of initial TrustEd authorisation, independent/private providers will be required to confirm whether they are primarily an ELE provider or a HE provider, taking into account the following factors: the total learner numbers enrolled on their ELE and HE programmes, the number of international learners enrolled on their ELE and HE programmes, turnover related to each category of education provision (where applicable) and other relevant factors. Providers focused mainly on English language education should apply through the ELE pathway, while those focused on higher education should apply through the HE pathway. Contact QQI for further guidance international.education@qqi.ie.

7. Will a provider that offers both ELE and HE programmes, and has been authorised to use the TrustEd Ireland mark via the ELE pathway, also need to apply for TrustEd authorisation for its HE provision, and vice versa?

Where an independent/private provider is authorised to use the IEM through the ELE pathway, but also provides some HE programmes to international learners, QQI expects that the provider will subscribe to the HE Code of Practice in relation to those learners. Following initial authorisation under the ELE pathway, QQI will arrange a supplementary review of compliance with the HE Code on an agreed basis and timeline with the provider.

8. Why is there a single TrustEd Ireland brand although there are two pathways (HE and ELE) to TrustEd Ireland authorisation?

The TrustEd Ireland brand is designed to convey a clear, simple and strong message: all authorised providers meet state standards for quality and are committed to protecting the interests of their international students. Keeping the brand unified ensures clarity, especially as the programme may expand to include other types of educational providers in the future.

9. Are there any other eligibility requirements for prospective applicant providers?

Yes, all providers must meet the following requirements:

- have established quality assurance (QA) procedures.
- have established access, transfer, and progression (ATP) arrangements.
- HE providers must have programmes/awards included within the National Framework of Qualifications.
- ELE providers must comply with the ELE Code and QA Guidelines for ELE criteria, clearly and closely align programmes with the CEFR, and meet statutory information requirements.
- Private/independent HE providers and ELE providers authorised to use the TrustEd Ireland mark must participate in the statutory Learner Protection Fund.

10. What will be required from HE and ELE providers in the application process?

HE and ELE providers applying for TrustEd Ireland authorisation must comply with specific Codes of Practice: one for HE providers and one for ELE providers. ELE providers must also demonstrate that their quality assurance procedures meet QQI's Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for English Language Education Providers.

11. Which providers are obliged to comply with the new statutory due diligence (capacity and capability) requirements when applying for TrustEd Ireland authorisation?

QQI is responsible for undertaking due diligence assessments of providers that engage with QQI on a statutory basis, unless they are exempted under legislation. This includes ELE providers, private/independent HE providers, and non-exempt linked providers. Specific requirements apply based on the type of provider and their prior engagement with QQI.

12. What are the stages of the TrustEd Ireland (International Education Mark) application process?

There are several stages in the IEM application process. The process may be summarised as follows:

- Step 1: Confirmation of Application

- Step 2: Access to Application Portal
- Step 3: Submit Self-assessment IEM Application Statement (IEMAS)
- Step 4: Assessment Panel Assessment
- Step 5: Engagement with Providers
- Step 6: Site Visit (*ELE provider applicants only*)
- Step 7: Assessors' Report
- Step 8: Provider Feedback
- Step 9: QQI Internal Governance
- Step 10: Decision on Authorisation

13. If a provider withdraws its application, will it receive a refund of the application fee?

If QQI deems a provider to have withdrawn during the screening stage, they will receive an 80% refund of the application fee. No refund is available if withdrawal occurs after the assessment stage begins.

14. What QQI divisions are responsible for processing TrustEd Ireland applications?

The International Education Division manages the assessment of the IEM application, while the Provider Governance and Risk Division manages due diligence assessments for English language providers.

15. How can I contact the International Education Division?

Providers can submit a query to the International Education division via international.education@qqi.ie

16. Will some providers receive TrustEd Ireland authorisation ahead of others?

No. Authorisation outcomes will be finalised and announced for all applicants at the same time, once the assessment process for all providers in a given application window is complete.

17. Will the ILEP continue after providers have been authorised to use the TrustEd Ireland mark?

The Interim List of Eligible Programmes is an interim measure pending the introduction of the TrustEd Ireland scheme. This list will cease to operate following the completion of the second TrustEd Ireland window in 2026. If your programme(s) is currently included on the ILEP, you must apply for and be authorised to use the TrustEd Ireland mark to continue to recruit non-EU/EEA international students who require study permission or student visas. If you apply for the TrustEd Ireland mark, you must comply with the Department of Justice in monitoring student compliance with immigration law. You can read more in Section 2.5 and 2.6 of the [policy-on-authorisation-to-use-the-international-education-mark 0.pdf \(qqi.ie\)](#).

18. Will providers who are currently authorised to recruit non-EU/EEA/Swiss learners who require study visas/permissions continue to be authorised to do so once ILEP closes?

The ILEP is an interim measure pending the introduction of TrustEd Ireland. Once TrustEd Ireland is fully implemented, the ILEP will cease to operate and institutions will be required to hold TrustEd Ireland authorisation in order to recruit international learners requiring visas/study permissions. Transitional arrangements will be put in place to support providers in managing this change. All providers seeking TrustEd Ireland authorisation are expected to cooperate with the Department of Justice in monitoring student compliance with immigration law.

Section 2 Higher Education Provider FAQs

1. [What principles and criteria are HE pathway applicants required to comply with?](#)
2. [Who will assess compliance with the HE Code?](#)
3. [What happens if there is a perceived conflict of interest within the assessment team?](#)
4. [How can a provider communicate a perceived/potential conflict of interest with the assessment panel?](#)
5. [Who makes the final decision on TrustEd Ireland authorisation and what are the possible outcomes for a HE provider?](#)
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7. [I am an ELE university campus company. What application pathway is most applicable?](#)
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10. [What categories of international learners are in scope for TrustEd Ireland \(HE Pathway\)?](#)
11. [Does the TrustEd Ireland application process include Erasmus + and study abroad learners?](#)
12. [Does the TrustEd Ireland application process include online and transnational learners?](#)
13. [Does the TrustEd Ireland application process include international learners enrolled on full or part time programmes who are normally resident in Ireland?](#)
14. [Are learners from Northern Ireland and Great Britain in scope for TrustEd Ireland?](#)
15. [How will ongoing compliance with the HE Code be monitored by QQI?](#)

1. What principles and criteria are HE pathway applicants required to comply with?

- Conduct ethical marketing and recruitment
- Provide accurate information to international learners about the HE provider and its programmes, and the manner of its engagement with recruitment agents
- Implement fair, transparent, and consistent admission policies that encompass a provider's approach to qualifications' recognition and its obligations under the Lisbon Recognition Convention
- Publish an English language policy statement, including requirements relating to international foundation year programmes

- Communicate with international learners on fees, refunds, and subsistence in a transparent, accurate and accessible manner
- Maintain supports and services for international learners
- Ensure that quality assurance arrangements and the HE Code are applied in an appropriate fashion to international learners outside the state who are enrolled on programmes leading to awards included within the NFQ, including learners enrolled on transnational and online programmes.

2. Who will assess compliance with the HE Code?

QQI will appoint a panel of three assessors to assess each provider's IEM application statement comprising:

- Chairperson: A current or former holder of a senior leadership role within a higher education institution. They will have led similar national or international regulatory evaluations;
- Subject matter expert: will have an evidenced track record of knowledge and experience working in international education, particularly in roles with responsibility for the welfare of international learners;
- Report writer: will have good general knowledge of the Irish Higher Education context, including quality assurance requirements, and international education as it pertains to the general and academic needs of learners on academic programmes.

The panel will review the IEM application and make a recommendation to QQI's Approvals and Reviews Committee (ARC) on compliance and any conditions required.

3. What happens if there is a perceived conflict of interest within the assessment team?

The Assessment Panel selected for each assessment will be asked to declare any potential conflict of interest prior to selection. The HE provider will also be asked to declare any potential conflicts of interest that members of the Assessment Panel may have with the provider. Where a potential conflict arises during the process, the HE provider must declare this to the QQI executive within five working days. QQI may make adjustments to the Assessment Panel membership in such cases. QQI will have final approval over the composition of each Assessment Panel. For further information please see the HE Pathway Guidance Handbook.

4. How can a provider communicate a perceived/potential conflict of interest with the assessment panel?

All communications should be made to QQI directly to international.education@qqi.ie

5. Who makes the final decision on TrustEd Ireland authorisation and what are the possible outcomes for a HE provider?

The Assessment Panel's final report, setting out its findings and recommendations, together with the HE provider's response to this report, will be submitted to QQI's Approvals and Reviews Committee (ARC) for a final decision. There are three possible outcomes:

- Authorised to use the TrustEd Ireland mark
- Authorised to use the TrustEd Ireland mark with conditions
- Not authorised to use the TrustEd Ireland mark.

The ARC reserves the right to impose conditions that have not been identified by the Assessment Panel, in addition to those identified by the Assessment Panel if that is the case.

6. What is the threshold standard for HE code compliance for a HE provider to achieve TrustEd Ireland authorisation?

For the purpose of satisfying QQI that a HE provider complies with the HE Code and may be authorised to use the TrustEd Ireland mark, the HE provider:

- must be fully compliant with at least 80% of the HE Code criteria applicable to that provider
- ensure that an 80% compliance rate is demonstrated under each of the applicable principles.

It is of note that not all 6 principles and the associated 63 criteria will apply to all providers.

7. I am an ELE university campus company. What application pathway is most applicable?

This will depend on the nature of the corporate relationship between the campus company and the parent university, and the quality assurance arrangements that are in place regarding the campus company's English language education provision. If the company acts independently of the university's corporate governance and academic quality assurance arrangements, then it should apply for TrustEd Ireland authorisation through the ELE pathway. Contact QQI for further guidance international.education@qqi.ie.

8. What is the application fee for HE providers?

Please refer to the Fees and Charges document in the resources section of www.qqi.ie

9. What is the annual charge for HE providers?

Please refer to the Fees and Charges document in the resources section of www.qqi.ie

10. What categories of international learners are in scope for TrustEd Ireland (HE Pathway)?

For the purposes of TrustEd Ireland (HE pathway), there are three distinct categories of learner:

- EU/EEA/Swiss learners in the state undertaking programmes that lead to major or non-major awards that are included within the NFQ;
- Non-EU/EEA/Swiss learners in the state undertaking programmes leading to major or non-major awards that are included within the NFQ;
- Learners outside the state enrolled on programmes that lead to major or non-major awards included within the NFQ, whether offered in transnational education settings and/or through remote, fully online modes of learning.

In submitting their IEM Application Statements, HE providers should endeavour to provide accurate data on the learner numbers in these categories. Where a provider considers that it is unable to provide any of the requested data e.g. in relation to precise information on a learner's nationality/citizenship, or a precise determination on whether an international learner is in the state primarily to receive education and training or is here for another purpose (e.g. on a work visa), this should be noted in its IEMAS. In such circumstances, the

provider should provide as much accurate data on the above categories that it possesses, and, if possible, an estimate of the number of enrolled international learners whose precise categorisation is, in the provider's view, indeterminate.

11. Are Erasmus+ and study abroad learners included in TrustEd Ireland?

The definition of an international learner, as set out in the HE Code, does not include learners on any form of study abroad, visiting student or exchange programme. Only learners that are enrolled on programmes that lead to awards that are included within the NFQ are in scope for TrustEd Ireland.

12. Does the TrustEd Ireland application process include online and transnational learners?

HE and ELE providers authorised to use the IEM will be expected to apply their respective code of practice to the relevant categories of international learners and programme categories defined in section 3.4 of the Policy on Authorisation. For some HE providers, this may include learners outside the state who are enrolled on programmes that lead to major and non-major awards included within the NFQ, whether these programmes are offered in transnational education settings and/or through remote, fully online modes of learning.

13. Does the TrustEd Ireland application process include international learners enrolled on full or part time programmes who are normally resident in Ireland?

Yes, all international learners that are enrolled on programmes that lead to awards that are included within the NFQ are in scope for TrustEd Ireland.

14. Are learners from Northern Ireland and Great Britain in scope for TrustEd Ireland?

No, learners from Northern Ireland and Great Britain are not included in the scope of TrustEd Ireland. According to the definition used by TrustEd Ireland, an international learner does not include citizens of Great Britain and Northern Ireland who are enrolled in programmes leading to major or non-major awards within the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). This exclusion is in line with the Common Travel Area agreement between the UK and Ireland, which allows for the free movement of people between the two countries. As a result, these learners are not classified as international learners for the purposes of TrustEd Ireland.

15. How will ongoing compliance with the HE Code be monitored by QQI?

HE providers authorised to use the TrustEd Ireland mark will be monitored through the regular cycle of QA engagements with QQI, including, as appropriate, cyclical institutional reviews, annual quality reports (AQRs), and quality dialogue meetings (QDMs). Linked providers of designated awarding bodies (DABs) who do not engage directly with QQI on statutory QA processes will engage directly with QQI on the TrustEd Ireland authorisation process. In this context, QQI will undertake the monitoring of the linked providers' compliance with the HE Code. QQI will establish a policy and process for IEM monitoring of linked providers ahead of the initial TrustEd authorisations.

1. [What principles and criteria are ELE pathway applicants required to comply with?](#)
2. [Will ELE providers receive a site visit inspection as part of the IEM application process?](#)
3. [Who will carry out the site visit inspection?](#)
4. [What happens if there is a perceived conflict of interest within the assessment team?](#)
5. [How can a provider communicate a perceived/potential conflict of interest with the assessment panel?](#)
6. [How long will it take to assess TrustEd Ireland applications?](#)
7. [Do ACELS recognised providers need to make an application for TrustEd Ireland?](#)
8. [What is the application fee for ELE providers?](#)
9. [Does the application fee include the due diligence assessment fee?](#)
10. [What is the annual charge for ELE providers?](#)
11. [Is there a review process for ELE pathway providers?](#)

1. What principles and criteria are ELE pathway applicants required to comply with?

ELE providers are required to comply with the principles and criteria set out in the ELE Code:

- requirements for premises
- operational, risk and human resources management
- programme design
- supports and services for international learners
- accurate information provision to international learners
- ethical marketing and recruitment
- enrolment, fees, refunds, and subsistence.

ELE providers are also required to demonstrate the suitability of their QA procedures by having regard to and meeting the criteria set out in the QA Guidelines for ELE:

- organisational structures
- management and governance of quality assurance
- academic management structures
- programme design
- supports and services for international learners
- staff supports and development

2. Will ELE providers receive a site visit inspection as part of the TrustEd Ireland (International Education Mark) application process?

Yes, a site visit will be conducted to verify provider compliance with the ELE Code and meeting the QA Guidelines for ELE criteria.

3. Who will carry out the site visit inspection?

Each provider will be assigned an Assessment Panel composed of a Lead Assessor and Co-Assessor, who will carry out the site visit. The Lead Assessor will be responsible for completing the final report, with contributions from the Co-Assessor.

4. What happens if there is a perceived conflict of interest within the assessment team?

The Assessment Panel selected for each assessment will be asked to declare any potential conflict of interest prior to selection. The ELE provider will also be asked to declare any potential conflicts of interest that members of the Assessment Panel may have with the provider. Where a potential conflict arises during the process, the ELE provider must declare this to the QQI executive within five working days. QQI may make adjustments to the Assessment Panel membership in such cases. QQI will have final approval over the composition of each Assessment Panel. Please see section A4.3 of the Guidance Handbook for ELE Providers for further details.

5. How can a provider communicate a perceived/potential conflict of interest with the assessment panel?

All communications should be made to QQI directly to international.education@qqi.ie

6. How long will it take to assess TrustEd Ireland applications?

The assessment process is expected to take approximately 30 weeks, provided there are no delays.

7. Do ACELS recognised providers need to make an application for TrustEd Ireland?

There will be no automatic transition from the existing ACELS scheme to the TrustEd Ireland scheme, although there will be a transition period during which ELE providers with ACELS accreditation will have the opportunity to complete their TrustEd Ireland application and assessment process before the ACELS scheme is discontinued. Providers who are recognised by ACELS and interested in applying for TrustEd Ireland authorisation will be required to undergo the same application and assessment process as other ELE providers. The existing non-statutory ACELS scheme, which is currently overseen by QQI on an administrative basis, will be discontinued in due course once ELE providers with ACELS accreditation, and who wish to apply for TrustEd Ireland authorisation, have been afforded a reasonable opportunity to do so. ACELS providers who do not wish to apply for TrustEd Ireland authorisation will no longer have ACELS accreditation once the ACELS scheme is discontinued.

8. What is the application fee for ELE providers?

Please refer to the Fees and Charges document in the resources section of www.qqi.ie

9. Does the application fee include the due diligence assessment fee?

Yes, the application fee for ELE providers includes the due diligence assessment fee, assessment of compliance with the ELE Code and QA Guidelines for ELE criteria fee, and the site visit inspection fee. Please refer to the Fees and Charges document in the resources section of www.qqi.ie

10. What is the annual charge for ELE providers?

Please refer to the Fees and Charges document in the resources section of www.qqi.ie

11. Is there a review process for ELE pathway providers?

ELE providers authorised to use the IEM will be subject to a review of such authorisation at least once every three years. In addition, ELE providers will be required to produce a self-monitoring report every 18 months.

Section 4 IT/Application portal FAQs

1. [How can a provider submit their application for TrustEd Ireland?](#)
2. [How does a provider access the application portal in QHub?](#)
3. [What should I do if my username/password does not work for the QHub application portal?](#)
4. [Where can I find a step-by-step guide on how to use the application portal, QHub?](#)

1. How can a provider submit their application for TrustEd Ireland?

Providers must confirm their intention to apply by submitting a Confirmation of Application. They will be contacted once the application portal is open for submissions. Providers will be emailed a username and password, which they will use to log into the application portal, QHub. Please refer to the IT Handbook for providers for more information.

2. How does a provider access the application portal QHub?

Providers can access the application portal QHub by going to the QQI website at www.qqi.ie. Please use incognito mode on your browser. Click 'Log-in' in the top right-hand corner, click the drop-down button QHub on the login page, and then click QHub again. This will bring you to the login section of the application portal. Please refer to the IT Handbook for providers for more information.

3. What should I do if my username/password does not work for the QHub application portal?

Please ensure you are using incognito mode on your browser to log into the application portal, QHub. If you have issues logging in using your username or password, or have forgotten your username/password, please contact us at international.education@qqi.ie.

4. Where can I find a step-by-step guide on how to use the application portal, QHub?

An IT step-by-step guide has been developed for both Higher Education and English Language Education providers. This document can be found here (NEEDS TO BE LINKED).