

Policy Identifier: Recognition of Foreign Qualifications

Policy Title:	Recognition of Foreign Qualifications
Description:	The purpose of this policy and procedure is to outline Marino Institute of Education’s position in respect of recognising foreign qualifications for the purpose of admission, including advanced entry, to Marino programmes and to describe the process for seeking recognition of a foreign qualification.
Author (Position):	Registrar & Vice President of Academic Affairs
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Approved By:	Governing Body
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Revision History		
Previous Version no.	Summary of Amendments	Reviewed Version no.
1.0	Original policy and procedure.	

Recognition of Foreign Qualifications Policy

1. Context

As part of a strategic commitment to increasingly diversify the MIE student community MIE encourages applications from international learners and applications based upon foreign qualifications.

As programmes offered by Marino Institute of Education lead to awards of Trinity College Dublin (Trinity College Dublin), the Institute ensures all admission related activity and decision-making align with Trinity College Dublin's practice and standards. Thus, the Institute has adopted Trinity College Dublin's Recognition of Foreign Qualifications procedure with a view to ensuring alignment of practice and the intention to aim for the highest standards of quality in all its admission related activities.

Applications for admission to the Institute are processed in adherence to the European Association for Quality Assurance (ENQA) [Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area](#), and the [Lisbon Recognition Convention](#).

In accordance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention foreign qualifications may be relied upon to secure access to the Institute's undergraduate and postgraduate programmes where the qualification has been recognised for the purpose of admission. Entry requirements may also stipulate additional specific requirements beyond those addressed in the general admission requirements for which the qualification is recognised. In such cases, the specific requirements must also be evidenced in addition to the qualification recognition.

It is understood that qualifications from different education systems will differ. However, the similarity in qualification purpose, duration, workload volume, quality assurance and skills and knowledge attained are what form the focus of the assessment for recognition. To be recognised a qualification must be free from substantial difference.

Recognition of a qualification does not guarantee admission. Recognition is a preliminary step that must be satisfied and subject to being recognised, an application can then proceed through the admissions process.

In many instances qualifications may already be recognised and statements of comparability are published on the [NARIC Ireland Foreign Qualifications database](#). Similarly, [country-](#)

[specific admissions requirements are published by Trinity College Dublin](#), as the Institute's awarding body. Prospective learners can review these information sources to determine if their qualification is already recognised.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the Recognition of Foreign Qualification Procedure is to ensure that applicants presenting foreign qualifications for admission are assessed in a transparent, equitable and timely manner, as required under the European Standards and Guidelines and the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

3. Definition:

For the purposes of this procedure, foreign qualifications are any qualification (second level, further and higher education) presented for admission obtained outside the State.

As per the "The European Recognition Manual for Higher Education Institutions", "Substantial differences are differences between the foreign qualification and the national qualification that are so significant, that they would most likely prevent the applicant from succeeding in further study or research activities." (2020, P.57)

4. Scope

The procedure spans both undergraduate and postgraduate applications for admission.

5. Procedure

5.1. Undergraduate CAO Applications (EU/EFTA/UK applicants):

5.1.1 The majority of undergraduate applicants who qualify for EU fee status are admitted centrally through the [Central Applications Office \(CAO\)](#). Recognition of EU/EFTA/UK qualifications is therefore implemented at a sectoral level.

5.1.2 As the Institute's Awarding Body, Trinity College Dublin is a member of a national EU Qualifications Group from the participating CAO institutions. This expert group publishes a document annually, ratified by the IUA Registrars Group, that details the [entry requirements criteria for EU/EFTA/UK applicants](#), with each institution assigned responsibility for a number of EU/EFTA countries. The document sets out the framework for equivalencies of EU/EFTA qualifications for entry to undergraduate degree programmes in Irish universities. The Institute will adhere to these equivalencies and related policies except where different equivalencies have been specifically approved by Council.

5.1.3 The annual publication is based on a combination of information available from:

- i. international qualification recognition databases (i.e. NARIC Ireland, the ENIC-NARIC Networks, ECCTIS (formerly UK NARIC) and other resources as required),
- ii. historical admissions standards data for entry, and
- iii. examination performance statistics where available.

5.1.4 Where a qualification is not published by the EU Qualifications Group, requests for recognition of a qualification can come:

- i. from individual applicants to the HEI directly, or
- ii. if an institution/HEI becomes aware of changes in the educational system of a particular country.

5.1.5 The request or notification of change is subsequently sent to the Admissions Officer of the institution/HEI within the EU Qualifications Group who has responsibility for that country.

5.1.6 The request for recognition or proposed change will be researched and brought to the EU Qualifications Group for discussion and recommendations.

1.7 The applicants are notified of the outcome and revisions to the annual list are made.

5.2. Undergraduate Non-EU (Direct) Applications:

5.2.1 The Academic Council of the Institute has delegated responsibility for the assessment of Direct Applications to the Institute to the Admissions Officer, under the oversight of the Registrar and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

5.2.2 Applications are made directly to the Institute, and all applications are assessed in accordance with the published admissions criteria. The Institute adheres to the admissions requirements per country as published on the Trinity College Dublin website (<https://www.tcd.ie/study/international/>)

5.2.3 Applicants must, at the point of application, authorise the Institute to verify their prior qualifications with the institution(s) they attended.

5.2.4 Marino provides specialised admissions training for Admissions staff in the Registrar's Office responsible for reviewing and processing applications to the Institute, including the use of NARIC databases (Ireland, others as required, as well as ECCTIS,

formerly UK NARIC) to compare foreign qualifications against the published admission criteria, and validating the authenticity of applications.

5.2.5 For undergraduate direct admissions, recommendations for any changes to the recognition of foreign qualifications, not recognised by Trinity College Dublin, are submitted to the Registrar and Vice President for Academic Affairs who submits them to the Institute Quality Committee and Academic Council for final approval.

5.2.6 Where an application is submitted that is based on qualifications for which Trinity College Dublin does not have agreed criteria, the Admissions Officer in conjunction with the Programme Leader will make a determination on the eligibility and competitiveness of the application in line with existing admissions criteria based on documentation provided by the applicant and drawing from NARIC Ireland, the ENIC-NARIC Networks, ECCTIS (formerly UK NARIC) and other resources as required. The evaluation follows the guidance outlined in Section 4 of the UNESCO publication “[A practical guide to recognition: implementing the Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education.](#)”

In order to be eligible for assessment for recognition, it is essential:

- The awarding body or institution is recognised by the State in which it is awarding, and where applicable
- The qualification is recognised by the education system to which it belongs.

If a qualification satisfies this initial eligibility requirement, it will then be evaluated in respect of:

- The level of the qualification
- The workload for completing the qualification
- The study programme and/or institution quality assurance
- The profile of the study programme
- The stated learning outcomes of the qualification
- Whether there are substantial differences between the foreign qualification and the domestic equivalent. Substantial difference relates to the function of the qualification and the purpose for which recognition is sought.

5.2.7 Recognition is granted if substantial differences are not identified. A non-recognition decision is determined where substantial differences are identified. In some instances, partial recognition may be determined. Where non-recognition and partial recognition decisions are determined, the applicants will be advised of alternative means of securing admission, including through RPL, as applicable.

5.2.8 The decision to recognise a foreign qualification does not mean that the applicant is being offered a place or admitted to a programme at the Institute. The admissions decision is distinct from a recognition decision.

5.3. Postgraduate Applications:

5.3.1 The Academic Council has delegated responsibility for administering and quality assuring academically assessed postgraduate applications to the Institute to the Admissions Officer, under the oversight of the Registrar and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

5.3.2 Application is made directly to the Institute, and all applications are assessed in accordance with the published admissions criteria.

5.3.3 Applicants must, at the point of application, authorise the Institute to verify their prior qualifications with the institution(s) they attended.

5.3.4 Applications are initially assessed by members of the academic community, usually Programme Leaders, for academic suitability to a programme.

5.3.5 Subsequently, academic recommendations are submitted to the Registrar's Office for quality assurance ensuring that offers are made to applicants that meet the entry requirements for that programme and validating the authenticity of applications.

5.3.6 The assessment of postgraduate applications includes the use of NARIC Ireland, the ENIC NARIC Networks, ECCTIS (formerly UK NARIC) UK and other resources as required to compare foreign qualifications against the published admission criteria. In order to be eligible for assessment for recognition, it is essential:

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5.3.8 The decision to recognise a foreign qualification does not mean that the applicant is being offered a place or admitted to a programme at the Institute. The admissions decision is distinct from a recognition decision.

5.3.9 For postgraduate admissions, recommendations for any changes to the recognition of foreign qualifications, that are not recognised by Trinity College Dublin, are submitted to the Registrar and Vice President for Academic Affairs for consideration who submits them to the Quality Committee and Academic Council for final approval.

6. Quality Assurance

6.1 The Institute's Recognition of Foreign Qualifications policy and procedures are quality assured at a sectoral level through its alignment with Trinity College Dublin's recognition practice and membership of the IUA Admissions Officers Group, and observance of sectoral benchmarking criteria for EU/EFTA applicants and reference to NARIC databases.

6.2 Turnaround times for all EU and non-EU applications are actively monitored and reported.

6.3 Outcomes of application and admission data for all cohorts of students are reported annually in the Registrar's Office Annual Report.

7. Appeals

7.1 An applicant can appeal a decision where the qualification they are presenting for admissions purposes is not recognised by the Institute and the applicant accurately identifies procedural failings on the part of the Institute. Disagreement with a recognition decision in itself is not suitable grounds for appeal.

7.2 The appeal should be submitted to the Assistant Registrar within 7 working days of the decision being issued. The Assistant Registrar will determine if there is evidence of procedural failings accurately identified by the applicant. In such cases the appeal will be escalated to the Registrar and Vice President for Academic Affairs for consideration. Where there is no evidence of procedural failings, the applicant will be advised that the appeal application has been rejected.

7.3 The outcome of an appeal will be communicated to the applicant, normally within 10 working days of the appeal being accepted.

7.4 Applications from students who are refugees, asylum seekers, or who, for similar reasons, do not have access to formal academic documentation, will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

8. Responsibility

The Registrar and Vice President for Academic Affairs is responsible for the oversight of this Procedure.

9. Related Documents

9.1 Admission, Access and Transfer Policy and Procedure

9.2 [Recognition of Prior Learning Policy](#)

9.3 [Trinity Webpage – Entry Requirements for International Students](#)

9.4 [NARIC Ireland Foreign Qualifications website](#)

Policy Identifier: Recognition of Foreign Qualifications

9.5. [QQI Policy and Criteria for Facilitating the Academic Recognition of Foreign Qualifications \(June 2015\)](#)

9.6. [EAR HEI Manual: The European Recognition Manual for Higher Education Institutions](#)

9.7 UNESCO publication: [A practical guide to recognition: implementing the Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education](#)

9.8 [The Lisbon Recognition Convention](#)

9.9 [ENQA Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, 2015](#)