

LEARNING AND TEACHING SUPPORT HANDBOOK

Chapter 23 - English Language Support for International Students: statement of procedures

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The University welcomes applications from all candidates with the academic potential to succeed in their chosen programme of study, regardless of their background. All students are required to meet General Entrance requirements including proficiency in English language. International students whose first language is not English will need to demonstrate proficiency in English as part of the applications process. Some programmes may have higher language entry requirements to those specified in the General Entrance requirements.
- 1.2 The Admissions Office, together with the Faculty (or delegated School) and the International Student Recruitment team, assesses applications and applies conditions where any requirements are not already met. Where a decision is made to vary requirements or offer levels, the potential of the student to reach the learning outcomes of their programme should be considered carefully and additional support recommended if appropriate.
- 1.3 Where students need additional language support, (whether undergraduate, postgraduate taught or postgraduate research) the Faculty (or delegated School) can draw on the support of INTO/University of Exeter International Study Centre (INTO/ISC) is able to offer and this is set out in this document. In certain circumstances provision additional to what INTO/ISC) ordinarily provides may be deemed necessary. Where support does not fall within terms agreed between the University and INTO/ISC, Faculties (or delegated Schools) may need to make separate arrangements with INTO/ISC and these may incur a cost, which the Faculty (or delegated School) will be responsible for.

2. Minimum English language requirements

- 2.1 For minimum English language entry requirements for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes please see [International Entry Requirements](#).
- 2.2 Further information on various other tests of English language and their acceptability for study in English can be found in a booklet published by BALEAP, the global forum for EAP professionals, entitled: '[BALEAP Guidelines on English Language Tests for University Entry](#)'.

3. Consideration of the English proficiency of applicants

- 3.1 The Admissions office will work with Faculties (or delegated Schools) and the International Student Recruitment team to determine whether an offer should be made to an applicant, and whether or not language requirements have been met. These decisions will be made carefully, ensuring that the student has the capability to succeed on the course academically. Where requirements are above UKVI minima but below programme requirements, Admissions will determine whether pre-sessional requirements will apply as a condition of offer or as a recommendation. Visa and immigration requirements are set out in [UK Visas and Immigration guidance on approved English Language tests](#).
- 3.2 The table in [Appendix 2](#) shows how much full-time English language tuition an applicant needs who has not met the minimum level of proficiency required. The amounts of tuition stated are only indicative, and there is no guarantee that any specific individual will improve their English proficiency to the required level in the time given. There is a wide range of variables which might affect someone's ability to learn a foreign language such as first language, age and educational level.
- 3.3 INTO/ISC is able to provide expert advice and guidance to Faculties (or delegated Schools) on matters relating to the support of students whose first language is not English. In the first instance, Faculties (or delegated Schools) should contact INTO/ISC's [Insessional Programme Manager](#).

4. English Language Tests

4.1 *Standard English Language Tests.* The most widely used standardised tests of English Language for academic purposes are:

- a. IELTS Test (International English Language Testing System)
- b. TOEFL Internet-based Test (Test of English as a Foreign Language)
- c. Pearson Test of English
- d. [LanguageCert SELT](#)

4.2 These tests supply results as an overall score with scores for the sub-skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking. In the case of IELTS, the mark range is from 0–9 where 9 is an expert user and 0 is a non-user. Numbers 7–9 represent advanced ability to use English, 4–6 a wide intermediate range, and 1–3 beginner–elementary.

4.3 Although the tests are heavily researched and extremely reliable, a ‘health warning’ is also necessary. Hence, the fact that a student may have met the minimum language requirement for unconditional entry as measured by these tests is no guarantee that the student will not experience any difficulties with use of English during his/her/their studies. Note that students with minimum levels at entry will always be recommended to participate in INTO/ISC’s Insessional programme.

4.4 The **IELTS test** cannot be taken at INTO. Tests are provided locally (Exeter and Plymouth) by [Mayflower College](#). More information on the IELTS test and other tests is available by contacting the [INTO/ISC Programme Office](#).

4.5 **INTO/ISC Assessment** – INTO/ISC does not currently offer a formal stand-alone test of English proficiency. All assessments of English take place during and at the end of courses offered by INTO/ISC (see [Appendix 1](#)). In comparison with the standardised tests referred to above, INTO/ISC assessments are based on students’ work for module assessment and provide, therefore, a better reflection of the type of language use which is required in academic study.

4.6 **International English Language Assessment test (IELA)** – In exceptional circumstances, where access to the tests mentioned in 4.1 is not possible, the University can consider results from an IELA test if invigilated by a member of University or INTO/ISC staff. The test was developed by Cambridge exams and staff at INTO University Partners and assesses reading, writing, speaking and listening. Further information is available from [International Student Recruitment](#).

5. English language courses

5.1 INTO/ISC provides two main types of English language course:

- a. Preparatory courses: these are full time, fee charging courses and programmes which students take before registering on a degree programme. Details can be found at [INTO/ISC: Our Programmes](#).
- b. English Language Skills Development (The Insessional Programme): INTO/ISC provides tuition and support in English language and academic literacy for students registered on degree courses (including Year Abroad students and those on exchange schemes). This tuition and support is referred to as English Language Skills Development (The Insessional Programme). The Insessional Programme is centrally funded and includes both credit-rated modules and support classes. The Insessional support programme is described in Section 7 below. Additional details can be found on at [INTO/ISC: English Language Skills Development](#) webpage.

5.2 Students requiring credits for their home universities will be directed to the credit-rated Insessional Programme.

6. Admission of candidates holding offers conditional on English language proficiency

6.1 The Admissions Office will admit only those students who have provided clear evidence that they have met any condition on their offer relating to English proficiency or who are judged sufficiently qualified to succeed academically.

6.2 In assessing whether a student has met the conditions of their offer, the Admissions Office expects to see either:

- a. An original test certificate from an external testing system (e.g. IELTS, TOEFL or Pearson Test of English) demonstrating that the applicant has met the condition or
- b. A result sheet from INTO/ISC indicating that the student has successfully completed their programme at the required level.

6.3 It is expected that students who enter a pre-sessional English course with the language levels specified by INTO/ISC will make sufficient progress to be able to proceed to their degree programmes at the end of their course. However, progression is only guaranteed for students in possession of a single CAS (see below 6.4). If on completion of their pre-sessional programme, a student has narrowly failed to meet the requirements for progression, and does not possess a single CAS, they will only be able to take up their place of study if the admitting Faculty (or delegated School) wishes to make a special case for admission (see below, 6.5 below). INTO recommends that each

case be treated individually. Faculties (or delegated Schools) wishing for advice on support available for particular students should contact the [Insessional Programme Manager](#) at INTO/ISC. The support available to students who have not achieved the University's minimum entry levels is described below (see 7.4.6 and 7.4.7 below).

- 6.4 Single CAS - Insessional support will be mandatory for single CAS students who do not meet the English language requirements for progression, as set out in the document 'Single CAS Proposal for Pre-sessional' (see [Appendix 3](#)).

6.5 Special Cases.

6.5.1 In exceptional circumstances, a Faculty (or delegated School) or Admissions may wish to admit a student who has not demonstrated that they have met the minimum English proficiency required by the academic programme. If a Faculty (or delegated school) or Admissions believes that there is a 'special case' for admitting the student, this must be approved by the Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor for Education (APVC-E) (or nominee) or Head of Admissions. It is the responsibility of the Faculty (or delegated school) or Admissions Office to only admit those students who it is confident are able to attain the learning outcomes of their programme.

6.5.2 Where a candidate has failed to satisfy the UK Visas and Immigration minimum requirements, a language waiver may, very exceptionally, be permitted as above, but in addition the Faculty APVC-E's approval, the Head of Admissions (or the International Admissions Officer) and the Head of Student Services' approvals must also be obtained.

- 6.6 Softening - Softening of English language entry levels relates to the lowering of entry requirements for specific programmes. Softening can only be authorised by the Head of Admissions or APVCEs.

- 6.7 INTO/ISC does not support the view that additional Insessional provision can normally provide adequate compensation for lower than specified English language entry levels (see [Appendix 2](#)). However, should Admissions or Faculty (or delegated School) wish to admit students with lower levels than those specified, INTO/ISC will advise on Insessional provision. This may incur a cost to the Faculty (or delegated school) (see paras 7.4.6 and 7.4.7). In special cases, or in the event of softening, Admissions and/or the Faculty (or delegated School) would be responsible for arranging and funding any additional

language support the student may require above that available as part of the standard Insessional provision (see 7.4.6 and 7.4.7).

- 6.8 When a student has met the conditions for entry onto an INTO pre-sessional course, they are not required to take a separate external English language test (e.g. IELTS or TOEFL) at the end of the course. These students are subject to the internal assessment procedures described in [Appendix 1](#). Where a Faculty (or delegated school) has given approval for the International Student Recruitment Office to make offers on its behalf, special cases may be approved by the Head of International Student Recruitment, and the International Student Recruitment Office will bear the responsibilities otherwise incumbent on Admissions/Faculty (or delegated School).

7. Insessional English language support

- 7.1 INTO/ISC's Insessional Support Programme provides tuition and support in English language and academic literacy skills to students during the course of their degree study. It is primarily intended for students studying at the Exeter campus. A parallel service is provided by [ASK](#) for Penryn students. Online support is available for students who are not campus based. Insessional support is intended for students whose first language is not English. It is specifically aimed at students who have met the University's English language entry requirements but have not yet achieved a fully operational command of English ('fully operational command' equates to IELTS band 8). While there is normally no formal assessment of students, participation and attendance are closely monitored (see also 7.3 Referrals), and a high level of commitment is required of students.
- 7.2 The Insessional Support Programme is complementary to INTO/ISC's preparatory courses, and students progressing from these courses are strongly encouraged to register as Insessional students. The Insessional Support Programme is also recommended for students not required to take a preparatory course. The Faculty (or delegated School) may wish to make Insessional support mandatory for certain students and INTO/ISC is able to advise when such action is appropriate. At the standard level of provision, no additional charge is incurred by students or Faculty (or delegated School) (see 7.4.6 below).
- 7.3 Referrals - Faculties or University support services may refer students to the Insessional programme if they feel that a student's progress is hampered by a student's English

language or academic literacy skills. Referral is a formal process, and a referred student's progress and attendance on Insessional courses will be monitored by the Insessional team. Faculties, schools or support services wishing to refer a student should contact the [Insessional Team](#). Progress reports on referred students are provided termly and can be requested by the Faculty (or delegated School) as required.

- 7.4 Responsibilities of the Faculty (or delegated School) – Responsibility for ensuring that the Faculty (or delegated School) cooperates with INTO/ISC in the provision of Insessional support lies with the Faculty APVCE and the Faculty Senior Education Partner (or nominee) (SEPs). SEPs are the Insessional team's first point of contact in Faculty (or delegated School).

7.4.1. When students are admitted on the understanding that they will undertake Insessional English language support classes, it is the responsibility of the Faculty (or delegated School) to assure itself that the student is complying with this requirement and to monitor and support the student's progress. The Faculty (or delegated School) should ensure that the student is given clear written information regarding what is required, and that it is made clear that failure to comply with the requirement could lead to disciplinary action being taken against the student.

7.4.2. The SEP (or nominee), should liaise with the INTO/ISC Insessional team about the English language Insessional support needs of their students, including English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP) provision and support for individual students. Faculties (or delegated Schools) may wish to consider whether a subject or department based (ESAP) class is warranted for a group of students on a program. SEPs, or other nominated person(s), are expected to attend the relevant INTO/ISC and Faculty (or delegated school) Board of Studies, which acts as the principal forum for discussion of Insessional provision, including ESAP, with Faculty (or delegated School). Full details of the procedure for setting up a new ESAP course are available from the [Insessional Programme Manager](#).

7.4.3. The Faculty (or delegated School) EBP, or nominated person(s), should provide INTO with clear information regarding any student for whom Insessional support classes are mandatory or strongly recommended, including referred students (see 7.3). This should, where appropriate, include a copy of a student's ILP.

- 7.4.4. Faculties (or delegated Schools) are responsible for ensuring that the SEP, or other nominated person(s), use the information supplied by INTO/ISC to track the progress and performance of individual students, and make further appropriate arrangements as necessary.
- 7.4.5. Faculties (or delegated Schools) need to be aware that the progress of specific students in English proficiency cannot be guaranteed.
- 7.4.6. Faculties (or delegated Schools) should be aware that, as part of its standard Insessional support provision, INTO/ISC is able to offer only a limited degree of additional support for students who have not demonstrated that they have met the minimum language requirement at the time they embark on their degree programmes. Details are available from the [Insessional Programme Manager](#), but the level of support would only be appropriate for students who have attended a preparatory course and have just failed to reach the required entry standard for their degree or for certain 'special case' students (see 6.5 above) deemed to have an English language level close to the minimum requirement. Faculties (or delegated Schools) should be aware, however, that this additional support may not be sufficient or appropriate for the particular students they wish to admit.
- 7.4.7. Faculty (or delegated Schools) should be prepared to pay for any English language Insessional support classes and one-to-one tutorials which may be necessary above and beyond the standard provision provided by INTO/ISC from its University funding. If a Faculty (or delegated School) decides to contract for extra language support they should do so with full awareness of the comments made above (paragraph 6.7).
- 7.5 Responsibilities of Faculties (or delegated Schools) - Faculties (or delegated Schools) should provide the INTO/ISC Insessional team with the full list of students who have softened English language entry requirements.
- 7.6 Responsibility of the INTO/ISC Academic Board (IAB) - The Insessional programme will be accountable to the IAB, who will be responsible for ratifying the annual Delivery Plan for the Insessional programme (Term 3 meeting).
- 7.7 Responsibilities of INTO/ISC - While INTO/ISC cannot compel students to attend the English language Insessional support courses and one-to-one tutorials that Faculty (or delegated School) expect or require them to, INTO/ISC will monitor the attendance and

participation of all students and report to the Faculty (or delegated School) as required. Additional responsibilities apply to referred students (see Referrals 7.3).

7.7.1. INTO/ISC should ensure that the range of Insessional support provision reflects current student needs. In particular, this should involve ongoing needs analyses involving liaising with the Faculty (or delegated School) described above and below (7.4.2 and 7.7.3 below) and course evaluation through student surveys conducted termly and other feedback mechanisms.

7.7.2. INTO/ISC undertakes to ensure that all its Insessional support classes and one-to-one tutorials meet the quality assurance requirements of INTO and the University. This includes full compliance with the TEAP process.

7.7.3. The INTO/ISC Insessional team will keep records of all Insessional courses, including attendance, course reviews and classwork records. Attendance details on Insessional support courses and participation in one-to-one tutorials will be subject to termly analysis as directed by the University (Policy, Planning and Business Intelligence), with subsequent reports submitted to the IAB and INTO/ISC and Faculty (or delegated school) Boards of Studies alongside the relevant Insessional coordinator's report as a focus for discussion of Insessional provision within Faculty (or delegated School) (see 7.4.2 above). A written, Annual Report on English Language Skills Development (The Insessional Programme) and the annual Delivery Plan will be submitted to IAB (Term 3 meeting), the latter for ratification.

7.7.4. INTO/ISC should make students aware of their responsibilities on registration for the Insessional programme.

7.8 Responsibilities of Students – Students undertake certain responsibilities in relation to any Insessional language support:

7.8.1 To attend punctually and consistently all English language Insessional support courses and one-to-one tutorials that their Faculty (or delegated School) expects or requires them to:

7.8.2 To advise INTO/ISC staff in advance if unable to attend any English language Insessional support courses and one-to-one tutorials for which they are enrolled, and provide medical or other evidence for absence where required;

7.8.3 To carry out any coursework and preparation required of them by their teacher;

- 7.8.4 To participate actively in class and contribute to class activities, both synchronous and asynchronous, in a constructive way; and
- 7.8.5 To provide feedback to INTO staff on their experiences of attending English language Insessional support courses and one-to-one tutorials with a view to maximising the quality and appropriateness of provision.