Emerald Cultural Institute Quality Assurance Framework

1. Introduction

Mission Statement

People are at the heart of what we do. We provide a transformative educational and cultural experience within a positive, nurturing environment where both students and staff can grow and prepare to meet their personal and professional goals.

Purpose of the Framework

This policy outlines the guidelines and procedures for the management and development of the QA framework at Emerald Cultural Institute including general assurance procedures, self monitoring and evaluation practices, reviews and responses/ enhancements, and finally concludes with an appendix of the specific area policies.

Scope

The QA framework has relevance to the activities of all staff, stakeholders and students.

Alignment with QQI Guidelines

This framework aligns with QQI's Policy on Quality Assurance Guidelines, ensuring compliance with national and European standards. It is intended to inform and support internal processes, providing a robust framework for quality assurance and enhancement.

The framework is aligned with the following key guidelines and legislation:

- Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Acts 2012-2019
- Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015)
- QQI Core and Sector-Specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines
- Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015
- Data Protection Act 2018

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2. Quality Assurance Overview

Key Principles

Our QA framework is guided by key principles:

- **Provider Ownership:** Quality Assurance (QA) is primarily the provider's responsibility, integrated across the entire school, and actively upheld by every staff member.
- **Continuous Improvement:** QA promotes an ethos of enhancement and innovation.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** QA processes are documented and accessible to all stakeholders.

We comply with the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act, 2012, ensuring our QA processes meet all statutory obligations. Our governance structures ensure separation of roles in decision-making and accountability for quality assurance. This includes oversight by internal and external stakeholders. QA includes systematic reviews, risk assessments, and contingency planning to address potential challenges and enhance service delivery. We are committed to diversity, equity and inclusion, fostering a respectful and supportive environment for all learners and staff.

Governance Structure

The governance structure at the Emerald Cultural Institute ensures effective oversight of both academic and operational quality assurance. Key governing bodies include:

- **Board of Directors:** Responsible for Governance, strategic direction, risk management, and financial oversight. The Managing Director is ultimately responsible for Quality Assurance within the organisation.
- **Management Team:** Responsible for day-to-day operations, implementation of policies, and resource allocation.
- **Academic Governance Committee:** Oversees academic standards and policies, ensuring independence from commercial considerations.
- **Operations Team** creates a forum for staff and management to evaluate performance, discuss plans and identify areas for operational improvement in day-to-day running of the school.
- **Quality Panel (see Governance Policy documents)** responsible for proactively initiating and overseeing Quality Assurance within the school including the implementation, monitoring and dissemination of QA policies and procedures.

Separation of Academic and Commercial Decision-Making

To maintain integrity and uphold academic standards, decision-making processes are clearly delineated. The Academic Governance Committee (AGC) operates independently of financial considerations, ensuring that academic decisions are focused on learner outcomes and quality standards.

3. Policy Areas

Corporate and Academic Governance
We ensure effective governance through well-defined structures, roles, and responsibilities for decision-making bodies. This is supported by our **Governance Policy**, as well as frameworks for managing staff grievances and recruitment.

Management and Operations
Operational procedures are designed to enhance efficiency and align with strategic objectives. Key policies in this area include the **Communication Policy for Staff**, policies related to **Staff Training and Development**, and frameworks for managing academic programmes and admissions.

Environmental Sustainability
We are committed to integrating sustainable practices across all operations to reduce our environmental impact. Our **Sustainability Policy** outlines our approach to maintaining environmental responsibility throughout the organisation.

Health and Safety
We prioritise the health and safety of all stakeholders through comprehensive policies and procedures. The **Health and Safety Report of Emerald Cultural Institute** provides a clear framework for ensuring a safe learning and working environment.

Enrolment, Fees, Refunds, and Subsistence
Our policies ensure transparency and fairness in the enrollment process and financial transactions. This includes our **Fee Policy**, **Refund Policy**, and **Admissions and Enrolment Policy**.

Learner Welfare and Support
We offer robust support services to meet the academic and personal needs of our learners. Our **Welfare Support Policy** and **Accommodation Policy** ensure that learners receive comprehensive assistance and suitable housing where applicable.

Stakeholder Complaints and Grievances
We have clear procedures in place to address complaints from learners and other stakeholders in a timely and fair manner. These are supported by our **Grievance Policies** for both students and staff.

Accommodation Services
Where applicable, our **Accommodation Policy** ensures that learners are provided with safe and comfortable living arrangements, prioritising their well-being.

Safeguarding
We maintain rigorous safeguarding policies to protect all learners, particularly minors and vulnerable individuals. Our **Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy** ensures the safety and welfare of all stakeholders.

Human Resources
Our HR policies guide recruitment, retention, and professional development. This includes our **Recruitment and Selection Policy** and policies for **Staff Training**.

Staff Training and Development
We ensure continuous professional development to equip staff with the skills required for high-quality service delivery. This is supported by the **ECI Training Policies.**

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
We promote inclusivity through our policies, which ensure that both academic programmes and the organisational culture are accessible to all. Our **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policies** are central to our approach.

Curriculum, Syllabus, and Programme Development
Our **Curriculum and Programme Design Policy** ensures that academic offerings meet learner needs and industry standards, providing relevant and rigorous education. We continuously evaluate our English Language Education (ELE) services to ensure quality and effectiveness, providing the best educational experience for our learners. This is covered in our **MEL Policy** and MEL Framework.

Assessment Design and Quality Reviews
We uphold fairness and transparency in assessment procedures, ensuring alignment with learning outcomes through our **Academic Integrity Policy** and regular programme reviews.

Academic Integrity and AI
We uphold the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity, which are outlined in our **Academic Integrity Policy**. We address the ethical use of AI in education and operations through clear guidelines set out in our **Artificial Intelligence Policy**, ensuring responsible integration.

Ethical Marketing and Recruitment
Our marketing and recruitment practices are transparent, ethical, and focused on the learner. We adhere to the highest standards in our **Marketing and Sales Policy**, ensuring fair and learner-centric outreach.

4. Quality Overview

Our QA Framework (QAF) encompasses a comprehensive suite of policies that address all areas of governance, operations, and service delivery. These policies are regularly reviewed and updated to remain aligned with best practices and evolving stakeholder needs.

All QA processes are documented within our relevant policies using a standardised template, ensuring clarity, consistency, and accessibility. These policies are regularly redeveloped, approved, implemented, and reviewed to maintain their relevance and effectiveness.

Key roles and responsibilities are clearly defined to ensure accountability and effective QA implementation. While a dedicated Quality Assurance Officer coordinates and oversees the processes, the responsibility for carrying out QA tasks lies with staff members across the organisation.

Programmes are developed and approved through a structured process, by the Academic Governance Committee (AGC), including benchmarking, stakeholder feedback, and risk assessment.

Quality Objectives

- To maintain a quality assurance framework and supporting systems, which align with the school's external QA obligations, and that are effectively embedded and integrated into ECIs regular operation;
- Ensure the internal Quality Assurance Framework has been designed to align with the school's external QA obligations;
- To ensure that Quality Objectives and the importance of a quality culture are well communicated to all employees;
- To deal with all customer complaints as soon as the problem comes to light;
- To commit to the provision of adequate resources to enable and facilitate the implementation of the quality assurance procedures.

Quality Culture

ECI has a comprehensive framework for Quality Assurance. The Quality panel (composed of Quality officer (general) Felicity Hamill, academic Quality officer (Rachael Fionda) and the Academic Director (Eithne Kelly) ensures that quality of service provision remains a key factor in decision making at all levels throughout the organisation.

Staff are empowered and encouraged to actively participate in Quality Assurance at ECI. This includes clear communication about the importance of a quality culture throughout the organisation from time of induction and initial training. All staff from across the organisation assist in monitoring and reviewing policies and procedures that relate to their departments.

Development, Implementation, and Review of Policies

The Institute follows a structured approach to policy development:

1. Identification of need through stakeholder feedback and strategic objectives.
2. Drafting and consultation with relevant committees.
3. Approval by the Academic or Management Committees.
4. Communication to stakeholders and integration into operational processes.

Continuous Improvement Processes

Emerald Cultural Institute fosters a culture of continuous improvement through:

- Regular feedback collection from learners, staff, and other stakeholders.
- Periodic self-evaluation and internal audits.
- External accreditation and benchmarking.
- Consultation with the SMT to establish an internal quality review schedule that aligns with the school calendar, ensuring each area within the QAF is reviewed yearly.
- Compilation of review findings by the QA panel, who communicate them to the SMT. Identified weaknesses, issues, and areas for improvement are highlighted.
- Collaborative decision-making by the SMT (with input from the QA panel) and relevant department staff to address identified issues. Clear goals, action plans, and timeframes are set.
- Oversight by the QA panel to ensure that action plans are effectively implemented.

Addressing QA Findings

ECI's quality assurance procedures provide invaluable insights that inform decision-making, drive continuous improvement, and enhance standards across the organisation. ECI is committed to ensuring that all QA findings, suggestions, and enhancements are implemented in a timely and integrated manner.

When an issue is identified through feedback or evaluation processes that indicates a need for changes to a system, policy, or area of the organisation, a representative of the Quality Panel brings it to the attention of the Managing Director and SMT. This ensures that appropriate action is taken in line with the QA framework.

Stakeholder Involvement

Stakeholders are actively engaged in the quality assurance process through representation on governance committees, feedback mechanisms, and collaborative forums. ECI ensures a comprehensive system of feedback, gathering regular input from students, ETOs, group leaders (GLs), and staff on various aspects, including premises, organisational and operational management, learning experiences, accommodation and catering services, social programmes, and overall service provision.

ECI's commitment to quality is further reinforced through long-standing relationships with reputable organisations and accreditation bodies. These partnerships provide external validation of ECI's high standards and ongoing commitment to excellence:

- **ACELS/QQI** – Manages and develops quality standards for English language education (ELE) providers. ECI has been part of this scheme since 1986.
- **EAQUALS** – Ensures that its member ELE providers uphold the highest standards through its accreditation scheme.
- **ELE Ireland (EEI)** – The leading association of quality-accredited English language schools in Ireland.
- **Quality English** – Certifies English language schools and colleges worldwide, ensuring top-tier service provision.
- **IALC** – An international association accrediting independent language centres that teach the language of their respective countries. IALC-accredited schools guarantee exceptional teaching standards, high-quality service provision, and a strong connection with their local communities.
- **Select Ireland** – A group of well-established, highly experienced independent English language schools in Ireland, each known for quality and personalised service.
- **ALTO** – A premium global forum uniting leading educational travel agents, language schools, international academic course providers, universities, national associations, and industry service providers.

These affiliations ensure that ECI consistently meets and exceeds industry standards, reinforcing its reputation for excellence in English language education.

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5. Curriculum and Programme Management

Curriculum Design and Development

Programmes are designed to meet learner needs, industry standards, and accreditation requirements. Curriculum reviews are conducted regularly to ensure relevance and quality.

Programme Delivery and Assessment

Teaching methodologies are learner-centred, leveraging innovative tools and technologies. Assessment practices uphold fairness, consistency, and academic integrity.

Academic Integrity and Ethical Practices

The Institute has policies to address plagiarism, misconduct, and ethical use of resources, including artificial intelligence.

6. Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

Self-Evaluation and Monitoring Processes

- Annual reviews of policies and procedures.
- Regular stakeholder feedback collection and analysis.
- Benchmarking against peer institutions and industry standards.

Internal and External Audits

The Institute conducts periodic audits to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements and identify opportunities for improvement. External accreditations provide additional layers of validation.

Responsibility	This policy is developed and updated periodically by the HR Department at Emerald Cultural Institute.
Scope	This scope covers all employees in the Institute, full time, part time and fixed term.
Implementation and review	1. **Communication and implementation:** This policy will be shared with our staff, students and other stakeholders through relevant handbooks and websites. 2. **Review:** Regular reviews will ensure the policy remains relevant to our context. Feedback from staff will guide ongoing improvements 3. **Updates:** Any changes will be approved by the relevant team and communicated promptly to all affected parties, ensuring the interests and rights of staff and learners are considered.
Area 1 of policy	**Informal Process** <u>Stage One</u> Employee grievances should first be discussed on an informal basis and brought to the attention of their Manager/Supervisor, by reference to Stage One of the Grievance Procedure. If it is inappropriate to discuss the issue of concern with your Manager/Supervisor, the matter may be discussed directly with another member of management. The Manager hearing the complaint will attempt to resolve the issue as soon as reasonably practical. However, should the matter remain unresolved or the response is not adequate, an employee may decide to escalate the Grievance to the Formal Process.
Area 2 of policy	**Formal Process** <u>Stage Two</u> Should an employee wish to proceed to the formal stage, an account of the grievance must be presented in writing and forwarded to a more Senior Manager. A Grievance Hearing will be held and a work colleague or representative may accompany the employee during a Grievance Hearing, if desired. A report of the discussion will be issued to all present. Should the matter remain unresolved, or the response is not adequate, the employee may appeal the issue in writing, to a nominated senior member of management, or, if not applicable, to a company Director, outlining the reasons for the Appeal within 7 days of the decision.
Area 3 of policy	<u>Stage Three</u>

	Upon receipt of an appeal of stage two of the Grievance Procedure, an Appeal Hearing will be held by a Company Director or appropriate person nominated and a work colleague/representative may accompany the employee during a grievance hearing if desired. A report of the discussion will be issued to all present. The Director, or other appropriate person nominated will make the final decision on the grievances. A decision by the Director may be appealed to the Workplace Relations Commission. Any instructions that may be issued which give cause for query/grievance should be carried out - albeit under protest - pending the matter being dealt with through the grievance procedure. You should carry out any instruction assigned to you. If at any time you have a difficulty with an instruction you should carry it out as requested, albeit under protest, whilst the grievance is being considered. No Industrial Action of any kind should be taken by any member of staff until the Grievance Procedure has been fully completed, a recommendation has been issued and then only after two weeks' notice in writing. Should a grievance arise from any form of harassment or intimidation, the employee has a duty to inform his/her General Manager. Grievances of this nature will be dealt with as per the Company Dignity at Work Policy.

Updates Any changes will be approved by the HR Department and Directors of Emerald Cultural Institute. Please see records below.

Date	**Summary of changes**	**Approved by**
April 2014	Developed in line with employment law and best practice.	HR (mssthehrpeople) and Directors of Emerald Cultural Institute
August 2018	Reviewed in line with employment law and best practice.	HR and Directors of Emerald Cultural Institute
December 2024	Reviewed and Realigned to the new ECI new standard policy template	HR

Policy	**Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure**

Purpose	This policy outlines the guidelines and procedures for our recruitment and selection process. The Company Recruitment and Selection Policy will: ● be fair and consistent; ● be non-discriminatory on the grounds of gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion, and membership of the Traveller community. ● conform to statutory regulations and agreed best practice. To ensure that these policy aims are achieved, all appointing managers will receive training in effective recruitment and selection.
Responsibility	This policy is developed and updated periodically by the HR Department at Emerald Cultural Institute.
Scope	This scope covers all employees in the Institute, full time, part time and fixed term.
Implementation and review	1. **Communication and implementation:** This policy will be shared with our staff, students and other stakeholders through relevant handbooks and websites. 2. **Review:** Regular reviews will ensure the policy remains relevant to our context. Feedback from staff will guide ongoing improvements 3. **Updates:** Any changes will be approved by the relevant team and communicated promptly to all affected parties, ensuring the interests and rights of staff and learners are considered.
Area 1 of policy	The recruitment and selection decision is of prime importance as the vehicle for obtaining the best possible person-to-job fit which will, when aggregated, contribute significantly towards the Institute's effectiveness. It is also becoming increasingly important, as the Institute evolves and changes, that new recruits show a willingness to learn, adaptability and ability to work as part of a team. The Recruitment & Selection procedure should help managers to ensure that these criteria are addressed. The Institute Recruitment and Selection Policy will: • be fair and consistent; • be non-discriminatory on the grounds of sex, race, age, religion or disability; • conform to statutory regulations and agreed best practice. To ensure that these policy aims are achieved, all appointing managers will receive training in effective recruitment and selection.
Area 2 of policy	<u>Procedure</u> The Recruitment Process: The following procedure should be used when a post is to be filled.

	The appointing manager must: Define the job. If it is an existing post, is an exact replacement required or is this an opportunity to revise the requirements. If it is a newly established post be clear on the exact requirements, draw up a job description / with the help of the HR Department where required and consult the appropriate Director in relation to the appropriate salary. Complete a Job Vacancy Form which confirms: ● details of the post. ● final approval from the appropriate Director. ● in the event of the job being newly established, the approval of the Director. Ensure the Job Description and person specification are up-to-date. Contact the HR Department for advice / any assistance in completing these. Collate an information package appropriate for the post. This package should include: ● job description and if appropriate, the person specification. ● information on the department. ● information on the Company. ● terms and conditions of employment. It is important that this pack is carefully put together in order to present a professional image of the Company, therefore out-of date or poorly presented information is not suitable. Discuss with the HR Department / appropriate Director the most effective means of obtaining suitable candidates. The following options should be explored (in this order): ● Internal advert within the Company. ● Examination of previous applications, or those held on file with HR. ● Online Advertising. ● External advert in the local press. ● External advert in the National press. ● External advert in the appropriate technical / professional Journal. ● For senior posts the use of a recruitment agency. Design the advertisement. All advertisements must contain as much information as possible to ensure the correct recruitment group is targeted and reduce unsuitable applications, while remaining as cost-effective as possible. External adverts will be submitted to the appropriate Director/ senior manager for approval before being placed.

Area 3 of policy	<u>The Selection Process</u> Appropriate selection procedures must be used for each post. Procedures may vary, at its simplest this may involve a straight forward interview and skills testing. For more senior posts psychometric testing, presentations to the interview panel on a chosen topic and/or a series of individual interviews on various topics may be included. The appointing manager will approach relevant people to assist with shortlisting and interviewing. At least two people should be involved in shortlisting and sit on the Interview Panel. The Curriculum Vitae's received by the closing date will be forwarded to the appointing managers for shortlisting. Applicants **must** be chosen against the Person Specification. It is the responsibility of the appointing manager at this stage to record (in writing) the reasons why an applicant is not shortlisted, using the 'Selection Form'. All papers must be returned to the HR Department, who will invite the candidates for interview, obtain references and make the necessary housekeeping arrangements for the interview. This will include timetabling the interviews, and Candidates who have not been shortlisted will also be informed.
Area 4 of Policy	At least one week prior to the interview, each panelist will receive an interview pack containing: ● copies of application forms / CV's. ● blank interview Evaluation forms. ● a copy of the job advertisement. ● a copy of the job description & the person specification. The appointing manager will: ● decide on the interview format and determine which areas to concentrate on with the questioning, detailing relevant questions on the Interview Question and Evaluation Form. ● decide on who will chair the Interview Panel. ● receive the references for candidates from the HR Department and be responsible for ensuring the confidentiality of these, and for their safe return to the HR Department for destruction. At the interview, the appointing manager will ensure that the Interview Question and Evaluation Form is completed as fully as possible. When interviewing, they will ensure that Equal Opportunities legislation is strictly adhered to, with no discrimination shown on the grounds of gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion, and membership of the Traveller community

	When all candidates have been interviewed, the panel will decide on the best person for the post. The appointing manager will arrange to inform the successful candidate as soon as possible, agreeing a commencement date and starting salary. All interview documentation should be returned marked "private & confidential" to the HR Department.
Area 5 of Policy	Upon return of the Interview Question and Evaluation Form, the HR Department will: ● telephone/ write to all unsuccessful candidates with outcome of interview within two working days. ● write to the appointee, offering the post providing satisfactory references. ● initiate a personnel file and computer entry for the new member of staff. ● notify the Manager if the appointee refuses the offer, or if there are any other details to be cleared. ● deal with any requirements for the finding of temporary accommodation for the appointee where required. The HR Department will arrange, in conjunction with the appointing manager an individual programme of induction for the new start which will be arranged and agreed at least one week before the appointee commences.

Updates Any changes will be approved by the HR Department and Directors of Emerald Cultural Institute. Please see records below.

Date	**Summary of changes**	**Approved by**
April 2014	Developed in line with employment law and best practice.	HR (mssthehrpeople) and Directors of Emerald Cultural Institute
August 2018	Reviewed in line with employment law and best practice.	HR and Directors of Emerald Cultural Institute
December 2024	Reviewed and Realigned to the new ECI new standard policy template	HR

Policy	**Communication Policy for Staff**
Purpose	This policy outlines procedures and guidelines to enable clear, transparent, efficient, and understandable communication processes and channels among administrative and academic management, as well as administrative and academic staff. The objective is to foster an environment of collaboration, accessibility, and accountability within the Emerald Cultural Institute
Responsibility	This policy is developed and updated by the Director of Operations and the Senior Management Team
Scope	This policy applies to all members of the academic and administrative management team, academic and administrative staff.
Implementation and review	1. **Communication and implementation:** This policy will be shared with our staff through their line manager and meeting invites are shared through Microsoft Calendar 2. **Review:** Annual review of the policy will ensure the policy remains relevant to our context. Feedback from staff will guide updates, improvements or adjustments. 3. **Updates:** Any changes or updates to the policy will be approved by the SMT and communicated promptly to all affected parties, ensuring the interests and rights of staff are considered.
Area 1 of policy	1. Communication Channels a. Official Emails: Formal communication between management,teachers and administrative staff via institutional emails. b. Meetings: Regularly scheduled meetings, both online and in-person, are held to discuss academic and administrative matters. c. Notice Boards: Notice boards in the Academic StaffRoom and Accounts Office will be used to display important information, initiatives and notices. d. Feedback Mechanisms: Regular cross departmental meetings and the Ideas Board (Academic Directors Office) are used for suggestions for improvement and feedback e. Project and Accountability Board (Managing Directors Office) is used to assign tasks, responsibilities and actions during the Weekly Operations meeting f. Whatsapp group for Academic Staff administered by Director of Studies for urgent communication
Area 2 of policy	1. Principles a. Clarity: All communication should be straightforward, avoiding jargon and ambiguity.

	b. Transparency: Information should be accessible to relevant stakeholders to ensure informed decision-making. c. Efficiency: Communication should be timely and use appropriate channels d. Inclusivity: Channels should be open and accessible to all relevant staff. e. Accountability: Responsibilities for communication should be clearly defined and monitored.
Area 3 of policy	**Communication Processes** To improve and document communication among management, administrative, and academic teams, consider the following steps: 1. **Structured Meeting Schedules:** Ensure regular meetings with clear agendas and follow-ups where required. **Senior Management Team –** Senior Management Team meet once per month. Additional meeting can be convened informally when required **Operations Stand-up Meeting –** Short Weekly meeting (Max 20 minutes) in the Managing Director's (MB) office using the Project Board to identify responsibilities, accountabilities, monitor progress and quality, and find resolution to issues identified. Managers and/or representatives from all departments and functions including quality officer attend regularly. **Academic Staff Meetings –** Academic Management and Teachers meet one per month with members of SMT attending where required. **Academic Management Stand-up Meeting-** Academic management team meets once per week. **Group Operations Meetings –** Bi-weekly meetings between academic and administrative team to oversee the smooth operations for all groups. **Student Welfare Meetings –** Weekly meeting with Student welfare team including both academic and administrative staff to look at any improvement or issues relating to the learner experience. Student feedback is reviewed as part of these meetings. **Quality Panel –** monthly meeting for the members of the quality panel and additional meetings organised closer to any internal or external reviews.

	<u>Summer Planning Meetings</u> - organised as required by the Operations team with increasing frequency to weekly from early March leading up to the summer months 2. **Meeting Minutes & Action Items**: Maintain records of meetings and ensure action items are followed up. 3. **Surveys & Feedback**: Conduct periodic surveys to gather feedback on communication effectiveness and implement suggestions to improve.

Updates

Date	**Summary of changes**	**Approved by**
March 2024	Drafting of policy	Director of operations in consultation with SMT
January 2025	Update of meeting schedules	Director of Operations- Aideen Murphy

Policy	**Admissions and Enrolment Policy**
Purpose	This procedure describes how bookings are received, confirmed and passed on to other relevant departments.
Responsibility	This policy is developed and updated by Admissions Manager & assistants
Scope	All enrolments received by ECI
Implementation and review	1. **Communication and implementation:** This policy will be shared with our staff, students and other stakeholders (such as agents and partners) through relevant handbooks and websites. 2. **Review:** Regular reviews will ensure the policy remains relevant to our context. Feedback from staff, learners, and stakeholders will guide ongoing improvements 3. **Updates:** Any changes will be approved by the relevant team and communicated promptly to all affected parties, ensuring the interests and rights of staff and learners are considered.
Area 1 of policy	**INTRODUCTION** Enrolments can be submitted by email, post, in person or through the Emerald Cultural Institute website. All applicants must complete an enrolment form, providing personal details and the course they wish to attend. If the student requests to book accommodation, allergies / dietary requirements and special accommodation requests will also be asked for. Emerald Cultural Institute does not discriminate and welcomes all students, regardless of nationality, race, gender, sexual orientation, or political beliefs. The school may decline an application if we believe we are unable to accommodate a student's medical or disability related needs. However, we will make every effort to support students with such needs. Applicants are also required to provide information about their nationality and visa status. The school may refuse admission if there is concern that the student might not comply with visa regulations of the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service [INIS].

Area 2 of policy	**1. Learners Enrolling Through An ETO (EEA Passport Holders and Non-Visa Required)** 1.1. Upon receiving an email from an ETO [Educational Tour Operator / Agent] containing a prospective student's completed enrolment form, the Admissions Manager enters the prospective

	student's information along with the relevant course details into the school's booking administration system, "Intrinsiq." 1.2. The Admissions Manager verifies that all required documentation has been submitted. 1.3. If any documentation is unclear or incomplete, the Admissions Manager may request additional information. 1.4. Once the applicant's booking is confirmed, a booking confirmation, a gross and net invoice and assessment link are generated and emailed to the ETO. 1.5. Homestay/Residential accommodation and airport transfers (if applicable) are emailed by the Accommodation Officer or Residence Officer to the ETO once payment is made and flights are booked. 1.6. If the ETO has not already provided it, the Admissions Manager requests the booked student's planned arrival time.

Area 3 of policy	**2. Learners Enrolling Through An ETO (Visa Required)** 2.1. Upon receiving an email from an ETO [Educational Tour Operator / Agent] containing a prospective student's completed enrolment form, the Admissions Manager enters the prospective student's information along with the relevant course details into the school's booking administration system, "Intrinsiq." 2.2. The Admissions Manager verifies that all required documentation has been submitted. 2.3. If any documentation is unclear or incomplete, the Admissions Manager may request additional information. 2.4. Once the applicant's booking is confirmed, a booking confirmation, a gross and net invoice and assessment link are generated and emailed to the ETO. 2.5. Once full payment is made, an Acceptance Letter is generated and emailed to the ETO. This Acceptance Letter is used by the student to apply for an entry visa into Ireland. 2.6. The status of the student remains as 'visa required' until the ETO confirms that the visa has been granted. 2.7. Once confirmed, Homestay/Residential accommodation and airport transfers (if applicable) are emailed by the Accommodation Officer or Residence Officer to the ETO at least 2 weeks in advance of student's arrival. 2.8. If the ETO has not already provided it, the Admissions Manager requests the booked student's planned arrival time. a.
Area 4 of policy	**3. Learners Enrolled Directly (EEA Passport Holders and Non Visa Required)** 3.1. Upon receiving an inquiry from a prospective student, the

	Admissions Manager or a Member of the Admissions Team sends the relevant course information and documentation. 3.2. Upon receiving a completed enrolment form, the applicant's details and relevant course information are entered into the school's booking administration system, "Intrinsiq." 3.3. All necessary documentation that has been submitted is checked. 3.4. If any documentation is unclear or incomplete, the Admissions Manager may request further details. 3.5. After verifying the applicant's details, a booking confirmation, gross invoice and assessment link are generated and emailed to the applicant. 3.6. Applicants are advised that course fees must be paid in full no later than two weeks before the course begins, and their place cannot be guaranteed without payment. A non-refundable deposit is also required at the time of booking. 3.7. Homestay/Residential accommodation and airport transfers (if applicable) are emailed by the Accommodation Officer or Residence Officer to the student once payment is made and flights are booked. 3.8. If the student has not already provided it, the Admissions Manager requests the booked student's planned arrival time.
Area 5 of policy	**4. Learners Enrolled Directly (Visa Required)** 4.1. Upon receiving an inquiry from a prospective student, the Admissions Manager or a Member of the Admissions Team sends the relevant course information and documentation. 4.2. Upon receiving a completed enrolment form, the applicant's details and relevant course information are entered into the school's booking administration system, "Intrinsiq." 4.3. All necessary documentation that has been submitted is checked. 4.4. If any documentation is unclear or incomplete, the Admissions Manager may request further details. 4.5. After verifying the applicant's details, a booking confirmation, gross invoice and assessment link are generated and emailed to the applicant. 4.6. Applicants are advised that course fees must be paid in full as soon as possible for us to issue an Acceptance Letter. The Acceptance Letter can be used to apply for an entry visa. 4.7. Once the visa is confirmed, Homestay/Residential accommodation and airport transfers (if applicable) are emailed by the Accommodation Officer or Residence Officer to the student once payment is made and flights are booked. 4.8. If the student has not already provided it, the Admissions Manager requests the booked student's planned arrival time.

Area 6 of policy	**5. Sponsored Learners Enrolled (e.g. Saudi Cultural Bureau)** 5.1. Upon receiving a request from the Saudi Cultural Bureau, the school confirms whether the prospective student will be receiving a Financial Guarantee 5.2. If the student is receiving a Saudi Government Scholarship i.e. Financial Guarantee, an Offer Letter is sent to the student. 5.3. The Offer Letter is signed, stamped, and a scanned copy is emailed to the student. 5.4. Upon confirmation, the student must send the Financial Guarantee letter to the school. The student cannot begin their studies until the school receives the Financial Guarantee. 5.5. The Admissions Manager emails the Saudi Cultural Bureau the booking confirmation and net invoice for the student.
Area 7 of policy	**6. Group Bookings** 6.1. Applicants should first contact the Institute to check availability and request an allocation for their group. 6.2. Once names are confirmed, the group enrolment form should be completed and sent to the school by email. 6.3. A deposit invoice of 20% will be issued. 6.4. The balance of fees due to the Institute should be paid at least one month in advance of the course start date. 6.5. Acceptance letters and confirmed accommodation details can be provided only after full payment has been received

Updates

Date	**Summary of changes**	**Approved by**
September 2023	New format. Including Direct bookings [Learners Enrolled Directly]	Director of Admissions, Conor O'Grady
January 2024	Included information on Sponsored students from the Saudi Cultural Bureau	Admissions Manager David Ferguson

September 2024	Realigned to our new standard policy template (expanded to include purpose summary, scope, implementation and review SOP, summary of record keeping and appeals process).	Admissions Manager David Ferguson

Environmental Sustainability Policies

Policy	**Environment and Sustainability Policy**
Purpose	At Emerald Cultural Institute, we are committed to minimising our environmental impact and fostering sustainability in our operations and educational practices. This policy outlines our dedication to creating an eco-conscious school environment and equipping our students with the knowledge and skills to act as responsible global citizens This policy aims to: - raise environmental awareness. - reduce our environmental impact - use resources sustainably - commit to continuous improvement
Responsibility	This policy is developed and updated by the Senior Management team and Academic Governance Committee (AGC) with input from the wider staff profile
Scope	**This policy applies to:** - Our learners - Our academic and admin teams - All programmes, activities, services and events offered by Emerald Cultural Institute (all centres, on and off-site).
Implementation and review	1. **Communication and implementation:** This policy will be shared with our staff, students and other stakeholders (such as agents and partners) through relevant handbooks and websites. We will engage in ongoing consultation. 2. **Review:** Regular reviews will ensure the policy remains relevant to our context and legally compliant. Feedback from staff, learners, and stakeholders will guide ongoing improvements. 3. **Updates:** Any changes will be approved by the relevant team and communicated promptly to all affected parties, ensuring the interests and rights of staff and learners are considered. See below for record of updates.
Area 1 of policy	**Minimising Waste and Reducing Paper Use** We strive to reduce waste and adopt digital-first solutions wherever possible. **For Teachers**: 1. Use digital platforms for lesson planning, sharing resources, and submitting assignments to reduce printing. 2. Display materials on smartboards or screens instead of photocopying handouts. 3. Encourage students to submit work electronically and store administrative records digitally. **For admin esp marketing staff**

	1. Keep printing of brochures/ price lists to a minimum. Opt for digital versions and only provide printed edition when requested specifically. **For Students**: 1. Bring reusable water bottles and lunch containers to school to minimise single-use plastics. 2. Follow school guidelines for proper recycling and waste disposal.
Area 2 of policy	**Energy and Resource Efficiency** We are committed to conserving energy and natural resources to reduce our carbon footprint. 1. Use energy-efficient lighting and appliances, and ensure lights and electronics are switched off when not in use. 2. Source environmentally friendly products, such as recycled paper and non-toxic cleaning supplies. 3. Reduction of carbon imprint in marketing travel- regional marketing consultants attend marketing events in specific area reduction long haul flights of SMT

Updates

Date	**Summary of changes**	**Approved by**
December 2024	Developed in line to reflect current usage and best practice recommendations	Senior Management Team

Health and Safety Policies

See latest Health and Safety Report of Emerald Cultural Institute

Enrolment, Fees, Refunds, and Subsistence Policies

Policy	**Fee Policy**
Purpose	At Emerald Cultural Institute, we are committed to providing a clear and transparent fee structure for all students. The following policy outlines the payment terms and conditions applicable to tuition and other related fees.
Responsibility	This policy is developed and updated by Chief Financial Strategist with the consultation of the Managing Director and Senior Management team
Scope	This policy applies to all students enrolling in individual or group courses at the Emerald Cultural Institute. It outlines tuition fees, deposits, payment methods, refund conditions, additional costs, and financial obligations for courses offered in Ireland and the UK
Implementation and review	1. **Communication and implementation:** This will be communicated to both students and ETO's. These are all included on the price lists and also available on the school website. The admissions manager and finance staff can advice students on this. 2. **Review:** Fee policy is reviewed annually 3. **Updates:** Any changes will be approved by the Managing Director with the consultation of the Senior Management team.
Area 1 of policy	**<u>Course Fees</u>** **Individual Courses** Applicants should first confirm availability by contacting the Institute by telephone or email (admissions@eci.ie). Upon confirmation, applicants must complete an enrolment form online at www.eci.ie or send via email to admissions@eci.ie. A booking deposit of €250 (Ireland) or £250 (UK) must accompany the completed enrolment form. The deposit is not refundable but is deductible from the total amount payable. All payments must be in Euro for courses in Ireland, and in Sterling for courses in the UK. **<u>Group Courses</u>** Applicants should first contact the Institute to check availability and request an allocation for their group. All summer groups should confirm their allocations by 14th February 2025. A deposit invoice of 20% will be issued by 1st March 2025. Once names are confirmed, the group enrolment form should be completed and sent to the Emerald Cultural Institute by email. Bookings can also be submitted online at www.eci.ie/ group-booking/. The balance of fees due to the Institute should be paid at least one month in advance of the course start date. Acceptance letters and confirmed accommodation details can be provided only after full payment has

	been received.
Area 2 of policy	Paying for a course The balance of fees due to the Institute must be paid one month in advance of the course start date. All payments must be made in Euro (€) via inter-bank transfer, credit card (MasterCard or Visa) or TransferMate (online platform for processing international bank tranfers at no cost to the payer). Contact the Institute for full bank account details. Non-EU students who require a visa to enter Ireland must pay fees into the escrow account operated by TransferMate where funds will be held on behalf of the student and the Institute pending the visa decision. For inter-bank transfers, please contact contact the Institute for full bank account details. Additional bank charges incurred for both the sending And receiving banks are payable by the sender. Please note €35 bank fees Will be added for payments from non-EU bank accounts. Payments by credit card will incur a 3% admin charge. **Additional costs** Some courses may require students to purchase additional materials or pay examination fees. Accommodation, transport and insurance are not included in the course fees unless stated otherwise.

Updates

Date	**Summary of changes**	**Approved by**
September 2024	Reviewed Annually	Managing Director

Policy	**Refund Policy**
Purpose	At Emerald Cultural Institute, we strive to provide the highest quality English language education. We understand that circumstances may change, and students may need to cancel or defer their course. Our refund policy is designed to be fair and transparent.
Responsibility	This policy is developed and updated by Chief Financial Strategist with the consultation of the Managing Director and Senior Management team
Scope	This policy applies to all students enrolling in individual or group courses at the Emerald Cultural Institute. It outlines the refund process and charges for courses in Ireland and the UK
Implementation and review	1. **Communication and implementation:** This will be communicated to both students and ETO's. These are all included on the price lists and also available on the school website. The admissions manager and finance staff can advise students on this. 2. **Review:** Fee policy is reviewed annually 3. **Updates:** Any changes will be approved by the Managing Director with the consultation of the Senior Management team.
Area 1 of policy	**1.Course Fees** Refunds are granted under the following conditions: •Before arrival Cancellation of booking before arrival: For cancellations received at least fourteen (14) days prior to the course commencement date, fees will be refunded less the nonrefundable deposit of €250 (Ireland) or £250 (UK) plus bank charges of €15 (Ireland) or £15 (UK). For cancellations received within 7-13 days of the course commencement date, 50% of the course fees will be refunded. For cancellations received less than 7 days before the course commencement date, no refund is given. •After arrival Cancellation after arrival: Once a student has commenced their course at the Institute they are obliged to complete their full course of study. The full course of study is defined as the initial enrolment period. No refund will be given for course fees if a student withdraws from the course before the completion of the full course of study. **2.Cancellation - Group Courses**

	Cancellation of booking before arrival: For cancellations received at least fourteen days prior to the course commencement, fees will be refunded less the nonrefundable deposit of 20%. For cancellations received within 7-13 days of course commencement 50% of the total fees will be refunded. For cancellations of less than 7 days no refund is given. **3.Visa Refusals** We will refund all prepaid money minus €265 for administration costs on all visa refusals, within 20 days of receiving the request. Written proof of the visa refusal from the Embassy is required. **4.Accommodation Fees** •Residential Accommodation A deposit for all residential accommodation is charged and is payable on the first day to the school (€150 for adult students). This deposit will be refunded provided that the room key has been returned and no damage has been caused. Residential accommodation fees are refundable (less the administration fee) once 28 days' notice of cancellation are provided. •Host Family Accommodation Prepaid host family accommodation fees can be refunded in full (less the administration fee) if at least 14 days cancellation notice is given.
Area 2 of policy	**Refund Request Procedure** •All refund requests must be checked with the Admissions Manager and once confirmed must be submitted to the Finance Department •Processing time for refunds is 5 – 7 working days once received by the Finance Department •Refunds will be issued via the original payment method or another mutually agreed-upon method.

Updates

Date	**Summary of changes**	**Approved by**
September 2024	Reviewed Annually	Managing Director

Learner Welfare and Supports Policies

Policy	**Welfare Support Policy**
Purpose	This policy outlines the guidelines and procedures for supporting international students during emergencies, financial hardship, and promoting overall well-being. This policy reflects Emerald Cultural Institute's mission to place people at the heart of everything we do. Through a positive and nurturing environment, we ensure that students feel secure, supported, and empowered to thrive in their academic and cultural experience while studying abroad.
Responsibility	This policy is developed and updated by the Student Welfare Officer in coordination with the Senior Management Team, ensuring a transformative educational experience that fosters student growth and well-being. All members of staff share responsibility for assisting students, with specific roles assigned to: ● Student Welfare Officer – Coordinates and delivers student support services with a student-centred approach. ● Accommodation Officer – Ensures students live in a safe, comfortable environment conducive to personal and academic development. ● Trained Welfare Staff – Receive annual training in safeguarding, mental health first aid, and crisis intervention, reinforcing ECI's commitment to a nurturing and supportive environment.
Scope	This policy applies to all international students enrolled at ECI and covers the following key areas: ● Personal emergencies (e.g., medical issues, family crises) ● Financial hardship ● Accommodation concerns ● Immigration challenges ● Health and safety issues ● Mental health and well-being
Implementation and review	1. **Communication and implementation:** This policy will be communicated to all staff, students, and stakeholders via *handbooks*, the *website*, and *orientation sessions*, ensuring that every learner feels supported in their transformative journey at ECI. 2. **Review:** This policy will be reviewed annually to maintain alignment with legal and regulatory requirements and ECI's mission of continuous growth and improvement. Feedback from staff, students, and stakeholders will inform

	improvements, ensuring that student welfare remains at the center of all decisions. 3. **Updates:** Any updates will be approved by senior management and communicated promptly to enhance the student experience.
Area 1 of policy (Emergency and Crisis Management)	1. Emergency Contacts: Students can contact ECI's 24/7 emergency number: +353 86 811 2047. 2. Medical Emergencies: Assistance with scheduling medical appointments and accessing healthcare services. 3. Fire or Safety Incidents: Emergency procedures are communicated during orientation and displayed on campus.
Area 2 of policy (Financial Hardship Support)	1. Short-term emergency financial assistance may be available in the form of scholarships for students facing unexpected difficulties. Availability is not guaranteed and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, reinforcing ECI's commitment to student welfare and well-being. 2. Non-Financial Support: Assistance with food provisions, transport aid, and essential student welfare services may also be available to ensure that no student is left without support in challenging times. 3. Welfare Monitoring: The Welfare Officer and academic staff proactively monitor attendance and well-being, identifying at-risk students early to provide guidance and assistance. 4. Applications for hardship support are processed through the Welfare Office, ensuring that those in need are met with empathy and practical solutions.
Area 3 of policy (Accommodation Support)	1. Host Family Issues: Students may report concerns to the Accommodation Officer for resolution or relocation assistance. 2. Emergency Accommodation Support: ECI will assist students in finding suitable alternatives if needed. 3. Quality Assurance: Regular accommodation inspections ensure host families and residences meet ECI's high standards. 4. Transparency in Accommodation Services: If ECI or its partners provide housing, this is disclosed before booking.
Area 4 of policy (Immigration Support)	1. Visa and Immigration Guidance: The Student Welfare Officer assists students with visa extensions, INIS compliance, and documentation. 2. Special Induction Sessions: Non-EU/EEA students receive detailed guidance on entry conditions, compliance requirements, and attendance expectations under immigration rules.

Area 5 of policy (Health and Well-Being Support)	1. Visa and Immigration Guidance: The Student Welfare Officer assists students with visa extensions, INIS compliance, and documentation. 2. Special Induction Sessions: Non-EU/EEA students receive detailed guidance on entry conditions, compliance requirements, and attendance expectations under immigration rules.
Area 6 of policy (Reporting and Resolution of Issues)	1. Reporting Concerns: Students can contact the Welfare Office via email (studentwelfare@eci.ie) or visit in person. 2. Resolution Process: Complaints are logged confidentially, and the relevant department follows up within one working day. 3. Escalation Procedure: If unresolved, students may escalate complaints to a senior officer or independent mediator.
Area 7 of policy (Community Support and Integration)	1. Mentorship: Long-term students (12 weeks+) are assigned academic mentors, fostering an inclusive and encouraging learning environment. 2. Social and Cultural Programs: A carefully designed calendar of activities helps students build meaningful connections, enhancing both their academic and personal growth while experiencing the richness of Irish culture. 3. Student Engagement: ECI is committed to creating a welcoming space where students from diverse backgrounds can share experiences, integrate into the wider community, and prepare for their personal and professional futures.
Area 8 of policy (Communication and Accessibility)	1. MentorshipOrientation and Handbook: Key welfare resources are introduced during orientation and detailed in the Student Handbook. 2. Online and In-Person Access: Information is available on ECI's website and noticeboards.

Updates

Date	**Summary of changes**	**Approved by**
2022	Revision of Student Handbook	Senior Management Team
Dec 2024	Realigned to Mission Statement & Standard Policy Template	Senior Management Team

Learner and Other Stakeholder Complaints and Grievances

Policy	**Student Complaint and Grievance Policy**
Purpose	This policy explains how learners, staff, and others can share problems or concerns at Emerald Cultural Institute. The process is clear, fair, and simple to follow. At Emerald, people are at the heart of what we do. We want to make sure everyone feels safe and valued. If learners tell us their concerns, it helps us to improve and give the best care and service. Our goal is to give students and staff a positive experience, where they can learn, grow, and reach their goals. This policy also makes sure we are fair, open, and honest. It helps us build trust and get better at what we do.
Responsibility	The School Directors, including the Academic Director are responsible for making sure this policy is followed. All staff members promise to handle complaints in a professional and prompt quick way.
Scope	This policy applies to: - Our learners - Our academic team - Our administration team - Our accommodation Team - All programmes, activities, services and events offered by Emerald Cultural Institute (all centres, on and off-site) - All services offered by Emerald Cultural Institute, for example accommodation, learners welfare, and any other aspect of the learner's experience
Implementation and review	1. **Communication and implementation:** This policy will be shared with our staff, students and other stakeholders (such as agents and partners) through relevant handbooks and websites. 2. **Review:** Regular reviews will ensure the policy remains relevant to our context. Feedback from staff, learners, and stakeholders will guide ongoing improvements 3. **Updates:** Any changes will be approved by the relevant team and communicated promptly to all affected parties, ensuring the interests and rights of staff and learners are considered. See below for record of updates.
Definitions	A complaint is when a learner has a problem or feels something needs to be fixed. This can be about any part of their experience at the school.
Area 1 of policy	**Feedback and Communication**

	We encourage learners to share their feedback often. Every month, learners are asked to fill out a feedback form to write about their experience and to let us know of any problems. Separate Academic feedback forms are also sent out monthly. At the end of week 1 learners are also asked for feedback. Mentor meetings are arranged with learners to discuss all aspects of the programme. Learners can also talk directly to the right staff member to solve problems quickly. Also see our student handbook for information about how to do this and who to see.
Area 2 of policy	**How to Make a Complaint: Informal Process** **Talk About the Problem:** Students should try to solve the problem by talking to the person involved. For example, talk to your teacher about classroom issues or the Accommodation Officer about housing problems. **Response and Help:** The person you speak to must reply within three working days and try to help solve the problem. Other staff may also help if needed. **What Happens Next:** - If the problem is solved, no further action is needed. - If the problem is not solved, you can use the formal process or decide not to continue.
Area 3 of policy	**How to Make a Complaint: Formal Process** **Send Your Complaint in Writing:** - Write your complaint and send it to the Academic Team or the Administration Team (check this). If your complaint is about the Academic Team, send it to the Academic Director or School Director - Explain the problem clearly and include any evidence, if possible. - Send the complaint within five working days after the problem happened. **Investigation**: - The Academic Governance Committee and/or Academic management team will look into the complaint or ask a staff member of the relevant department to investigate - The person your complaint is about will be told and asked to give their side of the story. **Decision and Communication:** - The investigator will look at all the evidence. - The decision will be shared in writing with everyone involved, including the person who made the complaint. - The decision may: a. Reject the complaint b. Suggest ways to fix the problem c. Offer recommendations - Independent Process: a. If the complaint cannot be solved internally, you may use an independent process organised by Emerald Cultural Institute - Record and Review:

	a. All formal complaints will be recorded. b. The Academic Governance Committee or other school teams will review complaints to help with continuing Quality Assurance
Area 4 of policy	**Additional Rights and Responsibilities:** - People making a complaint can bring a friend, family member, or colleague to meetings. Lawyers cannot act as legal representatives in these meetings. - The person the complaint is about has the right to know the details of the complaint and to respond. - Complaints must follow our Code of Conduct.
Area 5 of policy	**Confidentiality** All complaints will be kept private. Information will only be shared with staff who are helping to solve the problem.
Record keeping	All complaints are recorded, checked, and kept securely. This helps us stay responsible and keep improving.
Appeals	If a learner is not happy with the solution to their complaint, they can take the issue to the School Director. The Director will check the problem and make a final decision within five working days. If necessary an independent procedure will then take place.
Key contacts	**Academic:** Eithne Kelly eithne@eci.ie **Accommodation**: accommodation@eci.ie **Student Welfare:** studentwelfare@eci.ie

Updates

Date	**Summary of changes**	**Approved by**
2022	Policy updated to include contacts	Senior Management Team?
December 2024	Realigned to our mission Statement and to our new standard policy template (expanded to include purpose summary, scope, implementation and review SOP, summary of record keeping and appeals process). Modified to be easily read by a typical learner at A2 level.	Senior Management Team?

Accommodation Services

Policy	**Accommodation Policy**
Purpose	This policy outlines the provision of accommodation by Emerald Cultural institute to ensure a safe, inclusive, and supportive living environment for our students. It aims to facilitate student well-being, academic success, and a positive residence or homestay experience while participating in our programmes.
Responsibility	This policy is developed and updated by the Head of Operations, in consultation with the accommodation officers and QA officer
Scope	This policy applies to: ● All students who apply for accommodation services at Emerald Cultural Institute. ● All operations (including the host family officers) and administration staff responsible for accommodation management. ● Relevant details of our accommodation policy are communicated to our accommodation providers.
Implementation and review	1. **Communication and implementation:** This policy will be shared with our staff, students and other stakeholders (such as agents and partners) through relevant handbooks and the company website. Information pertaining to the providers will be communicated to them through our handbook, newsletters or in meetings where applicable. 2. **Review:** Regular reviews will ensure the policy remains relevant to our context. Feedback from staff, learners, and stakeholders will guide ongoing improvements 3. **Updates:** Any changes will be approved by the relevant team and communicated promptly to all affected parties, ensuring the interests and rights of staff and learners are considered.
Area 1 of policy	**Outline** The Emerald Cultural Institute provides different accommodation options for their enrolled students - residential or homestay. Students can choose the appropriate type of accommodation that best meets their preference and learning requirements.
Area 2 of policy	**Types of Accommodation** Family Homestay Accommodation for both Juniors and Adults Self-catering Residential Accommodation for Adults during the Academic Year Summer Residential Accommodation: Adult Summer Residential Accommodation: Juniors We also provide information to clients interested in booking: Hotels and Guesthouse Accommodation

	Information for students sourcing their own accommodation.
Area 3 of policy	**Booking Process** Accommodation is subject to availability and allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. In the event that your first accommodation choice is not available, we will endeavour to offer an alternative option, if available. All students requiring accommodation should complete the details for their accommodation request either via the online enrolment form on the Emerald Website or by completing and sending by email a pdf version of our enrolment form. Students should complete all the following information on the enrollment form to assist with their placement: *Do you require accommodation?* *If Yes select type of Accommodation required from the following categories; Host family standard, Host family executive, Residence Single, Residence twin, other.* *Arrival and Departure date:* *Sharing information:* *Allergies/ Medical Conditions/ Physical Restrictions* *Dietary Requirements* *Any Special Requests* In order to book accommodation once the course is already underway this request should be notified to staff in the accommodation office either in-person or by email. Where possible reasonable accommodation will be made for students with disabilities in residential or homestay accommodation. In advance of submitting the booking form, information should be provided about the nature of the disability, in order to assess and ensure that we can successfully meet the needs of the individual learner.
Area 4 of policy	**Fees and Payments** A booking deposit of €250 must accompany all applications for course and accommodation. The deposit is non-refundable but is deductible from the total amount payable. Booking confirmations sent to clients for courses and accommodation are accompanied by the relevant invoices. The balance of fees should be paid at least 2 weeks before the course start date. Upon receipt of payment the Emerald Cultural Institute provides each of our students and groups with basic family details in advance of their arrival in Ireland. This allows the student to leave

	contact details with his/her family or friends before coming to Ireland. It also allows the student to contact the Irish family before arrival if he/she so wishes. Residence students will be provided further specific details on their residence allocation. On entry to residence a fully refundable damage deposit of €150 is charged (adults) or €50 (juniors)
Area 5 of policy	**In house Rules and Expectations** ● EXPECTATIONS FOR ADULT STUDENTS IN HOST FAMILIES - Covered in the Student Induction ● ADULT RESIDENCE REGULATIONS- Covered in the "Residence guides" ● RULES FOR JUNIOR STUDENTS STAYING WITH HOST FAMILIES- Covered in "Junior handbook- host family" ● SUMMER JUNIOR RESIDENCE REGULATIONS- Covered in " Junior handbook- residence"
Area 6 of policy	**Check in and Check out** Check-in and Check-out is always recommended on Sundays We may be able to facilitate some exceptions for arrival or departure on a Saturday subject to availability in the residence or the host family. We recommend that students check with the Emerald Admissions team before confirming flight arrangements. Residence rooms may not be ready for use until 3pm on day of arrival (where possible it will be accommodated earlier) but students are welcome to arrive and use the communal facilities /drop their bags for safekeeping with onsite staff and head out to explore Dublin For arrival times to host family; The accommodation team communicates the arrival / departure times of each student to their host family. The times to welcome are agreed with the student and the host family in advance of their arrival/
Area 7 of policy	**Cancellations** Students can inform us of Accommodation cancellations either by email or in-person to the Student Welfare or the Administration/ accommodation office.

	Students who want to cancel their host family accommodation during their stay are required to give us a minimum of two weeks' notice. Students who do not give adequate notice will be charged for two weeks' host family accommodation. Students who want to cancel their residential accommodation during their stay are required to give us a minimum of four weeks' notice- those who do not give adequate notice will be charged for four weeks' residential accommodation.
Area 8 of policy	**Extensions and Changes** Accommodation arrivals should be on Sundays (Saturday arrivals will be also accommodated where possible) For any Emerald students requesting host family changes or changes from host family to residence or between different residences, a change fee of €100 will be applied. Extra nights in host family and residence are possible subject to availability and an additional charge. If any students want to extend their accommodation, they should speak with the accommodation office to check availability. Accommodation extensions cannot always be guaranteed and are subject to availability. Students wishing to extend their accommodation should check availability well in advance of completion of their initial stay.
Area 9 of policy	**Feedback and Issues/Complaints** Feedback from students is important to us to keep improving our accommodation services. If any students have questions or issues regarding accommodation, we inform them during their induction on their first day to speak with either the Student Welfare team (office on ground floor) or directly with the Accommodation Team. (The Student Welfare team can be contacted by email at any time at studentwelfare@eci.ie or our Accommodation team at accommodation@eci.ie . Students are also invited to give feedback at the end of their first week with us. Our monthly feedback forms offer students the chance to give us regular written feedback. An accommodation issue is any matter relating to their accommodation that is deemed by a student to require attention and/or corrective action. Issues can be raised either verbally or submitted in writing. The accommodation department will follow up with you within one working day at the latest after being informed about the issue.

	. (Generally at ECI if students have an issue, we recommend they speak to the Student Welfare Officer who will direct the student to the staff member best able to assist with the particular issue) Should an issue be of a more severe nature and result in a complaint the complaints procedure (as outlined in the student grievances and complaints policy) will be followed Resolution of complaints related to accommodations - host family or residence, is overseen by the Head of Operations

Updates

Date	**Summary of changes**	**Approved by**
January 2023	Creation of policy	Head of Operations AM and QA officer - CG
December 2024	Reviewed and Realigned to the new ECI new standard policy template	Head of Operations - AM in consultation QA / residence officer – FH, and accommodation officers KC and AO

Safeguarding Policies

Policy	**Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**
Purpose	This policy establishes clear guidelines and procedures to safeguard children from abuse, neglect, and exploitation within the Institute. It ensures a safe environment for children, outlines staff responsibilities, and promotes awareness and compliance with legal requirements to protect their well-being.
Responsibility	This policy is developed and updated when required by the HR Department at Emerald Cultural Institute.
Scope	This scope covers all employees in the Institute, full time, part time and fixed term. In addition to the principles and procedures outlined in this Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Emerald Cultural Institute has a Child Safeguarding Statement that provides a detailed framework for identifying and mitigating risks, reporting procedures, and specific safeguarding measures. The Child Safeguarding Statement is a legal requirement under the Children First Act 2015 and applies specifically to our operational practices, including all junior programmes and activities involving children and young people. All staff are required to be familiar with both this Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and the Child Safeguarding Statement. The Child Safeguarding Statement outlines: ● Specific procedures for reporting and responding to safeguarding concerns. ● Roles and responsibilities of Designated Liaison Persons (DLPs). ● Risk assessment and mitigation strategies. ● Compliance with Tusla's child protection framework. A copy of the Child Safeguarding Statement is available from management upon request and is displayed in the Institute and in all summer centres. Staff should refer to it alongside this Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy for guidance on specific safeguarding protocols. For any concerns regarding child protection or safeguarding, employees should consult the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) as outlined in the Child Safeguarding Statement.
Implementation and review	1. **Communication and implementation:** This policy will be shared with our staff, students and other stakeholders (such as agents and partners) through relevant handbooks and the company website. Information pertaining to the providers

	will be communicated to them through our handbook, newsletters or in meetings where applicable. 2. **Review:** Regular reviews will ensure the policy remains relevant to our context. Feedback from staff, learners, and stakeholders will guide ongoing improvements 3. **Updates:** Any changes will be approved by the relevant team and communicated promptly to all affected parties, ensuring the interests and rights of staff and learners are considered.
Area 1 of policy	It is the policy of Emerald Cultural Institute to protect the welfare of all children and young people by protecting them from neglect, physical, sexual and emotional harm or abuse. Our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Good Codes of Practice aim to raise awareness and understanding of the various categories of child abuse, the situations that might constitute reasonable grounds for concern and advice on how to respond to disclosure. This Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is based on and in compliance with the current child protection guidelines and legislation in the Republic of Ireland. Workers of the Institute should, at all times, show respect and understanding for the rights, safety and welfare of young people and children, and should conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of the Institute. The Institute is committed to listening to children and young people and recognises that "each child has a right to express his or her opinion freely and to have that opinion taken into account" in any matter or procedure" (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child). The UN Convention on the Rights of the child should be respected in all aspects of the Institute's activities.
Area 2 of policy	The Institute endeavours to ensure that children and young people are protected and kept safe from harm while taking part in educational programmes and events, at any time when required to work or volunteer with children or young people. <u>We do this by</u>***;*** ● Familiarising all employees and the Institute with the Child Protection Policy Statement. ● Setting down codes of behaviour between workers and children and familiarising all and workers with them. ● Ensuring fair and consistent recruitment practices. ● Generating awareness and understanding of the various categories of child abuse, the situations that might constitute reasonable grounds for concern and advice on how to respond to disclosure. ● Monitoring procedures for responding to accidents and complaints.

	● Putting in place a designated person to act as a liaison with outside agencies in relation to child protection accidents and complaints. ● Co-operating with any other childcare and protection agencies and professionals by sharing information when necessary and working together towards the best possible outcome for the children concerned. A full copy of this policy and procedure will be issued to you on commencement of your employment and thereafter is available from Management on request and you are required to be fully familiar with its content. In certain roles we may be required to carry out a Criminal Record Check on employees. This will be to assess their suitability for positions that involve working with children and vulnerable adults. In certain roles this may need to be checked periodically.

Updates Any changes will be approved by the HR Department and Directors of Emerald Cultural Institute. Please see records below.

Date	**Summary of changes**	**Approved by**
April 2014	Developed in line with employment law and best practice.	HR (mssthehrpeople) and Directors of Emerald Cultural Institute
April 2019	Reviewed in line with employment law and best practice.	HR and Directors of Emerald Cultural Institute
July 2022	Reviewed in line with employment law and best practice.	HR and Directors of Emerald Cultural Institute
February 2025	Reviewed and Realigned to the new ECI new standard policy template	HR

Human Resources Policies

Policy	**Continuing Professional Development Policy**
Purpose	This policy promotes the ongoing development and enhancement of employees' professional skills, knowledge, and competencies to ensure that employees are equipped with the necessary expertise to perform their roles effectively and stay current with industry trends.
Responsibility	This policy is developed and updated when required by the HR Department at Emerald Cultural Institute.
Scope	This scope covers all employees in the Institute, full time, part time and fixed term.
Implementation and review	1. **Communication and implementation:** This policy will be shared with our staff, students and other stakeholders (such as agents and partners) through relevant handbooks and the company website. Information pertaining to the providers will be communicated to them through our handbook, newsletters or in meetings where applicable. 2. **Review:** Regular reviews will ensure the policy remains relevant to our context. Feedback from staff, learners, and stakeholders will guide ongoing improvements 3. **Updates:** Any changes will be approved by the relevant team and communicated promptly to all affected parties, ensuring the interests and rights of staff and learners are considered.
Area 1 of policy	The policy promotes the ongoing development and enhancement of employees' professional skills, knowledge, and competencies. The Institute is committed to supporting its employees in their continuous learning and career development to ensure they are equipped with the necessary expertise to perform their roles effectively and stay current with industry trends. Employees are encouraged to take responsibility for their own professional development and are provided with opportunities to pursue continuing professional development activities that align with their current job responsibilities or future career aspirations. The Institute recognises that continuing professional development can take various forms, including attending workshops, seminars, conferences, enrolling in courses, participating in webinars, and engaging in self-directed learning activities.

Area 2 of policy	To support employees in their professional development, the Institute will provide access to resources such as training materials, funding for relevant courses or certifications, and time off to attend continuing professional development events, where applicable. If an employee requires time off or financial assistance to participate in continuing professional development activities, they must submit a request to their manager for consideration. To request time off for continuing professional development activities, employees should submit their request as soon as possible and at least 4 weeks in advance. The request should outline the specific continuing professional development activity, its relevance to the employee's role, and the proposed duration of the time off. Managers will assess the request based on the employee's work responsibilities, team needs, and how the continuing professional development activity aligns with the employee's development goals. For financial assistance, employees who wish to request funding for a continuing professional development course, conference, or other professional development activity should complete a formal request form, including details of the course, associated costs, and the potential impact on their professional growth. This form should be submitted to their manager as soon as possible and at least 4 weeks before the course to allow for proper review and consideration. Requests will be evaluated based on budgetary constraints, the relevance of the activity to the employee's role, and the potential benefit to the Institute. A Staff Development Request Form is available from your manager / HR Department to initiate this process. Employees should complete the form with the necessary details and submit it for review and approval. Managers will review requests for both time off and financial assistance and will work with employees to accommodate their development needs within the scope of the Institute's resources and priorities. Managers will endeavour to deliver decisions regarding time off or funding within 14 days of the date of receipt of the request.
Area 3 of policy	Employees are encouraged to set continuing professional development goals, document their progress, and reflect on how the activities contribute to their development and overall job performance. Managers are responsible for discussing continuing

	professional development goals with employees during performance reviews, providing guidance on suitable development opportunities, and offering feedback to help employees meet their objectives. The Institute will assess the effectiveness of continuing professional development programmes and activities by gathering feedback from employees and measuring improvements in performance, job satisfaction, and overall productivity. Continuing professional development will be an integral part of the performance management process, with employees' participation in development activities considered when evaluating their growth and potential for advancement within the Institute. All employees are expected to maintain and improve their professional competence through continuing professional development and participation will be considered when making decisions related to promotions, pay increases, and other career advancement opportunities. The Institute reserves the right to amend this policy as needed to ensure alignment with business objectives and evolving professional development needs. Any changes to the policy will be communicated to employees in a timely manner.

Updates Any changes will be approved by the HR Department and Directors of Emerald Cultural Institute. Please see records below.

Date	**Summary of changes**	**Approved by**
February 2025	Developed in line with employment law and best practice.	HR (mssthehrpeople) and Directors of Emerald Cultural Institute

Staff Training and Development Policies

Policy	**Training Policy**
Purpose	This policy outlines the goals, objectives, and strategies for employee development, as well as the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the training process.
Responsibility	This policy is developed and updated when required by the HR Department at Emerald Cultural Institute.
Scope	This scope covers all employees in the Institute, full time, part time and fixed term.
Implementation and review	1. **Communication and implementation:** This policy will be shared with our staff, students and other stakeholders (such as agents and partners) through relevant handbooks and the company website. Information pertaining to the providers will be communicated to them through our handbook, newsletters or in meetings where applicable. 2. **Review:** Regular reviews will ensure the policy remains relevant to our context. Feedback from staff, learners, and stakeholders will guide ongoing improvements 3. **Updates:** Any changes will be approved by the relevant team and communicated promptly to all affected parties, ensuring the interests and rights of staff and learners are considered.
Area 1 of policy	At Emerald Cultural Institute, continued professional development is an integral part of our company culture. From time to time, it may be required for you to undergo training, which could be both on-site and off-site. Some training may take place outside of business hours. We ask for your full cooperation in these training programs, which are for your benefit and continued professional development. If you are unable to attend a training session, you must notify your Manager immediately. Failure to attend without a justifiable reason may result in disciplinary action.

	If you feel you require training or retraining in a specific area, please inform your Manager. You may be asked to submit your request in writing, including: • The specific training you wish to undertake • How you believe it will improve your effectiveness at work • How it will benefit both you and the Company All training requests will be considered, and in some cases, you may be invited to a meeting to discuss the request further.

Updates Any changes will be approved by the HR Department and Directors of Emerald Cultural Institute. Please see records below.

Date	**Summary of changes**	**Approved by**
April 2014	Developed in line with employment law and best practice.	HR (mssthehrpeople) and Directors of Emerald Cultural Institute
February 2025	Reviewed in line with employment law and best practice.	HR and Directors of Emerald Cultural Institute
February 2025	Reviewed and Realigned to the new ECI new standard policy template	HR

Policy	**Training & Development Policy (Academic)**
Purpose	At Emerald Cultural Institute, our CPD policy is grounded in our mission to ensure people are at the heart of what we do and to support staff to grow and meet their professional goals. We also draw on our ethos, "Experience Tradition, Embrace Innovation," to underpin our training schedule with a balance between the fundamentals of language pedagogy and innovative approaches within the classroom. This policy applies to all teaching and administrative staff at Emerald Cultural Institute. It encompasses professional development activities such as workshops, seminars, accredited training courses, peer observation, and blended learning programmes. The policy also extends to collaborative development initiatives that align with learners' changing needs and international educational trends
Responsibility	Responsibility for overseeing and implementing this policy rests with the Academic Governance Committee (Academic Director, Director of Studies and Training & Development Coordinator).
Scope	This policy applies to: - Our academic team - All programmes, activities, services and events offered by Emerald Cultural Institute (all centres, on and off-site)
Implementation and review	1. **Communication and implementation:** This policy will be shared with our staff, students and other stakeholders through relevant handbooks and websites. 2. **Review:** Regular reviews will ensure the policy remains relevant to our context. Feedback from staff will guide ongoing improvements 3. **Updates:** Any changes will be approved by the relevant team and communicated promptly to all affected parties, ensuring the interests and rights of staff and learners are considered.
Ethos	Our training policy is aligned to the principles of the CEFR and supports teachers to promote communicative language competences, to introduce language structures which enable communication and to support students to adapt their language use according to the context.
Area 1 of policy	**Commitment to CPD** We believe that ongoing training is essential for maintaining teaching excellence and ensuring our courses meet the needs of an increasingly dynamic student population. All staff are supported in their pursuit of professional growth, which directly benefits the learner experience. We draw on the principles of the INSPIRE approach to ensure training is meaningful, relevant and has an impact.

Area 2 of policy	**Innovative Practices**: Drawing on our ethos, training initiatives are designed to blend traditional teaching excellence with modern innovations, including digital literacy, virtual learning platforms, and intercultural communication strategies.
Area 3 of policy	**Collaboration and Sharing**: Peer observation, collaborative lesson planning, and participation in team workshops are core components of our CPD approach, encouraging a community of learning among our educators.
Area 4 of policy	**Recognition and Encouragement:** Achievements in CPD will be recognised during appraisals and through internal acknowledgments, reinforcing the value we place on staff contributions to their professional and institutional growth.
Record keeping	The Academic Governance Committee maintains records of attendance and teachers have access to personal folders to record and reflect on their CPD activities.

Updates

Date	**Summary of changes**	**Approved by**
2018	Policy updated to include induction and observations (incorporated in the Teacher Handbook)	Academic Governance Committee
July 2024	Realigned to our mission statement and to our new standard policy template (expanded to include purpose summary, scope, implementation and review SOP, summary of record keeping and appeals process). Includes overview of CPD only.	Academic Governance Committee

Staff Complaints and Grievances Policies

Policy	**Grievance Procedure**
Purpose	This policy outlines the guidelines and procedures should any employee have a concern, problem or complaint at work.
Responsibility	This policy is developed and updated periodically by the HR Department at Emerald Cultural Institute.
Scope	This scope covers all employees in the Institute, full time, part time and fixed term.
Implementation and review	1. **Communication and implementation:** This policy will be shared with our staff, students and other stakeholders through relevant handbooks and websites. 2. **Review:** Regular reviews will ensure the policy remains relevant to our context. Feedback from staff will guide ongoing improvements 3. **Updates:** Any changes will be approved by the relevant team and communicated promptly to all affected parties, ensuring the interests and rights of staff and learners are considered.
Area 1 of policy	**Informal Process** <u>Stage One</u> Employee grievances should first be discussed on an informal basis and brought to the attention of their Manager/Supervisor, by reference to Stage One of the Grievance Procedure. If it is inappropriate to discuss the issue of concern with your Manager/Supervisor, the matter may be discussed directly with another member of management. The Manager hearing the complaint will attempt to resolve the issue as soon as reasonably practical. However, should the matter remain unresolved or the response is not adequate, an employee may decide to escalate the Grievance to the Formal Process.
Area 2 of policy	**Formal Process** <u>Stage Two</u> Should an employee wish to proceed to the formal stage, an account of the grievance must be presented in writing and forwarded to a more Senior Manager. A Grievance Hearing will be held and a work colleague or representative may accompany the employee during a Grievance Hearing, if desired. A report of the discussion will be issued to all present.

	Should the matter remain unresolved, or the response is not adequate, the employee may appeal the issue in writing, to a nominated senior member of management, or, if not applicable, to a company Director, outlining the reasons for the Appeal within 7 days of the decision.
Area 3 of policy	<u>Stage Three</u> Upon receipt of an appeal of stage two of the Grievance Procedure, an Appeal Hearing will be held by a Company Director or appropriate person nominated and a work colleague/representative may accompany the employee during a grievance hearing if desired. A report of the discussion will be issued to all present. The Director, or other appropriate person nominated will make the final decision on the grievances. A decision by the Director may be appealed to the Workplace Relations Commission. Any instructions that may be issued which give cause for query/grievance should be carried out - albeit under protest - pending the matter being dealt with through the grievance procedure. You should carry out any instruction assigned to you. If at any time you have a difficulty with an instruction you should carry it out as requested, albeit under protest, whilst the grievance is being considered. No Industrial Action of any kind should be taken by any member of staff until the Grievance Procedure has been fully completed, a recommendation has been issued and then only after two weeks' notice in writing. Should a grievance arise from any form of harassment or intimidation, the employee has a duty to inform his/her General Manager. Grievances of this nature will be dealt with as per the Company Dignity at Work Policy.

Updates Any changes will be approved by the HR Department and Directors of Emerald Cultural Institute. Please see records below.

Date	**Summary of changes**	**Approved by**
April 2014	Developed in line with employment law and best practice.	HR (mssthehrpeople) and Directors of Emerald Cultural Institute
August 2018	Reviewed in line with employment law and best practice.	HR and Directors of Emerald Cultural Institute
December 2024	Reviewed and Realigned to the new ECI new standard	HR

	policy template	

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policies

Policy	**Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Policy (Academic)**
Purpose	At Emerald Cultural Institute people are at the heart of everything we do. Our mission is to provide a transformative educational and cultural experience within a positive, nurturing environment. This commitment includes fostering a culture of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) where all students, staff, and stakeholders feel valued and respected. We are dedicated to creating a school environment where everyone, regardless of background, identity, or circumstances, feels safe, supported, and included and can reach their potential in terms of language proficiency and cultural awareness. - Diversity: We celebrate and embrace the unique identities, cultures, perspectives, and experiences that our students and staff bring to the Emerald community. - Equity: We ensure fair treatment, access, and opportunities for all, actively working to remove barriers that may prevent individuals from achieving their personal and professional goals. - Inclusion: We cultivate a sense of belonging where every individual is empowered to contribute and succeed in our community.
Responsibility	This policy is developed and updated by the Academic Governance Committee (AGC) with input from the wider academic management team and from the teaching team.
Scope	This policy applies to: - Our learners - Our academic team - Our administration team - Visitors, partners and stakeholders - All programmes, activities, services and events offered by Emerald Cultural Institute (all centres, on and off-site).
Implementation and review	1. **Communication and implementation:** This policy will be shared with our staff, students and other stakeholders (such as agents and partners) through relevant handbooks and websites. The academic team will be trained on various aspects of DEI during the CPD cycle. 2. **Review:** Regular reviews will ensure the policy remains relevant to our context and legally compliant. Feedback from staff, learners, and stakeholders will guide ongoing improvements. Regular training will keep us aligned with best practice.

	3. **Updates:** Any changes will be approved by the relevant team and communicated promptly to all affected parties, ensuring the interests and rights of staff and learners are considered. See below for record of updates.
Area 1 of policy	**Creating an Inclusive Environment:** ● Respect all individuals and their identities, including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, disability, and socio-economic background. ● Actively challenge discrimination, bias, and inequality wherever they occur. ● Promote cultural exchange and understanding among students and staff.
Area 2 of policy	**Ensuring Equity in Education:** ● We underpin our practice with the principles of Universal Design for Learning ● Regularly evaluate our programmes and policies to ensure fairness.
Area 3 of policy	**Raising Awareness and Building Capacity:** ● Provide regular training and resources to staff and students on DEI-related topics. ● Foster open dialogue about diversity and inclusion via our CPD programme ● Support international learners in adapting to their new cultural environment in Ireland.
Area 4 of policy	**Expectations for Behaviour** ● Treat everyone with respect and kindness. ● Use inclusive and respectful language. ● Refrain from any form of discrimination, harassment, or bullying. ● Take responsibility for your actions and speak up if you witness inappropriate behaviour.
Area 5 of policy	**Reporting and Accountability** ● If you experience or witness behaviour that violates this policy, report it to a teacher or manager. ● Reports will be treated seriously, confidentially, and investigated promptly. ● We will take appropriate action to address any breaches, including education, mediation, or disciplinary measures.

Updates

Date	**Summary of changes**	**Approved by**
August 2017	Developed in line with current guidelines	Administration team
December 2024	Redeveloped in line with DEI best practice	Academic Governance Committee

Policy	**Inclusive Learning and Support Policy (Academic)**
Purpose	At Emerald Cultural Institute we underpin our approach to students with additional needs with reference to our mission statement; to ensure that all learners receive a positive and transformative educational experience. We work within Universal Design for Learning principals. We aim to: - Foster an inclusive environment for all students and stakeholders. - Ensuring all students have equal opportunities to participate in the classroom and school life. - Providing an experience based on the principles of UDL to ensure equity for all learners.
Responsibility	This policy is developed and updated by the Academic Governance Committee (AGC) with input from the wider academic management team, from the teaching team and from the admin team.
Scope	This policy applies to: - Our learners - Our academic team - Our administration team - Visitors, partners and stakeholders - All programmes, activities, services and events offered by Emerald Cultural Institute (all centres, on and off-site).
Implementation and review	1. **Communication and implementation:** This policy will be shared with our staff, students and other stakeholders (such as agents and partners) through relevant handbooks and websites. 2. **Review:** Regular reviews will ensure the policy remains relevant to our context. Feedback from staff, learners, and stakeholders will guide ongoing improvements 3. **Updates:** Any changes will be approved by the relevant team and communicated promptly to all affected parties, ensuring the interests and rights of staff and learners are considered.

Definitions and identification	A student is considered to have special educational needs if they have greater difficulty in learning than their peers. This policy also applies to students with additional needs arising from a disability or other factors that may impact their ability to access education and fully participate in school life. Stakeholders can share information relating to specific needs via the following: **Initial Needs Analysis**. Students or their representatives share requirements during the standard Needs Analysis stage before arrival, allowing us to understand their specific needs and explore appropriate support options. **Ongoing Monitoring**. Where a student with additional needs has been placed in class, teachers and staff observe and review progress regularly to identify emerging needs. **Parental/Guardian Input**. In the case of minors, engagement with parents/guardians will take place during the application period and throughout the period of study with us.
Area 1 of policy	**Support and Provision** We provide a range of support tailored to individual needs, including: - **Learning goals**. We encourage all students to work towards the weekly Can Do statements and daily ILOs, as goal setting and reflecting on learning can help those with SEN in their learning journey. - **UDL approaches in the classroom**. These may include differentiated instruction, assistive technologies, activating schema, modified materials, or additional time for tasks and assessments, as well as a visual schedule of the lesson. - **Specialist training**. Teachers and staff receive training to understand and support diverse learning needs.
Area 2 of policy	**Accessibility** We are committed to ensuring our facilities and resources are accessible to students with SEN, including: - Providing physical access to classrooms, toilets, and other facilities. - Offering assistive technologies where possible to support learning.
Area 3 of policy	**Collaboration and Communication** - With students: We encourage students to participate in decisions about their learning and support, promoting self-advocacy and independence. - With families: We work closely with parents/guardians (for our young learners) via team/group leaders to ensure information about additional or special needs is disseminated to the teaching and academic team where relevant and requested.

Updates		
Date	**Summary of changes**	**Approved by**
December 2024	Developed in line with SEN best practice	Academic Governance Committee

Curriculum, Syllabus, Programme and Assessment Design, Quality Reviews

Policy	**Curriculum and Programme Design Policy**
Purpose	This policy outlines the principles and procedures for the design, management, and quality assurance of our curriculum, syllabi, and academic programmes. It ensures a structured approach to curriculum development, alignment with best practices, and continuous improvement, fostering an inclusive, high-quality learning environment.
Responsibility	This policy is developed and updated by the Academic Governance Committee in consultation with staff, learners, and stakeholders. Implementation is overseen by the Academic Quality Assurance Team, with input from teachers, programme coordinators, and external reviewers where appropriate.
Scope	This policy applies to all academic programmes, including General English, Examination Preparation, and Specialist Courses. It encompasses curriculum development, syllabus design, programme management, and quality reviews to ensure high educational standards and relevance to learner needs.
Implementation and review	1. **Communication and implementation:** This policy will be shared with our staff and students through relevant handbooks and websites. 2. **Review:**Regular reviews will ensure the policy remains responsive to pedagogical developments, accreditation requirements, and learner needs. Feedback from staff, learners, and stakeholders will inform ongoing enhancements. 3. **Updates:** Any changes will be approved by the relevant team and communicated promptly to all affected parties, ensuring transparency and consistency in curriculum management.
Area 1 of policy	**Curriculum and Syllabus Design** We uphold key principles in developing our curriculum and syllabi to ensure quality and consistency: **1. Learner-Centred Approach** - Curriculum design is informed by learner needs, aspirations, and real-world application. - Syllabi incorporate CEFR-aligned learning outcomes and communicative competences. **2. Educational Coherence** - Programmes are structured to provide clear progression pathways from A1 to C1. - Lessons align with weekly 'Can Do' statements and Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs). **3. Diverse Methodologies**

	- Core methodologies include the Communicative Approach, Task-Based Learning, and the Lexical Approach. - Teachers are encouraged to adapt materials to support diverse learning styles and needs.
Area 2 of policy	**Programme Management and Delivery** Effective management ensures that programmes run smoothly and meet academic and operational standards: 1. **Planning and Structuring** - Weekly syllabi provide structured learning pathways with clear language and skills goals. - Teaching materials, including course books and supplementary resources, are regularly reviewed. 2. **Assessment and Evaluation** - Assessment frameworks integrate formative and summative evaluation aligned with CEFR descriptors. - Weekly assessments track learner progress, informing instructional decisions. 3. **Teacher Support and Development** - Teachers receive ongoing professional development to enhance curriculum delivery. - Regular observations and feedback sessions ensure alignment with best teaching practices.
Area 3 of policy	**Area 3 of Policy** **Quality Reviews and Continuous Improvement** We maintain high standards through rigorous monitoring and evaluation processes: 1. **Quality Assurance Mechanisms** - Curriculum effectiveness is evaluated through student feedback, teacher reflections, and learning outcomes analysis. - Programme reviews incorporate accreditation requirements and industry best practices. 2. **Stakeholder Engagement** - Regular consultations with students, staff, and external experts inform curriculum updates. - Data from learner performance and feedback guides syllabus enhancements. 3. **Ongoing Adaptation** - Regular updates ensure curricula remain relevant to evolving educational needs and methodologies. - Innovation in teaching and learning is encouraged through collaborative reflection and professional development.

Updates		
Date	**Summary of changes**	**Approved by**

2020	Bringing together different strands of practice that were not previously formalised	Academic Governance Committee
March 2025	Created to standardise curriculum, syllabus design, and quality assurance.	Academic Governance Committee

MEL Framework (Academic QA)

See latest version at Emerald Cultural Institute

Policy	**MEL Policy**
Purpose	This policy outlines the principles and procedures for Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) within our academic programmes, and constitutes the academic QA. It ensures a structured approach to quality assurance, enabling continuous improvement in teaching and learning while aligning with best practices and institutional goals.
Responsibility	This policy is developed and updated by the Academic Governance Committee in consultation with staff, learners, and stakeholders. Implementation is overseen by the Academic Quality Assurance Team, with contributions from teachers, mentors, and programme coordinators
Scope	This policy applies to all academic programmes, including General English, Examination Preparation, and Specialist Courses. It encompasses student outcomes, teaching quality, and curriculum effectiveness to ensure high standards across all learning experiences.
Implementation and review	1. **Communication and implementation:** This policy will be shared with our staff, students and other stakeholders (such as agents and partners) through relevant handbooks and websites. 2. **Review:** Regular reviews will ensure the policy remains relevant to our context. Feedback from staff, learners, and stakeholders will guide ongoing improvements 3. **Updates:** Any changes will be approved by the relevant team and communicated promptly to all affected parties, ensuring the interests and rights of staff and learners are considered.
Area 1 of policy	**Monitoring** We monitor three key areas to ensure the effectiveness of our academic programmes: **1. Student Outcomes** - Language Proficiency: Measured through CEFR level progression, weekly assessments, and skill-based evaluations. - Skill Development: Tracking improvements in listening, speaking, reading, and writing through assessments and communicative tasks. **2. Teaching Quality** - Classroom Observations: Ensuring lessons align with our syllabus, ethos, and best practices.

	- Student Feedback: Regular questionnaires and mentoring sessions on learning experience. - Teacher Development: Monitoring participation in Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and individual learning paths. **3. Curriculum Effectiveness** - Alignment with CEFR: Ensuring lesson plans reflect Can Do statements and expected learning outcomes. - Student Task Performance: Measuring success in communicative tasks and applied language use.
Area 2 of policy	**Evaluation** We use data-driven evaluation to refine and improve teaching and learning processes. This includes: **1. Evaluating Student Outcomes** - Standardised tests and performance data to assess language proficiency progress. - Analysis of student performance patterns to identify strengths and gaps. **2. Evaluating Teaching Quality** - Observation checklists assessing lesson structure, methodology (e.g., Communicative Approach), and student engagement. - Aggregated feedback from student mentoring sessions and surveys. - CPD participation records and their impact on classroom teaching. **3. Evaluating Curriculum Effectiveness** - Mapping learning outcomes against CEFR descriptors. - Analysing student success rates in communicative tasks. - Ensuring curriculum updates align with best practices in language education.
Area 3 of policy	**Learning & Continuous Improvement** - Reports: Evaluation findings are compiled into regular reports for staff and stakeholders. - Collaborative Reflection: Team meetings review insights, discuss challenges, and develop solutions. - Actionable Goals: Evaluation results guide improvements in teaching, training, curriculum development, and operations.

Updates

Date	**Summary of changes**	**Approved by**
September 2024	Created to drive the consolidation of the MEL Framework	Academic Governance Committee

Academic Integrity and Artificial Intelligence Policies

Policy	**Academic Integrity Policy**
Purpose	This policy outlines the principles and procedures for upholding academic integrity within our institution. It ensures a structured approach to maintaining honesty, fairness, and ethical behaviour in all academic activities. The policy aims to foster a culture of integrity among students, staff, and stakeholders while aligning with institutional values and best practices.
Responsibility	This policy is developed and updated by the Academic Governance Committee in consultation with staff, learners, and stakeholders. Implementation is overseen by the Academic Quality Assurance Team, with contributions from teachers, mentors, and programme coordinators. All members of the institution are responsible for upholding academic integrity.
Scope	This policy applies to all academic programmes, including General English, Examination Preparation, and Specialist Courses. It covers all forms of academic work, including assessments, assignments, research, and classroom conduct. The policy applies to students, teaching staff, and administrative personnel involved in academic processes.
Implementation and review	1. **Communication and implementation:** This policy will be shared with our staff, students and other stakeholders (such as agents and partners) through relevant handbooks, websites and training sessions 2. **Review:** Regular reviews will ensure the policy remains relevant to our context. Feedback from staff, learners, and stakeholders will guide ongoing improvements 3. **Updates:** Any changes will be approved by the relevant team and communicated promptly to all affected parties, ensuring the interests and rights of staff and learners are considered.
Area 1 of policy	**Academic Integrity Principles** We uphold three key principles to ensure integrity within our academic programmes: 1. **Honesty** - All work submitted by students must be their own. - Students must accurately reference sources when using external material. - Misrepresentation, falsification, or fabrication of information is strictly prohibited. 2. **Fairness** - All students are assessed based on their own merit and effort.

	- Staff must ensure transparency in marking and feedback. - Procedures for handling academic misconduct are applied consistently and fairly. 3. **Responsibility** - Students and staff must be aware of and comply with academic integrity guidelines. - Training and resources will be provided to support ethical academic practices. - Suspected cases of academic misconduct must be reported and addressed.
Area 2 of policy	**Academic Misconduct and Procedures** We define and address academic misconduct through the following measures: 1. **Types of Academic Misconduct** - **Plagiarism:** Using someone else's work without proper acknowledgment. - **Collusion:** Unauthorized collaboration on assignments or assessments. - **Cheating:** Using prohibited materials or dishonest practices during exams. - **Fabrication:** Falsifying data, research findings, or academic records. 2. **Detection and Reporting** - Staff and students can report suspected academic misconduct through official channels. - Plagiarism detection tools and assessment monitoring will be used where appropriate. - Investigations will be conducted fairly and confidentially. 3. **Consequences and Disciplinary Actions** - Minor infractions may result in warnings or educational interventions. - Serious breaches can lead to penalties, including reassessment, grade reduction, or suspension. - Decisions on misconduct cases will follow a clear appeals process.
Area 3 of policy	**Promoting a Culture of Academic Integrity** We take a proactive approach to fostering academic integrity by: 1. **Education and Awareness** - Providing academic integrity workshops and training. - Including integrity guidelines in student and staff handbooks. - Encouraging discussions on ethical academic behaviour. 2. **Support and Resources** - Offering guidance on proper referencing and avoiding plagiarism. - Providing academic support services, such as writing centres and mentoring.

	- Ensuring staff are equipped to guide students on integrity matters. 3. **Continuous Improvement** - Regularly reviewing academic integrity policies and procedures. - Seeking feedback from students and staff to improve integrity initiatives. - Adapting strategies based on evolving academic standards and challenges.

Updates		
Date	**Summary of changes**	**Approved by**
March 2025	Developed to formalise academic integrity standards, incorporating principles from previous policies and documents over the years	Academic Governance Committee

Policy	**AI (Academic)**
Purpose	At Emerald Cultural Institute, we recognise the increasing importance of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in education and society. When used responsibly, AI can greatly enhance learning and teaching, complementing our mission to provide a transformative educational and cultural experience. This policy outlines practical guidance for the appropriate and ethical use of AI by teachers and learners at our institution. This policy aims to: - Ensure the ethical and responsible use of AI in teaching and learning. - Provide clear guidelines for integrating AI tools to support educational goals. - Promote awareness of the limitations and risks of AI. - Foster critical thinking and encourage the development of core language skills without over-reliance on AI. By fostering an environment where AI is used ethically and effectively, the Emerald Cultural Institute continues to embrace innovation while upholding the traditions of quality education and personal growth.
Responsibility	This policy is developed and updated by the Academic Governance Committee (AGC) with input from the wider academic management team and from the teaching team.
Scope	This policy applies to: - Our learners - Our academic team - All programmes, activities, services and events offered by Emerald Cultural Institute (all centres, on and off-site).
Implementation and review	1. **Communication and implementation:** This policy will be shared with our staff, students and other stakeholders (such as agents and partners) through relevant handbooks and websites. The academic team will be trained on various aspects of AI during the CPD cycle. Initial Phase of AI Training started in 2024 and will be continued over the course of 2025. 2. **Review:** Regular reviews will ensure the policy remains relevant to our context and legally compliant. Feedback from staff, learners, and stakeholders will guide ongoing improvements. Regular GDPR training will keep us aligned with best practice. 3. **Updates:** Any changes will be approved by the relevant team and communicated promptly to all affected parties, ensuring the interests and rights of staff and learners are considered.

Area 1 of policy	**General Principles** - **Transparency**: Teachers and learners should disclose when AI tools are used to assist in the creation of work or tasks. - **Support, Not Replace**: AI can be used to supplement and enhance learning, and not replace creativity or personal effort. - **Accuracy and Evaluation**: Users should critically evaluate AI-generated content for accuracy, appropriateness, and relevance to tasks or objectives. - **Ethics and Integrity**: The use of AI must align with academic honesty, avoiding plagiarism and ensuring that all work reflects the individual's own effort and understanding.
Area 2 of policy	**Guidance for Learners** - **Language Practice:** You can use AI chatbots to practice speaking English and to learn new words. - **Writing Help:** AI can give you ideas, check your grammar, or help you start writing. But you need to check the work and make it your own. - **Learning New Things:** AI can help you learn about topics. But always check the information and say where it is from. **What Not to Do with AI** - Don't use AI work and say it is yours. - Don't use AI too much for translation. Try to learn the language yourself.
Area 3 of policy	**Guidance for Teachers** **Integrating AI in Teaching** - **Enhancing Lesson Plans**: AI tools can support the creation of engaging, customised lesson content that addresses diverse learner needs. - **Encouraging Active Use**: Introduce learners to AI tools for skill-building while emphasising their limitations. - **Monitoring Usage**: Guide learners in the ethical use of AI and assess their understanding to ensure they are not over-relying on technology. **Evaluating AI Outputs** - Teachers should verify the accuracy of AI-generated materials and adapt them to reflect real-world scenarios and teaching objectives. - Encourage learners to critically analyse AI content, fostering their ability to identify errors or biases. **Maintaining Integrity** - Design assignments and assessments that require learners to demonstrate their personal understanding and skills, minimising the risk of over-dependence on AI.
Area 4 of policy	**Risks and Limitations of AI** - **Bias and Inaccuracy**: AI tools may generate incorrect or biased information, so users must validate all outputs. - **Privacy Concerns:** Users should avoid sharing personal or sensitive information with AI platforms.

	- **Skill Development:** Overuse of AI may hinder the development of essential language and cognitive skills. Teachers and learners should strive for a balanced approach.
Practical Tips for Effective Use	**For Learners:** - Check AI answers with good sources. - Think about AI ideas and change them to fit you. **For Teachers:** - Introduce AI tools as part of blended learning approaches. - Develop tasks that combine AI use with critical thinking exercises. - Refer learners to research ethical use of AI.

Updates

Date	**Summary of changes**	**Approved by**
December 2024	Developed in line to reflect current usage and best practice recommendations	Academic Governance Committee

Ethical Marketing and Recruitment Policies

Policy	**Marketing & Sales Policy**
Purpose	This policy outlines the guidelines and procedures we follow to allow our Marketing & Sales team to ensure the information available to our stakeholders is clear, accurate and transparent. This policy also ensures that our own team, our partners and those who act as consultants understand the importance of transparency and presenting all information on our school in an ethical manner. Furthermore, the policy outlines ● processes to audit the information our partners provide to their clients, ● processes for issuing partnership agreements, the carrying out of due diligence on partners and regular review of existing partner agreements.
Responsibility	This policy is developed and updated by the Sales & Business Development Manager(SM) and the Marketing Manager(MM).
Scope	The scope covers all the sales and marketing team, our partners and all stakeholders.
Implementation and review	1. **Communication and implementation:** This policy is shared with Marketing & Sales team, admissions team and SMT. 2. **Review:** Regular reviews will ensure the policy remains relevant to our context. Feedback from staff and stakeholders will guide ongoing improvements 3. **Updates:** Any changes will be approved by the relevant team and communicated promptly to all affected parties, ensuring the interests and rights of learners are considered.
Area 1 of policy	**Development and review of marketing materials, excluding website and downloadable pdf documents:** These include: ● Emerald Interactive Guide ● Brochure(Emerald Cultural Institute profile) ● Price list – adult ● Price list - junior After careful review Marketing Materials start to be developed/updated in February each year by MM & Managing Director. (In a year when marketing material is due a complete rebrand this process starts in the autumn of the previous year)

	Material Reviewed and content checked by SM. Any information pertaining to course changes, academic course content or academic service content is reviewed by Academic director. Price List review conducted by SMT, financial consultant & accountant. Financial controller updates price lists for both adults and juniors after final consultation with SMT. Completed by end August. All material disseminated to sales team by mid-August. The sales team prepare their own localised material as necessary, including translations of promotional material. All new information published/printed for end August to commence sales season at Alphe UK workshop each year. New Price lists/updated brochures sent to all partners via e-marketing mailing and are also uploaded to the 'Downloads' section of the website.
Area 2 of policy	**Development and review of Website & Digital marketing material.** The Emerald website is hosted by HEM(Higher Education Marketing). HEM also carry our any necessary maintenance to the website. The website content is reviewed monthly by our MM. Information is updated as necessary. A full website audit is completed in July each year and in August all new updates are made, and new materials, brochures and price lists are added to their relevant sections and to the 'Downloads' section of the website. The student welfare officer manages the 'Student information' section of the website and updates the events calendar monthly. Any text regarding course content, CEFR references, sample programmes is checked and verified by our academic team. Downloadable pdfs covering programmes, schools, summer centres, sample programmes, accommodation, practical information are also updated in July/August each year. New pdf documents are developed for new centres or programmes and existing documents are reviewed to include any new information.

	The SM and the MM review all information in these documents. Once updated these are all uploaded to the 'Downloads' section of the website and to each course/centre page as relevant. The updated information documents are also shared with the sales team, who may decide to translate the relevant documents for their markets. This is decided with the SM on a market-by-market basis.
Area 3 of policy	**Self-evaluation, monitoring and review of agent websites/promotional brochures.** ECI works with a wide variety of Educational Tour Operators (hereafter ETO). To ensure that our ETOs are providing clear, accurate and transparent, accessible, relevant and up to date information, our sales team, overseen by our SM conducts a monthly review of 10% of their ETOs/partners to check the agent websites reflect the correct and up to date information. A different selection of ETOs in their region is selected each month until all active partner websites are audited. The process is then restarted. ECI strongly believes in Principle 2 of the London statement requiring ETOs to provide 'honest information in an ethical manner'.(statement of Principles for the Ethical Recruitment of International Students by Education Agents and Consultants (Known as 'The London Statement'2012) To monitor the information provided in agent brochures, our sales team are asked to take sample brochures when attending industry workshops or ETO fairs. This material is always checked by our sales representatives and feedback is immediately given to agents on any information which may be erroneous or inaccurate.
Area 4 of policy	**Emerald ensures ETOs, recruitment partners and consultants are appropriately trained by undertaking the following:** ● Monthly meeting organised by SM with sales team/regional managers and Managing Director(when available) to update and train the team on any developments in our school, in Ireland, curriculum, programmes, facilities and all school related activities. ● Regular Webinars for ETOs covering updates on courses/centres, Junior/adult programmes. ● Regular Market-specific training by regional managers in person and online

	● Attendance at a wide variety of industry workshops allows us to update our ETOs regularly on our school and programmes. ● Monthly newsletters on programme/course/centre/availability updates. ● Monthly newsletters on special offers in relevant long-term markets.
Area 5 of policy	**ETO agreements – Review, Due diligence** All active ETOs are issued with an ETO agreement, which incorporates the key principles of the London statement and includes a termination clause in cases, where agents are not adhering to the core principles of the London Statement. All agreements with active ETOs are reviewed every two years by the sales team and overseen by the SM. Due diligence has been carried out on all new ETOs over time, but mostly by word-of-mouth or at industry workshop meetings. As of December 2024, this due diligence process has been formalised, whereby the sales team, overseen by the SM, ask all new ETOs for three references. The sales team then issue an official 'Reference Check document' to these three references. Once a completed 'reference check document' from three referees has been received we can issue an ETO agreement and commence our co-operation. (see official Reference Check document)

Updates

Date	**Summary of changes**	**Approved by**
December 2022	Rewritten after Covid period	MM/SM/SMT
December 2023	Implementation of process for sales team to review agents regularly	MM/SM/SMT
December 2024	Written due diligence completed for all new ETOs using new Reference check document	Managing Director/MM/SM/ SMT

Record of Updates

Policy name	2026	2027	2028	2029