

Policy & Procedure Title: Provision of Pastoral Care for International Students of South East Technological University Carlow (Role and Responsibility)

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Form(s)	Responsibilities/ Owner
	Vice President for Development & Research Vice President Academic Affairs & Registrar Head of Campus
	International Affairs Manager Erasmus Co-Ordinator Head of Learner Support and Student Services Academic Heads of Department All STaff
Superseded or Obsolete Procedures	

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1. Background

South East Technological University Carlow puts the learner at the centre of our values and our strategic priorities¹.

Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) was established in November 2012 by the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 (the 2012 Act). The 2012 Act sets out the functions of QQI, which will include the establishment of a Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners² (the Code) and the authorisation of an International Education Mark (IEM) for use by providers in compliance with the Code. This statutory Code will set out expectations relating to the quality of services and supports available to international learners in Ireland. It is issued under Section 60(1) of the 2012 Act (QQI, 2015).

Structure of the Code

The Code comprises criteria to be met by providers under four categories:

- General Requirements
 - Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions
 - Fees, Refunds and Subsistence
 - Supports and Services for International Learners
- (QQI, 2015)

The Code will set out the minimum standards of advice and care that are expected of educational providers with respect to international students. The Code applies to pastoral care and provision of information only, and not to academic standards. Appendix I sets out the Pastoral Supports and Services outlined in the Code against which providers will be assessed.

Please note that there are some cohorts ³of international students who are not covered by the Code.

2. South East Technological University Carlow Student Supports

All full time registered students of South East Technological University Carlow are provided with equitable access to on-campus supports, services, and accommodations within the resources available and to the extent that is reasonable.

¹ SETU Carlow Strategic Plan 2023-2028 available at <https://www.setu.ie/about/setu-president/strategic-plan-2023-2028>

² Available at <https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/Code%20of%20Practice.pdf>

³ For example students who were born outside of Ireland but now have residency status

3. International Office

South East Technological University Carlow is committed to the pastoral care of international students and also recognises the additional challenges facing international students who by the very nature of study abroad face geographical separation from family, and who may face cultural and linguistic barriers.

In this regard, international students benefit from the provision of an augmented service accessed by them through the dedicated International Office at South East Technological University Carlow. These supports include, but are not limited to;

- Academic Administration support
- Accommodation
- Attendance
- Bespoke Induction & Orientation for international students
- Community policing supports
- Cultural awareness activities
- English language support
- Examination support
- Financial
- Immigration
- Liaison with academic Heads of Department
- Liaison with students' Agents
- Liaison with students' home Universities
- Liaison with students' next of kin
- Liaison with students' sponsoring bodies
- Medical Insurance
- Pastoral Care
- Provision of letters required by international students
- Registration
- Study abroad supports – including official learning agreement
- Transport
- Work placement abroad supports – including official traineeship agreement

In providing these supports international students develop a relationship with International Office staff who will typically be the first point of contact should the student encounter any manner of difficulty throughout their course of studies at South East Technological University Carlow.

3.1 International Student Contact Details

Due to the nature of international students as described above, the International Office collect the local home address and contact details (i.e. Irish mobile number, personal e-mail address) from international students. These details are recorded in the student records system, Banner, and are used regularly to contact international students.

For Erasmus students the details outlined above are stored in the Incoming Erasmus student database. Next of kin details are requested on the Erasmus application form or the Erasmus Profile form. Home Higher Education Institution contact details are stored on the partner database in the International Office.

3.2 Pastoral Care and External Referral

At times students require medical attention or additional supports and these are available and provided by Student Services, the Teaching & Learning Centre, through academic Heads of Department and the International Office, where reasonably possible. At times circumstances occur where, due to the nature of the requirements, students must obtain their supports from external or community based providers.

Examples of these circumstances may include;

- Requirement for hospitalisation due to medical illness or emergency;
- Requirement for assessment and/or hospitalisation due to psychiatric illness or emergency;
- Requirement for ongoing psychiatric supports for mental illness (as opposed to counselling for mental health support);
- Accident or emergency occurring during a study or work-placement abroad;
- Dental treatment due to accident;
- Support for victims of crime;

Emergency/high risk cases referred to external or community based providers for immediate assessment or treatment may necessitate involvement of the emergency services (ambulance/gardai).

3.2.1 Pastoral Care and External Referral for Students on Campus

International students who present as unwell when on campus typically present themselves either to the International Office or to Student Services,

come to the attention, or are brought to the attention of a member of staff who contacts the International Office or Student Services for assistance.

(a) Non-Emergency/ Non High Risk

In circumstances, not deemed emergency/high risk, where the international student requires referral to hospital or to external supports, it is recommended that the student be accompanied by a peer or by a member of the International Office staff. In the case of peer accompaniment, transport may be provided as determined by the International Affairs Manager. In addition, students will be provided with an *out of hours contact number for International Office staff. (*staff may not be available if called late at night or during weekends and holidays).

(b) Emergency/ High Risk

In circumstances deemed emergency/high risk, where the international student requires referral to hospital or external supports Student Services will contact the International Office who, where possible, in loco familia will accompany the student to the external provider or will meet the student at the location of the external provider. The International Office will assist the external or community based provider in relation to student and next of kin details and will act as the point of contact for the student and a liaison with Student Services, academic Heads of Department, the student's peers, family, Agent, sponsoring body, and home Higher Education Institution where appropriate. Student Services will assist the International Office with any advice deemed necessary.

The International Office will endeavour to contact the student's next of kin, either directly or through the Agent, sponsoring body or home Higher Education Institution as appropriate to advise of the circumstances and any familial assistance or intervention required. The International Office, where appropriate, may also assist the student in availing of the benefits covered by their medical insurance.

The care and pastoral care of the student is thereafter the responsibility of the student themselves, their family, and the external provider.

The student and/or their family, Agent, sponsoring body, or home Higher Education Institution must contact the International Office should the student decide to take a leave of absence by withdrawal or deferral from their programme of study. The International Office will inform the academic Head of Department in this instance. Alternatively, should contact be initiated with the academic Head of Department, the academic Head of Department will inform the International Office for their records.

For Erasmus students there are two different types of forms for them to complete, one when they wish to take a leave of absence in term time and one which is an extension or reduction of their period of study.

Relevant forms are available within the University Quality Manual and available at the following links

<http://www.itcarlow.ie/resources/quality/quality-policies-procedures.htm>

and on Sharepoint at the following link

<https://staffportal.itcarlow.ie/functions/Quality/default.aspx>

If appropriate the Policy and Procedure on Fitness to Study may be invoked and is available within the University Quality Manual and available at the following links

<http://www.itcarlow.ie/resources/quality/quality-policies-procedures.htm>

and on Sharepoint at the following link

<https://staffportal.itcarlow.ie/functions/Quality/default.aspx>

If appropriate the Student Code of Discipline may also be invoked and is available within the University Quality Manual and available at the following links

<http://www.itcarlow.ie/resources/quality/quality-policies-procedures.htm>

and on Sharepoint at the following link

<https://staffportal.itcarlow.ie/functions/Quality/default.aspx>

Should the student return to study directly following the episode, or after a period of absence, they are expected to link in with the supports available through their academic Head of Department and Student Services.

If the Policy and Procedure on Fitness to Study, or the Student Code of Discipline are invoked, the student must fulfil any conditions as set out prior to their return to study.

The role of the International Affairs Manager or their nominee is to liaise with the Academic Head of Department and the Head of Learner Support and Student Services in relation to the student's wellbeing and what reasonable supports and reasonable academic supports may be required to facilitate the student's learning. Based on the information available, the Head of Department shall endeavour to put in place these academic supports as required. The Head of Department shall endeavour to keep the International Affairs Manager or their nominee and the Head of Learner Support and Student Services informed of the academic supports in place and where appropriate monitor and provide feedback on the student's progress.

3.2.2 Pastoral Care and External Referral for International Students off Campus

International students who present as unwell when off campus are typically brought to the attention of the International Office by peers or at times by Faculty members who may note their absence.

Once contacted by the International Office, international students who require medical attention are encouraged to visit Student Services on campus or, if out of hours, to out of hours services as listed in Appendix 3.

(a) Non-Emergency/ Non High Risk

In circumstances, not deemed to be emergency/high risk, where the international student requires referral to hospital or to external supports, it is recommended that the student is accompanied by a peer or by a member of the International Office staff. In the case of peer accompaniment, transport may be provided as determined by the International Affairs Manager. In addition, students will be provided with a contact number for International Office staff.

(b) Emergency/ High Risk

In circumstances deemed to be emergency/high risk, where the international student requires referral to hospital or external supports the International Office in loco familia may accompany the student to the external provider or may meet the student at the location of the external provider. In circumstances where the international student has been referred, or self-referred, to hospital or external supports the International Office in loco familia may meet the student at the location of the external provider. The International Office will assist the external provider in relation to student and next of kin details and will act as the point of contact for the student and a liaison with Student Services, academic Heads of Department, the student's peers, family, Agent, home Higher Education Institution (where appropriate), and external service providers. Student Services will assist the International Office with any advice deemed necessary.

The International Office shall endeavour to contact the student's next of kin, either directly or through the Agent or home Higher Education Institution as appropriate to advise of the circumstances and any familial assistance or intervention required. The International Office, where appropriate, may also assist the student in availing of the benefits covered by their medical insurance.

The care and pastoral care of the student is thereafter the responsibility of the student themselves, their family, and the external provider.

The student and/or their family, Agent, sponsoring body, or home Higher Education Institution shall contact the International Office should the student decide to take a leave of absence by withdrawal or deferral from their programme of study. For Erasmus students there are two different types of forms for them to complete, one when they wish to take a leave of absence in term time and one which is an extension or reduction of their period of study. Relevant forms are available within the University Quality Manual and available at the following links

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and on Sharepoint at the following link

<https://staffportal.itcarlow.ie/functions/Quality/default.aspx>

Should the student return to study directly following the episode, or after a period of absence, they are expected to link in with the supports available through their academic Head of Department and Student Services.

The role of the International Affairs Manager or their nominee is to liaise with the academic Head of Department and the Head of Learner Support and Student Services in relation to the student's wellbeing and what reasonable supports and reasonable academic supports may be required to facilitate the student's learning. Based on the information available, the Head of Department shall endeavour to put in place these academic supports as required. The Head of Department shall endeavour to keep the International Affairs Manager or their nominee and the Head of Learner Support and Student Services informed of the academic supports in place and where appropriate monitor and provide feedback on the student's progress.

(c) Prolonged Unexplained Absence

In circumstances where unexplained absence has been noted over an extended period of time, International Office staff will endeavour to contact the student using the personal and local contact details provided to them by the student. Failure to make contact with an international student may result in members of the International Office visiting the student's local address to ensure the welfare of the student and/or contacting the student's Agent, sponsoring body, home Higher Education University or family (see 4.0).

3.2.3 Pastoral Care for Study Abroad and Work Placement Abroad Students

All students going abroad on an Erasmus Study or Placement are provided with contact details for the SETU Carlow International Office prior to departure. After a settling in period a skype call takes place with the student abroad to ensure that no issues have arisen and that the student has settled into their host organisation/country. They are informed that International Office staff are available to assist, either by a further skype call, email or telephone. Students on study abroad are also advised that they should contact the international office at their host University as a first point of contact where assistance will also be available.

Students are also informed that should any academic issues arise during their Erasmus mobility abroad that they should contact their Course Director at SETU Carlow who will assist with any matters arising.

All students travelling abroad on an Erasmus study or placement mobility must get the E111 insurance card, which is valid throughout Europe. The students are also given a copy of the SETU Carlow Personal Accident Insurance Policy and they must take out an Erasmus insurance travel policy through the International Office at SETU Carlow unless they show evidence of personal insurance which will cover them while abroad, such as VHI, BUPA etc.

Students going on Erasmus study periods abroad apply for campus accommodation as part of their application process at the host institute. Students going on placement secure their own accommodation but the International Office will assist where possible.

Students going abroad book their own flights and arrange transport to their destination. However many colleges abroad have a buddy system and generally students going on study periods abroad are met on arrival and shown to their accommodation. This buddy is usually in touch with the student by email prior to departure.

Students going on both Erasmus study and placement are entitled to a contributory grant as set out under the Erasmus regulations. Students going abroad receive a sign Grant Agreement which outlines the amount of money that they will receive for their Erasmus period abroad with a choice to receive payment to their bank account in one lump sum or by instalment.

3.2.4 Pastoral Care in the event of the Death of an International Student

In the unfortunate event of the death of an international student University staff should refer to the University's Procedure in the Event of a Death, which can be found within the University Quality Manual and available at the following links <http://www.itcarlow.ie/resources/quality/quality-policies-procedures.htm>

and on Sharepoint at the following link

<https://staffportal.itcarlow.ie/functions/Quality/default.aspx>

3.2.5 Pastoral Care in the event of Serious Illness or Death of a Family Member of an International Student

In the unfortunate event of the death of a family member of an international student, International Office staff should put in place pastoral care supports for the student such as referral to the University's Chaplain or Counsellors. In addition, the International Office should determine and fund any reasonable financial supports that may be required by the student to allow them to return home at short notice. The International Office will ensure that the academic Head of Department is informed so that appropriate academic supports can be put in place if deemed necessary.

4.0 GDPR and Confidentiality

In all instances, confidentiality will be maintained by South East Technological University Carlow and individuals informed on a need to know basis in line with GDPR and Data Protection Legislation. South East Technological University Carlow will not normally disclose personal data or sensitive personal data without consent, other than in exceptional circumstances, i.e. where it is believed that there is potential adverse risk to the safety, health or wellbeing of any student or campus user.

Where urgent communication with a student through direct contact details is not possible or has, following repeated attempts, been unsuccessful the University reserves the right to contact relevant third parties, such as family, agent, home university, or authorities such as the Garda Síochána.

5.0 Definitions

For the purposes of this policy the following definitions will apply.

5.1 International Student

South East Technological University Carlow International Office provides supports, services and pastoral care to the following students;

- a. Students from non-EU countries who enter Ireland and register as a student of South East Technological University Carlow for the specific purpose of undertaking a programme of study, listed on the Department of Justice and Equality Internationalisation Register.
- b. Erasmus Exchange Students from Erasmus exchange countries and universities who enter Ireland and register as a student of University of Technology as part of an agreed bilateral exchange between South East Technological University Carlow and the student's home university.

5.2 Emergency/ High Risk

Emergency / High Risk refers to medical emergencies which could occur due to injury, chronic health condition (e.g. asthma attack), or unexpected major illness (e.g. stroke, heart attack). In such cases, the medical professional on campus (Nurse or GP) should be contacted immediately along with emergency 'blue light' services.

Emergency / High Risk also refers to mental health emergencies. In such cases, the medical professional on campus (Nurse, GP, or Counsellor) should be contacted so that assessment and external referral can take place if necessary. Where any member of staff believes that there is an immediate and imminent risk to the health of the student, or to others, emergency 'blue light' services should be contacted immediately.

In all instances, South East Technological University Carlow reserves the right to act in good faith to preserve the safety, health, and wellbeing of all campus users.

Appendix 1

Pastoral Supports and Services⁴

- a. Providers shall designate appropriate personnel to be responsible for inquiries about pastoral care issues from international learners (e.g. course co-ordinator, counsellor or international officer).
- b. Providers shall offer orientation information prior to learners' arrival (e.g. transport and accommodation services).
- c. Providers shall ensure that inductions offered to learners also meet the particular needs of international learners (including inter-cultural awareness).
- d. The induction programme shall be provided to all cohorts of international learners that register or enrol at various times of the year, including learners that access programmes through advanced entry.
- e. Providers shall provide information on all integration opportunities available to international learners and encourage learners to avail of those opportunities.
- f. Providers shall ensure that international learners are aware of opportunities to participate in, and be represented at, engagements between the provider and the student body.
- g. Providers shall have mechanisms in place to support international learners financially in instances of personal or other emergency or hardship.
- h. Providers shall facilitate and encourage feedback from international learners on the delivery of any supports and services. This includes informing learners about complaints processes for these services.

⁴ Available at <https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/Code%20of%20Practice.pdf>

Appendix 2 Contact Details for South East Technological University Carlow Staff

IMMEDIATE CONTACT FOR ANY INCIDENT FROM 9.00AM TO 5.00PM Monday to Friday

International Office

Dial 059 9175250 – Non-EU

Dial 059 9175092 or 059 9175090 – EU/Erasmus

Dial 059 9175079 – International Affairs Manager
or present to the International Office in the C Block

International Affairs Manager – *Out of Hours

353 (0)86 2392037

Nurse

Dial 059 9175606

or present to the Student Services Health Centre in the Barrow Centre

Out of hours and out of Term time – Contact Emergency Services – See Appendix 3

Head of Learner Support and Student Services

Dial : 059 9175610 or 059 9175600

or present to the Student Services Health Centre in the Barrow Centre

Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar

Dial 059 9175608

Estates Manager

Dial : 059 9175040

Note : As part of the Induction / Orientation process a wallet card will be given to incoming students at the beginning of the year with emergency service numbers and international office numbers. *Note that during 'out of hours' International Office staff may not be available if called late at night or during weekends and holidays.

Appendix 3 Emergency Services in Carlow, Wexford

"Blue Light" Emergency Number

In an emergency the "blue light" services - **Garda Síochána, Ambulance, Fire and Irish Coast Guard** - can be contacted by dialing **112 or 999**

Once the call is answered, state which service you require

Garda Síochána (24 hours)

Dial 999 or 112, or contact your local Garda Station

Garda Stations

Carlow Garda Station, Athy Rd, Carlow

Phone: (059) 913 6620

Wexford Garda Station, Mulgannon, Wexford

Phone: (053) 916 5200

CareDoc Locations (After Hours Doctor Service)

Carlow - Saint Dymphna's Hospital, Athy Rd, Strawhall, Carlow, R93 V603

Hours: Opens 6 p.m.

Phone: 1850 334 999

Wexford - Caredoc Centre, Grogans Road, Wexford, Y35 DA39

Hours: Opens 6 p.m.

Phone: 1850 334 999

Hospital Costs

Where students need to access a hospital for an emergency consultation, the hospital will charge the student an Accident and Emergency fee of €100.

Erasmus students should present their E111 card at the hospital and any other insurance documents that they have from their home institute.

Appendix 4 Diagram

