

Internationalisation and Ireland's International Education Mark: Reflections from Trinity College Dublin

2023 European Quality Assurance Forum (EQAF)

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Overview

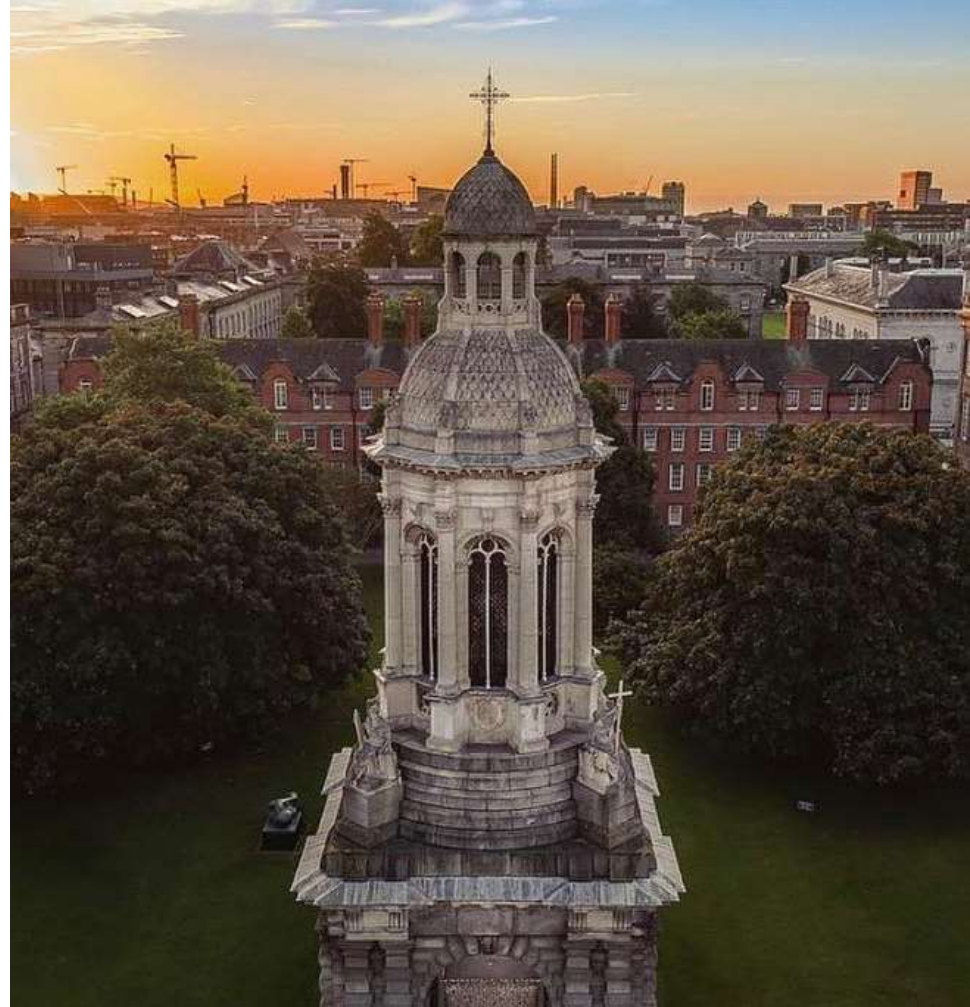
1. Quality Assurance in International HE in Ireland
2. Internationalisation at Trinity
3. International Education Mark (IEM) for Irish Higher Education
4. Trinity's approach to the IEM
5. Key Trinity quality measures and IEM preparation
6. Current and future impacts
7. Future Trinity developments in QA and internationalisation



1. Quality Assurance in International HE in Ireland

Why?

- Upcoming introduction of Ireland's International Education Mark (IEM) introduced by QQI for safeguarding international learners
- IEM sets national standards for education providers to ensure quality across the entire student journey



QQI and IEM

Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)

- Established as a state agency under the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act 2012
- QQI formed from an amalgamation of other agencies involved in QA (FETAC, HETAC, IUQB, and NQAI)
- Focus on creation of the IEM quality assurance mark
- To maintain academic excellence and ensure quality of education across the entire student journey from prospective student stage through to enrolment and to programme completion



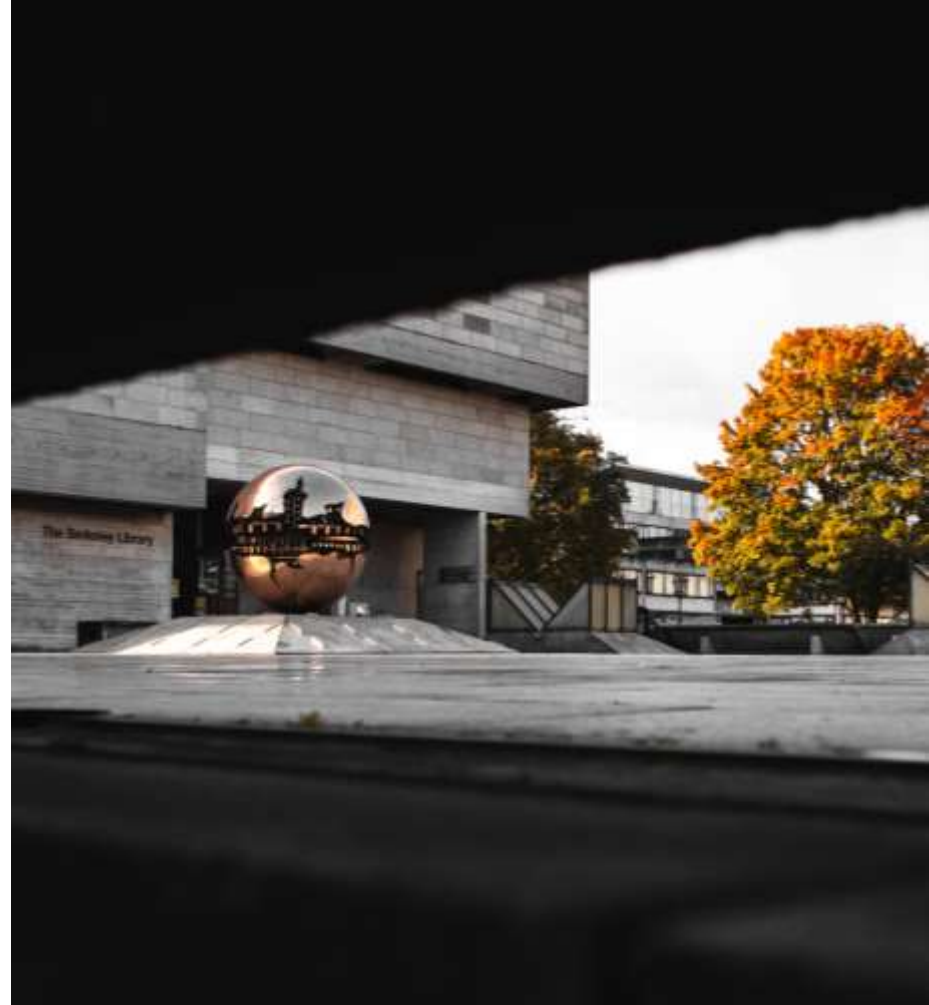
Importance of Quality Assurance in International Education

- Quality assurance in international education contexts – particular importance
- Ensures academic excellence through accreditation, validation, and quality audits
- Focus on enhancing the student experience in all aspects of their engagement with the institution
- Trinity's commitment to quality assurance - recently its adherence to QQI's extensive Code of Practice from 2021



2. Internationalisation at Trinity

- Trinity College Dublin - established in 1592
- Ireland's highest-ranking university
- 81st in 2024 THE World University rankings
- Longstanding commitment to internationalisation:
 - Diverse student body (34% international)
 - Ethical marketing & recruitment
 - Positive student experience
 - Extensive global partnerships and mobility
- Prior alignment with the IEM's goal of promoting excellence in international education and demonstrate key hallmarks of quality internationalisation in higher education



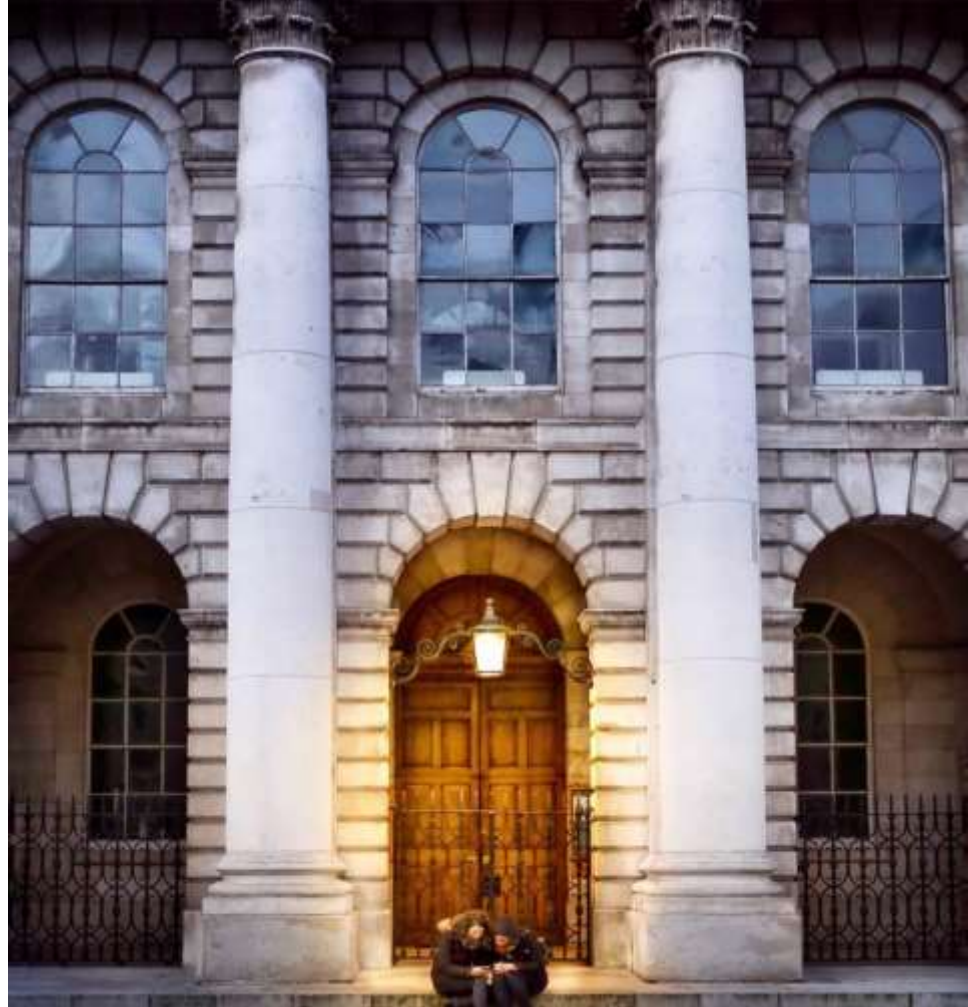
Trinity's Strategic Approach to Internationalisation

- Trinity's evolving approach to internationalisation over the last decade
- Establishment of the Global Relations division in 2012 and delivery of three Global Relations strategies to date
- Commitment to a deliberate and strategic approach to internationalisation



Success of Trinity's Internationalisation strategy

- In 2010, less than 1,200 of Trinity's students were from outside the EU
- In 2023, Trinity has over 21,000 students -- 34% are international students from 125 countries
- Trinity's global ranking as 16th most international university in the world according to the 2023 THE University Rankings
- 37% of Trinity's 3rd year UG students had a mobility experience -- Trinity works with over 300 partner universities globally (opportunities from exchange programmes to joint educational partnership)



3. Overview of IEM requirements

IEM guarantees for international learners:

- Reliable guide to quality providers in Ireland for Higher Education and English language programmes
- Ethical recruitment by providers
- Assessment of qualifications in accordance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention
- Quality and consistency of learning experiences through academic and service supports
- Protection of interests in case the chosen provider ceases to trade or deliver the chosen programme



3. Overview of IEM requirements

IEM Benefits for education and training providers

- confirmation of the quality of programmes
- support for marketing activities
- establishment of nationally agreed standards for international student care



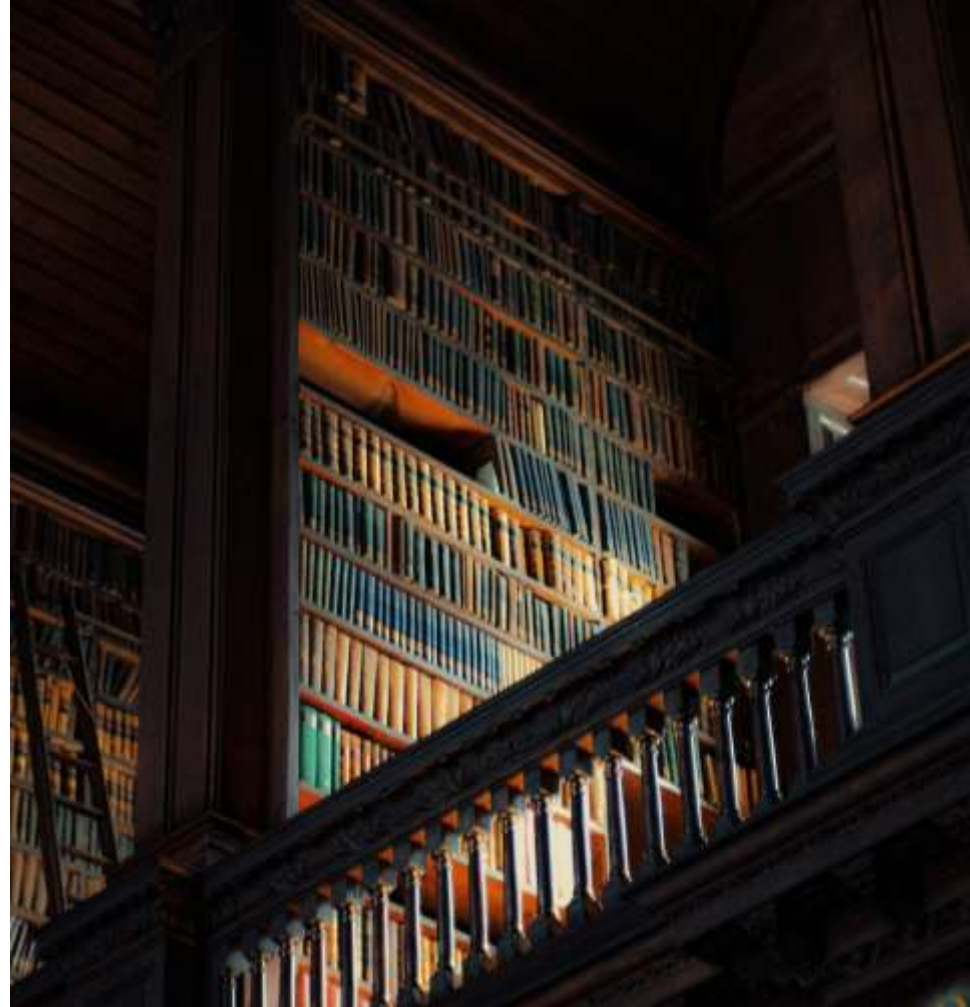
Expected Structure of the IEM

Key areas :

- Access, Transfer, and Progression
- Programmes and Awards
- Statutory Due Diligence Assessment
- Protection of Enrolled Learners
- Collection of Fees; Tax Compliance of Providers

Principles and Criteria of Quality Assurance assessment:

- Marketing and Recruitment
- Admissions and Qualifications' Recognition
- Fees, Refunds and Subsistence
- Supports and Services for International Learners
- English Language Policy Statement
- International Foundation Year Programmes
- International Learners outside the State



Expected Application Process and Roll-Out

- QQI to launch the IEM application process at the start of 2024 with two application windows (2024 and 2025)
- Education providers will have up to 24 weeks to submit their application in the form of a self-evaluation report
- Assessment process over 28 weeks, conducted by QQI assessors
- Communications imminently from QQI and the Department of Further and Higher Education to inform stakeholders about the new process and transition from the Interim List of Eligible Programmes (ILEP) to the IEM



4. Trinity's approach to the IEM

- Proactive approach to meeting the requirements of the International Education Mark (IEM) over the past three years
- Commitment to quality assurance for international students and ethical internationalisation
- Introduction of impactful measures aligned with IEM requirements and influenced by the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic from 2020 onward
- Core focus on excellence, innovation, and a student-centred approach in building adaptable systems, processes, and initiatives for future change and expansion



Trinity's Approach to Excellence and Innovation

- Highlighting the student-centred focus and adaptability of systems, processes, and initiatives to accommodate change and future expansion
- Emphasising the positive opportunities created by Trinity's commitment to quality assurance for international students
- Connecting Trinity's efforts to the broader landscape of internationalisation and acknowledging the impact of these measures in early data



5. Key Trinity Quality Measures and IEM preparation

Focus on key areas:

- **Recruitment and Admissions:** Changes and improvements in recruitment and admissions processes for international students
- **Student Experience and Support:** Initiatives to enhance the overall experience and support services for international students
- **Partnerships:** Showcasing new collaborations and partnerships forged by Trinity to strengthen its international education offerings
- Highlighting Trinity's commitment to diversity, transparency, and ethical practices



Recruitment and Admissions

Key measures:

- **English Language Policy:** Transparent requirements and standards for evaluating English language ability, complying with IEM and promoting diversity
- **Admissions Matrix:** Framework ensuring ethical business practices with education recruitment agents, expanding opportunities for global access
- **Education Agents:** Working with agents since 2016 – incorporation of "London Principles" ethical guidelines
- Benefits of these measures for enrolment, diversity, and compliance with quality assurance standards



Student Experience and Recruitment Collaboration

Overview of strategic initiatives:

- **Peer-to-Peer Engagement:** Initiatives giving prospective and incoming students insights into Trinity's student experience
- **'Goin to Trinity' App:** Community platform for connecting students, fostering a sense of belonging
- **'Talk to a Student' Platform:** Online tool facilitating interaction between prospective and current international students
- **Pathway to Belonging:** 8-week pre-arrival programme enhancing orientation and community building
- **The Global Room:** Supporting international students through specialist advisory services and engagement activities



'Goin' to Trinity' Community Platform

- Introduced in 2023
- Collaboration with educational technology provider Goin' Connect
- **Purpose:** Connecting prospective and incoming students, fostering a sense of belonging and community
- **Positive impact:** Improved candidate experience, measured by a high percentage of student engagement and positive survey responses



'Talk to a Student' Engagement Platform

- 'Talk to a Student' online tool introduced in 2020
- Collaboration with educational technology provider Unibuddy
- Facilitates interaction between prospective international students and current students
- Importance of peer-to-peer engagement in decision-making
- **Positive impact:** Enhanced prospective and current student interaction, contributing to informed decision-making



Pathway to Belonging: Pre-Arrival Programme

- 8-week pre-arrival webinar programme launched in 2023.
- Core focus on community and belonging, aligning with the definition of sense of belonging by Strayhorn (2012)
- Core topics covered: Visas, accommodation, health, academic and language adaptation, cultural transition
- Integration of student voice and peer-to-peer engagement
- Positive feedback: 90%+ positive responses, future plans for video content and programme expansion



The Global Room - Supporting International Students

- Global Room's role in supporting and enhancing the international student experience
- Established in 2013 as a core element of Trinity's Global Relations Strategy
- Specialist advisory services, cultural, social, and orientation engagement activities
- Inclusion of student voices through the Global Ambassador programme
- Plans for growth in line with strategic goals to enhance the student experience



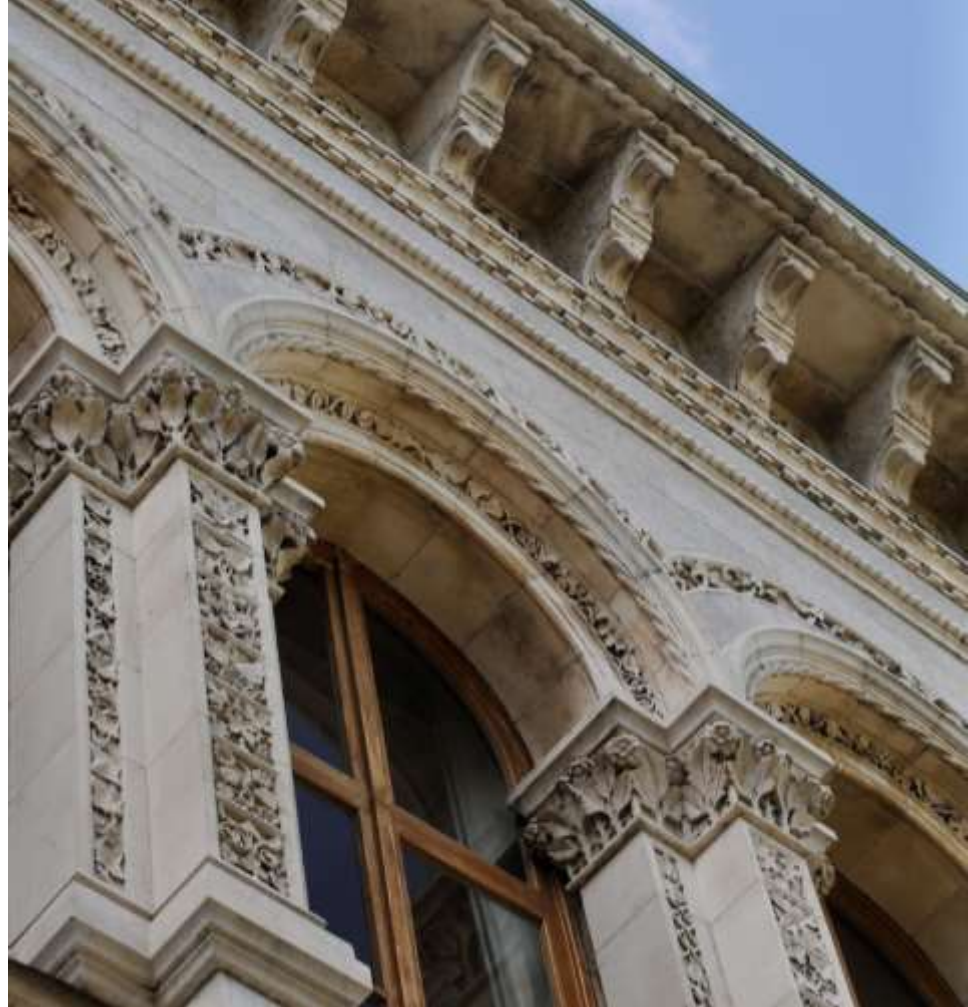
Sustaining International Students during Covid-19

- Series of measures implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic to support international students
- Trinity's implementation of sectoral 'Greet and Transfer' programme to ensure safe arrival in Ireland and compliance with health protocols
- Coordination of internal and external communications, arrival supports, and post-arrival quarantine assistance
- Recognition of the importance of maintaining support during challenging times



Partnership Toolkit for Higher Education Institutions

- Trinity's collaboration with over 300 universities globally
- Introduction to the International Partnerships Toolkit providing resources and support
- Interactive resource covering exchange guidelines, articulation agreements, dual and joint award programmes, and multidimensional partnerships
- Ensuring quality and ethical practices in the development of international partnerships and networks



6. Measurable impacts to date and future impacts expected

Measurable Impacts to Date:

- Increased international enrolment
- High student attendance at events
- Positive satisfaction in surveys
- Increased participation in global mobility programmes

Future Impacts Expected:

- Creation of new staff positions to enhance student experience
 - Recruitment of Immigration and Support Officer and Engagement Officer.
 - Expansion of in-country team members in India, China, Malaysia, UAE, and the US for on-the-ground support
 - 'Goin to Trinity' app
- Continued commitment to service-oriented and student experience approach



7. Future developments in QA & internationalisation at Trinity

- Maintaining commitment to continuous improvement and adherence to international best practices
- Embrace technological advancements and data-driven decision-making
- Adaptation to new educational models in the field of internationalisation
- Engagement with QQI on IEM application in 2024



Conclusion

- Trinity's forward-looking approach to quality education in the internationalisation context
- Commitment to ongoing improvement and alignment with global standards
- Anticipation of positive outcome in IEM application





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Thank you for listening.

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