3.6 English Language Level Requirements for Learners on the College's Academic Programmes

3.6.1 Introduction

Griffith College's academic programmes are delivered in English. This requires all learners to have a high level of proficiency in the English language in order to engage and succeed in their chosen programme. In addition to meeting the programme entry requirements, learners whose first language is not English must also meet the English language requirements specified for their particular programme. This policy sets out the English language level requirements for learners on the college's academic programmes.

3.6.2 Scope

The English language level requirements apply to the following programmes delivered by the college:

- All QQI validated programmes
- All programmes leading to BTEC awards
- All programmes leading to awards from Heriot-Watt university

3.6.3 Responsibilities of the College and Applicants

It is the responsibility of the college, through its admissions, marketing and quality assurance teams to ensure that:

- Information in respect of English language entry requirements is clearly communicated to applicants, partners and agents in advance of any learners being admitted to the college.
- The same information in respect of English Language entry requirements is posted on the GC website and all other relevant marketing materials.
- Applicants are advised as to the official forms of certification accepted by the college in respect of English language proficiency levels.

It is the responsibility of Applicants as part of their admissions and registration process to:

a) Supply the college with official certification of their internationally recognised English Language qualifications
b) Acknowledge that he/she understands the designated study path offered by the College
c) Confirm acceptance of their study path and the associated terms and conditions by returning a signed Acceptance Reply Form.

3.6.4 Language Level Standards

The college uses the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and the Common European Framework Reference of Languages (CEFRL) as the basis for determining the English language level requirements for learners onto its particular programmes. The college also recognises other equivalent international reference

frameworks approved by Ireland's Department of Justice for example CEFRL (The Common European Framework of References for Languages), TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) and other frameworks. Appendix 3: Comparison Table of English Language Level Equivalent shows the full list of English language reference frameworks accepted by the college, along with their language level equivalences on IELTS and CEFRL as a reference point but is superseded by any updates from the exam providers.

3.6.5   Entry Requirements
The college specifies the English language level required by learners for entry onto its programmes. The English language level is set to ensure that learners admitted to the programme can successfully undertake the programme, participating and engaging with confidence throughout their studies.

Different language levels are applied in line with the nature of the programme and the level or discipline involved. For example, learners undertaking postgraduate programmes in language intensive programmes such as law and journalism are required to have higher English language levels than learners undertaking undergraduate programmes in the creative arts.

Programme	IELTS	Supported Entry
Postgraduate Programmes (NFQ 9)		
Programmes in Journalism	7.0 or above (overall) No component below 6.5	N/A
Programmes in Law	6.5 or above (overall) No component below 6.0	N/A
All other Postgraduate Programmes	6.5 or above (overall) No component below 6.0	CEFR B2 (IELTS 6) No component below 5.5
Undergraduate Programmes (NFQ 6 to 8)		
Programmes in Law	6.5 or above (overall) No component below 6.0	N/A
Programmes in Journalism (Stage 1 only)	6.0 or above (overall) No component below 5.5	N/A
Programmes in Journalism (Stages 2, 3, or 4)	6.5 or above (overall) No component below 6.0	N/A
Other Programmes (Stage 1 only)	6.0 or above (overall) No component below 5.5	CEFR B2 (IELTS 5.5) No component below 5.0
Other Programmes (Stages 2, 3, 4)	6.0 or above (overall) No component below 5.5	N/A

Table 1: English Language Level Requirements for postgraduate and undergraduate programmes

3.6.6   Language Level Classifications
The college classifies applicants into the following three categories depending on their English language levels:

a) Category 1: Direct Entry

These learners provide official certification of their attainment of the English language level requirement for the programme, either in their application or in advance of programme commencement. These learners are eligible to join their programme directly, without any requirement to attend supplementary English language classes or to provide evidence of further advancing their English language level.

b) Category 2: Supported Entry

These learners provide official certification of their attainment of an English language level at the nearest grade immediately below that specified for the programme in their application (for example a grade of 6.5 on IELTS rather than 7.0). These learners are required to undertake English language support classes, sometimes provided by the college prior to joining the programme, and to continue these support language classes while attending the first semester of their higher education programme until they provide official certification of their attainment of the English language level specified for the programme. The college's schedule of intensive pre-semester and in-semester English language support classes are provided to Support Entry learners without cost.

Before the end of their first semester on their higher education programme, Supported Entry learners are required to sit an external English language examination to provide official certification of their attainment of the English language level specified for the programme. Exceptionally, a Supported Entry learner who has actively engaged in the language support classes and improved their level of English while falling short of the English language level in the external examination may be given one further opportunity to evidence their attainment of the English language level specified for the programme in the following semester.

It is a condition of entry to the college's language support programme that a learner's performance on the college's higher education programme will not be considered by an examination board for progression or award purposes until the learner has provided official certification of their attainment of the English language requirement level for the programme. Supported entry is not open to learners entering the college's language intensive programmes, for example in Law and Journalism.

c) Category 3: Deferred Entry

Learners whose English language level is below that required for either direct or supported entry are invited to undertake English language programmes, either with the college or with another provider by paying the associated fees. These learners are not eligible to undertake any part of the college's higher education programmes until they meet the English language requirements stipulated for Category 1 or Category 2 learners.

Deferred Entry learners enrolling on full-time English language programmes with the college with a view to subsequently progressing onto Higher Education programmes in the college can undertake the college's 10-week fulltime language development

programmes at a cost of €500 or any other English language programme with the associated fee and levels.

3.6.7   English Language Level Programme Requirements
The following table shows the English language level requirements for the college's programmes based on the IELTS criteria. It also indicates whether or not Supported Entry applies. Additional equivalency tables in respect of other English language reference frameworks are given in Appendix 3: Comparison Table of English Language Level Equivalent.