

Document Title/Reference	Admission Policy & Criteria
Purpose	To provide clear admission procedures which will be applied consistently and in a fair and transparent manner.
Scope	Admission to undergraduate and postgraduate courses.
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Contextual Guidelines	<p>ESG 1.4 'Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification'</p> <p>QQI Core Guidelines 3.2 'Learner Admission, Progression and Recognition'</p>
Related Policy	<i>Access, Transfer & Progression Policy</i> <i>Recognition of Prior Learning</i>
Audience & Communication	<p>Applicable to all students and Whitaker School staff.</p> <p>This policy will be available on the Institute's website. Programme entry requirements will be communicated through the website and printed course brochures available from the Institute.</p>
Policy Owner & Implementation	<p>The policy owner is the Head of the Whitaker School. The Policy is approved by IPA Faculty.</p> <p>The Head of Whitaker School and assistant registrar are responsible for the implementation of policy and will ensure that student admissions information is both up-to-date and accurate. They will oversee admission procedures.</p>

<p>Key Implementation Actions</p>	<p>Admission criteria and programme information is made publicly accessible on the IPA website as well as the Prospectus.</p> <p>Systems are in place to facilitate application, selection & enrolment.</p>
<p>Monitoring, Review and Continuous Improvement</p>	<p>The effectiveness and efficiency of the admission policy and procedures will be judged by completion targets, student feedback, information gathered during the admissions stage and annual internal audit procedures.</p> <p>Annual statistics of the learner profile of the IPA and their respective exam grades provide a valuable basis for review of admissions criteria.</p> <p>Evaluation and improvement of the admissions policy and procedures will be undertaken every year by the Head of School and assistant registrar based on NUI matriculation requirements, developments in information technology, and both staff and student experience and feedback on the admission process.</p>
<p>Revision History & Commencement Date & Date of Next Review</p>	<p>2006: Version 1 Revised annually</p> <p>Commencement Date (2016 Version): September 2017.</p> <p>Date of Next Review: 2018.</p>

Admissions Policy

1 Policy Statement

- 1.1 The Institute of Public Administration operates an open admissions policy for students over 17 years of age who fulfil the necessary requirements to undertake a course of study offered. As the IPA is a provider of professional education, it does not accept applicants through the CAO system. Applicants are required to apply directly to the Institute.
- 1.2 All suitably qualified applicants who express an interest in a course of study with the Institute will be dealt with in a professional and courteous manner and given information and guidance on what will suit them personally and professionally.
- 1.3 Inclusiveness and equality is central to the Institute's policy. The IPA does not discriminate on any of the grounds outlined in the Equal Status Acts 2000-2015. The IPA, in so far as is practicable within its resources, makes special accommodation for students with disabilities.
- 1.4 The Institute's policy reflects the diverse nature of potential students, both culturally and demographically (school leavers, mature students, distance education and foreign students). The IPA has a flexible range of criteria to judge the appropriateness of candidates for admission. These criteria are in line with NUI matriculation requirements and obligations in the area of Recognition of Prior Learning. Applicants who do not meet admission criteria based solely on previous academic achievement will be entitled to be considered based on maturity, professional experience and non-accredited learning such as the accumulation of tacit knowledge.
- 1.5 Matching the individual applicant with the most relevant course will be a priority for the IPA. Prior to Admission, prospective students will be provided with appropriate institutional and programme information on the IPA website and printed prospectuses to assist them in making an informed choice. The information provided will fulfil the Institute's obligations under Protection of Enrolled Learner legislation (Part 6 of the QQA Act of 2012) and Quality Assurance guidelines issued by QQI – awarding body, award type and level on NFQ, programme and assessment information, fees, tuition methods, academic calendar. Information about the Institute's role in the professional education of public sector employees will apprise prospective students about the content of IPA programmes and approach to teaching and learning.

1.6 The institute reserves the right of admission and may decide to modify, postpone or cancel student admission at any time should the need arise.

2 Policy Implementation

2.1 The Head of the Whitaker School and assistant registrar are responsible for the implementation of policy and will ensure that information on student admissions is both up-to-date and accurate. They will oversee admission procedures.

2.2 Entry requirements and admission criteria and programme information will be made available on the IPA website and printed prospectuses. Enrolment periods will be as advertised by the IPA and communicated to prospective applicants.

2.3 It is the responsibility of applicants to ensure they are fully briefed about their chosen course of study.

2.4 Applicants will take responsibility for ensuring that they have completed all documentation required for enrolment and paid the necessary fees. This includes, but is not limited to,

- a completed enrolment form
- a photocopy of their birth certificate
- a photocopy of their leaving certificate or a relevant qualification
- the fee for the programme or letter from employer stating that they will cover the fee
- a passport-type photograph

2.5 Applicants will take responsibility for ensuring that they are fully registered on the programme of study. An applicant cannot be considered a student until they have completed all stages in the registration process.

2.6 Offers made to applicants are subject to Institute rules and regulations.

2.7 Applicants will take responsibility for the veracity and accuracy of information supplied. Submitting false or misleading information or documentation can lead to cancellation of admission or expulsion from a programme.

3 Criteria for Admission

3.1 Undergraduate Programmes

Applicants under 21 years of age

- 3.1.1 NUI Minimum Academic Entry and Registration (Matriculation) Requirements, which applies to IPA accredited programmes, state that applicants must normally have attained the age of seventeen years by 15th January following entry to the IPA. Where an applicant below that age seeks to enter the IPA, special application must be made to the Director General of the IPA.
- 3.1.2 Undergraduate programmes offered by the IPA fall within the NUI Faculties of Arts and Commerce, and are subject to NUI Faculty Matriculation Requirements. For the Faculty of Arts, the Leaving Certificate papers passed must include Irish, English, plus a Third Language and three other subjects accepted for Matriculation Registration purposes. For Commerce, the papers passed must include Irish, English, Mathematics, plus a Third Language and two other subjects accepted for Matriculation Registration purposes.
- 3.1.3 For both Faculties, candidates must obtain a pass in at least six subjects in the Leaving Certificate selected according to college/faculty requirements, as set out in 3.1.2 above, with at least Grade C3 in two subjects on the Higher Course and at least Grade D3 (Ordinary or Higher Course) in four subjects (pre-2017 Leaving Certificate). For Leaving Certificate students of 2017 and onwards, the requirements will be a pass in at least six subjects selected according to college/faculty requirements, as set out in 3.1.2 above, with at least Grade H5 in two subjects on the Higher Course and at least Grade H7 (Higher Course) or O6 (Ordinary Course) in four subjects.
- 3.1.4 Applicants are advised to consult the most up-to-date NUI Minimum Academic Entry and Registration (Matriculation) Requirements (<http://www.nui.ie/college/entry-requirements.asp>) for further information on Leaving Certificate subjects accepted for Matriculation Regulation purposes; exemptions from the Irish requirement; eligible NCVA & FETAC qualifications; eligibility criteria for students presenting non-national qualifications (state exam within and outside the European Union); English language competency requirements for non-national students.
- 3.1.5 In special circumstances, applicants under 21 years of age who do not meet NUI matriculation requirements may be assessed by the IPA in consultation with, and subject to the approval of, the NUI. See section 4 below.

- 3.1.6 The IPA reserves the right to impose further entry requirements for specific programmes. In such cases, these requirements will be clearly indicated in programme prospectuses.

Applicants over 21 years of age

- 3.1.7 Students of mature years, that is students who are at least 21 years of age on the 1st January of the calendar year of entry, and who do not meet standard matriculation requirements, may be matriculated by the NUI on the recommendation of the IPA Faculty Committee for the purpose of entering a part-time course of study in the IPA.
- 3.1.8 Such applicants may be asked to provide Leaving Certificate results, previous commitment to further study/training, evidence of professional training courses, details of work experience.

3.2 Postgraduate Programmes

- 3.2.1 Applicants for Higher Diploma programmes must have a primary degree, at least at pass classification, or an equivalent qualification. Applicants for Master's Degree programmes must have a degree at Honours classification, or an equivalent qualification. At least three years' work experience would also be an advantage but is not compulsory.
- 3.2.2 Senior public servants may be matriculated onto postgraduate programmes by the NUI on the recommendation of the IPA Faculty Committee. Applicants will have extensive public management experience and be serving at Assistant Principal officer grade or above.

4 Special Case Applications

- 4.1. Prospective undergraduate students who do not meet the NUI Minimum Academic Entry and Registration (Matriculation) Requirements as set out in paragraph 3.1.5 may apply for an IPA programme by completing a Special Case Application Form. The Form allows the candidate to outline alternative educational achievements, work experience and reasons for applying. Applicants should be encouraged to seek support from their employers for their chosen programmes and should be requested to provide a letter of recommendation from their employers.
- 4.2 Completed forms and letters of recommendation form the basis for a special case that is brought to the IPA Faculty Committee for review.
- 4.3 Successful applicants will usually enrol on a Certificate programme before progressing to diploma or degree level.

5 Admission of Candidates with Disabilities: Policy Statement and Needs Assessment

5.1 Policy Statement

The Institute of Public Administration is committed, where it is practicable and possible from within its resources, to increasing and enhancing educational and personal development opportunities for people with disabilities and medical conditions. Should an applicant have a disability or suffer from a documented medical condition, which he or she believes could hinder full participation in an educational programme, he or she is invited to contact the assistant registrar and discuss, in confidence, the issues involved. The IPA, for its part, undertakes to work positively towards the resolution of any difficulties identified. The Institute expects that first-time applicants with a known disability or medical condition will engage with the Institute prior to admission to facilitate a mutually satisfactory accommodation before the commencement of studies.

5.2 Needs Assessment

To ensure that students with special needs are given appropriate student and academic support, such applicants are required to submit with their application forms an assessment of their disability or medical condition by a relevant medical/psychological practitioner. The assistant registrar, in consultation with the Head of School and/or Faculty, reviews these cases and recommends, as appropriate and so far as is practicable, exam accommodation, academic assistance or administrative support. These recommendations are guided by current legislation on access to education for students with special needs, advice from national disability associations, practice in other third-level institutions and the Institute's financial, human, and physical resources. The applicant is then notified of the outcome.

Applications for special support may be received during the academic year from registered students who, because of illness or accident, find that they are unable to fully participate in a programme of study or examination. These cases are subject to the same assessment procedures as those for first-time applicants to a course.

6 Selection Procedure

- 6.1 Applications are processed by the Registrar's Office, where each applicant's eligibility is assessed under the admission criteria as set out above.
- 6.2 The assessment of an application involves a review of a candidate's Leaving Certificate, post-Leaving Certificate and/or third level qualifications or professional experience. Where the

candidate is a mature student over 21 and does not meet the academic requirements, they may be matriculated by the NUI on the recommendation of the IPA Faculty Committee for the purpose of entering a part-time course of study in the IPA on the basis of their professional experience and professional requirements.

- 6.3 The decision to admit a student must be based ultimately on an informed judgement that the student is competent to begin the course and successfully complete the course. The Institute reserves the right to request an applicant to attend for interview to assess their eligibility for a programme where it deems such action appropriate.
- 6.4 Should the numbers enrolling for a class-based programme in the IPA exceed available capacity, places will be offered to eligible applicants on a first come first serve basis. Applicants who cannot be accommodated will be invited to place their names on a waiting list.
- 6.5 Incomplete applications will not be assessed until all information has been received from the applicant.
- 6.6 Fees paid in advance will be returned if, for any reason, an applicant is not offered a place on the programme or if the programme does not run.

7 Enrolment/Registration Process: New and Continuing Students

- 7.1 Once an application form is approved, the student will be notified that his or her application was successful. The applicant will be classified as an 'enrolled student' until fees are paid, at which point they will be classified as registered students.
- 7.2 Continuing students must register for each stage of their chosen programme. Registration periods will be provided to students following the notification of examination results.
- 7.3 Students will only be deemed to have registered to progress if they have passed their examinations from the previous session, and when the first instalment of their fees has been paid to the IPA.

8 Discontinuing the Course: Refund Policy

- 8.1 Students who decide to discontinue a programme within one month of the start date will have 80% of the tuition fee refunded to them or their employer as appropriate. Students who decide to discontinue a programme within 6 weeks of the start date for semesterised programmes, and 6 weeks for year-long programmes, will have 60% of the tuition fee refunded to them or their employer as appropriate. There will be no refund subsequent to these dates. Applications for such refunds must be made in writing, addressed to the IPA and postmarked no later than the cut-off dates above.

- 8.2 The start date will be defined as the official start of term for lecture students and the date of the first induction or orientation tutorial/seminar for students with a distance education component in their programme.
- 8.3 Distance education students applying for such refunds must at the same time return, in prime condition, the books and manuals with which they were supplied. The amount of the refund may be reduced if the books and manuals are not in prime condition.
- 8.4 Students who decide to discontinue the course should be contacted to ascertain the reason for withdrawing. Such information is valuable for Quality Assurance purposes.
- 8.5 Where appropriate, students should be offered an alternative to withdrawing from the course. eg leave of absence or pursuit of a programme on a phased basis (subject accumulation mode).
- 8.6 Where the IPA is not in a position to mount a programme after accepting an enrolment, or ceases a programme leading to an award, the IPA will refund the total fee paid by the student.