

ITB'S Erasmus Policy Statement (Overall Strategy)

ITB is located in Dublin 15, also known as the Greater Blanchardstown area in County Fingal. Dublin 15 was the fastest growing urban area in Ireland over the past 15 years. One of the characteristics of Blanchardstown as an area is that it has been a particularly high recipient of migrants, given that almost 22% of its population are non-Irish nationals which is double the national average. Both EU and non-EU workers were attracted to the area by the development of high-technology industry, in particular, the establishment of international companies such as IBM and E-Bay, specifically those with customer services divisions .

Currently ITB has 3,000 registered students and almost 20% were born outside Ireland from 89 different countries. Given the diverse nature of our student body ITB reflects the very nature of modern Ireland with a very international campus.

The Erasmus programme has been a key part of the institute's activities since it was founded in 2001 and we currently have inter-institutional agreements with 24 partner colleges in France, Germany, Spain, Austria, Belgium, Switzerland, Holland and Bulgaria. These partners were chosen because of the European languages studies at ITB and the synergy between the course content and institute values. In 2009, the ITB Governing Body reviewed the strategic plan to include the recruitment of International Students recognising the growing need to promote Ireland as a preferred destination for International Education.

As the Erasmus function was located in the Marketing and Development Unit of ITB it was decided that the Marketing and Development Unit would focus on the recruitment of International students as well as providing pastoral care to International and Erasmus students. Since 2009, ITB has targeted countries such as China, India, Canada and Brazil. We have liaised and worked with Education Ireland and Institutes of Technology Ireland on various initiatives such as joint marketing, trade missions and social media campaigns. Brazil and Canada are also targeted due to sectoral agreement with Colleges Ontario and the Science Without Borders initiative in Brazil.

ITB has signed several MOUs with other HEIs such as ITM India and the Hubei University of Economics, China.

ITB is a member of ICOS, the Irish Council for International students, an independent non-profit network of educational institutions, NGOs and individuals interested in international education and working with government and other agencies to promote good policies and best practice in relation to the recruitment, access and support of international students in Ireland

ITB works closely with Government agencies such as the Higher Education Authority, Institutes of Technology Ireland and Education Ireland to promote Ireland as a destination for international students. We have applied for and been awarded 3 Government of Ireland Scholarships, we actively promote ITB and Ireland using Education in Ireland marketing messages and branding. We also attend regular meetings with International officers in the HE sector in Ireland.

All staff working with International students have completed cross cultural or diversity training,

The Erasmus programme is promoted on our web site, during school visits and in all publicity material and over our social media channels. Some incoming Erasmus students have assisted local school leavers in preparing for oral exams as part of their terminal second level

examinations. Erasmus students are invited to participate in Open Days, Taster programmes and Business Week celebrations.

According to the Expert Group on Future Skills needs there is a critical need to improve foreign languages to meet employers' needs in exporting companies and this fact is highlighted during all outreach activities and in our prospectus (page 85)

ITB encourages staff to engage in mobility visits and to work on EU projects under schemes such as the Leonardo Da Vinci programme. Visits are showcased to other staff at our staff forum, in our staff newsletter and details of all collaborative projects are available on www.itb.ie

Pastoral Care is a key element of our support to students and includes

- Pre-departure phone call and assistance with Visa application
 - Comprehensive induction programme including assistance with GNIB registration
 - Settling in help to include purchase of Irish SIM card, access to a phone in case of emergencies, phone numbers and
- Contact details for International office staff, bus ticket for week 1
- Customised international student handbook
 - Introductory meeting with other international students
 - Academic mentor will be appointed
 - Assistance with accommodation search
 - Checklist is followed to ensure student is correctly registered on all electives, understands virtual learning environment (Moodle), is submitting assignments and is engaging socially and is availing of any on-campus services: library, nurse,
 - 2 cultural/social activities

In regards to teaching and training projects, ITB has been involved in two European projects. The first was SECASE, a software Engineering case study, which was a Leonardo funded initiative to improve the effectiveness of third level computer science and software development education by giving teaching staff access to up-to-date and business relevant case study material provided by the software industry. Partners included Association of Northern Ireland Colleges (ANIIC), Fredrick Institute of Technology in Cyprus and Aries Formazione in Italy. ITB developed a case study in the field of mobile gaming, using a legacy game made available by Eirplay Games and developed and hosted the project website(www.secase.eu). Multimedia educational material designed around the case studies, in the form of videos, assignments, lecture notes and software is available through the project website for use by educators.

In addition ITB was a partner on the VOCAL project (Vocationally Oriented Culture and Language: www.vocalproject.eu) which is a Leonardo da Vinci Transfer of Innovation project and part of the Lifelong Learning Programme. Partners included Universities in Bulgaria, Hungary, Lithuania, Portugal and Slovakia. This project was based on preparation for student mobility placement abroad. The preparation offered was both practical language skills and cultural awareness related to vocational training settings. This linguistic and cultural preparation is achieved by means of a virtual journey which can be undertaken by prospective mobility students accessing the materials on the user-friendly website. Full details about this project are available at the website www.vocalproject.eu which consists of a huge range of online bilingual resources in 13 languages on a range of topics including travel, accommodation, socialising, emergencies, at work, business, tourism, branding and services and engineering.

ITB's current strategic plan is called 'Making Education Accessible'. The first priority in that plan was to achieve growth in student numbers and diversity across the campus concentrating on our local catchment area and growing numbers on part-time programmes. Introducing and promoting programmes that feature a mobility option provides a valuable opportunity to students to expand their language and other skills sets as part of the studies. We currently offer clear progression routes for students with qualifications from all over the world.

During the recent HETAC Institutional Review, the international panel commended the range and quality of innovative initiatives in teaching and learning at ITB and the effective and widespread use of "Moodle" as a support for student learning. These technologies are available to all students and have allowed ITB to engage international students in bridging modules prior to their course commencement

Dr Mary Ann Kenny (Erasmus Co-ordinator) was awarded a European Award for a project entitled Using Multimedia Web blog with first year German. Mary Ann's project was recognised for its innovation and effectiveness. The European Language Label recognises creative and inventive ways to improve the quality of language teaching and learning.

ITB supports the 7 key Education in Ireland marketing messages. The pastoral care supports demonstrate a supportive learning environment as well as close collaboration and support with academic staff throughout the course of study. The links with local companies both MNCs and the small companies based at the LINC on campus will allow the International students to see the scale of innovation in SMEs in Ireland and also reinforces the message that the country successfully attracts FDI from MNCs all over the globe.

Internationalisation also provides a means of enhancing the quality of learning, teaching and research in Ireland and makes a significant contribution to our broader ambition as a global

innovation hub. Being part of the Erasmus programme strengthens ITB's course offering, internationalises our campus and our region and provide Ireland with a competitive advantage in becoming a leading centre of international education.

ITB regularly carries out programmatic and institutional review and industry is a key stakeholder in all discussions and reviews of course content. In addition ITB are participants in an Intelligent Energy Europe project which ran from November 2011 to April 2013 and were partners in a consortium with other Irish Colleges and the Construction Industry Federation and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. The full name of the project is Build UP Skills Ireland (BUSI) see <http://ireland.buildupskills.eu/>