

DEPARTURES AND VARIATIONS FROM THE UNIVERSITY'S REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

DIPLOMA IN FOUNDATION STUDIES (WITH NAMED PATHWAYS)

In September 2017, the directorate of Access, Digital and Distributed Learning (ADDL) received approval from an evaluation panel for a proposed new Level 3 Diploma in Foundation Studies (subject to conditions and recommendations), to be offered from January 2018. The programme will be marketed as an "International Foundation Programme" (IFP). It will be offered as pan-faculty provision and, for reasons of academic governance, it will be academically housed in the CFE within the central directorate of ADDL.

The IFP aims to provide non-EU/EEA international students with the foundation of academic knowledge, study skills and English language proficiency to enable them to succeed in a higher education environment and to meet the entry requirements for undergraduate study in linked progression degrees at Ulster. The content combines subject modules with English language modules. The IFP is designed to provide a bridge between the existing academic and English language level of prospective students and the level required for Honours degree study. For entry to the IFP, it is proposed that applicants are expected to have a minimum IELTS score of 5.0 (with no individual band score of less than 5.0). This is lower than the English language standard required by the University's regulations for entry to Ulster programmes – a minimum IELTS score of 6.0 (with no individual band score of less than 5.5).

The IFP was proposed in response to the Global Engagement objectives of the Five and Fifty Strategic Plan and the targets of the Academic Plan. It is intended that the programme will increase the accessibility of Ulster's degrees, deliver study opportunities to a much wider global audience, and assist the University in moving closer to ambitious international recruitment targets.

ADDL is seeking approval of a departure from the University's regulations to enable the proposed International Foundation Programme to recruit applicants with a minimum English language level of IELTS 5.0 (with no individual band score of less than 5.0). This is because the IFP will itself aim to raise students' English language proficiency to at least an IELTS score of 6.0 and to attract a wider international audience.

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