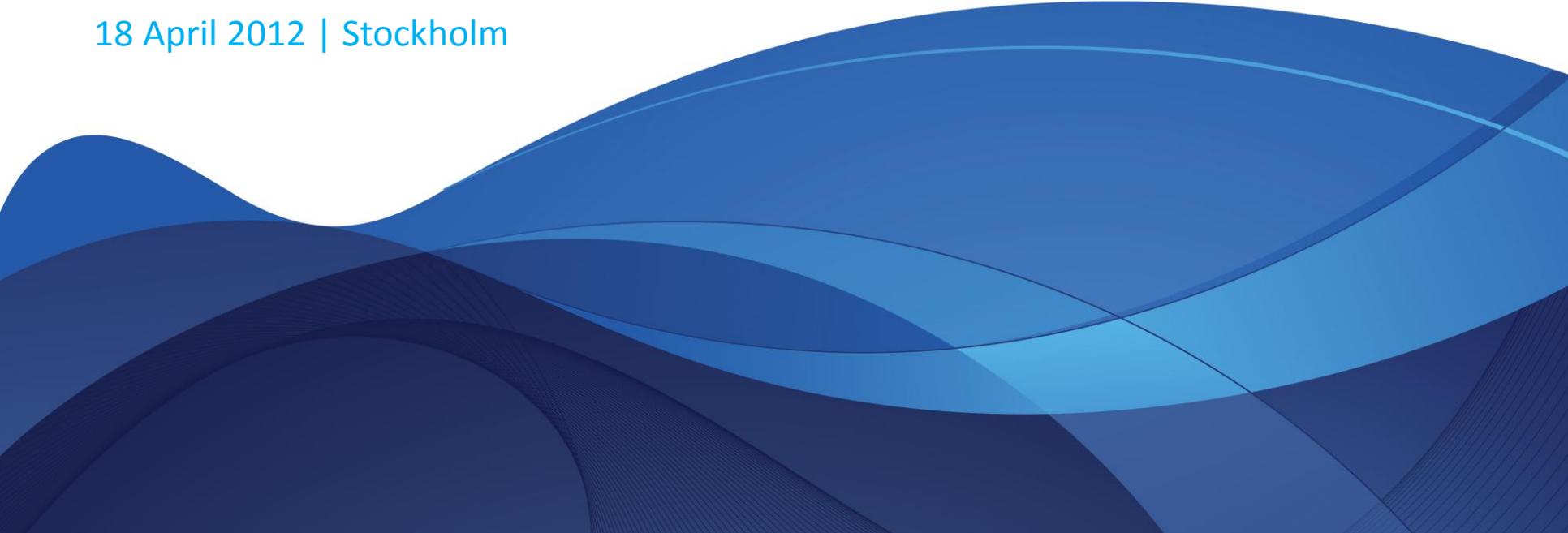


Entry and Residence of International Students – The Irish Case

Philip J. O’Connell and Mairéad Finn.
EMN Ireland.
Economic and Social Research Institute.

18 April 2012 | Stockholm



International Student's Access to Education in Ireland.

Relevant Education Sectors

Higher Education

- Universities
- Institutes of Technology
- Other Colleges
- NFQ 7 - 10

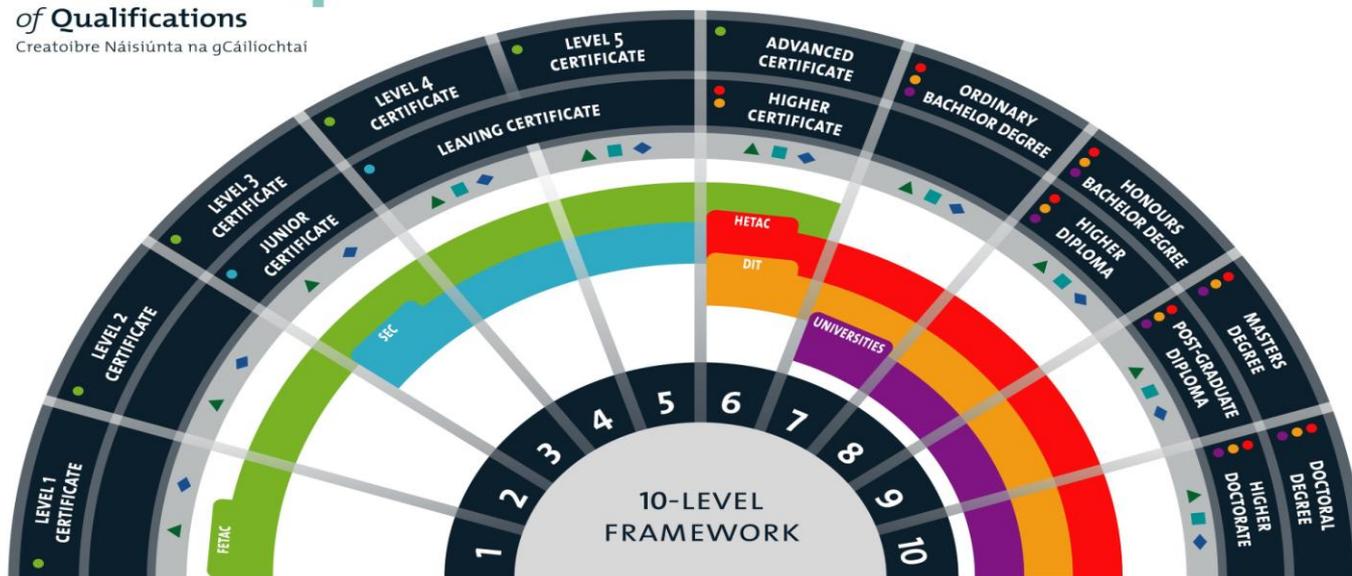
Further Education

- Post-Leaving Certificate Courses
- Access currently being phased out
- NFQ 5 - 6

English Language Schools

- Approximately 120 schools formally registered.
- Diverse sector.
- Problems of regulation and rogue schools.

National Framework of Qualifications



KEY

- FETAC - Further Education and Training Awards Council
- SEC - State Examinations Commission (Department of Education & Science)
- HETAC - Higher Education and Training Awards Council
- DIT - Dublin Institute of Technology
- Universities

AWARDS IN THE FRAMEWORK

There are four types of award in the National Framework of Qualifications:

- Major Awards: are the principal class of awards made at a level
- ▲ Minor Awards: are for partial completion of the outcomes for a Major Award
- Supplemental Awards: are for learning that is additional to a Major Award
- ◆ Special Purpose Awards: are for relatively narrow or purpose-specific achievement

International Students in the Higher Education System (+ 90,000 in English language schools)

| | 2001/2002 | 2003/2004 | 2007/2008 | 2010/2011 |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| TOTAL | 131,812 | 143,271 | 147,926 | 169,317 |
| Of which EU (excl. Northern Ireland) | 2,729 (2%**) | 3,188 (2.2%**) | 3,622 (2.4%) | 4,245 (2.5%) |
| Of which TCN | 5,389 (4%**) | 7,267 (5%) | 7,931 (5.3%) | 8,315 (4.9%) |
| Total International | 8,198 (6%) | 10,455 (7.2%) | 11,553 (7.7%) | 12,560 (7.4%*) |

Source: Department of Education and Skills, various statistical reports.

**Percentage of entire student population.

Student Visas Granted and Refused, 2011

= very high approval rates

| | Total Applications | Net Granted | Final Refused | Approval Rate |
|----------------|--------------------|-------------|---------------|---------------|
| Quarter 1 2011 | 844 | 657 | 187 | 78% |
| Quarter 2 2011 | 1148 | 1019 | 129 | 89% |
| Quarter 3 2011 | 2602 | 2364 | 238 | 91% |
| Total | 4594 | 4040 | 554 | 88% |

Source: Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service

'Investing in Global Relationships' Ireland's Education Strategy 2010-15

- Five year strategy launched in 2010.
- Targets to increase student numbers by 2015, specifying increases of:
 - Total international students (full, part and exchange) by 12,000 to 38,000
 - Those in higher education by 8,500 to 25,500.
 - Those undertaking advanced research to 3,800
 - Those on taught post-grad programmes (to 5,100)
 - Those on exchange and junior year abroad programmes (from 3,600 to 6,000)
 - ESL students from 90,000 to 120,000

‘Investing in Global Relationships’

Ireland’s International Education Strategy 2010-15

Ten Strategic Actions to enhance Ireland’s performance:

1. Ireland will enhance its performance through partnership and collaboration.
2. The Education Ireland brand will be redeveloped and national promotion and marketing will be strengthened.
3. Quality will be at the heart of Ireland’s international education offering.
4. Ireland’s visa, immigration and labour market access policies will be strong and competitive.
5. Ireland’s higher education institutions will be globally competitive and internationally oriented.
6. Ireland will develop targeted and relevant international education offerings.
7. Government policies and actions will be consistent and supportive.
8. Ireland will strengthen its networks of influence.
9. Outward mobility by Irish staff members and students will be encouraged.
10. North-South and EU cooperation will enhance Ireland’s international education performance.

New Immigration Regime for Full-Time, Non-EEA Students

- Published Sep. 2010 following public consultation.
- Twin – track approach: two complementary processes and accompanying structures put in place:
 1. Reform of Student Immigration Regime.
 2. A more joined-up national approach to the promotion of Ireland as a centre of education for international students.

Reform of the Student Immigration Regime

- Differentiated approach between degree and non-degree courses.
- 7 years permission to remain for degree courses, 3 years for non-degree courses.
- Fast-tracking of visas for students on degree courses.
- ‘Internationalisation Register’ – Alignment of immigration rules with specific courses
- ‘Educational tourist’ visa created for those on short-stay courses under 3 months.
- Enhanced cooperation with trusted agents. Blacklisting of rogue agents.

Enhancement of Quality Education

- Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Bill, 2011 published July 2011
- Code of Practice
- Quality Mark – ‘International Education Mark’
- Necessary for inclusion on Internationalisation Register.
- National Framework of Qualifications
- ‘Qualifications and Quality Assurance Ireland’
- Increased numbers of inspections of education providers.
- Education Ireland brand to be promoted by Enterprise Ireland and Fáilte Ireland.

Access to the Labour Market During Studies

- ‘Student Work Concession’ has been in place since 2001.
- 20 hrs/week during term, 40 hrs/week in summer.
- Since introduction of ‘New Regime’, access to labour market is limited to international students attending courses listed on the Internationalisation Register.
- Now, only students on courses greater than one year’s duration, and full-time, may work.
- Garda stamp in passport will indicate permission to work.
- This ‘Student Work Concession’ is currently under a separate review, further to the New Regime, with further changes yet to be announced.

Access to the Labour Market After Studies

- ‘Graduate Work Scheme’ for degree students
- Same working terms as student visa under academic holidays.
- Must then move to employment permit or green card permit.
- No need to leave Ireland to obtain new visa.
- Since ‘New Regime’, has been extended from six months to 1 year for graduates achieving qualifications greater than NFQ level 8.
- Remains at six months for graduates on NFQ level 7.
- For all other students, the right to employment ends upon expiry of the student visa.

% of Full-time Students at Work:

- In economic crisis, access to work among 3rd country nationals drops from 34% to 6%*
- Raises concerns about sustainability of globalisation strategy*

