

ACADEMIC BRIDGE STUDENT HANDBOOK

Year **2025** \ Version **01**



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1. Welcome to Academic Bridge

In September 2012, Academic Bridge Ltd opened its doors to students from all over the world to study and enjoy the English language. Over the past fourteen years we have grown from having only 10 students at one building to 1200 students at our two excellent locations in the center of Dublin.

As a school we want to become the best and most memorable chain of English schools around the globe. We will do this by providing an unforgettable learning experience for students and deliver the best customer service in the existing market. Students' happiness is our main concern. We believe that if we work together as a team we will be able to reach both the dreams of the students and those of the school.

2. The mission statement of AB

Our mission is to deliver high-quality English language courses in a welcoming and supportive atmosphere with qualified and passionate teachers to a pluricultural student base. Our aim is to enable our students to develop and improve their English language skills and increase their confidence by providing an immersive learning experience in Ireland.

3. Respect and Dignity Policy

AB is committed to creating a friendly classroom environment while upholding the dignity and respect of its students. AB will support every student's right to study in an environment which is free from any form of harassment, intimidation or bullying. This is in line with our policy and strategy as set out in our Staff Handbook which describes our commitment to continuous improvement in study practices.

AB recognises the rights of every student in such an environment and requires all members of staff and those working on behalf of AB to recognise their responsibilities in this regard. Every student in AB is entitled to be treated with dignity and respect by our employees. Equally, all students in AB are expected to support the principles of dignity and respect in relation to their study.

4. Equality Statement

AB works from an ethos of equality, fairness and justice for all students in this college. We will work towards elimination of barriers preventing active participation and involvement of students in the college. We recognise the needs of every student and will strive to help students reach their full potential. We will work tirelessly to promote equality under the nine grounds of the equality legislation.

Nine grounds of Equality: Race, Age, Gender, Family Status, Sexual Orientation, Disability, Marital Status, Religious Belief and Membership of Traveller Community.

5. Learners' Charter

AB seeks to provide an accessible, high quality service to all. We aim to give each learner the best possible chance of success in the classroom. We are committed to putting the learner first. Our commitment to each learner is to:

- Support the principles and practices of our Equality Statement
- Provide accurate impartial information to enable them to make an informed choice of courses
- Ensure that course enrolment is handled fairly and efficiently
- Offer high quality and enjoyable adult learning opportunities
- Provide a high quality learning experience
- Advise them on resources to support their studies
- Ensure that classes start and end on time and where practicable, and notify learners of any unavoidable changes
- Comply with Health and Safety requirements
- Make reasonable adjustments to provide additional support when required
- Provide a safe and welcoming environment
- Explain how learners are assessed
- Advise learners regularly on their progress
- Treat them with consideration and respect
- Give them both formal and informal opportunities to express their views and opinion
- Deal with complaints fairly and in confidence
- Provide access to an appropriate appeals procedure
- Be responsive to any concerns raised by learners
- Provide access to information and advice
- Provide students with feedback
- Continually improve our service for students

6. Communication Policy

AB's philosophy is to make communication a priority, ensuring it is an embedded part of our working practice. It is our policy to have an effective exchange of information with students. We believe that to be effective, we must facilitate the circulation of information and feedback. Therefore, we commit to providing access to relevant, accurate, and up-to-date information to all students, thereby enabling them to make informed choices.

Our aim is to ensure a high level of awareness of AB's role, vision and mission, and its place in the communities and regions that it serves. This also includes international communities, and we intend to achieve this in the following ways:

- Communicate AB's achievements and performance effectively to the wider public, celebrating its successes and reaffirming its vision of providing higher education that promotes student employability.
- Reinforce AB's vision and mission as a student-centered organization in publicity material.
- Communicate information in sufficient detail to students, using appropriate language
- Communicate openly to the communities it serves
- Raise awareness of AB's facilities to students, as well as to the general public.
- Ensure that students are available to give feedback on their individual and collective experiences of programmes and services. The feedback mechanisms will allow students of diverse backgrounds to give feedback on issues of particular concern to them.
- Students can give feedback by completing feedback surveys (which are handed out in class from time to time), by putting their comments in the suggestion box, or by email, text, phone, or one-to-one meetings.

7. College Contact Details

Main Building:

Academic Bridge College (AB)

33 Gardiner Place, Dublin 1.

Phone: +353-1878 8616

Email: info@academicbridge.ie

www.academicbridge.ie

2nd Building Address:

Academic Bridge College (AB)

11 Harcourt Street, Dublin 2.

Phone: +353-1878 8616

Email: info@academicbridge.ie

www.academicbridge.ie

8. Hours of opening

The college opens from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm Monday to Friday. Students are welcome to stay in the college during opening hours and may request to use classrooms/ common rooms to study outside timetabled hours. The administration hours are from 8.30 am to 4.30 pm. If for any reason these hours change in the future, details will be posted on the College notice boards

9. Admission

9.1 Minimum age

Any student wishing to enrol on a course at Academic Bridge must be at least 18 years old on the date of enrolment and entry into Ireland.

9.2 Course start dates

Academic Bridge English School operates a rolling enrolment policy. There are normally two new student intake dates per calendar month, which are outlined in our academic year calendar available on our website. Students have the freedom to select a desired course start date, but must be aware of limited availability of student spaces or course start dates being fully booked and therefore choose an alternative start date. Students remaining in the country after their valid and current student visa has expired and who wish to renew their student visas in Ireland as English Language students will be offered start dates by our sales representatives which must adhere to the Immigration policies regarding student visa renewals and are non-negotiable.

The deadline to start the course at Academic Bridge is 1 year after the first payment, either deposit, first instalment, or full payment, was made by the student. If the students have not used their reserved space and started tuition on one of our courses after 1 year from the first payment, Academic Bridge reserves the right to cancel the place on the course, and no refund will be given.

9.3 External exams

All long-term English language courses with a duration of 25-weeks based on which students receive the Stamp 2 student visa must conclude in one of the following externally assessed English language proficiency exams - TIE, IELTS, Cambridge, TOEFL or Trinity.

This is a mandatory Immigration requirement and is not open to negotiation. You will be charged for the TIE exam when paying your course fees at Academic Bridge and this fee is non-refundable. Arrangements will be made for all students to have their external exams booked towards the end of their course. Any students opting for an exam other than TIE exam will have to pay the price difference and the alternative exam will be booked for them or they will provide proof of booking and payment for an alternative exam and the TIE fee will be reimbursed to them.

All external exams must be taken within the eight months of the student visa validity and in Ireland. Students cannot book an external exam in a country other than Ireland and expect to be reimbursed the TIE exam fee. List of recognised external exams that qualify for TIE exam refund is available on INIS website and upon request from our Academic Managers.

Willingly choosing not to sit an external exam is in breach of these Terms and Conditions and the Stamp 2 Immigration Law. As a consequence, any student doing so might be denied receipt of our end-of-course certificate and visa renewal once asked about the external exam by the Immigration officer.

9.4 Certificates

An Academic Bridge end-of-course certificate will be issued to all students successfully completing their courses. In order to receive their certificate, students must have at least 70% of attendance at the end of their course. Any students not meeting this requirement will not be awarded a certificate.

9.5 Class timetable changes

Students can request for their class schedule to be changed prior to the start or during their course. This change must be permanent and NO more than one change will be allowed.

Any student wishing to change their schedule from PM classes to AM classes prior to their class start will be charged a flat rate of €400.

Any student wishing to change their schedule from PM classes to AM classes after their course has commenced will be charged a rate of €16 per remaining week of the course.

Students will not be reimbursed for the course price difference in the event of the change from AM to PM schedule.

*All schedule changes prior and after course start are subject to available space in class and must be requested and approved by the academic managers.

Academic Bridge is in no way obliged to accept and grant such requests and students should choose their schedules carefully prior to enrolment.

9.6 Application forms

All students must complete the application form sent by our sales representatives with accurate and up-to-date personal details prior to proceeding to further stages of their registration and course enrolment. Any incomplete or inaccurate information provided may result in a delay in issuing of documents requested from the school or even course start date postponement. It is essential that students enter the necessary information carefully and return the form to us in a timely manner.

9.7 Placement tests

All students enrolling in a course at Academic Bridge English School are assessed prior to the start of their course. The English language assessment consists of two parts: an online written placement test, which evaluates grammar and vocabulary, and an in-person spoken fluency assessment conducted on the Friday before the student's start date.

Students who have already completed an English course in Ireland and are renewing with us may submit an English certificate issued within the past six months. The academic team will review the certificate, and upon approval, renewal students will be exempt from the speaking test.

Academic managers place students into the appropriate level based on their test results and observations of their assessed language skills.

9.8 Admission and enrolment refusals

The following categories of students will not be allowed to start a process of booking a course or enrolling on a course with Academic Bridge:

- Students found to have breached the conditions of their permission to enter or remain in Ireland legally.
- Students attempting to gain admission by misrepresentation, falsification of documents or other fraudulent means.
- Students seeking to renew their English Language courses and student visas with attendance rate lower than 85% in their previous course.
- Students expelled from their English Language school due to not meeting the minimum attendance requirement or breaching other terms and conditions of the institution.
- Students who fail to fulfil the normal admission or enrolment requirements.
- Students who do not pay their tuition fees in full.

10. Student induction

The in-person new student induction takes place every Friday prior to our course start dates and all incoming students should attend. Our student induction is primarily intended for the students starting their first English course in Ireland. Renewal students receive a summary of the most important information regarding their course via email.

All the essential information about our courses any of our students must be familiar with is also provided in a welcome email and a powerpoint presentation, which should be studied carefully. Together with these terms and conditions, emails explain all the procedures and our operations in detail.

11. General course components covered by course fees

11.1 NON-EU/EEA students - 25-week tuition / Stamp 2 student visa programmes

Your course fees include the placement test, tuition, handouts, free access to elective classes, free wi-fi, and the end-of-course certificate + a mandatory Learner Protection Cover, Medical Insurance and an external end-of-course exam (TIE).

11.2 NON-EU/EEA students - short term programmes (12 weeks or less)

Your course fees include the placement test, tuition, handouts, free access to elective classes, free wi-fi and the end-of-course certificate.

11.3 EU/EEA students

Your course fees include the placement test, tuition, handouts, free access to elective classes, free wi-fi and the end-of-course certificate.

12.1 Airport transfer

Academic Bridge can arrange for you to be collected at Dublin airport and taken to your accommodation. The transfer service is available between 6:00 am and 11:00 pm daily. Transfers outside these hours may be possible upon request and could be subject to an additional charge. After the aircraft's arrival, the transfer provider is obliged to wait for the student at the airport for a maximum of one hour and a half and in some cases, the arriving student might be asked to wait at the airport for a limited time (never exceeding 1.5 hours) before leaving the airport. Every effort will be made on our side to avoid situations where students have to wait for the transfer.

It is the student's responsibility to notify their sales consultant and/or the transfer agent of any flight delays, rescheduling, cancellations, or postponed arrivals, otherwise, the service will not be provided.

Flight details must be sent to our sales agents 60 days before the arrival date in order to book the transfer service for students.

Please be aware of all our Airport Transfer rules prior to your departure from your home country. In the case that the student does not receive information about the delayed/missed flights on time, Academic Bridge will not be held responsible and the student is not entitled to claim a refund.

12.2 Accommodation

A booking fee of €50 will be charged for all accommodation services booked by Academic Bridge.

Students arriving between March 10th and March 23th, which is when the celebration of Saint Patrick's Day (March 17th) takes place, will be charged a fee of €100 extra per week of accommodation due to the fact of minimal accommodation availability.

Students are requested to provide flight details 60 days prior to their arrival in Ireland in order to have accommodation services booked for them.

Accommodation is always subject to availability and cannot always be guaranteed. Once accommodation booking and payment are first confirmed, we can only guarantee a place for the duration of the stay initially booked. If the student decides for any reason to change their first start date, accommodation will be subject to availability and no refund will be entitled in case it has already been booked and paid.

Please be aware of all our accommodation services rules prior to your arrival. Some accommodation providers may charge you a security deposit of approximately €100 paid in cash upon arrival, which is fully refunded on the last day of your stay if there was no damage done to any property. In the case of accommodation cancellations being made after the student's starting date, Academic Bridge will not be held responsible, and the student is not entitled to claim a refund.

Types of accommodation offered:

Student Residence

- based on a 7 nights stay, beginning on any day of the week.
- self-catering: no meals included.
- all guests must show a valid ID upon arrival.

Hostel

- based on a 7 nights stay, beginning on any day of the week.
- continental breakfast might be included, depending on the hostel. Other meals are not provided. All guests must show a valid ID upon arrival.

13. Fees payment

Full payment of course fees is due:

- 8 weeks prior to the arrival date of international students starting their first English Language course in Ireland.
- 4 weeks prior to the course start date for students renewing their English Language courses and student visas in Ireland.

Payment methods:

(a) Bank transfer to the following account:

BANK NAME: AIB (Allied Irish Banks)

BANK ADDRESS: 126 Capel Street, Dublin 1, Ireland

ACCOUNT NAME: ACADEMIC BRIDGE LTD

ACCOUNT NUMBER: 50998180

SORT CODE: 931101

SWIFT CODE: AIBKIE2D

IBAN: IE30AIBK93110150998180

- please provide the official proof of payment with the student's full name.

Or

(b) TransferMate - <https://academicbridge.paytostudy.com/>

- all charges must be paid by the sender.
- all documents required must be sent by the sender.

Or

(c) Flywire - <https://academicbridge.flywire.com/>

- all charges must be paid by the sender.
- all documents required must be sent by the sender.

Or

(c) NexPay - <https://portal.nexpay.com.au/AcademicBridge/paynow>

- all charges must be paid by the sender.
- all documents required must be sent by the sender.

14. Registering on a language course after a working holiday visa

If your country of origin has an arrangement with the Irish government and allows working holiday visas to their citizens, Academic Bridge will offer prospective students, who have completed a year of stay in Ireland on a working holiday visa, courses at renewal course price rates. Please enquire more information from our sales team representatives.

Courses

15.1 General English

Academic Bridge runs morning and afternoon General English courses across six different levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR):

A1 CEFR - Elementary

A2 CEFR - Pre-Intermediate

B1 CEFR - Intermediate

B1+ CEFR - Intermediate Plus

B2 CEFR - Upper Intermediate

C1 CEFR - Advanced

C1+ CEFR - Advanced Plus

C2 CEFR - Proficiency

15.2 Exam Preparation Classes*

Academic Bridge also prepares students for some of the world's most popular English Language proficiency exams, such as IELTS and Cambridge exams.

IELTS (Academic Module) - minimum entry level: strong B2 (strong Upper Intermediate) and above

CAE - minimum entry level: C1 (Advanced) and above

CPE - minimum entry level: very strong C1 (Advanced) or C2 (Proficiency)

Academic managers will not allow any students who do not meet the minimum entry level requirement to join exam preparation classes since the lack of ability to follow the complex content of those classes might hinder the progress of the group as a whole and prove counterproductive.

*Due to fluctuations in demand for exam preparation classes at times, Academic Bridge reserves the right to reduce the number of exam preparation classes provided or temporarily suspend them. Every effort will be made to avoid this situation in the best interest of our students.

Please confirm with our sales representatives whether the exam preparation course of your choice is currently available prior to course purchase.

16. Course structure

English language courses run for a total of 15 hours per week.

General English classes run from 9:00 am-12:10 pm and 1:00 pm-4:10 pm Monday to Friday; or 1:00 pm-5:00 pm Monday to Thursday..

Break time for morning class is 10:30-10:40 am and for afternoon class is 2:30- 2:40 pm (Monday-Friday); or from 15:00-15:15 pm (Monday-Thursday).

Academic Bridge reserves the right to make timetable changes during the year. This may be due to unavoidable circumstances and therefore the school will not be held responsible for any inconvenience caused.

17. College Facilities

- Most classrooms are equipped with a desktop and monitor.
- Free Internet access (WIFI) is available throughout the buildings.
- Paid photocopying facilities available in the reception/student's lauch..

- Library facilities and canteen; the college has a common-room/library available to all students during opening hours. It contains desks and chairs to eat or study and plenty of novels and other books to enrich students' vocabulary, knowledge of literature and general English skills.

18. Change of Address or Personal Information

Students are required to advise the college administration directly and immediately of the following changes:

- Address
- Phone number
- E-mail address

Change to your programme of study must be approved by the Director of Studies or Assistant Director of Studies only. Requests may be made online using the Request form (www.Academicbridge.ie) or by contacting the DOS/ Assistant Dos directly

19. Visas

19.1. Arriving in Ireland

All non-EU/EEA nationals should contact their local Irish embassy or consulate or visit <http://www.inis.gov.ie/en/INIS/Pages/check-irish-visa> in order to find out whether a visa needs to be obtained prior to travelling to Ireland.

If you are a national of a country whose citizens need a visa to enter Ireland, and the purpose of applying for it and travelling to Ireland is to study the English Language, Academic Bridge does not assume any responsibility in the event of the visa not being granted to you. Our staff will, however, assist you in the process and provide all necessary documentation.

If you are from a non-visa required non-EU/EEA country and you wish to stay and study in Ireland for 3 months or less, you can enrol on a short-term course (12 weeks or less) and you do not need to register with the INIS (Immigration) or apply for any other permission. However, you must enrol on and pay for your course of study before you travel, have your return flights booked, demonstrate the ability to support yourself financially during your stay, obey the law and not engage in work in Ireland.

19.2 Non-arrival of students

If any student does not contact the College within four weeks of their course commencing, giving good reason for their non-arrival, their enrolment will be cancelled without further warning, and the INIS will be informed of their non-arrival. In this instance, the student will not be entitled to a refund.

19.3 Dual citizenship

Students enrolling on a course at Academic Bridge who are legal citizens of both a non-EU/EEA and an EU/EEA country must decide prior to the purchase of their course, which citizenship and legal documents they are going to be using for their registration and the whole duration of their course of study. Taking advantage of having a dual citizenship and flexibly interpreting the terms and conditions of enrolment and Immigration regulations to avail of the benefits of having two passports simultaneously is not allowed.

19.4 Long-term student visas for non-EU/EEA citizens

Non-EU/EEA nationals wishing to enrol on long-term English Language courses of study at Academic Bridge and to obtain a Stamp 2 student visa in Ireland for the duration of eight months must observe the following conditions of their enrolment:

- the course must have a minimum duration of 25 weeks and be delivered within an eight-month period. It must include at least 15 hours of classroom tuition per week (excluding breaks), scheduled Monday to Friday between 9:00 a.m. and 4:10 p.m., or Monday to Thursday between 8:15 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.
- These courses can be offered exclusively to students who are not first language English users, i.e. if you are a national of a country where English is the only or one of the official languages, you will not be able to enrol on such a course and apply for a Stamp 2 visa in Ireland.
- The course must conclude in one of the following English language proficiency exams - TIE, IELTS, Cambridge, TOEFL, Trinity.
- Holiday periods taken during your course cannot at any point exceed 1/3 of the total tuition weeks elapsed.
- Students must meet a mandatory attendance requirement of a minimum 85% attendance at the end of their course.
- Where a student has 25% or more uncertified absence in the first six weeks of their programme, this will be communicated to the Immigration.
- Students must be covered by a private medical insurance policy valid for the duration of their course - students holding a Stamp 2 visa will be entitled to taking up part-time employment (max. 20 hours per week) to support themselves during their stay in Ireland. Full-time employment (up to 40 hours per week) is allowed and legal only from June - September and from 15 December - 15 January.
- Students are allowed to enrol on a maximum of three long-term English Language courses in Ireland.

If you are a non-EU/EEA citizen who does not need a visa prior to arrival in Ireland, read more about Stamp [2 student visa obtaining procedures and conditions here: http://www.inis.gov.ie/en/INIS/Pages/non-visa-longstudy](http://www.inis.gov.ie/en/INIS/Pages/non-visa-longstudy)

If you are a non-EU/EEA citizen who needs a visa prior to arrival in Ireland, read more about Stamp 2 student visa obtaining procedures and conditions here: <http://www.inis.gov.ie/en/INIS/Pages/visa-long-study>

20. Enrolment letters and Visa documents

Upon the payment of their course fees and the definite confirmation of their course start date, students will be sent their enrolment letter, which they have to show to the Immigration officers on their arrival in Ireland.

Any course start cancellations and refund requests made after the enrolment letter has been received will be reported to the Immigration and border control units.

In order to register for their student visa with the immigration, students must not use their enrolment letter. An official Visa Letter and a Health Insurance policy must be requested on our website and brought to the appointment at the Immigration office.

New Students (1st English Language Course): Visa documents will only be issued to students once the course fee payment has been completed in full and students have arrived in Ireland and commenced their courses. Students must book their IRP appointments for a date that is on or later than their course start date. Students must collect the original letters, digital copies of the documents must not be presented to the Immigration for the first student visa registration.

Renewal Students: Visa documents will only be issued to renewal students once the course fee payment has been completed in full. Students can collect the original hard copy letters if they wish, but digital copies of the documents will be sent to them initially for upload on the Immigration's visa renewal portal. Students cannot receive visa documents more than 60 days prior to their course start date.

In the event of students having their renewal student visa denied, due to low attendance rate in the previous course, Academic Bridge reserves the right to keep 500€ off the course fees paid. The student's course will consequently be cancelled and the student reported to the Immigration.

Any course cancellation and refund requests made after the visa documents have been received will be reported to the Immigration and border control units and an additional €300 penalty fee applies.

21. Medical Insurance

All non-EU/EEA long-term (25-week) students must take out private medical insurance in order to obtain their student visa. Academic Bridge makes arrangements and issues medical insurance policies for students through Endeavour Insurance Services Ltd trading as Academy Plus. The policy covers emergency medical expenses and is compliant with the applicable visa regulations. The cost of the policy is €150. A copy of the policy will be given to the student and must be presented at the Immigration appointment when applying for the student visa. Find out more at <https://academyplus.net/>

EU nationals cannot avail of this service. EU nationals should bring their European Health Insurance Card with them, which allows access to public health care services or make other individual arrangements by taking out private medical insurance.

21. Learner Protection Cover

Academic Bridge is a member of Private College Network (PCN), an organisation of private English Language schools in Ireland, that share a common interest in promoting English Language teaching in Ireland and improving the educational standards within this sector. All PCN member English Language schools provide Learner Protection Cover for their students, which is intended to meet the needs of students attending educational institutions that are not financially supported by the Irish state, where there is a legal obligation to hold this insurance in the event that the institution closes due to financial difficulties or its accreditation is withdrawn and students are unable to finish their courses.

This cover guarantees arranging and paying the cost of students' transfer to an alternative educational establishment or reimbursement of fees if the establishment at which they are attending the educational course becomes insolvent or is otherwise dissolved or loses accreditation during the period of insurance.

Find out more at <https://academyplus.net/>

Classes

22. Timetable

Academic Bridge runs classes in the AM and PM shift. Our classes are broken into two sessions with a break in between.

Shift	Class Start Time	Break Time	Class Finish Time
AM (Monday-Friday)	09:00 AM	10:30 AM (10 Min)	12:10 PM
AM (Monday-Thursday)	08:15 AM	10:00 AM (15 Min)	12:15 PM
PM (Monday-Friday)	01:00 PM	02:30 PM (10 Min)	04:10 PM
PM (Monday-Thursday)	01:00 PM	03:00 PM (15 Min)	05:00 PM

Our elective classes are normally run in between the two shifts, from 12:10 pm - 1:00 pm or after 4:20 - 5:00pm.

Students are advised to check the monthly elective activities calendar which is available on our social media channels and notice boards.

Academic Bridge reserves the right to make timetable changes during the year. This may be due to unavoidable circumstances and therefore the school will not be held responsible for any inconvenience caused.

23. Class sizes

The maximum number of students in each class is 16. Academic Bridge tries to maintain the average class size at 13 students per class and seeks, wherever possible, to ensure a good linguistic mix in the class, i.e.a multicultural classroom and students with a variety of mother tongues.

24. Class changes

Academic Bridge reserves the right to change the student's class if necessary and in order to accommodate all incoming students, ensure the best learning environment and a varied nationality mix in class.

Our school operates on two campuses. All students will be placed in class in either of the two locations based on class space availability and class attendance in the location of students' choice is not guaranteed at any time. However, every effort will be made to accommodate students' request to attend classes at the location which best suits them whenever possible.

Any requests for class change coming from students might not be granted and are subject to evaluation and the validity of any such request and the available space in class.

25. Level cycles and level changes

We organise our curriculum and classes in 12-week cycles at each level. Due to practising a rolling enrolment policy, Students will join classes at various stages in the cycle.

Halfway through the cycle or at the end of the cycle, students will sit the progress or end-of-cycle test and have the opportunity to progress to a higher level. The decision which students should progress to the next level is made upon teachers' recommendations to the academic managers and is based on the following criteria: regular attendance, effort, work and participation in class, weekly test results, progress or end-of cycle test result, overall assessment of spoken fluency and general attitude and motivation observed. Students must be aware of the fact that test score results are not the only or the most important criterion.

Students who do not satisfy the criteria for moving to a higher level will continue their studies in the same level and have the opportunity to change level after additional six weeks spent in the level or until a recommendation for moving up is made by the teacher.

Every 12 weeks the core textbook used in the level will be supplemented with a variety of materials, especially for the students who are not ready to be moved to a higher level after the end of the 12-week cycle.

26. Course material

Academic Bridge uses textbooks by world-renowned ELT publishers as our core course material. Students can buy books with their course or from the reception. Photocopies of the whole coursebooks are prohibited in class and any student bringing one to class will be warned. Teachers will provide additional class material, copies, handouts and downloads for students free of charge.

27. Punctuality

Any student arriving for class more than 10 minutes after the class has started will not be allowed into the classroom and will have to wait until the break time to join the class. This means they will only get attendance for half of their daily class if they stay for the whole duration of the part of the class following the break.

This 10-minute lateness allowance applies only to the first 90-minute session of the daily class. Students cannot arrive late for the second part of their daily classes or extend their breaks for 10 additional minutes. Students will be asked to leave the second 90-minute session if they arrive from the break late.

28. Long-term course cancellations (25 weeks or more)

Bookings may be cancelled up to 60 days prior to commencement of the course with a €400 administration penalty for non-EU/EEA students and 20% of the course fees total for EU/EEA students. The balance might be subject to currency exchange rates in your country.

For cancellations requested with less than 60 days prior to the course start date, 50% of the amount of the full fee will be refunded and an additional €50 penalty fee applies.

Any refund requests made after the visa documents have been received will be reported to the Immigration and border control units and an additional €300 penalty fee applies.

There is no refund for any cancellation requested once the course has commenced. This includes late arrivals, early departures, or days missed during the course for various reasons.

A fee of €500 applies to cancellations due to visa refusal prior to the course start date. Visa refusal documentation will be required as proof in order for refunds to be processed.

In the event of students having their renewal student visa denied, due to low attendance rate in the previous course, Academic Bridge reserves the right to keep 500€ off the course fees paid. Student's course will consequently be cancelled and the student reported to the Immigration.

Students who submit fraudulent documents for the purpose of applying for any immigration permission and get their visa renewal denied will automatically forfeit the right to any refund of the amount paid for their English course at Academic Bridge. This provision applies regardless of the stage of the course or process in which the student finds themselves at the time the irregularity is detected. Academic Bridge reserves the right to take appropriate legal action in the event of any document fraud.

Courses at Academic Bridge are non-transferable.

29. Short-term course cancellations (up to 24 weeks)

For cancellations up to 60 days prior to the course start date, 70% of the full fee amount will be refunded.

For cancellations requested less than 60 days in advance of the course start date, 50% of the amount of the full fee will be refunded and an additional €50 penalty fee applies.

There is no refund for any cancellation requested once the course has commenced. This includes late arrivals, early departures, or days missed during the course for various reasons.

30. Accommodation cancellations

Accommodation bookings may be cancelled up to 30 days prior to arrival at the accommodation. If this procedure is followed correctly, we will refund €100 per week booked.

Accommodation bookings are non-transferable.

There will be no refunds of accommodation cost payments given to any students who decided to cancel their course after using accommodation services provided by the school even for one day upon their arrival in Dublin.

31. Airport transfer cancellations

Transfer bookings may be cancelled up to 30 days prior to arrival at the airport. If this procedure is followed correctly, we will refund 25 euros per booking.

Transfer service is non-transferable.

There will be no refunds of transfer costs payments given to any students who decided to cancel their course after using transfer services provided by the school upon their arrival in Dublin.

32. Course start date postponement

If a student wants to postpone their course start date, they must inform their student advisor at least 60 days before their original course start date. In order to reschedule and book a new start date, students have to contact their student advisor at least 60 days prior to the new start date selected in order for the academic management to have enough time to try and secure a space for them to start on the start date selected.

*All start date changes requests **prior or after** course start are subject to available space in class and must be requested and approved by the academic managers. Academic Bridge is in NO way obliged to accept and grant such requests and students should choose their first start date carefully prior to enrolment.

** In the exceptional cases when Academic Bridge agrees to postpone a course start date with less than 60 days notice, students must understand that if they decide to cancel their registration, the original start date will be considered as their start date, resulting in refund of 50% of full tuition fees paid and an additional cancellation penalty fee of €50.

33. Refund Policy

Courses are payable in advance of course commencement. No booking can be guaranteed until payment is received.

Academic Bridge grounds for a refund or partial refund of fees are as follows:

- A. Visa is refused by INIS. Any application for a refund must be made in writing and must be accompanied by both a copy of the rejection letter from the INIS and a copy of their stamped passport. Please note: the rejection letter issued by the INIS will be evaluated by the College in order to assess grounds for any refund. All original letters issued by the College along with the student's IRP card must be returned to AB administration before any refund can be considered.
- B. Illness or disability suffered after the student's enrolment has been confirmed. In any such instance, a doctor's certificate would be required.
- C. If any student is refused access into Ireland for any reason, when arriving at an airport, any application for a refund must be made in writing and be accompanied by both a copy of the rejection letter from the INIS and a copy of their stamped passport. Please note: the rejection letter issued by the INIS will be evaluated by the College in order to assess grounds for any refund.

Please note: There is no automatic right to a refund of fees if at any time a student changes his/her mind about studying at AB College.

- 1. If a student withdraws after course commencement no refund will be given.
- 2. All course cancellations must be made in writing using the Academy's "Tuition fees Refund" form before course commencement date.
- 3. Students that are found to have provided incorrect information, resulting in their visa being refused, shall be exempt from any form of refund.
- 4. If you miss your flight or it is delayed you must notify the school or your agent in advance, otherwise the transfer will not be refunded.
- 5. Also, if you give up or stop staying at the accommodation during the period booked, a refund will not be given.
- 6. If the refund is applicable, it must be requested online through the Refund Form. The period for refund is from 4 to 6 weeks from the receipt of the refund request form. They can only be paid by bank transfer into bank accounts of which the nominated students are the holders, they cannot be paid into anyone else's account on the student's behalf. Any charges and fees occurring due to the refund transfer payment will be deducted from the balance being refunded.
- 7. iv) No refunds will be given for exams.

34. Holidays

If you are a non-EU/EEA student enrolled on a 25-week course, you are entitled to take 10 weeks of holiday during the validity period of your student visa of eight months (35 weeks).

Academic Bridge closes for two weeks during the Christmas and New Year's period. Those two weeks, if a student is enrolled with us at those times of the year, are taken from their total holiday allowance.

As per Immigration guidelines, holiday periods taken during your course cannot at any point exceed 1/3 of the total tuition weeks elapsed.

At Academic Bridge we practice the following holiday policy:

- long term students with a Stamp 2 student visa can take a maximum of seven weeks of holidays while they are studying (Christmas holidays included in those ten weeks, if students enrolled at the time) and three weeks of holiday after they have completed 25 weeks of tuition and before their student visa expires
- long term students with a Stamp 2 student visa can only take holidays after they have had classes for 8 weeks
- after 8 weeks in class, students can request a maximum of 2 weeks of holidays - after 9 weeks in class, students can request a maximum of 3 weeks of holidays.
- a maximum of 4 weeks of holidays at one time can be given after completing 12 weeks of classes
- Holidays must be requested on the schools website at least 1 week in advance as possible and an email will be sent directly to the student by an academic manager approving or rejecting the holiday request.
- Please note that holidays must be taken from **Sunday to Saturday**, and will be counted as a **full week**. It is not possible to take individual or spare days—only full weeks will be approved.

Working holidays can only be requested and approved during the months of June, July, August and September, and from 15th December until 15th January, when students can work full-time (40 hours per week) legally.

If a student enters Ireland as a tourist and enrolls on a short term, non-visa course of up to 90 days, holiday allowance policy is the following:

- for courses up to 5 weeks in duration, 1 week of holiday is allowed
- for courses from 6 and up to 10 weeks in duration, 2 weeks of holiday are allowed
- for courses of 12 weeks in duration, no holiday is allowed, since the student's maximum length of stay in the country is 12 weeks

For students from countries with which Ireland has a working holiday visa agreement in place, the total number of holiday weeks equals 1/3 of their course duration.

There is no replacement or compensation for classes that are not conducted when the school is closed for public holidays in Ireland.

35. Management of classes and maintenance of students' records

The management of English language classes is facilitated by the Director of Studies. The College maintains both hard and soft copies of student records. The customised student management system used administratively at AB also enables management to keep and maintain a student database which includes, but is not limited to admission details, class attendance, performance records, financial transactions, statistical reports etc.

AB retains all pertinent information in soft copy (digital) formats relating to learners on password-protected secure servers. Servers are backed up daily, and an off-site backup is regularly maintained. Typically, a hard copy print out will be locked away in a secure location.

A digital record of the file number is also created with the name of the learner, year of enrolment, year of completion, and programme name for ease of indexing and cross-referencing.

36. Disability

At AB we are committed to ensuring that the necessary accommodations are put in place to ensure that students with disabilities and/or specific learning difficulties can participate fully in the academic and social curricula of the College. However, as some of the buildings are protected, we are unable to alter the buildings to provide wheelchair access.

36.1 Supplementary Admissions & Assessment of Applicants Procedure

The application form, which students must complete when applying for a place at AB, gives students the opportunity to disclose any disabilities and/ or learning difficulties may impact their academic progress and ascertain the necessary accommodations that will need to be put in place to ensure that the needs of students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties can be met by AB.

All applications will be reviewed on an individual basis by management and recommendations made based on consideration of all of the information provided by the applicant.

37. Attendance Policy

To derive maximum benefit from the programme, we advise 100% attendance. It is an AB rule, based on Immigration requirements, that AB Students must maintain an attendance rate at least 85%. Teachers record attendance for each class.

AB monitors and records attendance through our student management system. This is linked to the AB Student Portal and provides personal attendance information to each student individually. Any absenteeism not covered by medical certification will be considered as non-attendance and will be dealt with according to our low attendance policy.

Keep the Academic Office informed if you have problems that will affect your attendance

If you are unable to attend class for any reason - or plan to exit the programme early - please inform the Academic Office immediately.

Low Attendance Policy

Maintain an attendance rate of at least 85%

No unscheduled breaks are permissible except in documented cases of illness or close family bereavement. Should a student's attendance fall below the requirement laid down by AB rules (informed by GNIB requirements), disciplinary action will be taken which could result in their enrolment with AB terminated. Where attendance is a provision of the student's visa, non-attendance may result in the loss of a learner's permission to live and study in Ireland.

A student who arrives more than Ten minutes late will not be allowed into their class and must wait until the break to enter the class. If a student leaves a class early, they will not receive attendance for that class.

Attendance Warning System

1. If you do not attend classes for three days consecutively without being excused, you will receive a formal attendance warning. In addition to this, your class registration will be made inactive and your name will be removed from the class list.
2. If your attendance remains below 85% for any considerable length of time, you will receive an attendance warning. Attendance warnings request that you come to the Academic Office to speak to the DOS to explain your absence from classes. If your attendance does not improve following an official warning, you will be sent another warning to a maximum of three attendance warnings.
3. If a learner receives three official attendance warnings (set by email) and their attendance is below 85%, they may be expelled from AB College. This will happen if the Academic Department is satisfied that every effort has been made by the Academic Team to assist the student and their attendance has not improved.
4. If a student feels that their expulsion from AB is unfair, they have the right to request a return to class. This must be done immediately, providing an explanation as to why they have been missing classes. Students are requested to re-submit their medical certificates as part of this process. The Academic Director will consider the appeal based on the following criteria:
 - Students informing the Academic Office in advance of their absence
 - Submission of medical documentation (submitted to AB in a timely fashion)
 - The amount of time that the student has studied and their ability to reach 85% by the end of their course.

The request to return to class should be done by completing the Return to Class online form. This will be considered by the Academic Director and students will receive an answer before the beginning of the next week. Students who are allowed to return to class, will resume their classes from the following Monday (or Tuesday where there is a public holiday.)

In the event that the return to class request is denied, the student has the right to an expulsion appeal. This appeal is considered by AB's Appeals Panel, made up of members of the AB Management Team, not including the Academic Director. The decision of the Expulsion Appeals Panel is final.

An appeal to the Expulsions Appeals Panel can be made by completing the online Expulsion Appeals form. Students will be given an answer on their appeal within 1 weeks. When the expulsion is upheld, the GNIB will be informed.

Sickness and Sick Leave

It is important to know that in Ireland we generally go to a GP (General Practitioner) who works from a Medical Centre if you are sick, rather than go directly to the hospital. It is cheaper and faster to go to a GP.

Any student who is sick should contact the school on the first day of their absence due to illness. They can telephone the school on 01 8788616 or email at reception@academicbridge.ie and the information will be passed on to the academic managers. Students can also email the academic managers directly if they have their email addresses and daily inform them of their condition. If the student who is sick has received a certificate from a doctor, a copy or a scan should be emailed to the school on the first day of absence. On the first day of return to classes, students must present the medical note in original to the academic managers and a copy will be kept for the school's records.

Academic Bridge will only accept medical notes in original that are stamped and signed by the doctor, copies will not suffice. The school can only accept medical certificates from doctors in Ireland and in the English language, any certificates from abroad will not be accepted and the same is valid for online medical consultations with foreign healthcare providers. All medical certificates will be checked with the healthcare provider upon receipt in line with the GDPR regulations. Students must refer to the list at reception for the approved clinics and medical centres from which we accept student medical certificates.

Providing a doctor's note might not remove absences for the missed class(es) from the students profile on our system. However, a note will be made that the student was absent due to illness. The reason for this practice is the attempt to avoid situations where medical certificates which are possibly not genuine are used to justify absence from class and the fact that Academic Bridge is not always in the position to ask medical institutions to verify the potentially fraudulent certificates provided. All students experiencing serious medical conditions which require longer absence are advised to talk to academic managers and ask for holidays in order not to lose class content and attendance due to illness.

Students cannot receive attendance and justify class absence by simply emailing or calling the school saying they are unwell and without providing a doctor's note. Any medical documentation found to be fraudulent will result in an official warning and might lead to expulsion from the school.

Should a student's attendance rate fall below 85% at the end of their course and the student is planning to renew their student visa, all original medical certificates should be brought to the visa renewal appointment at the Immigration office or uploaded on the Immigration's renewal website and any questions regarding absence due to illness and possibly lower than expected attendance rate answered directly to the Immigration officials.

Students will not be given any form of compensation or extra tuition time based on the fact that they have lost classes due to illness.

In terms of your attendance, students are not entitled to any undocumented sick leave. Language schools are not entitled to authorize sick leave. While you are in Ireland, the Department of Justice will only recognise doctors who are registered to practice in Ireland as having the authority to confirm your illness so that you can remain enrolled on an International student visa with a low level of attendance.

On the first day of sickness and on each day subsequently, you MUST email the Academic Office to inform AB that you will be absent from classes. To confirm your illness you are also requested to submit a doctor's certificate from a doctor who is registered to practice in Ireland.

If your attendance is below 85%, you are required to provide a medical certificate that confirms the exact dates that you were not able to attend classes. Please see this as a requirement not only to look after your health, but also to comply with Immigration regulation.

Please note that AB will only accept medical certificates when:

1. You show the original version of the certificate.
2. You attended a consultation with the doctor who is registered to practice in Ireland and the medical certificate includes the registration number and contact telephone number of this doctor.
3. You provided the certificate in a timely manner.
4. You informed the Academic Office of your illness in advance of your absence

38. Student Guidelines

Students are required to adhere to the following:

38.1 Student Code of Conduct:

At Academic Bridge we aim to maintain a pleasant, relaxed and friendly classroom environment. Inappropriate behaviour exhibited by any student negatively impacts on the learning experience for all the class members. Any form of such behaviour will not be tolerated and may result in a student's removal from the classroom. Repeated inappropriate conduct will result in expulsion from the school.

Inappropriate behaviour includes, but is not limited to:

- failing to respect the rights of other students to express their viewpoints.
- talking when the teacher or other students are speaking.
- overt inattentiveness in class (e.g. sleeping in class, reading material not connected to class content, frequent checking of social media, listening to audio messages on the phone etc.)

refusing to participate in class activities.

- creating excessive noise.
- eating in class.
- entering the class late or leaving early, or going in and out of the classroom frequently during class time, also leaving or entering the classroom without the teacher's permission or without informing the teacher.
- excessive use of mobile phones during class.
- poor personal hygiene.
- attending classes under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Abusive behaviour includes, but is not limited to:

- physically or verbally assaulting the teacher or other students.
- appearing to be on the verge of physically or verbally assaulting the teacher or other students · damaging classroom furniture or property · carrying a weapon.

Upon discovery or report of any instance of the behaviour listed above or other behaviour deemed as unacceptable, student will be contacted by academic managers and further disciplinary actions might follow

What is considered disruptive behaviour?

Talking without permission, repeatedly interrupting, being late, passing notes, texting, using smartphones/tablets, etc. making personal insults, using inappropriate language, physical threats or actions, and refusal to comply with the school or staff direction.

Any student found being disrespectful during class may be asked to leave the class and so may lose their attendance for that period. All such incidents will be reported to management and may be recorded on the student's file. Students continuously found to be disruptive or abusive in class could ultimately find themselves being expelled from the college and reported to INIS.

38.2 AB Staff

Although teachers and staff are there to help students, please ensure you communicate courteously and respectfully any problems/issues you may be having in class, or around the college. Students using foul or abusive language/ behaviour will not be tolerated. Disciplinary action will be taken where necessary, which may result in the expulsion of the student.

38.3 Participation

As a learner, you are also encouraged to participate in all classes, presentations, workshops and any other classes timetabled for your programme of study. The time spent in the classroom is a critical part of your learning experience. It is here that the core ideas, theories and methods of class content are introduced. The teachers are the cornerstone of your learning, and it is in class that topics are introduced.

38.4 Note taking

While the study book is available, you should also take notes in class. We advise you to reappraise your notes that evening or at least within 24 hours of your class. We recommend that you use the notes as a way to engage with the class readings, your notes are the starting point of your independent study to learn English.

38.5 Student Book

Students are encouraged to keep the course book in good condition. When you are changing to a different level, you just need to exchange your current book for the one at your new level with a fraction of the price.

Note: If you decide to write your book, we recommend using pencil ONLY. When changing the book to a new level, all notes written on the book must be erased.

Books that have been written on in pen will not be accepted for an exchange, and the student will have to purchase a new book. Similarly, if the book is dirty or wet it will not be taken back in exchange for a new book.

38.6 Laptops and tablets

The use of a laptop, tablet or Mobile phone in class to access any electronic version of your English book (e-Book) is not permitted, unless under very specific circumstances which have been communicated to administration beforehand. Online dictionaries may be used, at the discretion of the teacher.

38.7 Mobiles Phones

These devices should be either turned off or on airplane mode during class and be kept in your bag or a pocket and not on the desk as they may distract you or others. If you are expecting an urgent call, you must communicate this to your teacher at the beginning of class. If you are using a device such as a translation tool, or an online dictionary, you should ask permission from your teacher.

38.8 Online communication

You should not initiate or respond to a text, email, call or any social media activity during class, unless absolutely necessary.

38.9 Recording in the class not permitted

Recording of the teacher/class is not permitted. Any recording cannot be uploaded to any social media or online platform. The student will face disciplinary procedure if this should occur.

38.10 Computer and Wi-Fi use

As an AB student you must employ the Wi-Fi network and computing resources as tools to conduct your coursework in an efficient, ethical and lawful way and adhere to the guidelines outlined in the policy. Under no circumstances can the WIFI be used to download videos/movies or any unlawful material.

38.11 Personal Belongings and Valuables at School

AB cannot accept any liability for personal belongings and valuables or other property. As a result, we discourage students from bringing valuables to school.

39. Disciplinary Procedures

- Where a student's conduct or standard of performance is called into question, the Director of Studies (DOS) will arrange for the matter to be investigated. The student will have the opportunity to state their case.
- If, following the preliminary investigation, the DOS considers that disciplinary action is necessary, they shall arrange for this to be undertaken in accordance with the following procedures.

Offence	1 st Occasion	2 nd Occasion	3 rd Occasion	4 th Occasion
Minor Misconduct	Formal verbal warning	Formal written warning	Final written warning	Expulsion
Major Misconduct	Formal written warning	Final written warning	Expulsion	
Gross Misconduct	Expulsion			

- The issue will be escalated to the appropriate stage as described below. It is not necessary to work sequentially through the stages if the perceived seriousness of the issue requires more immediate action.

40. General Information

Company policy

Academic Bridge observes strict guidelines with regards to workplace safety, equality, bullying, harassment and protection of minority rights. Any student found in breach of these guidelines will face disciplinary or/and even legal action against them.

Rights

Academic Bridge organises and hosts a number of extra-curricular and social events, both on the school premises and elsewhere, to enrich the student experience and learning outcomes. During these activities it is normal for photographs, videos and recording to be taken, which may be used and

published for promotional purposes. If any student does not wish to be recorded or photographed during these activities they must make this clear during the activity, otherwise the school reserves the right to use these materials for the stated purposes.

Photography and Video Material

By accepting Academic Bridge's terms and conditions, the student accepts that Academic Bridge can freely use all photography, video and sound material created by the school and/or our staff during the programme which contains the student, without asking further approval from the student.

41. Complaints and Grievances

Academic Bridge – Learner Handbook

We are committed to providing a fair, transparent, and timely process for learners to raise concerns. Complaints are always treated with dignity, impartiality, and confidentiality.

1. Principles

- **Fairness & Impartiality:** Complaints are investigated objectively by appropriate staff.
- **Confidentiality:** Only those directly involved will be informed.
- **Right to Representation:** A learner may bring a classmate, friend, or agent to meetings.
- **No Retaliation:** Learners will not face negative consequences for making a genuine complaint.
- **Timeliness:** Clear timelines will be followed at each stage.

2. Types of Complaints Covered

Learners may raise complaints regarding:

- Breaches of Academic Bridge guidelines (e.g., class size, attendance, quality of teaching, QA, etc.)
- Breaches of QQI or TrustEd guidelines
- Breaches of international best practice for English Language Education
- Operational or ethical misconduct
- Discrimination, bullying, harassment, or unfair treatment
- Inaccurate or misleading information about the school or its programs
- Group or systemic issues affecting single or multiple classes
- Breaches of PCN guidelines (as applicable to your institution)

3. Step-by-Step Complaints Procedure

Stage 1: Informal Resolution (Talk First)

- ➡ Speak directly to your **Teacher** (for academic complaints)
- ➡ Speak to **Reception** (for non-academic issues such as facilities, finance, or administration)

- Most problems can be solved quickly at this stage.
- The staff member will discuss the issue and suggest solutions.
- A follow-up check will be made within a few days.

⇒ If the issue is **not resolved**, go to Stage 2.

Stage 2: Escalation to Academic Management

- ➡ Contact the **Director of Studies (DOS)** or **Assistant DOS**

- A meeting will be arranged with you and the relevant staff member.
- The DOS/ADOS will listen, review the issue, and propose a solution.
- You may bring a friend, classmate, or agent for support.

⇒ If you are **not satisfied**, go to Stage 3.

Stage 3: Formal Written Complaint

- ➡ Submit a **Formal Complaint Form** (available from Reception or the website).

- You must provide:
 - A clear description of the issue (facts, dates, people involved).
 - Any supporting evidence (emails, documents, etc.).
 - The outcome you are seeking.

Process:

1. **Acknowledgement:** Your complaint will be acknowledged within **2 working days**, with a summary of next steps and timeline.
2. **Investigation:**
 - A neutral investigator (DOS, senior staff member, or external consultant) will review documents, interview relevant parties, and gather evidence.
 - Target timeframe: **7–10 working days**. If delayed, updates will be provided.
3. **Hearing:**
 - Scheduled within **5 working days** of the investigation.
 - Both parties can present evidence, call witnesses, and ask questions.
 - You may bring a colleague or representative for support.
4. **Outcome Decision:**
 - Written decision issued within **2 working days** of the hearing, detailing findings, conclusions, and action steps.
 - If more time is needed, all parties will be informed of the revised timeline.

⇒ If you are **not satisfied** with the outcome of Stage 3, you may proceed to Stage 4 (Internal Appeal) or Stage 5 (External PCN Procedure).

Stage 4: Internal Appeal


⇒ If you are **not satisfied with the outcome**, you may **appeal in writing** to the School Director **within 7 calendar days** of receiving the response.

- An appeal meeting will be arranged within **5 working days**.
- The appeal will be reviewed by a manager or standing panel who was **not involved** in the original decision.
- A **final written decision** will be issued within **2 working days** of the appeal hearing.
- This decision is final.

⇒ If you are **not satisfied** with the outcome of Stage 4, you may proceed to Stage 5 (External PCN Procedure).

Stage 5: Escalation to Progressive College Network (PCN)

This stage is for grievances that remain unresolved after the internal appeal process (Stage 4).

-  Submit a Formal Grievance to PCN.
 - How to Submit: Send a written grievance via email to info@pcn.ie.
 - Content: Clearly state the facts, dates, individuals involved, and the outcome you are seeking. Keep language factual and polite.
 - Confidentiality: All submissions to PCN are treated with the utmost confidentiality and discretion.
 - Acknowledgement: PCN will acknowledge receipt within 2 business days, providing a summary of next steps and timelines.

PCN Formal Grievance Procedure:

- Investigation: PCN will appoint a neutral investigator (who could be PCN staff, an external consultant, or a senior committee member not involved in the issue). They will review documents, interview relevant parties and witnesses, and gather all materials.
 - Target Timeframe: Within 7–10 business days, with periodic updates to the complainant if delayed.
- Grievance Hearing: Scheduled within 5 working days after the investigation is complete.
 - Both parties will have the opportunity to present evidence, call witnesses, and ask questions.
 - Representation (colleague or union representative) is permitted.
- Outcome Decision: A written decision will be issued within 2 business days of the hearing, detailing findings, conclusions, and action steps. If more time is needed, all parties will be informed with a revised timeline.
- Appeal Process: If dissatisfied with PCN's outcome, the complainant may appeal in writing within 7 calendar days of receiving the decision.
 - The appeal will be heard by a more senior individual or standing panel not involved in the original PCN decision.
 - An appeal hearing will be convened within 5 working days, again allowing for representation.
 - A final written outcome will be published within 2 business days. This decision is final.

To see the full procedure of PCN [click here](#).

3. Summary Flow (Easy Reference)

Stage 1 → Teacher/Reception



Stage 2 → DOS/ADOS



Stage 3 → Formal Complaint (written, investigation, hearing, outcome)



Stage 4 → Intern Appeal to School Director



Stage 5 → External Escalation to PCN (info@pcn.ie)

4. Record Keeping

- All complaints (informal & formal) are logged confidentially.
- Records are available to learners upon request (subject to data protection).
- PCN will maintain its own records as per their procedure.

5. Review

- This procedure is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with QQI, TrustEd, and best practice in English language education, and to align with PCN objectives and legal requirements.