

STUDENT HANDBOOK

(Including Code of Conduct)

Updated 2026_05_06

Introduction

Welcome to Dublin Cultural Institute (DCI). We hope your time at our school will be enjoyable and productive. Please take the time to read through this handbook so you can understand the policies and procedures designed to ensure a safe, enjoyable, and effective learning environment. This handbook should be read in conjunction with the induction handout, which you will receive at the mandatory student induction on your first week.

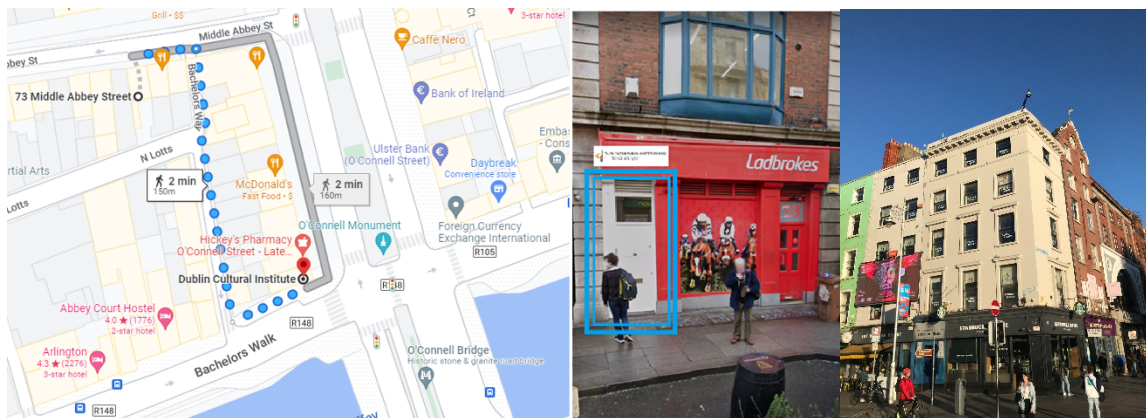
Location and Opening Hours

Students study in either the main building on 34a Bachelor's Walk or at the Abbey Street building, at 73 Middle Abbey Street, which is a one minute-walk away. There is a canteen in both buildings. The school is open from 8.30am to 5.30pm Monday to Friday.

If you require a place to study, please ask at the reception in either building. The telephone number is +353 1 8728470.

Out of Hours: WhatsApp +353 87 666 0500

Emergency telephone: +353 83 171 3521 (Please only use in real emergencies)



Level Placement

The first step on your English learning journey is to assess your current level. On your first day you will take the placement test in reading, writing, use of English and spoken interaction. The written part of the test takes around 70 minutes, and the speaking interview around 10 minutes.



The placement test takes place in the Abbey Street building. You can also arrange to take the test beforehand, so you can start class without delay on your first day. In the interview, you will receive feedback on your strengths and weaknesses discuss your own learning needs and agree goals.

Student Induction

On your first week, you are required to attend a new student induction. Here, the Academic Coordinator will provide a comprehensive overview of the school and its services. If you cannot attend your scheduled induction, you should attend another induction meeting within three weeks of starting classes.

Programmes

We offer General English, IELTS preparation, and English for Business Communications leading to one of the following external examinations:

- Test of Interactive English (TIE) <https://tie.ie>
- Cambridge General (PET/ FCE/CAE) <https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/learners/>
- IELTS (Academic version) <https://ielts.org/>
- Language Cert (B2/C1) <https://www.languagecert.org/en>

General English is available at levels from A1 to C1. We offer General English in the mornings and in the afternoons. IELTS and Business Communications classes are currently only offered in the mornings. For IELTS you will need to be at B2 level. Students are advised to enrol in IELTS for between six and twelve weeks. To commence English for Business Communications, you will need to be B2+. Programmes may be suspended/combined due to low demand or other unforeseen circumstances. A0 and C2 levels are available only when there are sufficient learners at these levels to open a dedicated class.

Timetable

All our programmes are full time, comprising 15 hours per week. The times of the classes are as follows:

General English (Mornings)

Monday to Friday

Session 1 (Teacher A): 9am to 10.30am

Session 2 (Teacher B): 10.45am to 12.15pm

General English (Afternoons)

Monday to Thursday

Session 1 (Teacher A): 1pm to 3pm

Session 2 (Teacher B): 3.15pm to 5pm

English for Business Communication (Mornings)

Monday to Thursday



Session 1 (Teacher A): 9am to 10.45am

Session 2 (Teacher B): 11.00am to 1pm

IELTS Preparation (Mornings)

Monday to Thursday

Session 1 (teacher A): 9am to 10.45am

Session 2 (teacher B): 11.00am to 1pm

Cycles

You will hear the term 'cycle' often during your time at DCI. A cycle is a six-week block of study in which you will be taught by the same two teachers, with the same group, in the same room, covering half the units in a course book. At the end of a cycle, you will be assessed and have the opportunity to demonstrate your readiness to be promoted to the next CEFR- level. If your attendance, class participation, and homework completion are satisfactory you can expect to move up a CEFR level after two full cycles, but it is not unnatural for learners to require extra time at a certain level.

The dates of the 2026 cycles are as follows:

Cycle 1: Jan 5 to Feb 13

Cycle 2: Feb 16 to Mar 27

Cycle 3: Mar 30 to May 8

Cycle 4: May 11 to Jun 19

Cycle 5: Jun 22 to July 31

Cycle 6: Aug 4* to Sep 11

Cycle 7: Sep 14 to Oct 23

Cycle 8: Oct 27* to Dec 4

Off Cycle Dec 7 to Dec 18

Christmas Holidays: Dec 21 to Jan 08 inclusively, 2027.

** starts on Tuesday due to public holiday*

Level Progression

The question is often asked how long does it take to learn English? The answer depends on many factors such as motivation, location, first language, lifestyle, resources, quality of teaching, aptitude for language acquisition and so on. However, on average we can say a typical learner takes 240 hours of guided learning to improve by two CEFR level (e.g., A1 to B1).

Table 1

Description	CEFR Level	Class Hours	Homework & Self Study	Total Hours*
(Proficiency)	(C2)	-	-	
Advanced	C1	360	120	480
Upper Intermediate	B2	180	60	240
Intermediate	B1	180	60	240
Pre-Intermediate	A2	180	60	240
Elementary	A1	180	60	240
(Beginner)	(A0)	90	30	120

Cycle

At DCI, each cycle consists of 90 classroom hours delivered as 15 hours a week over a six-week cycle. In addition, it is expected that every week, a student is completing at least five hours of guided study outside the classroom in the form of homework, assignments, and guided reading. Therefore on average a learner should aim to complete 120 hours every cycle. How many cycles should a learner expect to remain at the same level for?

Table 2

Class Hours	Homework & Self Study	Attendance	Total Actual Hours	Cycle Required
15*6=90	5*6=30	100%	120	2 cycles
15*6=90	5*6=30	85%	102	2-3 cycles
15*6=90	5*6=30	70%	96	

Coursebooks

Every student needs to borrow a course textbook and reader and pay a 50-euro deposit. Once you return the books in good condition before changing level, the school will exchange your books. Therefore, do not write in ink, and erase all pencil marks before exchanging. At the end of your course, you can claim back your 50-euro deposit.

Homework

At DCI you should receive and complete homework every day. The homework is designed to review important elements of the lesson or preview the next day's lesson. It is not designed to be time-consuming, but it remains important. Research indicates that information revised within a short time



will be retained for much longer. Homework and private revision should be part of your daily study routine.

Assessment

Every two weeks you will receive feedback. In week 2 and week 4, the test will be a short check or review of the grammar and vocabulary covered in the previous two weeks alongside constructive feedback to help you improve on some skills. In week 6, the test will be more formal and will assess your writing, reading, speaking, and listening. The results of the week 6 assessment will determine your next level in the new cycle.

Feedback

After each test, you will receive individual feedback from your teacher. In week 2 and week 4 the teacher will give you feedback on the following criteria:

- Organisation
- Engagement
- Homework

The teacher will also provide an informal assessment of

After the end of cycle assessment you will receive an email with your updated CEFR score in the following areas

- Reading
- Writing
- Speaking
- Listening

You will also be informed on your class details for the following cycle. As discussed at induction, you should not expect to be promoted to a higher level after each cycle. Most learners need at least two full cycles with good attendance, homework completion and self-study to move up a level.

Exit Exams

Stamp 2 visa students on 25-week Academic Year programmes are required to sit an external exit exam in one of the following exams:

- Test of Interactive English (TIE) <https://tie.ie>
- Cambridge Preliminary <https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/learners/>
- Cambridge First <https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/learners/>
- Cambridge Advanced <https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/learners/>
- IELTS <https://ielts.org/>
- LanguageCERT <https://www.languagecert.org/en>



Please click on the links above to access the official website on each exam provider for a introduction. You can speak to an academic manager for more details.

Registration will be handled by the school. We can also arrange exams for short term student who wish to sit an exam in Dublin. You can ask your teacher about the exams or request an exam consultation with an Academic Manager by emailing reception@dublinci.com.

Small Lending Library

DCI has a small but valuable and growing collection of graded readers, grammar revision books, exam practice materials, and DVDs available for loan. You can borrow from the reception in Abbey Street or speak to the Academic Coordinator for recommendations, or to make requests for purchases.

Activity Programme

DCI typically offers one social or cultural activity per week, normally on a Friday afternoon. We try to minimise the cost, if any. In the summer months, we offer weekend excursions. Periodically, we present workshops such as CV writing and an Irish Cinema Film Club and discussion and Drama Workshop. If you have an idea for a social programme activity, we would love to hear from you.

The Learner Contract

Our classes are participatory in nature. This means everybody must be actively engaged for the lessons to be effective. We expect both learners and teachers to respect the process by meeting the following expectations.

What your teacher expects of you:

- Attend every day on time
- Explain any absence to the teacher (preferably in advance by email)
- Speak English in class
- Concentrate on the lesson
- Ask questions and don't worry about mistakes
- Engage in pair-work and teamwork
- Be respectful to the teachers and other students
- Complete homework and assignments
- Give honest feedback on the class when asked
- Observe the DCI Code of Conduct

What you can expect of your teacher:

- Explain the plan for each session, week, cycle in advance
- Correct appropriate speaking and written errors
- Actively include everyone in the lesson
- Issue and correct homework
- Give personalised feedback



- Make every effort to get you to next level
- Act in a professional and courteous manner at all times

Behaviour & Participation

Students are required to act in a manner respectful of the school, its premises, staff and students. Students whose behaviour is deemed disrespectful or disruptive will receive a warning. Repeated incidents will result in expulsion from the school. Expelled students are not entitled to a refund of fees. Everybody should follow the Code of Conduct.

Code of Conduct

Normally, language schools are enjoyable places where learners and teachers from different cultures come together and share views and ideas. However, sometimes misunderstandings occur, due to different levels of English, stress, tiredness impatience and so on. We expect everyone to act in a respectful manner to staff and fellow students and to actively participate in the lessons. The following indicative guidelines will help you conform to our Code of Conduct:

1. Do not smoke or drink alcohol on the premises.
2. Do not enter the school under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
3. Do not carry weapons into the school.
4. Do not bring your bicycle or scooter into the school building.
5. Be sensitive to cultural differences.
6. Avoid excessive loudness and allow other students to contribute.
7. Refrain from bullying behaviour including mockery.
8. Do not seek to dominate class discussion or to monopolise the teacher's attention.
9. Avoid advancing excessively strong opinions on racial, political, religious, sexual, or gender issues.
10. Be mindful of others' personal space.
11. Do not eat in the classroom or bring in food or unlidged drinks.
12. Do not wilfully damage furniture, fittings, equipment, study materials or other property.
13. Do not attempt to defame the school, its students or employees by sharing derogatory or insulting images or remarks on social media.

Professional Conduct and Feedback

The relationship between students and teachers is built on trust, respect, and open communication. We recognise that students, as participants in an educational service, are entitled to share their experiences and provide feedback after completing their course.

However, given the personal and sensitive nature of the learning environment, we ask all students to act thoughtfully and responsibly when expressing opinions in public forums. Public criticism of



individual teachers is not considered appropriate, as it can undermine the respectful learning environment we aim to maintain.

We are fully committed to the same standards of professionalism and confidentiality. Any feedback or concerns about teaching, course delivery, or student experience should be raised directly with the school through the appropriate internal channels. This ensures that concerns are properly understood and addressed in a fair and constructive way.

Our goal is to support a positive and respectful community where both students and staff feel valued. We encourage honest feedback, but ask that it is shared in a manner that reflects these principles

Attendance

To guarantee the achievement of the learning outcomes DCI requires 100% attendance on all programmes. Attendance is recorded daily by the teachers and monitored by the Administrative Coordinator. Attendance is particularly important on the Academic Year programme. Visa-requiring students are required to demonstrate a minimum of 85% attendance in compliance with INIS regulations.

Attendance in a language course implies active participation in the lessons and a willingness to follow the teacher's instructions. Behaviours such as eating, sleeping, using electronic devices such as mobile phones, acting in a passive-aggressive manner, or other anti-social or distracting behaviour are unacceptable, and will result in the student being asked to leave which will affect his/her attendance.

Attendance Rules

1. An absence is defined as non-attendance for any reason.
2. All absence needs to be explained to the school by email to reception@dublinci.com.
3. Each day consists of two sessions. There are 8 or 10 sessions a week in the Morning programme and 8 sessions a week in the Afternoon Programme. If you miss one session you will receive only 50% attendance for that day.
4. A one- or two-day absence needs also to be explained in writing in the form of a note to the teacher on your return.
5. An absence of three days or more requires a phone call or email during the absence, and a meeting with the Academic Coordinator upon your return.
6. If your attendance falls below 80% over a two-week period, you will receive a first written warning.
7. If you have already received a first warning and your attendance period again falls below 80% over a two-week period, you will receive a second written warning.
8. If you have already received a second warning and your attendance again falls below 80% over a two-week period, you will receive a final written warning.



9. If you have received a final warning and continue to have unwarranted absences your enrolment will be terminated. You will be reported to INIS and rendered ineligible for a refund.
10. If you miss the first 10 consecutive days of your course without informing the school your enrolment will be automatically terminated with or without a warning.
11. If you have already received a first warning and subsequently miss 10 consecutive days with communicating with the school, your enrolment will be terminated with or without further warnings.
12. In the event of termination of your enrolment, you do have the right to submit an appeal which will be responded to with seven working days.

Absence & Sick leave

All absence from class, including sick leave, must be explained by the student to the school. The student must both notify the school during the absence and provide further explanation upon return. The student must notify the school of his/her absence, or arrange notification of same, to the Academic Coordinator by emailing reception@dublinci.com on the day of absence and each subsequent day of absence. Upon return the student must submit an absence letter or email to reception. One absence letter should be completed for each absence period, whether it consists of a half day, full day, or extends over two or more days. If sick leave extends for more than two consecutive days, a medical certificate is required. Please note while medical absences are unfortunate and not in your control, they remain recorded as an absence.

Back to School Meeting

The absence letter is reviewed and counter-signed by the Academic Coordinator and a follow-up back to school meeting is scheduled if deemed necessary. A follow up meeting will be scheduled in all cases except where the student has a good record and is not in danger of a warning, or where the student is on a short programme and enjoys reasonable attendance record.

Punctuality

All students are requested to be in class at the scheduled time of commencement. You will not be admitted to class if you arrive more than 15 minutes late and will have to wait until the second session. If you regularly arrive late, you may not be admitted to class even if you are less than 15 minutes late.

Students who cannot remain for the entire session should not start the session. Students who leave the classroom during the session, whether on their own decision or because they are instructed to do so by the teacher, will also lose attendance. Those leaving the class before the scheduled end of class will be marked absent for the period.

Holidays & Breaks

There are no holidays or breaks outside the published calendar for long term students. Request for extraordinary or additional holidays cannot be entertained. In individual cases personal circumstances may arise to make an enforced break from classes necessary. Examples include a court appearance or the serious illness or bereavement of a close family member. In such cases the school will support the



student in every way possible but still must record the student as absent for every day that he/she is away from class. It is important to stress that absence is a statement of fact. It is unalterable record of lack of presence in the classroom, often for unavoidable reasons. Marking a student as absent does not automatically confer censure. The school has no option but to record the statement of fact accurately. For this reason, the school encourages 100% attendance when possible as it allows for a generous 15% cushion of absence in the event of such unavoidable illness or absence. The student must also inform the school of unavoidable breaks when they occur.

Short Term Students

With the exception of three weeks' Christmas closure, there are no scheduled holidays for students on programmes for less than 25 weeks. You may apply to break your studies with a holiday week, once it is compliant with the rules governing your immigration status. For EU student and non-EU students on tourist visas of a maximum of 90 days, you may wish to make two separate bookings to allow for free time between bookings.

Academic Year Holidays

Students on Academic Year Programmes of 25 weeks are entitled to an additional 8 weeks of holiday. For every three weeks of studies you complete, you accrue one week of holiday. For example, a student who has completed 9 weeks of studies, has accrued three weeks of holiday. The minimum number of holidays to be taken at one time is one week. You should confirm holiday intentions before the start of your course. You must keep at least four weeks of holiday to use at the end of your course. Students on courses which overlap with the Christmas closure must take three weeks of their holiday weeks at this time.

Feedback

Informal Feedback

We hope that every student is satisfied with the service he/she receives at DCI. At all times we welcome comments and suggestions which can be brought up with the Academic Coordinator or any member of staff. Alternatively, you might prefer to email an anonymous comment to our virtual suggestion box here at info@dublinci.com.

Formal Feedback

Every six weeks you and your classmates will be asked to share your opinion all aspects of your classroom experience in the form of an online questionnaire.

Complaints

In the event that you are unhappy with any aspect of your experience at DCI please register a complaint. We ensure all complaints are dealt with promptly, fairly, consistently and confidentially. DCI welcomes feedback and recognizes that complaints provide an opportunity to improve the quality of the school. DCI will treat all complaints seriously and impartially. DCI will aim to resolve concerns as quickly as possible. Ensure that complainants are not disadvantaged for raising a genuine concern. Maintain confidentiality throughout the process and keep appropriate records of complaints and their outcomes.



Where possible, concerns should first be raised informally with the person directly involved. The school aims to resolve all informal complaints within five working days.

If the matter cannot be resolved informally, a formal complaint should be submitted in writing to Siobhan Smith (ssmith@dublinci.com). The complaint should include the complainant's name and contact details, a description of the issue, relevant dates and any supporting documents and the outcome sought. The school will acknowledge receipt of the formal complaint within 3 working days.

An investigation will usually include, reviewing the relevant documentation, meeting the complainant (where appropriate), obtaining information from staff or other individuals involved and considering all relevant evidence before reaching a decision. A written response will be issued within 10 working days.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may request a review within 5 working days of receiving the decision. The review will be conducted by a senior member of the team who was not directly involved in the original investigation. The outcome of the review will be communicated within 10 working days.

The External complaints procedure is managed through English Education Ireland. EEI provides an independent complaints review mechanism available to all EEI member institutions.

The mechanism supports compliance with TrustEd Ireland ELE Code of Practice Criteria 6.8(a) and 8.6(b) and EEI governance standards. It ensures that where internal complaints procedures do not reach resolution, complainants have access to independent review of standards compliance.

<https://englisheducationireland.ie/eei-complaints/>

Exit Questionnaire

On leaving the school, we will ask for your closing remarks on your experience. As always, we may ask for your honest feedback even if it is negative. As the school is relatively small you may be invited or requested to share your experience with a member of staff.

Public Transport links

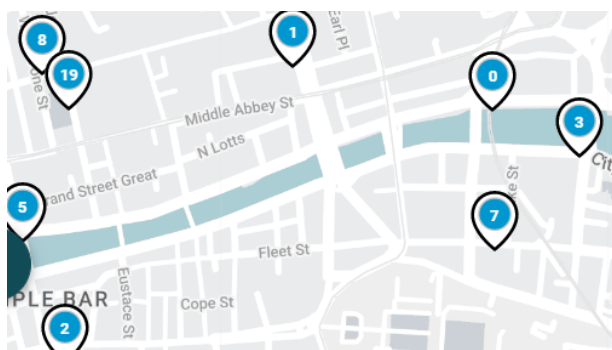
Bus

Full information on this mode of transport can be found at <https://www.dublinbus.ie/>

Dublin Bikes

Full information on this healthy, economical, and environmentally-friendly mode of transport can be found at <https://www.dublinbikes.ie>.

The map below shows the nearest bike stations to the DCI



Private Bikes & Scooters

Unfortunately, we do not have space for private bikes or scooters in the building. These should be parked outside.

Your Physical and Mental Health

If you are suffering for poor health, physical or mental, please speak to our Customer Service Manager, Siobhan Smith in confidence: ssmith@dublinci.com. Please do not suffer in silence if you are feeling depressed, anxious or homesick. Talking through your problems can be very helpful. We also have contact with professionals who can provide more advanced care.

Using your Arachas Medical Insurance

If you are feeling unwell, you should visit a GP or hospital. You may be asked to pay in advance for any medical appointment or treatment. If this is the case, please ensure to keep all receipts (including receipts for any medicines required). You can then make a claim directly to Arachas and they should refund you any monies spent, over the excess fee of €100.

If you are admitted to a hospital, you will not be required to pay in advance and therefore you should contact Arachas when payment is requested from the hospital. Arachas should pay the medical bills directly to the health care provider.

In general, dental procedures are not covered.

For a full list of what is covered, please check your policy.

General Practitioner (GP)

For minor illness and injuries, you should visit a local General Practitioner (GP). In Ireland, you must visit a GP initially, if you require specialized treatment or follow up the GP will give you a recommendation letter to arrange a visit with a specialist consultant.

The following GP surgeries are close to the school:

Abbey Street Medical Centre – 71 Middle Abbey Street, Dublin 1 - +353 1 873 4975 –

www.abbeymedicalcentre.com

Temple Bar Medical Centre 26 Wellington Quay, Temple Bar, Dublin, D02 R221

<https://templebardoc.com>



Mental Health

Being away from home can sometimes take a toll on your mental health. If you feel you are struggling to adapt to Irish life and need some support, please contact the school or one of the following services for assistance:



Organisation Name	Specialty	Phone	Website
Aware	Depression support	1800 80 48 48	https://aware.ie/
Pieta House	Suicide Prevention	1800 247 247 Or 0818 111 126 (arrange an appointment)	https://pieta.ie/
Samaritans	Mental health support	116 123 (available 24/7)	https://www.smaritans.org/
Spun Out	Lifestyle information	01 675 3554 (10am-6pm)	https://spunout.ie/
Mental Health Ireland	Promote positive Mental Health		https://www.mentalhealthireland.ie/

If you are looking for something more long term, the following are a few low-cost counselling services based in Dublin:

Dublin Counselling and Therapy Centre	01 8788236	http://www.dctc.ie/
Insight Matters	01 891 0703 / 085 203 1478	https://www.insightmatters.ie/
The Therapy Centre	086 1083669 / 01 9629514	https://thetherapycentre.ie/services/low-cost-counselling/
Access Counselling	01 5240708 / 085 139 1846	https://www.accesscounselling.ie/

Gynecology

If you are experiencing gynaecological issues, you should visit a GP in the first instance. The GP will be able to refer you to a specialist, if required.

The following health care providers specialize in women's health: The Dublin Well Woman Centre – www.wellwomancentre.ie