International Student Protocol

Academic year 2021/22

27 July 2021

1. Preamble

Based on the experience of the safe and well-received arrival of international students in 2020, and on the changes in the public health situation in the interim, this protocol has been created and approved by the higher education sector, with input from the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS), among other national stakeholders. This document serves as a framework for the safe arrival of all international students into Ireland for the academic year 2021/22. In the context of COVID-19, the protocol is designed to prioritise the protection of public health, including that of students, staff, and the wider community.

International students are of strategic importance to all of Ireland's HEIs, and are a major component of the national strategy for internationalisation. Ensuring their safe and managed arrival will preserve the national and institutional brand values, and will enable the higher education sector to advance towards the targets and goals set for internationalisation.

With Ireland committed to resuming safe levels of openness, and with vaccinations, PCR/Antigen testing, and behavioural guidelines well established, we are in a substantially improved position compared to last year. Nonetheless, the guiding principles of vigilance and agility remain in place.

This Protocol has drawn extensively on current Government guidance (public health and international travel advice), international best practice, and institution-specific needs. The situation will continue to evolve, and the details of implementation of this framework will shift as necessary.

2. Scope and definitions

For the purposes of this document, International Arrivals, will be understood to include students domiciled outside of Ireland who arrive in the State from abroad for the purpose of beginning or resuming a course of study in a higher education institution (HEI).

Mandatory Hotel Quarantine (MHQ) refers to the statutory requirement for defined categories of arrivals to enter into State-managed and monitored quarantine. This process is beyond the authority of the HEIs.

Self-Quarantine, also called "quarantine at home", requires individuals to remain in their accommodation for up to 14 days or until an authorised negative RT-PCR is produced at least 5 days after arrival.

3. Pre-departure

To the best of their ability, HEIs will advise all incoming international students:

3.1 To comply with requirements currently and publicly in place by the Irish Government in respect to international travel and arrival into Ireland.

3.2 To reinforce Government guidelines that recommend refraining from travel to Ireland if they have symptoms or have tested positive for Covid-19 in the 14 days prior to travel.

3.3 In addition, institutions will provide advice on complying with public health measures on their journey to campus.

3.4 Advise all students, where possible, to be fully vaccinated before travelling to Ireland. Communication will emphasise that those who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 (with an EMA/Irish recognised vaccine) do not currently need to enter mandatory hotel quarantine.

What 'fully vaccinated' means

A full course of any one of the following vaccines	Regarded as fully vaccinated after:
2 doses of Pfizer-BioNtech Vaccine: BNT162b2 (Comirnaty®)	7 days
2 doses of Moderna Vaccine: CX-024414 (Moderna®)	14 days
2 doses of Oxford-AstraZeneca Vaccine: ChAdOx1-SARS-COV-2 (Vaxzevria® or Covishield)	15 days
1 dose of Johnson & Johnson/Janssen Vaccine: Ad26.COV2-S [recombinant] (Janssen®)	14 days

Note: The information included in this table is correct at date of publication and is subject to change. Please check the latest information at www.gov.ie

4. Travel to Ireland

The table below provides an overview of international travel policy and HEI responsibilities based on proposed travel advice post-19 July 2021 when the EU Digital COVID Certificate (DCC) will be introduced.

4.1 HEIs will advise students of their legal requirements on arrival in Ireland including requirements for mandatory hotel quarantine, self-quarantine, and PCR testing post arrival.

Pre-Arrival **Institutions will provide all incoming international arrivals with**: Advice on international travel requirements A briefing on how they can comply with prevailing public health measures in Ireland	**Arriving from EU/EEA (and not outside the EU/EEA in 14 days prior to arrival in Ireland)**			Post Arrival **Institutions will request all incoming international arrivals to:** Inform them of accommodation arrangements Complete a COVID-19 Passenger Locator Form on arrival Download and use the HSE track and trace app Follow prevailing public health measures
	With valid DCC	Standard public health measures	Advise to observe public health restrictions and to present for post-arrival testing if symptomatic. Greet and guide to appropriate airport transfer options.	
	Without valid DCC/ No DCC	*As above* + Required negative PCR test (<72 hours before arrival)		
	Arriving from outside EU/EEA not on the designated state list ('emergency brake')			
	Proof of vaccination	Standard Public Health Measures	*As above*	
	No proof of vaccination	*As above* + Self-Quarantine + Require negative PCR test (<72 hours before arrival) + Post-arrival HSE PCR test	*As above* + Provision of supports for self-quarantine + Refer students to a HSE test post arrival	

	Arriving from countries outside EU/EEA on the designated state list ('emergency brake')		
Proof of vaccination	*As above* + Self-Quarantine + Require negative PCR test (<72 hours before arrival) + Post-arrival HSE PCR test	*As above* + Provision of supports for self-quarantine + Refer students to HSE test post arrival	
No proof of vaccination	MHQ-Mandatory Hotel Quarantine Require negative PCR test (<72 hours before arrival) Post-arrival HSE PCR test	Managed by the State Pre-Booked (before arrival) by traveler	

5. Managed Arrival in Ireland

For all students, under the current and planned travel policy, HEIs will:

5.1 Seek the travel and accommodation details of all international arrivals.

5.2 Advise students on the requirement to complete a COVID-19 Passenger Locator Form (as requested for all incoming passengers).

Planned travel policy (Post 19 July 2021)

(Green)For passengers arriving from EU/EEA (and not outside the EU/EEA in 14 days prior to arrival in Ireland) with Digital Covid Certificate (DCC) OR Passengers arriving from outside EU/EEA where an emergency brake has not been applied with recognised proof of full vaccination or DCC equivalent documentation. For passengers arriving from inside the EU/EEA with no Digital Covid Certificate (or equivalent), a negative PCR test (<72 hours before arrival) will need to be provided.

HEIs will:

5.3 Advise these students to observe public health restrictions and to present for post-arrival testing if they develop symptoms of COVID-19.

5.4 Guide International Arrivals to appropriate airport transfer options.

(Amber) Passengers arriving from countries outside EU/EEA, from nations with no 'emergency brake', with no proof of vaccination **OR Passengers from outside the EU/EAA, from nations with 'emergency brake', but with recognised proof of vaccination.**

HEIs will:

5.5 Guide International Arrivals to appropriate airport transfer options.

5.6 Provide support for students in self-quarantine

    5.6.1 Advise students of the government requirements which apply during the period of quarantine.

5.6.2   HEIs will endeavour to guide students into appropriate accommodation. Where possible, on-campus accommodation should be used for this and HEIs have agreed to cooperate in maximising the use of on-campus accommodation.

5.6.3   HEIs will advise students on COVID-19 symptoms and how to access medical supports should they be required.

5.6.4   HEIs will use reasonable endeavours to support their students in complying with quarantine requirements, using consistent risk-management procedures during the students' quarantine period.

5.6.5   In the event of an international student testing positive for COVID-19, HEIs will provide support to facilitate isolation in line with public health advice.

5.6.6   Refer students to a HSE test post arrival

(Red) For passengers arriving from outside EU/EEA, from nations with 'emergency brake', with no proof of full vaccination.

HEIs will:

5.7 Advise all students of the expected requirement for mandatory hotel quarantine (MHQ) and associated costs, and direct students to sources of further information and advice. These students become the primary responsibility of the state for the period of MHQ.

5.8 Provide appropriate, institution-specific supports (could include regular check-in phone call, access to academic classes, access to online social activities) to students undergoing mandatory hotel quarantine.

5.9 Following MHQ, students become Green status and will be offered advice on appropriate public and private transportation option to their campus.

Mirroring current practice and recognising that both vaccinated and non-vaccinated students can transmit the virus, HEIs will work to ensure that all students are advised and supported to follow best health advice to minimise infection.

6. Public Health issues

Public health advice on travelling to Ireland must be complied with by all International Arrivals. This advice will evolve over the coming months, and it is the responsibility of the institutions to ensure that all arriving students are aware of the most up to date public health advice.

In addition, HEIs should:

6.1 Encourage all international students to download the HSE track and trace App.

6.2 Ensure that all incoming international students receive the appropriate briefing on prevailing public health measures.

7. Institution-level sign off

Institutions have signed off on this protocol as a consistent framework for the sector and are in agreement with the principles described. Where institutions are not themselves assured that they take in international students in ways which meet these principles, they will need to take the appropriate alternative actions, which may include choosing to delay bringing students into Ireland and/or offering online provision until the students can be safely accommodated.