





June 2020

The National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE) is an agency of the Irish Department of Education operating under the aegis of Léargas. The following report details the delivery of the Department-funded NCGE guidance service to those eligible Irish students who were attending a European School in 2019/20.

NCGE wishes to acknowledge the direction, co-operation, and genuine commitment of the Department Inspectorate in the planning and co-ordination of this service.

NCGE is very grateful to the co-ordinating teachers based in the European schools who take on the responsibility for co-ordinating the delivery of the career guidance service provided by NCGE annually. Their assistance is critical to the delivery of this very valuable service and is completed in addition to their normal teaching responsibilities.

Furthermore, the delivery of this guidance service would not be possible without the professional dedication of the two qualified and highly experienced guidance counsellors who commit to the delivery of high-quality guidance service to the students. On behalf of NCGE, I wish to thank them for their dedication and personal commitment to the process.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge the NCGE staff involved in the co-ordination, planning, administration, and support of this guidance service, who each year review, consider and explore new ideas to ensure its continued professional delivery.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jennifer McKenzie', is positioned above the printed name and title.

Jennifer McKenzie
Director, National Centre for Guidance in Education

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1. Background

The European Schools website explains the role of European schools as follows:

'European Schools: The European Schools and the Accredited European Schools are educational institutions set up in the European Union's Member States. They provide children with a multilingual and multicultural education at nursery, primary and secondary levels. The Schools follow a specific curriculum and offer the European Baccalaureate diploma.'

<https://www.eursec.eu/en>

The Irish Department of Education website outlines the entitlement of access to guidance for Irish students enrolled in European Schools as follows:

'The Department of Education provides funding for access to appropriate guidance for the children of Irish parents who are enrolled in the European Schools. This service is coordinated by the National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE) and is delivered by qualified guidance counsellors as recognised by the Department. The support is intended to supplement, but not replace, the guidance support already available to students in the European Schools. It is geared specifically to the needs of Irish students who may be considering applying to Irish third-level institutions and who have questions regarding general entry requirements, course requirements, and application procedures and deadlines. The service is provided in the autumn term each year. In European Schools with larger numbers of Irish students - usually the schools in Brussels and Luxembourg - an Irish guidance counsellor visits the school. The guidance counsellor generally meets with each Year 7 student individually, and, as appropriate, with groups from Years 4, 5 and 6. In some cases, the guidance counsellor also meets with parents of Year 7 on a designated evening during the visit.

In the case of schools with smaller numbers of Irish students, an Irish guidance counsellor provides online guidance service by means of Skype or an equivalent system, by prior arrangement with the school. The service is provided to Year 7 students and, as appropriate, to students from Years 5 and 6.

Information on equivalences between the EB and national systems can be found in a document published annually on the ES website. Information is also available on the website of the Central Applications Office <http://www.cao.ie/>.'

<https://www.education.ie/en/The-Education-System/International/information-note-for-parents-on-the-european-schools.pdf>

There is further information regarding the European School system available on the Department of Education website cited above.

NCGE co-ordination of the guidance provision to Irish Students attending European Schools

As an agency of the Department, NCGE also hosts the Euroguidance Centre for Ireland. Euroguidance is co-funded by the European Commission to promote learning opportunities and mobility across Europe. NCGE coordinates guidance provisions to students in European Schools under the 'banner' of Euroguidance Ireland.

Whilst delivery is funded by the Department, NCGE has co-ordinated the delivery of the guidance service, on behalf of the Department, to European Schools for over 15 years. Each year, NCGE liaises with the relevant Senior Inspector (Inspectorate European Schools) in the Department, to access the details of the eligible European Schools and the associated student numbers requiring guidance provision. NCGE contracts qualified experienced guidance counsellors to provide this service each year.

Delivery is made both on site in the European Schools with one-to-one or group guidance and information sessions for parents **and** via online video conferencing-based guidance service (*e.g.* Skype or Adobe Connect) for one-to-one or group guidance sessions. Each year, NCGE meet with the Senior Inspector to review the guidance service provision to the European Schools, and to decide on and make changes to delivery, as appropriate, based on this review.

2. Staffing

Coordinating staff of NCGE in 2019:

Jennifer Mc Kenzie	Director, NCGE
Orla Ní Cheallaigh	Guidance Officer - Euroguidance
David Cullen	Communications Officer, NCGE

Guidance Counsellors who delivered the service in 2019 (contracted undertaking):

Ms Breeda Coyle	<i>School</i>	Ms Julie Mc Dermott	<i>School</i>	Ms. Orla Ní Cheallaigh	<i>School</i>
On site	Brussels 1	Via Skype	Alicante	On site	Brussels 1
On site	Brussels 2	Via Skype	Frankfurt	On site	Brussels 4
On site	Brussels 3	Via Skype	Karlsruhe		
On site	Brussels 4	Via Skype	Mol		
On site	Luxembourg 1	Via Skype	Bergen		
On site	Luxembourg 2	On site	Munich		
		On site	Varese		

Coordinating teachers in each school in 2019 (voluntary undertaking):

School	Coordinator
Alicante	Maria Goertz (New)
Bergen	Roger Mattingly
Brussels 1	Aoife Whelan
Brussels 2	Barry Kilgannon
Brussels 3	Íde Ní Mhóráin
Brussels 4	Yvonne Finnan
Frankfurt	Patrick Shellard
Karlsruhe	Anthony Boothroyd
Luxembourg 1	Sinéad O'Donovan (New)
Luxembourg 2	Aibhistín Ó Coimín
Mol	Majella O'Brien
Munich	Kieran Kiely
Varese	Mairéad Young (New)

3. Online resources

As highlighted, NCGE communicates the delivery of this service to schools, students, and parents under the 'banner' of Euroguidance Ireland. Relevant information is therefore made available through a dedicated section on the [Euroguidance Ireland website](#).

This information is revised annually by NCGE and includes:

- General guidelines for Irish European Baccalaureate students applying to study in Ireland
- The student appointment form
- Other Information (and links) about studying in Ireland.

4. Service preparation

The following provides an outline of the NCGE-coordinated administration, preparation, and delivery of the guidance Service.

Each year, the Department Inspectorate corresponds with the European School Directors to introduce NCGE / Euroguidance Ireland and invites co-operation and support for the coordination and delivery of the Irish European Schools guidance service.

In 2019, NCGE made available a unique *One Drive* folder for each school where information gathered from students, through the appointment form submissions, were populated. This furnished the appointed guidance counsellors with advance information in relation to specific students' needs prior to delivery and enabled parents of those students less than 18 years of age to provide documented permission/consent for their son/daughter to attend the one-to-one and/or group sessions. It also enabled both guidance counsellors and co-ordinating teachers to communicate more effectively.

See 'Appendix A' for further information.

Activity timeline

ACTION	UNDERTAKEN BY	DATE(S)
Provision of data to NCGE regarding the projected numbers and locations of eligible students and coordinating teachers for 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspectorate • European School Directors 	September / October 2019
e-mail to coordinating teachers outlining the proposed schedule of delivery and revised information on the appointment process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCGE • European School Coordinating teachers 	October 2019
Collation of student appointments and parental permissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCGE • Students • Parents 	September - November 2019
Drafting and signing of contracts by guidance counsellors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCGE • Guidance Counsellors 	October - November 2019
Collation and communication of final total numbers and year groups of students seeking guidance in each school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCGE • European School Coordinating teachers • Guidance Counsellors 	October - November 2019
Provision of online access to the prospectuses of 3 rd level institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCGE 	October - November 2019
Collation of up to date European Baccalaureate (EB) points conversion details ¹ and 'Irish Exemption' and DARE info	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCGE • Guidance Counsellors • TCD • UCC • IUA and NUI 	October - November 2019
Ongoing communication with coordinating teachers, students, and parents in lead-up to delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCGE • Guidance Counsellors 	October - November 2019

¹ NCGE compiled updated information in relation to the Central Applications Office (CAO) process and EB / Leaving Cert. equivalences. This followed detailed correspondence with relevant bodies such as the CAO and the Irish Universities Association (IUA).

5. Delivery – Statistics

PROJECTED eligible students³ - returned directly by schools for service in November 2019

School	S4	S5	S6	S7	TOTALS
Alicante	4	0	3	2	9
Bergen	1	2	1	1	5
Brussels 1	6	5	8	4	23
Brussels 11	5	2	6	7	20
Brussels 111	7	4	5	3	19
Brussels IV	8	11	8	5	32
Frankfurt	3	6	2	5	16
Karlsruhe	1	2	0	2	5
Luxembourg 1	2	5	2	3	12
Luxembourg 11	4	4	6	4	18
Mol	1	0	1	0	2
Munich	7	4	4	5	20
Varese	0	0	1	1	2

COLOUR – Guidance on site

COLOUR – Guidance via Skype

³Eligible students from each school are those who have at least one Irish parent and are in years S4-S7 each year.

Delivery dates and ACTUAL student numbers⁴

SCHOOL	DATE(S)	Projected	Actual	S7	S6	S5	S4	Parents
Alicante	12/11/2019	9	4	2	1	0	1	1
Bergen	15/11/2019	5	1	0	0	0	1	
Brussels 1	29/11/2019	23	14	2	5	3	4	5
Brussels 2	26/11/2019	20	6	3	3	0	0	
Brussels 3	28/11/2019	19	13	3	3	2	5	
Brussels 4	25/11/2019 and 27/11/2019	32	17	3	4	7	3	
Frankfurt	18/11/2019	16	10	5	0	3	2	
Karlsruhe	13/11/2019	5	5	2	0	2	1	
Luxembourg 1	19/11/2019	12	13	2	3	3	5	2
Luxembourg 2	18/11/2019	18	7	4	2	0	1	
Mol	N/A	2	0	0	0	0	0	
Munich	19/11/2019 and 20/11/2019	20	20	5	4	4	7	
Varese	14/11/2019	2	8	4	2	2	0	
TOTALS		183	118	35	27	26	30	8

⁴The final numbers of recipients do not directly correlate with the projected number as not all eligible students seek guidance nor are all students in a position to attend the guidance session(s) scheduled in their school. Where figures are higher than projected, this indicates that the appointment form was not completed in advance of delivery taking place.

6. Delivery - Provision

Two guidance counsellors were directly contracted by NCGE to deliver the guidance to students in the 13 European Schools in 2019. The NCGE/Euroguidance Guidance Officer also delivered the guidance service with group sessions in two schools on-site.

Guidance was provided on-site in four schools in Brussels, two in Luxembourg and two in Germany. Guidance was provided online for one additional school in Germany, one in Spain, one in Italy, one in Belgium and one in the Netherlands.

In line with the Department commitment, each guidance counsellor communicated her willingness to meet with the parents of individual students when requested. Eight parents availed of this opportunity in 2019.

In terms of delivery types and timings with students:

- S4 and S5 students were each to have access to a 40-minute group guidance session
- Each S6 and S7 student was to have access to a 30-40-minute individual guidance session.

7. Delivery - Guidance Counsellor reporting

In the following pages the guidance counsellors responsible for delivery provide their direct feedback on the service for 2019.

7.1 Guidance Counsellor preparation for delivery

Resources compiled in advance included:

- NCGE materials and website links and careers websites of European Schools
- CAO materials
- NUI handbook and other downloads
- Directory of Leaving Certificate Entry Requirements (IGC)- when available
- Agreed entry requirements for EU/EFTA guidelines (IUA, ITT, and RCSI)- when available
- HPAT material
- DARE information
- Relevant portfolio requirements
- Subject choice materials
- Miscellaneous hardcopy prospectuses and links to college websites
- Interest tests
- The European Schools Curriculum
- The European Baccalaureate: Information for admissions officers of universities and other higher education institutions (UK Dept. of Education)
- Open day, summer school and CAO conference-related information

See 'Appendix' B for a listing with appropriate links

7.2 Overall work undertaken

YEARS 4 & 5 (Group Sessions)

For Year 4, the work consisted of having students consider that choosing subjects and ultimately a course or career is much more than information-seeking but includes looking at self, hobbies and interests, favourite subjects, role models in their lives, stated parental wishes for them, preferred work environment and current levels of knowledge about their stated fields of work.

Subjects were looked at, the currency in terms of points for ordinary versus higher level subjects and their importance against the backdrop of the criteria linked to applying for a course within their current stated choices. Students were encouraged to conduct broad-based research on areas of interest to avoid premature decision-making.

The focus for Year 5, out of necessity, was on how to choose subjects to either keep their choices as open as possible or to satisfy their current known interests.

Within both groups:

- Some students were given an Interest Inventory test to complete at home
- Discussions took place re vocational fields vs. specific careers
- The subjects and levels essential for their highest preference areas were analysed
- Entry, faculty, matriculation requirements, and points were discussed
- The CAO system was outlined
- Equivalences between Leaving Certificate points and the European Baccalaureate were demonstrated
- Useful sources of information, including those which are web-based, were provided
- Qualifax, Careers Portal, and NCGE material were showcased or referenced
- The strategic and developmental importance of talking to people, or obtaining work experience, in areas of highest choice was outlined
- Applicable bonus points available for maths were explored
- How to conduct preliminary research and establish broad sectors of interest was explained
- It was suggested that students keep a file on all the information gathered so that it could be discussed with the guidance counsellor on a subsequent visit

YEARS 6 & 7 (Individual Sessions)

Year 6 students were encouraged to attend open days and obtain work experience in their chosen field to broaden their knowledge of their fields of interest and anchor their choices before year 7. Of necessity, much of the work with **Year 7** was explaining application procedures to the CAO.

Within both groups:

- The logic of their existing choices was revisited
- Details regarding the application process were refreshed
- The possibility of doing one's undergraduate course work in one country and then taking a master's degree in another country was discussed
- Health issues and potential anxiety were discussed
- The method of combining points with HPAT results was demonstrated
- The difference in points calculations between TCD and the other colleges was explained
- The necessity of getting their Baccalaureate scores to Ireland as quickly as possible after they obtained them was highlighted
- How to describe the European Baccalaureate on their CAO application was explained
- How to order their choices was explained
- The process for exemption from Irish (if applicable) was outlined
- Information on specific courses was provided
- The CAO offers schedule was explained
- Information on accommodation and the cost of living was provided
- Taking a subject in the Leaving Certificate was discussed
- Where a college course might lead in the future was discussed
- The bonus points for maths were discussed

7.3 Courses of interest

The varied range of subjects studied in the EB results in a different course focus from that found among Irish students. For example, the interest in International Relations, Politics, Economics, Philosophy, Drama, and various languages was recurrent as was a strong interest in all forms of media. The impression was of reflective students, anxious and ready to participate in global society in various ways.

The courses of interest ranged over the following areas and are grouped to reflect the general combinations that students enquired about.

- Art
- Business and Economics
- Law
- Humanities – Languages, Philosophy, History, Politics
- Psychology
- Acting / Drama
- Teaching
- Culinary Arts
- Science
- Engineering
- Medicine
- Architecture

7.4 Specific question areas

- The cost of studying in Ireland
- Supports for those with SEN/ health issues/ anxiety
- Finding accommodation
- Reasons why students should come to Ireland
- Quality and recognition of Irish education
- Opportunities for study in other countries as part of a course
- Work experience
- How to proceed once EB results become available
- Application procedures to the CAO
- Portfolio work and restricted courses
- The H Pat- combining points and practice courses
- Points calculations in different HEIs
- Bonus points allocated for maths across different HEIs
- The difference between ordinary- and higher-level subjects

7.5 Areas requiring additional clarification

- The conversion process of points for entry and additional course requirements, and the difference between them
- The difference in requirements and points calculation between Trinity College Dublin and other colleges
- When to communicate with NUI, directly with a college and with the CAO
- The NUI requirement for exemption from Irish
- Recognition of subjects e.g. maths/advanced maths, English/advanced English etc
- The implications of picking three-period subjects v five-period subjects
- The timing of applications (some students, because they are also applying to UCAS, do not focus on or apply to the CAO until rather late)

7.6 General observations

- When students choose to work with the programme set for them; working progressively in a focused and experiential manner, then real progress can be seen. Students now appear to be much more focused, knowledgeable, and aware
- There exists a cohort of students with the European Baccalaureate studying in Ireland. This peer information contributes greatly both to the knowledge base and desire of students to study in Ireland. It also highlights that the rationalisation of the Baccalaureate scores and the Leaving Certificate has had an effect
- The experience of having an older sibling/friend who has successfully gained entry to one of the Irish colleges also acts as a powerful motivational role model for many and paves the way for their own entry. The much-appreciated normalisation of the European Bac. exam would appear to be acting as a powerful stimulus for those who wish to attend college in Ireland
- Gifted students can be quite conflicted choosing between disparate but achievable careers
- Their previous exposure to career guidance seemed limited in the group sessions
- In the most successful cases, students have researched both in a general, and specific way, their courses, visited the colleges of their choice, talked to a student/lecturer, sat in on lectures, attended open days and gained some work experience. If a student had not done the research, attended open days, or undertaken work experience, then they remain very undecided about their career choice
- Financing 3rd level is continuing to be a large issue for many parents, with many of them looking to Ireland instead of the U.K. because of the high level of fees there, and indeed post-Brexit, that landscape will change again
- There is a huge linguistic focus in their (EB) curriculum which could offer these students a distinct advantage in the Irish context

8. Student destination survey

In 2018- 2019, NCGE instigated a process of requesting consent from Year 7 students and their parent(s) / guardian(s) to contact them **after** they had graduated from a European School.

In 2019, NCGE contacted 34 such S7 students (and their parent(s) / guardian(s)).

On publication of this 2019 summary report, 20 individual responses have been received, representing 57% of those surveyed. Of these, 19 indicated that they were engaged in further studies.

Results below:

- 8 stated that they were currently studying in Ireland.
- 8 stated that they were currently studying in another EU country.
- 3 stated that they were currently studying outside the EU.

Those studying in Ireland were enrolled on courses in the following areas:

- Arts
- European studies
- Medicine
- Engineering
- Science

NCGE will continue to survey the destination choices for future S7 'leavers', including those graduating in 2020.

9. Future Service Delivery

In 2019, following internal review discussions with the Department and the contracted guidance counsellors, NCGE identified that an overarching internal review of the guidance service provided to the European Schools should be carried out in 2020. This overarching internal review would inform the future development and continued delivery of the guidance service to European Schools. The valuable feedback provided by parents and students, co-ordinating teachers and contracted guidance counsellors will be considered as part of this process. The report of this review will be published by NCGE in 2020.

APPENDIX A

The 'Student Appointment' tool used in 2019

<https://euroguidance.ie/template>

DATA CAPTURED

- Student's Name
- Year
- Student e-mail (x 2 for S7)
- Parent / Guardian e-mail
- Subjects currently studied
- Are you studying Irish in school as other national language (ONL)?
- What would you like to do in your future career?
- Do you have a specific learning difficulty?
- Do you have any specific query that you would like the Guidance Counsellor to respond to?
- *Permission to contact students to seek feedback on the service or Third Level destination*
- *General GDPR-compliant data protection notice*

Home | News | About Euroguidance Ireland | Practitioner Info | Resources | Blogs | Contact Us | NCEI

For completion by Irish students (ONLY) seeking guidance in European Schools

School Name *

Student's Name *

Year *

Student E-Mail *

Parent / Guardian E-Mail *

Subjects Currently Studied *

Are you studying Irish in school as Other National Language (ONL) ? *

What would you like to do in your future career ? *

Do you have special learning needs ? *

Do you have any specific query that you would like the Guidance Counsellor to respond to ? *

NCEI / Euroguidance Ireland may contact me in the future to seek feedback on this service or information in relation to my Third Level destination *

Submit

APPENDIX B

'Toolkit' consulted by guidance counsellors in delivery of service in 2019.

Information Sources:
General guidelines for Irish European Baccalaureate students applying to study in Ireland https://euroguidance.ie/european-school-information
Euroguidance Ireland website https://euroguidance.ie/
Education in Ireland website http://www.educationinireland.com/en/
Qualifax http://www.qualifax.ie/
Careers Portal http://www.careersportal.ie/
CAO Handbook https://www.cao.ie/handbook.php
NUI Handbook (Matriculation Requirements) http://www.nui.ie/college/entry-requirements.asp
HEAR / DARE information http://accesscollege.ie/
Application Form / Guide for applying to NUI for an exemption from Irish and / or a Third Language <i>with necessary sections highlighted</i> http://www.nui.ie/college/docs/exemption.pdf
Agreed Entry Requirements for EU/EFTA – Guidelines (IUA, ITT, RCSI) - http://www2.cao.ie/downloads/documents/Guidelines-EU-EFTA.pdf
NCAD Portfolio Information (and other similar institutions) https://www.ncad.ie/study-at-ncad/undergraduate-year-1/portfolio-guide/
HPAT info and calculation table for adding result to Leaving Cert, statistics from previous year - https://hpat-ireland.acer.org/results
Information on the European Schools Curriculum https://www.eursec.eu/en
The European Baccalaureate: Information for admissions officers of universities and other higher education institutions, UK Dept. of Education https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/547385/The_European_Baccalaureate_Guidance_Document.pdf
Directory of Leaving Cert Entry Requirements - Institute of Guidance Counsellors (print copy only)
Worked examples of conversions from EB to CAO (as provided to NCGE by Dublin University and UCC– noting differences)
Individual College Websites
Careers websites of European Schools
Applicable interest tests
College prospectuses