



Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board

**OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT 2003
LANGUAGE SCHEME**

From 2015 - To 2018

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

1.1 Introduction

The Official Languages Act 2003 provides for the preparation by public bodies of a language scheme detailing the services which they will provide:

- through the medium of Irish,
- through the medium of English, and
- through the medium of Irish and English

and the measures to be adopted to ensure that any service not currently provided by the body through the medium of the Irish language will be so provided within an agreed timeframe.

In accordance with section 14(3) of the Act, language schemes remain in force for a period of 3 years or until such time as a new scheme is confirmed by the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, whichever is the later.

1.2 Preparation and Content of the Scheme

In the preparation of this scheme, due regard has been given to the Guidelines issued by the Department of Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht. In addition, there has been a comprehensive process of consultation with relevant stakeholders.

The Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board (GRETB) is guided by the principle that the provision of Irish language services should be based on:

- the underlying level of demand for specific services in the Irish language,
- the importance of a proactive approach to the provision of such services, and
- the resources, including human and financial resources, and the capacity of the body concerned to develop or access the necessary language capability.

This scheme complements the principles of Quality Customer Service and our Customer Charter. It has been formulated with the intention of ensuring that all relevant obligations under the Official Languages Act by the GRETB will be fully addressed on an incremental basis, through this and future schemes.

The time and effort put in by all concerned in this process is acknowledged and appreciated.

1.3 Commencement date of the Scheme

This Scheme has been confirmed on **09/02/2015** by the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. It commences with effect from this date and shall remain in force for a period of 3 years or until a new scheme has been confirmed, whichever is the later.

Chapter 2: Overview of Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board (GRETB)

2.1 Mission and Objectives

It is the mission of Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board (GRETB), in conjunction with other education and training agencies and community development bodies, to create and promote the development of learning neighbourhoods in Counties Galway and Roscommon, so that all who live in Counties Galway and Roscommon may have access to the education and training required by their personal, social, cultural, economic and civic needs.

2.2 Main Functions

GRETB is a statutory body with extensive responsibilities for the delivery of education and training in second-level schools, further education colleges, recognised centres of education (literacy and adult education schemes) in Counties Galway and Roscommon, and will, in the future, play a role in primary education (Community National Schools). GRETB is now the state agency with responsibility for administering SOLAS (previously FÁS) training centre in Mervue, Galway.

2.3 Key Services

GRETB establishes and maintains schools and recognised centres of education and plans, provides, coordinates and reviews the provision of education and training within its service areas. GRETB is also required (under direction from the Minister for Education and Skills) to provide support services to other education and training providers. Such supports may be in the context of capital projects and land, human resources, financial services, legal services, ICT and corporate governance.

2.4 Customers and Clients

All of the communities of Counties Galway and Roscommon;
Students, parents/guardians who constitute the learning communities/neighbourhoods of all of our second-level schools, recognised centres of education and all other services provided by GRETB, including further education and training services, community education services and youth work services;
State departments/semi-state agencies, voluntary agencies, community groups and individuals; and
GRETB's own employees.

Chapter 3: Details of services currently being provided in English only or bilingually

Details of services currently being provided in English only or bilingually in Irish and English; including services in Gaeltacht areas.

Current Provision of Services		
Services (General)	In English only	Bilingually, in English and Irish
Post-primary schools	All schools are administered in English, except Coláiste na Coiribe, Galway and Coláiste an Eachréidh, Athenry, GRETB's All-Irish post-primary colleges	
	Youthreach Centres, VTOS Centres, Adult Literacy Centres	Adult Guidance Service; Community Education
GRETB's Administrative HQ in An Coiléar Bán, Athenry	Finance Department	Secretary to the Chief Executive; Corporate Services; Human Resources; ICT; Support Services to the Board; Youth Officer; Timire Gaeilge
Island House, Galway		Buildings Department
GRETB Further Education and Training Centre, Mervue Business Park, Mervue		Further Education and Training Services
GRETB's sub-office in Roscommon town	All services in English	
Services in Gaeltacht Areas		Bilingually, in English and Irish
Through Irish only: all GRETB's post-primary schools; Youthreach Centre; VTOS Centre; Adult Literacy Centre; Breacadh		Petersburg Outdoor Education Centre, An Fhairche

Chapter 4: Enhancing the provision of Irish Language Services

The provisions shaded in grey in the table below are mandatory requirements under the Official Languages Act 2003.

Means of communication with the public		Commitment	
Recorded Oral Announcements		<p>The following recorded oral announcements will be in Irish or bilingual:</p> <p>(a) Recorded oral announcements provided on the telephone when the offices of the public body are closed;</p> <p>(b) Recorded oral announcements transmitted by a public address system;</p> <p>(c) Recorded oral announcements created and transmitted by means of a computerised messaging system or a computerised telephone answering system.</p> <p>This provision relates to 'recorded' announcements rather than 'live announcements'.</p> <p>Where a Placenames Order is in force, a public body is required to use the Irish language version of the placename specified in that Order in recorded oral announcements made by it or on its behalf.</p>	Mandatory
Written Communication	Letters and Electronic Mail	All written communication will be responded to in the official language in which it was received.	Mandatory
	Stationery	Headings of stationery, including notepaper, compliment slips, fax cover sheets, file covers and other folders, labels and envelopes are provided in Irish or bilingually.	Mandatory
Signage	Signage	All signage placed by Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board (GRETB) or on its behalf must be in Irish or bilingually, in accordance with the regulations (S.I. No.391/2008).	Mandatory
Publications	Publications	Documents setting out public policy	Mandatory

		proposals, audited accounts or financial statements, annual reports and strategy statements will be published simultaneously in Irish and English.	
	Circulars/Mailshots	Where a public body communicates in writing or by electronic mail with the general public or a class of the general public for the purpose of furnishing information to the public or the class, the body shall ensure that the communication is in the Irish language or in the English and Irish languages.	Mandatory
An Ghaeltacht	Gaeltacht Placenames	The official placenames of Gaeltacht areas will be used by the public body.	Mandatory

Please refer to the accompanying manual for a list of suggested actions under each service.

Means of communication with the public		Commitment	Timeline By end Yr 1/ Yr 2 / Yr 3
Oral Communication	Reception	Customers will be greeted firstly in Irish and then in English. A service through the medium of Irish will be available from the following sections: All sections at GRETB HQ, Athenry, Co. Galway; GRETB Buildings Section, Isalnd House, Galway; GRETB's Further Education and Training (FET) Centre, Mervue, Galway.	By the end of the first year of the scheme
	Face to Face/Counter Service	An up to date list of staff members who can provide a service through Irish will be made available.	During the first year of the scheme
	Switchboard	Switchboard staff will give the name of the public body in Irish and English.	Continuously
	Telephone communications with the public	Bilingual staff will make customers aware that they are willing to conduct business in Irish, if required.	Continuously
	Recorded Oral Announcements	Staff will have their pre-recorded personal telephone greetings in bilingual format.	By the end of the first year of the scheme
	Live announcements	20 % of live announcements will be bilingual.	Continuously
Written Communication	Information Leaflets/	A bilingual or Irish version of the information leaflets and brochures most commonly used	By the end of the first year

	Brochures	will be available	of the scheme
	Application Forms	There will be a bilingual or Irish version of the most commonly used application forms available	Continuously
	Other	All new application forms will be made available in Irish, or bilingually	From date of publication
Media	Press Releases	All press releases will be issued bilingually. The objective should be to issue this material simultaneously.	Continuously
	Media Spokespersons	An Irish speaking spokesperson/s will be available for interviews with the Irish language media.	Continuously
	Speeches	We will include 10% of Irish content in English speeches. It is expected that this will at least include greetings at the beginning and end of speeches in addition to occasional references in Irish to the subject and/or the occasion in question.	Continuously
	Other	All speeches pertaining to the Gaeltacht/taking place in the Gaeltacht shall be in Irish only.	Continuously
Information Technology	Email	We will publish a dedicated email address for queries in Irish on the website(s) of the public body. Standard email messages such as disclaimers will be bilingual.	By the end of the first year of the scheme
	Websites	The static material on the website and any other secondary website of the public body will be available bilingually. There will be a navigational link from a page in the English version of the website to the relevant page in the Irish version. An Irish language page will be developed on the intranet and will include basic guidance regarding the provision of Irish language services and the availability of Irish language resources.	By the end of the first year of the scheme.
	Computer Systems	Any new computer system being installed will be fully capable of handling the Irish language.	From the beginning, as new systems are being installed
	Interactive Services	Any online and interactive services that the public body itself develops will be	From the beginning, as

		made available bilingually. Every new online and interactive service will be made available on a bilingual basis.	new systems are being installed
	Other	The GRETB website shall include a bilingual statement from the Chief Executive affirming the Board's determination to implement the commitments entered into in the Board's language scheme. Were the Board to decide on a corporate tagline at some date in the future, such tagline shall be bilingual. GRETB shall commence, during the first year of the language scheme, a programme of bilingual internal signage in all its offices, schools and recognised centres of education.	From commencement of scheme
Gaeltacht	Meetings	Where required, meetings held in the Gaeltacht will be conducted in Irish with simultaneous translation to English provided, as appropriate. Contributions in Irish or English will be welcome at public meetings organised by or on behalf of the public body. Meetings organised by the public body that deal with Irish language issues will be held in Irish or bilingually, as appropriate.	Continuously

Chapter 5: Enhancing the Provision of Irish Language Services in Gaeltacht Areas

Enhancing the provision of Irish language services in Gaeltacht areas and ensuring that Irish becomes the working language in offices located in Gaeltacht areas by a certain date.

Commitments in Gaeltacht Areas

Description of services in Gaeltacht areas	Commitment	Timeline By end Yr 1/ Yr 2 / Yr 3
With the exception of Petersburg Outdoor Education Centre, An Fhairche, all of GRETB's services in the Gaeltacht regions in its operational area are being provided through the medium of Irish only.	GRETB shall draw up an Irish language policy and a policy regarding education in the Gaeltacht. The Board shall affirm its commitment to these policies at its official meeting and this commitment shall be reaffirmed by the chief Executive in his welcome address on the GRETB website.	By the end of the first year of the scheme
	GRETB recognises that Gaeltacht communities have very specific linguistic requirements. The Board will make every effort to ensure that all services pertaining to the Gaeltacht shall be so delivered through the medium of Irish, commencing during the first year of its language scheme.	Continuously
	No new GRETB policies/initiatives/programmes will impact adversely on, or do damage to, the specific cultural and linguistic characteristics of the Gaeltacht. The Board shall do all it can to nurture and strengthen those characteristics.	Continuously
	With regard to Gaeltacht placenames, GRETB shall use the official version at all times, in accordance with Statutory Instrument No. 872 of 2004 – The Placenames Order (Gaeltacht Areas), 2004.	Continuously
	Commencing during the lifetime of its first language scheme, the Board shall ensure that the Irish language shall become the working language in any of its school/centres/offices where such is not the case presently.	Commencing during the lifetime of the first language scheme.
	Commencing during the lifetime of its first language scheme, GRETB shall endeavour to appoint secretaries and all other employees in its Gaeltacht offices (schools and other recognised centres of education) who will be capable of dealing with members of the public who wish to conduct their business with the Board through Irish.	Continuously

	All documentation pertaining to Gaeltacht regions shall be provided in Irish only, or bilingually.	Continuously
	GRETB shall endeavour to convene all of its meetings for the Gaeltacht community through the medium of Irish.	Continuously
	Commencing during the lifetime of its first language scheme, GRETB shall endeavour to appoint a specialised administrative team with responsibility for the Board's Gaeltacht/Gaeloideachas provision. The appropriate upskilling shall be offered to that designated team so that it may be linguistically competent to offer an effective service through the medium of the Irish language.	Commencing during the lifetime of the first language scheme
	With regard to GRETB's schools and recognised centres of education in the Gaeltacht, the Board shall endeavour, in every way that it can, to appoint teaching staff who are capable of providing the full curriculum subject choices effectively through the medium of Irish.	Continuously

Irish as the working language in Gaeltacht offices

Commitment	Timeline By end Yr 1/ Yr 2 / Yr 3
At present, with the exception of Petersburg Outdoor Education Centre (POEC), An Fhairche, all of GRETB's Gaeltacht offices, schools and recognised centres of education are operating through the medium of the Irish language. POEC, An Fhairche functions bilingually.	

Chapter 6: Improving Language Capability

6.1 Recruitment

The recruitment of staff with the appropriate level of competence in the Irish language in each area of work of Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board (GRETB) will be the primary means of optimising the availability of services through Irish. Our recruitment policy, which is subject to the framework of agreed national recruitment procedures, will have regard to the need to improve Irish language capability on an incremental basis.

All new staff will be provided with an induction pack containing a copy of our agreed scheme in order to ensure that they are made aware of our commitments under the legislation.

6.2 Training and Development

The Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board (GRETB), is committed to making available opportunities for staff to attend appropriately accredited Irish language training courses, as resources permit. All staff will be advised of facilities/opportunities to improve their competency in Irish.

		Commitment	Timeline By end Yr 1/ Yr 2 / Yr 3
Improving Irish Language Capability	Recruitment	New staff will be provided with an induction pack containing a copy of our agreed scheme.	By the end of the first year of the scheme
	Training	<p>Opportunities to develop the Irish language competence of staff will be provided. In conjunction with the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, appropriate arrangements will be made for the provision of Irish language training and proficiency testing certification for staff in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support staff in maintaining and developing their proficiency in the Irish language, • enhance the capacity of staff to meet their Irish language obligations in the conduct of their duties, and • provide an accredited proficiency testing regime for staff. <p>Staff will be made aware of language</p>	Continuously

		resources such as www.focal.ie, www.focloir.ie, www.breis.focloir.ie and www.abair.ie, as well as WinGléacht, the electronic version of the Ó Dónaill Irish- English dictionary.	
	Participation in language promotion activities /Provision of resources	<p>Our internal library will ensure that books and other materials in Irish are available as a resource to staff to improve their competence in the Irish language.</p> <p>Staff will be encouraged to participate in cultural language activities.</p> <p>Staff will be aware of the concept of the proactive agreement - proactively offering services in Irish to the public .</p> <p>Appropriate continual professional development will be offered to the Bord's administrative staff to encourage them to improve their ability in Irish.</p> <p>Access to information on language resources will be facilitated.</p>	Continuously
	Other	<p>The support previously forthcoming (from certain VEC's) shall continue to be provided to improve the Irish language capability of staff, this by way of funding for recognised Irish language courses at certificate, diploma and degree levels, with the aim of further developing the standard, range and frequency of the Irish language services we offer to the public.</p> <p>Such courses shall include translation courses, courses in spoken and written Irish, and others not specified, which would impact positively on the general management and administrative staff capability to offer a high level of service in the Irish language.</p>	Continuously

Language Rights posters (from the Coimisinéir Teanga's office) will be displayed in prominent locations in every administrative office and every recognised educational centre of GRETB.

A staff survey will be conducted to determine their level of Irish language competency, in which they will be allowed to classify themselves as Fluent> Very Good>Good> Reasonable> Poor> As Standard.

Employment application forms will include a question regarding the applicant's competency in Irish. At least one question in Irish will be asked at the selection interview.

6.3 Designated Irish Language Posts

The posts listed below have been designated as having an Irish language competency requirement. It is the intention that holders of these posts will have achieved specified accredited standards in the Irish language, commensurate with the responsibilities of the post. When designating these posts, particular consideration has been given to posts located in Gaeltacht areas and to posts located outside Gaeltacht areas but whose customer base consists largely of Gaeltacht and/or Irish language speaking communities.

Title of Post	Location	Gaeltacht/Irish speaking community served	Indication of standard of Irish required (choose from basic, intermediate or advanced)
Principals, Deputy Principals, directors, managers, coordinators and all teaching posts	GRETB's schools, recognised centres of education and its other services.	The Gaeltacht community of Galway and the communities of all gaelcholáistí operating under the Board's remit	Advanced desirable
Secretaries, caretakers and other administrative positions	GRETB's schools, recognised centres of education and its other services.	The Gaeltacht community of Galway and the communities of all gaelcholáistí operating under the Board's remit	Advanced desirable

Chapter 7: Monitoring and Review

The implementation of the scheme will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis by [the Chief Executive of GRETB and his/her Senior Management Team]. The contact person for the scheme will be [Tomás Breathnach, Timire Gaeilge, Corporate Services Department.]

A formal system for monitoring requests for services through Irish will be available and recorded in our Annual Report.

Chapter 8: Publicising of Agreed Scheme

This scheme will be publicised both internally and externally, through a press release initially. A bilingual version of the scheme will be made available on our website and circulated to all staff and appropriate agencies. Other means to publicise the scheme may also be used.

In addition, we will take every opportunity in our day to day interaction with customers to promote and publicise the services we provide in Irish through the following means:

- directly informing customers on a proactive basis of the option of conducting business with us through Irish, for example, by the display of notices at reception areas indicating the Irish language services that are available;
- prominently listing these services on our website;
- signifying on selected guidelines, leaflets and application forms that these documents are also available in Irish, unless presented bilingually;
- giving equal prominence to Irish and English language materials.

A copy of the agreed scheme will be forwarded to the Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga.

The Irish language version of this scheme is the official version.

Appendices

Arising from a public call for submissions by Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI), Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board (GRETB) wishes to acknowledge submissions received from the following organisations/agencies/individuals:

- An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (COGG);
- Foras na Gaeilge;
- Údarás na Gaeltachta;
- Comhdháil Náisiúnta na Gaeilge;
- Gaelscoileanna Teo.;
- Peadar Mac Fhlannchadha, Conradh na Gaeilge, Maigh Cuilinn, Co. na Gaillimhe;
- Éamon Ó Tuathail, Dún Laoghaire, Co. Bhaile Átha Cliath; and
- Mícheál Ó Leidhin, Co. Chiarraí.