

Official Languages Act 2003

Church of Ireland College of Education

Scheme

Chapter 1

Introduction and background

The Official Languages Act 2003 gives legislative effect to the deliver of public services through the medium of Irish as provided by the Constitution. It is accepted that each citizen is entitled to transact all and every part of his/her business with the State through Irish alone. There is a corresponding duty imposed on public bodies to respect that entitlement in all dealings with the Citizen and to promote and maintain the Irish language as the national language.

The Official Languages Act provides for the preparation by public bodies of a draft scheme specifying those of its services the public body proposes to provide exclusively through Irish, exclusively through English or through both languages. This scheme sets out the measures which the Church of Ireland College of Education proposes to adopt to ensure that any services that are not provided by the College through Irish will be so provided over a period of time or a series of schemes. This scheme will be effective for a 3 year period commencing on 1st November 2007 and will be effective for a three year period from that date or until a new scheme may be ratified by the Minister under article 15 of the Act, whichever may occur earlier.

Chapter 2

Overview of The Church of Ireland College of Education

The history of the College began in 1811 with the foundation of the Kildare Place Training Institution. This Institution, which was run by the Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in Ireland (popularly known as the Kildare Place Society) pioneered courses of training for teachers, and developed the idea of a qualified teaching profession. In 1855 the Kildare Place College was taken over by the Church Education Society for the purpose of training Anglican students for church schools. The Church Education Society Training College became The Church of Ireland Training College in 1884, and as such received state aid and was recognised as a denominational College for training National Teachers.

A further significant development occurred in the 1920's when links were established with the University of Dublin by which students attended lectures in Trinity College and were eligible to continue for a degree after their period of training in C.I.T.C. The College survived the difficult war years, and in 1969 moved from Kildare Place to new purpose built accommodation in Rathmines. A few years later its name was changed again when it became The Church of Ireland College of Education. In 1974 a three year Bachelor in Education degree course was introduced. This was seen as a natural development of the long-standing links with Dublin University.

Since 1985 the College has developed an involvement with learning support and special educational needs. Current provision includes courses at certificate and

diploma levels. Diplomas are awarded by Dublin University and constitute the taught elements of a Masters degree programme.

2.1 Ethos

The College is concerned to create a community based on Christian values and encourages its students to reflect Christian principles in their lives and work. In particular, students are encouraged to value and respect all individuals irrespective of religious or social background, gender, race, family circumstances, educational achievement, physical characteristics or intellectual functioning.

In both initial teacher training and continuing professional development the College seeks to provide education of the highest possible standard. Preparation for work in smaller schools is a focus of attention in initial teacher training at the college and special efforts are made to advance the competency of students in the Irish language. In continuing professional development, courses to enable teachers to assist pupils and students who have special educational needs or who require learning support, are the particular focus of attention.

Because of its size and the fact that the majority of its undergraduate students live on campus, a relaxed and friendly atmosphere is characteristic of the college community.

2.2 Location

The College is situated on spacious grounds in Rathmines, Dublin 6 within easy reach of Trinity College Dublin and the city centre. Rathmines is a popular student area with good services and facilities. Residential accommodation on campus is available for the majority of undergraduate students.

2.3 Students

A total of 32 students, including mature students are admitted to initial teacher training education in the College each year. Over ninety per cent of students admitted are female. At present under the terms of a Ministerial Order all places on the Bachelor in Education programme are reserved for students who are members of Churches in the Protestant tradition.

Sixty participants are admitted to the post-graduate course in Special Education. Participants must be fully qualified primary or post primary schools but are admitted without reference to religious affiliation.

2.4 Staff

There are fifteen sanctioned academic positions on College staff. These serve undergraduate and postgraduate programmes and include two lecturing positions in Irish. Administrative staff consists of two full time positions, Principal and Bursar/Registrar supported by one clerical/receptionist position. Functions relating to academic affairs, financial management, human resources, buildings, maintenance, general information etc are discharged by the Principal and Bursar with very limited clerical support. Accordingly, the capacity of the College to assign duties and

responsibilities requiring advanced language skills in Irish for the purpose of providing certain services through the medium of Irish is severely restricted.

2.5 Links with The University of Dublin

Links with the University of Dublin, Trinity College were first established in the 1920's. The degree of Bachelor in Education (B.Ed) is taught jointly by the University's School of Education and three associated colleges of education including the Church of Ireland College of Education.

Students register both with a College of Education of their choice and with the University of Dublin, Trinity College and have full access to the facilities of the University.

They attend certain courses within their chosen College of Education and attend further courses in common with students from the other Colleges of Education, within the University's School of Education. An ordinary degree of B.Ed is awarded at the end of three years. Suitably qualified students may register for a fourth year of University work leading to the award of a B.Ed at honours level.

Courses in Special Education undertaken wholly at the Church of Ireland College of Education are validated by the University and awarded a University Diploma.

2.6 Links with the Department of Education and Science.

The College is funded directly by the Department of Education and Science which controls the number of students admitted, the number of full-time positions on staff and academic fees.

2.7 Legislative Background

The constitution of the Church of Ireland College of Education was laid down by a scheme drawn up by the Educational Endowments Commission (Educational Endowments (Ireland) Act 1885).

Under the terms of the scheme the governors of the college constitute a body corporate with perpetual succession and power to hold property, real and personal, for the purposes of the scheme. The land and buildings of the College are vested in the Governors upon trust.

The powers of the Governors as laid down by the scheme relate to the co-optation of new Governors, the maintenance of the College and practising schools, arrangements for the accommodation of students, the terms and conditions for the admission of students, payment of rents taxes and charges, the appointment of staff and the dismissal of students.

2.8 Mission

The particular and unique remit of the Church of Ireland College of Education is to provide an adequate supply of suitably qualified primary teachers for service in national schools under the management of The Church of Ireland, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and the Methodist Church. Under the terms and conditions of the

Employment Equality Act 1997, a Ministerial Order is in place which reserves all places on the B.Ed course for students who are members of churches in the Protestant tradition. This arrangement ensures that the ethos and characteristic spirit of Church of Ireland primary schools may be maintained.

2.9 Primary Teacher Education

Students admitted to the B.Ed programme must satisfy Leaving Certificate requirements laid down by the Department of Education and Science for entrants to all Colleges of Education. These provide, inter alia, for a minimum of Grade C in higher level Irish. Those admitted to the B.Ed programme in the College are first required to participate in a four week intensive course in Irish delivered partly in the College and partly in the Connemara Gaeltacht. . In addition, students are required to spend four weeks on an approved course in a Gaeltacht of their choice on during their first year of study. Irish is a pass/fail subject in each year of the B.Ed programme, and in order to proceed to the next year of their course all students must attain a pass grade in both written and oral Irish.

2.10 Special Education

The College is committed to providing appropriate support for pupils who require learning support and those with special educational needs. At present this aim is achieved by providing continuing professional development for teachers working in the areas of learning support and special educational needs as well as the provision of training for special needs assistants.

2.11 Postgraduate Diploma in Special Education

This course provides substantial theoretical and practical training for teachers working with pupils who require learning support and pupils with special educational needs. It is open to teachers in primary, post primary schools, educational centres such as Youthreach and the prison service. The programme of training is organised on a block release basis with the work of participants in their own schools supported, supervised and assessed on a regular basis by college staff. Successful completion of the course leads to the award of a Postgraduate Diploma by the University of Dublin, Trinity College.

2.12 Special Needs Assistants

The College provides training for special needs assistants currently employed in primary, post-primary and special schools. The course is of 60 hours duration and the content has been approved by the Department of Education and Science. At present, two such courses are available: one is delivered at the College, the other at Wexford Education Centre. Those who successfully complete the course are awarded a certificate.

2.13 Other Educational Activities

In addition to programmes of training a number of other educational services provided at the College. These include: The DICE project, the Reading Centre and the Plunkett Museum of Irish Education.

2.14 The DICE Project

The developmental and intercultural education project or DICE project works to integrate development and intercultural education within primary teacher education. With a staff of three it operates across the five colleges of education but it is based in and managed by The Church of Ireland College of Education.

2.15 The Plunket Museum of Irish Education

The Plunket Museum of Irish Education which is situated on the College grounds, celebrates Ireland's deep-rooted educational tradition. The Museum is Ireland's only repository dedicated solely to the preservation of school records, equipment, furniture, artefacts and textbooks inherited from earlier traditions of schooling. Many of these items are on view in the museum's exhibition areas where the story of our schools and their contribution to the social history of Ireland is told in a series of interpretative displays. Visitors can also experience the schooldays of yesteryear in a specially recreated nineteenth century classroom.

2.16 The Reading Centre

The Reading Centre has its concern the promotion of all aspects of reading including: children's literature, support for those with reading difficulties, social inclusion and children's books, leabhair Ghaeilge and the role of libraries in schools and in the community. The centre organises conferences, courses and occasional lectures.

Chapter Three

Provision of services in Irish, in English and in both Irish and English.

3.1 Customers and Clients

The College has both internal and external clients. These are respectively undergraduate and postgraduate students and members of the general public.

The College recognises its responsibilities to both internal and external clients in terms of the provisions of the Official Languages Act 2004.

3.2 Services and Language of Communication

An assessment of services available currently indicates that these are mainly provided through the medium of English. While some services are available through Irish (e.g. appeals of grades awarded to students in teaching practice) these tend to be the exception rather than the rule. Written communications in Irish are replied to in Irish but, in general, communication services are not conducted in a way that addresses the two official languages on the basis of equality. After consultation with the Irish language community and further exploration of the provisions of the Language Act it is proposed to upgrade the bilingual delivery of information about the college. There has always been a significant commitment to the bilingual provision of signage, stationery and public addresses at conferences, graduations etc. It would now be necessary to provide bilingual forms of background information about the college and its current services in both hard and electronic copy. Information leaflets, pamphlets, forms, yearly reports, staff business cards, etc. will now form part of the college's future commitment to a bilingual provision.

3.3 Means of communicating with the Public

Most Members of the public contact the college by calling personally or by telephone. Correspondence is a further point of contact. Objectives for the improvement of provision in this area are as follows:

- Training will be provided for the College receptionist to enable the acquisition and use of basic greetings in Irish.
- Callers by telephone will be greeted in Irish initially.
- If a caller seeks detailed information about either of the two courses that are offered in the College he / she will be facilitated, as soon as possible, to contact a member of the staff who will be able to discuss the query in Irish. The caller will also be provided with a written version of such information if necessary.
- Personal callers to the College will be welcomed in Irish and information provided as outlined above.
- Irish language templates will be devised in order to facilitate acknowledgement of correspondence

- Bilingual notices will be devised to facilitate correspondence with institutions where Irish is the primary language of communication. These will be used, where appropriate, when correspondence is initiated by the College.

3.4 Application and Registration Forms

The College uses a number of application and registration forms which relate to courses offered to internal customers.

- The objective here will be to provide all such forms in both Irish and English. Irish language versions of such forms are being prepared currently. Within the duration of this scheme application and registration forms for the College will be provided in a bilingual format on the same document except in cases where this may not be practical because of size, layout or the nature of the document. In these instances both English and Irish versions of the document will be available.

3.5 Information on Courses and Training

Various information is provided in relation to courses and training provided. The following objectives will apply in relation to all such courses and training.

- All College brochures and information leaflets will be available in bi-lingual format.
- Student Handbooks on all courses, both graduate and undergraduate will be made available in Irish and English on a phased schedule.
- Timetables and examination/assessment schedules and general notices will be provided in bilingual format within the duration of this scheme.

3.6 Publications

During the timeframe of the present scheme:-

- The College Brochure will be made available in bilingual format.
- The College, in conjunction with the other Associated Colleges of Trinity College will endeavour to support the provision of a bilingual form of the extensive student handbook for the B.Ed

3.7 College Website

The objectives in relation to the college website will be:

- The provision of course description in both Irish and English.
- The provision of admission procedures for courses in both Irish and English.
- Visitors to the College website will be able to access Irish medium information via the College homepage. The College is making arrangements to rebuild the College Website currently, and the static material on that site is in the process of being translated. It is hoped to have that task completed

within the duration of this scheme. As soon as extra necessary material becomes available for publishing on the site it will also be provided in both Irish and English. (cf note about the B.Ed Course Handbook in paragraph 3.6 above. It would be the intention to have that available for perusal on the College website.)

3.8 Computer and Information Systems

The College will ensure that as computer systems are upgraded and updated they will have the capacity to facilitate the use of the Irish language accurately. Systems that accommodate the accented vowels, spellcheck software and other language support software will be put in place.

This year the College's computer systems were upgraded to ensure that all computers are compatible with the Irish language on all software used by students and lecturers. In addition, systems have been upgraded in order that students and staff have easy access to spell checks, dictionaries and numerous on-line Irish language learning resources. At present, the College does not have any interactive services but in the event that it develops such a service is developed in the future, account will be taken of developing an Irish language version.

3.9 Advertising of Vacancies

The College will:

- Advertise positions in initial teacher education in both English and Irish language newspapers.

3.10 Support for the Irish Language in College

The current practice of supporting the language in the following ways will be continued:

- The provision of optional classes in Irish for those students who require such assistance.
- The provision of prizes and awards to encourage greater effort in Irish language skills.
- The provision of an intensive course in Irish for all first year students.
- The organization of chapel services conducted through Irish
- The continued support for student participation in social and cultural events in Irish, both in the college and in the wider community.

3.11 Mature Students

Advertisements in relation to applications for admission to initial teacher training are currently placed in English language papers only. The College will:-

- Advertise for applications from mature students in both English and Irish language papers.

3.12 Customer Service Charter

- The College will examine and where necessary amend and update the College's Customer Services Charter in order to ensure that its provisions are in keeping with the requirements of the Official Languages Act and the Scheme.

3.13 Staff Development in relation to the Language Act

The College has a well-developed development policy for members of staff. To further increase levels of awareness of the College's policy based on the demands of the Language Act and to increase further their levels of competency in Irish the following provision will be made:

- Information sessions to appraise staff of their new obligations arising from the Act
- Additional funding for the purpose of increasing the competency of those whose language skills require improvement to enable them to fulfill the extra demands that may be made on them as a result of compliance with the Language Act .
- To support all staff as they cope with the practical demands for providing written material, etc. as requested by the public or by clients of the college (e.g. that staff would have access to qualified accredited translators)
- In particular, the client demands from people who come from Gaelscoil or Gaeltacht backgrounds and the effects of such demands on college staff will need to be addressed
- Formal training in Irish for frontline office staff. This training usage in order to deal with personal callers and telephone queries.
- Competence in Irish may be listed, when appropriate, as a desirable skill when recruiting new staff in the future

3.14 **Co-ordinating Committee**

In order to monitor the implementation of this draft policy and ensure that the college meets its obligations in terms of the Official Languages Act, it is proposed to:-

- Establish a Language Co-ordinating Committee with members drawn from the staff and if possible, the Board of Governors, to address, co-ordinate, publicise and monitor the various stages of the phased implementation of this Scheme.

Chapter Four

Monitoring and Review

The implementation of this will be monitored on an on-going basis by the college's Language Co-ordination Committee which will provide an annual report for consideration by the Principal and Board of Governors.

Chapter Five

Publicising the Scheme

Copies of the Scheme will be made available on request to all staff and students. Copies will be circulated to the Department of Education and Science, An Coimisiún Teanga, Trinity College Dublin, The Church of Ireland Board of Education. Copies will also be made available on request to any member of the public.