

UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK SCHEME 2009 – 2012
Under Section 11 of the Official Languages Act 2003

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CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The University of Limerick published its first Scheme in 2006 under *Section 11* of the Official Languages Act 2003. *Section 11* provides for the preparation by public bodies of a statutory Scheme detailing the services they will provide through

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

and the measures to be adopted to ensure that any service not provided through the medium of the Irish language will be so provided over a period of time and/or a series of schemes – each scheme being effective for a 3-year period. The University of Limerick in accordance with the provisions of the Act publishes below its second Scheme for the period 2009 – 2012.

1.1 Preparation of the Scheme

1.1.1 *Section 12* of the Official Languages Act 2003 provides for the preparation of guidelines by the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs and their issue to public bodies to assist in the preparation of draft Schemes. This Scheme has been drawn up in conformity with the guidelines issued by the Minister in 2004.

1.1.2 The Scheme has been developed taking into account, variously, the submissions received through the public consultation process, and the views and suggestions of the campus community with regard to availability, capability and demand for services through Irish over the lifetime of the first Scheme.

The University published notices, inviting representations in relation to the preparation of the Scheme under *Section 11* from any interested parties in *The Limerick Post* (18 April 2009), *Foinse* (20 April 2009) and on www.gaelport.com. A number of submissions were received.

1.1.3 A focus group meeting for representative groups in the hinterland of the University was held on campus on 27 May 2009. In addition, the University has engaged in consultation with faculty and staff through an on-line survey.

1.1.4 As part of the process for preparing this scheme, a comprehensive language audit of UL faculty and staff took place in May 2009 to establish the staff competency levels in various departments and sections, and to assess the demand for services available in Irish and staff willingness to participate in Irish language activities and service provision. The main findings of this audit are available on the UL website.

1.1.5 The University of Limerick *Coiste na Gaeilge*, established a Working Group (The Irish Language Policy Working Group) in August 2004 with a clear brief to develop the University's first Scheme. This Working Group was renamed the UL Official Languages Act Implementation Group in 2006. The Group, with representatives from a range of functional areas, has prepared the 2009-2012 Scheme which has been agreed by *Coiste na Gaeilge* and the Executive Committee of the University.

- 1.1.6 The Executive Committee of the University of Limerick are grateful for the time and effort of all concerned in the development of the University of Limerick second Scheme.

1.2 The Content of the Language Scheme

- 1.2.1 Service provision has improved significantly since the inception of the first Scheme. Extensive commitments were made in the University's first Scheme to improve the level of service in Irish. All these commitments have been delivered.

This second Scheme builds on the progress achieved across the University over the period of the last Scheme. The objectives of the University of Limerick 2009-2012 Scheme are to:

- Continue the delivery of the commitments relating to communication with customers contained in the first scheme and enhance the level of service over the period of the new Scheme (2009-2012);
- Build on the commitment of the University to the promotion of the Irish language as well as the principles of quality assurance and improvement in all its services;
- Enhance the services available to internal and external customers through Irish and bilingually, and provide an active offer of services, and
- Raise the language awareness of staff and improve staff competency in Irish through the continued provision of language education programmes and *Aonad na Gaeilge* support.

1.3 Commencement Date of Scheme

- 1.3.1 This Scheme has been confirmed by the Minister for Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs. This Scheme will commence with effect from 29th December 2009 and will remain in force for a period of 3 years from this date or until a new Scheme has been confirmed by the Minister pursuant to *Section 15* of the Official Languages Act, whichever is earlier.

1.4 Overview of University of Limerick

- 1.4.1 **Mission:** The University of Limerick (UL) is an independent, internationally focused University. Its mission is to be internationally renowned as a distinctive university which shapes the future through educating and empowering people to meet the real challenges of tomorrow. The University intends to achieve its mission by:

- Attracting excellent students;
- Conducting outstanding research;
- Recruiting and retaining outstanding faculty and staff;
- Actively serving our communities and the development of the region, and
- Providing an exceptional campus and learning environment.

1.4.2 **Strategy :** The strategy of the University of Limerick for 2006-2011 is to realise its vision and to act on its commitments to:

- The empowerment potential of high quality education to develop and sustain productive, enquiring citizens;
- The integration of learning, research and innovation, characterized by reflective thinking and creativity;
- Ensuring that students are at the heart of what we do;
- Doing world-class research in targeted areas;
- The importance of an inspirational campus environment;
- The value of flexibility, diversity and collaboration, and
- Being a key contributor to the social, cultural, sporting and economic life of the region and the nation.

1.4.3 **Physical Campus:** The University's Campus, comprising 340 acres with the river Shannon at its centre, is located 5 km from Limerick City and 20km from Shannon International Airport. Adjacent to the University is the National Technological Park, Ireland's first science/technology park, which is home to 80 organisations and employs almost 4,000 people. There is close interaction between the National Technological Park and UL.

1.4.4 **University Staff & Services:** The University employs approximately 1300 administrative and academic staff. The principal work of the University is to provide education and to carry out research through its academic departments, research centres, administrative offices and support services. Student enrolment at the University is in the order of 11,000 undergraduate and postgraduate students.

1.4.5 **Customers and Clients:** In the context of the Official Languages Act, 2003, customers and clients are defined as follows:

Internal Customers: current students, faculty and staff, members of Governing Authority, associated bodies (e.g. Campus Life Services), and graduates.

External Customers: prospective students and employees, general public, co-operative employers and other placement providers, contractors and consultants, schools, research partners, state, semi-state and private bodies.

1.5 **Current extent of services available through Irish**

1.5.1 The University of Limerick operates primarily through the medium of the English language. However, the University has made significant developments over the period of the first Scheme in its provision of Irish medium and bilingual services. These are outlined in items 1.5.1.1 - 1.5.1.4 below:

1.5.1.1 Increased profile of Irish in the Campus environment

- An Irish version of the UL Website is available. All top level pages are available in Irish together with a number of other pages e.g. Information & Compliance and Acting Secretary.
- All policies, procedures and statutes approved by the Governing Authority are available in Irish and are published on the Acting Secretary's website.
- The *UL Profile* document is available bilingually on the website.
- The UL Conferring Booklet contains all faculty headings in Irish and English and also includes a welcome address from the President and Chancellor in Irish and English.
- UL Christmas Cards were produced electronically and bilingually in 2007 and 2008.
- A list of UL faculty and staff who are willing to act as spokespeople through the medium of Irish has been compiled and issued to the Irish media.
- An Irish version of the campus map is available on the UL website.
- All UL tender notices published on www.etenders.gov.ie are available in Irish.
- Voicemail messages are recorded bilingually in the offices targeted in the first Scheme (outlined in 1.5.1.3).
- HR job application forms together with standard response letters are available in Irish.
- An internal Human Resources document, the Recruitment Pack, is available in Irish.
- The UL Standard Administrative Contract of Employment is available in Irish.
- *Seomra na Gaeilge*, an Irish medium common room and a facility for the campus community opened in February 2009.
- The visibility of the Irish language has increased significantly in the Library and Information Services Division.

1.5.1.2 Staff Training and Development

- A comprehensive range of Irish language education programmes are available for staff during working hours. These are promoted by the Staff Training and Development Unit and *Aonad na Gaeilge*.
- A language awareness presentation has been incorporated into the Induction Programme offered to all new staff and faculty.
- A language awareness programme, *Gnéithe den Fheasacht Teanga* has been designed. This is now a core module (GA3034) in the UL *Teastas/Diplóma sa Ghaeilge*.
- One member of staff in 16 targeted areas has been designated as responsible for dealing with customers through the medium of Irish. These areas are outlined below in 1.5.1.3.

1.5.1.3 Targeted Departments and Offices

From the commencement of its first Scheme in 2006, the University of Limerick has been committed to encouraging the development of Irish language skills across all areas but especially in 16 targeted functional areas. However, the building of language skills is a gradual process and involves considerable time and commitment. Movement of staff across functional areas and other staffing issues have proved challenging in the development of capabilities within functional areas. The University is not in a position to control the recruitment of replacement staff in terms of Irish language capabilities.

In 2007, the University underwent substantial reconfiguration of its academic departments and offices. This resulted in the establishment of four faculties. The list below has been adapted from that of the first Scheme to reflect the reconfiguration and for the purpose of this Scheme will now be referred to as the “*Targeted Areas*”. Each of the offices below has designated one member of staff to deal effectively through the medium of Irish with customers, as required.

1. Student Affairs Division (Admissions*, Access Office);
2. Student Academic Administration;
3. Finance Division;
4. Human Resources Department;
5. Information Technology Division;
6. Library & Information Services Division;
7. Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences;
8. Faculty of Science* and Engineering *;
9. Faculty of Education & Health Sciences * ;
10. Research Office;
11. Information and Compliance*;
12. Department of Lifelong Learning and Outreach;
13. Procurement and Contracts;
14. Campus Life Services (including accommodation);
15. Co-Operative Education and Careers Division;
16. Buildings and Estates.

* It should be noted that no reference to a commitment to the designation of personnel in Admissions, Engineering, Health Sciences and Science was made in UL’s 2006-2009 Scheme. The Freedom of Information Office was originally targeted but this has now been renamed Information & Compliance. These areas are now included only because of reconfiguration.

1.5.1.4 Student Documentation

- The following Student Academic Administration forms are available bilingually on the web: Exemption; Internal Transfer; Leave of Absence; Link-in; Link-in Occasional and Re-admission forms.
- Hard copies of the following forms are available bilingually: Exit, Grant, Letter Requests, Transcript Requests and Change of Address forms.
- The following publications are also available through Irish: Summary of Undergraduate Programmes (Irish Version); Undergraduate Application Form (Irish Version); Application Fee Giro (Bilingual); Offer Giro (Bilingual); Mature Student Information Sheet (Irish Version); Instructions for Accepting an Offer (Irish Version), and Application for Re-admission (Irish Version).

CHAPTER 2:

PROVISION OF GENERAL INSTITUTIONAL SERVICES/ ACTIVITIES

2.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out the official language regime operated by the University in relation to its services and activities.

The UL Official Languages Act Implementation Group reviewed the procedures for translation services during the first Scheme, and the University will continue to outsource their translation requirements. This will be reviewed during the course of the second Scheme. Detailed procedures for Irish language translation are available bilingually on the UL website for the information of all staff and faculty.

2.2 Ongoing and New Commitments

2.2.1 Ongoing Commitments - General Communication with Customers

The following objectives were achieved during the first Scheme and will be continued from the beginning of the second Scheme:

- Voicemail messages in the following areas will be in Irish and English: The President's Office, Office of Vice-President (Academic & Registrar), Acting Secretary's Office, Office of Director of Finance, Admissions Office, Student Academic Administration, Human Resources Division, Co-operative Education & Careers Division and Library & Information Services Division.
- Staff at Main Reception will continue to greet customers and to give the name of the University in Irish and English. Suitable arrangements are in place so that they can put callers in touch without delay with the staff member responsible for offering the service required through Irish, where available.

2.2.2 New Commitments - General Communication with Customers

- Procedures with regard to dealing with customers through the medium of Irish will be agreed and published internally in the first year of the Scheme. These will promote quality customer service practice.
- Standard letters to prospective students will be issued bilingually by the Admissions Office (Year One).
- The voicemails of the Offices of the Deans and Faculty Managers for the four faculties will be in Irish & English (Year One):

Faculty of Business (Kemmy Business School)
Faculty of Education & Health Sciences
Faculty of Science & Engineering
Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.

2.2.3 Ongoing Commitments - Academic Programmes

The following commitments will be continued from the University's first Scheme:

- Irish will be offered to degree level on a number of programmes including
Bachelor of Arts (Joint Honours)
B.A. Applied Languages
B.A. Irish Music and Dance
B.A. Language, Literature and Film
B.Sc. Physical Education.
- The University will offer an optional module, *An Ghaeilge Ghairmiúil* in year three for Department of Education and Professional Studies students.
- The University will offer modules GA4161 *An Ghaeilge Fheidhmeach do Cheoltóirí agus do Rinceoirí 1*, GA4162 *An Ghaeilge Fheidhmeach do Cheoltóirí agus do Rinceoirí 2*, GA4173 *An Ghaeilge Fheidhmeach do Cheoltóirí agus do Rinceoirí 3* to students on the B.A. in Irish Music and Dance.
- The continued use of the Irish language at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance will be supported. Students who wish to submit their written submissions through the medium of the Irish language will be facilitated, subject to the availability of appropriate supervisors.
- The option to pursue postgraduate research through the medium of Irish in the area of sociolinguistics will continue.

2.2.4 New Commitments - Academic Programmes

- The University will offer the *Teastas sa Ghaeilge: An Ghaeilge sa Saol Comhaimseartha* on campus. This course comprises three language modules and one language awareness module and is particularly suitable for employees of public bodies interested in developing staff competency to meet the requirements of the Official Languages Act 2003.
- *Gaeilge do Thosaitheoirí 3* (GA4163) module will be offered to students of the BA in Irish Music and Dance and Study Abroad students from Academic Year 2010/11.
- *Gaeilge* will be offered as an option in the Graduate Diploma in Education (Languages) before the end of the Scheme. This will be subject to the approval of the Teaching Council.

It should be noted that academic programmes at UL are reviewed on an ongoing basis at course board, departmental, faculty and institutional level. Courses are subject to change depending on funding constraints, enrolment levels, change of staff, or change of departmental/institutional strategy.

2.2.5 On-Campus Accommodation

- The UL *Scéim Chónaithe* for first year students will be continued, subject to the ongoing availability of HEA and Campus Life Services funding.
- Campus Life Services will offer every applicant for on-campus accommodation at Kilmurry Village the option of choosing accommodation reserved for Irish speakers.

2.2.6 Publications, Press Releases, Brochures, Forms, Information Leaflets

- The University will continue to publish all newly approved Statutes, Policies and Procedures approved by the University's Governing Authority bilingually. These will be available on the Acting Secretary's website www.ul.ie/actingsecretary.
- The University will continue to publish the following leaflets, brochures and information in Irish or bilingually: UL Profile: Facts and Figures (revised annually and available on the UL website); Summary: Full-Time Honours Primary Degree Programmes and Admissions Requirements (revised annually); Sections of the UL Conferring Booklet, and Accommodation Brochure.
- The University publishes media releases regarding general University business that relate to issues or developments of national/international significance, and/or address themes of general interest to a national audience, and/or involve campus developments that would be likely to have national relevance and impact. The University of Limerick will continue to issue bilingually, throughout the course of the scheme, 25 per cent of press releases that relate to issues of national/international significance.
- The inclusion of Irish or bilingual articles in *UL Links*, the University's twice-yearly magazine will continue to be welcomed.
- All targeted one sided forms will be made available bilingually within the one cover. All forms which are two sided or more, will have Irish or English options available. Customers will be made aware of the availability of a separate Irish version by way of a suitable statement on the English version of the document and by any other means that the University deems appropriate.

2.2.7 Website

Web sites hosted on the UL corporate server must comply with the UL Design and Usability Guidelines. UL.ie must appear in the domain names of all UL organisations/colleges/departments.

The University of Limerick will continue its commitment from the first Scheme that top level pages of the University website will be made available in both languages throughout the duration of the second Scheme. This will ensure that any "new" top-level pages will be made available in both languages.

In addition, bilingual versions of the homepages of the following administrative/academic areas will be published before the end of the Scheme:

Finance Division (Year Two)
Library & Information Services Division (Year One)
Faculty of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences (Year One)
Faculty of Business (Year Two)
Faculty of Education & Health Sciences (Year One)
Faculty of Science & Engineering (Year Two)
Human Resources Department (Year One)
Buildings & Estates (Year One)
Acting Secretary's Office (Year One)
Student Academic Administration (Year One)
Admissions (Year Two)
Data Protection (Year Two)
Records Management (Year Two)
Further development of the Official Languages Act webpage (Year One - Three).

The following information on the website will remain in English only:

- Information aimed at an international audience;
- Information of a technical specialist nature;
- Web-based programmes of study (except Irish language programmes, should they be developed);
- Information relating to existing or new programmes (other than those available through Irish).

During the period of the current Scheme, any new interactive services will be introduced simultaneously in both languages. During the same period, any upgrading done on existing interactive services, currently available in English only, will include an Irish language option also.

The University will ensure that when tendering for new or updated computer systems (including recorded voice messaging systems e.g. elevator recorded messages), where appropriate, tenders will be invited to include systems with the ability to accommodate multilingual data and that user-interfacing aspects will be requested to support the use of the Irish language.

2.2.8 Information Technology

University personal computers can support the Irish language for both entry and editing of text and spell checking. Names and place-names can be recorded, displayed and printed in either official language.

2.2.9 Contact with External Media

The list of UL Faculty and Staff who are willing and competent to deal with the Irish language media on news items related to their field will be updated annually and made available through the UL Press Office.

CHAPTER 3:

SUPPORTING AND PROMOTING A BILINGUAL ENVIRONMENT

3.1 Introduction

The principal commitments of the University of Limerick with regard to its services and activities for the 2009-2012 period have been outlined in Chapter 2. This chapter now outlines the University's plans to raise the profile of the Irish language on campus, to raise awareness of language related issues, to provide language support, to improve the Irish language capability of staff in targeted areas, and to make some developments in supporting research through Irish. The primary deliverable of this second scheme, however, will be the development of an active offer promoting services and informing customers of the services developed as part of the first Scheme and this current Scheme. By the end of the current Scheme, the University of Limerick will achieve the targets outlined below.

3.2 Commitments

3.2.1 Staff Training and Development

- The language awareness presentation in the UL Induction Programme will continue. This outlines UL's legislative obligations under the Official Languages Act 2003;
- At least two language awareness events for the general campus community will take place each year;
- The University will continue to provide strategic language education programmes during working hours for staff of the 2006-2009 targeted areas. At least one member of staff in each of the newly targeted areas below will be requested to engage in a language learning programme:-
 - Faculty of Education and Health Sciences;
 - Faculty of Business;
 - Faculty of Science & Engineering;
 - Admissions Office.
- *Aonad na Gaeilge* will continue to organise *Gaeltacht*-based weekend programmes for the general campus community.
- The University will continue to assess the level of demand for Irish medium services by monitoring the level of enquiries and requests and by undertaking audits of demand. An audit of the language skills of staff and of the demand for services will be conducted (Year Two);

3.2.2. Increased profile of Irish in the campus environment

- Regular Irish medium events will be promoted at *Seomra na Gaeilge*;
- A touch screen bilingual facility will be available on all self-service facilities in the Library & Information Services Division (Year One);
- The Offices of the Deans and the Faculty Manager Offices will introduce Irish into their email signatures during the first year of the Scheme. (Year One)

3.2.3 Language Support

- An internal Language Support Network will be established for “designated” persons from all targeted areas. (Year One);
- A bilingual desktop card with useful phrases for use on the phone or at counter services will be distributed among targeted areas. (Year One);
- Mp3 files to help with pronunciation of the above phrases will be made available. (Year One);
- A pronunciation guide for Irish names at the Conferring Ceremonies will be made available. (Year One);
- A comprehensive bilingual directory of University of Limerick terminology will be published internally. (Year One).

3.2.4 An Active Offer

- A UL symbol to promote bilingual services on campus will be commissioned. Promotional post-it notes will be distributed among all administrative functional areas. (Year One);
- A poster campaign to promote availability of services through Irish will be undertaken. (Year One);
- Members of staff prepared to interact with customers in Irish on a “meet and greet” basis, and/or on the telephone in departments and offices other than those targeted areas will be requested to have their names published on the UL website;
- Where application forms and information leaflets are provided as separate Irish and English language versions, equal prominence will be given to both versions at all public locations and the Irish language version will be as readily accessible as the English language version.
- The updated list of staff (May 2009) prepared to conduct business through the medium of Irish will be available to staff at Main Reception. This will facilitate clients who wish to conduct their University business through Irish. The list will be updated yearly.

3.2.5 Research

- At least one *Siompóisiám Lae* for UL research students across all disciplines will take place before the end of the current Scheme. The aim of this will be to showcase the work of any student from any discipline who is able to present his/her work through Irish;
- At least one workshop in academic writing in Irish will be offered to interested staff and research students before the end of the current Scheme.

CHAPTER 4

MONITORING AND REVISION OF THE SCHEME

- It will be the responsibility of the Acting Secretary, in consultation with *Coiste na Gaeilge*, to ensure that processes are in place that will enable the University to achieve effectively the targets set out in the Scheme.
- Responsibility for monitoring and revising the Scheme will rest jointly with the senior management within the University and with *Coiste na Gaeilge* as the Committee charged with the promotion of Irish language and culture in the University. These will keep the effective operation of the Scheme under review. The day-to-day monitoring function will be carried out primarily by heads of departments and other units responsible for the implementation of the Scheme within their own areas.
- The Acting Secretary and *Coiste na Gaeilge* will report on the overall progress of the implementation of the Scheme to the Executive Committee of the University.

CHAPTER 5

PUBLICISING THE AGREED SCHEME

The contents of this second Scheme along with the commitments and provisions of the Scheme will be publicised within the University and to the general public by means of:

- Press Release
- Advertising of provisions
- Circulation to appropriate agencies and public bodies by email, and
- the University's website.

In addition, once departments and offices, which have committed to delivering a service are in a position to do so, this will also be publicised through the University website. The UL symbol promoting bilingual services will be displayed in all relevant departments and offices.

The UL active offer as outlined in section 3.2.4 is considered key to the effective implementation of the provisions of the Scheme. A reference to the importance of an active offer of services will also be included in the proposed internal procedures (2.2.2) for dealing with customers through the medium of Irish. The commitments made here will ensure that the University takes every opportunity in its interactions with customers to promote and publicise the services it provides through Irish.

A copy of this Scheme will be forwarded to *An Coimisinéir Teanga*. It should be noted that the English language version is the original text of this Scheme.