# Institute of Technology, Sligo

## Scheme 2019 – 2022

## Under Section 15 of the Official Languages Act 2003

# Contents

3

4

# 1 Introduction/Background

## 1.1  Introduction/Background

This scheme was prepared under Section 15 of the Official Languages Act 2003 (hereinafter referred to as the Act) by IT, SLIGO.  Section 15 provides for the preparation by public bodies of a statutory scheme detailing the services they will provide:

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

Public bodies must also outline the measures to be adopted to ensure that any service not provided by the body through the medium of the Irish language will be so provided within an agreed timeframe.

## 1.2  Guidelines for the Preparation of a Scheme

This scheme has been drawn up, having regard to the guidelines published by the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

On 13th February 2018, a public notice was placed in The Sligo Champion under Section 13 inviting representations in relation to the preparation of the draft scheme under Section 15 from any interested parties.  (See Appendix I).  No representations were made by members of the public.

On Monday 9th April a notice was placed on the campus staff email portal inviting any staff interested to a meeting to discuss ideas to support the Irish language at the Institute (See Appendix I).  A small number of staff attended this meeting and discussed how Irish language services and the use of Irish in the Institute might be improved.

On Monday 9<sup>th</sup> April an email was sent via the Students Union inviting students to forward suggestions regarding services through Irish or the use of the Irish language to the Librarian of the institute (See Appendix I).  To date one student has responded with suggestions for promoting Irish on campus.

## 1.3  The Content of the Language Scheme

The services provided in IT, SLIGO are currently through the medium of English. The Institute has a limited number of staff with verbal competency in Irish and an even smaller number with written competency.  The priorities of the scheme are to:

- Gauge and monitor the level of demand for services in the Irish language
- Create an awareness among staff of the content and purpose of the scheme
- Provide training for staff to develop competency in the Irish language
- Comply with the regulations of the Act
- Ensure effective implementation of the Scheme and that commitments given are delivered upon

## 1.4  Commencement Date of Scheme

The scheme has been confirmed by the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and will commence with effect from 24 June 2019.  The scheme will remain in force for a period of three years from this date or until a new scheme has been confirmed by the Minister pursuant to Section 15 of the Act, whichever is the later.

## 1.5  Overview of IT, SLIGO

### 1.5.1  Mission Statement

The Mission Statement of IT, Sligo is taken from the Strategic Plan 2017 – 2022:

6

*Advancing economic, social and environmental sustainability through education, innovation, and engagement, producing graduates who are innovative, confident and capable of leading the development of the region and beyond.*

### 1.5.2   Objectives

In its Strategic Plan the Institute sets out a series of objectives for:

- **Our Students:** Develop the ability to navigate their futures in a complex world
- **Learning and Teaching:** Support the continuous professional development of all staff.  Maintain and strengthen leadership in technology-enhanced learning
- **Research Development and Innovation:**  Enable more students and staff to conduct research.  Gain international recognition in key research areas
- **Partnership and External Engagement:**  Build stronger partnerships with second level schools/ETBs, employers and community
- **Shaping and Influencing Economic, Social and Cultural Development:** Raise the education-qualification profile of the regional population.  Support social entrepreneurship, business start-ups and development in the region.
- **Organisation and Governance:**  Continue to provide robust governance, accountability and appropriate processes.

### 1.5.3  The Institute

Since its formation in 1970 as a Regional Technical College (RTC), IT Sligo has transformed from a small college offering two year certificate courses to less than 100 students to a respected HEI providing programmes to over 6,000 students, stimulating and supporting the development of the North West region, and preparing graduates for the international world of work. Through this expansion, the Institute has made higher education accessible in the North West where historically there has been a limited tradition of access.

IT Sligo is set on a moderrn, state-of-the-art campus providing students with the highest quality learning environment and recreational facilities. The three schools of Business and

Social Sciences, Engineering and Design, and Science offer a range of programmes leading to qualifications from Level 6-10 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

The campus has been enhanced in recent years with the following developments:
- Major extension to Yeats Library
- MacMunn Science Building
- 3G pitch and floodlights
- Extension to the Technology Building
- Aurivo Auditorium (280 seat)
- Constance Markievicz Building – refurbishment of the School of Business and Social Sciences.

### 1.5.4 Customers and Clients

The Institute's principal customers are its students to whom it has a particular duty of care.  It also interacts with other educational institutions and agencies and the general public. Its key client and customer base comprises the following, but this list is not exclusive:

- Higher Education Authority (HEA)
- Department of Education and Skills
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)
- Technological Higher Education Association (THEA)
- Irish Research Council
- Sligo Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Education and Training Boards
- County Councils
- Enterprise Ireland
- IDA Ireland
- Fáilte Ireland
- The Arts Council of Ireland
- Engineers Ireland
- The Teaching Council
- West/North West Regional Cluster
- Connacht Ulster Alliance

- Northern and Western Regional Assembly.
- SOLAS – Further Education and Training Authority

### 1.5.5 Functions

| Function | Activity |
|---|---|
| **Governing Body** | |
| President | Communication |
| Science | Environmental Science |
| | Health and Nutritional Sciences |
| | Life Sciences |
| Engineering and Design | Arts, Design and Architecture |
| | Computing and Electronic Engineering |
| | Manufacturing Engineering |
| | Mechatronic Engineering |
| | Civil Engineering and Construction |
| Business and Social Sciences | Business |
| | Social Sciences |
| | Marketing, Tourism and Sport |
| Online Development | Centre for Online Learning |
| | IT Services |
| Finance and Corporate Services | Finance |
| | Human Resources |
| | Planning, Operation and Excellence |

| | Estates |
|---|---|
| Research, Innovation and Engagement | Research |
| | Innovation |
| Academic Affairs and Registrar | Student Affairs Manager |
| | Education Development Manager |
| | Library |
| | International Sales |
| | Student Recruitement and Marketing |

# 2 Assessment of Extent to which services are already available through Irish

## 2.1 General Assessment of level of Irish language services at IT, Sligo

The primary function of the Act is to ensure better availability and a higher standard of public services through Irish.

The main function of IT, Sligo is to provide quality education programmes and at present all programmes are delivered through English.

The Institute interacts with students, staff and members of the general public through its administration and through various services. Areas include the Admissions Office, Exams Office, Student Services, IT Services and Yeats Library. Virtually all of these services are currently provided through English. There are minor exceptions such as the multilingual (including Irish) interface on the Library Quick Check self service loans machine.

The Institute produces a number of statutory documents. Currently the *Annual Report* and *Financial Accounts* are published bilingually. The Institute, from time to time, places advertisements on sites such as publicjobs.ie which may have a requirement for a bilingual advertisement.

There is a small core group of staff who have a basic working knowledge of the language and who are interested in working with and through it. A wider group has a generally positive attitude to the language. The Students' Union has an Irish Language Officer. There is also a student Cumann na Gaeilge.

The position in relation to service provision/activities and level of services in Irish by individual departments within the Institute is set out below.

## 2.2  President's Office

### 2.2.1  Communications
The Communications Manager is responsible for internal and external communication programmes and media relations

Irish Language Provision:  The Communications Manager is responsible for the production of the *Annual Report* which is bilingual, Irish/English.

## 2.3  School of Science

The School delivers programmes at undergraduate and post-graduate level through the Departments of Environmental Science, Life Sciences and Health and Nutritional Sciences.

Irish Language Provision:  School of Science currently provides no services through Irish.

## 2.4  School of Engineering and Design

The School delivers programmes at undergraduate and post-graduate level through the Departments of Mechatronic Engineering, Computing and Electronic Engineering, Civil Engineering and Construction, Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering and Arts, Design and Architecture.

Irish Language Provision:  School of Engineering and Design currently provides no services through Irish.

## 2.5  School of Business and Social Sciences

The School delivers programmes at undergraduate and post-graduate level through the Departments of Business, Social Sciences and Marketing, Tourism and Sport.

Irish Language Provision:  School of Business and Social Sciences currently provides no services through Irish.

## 2.6  Finance and Corporate Services

### 2.6.1  Finance

The Finance Department is responsible for Institute accounts

Irish Language Provision:

- Statutory Accounts are published bilingually

### 2.6.2  Human Resources

The HR Office is responsible for staff recruitment, staff training and development and superannuation

Irish Language Provision:

- Job advertisements are bilingual where this is required by online sites such as publicjobs.ie

### 2.6.3  Planning, Operations and Excellence

Irish Language Provision:

- There is currently no Irish language provision in this department

### 2.6.4  Estates

The Estates Office is responsible for the physical campus, including buildings, grounds, utilities, cleaning, maintenance and signage.

Irish Language Provision:

- Estates is responsible for the campus signage system which is bilingual Irish/English

## 2.7  Research, Innovation and Engagement

### 2.7.1  Research

The Research Department supports the researchers at the Institute and develops the capacity of the Institute to carry out research, working with staff and students in the academic schools.

Irish Language Proision:  There is currently no use of Irish in the function of the Research Department.

### 2.7.2  Innovation

The Department of Innovation and External Engagement is responsible for the Innovation Centre, home to a range of startup companies.  It is also responsible for liaising between the Institute and Regional Enterprises.

Irish Language Provision:  There is currently no Irish language provision in the Department of Innovation and External Engagement.

## 2.8  Academic Affairs and Registrar

### 2.8.1  Student Affairs

The Student Affairs Department is responsible for student recruitment, including the Institute's relationship with the Central Applications Office.  This position also has overall responsibility for student services, including health, access etc.

Irish Language Provision:  Student Affairs currently provides no services through Irish

### 2.8.2  Education Development.

This Department has overall responsibility for the learning and teaching and examinations process.

Irish Language Provision:  Education Development currently provides no services through Irish

### 2.8.3 Library

The Library supports the teaching, learning and research activity of the Institute through the provision of information resources and services, learning spaces and information literacy training. The service is provided in the Yeats Library Building and also online via the library website and Moodle space.

Irish Language Provision:

- The Library contains a good collection of Irish language and Celtic Studies books
- The Library mounts exhibitions including Irish Language material
- The Quick Check Self Service Loans machine features a multilingual interface (including Irish)
- The Library has limited capacity to answer queries and deal with correspondence in Irish.

### 2.8.4 International Sales Manager

### 2.8.5 Student Recruitment and Marketing

Irish Language Provision: Neither of these functions currently provide services through Irish

## 2.9 Online Development

### 2.9.1 Centre for Online Learning

The Centre for Online Learning manages and develops the online learning operations of the Institute, providing a range of undergraduate and post-graduate courses to distance learners in Ireland and internationally. COL also makes MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) available.

Irish Language Provision: Centre for Online Learning currently provides no services through Irish.

### 2.9.2 IT Services

IT Services manages information technology at the Institute, including the network.

Irish Language Provision: IT Services currently provide no services through Irish.

# 3 Enhancement of Services to be Provided Bilingually

## 3.1 Introduction

IT Sligo does not predict a direct demand for course provision in Irish. However, it has formed the Connacht Ulster Alliance with Galway Mayo Institute of Technology and with Letterkenny Institute of Technology with a view to forming a Technological University. It also participates with these institutions and with NUI Galway in the West/Northwest Regional Cluster. All of these institutions have a track record of providing services to Gaeltacht areas and there is therefore a possibility that IT Sligo may participate jointly in programmes delivered to Gaeltacht areas in the future.

## 3.2 IT Sligo Irish Language Workgroup

As noted in Section 2.1 above, there is a small core group of staff interested in working through Irish and on Irish related projects. It is proposed that this group be formed into an Irish Language Workgroup which will meet regularly to progress the proposed improvements in Irish language service outlined below. Meetings of this group will be held through Irish as much as possible.

While the analysis in Chapter 2 was based on the Institute's Administrative hierarchy of Schools and Departments, the following proposals will, in general be cross-departmental and will be based on three themes:

- Means of Communication with the Public
- Staff Training, Education and Development
- Changing Perspectives

## 3.3  Means of Communication with the Public

The Institute's communication with the public is largely via the following media and at present is through the English language.

- Prospectus
- Application forms/Brochures/Information leaflets
- Online application processes
- Miscellaneous publications
- Website
- Email
- Letter
- Oral Communication
- Public relations.

The following commitments are being made in respect of this language scheme.

### 3.3.1  Prospectus

Having regard to the current constraints on resources the Institute does not expect to produce the entire prospectus bilingually during the lifetime of this scheme. Section headings and programme titles contained in the prospectus will be produced bilingually. Material particularly aimed at the international market will continue to be delivered in the language appropriate for the market.

Timescale:    2020 prospectus edition

### 3.3.2  Application forms/Brochures/Information leaflets

Direct application forms for undergraduate and postgraduate students will be issued bilingually. A programme will be initiated to produce brochures and information leaflets bilingually, beginning with the library. Consultants' reports and dedicated technical reports will be published in the language in which they were originally presented.

Timeframe:   Beginning Year 1 of the Scheme

17

### 3.3.2.1  Library Application Forms

The Library has a number of application forms for external membership.  These will act as a pilot for bilingual forms and will be issued in Irish and English

Timeframe:   Year 1 of the scheme

### 3.3.3  Online application

Online application processes will also be bilingual to the extent possible in the context of the technology.

Timeframe:   Year 3 of the scheme

### 3.3.4  Miscellaneous Publications

### 3.3.4.1  Graduation Booklet

The graduation booklet is published in time for the graduation ceremony, mainly listing students and their award.  The following sections will be bilingual

- Introductory pages
- Titles of courses and programmes

Timeframe:   By the end of year 2 of the scheme

### 3.3.5  Website

The Institute Website is dynamic and subject to ongoing change.  It is important to avoid content in Irish becoming out of date in comparison to related content in English.  It is also the case that, while multiple staff contribute content in English to the site, maintaining Irish content will be the responsibility of a very small number or possibly a single member of staff drawn from the Irish language Workgroup. For this reason, the approach to Irish language content on the website should be realistic and emphasise ongoing sustainability.  It is proposed that a body of summary information about the Institute be prepared, incorporating links to the principle sections of the web-site and that this be accessible from a "Gaeilge" link on the main page.  Members of the Irish language Campus Group should receive training in the use of the Institute's content management system and a small team

of individuals should be rostered to review and update the page of information in Irish.

> Timeframe:   End of Year One of the Scheme

The Library website includes a catalogue search.  An additional link will lead to a search screen with system text in Irish.

> Timeframe:   End of Year Two of the Scheme

### 3.3.6  Email

IT Sligo doesn't currently have an email disclaimer.  If one is introduced, it will be bilingual Irish/English.

> Timeframe:  Year 3 of the scheme

All Institute staff will be provided with a standardised answer to allow a response to email queries in Irish and a list of the names of members of the Irish Language Workgroup to whom queries may be forwarded.

> Timeframe:  Year 1 of the scheme

### 3.3.7  General Correspondence

The institute will nominate a staff member(s) responsible for responding in the same language when a person communicates in writing through Irish which is a statutory obligation. Suitable training will be provided to the nominated staff member.

> Timeframe:   Year 1 of the scheme

### 3.3.8  Public Relations

Press releases in relation to the Irish language will be published bilingually

> Timeframe:     Immediate

19

## 3.4  Translation and Other Support Services for Irish

The Institute has at least one staff member prepared to carry out translations of short texts such as recruitment advertisements.  More substantive documents such as annual reports, which are required to be translated under the Act, will be sent to commercial translation companies.  An RFT will be run to select a translation company with an option to extend the contract to the end of the scheme.

> Timeframe:     Year 1 of the Scheme

## 3.5  Staff Training, Development and Support

Prior to undertaking the training, development and support activities outlined below, it is proposed to run a survey of all staff at the Institute with a view to identifying three groups:

- Staff with a practical working knowledge of the language and a commitment to use it in a work context.  It is hoped to create the Irish Language Workgroup from these staff.
- Staff with a positive attitude to the language but whose commitment to using it at a practical level is low or whose level of fluency or confidence prevents them from doing so.
- Staff who may not currently be positively disposed towards the language and towards attempts to improve services in it.

### 3.5.1  Training, Development and Support for Irish Language Workgroup

It is the Irish Language Workgroup who will put in place most of the initiatives outlined in Section 3.3.  The following supports will be provided:

- A regular meeting of the group to be held through Irish as much as possible.
- A space on the Institute Moodle system, with sections targeted at the Irish Language Workgroup to make members aware of useful online services,

documents etc. and to provide a discussion forum. The working language of these sections will be Irish.

- In house training on available online dictionaries, basic web content management, phone messaging system, etc.

- Awareness raising regarding resources and organisations which support practical work in the Irish language

- Access to online and print publications in Irish

- Access to self-taught packages and grammars to improve fluency and correctness of language

- Access and funding support to pursue appropriate medium or advanced level courses provided locally or online

  Timeframe: It is proposed to put supports in place and develop procedures during Year 1 of the Scheme

### 3.5.2 Training, Development and Support for those with a positive attitude towards and a general interest in the Irish language

The extent of this group among the Institute staff will need to be determined by a survey. The aim will be to foster a positive attitude to Irish among the group. The following supports will be provided:

- Subject to interest and resourcing, efforts will be made to provide a basic Irish language class to build the "cupla focal" into a working knowledge of simple oral and written Irish. Based on previous experience at the Institute, it may be difficult to generate adequate numbers for a class and to sustain continuity of attendance

- The Moodle space referred to in Section 3.5.1 above will include bilingual and English language sections targeted at this group containing material on the culture and background of the Irish language and information on events during Seachtain na Gaeilge and at other times which might interest the group.

21

- Seachtain na Gaeilge.  Irish language events will be organised at the library and every effort will be made to involve as many language enthusiasts on campus as possible.
- Introduction to Irish Language Culture Weekly Seminar:  It is proposed to run a lunchtime, drop in seminar once per week in the library during the academic year featuring the following:
  - One or two interesting points about the Irish language (for example: the verb "to be" vs the "copail"; initial mutation; verb first etc.)  These will be viewed more as interesting curiosities rather than practical grammar with a view to fostering a fresh perspective on the language.
  - An aspect of Irish language history
  - A sample of Irish language literature in translation
    - Note: Classes, Seachtain na Gaeilge events and the proposed weekly seminars may also be open to students

Over time it is hoped that these initiatives may help to develop the interest and commitment of some of the Irish language enthusiasts and prompt them to improve their competency and fluency in a practical way, either by pursuing a course or by using self-taught materials, to the extent that they might join the Irish Language Workgroup of fluent speakers referred to above.  At that point they could begin to play an active role in delivering Irish language services.

Timeframe:   It is proposed to have these supports in place from Year 2 of the Scheme

## 3.6  Changing Perspectives among the General Staff

While there may be a core group of Irish speakers and a wider group with a positive attitude to the language, there may be others not positively disposed to the language or the Act.

One group which might not be thought of immediately in relation to Irish are the foreign students.  These come from a variety of countries, both European and

non-European.  They are given a certain amount of introduction to general Irish society and culture as part of their course and it would seem a natural progression to introduce those interested to a greater element of material on the Irish language.  Since Irish has a strong presence on the Internet and groups of dedicated learners and practitioners active in many countries, some of these students may already be aware of the language, if only in a vague way.  For those who are not, they may be surprised to learn that a language other than English is spoken in the Ireland and some may be interested in attending the lunchtime seminars mentioned in Section 3.5.2 above.  If an interested in the Irish language develops among foreign students, it may help change the perspective of the Institute community in general, including staff, on the Irish language.

Other initiatives which will be considered to change perspectives include:

- Occasional lectures on Minority Languages:  Attitudes to the Irish language and to the Act might be insular.  Attempts to revive Irish may be seen as a negative aspect unique to Ireland and a useless draw on the country's resources.  It is proposed that lectures on minority languages worldwide, especially in European countries, might show that preserving a minority language is a worthwhile societal and national aim.
- Events involving fluent Irish speakers who are not from Ireland:  There is an increasing cohort of people from different countries around the world, including some immigrants living in Ireland, who have developed an advanced proficiency in Irish.  Organising an event involving people such as this might help to show the Irish language in a new light.

Timeframe:  Two lectures during the period of the scheme

IT, SLIGO will be conscious of its obligations under the Act when recruiting staff.  All new recruits will be advised of the various opportunities and initiatives outlined above.

# 4 Monitoring and Revision

## 4.1  Monitoring and Revision

The Executive of the Institute will keep the effective operation of the scheme under review.  The day-to-day monitoring function will be carried out primarily by the Irish Language Workgroup who will provide a bi-annual report to the Institute Senior Management Committee and the Institute Executive including the following information:

- Summary of progress to date on each commitment given in Chapter 3.
- Summary of translation tasks and costs
- List of queries received and answered in Irish
- List of bilingual forms

A final report at the end of the scheme, written by the Librarian on behalf of the Irish Language Workgroup will assess the extent to which the scheme overall has been successfully implemented and will set out parameters for a following scheme.

# 5 Publicising the Scheme

## 5.1  Publicising the scheme

The contents of the scheme, along with the commitments and provisions of the scheme, will be publicised to the general public by means of:

- Press release
- Advertising of provisions

- Circulation to appropriate agencies and public bodies through email notification
- Publication on the institute website.

Internally the scheme will be promoted as follows:

- A copy of the scheme will be posted on the Institute Library website and a link circulated to all staff as soon as possible after approval.

A copy of this scheme has also been forwarded to Oifig Choimisinéir na dTeangacha Oifigiúla.