**Dundalk Institute of Technology Language Scheme 2014-2017**

* Draft based on that of Letterkenny

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

**FOREWORD**

This is Dundalk Institute of Technology’s second scheme under Section 11 of the Official Languages Act 2003. Our first scheme served the purpose of embedding the Act as part of our day to day operations at DKIT.

This second scheme allows us to build on the progress made and ensure a more natural engagement with the capability of the Institute to meet the requirements of the Act. The objective of DKIT has always been to engage with the spirit of the Act and to adopt a responsible and proactive approach to its implementation through our schemes.

In our current Strategic Plan 2011-14, the Institute has articulated the need to:

*“To promote use of the Irish language on campus and our implement Irish Language Scheme.”*

This strategic objective is encompassed in our approach to our Irish Language scheme and we look forward to successful implementation over the coming years.

* LYIT text, except for the quote from the Strategic Plan. Get Denis to review

**Denis Cummins**

**Uachtarán**

**INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

This is the second Irish language scheme prepared by Dundalk Institute of Technology in accordance with *Section 15* of the Official Languages Act, 2003 (hereinafter referred to as “the Act"). *Section 11* of the Act 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

along with 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.

The Institute’s first language scheme was implemented over a three year period from 18 October 2010. This scheme builds on the Institute’s first scheme and on the custom and practice that has been operative within the Institute, as well as the principles of Quality Customer Service.

* 1. **PREPARATION OF THE SCHEME**

*Section 12* of the Act provides for the preparation of guidelines by the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, and their issue to public bodies to assist in the preparation of draft schemes. This scheme has been drawn up having regard to these guidelines, which were published in 2004, and following a comprehensive process of consultation with students, staff and representative external stakeholders. A public notice was published under *Section 13* of the Act in September 2013, inviting representations in relation to the preparation of DKIT’s second draft scheme. This scheme has been informed by all submissions received and by the views and suggestions put forward by all stakeholders. The Institute appreciates the time and effort put in by all concerned in this process.

This scheme sets out the targets that DKIT has set itself for the second three-year period and indicates priority areas. Responsibility for monitoring and review will rest with the Executive Board of the Institute, of which the President is Chair.

**1.2 THE CONTENT OF THE LANGUAGE SCHEME**

This second scheme recognises the good will which exists towards the Irish language at DKIT and builds on the progress achieved across the organisation as a result of the implementation of the first scheme.

Extensive commitments were made in the Institute’s first scheme to improve the level of service in Irish. These commitments included:

* WEBSITE: The creation of an Irish image for significant parts of the DKIT website.
* PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS: The introduction of bilingual content in handbooks, invitations, application forms, business cards and student cards

Most commitments contained within the first scheme have been delivered and significant progress has been made on the remainder. Bilingual services across the Institute as a whole have been enhanced. However, the Institute recognises the importance of the continued expansion and enhancement of bilingual services.

Accordingly, the objective of this second scheme is to continue to deliver on these commitments and to enhance the level of service over the period of the scheme (2014-2017).

**1.3 COMMENCEMENT DATE OF SCHEME**

This scheme has been confirmed by the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and will commence with effect from 20 June 2014. It shall 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 earlier.

* Date to be reviewed when confirmation obtained

**1.4 OVERVIEW OF DUNDALK INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY**

**1.4.1 Profile of the Institute**

Dundalk Institute of Technology is a major provider of higher education in the North East region of the Republic of Ireland. Established in 1970 as the Regional Technical College, offering primarily technician and apprenticeship courses, it has evolved since then as one of the leading Institutes of Technology in Ireland through its top quality teaching and innovative programmes. Set in a state of the art 90 acre campus, DkIT is a Third Level Institute with almost 5,000 students with the statutory authority to award its own degrees up to level 9 (taught) on the National Qualifications Framework and it offers a full suite of programmes at craft, undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

The Institute is located half way between Dublin and Belfast off the M1 motorway. It has undergone enormous change over the last five years. These changes are most visible in the transformation of the physical appearance of the campus, most particularly with the Wind Turbine, the T.K. Whitaker building, the Nursing and Health Studies building, the Faulkner Student Services building, the refurbished PJ Carroll’s building and further expansion to the Regional Development Centre.

* As before, but review

**1.4.2 The DKIT Identity**

*Mission*

To provide the community with quality third-level education and services, relevant to the economic, social and cultural development of the region in the national and international context. It aims to promote personal responsibility among all its students and enhance the professionalism of all its members in a supportive, inclusive and productive environment.

* As before, but review

*Strategic Objectives*

1. To transform the teaching and learning process of the Institute so as to create a learner-centred and empowering process in which students take responsibility for their own learning and in which the staff-student relationship is based on equality and mutuality.
2. To develop an Institute-wide culture of collegiality based on academic autonomy, self-direction and personal responsibility.
3. To develop a research and scholarship culture which can foster a vibrant postgraduate programme and underpin the undergraduate programme in the Institute;
4. To develop the Institute as the Educational, Cultural, Economic and Social hub of the North East region so as to underpin ongoing economic and social development. The Institute is also committed to supporting education and developmental initiatives of benefit to other regions.
5. To continue the development of the campus to ensure that it is capable of meeting the educational and research needs of its staff and students, meets their extra-curricular requirements and is aesthetically attractive, environmentally friendly and safe.
6. Build the organisation capability of the Institute to respond and adapt to change.

* As before, but review

**1.4.3 Customers and Stakeholders**

The Institute’s principal stakeholders 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:

*Government Departments*

*Central Statistics Office*

*General Public:*

*Parents*

*Schools*

*Career Guidance personnel*

*People of Dundalk and catchment area*

*Industry*

*Graduates*

*Other bodies:*

*Urban and county councils*

*Chamber of commerce*

*Trades council*

*ForFás*

*Enterprise Ireland*

*FÁS*

*Other educational organisations*

The customer service standards commitments adopted by DKIT in relation to delivery of services to our customers shall apply to those services, whether delivered in the Irish language or in the English language.

**1.4.4 Institute Structures**

Governance

The **Governing Body** has as its primary function the management and control of the affairs of the Institute. The **President** controls and directs the activities of the Institute and is responsible for its efficient and proper management. The prime purpose of **Executive Board** is to assist the President in the implementation of Institute policy and to oversee the development and implementation of strategic planning in the Institute.

Academic Council

Academic Council assists the Governing Body in the planning, co-ordination, development and overseeing of the educational work of the Institute as well as protecting, maintaining and developing the academic standards of the courses and activities of the Institute

Academic Schools and Departments

The Institute is organised into four academic schools, which provide the educational services, at undergraduate and postgraduate level. Each school contains a number of departments and sections, as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **School** | **Department/Section** |
| School of Business & Humanities | * Department of Business Studies * Department of Humanities * Department of Management & Financial Studies * Hospitality Section * Lifelong Learning Section |
| School of Engineering | * Department of Electronic & Mechanical Engineering * Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering * Department of Construction and Surveying * Department of Engineering Trades |
| School of Health & Science | * Department of Applied Sciences * Department of Nursing, Midwifery & Health Studies * Midwifery Section |
| School of Informatics & Creative Arts | * Department of Music & Creative Media * Department of Computing & Mathematics |

* As before, but review

CHAPTER 2

COMMITMENTS TO SERVICE DELIVERY IN IRISH

**OVERVIEW**

The Institute is committed to providing quality services in Irish and/or bilingually to its customers. The priorities for this scheme are:

* To further enhance the Institute’s ability to provide services in Irish.
* To continue to raise staff awareness of the scheme.
* To continue to enhance staff competency in Irish through training and development.
* To continue to develop services to students through bilingual documentation and a limited one-to-one verbal service in designated areas.
* To develop a formal system for monitoring demand for services in Irish.

This chapter sets out all new and on-going commitments in relation to the provision of general institutional services and activities in Irish and/or bilingually to all of our customers.

**NEW AND ONGOING COMMITMENTS**

**2.1 PROVISION OF INFORMATION TO THE PUBLIC**

Since the inception of DKIT’s first scheme under the Official Languages Act, communications are increasingly being carried out bilingually. A large amount of Institute documentation has been prepared in bilingual format over the past three years and the Institute is committed to further enhancing the provision of Irish language literature and communications during the tenure of this and subsequent schemes in the following areas:

* Brochures, application forms and information leaflets (as outlined in Appendix 1)
* Publications (See 2.5 & 2.6)
* Press releases – 25% of these will be made available bilingually and simultaneously if being released to the national media. Bilingual versions will be published for 10% of those published on the DKIT website.
  + Review with Communications Office
* Website (See 2.8)

Invitations to events, student cards and staff business cards will continue to be printed bilingually.

**2.2 AN ACTIVE OFFER OF SERVICE**

The Institute will take every opportunity in its day-today interactions with customers to promote and publicise the services it provides through Irish, which may be done by:

* Directly informing customers on a pro-active basis of the option of dealing with the Institute through Irish, for example, by the display of notices at reception areas indicating the Irish language services that are available and also by prominently listing these in the Institute website.
* Incorporating footnotes on selected guidelines, leaflets, and applications forms explaining that these documents are also available in Irish (in cases where bilingual printed material is not produced under a single cover).
* Including notes in publications and advertisements stating that the Institute provides services through Irish and, accordingly, welcomes customers who wish to deal with it in Irish, according to the commitments in its agreed scheme.

**2.3 POINT OF FIRST CONTACT**

Receptionists/switchboard operators are the first points of contact with the public. It shall be the policy of the Institute to continue to ensure that standard Quality Customer Service (QCS) practices apply in this area as follows:

* Reception/switchboard staff will continue to give the name of the Institute in Irish
* Reception staff will be familiar with the basic greetings in Irish
* Arrangements will continue to be in place to put members of the public in touch speedily with whatever office or officer is responsible for offering the service required through Irish, as listed in Reception and on the Institute’s website.

**2.4 BILINGUAL ONE-TO-ONE SERVICES**

In its first scheme, the Institute pinpointed the **Library** as a priority area for the delivery of bilingual services. Efforts will continue to recruit, redeploy or train a staff member to provide such a service.

* Review with HR and Library

**2.5 BROCHURES, APPLICATION FORMS AND INFORMATION LEAFLETS**

Brochures, application forms and associated information leaflets will be made available bilingually to the extent outlined in *Appendix 1*. These are in addition to those outlined already in the Institute’s first scheme, which will continue to be made available bilingually. All of these will be published bilingually under the same cover, except where this is not feasible because of the size, layout or nature of the document. Where any of these brochures, application forms and leaflets is made available on the Institute’s website, the Irish version will be made available at the same time as the English version.

The Institute will ensure that where application forms and information leaflets are provided as separate Irish and English versions, equal prominence will be given to both versions at all public locations and that the Irish language version will be as readily accessible as the English language version. Customers will proactively 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/or by any other means that the Institute deems appropriate. Brochures aimed at an international market will be in English only.

Job descriptions will be prepared in Irish for specific cases where Irish is a core requirement of the position. Generic job descriptions, where the text remains the same from year to year, will be made available in Irish over the course of this scheme. All other job descriptions, for posts where the text changes frequently, will continue to be distributed in English only for the time being.

* Review with HR

**2.6 OTHER INSTITUTE PUBLICATIONS**

The Institute is committed to increasing the bilingual content of internal information documents and internal publications. Consultant reports and dedicated technical documents will continue to be published in the language in which they were originally presented.

The covers and all section headings in the Prospectus, as well as the text of the President’s Welcome and of the Library Welcome, will continue to be bilingual. The following additional sections in the Prospectus will also become bilingual:

* Fill in after review with School Liaison, especially on printing cost implications

The covers of the Student Handbook, as well as the text of the President’s Welcome and of the pages with Calendar, Diary and Useful Telephone Numbers, will continue to be bilingual. The following additional sections in the Student Handbook will also become bilingual:

* Fill in after review with Student Services, especially on printing cost implications

The Graduation Handbook will be published bilingually in full, apart from names of persons.

* Essentially the same as our previous commitment

A minimum of two articles in Irish per semester will continue to be published in the DkITimes electronic newsletter, DkITimes.

The Ignite, a glossy magazine published once a semester, will give the President’s Welcome bilingually.

* Check with Communications Office

**2.7 COMPUTER SYSTEMS**

During the course of this scheme, the Institute will continue to ensure that new and existing personal computers/laptops are enabled for Irish language characters.

In addition Microsoft Office Irish Language Interface Packs will be promoted as an option to be installed on personal computers upon request.

* Check with IT Services

Centrally provided applications such as *Core*, *Agresso*, *Banner*, *Millennium* and *VLE* are hosted and maintained by third party providers and, as a result, their capacity to support the Irish language currently falls outside the scope of the Institute. Nevertheless, working with other Institutes of Technology through the organisation *An Chéim*, efforts will be made to introduce Irish language interfaces into future versions of these applications.

**2.8 WEBSITE**

The Institute’s website was completely redesigned with a new content management system in 2012. The previously English-only site now includes introductory sections and general information pages in both official languages, in line with commitments made in the Institute’s first scheme. Over 100 general information pages in English now have a mirror image in Irish and users can click to view in the language of their choice.

During the current scheme the number of pages with mirror images in Irish will double to over 200.

* Any specific sections to be mentioned?

**2.9 INTERACTIVE SERVICES**

The Institute operates a limited number of interactive services, including on-line student registration for full-time programmes, as well as on-line application for job vacancies. These services are hosted and maintained by third party providers, and, as a result, the Institute has limited scope in modifying them. Nevertheless, working with other Institutes of Technology through the organisation *An Chéim*, efforts will be made to introduce Irish language interfaces as far as possible in existing applications and to press for future interactive services to be introduced simultaneously in both languages.

* Check with Registrar and Financial Controller

In particular the online application forms for job vacancies will become bilingual during the course of this scheme.

* Check with HR

**2.10 ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES**

The Institute does not currently provide courses in the Irish language and has no plans to do so. However it is intended to seek access to courses run by possible partner institutes in the course of future partnership negotiations.

* Review

**2.11 PUBLIC MEETING POLICY/SCHOOL VISITS**

The Institute does not hold public meetings in the Gaeltacht and conducts all of its public meetings in English. The Institute will endeavour, however, to conduct any targeted meetings in Gaelscoileanna and in the nearby Ráth Chairn Gaeltacht through Irish, e.g. talks about courses in DkIT. It will also continue to direct all correspondence to these schools through Irish.

* Review with School Liaison Office

**2.12 GAELTACHT PLACENAMES**

The official Placenames of Gaeltacht areas, [as declared by the Minister in the Placenames (Ceantair Ghaeltachta) Order 2004], will continue to be used by the Institute for official purposes.

CHAPTER 3

IMPROVING THE INSTITUTE’S IRISH LANGUAGE CAPABILITY

**3.1 RECRUITMENT AND PLACEMENT**

It should be noted that the Institute is bound by regulations set out by the Minister for Education and Skills governing selection procedures and that there is currently a moratorium on recruitment which restricts the Institute in making new appointments.

However, over the course of this and subsequent schemes, the Human Resource Department will (subject to the framework of agreed national recruitment procedures) ensure that an adequate number of staff in relevant areas is competent in Irish. This will use a mix of staff training and redeployment to supplement whatever recruitment may become possible.

The Institute’s recruitment policy will take account of the need for Irish language skills in areas such as Reception and the Library. Job advertisements and job descriptions will be reviewed as they arise to note the desirability and/or necessity of Irish language capability, where appropriate.

To increase language awareness we will continue to include this topic as part of our Induction Training courses to advise staff on the purpose of the Official Language Act, how it is implemented in the Institute and its implications for the organisation.

* HR to review all the above

**3.2 TRAINING AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

The Institute has an on-going commitment to providing appropriate training for staff and to supporting staff development. We will encourage the development of language skills to improve our capability to provide services through the Irish language. Some staff members throughout the Institute already have skills at basic, intermediate and advanced levels and our aim will be to build on these existing skills. Among the measures to be used by the Human Resource Department in cooperation with Oifig na Gaeilge and the Humanities Department will be:

* Survey of staff regarding Irish language skill levels and interest in improvement
* Publicising existing Irish language classes available externally
* Providing Irish language classes internally where feasible and subject to demand
* Support for staff wishing to take Irish language classes as part of the Staff Training and Development Plan
  + HR and Humanities to review

**3.3 ENHANCEMENT OF SUPPORT SERVICES**

Following on from the Institute’s first scheme, the enhancement of support services in Irish continues to be a priority. A list of staff willing to provide service in Irish has been provided to Reception and on the Institute’s website. It is intended to further improve staff competency in Irish through training, staff development and recruitment, as explained in 3.1 and 3.2 above.

Translations will continue to be carried out by the Irish Language Officer when of moderate size and otherwise contracted to outside professionals.

It is intended to develop partnership arrangements with other institutes and Irish language organisations to provide language classes.

The library will continue to act as a repository for Irish language learning resources for staff and student use e.g. Irish language books, CDs, DVDs etc. The library is committed to reviewing and updating these Irish resources on a continuous basis.

* Review all the above

**3.4 PROMOTION OF THE IRISH LANGUAGE**

The Institute is fully committed to the promotion and development of the Irish language on campus. This is reflected in the current Strategic Plan and will continue to be reflected in future Strategic Plans.

The appointment of a part-time Irish Language Officer during the first scheme constitutes a significant financial and symbolic commitment towards Irish by DKIT. This commitment will be maintained during the second scheme.

During speeches at public events held in the Institute, a portion of the introductory remarks will continue to include some Irish in order to promote a positive bilingual corporate image and environment.

The Careers Office will continue to draw students’ attention to the opportunities presented to those with a proficiency in Irish, not only in employment but also in further education.

* Check with Careers Officer

As Irish is a living language, it is important to foster its inclusion in campus life. Accordingly, a number of social events will be organised to cultivate this. These will include:

* Hosting of events during Seachtain na Gaeilge each year.
* The provision of social events for staff and students, including a Ciorcal Comhrá, as well as other social events to create an environment where it would be possible to speak Irish.
* Encouraging student to establish an Irish language society (or Cumann Gaelach). Since this has to be student-led, the Institute will encourage the Students Union to lead this process.

During the course of DKIT’s second language scheme, a dedicated set of pages on the Institute’s website will be used to keep staff and students informed about all things relating to the Irish language, including learning resources, services available through Irish at DKIT, events and information regarding language rights/duties under the Official Languages Act. This set of webpages will be maintained by Irish Language Officer and may be supplemented if and when a Cumann Gaelach is set up by the students of the Institute.

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CHAPTER 4

IMPLEMENTATION and MONITORING

The Executive Board of the Institute, of which the President is Chair, will have ultimate responsibility for ensuring the implementation of the scheme. This will be primarily achieved through the Academic Management and Planning and the Operations and Support Services Management Committees, which deal with operational issues on behalf of Executive Board. On-going implementation and monitoring will carried out by the Heads of the various Functional Units (Academic and Administrative) who are making commitments under this scheme. They will be assisted and facilitated by the Irish Language Officer.

* As before, but with addition of the last sentence

Progress will be monitored and reported to the Executive Board twice a year and in the Institute’s Annual Report.

* Simplified and more specific

A formal Institute-wide system for monitoring requests for services through Irish will be developed during the course of this scheme. This may take the form of a centralised database where the Heads of the various Functional Units can log requests for services in Irish as they occur in their respective areas.

* Simplified and more specific. Note: dropped reference to Meitheal na Gaeilge

CHAPTER 5

PUBLICISING OF AGREED SCHEME

The contents of this scheme and the commitments and provisions contained therein will be publicised to the general public by means of:-

* Press Release
* Official Launch
* Advertising of provisions
* Circulation to appropriate agencies and public bodies
* Website

In addition, the measures outlined in Chapter 2, Section 2.2 will be implemented *(An Active Offer of Service).*

The scheme will be circulated internally to all staff and students of the Institute via email, accompanied by a note from the President, and a copy of the agreed scheme will be forwarded to Oifig an Choimisinéara Teanga.

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

* As before, except for the Active Offer of Service and the email note from the President

**APPENDIX 1**

**Schedule for the Provision of Bilingual Documentation, including Brochures, Application Forms and Information Leaflets**

*These are in addition to the documentation provided under the first scheme which will continue to be available.*

* These examples are all from LYIT. Need to find ones appropriate to DkIT

**BY THE END OF YEAR ONE OF SCHEME**

**Office of the President**

*Academic Calendar*

*Invitations to the annual President’s Address during student induction (by email)*

*President’s Foreword in Staff Newsletter*

**BY THE END OF YEAR THREE OF SCHEME**

**Registry**

*Recheck-Review Application Form*

*Cover slip for Exam Scripts*

*Instruction for Exam Candidates*

*Summer Exam Letter (issued three times a year in Jan, May & Autumn)*

*Opening and closing sections of:* Carrying Subjects Form

Repeat Attending Form

ACCS Registration Form

**Access Office**

*Individual Education Plan*

**IT Services**

*Institute IT Policies Document*

**Secretary/Financial Controller’s Office**

*Standard letter calling Governing Body members to meetings*

**Finance Office**

*New Supplier Form*

*Quotation Request Form*

**Human Resources Department**

*Generic Job Descriptions (where the text doesn’t change from year to year)*

**School of Business**

*FAQ section of Learner Information & Course Requirements Document*

**Student Union**

*Volunteer Questionnaire Form*

* These examples are all from LYIT. Need to find ones appropriate to DkIT