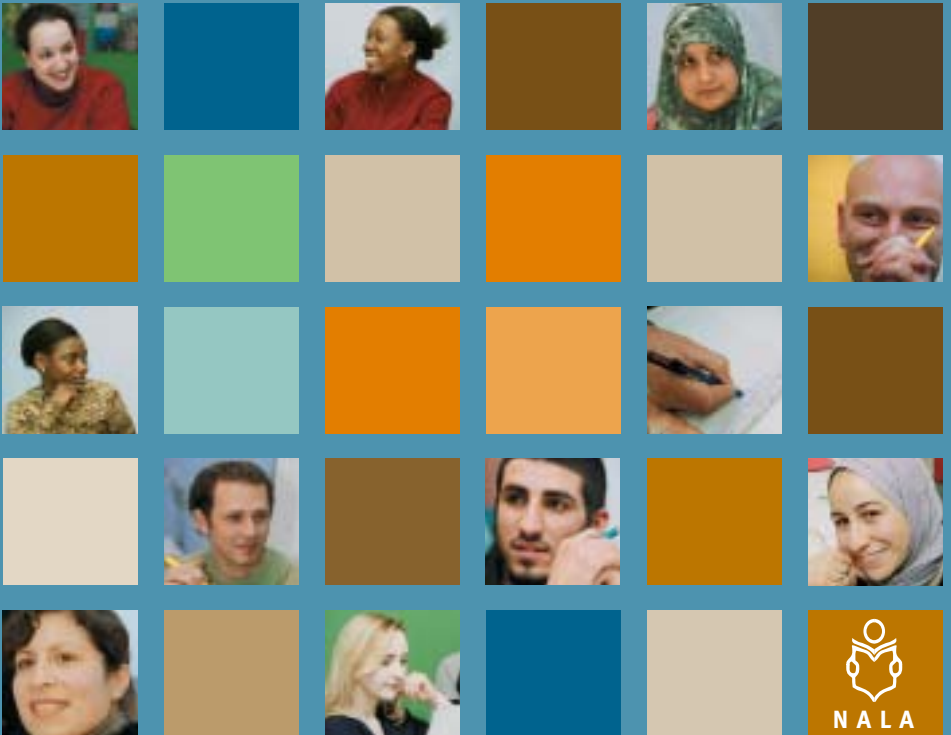# National Adult Literacy Agency

English for Speakers of Other Languages:
Policy Guidelines and Supports for
V.E.C. Adult Literacy Schemes

NALA

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Glossary of Terms

ABE	Adult Basic Education
ACELS	The Advisory Council for English Language Schools
ALOA	Adult Literacy Organisers' Association
BTEI	Back to Education Initiative
DALC	Dublin Adult Learning Centre
DES	Department of Education and Science
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
FETAC	Further Education and Training Awards Council
HETAC	Higher Education and Training Awards Council
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
IILT	Integrate Ireland Language and Training
IVEA	Irish Vocational Education Association

L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
LLLU	London Language and Literacy Unit
NALA	National Adult Literacy Agency
NCCRI	National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NQAI	National Qualifications Authority of Ireland
PLC	Post Leaving Certificate
SPIRASI	Spiritan Asylum Services Initiative
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
TIE	Test of Interactive English
VTOS	Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme
WIT	Waterford Institute of Technology

Teaching ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) to members of linguistic minorities is a relatively new area for most Irish adult literacy services, and so many practitioners feel unsure of how to deal with areas such as assessment, provision, promotion, participation, training and accreditation. NALA has therefore developed these policy guidelines and supports for literacy practitioners dealing with adults whose first language is not English.

The White Paper on Adult Education: Learning for Life (2000) sets the policy context for the development of ESOL provision. The White Paper recommends that adult education should be underpinned by three core principles:

(a) a systemic approach,
(b) equality of access,
(c) inter-culturalism.

In particular, the White Paper underlines the need to encourage the participation of immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers in education and states that there should be "free access to adult literacy, English language and mother culture supports" for these groups. [1]

NALA established an ESOL Executive Working Group with members from relevant stakeholders to initiate a consultation process and to develop policy guidelines and supports for literacy practitioners. The impetus for the group stems from two resolutions passed at the NALA AGM in 2001 requesting a discussion document and proposals for the Department of Education and Science. In order to first establish the current position in the VEC adult literacy service, NALA carried out a survey, the results of which are outlined in Part **1** of this document.

I would like to thank Mary Kett, Further Education Co-ordinator, in the Further Education section of the Department of Education and Science for chairing the group and assisting Fergus Dolan, Training Coordinator, NALA, in compiling this document.

I am very grateful to the members of the working group whose contributions to the debate on ESOL have greatly enhanced this document. I also extend many thanks to the VEC Adult Literacy Organisers who gave details of their work with ESOL learners to inform this document.

Inez Bailey
Director, National Adult Literacy Agency

[1]Learning for Life: White Paper on Adult Education (page 173)

Summary of Recommendations

1. Outreach and Promotion

Outreach and promotion must be adapted and changed as populations and needs change and this is particularly the case with ESOL learners. It is important to identify the target population before planning, implementing, evaluating and improving outreach and promotion strategies.

A community-based approach should be used to target new ESOL learners. Existing ESOL learners can also be used to recruit others, and members of ethnic minority groups can take on roles as paid ESOL tutors and volunteer tutors.

2. Provision and Participation

Language support should be provided free of charge, resources permitting, including ICT basic skills.

Organisers should access general regulations through their VEC so that they can inform learners of their eligibility in relation to tuition (see Appendix 1).

In exceptional circumstances, e.g. when there are a group of people of the same nationality who have similar needs and are at a similar level with regard to ESOL, they can be organised into distinct groups. For example, women-only classes can be organised, if participants experience specific difficulties in accessing provision related to cultural or childcare issues.

A wide range of tuition models should be highlighted in training to equip tutors with a broader range of skills to meet learners' needs (see 2.3 "A Framework for ESOL Provision in Literacy Schemes").

Every ESOL learner should ideally be offered a minimum of four hours ESOL provision a week. The scheme should aim to provide tuition that enables people to function autonomously in the society in which they are resident.

Beginners' groups in particular should ideally be closed for short, initial general courses of 8 to 10 weeks' duration and if possible, learners should have at least four hours tuition per week (i.e. 32 to 40 hours per course).

These short, 8 to 10 week courses can run in constant succession so that there is always a general ESOL class for new arrivals to join. Short courses generally prove more effective as attendance and numbers can fluctuate. Training teachers in strategies to cope with mixed-level groups and developing appropriate materials are key. Designing group learning programmes with specific aims for individual learners is also crucial.

ESOL learners' motivations and goals should be taken into account when planning provision, by utilising particular outreach techniques and tailoring materials to suit learners' needs.

Schemes should be aware of both the outside forces and internal factors that may result in many ESOL learners dropping out of classes and take measures to address the issue of irregular or non-attendance.

In schemes with a large number of ESOL learners, there is a need for a member of staff (e.g. an ESOL Resource Worker) to take on the responsibility for the organisation and development of ESOL, in liaison with the Adult Literacy Organiser. This ESOL Resource Worker should have ESOL training and where possible come from a language teaching background, as well as a literacy tutoring background.

Schemes should also seek to recruit and train group tutors and volunteers from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Schemes should liaise with other providers of ESOL within their VEC area and local community in order to maximise access for learners. They should encourage the integration of ESOL into other subject areas to avoid duplication.

Schemes should liaise with Community Welfare Officers, Health Boards, Department of Social and Family Affairs and FÁS local offices, as well as other local refugee/asylum seeker support groups to inform them as to the range of provision available.

3. Assessment

In further developing its literacy assessment framework, NALA will address the literacy needs of ESOL learners. However, there is a need for a broader assessment framework specifically for ESOL that involves all stakeholders and which takes account of international best practice in language teaching, drawing on the Common European Framework.

Practising ESOL tutors should be trained in on-going assessment once the framework is developed.

4. Accreditation

We recommend that practitioners submit language portfolios for accreditation to FETAC who will also welcome comment and feedback from practitioners and learners. Organisers and ESOL tutors are recommended to contact NALA with FETAC feedback.

We also recommend that NALA review the use of FETAC foundation modules in literacy schemes on a regular basis.

Any review of the FETAC language modules should take into consideration the views of ESOL practitioners. VEC Adult Literacy Service should also familiarise themselves with other recognised accreditation options (e.g. T.I.E.).

5. Training and Support

The current situation in relation to training opportunities for ESOL practitioners is unsatisfactory and steps should be taken to implement a comprehensive programme specifically for ESOL.

In the interim, we recommend that tutors who have been assigned an ESOL group should have ESOL, Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) or some language training and an adult literacy tuition background.

TEFL-trained teachers need an induction into the adult literacy service to complement their language training. For example the Initial Tutor Training Course for literacy tutors may provide an introduction to the adult literacy ethos.

Equally, experienced Adult Literacy Tutors should undergo some form of ESOL or TEFL training.

It is desirable that group tutors should have qualifications based on courses of at least 70 hours' duration (recommended by ACELS – the Advisory Council for English Language Schools) and where possible on courses of 100 hours. This should complement or build on credit transfers from the NALA/WIT accreditation project which provides qualifications for literacy workers. It is recommended that tutors avail of the NALA/WIT "ESOL and Literacy" module which will be available from Autumn 2003.

Adult Literacy Organisers and ESOL Resource Workers should also undergo some form of ESOL training and an element of ESOL awareness should be built into the Initial Tutor Training course for every scheme.

Schemes currently offer tuition to a wide range of ethnic groups and this has implications for intercultural awareness training. Intercultural awareness and anti-racism training should be made available to all staff in literacy schemes. An element of intercultural awareness should also be built into literacy awareness training provided by schemes.

Lack of childcare is a barrier to participation and there is an urgent need to expand accessible and affordable provision.

6. Equal Status Policy

Every scheme should develop an intercultural and equal status policy statement and all staff should be made aware of the policy.

Part 1
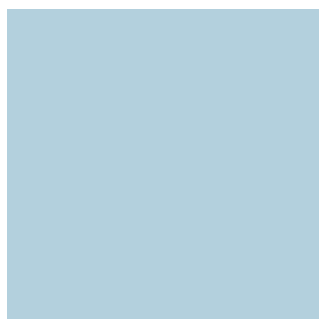
Definitions

ESOL is an umbrella term to **include English Language Teaching (ELT)** covering situations in which English is taught to all groups of learners who are non-native speakers.

ESOL or ESL (English as a Second Language) is used to refer to situations in which English is being taught and learned in countries, contexts and cultures in which English is the predominant language of communication.

EFL/TEFL (English as a Foreign Language/Teaching English as a Foreign Language) are used in contexts where English is neither widely used for communication, nor used as the medium of instruction. They presume learners already have literacy and are usually taught in the learner's mother tongue, frequently in private language schools. In EFL, accreditation mechanisms usually dictate course direction.

Programmes aimed at people learning English for specialised needs, usually based around specific language and vocabulary for vocational areas, e.g. English for Nursing, Hotel and Catering, Medicine, Computers etc., are known as **ESP (English for Specific Purposes)**.

ESOL learners are primarily concerned with developing **speaking** and **listening** skills in functional language for everyday use. Programmes are learner-centred and needs-based with attainable short-term goals. Preparing learners for independence, ESOL takes account of educational/employment aspirations. ESOL also incorporates communicative language techniques for mixed levels and cross-cultural approaches which recognise learners' other languages/cultures.

ESOL is used in the UK to describe language teaching to all learners over the age of 16,[2] while English as an Additional Language (EAL) is the accepted term for ELT for learners under 16.

Other Initiatives

The City of Dublin VEC, in conjunction with County Dublin VEC, has conducted research on the language needs of asylum seekers and refugees in Ireland on behalf of the Department of Education and Science. The research, entitled *Asylum Seekers in Adult Education: A Study of Language and Literacy Needs,* was conducted by Tanya Ward.

The research was commissioned to:

• compile a profile of the asylum seeking population in Dublin based on: age, gender, mother tongue, country of origin, educational background, domestic situation, familial relationships, experience of language learning and location.

• evaluate current language/literacy provision for asylum seekers and other minority linguistic groups, paying particular attention to: co-ordination and referral between agencies, networking and information exchange, learning sites, childcare, teaching programmes and materials, targeted interventions, outreach centres, accreditation and the role of European initiatives.

Considering provision for asylum seekers holistically,this report stresses language/literacy issues are inextricably linked to equality and interculturalism. The research advocates a learner-centred and needs-based approach for the delivery of programmes through a mainstream state adult education service (with support for community-based programmes) with accountable, transparent structures. The report makes recommendations to be included in national strategies and for the City of Dublin VEC/County Dublin VEC.

The recommendations relate to:

• National co-ordination and proposals for ESOL provision;

• Equality and interculturalism in Adult and Further Education;

• Training and materials;

• Accreditation and evaluation Supports for ESOL learners.

The **IVEA** (Irish Vocational Education Association) Working Group has published a Pilot **Framework for Educational Provision for Refugees, Asylum Seekers and other Non-Nationals.** The framework is focused on three key objectives:

- seeking to implement the recommendations of the IVEA Working Group Report (2001) through lobbying of Government/ political parties;

- establishing communications and co-ordination with other relevant organisations/interested parties;

- formulating a model of educational provision (focusing on language and literacy) to be implemented nationally by their thirty-three member VECs.

The proposed model seeks to address the educational needs of asylum seekers and refugees and covers both mainstream and non-mainstream educational programmes under the remit of VECs. The model addresses the issues of tutor training, teaching methodology, curriculum and support structures.

Integrate Ireland Language and Training (IILT) (formerly the Refugee Language Support Unit) has been running intensive language classes for adult refugees since 1997. The Department of Education and Science assigned IILT an active research role to identify the needs of learners in this domain and to specify benchmarks to allow for learner and teacher assessment of progress. The staff at IILT continue to generate and pilot learning materials based on the needs of the learners.

In October 2001 the DES asked IILT to co-ordinate a project to develop language-learning materials for asylum seekers and non-nationals other than refugees. As a result a focus group has been convened to develop materials for ESOL classes. The group comprises a range of practitioners working in the VEC system (Adult Literacy Organisers, Literacy Tutors) around the country as well as the voluntary sector. The focus group carried-out an intensive piloting phase of materials in the autumn of 2002. A second round of piloting is in process with final publication and distribution due in September 2003. The development of these materials will be supported by training for practitioners.

The survey examined the current position in relation to ESOL provision in adult literacy schemes and was conducted in February 2002. A summary of the results is outlined below.

1. Questionnaire Overview

A questionnaire was circulated to all Adult Literacy Schemes (125), requesting information on the following areas:

- provision;
- participation;
- information on ESOL tutors;
- assessment;
- accreditation and support.

Responses were received from 59 schemes (47%), with good representation from all over the country (responses from 25 of the 26 counties).

The vast majority of respondents (83%) reported offering ESOL provision for asylum seekers, refugees and migrant workers. 62% were group classes with 38% attending 1:1 classes. A sizeable majority of respondents (73%) felt that there is currently not enough ESOL provision available to meet demand.

The main issues highlighted by respondents in relation to planning and managing an ESOL class were the cultural backgrounds of the participants and their language background and levels.

2. Learner Participation

Eligibility for ESOL provision: 100% of those who responded felt that asylum seekers and refugees should be entitled to ESOL classes. 85% felt that migrant workers should be entitled to classes.[3]

3. Motivations for ESOL learners' attendance were:

- to improve their English;
- to integrate more easily;
- for work;
- for day-to-day living.

ESOL learners are motivated by the provision of:
- welcoming atmosphere;
- needs-based classes;
- stimulating materials.

The most common reasons for leaving classes are:
- work commitments;
- moving on;
- lack of childcare facilities.

4. Assessment and Accreditation

The respondents stated that most ESOL learners are assessed in the same way as adult literacy learners, i.e. by informal interview. On the subject of accreditation, 98% of ESOL courses are not currently being accredited and respondents felt that there was a need to develop an accreditation system that met the learning needs of ESOL learners.

[3]·DES regulations state that within the constraints of the overall budget provided under the Adult Literacy and Community Education Scheme, adult literacy and language tuition may be provided free of charge to all non EU Nationals. Full details are included in Appendix 1.

5. Training

32% of ESOL tutors reported that they had some form of ESOL training and 68% of ESOL tutors were also literacy tutors. However, this response may reflect confusion on the part of many organisers and tutors in relation to the difference between ESOL and TEFL.

Organisers felt there was a need for more language training as well as inter-cultural awareness training to complement the existing provision.

6. Support

96% of Organisers felt that there was a need for more resources for ESOL in the form of materials, a specific budget and training.

94% of finance for ESOL classes is currently drawn from the existing literacy budget. Other funding is drawn from local community or partnership groups. Almost half of the literacy schemes have already requested extra funding from their VEC for ESOL classes. 88% of tutors are paid and 12% are volunteers.

Literacy scheme premises are used for classes in 76% of cases. Other premises are provided by local schools, hostels, factories and community centres.

Most schemes (93%) do not have translation facilities.

Only 22% of schemes have childcare facilities, although 80% of Organisers said they feel there is a need for them in their scheme.

Only 38% of schemes have a referral system for ESOL learners in relation to welfare, housing or rights issues and it would appear that literacy practitioners are in need of training and advice in this area.

Post Script: In June 2002, out of a total of 23,973 adult literacy learners 3,114 were participating in ESOL classes (13%).

Part 2

The guidelines and recommendations below are based on the survey findings of ESOL provision in the adult literacy service (from February 2002) and feedback and inputs from the NALA ESOL Executive Working Group. The guidelines are proposed in the context of the principles for adult basic education outlined in the NALA Quality Framework as follows[4]:

- The learner's right to attend on a voluntary basis and to set his/her own goals will be supported by the organisation
- An ethical code of confidentiality, respect and trust will inform all aspects of the organisation
- Cultural differences will be respected at all levels of the organisation
- Particular attention will be paid to creating and maintaining an atmosphere of social interaction, informality, and enjoyment within the organisation
- Learners will be enabled to participate in all aspects of the organisation, including evaluation of the scheme.

The guidelines and recommendations are listed under the following headings:

1. **Outreach and Promotion**
2. **Provision and Participation**
3. **Assessment**
4. **Accreditation**
5. **Training and Support**
6. **Equal Status Policy**

1. Outreach and Promotion

Outreach and promotion are key parts of a quality adult basic education (ABE) service. They relate to raising awareness about the literacy scheme and the services it provides and its involvement within local activities and communities. **Outreach and promotion must be adapted and changed as populations and needs change and this is particularly the case with ESOL learners. It is important to identify the target population before planning, implementing, evaluating and improving outreach and promotion strategies.** The value of linking with other groups in developing and improving a scheme's approach to outreach and promotion is immense. Services of particular relevance to ESOL students might be:

- Community Welfare Officers;
- Health Boards;
- Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs;
- NGOs working with asylum seekers and refugees;
- local community groups;
- ethnic minority shops and churches.

This community-based approach should be used to target new ESOL learners. Existing ESOL learners can also be used to recruit others, and members of ethnic minority groups can take on roles as paid ESOL tutors and volunteer tutors (see also Provision and Participation: Staffing).

Further information on outreach and recruitment can be found in Section 7 of the user guide of the *NALA Evolving Quality Framework for Adult Basic Education*.

2. Provision and Participation

2.1 Entitlements of ESOL Learners

The results of the survey of current ESOL provision in literacy schemes clearly demonstrates the need to expand and broaden existing provision as it is currently not adequate to meet demands: this issue was highlighted by 73% of respondents in the survey. Provision varies, with some schemes accommodating learners in mainstream adult literacy programmes. There is also a lack of information leading to confusion on the part of local providers as to the rights and entitlements of refugees, asylum seekers and migrant workers.

All asylum seekers and migrant workers are entitled to free language and literacy tuition, while refugees are entitled to access all courses open to EU nationals.

Language support should be provided free of charge, resources permitting, including ICT basic skills.Organisers should access general regulations through their VEC so that they can inform learners of their eligibility in relation to tuition. (See Appendix 1 of this document for the Department of Education and Science's current regulations/status of entitlement. Referral numbers for health and housing organisations for Organisers are also included in Appendix 2).

In exceptional circumstances, e.g. when there are a group of people of the same nationality who have similar needs and are at a similar level with regard to ESOL they can be organised into distinct groups. For example, women-only classes can be organised, if participants experience specific difficulties in accessing provision related to cultural or childcare issues.

2.2 ESOL Learners' Language Profiles

ESOL learners are diverse in their language levels and needs. Some may have good spoken English with poor literacy skills in the English language, while others may have no spoken ability in English and poor literacy skills in their mother tongue.
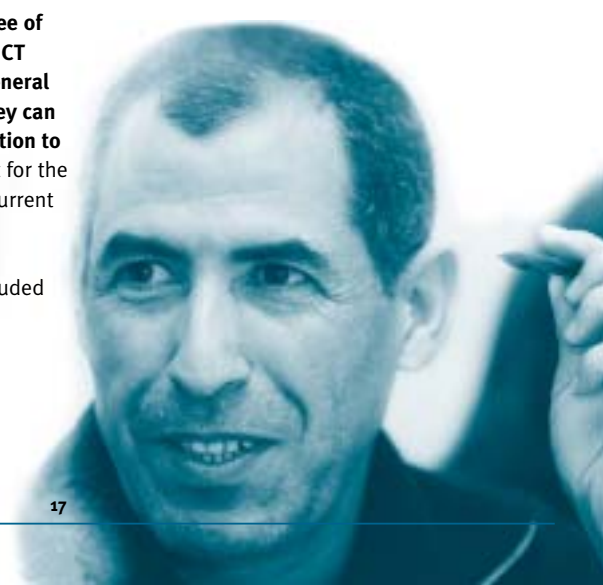
Literacy and Language Profiles of ESOL Learnes **Table 1**

Literacy in L1/L2	Literacy in English	Level of Spoken Communication
no	no	from beginners to advanced
yes	no	from beginners to advanced
yes	yes	from beginners to advanced

L1 = first language   L2 = second language

Speaking/Listening Levels

Levels of oral competence can roughly be divided into 3 groups:

1. beginners
2. students are able to communicate at a basic level, although fluency is greater than accuracy
3. students are able to communicate fairly competently, although grammatical accuracy and consistency is an issue [5].

Literacy Levels For ESOL Learners

Levels of literacy can be divided into four groups:

1. students not literate in any language
2. students not literate in the roman script
3. students with difficulty in de-coding less common words and/or who can copy but have difficulties writing freely [6]
4. students who need to improve literacy levels to function effectively in everyday situations.

More detailed group profiles are also included in Appendix 3.

2.3 A Framework for ESOL Provision in Literacy Schemes

Traditional literacy tuition models are not wholly appropriate for ESOL learners for a number of reasons. First, as in any literacy class, there may be a broad range of literacy levels but learners will also vary widely in their levels of oral language competency, as well as in their levels of educational experience (see student profiles above). Secondly, demand for tuition may also fluctuate widely, as the communities from which learners come are not settled.

Every ESOL learner should receive a minimum of four hours ESOL provision a week. The scheme should aim to provide tuition that enables people to function autonomously in the society in which they are resident.

learning programmes and teaching approaches may need to take account of some or all of the following:

- learners' short-term goals and the contexts in which they will need to use English
- learners' educational and employment aspirations
- learners' wider needs for skills, e.g. IT, study skills, job-search or specific subject skills
- the local community context
- techniques for teaching mixed-level groups and groups of learners with very mixed educational backgrounds
- techniques for teaching individuals whose listening/speaking skills are much higher or lower than their reading/writing skills
- communicative language-teaching techniques, including ways of working with learners who do not share a language with the teacher (having bilingual classroom assistants would be a further option here)
- cross-cultural approaches which draw on learners' knowledge of other languages and cultures
- the need to move learners towards independence
- strategies for identifying and tackling learning difficulties such as dyslexia
- the effect of psychological or physical trauma, personal loss or culture shock on learning (this highlights the need for cultural awareness training for ESOL tutors/teachers)[7].

There are currently no national standards in Ireland for ESOL (in speaking, listening, reading and writing) with no corresponding core curricula. Resources available to schemes across the country vary as much as the learner base itself. However, there are common areas which both schemes with very limited resources and schemes with a specific budget for ESOL share. Some of these might include:

1. **devising processes for placing learners in classes** and carrying out initial assessment, i.e. deciding on learners' current levels of ability

2. **designing learning programmes** for individuals and groups, i.e. selecting objectives and learning activities

3. carrying out **summative assessment of learners' progress** at the end of courses and recording levels or standards reached in reading, writing, listening and speaking

4. where possible, setting up **progression routes** and systems of referrals to other centres as well as accredited courses and a process of tracking learners, including date of leaving and the form of provision they subsequently access

5. providing **tutor training** in assessment and needs analysis, planning learning programmes, teaching mixed-level classes, communicative language teaching and cultural awareness.

2.4 ESOL Provision: Suggested Stages

The following steps[8] are suggested in providing ESOL classes and can be implemented by any scheme, small, medium or large. Larger schemes will obviously have more scope for providing both graded general ESOL classes and separate basic literacy for ESOL learners. Smaller schemes can use strategies for coping with mixed-level groups and individual needs, including specific literacy difficulties. These are also briefly outlined below.

Step 1: Interview and initial diagnostic assessment for placement purposes

This should aim to establish a learner's:

- Current competence in the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing)
- (More detailed assessment of a learner's language skills/needs/goals and objectives with a view to planning a learning programme will have to be carried out with the tuto/group once the learner has been placed.)
- Previous education in own country including language of education (this may differ from the learner's first, spoken language)
- Work experience
- Present circumstances (including status, if working etc.)
- Education/training/language learning in Ireland
- Long and short term goals and perceived needs.

NB. The amount of information gathered will obviously depend on the learner's level of English or whether there is someone present who can interpret.
A more detailed guide to interviewing ESOL students is included in Appendix 4.

Step 2: Placement and short general ESOL courses of 8 to 10 weeks

Once the learners have been initially assessed, they can be placed in a class. For larger schemes, there is more scope for graded provision, e.g. three levels: Beginners, Elementary and Intermediate+. If possible, at least two levels (Beginners/Elementary and Intermediate/Advanced) should be provided. **Beginners' groups in particular should ideally be closed groups for short, initial general courses of 8 to 10 weeks' duration and if possible, learners should have at least four hours per week (i.e. 32 to 40 hours per course).**

Short, initial general ESOL courses of 8 to 10 weeks will:

- provide revision for more advanced learners
- provide a base in 'survival English' for complete beginners
- allow time to thoroughly establish students' levels of competence in speaking/listening/reading/writing
- allow time to analyse individual needs and devise a learning programme for the following weeks.

[8] This information was provided by the Dublin Adult Learning Centre

The general ESOL courses should be modular/theme-based and the emphasis should be on functional, 'survival English', e.g.:

• doctor/health
• shopping
• travel/transport
• accommodation
• telephone English
• accessing information.

NB. Cultural awareness/information about Ireland and cross-cultural exchange should be an integral part of any ESOL programme.

It is possible to negotiate a learning programme even with complete beginners by using pictures. This 'plan of work' for 8 to 10 weeks can then be displayed so that if learners do join the group at a later date they may see what the group has already covered.

These short, 8 to 10 week courses can run in constant succession so that there is always a general ESOL class for new arrivals to join. Short courses generally prove more effective since attendance and numbers can fluctuate.

Step 3: Designing a (more specific and needs-based) learning programme for the next 8 to 10 weeks

Following an initial 8 to 10 week general ESOL course which contains ongoing assessment, the tutor/tutors can then draw up a group profile which includes the learners' level of English (level of competence in the four skills), prior learning and experience and individual needs and goals. (see sample ESOL group profile in Appendix 3). Invariably, even graded ESOL classes have a wide range of listening, speaking and literacy skills. Learners may also want to work on different contexts (e.g. work-related English/health). It is possible to draw up group objectives with the learners which include a range of contexts so that everyone's needs are addressed. Learners will then have individual objectives for the language skills on which they wish to focus. The learning programme over the next 8 to 10 weeks (resources permitting) should again include ongoing assessment so that learners can monitor their own progress.

Resources permitting, ESOL provision could also be extended (and/or ESOL students could be integrated into other programmes within the scheme) to include:

• pre-vocational English
• computers
• family learning
• other courses accredited through the Further Education framework
• language support for learners who join other mainstream courses (e.g. pre-vocational training courses/family learning).

Coping with mixed-level groups/literacy

In reality, even when the resources are available for graded provision, most ESOL classes tend to be mixed level and can include learners with varying levels of literacy. **Training teachers in strategies to cope with mixed-level groups and developing appropriate materials are key. Designing group learning programmes with specific aims for individual learners is also crucial.** Options include:

- group teaching
- open learning opportunities, e.g. distance learning, computer-based training, self-directed study
- 1:1 support from volunteer tutors who have done ESOL training.

Materials

A wide range of teaching materials for ESOL is currently available in the NALA resource room and may be accessed through the **ESOL Resource Guide,** available from the Agency, and also on the NALA website: www.nala.ie

2.5 Learners' Motivations

have specific motivations for attending classes. For example, parents may wish to help a child who is attending school. Lack of structured activity may be a factor for hostel residents and other learners may wish to access work-related materials or obtain accreditation.

These motivations and goals should be taken into account when planning provision by utilising particular outreach techniques and tailoring materials to suit learners' needs.

2.6 Factors Affecting ESOL Learners' Attendance

Schemes should be aware of the outside forces and internal factors that may result in many ESOL learners dropping out of classes. Firstly, the range and quality of provision may affect attendance. Secondly, according to information compiled by Integrate Ireland Language and Training (IILT), amongst the issues which impact on asylum seekers' learning are anxiety about the future, health, family, racism and finance. Problems with childcare and dealing with officialdom also cause anxiety. (A summary of the impact and solutions of theses issues can be found in Appendix 5).

Schemes should be aware that ESOL students may not attend on a regular basis for a variety of reasons and should take measures to address this situation. For example, an attendance record should be kept and if the class is unable to cope with the demand, priority should be given to those who attend regularly. In these circumstances, care should be taken not to exclude those with very basic language skills and whose learning needs are greatest. Wherever possible, those whose attendance is irregular should be followed up.

2.7 Staffing

In schemes with a large number of ESOL learners, there is a need for a member of staff (e.g. an ESOL Resource Worker) to take on the responsibility for the organisation and development of ESOL, in liaison with the Adult Literacy Organiser. This ESOL Resource Worker would need to have ESOL training and where possible come from a language teaching background as well as a literacy tutoring background.

Schemes should also seek to recruit group tutors and volunteers from ethnic minority backgrounds.

2.8 Liaison with other providers

Organisers referred to the need for increased funding and provision in their response to the survey. However, there may be other ESOL provision in the proximity of the literacy scheme. The range of Further Education courses is currently being expanded, particularly through the **Back to Education Initiative** (BTEI) which is providing new part-time learning opportunities through Further Education

colleges and centres, VTOS, Youthreach and Senior Traveller Training Centres, as well as Adult Literacy Schemes. The BTEI is targeting marginalised and disadvantaged groups, including refugees and asylum seekers who need second language provision.

Schemes should liaise with other providers of ESOL within their VEC area and local community in order to maximise access for learners and play a role in encouraging the

integration of ESOL into other subject areas to avoid duplication.

Schemes should also keep Community Welfare Officers, Health Boards, the Department of Social and Family Affairs and FÁS local offices, as well as other local refugee/asylum seeker support groups informed as to the range of provision available (see also 1. Outreach and Promotion).

3. Assessment

There are no published assessment materials for ESOL that have been developed for the Irish context. However, NALA, in collaboration with literacy providers, is currently engaged in the piloting of a draft assessment framework for literacy and numeracy and the aim is to develop the framework, associated resources and training programmes for mainstream use during 2003 [9]. Responses to the survey of ESOL provision in literacy schemes, as well as feedback from the schemes involved in piloting the literacy assessment framework, indicate a strong demand from literacy providers for new assessment procedures suitable for use with ESOL students in an Irish context.

In further developing its literacy assessment framework, NALA is continuing to address the literacy needs of ESOL learners. However, there is a need for a broader assessment framework specifically for ESOL that involves all stakeholders (e.g. Adult Education Organisers, Further Education colleges, PLCs etc.) and which takes account of international best practice in language teaching, drawing on the Common European Framework of Reference for Language [10].

NALA should also actively promote cooperation with other stakeholders in the area of assessment. **Practising ESOL tutors should be trained in on-going assessment once the framework is developed.**

In the interim, an appropriate initial starting point for the Organiser could be an interview with some basic oral questions to test listening and speaking, with one piece of reading and a basic form that the learner is asked to complete. The Organiser should also ask relevant questions about first language and level of education. Further initial assessment should be undertaken by the tutor based on observations during the first six weeks of tuition.

4. Accreditation

Accreditation appears to be a strong motivating force in ESOL learners' attendance. At present there is no specific accreditation available for ESOL learners. FETAC offers accreditation at Foundation, Level 1 and 2 language modules and they may be adapted to the needs of ESOL learners. However, there is a strong view from practitioners that the modules are inappropriate for use with ESOL learners, because they are primarily designed for English speakers learning the basics of a foreign language for holiday purposes. They do not refer to tasks that are relevant to life in Ireland (e.g. health/childcare).

They are therefore not ideal for ESOL learners but the Specific Learning Outcomes can be used as templates with adaptations. The modules describe the standards to be achieved and it is course providers who are responsible for the design of learning programmes. The FETAC language module states that " the duration, content and delivery of learning programmes should be appropriate to the learners' needs and interests, and should enable the learners to reach the standard as described in the modules."[11] A benefit of using the modules is that students learn to build a portfolio and thus gain independent learning techniques.

The modules were reviewed in 2001 and are intended to describe the standards required for any modern language, including English, in line with the Council of Europe guidelines. FETAC has indicated that it is not envisaged that these modules will be reviewed in the short term.

FETAC has received a small number of entries from ESOL practitioners for accreditation in these language modules and recommend that tutors adapt them to suit learners' needs. Practitioners should also be aware that the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) is preparing a new framework of qualifications. Sub-strands of knowledge, skill and competence have been used to generate level indicators and the Authority has now determined a 10-level grid of level indicators. Two of these levels will be below the current Foundation Level[12].

Schemes who wish to offer other opportunities for accreditation may wish to consider the Test of Interactive English (T.I.E.) available through ACELS (The Advisory Council for English Language Schools). A further option is the IELTS (International English Language Testing System). This exam is suitable for learners who have a more academic background and who aim to pursue third-level education in Ireland at some point in the future. Cambridge Accredited Courses (First Certificate and Advanced Certificate) are a further option.

We recommend that practitioners submit language portfolios for accreditation to FETAC who will also welcome comment and feedback on the module from practitioners and learners. Organisers and ESOL tutors are recommended to contact NALA with the FETAC feedback.

We also recommend that NALA review the use of FETAC Foundation modules in literacy schemes on a regular basis.

Any review of the FETAC language modules should take into consideration the views of ESOL practitioners.

5. Training and Support

5.1 Training

At present there is very limited language training available in Ireland specifically for tutors working with ESOL groups.

According to NALA's ESOL survey, February 2002, a majority of tutors (68%) teaching ESOL in literacy schemes hadn't received any training for ESOL and Organisers highlighted the need for more language training for tutors.

NALA currently offers a series of one-day "ESOL and Literacy" courses, which look at materials and suitable tuition methods. These are known as "ESOL 1" and "ESOL 2".

• "ESOL 1" deals with how to teach beginners, compares ESL/EFL methodology and focuses on the four skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing with specific emphasis on literacy. The course also deals with sourcing and developing materials.

• The "ESOL 2" training day looks at syllabus design, lesson planning for ESOL, assessment and evaluation, how to teach advanced learners, teaching multi-level classes and sourcing and developing materials.

Integrate Ireland Language and Training is also delivering a series of Material Development workshops throughout the country.

ESOL is now an integral part of the literacy service and training supports should reflect this. NALA is also working on developing a new six-day ESOL and Literacy programme, accredited by Waterford Institute of Technology at Certificate Level, which will be available in

The current situation in relation to training opportunities for ESOL practitioners is unsatisfactory and steps should be taken to implement a comprehensive training programme through cooperation with ACELS and other stakeholders.

In the interim, we recommend that Literacy Tutors who have been assigned an ESOL group should have ESOL, TEFL or some language training and an adult literacy tuition background. TEFL-trained tutors need an induction into the adult literacy service to complement their language training. The Initial Tutor Training Course may also provide an introduction to the adult literacy ethos. Equally, experienced Adult Literacy Tutors should undergo some form of ESOL or TEFL training.

It is desirable that tutors should have qualifications based on courses of at least 70 hours' duration (recommended by ACELS – the Advisory Council for English Language Schools) and where possible on courses of 100 hours.[13] This should complement or build on credit transfers from the NALA/WIT accreditation project which provides qualifications for literacy workers. It is recommended that tutors avail of the NALA/WIT "ESOL and Literacy" module which will be available from Autumn 2003.

A wide range of tuition models should be highlighted in training, to equip tutors with a broader range of skills to meet learners' needs. Adult Literacy Organisers and ESOL Resource Workers should also undergo some form of ESOL training and an element of ESOL awareness should be built into the Initial Literacy Tutor Training course for every scheme.

[13.] ACELS also recommends that language schools require participants on TEFL training courses to hold a primary degree or a qualification recognised by t he Department of Education and Science or the Higher Education Training & Awards Council (HETAC) as being the equivalent of a degree.

A wide range of tuition models should be highlighted in training, to equip tutors with a broader range of skills to meet learners' needs. Adult Literacy Organisers and ESOL Resource Workers should also undergo some form of ESOL training and an element of ESOL awareness should be built into the Initial Literacy Tutor Training course for every scheme.

Schemes currently offer tuition to a wide range of ethnic groups and this has implications for intercultural awareness training. Intercultural awareness and anti-racism training should be made available to all staff in literacy schemes. An element of intercultural awareness should also be built into literacy awareness training undertaken by schemes. [14]

NALA currently offers a one-day workshop on "Intercultural Awareness" for ESOL/adult literacy tutors and ALOs and are developing accredited training with WIT on Intercultural Awareness.

5.2 Childcare

In relation to childcare, 80% of Organisers who responded in the survey said that they needed childcare facilities. **Lack of childcare is a barrier to participation and there is an urgent need to expand accessible and affordable provision.** Schemes may wish to apply to the Department of Justice Childcare Programme through their VEC to establish crèche facilities. Funds are available for both capital and staffing costs. Schemes should also be aware that County Childcare Plans are currently being established by County Development Boards with the appointment of County Childcare Co-ordinators.

5.3 Guidance for ESOL Learners

The Adult Guidance Initiative is building a network of adult guidance projects throughout the country. There are currently 18 pilot projects operating, with another 8 recently approved. The initiative is aimed at any adult taking a literacy, community education or VTOS course. For further details of nearest projects, refer to: www.ncge.ie

6. Equal Status Policy

Every scheme should develop an intercultural and equal status policy statement. This policy will be closely informed by the guiding principles within the NALA Quality Framework, particularly the statement that **"Cultural differences will be respected at all levels of the organisation."** The Equal Status Policy statement should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis. Ideally, this policy should be formulated on the basis of in-depth consultation with key stakeholders, which should include ESOL learners in the scheme.

Schemes should refer to the Equal Status Act (2000) in drawing up their equal status policy. The Equal Status Act addresses nine grounds on which people may experience discrimination: gender; family status; marital status; religion; age; race; membership of the Traveller community; sexual orientation; disability.

All tutors and learners should be made aware of the scheme's Equal Status Policy Statement

Further guidelines for the creation of equal status policy statements are included in Appendix 6.

[14]. The National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI) has published guidelines on anti-racism and intercultural training. The guidelines are available free of charge from the NCCRI, 20 Harcourt Street, Dublin 2. Email: nccri@eircom.net Web: www.nccri.com

Department of Education and Science current regulations/status of entitlement

To: Chief Executive Officers of VECs
     Principals of PLC colleges
     National Co-ordinators

27 September 2001

Re: Access to PLC, VTOS and Youthreach programmes for non-EU nationals

Dear CEO/Principal/Co-ordinator,

This letter sets out arrangements to be applied to non-nationals who seek entry to PLC courses, Youthreach or VTOS programmes. Please bring these arrangements to the attention of all relevant staff in your area. **The White Paper on Adult Education: "Learning for Life"** sets out a number of proposals in relation to the participation in education and training of refugees and asylum seekers in **s.8.13**. An extract is set out below.

1.Treatment on equal basis with Irish nationals, subject to normal conditions of relevant scheme

As a general principle, the following categories must be treated on the same basis as Irish nationals in terms of access to vocational training programmes within the Further Education Sector i.e. **the same conditions as apply to Irish nationals for the relevant programme or scheme should also apply to them**

• EU nationals;
• persons who have refugee status in
  Ireland - be that convention or programme
  refugee status;
• persons in the State as the spouse of an EU national, where the EU national has moved
  from one country to another within the EU to work;
• persons (including their dependent spouse and children) who have been granted leave to
  remain in the State on humanitarian grounds;
• persons who have permission to remain in the State as the parents of a child born in Ireland; (they
  should have a letter from the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform granting them "leave
  to remain".

These rights extend to programmes in the Further Education sector only. Such a right is not extended to siblings of the Irish born child.)

- those asylum applicants covered by the terms of a Government decision of 26 July 1999 - See Appendix 1. (Such persons will be in possession of a letter from the Asylum Division of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (D/JELR) stating that they are eligible to seek work).

2. PLC applicants

2.1 Tuition

In practice, the categories listed at 1. above are entitled to free access to PLC courses, while **any other categories should be charged the economic fee, which, for all future fees levied, should be £2,877 per annum.   Participants who pay the economic fee should be self-supporting, and have approval to remain in the State (i.e. student visa or green handbook stamped by Gardaí).** If not approved to stay in Ireland, it is suggested that students be told in a letter that the college is willing to enrol them on payment of the economic fee and production of an approval letter from the D/JELR to stay in Ireland.

Asylum seekers who entered the country after 26 July 1999 are not eligible for free PLC tuition, except in cases where they have been granted "leave to remain" or on the basis of being the parents of an Irish born child.

Asylum seekers in the "right to work" category who entered the country before 26 July 1999, who have been waiting at least a year for a determination on their case and are in possession of the notification of their right to work from the D/JELR, are entitled to free tuition on PLC courses.

VECs are asked to ensure that any asylum seekers enrolled on programmes are notified in writing that their enrolment on an education and training programme is without prejudice to their application for asylum, and cannot be used as a basis for seeking to stay in the country where applications are refused. The asylum seeker should confirm in writing to the VEC that s/he accepts this condition.

2.2 Student Maintenance grants

For administration of student maintenance grants the normal criteria governing eligibility for the schemes (nationality, residency clause, and means test etc) apply. While EU nationals, refugees and those who have been granted humanitarian leave to remain in the State may apply for maintenance grants, subject to the criteria of the schemes of assistance, **non-EU nationals and asylum seekers are not eligible to receive maintenance support.**

**2.3 Progression to third level (including
D/SFCA Back to Education Third Level Option)**

The free fees initiative does not apply to non-EU nationals or asylum seekers. The present position whereby access for such groups is conditional, among other things, on payment of the economic fee with no entitlement to maintenance or fee support is unchanged.

Where free fees under the third level student support schemes apply to refugees and those with humanitarian leave to remain in the State, the usual residency requirements (resident in the EU for 3 of the last 5 years) also apply.

3. VTOS

Participation in the Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme, including dispersed mode PLC courses, is confined to adults aged 21 or over who are receiving an unemployment payment or signing for credits for at least six months. Dependent spouses, recipients of One Parent Family Payment or disability payment who meet these criteria are also eligible.
Asylum seekers in the "right to work" category i.e. those who entered the country before 26 July 1999, who have been waiting at least a year for a determination on their case and are in possession of the notification of their right to work from the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, are entitled to VTOS. They are also required to be over 21, have been unemployed for at least six months (time spent on supplementary welfare or in direct provision can count for this), and have been in receipt of the relevant payment immediately before accessing the programme.

Refugees and dependent spouses of Irish nationals who satisfy the normal conditions of VTOS are also eligible.

Asylum seekers who are parents of an Irish born child are also entitled to VTOS subject to being over 21 and at least six months unemployed, having the required "approval to remain" from the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, and having been in receipt of a relevant payment immediately before starting the programme. The time spent on supplementary welfare or in direct provision in Ireland prior to the child being born may count for the purpose of the six-month qualifying period.

4. Third level colleges

Like other non-EU nationals, asylum seekers are not eligible for free tuition in third level colleges.

5.Youthreach

Youthreach is confined to young people aged 15-20 years of age who left school with less than 5 Ds at Junior cycle or equivalent.

As a general rule, pupils are admitted to primary and second level schools in Ireland irrespective of their nationality or status, and non-EU nationals, refugees and asylum seekers under 18 would therefore generally avail of free education at their local schools. Where refugees or asylum seekers aged 15-18 have not completed upper secondary education and their circumstances are such that school is not a viable option, they may be admitted to Youthreach. It is envisaged that this will arise only in the most exceptional cases, and where there is the prior approval of the Further Education Section – an educational assessor will be put in place shortly to undertake an assessment of individual needs.

6.Primary and Post-Primary Schools for non-nationals

It is the practice to admit children up to 18 to primary or post-primary school irrespective of nationality or status. Additional resources are available to schools for those for whom English is not the mother tongue, as set out in the Department's information booklet on the subject.

7.Refugees

Under the terms of the **Refugee Act, 1996,** refugees (adult/children) have rights of access to all educational services on the same basis as Irish nationals.

8. Integrate Ireland Language and Training

Integrate Ireland Language and Training (formerly The Refugee Language Support Unit) established under the auspices of Trinity College, has been provided with a budget to co-ordinate action for language tuition for refugees to assist them along the pathway to independent living. The Unit's functions are fulfiled in co-operation with FÁS and refugee groups.

The Department of Education and Science has recently agreed to provide additional funds to the Unit for staff development programmes, for VEC and voluntary tutors and, for resource materials to meet the literacy and language needs of adults, including asylum seekers and other non-nationals. A Working Group including VEC and NALA representation is being established to progress this development.

9. Adult Literacy

Within the constraints of the overall budget provided under the Adult Literacy and Community Education Scheme, **adult literacy and language tuition may be provided free of charge for adult asylum seekers.** A pilot initiative has begun in the Dublin area to assess levels of need, programme requirements and costs in this area. Pending the outcome of the pilot study, it will not be possible to cater for adult asylum seekers other than through existing levels of resources.

10. FÁS

In general asylum seekers cannot access vocational training provided by FÁS. However, those in the "right to work" category are provided with work orientation programmes and supports organised through an Asylum Seekers Unit within FÁS. Refugees and those with humanitarian leave to remain in the State or granted leave to remain as the parents of an Irish born child, have the same rights as Irish nationals.

11. Implementation

These arrangements take the place of any previous arrangements for non-nationals, refugees and asylum seekers and may be applied with immediate effect.

Yours sincerely,

_____
Peter Kelly,
Assistant Principal.

Extract from White Paper 2000

Extract from "Learning for Life": White Paper on Adult Education Regarding the Treatment of Asylum Seekers Seeking Access to Adult Education

1. It proposed that for **children aged between 15-18**, referral to school or Youthreach;

2. In the case of **asylum seekers with entitlement to work** (all pre-26 July 1999 asylum seekers who are at least one year in Ireland);

• free access to adult literacy, English language and mother culture supports;

• freeaccess to active labour market programmes such as PLC or VTOS if over 21 and six months in receipt of a qualifying social welfare payment, on the same basis as other participants. **As non-EU nationals they would not get maintenance grants for PLC courses,** but no tuition fees would be charged;

• access to free part-time Back to Education Initiative programmes up to and including PLC level for social welfare recipients, under arrangements set out for Category 2 in Chapter 4 of the White Paper;

• access to education and training programmes will be allowed for this group on the clear understanding that enrolment is without prejudice to the determination reached on their asylum status, and cannot be used as a basis for seeking an extension or remaining in the State should their application for asylum be rejected;

• in line with other non-EU nationals, access to third-level education will apply only on payment of the economic fee, and there will be no entitlement to maintenance grants.

3. For those **asylum seekers who do not have an entitlement to work,** free access to adult literacy, English language and mother culture supports only.

The following organisations provide information on health, housing, welfare and other issues:

Integrating Ireland[15]
C/o Comhlamh
10 Upper Camden Street
Dublin 2
Tel: 01 – 478 3490
Fax: 01 – 478 3738
Email: magda@comhlamh.org
Website: www.integratingireland.ie

Access Ireland
Dominick Court
40 – 41 Dominick Street Lower
Dublin 1
Tel: 01 – 878 0589
Fax : 01 – 878 0591
Email: accessireland@connect.ie

Nasc – The Irish Immigrants Support Centre
St. Marie's of the Isle
Sharman Crawford St
Cork
Tel: 021 – 431 7411
Fax: 021 – 431 7402
Email: iisc@eircom.net

Doras Luimní
Mount St. Alphonsus
South Circular Road
Limerick
Tel: 061 – 310328
Fax :061 - 310328
Email: dorasluimni@eircom.net

National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI)
20 Harcourt St
Dublin 2
Tel: 01 – 478 5777
Fax: 01 – 478 5778
Email: nccri@eircom.net
Website: www.nccri.com

Information on ESOL training currently available can be obtained from:
NALA
76 Lower Gardiner Street
Dublin 1
Tel: 01 – 855 4332
Fax : 01 – 855 5475
Email: literacy@nala.ie
Website: www.nala.ie

Advisory Council for English Language Schools (ACELS)
44 Leeson Place
Dublin 2
Tel: 01 - 676 7374
Email: acels@iol.ie
Website: www.iol.ie/~acels

[15.] As distinct from "Integrate Ireland Language & Training"

Appendix 3: Sample Profiles

Group Profile 1: ESOL (Literacy Learners)

Table 2

Name/ Code	Country of Origin	First Language L1	Age	M/F	Arrival in Ire.	Educational Background	*Literacy Level in L1	Literacy Level in English	Level of Spoken English
Nouara	Algeria	Arabic	29	M	1997	Finished age 15 Algeria	Yes Arabic	Knows names of letters of alphabet/reads signs, notices. Needs practice with handwriting.	Fairly fluent post-elementary but pronunciation/ inaccuracy can impede comprehension inaccuracy can impede comprehension
Michael	Nigeria	Ebo/Yoruba	24	M	2001	Finished school age 14 Nigeria	No	Reads but has difficulties with writing/spelling grammar.	Bilingual. Feels that he has difficulties with pronunciation/ accent in Ireland.
Marinko	Kosovo	Albanian	17	M	1997	4 years primary school Albania. On Youthreach Programme.	No	Knows some of the names of letters of alphabet/reads signs/notices. Can write address in upper case.	Native speaker -like fluency.
Queen	Nigeria	Ebo	23	F	1999	5 years primary school Nigeria	No	Reads common words and writes name/address but has difficulties filling in a form.	Bilingual
Shade	Nigeria	Ebo	18	F	2001	3 years primary school Nigeria. On Youthreach Programme.	No	Knows names of of letters of alphabet but not sounds. Writes own name only.	Elementary (just post-beginner)
Zara	Somalia	Somali	21	F	2002	None	No	Knows the names of some of the letters of the alphabet.	Elementary (just post-beginner)

Note: This group has 2 hours tuition per week. The two latter students who are more basic have 2 supplementary hours each per week with 1:1 volunteer literacy tutors.

Learners gave these responses themselves in the initial interviews, which were conducted in English.

Name /Code	Country/First Language How Long in Ireland	Previous Education	Work Experience	Level of English	Goals	Language Needs
Said	Algeria Arabic/Berber	Graduate in Public Administration 1 year in Ireland No English before coming to Ireland. Learned French and has Roman Script. Has computer skills.	Civil Service	L Pre-Intermediate S Elementary R Elementary W Elementary Good Handwriting	To improve Grammar. To talk on the telephone. To read newspapers. Watching TV.	Extend vocabulary. Improve accuracy in tenses, usage etc. Word Order. Develop writing skills. Pronunciation- vowel sounds/word stress.
Evodie	DR Congo Lingala 2 years in Ireland (short time)	Completed Secondary Education (Lang. of Education was French)	Worked in an office in Congo Mother -3 Children	L Intermediate S Intermediate R Elementary W Elementary Good Handwriting	To develop confidence in speaking. To improve Grammar. To talk to children's teachers and help with homework. To get on a training course for an office job.	Develop writing skills. Improve accuracy in tenses, usage etc. Extend vocabulary
Natascha	Ukraine Ukrainian/ Russian 18 months in Ireland	Completed Secondary Education. 1 year of 3rd level in Ukraine. No English before coming to Ireland.	Worked in a shop in Ukraine Mother 1- Child	L Elementary S Elementary –confident but not structured R Beginner W Beginner Spelling difficult	To get on a hairdressing and cosmetics (VTOS) training course. To improve writing and spelling.	Weak Structure- tenses, articles, word order. Spelling. Pronunciation- Sentence Rhythm/ Word Stress /Intonation. To develop learning Strategies.
Hristina	Bulgaria Bulgarian 1 year in Ireland	Completed Secondary Education.	Student in Bulgaria. Mother – 1 child	L Elementary S Elementary R Elementary W Beginner	To get on a hairdressing and cosmetics(VTOS) training course. confidence in speaking. To improve writing and spelling. To talk on the telephone.	Basic Sentence Structure.Tenses, articles, plurals. Spelling & Punctuation. To Develop learing strategies

Table 3

Name /Code	Country/First Language How Long in Ireland	Previous Education	Work Experience	Level of English	Goals	Language Needs
Ozlem	Turkey Turkish 9 months in Ireland No English before coming to Ireland. Speaks a little German.	Completed Junior Cycle, Secondary Education.	Student in Turkey	L Elementary S Elementary R Beginner W Beginner	To deal with everyday needs. To read letters. To speak English well enough to work in a shop.	Handwriting. Has difficulty sounding out words/guessing meaning from context. Spelling. Pronunciation - Sentence stress /Intonation.
Valeria	Romania Romanian 3 years in Ireland	3rd Level Qualification in Data Entry/IT Skills. No English before coming to Ireland.	Data Entry in Romania Mother – 3 children	L Intermediate S Pre-Intermediate R Elementary W Elementary	To get on an IT training course or a job commensurate with with skills. To talk to children's teachers. To talk on the telephone.	Develop writing skills. Develop confidence in speaking. Develop accuracy- tenses, articles, plurals.
Ntima	Angola Kikongo 1 year in Ireland	Secondary Education. No English before coming to Ireland. Speaks Portuguese.	Student in Angola.	L Pre-Intermediate S Pre-Intermediate R Elementary W Elementary	To get on a training course to get a in an office. Would like IT skills.	Basic Sentence Structure. Extend vocabulary. Pronunciation- and stress patterns. Develop learning strategies

Note: This group profile is a cross-section of 7 students out of a group total of 12, but includes the range of nationalities in the group and reflects the range of levels, goals and language needs generally.
The group worked together from September 2001 to June 2002, 4 hours per week. There was an average attendance of 8-10 students. All the students completed a 20-hour Basic Computer Course.

L = listening   **S** = speaking   **R** = reading   **W** = writing

Initial Interview and Assessment, ESOL Interview Sequence and ESOL Interview Form

1. Initial Interview/Brief Assessment of Skills for Initial Placement Purposes

Non-ESOL literacy students' initial needs are generally established by way of an informal interview with the coordinator/tutor. The interview form used asks questions specific to reading/writing ability and spelling.

Much of the information on the standard interview form needs to be included for ESOL students e.g. gender, contact details, educational background, not least because literacy schemes have to provide statistics as a whole regularly to funders/management boards. However, more specific information is also required.

The level of detail of this information will obviously depend on the learner's level of spoken English/if there is an interpreter present. However, even with complete beginners in speaking/listening skills, it is at least possible to ascertain if the student is familiar with roman script by reading and filling in a simple form together with name/contact details. It should also be possible to establish nationality, language and length of time spent in Ireland. This should be enough for initial placement purposes. Without a bilingual assessment, any reading/ writing difficulties in the student's own language would only become apparent over a period of time.

For a student who has more advanced speaking skills in English, it is possible to gather more

information including:

- First language/other languages (spoken and written)
- Previous English language training/other formal language training
- Status
- Occupation in own country/occupation in Ireland (if student has right to work)
- Length of time spent in Ireland.

1.1 Listening/Speaking

This means that the interview is used as a means of assessing listening and speaking skills. It is also flexible because it can be pitched at different levels. If a student has only given short answers and it is not clear if he/she can speak more extensively, s/he can be asked to expand on some points.

1.2 Reading/Writing

In addition to filling out a form, it is also possible to briefly assess a student's reading comprehension level in English in the initial interview. Keep a file of reading material pitched at different levels (e.g. reading social sight words/recognising signs/recognising the alphabet/numbers/days of the week/describing a picture/reading a short text and answering questions orally).

More detailed assessment of a student's language skills/needs/goals and objectives with a view to planning a learning programme will have to be carried out with the tutor/group once the student has been placed.

Please note: Materials developed by the LLLU (London Language and Literacy Unit) including the Multilingual Negotiation Pack and Criteria for the Assessment of English Language Skills are available from NALA, email: literacy@nala.ie

2. ESOL: Interview Sequence

These are guidelines to assess speaking and aural comprehension. The idea is that the interview should move from formulaic questions about personal information to more challenging open-ended questions. Things to look at are: verb/tenses/control of functions/vocabulary /fluency/pronunciation. The interviewer should encourage the student to expand on answers with follow-up questions and encouraging silence. Obviously, discretion should be used regarding questions asked or the topic changed if the student feels uncomfortable.

Sample Questions

What is your name?
Can you spell your name please?
What is your first language?
Do you speak any other language?
Where do you live?
Where are you from?
When did you come to Ireland? /How long have you been in Dublin?
Have you been to English classes before?

Tell me about your family.
Tell me about your education.
Tell me about your work/job (in your country/in Ireland).
What are your hobbies/interests?
What questions would you like to ask about the programme?

What do you find to be the main differences between your country and Ireland?
What are the main differences between schools in your country and in Ireland?

3.ESOL Interview Form

First Name: Family Name:

Date of Birth: Age: Gender:

Address:

Phone: Contact:

Nationality:

Number of weeks/months/years in Ireland:

Current Status: Asylum-seeker/ Refugee/ Work Permit /Other

Previous Education: Primary [] Second level [] Third level [] Other

Age leaving school: Additional Information:

Occupation:

Language:

	Language	Speak	Read	Write
Language of Education				
Other				

Have you attended (English) classes before?   Yes   No

Details:

Hobbies/Interests:

Any relevant health information:

Type of preferred tuition: Group   1:1

Times Available for Tuition

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Morning					
Afternoon					
Evening					

Factors Affecting ESOL Learners (Adapted from Integrate Ireland Language and Training)

Table 4

ISSUE	IMPACT	SOLUTIONS
Social Situations Anxiety about future	Cumulative effective is lack of motivation and	Make issues part of learning programme
Racism	disinterest at best, late/poor attendance and drop out at worst	Class contracts with cultural diversity/awareness at core
Finance	Fear, lack of tolerance	Short-term contracts with fixed aims
Dealing with officialdom	Non-attendance	
Childcare	Helplessness/loss of confidence	Make classes "active" and empowering
Poor/late attendance and disruption to class	Isolation of women	Actively seek and encourage women to join classes
Limited Class Time	Sense of isolation and depression	Increase class time
Lack of sense of progress	Classes in the centres not suitable and disrupted easily	Social outings and activities Develop learner autonomy
		Better/wider co-ordination
Living in reception centres	Exacerbates tension between groups	Raise cultural awareness and diversity
WIDE RANGE OF NEEDS AND DIVERSITY IN CLASS	Embarrassment, awkwardness and reticence	Classroom management – build up trust/develop cultural and class integration

Sample Policy

An equal status policy could include the following: (sample text in bold)

1. Statement of policy outlining the scheme's commitment to equality/diversity.

2. Aim of Policy
   Our objectives are:

   • to accommodate diversity;
   • to promote and implement positive action to ensure equality outcomes;
   • to ensure that no-one is discriminated against by virtue of their race.

3. Scope of policy. Examples of areas covered by this section are materials, communication Strategies or staff training;

4. Materials: We will strive to ensure that our materials are provided in a relevant and accessible manner to people from ethnic minority backgrounds.

5. Responsibility: A statement of who is responsible for policy implementation and a commitment to investing resources to ensure that this policy is implemented.

6. Monitoring

7. Review:
   Further details can be obtained from the Support Pack on Equality/Diversity Aspects of Quality Care for the Civil Service and the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (www.nccri.com)