



Commission for Aviation Regulation

Official Languages Act 2003 Scheme 2016 – 2019

1. Chapter 1. Introduction and Background

1.1 Introduction

The Official Languages Act 2003 provides for the preparation by public bodies of a language scheme detailing the services which they will provide:

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

and the measures to be adopted to ensure that any service not currently provided by the body through the medium of the Irish language will be so provided within an agreed timeframe.

In accordance with section 14(3) of the Act, language schemes remain in force for a period of 3 years or until such time as a new scheme is confirmed by the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, whichever is the later.

1.2 Preparation and Content of the Scheme

In the preparation of this scheme, due regard has been given to the Guidelines issued by the Department of Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht. In addition, a consultation process was opened seeking contributions from interested parties. Six submissions were received after the consultation process had closed but these submissions were not relevant to the work of the Commission for Aviation Regulation.

The **Commission for Aviation Regulation** is guided by the principle that the provision of Irish language services should be based on:

- the underlying level of demand for specific services in the Irish language,
- the importance of a proactive approach to the provision of such services, and
- the resources, including human and financial resources, and the capacity of the body concerned to develop or access the necessary language capability.

This scheme complements the principles of Quality Customer Service and our Customer Charter. It has been formulated with the intention of ensuring that all relevant obligations under the Official Languages Act imposed on the **Commission for Aviation Regulation** will be fully addressed on an incremental basis, through this and future schemes.

1.3 Commencement date of the Scheme

This Scheme has been confirmed by the Minister for Arts, Heritage, regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. It commences with effect from 08 August 2016 and shall remain in force for a period of 3 years or until a new scheme has been confirmed, whichever is the later.

2. Chapter 2: Overview of Commission for Aviation Regulation

The Commission for Aviation Regulation regulates certain aspects of the aviation and travel trade sectors in Ireland. It was established on the 27th February 2001 under the Aviation Regulation Act, 2001. The 2001 Act was subsequently amended by the State Airports Act, 2004 and the Aviation Act, 2006.

The Commission is an independent public body under the auspices of the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and is accountable to the Houses of the Oireachtas. It has a staff complement of 16 people. The Commission is guided in its actions by the legislation governing the areas that it regulates.

2.1 Main Functions

The principal function of the Commission is to set the maximum level of airport charges at Dublin Airport.

The Commission is responsible, under EU legislation, for discharging Ireland's responsibilities for schedule coordination/slot allocation at Irish airports and the appointment where necessary of a schedules facilitator/slot co-ordinator.

The Commission is also responsible for licensing the travel trade in Ireland, and grants licences to both tour operators and travel agents. As part of this function, the Commission administers a bonding scheme to reimburse consumers in the event of a travel agent collapse. The Commission also licenses airlines and approves groundhandling services providers under regulations implementing EU legislation.

The Commission has a significant consumer protection role. The Commission is the national enforcement body tasked with the monitoring and regulation of EU legislation covering Air Passenger Rights and the provision of assistance to Passengers with Reduced Mobility (PRM).

3. Chapter 3: Details of services currently being provided in English only or bilingually

Services provided bilingually:

- The Commission for Aviation Regulation currently publishes its Annual Report in both Irish and English.
- The Commission for Aviation Regulation's letterhead is printed in both Irish and English.
- Sections of the Commission for Aviation Regulation's website are available in both Irish and English.

Details of services currently being provided in English only:

- Consultations on Airport Charges, Access to Installation fees and Passengers with Reduced Mobility Fees
- Slot Co-ordination Services at Dublin Airport
- Licensing Tour Operators and Travel Agents
- Services provided to public affected by Tour Operator or Travel Agent Collapse
- Licensing Irish-based Air Carriers
- Licensing Groundhandlers
- Services provided to air passengers under Regulation (EC) 261/2004 and Regulation (EC) No. 1107/2006

4. Chapter 4: Enhancing the provision of Irish Language Services

The Commission for Aviation Regulation is committed to enhancing the availability of services through Irish, as resources allow. To this end, the following steps will be taken:

- Reception staff will greet callers in Irish using “Dia Duit”, “maidin maith” etc. and will be able to inform callers using Irish that their query will be directed to someone who can assist them in Irish.
- A staff member with an acceptable level of working Irish will respond in Irish to any calls, e-mails or queries in Irish. If necessary, time will be taken to research a response requiring specialised vocabulary and the customer answered within an agreed timeframe.
- Information leaflets in Irish and English outlining air passenger rights under the relevant EU Regulations will be made available at Irish airports from the beginning of the Scheme.
- All content in the sections of the website relating to air passenger rights and the rights of passengers with reduced mobility will be available in Irish within two years of the agreement of the scheme.
- Application forms for the various licences that the Commission grants to air carriers, groundhandlers, travel agents and tour operators will be made available on its website in Irish within the lifetime of this scheme.
- Claim forms in respect of consumer protection schemes administered by the Commission related to flight cancellation, delay and denied boarding will be made available on the Commissions website in Irish, in addition to claim forms regarding the collapse of travel agents and tour operators and the failure to properly assist passengers of reduced mobility at Irish airports within the lifetime of this scheme.

5. Chapter 5: Enhancing the Provision of Irish Language Services in Gaeltacht Areas

The Commission for Aviation Regulation does not operate in Gaeltacht Areas. However, summaries of the contents of the air passenger rights Regulations are available in Irish and English at Donegal Airport.

6. Chapter 6: Improving Language Capability

6.1 Staff, training and development

All new staff will be provided with an induction pack containing a copy of our agreed scheme in order to ensure that they are made aware of our commitments under the legislation.

The Commission for Aviation Regulation is committed to making available opportunities for staff to attend appropriately accredited Irish language training courses, as resources permit. All staff will be advised of facilities/opportunities to improve their competency in Irish.

One member of staff with the appropriate level of competence in the Irish language in each area of work of Commission for Aviation Regulation will be the primary means of optimising the availability of services through Irish.

6.2 Designated Irish Language Posts

Having regard to Government policy for enhanced provision of services in Irish, the Commission for Aviation Regulation will, by the end of year one of the scheme, identify any posts for which Irish language competency is an essential requirement. Every effort will be made to fulfil these requirements by the end of this scheme having regard to recruitment, promotion and training policies, as appropriate. This will enable the Commission for Aviation Regulation to plan and prioritise the incremental improvement of services in Irish in a more strategic manner.

7. Chapter 7: Monitoring and Review

The implementation of the scheme will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis by the Commissioner. The contact person for the scheme will be Joanne Molloy.

A formal system for monitoring requests for services through Irish will be available and recorded in our Annual Report.

8. Chapter 8: Publicising of Agreed Scheme

This scheme will be publicised both internally and externally on the Commission for Aviation Regulation's website.

A copy of the agreed scheme will be forwarded to the Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga.

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