What was the RÉITEACH seminar about?

RÉITEACH was a seminar held in the Dublin Convention Centre on 12 March 2026 which examined how we can work towards a satisfactory Irish-language learning experience for every student. There was a particular focus on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and on how the Irish-language curricula in our education system can be aligned with it, as committed to in the current Programme for Government. The proposal to develop a policy for Irish in the education system — from early-years education through to third level, based on the CEFR — was also discussed and developed further. A clearer understanding was shared of what the CEFR is, of the benefits it could offer (particularly in tackling the enormous growth in the number of exemptions), and of how the education system could be aligned with the CEFR. Attendees were given the opportunity to put forward proposals on how to ensure a satisfactory Irish-language learning experience for every student. There was also discussion of the new Leaving Certificate Irish specifications currently being developed by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). This seminar was organised to contribute to the National Conversation on Education that the Department of Education and Youth began in 2026.

Why was the focus on the CEFR?

This seminar was aligned with and facilitated discussion on the references and commitments set out in the following Government documents, policies and legislation: the commitment in the Programme for Government to work towards aligning Irish-language curricula with the CEFR; action 1.2.4 in the Action Plan for Irish in English-Medium Schools regarding the CEFR; the recommendation in the Department of Education and Youth Inspectorate Report (2024) that the Primary Language Curriculum be aligned with the CEFR; the reference in the Action Plan for Irish-Language Public Services 2026–2028 to work towards aligning Irish language curricula with the CEFR; and the recruitment target in the Official Languages Act 2021 (amendment) for 20% of new recruits from the end of 2030 onwards to be competent in Irish and English.

What were the main recommendations made on the day?

- A policy for Irish in the education system — from early-years education through to third level — that is fully aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) should be developed without further delay
- Aligning the system with the CEFR is feasible (further information on the approach and the possibilities involved is available in the presentation given by Aoife Ní Ghloinn, Maynooth University, available at this link)
- The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) could provide solutions to many of the challenges: different levels for different abilities; task-based learning; learning for life; later/lifelong learning
- There are lessons to be learned from Wales regarding its ambition, its use of the CEFR, and the National Centre established to support implementation (further information is available in the presentation given by Dona Lewis and Meinir Ebbsworth, National Centre for Learning Welsh, available at this link, and in the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025, available at this link)
- The current education system is not succeeding in enabling children and young people to become Irish speakers — yet young people themselves want to become Irish speakers (further information is available in the talk given by Eimear Nic Dhonnchadha, Irish Second-Level Students' Union, available at this link)
- It was acknowledged that the state examinations have a detrimental effect on language learning (further information in the presentation given by Aisling Ní Dhiorbháin, Dublin City University, available at this link)
- The lack of Irish-language input in Initial Primary Teacher Education courses needs to be addressed
- There is a very significant risk to the status of Irish in the Leaving Certificate under the NCCA's new proposals for a choice of modules rather than a subject (further information is available in the presentation given by Fíona Uí Uiginn, former President of Gaeloideachas, available at this link)
- There is no educational basis for the exemptions system, and if the current policy continues, Irish will soon become an optional subject. The granting of exemptions should be brought under NEPS's direction (further information in the presentation given by Pádraig Ó Duibhir, Professor Emeritus, Dublin City University, available at this link)
- Supports are essential to facilitate students of all abilities and the National Council for Special Education needs additional resources to do so
- A new Leaving Certificate subject — distinct from T1/T2 — is needed for high-ability pupils and native Irish speakers, and an oral examination is essential at Junior Cycle (further information is available in the talk given by Shane Ó Coinn, An Gréasán do Mhúinteoirí Gaeilge / the Irish Teachers' Network, available at this link)
- The Department's Action Plan for English-medium schools is good and it needs to be implemented

RÉITEACH

- i dtreo eispéiris shásúil foghlama Gaeilge do gach dalta

- towards a satisfactory Irish language learning experience for every student

Déardaoin | Thursday • 12/03/2026 • An tIonad Comhdhála, BAC | Convention Centre, Dublin

Clár:

09:00	Clárú le tae agus caifé	Registration with tea and coffee
09:30	Oscailt an tSeimineáir	Opening of the Seminar
09:45	**Seisiún 1** - plé le painéal cainteoirí, ceardlann & aiseolas:	**Session 1** - discussion panel, workshop & feedback:
	"An FTCE a ailíniú leis an gcuraclam iomlán - féidearthachtaí, buntáistí agus dúshláin"	***"Aligning the CEFR with the whole curriculum - possibilities, advantages and challenges"***

Aoife Ní Ghloinn

Stiúrthóir ar Lárionad na Gaeilge, Ollscoil Mhá Nuad
Director of The Centre for Irish Language, Maynooth University

Pádraig Ó Duibhir

Ollamh Emeritus, Institiúid Oideachais, Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath
Professor Emeritus, Institute of Education, DCU

Dona Lewis

Príomhfheidhmeannach, Ionad Náisiúnta d'Fhoghlaim na Breatnaise
Chief Executive, National Centre for Learning Welsh
Prif Weithredwr, Y Ganolfan Dysgu Cymraeg Genedlaethol

11:30	Tae & Caifé	Tea & Coffee
11:45	**Seisiún 2** - plé le painéal cainteoirí, ceardlann & aiseolas:	**Session 2** - discussion panel, workshop & feedback:
	"Eispéireas sásúil do na daltaí - riachtanais, sásamh na riachtanas agus acmhainní"	***"A satisfactory experience for students - needs, addressing those needs and resources"***

Shane Ó Coinn

Cathaoirleach, An Gréasán do Mhúinteoirí Gaeilge
Chaiperson, An Gréasán do Mhúinteoirí Gaeilge

Eimear Nic Dhonnchadha

Ionadaí, Aontas Daltaí Iar-Bhunscoile na hÉireann
Representative, Irish Second-Level Students' Union

Nioclás Ó Laoghaire

Comhordaitheoir Thionscadal na Gaeilge, An Chomhairle Náisiúnta um Oideachas Speisialta
Co-ordinator of Irish language Project, The National Council for Special Education

13:15	Lón	Lunch
14:00	**Seisiún 3** - plé le painéal cainteoirí, ceardlann & aiseolas:	**Session 3** - discussion panel, workshop & feedback:
	"Soláthar sásúil don Ghaeilge ag an Ardteist - sonraíochtaí, tacaíochtaí agus aitheantas cuí"	***"Satisfactory provision for Irish at Leaving Cert - specifications, supports and appropriate recognition"***

Fíona Uí Uiginn

Iar-Uachtarán Ghaeloideachas agus Colaiste Íosagáin
Former President of Gaeloideachas and Coláiste Íosagáin

Aisling Ní Dhíorabháin

Stiúrthóir SEALBHÚ, Ollscoil Cathair Bhaile Átha Cliath
Director of SEALBHÚ, Dublin City University

15:15	Achoimre ar mholtaí an lae	Summary of the day's recommendations
15:30	Críoch	Finish

Tacaíocht ó | Supported by:

An Foras Pátrúnachta · An Gréasán · ISSU Irish Second-Level Students' Union · AMLÉ Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn · Conradh na Gaeilge · Concos Coláistí Gaeilge · Foras na Gaeilge · Ógras Do Ghaeilge + Do Óige · Gael Linn · Gaeloideachas · Ollscoil Mhá Nuad · Lárionad na Gaeilge Taighde, Teagasc & Tástáil · Ollscoil na Gaillimhe University of Galway