



## Abstract

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- Theme:** The cultural, political and historical context
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### ABSTRACT

The National University of Ireland, Galway (NUI, Galway) has had a statutory obligation to provide third level courses through the medium of Irish since 1929. In the period 1929-2000 this obligation was fulfilled by encouraging and facilitating staff members who were competent in Irish to teach their courses through the medium of Irish where sufficient demand existed among the student body. In addition, a small number of scholarships were provided to high achieving students who opted to follow their course through the medium of Irish.

In the year 2000, the University decided to review its approach to the provision of third level courses through Irish. In undertaking this review it was decided to adopt an external customer led approach and to undertake an analysis of the current needs of the Irish-speaking community and of how NUI, Galway as a third level institution could best meet these needs. The result of this review was the adoption by the University of a development strategy for Irish-medium University Education, and the establishment of a new Irish-medium Academy – *Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge*.

This paper will look at the social, community, language planning, organisational and strategic considerations that underpinned NUI, Galway's review of its bilingual education model and led to the adoption of this particular third-level Irish-medium model. It will include a brief introduction to the current status of the Irish language and the history of NUI, Galway's promotion of Irish-medium studies. The paper concludes with an outline of the main principles which *Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge* sees as central to its future success and development.