



Irish Language Scheme 2014 - 2017

Scheme as prepared under Section 15 of the Official Languages Act 2003

1. Introduction and Background

This second scheme of the Chester Beatty Library (CBL) has been prepared in accordance with Section 15 of the Official Languages Act 2003. Section 15 provides for a periodic review of the scheme and the preparation of a new draft scheme.

The Act provides for the preparation by public bodies of a statutory scheme detailing the services they 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 provided by the CBL through the medium of the Irish language will be so provided within an agreed timeframe.

2. Guidelines and Preparation of the Scheme

Section 12 of the Act provides for the preparation of guidelines by the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and their issue to public bodies to assist in the preparation of the draft schemes. This scheme has been drawn up with due regard to those guidelines.

The CBL recognises that the public have a right to choose to do business in their preferred language and that they will be facilitated in their dealings with us, whether in English or in Irish. As Irish is the national language and the first official language of the state, the CBL is committed to maintaining and improving the delivery of services to the public through the medium of Irish.

In the event of commitments in CBL's earlier scheme not having been fully implemented to date, this matter has been the subject of discussion with the Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga.

2. Commencement date of Scheme

This scheme has been confirmed by the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. The scheme is commenced with effect from 16 June 2014 and shall remain in force for a period of 3 years from this date or until a new scheme has been confirmed by the Minister pursuant to section 15 of the Act, whichever is the later.

3. Overview of the Chester Beatty Library

The Chester Beatty Library and museum is the pre-eminent Irish institution promoting the appreciation and understanding of world cultures and the engagement with the peoples whose cultures are represented in our Collections. The Library contains some of the finest treasures of the great cultures and religions of the world, bequeathed to the Irish people and entrusted to the care of the State by Sir Alfred Chester Beatty (1875–1968), a successful American mining engineer, collector and philanthropist.

Since its move to Dublin Castle in 2000, the Chester Beatty Library has gone from strength to strength. In its original location on Shrewsbury Road in the suburbs of Dublin, the Library was able to accommodate scholars and had modest facilities at its disposal to display elements of the Collection for the public's enjoyment. On average, the Library attracted a few thousand visitors a year. By contrast, within seven years of moving to Dublin Castle, visitor numbers had increased to more than 250,000. Facilities for the Collections and the public were so greatly enhanced that in 2002 the CBL won the European Museum of the Year Award.

Today, the Library is one of the nation's most favoured National Cultural Institutions. Through international collaborations, it has brought extraordinary temporary exhibitions to the public, by drawing from the permanent Collection (with exhibitions such as Dürer, Muraqqa and Shahnama) as well as by borrowing from international collections (exhibitions such as Leonardo, Rembrandt and Matisse).

Through its permanent and temporary displays, its intercultural learning programme and broad variety of public activities for all ages and backgrounds, it is a vibrant, engaging and welcoming space for the appreciation and understanding of world cultures.

The Chester Beatty collections consist of more than 6,000 manuscripts on paper, vellum and other media, together with about 4,000 fine and early printed books, and some hundreds of items of decorative arts interest. Amongst the most important treasures of the Library are the biblical and Manichaean papyri, the great collections of Islamic manuscripts (including over 300 complete or fragmentary copies of the Holy Qur'an), and many works of philosophy, liturgy and spiritual belief from China, Japan, Southeast Asia and non-Islamic India. The Christian collections include illuminated manuscripts from Egypt, The Levant, Byzantium, from Western Europe, Ethiopia, Russia and Serbia, and an interesting archive of documents relating to the Christian Missions to East Asia in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The Islamic collections include over 2,700 manuscripts of scholarship, Islamic law, prayer and commentary on the life of the Prophet, medicine, mathematics, science and books of pilgrimage. In addition to those, which are illuminated with abstract ornament,

there are the very finely illustrated codices from Persia, Turkey and the Mughal Court of India. Clearly the Library holds within its collections important material bearing on the history of Christianity and of Christian thought, of Islam and Islamic learning and spirituality, and of East Asian traditions including Daoism, Confucianism, Zen Buddhism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism and many more. The collection is also rich in works of art which do not have a specifically religious character but represent a very important resource for the history of writing and of the book throughout the Old World.

4. Functional Areas of the Library

The Library functions primarily as an art museum with two floors of exhibition galleries. Visitors enter the Library via the garden at Dublin Castle. The glass-roofed entrance hall is a fine modern space that links the 18th-century building with the new, purpose-built exhibition galleries. On the ground floor, visitors can enjoy an audio-visual presentation on the life of Sir Alfred Chester Beatty and his great art collection. There are also a lecture theatre, restaurant and shop on this level.

The exhibition galleries are situated on the first and second floors. *Arts of the Book*, contains books from the ancient world including the world famous Chester Beatty Love Poems (c.1160 BC), Egyptian Books of the Dead and beautifully illuminated medieval European manuscripts and fine European printed books, as well as Old Master prints. The exhibition explores the richness of the Islamic manuscript tradition - illustrations and illuminations, calligraphy, and exquisite bindings from across the Middle East and India are on display. Highlights from East Asia include one of the finest collections of Chinese jade books in the world, Japanese picture-scrolls depicting fables and legends, and deluxe woodblock prints. Audio-visual programmes complement the exhibition, helping the visitor to learn more about the arts of the book throughout the world.

The *Sacred Traditions* Gallery is dedicated to the great religions of the world including Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism. Audio-visual programmes explore the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca, the lives of Christ and the Buddha, and rites of passage – birth, marriage and death – in different belief systems. Outstanding exhibits in these galleries range from great illuminated copies of the Qur'an dating from the 9th to the 19th century AD; ancient papyri, including the famous Egyptian love poems of around 1100 BC; and some of the very earliest Gospel and other New Testament texts, dating to c.200 AD. The Chester Beatty collection of New Testament texts is a fundamental source for early Christianity and the Qur'an manuscripts represent the finest expressions of Islam in calligraphy and ornamental detail. Also on display are fine scrolls and other religious artworks from China, Japan, Tibet, and South and Southeast Asia.

The Library also contains a reading room with a large and growing collection of reference books. Visitors (who must first apply for a reader's ticket) can work in this beautiful room on the first floor of the original Clock Tower building, which incorporates the fine lacquered ceiling in Chinese style that Chester Beatty had originally created for his London home. The mahogany bookcases were made in 1950 by Hicks of Dublin.

5. Context of the Irish Language Scheme 2014 - 2017

The CBL is committed to the aim of the Official Languages Act 2003 to improve over a period of time the quantity and quality of services provided for the public through Irish.

A number of commitments were given in the CBL's first scheme to improve the level of services through Irish and these are outlined in section 6 below. These commitments addressed the areas of Irish language signage, publications, tours, website, e-mail, public announcements and staff training to accommodate visitors who wish to conduct their business through the medium of Irish.

The objective of the second scheme is to continue the delivery of these services available in Irish throughout the lifetime of this scheme.

6. Assessment of Irish language services

New or enhanced services available in time period since first Irish Language Scheme was published:

Guided Tours:

- A guided tour in Irish is scheduled once a month and this will continue subject to tour guide being available (all guides are volunteers).

Publications:

- The Library published its main Guide to the Collections in Irish as an e-book in 2013.
- All Annual Reports are published simultaneously online in bi-lingual format.
- The Library's 'Statement of Strategy 2013-2015' has been published online in bi-lingual format.

Signage:

- New 'Opening Hours' signage installed in 2013 in accordance with Regulations under Section 9 (1) of the Act.

Oral Announcements:

- Recorded announcement in new lift (installed 2014) in accordance with Regulations under Section 9 (1) of the Act.

Press Releases:

- All press releases are provided in Irish and sent to relevant Irish Language media.

Website:

- The following sections of the Library's website covering the general information for potential visitors and researchers is now available in bi-lingual format: *About Us, Plan a Visit, Support the Library*, and particular sections of *Education, Exhibitions, Shop & Collections*.

- The online booking form for workshops/events etc is available in bi-lingual format.

Computer Systems:

- All Library computer systems are currently compatible with the Irish language and any new systems being installed will also be compatible. The Library's Collections Management database is compatible with the Irish Language.

Training and Recruitment:

- The Library continues to up skill Attendant/Receptionist and other staff by continuing to offer a variety of Irish Language courses.
- A knowledge of the Irish language is listed as an 'advantage' when recruiting Attendant and/or other staff.

Leaflets:

- The main information leaflet for the Library is available to the public in Irish and is also downloadable from our website.

Information Panels:

- All introductory panels in each section of the Permanent Exhibition Galleries are in bi-lingual format. Any new panels generated for the permanent exhibition galleries are bi-lingual.

Invitations:

- All invitations to exhibition openings are in bi-lingual format.

Email:

- The standard disclaimer on all emails is in bi-lingual format.

Other:

- Raidió na Life broadcast from the Chester Beatty Library during Culture Night 2011 and visitors were interviewed through Irish about the arts.

7. Commitment to Irish language services 2014 - 2017

The CBL has delivered on the commitments outlined in its first Irish Language Scheme, in addition to further enhancing its bi-lingual services to the public. These commitments have been delivered within the context of public sector recruitment embargos and greatly reduced resources and CBL remains committed to developing enhanced services where possible in the Irish language despite the continuing challenges. In this new scheme 2014-2017, CBL will continue to offer and enhance the existing services provided, through the medium of Irish.

All commitments to services offered by the CBL are given based on the current situation as outlined in the paragraph above. It must be noted that delivery on these commitments may be negatively affected by financial and staffing changes that may occur in the future, which are beyond the control of the CBL.

8. Monitoring and Revision

The Director and Head of Operations and Administration of the Library will keep the effective operation of the scheme under review.

The day-to-day monitoring function will be carried out primarily by the Head of Operations and Administration who will report on the scheme's implementation to the Director and Board of Trustees.

9. Publicising of an Agreed Scheme

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

- Circulation to appropriate agencies and public bodies;
- Website.

In addition, we will take every opportunity in our day to day interaction with customers to promote and publicise the services we provide in Irish through the following means:

- directly informing customers on a proactive basis of the option of conducting business with us through Irish, for example, by the display of notices at reception areas indicating the Irish language services that are available;
- prominently listing these services on our website;
- signifying on selected guidelines, leaflets and application forms that these documents are also available in Irish, unless presented bilingually;
- giving equal prominence to Irish and English language materials.

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.