



GELS

Gender Equality in Language Studies
Comhionannas Inscne sa Léann Teanga

GENERAL INFORMATION SHEET

UNIVERSITY PROJECT PARTNERS



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BACKGROUND

Within Language Studies (*Gaeilge* and Modern Foreign Languages [MFLs]), **women** commonly **constitute around 80% of the student and staff bodies in Irish HEIs**.

GELS is highly innovative project constituting the **first national study of gender inequality in Language Studies in Irish HE** i.e. the converse gender dynamic, where **those not identifying as female are under-represented and require greater visibility and promotion** in future gender-equality initiatives.

The four universities listed above are working with two DEIS schools each to **uncover** and **interrogate** the **systemic factors at post-primary and HE level** that contribute to such 'converse' gender representation in Language Studies. Having established this, the project aims to **develop strategy recommendations for stakeholders** to achieve **greater gender equality and diverse representation** in Language Studies.

Let's start the conversation!

Cuirimis tús leis an gcomhrá!

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The project is funded by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) under its *Gender Equality Enhancement Fund 2022*.

HOW YOUR SCHOOL CAN PARTICIPATE IN THE PROJECT

Staff

1) Online questionnaire (with three routes)

Staff from the below three cohorts will be invited to take part in a short online questionnaire. No personal, identifying data will be collected and no-one will know how any individual respondent has answered the questions. We are not interested in individual responses, but rather whether we can identify any significant differences in responses from different language disciplines, those with different professional responsibilities or those who identify as different genders. The questionnaire will be available over a period of time for staff to complete at their own convenience and will take about 10-15 minutes to complete.

- a) language teachers (*Gaeilge* and modern foreign languages)
- b) School Principal
- c) Guidance Counsellors

2) Individual interviews

The above cohorts will also be asked to take part in short individual interviews about their experience of language learning and teaching, school management and policy relating to languages, and careers guidance. These interviews, lasting ca. 20 mins, will be conducted by a project member and can be arranged in person in the school or online.

Additionally, we will be working closely with one or more teachers in the school to act as gatekeepers in liaising with parents/guardians and students on the project team's behalf, particularly in encouraging participation in the project and in administering ethics documentation (information sheets and consent forms) to obtain parental/guardian consent and student assent.

Students

1) Online Questionnaire for whole school

All students in the school will be invited to take part in a short online questionnaire. No-one will know how any student has answered the questions. We are only interested in perspectives on, and experiences of, learning *Gaeilge* and MFLs and to see generally if we can see any difference between the answers from different years or the answers students who identify as different genders give. The questionnaire will ideally take place in school on a mutually agreed date and will take about 10-15 minutes to complete. The questionnaire should be self-explanatory, but we will provide some support materials for staff administering the questionnaire. When students press the final submission button, that means they agree their answers can be used in the project. Since the data from the questionnaires is entirely anonymous from the beginning, it will not be possible to identify any individual's responses to remove the data from the study after they have been submitted. Something they write might be included in a presentation or a publication, but no-one will know that it was them who wrote it, so we would encourage them to be as honest as possible.

2) Session with current university students

We will be organising an online session on a mutually agreed date where some students in First, Second and Transition Years will be able to hear from university students in their catchment who are studying languages. They will talk about their reasons for choosing their particular languages and what it is like to continue and begin languages at university. Students from the school will have the opportunity to ask questions. The session will take place in a language class and last 30-35 minutes. The presentations from this session may be video-recorded so we can use the materials again; recordings of chats between school and university students may be audio-recorded so we can note what people have talked about, but these recordings will be deleted later. No post-primary students will be identifiable. We will always let students know when we are going to start recording so they can sit somewhere their face cannot be seen if they prefer.

3) Session with people working with languages

We will be organising an online session on a mutually agreed date where some students from TY/Fifth Year will be able to hear from people who are working with languages in Ireland and abroad. They will talk about their experience of learning languages and what their everyday working life is like. Students from the school will have the opportunity to ask questions. The session will take place in a language class and last 30-35 minutes. The presentations from this session may be video-recorded so we can use the materials again; recordings of chats between school and university students may be audio-recorded so we can note what people have talked about, but these recordings will be deleted later. No post-primary students will be identified. We will always let students know when we are going to start recording and we will ask them to switch off any cameras and mics during presentations.

4) Follow-up online questionnaire

We are interested to see whether the different events have made a difference in students' attitudes to language learning even over a short period, so we will be asking students to complete a second short online questionnaire. Again, this will happen in school with the same arrangements as for the first questionnaire.

5) Small discussion groups facilitated by project member in your cluster

A small number of students may be asked to take part in short discussion groups about their experience of, and opinions on, language learning. These discussion groups will be led by a member of the GELS team who is Garda vetted and is experienced at working with post-primary students. The discussions will last 10-15 minutes and, with the agreement of participants, will be audio-recorded on a hand-held digital recorder. Recordings will be transferred to password-protected devices/platforms, and the recording device wiped. Where a Garda-vetted GELS team member is not available, the discussion groups will be run by a project member, with a member of school staff present as required.