



2013 Annual Report



Irish Aid

An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

ICOS receives financial support from Irish Aid towards the provision of a range of services related to the implementation of the Irish Aid Fellowship Programme.



EDUCATION IN IRELAND

WORLD-CLASS STANDARDS
WARMEST OF WELCOMES

ICOS acknowledges the financial support received from the Internationalisation Development Fund of the Department of Education and Skills to undertake projects in collaboration with USI aimed at enhancing the international student experience.

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Cover image and above: Contributors at the 2013 ICOS-USI International Student Focus Groups, held in Dublin, Cork and Galway - see p9 for more information. The report from these these events is available for download at: <http://bit.ly/1uiMfco>



Dr Stephen Robinson, Chairperson of ICOS

In my capacity as Chairperson of the Irish Council for International Students (ICOS), I am pleased to share details of our activities and achievements in 2013. A constant challenge for any organisation is to be able to respond to change and I am happy to report that ICOS continues to show leadership and to grow its influence in policy areas that impact on the quality of the experience and the rights of international students in Ireland.

In 2013, ICOS was successful in providing a number of opportunities for our members and for international students themselves to articulate their views. This was achieved through ongoing communication with relevant Government Departments, representation on the High Level Group established by the Government to oversee Ireland's Internationalisation strategy and formal submissions on key policies as appropriate. ICOS' main public event during the year is an annual seminar which, in 2013, was again held in the National College of Ireland (NCI) and which gave members an opportunity for focussed discussion on the Government's plans for the introduction of and International Education Mark (IEM).

ICOS also represented its members and raised immigration and customer service issues at four

customer forum meetings with INIS and the GNIB which were held during the year.

In 2013, ICOS continued to manage a very successful Irish Aid Fellowship programme which has grown in diversity in recent years with a number of new schemes, notably in South Africa and Vietnam. Development of an active fellowship alumni network through a range of supports is also part of the package of responsibilities covered by ICOS under its current contract with Irish Aid which runs to the end of 2014.

ICOS remains committed to providing quality and relevant training and information support to members and students and in 2013 the focus was on the further testing and development of a video resource and training manual in advance of its launch early in 2015. This video and manual, entitled "Diverse Voices", when released, will be an important tool in building awareness and knowledge regarding the support needs of international students in Irish higher education.

I take this opportunity to thank everyone who has contributed to ICOS' work during the year and especially my colleagues on the Board and ICOS' hard-working staff. I want to pay tribute in particular to Nicola Carroll, NCI who stepped down as Chairperson of ICOS in 2013 having ably and actively represented the organisation over her 3-year term in office.

This forward is written, in 2014, against the backdrop of much adverse publicity surrounding Ireland's image as a secure destination for international students. Thousands of students have been displaced and lost money due to the sudden closure of a number of private colleges. System reforms and regulatory changes have become urgent. ICOS' national profile has never been higher nor the demand for our services greater but finding the resources to do our work remains a significant challenge. We trust in your continued support to allow us to fulfil our mission to be the leading independent organisation advocating for the rights of international students in Ireland.

ICOS' **vision** is that all international students who come to study in Ireland achieve their educational aims and are valued and treated equitably by the institutions that host them and by the wider society in which they live and work.

**INTERNATIONAL
EDUCATION
POLICY
AND
STANDARDS**

**IRISH AID
FELLOWSHIP
PROGRAMME
DEVELOPMENT AND
AWARENESS**

**ICOS
STRATEGIC
GOALS**

**SERVICES TO
ICOS MEMBERS
AND STUDENTS**

**ORGANISATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT**

ICOS' **mission** is to be the leading independent organisation advocating for the rights of international students in Ireland. ICOS will collaborate with its members, student organisations and government agencies to ensure that international education policy and practice in Ireland is quality driven and remains firmly focused on the educational and social needs of all students.

1

Policy and Standards

Goal: To influence national and institutional policies so as to offer greater protection to international students and enhance their experience in Ireland

Advocacy

ICOS seeks to act as a voice for both students and higher education institutions in advocating for good policy and practice in international education.

Ireland's International Education Strategy 2010-2015 provides the backdrop for activities in this area and ICOS continues to be represented by the Director on the High Level Group appointed by the Minister of Education and Skills to oversee the implementation of the strategy. This enabled ICOS to participate in key discussions during the year and to ensure that the student experience element of Ireland's international strategy is kept in focus. In 2013, ICOS actively engaged with international students and its members in order to provide considered opinion to the interim review of the Government's Internationalisation Strategy. The review report is expected early in 2014. ICOS also responded on behalf of members to QQI's call for submission on its Green Paper on the International Education Mark (IEM). The Green Paper on the IEM had earlier been the focus of discussion at ICOS' annual seminar in June. The proposed centralisation to Dublin of GNIB registration services was another issue on

which ICOS made representations in 2013. This is a particularly important issue for ICOS members outside the capital.

In addition, through the Immigrant Information Network (IIN), ICOS participates in quarterly meetings with INIS and the GNIB where ICOS members' questions on student immigration policy and service issues are addressed.

Best practice

In June, ICOS held a successful annual seminar on the topic "The Quest for Quality – remaining challenges in Ireland's International Education Strategy". The ICOS seminar is a very important networking opportunity for those in the international education sector and the 2013 event was addressed by the Minister for Education and Skills, Ruairi Quinn TD and the key note speaker was Maria Kelo, Director, European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). As previously mentioned the 2013 seminar also provided an important opportunity to discuss ICOS' response to the QQI's Green Paper on the IEM.



ICOS SEMINAR 2013

Hosts and speakers pictured at the 2013 ICOS Seminar, held at the National College of Ireland (NCI). From left to right: Dr Phillip Matthews, President of NCI; Maria Kelo, Director, European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA); John O' Connor, Manager of Framework Development, Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI); Laura Harmon, USIVice President for Equality and Citizenship; Sheila Power, ICOS Director; Ruairi Quinn TD, Minister for Education and Skills.

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Management of the Irish Aid Fellowship Programme

Goal: To work with Irish Aid and higher education institutions to develop the Fellowship Programme as an effective tool for capacity development in Ireland's partner countries and to contribute to a better understanding of the programme in Ireland

Overview

In 2013, ICOS continued to provide professional services to Irish Aid in respect of the management of the Irish Aid Fellowship Programme with the Programme achieving all its main targets in terms of quality of applications and number of fellows completing successfully. 2013 saw increased numbers and a growing diversity of schemes under the Irish Aid fellowship umbrella including the addition of new vocational/technology related fellowships for Vietnam (IDEAS II) and the commencement of the Kadar Asmal Fellowship Programme in South Africa.

Fellowship Training Programme (FTP)

ICOS processed 130 applications for the Irish Aid Fellowship Training Programme across its four different strands. Ultimately 43 fellows accepted awards in Irish higher education institutions and a further 19 candidates accepted awards for regional

institutions. Fellowships were awarded to students from Ethiopia, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda, Vietnam and Zambia.

Courtney Fellowship

Irish Aid's annual Courtney Fellowship provides sponsorship for a student from Burundi to pursue a Master's level course in Ireland in the area of Governance or Peace Studies. One award was made in 2013.

Kadar Asmal Fellowships

A new fellowship scheme in 2013, this programme saw the award of two fellowships for South African citizens to pursue Masters Programmes in 2013-14 are studying International Development and Global Health in UCD and TCD respectively.



2013-14 awardees under Irish Aid's FTP, Courtney and Kader Asmal Fellowships



Irish Aid

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IDEAS I Programme

The 2013 intake for the IDEAS Programme was 22 (-2 on 2012) with all fellows undertaking courses at the UCD Michael Smurfit Graduate Business School.

ICOS role with respect to this programme parallels that for the FTP except that placement and accommodation arrangements are handled directly by UCD.

IDEAS II Programme

With a focus on vocational technology, IDEAS II was piloted in 2013 with 5 fellows from Vietnam awarded fellowships to undertake Masters programmes in disciplines such as Pharmacology, Biotechnology and ICT. The fellows studied in UCD, DIT, DCU and NUIG.

Services provided by ICOS

- Financial and administrative services
- Coordination of placement of fellowship candidates onto academic programmes
- Travel and logistics service
- Pre-and post arrival information and briefings to fellows
- Orientation day and welcome party at start of academic year
- Links with academic staff and host institutions
- Immigration assistance and advice
- Social and cultural events
- Support, information and advice to fellows during the course of their fellowship.
- Monitoring academic progress and welfare of fellows
- Reporting to DFA on fellowship matters
- Research on the longer term impact of fellowships on recipients when they return to their home countries

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2013-14 awardees under Irish Aid's IDEAS Programme - Strands I and II

Management of the Irish Aid Fellowship Programme

Services provided by ICOS (cont'd)

- Development of an Irish Aid fellowship alumni network
- Investigation of regional course quality and research on programmes available through distance learning to expand the range of study opportunities
- Greater visibility of the fellowships through the development of case study and other materials and the use of the web

Special Events

ICOS organises special events on an annual cycle for fellows. This includes a comprehensive one day Orientation programme and Welcome reception for all newly arrived fellows. ICOS also hosted both Christmas and St Patrick's Day parties, events that support the process of fellows adjusting to living and studying in Ireland.

Alumni Network

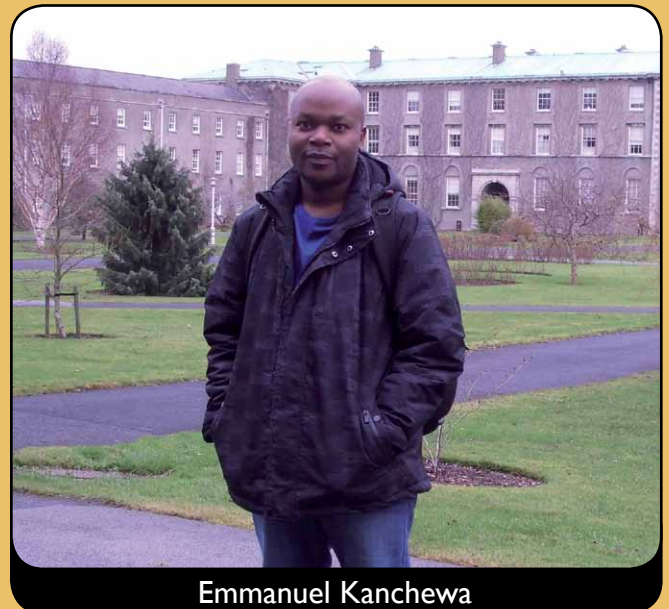
The Irish Aid Fellowship Alumni Network was further developed during 2013. Social networking and an alumni newsletter, "The Link", played key roles as tools for continued engagement between ICOS, former fellows and the Irish Aid programme. There were two newsletter issues published for alumni in 2013. These are posted to the dedicated alumni section of ICOS' website and details are sent via email to former fellows. A growing number of fellowship alumni are profiled at the ICOS website.

Outcomes

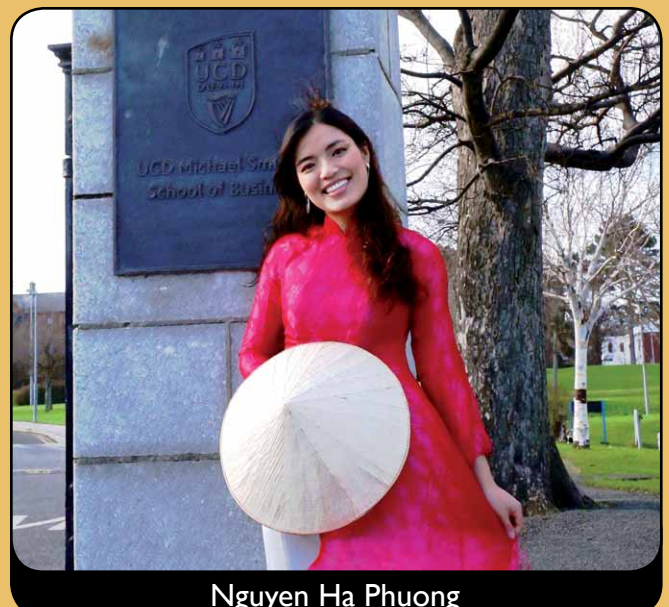
An analysis of results achieved by completing fellows carried out in 2013 highlights the success of the programme and underlines the fact that the FTP is funding worthy candidates in a position to contribute significantly to capacity building upon their return home.

2013-14 Student Case Studies

Emmanuel Kanchewa from Malawi studied for the MA in Economics at NUI Maynooth under the Irish Aid Fellowship Training Programme. Nguyen Ha Phuong from Vietnam studied for the MSc in Project Management at UCD under the Irish Aid IDEAS Programme. Their stories were among the seven personal profiles provided by ICOS to Irish Aid in 2013 to help illustrate the role of the fellowship programme in the context of Ireland's overall aid effort. You can see their profiles at the ICOS website.



Emmanuel Kanchewa



Nguyen Ha Phuong

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Services to Members and Students

Goal: To strengthen the ability of our members to deliver appropriate and quality services to their international students while also providing independent information and advice directly to international students

Services to Members

ICOS' continued to maintain online information resources for members, including a passworded area providing an archive of key updates and documents. Two issues of the ICOS newsletter were produced and circulated to members in 2013 along with a number of one-off email updates on matters of importance.

Members were also able to avail of ICOS' expertise on all matters related to international student rights and welfare, via both email and telephone enquiries.

ICOS delivered 12 training courses in cross-cultural awareness and teaching in a cross-cultural environment in 8 different higher education institutes reaching 134 academic and student support staff in total. Evaluation indicated a very high level of overall satisfaction with ICOS courses, with a large percentage of participants noting that their knowledge and skills had been increased following ICOS training. Noted developments in 2013 included the delivery of training to a small group of student peer mentors at NUIG and this is an area in which further development is planned for 2014.

The ICOS' seminar, which is primarily addressed to members, aims to provide an annual opportunity to explore a key theme in international education (see p 4)

Video Project

In 2013, ICOS made significant progress in its development of 'Diverse Voices: Listening to International Students' a training DVD and manual to enhance awareness and understanding of international students' support needs, funded by the Department of Education and Skills. The final product is expected to launch in early 2015.

ICOS trialled the DVD during many of its training sessions throughout the year and it was very well received by training participants.

Services to International Students

ICOS maintains a range of online information guides aimed at international students. Regular news updates were also provided through ICOS' Facebook page. The number of followers/likes of ICOS' page grew steadily throughout the year from 606 at the end of 2012 to 752 at the end of 2013 (+ 24%)

ICOS provides a telephone and email advice service for international students as well as dealing with enquiries and referrals from other advice centres. On occasion, ICOS also becomes involved in mediation in an effort to resolve problems between students and education providers.

Student Fora

Forum events recognise the importance of providing regular and genuine opportunities for international students to reflect on their own experience and to share their insights. These events complement the feedback from students gathered by other means and support ICOS and USI to appropriately represent international students' views with regard to policy development and improvements in student support services.

58 international students from 17 higher education institutions participated in three international student focus groups organised jointly by ICOS and USI in 2013. The focus groups, commissioned by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and held in Dublin (TCD), Cork (UCC) and Galway (NUIG), were designed to contribute student views to the interim review of Ireland's Internationalisation strategy. ICOS subsequently submitted a report of the findings to DES.

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Organisational Development

Goal: To strengthen ICOS' own capacity to deliver

Revision of ICOS Memorandum and Articles of Association

With advice from BoardMatch Ireland, the Board of ICOS undertook a review of ICOS' governing instruments and recommended some changes which were adopted at ICOS' 2013 AGM. The changes were intended to facilitate a renewed application for charitable status. ICOS formally lodged an application for charitable status in December 2013 and a decision is awaited.

Board of ICOS

In 2013, Nicola Carroll (NCI) - pictured below - stepped down as ICOS Chairperson having served three years. Nicola was replaced in September 2013 by Stephen Robinson, Director, Champlain College Dublin with Kevin Geoghegan, Griffith College Dublin continuing as Vice Chair. Donal McAlister, IT Carlow assumed the role of Honorary Treasurer. Four new members were elected to the ICOS Board in 2013 with new representatives from NCI, TCD, CIT and Ballsbridge College of Further Education. The Board met 5 times in 2013.



Outgoing ICOS Chairperson Nicola Carroll

Funding

ICOS secured small additional funding during the year to support HEA's research on the Government of Ireland Scholarship Programme. ICOS also received funding from DES to facilitate a series of student focus groups in the context of the midterm review of Ireland's Internationalisation Strategy.

National and International Networking

ICOS keeps up to date and maintains its international profile through membership of UKCISA, the UK Council for International Student Affairs and the EAIE, the European Association for International Education. At national level, ICOS is involved in a number of networking forums including the Immigrant Information Network which regularly meets with officials in the GNIB and INIS. ICOS is a consistent member of Dóchas and the Wheel and connects with immigrant support organisations such as the Africa Centre, the Migrant Rights Centre of Ireland (MCRI) and the Immigrant Council for Ireland (ICI)

Dóchas Code of Conduct on Images and Messages

ICOS is a signatory to the Dóchas Code of Conduct on Images and Messages, which provides a framework which organisations can refer to when designing and implementing their public communication strategy. ICOS was represented at the annual Code review meeting held by Dóchas and new staff and volunteers were provided with information on the Code and a web-based feedback mechanism is provided for comment from members of the public.

Summary of Accounts

Approved by the Board: 10 April 2014
Auditors: BFGD Chartered Accountants, 1 Castlewood Avenue, Rathmines, Dublin 6

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31st December 2013

	2013 Restricted	2013 Unrestricted	Total 2013	Total 2012
Incoming Resources				
Incoming resources from generated funds:				
Activities for generating funds	1,193,253	252,357	1,445,610	1,061,969
Investment income	-	337	337	1,265
Total Incoming Resources	1,193,253	252,694	1,445,947	1,063,234
Resources Expended				
Charitable activities	1,193,253	240,402	1,433,655	1,032,703
Governance costs	-	5,299	5,299	5,920
Total Resources Expended	1,193,253	245,701	1,438,954	1,038,623
Net Incoming Resources	-	6,993	6,993	24,611
Balance forward at 1st January 2013	-	186,190	186,190	161,579
Balance forward at 31st December 2013	-	193,183	193,183	186,190

Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2013

	2013	2012
Fixed Assets		
Tangible Assets	195,463	193,154
Current Assets		
Debtors	31,672	29,400
Cash at Bank and on Hand	1,029,263	654,227
Creditors		
Amounts Falling Due Within One Year	(1,002,888)	(630,264)
Total Assets less Current Liabilities	253,510	246,517
Capital and Reserves		
Revaluation Reserve	60,327	60,327
Income and Expenditure Account	193,183	186,190
	253,510	246,517

Institutional Representatives and Individual Members

ICOS Council, December 2013

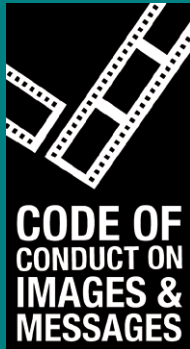
* ICOS Board member

Athlone Institute of Technology	Ms Mary Simpson	Manager, International Office
	Ms Jackie Cunane	International Office Co-ordinator
Ballsbridge College of Further Education	Mr Robert Griffiths	Head of EFL
	Mr Laurence Cooke	Co-ordinator
Champlain College Dublin	Dr. Stephen Robinson *	Director
	Ms Lilly Johnsson	Operations Manager
Cork Institute of Technology	Mr Michael Loftus	Head of Faculty of Engineering & Science
	Ms Niamh Lynes *	International Office Co-ordinator
Dublin Business School	Mr Jonathan Duignan	International Student Recruitment Manager
	Mr Declan Coogan	Admissions Manager for US and Europe
Dublin City University	Ms Sylvia Schroeder	Senior International Officer
	Ms Audrey Byrne	Assistant International Officer
Dublin Institute of Technology	Ms Caoimhe Mulhall	European Student Co-ordinator
	Ms Patricia Houston	Student Officer
Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design & Technology	Mr David Doyle	Academic Administration & Student Affairs Manager
	Ms Tara Ryan	Educational Partnerships & Student Services Manager
Galway-Mayo IT	Mr Larry Elwood	Head of School of Business
	Ms Caitriona Cummins	International Officer
Griffith College Dublin	Mr Kevin Geoghegan *	Director of Market Research & Development
IES Abroad	Dr Ashley Taggart	Director
IT Blanchardstown	Ms Fiona Canning	International Officer
	Ms Mairead Murphy	Marketing Manager
IT Carlow	Mr Donal Mc Alister *	International Coordinator
	Ms Rosemary Flynn	Non-EU Administrator
IT Tallaght	Ms Rosemary Cooper	Academic Administration & Student Affairs Manager
	Ms Stella Browne	Administrative Officer
IT Tralee	Mr Eddie Scully	International Education Officer

Limerick Institute of Technology	Mr Michael O'Connell	Executive in Strategic Change
	Ms Niamh Kavanagh	International Officer
National College of Art & Design	Ms Cathy McCartney	Admissions Officer
	Ms Berna Scanlan	Admissions Officer
National College of Ireland	Ms Nicola Carroll	Head of International Office
	Ms Sheila Mahon *	International Communication Officer
NUI Galway	Ms Anna Cunningham	Director, International Office
	Ms Louise Kelly *	International Student Officer
NUI Maynooth	Mr Wayne Henry	Director of International Office
	Mr Paul Mullally	International Officer
Royal College of Surgeons	Mr Philip Curtis	Head of Admissions & Student Services
	Ms Corriena Brien	Student Services Manager
Shannon College of Hotel Management	Mr Phillip J Smyth	Director
Trinity College Dublin	Ms Sinéad Ryan	Director of Internationalisation
	Ms Genevieve Judson-Jordain *	Regional Officer, Multiple Markets
Union of Students in Ireland	Ms Laura Harmon *	Vice President for Equality & Citizenship
University College Cork	Ms Suzanne Buckley *	International Student Support Officer
University College Dublin	Mr Alex Metcalfe	Director of International Affairs
	Ms Carl Lusby *	International Student Officer
University of Limerick	Ms Josephine Page	Manager, International Division
	Ms Amanda Glennon	Co-ordinator, International Division
Waterford IT	Ms Sinead Day	International Education Manager
Individual (Honorary) Members	Mr John Magoye	
	Mr Don Niall	
	Ms Alice Grattan Esmonde	
	Professor Brian McMurry	

Summary of Main Activities and Achievements 2013

Goal	Main Activities
<p>1 To influence national and institutional policies so as to offer greater protection to international students and enhance their experience in Ireland</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICOS' Director continued to represent ICOS on the High Level Group (HLG) appointed by the Government to support implementation of Ireland's International Education Strategy (2010-2015) • Quarterly meetings with GNIB and INIS on customer service and registration issues affecting international students • Media and advocacy work on specific issues • Submission to Government review of Ireland's International Education Strategy and follow-up meeting in DES • Consultation with QQI and formal submission on Green Paper on the International Education Mark (IEM)
<p>2 To work with Irish Aid and higher education institutions to develop the Fellowship Programme as an effective tool for capacity development in Ireland's partner countries and to contribute to a better understanding of the programme in Ireland</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This year, ICOS Processed 130 new applications for the Irish Aid Fellowship Training Programme which ultimately resulted in the award of 43 new fellowships for the 2013-14 academic year. New fellowship streams added • Provided travel, accommodation and insurance arrangements for all study fellows • On-going welfare and support services to deal with illness, bereavements and other problems of study fellows • Maintenance and dissemination of lists of approved courses • Continued development of fellowship alumni network including continued publication of Alumni newsletter "The Link". • Development of fellowship pages on website and the research and development of fellowship profiles • Tracking studies of returned study fellows
<p>3 To strengthen the ability of our members to deliver appropriate and quality services to their international students while providing independent information and advice directly to international students</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued development of ICOS training programme with delivery of 12 courses to 134 participants in 8 ICOS member HEIs • Annual Seminar on "The Quest for Quality" opened by the Minister for Education and Skills and over 50 attended • On-going response to information requests from members • Web based information service • Support to students with problems with their institutions – on-going case work on fee refunds and other issues • e-bulletin to members with 2 issues in 2013 • Cooperation with USI on Dublin, Cork and Galway regional international student focus groups 58 international students attended. • E-mail enquiry service for international students.
<p>4 To strengthen ICOS' own capacity to deliver</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued strengthening and renewal of ICOS board with appointment of a new Chairperson and four new members. • On-going upgrading of communications and data management systems. • All staff availing of training and opportunities to up skill. • Membership of national and international networks to keep up to date on best practice.



ICOS has signed the Dóchas Code of
Conduct on Images and Messages

See p10 and www.dochas.ie/code for more information

Please send your feedback to code@icosirl.ie

Photo credits:

Front cover, lower - Courtesy of Laura Harmon

Page 3 - Courtesy of Dr Stephen Robinson

Page 8, lower - Courtesy of Nguyen Ha Phuong

Page 10 - Bonnie Cullen, Courtesy of NCI

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