



Annual Report 2012





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: Contributors and feedback from the November 2012 ICOS-USI International Student Forum, held at Dublin's Mansion House.



Irish Aid fellows Fyawupi Mwafongo (Malawi) and Linh Thuy Hoang (Vietnam) help launch a public consultation on the White Paper on Irish Aid in February 2012.



FOREWORD

Nicola Carroll, ICOS Chairperson

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 2012 as well as to reflect on some of the findings in ICOS' strategic review. Overall, it was reassuring to hear from that review that ICOS continues to be valued by its membership and by external stakeholders alike who are keen to see the continued existence and development of an independent organisation which uniquely focuses on the rights and welfare of international students.

The services which ICOS provides to members to facilitate networking and strengthen institutions own capacity to deliver high quality services to international students are appreciated but ICOS can do more and the challenge for 2013 and beyond will be to find ways and resources to provide for the more systematic exchange of good practice across the sector. Providing an effective, independent and authentic platform for international students themselves to advocate in their own interests is also an on-going challenge but one which ICOS is happy to embrace.

ICOS was successful in 2012 in providing a number of opportunities for our members and for international students themselves to articulate their views. ICOS also regularly engages with the Department of Education and Skills (DES) on the implementation of Ireland's International Education Strategy and represents the interests of students and its members on the High Level Group which advises the Government. 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. ICOS' main public event is an annual seminar which, in 2012, was again held in the National College of Ireland (NCI) and which generated plenty of discussion on our main theme. ICOS also coordinated two student forums, in Cork in February and in Dublin in November, with the Union of Students in Ireland (USI) partnering ICOS for both events.

In 2012, ICOS continued to manage a very successful Irish Aid Fellowship programme, making sure to record the achievements of that programme on behalf of Irish Aid as well as exploring its future expansion. The increase in the number of fellows from Vietnam is worthy of particular mention as is the development of a new fellowship scheme for South Africa.

ICOS remains committed to providing quality and relevant training and information support to members and students and in 2012, ICOS with the support of USI and funding from DES, completed filming for a video training resource. A training manual to complement the video is currently being developed and when released, the package will be an important tool in building awareness about 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 particularly to my colleagues on the Board and to the hardworking ICOS staff who are all keen advocates of ICOS' central mission which is to make Ireland a welcoming and quality destination for international students.

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. Working with its members, student organisations and government agencies, ICOS will strive to achieve a political, operational and social environment where international education will thrive and be respected.

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 now provides the backdrop for activities in this area and ICOS continues to be represented by its 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. However, despite this engagement, ICOS was deeply disappointed at the sudden doubling, without consultation or notice of the immigration registration fee in November 2012. INIS did respond by facilitating a special meeting in December to listen to concerns raised by ICOS and other members of the High Level Group and to explore how the sector interests could work better together on student visa and immigration matters.

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

ICOS' annual seminar is themed to address issues of best practice in the sector, offering an opportunity for critical reflection. The 2012 seminar "Valuing our International Students: Gaps and Opportunities in Student Support" took place on 7th June and was opened by Ciarán Cannon, TD, Minister of State for Training and Skills.

Among the key contributors was Dr Laura Rumbley, outgoing Deputy Director at the Academic Cooperation Association (ACA) and co-author of "Taking Care of the Brains – Principles and Practice in International Student Support". Sinead Lucey from the Irish Universities Association (IUA) presented a summary of findings from the International Student Barometer Surveys recently completed by the Irish universities.

A round table discussion format allowed participants to network and share their own experience through the afternoon.



Minister of State for Training and Skills, Mr Ciarán Cannon TD, opens the 2012 ICOS Seminar

FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT AND AWARENESS



Goal: To work with Irish Aid and higher education institutions to develop the Fellowship Training 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

Work on Irish Aid's Fellowship Programme remains the cornerstone of ICOS activity and the main basis on which the organisation is funded. For 2012, ICOS assumed added responsibilities with respect to the Irish Aid IDEAS Programme for Vietnam and well as continuing its role in relation to the Irish Aid Fellowship Training Programme and Courtney Fellowship.

A new IDEAS Strand 2 technical scholarship and the Kader Asmal Fellowship for South Africa were both introduced in late 2012 with a view to receiving their first intakes in 2013. The ICOS website was therefore restructured to provide supporting information on each of the fellowship pathways.

Fellowship Training Programme

ICOS processed 146 new applications (compared to 121 in 2011) which resulted in the award of 46 new fellowships by Irish Aid for the 2012-13 academic year (an increase of 4 on the previous year). 17 of these fellowships were for study in Irish HEIs, while 29 fellowships were for study in regional institutions. Fellowships were awarded to students from Ethiopia, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Timor Leste, Uganda, Vietnam and Zambia.

Ongoing support was provided

to the 2011-12 intake of FTP fellows through to completion of their studies. At the year's end, 21 (95%) out of a possible 22 continuing 2011 fellows in Ireland had successfully completed their courses, whilst one had availed of an extension due to personal circumstances.

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 Peace Studies. Whilst three applications were processed by ICOS, placement issues meant that no award was ultimately made for 2012.

IDEAS Programme

The 2012 intake for the IDEAS Programme increased to 24, with all fellows undertaking courses at the UCD Michael Smurfit Graduate Business School. All 12 awardees from 2011 were supported through to successful completion.

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

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
- 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



New Ireland-based Fellows at the 2012 orientation

the process of fellows adjusting to living and studying in Ireland.

Alumni Network

The Irish Aid Fellowship Alumni Network was further developed during 2012. 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 2012. 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 FTP fellows

carried out in 2012 highlights the success of the programme and underlines the fact that Irish Aid is funding worthy candidates

in a position to contribute significantly to capacity building upon their return to their workplaces.

CASE STUDY:

Grace Namukonde (Zambia)

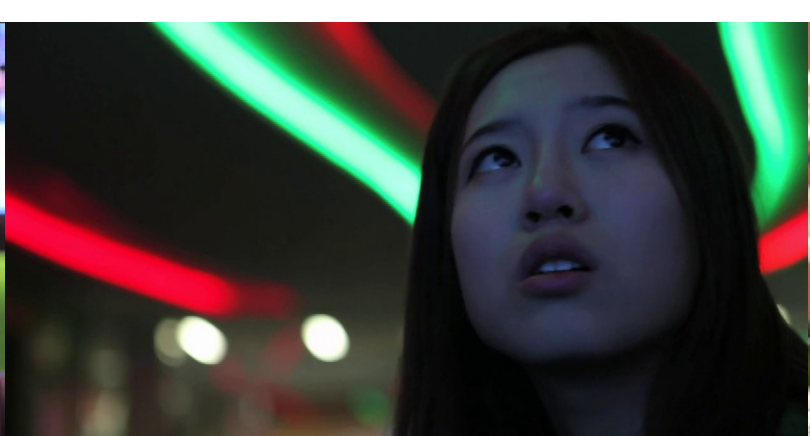


Grace works for the Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED). In 2012, she was awarded an Irish Aid fellowship to study for the Masters in Gender, Globalisation and Rights at NUI

Galway. During her studies, she explained what she was gaining from the course:

"It's helping me to see where I can go back and improve things in my programme and also in terms of teaching people on human rights and children's rights. Returning as a gender specialist, I'll be able to train staff to understand how to mainstream gender in our programmes and also take that into our networks and policy advocacy."

Read profiles of Grace and other fellows from 2012 at our website.



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

Member Services

ICOS' continued to maintain online information resources for members, including a passworded area providing an archive of key updates and documents. Five newsletters were produced and circulated to members 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.

ICOS delivered 13 training courses in cross-cultural awareness and teaching in a cross-cultural environment in 9 different higher education institutes across the country, reaching 89 staff in total. Overall 97% of participants rated ICOS courses as good or very good.

The ICOS seminar (p5) provided members with an opportunity to network and explore a key theme in international education.

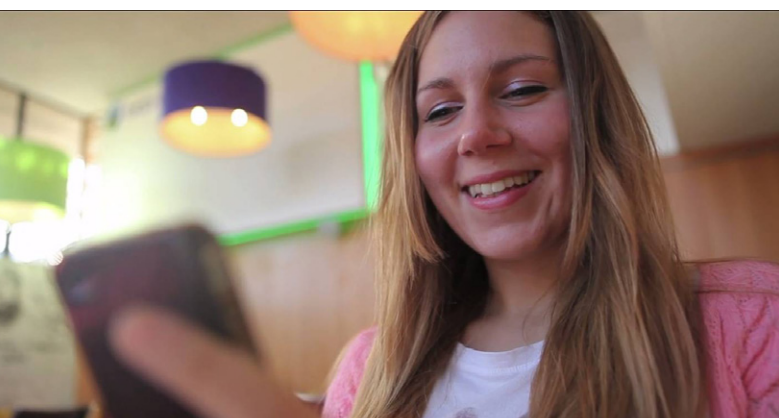
Training DVD Project

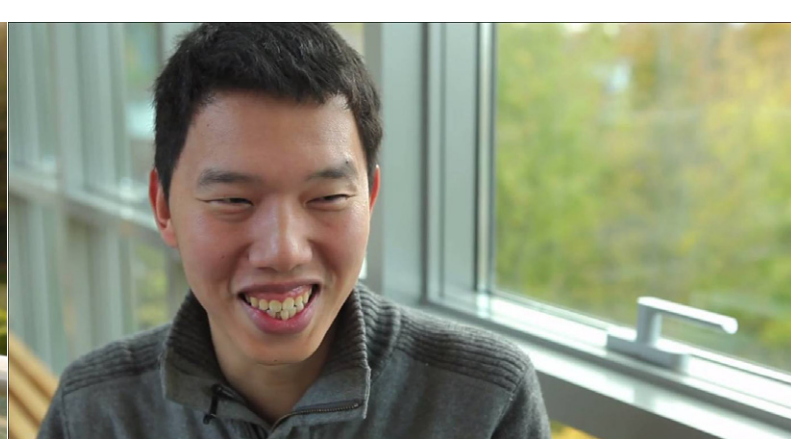
ICOS and USI received funding from the Department of Education and Skills (DES) for the development of a DVD resource to be used in cross-cultural awareness training. Working with Yellow Brick Media, filming was completed in the final part the year.

28 separate student interviews were conducted and a range of academic and support staff also gave contributions. A tremendous amount of high quality content was recorded and it is expected that the process of reviewing, selecting and structuring the footage will take significant additional time to complete. Extensive written training materials are also planned before the DVD package will receive its final launch.

2013 Update

Prior to the publication of this report, a short video preview was posted online at the following link: <http://vimeo.com/71323288>





Services to International Students

ICOS maintains a range of online information guides aimed at international students at its website. Web statistics indicate that these continued to be well referenced during the year.

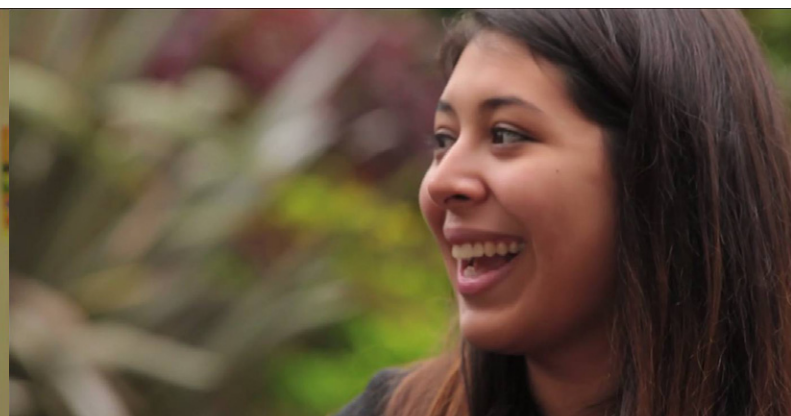
A social media presence has been developed through a Facebook page, offering updates of particular relevance to international students and those working in the sector. The number of followers grew steadily from 460 at the end of 2011 to 606 at the end of 2012, which constituted a rise of 32% in popularity.

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.

Two International Student Forums, organised jointly by ICOS and USI, took place in 2012 and included the participation of 66 international students from 12 higher education institutes. The first forum was held in University College Cork on 22nd February and the second was held in the Mansion House, Dublin, on 14th November 2012. Reports were produced in each instance, outlining the issues arising. Funding was provided with thanks to the Department of Education and Skills.



ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Goal: To strengthen ICOS' own capacity to deliver

Membership

In 2012 ICOS admitted two new members, International School of Business, Dublin (ISB) and Cork Institute of Technology (CIT).

Executive Committee

In 2012, Nicola Carroll (NCI) continued her term as ICOS Chair, with Kevin Geoghegan also continuing as Vice Chair. Dr. Stephen Robinson had the role of Honorary Treasurer for 2011-12. Laura Harmon (TCD Students Union) and Sylvia Schroeder (DCU) were appointed to the committee as new members. The Executive Committee met 5 times in 2012.

Funding

The securing of funding from the Department of Education and Skills for two specific projects broadened the base of ICOS funding during the year. It is recognised that more diverse long-term funding is a key strategic goal for the organisation.

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. EAIE held its annual

conference in Dublin in September 2012 and ICOS was pleased to be able contribute to the conference publication, "Rethinking education, Reshaping Economies" with an article co-written with Gill Roe from Enterprise Ireland on international academic talent attraction and retention.

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. In 2012, ICOS availed of training on implementation of the Code for its Programme and Communications Officer, who acts as 'Code Champion' and represented the organisation at the annual Code review meeting held by Dóchas. All new staff and volunteers were provided with information on the Code and a web-based feedback mechanism provided for comment from members of the public.

Death of former ICOS Chairperson



ICOS was sad to hear of the passing, in November 2012, of one its founding members, Professor Louis Smith, who served as ICOS' Chairperson for many years and remained a valued friend.

Professor Smith was a Director of ICOS for nearly 25 years between 1975 and 1999 and was an

Honorary member until his death. Professor Smith was instrumental in many important developments over the organisation's history not least in the achieving state recognition and funding for ICOS as well as in securing ICOS' current home at 41 Morehampton Road. He remained ever generous with his time and never wavered in his genuine interest and concern that international students would be properly supported while in Ireland. He was also one of the first to speak of the importance of maintaining links with international alumni of Irish institutions.

SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTS

Approved by the Board: 22 May 2013
Auditors: BFGD Chartered Accountants, 1 Castlewood Avenue, Rathmines, Dublin 6

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31st December 2012

	2012 Restricted	2012 Unrestricted	Total 2012	Total 2011
Incoming Resources				
Incoming resources from generated funds:				
Activities for generating funds	785,523	276,446	1,061,969	1,305,008
Investment income	-	1,265	1,265	3,344
Total Incoming Resources	785,523	277,711	1,063,234	1,308,352
Resources Expended				
Charitable activities	785,523	247,180	1,032,703	1,280,260
Governance costs	-	5,920	5,920	14,997
Total Resources Expended	785,523	253,100	1,038,623	1,295,257
Net Incoming Resources	-	24,611	24,611	13,095
Balance forward at 1st January 2012	-	161,579	161,579	148,484
Balance forward at 31st December 2012	-	186,190	186,190	161,579

Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2012

	2012	2011
Fixed Assets		
Tangible Assets	193,154	192,829
Current Assets		
Debtors	29,400	89,891
Cash at Bank and on Hand	654,227	575,686
Creditors		
Amounts Falling Due Within One Year	(630,264)	(636,500)
Total Assets less Current Liabilities	246,517	221,906
Capital and Reserves		
Revaluation Reserve	60,327	60,327
Income and Expenditure Account	186,190	161,579
	246,517	221,906

INSTITUTIONAL REPRESENTATIVES AND INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

ICOS Council, December 2012

* ICOS Executive Committee 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 and Science
	Ms. Niamh Lynes	International Office Co-ordinator
Dublin Business School	Mr. Giles Kilcoyne *	Admissions Manager
	Mr. Declan Coogan	Admissions Manager for US and Europe
Dublin City University	Ms. Sylvia Schroeder *	Senior International Officer
	Ms. Audrey Byrne	Exchange Co-ordinator / 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 and Technology	Mr. David Doyle	Academic Administration and Student Affairs Manager
Dundalk Institute of Technology	Mr. Michael Stewart	International Marketing Officer
	Ms. Mary Heffernan	International Officer
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 and Development
IES Abroad	Dr Ashley Taggart	Director
International Study Institute Ireland	Mr. Brian Burns	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 Sligo	Mr. Gerry Hegarty	Academic Administration Manager
	Ms. Eileen Gillen	International Officer
IT Tallaght	Ms. Rosemary Cooper	Academic Administration and 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. Sinead Collier	International Officer
National College of Art and 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
	Ms. Michelle Brien	International Marketing Officer
Royal College of Surgeons	Mr. Philip Curtis	Head of Admissions and 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
Union of Students in Ireland	Ms. Laura Harmon *	Vice President for Equality and 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	Ms. Alice Grattan Esmonde
	Mr. Don Niall	Prof. Brian McMurry

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES 2012

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
<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 146 new applications for the Irish Aid Fellowship Training Programme which ultimately resulted in the award of 45 new fellowships for the 2012-2013 academic year. • 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 also 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 13 courses to 89 participants in 9 ICOS member HEIs • Presentations on International Student Support at AUA, CSSI and USI Conferences • 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 • Delivery of regular e-bulletin to members with 4 issues published in 2012 • Cooperation with USI on Dublin and Cork regional international students forums held in UCC and the Mansion House. Over 65 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"> • The addition of two new members, The International School of Business Dublin (ISB) and Cork Institute of Technology (CIT). • Continued strengthening and renewal of ICOS board. • 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

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Irish Council for International Students

41 Morehampton Road

Dublin 4

Ireland

Tel: 353 1 660 5233

Fax: 353 1 668 2320

Email: office@icosirl.ie

Web: www.icosirl.ie

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