# UCFL: Northern Ireland

14 November 2025

## 1 QUB

### 1.1 New undergraduate pathways

New pathways have been approved for 2026 entry: Law with Irish, Irish and Broadcast Production, Irish and Portuguese. Other pathways involving Languages are in the approval process.

### 1.2 Modern languages mentoring

We are mentoring in 10 schools across NI this year; the school selection process focused on non-selective schools and those with above-average rates of free school meals for the sector. Mentoring is being delivered to pupils in their GCSE year, by final-year students of French, Irish, and Spanish.

## 2 Political developments

### 2.1 Language commissioner appointments

Following the Identity and Language (Northern Ireland) Act (2022), Pól Deeds (former CEO of An Droichead and subsequently deputy CEO of the island-wide body Foras na Gaeilge) has been appointed Irish Language Commissioner. Lee Reynolds (former policy advisor for the Democratic Unionist Party) has been appointed Commissioner for the Ulster Scots and the Ulster British tradition.

### 2.2 Belfast language policy

Belfast City Council has approved an Irish language policy for the first time. This will increase access to and visibility of Irish in public services including in a new bilingual corporate identity and signage for the council, and in making key communications available bilingually.

## 3 NICILT

### 3.1 30th anniversary

NICILT celebrated 30 years of research into language teaching last month. Since 2024 they have been part of the Centre for Language Education Research in the School of Social Sciences, Education, and Social Work at QUB.

### 3.2 NI branch of Association for Language Learning

This is coordinated by colleagues at NICILT, and was launched on 17 September. It supports and connects teachers of languages in schools.

*Merryn Davies-Deacon*