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O L L S C O I L L U I M N I G H



# Universities and Intercultural Cities

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THE SUNDAY TIMES

UNIVERSITY  
OF THE YEAR 2015

## University of Limerick

- 13,500 students; c 18% non-Irish
- (Limerick city – 24,000 students)
- “Pioneering and Connected” Strategic Plan 2011-15
- Connected to the communities we serve
- Resonates with Nancy Cantor’s notion of a university as an Anchor Institution
- The university as a site for opportunity and engagement
- Public problem solving





## Census 2011

2011 Nationality: Limerick City and County & the State

Category	Limerick City		Limerick County		Limerick City & County		State	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Irish	48859	86.4	120364	90.2	169223	89.1	3927143	86.8
Non-Irish	6847	12.1	11580	8.7	18427	9.7	544357	12
No nationality	26	0	28	0	54	0	1487	0
Not stated	789	1.4	1450	1.1	2239	1.2	52294	1.2
Total	56521	100	133422	100	189943	100	4525281	100
of which:	Number	As % non-national	Number	As % non-national	Number	As % non-national	Number	As % non-national
Polish	2572	37.6	3518	30.4	6090	33	122585	22.5
UK	685	10	2864	24.7	3549	19.3	112259	20.6
Asian	916	13.4	1288	11.1	2204	12	65579	12
African	502	7.3	635	5.5	1137	6.2	41642	7.6



## Census 2011

- 30% increase in non-Irish nationals from 2006-2011
- Romanian, Indian, Polish, Lithuanian, Latvian, Brazilian communities grew significantly
- 17% Irish residents born outside the country, representing a 25% increase over 2006; 31% increase in foreign born women
- 514,068 (out of a population of 4.5m) speak a foreign language at home



## What does the University of Limerick do?

### Research

- Medicine: migrants access to primary health care  
<http://www.ul.ie/gems/news/restore-conference-2015>
- Psychology: international students – level of integration, academic performance, wellbeing
- Hate and Hostility Research Group <http://www.ul.ie/emotions/hhrg>



## Education

- Curriculum: broadening module on cultural diversity; module on teaching international students
- Seminars aimed at sharing good practices and developing intercultural awareness and competence

<http://www.ul.ie/psychology/article/practice-what-we-preach-teaching-and-working-culturally-diverse-environments>

- Project work: assignment to develop anti-rumour strategies
- The UL Practicum – community orientated research project e.g. Irish Identities, Immigration and Integration

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MqXuCcDjJ\\_U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MqXuCcDjJ_U)



## Outreach/Civic Engagement

- Limerick City and County Intercultural Working Group
- Community based education programmes e.g. Parent in Education Programme - Your Knowledge, Their Future
- Seminars, discussion fora focusing on the relationship between educational practitioners and academia
- Free English language classes delivered in local communities
- Music: Sanctuary project <http://www.irishworldacademy.ie/sanctuary-irish-chamber-orchestra-global-song-programme/>





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## Student Activity

- Volunteering: placements in community organisations
- Project: Limerick Students, Our City, Our Culture
- UL International Society: provide language tuition to Irish school students
- UL Development Society: Deloitte Top Technology Talent Competition 2015 – improved process for foreign nationals transferring money home



## Challenges

- National policy – slow to adapt
- Availability of data
- Role models – e.g. teachers predominantly Irish; other professions?
- Coordination of University activities?
- Are we effecting sustainable change?
- How are we adapting to changing student/staff profile?
- Accommodating diversity?