
Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education

June 2011



AN CHOMHAIRLE MHÚINTEOIREACHTA

The Teaching Council

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Foreword

In 2007, the Council began the process of drafting its Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education covering initial teacher education, induction and early and continuing professional development. To inform the development of the policy, the Council commissioned two pieces of research. Firstly, a position paper entitled *A Review Paper on Thinking and Policies Relating to Teacher Education in Ireland* was prepared by Dr John Coolahan, Professor Emeritus, NUI Maynooth. This was followed by a detailed study entitled *Learning to Teach: A Nine Country Cross National Study*, undertaken by a team of researchers from University College Cork, led by Dr Paul Conway.

In parallel with the research outlined above, the Council embarked on a comprehensive consultation process. On 4 February 2008, the Council convened a meeting of the partners in education to initiate a national debate on the continuum of teacher education. At that meeting, a wide-ranging discussion took place and all feedback was noted by the Council and informed its deliberations. In the months which ensued, the Council developed the outline of its policy paper. In October 2008, as part of a second phase of consultation, a series of 11 sectoral meetings was convened by the Council at which the outline document was discussed by the partners in education.

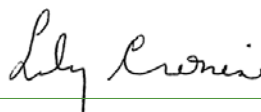
In June 2009, the Council established a sub-group of its Education Committee to further develop the policy. That working group met on 16 occasions over the months from July 2009 to November 2010 where it debated and drafted a number of iterations, culminating in the draft policy which was published in December 2010. The publication of the draft policy marked the beginning of the third phase of consultation. There was a high level of engagement with that process and more than 200 submissions were received from individuals and organisations. Each submission was read and considered and the policy was finalised and adopted by the Council at its meeting on 13 June 2011.

The publication of this document is a significant development as it provides the framework for the reconceptualisation of teacher education across the continuum. Thanks are due to the following: Professor John Coolahan and Dr Paul Conway and his colleagues, whose research informed the Council's deliberations; those individuals and groups who engaged with the Council's consultation process, thereby influencing the direction of teacher education in Ireland in the years ahead; the Teaching Council members and, in particular, its Education Committee and the Policy Working Group, for their careful attention to detail and commitment to the task at all times; Gerry Malone, Susie Hall and Noel Buckley, who chaired the Education Committee and Policy Working Group at various stages of the process, and whose leadership was key to bringing this document to fruition; Carmel Kearns, the Council's Education Officer, who acted as secretary throughout the process.

Le gach dea mhéin,



Áine Lawlor
CEO/Director



Lily Cronin
Chairperson

Glossary

Competences: Competences are statements of the attributes, skills and knowledge that teachers as professionals should possess and exemplify. The achievement of competence is a developmental process that continues throughout a teacher's career. 'Competencies' is the term used in some countries (e.g. New Zealand) and by some researchers. The term 'competences' is used in this paper.

Continuum of teacher education: This describes the formal and informal educational and developmental activities in which teachers engage, as life-long learners, during their teaching career. It encompasses initial teacher education, induction, early and continuing professional development and, indeed, late career support.

Foundation studies: As a multi-disciplinary field of study, education is informed by several areas of learning that have their origins in other relevant disciplines. Applied to education, 'foundation studies' typically includes the following: history of education; psychology of education; sociology of education; philosophy of education.

HEI: The term HEI or Higher Education Institution is used in this document to denote those colleges, universities and other third level bodies providing one or more programmes of teacher education.

Out-of-field teachers: Teachers teaching a subject in respect of which their qualifications do not meet the subject-specific criteria set down by the Teaching Council for registration purposes.

Professional portfolio: The term professional portfolio refers to an instrument used by the student teacher to document his or her work, to support the process of reflection on his or her practice and on the subject content, and to identify areas in which he/she may need support or guidance. The portfolio also facilitates students to become more conscious of the theories and assumptions that guide their practice, and provides a basis for collaborative dialogue about teaching.

Professional studies: Professional studies incorporate studies in the pedagogy of the subjects of the relevant curriculum or syllabus (i.e., in the case of the primary sector, the entire range of subjects which is included in the Primary School Curriculum and, in the case of post-primary, the post-primary syllabus subjects in which the student teacher is specialising). Professional studies should be directed towards the appropriate age group.

School placement: The term school placement refers to that part of the programme which takes place in school settings and which is designed to give the student teacher an opportunity to apply educational theory in a variety of teaching situations and school contexts. It affords the student teacher opportunities to participate in school life in a way that is structured and supported. The Council is aware that the term "teaching practice" is the more widely used term in the Irish teacher education context. However, it considers the term "school placement" more accurately reflects the nature of the experience as one encompassing a range of teaching and non-teaching activities.

Introduction

This policy has been developed in line with the Teaching Council's role as the regulatory body that sets teaching standards and establishes best practice at all stages on the continuum of teacher education.

Ireland has been fortunate in the quality of its teachers and this is due in no small measure to the supportive role of the State in teacher education. The Council regards education as a public good and therefore wishes to reiterate that it is the primary responsibility and direct role of the State, in co-operation with the Council, to support high quality teacher education. In order to fulfil this responsibility, the State should guarantee, through its Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), an adequate supply of highly qualified teachers, as has been the tradition for many decades. In this context, the State and the profession share a responsibility for the continuing professional development of teachers. The State should consider the negative impact of the casualisation of the profession where many teachers remain in part-time or short-term employment for extended periods. The State also needs to recognise that the quality of teaching is compromised by the deployment of out-of-field teachers.

The Council believes that the time is now right for a fresh and thorough look at teacher education to ensure that tomorrow's teachers are competent to meet the challenges that they face and are life-long learners, continually adapting over the course of their careers to enable them to support their students' learning.

This paper is underpinned by an extensive programme of research and consultation and it sets out the Council's policy on the continuum of teacher education including initial teacher education, induction, early and continuing professional development. The policy, and a suite of ancillary documents which helped inform it, are available for download from the Council's website, www.teachingcouncil.ie

In setting out its policy, the Council is cognisant of the value of education in society, of the unique role which teachers play within the education system in providing for the holistic development of students, and of the complex and intricate nature of teaching as it is elaborated in the *Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers*. The Council reiterates the critical objectives of promoting quality teaching and learning, as well as the centrality of the core values and professional commitments of the teaching profession as set out in the *Code*.

The Council is also mindful of the evolving and dynamic context for teaching whereby new understandings and insights have emerged in a range of areas including pedagogy, curriculum, assessment, human learning, early childhood education and teacher education. In parallel, teachers have found themselves facing a range of new challenges and opportunities in the classroom in recent years. The inclusion of children with disabilities and/or special educational needs into mainstream schools, the increase in the numbers of students from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, the changes in an increasingly diverse society, changing family structures and the emergence of new societal and economic problems are contributing to the complexity of teaching in 21st century Ireland. This complexity is intensified by the fact that teaching in the primary, post-primary and further education sectors takes place

in a multiplicity of contexts, thereby resulting in a diverse range of needs within and across the different sectors.

The pace of change in the education system since the 1990s, including significant changes to, and reform of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment at both primary and post-primary levels, together with the pace of legislative change in the education sector, is having a significant impact on teaching. The introduction of Aistear¹, a new framework for early childhood education, brings into focus the work of teachers in the junior classes of primary school. The Government's *20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language (Straitéis 20 Bliain don Ghaeilge 2010-2030)* highlights the challenges and requirements that arise in preparing teachers to teach Irish throughout their careers. Its *Draft National Plan to Improve Literacy and Numeracy in Schools* highlights the challenges which arise in relation to literacy and numeracy and the developments that are needed to enhance the skills of teachers in teaching literacy and numeracy. The emergence of new technologies and social media play a central role in the way young people communicate and learn and this is having an impact across all education provision. Regard for social inclusion, the early identification of children with learning difficulties, multiculturalism, partnership with parents and ICT are increasingly significant issues. There is a heightened expectation in relation to the role of teachers and a major cultural shift whereby teaching now requires a much greater degree of interaction with students, colleagues, parents and co-professionals.

In summary, the emergence of new knowledge, understandings and insights into curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and teacher learning, together with the accelerating pace of societal, legislative and educational reform and the increasingly complex role of teachers, provide an important context for this policy.

¹ *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* was developed by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) in partnership with the early childhood sector. It was published in October 2009.

The Continuum of Teacher Education

The continuum of teacher education describes the formal and informal educational and developmental activities in which teachers engage, as life-long learners, during their teaching career. It encompasses initial teacher education, induction, early and continuing professional development and, indeed, late career support, with each stage merging seamlessly into the next and interconnecting in a dynamic way with each of the others.

The continuum of teacher education has traditionally been referred to internationally as the “three ‘I’s” of initial teacher education, induction and in-career development. The Council is adopting another set of “three ‘I’s”, namely, **innovation**, **integration** and **improvement** which should underpin all stages of the continuum.

Innovation

The Council believes that innovation is essential at all stages of the continuum if teacher education is to be effective in meeting the changing needs identified in the introduction. The Council sees the concept of innovation as encompassing those processes whereby fresh thinking is applied to teacher education with the aim of renewing and improving it. Initial teacher education must be reconceptualised so that it is fit-for-purpose in preparing 21st century teachers and interfaces appropriately with the induction stage. Innovative, multi-faceted programmes of induction must be developed and made available to all teachers to ensure a seamless transition from being a student on a programme of initial teacher education to being a practising teacher in the classroom. Equally, at early and continuing professional development stages, new models of provision need to be developed to assist teachers to develop and broaden the professional knowledge, skill and competences appropriate to their teaching.

Integration

The theme of integration is threaded throughout this document. For many years in Ireland, there has been a recognition of teacher education as a continuum and this is evidenced in the *Report on the National Education Convention* (1993) the Government White Paper, *Charting Our Education Future* (1995) and the OECD Report, *Teachers Matter: Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers* (2005). Further details are available in the Council’s background report, *Teacher Education in Ireland and Internationally*, which accompanies this document.

This view of teacher education as a continuum was reflected in the mid 1990s in the establishment of the In-Career Development Unit (ICDU), now the Teacher Education Section (TES), by the Department of Education and Skills. The rationale for the administrative change from the ICDU to the TES was to ensure cohesion in teacher education policy and practice across all phases of the teaching career.

Despite research, reports and restructuring of sections within the Department of Education and Skills, the problem of fragmentation of teacher education has remained significant in Ireland with insufficient linkages being made between the stages of the continuum. Furthermore,

there is an overreliance on initial teacher education in a context where, until very recently, a formal induction programme has not been in place for the majority of newly qualified teachers (NQTs). It has long been recognised that there is a need to bring greater coherence to provision at all stages of the continuum and the Council believes that this issue must be addressed as a matter of priority.

Improvement

The Council recognises that there is much excellent work being done by providers at the initial teacher education stage. However, it has identified many opportunities for improvement in key areas, e.g., many current programmes are overloaded and are based on somewhat outdated models of provision where there is much emphasis on contact hours and assessment. This leaves insufficient time and space for the meaningful initiation of the development of teachers as reflective, enquiry-oriented, life-long learners. This development is essential to prepare teachers to continually self-evaluate, collaborate and adapt throughout their careers to reflect the changing realities of the classrooms in which they will teach.

The Council welcomes the recent introduction of the National Induction Programme for Teachers, which is accessible to all newly qualified teachers, but it believes that this is just a starting point, and there remains considerable scope for growth and improvement.

Equally, while the Council acknowledges the range of continuing professional development programmes available for teachers, it believes that there is a need for much improvement in this area to ensure the long-term capacity-building that is now needed in the system.

The Council is conscious of the need for strategies which will enable coherence and cohesion throughout the continuum and ensure the achievement of appropriate standards.

The Council is also mindful of the Government's *20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language (Straitéis 20 Bliain don Ghaeilge 2010-2030)* which sets out areas for Government action under various headings including education. In line with that strategy, the Council recognises the need for high standards of Irish among both primary and post-primary teachers in regard to teaching Irish as a subject, using it as a means of communication and as a medium of instruction. The Council expects that this need can be factored in at each phase of the continuum. It is confident that existing reserves of expertise and capacity may be harnessed effectively by teacher education providers and other agencies to meet the challenges and requirements that arise in this context.

Guiding Principles

The Teaching Council's policy is that teacher education should be based on the three pillars of innovation, integration and improvement and underpinned by a number of key principles. It should:

- be directed towards the learner, who is at the centre of all educational endeavour;
- be informed by the core values and professional commitments which are central to teaching, as set out in the Teaching Council's *Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers*
- be informed by the best available research and evidence;
- recognise teachers as life-long learners and teacher education as a continuum;
- develop those competences which facilitate quality learning, cater for educational priorities and are central to teachers' professional practice and personal growth;
- promote a love of learning and a sense of wonder and enquiry;
- foster reflective, critical and research-based learning;
- be based on a broad understanding of the practice of teaching as one involving complex relationships and requiring different types of professional knowledge¹, attitudes and dispositions;
- be supported by appropriate structures designed to achieve coherence across all stages of the continuum;
- be designed and provided using a partnership model involving teachers, schools and teacher educators;
- be adequately resourced to meet teacher, school and system needs;
- recognise that teachers, as professionals and as public servants, are accountable for the quality of the service that they provide;
- be subject to periodic review and ongoing evaluation of needs and priorities.

¹ Knowledge – for practice, knowledge – in practice and knowledge – of practice, as explicated in Cochran-Smith, M., & Lytle, S. L. (1999). *'Relationships of knowledge and practice: teacher learning in communities'*, *Review of Research in Education*

Initial Teacher Education

Initial Teacher Education (ITE) refers to the foundation stage of learning to be a teacher when student teachers are engaged in a recognised teacher education programme provided by a Higher Education Institution. Further information on the provision of initial teacher education in Ireland and internationally is available in the Council's background document, *Teacher Education in Ireland and Internationally*.

Policy on Initial Teacher Education

The Teaching Council's policy on initial teacher education is generic in nature, insofar as possible, and applies to concurrent and consecutive programmes for primary and post-primary teaching, including the further education sector. It will be revised from time to time having regard to the ongoing reviews by the Council of programmes of initial teacher education.

The Council's policy is based on the generic principles of good teacher education which are outlined on page 10, bearing in mind its drive for innovation, integration and improvement. In addition, the following principles, which are specific to initial teacher education, are significant.

Initial Teacher Education, Teacher Formation and the Continuum

- The initial teacher education stage of the continuum of teacher education is the foundation of the teacher's career and must be built upon through induction, early and continuing professional development using a spiral approach, i.e., involving an iterative revisiting of topics, subjects or themes throughout the career, building, extending and deepening understanding.
- Initial teacher education should develop knowledge-of practice, knowledge-for practice and also student teachers' capacity and skill for reflecting critically on their own practice and that of others, referred to in the literature as knowledge-in practice. The goal is to become in a real sense, though as yet in an initial sense, one's own best critic. In advancing this goal, the benefits for professional learning when student teachers evaluate each other's work in teams should be emphasised.
- Initial teacher education should be mindful of, and challenge as appropriate, the attitudes and beliefs about teaching and learning which student teachers carry with them and which inform and guide their professional practice.
- Initial teacher education should involve the compilation of professional development portfolios by student teachers, a practice to be maintained by them throughout the life-long learning process.
- Learning by student teachers should include their own learning of the curriculum subjects/ syllabi they will teach, in terms of content, purpose and pedagogy. It should also include the insights, dispositions and pedagogical capabilities that enable them, with growing degrees of fluency and confidence, to draw others into the learning of such subjects in imaginative and age-appropriate ways.

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- Programmes of initial teacher education should prepare student teachers for core areas such as school and classroom planning, assessment, evaluation, classroom management and differentiated teaching to meet the needs of the individual learner.
 - They should prepare student teachers for entry to their professional role in the context of a collaborative, dynamic school environment, helping them to engage with colleagues, co-professionals and parents and understand their respective roles.
 - They should equip newly qualified teachers with a set of competences to facilitate quality learning and cater for current educational priorities such as literacy and numeracy, ICT and inclusion.

Entry to Initial Teacher Education

- Selection procedures for initial teacher education should assess, in so far as possible, the broad range of factors which may impact on the applicant's suitability for entry to the profession. In that context, there should be a review of entry requirements and selection procedures to include consideration of: the use of aptitude tests and structured interviews; the significance of previous relevant experience; subject quotas; the standard of academic achievement required. Having regard to the latter in particular, the Council considers that the entry level requirement in respect of Mathematics at primary level should be raised. Such a review would also explore ways of facilitating entry to the profession by under-represented groups and alternative ways of assessing competence in numeracy, literacy and Gaeilge, as appropriate, prior to entry. It should also review the current practice of using quotas for Gaeltacht applications at primary level.

Programmes

- The foundation studies, professional studies and the school placement should be carefully planned in the light of changing understandings of the nature of learning and the theory-practice relationship, so that there is an appropriate balance between them and their inter-relationship is made explicit.

The foundation studies should:

- provide research-informed insights into student teachers' understanding of the practices of teaching, learning and assessment;
- illuminate key dimensions of the professional context in which the thinking and actions of teachers are carried out;
- provide the basis for a strong professional ethic in teaching;
- provide the basis for reflective practice.

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- Professional studies such as subject pedagogies (methodologies) and curriculum studies should be designed to advance the communicative skills of student teachers. They should also promote pedagogical content knowledge and cultivate the understanding and acumen that transform a fluency in one or more teaching subjects into an assured pedagogical capability. In such studies, teaching itself is understood and practised as a form of self-critical learning by student teachers, with ample opportunities for teamwork and enquiry-based initiatives with colleagues.
 - Where academic elective subjects form part of the programme, they should incorporate material appropriate to the teaching of the subject in the relevant sector. While such subjects may aim to contribute to students' personal and cultural development, they should also be related to their future work as teachers and the development of subject leaders. The range and focus of such subjects should be reviewed to reflect these aims.

The School Placement

- The school placement experience should be regarded as a valuable opportunity for student teacher development and not merely as a means of assessing student teacher performance. New and innovative models need to be developed using a partnership approach, whereby HEIs and schools actively collaborate in the organisation of the placement. Such models would see greater levels of responsibility devolved to the profession for the provision of structured support for its new members and a gradual increase in classroom responsibility for student teachers. Structured support would include mentoring, supervision and critical analysis of the experience as well as observation of, and conversations with, experienced teachers. Under this partnership model, all recognised schools would be expected to host a student on placement.
- The school placement should take place in a variety of settings and incorporate a variety of teaching situations and school contexts: different age groups of students; different sectors, (primary/post-primary/FE), as appropriate; various socio-economic and cultural environments; multi-class and mixed ability teaching situations and team teaching/co-teaching situations. In all of these contexts, the placement should afford student teachers the opportunity to plan and implement lessons and receive constructive feedback.
- In the context of programmes of a longer duration (see below), the school placement should also allow the student teacher to undertake a variety of non-teaching activities and to observe a wide range of different teaching approaches. The extended duration of programmes should also allow for the development of a more reflective, enquiry-oriented approach to the school placement.

Assessment

- Rigorous systems should be in place to assess the development of the competences expected of graduating teachers. Such systems should ensure that the graduating teacher will be capable of sustained classroom practice.

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- As part of any programme of initial teacher education at primary and post-primary levels, all student teachers should be required to complete courses in the teaching and assessment of literacy and numeracy. Assessment should evaluate their own levels of literacy and numeracy and as well as their ability to teach and assess them.

The Duration and Nature of Initial Teacher Education Programmes

- This policy is mindful of the role of the Council, in co-operation with the Department of Education and Skills, in determining the duration and nature of teacher education. The Council recognises the particular strengths of both the concurrent and consecutive models and is of the view that a balance should be maintained by the State in the provision of both. The Council notes that, at present, the concurrent route tends to be confined to programmes with practical, laboratory or workshop elements. It would welcome a greater degree of experimentation in the range of programmes offered via this route.
- In cases where the number of places on programmes is regulated by the Department of Education and Skills, providers should be given sufficient advance notice of their allocation so as to facilitate multi-annual planning.
- The duration and nature of initial teacher education programmes should have regard to the professional and personal development needs of student teachers at this crucial, foundation stage and the need to ensure that qualifications are recognised internationally. The duration of concurrent programmes should be a minimum of four years while post-graduate programmes of teacher education should take place over two years, thereby facilitating an innovative reconceptualisation of current programmes. The additional time available should be devoted to core areas, rather than academic subject electives, and should allow for:
 - extended school placement periods;
 - an increased emphasis on professional development portfolio work, reflective practice and research/enquiry-based learning;
 - an increased emphasis on the key strategic priorities of literacy and numeracy, ICT and inclusion;
 - enhanced modes of delivery to enable wider access to programmes of teacher education.
- The Council believes that reconceptualised, extended programmes should be in place no later than 2012/2013 in the case of concurrent programmes and 2014/2015 in the case of consecutive programmes. It notes the concerns raised by a number of participants in its consultation process, regarding potential anomalies that may arise as a result of the extension to the duration of consecutive programmes. It acknowledges the validity of these concerns, and the need for a dialogue to take place between the Council and key stakeholders, in relation to these issues. This dialogue should consider the extent to which the various qualifications might be recognised in partial fulfilment of a Master's degree.

Resourcing Issues

- Among the resourcing issues to be considered are the following:
 - Lecturers and other staff responsible for student teachers' professional and personal development should be suitably qualified and experienced;
 - Staffing levels in provider institutions should be such that a student-centred experience can be provided, in particular, through active tutorial workshops;
 - HEI facilities appropriate to the programme concerned should be available to support teaching, learning and research.

Induction

Induction may be defined as a programme of teacher education which takes place during that critical period at the beginning of the newly qualified teacher's career, usually the first year after qualifying as a teacher. The purpose of an induction programme is to offer systematic professional and personal support to the newly qualified teacher. The support is primarily school-based and is given at school level by an experienced teacher, usually called a mentor, in collaboration with colleagues and initial teacher education providers. It builds on the experience of initial teacher education and lays the foundation for subsequent professional and personal growth and development. Induction, therefore, is a particularly significant phase in building a seamless continuum of teacher education. Further information on induction in Ireland and internationally is available in the Council's background document, *Teacher Education in Ireland and Internationally*.

The Council welcomes the communication from the Minister for Education and Skills in August 2010 that it is intended to commence section 7(2)(f) of the Teaching Council Act, 2001, in relation to the induction of teachers into the teaching profession, in September 2012. The Council is now preparing for its role in that area and is working towards the establishment of induction procedures for newly qualified teachers from that date. As part of that work, the Council is considering how such procedures might dovetail with the probationary process.

Policy on Induction

The Teaching Council's policy on induction is based on an appreciation that teaching is an instance, *par excellence*, of life-long learning and that initial teacher education cannot furnish 'finished products'. It also recognises the important part induction plays in enriching schools themselves as learning environments, including the significant changes in work practices that innovative induction programmes both require and promote. Therefore, the implementation of comprehensive induction programmes for all newly qualified teachers will be a major step forward in building the continuum of teacher education in Ireland.

The Council's policy on induction is based on the three pillars of innovation, integration and improvement as well as the generic principles of good teacher education which are outlined on page 10. In addition, the following principles, which are specific to induction, are significant.

Induction for all NQTs

- There should be a multi-faceted national programme of induction, and all NQTs should be afforded a school placement opportunity to allow them to participate fully in the induction process.
- The implementation of the programme should ensure that induction is available to all NQTs in the first year after graduation.
- Satisfactory completion of a programme of induction should be a requirement for full registration.

Induction and the Continuum

- Induction, a primarily formative process, is distinct from probation, a primarily evaluative process.
- Induction programmes should be integrally related to, and build on, programmes of initial teacher education and be based on a co-operative approach involving partnership between HEIs, the education centres network, support services and schools.
- Induction and continuing professional development should be based on the enquiry-oriented stance initiated in initial teacher education. Structural links and interfaces should be explicitly addressed in any national induction programme.
- Induction programmes should shape NQTs' professional engagement in life-long learning and help them continue their development as competent, effective teachers.
- Induction should attend to the professional learning needs of NQTs and their induction into learning communities for life-long learning as professionals.

Design of Induction Programmes

- Induction programmes should be designed through a consultative process involving HEIs, school representatives and continuing professional development providers.
- Induction programmes should provide access to a mentor with a minimum of five years in-school teaching experience.
- Mentors should be educated into their role through specific mentoring development programmes.
- Insofar as is reasonably practicable, mentors and mentees should be matched in terms of curriculum/subject expertise. Neighbouring schools should cooperate to facilitate this.
- NQTs should actively shape their own professional development, in the context of a professional development portfolio commenced during initial teacher education and built on throughout the teaching career.
- Accreditation opportunities should be provided for both mentors and NQTs, within a life-long learning framework to be designed by the Council.

Partnership with Schools

- Induction should be based on a whole-school approach which sees induction and mentoring as the professional responsibility of the whole community of teachers, supported by ITE providers, school leadership and linked to the school's development plan.
- The influence of the experienced teacher, the principal teacher and school management should be visible in the support provided to the NQT during the induction period.

Resourcing of Induction

- Induction programmes should have access to an induction support service.
- Appropriate structures, resources and processes, including training of mentors, time for meetings with mentors, peer observation and attendance at relevant courses for NQTs, are essential to the provision of effective induction programmes.
- With regard to the latter, the Council recommends that discrete time be set aside by schools for the purposes of NQT and mentor development.

Evaluation

- Any induction procedures which may be put in place should be subject to periodic review and ongoing evaluation of needs and priorities.

Continuing Professional Development

Continuing professional development (CPD) refers to life-long teacher learning and comprises the full range of educational experiences designed to enrich teachers' professional knowledge, understanding and capabilities throughout their careers. Further information on the provision of continuing professional development in Ireland and internationally is available in the Council's background document, *Teacher Education in Ireland and Internationally*.

Policy on Continuing Professional Development

The Teaching Council's Policy on CPD is underpinned by the three pillars of innovation, integration and improvement and the Council's generic principles of good teacher education which are set out on page 10. In addition, the following principles, which are specific to CPD, are significant.

CPD – a Right and Responsibility

- CPD is a right for all registered teachers. In that context, an allocation of time for individual and/or staff group CPD should be built into teachers' scheduled non-teaching time. The allocation of time should be significant and should reflect the importance of CPD for effective professional practice.
- CPD should be based on teachers' identified needs within the school as a learning community.
- CPD is a responsibility of all registered teachers. In that context, a registered teacher should take reasonable steps to maintain, develop and broaden the professional knowledge, skill and capabilities appropriate to his or her teaching.

Coherent National Framework

- Effective CPD provision requires the adoption of a coherent national framework that is informed by international and national research evidence and that caters for individual teacher, school and system needs.
- The national framework should identify ways in which professional development can be resourced and facilitated both within and outside school time, within a school and/or within a cluster of schools. A key challenge will be to take account of different categories of need and address current shortfalls while recognising the integrity of the school year and the need to minimise disruption to student learning.
- There should be a partnership approach to policy development and planning involving all the key stakeholders.

The Council intends to work towards a position, following the adoption of a coherent national framework for CPD as outlined above, where renewal of registration with the Teaching Council will be subject to the receipt of satisfactory evidence in relation to engagement in CPD.

Resourcing of CPD

- CPD programmes should have access to a national support service.
- The provision of CPD should be supported by appropriate structures, resources and processes at national, regional and local level.

School Leadership and the Role of the Principal

- Effective school leadership, within a collaborative school culture, is essential for the continuing professional development of teachers. In particular, the instructional leadership aspect of the principal's role should be the central and core element of his/her work and should also include provision for CPD for the school.
- The current administrative workload of principals, and particularly teaching principals, should be addressed so that they can be facilitated in developing the school as a learning community. The move to a model of more distributed leadership within schools would facilitate this.

Teacher Formation

- CPD should promote knowledge-for, knowledge-in and knowledge-of practice in a context where there is adequate time for feedback and follow-up support.
- Effective CPD, which is participative in nature, should encourage teachers to evaluate their pedagogical beliefs and practices, to critically reflect on their professional practice and working environments and to engage in professional collaboration.
- Individual teachers should actively shape their own professional development, in the context of a professional development portfolio commenced during initial teacher education and retained throughout the teaching career.
- CPD should facilitate teachers' critical engagement with curriculum, pedagogy and assessment to maximise students' learning.

Design of CPD

- Approaches to professional development should be designed having regard to the settings in which teachers work and the plurality of roles played by teachers in the holistic development of students.
- Approaches to professional development should recognise the importance of an attractive career structure for teachers. In that regard, the Council believes that a national framework should facilitate teachers wishing to avail of leave of absence to pursue professional development opportunities.
- Effective CPD should be constructivist in nature, involving both formal and informal ways of learning where emphasis is placed on reflection, joint problem solving, networking and systematic sharing of expertise and experience.
- As professional learning communities, schools, or clusters of schools working together through structures such as HEIs, the education centres and subject associations, have a central role to play in prioritising professional development needs.

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- CPD should be linked to school development and improvement and should empower teachers as professionals working within a coherent school programme rather than focussing solely on skills training.
 - School-based collaborative enquiry carried out by teachers in teams or groups and supported by teacher education departments, is a valuable model for CPD.
 - In exercising their role as professional learning communities, schools should prepare a professional development plan covering a three to five year period, taking into account teachers' individual needs, the needs of the school and the needs of the system.

Partnership and Collaboration

- The identification of priorities and the effective implementation of quality professional development requires ongoing collaboration between the stakeholders in education.
- A collegial culture within schools and collaboration between schools and teacher education providers, are key determinants in nurturing teachers' engagement in professional development.
- CPD should involve teachers in sharing their expertise and experience more systematically while building cumulative knowledge across the profession by strengthening connections across research, policy and practice.

Accreditation of CPD

- The National Framework of Qualifications should be utilised to facilitate recognition of the role of additional qualifications in teachers' career structures.
- Flexible modes of recognition and administration of CPD need to be continually developed and reviewed.
- Programmes of CPD should be accredited by the Teaching Council having regard to its statutory powers under Section 39 of the Teaching Council Act, 2001. Such accreditation should be based on criteria to be developed by the Teaching Council as part of a framework for CPD.

Priority Areas

- CPD should foster the development of competences to facilitate quality learning and cater for educational priorities. At present, key national priority areas include: literacy; numeracy; ICT; inclusion.
- The Council will actively engage with teacher education providers in relation to the development of programmes of professional development aimed at up-skilling practising teachers in their subject content knowledge.

Conclusion

The establishment of the Teaching Council as the professional standards body for teaching, marked a watershed in the development of teaching as a profession in Ireland and has provided a timely opportunity to take a renewed look at teacher education at all stages of the continuum.

In this policy paper, the Council has set out its vision for teacher education under the banner of a new “three I’s”: innovation, integration and improvement. Guiding principles have been identified which will facilitate cohesion and coherence in teacher education across the teaching career. Within each stage of the continuum, these generic principles have been elaborated into more detailed policy positions, following a process of research, consultation and deliberation.

This policy will guide the Council in the years ahead, as it works to develop criteria and guidelines for reconceptualised programmes of initial teacher education, induction and continuing professional development. As such, it is key to ensuring that tomorrow’s teachers will be competent to meet the challenges that they face and will be life-long learners, continually adapting over the course of their careers to enable them to support their students’ learning.

This document will be subject to ongoing review and revision as appropriate. It is available for download from the Teacher Education page of www.teachingcouncil.ie

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