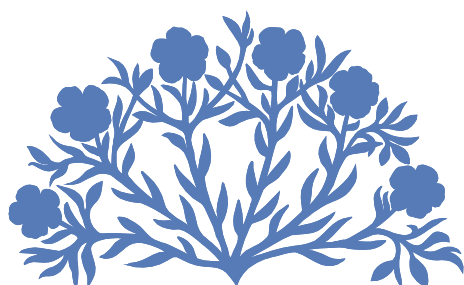


North South Inter-Parliamentary Association



Fifth meeting

Recognition of Teacher Qualifications and Teacher Mobility

8 October 2014

Background briefing prepared by the Research and Information Service (RaISE) of the Northern Ireland Assembly and of the Library & Research Service of the Houses of the Oireachtas (*Tithe an Oireachtais*)

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Key Points

- There are a variety of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) models, which vary in structure and duration, in Ireland and in the United Kingdom.
- The Teaching Council in the Republic is responsible for registering teachers in the Republic. In Northern Ireland the General Teaching Council Northern Ireland (GTCNI) has this responsibility.
- Teacher mobility between the two jurisdictions is restricted by the following:
 - Registration requirements;
 - Irish language qualification requirements;
 - The 'History of and Structure of Irish Education' qualification;
 - The shortage of teaching job opportunities.
- In 2000, a Joint Teacher Qualifications Working Group was established under the auspices of the North South Ministerial Council (NSMC) to examine a range of issues related to teacher mobility.
- There has been some progress on addressing issues around teacher mobility:
 - The Teaching Councils in both jurisdictions are working together to simplify the assessment of teachers' qualifications for the purposes of registration in the Republic.
 - Departments in both jurisdictions continue to work to make it easier for teachers from the North to undertake the qualification to meet the necessary conditions of the Irish language requirements in the Republic;
 - Subject to validation by the Teaching Council, St Mary's University College, Belfast will deliver the Irish language qualification in Northern Ireland;
 - There is cooperation between Marino Institute of Education and the University of Ulster, in supporting teachers from Northern Ireland wishing to undertake the Irish Language Requirement qualification;
 - The Teaching Council has decided to waive the fee for the assessment of qualifications for teachers from the Northern Ireland currently accredited by the GTCNI.
- During 2013, GTCNI registered 29 teachers who trained in the Republic.

1. Background

1.1. The Development of Teacher Training Models in Various Jurisdictions

In the Republic, Initial Teacher Education (ITE) is provided by Colleges of Education (primary teacher education) and Universities (post-primary teacher education). ITE programmes have recently been extended in duration and are currently being restructured. Government policy in the Republic dictates that closer collaboration should take place between Colleges of Education and Universities.¹

In England and Wales the contribution of universities has diminished as school-based practice is now emphasised as the core of ITE programmes. The current development in England, of the School Direct model of teacher education, sees schools taking responsibility for training; receiving support from universities. For example, the responsibilities of the University of Southampton in the School Direct model include²:

- The delivery of tuition in agreed aspects of the curriculum;
- Working with school staff to moderate and assess the teaching of trainees;
- Assessing trainee assignments and their Portfolios of Evidence;
- Interviewing prospective trainees, in association with schools.

It has been suggested that this model has potential to further diminish the contribution of universities.³

More information about the School Direct Model can be found here.⁴

In Northern Ireland and Scotland, universities continue to have a strong role in ITE. However, it is acknowledged that there is potential in both jurisdictions to strengthen university/school partnerships. It is argued that this could lead to a more effective

¹Department for Employment and Learning (2014) *Review of the Initial Teacher Education Infrastructure in Northern Ireland*. Available at: www.delni.gov.uk/teacher-training-infrastructure-overview-of-international-best-practice.pdf

² University of Southampton (2013) *School Direct Policies and Procedures*

³ Department for Employment and Learning (2014) *Review of the Initial Teacher Education Infrastructure in Northern Ireland*. Available at: www.delni.gov.uk/teacher-training-infrastructure-overview-of-international-best-practice.pdf

⁴ www.education.gov.uk/get-into-teaching/teacher-training-options/school-based-training/school-direct

combination of research and professional practice. The Department of Education in Northern Ireland is currently carrying out a review of teacher education.⁵

In short, the various jurisdictions have a diverse range of teacher training arrangements which are being actively developed.

1.2. Initial Teacher Education Providers in the Republic

Initial Teacher Education programmes are provided for primary and post-primary teachers through a variety of undergraduate and postgraduate courses.

Primary Sector

There are five state-funded Colleges of Education which offer ITE for primary teachers. They are:

- Marino Institute of Education, Dublin 9
- Mary Immaculate College, Limerick
- St. Patrick's College, Dublin 9
- The Church of Ireland College of Education, Dublin 6
- The Froebel College of Education, Blackrock, Co. Dublin

These colleges offer an undergraduate programme leading to a full-time Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degree course. Four of the Colleges of Education also offer a Graduate Diploma in Education (GDE) which is an alternative route for students to train as primary school teachers.

Undergraduate programmes for primary teachers have recently been extended to four years (prior to September 2012 they were three years). Similarly, postgraduate programmes for primary teaching have been extended from 18 months to two years in duration.

It should also be noted that an on-line Higher Diploma in Arts in Primary Education is offered by Hibernia College, the Republic's only government-accredited eLearning college. Hibernia College is a privately-owned company; it is not state-funded.

⁵ Department for Employment and Learning (2014) *Review of the Initial Teacher Education Infrastructure in Northern Ireland*.

Post-primary Sector

Post-primary ITE is provided through courses which are consecutive or in concurrent format. The consecutive route is the most common pathway.

The consecutive route to becoming a post-primary school teacher is the professional diploma in education (PDE). To enter this programme candidates require a degree in at least one subject which meets the criteria for registration with the Teaching Council. This involves studying for a degree initially and then taking a subsequent teacher education qualification. A 'suitable degree' is defined as a third level college qualification which allows the holder to teach at least one curricular subject to Leaving Certificate Higher Level. Similar to the primary sector, consecutive ITE programmes have been extended to two years full time study for the post-primary sector (from September 2014).

The concurrent model of ITE involves four years of undergraduate study which covers both teaching methods and curricular subject content. The following table lists the institutions which provide post-primary initial teacher education courses in the Republic.

Table 1: Post-Primary Initial Teacher Education Providers

Institution	Type of provision
University College, Cork	concurrent & consecutive
University College, Dublin	consecutive
NUI Galway	consecutive
NUI Maynooth	consecutive
Trinity College, Dublin	concurrent & consecutive
Dublin City University	concurrent
University of Limerick	concurrent & consecutive
Mater Dei, Dublin	concurrent
St. Angela's College, Sligo	concurrent
National College of Art and Design, Dublin	concurrent & consecutive
Crawford School of Art and Design, Cork	consecutive
Limerick IT, School of Art and Design	consecutive
St. Patrick's College, Thurles	concurrent
Galway Mayo IT, Letterfrack	concurrent
Hibernia College	concurrent

The Teaching Council includes a list of accredited programmes of primary and post primary teacher education on their website. The list is available [here](#).

1.3. Initial Teacher Education Providers in Northern Ireland

Initial Teacher Education (ITE) is phase-related. This means that both the professional studies and the school experience (teaching practice) elements are focused on teaching in either primary or post-primary schools.⁶ Northern Ireland has a four-stage model of ITE comprising initial teacher education, induction (year one of teaching), early professional development (years two and three) and continuing professional development.⁷ ITE is provided in the following institutions:⁸

St Mary's University College: a College of Queen's University Belfast:

- A four-year B.Ed. (Hons) course directed at primary level teaching;
- A four-year B.Ed. (Hons) course directed at post-primary level teaching in Business Studies, Religious Studies, Technology and Design, Mathematics/Science; and
- A one-year course directed at primary level teaching in Irish Medium Education schools for university graduates leading to the award of a PGCE.

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Stranmillis University College: a College of Queen's University Belfast:

- A four year B.Ed. (Hons) course directed at primary level teaching;
- A four-year B.Ed. (Hons) courses directed at post-primary level teaching in Business Studies, Religious Studies, Technology and Design, Mathematics/Science; and
- A one-year course directed at primary level teaching for university graduates leading to the award of a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). The subject specialism on offer is Early Years.

Queen's University Belfast:

- A one-year course directed at post-primary level teaching for university graduates leading to the award of a PGCE. The subject specialisms on offer are English, Mathematics, Computing/IT, Science (Biology, Chemistry, Physics), Modern

⁶ Department of Education Website: Available at www.deni.gov.uk/10_teaching_in_northern_ireland-initial_teacher_education-pg.htm

⁷ Teaching Council Ireland Website: Available at www.teachingcouncil.ie/fileupload/Teacher%20Education/policybackgroundpaper%20brf24dec2010.pdf

⁸ Department of Education Website: Available at http://www.deni.gov.uk/10_teaching_in_northern_ireland-initial_teacher_education-pg.htm

Languages, Religious Education, Social Sciences (Politics, Sociology), Irish Language Medium Education (in association with St Mary's University College).

The University of Ulster (Coleraine):

- a one-year course directed at primary level teaching for university graduates leading to the award of a PGCE;
- a one-year PGCE course directed at post-primary level teaching for university graduates holding relevant degrees. The subject specialisms on offer are: Art and Design, English with Drama and Media Studies, Geography, History, Home Economics, Irish Language Medium Education (in association with St Mary's University College), Music, Physical Education, Technology and Design.

The Open University

The Open University (OU) has recently withdrawn the PGCE qualification that was available in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The OU has also withdrawn the respective qualification in Scotland.

2. Registration of Teaching Qualifications

1.4. Teacher Registration in Ireland

The Teaching Council is responsible for promoting the professional development of teachers and regulating teacher standards. To be registered, a teacher must have attained a satisfactory level of professional qualification and training. Only teachers who have met the registration requirements are permitted to teach in state-funded schools and have government funded salaries.⁹

The Council registers teachers under the terms of section 31(5) of the *Teaching Council Act* and the [Teaching Council \[Registration\] Regulations 2009](#). The Council also operates in accordance with the European Directive for the mutual recognition of qualifications 2005/36/EC for the teaching profession.¹⁰

The registration process depends on whether or not an applicant has qualified within the Republic.¹¹

1. **Qualified in the Republic:** there are separate application procedures for [newly qualified teachers](#) and teachers who are [not newly qualified](#) and who wish to begin teaching or return to teaching.
2. **Qualified outside the Republic:** Further information for applicants who qualified outside of the Republic but within the EU/EEA¹² is available at the link provided.¹³

Appealing a decision of the Council

If a person is unhappy with the decision of the Teaching Council they may appeal through:

- Internal appeal mechanisms;
- Challenging a decision in the High Court; and
- The Office of the Ombudsman.

⁹ Teaching Council Ireland Website: Available at www.teachingcouncil.ie

¹⁰ Teaching Council Ireland Website: Available at <http://www.teachingcouncil.ie/registration/overview.770.html>

¹¹ Teaching Council Ireland Website: Available at www.teachingcouncil.ie/registration/applying-to-register.195.html

¹² The EEA consists of the EU Member States plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. Switzerland is not a member of the EU or EEA but has similar rights to an EEA country.

¹³ Teaching Council Ireland Website: Available at www.teachingcouncil.ie/applying-to-register/teachers-qualified-outside-of-ireland-qualifications-awarded-in-eueea-countries.464.html

1.5. Teacher Registration in Northern Ireland

The General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI) has a statutory duty to determine who should be a member of the teaching profession in Northern Ireland. The GTCNI approves qualifications and eligibility to teach.

GTCNI took on the role of approval of qualifications in October 2007. This remit is governed by the legislative authority of the 2006 Education (NI) Order and the current DE Circular 2007/22: The DE Circular is available at the link provided.¹⁴

The most commonplace pathway into teaching in Northern Ireland requires teachers to possess either of the following qualifications:¹⁵

1. A recognised teaching degree awarded after finishing an approved teacher training course (usually lasting four years) at a university or college of education in the United Kingdom; or
2. A recognised degree or equivalent qualification plus a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) awarded after finishing an approved one-year full-time course at a university or college of education the United Kingdom.

Additionally, prospective teachers must have a GCSE grade A - C or equivalent in English language, Mathematics, and (for primary teaching) Science.

Similarly to the Teaching Council in the Irish Republic, GTCNI operates within the common context of [EU Directive 2005/36/EC](#) with regard to the recognition of professional qualifications. Teachers, including those who have qualified in the Republic, wishing to seek recognition via the Directive must do so by making an application to the GTCNI.

In Northern Ireland teacher training is phase specific. However, teachers are not registered by phase (e.g. primary/secondary) nor are they registered to teach a particular subject. Therefore, when making appointments, it is the responsibility of the employer to ensure that prospective teachers are suitably trained for the required phase and subject. This is especially important in practical and physical subjects where there is a potential health and safety risk.¹⁶

¹⁴ Department of Education Northern Ireland Website: Available at www.deni.gov.uk/dc2007-22.pdf

¹⁵ Information provided by GTCNI

¹⁶ DE Circular: 2007/ 22

3. Restrictions to teacher mobility?

As previously mentioned, in Northern Ireland (NI) teachers are not registered by phase (i.e. primary/secondary) nor are they registered to teach a particular subject. In contrast, teachers who train in the Republic *are* registered by phase and subject. Therefore, teachers who qualify in Northern Ireland and wish to register with the Teaching Council in the Republic are required to produce detailed evidence of age-specific and subject training.¹⁷

The review of teacher education, currently being carried out by the Department of Education in Northern Ireland, has the potential to impact on teacher mobility between the two jurisdictions. It is not clear, at this stage, if the outcome of the review will lead to divergence or convergence in teacher education models.¹⁸

1.6. Irish Language Requirements

There are Irish language requirements in the Republic for some teachers who qualify to teach in Northern Ireland. At the NSMC meeting on 2nd April 2014, the:

“Ministers noted that both Departments continue to work to make it easier for teachers from the North to undertake the qualification to meet the necessary conditions of the Irish Language Requirement in the south.”¹⁹

1.6.1. Primary School Teaching

The Irish Language Qualification (Scrúdú Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge) must be obtained within a 3 year period of taking up the relevant teacher's post.²⁰ The Scrúdú Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge is regarded to be of a standard between A-Level and Degree level. The qualification involves sitting 4 examinations. There are 2 written papers; language and literature. Additionally, there is both an oral and aural exam. This is accompanied by an inspection of teaching and the development of a cultural portfolio. Resits are permitted and results may be appealed.

¹⁷ Information provided by GTCNI

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ North South Ministerial Council Education Meeting Joint Communiqué: Available at: http://www.northsouthministerialcouncil.org/paper_nsmc_ed_1_14_jc_-_joint_communique_-_02.04.14.pdf

²⁰ Teaching Council Ireland Website: Available at <http://www.teachingcouncil.ie/registration/registration-with-conditions.205.html>

Pass rates can be found on www.irlweb.ie. Results from Spring 2014's Scrúdú Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge are presented below:²¹ Table 2 shows that the majority of those sitting the exams do pass; the percentage of those passing ranges from 76% - 92%.

Table 2: An Scrúdú Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge (S.C.G) Torthaí – Results Aibreán 2014

Total number of Applicants	148			
	Paper 1	Paper 2	Aural	Oral
Total Applications per module	147	141	116	121
Withdrew prior to Exam	03(02%)	03(02%)	02 (02%)	02 (02%)
Number who did not attend Exam	04 (03%)	02 (01%)	03 (03%)	05 (04%)
Incomplete/F-Incomplete	08 (05%)	07 (05%)	---	---
Number who presented for Exam	132	129	111	114
Number who achieved 40% or above (Pass Rate)	105 (76%)	119 (92%)	97 (87%)	87 (76%)
Number who achieved 39% or below	27 (24%)	10 (08%)	14 (13%)	27 (24%)
Number of candidates exempt from parts of SCG	12 (09%)	12 (09%)	---	---

1.6.2. Post-Primary School Teaching

No Irish Language qualification is required unless a teacher is working in an Irish language school or in the Gaeltacht. The Ceard Teastas Gaeilge is the Irish Language qualification which is required to teach in Gaelcholáistí or Gaeltacht schools.²²

²¹ An Scrúdú le hAghaidh Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge (S.C.G.)Torthaí – Results Aibreán 2014: Available at <http://www.irlweb.ie/P%E1ip%E9ir%20Earrach%202014/SCG%20Staitistic%ED%20C%E1isc%202014.pdf>

²² The Teaching Council Ireland Website: Available at www.teachingcouncil.ie/

1.7. History and Structure of the Irish Education System Aptitude Test

Teachers registered under Regulation Four of the Teaching Council [Registration] Regulations, 2009 must sit the *History and Structure of the Irish Education System Aptitude Test* which is administered twice a year by the Teaching Council. This is a compulsory course on all Teaching Council accredited post-primary initial teacher education programmes in the Republic.

1.8. Employment opportunities for teachers

A BBC article published in January 2013 reported that only 5% of new teachers who graduated the previous year, and who registered for work in Northern Ireland, secured permanent jobs. A representative of the National Association of Head Teachers voiced concern over the lack of jobs. However, she disagreed that Northern Ireland was training too many teachers; instead advocating a reduction in class sizes.²³

An article in the Irish Post on February 26, 2013 suggested that the over-supply of teachers is a significant problem in the Republic.²⁴ In the article, Sheila Nunan, the General Secretary of the Irish National Teachers' Organisation (teaching union) commented that teacher unemployment is the single biggest challenge facing primary teachers in the Republic. She went on to say that there are hundreds of fully qualified teachers unable to get work; therefore qualified teachers are being forced into emigration.

It is therefore possible that the lack of permanent teaching positions in both Northern Ireland and the Republic is a disincentive to teachers who are considering seeking a teaching post in the other jurisdiction.

²³ BBC Website www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-21242036

²⁴ The Irish Post www.irishpost.co.uk/news/number-of-irish-teachers-flocking-to-britain-doubles

4. Statistics: Inter-jurisdiction teacher registration

The Republic to Northern Ireland

The following figures were supplied by the General Teaching Council Northern Ireland (GTCNI):

- Teachers in the Republic²⁵ approved for registration during 2013 **29**
- Teachers in the Republic²⁶ declined for registration during 2013 **1**

The total number of teachers registered with the GTCNI, as of March 2014, was:

- Registered Teachers **26,689**
- Registered Teachers with an open employment record²⁷ **19,584**

The teaching register is a live entity which changes as people join and leave the register. GTCNI advises that it cannot be assumed that the difference between the number of registered teachers and those with an open employment record (7105) amounts to the number of unemployed teachers²⁸.

Northern Ireland to the Republic

The following figures were supplied by the Teaching Council in the Republic. The figures show teachers from the North who have registered in the Republic. The statistics should be read in the context of registration and not employment, i.e. the Teaching Council does not know if these teachers were subsequently employed in Ireland. The Teaching Council estimate that in the region of 20-30 teachers move from North to the Republic annually.

Number of teachers who registered in the Republic, having trained as teachers in Northern Ireland.

- 1960 - 2000 = 255
- 2001-2005 = 226
- Since the establishment of the Teaching Council in 2006 – 2014 = 256

²⁵ Teachers who qualified to teach in the Republic of Ireland

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ Teachers with a permanent post or significant temporary post: A one year contract or long term temporary post for a school term or more.

²⁸ Information provided by GTCNI

5. What is being done to facilitate teacher mobility?

1.9. North-South student teacher exchange programme

A component of the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement involved looking at ways in which the two jurisdictions might co-operate with one another on economic and social matters. One such area in which co-operation was thought to be beneficial was teacher education. In 2000, a Joint Teacher Qualifications Working Group was established under the auspices of the North South Ministerial Council to examine a range of issues related to teacher mobility.²⁹

To help further examine possibilities of improving teacher mobility, a Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South (SCoTENS) was established in 2003.

From 2002-2007, 103 student teachers from the island of Ireland took part in a student teacher exchange programme which was reviewed in a report published in 2008. The full report can be accessed at the link provided.³⁰ As part of the exchange, student teachers were enabled to carry out part of their assessed teaching practice in host primary schools in the other jurisdiction.

The report found that that the programme was a ‘great success’ and resulted in:

“...greater interest in peace and reconciliation issues; greater consciousness of the demands of multicultural classrooms; greater knowledge of the other jurisdiction’s education system and curriculum; the invaluable experience gained from learning from skilled teachers in the other jurisdiction; and a greatly increased sense of personal worth and confidence gained through participation in the exchange.”

SCoTENS was not involved in the student teacher exchange programme directly but commenting on the initiative a founding member, Professor Richard McMinn, said:

“...the cross-border dimension complemented very well the existing partnership working between the two Northern Ireland university colleges under the banner of DMU (Diversity and Mutual Understanding), funded by the NI Government.”

²⁹ PQ from February 2008, see <http://debates.oireachtas.ie/dail/2008/02/14/00128.asp>

³⁰ Martin (2008) *North- South Student Teacher Exchange Project* NUI Maynooth: Available at www.crossborder.ie/pubs/stc-study.pdf

1.10. Progress on improving Teacher Mobility to date

Northern Ireland's Education Minister, John O'Dowd referred to teacher mobility in a North/South Ministerial Council statement on 13 May 2014. He stated that the key developments include:

- The Teaching Council in the Republic will simplify qualification assessment through an increase in the use of in-house desk assessment of applications;
- The Teaching Council, in consultation with the General Teaching Council, is working to simplify assessment of qualifications of teachers for the purposes of their registration with the Teaching Council. This process will follow the completion of work on the review and redesign of teacher education programmes in the Republic, which is expected to finish in the first quarter of 2015;
- Both Departments continue to work to make it easier for teachers from the North to undertake the qualification to meet the necessary conditions of the Irish language requirements in the Republic;
- Subject to validation by the Teaching Council, St Mary's University College, Belfast will deliver the Irish language qualification in the North.

The North South Ministerial Council 2013 Annual Report made reference to teacher mobility by stating that:³¹

“The Teaching Council of Ireland (TCI) has decided to waive the fee for the assessment of qualifications for teachers from the North currently accredited by the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI).”

On 26th November 2013 in reply to a PQ the Minister for Education and Skills, Mr. Ruairí Quinn, T.D. referred to discussions, which previously took place between the Department of Education and Skills in the Republic and the Department of Education in Northern Ireland, as well as the Teaching Council and St. Mary's College, Belfast with regard to compensation measures for the Irish Language Requirement (ILR).

Mr. Ruairí Quinn, T.D. also reported cooperation between Marino Institute of Education and the University of Ulster, which he said:

“...have agreed to collaborate to assist and support candidates in the North of Ireland and border regions wishing to undertake the Irish Language Requirement (S.C.G./O.C.G.)”

³¹ The North South Ministerial Council 2013 Annual Report: Available at www.northsouthministerialcouncil.org/nsmc-annual-report-2013.pdf