

## Opening Address

In his opening address, Declan Kelleher (Chair of the Teaching Council's Education Committee) highlighted the intergenerational responsibility of teachers and schools to welcome student teachers on placement. While recognising that most schools do this, some, for a variety of reasons, find this process challenging, but Mr. Kelleher urged all schools to consider teaching as a community activity. As professionals and despite all the demands that today's world places on our schools, we must be prepared to welcome them by facilitating their school placement. Declan also made explicit links between the school placement experience and Droichead, in referencing the Council's efforts toward conceptually and practically linking both phases of the broader teacher education continuum. He highlighted how Droichead has been modified to take full account of the extended school placement, and how this link will be further reflected in the next review of the Council's Initial Teacher Education Criteria and Guidelines, due to commence in 2017. His address further referenced how the Council envisages opportunities for stronger connections across these two critically important phases of the continuum, where student teachers at the end of their final placement will identify and agree areas for further learning with their HEI placement tutor, and these will form the starting point for the Droichead. Mr Kelleher concluded in highlighting how the National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT), and HEIs will have opportunities to make stronger connections across these two phases and, to make the transition from student teacher to graduate teacher smoother. He raised important questions around the collaborative experience of schools and HEIs, and of co-operating teachers and HEI tutors. To this end, he highlighted how NIPT and HEIs will have opportunities to explore the roles of schools in supporting both school placement and Droichead experiences, which despite their distinctiveness, share common features such as support, collaboration, shared learning, and reflection.