An Chomhairle Mhúinteoireachta
The Teaching Council

CÉIM

COSÁN

DROICHEAD

Céim:
Standards for Initial Teacher Education

In accordance with Section 38 of the Teaching Council Acts, 2001-2015

October 2020

Contents

Foreword

Céim: Standards for Initial Teacher Education sets out the requirements which all programmes of qualification for teaching in Ireland must meet in order to gain accreditation from the Teaching Council. It is also a benchmark for anybody seeking to register as a teacher in Ireland.

This is therefore a keystone document in the continuum of teacher education. The continuum reflects the fact that teachers are always learning so that they can always teach. Their formal learning journey commences in Initial Teacher Education. In Ireland, State policy provides that this initial phase of their learning takes place in a rich, diverse and vibrant environment connecting the best of quality teacher education in Higher Education Institutions with the most innovative, exciting and caring practice led by our teaching profession.

On behalf of the Teaching Council, we are delighted to present these standards to the Irish education system, and indeed beyond. The document is the result of an extensive consultation process with stakeholders in Irish education and with the Department of Education. It has also been reviewed in an international context, and is informed by quality research, particularly in the area of school placement.

We all know, however, that education is about people helping people to learn. And we also know that teaching and learning are relational processes, brought alive every day when teachers and students connect with each other.

Policy, including standards for ITE, is thankfully not immune to this dynamic. These standards will be realised not only in the drafting and submission of revised programmes of qualification to the Teaching Council for accreditation. They will be realised in full when our children, young people and adult learners in schools receive the full benefit of the collective expertise of all those entrusted with their education. Every interaction between student teachers and teacher educators, including Treoraithe and all teaching colleagues on school placement, every conversation, every moment of learning and insight and application into practice, will be another step in the right direction.

As we come to appreciate more fully how policy in education is a dynamic process, co-created over time by all those who teach and learn, we look forward to continued engagement with stakeholders, school communities and the Department of Education in sustaining quality education well into the 21st century.

Seán McMahon
Chairperson

Tomás Ó Ruairc
Director

Glossary

Agency

Agency refers to teachers' understanding of their status as autonomous professionals teaching in community contexts (community of practice; school community). It also refers to their capacity to act on this understanding in intentional, responsible and innovative ways that reflect and enhance their relationships with peers, students, parents and the wider community.

"Aptitude Test"

An 'aptitude test' refers to a demonstration of knowledge [e.g. assignment, examination (oral, written, practical), project or portfolio].

In accordance with the EU Recognition of Professional Qualifications Directive (2013/55/EC), the Teaching Council assesses the qualifications of teachers who qualify out of state and who seek professional recognition in Ireland. The Council compares these qualifications to the standards and content of initial teacher education programmes in Ireland. Where differences arise in the content studied, the EU Directive indicates that an 'aptitude test' must be made available in order to address the content shortfall.

Centre for Education

A Centre for Education is as provided for in Section 10 (4) of the *Education Act*, 1998.

Collaboration

This occurs when those involved in teaching and learning work together as partners to achieve the shared goal of developing the knowledge, skills and competencies which student teachers need while ensuring the best outcomes for learners during the process. This is underpinned by the sharing of knowledge and learning, the building of consensus and the improvement of skills critical to the success of school placement.

Continuum of Teacher Education

This refers to the formal and informal learning in which teachers engage as life-long learners during their teaching career. It encompasses initial teacher education, Droichead (the integrated professional induction framework), and Cosán (teachers' learning).

Education and Training Boards (ETBs)

ETBs provide education and training programmes at local and community level across Ireland.

Fillteán Foghlama

The Fillteán Foghlama is a record maintained by student teachers during the Tréimshe Foghlama sa Ghaeltacht. It outlines the student teachers' personal aims, the resources and guidelines they create for the teaching of Gaeilge, self-reflection on their language progression and evidence of their participation in the Tréimshe that they can share with their peers when they return to the HEI.

Foundation Studies

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

Global Citizenship Education (GCED)

GCED aims to empower learners of all ages to assume active roles, both locally and globally, in building more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive and secure societies.

GCED ensures that "all learners are provided with the knowledge and skills to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development" (UNESCO).

Higher Education Institution (HEI)

HEI or Higher Education Institution denotes those colleges, universities and other third level bodies providing one or more accredited programmes of initial teacher education.

Identity

For the purpose of these standards, identity is both a concept and a process. This rests on the view that teachers are always becoming and being teachers. At all stages of their learning, they have a sense of who they are as people and professionals, while at the same time being open to learning, growth and development. This is closely linked with the importance of reflective practice.

Inclusive Education

The term inclusive education refers to any aspect of teachers' learning aimed at improving their capacity to address and respond to the diversity of learners' needs; to enable their participation in learning; and remove barriers to education through the accommodation and provision of appropriate structures and arrangements to enable each learner to achieve the maximum benefit from his/her attendance at school.

The Council's view of a truly inclusive approach to professional practice recognises that teachers encounter a diverse range of needs in the course of their teaching, regardless of setting. This will include additional learning needs (e.g. autism, dyslexia, dyspraxia) and learning needs associated with diverse linguistic, socioeconomic, cultural and ethnic (including Traveller community, Roma) backgrounds.

Initial Teacher Education (ITE)

ITE refers to the initial phase of learning to be a teacher when student teachers are engaged in a recognised teacher education programme.

Mentoring

Mentoring encompasses all those means by which the student teacher on placement is supported, advised and encouraged and his/ her practice and thinking is affirmed and challenged, as appropriate. It is acknowledged that the process of mentoring student teachers is distinct from the process of mentoring newly qualified teachers.

Native Speaker (Gaeilge)

A pupil who is raised through Irish and whose parent(s) speak Irish as the main language of communication in the home.

Parent

The term "parent" denotes parents and legal guardians.

Partnership

Partnership refers to the processes, structures and arrangements that enable the partners to work and learn collaboratively in teacher education. These processes, structures and arrangements also include School/HEI partnerships which focus on improving learning and teaching.

Principal (teacher)

As the leader of learning, the principal provides leadership to teachers, other staff and learners. In collaboration with colleagues, the principal is responsible for the creation of a school environment which is supportive of learning for all pupils and teachers in the school community.

Professional Conversations

The term '*professional conversations'* refers to formal and informal dialogue that occurs between education professionals, including teacher educators in HEIs, placement tutors, principals / deputy principals, teachers, Treoraithe, and student teachers. These professional conversations share learning and "promote teacher collegiality and self-efficacy through the sharing of practice and information" (Timperley, 2015, p. 6).

Professional Studies

Professional studies incorporate studies in the pedagogy of the subjects of the relevant curriculum or specification (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 subjects in which the student teacher is specialising). Professional studies shall be directed towards the appropriate age group.

Pupils

The term "pupils" denotes students at primary and post-primary.

Recognised School

A recognised school is a school which is recognised in accordance with Section 10 of the Education Act, 1998.

School Management Authority

This is the Board of Management and/or the ETB, as appropriate. The school management authority manages the school on behalf of the Patron in accordance with Section 15 of the Education Act, 1998. It provides, or arranges the provision of, quality teaching and learning experiences for learners and has responsibility for ensuring that the school placement policy is in place and adhered to.

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 integrate educational theory and practice in a variety of teaching situations and school contexts. The school placement experience encompasses a range of teaching and non-teaching activities and affords the student teacher opportunities to participate in school life in a way that is structured and supported.

School Placement Tutor

A School Placement Tutor is a person engaged by a HEI to support and mentor student teachers and evaluate their practice while on placement.

Student Teacher

A student teacher is a student who is engaged in a programme of initial teacher education.

Taisce

Taisce refers to the process of *portfolio-based learning* which is engaged in by student teachers to enable them to reflect on their professional learning and practice, as appropriate to their stage of learning and to identify and plan for areas in which they may need support or guidance.

The process of portfolio-based learning also facilitates students to become more conscious of the theories and assumptions that guide their practice, and provides a basis for professional conversations about teaching with HEI-tutors and school-based stakeholders alike. Student teachers, in collaboration with the HEI as part of the school placement experience, will identify areas for further learning in the *Droichead* induction phase of the continuum. Portfolio-based learning will continue to be an important process to support the newly-qualified teacher in engaging in the professional conversations, which are central to the Droichead process.

Teacher
The term "teacher" denotes a teacher registered with the Teaching Council.

Teachers' Learning
Professional learning describes all the learning which teachers engage in to support their professional practice and to address the needs of all pupils in their care. The teacher as a reflective professional is able to draw on an integrated knowledge base to improve practice through inquiry.

Team Teaching
Team teaching involves a group of two or more teachers working together to plan, conduct and evaluate the learning activities for the same group of learners. It generally involves teachers teaching the same learners at the same time, although this is not always the case.

The three 'I's
The continuum of teacher education has traditionally been referred to internationally as the "three I's". The Teaching Council adopts the three pillars of *innovation, integration* and *improvement* as underpinning all phases of the continuum of teacher education.

Treoraí
The term *Treoraí,* the Irish word for guide, replaces the term *Co-operating Teacher* and more accurately reflects the nature of the role of a teacher who supports and guides the student teacher during his/her school placement experience. In a post-primary setting, a student teacher may be placed in a number of different classes and may, therefore, collaborate with a number of different *Treoraithe* across a number of subject areas.

Introduction

The Teaching Council was established on a statutory basis in March 2006 as the professional standards body for the teaching profession. The Council, in co-operation with the Department of Education and Skills, is responsible for determining the duration and nature of programmes of teacher education. The Council endorses the particular strengths of both the concurrent and consecutive models for the primary and post-primary sectors and is of the view that a balance should be maintained by the State in the provision of both. The Council works within the framework of its *Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education*. The policy highlights the evolving and dynamic context for teaching and the increasingly complex role of teachers in Ireland today and states that innovation, integration and improvement should underpin all phases of the continuum.

The Council developed its *Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education* in 2011. It is also significant that the Council set out, for the first time in the history of teacher education in the State, learning outcomes for all graduates of ITE programmes. The criteria which providers of programmes of ITE were required to observe were first set out in the *Initial Teacher Education: Criteria and Guidelines for Programme providers* (2011). Subsequently, the publication of the *Guidelines on school placement* (2013) was presented as an addendum to the aforementioned publication. It was acknowledged that time would be required for the guidelines to bed down and that the Council's requirements would be subject to review and change, as informed by further research and consultation.

With that in mind and in light of the reconceptualisation of ITE programmes in 2012 and 2014 respectively, the Council commissioned a team of external researchers, led by Professor Kathy Hall, to gather evidence of current practice in relation to school placement, and make recommendations to inform the Council's thinking and future policy on school placement.

Professor Kathy Hall noted that:

> *Overall, the research found that school placement is a deeply meaningful professional experience for the vast majority of student teachers on teacher education programmes in Ireland. They feel competent and confident about their placements and have opportunities to learn to teach in a variety of schools over an extended time period. So, we can be assured that the reforms introduced by the Teaching Council over the past number of years are bedding down, and new models of school placement are becoming established in our schools. Unsurprisingly, however, some challenges remain, and our report has highlighted these for further attention."*

This commissioned report led to the convening of a School Placement Working Group in 2018 to consider how greater alignment could be obtained between the policy on school placement and its enactment.

The publication of this document, which outlines the revised standards for ITE programme providers, marks another step forward in the articulation of the continuum of teacher education. To that end, the development of ITE programmes and quality school placement experiences is of particular importance and the Teaching Council envisages that schools, HEIs and other stakeholders will harness existing good practice in this area and share and develop it for the benefit of all partners, especially student teachers and pupils.

This new edition of the policy document draws on the recommendations and implications cited in the commissioned research report into school placement and the work of the School Placement Working Group and its sub-groups. School placement is considered to be the fulcrum of teacher education. It includes teachers from all phases of the continuum – experienced teachers who support and guide the student teacher, and who learn from the process themselves; student teachers who are learning about being teachers; and placement tutors.

Having reflected on the discourse around the continuum since the policy was published in 2011, the Council is concerned that there remains a view that teacher education ends at the point of qualification. Such a view overlooks the fact that this phase of the continuum is called *Initial* Teacher Education. It is one step on the lifelong learning journey on which student teachers embark. We know from research commissioned by the Council (2009) that student teachers commence their studies with their own views and understanding of what makes good teachers. This research reminds us that part of their learning at this stage involves them deconstructing that identity so that their practice can be as inclusive as possible. As this is one step in the process of learning about being a teacher, the Council is designating this phase of the Continuum under *Céim: Standards for Initial Teacher Education.*

The standards set out the requirements that all initial teacher education programmes shall meet to be accredited by the Teaching Council. They draw on the expertise and vision of various stakeholders, including inter alia teachers, school principals, Teacher Union representatives, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), the Higher Education Authority, the Department of Education and Skills, parents, student teachers, co-operating teacher and the broader education community. They embody our collective commitment to quality teaching and learning in all schools for all learners.

Under Section 38 of the Teaching Council Act, 2001-2015, ITE programmes are subject to review and accreditation by the Teaching Council, for registration purposes. In that context, this is an important document for programme providers and for programme review panels. It will also be of interest to school leaders and teachers and all who are involved in promoting high quality teaching and learning in our schools.

This policy document will act as an important point of reference for the Teaching Council, as it reviews programmes of ITE for professional accreditation purposes and for relevant agencies, as they shape and implement education policy in the primary and post-primary sectors.

This document should be read in conjunction with the Council's procedures for the review and professional accreditation of programmes of ITE and the accompanying *Pro Forma* for the submission of programme documentation.

Guidance Note

This document is divided into two sections:

1. **The Programme Standards** are the benchmark for the process of review and accreditation.

   Terminology:
   Where 'shall' is referenced, this is a mandatory requirement.

   Where 'should' is referenced, the Council expresses an 'ideal' scenario but recognises that certain challenges may arise in its implementation.

   Where the ideal scenario may not be achieved, the provider will be required to explain why (comply/explain process) during the review and accreditation process.

2. **The Graduate Teacher Standards** outline the skills, knowledge, understanding, and professional values expected of newly qualified teachers. These standards will not be measured during the review and accreditation process, but rather they should be used as a tool by teacher educators to support programme design. They should also be used as a tool for student teachers to support their ongoing development.

1

Programme Standards

Initial teacher education programme design is underpinned by a number of key principles:

> the core values underpinning the Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers-trust, integrity, care and respect

> a commitment to facilitate quality teaching and learning for all pupils

> reflective, research-informed teaching and learning that links sites of practice (HEI and school)

> school placement as the fulcrum of teacher education

> a partnership model involving teachers, schools and teacher educators

> a recognition of the importance of high quality initial teacher education as the first step on the continuum of teacher education

1.1 Programme Design

1.1.1 The Programme

Programmes shall have received academic accreditation prior to being submitted to the Teaching Council for professional accreditation.

Through the Council's Registration Regulations, these standards are aligned to the National Qualifications Framework. This has been done to facilitate the work of programme providers in identifying the correlation between the requirements for academic and professional accreditation.

1.1.2 Conceptual Framework

Programmes of ITE shall be supported by a clearly-defined conceptual framework. They shall be underpinned by clearly-defined aims which are closely aligned with the programme's conceptual framework and are reflected in specific learning outcomes. The framework shall be developed by providers in the context of their particular mission and ethos and shall be informed by research and by the Council's *Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education* and its *Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers*.

The conceptual framework shall identify the principles, beliefs and values about education, about teacher education and about teaching and learning that the HEI believes can best support student teachers in learning about teaching and how to teach. The framework shall be underpinned by a research-informed approach that supports student teachers in engaging with and in research. This approach shall enable the student teacher whilst on placement to demonstrate the link between the sites of practice (HEI and school). The conceptual framework should also reflect that school placement is the fulcrum of the continuum of teacher education. It shall provide a rationale for the model of ITE adopted by the provider. Clear linkages between the programme aims and the conceptual framework shall be evident, as shall the revisiting of key themes over the course of the programme.

The professional studies aspect of the programme shall demonstrate that student teachers have sufficient opportunities to actively learn from practising teachers about relevant and innovate methodologies, appropriate to their practice. These opportunities shall be independent of and in addition to engagement with Treoraithe on school placement.

1.1.3 Programme Aims

Programmes of ITE shall be in compliance with the relevant requirements of the Teaching Council registration regulations. They shall be underpinned by clearly-defined aims which are closely aligned with the programme's conceptual framework and are reflected in specific learning outcomes.

Programmes shall enable newly qualified teachers to facilitate quality teaching and learning for all pupils. In the context of curriculum development to include the learning outcomes based curricula and national priorities, including those identified in the core elements at Table 2, programmes "shall foster teachers' agency to enable them to apply their creativity, knowledge and skills within and across disciplines" (STEM Education Policy Statement, 2017-2026).

Programmes shall prepare student teachers for teaching, learning, reflective practices and assessment in their schools. They will be prepared for entry to their professional role in the context of a collaborative, inclusive, dynamic teaching profession, helping them to engage with colleagues, co-professionals, pupils and parents and understand their respective roles.

Programmes shall foster a mind-set in student teachers to be open to professional growth and learning over the course of their careers, to reflect on their own professional learning and that of their pupils and to support their pupils in achieving their full potential.

1.1.4 Programme Duration and Balance

Concurrent programmes shall be a minimum of four years duration and consecutive programmes shall be a minimum of two years duration.

The models of teaching, learning and assessment set out in the conceptual framework shall be evident in the way in which the programme is structured. All areas of study shall be relevant to students' future work as teachers, developing their understanding and experience of the complexity of teaching. Programmes will facilitate student teachers' personal development, their growth and wellbeing into their professional role, enabling them to become responsible, trustworthy, and reflective practitioners.

Programmes shall prepare student teachers for life in the classroom and for active engagement in teaching within a professional learning community. In this regard, programme components shall reflect the Teaching Council's *Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers,* in particular, the core values of *trust, care, respect and integrity*.

There shall be an appropriate balance between the various areas of study in terms of time and resources and the proportion of credits allocated to them. In this respect, the Council's requirements are set out in Table 1.

Table 1: ITE Programme Balance

	Consecutive Programmes Minimum 2 years (120 ECTS)		Concurrent Programmes Minimum 4 Years (240 ECTS)	
	Primary	Post -Primary	Primary	Post-Primary
Foundation and Professional Studies *(Minimum ECTs specified)*	50% (60 ECTS)	50% (60 ECTS)	55% (132 ECTS)	25% (60 ECTS)
School Placement *(Minimum ECTs specified)*	40% (48 ECTS) (24 weeks)	40% (48 ECTS (24 weeks or equivalent)	25% (60 ECTS) (30 weeks)	25% (60 ECTS) (30 weeks or equivalent)
Subject Disciplines				50% (120 ECTS)
Discretionary Time *(Maximum ECTs specified)*	10% (12 ECTS)	10% (12 ECTS)	20% (48 ECTS)	
Tréimhse Foghlama sa Ghaeltacht	4 weeks (2 blocks of 2 weeks)	As per Curricular Subject Requirements	4 weeks (2 blocks of 2 weeks)	As per Curricular Subject Requirements

1.1.5 Tréimhse Foghlama sa Ghaeltacht

Primary consecutive and concurrent programmes shall provide for an immersive educational programme through the medium of Irish in a Gaeltacht setting of a minimum four weeks duration. This may be accessed in two blocks, each of which shall be at least two weeks duration.

The programmes shall follow *Na Siollabais Oifigiúla do na Tréimhsí Foghlama sa Ghaeltacht do Mhic Léinn Oideachais.*

The programme shall allow the student teacher to build on their Taisce by using the Fillteán Foghlama developed during their Tréimshí. This Fillteán Foghlama shall be of relevance to the professional studies aspects of the programme of ITE.

In addition, Gaeltacht programmes shall make adequate provision to include the diversity of learners in the student teacher population e.g. native speaker, second language learners of high ability.

This immersive educational programme forms part of the overall programme of ITE. HEI staff shall be satisfied that the immersive educational experience is of sufficient quality.

In keeping with the principle of integration, the Council will require evidence that programme content provides opportunities for student teachers to meaningfully integrate their experience into their learning in the HEI e.g. reflection on their experience in the Gaeltacht; presenting their Fillteán Foghlama and spoken language to peers.

In the context of ensuring an adequate supply of teachers to meet the identified needs of the system, including Gaeltacht and Irish-medium schools, the Council welcomes other innovative measures that support all student teachers in enhancing their understanding of teaching in these settings and which seek to support them in their ongoing learning to meet these needs. This may include school placement in Irish-medium schools.

1.1.6 Integration and Diversity of Programme Content

Programmes shall be designed in a demonstrably integrated way, incorporating foundation studies, professional studies, and school placement and, as appropriate, subject disciplines. Providers shall plan for, and facilitate, this through collaborative, cross-disciplinary team processes. Specifically, foundation studies shall be integrated into the programme in a way that is meaningful for student teachers. Modules shall explicitly focus on connections between methods courses and the social context of practice in classrooms and schools.

Programme design shall follow a spiral learning approach allowing for key concepts and topics to be revisited over the course of programmes in order to develop deeper understandings.

Programmes shall be designed to allow student teachers experience a variety of teaching, learning and assessment modes, as appropriate, relevant to the area of study. Tutorials and small group work shall be a central feature of all ITE programmes.

Programmes shall provide opportunities for individual and collective reflection by student teachers and programme staff.

Provision of 'aptitude tests' for teachers who have qualified outside of the State.

Programme design shall allow for the provision of 'aptitude tests' for teachers who have qualified outside of the State in the context of the EU Recognition of Professional Qualifications Directive (2013/55/EC).

The EU Directive (2013/55/EC) enables the free movement of recognised professionals within the EU. The Teaching Council, as the professional standards body for the teaching profession and the competent authority for the professional recognition of out of state qualified teachers, is committed to maintaining and enhancing the standards for ITE set out in this document. This includes ensuring that all teachers, regardless of country of qualification achieve the same standards of initial teacher education.

The Teaching Council assesses the qualifications of teachers who have qualified out of state and who seek professional recognition in Ireland. The Council compares these qualifications to the standards and content of initial teacher education programmes in the State. Where applicants' qualifications are deemed not comparable with these standards, they will be provided with a letter from the Council outlining any areas which have been applied as conditions to their recognition. The Council's assessment approach will identify conditions in line with the design and content of ITE programmes in the state, under the broad areas of Foundation Studies, Professional Studies, Irish Education Context, School Placement and Subject Content.

Where differences in content studied arise, the EU Directive indicates that an 'aptitude test' must be made available within a 6-month period from the date of application of the condition, in order to address the content shortfall. An 'aptitude test' in this context refers to a demonstration of knowledge [e.g. assignment, examination (oral, written, practical), project or portfolio] that addresses the difference identified.

'Aptitude tests' can be provided by HEIs on an individual or collaborative basis.

1.1.7 Required Areas of Study

A. Foundation Studies, Professional Studies & School Placement

Recognising that teacher education continues over the entire span of a teacher's career, the focus of ITE will provide student teachers with a solid foundation of high-level beginning knowledge, skills, and professional values to be built on through the continuum of teacher education. In this context, the importance of ITE in relation to students' learning, teachers' learning, development of adaptive expertise and professional growth is emphasised.

Subject discipline components in post-primary programmes of ITE shall include subject specific curricular studies and pedagogies (methodologies) in which the theory, methodology and practice of teaching specific subjects are addressed, as appropriate.

Foundation studies shall:

o   provide research-informed[1] insights to support student teachers' understanding of the practices of teaching, learning and assessment for all pupils

o   provide the basis of a strong professional ethic in teaching and learning

o   include curriculum studies, the history and policy of education, philosophy of education, psychology of education, sociology of education

o   enhance students' understanding of the Irish education system, locate it in context and enable students to think critically about it

o   explore key dimensions of the professional context in which the thinking and actions of teachers are carried out.

Professional studies shall:

o   develop the pedagogical expertise of student teachers, including subject specific pedagogical content knowledge

o   ensure that opportunities shall be provided for students to experiment with and explore new and emerging technologies for teaching and learning throughout their initial teacher education

o   advance the communicative skills of student teachers

o   ensure that teaching itself is understood and practised as a form of self-critical learning by student teachers, with ample opportunities for individual and collaborative reflection, and engagement in and with research.

o   develop the adaptive expertise of student teachers[2].

The school placement shall provide opportunities for student teachers to:

o   experience a high support / high challenge model of placement where their strengths are nurtured and fostered, while areas for further learning and development are identified in an overarching context of collaborative professionalism

o   engage in research on their own practice that demonstrates the connection between the sites of practice (HEI and school). The student teacher shall discuss their research plans with the Treoraí, as they have overall responsibility for the class.

o   plan for, and undertake, class teaching, learning and assessment using a wide range of strategies in a diversity of class settings and subject levels

o   establish classroom management strategies that support suitable and effective learning for all pupils and that promote and maintain positive behaviour

o   observe experienced teachers teaching

o   be involved in a wide range of school activities

o   reflect critically on their practice and programme of study and how both inform and shape each other

o   receive and respond to feedback on their practice

o   identify areas for further professional learning for Droichead.

B. Core elements of programmes of ITE

In addition to the areas outlined above, Table 2 sets outs the elements that shall be core to all programmes of ITE.

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1   Teaching Council Research Strategy.

2   Adaptive expertise can be best understood by contrasting it with routine expertise. Both kinds assume teachers learn throughout their lifetimes. Routine experts learn how to apply a core set of skills with greater fluency and efficiency. Adaptive experts, on the other hand, continually expand the breadth and depth of their expertise and are tuned into situations in which their skills are inadequate. Teachers with adaptive expertise, therefore, have the capability to identify when known routines do not work and to seek new information about different approaches when needed" (Timperley, 2011, p. 12).

Table 2: Core Elements of ITE Programmes

All ITE programmes shall include the specific elements set out hereunder on an equitable basis. The Council recognises that many of these areas of study may already be included in programmes of ITE either through the foundation studies or professional studies. By delineating them as core elements to all programmes, the Council is ensuring that, these elements underpin all aspects of programmes of ITE.

1. **Inclusive Education:** With reference to Inclusive Education as outlined in the Glossary, this includes the fostering of appropriate learning environments, including digital ones, that support the development of student teachers' ability to provide for the learning needs of all pupils by utilising, for example, a universal design for learning framework.

2. **Global Citizenship Education:** to include Education for Sustainable Development; Wellbeing (personal and community); Social Justice, Interculturalism. There should be demonstrable integration between Inclusive Education and Global Citizenship Education rooted in the principle of care for others.

3. **Professional Relationships and working with parents:** (to include working with parents, pupils, peers, external agencies and others; preparing for school placement; the school as a learning community; and legislation relevant to the school and classroom).

4. **Professional identity and agency:** to include support for the development of the teacher as a self-reflective autonomous professional who demonstrates the four values outlined in the Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers, and the teacher as a lifelong learner (and Treoraí) in relation to the continuum of teacher education.

5. **Creativity and Reflective practice:** (to include fostering a creative mindset among student teachers, teachers as reflective practitioners; teachers as innovators; teachers as researchers; teachers' relationship with the school as a learning community and the development of *Taisce* to support the process of portfolio-based learning).

6. **Literacy and Numeracy:** Programme design shall ensure that student teachers are afforded opportunities to enhance their own literacy and numeracy and are required to demonstrate an acceptable level of proficiency in literacy and numeracy. Students shall be required to demonstrate their competence in teaching and assessing literacy and numeracy appropriate to their curricular/ subject area(s).

7. **Digital Skills:** to include Digital Literacy; the use of digital technologies to support teaching, learning and assessment for all learners; the integration of digital skills across the programme including opportunities for student teachers to explore new and emerging technologies.

In addition to the above elements which are required to be core to all ITE programmes, the following shall also be addressed on a sector specific-basis.

All primary level ITE programmes shall address:

o **Gaeilge -** Student teachers' confidence and competence in Irish, including oral Irish, needs to be developed to a sufficient level to enable them to teach the Gaeilge primary curriculum. This includes, but is not limited to language learning as part of the Tréimhse Foghlama sa Ghaeltacht.

(Students enrolled in an ITE ISL programme are exempt from this requirement).

o **Early Childhood Education**

All post-primary level ITE programmes shall address curricular subject criteria registration requirements:

i. Concurrent programme design shall ensure that subject specific programme content is aligned with the Council's curricular subject specific registration requirements (post-primary).

ii. Consecutive programme design shall ensure that entry selection processes are aligned with the Council's curricular subject specific registration requirements (post-primary).

1.1.8 Learning and Assessment Strategies

The principles, beliefs and values about teaching, learning and assessment which are set out in the conceptual framework shall be evident in the teaching, learning and assessment modes used in the programme.

Assessment

There shall be a realistic relationship between the learning opportunities and the assessment criteria which student teachers are expected to meet. Assessment processes and procedures will be coherent and shall be integrated using a variety of assessment modes.

Student teachers shall be supported in their development of strategies to support, monitor and holistically assess pupils' approaches to learning and their progress – including effective feedback techniques. The use of assessment strategies for formative as well as summative purposes is important.

1.2 Programme Resourcing

1.2.1 Minimum Entry Requirements

Minimum entry requirements for programmes of Initial Teacher Education are set by the Minister of Education and Skills, in consultation with the Teaching Council and are published on the website of the Department of Education and Skills.

Links to minimum entry requirements for Primary concurrent and consecutive programmes are found here.

1.2.2 Staffing

Teacher educators in HEIs have a particular role in the field of education, helping student teachers to build the foundations of their teaching career and, thus, contributing to the common good in our schools through teacher education.

Staff qualifications and experience – registration with Council

Lecturers and other staff shall have a qualification and experience that demonstrate their capacity to teach student teachers to the required qualification level. This should include experience of teaching in the relevant sector. Appropriate staff development policies should be in place to ensure that staff continue to enhance their knowledge and expertise including that relating to reflective practice, research, curriculum development, inclusive education and professional development.

From May 2022, at least 50% of all School Placement Tutors shall be registered as teachers with the Teaching Council in accordance with the Routes of Registration as outlined in the Teaching Council Registration Regulations (2016). Prior to qualification, a student teacher shall be summatively assessed at least once by a registered teacher, during their programme of initial teacher education.

Student: staff ratio

Student: staff ratio for programmes of ITE is 15:1. This is a vital support in ensuring that schools and departments of education receive the resources intended for them. Where programmes are not adhering to this ratio, a clear timeline, within the period of accreditation, shall be submitted by the HEI for its achievement.

1.2.3 Facilities

Appropriate facilities should be available to support research, teaching and learning such as;

- Appropriately resourced libraries, including resources in Gaeilge and Modern Foreign Languages
- Language laboratories
- Access to Digital Technology resources that are supportive of (online) teaching, learning and assessment
- Science/ Sport/Art resources, as appropriate
- Silent & Group Research Spaces
- Outdoor and play spaces (primary)
- Science labs (post-primary)

1.2.4 Student Support and Guidance Systems

There should be adequate provision for the personal and social development and pastoral care of student teachers.

It should also be possible for a student teacher to transfer to an alternative programme, where feasible, and to carry credits in so doing, with due regard to the exit award arrangements already in place in the HEIs.

1.2.5 Communication and Decision-making Structures

Appropriate structures shall be in place to facilitate the participation of staff and students in relevant deliberation and decision-making processes. The skill of decision-making is central to the role of a teacher.

The Education Department should be represented on the HEI's Academic Council and should seek representation on the Governing Body, or equivalent.

1.2.6 Financial Resources

Programmes shall be adequately resourced to ensure that programme aims are met. Budgets shall allow for, and reflect, the nature of a programme of teacher education which includes school placements and a range of facilities and equipment to support practical professional activities. (See, for example, 1.2.2 and 1.2.3 above for further details of the Council's requirements).

At a minimum the budget for the Education Department shall reflect the funding model used by the Higher Education Authority.

1.3 School Placement

This section of the document should be read in conjunction with the *Guidelines on School Placement*.

1.3.1 A Shared Vision for School Placement

School placement is a central feature of initial teacher education, where student teachers are welcomed and supported by HEI tutors, school principals, class teachers and the school community. Student teachers' rich contribution to pupil learning and school life is recognised and celebrated.

Student teachers must successfully complete this element of the programme. It provides student teachers with an opportunity to reflect on their identity as teachers, to develop it and become socialised into the profession. It is underpinned by a shared professional understanding that collaborative engagement with school placement provides professional learning opportunities for all involved.

School-HEI partnerships:

- support professional collaboration

- foster innovation in pedagogical practice for all teachers

- support engagement with and in research by all teachers

- are focused on the learning needs of pupils, and of all teachers.

Student teachers experience a supportive model of placement which facilitates professional conversational engagement between all partners. Such supports shall include structures at the national level to facilitate quality and collaborative engagement in school placement. Student teachers identify further professional learning for Droichead, the induction phase of the continuum.

1.3.2 Duration

The duration of the school placement shall be in compliance with the Teaching Council's requirements as set out in Table 1.

The duration shall include both school-based and HEI directed activities, as outlined in the Guidelines on School Placement. Over the full programme, the school-based element should incorporate, direct teaching experience of a minimum of 200 hours, which may include some team teaching experience. Extended periods of school placement shall be scheduled for the second half of the programme with at least one of the later placements being for a minimum of 10 weeks, or its equivalent, with a minimum of 3 days per week spent in schools. Student teachers in post-primary should not be timetabled for classes separate from the classes to which they have been assigned for the purposes of the placement.

Required placement periods shall take place only in schools that are recognised in accordance with Section 10 of the Education Act, 1998[3]. At all times, the class teacher retains the primary responsibility for their class(es).

In all placements, the duration shall be sufficient for student teachers to get to know the pupils and the learning environment. It shall also allow time for the student teacher to plan, teach and assess pupil learning, evaluate and review planning and reflect on his/her practice. The experience should include opportunities for systematic observation in the school, for collaborative work with school staff and for structured participation in school life.

The duration of the placement shall also allow for the development of a more reflective, enquiry oriented approach to the school placement and facilitate the development of the teacher as reflective practitioner. The design of programmes shall allow for structured preparation for the school placement and collective de-briefing and reflection immediately after the placement.

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3 Over and above the minimum periods prescribed by the Teaching Council in Table 1, providers may choose to arrange additional placements in other locations which are not recognised in accordance with Section 10 of the Education Act, 1998.

1.3.3 Elements of School Placement

Schools and HEIs shall ensure that the student teacher is afforded an appropriate blend of various types of activities while on placement, having regard to the stage they are at on a programme of ITE. A non-exhaustive list of school-based, HEI-directed activities are listed in the School Placement Guidelines.

1.3.4 School Placement Models

New and innovative school placement models should be developed using a partnership approach, whereby HEIs and schools actively collaborate in the organisation of the school placement.

1.3.5 Securing of Placement

HEIs have overall responsibility for the placement of student teachers and may choose to delegate the identification of host schools to student teachers from time to time.

1.3.6 Diversity of Placement Settings

School placement shall comprise a minimum of two placement settings incorporating a variety of teaching situations, class levels and school contexts, including Irish medium schools

Every effort should be made to ensure that student teachers gain teaching experience in a variety of school contexts to reflect the socio-economic and cultural mix of society. Multi-class and/or mixed ability teaching situations and team teaching/co-teaching situations should be encouraged.

Over the course of all his/her placements, a student teacher at primary level shall be exposed to a range of class levels and, where feasible, to multi-class teaching situations. At post-primary level, a student teacher should have opportunities to teach both junior and senior cycles, mixed ability teaching, special classes and examination classes, including classes completing Classroom-based Assessments. In planning for this, HEIs and schools should have regard to a range of variables, e.g., the timing of the placement in the school calendar, and the stage the student teacher is at on the initial teacher education (ITE) programme.

Alternative placement experiences, including North/South and Erasmus+ placements and placements in Centres for Education and other educational settings which are not recognised schools, may all provide valuable teaching and learning experiences for the student teacher, and may be arranged as part of the HEI-directed activities listed in the School Placement Guidelines. Student teachers at primary level may gain some placement experience in an Early Years educational setting and/or a post-primary school. Similarly, student teachers at post-primary level may gain some placement experience in a primary school.

1.3.7 Taisce in School Placement

During every module of school placement and as appropriate to the student teacher's stage of development, the student teacher shall, through the use of their Taisce:

o Demonstrate an understanding of inclusive education as applicable to that context

o Demonstrate an understanding of working with parents

The programme provider shall provide evidence of the approaches they are utilising to enable the student teacher to demonstrate the above.

The Council holds the view that good inclusive teaching is good teaching. The identification of learning needs should not conclude with a label. Professionally agile responses to learners' needs, informed and supported by ongoing professional learning, are at the heart of good inclusive practice. It is important that in identifying needs, teacher education should support teachers in fostering a love and joy of learning in all learners, regardless of background and identified needs.

1.3.8 Research in School Placement

Research offers the student teacher the chance to investigate and learn from their practice and derive ideas and conclusions that enriches and advances their understanding of their practice, and enhance their teaching.

During at least one school placement module, the student teacher shall engage in research on their own practice that demonstrates the connection between the sites of practice (HEI and school). The student teacher shall discuss their research plans with the Treoraí, as they have overall responsibility for the class.

In this context research can align with the learning needs of pupils to inform and refine the student teachers' understanding of their own pedagogical and reflective practices. Research carried out by the student teacher while on placement can align with the needs of the school, the learning needs of pupils, and the HEI-based research elements of the programme.

1.3.9 School Placement: Evaluation and Assessment

The school placement experience is integral to all ITE programmes and to student teacher development. It is not merely a means of assessing student teacher performance, but is also a critical experience in determining, through both self and external evaluation, the student teacher's suitability and capability to be a teacher.

It is a requirement that all student teachers are supported and assessed by two or more Placement Tutors.

From May 2022, at least 50% of all School Placement Tutors shall be registered as teachers with the Teaching Council in accordance with the Routes of Registration as outlined in the Teaching Council Registration Regulations (2016). Prior to qualification, a student teacher shall be summatively assessed at least once by a registered teacher, during their programme of initial teacher education.

Due to its critical importance and relevance to entering the teaching profession, a student teacher is required to pass the school placement element of his/her teacher education programme independently of any other element of the programme, to achieve the qualification being awarded.

Students who fail a module of school placement shall be offered teaching enrichment and mentoring support before being afforded not more than one opportunity to repeat that placement, with due regard to the institution's fitness to practice code.

2

Graduate Teacher Standards

The Programme Standards outlined above are the benchmark for the process of review and accreditation. Review panels will base their recommendation on the standards outlined in section 1.

The Graduate Teacher Standards below, outline the skills, knowledge, understanding, and professional values expected of newly qualified teachers.

In this respect, student teachers are expected to use these standards as a tool to support their ongoing development, including reflective practice and enquiry pedagogies.

Teacher educators can also use the Graduate Teacher Standards to support programme design.

A range of learning outcomes are set out under three broad headings:

1 **Professional Values**

2 **Professional Skills and Practice**

3 **Professional Knowledge and Understanding**

The design and delivery of programmes shall enable graduates to meet the expected learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are inherently linked to each other and one does not exist independently of the other two. It is this inter-relationship among all of the standards which enables the development and the professionalism of the graduate teacher.

The learning outcomes are directly related to the complex role of the teacher as referred to in the introduction to this document. They take cognisance of the fact that this is the beginning of a journey of life-long learning for the graduate teacher. The outcomes will be built on and will lead to engagement at a broader and deeper level as the teacher grows in confidence and experience.

Learning outcomes are evident through:

- formal structures which accommodate professional conversations between the student, Treoraithe and HEI personnel

- the HEI Placement Tutor's observation and evaluation of the student teacher during the school placement experience

- the observation and feedback to the student teacher during his/her school placement experience

- the student teacher's completion of a research project

- the student teacher's engagement in a process of portfolio-based learning, and ongoing assessment of and for learning.

The learning outcomes, set out by the Council, encompass the standards of teaching, knowledge, understanding, skill and competence together with the values, attitudes and professional dispositions which are central to the practice of teaching.

2.1 Professional Values

Elements	By the end of the programme of initial teacher education, the student teacher will be able to:
Ethical Standards and Professional Behaviour	1. demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the unique role of the teacher as professional in providing for the holistic development of students, and the complex and intricate nature of teaching, as explicated in the *Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers*
	2. demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the continuum of teacher education and the life-long learning journey of the teacher, as outlined in the Teaching Council's policy documents; *Droichead: The Integrated Professional Induction Framework* and *Cosán: The National Framework for Teachers' Learning*
Professional and Ethical Teaching	3. demonstrate the importance of commitment to lifelong personal and professional learning which is reflected in the approach taken to his/her work
	4. demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the legal and professional aspects of a teacher's position and responsibilities in relation to his/her pupils.
	5. Uphold the core values and professional commitments which are set out in the *Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers and be able to* reflect on these values and commitments and the implications for his/her practice
	6. be able to contribute to the development of educational standards and guidelines
	7. show an understanding of and practise within the statutory framework pertaining to education, including child protection guidelines, and any other identified, relevant, national priorities
	8. demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the importance of sharing professional learning in a collegial manner to support and enhance teaching and learning
	9. Demonstrate an openness to exploring new and emerging technologies and their educational application
	10. demonstrate an understanding and consciousness of professional practice issues through the process of reflection on experience
	11. uphold the reputation and standing of the teaching profession through their practice, as explicated in the *Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers*.

2.2 Professional Skills and Practice

Elements	By the end of the programme of initial teacher education, the student teacher will be able to:
Classroom Management & Organisational Skills	1. use appropriate class management and organisation skills to cater for a range of classroom situations
	2. manage his/her time and work effectively and efficiently
	3. establish classroom management strategies that support suitable and effective learning for all pupils
	4. create and maintain a safe, interactive and challenging environment using strategies that promote and maintain positive behaviour, in accordance with school policy.
Communication and Relationship-building Skills	5. develop positive relationships and communicate effectively with pupils, parents, colleagues, student teachers, the school principal, school management, co-professionals and the wider community
	6. foster good relationships with and among pupils based on mutual respect, trust and meaningful interactions
	7. communicate effectively with pupils, parents, colleagues, the school principal, school management, co-professionals, colleagues, and the wider community by using appropriate skills (including digital skills), styles and systems to suit the given situation and setting
	8. enable pupils to resolve conflict.
Integration and Application of Knowledge in relation to Planning, Teaching, Learning and Assessment Skills (in Complex and Unpredictable Educational Classroom and Settings)	9. access, develop, adapt and use a variety of curriculum resources and materials for learning and teaching to support and challenge all pupils
	10. set clear, challenging and achievable expectations for all pupils in line with the curriculum
	11. motivate, inspire, acknowledge and celebrate effort and success
	12. apply knowledge of the individual potential of pupils, dispositions towards learning, varying backgrounds, identities, experiences and learning styles to planning for teaching, learning and assessment
	13. use a range of strategies to support, monitor and assess pupils' approach to learning and their progress – including effective feedback strategies
	14. engage with pupils in order to develop effective, creative and imaginative strategies that promote individual and shared learning
	15. assess the achievement of curriculum objectives and adapt their teaching accordingly
	16. apply his/her knowledge of pupils' holistic development to their teaching and promote social responsibility

Elements	By the end of the programme of initial teacher education, the student teacher will be able to:
(continued)	17. employ relevant technical knowledge and skills of a range of digital technologies including multi-media resources, effectively to facilitate teaching and assessment practices and to aid pupil learning
	18. contribute to effective school self-evaluation and planning
	19. integrate relevant principles and theories of education, in the context of the relevant curriculum/syllabus, using well-developed skills of enquiry, to inform his/ her professional practice
	20. conduct a systematic, holistic assessment of pupil needs
	21. implement a range of methodologies to achieve planned outcomes
	22. evaluate pupil progress towards those outcomes
	23. review plans on the basis of evaluation data and in consultation with others, as appropriate
	24. conduct and apply relevant research as appropriate to his/her teaching context, identifying, critically analysing and integrating new knowledge regarding curriculum, pedagogy and assessment into their practice
	25. collaborate with Special Education Teachers by referring students for specialised educational support as required and participating in the provision of that support, as appropriate.
Analytical, Critical Thinking, Problem-solving, Reflection and evaluation Skills	26. individually, and in collaboration with colleagues, reflect on his/her attitudes, and beliefs about teaching and learning which inform and guide his/her professional practice
	27. reflect critically on the effectiveness his/her practice on an ongoing basis so as to inform and adjust his/her practice.
	28. engage in various forms of data gathering and critically analyse and evaluate relevant knowledge and research
	29. think critically, analyse, and solve problems, as an individual and a member of a team
	30. engage in portfolio-based learning and identify area(s) for further learning in the *Droichead* induction phase of the continuum
	31. demonstrate a professional commitment to seeking, accepting and acting upon constructive advice
	32. actively participate in professional learning communities which engage in group reflection, learning and practice

2.3 Professional Knowledge and Understanding

Elements	By the end of the programme of initial teacher education, the student teacher will be able to understand:
Subject Knowledge and Curriculum Process and Content	1. the dynamic processes by which curriculum is designed and facilitated for all pupils
	2. current national curricula/specifications in the relevant sector and an awareness of curriculum requirements in preceding and subsequent stages of learning
	3. the subject matter, pedagogical content and related methodology of the relevant curricula/specifications and guidelines and how these can be extended to all pupils
	4. literacy and numeracy, as they relate to curriculum requirements
	5. cross-curricular links and themes, including those outlined under the core elements of ITE programmes, and how these are related to life experiences.
Key Principles of Planning, Teaching, Learning, Assessment, Reflection and Evaluation	6. the factors that promote and hinder effective learning, the impact of pupils' backgrounds and identities on learning and the need to provide for the holistic development of the pupil, particularly through differentiated approaches
	7. the theory, concepts and methods pertaining to effective teaching, learning and assessment, both summative and formative
	8. current thinking on human development and learning
	9. the role of teachers as leaders of teaching and learning, who contribute to creating and sustaining learning communities in their classrooms, in their schools and through their professional networks
	10. pupils as active agents in their own learning
	11. the interdependence of teachers' learning and pupil learning and the importance of teacher-pupil relationships in the teaching/learning process
	12. important issues related to cyber-ethics including issues of privacy, information security, copyright and on-line safety and understand the complex interplay between technology and society
	13. not just how to read and carry out research, but also how to think as researchers when working in or with schools, and why it matters
	14. models of planning coherent, differentiated and integrated teaching programmes which are informed by ongoing reflection on professional practice.

Elements	By the end of the programme of initial teacher education, the student teacher will be able to understand:
Education and the Education System	**15.** the nature and purposes of education and the social and policy contexts in which the aims of education are defined and implemented
	16. the origins and development of the statutory and policy-making framework pertaining to education, his/her specific role and responsibilities emanating from that framework, together with the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders, including parents
	17. the rights of children and young people, including their right to a voice in various matters that relate to their lives
	18. the sector in which he/she will be teaching and his/her professional responsibilities within it
	19. other education sectors and factors which may impact on pupils' transition from one sector to another
	20. school culture and how it impacts on teaching and learning and the implementation of curriculum policy
	21. educational research and its contribution to teaching, learning and assessment
	22. the importance of teachers' intergenerational responsibility to support student teachers.
Communication and Relationship-building	**23.** the importance of teacher-pupil relationships in the teaching/learning process
	24. strategies for developing positive relationships and communicating effectively with pupils, parents, colleagues, the school principal, school management, co-professionals and the wider community
	25. the roles of stakeholders and the importance of engagement and cooperation with them, contributing to the characteristic spirit of the school and developing a positive environment for teaching and learning