

# Further Education: General and Programme Requirements for the Accreditation of Teacher Education Qualifications

In accordance with Section 38 of the Teaching Council Act, 2001 and  
Regulation Five of the Teaching Council (Registration) Regulations 2009

March 2011

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# Acknowledgements

The general and programme requirements set out in this document have been approved by the Teaching Council for the purposes of accrediting programmes of initial teacher education (further education) submitted to the Council in accordance with Section 38(1) of the Teaching Council Act, 2001, and Regulation Five (Further Education) of the Teaching Council (Registration) Regulations, 2009.

The Teaching Council wishes to express its sincere appreciation to the organisations and individuals who offered advice, input and comments in the course of the preparation of these requirements. The Council wishes to record its particular appreciation to the members of the original Programme Providers Working Group who prepared the initial report.

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# Glossary

## Accreditation

Accreditation refers to the statutory power of the Teaching Council to review and accredit programmes of teacher education and training provided by institutions of higher education and training in the State.

## Further Education and Further Education Sector

The term “further education” embraces education and training which usually occurs outside of post-primary schooling but which is not part of the third-level system.

## HEI

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

## Registration Regulations

Registration Regulations were published in 2009 by the Teaching Council in accordance with Section 31 of the Teaching Council Act, 2001. Regulation Five of the Teaching Council (Registration) Regulations, 2009 refers to further education. Such Regulations may, from time to time, be amended or updated by the Teaching Council.

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# Foreword

In November 2009, the Teaching Council published the Teaching Council (Registration) Regulations, 2009 which set out the Council's requirements for persons wishing to become registered teachers in Ireland. Among the objectives of the regulations is the achievement of consistent standards in the qualifications required to be registered as a teacher, irrespective of whether the teacher will teach in the primary, post-primary, or further education sectors.

Included in Regulation Five (Further Education) of those regulations is the requirement, with effect from 01 April 2013, for applicants for registration to have attained, inter alia, a Council approved further education teacher education qualification.

This document, the *General and Programme Requirements*, will be used by the Teaching Council when assessing and accrediting further education teacher education programmes being offered by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). It sets out the requirements which will be applied in conjunction with the Council's overarching teacher education programme review and accreditation policies. The Council's role vis-à-vis teacher education in Ireland is provided for in Section 38 of the Teaching Council Act, 2001 which gives statutory powers to the Council to review and accredit programmes of teacher education in Ireland. In setting out its general and programme requirements, the Council is cognisant of a number of issues and factors that are particular to the further education sector. These include:

- The role of the relevant authorities, particularly the Vocational Education Committees (VECs) in facilitating teaching practice placements and encouraging new and existing teaching staff to complete such a qualification is considered crucial by the Council. This accords with the Teaching Council's objective of enhancing the standards of teaching in Ireland.
- It is clear that the successful implementation of further education teacher education programmes is highly reliant on the willingness of HEIs, particularly those with existing teacher education programmes for other sectors, to embrace the provision of suitable programmes. It is also clear that the means of delivering programmes will be an essential element in the success of such programmes. The Council wishes to encourage HEIs to look at alternative and more flexible options such as forming delivery alliances with other HEIs and educational institutions such as further education colleges and to consider blended solutions utilising both on-line and the more traditional means of programme delivery.

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- The Council is aware that HEIs may wish to make their programmes available to a wide audience, many of whom will not be interested or eligible to subsequently register with the Council. While traditionally teacher education programmes at primary and post-primary level are in large part geared towards supplying the demand for teachers in schools, the Council recognises that the viability of further education teacher education programmes may be dependent on taking a broader approach as to who may enter such programmes. However, the requirement to satisfy the Council's registration requirements still stands for those wishing to register as teachers in the further education sector.
  - The Council supports the concept of introductory or incremental teacher education programmes at National Framework of Qualifications levels 6 and/or 7. These programmes would be accredited by a body such as FETAC recognising such qualifications for the purposes of entry to level 8 programmes accredited in accordance with the general and programme requirements. This would suggest that a degree of consultation between level 6/7 programme providers and accredited HEI level 8 providers would be of value.
  - The Council is aware of the developments in the field of further education in Northern Ireland and abroad. The need to improve and enhance the quality of teacher education in the further education sector in Ireland is broadly recognised and it is the Council's aspiration that it will play its part in this regard.

The Teaching Council's (Registration) Regulations, 2009 are based on the premise that an applicant has satisfactorily completed his/her educational qualifications prior to seeking registration with the Teaching Council. The case has been argued to the Council that to apply such an approach to the further education sector (with effect from 01 April 2013) could in some instances have a substantial and negative impact on the employers' ability to recruit teaching staff for specific programmes where suitable industrial or professional expertise is required. The Council has committed to discuss this matter further with employers and the Department of Education and Skills with a view to considering how these issues may be overcome while ensuring the teaching competence of new entrants to the further education sector.

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# 1 General Requirements

## 1.1 Application

The general and programme requirements set out in this document will be used by the Teaching Council when reviewing, for professional accreditation purposes, teacher education programmes designed for teachers in the further education sector. The requirements are also aimed at providing guidance to programme providers proposing to seek accreditation for a new further education teacher education programme.

## 1.2 Section 38 of the Teaching Council Act, 2001

The professional accreditation of teacher education and training programmes in accordance with the general and programme requirements is done so under the terms of Section 38 of the Teaching Council Act, 2001.

## 1.3 Purpose of the Qualification

The purpose of the teacher education qualification is to provide teachers with the necessary knowledge, skills and competences to be able to carry out their teaching role and responsibilities. A primary outcome of programmes presented for accreditation must be the award of a teacher education qualification designed for teaching in the further education sector.

## 1.4 Accreditation

A programme presented to the Teaching Council for professional accreditation must also receive (or be in the process of receiving) academic accreditation from a recognised institution of higher education and training in the State under the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act, 1999.

Programmes presented for professional accreditation will be subject to the Council's standard accreditation procedures and processes as published from time to time by the Council and using the general and programme requirements outlined in this document.



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### 1.5 Qualification Level on the National Framework of Qualifications

In order for a further education teacher education programme to achieve accreditation from the Teaching Council, the programme award level should be consistent with teacher education qualifications at post-primary level and in any event not less than level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

### 1.6 European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) Credits

To achieve accreditation, the programme in its entirety must carry a minimum of 60 ECTS credits.

### 1.7 Programme Timeframe and Delivery

It is a matter for each HEI to determine the timeframe and method of delivery of its programme. It is important that the Council is provided with details as to the proposed arrangements together with evidence that the timeframe and delivery of the programme will provide a cohesive and integrated qualification. Teacher education programmes for further education may be delivered as a standalone qualification or as part of a concurrent degree programme.

**Note:** Regulation Five of the Teaching Council (Registration) Regulations, 2009 does not include provision for the delivery of a concurrent degree of academic study and further education teacher education. However, for the purpose of accreditation of further education teacher education qualifications, the Council will consider concurrent degree programmes which include further education teacher education. The degree must be obtained following a course of study carrying at least 240 ECTS credits. The teacher education programme must form an integrated part of the degree.

### 1.8 Entry Requirements

HEIs may determine the entry requirements for entry to their programme. However, it is important that applicants for programmes are made fully aware by the HEI that if they wish to gain entry to the Register of Teachers they must comply with Regulation Five of the Teaching Council's (Registration) Regulations, 2009.

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## 1.9 Qualification Requirements for Registration

The following qualification requirements will apply to applicants wishing to register under Regulation Five as a teacher in further education sector after **1 April 2013:**

- 1.9.1** The applicant must hold a primary degree or equivalent (not less than level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) carrying at least 180 ECTS credits,

**AND**

a teacher education qualification approved by the Council for post-primary teaching (First Year to Sixth Year) or an accredited further education teacher education qualification,

**OR**

- 1.9.2** An ordinary degree or equivalent (not less than level 7 on the NFQ) carrying at least 180 ECTS credits,

**PLUS**

- i)* an appropriate additional qualification, or
- ii)* certified accreditation of prior learning based on a minimum of three years' experience in a workplace or instructional setting which is relevant to the candidate's qualifications such as may be recognised by The Teaching Council as suitable for the purpose of registration as a teacher under this regulation which meets such requirements as the Teaching Council may publish from time to time,

**AND**

- iii)* a teacher education qualification approved by the Council for post-primary teaching (First Year to Sixth Year) or an accredited further education teacher education qualification.

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## 2 Programme Requirements

The Council's expectations with regard to the contents of a further education teacher education programme are set out in sections 2.2 to 2.8 below and the expected outcomes of approved programmes are set out in Section 3. It is also understood that students on a further education teacher education programme must have the subject knowledge in the area that they teach within the requirements of Regulation Five of the Teaching Council (Registration) Regulations, 2009.

### 2.1 Submission of Programmes

HEIs wishing to submit programmes leading to a teacher education qualification for professional accreditation should do so as follows:

- complete the Council's Further Education Pro Forma for accreditation
- supply requested supporting documentation (in hard copy and electronic format) as explained in the introduction to the Pro Forma.

Accreditation will be awarded for a defined period on the basis of the documentation provided being assessed as meeting the Council's general and programme requirements. The programme will subsequently be included in the Council's ongoing review and accreditation process for programmes of teacher education.

### 2.2 Core Values

The core values which underpin the work of the teaching profession in Ireland have been made explicit in the Teaching Council's *Codes of Professional Conduct for Teachers (2007)*<sup>1</sup>. They relate to the educational experience, educational outcomes and relationships in teaching. The core values are:

- commitment
- quality of education
- student-centred learning
- responding to change
- professional development
- holistic development
- cultural values

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<sup>1</sup> The Codes of Professional Conduct for Teachers (2007) are currently under review.

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- social justice, equality and inclusion
  - collegiality
  - collaboration
  - respect
  - care
  - co-operation.

Given the interconnectedness of teacher learning across all phases of the teaching continuum, the teacher education programme, in its design and delivery, should provide varied opportunities for student teachers to develop their commitment to such values. This will enable student teachers to develop a reflective stance in their own teaching and in the exercise of their professional judgement. These values are also implicit in the commitment to self-directed learning, independently or as part of a teacher's involvement in a community of practice.

It is expected that the providers of teacher education programmes declare that the programme is underpinned by the values explicit in the *Codes of Professional Conduct for Teachers (2007)*.

### 2.3 Principles and Aims

Teacher education programmes for further education should recognise the distinctive characteristics of that sector, with particular reference to the profile of learners and to the context within which further education initiatives are located. The further education sector is usually (though by no means always) concerned with educational programmes outside the statutory age range of school attendance.

Teaching in further education is characterised by learner-teacher relationships based on mutual respect and equality. There is recognition of the professional role of the teacher in responding directly to the individual and collective needs of the learners. Certification of programmes of further education study is based on the achievement of stated learning outcomes rather than on coverage of centrally defined syllabi. A crucial requirement of the further education teacher therefore is the capacity to analyse learners' needs, to develop a programme of study in response to those needs and to assess learner progress.

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Teacher education programmes in further education should therefore aim to:

- i) prepare student teachers to develop their knowledge, skills, competences and understanding in order to teach in further education
- ii) provide a foundation in the theories and practices of lifelong learning, including pedagogical and andragogical approaches to teaching and learning
- iii) develop teaching styles and methodologies appropriate to a wide range of learners and contexts
- iv) develop the theoretical understanding and practical skills to devise and implement programme-appropriate assessment for national certification
- v) provide supervised and supportive practical teaching experience in authentic further education settings.

#### **2.4 Structure and Content**

Teacher education programmes should be designed in an integrated way, with clear linkages between the various components of the programme – that is, the foundation studies, the professional studies and the practical teaching experience.

#### **2.5 Foundation Studies**

Active learning methodologies which promote enquiry and reflection among students should be used to integrate theory and practice in the study of the following elements:

- i) educational psychology, with particular reference to the psychology of adolescent and adult learning
- ii) philosophy of adult education, including andragogy, work-based learning and critical theory
- iii) sociology of education, including adult education and issues of social change and inclusion, equality and diversity, interculturalism, community norms and structures
- iv) curriculum, design and development, assessment and evaluation studies, including the development of the teacher as a reflective practitioner, and the evolution of curriculum practice in the further education sector

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- v) education policy studies, including history of adult, community and non-compulsory education, contemporary policy issues in further education (including European initiatives), education policies at primary and post-primary level and current legislative requirements
  - vi) theories and concepts which underpin assessment practice.

## 2.6 Professional Studies

The programme should develop the student teacher's competence, i.e. knowledge, skills, attitudes and understanding in using a range of approaches and methodologies for the effective teaching of, and learning by, students in further education.

On successful completion of a programme of teacher education for further education, graduates should be able to:

- i) critically engage with, reflect and apply a range of approaches for the teaching and learning of the subject matter including assessment, as appropriate to different learner groups
- ii) design a programme, course or module appropriate for the learners, including teaching techniques, assessment and evaluation modes, in accordance with the requirements of the relevant awarding body
- iii) demonstrate successful implementation of teaching in an authentic setting.

## 2.7 Practical Teaching Programme

The programme should develop the student teacher's skills and competence in practical teaching in an incremental manner using a range of teaching and learning methods including observation, peer teaching, co-teaching, mentoring, and other forms of structured support. It should allow the student teacher to plan, deliver and receive feedback on lessons.

The quality of the teaching practice placement and the quality of the workplace learning environment is fundamental to the development of a competent, safe and effective practitioner. The effective governance of the programme requires a strong partnership between the academic and workplace personnel.

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A minimum of 30 hours should be assigned to teaching practice observation and other learning methods prior to teaching practice placements. HEIs may choose to consider taking account of recognition of prior learning (RPL) for this purpose.

Practice placements should consist of at least 100 hours teaching recognised courses on FETAC (or equivalent) further education accredited programmes which would, where possible, encompass at least two settings. The HEI may consider using blended learning techniques to part fulfil meeting this requirement provided that the teaching practice components outlined in the next paragraph are met.

Placement of student-teachers in authentic further education settings is a central element of this area of study. This practical teaching component should be augmented where possible by focused curriculum studies in the specific disciplinary domains within which the student-teacher will be teaching.

## 2.8 Outcomes

On successful completion of a programme of teacher education in further education, graduates should be able to:

- i) understand the educational and social context within which further education takes place
- ii) describe and critically reflect on the particular features of teaching and learning in the further education sector
- iii) critically apply appropriate pedagogical and/or andragogical approaches to teaching, learning and assessment
- iv) understand the similarities and differences between the further education sector and the other sectors of education in Ireland
- v) reflect critically on their own teaching skills.

A more detailed list of programme outcomes is set out in Section 3.

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## 3 Learning Outcomes

The learning outcomes for further education teacher programmes should be evident and assessable through:

- formal structures which accommodate dialogue between the student teacher and HEI personnel
- the supervisor's/tutor's observation and evaluation of the student teacher during teaching practice placements
- the demonstration of the practical knowledge of teaching, learning and assessment in a range of formal and informal education settings
- the student teacher's presentation of projects and portfolios
- the ongoing assessment of, and for, learning.

By these means, evidence of the following should be demonstrated.

### 3.1 Values

The graduate teacher knows and subscribes to the core values as set out in the Teaching Council's *Codes of Professional Conduct for Teachers (2007)*.

### 3.2 Professional Conduct

The graduate teacher is committed to the standards of professional conduct which are expected of the teaching profession, as set out in the Teaching Council's *Codes of Professional Conduct for Teachers (2007)*. He/she will have had opportunities to discuss and reflect on these standards and the implications for his/her practice.

### 3.3 Communication and Relationships

The graduate teacher should have developed a knowledge and understanding of strategies for communicating effectively and developing positive relationships with learners, parents (where appropriate), school/centre/programme management, colleagues and the wider community.

- Learners:** The graduate teacher understands that good teacher-learner relationships are fundamental to engagement in the teaching/learning process and he/she develops this through communication which is built on mutual respect and trust. He/she understands differences in learners' backgrounds and identities and the way in which these differences can shape experience and impact on learning. He/she understands



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the concepts of equality and diversity, respects values and accommodates diversity when encountered.

- ii) **School/centre/programme management, parents and the community:** The graduate teacher will have had opportunities to consider the role of teachers as active partners with school/centre/programme management (and parents/guardians/carers where appropriate) in the development of a school/centre ethos and culture which is conducive to a positive environment for teaching and learning. He/she understands that effective teaching requires the support and positive collaboration of the wider community.
- iii) **Colleagues:** The graduate teacher has an understanding of the roles of all staff within the school/centre/programme. He/she understands the importance of co-operation and collaboration and acts in a spirit of collegiality with colleagues.

### 3.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The graduate teacher should:

- i) have an understanding of the role of teachers as educational leaders who contribute to creating and sustaining learning communities in their classes, in their schools/centres and through their professional networks
- ii) have an understanding of the way in which teaching is shaped by knowledge of human development and learning
- iii) have an integrated approach to planning which includes teaching strategies, learning activities, assessment modes and resources
- iv) recognise the individual potential of learners, have the capacity to undertake student needs and skills analysis, including the recognition of prior learning, and make preparation for those with special/exceptional needs and potential as guided by the group teacher
- v) have knowledge and understanding of the factors that promote and hinder effective learning, and has the capacity to utilise flexible and adaptable approaches to learning
- vi) apply his or her knowledge of learners' holistic development to his/her teaching and to the promotion of social responsibilities, as far as is practicable
- vii) apply his or her knowledge of learners' backgrounds, identities, experiences and learning modes to his/her teaching, insofar as he/she is aware of these
- viii) set clear, challenging and achievable expectations for learners, be able to plan and communicate accordingly and motivate and assist learners to become agents in their learning

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- ix) know how to motivate and inspire by sharing his/her vision, expertise and reflections, and acknowledge and celebrate effort and success
  - x) know how to engage with learners in order to develop effective, creative and imaginative teaching strategies that are appropriate to the learners and promote learning, e.g., facilitating interaction among learners to enable shared learning as well as individual learning outcomes
  - xi) use a range of strategies to support, monitor and assess learning, students' approach to learning, progress achieved, and give feedback
  - xii) assess the achievement of curriculum/module objectives and adapt his/her teaching accordingly
  - xiii) access, develop and use a variety of available curriculum resources to enhance and enrich the learning environment
  - xiv) utilise technology, including multimedia resources, effectively and appropriately to aid learning
  - xv) understand how teachers may utilise the community as a learning resource and appreciate that the community, in turn, is enriched by its interaction with schools/centres/programmes, learners and teachers who have a tradition of contributing to a range of community activities.

### 3.5 Subject Knowledge, Curriculum Process and Content

The graduate teacher should have:

- i) the knowledge and understanding to analyse the subject matter and related methodology of the relevant syllabi, and identify how it is linked to other subjects and related to life experiences
- ii) an understanding of curriculum concepts
- iii) developed a knowledge and understanding of the process of developing and designing a course, programme or module, including planning, implementation, evaluation and quality based assurance models
- iv) developed the knowledge to plan coherent and progressive teaching programmes which match learners' needs and abilities
- v) an awareness of curriculum/module requirements in preceding and subsequent stages of learning including FETAC (or equivalent) levels and further education to higher education transition
- vi) developed the linguistic, pedagogical and andragogical knowledge and skills to teach the curriculum/module
- vii) the knowledge and understanding to fulfil his/her responsibilities in respect of cross-curricular themes such as citizenship, creativity, inclusion and diversity, initiative, literacy and numeracy, personal, social and health education and ICT, as appropriate to the sector and stage of education.

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### 3.6 Group Management and Organisation

The graduate teacher should have the knowledge and capacity to:

- i) assess and make best use of the environment and setting in which a course, programme or module is being undertaken
- ii) establish group management strategies that support differentiated learning in a way that respects the dignity of all learners
- iii) acquire the necessary group management and organisation skills to cater for a range of situations
- iv) create and maintain a safe, interactive and challenging environment
- v) implement relevant health and safety policies and practices in the course of his/her teaching
- vi) understand a range of strategies to promote and maintain positive behaviour, in accordance with school/centre/programme policy, thereby establishing an environment conducive to learning
- vii) demonstrate a professional commitment to meeting deadlines and the skills necessary to manage his/her time and workload effectively and efficiently and maintain a healthy work/life balance.

### 3.7 The Teacher as Lifelong Learner

The graduate teacher should:

- i) value him/herself as a developing professional and be aware that professional development is a lifelong process upon which he/she has embarked
- ii) be able to plan for teaching and learning and improve the effectiveness of his/ her own practice through continuous reflection on that practice. By reflecting on his/her practice, he/she should be able to contribute to the processes of curriculum development and school/centre planning
- iii) demonstrate a professional commitment to seeking, accepting and acting upon constructive advice on progress and a willingness to contribute and respond to changes in education policies and practices
- iv) appreciate the interdependence of his/her own learning and that of the students he/she teaches.

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### 3.8 Knowledge and Understanding of Education and the Education System

The graduate teacher should have:

- i) developed a knowledge and understanding of contemporary debates about the nature and purposes of education and the social and policy contexts in which the aims of education are defined and implemented, and be able to know how to construct and sustain reasoned and coherent arguments about educational matters and professional practices
- ii) an understanding of research and its contribution to education and be able to draw on relevant principles and theories of education, using well-developed skills of inquiry, to inform his/her professional practice and values
- iii) a good working knowledge of the sector in which he/she will be teaching and his/her professional responsibilities within it
- iv) a reasonable understanding of other education sectors and of factors which may impact on learners' transition from one sector to another
- v) a knowledge and understanding of the statutory framework pertaining to education, including relevant European developments and of his/her specific responsibilities emanating from that and be committed to working within that statutory framework.







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