

**Teaching Council**  
**Strategic Plan 2022-2027**

**Teaching and  
Learning **for All****

**Teagasc agus  
Foghlaim **do chách****

# Introduction

## Réamhrá

**The Teaching Council is the statutory professional standards body for the teaching profession in Ireland, charged in law with promoting and regulating the profession.**

This 2022-2027 strategic plan is the first 5-year plan in the Council's history. It sets forward the Council's ambitions for its remit years ahead, in the context of the wider education system, and the culmination of a comprehensive consultation process with stakeholders, Council staff and the Department of Education. The Council thanks everyone who has informed these reflections both during this consultation process and over the years through many professional conversations.

This plan sees the completion of the growth phase of Droichead, the integrated professional induction framework for newly qualified teachers (NQTs). It also marks the revision of the standards for Initial Teacher Education in Céim, and sets the ambition for the systemic implementation of Cosán, the national framework for teachers' learning. As these areas constitute the three pillars of the Continuum of Teacher Education, the Council deems it both appropriate and necessary to set this plan in a 5-year timeframe to maximise the strategic scope for their development.

The Council maintains a register of over 111,000 teachers for a school system of almost 4,000 schools and one million learners. We work continuously to ensure that all aspects of our work, including operations and regulation, are efficient, effective and responsive. The launch of NOVUS, the new database for the register, the largest of its kind in Ireland, will mark a new phase in this work.

The register has grown every year since its creation in 2006. Each year, an average of 5,500 teachers apply for initial registration with the Council.

This highlights, particularly in the context of inclusion, equality and diversity, the importance of the systemic implementation of Cosán over the next five years. The pandemic was a particularly strong example of teachers' commitment to professional learning in order to respond to the needs of their learners – but it is by no means the only one. This professional commitment of teachers is situated within a context of increasing expectations from the public for connectedness in public services, and for quality teaching and learning. That said, this is not about doing more, but about recognising all that is being done to respond to the needs of learners and clarifying the purpose of professional learning. For these reasons, the Council will continue to collaborate with stakeholders to ensure that all opportunities for professional learning are sufficiently flexible and relevant to facilitate professional responsiveness to learners' needs.

The public interest is of paramount importance to the Teaching Council. Of course, the public interest has a particular meaning in terms of the goals of our policies and the purposes of our regulatory work. It needs to be clarified that the public interest and the profession's needs are not at odds with each other. The Council's work is predicated on the understanding that they are one and the same, particularly as exemplified in the Code of Professional Conduct. This is also reflected in the legislation underpinning the functions and work of the Teaching Council, where the State has recognised the deep cultural and historical regard which Irish society has had for teachers through the mandate therein.

# Foreword from Teaching Council Chairperson and Director

## Réamhrá ó Chathaoirleach agus ó Stiúrthóir na Comhairle Múinteoireachta

**The Irish education system has come through a period of incredible innovation and transformation. This could be said of the past sixteen years as much as it could be said of the last two.**

As can be seen in the recently published School Placement Innovation Report (2021), the response of the teaching profession and of teacher educators to the first global pandemic in over a century has been phenomenal and inspirational. Our nation owes the teaching profession a debt of gratitude for the ways in which they sustained teaching and learning during all phases of the pandemic. The extent to which schools assisted and led their teaching staff to adapt the use of digital tools and pedagogy to support this work was also a significant development during this time.

As the Teaching Council looks ahead to the next five years in its strategic planning, it is clear that it needs to strike a careful balance between adapting many of these changes on the one hand, while on the other ensuring that the best of our teaching and learning that has always served us well continues to do so.

This is all the more pertinent in light of the increasing attention being paid to the matter of inclusion, diversity and equality in Irish education. Ireland's ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities will have significant implications for this area over the next ten years and more. In addition, the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act places equality and human rights at the heart of how public bodies fulfil their purpose. The Teaching Council is committed to the elimination of discrimination, promotion of equal opportunity for all staff and teachers, and the protection of human rights for all.

If the long-term strategic direction of inclusive education is the greater co-location of education and care, and in particular therapeutic services, this will need more space and time for all professionals to collaborate effectively in support of all learners' needs. Therefore, the Council's Strategic Plan will continue to emphasise the importance of collaborative practice. It is fair to say that across the education landscape, the scope for such collaborative practice has grown significantly in the past few years. This needs to continue.

Having said this, there is a quote, perhaps lesser known, of Prof. John Coolahan's which needs to be cited here:



**There is a three-letter word which I cherish in the education process, but is rarely expressed, and that is 'joy'. I consider that education is a joyous, fulfilling activity, and this dimension of joyous engagement should be more emphasised. At its heart, learning is a mode of exploration and should be cherished.**

*[cited by Prof. Ciarán Benson, Time, Vocabulary and Art's Thoughtful Uses of Feeling? – lecture given on 28 February 2019; published 2021]*



**Such eloquence provides a very supportive backdrop to the concepts of creativity, wellbeing, equality, inclusion and diversity in teaching and learning.**

Such eloquence provides a very supportive backdrop to the concepts of creativity, wellbeing, equality, inclusion and diversity in teaching and learning. We will seek to continue to enhance the inclusiveness of our approaches, and the diversity of our teaching profession, not because something is broken (which it is not), nor because we are obliged to, but because these are good things to do, and they will enhance the joy of our collective endeavours.

Systemic collaboration between the Teaching Council, the Minister and Department of Education, its Inspectorate, other Government departments and bodies (including the NCCA and NCSE) and education stakeholders will continue to be of vital importance in developing and implementing innovative and responsive policy responses to our collective needs and challenges.

International evidence, as well as Government policy and legislation, tells us that climate change is a real and present crisis which calls for collaboration and innovation across all areas – subjects; schools; sectors; departments; communities; nations. The pace and scale of our response to climate change to date indicates that while the gathering and sharing of reliable evidence is vital, it will clearly not be enough. Climate change demands of education, as it does of all disciplines and endeavours, that we connect, share and communicate much more effectively with each other so that we understand what the evidence is saying to us, what part each of us can play and how we can act together to do what needs to be done.

Our approach to education, therefore, needs to support sustainability of people and of place. Sustainability of people includes wellbeing, growth, agency and resilience.

Sustainability of place includes how people relate to each other in environmentally sustainable ways. Education cannot solve this problem on its own. But it does have a significant part to play in supporting the collective endeavours of all areas of knowledge, insight and expertise. After all, who will teach the climate scientists of tomorrow?

In his poem “Reason and Passion”, Khalil Gibran writes:



**Your reason and your passion are the rudder and the sails of your seafaring soul.”**

In so far as the profession of teaching seems to exemplify how the personal and the professional can work best together in serving the needs of others, in this case all learners, it would seem that such a call is both appropriate and necessary in these turbulent times. We understand that all journeys of passion and reason need a compass to guide the way. The Council’s Strategic Plan 2022-2027 offers one such compass for our diverse communities of learning, and we look forward to exciting and innovative collaboration with stakeholders in navigating the journey ahead.

**Tomás Ó Ruairc**  
Director / CEO

**Seán McMahon**  
Chairperson

December 2021

# Progress under Strategic Plan 2018-2020

## Dul chun cinn faoin bPlean Straitéiseach 2018/2020

### The Council's seven goals which we set for the period 2018-2020 covered the following areas:

- 1** Consolidate and communicate the progress made towards a seamless Continuum of Teacher Education.
- 2** Work with the Department of Education and Skills and stakeholders to agree a model and process for ensuring a better match between teacher supply and demand.
- 3** Support teachers in enhancing their professional practice through professional learning frameworks which facilitate a culture of shared learning.
- 4** Continue to safeguard entry to the profession through high standards for initial teacher education, as well as effective and efficient review and registration processes.
- 5** Ensure that the implementation of the Fitness to Teach process is robust, fair and transparent for teachers and the wider public.
- 6** Promote the teaching profession, including wellbeing, and enhance awareness of the Council's work, through innovative and accessible communications.
- 7** Ensure that the Teaching Council has sufficient resources, including from other sources, to support: efficient ways of working, compliance with corporate governance and development of effective policies.



## We have made significant progress under each of these strategic goals over the course of the last three years:

### Goal 1

- › Céim: Standards for ITE were approved by Council, and a Guidance Note on School Placement was developed, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, to enable the planning and facilitation for school placement in the context of Covid 19.

### Goal 2

- › The Teaching Council played an active role in the working and oversight groups established by the Department of Education in relation to teacher supply throughout the period of the last Strategic Plan. This work included communications promoting teaching as a profession, supporting emerging data models on the basis of the register of teachers, and supporting a number of new developments in relation to programmes of Initial Teacher Education.
- › A number of new concurrent programmes for post-primary teaching targeted at priority subject areas were accredited by the Teaching Council, and
- › Significant work was led by the Teaching Council in collaboration with the Department of Education, Higher Education Institutions (HEIS) and stakeholders to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on teaching and learning, including: flexible ITE programme delivery facilitating substitution needs in schools; emergency regulation allowing completion of induction in Ireland for those who qualified abroad, and promotion of the SubSeeker platform as a partnership between the Irish Primary Principals' Network (IPPN) and the National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals (NAPD).

### Goal 3

- › The Droichead growth phase was concluded in the 2020/2021 academic year. Over 3,400 teachers engaged in the process in over 1,600 schools during the academic year. As a result of the investment in the process, there are now 8,400 mentor teachers in over 2,000 schools.
- › Cosán workshops were hosted throughout the pandemic in collaboration with Education Support Centres Ireland (ECSI) in 2019/2020 school year.

### Goal 4

- › Revised Curricular Subject Requirements were approved by the Council and the Minister for Education in 2020.

### Goal 5

- › The robustness and quality of the Council's fitness to teach processes and procedures have been confirmed in Court judgments including the Court of Appeal Judgment in 'MP -v- The Teaching Council' delivered in July 2019.

### Goal 6

- › FÉILTE consolidated in 2018 in Limerick, 2019 in Galway and in 2020 online. 2020 was an entirely online event, and saw the FÉILTE's largest audience of over 3,000 people engage with the event.

### Goal 7

- › A tailored NQT registration process was restructured in light of Covid. More than 3,400 registrations were finalised within a four-week shorter timeframe than previous years.
- › The implementation phase of the new online registration database replacement project 'NOVUS' commenced in January 2020, including design, discovery workshops, and drafting of the project Statement of Works.



# Statement of Purpose

## Ráiteas aidhme

The Teaching Council promotes and supports the highest standards in teachers' professionalism and teacher education through effective policies, regulation and research.

We seek to foster a conducive landscape for sustainable and responsive teaching and learning in our communities. We do this by collaborating with the Department of Education and all stakeholders in an increasing diversity of innovative ways.

This work will ensure quality teaching and learning for all, through enhanced creativity, inclusion, diversity, leadership, and wellbeing. This in turn will further develop public confidence and trust in the teaching profession in Ireland, and in education more broadly.







# Strategic Goals & Objectives

## Aidhmeanna agus Cuspóirí Straitéiseacha

### 1 Teacher Registration & Supply



#### Goal:

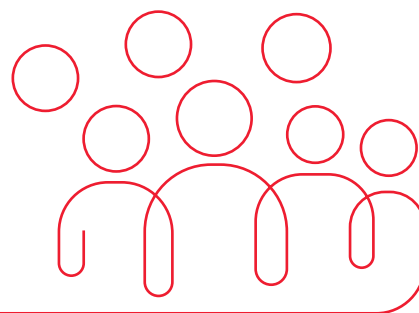
Ensure a sufficient supply of registered and vetted teachers to meet the identified needs of the school system, including diversity, in collaboration with the Department of Education, Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science and all stakeholders.

#### Objectives

- 1.1 Ensure that all programmes of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) which are reviewed and accredited by the Teaching Council meet the standards set out in Céim and are aligned with national policy priorities.
- 1.2 Review Droichead in light of the implementation of the growth phase and update policy as appropriate.
- 1.3 Implement the new registration database NOVUS and position the Teaching Council as a leading innovator in the field of professional regulation, including digitisation.
- 1.4 Provide accurate data to support the ongoing refinement of teacher supply modelling by leveraging NOVUS, the new registration database, in collaboration with the Department of Education and other stakeholders.
- 1.5 Continue to streamline Council registration processes and procedures with a view to increasing efficiencies with a particular focus on registration subject to conditions and assessment of overseas teaching qualifications.
- 1.6 Collaborate with relevant stakeholders in ensuring that the recruitment and substitution needs of schools are met with registered teachers on a systemic basis.
- 1.7 Support and encourage Irish language and Irish-medium education in collaboration with the Department of Education, its agencies and stakeholders.
- 1.8 Progress the commissioning of longitudinal research to review the impact of the reconceptualised and extended programmes of ITE in collaboration with the Department of Education.
- 1.9 Implement updated Teaching Council (Registration) Regulations, following consultation with stakeholders.
- 1.10 Continue collaboration with stakeholders and the Department of Education to support and promote diversity in the teaching profession.



# 2 Collaborative Professional Communities for Sustainability



## Goal:

Provide practical frameworks and supports for collaborative professional communities with a particular focus on inclusion, joy and creativity in quality teaching and learning.

## Objectives

- 2.1 Collaborate with the Department of Education, the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, and other partners to promote and support teachers' professionalism in schools and in the wider education context, with a particular focus on sustainability, innovation, leadership and research.
- 2.2 Continue to progress the implementation of the key recommendations from the School Placement Work Group report and action plan in collaboration with the Department of Education and stakeholders.
- 2.3 Promote the system-wide implementation of Cosán (the national framework for teachers' learning) in collaboration with the Department of Education, its support services and national stakeholders, to foster joy and creativity in learning.
- 2.4 Establish and support a 'Professional Learning Community' of Cosán teachers to disseminate best practice and celebrate successes within schools, across regions and more generally.
- 2.5 Through the EU Technical Support Instrument project, and in collaboration with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), explore how BEACONS (Bringing Education Alive for our Communities On a National Scale) can help communities and national stakeholders support and encourage wellbeing, creativity and inclusion for all.
- 2.6 Increase awareness of FÉILTE (the Teaching Council's annual Festival of Education in Learning and Teaching Excellence) and expand its reach/impact by:
  - (i) developing partnerships with key stakeholders
  - (ii) providing content remotely/on-line in a hybrid context and
  - (iii) establishing regional networks.
- 2.7 Review the Council's research strategy, ensuring alignment with the Department of Education and its agencies and the growth of systemic connections.
- 2.8 Promote the Council's research series CROÍ, thereby making evidence and best practice more accessible and supporting a research culture in the teaching profession.
- 2.9 Develop and implement an integrated communications and engagement strategy to incorporate clear objectives and deliverables, with a particular emphasis on plain English and Gaeilge shimplí.



Research

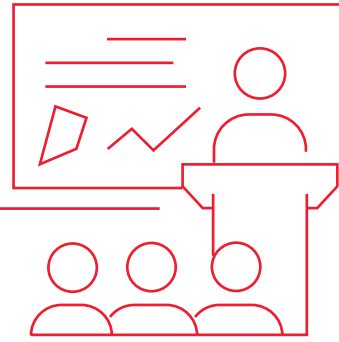


Creativity



Sustainability

# 3 Fitness to Teach



## Goal:

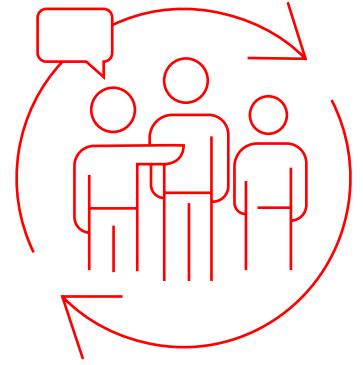
**Continue to ensure that fitness to teach processes are fair, appropriate and effective in the interests of the public and the profession.**

## Objectives

- 3.1** Engage with the Department of Education and national stakeholders:
  - (i) on the establishment of section 28 procedures (Education Act 1998) to ensure that, where appropriate, disciplinary matters are resolved successfully at school level, with more serious issues notified to the Teaching Council and
  - (ii) on the commencement of regulations to give effect to Section 37 of the Teaching Council Act.
- 3.2** Review and revise, where appropriate, the communications which issue to the public and teachers regarding fitness to teach, with a particular emphasis on plain English to ensure greater accessibility.
- 3.3** Complete a review of fitness to teach processes and as required, streamline investigating and inquiry stages to optimise efficiencies from initiation to conclusion.



# 4 Corporate & Resourcing Sustainable Ways of Working



## Goal:

Maintain and enhance the Teaching Council's flexible, collaborative and innovative organisational culture that supports shared learning and responsiveness to regulatory requirements and national priorities.

## Objectives

- 4.1** Develop a customised and integrated people strategy to support the implementation of the Council's strategic objectives.
- 4.2** Implement blended working arrangements which support the Council's strategic direction and reflect national guidelines.
- 4.3** Maintain and enhance sustainable ways of working which support staff wellbeing and meet organisational efficiency objectives.
- 4.4** Complete periodic reviews of staffing levels against the strategic needs of the organisation and its financial resources.
- 4.5** Complete a review of the current legislation regulating and promoting the teaching profession to inform and recommend changes.
- 4.6** Continue to align governance structures to our strategic priorities, by:
  - (i) continuing to review security and IT systems
  - (ii) proactively progressing the internal audit plan and, in the context of the Code of Practice for State Bodies (2016)
  - (iii) finalising the review of the Code of Practice for Council members, Chairperson, Director and Secretary.
- 4.7** Increase awareness of the Council's role and achievements in the areas of promotion, regulation and excellence in teaching, learning and research through strengthening relationships with stakeholders and key audiences.
- 4.8** Continue to deliver Council services and processes in an equitable and transparent way, placing human rights and equality at the core of how we perform our functions.



**An Chomhairle Mhúinteoireachta**  
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