

An Chomhairle
Mhúinteoireachta



The Teaching Council

REPORT TO THE TEACHING COUNCIL

DCU Institute of Education
B.Ed (Irish Sign Language)

**Report of the Review Panel to
The Teaching Council
following the
Review of the Bachelor of Education (Irish Sign Language)
DCU Institute of Education**

28th October 2018

1. Background

The Teaching Council was established on a statutory basis in March 2006 as the professional standards body for teaching. It works within the framework of the Teaching Council Act, 2001, Section 38 which sets out the Council's statutory role in reviewing and accrediting programmes of initial teacher education.

The Teaching Council's role in relation to the review and accreditation of programmes of initial teacher education is distinct from the academic accreditation which programmes already undergo. Academic accreditation is based on the suitability of a programme for the award of a degree/diploma whereas professional accreditation is a judgement as to whether a programme prepares one for entry into a profession.

The review and accreditation of programmes of initial teacher education by the Teaching Council provide an opportunity for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to demonstrate that they offer quality programmes of teacher education. It is expected that the graduates of such programmes achieve programme aims and learning outcomes that are aligned with the values, professional dispositions and standards of teaching, knowledge, skill and competence which are central to the practice of teaching.

In order to guide its review of programmes, the Teaching Council published its *Initial Teacher Education: Strategy for the Review and Professional Accreditation of Existing Programmes* in September 2011.

In carrying out reviews, the Council is mindful of its *Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education* published in 2011. The policy highlights the evolving and dynamic context for teaching and the increasingly complex role of teachers in Ireland today.

This report relates to the review of the Bachelor of Education (Irish Sign Language) provided by DCU Institute of Education.

2. Publication of this Report

The Teaching Council routinely makes information available to the public in relation to its functions and activities and, in line with that practice, this report will be available on the Council's website, www.teachingcouncil.ie.

3. Overview of the Review Process

The Review Panel was appointed in March 2018 with Dr. Áine Hyland as Chairperson.¹ .

To assist and support the work of the Panel, Phil Fox was appointed as Rapporteur. Her functions included liaison with HEIs, maintaining records of meetings, and drafting and finalising the Panel's report in conjunction with the Review Panel Chairperson.

The initial meeting of the Panel was convened on 6 March 2018. The Panel members were supplied with documentation in respect of the Bachelor of Education (Irish Sign Language) programme of DCU Institute of Education. The documents were studied taking into consideration the Council's requirements most notably the *Initial Teacher Education: Criteria and Guidelines for Programme Providers*.

Additional information and clarity were sought in regard to a number of issues, to which DCU responded in a timely fashion. The review did not include a visit to DCU. The Panel members also made use of electronic mail to exchange views and comments prior to coming together to form a collective view of the programme.

The Panel decided to seek the expert advice of Dr. Lynne Barnes, Divisional Co-coordinator: Deaf Studies, at the School of Humanities and the Social Sciences, University of Central Lancashire, with regard to the ISL aspects of the programme. Following the receipt of a positive report from Dr. Barnes, the Review Panel reconvened on 4 October 2018 and made a recommendation for accreditation. The Panel prepared its report, having considered the provider's initial submission and further clarifications.

4. Documentation

DCU Institute of Education adhered to the *Pro Forma for the Submission of Existing Programmes for Review and Professional Accreditation by the Teaching Council* of June 2011, supplying detailed information under all headings. The College also provided several volumes of appendices giving supplementary and background information. The Pro Forma submission extended to 93 pages while the appendices ran to 69 pages.

The Pro Forma submission provided detailed information under three main headings (Inputs, Processes, and Outcomes).

¹ Details of the Panel membership are included at Appendix 1

5. Overall finding

The programme presented for accreditation was the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) Irish Sign Language (ISL) programme, a four-year initial teacher education programme which prepares student teachers to teach in the primary deaf education sector. This programme, which is at level 8 on the National Framework for Qualifications, will run alongside the current Bachelor of Education programme which is accredited by Dublin City University and the Teaching Council, sharing the majority of its modules with that programme.

The students on the BEd ISL pathway will follow the same BEd programme as their hearing peers with the following amendments:

- content on Gaeilge (Irish) and Teagasc na Gaeilge (Teaching of Irish) will be replaced in the suite of modules entitled Language and Literacy/Litearthacht agus Teanga with content on Irish Sign Language and the Teaching of Irish Sign Language.
- the FN156 year-long foundation module in Irish in year 1 will be replaced with a year-long module in Skills for University (covering English in semester 1 and Maths in semester 2).
- minor amendments are made to ED2012 Visual Arts and Music Education to accommodate deaf students on the music education component
- using the existing structure for specialisms within the BEd, students on the BEd ISL pathway will complete a mandatory specialism in deaf education (2 modules in second year, 2 modules in third year and 1 module in fourth year). This specialism will be delivered predominantly through the medium of Irish Sign Language and, while available to other (hearing) students on the BEd, it is understood that students signing up for this specialism must be competent users of ISL.
- an additional Foundation in Humanities and Science module will be made available (compulsory for BEd ISL students). This will be an optional module for all students on the BEd. but Irish Sign Language interpretation will be needed to accommodate hearing students.
- Taking into account the above, the key difference between the B.Ed. and the B.Ed (ISL) was identified by the Panel as follows: the Irish language and Irish pedagogy modules in the existing B.Ed. will be replaced by Irish Sign Language modules. This will mean that graduates of the proposed programme will not be in a position to teach Irish in primary schools.

6. Commendations

Arising from its review of the programme, the Review Panel:

- noted that opportunities for students to study deaf education in greater depth is a central feature of the programme and will lead to graduates who are highly knowledgeable and skilled in the field of deaf education
- complimented the programme provider on a well-prepared and innovative programme
- sees the programme as having the potential to become an international leader/model in the area of deaf education
- recommended that the programme should be promoted and widely disseminated as it may well attract international interest.

7. Clarifications

The Review Panel suggested that clarification should be provided on the following points:

- will it be possible for an applicant who is not deaf/hard of hearing to apply through the ISL route?
- Table 1: all credit counts should be placed under the relevant specialism
- Section 1.2. (a) 7. this point could be broadened to reflect the duality of being a member of an ethnic group and also being deaf/hard of hearing
- Table 23 should also reflect research findings from 2010 to date
- Appendix A (Module Descriptors) Music Education 1. Song Arrangement: Is 'singing' or 'signing' being referred to?

(Appendix 2 outlines responses from the programme provider to the clarifications sought)

9. Recommendation

The Review Panel recommends that the B.Ed. (ISL) be granted accreditation. While every effort should be made to meet the normal Teaching Council requirements in regard to School Placement, the Review Panel recognises that a degree of flexibility and reasonable accommodations may have to be made from time to time in the case of the B.Ed. (ISL) and recommends that any such flexibility should be subject to Council (Executive) approval.

Appendix 1: Review Panel Membership

Independent Review Panel Chair

Professor Áine Hyland is former Vice-President and Professor Emerita of Education at University College Cork and a member of the Royal Irish Academy. Professor Hyland is a leading authority on educational history, curriculum theory and educational policy and has published widely in these areas.

Teacher Education Expert

Professor Sheelagh Drudy is Professor Emeritus of Education at University College Dublin and former Head of the UCD School of Education. She is a former teacher, educational researcher and teach educator. She has researched and published numerous books and peer-reviewed papers on education including the sociology of education, gender, class, teacher education and inclusion.

Teacher

Mr. Patrick McVicar is a former post-primary school Principal and former member of the ACCS Executive and of the Teaching Council. Mr. Mc Vickar has also served on a number of NCCA committees including Course Committees for Technical Graphics, Design & Communication Graphics and the Board of Studies for Technological Subjects.

Rapporteur

Ms. Phil Fox is Head of Initial Teacher Education in the Teaching Council. Ms. Fox is a Post-primary teacher with over 14 years experience teaching of Gaeilge and History. Ms. Fox was previously seconded to the Professional Development Service for Teachers.

Appendix 2: Clarifications sought at section 7, responses from programme provider

Clarification request: will it be possible for an applicant who is not deaf/hard of hearing to apply through the ISL route?

Response: entry to this route will be restricted to those who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Clarification request: Table 1 all credit counts should be placed under the relevant specialism

Response: the table in the programme submission was amended to reflect the above.

Clarification request: Section 1.2. (a) 7. this point could be broadened to reflect the duality of being a member of an ethnic group and also being deaf/hard of hearing

Response: the recommendation in section 1.2 refers to the recommendations of the original accreditation board for the B.Ed (not the B.Ed ISL). Subsequently, it is not referring to applicants who are D/HH.

Clarification Request: Table 23 should also reflect research findings from 2010 to date

Response: a table outlining research outputs was provided to the Council

Clarification request: Appendix A (Module Descriptors) Music Education 1. Song Arrangement: Is 'singing' or 'signing' being referred to?

Response: Irish Sign Language 'singing' is being referred to, pointing to the creative performance of Sign Language singing, or music-signing, often in unison with a choir as an expressive medium.