Report of the Review Panel to the Teaching Council following a review of a Further Education Initial Teacher Education programme

An Chomhairle
Mhúinteoireachta
The Teaching Council

Name of HEI: **University College Cork (UCC)**

Name of Programme: **Postgraduate Diploma in Further Adult & Community Education (PDFACE)**

Date: **September 2023**

Contents

1. Programme Overview

This report relates to the review of the following programme provided by University College Cork (UCC):

Postgraduate Diploma in Further Adult & Community Education (PDFACE), hereinafter referred to as 'the programme'

2. Background

The Teaching Council is the statutory body charged with setting the standards for entry to the teaching profession and ensuring that these standards are upheld.

In accordance with Section 38 of The Teaching Council Act, 2001,

(1) the Council shall, from time to time:

> (a) review and accredit programmes of teacher education and training provided by institutions of higher education and training in the State,

> (b) review the standards of education and training appropriate to a person entering a programme of teacher education and training, and

> (c) review the standards of knowledge, skill and competence required for the practice of teaching,

> and shall advise the Minister and, as it considers appropriate, the institutions concerned.

(2) The Council shall consult with the Minister and with such institutions of higher education and training in the State as it considers appropriate for the purpose of the performance of its functions under *subsection (1)*.

The Teaching Council's role in relation to the review and accreditation of programmes of 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 for any profession is a judgement as to whether a programme prepares one for entry into that profession.

The review and accreditation of programmes of teacher education by The Teaching Council provides 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 which are aligned with the values and professional dispositions and the 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 has published its *Further Education: General and Programme Requirements for the Accreditation of Teacher Education Qualifications* (March 2011).

3. Statement with regard to the Freedom of Information Acts, 1997 and 2003 (FOI Act) and 2003 (FOI Act)

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 made available on the Council's website, www.teachingcouncil.ie.

The FOI Act is designed to allow public access to information held by public bodies which is not routinely available through other sources. The Teaching Council complies fully with the terms of the FOI Act and access to this document may be sought in accordance with that Act. It should be noted that access to information under the FOI Act is subject to certain exemptions and one or more of those exemptions may apply in relation to some or all of this report.

4. The Review Process

The review of the **Postgraduate Diploma in Further Adult & Community Education (PDFACE)** took place between February 2023 and July 2023 in accordance with the Council's Procedures for the Professional Accreditation of Programmes of ITE. The process was formally initiated when the Review Panel (hereinafter referred to as 'the panel') was appointed by the Teaching Council's Director with Prof Gary Granville as Panel Chair and Dr Anne O'Connor Walsh and Ms Clare Blackwell as panel members.

The panel met on 18 April 2023 to consider the submission having reviewed the documentation. They requested clarifications from UCC on 3 May 2023. UCC responded to this request on 12 May 2023.

The panel conducted a site visit to UCC on 18 May 2023. This was also attended by the rapporteur and Teaching Council staff. The panel had a tour of the facilities and met representatives from the University Management Team, the Programme Team and the Teaching Placement Team.

The panel met the following personnel:

- Vice President of Learning & Teaching, UCC
- Director, ACE
- Assistant Director, ACE
- Finance and Operations Manager, ACE
- Head of the School of Education
- School of Education Manager
- Head of the Skills Centre
- Programme Director)
- Course Coordinator
- Lecturer and Teaching Placement tutor
- Teaching Placement tutor
- Lecturer, CIRTL
- Lecturer, ACE
- Lecturer, Adult Education Officer, CETB

The panel met to discuss the clarifications received and agree recommendations. The report was drafted and issued to UCC for a 30-day feedback period. This report sets out the overall findings of the panel. The report was finalised when the final response was received from UCC.

The Chair will present the report to the Education Committee at their next meeting. They may decide to; accredit the programme, accredit the programme with requirements or not accredit the programme.

5. Documentation

The documentation submitted by UCC conformed to *the Pro Forma for the submission of programmes of initial teacher education (further education) for accreditation by the Teaching Council*. Key areas of focus were:

- Academic Accreditation
- Programme description (NFQ level, ECTS, Duration, Entry Requirements, RPL policy)
- Conceptual framework
- Programme aims
- Programme design and structure
- Programme content
- Module Descriptors
- Teaching, learning and assessment strategies
- Practical teaching programme
- Staffing
- Facilities
- Student support and guidance systems
- Communication and decision-making structures
- Financial resources
- Programme learning outcomes

7. Overall Findings

The Postgraduate Diploma in Further, Adult & Community Education (PDFACE) is informed by a long history of teacher education at UCC and an equally impressive history of imaginative involvement in adult and community education. As such, it is a welcome addition to the suite of further education ITE programmes on offer to the FET sector. It is delivered by UCC through a collaboration between the School of Education and the Centre for Adult Continuing Education (ACE).

The panel met the programme team on a site visit to UCC and were particularly impressed with the broad range of expertise and professional experience of the programme team, who expressed a clear commitment to, and enthusiasm for the programme. They demonstrated an awareness of the diverse needs of their target student cohort and a commitment to ensuring that the appropriate supports are put in place to allow their students to succeed. This was further highlighted during the tour of the facilities where the Teaching Research Laboratory (which offers flexible access arrangements for FET students) and the UCC Skills Centre (which offers dedicated workshops to students) were showcased. The panel was also impressed by evidence of supportive relationships with key external partners, notably the ETB.

7.1. General Requirements

Requirement	Details	Requirement addressed
7.1.1 Programme Description	The programme is a NFQ level 9 Postgraduate Diploma in Further, Adult & Community Education (PDFACE) awarded by University College Cork (UCC). It is a part-time programme and takes place over three semesters and includes 100 hours of teaching practice with an additional 30 hours of observation. The programme carries a total of 60 ECTS and adopts a blended learning approach with face to face and online lectures and tutorials employed. *"The aim of this programme is to provide students (i.e., FET student teachers) with the knowledge, understanding, skills and professional attitudes and values to teach in Further Education (FE) and Adult and Community Education settings."*	Yes
7.1.2 Purpose of Qualification	The submission confirmed that the programme aims to provide a professional teaching qualification in the Further and Adult and Community Education Sector for existing practising teachers (who may not have a formal teaching qualification) and those wishing to enter the FET sector.	Yes
7.1.3 Accreditation	UCC provided evidence that the programme was academically accredited on 25 October 2022.	Yes
7.1.4 Qualification Level on the National Framework of Qualifications	The programme is Level 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications.	Yes
7.1.5 ECTS Credits	The programme carries 60 ECTS.	Yes
7.1.6 Entry Requirements	The submission confirmed that the entry requirements for acceptance on the programme are aligned with the Teaching Council Route 3 (Further Education) registration requirements and include a combination of recognition of academic qualifications and recognised prior learning (RPL).	Yes

	Applicants will be made aware of the Teaching Council Route 3 registration requirements prior to entry on the programme.	
	Recognition of prior learning will be in accordance with UCC's policy and aligned with the specific learning outcomes of the programme. An up-to-date CV and references will be required to be furnished and an interview may be arranged.	
	The submission demonstrated that there are appropriate garda vetting and fitness to practice policies and procedures in place to ensure that applicants offered a place on the programme go through the appropriate clearance procedures.	

7.2 The Programme

Requirement	Details	Requirement addressed
7.2.1 Conceptual Framework	The submission confirmed that the conceptual framework for the programme has a strong research base and reflects UCC's principles, beliefs and values about teacher education and FET educators in particular.	Yes
	"Successful adult educators engage the fullest variety and experiences of lifelong learner cohorts. They are particularly specialized in working on and researching the 'lived' experiences of adult learners in increasingly multicultural and other 'superdiverse' educational settings and they are committed to critiquing and advancing conditions for those who are marginalised - politically, socially, culturally and educationally."	
	It provides a rationale for the model of teacher education adopted, which is informed by a long history of teacher education at UCC and the ambition to provide a full suite of lifelong learning ITE provision.	
	"We see our UCC PDFACE programme promoting the ethical standards of the wider teaching profession and developing the breadth of knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours appropriate to beginning and practising FET educators."	

	The submission detailed how the conceptual framework is reflected in the programme aims and how core values are integrated into the programme. *"These values are implicit in a commitment to self-directed learning, as well as professional community engagement."*	
7.2.2 Programme Aims	The submission demonstrated how the programme aims are aligned with the conceptual framework and reflected in specific learning outcomes such as:- *"design and deliver a programme, course or module appropriate for the learners, including teaching methods, assessment and evaluation modes, in accordance with the requirements of the relevant awarding body."*	Yes
7.2.3 Programme Design & Structure	The submission confirmed that the programme is a NFQ Level 9, 60 ECTS award delivered on a part-time basis over three semesters through a blended delivery model. Students will participate in regular on-campus workshops at weekends and undertake supervised professional teaching placement, fulfilling the 100-hour teaching practice requirement. UCC confirmed that the online component of the programme will be delivered through UCC's virtual learning platform 'Canvas' and furnished a draft student timetable. The submission demonstrated how student teachers' meaningful engagement with the programme will be facilitated and encouraged. It detailed how an induction survey will be sent to first year students to build a picture of *"who they are and what areas of FET they represent"* and the programme team will incorporate this information into programme design and delivery. *"Our programme offers a meaningful – professional-based – curriculum with thoughtful consideration given to the types of authentic learning methods and assessment standards that adult learners need to meet 'out there'"* The submission detailed how the programme will develop students' attitudes, values and	Yes

professional dispositions as set out in the Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers.

"Guided by and through the Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers (2016), student teachers are encouraged to develop professional dispositions and competences that cater – first and foremost - for the 'situated' adult learner".

The submission confirmed that students will be encouraged to become life-long learners throughout the programme.

"students will be reminded of the need for them to continue learning post-graduation in order to keep abreast of sectoral developments at a national and international level, as well as broader societal issues that may influence the sector and their prospective students"

The review process determined that the programme will facilitate the development of reflective practices by students.

"student teachers will reflect continuously on their teaching, learning, and assessment and will be prompted to a) highlight what they are doing well, b) highlight what areas they need to improve upon, and c) advance actions on what it is they can do differently in the interest of furthering their personal/professional development"

Students will maintain an *"electronic placement portfolio"* with a section dedicated to weekly reflections.

7.2.4 Programme Content	The submission included an overview of each semester of the programme and module descriptors and indicative reading lists for each module.	Yes
7.2.5 Teaching, Learning & Assessment Strategies	The submission detailed how the models of teaching, learning and assessment employed on the programme are informed by *"andragogical philosophy and established literature"* including lectures, workshops, peer presentations, small group work, discussions, self-directed learning, reflections, portfolio entries, feedback events, microteaching and online learning.	Yes

	"A variety of assessment methods are employed in this programme - teaching placement portfolios; online reflective learning journals and workshops; group and individual research projects, as well as peer presentations/placement events; discussion boards; and written essays"	
7.2.6 Practical Teaching Programme	The submission outlined the teaching placement element of the programme which included reference to the number and different types of placements. Students complete two "Professional Teaching Placement" modules (ED6611, a 10 ECTS module in Year 1 & ED6612, a 15 ECTS module in Year 2). UCC referenced the diverse placement settings on offer, the qualifications of the placement tutors, the relationship with co-operating teachers, as well as how school placement is assessed and coordinated. They also outlined student preparation for placement and provisions for collective de-briefing after placement. *"Student teachers will prepare and teach lessons in a supported environment commensurate with their stage of development."* *"Teaching Placement provides the student teacher with the opportunity to learn the competencies needed to successfully confront the challenges of FET teaching."* Grade descriptors for marking teaching placements were clearly set out in the submission.	Yes
7.2.7 Staffing	The submission included details of the qualifications and expertise of the programme team who are comprised of staff from both the School of Education and the Centre for Adult Continuing Education in UCC. *"The School of Education will act as the academic anchor school for the programme and as such, will provide academic oversight and governance. ACE will administer the programme and support the students through the programme cycle from recruitment to graduation"* The submission confirmed that there are opportunities for staff to engage in professional	Yes

	development courses and access a substantial suite of training and development programmes. The projected student staff ratio based on a maximum cohort of 32 students on both years of the programme is 8:1. Staff are *"carefully chosen to carry out their specialist academic and practitioner-based functions and directly and indirectly contribute to the 9 learning outcomes of the programme"* The professionalism and enthusiasm of the programme team was evident on the panel's site visit to UCC. They showed a lot of passion for the programme and the FET sector generally.	
7.2.8 Facilities	The submission confirmed that there are appropriate facilities available to support research, teaching and learning on the programme. The panel was particularly impressed with the library, the UCC Skills Centre and the new Teaching Research Laboratory which they viewed on the site visit to UCC. These facilities have the potential to become an invaluable resource for students on this programme.	Yes
7.2.9 Student Support & Guidance Systems	The submission provided details of the student support and guidance systems available to students on the programme to include a dedicated programme co-ordinator. It was clear from our conversations on the site visit that the programme team are very mindful and aware of the potential challenges for adult learners and have built in specific supports for students to assist them to succeed on the programme. The panel was particularly impressed with the dedicated workshops run by the UCC Skills Centre. *"These workshops are delivered in the evenings and at weekends to facilitate adult learners with family or professional commitments during the week."* Students are assigned a teaching placement tutor at the beginning of the programme to *"holistically"* support their development.	Yes

	"Each tutor is a qualified and experienced teacher, ever-mindful of the diverse learning strengths, needs, interests and abilities of a diverse range of adult learners"	
7.2.10 Communication & Decision-making Structures	The review process determined that there are appropriate structures in place to facilitate the participation of staff and students in relevant deliberation and decision-making processes. The submission detailed the quality assurance measures in place on the programme and referenced a programme committee team which will produce an annual report and be responsible for the development of the programme going forward.	Yes
7.2.11 Financial Resources	The review process determined that the programme is adequately resourced to ensure that programme aims are met.	Yes

7.3 Programme Outcomes

The submission demonstrated how the programme is designed to enable graduates to meet expected learning outcomes as specified in the *Further Education: General and Programme Requirements for the Accreditation of Teacher Education Qualifications*.

Learning Outcome (LO)	Details	Learning Outcome addressed
Values	The submission confirmed that student teachers will be expected to know and subscribe to the core values as set out in the Teaching Council's Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers. *"He/She/They should be able to demonstrate these values, showing that they serve as an ethical guide to personal/professional identity and practice; reminding others in the educational community (as well as in the wider public sphere) of their understanding and expectations of the teaching profession; and exemplifying the legal and professional standards required of an innovative community of educators who are charged with the care and responsibility of forming and future citizens (including those more vulnerable members of our society)"*	Yes
Professional Conduct	The submission demonstrated that student teachers will have the opportunity to discuss and	Yes

	reflect on the standards of professional conduct and the implications for his or her practice. *"…student teachers will undertake a critical discourse analysis of the Codes of Professional Conduct for Teachers with a view to discerning the key personal/professional 'messages' therein and undertaking a critical reflection and write-up of the key challenges to, and requisite changes, to existing knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and behaviours."*	
Communication & Relationships	The review process determined that student teachers will be expected to develop strategies for communicating effectively & developing positive relationships with all stakeholders. *"…communicative and relational work is built on mutual trust and respect and on a deep appreciation that educational access, accessibility and outcomes are often predicated on wider values of respect, dignity and care that are held and shown to shape adult learners' authentic opportunities for personal/professional 'success' (in the broadest meaning of the term)."*	Yes
Teaching, Learning & Assessment	The submission demonstrated that the programme is designed to allow students to meet expected learning outcomes related to teaching, learning and assessment. *"A more structured and managed learner-centred approach is expected to be refined over time where learners have more 'space and time' to direct their own work and present to others their 'discovery' outcomes from pair/peer focused activities."*	Yes
Subject Knowledge, Curriculum Process & Content	The submission confirmed that student teachers will be expected to have an understanding of designing and implementing a curriculum on completion of the programme. *"The graduate teacher must be able to deeply engage in intra- inter- and trans- disciplinary ways of 'knowing and doing' and should be able to design and implement and revise (at modular and/or programme level) a curriculum plan of study that is philosophically and methodologically appropriate for specific adult learner cohorts."*	Yes

Group Management & Organisation	That student teachers will have the ability to make best use of the environments and settings in which they will be teaching, to support their learners, is an important learning outcome of the programme. *"…the graduate teacher should – making full use of the centre's/institution's 'wraparound' learning services and facilities and latest policies and practices, as well as established and changing cultural, supports - be able to develop a caring, nurturing, collaborative, enjoyable and productive learning climate."*	Yes
The Teacher as Lifelong learner	The submission demonstrated that the programme will encourage student teachers to reflect on their practice and see themselves as lifelong learners. *"Being helpfully responsive to guidance and advice, and constructively critical of one's changing practices, are necessary (inter-dependent and self-regulating) attributes of the lifelong learner."*	Yes
Knowledge & Understanding of Education & The Education System.	The submission confirmed that the programme seeks to ensure that student teachers develop knowledge and understanding of education and the FET sector. *"…the graduate teacher ought to develop a knowledge and understanding of contemporary debates about the nature and purpose of FET work and the ways in which broader social, economic and policy contexts frame its purpose and practice"*	Yes

8. Recommendation

Having regard to the documentation that was submitted, the panel adjudges that the programme meets the standards set down by the Teaching Council in *Further Education: General and Programme Requirements for the Accreditation of Teacher Education Qualifications.*

Accordingly, the panel recommends to the Teaching Council that the programme be granted accreditation.

Appendix I – Review Panel Members

Panel Chair: **Professor Gary Granville**

Gary Granville is Emeritus Professor of Education and former Head of School of Education at the National College of Art and Design (NCAD), Dublin. He was Chair of the Forum for Heads of Teacher Education in Ireland and has served on Teaching Council working groups for accreditation of ITE and FE programmes. His research and professional activities include arts education and creativity, curriculum and assessment policy and educational evaluation.

Panel Member: **Dr Anne O'Connor Walsh**

Now retired, Anne Walsh was formerly Academic Coordinator of Adult Training and Education Studies, Centre of Adult Learning and Professional Development, University of Galway. In her role she had responsibility for a range of blended learning professional development programmes including undergraduate and post-graduate studies in training, further education teaching, TEFL, CPD and leadership. She has served on the QQI Board and has participated in Teaching Council working groups for accreditation of FE programmes. Her interests lie in exploring professionalism in teaching, adult engagement in education, the use of technology in educational practices and the lifelong learning/employability debate.

Panel Member: **Ms Clare Blackwell**

Clare Blackwell is a Teacher of Visual Art, Design, and Digital Media at Dunboyne College of Further Education, Co Meath. Clare's background includes over 12 years of experience across further education & training, including Ballyfermot & Limerick Colleges of Further Education, as well as experience in youth & community and post-primary education settings. Clare holds a B.A. in Design & Higher Diploma in Education from Limerick School of Art & Design, with a Postgraduate Diploma in Creative Digital Media from TU Dublin.