An Chomhairle
Mhúinteoireachta
The Teaching Council

**Final Report of the Review Panel to the Teaching Council
following a review of the reconceptualised programme
submitted for accreditation by University College Dublin.**

Professional Master of Education

14 October 2013

Contents

1. 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, the Council shall:

(a) review and accredit the 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.

The Teaching Council's role in relation to the review and accreditation of programmes of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) is distinct from the academic accreditation which programmes also undergo. Academic accreditation is based on the suitability of a programme for the award of a degree/diploma/master, 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 ITE 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 will achieve programme aims and learning outcomes which are aligned with the values, professional dispositions, and the standards of teaching, knowledge, skill and competence that are central to the practice of teaching.

In order to guide its review of programmes, the Teaching Council has published *Initial Teacher Education: Strategy for the Review and Accreditation of Programmes* (hereinafter referred to as the Council's review strategy). That document sets out the process by which programmes are reviewed.

In carrying out reviews, the Council is mindful of its *Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education* which sets out its vision for teacher education at all stages of the continuum – ITE, Induction, and Continuing Professional Development. Published in 2011, the policy highlights the evolving and dynamic context for teaching and the increasingly complex role of teachers in Ireland today. The policy states that "...the time is now right for a thorough and fresh look at teacher education to ensure that tomorrow's teachers are competent to meet the challenges that they face and are life-long learners, continually adapting over the course of their careers to enable them to support their students' learning." It further states that innovation, integration and improvement should underpin all stages of the continuum.

In parallel with the development by the Council of its Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education, the Minister for Education and Skills initiated a national consultation process on the theme of improving literacy and numeracy. This culminated in 2011 with the publication of *Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life* as the national strategy to improve literacy and numeracy standards among children and young people in the education system. The strategy emphasised teachers' professional development and proposed that the duration of initial teacher education (ITE) programmes should be extended and that programme content should be reconceptualised.

The Teaching Council, having established an Advisory Group on Initial Teacher Education, developed criteria to be observed and guidelines to be followed by providers in reconceptualising programmes of initial teacher education at primary and post-primary levels. They were approved by the Council and published in June 2011 as *Initial Teacher Education: Criteria and Guidelines for Programme Providers* (hereinafter referred to as the Council's criteria). These relate to a range of areas, including programme design, areas of study, duration of programmes, the numbers and qualifications of staff, facilities and resources. As such, they form the bridge between the Council's policy and the development and implementation of reconceptualised programmes. Significantly, the criteria:

- prescribe those areas of study which will be mandatory in programmes, including numeracy and literacy, behaviour management, parents in education, ICT and inclusive education
- set out for the first time the expected learning outcomes for graduates of all ITE programmes
- propose raising the minimum requirements for persons entering programmes of ITE at primary level and a literacy and numeracy admissions test for mature entrants
- require a 15:1 student-staff ratio
- call for the development of new and innovative school placement models, involving active collaboration between HEIs and schools, and an enhanced role for the teaching profession in the provision of structured support for student teachers
- require that student teachers should spend at least 25% of the programme on school placement, and that such placements should be in a minimum of two schools
- require increased emphasis on research, portfolio work and other strategic priorities.

While recognising the inter-related nature of all aspects of programmes of teacher education, the criteria and guidelines are categorised under Inputs, Processes and Outcomes. All three dimensions have an important bearing on the quality of teacher education. The required Inputs and Outcomes are clearly elaborated in the document; while the Processes are less prescriptive to allow HEIs the freedom to develop the processes which best suit their individual situations.

Providers of existing programmes have been asked to reconceptualise their programmes in line with the revised criteria and to submit them for accreditation. This report relates to the review of the following programme provided by University College Dublin – the Professional Master of Education - hereinafter referred to as 'the programme'.

2.   The Review Process

The review of the Professional Master of Education took place between May and June, 2013, in accordance with the Council's review strategy. The process was formally initiated when the Review Panel (hereinafter referred to as 'the panel') was appointed by the Teaching Council's director, with Professor John Coolahan as Chairperson.[1] To assist and support the work of the panel, Dr Barney O'Reilly was appointed as Rapporteur. His functions included liaison with University College Dublin maintaining records of meetings, and drafting and finalising the panel's report in conjunction with the panel Chairperson. The panel was also supported in its deliberations by the Director and staff of the Teaching Council.

Documentation relating to the application was submitted to the Teaching Council by University College Dublin (hereinafter referred to as 'UCD') in April 2013, following academic accreditation. The panel met initially on 2 May 2013 to give preliminary consideration to the UCD submission. Following this meeting, individual members of the panel reviewed the submission and circulated their comments and questions to other members of the panel. Following consideration of the documentation and a collation of the initial views of the members of the panel, further panel meetings were held on 14 May and 18 June, 2013 (two meetings).

The panel members visited UCD on 18 June 2013 and engaged in discussions with the Head and members of the School of Education, UCD, as well as the UCD Registrar and Deputy President and the Principal of the College of Human Sciences.[2] The visit had as its primary objective the clarification of issues arising from the documentation. Prior to the meetings, the Rapporteur communicated a set of issues for clarification to the School of Education, UCD. The responses provided by the School of Education to these requests for clarification provided the main agenda for the meeting. The visit schedule is included in Appendix 2. Further to UCD receiving the draft of the final report of the Review Panel, in accordance with Section 7 of the Council's review strategy the panel would like to thank UCD for providing further updates and clarification on the non-pay budget and staff/student ratio, and submitting revised programme documentation, taking account of matters raised during the course of the review.

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[1] Details of the Review Panel membership are included in Appendix I
[2] A list of the staff members present is included in Appendix II

3.   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.

4.   Documentation

The documentation submitted by UCD was in accordance with the template provided by the Teaching Council in the Pro Forma and Guidelines which accompany the Council's review strategy. Key areas of focus were:

4.1 Inputs

Conceptual Framework
The Programme
Programme Aims
Programme Design
Areas of Study
Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategies
School Placement
The Duration and Nature of the Programme
Student Intake
Staffing
Facilities
Student Support and Guidance Systems
Communication and Decision-Making Structures
Financial Resources

4.2 Processes

Teaching, Learning and Assessment Approaches
Engagement of Student Teachers with the Programme
Engagement of Student Teachers with Staff and with other Student Teachers
Progression within the Programme
Personal and Social Development
Development of Professional Attitudes, Values and Dispositions
Lifelong Learning
Reflective Processes

4.3 Outcomes

Knowledge-Breadth/Knowledge-Kind
Know-How & Skill-Range/Know-How & Skill-Selectivity
Competence-Context/Competence-Role
Competence-Learning to Learn
Competence-Insight

5.   *Overall Findings*

Having regard to the documentation that was initially submitted, together with the supplementary documentation that was provided in response to the panel's queries, and subsequent discussions with programme staff, the panel adjudges that the programme satisfies the criteria set down by the Teaching Council in its *Criteria and Guidelines* and the methodology and other entry requirements set down in its curricular subject requirements. Accordingly, it recommends to the Teaching Council that the programme be granted accreditation, subject to the stipulations which are set out in Section 8 (see below).

The commendations in section 6 below relate to areas of particular strength which the panel has identified.

With regard to the recommendations in section 7, the panel suggests that the Teaching Council should require the university to set out and submit, within twelve months of receiving the final review report, its proposals for implementing the recommendations. It further recommends that the Teaching Council should prioritise those areas to be accorded particular attention when the programme falls due for re-accreditation. The panel welcomes the assurances given by UCD during the course of the review process that these issues will be appropriately addressed, and indeed, it has been advised that action has already been taken in relation to a number of the recommendations.

The stipulations in section 8 relate to areas which the panel believes to be of such strategic importance to the programme that accreditation should be subject to those stipulations being met. Therefore, the panel recommends that the Teaching Council should require UCD to set out, and submit to the Teaching Council within two months of receiving the final review report, its proposals for implementing the stipulations.

In the case of the national issues raised in section 9 of this report, the panel recommends that the Council engage in dialogue on those issues at national level.

In view of the reconceptualisation of the new programme with regard to content and processes, the panel recommends that UCD submit a progress report to the Teaching Council in Spring 2016, prior to a third cohort of students being admitted to the two-year programme. The Teaching Council should check that all programme commitments are being fulfilled prior to extending approval of programme accreditation.

Therefore, the panel proposes that accreditation of the programme would have a lifespan of two years, with a further three years accreditation to be approved subject to the Council's satisfaction with the progress report referenced above.

6. Commendations

Having regard to:

1. the documentation which was submitted, and
2. information gleaned during the visit to the college/meeting with HEI,

the panel has noted a number of particular strengths of the programme, as follows:

6.1 Engagement with the review process

UCD staff is to be commended for its professionalism, collegial and collaborative approach to the work of the panel and willingness to accommodate the panel in relation to the arrangement of the visit and meetings.

The panel appreciates that UCD School of Education agreed to make adjustments to its submission in the light of the queries and discussions at the visit of panel members to the institution.

6.2 Inputs

The UCD submission is impressive and indicative of a lot of careful thought and planning by the School of Education staff. It is very much in line with Teaching Council policy. The School of Education has grasped the significance of the historical juncture for teacher education. The submission is reflective of a holistic philosophy of teacher education and is well based on the research literature.

In particular, the panel commends:

- the conceptualisation of the programme which is admirably articulated, with a good focus on the requirements of teacher educators themselves and takes account of leading national and international research;

- the Key Principles of the proposed programme, together with the emphasis on "Reflective Review and Critique" which are well formulated and concisely expressed;

- the programme aims which are appropriate and well formulated;

- the Professional Practice portfolio which places the portfolio at the centre of learning. This module should be very useful for participants and should assist in connecting theory and practice;

- the way in which the mandatory areas of study, as set out by the Teaching Council, have been integrated into the programme

- the significance attached to the 'social trustee responsibility' of the professional teacher and the centrality attached to "...education, particularly compulsory education as a public good".

6.3 Outcomes

In addition, the panel commends the statement of Outcomes which are clear, well expressed and in line with Teaching Council's aspirations.

7.   Recommendations

Having regard to:

1.   the documentation which was submitted, and

2.   information gleaned during the meeting with UCD School of Education representatives,

the panel has noted a number of areas of the programme which it recommends be developed. They are as follows:

7.1 Inputs

7.1.1   Areas of Study

The panel recommends that more specific and explicit provision be made in programme modules (for example in EDUC 3: Curriculum and Assessment, and in Subject Pedagogy modules) for the development of student competencies in assessment *of* learning and assessment *for* learning.

7.1.2   School Placement and School Partnership

While acknowledging the work already underway by the School of Education, the panel recommends that a structured programme be outlined and undertaken to develop school placement policies, procedures and partnerships.

In addition, the panel recommends that the School of Education sustains its efforts to ensure that student teachers are not required to assume the responsibilities for classes as qualified teachers in the course of their school placement.

7.2 Processes

7.2.1   Mode of Programme Delivery:

The panel recommends that the School of Education, building on the commitments outlined in its submission, make more explicit and specific provision for the use of small group and peer-group techniques (including the video analysis of teaching performance) which are resourced adequately) in terms of staff and facilities.

8.   Stipulations

Having regard to:

1.   the documentation which was submitted, and
2.   information gleaned during the meetings with UCD School of Education representatives,

the panel has noted a number of areas of the programme which it considers must be addressed prior to the admission of a second intake to the programme, as follows:

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8.1 Facilities:

The School of Education needs to establish a strong relationship with the University Library with a view to enhancing the availability and usage of appropriate resources and equipment (including ICT) beneficial to the teaching and school placement requirements of ITE students.

8.2 School Placement

That the School of Education restructure the School Placement arrangements by September 2015, when the first cohort of students will enter their second year, so that they incorporate a significant block placement in the second year of the programme, in accordance with Teaching Council requirements.(See Teaching Council (2011) p. 1)

9.   National Issues

Having regard to:

1.   the documentation which was submitted, and
2.   information gleaned during the visit to UCD and meeting with School of Education staff and senior officers of the HEI,

the panel has noted the following issues which it believes merit further attention by the Teaching Council and/or other national stakeholders.

9.1 Teacher Supply

The panel welcomes the fact that the Teaching Council is planning to establish a working group to inform its deliberations in relation to the issue of teacher supply. It understands that that group's terms of reference are currently being developed. In that context, it recommends that:

(a) the Council should facilitate, in association with the relevant stakeholders, the rationalisation of the supply of post-primary subject methodologies across institutions

(b) in line with "20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010- 2030", the teacher supply needs of Irish-medium schools and the teaching of Irish, require the special attention of the Council.

9.2 School Placement

a.   Further to the development of 'Guidelines on School Placement' 1st (draft)Edition (2012), that Council, in conjunction with the Department of Education and Skills, support, encourage and facilitate schools to work in co-operation with HEIs , in the implementation of the vision and the processes for appropriate school placements, as set out in the Draft Guidelines.

b.   The panel recommends that Council and the NCCA clarify the role of the student teacher in school based assessment following Junior Cycle reform.

9.3 Council Pro Forma Accreditation Documentation:

9.3.1 Diversity in the Teaching Profession

The panel recommends that Council consider policy on diversity in the teaching profession, so that it might be more representative of the diverse population served by Irish post-primary schools. In that context, the panel believes it would be helpful were the Council to amend its pro forma documentation for accreditation purposes to require HEIs to indicate policies and procedures in place at HEI level to promote diversity of intake to ITE.

9.3.2. Resource Data Presentation

The panel suggests that Council develop a template for the presentation of the resource data which will facilitate evaluation of the human and financial resources i) required, and ii) committed, for the delivery and support of programmes proposed for accreditation.

9.3.3 Use of ECTS framework in Module Descriptors

The panel suggests that the structure provided by the European Frameworks on Programme Design, and European Transfer Credit System (ECTS) for the presentation of data relating the elements of student workload - *Staff Contact, Independent Study, School Placement, Preparation for Assessment* and *Assessment* - should be considered for more comprehensive use by Council when providing HEIs with Pro Forma documentation for accreditation purposes. (See European Communities (2009) ECTS Users' Guide. p18-19).

Appendix 1 – Review Panel Membership

Chair – Professor John Coolahan.

Dr John Coolahan is Professor Emeritus at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth. He has had extensive involvement in public service, advising the Department of Education and Skills on educational policy and development in Ireland since 1991. In 2007, he produced a position paper for the Teaching Council on "*Thinking and Policies Relating to Teacher Education in Ireland*". He is a former President of the Educational Studies Association of Ireland and former Academic Chairman of the Association for Teacher Education in Europe. He is a co-founder of SCoTENS (Standing Conference on Teacher Education, North and South). He has previously chaired two review panels on behalf of the Teaching Council.

Teacher Educator – Professor Harry McMahon.

Dr Harry McMahon is Professor Emeritus at the University of Ulster where he was Head of School of Education. Dr McMahon was previously an external examiner at University College Dublin, University College Cork, NUI Maynooth and NUI Galway at both M.Ed and Ph.D. levels.

He is a co-founder with Professor John Coolahan of SCoTENS, (Standing Conference on Teacher Education, North and South).

Teaching Council Member – Kieran Christie.

Kieran Christie was elected to the Teaching Council in the Community and Comprehensive schools category. He is a teacher of Materials Technology (Wood), Technology, Technical Graphics and Construction Studies in St. Attracta's Community School, Tubbercurry. He was previously a member of the Technology Syllabus Committees and the Short Course Committee of the NCCA. Kieran was awarded his B.Tech (Ed.) qualification in the University of Limerick.

DES Inspector – Eibhlín Ní Scannláin.

Eibhlín Ní Scannláin is a Post-Primary Inspector in the Department of Education and Skills. She is assigned to the Department's Teacher Education Section and also contributes to the Inspectorate's Literacy, Numeracy, Curriculum and Assessment Unit. She has broad range of experience in school inspection (including the Irish-medium sector), teaching, applied linguistics, assessment, curriculum development and teacher education.

Rapporteur – Dr O'Reilly

Dr. Barney O'Reilly has worked as a second-level teacher and a teacher educator. As CEO of 'Kerry Education Service - *the VEC in Kerry*' until 2011, he has worked as an administrator and as an educational leader for over twenty-five years and participated in education related policy formulation and implementation at a national and a local level. He holds a PhD degree from the University of Edinburgh and continues to be active in policy related research, with a particular interest in issues relating to publicly-managed schools.

Appendix 2 – Visit Schedule - 18 June 2013.

Venue: Roebuck Offices, UCD, Belfield Campus.

10.30am - 12.45pm: Meeting of panel

1.00pm - 1.45pm. : Lunch hosted by School of Education, UCD.

2.00pm - 4.00pm.: Meeting at UCD School of Education

4.00pm - 5.50pm: Meeting of panel

Attendance

UCD:
Prof. Ciaran Sugrue	Head of the School of Education,
Prof. Brian Nolan	College Principal, College of Human Sciences,
Prof. Mark Rogers	Registrar and Deputy President,
Dr Judith Harford	School of Education,
Dr Gerry Mac Ruairc	School of Education,
Dr William Kinsella	School of Education,
Dr Lelia Murtagh	School of Education.

Teaching Council panel :
Prof. John Coolahan	Chair,
Prof. Harry McMahon	Member,
Mr Kieran Christie	Member,
Ms Eibhlín Ni Scannláin	Member,
Dr Barney O'Reilly	Rapporteur.