



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

Name of HEI: **Mary Immaculate College (Thurles)**

Name of Programme: **BA in Education:**

Date: December 2023

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.

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Programme Overview

This report relates to the review of the following programme provided by Mary Immaculate College (Thurles):

BA in Education hereinafter referred to as ‘the programme’.

Background

Céim: Standards for Initial Teacher Education sets out the standards which programmes of initial teacher education in Ireland must meet in order to gain accreditation from the Teaching Council. It is also a benchmark for anybody seeking to register as a teacher in Ireland.

The Teaching Council’s *Procedures for the Professional Accreditation of Programmes of Initial Teacher Education* (hereinafter referred to as the *Procedures*) sets out the process by which programmes are reviewed.

Mary Immaculate College (Thurles) (Thurles) submitted a completed pro forma, toolkits and appendices which mapped the programme against each of the standards outlined in *Céim: Standards for Initial Teacher Education*. The programme was reviewed by the Review Panel following the *Procedures*.

Particular requirements for post-primary programmes

In November 2020, the Council published *The Teaching Council Registration Curricular Subject Requirements (Post-Primary)*, which set out the Council’s revised subject criteria requirements for approved curricular subjects. The requirements may be met through studies incorporated into a concurrent programme of initial teacher education or may be met through undergraduate studies prior to completing a consecutive programme of initial teacher education. This also guides providers of post-primary consecutive programmes in determining suitability of entrants, outlining which curricular subjects, entrants can ultimately be registered to teach, as well as matching students to appropriate methodology modules.

The Review Process

The review of **BA in Education at Mary Immaculate College (Thurles)** took place between April 2023 and November 2023 in accordance with the Council's *Procedures for the Professional Accreditation of Programmes of Initial Teacher Education*.

Step 1 Notification	The Council notified Mary Immaculate College (Thurles) of its intention to review the BA in Education on 15 November 2022.
Step 2 Preliminary Meeting	A preliminary meeting was held between the Council executive staff and Mary Immaculate College (Thurles) on 5 December 2022 to provide an overview of the submission documentation and answer queries from Mary Immaculate College (Thurles).
Step 3 Submission	Mary Immaculate College (Thurles) submitted the proforma and supporting documentation for the BA in Education , on 21 April 2023.
Step 4 Desk-based Review	A desk-based review was conducted by the Council staff on 10 May 2023 and a letter requesting clarifications was sent to Mary Immaculate College (Thurles) on the 19 May 2023. Mary Immaculate College (Thurles) submitted their response on 2 June 2023
Step 5 Appointment of Review Panel	The process was formally initiated when the Review Panel (hereinafter referred to as 'the panel') was appointed by the Teaching Council's director, with Dr Claire Connolly, Ms Mary Dunne, Mr Ciarán Flynn and Ms Eleanor Parks, Prof. Kenneth Muir as panel members. The panel was briefed by Teaching Council staff.
Rapporteur	The review panel was supported in their role by Ms Niamh Harkin as rapporteur. The rapporteur's functions included liaison with Mary Immaculate College (Thurles) 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 external subject experts and by the Director of the Teaching Council and their executive staff nominees.
Step 6 Review panel meeting 1	The panel met on 24 August 2023 to consider the submission. They requested clarifications from Mary Immaculate College (Thurles) on 11 September 2023 Mary Immaculate College (Thurles) responded to this request on 13 October 2023.
Step 7 Engagement with the HEI	The Panel Chair and Rapporteur held a pre-meet with Head of Education and the School placement manger along with a number of programme managers on 16 October 2023 to discuss arrangements for a site visit.

<p>Site Visit</p>	<p>The panel conducted a site visit to Mary Immaculate College (Thurles) on 24 October 2023. This was also attended by the Rapporteur and Teaching Council staff. The panel had a tour of the facilities and met with representatives from the College management team, the programme teams, the school placement team and some students and recent graduates of the programmes.</p> <p>The following attended on behalf of the college:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President MIC • Head of School of Education • Vice President of Academic Affairs • Vice President of Administration & Finance • Dean of Education (Early Childhood & Teacher Education) • Senior Academic Administrator • Business/Accounting lecturer • Mathematics lecturer • Education lecturer • Gaeilge lecturer • Home Economics lecturer • Theology & Religious Studies lecturer • School Placement manager • School Principals • School Placement Tutors • Students and Graduates from the programme
<p>Step 8: Review panel meeting 2</p>	<p>The panel met to consider the clarifications and agree recommendations immediately after the site visit on 24 October 2023.</p>
<p>Step 8 Reporting</p>	<p>The report was drafted and issued to the HEI for the 30-day feedback period.</p> <p>It was finalised when the final response was received from Mary Immaculate College (Thurles).</p>
<p>Step 9 Education Committee</p>	<p>The Chair will present the report at the next meeting of the Education Committee. They may decide to: accredit the programme, accredit the programme with requirements or not accredit the programme.</p>

Overall Findings

The Panel recognises and appreciates the positive, professional engagement of Mary Immaculate College (Thurles)'s leadership and the BA in Education programme team with the review and accreditation process. The Panel praises the deep commitment of the staff to providing high quality Initial Teacher Education in MIC (Thurles).

The BA in Education is a concurrent four-year post-primary undergraduate programme with seven pathways: Business Studies and Accounting, Business Studies and Religious Studies, Gaeilge and Religious Studies, Gaeilge and Business Studies, Mathematics and Gaeilge, Mathematics and Business Studies and the newly introduced BA in Education, Home Economics and Business Studies pathway. The Panel was impressed by the passion and enthusiasm demonstrated by the programme team across the breadth of programme offerings during the site visit which provided the platform to demonstrate connections between areas of study, the layered, spiral approach to learning and placement, as well as some of the innovative practices that had not been demonstrated to full effect in the submission.

With specific regard to the new BA in Education, Home Economics and Business Studies programme pathway the site visit highlighted that working in collaboration with Tipperary Education and Training Board, Archerstown, appropriate programme and subject specific facilities are available to support teaching and learning. The panel recognise the quality of facilities available to support the Home Economics programme and acknowledge this will enhance the skills and knowledge provision of the new programme. The stated College plans to provide similar facilities on the Thurles campus is also acknowledged. MIC Thurles' continued development of the new BA in Education, Home Economics, and Business Studies, including their intention to supporting increased staffing levels is welcomed by the panel.

The panel praises the programme's overall design and structure which demonstrates clear integration of the *Céim: Standards for Initial Teacher Education*. The focus of developing the student as a caring, agentic professional articulated in the conceptual framework, is evident across the content and teaching and learning processes of the programme and was noted in the submission. This was supplemented in discussions during the site visit and the Panel was provided with robust exemplars of opportunities for students to work both locally within the community, and to learn from placements in international settings.

School placement is at the heart of the programme, and this was clear in the professional conversations held during the site visit with the programme and School Placement teams, and reinforced by students, recent graduates, and school representatives. Students are clearly supported and nurtured in their professional learning, and this is evidenced throughout the documentation including connections made between modules, school placement guidelines and expectations shared with schools. The Panel welcomes the culture that has been developed of coaching and supporting students in their development as reflective practitioners, both through the Professional Development Plan and the Professional Hour offered to all throughout the placement period.

Programme Design

	Comment	Standard addressed?
1.1.1 The Programme	The Programme received academic accreditation from MIC and was submitted to the Teaching Council for professional accreditation and is in line with the Council's Registration Regulations 2016.	Yes
1.1.2 Conceptual Framework	<p>The programme is supported by a clearly defined conceptual framework.</p> <p>In the application, Mary Immaculate College (Thurles) demonstrated their 'mission as providing our students with opportunities for social, emotional, intellectual, cultural, religious and spiritual development during their time in MIC. The Teaching Council's <i>Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers</i> (2016) is embedded into our programme as we prepare our students to become competent, assured, creative and caring professionals and active participative citizens with skills necessary to be reflective practitioners, life long learners and teacher researchers. We strive to imbue an ethic of care amongst our students that is action orientated in the face of inequality and injustice at a local and global level.'</p> <p>Mary Immaculate College (Thurles) demonstrated how the programme is informed by research and 'The Teaching Council's <i>Policy of the Continuum of Teacher Education</i> (2011) is integrated into our programme pathways and we are cognisant of the responsibility we have to educate future teachers who have professional knowledge, skills and values that are reflective of the high-status teachers and teaching occupy in Ireland. '</p> <p>They demonstrated the core idea that being and becoming a teacher is a lifelong process involving knowledge and skills as well as the development of teacher voice and agency and a commitment to the needs of all learners and the <i>Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers</i>.</p> <p>We are therefore keenly aware of the importance of educating future teachers who recognise their responsibility to provide an optimum educational experience for all. Timperley's (2015) 'adaptive expertise' reflects our vision for students and the beginning of their career as an NQT, moving from a passive stance where others try to improve their practice to active orientation where individuals develop agency for their own improvement (Timperley, 2015:7).</p>	Yes

	<p>The application demonstrated how the conceptual framework provides a rationale for the model of ITE which has been adopted and how it enables student teachers while on placement to demonstrate the link between the sites of practice (HEI and School) with ‘the links between college and school are developed and supported through a variety of approaches, such as: the school placement focus of many of the modules; all course lecturers are assigned as placement tutors to students on school placement; the recent post-primary school-based experience of some educational lecturers; methodology modules are taught and led by experienced and practicing post-primary school teachers; and links with school cooperating teachers, mentors and middle leaders through the MIC Thurles postgraduate course on <i>Middle Leadership and Mentoring.</i>’</p> <p>The submission shows how school placement is the fulcrum of the continuum of teacher education and how key themes are revisited over the programme.</p> <p>The review process determined that the submission demonstrates how the professional studies aspect of the programme gives student teachers sufficient opportunities to actively learn from practising teachers about relevant and innovative methodologies, appropriate to their practice.</p> <p>‘Students encounter 4 different practicing teachers across their two modules of methodology classes. At the end of placement in year 2 students are much more attuned to the challenges and opportunities teaching has to offer. By year 4 they will have been in 3 different educational settings and are primed to maximise their engagement with their methodology tutors.’</p>	
1.1.3 Programme Aims	<p>The review process determined that the submission clearly defines the aims of the programme, demonstrating where the aims are closely aligned with the conceptual framework and are reflected in specific learning outcomes.</p> <p>‘A key aim for the BA in Education programme at MIC Thurles is the development of professionals who are committed to promoting rich, flexible, creative learner-centred environments, where pupils are active agents in the learning process. In addition, it is vital to support the general aims of post-primary education within the context of each individual pupil's social and cultural background, development, potential, learning and the multiple forms of understanding the pupil brings to the classroom...This aligns well with the central thrust of our conceptual framework which states that we seek to educate teachers who are flexible and adaptable and above all, have a deeply held conviction of the privileged</p>	Yes

	<p>role they occupy in the lives of pupils and the responsibility they have to those same pupils, parents, and broader society.’</p> <p>The application demonstrated how the programme caters for curriculum development, to include the learning outcomes-based curricula and national priorities.</p> <p>‘Mary Immaculate College (Thurles) modules are designed around carefully crafted learning outcomes which inform the content and the design of assessment of each given module. As such, students experience a learning outcomes-based curricula as learners while also exploring the nature and design of such curricula in their education and pedagogy modules to enable them to apply these principles as educators. Students are supported to be both curriculum implementers but also curriculum designers and this aim is assisted by staff who are accommodated to work on a range of activities led by the Department of Education, NCCA, NCSE and Teaching Council.’</p> <p>Mary Immaculate College (Thurles) has demonstrated how the programme will enable newly qualified teachers to facilitate quality teaching and learning for all pupils, how it prepares student teachers for teaching, learning, reflective practices, and assessment in their schools, and prepares them for entry to their professional role.</p> <p>The application demonstrates how the programme aims foster student teachers’ agency and mind-set to be open to professional growth and learning over the course of their careers, to reflect on their own professional learning and that of their pupils, and to support their pupils in achieving their full potential.</p> <p>‘Built on the premise of a democratic model of initial teacher education, our four-year B.A programme enable students to examine their role as teacher in a post-primary setting. These programme-pathways blend subject content and specific subject pedagogies with modules which interrogate contemporary issues in education in a context of campus-based and school-based learning opportunities. Thus, students are enabled to achieve deep insights into teaching and learning early in the programme and throughout. ’</p>	
<p>1.1.4 Programme Duration & Balance</p>	<p>The review process determined that the submission demonstrated that the concurrent programme meets the criterion of a minimum of four years duration, and demonstrates how the models of teaching, learning and assessment set out in the conceptual framework are evident in the programme structure.</p>	<p>Yes</p>

	<p>The concurrent four-year BA in Education where and students undertake a programme-pathway comprising of four elements. Education (60 ECTS), School Placement and Research (60 ECTS) and two chosen subject areas (120 ECTS minimum). In total there are approx. 25-30 student effort hours associated with each single ECTS credit. Hence the contact hours illustrated in the timetables are only a fraction of the student input required in each of the areas of study over the duration of the programme.'</p> <p>Mary Immaculate College (Thurles) demonstrated that all areas of study are relevant to students' future work as teachers, that the programme will facilitate student teachers' personal development and their growth and wellbeing into their professional role, enabling them to become responsible, trustworthy, and reflective practitioners who are prepared for life in the classroom.</p> <p>'Personal and professional development are intertwined in our programme of study. Year 1 attends to initiating actions that build student confidence and competence which continue to be developed over the four years. Student confidence is key for many students and key for others is a realisation of the responsibility of being a teacher. Subject content and subject-specific pedagogies are blended with modules which interrogate contemporary issues in education, in a context of campus-based and school-based learning opportunities.'</p> <p>The panel is satisfied that the submission demonstrated the programme prepares students for life in the classroom and active engagement in teaching within a professional learning community, reflecting the core values of trust, care, respect and integrity. '</p>	
<p>1.1.6 Integration and Diversity of Programme Content</p>	<p>Mary Immaculate College (Thurles) have demonstrated that foundation studies are integrated into the programme in a way that is meaningful for student teachers and their practice; that the programme design follows a spiral learning approach and that the programme allows student teachers to experience a variety of teaching, learning and assessment modes as 'Foundation Studies typically incorporate history of education; psychology of education; sociology of education; and philosophy of education into our programme of study. Our students engage with these areas throughout the 4 years of their programme in order to build understanding gradually and progressively, thus adopting a spiral curriculum approach. In Year 1, the module <i>Understanding Contemporary Schools and Society</i> (EDS151) has three components - philosophy, sociology, and history - each of which are explored individually and in tandem during the</p>	<p>Yes</p>

	module. For example, students are challenged to critically reflect upon the ideas the values that shape approaches to education and pedagogy, while also developing an appreciation of the history of the Irish education system.'	
Aptitude test	Mary Immaculate College (Thurles) completed an 'Aptitude Test' declaration form, confirming that the programme design allows for the provision of 'aptitude tests' for teachers who have qualified outside of the State.	Yes
<u>1.1.7 Required Areas of Study</u>	<p>The review process determined that the submission demonstrated how the Foundation Studies, Professional Studies & School Placement elements of the programme meet the requirements of this standard.</p> <p><u>Foundation Studies</u></p> <p>The programme provides research informed insights to support student teachers' understanding of the practices of teaching, learning and assessment for all pupils.</p> <p>The Panel is satisfied that the programme provides the basis of a strong professional ethic in teaching and learning and includes curriculum studies, the history and policy of education, philosophy of education, psychology of education and sociology of education</p> <p>'In the foundation studies elements of our programme, students are provided opportunities for focused reflection on their own identity as teachers and on the philosophical, sociological, psychological, and historical contexts of education. Critical reflection and analysis skills are further developed through the opportunity for students to engage in educational research. The development of an e-portfolio throughout the programme engages students in reflective dialogue and develops their skills in the articulation of their own experience.'</p> <p>The programme, enhances students' understanding of the Irish education system, locates it in context and enables students to think critically about it.</p> <p>The submission states that 'the design and sequencing of modules from Year 1 through to Year 4 threads consistent themes through our students' learning journeys as they develop strong critical understanding of the history, policy, philosophy, sociology, and psychology related to post-primary education in Ireland. This enables them to better understand the nuances of practices of teaching, learning, and assessment for all pupils in order to inform their decision</p>	Yes

	<p>making as teachers on School Placements 1 and 2. Students then have the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to apply this research-informed understanding during their final placement and record the depth of their thinking through their research project reports and presentations.'</p> <p><u>Professional Studies</u></p> <p>Mary Immaculate College (Thurles) demonstrated in the submission that the Professional Studies elements of the programme develop the pedagogical expertise of student teachers, including subject specific pedagogical content knowledge.</p> <p>'Our students are given the opportunity to understand the impact and importance of the profession they are entering. We aim to aid their development of a diverse range of communication and relationship building skills as well as skills associated with critical thinking and being a professional teacher. The Teaching Council's <i>Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers</i> is at the forefront throughout this module.'</p> <p>Students are afforded the opportunity for reflection and engagement in and with research to develop their adaptive expertise.</p> <p>'Students begin their E-Portfolio on the first day of the course and submit it during the final week of Year 4. The e-portfolio is modelled on the Taisce portfolio that they will engage with during their Droichead year. While there is consistent engagement with the e-portfolio, the EDS402 module places further emphasis on this aspect of the programme as the e-portfolio begins to take shape. This module provides student teachers with a structure for documenting and reflecting upon their assumptions, understandings, experiences (including observations, peer-teaching and individual teaching experiences) and achievements during their teacher education programme. It encourages student teachers to link practice with theory and to engage more deeply with subject matter and pedagogical content.'</p> <p><u>School Placement</u></p> <p>Mary Immaculate College (Thurles) demonstrated how the school placement model on the programme provide opportunities for student teachers to experience a high support/high challenge model of placement and engage in research on their own practice, making connections between the sites of practice.</p> <p>Students are given the opportunity to observe experienced teachers and plan for and undertake class teaching, learning and assessment in a diversity of class settings and subject</p>	
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	<p>levels, to assist them in establishing classroom management strategies.</p> <p>With regard to school placement the submission states 'Preparation for our students to engage effectively in these placements begins in Year 1 with the gradual integration into their role as a teacher through a one-week school placement to observe expert teachers and microteaching experiences in EDS150. Through this module, students are introduced to the post-primary classroom environment and to some of the fundamental skills and pedagogical knowledge necessary for effective teaching.'</p> <p>Mary Immaculate College (Thurles) demonstrated that student teachers are encouraged to reflect critically on their practice and programme of study, reflecting on feedback from discussions and identify areas for further professional learning for Droichead through their electronic portfolio or "Taisce".</p> <p>'The placement is supported by the continuation of professional portfolio work, with a strong emphasis on reflective practice and the improvement of the students' portfolio (Taisce). This is supplemented by the module EDS402 which provides a structure for documenting and reflecting upon their assumptions, understandings, experiences (including observations, peer-teaching and individual teaching experiences) and achievements during their teacher education programme. As such, students link theory to practice and gain strong insights into their strengths and areas for development upon conclusion of this placement and, thus, can effectively plan for further professional learning for Droichead.'</p> <p><u>Core elements of programmes of ITE</u></p> <p>The review process determined that the submission demonstrated that the following elements underpin all aspects of the programme.</p> <p>1. Inclusive Education</p> <p>Mary Immaculate College (Thurles) demonstrated that inclusive education permeates their ITE programme.</p> <p>'A central tenet of our ITE programmes is the preparation of our students to be inclusive teachers for all learners. Diversity in all its forms is welcomed on campus and student teachers are facilitated to attend to their conscious and unconscious biases and address aspects associated with their held and emerging values, attitudes, beliefs and dispositions as citizens and as teachers. In turn skillsets that support professional</p>	
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	<p>dispositions are interwoven with supporting student teachers in working with parents and personnel external to the school.'</p> <p>2. Global Citizenship Education</p> <p>The application evidenced how global citizenship education and education for sustainable development is integrated into the programme.</p> <p>'Global Citizenship Education is a strong element of the 'hidden curriculum' on the Thurles campus and is experienced by the students through their everyday interactions with staff and their peers and also within the various active voluntary groups operating within the college, such as the Green Campus Committee, Fairtrade Ireland and the work of the Sustainability Committee. In turn, we partner with colleagues in Africa and USA to ensure scholarship programmes are available for our students to access additional learning in a range of locations. Merging Business and GCE is captured in our work with the St Francis programme in New York City which offers one such opportunity to 10 of our students annually. In turn our students volunteer to work online with learners in Direct Provision and refugee camps in Ireland and abroad i.e. Lesbos.'</p> <p>3. Professional Relationships and working with parents</p> <p>Mary Immaculate College (Thurles) showed that the core element of establishing professional relationships and working with parents is integrated into the programme.</p> <p>'The students' understanding and appreciation of relationships with parents and the wider school community is developed throughout the programme, and is embedded within the educational modules EDS100, EDS200, EDS201 and EDS300. EDS300 has a significant input from the Middleton Centre for Autism, and this focuses on parental involvement and pupil supports. Other inputs include the year 3 school placement which addresses inclusion with parents, and the year 4 National Parents Council (NPC) elective module. This module is offered and delivered by the NPC.'</p> <p>4. Professional identity and agency</p> <p>The application demonstrated that the programme includes support for the development of the teacher as a self-reflective autonomous professional.</p> <p>'Our key goal is to support students to be the teacher they wish to be (at any given time during the four years) while challenging them to be the teacher we perceive they may need to be. Students develop a sense of themselves as</p>	
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	<p>professional educators. They are aware of and are able to critique their professional choices, decision making role and responsibilities. We believe the exploration and development of teacher identity, teacher agency, and the understanding of leadership as an intrinsic component of teacher education. A strong emphasis on being adaptive, responsive and a life-long learner is central to our programmes of study.'</p> <p>5. Creativity and Reflective practice</p> <p>Mary Immaculate College (Thurles) have demonstrated how the programme fosters a creative mindset among student teachers as reflective practitioners, innovators, and researchers:</p> <p>'We believe in Freire's concept of 'Praxis' where action and reflection are interconnected and interdependent both on placement with daily and weekly reflections and while on campus. Being a professional requires reflection on one's actions as set against the impact such has on learners and others and requires the development of a mindset that connects reflection with improvement. Creativity is encouraged as an outcome of reflective practice while on campus and on school placement. An emphasis on 'teaching practice' over 'teaching perfect' seeks to support creativity and reflection.'</p> <p>6. Literacy and Numeracy</p> <p>The programme design shows a commitment to enhance students' own literacy and numeracy while also ensuring that they learn techniques to develop their future pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.</p> <p>'In addition to the integration of literacy across all the programme modules, the students receive key inputs at various stages during their course. One such example is the first-year module on Information Literacy, which aims to enhance and develop the students study, research and writing skills appropriate to Third Level study. These skills also develop the students capacity to study in college and work within schools and enables them to manage their information needs and enhance their lifelong learning and ongoing development.</p> <p>Numeracy involves the adoption of mathematical understanding and skills to solve problems and meet the demands of day-to-day work in school, college and in other complex social settings and is a deliberate syllabus topic – separate from literacy – within teaching and learning modules (EDS100, EDS150, EDS200, EDS251, EDS351) and in the assessment of students of these modules.'</p>	
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	<p>7. Digital Skills</p> <p>Mary Immaculate College (Thurles) have demonstrated that digital skills are incorporated into the programme to support teaching and learning for all students.</p> <p>‘It is recognised that the 21st century is the age of information and that as educators, there is a responsibility to ensure students are fully equipped to live, work and function in the digital world. The twin skills of information and digital literacy are essential for students to be able to navigate the information age. There is a further recognition that initial teacher education needs to have a particular focus on developing these skills as students are future educators themselves.</p> <p>On entry into Third Level, students are required to become familiar with a range of digital tools and platforms. These include VLEs, library catalogues and databases, student email, and other resources such as OneNote, EndNote and so forth. The students need for digital competence is introduced at the very beginning. In MIC as whole, information literacy and digital literacy is embedded across all programs. In MIC Thurles, first year students undertake a module on Information Literacy taught by the librarian with guest speakers from school settings also involved.’</p>	
<p>Post-Primary: Curricular subject criteria registration requirements</p>	<p>The programme is Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). The entry selection processes are aligned with the Council’s curricular subject specific registration requirements.</p> <p>The review process determined that the programme includes subject specific curricular studies and pedagogies (methodologies) for Accounting, Business Studies, Gaelige, Home Economics, Mathematics and Religious Studies</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>1.1.8 Learning and Assessment Strategies</p>	<p>Mary Immaculate College (Thurles) demonstrated how the principles, beliefs, and values about teaching, learning and assessment which are set out in the conceptual framework are evident in the teaching, learning and assessment modes used in the programme.</p> <p>‘The manner in which students are taught and assessed seeks to mirror the manner in which we wish our students to teach, aligning with the conceptual framework and our respect for the dignity of the individual and their contribution to their learning and those around them.’</p>	<p>Yes</p>

	<p>The submission demonstrated the relationship (constructive alignment) between the learning opportunities and the assessment criteria which student teachers are expected to meet, and how the assessment processes and procedures are coherent and integrated using a variety of assessment modes.</p> <p>‘The teaching, learning, and assessment experiences within the programme are informed by current research on teacher education and teacher development. Students critically engage with current research within all aspects of the programme including lectures, tutorials, and workshops. A wide range of assessment tools are utilised within the programme - student presentations, essays, reports, posters, journals and learning logs, group work as well as terminal examinations. Students are challenged to employ relevant technical knowledge and skills of a range of digital technologies and multi-media resources to produce their work.’</p>	
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Programme Resourcing

	Comment	Standard addressed?
1.2.2 Staffing	<p>The review process determined that the submission demonstrated that the programme meets this standard by providing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • programme staff qualifications and experience • evidence that currently 68% of school placement tutors on this Mary Immaculate College (Thurles) programme are registered with the Teaching Council. <p>The application demonstrated the staff distribution mechanisms they have in place to show that prior to qualification, while on school placement, a student teacher will be summatively assessed at least once by a registered teacher.</p> <p>The application demonstrated that the programme meets the Céim student: staff ratio (SSR) of 15:1 with the programme demonstrating a SSR of 14.3:1</p> <p>Mary Immaculate College (Thurles) demonstrated the staff development policies that are in place to ensure that staff continue to enhance their knowledge and expertise.</p>	Yes
1.2.3 Facilities	<p>Mary Immaculate College (Thurles) demonstrated that appropriate facilities are available to support research, teaching, and learning, providing the following: Libraries with Gaeilge resources, computer rooms, Mathematics room with additional resources, Home Economics facilities in</p>	Yes

	<p>conjunction with Tipperary ETB, tutorial rooms, student lounge, corridor study booths and a Church for private reflection</p>	
1.2.4 Student Support and Guidance Systems	<p>The review process determined that the submission demonstrated that provisions are in place for the personal and social development and pastoral care of student teachers.</p> <p>Mary Immaculate College (Thurles) have a wide range of student supports and services including the following services and provision: ‘We have clear attendance protocols and buddy systems which allow us identify students who may be at risk for any number of reasons. Where expert advice is required we have our qualified Counsellor and our College Chaplain to assist us in our work. While we are not better people our relative size ensures we have a better chance in ensuring our students are cared for and this is reflected in our very high retention rates (over 95%) and our high participation rate in clubs and societies (80%). We have a full-sized playing field, access to swimming pool, gym and other sporting facilities. MISU Students' Union facilitate a range of clubs and societies that ensure students are kept active and healthy while making friends and memories for life. We place a strong emphasis on peer-support and creating a culture that is inclusive of all at all times.’</p> <p>Mary Immaculate College (Thurles) have demonstrated how a student teacher might transfer to an alternative programme in line with the University’s policies and procedures.</p> <p>‘When a student fails placement, they are mentored and supported by the college and supports are put in place to ensure the student is given every opportunity to succeed, including support with accessing a school, careful consideration of placement tutors and access to all preparatory classes as well as one-to-one provision in advance of placement.</p> <p>Students who wish to withdraw from school placement, or who fail a school placement module (i.e., who fail the first attempt and also fail the repeat attempt) can obtain an exit award. The award type will depend on the number of credits accumulated by the student.’</p>	Yes
1.2.5 Communication and Decision-making Structures	<p>The review process determined that the submission demonstrated the structures that are in place to facilitate the participation of staff and students in relevant deliberation and decision-making processes.</p> <p>‘Our class representatives, via the MISU, are a central reason for our success as a college and the formal combined with the informal relationships assists us in progressing and improving on the work that we do collectively. While we have formal</p>	Yes

	Staff Student Forum the key to participation and partnership is in sharing problems and ambitions with all. A recent example of same was our decision to retain Pass/Fail for year 2 placement and graded placement for year 4. Similar consultation saw us as a college ready to respond to the recent teacher supply challenges by adjusting our timetable to free students to support schools.'	
1.2.6 Financial Resources	Mary Immaculate College (Thurles) demonstrated that the programme is adequately resourced to ensure that programme aims are met through student fee income and state grants.	Yes

School Placement

	Comment	Standard addressed?
1.3.1 A Shared Vision for School Placement	<p>Mary Immaculate College (Thurles) school placement model supports the shared vision for school placement. The review process determined that the submission demonstrated that student teachers experience a supportive model of placement which facilitates professional conversational engagement between all partners.</p> <p>'School placement is at the heart of the work of the college and is undertaken in partnership with schools. This reciprocal relationship allows both college and school personnel to develop their professional skills for the betterment of both student teacher and school pupil. Students are released for placement during each year of their four- year concurrent programme'.</p>	Yes
1.3.2 Duration	<p>The review process determined that the submission demonstrated that the duration of the school placement is in compliance with the Teaching Council's requirements and includes both school-based and HEI-directed activities, thus meeting the requirements of this standard.</p> <p>'A block-release model is adopted which allows students engage in placement for a week in Year 1, 6 weeks in Year 2, a minimum of two weeks in Year 3 and an extended 14-week placement in Year 4. Students are supported in selecting and accessing their placements through the School Placement Office. Year 3 placement also includes opportunities to access international placements. In recent times, upon the request of the Minister for Education, our Year 3 students are released one day a week in semester 2 to support teacher supply concerns.'</p>	Yes

<p>1.3.3 Elements of School Placement</p>	<p>The review process determined that the submission demonstrated that the school-based and HEI-directed activities included as part of the placement experience are as outlined in the <i>Guidelines on School Placement</i> and regarding the stage the student teacher is at on the programme.</p> <p>'The basis of the relationships with schools rest on the three 'I's of innovation, integration and improvement (<i>Guidelines on School Placement, 2021</i>) as well as an intentional focus on the core values of trust, care, integrity and respect (<i>Code of Professional Conduct, 2016</i>). Student teachers engage in school placement where teaching practice forms a key component. However, to foster a continuum of innovation, integration and improvement for all, the focus is on 'teaching practice and not teaching perfect'. Collaborative practices and inquiry are also a feature of our programme and of our relationships with school personnel.'</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>1.3.4 School Placement Models</p>	<p>The review process determined that the submission demonstrated that school placement models are developed using a partnership approach, whereby the HEI and schools actively collaborate in the organisation of the school placement.</p> <p>'With the support of school personnel our students are facilitated with systematic observation in the first two weeks of placement in year 2 and year 4. We encourage schools to celebrate that our students are student teachers and require specific support in the early days of placement. We offer suggestions, as per the Teaching Council guidelines on how best our students can be supported and in turn how best our students' insights and expertise can be utilised by the school. We encourage schools to expose our students to school life including attending parent-teacher meetings, staff meetings and professional learning opportunities. Engagement in extra- and co-curricular activities are also advocated by the college where students' individual strengths and interests can be used to good effect to support pupils and to build stronger relationships with all involved.'</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>1.3.5 Securing of Placement</p>	<p>The review process determined Mary Immaculate College (Thurles) assumes overall responsibility for the placement of student teachers.</p> <p>'School placement is coordinated and planned by the School Placement Office. Students are released for</p>	<p>Yes</p>

	<p>placement in the Spring semester of each year. The two key placements are in year 2 and year 4 of the programme. Students are encouraged to nominate three schools and the Placement Officer engages with the student to ensure the schools are suitable for placement and comply with Teaching Council regulations. The Placement Officer liaises with the school on the student's behalf to secure placement.'</p>	
1.3.6 Diversity of Placement Settings	<p>The review process determined that the submission demonstrated that the programme meets the requirement of a minimum of two placement settings incorporating a variety of teaching situations, class levels and school contexts, including Irish medium schools.</p>	Yes
1.3.7 Taisce in School Placement	<p>The review process determined that the submission provided evidence of the approaches Mary Immaculate College (Thurles) is using to enable the student teacher to demonstrate, using their Taisce</p> <p>'To further supplement their final placement experience, students in Year 4 undertake a self-reflective study through their Research Project modules and E-Portfolio (TAISCE)modules enable them to analyse and evaluate their own practice and how their practice impacts pupil learning. This demonstrates our commitment to Aim 8 which encourages inquiry-based critical examination and consideration of all aspects of professional practice linked to a commitment to the teacher-as-learner and sustained by continuing professional development and lifelong learning. A key goal of these modules is to provide our students with the knowledge, skills, and experience to facilitate further exploration of their practice as they transition into full-time teaching, thus sustaining professional growth and learning over the course of their careers.'</p>	Yes
1.3.8 Research in School Placement	<p>Mary Immaculate College (Thurles) demonstrated that the student teacher engages in research on their own practice that demonstrates the connection between the sites of practice during at least one school placement module.</p> <p>'Inculcating a love and joy of learning needs to be modelled on campus if it is to be achieved on placement. We support student teachers to be the teachers they wish to be and encourage them to be the teachers we believe they need to be. This is achieved by constant exploration of all aspects of pedagogy including specific areas of interest relevant to our students and related pedagogical content knowledge.</p>	Yes

	<p>Research and reflective practices are key in developing student teachers understanding of their roles and responsibilities as teachers.'</p>	
<p>1.3.9 School Placement: Evaluation and Assessment</p>	<p>The review process determined that the submission demonstrated that all student teachers are supported and assessed by two or more placement tutors, and at least once by a registered teacher. It outlined the teaching enrichment and mentoring support offered to students who fail a module of school placement.</p> <p>'Collective de-briefing is conducted during placement at the end of each week when students, Placement Office staff and Head of School meet online every Friday between 4-5pm. On full completion of their programme of placement students are met collectively and surveyed on their experiences. They also meet with their placement tutors at this time. Students who struggled with placement are met by the Head of School and Placement Officer individually. All of these activities happen within a week of placement being completed and are used to assist individual students in planning their next steps and it is central to post-evaluation review with all staff. This review then forms part of the college-wide review of placement with improvements put in place for the subsequent year.'</p>	<p>Yes</p>

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 *Céim: Standards for Initial Teacher Education*.

Accordingly, it recommends to the Teaching Council that the programme be granted accreditation subject to the following requirement;

Matter	Requirement
<p>Home Economics Subject</p>	<p>To support the significant development work taking place in the new subject offering of Home Economics, MIC Thurles shall submit within 6 months of this report:</p> <p>New module descriptions for the Home Economics programme to include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstration of a spiralled approach across the syllabus showing levels of increasing complexity and building on themes as evidence of the breadth of content. Further evidence of module development should be shown across all Home Economics modules. • The Food Studies programme maintains an integrated approach to theory (45% approx.) and practical work (55% approx.) with the practical work continuously assessed throughout each semester. Assessment criteria are provided, monitored and evaluated by the lecturer. Evidence detailing the assessment criteria for practical and written work should be provided. • Module HE4711 – Food Science, Sustainability and Culinary Skills has a Practical Culinary Skills Assignment of 2 hours duration. The detail of this assignment and the assessment of relevant skill development should be clarified and updated. • Module HE4712 Textile Science, Sustainability and Textile Skills maintains an integrated approach with the practical and theoretical components, with a weighting of approximately 33% theory and 66% practical work. Evidence detailing the assessment criteria for practical and written work should be provided. • Exemplars of the modular written assessments for all modules should show validity, reliability, inclusiveness and equity and accurately target the objective to be tested. Matching the requirements of the questions to the time available is essential as is equality of information required and student responses in each question. Exemplars of written assessments in the different modules should be updated to ensure clarity for student teachers before they take these examinations.

Appendix 1 - Review Panel Membership

Chair: **Dr Claire Connolly**

Claire is the School Experience Co-ordinator at St Mary's University College (SMUCB), Belfast. Prior to working in Initial Teacher Education, she worked in primary schools in both Northern Ireland and Texas. She has extensive experience in designing and evaluating policies and procedures to ensure the quality of teacher education programmes in SMUCB. Claire has been involved in organising North/South Student Teacher Exchanges over the last twenty years which has allowed her to work with, and learn from, School Placement Coordinators, students, placement tutors and Treoraí. She has been an external examiner for several Initial Teacher Education programmes in both Ireland and Scotland. She has extensive knowledge of the Teaching Council's review and accreditation role, having previously served on review panels for the Council.

Panel Member: **Ms Mary Dunne**

Mary's career has been spent primarily in the Primary School sector. While working as a teacher in a multi-class setting, and later as a teaching-principal, the skills of multi-tasking came to the fore and became finely honed. Having a strong belief in the importance and impact of the local environment on children's learning, Mary had the opportunity to work with the Department of Education's support service for primary schools. The launch of the Social, Environmental and Scientific Education curriculum (SESE) provided the opportunity to work with teachers and schools in many different contexts. Following this work with primary schools, Mary worked for a number of years as a primary school inspector, advising, evaluating and supporting schools. For a number of years also, Mary was deployed to work in an advisory capacity with the Department's Teacher Education Section (TES) in Athlone.

Panel Member: **Mr Ciarán Flynn**

Ciarán Flynn, Educational Consultant, retired from his eight-year tenure as General Secretary of the Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools (ACCS), where he advised and supported the Boards of Management and Principals of the 96 post-primary schools in the Association. He acted as a Management nominee on the Teaching Council for a three-year term, chairing the Audit and Risk Committee. He chaired the TC/DE research on "Teacher Supply", chaired the Placement System Working Group and the Droichead QA panels for 5 years.

He was Principal of Navan Community College and the founding Principal in 1994 of Ashbourne Community School. He completed his Masters in Education Management in the University of Ulster in 1994. He worked for an eight-year period as a Part-Time Lecturer in DCU on the M.Sc. in Educational Training and Management programme.

He was a member of the national Leadership Development for Schools Team for a three-year period working with newly appointed Principal and Deputy Principal teachers countrywide on behalf of the Department of Education and Skills. As an Educational Consultant he has worked for and with individual schools, regional and national educational bodies in carrying out investigations, supporting and promoting professional development. He also carries out work for the Department of Education and Science in a number of areas and for the State Examinations Commission as a member of the Audit and Risk committee. He is the Chairperson of the boards of management of two schools in the Leinster area and recently retired from Chairpersonship of the Le Chéile Schools Trust.

Panel Member: Ms Eleanor Parks

Eleanor Parks worked as a Home Economics Teacher with Co. Kilkenny ETB in Slieverue Vocational School, Co. Kilkenny and then in Abbey Community College, Ferrybank, Waterford (Abbey Community College is the amalgamation of Slieverue Vocational School and SHM Secondary School, Ferrybank Waterford.) From there Eleanor worked as Examinations and Assessment Manager for Home Economics with the State Examinations Commission.

Panel Member: Professor Kenneth Muir

Ken Muir was Chief Executive and Registrar of the General Teaching Council for Scotland between 2013 and 2021. Similar to the Teaching Council in Ireland, GTC Scotland has the responsibility for registering and regulating the Scottish teaching profession as well as for accrediting all teacher education programmes. Prior to this, he worked for Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education and was Chief Inspector of Education in Scotland. Ken began his teaching career as a teacher of Geography and Geology and has held various senior posts over his career, working in schools and local authority education departments. He has been a member of many national and international education groups and has a particular interest in the Finnish education system where he has worked with Helsinki University and the Finnish National Board of Education. On his retiral in 2021, he was commissioned as independent Adviser to the Scottish Government to produce his report, Putting Learners at the Centre: Towards a Future Vision for Scottish Education, which was published in February 2022. Ken holds an Honorary Professorship at the University of the West of Scotland and was made a Commander of the British Empire (CBE) in the 2021 Queen's Birthday Honours List for his services to education.

Appendix 2 - Teaching Council Registration: Curricular Subject Requirements (Post-Primary) Effective for registration on or after 1 January 2023

Accounting

In order to meet the registration requirements set down in the Teaching Council [Registration] Regulations

in respect of the curricular subject of Accounting an applicant must meet all of the following criteria:

1.
 - (a) Applicants must hold a degree-level qualification, with Accounting studied up to and including third-year level or higher (or modular equivalent).
 - (b) The qualifying degree must be equivalent to at least Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and with a minimum pass result in all examinations pertinent to the subject of Accounting.
 - (c) The qualifying degree must carry at least 180 ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) credits (or equivalent) with the specific study of Accounting comprising at least 60 ECTS credits (or equivalent).

2. The study of Accounting during the qualification must show that the holder has acquired sufficient knowledge, skills and understanding to teach the Accounting syllabus/specification to the highest level in post- primary education (see www.curriculumonline.ie).

To meet this requirement the qualification must include the study of all the following Essential Areas:

- a) Financial Accounting
- b) Management Accounting

The remaining ECTS credits may be drawn from the following areas or their equivalents:

- c) Company/ Business Law
- d) The Conceptual and Regulatory Framework of Accounting
- e) Information and Communication Technology in Accounting
- f) Other accounting areas of study, for example, forensic accounting

Business

In order to meet the registration requirements set down in the Teaching Council [Registration] Regulations in respect of the curricular subject of BUSINESS an applicant must meet all of the following criteria:

1.
 - (a) Applicants must hold a degree-level qualification, with Business studied up to and including third-year level or higher (or modular equivalent).
 - (b) The qualifying degree must be equivalent to at least Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and with a minimum pass result in all examinations pertinent to the subject of Business.
 - (c) The qualifying degree must carry at least 180 ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) credits (or equivalent) with the specific study of Business comprising at least 60 ECTS credits (or equivalent).

2. The study of Business during the qualification must show that the holder has acquired sufficient knowledge, skills and understanding to teach the Business syllabus/specification to the highest level in post- primary education (see www.curriculumonline.ie).

To meet this requirement the degree must include the study of at least five of the following:

- a) Organisational Behaviour
- b) Business Innovation/Enterprise and Entrepreneurship
- c) Management
- d) Business Environment
- e) Human Resource Management
- f) Marketing
- g) Business Law
- h) Accounting/Finance or Economics

Gaeilge

In order to meet the registration requirements set down in the Teaching Council (Registration) Regulations in respect of the curricular subject of Gaeilge an applicant must meet all of the following criteria:

1.
 - (a) Applicants must hold a degree-level qualification, with Gaeilge studied up to and including third-year level or higher (or modular equivalent).
 - (b) The qualifying degree must be equivalent to at least Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and with a minimum pass result in all examinations pertinent to the subject of Gaeilge.
 - (c) The qualifying degree must carry at least 180 ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) credits (or equivalent) with the specific study of Gaeilge comprising at least 60 ECTS credits (or equivalent).
2. The study of Gaeilge/Irish during the qualification must show that the holder has acquired sufficient knowledge, skills and understanding to teach the Gaeilge syllabus/specification to the highest level in postprimary education ([see www.curriculumonline.ie](http://www.curriculumonline.ie)).

The degree must also include the study of the following:

- a) Language skills¹
- b) The study of texts ²

3. Prior to completion of their teacher education studies, applicants should provide verifiable evidence of an immersive educational experience in Gaeilge of a minimum of four weeks duration.

This may be accessed in two blocks, each of which must be at least two weeks. At least one of these blocks must be in a Gaeltacht setting with the option of one block in an Irish medium setting.

The immersive educational experience(s) must be one of the following:

- attending an Irish language course
 - working as a staff member in an educational setting in the Gaeltacht
 - conducting an action research project which is of relevance to their teaching studies
 - engaging in School Placement.
 -
4. Evidence of linguistic competence
 - All applicants must provide evidence of linguistic competence in the language. This can be demonstrated by providing evidence of achieving a minimum level of B2.2 on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (or equivalent) from the higher education institution where the qualification was completed.
 - Alternatively, applicants can provide certification of achieving level B2.2 standard of an independent language competency test.
 - Applicants for whom the language is their first language.

¹ reading, spoken production, spoken interaction, listening and writing

² texts refer to all products of language use including aural, oral, written and digital texts

Home Economics

In order to meet the registration requirements set down in the Teaching Council [Registration] Regulations in respect of the curricular subject of Home Economics an applicant must meet all of the following criteria:

1.
 - (a) Applicants must hold a degree-level qualification, with Home Economics studied up to and including third-year level or higher (or modular equivalent).
 - (b) The qualifying degree must be equivalent to at least Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and with a minimum pass result in all examinations pertinent to the subject of Home Economics.
 - (c) The qualifying degree must carry at least 180 ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) credits (or equivalent) with the specific study of Home Economics comprising at least 60 ECTS credits (or equivalent).
2. The study of Home Economics during the qualification must show that the holder has acquired sufficient knowledge, skills and understanding to teach the Home Economics syllabus/specification to the highest level in post-primary education (see www.curriculumonline.ie).
3. In order to meet this requirement the study of all of the following inter-related components of Home Economics and their application to the individual, family and society must be studied as an integral part of the degree course:
 - a) Food Studies (including the integration of theory and practice)
 - b) Textiles, Fashion Design and Home Design (including garment construction and practical craft work)
 - c) Family Resource Management and Social Studies (including Home Economics Studies and consumer studies)
4. The degree must include course and practical work content in the above areas

Mathematics

In order to meet the registration requirements set down in the Teaching Council [Registration] Regulations in respect of the curricular subject of Mathematics an applicant must meet all of the following criteria:

1.
 - (a) Applicants must hold a degree-level qualification, with Mathematics studied up to and including third-year level or higher (or modular equivalent).
 - (b) The qualifying degree must be equivalent to at least Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and with a minimum pass result in all examinations pertinent to the subject of Mathematics.
 - (c) The qualifying degree must carry at least 180 ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) credits (or equivalent) with the specific study of Mathematics comprising at least 60 ECTS credits (or equivalent).

2. The study of Mathematics during the qualification must show that the holder has acquired sufficient knowledge, skills and understanding to teach the Mathematics syllabus/specification to the highest level in post- primary education (see www.curriculumonline.ie).

To meet this requirement the degree must include the study of all of the following

Essential areas of study

- a) Analysis (must include a module or modules in multi variable calculus)
- b) Algebra (must include a module or modules in linear Algebra)
- c) Geometry (must include a module or modules in Euclidean and Non-Euclidean Geometry)
- d) Probability
- e) Statistics (must include a module or modules in Statistical Inference)

The remaining credits (or equivalent) may be in any of the above essential areas, or be drawn from the following optional areas:

Optional areas of study

- f) Dynamical Systems and Chaos
- g) Calculus of Variations
- h) Numerical Analysis or Computational Mathematics
- i) Mathematical Modelling
- j) Discrete Mathematics
- k) History or Philosophy of Mathematics
- l) Mathematical Logic
- m) Set Theory and Cardinality

Religious Education

In order to meet the registration requirements set down in the Teaching Council [Registration] Regulations in respect of the curricular subject of Religious Education an applicant must meet all of the following criteria:

1.
 - (a) Applicants must hold a degree-level qualification, with Religious Education studied up to and including third-year level or higher (or modular equivalent).
 - (b) The qualifying degree must be equivalent to at least Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and with a minimum pass result in all examinations pertinent to the subject of Religious Education.
 - (c) The qualifying degree must carry at least 180 ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) credits (or equivalent) with the specific study of Religious Education comprising at least 60 ECTS credits (or equivalent).

2. The study of Religious Education during the qualification must show that the holder has acquired sufficient knowledge, skills and understanding to teach the Religious Education syllabus/specification to the highest level in post- primary education (see www.curriculumonline.ie).

To meet this requirement the degree must include the study of 5 of the following:

- a) Sacred Texts including the Bible
- b) Christianity – Origins and Contemporary Experience
- c) World Religions
- d) Secular Belief Systems
- e) Ethics
- f) Systematic Theology
- g) Philosophy of Religion