

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

Name of HEI: **University of Galway**

Name of Programme: **Máistir Gairmiúil san Oideachas**

Date: 06 January 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 University of Galway:

Máistir Gairmiúil san Oideachas, 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.

University of Galway 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 **Máistir Gairmiúil san Oideachas** at University of Galway took place between May 2022 and December 2022 in accordance with the Council's *Procedures for the Professional Accreditation of Programmes of Initial Teacher Education*.

Notification	The Council notified University of Galway of the Review and accreditation of the Máistir Gairmiúil san Oideachas on 11 November 2021.
Preliminary Meeting	A preliminary meeting was held between the Council executive staff and University of Galway on 9 December 2021 to provide an overview of the submission documentation and answer queries from University of Galway.
Submission	University of Galway submitted the proforma and supporting documentation for the Máistir Gairmiúil san Oideachas on 03 June 2022.
Desk-based Review	A desk-based review was conducted by the Council staff and a letter requesting clarifications was sent to University of Galway on 27 June 2022. University of Galway submitted their response on 09 September 2022.
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 acting director, with Professor Sheelagh Drudy as Chairperson and Professor Jim Gleeson and Dr Seán Ó Coigligh as panel members. The panel was briefed by Teaching Council staff.
Rapporteur	<p>The review panel was supported by Jean Harrington in their role as a rapporteur.</p> <p>The Rapporteur's functions included liaison with University of Galway, 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.</p>

Review panel meeting 1	The panel met on 19 October 2022 to consider the submission. They requested clarifications from University of Galway on 26 October 2022. University of Galway responded to this request on 11 November 2022.
Engagement with the HEI	<p>The Panel Chair and Rapporteur held a pre-meet with the Head of School of Education and the Head of Discipline of Education on 17 November 2022 to discuss the personnel the Panel wished to meet and to arrange a schedule.</p> <p>The full Review Panel conducted a site visit to University of Galway on 24 November 2022. This was also attended by the Rapporteur and Higher Executive Officer from the Teaching Council, who attended in an observatory capacity.</p> <p>The following attended on behalf of the university:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President • Head of School of Education • Head of Discipline of Education • Incoming Head of School of Education • Director of BME (Education) • Director of CSM (Education) • Director of Teaching and Learning • Programme staff from the programme • Director PME1 • Director PME2 • Director PME Pedagogy • Ceann Bhliain 1 MGO • Ceann Bhliain 2 MGO • Registrar • Bursar • Students and graduates from the programme • Director of School Placement • School Placement Tutors
Review panel meeting 2	The panel met to consider these clarifications and agreed recommendations immediately after the site visit on 24 November 2022.
Reporting	The report was drafted and issued to the HEI for the 30-day feedback period. It was finalised when the final response was received from University of Galway.

Education
Committee

The Chair will present the report to the Education Committee on 16 January 2023. They may decide to; accredit the programme, accredit the programme with requirements or not accredit the programme.

Overall Findings

The Panel was very impressed with the seriousness and professionalism with which the School of Education in the University of Galway engaged with the Review process. Documentation and evidence were submitted in support of each of the *Céim* standards. The value of this was reflected in the emphasis in the submission on the fostering of student teachers as research informed professionals and as researchers on their own practice. The Panel was also aware of the national importance of the MGO programme in the arena of the Irish language and the needs of gaelscoileanna.

This programme meets a clear national need and fills a key role in the implementation of state policy on the Irish language. As stated in the pro-forma, the mission of the MGO is 'to provide high-quality teachers of Irish for the Irish-medium sector who are competent, trained, reflective, creative and with awareness of good practices of immersion education/CLIL.'

The panel considers this programme to be of key importance to the implementation of Irish language policy.

Programme Design

	Comment	Standard addressed?
1.1.1 The Programme	The Programme received academic accreditation from the Academic Council on 8 April 2014, prior to being submitted to the Teaching Council for professional accreditation. Up to date accreditation was sought as a clarification by the Teaching Council and was received on 8 August 2022.	Yes
1.1.2 Conceptual Framework	<p>The review process determined that the submission demonstrated how the conceptual framework is developed in the context of the provider’s mission and ethos. The conceptual framework here places a strong (and understandable) emphasis on Irish language in Irish-medium schools.</p> <p>‘The mission of the Professional Master of Education is to provide high-quality teachers of Irish for the Irish-medium sector who are: competent, trained, reflective, creative and with awareness of good practices of immersion education/CLIL.’</p> <p>University of Galway demonstrated how the programme is informed by research, the <i>Council’s Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education</i>, and the <i>Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers</i>.</p> <p>The submission clearly articulates how it identifies the University’s principles, beliefs and values about education.</p> <p>The review process determined that the submission demonstrated how the conceptual framework provides a rationale for the model of ITE which has been adopted.</p> <p>‘The MGO’s vision is “the Professional Master of Education is synonymous as a pioneer in the growth and development of the Irish-medium education sector in Ireland”. It is an ambitious vision that has been rooted since the MGO was established in 1998. The programme was set up to cater for the shortage of subject teachers who were due to work in Irish-medium schools and Gaeltacht areas. This was an exemplary and pioneering course, and this is still the case. It was the first immersion programme in initial teacher education in a minority language in Europe.’</p> <p>The review process determined that the submission demonstrated how the conceptual framework and</p>	Yes

	<p>programme design supports school placement as the fulcrum of the continuum of teacher education. It also shows how key themes are revisited over the programme. The programme 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><i>Céim</i> outlines that programme design is underpinned by the key principle of research-informed teaching. Issues faced by the core team include the paucity of Irish language school text-books, of refereed education literature in the Irish language, and the Irish language proficiency of students working in the Irish language environment. There is a need for greater research and publication on Irish language teaching, and the panel has noted low levels of research and publication activity within the MGO faculty as compared to the PME faculty.</p>	
<p>1.1.3 Programme Aims</p>	<p>The review process determined that the submission clearly defined 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>The review process determined that the submission demonstrates how the programme caters for curriculum development, to include the learning outcomes-based curricula and national priorities.</p> <p>The application demonstrates how the programme aims will enable newly qualified teachers to facilitate quality teaching and learning for all pupils.</p> <p>The main aims of the programme are as follows and are clearly derived from the MGO's vision and mission.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate student teachers' understanding of the theory frameworks, professional knowledge and teaching skills which are the cornerstones of teaching, learning and assessment at post-primary level and in particular in the Gaeltacht/Irish-medium sector. • Develop teachers' awareness, abilities and skills to implement national priorities, including the core aspects of literacy, numeracy and inclusion. • Develop the capacity of student teachers to critically 	<p>Yes</p>

	<p>reflect and subsequently provide a stable basis for professional development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing collegial and teamwork skills as well as understanding of school planning and development • To support student teachers on the programme with inquiry-based learning, with active research and its role in lifelong learning, and to give them an insight into the ethical and legal duties of educators. • Develop research skills and report the results through appropriate means.' <p>The programme fosters student teachers' agency and mindset 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>1.1.4 Programme Duration & Balance</p>	<p>The review process determined that the submission demonstrates that the MGO programme meets the criterion of a minimum of 2 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>University of Galway 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, thus enabling them to become responsible, trustworthy, and reflective practitioners.</p> <p>The Panel is satisfied that the submission demonstrated that the programme prepares student teachers for life in the classroom and for active engagement in teaching within a professional learning community, reflecting the core values of trust, care, respect and integrity.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>1.1.6 Integration and Diversity of Programme Content</p>	<p>University of Galway has 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.</p> <p>The submission demonstrated that small group work and tutorials are a central feature of the programme, and the</p>	

	programme provides opportunities for individual and collective reflection by student teachers and programme staff.	
Aptitude test	University of Galway 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
1.1.7 Required Areas of Study	<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> The programme provides research informed insights to support student teachers' understanding of the practices of teaching, learning and assessment for all pupils with research-informed practice across all education and discipline modules.</p> <p>The Panel is satisfied that the programme provides the basis of a strong professional ethic in teaching and learning, including curriculum studies, the history and policy of education, philosophy of education, psychology of education & sociology of education, enhances students' understanding of the Irish education system, locates it in context and enables students to think critically about it, and explores key dimensions of the professional context in which the thinking and actions of teachers are carried out.</p> <p>Curriculum Studies is categorised as a Foundation Study in <i>Céim</i>, however, in this programme Foundation Studies are seen in terms of the Philosophy, Psychology, History and Sociology of Education. Curriculum and Assessment is categorised as a Professional Studies module (ED6131). This module also includes Teaching through Irish and Teaching, Learning and Assessment.</p> <p>'A spiral approach is used to incorporate the elements of the foundation studies into the MGO programme with the objective that graduates of the programme should be able to evaluate and develop their own practice from a basis that is rooted in research. From the beginning of the first year, information and material from educational research is presented to students who are encouraged to reflect on how to apply this information in their practice for the welfare of</p>	Yes

pupils. This knowledge is built through the program and continually evolves as the experience and understanding of students grows. For an inclusive approach, this information is provided in a variety of forms and the subject is differentiated as appropriate.'

Professional Studies

University of Galway demonstrated that the Professional Studies elements of the programme develop the pedagogical expertise of student teachers, including subject specific pedagogical content knowledge as evidenced in their Professional Studies modules.

The submission demonstrated how the programme ensures that opportunities shall be provided for students to experiment with and explore new and emerging technologies for teaching and learning throughout their initial teacher education.

Further, it demonstrated how the Professional Studies elements of the programme ensure that teaching itself is understood and practised as a form of self-critical learning by student teachers, with ample opportunities for individual and collaborative reflection, and engagement in and with research.

'Reflection is an integral part of the MGO. A theory and understanding of reflection is provided throughout the course which discusses the importance of reflection as part of self-critical learning. As an assessment for Professional Practice, student teachers are required to use their Taisce for reflecting. This reflection is used in a variety of ways — recorded, written and video footage. Consideration is also given to the various tasks relating to content and curriculum methodologies and assessment. As part of the school placement, there is regular reflection.'

School Placement

University of Galway demonstrated how the school placement provides opportunities for student teachers to experience a high support/high challenge model of placement as placements are carefully scheduled throughout the academic year and are designed to give student teachers opportunities to integrate theory garnered in coursework with practice in a variety of settings.

The review process determined that the submission demonstrated how student teachers engage in research on

their own practice which demonstrates the connection between the sites of practice (University and school). The review process also demonstrated how student teachers plan for, and undertake, class teaching, learning and assessment using a wide range of strategies in a diversity of class settings and subject levels, establish classroom management strategies that support suitable and effective learning for all pupils and that promote and maintain positive behaviour; observe experienced teachers teaching; are involved in a wide range of school activities; reflect critically on their practice and programme of study and how both inform and shape each other; receive and respond to feedback on their practice, and identify areas for further professional learning for Droichead.

'Student teachers undertake a research project on their own practice in the second year of the programme. This allows them to combine theory and literature with their own practice and strengthens the link between school settings and the University. The research carried out by the student teachers often benefits the placement schools and they are very interested in the work the students are doing.

'The student teachers have a mixture of year groups while on school placement. This allows them to implement a wide range of strategies and approaches in their planning and teaching. Because there is diversity in every school class, it is understandable that the trainee teachers have regular opportunities to practice and apply different management and teaching strategies. There is a link between learning on the MGO modules and teaching in the classroom.'

Core elements of programmes of ITE

The review process determined that the submission demonstrated that the following elements underpin all aspects of the programme.

1. Inclusive Education

'Emphasis is placed on the teacher's responsibility to build a critical stance in relation to practices and structures that hinder inclusion and equality of participation (Cochran-Smith, 2020; Zeichner, 2009). This is done through the content of the program and through the approach and philosophy of the program.

'All modules encompass concepts, policies, theoretical and empirical literature, pedagogy and methodologies of inclusive education.'

2. Global Citizenship Education

'Global Citizenship/Development Education has been central to the MGO approach for a long time. In 2012 we organised the first "Development Education Day" in the School of Education on a conference basis and have developed to embed the material throughout the programme since then. We work closely with our partners: Ubuntu Network, Irish Aid and the One World Centre among other stakeholders to ensure Global Citizenship Education is embedded across the programme.'

3. Professional Relationships and working with parents

'Emphasis is placed on the model of partnership with student teachers school placement. Emphasis is placed on open and effective communication with pupils, colleagues, parents, school management and other members of the school community in a professional, collaborative and supportive manner. Student teachers are asked to participate fully in school life, from co-operative planning with his/her and other teachers in the school and to share good practice in a collegial way to support and improve teaching and learning. Special emphasis is placed on co-operation with Special Education teachers to gain a deeper understanding of the diverse needs of students to provide appropriate planning and support for these students.'

4. Professional identity and agency

'The teacher's development as a self-reflective practitioner with the ability to take decisions based on value-based (Biesta, 2015) is highlighted. The programme provides guidance and support to student teachers to integrate their personal values with those of the teacher as set out in the *Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers*, with the aim that graduates of MGO are prepared to actively participate in a school community.'

5. Creativity and Reflective practice

'Creative and wellbeing workshops are held weekly with student teachers on campus. The focus is on the teacher's own well-being, as well as responsiveness, flexibility,

	<p>suitability and directed improvisation as elements of inclusion in all sections of student teachers' work and learning, particularly as it relates to their own lives, and while teaching on school placement.'</p> <p><u>6. Literacy and Numeracy</u> 'Full participation in today's society requires literacy and numeracy skills (O' Sullivan et al., 2019; Shanahan and Shanahan 2012). As a result, the MGO provides opportunities for student teachers to improve their own literacy and numeracy. They are also given the appropriate understandings, theory and pedagogical information to enable them to embed literacy and numeracy in their daily practice. This research-based practice will support the development of students' literacy and numeracy skills.'</p> <p><u>7. Digital Skills</u> 'It is strongly believed that a module or course in "Education Technologies/Digital Learning" on an ITE course is not sufficient, as student teachers regard this course as a separate or additional course. To this end, the MGO model is to embed digital skills across the programme and provide training teachers with opportunities to develop and demonstrate their digital literacy throughout the programme.'</p>	
Post-primary: Curricular subject criteria registration requirements	<p>The programme is Level 9 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 submission demonstrated that subject discipline components include subject specific curricular studies and pedagogies (methodologies) for 19 subjects: English, Music, Accounting, Economics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Irish, Mathematics, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Religious Education, CSPE, Business Studies, History, Geography, Specialist Teaching Methods.</p>	Yes
1.1.8 Learning and Assessment Strategies	<p>University of Galway 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>	Yes

	It 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.	
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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 from May 2022 at least 50% of all School Placement Tutors are registered as teachers with the Teaching Council, with 64% of their existing staff registered with the Teaching Council. • evidence that the staff distribution mechanisms the College has 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. • It also demonstrated how the student:staff ratio of 15:1 is achieved, with the programme demonstrating a ratio of 9:1. <p>University of Galway demonstrated the staff development policies that are in place to ensure that staff continue to enhance their knowledge and expertise including that relating to reflective practice, research, curriculum development, inclusive education, and professional development. The University's Continuing Professional Development Policy outlines their commitment.</p>	Yes
1.2.3 Facilities	University of Galway demonstrated that appropriate facilities are available to support research, teaching, and learning, providing the following: Libraries, Library Supports for students with disabilities, Digital Technology resources, Sports and Art facilities, Science Labs, and Microteaching labs.	Yes

1.2.4 Student Support and Guidance Systems	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.	Yes
1.2.5 Communication and Decision-making Structures	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.	Yes
1.2.6 Financial Resources	University of Galway has 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>The University of Galway 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 a central element of the MGO and on each and every programme in initial teacher education and as laid out in <i>Céim</i>. Each student teacher has at least two different school settings, which adds to the challenge and gives them a wider range of experience. This ensures that they are supported by different teams and Treoraithe in schools across the country. It is recommended that schools be selected in different settings as far as possible, for example, a Gaelcholáiste/Gaeltacht school, a city/rural school, a mixed/one-sex school etc.’</p>	Yes
1.3.2 Duration	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.	Yes
1.3.3 Elements of	The review process determined that the submission demonstrated that the school-based and HEI-directed activities included as part	Yes

School Placement	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.	
1.3.4 School Placement Models	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.	Yes
1.3.5 Securing of Placement	The review process determined that the submission demonstrated that University of Galway assumes overall responsibility for the placement of student teachers.	Yes
1.3.6 Diversity of Placement Settings	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.	Yes
1.3.7 Taisce in School Placement	The review process determined that the submission provided evidence of the approaches University of Galway is utilising to enable the student teacher to demonstrate, using their Taisce, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an understanding of inclusive education as applicable to that context • an understanding of working with parents 	Yes
1.3.8 Research in School Placement	University of Galway 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.	Yes
1.3.9 School Placement: Evaluation and Assessment	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. 'Where a trainee teacher is at risk of failure, we have developed a support system where visits and additional support are provided. These additional visits are carried out virtually and/or in person. In addition, the School Placement Tutor holds discussions with the Treoraí in the school and with the Principal, to implement a support plan at school level. As many graduates of MGO are Treoraithe in schools, they are well aware of the system and philosophy of the programme and thus provide valuable input to the support system.'	Yes

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* and in the *Curricular Subject Requirements (Post-Primary)*.

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

Appendix 1 – Review Panel Membership

Chair

Professor Sheelagh Drudy

Professor Drudy is a former teacher, educational researcher and teacher educator. She was a member of the first Teaching Council appointed by the Minister in 2005 and has also been a Council member of the National Council for Special Education (NCSE). She is the author and co-author of books and papers on education, including *Education in Ireland: Challenge and Change* (2009), Dublin: Gill and Macmillan. She is currently an external reviewer for a number of international journals and an assessor for international research organisations. She has been involved in quality assurance reviews in various HEIs.

Panel Member

Professor Jim Gleeson

Jim Gleeson was a teacher in the Vocational Education sector and has worked on various curriculum development and evaluation projects. He worked in teacher education at Thomond College of Education/University of Limerick (1981-2011). Jim was an IUA nominee on the Teaching Council from 2005-2012. He was Professor of Identity and Curriculum at Australian Catholic University, Brisbane, from 2013-2018, and he is currently an Adjunct Professor at the Institute of Education, Dublin City University. Jim's main research interests include curriculum policy and practice; teacher professionalism and development; faith-based education.

Panel Member

Dr Seán Ó Coigligh

Seán Ó Coigligh was a secondary school teacher in Dundalk, Co. Louth where he taught Gaeilge, Religious Education and CSPE through the medium of Irish and English. His background is firmly rooted in human rights' education, having spent some years working with the Redemptorist Congregation in the Philippines on Basic Christian Community Projects. He was also a member of the Education for Reconciliation Programme Pilot Group, a cross-border schools' initiative aimed at fostering understanding through collaborative classroom activities. His post-graduate studies have focussed on the evolution of the teaching of Irish through the Gaelic Colleges in the early years of twentieth century.