

# **Addition of Agricultural Science methodology to PME (Post Primary) University of Galway**

February 2025

## Background

This submission is specifically for the proposed addition of the methodology for Agricultural Science to the existing PME (PP). The Professional Master of Education (Post-primary) from University of Galway was accredited by the Teaching Council in January 2023. The full report for the accredited programme is available on the Teaching Council Website.

The Agricultural Science methodology will be offered within the existing PME and is intended to prepare postgraduate student teachers for registration and teaching of Agricultural Science.

## Process

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

The University of Galway submitted an updated pro forma, to demonstrate the Agricultural Science specific programme elements. The addition to the programme was reviewed by the Review Panel following the *Procedures*.

The review of the addition of the **Agricultural Science Methodology to the accredited Professional Master of Education (Post-primary) at University of Galway** took place between December 2024 and February 2025 in accordance with the Council's *Procedures for the Professional Accreditation of Programmes of Initial Teacher Education*.

Step 1 Notification	University of Galway notified the Council of its intention to submit an additional methodology Agricultural Science to the Professional Master of Education (PP)
Step 2 Submission	University of Galway submitted the required documents on 13 December 2024
Step 3 Desk-based Review	A desk-based review was completed by the Council staff on 18 December 2024.
Step 4 Appointment of Review Panel	The process was formally initiated when the Review Panel (hereinafter referred to as 'the panel') was convened by the Teaching Council's director, with Mr Ciarán Flynn as Chairperson and Professor Sarah Anderson and Mr Joe Corroon as panel members. The panel was briefed by Teaching Council staff.

Rapporteur	<p>The review panel was supported in their role by Laura Conneally as 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 the Director of the Teaching Council and her executive staff nominees.</p>
Step 5 Review panel meeting 1	The panel met on 04 February 2025 to consider the submission.
Engagement	<p>The review panel conducted a site visit to University of Galway on 18 February 2025. This was also attended by the rapporteur and Teaching Council staff.</p> <p>The following attended on behalf of University of Galway:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deputy President/Registrar</li> <li>• Programme Director</li> <li>• Subject Area Representatives</li> <li>• Education Representatives</li> <li>• Placement Co-ordinator</li> <li>• School Placement Tutors</li> <li>• School Principals</li> </ul>
Step 6 Review panel	The panel met to consider the clarifications and agree recommendations following the engagement.
Step 7 Reporting	<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 University of Galway.</p>
Step 8 Education Committee	The Chair will present the report at the next meeting of the Education Committee. They may decide to accredit the addition to the accredited programme, accredit the addition to the programme with requirements or not accredit the addition to the programme.

## Overview

It was noted by the Panel that the PME (Post Primary) has been accredited by the Teaching Council in January 2023 in accordance with Céim: Standards for Initial Teacher Education. The panel examined the addition of the subject methodology, Agricultural Science, to the accredited PME programme Post Primary. The panel visited University of Galway and met senior management, the programme team, the school placement team, school placement tutors and school principals. The panel completed a tour of the facilities provided by University of Galway, necessary to accommodate the Agricultural Science methodology, including classrooms, laboratories and lecture theatres. The panel considered the following factors in their review of the programme for the addition of Agricultural Science as a subject methodology on the PME:

- There is a clear conceptual framework and considered integration of Céim standards in the provision for the Agricultural science subject methodology.
- The methodology for Agricultural Science demonstrates clear alignment with the student teacher's trajectory of learning and professional development as reflective practitioners. Key components of the conceptual framework, particularly around reflection, were articulated during conversations with faculty.
- The opportunity for Agricultural Science PME students to avail of visits to Teagasc approved farms and Agricultural colleges for research and project purposes, was welcomed by the panel.
- The panel met with and held discussions with some staff members who would teach the Agricultural Science methodology for University of Galway and the panel was satisfied with the content of the programme outlined. This is supported by the experience of the University of Galway staff offering Agricultural Science as an Undergraduate Degree, where appropriate.
- All safety questions were addressed by the panel. They outlined that there are specific lectures on Health and Safety and safety is embedded in all laboratory work on an ongoing basis.

## Review outcome

Having regard to the documentation that was submitted, the panel adjudges that the addition to 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 this addition of the methodology for Agricultural Science to the accredited PME (Post Primary) programme, be granted accreditation.

## Appendix 1 – Review Panel Members

### **Chair: 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 joint research project of the Teaching Council and the Department of Education on “Teacher Supply” and chaired the Placement System Working Group. He was Principal of Navan Community College and the founding Principal in 1994 of Ashbourne Community School. In his 30-year teaching career he worked in a number of Dublin and Meath schools as a Science and Career Guidance teacher, then as a Deputy Principal. He lectured on the M.Sc. in Educational Training and Management programme in DCU in areas such as Action Research and Leadership and supervising Masters students.

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.

### **Panel Member: Professor Sarah Anderson**

Sarah Anderson is a Professor of Teacher Education at the University of Glasgow in Scotland. Sarah has a PhD in Teacher Education with a cognate in Educational Leadership from the University of North Dakota, USA in addition to a master's degree in special education and an undergraduate degree in teaching secondary level social sciences. From 2012-2020 Sarah worked at Mayville State University in the role of associate professor and accreditation coordinator. As a teacher educator, she has instructed graduate and undergraduate pedagogical courses, taught courses in special education, advised capstone portfolios, and supervised clinical experiences. Her research interests include teacher appraisal for continual improvement, progress monitoring for response to intervention, high-impact practices, and effective instructional strategies. Sarah was active in her state working to influence legislation and administrative rules regarding teacher licensing.

Before accepting a full-time position in higher education, Sarah was a high school special education teacher who worked with students with emotional disorders, learning disabilities and other health impairments and taught English.

### **Panel Member: Mr Joe Corroon**

Joe Corroon is a secondary school teacher in Coláiste Mhuire Mullingar and previously in Ballyfin, Co Laois. Over the last 30 years, he has taught Agricultural Science, Physics, Chemistry, and Mathematics. He has also been a cooperating teacher for PME's during their placement. Joe is also the Chairman of The Irish Agricultural Science Teachers' Association (IASTA). He is involved in coaching football within his school, club and county.