



*An Chomhairle Mhúinteoireachta*  
**The Teaching Council**

**Droichead**

**Teaching Council policy on a new model of induction and probation  
for newly qualified teachers,  
following consultation with stakeholders**

**27 May 2013**

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## List of Acronyms

DES	Department of Education and Skills
NIPT	National Induction Programme for Teachers
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
PST	Professional Support Team

## 1. Introduction

This consultation paper sets out the Council's proposals to give effect to its role in induction and probation in the short to medium term. The Teaching Council Act, 2001, states that the Council shall establish:

- procedures for the induction of new teachers and
- procedures and criteria for their probation (including periods of probation).

On 1 September 2012, the statutory instrument commencing the relevant functions of the Act was signed with effect from that date. The Council has now, therefore, statutory responsibility for these areas and must ensure that appropriate procedures and criteria are developed.

A letter from the Minister in July 2010 (see Appendix 1) is also pertinent, as it sets out Ministerial policy on the implementation of the Council's statutory functions in relation to induction and probation.

This paper sets out the Council's policy for carrying out its functions in relation to induction and probation. In setting out this policy, the Council has had regard to the feedback arising from the consultation process on *Droichead* in April-May 2013.

It should be noted that, in this paper, probation refers only to probation for registration purposes. It is entirely separate to probation for employment purposes, and the standards and processes for the latter are a matter for employers.

## 2. Current systems for induction and probation

Induction, as currently conceptualised, encompasses a school-based strand involving mentoring support, and an out-of-school strand in the form of a national workshop programme. Engagement in the workshop programme is a requirement for full registration with the Teaching Council. Engagement in the school-based strand is not currently a requirement for full registration and, in any event, is not available to all newly registered teachers as not every school has a trained mentor on the staff.

At primary level, probation is understood to be a process which all newly qualified teachers (NQTs) must undergo. It is school based and involves a service and a competence dimension. The Inspectorate of the Department of Education and Skills (DES) currently confirms the competence aspect while the principal confirms the service aspect. At post-primary level, principals confirm satisfactory completion of a minimum period of post-qualification employment via a form known as "Form B". The Council deems that this addresses both the competence and service issues.

In summary, induction and probation, as currently in place, are each considered to be processes which run in parallel, with little or no connection between the two.

### 3. Reconceptualising induction and probation

In this paper, the Council is setting out a reconceptualised model of induction and probation whereby induction is a process and probation is a distinct point on the teacher's professional journey through his or her career. The point of probation is reached when all conditions which were applied on initial registration have been fulfilled, and the teacher can be fully registered.

Completion of an induction workshop programme is one of the conditions which must be met before the teacher may be probated. In addition, a condition of post-qualification professional practice will be introduced and applied to all NQTs when they first register. This will be referred to as the *Droichead* experience and will be applied as a condition to the registration of NQTs at both primary and post-primary levels.

When all conditions for full registration (including the induction workshop programme, *Droichead* and possibly others, for example, shortfalls in Irish language competence, qualifications shortfalls, etc.) have been met, based on confirmations by relevant personnel, the Council will deem the teacher to be probated and will grant the teacher full registration status. (See Figure 1 on page 3.)

#### 3.1 Defining induction

Induction can be defined as a vital stage in the teacher's professional journey between initial teacher education and fully independent practice as a qualified teacher. While in the induction phase, the NQT will practise in a supportive environment with access to a mentor, complete a programme of induction workshops and remain conditionally registered. (See section 5.1 for more information on induction.)

#### 3.2 Defining *Droichead*

*Droichead* refers to that period of professional practice which an NQT will be required to undertake following initial registration.

Satisfactory engagement in *Droichead* will be attached to every NQT's registration as a condition.

From the perspective of the NQT, what this will mean in practice is that, in order to fulfil the *Droichead* condition, he or she will have to:

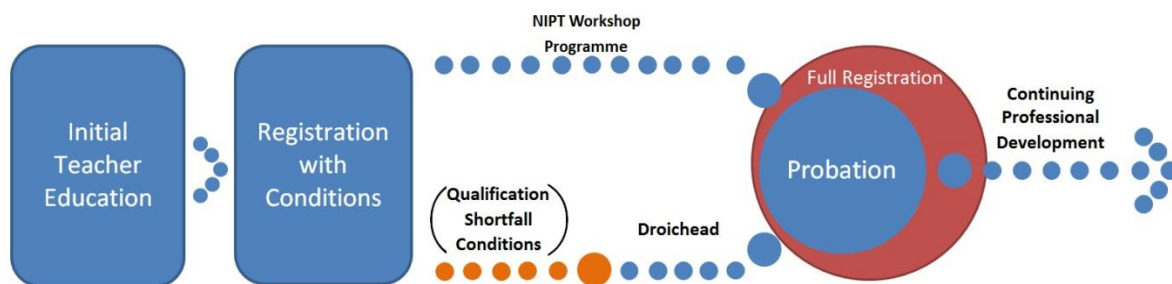
- (a) engage in a period of school-based induction
- (b) be confirmed by (an) experienced fellow professional(s), following that process, as having satisfied certain criteria and
- (c) complete a minimum period of post-qualification professional practice, which may take place in one or more schools.

(See section 5.2 for more information on *Droichead*.)

#### 3.3 Defining probation

Probation refers to that juncture when an NQT has satisfied all of the conditions which were applied on initial registration and is now ready for progression to the next phase of the continuum. Some conditions, such as engagement in an induction workshop programme and satisfactory completion of *Droichead*, will be a requirement for all NQTs. Others, such as the completion of a module to address a qualification shortfall or an aptitude test in relation to the Irish Language Requirement, may be specific to an individual teacher and, in such cases, the Council will require teachers to address those shortfalls before they may apply to commence *Droichead*.

Probation, for registration purposes, will be confirmed by the Council when it has received evidence that all of the NQT's registration conditions have been met. At that point, the teacher will be awarded full registration status. (See Figure 1.)



**Figure 1. Probation in the context of the continuum of teacher education.**

It should also be noted that the term “newly qualified teacher (NQT)” in this paper is intended to encompass all newly registered teachers who are beginning their teaching career, regardless of the date of qualification.

## 4. Values and principles underpinning the proposals in this paper

### 4.1 Shared professional responsibility and professionally-led regulation

This paper sets out a way forward for induction and probation which positions school communities in a professional space where shared professional responsibility is the norm. In doing so, it supports the growth of collective professional confidence.

A fundamental value underpinning the policies in this paper is professionally-led regulation. The Council's structure is based on this and, historically, it has grown from a discourse which sought to vest oversight and guardianship of the teaching profession in the members of that profession.<sup>1</sup> The Oireachtas saw fit to act on this basis in 2001, based in no small part on the trust and confidence that the public continues to have in teachers. In the case of *Droichead*, professionally-led regulation is manifested by the fact that registered teachers, as fellow professionals and colleagues of the NQT, will support him or her on his or her journey through this stage of the continuum. It is also evidenced by the fact that an experienced colleague (or colleagues) will confirm to the Teaching Council whether or not the NQT has satisfactorily completed *Droichead* and is ready to move to the next phase of the continuum.

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Chapter 1 of the *Report of the Steering Committee on the Establishment of a Teaching Council – The Context and Rationale for a Teaching Council*. See also the Dáil debates from 24 October 2000 when the Teaching Council Bill was being debated: “A professional council charged with maintaining and developing standards is a natural part of the maturing of any profession. We already have similar professional bodies in a number of areas, including the Medical Council and the Nursing Board. It is timely that teachers should have their own professional role formally recognised by the State in a Teaching Council. This will confirm the status of teachers, entitle them to regulate their own affairs and empower them with greater responsibility for the standards and quality of education...The establishment of an autonomous Teaching Council to be the voice of teachers on educational matters and to promote the highest possible standards of practice in our schools is fundamental to the growth and development of the teaching profession...It is timely that a statutory council be established to protect and promote the status of teaching in society and the advancement of the profession...The council will be an independent statutory agency which will exercise the powers and perform the functions through which teachers can achieve a large degree of professional autonomy and self-regulation.” (Minister Woods)

Aligned with this is the principle of support being provided for the profession by the profession. There is considerable research which lends weight to the argument that the closer the support and the learning is to the site of practice, the greater the impact of that support and learning.<sup>2</sup>

The vision of shared professional responsibility and professionally-led regulation will be realised through the establishment in schools of Professional Support Teams (PSTs) to scaffold the *Droichead* experience. In each case, the team will be appointed by the principal and comprised of the principal and another experienced teacher (or teachers), each of whom may have distinct roles. The approach will be a collegial one. Further information on the Professional Support Team is set out in sections 5.2.2. and 5.2.4.

The Council believes that professionally-led regulation will provide a solid foundation for induction and probation in the future, and that all stakeholders have a key role to play in ensuring that change in this area is fit for purpose. In introducing such change, any proposals for *Droichead* will need to be amenable to implementation in a busy and demanding school environment. Adequate resourcing will be vital.

#### **4.2 A coherent approach**

The Council's *Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education* sees induction as a "particularly significant phase in building a seamless continuum of teacher education". It "builds on the experience of initial teacher education and lays the foundations for subsequent professional and personal growth and development". It further notes the need to consider how induction procedures might dovetail with the process of probation for full registration. The policies in this paper have been developed in light of the integrated approach envisaged in the policy paper on the continuum.

In setting out these policies, account has been taken of the position of NQTs on the continuum. The Council believes that any new model of induction and probation should be seen in the context of the ongoing improvements in initial teacher education arising from the roll-out of the extended and reconceptualised programmes. In particular, they should take account of the extended and enhanced school placement since, by definition, all phases on the continuum are interrelated, and all school-based experience plays a critical role in supporting professional learning. The Council believes that its proposals represent a practical approach to delivering the concept of the continuum at school level, by enhancing the linkages between the school-based components of successive phases.

In a similar way, induction and probation should not be seen in isolation from the wider quality assurance framework which is in place (or will soon be in place) at all stages in the teaching career, including:

- in-service provision to support professional development needs
- school inspections
- the school self-evaluation model which was launched by the DES in 2012
- the provisions of Section 24 of the Education Act, 1998
- Part 5 of the Teaching Council Act, 2001, dealing with fitness to teach.

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<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Day, C. (1999) *Developing teachers: The Challenges for Lifelong Learning*. London: Falmer Press. Fullan, M., and Hargreaves, A. (1992) *Teacher Development and Educational Change*. London: Falmer Press. Harris, A., and Lambert, L. (2003) *Building Leadership Capacity for School Improvement*. Maidenhead: Open University Press. Lieberman, A. Practices that support teacher development. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 00317217, April 1995, Vol. 76 issue 8. Stoll, L., and Fink, D. (1995) *Changing our Schools: Linking school effectiveness and school improvement*. Buckingham: Open University Press. Sugrue, C. (2002) Irish teachers' experiences of professional learning: implications for policy and practice. *Journal of In-service Education*, 28; 2 311-338.

### **4.3 The newly qualified teacher's ownership of his/her journey**

Central to these proposals is a vision of the NQT as an emerging professional who takes ownership of the *Droichead* process and assumes responsibility for his/her professional development. The NQT will ensure that his or her *Droichead* form is completed and signed as appropriate, and submitted to the Teaching Council.

### **4.4 Fairness**

In setting out these policies, the Council believes that the principle of fairness should apply to the *Droichead* process. In essence, this principle means that the PST, the National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT), the Inspectorate and anyone else who may have a role in supporting the NQT, or making a recommendation to the Teaching Council, must act fairly and reasonably at all times.

## **5. Proposed approach**

As outlined in 1 above, the Council sees probation as a distinct point on the teacher's career-long learning journey. In order to reach that point, a teacher must satisfy the Council that he or she has met all of the conditions which have been attached to his/her initial registration. Only at that point can the Council confirm probation.

The conditions attached to an NQT's registration may vary. At a minimum the following conditions will be attached:

- (i) Completion of the National Induction Workshop Programme
- (ii) Satisfactory engagement in *Droichead*.

### **5.1 National Induction Workshop Programme**

From 2013 onwards, NQTs seeking to be probated will be required to complete not less than 10 two-hour workshops of their choosing. This approach allows teachers to tailor their workshop programme to meet their own professional development needs and is in line with the principle of NQT ownership, as enunciated in 4.3. NQTs will be required to satisfy the induction workshop condition within three years of initial registration.<sup>3</sup>

On completion of the National Induction Workshop Programme, the NIPT will confirm to the Teaching Council that the teacher has satisfactorily engaged in same and the condition will be removed by the Council.

### **5.2 Droichead**

**5.2.1** *Droichead* refers to that period of professional practice which an NQT will be required to undertake following initial registration. It will encompass:

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<sup>3</sup> In exceptional circumstances and subject to appropriate documentary evidence, the Council may facilitate an extension to this timeframe.



- a process of school-based induction
- confirmation by (an) experienced fellow professional(s), following that process, that the NQT has satisfied certain criteria and
- completion by the NQT of a minimum period of post-qualification professional practice which may take place in one or more schools.

Satisfactory completion of *Droichead* will be attached to every NQT's registration as a condition.

In accordance with this new conceptualisation, a central part of the *Droichead* experience is the input of (an) experienced colleague(s) in the NQT's school, who will work to ensure that the experience is structured and supported, and will confirm to the Council that the NQT is ready to progress to the next phase of the continuum. In some cases, such confirmation may be given subject to the NQT completing further periods of professional practice in another school or schools.

Further details in relation to the minimum periods of professional practice required for completion of *Droichead* are set out in Appendix 4.

**5.2.2.** *Droichead* may be facilitated within schools in different ways, having regard to their size, structure and particular circumstances.

In keeping with the aforementioned principle of shared professional responsibility, the Council believes that the best approach is the establishment of PSTs. Such teams will be comprised of principals, mentors and other experienced teachers, each of whom may have distinct roles. Mentors support NQTs during the induction phase. Principals, deputy principals or other experienced teachers may work together to form a joint opinion and make a recommendation to the Teaching Council in relation to the NQT's practice.

In some circumstances, the PST model could be adapted through the establishment of a single team to address the school-based professional support needs of a number of schools. Such inter-school PSTs may involve schools from within the same sector, or may be cross-sectoral, as deemed appropriate. By adopting this approach, schools may give effect to the principle of shared professional responsibility, but tailor it to their particular needs and circumstances.

Another possible model could involve confirmation of satisfactory engagement in *Droichead* by the principal or deputy principal, or an experienced colleague nominated by him/her.

**5.2.3** In all cases, at the end of the *Droichead* experience, the PST (or principal/deputy principal/other experienced colleague) will complete a *Droichead* form confirming to the Teaching Council that the NQT has

- completed a required minimum period of professional practice, as set out in Appendix 4
- engaged professionally with the school-based induction activities as established by the Teaching Council
- demonstrated a satisfactory commitment to quality teaching and learning
- demonstrated an ability to practise independently as a qualified, fully registered teacher.

(See *Droichead* form in Appendix 3.)

The Teaching Council will establish guidelines to support the PST in this regard.

In the case of the approach referred to in 5.2.2 above, the form will be signed by members of the PST, which is drawn from a number of schools.

The form will be retained by the NQT until such time as he or she has completed the total period of professional practice required. Based on the form submitted, the Teaching Council will determine if the *Droichead* condition should be removed from the NQT's registration.

**5.2.4** It is important to note that although the mentor is a member of the PST, he or she does not have any role in confirming that the NQT has satisfactorily completed *Droichead*. Similarly, although the principal is a member of the team, he or she may not always be directly involved in making a recommendation to the Teaching Council. Rather, the principal would be responsible for ensuring that the *Droichead* process, including school-based mentoring and support, has been properly conducted by the school's PST, which s/he has appointed.

**5.2.5** Where, having regard to the practice of an NQT, the principal and/or other member of the PST is uncertain as to the appropriateness of certifying the *Droichead* form, or an NQT has concerns in relation to any aspect of the process, an associate<sup>4</sup> in the pilot county will be available to advise, guide and coach the NQT, the principal and/or the members of the PST. The NIPT will also be available to provide additional supports for the NQT, and guidance for the PST, as appropriate. If, following such interventions, the PST is still undecided, the Inspectorate will be available to provide a second opinion. The Inspectorate will evaluate the work of the teacher and make a recommendation to the Teaching Council based on its assessment of the teacher's suitability for full registration. The form is retained by the NQT and a copy is given to the members of the PST.

**5.2.6** In advance of the introduction of *Droichead*, mentor capacity will need to be increased. The NIPT is actively recruiting new mentors and arranging professional development for them, as well as refresher training for established mentors. Mentors will be active participants in their school's PST, and will support, guide and advise NQTs as they journey towards probation. They may also have a key role in supporting other members of the PST.

**5.2.7** NQTs will be required to satisfy the *Droichead* condition within three years of initial registration.<sup>5</sup>

**5.2.8** It is important that all NQTs gain the maximum benefit from their induction into the profession. To that end, the more time an NQT spends engaged in professional practice in a whole school environment, and the longer the continuous block of that time, the better.

However, the Council is aware that, in the current climate, many teachers have difficulty in accessing professional practice opportunities which would allow them to complete the *Droichead* experience. In this light, the Council calls on all stakeholders with a responsibility in this area to make every effort to ensure that a system of properly resourced, guaranteed placement in schools is put in place as a matter of urgency, for all teachers seeking full registration.

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<sup>4</sup> An associate is a practising teacher, experienced mentor and induction workshop facilitator who, subject to agreement with the DES, will be available to support the *Droichead* process in pilot schools.

<sup>5</sup> In exceptional circumstances and subject to appropriate documentary evidence, the Council may facilitate an extension to this timeframe.

## 6. Piloting of the proposed process

In piloting a new model of probation, the Council is mindful of the fact that this will involve a significant degree of cultural change for both primary and post-primary teachers. It is important to acknowledge that all stakeholders are keen to maintain and enhance the standards that currently apply to the probation of NQTs. External evaluation has been the model through which these standards have been realised at primary level and it is acknowledged that many teachers would prefer a continuation of that approach. In adopting an opt-in pilot, the Council is asking all stakeholders to examine the evidence that will be generated by fellow professionals, grounded in the daily realities of classrooms and schools. It believes that, in the context of professionally-led regulation, this is the best way to inform and support the development of its policies, including probation. In this light, it is worth noting that the Council's aim is to have the pilot completed within two years. But it will have to have regard to the evidence gathered in the research project in deciding how to proceed at that point.

Schools will be selected on a voluntary opt-in basis. The pilot will, in the first instance, be confined to primary and post-primary schools in those counties which normally have the highest concentration of NQTs, i.e., Dublin, Cork, Galway, Limerick, Kildare, Meath and Wexford. Where schools in other counties express interest in the pilot, and there is a sufficient concentration of such schools to render their participation in the pilot viable in terms of availability of support resources, the Council is open to extending the pilot into other counties.

Ideally, the pilot will involve 200–300 schools with an existing mentor or access to a visiting mentor, and the sample should be representative of:

- primary and post-primary schools (including special schools)<sup>6</sup>
- schools with teaching principals and others with administrative principals
- schools with one NQT and other schools with multiple new teachers.

Where a school opts to participate in the pilot, the PST in that school will be invited to participate in a network of teachers from a cluster of such schools in the same region. Cluster meetings will be arranged in designated Education Centres, at which PSTs will receive training, share their experiences of the pilot with teachers from other schools and receive support from the NIPT and an inspector assigned to that cluster.

Ongoing telephone and email support will also be available to PSTs in the pilot schools from the Inspectorate and the NIPT.

Where an NQT in a pilot school is experiencing professional difficulties and the PST has concerns about confirming satisfactory completion of *Droichead*, the Inspectorate will be available to carry out visits and make a recommendation to the Council in relation to the NQT. (See section 5.2.5.)

Pilot schools will be prioritised by the NIPT when planning their programme of mentor training. In addition, some of the bank of discretionary time which is managed by the NIPT will be prioritised for pilot schools.

Research will be carried out to evaluate the new model and to gather evidence from the profession to inform the Council's thinking on a number of key areas including:

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<sup>6</sup> As recognised by the Department of Education and Skills.

- the various approaches which might be appropriate having regard to the size and circumstances of different types of schools
- the level of observation of the teacher's practice which might be appropriate
- the level of observation by an NQT which might be appropriate
- the nature of any professional conversations which might take place between the NQT and the members of the PST
- the distinct role of the mentor and his or her relationship with the other members of the PST
- the mechanisms by which the NQT will plan for, and record, his or her professional experience and learning during *Droichead*
- the standards of knowledge, skill and competence which might be developed to guide PSTs in determining if a teacher has made satisfactory progress, and the interface between those standards and the *Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers*
- the categories of experienced teachers who might be part of the PST
- the mechanisms by which the input of the Inspectorate might be sought in more complex cases
- the information materials and resources which might support mainstreaming of the new model
- any capacity or access issues, professional development requirements or other factors which need to be addressed.

A research bursary will be made available by the Council to all schools participating in the pilot, to support their role in the research strand. This is based on an estimated maximum participation of 300 schools in the pilot (200 primary and 100 post-primary). In the event that the level of interest exceeds this figure, it may be necessary to limit the number of pilot schools in year one. A figure of €1,000 per year will be awarded to all schools involved in both years one and two of the pilot. A figure of €750 will be made available to schools opting in for year two only. Such bursaries will be charged to the Council's research budget. Bursaries will be awarded in respect of the pilot schools' participation in the research project and may be spent on any activity which will generate research evidence to inform the final shape of the induction and probation model. Funding will cease on completion of the pilot.

## **7. Arrangements for the probation of newly qualified teachers working in schools not participating in the pilot**

For the two years of the pilot scheme, the procedures for the probation of NQTs in non-pilot schools will be tailored depending on the circumstances of the school.

### **i. Post-primary schools**

In post-primary schools which are not participating in the pilot scheme, principals will continue to sign the "Form B" in relation to the NQT's post-qualification employment and submit it to the Teaching Council.

### **ii. Primary schools**

Where primary schools are not participating in the pilot, NQTs will register for probation with the Limerick Education Centre as in previous years. The current professional practice requirements will be maintained for all NQTs working in such schools, i.e., a minimum of two periods of 50 days of service or one period of 100 days, which must be completed within three years of conditional registration.

The Inspectorate will continue to visit the NQT on one or more occasions during the period(s) of service and make a recommendation to the Teaching Council in relation to the teacher's professional competence and readiness for probation.

The Inspectorate will consult with the principal concerning the teacher's work in the school and whether the teacher has engaged with the induction workshop programme (insofar as the principal is aware of same) and the extent to which the teacher has availed of in-school mentoring (where such support is available).

## Appendix 1 – Letter from the Minister in July 2010 signalling the commencement of the Council's functions with regard to induction and probation

Oifig An Aire Oideachais agus Eolaíochta.  
Sráid Maoibhride,  
Baile Átha Cliath 1

Telefón: (01) 889 6400  
Facs: (01) 872 9093



Office of the Minister for Education and Science  
Marlborough Street,  
Dublin 1

Telephone: (01) 889 6400  
Fax: (01) 872 9093

21 July 2010

Ms Aine Lawlor  
Director  
The Teaching Council  
Block A  
Maynooth Business Campus  
Maynooth  
Co Kildare



Dear Aine

You will recall that in December 2007, the then Minister for Education and Science, Mary Hanafin, TD wrote to you setting out her views regarding Section 38 of the Teaching Council Act, 2001. In that letter she stated that she was in favour of a well-structured period of induction which would be linked to, but separate from, initial teacher education. Minister Hanafin also made reference to the arrangements for the probation of teachers and acknowledged that the Council needed time to formulate its views on the issues of both probation and induction. In the meantime, the arrangements then in place for both the induction and probation of teachers have remained unchanged: the probationary inspection process has continued to operate at primary level for the purposes of informing the Council's decisions regarding the registration of teachers, while the arrangements at post-primary have remained very limited in nature.

As you are aware, among the core tasks of the Teaching Council are the regulation of the teaching profession, and the establishment and improvement of standards of teaching knowledge, skill and competence of teachers. In this regard, I wish to acknowledge the significant progress which has been made by the Council in its work to date, in particular, the publication of the Codes of Professional Conduct for Teachers and the Teaching Council [Registration] Regulations 2009, the review and accreditation of programmes of teacher education which have been undertaken on a pilot basis and the consultation process currently underway in relation to criteria for a teacher education qualification relevant to the Further Education sector.

The way in which any professional body grants access to membership of the profession and the way it supports and assures the quality of new entrants to the profession have the potential to make a major contribution to the quality of the profession and its work. Consequently, I believe that priority should now be given to clarifying the arrangements for the induction and probation of teachers and I wish to inform the Council that it is my desire to commence Section 7(2)(f) and Section 7(2)(g) of the Teaching Council Act, 2001 no later than 1 September 2012. I trust that this lead-in period will give the Council sufficient time to consult with the necessary interests and to finalise arrangements that the Council would wish to implement for the induction and probation of teachers following commencement of these sections of the Act. I will comment further on this matter below.

I am conscious, however, of the importance of induction processes for teachers and that current arrangements need to be improved. As an interim measure, therefore, I intend to support the provision of a national induction programme for teachers from September 2010. This induction programme will be funded by the Teacher Education Section of my Department and managed through the education centre network.

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The induction support programme will be available initially to all newly qualified primary teachers who have been granted conditional recognition by the Teaching Council pending satisfactory completion of probationary requirements. The programme will be extended to all newly qualified post-primary teachers as soon as possible. (The NPPTI programmes at primary and post-primary level will be discontinued).

The induction support programme will be delivered in a variety of modes (including face-to-face sessions, workshops and seminars, online support and self-help groups) in cluster groups based in education centres or other suitable locations in out-of-school time for a minimum of twenty hours, generally in ten sessions over the course of a school year. The induction support programme will be delivered by trained tutors/facilitators. I believe this support will be very beneficial for newly qualified teachers and will complement the support and advice that principals and other teachers provide to new entrants to the profession in their schools. While participation in and satisfactory completion of the induction programme will be optional for all probationary primary teachers from 1 September 2010 (and for such teachers at post primary level soon thereafter), I am anxious that the Council, school principals and the teaching profession generally would encourage probationary teachers to participate fully in the national induction programme.

As this induction programme will provide professional support and advice for newly qualified and other teachers entering the system, I have decided that the probationary inspection arrangements that exist currently at primary level, and that enable the Council to determine if conditions attached to registration have been met, should be adjusted in the light of the new programme. Consequently, my Department is preparing a circular to inform school management and teachers regarding the new arrangements. The draft circular proposes a number of adjustments to the current process, including changes to the periods that a teacher may be given to fulfil conditions attaching to probation. I enclose a copy of the draft circular and will welcome the views of the Council on its contents by 25 August 2010.

Following receipt of the Council's response on the draft Circular, consultation with the education partners will follow. It is proposed that the revised arrangements for the probation of primary teachers will come into effect from 1 September 2010 and will be operational for the period to 31 August 2012, after which the arrangements put in place by the Council will become operational. Once the consultation process has concluded and the draft Circular has been finalised, I would be grateful if the Council could confirm to the Department that the parameters surrounding the probationary process, as outlined in the Circular, will be formally adopted by the Council as the process through which the probationary requirement attaching to conditional registration will be fulfilled during the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2012.

I am conscious of the requirement of the Council, under Section 7(3) of the Teaching Council Act to implement policies as established from time to time by me and I wish to set out my policies in regard to probation and induction in the context of the registration of teachers. I believe that both processes are required to ensure that teachers make a successful transition from initial teacher education to service as a teacher and that these processes should make an important contribution to guaranteeing that only teachers of the highest professional standards gain full membership of the teaching profession. My officials will be happy to work with the Council as it seeks to develop its procedures for the induction and probation of teachers.

While participation in the induction programme that will be put in place from 1 September 2010 will be optional, I believe that all teachers should participate in an induction process during the initial stages of their teaching career. Consequently, it would be my preference that the Council would give consideration to making satisfactory completion of an induction programme a requirement of full registration with the Council.

I am also of the view that satisfactory completion of a robust probationary process should be a requirement for full registration with the Council. I believe that the Council should give consideration to including both service and professional competence requirements in the probationary process.

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I believe that the Council should consider the need to have satisfactory completion of the induction and probation processes verified by a combination of mechanisms that are internal and external to the school. Of course, the leadership and management of schools will need to have guidance available to them regarding any involvement they will have in such internal mechanisms.

Finally, I should note that I have not referred so far in this letter to probationary requirements in an employment context. This topic is beyond the scope of this letter and will need to be discussed in the appropriate employer/employee forum.

I wish to assure the Council of my full support as it engages in its work and I look forward to being consulted by the Council during its deliberations on the above topics and to considering the outcomes in due course.

Yours sincerely



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Mary Coughlan, TD  
Tánaiste and Minister for Education and Skills

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## **Appendix 2 – Letter from the Department of Education and Skills dated 1 September 2012 regarding commencement of the Council’s induction and probation functions**

Tomás O’Ruairc, Uas,  
Director,  
The Teaching Council,

1 September 2012

Dear Tomás,

As you know Minister Coughlan committed in July 2010 to commence Section 7 (2) (f) (induction) and Section 7 (2) (g) (probation) of the Teaching Council Act 2001 no later than 1 September 2012. Further to our recent discussions the statutory instrument has been signed by the Minister, commencing Section 7 (2) (f) and Section 7 (2) (g) from 1 September 2012. Once published, a copy of the statutory instrument will be forwarded to you.

The Department appreciates the preparatory work undertaken by the Teaching Council in preparing for the commencement of S. 7 (f) and (g), in publishing and consulting widely on the Career Entry Professional Programme, intended to replace the current separate induction and probation processes, and to move responsibility for probation and support for new teachers more to the school community. It is understood that during the consultation phase, a range of issues and concerns relating to the practical implementation of the CEPP were raised by the education partners and that the Council is giving consideration to these at present.

### **Probation**

As you are aware, until such time as a revised CEPP or alternative is finalised, it has been agreed that, at primary level, probation will continue to be validated by the Inspectorate for the 2012/2013 school year. A circular to that effect issued in August.

At post-primary level, the existing arrangements whereby the school validates the probationary process will also continue for the time being.

### **Induction**

I know that the Council has recently put in place a requirement for mandatory participation in the National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT) for NQTs from September 2012 and that to fulfil this registration requirement NQTs must attend twelve workshops within 3 years. The move to mandatory participation in NIPT is also in keeping with the Department's Literacy and Numeracy Strategy.

It is appreciated also that the move towards the type of CEPP programme that was envisaged by the Council will not take place immediately, and the current practices will not change on signing of this Order. However, commencement of these sections is part of the planned progress towards full implementation of the 2001 Act. It gives the Teaching Council, when ready, the right to put in place amended procedures and criteria.

The Department will continue to work closely with the Teaching Council to ensure the orderly transition of all legal and practical arrangements, suitable to both parties and ensuring that there is no disruption to the probationary process for primary teachers.

Yours sincerely,

Eddie Ward  
Principal Officer,  
Teacher Education Section

## Appendix 3 – Sample *Droichead* form

### CONFIRMATION OF COMPLETION OF *DROICHEAD* FOR PROBATION PURPOSES (PRIMARY AND POST-PRIMARY NQTs)

#### Introduction

Registration is granted, subject to conditions, to teachers who have not met all of the requirements for full registration. One such condition is the satisfactory completion of the *Droichead* experience within three years of conditional registration.<sup>7</sup> In order to fulfil the *Droichead* condition, a new teacher is required to:

- (a) engage in a process of school-based induction
- (b) be confirmed by (an) experienced fellow professional(s), following that process, as having satisfied certain criteria and
- (c) complete a minimum period or periods of post-qualification professional practice.

When all conditions for full registration have been met, based on confirmations by relevant personnel, the Council will deem the teacher to be probated and will grant the teacher full registration status.

This form provides the evidence for the Council that both requirements of *Droichead* (as set out in (a) and (b) above) have been met.

This form may be completed in respect of State-recognised schools where the teacher has been deemed to have:

- completed a required minimum period of post-qualification professional practice<sup>8</sup>
- engaged professionally with the school-based induction activities as established by the Teaching Council
- demonstrated a satisfactory commitment to quality teaching and learning
- demonstrated an ability to practise independently as a qualified, fully registered teacher.

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<sup>7</sup>In exceptional circumstances, a teacher may apply to the Council for an extension of the three-year time period.

<sup>8</sup> In cases where the period of professional practice takes place in more than one school this can be aggregated towards the overall practice requirement. In these circumstances, the NQT should ensure that the relevant sections on the back of the form are completed and signed by the principal of each school.

<b>PART A</b>					<b>CONFIRMATION RE ENGAGEMENT IN <i>DROIHEAD</i> IN RECOGNISED SCHOOLS IN IRELAND</b>				
<b>To be completed by the applicant</b>									
TEACHER NAME:									
ADDRESS:									
REGISTRATION NUMBER:									
DURATION OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE (provide exact dates and total number of days, e.g., 1/9/2013 to 30/6/2014, xx days):									
FORMAL SCHOOL NAME:						School Roll Number:			
SCHOOL ADDRESS:									
SUBJECT(S) TAUGHT (this piece to be tailored for primary/post-primary):			SUBJECT/AREA_1		SUBJECT/AREA_2		SUBJECT/AREA_3		SUBJECT/AREA_4
Total number of teaching hours for this subject in the period specified:									
Classroom setting (mainstream/learning support/resource, etc.):									
My teaching was observed by (an) experienced colleague(s) (please elaborate here, as appropriate):			I have completed the induction workshop programme (please insert certificate number here):			I have undergone a process of in-school mentoring (co-ordinated by the NIPT):			
Signature of teacher:						Date:			
I confirm that I have been a mentor for this NQT for the period of professional practice outlined above, and that she/he has engaged professionally with a range of school-based induction activities.									
Signature of mentor:			Registration Number:			Date:			
<b>PART B</b>					<b>CONFIRMATION BY PRINCIPAL AND/OR OTHER MEMBERS OF PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT TEAM</b>				
I/We confirm that the particulars given above are correct and accurate, and that the teacher named on this document has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>completed a required minimum period of post-qualification professional practice</li> <li>engaged professionally with the school-based induction activities as established by the Teaching Council</li> <li>demonstrated a satisfactory commitment to quality teaching and learning</li> <li>demonstrated an ability to practise independently as a qualified, fully registered teacher</li> </ul> I am/We are therefore in a position to recommend that the <i>Droichead</i> condition be removed from this teacher's registration SUBJECT TO SATISFACTORY COMPLETION OF THE REMAINING PERIOD OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE WHICH IS REQUIRED BY THE TEACHING COUNCIL. (Delete text in CAPS, as appropriate.)									
Name(s) of principal and/or relevant members of professional support team:			Signature(s):			Registration Number(s):		Date:	
School name:					School stamp:  OFFICIAL SCHOOL STAMP				



## **Appendix 4 – Minimum periods of professional practice required in order to fulfil the *Droichead* condition**

1. In the case of post-primary teachers wishing to satisfy the *Droichead* condition, they will be required to complete not less than 300 hours' post-qualification teaching experience in a recognised school including not less than 200 hours' teaching of a curricular subject to a designated class on the school's timetable.
2. In the case of primary teachers, there will be a menu of options depending on the opportunities which arise. The options are as follows:
  - at least 100 days in one block in a single school
  - at least 100 days, which may take place in separate schools, in two blocks of not less than 50 days each.
  - at least 120 days, which must involve a single block of not less than 50 days.
3. Only professional practice as a qualified teacher (post teaching qualification) will be taken into account for the purposes of satisfying the *Droichead* condition. Teaching experience as a substitute teacher may be accepted for the purposes of fulfilling the above requirements.
4. The required minimum period of professional practice must take place in State-recognised schools.<sup>9</sup> In cases where the period of professional practice takes place in more than one school this can be aggregated towards the overall practice requirement. In these circumstances, the NQT should ensure that the relevant sections on the back of the form are completed and signed by the principal of each school.

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<sup>9</sup>The proposals in this paper relate to induction and probation in Ireland. In line with current practice, the Council will continue to recognise induction periods carried out in the UK/Wales/Scotland/Northern Ireland as long as they: are at least of one year's duration; are carried out by an 'Appropriate Body' (i.e., a local education authority or council or library board); take place in a recognised school and are supervised by the head teacher of that school; and conclude with certification from the appropriate body that the professional standards for teachers have been met. Induction and/or probation (or similar) processes in other countries are considered on a case by case basis by the Teaching Council.