



An Chomhairle Mhúinteoireachta
The Teaching Council

Final Report of the Review Panel to the Teaching Council following a review of reconceptualised programmes of initial teacher education

Professional Master of Education (submitted for accreditation by University College Cork)

and

Professional Master of Education Art and Design (submitted for accreditation jointly by University College Cork and Crawford College of Art and Design/Cork Institute of Technology)

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1. Background

The Teaching Council is the statutory body charged with setting the standards for entry to the teaching profession and ensuring that these standards are upheld.

In accordance with Section 38 of the Teaching Council Act, 2001, the Council shall:

- (a) review and accredit the programmes of teacher education and training provided by institutions of higher education and training in the State,
- (b) review the standards of education and training appropriate to a person entering a programme of teacher education and training, and
- (c) review the standards of knowledge, skill and competence required for the practice of teaching,

and shall advise the Minister and, as it considers appropriate, the institutions concerned.

The Teaching Council's role in relation to the review and accreditation of programmes of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) is distinct from the academic accreditation which programmes also undergo. Academic accreditation is based on the suitability of a programme for the award of a degree, diploma, master, etc. whereas professional accreditation for any profession is a judgement as to whether a programme prepares one for entry into that profession.

The review and accreditation of programmes of ITE by the Teaching Council provides an opportunity for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to demonstrate that they offer quality programmes of teacher education. It is expected that the graduates of such programmes will achieve programme aims and learning outcomes which are aligned with the values, professional dispositions, and the standards of teaching, knowledge, skill and competence that are central to the practice of teaching.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Providers of existing programmes have been asked to reconceptualise their programmes in line with the revised criteria and to submit them for accreditation. This report relates to the review of the following programmes: the Master of Education, provided by University College Cork - and the Master of Education (Art and Design) provided jointly by University College Cork and Crawford College of Art and Design/ Cork Institute of Technology , hereinafter referred to

collectively as 'the programmes'.

2. The Review Process

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

Documentation relating to the application was submitted to the Teaching Council by University College Cork (hereinafter also referred to as 'UCC') and by Crawford College of Art and Design/CIT (hereinafter referred to as Crawford College) in January, 2013. The panel met initially on 24 January, 2013 to give preliminary consideration to the UCC submission. Following this meeting, individual members of the panel reviewed the submission and circulated their comments and questions to other members of the panel. Following full consideration of the documentation and a collation of the initial views of the members of the panel, further panel meetings were held on 21 February, 2013, 25 March, 2013 and 2 May, 2013.

Issues for further clarification were identified by the panel and were communicated to the School of Education, UCC and Crawford College by the Rapporteur and responded to by the School of Education and Crawford College.

The Chairperson, Professor John Coolahan, and Rapporteur, Dr Barney O'Reilly, visited UCC and Crawford College on 18 April, 2013 and engaged with representative members of the School of Education UCC and the Crawford College. The visit had as its primary objective the clarification of issues arising from the documentation.² Responses from the institutions to these requests for clarification provided the main agenda for the meetings. The visit schedule is included in Appendix 2. The panel would like to acknowledge the further updates and points of clarification which were submitted by UCC, following its consideration of the draft report. It also welcomes the revised copy of the programme documentation, which was updated taking account of matters raised during the course of the review.

¹ Details of the Review Panel membership are included in Appendix I

² A list of the staff member presenters is included in Appendix II

3. Publication of this Report

The Teaching Council routinely makes information available to the public in relation to its functions and activities and, in line with that practice, this report will be available on the Council's website, www.teachingcouncil.ie.

4. Documentation

The documentation submitted in January, 2013 by University College Cork and Crawford College was in accordance with the template provided by the Teaching Council in the Pro Forma and Guidelines which accompany the Council's review strategy. Key areas of focus were:

4.1. Inputs

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

4.2. Processes

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

4.3. Outcomes

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

5. Overall Findings

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

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

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

The stipulations in section 8 relate to areas which the panel believes to be of such strategic importance to the programmes that accreditation should be subject to those stipulations being met. Therefore, the panel recommends that the Teaching Council should require UCC and Crawford College to set out and submit to the Teaching Council, within two months of receiving the final review report, their proposals for implementing the stipulations. It welcomes the assurances given by UCC during the course of the review process that these issues will be prioritised, and indeed, it has been advised that action has already been taken in relation to stipulation 8.1.

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

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

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

6. Commendations

Having regard to:

1. the documentation which was submitted and
2. information gleaned during the visit and meetings with programme staff,

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

6.1. Engagement with the review process

The panel wishes to express its appreciation to the staffs of UCC School of Education and Crawford College for their professionalism, collegial and collaborative approach to the work of the panel and their willingness to accommodate the panel in relation to the arrangement of the visit and meetings.

The panel appreciates that the staff of UCC and Crawford College agreed to make adjustments to their final submission in the light of the queries and discussions at the visit of panel members to the institutions.

Finally, the panel wishes to acknowledge with appreciation the letter from UCC, dated 1 May 2013, in which the institution acknowledges that additional resources will be required for the delivery of the programmes and indicates its commitment in that regard.

6.2. Inputs

6.2.1. Conceptual Framework

The panel commends the conceptual framework which is an impressive feature of the submission. There is an assured and appropriate research base, which is well referenced. The context for teacher education in the current and evolving era is well set out. The seven principles as presented provide a good underpinning of the programmes, are clearly articulated and incorporate key elements of best practice. The principles provide an admirable rationale for the programme and are in keeping with Teaching Council policy.

6.2.2. Programme Design

The panel commends the emphasis on the integration of “theory” and “practice” and the emphasis on the spiral nature of the design is praiseworthy.

6.2.3. Areas of Study

The panel commends the module descriptions presented in the submission which provide ample evidence of curriculum design procedures informed by relevant research and the best of contemporary practice in the field of teacher education.

The inclusion of the two cross-curricular modules ED6321 and ED6351 is to be commended. They provide an alternative approach to pedagogical studies of equal value to those provided though the subject based pairs of modules.

6.2.4. Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategies

The panel commends the decision to use a Pass/Fail approach to assessment in module ED6342 Foundations Seminar in Year 2. This decision indicates the readiness of the design team to set aside conventional approaches to assessment in order to foster students' experience of complex, value laden decision-making in education.

6.2.5. School Placement

The panel commends the work undertaken by UCC in the development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with School Placement partner schools. The collaborative and detailed approach to this on-going work is commendable. The staff showed a commendable awareness of the complexity of achieving the cultural changes involved. The panel recognises that this is an on-going task that will benefit from the implementation of the Teaching Council's School Placement policy and national support.

6.3. Processes

6.3.1. Reflective Processes

The panel commends the steps taken (e.g., in ED6341 Collaborative Seminar) to involve students in complex, purposeful learning in an environment akin to that likely to be experienced in continuing professional development. This feature is an underpinning dimension of the programmes as set out.

6.4. Outcomes

The panel commends the clear articulation of learning outcomes in the submission which indicates careful reflection by the staff on how the various elements of the course interact and combine to shape the desired outcomes. It represents a strong feature of the presentation of the programmes.

7. Recommendations

Having regard to:

1. the documentation which was submitted, and
2. information gleaned during the visits and meetings with the HEIs,

the panel has noted a number of areas of the programmes which it recommends be developed by UCC and Crawford College. They are as follows:

7.1. Inputs

7.1.1. Areas of Study

The panel notes the extent to which assessment as a professional responsibility of teachers and the related competency demands of the Junior Cycle reforms are provided for by being embedded in a number of modules in both year 1 and 2. The panel recommends that UCC and Crawford College ensure that programme delivery give additional emphasis and focus to teacher competence in assessment *of* learning and assessment *for* learning in the context of current curricular and assessment reforms.

7.1.2. School Placement

The panel recommends that a distinctive formalisation of the School Placement Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) be developed by Crawford College.

The panel recommends that there be clarity, in both module content and in the MOU with schools, that final responsibility for formal school-based assessment in the context of Junior Cycle reform lies with the school (co-operating teacher) and not with the student teacher on placement.

7.1.3. Communication and Decision-Making Structures

The panel recommends that the formal agreement on the joint provision of the programme between Crawford College and UCC be finalised and made available to Council.

8. Stipulations

Having regard to:

1. the documentation which was submitted, and
2. information gleaned during the visits to the institutions and the meetings with programme staff,

the panel has noted two areas of the programmes which it considers must be addressed prior to commencement of the programmes.

8.1. Access to Teaching Resources Library

The panel stipulates that the hours during which the Teaching Resources Laboratory is available to students should be extended.

8.2. Staffing

If the planned student intake is maintained, it will be necessary to increase the School of Education staffing levels significantly, prior to the intake of 2015, having regard to the staff student ratio of 1:15 set by the Teaching Council in its criteria for ITE providers.

9. National Issues

Having regard to:

1. the documentation which was submitted and
2. information gleaned during the visits and meetings with the HEIs,

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

9.1. Teacher Supply

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

- a. the Council should facilitate, in association with the relevant stakeholders, the rationalisation of the supply of post-primary subject methodologies across institutions.
- b. in line with "20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010- 2030", the teacher supply needs of Irish-medium schools and the teaching of Irish, require the special attention of the Council.

9.2. School Placement

- a. Further to the development of 'Guidelines on School Placement' 1st (draft) Edition (2012), that Council, in conjunction with the Department of Education and Skills, support, encourage and facilitate schools to work in co-operation with HEIs , in the implementation of the vision and the processes for appropriate school placements, as set out in the Draft Guidelines.
- b. The panel recommends that Council and the NCCA clarify the role of the student teacher in school based assessment following Junior Cycle reform.

9.3. Council Pro Forma Accreditation Documentation:

a) Diversity in the Teaching Profession

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

b) Resource Data presentation

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

c) Use of ECTS framework in Module Descriptors

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

Appendix 1 – Review Panel Membership

Chair – Professor John Coolahan.

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

Teaching Educator – Professor Harry McMahon.

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

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

Teaching Council Member – Kieran Christie.

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

DES Inspector – Eibhlín Ní Scannláin.

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

Rapporteur – Dr Barney O’Reilly

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

Appendix 2 – Visit Schedule - 18 April, 2013.

11.15 - 12.20pm. UCC School of Education Visit:

Attendance:

For UCC, School of Education:

Prof. Kathy Hall, Head, School of Education

Dr Brian Murphy, Masters Course Director

Dr Fiachra Long, School of Education

Ms Angela Desmond. UCC

For Teaching Council Panel:

Prof. John Coolahan, Chair

Dr Barney O'Reilly, Rapporteur.

12.20-1.15pm: UCC School of Education and Finance office:

For UCC, School of Education:

Prof. Kathy Hall

Ms Angela Desmond

For UCC Finance Office;

Ms Anne Marie Cooney.

For Teaching Council Panel:

Prof. John Coolahan, Chair

Dr Barney O'Reilly, Rapporteur.

Lunch:

2.30 - 3.45pm: Crawford College of Art and Design- at Crawford College

For Crawford College of Art and Design:

Ms Orla Flynn, Head of CIT Crawford College of Art and Design,

Dr Albert Walsh, Head of Art and Design Education,

Ms Susannah Broderick, Lecturer, Art & Design Education,

Ms Janet Doolan, Lecturer, Art & Design Education,

Mr Mark Ewart, Lecturer, Art & Design Education.

For Teaching Council Panel:

Prof. John Coolahan, Chair

Dr Barney O'Reilly, Rapporteur.