

REPORT TO THE TEACHING COUNCIL

DCU Institute of Education
Bachelor of Education
(Gaeilge and French,
German or Spanish)

**Report of the Review Panel to the Teaching Council following a
review of the proposed Initial Teacher Education programme at
Dublin City University Institute of Education**

**Bachelor of Education in Gaeilge and French,
German or Spanish**

11th June 2019

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1. Background

1.1 The Teaching Council's Review and Accreditation Function

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, 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.

1.2 Review and Accreditation Strategy

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.

1.3 National Policy Framework

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.

1.4 Accreditation Criteria

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.

1.5 Particular requirements for post-primary programmes

In November 2011, the Council published *Teaching Council Requirements for Entry onto a Programme of Initial Teacher Education*, which set out the Council's revised subject criteria in draft form. Following a wide-ranging consultation process involving all the major education stakeholders, a final set of proposals were developed. These were approved by Council in December 2012, and the Minister for Education and Skills has conveyed his agreement with the Council's views in this area. The subject specific criteria have been in use for all applications for Registration since 1 January 2017.

1.6 Programme overview

This report relates to the review of the following programme provided by **Dublin City University – Bachelor of Education in Gaeilge and French, German OR Spanish** - hereinafter referred to as 'the programme'.

The Bachelor of Education in Gaeilge and French, German or Spanish, is also referred to as B.Ed. (Languages) in this report. This is a 240 ECTS credit concurrent initial teacher education programme offered over four years, which prepares student teachers to teach two curricular language subjects at post-primary level i.e. Gaeilge as well as either French, German or Spanish.

2. The Review Process

The review of the B.Ed. in Gaeilge and French, German or Spanish took place between January and June 2019, 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 Áine Hyland as Chairperson.¹ The panel included Professor Sheelagh Drudy and Mr. Patrick McVicar, and was supported in its deliberations by external subject experts and by the Director and staff of the Teaching Council.

Documentation relating to the application was submitted to the Teaching Council by Dublin City University (hereinafter also referred to as DCU) on 26 October 2018. The panel was appointed and consulted initially in late January 2019 to give preliminary consideration to the DCU submission. The panel also asked that advice on the curricular subjects be sought from four subject experts. The reports of the subject advisers were received on 28th February and 4th March. The panel met, together with executive staff of the Teaching Council in the Teaching Council Offices on Thursday 7th March.

Following some discussions, an initial report was drafted by the Chairperson on 29th March and was submitted to the Council executive. A teleconference meeting between the panel and the executive was held on 5th April to discuss the draft report. The panel was then asked to submit the report on the official template. The draft report, which contained a number of stipulations and recommendations was sent to DCU on 7th April.

On 11th April, the Chairperson had a phone call from the Dean of Education in DCU expressing some concerns about the stipulations in the draft report, pointing out that DCU had taken account of the National Language Strategy, *Language Connects*, when drafting the new programme and had also sought advice from international experts on language teaching. She raised some questions about the specific subject requirements of the Teaching Council and whether they were compatible with the new specification of the Junior and Leaving Certificate.

On 13th May, an email was received from DCU in which the university committed to fully address the stipulations as set down in the draft report of the panel. The email contained a number of queries, and requests for clarification about some the stipulations. In particular clarification was sought in relation to the overlap in the counting of credits between the subject specific components and the education components of the programme as well as the assessment of language competency to ensure that graduates met the B2.2 requirements of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

The panel and the executive discussed these queries during a conference call on 16th May and on 17th May the chairperson replied by email to DCU's queries. The email reminded DCU that it is the policy of the Teaching Council that there should be no overlap between the 120 Education ECTS credits and the 60 subject-specific language and literature credits,

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

nor should any module be double-counted. While emphasising this point, the email stated that the panel fully endorsed and commended the proposal in the DCU submission that some of the Education modules (e.g. some Foundation, Professional and Pedagogical studies) be taught through the target language. The email also pointed out that while applicants must have “verifiable residential experience of at least two months in a country where the target language is the vernacular (spoken language)”, the Teaching Council did not require that the verifiable residential experience should be included within the 60 ECTS credits for the specific language subject. DCU was also reminded that the maximum annual limit of 60 ECTS credits from a student workload point of view, as set out in the Bologna agreement, should be adhered to.

On 5th June, DCU submitted amendments to their original submission in which all the stipulations and recommendation of the panel’s draft report of 7th April were fully addressed.

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 October 2018 by DCU 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 following discussions and correspondence, the panel adjudges that the programme satisfies the criteria set down by the Teaching Council in its *Criteria and Guidelines* and in its curricular subject requirements in respect of the curricular subjects Gaeilge, French, German and Spanish. Accordingly, it recommends to the Teaching Council that the programme be granted accreditation.

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

Since the amendments submitted by DCU on 5th June addressed all of the recommendations and stipulations in the panel's draft report of 7th April, this report contains no recommendations or stipulations.

The panel is happy to recommend that accreditation of the programmes should have a lifespan of five years. However, DCU has pointed out that new Curricular Subject Requirements (Post-Primary) are scheduled for publication in 2020/2021. In view of this, they have formally requested the waiving of the five-year accreditation period, and asked that they be allowed to submit a revised programme for re-accreditation when these new guidelines come into effect.

6. Commendations

Having regard to:

1. the Pro Forma documentation which was submitted
2. the supplementary material which was submitted, and
3. advice received from the curricular subject specialists who supported the review process and

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

6.1 Engagement with the review process

DCU co-operated fully with the review process.

6.2 Inputs

6.2.1 Conceptual Framework and Programme Design

The panel is impressed by this innovative programme and commends the DCU team for the clarity and excellence of its submission and the proposal to build students' professional identity as language teachers from the outset.

The proposal to teach a number of Foundation, Professional and Pedagogical studies

through the target language is commendable and the panel recognises that DCU fully meets Teaching Council requirements relating to the Education and specific subject components of the programme.

The panel notes and commends the requirement that before embarking on an Erasmus placement, students must submit a learning agreement which will be verified by an academic coordinator in DCU which will only be signed if all modules are at the required level. It is also noted that students must take modules delivered and assessed through the medium of the target language, and should they fail to successfully obtain the required credits they will be deemed to have failed their semester abroad and will have to repeat it.

As regards the assessment of linguistic competence in the target language, the panel notes that all language modules offered by DCU are benchmarked against CEFR. The panel commends DCU for its assurance that written and oral assignments or examinations in Years 3 and 4 are designed to test whether students have achieved the specified learning outcomes which are aligned to CEFR level B.2.2 in the five skills – Reading, Listening, Writing, Speaking Interaction and Speaking Production.

The panel also commends the requirement that applicants must have achieved a minimum of a H3 grade in the Leaving Certificate in the language which they propose to study.

The various exit strategies proposed by DCU for students who at various points in the B.Ed. (Languages) programme decide not to pursue a teaching career, are impressive and are commended.

The panel notes that the Education components of the programme are based on or build on the existing Education modules of the other post-primary concurrent B.Ed programmes provide by DCU. As these components of the programme, including programme aims, 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., communications and decision-making structures and financial resources have already been commended and approved by the Teaching Council in its earlier accreditations, the panel confirms that these components meet all the requirements of the Council.

6.3 Processes

Similarly, the panel approves and recommends that the Council accredit the processes undertaken.

Appendix 1 - Review Panel Membership

Professor Áine Hyland (Chair of the Review Panel) is Emeritus Professor of Education and former Vice-President of University College Cork. She is author of *A Review of the Structure of Teacher Education Provision in Ireland, a Background Paper*, published by the HEA in June 2012, and *Transition from Second to Third Level*, published in September 2011. She supported Professor Pasi Sahlberg in his 2018 Review of Progress on Restructuring Initial Teacher Education Provision in Ireland. She was an adviser to the Lithuanian Government in 2018 on a European Commission funded project on *Supply and Demand of Teachers in Lithuania*.

Professor Drudy is Professor Emeritus of Education at University College Dublin. She is a former teacher, educational researcher and teacher educator. She was a member of the first Teaching Council appointed by the Minister in 2005. She has been an external examiner at a number of Higher Education Institutions and has been involved in quality assurance reviews in various HEIs. She was a member of the Educational Sciences Working Group, TUNING Project 'Tuning Educational Structures in Europe'. She has chaired and participated in panels which have reviewed a series of initial teacher education programmes for the Teaching Council. She was a member of the National Council for Special Education and chaired its Research Committee 2013 - 2018.

Patrick Mc Vicar is a former post-primary school principal and a former member of the Teaching Council, where he served on the Education and Registration committees. Currently a member of the Association of Community & Comprehensive Schools (ACCS) executive, he has served on a number of NCCA and NCSE committees and working groups.

Appendix 2 - Teaching Council Registration: Curricular Subject Requirements (Post-primary)

Gaeilge/Irish

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

1. (a) Applicants must hold a degree-level qualification, with Irish studied up to and including third-year level or higher (or modular equivalent).

(b) The qualifying degree must be equivalent to at least Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and with a minimum pass¹ result in all examinations pertinent to the subject of Irish.

¹
(c) The qualifying degree must carry at least 180 ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) credits (or equivalent) with the specific study of Irish comprising at least 60 ECTS credits (or equivalent) and with not less than 10 ECTS credits (or equivalent) studied at third-year level or higher (or modular equivalent).

2. The study of Irish during the degree must show that the holder has acquired sufficient knowledge, skills and understanding to teach the Irish syllabus (www.curriculumonline.ie). To meet this requirement the degree must include the study of: 2 to the highest level in post-primary education (see

(a) Irish Language Studies

and

(b) Irish Literature

The degree must incorporate the study of Literature through the medium of Irish comprising of at least 20 ECTS credits and should incorporate at least two of the following areas:

- i. Poetry
- ii. Prose
- iii. Media/Film Studies
- iv. Drama.

3. Applicants must have verifiable residential experience of at least two months in an area designated as a Gaeltacht area.

4. Applicants must provide evidence of linguistic competence in the language. This can be demonstrated by:

(a) Applicants for whom the language is their mother tongue

Or

(b) Providing evidence of achieving a minimum level of B2.2 on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (or equivalent) from the higher education institution where the qualification was completed. Alternatively applicants can provide certification of successful completion of an independent language competency test.

5. Applicants must also have completed a programme of post-primary initial teacher education (age range 12-18 years) carrying a minimum of 120 ECTS credits (or equivalent)³

¹ which includes pass by compensation.

² as approved by the Minister for Education & Skills, and published by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA).

³ Applicants who have commenced a programme of initial teacher education prior to 01/09/2014 carrying less than 120 ECTS credits may be exempted from this requirement at the Council's discretion.

French

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

1. (a) Applicants must hold a degree-level qualification, with French studied up to and including third-year level or higher (or modular equivalent).

(b) The qualifying degree must be equivalent to at least Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and with a minimum pass¹ result in all examinations pertinent to the subject of French.

¹ which includes pass by compensation.

² as approved by the Minister for Education & Skills, and published by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA).

³ Applicants who have commenced a programme of initial teacher education prior to 01/09/2014 carrying less than 120 ECTS credits may be exempted from this requirement at the Council's discretion.

(c) The qualifying degree must carry at least 180 ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) credits (or equivalent) with the specific study of French comprising at least 60 ECTS credits (or equivalent) and with not less than 10 ECTS credits (or equivalent) studied at third-year level or higher (or modular equivalent).

2. The study of French during the degree must show that the holder has acquired sufficient knowledge, skills and understanding to teach the French syllabus www.curriculumonline.ie. To meet this requirement the degree must include: ² to the highest level in post-primary education (see

(a) French Language Studies

and

(b) French Literature

The degree must incorporate the study of Literature through the medium of French, comprising at least 15 ECTS credits and should incorporate the study of at least two of the following areas:

- i. Drama
- ii. Poetry
- iii. Fiction
- iv. Media/Film Studies or Communications
- v. History of Ideas (Philosophical works in French).

3. Applicants must have verifiable residential experience of at least two months in France or a country where French is the vernacular (spoken language).

4. Applicants must provide evidence of linguistic competence in the language. This can be demonstrated by:

(a) Applicants for whom the language is their mother tongue

Or

(b) Providing evidence of achieving a minimum level of B2.2 on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (or equivalent) from the higher education institution where the qualification was completed. Alternatively applicants can provide certification of successful completion of an independent language competency test.

5. Applicants must also have completed a programme of post-primary initial teacher education (age range 12-18 years) carrying a minimum of 120 ECTS credits (or equivalent)³.

¹ which includes pass by compensation.

² as approved by the Minister for Education & Skills, and published by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA).

³ Applicants who have commenced a programme of initial teacher education prior to 01/09/2014 carrying less than 120 ECTS credits may be exempted from this requirement at the Council's discretion.

Spanish

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

1. (a) Applicants must hold a degree-level qualification, with Spanish studied up to and including third-year level or higher (or modular equivalent).

(b) The qualifying degree must be equivalent to at least Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and with a minimum pass¹ result in all examinations pertinent to the subject of Spanish.

(c) The qualifying degree must carry at least 180 ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) credits (or equivalent) with the specific study of Spanish comprising at least 60 ECTS credits (or equivalent) and with not less than 10 ECTS credits (or equivalent) studied at third-year level or higher (or modular equivalent).

2. The study of Spanish during the degree must show that the holder has acquired sufficient knowledge, skills and understanding to teach the Spanish syllabus www.curriculumonline.ie. To meet this requirement the degree must include: ² to the highest level in post-primary education (see

(a) Spanish Language Studies

and

(b) Spanish Literature

The degree must incorporate the study of Literature through the medium of Spanish, comprising at least 15 ECTS credits. The study of Literature should incorporate the study of at least two of the following areas:

- i. Drama
- ii. Poetry
- iii. Fiction
- iv. Media/Film Studies or Communications
- v. History of Ideas (Philosophical works in Spanish).

3. Applicants must have verifiable residential experience of at least two months in Spain or a country where Spanish is the vernacular (spoken language).

4. Applicants must provide evidence of linguistic competence in the language. This can be demonstrated by:

(a) Applicants for whom the language is their mother tongue

Or

(b) Providing evidence of achieving a minimum level of B2.2 on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (or equivalent) from the higher education institution where the qualification was completed. Alternatively applicants can provide certification of successful completion of an independent language competency test.

5. Applicants must also have completed a programme of post-primary initial teacher education (age range 12-18 years) carrying a minimum of 120 ECTS credits (or equivalent)³.

¹ which includes pass by compensation.

² as approved by the Minister for Education & Skills, and published by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA).

³ Applicants who have commenced a programme of initial teacher education prior to 01/09/2014 carrying less than 120 ECTS credits may be exempted from this requirement at the Council's discretion.

German

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

1. (a) Applicants must hold a degree-level qualification, with German studied up to and including third-year level or higher (or modular equivalent).

(b) The qualifying degree must be equivalent to at least Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and with a minimum pass¹ result in all examinations pertinent to the subject of German.

(c) The qualifying degree must carry at least 180 ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) credits (or equivalent) with the specific study of German comprising at least 60 ECTS credits (or equivalent) and with not less than 10 ECTS credits (or equivalent) studied at third year level or higher (or modular equivalent).

2. The study of German during the degree must show that the holder has acquired sufficient knowledge, skills and understanding to teach the German syllabus (www.curriculumonline.ie). To meet this requirement the degree must include: ² to the highest level in post-primary education (see

(a) German Language Studies

and

(b) German Literature

The degree must incorporate the study of Literature through the medium of German, comprising at least 15 ECTS credits and should incorporate the study of at least two of the following areas:

- i. Drama
- ii. Poetry
- iii. Fiction
- iv. Media/Film Studies or Communications
- v. History of Ideas (Philosophical works in German)

3. Applicants must have verifiable residential experience of at least two months in Germany or a country where German is the vernacular (spoken language).

4. Applicants must provide evidence of linguistic competence in the language. This can be demonstrated by:

(a) Applicants for whom the language is their mother tongue

Or

(b) Providing evidence of achieving a minimum level of B2.2 on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (or equivalent) from the higher education institution where the qualification was completed. Alternatively applicants can provide certification of successful completion of an independent language competency test.

5. Applicants must also have completed a programme of post-primary initial teacher education (age range 12-18 years) carrying a minimum of 120 ECTS credits (or equivalent)³.

¹ which includes pass by compensation.

² as approved by the Minister for Education & Skills, and published by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA).

³ Applicants who have commenced a programme of initial teacher education prior to 01/09/2014 carrying less than 120 ECTS credits may be exempted from this requirement at the Council's discretion.