

## Teaching Council Cycle 2 - Evaluation

[Link to survey](#) *Completed by IPPN Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> October*

**1. A cycle of initial teacher education professional accreditation was conducted between 2021 and 2023. Please comment on your level of awareness of and direct involvement with this cycle of accreditation?**

IPPN is aware that this project has been underway, as some of our team has been involved with HEIs. We were not made aware of it directly by the Teaching Council.

Given the potential role school leaders play in providing rich feedback and input to the accreditation process with regard to fitness to teach in the various school contexts, perhaps engagement with school leadership via IPPN in future accreditation cycles could be facilitated.

**2. The process for how review and accreditation is conducted is outlined in the Procedures for Professional Accreditation. Please offer any observations or comments you may have in relation to the process as outlined.**

While IPPN is not in a position to comment on each HEI's programmes, a number of our senior staff have participated in reviews at several of the colleges. The feedback provided here is based on their insights and recommendations.

1. We welcome the fact that all HEIs had to be reviewed.
2. The review processes were very thorough and the review panels had highly experienced and well respected members, at least in those HEIs in which IPPN staff were involved.
3. The review must answer a number of key questions
  - a. Are the teachers coming out of the programme 'fit for purpose'?
  - b. Are there major/minor weaknesses in their training, such as fit to teach special needs pupils, teach in Special classes.
  - c. In the context of one quarter of all teachers working in Special education roles, it must be asked, what is the level of fitness to practice?
4. How is innovative practice acknowledged as part of the review? Has thought been given to highlighting such practice such that it be implemented across all HEIs? An example is the innovation introduced in the first year ITE programme at Marino - Approximations of

Practice\*, whereby the four core practices – storytelling, discussion, explanation and group tasks – are broken down step-by-step so students can grasp the techniques and apply them throughout the year, including in a test lesson. Further detail is provided below.

5. What is the role of schools, and school leaders, in such a review? Schools support NQTs with their probation, and are where they learn ‘on the job’. They are well placed to provide feedback on the level of ‘fitness for purpose’ of the teachers from each HEI and could have crucial insights on particular strengths or weaknesses of each programme. How can schools’ expertise be harnessed in Céim?
6. School Placements and how they are organised and managed needs to be reviewed. Placements are essential but are they organised to suit the colleges, the students or the schools? All have varying needs so it needs to be clear which are prioritised. It has been noted that some colleges overlap assignments during school placement. Student teachers should not be doing other assignments in the middle of school placements, such is the intensity of these placements.
7. It would be worth reviewing the longitudinal research by NCSE on how well NQTs are prepared for teaching pupils with special educational needs, whether in mainstream classes, special classes, or special schools. Anecdotally, many schools comment that student teachers doing placements in special education settings are not adequately prepared. Given the proportion of all teachers who are SETs or working with pupils in mainstream and special classes, this needs to be reviewed as part of ITE provision.
8. Special education placement needs to have more of a focus in terms of overall school provision for SEN, as well as looking at one or two case studies of pupils during the allocated time. Perhaps the first pupil could be a ‘high incidence’ pupil e.g. dyslexia, and the second a pupil with more complex needs. There seems to be a complete lack of supervision for SEN placement, other than an online interview at the end, which is wholly inadequate and does not sit well with school leadership, who will subsequently employ these newly-qualified teachers.

#### **\*Approximations of Practice**

The Approximations of Practice programme is delivered in Marino Institute of Education to first year student teachers, and is based on global research. The students call it Teaching and Learning, which indicates that they understand and appreciate the focus. It entails interrogating the 4 core practices of teaching – storytelling, discussion, explanation and group tasks – in preparation for presenting in 5-minute pieces at the end of term .

The students rehearse each one individually in small groups in college, they then practise them in local schools, culminating in teaching a 20-minute lesson (with 4 x 5-minute practices) at the end of the first semester in a room with children from local schools and an Assessor.

In third year, they learn to take a general parents' meeting, a meeting of parents of a child with additional needs, a difficult conversation meeting with parents etc. They also do an assessment where actors are brought in to play the part of parents on Assessment Day.

**3. The Teaching Council took an institutional approach to review and accreditation, reviewing all programmes at one HEI at the same time. Please rate and comment on this approach.**

- Very Unhelpful
- Unhelpful
- **Unsure**
- Helpful
- Very Helpful

The approach taken by the Teaching Council in reviewing all programmes in one institution may well have suited the institutions and the Council. Would it have been better to review similar programmes - such as the PME, etc. - in all of the institutions at the same time, thus providing a clearer comparison on those programmes?

Communication within colleges regarding the review/accreditation process needs to be considered. Every lecturer/tutor needs to be made aware of the evaluation process, timescales and what is expected of them, as well as the core messages to be disseminated across all HEIs.

Learning what works best in ITE in terms of fitness to teach in schools in different contexts is a rich source of information to improve practice across the sector. Such learning could and should be shared, for example via a Shared Learning Day attended by course leaders from all HEIs, or a similar approach.

**The outcome of the review process, in the form of programme reports, is published on the Teaching Council's website and has been made available to the Minister for Education and the Chief Inspector. Please comment on your awareness of these reports, and the format and content of these reports.**

Those involved in this consultation are not aware of these reports. It may be that links were provided to IPPN in the past. Ordinarily, such communications are shared with the Advocacy Team, which works on submissions etc.

**Please comment on the communication around this cycle of accreditation to the education partners/stakeholders**

The turnaround was tight at a very busy time of year. We received the email on 26th Sep and the response had to be in by 4th October. Budget 2025 was announced on 1st October, which is a busy time for stakeholders.

While the form may take minutes to complete, internal consultation and deliberations about the responses takes a lot longer. More advance notice should be given to stakeholders.

**Please comment on the opportunity to communicate and the quality of engagement with the Teaching Council, during the accreditation process, as appropriate to your organisation.**

IPPN appreciates the opportunity to provide input to the consultation process, particularly as we believe that school leaders and schools views should be sought as part of the accreditation process.

The level of engagement from the Council was via a single email, thus it is difficult to comment on the quality aspect.

**Final Comments on the Process**

Feedback to IPPN and to other contributors on the usefulness of our submission and how, or whether, it will shape the Council's thinking on the accreditation process would be helpful, to inform future consultation processes and the level of input required of IPPN.

Each consultation is an investment in time and expertise of very busy staff, and we need to ensure we prioritise work that has an impact. IPPN would be happy to discuss our submission further.

All the best with the evaluation process and thank you for offering IPPN an opportunity to contribute.