



Circular 0058/2010

## To Boards of Management/Vocational Education Committees and Principal Teachers of Primary Schools

### Probationary Requirements for Registration Purposes for Primary Teachers

#### INTRODUCTION

##### 1. Purpose of this circular

This circular outlines certain changes to the probationary process for primary teachers. The provisions in this circular will apply, pending the transfer of responsibilities for establishing procedures and criteria for the induction and probation of teachers to the Teaching Council at a date in the future. This circular replaces Circular 140/2006 which is hereby withdrawn.

Please ensure that copies of this circular are provided to all members of the Board of Management/Vocational Education Committee and its contents are brought to the attention of all probationary teachers in your employment including those on leave of absence. The circular can be accessed on the Department's website [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie).

##### 2. Importance of post-qualification professional development and practice

The transition from an initial teacher education programme to working as a fully registered teacher in a school is a critical time in the professional development of a teacher. During this time, teachers develop and refine their teaching skills in school settings, they continue with their professional development that began during initial teacher education and will continue throughout their careers, and they become fully registered members of the teaching profession. It is a period in which they learn by working collaboratively with colleagues and under the direction of the school principal.

To support teachers in making a successful transition from initial teacher education to working in school, the Minister for Education and Skills has established a National Induction Programme for teachers from September 2010. The probationary process for primary teachers has been adjusted in the light of this additional support.

##### 3. Contents of this circular

This circular

- Refers to the requirements for teachers to be qualified and registered and outlines how the Teaching Council may register teachers with conditions, including probationary conditions (sections 4-6)

- Provides details of the new National Induction Programme that has been designed to support and advise newly qualified and other primary teachers who are completing the probationary process (section 7)
- Describes the probationary process that teachers are required to complete satisfactorily if they are to achieve full registration (“registration without conditions”) by the Teaching Council (sections 8-13)
- Describes changes to the evaluation of probationary teachers’ professional competence which will be operated by the Inspectorate of the Department to inform the decisions of the Teaching Council regarding the registration of primary teachers (sections 11-12)
- Outlines arrangements that apply to teachers who commenced the probationary process prior to 1 September 2010 but who have not completed the process satisfactorily by that date (section 13)
- Sets out the arrangements for a supplementary inspection which apply when a teacher who is probated in a restricted setting moves to a mainstream setting (section 14)
- Provides for changes affecting teachers who have met the Irish language requirement (section 15)
- Draws the attention of teachers and prospective student teachers to changes regarding the recognition by the Teaching Council of teacher qualifications obtained in another EU/EEA country where the course leading to the qualification is commenced from 1 January 2011 (section 16).

## **PART A: REGISTRATION OF TEACHERS BY THE TEACHING COUNCIL**

### **4. Teaching Council Regulations for the registration of teachers**

- 4.1.** The Teaching Council is the body with statutory responsibility for the registration of teachers in Ireland. Teachers are registered by the Council in accordance with the *Teaching Council [Registration] Regulations 2009*. A copy of these regulations and full details about how newly qualified and other teachers may apply to the Council for registration may be found on the website of the Teaching Council.
- 4.2.** In general, a teacher registered under Regulation 2 of the *Teaching Council [Registration] Regulations 2009* is eligible for appointment as a teacher in all mainstream and all special education settings in recognised primary schools and special schools. A teacher registered under Regulation 3 of the *Teaching Council [Registration] Regulations 2009* is eligible for appointment as a teacher in restricted settings only, i.e. in certain categories of special schools and in special classes in mainstream schools where Irish is not a curricular requirement, and as a Resource Teacher for pupils with low-incidence disabilities under the General Allocation Model (as outlined in Circular Sp Ed 02/05 and Circular Sp Ed 36/2006). The eligibility of a teacher for appointment to various posts in recognised schools may be altered from time to time by the Minister for Education and Skills.
- 4.3.** Circular 40/2010 of the Department of Education and Skills outlines the responsibilities of schools, as employers, in relation to teacher recruitment, registration and qualifications and the remuneration arrangements which apply.

## 5. Registration with conditions

- 5.1. Newly qualified primary teachers who have completed their initial teacher education in the State are registered by the Teaching Council *with the condition* of completing satisfactorily probationary requirements, i.e. their *full registration* is confirmed only when they have completed successfully a probationary process.
- 5.2. Most qualified teachers who have completed their initial teacher education outside the State are also *registered with conditions* by the Teaching Council. These conditions may relate to addressing qualification shortfalls, completing Irish language requirements and completing satisfactorily a probationary process.
- 5.3. Full details of *registration with conditions* may be obtained on the website of the Teaching Council.

## 6. Time limits on registration with conditions

- 6.1. In accordance with the provisions of the Teaching Council Act 2001, the Teaching Council stipulates the period during which the conditions attaching to registration with conditions must be satisfied. Failure to complete satisfactorily and within the stipulated time limit the conditions attached to registration by the Council may result in the registration of the teacher lapsing and this may have implications for his/her eligibility for employment in a school.
- 6.2. The time limits set by the Council during which a teacher may satisfy the conditions attaching to his/her registration vary depending on the conditions to be satisfied:
  - Registration with probationary conditions is valid for a period of three years from the date of first registration
  - Registration with conditions other than probationary conditions (for example, conditions relating to addressing qualification shortfalls) is valid for a period of three years from the date of first registration
  - Where teachers are registered with both probationary and other conditions (for example, conditions relating to addressing qualification shortfalls *and* probationary requirements) two consecutive periods are allowed
  - All non-probationary conditions must be met before the probationary period commences
  - The three year period allowed for addressing probationary conditions will begin on the day following the date on which non-probationary conditions have been met.
- 6.3. Teachers who were employed in posts recognised for probationary purposes prior to 1 September 2010 and whose period of probation has not expired by that date will have until 31 August 2015 to satisfy the probationary requirement.

## PART B: NATIONAL INDUCTION PROGRAMME FOR NEWLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS

### 7. Induction support

- 7.1. The Minister for Education and Skills recognises the importance of the transition from an initial teacher education programme to working as a teacher in a school and will therefore support the provision, *via* the education centre network, of a **National Induction Programme** for newly qualified primary teachers from September 2010. The induction support programme will be available to all qualified primary teachers who have been granted conditional registration by the Teaching Council and whose only remaining condition relates to probation.

**7.2.** Building on the knowledge, skills and competences developed during the initial teacher education stage, the National Induction Programme will provide professional support and advice to newly qualified teachers. This will cover areas such as classroom management and organisation, planning and preparation of work, assessment, differentiation, teaching literacy, behaviour management, inclusive practice, child protection and working with parents. The programme will be delivered in a variety of modes (including workshops, seminars, online support and professional support groups). The induction programme will complement the support, advice, and opportunities for teacher observation and feedback that principal teachers and other teachers provide to newly qualified teachers in their schools. Recognising the importance of the continuum of teacher education, the National Induction Programme will ensure close linkage with teacher educators in colleges of education and universities.

**7.3.** Newly qualified teachers who are taking up positions in recognised primary schools are strongly urged to enrol and participate fully in the National Induction Programme in an education centre. Principals are asked to encourage newly qualified teachers to participate in the induction programme and to cooperate with the provision of the programme. Further details of the programme are available on the websites of each of the education centres, on the website of the Teaching Council and on the website of the National Induction Programme.

## **PART C: THE PROBATIONARY PROCESS FOR PRIMARY TEACHERS**

### **8. The probationary process for teachers with conditional registration**

**8.1.** The probationary process which must be completed satisfactorily by teachers if they are to fulfil the conditions of their registration with the Teaching Council incorporates two elements. In order to complete the process satisfactorily, the teacher

- Must complete a period of satisfactory service in a school (the “service” requirement)

*and*

- Demonstrate his/her professional competence in a school setting (the “professional competence” requirement).

### **9. Commencing the probationary process**

**9.1.** A teacher who is registered with the Teaching Council with both non-probationary and probationary conditions and who has satisfied all non-probationary conditions is immediately eligible to commence discharging the probationary requirement in a teaching post which is recognised for probationary purposes in a primary school. When applying to have his/her professional competence evaluated, the teacher must supply written evidence from the Teaching Council that the non-probationary conditions have been successfully met.

**9.2.** A teacher who is registered or has applied for registration with the Teaching Council and who needs to have his/her professional competence evaluated to satisfy the Council's probationary requirements, must make an application for inspection visits to Limerick Education Centre (which administers details of probationary teachers on behalf of the Inspectorate of the Department of Education and Skills) using form OP1 available at [www.lec.ie](http://www.lec.ie). A teacher must provide evidence of his/her registration before inspections can commence. Applications may only be made electronically and must be made *as soon as the teacher commences service* in a post that is

recognised for probationary purposes. Every effort is made to ensure that all teachers who make an application for these inspections before a nominated date (normally in December/January each year) are inspected in that school year.

## **10. Service requirements for probation**

- 10.1.** As a general rule, service in a permanent, temporary or substitute teaching post in a primary school may be reckoned for probationary purposes, subject to the conditions in the paragraphs below. This service may be in a mainstream, special class or special school setting or in a post as a full-time resource teacher (low incidence disabilities) under the General Allocation Model.
- 10.2.** A probationary teacher must complete a minimum of 170 school days from the date on which he/she was first appointed to a post recognised for probationary purposes in a primary school. This service must include at least two periods of 50 consecutive school days. This service must be completed within a maximum of three years from the date of first registration or, if applicable, from the date on which other conditions are met. (See section 6 above.)
- 10.3.** From 1 September 2010, it is the responsibility of the probationary teacher to obtain written evidence of his/her service from the management of the employing school or schools and to submit this record to the Teaching Council so as to satisfy the Council regarding the completion of the service requirement.
- 10.4.** In the case of teachers who were employed in recognised schools prior to 1 September 2010 and who may require evidence of their service to date to submit to the Teaching Council so as to satisfy the Council regarding the completion of the service requirement, the Department will provide these teachers with a record of their service to 31 August 2010.

## **11. Professional competence requirements: Inspection visits and reports**

### Evaluation of professional competence

- 11.1.** Pending the operation of probationary and induction processes directly under the auspices of the Teaching Council as outlined in section 1 above, the Inspectorate of the Department of Education and Skills will continue to evaluate the professional competence of teachers for the purposes of informing the Teaching Council's decisions regarding the conditional or full registration of primary teachers. The probationary inspection process that was operated by the Inspectorate in primary schools heretofore has been adjusted in the light of the provision of the National Induction Programme described above.
- 11.2.** Generally, inspection visits will not occur in the first term of the school year. During this time, the teacher should attend and participate in the first term of the induction programme (described in section 7 above) and will also receive the assistance and advice that principal teachers and other teachers offer to newly recruited teachers.
- 11.3.** During the second and third terms of the school year, the teacher should continue to attend and complete the induction programme and will also receive ongoing advice and support from the principal and other teachers. In addition, the Inspectorate will inspect the work of the teacher during two unannounced inspection visits. These visits will generally last about half a school day. During the inspection visits, the inspector will evaluate the teacher's effectiveness in a classroom environment and in teaching curriculum areas and subjects as outlined in the *Primary School Curriculum*. The inspector will also provide advice and oral feedback to the teacher during each visit. It is desirable for the principal (or another fully registered teacher nominated by the principal) to be present when the oral feedback is provided to the

newly qualified teacher. The criteria used in the evaluation of the teacher's work are listed in Appendix A.

11.4. Following the two inspection visits, the Inspectorate will determine the rating to be applied to the teacher's work as follows:

(a) **“Has demonstrated satisfactory professional competence in a mainstream setting”** This rating indicates that the teacher has demonstrated satisfactory teaching skills in a mainstream class

*or*

(b) **“Has demonstrated satisfactory professional competence in a restricted setting”** This rating indicates that the teacher has demonstrated satisfactory teaching skills in a restricted setting (see 4.2 above)

*or*

(c) **“Requires a further period to develop and demonstrate professional competence”** Normally this rating may be used only once, following the two inspection visits (normally in the first year of service), where the inspector may recommend that the teacher needs more time to develop and demonstrate his/her teaching skills. This may arise either because the teacher has been absent from duty for a significant length of time, or because the inspector judges that there are significant weaknesses in the teacher's work and that he/she requires additional time to develop appropriate skills

*or*

(d) **“Has not demonstrated satisfactory professional competence”** This rating indicates that the inspector judges that the teacher has not demonstrated satisfactory teaching skills in the setting in which his/her work has been evaluated.

#### Reports arising from the evaluation of professional competence

11.5. The Inspectorate will provide the teacher with written confirmation that he/she has achieved either of the following ratings: “Has demonstrated satisfactory professional competence in a mainstream setting” or “Has demonstrated satisfactory professional competence in a restricted setting”.

11.6. The Inspectorate will inform the Teaching Council of the names and other necessary identification details of all teachers whose work achieves the rating “Has demonstrated satisfactory professional competence in a mainstream setting” or “Has demonstrated satisfactory professional competence in a restricted setting”. The transfer of this information to the Teaching Council will facilitate the Council in updating the teacher's registration status.

11.7. In the case of teachers whose work is rated as “Requires a further period to develop and demonstrate professional competence” or “Has not demonstrated satisfactory professional competence” a written inspection report outlining the outcomes of the evaluation and recording advice for further development will be furnished to the teacher by the Inspectorate. The names and other necessary identification details of the teachers to whom such reports are issued will be furnished to the Teaching Council.

11.8. As a written report will no longer be furnished to every probationary teacher following the evaluation of his/her professional competence, copies of inspection reports under previous probationary arrangements or written confirmation of professional competence or inspection reports under current probationary arrangements may not be among the supporting documentation requested when applications are invited for teaching posts in recognised schools. *Appendix D* of

*Boards of Management of National Schools: Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure* is hereby amended.

**11.9.** A teacher may seek a review of an inspection in line with *Procedures for Review of Inspections on Schools and Teachers under Section 13(9) of the Education Act (1998)*.

## **12. Completion of probationary process**

**12.1.** The completion of probation is subject to both service and professional requirements. The teacher must satisfy the Teaching Council as to his/her fulfilment of both requirements and decisions regarding the teacher's registration are a matter for the Council. The probationary period ends when the Teaching Council is satisfied that both the service requirement and the professional competence requirement are fully met. The Council will provide confirmation to the teacher regarding his/her conditional or full registration as a teacher.

**12.2.** Where the probationary period is extended beyond the normal service requirements as described at section 11.4(c) above, the teacher must re-apply for inspection visits using the OP1 form immediately on commencing service in a school in the following school year. These teachers are prioritised for inspection visits and may receive at least one inspection visit in the first term of the following school year.

**12.3.** Where the inspector judges that the teacher "Has not demonstrated satisfactory professional competence" as described at section 11.4(d) above, the teacher must complete a further service period of not less than two periods of 50 consecutive school days. The teacher must re-apply for inspection visits using the OP1 form immediately on commencing service in a school in the following school year. The inspection visits take place in accordance with section 11 above.

**12.4.** Failure to complete satisfactorily and within the stipulated time limit the conditions attached to registration by the Teaching Council may result in the registration of the teacher lapsing and this may have implications for his/her eligibility for employment in a school.

## **13. Transitional arrangements for teachers who have not completed probationary requirements by 1 September 2010 (subject to 6.3 above)**

**13.1.** Teachers who were employed in posts recognised for probationary purposes prior to 1 September 2010 whose period of probation has not expired by that date and who have not received any inspection visits to date should apply for inspection visits using the OP1 form immediately on commencing service in a school in 2010-2011. These teachers may participate in the induction programme. The work of these teachers will be evaluated as provided for in sections 11-12 above and they will be prioritised for inspection visits.

**13.2.** Teachers who commenced the probationary period prior to 1 September 2010 and whose general inspection resulted in the rating "Not Satisfactory" or whose general inspection was deferred in line with section 3.2 of Circular 140/2006 (i.e. teachers who had been absent from duty for a significant period of time in the school year 2009-2010 and those judged by an inspector during the school year 2009-2010 to have had significant and fundamental weakness in their work and where the teacher required additional time to develop appropriate skills) are required to apply for inspection visits in the school year 2010-2011 using the OP1 form immediately on commencing service in a school. These teachers must complete a further service period of not less than two periods of 50 consecutive school days. They may also participate in the induction programme. The work of these teachers will be evaluated

as provided for in sections 11-12 above and they will be prioritised for inspection visits.

#### **14. Teachers moving from restricted to mainstream settings**

**14.1.** Teachers who have demonstrated satisfactory professional competence in a restricted setting and who are eligible to work in mainstream classroom settings are obliged to demonstrate their professional competence in such settings within two years of taking up a position in a mainstream classroom.

**14.2.** When a teacher who has been probated in a restricted setting takes up a post in a mainstream classroom, the teacher must advise the Teaching Council in writing of the date on which he/she has taken up this post so that the Council may allow an appropriate two year period during which this condition must be satisfied. Such teachers should make an application for a supplementary inspection visit using OP1 form when they have taken up a position in a mainstream setting. The Inspectorate will carry out the supplementary inspection of the work of teachers in this category, normally as a result of a single incidental visit, and will concentrate on any professional skills that may not have been evaluated in the restricted setting. The Inspectorate will inform the teacher and the Teaching Council of the outcome in accordance with the ratings outlined at 11.4 (a), (c) or (d) above.

### **PART D: OTHER CHANGES TO PROBATIONARY PROCESS FOR REGISTRATION PURPOSES**

#### **15. Irish language requirement and assessment of competence to teach Irish**

**15.1.** It is a condition of registration under Regulation 2 of the *Teaching Council [Registration] Regulations 2009* that the teacher satisfies the Irish language requirement of the Teaching Council. Teachers who need to satisfy the Teaching Council that they are competent to teach the Irish language (such as those who completed their initial teacher education outside the State) do so by means of completing an aptitude test or an adaptation period, both of which test the teacher's ability to teach the Irish language in classroom settings. Full details are available on the website of the Teaching Council.

**15.2.** Prior to 1 September 2010, teachers who completed the Scrúdú le haghaidh Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge (SCG) or the Oirúnú le haghaidh Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge (OCG) were required to demonstrate their professional competence in the teaching of Irish in a classroom setting. These teachers had to receive a satisfactory additional inspection report on their competence in the teaching of Irish (*a Ráiteas*) within two years of taking up a mainstream position. However, given that teachers' ability to teach Irish in a classroom setting is now tested as part of the assessment procedure for both the aptitude test and the adaptation period, the need for the additional inspection report (*Ráiteas*) no longer exists and the practice will be discontinued from 1 September 2010.

#### **16. Teacher education qualifications obtained in EU/EEA countries**

**16.1.** In accordance with the European Council Directives on Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications, which were transposed into law by the Recognition of Professional Qualifications (Directive 2005/36/EC) Regulations 2008 (S.I. No.139 of 2008), persons who are recognised for the purposes of teaching in one EU member state are entitled to have those qualifications recognised in all other member states. Such recognition may be granted subject to conditions, pending the making good of



any shortfalls identified. The Teaching Council is the competent/designated authority in Ireland for assessing applications to ensure that they meet the qualifications criteria set out in the relevant Teaching Council regulations. In general, teachers must satisfy all other conditions set by the Teaching Council before addressing any probationary conditions required by the Council. Further details on the implications of the above Directive for Teacher Registration and Qualifications are set out in Circular 0031/2010.

- 16.2.** Applications for registration with the Teaching Council should include evidence of satisfactory completion of probation/induction processes undertaken in another jurisdiction where this has occurred. It is a matter for the Teaching Council to determine if the evidence provided is sufficient to warrant exemption from the probationary requirement in Ireland.
- 16.3.** The Teaching Council issued a notice on 19 May 2010 informing persons who intended to commence a teacher education qualification in another EU/EEA member state from 1 January 2011 onwards that they must also complete any period of post-qualification professional practice (for example, NQT or induction year) and be fully recognised/registered under the terms of Directive 2005/36/EC by the designated authority of that member state prior to seeking registration with the Teaching Council in Ireland. This notice from the Teaching Council does not change arrangements for persons who have commenced a teaching qualification outside of Ireland prior to 31 December 2010.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

<p><b>Queries regarding:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registration of teachers</li> <li>• Making an application for registration as a teacher</li> <li>• Full registration and conditional registration as a teacher</li> <li>• Fulfilling the service and professional requirements</li> <li>• Eligibility for exemption from probationary requirements as a result of satisfactory completion of probation and/or induction abroad</li> <li>• Statements regarding completion of the probationary process (for example, for use if seeking employment abroad)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Contact:</b>  The Teaching Council  Block A  Maynooth Business Campus  Maynooth  Co Kildare  Phone: 01-651 7900  Email: <a href="mailto:info@teachingcouncil.ie">info@teachingcouncil.ie</a>  Web: <a href="http://www.teachingcouncil.ie">www.teachingcouncil.ie</a></p>
<p><b>Queries regarding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Induction programme</li> </ul>	<p><b>Contact:</b>  National Induction Programme  Office  The Gate Lodge  St Patrick's College  Drumcondra  Dublin 9  Phone: 01 884 2257  Web: <a href="http://www.teacherinduction.ie">www.teacherinduction.ie</a></p> <p>Co-ordinator: Mary Burke  Email: <a href="mailto:mary.burke@spd.dcu.ie">mary.burke@spd.dcu.ie</a>  Phone: 01 884 2288  Mobile: 086 8130997</p>
<p><b>Queries regarding:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Probationary requirements for primary teachers</li> <li>• Applying for inspection visits for evaluation of professional competence</li> <li>• Inspection visits for professional competence</li> </ul>	<p><b>Contact:</b>  Probationary Teachers Desk  Limerick Education Centre  Parkway House  Parkway Centre  Dublin Road  Limerick  Phone: 061-312 360  Web: <a href="http://www.lec.ie">www.lec.ie</a></p>

Department of Education and Skills  
1 September 2010

## APPENDIX A

### CRITERIA USED IN THE INSPECTION OF THE WORK OF TEACHERS FOR PROBATIONARY AND REGISTRATION PURPOSES

#### Planning, preparation and recording of progress

- Adequacy of class timetable referenced to the specified minimum weekly time framework in the *Primary School Curriculum*
- Clarity of teaching objectives, both long-term and short-term
- Suitability of objectives: extent of reference to *Primary School Curriculum* (with due regard for its underlying principles) and the School Plan
- Range and appropriateness of resources
- Provision for differences in pupil abilities
- Quality and effectiveness of progress records

#### Classroom management and organisation

- Promotion of good discipline and behaviour
- Cultivation of a caring relationship with pupils (including use of praise and positive feedback)
- Overall attractiveness of environment (layout, quality of display including pupils' work, interest centres etc.)
- Accessibility and use of resources
- Management of SNA support (where appropriate)

#### Quality of teaching across curriculum areas

- Variety and suitability of teaching methods, including whole class, group or individual learning
- Match of work to pupil ability with particular reference to attention levels and receptiveness of pupils
- Communication skills e.g. questioning, explaining, responding, and quality of relationships and interactions between teacher and pupils and pupils with each other
- Assessment procedures, monitoring and recording of learning
- Structure and pace of lessons
- Regard for continuity and progression

#### Quality of pupils' learning in curriculum areas

- Extent to which pupils are on task and working purposefully
- Range and suitability of material covered
- Pupils' knowledge of subject matter, skills and attitudes
- Quality of learning outcomes, including written work