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# Review of the Structure of Teacher Education in Ireland

***Briefing Document on Progress since the publication of the Report of the International Review Panel in 2012.***

This paper documents the changes that have occurred in initial teacher education provision (ITE) in Ireland since the report of the International Review Panel was published in 2012. It summarises the extent to which the recommendations of the review panel were implemented in each of the six ITE clusters.

Áine Hyland

13th January 2018

# Review of the Structure of Teacher Education in Ireland

## Briefing Document re. Progress since 2012

**International Context:**

The central role of teachers in ensuring the quality of education has been increasingly recognised internationally in recent decades. In 2005, the OECD publication *Teachers Matter: Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers* stated[1]:

> Teachers are central to schooling. They are even more critical as expectations grow for teaching and learning to become more student-centred and to emphasise active learning …. This calls for demanding concepts of professionalism; the teacher as facilitator, as knowledgeable, expert individual: as networked team participant, oriented to individual needs; engaged both in teaching and in research and development.

OECD's *Building a High Quality Teaching Profession: Lessons from Around the World* (2011), concluded[2]:

> Making teaching an attractive profession requires supporting continuous learning, developing career structure to give new roles to teachers and engaging strong teachers as active agents in school reform, not just implementers of plans designed by others. It also requires strengthening the knowledge base of education and developing a culture of research and reflection in schools so that teaching and learning can be based on the best available knowledge.

Another OECD report published the same year[3] analysed the international PISA results of 2009 to draw some conclusions on what were the characteristics of "strong performers and successful reformers in education". As regards teachers and teacher education, the report stated: "The quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers and principals". It indicated that other professions and national governments know that they have to pay attention to the pool from which they recruit; how they recruit; how they select their staff; and the kind of initial training their recruits get before they present themselves for employment.

The report pointed out that many of the countries which were studied for the purposes of identifying successful strategies**,** have moved "from a system in which teachers were recruited into a large number of specialised low-status colleges of teacher education, with relatively low entrance standards, into a relatively smaller number of teacher-education colleges with relatively high entrance standards and relatively high status in the university."

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[1] OECD (2005) *Teachers Matter: Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers.*
[2] OECD (2011) *Building a High Quality Teaching Profession: Lessons from Around the World.*
[3]OECD (2011) *Lessons from PISA for the United States: Strong Performers and Successful Reformers in Education*. http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/32/50/46623978.pdf

The report added:

> Apart from raising entrance standards to make them comparable to those of other professions, teacher-education programmes in the top-performing countries are working to move their initial teacher-education programmes towards a model based less on preparing academics and more on preparing professionals in clinical settings, in which they get into schools earlier, spend more time there and get more and better support in the process….

The report identified the following factors among those which distinguish high-performing countries from others:

- They put more emphasis on developing the capacity of teachers in training to diagnose student problems swiftly and accurately
- They are working to develop the prospective teachers' capacity to draw from a wide repertoire of possible solutions those that are particularly appropriate to the diagnosis.
- They put more emphasis on the specific instructional techniques that are appropriate for the subjects that the prospective teacher will teach.
- Some countries, notably Shanghai-China and Finland, provide teachers with the research skills needed to enable them to improve their practice in a highly disciplined way[4].
- In most of these countries, those who are going on to be elementary or primary school teachers are required to declare whether they will specialise in either mathematics or science or their native languages and social studies, and they are required to attain a high level of substantive knowledge in the specialty they will teach."

**OECD PISA Results 2009**

Around the time these reports were published, the results of the 2009 OECD PISA tests of literacy and numeracy of 15-year-olds had been a wake-up call for education policy makers in Ireland. Until then, Ireland had been well-placed in the international league tables of pupil performance.[5] But in 2009, Ireland's overall ranking had fallen to 21st among 65 participating countries and 17th of 34 OECD countries. In the literacy tests, Ireland's ranking fell from 5th place in 2000 to 17th in 2009[6]. This decline was the largest across all 39 countries which participated in both PISA 2000 and PISA 2009[7]. As regards mathematics, Ireland ranked

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[4] In Finland since 1979, all teachers are required to have master's degree before being given a licence to teach. Teachers are also expected to understand and be involved in research; to have strong content knowledge; a broad repertoire of pedagogical approaches; training in diagnosing students with learning difficulties and in differentiating instruction based on learning needs. Strong clinical experience under the supervision of master teachers is also an important part of the training in schools associated with universities. Teacher education faculty are carefully selected and must have teaching experience as well as research doctorates.

[5] The information in this section is taken from *PISA 2009: The Performance and Progress of 15-year olds in Ireland: Summary report* produced by Rachel Perkins, Gráinne Moran, Jude Cosgrove and Gerry Shiel of the Educational Research Centre, Drumcondra 2010. See also http://www.erc.ie/documents/pisa2009main_nationalreport.pdf

[6] In the 2009 PISA tests, Ireland's mean score on the reading literacy of 15 year olds was 495.6 - close to the OECD average of 493.4. The mean score for Ireland in reading was some 31 points lower in 2009 than in 2000.

[7] It is gratifying to note that since then, Ireland has regained its ranking in the OECD PISA tests. The recently launched (Dec 2017) 2016 PIRLS (the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) report, shows that Ireland's primary school children are best in Europe and OECD countries for reading skills.

32nd among 65 participating countries and 26th of 34 OECD countries[8].The PISA scores also showed significant disparity between the educational attainment of young people from higher socio-economic backgrounds and those from less advantaged backgrounds.

***Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2011***

The deterioration in the attainment of Irish 15-year-olds between 2000 and 2009, as indicated in the PISA tests, led the Irish government to re-appraise the teaching of literacy and numeracy in Irish schools and in July 2011 a strategy document entitled *Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life: National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People*[9] was issued. This strategy set out a number of qualitative and quantitative targets for improving literacy and numeracy standards for the period 2011 to 2020. Among the key areas addressed in the strategy was the need "to ensure the development of teachers' skills in literacy and numeracy teaching" and to improve the professional practice of teachers through changes in both pre-service and in-service education.

Actions in the *Literacy and Numeracy Strategy* to improve teacher education included the following:

- Lengthening the B.Ed. degree programme for primary teachers to four years and the diploma for primary teaching to two years;
- Replacing the study of humanities (also known as 'academic electives') within the B.Ed. programme (for primary teachers) with a range of optional courses more closely related to education;
- Lengthening of H.Dip.Ed.courses for post-primary teachers from one year to two years;
- Ensuring that modules on the teaching, learning, and assessment of literacy and numeracy are a mandatory requirement for all primary and post-primary teacher education programmes;
- The allocation of a minimum of 40% of the extended programmes to school placement.
- Continuing professional development courses for teachers to include mandatory units on literacy, numeracy and assessment;
- Improvements to education courses for staff working in pre-schools.

As regards teacher education, the decision to extend initial teacher education programmes at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels by one year would pose wide-ranging challenges for ITE providers, but was nevertheless welcomed, as such an extension had been sought by teacher educators and commentators on many occasions during the previous twenty years.[10]

[8]Ireland's performance in mathematics declined by 16 points between 2003 and2009, the second largest decline among countries participating in both years. Ireland's mean score was 487.1, a score that was significantly below the OECD average of 495.7.

[9] http://www.education.ie/admin/servlet/blobservlet/lit_num_strat.pdf

[10] John Coolahan "The Historical Development of Teacher Education in the Republic of Ireland" in Andy Burke (editor) *Teacher Education in the Republic of Ireland: Retrospect and Prospect* (Nov 2004); Thomas Kelleghan "The Future of the Teacher Education Continuum in Ireland: opportunities and challenges" in *Oideas 54* (Winter 2009); Ian Murphy and John Coolahan, *Attracting, Developing and*

There were also major challenges to be met in re-focusing ITE programmes as set out in the *Literacy and Numeracy Strategy*.

***National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030***

Six months after the Minister's announcement that ITE programmes were to be extended, the Department of Education published its national strategy for higher education until 2030. This strategy[11], which focused on system development, saw collaboration, locally, regionally, nationally and internationally as being key. The document stated that "inter-institutional collaborations will be required across a range of activities such as programme design and provision, access, transfer and progression, research, knowledge transfer and shared support services". It indicated that "an immediate priority is to enhance the quality and cost-effectiveness of provision through shared collaborative provision at under-graduate and post-graduate levels" and stated that "collaborations and alliances may also lead over time to consolidation, where this can bring academic and other benefits to the HEIs involved and the wider system". The strategy recognised that Ireland had a significant number of small higher education institutions in receipt of public funding and recommended "that these should be consolidated, where appropriate, to promote coherence and sustainability".

Shortly after the publication of the National Strategy, the HEA published a paper on its implementation[12], setting out its vision for higher education in the future and referring to the need to maintain an element of competition in the sector while at the same time encouraging collaboration:

> Competition between institutions, both public and private, is an essential feature of any higher education system. But care needs to be taken that competition does not create unnecessary and wasteful duplication. Elimination of unnecessary duplication of provision, while maintaining capacity to meet future student demand, will be an important part of the HEA's system co-ordination role. The HEA will facilitate and co-ordinate analysis by the relevant institutions of programme and disciplinary offerings to explore on a system basis where unnecessary duplication arises and how rationalisation can be achieved. Regional clusters provide an ideal platform to ensure coherence and comprehensiveness of provision locally and regionally.

The HEA envisaged that regional clusters would develop in an evolutionary and organic way in the years ahead, and that different clusters would develop at different paces and in different ways according to institutional and regional needs. It emphasised that the purpose of clusters was not to suppress institutional identity and stated that "a major risk that needs to be managed and mitigated will be that the different missions of the institutions within the cluster could, over time, lose their distinctiveness and particular types of provision would be lost from the region". The HEA was of the view that "It will be essential that this does not take

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*Retaining Effective Teachers: Country Background Report for Ireland* (April 2003). Kieran Byrne *Report of the Advisory Group on Post-Primary Teacher Education* (April 2002).

[11] The *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030*, http://www.hea.ie/files/files/DES_Higher_Ed_Main_Report.pdf and the HEA implementation paper *Towards a Future Higher Education Landscape, February 2012.* http://www.hea.ie/files/TowardsaFutureHigherEducationLandscape.pdf

[12] http://www.hea.ie/files/TowardsaFutureHigherEducationLandscape.pdf

place and that the systems for review and evaluation pay particular regard to this".[13] In its correspondence with heads of higher education institutions, the HEA anticipated that smaller institutions would be "consolidated through incorporation into or merger with existing universities, institutes of technology or into technological universities" and that "public funding of these small institutions will not be continued except in circumstances where there are significant reasons of a strategic kind for continuing funding as separate institutions".

Each higher education institution was asked to make a submission to the HEA setting out its strategic intentions as to where it proposed to position itself in the Irish higher education system in the coming years. Submissions were to cover such areas as the institution's distinctive mission, its preferred institutional type and structure having regard to current strengths, its institutional alliances and its involvement in regional clusters and any other matters relevant to its future strategic development.

***A Review of the Structure of Initial Teacher Education Provision in Ireland – April 2012***

Six months after the publication of the National Strategy on Higher Education, the then Minister for Education and Skills, Ruairi Quinn, requested the HEA to undertake a review of the structure of initial teacher education (ITE) provision in Ireland[14]. The HEA commissioned a team of international teacher education experts, consisting of Pasi Sahlberg, John Furlong and Pamela Munn to undertake this task. A background paper was prepared by this author in April 2012[15] and was made available to the international team. The background paper described and analysed the provision of initial teacher education in Ireland at all levels, from early childhood to further and adult education, but focusing particularly on providers and programmes for primary and second-level teachers. It referred to some of the concerns that had been raised about the provision of teacher education in Ireland and suggested questions and issues for consideration by the Review Team.

At that time, there were 19 publicly-funded teacher education providers in Ireland with over 30 separate teacher education programmes accredited by the Teaching Council for teaching at primary and second levels.

***Initial Teacher Education programmes for Primary Teachers 2012***

Five Colleges of Education provided publicly-funded initial teacher education programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate levels for primary teachers. These were Mary Immaculate College, Limerick (MICE); St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra (SPD), Dublin 9: Coláiste Mhuire, Marino, Dublin 9 (Marino); Froebel College, Blackrock, Co. Dublin (Froebel), and the Church of Ireland College of Education, Rathmines, Dublin 6 (CICE).

While the ITE programmes provided by the publicly-funded colleges of education were validated by various universities, all five colleges were owned and managed by Church

[13] *Ibid.*
[14] Letter dated 20th March 2012 from the Minister for Education and Skills, Ruairi Quinn to the HEA.
[15] Áine Hyland, *A Review of the Structure of Initial Teacher Education Provision in Ireland,* April 2012.

bodies[16], and the campuses of the colleges of education were independent of (and sometimes some distance away from) the campuses of their validating university. Awards from MICE were validated by the University of Limerick; SPD was validated by Dublin City University; Marino and CICE were validated by Trinity College Dublin; and Froebel College, which had formerly been validated by Trinity College, was validated by NUI Maynooth.

In addition to the five publicly funded providers, there was one private provider, Hibernia College, which provided an accredited[17] post-graduate initial teacher education on a blended learning basis for primary teachers.

In 2011, a total of 1,174 students graduated from the publicly-funded colleges for primary teachers – 973 from concurrent programmes and 91 from consecutive programmes. In addition, there were 713 graduates from Hibernia College (consecutive programme).

***Initial Teacher Education Programmes for Second-Level Teachers 2011***

Second-level teachers in Ireland are subject-specific teachers and nowadays they are registered to teach one or two subjects of the second-level school curriculum. In 2011, initial teacher education programmes for second level teachers (concurrent and consecutive) were provided by each of the seven universities[18], by three institutes of technology[19], by the National College of Art and Design and by three specialised colleges of education – Mater Dei Institute, St. Angela's College, Sligo and St. Patrick's College, Thurles. The majority of second level teachers completed an undergraduate programme (usually either a three year - 180 ECTS - programme or a four year 240 ECTS programme) in a specific subject or subjects, and then completed a consecutive one-year (60 ECTS) ITE programme at postgraduate level. A smaller number completed a four-year concurrent postgraduate programme. In 2011, 1,576 graduates completed programmes for second level teaching – 464 graduated from concurrent programmes and 1,112 from consecutive programmes.

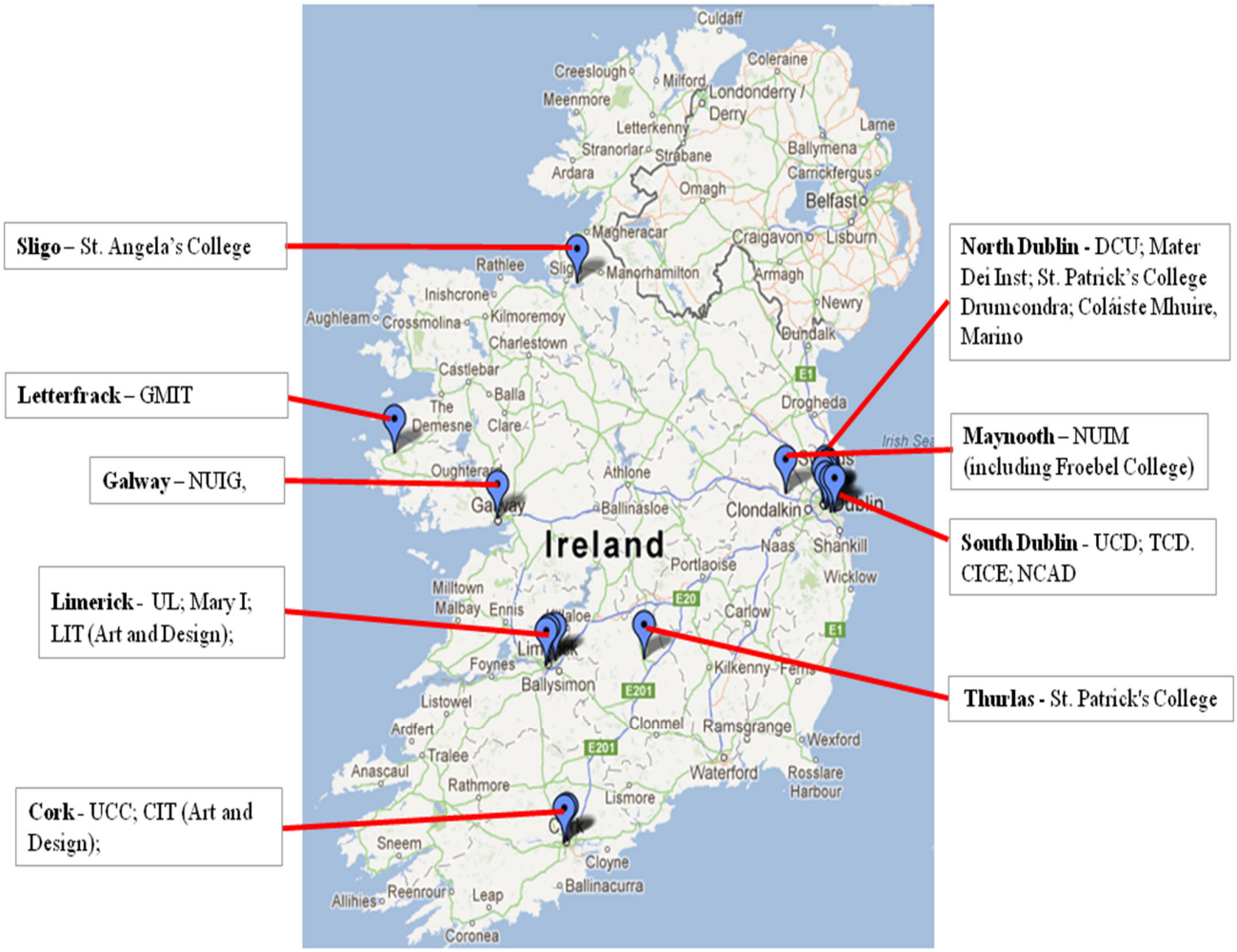
In addition to the publicly funded providers of ITE for post-primary teachers, a private provider, Hibernia College, has provided a two-year (PME) ITE programmes for post-primary teachers since 2013. Hibernia College accepts two cohorts of students for this programme every year and plans to graduate over 200 post-primary teachers each year.

[16] St. Patrick's College Drumcondra, Mary Immaculate College, Froebel College and Coláiste Mhuire, Marino are owned and managed by Catholic dioceses or religious congregations; the Church of Ireland College in Rathmines is owned and managed by the Church of Ireland.
[17] Accredited by the Teaching Council
[18] The validating universities were University College Dublin (UCD); University College Cork (UCC); National University of Ireland Galway (NUIG); National University of Ireland, Maynooth (NUIM); Trinity College Dublin (TCD); University of Limerick (UL) and Dublin City University DCU).
[19] Galway Mayo Institute of Technology (Letterfrack campus); LIT (Limerick School of Art and Design); and CIT (Crawford College of Art and Design).

The following map shows the location of each of the publicly-funded providers:

**FIGURE 1**

**Map of Ireland showing the location of each of the nineteen publicly-funded initial teacher education providers for primary and second-level teachers in 2012**



The panel of international teacher education experts arrived in Ireland in June 2012 to carry out the review. In its terms of reference, the panel was asked to bear in mind that in countries where student outcomes are high, the following features are evident: teacher education is research-driven; graduate teachers are capable of applying research to their work in a constructive and reflective way; relatively small numbers of institutions are involved in initial teacher education provision allowing for a critical mass to conduct research at a high level, and those institutes span /combine education sectors allowing for meaningful synergies in initial teacher education for early childhood, primary, second-level and other sectors of education.

Having met with some of the providers and policy-makers, and having considered the background paper and the issues raised, the Review Panel set out its vision for the future of teacher education as follows:

> By 2030 Ireland will have a network of teacher education institutions based on a small number of internationally comparable institutes of teacher education. Each of these institutes will offer research-based teacher education in internationally inspiring environments, provided at Masters level initially or through continuing professional development. Each will also offer further professional development services on the continuum ranging from early childhood to in-service training of teachers and leaders.

The panel reiterated that the key characteristics of internationally recognised teacher education systems included high quality instruction on both pedagogy and pedagogical content knowledge; a strong focus on research as a basis of teaching and learning; a close and systematic engagement with schools; and real internationalisation of the institutions providing initial and continuing teacher education. Experience from other education systems suggested that it would be difficult to have these key characteristics unless the size of teacher education institutions was sufficiently large and had a "critical mass". The report went on to state:

> Therefore, the Review Panel recommends that teacher education should be facilitated in a university setting with systematic links to clinical practice in field schools which provide where possible for the full range of sectoral teacher education, spanning early childhood to adult education. This would facilitate greater synergies between the different levels of education. It would also provide a critical mass for improving capacity for high quality research, the integration of students and staff across a number of disciplines and the promotion of balanced international mobility of students and staff. These require that all teacher education institutions are equipped with full-time staff and rely only when absolutely necessary on part-time personnel.

The Review Panel recommended that in order for this vision to be realised, provision by two of the smaller providers, St. Patrick's College Thurles, and Galway-Mayo Institute of Education should be discontinued. The remaining 17 publicly funded providers should be clustered into six centres of excellence, with initial teacher education located in one setting within each cluster and organised with a title such as "institute of teacher education" or "centre for teacher education".

In summary, the report recommended the establishment of the following six centres of excellence:

1. A centre comprising of Dublin City University (DCU); St. Patrick's College Drumcondra (SPD); Mater Dei Institute of Education (MDIE).
2. A centre comprising Trinity College Dublin (TCD); Marino Institute of Education (MIE); University College Dublin (UCD); and the National College of Art and Design (NCAD).
3. A centre comprising National University of Ireland Maynooth (NUIM) – now called Maynooth University (MU); and the Froebel College.
4. A centre comprising University of Limerick (UL) Mary Immaculate College of Education (MICE); and Limerick Institute of Education (LIT).
5. A centre comprising University College Cork (UCC) and Cork Institute of Technology (CIT).
6. A centre comprising National University of Ireland Galway (NUIG) and St. Angela's College Sligo.

With regard to Art education, the Panel recommended that ITE programmes for Art should be university-accredited and university-based. This would mean that teacher education courses in Art should be planned and delivered jointly by personnel from a university and the art institute. Staff should be integrated in terms of the planning and delivery of common parts of the programmes and students should be integrated for lectures and seminars.

In all cases, it was recommended that mergers / alliances would take place whereby teacher education would be facilitated at one location within the restructured setting. The new configuration might be titled an "Institute of Education" a "Centre for Teacher Education" or equivalent.

Other issues raised by the Review Panel were the calibre of applicants to ITE programmes and the issue of supply and demand of teachers. As regards the former, the Review Panel recognised that the calibre of school leavers applying to ITE programmes in Ireland was "amongst the highest, if not the highest in the world.[20]The panel indicated that this should be maintained, stating that this "rich resource should be highly valued and student teachers should be challenged to their full potential".

As regards the supply/demand issue, the panel pointed out that over-supply and associated unemployment levels among newly qualified teachers could have a negative effect on the attractiveness of teaching as a career and on the calibre of those aspiring to become teachers. It therefore recommended that a review of teacher supply and demand be undertaken as a matter of urgency.

[20] Successful applicants for undergraduate ITE programmes in 2011were in the top-achieving 12.5% in the Leaving Certificate examination.

**Review and Revision of the Content of Initial Teacher Education Programme**

During this period, the Teaching Council was reviewing the content of teacher education and in 2011 its policy document *on the Continuum of Teacher Education* was published. This policy document envisaged a life-long learning approach to the teaching profession involving initial, induction and in-service education. The Council saw the continuum of teacher education as encompassing "initial teacher education, induction, early and continuing professional development and indeed, late career support, with each stage merging seamlessly into the next and interconnecting in a dynamic way with each of the others".

Parallel with the publication of this policy document, the Council published two other documents *Initial Teacher Education, Criteria and Guidelines for Programme Providers* and *Strategy for the Review* and *Professional Accreditation of Existing Programmes* which set a new standard for all initial teacher education programmes. As well as adding an additional year to all ITE programmes, a striking feature of the new approach was the much greater emphasis on partnership and collaboration between the ITE providers and the schools, and an enhanced role beyond teaching practice for student teachers to experience the general life of the school. In this regard the document stated:

> School placement is designed to give the student teacher an opportunity to learn about teaching and learning, to gain practice in teaching, to apply educational theory in a variety of teaching and learning situations and school contexts and to participate in school life in a way that is structured and supported. It replaces the term "teaching practice" and more accurately reflects the nature of the experience as one encompassing a range of teaching and non-teaching activities.

The new approach also emphasised the role of teacher as reflective practitioner. Using the language "teacher-as-researcher" the guidelines stated that "student teachers should have opportunities to engage in research as the foundation of their practitioner-based enquiry stance in the future". To this end, student teachers would both generate and use research in their practice.

As can be seen from the above summary, the implications for ITE providers of the decisions of the Minister for Education, the Teaching Council and the HEA regarding the duration, content, and structure of initial teacher education, would be very significant. The extension of the duration of initial teacher education, accompanied by a comprehensive reform of the content of ITE programmes, and the re-structuring of the ITE system all occurred in parallel. During the five-year period 2012 to 2017 initial teacher education in Ireland underwent a root and branch reform to an extent never before experienced.

**Challenges in Implementation**

The challenges for ITE providers in meeting the new requirements were very significant and should not be underestimated. The time frames set by the various policy makers for introducing change were very short. For example, the Teaching Council informed ITE providers in 2011 that the new concurrent ITE programmes would have to be in place by the beginning of the academic year 2012/13 and the consecutive programmes by 2014/15. The period in question was one of austerity in the public finances and there was a moratorium in

place on the appointment of new staff in all publicly funded institutions.[21] Moreover, the starting salaries of beginning (i.e. newly qualified) teachers (NQTs) was reduced and because of the cutbacks, there were fewer posts available for NQTs. It was undoubtedly an inauspicious time in which to introduce such a major reform of initial teacher education. On the other hand, the shortage of new posts meant that the system could survive a year when there would be virtually no NQTs, because of the addition of an extra year to ITE programmes. And yet, in spite of the challenges, the proposed reforms – including duration and content of programmes, and the re-structuring of the ITE system - were largely implemented on target, as the following sections will show. It is a great tribute to the institutions and to the staff of those institutions that the reforms were embraced and implemented so thoroughly.

In a recent book on *Teacher Preparation in Ireland*, its authors summarised the changes faced by ITE providers, as follows[22]:

> The situation was not helped by the issuing of a directive in 2011 that the colleges providing programmes for initial teacher preparation would have to design and develop new programmes, achieve university validation, and secure Teaching Council accreditation, within less than one year. Furthermore what was already a challenging process was aggravated by the manner in which the changes required were mandated. The initial announcement that they would be taking place was made unexpectedly by the Minister for Education: it was to be found nested within the document on the nation's new literacy and numeracy strategy published back in 2011. This was a major surprise to personnel within the colleges and universities as they had no sense that anything so major was imminent.

The ongoing challenges were recognised by the HEA in its report to the Minister for Education on 13th April 2013, where it stated

> "The coming years will probably see a significant level of merger activity in the higher education system. Mergers are envisaged within the institutes of technology sector and some incorporations of smaller colleges and colleges of education into universities are expected. Mergers in higher education are notoriously difficult and can only be driven by mutual recognition that the ultimate outcome will justify the effort and inevitable short-term disruptions. Central authorities must also set the policy parameters and funding mechanism appropriate to spur collaboration, rationalisation and eventual merger where this is a viable and necessary outcome. … Successful mergers need strong leadership and good communications to ensure that they are well managed and that the negotiation and implementation processes stay on course.

As John Coolahan wrote in 2013[23]:

[21] A moratorium on public service appointments had been introduced as one of the conditions of the economic "bail-out" provided by the troika after the collapse of the banking system in Ireland.
[22] Tom O'Donoghue, Judith Harford and Teresa O'Doherty *Teacher Preparation in Ireland: History, Policy and Future Directions.* UK, Emerald Publishing 2017.
[23] John Coolahan, *Towards a New Era for Teacher Education and the Engagement of the Teaching Profession*, November 2013.

> We are living in a period where a paradigm shift may be afoot in the duration, design, quality and process of teacher education in Ireland …. Following a long gestation, a great deal of change is now being compacted in a short period.

**What has Been Achieved?**

The following section will consider each of the six centres of initial teacher education which were identified by the international panel and will summarise developments between 2012 and 2017. In the case of each centre, the first (blue) panel shows the proposals which were made in the 2012 Report of the International Panel. The red panel shows the slightly amended proposal by the HEA – approved by the Minister – in 2013. The final (black panel) attempts to summarise what the current situation is in 2017, and the extent to which each cluster has acted on the recommendations of the international panel.

**Centre 1: Dublin City University (DCU); St. Patrick's Drumcondra (SPD); Mater Dei Institute (MDI); Church of Ireland College of Education (CICE).**

The International Review Panel recommended that if DCU, SPD, and MDI amalgamated, the continuum of sectoral teacher education would be partially fulfilled as ITE for primary teachers was facilitated by SPD and ITE for post-primary teachers was facilitated by DCU and MDI. As regards early childhood education, no specific qualification was awarded at that time, but the international panel recognised that this could be addressed in the future. The panel pointed out that the research capacity of the combined HEIs was strong and they recommended that the Educational Research Centre at SPD be fully integrated into the proposed Institute. In summary, it was indicated that a strong central teacher education hub could be created, possibly centred in the SPD campus.

As regards the Church of Ireland College of Education, the panel suggested that this cluster would be a possible location for CICE.

**(The HEA proposals in 2013)**

The integration of SPD and Mater Dei with DCU to form a new Institute of Education as a fifth faculty of DCU is proceeding and will conclude with the colleges being fully incorporated into the university. The rationalisation of programmes not related to teacher education will occur through the development of an enhanced Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in DCU.

The Governors of CICE have agreed to pursue formal discussions relating to structure and governance with DCU. The governance structure of CICE is complex and it is recognised that changes to it will necessarily take more time to achieve, although these are progressing.

**The current situation is as follows**: The recommendations of the International Panel have been more than fully implemented and the new DCU Institute of Education was formally established on October 1st 2016. It is up and running successfully. The full integration of the undergraduate education programmes for primary education is nearing completion. A Level 8 degree in Early Childhood Education has been added to the range of undergraduate offerings in the Institute. The incorporation has a had a significant impact on the profile of the University as a whole with the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences now the largest of all faculties, closely followed by the Institute of Education. Next year, the largest single cohort to graduate from DCU will be the cohort of primary teachers.

Although SPD and MDI had both been Catholic Colleges under the trusteeship of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, and the CICE was a Protestant College under the auspices of the Church of Ireland Archbishop of Dublin, all three institutions agreed to be incorporated into DCU, and join what was the School of Education Studies at DCU to form the single entity.

The SPD campus was renovated and extended and the vast majority of teacher education staff and students were relocated there in Sep. 2016 under the new title of St. Patrick's Campus, DCU. Two post-primary teacher education programmes remain in DCU's Faculty of Science and Health – one in physical education, and one in science education but are supported by

Institute of Education faculty, who also work with Science and Health on joint research projects.

The Institute is now the largest provider of teacher education in the State with 4,000 students and 145 academic staff. It consists of six schools, staffed by staff from the four different institutions, and a range of research centres, including two University Research Centres - the Centre for Evaluation, Quality and Inspection (EQI), and the Anti-Bullying Centre (ABC). Two externally funded research centres have also been established - The Centre for Assessment Research, Policy and Practice (CARPE) - and, from January 2018, a Centre for Research in Early Childhood Education. Both of these centres are led by funded Chairs.

The denominational ethos of two of the constituent colleges is supported through two specialist centres – the Church of Ireland Centre, and the Mater Dei Centre for Catholic Education, each led by a Director and with a particular responsibility for ensuring a supply of graduates qualified to teach in denominational settings. Provision is also in place to provide for teachers who will teach in multidenominational and non-denominational schools.

Additional academic and senior staff have been appointed. The former President of St Patrick's College has been appointed Deputy President of the University. A new Executive Dean of the Faculty of Education has been appointed and new Professors of Early Childhood Education and of Educational Assessment, supported by philanthropic funding, have also been appointed. Since incorporation, 16.5 new academic appointments have been made, of whom four replaced staff who were retiring, as well as the two externally funded Chairs. There is a strong research ethic in the Institute and approximately 70% of permanent staff have a doctorate.

All incoming students are registered as DCU students, and from 2018, all will graduate as DCU graduates. DCU Institute of Education now offers a full continuum of ITE programmes - from early childhood to further and higher education, as well as research and taught Masters and Doctorate programmes. Planning for extended provision for post-primary teacher education is now underway, as well as for a specialist Master's programme in early childhood education.

*The following table shows the number of ITE students who graduated in 2017 from the Institute of Education, DCU:*

| | *Graduated in 2017* |
|---|---|
| *B Ed* | *417* |
| *B Rel Ed English* | *27* |
| *B Rel Ed History* | *21* |
| *B Rel Ed Music* | *17* |
| *BSc Science Ed* | *19* |
| *BSc PE Biology* | *26* |
| *BSc PE Maths* | *17* |
| *B Ed and Training* | *64* |

| | |
|---|---|
| *PME Primary* | *61* |
| *PME Post-primary* | *118* |

An Incorporation Agreement, signed by all of the partners, sets out the arrangements for the two denominational centres, and includes provision for an Advisory Council (in the case of the CICE) and an Advisory Board (in the case of the MDCCE) to represent the interests of the respective Archbishops, and to support the work of each centre and director. As regards property transfers, the SPD campus is leased to DCU on a long lease arrangement.

The Dean emphasises that the scale of the incorporation project – in terms of the time and resources applied by all the institutions - should not be underestimated. Over a three-year period,150 people were involved in the project, and at key points, a team of 50 people was dedicated to the work full-time – including various administrative staff, HR, Registry, libraries and academic programmes. The legal and governance issues were unprecedented, and delivering on incorporation depended on the conviction of the respective institutional leaders, governing bodies and trustees that the project was worth doing and that what would emerge would be better than what was being lost.

In her reply to the queries raised in connection with this review, the Dean has pointed out that the process is ongoing. Each day something unforeseen arises, usually a technical issue, but generally requiring consideration and decision. Of note, even the drivers of the teacher education reform, including the DES and the Teaching Council continue to list the legacy institutions as providers of initial teacher education. Getting the 'message' out about the change in the configuration of the institutions remains a work in progress.

She refers to one notable benefit – there is growing international interest in the IoE, both in terms of the scale and the positioning of ITE at the heart of a University like DCU.

The fully incorporated Institute is now (October 2017) in its second year and is beginning to see some traditional 'borders' being breached. Staff traditionally associated with primary education have begun contributing to post-primary teacher education programmes and vice versa. Research and innovation projects are bringing academics from a range of disciplines together. Planning for shared modules across programmes is challenging given the numbers of students involved, but is being actively pursued.

**Cluster 2: Trinity College Dublin (TCD); Marino Institute of Education (MIE); University College Dublin (UCD); and the National College of Art and Design (NCAD).**

In 2012, the Review Panel recommended that TCD, MIE and UCD should form one centre for teacher education. The panel noted the possibility of it being centred at Marino which had a modern teacher education campus. It recommended that initial teacher education at NCAD should be integrated into this centre. If this were done, the continuum of sectoral teacher education would be partially fulfilled (except for ECE). The Review Panel recognised the potential strength of the combined research capacity at UCD and TCD and recommended that this be harnessed in the interests of teacher education. In the proposed new configuration, the panel recommended that a single governance structure with a single stream of funding, be put in place in respect of the proposed Institute with an appropriate constitution for the new institute providing for joint ownership.

**The HEA Proposals of 2013** envisaged that following the recommendations of the International Review Panel, TCD, MIE, UCD and the NCAD would participate in the formation of a new Institute of Education. The HEA recognised that while the relationship between Marino Institute and TCD was based on a joint trusteeship, it was the view of the HEA that the full incorporation of Marino Institute into TCD offered "the optimal structural arrangement" and recommended that this should be advanced by the institutions.

**The current situation is as follows:**

In the case of this cluster, the recommendations of the International Panel and of the HEA in relation to initial teacher education (ITE) have not been implemented to date. TCD, UCD, NCAD and MIE continue to provide ITE programmes on four separate campuses, which are not geographically close to one another. (Marino Institute is situated less than 4 km from the DCU/SPD campus (cluster 1), but about 8km from TCD, the closest college in cluster 2).

In the context of this review, four separate replies were received to queries raised by this author. While in most of the other clusters, one joint reply was received, in the case of this cluster, each institution (i.e. TCD, UCD, MIE and NCAD) replied separately to the queries of this author.

***TCD***

According to the reply from the Registrar of TCD, the four partners, namely TCD, UCD, NCAD and MIE, **in agreement with the HEA** have focused on the provision of a virtual centre 'that will draw on the resources of each to enhance the quality of their teacher education and research' (Higher Education System Performance review, 2014-16). He states that "as this is not a merger, development of this centre has focused on collaboration in research, ITE and CPD". He adds that recent discussions between all four partners suggest that CPD and research offer the best prospects for joint activity and closer collaboration in the short-term.

### *Marino Institute of Education (MIE)*

MIE remains a free-standing College of Education, affiliated to Trinity College, and its programmes are validated by Trinity College (as they have been since 1976). MIE offers a degree programme in Education Studies (not accredited by the Teaching Council) and a degree in Early Childhood Education as well as a B.Ed. programme. MIE continues to be directly funded by the Department of Education and does not come under the auspices of the HEA. It is governed under the joint trusteeship of the Congregation of Christian Brothers European Province and Trinity College. Its students have access to TCD services and library, but given that TCD is situated about 7 km from MIE, it is unlikely that this facility is regularly used by students.

The President of Marino Institute of Education sent a long reply, which is reproduced in full in the Appendix to this review. She stated that the Heads of the four institutions, TCD, MIE, NCAD and UCD, had initially welcomed the report of the 2012 Review Group as presenting a real opportunity for the development of teacher education in Ireland and indicated that the concept of a collaborative Institute of Initial Teacher Education across the four HEI's became an element of strategic planning in each of the institutions. Her reply gives details of a Task Force, composed of senior personnel from the four named institutions, which was established to progress the delivery of an Institute of Teacher Education, as a single entity. The Task Force received funding of €100,000 in 2013 from the HEA's Strategic Innovation and Development Fund to pursue its work but a review of the project carried out on behalf of the HEA the following year, noted that its work appeared to be at an early stage and indicated that any further funding would be contingent on the development of a shared academic plan, involving an integrated programme with accelerated timelines.

At the outset some progress appears to have been made with regard to the scope, vision, activities and model of governance of a new Institute for ITE involving TCD, UCD, NCAD and MIE. However, to date there has been no tangible outcome in relation to collaboration in the provision of ITE programmes, either for primary or for post-primary teachers.

It is relevant to note that the President of MIE (who has been very co-operative with this review) will retire this summer. The post of President has been advertised, but whereas other higher education institutes, including colleges of education, have had to get approval from the HEA before advertising the post of President (e.g. Mary Immaculate College, Limerick), that has not occurred in the case of MIE since MIE continues to be funded by the Department of Education and Skills.

***UCD***

According to the reply received from the Head of Education in UCD (reproduced in full in the Appendix), the UCD School of Education has developed an ambitious strategy for Teacher Education over the coming five years. This strategy intends to harness the research strengths of the School (currently ranked No 1 in Ireland in QS subject rankings), as well as draw on the disciplinary strengths of UCD and world class campus facilities, integrating this into an extended portfolio of Initial Teacher Education. The Head of Education states that this strategy is based on both the system's needs, in terms of teacher supply, as well as on the spirit of the 2012 (Sahlberg) Report which underlines the importance of 'research-based teacher education in internationally inspiring environments… on the continuum ranging from early childhood' (2012, p. 24).

The plan includes (a) extending the current range of concurrent (five year) ITE programmes provided by UCD; (b) extending their PME offering to create a PME that caters jointly for primary and post-primary student teachers; (c) Provision Education as a major subject at undergraduate level with a primary/post-primary teaching specialism, and (d) Extending outreach through accredited short-course CPD programmes for teachers

UCD has been in discussions with NCAD in relation to how it (NCAD) could collaborate as a recognized College of UCD in some of this development, given their expertise (and leading role nationally) in the field of Arts and Design Education. This collaboration might include offering Arts and Design Education (provided by NCAD) as a subject specialism in UCD's Initial Teacher Education programmes, while UCD could offer its expertise across other subject methodologies and foundation disciplines to NCAD student teachers. These collaborations would be facilitated by the current structures of collaboration between UCD and NCAD and the validating role of UCD in relation to NCAD degrees. However, as noted earlier, there are as yet no concrete ITE outcomes to these plans and discussions.

UCD also states that its School of Education has invested considerable effort in trying to build a sustainable platform for collaboration across the four institutions in the original proposed cluster in the area of ITE. However, the view now is that collaboration with NCAD "offers an approach that adds value to the work of both institutions, harnessing the potential of both to provide an ITE experience embedded in the principles of the Sahlberg report". UCD is of the view that this would result in the establishment of a world-class centre of excellence in teacher education on the south side of Dublin city. The response from UCD does not mention collaboration with TCD and it would appear, as also indicated in the TCD submission, that neither UCD nor TCD have any plans to pursue such collaboration.

***NCAD***

The National College of Art and Design became a recognised college of UCD in 2011. At one stage, it seemed that NCAD would form a Collaborative Institute of Education with UCD but this plan does not appear to be currently pursued nor is it clear what its implications (if pursued) would be for initial teacher education.

The reply from the Head of the School of Education in NCAD states that the Schools of Education in NCAD and UCD have a positive working relationship. The reply refers to a history of collaboration, "with over 60 projects since the formation of an academic alliance in 2010". There has been collaboration between UCD School of Education and NCAD School of Education in shared teaching of modules, in shared research and in their ACCESS programmes. They see potential for a closer relationship and further positive growth. They are interested in "an organic development of programmes without fragmenting the student experience geographically"[24]. They are "more than happy" to deepen the collaboration with UCD on these terms. They make the point that the sharing of support services could enhance these synergies / library and archival facilities as well as the provision of Virtual Learning Environments for student teachers in both institutions to accommodate blended learning opportunities. They have been in discussion with UCD's School of Education on possibilities for future collaboration. They see opportunities to collaborate with UCD on CPD (arts based provision) through extending outreach through accredited short course CPD programmes for teachers. They have also discussed the possibility of UCD being able to provide NCAD initial teacher educators with a second subject in the context of a master's provision.

**In summary**, in Cluster 2, there is no indication from the replies received that there will be any major change in the current structure of provision of ITE in any of the four institutions of in the immediate future. In this cluster, while some limited collaboration has taken place between some of the institutions, the recommendations of the Sahlberg Review have not been implemented.

[24] NCAD is located close to Dublin City Centre (within walking distance of TCD) but it is about six km from the UCD campus and there is no direct public transport route.

**Centre 3: NUI Maynooth (now Maynooth University) and Froebel College**

In 2012, the International Review Panel agreed that the merger of Froebel with Maynooth, which was then under way, concurred with the Review Panel's terms of reference with regard to the continuum of sectoral teacher education provision and a critical mass for research purposes. The Panel noted that the continuum included ECE, primary, post-primary, adult/continuing and the NUIM Teaching and Learning Centre for academic staff.

**The HEA proposals of** 2013 recognised that the integration of Froebel College into NUI Maynooth to create a Centre of Excellence in teacher education was proceeding and was well advanced and should conclude with full incorporation of the college into the university.

**The current situation is as follows:** As was noted in the report of the International Panel in 2012, Froebel College relocated and became absorbed into the campus of Maynooth University. Since Sep. 2011 students in Froebel college have been registered as students of Maynooth University. A new Froebel Department of Primary and Early Childhood Education was established in 2013. At this point the Froebel College ceased operations, and the staff became employees of Maynooth University. The new Department works in parallel with pre-existing departments i.e. the Department of Education and the Department of Adult and Community Education, which are separate academic units in the Faculty of Social Science. In 2017, 103 PME graduates (postprimary) completed their ITE programme and 22 students completed a concurrent programme in either Science or Maths and Education. 90 ITE students graduated from the Froebel Department – 62 from the four year concurrent programme and 28 from the two year consecutive programme. The Froebel Department also offers a B.A. In Early Childhood (Teaching and Learning).

In late 2016, all three departments, and the Centre of Teaching and Learning, moved into a new purpose-built building. A full merger has taken place and the outcome seems very positive from the point of view of governance, campus life etc. This has been reflected in the high quality of student applicants who appear to welcome the combination of rigorous teacher preparation and a full university-campus life. The merged centre also satisfies the total sectoral approach recommended by the international panel. The opportunity is now there for even fuller collaboration and sharing of expertise and resources across the sectoral span.

In his reply to this author's queries, the Registrar of Maynooth University (who was previously Head of the Education Department there) has confirmed that Froebel College of Education has integrated successfully into the University. Since the move to Maynooth in 2013, relationships between staff across the various Education Departments and across the University have developed organically. The move into the new building has enhanced levels of interaction and collaboration. Following a period of settling in, staff members have begun to work more formally through various initiatives arising from

academic interests creating natural synergies and collaborations. There are also many university-wide collaborations and community engagements and a very rich collaborative research agenda. (A list of these initiatives is provided in the full submission in the Appendix). There is joint collaboration between the Froebel Department and the Department of Education on the provision of a Master of Education with specialism in Early Childhood Education and Froebel staff are gradually engaging in dissertation supervision at Masters and Doctoral level.

**Centre 4: University of Limerick (UL); Mary Immaculate College (MIC); Limerick Institute of Technology (LIT); St. Patrick's College, Thurles.**

The Review Panel recommended that MIC and UL should form one integrated centre for teacher education and that teacher education at LIT should be integrated into this centre. In this way, the continuum of sectoral teacher education could be fulfilled. The Review Panel recognised that the research capacity of the combined HEIs was strong. It recommended that the integrated UL /MIC entity should be nominated as a Centre of Excellence for Teacher Education, and suggested that the new configuration would act as a regional hub supporting teachers' CPD in collaboration with UCC and NUIG. The Review Panel appreciated that the recommended integration of MIC into UL, together with teacher education at LIT, would require negotiation with regard to the location. It understood that the campus at MIC has been greatly enhanced and extended over recent years and might be the appropriate location for the new centre for teacher education.

The Panel recommended that initial teacher education in St. Patrick's College Thurles should be discontinued.

**In 2013, the HEA stated that** UL in association with Mary Immaculate College, would lead the core of a Centre for Excellence for teacher education, with links to NUI Galway and UCC. It indicated that the Centre would require close integration of the two institutions with the objective of locating teacher education within the university setting, in a research-based context and to ensure maximum coordination in the provision of programmes. It stated that the merger of Mary Immaculate College into UL offered the best configuration and should remain the objective of both institutions.

The HEA asked that a detailed joint plan be provided by the institutions by October 2013 and stated that this "must address the governance structures of the Centre and the rationalisation of education programmes, as well as the rationalisation of humanities provision through the joint provision of a single UL BA offering".

The HEA proposal indicated that the proposed incorporation of teacher education provided in Limerick IT into UL was proceeding.

**As regards St. Patrick's College, Thurles, the HEA was of the view that** the provision of initial teacher education in St. Patrick's College Thurles should be discontinued and stated that it would work with the college to agree the detailed arrangements. **It was recognised that** while the continuance of ITE in the College was not appropriate, the College had good facilities and a cadre of staff that could be employed in other aspects of teacher professional development. It recommended that the contribution the College could make as a linked private provider to the Limerick Centre of Excellence should be explored by the parties as the Centre was developed and plans agreed with the HEA.

**The current situation for Cluster 4 is as follows:**

In response to queries from this author about developments in this cluster, one joint reply was received on NISE (National Institute for Studies in Education) notepaper, signed by the Presidents of UL, LIT and the Acting President of MIC. While the recommendations of the International Review Panel have not been fully realised in this cluster, it should be noted that the joint reply states clearly that the collaborations and developments which have occurred since 2012 have all been approved by the HEA.

***UL.***

UL is the second largest provider of ITE (post-primary) in the country (second to Dublin City University). In terms of ITE, UL provides concurrent programmes in the following subjects: Science, PE, English, Mathematics, Irish, Materials Technology Wood, Engineering, Technology and Design. It also provides consecutive programmes in the areas of Business, Technology, Languages, P.E., Mathematics and Music - with over 1,100 ITE students on campus. In 2017, 245 students graduated from its undergraduate Teacher Education programmes and a further 68 graduated from its Professional Master of Education (PME) programme. The school has 50 full-time staff members.

UL delivers a programme in Mathematics Teaching through EPI-STEM, the National Centre for STEM Education. This programme targets out-of-field mathematics teachers and has had an average annual intake of some 200 teachers per year. In Sept. 2017, it enrolled the sixth cohort of students on the programme. The Professional Diploma in Maths Teaching is jointly awarded by UL and NUIG.

***MIC***

Mary Immaculate College (MIC) has been a Catholic College of Education for primary teachers since 1900. In recent decades it has expanded considerably and now offers programmes in psychology, theology and liberal arts as well as in ITE. Currently, MIC has 3800 registered students in the Faculty of Education. In 2017, MIC graduated 427 BEd / BEd in Education and Psychology (both 4-year concurrent programmes for primary level teachers), 63 PME (2-year consecutive primary level teachers), 62 second-level teachers (4-year concurrent programmes), and 16 Further Education teachers. In addition, MIC graduated 87 students in Early Childhood Practice/Early Childhood Care and Education and 190 students with BA in Liberal Arts.

***St. Patrick's College Thurles:***

At the time of the International Review Panel's report in 2012, St. Patrick's College Thurles was a small Catholic college (formerly a seminary) providing ITE for post-primary teachers of RE and a limited number of other subjects. The Sahlberg report and the HEA proposals of 2013 recommended that ITE provision by St Patrick's College, Thurles be discontinued. This recommendation appeared initially to have been accepted and St. Patrick's Thurles, announced that it would no longer accept new students from September 2013. However, following discussions with Mary Immaculate College and subsequently with the Higher Executive Authority (HEA) and the DES, the then Minister for Education & Skills, Jan O'Sullivan announced the incorporation by Mary Immaculate

College (MIC) of St. Patrick's College, Thurles on 14 September 2016. Since September 2016, MIC offers 4 second-level concurrent teacher education programmes on its Thurles campus.

***LIT***

LIT provides an ITE consecutive programme in the teaching of Art and Design for a small number of post-primary teachers. Intake is normally limited to 15 students per annum. Commencing in 2016, the two-year PME in Art and Design with Digital Media programme has been redesignated as a joint award between UL and LIT, with UL delivering 18 credits in the area of Foundation Studies. The students attend the UL campus for three modules - '*Understanding Learning*', '*Curriculum Policy and Reform*' and '*History, Policy and Contemporary Issues in Education*'.

It should be noted that Mary Immaculate College and the University of Limerick are geographically located on opposite sides of the city of Limerick, about 8 km apart. It is also relevant to note that there has been considerable public investment in state-of-the-art buildings in Mary Immaculate College, and that the ITE facilities there are excellent. Mary Immaculate College staff have an impressive research profile. With the incorporation of St. Patrick's College Thurles into Mary Immaculate College, MIC now offers a full range of ITE programmes – from early childhood through primary and post-primary to further and adult education.

As well as providing separate ITE programmes and postgraduate education programmes, MIC and UL have created a joint BA programme. This joint degree was developed in response to one of the recommendations of the HEA. This programme formally began in September 2017. The new Joint MIC/UL BA programme commenced with more than 650 students from both institutions studying a choice of 19 subjects, some of which are offered in MIC and some in UL. The 19 different subjects offered to the incoming cohort offers in excess of 150 pathways. This joint BA Liberal Arts programme is a four-year honours degree programme with three years on campus and one year on work placement and/or study abroad.

In 2013, Mary Immaculate College (MIC) and the University of Limerick (UL) agreed to establish a National Institute for Studies in Education. The founding document states:

> This partnership rests on mutual acknowledgment of each institution's particular strengths in Education Studies including teacher education, and an essential commitment by both to parity of esteem enabling them to maximize their collective capacity.

According to the reply received, the commitment to parity of esteem and the mutual agreement that the institutions would continue as independent entities working in partnership, was core to the establishment of NISE. In response to a query from this author, the three Presidents confirmed that the **framework for the establishment of NISE was accepted and approved by the HEA** and stated that as a consequence, UL, MIC and LIT will continue to collaborate via the NISE partnership and respond to

national calls and opportunities where they arise. It is clear from the wording of the NISE founding document and from the response received in the context of this review, that both UL and MIC intend to continue to offer their respective ITE programmes on their separate campuses. While accepting the spirit of the 2012 International Review, the response clarifies that it is not intended to "form one integrated centre for teacher education" as recommended in that Review. The agreement makes it clear that neither institution accepts the recommendation of the HEA in 2013 that "the merger of Mary Immaculate College into UL offered the best configuration and should remain the objective of both institutions". The institutional response to this review is in no doubt that the collaboration which has been developed thorough NISE ***"is the agreed reference with the HEA in respect of the Limerick implementation of the Sahlberg report". (***This author's italics).

As regards financing, MIC and UL get separate budgets from the HEA. All core funding for MIC is transferred firstly to UL who in turn transfer funds onto MIC. Student intake to concurrent initial teacher education programmes continues to be decided annually by the Minister for Education which does not facilitate multi-annual planning.

**Centre 5: University College Cork (UCC) and Cork Institute of Technology (CIT)**

The International Review Panel recommended that UCC should retain ITE for post-primary teachers and that teacher education as provided at CIT should integrate with UCC. It noted that teacher education students at CIT's Crawford College of Art and Design attended UCC for some lectures mainly in the area of Foundation Studies. The recommendation for the amalgamation of teacher education in CIT into UCC envisaged art and design students attending multidisciplinary lectures and tutorials in education at the University, thereby encouraging discussion and debate about teaching and learning across the curriculum as well as within subject specialisms. The panel noted that integration across the curriculum for teacher education would enhance a critical mass for research purposes including art and design.

With regard to Art education generally, the panel recommended that ITE programmes for Art should be university-accredited and university-based. This would mean that teacher education courses in Art should be planned and delivered jointly by personnel from a university and the art institute. Staff should be integrated in terms of the planning and delivery of common parts of the programmes and students should be integrated for lectures and seminars.

As regards the amalgamation of teacher education in UCC and CIT, the panel recognised that the continuum of sectoral teacher education would not be satisfied in this arrangement. It acknowledged the value of the interdisciplinary provision for the B.A.in Early Years and Childhood and it appreciated that UCC would like to extend its provision to include teacher education for primary teachers, affording subject specialisms for future curriculum leadership roles. However, the panel felt that it was not clear that this was a viable option for a number of reasons including current teacher supply nationally. It recommended that subject specialisms for primary teachers should be pursued by UCC in the context of CPD for teachers as was provided for the Science Education. It pointed out the relevance of its recommendation that a Centre of Excellence for Teacher Education be created in Limerick as a regional hub.

The panel noted the strength of the research capacity at UCC both in terms of staff members and doctoral students.

In its proposal of May 2013, the HEA noted that good progress had already occurred in implementing the integration of art education (provided by CIT) into UCC with the objective of a joint programme leading to joint awards by 2014.

**The Current Situation:** 113 students graduated from UCC's two-year PME programme in 2017. UCC offers a four-year concurrent degree in Sports Studies and Physical Education which is accredited by the Teaching Council and 46 students graduated from this programme in 2017. UCC also offers a four-year concurrent degree in Science and Education, which is accredited by the Teaching Council, and 12 students graduated from

this programme in 2017. As regards Art and Design students, 17 graduated in 2017. UCC also offers a Level 8 degree in Early Childhood Studies.

The recommendation of the International Review Panel that CIT Crawford Art and Design (CAD) should integrate with UCC in the delivery of initial teacher education and that CAD students should attend multidisciplinary lectures and tutorials at the university has now been implemented. In Year 1 of the PME, CAD students attend lectures and tutorials in UCC in the following subjects:

**ED6301** Philosophy and History of Education (5 credits)
**ED6302** Introduction to Psychology and Sociology of Education (5 credits)
**ED6303** Curriculum and Assessment (5 credits)
**ED6306** Inclusion – Special Educational Needs and Multicultural Education (5 credits)
**ED6331** School Placement: Research and Professional Experiences Portfolio A (5 credits)
**ED6332** School Placement: Research and Professional Experiences Portfolio B (5 credits)

The School Placement Module (20 credits) and Art and Design pedagogy modules (10 credits) are delivered by Crawford CIT.

In Year 2, CAD students attend UCC for the following lectures and tutorials:

**ED6341** Collaborative Seminar: Contemporary Issues in Irish Schools (5 credits)
**ED6342** Foundational Themes in Education (5 credits)
**ED6354** Literacy and Numeracy Development in the Post-Primary Classroom (5 credits)
**ED6359** PME Professional Research Paper (10 credits): (For this module, CIT Crawford students participate fully in lectures designed to support the process of researching teaching and learning with additional support from specialist tutorials throughout the year while the supervision of the research paper is then done by CIT Crawford staff).

The School Placement Module (30 credits) and Art and Design pedagogy module (5 credits) are delivered by Crawford CIT. Crawford CIT students are placed in schools using the CIT placement service but the outlay of visits, timing and procedures and grading protocols are a replica of UCC's. CIT and UCC share the same MOU with schools as placement sites.

In the current year (2017 – 2018), the governance and contractual arrangements for collaboration between UCC and CIT have been revised. The Presidents of both institutions signed a new Memorandum of Cooperation in Relation to Research on 18 April 2017 and a revised Master Consortium Agreement in Relation to Joint Programmes on 14 September 2017. The new agreement on joint programmes provides for more streamlined governance arrangements and clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of each institutional partner. One of the joint programmes which comes under this agreement is the **Professional Master of Education (Art & Design) (CKD25)**

As regards the recommendation that MIC, UL and LIT form a Centre of Excellence for Teacher Education, UCC is of the view that since 'the integrated UL/MIC entity' recommended in the report of the International Review Panel is not (yet) sufficiently developed, UCC's collaboration with UL and MIC remains at a collegial rather than institutional level.

**Centre 6: NUI Galway, St. Angela's Sligo and Galway-Mayo IT**

The panel recommended that NUIG retain ITE for post-primary teachers – and that the provision for teacher education offered at St. Angela's College should move to the NUIG campus and be fully integrated there. It recognised that the continuum of sectoral teacher education provision would not be satisfied by this arrangement. However, given the location of NUIG, the panel noted that it had a regional remit in the area of CPD for teachers with the provision of postgraduate and doctoral programmes, including that of primary teachers.

Re. GMIT – The panel recognised the contribution made by GMIT in the area of teacher education but believed that they do not fulfil the requirements with regard to the optimal setting for teacher education. In that context, it was recommended that teacher education in GMIT be discontinued.

Re. St. Angela's, Sligo - the panel recognised the unique provision St. Angela's offered in relation to Home Economics but believed it was essential that it be integrated into a broader teacher education setting and that it would benefit greatly from such a move. In that regard, the panel recommended that ITE at St. Angela's should be fully integrated into the NUIG campus.

The panel recognised that there were some individual strengths in the area of research but stated that the research capacity of the combined HEIs in the configuration would require development. It indicated that further strengthening of links between NUIG and UL/MICE could also contribute to the building of research capacity, particularly in the area of primary teacher education. It pointed out the relevance of the proposed Centre of Excellence in Limerick in this regard.

In May 2013, the HEA proposal stated that it was proposed that St. Angela's Sligo be fully incorporated into NUI Galway. It recommended that a joint implementation plan should be submitted to the HEA by October 2013, addressing governance, structures, provision and sustainability. It indicated that this merger would have particular implications for the organisation (academic and administrative) of St. Angela's that would require early joint resolution.

It asked that detailed plans be developed by the end of 2013 relating to the linkages between NUI Galway and the Centre of Excellence in teacher education to be established at UL/MIC and the revised arrangements between Galway-Mayo IT (GMIT) and NUI Galway.

**The Current Situation**:

In response to queries from this author about Cluster 6, a single reply was received from the Registrar of NUIG on behalf of all three institutions.

NUIG provides two different two-year consecutive PME programmes – one through the medium of the English language and one through the medium of the Irish language. 124 students graduated in 2017 with a PME (post-primary) and 25 graduated with a PME (post-primary) through the Irish language. NUIG also offers a B.A. degree programme in Early Childhood Studies and Practice, but this programme is offered through the Dept. of Adult Learning and Professional Development and does not appear to have any connection with the other ITE programmes. NUIG does not provide an ITE programme for primary teachers.

St. Angela's College, Sligo is the only Home Economics college in the country and in 2017, 62 students graduated with a teaching qualification in two subjects - Home Economics and either Irish, or Biology or Economics or Religious Education. A decision has been taken to incorporate St. Angela's College (which is a Catholic College) into NUI Galway and negotiations are taking place to finalise this incorporation. Some difficulties were encountered in incorporating the staff of St. Angela's into NUIG, arising from the differences in qualifications between a Home Economics institution and a university. These difficulties have now largely been resolved (see Appendix). However, unanticipated problems have recently arisen in relation to the transfer of ownership of St. Angela's College campus to NUI Galway.

It is anticipated that in the main, St. Angela's students will continue to be taught on the St. Angela's campus (which has specialist facilities for Home Economics). Cross campus broadcast lectures are planned in a number of subject areas. These refer specifically to the second subject provisions at St. Angela's in the areas of Economics, Biology and Irish. There are significant cross campus activities planned in the area of graduate education for practising teachers but it is not anticipated that students will transfer to the NUIG campus.

From the point of view of St. Angela's students, the new relationship between NUIG and St. Angela's will mean broader provision and enhanced learning outcomes in second subjects; a broader range of perspectives on classroom practice arising from cross institutional work on school placement and greater links and sharing of expertise on all graduate/ masters programmes. From the point of view of staff, the merger will result in enhanced research mentoring, more opportunities for Doctoral supervision, building greater research capacity and more efficient and manageable school placement workloads. A number of recent appointees in St Angela's have a PhD and are anxious to develop research careers. These ambitions will be supported by NUIG. These appointments, together with colleagues in St Angela's who are already interested in research will add significantly to the critical mass of research active colleagues in NUIG.

As regards institutional budgets, St. Angela's budget has not been incorporated into the NUIG budget.

**GMIT**

The ITE programme in GMIT is a programme for post-primary teachers of Wood Technology. It is a highly specialised programme, enrolling fewer than 20 students each year, which requires access to high-tech and expensive equipment and machinery, which have been installed in the GMIT campus in Letterfrack. The ITE students spend the first two years of their concurrent four-year programme in Letterfrack and the second two years on the Galway campus. The HEA agreed that these students should continue to spend the first two years of their programme on the Letterfrack campus and during their period on the Galway campus, they attend some lectures in NUIG. There is a good working relationship between GMIT staff and staff in the School of Education at NUI Galway.

While some details in relation to the incorporation of St. Angela's into NUIG remain to be finalized, this cluster has largely implemented the recommendations of the 2012 International Review Panel, in spite of the staffing and other difficulties that were encountered. Given that the specialist facilities required for the practical subjects, Home Economics and Wood Technology are located respectively in Sligo and Letterfrack, the HEA has agreed that students taking these subjects will continue to be taught in those campuses.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Considerable progress has been made over the past five years in implementing the recommendations of the report of the International Review Panel on the Structure of Teacher Education (2012). The recommendations have been fully implemented in the case of three clusters – Cluster (1) - Dublin City University/Saint Patrick's Drumcondra (DCU/SPD); Cluster (3) Maynooth University(MU) and Cluster (5) University College Cork (UCC). Clusters (1) and (3) provide a full range of ITE programmes from early childhood to post-primary, with full incorporation of staff and students on the same campus. Cluster (5) provides an ITE degree programme for early childhood, consecutive and concurrent programmes for post-primary teachers, and incorporates CIT/Crawford students on the UCC campus for all relevant Education modules.

In the case of Cluster (6) - NUI Galway/St. Angela's Sligo - implementation of the recommendations of the International Panel is almost complete and senior management teams in both institutions are committed to finalising the incorporation of St. Angela's into NUIG as soon as legal issues are resolved. The Home Economics students will continue to be located on the St. Angela's campus outside Sligo where HE facilities and equipment are located but students and staff of both campuses will interact and collaborate both in person and through video conferencing. The NUIG/St. Angela's cluster provides ITE for early childhood teachers and consecutive and concurrent programmes for post-primary teachers but has no programme for primary teachers. Students on the ITE programme in Wood Technology at GMIT/Letterfrack continue to spend their first two years in Letterfrack, where expensive wood technology equipment is installed, and will spend the second two years on the Galway campus, where they share relevant education modules with the ITE students in NUI Galway.

The situation in the case of Cluster (4) - University of Limerick/Mary Immaculate College - is more complex. While the four HEIs in this cluster collaborate on research and some CPD and Masters and Doctorate programmes through their National Institute for Studies in Education, as far as ITE is concerned, there are now two sub-clusters in Limerick. MIC and the former St. Patrick's Thurles, now incorporated into MIC, is one sub-cluster, and UL and LIT is effectively a separate sub-cluster. In 2012, the HEA supported the recommendations of the International Review Group that St. Patrick's Thurles (a small Catholic college providing ITE for post-primary teachers) should be closed, and it appeared initially that this recommendation had been accepted.[25]However, following negotiations at a high level, it was agreed that St. Patrick's would be incorporated into MIC (also a Catholic College) and this incorporation has now been completed. The campus in Thurles will continue to be used as an outcentre of MIC for post-primary ITE. The combined campuses of that sub-cluster now offer a full suite of

[25] There was no intake of students to St. Patrick's Thurles in 2013/14.

ITE programmes - early childhood, primary and post-primary - all of which are validated by the University of Limerick. There are 3,800 students enrolled in the MIC Faculty of Education, and the campus in Limerick is a modern purpose-built campus.

Seven km. away, on the north side of the city of Limerick, UL provides a range of both concurrent and consecutive programmes for post-primary teachers, with 1,100 ITE students on campus. It also provides Masters and doctoral programmes as well as shorter CPD programmes. ITE students from LIT, which provides a consecutive programme in the teaching of Art and Design, attend the UL campus for three Education modules (18 ECTS out of 120 ECTS). UL does not provide ITE programmes for early childhood or primary teachers.

Cluster 2 – TCD, UCD, NCAD and Marino – has made little or no progress in implementing the recommendations of the International Panel. Initially, there appeared to be some interest in developing collaboration between the four institutions and a Task Force was set up to deliver an Institute of Teacher Education across the four HEIs. Funding of €100,000 was provided in 2013 by the HEA to progress this work. At the outset, there was some progress regarding the scope, vision, activities and model of governance for a new Institute. However, the Task Force is no longer active, and the (separate) replies received from the four institutions, setting out their individual plans for future developments, make it clear that there are no longer any plans on the part of either UCD or TCD to collaborate with each other.

There are some research collaborations between UCD and NCAD, and both institutions have a positive working relationship. NCAD is situated close to Dublin city centre (c. one km. distance from TCD) and is not on a bus route to the UCD campus which is situated about 7 km. away. Some years ago there were plans to re-locate NCAD on to a site close to UCD but this is no longer under consideration.

While TCD and Marino also appear to have a positive working relationship with each other, there are no tangible signs of collaboration on the provision of ITE. Marino Institute is situated on the north side of Dublin city, about 7 km from Trinity College, but within walking distance of the new Education campus of DCU/SPD. Marino continues to be funded directly by the Department of Education and Skills and is not under the auspices of the HEA. This has meant that the HEA has no influence or authority over Marino Institute, in contrast to its (the HEA's) relationship with other ITE providers, and financial and other pressures can be exerted to ensure co-operation with the restructuring agenda. Unlike the other HEIs, Marino is not subject to the HEA's Performance Management Framework under which funding incentives and disincentives can be provided.

It seems very unlikely that TCD and UCD will join forces or that they will collaborate in the provision of ITE at any level. As can be seen from their responses, both universities have separate ambitious agenda for the development of their Education Departments –

which do not include collaboration with each other. It might be mentioned that there has been a long history of independence and separateness of both institutions, dating back for over a century, and that this extends to all faculties and departments.

**Factors which contributed to the reform agenda.**

***Institutional Commitment and Leadership:*** This was arguably the most influential factor contributing to the implementation of the recommendations of the Review Panel. Where implementation has been successful, there was clear and sustained commitment by the university and college Presidents and by the trustees of the colleges in the respective clusters, to engage in the reform and to prioritise and lead the incorporation agenda. The institutions involved in each cluster shared their vision with members of their senior management teams and provided the financial, human and other resources necessary for successful implementation. This is exemplified in Cluster 1 where the President had stated as early as 2010 that an Institute of Education would be one of the priorities of his presidency. As well as allocating the required resources to achieve this, and leading the complex diplomatic, human relations and legal negotiations involved, a number of senior strategic appointments were made in DCU including an Executive Dean of Education and three new Education Professors. During the period of the incorporation, considerable time and energy, as well as resources were deployed to achieve a successful outcome and more than 150 staff (academic, administrative and legal) from the various institutions were actively engaged in work relating to the incorporation. The Archbishops of Dublin, as Trustees of the various colleges of education involved in the incorporation, engaged positively with the negotiations. As well as the academic aspects of incorporation, there were financial, legal and infrastructural challenges involved and human resource and industrial relations issues to be resolved.

Similarly, in the case of Cluster 3, strong leadership was provided both by the President and Registrar of the University and by the trustees and the President of Froebel College. Significant funding was provided by the Froebel College trustees to facilitate the transfer of staff and students from Blackrock in Co. Dublin to Maynooth and the impressive new purpose-built Education House on the North Campus of Maynooth College was financed largely by the Dominican Order - trustees of Froebel College.

In the case of the successful clusters, there was stability at senior management level during the period of negotiations, with very little staff turnover. On the other hand, in clusters where there was a less successful outcome, commitment to incorporation or merger was either not articulated or less clearly articulated by the leaders and senior management. In some cases there were also changes in the leadership team, either because the term of office of the President and Registrar came to an end or because a senior member of staff (e.g. Professor) retired or resigned.

***Status of Education Departments in Universities***: In the university sector in Ireland, Education Departments traditionally had low status and were often treated as institutional

"cash cows" with a large intake of ITE students, very high student-staff ratios and often with poor accommodation. While the situation has improved in some universities in recent decades, the legacy still remains in others. Education as a discipline in many universities compared unfavorably with colleges of education, where education was the *raison d'etre* of the institution. It was not therefore surprising that when incorporation of a college of education into a university was mooted, it evoked negative reactions from education staff in colleges of education, ranging from reluctance to vociferous objections. The successful clusters engaged positively with staff concerns and were committed to supporting parity of esteem and equality of opportunity between college of education staff and their university colleagues.

***HEA Funding Model:*** While it is not easy to access data in relation to the historic funding of colleges of education and education departments in universities, it would appear (in terms of Euros per student) that colleges of education in the past were more generously funded than university Education departments. There were complex reasons for this. While the HEA resource allocation model for universities treated education students more generously than (for example) Arts or Humanities students, the weighted grant was not necessarily passed on to the Education Department within the universities' own internal resource allocation model. Colleges of Education in the past received their funding directly from the Department of Education on the basis of an annual budget, and this resulted (in general) in colleges of education being more generously funded per capita than university education departments.

During the recent incorporation negotiations, the HEA agreed to maintain the more generous financial allocation which colleges of education had enjoyed prior to incorporation for a period of five years following incorporation. This five-year guarantee is welcome and was a crucial element in the success of cluster negotiations. In the case of some individual colleges, the costs involved in the incorporation process were significant, as can be seen from financial data published by the DES.

**Unintended Consequences of Recent Developments in Teacher Education.**

***Fewer applicants for consecutive programmes***: While the extension of the duration of teacher education programmes was welcomed when the decision was announced in 2011, it had some unintended consequences, especially in the case of consecutive post-graduate ITE programmes. In the case of post-primary teachers, the additional year has extended their period of study to a minimum of five years (three years undergraduate followed by a two-year postgraduate ITE programme). Since the duration of a Level 8 (honours) STEM undergraduate degree in all universities and arts, humanities and business degrees in some universities is four years, it now takes six years for graduates of these programmes to qualify as post-primary teachers.

Within a year of the introduction of the reformed ITE programmes, the numbers of STEM applicants for ITE programmes began to fall and in the current year, the fall has

been dramatic. Overall, the number of graduates applying for the two-year Professional Masters in Education has more than halved since 2012. This is a matter of great concern to ITE providers and to school management, who are already finding it almost impossible to fill posts in some subject areas.

The number of applications has increased somewhat for four and five-year concurrent STEM ITE programmes – which now exist in all six clusters - but if the current trend continues there is likely to be a serious shortfall of STEM teachers and teachers in other shortage subjects within a few years.

***Cost of Graduate Programmes:*** Another reason for the reduction in applications for the two-year consecutive ITE programmes is cost. The annual student fee for an undergraduate programme in Ireland is €3,500. The fee for a Masters degree is more than €6,000 p.a, - so fees alone for the two-year PME cost €12,000. In addition, students have to pay for accommodation and subsistence, as well as for travel and various other costs associated with the programme[26]. During the recession, grants which had previously been available for students taking post-graduate programmes, and who came from low-income families were withdrawn, and while these grants have been partially restored in the recent past, they do not cover all the costs associated with the PME. There is concern that post-primary ITE programmes will only be affordable for students from more financially advantaged families and also that the overall fall in the number of applicants could result in a deterioration in the academic calibre of applicants. If this were to happen, it would be a very unfortunate unintended outcome of the reform agenda.

So far, the academic calibre of students accepted onto concurrent programmes for both primary and post-primary students has remained high, although there is concern that the intake into these programmes is disproportionately skewed from a socio-economic point of view. A special targeted fund has been set up to encourage ITE clusters to set up access programmes for under-represented students (from lower socio-economic and minority ethnic groups) to apply for ITE programmes, but it is as yet too early to comment on the success or otherwise of this initiative.

***Reduction in starting salaries of teachers***: Even if sufficient students are recruited into ITE programmes, the reduction in the starting salary of teachers (introduced during the recession) has meant that teaching is no longer as attractive a profession in Ireland today as it was in the past. The starting salary of teachers now compares unfavourably with that of some other professions and with some non-teaching jobs, especially in the private sector. Moreover, the cost of living, especially of accommodation, is so high in Irish cities (e.g. Dublin) that some NQTs have indicated that they cannot afford to accept teaching posts in these cities. This has resulted in their accepting better paid jobs in

[26] Since the programme for Medicine is an undergraduate programme – fees for medical programmes are lower than fees for ITE programmes. Moreover, the duration of a medical programme is five years whereas the duration of an ITE programme can now be 6 years, so it costs less in terms of student fees for a student to qualify as a doctor than to qualify as a post-primary teacher.

industry (especially in the IT sector), or emigrating to take up teaching posts in other countries, e.g. the Middle East, where remuneration and working conditions are more attractive.

***Supply and Demand of Teachers: The Striking the Balance Report:*** The Report of the International Review Panel in 2012 found that there was an increasing reliance on out-of-field teachers in some subject areas, and advised that the supply of and demand for teachers be monitored continuously. The report recommended that "appropriate databases and forecasting mechanisms are developed to ensure that an adequate supply of teachers with the required specialisms are in place".

In this regard it might be mentioned that in the past, what is now referred to as "out-of-field" teaching was common in Ireland, especially in smaller school outside large centres of population. However, since the setting up of the Teaching Council, teachers are accredited to teach specific subjects and it is generally expected that students will be taught by teachers qualified in that subject. A relatively small school in a sparsely populated area may not have enough posts to employ a full-time teacher for a subject for which there is only limited demand. That school might be in a position to offer a part-time post of ten hours a week, but the salary for such a post would not provide a living wage for a qualified applicant. Consequently, it is not surprising that schools often find it impossible to attract a qualified teacher to accept a part-time post in a subject such as Physics or a modern European language.

Following the recommendation of the International Review Panel in 2012, a technical working group with representatives from the Teaching Council and the Department of Education was convened by the Teaching Council and following widespread consultation, a report on teacher supply and demand – *Striking the Balance* - was completed and submitted to the Minister for Education in December 2015. This report carried out a detailed study of the existing teacher supply situation and found a significant imbalance between teacher supply and demand in mathematics, Irish, biology, modern languages and home economics. It recommended the setting up of a permanent working group which would monitor issues relating to teacher supply and demand and advise on an ongoing basis. The report was published in May 2017 but no action has yet been taken on the setting up of a permanent working group.

In recent days, Minister for Education, Richard Bruton, admitting that the shortage of science teachers needed to be addressed[27], indicated that "financial incentives" could be used to encourage more physics and chemistry graduates to pursue second-level teaching. He also indicated that "there may be an opportunity of shaping the throughput where more take up subjects where we have shortages …" but no specific commitments have been made as yet on the matter.

[27] Kevin O'Sullivan, "Bruton considers incentives for teachers" in *Irish Times*, 12th January 2018.

### *ITE Programmes for Early Childhood*

Since the report of the International Review Panel was published in 2012, ITE programmes for Early Childhood have been set up in a number of Institutes of Technology and in some private colleges. These programmes are at various levels on the National Qualifiactions framework (from Level 5 to Level 9). They have not been included in the ITE restructuring programmes. It may be timely to re-visit the structure of provision of ITE programmes for Early Childhood.

### *Level of Qualification of ITE programmes*

Although all ITE programmes have a duration of at least four years, some programmes are awarded at Bachelors level (level 8) and some at Masters Level (Level 9). In general, concurrent programmes for both primary and post-primary teachers lead to a Bachelors degree and consecutive programmes lead to a Masters degree. It may now be timely to consider whether all ITE qualifications (primary and post-primary) should be awarded at Masters level.

This briefing document has attempted to summarise developments in initial teacher education in Ireland during the past five years and has provided an overview of the consequences, intended and unintended, of various government policies which drove these developments. A number of other questions remain to be addressed. These include the relative roles in relation to ITE of the Teaching Council; the Teacher Education Section in the Department of Education and Skills; and the Higher Education Authority and their interrelationships. All three bodies have played a very significant role in the reform of ITE in the past five years, but at times they appear to lack co-ordination and to act independently of each other.

### *And Finally …*

A recent comprehensive study of teacher preparation in Ireland has suggested a number of further challenges which need to be addressed either in the short or medium term to consolidate and strengthen ITE[28]. While recognising the advantages of incorporating teacher education within universities, the study raises concern that this "universitisation of teacher education" which requires ITE staff to "engage in the often practice-remote publishing and research culture of research intensive universities if they wish to gain career promotions" might be to the detriment of their engagement in teaching, student mentoring, and school placement supervision, which are essential components of professionally-demanding programmes.

The study also raises the issue of what is referred to as "the de-regulation of teacher education". At a time when policy-makers are imposing ever more demanding

[28] O'Donoghue, Harford, and O'page Doherty, *op.cit,* p.222.

requirements on publicly-funded ITE providers, the Department of Education and Skills has recognised a private provider, Hibernia College, which now graduates more primary teachers each year than all of the publicly funded colleges combined. Hibernia has more recently entered the field of post-primary teacher education and the annual output of post-primay teachers from Hibernia College is growing. While the DES imposes a "numerus clausus" or cap on the number of students enrolled on publicly-funded ITE programmes for primary teachers, no such cap exists for the private provider. The basis on which the cap is determined annually, has not been made clear, although this issue was raised in 2012.

It is important that the traditionally high standard of ITE be maintained to ensure that the teaching profession in Ireland continues to attract "the best and the brightest" as it has done for generations past.