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Title	A review of the structure of initial teacher education provision in Ireland. Background paper for the International Review Team
Authors	Hyland, Áine
Publication date	2012-05-01;2012-05-01
Original Citation	Hyland, Á. (2012) A review of the structure of initial teacher education provision in Ireland. Background paper for the International Review Team, pp. 1-40.
Type of publication	Report
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Download date	2026-11-06 19:36:11
Item downloaded from	https://hdl.handle.net/10468/17596

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A Review of the Structure of Initial Teacher Education Provision in Ireland.

Background Paper for the International Review Team May 2012.

Paper prepared by Áine Hyland, Emeritus Professor of Education, University College Cork.

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Acknowledgement

I would like to acknowledge the help and support provided by Jennifer Murphy, Manager of the National Academy for the Integration of Research and Teaching and Learning (NAIRTL) in researching, drafting and laying-out of this paper.

Introduction

The Minister for Education and Skills, Ruairi Quinn, by letter dated 20th March 2012, requested the HEA to undertake a review of the structure of initial teacher education (ITE) provision in Ireland. This is a timely exercise. During the past decade there has been unprecedented growth and development of programmes for educating teachers at all levels – from early childhood to higher education[1]. There are currently 19 publicly-funded accredited ITE providers in Ireland providing over 30 programmes for primary and second-level teachers, as well as a number of private non-funded providers. In addition, initial teacher education programmes are available for early childhood teachers; adult and community education teachers and teachers in higher education. And within the past year, the Teaching Council has invited expressions of interest from potential providers of initial teacher education for further education teachers. The growth of teacher education programmes during the past decade has occurred in a piecemeal and un-coordinated manner involving a variety of providers and models of provision, with only limited co-operation or collaboration across the sectors or within the same sector – even among those providers which are in close geographical proximity, or even on the same campus. While exciting and cutting edge research and educational innovation are being undertaken in many teacher education settings, these developments are often neither widely disseminated nor applied in other settings.

The Minister's decision in July 2011[2] to extend the three year concurrent B.Ed. programme for primary teachers to a four year programme, and to extend the eighteen month consecutive programme for primary teachers and the one year consecutive Professional Diploma in Education at post-primary level, each to a two year programme, heralds the beginning of a new chapter in teacher education provision in Ireland. It also provides an opportunity to review and reflect on the structure of teacher education in Ireland and to "provide a teacher education regime that is comparable with the world's best", as envisaged by the Minister in his letter to the HEA. During the past twenty years, there have been many calls to extend initial teacher education programmes by a further year[3] and the policy decision last July to do so has been widely welcomed. Ireland now has an opportunity to bring greater coherence into the structure of provision of teacher education, to encourage co-operation and collaboration between the various providers (using open and flexible learning approaches where appropriate), and to provide a framework which will enable examples of excellent practice to become standard practice.

An international review team has been set up to undertake the review and this background paper has been prepared to inform their deliberations. The paper will describe and analyse current provision of initial teacher education in Ireland[4] at all levels, focusing particularly on providers and programmes for primary and second-level teachers. It will refer to some of the concerns that have been raised recently about the provision of teacher education in

[1] Including ITE programmes for early childhood, primary, second level, further education, adult and community education and higher education.
[2] Department of Education and Skills, *Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life* (July 2011). http://www.education.ie/admin/servlet/blobservlet/lit_num_strat.pdf
[3] 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 Retaining Effective Teachers: Country Background Report for Ireland* (April 2003). Kieran Byrne *Report of the Advisory Group on Post-Primary Teacher Education* (April 2002).
[4] This paper refers to teacher education in the Republic of Ireland.

Ireland and will suggest questions and issues which might be considered by the Review Team. The report will not revisit the content of teacher education programmes, as this issue has recently been dealt with by the Teaching Council[5].

Ireland's national strategy for higher education for the next twenty years[6] sees collaboration, locally, regionally, nationally and internationally as being key to system development. The strategy states 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 indicates 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 states 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 recognises that Ireland has a significant number of small higher education institutions that are in receipt of public funding and recommends "that these should be consolidated, where appropriate, to promote coherence and sustainability".

In a recent paper on the implementation of the National Strategy[7], the HEA set out its vision for higher education in the future and refers 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 envisages that regional clusters will develop in an evolutionary and organic way in the years ahead, and that different clusters will develop at different paces and in different ways according to institutional and regional needs. It emphasises that the purpose of clusters is not to suppress institutional identity and states 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 is of the view that "It will be essential that this does not take place and that the systems for review and evaluation pay particular regard to this".[8]

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[5] See John Coolahan, *A Review Paper on Thinking and Policies Relating to Teacher Education in Ireland* (2007); Paul Conway et al, *Learning to Teach: A Nine Country Cross National Study* (2009); Teaching Council, *Initial Teacher Education: Criteria and Guidelines for Programme Providers* (August 2011); Teaching Council, *Initial Teacher Education: Strategy for the Review and Professional Accreditation of Existing Programmes* (Sep. 2011); Teaching Council, *Further Education: General and Programme Requirements for the Accreditation of Teacher Education Qualifications* (March 2011). Teaching Council, *Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education* (June 2011). (http://www.teachingcouncil.ie)

[6] 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

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

[8] Ibid.

In its correspondence with heads of higher education institutions, the HEA anticipates that smaller institutions "will 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 has been asked to make a submission to the HEA by the end of July 2012, setting out its strategic intentions as to where it proposes to position itself in the Irish higher education system in the coming years. Submissions are 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.

It is in this context that this background paper describes and analyses the current situation in relation to the provision of teacher education and suggests some issues that might be considered by the Review Team. While the paper focuses primarily on teacher education for primary and second level teachers, it will refer to teacher education programmes at other levels - early childhood education, further education, adult and community education and higher education, where relevant.

In considering these issues, the author of this paper is acutely conscious of the difficulties being experienced throughout the education sector as a result of the financial stringencies that have been imposed on public sector spending during the past three years and that will continue to be experienced into the foreseeable future. Higher education institutions have had to meet many challenges resulting from these cuts, and many teacher education programmes have been severely affected by cutbacks and by the loss of staff who have retired, have not been replaced and may not be replaced for some time. The HEA recognises this in its acknowledgement that "notwithstanding the significant overall increases in investment in higher education, per capita expenditure (in higher education) remained modest by international standards throughout the period of growth (of student numbers) and has significantly decreased since 2009"[9]. The current economic crisis makes it more crucial than ever that the best possible outcomes are achieved from the state's investment in teacher education.

Pupil Performance – the implications of the 2009 OECD PISA results

The results of the 2009 OECD PISA tests of literacy and numeracy of 15 year olds were a wake-up call for Ireland, which until then had been well-placed in the international league tables of pupil performance[10] Ireland's overall ranking in 2009 was 21st among 65 participating countries and 17th of 34 OECD countries. In the reading tests, Ireland's ranking fell from 5th place in 2000 to 17th in 2009[11]. This decline was the largest across all 39 countries which participated in both PISA 2000 and PISA 2009. As regards Mathematics, Ireland ranked 32nd among 65 participating countries and 26th of 34 OECD

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

[10] 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

[11] In the 2009 PISA tests, Ireland's mean score on the reading literacy of 15 year olds was 495.6[11] - 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.

countries[12]. In Science, Ireland's mean score was 508 – no change in performance between 2006 and 2009[13]. The PISA scores showed significant disparity between the educational attainment of young people from higher socio-economic backgrounds and those from less advantaged backgrounds. Students in Ireland in the bottom third of the socio-economic distribution had a mean reading score that was 76 points lower than students in the top third.

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 to issue in July 2011 a strategy document entitled *Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life: the National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People*[14]. 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 improve the professional practice of teachers through changes in both pre-service and in-service education. The strategy also emphasised the importance of getting the content of the literacy and numeracy curriculum right at primary and post-primary levels by making sure that the curriculum is clear about what students are expected to learn at each stage of their learning.

Actions in the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy to improve teacher education include 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 which are 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;
- 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.

The decision to extend initial teacher education programmes at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels by one year (an additional 60 ECTs) was welcomed in education circles. As indicated earlier in this paper, such an extension had been sought by many committees and commentators over the past twenty years and while the deterioration in pupil performance in the PISA tests was a source of widespread concern and disappointment, the fact that it has resulted in a government policy decision to extend the duration of initial teacher education was an unexpected bonus.

[12]Ireland's performance in mathematics declined by 16 points since 2003, 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.

[13] Ireland's mean science score is still significantly above the OECD average. Ireland ranks 20th out of 65 countries and 14th of 34 OECD countries

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

In recent months, the Teaching Council has drawn up guidelines on how initial teacher education programmes might be re-conceptualised in the light of the decision to extend their duration by an extra year for B.Ed. students and six months for postgraduate students, and teacher education providers are currently revising their programmes to take account of these guidelines. These guidelines envisage an increased emphasis on pedagogic training in literacy and numeracy for both primary and second-level teachers; an increase in the time spent by student-teachers in schools and on teaching practice; a reduction in the amount of time spent on academic subjects and a greater focus on pedagogic training generally.

Teacher Quality - International Evidence

An OECD report published in 2011[15] analysed the international PISA results 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 pointed out 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.

With respect to the recruitment of teachers, the report pointed out that "the aim generally is to do whatever is possible to generate a pool that comes from the highest-performing segment of the population". It mentioned the situation in Finland where over 6,600 applicants competed in 2010 for 660 available slots in primary schools preparation programmes in the eight universities that educate teachers. It drew attention to the situation in some Asian countries where teaching is one of the best paid positions in the civil service and consequently attracts high calibre students. It stated that "by raising the bar to enter the teaching profession, these systems discourage young people with poor qualifications from entering teaching and attract people with high qualifications".

The report pointed out that many of the countries studied for the purposes of identifying successful strategies**,** have moved from a system in which teachers are 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. Here again, Finland is quoted as "the archetypal case". The report states that "countries interested in raising the quality of their teaching force understand that they cannot accomplish that goal without raising the standards for entrance into their schools of education ….".

The report adds:

> 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. In Finland, this includes both extensive course work on how to teach – with a strong emphasis on using research based on state-of-the art practice – and at least a full year of clinical experience in a school associated with the university. These model

[15]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

schools are intended to develop and pilot innovative practices, and foster research on learning and teaching".[16]

The report identifies other factors which distinguish high-performing countries from others as including the following:

- 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. The report points out that in Finland where teacher education is a shared responsibility between the teacher-education faculty and the academic-subject faculty, there is substantial attention to subject-specific pedagogy for prospective teachers.
- 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[17].
- In most of these countries, people 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."

Similar findings emerge in a report published by McKinsey and Company in September 2010[18]. That report shows that the world's top-performing school systems – Singapore, Finland and South Korea – recruit, develop and retain 100% of their teacher corps from the top third of the academic cohort. In addition, their governments closely monitor the demand for teachers, and regulate supply to match it, so that teachers who complete the selective training are guaranteed jobs in the profession.

The Teaching Profession in Ireland

The teaching profession in Ireland is held in high esteem and this respect is deeply rooted in history. Ireland is particularly fortunate that to date, virtually all its primary teacher education programmes attract recruits from the top 15% of academic achievers in the (school) Leaving Certificate examination[19]. Competition is also very keen for entry to post-primary teaching, with many of the top achievers at undergraduate level accepting a place on the consecutive Professional Diploma in Education – the required qualification for

[16] OECD *Lessons from PISA for the US,* p.237 http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/32/50/46623978.pdf
[17] 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.
[18] McKinsey and Company *Closing the Talent Gap: Attracting and Retaining top-third graduates to careers in teaching* (Sep. 2010)
[19] The cut-off point in 2011 for B.Ed programmes in colleges of primary teacher education was 470 out of 600 points. An analysis of CAO figures shows that only 15% of students who applied for a place in higher education achieved points equal to or higher than this.

registration as a post-primary teacher in Ireland. Various attitudinal surveys have indicated that teaching is a profession highly regarded by the public.

Teachers in Ireland are highly unionised, with 98% of primary teachers and 91% of post-primary teachers belonging to a teacher union.[20] Teacher Unions have played a significant role in Irish education since their foundation. As well as negotiating on behalf of their members in relation to pay and conditions of service, they are active in aspects of the professional role of teachers. They play a key role in curriculum development at primary and post-primary level through membership of the National Council of Curriculum and Assessment and in the regulation of the profession through membership of the Teaching Council. An OECD analysis points out that "many of the countries with the strongest student performance also have strong teacher unions" and indicates that "the higher a country is on the world's education league tables, the more likely the country is working constructively with its unions and treating its teachers as trusted professional partners"[21].

Teacher Education in Ireland

When considering issues relating to teacher education, the members of the Review Team may need to familiarise themselves with the national economic, constitutional and demographic context within which this review is taking place. They may also need to be aware of the governance and regulatory framework of the Irish education system; its main structural features; its curriculum, and the role of the Churches in the control and management of education, including teacher education. This information is provided in the Appendix. Data on the number of schools, colleges, teachers and pupil enrolments are also provided. It is important to note that unlike other EU countries, the school-going population in Ireland is increasing and that pupil enrolments at primary, second and third level education in Ireland are projected to grow significantly in the next five years. At primary level, enrolments are projected to increase from the current 510,000 to 550,000 in 2017; and in second level schools from 317,000 to over 340,000 during the same period[22]. This will have implications for the provision of school places and for teacher demand.

Initial teacher education programmes for primary, second-level and further education teachers are accredited by the Teaching Council, which was established on a statutory basis in 2006[23]. The Council acts "as the guardian of teaching standards, establishing best practice at all stages on the continuum of teacher education[24]". It is charged with reviewing and accrediting programmes of initial teacher education, including the standards for entry to those programmes. Teaching Council policy regards teacher education as a continuum, encompassing initial teacher education, induction, early and continuing professional development and late career support. It sees teachers as life-long learners, engaging in formal and informal educational developmental activities throughout their career[25].

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[20] There are three main teacher unions in Ireland. The Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO) – which was founded in 1868, represents virtually all primary teachers in the Republic of Ireland as well as some primary and second-level teachers in Northern Ireland. The Association of Secondary Teachers in Ireland (ASTI) – founded in 1909 - represents second -level teachers in voluntary secondary schools and in some community and comprehensive schools. The Teachers Union of Ireland (TUI) represents teachers in Vocational Schools and in some community and comprehensive schools. The Irish Federation of University Teachers (IFUT) represents some teachers in colleges of education and in the university sector.
[21] OECD "*Lessons from PISA for the United States",* 2011, p. 238
[22] http://www.education.ie/home/home.jsp?pcategory=17216&ecategory=52107&language=EN
[23] http://www.teachingcouncil.ie
[24] Áine Lawlor "The Teaching Council and Teacher Education" in *Oideas 54* (Winter 2009).
[25] Teaching Council, *Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education* (June 2011).

To be eligible for registration as a primary teacher, learners are required to undertake either a concurrent initial teacher education programme of a minimum of three years (180 ECTs), or a postgraduate (consecutive) teacher education programme of 18 months (90 ECTs). Those wishing to become second-level teachers are required to undertake either a concurrent (undergraduate) initial teacher education programme of a minimum of four years (240 ECTs), or a postgraduate (consecutive) teacher education programme of 12 months (60 ECTs). As already indicated, the Minister for Education has announced that an additional year (60 ECTs) will be added to B.Ed. primary teacher education programmes and the extended programme will come into effect from September 2012. In the case of consecutive programmes, the additional six months (30 ECTs) or one year (60 ECTs) in relation to primary and second-level teachers respectively, will come into effect in September 2013.

Under the EU directive for mutual recognition of professional qualifications[26] recognised teachers in other EU countries may also apply for registration as teachers in Ireland. An estimated 500 teachers apply every year to the Teaching Council under the provisions of this directive. Some of these are of Irish origin who having failed to get a place in a teacher education programme in Ireland, travelled to another EU country to study and qualify as a teacher. Partly because of the Church-based tradition of Irish education but largely because of Irish-language requirements[27], the teaching profession in Ireland, especially at primary school level, is less culturally and ethnically diverse than in other OECD countries.

Teachers in the further education (FE) sector have not traditionally been required to have a teacher education qualification. Many FE teachers hold technical or business or craft or services qualifications or their expertise was acquired in the workplace rather than through a formal educational / academic programme. In November 2009, the Teaching Council set out the Council's requirements for teachers in the primary, post-primary or further education sector. Included in Regulation Five (Further Education) of those regulations is the requirement, with effect from 1st April 2013, for applicants for registration to have attained, *inter alia*, a Council approved further education teacher education qualification. The implications of this regulation for teacher education will be discussed later in this paper.

Teachers and lecturers in the higher education sector in Ireland are not required to have a teaching qualification prior to their appointment. However, within the past decade, there has been a growing interest in and focus on teaching and learning in higher education and on linkages between research and teaching and learning. Centres or units to support teaching and learning in higher education have been set up in the universities and in some institutes of technology[28] and many of these provide accredited programmes at postgraduate level[29] for teachers in higher education settings. Generally speaking these centres (which support teaching and learning across all disciplines of the university), operate independently of the Education faculties within those universities, and often have little contact with providers of teacher education for other sectors of education.

[26] http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/qualifications/index_en.htm

[27] Since the foundation of the State in 1921, government policy has required that all teachers in primary schools are fluent in the Irish language, and are qualified to teach through the medium of that language, as Irish is a subject in the Primary School Curriculum. While a very small number of non-Irish nationals have been successful in meeting the Irish language requirement, this is rare. While qualified teachers from other EU countries may teach in Irish schools pending their meeting the Irish language requirement, this recognition is limited to a five year period at the end of which they are required to demonstrate proficiency in the Irish language.

[28] For example, since the 1990s, the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) was set up in NUIG; the Centre for Academic Practice (CAPSL) was set up in TCD; Ionad Bairre was set up in UCC; and Centres for Teaching and Learning were set up in UCD, UL, DCU, DIT and WIT.

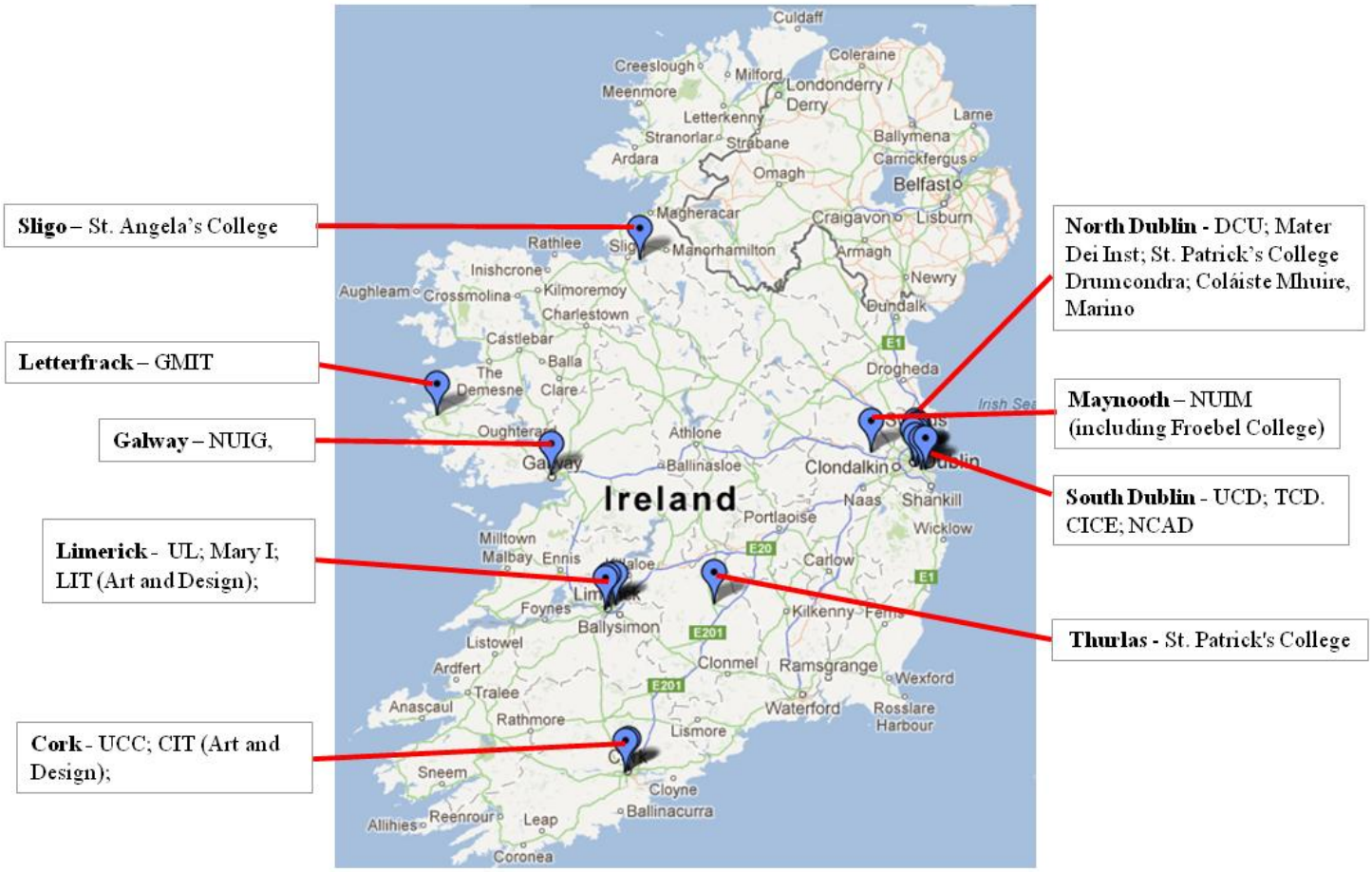
[29] Postgraduate certificates and diplomas as well as Masters degrees and doctorates.

As will be highlighted in the next section, teacher education programmes for different sectors – even when provided within the same higher education institution – almost invariably operate in separate silos, independently of each other, with only limited sharing of expertise or resources.

ITE providers for primary and second level teachers

There are currently 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[30]. The number of student-teachers who graduated from these programmes in 2011 was 2,840 (1,174 primary teachers and 1,576 second level teachers). A map showing the location of each of the publicly-funded providers and a table listing the programmes and the numbers graduating annually from each programme between 2007 and 2011 follow:

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



[30] The number of programmes can be calculated differently depending on whether the calculation is based on the categorisation of programmes at the point of entry (and as shown on the CAO list) or on the list of programmes accredited by the Teaching Council.

Table 1. Providers of ITE programmes for Primary and Second-Level Teachers and numbers graduating from each programme: 2007 – 11

(Source: Teaching Council)

Teacher Education Graduate Statistics					
Primary	**2007**	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**
Undergraduate Concurrent Qualifications (B.Ed.)					
Coláiste Mhuire Marino	88	84	70	83	85
St Patricks College Drumcondra	357	375	365	358	360
Froebel College of Education	63	70	66	75	61
Mary Immaculate College	360	397	353	377	407
Mary Immaculate College (B.Ed. Psyc)	0	27	34	24	31
Church of Ireland College	27	20	23	27	29
Montessori Qualifications					
SNMC	0	116	104	102	88
AMI	0	12	5	10	3
Postgraduate Diploma in Education (Primary)					
Coláiste Mhuire Marino	42	39	72	92	51
St Patricks College Drumcondra	96	170	160	169	59
Froebel College of Education	36	30	57	60	32
Mary Immaculate College	50	94	136	135	59
Hibernia (Cohort 1)	226	250	252	310	338
Hibernia (Cohort 2)	246	244	280	337	375
Post-Primary					
Concurrent Qualifications					
University of Limerick	199	200	237	224	204
National College of Art and Design	9	16	11	14	9
Dublin City University	10	19	17	35	43
St. Patricks College (Thurles)	0	34	31	32	35
Mater Dei	70	58	56	65	54
St Angela's College Sligo	28	42	39	40	49
TCD B.Mus.			9	10	10
Galway Mayo Institute of Technology	0	0	0	10	14
University College Cork				41	46
National University of Ireland, Maynooth (first cohort of grads due in 2012 - approx 25 grads- BSc Ed)					
National University of Ireland, Galway (first cohort of grads due out 2012 - BA in Maths and Ed)					
Postgraduate Diploma in Post-Primary Education					
University of Limerick	90	87	128	74	88
University College Dublin	117	136	106	223	205
National University of Ireland Galway	212	165	208	201	195
UUIG -Dioploma Iarchéime Oideachais		43	34	41	27
National University of Ireland Maynooth	138	130	159	142	133
National College of Art and Design	16	20	20	18	18
University of Dublin - Trinity College	131	149	120	131	117
Dublin City University	0	64	35	39	42
University College Cork	195	205	215	190	231
Crawford College of Art and Design		27	25	29	28
Limerick School of Art and Design	26	28	30	30	28
Galway Mayo Institute of Technology - Postgraduate	0	0	0	19	N/A
Hibernia College (first cohort of grads due out in 2013)					N/A
Total	**3148**	**3351**	**3457**	**3767**	**3554**

ITE for primary teachers

Five colleges of education provide publicly-funded initial teacher education programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate levels for primary teachers. These are Mary Immaculate College, Limerick; St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Dublin 9: Coláiste Mhuire, Marino, Dublin 9; Froebel College, Blackrock, Co. Dublin, and the Church of Ireland College of Education, Rathmines, Dublin 6. In MICE and SPD, ITE students study an academic subject to degree level as well as studying education as a subject.[31] The number of students admitted annually to publicly-funded colleges of education for primary teachers is controlled by the Department of Education and Skills. Some of the colleges also provide continuing professional development programmes at postgraduate level. In addition, Mary Immaculate College (MICE) and St. Patrick's College (SPD) provide undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in Arts/Humanities.

The following table gives an overview of the programmes provided by each of the five colleges and the total student enrolment in each college:

Table 2 Enrolment and programme provision in primary teacher education colleges

College	Total Student Enrolment[32]	Programmes Provided					
		ITE		Other Education Programmes		Other Programmes Arts/Humanities	
		UG	PG	UG	PG	UG	PG
MICE	2,845	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SPD	1,980	✓	✓	•	✓	✓	✓
Marino	550	✓	✓	•	✓	•	•
Froebel	260	✓	✓	•	•	•	•
CICE	176	✓	•	•	✓	•	•

While the programmes provided by the publicly-funded colleges of education are validated by various universities, the colleges are owned and managed by Church bodies[33], and the campuses of the colleges of education are independent of (and sometimes some distance away from) the campuses of their validating university[34]. Awards from MICE are validated by the University of Limerick; SPD are validated by Dublin City University; Marino and the Church of Ireland College are validated by Trinity College Dublin and Froebel College, which was formerly validated by Trinity College, has been validated by NUI Maynooth since 2011.

[31] For details, see Appendix.
[32] Statistics provided by the Higher Education Authority.
[33] 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.
[34] One college, Froebel College, owned by the Dominican Order of nuns, which until 2010 was accredited by Trinity College Dublin, has recently been accepted for validation by the National University of Ireland Maynooth. It is currently located in Blackrock, Co. Dublin but proposes to move to the NUIM campus in 2013 and to merge fully with the university.

In addition to the five publicly funded providers, there is one accredited private provider, Hibernia College, which provides a post-graduate initial teacher education on a blended learning basis for primary teachers. There are also two providers who provide accredited Montessori programmes for teachers in special schools and special classes[35]. However, the majority of teachers of special needs pupils are accredited for mainstream teaching and have also completed a postgraduate programme in special needs education in one of the publicly-funded colleges of education or universities.

In 2010/2011, a total of 1174 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) and 91 graduates from the two Montessori colleges.

ITE for second-level teachers

Second-level teachers in Ireland are subject-specific teachers and are usually registered to teach one or two subjects of the second-level school curriculum.
Initial teacher education programmes for second level teachers (concurrent and consecutive) are provided by each of the seven universities[36], by three institutes of technology[37], by the National College of Art and Design and by three specialised colleges of education[38]. The majority of second level teachers complete 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 complete a consecutive one year (60 ECTs) ITE programme at postgraduate level. A smaller number complete a four year concurrent postgraduate programme. In 2010/2011, 1,576 graduates completed a programme for second level teaching – 464 graduated from concurrent programmes and 1,112 from consecutive programmes.

The following table gives a list of providers of undergraduate (concurrent) and post graduate (consecutive) ITE programmes for second level teachers. The universities provide pedagogical training in almost all subjects of the second level curriculum. The undergraduate programmes offered by all providers are listed in table 3 below.

[35] St. Nicholas Montessori College and AMI College. Teachers graduating from these colleges have restricted recognition – they can teach only in schools and in classes in mainstream schools catering for pupils with special educational needs.
[36] University College Dublin; University College Cork; National University of Ireland Galway; National University of Ireland, Maynooth; Trinity College Dublin; University of Limerick and Dublin City University.
[37] Galway Mayo Institute of Technology (Letterfrack campus); LIT (Limerick School of Art and Design); and CIT (Crawford College of Art and Design).
[38] These are Mater Dei Institute; St. Patrick's College of Education, Thurles; and St. Angela's College Sligo;

Table 3. Undergraduate and Postgraduate ITE programmes for 2nd level teachers

Higher Education Institution	Teacher Education Programmes	
	UG	PG
UCD	●	✓
TCD	✓ Music	✓
UCC	✓ Sports Studies Science	✓
NUIG	✓ Maths	✓
NUIM	✓ Science	✓
UL	✓ P.E. Physics and Chemistry Biological Science with Physics; Materials, Architecture and Tech. Graphics Materials and Engineering Technology Modern Languages	✓
DCU	✓ Science P.E. with Biology	✓
NCAD	✓ Art and Design	✓
GMIT	✓ Design and Technology	✓
LIT	●	✓
CIT	●	✓
Mater Dei	✓ Religion and Music Religion and History Religion and English	●
St. Angela's	✓ Home Ec. with RE Home Ec. with Biology Home Ec. with Irish Home Ec. with Economics	●
St. Patrick's Thurles	✓ Business Studies and RE Irish and RE	●

In the five universities (UCD, UCC, NUIG, NUIM, and TCD) which provide 85% of the places on consecutive programmes, efforts were made by the government about twenty years ago to control the intake to these programmes. An upper limit of places was agreed by each of the universities at the time but as further providers were accredited during the past

two decades, the government abandoned efforts to monitor numbers entering second level ITE programmes.

One-year postgraduate programmes are also provided by other (non-university) institutions – programmes for teachers of Art and Design are provided by the National College of Art and Design in Dublin, by Crawford College of Art and Design in Cork (CIT), and by the College of Art and Design in Limerick (LIT). A one-year programme for Wood Technology teachers is provided by Galway Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT). A consecutive two year programme by the private provider, Hibernia College has recently been accredited by the Teaching Council and will be provided within the coming year.

Applications have also been received in recent months by the Teaching Council for accreditation of programmes of teacher education in other non-university higher education institutions. New programmes submitted to the Teaching Council are currently individually assessed on their merits and if the programmes satisfy the criteria set down in the Teaching Council guidelines, accreditation is granted, regardless of the need for such a programme or of the number of similar programmes available nationally or even locally.

Subject Specific Pedagogical Training

As part of the one-year consecutive teacher education programme, six universities (UCD; TCD; UCC; NUIG; NUIM; DCU) provide pedagogical training in most academic subjects of the second level curriculum. There is no tradition of individual universities specialising in specific subject areas. Trinity College Dublin provides methodology teaching in twenty separate subjects; NUIM also provides twenty areas of subject specialisms; and UCD and UCC (which do not distinguish separate subjects within the Sciences, Languages or Business) each provide 12 subject methodology areas. DCU provides eleven subject methodologies. It should be noted that subjects offered can vary from year to year. As stated on the website of one provider: "Subject Pedagogy/Special Methods Modules vary slightly in number and structure from year to year – partly due to staffing and partly due to interest from among the student cohort[39]".

Ensuring that staff involved in initial teacher education programmes have professional or teaching experience at school level on the one hand, and academic and research qualifications and expertise on the other is an ongoing challenge for teacher education providers worldwide. This issue is not unique to education – it also arises in other professional disciplines, e.g. Medical and Nursing education; Legal education; Engineering Education; Business Education etc. The challenge has been well-addressed in most teacher education settings in Ireland, the staff of which usually have teaching experience in the relevant sector and also hold academic qualifications to a high level. As a result of a policy of encouraging and supporting existing staff who were recruited in the past without a doctorate to undertake doctoral degrees, and of more recent recruitment policies which expect staff applying for posts in universities and colleges of education to hold a doctoral degree, the majority of full-time staff in initial teacher education settings, now hold doctoral degrees.

In order to provide courses across the full range of subject pedagogies, most providers, especially of second-level ITE programmes, employ a significant number of part-time staff, usually on a sessional basis. An analysis of the staffing details of the Education Departments in the five universities which provide the majority of places on the consecutive teacher

[39] http://www.ucd.ie/education/

education programme indicates that only a minority (less than 25%) of the subject methods co-ordinators are full-time academic staff. The majority of the subject methodology co-ordinators are either current or retired teachers of the subject involved. It is worth noting that some staff in the academic disciplinary departments of these same universities are actively engaged in pedagogical research and have published on the pedagogy of their subject. However, such staff rarely have any connection with the education department of their own university. Education departments tend to operate largely on a stand-alone basis, and although they provide specific subject pedagogical training/education in a range of academic subjects, they rarely draw on the expertise or the pedagogical research of the relevant academic departments within the universities.

Entry Requirements to initial teacher education programmes

Entry requirements to ITE programmes for primary teachers

As indicated earlier, there is a high demand for places on teacher education programmes for primary and second-level teachers and entry requirements are demanding. The regulations for entry to concurrent programmes in colleges of education (primary teaching) for school leavers require applicants to have Grade C3 on a Higher Level paper in not less than three subjects of the Leaving Certificate examination, and Grade D3 in three other subjects. Candidates must achieve a minimum of Grade C3 in Irish at Higher Level: a minimum of Grade C3 in English Ordinary Level or D3 Higher Level and a minimum of Grade D3 in Mathematics at either Ordinary or Higher Level. The best six subjects in a single sitting of the Leaving Certificate Examination are counted for points purposes, subject to a maximum of 600 points and in recent years the cut-off point was in the region of 470. In the past, school leavers applying for a place on a teacher education programme also had to undergo an interview and undertake other tests of suitability, but these additional requirements for entry to the B.Ed. programme were discontinued some years ago. The only college which now interviews its applicants for concurrent programmes for primary teachers is the Church of Ireland College of Education.

The ratio of applicants to places in colleges of education for primary teachers is high and successful candidates are invariably within the top 15% of those who apply for places in higher education. Retention and success rates among students in colleges of education are the highest in the higher education sector. Despite the current entry requirements, and the subsequent successful completion of the programme by more than 95% of entrants,[40] concern has been expressed as to whether or not all successful applicants have adequate levels of numeracy and literacy. To address this, it has been suggested that the entry requirements should be raised to an even more demanding level. However, the concern about standards of literacy and numeracy might more appropriately be addressed through the introduction of specific literacy and numeracy tests for applicants to initial teacher education programmes.[41]

Applicants for the relatively small number of places in consecutive initial teacher programmes for primary teachers must have an honours Bachelor degree (major award at level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications) or at Masters or Doctoral level, i.e. a major award at Level 9 or Level 10 on the National Framework of Qualifications, and a

[40] HEA *A Study of Progression in Irish Higher Education* (October 2010). http://www.hea.ie/en/node/1386

[41] A recent report on teacher education in Scotland recommended that "candidates for teaching should undertake diagnostic assessments of their competence in both literacy and numeracy. The threshold established for entry should allow for weaknesses to be addressed by the student during the course. A more demanding level should be set for competence to teach". (*Report of a Review of Teacher Education in Scotland,* 2010, p. 27.)

grade C3 or above in Higher Level Irish; a grade D3 or above in Mathematics (Ordinary or Higher level); and a grade C3 or above in English (Ordinary level) or grade D3 or above in English (Higher level) in the Leaving Certificate. Applicants for the consecutive programmes are also required to undergo an interview and an oral Irish test. The number of places available in each college in this category is low (numbers are controlled by the Department of Education and Skills) and the competition for places is keen. The demand for places on consecutive programmes for primary teachers is demonstrated by the high demand for places on the programme provided by the private provider, Hibernia College, which accepts over 700 students each year. The fact that the Hibernia programme is delivered online and on a blended learning basis is attractive to a wide range of potential applicants.

Entry requirements to ITE programmes for second-level teachers

The standard of entry to four year concurrent teacher education programmes for second-level teachers is also high, although not as high as the standard for concurrent teacher education programmes for primary teachers. Generally speaking, successful applicants for concurrent programmes for second level teachers are within the top third of school leavers in terms of academic achievement, the only exception being one recently accredited provider, where applicants are in the top 50% of school leaver achievement[42].

Graduates who seek a place on a one-year consecutive ITE programme for second-level teachers in one of the seven universities apply through a central post-graduate applications centre (PAC)[43]. The criteria for selection differ somewhat for the different universities. The four universities of the National University of Ireland (UCD, UCC, NUIG and NUIM) apply a points system to applications based on (1) performance in an eligible primary degree (2) additional relevant academic qualifications and (3) allowable relevant professional experience. Applicants are not interviewed. The academic standard of entry to these programmes is high and usually only those applicants who have achieved a First Class Honours degree or a degree at the upper Second Class honours level succeed in gaining a place. The (NUI) application system does not differentiate between applicants for different subject areas so that in theory, all the available places could be allocated to applicants from a small number of subject areas, if their degree results happened to be the highest. This selection system has been subject to criticism as it makes no provision for ensuring that places will be provided in subject areas where there are teacher shortages. Conversely, the system could also lead to an oversupply of teachers in some subject areas and this has been the case in the past[44].

Applicants for places in the one-year programme in Trinity College Dublin, which provides about 10% of total available places, must specify at the point of application which subject specialism they intend to study. This enables Trinity College to control the number of places in each subject area and allows for monitoring under- and over-supply. Trinity College also interviews its applicants.

Funding of Teacher Education Programmes

As indicated earlier in this paper, there are 19 publicly-funded providers of teacher education programmes. Most are funded through HEA funding, but the three smaller

[42] See CAO website – http://www.cao.ie
[43] See http://www.pac.ie
[44] The only area where a quota is applied is in the area of Business and Business related degrees. This is deemed necessary "due to the over-subscription of these degrees on the various Professional Diploma in Education programmes".

primary teacher education colleges – Froebel, Marino, and the Church of Ireland Colleges of Education are funded directly by the Department of Education and Skills. The total amount allocated to the three smaller primary teacher education colleges in 2011 was €12,549,000.[45]

The other two colleges of education for primary teachers – St. Patrick's College Drumcondra, and Mary Immaculate College, Limerick as well as St. Angela's College, Sligo, and Mater Dei Institute of Education, Dublin are funded through the HEA. Their budgets are routed through their validating universities and are ring-fenced in each case and the university has no say in how the college spends its budget. The recurrent amount allocated by government to St. Patrick's College Drumcondra and Mary Immaculate College in 2011 was €32.8 million (grant and fees) – and €7.8 million was allocated for Mater Dei and St. Angela's College. An amount of €11.4 million was allocated to the National College of Art and Design, but only a small proportion of this relates to teacher education.

The following table shows the number of students in each of the five colleges of education, showing undergraduate and postgraduate students separately. In the case of the two larger colleges, the enrolment figures include students taking Arts/Humanities programmes. The table also shows the recurrent funding allocation to the colleges in 2011, showing separately the funding to the two larger colleges (SPD and MICE) which are funded by the HEA, and the three smaller colleges (Marino, Froebel and the Church of Ireland College) which are funded directly by the Department of Education and Science. It will be noted that the average per capita cost in the two larger colleges is €6,798 whereas the average per capita cost in the three smaller colleges is €12,715.

Table 2. Number of students and cost per capita in colleges of primary education

College	Number of Students			Recurrent funding (in millions) €	Per capita funding (average) €
	UG	PG	Total		
MICE	2,500	345	2,845	32.8m	6,798
SPD	1,840	140	1,980		
Marino	429	121	550	12.55m	12,715
Froebel	229	31	260		
CICE	124	52	176		
Total	5,122	689	5,811	45.35m	7,804

University-based programmes for second-level teachers are funded through the core grant and the grant in lieu of fees allocated by the HEA to each university. The HEA allocates funding to the universities through the Recurrent Grant Allocation Model (RGAM). The allocation of the core grant is determined on a formula basis – based on a standard per capita amount in respect of EU student numbers – weighted according to four broad subject groups[46]. Education students are categorised in the "fieldwork" category which has a weighting of 1.3 under the RGAM (undergraduate Education students and postgraduate

[45] Dept. of Public Expenditure and Reform, *Comprehensive Expenditure Report 2012-2014*, p. 178. The amount budgeted for 2012 is €11,680,000

[46] Each student in an Arts/Humanities programmes is weighted as one student.

diploma students receive the same weighting). In addition, a grant in lieu of fees (free fees funding) is allocated on the basis of certified student number returns. The recurrent provision to each university is allocated as a block grant and the internal allocation is a matter for each institution.

In some recent Teaching Council accreditation reports and in Quality Review reports within the university sector, the Review Panels expressed concern about under-resourcing and the poor physical resources and environment of some Education Departments in the university sector. In one case it was pointed out that the student-staff ratio in an Education Department was over 40:1 in a university where the average student:staff ratio in the university overall was less than 20:1[47]. In another case, the Review Panel expressed concern about the failure of the university to replace some key staff who had retired in an education department. Inadequacy of resources is a recurring concern in education departments in some universities. The under-resourcing of education departments is a phenomenon experienced in many universities world-wide, and it has been suggested that Education students are often regarded as the "cash-cows" of universities, some of their fees and funding being diverted to subsidise other departments and faculties.

This is not usually an issue in colleges of education, where funding is ring-fenced specifically for the college and where facilities and resources are often more satisfactory than in education departments in universities. Staff and students who have had experience of teacher education colleges and education departments/faculties of university would usually agree that the status of education studies within a college of education is higher than it is within many universities and that resources and facilities for education students (e.g. pedagogical resource centres; teaching practice preparation rooms; simulated classroom settings etc,) in colleges of education are often more impressive than they are in university settings.

Research

Within recent decades, there has been significant educational research activity in colleges of education and in education departments/faculties of universities. The Educational Research Centre (ERC) in Drumcondra, on the campus of St. Patrick's College, plays an important role in educational/pedagogical research nationally and internationally[48]. The ERC publishes a research journal and has developed national standardised tests in literacy and numeracy, carried out research on assessment and evaluation, monitored national curriculum reform and pupil performance, and is the agency which monitors and analyses the PISA results on behalf of the Department of Education and Skills. The all-island Educational Studies Association of Ireland, run by academic staff in colleges of education and education departments, hosts a well attended annual conference and publishes a respected peer-reviewed journal – Irish Educational Studies. There are other specialised educational associations which focus on specific aspects of education (e.g. Reading Association of Ireland) and some of these also publish journals and/or conference proceedings.

An analysis of recent research publications, and of university and college of education websites, indicates that academics in colleges of education and education faculties/departments of universities are engaged in a wide range of educational research topics and projects. While some of the research focuses on the foundation disciplines of

[47] http://www.teachingcouncil.ie/_fileupload/Teacher%20Education/Completed%20Reviews/UL_95084493_finalreport_03Oct2010.pdf
[48] http://www.erc.ie

education (philosophy, psychology, sociology and history of education) or on issues relating to management and leadership, or other broader aspects of education, there is also a considerable body of pedagogical research being undertaken. This includes research on language and literacy, on mathematics education and numeracy, and on aspects of teaching, learning and assessment. Some of this work is action-based research and involves collaboration between staff in the colleges of education and in education departments, and practising teachers in classroom settings. While there are many active and highly-respected individual researchers and some relatively small scale research projects, it is clear from even a cursory examination and analysis of the websites that cross-institutional collaboration is limited and that there is a good deal of overlap in the areas of educational research across institutions. There are exceptions to this, one being educational research on a cross-border basis, supported by the North/South education body SCoTENS (Standing Conference on Teaching Education North and South). Other collaborative research includes EU- funded educational projects in which some educational institutions in Ireland are involved. Irish Aid also funds educational research in some colleges. Centres and research teams involved in educational research in Irish higher education institutions are relatively small in size and do not have the critical mass that would normally be associated with academic Centres of Excellence internationally. It is clear that many areas of educational research in Ireland would benefit if there was greater inter-institutional collaboration and co-operation.

As indicated earlier, a significant proportion of staff involved in subject methodologies, especially in university education departments, are employed on a part-time or sessional basis. They are undoubtedly excellent teachers but many do not hold doctoral degrees nor do they appear to be engaged in academic or pedagogic research. This fact was commented on Review Panels for the Teaching Council[49] who suggested that ITE providers should be more pro-active in supporting part-time staff, particularly those employed to teach specific subject methodologies, to engage in CPD courses to update their skills, and to encourage them to use ICT tools and web-based materials, so as to enable them to model subject-appropriate teaching methodologies.

Provision of Initial Teacher Education for Teachers in Other Sectors

At least ten higher education institutions in Ireland – universities, colleges of education and institutes of technology, currently provide Bachelors degree level programmes (levels 7 and 8) in the area of early childhood education and care. These include University College Cork, NUI Maynooth, Mary Immaculate College Limerick, Blanchardstown IT, Cork IT, Carlow IT, Dundalk IT, Sligo IT, Tralee IT, and Waterford IT. Some institutions also provide programmes at Masters level and a small number provide doctoral programmes. While programmes in early childhood studies (ECS) have not traditionally been categorised as initial teacher education programmes, they include courses and modules on teaching and learning and many of their graduates are employed in education settings. Some graduates of ECS programmes subsequently enrol in postgraduate accredited ITE programmes for primary teachers.

The Teaching Council has recently invited expressions of interest for the provision of teacher education programmes for teachers in the further education sector. It is understood that seven expressions of interest are currently being considered by the Teaching Council, some but not all of which are from existing accredited providers of primary or second-level

[49] http://www.teachingcouncil.ie/_fileupload/Teacher%20Education/Completed%20Reviews/UCD_52786486_finalreport_28Sep2010.pdf

ITE. A number of higher education institutions also provide programmes for teachers and facilitators in adult and continuing education settings.

During the past decade, there has been a surge in the provision of teacher development programmes for lecturers and teachers in the higher education sector. All seven universities and some institutes of technology have set up centres or units for teaching and learning in higher education[50] most of which now provide certificated programmes. Three universities offer a 30 credit (ECTs) postgraduate certificate in teaching and learning in higher education; six universities offer a 60 credit postgraduate diploma and there are at least six Masters programme that relate to teaching and learning in higher education. In one university, almost 200 academic staff have completed a postgraduate certificate programme in teaching and learning to date. A small number of higher education institutions offer discipline-specific programmes, most notably in health education. NUI Galway and The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland offers a Masters programme for health professionals[51]. Participants on the postgraduate programmes in teaching and learning in highetr education are members of various university faculties who already hold a doctoral degree in their discipline and are interested in becoming more informed about and skilled in the pedagogy of their subject.

Most of the learning and teaching centres are actively engaged in research on teaching and learning in higher education[52]. Some of the research and innovation has been supported by the HEA through its Strategic Innovation Fund (SIF) and collaborative projects have been supported and encouraged by SIF-funded initiatives such as the National Academy for the Integration of Research and Teaching and Learning (NAIRTL)[53], the Shannon Consortium, Dublin Regional Higher Education Alliance (DRHEA), and the Learning Innovation Network (LIN). Other initiatives and networks include the Educational Developers in Ireland (EDIN); the All Ireland Society for Higher Education (AISHE); the Irish Learning Technology Association (ILTA) and the National Digital Learning Resources (NDLR). The websites and publications of these initiatives[54] indicate that innovative pedagogical research is being undertaken by academic staff in disciplinary departments in the third level sector which is relevant for second level teaching. The output of such research includes new tools for teaching and learning e.g. CD Roms, books and web-based outputs such as games, websites, wikis and blogs. One example of such a resource is a recently launched smart-phone app for learning 17th century Irish history developed by academic staff in UL and NUIG and supported by grants from NAIRTL and the Royal Irish Academy[55]. Other examples include resources for language teaching and for maths and science teaching, details of which are available on the NAIRTL website[56]. However, there is currently only

[50] The Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) in NUIG; Ionad Bairre in UCC; the Centre for Teaching and Learning in UCD; the Centre for Academic Practice and SL (CAPSL) in TCD and T&L Centres in UCD, UL, DCU, DIT and WIT.

[51] Jennifer Murphy (forthcoming 2012) "Teacher Development Programmes: National Policies Enabling Local Impact in Ireland" in Simon, E. and Pleschová, G. (eds) *Teacher Development in Higher Education: Existing Programs, Program Impact, and Future Trends*. Routledge.

[52] These centres have been influenced by the seminal work of Ernest Boyer in 1990 *Scholarship Re-considered: Priorities of the Professoriate* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass) and subsequent publications including the work of the Carnegie Foundation for Teaching and Learning in the U.S. http://www.carnegiefoundation.org

[53] http://www.nairtl,ie; http://www3.ul.ie/shannonconsortium/about.php; http://www.lin-ireland.com/index.php?title=Main_Page

[54] For a list of projects on innovations in teaching, learning and assessment in higher education, supported by grants from NAIRTL, see *NAIRTL Grants Initiative: Evaluation of Impact* (December 2011) and available on http://www.nairtl.ie. See also other publications on this website.

[55] www.irelandundersiege.com

[56] http://www.nairtl.ie/publications

limited interaction between the centres for teaching and learning in higher education and the Education faculties/departments in the university sector and greater collaboration would undoubtedly be of benefit to student-teachers.

Conclusion

The extension of the primary B.Ed. programme to a four year programme (240 ECTs) and of the one year postgraduate second level ITE programme to a two year programme (120 ECTs) heralds the beginning of a new era in teacher education in Ireland. While the review of the structure of teacher education provision, initiated by the Minister for Education and Skills in his letter of 22nd March is timely, it provides a new challenge for policy-makers and teacher education providers. It is however an opportunity to reconfigure the system of initial teacher education in Ireland to ensure that it will provide the best possible learning experience for student-teachers and will compare favourably with the best in the world.

Issues which might be addressed in the forthcoming review include the following:

1. Are there too many providers of teacher education programmes in Ireland? There are 19 publicly-funded providers with over 30 programmes for primary and second level teachers, graduating more than 2,700 teachers per annum.[57] A number of the providers are free-standing, single-purpose institutions[58].

2. Greater collaboration between higher education institutions is envisaged in the *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030*. How might collaboration between initial teacher education providers be achieved both across and within the sectors? Geographical clusters would be one possibility; thematic clusters another[59]. As was pointed out in the HEA letter to heads of higher education institutions in February 2012, the purpose of clustering is not to suppress institutional identity, which could be maintained in any proposed models of collaboration.

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   Clusters or alliances could draw on the teacher education expertise within different institutions, including expertise in early childhood, primary, second-level, further education, adult and community education as well as higher education. Strong centres of excellence for both teaching and research could be developed within clusters, which could be exciting, interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral, with the potential to become world-renowned. Shared design and delivery of courses drawing on the best expertise available would become the hallmark of such clusters. This would be facilitated by compatible VLEs, increased use of technology and distance-learning techniques.

3. If geographical or thematic clusters and centres of excellence were set up, what mechanisms could be set in place to monitor the effectiveness and impact of such clusters on an ongoing basis?

4. Successful education systems internationally control numbers in initial teacher education programmes. Should the Department of Education and Skill's current

[57] Ireland is a country with a total population of 4.6 million people.
[58] In its correspondence with the heads of higher education institutions, the HEA anticipates that smaller institutions will be consolidated through incorporation into or merger with existing institutions.
[59] The title "Institute of Education" has already been suggested as a possible title for one such collaborative initiative.

system of controlling numbers in publicly-funded initial teacher education programmes at primary level be maintained and expanded to ITE programmes for second-level teachers? If so how can such control be maintained and developed in Ireland when a private accredited provider (Hibernia) provides nearly as many ITE places for primary teachers as the publicly-funded colleges, and is about to embark on a similar ITE programme for post-primary teachers?

5. All colleges of education for primary teachers are owned and managed by the Churches. How can a restructured system ensure diversity of teacher education provision (catering for all religions and none) and prepare teachers who have the knowledge and expertise to teach in schools under different patronage – Church-based or otherwise?

6. Each of the five main providers of consecutive ITE programmes for second level teachers[60] currently provides pedagogic courses in all subjects of the second level curriculum – up to twenty subject pedagogies in each institution. Is it possible that agreement might be reached whereby each provider (or cluster) might offer only a limited number of subject specialisations, focusing on subjects where they have teaching and research expertise to a high level? This in turn might facilitate a more targeted approach to the selection of students for consecutive ITE programmes for second level teachers based on subject areas.

7. Is there scope within the universities/clusters for greater collaboration between education departments and individual subject/disciplinary departments – many of whom have expertise and have carried out research on the pedagogy of their disciplines?

8. Expressions of interest for the provision of ITE programmes for further Education teachers have been sought by the Teaching Council. Should accreditation of these or other new programmes be suspended pending the outcome of this review?

[60] UCD, UCC, NUIG, NUIM, and TCD.

Appendix to the Background Report

Ireland – demographic, constitutional and economic context.

The Demographic Context:
Ireland has been an independent country since 1922. It is a parliamentary democracy and is governed by the 1937 Constitution (Bunreacht na hEireann). There are two official languages - English and Irish (Gaeilge)[61]. The population of the country in 2011 was 4,588,252 – the highest in over 100 years. The increase in the past decade has been particularly notable with a growth of over 1,000,000 in the past fifteen years and an increase of 400,000 since the 2006 census. While inward migration has contributed to this growth in population, it has been mainly driven by the birth rate, which is one of the highest in the EU. Some 363,500 babies were born between 2006 and 2011, while 147,700 people died in the same period. While the population of the EU has increased by 5% since 1996, the increase in Ireland was 25% during the same period.

After many decades of net outward migration, Ireland experienced net inward migration in the past two decades. Between 2002 and 2006, the annual average net inward migration was 47,800. During the past five years this has fallen to 23,730. According to the Census of 2011, more than one in six of the population was born outside Ireland. Although the population is getting older, Ireland still has a young population compared to other EU countries, with over 20% under the age of 15.

In 2011, 84% of the population was Roman Catholic, 3% Church of Ireland (Anglican); 1% Presbyterian or Methodist; 1% Orthodox (Greek, Coptic or Russian) and 1% Islam (Muslim). 6% declared themselves as "No Religion". A further 1.5% did not declare any religion. Growth in some faiths such as Islam and Orthodox Christianity can be primarily accounted for by inward migration from Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe.

The continuing population increase means that government budget plans for the next number of years will have to take into account major increases in population in some parts of the country. The overall increase in population is not evenly distributed and schools in some parts of the country are experiencing a fall in school enrolment while others have difficulty coping with the increase in demand for school places. The population increase will have a major bearing on the provision of schooling and will require additional school buildings and teachers in some areas of the country.

The Economic Context:
From the 1970s onwards the Irish economy benefited from a rise in consumer spending, construction and business investment. The decade from 1995 to 2005 was one of high economic growth and is sometimes referred to as the "Celtic Tiger". GDP growth was robust up to 2005, with a rate of over 4% in 2004 and 4.7% in 2005. In 2006, Ireland had the lowest level of unemployment in the EU; the second lowest national debt; the second highest minimum wage and the highest investment in the EU on infrastructure. The annual GDP growth was above 4% between 2000 and 2005. The labour market was buoyant, and further strong employment growth was expected.

[61] The Irish Constitution states that the Irish language (Gaeilge) is the first official language and recognises English as the second official language. The reality for the large majority of the Irish population is that English is their mother tongue and the language of daily usage.

However, economic activity dropped sharply in 2008 and Ireland entered into a recession with the onset of the world financial crisis and a severe slowdown in the property and construction market in Ireland, exacerbated by a crisis in the banking industry. Economic growth was 4.7% in 2007 but fell to -1.7% in 2008 and to -7.1% in 2009. In November 2010, the Irish Government published a National Recovery plan, which aims to restore order to the public finances and to bring its deficit in line with the EU target of 3% of economic output by 2015. This involves a budget adjustment of €15 billion (i.e. expenditure cuts and tax increases) over a four year period. The International Monetary Fund (IMF), the European Commission (EU) and the European Central Bank regularly review the €85bn international bailout that was made available to the Irish government in 2010. They have expressed satisfaction to date on the Irish government's progress in meeting budgetary targets, recapitalising the banks and introducing a job creation initiative. The export sector, dominated by foreign multinationals, remains a key component of Ireland's economy.

Following the onset of the recession in 2008, the unemployment rate grew rapidly in Ireland from less then 5% to 14.2% in June, 2011. The number of long-term unemployed increased by more than a third in the twelve months up to June, 2011. In June 2010, there were 137,195 unemployed and on the live register for more than 12 months. This had increased to 186,643 by June 2011. Eight of every ten of these are over 25. These, and other unemployment figures, highlight the huge challenges faced in getting people back to work.

The Education System in Ireland

Governance and regulatory framework

The 1937 Constitution (Bunreacht na hEireann) and various legislative measures, especially the Education Act (1998), the Education (Welfare) Act (2000), the Vocational Education Act (1930) and subsequent amendments, the Universities Act (1997) and the Institutes of Technology Act (2004) provide the constitutional and legislative framework for Irish education.

The 1937 Constitution is underpinned by the principle of subsidiarity and emphasises minimal State interference in the life of the family. Article 42, which deals with education, states that parents are the 'primary and natural educator' of their child(ren) and refers to their 'inalienable rights' in this regard. It defines the role of the State as requiring that children receive 'a certain minimum education, moral, intellectual and social'. Article 44.4 provides that legislation providing State aid for schools shall not discriminate between schools under the management of different religious denominations, nor prejudice the right of any child to attend a school receiving public money without attending religious instruction in that school.

The Education Act of 1998 provides the main legislative framework for Irish primary, post-primary, adult and continuing education and for vocational education and training. This act makes formal provision for the education 'of every person in the State, including any person with a disability or who has other special educational needs'. It sets out the functions and responsibilities of all key partners in the schooling system. The School Attendance Act (1926) and its amendments require children to attend school between age 6 and age 15. The Education (Welfare) Act 2000 became operational on July 5th 2002 and raised the school leaving age to 16, or the completion of three full years of second level education. Under the provisions of this act the National Educational Welfare Board was established with responsibility for ensuring the educational welfare of young people under 16 years of age whether they are enrolled in a school or placed in another educational establishment. Section 7 of the Equal Status Act (2000) also impacts on education in terms of guaranteeing access

to, and participation in, such schools by members of named minority groups including those with disabilities and members of ethnic minority groups.

The Main Structural Features of the Irish Education System

The vast majority of Irish children (about 97%) attend non fee-paying publicly funded schools. The school system consists of eight years of primary schooling (including two years infant education between the age of four and six). This is followed by five or six years of second level or post-primary schooling – three years of Junior Cycle (lower secondary education), and either two or three years of Senior Cycle (upper secondary education).

The Churches play an important role in the provision of Irish education, a situation that has its origins in the 19th century. They own and manage almost all primary schools and the majority of schools at secondary level. Over 90% of pupils attend primary schools that are owned and controlled by the Catholic Church; about 6% attend schools controlled by Protestant denominations and a very small number of schools are operated by other religious groups including the Irish Islamic community (two primary schools) and the Jewish community (one school). Since the 1970s, parents in some parts of the country have set up publicly-funded multi-denominational schools. These schools are co-ordinated by a national body called Educate Together. The Educate Together movement has grown in the past two decades and there are currently around 60 Educate Together primary schools in the country.

It has recently been recognized that the number of schools owned and managed by the Catholic Church is disproportionate to the number of children for whom Catholic education is sought by their parents. Some Catholic bishops have indicated a willingness to transfer some of their school to an alternative form of patronage and a Forum on Patronage and Pluralism was set up in 2011 by the Minister for Education and Skills, Ruairi Quinn, T.D., to examine this issue. The Report of the committee was published in April 2012 and in reviewing the evolution of the primary schools system, it stated:

> In summary, Ireland is being increasingly criticised by a range of international agencies for the lack of balance in the character of its primary school system, which is so heavily dominated by denominational schools. In Ireland, senior Catholic spokespersons, as well as the collective body of bishops have drawn attention to the unsatisfactory configuration of the primary school system. At least four Ministers for Education, over recent years, have stressed the need for changes, and taken some initiatives in that regard. Agencies, such as the Commission on School Accommodation, have called for a greater diversity of school patronage. The national teachers union, the INTO, has called for change and sought multi-partner talks to pave the way for change. The Constitution Review Committee has raised serious questions about the compatibility of current Rules with the Constitution. The Irish Human Rights Commission has called for a diversity of provision of school type to reflect the diversity of religious and non-religious convictions …….

At second level, until around 1970, Ireland had a binary education system with (voluntary) secondary schools providing academic education and vocational schools providing vocational and technical education. In general, the voluntary secondary schools were privately owned by Church bodies and offered a classical-type academic curriculum leading to higher education and general public service employment. The vocational/technical schools offered a practical or technical curriculum of two years duration under local Vocal Education Committees (i..e. public authority/ municipal control) leading to apprenticeships or directly into the workforce. In 1968 free second level education was introduced, with a common second level curriculum for all pupils, regardless of what type of school they

attended. As the demand for second level education grew, new types of schools – comprehensive and community schools - were established in the 1970s and 1980s.

In virtually all primary schools and secondary schools, a Board of Management is set up to manage the school. The Board of Management is the legal employer of the school staff and its responsibilities are laid down in the Education Act (1998). Each Board is composed of nominees of the Patron / Trustees (i.e. the school owners), parents elected by the body of parents of pupils in the school, and teachers elected by teachers in the school. The Chairperson of the Board is appointed by the Patron / Trustees who also must approve all members of the board. All members of Boards of Management of primary and post-primary schools serve in a voluntary capacity. Although the State pays the salaries of teachers in all publicly-funded schools, the Board of Management determines appointments and promotions of teachers (except in vocational school) subject to regulations set down by the Department of Education and Skills.

Projections of School Enrolment

As already indicated, Ireland has one of the highest birth rates in Europe. The annual number of births grew from 48,000 in 1994 to 73,000 in 2011. The 2011 census indicates that there were 72,410 children between the ages of 0 and 1; 72,645 between 1 and 2; 72,566 between 2 and 3; and 71,457 between 3 and 4 years of age in Ireland a year ago. Projections published by the Department of Education and Skills in June 2011 anticipate a growth in enrolment in primary schools from the current 510,000 to around 550,000 in 2017, and in second level schools from 317,400 to over 340,000 during the same period. Enrolment in higher education is projected to grow from 161,000 in 2010 to over 220,000 by the end of the decade.

Longer term projections anticipate a fall in the number of births in the next decade, based on the assumption that there will be a gradual decline in the level of net outward migration between 2011 and 2014 coupled with a small fall in the rate of fertility. Under this scenario, the number of births in 2015 is projected at 61,500. However, it should be noted that population and particularly school enrolment projections in Ireland in recent decades have tended to underestimate the actual growth that occurred and current official projections may also prove to be an underestimation of longer-term future enrolments.

Implications for schooling of the growing cultural and ethnic diversity of the population

The implications of the growth of inward migration in the past decade are significant for Irish schools. Until recently, the Irish school going population was to a large extent, culturally and ethnically monolithic. Within the past decade this has changed, and in recent years, a growing number of children born outside the State have enrolled in Irish schools. A significant number of these come from non-English speaking backgrounds. It is estimated that more than 10% of pupils in Irish primary and second level schools were born outside Ireland. Many of these pupils do not have English or Irish as their first language and this creates new challenges for schools. The religious diversity of these pupils is also a new challenge for the Irish education system, which until recently, was largely monolithic in terms of the religious backgrounds of pupils and teachers.

Funding of education.

The government's current budget for education in Ireland in 2012 is just over €8 billion, €3.1 billion for primary education and €2.7 billion for second-level education. Third level education accounts for €1.6 billion of which €1.1 billion relates to recurrent provision to

HEA institutions[62]. Public expenditure on education as a percentage of total public expenditure in 2008 was 13.4%, somewhat above the OECD and EU21 average of 12.9% and 11.7% respectively. Public expenditure on education in Ireland represented 5.7% of GDP in 2008 – slightly above the OECD and EU21 average of 5.4%[63].

The State pays the bulk of the building and running costs of schools and also pays teachers' salaries. Schools are required to contribute towards their running costs and this contribution is raised through various fund-raising events. Unlike other EU countries, where local authorities and municipalities usually contribute to the cost of education, in Ireland local authorities do not provide funding for education.

Early Childhood Education and Care

Unlike many other European countries, Ireland does not have a tradition of pre-school education, and until very recently, there was no public funding available for early childhood education except for a very small number of specific pre-primary centres for children from disadvantaged backgrounds, including children of the travelling community. The compulsory school age in Ireland is 6 and all forms of pre-primary education are optional. However, children from the age of 4 can be enrolled in infant classes in primary schools. Nearly half of 4-year-olds and virtually all 5-year-olds attend primary school. With the exception of the above, early childhood education and care services in Ireland are delivered outside the formal education system, by a diverse range of private, community and voluntary interests and are described variously as crèches, nurseries, pre-schools, naíonraí (Irish language pre-schools), playgroups and daycare services.

A free Pre-School Year scheme was introduced by government in January 2010 and is administered by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. Under the terms of this initiative, all children are now entitled to a free pre-school year of appropriate programme-based activities in the year prior to starting primary school. While participation is voluntary, there has been an immediate and very positive response to the scheme. Approximately 63,000 or 94% of eligible children were enrolled in pre-school services in the first year of the scheme i.e. in the 2010/11 school year.

The regulatory environment for early childhood education is split between the Department of Education and Skills whose Inspectorate has responsibility for all activities in primary schools and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs whose Pre-School Inspectorate monitor the implementation of the 2006 Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No 2) Regulations.

Primary Education

There are 3,309 publicly-funded primary schools (including 140 special schools for children with special educational needs) in Ireland[64]. 96% of these schools are under the patronage of the various churches. The remainder are multi-denominational schools (in the Educate Together network) and Gaelscoileanna (schools in which all teaching is carried out through the medium of the Irish language).

[62] Revised Book of Estimates February 2012.
[63] OECD *Education at a Glance* (OECD 2011), p. 254.
[64] For the past two decades, the state has had a policy of integrating children with special needs into mainstream schools, and provides additional resources to support such integration.

The following table gives details of the patronage/ownership of primary schools[65]:

Table 1. Total number of primary schools by patron body (2010/11)*

Patron Body	No of Schools	% of Total
Catholic	2,841	89.65
Church of Ireland	174	5.49
Presbyterian	17	0.54
Methodist	1	0.03
Jewish	1	0.03
Islamic	2	0.06
Quaker	1	0.03
John Scottus Educational Trust Ld	1	0.03
Lifeways Ireland Ltd	2	0.06
An Foras Pátrúnachta na Scoileanna Lán-Ghaeilge Teo	57	1.80
Educate Together Ltd (national patron body)	44	1.39
Schools in Educate Together network with their own patron body	14	0.44
Vocational Education Committees**	5	0.16
Minister for Education & Skills***	9	0.29
Total	**3,169**	**100%**

*This table outlines the patronage of ordinary mainstream primary schools and does not include special school.

Primary schools operate an eight-year programme, consisting of two "kindergarten" years (Junior and Senior Infants), followed by classes 1-6. The current official primary curriculum was developed by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment and approved and published by the Department of Education and Skills in 1999. While the Irish language is a compulsory subject for pupils in all primary and second level schools, about 150 primary schools (referred to in the Irish language as Gaelscoileanna) teach all subjects through the medium of the Irish language and the normal language of communication is Irish. In addition to these, a further 140 or so schools in Gaeltacht areas (i.e. Irish-speaking areas of the country) also use Irish as the normal medium of communication and teach all subjects through Irish.

Since the foundation of the national school system 180 years ago, religious education (RE) has played a central role in primary schooling in Ireland. In schools under Roman Catholic patronage, R.E. includes faith formation and preparation for the sacraments of First Confession, First Communion and Confirmation, takes place within school hours and is taught by the classroom teacher. In Educate Together schools, a common Ethical Curriculum, suitable for children of all religions and none, is taught by the classroom teachers within schools hours. In those schools, faith formation is regarded as a matter for parents, and groups of parents who wish to arrange for such classes are facilitated to do so outside school hours by the schools' boards of management. In the past three years, the State has set up a new type of primary school known as a Community National School. There are

[65] John Coolahan et al *Report of the Advisory Group on Patronage and Pluralism* (April 2012).

currently five such schools in the country and it is intended that these schools will be under the patronage of the local Vocational Education Committees (see section on post-primary schools) and that in those schools, faith formation classes will be made available for all the main religious groups within school hours. This proposal has led to some controversy in recent months[66] and the discussion on the form of religious education which will be provided in these schools is ongoing.

Second Level Education in Ireland

There are 729 second-level schools in Ireland comprising 383 (voluntary) secondary schools (52% of total); 254 vocational schools and community colleges (35% of total), and 92 community and comprehensive schools (13% of total). There are 356,100 pupils enrolled in these schools, taught by 26,185 teachers. (Statistics relate to 2010/11). Most second-level schools are free - a small number of voluntary secondary schools cater for less than 4% of pupils are fee-paying.

Almost all voluntary secondary schools are owned and managed by legal Trusts representing Catholic Religious orders of nuns or brothers or Catholic Diocesan authorities. A small number are owned by Protestant Church bodies or lay trusts or individuals. Vocational schools and community colleges are publicly owned and are run by Vocational Education Committees, and community and comprehensive schools are owned by the State and run by boards of management on which the Churches are represented.

Second level education consists of a three-year Junior Cycle (lower secondary), followed by a two or three year Senior Cycle (upper secondary), depending on whether an optional Transition Year is taken. Students usually commence the Junior Cycle at age 12. A State examination, the Junior Certificate, is taken after three years. The principal objective of the Junior Cycle is for students to complete broad, balanced and coherent courses of study in a variety of curricular areas, and to allow them to achieve levels of competence that will enable them to proceed to Senior Cycle education.

The Senior Cycle caters for students in the 15 to 18 year age group. Transition Year, which has been a major innovation in Irish education, is an option which is now firmly embedded in the system. It immediately follows the Junior Cycle. It provides an opportunity for students to engage in a wide range of educational experiences, including work placement, over the course of a year that is free from formal examinations. The aim of Transition Year is to educate students for maturity with an emphasis on personal development, social awareness and skills for life. During the final two years of Senior Cycle students take one of three programmes, each leading to a State Examination – the traditional (or established) Leaving Certificate, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) or the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA).

The Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) can be described as the established Leaving Certificate with a strong vocational dimension. It provides students with the opportunity to realise their potential for self-directed learning, for innovation and for enterprise. Both the Leaving Certificate (Established) and the Leaving Certificate (Vocational) are awarded at levels 4 or 5 of the National Qualifications Framework.

[66] See for example article by Emer O'Kelly "Catholic Church remains biggest child in playground" in *Irish Independent* 15th April 2012.

The Leaving Certificate Applied, on the other hand, is a distinct, self-contained two-year Leaving Certificate programme which emphasises forms of achievement and excellence which the established Leaving Certificate had not recognised in the past. It is an innovative programme in the way students learn, in what they learn and in the way their achievements are assessed. It is student-centred, involving a cross-curricular approach rather than a subject based structure. It has as its primary objective the preparation of participants for adult and working life through relevant learning experiences which develop areas of human endeavour - spiritual, intellectual, social, emotional, aesthetic and physical.

Graduates of the Leaving Certificate Applied cannot apply directly for places in higher education institutions. However, those who progress to an approved further education award are eligible for admission to some third level courses in institutes of technology and universities.

Further Education (i.e. Post-secondary, non-tertiary)

The further education (FE) sector in Ireland has not traditionally been categorised by the Department of Education and Skills as a sector distinct from the second-level sector. Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) courses are provided in second-level schools and in colleges of further education run by Vocational Education Committees. The main aim of PLC programmes is to provide for a more intensive development of technical skills, including new technologies, combining opportunities for work experience, vocational studies and general studies. Providers must demonstrate a labour market justification for the programmes being proposed. PLC programmes cater for people who have completed senior cycle education, and require further vocational education and training to enhance their prospects of employment or progression to other studies or for adults returning to education, who may not have completed the senior cycle, but are deemed by the provider to have the necessary competencies and capacity to undertake the programme. Admission is normally determined by application and interview.

There are about 33,000 places on PLC programmes nationally and the programmes are certified at levels 5 and 6 on the NFQ. Based on current policy in relation to the funding of further education, the DES projections anticipate that there will be about 40,000 students in the further education sector each year for the next decade or so.

Higher Education

There are seven universities, 14 institutes of technology (including the Dublin Institute of Technology), and seven colleges of education funded by the State. In addition there are a number of smaller colleges which receive partial state funding and there are also a number of private colleges. Enrolment in higher education currently exceeds 162,000 students. Since the 1960s, when the total enrolment in higher education was less than 20,000 students, there has been a transformation of the structure, content and role of higher education in Ireland. Following the publication of the reports on Investment in Education (1965) and the Commission on Higher Education (1967), the universities were greatly expanded and Teacher Training Colleges were upgraded to become Colleges of Education with links to universities. Thirteen new regional technical colleges, subsequently called Institutes of Technology, were established as were National Institutes of Higher Education in Limerick and in Dublin, later to become the University of Limerick and Dublin City University. The Dublin Institute of Technology, which had previously consisted of a number of small specialist institutions, was also rationalised and expanded from the 1960s onwards. The

technological sector was intended to be more technical and applied than the university sector and to come more directly under state control.

The Higher Education Authority (HEA) was established in 1968 as a key intermediary agency between the state and the universities with important planning and budgetary responsibilities for the university sector. In 2007 responsibility for the Institutes of Technology was transferred from the Department of Education to the HEA and prior to that, the HEA had also taken responsibility for most of the Colleges of Education. In 1971 the National Council for Educational Awards (NCEA) – subsequently called the Higher Education and Training Council (HETAC) was set up as the awarding body with academic responsibilities for the non-university sector. As will be seen in subsequent sections of this report, ITE programmes for primary teachers (other than the programme provided by the private provider Hibernia) are validated by one or other of the universities. While most of the ITE programmes for second-level teachers are validated by universities, a small but increasing number are academically validated by HETAC.

The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 supports the diversity of provision which has been a feature of the Irish higher education system for the past 50 years. The strategy states that "Diversity is one of the major factors associated with the positive performance of higher education systems" and emphasises that institutes of technology and universities in Ireland each play different and complementary roles to meet the diverse needs of students, society and the economy". At the same time, the strategy emphasises the need for greater collaboration and consolidation within the higher education system.

In relation to student applications for admission to higher education, the Central Applications Office (CAO) was set up in 1976 to process applications for university undergraduate courses, on the basis of a points system linked to performance in the Leaving Certificate Examinations. This office later took on the processing of applications for the non-university sector also. In the mid 1990s, a central applications office was also set up for applications for postgraduate programmes. Initially this office related only to applications for the Higher Diploma in Education provided by the universities of the National University of Ireland, but its role has since been expanded to process applications for postgraduate programmes other than teacher education programmes.

Initial Teacher Education – Primary Teachers[67]

The first teacher training institution on the island of Ireland was set up two hundred years ago (in 1811) in Dublin by the Kildare Place Society (KPS) – a voluntary society set up to promote and support the education of the poor in Ireland. The KPS Training College accepted student teachers from all religious backgrounds and in its approach to education and teacher training, it left a lasting legacy to the Irish education system.

Following the setting up of the National School system in 1831, the Commissioners of National Education set up two teacher training establishments – one for men and one for women. The recent report of the Forum on Patronage and Pluralism (April 2012) describes the development of teacher training in the 19th century as follows[68]:

[67] For a fuller description of the history of teacher education in Ireland see John Coolahan "The historical development of teacher education in Ireland in Andy Burke (editor) *Teacher Education in the Republic of Ireland: Retrospect and Prospect* (Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South (November 2004).

[68] John Coolahan et al, *Report of the Advisory Group on Patronage and Pluralism* (April 2012)

> These (two training establishments) were to be managed by the Commissioners (of National Education) on the mixed education (religious) principle. The same provisions were to hold for a range of regional model schools, set up during the mid century. These had an apprenticeship training role (monitorial) for aspiring teachers. The mixed education principle was not regarded as satisfactory by the main religious denominational leaders. From 1860, the Catholic hierarchy, in particular, strongly opposed the Commissioners' institutions. Eventually, in 1884, following much agitation, the State agreed to give financial support to denominational training colleges which increased in number and expanded in size over subsequent years. This support was a significant concession to the denominational emphasis in primary education."

By the beginning of the twentieth century, there was one non-denominational training college run by the State; four training colleges under Catholic control and one training college under Church of Ireland control, all of which provided a two year teacher training programme.

After the foundation of the Free State in 1921, there were four publicly funded Catholic teacher training colleges in the Free State – Carysfort College, St. Patrick's College Drumcondra, Mary Immaculate College Limerick and the Christian Brothers Training College in Waterford (afterwards transferred to Marino in Dublin) as well as the Church of Ireland college, located in Kildare Place in the centre of Dublin at that time, and afterwards transferred to Rathmines, Dublin 6. They were all boarding institutions, run on strict disciplinary lines and all except the Church of Ireland College were single-sex colleges. The academic programme was set, examined and accredited by the Department of Education and the student timetable left little time for reading or reflection. Lecturers were not expected nor facilitated to engage in educational research.

The 1960s was a period of review and reform in education as in other areas of Irish life. Two major reports, the OECD-supported Investment in Education report (1966) and the report of the Commission on Higher Education (1967) highlighted shortcomings in many areas of Irish education and led to major changes in all sectors of the education system. In the 1960s the two year teacher training programme was modified and the Education course was remodelled, with a stronger emphasis on pedagogical theory and the principles of education. Courses in psychology, sociology and history of education were introduced. Libraries became better resourced and students were required to become more independent as learners. The setting up of the Educational Research Centre on the campus of St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra was indicative of the new thinking that was to influence teacher education from then on.

In the early 1970s, it was decided that the initial teacher education programme for primary teachers should be expanded from two to three years and that graduates should be awarded a Bachelor in Education (B.Ed.) degree. The B.Ed. degree programme was introduced in all colleges in 1974. The colleges were re-named Colleges of Education and each college was linked to a university. The three larger colleges (Carysfort, St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra and Mary Immaculate College) became recognised colleges of the National University of Ireland (NUI) and the three smaller colleges (Marino Institute, Froebel College and the Church of Ireland College, were affiliated to Trinity College Dublin (TCD).

The NUI-related colleges provided a three year Honours B.Ed. degree programme where students studied an academic subject to degree level as well as Education (including pedagogical studies and teaching practice). It was envisaged that students in the colleges of

education would in due course benefit from the institutional linkage with the university sector, but this did not happen and the B.Ed. programmes (which included an academic subject) continued to be taught on the teacher education college campuses, with little or no link with the universities. Contact between the three biggest teacher education colleges and their associated university was limited, other than for academic validation purposes.

From the mid 1970s, the TCD related colleges (Froebel, Marino and the Church of Ireland College) provided a three year B.Ed. degree programme at Pass level with no academic subject offered to degree level. Students in the TCD-linked colleges attended some of their lectures (especially Foundation Studies) on the TCD campus and some of the TCD academic staff also lectured on the campus of the colleges. Students who graduated with a Pass B.Ed. from TCD after the three year programme had the option of attending a fourth year on the campus of Trinity College in order to obtain an Honours B.Ed. degree. The fourth year was usually undertaken by graduates who were already teaching on either a full-time or part-time basis, and this additional year included a research project usually related to the student's teaching experience.

During the economic recession of the late 1980s, the government decided that there was an over-supply of teacher education places, and grants were withdrawn from Carysfort College. The college closed in 1988 after operating for over 100 years as a training college/college of education. The closure proved to be controversial and did not initially result in any worthwhile savings to the state as all the staff were redeployed to other publicly-funded institutions. Moreover, although significant public monies had been invested in the campus and the buildings over the years, the buildings did not revert to the state for public use when the college was closed. The religious congregation which owned the campus sold it to a developer, who sold part of it to University College Dublin six months later at a considerable profit[69].

In the early 1990s, following the granting of university status to the University of Limerick and Dublin City University, the other two NUI affiliated colleges, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick and St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra transferred their linkage/affiliation to the University of Limerick and Dublin City University respectively. From then on, graduates of Mary Immaculate College were conferred with a B.Ed. degree by the University of Limerick and graduates of St., Patrick's College were conferred with a B.Ed degree by DCU.

The decision to link those colleges with their geographically adjacent universities was motivated by a desire to give teacher education students a more direct experience of university life and to enable them to have greater contact with students in other university disciplines. Geographically, the universities to which the colleges were now linked were in closer proximity to the campus of the colleges of education – DCU was within three km of St. Patrick's College and UL was about eight km distant from Mary Immaculate College. However, at the behest of the Church authorities who owned the colleges of education, the Memoranda of Agreement which were drawn up between the two colleges and the universities to which they were linked in the early 1990s, specified the limitations of the relationship between them and their validating university. The governing structure, autonomy and ethos of each of the colleges of education were protected and in practice, both colleges of education have operated largely independently of their validating universities during the subsequent twenty years. They are self-contained institutions which provide a wide range of facilities and resources for their students (library, sports facilities, student

[69] *Irish Times* 7th February 1992 and *Irish Times, Education and Living,* 2nd May 2000.

societies etc) on their own campus and their students do not attend lectures nor use the facilities, nor engage generally with either students or staff of the related university campus.

As regards the three smaller colleges the degrees of which were validated by Trinity College, there was initially more direct engagement between the staff and students of these colleges and their counterparts in Trinity College. Until recently, students from the three smaller colleges attended some lectures, including lectures in Foundation Studies (i.e. Philosophy of Education, Psychology, History of Education and Sociology of Education) on the campus of Trinity College. In some pedagogic areas, academic staff from Trinity College also visited the colleges to deliver some lectures. The full Fourth Year B.Ed. programme was delivered on campus in Trinity College for many decades. However, this arrangement was discontinued by the Education Faculty of Trinity College two years ago and students in the three smaller colleges no longer attend lectures on the campus of Trinity College. Two years ago, Froebel College, Blackrock, decided to discontinue its link with TCD and its programmes are now being validated by NUI Maynooth. The college plans to move to the NUI Maynooth campus in 2013.

The B.Ed. programme in all five colleges includes a module on Religious Education. In addition, the Catholic colleges provide a separate certificated course in Religious Education. Since students who graduate with the Certificate in Religious Education are more likely to be appointed to a position in a Catholic school, almost all students in the four Catholic colleges enrol on this course. In those colleges, the R.E. module that is incorporated in the B.Ed programme was traditionally based on Catholic R.E. In recent years, colleges provide a more inclusive programme, focusing on the methodology of teaching R.E. However the focus of the R.E. programme provided within the B.Ed. programmes continues to be of concern in some educational circles and the patron body, Educate Together, has had discussions with the management of the colleges with a view to ensuring that graduating teachers are adequately prepared to teach the Ethical Education programme provided in Educate Together schools. Concern has also been expressed at the amount of time spent on R.E. in some colleges of education, and a recent report from a Review Panel on behalf of the Teaching Council drew attention to "some inconsistency in the balance of time allocated to various programme components". It pointed out that "subjects such as Science, SPHE, Geography and History are currently allotted 12 hours each as compared with the 48 hours each allotted to other subjects such as Visual Arts, Religious Education and Múineadh na Gaeilge (the teaching of Irish). It added that "While the panel welcomes the fact that student teachers have access to the Certificate in Religious Education on an optional basis, it is concerned by the amount of time allocated to Religious Education within the B. Ed. programme, in the context of the overall number of contact hours available". It recommended that the College review its B.Ed. programme examining in particular the time allocated to Religious Education.

In summary, there are currently five publicly-funded Colleges of Education providing teacher education for primary teachers:- St. Patrick's College Drumcondra 9; Mary Immaculate College, Limerick; Froebel College of Education, Blackrock; Marino Institute of Education, Dublin 9; Church of Ireland College of Education, Rathmines., Dublin 9. In addition, an 18 month consecutive programme for primary provided by a private blended-learning provider, Hibernia College is accredited by the Teaching Council. Two Montessori colleges, neither of which is publicly-funded, are accredited to provide initial teacher education programmes for teachers in special needs schools and classes.

Mary Immaculate College of Education, Limerick

Mary Immaculate College, Limerick is also under Roman Catholic control. It is a designated College of the University of Limerick (UL) and has an institutional linkage agreement with that university, which validates and confers all its degrees and awards. The campus of Mary Immaculate College is situated about 8 km from the UL campus, on the opposite side of the city. As well as providing a three year B.Ed programme, Mary Immaculate College provides a B.Ed. in Education and Psychology; a B.A. in Early Childhood Care and Education and a B.A. degree programme in humanities at undergraduate level. At postgraduate level, as well as providing an 18 month Graduate Diploma in Education for Primary Teachers, the college offers a range of other postgraduate certificate and diploma courses and eleven different Masters programmes – two of which (Civil and Canon Law, and Local History) are offered in conjunction with the University of Limerick. It also offers a structured PhD programme in Philosophy of Art and Culture.

Students enrolled on the B.Ed programme in Mary Immaculate College choose Education, Gaeilge and two academic subjects in Year 1 and Education and one academic subject in Years 2 and 3 from the following list of subjects: English, French Studies, Geography, German Studies, History, Mathematics, Music, Philosophy, Theology and Religious Studies. The B.A. programme is a four year programme and students can choose from 13 subjects – they take four subjects in First Year and two subjects in each of Years 2 and 4. Year 3 is an off-campus year during which students can engage in a range of different placements or co-operative learning opportunities.

The total enrolment in Mary Immaculate College is 2,845 (2502 undergraduate and 343 postgraduate students). 2,138 or 75% of these are female.

St. Patrick's College of Education, Drumcondra, Dublin 9

St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra is under Roman Catholic control. It is a designated College of Dublin City University (DCU) and has an institutional linkage agreement with DCU, which validates and confers all its degrees and awards. As well as providing the B.Ed programme, St. Patrick's College provides a B.A. (Humanities) programme and a Certificate in Religious Studies at undergraduate level. At postgraduate level, as well as providing an 18 month Graduate Diploma in Education for Primary Teachers, it provides a range of Certificate, Diploma, Masters and Doctoral programmes, including M.A. in Humanities, Masters in Education (M. Ed.), Masters in Religious Education, Doctorate in Education and PhD/MA by Research. .

Students enrolled on the B.Ed. programme study Education and two academic subjects in First Year and Education and one Academic subject in Years 2 and 3. The academic subject(s) can be chosen from the following list: Biosciences (First Year only), English, French, Gaeilge, Geography, History, Mathematics, Music and Religious Studies. Students taking the BA in Humanities programme are required to take three subjects from the list for First Year (with the addition of the option of Human Development) and two subjects in Years 2 and 3.

The total number of students in St. Patrick's Drumcondra in 2010/2011 was 1,981 (1838 at undergraduate and 143 at postgraduate level). The majority of these (1538 or 78%) were female

Coláiste Mhuire, Marino, Dublin 9.
Marino is one of the smaller colleges under Roman Catholic control. It has an enrolment of 550 students, 430 at undergraduate level and 120 at postgraduate level. 83% of the students are female. Marino was originally a teacher training college for the Christian Brothers community, but about 30 years ago it opened its door to lay students and it is now a lay co-educational institution. It has an institutional linkage agreement with the University of Dublin (Trinity College) and its B.Ed. degree is validated and awarded by the University of Dublin. It is situated about 6 km from Trinity College on the north side of the city. It is about three kms from the DCU campus and a similar distance from St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra. As well as providing a four year B. Ed. Degree, it has recently began to offer a B.Sc. degree in Education Studies "designed for those interested in working as educators, policy-makers and educational administrators outside school settings". This degree course is not validated by the Teaching Council, as it is not a teacher education programme, nor is it publicly-funded. The annual fee for the programme is €4,500. At post-graduate level, the college is currently advertising a Masters programme in Intercultural Education which is due to commence in October 2012 – validation from Trinity College is pending. It also offers a Postgraduate Diploma in Spirituality and Leadership in Education as well as a number of continuing professional development programmes.

Froebel College of Education, Blackrock, Co. Dublin
Froebel College is under the control of the Dominican Order of nuns. It has an enrolment of about 260 students, 230 at undergraduate level and 30 at postgraduate level. 88% of the students are female. Until 2010, its B.Ed programme was validated by Trinity College Dublin but two years ago the college decided to seek validation from the National University of Ireland, Maynooth. Since then, its programmes have been validated by NUIM. While classes are currently taught on the Froebel Blackrock campus (in south Dublin), it is proposed to move the college to the campus of NUI Maynooth in 2013. In terms of governance and management, it is understood that Froebel College will merge fully with NUI Maynooth, subject to its ethos as a college with a Froebel philosophy being maintained.

Froebel College also provides a Higher Diploma in Ed. for primary teachers; a Postgraduate Diploma in Special Education; and a B.A. in Early Childhood in Teaching and Learning. It has a total enrolment of xx students.

The Church of Ireland College of Education, Rathmines, Dublin 6
CICE is the third of the small colleges and has an enrolment of 176 students, 124 at undergraduate level and 52 at postgraduate level. 93% of the students are female. The annual intake into its B.Ed. programme is just over 30 students. It provides a Postgraduate Diploma in Learning Support and Special Educational Needs as well as a Certificate for Special Needs Assistants. Its programmes are validated by Trinity College Dublin.

Initial Teacher Education - Second Level Teachers

Since the early 20th century, secondary school teachers have been required to undertake a programme of teacher training and to register with the Secondary Teachers Registration Council. This council was set up in 1918 to enforce minimum educational requirements for secondary teachers and it controlled the Register of Secondary Teachers until its responsibilities were transferred to the Teaching Council under the Teaching Council Act 2001. Traditionally, teachers in vocational schools were not required to undertake an initial teacher education programme but from 2013 all teachers entering the second-level sector will be required to undertake the same initial teacher education as is currently required of teachers in secondary schools.

Until the 1960s, initial teacher education for subject-specific second-level teachers was provided on a part-time one-year postgraduate basis by the Education Departments of the four universities. The programme was commonly referred to as the Higher Diploma in Education or "the H.Dip". In the 1960s, the programme became a full-time one year programme which included supervised teaching practice placement. The programme has been a one-year programme since then and as indicated earlier, the decision of the Minister for Education and Skills to extend it by a further year has been widely welcomed.

Although the Education Departments of the universities were (and continue to be) located on the campus of the universities, they tend to operate largely on a stand-alone basis within the university, and although they provide specific subject pedagogical training/education in a range of academic subjects, they rarely drew on the expertise or the research of the relevant academic departments within the universities. While Education Departments employ some full-time academic staff who are subject specialists and have an active research background in the pedagogy of a specific subject, they also employ current or recently retired teachers "who bring extensive classroom experience[70]" to the programme. An analysis of the current websites of university Education Departments shows that the five universities which have traditionally been associated with consecutive teacher education programmes (TCD, UCD, UCC, NUIG, and NUIM - who between them graduated 960 (86%) of the subject specialist teacher from consecutive programmes in 2011) each provide subject methods teaching in almost all the subjects of the second level curriculum. (There has been no tradition of different universities specialising in different subject areas). Trinity College Dublin provides methodology teaching in twenty separate subjects and applicants to TCD must specify at the point of application which subject specialism they intend to study; NUIM also provides twenty areas of subject specialisms; and UCD and UCC (which do not distinguish separate subjects within the Sciences, languages or Business) each provide 12 subject methodology areas.

A more detailed analysis of the staffing details suggests that about 25% of the subject methods co-ordinators are full-time academic staff (not all of whom are engaged in research on the pedagogy of the subject) and three quarters of the subject methodology co-ordinators are either current or retired teachers of the subject involved. It is however worth noting that some staff in the academic disciplinary departments of those universities, are actively engaged in research and have published on the pedagogy of their subject. However, these staff have little or no connection with the Education Department within their own university and their colleagues in the Education Department may well be unaware of their interests in pedagogical research.

In the 1970s, the Department of Education decided that there was a need for specific training for teachers of practical subjects such as PE, Home Economics, Woodwork, Metalwork etc. and Thomond College of Education was opened in Limerick. In the early 1990s, Thomond College was amalgamated with the University of Limerick and during the subsequent twenty years, the University of Limerick gradually expanded its Education Department and added a number of further programmes – concurrent and consecutive – to its teacher education provision. It now provides six undergraduate four year teacher education programmes (Physical Education; Physics and Chemistry; Biological Science with Physics; Materials, Architecture and Technical Graphics; Materials and Engineering Technology and Modern Languages). In addition it provides a one year programme for second level teachers under six different strands Music, Business, Languages, Technology, PE and Maths). From the 1990s onwards, Dublin City University also began to develop its Education Department and

[70] Website of TCD Education Department

now provides four year concurrent initial teacher education programmes in Science Education and in PE with Biology. It also provides a Professional Diploma in Education on a two year flexible learning basis in eleven different subject areas.

Within the past decade, a range of new initial teacher education programmes provided by smaller non-university providers have been accredited. These include a four year B.Sc. in Design and Technology Education provided by the Galway/Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT) – the first two years are provided on its Letterfrack campus and the second two years on its main campus in Galway. Mater Dei Institute in Dublin has expanded its provision to include initial teacher education for teacher of English, History and Music. St. Patrick's College Thurles (formerly a seminary for Catholic priests) provides teacher education programmes for teachers of RE, Business Studies and Irish. St. Angela's Sligo (originally a College of Home Economics) provides concurrent four year courses for teachers of Biology and Irish as well as Home Economics. A one year consecutive programme of initial teacher education in Technology is also provided by GMIT as well as by three Colleges of Art and Design – the National College of Art and Design (NCAD); Crawford College of Art and Design in the Cork Institute of Technology; and the Limerick Institute of Technology's College of Art and Design. Concurrent ITE programmes have also been accredited within the past decade in UCC, NUIG and NUIM – (B.Ed. in Sports Studies and P.E. and a B.Sc. in Science Education in University College Cork; Bachelors in Science Education in NUIM (first cohort of graduates due in 2012) and B.A. in Maths and Education in NUIM (first cohort of graduates due in 2012).

A consecutive two year flexible learning programme for second level teachers, provided by Hibernia College has been accredited by the Teaching Council and the first cohort of students have recently begun the programme.