

**Report of the International Review Panel**

**on the**

**Structure of Initial Teacher Education Provision in Ireland:**

**Review conducted on behalf of the**

**Department of Education and Skills**

**July 2012**

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## Chairperson's Foreword

Initial teacher education is probably the single most important factor in having a well-performing public education system. Evidence from the OECD countries is consistent with this notion. Singapore, Korea, Canada and Finland, countries that the OECD labels as having 'strong performing' education systems, have systematically invested in enhancing the initial education of their teachers. In all of these education systems, teachers are educated in academic universities where theory and practice are combined to form a foundation for teaching that is on a par with other academic professions. In all of these high performing education systems, teaching is also perceived by young people as an attractive career choice which makes admission to teacher education highly competitive and intellectually demanding.

Ireland has several advantages in its current system of teachers and teacher education that distinguish the Irish education system from many others. Most importantly, among young Irish people, to be a teacher is a popular choice that carries strong social prestige unlike in most other countries in Europe. Teacher education is widely accessible throughout Ireland and numerous initial teacher education programmes are serving diverse needs of communities and regions in the State. Finally, due to Ireland's economic and social structures, education has a central role to play in the future strategies of the nation. This brings teachers and how they are educated to the core of implementation of national programmes for sustainable economic growth and prosperity.

Ireland's National Strategy for Higher Education 2030 sets the direction for the transformation of the Irish higher education system for the years to come. It sees local, regional and international collaboration as the key to higher education system development. This strategy also insists on enhancing students' learning, focusing on research, and advancing internationalisation in all higher education institutions. It is in this context that the International Review Panel examined the structure of the current initial teacher education system and now presents its observations and recommendations in this report. It was clear to the Panel from the beginning that this review is part of the larger

whole when analysing current structures, policies and funding of the Irish higher education system.

Teacher education is multifaceted and understanding any element of it is a complex task. In our Panel discussions, when preparing for the visit to Ireland in June, and also in our writings that followed, it was difficult to ignore aspects of teacher education such as curricula, policy, funding or continuing professional development of teachers which were outside of this review.

We limited our work strictly to what we were asked to do by the Higher Education Authority. Our formal assignment was “to identify possible new structures which will recognise and address weaker areas in the system of teacher education; leverage the current strengths in the system; and envision innovative strategies so that Ireland can provide a teacher education regime that is comparable with the best in the world” as Section 2 of this report describes. Therefore what is written on the pages that follow are our observations and recommendations on the **structure of initial teacher education** and nothing beyond that. We felt, however, that we should also comment on some important matters outside of the structural aspects of initial teacher education. These comments are included in Section 5.

The Review Panel would like to recognise the work that has been done in teacher education in Ireland in the past. It is clear that the good international performance that Ireland has celebrated in the early cycles of the OECD PISA study would not have been possible without a significant contribution from the initial teacher education system. We would also like to acknowledge the leadership that both the Department of Education and Skills and the Higher Education Authority demonstrate by their willingness to think openly and put forward initiatives to transform higher education in Ireland.

We believe that in order to advance further in its national teacher education system, Ireland needs to invest more in the continuous improvement of the quality of teaching, the role of research in teacher education, and international cooperation in all of its teacher education institutions. In each of these areas of development, size is a significant factor. Institutions with limited resources – both human and financial – more often than not find breakthroughs in transformation difficult. Therefore, having larger professional

communities with more diverse knowledge and skills often unlocks creativity and innovation for further improvement.

This very same process is underway everywhere today, even where teachers' education seems to be world class. Most education systems in Europe, for example, have implemented or are considering structural reforms similar to Ireland, in their teacher education systems. It was a pleasant surprise for the Review Panel to see how much higher education institutions in Ireland had already progressed in seeking deeper collaboration or even consolidation of initial teacher education. We are grateful to all personnel we met from the higher education institutions for their willingness to help us to understand how Ireland could provide a teacher education regime that is comparable with the best in the world.

On behalf of the Review Panel, I would like to thank Professor Áine Hyland for her helpful background paper without which our task would have been even more challenging. Áine Lawlor, former CEO of the Teaching Council, kindly assisted the Review Panel in finalising this report, ably supported by Valerie Harvey (HEA). We express our gratitude to both of them. Finally, I want to thank my Panel – Professors Pamela Munn and John Furlong – for their professionalism, openness and collegiality during this review.

Pasi Sahlberg

Chair

## Glossary

|      |  |
|------|--|
| CICE | Church of Ireland College of Education   |
| CIT  | Cork Institute of Technology             |
| DCU  | Dublin City University                   |
| DES  | Department of Education and Skills       |
| ECE  | Early Childhood Education                |
| GMIT | Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology      |
| HEA  | Higher Education Authority               |
| HEI  | Higher Education Institution             |
| ITE  | Initial Teacher Education                |
| LIT  | Limerick Institute of Technology         |
| MDI  | Mater Dei Institute of Education         |
| MIC  | Mary Immaculate College, Limerick        |
| MIE  | Marino Institute of Education            |
| NCAD | National College of Art and Design       |
| NUIG | National University of Ireland, Galway   |
| NUIM | National University of Ireland, Maynooth |
| SPD  | St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra        |
| TCD  | Trinity College Dublin                   |
| UCC  | University College Cork                  |
| UCD  | University College Dublin                |
| UL   | University of Limerick                   |

## Introduction

### Review Panel

In April 2012, following a request from the Minister for Education and Skills, an International Review Panel was established to advise on the structure of initial teacher education (ITE) provision in the State. The Higher Education Authority (HEA) was requested to manage the review process on behalf of the Department of Education and Skills (DES). The members of the Panel were: Professor Pasi Sahlberg, Director General of CIMO (in the Ministry of Education) in Helsinki, Finland and Adjunct Professor at the University of Helsinki and the University of Oulu, who chaired the Panel; Professor Pamela Munn, Professor Emeritus at the University of Edinburgh and Professor John Furlong, former Director of the Oxford University Department of Education.

### Purpose of the Review

The purpose of the review was to consider the structure of ITE provision in Ireland and to identify possible new structures based on a reconfiguration of existing programmes in order to strengthen the quality of teacher education. The review had its genesis in the Government-approved *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030* (January 2011), and the subsequent document issued by the HEA *Towards a Future Higher Education Landscape* (February 2012), together with a Ministerial request to the HEA to manage such a review and “envision innovative strategies so that Ireland can provide a teacher education regime that is comparable with the world’s best”.

### Review Process

The review process involved the following:

- Communication by the DES and by the HEA with the higher education institutions (HEIs) that provide for ITE
- HEA’s receipt of submissions from the HEIs following a request for same
- Establishment of the International Review Panel

- HEA's commissioning of Professor Áine Hyland to write a background paper to inform the work of the Panel
- A three-day visit to Dublin by the Review Panel in June 2012 during which the Panel:
  - discussed the information garnered from the submissions, from Professor Hyland's report and from other relevant documentation
  - met with Professor Hyland and with personnel from the DES, the HEA and the Teaching Council
  - met with representatives of all 19 HEIs who were invited to attend in the groupings which accorded with the institutional connections presented in their submissions
  - met with a representative of Hibernia to inform themselves about the nature and extent of its provision of ITE.
- The Review Panel's processing of the breadth and depth of information and opinions to which they were exposed, culminating in the Panel's conclusions and recommendation as set out in this report.

After this Introduction, the report is set out in seven sections:

1. Background to the Review
2. Terms of Reference
3. Current International Trends in Initial Teacher Education
4. Current Irish Provision for Initial Teacher Education
5. Conclusions and General Observations
6. Specific Recommendations on Restructuring Initial Teacher Education Provision
7. Supplementary Issues



## 1. Background to the Review

This review is a key part of a broader review of the Higher Education sector in Ireland which is scheduled to conclude by the end of 2012. Based on international practice, the DES is concerned that, in Ireland, the large number of teacher education programmes being facilitated by a large number of HEIs is not in the best interest of quality teacher education. In that context, the urgency of reviewing teacher education as an entity, at national level, prompted the Minister for Education and Skills to prioritise ITE and request that it be undertaken immediately, and separately, before the overall higher education review.

The following publications and communications were issued to HEIs in the lead-up to the review:

- ***The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030, the Report of the Strategy Group***, published by the DES in January 2011. The strategy proposes the vision for higher education in Ireland including governance, structures and funding and the development of a coherent framework for higher education.
- As part of the National Strategy implementation process, ***Towards a Future Higher Education Landscape*** was issued by the HEA to all HEIs in February 2012. It was accompanied by a letter requesting each institution to make a submission to the HEA by 31 July 2012 “setting out its strategic intentions as to where it proposes to position itself within the Irish higher education system... the institution’s distinctive mission, its institutional type and structure, its institutional alliances, its participation in regional clusters and any other matters relevant to the future strategic direction of the institution...”
- In April 2012, the DES wrote to the HEIs engaged in teacher education saying that “... while there are significant changes afoot to the content and focus of the ITE programmes for both the primary and post-primary sectors...the Minister for Education and Skills considers that the issue of structural change at institutional level should also be required... (and)... has asked the HEA to engage with the initial teacher education sector and carry out a review of the structure of initial teacher

education provision and to identify possible new structures for teacher education based on a reconfiguration of existing provision...”

- A letter to HEIs from the HEA, in April 2012, referred to the letter from the DES and advised that an International Review Panel was being established by the HEA in compliance with the Minister’s wishes. The letter was accompanied by the Terms of Reference for the review and it also stated that a background paper was being prepared by Professor Hyland. The HEIs were asked to submit their views on their future role in teacher education, by 31 May 2012, for consideration by the Panel. The submissions were to be “set in the context of the terms of reference for the review, including the recommendations of the National Strategy for Higher Education and other relevant policy documents.”
- At the request of the HEA, a paper entitled ***A Review of the Structure of Initial Teacher Provision in Ireland: Background Paper for the International Review Panel*** was completed by Professor Hyland in May 2012, forwarded to the HEIs and published on the HEA website. This paper documents current provision for ITE and raises a number of issues to be addressed in the review.

## 2. Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference, attached at Appendix 1, asked the Review Panel “to identify possible new structures which will recognise and address weaker areas in the system of teacher education; leverage the current strengths in the system; and envision innovative strategies so that Ireland can provide a teacher education regime that is comparable with the best in the world.”

The terms of reference go on to say that “the review should bear in mind that in countries where student outcomes are high, the following features are evident:

- Teacher education is required to be research-driven
- Graduate teachers are capable of applying research to their work in a constructive and reflective way
- Relatively small numbers of institutions are involved in ITE provision allowing for a critical mass to conduct research at a high level
- Such institutes span/combine education sectors allowing for meaningful synergies in ITE for early childhood, primary, second-level, and other sectors of education.”

The Review Panel was mindful that these features of high quality teacher education were core to their terms of reference and they remained central to their deliberations throughout the process. The members were also aware that they were considering teacher education as a separate element of the broader context of Higher Education as set out in the HEA document *Towards a Future Higher Education Landscape*.

The review was confined to the structure of ITE provision and ITE curricula were not included. The latter had been covered by the Teaching Council in its *Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education* (June 2011) and *Initial Teacher Education: Criteria and Guidelines for Programme Providers* (August 2011). The Council’s legislative brief on professional accreditation, i.e. to review and accredit ITE programmes, provided the context for these publications.

It should also be noted that, while the Panel's remit pertained to state-funded HEIs, the members deemed it appropriate to comment on the teacher education provision offered by Hibernia College, where appropriate to do so.

### **3. Current International Trends in Initial Teacher Education**

This section gives a brief synopsis of the key features of internationally renowned teacher education systems which are being looked to as models for improvement.

As a member state, Ireland is influenced by the European Commission's work on teacher education which sees that teachers' roles are changing rapidly and becoming more challenging. As a result, one of the priorities of the EU is to improve teacher quality and teacher education. It has made a number of proposals on areas such as: teachers' knowledge, attitudes and pedagogic skills; coordinated, coherent, and adequately resourced teacher education; reflective practice and research among teachers; the status and recognition of the teaching profession and the professionalisation of teaching. All these indicate that ITE needs to be upgraded in many countries and that transition from teacher education to school needs to be made smoother through effective mentoring, induction and school leadership.

The EU aspirations have been actualised in Finland which is highly acclaimed for its education system due especially to the quality of its teachers. There is a rigorous selection process for entry to teacher education and the competition for places adds to the attraction of teaching. ITE is research-based and extends to five years leading to a Masters level award. On being employed, teachers assume professional responsibility for curriculum planning, student assessment and school improvement, enjoying a high level of autonomy in their work and high status in society.

In Singapore, the National Institute of Education (NIE) is the sole provider of ITE. Evidence-based and research-informed learning underpins NIE's programmes. NIE's strategic plan for 2007-2012 sets out its ambition to be an institute of distinction, excelling in teacher education and teacher research. It has formed partnerships with other universities in Asia and also in Europe and the USA for the purpose of research collaboration and staff and student exchanges.

It has been found that in high-performing education systems, such as Canada, South Korea, Finland and Singapore, policy on teacher education is a national priority. Teachers are educated in academic universities where theory and practice are combined to form a

foundation for teaching that is on a par with other academic professions. Teacher education is research-based and internationalisation is high on the agenda. Also, in these systems, teaching is perceived by young people as an attractive career choice which makes admission to teacher education highly competitive and intellectually demanding.

The main international trends in ITE that are relevant to this review are the following. First, teaching is increasingly viewed as a **high status profession** similar to the work of lawyers, doctors and engineers. Teachers also have similar access to Masters and Doctoral studies and thereby to a career path in academic universities and research institutions as well as in schools and classrooms.

Second, as a consequence of the former trend, teacher education is increasingly relying on research knowledge on the one hand and focusing on preparing teachers to use and do research on the other. **Research-based teacher education** expands conventional teacher competences so that teachers are able to use educational research as part of their work in school. They diagnose their own teaching and learning by using educational research knowledge and methodologies to find the best methods of work, and understand their professional development through critically reflecting on their own thinking and behaviour.

Third, many teacher education programmes are having a more systematic focus on linking theory and practice during the initial preparation of teachers. In some countries, practical learning is also becoming an integral part of Masters degree studies for ITE, similar to the way in which doctors or lawyers practise during their studies. School placements are giving way to **clinical learning** in special teacher training schools or carefully assigned regular schools where highly trained master teachers supervise the learning of student teachers.

These features are seen as contributing to a continual spiral of improvement in pupils' learning which is the key objective of high quality ITE and continuous professional development.

#### 4. Current Irish Provision for Initial Teacher Education

The Review Panel greatly appreciated the background paper, *A Review of the Structure of Initial Teacher Education Provision in Ireland (May 2012)*, prepared by Professor Áine Hyland, at the request of the HEA. It was most helpful in giving them a detailed overview of the current provision for ITE in Ireland, including the following Teacher Education Graduate Statistics:

| Providers of ITE programmes for Primary and Second-Level Teachers -<br>Teacher Education Graduate Statistics |              |              |              |              |              |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Primary  | 2007         | 2008         | 2009         | 2010         | 2011         |
| <b>Undergraduate Concurrent Qualifications (B.Ed.)</b>   |              |              |              |              |              |
| Marino Institute of Education  | 88           | 84           | 70           | 83           | 85           |
| St Patrick's College Drumcondra  | 357          | 375          | 365          | 358          | 360          |
| Froebel College of Education   | 63           | 70           | 66           | 75           | 61           |
| Mary Immaculate College<br>B.Ed + B.Ed. Psych  | 360 + 0      | 397 + 27     | 353 + 34     | 377 + 24     | 407 + 31     |
| Church of Ireland College  | 27           | 30           | 28           | 33           | 29           |
| <b>Postgraduate Diploma in Education (Primary)</b>   |              |              |              |              |              |
| Marino Institute of Education  | 42           | 39           | 72           | 92           | 51           |
| St Patrick's 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) + (Cohort 2)   | 226 + 246    | 250 + 244    | 252 + 280    | 310 + 337    | 338 + 375    |
| <b>Total Primary</b>   | <b>1,591</b> | <b>1,810</b> | <b>1,873</b> | <b>2,053</b> | <b>1,887</b> |

| Providers of ITE programmes for Primary and Second-Level Teachers (ctd.) -<br>Teacher Education Graduate Statistics |              |              |              |              |              |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Post-Primary  | 2007         | 2008         | 2009         | 2010         | 2011         |
| <b>Concurrent Qualifications</b>  |              |              |              |              |              |
| 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. Patrick's College Thurles   | 0            | 34           | 31           | 32           | 35           |
| Mater Dei Institute of Education  | 70           | 58           | 56           | 65           | 54           |
| St Angela's College Sligo   | 28           | 42           | 39           | 40           | 49           |
| University of Dublin - Trinity College Dublin (B.Mus.)  |              |              | 9            | 10           | 10           |
| Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology   |              |              |              | 10           | 14           |
| University College Cork   |              |              |              | 41           | 46           |
| National University of Ireland, Maynooth (first cohort of grads due in 2012 - approx 25 grads- BScEd)               |              |              |              |              |              |
| National University of Ireland, Galway (first cohort of grads due out 2012 - BA in Maths and Ed)                    |              |              |              |              |              |
| <b>Postgraduate Diploma in Post-Primary Education</b>   |              |              |              |              |              |
| University of Limerick  | 90           | 87           | 128          | 74           | 88           |
| University College Dublin   | 117          | 136          | 106          | 223          | 205          |
| National University of Ireland Galway (NUIG)  | 212          | 165          | 208          | 201          | 195          |
| NUIG -Dioplaoma 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 Dublin   | 131          | 149          | 120          | 131          | 117          |
| Dublin City University  | 0            | 64           | 35           | 39           | 42           |
| University College Cork   | 195          | 205          | 215          | 190          | 231          |
| Cork Institute of Technology  |              | 27           | 25           | 29           | 28           |
| Limerick Institute of Technology  | 26           | 28           | 30           | 30           | 28           |
| Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology   |              |              |              | 19           | N/A          |
| Hibernia College (first cohort of grads due out in 2013)  |              |              |              |              | N/A          |
| <b>Total Post-Primary</b>   | <b>1,241</b> | <b>1,423</b> | <b>1,480</b> | <b>1,608</b> | <b>1,576</b> |
| <b>Overall Total (Primary + Post-Primary)</b>   | <b>2,832</b> | <b>3,233</b> | <b>3,353</b> | <b>3,661</b> | <b>3,463</b> |



## **5. Conclusions and General Observations**

This section sets out the Review Panel's conclusions and offers comment on a number of issues which are common to many programmes of ITE rather than repeat them for individual HEIs in Section 6.

The Review Panel became aware that, in recent years, a number of HEIs had begun discussions on their future. Some had restructured internally in the interest of quality provision and in the context of economic exigencies. Some had formed alliances and some had planned mergers. It was apparent to the Panel that the initiation of the review did not come as a surprise to the HEIs.

The Review Panel wishes to reiterate that the key characteristics of internationally recognised teacher education systems include being university-based with high quality instruction on both pedagogy and pedagogical content knowledge, a strong focus on research as a basis of teaching and learning, systematic clinical practice in school settings, and real internationalisation of the institutions providing initial and continuing teacher education.

The Review Panel's experience from other education systems suggests that it is difficult to have these key characteristics unless the size of the teacher education institution is sufficiently large and thereby has a 'critical mass' through full-time professional staff, and competitiveness for good teaching, research and international cooperation. All these characteristics are also essential for the overall quality of teacher education.

### **Current Provision for Initial Teacher Education**

The Review Panel noted that the current provision for ITE in Ireland encompasses 19 state-funded providers plus three non-funded providers, these being Hibernia College and two Montessori Colleges. There are over 40 programmes of ITE engaged in the preparation of primary and post-primary teachers through concurrent and consecutive models. There is some small-scale provision with small-scale providers and some unnecessary duplication of provision. The Review Panel concluded that the provision outlined above does not concur with high-performing international practice where relatively small numbers of institutions are involved in ITE provision allowing for a critical mass of staff and students to conduct

research at a high level. It accepts the principle that the number of providers be reduced and, as requested by the Minister for Education and Skills, it sets out specific recommendations in Section 6 to address this matter.

### **Entrants to Initial Teacher Education in Ireland and Teacher Supply and Demand**

The Review Panel noted the high calibre of entrants to ITE in Ireland and concluded that the academic standard of applicants is amongst the highest, if not the highest, in the world. This rich resource should be highly valued and student teachers should be challenged and developed to their full potential. It was noted by the Panel that in some countries, e.g. Finland, all teachers are educated to Masters level in research-based academic universities. It was considered that this could be a longer term aspiration for teacher education in Ireland, either as part of ITE or through programmes of continuing professional development.

The Review Panel was surprised and concerned that the issue of teacher supply and demand has not been addressed in Ireland as it has been elsewhere. For example, a teacher workforce planning exercise is carried out annually in the four jurisdictions of the UK to ensure an appropriate supply of high-quality teachers covering geographical areas, education sectors and curriculum specialisms.

In Ireland, the number of students entering the publicly-funded institutions which provide primary teaching is capped by the DES though the rationale for those numbers is unclear, especially in the light of numbers in the private sector which remain uncapped. In relation to post-primary provision, while historically quotas were in place, in more recent years these quotas have not been rigidly enforced. Another indeterminate annual source of teacher supply is that of teachers who obtain their qualifications outside of Ireland and come here to teach. Many of these are Irish people who do not gain admission to teacher education in Ireland. While supply may be ascertained from the Teaching Council's Registration Database when it is complete, the need for teachers in the system is not established annually for planning purposes.

One impact of the absence of reliable data on both supply and demand for teachers has been the increasing reliance on 'out-of-field' teachers at post-primary level. To that end,

the Review Panel suggests that appropriate databases and forecasting mechanisms are developed to ensure that an adequate supply of teachers with the required curriculum specialisms is in place.

The Review Panel believes that a more effective modelling of the supply and demand for new teachers should be developed as a matter of urgency in the interest of maintaining an adequate supply of high calibre entrants to the profession. It is suggested that the DES, the HEA and the Teaching Council could collaborate in this regard. ITE providers also need to be aware of and involved in the calculation of supply. Related to this, in future, HEIs considering new programmes of ITE might give advance notice of their intentions to the relevant authority/authorities and receive advice in this regard as the desirability and viability of such programmes may be questionable. It is a waste of precious staff time and effort to develop programmes for which there is no national need.

The issue of supply is also closely linked to that of quality. Where there is an oversupply of teachers, with the consequent reduction in opportunities for employment, it may not be possible to continue to attract high calibre entrants into teaching. It is acknowledged that all entrants are subject to the same minimum entry requirements but evidence from state-funded programmes indicates that many students have achieved far in excess of this level. In the interest of maintaining the numbers of high calibre entrants, the Panel suggests that all providers, including Hibernia College, be required to submit data to the DES with regard to the standards of its entrants.

In summary, the Panel believes that it is important that the State monitors the quality of entrants to ITE and ensures that the high calibre of entrants is maintained, particularly if provision diversifies where new private providers enter the market. Not to do so could diminish Ireland's key resource in this area.

### **Research-based Teacher Education**

The Review Panel noted that the current configuration of provision for ITE results in the lack of a critical mass for research purposes. It further noted that there is a lack of common understanding by HEIs with regard to the research terminology, i.e., research-driven, research-led, research-active, research-informed and research-based assume different

meanings in ITE. In Finland, research-based teacher education means that student teachers are prepared through a research-based approach led by researchers. This means that those teaching in ITE are actively involved in research and use their research-based knowledge to inform their teaching. Critical reflection on practice takes place in higher education as well as in school classrooms, thereby creating a 'virtuous circle' of reflective practice.

The Review Panel suggests that there should be a culture of research in teacher education where staff are familiar with current research and are engaged in research on critical areas of teaching and teacher education: their own practice; teachers' professional learning; Irish and international education policy, and the fundamentals of teaching, learning and assessment. Student teachers should also be engaged in researching their practice, reflecting on it and improving their teaching accordingly. In short, the teaching profession needs to model an approach to learning that it wishes pupils to adopt - enquiring, engaged and critical. This is essential in a world where knowledge is developing rapidly and there are multiple sources of information available via the internet. The State wishes to see high standards of literacy and numeracy among all school leavers together with well informed, critical thinkers across the disciplines.

### **Casualisation of Staffing Provision**

The Review Panel noted that many programmes are heavily dependent on part-time staff, particularly in the facilitation of subject-specific methodologies on the Professional Diploma in Education for post-primary teachers, and for the supervision of students on school placements on both primary and post-primary programmes. The panel considered that an over-reliance on part-time staff was not conducive to high quality outcomes, particularly in the area of research and systematic quality improvement of HEIs.

While the experience and expertise of practising, or recently retired, teachers is a valuable resource in ITE, research-driven programmes need to be adequately staffed by full-time university lecturers well versed in research and in current debates about practice. It is usually the case that part-time staff are not properly integrated into 'the scholarly culture' of the university and are therefore not personally involved in research or continuous improvement of teacher education.

In summary, the Review Panel acknowledges that experienced school teachers have a vitally important contribution to make to the professional learning of new teachers but this needs to be seen as distinct from the support for learning that can be made by university based professionals who are themselves engaged in a research culture. The Panel intends that its recommendations in relation to the specific restructuring of provision will enable a more balanced approach to be adopted in the employment of full-time and part-time staff and thereby improve quality across all aspects of ITE.

### **Subject Knowledge and Subject Pedagogical Knowledge**

The Review Panel notes that the casualisation of the staffing provision mentioned above can result in a disconnect between the student teacher's development of subject knowledge and subject pedagogical knowledge. It recommends that in the new configurations, outlined in Section 6, expertise in subject knowledge should reside in institutions with a critical mass of subject knowledge experts, in effect in universities. Thus ITE provision should be supported by connections to, and interaction with, the faculties/subject departments in the university, except in the case of the creative arts where the subject specialists will be located in the specialist institutions.

### **School Placement**

The Review Panel was surprised that, on the whole, the responsibility for finding placements for students on teaching practice rested with the students themselves. Based on their experience, the Panel is of the view that placements should be allocated by the ITE provider, either in the university teacher training schools or other schools, on the basis of partnerships between the provider and schools. In other systems, students typically experience teaching practice in at least two different types of schools, for example, in more and less prosperous areas, and are discouraged from placements in schools where they were pupils/students themselves. Ideal partnerships involve shared responsibility between the school and the university for the assessment of student competence. This builds on good mentoring arrangements within schools for student teachers. The Review Panel heard about promising partnership arrangements and would encourage the development and strengthening of these. The Teaching Council's *Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education* and the *Initial Teacher Education: Criteria and Guidelines for Programme*

**Providers** pave the way for ITE providers and schools to develop partnerships extending beyond ITE to continuous professional development and shared research agendas.

### **Ethos and Denominational Issues**

The Review Panel respected the ethos of all HEIs in its deliberations and was aware, in particular, of the denominational governance of Colleges of Education. The Panel did not undertake to make any recommendations in relation to denominational matters other than to note that student teachers of any denomination, or none, are accommodated and afforded opportunities to prepare, according to their individual wishes, for the teaching of religion.

### **Flexibility and Access**

One of the consequences of the changes recommended in this report is that teacher education in Ireland will be concentrated into a smaller number of centres which will be professionally and academically stronger than the current structures. In light of these recommendations, and the commitment of the HEA to broaden access to higher education generally, the Review Panel suggests that, while maintaining current high standards of entry and course provision, HEIs should develop new, innovative approaches in order to facilitate greater flexibility of learning and access to programmes.

### **Internationalisation**

Internationalisation in higher education is one of the key aspects of European higher education policy today. Therefore, the Review Panel also looked at Ireland's efforts in the area of Internationalisation in relation to ITE. The Review Panel was surprised at the relatively low level of international student mobility in Ireland, for example in the Erasmus programme, particularly in view of the fact that Ireland is an English-speaking country. In particular, the proportion of outgoing students in teacher education institutions is very low by European standards. The Review Panel heard that this is mainly due to demanding study programmes in Irish teacher education institutions and also because students' credits earned in other countries are not necessarily fully recognised at home. It suggests that a concerted effort should be made, at national level, to attract student teachers to the country and to encourage Irish student teachers to spend part of their study period abroad,

as recommended by the Irish national internationalisation strategy. European higher education systems aim to have one-fifth of their students graduating with one or other kind of internationalisation element in their degrees. It may be necessary to look at the real reasons for the relatively low levels of mobility and how credit transfers between Irish and European teacher education programmes work. The two-way experience would be valuable and enriching for teacher education.

### **Funding**

The Review Panel recognises that the model used by the HEA, while formula based, allocates a block grant to each HEI and the internal allocation of this funding is a matter for each institution. This internal allocation process has led to different levels of funding for teacher education across the institutions. It is recognised that there has been a tradition in many HEIs, internationally, that some of the funding allocated by reference to ITE numbers has not been fully applied to ITE. Therefore, the Review Panel suggests that as discipline-based clusters of institutions/centres of excellence emerge, and, more broadly, as the National Strategy is being implemented, the HEA should consider linking funding more clearly to the specific discipline or thematic area. The Panel further suggests that the HEA should consider ways in which funding can support desired outcomes in relation to ITE. Further comments on funding may be found in relation to specific configurations in Section 6.

### **Review Panel's Vision**

The Review Panel's vision for the structure of ITE provision in Ireland is that by 2030 Ireland will have a network of teacher education institutions based on a small number of internationally comparable institutes of teacher education. Each of these institutes will offer research-based teacher education in internationally inspiring environments, provided at Masters level initially or through continuing professional development. Each will also offer further professional development services on the continuum ranging from early childhood to in-service training of teachers and leaders.

## **6. Specific Recommendations on Restructuring Initial Teacher Education**

The Review Panel reiterates that the key characteristics of internationally recognised teacher education systems include high quality instruction on both pedagogy and pedagogical content knowledge, a strong focus on research as a basis of teaching and learning, a close and systematic engagement with schools, and real internationalisation of the institutions providing initial and continuing teacher education.

The Review Panel's experience from other education systems suggests that it is difficult to have these key characteristics unless the size of teacher education institution is sufficiently large and thereby has a 'critical mass' and competitiveness for good teaching, research and international cooperation. All of these characteristics are also essential for the overall quality of teacher education.

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

Having given careful consideration to all the information received, and based on the terms of reference which underpinned its work, the Review Panel recommends that teacher education in Ireland should be restructured according to the following configurations:

- 6.1 Dublin City University - St. Patrick's College Drumcondra - Mater Dei Institute of Education
- 6.2 Trinity College Dublin - Marino Institute of Education - University College Dublin - National College of Art and Design
- 6.3 National University of Ireland Maynooth - Froebel College
- 6.4 University of Limerick - Mary Immaculate College - Limerick Institute of Technology
- 6.5 University College Cork - Cork Institute of Technology
- 6.6 National University of Ireland Galway - St. Angela's College Sligo



The Panel heard a separate presentation from the Church of Ireland College of Education (CICE) indicating that discussions have been initiated between CICE and NUIM. The Review Panel agreed that CICE would be suitably positioned in any one of the configurations at 6.1, 6.2 or 6.3 and believes that its participation would strengthen the chosen configuration.

It will be noted that Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology and St. Patrick's College Thurles are excluded from the institutional configurations. The Panel recognises the contribution made by both HEIs in the area of teacher education but it believes that they do not fulfil the requirements with regard to the optimal setting for teacher education as set out in this report. In that context, it is recommended that teacher education in both HEIs be discontinued.

The Panel recognises the unique provision St. Angela's College Sligo offers in relation to Home Economics but believes it is essential that it is integrated into a broader teacher education setting and that it would benefit greatly from such a move. In that regard, the Panel recommends that ITE at St. Angela's College should be fully integrated into the NUIG campus.

With regard to Art, the Panel recognises the distinctive Art elements of teacher education programmes for Art. However, based on the principle that a common programme should be followed by all post-primary teacher education students in each consortium, the Panel recommends ITE programmes for Art should be university-accredited and university-based. This means that teacher education courses in Art should be planned and delivered jointly by personnel from a university and the art institute. Staff should be integrated in terms of the planning and delivery of common parts of the programme and, likewise, students should be integrated for lectures and seminars.

In all cases, set out in the following pages, it is recommended that mergers/alliances will take place whereby teacher education is facilitated at one location within the restructured setting. The new configuration may be titled an "Institute of Teacher Education", a "Centre for Teacher Education", or equivalent. In the case of Mary Immaculate College and the University of Limerick, it is intended that the new configuration will aim to be a Centre of Excellence for Teacher Education, acting as a satellite or hub for other Centres or Institutes.

## **6.1 Dublin City University - St. Patrick's College Drumcondra – Mater Dei Institute of Education**

The Review Panel recommends that Dublin City University (DCU), St. Patrick's College Drumcondra (SPD) and Mater Dei Institute of Education (MDI) should form one centre for teacher education. A proposal to this effect, i.e., the establishment of a new Institute of Education, involving the integration of all three institutions, and the subsuming of SPD and MDI into DCU, was put forward in their submissions to the HEA.

The continuum of sectoral teacher education would be partially fulfilled in this arrangement as ITE for primary teachers is facilitated by SPD, and ITE for post-primary teachers is facilitated by DCU and MDI. Early Childhood Education (ECE) is offered as a major specialism in the B.Ed. programme at SPD. No specific ECE qualification is awarded but this could be addressed in the future in light of the needs of the ECE sector. It is noted that the Special Education Department at SPD also provides for cross-sectoral teacher education in Special Education Needs.

The research capacity of the combined HEIs is strong and could form a critical mass as required in the HEA Strategy. It is recommended that the Education Research Centre at SPD should be fully integrated into the proposed new Institute for Education and should play a greater role in the area of teacher education, particularly in developing a research-driven approach to ITE.

It is acknowledged that there is a genuine aspiration for integration but the management plan for its implementation was not evident to the Review Panel. This needs to be developed by all involved so that a shared sense of ownership of integration is promoted and genuine integration of teaching, learning and research across all programmes is developed. Questions arise as to the integration of programme personnel together with the location of programme provision. It is recommended that a strong central teacher education hub be created, possibly centred in the campus at SPD where a major refurbishment and building programme is underway. Geographically, the colleges are well positioned to accommodate centrally-accessible programme components as well as separate, college-based faculties, as appropriate.

## **6.2 Trinity College - Marino Institute of Education - University College Dublin – National College of Art and Design**

The Review Panel recommends that Trinity College Dublin (TCD), Marino Institute of Education (MIE) and University College Dublin (UCD) should form one centre for teacher education. In this context, the Panel notes the possibility of it being centred at Marino which has a modern teacher education campus which may not currently be fully utilised. Teacher education at the National College of Art and Design (NCAD) should be integrated into this centre based on the recommendations for Art teacher education set out in the introduction to Section 6. Currently, TCD has a close alliance with MIE as an Associate College, and formal alliances are in place between UCD and NCAD and between UCD and TCD. United, these HEIs have the potential to become a flagship Institute of Teacher Education.

The continuum of sectoral teacher education would be partially fulfilled in this arrangement as ITE for primary teachers is facilitated by MIE, and ITE for post-primary teachers is facilitated by TCD, UCD and NCAD. ECE is integral to teacher education for primary teachers but a separate ECE qualification is not currently awarded. However, MIE is planning a Masters in ECE, commencing in 2013.

The Review Panel took cognisance of the fact that UCD and TCD offer ITE only at post-primary level. However, the Review Panel recognises the potential strength of the combined research capacity at both universities and recommends that this be harnessed in the interests of teacher education, forming a critical mass with MIE and NCAD, as required in the National Strategy, with the potential to develop a world class research base, particularly if common education programmes across the sectors were developed.

In the proposed new configuration, the Panel recommends that a single governance structure, with a single stream of funding, be put in place in respect of the proposed Institute with an appropriate constitution for the new institute providing for a jointly owned institute. It will also be necessary to develop an implementation plan with regard to the full integration of teaching, learning and research.

### **6.3 National University of Ireland Maynooth - Froebel College**

The Review Panel agreed that the merger of Froebel College with the National University of Ireland Maynooth (NUIM), which has already commenced, concurred with the Review Panel's terms of reference with regard to the continuum of sectoral teacher education provision and the provision of a critical mass for research purposes.

For the first time in Ireland, the full range of teacher education is being accommodated and fulfilled by one teacher education provider, i.e., NUIM. ECE and ITE for primary teachers are facilitated by Froebel College. ITE for post-primary teachers, including those in the Adult/Further Education sector, is facilitated by NUIM. The NUIM Teaching and Learning Centre which provides pedagogical support for academic staff in NUIM is also part of this unit.

There are some individual strengths in the area of research but the research capacity of the combined HEIs in the new configuration will require development. The personnel representing both HEIs acknowledged this and spoke of their intentions in this regard.

The Review Panel noted that the presentation made to them by the personnel from both HEIs was impressive in its strength and credibility. The University has a clear strategy for the next five years with several aspects of administration and management already integrated. Currently, the first and second-year students in Froebel College are registered with NUIM and all Froebel students will be on the Maynooth campus in 2013. The Education Department at NUIM will incorporate "The Froebel Department of Primary and Early Childhood Education". A new building for all education students and staff is at advanced planning stage and staff relationships are already developing across both HEIs.

#### **6.4 University of Limerick - Mary Immaculate College - Limerick Institute of Technology**

The Review Panel recommends that Mary Immaculate College (MIC) and the University of Limerick (UL) should form one integrated centre for teacher education. Teacher education currently provided at Limerick Institute of Technology (LIT) should be integrated into this centre, based on the recommendations for Art teacher education set out in the introduction to Section 6, in the interests of forming a critical mass for teaching, learning and research purposes.

The continuum of sectoral teacher education could be fulfilled in this arrangement as ITE for primary teachers is facilitated by MIC and ITE for post-primary teachers is facilitated by UL and LIT. No specific ECE qualification is awarded but this could be addressed in the future as MIC currently offers a B.A. in Early Childhood Care and Education which could lend itself to conversion to a B.Ed. in ECE, depending on the needs of the sector.

The Review Panel recognises that the research capacity of the combined HEIs is strong and could form a critical mass as required in the National Strategy. It further recommends that the integrated UL/MIC entity should be nominated as a Centre of Excellence for Teacher Education as referred to in the introduction to Section 6. In this context, the new configuration would act as a regional hub supporting teachers' continuing professional development in collaboration with University College Cork and the National University of Ireland Galway.

The Review Panel appreciates that the recommended integration of MIC into UL, together with teacher education at LIT, will require negotiation with regard to the location/relocation of programmes, students and personnel. It understands that the campus at MIC has been greatly enhanced and extended over recent years and may be the appropriate location for the new centre for teacher education.

## **6.5 University College Cork - Cork Institute of Technology**

The Review Panel recommends that University College Cork (UCC) should retain ITE for post-primary teachers. Teacher education currently provided at Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) should integrate with UCC based on the recommendations for Art teacher education set out in the introduction to Section 6. Currently, teacher education students at CIT's Crawford College of Art and Design attend UCC for some lectures, mainly in the area of the Foundation Studies. The recommendation for the amalgamation of teacher education in CIT into UCC envisages art and design students attending multidisciplinary lectures and tutorials in education at the University, thereby encouraging discussion and debate about teaching and learning across the curriculum as well as within subject specialisms. Integration across the curriculum for teacher education enhances a critical mass for research purposes by including art and design.

The Review Panel recognises that the continuum of sectoral teacher education will not be fully satisfied in this arrangement. It acknowledges the value of the interdisciplinary provision for the B.A. in Early Years and Childhood and it appreciates that UCC wishes to extend its provision to include teacher education for primary teachers, affording subject specialisms for future curriculum leadership roles. However, it was not clear that this was a viable option for a number of reasons, including current teacher supply nationally. The Review Panel recommends that subject specialisms for Primary Teachers should be pursued by UCC in the context of continuing professional development for teachers, as is currently provided for in Science Education. In that context, the Review Panel's recommendation in 6.4 with regard to the creation of a Centre of Excellence for Teacher Education in Limerick, as a regional hub, is relevant.

The Review Panel notes the strength of the research capacity at UCC both in terms of staff members and Doctoral students. It was impressed by the breadth and depth of UCC's submission to the HEA and notes the ongoing development of synergies across faculties and departments which enhances teacher education in the university.

## **6.6 National University of Ireland Galway - St. Angela's College Sligo**

The Review Panel recommends that the National University of Ireland Galway (NUIG) retain ITE for post-primary teachers. The provision for teacher education currently offered at St. Angela's College Sligo should move to the NUIG campus and be fully integrated there.

The Review Panel recognises that the continuum of sectoral teacher education provision will not be fully satisfied in this arrangement. However, given the location of NUIG, it has a regional remit in the area of continuing professional development for teachers, with the provision of postgraduate and doctoral programmes, including that of primary teachers.

There are some individual strengths in the area of research but the research capacity of the combined HEIs in the new configuration will require development. Further strengthening of links between NUIG and the University of Limerick/Mary Immaculate College reconfiguration could also contribute to the building of research capacity, particularly in the area of primary teacher education. In that context, the Review Panel's recommendation in 6.4 with regard to the creation of a Centre of Excellence for Teacher Education in Limerick, as a regional hub, is relevant.

## **7. Supplementary issues**

The Review Panel's recommendations are designed in a way that allows for their immediate implementation. The Panel further recommends the following:

### **National Policy for Research**

Upgrading and enhancing the research capacities of the new teacher education institutions require a national policy for research on teaching and teacher education. The national policy could be used by the new establishments as a framework for their own strategies. Possible foci for research are identified in Research Based Teacher Education in Section 5.

### **Research Funding**

It is of paramount importance that the new structure of ITE will be given particular attention when the new higher education funding system is developed. It will be necessary to secure proper resources for each new centre and to adequately address research as one of the criteria for core funding.

### **Internationalisation**

There should be a combined national effort to enhance internationalisation in Irish schools of education in general, and teacher education institutes in particular, to enable outgoing student and staff mobility to better match good European practice. The consolidation of ITE within the university sector should enhance this effort by building on existing university support for internationalisation.

### **Education for School Leadership**

The Panel heard very little about leadership training programmes from the HEIs. It understands that support for school principals is provided by the Leadership Development for Schools (LDS) service which is part of the national Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST). However, the Panel members believe that the initial and continuing education of school principals should also be integrated into the proposed ITE centres.



## **Appendix 1**

### **A Review of the Structure of Initial Teacher Education Provision in Ireland**

#### **Introduction**

The Government is committed to improving the quality of education in Ireland and particularly the quality of the State's teaching force. Significant changes to the content and focus of the teacher education programmes for both the primary and the post-primary sectors are being implemented, facilitated by the work of the Teaching Council and the teacher education providers. A national induction programme for newly qualified teachers is being introduced and a range of continuing development programmes is being provided by the Department of Education and Skills.

In addition, it is the view of the Minister for Education and Skills Mr. Ruairi Quinn, T.D. that structural change at institutional level is also required. To that end the Minister has requested the HEA to engage with the initial teacher education sector to identify possible new institutional structures for teacher education based on a reconfiguration of existing provision.

#### **Terms of Reference:**

To carry out a review of the structure of initial teacher education provision, and to identify possible new structures which will recognise and address weaker areas in the system of teacher education; leverage the current strengths in the system; and envision innovative strategies so that Ireland can provide a teacher education regime that is comparable with the best in the world.

In undertaking the review, the Review Team should engage with the initial teacher education sector so as to identify possible new structures based on a reconfiguration of existing provision. The review should bear in mind that in countries where student outcomes are high, the following features are evident:

- Teacher education is required to be research-driven

- Graduate teachers are capable of applying research to their work in a constructive and reflective way
- Relatively small numbers of institutions are involved in ITE provision allowing for critical mass to conduct research at a high level
- Such institutes span /combine education sectors allowing for meaningful synergies in ITE for early childhood, primary, second-level, (“and other sectors of education.

### **National Strategy for Higher Education and related policy instruments**

The review should have regard to the recommendations of the *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030* in relation to smaller institutions that currently receive core grant funding – these would include providers of teacher education.

*“In the case of institutions that currently receive core grant (partial or full) and free fees funding, the overall framework of incentives should promote the incorporation or merger of these institutions into existing universities or institutes of technology or into technological universities when they are established.*

*Proposals for incorporation should be pursued on the basis of demonstrated strategic fit, including:*

- *Complementarity of mission and provision;*
- *Potential for synergies;*
- *Potential for joint activity;*
- *Shared activities with potential for rationalisation;*
- *Financial sustainability; and*
- *Common governance and management structures.*

*While there may be exceptional cases where highly specialised provision, allied to proven reputational strength, can justify stand-alone status, the more likely alternative over time for institutions that are not incorporated into a larger entity will be to be funded privately. (page 108)”.*

The review should also take account of the policy and strategy documents relating to implementation of the National Strategy published by the HEA, in particular those relating

to the development of a coherent and co-ordinated higher education system. Within this context, the initial teacher education sector should be viewed as a discrete entity.

The Review team should also take account of the ***National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People*** (DES publication ***Literacy and Numeracy for Life*** July 2011) and the Teaching Council's policy documents including ***Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education***, June 2011; and ***Initial Teacher Education: Criteria and Guidelines for Programme Providers*** August 2011.