



**Teacher Supply Action Plan**  
**Upskilling Programmes in Priority Subject Areas**  
**(Mathematics, Physics, Spanish)**  
**Call for Proposals**

## 1. Context

The post-primary system is currently experiencing a period of sustained growth with pupil enrolments projected to increase by more than 30,000 over the next five years until a peak in 2024. The scale of the increase is creating challenges around teacher supply, particularly in respect of certain subject areas. In response, the Department of Education and Skills (DES) established a Steering Group on Teacher Supply to facilitate multi-agency engagement and to lead on a coordinated programme of actions to address concerns in relation to the supply of teachers at post-primary level and the supply of substitute teachers at primary level. Arising from the work of this Group and its various substructures, the Minister for Education and Skills published the [Teacher Supply Action Plan](#) (TSAP) in November 2018. The HEA is tasked with overseeing the relevant higher education actions in the TSAP and regularly reports on developments to the Steering Group and its various substructures.

Significant progress has been made in the implementation of the TSAP to date, including a technical report on teacher demand and supply at primary and post-primary level, and a '[Teaching Transforms](#)' communications campaign to promote the teaching profession. There has also been extensive consultative engagement with stakeholders at regional and national level, and a teacher sharing scheme at post-primary level has been introduced.

In the higher education space, a number of actions have already been implemented including the provision of additional places on existing concurrent and consecutive post-primary ITE programmes. The HEA supported the development of new four-year concurrent post-primary initial teacher education (ITE) programmes in the targeted subject areas, with a number of new programmes introduced in September 2019/20 and more planned for September 2020/21.

The TSAP also calls for the development of upskilling programmes in targeted subject areas for existing teachers to complement the introduction of new concurrent programmes. The HEA conducted a scoping exercise of current provision and the future plans of the centres of teaching in respect of upskilling programmes in early 2019. The results of this scoping exercise were shared with the DES to build a better understanding of the landscape.

The DES requested the HEA to manage a funding call on its behalf to support the development of teacher upskilling programmes in **Mathematics, Physics, and Spanish**. The development of upskilling programmes supports the commitment of the DES to providing opportunities for teachers' learning (CPD) across the continuum of teacher education, particularly in the context of the Teaching Council's work with Cosán, the national framework for teachers' learning.

Proposals are now invited for flexible upskilling programmes in the targeted subject areas of **Mathematics, Physics, and Spanish**. Upskilling programmes must enable teachers to meet the *Curricular Subject Requirements* of the Teaching Council to register to teach the upskilled subject at the highest level<sup>1</sup>.

It is intended that upskilling programmes will be open to registered post-primary teachers irrespective of employment status. Programme places will be prioritised for the unemployed, those not in full employment, and those teaching the subject of the upskilling programme out of field. Upskilling programmes should be targeted at post-primary teachers in related disciplines.

Flexible and innovative provision is sought to ensure the best opportunity for potential applicants to participate, including those in partial or full employment. Participation on the programmes should not impact on class contact time for currently serving teachers. Flexible provision should enable delivery on a national scale with a regional aspect as appropriate.

Similar to previous upskilling programmes supported by the DES, places on upskilling programmes will be provided free of charge to participating teachers with the funding awarded to successful institutions from this call intended to cover fee costs.

To specifically address teacher supply challenges experienced in Irish medium schools, proposals for programmes to upskill teachers to teach the targeted subject in an Irish medium setting are particularly welcome.

## 2. Call for Proposals

### 2.1 Overview

The call is open to institutions that have primary or post-primary ITE programmes accredited by the Teaching Council.

Proposals from individual institutions will be accepted, however collaborative proposals are encouraged.

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<sup>1</sup> Proposals will be assessed based on the current *Curricular Subject Requirements*. Institutions are advised that the Teaching Council is currently reviewing the *Curricular Subject Requirements*, and it is likely that revised *Criteria* will be published and become operational within the lifetime of the successfully awarded upskilling programmes. Institutions that are successfully awarded from this call must ensure that programmes will continue to enable participants to meet the applicable *Curricular Subject Requirements*.

Proposals will be evaluated in accordance with the criteria outlined in this document.

Funding will cover student fees in respect of participation. All costs associated with programme delivery should be detailed in the proposal and considered in the fee structure.

Funding will support two cycles (two intakes) of a flexible upskilling programme, commencing in the calendar year of 2020. The outcomes will then be reviewed in the context of teacher supply nationally and the needs of the system. There is no commitment to funding beyond two cycles. There is no guarantee that any or all proposals will be supported by this call.

Proposals for the delivery of flexible programmes to upskill teachers to teach the targeted subject in an Irish medium setting are strongly encouraged.

Flexible provision should enable delivery on a national scale, with a regional dimension as appropriate.

Institutions should have regard to the ongoing work of the Teaching Council on Cosán, the national framework for teachers' learning.

Queries or requests for clarification should be directed to [teachereducation@hea.ie](mailto:teachereducation@hea.ie). Responses will be provided via a FAQ document, which will be published on the dedicated call page on the HEA website at regular intervals.

## 2.2 Conditions

Institutions can submit more than one proposal. For example, a proposal for an upskilling programme in Spanish and a proposal for an upskilling programme in Mathematics may be made by the same institution, but must be submitted separately.

Proposals must be signed by the relevant president or presidents, as appropriate.

In instances of a collaborative proposal from more than one institution, a lead institution for the purposes of financial management and reporting must be identified.

Each proposal should **not** exceed 5,000 words.

Proposals should be received by the HEA in electronic format **before 5pm** on **2 March 2020** to [teachereducation@hea.ie](mailto:teachereducation@hea.ie). The subject area of the proposed programme and the name of the institution should be indicated in the subject line of the email. A hard copy is not required.

Proposals for upskilling programmes in respect of **Mathematics**, **Physics**, and **Spanish**<sup>2</sup> only are being sought at this time.

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<sup>2</sup>The inclusion of a MFL furthers the commitment in *Languages Connect: Ireland's Strategy for Foreign Languages in Education 2017-2026* to consider the possibility of a post-graduate programme for teachers of other languages to enhance their ability to teach additional languages.

### 3. Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria will be used to assess proposals. A minimum threshold will apply in respect of each of the below categories of programme structure, partnership/support, and funding. Meeting the minimum threshold is no guarantee of funding.

(a) **Programme Structure** (50 marks – minimum threshold 35 marks)

- Provision – programme duration and ECTS allocation; NFQ level; proposed mode of provision; proposed delivery methods; plans to facilitate participation by those in employment; plans for face-to-face delivery and location(s), as relevant. (10)
- Course description – overview of modules; must demonstrate how modules meet the *Curricular Subject Requirements* of the Teaching Council. (20)
- Teaching, learning, and assessment methodologies – intended learning outcomes; how timings/methods of assessment facilitate those in employment; reference to relevant policy/strategy/research. (15)
- Scale of demand and eligibility – target audience and estimated scale of demand for programme; additional eligibility requirements including pre-existing subject knowledge, as appropriate; plans for promotion and awareness raising. (5)

(b) **Partnership/support** (30 marks – minimum threshold 15 marks)

- Collaboration(s) proposed – within/between institutions and/or within centres of teaching and/or between centres of teaching, with other relevant stakeholders, etc, and how this enhances offering to student. (10)
- Specialist knowledge – expertise of those developing and delivering the programme, to include subject knowledge and related research, and experience of primary or post-primary ITE as relevant. (15)
- Supports for students – additional resources provided to support programme participants. (5)

(c) **Funding** (20 marks – minimum threshold 10 marks)

- Value for money and impact of programme - having regard to capacity for annual student intake, minimum number of participants; proposed start date and fees sought. (20)

## 4. Evaluation of proposals

All proposals will be evaluated in accordance with the process outlined below:

- i. Proposals will be validated by the HEA Executive for eligibility as per the call document, including:
  - Received within deadline.
  - Signed by the relevant president(s).
  - Received from eligible institutions (Section 2.1 of the call documentation).
- ii. All eligible proposals will be sent to the Teaching Council for observations in respect of the *Curricular Subject Requirements*. These observations will be shared with the panel for the purposes of guidance and context, but will not form part of the formal assessment process. The Teaching Council has no decision-making function in respect of the proposals.
- iii. The panel will consist of two experts in the field of teacher education. Each panel member will assess the proposals in line with the criteria in the call documentation and score the proposals accordingly. Panel members will participate in a consensus meeting to agree the proposals that rank highest above the minimum threshold in each subject area. In instances where two or more proposals in the same subject area are equally scored, priority will be awarded to programmes that upskill teachers to teach the targeted subject in Irish medium settings. In cases where this is not applicable and/or where two or more programmes in the same subject area remain on an equal footing, priority will then be given to the programme that scored highest in terms of programme structure, and then in terms of partnership/support, as necessary.
- iv. The recommendations of the panel in respect of each subject area will be shared with the DES.
- v. The DES will consider the recommendations of the panel in the context of national supply and the level of funding available. The DES will make the final decision as to which, if any, programmes receive funding.

Institutions will be informed of the outcome of the process in April 2020.

## 5. Format of proposals

Institutions that intend to submit a proposal are requested to return the **Expression of Interest** form provided to [teachereducation@hea.ie](mailto:teachereducation@hea.ie) **no later than 5pm on 24 January 2020**.

Institutions should format proposals using the template provided. Proposals should include a brief introduction summarising the proposal and detailing costs.

## 6. Data requirements

Institutions with successful proposals will be required to report to the HEA on progress and the outcomes for participants on completion of the programme. This requires that institutions collect data including that outlined below for the purposes of evaluation and to inform policy decisions:

- Level of demand – number of applications; expressions of interest;
- Subjects participants are registered to teach;
- Number of applicants/participants currently teaching the subject of the upskilling programme out of field;
- Number of years of teaching experience of participants;
- Current employment status as teacher – permanent/fixed term; full employment/partial employment; number of teaching hours, etc;
- Reason(s) for undertaking programme – develop skillset; to secure additional teaching hours, etc;
- Commencement and completion dates;
- Rate of attrition and accompanying reasons;
- Outcomes following completion of programme – teaching new upskilled subject; additional hours secured, etc;
- Participants’ experience of programme.

This data will be returned to the HEA on an aggregated and anonymised basis, and will be used to inform an evaluation of the upskilling programmes supported by this funding. The results of this evaluation will be shared with the DES.

## 7. Governance

Part funding will be provided on receipt of enrolment figures with the balance of the funding released on receipt of confirmation of enrolments.

Institutions with successful proposals will be accountable to the HEA for the funding allocated. In the case of collaborative proposals involving more than one institution, a lead institution must be identified for the purposes of financial management and reporting.

## 8. Key timeframes

Publication of call for proposals	December 2019
Deadline for receipt of Expression of Interest forms	<b>5pm on 24 January 2020</b>
Deadline for receipt of proposals	<b>5pm on 2 March 2020</b>
Expected outcome	April 2020