

*Report of the Review Panel to the  
Teaching Council following a review of  
an Initial Teacher Education  
programme*

An Chomhairle  
Mhúinteoireachta



**The Teaching Council**

Name of HEI: **Maynooth University**

Name of Programme: **Professional Master of Education**

Date: 31 August 2022

The requirement(s) listed on page 17 of this report have  
been met in full as of 29 August 2023

Publication of this Report

The Teaching Council routinely makes information available to the public in relation to its functions and activities and, in line with that practice, this report will be available on the Council's website, [www.teachingcouncil.ie](http://www.teachingcouncil.ie).

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## Programme Overview

This report relates to the review of the following programme provided by Maynooth University

**Professional Master of Education**, hereinafter referred to as ‘the programme’.

## Background

*Céim: Standards for Initial Teacher Education* sets out the standards which programmes of initial teacher education in Ireland must meet in order to gain accreditation from the Teaching Council. It is also a benchmark for anybody seeking to register as a teacher in Ireland.

The Teaching Council’s *Procedures for the Professional Accreditation of Programmes of Initial Teacher Education* (hereinafter referred to as the *Procedures*) sets out the process by which programmes are reviewed.

Maynooth University submitted a completed pro forma, toolkits and appendices which mapped the programme against each of the standards outlined in *Céim: Standards for Initial Teacher Education*. The programme was reviewed by the Review Panel following the *Procedures*.

## Particular requirements for post-primary programmes

In November 2020, the Council published *The Teaching Council Registration Curricular Subject Requirements (Post-Primary)*, which set out the Council’s revised subject criteria requirements for approved curricular subjects. The requirements may be met through studies incorporated into a concurrent programme of initial teacher education or may be met through undergraduate studies prior to completing a consecutive programme of initial teacher education. This also guides providers of post-primary consecutive programmes in determining suitability of entrants, outlining which curricular subjects, entrants can ultimately be registered to teach, as well as matching students to appropriate methodology modules.

## The Review Process

The review of **Professional Master of Education** at Maynooth University took place between March 2022 and July 2022 in accordance with the Council's *Procedures for the Professional Accreditation of Programmes of Initial Teacher Education*.

Notification	The Council notified Maynooth University of the Review and accreditation of the <b>Professional Master of Education</b> on 11 October 2021.
Preliminary Meeting	A preliminary meeting was held between the Council executive staff and Maynooth University on 4 November 2021 to provide an overview of the submission documentation and answer queries from Maynooth University.
Submission	Maynooth University submitted the proforma and supporting documentation for the Professional Master of Education on 11 March 2022.
Desk-based Review	A desk-based review was conducted by the Council staff and a letter requesting clarifications was sent to Maynooth University on 25 March 2022. Maynooth University submitted their response on 4 April 2022.
Appointment of Review Panel	The process was formally initiated when the Review Panel (hereinafter referred to as 'the panel') was appointed by the Teaching Council's acting director, with Dr Mary Fleming as Chairperson and Prof. Jim Gleeson and Mr. Milo Walsh as panel members. The panel was briefed by Teaching Council staff.
Rapporteur	<p>The review panel was supported by Mary Condon in their role as a rapporteur.</p> <p>The Rapporteur's functions included liaison with Maynooth University, maintaining records of meetings, and drafting and finalising the panel's report in conjunction with the panel Chairperson. The panel was also supported in its deliberations by external subject experts and by the Director of the Teaching Council and their executive staff nominees.</p>

Review panel meeting 1	The panel met on 19 April 2022 to consider the submission. They requested clarifications from Maynooth University on 11 May 2022. Maynooth University responded to this request on 1 June 2022.
Engagement with the HEI	<p>The Panel Chair and Rapporteur held a pre-meet with the Head of School of Education (Acting) on 17 May 2022 to discuss the personnel the Panel wished to meet and to arrange a schedule for the online meeting</p> <p>The full Review Panel held a virtual meeting with Maynooth University on 7 June 2022. This was also attended by the Rapporteur and the Acting Head of Initial Teacher Education, who attended in an observatory capacity.</p> <p>The following attended on behalf of the university:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dean of the Faculty of Social Science</li> <li>• Acting Head of Education</li> <li>• PME 2 Programme Leader</li> <li>• BSc Programme Leader</li> <li>• School Placement Officer</li> <li>• Administrative Officer</li> <li>• Placement Tutor</li> <li>• Methodologist and Treoraí</li> </ul>
Review panel meeting 2	The panel met to consider these clarifications and agree recommendations on 19 July 2022.
Reporting	<p>The report was drafted and issued to the HEI for the 30-day feedback period.</p> <p>It was finalised when the final response was received from Maynooth University.</p>
Education Committee	The Chair will present the report to the Education Committee on 13 September 2022. They may decide to; accredit the programme, accredit the programme with requirements or not accredit the programme.

## Overall Findings

The Panel commends the quality of the submission and the professional and deep engagement of the Maynooth University programme teams with the process.

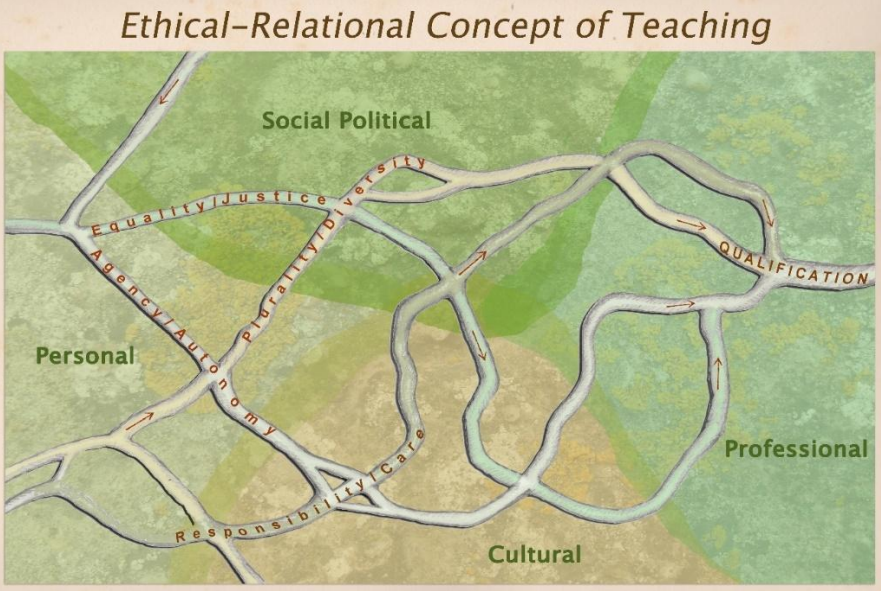
The documentation was excellently presented with clear and coherent links to modules, design structure and school placement guidelines.

Documentation and the subsequent discussions at the online meeting reflected deep engagement and considered thinking on the CÉIM standards. Consequently, the two programmes represent a creative response to the accreditation process and demonstrate clear alignment with the student teacher's trajectory of learning and professional development as reflective practitioners.

School placement within the programmes is very well developed and structured. The placement handbooks for students, tutors, and school personnel (Treoraithe) and other personnel provided focus and clarity on each stakeholder's requirements and responsibilities.

The development of Taisce as a core activity supports and enables the student teacher to build appreciation of reflective practice as a lifelong professional learning endeavour. This is further emphasised with the creation of an individual professional growth plan in the final year that links to future professional learning and development.

## Programme Design

	Comment	Standard addressed?
1.1.1 The Programme	The Programme received academic accreditation in November 2021 prior to being submitted to the Teaching Council for professional accreditation and is in line with the Council’s Registration Regulations 2016.	Yes
1.1.2 Conceptual Framework	<p>The programme is supported by a clearly defined conceptual framework</p>  <p>The diagram, titled 'Ethical-Relational Concept of Teaching', illustrates a complex network of interconnected paths. It is divided into four domains: Social Political (top), Personal (left), Cultural (bottom), and Professional (right). Key concepts are represented as paths or nodes: 'Equality/Justice' and 'Agency/Autonomy' are in the Personal domain; 'Plurality/Diversity' and 'Responsibility/Care' span across the Personal and Cultural domains; 'QUALIFICATION' is in the Professional domain. The paths are interconnected, showing the multidimensional nature of teaching.</p> <p>Appendix 7</p> <p><i>“At Maynooth University Department of Education we have been guided by what arguably lies at the heart of any teacher education programme, namely the concept of ‘teaching’.”</i></p> <p><i>“Teaching conceived as an ethical-relational practice therefore allows us to consider the multidimensional nature of teaching”</i></p> <p><i>“Our ethos is strongly rooted in the ability of education to shape the future, at the level of both society and the individual. In this, our ethos is not merely aspirational but practical and thoroughly supported by educational research that focuses on the transformative potential of teaching as an ethical-relational activity.”</i></p> <p><i>“The key concepts of our framework within the four domains of teaching provide a strong rationale for the scope and design of our ITE programme. The image in Appendix 7, clearly illustrates several</i></p>	Yes

	<p><i>pathways that intersect, with each identified concept informing the others”</i></p> <p>The conceptual framework and programme design supports school placement as the fulcrum of the continuum of teacher education. It also shows how key themes are revisited over the programme. The programme demonstrates how the professional studies aspect of the programme gives student teachers sufficient opportunities to actively learn from practising teachers about relevant and innovative methodologies, appropriate to their practice.</p> <p><i>“While the content of modules revisits these key concepts in a progressive fashion, at the crux of our programmes lies school placement – a pivotal element to our educational design.”</i></p>	
<p>1.1.3 Programme Aims</p>	<p>The application clearly defines the aims of the programme, demonstrating where the aims are closely aligned with the conceptual framework and are reflected in specific learning outcomes.</p> <p>The programme aims are demonstrated in learning outcomes relating to</p> <p><i>“Aim 1 – Personal Domain: To support newly qualified teachers’ appreciation that all teaching is an inherently ethical activity which should honour the dignity and agency of all involved</i></p> <p><i>Aim 2 – Professional Domain: To empower newly qualified teachers to confidently and competently navigate the opportunities and challenges related to activating their own sense of agency in contemporary school contexts</i></p> <p><i>Aim 3 – Social Political Domain: To develop a critical sense of social justice and social justice education,</i></p> <p><i>Aim 4 – Cultural Domain: To understand that in addition to their responsibility to care for their students, teachers have a responsibility to care for themselves, the broader community and the future of our shared world”</i></p> <p>The application demonstrates how the programme caters for curriculum development, to include the learning outcomes-based curricula and national priorities.</p> <p>The application demonstrates how the programme aims will enable newly qualified teachers to facilitate quality teaching and learning for all pupils.</p> <p>The programme fosters student teachers’ agency and mind-set to be open to professional growth and learning over the course of their careers, to reflect on their own professional learning and that of</p>	<p>Yes</p>

	<p>their pupils, and to support their pupils in achieving their full potential.</p> <p><i>“Teachers are curricular designers and our student teachers are scaffolded into developing their critical capacity, competence, and confidence in curriculum design. We call upon them to exercise their agency in the development of lessons, and units of learning, that are responsive to their teaching contexts, nurture their pupils and address pressing social issues”</i></p>	
1.1.4 Programme Duration & Balance	<p>The review process determined that the submission demonstrates that the PME programme meets the criterion of a minimum of 2 years duration (120 ECTS credits), and how the models of teaching, learning and assessment set out in the conceptual framework are evident in the programme structure.</p> <p><i>“This provides 50 credits for School Placement activities. The remaining credits are dedicated to modules relating to the Foundation Disciplines and Professional Studies.”</i></p> <p><i>“The programme prepares student teachers for life in the classroom and for active engagement in teaching within a professional learning community reflecting the core values of trust, care, respect and integrity. Our assessment practices are tailored towards these core values.”</i></p>	Yes
1.1.6 Integration and Diversity of Programme Content	<p>Maynooth University have demonstrated that foundation studies are integrated into the programme in a way that is meaningful for student teachers and their practice; that the programme design follows a spiral learning approach, and that the programme allows student teachers to experience a variety of teaching, learning and assessment modes.</p> <p><i>“Foundation studies are therefore not isolated from Professional Studies or School Placement, but instead are pivotal to the very way students are encouraged to think about, reflect on, and engage practically in their professional development as teachers.”</i></p> <p>and</p> <p><i>“the spiral curriculum, which introduces, works with and revisits key concepts and topics across the duration of the programme”</i></p>	
Aptitude test	<p>Maynooth University completed an ‘Aptitude test’ declaration form, confirming that the programme design allows for the provision of ‘aptitude tests’ for teachers who have qualified outside of the State.</p>	Yes

<p>1.1.7 Required Areas of Study</p>	<p>The review process determined that the submission demonstrated how the Foundation Studies, Professional Studies &amp; School Placement elements of the programme meet the requirements of this standard.</p> <p><u>Foundation Studies</u> The programme provides research informed insights to support student teachers’ understanding of the practices of teaching, learning and assessment for all pupils.</p> <p><i>“Foundation Studies also provides the basis for a strong professional ethic in teaching and learning. It is designed to challenge students’ assumptions and beliefs, and to help them articulate their values in education.”</i></p> <p>The programme provides the basis of a strong professional ethic in teaching and learning, including curriculum studies, the history and policy of education, philosophy of education, psychology of education &amp; sociology of education.</p> <p><i>“Thus, course alignment (the intentional alignment of course objectives, curriculum, pedagogy and assessment structure) ensures integration and connection between and across the foundation disciplines (history, psychology, sociology etc)”</i></p> <p>The programme, enhances students’ understanding of the Irish education system, locates it in context and enables students to think critically about it.</p> <p><u>Professional Studies</u> Maynooth University demonstrated that the Professional Studies elements of the programme develop the pedagogical expertise of student teachers, including subject specific pedagogical content knowledge as evidenced in their Professional Studies modules.</p> <p><i>“During the professional studies element of the programme, we focus on providing multiple opportunities for these student teachers to transform that subject knowledge into knowledge for teaching,”</i></p> <p><u>School Placement</u> Maynooth University demonstrated how the school placement provides opportunities for student teachers to experience a high support/high challenge model of placement as;</p> <p><i>“Student teachers are scaffolded in their professional growth by operating a high challenge, high support model of school placement”</i></p>	<p>Yes</p>
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	<p>They will both inform and shape each other, receive, and respond to feedback on their practice and identify areas for further professional learning for Droichead.</p> <p><i>“Student teachers are supported to incrementally increase the criticality of their reflections, moving from reflecting in university-based ‘laboratory-style’ teaching situations, to recording reflections on individual lessons, to self-appraising their teaching midway through each placement and in post-placement portfolios (Taisce)”</i></p> <p><u>Core elements of programmes of ITE</u>  The review process determined that the submission demonstrated that the following elements underpin all aspects of the programme.</p> <p><u>1. Inclusive Education</u></p> <p><i>“Our programme provides for the learning needs of all our students and commits to pedagogic principles in the universal design for learning framework, which prioritise multimodal means of (a) engagement, (b) representation and (c) action/expression”</i></p> <p><u>2. Global Citizenship Education</u></p> <p><i>“The core element of Global Citizenship Education permeates all aspects of the programme, informed as it is by the intersection of the social/political, cultural, professional and personal dimensions of the Conceptual Framework.”</i></p> <p><u>3. Professional Relationships and working with parents</u></p> <p><i>“In order to engage appropriately with these different individuals and groups, a deep understanding of those different situations, settings and relationships is vital.”</i></p> <p><i>“Preparation for school placement not only emphasises the role of the teacher in the classroom but also highlights the teacher as extended professional.”</i></p> <p><u>4. Professional identity and agency</u></p> <p><i>“Supporting our student teachers in the growth and development of their professional agency and identity are at the heart of everything we do in the PME across various modules.”</i></p> <p><u>5. Creativity and Reflective practice</u></p>	
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	<p><i>“From student’s first engagement with the programme, tutors and lecturers’ model creative and innovative strategies and assessment modes to support student teachers in their professional roles. This includes a dynamic range of assessment strategies employed, including role plays, oral presentations, poster presentations and art-based assessments.”</i></p> <p><u>6. Literacy and Numeracy</u></p> <p><i>“Literacy and numeracy are embedded in assessment practices, teaching, learning and key skills in all subjects.”</i></p> <p><u>7. Digital Skills</u></p> <p><i>“The development of digital literacy is paramount throughout the programme. While technology is deliberately taught as a pedagogical approach, lecturers also model best and innovative practice by incorporating digital technologies into their pedagogical and assessment practices within modules.”</i></p>	
Post-primary: Curricular subject criteria registration requirements	The programme is Level 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). The entry selection processes are aligned with the Council’s curricular subject specific registration requirements.	Yes
	The review process determined that the submission demonstrated that subject discipline components include subject specific curricular studies and pedagogies (methodologies) for 23 subjects.	
1.1.8 Learning and Assessment Strategies	<p>Maynooth University demonstrated how the principles, beliefs, and values about teaching, learning and assessment which are set out in the conceptual framework are evident in the teaching, learning and assessment modes used in the programme. It demonstrated the relationship (constructive alignment) between the learning opportunities and the assessment criteria which student teachers are expected to meet, and how the assessment processes and procedures are coherent and integrated using a variety of assessment modes.</p> <p><i>“The programme adopts a number of innovative learning and assessment strategies. These demonstrate our commitment to developing sound fundamentals of teaching while at the same time, honing the critical and reflective capacities of our student teachers”</i></p>	Yes

## Programme Resourcing

	Comment	Standard addressed Yes/No
1.2.2 Staffing	<p>The review process determined that the submission demonstrated that the programme meets this standard by providing:</p> <p>programme staff qualifications and experience</p> <p>evidence that from September 2022 at least 50% of all School Placement Tutors are registered as teachers with the Teaching Council, with 84% of their existing placement tutors registered with the Teaching Council.</p> <p>evidence that the staff distribution mechanisms the College has in place to show that prior to qualification, while on school placement, a student teacher will be summatively assessed at least once by a registered teacher.</p> <p>evidence of a student: staff ratio of 19.4:1 (as this ratio was greater than the required standard of 15.1, the University was required to address this shortfall at the full panel meeting in June 2022. Subsequently the University submitted a recruitment plan to the panel that when achieved will address this standard)</p> <p>Maynooth University demonstrated the staff development policies that are in place to ensure that staff continue to enhance their knowledge and expertise including that relating to reflective practice, research, curriculum development, inclusive education, and professional development. The University's Continuing Professional Development Policy outlines their commitment.</p>	Yes subject to requirement below
1.2.3 Facilities	<p>Maynooth University demonstrated that appropriate facilities are available to support research, teaching, and learning, providing the following: Libraries, Library Supports for students with disabilities, Digital Technology resources, Sports and Art facilities, Science Labs, and Microteaching labs</p>	Yes
1.2.4 Student Support and Guidance Systems	<p>The review process determined that the submission demonstrated that provisions are in place for the personal and social development and pastoral care of student teachers.</p> <p>Maynooth University has a wide range of student supports and services.</p> <p><i>"The Maynooth University Writing Centre The Student Counselling Service</i></p>	Yes

	<p><i>The Student Health Centre</i>  <i>The Student Budgeting Advice Service</i>  <i>The Student Support Officer</i>  <i>Crèche</i>  <i>The Sports Office</i>  <i>The Maynooth University Access Office.”</i></p> <p><i>“A student can exit the PME at 2 points prior to completion: -S/he can exit with a Certificate in Educational Studies having completed 30 credits of the PME. -S/he can exit with a Postgraduate Diploma in Educational Studies having completed 60 credits of the PME.”</i></p>	
1.2.5 Communication and Decision-making Structures	<p>The review process determined that the submission demonstrated the structures that are in place to facilitate the participation of staff and students in relevant deliberation and decision-making processes.</p> <p><i>“At a departmental level, monthly staff meetings are scheduled, and decisions are made following discussion and debate.”</i></p> <p>and</p> <p><i>“Students are consulted annually by External Examiners when they undertake their work and this feeds into programme revisions and reviews.”</i></p>	Yes
1.2.6 Financial Resources	<p>Maynooth University have demonstrated that the programme is adequately resourced to ensure that programme aims are met through student fee income and state grants.</p>	Yes

## School Placement

	Comment	Standard addressed?
1.3.1 A Shared Vision for School Placement	<p>The Maynooth University school placement model supports the shared vision for school placement. The review process determined that the submission demonstrated that student teachers experience a supportive model of placement which facilitates professional conversational engagement between all partners.</p> <p><i>“The high support culture of the Department also encourages student teachers to share any issues they are experiencing with their tutors, School Placement Officer or programme leader so that they can be supported”</i></p>	Yes

1.3.2 Duration	The review process determined that the submission demonstrated that the duration of the school placement is in compliance with the Teaching Council's requirements and includes both school-based and HEI-directed activities, thus meeting the requirements of this standard.	Yes
1.3.3 Elements of School Placement	The review process determined that the submission demonstrated that the school-based and HEI-directed activities included as part of the placement experience are as outlined in the Guidelines on School Placement and regarding the stage the student teacher is at on the programme.	Yes
1.3.4 School Placement Models	The review process determined that the submission demonstrated that school placement models are developed using a partnership approach, whereby the HEI and schools actively collaborate in the organisation of the school placement.  <i>"The Department has a systematic approach to the planning and coordination of school placement across the programme. A calendar for school placement is developed annually and is shared with students, schools and departmental personnel in advance of each school year. This is communicated and discussed at student and tutor induction sessions and the School Placement Officer communicates on an ongoing basis with schools."</i>	Yes
1.3.5 Securing of Placement	The review process determined that the submission demonstrated that Maynooth University assumes overall responsibility for the placement of student teachers.  <i>"Where the student teacher experiences difficulty sourcing a placement, the School Placement Officer or wider departmental team reaches out to schools and networks to provide additional support securing a placement."</i>	Yes
1.3.6 Diversity of Placement Settings	The review process determined that the submission demonstrated that the programme meets the requirement of a minimum of two placement settings incorporating a variety of teaching situations, class levels and school contexts, including Irish medium schools.  <i>"The various categories of school types (e.g., patronage types, coeducational/single-sex, fee-paying/public, DEIS/non-DEIS) are explored with students to ensure a diversity of experiences across placements within the programme."</i>	Yes
1.3.7 Taisce in School Placement	The review process determined that the submission provided evidence of the approaches Maynooth University is utilising to enable the student teacher to demonstrate, using their Taisce,	Yes

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an understanding of inclusive education as applicable to that context</li> <li>• an understanding of working with parents</li> </ul>	
1.3.8 Research in School Placement	<p>Maynooth University demonstrated that the student teacher engages in research on their own practice that demonstrates the connection between the sites of practice during at least one school placement module.</p> <p><i>“Student teachers are supported to incrementally increase the criticality of their reflections, moving from reflecting in university-based ‘laboratory-style’ teaching situations, to recording reflections on individual lessons, to self-appraising their teaching midway through each placement and in post-placement portfolios (Taisce)”</i></p>	Yes
1.3.9 School Placement: Evaluation and Assessment	<p>The review process determined that the submission demonstrated that all student teachers are supported and assessed by two or more Placement Tutors, and at least once by a registered teacher. It outlined the teaching enrichment and mentoring support offered to students who fail a module of school placement.</p> <p><i>“If these comprehensive interventions are unsuccessful and the student fails the school placement module, planning commences with the student teacher to identify needs and to develop both university-based and school-based supports before the repeat placement begins.”</i></p>	Yes

## Recommendation

Having regard to the documentation that was submitted, the panel adjudges that the programme meets the standards set down by the Teaching Council in *Céim: Standards for Initial Teacher Education* and in The Teaching Council Registration Curricular Subject Requirements (Post-Primary)

Accordingly, it recommends to the Teaching Council that the programme be granted accreditation subject to the following requirement:

### Programme Accreditation Requirement

The Teaching Council will require confirmation, that the proposed recruitment, as outlined in the letter provided by Maynooth University, dated 8 July 2022, to ensure that the student staff ratio requirement is being brought into alignment with the Céim standard of 15:1, has been implemented by Maynooth University.

Evidence of meeting this requirement should be submitted to the Council not later than 31 March 2023.

<b>Date Requirement met in full</b>
29 August 2023

## Appendix 1 - Review Panel Membership

### **Chair**

Dr Mary Fleming

Dr Mary Fleming Emeritus Senior Lecturer in NUI Galway. She was Head of the School of Education, NUI Galway from 2013-2016 and member of the Teaching Council 2016-2018. As Director Teacher Education within the School of Education from 2012, she had primary responsibility for the development and accreditation of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Programmes and was academic Director of the Professional Master of Education. Mary lectured and taught modules in the areas of Leadership and Policy development, Curriculum Studies, and Professional Practice. Her research interest areas are concerned with the dynamics of teaching and learning within classrooms, leading learning and policy developments within the system and leadership practices within educational contexts.

### **Panel Member**

Professor Jim Gleeson

Jim Gleeson was a teacher in the Vocational Education sector and has worked on various curriculum development and evaluation projects. He worked in teacher education at Thomond College of Education/University of Limerick (1981-2011). Jim was an IUA nominee on the Teaching Council from 2005-2012. He was Professor of Identity and Curriculum at Australian Catholic University, Brisbane, from 2013-2018, and he is currently an Adjunct Professor at the Institute of Education, Dublin City University. Jim's main research interests include curriculum policy and practice; teacher professionalism and development; faith-based education.

### **Panel Member**

Mr Milo Walsh

Mr Walsh is the former assistant Principal CBS Wexford. Member of Teaching council 2005-2016 (Investigative/Disciplinary/Education Committee). Member of Teaching Council executive 2012-2016. Chair of finance committee Teaching Council 2012-2016. School Development Planning Co-ordinator Dept. of Education and science 2007-2011. INTO Education Committee member 1996-2014. Chairperson INTO Education Committee 2005-2009.