

Institiúid Náisiúnta do
Léann an Oideachais
National Institute for
Studies in Education



This project is co-financed by the Higher Education Authority under National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015-2019 Programme for Access to Higher Education (PATH) Fund - Strand 1: Equity of Access to Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and National Institute for Studies in Education (NISE) and the Shannon Consortium institutions.

Programme for Access to Higher Education (PATH)

Project Officer

(36 month, full time post)

JOB SPECIFICATION AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

1. PREAMBLE

Mary Immaculate College (MIC) is an autonomous, university-level, Catholic College of Education and the Liberal Arts. Founded in 1898, and linked academically with the University of Limerick, MIC is the oldest higher education institution in Limerick. Significant expansion in recent decades has seen the College's offerings proliferate across two impressive campuses, one based in the heart of Limerick City and one in Thurles, Co. Tipperary. The diverse student community is made up of more than 5,000 learners, participating in nine undergraduate degree programmes and a multiplicity of postgraduate opportunities extending to doctoral level. Academic staff are engaged in a wide range of research interests which underpins all teaching and learning at the College.

MIC seeks to prepare its students for professional excellence and to nurture their capacity to lead flourishing lives.

2. CANDIDATE PROFILE & SCOPE OF THE POSITION

Following the Sahlberg report (2012) UL, MIC and LIT established the National Institute for Studies in Education (NISE) in April 2014. Nationally UL, MIC and LIT annually graduate between 35-40% of all (state funded) student teachers for the teaching profession and the existing figures for new entrants via non-traditional routes across the three NISE members indicate a strong commitment to enhancing access.

The National Institute for Studies in Education (NISE), comprising LIT, MIC and UL, has been awarded funding from the HEA to widen participation to initial teacher education (ITE). NISE's suite of projects are framed in terms of four distinct and inter-related phases: (i) promotion & recruitment at pre-entry, (ii) application and selection at pre-entry, (iii) initial transition upon entry to ITE and, (iv) on-going support through ITE and into the first year of teaching. Within that framework, the three proposed programmes are: (i) Step into Teaching: Urban and Rural Disadvantage and Access to ITE, (ii) Mapping the Journey: Enhancing Progression from FE to HE, (iii) Mapping the Journey: Transition and Support for Student Teachers. Further detail of each individual project is provided below.

The proposed set of cross-institutional programmes will be undertaken collaboratively by a team of staff working across all three programmes with clearly focused remits within the programmes.

On behalf of NISE, Mary Immaculate College wishes to fill the position of Project Officer for the Programme for Access to Higher Education (PATH) Strand 1 on a 36-month, fulltime, fixed term basis commencing September 2017.

These projects will clearly operationalise the initial steps towards the fulfilment of a multitude of policy recommendations outlined in the National Plan on Equity of Access to Higher Education

2015-2019 and the Call for Funding Proposals. Furthermore, each project is clearly aligned with one or more of the goals identified in the National Access Plan 2015-2019 and applied to the ITE context.

The three projects are as follows:

Project 1: Step into teaching: will target second-level students who are potential entrants to ITE through the provision of classes, via Campa Samhraidh, to improve Gaeilge proficiency, provide opportunities for the students to participate in a wide range of ITE ‘taster’ courses, and provide practical information on HEAR/DARE/SUSI supports. ITE undergraduate students will mentor the targeted post-primary students.

Project 2: Enhancing Progression from FE to HE: this project aims to facilitate the transition from further education to ITE (post primary) through the creation of a new pathway for FE mature students, by developing an alternative entry route to ITE which will accept QQI Levels Five, Six and the national Craft Certificate as alternatives to the traditional Leaving Certificate entry requirements. Prospective students will complete for a place on post-primary ITE programmes through the CAO system but as QQI applicants.

Project 3: Comprises a Student Teacher Transition Programme (STTP) which is intended to build on the success of the University of Limerick’s Transition to University Course and its innovative ‘First Seven Weeks’ programme and Orientation at Mary Immaculate College. STTP will be an intensive one-week experience open to all successful new ITE entrants from the National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education target groups. This intensive programme will prepare new students for their higher-level education experiences, their specific courses of study and will also introduce them to their mentoring and academic support framework. Students on the programme will be asked to keep reflective portfolios, which will capture their experience of earlier education, early transition and their journey through the first year of their teaching programmes. This will assist in the evaluation of what strategies are effective in easing the transition to ITE for students from the target groups.

In order to be considered for this position candidates must have:

- A qualification at Level 7 on the NFQ or higher in Education/Community work, Social work, Youth work, or a cognate area or a significant level of experience;
- A minimum of 3 years’ relevant experience in the field of education, community work, social care or a cognate area;
- Experience of and participation in comparable projects in an education context;
- A broad understanding of the education system in Ireland;
- A keen understanding of the area of widening participation; in particular of transitions, access programmes/initiatives and of peer-to-peer mentoring;
- The skills required to collaborate in the research dimension of the project, and an appreciation of the value of research for the full implementation of the project;
- Experience and skills in resource development, effective collaboration, public relations and media management;
- Excellent quantitative and qualitative data analysis skills and experience in using data interrogation tools such as Microsoft Excel, SurveyMonkey, SPSS and other similar tools;
- Excellent administrative and organisational skills including budgeting, report writing and IT skills;

- Demonstrable ability to plan effectively and to prioritise, manage and complete a variety of tasks at times of high pressure and to work effectively both as part of a team and on own initiative;
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills and the ability to maintain high levels of confidentiality and discretion;
- Commitment to working during the summer period as required by the core projects;

It is desirable that candidates will also have:

- Experience of working in partnerships;
- Working knowledge of Gaeilge;
- Full, clean driving license with access to own transport.

Cuirfear fáilte faoi leith roimh iarratais ó dhaoine go bhfuil inniúlacht acu sa Ghaeilge. Applications are welcome from people who have a competence in Irish.

Candidates must clearly indicate in their applications how they meet each of the above criteria.

3. JOB DESCRIPTION

Reporting Relationship

The appointee is required to carry out the duties attached to the post, under the general direction of the Programme Manager to whom (s)he reports, and to whom (s)he is responsible for the performance of these duties in the first instance. Within MIC, the appointee will report through the Programme Manager to NISE/Shannon Consortium, the Dean of Education and the College President and/or such other College Officers as the President may designate from time to time. The appointee will also provide reports and/or oral presentations to the Project Management Committee and other stakeholders, as required.

As required, (s)he will liaise with the Heads of Departments and those in leadership/management positions within the Faculty of Education, the Dean of Education, and other College personnel and with relevant College bodies in carrying out the duties attaching to the post. In the case of there being a crossover in terms of the duties and responsibilities of other post holders within the College, the College President will adjudicate on same.

The reporting relationship may be subject to review from time to time, in line with service needs and developments in the College.

Duties and Responsibilities

The PATH Project Officer will

- plan, manage and coordinate projects with the Programme Manager;
- assist the Programme Manager in working with the school communities, further education sector, faculties across higher education institutions, access professionals and external stakeholders in order to ensure that the targets outlined in the project plans are adhered to;
- work with the Programme Manager to develop and deliver programmes/workshops/training in collaboration with other stakeholders;

- carry out baseline research, as directed by Programme Manager to identify ongoing strengths, challenges and learning associated with each project;
- review and monitor progress and assist in the evaluation of the different strands in the initiative;
- assist in the development of publications, resource materials and disseminate findings from projects under the direction of the Programme Manager;
- participate in professional development opportunities as required;
- work closely with the Programme Manager to keep a record of all income and expenditure and prepare reports and or presentations for NISE and other stakeholders, if required;
- maintain detailed project plans throughout the time span of the project under the direction of the Programme Manager.

The work is broadly defined and the list of duties is not exhaustive. The performance of the entire range of duties is not necessarily confined to any one individual, as the work requires that the staff function in a flexible manner, and work together as a team. The College retains the right to assign new duties and/or to re-assign staff to other areas of the College, in response to service needs.

4. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

General

All persons employed will sign an appropriate contract, which will contain terms and conditions of the employment. A job description is given to all applicants for employment and this will form part of the contract documentation.

Exclusivity of Service and Outside Work

The person appointed will be required to devote his/her full-time attention and abilities to his/her duties during his/her working hours in the College, and to act in the best interest of the College at all times. Therefore, for as long as the successful applicant is employed by the College, he/she may not, without the prior written consent of the College, be actively engaged or concerned in any way, either directly or indirectly, in any other business or undertaking where this is or is likely to be in conflict with the College's interests or the performance of the employee's duties.

The appointee will not, during his/her tenure of office, undertake paid outside work unless he/she has received the permission of the Executive Team of Mary Immaculate College to undertake such work on the terms and conditions as agreed for the particular undertaking in question. In every case, it is the duty of the appointee to seek in writing the prior permission of the Executive Team. It is also the duty, in every case, of the appointee to inform the person or body for whom the work is being undertaken, that the work is being conducted in a private capacity and that the College cannot in any circumstances be responsible for such work.

Probationary Period

The appointment is subject to satisfactory completion of a nine-month probationary period. The probationary period may be extended at the discretion of The College but will not in any case exceed 11 months. Absences during the period of probation will extend the probationary period. Performance and conduct during the probationary period will be monitored through a process of assessment meetings. Termination of employment during the probationary period will be at the discretion of the College. An abridged version of the disciplinary procedure will apply to employees on probation.

Hours of Attendance

Full time hours are 37 hours per week.

The normal hours of duty are Monday to Thursday, 9am to 5.15pm and Friday 9am to 4.45pm with a 45-minute lunch break each day. The College reserves the right to adjust starting and finishing times or days of duty to meet service needs.

The post holder may be required to work occasional evenings and/or weekends.

Place of Work

The place of work will be the University of Limerick and Mary Immaculate College, Limerick and a desk will be provided at both locations to facilitate cross-institution working. Similarly, access to a workstation will be provided at Limerick Institute of Technology as required. The College reserves the right to require the post holder to work from any other location, such as the University of Limerick and Limerick Institute of Technology. The post holder will be required to reside within a reasonable distance of their place of work.

Salary

The Salary scale for this position has been approved by the Department of Education & Skills and the Higher Education Authority in line with Government Policy on Public Sector remuneration. The rate of remuneration may be adjusted from time to time in line with Government pay policy. The appointment will be made on the salary scale at a point in line with current Government Pay Policy. New entrants to the Civil or Public Sector, as defined in Circular 18/2010, will commence on the first point of the salary scale.

The grade for this post is Executive Officer. With effect from 1st April, 2017, the annual salary scale for the grade is:

Executive Officer: €29,707 to €48,975 (13 points).

Executive Officer (New Entrants): €26,837 to €48,975 (15 points)

Salary will be paid on a monthly basis on the 2nd last bank working day of each month, using the Paypath facility. Payment of salaries and wages are subject to statutory deductions, i.e. Income Tax (PAYE), Superannuation Contributions and Pay Related Social Insurance (PRSI).

Superannuation

New entrants to the public service will be required to participate in the Single Public Service Pension Scheme and pay Superannuation contributions at the appropriate rates in accordance with the provisions of the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act, 2012.

All other eligible appointees are automatically included in the Colleges' of Education Pension Scheme on taking up appointment. In compliance with the Colleges of Education Pension Scheme, deductions

amounting to 6.5% are made from salary. Details of the regulations concerning the Colleges' of Education Pension Scheme may be obtained from the College's Human Resources Office.

The mandatory retirement age for new entrant staff in employment in the public service after 1st January 2013 is 70 years. All other Members of the College's staff must retire at the age of 65.

Staff who are not eligible for membership of the Colleges' of Education Pension Scheme or the Single Public Service Pension Scheme may avail of a PRSA (Personal Retirement Savings Account). A designated PRSA provider has been nominated by the College and staff who are not eligible for membership of the aforementioned schemes should contact the Finance Office for further information on PRSA.

Annual Leave

The annual leave entitlement for this grade is 25 working days per leave year. Annual leave may not be available over the summer months, as projects will be delivered over this period. The taking of leave must have the prior approval of the relevant Line Manager.

Public Holidays are granted in accordance with the provisions of the Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997.

Sick Leave

There is a discretionary sick pay scheme, details of which are available from the Human Resources Office. Employees who have a minimum 3 months' continuous employment with the College may be granted sick pay subject to the terms of the Public Service Sick Leave Scheme. Sick pay is contingent on full cooperation and compliance with the Colleges absence management procedures.

Termination of Employment

At least two calendar months' written notice is required to resign this post.

On the termination of employment but before departing from the College, staff members are required to return to the College all books, reports, memoranda, correspondence, papers, records, reports, files including data held on electronic files, computer disks, electronically recorded discs, and any other documentation, and all other property, including office keys, belonging to the College or relating to its business or affairs which are in the possession of a staff member or under his/her control when the employment is terminated.

Confidentiality

In the course of working in Mary Immaculate College, the person appointed may have access to, or hear information concerning staff and/or students, and/or the functioning and the business of the College. Such information acquired in the course of employment with the College, including any aspect of the College's responsibilities or operations, is considered to be confidential information. On no account must information concerning students, staff or other College business be divulged or discussed except in the performance of normal duty, and unless authorised to do so, this information shall not be communicated to a third party. In addition, records must never be left in a manner that unauthorised persons can obtain access to them and must be kept in safe custody when no longer required.

Health & Safety

Mary Immaculate College will ensure as far as reasonably practicable, a safe and healthy work environment. Therefore, it is the duty of each employee to take reasonable care to protect the health and safety of themselves and of other people in the workplace. Each employee must comply with all health and safety policies and procedures in operation in Mary Immaculate College and familiarise him/herself with the Safety Statement.

Employees are obliged to wear the PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) they have been provided with and no person shall intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse any appliance, protective clothing or other equipment provided in the workplace for health and safety purposes. Employees are statutorily/legally obliged to ensure that any accidents/incidents that may occur are reported promptly to the Health and Safety Officer on the MIC Accident/Incident Report Form.

The person appointed to this post must fully participate in and attend all relevant work-related health and safety training as may be required by the College.

College Policies, Rules and Regulations

The College is a Public-Sector employer and is bound by National Agreements. It is also bound by regulations, circulars and directives issued on behalf of Government by the Department of Finance, the Department of Education & Skills and the Higher Education Authority.

Employees are at all times subject to the provisions of the College policies, rules and regulations. These policies include but are not confined to Discipline & Grievance Policies, Dignity at Work, Examination Rules & Regulations, Policy on Responsible Computing and Use of Information Technology Facilities. These policies are outlined in the Staff Handbook for College employees. All employees are required to familiarise themselves with the contents of the Handbook, which is available via the Human Resources webpage on the College website.

5. APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

Method of Selection for Recommendation

The number of applications received for a position generally exceeds that required to fill the position and while a candidate may meet the eligibility requirements of the competition, if the numbers applying for the position are such that it would not be practical to interview everyone, the College may decide that only a limited number of candidates will be called to interview. In this respect, the College will provide for the employment of a short listing process to select a group for interview who, based on an examination of the application forms appear to be most suitable for the position. An expert board will examine each application form against pre-determined criteria based on the requirements of the position. This is not to suggest that other candidates are necessarily unsuitable or incapable of undertaking the job, rather that there are some candidates, who based on their application, appear to be better qualified and/or have more relevant experience. It is therefore in the candidate's own interest to provide a detailed and accurate account of qualifications/ experience on the application and clearly identify how they meet the specified candidate criteria.

The selection process may include an aptitude assessment of one or more of the essential competencies for the post.

A recommendation for appointment will be made by an Interview Board. The appointment will be based on this recommendation, except where considerations of health or an unsuitable record in previous employment warrants a departure. A panel will be formed from which temporary appointments to this post may be filled during the life of the panel (12 months).

Candidates must produce satisfactory documentary evidence of all training and experience claimed by them, if required.

Medical Examination

For the purpose of satisfying requirements as to health, successful candidates, before being appointed, may be required to undergo pre-employment health screening.

Garda Vetting

Successful applicants will be required to undergo Garda vetting. Specific instruction on this process will be given at the appropriate time. Applicants who do not comply with the College's requirements in this regard will be excluded from consideration for appointment.

Making of Applications

Application forms for this post may be downloaded from the Mary Immaculate College website. **Five** copies of the completed application form must be submitted. Email applications will **not** be accepted.

Applications must be submitted in typed format. Handwritten applications will **not** be accepted. Incomplete applications, including those submitted with fewer than the required number of copies, will **not** be accepted.

Applications must reach the Human Resources Office, Mary Immaculate College, South Circular Road, Limerick not later than

2pm on Wednesday, 20th September 2017

Late applications will **not** be accepted.

The College will not be responsible for any expenses, including travelling expenses, which candidates may incur in connection with their candidature.

Any attempt by a candidate either personally or through any other person, on their behalf, to canvass or otherwise influence the outcome of the selection/interview process in his/her favour will lead to disqualification from the competition. Any representations made on behalf of a candidate, without his/her knowledge will be ignored.

Mary Immaculate College is an equal opportunities employer.

August 2017