

An Chomhairle
Mhúinteoireachta

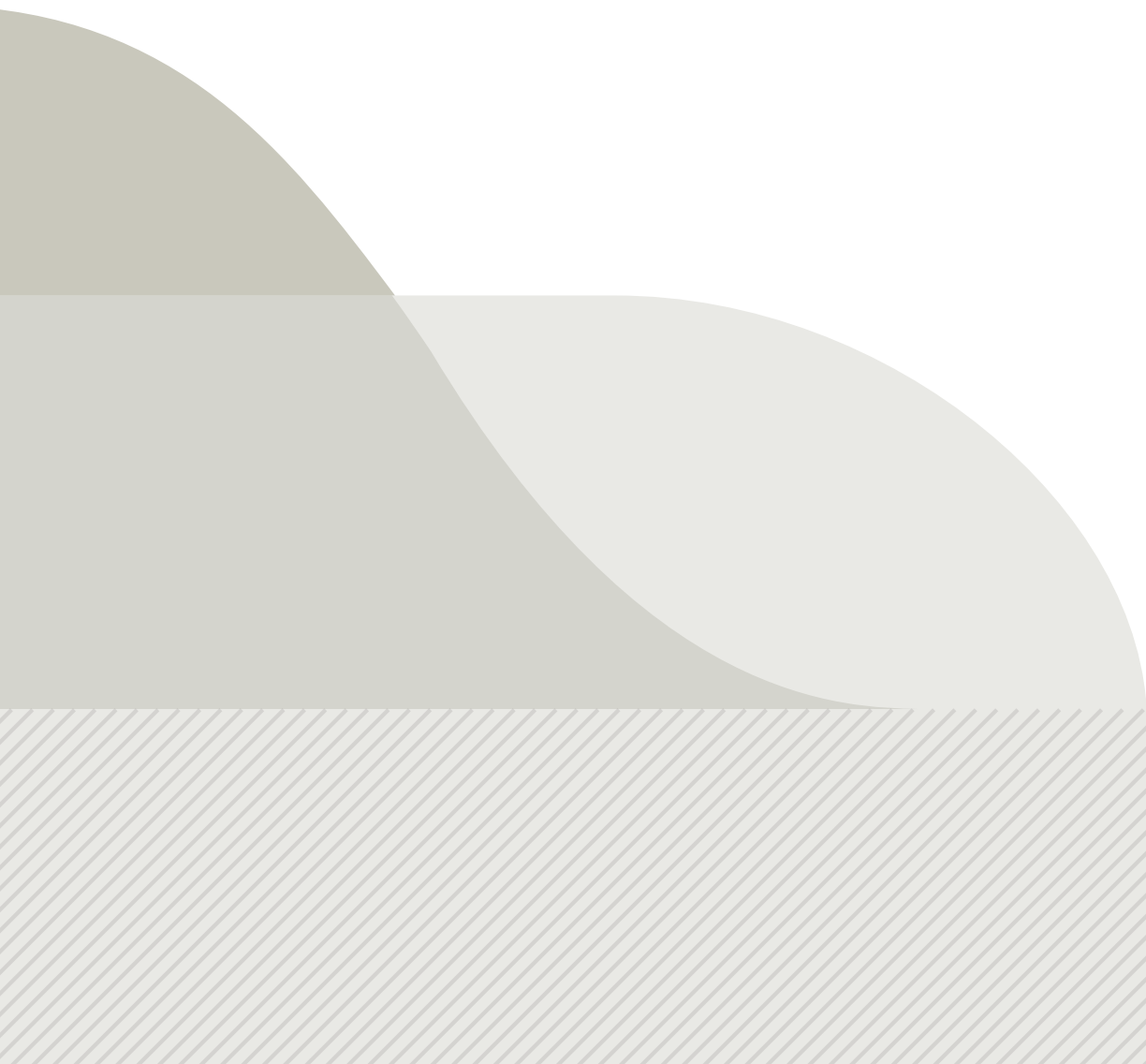


The Teaching Council

Report and Action Plan of the School Placement Working Group

*to the Department of Education and Skills'
Teacher Supply Implementation Group*

September 2019



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List of Acronyms

DES	Department of Education and Skills
DEIS	Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools
HEA	Higher Education Authority
HEI	Higher Education Institution
IFUT	Irish Federation of University Teachers
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
PAC	Postgraduate Applications Centre
PME	Professional Masters in Education
PDST	Professional Development Support for Teachers
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SSE	School Self Evaluation
ST	Student Teacher
SP	School Placement
SPWG	School Placement Working Group
T-REX	Teachers' Research Exchange

Chairperson's Foreword

School placement is the fulcrum of the continuum of teacher education. What does this mean in practice?

School placement is the one space in which teacher educators, including experienced teachers in schools, and student teachers all meet and relate with each other. The quality of student teachers' experience on school placement has a direct impact on the quality of their teaching when they qualify – and thereby on the quality of pupils' learning, both now and into the future.

This is why the School Placement Working Group (SPWG) has identified action research as one area that can not only bring research, policy and practice closer together – but can help each area directly inform and support the other. It is an area of work whose potential has been hidden in plain sight for far too long. We are aware of some innovative work already by some HEIs in this space. The Council is reflecting on this as part of its deliberations on the new standards for ITE.

It is little wonder that student teachers consistently rate school placement as the most relevant area of their teacher education studies. This also highlights how important it is that we give the teachers who welcome student teachers on placement every possible support for their own professional learning. The nature of this support, and its purpose, is captured in the new term which the School Placement Working Group has identified for the experienced teachers - *Treoraithe*. According to Foclóir Uí Dhónaill, this translates as *guide*. This replaces the term “co-operating teacher” as the Group is of the view that *Treoraithe* more accurately encapsulates the role as outlined in the Council's School Placement Guidelines. The expectations of *Treoraithe* are no more and no less than those of co-operating teachers, as described in Teaching Council policy. The support which they need, however, is much clearer and this is reflected in the recommendations of the SPWG in relation to a formal programme of professional learning.

The Group is keen to acknowledge that teachers have been welcoming student teachers on placement for decades. All those who have qualified as teachers to date have done so because other teachers inspired them and other teachers supported them on placement. The intergenerational benefits of school placement are very much in evidence in schools all around the country. The SPWG's recommendations are designed to ensure that these benefits are shared more consistently and equitably for all teachers and learners. They do this based on the belief that school placement at its best is a win-win for all parties to the process. It exemplifies the connection of professional learning from across the continuum of teacher education for experienced teachers, student teachers, schools and HEIs.

The SPWG has reflected deeply on the many issues and challenges which have been well traced in relation to school placement. These are extensively documented in the longitudinal research commissioned by the Council (Hall et al., 2018) and also in feedback and conversations with many stakeholders, including HEIs, school principals and management, and teacher unions. Underpinning the Group's report and its recommendations is a clear recognition that the current arrangements for school placement across the system are not sustainable.

Everyone – student teachers, HEIs, school principals and *Treoraithe* – have all spoken of the critical value of school placement and how vital it is for sustaining quality teaching and learning. Yet each of these parties have also spoken of their frustration at the ad hoc nature of the process. For some student teachers, there is the challenge of securing placement. For HEIs, there can be a perception that some schools do not shoulder their responsibility fairly across the system. For schools, there is a perception that some HEIs do not sufficiently recognise school staff's contribution to quality teacher education programmes across their sector. And all parties look to the Teaching Council and the Department to do something about this.

If I have learned one thing about Irish education over the past seven years, it is that while policy setting and regulation can be powerful forces for change and quality assurance, everybody who cares about quality teaching and learning must collaborate together in order to realise the exciting potential of this work. This includes the Department and the Council.

It was Margaret Wheatley, the author and systems change theorist, who said:

“ *Everyone in a complex system has a slightly different interpretation. The more interpretations we gather, the easier it becomes to gain a sense of the whole.*

In this light, I want to pay particular tribute to every member of the School Placement Working Group for their commitment to its work and the honesty and authenticity of their engagement. Over a number of meetings, the Group teased out the strengths and challenges of school placement from every conceivable angle. And I have observed an impressive and instructive unity of purpose throughout its deliberations.

The other significant feature of the SPWG's work was the conversations which took place among HEIs and school principals, both within their respective sectors and across sectors. Given the pressures of timelines, these conversations must be seen as merely a beginning. In recognition of the critical importance of sustained stakeholder collaboration, as identified earlier and also in the work on teacher supply, it is no surprise that the SPWG has emphasised the importance of ongoing communications across the system as its recommendations are carried forward.

In closing, I want to thank all the staff of Initial Teacher Education and Induction in the Council who have worked so hard behind the scenes to support the SPWG in its work – Phil Fox, Siobhán Healy, Bríd Murphy and Sarah O'Grady.

I am delighted to commend this report to the Teaching Council and the Minister for Education and Skills and look forward to working with all stakeholders in realising our shared vision for school placement –

“ *School placement is a central feature of initial teacher education, where student teachers are welcomed and supported by HEI tutors, school principals, class teachers and the school community. Student teachers' rich contribution to pupil learning and school life is recognised and celebrated.*



Tomás Ó Ruairc

Director / CEO

September 2019

Report of the School Placement Working Group

Introduction and Background

Under Section 38 of the Teaching Council Acts 2001-2015 the Council is responsible for the review and accreditation of programmes of Initial Teacher Education, having regard to the national policy framework established by the Minister for Education and Skills. Guidelines for this are set out by the Council in its documents, *Initial Teacher Education: Strategy for the Review and Professional Accreditation of Existing Programmes*, *Guidelines on School Placement*, and *Initial Teacher Education: Criteria and Guidelines for Programme Providers*. In this context, and as part of the Teacher Supply Action Plan, the Department of Education and Skills has requested the Teaching Council to review the implementation of school placement guidelines, with a particular focus on school/HEI partnerships, and to make recommendations. This review should also have regard to relevant systemic issues in relation to teacher supply.

In 2014, the Council commissioned a team of external researchers, led by Professor Kathy Hall in University College Cork, to gather evidence of current practice in relation to school placement, and make recommendations to inform the Council's thinking and future policy on school placement. The research was conducted over a period of almost four years concluding in early 2018, and the final research report was presented to the Teaching Council in July 2018.

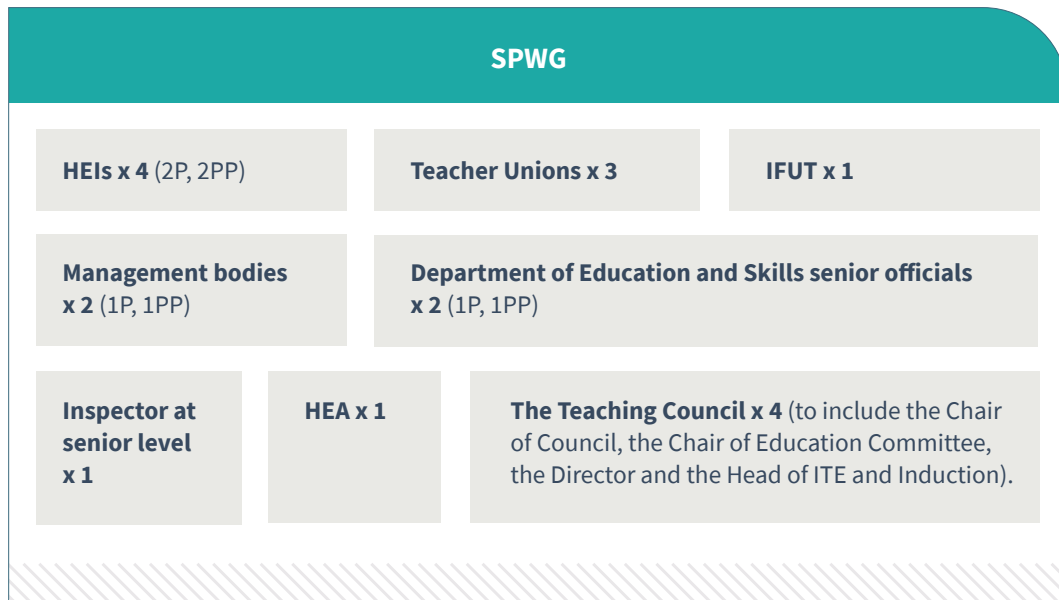
The report on school placement highlighted an emerging reluctance among schools to offer placements to student teachers. Challenges facing principals and deputy principals included having to facilitate different HEI placement calendars, expectations and grading systems. These challenges coupled with reports of increased administration workloads and costs, have led to difficulties in sourcing and securing school placements. One of the key recommendations arising from the research was that a Working Group be convened to consider how greater alignment can be obtained between the policy on school placement and its enactment.

Focus of Report

The Terms of Reference (see Appendix 1) for the School Placement Working Group (SPWG) specified that the group would, having regard for systemic issues, review the implementation of the School Placement Guidelines and would consider the report of the research conducted by Hall et al (2018), with particular reference to the policy implications identified therein. Specifically, it would convey recommendations to the Department of Education and Skills' Teacher Supply Implementation Group and inform the forthcoming review of the *Initial Teacher Education: Criteria and Guidelines for Programme Providers* in respect of School Placement. In respect of all issues highlighted for further attention by the researchers, the SPWG worked towards a coordinated, appropriate and sustainable approach to implementation.

SPWG Composition

Following a presentation of the research report to the Teaching Council in July 2018, a School Placement Working Group (SPWG) was convened in November 2018. A list of SPWG members and the organisations to which they are affiliated is presented in *Appendix 2*. Its composition is summarised as follows:



Subgroups

To support its work, the SPWG convened two subgroups, which represented the voices of 1) Principals and 2) HEI stakeholders.

SPWG Meetings and Subgroup Meetings

Since November 2018, the SPWG met on seven occasions and three subgroup meetings took place (see *Appendix 3*). So as to inform its work, the SPWG actively sought to hear the voices of experienced teachers, newly-qualified teachers and student teachers in relation to school placement. To that end, in March 2019, teachers who took part in the Hall et al. research study were invited to give presentations to the SPWG. The three presentations explored various models of school placement, including a local model of school placement in a single school, a model of school placement between a number of schools and one HEI, and lastly a regional model of induction for both student teachers and newly appointed staff across fifteen post-primary schools.

The SPWG also sought input from the Teachers' Research Exchange (T-REX) Development Team. T-REX is an online forum and was established with support from the NCCA, the Centre for Effective Services, the Teaching Council and, the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. In September 2019, representatives from Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick and Marino Institute of Education gave a presentation to the SPWG. Their presentation explored how T-REX is being used by teachers and student teachers to engage with and in research, and as a tool by teacher educators to scaffold student teachers' engagement with theory and research *while* on placement in schools. Their presentation outlined how the T-REX research exchange platform can be used as a digital bridge not only between theory and practice, but also between the teacher, teacher educator and student teacher, and the school and HEI setting. The presentation also outlined how one possible model for connecting research and practice as part of school placement might work.

Subgroup meetings were well attended. Thirty-seven representatives were in attendance at the Principals' Subgroup meeting in February 2019 and twenty-seven representatives attended the HEI Subgroup meeting in March 2019. In the spirit of partnership and collaboration, a joint Principal-HEI Subgroup meeting took place in May 2019, at which there were thirty-six attendees. A panel of four, comprising one representative from each of the subgroups and two student teachers, presented at the Joint Subgroup meeting. Each subgroup representative summarised the discussions held at their respective meetings. The student teachers outlined their personal experiences of school placement, highlighting both positive and negative aspects of the process. They offered suggestions for both HEIs and schools around how to create improved and sustainable placement experiences. Stakeholders were then encouraged to sit together and identify actionable solutions to specific challenges identified at previous meetings. The opinions of student teachers were also sought at a consultation forum in March 2019. The School Placement Working Group has considered the suggested actions proposed at subgroup meetings, coupled with the proposals made by student teachers at the consultation forum.

Shared Vision for School Placement

Having considered the Hall et al. (2018) report on school placement, the SPWG began its work by developing a shared vision for school placement. This vision document was presented at all SPWG and sub-group meetings and has evolved over time. It is believed that the document below will serve as a vision for school placement into the future and underpin a coordinated, appropriate and sustainable approach to implementation of identified priority actions areas. It reads:

School placement is a central feature of initial teacher education, where student teachers are welcomed and supported by HEI tutors, school principals, class teachers and the school community. Student teachers' rich contribution to pupil learning and school life is recognised and celebrated.

Student teachers must successfully complete this element of the programme. It provides student teachers with an opportunity to reflect on their identity as teachers, to develop it and become socialised into the profession. It is underpinned by a shared professional understanding that collaborative engagement with school placement provides professional learning opportunities for all involved.

School-HEI partnerships:

- support professional collaboration
- foster innovation in pedagogical practice for all teachers
- support engagement with and in research by all teachers
- are focused on the learning needs of pupils, and of all teachers.

Student teachers experience a supportive model of placement which facilitates professional conversational engagement between all partners. Such supports shall include structures at the national level to facilitate quality and collaborative engagement in school placement. Student teachers identify further professional learning for Droichead, the induction phase of the continuum.

Towards an Action Plan Report

Following its consideration of feedback and observations received at SPWG meetings, sub-groups and engagements, the Group identified key challenges, under three broad heading in relation to school placement.

1. Sourcing and administration of School Placement
2. Financial cost of School Placement
3. Roles and responsibilities of stakeholders (with a particular focus on teachers who host student teachers)

These challenges formed the basis of the action plan on school placement.

Number of Placements Required and Projected Costs

In order to provide a fully costed action plan on school placement, both the DES and the HEA were requested to provide a costing analysis, based on 3000 student teachers¹, for the following:

1. The establishment of a software package that would support a centralised school placement system.
 - a. the system would facilitate the sourcing, administration and organisation of school placement for HEIs, primary and post-primary level schools
 - b. the system would have the capacity to match students to school places and encourage geographical alignment between HEIs and schools, including the movement of HEI tutors regionally
 - c. although more reliable data is needed, based on annual applications to the Teaching Council for initial registration, the system would be required to facilitate placements for approximately 3000 student teachers per annum
 - d. based on engagement with another teaching regulator, a dedicated staff member would be required to administrate the system, at Executive Officer level
 - e. I.T. and associated system maintenance costs should also be considered.
2. The costs associated with developing and implementing a programme of professional learning for Treoraithe (formerly called co-operating teachers).
 - a. this programme would support Treoraithe in their work with student teachers
 - b. the Treoraithe Professional Learning Group (TPLG), as described in the draft action plan will be tasked with drafting programme content and outlining programme implementation
 - c. implementation would involve an initial demonstration model phase following by full national roll-out.

It was also suggested that costings should take account of the impact of Droichead on the wider system, including cultural change, as evidenced by the research in this area.

¹ Estimated at approximately 3,000 student teachers per annum by using the annual applications to the Teaching Council for initial registration as a proxy.

Three potential implementation models for the programme of professional learning for Treoraithe were provided:

Model A

Release time to be provided for a three-day professional learning programme for individual Treoraithe

Model B

A whole school approach to professional learning, involving all teaching staff (three days)

Model C

A whole school approach to professional learning involving all teaching staff (two days) plus release time (one day) to be accessed by a Treoraí as needed, for bespoke learning activities in specific subject areas/contexts.

HEA Points of Information Received

- i. A summary of the costs estimated for the online school placement systems that were funded by the HEA under the Strategic Innovation and Development Fund in 2013 were received. The costs were estimated at 2013 levels and reflected the differing specifications of the systems.
- ii. It was recommended that the software package for a centralised school placement system should include costs for security (GDPR compliance, etc.), and for the training of users (principals, HEI tutors, teachers).
- iii. Of importance to note is that HEA returns in 2017/18 suggest that there were approximately 4,000 primary ITE students and approximately 4,000 post-primary ITE students across all years at undergraduate and postgraduate level. Moreover, the HEA returns only refer to HEA designated institutions and so do not include students registered on ITE programmes in Marino Institute of Education or Hibernia College. While it is not possible to give an accurate estimate, it is reasonable to assume that the number of ITE students requiring school placements is higher than the 8,000 estimated by the HEA.
- iv. The HEA provides funding to designated HEIs via the Recurrent Grant Allocation Model (RGAM), which employs a funding formula that is informed by student numbers from the previous academic year that have been audited and verified. The student numbers are then weighted for the relative costs pertaining to different disciplines. For example, students on ITE programmes are given a higher weighting than humanities students, but less than medicine, to take account of the unique elements of ITE provision.
- v. The Review of the Allocation Model for Funding Higher Education Institutions which was published in 2018, recommended that disciplines that were the subject of academic reform, such as ITE, should undergo detailed reviews so that appropriate weightings that take account of the reforms can be assigned. The report also recommended that a review should be undertaken to establish a consistent and comparable costing system and reporting requirements across all higher education institutions, and this is being examined and progressed in advance of detailed discipline reviews being undertaken. The SPWG recommends that this work be completed as a matter of urgency.

DES: Points of Information Received

- i. The professional learning models for Treoraithe were worked through with established costings based on what are considered reasonable assumptions. However, several key assumptions were based on incomplete data only.
- ii. Student teachers have different lengths of school placement in each year of their ITE programme. Therefore, in any given year, there are student teachers on placement who are enrolled in different year groups of concurrent and consecutive ITE programmes. It has not proven possible to date to arrive at an accurate figure for total school placement demand in the system. This must be a priority item to address in the specification and growth of a central placement system.
- iii. Not all schools facilitate placement and some schools have several teachers on placement. However, no regional/national data/information has been collated /is available on the proportion of schools that take a student teacher on placement.
- iv. The terms of reference of the proposed working group on the Treoraí Professional Learning Programme envisage that all support services will have an input into its design. Clearly, the programme will have to take account of the impact of their work with teachers over the past number of years.

Towards a Demo Model

Due to an apparent lack of reliable data, it has proven impossible to identify accurate figures regarding the number of placements needed, and the projected costs based on same. A data collection exercise regarding the total number of school placements required, across all ITE providers including non HEA designated providers, has commenced, the findings of which will be made available to the DES, in due course. Furthermore, in a context of school closures that are already planned for professional learning related to the Primary Language Curriculum and Junior Cycle, it is the recommendation of the SPWG that only sensible and feasible way to proceed is by way of a phased demo model, as per model C on page 11. This demo model will be introduced on a growth phase basis and will focus on a smaller number of schools bounded by geographical location. With a commitment to developing this demo model to a national level, any identified, prospective or emerging concerns or issues will be remedied. The ongoing systematic evaluation of success indicators, as outlined below in *Table 2*, will also facilitate its development.

The three Priority Action areas identified by the SPWG include:

1. The creation of a national central school placement system and integrated online Portal
2. The launching of a demo model to include piloting of the placement system and professional learning programme to support Treoraithe and the whole-school
3. Support for the development of School-HEI partnerships - research and recognition thereof.

Conclusion

As per the SPWG *Terms of Reference*, the Working Group has reviewed the implementation of the School Placement Guidelines and has considered the final report on *School Placement in Initial Teacher Education* (Hall et al., 2018), and in particular the policy implications identified therein. In the course of its work, the SPWG identified sectoral differences and challenges.

Key challenges, under three broad headings, were identified as follows:

4. Sourcing and administration of School Placement
5. Financial cost of School Placement
6. Roles and responsibilities of stakeholders (with a particular focus on teachers who host student teachers)

Actionable solutions proposed at subgroup meetings by student teachers, experienced teachers, principals (from both sectors) and HEI representatives have also served to inform the work of the SPWG. Furthermore, documents submitted from various organisations and stakeholders, which outlined their position on school placement², were examined and considered.

Adherence to the timeframe developed for the publication of this SPWG Report and Action Plan ensures that an *Implementation Plan* can be made available in advance of the next review and accreditation cycle in 2020. In this context, it should be noted that the work of the SPWG has also informed the Teaching Council's ongoing review of the *Initial Teacher Education: Criteria and Guidelines for Programme Providers*, in respect of school placement. It is anticipated that this report, coupled with the *Shared Vision for School Placement* will inform a national conceptualisation for school placement.

In terms of producing a costed Action Plan, and following the review of projected costs received, an obvious data gap has been identified. Ultimately there is a dearth of up-to-date, reliable data upon which to accurately calculate projected costs. To that end, a data collection exercise has been commenced and a demo model for the professional learning for Treoraithe is proposed.

Going forward, it is recommended that data submitted to the HEA and/or DES, as appropriate (annually) and to the Teaching Council (during the Review and Accreditation process) should indicate:

1. the number of student teachers enrolled in each year of the specified ITE programme
2. the number of placements required by students in each year of the specified ITE programme
3. the number of weeks spent on placement in each academic year of the specified ITE programme.

It is anticipated that the Council may request from ITE programmes a breakdown of this data when the next phase of Review and Accreditation processes begin in 2020. By joining data across institutions, it will facilitate long-term planning around teacher supply, initial teacher education, school placement, emerging curricular needs etc.

In conclusion, the work of the SPWG has identified certain cross-sectoral challenges in relation to school placement, and others that are sector specific. The SPWG has worked towards a coordinated, appropriate and sustainable approach to the successful implementation of three *Priority Actions Areas*, as outlined in the Action Plan below. The voices of various stakeholders have been central to the production of this SPWG Report and Action Plan.

2 Including: JMB Survey on Student Teacher Placement 2017; School Placement Challenges and Responses: Joint HEI Position Paper for Submission to the Teaching Council (February 2018); Union of Students of Ireland: Student Teachers Placement Report (2018).

Recommendations to the Teacher Supply Implementation Group

- 1.** The creation of a central school placement system and integrated online Portal
- 2.** The launching of a demo model programme of professional learning to support co-operating teachers/ Treoraithe.
- 3.** Support for the development of School-HEI partnerships - research and recognition thereof.
- 4.** A need for all stakeholders to realise the Shared Vision – to include a comprehensive communication process whereby conversations are facilitated about the role of Treoraithe and benefits of placement system. This will need to track the growth of the demo model and identify participants from the first phase of the demo who will speak to subsequent cohorts. Equally, HEIs and schools should be invited to observe what is happening in the demo model. But every stakeholder will need to play their part.
- 5.** The SPWG noted feedback from stakeholders, including student teachers, as to the significant costs that can arise when on placement. The expectation is that the centralised system should facilitate closer geographic alignment of placement which will help reduce costs. The Council will also review how its standards could facilitate a more effective and feasible approach to portfolio-based learning. It should also be noted that the Department is reviewing assistance provided to student teachers as part of the Teacher Supply Action Plan.
- 6.** The SPWG recommends that the three models of school placement which were presented to it should also engage with the proposed working groups in the action plan below, as appropriate to their remit.

Action Plan

Priority Action 1: Central School Placement System & Integrated Online Portal/ Hub

PRIORITY ACTION 1:	Central School Placement System & Integrated Online Portal/Hub
Details	<p>a. Creation of a central school placement system to facilitate the sourcing, administration and organisation of school placement for HEIs, primary and post-primary level schools, with different levels of access for principals, HEIs and Student Teachers (STs).</p> <p>The central system should have the capability to facilitate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Matching of students to school places ○ Smoother administrative processes for schools and HEIs ○ More schools to support school placement ○ Geographical alignment between HEIs and schools and the movement of regional HEI tutors across HEIs ○ Capturing of data to support better understanding of school placement processes at school, HEI and policy levels ○ Greater capacity in the school system for student placement. <p>b. The Teaching Council will lead on this Priority Action for the purposes of its initial establishment and administration, with support and resources from the DES, subject to approval. The resources will be explored further by the Central Placement System Working Group.</p> <p>c. Mindful of the Council’s requirements that schools and HEIs form partnerships that support professional collaboration, it will be important that this system and its hosting includes some form of local / regional mediation. Education Centres could play a role here.</p> <p>d. A “mygov.ie”- type repository for school placement will be linked to the central placement system, through which different levels of access will be made available for teachers, principals, HEIs and STs. One option here may be the platform.</p> <p>e. Hub resources should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Shared Vision for School placement ○ Guidelines for schools, information on HEI placement calendars etc. ○ Guidelines and webinar for Treoraithe (formally known as Co-operating Teachers) around observation of and professional conversations with student teachers ○ Links to various forums (e.g. T-Rex) and websites (Teaching Council, DES, NIPT JCT, PDST ...). ○ Guidelines for schools and STs on ethics <p>f. The Central Placement System and the integrated online portal/ hub should link to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the online substitute portal currently being developed by IPPN and NAPD ○ OLCS for drawing down release time, in whole or in part, for Treoraithe and STs to engage in planning, observation and professionally reflective conversations ○ And to a scheduling tool for placement tutors and student teachers. <p>g. Promotion of the Central Placement System and its information Hub must be supported via the TC, DES, Managerial Bodies and Teacher Unions</p> <p>h. A communications campaign will be launched to highlight the benefits to schools and school-based stakeholders of engaging in supportive SP processes.</p>

PRIORITY ACTION 1:	Central School Placement System & Integrated Online Portal/Hub
Partner(s)	DES, TC, IT experts, Managerial bodies, NIPT, HEIs, Teacher Unions, Student teacher representatives
Quarter	<p>Demo – ready for testing no later than Jan. 2021</p> <p>Launch of Demo Online placement System and Information Hub – no later than Sept. 2021</p> <p>€285,000 - €324,000 - Based on 2013 Data from the HEA regarding two existing systems (METIS and TUS).</p> <p>Given the scale of these systems, the SPWG is of the view that these figures may be used as a guide to inform the piloting of a placement system in the demo model.</p> <p>This is because the scale of the demo model may be similar to the number of HEIs in the aforementioned systems.</p>
Projected Costs	<p>With inflation, the need for enhanced functionality and capacity and the need to provide for ongoing maintenance, a market sounding exercise may be necessary to produce a better estimation of cost.</p> <p>The Working Group tasked with this action will explore all options, including off-the-shelf and bespoke systems.</p>

Priority Action 2: Professional Learning Programme for Treoraithe (PLPT)

PRIORITY ACTION 2:	Professional Learning Programme for Treoraithe (PLPT)
Details	<p>a. This Action will be led by the DES, supported by the Teaching Council and be co-ordinated by the NIPT, in collaboration with the JCT, PDST, CSL, NCSE, and NCCA.</p> <p>b. A demo model programme of professional learning to support Treoraithe in their work with STs will be designed by the Treoraithe Professional Learning Working Group.</p> <p>c. The proposed demo model will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A whole school professional learning approach, which will be on a blended hybrid model. This will mean a combination of online and place-based learning, as well as whole school and individual Treoraí learning. <p>The number of days will be determined by the working groups to be established. It is estimated that two days would be required at whole school level and a similar amount for Treoraithe. This would provide scope for reinforcement of key learning as applied to practice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For bespoke professional learning activities in specific subject areas/ contexts, whole-school and individual learning may benefit from collaboration with other professional learning opportunities, for example in relation to Junior Cycle reform, the Primary Language Curriculum etc. <p>d. Possibility of EPV days could be explored</p> <p>e. Collaboration with managerial bodies and teacher unions will be essential in communicating the benefits of SP to the whole-school community (school leaders [teaching principals], teachers, parents etc.).</p>
Partner(s)	DES, TC, HEIs, NIPT, JCT, PDST, NCSE, CSL, NCCA , Managerial Bodies, Teacher Unions.
Quarter	Launch of demo Treoraithe Professional Learning Programme – September 2020
Projected Costs	<p>The terms of reference of the working group on this action will include identifying projected costs.</p> <p>It has proven quite difficult to provide an accurate estimate of costs for this programme. In so far as the SPWG can establish this, there is no reliable aggregate figure for the demand for school placements at a national level. An average of 3,500 teachers apply for registration with the Council each year, however estimates indicate that upwards of 8,000 school placements are required each year (across year groups and programme-types). School placement calendars vary significantly across HEIs and the degree of overlap of placement periods is unknown. This is a strong argument for a small demo model starting with a small number of HEIs. It will be essential that effective and accessible data collation mechanisms are embedded in this demo from the start.</p>

Priority Action 3: School - HEI partnerships: Research & Recognition

PRIORITY ACTION 3:	School - HEI partnerships: Research & Recognition
<p>Details</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The SPWG acknowledges the extent of schools’ engagement with and support for teachers’ research in a variety of formats, including but not limited to self-study, lesson study, case study and action research. In this context, practitioner-based action research carried out by the ST while on placement can align with the needs of the school, the learning needs of pupils, and the HEI-based research elements of the programme. b. Opportunities for student teachers and teachers to engage in HEI/school-based research and partnership projects and to share their learning with peers will also be facilitated and supported via T-Rex, and other HEI/school-led research initiatives. ONGOING c. WSE/ MLL reports will acknowledge schools for facilitating STs on placement, including research carried out by student teachers while on placement. ONGOING d. Mindful of possible workload implications, a model of adequate support for teachers may be considered by the School Placement Implementation Group. e. The Council can clarify ethical concerns around ST research in the context of the standards for ITE and the Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers. The Group is also aware of other measures which some HEIs have put in place to allow for practitioner-focused research grounded in reflective practice while adhering to ethical guidelines (UCC). In this light, the potential for ST research to inform the School-Self-Evaluation process in their respective schools will be communicated to management bodies (see Hall et al., 2018, p. 128) (c.f. terms of reference for Communications Working Group). f. Schools’ involvement in the demo model and/ or whole-school professional learning would also be acknowledged in WSE/MLL reports (c.f. terms of reference for School Placement Implementation Group). g. The Council will consider how Treoraithe could be recognised as part of the Cosán development process. This may take the form of a digital badge which would be awarded by the Council on completion of the professional learning programme for Treoraithe (Subject to confirmation of commencement of the Treoraithe Professional Learning Programme (TPLP)). h. A scoping exercise will be led by the TC and HEA to explore good practice around HEI-school partnerships and to examine whether the development of a dedicated fund to support good practice would have merit. i. (Scoping exercise to be completed by Q3 2020 – in tandem with development of Demo model). j. The Review of the Allocation Model for Funding Higher Education Institutions (HEA) which was published in 2018, recommended that disciplines that were the subject of academic reform, such as ITE, should undergo detailed reviews so that appropriate weightings that take account of the reforms can be assigned. The report also recommended that a review should be undertaken to establish a consistent and comparable costing system and reporting requirements across all higher education institutions, and this is being examined and progressed in advance of detailed discipline reviews being undertaken. The SPWG recommends that this work be completed as a matter of urgency.
<p>Partner(s)</p>	<p>DES, TC, Education Support Centres Ireland(ESCI), HEIs, Managerial bodies, Teacher Unions.</p>

Timeline leading to Development of a Demo Model

September 2019

SPWG Report and Action Plan to be sent to DES and the Teaching Council's Education Committee.

January 2020

- a. Establishment of a School Placement Implementation Group to oversee three Working Groups (WGs), comprising 12 members, maximum. Each working group can have sectorally-specific meetings as necessary. The School Placement Implementation Group will consider the parameters of the demo model, i.e. no. of HEIs involved, geographical region, number of schools involved. The School Placement Implementation Group will also consider current online information hub models, for example the Outcomes for Children National Data & Information Hub, established by TUSLA and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. The Group will oversee three Working Groups as outlined below:
- 1) Placement System Working Group - this will develop the specification for a centralised placement system for school placement. It will also review current models that are available e.g. Student Placement System (Scotland); TUS (MI & UL); InPlace (Hibernia); METIS (DCU); APPEL (Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland). It will consider if they fulfil identified requirements. It will also make recommendations regarding regional supports for HEI / school partnerships.
 - 2) Treoraithe Professional Learning Group
This group will draft programme content for the Treoraithe Professional Learning, and recommend the model of teaching of same.
 - 3) Communications Working Group The remit of the CWG on teacher supply will be amended to include the actions arising from the Implementation Group which may include promoting the hosting of student teachers by schools.

These Working Groups will consider the proposed priority actions as outlined in this Action Plan.

In tandem with the suggested timeline (Sept. 2019 – July 2020), the following actions should take place; establishment of an online placement system and Information Hub and collective agreement by HEIs on how the system will work. HEIs will also be invited to apply for inclusion in the demonstration model which will initially implement these new measures – central placement system and Treoraithe professional learning. Schools will be invited to be formal partners with nominated HEIs in this model.

The goal should be:

- o that the Treoraithe Professional Learning Programme (TPLP) demonstration model should be ready for teachers by September 2020.
- o that the placement system is ready for testing no later than January 2021, with finalisation no later than September 2021.

A phased model of growth of the supports and resources should also be determined by the Implementation Group.

The terms of reference for each of the Working Groups to be determined by December 2019.

Table 1: Overview of the School Placement Implementation Group and the three Working Groups

	School Placement Implementation Group ³ (15 members)	Placement system working group (12)	Treoraithe Professional Learning Programme (TPLP) (19)	Communications Group
School Placement Implementation Group and 3x Working Groups Partners	DES (2) Teaching Council (3) HEA (1) HEIs (2) ECSI (1) NIPT (1) Teacher unions (3) Managerial Bodies (2)	DES (1) Teaching Council (2) HEIs (2) Managerial Bodies (2) IPPN (1) NAPD (1) Teacher unions (3)	DES (1) Teaching Council (3) NIPT (2) HEIs (2) Managerial Bodies (2) IPPN/NAPD (2) Teacher unions (3) JCT (1) PDST (1) NCCA (1) NCSE (1)	The remit of the CWG on teacher supply will be amended to include the actions arising from the Implementation Group.
Overview of Remit (a)	School Placement Implementation Group to oversee three Working Groups (WGs). Each working group can have sectorally-specific meetings as necessary.	This WG will develop the specification for a centralised placement system for school placement. It will also review current models that are available e.g. Student Placement System (Scotland); TUS (MI & UL); InPlace (Hibernia); METIS (DCU); APPEL (Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland). It will consider if they fulfil identified requirements. It will also make recommendations regarding regional supports for HEI/ school partnerships.	This group will draft programme content for the Treoraithe Professional Learning, and recommend the model of teaching of same.	To promote the Central placement system and integrated online information hub.
Overview of Remit (b)	A phased model of growth of the supports and resources should be determined by the Implementation Group.	To consider current online information hub models, for example the Outcomes for Children National Data & Information hub, established by TUSLA and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.	Suggest a phased model of growth to the Implementation Group.	Launch a communications campaign to highlight the benefits to schools and school-based.
Overview of Remit (c)	The School Placement Implementation Group will consider the parameters of the demo model, i.e. no. of HEIs involved, geographical region, number of schools involved.			
Timeframe	Sept 2019 July 2020	Testing of system for demo model – Jan. 2021 Launch of system for demo model – Sept 2021	Deadline – Sept. 2020	

3 In tandem with the suggested timeline (Sept. 2019 – July 2020), the following actions should take place; a market sounding exercise, procurement of an online placement system and Information Hub and collective agreement by HEIs on how the system will work. HEIs will also be invited to apply for inclusion in the demonstration model, which will initially implement these new measures – central placement system and Treoraithe professional learning. Schools will be invited to be formal partners with nominated HEIs in this mode

Table 2: Indicators to measure progress

Indicator	
Priority Action 1: Central School Placement System & Online Portal/ Hub	
i. Launching of a demo model for an online placement system and Information Portal/ hub.	i. Growing number of schools and HEIs involved. Reduction in administration and workload costs (time and money) for both schools and HEIs.
ii. Use of the Central placement system by principals, STs and HEIs.	ii. Increase in number of participants and reduction in reports of difficulty sourcing/ securing placements. Greater capacity in the school system for student placement.
Priority Action 2: Central School Placement System & Online Portal/ Hub	
i. Creation and launch of demo model of professional learning.	i. Success of growth phase - numbers of participants.
ii. Engagement in demo model of whole-school training for Treoraithe.	ii. Constructive feedback – from STs, Treoraithe etc.
iii. Development of guidelines on feedback and observation skills.	iii. HEI collaboration.
Priority Action 3: Priority Action 3: School - HEI partnerships - Research & Recognition	
i. The development of School-HEI research partnerships.	i. Increased use of T-Rex to facilitate engagement with research.
ii. Recognition of school support of STs on placement.	ii. Recognition of school engagement in WSE/ MLL reports/awarding of Digital.
	iii. Badges for schools (via Cosán).

Periods of systematic reflection will be built into the implementation/ growth phase to ensure quality assurance.

Appendices

Appendix 1:

SPWG Terms of Reference

1. Background

Under Section 38 of the Teaching Council Acts 2001-2012, the Council is responsible for Review and Accreditation of programmes of Initial Teacher Education, having regard to the national policy framework established by the Minister for Education and Skills. Guidelines for this are set out by the

Council in its documents, *Initial Teacher Education: Strategy for the Review and Professional Accreditation of Existing Programmes, Guidelines on School Placement, and Initial Teacher Education: Criteria and Guidelines for Programme providers*. In this context, the DES has requested the Teaching Council to review the implementation of school placement guidelines, with a particular focus on school/HEI partnerships, and to make recommendations. This review should have regard to relevant systemic issues in relation to teacher supply.

As part of the criteria for initial teacher education (ITE) which were published in 2011, the Teaching Council required all ITE programmes to include an extended and reconceptualised school placement experience, based on a partnership approach between Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and schools. In the school placement guidelines which were adopted as an addendum to the criteria, the Council recognised that implementation would be challenging for schools and HEIs, owing to the many complexities which would need to be addressed. The guidelines also acknowledged that time would be required for the guidelines to bed down and noted that the Council's requirements would be subject to review and change, as informed by further research.

With that in mind, the Council commissioned a team of external researchers, led by Professor Kathy Hall in University College Cork, to gather evidence of current practice in relation to school placement, and make recommendations to inform the Council's thinking and future policy on school placement. The research was conducted over a period of almost four years, with fieldwork beginning in late 2014 and continuing into early 2018.

The final research report was presented to the Teaching Council in July 2018 and is available here. One of the key recommendations arising from the research, was "that, a Working Group be convened to consider how greater alignment can be obtained between the policy on SP and its enactment, bearing in mind the findings and implications of this study. It may be that the Working Group on SP that was established some time ago could be revitalised to develop a timeframe for the enactment and monitoring of a framework that would address roles, responsibilities, resources, and CPD. This group, chaired by the Teaching Council, would need to include senior members drawn from key interest groups: the Teaching Council itself, HEIs, the DES and HEA.

2. Terms of Reference

- HEIs x 4 (2P, 2PP)
- Teacher Unions x 3
- IFUT x1
- Management bodies x 2(1P, 1PP)
- Department of Education and Skills senior officials x2
- Inspector at senior level x1
- HEA x1
- The Teaching Council x 4 (Chair of Council, Chair of Education Committee, Director and Head of ITE and Induction)

3. Chair

The group will be chaired by the Director of the Teaching Council.

4. Role

The Working Group will, having regard for systemic issues, review the implementation of the School Placement Guidelines and will consider the report of the research conducted by Hall et al, with particular reference to the policy implications identified therein. In respect of all issues highlighted for further attention by the researchers, the working group will work towards a coordinated, appropriate and sustainable approach to implementation.

Specifically, it will convey recommendations to the Department of Education and Skills' Teacher Supply Implementation Group and inform the forthcoming review of the Initial Teacher Education: Criteria and Guidelines for Programme providers in respect of School Placement.

5. Reporting

The Working Group will be expected to report by September 2019. This timeframe has been developed so as to ensure the implementation plan can be made available in advance of the next review and accreditation cycle in 2020.

6. Formation of sub-groups

As the need arises, the Working Group may establish sub-committees focused on particular aspects of its work, and will determine the appropriate composition and terms of reference for each subcommittee on a case-by-case basis.

7. Meetings

It is anticipated that the Committee will meet 4 to 6 times over its lifetime as set out in Clause 5 above. A schedule of meetings will be agreed in advance. As much as possible, meetings will be arranged so as to allow for regular progress reports to be presented to the Council's Education Committee.

8. Secretariat

The secretariat to the Committee will be provided by the Teaching Council.

October 2018

Appendix 2: SPWG Members

	Name	Organisation
1	Louise Callinan	Higher Education Authority
2	Breda Corr	Management Body Representative (Primary)
3	Michael Delargey	Irish Federation of University Teachers (IFUT)
4	Brendan Doody	Department of Education and Skills, Inspectorate
5	Phil Fox	Teaching Council (Head of ITE & Induction)
6	Michael Gillespie	Teachers' Union of Ireland (TUI)
7	Chris Kelly	Department of Education and Skills
8	Mary Kelly	Teaching Council Member (Hibernia College)
9	Moira Leydon	Association of Secondary Teachers in Ireland (ASTI)
10	Máire Lineen	Chair of Teaching Council Education Committee
11	Anthony Malone	Teaching Council Member (Maynooth University)
12	Noelle Moran	Chair of Teaching Council
13	Jim Mulkerrins	Department of Education and Skills
14	Deirbhile Nic Craith	Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO)
15	Melanie Ní Dhuinn	Teaching Council Member (TCD)
16	Séamie Ó Néill	Maynooth University
17	Tomás Ó Ruairc	Teaching Council Director and Chair of SPWG
18	Michael Redmond	Management Body Representative (Post-primary)

Appendix 3: Schedule of SPWG and Subgroup Meetings

Date	Meeting
22 November 2018	SPWG Meeting 1
17 January 2019	SPWG Meeting 2
13 Feb. 2019	Principals' Subgroup
6 March 2019	SPWG Meeting 3
14 March 2019	HEI Subgroup
01 May 2019	Principals & HEI Joint Subgroup
16 May 2019	SPWG Meeting 4
20 June 2019	SPWG Meeting 5
05 September 2019	SPWG Meeting 6
19 September 2019	SPWG Meeting 7

An Chomhairle Mhúinteoireachta
The Teaching Council

Block A, Maynooth Business Campus,
Maynooth, Co. Kildare, W23 Y7Xo, Ireland

Lo-Call 1890 224 224

Telephone +353 1 651 7900

Facsimile +353 1 651 7901

Email info@teachingcouncil.ie

www.teachingcouncil.ie

An Chomhairle
Mhúinteoireachta
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