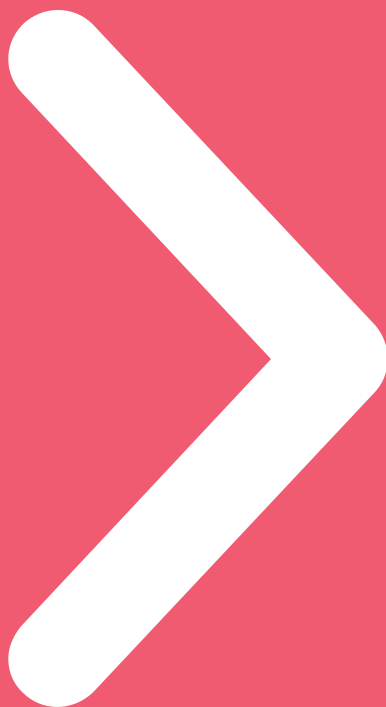


Student Teacher Placement in the Further Education and Training: Sector Guidelines



Foreword

The HEI FET Forum is pleased to present our publication: *“Guidelines on Placement of Student Teachers in the Further Education and Training Sector”*. This brief document aims to provide you with an overview of what a placement for students undertaking an Initial teacher education (ITE) qualification in Further Education and Training (FET) might entail for the student, the designated teaching and learning practitioner, the placement setting, and the higher education institution. All information is provided as a suggestion for good practice and is informed by the Teaching Council of Ireland March 2011 publication: *“Further Education: General and Programme Requirements for the Accreditation of Teacher Education Qualifications”*.

The Guidelines were developed through a partnership process with the Teaching Council of Ireland, Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI) and the HEI FET Forum. The HEI FET Forum is comprised of eight Higher Education providers who designed initial teacher education programmes specifically for those in the further education sector and were subsequently awarded professional accreditation by the Teaching Council. The Forum is a national network focused on the continued enhancement of teaching and learning in Further Education and Training.

The HEI FET Forum is aware of the benefits and challenges of student teacher placement in education and training settings. We aim to work in partnership with all stakeholders to contribute to and progress the existing expertise and professionalism of the sector, student teachers, FET staff and learners in the future.

We thank all who provided their time and expertise to this guidelines publication production. It is envisaged that a more comprehensive document will evolve in coming years as Initial teacher education (ITE) in Further Education and Training evolves and the partnership of agencies and practitioners further consolidates. To this end any feedback is welcome to respective agencies and to the HEI FET Forum (email hei.fet.forum@gmail.com, or visit the Forum at www.heifetforum.ie)

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HEI FET Forum

The HEI FET Forum membership comprises eight Higher Education providers as listed:

1. **NUI Galway**
2. **Mary Immaculate College**
3. **Waterford Institute of Technology**
4. **National College of Ireland**
5. **Marino Institute of Education**
6. **Maynooth University**
7. **Dublin City University**
8. **National College of Art & Design**



Introduction

These Guidelines on Student Teacher Placement for Student Teachers in Further Education and Training (FET) Programmes are designed to support new and innovative models of placement using a partnership approach that takes account of the workload and time commitment of staff in placement settings.

At the heart of these guidelines is the principle that Further Education and Training (FET) programme providers promote the learning of student teachers, placement setting staff, Higher Education Institution (HEI) staff and FET learners on a continual and reciprocal basis (For an explanation of terms see Appendix 1). Therefore, a holistic approach to student teacher placement, under the guidance of programme managers, is of vital importance.

1. What is Student Teacher Placement?

Student teacher placement is a critical part of initial teacher education (ITE), involves a number of stakeholders (See Appendix 1) and is designed to give the student teacher an opportunity to: experience teaching / learning in a real environment; to apply educational theory in a variety of teaching/learning and placement settings; and, to participate in the daily life of placement settings in a way that is structured and supported.

Student teacher placement comprises a wide range of teaching and non-teaching activities, and allows the student teacher to see at first hand the complexity of teaching and the variety of roles undertaken by teaching and learning practitioners (Appendix 1). Placement facilitates the development of the student teacher's capacity for self-reflection in professional conversation with experienced teaching and learning practitioners and with the HEI tutors appointed by the HEI. It also offers the student teacher valuable opportunities to receive advice in a way that is structured and supportive. As such, it provides an opportunity for student teachers to develop their capacity for self-reflection and enhances the development of a range of knowledge, skills, competences and professional dispositions critical for the development of the student teacher's professional identity.

2. Benefits of Student Teacher Placement for Placement Settings

A well-managed placement is beneficial for all those involved. It presents opportunities for sharing ideas and new methodologies, fosters discussion on teaching and learning, and offers opportunities for real engagement and learning.

From the placement setting point of view, the benefits of placement are many including developing as learning communities through the sharing of knowledge and skills, and through interaction with student teachers and with HEIs. Placement setting staff, in particular, can observe and be informed about a variety of approaches to teaching and learning. Learners also benefit from a variety of enriching experiences through the structured participation of student teachers in their placement.

3. Placement Requirements

The criteria and guidelines for initial teacher education are set out in the Teaching Council's publication, *Initial Teacher Education: Criteria and Guidelines for Programme Providers* (The Teaching Council 2011b). Additionally, the requirements for accreditation of Further Education teacher programmes are set out in *Further Education: General and Programme Requirements for the Accreditation of Teacher Education Qualifications* (The Teaching Council 2011a).

Overarching the latter publication is Route 3 (Further Education) of the Teaching Council (Registration) Regulations, 2016, which requires that all applicants for registration must have attained, inter alia, a Council approved Further Education teacher education qualification. Within this framework, providers of programmes are expected to ensure that all components of a teacher education programme offer students an appropriate range of knowledge and skills through which they have the capacity to develop the competence to become excellent FET teachers.

A central component of a programme of teacher education is the practical teaching module. This involves a range of teaching and learning activities that facilitates the incremental and ongoing learning of the student teacher and incorporates methods such as observation, peer teaching, co-teaching, mentoring, and other forms of structured support. Activities should include opportunities to plan, deliver and receive feedback on lessons (The Teaching Council 2011a).

Currently, the Teaching Council requires placements for student teachers to consist of: a minimum of 30 hours assigned to teaching practice observation and other

learning methods prior to teaching practice placements; and, a minimum of 100 hours of teaching of recognised in QQI/FETAC (or equivalent) Further Education accredited programmes. Where possible, placements should consist of at least two settings. Blended teaching/learning formats may part fulfil this requirement provided that placement is in an authentic Further Education setting.

4. Placement Activities

As well as direct teaching to a designated class, the placement based element *must* include the following activities:

Planning for teaching, learning and assessment (assigned classes)

Leading learning experiences appropriate to the context and situation of the classroom, both independently and collaboratively, and with due regard to the diverse learning needs of the learners and learning environments

Assessment of, and for, learning (assigned classes)

Structured observation of and by the student teacher, and exchange of feedback following such observations

Professional conversations and collaborative work with experienced teaching and learning practitioners and other placement setting staff

Engagement with day-to-day life within the placement setting

Critical reflection on practice, both individually and with placement setting staff

Structured and supported participation in placement setting life.

Other activities a student teacher *should* participate in, where possible, while on placement:

Learning support and resource teaching

Implementation of internal and external quality assurance policies and procedures

Attendance at staff meetings

Placement-based research, relevant to the placement

Supported engagement with other placement setting staff of and by experienced Teaching and Learning Practitioners

Engagement with placement-based continuing professional development and/or placement development planning

Any other relevant placement activities

5. Placement Process and Support

The HEI will provide appropriate documentation to student teachers to facilitate them in securing an appropriate placement including, but not limited to: student course registration details; HEI insurance details; HEI Garda vetting; and a copy of these Guidelines.

Once a student teacher has secured his/her placement, the HEI will confirm suitability of said placement in line with the Teaching Council Guidelines (The Teaching Council 2011a).

Once approved, HEI staff will initiate contact with the placement setting staff: it is envisaged that regular communication will continue throughout the placement period.

The placement setting provides important support to student teachers in the form of an initial structured induction to the placement setting ethos, policies and practices. On-going structured support for the student teacher is also a key element of the placement and is provided primarily from two key sources: the HEI Placement Tutor (from the relevant HEI); and the designated Teaching and Learning Practitioner (from the relevant placement setting) (Figure 1).

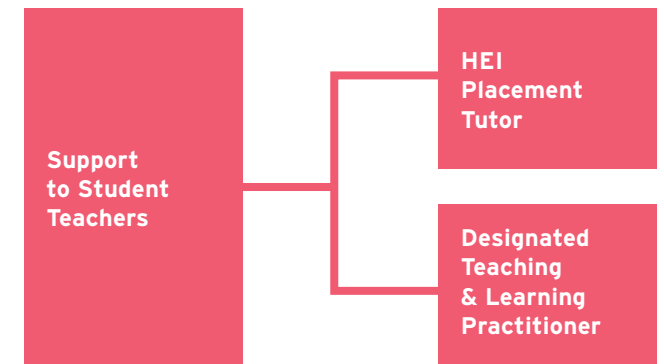


Figure 1: Support to Student Teachers

5.1 HEI Placement Tutor

The HEI Placement Tutor (Appendix 1) observes the student teacher teaching; engages him/her in a constructive feedback dialogue; and assesses his/her practice for grading purposes. The HEI Placement Tutor ensures that the student teacher is appropriately supported, and collaborates with the designated Teaching and Learning Practitioner regarding, *inter alia*, preparation and planning, good teaching and learning practices and matters of professionalism as outlined in the *Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers* (The Teaching Council 2012). The HEI Placement Tutor supports the student teacher in engaging in reflective dialogue, and engages with the designated Teaching and Learning Practitioner and the Placement Setting Manager, as appropriate, in relation to the student teachers' practice and experience.

Both the HEI Placement Tutor and the student teacher must be cognisant and respectful of the placement setting ethos, policies, practices and any special placement arrangements.

5.2 Designated Teaching and Learning Practitioner

The designated Teaching and Learning Practitioner (Appendix 1) supports and guides student teachers as they develop professionally.

The designated Teaching and Learning Practitioner introduces the student teacher to the relevant curriculum/ programme/ module of study, its related plan of delivery and assessment requirements. Additionally, s/he introduces the student teacher to the learners and discusses their needs and attainments. S/he also assigns the teaching of areas of the curriculum/ programme/module to the student teacher while retaining primary responsibility for the progress of the learners.

Structured support that a designated Teaching and Learning Practitioner might provide or arrange on behalf of the student teacher may include: the provision of advice and guidance; sharing ideas and approaches to planning, teaching, learning and assessment; critical reflection on his/her practice; and engaging with and responding appropriately to feedback from learners.

The designated Teaching and Learning Practitioner arranges opportunities for the student teacher to observe others teaching (including the designated Teaching and Learning Practitioner, where possible); and, opportunities for the student teacher to have his/her teaching observed and to be provided with constructive feedback (including by the designated Teaching and Learning Practitioner, where possible).

Crucially, as the student teacher's competence develops, the designated Teaching and Learning Practitioner should allow for and encourage the student teacher to teach both independently and collaboratively.

5.3 Student Teacher

Student teachers (Appendix 1) are expected to take a proactive approach to their own learning and to participate constructively in a broad range of placement experiences. They should engage fully in the life of the placement setting and seek and avail of opportunities to observe and work alongside other placement setting staff. They are expected to maximise their learning opportunities, and to engage with constructive feedback from their HEI Placement Tutor(s), designated Teaching and Learning Practitioner(s) and the Placement Setting Manager.

It is expected that student teachers will prepare and teach lessons in a supported environment commensurate with their stage of development. This should be done in line with HEI requirements and the ethos, policies and practices of the host placement setting (in particular in relation to assessment and other relevant teaching and learning policies). In doing so, they should always be conscious that learner needs are paramount and that a duty of care prevails.

At all times, a placement setting community can thus expect that a student teacher will engage with it in a respectful and courteous manner, and have due regard for and adhere to the values and standards underpinning placement setting's ethos, policies and practices, and the *Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers* (The Teaching Council 2012).

6. Observation and feedback

Research indicates that observation and feedback are two of the most valued elements of structured support (Dalgarno, Reupert and Bishop, 2015; Gardiner and Shipley Robinson, 2010). HEIs will provide guidance on observation and feedback and will support HEI Placement Tutors and designated Teaching and Learning Practitioners to ensure that it is implemented in a consistent manner.

Additionally, the HEI Placement Tutor should collaborate with the designated Teaching and Learning Practitioners in relation to any recommendations made or advice given to student teachers.

Feedback should be:

- » **Based on observed practice**
- » **Appropriate to the requirements and expectations**

- » of the particular placement
- » Provided in a timely fashion
- » Clear, fair and honest
- » Communicated in a manner appropriate to a constructive discussion on teaching and learning
- » Provided in an encouraging and sensitive manner.

The HEI Placement Tutor should collaborate with the designated Teaching and Learning Practitioners and should seek to engage the student teacher in a critical reflection on his/her practice so as to identify strengths, areas for improvement and possible constructive strategies for improving practice.

NOTES:

References:

Dalgarno, B., Reupert, A. and Bishop, A. 2015. Blogging while on professional placement: explaining the diversity in student attitudes and engagement. *Technology, Pedagogy and Education*, 24(2), pp. 189-209.

Gardiner, W. and Shipley Robinson, K. 2010. Promising Practice, Practice Partnered Field Placements: Collaboration in the "Real World". *The Teacher Educator*, 45, pp. 202-215.

The Teaching Council, 2012. *Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers*, Maynooth: The Teaching Council of Ireland.

The Teaching Council, 2011a. *Further Education: General and Programme Requirements for the Accreditation of Teacher Education Qualifications*, Maynooth: The Teaching Council of Ireland.

¹ Where the designated Teaching and Learning Practitioner is not registered with the Teaching Council of Ireland, it is expected that the HEI Placement Tutor will be registered with the Teaching Council of Ireland.

² It is expected that Teaching and Learning Practitioners will obtain an ITE qualification over time.

Higher Education Institution (HEI)

The HEI denotes those public and private colleges, universities and other third level bodies which provide one or more accredited programmes of initial teacher education (ITE).

Placement Setting

The Placement Setting refers to any School/Centre/College or Education/Training Teaching Practice Setting where a student teacher may complete his/her Centre Placement.

Student Teacher

The student teacher is any individual registered on a Further Education and Training (FET) Initial Teacher Education programme (ITE). S/he is required to have due regard for and adhere to the values and standards set out in the Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers (The Teaching Council 2012) and for the placement setting ethos, policies and practices.

If student teachers are experiencing difficulties, it is their responsibility to contact the relevant HEI (HEI Placement Tutor) and/or Placement Setting Manager.

HEI Placement Tutor

A HEI Placement Tutor is a person engaged by a HEI to support and mentor student teachers and evaluate and grade their practice while on placement.

Placement Setting Manager

The Placement Setting Manager refers to the Principal, Manager or Director of any School, College or Education/Training Centre.

The Placement Setting Manager assigns the student teacher relevant classes and designates an appropriate Teaching and Learning Practitioner to support the student teacher in their placement.

The Placement Setting Manager, where possible, should be available to student teachers for professional support and advice, and should facilitate a placement setting orientation for him/her at the outset of the placement. The Placement Setting Manager does not have a role in grading the student teacher.

The Placement Setting Manager maintains contact with the relevant HEI and advises of any difficulties or concerns relating to a student teacher's practice or professional conduct in a timely manner.

Designated Teaching and Learning Practitioner

The designated Teaching and Learning Practitioner is; a suitably experienced individual¹; is ideally registered with The Teaching Council of Ireland; and preferably holds a recognised ITE qualification².

The designated Teaching and Learning Practitioner is assigned by the Placement Setting Manager and ensures that the student teacher is supported in their placement.

The designated Teaching and Learning Practitioner does not have a role in grading the student teacher.

The designated Teaching and Learning Practitioner should advise the Placement Setting Manager of any difficulties or concerns relating to a student teacher's practice or professional conduct in a timely manner.

HEI FET Forum

Institutions and Programmes

INSTITUTION	TITLE OF FET PROGRAMME
NUI Galway	Professional Diploma in Education (Further Education)
Marino Institute of Education	Professional Diploma in Education (Further Ed).
Dublin City university (DCU)	BSc Education & Training (Further, Adult and Continuing Education)
Mary Immaculate College	Graduate Diploma / M.Ed. in Adult and Further Education
Maynooth University (MU)	Higher Diploma in Further Education (Fulltime and part time)
National College of Art and Design (NCAD)	Masters in Socially Engaged Art, (Further Adult and Community Education)
National College of Ireland (NCI)	Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Learning and Teaching (Further Education Track)
Waterford institute of Technology (WIT)	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Teaching in Further Education and Adult Education and Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching in Further Education

Contact the Forum by email at
hei.fet.forum@gmail.com

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