



Circular 0140/2006

## To Boards of Management and Principal Teachers of Primary Schools

### Probationary Requirements for Primary Teachers

The purpose of this circular is to set down probationary requirements for primary teachers, whether qualified in the State or in other jurisdictions.

The probation of primary teachers is a key element in their professional recognition, as successful completion of the probationary period within the parameters outlined in this circular is a pre-requisite for employment as a fully recognised primary teacher. The primary education environment which newly qualified teachers and teachers from other jurisdictions now enter is more complex than has been the case at any other time. In that context, therefore, this circular

- clarifies the range of teaching service that may be reckoned for probationary purposes and
- sets down in detail the probationary requirements of teachers who qualified outside the State.

[Part One](#) sets down the Service and Professional Requirements for the probation of teachers who qualified in the State. [Part Two](#) deals with the probationary requirements of teachers from other jurisdictions seeking to attain full recognition in Ireland and certain Montessori teachers who qualified in Ireland. [Part Three](#) provides answers to Frequently Asked Questions.

Currently, overall administrative responsibility for the probation process lies with Primary Administration Section 2 of the Department of Education and Science. Matters of professional guidance, the carrying out of inspection visits during the probationary period and reporting on such visits are all functions of the Inspectorate.

The publication of this circular takes account of the General Allocation Scheme (Circulars Sp Ed [02/05](#) and [0036/2006](#)) for the resourcing of schools to cater for pupils with special educational needs.

Under the Teaching Council Acts 2001 and 2006, and within a general requirement to implement Ministerial policy in the matter, the Teaching Council now has responsibility for determining the education, training and qualifications required for a teacher to be registered and for establishing procedures and criteria for the registration of teachers. In the future, the Council will assume responsibility for establishing procedures for the induction and probation of teachers. The terms of this circular will apply until such procedures have been established.

This circular supersedes and replaces Circular 18/83 as well as references to probation requirements set out in [Circular 25/00](#). The circular is also available on the Department of Education and Science website ([www.education.gov.ie](http://www.education.gov.ie))

**Johnny Bracken**  
Principal Officer  
November, 2006

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## **Teachers who have successfully completed, in the State, a course recognised for the purpose of appointment as a primary teacher**

### **1. Introduction**

A teacher who has successfully completed, in the State, a course recognised for the purpose of appointment as a primary teacher (see [Appendix 3](#)), is placed on probation on taking up a teaching post in a primary school. During the probationary period the Department's Inspectorate will evaluate the teacher's effectiveness in a classroom environment, and in teaching the appropriate range of curriculum areas and subjects.

The completion of probation is subject to service and professional requirements.

### **2. Service requirements**

- a. As a general rule, service in a permanent, temporary or substitute teaching post in a primary school may be reckoned for probationary purposes, subject to the conditions in paragraphs (b) and (c) below. This service may be in a mainstream, special class or special school setting or in a post as a full-time resource teacher (low incidence disabilities) under the General Allocation Scheme.
- b. In general, a probationary teacher must give continuous service of not less than 178 school days (excluding school closings) in a 12-month period from the date on which he/she was first appointed to a post recognised for probationary purposes in a primary school. This equates to the normal school year minimum requirement of 183 school days, with allowance for breaks between periods of employment of up to 5 school days in total. This service will normally extend over a single school year. Significant absences from duty, for whatever reason, may require that the probationary period be extended into a second school year.
- c. In the case of broken service (i.e. where there are breaks between periods of employment totalling more than 5 school days in the 12 months from the date of first appointment) a probationary teacher must give satisfactory service of not less than 300 paid days in total from the date of first appointment to a post recognised for probationary purposes. Such service must include at least two periods of 60 consecutive school days, or two school terms, whichever is the longer.

### **3. Professional requirements**

#### **3.1 Inspection visits and reports**

An inspector will visit a teacher during the probationary period in order to monitor progress, to provide advice and guidance and to report on his/her performance in teaching the range of curricular areas and subjects appropriate to the teaching setting.

In the case of continuous service, the inspector will normally complete an interim report (*Beagthuaírisc*) on the teacher's work during the first half of the probationary year. The *Beagthuaírisc*, which is discussed fully with the teacher, highlights areas of strength and areas for development in broad categories of the teacher's work and records the advice given to the teacher by the inspector. A General Report (*Móorthuaírisc*) following a General Inspection will normally be furnished in the second half of that year. The *Móorthuaírisc* provides more detailed evaluative commentary on the teacher's work, identifies strengths and aspects for further development and provides an overall rating of the teacher's work ("Satisfactory" or "Not satisfactory").

In the case of broken service, the *Beagthuaírisc* will be completed during the first 60-day period (or school term, whichever is the longer) and the *Móorthuaírisc* during a subsequent 60-day period (or school term, whichever is the longer).

### 3.2 Deferral of a General Inspection

Normally, a General Inspection, duly notified, will be carried out in the second half of the probationary period. Only in exceptional cases may a General Inspection be deferred, at the discretion of the Inspector, as follows:

- where a teacher has been absent from duty for a significant length of time, for whatever reason, or
- where, in the judgement of the inspector, there are significant and fundamental weaknesses in the teacher's work and where the teacher requires additional time to develop appropriate skills.

Where a General Inspection is deferred, the inspector will furnish a *Beagthuaireisc* to the Department indicating the reasons for the deferral and recommending an extension of the probationary period for no longer than one further year during which period a General Inspection must be carried out. In such cases, the inspector **will** furnish a further *Beagthuaireisc* prior to undertaking a General Inspection.

Only in very exceptional cases can more than one deferral be permitted within the time set down for completion of probation (see paragraph 4(b) below).

### 3.3 A General Inspection resulting in the rating "Not satisfactory"

In the event of a General Inspection resulting in the rating "Not satisfactory", the teacher will be required to undertake a further probationary period of not less than 183 school days (excluding school closings) effective from the date of that General Inspection.

## 4. Completion of probation

- a. Satisfactory completion of probation is a prerequisite for full recognition as a primary teacher and is contingent upon fulfilment of both service and professional requirements.
- b. Probation is normally completed after one full school year, but, in any event, must be completed within a period of five school years accumulated service from a teacher's first appointment in a primary school to any post recognised for probationary purposes, whether in a permanent, temporary or substitute capacity (temporary or substitute service of less than 60 days in total will not be included in calculating the five-year period). Unless a teacher achieves a "Satisfactory" rating within this period, full recognition will not be granted. Failure to achieve a satisfactory rating will be notified to the Teaching Council and may have implications for continued registration.
- c. In the case of continuous service, where the professional requirements have been fulfilled, the probationary period terminates on the first anniversary of the date on which the teacher took up his/her first appointment in a post recognised for probationary purposes.
- d. In the case of broken service, where the professional requirements have been fulfilled, the probationary period terminates upon completion of 300 paid days service from the date of first appointment in a primary school to a post recognised for probationary purposes.
- e. Where, in very exceptional circumstances, probation is extended beyond the normal service requirements (see paragraph 3.2 above), the probationary period terminates on the date of a General Inspection resulting in a "Satisfactory" rating.

## **5. Service as a teacher in a special school or in a special class in a mainstream primary school where Irish is not a curricular requirement**

Teachers who successfully completed, in the State, a course recognised for the purpose of employment as a primary teacher may be probated either

- in a special school setting where the full range of curriculum, with the possible exception of Irish, is taught or
- in a special class setting in a mainstream primary school (e.g. classes for pupils with Mild General Learning Disability, Specific Speech and Language Disorders, Autism Spectrum Disorders) where Irish is not a curricular requirement, but where, otherwise, a full curriculum appropriate to the setting is taught.

The normal service and professional requirements apply in both settings.

A teacher's competence to teach Irish is not normally evaluated in special education settings as set out above. In order to achieve full recognition status for a mainstream class setting, a teacher who qualified in the State and has already been probated in a special education setting must receive a satisfactory additional report on his/her competence in the teaching of Irish (a *Ráiteas*) within two years of taking up a mainstream position.

## **6. Service as full-time Resource Teacher (low-incidence disability) under the General Allocation Model (Circulars Sp Ed [02/05](#) and [0036/2006](#)) held by a teacher who successfully completed, in the State, a course recognised for the purpose of employment as a primary teacher**

Where an unprobated teacher in this category is appointed to a full-time post as Resource Teacher for pupils with low-incidence disabilities, he/she may now be probated in that setting, subject to the normal service requirements and the following conditions:

- a. The relevant professional requirements must be satisfied on the basis of an Inspector's evaluation of the teacher's work within the particular teaching context attaching to the post. The normal inspection and reporting requirements will apply (see Par. 3 above).
- b. Where a teacher qualified in the State and probated in a full-time resource teaching setting takes up a position subsequently in a mainstream class, special class or special school, and in order to achieve full recognition in those additional settings, there will be a requirement to demonstrate competence in any professional skills that may have not been evaluated and reported upon in the resource teaching setting. These skills may include competence to manage larger class settings and teach the appropriate range of curriculum.

The teacher must receive a satisfactory report on this additional inspection within 2 years of taking up any of the positions involved. The report on this additional inspection will take the form of a *Ráiteas* (Statement).

## **7. Notification to the Department of Education and Science**

Under new procedures for the identification of probationary teachers, introduced for the school year 2006/2007, it is the responsibility of a school to notify the Department of Education and Science of any such teachers employed in the school. This applies to any unprobated teacher appointed to a post recognised for probationary purposes for a period of at least 60 days.

Failure to notify the Department by the specified date may delay key elements of the probationary process for individual teachers.

## **Teachers who qualified outside the State, and certain Montessori teachers who qualified in Ireland**

### **1. Introduction**

General conditions and procedures for the recognition of teachers who qualified outside the State, including those to whom the terms of EU Directive 89/48/EEC apply, are set out in [Circular 25/00](#) "Recognition of Teacher Qualifications for the Purpose of Teaching in National Schools". The provisions of this circular continue to apply until such time as new regulations are put in place by the Teaching Council.

Subject to fulfilment of normal probationary requirements, full recognition is awarded to applicant teachers who qualified outside the State and have already satisfied the Irish language and all other qualification requirements. This provision currently applies to teachers who have qualified as primary teachers in St. Mary's College, Belfast, having successfully completed the four-year honours Academic Irish course. In addition it also applies to teachers who have completed their Post-Graduate Certificate in Education through the medium of Irish in St. Mary's College, Belfast. A teacher who qualified outside the State, but who has a primary degree in Irish from within the State, must fulfil certain of the Irish language requirements, through An Scrúdú le haghaidh Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge (SCG), before the award of full recognition.

In the case of all other teachers who qualified abroad and whose primary teaching qualifications have been accepted by the Department (up to 28 March 2006), or subsequently by the Teaching Council, there are two categories of recognition. The recognition category is determined by the applicant's qualifications.

- i. **Provisional Recognition** permits a teacher who qualified outside the State to teach in all primary and special education settings while working towards satisfying the Irish language requirements through An Scrúdú le haghaidh Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge (SCG).
- ii. **Restricted Recognition** permits a teacher to teach only in certain categories of special school, special classes in primary schools where Irish is not a curricular requirement, or in a post as full-time resource teacher for children with special educational needs (low incidence disabilities) in mainstream schools. Restricted recognition also applies to certain Montessori teachers who qualified in Ireland (see Part 4 of [Circular 25/00](#)).

### **2. Probation of a teacher awarded Provisional Recognition who has passed the SCG**

- i. A teacher with Provisional Recognition may not be probated before passing the SCG. However, in the interim, the teacher's work may be monitored by a Department inspector.

In the case of a teacher who has passed the SCG, and who cannot provide evidence of having satisfactorily completed the equivalent of a probationary period of at least one year outside the State (see ii below), the probationary period is deemed to have begun on the date of notification of passing all modules of the SCG. Probation will be in accordance with the professional and services requirements set out in Part One.

Where, in very exceptional circumstances, the additional Irish language requirement to complete a 3-week approved course in the Gaeltacht has not been fulfilled before the SCG has been passed, the beginning of the probationary period will not be delayed. However, a teacher will not be regarded as fully probated until such time as certified evidence of the Gaeltacht requirement has been provided.

- ii. A teacher who has passed the SCG and who has satisfactorily completed the equivalent of a probationary period of at least one year outside the State may have this probationary period accepted for the purpose of full recognition, subject to the following conditions:

- On application for recognition, the teacher must furnish certified evidence from the relevant State or local authority confirming satisfactory completion of a probationary period or its equivalent in that jurisdiction. In the absence of such evidence, the teacher will be placed on probation in accordance with the conditions set out in Part One of this Circular.
  - The Department of Education and Science Inspectorate will examine the certified evidence provided, to determine whether the probationary evidence adequately satisfies the requirements of teacher probation in this jurisdiction. In the case of non-approval, the teacher will be required to complete a probationary period in accordance with the conditions set out in Part One of this Circular.
  - Where, in the view of the Inspectorate, the probationary evidence adequately satisfies the requirements of teacher probation in this jurisdiction, the teacher must achieve a “Satisfactory” rating for the teaching of Irish within two years of first taking up a post in a mainstream class setting.
- iii. Where a teacher has passed the SCG, and has been probated in a special school or special class, he/she must achieve a “Satisfactory” rating for the teaching of Irish within two years of taking up a post in a mainstream class setting.

### **3. Probation of a teacher with Restricted Recognition in a special school or in a special class in a mainstream primary school**

In accordance with [Circular 25/00](#), Part 4, a teacher with Restricted Recognition working in a special school, or in a special class in a primary school where Irish is not a curricular requirement, must, regardless of experience abroad, complete a probationary period in accordance with the service and professional requirements set out in [Part One](#) above.

### **4. Probation of a teacher with Restricted Recognition in a resource teaching (low incidence disability) post in a mainstream school**

Where an unprobated teacher with Restricted Recognition is appointed to a full-time post as Resource Teacher for pupils with low-incidence disabilities in a mainstream school, he/she may now be probated in that setting, subject to the normal service requirements and the following conditions:

- a. The relevant professional requirements must be satisfied on the basis of an Inspector’s evaluation of the teacher’s work within the particular teaching context attaching to the post. The normal inspection and reporting requirements will apply (see [Part One](#), Par. 3 above).

A teacher with Restricted Recognition who satisfies professional requirements in this setting is considered probated for the purposes of [Part One](#), Pars. 4(a) and 4(b).

- b. A teacher with Restricted Recognition probated in a full-time resource teaching setting is only eligible to continue in such a setting or to take up a position in a special class or special school. In order to achieve full recognition status in those additional settings, there will a requirement to demonstrate competence in any professional skills that may have not been evaluated and reported upon in the resource teaching setting. These skills may include competence to manage larger class settings and teach the appropriate range of curriculum.

The teacher must receive a satisfactory report on this additional inspection within 2 years of taking up any of the positions involved. The report on this additional inspection will take the form of a *Raiteas* (Statement)

**5. Special consideration: a teacher with Restricted Recognition who held a full-time Resource Teaching post prior to the General Allocation Scheme and who is continuing in an LS/RT post**

An unprobated teacher in this category who is continuing in an LS/RT post under Circulars Sp Ed [02/05](#) and [0036/2006](#), may be probated in that setting, as an exceptional measure, subject to the conditions set out in Par. 4 above.



## **Some additional Frequently Asked Questions**

### ***Can a probationary teacher appeal a “Not satisfactory” rating?***

Yes, a probationary teacher may appeal against an inspector's report. The appeal procedure is as set down in the ***Procedure for Review of Inspections on Schools and Teachers under Section 13(9) of the Education Act 1998*** [Department of Education and Science 2006] a copy of which has been sent to each school. The Review Procedure is also available on the Department of Education and Science website ([www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie))

### ***If a teacher is probated, but leaves teaching for a number of years, what is their position on returning to teaching?***

They retain their status as a probated teacher, but, like all probated teachers, their work will continue to be subject to ongoing evaluation by the Inspectorate.

### ***Can proof of probation be obtained by teachers seeking work abroad?***

Probated teachers may obtain, on request from the Department, a Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) Certificate issued under the terms of EU Directive 89/48/EEC (effected by S.I. 1 of 1991) which confirms full recognition status. Teachers applying for posts abroad usually require this Certificate and it may be obtained on request from: The Teaching Council, Block A, Maynooth Business Campus, Maynooth, Co. Kildare.

Tel: (01) 610 6863/4 or [info@teachingcouncil.ie](mailto:info@teachingcouncil.ie)

## **Appendix 1**

### **Definitions used for the purposes of this Circular**

#### **Primary school**

A recognised school (as defined in the Education Act 1998) providing first-level education (such schools, historically, have also been termed National Schools). For administrative purposes, the general term “primary schools” encompasses special schools for the age-range 4–18. In this circular, a distinction is drawn between mainstream primary and special schools.

#### **Probation**

An element of the process by which a qualified teacher gains full recognition to teach in a primary school

#### **Qualified teacher**

A teacher

- who has successfully completed, in the State, a course recognised for the purpose of employment as a primary teacher, or
- whose qualifications, if achieved outside the State, have been recognised by the Department of Education and Science (up to 28 March 2006), or by the Teaching Council thereafter

#### **Posts recognised for probationary purposes**

Service in a permanent, temporary or substitute teaching capacity in a recognised school; this service may be in a mainstream class, a special class (where the full range of curriculum, with the possible exception of Irish, is taught), a special school or in a post as full-time resource teacher (low incidence disabilities) in a mainstream primary school.

#### **Continuous service**

Not less than 178 school days (excluding school closings) in a 12-month period, irrespective of the date on which duty commenced (i.e. the normal school-year requirement of 183 school days with allowance for periods between employments totalling up to and including 5 school days)

#### **Broken service**

Periods between employments greater than 5 days in total within 12 months of the date of first appointment.

#### **Beagthuirisc**

In this context, an interim report on the progress of a probationary teacher's work completed by an inspector. The *Beagthuirisc*, which is discussed fully with the teacher, highlights areas of strength and areas for development in broad categories of the teacher's work and records the advice given to the teacher by the inspector.

### **Mórtuairisc**

A General Report, following completion of a *General Inspection (Mórhiosrú)* on a probationary teacher's work, furnished by an inspector, copies of which are sent to the teacher and the school. The *Mórtuairisc* provides more detailed evaluative commentary on the teacher's work, identifies strengths and aspects for further development and provides an overall rating of the teacher's work ("Satisfactory" or "Not satisfactory").

### **Full recognition**

A teacher is considered fully recognised

- if he/she has successfully completed, in the State, a course recognised for the purpose of employment as a primary teacher **or**
- if qualified outside the State, he/she has fulfilled all the requisite qualification and Irish language requirements

**and**

- if he/she has fulfilled all appropriate probationary requirements.

### **Provisional recognition**

A teacher who qualified outside the State, whether within the European Union or otherwise, and whose teaching qualifications have been assessed and accepted by the Department of Education and Science (up to 28 March 2006) or by the Teaching Council thereafter, but who does not possess an appropriate Irish language qualification, will be granted, on application, a five year period of provisional recognition to teach in primary schools. During this period of provisional recognition, the teacher will be required to work towards meeting the Irish language requirements. Following a review of the Scrúdú le haghaidh Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge (SCG), extensions to the 5-year limit are now permissible in certain circumstances.

### **Restricted recognition**

A teacher from another jurisdiction, whose teaching qualifications have been assessed and accepted by the Department of Education and Science (up to 28 March 2006) or by the Teaching Council thereafter, will be granted restricted recognition giving eligibility to teach in certain categories of special school and in the categories of special classes in mainstream primary schools where Irish is not a curricular requirement. In addition, such teachers are entitled to take up posts in special schools for young offenders and in Youth Encounter Projects or special education projects and may be appointed to posts as full-time resource teachers for pupils with low incidence disabilities in mainstream primary schools.

Restricted Recognition is also available for certain categories of Montessori teachers, and to teachers with recognised post-primary teaching qualifications who wish to teach in special schools where a proportion of pupils are of post-primary age and where second-level programmes are being provided by the school. Please see [Circular 25/00](#) (Parts Four and Five) for details.

Teachers granted Restricted Recognition are not eligible to teach in mainstream class settings and, therefore, do not have to meet an Irish language requirement.

## Appendix 2

### Benefits deriving from successful probation

#### General benefits

A teacher who has been successfully probated in any setting, having met both service and professional requirements:

- is eligible to apply for career-breaks
- is entitled to appropriate panel rights
- is eligible for job-sharing
- qualifies for the Teacher Exchange Scheme.

#### Eligibility for appointment to certain additional posts

- a teacher qualified in the State**
- a teacher qualified outside the State who was awarded Provisional Recognition and fully satisfied the Irish language requirements**

A teacher in either of these categories who has been successfully probated in a mainstream, special class or special school setting, is eligible for appointment to the following additional posts:

- Principal teacher (subject to conditions outlined in Circular 02/02)
- Teacher in an LS/RT post under the General Allocation Scheme
- Resource Teacher for Travellers
- Support Teachers
- Teacher in an Early Start unit
- Home-School-Community Liaison teacher
- Visiting Teacher for Travellers
- Visiting Teacher for the Hearing and Visually Impaired.

- a teacher awarded Restricted Recognition**

A teacher who was awarded Restricted Recognition and who has been successfully probated in a special school or special class setting is eligible only for additional posts that may apply in special schools. This includes a post as Principal of a Special School, subject to the conditions set out in Circular 02/02.

- a teacher probated in a Resource Teacher post**

A teacher (a) who qualified in the State or (b) who qualified outside the State and was awarded Restricted Recognition, and who was successfully probated in a full-time resource teaching (low disabilities) post in a mainstream school is not eligible for appointment to any additional posts until they have fulfilled the full requirements set out in [Part One](#), Par. 6, Condition (b).

### **Appendix 3**

#### **Initial teacher education programmes in the State recognised for the purpose of employment as a primary teacher**

St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Dublin 9

Mary Immaculate College, South Circular Road, Limerick

Coláiste Mhuire, Griffith Avenue, Marino, Dublin 9

Froebel College of Education, Sion Hill, Blackrock, County Dublin

Church of Ireland College of Education, Upper Rathmines Road, Dublin 6

Higher Diploma in Arts in Primary Education (Hibernia College)

### **Appendix 4**

#### **Courses leading to recognised Montessori qualifications in the State**

- 3 year full-time course in the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) College, Mount St. Mary's, Milltown, Dublin 14
- B.A. in Montessori Education or B.A. (Hons.) in Montessori Education awarded by St. Nicholas Montessori College, Dún Laoghaire (accredited by HETAC)

## Appendix 5

### Notification of General Inspection on the work of a probationary teacher

Under Rule 161(11) of the Rules for National Schools, three clear school days' notice of a General Inspection (Mórfhiosrú) is given in writing to the teacher and to the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

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Inspector's official address  
Inspector's official phone number

Probationary Teacher's Name  
School Address 1  
School Address 2  
School Address 3

Date

### Notification of a General Inspection on the work of a probationary teacher

A chara

This is to notify you that I intend to carry out a General Inspection of your work as provided under Par. 3.1 [Part One](#) of Circular 0140/2006 "Probationary Requirements for Primary Teachers".

The General Inspection is scheduled to take place on

Should any circumstances arise which would prevent the inspection from taking place, please notify me immediately.

Le meas

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(Inspector's name + title)