

IRELAND

ECEC Workforce Profile

Country report author

Maresa Duignan

Department of Education and Skills, Dublin

Citation suggestion:

Duignan, M. 2017. "Ireland – ECEC Workforce Profile." In *Workforce Profiles in Systems of Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe*, edited by P. Oberhuemer and I. Schreyer. www.seepro.eu/English/Country_Reports.htm

Funded by:

Contents

1. ECEC governance.....	3
2. Who belongs to the early years workforce?	3
2.1 Regular contact staff in ECEC provision.....	3
2.2 Structural composition of ECEC workforce	6
3. Initial professional studies (IPS)	9
3.1 Initial qualifying routes – higher education and vocational.....	9
3.2 Competency requirements and curricula in IPS programmes	11
3.3 Alternative entry and qualification routes, system permeability	14
4. Workplace-based learning in the IPS of core practitioners.....	15
5. Continuing professional development (CPD)	15
6. Recent policy reforms and initiatives relating to ECEC staffing	16
7. Recent country-specific research relating to ECEC professionalisation and staffing issues.....	17
8. General workforce issues	17
8.1 Remuneration.....	17
8.2 Full-time and part-time employment.....	17
8.3 Staff support measures in the workplace	18
8.4 Non-contact time	18
8.5 Staff shortages and recruitment strategies.....	18
9. Workforce challenges – country expert assessment	19
10. References.....	19

1. ECEC governance

In Ireland, Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services have a long tradition of multi-sectoral governance. This is primarily related to the source of state funding. ECEC provision is funded, in the main, by two government departments. The Department of Education and Skills (DES) provides for early education and primary education for children aged 3-6 years located in and under the governance of schools. ECEC for children under 3 years and for children aged 3-6 years in settings other than primary schools is funded by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA). There is some small level of provision for children with disabilities or at risk funded by the Department of Health and the Department of Social Protection, however these are small scale interventions and usually subject to regulation and policy generated by either of the two lead departments.

Children aged 0-6 are enrolled in centre-based ECEC settings on the basis of their parent's choice. There is low level of participation by 0- to 3-year olds in centre-based settings, with the majority of parents making informal childcare arrangements or using family day care (McGinnity *et al* 2013). A further complexity to the pattern of ECEC enrolment in Ireland is the traditional early enrolment in formal education. Despite the fact that the compulsory school starting age is 6 years, many 4-year olds and almost all 5-year olds attend primary school.

Governance and funding of ECEC is centralised, however there is a national support system at county level which assists ECEC services with funding application and improving the quality of provision.

2. Who belongs to the early years workforce?

2.1 Regular contact staff in ECEC provision

The complex nature of provision of ECEC services and patterns of enrolment of children aged 0-6 years in a variety of state funded care and education provision makes the definition and description of the ECEC workforce in Ireland quite challenging. The following definition, taken from Irish national policy, clearly excludes the staff in primary schools from the ECEC workforce as it characterises ECEC provision to be:

"...daycare facilities and services for pre-school children and school-going children out of school hours. It includes services offering care, education and socialisation opportunities for children to the benefit of children, parents, employers and the wider community. Thus, services such as pre-schools, naíonraí [Irish language: pre-schools], daycare services, crèches, play groups, childminding and after-school groups are included, but schools (primary, secondary and special) and residential centres for children are excluded" (Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform [DJELR] 1999).

However for the purposes of this report, staff in primary schools working with children aged 3-6 years will be included in order to provide a full picture of workforce in Ireland engaged in the care and education of children aged 0-6 years.

Staff working directly with children aged 0-6 years (non-primary)

Since 2014, a series of national policy initiatives focused on the improvement of the quality of ECEC provision and practice have created a number of new roles within the ECEC sector pri-

marily for higher education graduates with practice experience. In January 2016, a report published by Early Childhood Ireland (ECI), the leading representative organisation for the ECEC workforce, estimated the total number of ECEC staff to be 25,000 (ECI 2016).

The data in this paper has been drawn from a Pobal¹ survey of ECEC settings which have an active contract with the state to deliver ECEC services for children. The survey data were collected in 2016 via an integrated IT system which manages the state ECEC funding programmes. While completion of the survey data was not a requirement for provision of funding, it was integrated on the same system and completion of this 'survey Profile' data was strongly encouraged by both Pobal and DCYA. It achieved a very high response rate with a total of 3,429² of a potential 4,323 services (79%) making a return (Pobal 2016).

The following represents the most commonly held roles and titles of staff working in direct contact with children in ECEC settings (0- to 5-year olds) in Ireland.

Table 1

Ireland: Staff in ECEC settings (non-primary) – Numbers and percentage according to job titles, 2016

Job Title	Number of Staff	Staff, in %
Student Placement	145	1
Deputy Manager	1,016	6
Centre Manager	2,436	14
Room Leader (non-ECCE settings) ³	2,486	14
Room Leader (ECCE funded settings)	3,373	19
Early Years Assistant (ECCE funded settings)	3,531	20
Early Years Assistant (non-ECCE settings)	4,854	27
Grand Total	17,841	100

Staff working directly with children aged 4-6 years (primary)

In the primary education sector, staff working directly with children include qualified Primary School Teachers and Special Needs or Classroom Assistants. All primary teachers are required to have an honours Bachelor's degree in primary teaching and be registered with the Teaching Council of Ireland (Teaching Council 2016). Special Needs Assistants (SNA) are required to have achieved a NFQI (*National Framework of Qualifications Ireland*) Level 3 (ISCED Level 2) major award or equivalent, but no specialist subject is specified (DES 2011). Anecdotal evidence would suggest that many SNAs have achieved a specialist qualification. However, as this is not a requirement for employment, no data are available on the extent of such qualifications.

Table 2 shows ECEC staff in centre-based settings (non-primary) and the main staff in primary classrooms and also categorises the core practitioners (i.e. staff with group or centre responsibility) according to one of five ECEC professional profiles adapted from the original SEEPRO study (see Box 1 at end of this section).

¹ Pobal is a not-for-profit company with charitable status. Pobal manages programmes on behalf of Government departments, other national agencies and the EU.

² This figure is services that were in contract and open, services that closed earlier in 2016 are not included.

³ ECCE (Early Childhood Care and Education) refers to the contract for the delivery of the universal free pre-school in early childhood care and education programme.

Table 2

Ireland: ECEC staff in centre-based settings (0-6 non-primary and 4-6 primary)

Job title	Main ECEC workplace settings and age-range	Main position/s	Main age-range focus of IPS	Minimum qualification requirement and ECTS points/EQF level/ISCED ⁴ level
ECEC sector 0-6 (non-primary)				
Centre Manager <i>Profile:</i> Early Childhood Pedagogy Professional	Full- and part-time day care Sessional pre-school and after school services Drop-in services 0-6 years If after school provision is offered, the age range may extend to 14 years	Centre head	0 to 6 years	Post-secondary vocational qualification in early childhood care and education ECTS points: n/a NFQI: level 5 EQF: level 4 or 5 ISCED 2013-F: 0922 ISCED 2011: 4
Room Leader (ECCE) <i>Profile:</i> Early Childhood Pedagogy Professional	Full- and part-time day care Sessional pre-school and after school services Drop-in services 0-6 years If after school provision is offered, the age range may extend to 14 years	Core practitioner with group responsibility	0 to 6 years	Post-secondary vocational qualification in early childhood care and education ECTS points: n/a NFQI: level 6 EQF: level 5 ISCED 2013-F: 0922 ISCED 2011: 4/5
Room Leader (non-ECCE) <i>Profile:</i> Early Childhood Pedagogy Professional	Full- and part-time day care Sessional pre-school and after school services Drop-in services 0-6 years If after school provision is offered, the age range may extend to 14 years	Core practitioner with group responsibility	0 to 6 years	Post-secondary vocational qualification in early childhood care and education ECTS points: n/a NFQI: level 5 EQF: level 4 ISCED 2013-F: 0922 ISCED 2011: 4
Early Years Assistant <i>Profile:</i> Early Childhood Pedagogy Professional	Full- and part-time day care Sessional pre-school and after school services Drop-in services 0-6 years If after school provision is offered, the age range may extend to 14 years	Qualified co-worker	0 to 6 years	Post-secondary vocational qualification in early childhood care and education ECTS points: n/a NFQI: level 5 EQF: level 4 ISCED 2013-F: 0922 ISCED 2011: 4
(Pre-)Primary education sector (4-6)				
Primary Teacher <i>Profile:</i> Pre-primary and Primary Education	Classes in primary schools 4- to 6-year olds Primary schools	Core practitioner with group responsibility	4-12 years	Bachelor's degree (honours) 4 years university ECTS points: 180

⁴ UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2012, 2014.

Job title	Main ECEC workplace settings and age-range	Main position/s	Main age-range focus of IPS	Minimum qualification requirement and ECTS points/EQF level/ISCED ⁴ level
Professional	4-12 years			NFQI: level 8 EQF: level 6 ISCED 2013-F: 0113 ISCED 2011: 6
Special Needs Assistant / Classroom Assistant	Classes in primary schools 4- to 6-year olds Primary schools 4-12 years	Co-worker without formal qualification	n/a	Junior certificate – Lower secondary or QQI Level 3 award ⁵ ECTS points: n/a NFQI: level 3 EQF: level 2 ISCED 2013-F: 0011 ISCED 2011: 2

Box 1

SEEPRO professional profile categories for core practitioners (adapted from Oberhuemer, P., I. Schreyer, and M.J. Neuman 2010)

- *Early Childhood Pedagogy Professional* (specialist focus, 0– 6/7 years)
- *Pre-primary Education Professional* (exclusive pre-primary focus 3/4–6 years)
- *Pre-primary and Primary Education Professional* (focus on pre-primary and primary education 3/4–10/11 years)
- *Social and Childhood Pedagogy Professional* (mainly broad focus, including ECEC, usually 0–12 years, but sometimes including adults)
- *Social Care/Health Care Professional* (both narrow focus, 0–3, or broad focus, sometimes including adults)

2.2 Structural composition of ECEC workforce

0-6 ECEC non-primary sector

The Irish ECEC workforce is strongly female with less than 2% being male. Since the introduction of the universal free preschool education programme by the Irish Government in 2010, the qualification profile of the workforce has steadily improved due to the unprecedented introduction in 2010 of a contractual requirement for pre-school leaders to have achieved minimum qualification levels to practise. The qualification contractual requirement for pre-school leaders staff was raised to a minimum of a Level 6 major award⁶ in Early Childhood Education and Care in 2016, and a minimum of a Level 5 major award in ECEC is being introduced for all childcare staff under the 2016 Regulations from the end of 2016 (DCYA 2016a). The current qualification profile of staff in settings on contract to deliver state funded ECEC is represented in *Table 3* below.

⁵ Ireland has a 10 level national qualification framework (NFQ) through which all learning achievements may be measured and related to each other in a coherent way. The many different types and sizes of qualifications included in the NFQ are organised based on their level of knowledge, skill and competence. Level 5 and 6 awards broadly equate to ISCED level 4 (ISCED 2011). For further information see QQI – Quality and Qualifications Ireland 2017.

Table 3:

Ireland: ISCED levels of education, main programmes in Irish education/training, typical awards and National Framework of Qualifications Ireland (NFQI) levels

ISCED 2011 Level	Corresponds to:	Typical award	EQF Level	Award NFQI Level
0 Pre-primary education	Early Start and other pre- primary	QQI Certificate		Level 1/2
1 Primary education	Primary education		1	
2 Lower secondary	2nd level education – Junior Cycle	Junior Certificate	2	Level 3
3 Upper secondary	2nd level education – Senior Cycle	Leaving Certificate	3	Level 4
			4	Level 5
4 Post-secondary non-tertiary	Apprenticeship, Post Leaving Cert (PLC) courses, other Further Education and Training courses	QQI Level 5 Certificate	4	
		QQI Advanced Certificate	5	
5 Short-cycle tertiary education	Third level: Higher certificate HEI diploma	Higher Certificate	5	Level 7
6 Bachelor's degree or equivalent	Third level: Ordinary (three-year) or honours (four-year) Bachelor's degree Higher diploma	Ordinary Bachelor's Degree	6	
		Honours Bachelor Degree	6	
		Higher Diploma	6	Level 8
7 Master's degree or equivalent	Third level – master's degree and postgraduate certs/diplomas	Postgraduate Diploma Master's degree	7	Level 9
8 Doctoral degree or equivalent	PhD	PhD	8	Level 10

Source: Adapted from ISCED 2011 (UNESCO 2012)

Table 4

Ireland: ECEC Staff (non-primary) - Numbers and percentage according to qualification levels and gender, 2016

Qualification Level	Number of female staff		Number of male staff		Total Staff	
	Number	Percentage of total	Number	Percentage of total	Number	Percentage
No Qualification	1,866	10.5	93	0.5	1,959	11
NFQI Level 4	173	1.0	7	0.04	180	1
NFQI Level 5	5,629	31.6	53	0.3	5,682	32
NFQI Level 6	6,792	38.1	45	0.3	6,837	38
NFQI Level 7	915	5.1	16	0.1	931	5
NFQI Level 8	2,032	11.4	26	0.1	2,058	12
NFQI Level 9/10	189	1.1	5	0.03	194	1
Total	17,596	98.6	245	1.4	17,841	100

The figure of 11% for unqualified staff in ECEC settings has been impacted upon by a policy decision in 2013 to allow for a 'grandfathering' rule to apply to staff who are approaching retirement from their employment in the ECEC sector and who do not wish to undertake courses leading to the required regulated qualification. In such cases staff can sign a declaration of their intention to retire from the sector and are then exempted from the minimum qualification requirement. This exemption expires in September 2021 and after this time there should be no unqualified staff in the ECEC sector.

The predominance of vocational qualifications at a lower level than a Bachelor's degree reflects the traditional absence of regulation for the ECEC workforce. Even with the introduction of regulation to practise in the ECEC sector, the required qualification will be set at a minimum level of 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQI). This is equivalent to ISCED 4 internationally (see Table 4 above). However, despite the lack of incentive and support for the workforce in relation to achieving higher level qualifications, it is also noteworthy that there

has been a steady increase since 2010 in the number of staff with a Bachelor's degree or higher working in the sector. In 2014, the percentage stood at 14.7% and was 18% in 2016 (Pobal 2016).

There are no data available regarding the ethnic breakdown of the ECEC workforce. However, processing of applications for contracts to deliver the Free Preschool in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme funding has led to the establishment of a qualification database which details qualifications currently accepted as fulfilling the contractual requirements for the DCYA funded free preschool education programme. This shows that there is a growing diversity in the qualification profile of the ECEC workforce albeit starting from a very homogeneous Irish national base (DCYA 2016b).

Table 5

Ireland: Structural composition of ECEC staff (non-primary)

Staff categories	Proportion of workforce, 2016
Staff with specialist higher education degree	18%
Staff with specialist vocational qualification (post-secondary)	71%
Staff with non-specialist qualification	n/a
Unqualified staff	11%
Specialist support staff (e.g. speech therapists)	n/a
Male staff	1.4%
Staff with a background of migration	No national data available

4-6 ECE primary sector

The total number of primary teachers working with children aged 4 to 12 years on the payroll of the DES in 2016 was 34,576. There are no disaggregated figures for those working with 4- to 6-year olds in primary schools. All teachers are in full-time employment. Special Needs Assistants' (SNAs) employment is broken down into full time and part time as follows:

Table 6

Ireland: Special Needs Assistants according to gender and employment, 2016

	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent
Males	247	58	276
Females	6,816	2,616	8,127
Total	7,063	2,674	8,403

The combined workforce total is therefore 44,313.

Table 7

Ireland: Structural composition of primary sector (no disaggregated data for pre-primary section)

Staff categories	Proportion of workforce, 2016 n = 44,313
Staff with specialist higher education degree	78%
Staff with specialist vocational qualification (post-secondary)	n/a
Staff with non-specialist qualification (SNA)	22%
Unqualified staff	n/a
Specialist support staff (e.g. speech therapists)	n/a
Male staff	Primary Teachers: 13% SNAs: 3%
Staff with a background of migration	No national data available

3. Initial professional studies (IPS)

3.1 Initial qualifying routes – higher education and vocational

Regulation of qualification to practise in the ECEC sector has just been introduced with the new childcare regulations which commenced on a phased basis from July 1st 2016. The Child-care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 require that

“...all staff members working directly with children in pre-school services must hold at least a major award in early childhood care and education at level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework, or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent. This requirement will come into effect for newly-registering services on 30th June 2016 and for existing services on 31st December 2016” (DCYA 2016).

The historical absence of regulation of staff qualification has resulted in a very diverse workforce whose members have undertaken a variety of initial professional studies (or in some cases none at all) before commencing work in ECEC settings. Into the future the likely range of IPS will comprise the following:

1. Completion of school leaving certificate (completed by the majority of pupils at the end of secondary education) as point of entry into a higher education programme in early childhood studies at Levels 6, 7 or 8 on the Irish national framework of qualifications (NFQI).
2. Completion of a further education programme in early childhood studies at Levels 4, 5 or 6 on the NFQI – this may also facilitate progression to awards in higher education as above.

For many in the ECEC sector in Ireland (outside of staff in primary schools), the latter route has been the most common. This is due to the fact that qualification requirements are a very recent specification to gain employment in the ECEC sector and also due to the low status with which work in this sector has traditionally been regarded (Duignan 2012; DES 2016).

Tables 8 to 10 give a brief overview of the main qualifying routes for core practitioners and other key contact staff (e.g. Early Years Assistants) in the 0-6 non primary ECEC sector. As all staff must now comply with regulatory requirements for a minimum qualification of a nationally accredited major award in Early Childhood Care and Education (or equivalent as detailed by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs list of recognised qualifications (DCYA 2016d), the qualification route to achieving this award is common for all staff.

Table 8

Ireland: Centre Manager, ECEC 0-6 sector non-primary

Job title in English: Centre Manager
Profile: Early Childhood Pedagogy Professional
Entry requirements: School leaving certificate (secondary education) and/or completion of further education programme in early childhood studies. <i>Minimum requirement</i> = Level 5 (NFQI) major award in Early Childhood Care and Education (or equivalent).
Professional studies: The duration, place of study and whether full- or part-time varies according to individual choice of practitioner.
Award: Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) Major Award in Early Childhood Care and Education / <i>Cúram agus Oideachas na Luath-Óige</i>
ECTS points: n/a
EQF level: 4
ISCED 2013-F: 0922
ISCED 2011: 4
Main ECEC workplace: The full range of ECCE settings for children 0-6 (non-primary)

Table 9

Ireland: Room leader, ECEC 0-6 sector non-primary

Job title in English: <i>Room Manager</i>
Profile: Early Childhood Pedagogy Professional
<p>Entry requirements: School leaving certificate (secondary education) and/or completion of further education programme in early childhood studies. <i>Minimum requirement</i> = Level 5 (NFQI) major award in Early Childhood Care and Education (or equivalent).</p> <p>Professional studies: The duration, place of study and whether full- or part-time varies according to individual choice of practitioner.</p> <p>Award: Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) Major Award in Early Childhood Care and Education / <i>Cúram agus Oideachas na Luath-Óige</i></p> <p>ECTS points: n/a</p> <p>EQF level: 4</p> <p>ISCED 2013-F: 0922</p> <p>ISCED 2011: 4</p> <p>Main ECEC workplaces: The full range of ECCE settings for children 0-6 (non-primary)</p>

Table 10

Ireland: Early Years Assistant, ECEC 0-6 sector non-primary

Job title in English: <i>Early Years Assistant</i>
<p>Entry requirements: School leaving certificate (secondary education) and/or completion of further education programme in early childhood studies. <i>Minimum requirement</i> = Level 5 (NFQI) major award in Early Childhood Care and Education (or equivalent).</p> <p>Professional studies: The duration, place of study and whether full- or part-time varies according to individual choice of practitioner.</p> <p>Award: Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) Major Award in Early Childhood Care and Education/ <i>Cúram agus Oideachas na Luath-Óige</i></p> <p>ECTS points: n/a</p> <p>EQF level: 4</p> <p>ISCED 2013-F: 0922</p> <p>ISCED 2011: 4</p> <p>Main ECEC workplace: The full range of ECCE settings for children 0-6 (non-primary sector)</p>

Table 11 summarises the IPS characteristics for Primary Teachers.

Table 11

Ireland: Primary Teacher

Job title in English: <i>Primary Teacher</i>
Profile: (Pre-primary and) Primary Education Professional
<p>Entry requirements: National Leaving Certificate; Minimum points requirement. Restricted entry⁷</p> <p>Professional studies: 4 years at university</p> <p>Award: Bachelor's degree (honours) in Education - Primary</p> <p>ECTS points: 180</p> <p>EQF level: 6</p> <p>ISCED 2013-F: 0113</p> <p>ISCED 2011: 6</p> <p>Main ECEC workplace: Primary schools, classes in primary schools attended by 4- to 6-year olds</p>

⁷ The number of places on initial primary teaching courses in Ireland is restricted annually by the Government. Each third level institution offering this programme has an allocation of places and sets the minimum points requirement for entry each year based upon demand. The average points requirement in 2016/7 was 465 (out of a possible 625). Alternative entry routes are available for mature students (Teaching Council 2015b).

3.2 Competency requirements and curricula in IPS programmes

Vocational/Further Education Awards (0-6 ECEC sector non-primary)

Since 2011, Common Award Standards have been prescribed for further education awards in Early Childhood Care and Education (QQI 2011). The CAS include a range of mandatory and elective component awards that can be selected by education and training providers who wish to deliver nationally accredited programmes of education and training for the early years sector in Ireland. This allows for some variety in the content of programmes of learning, e.g. a particular curricular philosophy can be prioritised by the education and training provider, but ensures that mandatory skills, knowledge and competences are included.

Level 5 award (NFQI)

The purpose of the award specification for the Level 5 award (NFQI) specified in the 2016 Early Years Services Regulations is described as follows: “The purpose of this award is to enable the learner to acquire the knowledge, skill and competence to work independently and under supervision in a range of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) settings and or to progress to higher education and training” (QQI 2016).

Competence requirements

Learners will be able to:

- Demonstrate a broad range of knowledge related to the learning, well-being and development of children and their identities in the field of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE).
- Demonstrate knowledge of some theoretical concepts and abstract thinking pertinent to ECCE practice to include child protection, with significant depth in certain areas;
- Demonstrate a broad range of practice, interpersonal, reflective and pedagogical skills in providing for the holistic needs of babies and young children at group and individual level;
- Exercise judgment in selecting appropriate procedural responses to routine, varied and unfamiliar situations and challenges within an ECCE setting;
- Demonstrate knowledge and skills within a range of varied and specific ECCE practice contexts and settings;
- Contribute to the planning, implementation and evaluation of the curriculum in support of the learning, wellbeing and development of all children recognising the importance of working in partnership with staff, parents/guardians/carers/families and the broader community;
- Reflect on personal values and practices to inform self-understanding and personal development.

To access programmes leading to this award the learner should have reached the standards of knowledge, skill and competence associated with the preceding level of the National Framework of Qualifications. This may have been achieved through a formal qualification or through relevant life and work experience. Achievement of this award will enable the learner to transfer to other appropriate programmes leading to awards at the same level of the National Framework of Qualifications.

The overall grade (Pass, Merit or Distinction) will be determined by the grades achieved on the components. The total credit value required for this certificate is 120 credits. This will be achieved by completing the following components:

Table 12

Ireland: Further Education and Training (FET) - Credit values, vocational professional studies

Award Code	Title	Level	Credit Value
All of the following component(s) – 60 FET credits			
5N1764	Child Development	5	15

Award Code	Title	Level	Credit Value
5N1770	Early Care and Education Practice	5	15
5N1773	Early Childhood Education and Play	5	15
5N1765	Child Health and Well Being	5	15
A minimum credit value of 15 from the following components			
5N1356	Work Experience	5	15
5N1433	Work Practice	5	15
A minimum credit value of 15 from the following components			
5N0690	Communications	5	15
5N1367	Team working	5	15
5N1390	Personal Effectiveness	5	15
5N0972	Customer Service	5	15
A minimum credit value of 15 from the following components			
5N1786	Special Needs Assisting	5	15
5N1769	Creative Arts for Early Childhood	5	15
5N1279	Human Growth and Development	5	15
5N1370	Social Studies	5	15
5N1394	Legal Practice and Procedures	5	15
5N1763	Approaches to Early Childhood Education	5	15
5N1766	Childminding Practice	5	15
5N1779	Infant and Toddler Years	5	15
5N1781	School Age Childcare	5	15
5N1775	Equality and Diversity in Childcare	5	15
5N2006	Nutrition	5	15
5N2005	Irish for Preschool Services	5	15
5N1207	Occupational First Aid	5	5
5N2396	Children with Additional Needs	5	15
The remaining credit value of 15 can be obtained by using relevant component(s) from level 5. A maximum of 15 credits may be used from either level 4 or level 6.			

Specific validation requirements

In order to be able to offer this award, the training provider must have sufficient facilities and opportunities to enable the learner to demonstrate a range of practical skills and competencies in an appropriate Early Childhood Care and Education setting.

Higher Education Awards

0-6 ECEC non-primary sector

There are no equivalent award standards for courses in higher education. However, Bachelor's degrees at level 7 or 8 on the NFQI have generally been informed by the following Occupational Role Profile for Advanced Practitioner. This was developed and published by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform in 2002 (lead government department for ECEC at the time) (DJELR 2002:22).

Table 13

Ireland: Advanced practitioner competence profile

It is understood that a practitioner at this stage of professional development may work with complete autonomy and will have full responsibility for the work of others.

Key tasks and responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage overall operation and maintenance of an ECCE service, e.g. Resources, Finance, Administration, Personnel; • Formulate, implement and evaluate philosophy, policies and procedures; • Develop and evaluate programmes and activities;

- Develop quality improvement strategies within a service to enhance the quality of experience for all children and staff;
- Establish and maintain effective working relationships with all staff;
- Mentor and support practitioners engaged in professional development;
- Engage in learning opportunities to improve knowledge and skills at a personal and professional level;
- Establish and maintain relationship with parents, families and guardians;
- Liaise with outside agencies e.g. County Committees, Regulatory Organisations, and National Government Organisations;
- Facilitate pre-service and in-service education and training of ECCE practitioners;
- Recognise and deal with discriminatory policies, procedures, practices and incidents.

Skills and knowledge

CHILD DEVELOPMENT

- In-depth knowledge and understanding of child development theories;
- Ability to describe in detail patterns in the holistic development of children;
- Ability to apply theory of an area of knowledge in a professional practice context;
- Ability to communicate and demonstrate the links between ECCE theory and practice;
- In-depth understanding of the role of adults in the holistic development of the child;
- Ability to use recorded observations and reflection on practice to develop long-term and short-term objectives and plans for the holistic development of individual children.

EDUCATION AND PLAY

- Ability to plan, implement, coordinate and evaluate a curriculum for babies and children (0-8);
- In-depth knowledge and understanding of a wide range of different models/systems in use in ECCE ;
- Critical awareness of the value of research in ECCE.

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

- Ability to liaise and maintain relationships in the wider environment including other professionals, management committees, local community and voluntary organisations and statutory bodies;
- Knowledge of a range of methods available for improving adverse social environmental factors for babies and young children, including knowledge of the public services available locally and nationally and the ability to use these appropriately for the benefit of children;
- Ability to develop, implement and evaluate initiatives to support the inclusion of all children and families in ECCE services.

HEALTH, HYGIENE, NUTRITION, SAFETY

- Ability to ensure the safety of children and adults in an ECCE environment;
- Ability to take responsibility for the welfare and well-being of all children and adults in an ECCE service;
- Knowledge and skill in the process of development, implementation and evaluation of policies and procedures in an ECCE service.

PERSONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Ability to reflect and critically evaluate self in relation to personal and professional development;
- Ability to promote and support professional development of ECCE practitioners;
- Critical awareness of the value of research in ECCE.

COMMUNICATION, MANAGEMENT, ADMINISTRATION

- Knowledge and understanding of financial, administrative and personnel management theory and practice necessary for the effective operation of an ECCE service;
- Ability to plan for and resource flexible ECCE services for children and families ;
- Ability to implement organisational structures ensuring that lines of authority and accountability are understood by all staff members;
- Ability to supervise staff and support their development (including induction of new staff);
- Ability to put in place and maintain admission procedures and record-keeping systems relating to children, their families and the staff of the ECCE service;
- Ability to identify and solve problems related to the effective operation of an ECCE service.

SUPERVISED PRACTICE

Supervised practical experience as appropriate.

In 2016, the Department of Education and Skills announced a review of occupational role profiles for the Early Years sector as a precursor for a review of all initial professional education programmes in ECEC in 2018. This review has primarily been prompted by the development since 2014 of a range of job opportunities for experienced higher education graduates. These posts involve work in inspection and quality improvement initiatives in the ECEC sector. Recruitment for such posts highlighted the diversity in content and delivery of higher education

courses and the variability in the capacity of graduates to undertake the newly emerging graduate roles in the ECEC sector.

4-6 ECE Primary sector

Staff working in primary schools with children aged 4-6 years comprise qualified and registered primary school teachers and special needs or general classroom assistants. Primary Teachers are required to have a higher education Bachelor's degree that meets the requirements of registration with the Teaching Council of Ireland and must meet the required Irish language proficiency requirements.

Table 13

Ireland: Mandatory Elements of Programmes of Initial Teacher Education (ITE)

The following are mandatory elements of all ITE programmes as stipulated by The Teaching Council of Ireland (2011).

Early Childhood Education (Primary)/Adolescent Learning (Post-primary)

- Inclusive Education (Special Education, Multiculturalism, Disadvantage, etc.);
- Numeracy;
- Literacy;
- Gaeilge (Irish) (Primary);
- The Teacher as Professional/Reflective Practitioner/Researcher;
- Developing a Professional Portfolio;
- Parents in Education - Co-operation and Collaboration;
- The School as a Learning Community;
- Preparation for School Placement;
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment including School and Classroom Planning;
- Differentiation;
- Behaviour Management;
- ICT in Teaching and Learning;
- Legislation Relevant to School and Classroom;
- The Teacher and External Agencies.

In all areas of study there should be provision for:

- the promotion of the love of learning, reflective practice and critical thinking;
- the development of student teachers' understanding of schools as organisations;
- the development of student teachers as researchers and lifelong learners;
- students' personal and social development, having regard to teachers' pastoral role;
- student teachers' literacy and numeracy and their competence in promoting and assessing literacy and numeracy as appropriate to their curricular/subject area.

The lack of specialised qualification requirements for the **Special Needs Assistants / Classroom Assistants** means that there are no specific competency or curricular requirements available for this role.

3.3 Alternative entry and qualification routes, system permeability

The historically unregulated nature of the ECEC (non-primary) workforce in Ireland has resulted in an extremely diverse range of qualifications amongst practitioners. Since 2010 and the introduction of the state funded universal free preschool programme, practitioners have been required to demonstrate that they have achieved a minimum level of qualification equivalent to the Major award at level 5 (detailed above). As a pragmatic approach to ensuring that the infrastructural capacity to deliver the new free preschool initiative was not reduced, a system was established to individually assess the qualification profile of each practitioner in each setting and either allow them to meet the contract qualification requirements or recommend that the individual undertake a further course of study (to be subsidised by the State). Many practitioners took advantage of this initiative and the availability of a 'Learner Fund' to refresh or upskill their qualification profile. Education and Training providers delivering courses funded by the Learner Fund were required to facilitate Recognition of Prior Learning. This Learner

Fund initiative has resulted in the participation of in excess of 3,500 staff in ECEC settings undertaking courses to achieve either level 5 or 6 major awards in the past two years. The Learner Fund does not extend to subsidies for higher education courses and due to the low wage nature of employment in the ECEC sector it is very challenging for practitioners working in ECEC settings to progress their qualifications beyond the vocational level. An added disincentive is the fact that there is insufficient additional remuneration for those staff who make the investment in achieving higher level qualifications (ECI 2016). There have been policy recommendations calling for extension of the Learner Fund to subsidise degree level courses (Start Strong 2015; DCYA 2015).

4. Workplace-based learning in the IPS of core practitioners

0-6 ECEC non-primary sector

A practicum in an ECEC setting is a requirement of all nationally accredited major awards in ECEC in Ireland. This is also included as a criterion for the recognition of international awards to be deemed equivalent to Irish awards in ECEC under the terms of the contract with the DCYA for the free preschool programme. Despite this, however, there are no nationally agreed guidelines in relation to this element of professional preparation. In 2015, a survey conducted by the DES to examine the satisfaction of ECEC practitioners with their initial professional preparation courses found that there were many who felt that there was a need for the application of standards in relation to the duration, content, supervision and assessment of the practicum. This finding will be addressed in a review of further and higher education courses in ECEC by DES (DES 2016). Until this review is completed, the duration, content, supervision and evaluation of workplace-based learning in the initial professional studies of staff in early years settings (non-primary sector) is decided upon by each education and training provider independently.

4-6 ECE primary sector

In the primary sector, supervised practicum for primary teachers is standardised and specified by the Teaching Council of Ireland. In general it is required that 40% of initial professional education should comprise a supervised practicum. Further it is a requirement of registration as a primary teacher that each student passes this element of the programme (The Teaching Council of Ireland 2011).

5. Continuing professional development (CPD)

0-6 ECEC non-primary sector

Once again, the unregulated nature of practice in ECEC in Ireland has predicated against a coherent system for CPD. Since 2013, there have been two national CPD initiatives established to meet either regulatory requirements for practice (Child Protection training) or quality improvement in ECEC practice (Equality and Diversity training). Other CPD opportunities are delivered through organisations and agencies at regional or local level, which are either funded by the state or membership fees to support quality improvement in ECEC. The courses offered through these organisations are varied and rarely adhere to a standardised format. ECEC practitioners usually attend such CPD in their own time and at their own expense. In some instances employers may subsidise this activity for their staff but there is no national data available to establish the extent of this support.

The need for a coherent, coordinated strategy for the CPD of ECEC staff also emerged from the DES survey of practitioners in 2015. Issues highlighted for CPD included: working with children with additional needs, working with parents, and using the national curriculum and quality frameworks for ECEC. Some positive response to these issues is already evident and in September 2016 a new State funded initiative commenced to support staff in ECEC settings nationally to enrol in a programme of CPD to build capacity regarding the inclusion of children with disability in mainstream ECEC settings (DCYA 2016c).

4-6 ECE primary sector

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of Primary School teachers falls under the remit of the Teaching Council of Ireland (for details see: The Teaching Council 2015a). Under the terms of rule 58 of the Rules for National Schools, primary teachers are incentivised, through the availability of extra personal vacation days (EPV), to avail of a wide range of CPD courses during the summer months when schools are closed (DES 2017). Some of these courses are particularly relevant to teachers of children in the infant classes of primary schools (4- to 6-year olds); however they are not mandatory and are offered by a wide range of private education providers.

In the instance of the introduction of new curricula/practice in primary education, teachers will be offered specific CPD by the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST). The PDST was established in September 2010 as a generic, integrated and cross-sectoral support service for schools (PDST 2017a). The PDST offers professional learning opportunities to teachers and school leaders in a range of pedagogical, curricular and educational areas. The most recent initiative focused on infant education in primary schools relates to the introduction of a new primary language curriculum in 2015/2016 (PDST 2017b).

6. Recent policy reforms and initiatives relating to ECEC staffing

Regulation of qualifications for staff in ECEC settings in Ireland has just been introduced for the first time in the Child Care Regulations (*the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016*). The qualification requirements aspect of the new Regulations did not commence until 31st December 2016. This absence of regulation has previously meant that very limited data on the profile of the Irish ECEC workforce has been available at national level. However, in 2016, all ECEC settings in receipt of State funding to deliver ECEC services were invited by the DCYA to return a service profile including details of staffing numbers, qualifications, experience etc. This data has been included in this report.

In addition to a changing regulatory context, the period from 2014 has seen the introduction of a series of major policy developments impacting directly on the ECEC sector. These include:

- Introduction (2010) and extension (2015) of universal free preschool in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme (DCYA 2016c);
- Introduction of Education-focused inspection (2015/6; DES 2016a);
- Establishment of the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) for children with a disability in the ECCE Programme (2016/17 (Access Inclusion Model 2016));
- Introduction of the Learner Fund to subsidise the cost of upskilling those working in the sector to gain a Level 5 or Level 6 qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education (DCYA 2014).

7. Recent country-specific research relating to ECEC professionalisation and staffing issues

In 2010, the Department for Education and Skills published a Workforce Development Plan for the ECCE sector in Ireland (DES 2010). This publication related the occupational role profiles of 2002 to national awards in ECEC effectively providing clarity, for the first time, to practitioners in the ECEC sector about the need for progressing their qualification profile in order to achieve knowledge and skills associated with these different roles in ECEC.

Very little further national research has been conducted outside annual sector surveys administered to ECEC settings in receipt of State funding. Reports of this survey have been published for 2010 –2014 (Pobal 2017). Data were gathered on staff qualifications, ratios and turnover rates. Whilst this data did provide some interesting insights into the profile of the ECEC workforce, e.g. the 2014 data showed that over 20% of ECEC services had a high level of dependency on volunteer staff or staff funded through social welfare related employment schemes (Pobal 2014), it was not until 2015 that the ECEC workforce was given the opportunity to participate in national research that included qualitative research. This research was carried out by the DES to establish the perspectives of ECEC staff and employers on the suitability and relevance of professional education and training programmes in ECEC programmes. Data gathered in relation to staff perspectives on initial professional education were published in April 2016. Of note was the general consensus that IPS did not adequately prepare staff for responding to the needs of the diverse population of children attending the free preschool programme - in particular children with English as a second language or children with disabilities (DES 2016).

Following on from this research a review of occupational role profiles in the ECEC sector has been commissioned as the basis for a comprehensive review of education and training programmes leading to professional practice in the ECEC sector, commencing in 2017.

8. General workforce issues

8.1 Remuneration

In January 2016, a survey of the pay rates across the Irish ECEC workforce (non-primary) was published by Early Childhood Ireland (ECI 2016), the largest membership organisation for the ECEC sector. The survey was based upon 3,016 responses from staff in ECEC settings and claimed an average hourly rate of 13.28€ for a manager and 10.27€ for other staff. When this is compared with the average industrial wage in Ireland of 21.46€ per hour, it is apparent that this is a low wage sector (ECI 2016). Almost half of staff are employed part-time (see below) and there is a further phenomenon of ‘term-time’ only contracts for staff who are employed to deliver the Free Preschool in ECCE Programme. The contract for the ECCE Programme is for 38 weeks and many staff are made redundant by their employers outside of these weeks and are forced to seek social welfare payments for the remaining weeks of the year.

8.2 Full-time and part-time employment

Full-time work corresponds to 38 hours per week, part-time work may be anything below that. There is a strong tendency for part-time work in the ECEC sector (non-primary 0-6) in Ireland, as can be seen from the figures below.

Table 14

Ireland: ECEC Staff - Full-Time/Part-Time, ECEC sector 0-6 non-primary

Full-time/Part-time Employee	Number of Staff	Percentage
Full time employee	9,641	54
Part time employee	8,200	46
Total	17,841	100

Source: Pobal 2016.

Despite this, there is a relatively low turnover rate in ECEC with over 50% of staff employed for four or more years in their current employment.

Table 15

Ireland: ECEC Staff (0-6 non-primary) - Length of time in service (current workplace)

Length of Service	Number of Staff	Percentage
Under 1 Year	3,028	17
1 to 2 Years	2,429	14
2 to 4 Years	3,190	18
4 to 10 years+	5,024	28
More than 10 years+	4,170	23
Total	17,841	100

8.3 Staff support measures in the workplace

There is very little information available at national level regarding the terms and conditions of employment of the ECEC workforce. However, in 2016 a national consultation related to the introduction of education-focused inspection was carried out by the Department of Education and Skills to establish the challenges facing the ECEC sector in relation to improving the quality of educational provision and practice. The survey findings highlighted the lack of support for staff (DES unpublished).

8.4 Non-contact time

The above-mentioned survey also highlighted the lack of non-contact time for planning and reviewing practice, considering this to be a key factor in preventing engagement in quality improvement activity (DES unpublished).

8.5 Staff shortages and recruitment strategies

Historically, the supply of staff in ECEC services in Ireland has not been an issue due to the absence of qualification to practise requirements. The introduction, from December 2016, of regulation in this regard has the potential to significantly impact on this situation. Further, the expansion of the offer of free preschool provision to all children from age 3 years to the start of primary school will require an estimated 40% increase in the provision of places and will also increase the demand for Preschool Leaders with Level 6 awards in early childhood care and education. In this context, strategies to recruit and retain qualified staff will become more pertinent in the ECEC sector.

9. Workforce challenges – country expert assessment

The ECEC workforce in Ireland has been on a challenging journey in the past two decades. From a largely invisible (in policy terms) sector, ECEC has become a priority national policy issue attracting increased public funding and concomitant accountability demands. The impact on the workforce has ultimately manifested in the introduction of regulation to practise for all staff in direct contact with children in ECEC settings. Since December 2016, it is no longer possible to be employed in the ECEC sector, in centre based settings⁸, without achieving a minimum level of qualification. On a positive note, this has the potential to promote the recognition of the specialised nature of work in this sector and raise the status of employment in ECEC.

New national policy investment and initiatives to improve the quality of practice in ECEC also have potential to raise the profile of the sector and its workforce. In particular, initiatives that have created professional career opportunities for graduates of higher education programmes with post-qualification practice experience in ECEC settings, e.g. mentors, inspectors, researchers and lecturers, augur well for the future of the sector by providing incentives for enrolment in higher education ECEC programmes and creating more attractive career pathways for graduates.

A rise in the qualification profile, particularly of staff with higher education qualifications, has the potential to raise the capacity of the ECEC sector in terms of provision, practice and research. However, there is likely to be a time lag between the immediate accountability demands associated with increased national funding for ECEC and realisation of tangible improvements in the status, terms and conditions of employment of the ECEC workforce. In the short term it could lead to retention difficulties for employers in the ECEC sector, especially as the recovery of Ireland's wider economy begins to provide attractive alternative employment opportunities. It could also present challenges for the workforce in responding to increasing demands for quality improvement across a range of aspects of practice including curriculum planning and implementation, inclusion of children with diverse additional needs and engaging in cross professional dialogue with other professionals in the wider health and education workforce.

10. References

- Access Inclusion Model. 2016. *Access Inclusion Model* <http://aim.gov.ie/>
- [DCYA] Department of Children and Youth Affairs. 2014. *Minister Fitzgerald Announces New 'Learner Fund' for Childcare Staff Seeking Qualifications* <http://dcya.gov.ie/viewdoc.asp?DocID=3126>
- [DCYA] Department of Children and Youth Affairs. 2015. *Report of Inter-Departmental Working Group: Future Investment in Childcare in Ireland.* <http://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/earlyyears/20150722IDGReportonEarlyYrsInvestmentReport.pdf>
- [DCYA] Department of Children and Youth Affairs. 2016. *Press Release Announcing the Publication of New Preschool Regulations.* <http://www.dcy.gov.ie/viewdoc.asp?DocID=3774>
- [DCYA] Department of Children and Youth Affairs. 2016a. *Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016* <http://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/publications/20160602ChildCareRegs2016.PDF>

⁸ Services not required to register with the Child and Family Agency including some Childminders (caring for three or fewer non-relative children) and After School provision will not be subject to the regulation and therefore may employ unqualified staff.

- [DCYA] Department of Children and Youth Affairs. 2016b. *Early Years (Pre-school) Regulations and DCYA Childcare Programmes Qualification Requirements Database*. <http://www.dcy.gov.ie/eyrq/>
- [DCYA] Department of Children and Youth Affairs. 2016c. *Free Pre-School Year in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). Guide for Parents*. http://www.dcy.gov.ie/viewdoc.asp?fn=/documents/childcare/ECCE_guideforparents.htm
- [DCYA] Department of Children and Youth Affairs. 2016d. *Early Years Recognised Qualifications*. <http://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/earlyyears/20170109DCYAEarlyYearsQualificationsList.pdf>
- [DES] Department of Education and Skills. 2010. *A Workforce Development Plan for the Early Childhood Care and Education Sector*. https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Early-Years/eye_workforce_dev_plan.pdf
- [DES] Department of Education and Skills. 2011. *Circular 021/2011. Educational Qualifications for Appointment as Special Needs Assistant in Recognised Primary and Post Primary Schools*. http://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0021_2011.pdf
- [DES] Department of Education and Skills. 2016a. *Survey of Early Years Practitioners Consultation for the Review of Education and Training Programmes in Early Years*. <https://www.education.ie/en/The-Education-System/Early-Childhood/Early-Years-Practitioner-Survey-Findings-2016.pdf>
- [DES] Department of Education and Skills. 2016b. *A Guide to Early-years Education-focused Inspection (EYEI) in Early-years Settings Participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme*. <http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Inspection-Reports-Publications/Evaluation-Reports-Guidelines/A-Guide-to-Early-years-Education-focused-Inspection-EYEI-in-Early-years-Settings-Participating-ECCE-Programme.pdf>
- [DES] Department of Education and Skills. 2017. *Extra Personal Vacation Days*. <http://www.education.ie/en/Education-Staff/Services/Breaks-Leave/Extra-Personal-Vacation-Days/>.
- [DES] Department of Education and Skills. Unpublished. *Report of a Consultation Process on the Introduction of Early Years Education-focused Inspection*. Dublin. Department of Education and Skills.
- [DJELR] Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform. 1999. *National Childcare Strategy- Report of the Partnership 2000 Expert Working Group on Childcare*. Dublin. Government publications Office. <http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Childcare1.pdf/Files/Childcare1.pdf>.
- [DJELR] Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform. 2002. *Quality Childcare and Lifelong Learning: A Model Framework for Education, Training and Professional Development on the Early Childhood Care and Education Sector*. <https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Early-Years/Model-Framework-for-Education-Training-and-Professional-Development-in-the-Early-Childhood-Care-and-Education-Sector.pdf>
- Duignan, M. 2012. *The Journey towards Professionalism in the Early Childhood Care and Education Sector in Ireland*. Presentation to the Association of Childhood Professionals of Ireland, Waterford, October 2012. http://www.acpireland.com/uploads/1/5/3/7/15370432/the_journey_towards_professionalism_in_waterford_presentation.pdf
- [ECI] Early Childhood Ireland. 2016. *Pay Rates in the Irish Early Childhood Care and Education Sector* https://www.earlychildhoodireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Research-Brief-Pay-Rates_FINAL.pdf
- McGinnity, F., A. Murray and S. McNally. 2013 *Mothers' Return to Work and Childcare Choices for Infants in Ireland*. <http://www.esri.ie/pubs/BKMNEXT238.pdf>
- Oberhuemer, P., I. Schreyer, and M.J. Neuman. 2010. *Professionals in Early Childhood Education and Care Systems: European Profiles and Perspectives*. Opladen and Farmington Hills, MI: Barbara Budrich.
- [PDST] Professional Development Service for Teachers. 2017a. *Primary – Post Primary*. www.pdst.ie.
- [PDST] Professional Development Service for Teachers. 2017b. *Primary Language Curriculum*. <http://www.pdst.ie/literacy/primarylanguagecurriculum>
- Pobal. 2014. *Pobal Annual Early Years Sector Survey Report 2014*. <https://www.pobal.ie/News/Pages/Pobal-Annual-Early-Years-Sector-Survey-Report-2014.aspx>
- Pobal. 2016. *Early Years Sector Profile 2015 - 2016*. Pobal Holbrook House Dublin 2 D02EY84. Ireland.
- Pobal. 2017. *Publications*. www.pobal.ie/publications
- [QQI] Quality and Qualifications Ireland. 2011. *Common Award System*. <https://qhhelp.qqi.ie/providers/certification-queries/common-award-system-cas-exemptions/>

- [QQI] Quality and Qualifications Ireland. 2016. *Certificate Specification NFQ Level 5 Early Childhood Care and Education 5M2009*
http://docs.qqi.ie/AwardsLibraryPdf/5M2009_AwardSpecifications_English.pdf
- [QQI] Quality and Qualifications Ireland. 2017. *National Framework of Qualifications*.
[http://www.qqi.ie/Pages/National-Framework-of-Qualifications-\(NFQ\).aspx](http://www.qqi.ie/Pages/National-Framework-of-Qualifications-(NFQ).aspx)
- Start Strong. 2015. *Budget 2016 Analysis*.
http://www.startstrong.ie/files/Start_Strong_Budget_2016_Analysis_FINAL.pdf
- The Teaching Council. 2011. *Initial Teacher Education: Criteria and Guidelines for Programme Providers In accordance with Section 38 of the Teaching Council Act, 2001*.
<http://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/Publications/Teacher-Education/Initial-Teacher-Education-Criteria-and-Guidelines-for-Programme-Providers.pdf>
- The Teaching Council. 2015a. *Continuing Professional Development*.
<http://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/Teacher-Education/Continuing-Professional-Development/>
- The Teaching Council. 2015b. *Entry to Initial Teacher Education*.
[http://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/Teacher-Education/Initial-Teacher-Education/Entry-to-Initial-Teacher-Education -](http://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/Teacher-Education/Initial-Teacher-Education/Entry-to-Initial-Teacher-Education-)
- The Teaching Council. 2016. *Teaching Council (Registration) (Amendment) Regulations 2016*.
<http://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/Publications/Registration/Teaching-Council-Registration-Amendment-Regulations-2016.pdf>
- UNESCO Institute for Statistics. 2012. *International Standard Classification of Education 2011*.
<http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/isced-2011-en.pdf>
- UNESCO Institute for Statistics. 2014. *ISCED Fields of Education and Training 2013 (ISCED-F 2013). Manual to accompany ISCED 2011*. <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/isced-fields-of-education-and-training-2013-en.pdf>

