

Press release

Minister Foley announces new contracts for Irish-medium teacher education programmes

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- up to 60 places for teacher education through Irish to be delivered annually
- action to increase supply of Irish-medium teachers

Minister for Education Norma Foley today announced that new contracts have been signed for two Irish-medium teacher education programmes. The programmes will deliver up to 60 places for teacher education through Irish annually, and represent an important measure to increase the supply of teachers for Irish-medium schools both inside and outside of the Gaeltacht.

The two Irish-medium teacher education programmes represent an investment of over €7 million by the Department of Education, and will be delivered by the Marino Institute of Education and Trinity College Dublin.

Marino Institute of Education will continue to deliver the four-year Irish-medium Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) for primary teachers, which commenced in 2019. Trinity College Dublin will commence delivery of a Masters in Irish-medium and Gaeltacht Education (M.Ed.) for primary and post-primary teachers and principals in September 2023. Both programmes will be delivered through the medium of Irish.

Minister Foley said:

"The delivery of the Irish-medium Bachelor of Education and the Masters in Irish-medium and Gaeltacht Education programmes has been a key aspect of the Policy on Gaeltacht Education. I am delighted to announce today that new contracts have been awarded to ensure the continued delivery of these programmes.

"I am excited to welcome the first cohort of graduates from the B.Oid. in Marino Institute of Education into the teaching profession later this year. They will be the first cohort of primary school teachers to have completed their B.Ed. studies through the medium of Irish. This is a significant development, which will greatly benefit Irish-medium schools across the country.

"The new M.Ed. in Irish-medium and Gaeltacht Education, to be delivered by Trinity College Dublin, promises to be an innovative and rewarding course. It will allow participants to develop their professional and pedagogical knowledge of Irish-medium education contexts, while also developing their linguistic competence.

"I would like to thank the staff of Mary Immaculate College, who have delivered the M.Ed. programme under the Policy on Gaeltacht Education since 2018. The excellent work that has been carried out, and particularly the research undertaken in the field of Irish-medium education by graduates, demonstrates the effectiveness and the value of the programme."

Both contracts were awarded following a comprehensive procurement process, managed by the Office of Government Procurement (OGP) in conjunction with the Department of Education. The Minister also thanked the OGP for their support with the process.

Notes

The Policy on Gaeltacht Education (the Policy) was published in October 2016. The overarching goal of the Policy is to ensure the provision of high quality Irish-medium education in Gaeltacht schools to support the use of Irish as the main language of Gaeltacht communities.

A key pillar of the Policy is improving the quality of teaching through Irish.

Contracts for the Irish-medium B.Ed. and M.Ed. funded under the Policy on Gaeltacht Education were awarded to Marino Institute of Education and Mary Immaculate College after a procurement process in in 2017. As these contracts were nearing their conclusion, a new Request for Tenders was published in October 2022 by the Office of Government Procurement on behalf of the Department of Education.

As part of measures previously announced by the department to increase teacher supply, 30 additional places on the Irish-medium B.Ed. are being made available for the academic year 2023-2024.

Applications for the B.Ed. can be made through the CAO until 1 July 2023. The CAO course codes for the Irish-medium B.Ed. are CM003 and CM004.

The deadline for applications for the M.Ed. in Irish-medium and Gaeltacht Education in Trinity College Dublin is 26 June 2023. Applications can be submitted on [the Trinity College Dublin website](https://www.tcd.ie/courses/postgraduate/courses/irish-medium-and-gaeltacht-education-med/). (<https://www.tcd.ie/courses/postgraduate/courses/irish-medium-and-gaeltacht-education-med/>).

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