

QUALIFICATION RULES FOR TEACHERS IN NURSERY, PRIMARY, POST PRIMARY AND SPECIAL SCHOOLS

Purpose This guidance provides **essential information for Employing Authorities, Board of Governors and Principals of grant-aided schools in Northern Ireland and teachers** about the qualifications required to be eligible for registration with the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI) in order to seek employment as a teacher in a grant-aided school in Northern Ireland.

Audience Education and Library Boards
Council for Catholic Maintained Schools
Principals and Board of Governors of all grant-aided schools
Initial Teacher Education Institutions
Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education
Comhairle Na Gaelscolaíochta
Governing Bodies Association
Teachers Unions

Contact Any enquiries about the contents of this Guidance should be addressed to:

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Introduction

- 1.1 Article 35 of the Education (NI) Order 2006 amended Article 36 of the Education (NI) Order 1998 to transfer responsibility for the approval of teaching qualifications, for the purposes of registration with the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI), from the Department of Education to GTCNI.
- 1.2 The purpose of the GTCNI Qualification Rules for Teachers in Nursery, Primary, Post Primary and Special Schools (the Rules), approved by GTCNI in November 2014, is to update and replace existing guidance on the qualifications required by anyone wishing to teach in grant-aided nursery, primary, post primary and special schools in Northern Ireland. These Rules replace Department of Education Circulars 2007/22 issued 10 October 2007, 2001/21 issued on 19 December 2001, 2001/2 issued on 10 January 2001, 1997/11 issued on 10 July 1997, 1971/48 issued on 1 September 1971 and 1970/25 issued on 3 April 1970.
- 1.3 The GTCNI is the professional registration and regulatory body for teachers in Northern Ireland. It has a statutory duty to determine who should be a member of the teaching profession in Northern Ireland. Persons employed as teachers in grant-aided schools and peripatetic teachers are required, under Article 35 (3) of the Education (NI) Order 1998, to be registered with GTCNI.
- 1.4 From 19 October 2007, GTCNI has, as part of its registration process, approved qualifications for the purpose of registration. Therefore teachers requiring admission to the Register of teachers must seek approval of their qualifications by making an application to GTCNI. **Application forms can be obtained from GTCNI's website www.gtcni.org.uk or by contacting GTCNI directly: registration@gtcni.org.uk, 028 9033 3390, GTCNI, 3rd – 4th Floor Albany House, 73 –75 Great Victoria Street, Belfast, BT2 7AF.**
- 1.5 Teachers who have already been granted recognition under the terms of the replaced Department of Education Circulars will continue to be recognised.
- 1.6 When making appointments, relevant bodies should bear in mind that although a teacher may be qualified to teach in either primary or post primary schools, they (employer bodies) should ensure that the teacher is suitably qualified for the required phase and subject, especially in practical and physical subjects where there is a potential health and safety risk. Relevant bodies should contact the Department of Education for the current advice on this matter. To be employed as a teacher of pupils with visual and hearing impairment the teacher must have successfully completed a course approved by the Department of Education for this purpose.
- 1.7 When making appointments for nursery teaching an emphasis on early years initial training is desirable but not essential.

2 Students who have successfully completed one of the following courses of study at any approved university or teacher education college in the United Kingdom will be eligible for registration with GTCNI and may seek employment in grant-aided schools in Northern Ireland.

A. University Degrees

- (i) Bachelor of Education Degrees
- (ii) Other degree courses with an approved teacher education element

B. Courses of Teacher Education

- (i) An approved degree course and an approved Post Graduate Certificate in Education;
- (ii) An approved degree course and a GTCNI accredited Post-Graduate Certification in Education in Further Education, PGCE (FE), obtained while employed for a minimum of 8 hours per week as a teacher/FE lecturer in an Institution of Further Education in Northern Ireland, as defined by the Further Education Order (NI) 1997.

For students who have obtained their teacher education qualifications in England or Wales, the courses must lead to the granting of *Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). For students who have obtained their teacher education qualifications in Scotland, the course must be GTC for Scotland approved.

- 2.1 A teacher who has been awarded a teaching qualification after 21 August 1984 must also have attained at least a grade C in Mathematics and English in GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) or an equivalent accredited qualification of similar breadth and depth. In addition, all newly qualified teachers who wish to teach in primary schools must have obtained at least a grade C in a science subject or subjects in GCSE or an equivalent accredited qualification of similar breadth and depth.
- 2.2 Teachers who have obtained qualified teacher status (QTS) awarded by the National College for Teaching and Leadership from the Department of Education (England) or the General Teaching Councils for Scotland or Wales may be eligible for registration with GTCNI and to apply for teaching posts in grant-aided schools in Northern Ireland.
- 2.3 Teachers who have gained teaching qualifications in another Member State of the EEA/EU will be qualified to teach in Northern Ireland if they satisfy the criteria of EU Directive 2005/36/EC. Teachers wishing to seek recognition via the Directive must do so by making an application to GTCNI. **Applications forms can be obtained from GTCNI's website www.gtcni.org.uk or by contacting GTCNI directly: registration@gtcni.org.uk; 028 9033 3390; GTCNI, 3rd – 4th Floor Albany House, 73–75 Great Victoria Street, Belfast, BT2 7AF**
- 2.4 Teachers who have gained teaching qualifications in non-EEA/EU countries and who wish to teach in grant-aided schools in Northern Ireland must seek approval of their qualifications by making an application to GTCNI. **Applications forms can be obtained from GTCNI's website www.gtcni.org.uk or by contacting GTCNI directly: registration@gtcni.org.uk; 028 9033 3390; GTCNI, 3rd – 4th Floor Albany House, 73–75 Great Victoria Street, Belfast, BT2 7AF**

*The Council does not recognise QTS awards by assessment route only obtained in less than one academic year.