



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Óige
Department of Education
and Youth

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND YOUTH

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS FOR INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION COURSES FOR PRIMARY TEACHERS 2026

MATURE STUDENTS' COMPETITION

1. Application for admission to a Bachelor of Education Degree Programme as a mature candidate.

Applications are being sought for admission to a four-year full-time course leading to a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degree awarded by the following Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) for primary teachers:

- Marino Institute of Education, Griffith Avenue, Dublin 9
- Mary Immaculate College, South Circular Road, Limerick
- DCU Institute of Education, DCU St Patrick's Campus, Drumcondra, Dublin 9
- Froebel Department of Primary and Early Childhood Education, Maynooth University, Maynooth, Co Kildare

(Contact details for the Higher Education Institutions are set out at Appendix 1)

Persons who successfully complete this course may be registered with the Teaching Council under Route 1: Primary. Link to Website: www.teachingcouncil.ie.

Applications are made through the Central Applications Office (CAO) by 1 February 2026. Mature applicants must not be less than 23 years of age on 1 January of the year of entry (i.e. on 1 January 2026 for entry in autumn 2026)

2. Minimum Academic Requirements 2026 – Leaving Certificate Examination.

(a) Minimum grades required in essential subjects

Subject	Irish	Mathematics	English
Minimum Grade ¹	H4	H7 or O4	H7 or O4
% Mark	60%<70%	30%<40% 60%<70%	or 30%<40% or 60% <70%

H – Higher Level
O – Ordinary Level

(b) General grades required in the leaving certificate.

In parallel with meeting the minimum grades required in Irish, English and Mathematics, students must have achieved the following grades across their overall results.

- Grade H5 (50%<60%) on a Higher Level paper in not less than three subjects
- Grade O6 (40%<50% Ordinary Level) or H7 (30%<40% Higher Level) in three other subjects in accordance with the Rules and Programme for Secondary Schools.

The grades and % marks in the 1992-2016 grading scheme and the new 2017 scheme are set out at Appendix 3.

Combination of results in different Leaving Certificate Examinations

Applicants may combine results obtained at the Leaving Certificate Examination in different years for the purpose of meeting the academic requirements.

¹ See Appendix 3 for equivalent grades in pre-2017 marking scheme

Acceptable alternatives to a second-level qualification in Irish, English or Mathematics

A Pass in a University *First Arts* Examination in Irish, English or Mathematics as deemed appropriate by the Higher Education Institution(s) will be accepted in lieu of the Leaving Certificate Examination or GCE/GCSE requirement for the relevant subject.

Acceptable alternatives to a second-level qualification in Irish

- Grade C obtained in the Matriculation Examination (which existed up to 1992)
- Diplóma sa Ghaeilge, Level C1, UG
- Diplóma sa Ghaeilge, Level B2, UG
- Diplóma sa Ghaeilge, Maynooth University
- Teastas Eorpach na Gaeilge (TEG) at Level B2, Maynooth University (www.teg.ie)
- Diploma in Arts (Applied Irish), University College Cork
- Diplóma sa Ghaeilge Fheidhmeach, UCD
- Diplóma sa Ghaeilge (An Ghaeilge sa Saol Comhaimseartha), University of Limerick
- Diploma in Irish at the University of Ulster

Acceptable alternatives to a second-level qualification in Mathematics

- A Pass grade obtained in Mathematics in the Matriculation Examination (which existed up to 1992).
- A merit grade (65-79%) or distinction grade (80-100%) obtained in QQI Level 5 Mathematics Course 5N 1833.

The minimum academic requirements for **GC(S)E and GCE A Level** and AS Level Examinations are set out in Appendix 2.

3. Selection Process

Once applicants have satisfied the minimum academic requirements, selection is on the basis of a competitive general Interview and a competitive Oral Irish Examination. Each Institution will e-mail eligible applicants with a link to their supplementary application form and instructions regarding other necessary steps. Each institution will include applicants who have indicated that they are taking a Leaving Certificate/GC(S)E Examination in 2026 as 'provisionally eligible' on the basis that their actual Leaving Certificate/GC(S)E results will be unknown and available by September 2026.

The closing date for the return of the completed supplementary application form and attachments to the Institution(s) is **5.00 p.m on Sunday 29 March 2026.**

The results of these tests will be graded and allocated points as follows:

Interview	Total Marks Available 100 Marks	Pass Mark 40 Marks
Oral Irish Examination	Total Marks Available 40 Marks	Pass Mark 16 Marks

Applicants who have failed the general Interview on two previous occasions are not eligible for the competition. Part of the general Interview may be conducted in Irish.

Information on the general Interview and Oral Irish Examination is available from the Higher Education Institutions.

Applicants who get a "fail" grade in either the general Interview or the Oral Irish Examination are eliminated from the competition. The remaining applicants are placed in an order of merit determined by the results of the general Interview and Oral Irish Examination combined.

Where two or more applicants obtain the same points, their placement on the order of merit will be determined by random selection.

Each Institution will fill its places by reference to the relevant order-of-merit list and offers are made through the CAO using the normal allocation process, working down through the applicant's preferences to find the highest preference for which the applicant is entitled to receive an offer, if any.

Some high merit applicants will be made offers through the CAO in Round A. The remaining applicants, including those awaiting 2026 examination results, may be made offers through the CAO in Round 1. If necessary, offers may be made in subsequent rounds. The date for issue of Round A and Round 1 offers is yet to be confirmed by the CAO. These dates and other important dates in relation to the CAO application process will be available at this link: [Central Applications Office \(cao.ie\)](http://cao.ie)

Please note that any offer will be subject to fulfilling the minimum entry requirements. An offer by one of the Institutions listed above is subject to the applicant not receiving a higher offer from a Higher Education Institution through the CAO for another course.

Successful applicants who accept places are required to enter the Higher Education Institutions in autumn (actual dates available from the individual Institutions). In special circumstances, at the discretion of the Higher Education Institution authorities, the date of entry may be deferred for a limited period.

4. Additional Information

1. Proficiency in Irish language:

1.1. Tréimhse Foghlama sa Ghaeltacht (Gaeltacht Learning Period): All students who gain entry to the B.Ed programme are required to complete two placements in the Gaeltacht. Each placement will be of two weeks' duration. It should be noted that this is a **compulsory** part of the programme. A grant is payable by the Department of Education and Youth for students on State-funded primary initial teacher education programmes to cover the cost of the placements.

1.2. Oral Irish Test: In addition, applicants should note that students will be required to undergo an oral Irish test at the end of their first year of initial teacher education and must pass this test in order to continue to the second year of the course. Students who fail this oral Irish test may, at the discretion of the Higher Education Institution, be allowed to repeat the test.

2. Student Grants:

SUSI (Student Universal Support Ireland) is Ireland's single national awarding authority for all higher and further education grants. Students are advised to submit a fully completed online grant application to SUSI so that their eligibility for grant assistance can be assessed. It is anticipated that the 2026/27 Scheme will open for applications in spring 2026. Further information regarding the Student Grant Scheme is available on the SUSI website at www.susi.ie

3. Fitness to Practise:

3.1. Garda Vetting: Before a Higher Education Institution can complete a student registration, the Higher Education Institution requires that all incoming teacher education students undergo a process of Garda vetting in order to establish whether they have any convictions or criminal charges pending. Where this process confirms the existence of such, the matter is referred to a Vetting Committee within the Institution which decides whether the student can continue with his/her programme of study.

3.2. Medical Requirements and Disabilities: Some Higher Education Institutions require that all incoming teacher education students complete a medical information form, indicating whether they have any significant ongoing illnesses or disabilities which might adversely impact their capacity to meet the requirements of the course, including School Placement. Entrants who declare significant health conditions, disabilities or psychological conditions will be assessed on an individual basis to evaluate whether, with reasonable accommodations, they would have the ability to undertake the demands of the programme. Individuals will not be excluded on the grounds that they have a particular condition or disability if it is deemed likely that it would be possible for that person to fulfil the requirements of the course with reasonable accommodation(s). The

Higher Education Institutions will advise students as to the procedure to be followed in this regard.

4. Gaeltacht Entry Route:

Up to ten per cent of places on the Bachelor of Education programme may be reserved for applicants from the Gaeltacht.

Applicants wishing to apply for the Gaeltacht Entry route to the primary B.Ed. (English Medium) must meet the two criteria listed below as outlined in [Circular 34/2021 Updated Entry Criteria for the Gaeltacht Entry Route to the \(English Medium\) Primary Bachelor of Education](#)

- (a) Be resident in a Gaeltacht Language Planning area **and**
- (b) Must obtain at least a H3 in Leaving Certificate Irish

Apart from the requirement to meet both of the criteria listed above, applicants must also meet all the other requirements for entry to the Primary B.Ed. and any particular matriculation requirements for the HEI they are applying to.

5. Marino Institute of Education - Bachelor in Education through the Medium of Irish (Primary Teaching)

The Bachelor of Education through the Medium of Irish (Primary Teaching) course at Marino Institute of Education is a 4-year initial teacher education programme through the medium of Irish which commenced in September 2019. This course forms part of the implementation of the Policy on Gaeltacht Education 2017-2022.

Applications are invited from mature students for the above programme (CAO course codes: CM003/CM004). The minimum entry requirements for this course include a H3 in Leaving Certificate Irish. In addition to the minimum entry requirements, candidates must achieve 50% or higher in the Teastas Eorpach na Gaeilge (TEG) Level B1 examination. Application form available in January 2026 (see: www.teg.ie/oid).

Applicants will also be required to complete a Mature Student Supplementary Information Form and return it directly to the Admissions Office, Marino Institute of Education, Griffith Avenue, Dublin 9 by **5.00 p.m on Sunday 29 March 2026**. Eligible candidates will be required to undertake a general interview and an Irish Oral test and will be selected on a competitive basis. Full details regarding this course are available online at www.mie.ie/oid.

Appendix 1

Higher Education Institutions – Contact Details

Marino Institute of Education

Griffith Avenue

Dublin 9

Telephone: (01) 805 7742

Email: admissions@mie.ie

Website: www.mie.ie

Froebel Department of Primary and Early Childhood Education

Maynooth University

Maynooth, Co. Kildare

Telephone: (01) 4747400

Email: froebel.department@mu.ie

Website: <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/froebel-department-primary-and-early-childhood-education>.

Mary Immaculate College

South Circular Road

Limerick

Telephone: 061 204348 / 205137

Email: admissions@mic.ul.ie

Website: www.mic.ul.ie

DCU Institute of Education

DCU St Patrick's Campus

Drumcondra,

Dublin 9

Telephone: (01) 700 9161

Email: ioe@dcu.ie

Website: www.dcu.ie

Appendix 2

Minimum Qualifications in GC(S)E and GCE AS and A Level Examinations for admission to the Bachelor of Education Degree Course

General

- Six subjects must be presented, at least three subjects at GCE A Level and the remaining subjects at GCE AS or GC(S)E level. The six subjects must include Irish, English and Mathematics.
- A subject may be counted from only one of the examinations, GC(S)E, GCE AS Level or GCE A Level.
- Only subjects taken at one sitting of a particular examination, GC(S)E, GCE AS Level or GCE A Level, will be accepted. Examinations taken in the same academic year are regarded as the same sitting.

Specific requirements in Irish, English & Mathematics.

- Grade C at GCE A level in at least three subjects, including Irish
- Grade C at GC(S)E Level in both English and English Literature, or Grade B at GC(S)E Level in either English or English Literature.
- Grade D at GC(S)E Level in Additional Mathematics or Grade C at GC(S)E Level in Mathematics
- Grade C in one other subject at GC(S)E level

Applicants must satisfy the matriculation requirements of the University to which the Higher Education Institution is affiliated.

Appendix 3

Leaving Cert Grading Schemes (1992-2016 Scheme and New Scheme 2017)

1992 – 2016 Scheme	% Awarded	New Scheme 2017 onwards	% Awarded
A1	90-100	H1 / O1	90-100
A2	85<90	H2 / O2	80<90
B1	80<85		
B2	75<80	H3 / O3	70<80
B3	70<75		
C1	65<70	H4 / O4	60<70
C2	60<65		
C3	55<60	H5 / O5	50<60
D1	50<55		
D2	45<50	H6 / O6	40<50
D3	40<45		
E	25<40	H7/O7	30<40
F	10<25	H8/O8	0<30