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Assembly

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# Teaching regulators in Great Britain and Ireland

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This Paper considers the role and responsibilities of the organisations responsible for regulating the teaching profession in Great Britain and Ireland in the context of the General Teaching Council Bill which is currently at Committee stage.

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## Key Points

- In their evidence to the Committee on the General Teaching Council Bill (and in the Explanatory and Financial Memorandum accompanying the Bill), Department of Education officials noted that “[they] are trying to pick up on the best elements of the models that are followed by the other UK teaching regulators”, and in particular, from the General Teaching Council Scotland and the Education Workforce Council in Wales.
- This paper, which builds on the RalSe research paper on the Bill, NIAR [257-25](#), outlines the role and responsibilities of the regulatory authorities for the teaching profession in Great Britain and Ireland in more detail.
- It notes that the **Teaching Regulation Agency in England** is not a register of teachers but purely a regulator as an executive agency of the Department for Education and is not therefore directly comparable to the other regulators. The TRA disciplinary panels consist of three members recruited through public appointment, including a teacher. The panel is supported by a legal adviser. If the TRA believes a Prohibition Order is required, it will make a recommendation to the Secretary of State, who then makes the decision on the sanction.
- The **General Teaching Council Scotland** is a wholly independent regulator. The Council has 37 members, 19 of whom are elected teachers, 11 are stakeholder nominees (see Appendix 1 for list of nominees) and seven are by public appointment. It has provisional registration for teachers who have not yet completed induction, and revalidation every five years is required through evidence of professional development. Disciplinary panels are comprised of at least three people, including a lay person, and are supported by a GTCS Servicing Officer and an independent legal adviser. Sanctions can include: a Reprimand; a Conditional Registration Order, a Reprimand and Conditional Registration Order; or a Removal. The fee for registration is currently £85

per year. Fees are set out in a fees strategic plan which covers a five-year period so that teachers are aware of any increases in advance.

- The **Education Workforce Council in Wales** is an independent regulator of education practitioners. It has 14 members, at least four of whom are teachers. Seven are nominated (see Appendix 2 for list of nominees) and seven are public appointments. Wales has provisional registration for those who are: undertaking a period of induction; starting teacher training, or working towards obtaining a required qualification. It has no revalidation in relation to professional development. EWC disciplinary panels have at least three panel members, including at least one member registered with EWC, and one lay person. The panel is supported by a legal advisor. The panel is led by a barrister if the case progresses to a full hearing. Potential sanctions can include: a Reprimand; a Conditional Registration Order; a Suspension Order; or a Prohibition Order. EWC has two fee levels: £45 for teachers and lecturers and £15 for support workers per year. Fees are established in legislation rather than by EWC.
- **The Teaching Council in Ireland**, the independent regulator, has, like Scotland, 37 members. It has a higher representation of teachers at 22 (16 elected and 6 nominated by unions) as well as two parent representatives alongside nominated representatives from further and higher education, school management, business and trade unions (see Appendix 3). The Council allows provisional registration for three years for Newly Qualified Teachers to complete Droichead (induction) or for registration with “qualification shortfalls” if applicable for teachers qualifying outside Ireland. It does not require teachers to revalidate their registration. Teaching Council Disciplinary Committee Panels consist of not less than three and not more than five members of the Disciplinary Committee. Hearings are led by the Director of the Teaching Council with legal support. Sanctions include: Retention on register subject to conditions (i.e. further training); Suspension or Removal. The Council

has an initial registration fee of €90 followed by an annual renewal of €65. Fees must be approved by the Minister for Education.

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# 1 Introduction

The General Teaching Council Bill, which is currently passing through the Northern Ireland Assembly, seeks to reinstate the Board of the General Teaching Council (GTC) for Northern Ireland, following the decision to dissolve the GTC in December 2021 by the then Minister of Education, Michelle McIlveen.

In their evidence to the Committee (and in the EFM accompanying the Bill), officials noted that “[they] are trying to pick up on the best elements of the models that are followed by the other UK teaching regulators”, and in particular, from the General Teaching Council Scotland and the Education Workforce Council in Wales.

This paper, which builds on the RaISe paper on the Bill ([NIAR 257-25](#)), outlines the role and responsibilities of the regulatory authorities for the teaching profession in Great Britain and Ireland, with a focus on the specific issues raised by the Committee in the RaISe briefing of 4<sup>th</sup> February 2026, and subsequently, i.e.:

- Representation of language sectors such as Scots Gaelic and Welsh
- Parental representation on Councils
- Composition of disciplinary panels
- Fee setting
- The relative independence of Councils in relation to their parent Departments

## 2 England

The Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) is an executive agency of the Department for Education (DfE) in England. Its purpose is to support employers, schools and headteachers with their safeguarding responsibilities.<sup>1</sup> It

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<sup>1</sup> Teaching Regulation Agency [Teaching Regulation Agency Strategy 2024-2027 and Business Plan 2024-2025](#) (2025)

investigates allegations of serious misconduct by teachers and prohibits teachers when necessary. The TRA maintains a record of qualified teachers to enable employers to conduct pre-employment checks. The TRA is a regulatory body rather than a teaching representative body and does not maintain a register of teachers.<sup>2</sup> According to correspondence with the TRA:

“Unlike Scotland and Wales, the regulatory model in England does not require teachers to be actively registered with the regulator. There is no public register of teachers in England and therefore teachers do not hold registration statuses (for example full registration, provisional registration etc). In order to be employed as a qualified teacher in maintained schools in England, teachers must hold qualified teacher status (QTS) and subsequently complete a statutory induction period. [DfE] maintains the central record of teachers in England. This central record is checked by Employers via a DfE digital service to confirm whether a teacher holds QTS and has passed induction. Disciplinary action taken by the [TRA] can result in a prohibition order being imposed on a teacher which prevents them from teaching in schools. TRA maintains the list of prohibited teachers and employers can also check if a teacher is prohibited using the same digital service they use to confirm QTS.”<sup>3</sup>

The Teaching Regulation Agency in England is therefore not directly comparable with the models found elsewhere in Scotland, Wales and Ireland. It is an executive agency and as such does not have any members. Further details of its disciplinary processes are provided below.

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<sup>2</sup> The National College for School Leadership merged with the Teaching Agency to form the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL). The Teaching Agency had covered teacher regulation, supply, retention and teacher quality. The new merged body had responsibility for school leader development, as well as teacher regulation and supply. In 2018, the NCTL was dissolved and some functions transferred to the DfE, with the teaching regulation elements transferred to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA). In more recent times, the TRA has been criticised for the length of time taken to process misconduct cases. Source: correspondence from the House of Commons Library (7.01.26) and [Teachers' regulator in England investigated after claims it has left teachers in distress](#) Guardian, 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2024

<sup>3</sup> Correspondence between RalSe and Teaching Regulation Agency officials, 21<sup>st</sup> January 2026

## 2.1 Disciplinary panels

The Teaching Regulation Agency website outlines the relevant legislation which covers its work.

“[The Education Act 2011](#) gives responsibility, from 1 April 2012, to the Secretary of State for Education to regulate the teaching profession in England and to hold a list of teachers who have been prohibited from teaching.

[The Teachers’ Disciplinary \(England\) Regulations 2012 \(the Regulations\)](#) as amended by [The Teachers’ Disciplinary \(Amendment\) \(England\) Regulations 2014](#) provide information about the arrangements. TRA operates these on behalf of the Secretary of State... They cover cases of serious misconduct. This is when a teacher’s behaviour:

- is fundamentally incompatible with being a teacher
- could lead to them being prohibited from teaching

The regulations don’t cover the cases of less serious misconduct, incompetence or under-performance. A teacher’s employer should deal with these cases.”<sup>4</sup>

Once it receives a referral, the TRA checks whether it has jurisdiction over the matter and, if so, it commences an investigatory stage.

According to its guidance, “if the TRA decides to carry out an investigation, it will formulate the allegations to be put to the teacher and inform the teacher that they have 28 days to submit representations and evidence. The TRA considers the evidence, and if appropriate seeks advice from experts from the teaching, medical, legal or other professions. When the TRA has completed its

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<sup>4</sup> Teaching Regulation Agency [Teacher misconduct: regulating the teaching profession](#) (2024) accessed 20<sup>th</sup> March 2026

investigation, it will decide whether to refer the case to a professional conduct panel hearing”.<sup>5</sup>

### 2.1.1 Professional Conduct Panels

Panel members are recruited through a public appointments process. A panel has three members, and will include: a teacher, or someone who has been a teacher in the previous five years; and a layperson, specifically not from the teaching profession. The third panel member may be a person who has taught previously, but does not currently meet the ‘teacher panellist’ criteria and is referred to as a ‘former teacher panellist’. One panellist is asked to act as chair. A legal adviser is present to advise the panel on the legal process. The adviser is not a member of DfE and takes no part in the decision-making process.<sup>6</sup>

## 2.2 Disciplinary powers

The panel decides firstly whether the allegations have been proved and, “if so, (ii) whether they amount to unacceptable professional conduct, conduct that may bring the teaching profession into disrepute or conviction, at any time, of a relevant offence and, if so, (iii) whether to recommend to the Secretary of State that a prohibition order should be made and, if so, whether the teacher should be permitted to apply to have the order set aside after a specified period”.<sup>7</sup>

The TRA can issue an Interim Prohibition Order if the alleged offence is deemed to be sufficiently serious.<sup>8</sup> It can then issue a Prohibition Order, following the Secretary of State’s decision. This Order has a lifetime duration but can be reviewed.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Teaching Regulation Agency [Teacher misconduct: disciplinary procedures for the teaching profession](#) (2020)

<sup>6</sup> [Teacher misconduct: regulating the teaching profession](#) accessed 22nd December 2025

<sup>7</sup> Teaching Regulation Agency (2020) [Teacher misconduct: Disciplinary procedures for the teaching profession](#)

<sup>8</sup> As above

<sup>9</sup> Teaching Regulation Agency (2022) [Teacher misconduct: the prohibition of teachers](#)

### 3 Scotland

The General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTC Scotland) is the independent regulator for teachers and college lecturers in Scotland. It was the first independent, self-regulating body for teaching in the world.<sup>10</sup> It maintains the register of teaching professionals as registration is a legal requirement to teach in Scottish schools.<sup>11</sup> It sets the qualifications and criteria for registration; sets and upholds the standards for the profession, including expectations of conduct; and investigates concerns around competence and conduct under its fitness to teach process. It also accredits Initial Teacher Training and works with the Scottish Government and others nationally and internationally to inform policy development around regulation.

#### 3.1 Composition of GTC Scotland

The composition of the GTC Scotland is set out in Schedule 2 of [The Public Services Reform \(General Teaching Council for Scotland\) Order 2011](#).<sup>12</sup>

There are 37 members of GTC Scotland: 19 elected registered teachers; 11 educational stakeholder nominees and seven lay members appointed by an independent Appointments Committee.<sup>13</sup> Details of the 11 nominated members are provided in Appendix 1. These include three representatives of local government and one individual representing parent councils. The Council has confirmed that it does not have a specific seat for Gaelic-medium representatives.<sup>14</sup>

GTC Scotland can also determine its committee and panel structure under the Public Services Reform (General Teaching Council for Scotland) Order 2011.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> [About GTC Scotland](#) accessed 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2025

<sup>11</sup> As above

<sup>12</sup> [The Public Services Reform \(General Teaching Council for Scotland\) Order 2011](#)

<sup>13</sup> GTC Scotland [Governance](#) accessed 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2025

<sup>14</sup> Correspondence with RalSe received 14<sup>th</sup> April 2024

<sup>15</sup> As above

### 3.2 Provisional registration of teachers

Provisionally registered teachers in Scotland have successfully achieved a teaching qualification but have not yet completed an induction period of assessed teaching practice. [GTC Scotland's Provisional Registration and Probationary Policy 2023](#) sets out the requirements for individual teachers to progress from provisional to full registration. There are three groups of provisionally registered teachers in Scotland: those that have qualified in Scotland; those with an equivalent qualification gained outside of Scotland; and fully registered teachers seeking registration in an additional registration category.<sup>16</sup>

For those teachers who are provisionally registered and who qualified in Scotland, the minimum probationary period before Full Registration is one academic session (190 days). For those who qualify outside Scotland, their cases are considered on an individual basis but will also include a probationary period.<sup>17</sup>

### 3.3 Revalidation of registration

GTC Scotland has a reaccreditation scheme called Professional Update (PU)<sup>18</sup> to record the standards of education and training of teachers on its Register. PU is an ongoing process that includes:

- Engaging in relevant professional learning
- Self-evaluating against the Professional Standards
- Maintaining a reflective professional learning record
- Dialogue with a line manager acting as reviewer

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<sup>16</sup> GTC Scotland [What is Provisional Registration](#) (2023) accessed 9<sup>th</sup> January 2026

<sup>17</sup> GTC Scotland (2023) [Policy - Provisional Registration and Probationary Teaching Service](#)

<sup>18</sup> GTC Scotland [Professional Update](#) accessed 9<sup>th</sup> January 2026

To maintain Full (General) registration status with GTC Scotland, teachers and college lecturers must provide evidence of their engagement with the PU process every five years.<sup>19</sup>

### 3.4 Disciplinary panels

When the GTC Scotland receives a referral, it assesses whether the complaint meets its threshold for an investigation.

“The behaviour or action must be of a level of seriousness that it raises a concern that the teacher presents a risk or could undermine public confidence in the teaching profession.”<sup>20</sup>

GTC Scotland panels include at least three people. The majority will be registered teachers and college lecturers and there will be at least one non-teacher. Panel members are not GTC Scotland employees.<sup>21</sup> The GTC Scotland website states that the Panel “is supported by a GTC Scotland Servicing Officer, who advises them on any procedural matters, and an independent Legal Assessor to advise on legal matters.”<sup>22</sup> Correspondence between the Council and RaISe provides more detail on the nature of legal support:

“We appoint independent legal assessors to provide legal advice to Fitness to Teach panels during panel meetings and hearings. Legal assessors are independent of GTC Scotland and, in accordance with the 2011 Order, must be an advocate or solicitor of not less than 10 years’ standing. They are appointed to carry out the functions as described in The General Teaching Council for Scotland (Legal Assessor) Rules 2017.”<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> [Policies for teachers and lecturers - Education Scotland](#) accessed 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2026

<sup>20</sup> GTC Scotland (2023) [Fitness to Teach threshold policy](#)

<sup>21</sup> GTC Scotland [Panel consideration meetings](#) accessed 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2025

<sup>22</sup> As above

<sup>23</sup> Correspondence between GTC Scotland and RaISe received 14<sup>th</sup> April 2024

### 3.5 Disciplinary powers

Potential sanctions from GTC Scotland from a panel consideration meeting or a full hearing include (if warranted):

- Reprimand
- Conditional Registration Order
- Reprimand and Conditional Registration Order
- Removal<sup>24</sup>

The Panel can also recommend no further action or request further information. The Panel meetings are held in private and the teacher cannot attend. They do, however, receive a copy of the report 28 days in advance of the meeting and have the opportunity to respond to it.<sup>25</sup> If the teacher does not accept the findings, the case is referred to a public hearing.

### 3.6 Fees and charges

GTC Scotland is self-financing. According to its fees policy, fees are set with the objectives of:

- Being transparent
- Reflects the costs incurred by GTC Scotland
- Ensures the long term financial sustainability of the organisation
- Provides predictability for registrants

The policy states that GTC Scotland will publish a fees strategic plan every five years to balance financial sustainability with predictability for registrants and will consult on this plan with registrants.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> GTC Scotland [Panel consideration meetings](#) accessed 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2025. GTC Scotland is currently reviewing its Fitness to Teach process: [GTC Scotland publishes Fitness to Teach action plan](#)

<sup>25</sup> As above

<sup>26</sup> GTC Scotland (2023) [GTC Scotland Fee Policy](#)

In December 2024, GTC Scotland stated that it will increase its annual registration fee from £65 to £75 from April 2025 followed by planned increases to £83 in 2026 and £88 in 2027.<sup>27</sup> In correspondence with RaISE, the Council states:

“We are fully funded by the registration fees that teachers pay. We were given the authority to charge and set fee levels in Article 20 of the 2011 Order. We keep fees under regular review and always aim to keep costs down or offset them elsewhere if possible. We aim to find the right balance between the frequency of fee adjustments to ensure financial sustainability while providing reasonable predictability for teachers and college lecturers. In December 2024, we announced a plan to raise the annual registration fee in incremental stages over 3 years. Until April 2025, we had held our annual registration fee at £65 for 8 years, which is the longest amount of time that has passed without an increase. During that time, we utilised a combination of reserves we had built up and efficiency savings to absorb the impact of turbulent economic conditions without having to increase the annual registration fee. However, it was no longer sustainable for us to continue operating in that way.”<sup>28</sup>

### 3.7 Independence from the Scottish Government

Correspondence between the General Teaching Council for Scotland and RaISE explains that:

“Plans to make GTC Scotland an independent body were announced following the election of the Scottish National Party as a minority Scottish Government in 2007. First Minister Alex Salmond had made an election commitment to reduce the number of non-departmental public bodies.”<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> [GTC Scotland to increase registration fees from April 2025](#) accessed 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2025

<sup>28</sup> Correspondence from GTC Scotland to RaISE dated 14<sup>th</sup> April 2026

<sup>29</sup> As above

The First Minister therefore announced in January 2008 that the General Teaching Council for Scotland was to become “a self-regulating, profession-led body, similar to the General Medical Council” rather than a Non-Departmental Public Body. It gained full independence from the Scottish government in 2012 under [The Public Services Reform \(General Teaching Council for Scotland\) Order 2011](#) (the 2011 Order).<sup>30</sup> The Council therefore became the first independent teaching regulator in the world.<sup>31</sup> GTC Scotland advises the Government on policy but receives no funding from it.<sup>32</sup> In its correspondence, GTC Scotland elaborates further:

“As a registered organisation with charitable status, we report to the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator and publish an Annual report and financial statements. We also lay these before Scottish Parliament (art 5, 2011 Order). One of the conditions of meeting the charity test under the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 is not being subject to the direction or control of Ministers (section 7(4)(b)). While we are not part of the structure of Government, article 6 of the 2011 Order gives us a duty to report to Scottish Ministers and make recommendations about matters relating to teachers’ education, learning, career development and fitness to teach, and the supply of teachers, except matters of remuneration or conditions of service, which they must consider”.<sup>33</sup>

## 4 Wales

The Education Workforce Council is the independent, professional regulator for the education workforce in Wales. It establishes and maintains a Register of

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<sup>30</sup> As above

<sup>31</sup> Matheson, I. [Milestones and Minefields. The General Teaching Council: the first 50 years](#) (GTCS, 2015)

<sup>32</sup> [About GTC Scotland](#) accessed 26<sup>th</sup> March 2026

<sup>33</sup> See footnote 28

Education Practitioners.<sup>34</sup> It regulates education practitioners across schools, further education, youth work, and work-based learning.<sup>35</sup>

As the previous [RalSe paper on the Bill](#) noted, one of the recommendations of the Independent Review of Education in Northern Ireland is that the remit of the GTCNI is extended to include all those working in education (other than in higher education):

“As soon as practicable, this requirement should be extended to cover all professionals and para-professionals employed within the publicly funded education service, other than in universities – with the GTCNI becoming an Education Workforce Council.”<sup>36</sup>

EWC publishes a Code of Professional Conduct and Practice which sets out the standards expected of registrants. It also investigates and hears allegations of unacceptable professional conduct, serious professional incompetence, or relevant criminal offences.<sup>37</sup> EWC also works to promote the sector and influence education policy decision-making.<sup>38</sup>

According to the [Education \(Wales\) Act 2014](#), “Welsh Ministers may by order confer or impose on the Council such additional functions as they consider appropriate.”<sup>39</sup>

#### 4.1 Composition of EWC

There are 14 members of the Council, seven of whom are public appointments and seven of whom are nominated by 13 teaching unions (Part 1 organisations) and 14 other organisations (Part 2). These organisations are specified in

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<sup>34</sup> [Introduction to the EWC](#) accessed 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2025

<sup>35</sup> As above

<sup>36</sup> Independent Review of Education (2023) [Investing in a Better Future](#)

<sup>37</sup> [Introduction to the EWC](#) accessed 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2025

<sup>38</sup> EWC was established by the [Education \(Wales\) Act 2014](#). The Act renamed the General Teaching Council Wales to the Education Workforce Council and “expands its remit to include the registration and regulation of more of the people who are involved in teaching and learning in Wales”

<sup>39</sup> [Education \(Wales\) Act 2014](#)

Schedule 2 of The Education Workforce Council (Membership and Appointment) (Wales) Regulations 2014. These organisations are listed in Appendix 2 of this paper Welsh ministers must ensure that, as far as possible, that four of the seven nominated members come from Part 1 organisations, which are all teaching unions.

Correspondence with EWC confirmed there is no specific requirement for Welsh-medium education representation on the Council. It should be noted however that one of the Part 1 teaching unions, UCAC (Undeb Cenedlaethol Athrawon Cymru), operates in Welsh only. This means that there may be some Welsh language representation on the Council, though this is not guaranteed.

## 4.2 Provisional registration of teachers

The Education (Wales) Act 2014 gives EWC the power to register individuals on a provisional basis. According to the EFM accompanying the Act, “there are a variety of circumstances where it may be appropriate for a person to be provisionally registered including while the person:

- Undertakes a period of induction
- Starts teacher training
- Works towards obtaining a required qualification”<sup>40</sup>

## 4.3 Revalidation of registration

There is currently no need for registrants in Wales to revalidate to renew registration. This was confirmed in correspondence between RaiSe and EWC:

“We are somewhat of an outlier in this respect in comparison with some other regulators in education (as well as other professions such as in the health sector, for example). In addition, where practitioners have not been

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<sup>40</sup> [Education \(Wales\) Act 2014](#)

practising for a long period of time, they are not required to provide evidence of having maintained their professional development whilst they have been out of the profession.<sup>41</sup>

#### 4.4 Disciplinary panels

EWC's Code of Professional Conduct and Practice sets out the standards expected of teachers and other practitioners in Wales. Employers are under a legal duty to make a referral to EWC if they have concerns about unprofessional conduct, offences or serious professional incompetence. The EWC website states: "as a regulator, our role is not to punish practitioners, but to safeguard learners, young people, and parents/guardians, and to maintain public trust and confidence in the education workforce".<sup>42</sup>

The initial complaint, if it meets the threshold for further investigation, is considered in private by the Investigating Committee which must include a minimum of three panel members, including at least one member registered with EWC, and one lay person. The Investigating Committee is supported by an independent legal advisor to make sure the process is fair.<sup>43</sup>

If the complaint progresses to a public hearing, it is heard by a fitness to practise committee which includes at least three panel members, including at least one member registered with EWC. The Committee is supported by an independent legal adviser. The Committee which sits at a hearing will not have had any previous knowledge of the case.<sup>44</sup> EWC's case is presented by a barrister.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Correspondence between RaiSe and EWC officials, February 2026

<sup>42</sup> [What is fitness to practise?](#) accessed 27<sup>th</sup> March 2026

<sup>43</sup> As above

<sup>44</sup> [Fitness to Practise hearings](#) accessed 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2025

<sup>45</sup> [Fitness to Practise hearings](#) accessed 27<sup>th</sup> March 2026

## 4.5 Disciplinary powers

EWC investigates all referrals received where it is alleged that a registered person is guilty of unacceptable professional conduct or serious professional incompetence, and/or has been convicted (at any time) of a relevant offence.<sup>46</sup> Prior to the Disciplinary Committee hearing, an individual can agree to a voluntary reprimand or voluntary prohibition which can then be ratified by the Committee. If the individual does not admit the specified conduct, the sanctions available to the panel are:

- A reprimand
- A Conditional Registration Order<sup>47</sup>
- A Suspension Order<sup>48</sup>
- A Prohibition Order<sup>49</sup>

## 4.6 Fees and charges

EWC in Wales has a two-tier fee system. The first group (school teachers, further education teachers, youth workers) pay £45 while those in the second group (school, further education or youth support workers) pay £15 per year. It also receives grant funding for other activities from the Welsh Government.<sup>50</sup> The fees are set out in the [The Education Workforce Council \(Registration Fees\) Regulations 2017](#). Correspondence from EWC to RaISe states:

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<sup>46</sup> Education Workforce Council (2024) [Disciplinary Procedures and Rules 2024](#)

<sup>47</sup> This shall specify all the conditions relevant to the registered person's employment as a practitioner with which the individual must comply, and in relation to each condition, whether it is time bound

<sup>48</sup> This shall specify the period (not exceeding two years) at the end of which the person again becomes eligible to re-apply for registration. A Suspension Order may specify conditions to be complied with by the individual which must be complied with before they can become eligible again to apply for registration. A condition specified in a Suspension Order can be time bound or not

<sup>49</sup> This shall specify the period (which shall not be less than two years, beginning with the date on which the order takes effect) before the end of which no application may be made by the person for a determination that he or she is eligible to re-apply for registration. A person wishing to be readmitted to the Register following a Prohibition Order must apply to the EWC for a determination in compliance with the rules

<sup>50</sup> EWC [Apply to register](#) accessed 10<sup>th</sup> April 2026

“As an independent regulator our fees are set in the legislation (currently at £46). However, the legislation allows Welsh Government to provide a registration fee subsidy to allow for tiered bands of registration fees. This means that we are able to charge £45 for school teachers to register and £15 for school learning support workers who are likely to be lower paid, Our fees have remained at this level and, hopefully, after the Senedd (Welsh Government) elections in May 2026 there will be a public consultation about our fees which will allow us to set fees for the next few years so that we are able to have sufficient income to cover our regulatory costs.”

The most recent EWC Annual Report and Accounts to 31 March 2025 notes, however, that the Government subsidy is not always guaranteed:

“In March 2024, [the] Welsh Government announced that it would not be providing registrants with a contribution towards their annual registration fees (known as a subsidy), for 2024/25. To avoid financial implications for our registrants, our Council agreed to cover the cost of the subsidy from our reserves. In March 2025, Welsh Government confirmed to us that it would be providing only a partial subsidy to registrants for 2025/26. In considering the financial repercussions for our registrants, our Council again agreed to use our reserves to cover the shortfall. We continue to work with Welsh Government to consider potential future funding models and their implications on the education workforce.”<sup>51</sup>

#### 4.7 Independence from the Welsh Government

Correspondence from EWC to RaiSe in relation to the independence of the Council states that:

“EWC is an independent regulator which means that Welsh Government is not involved at all in our operational regulatory functions i.e. registration, fitness to practice, ITE accreditation. Our status is outlined in Schedule 1 of the

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<sup>51</sup> [Annual Report and Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2025](#)

Education (Wales) Act 2014. That said, Welsh Government is a very important stakeholder for EWC and we meet regularly with them to discuss our work. We work very closely with officials in many areas, including safeguarding and child protection. We also rely on Welsh Government to support EWC where it becomes clear that there are gaps in our regulatory framework. For example, where we identify potential groups of practitioners working in education whom are not registered whom EWC believes ought to be registered in order to better protect the public.”<sup>52</sup>

## 5 Ireland

The Teaching Council is the regulator of the teaching profession in Ireland. Its role is “to protect the public by promoting and regulating professional standards in teaching”.<sup>53</sup> It maintains the register of 126,000 registered teachers in Ireland, vets applicants to the register, ensures that Newly Qualified Teachers coming into the profession receive the necessary support, investigates complaints against registered teachers and apply sanctions if necessary, reviews and accredits 52 ITE programmes, and provide free access to an online library of journals and ebooks. The Council awards bursaries to teachers. It also conducts and commissions research “to support evidence informed decision making.”<sup>54</sup>

### 5.1 Composition of the Teaching Council

The membership of the Council is set out in the [Teaching Council Act 2001](#).<sup>55</sup> Like Scotland, the Teaching Council in Ireland has 37 members. The membership includes:

- 11 primary teachers: nine elected and two teacher union nominees

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<sup>52</sup> Correspondence from EWC officials to RalSe dated 16<sup>th</sup> February 2026

<sup>53</sup> [The Teaching Council](#) accessed 19<sup>th</sup> December 2025

<sup>54</sup> The Teaching Council (n.d.) [What does the Teaching Council do?](#)

<sup>55</sup> [Teaching Council Act, 2001, Section 8](#). This list was amended in 2012 with the closure of one higher education institute and its subsequent replacement with another on the list.

- 11 post-primary teachers: seven elected and four teacher union nominees
- Two members nominated by colleges of education
- Two members nominated by specified third-level bodies
- Four members nominated by school management (two primary and two post-primary)
- Two members nominated by parents' associations (one primary and one post-primary)
- Five nominated by the Minister for Education, including one representing each of IBEC (the Irish business association) and ICTU (the Irish Congress of Trade Unions).

The two members representing the parents' associations currently are members of the National Parents Council.<sup>56</sup> The full list of nominees is presented in Appendix 3.

Under the Teaching Council Act 2001-2015, the Council “may establish committees consisting in whole or in part of persons who are members of the Council— (a) to assist and advise the Council on matters relating to any of its functions or on such matters as the Council may from time to time determine, or (b) to perform such functions of the Council as may be delegated to the committee from time to time.”<sup>57</sup>

In correspondence with RalSe, the Teaching Council provided the following clarification regarding representation of Irish-medium education on the Council:

“There is no dedicated seat on Council for Irish-medium reps. It is worth noting that Irish language competence is a requirement for some cohorts of teachers who are represented on the Council through other means so capability in the language is

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<sup>56</sup> [Structure of the Council | About us | The Teaching Council](#) accessed 20<sup>th</sup> March 2026

<sup>57</sup> [TEACHING COUNCIL ACT 2001](#)

very strong without a specific language clause. In addition, the Official Languages Act applies to the Teaching Council.”

## 5.2 Provisional registration of teachers

In Ireland, the Teaching Council offers registration with conditions if the application has not fulfilled all registration requirements. The condition(s) are recorded on the Register and on the Conditional Registration letter. If all the conditions are not within a three year timeframe and an extension is not granted, the registration will lapse.<sup>58</sup>

In correspondence with RaiSe in March 2026, the Teaching Council provided the following clarification:

“If applicants have not addressed this registration condition within the three-year period, they can apply for an extension of time to meet the condition. Extensions are granted at the discretion of the Council. If the condition is not met within the timeframe and if an extension request is not granted, a teacher’s registration will lapse. Registration with conditions occurs in the following circumstances:

1. All newly qualified teachers (NQTs) who meet the requirements for registration are registered with a condition that they must complete Droichead, the Council’s professional induction process for NQTs. They are given a period of three years to address the condition.
2. In certain circumstances where applicants who do not meet the Council’s requirements for registration in full (specifically the teacher education qualification requirements), for example, teachers who qualify outside of the Republic of Ireland, they may be registered with the condition of ‘Qualification Shortfalls’. They are given a period of three

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<sup>58</sup> [Registration with Condition\(s\) | The Teaching Council](#) accessed 9<sup>th</sup> January 2026

years to address the condition. The identification of qualification shortfalls in this context, aligns with the provisions of [Directive 2005/36/EC](#)<sup>59</sup>.”

The Council noted that it is currently reviewing its process of providing registration with conditions in circumstances where a qualification shortfall is identified in order to protect standards. It also stated that the management of extension requirements creates a considerable amount of administrative burden on its staff.

### **5.2.1 The Teaching Council’s concerns regarding the lack of induction in NI**

In correspondence with RalSe on the issue of registration, the Teaching Council raised the following concern about the lack of an induction period for some teachers who qualify outside Northern Ireland who can register for GTCNI and therefore the Teaching Council:

“Currently, there is misalignment between the requirements for being deemed a fully qualified teacher in England, the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. The TRA in England and the Teaching Council in Ireland require teachers to complete a teacher education qualification and induction period in order to be deemed fully qualified and eligible for full registration. However, teachers are deemed to be fully qualified and can gain full registration with the GTCNI on completion of a teacher education qualification only. There is no requirement for them to complete an induction period in NI in order to gain full registration. This creates a loophole for those applicants who have completed QTS/iQTS programmes in England and who have not completed an induction period, to register with the Teaching Council in Ireland on the basis of being granted full registration with GTCNI. This arises from the application of the provisions of the professional qualifications directive (2005/36/EC) which is otherwise very beneficial in supporting effective cross border mobility of teachers. This is an area of concern for the Teaching Council, as this route to

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<sup>59</sup> Directive 2005/36/EC, adopted on 7 September 2005, establishes a framework for the mutual recognition of professional qualifications across EU Member States (and the wider EEA).

registration facilitates access for those who may have completed programmes that fall significantly below teacher education standards in Ireland. Should the GTCNI require teachers to complete an induction period prior to being deemed fully qualified and eligible for full registration, this would protect the standards of teacher education, teaching, learning and assessment and support cross-border mobility.”

The Committee may want to seek further clarification on this issue from GTCNI and the Department of Education.

### 5.3 Revalidation of registration

In correspondence with RalSe, the Teaching Council states:

“The Council’s function (s39 of the Act) which relates to teachers’ ongoing professional learning has yet to be commenced by the Minister for Education and Youth. In advance of the commencement of that section, the Council published Cosán, the National Framework for Teachers’ Learning to promote professional learning. To support teachers in being lifelong learners, the Council provides all registered teachers with free access to an online library, with access to the full text of over 500 eBooks and 2,000 journals. Continued registration is thus not dependent on demonstration of continuous professional development.”<sup>60</sup>

S39 of the Teaching Council Act 2001 states that “The Council shall promote the continuing education and training and professional development of teachers”.<sup>61</sup>

### 5.4 Disciplinary panels

The Teaching Council published the latest version of the Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers in 2016. According to its website, “The Code sets out the

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<sup>60</sup> Correspondence between Teaching Council officials and RalSe, February-March 2026

<sup>61</sup> [Teaching Council Act, 2001](#)

standards of professional knowledge, skill, competence and conduct which are expected of registered teachers. The standards are underpinned by four core values – respect, care, integrity and trust, and reflect the complexity of teaching.” It is intended to maintain public trust and confidence in teaching and teachers are expected to be familiar with its contents.<sup>62</sup>

When the Teaching Council receives a complaint about a registered teacher, its Investigating Committee examines it in the first instance. According to the Teaching Council website, “if the Investigating Committee decides that an inquiry is needed, it refers the complaint to the Disciplinary Committee. A panel of the Disciplinary Committee is then formed to hold the inquiry, which usually takes the form of an oral hearing”.<sup>63</sup> A Panel consists of not less than three and not more than five members of the Disciplinary Committee.<sup>64</sup> The Director of the Teaching Council is responsible for preparing and presenting the evidence to the Panel at the hearing and must prove the complaint with support from solicitors.<sup>65</sup>

## 5.5 Disciplinary powers

Section 44 of the Teaching Council Act 2001 gives the Council powers of removal or suspension from register, or retention subject to condition as follows:

**44.—(1)** Where a finding of unfitness to teach has been made by a panel under this Part, the Disciplinary Committee, following its consideration of the report of the inquiry made by the panel under [section 43](#), may make a decision—

(a) that the registered teacher shall be removed from the register and that he or she shall not be eligible to apply to be restored to the register

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<sup>62</sup> [Code of Professional Conduct \(Updated 2nd edition 2016\) | Fitness to Teach | The Teaching Council](#)

<sup>63</sup> [Information for Witnesses at hearings before a Disciplinary Committee Panel | Complaints about registered teachers | Fitness to Teach | The Teaching Council](#) accessed 18<sup>th</sup> March 2026

<sup>64</sup> [Fitness to Teach Inquiries](#) accessed 22nd December 2025

<sup>65</sup> See footnote 55

under [section 31](#) before the expiration of such period, beginning with the date of removal, as may be specified by the Disciplinary Committee in the decision,

(b) that the registered teacher shall be suspended from the register for the period specified by the Disciplinary Committee which period shall not exceed 2 years, or

(c) that the registered teacher shall be retained on the register subject to all or any of the following conditions:

(i) that the teacher seek the assistance of such service relating to teacher health and welfare as may be available;

(ii) that the teacher attend a specified professional development course, or such other course as the Disciplinary Committee considers appropriate;

(iii) the period within which the teacher shall comply with the conditions of the retention;

(iv) such other conditions as the Disciplinary Committee thinks fit.<sup>66</sup>

## 5.6 Fees and charges

The Teaching Council's initial registration fee is €90 (approximately £79) followed by an annual renewal fee of €65 (approximately £57). The fees charged by the Council are approved by the Minister for Education in accordance with the Teaching Council Act 2001.<sup>67</sup>

In correspondence with RalSe, the Teaching Council confirmed that it was self-financing:

“Yes, 95% of income comes from registration and accreditation fees. The remainder consists of investment income from an investment portfolio and rental income from leasing space in the building owned by the Teaching

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<sup>66</sup> [Teaching Council Act, 2001, Section 44](#)

<sup>67</sup> Teaching Council (n.d.) [Fees](#) accessed on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2026

Council. The funds used to establish these assets came from a surplus generated before all functions that the original fee had been set to fund were commenced.”<sup>68</sup>

## 5.7 Independence from the Irish Government

In its correspondence with RalSe, the Teaching Council clarified its status in relation to the Department of Education and Youth as follows:

“The Council is independent from the Department in all decisions relating to Teacher Registration and Fitness to Teach matters. This is established in the legislation. In addition, the Council receives no funding from the Department. All funds for the Council come from Teacher registration fees, accreditation fees, investment fees and rental income. As the employees of Council are public servants, Department sanction is required for any changes in headcount and pensions are funded through the public sector pension scheme. The Council and Department have an Agency Governance Framework in place whereby there is agreement on the governance of the Council. As a public body we are answerable to the Department in terms of compliance with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies and other compliance matters (e.g. Public Procurement, FOI etc). While the Council sets initial teacher education standards and reviews and accredits programmes independently, it operates within the broader policy framework set by the Department of Education and Youth.”

## 6 Conclusions

This paper, which builds on the [RalSe research paper](#) on the General Teaching Council Bill, outlines in more detail the role and responsibilities of the regulatory authorities for the teaching profession in Great Britain and Ireland, with a focus

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<sup>68</sup> See footnote 54

on the specific issues raised by the Committee in the RalSe briefing of 4<sup>th</sup> February 2026, and subsequently, i.e.:

- Fee setting
- Representation of language sectors such as Scots Gaelic and Welsh on the Councils
- Parental representation on Councils
- Composition of disciplinary panels
- The relative independence of Councils in relation to their parent Departments

Practice in each of the four regulators considered (England, Scotland, Wales and the Republic of Ireland) is summarised in the table below. As has been previously noted, the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) in England differs from the Councils in the other jurisdictions in that it is purely a regulator and not a register. Some of the considerations in the table below are therefore not applicable to the TRA.

	<b>Teaching Regulation Agency - England</b>	<b>General Teaching Council Scotland - Scotland</b>	<b>Education Workforce Council - Wales</b>	<b>Teaching Council - Ireland</b>
Membership	Not applicable	37	14	37
Number of teachers	Not applicable	19	At least 4	22
Representation of language-medium education	Not applicable	TBC	Not explicitly	Not explicitly
Representation of parents	Not applicable	Yes - 1 individual nominated by a body representative of Parents Councils	No	Yes – 2 individuals nominated by a primary national association of parents and a post-primary

				national association of parents
Appointment process	Not applicable	19 elected teachers 11 stakeholder nominees 7 lay members from independent Appointments Committee	7 stakeholder nominees 7 public appointments	16 elected teachers, 6 teacher union nominees 2 parent nominees Also nominations from FE/HE, business and unions
Provisional registration	Not applicable	Teachers who have not yet completed induction. Minimum induction period of 1 academic session	For those who are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertaking a period of induction</li> <li>• Starting teacher training</li> <li>• Working towards obtaining a required qualification</li> </ul>	Three years for NQTs to complete Droichead (induction)  Registration with “qualification shortfalls” if applicable for teachers qualifying outside RoI
Revalidation of registration	Not applicable	Teachers must provide evidence of engagement with the Professional	No	No

		Update Scheme every 5 years		
Disciplinary panels	3 members recruited through public appointment, including a teacher. Supported by a legal adviser.	At least 3 people, majority teachers or college lecturers, at least 1 non-teacher. Supported by a GTCS Servicing Officer to advise on procedure and an independent legal adviser.	At least 3 panel members, including at least 1 member registered with EWC, and 1 lay person, supported by a legal advisor. Led by a barrister if case progresses to a full hearing.	A Panel consists of not less than 3 and not more than 5 members of the Disciplinary Committee. Led by the Director of the Teaching Council with legal support.
Disciplinary powers	Recommendation to the Secretary of State if a Prohibition Order is required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reprimand</li> <li>• Conditional Registration Order</li> <li>• Reprimand and Conditional Registration Order</li> <li>• Removal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A reprimand</li> <li>• A Conditional Registration Order</li> <li>• A Suspension Order</li> <li>• A Prohibition Order</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retention on register subject to conditions (i.e. further training)</li> <li>• Suspension</li> <li>• Removal</li> </ul>

<p>Fees</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>	<p>Fees strategic plan published every 5 years  Currently £83</p>	<p>Two-tier system  Currently £45 for teachers  Currently £15 for support workers  Set out in legislation</p>	<p>Initial registration fee of €90 followed by an annual renewal of €65  Approved by Minister for Education</p>
<p>Status</p>	<p>Executive Agency sponsored by the Department for Education</p>	<p>Independent body</p>	<p>Independent register and regulator</p>	<p>Independent register and regulator</p>

## Appendix 1: Organisations nominating to GTC Scotland

### [The Public Services Reform \(General Teaching Council for Scotland\) Order 2011](#) - Schedule 2

#### **Membership**

1. The GTCS is to have 37 members (19 elected members, 11 nominated members and 7 appointed members).

#### **Nominated members**

3. The 11 nominated members are to be comprised of the following:—

The 11 nominated members are to be comprised of the following:

- (a) 3 individuals nominated by the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (following consultation with the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland);
- (b) 3 individuals nominated by Universities Scotland (following consultation with institutions providing recognised teaching qualifications for individuals seeking registration as either school teachers or further education teachers);
- (c) 1 individual nominated by the governing bodies of institutions in the further education sector;
- (d) 1 individual nominated by the Scottish Council of Independent Schools;
- (e) 1 individual nominated by the Church and Society Council of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland;
- (f) 1 individual nominated by the Scottish Hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church;
- (g) 1 individual nominated by a body representative of Parent Councils and Combined Parent Councils.

## Appendix 2: Organisations nominating to EWC

[The Education Workforce Council \(Membership and Appointment\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2014](#) Schedule 2

### Part 1

1. National Union of Teachers (Cymru)
2. National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (Cymru)
3. Association of School and College Leaders
4. Professional Association of Teachers
5. National Association of Head Teachers in Wales
6. Undeb Cenedlaethol Athrawon Cymru<sup>69</sup>
7. Association of Teachers and Lecturers
8. University and College Union
9. UNISON
10. GMB
11. Unite the Union
12. Aspect Group of Prospect Union
13. Wales TUC

### Part 2

14. CollegesWales
15. Y Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol<sup>70</sup>
16. Association of Directors of Education in Wales
17. Welsh Local Government Association
18. Confederation of School Governors Associations in Wales
19. The Church in Wales

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<sup>69</sup> “UCAC is Wales’s own education union for teachers, head-teachers, lecturers and tutors – the only teachers’ union that puts Wales, and members in Wales, first. UCAC provides support for its members in the Welsh language and all its publications are in the Welsh language only” [UCAC](#) accessed 13<sup>th</sup> March 2026

<sup>70</sup> The Welsh National College. It works with further education colleges, universities and the Welsh Government to promote the Welsh language. [Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol](#) accessed 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026

20. The Catholic Education Service
21. Higher Education Wales
22. Universities Council for the Education of Teachers
23. Welsh Independent Schools Council
24. Wales Association of SACREs
25. Association of Directors of Social Services Cymru
26. Federation of Small Businesses
27. Wales Council for Voluntary Action

### **Part 1 organisations**

Part 1 lists trade unions and professional associations representing teachers, lecturers, school leaders, and education staff. These bodies are primarily workforce-representative organisations within the education sector (i.e. unions and professional associations).

Under Regulation 6(3), the Welsh Ministers must—*as far as possible*—ensure that four of the seven nominated members appointed to the Education Workforce Council come from organisations in Part 1.

### **Part 2 organisations**

Part 2 lists education sector bodies, employer organisations, faith organisations, local government bodies, and wider civic organisations. These represent institutions, governance groups, employers, and sectoral stakeholders, rather than workforce unions.

These organisations do **not** have a guaranteed quota but may nominate individuals for appointment.

## Appendix 3: Organisations nominating to the Teaching Council

### Teaching Council Act 2001

8.—(1) The Council shall consist of 37 members.

(2) The members of the Council shall be appointed by the Minister and shall include—

(a) 11 registered teachers employed in, or qualified to teach in, recognised primary schools of whom—

(i) 9 shall be elected by registered teachers employed in, or qualified to teach in, recognised primary schools, and

(ii) 2 shall be nominated by recognised trade unions representing such teachers,

(b) 11 registered teachers employed in, or qualified to teach in, recognised post-primary schools of whom—

(i) 7 shall be elected by registered teachers employed in, or qualified to teach in, recognised post-primary schools, and

(ii) 4 shall be nominated by recognised trade unions representing such teachers,

(c) 2 persons nominated jointly by the following bodies:

(i) St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Dublin;

(ii) Church of Ireland College of Education, Rathmines, Dublin;

(iii) St. Mary's, Marino, Dublin;

(iv) Froebel College of Education, Sion Hill, Blackrock, County Dublin;

(v) Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick,

(d) 2 persons nominated jointly by the following bodies:

(i) National College of Art and Design;

- (ii) National University of Ireland, Cork;
  - (iii) National University of Ireland, Dublin;
  - (iv) National University of Ireland, Galway;
  - (v) National University of Ireland, Maynooth;
  - (vi) Dublin University;
  - (vii) University of Limerick;
  - (viii) Dublin City University;
  - (ix) St. Catherine's College of Education for Home Economics, Sion Hill, Blackrock, County Dublin; **replaced by Hibernia College in 2012 when St. Catherine's College closed**
  - (x) St. Angela's College of Education, Sligo;
  - (xi) such other bodies, providing university or other higher education and training (within the meaning of the [Qualifications \(Education and Training\) Act, 1999](#) ), as the Council shall determine,
- (e) 4 persons nominated by recognised school management organisations of whom—
- (i) 2 shall be nominated by recognised school management organisations representing managers of recognised primary schools, and
  - (ii) 2 shall be nominated by recognised school management organisations representing managers of recognised post-primary schools,
- (f) 2 persons nominated by national associations of parents of whom—
- (i) one shall be nominated jointly by those national associations of parents representing parents of students attending recognised primary schools, and
  - (ii) one shall be nominated jointly by those national associations of parents representing parents of students attending recognised post-primary schools,
- and

(g) 5 persons appointed by the Minister, including persons with experience in business, industry or the professions, of whom—

(i) one shall be nominated to the Minister by the Irish Congress of Trade unions, and

(ii) one shall be nominated to the Minister by the Irish Business and Employers' Confederation.