



## Droichead – Frequently Asked Questions – Post-primary

### What is Droichead?

The Droichead process is an integrated professional induction framework for Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs).

It builds on initial teacher education and recognises that induction is a distinct phase of the continuum of teacher education. This integrated framework includes both school-based induction (Strand A) and additional professional learning activities (Strand B) to address the needs of teachers as they begin their careers.

The main objective of the Droichead process is to support the professional learning of the NQTs during the induction phase, thus laying the foundations for subsequent professional growth and learning for the next phase of their career.

Droichead is a national induction policy and is available [here](#).

### What is a Professional Support Team?

A Professional Support Team (PST) is a team of experienced, fully registered teachers (which may include the principal) who are trained by the Droichead Induction Division to support the Droichead process. The PST works collaboratively to support and guide an NQT through their induction phase.

To date, some post-primary principals have opted to engage as a member of the school's PST. However, principals can also opt for an oversight role - choosing to support the NQT and PST as they undertake the Droichead process, but are not part of the PST and do not sign Form D. As leaders of the school, principals foster a learning culture in which Droichead can flourish and support the PST in facilitating a quality induction process.

The PST may be entirely school based. Alternatively, schools may nominate an external PST member. The external PST member may be a teacher from a local school, or a teacher selected from a panel of trained PST members operated by the Droichead Induction Division. A school may also opt for an inter-school PST model, whereby a cluster of schools will form a single PST made up of teachers from the

cluster schools. In these external dimension options, at least one PST member must be from the base school. For further information on the external and inter-school models, please click [here](#).

### What are the Standards?

The Teaching Council has established standards to support the Droichead process, in guiding the NQT, with the PST, in relation to their professional learning and practice.

Through their engagement in the Droichead process, the NQT will:

1. have engaged professionally with school-based induction and additional professional learning activities
2. have shown their professional commitment to quality teaching and learning for their pupils/students
3. have engaged in reflective practice that supports their professional learning and practice, both individually and collaboratively.

The Droichead standards, indicators of good practice and school context examples are further explored as part of professional development for the PST, facilitated by the Droichead Induction Division.

### What Training and Supports are Available in Schools?

Each member of the PST receives three days training from the Droichead Induction Division. The training is designed to equip PST members with the skills and knowledge required to guide an NQT through the process. Substitute cover is provided as per Department of Education guidelines.

The Droichead Induction Division also provides further professional development events for trained PST members. Schools will be contacted directly with details of such events.

School support is a core element of Droichead Induction Division's provision. We are happy to interact with your school to support the facilitation of the Droichead process. If you would like a member of the Droichead Induction Division team to engage with your school, please complete the Droichead School Support Request

Form [here](#).

Contact details for your Professional Learning Leader (PLL) may be accessed [here](#).

### Is Release Time Available for School-based Induction?

Yes. Release time, with substitute cover, is **automatically** provided for school-based induction in schools providing the Droichead process. Schools do not apply for this release time.

Post-primary schools will also have the option of claiming the hours through an allocation model, substitute hours or a combination of both. It is a matter for each school to determine which model it will use and how it will distribute the hours to PST(s) and NQT(s).

Between 22 and 44 hours are available to schools supporting NQTs through the Droichead process. This is in addition to the release days for training. For further information on release time, please click [here](#).

Additional discretionary time may also be allocated to a school in certain circumstances. To seek discretionary time, Principals should contact the Droichead Induction Division.

### What is involved in the Droichead Process?

#### **Duration & Setting**

A post-primary teacher must complete 200 hours teaching employment in an eligible setting and must include the teaching of a post-primary curricular subject(s) to a designated class on the school's timetable, or employment in a learning support, special needs, or language support position. It should be noted that this is a minimum period of practice. Given that Droichead, as a professional induction framework, is designed to provide the maximum degree of support, guidance, and advice, it is recommended, where an NQT has additional time in his or her school over and above the minimum requirements set out above, that extra time be used to support the Droichead process.

A post-primary teacher will normally undertake the Droichead process when

employed in a recognised post-primary school. Generally, paid employment in a permanent, temporary or substitute capacity is eligible, so long as such employment will afford the teacher the opportunity to meet the minimum duration requirements.

A post-primary teacher may also complete the Droichead process where they are employed in one of the following roles:

- a) a special school where a proportion of the pupils attending the school are of post-primary age, and where the teacher is teaching a Post-primary curricular subject(s) to such pupils, or
- b) a Centre for Education where a post-primary curricular subject(s) is being taught.

It should be noted that where NQTs are employed in the above settings via voluntary (unpaid) service or internship schemes and similar such schemes that may be commenced in the future, is not deemed acceptable by the Teaching Council as being suitable settings for Droichead.

### **Starting the Process**

The Droichead process cannot commence until the NQT receives their confirmation email from the Teaching Council confirming approval to commence Droichead. NQTs must apply to commence the Droichead process via the "[My Registration Login](#)" on the Teaching Council's website.

At the start of the process, the PST will agree a Droichead Outline Plan with the NQT. This captures the indicative timeframe for the process and outlines the induction activities, meetings, etc. which will support the NQT's process. They will also share the Droichead Standards that will guide and inform the process with the NQT, thus ensuring certainty for the NQT from the outset. Both documents are explored at PST training, with templates and samples available [here](#).

### **Engaging in the Process**

During the process, an NQT will meet with, and engage in **professional conversations** (informal conversations and arranged meetings) with the PST and

other colleagues. The NQT will be afforded opportunities to **observe** classroom practice and to be observed by the PST. As the process continues, specific dates and times for specific **induction activities** are agreed between the PST and NQT. All induction activities are agreed and scheduled in advance. To complement the school-based induction strand, NQTs also will also engage in **cluster meetings** with their peers, identify opportunities for professional development (**Professional Learning Activities**) and maintain a **Taisce** (portfolio-based learning) to document their learning and support reflective practice.

### **Certainty for the NQT**

Keeping the Droichead Standards central to guiding the NQT with the PST through the process. The standards are broken down at training to enable to PST and the NQT to identify and focus on areas that may require support. The indicative timeframe for the process is agreed at the start by the NQT and PST. There are no surprise observations in Droichead. All observations are planned. The emphasis is on supporting NQTs to progress the quality of their professional practice. Droichead is a non-evaluative induction process, which takes place in a spirit of collegiality and where the focus is on support and collaboration to enhance quality teaching, learning and assessment of students in the classroom.

### **Concluding the Process**

Following the Droichead process, a declaration is made by the NQT that they are ready to move to the next phase on the continuum of teacher education. The NQT and PST (who engaged in the NQT's process), following collective reflection, that through their engagement in Droichead, they have participated in a quality teaching and learning process. The Teaching Council then removes the Droichead condition from the teacher's registration. The teacher will be fully registered by the Council when all registration conditions (e.g., Irish Language Requirement, qualifications shortfall conditions) have been deemed by the Teaching Council to have been met.

The PST and the NQT jointly declare on Form D that they have engaged in a quality teaching and learning process. Neither party is asked to evaluate the other. Supports are built into the non-evaluative Droichead process to identify and address any concerns that may be identified by either party during the process.



## What Mechanisms are in Place to Ensure Quality and Consistency?

The following mechanisms help to ensure quality and consistency:

- Training, ongoing professional development, and shared learning events provided by the Droichead Induction Division
- Oversight role of the Principal
- A Droichead Induction Division Associate is assigned to every school
- Each year a Droichead Quality Assurance (DQA) Panel will interact with a number of schools engaging in the process. The Teaching Council establishes the (DQA) panels, comprising an independent chairperson, a practising teacher from the relevant sector and a person with expertise in the support and/or evaluation of teaching and learning at school level. The DQA panel interacts with a sample of schools where the Droichead process has taken place and discusses the process with the Principal, the PST and the NQT. Such visits are pre- arranged and take place in a spirit of collegiality and collaboration. Following its review, the DQA panel submits an anonymised report to the Teaching Council setting out its findings and recommendations in relation to the process.
- DQA Reports are available [here](#).

## Queries

Please contact [droicheadinduction@oide.ie](mailto:droicheadinduction@oide.ie) if you have any queries.

