

Becoming a Teacher

Year 4 Post Primary

School Based Work 2025-26



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Reflect

Select

Defend/Discus



RATIONALE

Professional Studies and Placement (School Based Work) are interrelated with the other components of the B.Ed. in its general aim of ensuring that students enter the teaching profession with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values appropriate to professional teachers.

In order to respond to the demands of being a teacher, the specific purpose of the course is to enable students to gain theoretical knowledge and practical experience of teaching and learning within the Post-Primary School. This will provide an understanding and awareness of the many factors – cultural, sociological and psychological as well as methodological – which may promote or inhibit learning at Key Stage 3, 4 and Post-16 of the Post-Primary School.

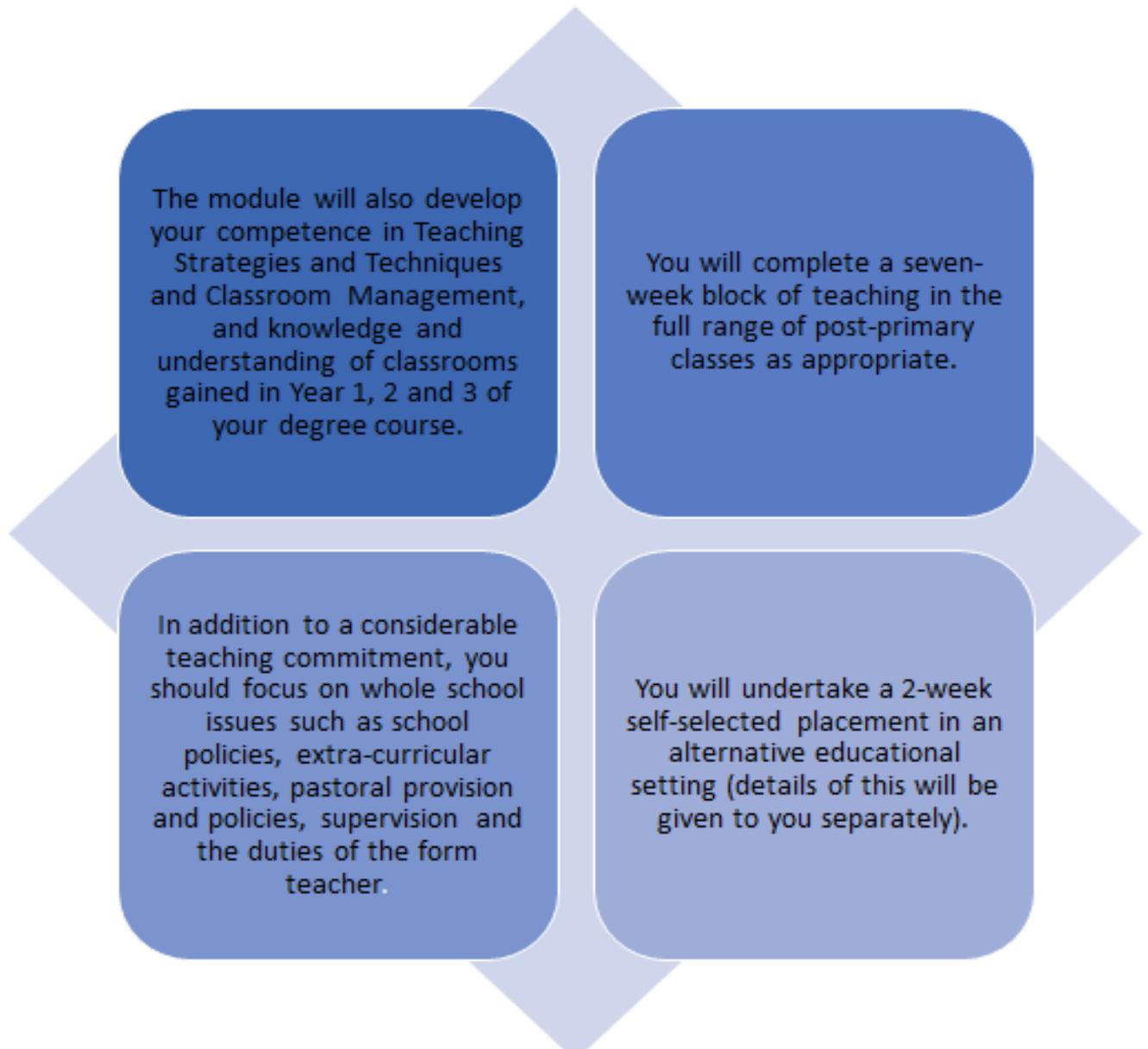
While the chief objective of the course is to provide for the immediate personal and professional needs of newly qualified teachers, the course as a whole will form a sound foundation for their further professional development.

SCHOOL-BASED WORK

School Based Work lies at the heart of the professional preparation of any student teacher.

It occurs in each year of the undergraduate programme and represents a significant part of a double module in Year 1 rising progressively to the work undertaken in Year 4.

Many parts of the degree programme contribute to this professional development - Education and Professional Studies, and Subject Studies.



In 2025-26 student feedback identified that they would have liked to have received information on SBW requirements in person and earlier in the academic year. This briefing will therefore be before reading week in Semester 1 2024-25.

N.B. This module guide only provides an overview of placement with specific details being provided in briefing sessions during 2025-26. Please get in touch with the module co-ordinator if you have any specific questions and discuss expectations with your SBW tutor.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students should demonstrate:

1. a high level of ability to teach for purposeful learning;
2. the capacity to take responsibility for a range of non-teaching responsibilities;
3. the capacity and willingness to engage in critical reflection about their developing competence;
4. an understanding of the GTCNI competences;
5. a refined ability to provide a safe, supportive, purposeful and inclusive learning environment;
6. the capacity to make a significant contribution to the work of the school;
7. knowledge of whole school issues and policies;
8. a high level of understanding of the complex social, cultural and political factors that impinge upon the teaching/learning process;
9. adaptability to respond to the conditions in an alternative educational setting; and
10. competence in compiling a portfolio of significant artefacts of evidence about their own teaching.

Transferable Skills

Students should:

- have a practised ability to organise and articulate opinions and arguments about teaching and learning;
- be competent users of Information and Communication Technology in preparation for teaching and in teaching;
- have a well-developed ability to function effectively as part of a teaching team; and
- have a well-developed ability to organise an effective work pattern for teaching.

Students will be supported by a main tutor in College and will have supervision visits from their main and other tutors while in school. In addition, students will have a visit from an Associate Placement Assessor (a serving or recently retired school leader) and some students may also be visited by an External Examiner. While the External Examiner will provide feedback to the student, their role is to ensure that College practice, standards and procedures meet with Initial Teacher Education expectations.

Central Requirements

Students are expected to attend all scheduled sessions and other forms of instruction as defined by the programme of study.

- 1. Students must pass the practical element of Placement.**
- 2. Students must fully engage with the “Reflect-Select-Defend/Discuss” activity.**

Specific details of the Reflect-Select-Defend/Discuss will be provided in separate documentation and a dedicated presentation.

GTCNI Competences in Partnership with schools

Central to professional preparation is the great emphasis placed on School Based Work and the acquisition of professional competences by student teachers. There is recognition that some competences can best be developed and extended during the school based aspect of the course.

Schools and College are in close partnership to ensure the maximum development of these competences. The various teacher competences are detailed in the publication “Teaching: The Reflective Profession” published by the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland.

The roles of the partners in Initial Teacher Education are clearly spelt out in the ***Teacher Education Partnership Handbook*** with which you should all become familiar. Copies are on consultation in the Library or can be viewed and downloaded at the following URL:

http://www.deni.gov.uk/teacher_education_partnership_handbook-3.pdf

A summary of these is also presented at the end of this course guide.

While the teacher competences on the SBW report sheet do not claim to cover every facet of the teaching process, they do provide a realistic and manageable framework on which to focus your teaching. As with previous placements, you need to be familiar with these indicators and plan accordingly.

COURSE READING

As with years 1-3, much of the activity that you are requested to undertake within SBW is discussed in the various text books within Stranmillis Library. You should aim to read widely to support your teaching, and learning about teaching, this will help you to evaluate your classroom performance. The information you access from your host institution inspection report (if available) www.deni.gov.uk will provide you with useful background information.



You are also expected to read *LEARNING LEADERS - A Strategy for Teacher Professional Learning*



<https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/25762/1/strategy-document-english.pdf>

Particular attention is drawn to pages 22&23 and this underpins the gathering of evidence for the Reflect-Select-Defend exercise.

PATTERN OF SCHOOL BASED WORK

Students are normally placed in a school for a year.

Insight Placement

In year 4 you will undertake a mandatory 2-week placement in an education-related setting. The details of the Insight Placement are provided later in this module guide. The dates for the Insight Placement are:

- Monday 12th to Friday 23th January 2026 (10 days)



Placement in School/FE

You will be placed in one School or Further Education College for this academic year. In Year 4 you will organise your own observation days (You will arrange the observation in conjunction with your school around your own Stranmillis timetable) followed later by a **7-week block** beginning on 09 February 2026.



What is expected on the observation days is to familiarise yourself with the institution. You should also aim to establish a teaching timetable (the classes you will teach on the 7-week block) with your host teachers, and if possible, observe some of the classes that you will be teaching during the block.

3-5 Day Observation - Establishing a Timetable and Observing Classes

- *You select dates that suit you and negotiate with your school.*

7 Week Block Practice

- *Beginning Monday 09 February 2026*
- *Finishing Friday 27 March 2026*

During this period, you will be expected to teach all of the classes on your timetable. However, 09 February could be used to observe classes that you are teaching, but have not observed/met before. These arrangements may differ due to the school calendar and this must be communicated clearly with Stranmillis.



It is the University College's wish that Year 4 post-primary students will be given **increased responsibility in line with the role of a full-time teacher**. The extent of this involvement will be at the school's discretion.

It is envisaged that students will engage with curriculum, pastoral and administrative leaders in order to gain knowledge of whole school issues; attend staff briefings/CPD as appropriate; and that they will contribute to extra-curriculum activities – school productions, Young Enterprise, sports, clubs and societies etc.



SBW timetable (Post-primary)

To placements@stran.ac.uk

Before Block Placement (As an email attachment)

Use standard blank timetable Proforma (no colour, include times and if a 2 Week timetable, **which week is which**).

Expectations (The following is a statement of the minimum required)

Teaching Requirement

- 13-15 teaching hours per week – with some teaching each day.
- Act as a classroom assistant when not teaching
- Assist in administration, if requested
- Engagement in form class work.
- Engagement in main and other areas.

Planning & Preparation

- 3 schemes of work will be expected for assessment.
- Daily notes to cover all lessons taught that day - approximately one A 4 side. You can use the template we provide, or your own approach.

Evaluation & Reflection

- A **summary** or outline evaluation at the end of each day
- Upload a **'Weekly Evaluation Video'** that focuses on 1. Pupil Learning and Assessment, 2. Your Wider Professional Role and 3. Characteristics of a Teacher.

Exceptional Circumstances

Students have the right to submit a letter to the Director of Teaching and Learning or the Director of Student and Learning Services outlining mitigating circumstances which they believe affected their work and progress on SBW placements. Such letters must be received within 10 working days after the end of the block placement. Students and schools should be aware that these are 'discoverable' documents.

These letters will be considered by the Exceptional Circumstances Committee which will advise the Board of Examiners before a final decision is made on a student's mark/grade for SBW.

Your Teaching file

Your teaching file represents a portfolio of evidence which is reflective of your developing competence in and understanding of the 'plan-do-review' cycle but also is indicative of your professionalism as a teacher. It should be personal to you and to the classes that you are teaching. It should therefore be well organised, carefully laid out and should exhibit high standards of presentation.



As with previous years, your teaching file for the block placement will be an **electronic file of evidence** that you will share with your tutors and your class teachers. The teaching file must be kept up to date on a daily basis and should be readily available for tutors to view at all times. Your Electronic

teaching file will be integral to the assessment of your placement and your Tutor should be able to access your folders easily so you must maintain your folders carefully.

Only you and your Tutor will have access to your Placement folder on OneDrive – however you may be asked to share your planning and reflections etc. with a member of the school staff.

In negotiation with your tutor, some of your planning material may be ‘printed material’, however this must be available for any observations.

Insight Placement Programme (IP)

IP Overview

As part of the Professional Studies and Placement module you will receive the opportunity to complete a two week (10 day) placement in an education-related setting.

This placement will take place from Monday 13th to Friday 24th January 2025 (inclusive).

IP Aims

The Insight placement is an opportunity to enhance your understanding of the wider education sector or of an industry relevant to your areas of specialism.

You may wish to enhance your knowledge of teaching in alternative settings such as Education Other Than At Schools (EOTAS) centres. Alternatively, your interests may lead you to consider placement in a museum, library, charity or community-based organisation.

IP Learning Outcomes

By engaging in the placement you will be demonstrating one of the core learning outcomes of the Professional Studies and Placement module – “*the adaptability to respond to conditions in an education-related setting.*”

You will also develop an increased understanding of the wider career opportunities, aside from teaching in mainstream schools, which currently exist for education professionals.

Securing an IP

You have the opportunity to source your own placement in an education-related or you can choose from a wide range of College-sourced placements. Regardless of your intentions you will need to complete the necessary paperwork and return at by the deadlines stipulated.

IP Attendance

Participation in the Insight placement is a mandatory element of the Professional Studies and Placement module.

If you are absent during placement due to illness or other exceptional circumstances, you must:

1. Inform the placement provider as soon as possible.
2. Email the 'Placements Team': placements@stran.ac.uk
3. Record your absence on the placement portal.

IP College Contact

An academic staff member will be in contact with the placement provider and may even visit the setting during your attendance. If you are experiencing any difficulties or issues in relation to the setting, it is important to make contact with the 'Placements Team': placements@stran.ac.uk as soon as possible.

IP Reflection

On completion of the placement you will complete a short, written reflective piece which encourages you to reflect on the new knowledge you have gained and the skills you have developed. You should include this piece in your final Reflect, Select, Defend portfolio.

Key IP Contacts

- **Insight Placement Co-ordinator:** Joanne Doherty, Careers and Employability Adviser, j.doherty@stran.ac.uk

- **Insight Placement Support:** The 'Placements Team': placements@stran.ac.uk

IP Frequently Asked Questions

1. Can I attend any of the schools from previous school-based work or from my fourth year block placement as my Insight placement?

No, Insight placement is an opportunity to enhance your knowledge and expand your skillset in a new education-related setting. It is entirely separate from school-based work.

2. Can I attend a mainstream school that isn't my old primary/post-primary school and isn't one of my block placement schools?

You are **not** able to attend a mainstream school in Northern Ireland but you may wish to take up placement in a school in other parts of the UK. You may even wish to undertake placement at a school or college in the Republic of Ireland, in Europe or beyond.

3. Can I complete an industry placement in my family business or part-time job?

No, Insight placement is an opportunity to learn more about a setting, industry or sector which is usually not accessible to you.

4. I'd like to attend a special needs school – can I?

As you have the opportunity to complete a special needs placement as part of school-based work, you are **not** able to consider this for Insight placement. Instead, you may wish to increase your knowledge and awareness of the wide range of charities which support children and young adults with additional needs.

5. I would like the College to arrange my placement but what if I don't get any of my four choices?

It's very likely that we will be able to secure one of your four choices but, if this is not possible, we will get in touch and ask you to make alternative choices.

6. I plan to source my own placement. What should I do?

You should complete the necessary form with the details of your intended organisation and submit this to the 'Placements Team': placements@stran.ac.uk. As soon as you are able, you should email Placements with confirmation of your placement or with the details of an alternative placement provider, if necessary.

7. If the College sources my placement, should I make contact with the organisation before starting?

Yes, you should phone and speak to your placement provider before the Christmas break. As well as introducing yourself, you can thank them for the opportunity and ask any questions you may have.

Attendance in College Classes associated with placement

As you are undertaking a professional degree, it is important to attend all timetabled classes. Students who fail to satisfy attendance requirements will be referred to the Course Co-ordinator and if their attendance is deemed to compromise satisfactory completion of the course, they will be referred to the Board of Examiners who may decide that the course cannot be passed given the poor level of attendance. It is therefore essential that full attendance is achieved and where unavoidable absences take place, due to illness or other recognised extenuating circumstances, students must use the existing Student Absence procedure so that this can be considered when Boards of Examiners are reviewing attendance.

Plagiarism in any written components

The University College regards plagiarism as a serious academic offence which may lead to disciplinary action being taken against the student concerned. Students are responsible for knowing the University's standards and abiding by them. According to the University General Regulations "It is an academic offence for a student to commit an act whereby he/she gains or attempts to gain an unfair advantage". The full regulations are available via the following link-

<https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/AcademicAffairs/GeneralRegulations/Procedures/ProceduresforDealingwithAcademicOffences/>

Assignment Submission

All assignments will be uploaded online via Canvas and further details on how to submit in this way will be provided during the course.

Late Submission

Continuous assessment/coursework submitted after the deadline will be penalised at the rate of 5% of the total marks available for each calendar day late up to a maximum of five calendar days, after which a mark of zero shall be awarded. The example below illustrates this.

Example of work due on Thursday 16th December 5pm:

Work submitted before Thu 16 th at 5pm	Full mark awarded
Work submitted between Thu 16 th at 5pm and Fri 17 th at 5pm	A deduction of 5 % will be applied
Work submitted between Fri 17 th at 5pm and Sat 18 th at 5pm	A deduction of 10 % will be applied
Work submitted between Sat 18 th at 5pm and Sun 19 th at 5pm	A deduction of 15 % will be applied
Work submitted between Sun 19 th at 5pm and Mon 20 th at 5pm	A deduction of 20 % will be applied
Work submitted after Mon 20 th at 5pm	A mark of zero recorded

This excludes University closure days. The late penalty will apply to the continuous assessment/coursework component mark only and not to the overall course mark.

Exemptions shall be granted only if there are exceptional circumstances, and where the student has made a case in writing using the appropriate form and with appropriate supporting evidence if required (available [here](#)) by email to student-absence@stran.ac.uk within three working days of the deadline for submission or where a concession has been agreed on the grounds of a student's disability. A list of guidelines on acceptable exceptional circumstances is contained in the [Guidelines on Exceptional Circumstances](#). Extensions to deadlines shall be proportionate to the impact of the exceptional circumstances.

Artificial Intelligence

The advent of AI brings with it many possibilities for efficiency of outcome, clarity of thought, the prompting of creativity and the streamlining of productivity. We fully acknowledge the usefulness of it as an important tool available to students and educators. As such, our modules may cover elements of the use of AI in a professional context.



P4: Professional Behaviour

The BEd is a professional degree and it is therefore expected that students will approach their studies with professionalism and integrity, especially in relation to assessment. We recognize that there may be times when you use AI as a springboard for ideas, as a tool to identify improvement or check accuracy, or as a vehicle to assist you in the sourcing of resources. We therefore encourage you to use this as you would the more traditional methods of research, such as books, articles or search engines.

However, as with all of the above, *acknowledgement* of the use of AI is an important aspect of academic rigor and is a requirement of the college. We recognize that this is an emerging technology and the ethics surrounding its use can be a little unclear, so to support you, each module will refer in its guide to how AI can be used in assessment, using the following level:

2	AI-ASSISTED IDEA GENERATION AND STRUCTURING	<p>AI can be used in the assessment for brainstorming, creating structures, and generating ideas for improving work.</p> <p>No AI content is allowed in the final submission.</p>
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Professional Values

In this course we take account of the following Professional Values in both its content and assessment.



P1: Professional Knowledge



P2: Professional Skills



P3: Professional Partnership



P4: Professional Behaviour

Sustainability

Sustainability is important for our world and important to our college. Using the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals as a template, in this guide it can be seen how this module addresses some of the SDGs in its content (as seen throughout this course guide).



Key Reading

Recommended reading for the course is provided in CANVAS resources – here you will be directed to particular readings required for discussion and assessment and will see other texts/web links that will be useful for your assessment tasks.

Reminder - Useful Additional Information

See B.Ed. Programme Handbooks for further information on:

- General Regulations for all University courses;
- The examination process;
- Assessment mark schemes;
- Plagiarism regulations;
- Guide to using the Harvard Reference System.

Child Protection and Safeguarding

*Contact: Heather Lyle
Child Protection & Safeguarding Co-ordinator
Stranmillis University College, Belfast
h.lyle@stran.ac.uk
Tel: 028 90 384 405*

Children and young people have a fundamental right to be protected from harm.

Everyone in school plays a key part in protecting children and keeping them safe. There are three vital aspects to this role:

- Creating a safe and supportive environment for children
- Recognising pupils who are at risk or suffering from harm
- Taking appropriate action.

You can contribute to creating a safe and supportive environment for children through your work ethos and professionalism and in the way you communicate with and respond to children directly. By re-familiarising yourself with key indicators of adversity, you will increase the likelihood of recognising when a child is at risk or suffering from harm. Most importantly, if you are concerned about a child you can take appropriate action by reporting your concern immediately.

The information below tells you what to do if you are concerned about a pupil during your school-based work and where you can get information or help. It is important that you become familiar with your school's legal child protection and safeguarding duty. We strongly suggest that you use the check list contained below prior to and during your first day of school-based work (see below).

The school's role in child protection:

- Your school will have a designated person/teacher for pastoral care or child protection. This person is responsible for all child protection matters affecting pupils at the school
- Your school must have a child protection policy. This may be contained within a safeguarding policy or as a separate document. You can ask for a copy of this if you would like to see it
- All schools in Northern Ireland must follow the legislation and guidance from the Department of Education and Education and Library Boards
- If a school is worried about a pupil's welfare, they must refer this to the appropriate services, usually the Gateway Team to Children's Social Work Service (see contacts below)
- Schools may wish to inform parents that they have made a referral but they should NOT contact parents if they think that this could put a child at risk of harm

Your role in child protection:

- In general, students must be observant of children's learning, classroom behaviour and social relationships
- If you are concerned about the welfare of a pupil, you must report this to the designated person/teacher in your school immediately
- If the designated person/teacher is unavailable, you must report your concern to the school deputy designated teacher
- If a report about a pupil's welfare is made during school-based work, you must inform a member of the College Child Protection and Safeguarding Team that you have done so.
- If you are unhappy with decisions made in school about your concern, you must report this to any member of the College Child Protection and Safeguarding Team immediately
- If you are concerned about a child, you should NOT approach the parent/guardian or discuss your concern with anyone else unless designated i.e. designated teacher.

The Child Protection & Safeguarding Team 2024 – 2025

Heather Lyle Child Protection & Safeguarding Co-ordinator		Central Building First Floor Tel: 028 90 384 405 Email: h.Lyle@stran.ac.uk
Noel Purdy Deputy Child Protection & Safeguarding Co-ordinator		Stranmillis House, Second Floor Tel: 028 90 384 305 Email: n.purdy@stran.ac.uk
Michael Ievers (Post-Primary)		Orchard Building First Floor Tel: 028 90 384 474 Email: m.ievers@stran.ac.uk
Rachel Campbell (Primary & HPAS)		Orchard Building Top Floor Tel: 028 90 384 443 Email: r.campbell@stran.ac.uk
Andy Brown (International)		Central Building Ground Floor Tel: 028 90 384 259 Email: a.brown@stran.ac.uk
Anita Gracie (PGCE)		Central Building First Floor Tel: 028 90 384 391 Email: a.gracie@stran.ac.uk

Year 4 School Based Work

GTCNI – Summary of the 27 Teacher Competences

- 1 Teachers should demonstrate that they understand and uphold the core values and commitments enshrined in the Council's Code of Values
- 2 Teachers will have developed a knowledge and understanding of contemporary debates about the nature and purposes of education and the social and policy contexts in which the aims of education are defined and implemented
- 3
 - i) Teachers will have developed a knowledge and understanding of the learning area/subjects they teach, including the centrality of strategies and initiatives to improve, literacy, numeracy and thinking skills, keeping curricular, subject and pedagogical knowledge up-to-date through reflection, self-study and collaboration with colleagues
 - ii) Teachers will have developed, in Irish medium and other bilingual contexts, sufficient linguistics and pedagogical knowledge to teach the curriculum
- 4 Teachers will have developed a knowledge and understanding of how the learning area/subjects they teach contribute to the NI Curriculum and be aware of curriculum requirements in preceding and subsequent key stages
- 5 Teachers will have developed a knowledge and understanding of curriculum development processes, including planning, implementation and evaluation
- 6 Teachers will have developed a knowledge and understanding of the factors that promote and hinder effective learning, and be aware of the need to provide for the holistic development of the child.
- 7 Teachers will have developed a knowledge and understanding of a range of strategies to promote and maintain positive behaviour, including an acknowledgement of pupil voice, to establish an effective learning environment
- 8 Teachers will have developed a knowledge and understanding of the need to take account of the significant features of pupils' cultures, languages and faiths and to address the implications for learning arising from these
- 9 Teachers will have developed a knowledge and understanding of their responsibilities under the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice and know the features of the most common special needs and appropriate strategies to address these



- 10** Teachers will have developed a knowledge and understanding of strategies for communicating effectively with pupils, parents, colleagues and personnel from relevant child and school support agencies
- 11** Teachers will have developed a knowledge and understanding of how to use technology effectively, both to aid pupil learning and to support their professional role, and how this competence embeds across all of the competences
- 12** Teachers will have developed a knowledge and understanding of the interrelationship between schools and the communities they serve, and the potential for mutual development and well-being
- 13** Teachers will have developed a knowledge and understanding of the statutory framework pertaining to education and schooling and their specific responsibilities emanating from it
- 14** Teachers will set appropriate learning objectives/outcomes/intentions, taking account of what pupils know, understand and can do, and the demands of the NI Curriculum in terms of knowledge, skills acquisition and progression
- 15** Teachers will plan and evaluate lessons that enable all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to meet learning objectives/outcomes/intentions, showing high expectations and an awareness of potential areas of difficulty
- 16** Teachers will, when appropriate, deploy, organise and guide the work of other adults to support pupils' learning
- 17** Teachers will plan for out-of-school learning, including school visits and field work, where appropriate
- 18** Teachers will manage their time and workload effectively and efficiently and maintain a work/life balance
- 19** Teachers will create and maintain a safe, interactive and challenging learning environment, with appropriate clarity of purpose for activities
- 20** Teachers will use a range of teaching strategies and resources including eLearning where appropriate, that enable learning to take place and which maintain pace within lessons and over time
- 21** Teachers will employ strategies that motivate and meet the needs of all pupils, including those with special and additional educational needs and for those not learning in their first language



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- 22** Teachers will secure and promote a standard of behaviour that enables all pupils to learn, pre-empting and dealing with inappropriate behaviour in the context of the school policies and what is known about best practice
 - 23** Teachers will contribute to the life and development of the school, collaborating with teaching and support staff, parents and external agencies
 - 24** Teachers will focus on assessment for learning by monitoring pupils' progress, giving constructive feedback to help pupils reflect on and improve their learning.
 - 25** Teachers will select from a range of assessment strategies to evaluate pupils' learning, and use this information in their planning to help make their teaching more effective.
 - 26** Teachers will assess the levels of pupils' attainment against relevant benchmarking data and understand the relationship between pupil assessment and target setting
 - 27** Teachers will liaise orally and in written reports in an effective manner with parents or carers on their child's progress and achievements