This chapter covers teacher education in early childhood and school education, higher education, and adult education.

For each of these, it focuses on three major features: initial teacher education and training, conditions of service, and continuing professional development.

It does not cover staff in private, voluntary and independent (PVI) early childhood education and care (ECEC) providers who are not trained teachers.

**Early childhood and school education**

**Initial teacher education and conditions of service**

Teacher trainees undertake initial teacher education (ITE) leading to ‘eligibility to teach’. This is the formal recognition by the General Teaching Council Northern Ireland (GTCNI) \(^1\) that an individual has successfully completed his or her initial teacher education and is permitted to teach in a grant-aided \(^2\) school. Both concurrent (undergraduate) and consecutive (postgraduate) training routes are available.

The curriculum for ITE programmes is determined by providers, but these must meet the requirements of Circular 2010/03, *Initial Teacher Education: Approval of Programmes* \(^3\). Programmes are designed to enable students to develop the required professional competences for the initial teacher education phase, as set out in the GTCNI’s 2011 publication *Teaching: the Reflective Profession* \(^4\).

Teachers are not civil servants. They apply for specific posts through an open recruitment process. All teachers who wish to teach in grant-aided schools must be registered with the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI). Their initial training, qualifications, recruitment procedures, pay and conditions of employment are subject to regulation.

**Continuing professional development**

There is an integrated, competence-based approach to training and developing teachers in Northern Ireland, as set out in *Teaching: the Reflective Profession* \(^4\). This forms a continuum of career long professional development that encompasses initial teacher education, early professional development (EPD), continuing professional development (CPD), collaborative practice and school improvement.

 Undertaking continuing professional development (CPD) throughout a teacher’s career is regarded as a professional duty. The CPD needs of each teacher are determined by the individual and his or her school, in the context of performance management and the school development plan.
Higher education

Initial teacher education and conditions of service

There is no national training programme for teaching in higher education, and higher education institutions (HEIs) have the autonomy to employ teaching staff, organise their own training provision, and supervise the continuing professional development of their staff.

Higher education staff are not civil servants. Their pay and conditions of employment are not regulated, but are negotiated and agreed nationally under a UK-wide framework agreement. Individual HEIs then create their own pay and grading structures using the national framework, in negotiation with local union representatives.

Continuing professional development

While there is no legal requirement for academic staff in higher education to undertake professional development, there is an expectation that they will do so. A number of organisations and frameworks exist to assist HEIs and their staff in fulfilling this expectation.

Adult learning

The further education (FE) sector covers a wide range of teaching roles and contexts, as it caters for adults (see the Chapter on ‘Adult Education and Training’) and many 16- to 18/19-year-olds.

Policy objectives

There is an overarching strategy for the further education (FE) sector, Further Education Means Success, which was launched in January 2016. One of the nine main themes of the strategy, ‘excellence’ includes the policy commitment ‘Embedding High Quality Teaching’:

‘Through a new teacher education framework, there will be a renewed focus on high quality initial teacher education and continual professional development for all lecturing staff, with minimum standards for pedagogy and subject qualifications put in place’ (page 12).

The strategy also proposes establishing a system of professional registration and support for lecturers (page 52). Pending the passage of legislation, this registration would be with the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI), which it is intended, will become the independent regulator and professional voice of FE lecturers.

A Programme for Implementation of the strategy, published in March 2016, states that the new framework for teaching qualifications, including specialist subject qualifications, initial teaching qualifications and continuing professional development should be in place by June 2018 (page 18).

At the time of writing, March 2019, the new qualifications framework is not yet in place and there have been no further announcements regarding the system of professional registration for lecturers.

Initial teacher education and conditions of service

All teachers in further education (FE) colleges are required to hold an approved teaching qualification, as set out in The Further Education Teachers’ (Eligibility) Regulations (Northern Ireland)
2007 [9], as amended. These qualifications can be obtained through pre-service or in-service training. The 2009 Professional Standards [10], endorsed by the Government, are intended to underpin the teaching qualifications for the sector.

Salaries and conditions of employment are not regulated, but are negotiated centrally by representatives of the FE colleges (the employers) and of lecturers’ professional associations. The national agreements resulting from negotiations are available on the University and College Union (UCU) website [11]. Recruitment procedures are not regulated and staff obtain posts by applying for available vacancies. Staff in the FE sector are not civil servants.

**Continuing professional development**

There are no statutory requirements for lecturers in further education (FE) to undertake continuing professional development (CPD), apart from a requirement for those entering the profession without an initial teaching qualification to gain one. However, the 2009 Professional Standards [12] define professional knowledge and practice for lecturers and are intended to underpin their ongoing professional development.

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