

PGDip/MEd with Specialisms



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How do the Specialisms work?

How do the PGDip/MEd specialisms work?

We offer a number of specialisms which will lead to a named award (for example MEd (ICT) or MEd (TESOL)). You must take two or more modules from that specialist area to qualify for the specialist designation. If you select across specialisms your final award will be designated 'Professional Practice' i.e. MEd (Professional Practice). In addition to the specialism modules, you will be required to take compulsory modules as follows: The Reflective Practitioner (Semester 1 Year 1) (except Monaghan EC students), Research Design and Initiation (Semester 2 Year 2) and a Research Module.

Specialism	Modules (and module codes)	Mode of Delivery (and Semester available)	Location/availability
Working with Children and Youth	1. Policy Development and Implementation EDU705 2. Introduction to Children's Rights EDU704	1. Fully online 1 2. Fully online 2	Available to all
Conflict Transformation and Peace building	1. Schooling in Conflict Affected Contexts EDU707 2. Education, Conflict and Peacebuilding: From Theory to Practice EDU706	1. Fully online 1 2. Fully online 2	Available to all
Inclusive and Special Education	1. Inclusive and Special Education: Developing and Analysing Practice EDU963 2. Policy and Practice: Leading and Managing Inclusive and Special Education EDU964	1. Fully online 1 2. Fully online 2	Available to all
Information and Communication Technology	1. Leading and Managing ICT EDU920 2. Collaborative Learning Online EDU922	1. Fully online 1 2. Fully online 2	Available to all
Learning and Teaching	1. E-Portfolios: Personal Development Planning EDU953 2. Children's Learning and Assessment EDU955	1. Fully online 2 2. Fully online 2	Available to all
Leadership and Management	1. Building Teams and Managing Resources EDU927 2. Leadership for Learning EDU867 3. Strategic Development Planning EDU912	1. Face to face/web supplemented 1 (Monaghan), or 2 (Athlone, Carrick-on-Shannon, Coleraine, Magee) 2. Face to face/web supplemented 1 (Athlone, Coleraine, Carrick-on-Shannon, Magee, Year 2), or 2 (Monaghan) 3. Face to face/web supplemented 1 (Monaghan, Year 2)	1 & 2. RoI – Monaghan, Carrick-on-Shannon and Athlone Education Centres NI – Magee campus 3. Monaghan only
TESOL	1. English Language Teaching Methodologies EDU701 2. English as an Additional Language EDU956	1. Face to face (weekend, evenings) /web supplemented 1 2. Face to face (weekend, evenings) /web supplemented 2	NI – Location to be advised RoI – Location to be advised

**** Please note that not all specialisms are available at all locations and all are subject to viable numbers****

MODULE DETAILS

The Reflective Professional

This module is designed to help participants to develop a research-based reflective approach to their teaching. While it is concerned with the theory and practice of reflective analysis as it is applied to teaching and learning, curriculum and professional development, the focus is mainly on how these can be applied in the participants' respective contexts. Hence, the module is designed to improve current practice in context and the culmination of the module, an in-depth analysis of the participants' professional activity, is designed to show how current research can be applied in practical contexts. The module is also set up in such a way as to prepare participants for later modules.

The module aims to help students:

- Understand the desirability of professions being research-based;
- develop the capacity for informed, objective, critical reflection and analysis of practice;
- develop understanding of key developments in curricula and to explore and critique current education policy decisions in participants' respective jurisdictions;
- equip teachers with a rigorous knowledge and understanding of the area of curriculum theory and development which will impact on their teaching, learning, assessment, professional values and practice;
- enable teachers to be increasingly effective in shaping provision to ensure that pupils experience a relevant and coherent curriculum; and
- To develop criticality and analytical skills and to communicate complex arguments with clarity and coherence.

**** Note – this module is taken by all students except those in Monaghan and those with direct entry to second year. ****

1. Policy Development and Implementation (EDU705)

Policy development and implementation are complex and multi-layered processes. It is dictated by a range of factors: explicitly, the political economy, national legislation and international treaties influence some decisions, however, the 'hidden discourse' of power relationships and behind-the-scenes negotiation are also key factors.

Policy making in relation to children is a relatively new phenomenon and emerged in many State parties following their ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Child-centred policy argues for social investment in children as people in their own right, not just future citizens. An extensive policy base has been progressed in recent years to review and modernise services that affect the lives of children. However, concerns about a 'policy implementation gap' highlight the need for greater understanding on how to monitor policy development and implementation within a rights-based context.

Proponents of children's rights advocate that the CRC should inform policy for children and young people. It is argued that a revised approach to policy making would align government decisions to human rights obligations, ensuring that the best interests of the child are a primary consideration in all decisions concerning children. A key mechanism for assessing the extent to which policy is child rights compliant is through the Child Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) which is seen as a comprehensive joined up, innovative tool that would meet many of features of good policy making and would provide a basis to evaluate the significant effects of a policy in relation to the Articles of the CRC.

2. Introduction to Children's Rights (EDU704)

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) is the most important international human rights instrument outlining the rights of children. It is considered the cornerstone of children's rights globally and is the most widely ratified human rights treaty, thereby underscoring the international acceptance of its principles. The Convention stretches across the many domains of a child's life, covering civil and political as well as economic, social and cultural rights. It was ratified by the United Kingdom in 1991 and the Irish Government in 1992 although it has not been incorporated into domestic law of either jurisdiction.

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child monitors the implementation and progress of children's rights in state parties and issues concluding observations (recommendations) on further measures to be taken to give effect to the rights enshrined in the Convention. There is no one formula for adopting a rights-based approach but there is a common set of human rights principles that inform the process. Foremost among these are the accountability of duty bearers, the participation of rights holders and recognising that all human beings are equally entitled to their rights without discrimination.

Steps common to models of a rights-based approach include: the specification of child rights obligations the Government has legally committed to deliver; identifying policy and legislative actions taken by Government to implement children's rights; explicitly making the link between child rights and well-being as understood in national policy and practice; and measuring progress regarding the realisation of children's rights and progress in achieving child outcomes.

SPECIALISM: Conflict Transformation and Peace building

1. Schooling in Conflict Affected Contexts (EDU707)

The field of education and conflict has assumed an increasingly visible position in the priorities and activities of international donors, actors and agencies. Having developed a strong understanding of the international actors and agencies engaged in the field through the module on Education, Conflict and Peace building, this module allows students to further explore a number of key areas of education in terms of schooling. It locates education within the politics of situations of conflict and examines the implications of conflict sensitive education for curriculum design, school management and teachers.

Building on the Education, Conflict and Peace building module, this module allows students to further explore a number of key areas that merit particular attention in terms of their contribution to conflict and peace building including ethnicity, religion, national identity and historical memory. Through the use of international case studies the implications for education are illustrated through approaches to language of instruction, faith-based education, the role of citizenship education in the development of national identity and state-building and implications for history teaching.

2. Education, Conflict and Peace building: From Theory to Practice (EDU706)

The field of education and conflict has assumed an increasingly visible position in the priorities and activities of international donors, actors and agencies. This module is designed to provide students with an understanding of the growing field of education in emergencies, the role of education in both fuelling and mitigating conflict as well as the contribution it can make to longer term social transformation. As such it will be attractive to educationalists wishing to gain an international dimension to their research and practice, as well as staff currently working in international agencies in the field. The content of the module draws extensively on the research work of the UNESCO Centre and where possible will invite expert input from policymakers and practitioners working with agencies such as UNHCR, UNESCO and UNICEF.

This module will introduce students to developments over the past ten years in the field of Education, Conflict and Peacebuilding. Over the course of six weeks students will be encouraged to critically analyse different conceptualisations of the relationship between education and conflict including the role for education as part of humanitarian response, the potential for education in both fuelling and mitigating intergroup hostility and its contribution towards a more transformative agenda. Each lecture shall provide a critical review of the state of the art in a number of key thematic areas by analysing the different theoretical perspectives and motivations of various actors and agencies in each of these fields. Thematic areas include the development of Education in Emergencies; theories that have emerged about the relationship between education, identity and conflict; educational responses to 'youth' in conflict settings; and critiques related to the role of aid and security and its relationship to the UN peacebuilding agenda. The course will provide students with the ability to critically analyse the design and implementation of education policy and programming in conflict settings.

SPECIALISM: Inclusive and Special Education

1. Inclusive and Special Education: Developing and Analysing Practice (EDU963)

Education is inextricably linked to, and reflective of, cultural, social and political reform that has variously addressed the funding, administration, management and constitution of schools. A key priority has been the creation of an education environment that recognises the diversity of learners and that is designed to meet and enable all children to succeed, whatever their abilities. The continuing emergence of inclusive educational environments has placed an expectation on all educators to review their practice. Additionally, the emergence of an integrated services agenda has defined the potential for reciprocal, collaborative and co-ordinated partnerships between schools and other agencies.

This module will enable those working (or aspiring to work) in a leadership capacity, to examine their current practice and to use their findings to challenge, influence and develop institutional cultures in a way that will inform their own and colleagues' professional practice. It will seek to develop participants' leadership and/or managerial capabilities as a skill and competency that can effect individual and organisational change. At the same time, it will facilitate shared professional dialogue and the promotion of research within and across professional boundaries. This will include a critical examination of regional, national and international policy developments in inclusive and special education and assessment of the political, social, educational and economic implications for those who are disabled or experience difficulties in learning. The practical element of the module will enable participants to examine, appreciate and understand the extent to which policy decisions influence their own practice. It will also encourage participants to re-consider the contribution they can make to influence future policy reform.

2. Policy and Practice: Leading and Managing Inclusive and Special Education (EDU964)

Historically, special education has been variously provided as supplementary to, or separate from, mainstream education. In recent years, the validity and efficacy of a separate system of provision has been questioned from equality, anti-discrimination, social justice and/or human rights perspectives. This has resulted in increased emphasis on equitable and accessible educational provision that is defined within a philosophy of inclusion. At the same time, however, the distinctive role and function of special schools has received renewed attention. Collectively, changes in policy and legislation have required educational organisations to consider their pedagogy, curricular provision and institutional planning in order to respond positively and constructively to pupil diversity, so that individual difference is acknowledged as a positive and inherent feature of all learning environments.

In Northern Ireland, the introduction of a revised curriculum, the associated application of pupil profiles and individual Education Plans (EP), and the prospect of a rationalised education system will significantly alter the composition and constitution of schools, as well as the generic profile of the pupil population and their attendant needs. Teachers will therefore need to be equipped with the confidence and skills to deal with diversity in their classroom. This includes children with a range of special educational needs; however, it may also include pupils from a minority ethnic background for whom English is a second language. For this reason, teachers and policy makers should begin to consider the dual expectation of educational provision for all pupils, which takes full account of 'sameness', and at the same time pays due regard to the 'difference' and 'diversity' of individuals.

1. Leading and Managing ICT (EDU920)

This module is about understanding how interactive digital technology can impact on classroom learning and teacher support in professional development contexts. It provides an overview of the theoretical issues that underpin learning in a virtual context. Participants will be encouraged to evaluate the application of ICT in terms of the opportunities it provides for learning to take place in new ways, for teachers to rethink their roles and 'traditional' teaching activities and how teacher support in schools or other contexts can be enhanced.

Much of the module will develop participants' understanding of the potential of ICT in developing deep and profound learning and will evaluate the impact of these technologies on learning and teaching within a reflective approach. The ways of assessing ICT skill development in learners will also be examined, including the use of ePortfolios of evidence, including some of the challenges that any assessment might generate. Finally, schemes designed to evaluate learning in ICT on a regional or national basis close to home and further afield will be examined and compared.

Participants will be provided with opportunities to plan, conduct and monitor ICT-based learning and teaching scenarios that are underpinned and guided by key literature in this area and will be encouraged to evaluate the potential for change at classroom, whole-school and school-community contexts.

2. Collaborative Learning Online (EDU922)

This module is designed to meet the professional needs of teachers and members of the education and training community. The Chief Inspector's Report 2004-2006 (2007: 19) identifies ICT as a key recurring theme for teacher development. Northern Ireland has invested heavily in the education technology infrastructure via the Classroom 2000 (C2K) project which includes the provision of the 'Fronter' Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

Participants are asked to consider some of the possibilities that are offered by a VLE to promote and develop Collaborative Learning Online (CLO). The module will begin with a comparison of CLO within the face-to-face and online contexts and a consideration of the relevant pedagogical contexts. The focus will then move towards collaborative 'E-tivities' (Salmon, 2002) and examination of the role of the teacher as an e-moderator.

SPECIALISM: Learning and Teaching

1. Children's Learning and Assessment (EDU955)

This module is focused solely on developing the student's knowledge and ability to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in their classroom and the wider school community. The module content is designed to allow the student to reflect upon their current environments of learning and teaching and to examine methodologies that may challenge their opinions and views of pedagogy. Students will be given several opportunities to examine and critique a range of current literature perspectives and respond to scholars thinking from the perspectives of their own classroom teaching. This module will aim to bridge the gap between research and practice to assist teachers in translating the recent research into practical strategies that are effective within the constraints of day-to-day classroom life.

Current research has increasingly noted the importance of giving children 'ownership' of their learning. Until recently, lessons were something that 'happened' to children, rather than involved them and certainly were not directed by the children. Involving children in planning the learning and learning opportunities, methods of delivery, assessment and outcome of tasks is still a radical and unpractised concept to most teachers. Students will be encouraged to implement a range of strategies from simple pupil review of learning to more developed planning of the learning itself. In this module the study of all areas of improvement of the learning environment have been tailored to include reading, material and video examples of all key stages and a range of subject areas so that practitioners can engage with appropriate and relevant material.

Assessment of and for learning is an integral part of the learning equation. Teachers need to use modes of assessment to enhance change, growth and development, rather than to encourage labelling and compartmentalising children. Study within this module will encourage teachers to analyse best practice and pressures in the field of assessment. There are pressures on the one hand for external, quantifiable and generalised accountability, and on the other for individualised, formative and qualitative progression. The module will also encourage students to take on a leadership role of driving forward good practice in assessment for learning within (either/ or) their own classroom, department and school.

2. E-Portfolios: Personal Development Planning (EDU953)

Lifelong learning policy has recently included how learners should record, maintain and develop evidence of their learning. European and national directives regarding e-portfolios have given impetus to how Personal Development Planning (PDP) should be developed and managed. Further importance is attached to PDP by the growing numbers of people for whom one occupation for life, in one location, is no longer possible or desirable. Modern education has to prepare people for changing professional, vocational and geographical circumstances. Thus, the emerging consensus that career-long planning should include how learners record and build on their personal and social, decision-making and metacognitive skills and apply them to ever changing contexts is a strong feature of the module content.

The application of PDP to a range of contexts is examined as is the medium through which the process is recorded - e-portfolios. How to equip those responsible for integrating PDP into their teaching and learning programmes will be addressed, as will the practicalities of using and maintaining e-portfolios.

Once the rationale for PDP and its implications for teaching and learning are established the module will include issues of interoperability, migration of data and progression from one learning context to another. These issues will be addressed from personal and institutional perspectives and the implications for individual learners drawn out.

For PDP to provide an effective foundation for lifelong learning, providers need to be equipped with a systematic and comprehensive understanding of their role in providing effective leadership which is learner-centred, well informed and resourced. Only then will PDP be the sustainable lifelong process it is intended to be.

1. Building Teams and Managing Resources (EDU927)

Building Teams: Many organisations require staff to collaborate or cooperate as a team to complete tasks. Today schools are moving away from rigid hierarchical structures to form more flexible units. Increasingly teams are being used to accomplish organisational objectives. For example, a group of teachers may be brought together to prepare a specific report and they will be asked to present the result at the end in the form of a team presentation. This is a very challenging and risky task and may require the acquisition of new skills. However, in spite of the difficulties there are obvious advantages; the workload is shared, a range of abilities can be used, new roles can be practised, variety can be built into the occasion, an opportunity can be created to demonstrate the effectiveness and 'togetherness' of the team, and a sense of team ownership of the agreed objectives may ensure that they will be vigorously pursued. Schools require teachers to communicate effectively, and they are more likely to develop as communicators when they are confident enough that they can contribute to and receive constructive criticism in a team setting. Good communication and teamwork skills are important to all schools.

Managing Resources: The New Public Management reforms of the last 15 years have brought private sector management practices and private companies into the public sector. As a result all educational institutions now receive and manage finance and resources. Decentralisation of school management systems, school improvement strategies, market-oriented efforts, new forms of accountability, and the emergence of public private partnerships have emphasised the importance of the management of financial, human and material resources. Education managers in decentralised institutions have a specific responsibility to ensure that resource management, through the budgetary process is linked directly to improvements in teaching and learning. This means that budgetary decisions are not seen as separate from curricular and pedagogic issues. This requires, among other things, an emphasis on the economic use of resources, the efficient and effective use of resources, equity for all pupils, offering value for money and linking educational outcomes to resource allocation. To fulfil this task education managers need to analyse, evaluate and review their resource management practices in line with the changing environment in which educational institutions operate.

2. Leadership for Learning (EDU867)

In the past there has been an obsession in the literature with the leadership role of head teachers/principals, and little attention has been given to other staff with leadership and management responsibilities. Today as a result of decentralisation and restructuring many teachers have significant such responsibilities. These teachers have a key influence on the quality of learning and teaching. This influence has been recognised by the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) in England, who working with school leaders at all stages of their professional development, seek to understand the ways in which leaders influence learning and teaching. The current emphasis in leadership studies is now focused on the ways in which school leaders can improve the quality of learning and teaching. The NCSL has identified a number of strategies and practices, such as *distributed leadership* and *learning-centred*

leadership, that can help schools enhance learning and improve performance. The impact of these strategies is not just directed to student improvement in test scores but on the students learning capability.

3. Strategic Development Planning (EDU912)

Education managers cannot expect to achieve successful sustainable school improvement without an understanding of strategic leadership, management and planning. The module provides an introduction to concepts and theories related to strategic leadership management and planning, and school improvement. The module will introduce techniques and tools that can help a school or department develop its own capacity for monitoring improvement. The key concepts, issues and problems that managers need to take into account, in monitoring and evaluating school/department/teacher progress will be identified. The basic premise of strategic planning and school improvement is that each school can identify and achieve its own strategic plan. Consideration will be given to the ways in which strategic capability can be built into schools. The module concludes by introducing the new strategic planning techniques of 'scenarios' and 'trend lines'. These will be used to consider how schools might respond to the challenges of the 21st Century.

1. English Language Teaching Methodologies (EDU701)

This module focuses on issues in the practice, methods and planning of language teaching, paying particular attention to the context in which lessons are planned and realised. The focus of the module will be to examine classroom practice (e.g. classroom management, lesson planning, methods, the teaching of the four skills), teacher and learner roles and context, drawing on existing pedagogical literature and language teaching materials. Since the module focuses on the *practice* of teaching, students will be expected to teach, reflect on and plan lessons over the course of the module through a series of microteaching sessions.

The module aims to:

- Develop students' skills and competence in the ESOL classroom.
- Give students an opportunity to apply their knowledge, understanding and skills from other parts of the course in the teaching of series of microteaching lessons.
- Develop students' ability to plan and implement decisions, to recognise problems and find solutions regarding their teaching.
- Allow students to critically reflect on their practice and make adjustments accordingly and to critically reflect on ELT methodology.
- Develop students' use of resources and materials for teaching.
- Develop students' interpersonal skills by requiring them to work collaboratively with peers.

2. English as an Additional Language (EDU956)

The module develops students' conceptual competences, by giving them a solid practical and theoretical underpinning regarding key issues regarding teaching English as an Additional Language. By doing so, it offers an opportunity to apply the theory to their practice and to explore research critically, either as a resource for their own teaching or for their own research. It will offer the opportunity to identify and clarify theories and explore a range of theoretical knowledge and practical skills in depth. It is intended for teachers who find themselves in the position of having to teach non-native speakers of English within the general school system.

The module aims to equip teachers with the knowledge and expertise to deal with children for whom EAL successfully so that they will be able to participate in mainstream education with a minimum of delay and a maximum of success.

- To give the students a broad knowledge and understanding of the most relevant research into theories underpinning English language acquisition/learning processes.
- To give students an opportunity to demonstrate an ability to use examples from their own experience of language learning processes and to apply knowledge about language acquisition/learning research to the classroom.

- To demonstrate an improved competence in practical teaching in an authentic situation with non-native speakers of English (that is in schemes of work, lesson planning, lesson delivery and strategies, assessment and learner support).
- To be able to adapt their approach and methods to a diverse range of learners with due respect to age, cultural background and ethical considerations.
- To be critically reflective about teaching and learning and apply a process of change and improvement.

FINAL MASTERS MODULES (Years 2 and 3)

RESEARCH, DESIGN AND INITIATION – compulsory module

The Research Design and Initiation module introduces students to the key ideas and issues that underpin educational research theory and practice. It provides a research methods course to guide them in commencing their own empirical research project. All students will have developed knowledge, insight and skills as reflective practitioners in the classroom or practice situation, and many will be very familiar with action research. This module is designed to widen their views of research enquiry, to help students organise, implement and progress an educational research project by dissertation encompassing good practice in primary and secondary research, methodological design, analytical insightfulness and piloting, and implementation planning including ethical enquiry.

[Students will select either a full Dissertation or a shorter Research Project plus 1 additional module]

DISSERTATION

This module gives candidates the opportunity to carry out an in-depth piece of independent research which could potentially lead to a PhD or more academically rigorous study. It will draw upon knowledge of research methodology and involve a synthesis of theory and practice of benefit to the student intellectually and to the workplace. This module lasts for 2 University semesters and will result in a 18,000 word document (+/-10%) which is potentially publishable in an educational journal.

RESEARCH PROJECT

This module gives candidates the opportunity to carry out a small scale piece of research that will be academically rigorous yet manageable within the circumstances of professional life. It will draw upon knowledge of research methodology and involve a synthesis of theory and practice of benefit to the student intellectually and to the workplace within which he or she functions. This module lasts for 1 University semester and should result in an 8,000 word document. These may also be potentially publishable.

