

INVESTING IN THE TEACHING WORKFORCE

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The Investing in the Teaching Workforce Scheme (hereafter referred to as “the Scheme”) has been introduced for 2016/17 as a pilot and launched on 5 September 2016.

CONTENTS

SECTION 1 – INVESTING IN THE TEACHING WORKFORCE SCHEME

1. What is the aim of the Scheme?
2. When will the Scheme be launched?
3. Will the Scheme run over a number of years?
4. How is the Scheme being funded?
5. How many teachers will be released under the terms of the Scheme?
6. Who is eligible to apply for the Scheme?
7. I am a Vice-Principal (VP); can I apply to leave under the terms of the Scheme?
8. I am a Principal; can I apply to leave under the terms of the Scheme?
9. Why is the age of those who can apply for release from the profession restricted to 55 years and over?
10. I am under the age of 55; can I apply?
11. How will I be notified of the terms of the Scheme?
12. I do not have access to a work or personal e-mail address; how will I apply for the Scheme?
13. I do not work in a grant-aided school; can I apply for the Scheme?
14. I work an alternative work pattern, e.g. part-time/reduced hours/job share/partial retirement; can I apply for the Scheme?

15. I am employed on a temporary contract; can I apply for the Scheme?
16. I am over the age of 60; can I apply for the Scheme?
17. Can I apply for the Scheme if I am on sickness absence? If so, must I return to work first?
18. Can teachers on a career break, or about to start a career break, apply for the Scheme?
19. Can teachers on secondment, paid or unpaid leave, or on temporary transfer/loan apply for the Scheme?
20. Can a teacher who is subject to an ongoing Human Resource procedure apply for the Scheme?
21. How will teachers, who are on long term leave, or without access to work e-mails, be kept informed of the Scheme?
22. Does a 5% actuarial reduction for each year you are under your scheme pension age apply when you leave under the Scheme?
23. Where can I get more information about the Scheme?

SECTION 2 – PROCESS FOR THE SCHEME

24. How can I apply to leave the teaching profession under the terms of the Scheme?
25. When is the closing date for applications to leave under the terms of the Scheme?
26. What happens if a number of teachers at my school apply?
27. Will I receive a quote of how much my retirement payment would be?
28. How will applicants be selected to leave?
29. What are capitalisation costs?
30. How are capitalisation costs worked out?
31. The Circular advises that applications will be prioritised on the basis of “cost of release”; what does this mean?
32. When will I know if I have been successful in my application to leave?
33. When can I leave the teaching profession under the terms of this Scheme?
34. Can I change my mind once I apply?

35. Why are conditional offers being issued?
36. If I accept the conditional offer, am I then committed to leave?
37. What happens if a “suitably” qualified candidate is not found for the post which will become vacant?
38. If I am selected to leave under the terms of the Scheme, when will I receive my retirement payment?
39. If my pay increases in September 2016, will this affect my pension payment?
40. If I leave the teaching profession before a pay award has been implemented and am due an increase in salary, will I be paid arrears of pension?
41. Will everyone who is approved under the terms of the Scheme leave at the same time?
42. How much notice will I be given if I am selected to leave under the terms of the Scheme?
43. I plan to notify my employer of my intention to retire, will this impact on my selection for the Scheme?
44. I am due to leave under the terms of the Scheme and am currently making repayments, e.g. overpayment through payroll; how will repayments be managed?

SECTION 3 – AFTER SELECTION IS COMPLETED

45. Can I appeal against not being selected?
46. I was not selected for release under the terms of the Scheme, however I would still like to leave; what options do I have and how will they impact on my pension?
47. Will there be another Scheme in 2017/18?
48. If I retire under the terms of the Scheme, will I be able to apply for re-employment on a temporary basis?
49. For teachers who leave under the terms of the Scheme, will there be any restriction on the rate of pay should they return to teaching in Northern Ireland?

SECTION 4 – ROLE OF BOARD OF GOVERNORS AND EMPLOYING/FUNDING AUTHORITY

50. What is the latest date that an “Expression of Interest” form can be accepted from a teacher?
51. What happens if a school is in receipt of multiple applications under the terms of the Scheme?
52. When can teachers who have received their conditional approval, be released under the terms of the Scheme?
53. To whom and by when should Board of Governors submit their applications?

SECTION 5 - RECRUITMENT PROCESS OF RECENTLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS)

54. Who is eligible to apply for posts which become vacant under the terms of the Scheme?
55. Why is recruitment and appointment restricted to those Recently Qualified Teachers who qualified in the years 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016, who are not in a permanent teaching post and who are registered with the GTCNI to teach by the date of taking up appointment?
56. How do I apply for job opportunities created as a result of the Scheme?
57. If I obtained my teaching qualifications outside of the UK, can I apply for the job opportunities which arise under the terms of the Scheme?
58. Can someone in a permanent teaching post outside Northern Ireland apply?
59. I am a Recently Qualified Teacher employed on a temporary 1/365 contract for one year; am I eligible to apply for posts?
60. I am a Recently Qualified Teacher employed on a temporary basis through NISTR; am I eligible to apply for posts?
61. If Boards of Governors are not using experience as a criterion for the posts, will schools not be able to request experience in a particular specialism, even if that is within the time period since graduation?

SECTION 1: INVESTING IN THE TEACHING WORKFORCE SCHEME

1. What is the aim of the Scheme?

The policy aim of the Scheme is to refresh and re-profile the teaching workforce by enabling teachers aged 55 years and over, who are in permanent posts, to be released from the teaching profession, at their request, and to replace the vacant posts with Recently Qualified Teachers.¹

2. When will the Scheme be launched?

The Scheme launched on 5 September 2016. Expressions of Interest, contained within the application form, must be completed by those who wish to be released from the profession and submitted to Boards of Governors **no later than 16 September 2016**. **Late applications will not be accepted.**

3. Will the Scheme run over a number of years?

The Scheme launched on 5 September 2016, as a pilot. Dependant on the uptake and success in 2016/17, consideration will be given to submitting a bid to the Public Sector Transformation Fund for an Investing in the Teaching Workforce Scheme in 2017/18.

4. How is the Scheme being funded?

Funding for the Scheme will be allocated from the Public Sector Transformation Fund 2016/17.

5. How many teachers will be released under the terms of the Scheme?

It is estimated that up to 120 teachers could be released under the terms of the Scheme.

6. Who is eligible to apply for the Scheme?

The Scheme will be applicable to permanent teachers aged 55 years and over on 31 March 2017, who wish to leave the profession, subject to Department of Education approval and confirmation of the recruitment and appointment of a Recently Qualified Teacher as a replacement in the vacant post.

7. I am a Vice-Principal (VP); can I apply to leave under the terms of the Scheme?

Vice-Principals (VP) **can** apply to leave under the terms of the Scheme, where the Board of Governors wish to further restructure the staffing profile of the school by suppressing the VP post and creating a teaching post, or where the Teaching Appointments Scheme allows for an

¹ Under the terms of the Scheme, Recently Qualified Teachers are defined as those who have qualified to teach in 2012, up to and including those who will have qualified during 2016 (that is 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016), who are not in permanent teaching employment and are registered with the GTCNI to teach by the date of taking up post.

internal trawl to fill the vacant VP post with the subsequent vacancy created in the school being filled by a Recently Qualified Teacher (with the approval of the relevant Employing Authority).

8. I am a Principal; can I apply to leave under the terms of the Scheme?

Principals **cannot** apply to leave under the terms of the Scheme. These posts are prescribed posts and recruitment for Principals is subject to external recruitment.

9. Why is the age of those who can apply for release from the profession restricted to 55 years and over?

The Scheme will operate within the legislative environment of the Teachers' (Compensation for Redundancy and Premature Retirement) Regulations (NI) 2010 and the Finance Act 2004. This legislation restricts the age limit of the Scheme for the cohort leaving the teaching profession to age 55 years and over, which is the minimum age of retirement.

10. I am under the age of 55; can I apply?

Only teachers aged 55 years and over on 31 March 2017 are eligible to apply for the Scheme.

11. How will I be notified of the terms of the Scheme?

DE Circular 2016/12: Investing in the Teaching Workforce Scheme was published on the Department of Education website on 5 September 2016 and outlines the process for the Scheme and the related application form (<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/node/20324>). This Circular issued to all schools and interested bodies on 5 September 2016. Your Employing Authority will also keep you updated.

12. I do not have access to a work or personal e-mail address; how will I apply for the Scheme?

It is the responsibility of the Principal and/or Employing Authority to issue communication to teachers who are eligible to apply for the Scheme who are without access to work e-mails.

13. I do not work in a grant-aided school; can I apply for the Scheme?

The Investing in the Teaching Workforce Scheme is only applicable to permanent teachers, aged 55 years and over, who are employed in grant-aided schools within the Education sector.

14. I work an alternative work pattern, e.g. part-time/reduced hours/job share/partial retirement; can I apply for the Scheme?

Any teacher aged 55 years or over on 31 March 2017 and employed in a permanent teaching post, can apply to the Scheme regardless of their working pattern.

15. I am employed on a temporary contract; can I apply for the Scheme?

The Scheme is only applicable to teachers in permanent posts.

16. I am over the age of 60; can I apply for the Scheme?

The terms of this Scheme will enable teachers aged between 55 and 59 to have early access to pension accrued to date, **with no actuarial reduction** to the pension benefits they will receive, despite receiving these benefits before normal retirement age. As 60 is the normal retirement age, a teacher would already be entitled to full pension and therefore would not benefit from the terms of this Scheme.

17. Can I apply for the Scheme if I am on sickness absence? If so, must I return to work first?

Teachers on sickness absence who are otherwise eligible for the Scheme may apply, without first having to return to work. However, teachers may not apply if, at the date of the launch of the Scheme (5 September 2016), they have been granted retirement on medical grounds, or have been given a date for dismissal under inefficiency terms.

18. Can teachers on a career break, or about to start a career break, apply for the Scheme?

Teachers on a career break, or those staff who have agreed a career break which is due to commence in the 2016/17 financial year are eligible to apply, providing they meet the eligibility criteria.

19. Can teachers on secondment, paid or unpaid leave, or on temporary transfer/loan apply for the Scheme?

Teachers from these groups may apply providing they meet the eligibility criteria.

20. Can a teacher who is subject to an ongoing Human Resource procedure apply for the Scheme?

Teachers who are subject to ongoing Human Resource procedures may apply for the Scheme; however, details of the appropriateness of the application with relevant circumstantial evidence should be provided by the Board of Governors as a separate attachment to the application form. The Employing/Funding Authority should consider such cases and document advice where they are in support of the application proceeding.

21. How will teachers, who are on long term leave, or without access to work e-mails, be kept informed of the Scheme?

It is the responsibility of the Principal and/or Employing Authority to issue communication to teachers who are eligible to apply for the Scheme who are without access to work e-mails.

22. Does a 5% actuarial reduction for each year you are under your scheme pension age apply when you leave under the terms of the Scheme?

Teachers who are released under the terms of this Scheme will have early access to pension, **accrued to date**, with no actuarial reduction to the pension benefits they will receive, despite receiving these benefits before normal retirement age.

23. Where can I get more information about the Scheme?

An Investing in the Teaching Workforce section is on the Department of Education website (<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/node/20324>). All relevant information will be published here.

SECTION 2: PROCESS FOR THE SCHEME

24. How can I apply to leave the teaching profession under the terms of the Scheme?

Teachers who wish to be released from the teaching profession under the terms of the Scheme should complete the “Expression of Interest” on page 3 of the associated application form and submit this to their Board of Governors **no later than 16 September 2016**.

25. When is the closing date for applications to leave under the terms of the Scheme?

The application form must be with Boards of Governors **no later than 16 September 2016**.
Late applications will not be accepted.

26. What happens if a number of teachers at my school apply?

If a school is in receipt of multiple applications to the Scheme, which may be detrimental to the efficient and effective operation of the school setting, **it is the responsibility of the Board of Governors** to determine those applications they are prepared to agree, based on the specific needs of the school and provision of the curriculum.

27. Will I receive a quote of how much my retirement payment would be?

Teachers should refer to their individual Annual Benefits Statement (ABS) issued in June 2016 by Teachers’ Pay and Pensions. No further Statement will be issued until June 2017.

28. How will applicants be selected to leave?

Boards of Governors will assess and complete the application form, giving due consideration to:

- Risks in relation to the continuity of curriculum delivery to pupils and how any such risks can be managed.
- Examination of the opportunity for curricular change.
- Assessment of restructuring within the teaching workforce of the school.
- The reallocation of teaching allowances, should the teacher who wishes to be released be in receipt of allowances.
- The support that may be required and can be provided for the Recently Qualified Teacher on appointment to post.

On receipt of applications from the Employing/Funding Authority, Teachers’ Pay and Pensions will calculate capitalisation costs and the Department will prioritise applications in order of cost of release. Applications of lesser cost will be given precedence for funding. The Department

will determine those applications that can be conditionally approved under the terms of the Scheme, subject to affordability within the limits of the threshold of funding, and will advise the Employing/Funding Authority **by 5 December 2016**.

The Employing/Funding Authority will then notify those applicants whose application has been prioritised and conditionally approved for release **by 9 December 2016**.

29. What are capitalisation costs?

This is the anticipated capital cost for early release from the teaching profession under the terms of the Scheme, i.e. the difference between the full and reduced benefits payable to the retired teachers over the lifetime of the pension.

30. How are capitalisation costs worked out?

The capitalisation costs are worked out using the following calculation:

Full pension accrued by member less the actuarially reduced pension multiplied by a factor (supplied by Government Actuaries Department) plus full lump sum accrued by member less the actuarially reduced lump sum.

31. The Circular advises that applications will be prioritised on the basis of “cost of release”; what does this mean?

Applications of lesser cost will be given precedence for funding. The Department will determine those applications that can be conditionally approved under the terms of the Scheme, subject to affordability within the limits of the threshold of funding available.

32. When will I know if I have been successful in my application to leave?

The Employing/Funding Authority will notify those applicants whose application has been prioritised and conditionally approved for release **by 9 December 2016**.

33. When can I leave the teaching profession under the terms of the Scheme?

No date for release can be agreed until the subsequent recruitment process to secure and appoint a Recently Qualified Teacher has been completed and a date of commencement of employment is confirmed.

34. Can I change my mind once I apply?

By submitting the application form, an interest is merely being expressed in leaving the teaching workforce under the terms of the Scheme. It should be emphasised that **no commitment** is being given, by any party, at this stage. Applicants will be given the

opportunity to confirm their acceptance to proceed with their application, or withdraw from the Scheme, at a later stage in the process.

35. Why are conditional offers being issued?

Conditional offers are being used to give applicants the opportunity to either confirm their acceptance to proceed, or withdraw their application.

36. If I accept the conditional offer, am I then committed to leave?

If a conditional offer is accepted, a commitment to leave has been made. However, it is subject to the appointment of a Recently Qualified Teacher, as defined by the Scheme, to the vacant post.

37. What happens if a “suitably” qualified candidate is not found for the post which will become vacant?

Release from the teaching profession, under the terms of the Scheme, is dependent on confirmation of the recruitment of a Recently Qualified Teacher to the vacant post.

38. If I am selected to leave under the terms of the Scheme, when will I receive my retirement payment?

This can only be determined once the date of commencement of employment of a Recently Qualified Teacher is known. However, Teachers' Pay and Pensions requires three/four months notification in order to release your retirement payment.

39. If my pay increases in September 2016, will this affect my pension payment?

Any pay increase which comes into effect while a teacher is still in pensionable employment will be included in the calculation of pension benefits due.

40. If I leave the teaching profession before a pay award has been implemented and am due an increase in salary, will I be paid arrears of pension?

If a retrospective pay award is implemented for a period when a teacher was still in pensionable service, pension benefits will be revised accordingly and any arrears due will be paid.

41. Will everyone who is approved under the terms of the Scheme leave at the same time?

Teachers who receive conditional approval for release under the terms of the Scheme must not leave the profession until the subsequent recruitment process to secure and appoint a Recently Qualified Teacher has been completed, and a date of commencement of employment is confirmed.

42. How much notice will I be given if I am selected to leave under the terms of the Scheme?

On acceptance of a conditional offer, a teacher will be asked to agree to the full notice period of three/four months, dependent on the time of year.

43. I plan to notify my employer of my intention to retire; will this impact on my selection for the Scheme?

If a teacher formally notifies their employer of their intention to retire, they will be removed from the Scheme and no longer be considered for selection.

44. I am due to leave under the terms of the Scheme and am currently making repayments, e.g. overpayment through payroll; how will repayments be managed?

The Department will continue to recover any outstanding overpayment. The recovery is made by deductions from the retired teacher's pension and made through the pensions' payroll.

SECTION 3: AFTER SELECTION IS COMPLETED

45. Can I appeal against not being selected?

There is no right of appeal.

46. I was not selected for release under the terms of the Scheme, however I would still like to leave; what options do I have and how will they impact on my pension?

All teachers aged 55 to 59 years continue to have the option to retire and draw an actuarially reduced pension.

47. Will there be another Scheme in 2017/18?

Dependent on the uptake and success in 2016/17, consideration will be given to submitting a bid to the Public Sector Transformation Fund for an Investing in the Teaching Workforce Scheme in 2017/18.

48. If I retire under the terms of the Scheme, will I be able to apply for re-employment on a temporary basis?

Teachers who retire under this Scheme can register on the Northern Ireland Substitute Teachers' Register (NISTR) for re-employment on a temporary basis.

49. For teachers who leave under the terms of the Scheme, will there be any restriction on the rate of pay should they return to teaching in Northern Ireland?

With effect from 1 September 2016, the annual salary to be paid to teachers who have prematurely retired under the Investing in the Teaching Workforce Scheme and who are re-employed in grant-aided schools shall be restricted to Point 1 of the teachers' Main Pay Scale for all future teaching employment, as outlined in DE Circular 2016/13: Rate of Pay for Teachers Prematurely Retired Under the Investing in the Teaching Workforce Scheme (which is available at <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/node/20324>)

SECTION 4: ROLE OF BOARD OF GOVERNORS AND EMPLOYING/FUNDING AUTHORITY

50. What is the latest date that an “Expression of Interest” form can be accepted from a teacher?

Application forms must be with Boards of Governors **no later than 16 September 2016**. **Late applications will not be accepted.**

51. What happens if a school is in receipt of multiple applications under the terms of the Scheme?

If a school is in receipt of multiple applications to the Scheme, which may be detrimental to the efficient and effective operation of the school setting, **it is the responsibility of the Board of Governors** to determine those applications they are prepared to agree, based on the specific needs of the school and provision of the curriculum.

52. When can teachers who have received their conditional approval, be released under the terms of the Scheme?

Teachers who receive conditional approval for their application must not be released until the subsequent recruitment exercise to secure and appoint a Recently Qualified Teacher has been completed and a date of commencement of employment is confirmed.

53. To whom and by when should Boards of Governors submit their applications?

Applications should be submitted to the relevant Employing/Funding Authority as follows, **no later than 14 October 2016**. **Late applications will not be accepted.**

- Controlled Schools – Education Authority (EA).
- Catholic Maintained Schools – Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS).
- Irish Medium Schools – Education Authority (EA).
- Other Maintained Schools – Education Authority (EA).
- Voluntary Grammar (VG) / Grant Maintained Integrated (GMI) Schools – Schools Finance Team, Department of Education.

SECTION 5: RECRUITMENT PROCESS OF RECENTLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS

54. Who is eligible to apply for posts which become vacant under the terms of the Scheme?

Recently Qualified Teachers who have qualified to teach in 2012, up to and including those who will qualify during 2016 (that is 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016), who are not in permanent teaching employment and are registered with the GTCNI to teach by the date of taking up post are eligible to apply for the posts which become vacant under the terms of the Scheme.

55. Why is recruitment and appointment restricted to those Recently Qualified Teachers who qualified in the years 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016, who are not in a permanent teaching post and who are registered with the GTCNI to teach by the date of taking up appointment?

The Department carried out an objective and measured approach in relation to the analysis of data which concluded that graduates who had qualified in the years 2012 up to and including 2016 have experienced the greatest difficulty in securing meaningful employment.

56. How do I apply for job opportunities created as a result of the Scheme?

Job opportunities created as a result of this Scheme will be advertised in due course, it is unlikely that this will be before Spring 2017.

57. If I obtained my teaching qualifications outside of the UK, can I apply for the job opportunities which arise under the terms of the Scheme?

Recently Qualified Teachers who have qualified to teach in 2012, up to and including those who will qualify during 2016 (that is 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016), who are not in permanent teaching employment and **are registered with the GTCNI** to teach by the date of taking up post are eligible to apply for the posts which become vacant under the terms of the Scheme, regardless of where their teaching qualification was obtained.

58. Can someone in a permanent teaching post outside Northern Ireland apply?

No, the Scheme is open to all Recently Qualified Teachers who meet the eligibility criteria and **who are not in permanent teaching employment.**

59. I am a Recently Qualified Teacher employed on a temporary 1/365 contract for one year; am I eligible to apply for posts?

Recently Qualified Teachers who have qualified to teach in 2012, up to and including those who will qualify during 2016 (that is 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016), **who are not in**

permanent teaching employment and are registered with the GTCNI to teach by the date of taking up post are eligible to apply for the posts which become vacant under the terms of the Scheme.

60. I am a Recently Qualified Teacher employed on a temporary basis through NISTR; am I eligible to apply for posts?

Recently Qualified Teachers who have qualified to teach in 2012, up to and including those who will qualify during 2016 (that is 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016), **who are not in permanent teaching employment** and are registered with the GTCNI to teach by the date of taking up post are eligible to apply for the posts which become vacant under the terms of the Scheme.

61. If Boards of Governors are not using experience as a criterion for the posts, will schools not be able to request experience in a particular specialism, even if that is within the time period since graduation?

Boards of Governors must not shortlist applications based upon experience, however, where a post requires a particular area of specialism this should be stated in the advertised job specification.