

**SUBJECT: INVESTING IN THE TEACHING
WORKFORCE SCHEME 2018/19**

CIRCULAR NUMBER: 2018/04

DATE OF ISSUE: 16 April 2018

AUDIENCE:

- Principals and Boards of Governors of Grant-aided Schools;
- Education Authority;
- Council for Catholic Maintained Schools;
- Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta;
- Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education;
- Governing Bodies Association;
- Teachers' Unions;
- General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI)
- Controlled Schools Support Council
- Catholic Schools' Trustee Service

SUMMARY OF CONTENTS:

This Circular provides guidelines on the operation of the Investing in the Teaching Workforce Scheme in 2018/19.

ENQUIRIES:

Any enquiries regarding the contents of this Circular should be addressed to:

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STATUS OF CONTENTS:

Advice

RELATED DOCUMENTS:

DE Circular 2016/13 Rate of Pay for Teachers Prematurely Retired under the Investing in the Teaching Workforce Scheme

SUPERSEDED DOCUMENTS:

DE Circular 2016/12 Investing in the Teaching Workforce Scheme.

EXPIRY DATE:

31 March 2019

DE WEBSITE:

This Circular is available on <http://www.education-ni.gov.uk>

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Investing in the Teaching Workforce Scheme (hereafter referred to as 'the Scheme') will operate in the 2018/19 financial year. The policy aims of the Scheme are to refresh and re-profile the teaching workforce by enabling the release of permanent teachers aged 55 years and over, at 30 April 2018, from the teaching profession and to replace the vacant posts with Recently Qualified Teachers¹ who are not in permanent teaching employment at the date of application, who have qualified to teach in 2013, up to and including those who will have qualified during 2017 (that is 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017) and are registered with the GTCNI to teach by the date of taking up post.
2. 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 workforce to age 55 years and over, which is the minimum age of retirement. This will enable teachers who are released under the terms of the Scheme 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. It should be noted that no additional compensatory payment or 'added years' will be made.
3. Funding for the Scheme will be allocated from the Public Sector Transformation Fund.

¹ Under the terms of the Scheme, Recently Qualified Teachers are defined as those who have qualified to teach in 2013, up to and including those who will have qualified during 2017 (that is 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017), who are not in permanent teaching employment and are registered with the GTCNI to teach by the date of taking up post.

ELIGIBILITY FOR THE SCHEME

4. The Scheme will be applicable to permanent teachers aged 55 years and over at 30 April 2018 who wish to leave the profession, subject to confirmation of the recruitment and appointment of a Recently Qualified Teacher as a replacement in the vacant post, and, subsequent approval from the Department of Education.
5. Teachers who have reached or passed their normal retirement age by 31 March 2019 will not benefit from application to the Scheme and therefore will not be eligible to apply.
6. The application to leave the teaching profession **must** be initiated by the teacher, not by the school.
7. Vice-Principals 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 Vice-Principal post and creating a teaching post; or where the Teaching Appointments Scheme allows for an internal trawl to fill the vacant Vice-Principal post, and the subsequent vacancy created in the school being filled by a Recently Qualified Teacher (with the approval of the relevant Employing Authority).
8. 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, requiring an extensive breadth of experience which could not be replaced by a Recently Qualified Teacher.
9. There is **no** guarantee that any teacher who applies to be released under the terms of the Scheme will be released. Applications will be prioritised on the basis of cost of release, with the lesser cost being given precedence over those with a greater cost, subject to affordability within the threshold of funding available to the Department.

10. In cases where an application is proposed for a teacher who is subject to an ongoing Human Resources procedure, details of the appropriateness of the application should be summarised, with circumstantial evidence, by the relevant Board of Governors as a separate attachment. The Employing/ Funding Authority should consider such cases and document advice where it is in support of the application proceeding.
11. Schools experiencing challenging financial positions should be aware that the Strategic Cost Reduction Programme 2018/19 should also be considered as an option for managing budgetary constraints, in addition to the terms of this Scheme.

APPLICATIONS TO THE SCHEME

12. Teachers in permanent posts who wish to give consideration to be released from the teaching profession under the terms of the Scheme should complete the “Expression of Interest” on page 4 of the application form, and forward the application form to their Board of Governors **no later than 23 April 2018.** **Late applications will not be accepted. There is no right of appeal at any stage of the process.**
13. Teachers should refer to their individual Annual Benefits Statement (ABS) issued in March 2018 by Teachers’ Pay and Pensions Team and should note that where this Statement has been received, no further Statement will be issued.
14. By submitting an application form, teachers are merely expressing an interest 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 of the process.**

15. Applications to the Scheme are subject to:

- i. Agreement of the relevant Board of Governors;
- ii. Agreement of the relevant Employing/Funding Authorities;
- iii. Prioritisation of applications on the basis of cost of release; and
- iv. Approval of the Department of Education and subject to affordability within the threshold of funding available.

PROCESS FOR BOARDS OF GOVERNORS

16. Upon receipt of an “Expression of Interest” from a teacher, the Board of Governors should assess and complete the application form giving due consideration to:

- The risks in relation to continuity of curriculum delivery to pupils and how any such risks can be managed;
- Examination of the opportunity for curricular change, for example, through the introduction of revised subjects and subjects new to the school;
- 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; and
- The support that may be required and can be provided for the Recently Qualified Teacher on appointment to post.

17. 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. Boards of Governors should ensure that evidence relating to these decisions is clearly documented and retained.

18. In considering the release of teachers under the terms of the Scheme, Boards of Governors should be fully aware that 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.

All appointments for Recently Qualified Teachers must be ratified and approved prior to final approval being provided to the teacher who has applied for release. All releases must be completed by 31 March 2019.

19. Boards of Governors should submit the applications to the relevant Employing/Funding Authority as follows:

- Controlled Schools: Education Authority,
- Catholic Maintained Schools: CCMS,
- Irish Medium Schools: Education Authority,
- Other Maintained Schools: Education Authority,
- VGS/GMI schools: Education Authority.

Contact details for submission are available on the application form.

20. Applications, as agreed by Boards of Governors, must be received by the Employing/Funding Authority **no later than Monday 30 April 2018.** Late applications will not be accepted.

PROCESS FOR EMPLOYING/FUNDING AUTHORITY

21. On receipt of applications, the Employing/Funding Authority should ensure all relevant information has been provided.

22. Employing/Funding Authorities will then compile a list of all applicants approved by Boards of Governors and will submit a request for capitalisation

costs for **all** those named on the respective lists to Teachers' Pay and Pensions Team, Waterside House, **no later than Tuesday 8 May 2018.**

23. Once capitalisation costs are completed, the applications will be prioritised 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 available, and will advise the Employing/Funding Authority **by Friday 8 June 2018.**
24. The Employing/Funding Authority will then notify applicants and schools where the application has been prioritised **by Friday 15 June 2018.**
25. Teachers who have received conditional approval for release must confirm their acceptance to proceed with the application for release under the terms of the Scheme to their Board of Governors **no later than Friday 22 June 2018. Late acceptances will not be considered.**
26. Release from the profession under the terms of the Scheme is subject to Department of Education approval and appointment of a Recently Qualified Teacher to the post being vacated. **Therefore no assumptions should be made until Departmental approval is secured.**
27. Boards of Governors should submit the names of those who have confirmed their acceptance to proceed with their application for release under the terms of the Scheme to the relevant Employing/Funding Authority **no later than Friday 29 June 2018.**
28. The Employing/Funding Authority will share this information with Teachers' Negotiating Team, Department of Education (TNT.Team@education-ni.gov.uk) **no later than Friday 6 July 2018. Late applications will not be accepted.**

29. Funding will only be provided once the Education/ Funding Authority has confirmed both the date that the exiting teacher left and the Recently Qualified Teacher commenced employment.

APPLICATION FOR PREMATURE RETIREMENT

30. The Employing/Funding Authority should liaise with the teacher, who has received conditional approval, to complete a TP4 form. The Employing/Funding Authority will authorise the completed TP4 form and submit this to Teachers' Pay and Pensions Team, Waterside House.

31. Teachers' Pay and Pensions Team will process the application and prepare payment, confirming the pension amount due to the applicant, subject to the recruitment of a Recently Qualified Teacher.

SCHOOL WORKFORCE ASSESSMENT

32. Where a teacher is successful in their application to be released under the terms of the Scheme, participating schools will be expected to complete a School Workforce Assessment, at a later date, which demonstrates how the teaching workforce at the school will be refreshed through the release of the teacher aged 55 years and over and the subsequent appointment of a Recently Qualified Teacher. Workshops will be held **during week commencing 27 August 2018** to assist with the completion of the School Workforce Assessment document. At least one member of the Board of Governors and the school Principal will be required to attend.

RECRUITMENT PROCESS FOR RECENTLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS

33. The recruitment process for a Recently Qualified Teacher, in accordance with the criteria for this Scheme, must not be initiated by the Board of Governors until conditional approval to release the teacher has been confirmed by the Department and the Employing/Funding Authority and accepted by the teacher and a School Workforce Assessment has been completed.

34. Boards of Governors should refer to the recruitment process relevant to their Employing/Funding Authority. In accordance with the aims of this Scheme, Boards of Governors must not shortlist applications based upon experience.
35. Consideration to the timing of the recruitment exercise must be given. In all cases, the Recently Qualified Teacher should be appointed on the date immediately following the last day of service of the exiting teacher; the only exception should be in the case where a teacher exits on a Friday or on a day before a school holiday. **The release date for teachers leaving under the terms of the Scheme will take place at either 28 February 2019 or 31 March 2019.**
36. Following ratification by the Employing Authority of the recruitment of a Recently Qualified Teacher, as defined by this Scheme, the proposed date of release should be agreed with the Employing/Funding Authority at an early stage. All appointments for Recently Qualified Teachers **must be accepted by 31 March 2019** in order to avail of this Scheme.

TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT

37. Once a date of release is confirmed, the Employing/ Funding Authority should issue a termination letter to the exiting teacher.

RE-EMPLOYMENT OF TEACHERS RELEASED UNDER THE TERMS OF THE SCHEME

38. Those teachers prematurely retired under the Scheme, with access to an unreduced pension, will have a restriction of salary placed for all future teaching employment.
39. The annual salary to be paid to prematurely retired teachers who are re-employed in grant aided schools shall be restricted to Point 1 of the teachers' Main Pay Scale. Further guidance can be found in DE Circular 2016/13: Rate of Pay for Teachers Prematurely Retired under the Investing in the Teaching Workforce Scheme.

40. When filling vacancies, which are not created as a result of this Scheme, including those of a temporary nature, employers should give preference to newly and recently qualified teachers or experienced non-retired teachers.

APPLICATION FORM

41. An application form to apply for release under the terms of this Scheme can be found on the Department of Education website.

INVESTING IN THE TEACHING WORKFORCE SCHEME 2018/19 – KEY DATES FOR SCHOOLS

Action	Timeframe
Letter to Schools to announce the 2018/19 Investing in the Teaching Workforce Scheme.	Tuesday 10 April 2018
Launch of Scheme.	Monday 16 April 2018
Applicant sends Expression of Interest to Board of Governors.	No later than Monday 23 April 2018
Board of Governors sends agreed applications to Employing/Funding Authority.	No later than Monday 30 April 2018
Employing/Funding Authority sends applications to Teachers Pay and Pensions Team for capitalisation costs to be calculated.	No later than Tuesday 8 May 2018
Employing/Funding Authority issues conditional offer to teachers, and schools, whose applications have been prioritised for release. Correspondence will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Workforce Assessment; • Dates for School Workforce Assessment workshops. 	By Friday 15 June 2018
Teacher confirms acceptance for application to proceed with Board of Governors.	No later than Friday 22 June 2018
Board of Governors submit the following information to Employing/Funding Authority: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name(s) of teachers who have accepted the conditional offer; • Date of attendance, and attendees, at School Workforce Assessment workshop. 	No later than Friday 29 June 2018
Following receipt of the above information, schools will be provided with a candidate information pack to prepare for the advertisement of the post for the Recently Qualified Teacher.	
School Workforce Assessment Workshops commence.	w/c 27 August 2018
Schools submit School Workforce Assessment to Employing/Funding Authority.	By Monday 10 September 2018
Recruitment process for Recently Qualified Teachers begins.	w/c 8 October 2018
Recruitment process complete and appointments made.	Complete no later than 31 March 2019