

Marino Institute of Education – Consultation on the Reform of The Higher Education Authority Act, 1971

Marino Institute of Education (MIE) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science update on the Reform of the HEA Act 1971. MIE is an autonomous, charitable higher education institute, under the co-trusteeship of the Congregation of Christian Brothers European Province and Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin, hereafter Trinity. Established in 1905 as a centre of Christian Brothers' Education, Research and Teaching, the college became a recognised provider of teacher education in 1929, and since that time has been directly funded by the Department of Education for the provision of initial teacher education.

With the introduction of the Bachelor of Education in 1976, MIE became an Associated College of Trinity, and all programmes at MIE lead to the award of a Trinity College degree. In July 2011, this relationship was further strengthened with the formalisation of an agreement which places MIE under the joint trusteeship of the European Province of the Christian Brothers and Trinity College Dublin.

MIE is a not-for-profit HEI, and a registered charity, regulated by the Charities Regulator. In addition to providing programmes in initial teacher education (through both the medium of English and the medium of Irish), during the last decade the academic mission and scope of MIE's activity has been re-envisioned to encompass a deeper understanding of education in and beyond the classroom. MIE's programmes incorporate the continuum of teacher education, providing a BSc in Early Childhood Education and initial and inservice teacher education for primary and further education teachers, at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. This is complemented with a commitment to education studies encompassing non-traditional education settings and the wider education environment in a pluralist context. MIE currently educates approximately 1200 students, providing high quality programmes, which are validated by Trinity and, where appropriate, are accredited by the Teaching Council. The BSc in Early Childhood Education was accredited by the Qualifications Advisory Board for alignment with of the Professional Award Criteria and Guidelines in May 2020 under the Department of Education and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

The values, mission and priorities of MIE find resonance in this consultative document. In all its activities, MIE operates with the learner at the centre of its focus. MIE is committed to providing a quality education for all our students, to respond to the needs of all learners, to provide access to education for all, and to do so within a community of care and compassion. Although lying outside of the HEA ACT 1971 and not funded through the HEA, MIE engages proactively with the various access initiatives of the HEA/Department of Education. For instance MIE is a partner in the PATH project, with specific commitment to Traveller Education under the TOBAR project; it supports access to higher education from all underrepresented groups through the 1916 Scholarships, is a lead partner in the Dublin City of Learning project, and provides valuable support for immigrant teachers through the Migrant Teacher Project. At least 15% of our undergraduate students avail of the HEAR and

DARE access programmes and 25% of our students are in receipt of SUSI grants. At MIE we value our students and student voice, encourage their active participation in all committees and decision-making processes, and we promote engagement with Studentsurvey.ie. In the recent round of surveys (2021), MIE has achieved a response rate of almost 50%, the second highest response rate in the system, reflecting the high level of engagement of our students in all our work.

Throughout, MIE has been determined to ensure that there are strong governance structures within the Institute. The Instrument of Governance was revised in 2016, and following an externally managed review, our Institutional structures were revised in 2019. The terms of reference of our Academic Council have been updated, and the membership of Council extended. The Quality, Finance and Audit subcommittees of our Governing Body ensure that risks are assessed, and that appropriate levels of internal control and accountability are in place. MIE has invested significantly in the establishment of a Quality Office, the appointment of a Quality Officer, and a Data Protection/GDPR Officer, to ensure that the policies and procedures of the Institute are appropriate. MIE is cognisant of the importance of quality assurance and corporate fitness, and is satisfied that it is providing effective internal governance, as well as promoting excellence in all of its activities.

MIE is a small, focused and dynamic institute, which has kept pace with the contemporary landscape, while remaining committed to our founding principles of social justice and excellence in education. Ethical governance is core to the work of MIE, and despite being outside of the regulatory and legislative domain of the HEA, MIE has ensured that the governance structures established are aligned with the expectations of the public sector, are transparent, and will meet the requirements of any potential performance and governance framework introduced by the HEA.

Objectives of Legislative reform

The core objectives of the HEA legislation outlined on p.5 of the consultation paper are welcomed by MIE. We concur with the emphasis on:

- o Maintaining and enhancing the reputation of the higher education sector, including international reputation,
- o Advancing equality, diversity and inclusion in higher education,
- o Promoting and safeguarding the interests of the students,
- o Providing a comprehensive governance and accountability framework to safeguard Exchequer investment in the sector and ensuring accountability by HEIs for that funding, and
- o Promoting and supporting HEIs in achieving excellence in teaching, learning and research in higher education.

Establishment of the new Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.

Given the growth of the sector and increasing student population planned for the next decade, MIE welcomes the establishment of a dedicated department to set the vision and strategy for higher education.

It is worth teasing out the residual relationship between the Department of Education and the new Department. Although there may be multiple areas for consideration, of particular interest to MIE is the case of Initial Teacher Education and in particular the potential roles and responsibilities of the

Teacher Education Section of the Department of Education and the new DHERIS. If there is to be a split in roles and responsibilities, what will be the impact on teacher education providers?

One of the benefits of a new dedicated department will be the establishment of a central and direct line of communication for an institute such as MIE. Currently, MIE does not have a direct line of communication with the HEA, is not included in emails/information sharing activities, and is not eligible to apply for some aspects of funding, such as funding associated with the National Forum for Teaching and Learning.

Corporate, Academic and Executive Governance.

MIE has established clear and defined roles for its Governing Body, Academic Council and its President/CEO and Leadership Team. The terms of reference of all these bodies are available at https://www.mie.ie/en/about_us/governance_and_management/. MIE is already a good exemplar of a 'shared governance' approach between its corporate, academic and executive branches.

MIE's Governing Body may have up to 18 members, 14 of whom are nominated by the Trustees, 3 are elected staff representatives, and 1 is an elected representative of the Students' Union (see Appendix 1 for an overview of MIE's governance structures).

Given the fact that MIE is under the joint trusteeship of the European Province of the Christian Brothers and Trinity College Dublin and is also a linked provider of Trinity, the Chair of Governing Body (GB) and 3 senior members of Trinity staff are members of the Board, while all others, with the exception of elected internal representatives, are external members. These members come from a variety of business, legal, community and charitable organisations, and each has a specific contribution to make to the skillset of the Board.

There are no MIE ex officio members of GB. Corporate Governance resides with the Governing Body (GB), the President /CEO is not a member of GB, but is answerable to the GB, and is secretary to the Board. In this way, the President and the Leadership team are held to a high level of accountability.

The Trustees are mindful to appoint members to the Governing Body who are committed to upholding the mission, founding principles, and purpose of the Institute. Any change in this procedure would have to be considered by the Trustees.

Co-regulation

MIE is self-regulated and currently reports on student numbers and progression to the Department of Education (see Appendix 2 for detailed financial information). MIE's block grant of €4.74m per annum for the Bachelor of Education (Primary) and the Professional Master of Education programme has remained static since 2005. As funding is attached to our initial teacher education programmes, for which the number of students is capped by the Department of Education, core funding of MIE has remained unchanged. MIE's fulltime degree courses in Education Studies and Early Childhood Education (total of 390 students) receive no public funding.

MIE currently has substantial autonomy with regard to its own future. For example, it does not require permission to appoint new members of staff. In this capacity, MIE has had the autonomy to invest in front-facing staff and to ensure that the Institute meets the staff student ratio as required by the Teaching Council. MIE has been flexible and nimble in its response to calls for programmes,

such as the B.Ed. through the medium of Irish, and because it does not exert 'top-slices' to applications, MIE can compete favourably against larger and more complex organisations.

MIE does not receive HEA capital investment grants. We last received funding for capital grants totalling €2,020,055 from the Department of Education and Skills in 2002, when we moved our library. These grants are secured by a 40-year deed of charge over St. Patrick's building, with effect from 2003. The grants are repayable in full if the Institute ceases to operate publicly approved courses during the period.

Since 2002 MIE has constructed a purpose-built gym, lecture theatre, teaching, learning and student spaces, and a canteen, in addition to acquiring student accommodation (302 bed capacity), all of which has been funded solely through securing private loans.

MIE is an anomaly within the system: although we are a not-for-profit charity, already in receipt of exchequer funding by the Department of Education for some of our programmes and some of our students, MIE is not recognised for targeted funding initiatives in teaching and learning, innovation and research.

MIE's capacity to be networked with other institutions and engage in collaborative projects, is best described as ad hoc and opportunistic. Nonetheless, MIE successfully navigates the landscape to become a trusted partner in a wide variety of activities, including EU H2020 research projects.

This proposed legislation and the potential introduction of co-regulation could have a significant impact on institutions such as MIE which currently lie outside the HEA structure. In the first instance, the introduction of co-regulation, and the additional compliance and reporting requirements it brings, would create challenges for MIE. Increased levels of reporting would require resources which the Institute does not currently possess.

MIE employees are private sector employees, which is atypical of the broader higher education system. MIE has a private pension scheme with 33 people contributing to an academic and senior staff members pension and 25 contributing to two general staff pension schemes. A number of staff members are currently not contributing to either pension scheme.

Although HEA membership and co-regulation is not synonymous with public sector status, most institutions affiliated with the HEA are public sector institutions. Currently the absence of public sector status makes MIE less attractive to staff who wish to work in teacher education. As all other undergraduate initial teacher education providers are in the public sector, MIE staff might perceive co-regulation by the HEA as being synonymous with their employment having public sector status. Inclusion under the HEA legislation could raise expectations among staff (such as pension and redeployment rights) which MIE would not be able to satisfy.

Proposed Legislative Reform: Role of Academic Council

MIE's Academic Council is responsible for the academic affairs of the Institute and aligns with the provisions under the proposed legislation. Membership of MIE's Academic Council comprises ex officio members, as well as elected staff and student representation, and two members of the Governing Body. The Terms of Reference of MIE's Academic Council state that its purpose is to:

- i. Direct the educational matters of the Institute such as curriculum, education provision, academic policy and regulatory oversight through approval of Academic Regulations, Student Code and new academic policies.

- ii. Consider matters of academic governance of the Institute. The Council will ensure that programmes and courses are regularly monitored and evaluated. Directors of course programmes shall provide an annual report according to the guidelines prepared by the Governing Body. The Academic Council shall also oversee and consider the outcome of any academic reviews undertaken.
- iii. Advise and make recommendations to the Institute on academic institutional and sectoral initiatives and strategic priorities such as education strategy, Department of Education/HEA policy and other institutional and national initiatives.
- iv. Oversee the academic governance framework: constitute, reconstitute and discontinue committees.
- v. Maintain oversight of functions undertaken by subcommittees with a key role in approving an annual work programme for subcommittees and prescribing annual reporting requirements.
- vi. Make recommendations, following Courts of Examiners, relating to principles and regulations regarding the selection, admission, progression, retention and exclusion of students.
- vii. To propose and approve the academic policies that underpin the academic affairs of the Institute, including the conduct of examinations, the determination of examination results, the procedures for appeals by students relating to the results of such examinations and the evaluation of academic progress
- viii. To make recommendations for the criteria of awarding of fellowships, scholarships, bursaries, prizes or other awards.

Proposed Legislative Reform: Data Collection

As a Data Processor, MIE has developed policies and procedures surrounding the protection of privacy and the management of institutional and student related data. The proposed legislation sets out a clear performance and governance framework between the HEA and the HEIs including data collection. MIE does not have a data sharing agreement with the DFHERIS or the Department of Education. All information submitted to the HEA is anonymised.

Students and Staff as Stakeholders of MIE

Staff and students have significant representation on Academic Council and on Governing Body. They also are represented on other committees such as the COVID-19 Committee as well as the Strategic Planning Committee and the Quality Committee. MIE has been conducting significant levels of consultation with students, alumni and staff in the development of the 2021-2026 Strategic Plan.

The student voice is encouraged and supported at MIE and the Students' Union, funded by the Institute, is a vibrant organisation. There is a class representative structure, a strong tutor-tutee relationship, a student engagement officer, and a staff-student liaison committee which meets at least once each semester. Each lecturer conducts module review surveys and MIE participates in StudentSurvey.ie.

Proposed Legislative Reform: Research

The proposed legislation identifies the role of the HEA to promote, support and evaluate research across the disciplines. MIE would welcome the support and the recognition of the HEA for its research activities which align well with the priorities of the department.

MIE recognises the value of diversifying its externally-funded research activity to complement, support and enhance the research expertise of its staff. The Institute maintains an active project funding lifecycle approach for targeting and securing relevant funding at national, European and international levels. In 2019-2020, the Institute partnered in €10.1m worth of projects, grants and tenders. The Institute maintained its strong track record of engagement with Erasmus+ projects, and notably partnered in its first Knowledge Alliance project, Educational Knowledge Transfer, representing the Institute's first foray into centralised Erasmus+ actions. The Institute's first engagement with the Horizon 2020 programme was also confirmed with participation in two Marie Skłodowska-Curie Innovative Training Networks, SOLiDi and SellSTEM. The Institute also continues to perform strongly in securing national research-focused tenders.

Current research projects /initiatives include:

Self-study Research Investigating Possibilities and Pitfalls of Arts Integration (PAINT) Project

This SCoTENS funded project in collaboration with Stranmillis University College, Belfast, explores cross-curricular learning by examining and comparing the experiences, opportunities and challenges pertaining to integrated arts with preservice primary school teachers in ITE north and south from a quality arts and integrated learning perspective.

Interactive apps and narrative writing: children's and teachers' perspectives in primary schools in socially disadvantaged areas (InAn) Project

This SCoTENS-funded project, in collaboration with Stranmillis University College, Belfast, will use an Amazon Alexa app, 'The Magic Door' with primary aged children in schools in areas of social disadvantage, to enable them to co-create oral stories in a fairy tale genre. The app provides interactive support for storytelling and allows children choice in the direction of their stories and the activities of the characters.

Educational Knowledge Transfer

MIE is a partner in this Erasmus + €1m research project Educational Knowledge Transfer (<https://ektproject.eu/>). The project will develop innovative and multidisciplinary approaches to teaching and learning, as well as allow university-business collaboration in the development of an e-learning technology comprehensive strategy that will be tailored to the needs of the education sector. The project will also allow the development of a collaborative partnership between universities and companies that promotes the joint creation of services based on scientific knowledge and the transfer of educational knowledge to the e-learning company. This in turn will impact on a better service to educational institutions and education professionals.

Solidarity in Diversity (SOLiDi) H2020 project

MIE is a partner organisation in the €4m Solidarity in Diversity (SOLiDi) Innovative Training Network funded under the Horizon 2020 ITN Marie Skłodowska-Curie Action. Led by the University of Antwerp, in Belgium, MIE is a partner to the work of Maynooth University, through the work of the Migrant Teacher Project.

Spatial Thinking in STEM Learning (SellSTEM) H2020 project

MIE is a partner organisation in the SellSTEM Innovative Training Network funded under the Horizon 2020 ITN Marie Skłodowska-Curie Action. Led by Technology University Dublin this project has a €4m budget. MIE is a partner to TU Dublin, and will co-supervise and host a doctoral student who will pilot the teacher education module with preservice teachers.

Consulting with children on the Draft Primary Curriculum

The MIE Early Childhood team successfully tendered to provide the NCCA with services for consulting with children on the Draft Primary Curriculum. This project will design an appropriate approach for collecting data from children of different life stages, cultures and abilities.

DEEPEN

Now in its second year, the Teaching Council funded DEEPEN research project explores the lived experience of Droichead, the professional induction process for teachers in primary and post-primary schools in Ireland. The focus of the research is on four key settings: DEIS schools; Gaelscoileanna/ Scoileanna Gaeltachta; Small schools and SEN settings. The research is a joint MIE/Trinity project.

Evaluation of Better Start with a particular focus on the Better Start National Early Years Quality Development Service (QDS)

In July 2020, MIE was a partner in a successful tender for services from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs to undertake an evaluation of Better Start with a particular focus on the Better Start National Early Years Quality Development Service (QDS). The Centre for Effective Services is the lead partner on this project.

An Evaluation of Partnership Schools Ireland (PSI) initiative.

The research is commissioned by the National Parents Council Primary and the IPPN with funding from the Department of Education and Skills, the Irish Primary Principals Network and National Parents Council Primary. The research project is being undertaken jointly between Marino Institute of Education and Maynooth University.

Proposed Legislative Reform: Equity of Participation

MIE is committed to promoting access to higher education and to providing life-long education opportunities. MIE reserves 15% of places on undergraduate courses for HEAR (Higher Education Access Route), DARE (Disability Access Route to Education) and mature students. In 2019/2020, 16 students entered MIE programmes via HEAR and 16 students entered through DARE. However, reflective of the increasing numbers of students from lower socio-economic backgrounds in higher education, 25% of all students entering MIE were in receipt of SUSI grants. The Institute is committed to increasing access to its programme provision and, as part of the Leinster Pillar 1 Cluster, is fully engaged with the HEA's Programme for Access to Higher Education (PATH). MIE is a partner in the following PATH initiatives: the I Can Teach project, which is coordinated by Trinity College Dublin under the PATH 1 strand; the 1916 Bursary Programme under the PATH 2 strand, which is coordinated by UCD; and the Bridges to Education project, which is coordinated by UCD under the PATH 3 Strand.

Migrant Teacher Project

The Migrant Teacher Project seeks to increase the participation of migrant teachers in the Irish primary and post-primary education sectors. The project is funded by the Department of Justice and Equality through the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, and by the Department of Education. As part of the project, a Bridging Programme for Immigrant Internationally Educated Teachers (IIETs) has been developed. This part time programme supports teachers from immigrant backgrounds who hold international teaching qualifications, and who are now living in Ireland, to learn about Irish education, curriculum and structures, with a view to supporting them to gain employment in schools in Ireland. This year the third Bridging Programme is being offered.

Tobar

The Tobar project continues to be successful in its aim to increase participation of Irish Travellers in Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes. At the end of its second full year of activity, 2019-2020, the project had supported three students to join ITE programmes at primary and post-primary levels. In recognition of the work of the Institute in relation to promoting the inclusion of students from the Traveller community in ITE, [REDACTED] was invited to address the Oireachtas Committee in November 2019 and the Government's *Action Plan for Increasing Traveller Participation in Higher Education 2019-2021* made specific commendation of the Institute's Tobar project (p.9).

Appendix 1: Organisation & Governance

Trustees

Marino Institute of Education was established as a Charitable Trust by Deed dated October 1991. It is registered with the Charities Regulatory Authority (no.20054786) and is recognised by the Revenue Commissioners as having charitable status (CHY 15693). The Trustees of the Institute comprise of two nominees of the European Province Leadership Team of the Christian Brothers and two nominees of the Board of Trinity College Dublin, and for 2020-21, these are:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

MIE's Governing Body operates under an Instrument of Governance, which was most recently revised in June 2016. The Governing Body is charged with governing and controlling all the affairs of the Institute in accordance with the intention of the Trustees, expressed in the seven Guiding Principles:

1. Be ecumenical and respectful of all faith communities
2. Provide a strong element of teacher education
3. Be supportive of the mission of Catholic education by articulating its ethos and by proposing models to implement it
4. Provide education programmes to encourage and empower the poor and disadvantaged
5. Build a community of learning which is person-centred, respectful of individual differences and accessible to people who are disadvantaged
6. Assist parents to fulfil the responsibilities of their role as educators
7. Respect all truth seekers and defend their right to pursue new knowledge wherever it may lead.

Governing Body

The Instrument of Governance (2016) provides for the appointment of a Governing Body to discharge the authority of the Trustees within the Institute. The Governing Body's responsibilities include putting in place a system to oversee the education, training, research, and related activities of the Institute, and ensuring its quality. The primary function of the Governing Body is to set the strategic direction and govern and control the affairs of the Institute in accordance with the intentions of the Trustees, as expressed in the Guiding Principles. The Governing Body meets six times per academic year.

Governing Body Membership 2020-2021

[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

[Redacted text block]

Leadership Team

The Leadership Team advises the President in relation to the day-to-day activities of MIE. In that capacity the Leadership Team oversees quality assurance, and implements policies and strategies adopted by the Governing Body. The Leadership Team deals with all operational matters affecting the Institute. The Leadership Team makes recommendations on delivery of strategy and commissioning plans and takes day-to-day decisions on performance management and risk management to provide robust assurance to the Governing Body. The Leadership Team met 25 times during 2019-2020.

The Leadership Team comprises:

[Redacted list of Leadership Team members]

Appendix 2: The Structure of MIE Funding

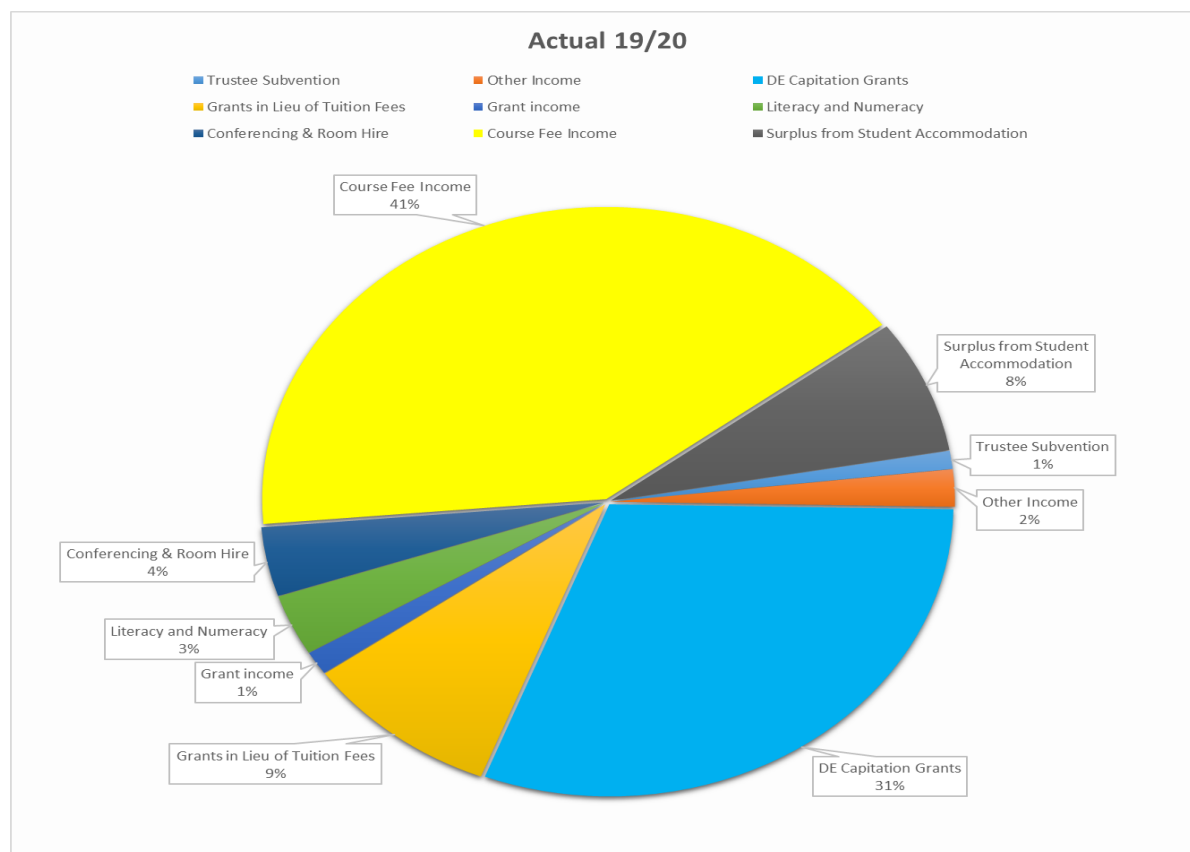
Marino Institute of Education (MIE) is a private charitable trust under the co-trusteeship of the Congregation of Christian Brothers in Ireland and the University of Dublin, Trinity College. MIE, with its long history, its status as a charity, and its commitment to contributing to the public good is not a commercial, for-profit organisation. MIE is partly funded by the Teacher Education Section of the Department of Education (DE) but is also reliant on its capacity to generate other income streams in order to provide broader offerings from initial teacher education courses, courses in education studies, further education, and early childhood education alongside a range of master's programmes.

MIE currently receives funding from the Department of Education by way of capitation grants and grants in lieu of tuition fees. Capitation grants are received for the Bachelor of Education (Primary), Baitsiléir san Oideachas Trí Mheán na Gaeilge (Bunmhúinteoireacht), and the Professional Master of Education programme. Grant in lieu of Tuition fees are only received for the Bachelor of Education (Primary), Baitsiléir san Oideachas Trí Mheán na Gaeilge (Bunmhúinteoireacht).

The B.Sc. in Education Studies and the B.Sc. in Early Childhood Education are not covered by the Grant in lieu of Tuition fees. These courses do meet the funding criteria, but have not been approved by the Department of Education.

MIE also receives Literacy and Numeracy funding from the Department of Education under the *National Strategy: Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life 2011-2020* (published 2011, and interim review March 2017).

Other income streams at MIE comprises of income from student fees, grant income, trustee subvention conferencing & room hire and from its student accommodation.



Note: Above chart is based on MIE's Audited financial statements, the surplus from the student accommodation excludes depreciation.