



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Guidance-counselling courses approved by the Department of Education

February 2024

The Department of Education (DE) currently has a remit for post-primary guidance.

The [Programme Recognition Framework \(2016\)](#) sets out criteria and guidelines for providers of initial education programmes in guidance counselling who intend that their programme graduates will work in guidance services under the remit of the Department of Education.

Background to the PRF

In March 2016, following a consultative process with stakeholders, the Department published the [Programme Recognition Framework \(2016\)](#) (PRF). The criteria presented in the PRF has drawn on and been informed by guidance expertise and knowledge base from within Ireland and beyond. Submissions received have informed the further development and refinement of the PRF.

The PRF sets out criteria and guidelines of initial education programmes in guidance counselling. It is intended that programme graduates will work in guidance services under the remit of the DE.

Procedure for recognition

The PRF took effect from 2018 and programme providers in Ireland need to ensure their programmes meet the criteria and requirements as presented. All new guidance-counselling training programmes must meet the PRF requirements to be deemed acceptable.

Programme providers submit an application for recognition with a detailed outline of their course to DE Guidance Unit guidance@education.gov.ie, indicating the appropriate course components, NFQ level of award, and total ECTS credits. Approved courses must be at NFQ level 8/9, offering at least 60 ECTS in guidance counselling.

Course providers must ensure that programmes address eight areas of competence in order to meet the PRF criteria and be deemed acceptable to DE.

Eight areas of competence:

1. Guidance theory and professional practice;
2. Counselling skills in a guidance context;
3. Labour market, learning and career-related information;
4. Teaching and learning: design, delivery and evaluation of programmes/learning experiences;
5. Psychometric testing;
6. Communicating, collaborating and networking;
7. Research and evidence-informed practice and;
8. Leading and managing the guidance service.

European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)

Courses must meet the following to be deemed acceptable. At least 60 ECTS (minimum) is required overall with the following requirements for each of the areas of competence and placement as specified below:

Guidance theory and professional practice and counselling skills in a guidance context	15-20 ECTS
Two areas of competence Teaching and learning – designing, delivering and evaluating programmes	5 ECTS
Communicating, collaborating and networking:	5 ECTS
Leading and managing the guidance service	5 ECTS
Psychometric Testing	A minimum of 30 hours teaching in psychometrics is required
Placement	10 ECTS
Remaining areas of competence (labour market, learning and career-related information, and research and evidence-informed practice)	ECTS should be assigned to each

Programme providers may include assigning additional credits to the areas identified above, if deemed appropriate. It is envisaged that this approach will provide flexibility to providers on how the additional ECTS are assigned.

Programme providers will need to ensure that their programmes meet the minimum requirements stated above.

List of guidance-counselling courses in Ireland (Both historical and currently provided)

The following list outlines courses which were previously or are currently provided by the HEIs. Many programmes have ceased or have been replaced with new iterations of a previous course.

Since the PRF came into operation (2018) all newer courses must meet the PRF requirements for recognition and approval but older guidance counselling courses at NFQ level 8/9 are still considered acceptable for assignment as a guidance counsellor.

Additional sector specific requirements, such as that of registered Teaching Council teacher for the sector ([Teaching Council Route 2 post-primary or Route 3 further education](#)) may

apply to work in some settings including post-primary schools. See post-primary [Staffing Arrangements Circulars](#) for more details regarding guidance in post-primary schools.

Current guidance-counselling courses provided by three HEIs (DCU, MU, and UL) are approved until **2024**.

University	Course Title	Years Active	
		From	To
DCU	MSc in Guidance Counselling	2011	2024
	MSc/Graduate Diploma in Guidance Counselling	2007	2024

University	Course Title	Years Active	
		From	To
University of Limerick	MA in Guidance Counselling*	2013	2014
	MA Guidance Counselling and Lifespan Development	2013	2024
	Graduate Diploma in Guidance Counselling and Lifespan Development	2013	2024
	Graduate Diploma in Guidance Counselling	1997	2013

* MA in Guidance Counselling (as 'top-up') was awarded by UL in 2013/14.

University	Course Title	Years Active	
		From	To
NUI Maynooth (Adult Guidance)	Postgraduate Diploma in Arts (Adult Guidance and Counselling)	2013	2024
	Diploma in Arts (Adult Guidance and Counselling)	1996	2024
	Higher Diploma in Arts (Adult Guidance and Counselling)	1996	2013

University	Course Title	Years Active	
		From	To
University College Dublin	Higher Diploma in Career Guidance	1970s	2001

University	Course Title	Years Active	
		From	To
NUI Maynooth (School of Guidance)	Postgraduate Diploma in School Guidance Counselling	2018	2024
	Postgraduate Diploma in Arts (School Guidance and Counselling)	2004	
	MEd (School Guidance and Counselling) Degree (CPD)	2005	
	Higher Diploma in Arts (School Guidance and Counselling)	1996	
	Postgraduate Diploma in Educational Guidance Counselling	2022	
	M.ED. School Guidance Counselling	2022	

University	Course Title	Years Active	
		From	To
University College Cork	MA in Applied Psychology (Guidance Counselling)	2012	2019
	MA in Guidance Counselling	2010	2011
	Postgraduate Diploma in Guidance & Counselling	2005	2009
	Higher Diploma in Guidance & Counselling	1994	2005
	Diploma in Guidance & Counselling	1991	1994
	Diploma in Career Guidance	1981	1991

University	Course Title	Years Active	
		From	To
Trinity College Dublin	Master in Education (Educational Guidance and Counselling) - Part-Time	2006	2013
	Master in Science in Educational Guidance and Counselling (Mode A and Mode B) - Part-Time	2001	2006
	Master in Education (M.Ed.) with specialism in Educational Guidance and Counselling – Full time	1978	2001
	Master in Education (M.Ed. with specialisation in Guidance Counselling) – Full time	2001	2007