

Subject:

DE Circular Number 2026/14

Issued: 22 June 2026

INTERNAL TRACKING AND MONITORING

Audience:

- Principals, Vice-Principals and Teachers in Grant-aided Schools;
- 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 (Grammar Schools);
- Controlled Schools Support Council (CSSC);
- Teachers' Unions;
- General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland;
- EOTAS Centres.

Summary of Contents:

This circular, issued by the Department of Education, recommends that for the 2026/27 academic year onwards, schools are expected to ensure that no more than three formal, school wide internal tracking points take place within a year group per school year.

Enquiries:

Any enquiries about the content of this Circular should be addressed to:
Teacher Workforce Team
Department of Education
Rathgael House
Balloo Road
BANGOR BT19 7PR

Governors' Awareness:
Essential

Status of Contents:
For information and action by schools

Related Documents:
None

Superseded Documents:
None

Expiry Date:
N/A

DE Website:
<http://www.education-ni.gov.uk>

Email:
teacherworkforceteam@education-ni.gov.uk

Introduction

1. The Department is committed to reducing unnecessary workload, strengthening professional trust, and improving wellbeing across the teaching profession.
2. **The Department is recommending for the 2026/27 academic year onwards, schools are expected to adhere to statutory assessment obligations and review and revise their current non statutory assessment practices, to ensure that no more than three formal, school wide internal tracking points take place within a year group per school year.**

Independent Review of Teacher Workload

3. Implementation of this recommendation will satisfy Recommendation 16 of the [Independent Review of Teacher Workload Report](#).

Recommendation 16 - Internal tracking and monitoring

The evidence presented by the Independent Review of Teacher Workload Panel highlights that tracking and monitoring activities have become a significant and often excessive driver of teacher workload within schools. An excessive focus on tracking and monitoring has evolved largely through custom and practice at school level rather than from a clear pedagogical requirement. The Panel found that many schools have developed high-frequency internal tracking systems that generate an administrative burden without strong evidence to justify their scale.

In response, the Independent Panel made a clear and targeted recommendation to rebalance this aspect of workload. It recommended that schools limit the number of formal tracking points to no more than three across the school year. This proposal is intended to establish a clearer and more proportionate framework for monitoring pupil progress and ensuring that assessment activity is focused, purposeful, and manageable.

4. A more streamlined approach will allow teachers to focus on the quality of assessment rather than the quantity, using professional judgement to inform teaching and support pupil development.

John Mason
Teaching Workforce Team