



Department of  
**Education**  
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# Transform**ED**

Irish Medium Education Practitioner Working Groups

**Expressions of Interest**

REVIEW OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND CURRICULUM



## Overview

As part of the TransformED reform programme, the Strategic Review of the Northern Ireland Curriculum led by Lucy Crehan (May 2025) recommended a new curriculum framework for Northern Ireland, which is purpose-led, knowledge-rich, continuous and coherent, specific and focused, flexible and inclusive. Work to design the new curriculum framework is nearing completion and a consultation on the new draft framework will commence shortly.

The Strategic Review found that the current Northern Ireland curriculum does not adequately meet the needs of those educated through the medium of Irish. Irish medium education (IME) schools must simultaneously interpret broad curriculum expectations and adapt them to the distinct linguistic and developmental pathways associated with immersion education. This creates an increased burden on practitioners and risks variability in pupil entitlement.

There is therefore a clear system-level need to provide greater structure and clarity through bespoke curriculum work for IME within the reformed framework.

## IM Practitioner Working Groups

### THE ROLE OF THE WORKING GROUPS

The new Northern Ireland Curriculum 2028 establishes a knowledge rich, coherent and specified entitlement, with curriculum content appropriately sequenced to support cumulative learning over time.

In this context, bespoke Irish-medium strands provide a necessary extension to ensure that progression is articulated in ways that reflect immersion contexts.

The establishment of IM Practitioner Working Groups is central to developing bespoke curriculum strands for IM schools, that provide a necessary extension to ensure that progression is articulated in ways that reflect immersion contexts. These strands will not create a separate curriculum but will incorporate essential considerations for IME within the overall framework.

Crucially, Irish-medium strands will preserve the full ambition, content and intellectual demand of the statutory curriculum but adapted to reflect the need to sequence and present knowledge in ways that are compatible with immersion pedagogy and language acquisition.

Subject specific working groups will be responsible for developing and drafting the relevant content, linked to specific curricular strands.

At this stage, there will be five working groups;

1. Irish (as a subject)
2. English and Biliteracy
3. Mathematics
4. History, Geography and Science (Keystage 1-3)
5. Language acquisition through History, Geography and Science (Foundation Stage)

The groups will operate under the direction of the Irish Medium Lead Advisor for Curriculum Reform, who will provide guidance on the approach to developing the work.

Drafting will be an iterative process, with working groups preparing papers for review by the Irish Medium Lead Advisor and Departmental Officials until a final draft(s) is agreed by the Minister of Education.

## Working Group Membership

It is the aim of the Department that the IM Working Groups will be comprised of teachers (current or retired) and those with significant experience in IME. It is hoped that working groups will include individuals with expertise within each Key Stage for Irish and English, and subject co-ordinators for the other subjects.

Additional members may be co-opted onto working groups should there be an obvious gap in experience, including the use of academics, subject specialists or other stakeholders.

Teachers and practitioners who apply to serve on these Working Groups will be instrumental in shaping the future of IME in Northern Ireland by providing practical insights, contributing to curriculum design, and ensuring it reflects real-world teaching and learning, as well as immersion pedagogy.

## How to get involved

If you are interested in contributing to the development of the IM curriculum framework, please complete the [Expression of Interest form](#).

Completion of the form will require both tick box and free text responses. Where you are asked to complete free text boxes, we would encourage you to carefully address each of the essential criteria listed and provide clear and relevant examples which demonstrate how your knowledge, skills and experience align with the specific criteria.

For example, when discussing your experience in curriculum design describe the specific curriculum frameworks or subject areas you have worked with and how you have contributed to their development.

All completed applications must be returned by **Friday 3 July 2026**.

### ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

Applicants must meet the following essential criteria to be considered for participation in a subject-specific working group:

#### Qualifications

- Have a teaching qualification or have a postgraduate qualification in a relevant area.

#### Subject Expertise

- Be able to demonstrate expertise in IME.
- Have up-to-date knowledge of curriculum content, trends and emerging issues in IME and within the specific subject and/or Key Stage.

#### Curriculum Design and Pedagogical Understanding

- Be able to demonstrate a clear understanding of curriculum design principles, including progression, coherence, rigour and importance of knowledge.
- Familiarity with effective teaching approaches related to IME and/or their subject area

#### Communication Skills

- Strong written and verbal communication skills in both Irish and English.
- Ability to clearly articulate ideas, provide feedback, and contribute to the writing and refinement of curriculum documents.
- Strong interpersonal skills and the ability to work effectively in collaborative, cross-functional teams.
- Willingness to listen to diverse perspectives and contribute constructively to group discussions.

Applicants must be able to commit to the agreed time requirements, including attendance at scheduled meetings (virtual and/or in-person), review of draft materials, and participation in collaborative tasks.

They must also have the agreement of school leadership to enable release time (with substitute cover provided by the Department if needed).

## **SELECTION**

Applications will be assessed by senior officials in the Department of Education.

## **TIME COMMITMENT**

The time commitment will vary depending on the specific working group.

Drafting groups for Irish, and for English and Bilingual, are expected to operate for up to 20 working days between September and December.

Subject working groups for Mathematics, History, Geography and Science will operate for up to 10 working days between September and December.

This will comprise a combination of:

- Working group meetings
- Individual drafting and review
- Remote engagement

There may also be an opportunity to participate in a study visit (within the UK or the Republic of Ireland) to gain first-hand insight into language immersion practices in other areas.

Engagement will include a blend of in-person and remote working.

Detailed schedules will be confirmed following establishment of the Working Group, with activity commencing in mid-late September.

Work will be undertaken on an iterative basis, to support the development, refinement and agreement of draft materials.

## **PAYMENTS AND RELEASE**

For any time out of the classroom, full substitute cover will be paid. Work completed outside contracted hours will be compensated directly to the individual at an equivalent rate to the substitute cover. Travel and subsistence will be available for face-to face meetings.

Applicants currently employed in the public sector should note that individuals cannot receive dual remuneration from public funds for the same period of time. Accordingly, where duties associated with this role are undertaken during hours for which the individual is already in receipt of public sector pay, no additional remuneration will be provided.

However, recognising the challenges associated with securing substitute cover in IM schools, the Department may adopt a mixed-method approach to completing this work.

Therefore, Engagement may take one of the following forms (up to 20 days over a four-month period):

1. Up to 20 days completed outside school hours, with remuneration paid directly to the individual.
2. Up to 20 days completed during school hours or working hours.
3. Up to 20 consecutive days working within the Department on a short-term secondment.
4. A mixed model of options 1 and 2 i.e. 10 days during school time and 10 days outside school hours.

Please indicate on the application form your preferred method of engagement with the Subject Working Groups, in order of preference.

In the interests of minimising the potential for double paying to occur, the Department reserves the right to contact your employer regarding your candidature.

It is essential that applicants have discussed and agreed their release with their school Principal before applying.

### PRIVACY NOTICE

Your privacy is important to the Department, and we will process your personal data in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 – General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

A copy of the Department's Privacy Notice is available on our website [www.education-ni.gov.uk](http://www.education-ni.gov.uk).

## Further information

Any general queries about the application/appointment process should be addressed in the first instance to Orla Flanagan in the Curriculum Reform Team.

Email: [CurriculumReform@education-ni.gov.uk](mailto:CurriculumReform@education-ni.gov.uk)

