



Circular 0027/2023

**To: The Managerial Authorities of Recognised Secondary, Community and
Comprehensive Schools and
The Chief Executives of Education and Training Boards**

**NQF Level 9 Graduate Diploma in Social Personal and Health
Education/Relationships and Sexuality Education (SPHE/RSE)
Programme 2024**

Introduction

The Department of Education is enabling the provision of a postgraduate upskilling programme of study for teachers who aspire to further develop their skills in relation to the delivery of SPHE/RSE in post-primary schools. The programme aims to build capacity and leadership within the teaching profession in relation to SPHE/RSE. This programme of continuing professional development will be offered to teachers in January 2024.

Programme 2024

The programme will be offered by Dublin City University (DCU).

The 2024 intake will be as follows:

January 2024: A minimum of 70 places

Depending on demand for the programme, further intakes may be offered in the future.

Successful completion of the programme will lead to a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Level 9 award of Graduate Diploma in SPHE/RSE.



Funding

Funding for the programme is provided by the Teacher Education Section of the Department of Education.

Aim and Content

The programme aims to upskill teachers' pedagogical practice and leadership skills in relation to the delivery of SPHE/RSE in post-primary schools. The programme will provide substantial theoretical and practical continuing professional development for each participant. The provision of high quality pedagogical content knowledge in the programme will empower teachers to become an effective teacher in this subject area.

Post-primary teachers who are currently teaching SPHE/RSE and have a permanent teaching position or a contract of indefinite duration (CID) are the target group for participation in the programme. Ideally, teachers should have taught SPHE in junior cycle and RSE in senior cycle for one full academic year at a minimum. It is desirable that participants would have a role in the coordination of SPHE/RSE within their school or would be hoping to avail of the opportunity to assume such a role.

In order to participate in this postgraduate professional development programme, teachers must have completed introductory training in SPHE and/or RSE, such as that provided by the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) and/or Junior Cycle for Teachers (JCT). Current Garda vetting is also a requirement. In nominating a teacher to participate, the school principal must give a commitment that the teacher will be timetabled to teach SPHE/RSE for the duration of, and following, the programme and in the future.

Qualifications will be awarded by DCU to participants who successfully complete the programme. Participants will be assessed on the basis of, inter alia, the required attendance of the programme, successful completion of selected tasks and written assignments, submission of evidence of practices engaged with via ePortfolio, engagement in professional learning communities (PLCs) and in professional consultations with programme mentors/tutors. Further details of assessment will be made available to participants by DCU.



Duration and Organisation

The programme is one academic year in duration. A blended learning approach to programme provision is employed, combining in-person and synchronous/asynchronous online delivery. Applicants should note that, with the support of the Department of Education, there is a total of four weeks (20 days) release from schools for attendance at the relevant programme venue(s).

DCU is the main venue for programme delivery. A small number of workshops will be delivered at an alternate location in the Midlands (venue to be confirmed). These varied modes of delivery are intended to accommodate the needs of working teachers to facilitate their participation in the programme.

Covid-19

Applicants should be aware DCU may need to continue to operate under Covid-19 restrictions for the 2023/2024 academic year which may necessitate amendments to the delivery of certain elements of the programme in order to abide with the prevailing Government health advice at the time.

Provider

DCU Institute of Education, DCU St Patrick's Campus, Drumcondra, Dublin 9, DO9DYOO (www.dcu.ie).

This programme is provided by the School of Human Development, in DCU's Institute of Education and leads to the award of the NQF Level 9 Graduate Diploma in Social, Personal and Health Education/ Relationships and Sexuality Education (*GradDip SPHE/RSE*).

The programme will involve a blended model of delivery incorporating inter alia;

- attendance, in-person, at lectures and workshops facilitated through a series of block release days from school with a maximum of four weeks duration (20 days) across the one-year programme,
- attendance at spring/Easter/summer/autumn schools as required,
- on-line learning, attendance at approximately one two-hour online lecture/workshop/seminar per week across DCU's academic year,



- creation and development of an ePortfolio of evidence of professional practice with which the student has engaged throughout the programme;
- engagement in professional learning communities (PLCs),
- engagement in professional consultations with programme mentors/tutors.

In order to participate in the programme, teachers will need access to a computer and reliable broadband internet access.

Further programme information is available at:

<https://www.dcu.ie/gdip-sphe-rse>

Applicants should apply using the online application form accessible via the above link. Please follow the instructions, ensuring that all required information is available before commencing this process.

Postal applications sent to DCU will not be accepted.

Queries can be directed to: gdip-sphe-rse@dcu.ie

Eligibility

Please note that all teachers must be registered in accordance with Section 31 of the Teaching Council Acts, 2001-2015. Please refer to the Teaching Council website www.teachingcouncil.ie for further information.

This programme is open to all serving fully registered teachers who are employed in a position funded by the Department of Education and who teach, and will continue to teach, Social, Personal and Health Education/Relationships and Sexuality Education in recognised post-primary schools.

On their weekly timetables, teachers must currently, and for the duration of the programme, be timetabled to teach SPHE/RSE.



Teachers will be required to forward a copy of their Registration Certificate¹ (see footnote 1 below) from the Teaching Council, when submitting their application form. If the “Route” field is blank, teachers will be required to provide evidence that they have qualifications suitable to teach in the mainstream post-primary sector.

Applicants must also provide evidence of having completed introductory training in SPHE and/or RSE, such as that provided by the PDST and/or JCT and will be asked to confirm that they have up-to-date Garda vetting in respect of their current role.

The person nominated must be a teacher eligible to hold a permanent post in recognised second level schools.

Applications and Selection

Applications will open at the end of August 2023 and must be submitted via the online application form by 5pm, 20th September 2023.

The selection of participants from the eligible applicants will be a matter for the DCU authorities.

Programme Fees

No fee or registration charges will apply for applicants eligible under the terms of this Circular.

Extra Personal Vacation

No extra personal vacation will be allowed in respect of attendance at the programme.

Substitution

Substitution, which must be approved by the managerial authority of the school, will be allowed for four weeks (20 days) duration of release in total. The dates of the respective days will be provided by DCU. The substitution must be deemed necessary to cover the approved periods of absence of the teacher from teaching duty for attendance at the course. Documentation from DCU specifying the absence details must be retained by the school. It should be

¹ Certificates of Registration are available to download by logging into the My Registration portal on the Teaching Council website www.teachingcouncil.ie



noted that paid substitution cover will not be provided by the Department of Education where a teacher takes personal leave during the block release element of the programme.

Salary Arrangements

All teachers on block release under the terms of this programme will continue to receive their salary in the usual way.

Please note that successful completion of this programme will not result in any entitlement to additional remuneration from the Department of Education.

Travel and Subsistence

Please note that there will be no reimbursement of any travel or subsistence expenses incurred by participants in the programme which is the subject of this Circular.

Jill Fannin
Principal Officer
Teacher Education Section
25 May 2023



APPENDIX 1

The following Circulars are available for download on the website of the Department of Education. www.gov.ie/education :

<u>0031/2011</u>	Teacher Recruitment Registration and Qualifications – Post Primary
<u>0025/2013</u>	Requirement for Teachers in Recognised Schools to Register with the Teaching Council
<u>0052/2013</u>	Procedures on the Commencement of Section 30 in Recognised School

