

## ASTI survey of newly qualified teachers

A survey of 660 second-level teaching students graduating this year was undertaken by the ASTI as part of its ongoing campaign to raise awareness about issues relevant to the supply of new teachers to second-level schools and the difficulties faced by graduate teachers.

### Employment trends

In 2010 ASTI published a significant policy document *Entry Routes into Second Level Education: The Problem of the Hours Culture*, which demonstrated the negative trends arising from the fact that 27% of teachers in second-level schools do not have permanent teaching positions.

Higher Education Authority (HEA) reports for the last decade and more demonstrate that only approximately 10% of graduates from the Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) obtain full-time permanent employment in second-level schools in the year following graduation. The majority are employed on a contracted hours basis for a number of years. This situation is now becoming the norm, leading to a culture of 'by the hour' teaching positions as the main entry route into second-level teaching.

The 2008 OECD Teaching and Learning in Schools Study (TALIS) found that 73% of Irish second-level teachers are in permanent employment – one of the lowest figures in the OECD. A particular feature of the Irish second-level education sector is that a large number of temporary positions are not full-time positions.

Over a quarter of Irish teachers are employed on temporary contracts. The percentage of fixed-term teachers in Irish schools is 27% - significantly higher than the TALIS average of 16%. Contractual status is closely related to teachers' age with just over a quarter of teachers aged below 30 having permanent posts.

### Future concerns

**The ASTI survey shows that only half of second-level teachers graduating this year expect to have a secure teaching job in five years time.**

The ASTI has consistently argued that teachers' uncertain prospects and the current model of entry to teaching is damaging our education system. It is impacting not only on young teachers' morale and the motivation to remain teaching in Ireland but is also having a negative impact on the quality of education in our schools. The results from the survey confirm the ASTI's concerns and underline the need for immediate policy responses to avoid long-term problems in the supply of high quality graduates to teaching.

### Induction programme

Policy responses must include the roll-out of a national induction programme in 2012 – as indicated in the Draft National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy. This would guarantee that all newly qualified teachers are provided a one-year full-time post in a school, with a reduced teaching workload to enable them to engage in essential activities such as being mentored by experienced teachers, team teaching, curriculum planning, as well as taking further learning modules provided by training colleges/universities. Each school should be entitled to an ex-quota 'induction post' based on a schedule aligned to the current pupil-teacher ratio in the school. This model would serve to embed high-quality induction and probation procedures into the teaching profession. Every school would, therefore, have a responsibility to provide induction, which is not the case at present.

## Key findings

### Teachers want to teach - in Ireland

The student teachers surveyed chose their careers with purpose. Over three-quarters of respondents had previous experience of teaching in a school and the most cited reasons for the respondents' decisions to teach were to teach a subject they love, to work with young people, to make a difference and to make a worthwhile contribution to students' lives.

The great majority of those surveyed (88%) intend to seek a teaching job in Ireland after graduation.

### Teachers are pessimistic about their future prospects

While the great majority (88%) of teachers surveyed intend to seek a teaching job in Ireland after graduation, only 15% of these believe they will be able to get a teaching post in their local area, only 6% believe they will be able to obtain a full-time post and only 21% believe they will be able to secure a teaching post that will deliver a decent salary.

Most teachers believe that they will remain in teaching for five years at least. However, one-quarter of respondents believe that in 5 years time they still will not have a permanent post and a further 11% say that they will consider a career change if they do not have a permanent post at this stage.

Of the teachers who do not intend to seek a teaching job in Ireland (12%), the most cited alternative options under consideration were to seek work in another field (79%) and to emigrate (75%).

The most often cited reasons for not seeking teaching work in Ireland were because of a lack of teaching jobs (46%) and a reluctance to spend years in temporary or casual teaching posts (30%).

### Changes to employment conditions will impact on the teaching profession

Most graduate teachers are aware of the planned changes to new teachers' pay and pensions. Over 90% of teachers are angry that they will be paid less to do the same job as colleagues.

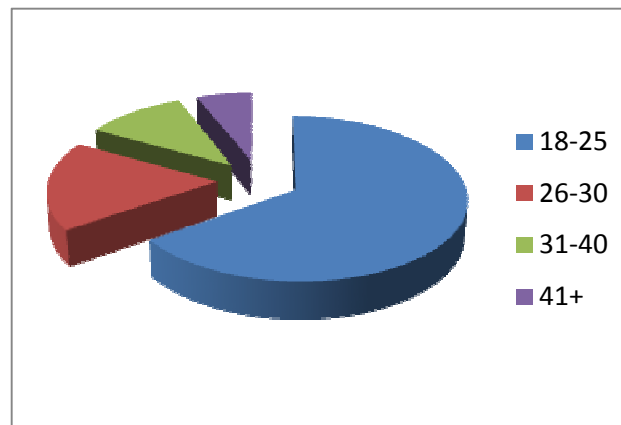
82% believe that diminished conditions will discourage graduates from choosing teaching as a career, while 81% believe this will undermine the status of teachers in society.

## Profile of respondents

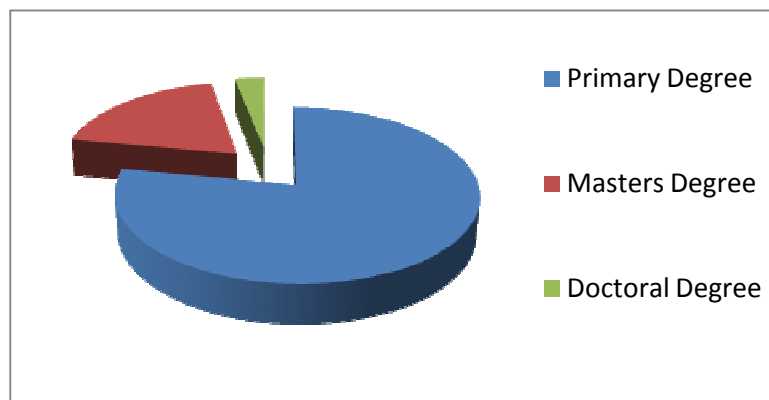
A total of 661 students from all current graduate/undergraduate second-level teacher education programmes took part in the ASTI survey. This represents approximately 40% of the student cohort\*. The survey sample includes students in the four NUI colleges, TCD, DCU, UL as well as NCAD, St Angela's College, Sligo and Mater Dei Institute. The survey is, therefore, a highly representative sample of the cohort of young teachers who will graduate in 2011.

The majority of respondents (65%) were under the age of 25. One in five teachers (22%) had achieved postgraduate qualifications before undertaking the PGDE course. 19% had Masters degrees and 3% had Doctoral degrees.

### Age profile of respondents



### Respondents' qualifications



*\*in 2010, 1618 graduates from second-level teacher education programmes transferred to the Teaching Council. The transfer figure for 2011 is not yet available but is considered to be broadly similar.*

## Reasons for choosing a teaching career

Most student teachers surveyed had teaching experience before they undertook the PGDE course - a trend strongly identified in the literature as being associated with a view of teaching as a vocation among young teachers. It must also be noted that bonus points are currently awarded for teaching experience for entry to many teacher education programmes.

Over three-quarters of respondents - 76% - had prior experience of teaching in schools, 40% had workplace training and 27% had private tuition experience. Experience working in adult education and youth groups was also evident.

### Respondents' previous teaching experience

In school	76%
Training	40%
Youth group	17%
Private tuition	27%
Adult education	16%
Art/culture classes	5%

The national and international literature underlines the significance of teachers' reasons for choosing teaching as a career for overall quality in the profession.

Factors strongly associated with a quality teaching profession, according to the 2005 OECD report *Teachers Matter*, are attachment to strong social values on the relevance of teaching in society, a desire to work with young people, and a strong commitment to a knowledge base.

The ASTI survey found the most cited reasons for choosing teaching as a career are: "*Teaching a subject I love*" (68%); "*Working with young people*" (57%); and, "*Making a difference to young people's lives*" (42%) .

More instrumentalist reasons for choosing teaching as a career, such as employment conditions and levels of pay, were not viewed as being as important as the vocational aspects of teaching.

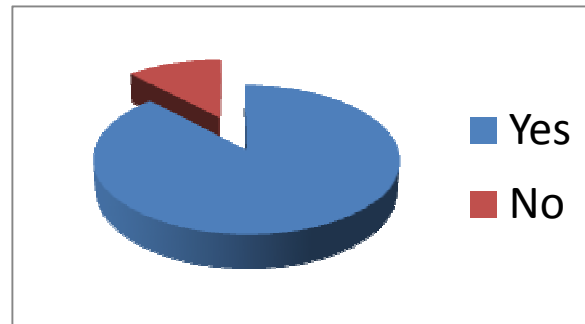
### Reasons for choosing teaching as a career

Teaching a subject I love	68%
Working with young people	57%
Making a difference to young people's lives	42%
Making a worthwhile contribution to society	27%
Work-life balance/holidays	27%
Secure employment	25%
Salary	4%
Pension	2%

## Career plans after graduation

A lack of employment opportunities is having a demonstrable impact on young teachers' morale and career plans. While the majority (88%) of students plan to seek a teaching job in Ireland, 12% have stated that they do not intend to seek a job in Ireland.

### Planning to seek a teaching job in Ireland after graduation



Among those who do not plan to seek teaching work in Ireland, a number of options were under consideration such as returning to education (40%); seeking work in another field (79%); and, emigration (75%).

### Options considered by those who do not plan to seek teaching work in Ireland

Return to education	40%
Seek work in another field	79%
Emigrate	75%

Asked why they did not plan to seek work in Ireland, the major factors for these trainee teachers were the shortage of teaching posts (46%); reluctance to spend years in part-time teaching posts (30%), no confidence that they could get a job in their local area (19%), and changes to teachers' starting salaries (5%).

### Why do you not plan to seek work in Ireland?

No teaching posts in current economic climate	46%
Not confident that can get a teaching post in my area	19%
Changes to starting teachers' salaries and pensions	5%
Don't want to spend years in temporary or casual teaching posts	30%

Even among those respondents who plan to seek work in Ireland, there were very low levels of confidence that they could gain full-time teaching posts or posts that would deliver a decent wage. Only 15% of respondents were confident that they could obtain a teaching post in their local area. Only 6% were confident that they could get a full-time teaching post. Just over one-fifth (21%) were confident that they could secure a teaching post that would deliver a decent salary.

**If you plan to seek work in Ireland, are you confident that you:**

Will be able to get teaching post in local area	15%
Will be able to get a full-time teaching post	6%
Will be able to secure a teaching post which will deliver a decent salary	21%

**Future as a teacher**

An inevitable result of poor employment opportunities in teaching is the loss of teachers to the profession. The indications from the current cohort are disturbing in this respect. Asked “*Where do you see your future in five years time?*” just over half (53%) envisage that they will be teaching in a permanent post in five years’ time. Less than a quarter (24%) envisage that they will be in teaching but not in a permanent post, while 14% stated they would hope to still be in teaching but would start thinking of a career change if they did not have a permanent post. 17% of respondents were not sure of where their career would be in five years’ time.

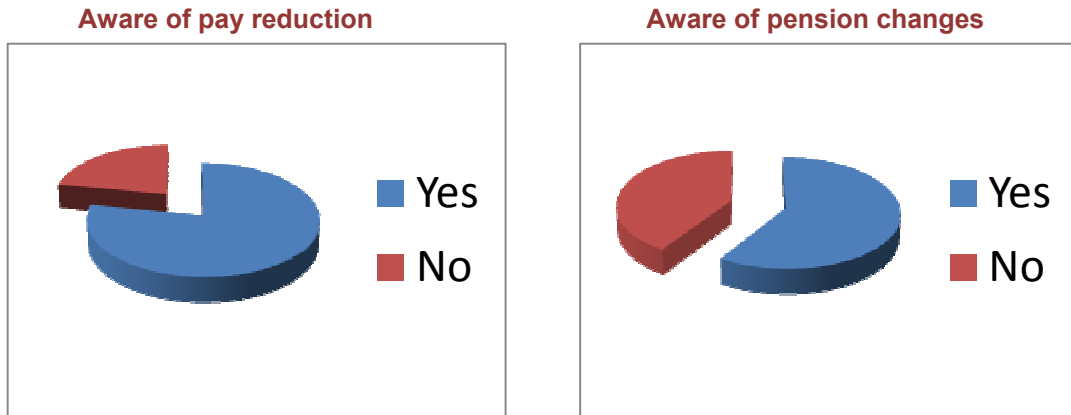
**How do you see your future in five years time?**

Still in teaching in a permanent post	53%
Still in teaching, not in a permanent post	24%
Still in teaching but will start thinking of career change if don't have permanent post	14%
Not sure	17%

## Changes to employment conditions of new entrants to teaching

Budget 2011 announced changes to entry level salaries for new entrants to the public service, including a 10% pay cut and a reversion to the first point on the salary scale. Together, these measures represent a reduction in salary for new teachers of almost 14%.

The great majority of young teachers (78%) were aware of these changes. Over half (55%) were aware of the proposed changes to public sector pension schemes.



### Impact of changes to employment conditions

There is an established body of national and international research which underlines that Irish teachers are motivated by the professional dimensions of teaching. At the same time, pay is an important dimension of any job and the status and attractiveness of the profession is inextricably linked to levels of remuneration in the profession.

Young teachers are keenly aware of the effects of changes to entry level salaries. The majority (82%) considered that changes to employment conditions for new entrants to the public service would deter graduates from choosing teaching as a career. Similarly, 81% considered that these changes would undermine the status of teachers in society. 86% considered these changes unfair to public sector workers. 92% of trainee teachers stated they are “angry” because they will be paid less for doing the same job as colleagues.

### How do you feel about the changes to employment conditions of new teachers?

Decisions will discourage graduates from choosing teaching as a career	82%
Decisions will undermine the status of teachers in society	81%
Decisions are unfair to public sector workers	86%
I am angry that I will be paid less for doing the same job	92%

## Why is the ASTI worried about the current entry model to schools?

### It is damaging for the quality of the teaching profession

Society requires the highest standards of teacher professionalism. Learning to teach is a complex process and the early professional experiences of new teachers have an enduring influence on their capacity to master the range of teaching skills. Moreover, teachers in non-permanent posts are not getting the wider range of professional experiences in relation to curriculum planning, school development planning, pastoral care and student support, which a full-time member of staff is exposed to and required to contribute to.

We can no longer be complacent that Ireland will not experience the problems of attrition and teacher shortages that have materialised elsewhere. The current model of entry to teaching, based on the “hours” culture, is damaging the attractiveness of teaching as a profession and is undermining other policy initiatives aimed at maintaining teacher quality.

### It is damaging for the quality of education

Young teachers are the ‘life-force’ of schools. They bring energy, enthusiasm and new ideas to both the classroom and the staffroom. Our schools need these qualities but young teacher recruitment is restricted by the pupil-teacher ratio. The requirement to apply for concessionary hours on an annual basis also makes it difficult to retain suitable young teachers in the school. Some schools have up to 20% of their staff posts filled by young teachers in non-permanent positions.

More significantly, the non-availability of such young teachers in the school Monday to Friday, all day, every day, has a very direct impact on the quality of their relationships with students. Teaching is, above all, relationship-based. Pupil-teacher relationships are created not just inside the classroom but in the corridors, in the library, on the sports field, etc. Young teachers have commented on how difficult it is to create relationships with students when they might only spend a few hours teaching in the school each week.

The TALIS report provided further evidence of the impact of the high pupil-teacher ratio of non-permanent teachers on the quality of classroom instruction. Low student achievement is associated with poor classroom disciplinary climate in all OECD countries, including Ireland. However, in Ireland, TALIS found that non-permanent teachers reported more disciplinary problems in their classrooms and less usage of diverse teaching strategies compared to permanent teachers. Teachers who had infrequent relationships with their students also rate them more negatively - a factor also contributing to poor classroom climate. The TALIS report is unequivocal in stating “*Stronger classroom climate is associated with teachers working full-time and in permanent employment and teachers rating the ability of their students more positively*” (TALIS, *National Report for Ireland*, p.xxv)

### It is damaging for the young teachers

Graduates who enter teacher education do so because they are strongly motivated by the vocational dimensions of teaching. Teaching is still a vocation – a fact repeatedly remarked upon in all national and international reviews of Irish education.

Upon entry to employment, however, these highly motivated young teachers suffer a huge culture shock. Instead of a teaching job, they have short-term teaching hours. Instead of beginning a process of integration into the school life and culture, they have at best a peripheral relationship with the school. There is no job security and no guarantee of employment at the end of the school year.

This situation is very distressing for young graduates. There is already evidence that lack of employment and income security is causing many young teachers to seek a career elsewhere – teaching in the UK, New Zealand, Australia and the US.