



Circular 0003/2025

THIS CIRCULAR SUPERSEDES ALL PREVIOUS CIRCULARS ON THIS SCHEME

To: Managerial Authorities, Principals and Teachers of Recognised Primary, Secondary, Community and Comprehensive Schools, the Chief Executives of Education and Training Boards.

Teacher Fee Refund Scheme 2024

ALL ENQUIRIES SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO:

The Administrator, Teacher Fee Refund Scheme
Clare Education Support Centre
Government Buildings, Kilrush Road, Ennis,
Co. Clare V95 F782
Tel: (065) 684 5500
E-MAIL: teacherfeerefund@clareed.ie

**Applications will only be accepted for
Courses/Part of courses completed in the period
1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024**

Introduction and Purpose

The purpose of this circular is to set out for school management authorities, principals and teachers the provisions determining the operation of the *Teacher Fee Refund Scheme*. Please bring this circular to the attention of all teaching staff in your organisation, including those on leave, secondment or career break.

The objective of the *Teacher Fee Refund Scheme* is to provide a partial refund towards the cost of course fees and examination fees upon the successful completion of the teacher professional learning course/s (where the course duration is longer than one year funding is provided upon successful completion of each year of the course). The funding is available for courses that are directly relevant and of benefit to schools and that are subject to certification/award by an appropriate accreditation authority recognised by the Department of Education (DE).



The *Teacher Fee Refund Scheme* refers to individual applications only and refunds may not be claimed by schools or other employers.

This scheme is subject to review and changes may be introduced before the scheme is next open to applications (i.e. before applications for refund of fees in respect of the next academic year are invited).

Teachers Eligible

Currently serving primary and post-primary teachers who are registered with the Teaching Council, paid by the State and employed in a Department of Education recognised primary or post primary school are eligible to apply for funding under the scheme. This includes permanent whole-time teachers, temporary whole-time teachers, part-time teachers, teachers who are job sharing, substitute teachers, teachers holding contracts of indefinite duration and teachers holding fixed-term contracts who are employed for the full school year and who provide teaching service during each school week. *The list of recognised primary and post primary schools is available on the Department website: Please see: <https://www.gov.ie/en/service/find-a-school/>*

Fully registered teachers on secondment within the education sector are eligible to apply under the scheme.

Teachers on career break/unpaid leave during the 2023/24 school year are only eligible to apply for a refund of fees upon their return to school and the refund can only be made in respect of fees incurred between 1st September 2023 and 31st August 2024.

Courses Not Eligible Under the Scheme

- Funding under the *Teacher Fee Refund Scheme* will not be provided for courses which result in a qualification in respect of which an allowance is payable.
- Courses which are already wholly funded or part-funded by the Department of Education, or the Department of Further and Higher Education, either directly or indirectly, are not eligible for the scheme.
- This scheme will not fund shortfalls in qualifications required for full recognition as a primary or post-primary teacher.

Qualifying Courses

- Courses which qualify should be directly relevant and of benefit to schools, school management, or teachers and should ultimately positively impact on teaching, learning and assessment. Final decisions



on the relevance of particular courses will be made by the Steering Committee.

- Courses should be subject to certification/award by an appropriate accreditation authority recognised by the Department of Education for the purpose of this scheme.

Diploma Courses

- In general, recognised diploma and certificate courses accredited as above will be eligible under the *Teacher Fee Refund Scheme*.
- If the final year of the course has been completed a copy of the actual diploma certificate must accompany your online application.
- For intervening years, a transcript of the results of the relevant year's assessment must accompany your online application.

Prioritisation of Courses

In order to prioritise teachers' professional learning in areas clearly linked to learning, teaching and assessment, 80% of funding is allocated to relevant programmes in line with policy priorities in the following key areas:

- a) Upskilling for existing post primary teachers leading to registration with the Teaching Council in an additional subject, to support teacher supply at post-primary level.
- b) Inclusion and tackling disadvantage, discrimination and inequality.
- c) Promoting well-being (in line with the Wellbeing Policy and Framework for Practice 2019 - 2023)
- d) Digital technologies in teaching, learning and assessment (in line with the Digital Strategy for Schools to 2027)
- e) Improving students' literacy and numeracy skills
- f) Curricular initiatives identified by the Department of Education (must also be endorsed by the applicant teacher's school management) as follows:
 1. Improving assessment literacy
 2. Education in the area of sustainability
 3. Upskilling for primary and post primary school teachers in Irish language provision



4. Improving learner experiences and outcomes for students with exceptional abilities

The remaining 20% of funding will be allocated to provide a refund of fees for courses which are not directly linked to the areas outlined above but still fulfil the eligibility criteria.

Applications to Teacher Fee Refund Scheme

- Clare Education Support Centre administers the scheme on behalf of the Department of Education.
- Teachers must apply with the approval of their Principal and Board of Management and/or Education and Training Board using the online application form which can be accessed at:

<https://teacherfeerefund.com/>

- Applications will only be accepted for courses/part of courses completed in the period **1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024**.
- The closing date for receipt of applications is **Wednesday 02 April at 3pm**. All applications received will be acknowledged.
- Where the duration of a course is more than one year, applications must be made following the successful completion of each year.
- Applicants will also be required to provide documentary evidence from the course provider (Accrediting Authority or Third Level Institute) confirming:
 - a) the official title of the course;
 - b) the applicant's successful completion of the course or year of course;
 - c) the applicant's examination results.Note: A copy of the official transcript will suffice if it meets all of the above requirements.
- It is the responsibility of all applicants to ensure that the application form is fully completed, signed and accompanied by all relevant documentation.
- **It is the responsibility of all applicants to ensure that the information supplied in the application form is accurate.** Please note that information



supplied, particularly in relation to the classification of courses by priority areas may affect the percentage refund that a successful candidate will receive.

Clare Education Support Centre and the Department of Education reserve the right to request original documentation at any time.

LATE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED.

Appeals Committee

- An Appeals Committee comprising members of the Teacher Professional Learning Section and the Inspectorate of the Department of Education adjudicate on appeals from applicants whose applications were not approved during the normal application process.
- Appeals on decisions **must be received in email format in the tfrsappeals@education.gov.ie inbox within four working weeks** from the date on which notification of the decision was issued.
- The emailed appeal must include:
 - A statement from the appellant detailing the grounds for appeal.
 - A copy of the refusal correspondence received from Clare Education Support Centre.
 - A copy of the online application form.
- Late, incomplete or unsigned applications are not grounds for appeal.
- All information and documents in support of an appeal is subject to verification.
- Decisions made by the Appeals Committee are final.

Amounts Payable to Applicants

- Successful applicants for funding under the Teacher Fee Refund Scheme will be awarded a **partial** refund of the fees they have paid. The proportion of fees refunded under the scheme depends on the funding available and number of qualifying applicants in any given year.
- Payment to successful applicants will be by Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). Please provide your bank details to facilitate this. Clare Education Support Centre will apply appropriate data security protocols to the use



of this data. Applications for funding under the *Teacher Fee Refund Scheme* are made retrospectively for a course undertaken during the previous academic year.

- To be eligible for a refund of fees, the total fees payable by the applicant for the course must exceed **€600** in the relevant application year. The maximum fee amount on which a refund will be made is **€5,000** per year. Only fees which relate to the academic year for which the application is made will be considered.
- The funding for this scheme is conditional on the budget allocated to the Department of Education.
- 80% of the funding for the Teacher Fee Refund Scheme will be allocated to provide a refund of fees to registered teachers undertaking relevant programmes in line with policy priorities in key areas. Within this funding bracket the allocation of funds will be on a pro-rata basis so that all successful applicants each receive the same proportion of their eligible fees.
- The remaining 20% of funding will be allocated to provide a refund of fees for courses which are not directly linked to key priority areas but still fulfil the eligibility criteria. Within this funding bracket the allocation of funds will be on a pro-rata basis so that all successful applicants each receive the same proportion of their eligible fees.
- Where an applicant is already in receipt of any payment/subsidy towards the cost of the course in question, the amount of fees eligible for payment will be reduced accordingly by the amount of such payment(s). It is the responsibility of the applicant to include information about any payment/ subsidy received towards the cost of the course in their application form.
- Failure to declare all subsidies/allowances will result in an application being declared null and void.
- Courses which are already wholly funded or part-funded by the Department of Education, or the Department of Further and Higher Education, either directly or indirectly, are not eligible for the scheme.
- Courses which are duplicating what is already provided by the Department of Education and for which there are places available will fall under the 20% funding bracket. If you have applied for, and have been unable to access, a Department of Education-funded course please include proof of this with your application.
- Payment will issue as soon as a decision has been reached.



- Applicants should note that tax relief may be available under Section 21 of the Finance Act 2000 Relief for postgraduate and certain third-level fees. If tax relief is claimed applicants must note this on their application form.
- A successful application for a refund under the Scheme in any year does not automatically guarantee that a refund will be granted for applications to the same course in a subsequent year.

Notification of Teachers

Please bring this circular to the attention of all teaching staff including those on leave, secondment or career break.

Jill Fannin
Principal Officer
Teacher Professional Learning Section
13 January, 2025