



Houses of the
Oireachtas
Tithe an Oireachtais

TITHE AN OIREACHTAIS

AN COMHCHOISTE UM

**OIDEACHAS, BREISOIDEACHAS AGUS ARDOIDEACHAS,
TAIGHDE, NUÁLAÍOCHT AGUS EOLAÍOCHT**

Clár Oibre 2023

Eanáir 2023

HOUSES OF THE OIREACHTAS

JOINT COMMITTEE ON

**EDUCATION, FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION,
RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND SCIENCE**

Work Programme 2023

January 2023

33/ES/13

MEMBERSHIP



Rose Conway-Walsh TD
Sinn Féin



Cathal Crowe TD
Fine Gael



Paul Kehoe TD Fine Gael
(Cathaoirleach)



Carol Nolan TD
Independent



Jim O'Callaghan TD
Fianna Fáil



Marc O Cathasaigh TD
Green Party



Donnchadh Ó Laoghaire
TD Sinn Féin



Aodhán Ó Ríordáin TD
Labour Party



Pádraig O'Sullivan TD
Fianna Fáil



Senator Aisling Dolan
Fine Gael



Senator Eileen Flynn
Independent



Senator Rónán Mullen
Independent



Senator Fiona O'Loughlin
Fianna Fáil (Leas-
Cathaoirleach)



Senator Pauline O'Reilly
Green Party

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INTRODUCTION

The Joint Committee on Education, Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science was established following Orders of Dáil Éireann and of Seanad Éireann on 31 July 2020 and 16 September 2020 respectively. Standing Orders 89(4) (Dáil Éireann) and 77(4) (Seanad Éireann) require that “as soon as may be following its appointment and thereafter at annual intervals, each Select Committee shall prepare a work programme and shall lay such programme before Dáil/Seanad Éireann”.

This Work Programme of the Joint Committee on Education, Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science for 2023 was agreed by the Joint Committee at its meeting on 13 December 2022. In accordance with the Standing Orders of Dáil Éireann and Seanad Éireann, it was agreed that the Work Programme be laid before both Houses of the Oireachtas.

SELECT COMMITTEE

The Dáil Select Committee on Education was established by Order of Dáil Éireann on 31st July 2020.

The function of the Select Committee is to consider -

1. Bills,
2. Proposals contained in any motion, including any motion within the meaning of Standing Order 164,
3. Estimates for Public Services,
4. Other matters as shall be referred to the Select Committee by the Dáil,
5. Annual Output Statements, and
6. such Value for Money and Policy Reviews as the Select Committee may select relating to the relevant Departments.

PRE-LEGISLATIVE SCRUTINY

In addition, the Government Legislative Programme makes provision for the publication of Bills. Following changes to Standing Orders (agreed by the Dáil on 17th October 2013), Ministers are now required, except in exceptional circumstances, to bring the general scheme or draft heads of a Bill to a Committee

for consideration. Committees are empowered to consider the draft Heads of Government Bills but they are not required to do so. It is the prerogative of the Committee to decide on a case-by-case basis whether it wishes to engage in pre-legislative scrutiny on any Government Bill.

LEGISLATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

PRE-LEGISLATIVE SCRUTINY

AT SECOND STAGE

Education (Student and Parent Charter) Bill 2019. This Bill has been automatically returned to the Dáil Order Paper for Second Stage.

Education (Inspection of Individual Education Plans for Children with Special Needs) Bill 2022

Education (Voluntary Contributions) Bill 2021

Education (Affordable School Uniforms) Bill 2022 (Private Members Bill)

Education (Relationships and Sexuality Education) (Amendment) Bill 2022 (Private Members Bill. Before Seanad Eireann)

AT THIRD STAGE

Education (Health, Relationships and Sex Education) Bill 2021

AT FOURTH STAGE

Education (Admission to Schools) Bill 2020 (Private Members Bill)

Education (Relationships and Sexuality Education) (Amendment) Bill 2022. This Bill is currently at Second Stage before Seanad Eireann.

HEADS OF BILL IN PREPARATION

Residential Institutions Statutory Fund (Dissolution) Bill 2016

Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2015

DEPARTMENT OF FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION, RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND SCIENCE

PREPARATORY WORK UNDERWAY

Industrial Training Act (Amendment) Bill, *Date TBC*

Licensing of Construction Workers Bill 2020

ESTIMATES AND OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS

The Estimates for Public Services are Ministers' spending plans for the coming financial year. When the Estimates are referred to Select Committees for examination, the Committee has a valuable opportunity to question the relevant Minister about proposed spending. Note: The Select Committee is required to consider the Estimates but are not empowered to amend them.

The Estimate with which the Select Committees must deal in 2023 is the Revised Estimate for Public Services (Education– Vote 26 and Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science – Vote 45)

A Supplementary Estimate may be considered in December if additional monies are required by the relevant Government Department.

It is the Committee's intention to focus on –

- what the Departments have committed to achieving,
- how monies are allocated between services, and
- exploring the policy issues underpinning the various spending provisions as well as to consider these matters as fully as possible.

The proposed approach presents Departmental Estimates on a Strategic Programme basis consistent with the Statements of Strategy. These Estimates have been supplemented with certain performance information regarding the outputs and impacts of Programme expenditure.

In keeping with a whole of year approach, it is the Committee's intention to have an exchange of views with the Minister for Education and the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science in advance of Budget 2023 on the emerging position for 2024.

In addition, the examination of Value for Money (VFM) Reviews is another important part of scrutinising Government expenditure.

REFERRALS OF MOTIONS AND OTHER MATTERS

From time to time, matters may arise and may be referred to the Select Committee by the Dáil. It is not possible to say in advance what those matters might be or when they might arise.

JOINT COMMITTEE

The duties of the Joint Committee are discharged in two ways, i.e.

- items of business referred to it by one or both Houses, and
- it can select business for consideration itself, from the areas within its terms of reference. In practice, the Joint Committee's work will comprise the examination of EU business and key policy priorities.

ENGAGEMENT ON EU MATTERS

The Joint Committee shadows the Department of Education and the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science and the remit of these Departments, in the European context, forms the basis of the Joint Committee's remit in terms of scrutiny of European matters.

Role of Oireachtas Committees in EU Matters is under consideration and a substantive narrative will be included shortly in a revised Work Programme.

KEY POLICY PRIORITIES

The Joint Committee is empowered to consider such other policy issues as it may select within its terms of reference. In the period January 2023 to December 2023, in addition to core business such as legislation etc., the Committee will focus on key priority topics within the remit of both Departments.

The following are some of the key policy issues identified by the Joint Committee for examination:

GENERAL

- Examination in advance of proposed Citizens Assembly on the Future of Education.
- Discussion on the progress on the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals set out in the United Nations 2030 Agenda that come under the remit of the Department of Education and the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science and how to build the provisions of Standing Order 100(4) into the ongoing work of the committee
- Addressing discrimination of minority ethnic and religious communities struggling with inclusion in the Irish education system at all levels.
- Decent working conditions for those working at all levels of the education sector including (a) resolving issues regarding pay equality & conditions for school secretaries, (b) review of the Role of School Principals and (c) review of the Work Loads of Teachers
- Progress made in implementing the recommendations contained in the published Report of the Oireachtas Special Committee on Climate Action, that come under the remit of the Department of Education and the Department of Education, Further and Higher Education, Research Innovation and Science
- Adequacy of the Department of Education's Digital Strategy and enabling real remote learning options for all levels of education including considering the impact to remote access for;
 - marginalized communities who may require funding
 - the lack of connectivity for students in Rural Ireland
 - options for opting out of in-person learning in favour of remote learning
 - Students who live with Vulnerable Families and Relatives
 - Traveller History Bill
- European Year of Skills 2023

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY LEVEL

- Educational Disadvantage and specifically (a) DEIS Model; (b) Early Childhood Intervention and (c) Traveller Children in Primary and Secondary Schools
- Special Needs Provision and the examination of the lack of resources for those with additional needs, including a review of:
 1. ringfenced funding to make sure every child who needs one has full access to an SNA for autism services provision,
 2. National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS),
 3. School Inclusion Model (SIM), and
 4. state recognition of a broader range of intellectual disabilities
- The need for a new 'modern languages in Primary School' Initiative
- School patronage at primary and post primary school level, including an examination of the Community National School model and new models at secondary level
- Introduction of a Healthy Eating Programme at Primary and Post Primary Level
- Review of the School Building Programme and Energy Efficiency Upgrade Pilot Programme
- The provision, content and delivery of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and Continuous Professional Development (CPD), to include identifying innovative measures to support school leadership and the quality of teaching
- Education for visually impaired students - Discussion with the National Blind Council of Ireland (NCBI) on the report entitled Equitable Education
- The underfunding of Catholic voluntary secondary schools with respect to other school types and the resulting implications for parents who choose to send their children to Catholic voluntary secondary schools.
- The lack of representation of schools in the Catholic sector at second level by having only one parent representative group (National Parents Council Post Primary (NPCPP) to represent all parents.
- The lack of diversity of secondary school parent representative groups

- Education inequality: review of DEIS system & potential for re-establishment of education equality committee
- Barriers to progression from secondary to university, taking into consideration Irish language and maths requirements.
- An Examination of the inadequate access for primary gaelscoil pupils to a secondary gaelscoil.
- Religious instruction in Schools
- Climate and biodiversity in our school infrastructure
- Educational experience of Irish Sign Language students

FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION, RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND SCIENCE

- The effect of rising costs of accommodation on students and their families and the impact on equality of access to third level education and the National Student Accommodation Strategy
- The ability of the Irish higher education sector to acquire and retain International Research Funding with specific reference to the EU Horizon Programme post Brexit
- Review the Apprenticeship Model and the need to (a) rebrand it as a viable career option with equivalence to higher education qualifications (b) restructure non-traditional apprenticeships; (c) encourage more female apprentices and (d) provide the requisite apprenticeship training for a just transition to a green economy and (e) address the backlog in access to off-the-job training for apprenticeships.
- Reform of the scientific and innovation research models in higher education institutions to increase PhD candidates in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) related disciplines and developing STEM talent with clear pathways on to Further and Higher Education (in liaison with the Department of Education)
- Progress made regarding commitments in the New Decade New Approach Agreement to initiate coordinated approaches to higher education provision in the North West and broader cooperation in the higher education and research sectors, in liaison with the Minister for the Economy in Northern Ireland

- Measures to support a north-south programme of research and innovation, including an all-island research hub, through Universities Ireland
- Proposals for a Connaught/Ulster Alliance in Higher Education
- Cross border student enrolment
- Progress in implementing the measures in the Programme for Government to challenge sexual violence and sexual harassment in Higher Education, building on the progress achieved under the Framework for Consent in Higher Education Institutions and the need to extend the measures to Further Education Institutions
- Educational issues facing asylum seekers and those in direct provision with specific reference to the issue of access to third level education
- Examine the National Strategy for Further Education and Training and, specifically, (a) Digital Transformation (b) emergence of new skill requirements (c) Improving Pathways (LLL) (d) the Funding Model and other key issues in Further Education.
- Human Rights and Academic Freedom Issues arising from Irish third-level institutions international links.
- Analysis of proposed SUSI Review, with specific reference to the proposed changes for 2023
- The use of public institution caps on places as a means of controlling supply of trained professionals in certain sectors such as Primary teacher training, nursing and others
- Commercialisation of research in Publicly Funded Universities

CHAIRPERSONS DESIGNATE OF STATE BOARDS

In accordance with the Government Decision of May 2011, which put new arrangements in place to ensure greater transparency in the appointment of persons to State boards and bodies, the Joint Committee will meet with the Chairpersons designate, as the nominations arise.

Alternatively, the Committee may seek written submissions from candidates, outlining their (a) professional credentials and work experience and (b) key priorities in their appointment.

This presents an opportunity for Chairpersons Designate to outline their experience and the approach they will take as Chair to the agency or body to which they are proposed to be appointed.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Paul Kehoe", is enclosed in a light blue rectangular box.

Paul Kehoe, T.D.

Cathaoirleach,

23 January 2023