



1. Introduction

1.1. In this document, we have identified three recommendations pertaining to the content of Chapter 8, 'Norms & Stereotypes in Education', of the Report of the Citizen's assembly on Gender Equality. These recommendations are specific to education in the post-primary context, and aim to enhance gender equality by increasing educator training and emphasising gender-inclusive learning environments.

2. Appropriate pre-service gender-related training for SPHE teachers

2.1. Implementing recommendation 28a (the provision of adequate training to promote gender awareness and gender-sensitive teaching methods) offers an important opportunity to address wider issues of training as a barrier to best practice, which has been [identified at post-primary level](#). The Teaching Council registration '[curriculum subject requirements](#)' outlines the requisite skills and accreditation to deliver each subject of the post-primary curriculum. Currently, Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) – within which RSE resides – is not recognised and there are no formal curricular requirements identified in order to be a teacher of this subject. As such, the delivery of lessons which fall within the remit of SPHE (including RSE) can be, [and sometimes have been](#), assigned to educators who have received little or no training in appropriate teaching methods or pedagogies. It is therefore recommended that appropriate subject requirements be established for SPHE, which prospective teachers would be required to meet in order to register with The Teaching Council to deliver this subject. This would oblige all consecutive and concurrent teacher-education programmes to offer a learning pathway that would lead to an accredited qualification to teach SPHE.

2.2. The benefit of this measure would be two-fold. Firstly, emphasising teacher training pre-service would help to circumvent documented barriers to teacher uptake in CPD, such as [workload-related time constraints](#). Secondly, the introduction of an accredited SPHE learning pathway for teachers would help to ensure best practice in the delivery of RSE and would potentially reduce the propensity for untrained educators to deliver lessons in sensitive topics such as sex and sexuality, consent and sex/gender based violence. An illustrative draft of curricular requirements for SPHE is provided in Appendix 1.

3. Appropriate pre-service gender-related training for all educators

3.1. In relation to the committee's overwhelming affirmative response to question 23, which indicated favourable opinions regarding the provision of gender-related training to all educational staff, we would again recommend an emphasis on pre-service training. To this end, we propose that a minimum requisite base-level gender-knowledge and gender-sensitive teaching methods skillset be mandatory for all educators in order to register as a post-primary teacher with The Teaching Council, regardless of their chosen subject. This would require that all prospective educators undergo some degree of pre-service training and that this training be recognised as a requisite criterion to register as a teacher with The Teaching Council. This training could take the form of a mandatory 'gender in teaching' module on all accredited concurrent and consecutive teacher-education programmes and could encompass [indicated areas of concern](#), such as theories of gender, (gendered) student/teacher relationship styles and gender-sensitive teaching methods.

3.2. We believe this measure would be highly advantageous in enhancing gender considerations in educational contexts. However, this measure may be most helpful in addressing existing educators concerns. For example, international research has identified a degree of reticence among some educators toward students of the LGBTQI community, which has been attributed to a [lack of appropriate gender-related training](#). It has also been noted that male educators are generally [more likely to feel discomfort](#) in this regard and that female educators' tend to be [over-represented in pastoral care](#)

[roles](#). Mandatory pre-service gender-related training would be a positive step toward reducing gender stereotypes in educator rolls within school settings and achieving a reality whereby all educators would be confident and comfortable in addressing the day-to-day needs of their students.

4. Moving toward gender-inclusive educational environments

4.1. More broadly, there is [evidence to suggest](#) that the issues discussed in Chapter 8, and many of the recommendations made therein, might be best addressed in a co-educational school setting. As was identified by the committee members, education can be a prominent context within which gender norms and stereotypes can be established. Further to the stated influence these norms and stereotypes can have regarding subject choice and subsequent career, education can also have a significant and gendered influence on [student wellbeing, as well as social and emotional outcomes](#). In line with the proposal recently put forward by the Labour Party, we recommend that the committee consider a move toward ending single-sex schooling.

4.2. The benefits of a move toward ending single-sex schooling are evident in relation to a number of recommendations proposed by the committee. For example, recommendation 26a – the provision of a broad range of subjects that counters gender stereotyping – would arguably be best actioned in a co-educational setting, where [gender-typing of curriculum subjects is less likely to occur](#). With regard to recommendation 27b – explicitly covering gender power dynamics, consent and domestic, sexual and gender-based violence within the revised Relationships and Sexuality curriculum – again it is arguable that these important issues would be best addressed in gender-inclusive environments (including LGBTQI and non-binary identities) where students can learn of and from one another. In relation to recommendation 28a – the provision of training in gender-sensitive teaching methods – the cessation of single-sex schooling would allow for these gender-sensitive methods and pedagogies to be developed specifically for a classroom environment that encompasses all gender identities.

5. Executive Summary

5.1. The recommendations we have provided in this document pertain to the content of Chapter 8, 'Norms & Stereotypes in Education', of the Report of the Citizen's assembly on Gender Equality. Specifically, these recommendations are most appropriate in the context of post-primary education, but may also be adapted and implemented at a primary school level.

- We would suggest that the committee consider that appropriate subject requirements be established for Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) (within which Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) resides), which prospective teachers would be required to meet in order to register with The Teaching Council to deliver this subject.
- We recommend that all prospective educators undergo some degree of pre-service gender-related training and that this training be recognised as a requisite criterion to register as a teacher with The Teaching Council.
- We recommend promoting gender-inclusive educational environments by discontinuing the use of single-sex schooling.

Appendix 1. Draft SPHE Curricular Subject Requirements

(Note: The criteria set forth for an accredited SPHE learning pathway are drafted based on existing curricular subject requirements. Topics of study listed in section two are hypothesised based on available research and areas of learning in SPHE classes).

In order to meet the registration requirements set down in The Teaching Council [Registration] Regulations in respect of the curricular subject of SPHE, an applicant must meet **all** of the following criteria:

1. (a) Applicants must hold a degree-level qualification, with SPHE studied up to and including third-year level or higher (or modular equivalent).
 (b) The qualifying degree must be equivalent to at least Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and with a minimum pass¹ result in all examinations pertinent to the subject of SPHE.
 (c) The qualifying degree must carry at least 180 ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) credits (or equivalent) with the specific study of SPHE comprising at least 60 ECTS credits (or equivalent) and with not less than 10ECTS credits (or equivalent) studied at third-year level or higher (or modular equivalent).
2. The study of SPHE during the degree must show that the holder has acquired sufficient knowledge, skills and understanding to teach the SPHE syllabus² to the highest level in post-primary education (see www.curriculumonline.ie). To meet the requirement the degree should have 60 ECTS credits in SPHE, to be comprised by the study of an appropriate selection of the following topics:

<u>Theory</u>	<u>Methodology</u>	<u>SPHE Modules</u>
• Psychology of Development	• Introduction to Wellbeing Pedagogies	• Gender, Sex and Sexuality
• Psychology of Education	• Advanced Wellbeing Pedagogies	• Wellbeing and Technology
• Sociology of Development	• Wellbeing-orientated activities	• Substance use and personal safety
• Sociology of Education	• A Whole-School Approach to Wellbeing	• Friendships and Identity
• Theories of Wellbeing	• Self-care	
• Emotional Intelligence		

3. Applicants must also have completed a programme of post-primary initial teacher education (age range 12-18 years) carrying a minimum of 120 ECTS credits (or equivalent). The programme should include a methodology module(s) on the teaching of SPHE carrying a minimum of 5 ECTS credits (or equivalent)³.

¹ which includes pass by compensation.

² as approved by the Minister for Education & Skills, and published by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA).

³ Applicants who have completed a specialist concurrent degree in Sociology or Politics must meet all of the requirements detailed above. This course should be equivalent to a minimum of 240 ECTS credits.