



An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Rannóg Oideachais Múinteoirí
Corr na Madadh
Baile Átha Luain
Co. na hIarmhí.
N37 X659

Department of Education and Skills
Teacher Education Section
Cornamaddy
Athlone
Co Westmeath
N37 X659

TEACHER FEE REFUND SCHEME 2016

Circular Letter 0005/2017

[THIS CIRCULAR SUPERSEDES ALL PREVIOUS CIRCULARS ON THIS SCHEME]

ALL ENQUIRIES SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO:

The Administrator, Teacher Fee Refund Scheme
Marino Institute of Education
Griffith Avenue, Dublin, D09 R232
Tel: (01) 8535102
E-MAIL: refundoffeesscheme@mie.ie

INTRODUCTION

The aim 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*.

The purpose of the Teacher Fee Refund Scheme is to provide funding towards the cost of course participation and examination fees on successful completion of professional development 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 and Skills (DES).

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 in 2018.

TEACHERS ELIGIBLE

- Serving primary and post-primary teachers who are registered with The Teaching Council and paid by the State are eligible to apply for funding under the scheme. This includes permanent whole-time, temporary whole-time, part-time teachers, 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.**
- Fully registered teachers on secondment within the education sector are eligible to apply on successful completion of each year of the course.
- **Teachers on career break/unpaid leave are eligible to apply for a refund of fees, but only on their return to school following the year(s) in which they were absent on career break/study leave.**

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 on or before 4 December 2011 (Ref: Circular 0008/2013, Paragraph 12).
- In the case of persons who have commenced a Masters Degree or equivalent course on or before 4 December 2011 (Ref: Circular 0008/2013, Paragraph 12), such persons are generally not eligible under the scheme, as they lead to a qualification in respect of which an allowance is payable. The exception to this would be if the applicant:
 - already holds an honours Masters degree for which an allowance is payable;
 - has a pass Masters degree and obtains another pass Masters degree.
- This scheme will not fund shortfalls in qualifications required for full recognition as a primary or post-primary teacher.
- If you have a pass degree allowance and subsequently obtain an honours degree you are not eligible to apply.

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

Diploma Courses

- In general, recognised diploma and certificate courses accredited by a range of reputable bodies will be eligible under *the Teacher Fee Refund Scheme*.
- **A copy of the actual diploma certificate** received following the successful completion of the course must accompany all application forms.

APPLICATIONS TO TEACHER REFUND SCHEME

- The Marino Institute of Education (MIE) administers the scheme on behalf of the Department of Education and Skills.
- Teachers must apply with the approval of their Principals and Boards of Management and/or Education and Training Boards on the standard application form. Completed application forms should be forwarded to:

The Administrator, Teacher Fee Refund Scheme
Marino Institute of Education, Griffith Avenue, Dublin D09 R232
Tel: (01) 8535102
e-mail: refundoffeesscheme@mie.ie

- Applications will only be accepted for courses/part of courses completed in the period 1 September 2015 to 31 August 2016.
- The closing date for receipt of applications is 31st March 2017. All applications received will be acknowledged.
- Where the duration of a course is more than a 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) official title of the course
 - b) the applicant's successful completion of the course or year of course
 - c) examination results

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.**

MIE and the DES reserve the right to request original documentation at any time.

- **Late applications will not be considered.**

MONITORING COMMITTEE

- A Monitoring Committee, consisting of teacher union representatives and representatives from school management and the Department of Education and Skills, oversees the administration of the scheme and makes recommendations on the allocation of payments to applicants.
- Appeals against a recommendation of the monitoring committee may be made to an Appeals Committee under the aegis of the Minister for Education and Skills.

APPEALS COMMITTEE

- An Appeals Committee comprising members of the Teacher Education Section, DES and the Inspectorate will adjudicate on appeals from applicants whose applications were not approved by the monitoring committee.
- Appeals on the decision of the monitoring committee **must be received within four working weeks** from the date on which notification of the decision was issued.
- Late, incomplete or unsigned applications are not grounds for appeal.
- A copy of the application form must be attached to the letter of appeal. This letter **should state clearly the grounds for appeal.**
- All information and documents in support of an appeal is subject to verification.

AMOUNTS PAYABLE TO APPLICANTS

This year we are piloting payment to successful applicants by EFT rather than cheque. Please provide your bank details on page 12 to avail of this facility. MIE 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.
- 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 €5000. 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 and Skills.
- The proportion of fees refunded under the scheme depends on the number of qualifying applicants in any given year. The funding available is allocated 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).
- Failure to declare all subsidies/allowances will result in an application being declared null and void.
- Payment will issue as soon as a decision has been made by the monitoring committee.

NOTIFICATION OF TEACHERS

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

*Eddie Ward
Principal Officer
Teacher Education Section
January 2017*

