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Lorraine O'Connell

Bridging Policy and Practice

Navigating Reform in Music Teacher Education in Ireland

Abstract

This chapter provides a critical overview of music teacher education (MTE) in Ireland, situating contemporary provision within its historical, policy, and curricular contexts. It describes the pathways into primary and secondary teaching and discusses the impact of the Teaching Council reforms of the past two decades.

Drawing on policy documents and on an expanding, but still limited, research base, the chapter identifies key tensions shaping MTE: the marginalisation of music in schools and in teacher education, an epistemic gap between school and higher education, and challenges regarding entry requirements and school placement. At the same time, it foregrounds the role of music teacher educators in responding to challenges through innovative practices and sustained professional commitment. A co-teaching case study illustrates how school-university partnerships can help bridge the divide between policy and practice.

The chapter concludes by identifying key priorities for future MTE development, emphasising the need for greater dialogue among all stakeholders, expanded research, and greater coherence across the teacher education continuum.

Keywords: continuum of teacher education; co-teaching; curriculum and policy; music teacher education; pedagogical competence

Introduction

Music has been included in the curriculum of both primary and secondary education since the foundation of the state in 1922.[1] However, historically, the subject's teaching and learning have developed along two distinct pathways, a division that remains evident today. Primary education is underpinned by a holistic child-centred philosophy that emphasises experiential and integrated learning. Music is compulsory and is typically taught by the generalist teacher. In contrast, secondary education is subject-centred, and while the music curriculum has expanded, it remains closely aligned with the practices of Western art music. Music is optional at this level and is taught by a subject specialist.

This bifurcation is also reflected in music teacher education (MTE). The majority of primary teachers complete a four-year concurrent Bachelor of Education (B Ed). Music constitutes one component within a broad programme for generalist teaching. Most secondary music teachers follow a consecutive pathway; on completion of an undergraduate degree in Music (BA with Music or B Mus), they undertake a two-year Professional Master's in Education (PME). However, a small number of primary teachers (who already hold a bachelor's degree) also pursue this consecutive route, while two concurrent programmes offer initial teacher education in Music for secondary teachers.

Teacher Education in Ireland

Initial teacher education (ITE) in Ireland has a relatively long history. The preparation of primary teachers can be traced to the mid-eighteenth century, with the establishment of several colleges of education. A Higher Diploma in Education for secondary teachers was introduced in 1912, and became mandatory for registration in 1918 (Coolahan, 2007). Although the structure and content of ITE have evolved over time, the most significant changes have occurred over the past 20 years, following the establishment of the Teaching Council (TC).

Established on a statutory basis in 2006, the TC sets professional standards across the education sector, including ITE. Its remit includes specifying minimum entry requirements, content, learning outcomes and school placement requirements for all ITE programmes. It is also responsible for reviewing and accrediting these courses. Registration with the TC is mandatory for all primary and secondary school teachers.

[1] Until then, the entire island of Ireland was part of the United Kingdom. In 1921, the island was politically split into two jurisdictions: Northern Ireland (six counties) and the Irish Free State (26 counties). In 1922 the government of the Irish Free State was formed. While a new constitution was adopted in 1937, whereby the state became known as "Ireland", it was not until 1949 that the country was declared a Republic.

Following a major systemic review of ITE provision, the TC has instigated substantial reforms since 2011. Key changes include:

- the embedding of the four primary teacher education colleges into university settings, with the consequent modularisation of programmes;[2]
- the extension of concurrent ITE programmes from three to four years, and postgraduate programmes from one to two years;
- increased school placement requirements;
- formal accreditation of ITE programmes by the TC.

Accreditation has introduced new programme structures and prescribed credit allocation. Programmes must include: Foundation Studies (curriculum studies, history and policy of education, philosophy of education, educational psychology and sociology of education), Professional Studies, and School Placement (The Teaching Council, 2017a, 2020).

These reforms are framed within the context of the TC's *Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education* (2011), which positions ITE as but the first step of a three-stage career-long process. Following initial qualification, novice teachers are required to complete a one-year induction programme (The Teaching Council, 2017b). Recognising teachers as autonomous professionals, the TC also promotes lifelong learning and reflection. The framework for this third stage is still in development, with implementation expected by 2027 (The Teaching Council, n. d.).[3]

Music in Primary Teacher Education

The preparation of primary teachers has become progressively more professionalised over time. The original two-year diploma was expanded in the 1970s to a three-year, university-accredited B Ed degree, and within the past 15 years, to a four-year programme. Music pedagogy – known as Curriculum Music – has been included in primary ITE from an early stage. While there is evidence that music had also been taught as an academic subject (music theory, harmony, history, etc.) in some colleges (Flynn & O'Flynn, 2019), the introduction of the three-year B Ed allowed students to study an arts or humanities subject, including music, as an elective specialism, to degree level. Initially, Curriculum Music allocation also increased in the expanded course – a welcome development given the ambitious nature of the 1971 primary curriculum, which demanded substantial musical skills and knowledge from teachers (Walsh, 2016). However, competing requirements within

[2] Prior to this, and from the mid-1970s, the B Ed degree in all four colleges had been accredited by one of the universities. However, each college was governed as an independent institution.

[3] The TC gives journey-related Irish-language titles to the frameworks for these stages: *Céim* (step), *Droichead* (bridge) and *Cosán* (path).

the programme could not sustain this expansion, and allocation for Curriculum Music decreased, precisely when it was most needed (Flynn & O'Flynn, 2019). Nonetheless, most colleges included Curriculum Music in at least two of the programme's three years.

As noted above, the B Ed is now a four-year programme (240 ECTS). Ironically, due to the additional TC requirements, music provision has diminished in two respects. First, students no longer have the opportunity to study an arts/humanities subject to degree level. Second, and more worryingly, timetable allocation for Curriculum Music has been further reduced (Flynn & O'Flynn, 2019). Typically, Curriculum Music is now taught within a single semester. Furthermore, in two of the programmes, it is taught within the context of Arts Education (reflecting recent curriculum changes within the primary curriculum). There remains, however, some scope to expand allocation for Music. "Discretionary Time" (up to 48 ECTS) is available within ITE programmes to provide additional elective modules. Two of the larger institutions use this opportunity to offer electives in music and/or music education (O'Flynn et al., 2022). Moreover, most institutions support a vibrant extra-curricular music-making culture (e.g., choirs, orchestras, Irish traditional and other ensembles), offering students meaningful and practical opportunities to participate in music.

All four primary ITE providers also offer a two-year in-person PME programme for graduates who already hold a bachelor's degree (in any subject) and wish to qualify as a primary teacher. One independent provider also offers a blended PME programme. All PME programmes are also subject to the TC requirements.

Music in Secondary Teacher Education

There are two available routes to qualify as a secondary Music teacher in Ireland. The majority of students follow a consecutive pathway. This involves completing i) a three- or four-year honours bachelor's degree (minimum 180 ECTS), of which at least 60 ECTS must be in Music, followed by ii) a two-year Professional Master's in Education (PME: 120 ECTS). Alongside their traditional range of subjects, all seven Irish universities provide undergraduate music degrees (BA with Music and/or a B Mus) and PME programmes. Undergraduate music degrees also offered through Ireland's three conservatoires, two of which are schools within technological universities,[4] as well as by a further technological university and one institute of technology.[5]

[4] The Royal Irish Academy of Music is the only higher education institute to offer degrees in music only. TU Dublin Conservatoire and the Cork School of Music are embedded within technological universities (i.e. Technological University Dublin and Munster Technological University respectively).

[5] Beginning in 2019, five technological universities have been established through the merging of several "institutes of technology". While Dundalk Institute of Technology – which offers Music degrees – has not yet received university status, negotiations are under way to embed this college within Queen's University, Belfast. This will mark the first Northern Ireland/Republic of Ireland formal partnership.

All PME programmes teach the required Foundation Subjects, Professional Studies and School Placement, but do not include additional discipline-specific content beyond teaching methods. Therefore, the TC prescribes the subject requirements for undergraduate degrees acceptable for entry to PME programmes. For Music, this includes music performance, harmony and counterpoint, composition, aural, keyboard and music technology skills, Western art music and Irish traditional music.

Two undergraduate degrees provide a concurrent route to qualification. The Bachelor of Music Education (B Mus Ed), established in 1985, is offered by Trinity College Dublin in conjunction with the Royal Irish Academy of Music and Technological University Dublin. The Bachelor of Religious Education at Dublin City University prepares students to teach Religious Education with another subject (Music, English or History). These programmes combine specialist studies in music (adhering to the TC criteria) with the required Foundation and Professional Studies and School Placement.

The TC reforms, together with government policy and curricular developments, present efforts to harmonise and improve teacher education across all programmes. However, these have also given rise to a range of challenges that have disrupted this space. In mapping the literature, the following section highlights where these tensions are most visible.

Research on Initial Teacher Education in Ireland

Since the 1990s, music education research across a range of subdisciplines has blossomed in Ireland (McCarthy, 2023). Yet, research addressing music teacher education (MTE) remains comparatively limited (Moore et al., 2019; O'Flynn et al., 2022). Apart from one relatively extensive study conducted by Moore et al. (2019), other published research comprises small-scale practitioner studies by music teacher educators within their own contexts. Additionally, some doctoral research studies, while not explicitly focused on MTE, generate findings pertinent to the field.

Taken together, these studies uncover several recurring issues and challenges that shape and, at times, disrupt MTE in Ireland. These include: the marginal position of music within primary ITE programmes, with consequent implications for generalist teachers' confidence in teaching music; an epistemic gap between secondary school and higher education music that impacts access to and experiences of music at the undergraduate level; and issues around school placement.

As noted above, the most comprehensive research on MTE to date is a comparative cross-border study conducted by Moore et al. (2019, 2025) and O'Flynn et al. (2022).[6] Drawing on documentary analysis and focus group interviews with music teacher educators, the project examined historical and contemporary policies and provisions for music in ITE at the primary and secondary levels. It documented teacher educators' perspectives and experiences of this provision, including their observations of students' attitudes towards music and of the value that students and institutions placed on it. Importantly, the project sought to foster collaboration by bringing ITE providers together to share practice.

A central finding of this research concerns the marginal position of music within primary ITE programmes, with limited contact time, low credit weighting (as a result of TC changes), and inadequate staffing levels posing challenges for all providers. Further dilution occurs in those programmes where music is subsumed into a broader Arts Education module (co-taught with art and drama). This structural marginalisation likely contributes to preservice teachers' low confidence in teaching music – an issue widely reported both internationally and in Irish studies (e. g. Heneghan, 2002; INTO, 2009; Kerin, 2019; Gubbins, 2021; Mulvey et al., 2025). Moore et al.'s study reinforces these findings, particularly in relation to implications for the work of music teacher educators, who reported assuming expanded professional roles that extended beyond developing preservice teachers' musical knowledge and musical content knowledge. This included devoting considerable effort to creating innovative practices to unlock students' innate musicality, advocating for music's intrinsic value in the curriculum, and challenging preservice teachers' negative perceptions of their own musical abilities. A further contributing factor to students' low self-efficacy is their experience of music during school placement. In principle, students are required to teach the full primary curriculum; however, in practice, it was highlighted that it is possible for a student to neither observe a good quality music lesson nor teach music during their school placement.

This study is among the first to amplify the voices of Irish music teacher educators. In doing so, it offers critical insights into how policy changes around ITE and education shape institutional arrangements and pedagogical practices. It highlights the challenges in bridging the gap between education policy and the practice within ITE. While Music is a core subject within compulsory Arts Education in the primary curriculum, the limited space and value afforded to music in ITE raises questions about how effectively preservice teachers can be prepared to teach the subject.

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[6] This study took place within *SCoTENS* (Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South). Established in the wake of the Belfast Peace agreement, this is a network of colleges of education, university departments and other education stakeholders, to promote cross-border collaboration in teacher education and research on the island of Ireland. "North" refers to Northern Ireland (UK), the "South" refers to the Republic of Ireland.

One practitioner-led study which aimed to bridge this gap was Kenny's (2017) work with first-year primary preservice teachers in Mary Immaculate College (University of Limerick). This study provides some insight into how students' negative attitudes toward music in school form and how these might be challenged within ITE. Students from varied musical backgrounds (and none) participated in a 12-week music module within a broader Creative Arts course, which included active and creative music-making in a collaborative environment. Through reflective coursework and focus-group discussions, the study explored how students' musical identities and attitudes towards teaching music evolved throughout the module.

The findings indicate that students' perceptions of music's value and their musical identities were significantly shaped by their prior school and personal musical experiences. Limited exposure to music often contributed to low self-efficacy around developing the musical knowledge and skills required to teach the curriculum. At the same time, the study contributes to MTE by highlighting the potential of collaborative music-making, paired with reflection, to challenge students' preconceptions about teaching music, foster confidence and self-efficacy, and enhance pedagogical understanding, thereby ultimately having implications for curriculum design in ITE programmes.

Acquiring the requisite musical knowledge and skills for teaching may also be a concern for preservice secondary school teachers. The disciplinary knowledge stipulated by the TC for entry into MTE programmes (outlined above) is primarily grounded in a Western classical aesthetic. Although not explicitly focused on teacher education, Moore's (2013) doctoral research identifies a significant epistemic misalignment between musical learning developed through secondary school music and the knowledge and skills required and valued in undergraduate programmes. Through a national survey, Moore found that undergraduate students with greater cultural, social and economic capital have access to private instrumental and theoretical tuition and are more likely to meet the demands of undergraduate music programmes. By contrast, undergraduate students whose music learning occurs mainly through secondary school education frequently encounter difficulties with the theoretical and analytical demands of higher education. While many higher education institutes provide foundation courses in music theory, Moore argues that these supports require further enhancement to bridge the gap (Moore, 2013; 2015). These findings have significant implications for postgraduate MTE programmes, especially given the growing call for socio-economic diversification within the teaching profession (Higher Education Authority, 2022). Music graduates who lack confidence in their literacy and analytical skills are less likely to pursue a teaching career, thus perpetuating a homogeneous music teaching profession rooted in a Western classical aesthetic.

Bowe's (2014) doctoral investigation, while also not directly focused on teacher education, extends the discussion beyond higher education into the school setting, with implications for MTE. Drawing on her own experience of encountering preservice music

teachers reluctant to sing or engage in active music-making, and a nationwide survey of secondary school principals, she highlights the tension between the high expectations placed on music teachers in schools and the extent to which required competences are developed within undergraduate music degrees and ITE programmes. Principals expect music teachers to be versatile musicians who demonstrate a wide range of musicianship skills both within the classroom and in extra-curricular activities. Bowe therefore calls for more rigorous recruitment procedures, including an interview and an assessment of musical competence, to ensure that "prospective music teachers exhibit the requisite competencies *prior* to admission on ITE programmes" (2014, p. 230). Bowe further recommends reform of consecutive MTE programmes to strengthen the development of music-specific pedagogical content knowledge and other competences required of secondary teachers. Linked with this is the need to provide adequate staffing resources for music within ITE. Such consecutive courses often employ music methods tutors on an *ad hoc* basis – an issue also highlighted by Moore et al. (2019; 2023; O'Flynn et al., 2022).

Research on school placement in Ireland has received much attention in recent years; however, school placement specifically addressing MTE remains under-researched. While one study by Kerin and O'Connell (2021) focused on school placement for secondary school preservice music teachers, it was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Traditional classroom visits for assessment became off-limits to higher education tutors, necessitating the development of an alternative approach. While classroom visits have now resumed, the study nonetheless provides valuable insights into broader issues around school placement. These include the importance of facilitating structured tutor and peer support during placement, and the inclusion of the student voice when revising assessment strategies. More broadly, the study's implications point to the need for research on the quality and consistency of mentoring by school-based cooperating teachers, the relationship among the student, mentor, and higher education tutor, and how university-based learning links with classroom practice.

In summary, the research landscape specifically around MTE in Ireland is limited. While existing studies offer valuable insights into the challenges and how some of these are being addressed, there is a need for more critical investigations targeting specific areas of research. For example, building on Moore et al.'s initiative, comparative research across institutions could provide greater insight into how programme structures influence the quality of teacher education. Longitudinal studies following graduates as they transition into their early teaching careers would help illuminate how effectively ITE programmes for music teachers prepare them for school contexts. Harmonising disruption and building the policy/practice divide will require not only pedagogical innovation, but also greater policy coherence across the music education continuum. Expanding the research base on MTE will help inform such future developments.

A Case Report: The Development of a Mutually Beneficial Co-teaching Project with Primary Teachers and Preservice Music Teachers

This case report examines the development of a co-teaching project initiated by Dr Marita Kerin (course director for the Bachelor of Music Education degree at Trinity College Dublin). Originally conceived as a doctoral-research study, the project has continued and evolved, and is now fully embedded in the B Mus Ed curriculum as a core component of School Placement requirements.

The project emerged as a response to the intersection of the challenges of teaching Music within the primary school curriculum and school placement reforms. As already noted, the teaching of Music in primary schools is disrupted by teachers' perceived confidence deficits. Policy and school curricular changes have further impacted these issues. These include an increased emphasis on literacy and numeracy development (DES, 2011), the integration of Music within a broader Arts Education framework (DEY, 2025), and, more recently, the introduction of additional subjects within STEM and the teaching of a European language (DOE, 2023) – all of which have reduced the time available for Music in schools. While the primary curriculum specifies time allocation for Arts Education, it does not prescribe dedicated time for the individual disciplines (i.e. Music, Visual art, Drama). Consequently, classroom teachers who already lack confidence may devote less time to teaching music.

The second catalyst for this project relates to the Teaching Council's requirement to extend and enhance school placement, and to establish meaningful partnerships between schools and higher education institutes (Teaching Council, 2020, 2017a; Hall et al., 2018). While these reforms represent structural harmony at the policy level, their implementation has generated practical challenges. Firstly, prior to these reforms, B Mus Ed students completed placements in secondary schools during three years of the four-year programme. Extending this necessitated an additional placement period in their first year of study, further exacerbating the already challenging task of securing student placements in secondary schools. One pragmatic solution was to situate an introductory placement period in a primary school. A positive outcome in doing so was the establishment of a school-university partnership, aligning with the second TC requirement noted above. However, drawing on previous research, Kerin (2019) highlights the challenges associated with the TC partnership aspiration, noting how school personnel have perceived it as adding to teachers' workload, and have called for greater clarity around roles and responsibilities, together with enhanced support for schools. It was hoped that the co-teaching model would help provide that support.

The co-teaching model in action

The co-teaching project was designed in collaboration with a local primary school. A co-teaching model is described as one which "involves two or more teachers learning from each other while sharing the responsibility for teaching the students" (Murphy & Scantlebury, 2010, p. 1). The school chosen was (and is) an inner-city girls' primary school, situated in an area of socio-economic disadvantage. Music education students (usually in pairs) are assigned to a class teacher and co-teach one music lesson per week over six weeks. While preservice teachers (PSTs) present as novice teachers, they are competent performers with strong musical knowledge and skills (content knowledge). However, most lack teaching experience. The primary classroom teacher, on the other hand, possesses extensive pedagogical knowledge and teaching expertise, but many claim confidence deficits in teaching Music. Prior to placement, university-led preparation seminars introduce PSTs to pedagogical repertoire, classroom methods, reflective practice, and the theoretical principles underpinning co-teaching. Further induction involves observation, whereby the PSTs observe, reflect on and co-discuss other subjects taught by the class teacher. Through this, they learn from the teacher's pedagogical knowledge, their understanding of the pupils they teach, a variety of teaching and assessment strategies, and approaches to classroom management. As Kerin notes, PSTs relied on the class teacher "to ensure that the children were accommodated, that the music lesson was relevant to the age-group and that the children were engaged with the expertise which the musician offered" (Kerin, 2019, p. 146).

Regarding the music lessons, the PST and the classroom teacher co-plan, co-teach, and co-reflect on them, embracing the three strands of the curriculum: *Listening and responding*, *Performing*, and *Composing*. Unlike traditional school placement, co-teaching promotes equality and assumes "a shared and equal responsibility for pupil learning amongst co-teachers" (Kerin, 2019, p. 6).

The project yielded several important outcomes at the individual and institutional levels. In addition to resolving the logistical issue of finding sites for additional school placement for PSTs, this approach provided a supported entry into classroom practice, enabling them to connect their musical knowledge and university learning with practical application. Working alongside experienced teachers facilitated a greater understanding of classroom dynamics.

For classroom teachers, the collaboration created opportunities for professional learning. However, while they reported improvements in their musical knowledge and skills in teaching music, as well as a clearer understanding of the music curriculum and a deeper appreciation of music's intrinsic value, they continued to perceive themselves least confident in teaching the subject.

Another significant outcome of the project was in relation to a transformed school culture, shifting from one that endorsed solo teaching to one that embraced collaboration and the sharing of expertise through professional conversations and reflection.

While this project illustrates how efforts to create localised pedagogical harmony within ITE, it also highlights several limitations and wider systemic disruptions, for example, the relatively short placement duration constrains the depth and sustainability of the impact on both PSTs and teachers. Neither does it resolve deeper structural constraints which directly contribute to teachers' confidence deficits in teaching music, such as the limited curriculum time for music, and its marginal position within both school and ITE. Nevertheless, positioning school placement in a collaborative, reciprocal learning environment offers a mutually beneficial approach to school placement that seeks to bridge the gap between policy, practice, and professional learning.

Enduring Challenges and Promising Practices: Progressing Music Teacher Education

Initial teacher education and music in ITE has a long history in Ireland. While it has evolved in response to curricular and policy changes, the most impactful reforms have occurred in the past two decades. These reforms have strengthened the professionalism of teacher education; however, partly as a result of these changes, tensions which disrupt progress in MTE have emerged. The harmonisation of these disruptions will depend on how MTE programmes aim to resolve these tensions.

Part of the TC's remit is to review all individual ITE programmes, typically every five years. While the purpose of this review is to ensure programmes meet the required professional standards, it is also an opportunity for each provider to review their programme(s) in light of the challenges they experience, the needs of their student cohort, curricular development in schools, and other policy changes.

A key priority for music in primary ITE lies in addressing the issue of limited contact time. Future programme design could therefore explore innovative pedagogical approaches to unlock students' innate musicality (and therefore confidence). In addition, programmes could consider how to strategically use available "discretionary" credits to expand curricular offerings in music and music pedagogy effectively. This is already occurring in some MTE programmes, and so building a stronger collaborative network of music teacher educators – as outlined earlier in the comparative study by Moore et al. (2019) – would provide opportunities to share practice and serve to enhance MTE across all programmes.

Bridging the epistemic gap between secondary school music and the knowledge, skills, and competences valued at higher levels and prescribed by the TC is important to ensure equal access for all students wishing to pursue a teaching career. Future development will require critical and sustained dialogue between music educators across all sectors, curriculum developers, the TC, and policymakers, to consider the nature and diversity of

musical knowledge. The argument is not to diminish the value of the Western classical aesthetic and its contribution to music education, but, in light of broadening school curricula, there is a need to expand the musical practices represented, so that MTE prepares teachers who are more stylistically diverse, inclusive, and adaptable.

A further critical area for development is the strengthening of the continuum of teacher education. While the TC's policy frameworks promote teacher learning as a career-long process, the provision of continuous professional development (CPD) for music, especially at the primary level, remains uneven. Expanding access to high-quality, subject-specific CPD and ensuring strong alignment between ITE and in-service provision will be vital. This will be of particular importance in the coming years with changes in both the primary and upper secondary school music curricula about to come on stream. Initiatives such as *Oide* (2026)[7], alongside the Post-Primary Teachers' Association[8] and other professional networks[9], make valuable contributions to CPD, but there is scope for more systematic, sustained and equitable provision.

The co-teaching case presented earlier illustrated the potential for deepening school-university partnerships. This model offers a means to bridge the divide between policy and practice by supporting both preservice and in-service teachers through collaborative, context-responsive learning. It also helps bridge the divide between primary and secondary music education, as these secondary PSTs gain a deeper understanding of primary education. There is scope to develop the co-teaching model and to embed it more systematically within ITE, for example, by also offering structured mentorship training for cooperating teachers. Not only would this further enhance school-university partnerships and provide CPD for classroom teachers (primary and secondary), but it would also adhere to TC recommendations in this regard (The Teaching Council, 2017).

Finally, while existing research provides valuable insights into areas of harmony and disruption in MTE in Ireland, progress in the field will depend on the development of a more robust research base. There is a need for larger-scale, longitudinal, and comparative research that can inform policy and practice more directly. In particular, research that foregrounds issues of access and diversity is crucial in shaping a more responsive and relevant MTE structure.

Taken together, these priorities suggest that "harmony" in MTE lies neither in resolving nor disrupting tensions but in learning from the experience of enduring these challenges, engaging with them, and responding creatively through innovative, promising

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7 *Oide* (meaning "tutor" or "teacher") was established in 2023 by the Department of Education and Youth as a professional learning and support service. It provies subject-specific resources, organises CPD events and updates teachers on curriculum and policy developments.

8 See http://ppmta.ie

9 For example; Society for Music Education in Ireland (https://www.smei.ie); Kodály Ireland (https://www.kodaly.ie); Orff-Schulwerk Association Ireland

practices. As Christophersen et al. observe, "approaching issues of change within teacher education is a complex matter" and should be regarded as a "process rather than an event" (2023, p. 17). For MTE, this process of bridging policy and practice, and navigating ongoing reform, requires more focused research in MTE, a deeper commitment to equity, diversity, and societal change, and, above all, critical dialogue with all stakeholders. In this sense, harmony is not a final resolution, but an ongoing practice of critical, collaborative engagement.

Declaration of AI usage

AI was used to a limited extent in the preparation of this chapter two ways. First, it was used to assist in identifying additional peer-reviewed articles and research around music teacher education in Ireland. Second, it was used to suggest some edits to the text where the word count had been exceeded.

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