



Circular Letter 0028 /2010

**To: The Managerial Authorities of Recognised Secondary, Community,
and Comprehensive Schools
and
The Chief Executive Officers of Vocational Education Committees**

**FRENCH/IRISH TEACHER PROFESSIONAL VISITS SCHEME
FOR REGISTERED TEACHERS IN RECOGNISED
POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

The Minister for Education and Science wishes to advise school management authorities, principals and teachers regarding the pilot French/Irish Teacher Professional Visit Scheme for teachers.

This circular supersedes all previous circulars, memoranda, rules and regulations in relation to teacher exchange between France and Ireland for teachers in recognised post-primary schools.

Please ensure that copies of this circular are provided to all members of the Board of Management/Vocational Education Committee and to bring its contents to the attention of all teachers in your employment including those on leave of absence.

This Circular can be accessed on the Department's website under www.education.ie Home – Education Personnel – Post-Primary – Circulars and Information Booklets – Programmes and Initiatives

All enquiries regarding this circular should be e-mailed to teachersna@education.gov.ie

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French/Irish Teacher Professional Visits Scheme

1. Introduction

The arrangements governing the annual scheme for the exchange of teachers between France and Ireland have been under review. A revised scheme, details of which are given below, will be introduced for Irish teachers on a pilot basis in the school year 2010/2011.

2 Scope and Objectives of Scheme

2.1 The scope of this pilot scheme is limited to a maximum of 18 teachers from France to visit second-level schools in Ireland for two weeks, and for 18 Irish teachers of French to visit second-level schools in France for two weeks on similar terms. However, the visits will not be on a post-to-post exchange basis, as was the case under the previous scheme

2.2 The objective of this scheme is to facilitate applicants where possible in the areas of:

- Professional Development

The revised scheme is to assist Irish teachers in perfecting their knowledge of French and afford them the experience of working in a different educational system through a short-term visit of two weeks duration. The focus of the visit will be on professional development, through observation and participation in the life of the host school.

- Education

To develop school partnerships; the visiting Irish teacher will be expected to carry out an exchange project between their own school and the French host school. The project might typically involve the use of ICTs to support the exchange of information between students on topics such as music, school life, a local town or region. The project element is included in the expectation that there will be real benefits in learning and language development for students in the partner schools.

3 Eligibility

3.1 A teacher may apply for a professional visit where s/he:

- a) is registered with the Teaching Council and
- b) is employed in a recognised second-level school on a permanent basis or under contract of indefinite duration for 22 hours per week or a fixed term contract for 22 hours per week and
- c) is a graduate in French and has at least 2 years' experience of teaching the language.

4 Operation of the Scheme

4.1 A teacher seeking to participate in this scheme should apply by completing the **application form** prescribed by the Department of Education and Science.

- 4.2 Applications (two copies) should reach the Department by the closing date specified on application form. Only applications received on official forms will be considered.
- 4.3 The approval of the school authorities will be required for a teacher to participate in the scheme.
- 4.4 The cost of substitution for participation in this scheme will not be covered by special grants. If substitution is required, it would be open to school authorities to use their substitution budgets for this purpose if they wish to do so. Teachers must arrange their visits at times which will necessitate only one week's absence from their schools during term time by, for example, taking the second week during a time of closure for their home school, such as a mid-term break.
- 4.5 Subject to regular and satisfactory full-time service, the Irish teacher, while on the visit, will continue to receive salary in the usual way. The Irish teacher will, in addition, be paid a tax-free allowance (on presenting supporting receipts) to a maximum of €500 towards travel and accommodation costs. To receive this allowance the teacher will be required to submit the prescribed **claim form** within 6 months of their return. Proof of travel arrangements and certification from host school of having satisfactorily participated in the scheme will be required for payment of the allowance.
- 4.6 Teachers on exchange will be responsible for making their own travel arrangements and for finding suitable accommodation while abroad.
- 4.7 The selection of the school in France to be visited will be made by the French authorities. Account will be taken, where possible, of any preference of the applicant with regard to location or type of school.
- 4.8 Some schools or teachers may have established links with French schools through twinning arrangements. It may be possible to arrange for placement in the twinned school.
- 4.9 Applicants may be required to attend for interview and the applicant will be responsible for any expenses thus incurred.