

**QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED TO TEACH IN  
INSTITUTIONS OF FURTHER EDUCATION**

**Circular Number:  
FE 01/12**

**Date of Issue:  
12 September 2012**

**Target Audience:**

- FE College Governing Bodies and Principals
- FE College Human Resources Directors
- FE College Human Resources Departments

**Summary of Contents:**

This circular outlines the minimum qualifications required, for associate and full-time lecturers, to teach in Further Education Colleges in Northern Ireland.

**Enquiries:**

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**Status of Contents:**

Mandatory

**Related Documents:**

**DE 2007/22**

**Superseded Documents:**

**FE 12/09**

**Expiry Date:**

**N/A**

**DfE website:**

<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/topics/further-education>

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## **Introduction**

1. The Further Education Teachers' (Eligibility) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007 (S.R. 2007 No. 127), as amended, require that every person employed as a Further Education (FE) lecturer must have such qualifications which are approved by the Department for Employment and Learning. This circular outlines the minimum qualification standards for associate and full-time FE lecturers; however, colleges have the discretion to enhance the requirements beyond the minimum.

## **Recognised Teaching Qualifications**

2. Only the following qualifications are recognised for teaching in the Northern Ireland FE Sector:
  - Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), obtained in the UK;
  - Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), obtained in the Republic of Ireland (provided the individual also holds a 'conditional registration' or 'full registration' with the Teaching Council in Ireland);
  - Bachelor of Education Degree (B.Ed), obtained in the UK or the Republic of Ireland;
  - University of Ulster BA (Honours) in Education;
  - BA (Honours) in Education obtained in England (provided the individual also holds a Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) Certificate);
  - BA (Honours) in Education obtained in Scotland or Wales (provided the individual also holds full or provisional registration with their respective Teaching Councils);
  - the Northern Ireland Post Graduate Certificate in Further and Higher Education (PGCFHE);
  - the Northern Ireland Post Graduate Diploma in Further and Higher Education (PGDFHE); and

- the Northern Ireland Post Graduate Certificate in Education (Further Education) (PGCE (Further Education)).
3. In addition, lecturers and teachers, who are currently registered with the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI), are recognised as eligible to teach in the FE Sector in Northern Ireland.
  4. Prospective lecturers who do not hold one of the qualifications listed at paragraph 2 above, may still be eligible to apply for a teaching post, provided they complete the in-service PGCE (Further Education) teaching qualification.
  5. Any new applicants for a teaching post, who hold a teaching qualification, which has been obtained outside the UK and the Republic of Ireland, and which is not listed in this circular, should not be appointed until confirmation has been received from the Department that the qualification is deemed to be acceptable.
  6. Prospective lecturers, who hold a teaching qualification which is not listed in paragraph 2, or acceptable to the Department as a recognised teaching qualification as per paragraph 5, will also be required to undertake and complete the PGCE (Further Education). Consideration will, however, be given to previous qualifications undertaken, and accreditation of prior learning (APL) will be offered where appropriate.

### **The Post Graduate Certificate of Education (Further Education)**

7. The PGCE (Further Education) is fully accredited by the GTCNI and is mapped to the professional competences for teachers in Northern Ireland.

8. Year 1 of the PGCE (Further Education) must be commenced within the first year of appointment. The second year must be successfully completed within the next two years.
9. To be eligible to teach in FE, and to undertake the PGCE (Further Education), lecturers must also meet the general education and experience requirements, as outlined at **Annex A**.
10. Examining and validating bodies may also require teachers to hold specific qualifications as a condition of their approval of a particular College course.

### **Existing Lecturers**

11. Existing lecturers, who are currently employed by an FE College in Northern Ireland, who hold other qualifications, and who are already recognised as qualified lecturers in Northern Ireland Colleges of Further Education, will continue to be so recognised.

### **Former-Lecturers**

12. Former-lecturers, who are no longer employed by a Northern Ireland FE College, and who do not hold the PGCE (FE) or a teaching qualification, as listed in paragraph 2 above, and who do not meet the subject qualification criteria, listed at **Annex A**, will not be recognised as qualified teachers.

**MINIMUM GENERAL EDUCATION AND SUBJECT AREA QUALIFICATIONS  
FOR FE LECTURERS**

**APPLICANTS MUST HAVE:**

GCSE (or any qualification which is deemed to be equivalent) in English (Grade A\* – C) or Essential Skills Level 2 (or higher) in Communication;

GCSE (or any qualification which is deemed to be equivalent) in Maths (Grade A\* – C) or Essential Skills Level 2 (or higher) in Numeracy, or NICATS Access Maths Modules;

**and either**

A university degree in the specialist area in which the applicant is to teach,

defined as follows –

- ✓ a degree obtained at a university in the UK or the Republic of Ireland; or
- ✓ a degree obtained at any other university, provided the Department accepts the standard and content of that degree as equivalent to those stated above; or
- ✓ any qualification gained outside the UK and the Republic of Ireland, deemed by the Department, to be equivalent to a university degree.

**OR**

Three years relevant industrial, professional or business experience;

**AND**

A qualification in the specialist area in which the applicant is to teach. This qualification should be at Level 5 or above on the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) /National Qualifications Framework (NQF) for England and Northern Ireland.