

APPENDIX 7

O.C.G. Exemptions Policy

GUIDELINES FOR OCG EXEMPTION

INTRODUCTION

The Irish Language Requirement

Teachers in national schools must be qualified to teach the range of subjects as outlined in the Primary School Curriculum -1999 (Curaclam na Bunscoile) to children in all classes. The ability to speak Irish proficiently and to use Irish as the language of incidental communication in the classroom is a prerequisite for teaching Irish. Accordingly, teachers who obtained their teaching qualification outside the State and have a curriculum shortfall in Irish must make good this shortfall.

Under the EU Recognition of Professional Qualifications (2005/36/EC) Regulations, 2008, as given effect in S.I. No 139 of 2008, teachers who have a curriculum shortfall in Irish have the choice to make up this shortfall, either by way of an Aptitude Test (SCG – An Scrúdú le hAghaidh Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge) or an Adaptation Period (OCG – Oiriúnú le hAghaidh Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge). In the past, teachers who obtained their primary teaching qualification outside the State undertook the aptitude test, *An Scrúdú le hAghaidh Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge* (SCG), as a means of acquiring the necessary qualification.

The Teaching Council is the designated authority for the recognition of qualifications under the terms of the above EU Directive and the competent authority for the recognition of qualifications obtained outside of the EU. The terms and conditions for employment in recognised schools are determined by the Minister for Education and Science.

Prospective applicants for the OCG (Oiriúnú le hAghaidh Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge – Adaptation Period) are referred to the Irish Language Requirement Website www.ilrweb.ie which outlines the ways in which teachers with a curriculum shortfall for registration purposes in the Irish language can address same.

Prospective applicants seeking to fulfill the Irish Language Requirement (ILR) must be registered with the Teaching Council or have submitted an application for Registration. They must choose between the SCG (An Scrúdú le hAghaidh Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge – Aptitude Test) and the OCG (Oiriúnú le hAghaidh Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge – Adaptation Period). Candidates must inform the Teaching Council of their choice and must ensure that their conditional registration deems them eligible to undertake their choice of SCG or OCG. The candidate must apply to the Irish Language Requirement Office (Coláiste Mhuire, Marino) to undertake the SCG or the OCG.

1. THE IRISH LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT

In order to satisfy the Irish language requirement applicants have two options.

Option 1

- Pass the written, aural, oral and practical elements of the Qualifying Irish Examination (Scrúdú Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge) (SCG) Further information on the SCG may be downloaded from the Irish Language Requirement Website www.ilrweb.ie; and
- Provide certification that they have resided in the Gaeltacht while attending an approved three-week course or its aggregated equivalent either in one-week blocks, or in a combination of one-week and two-week blocks.

Option 2

- Complete the requirements of the Qualifying Irish Adaptation Period (Oiriúnú don Cháilíocht sa Ghaeilge)(OCG), and
- Provide certification that they have resided in the Gaeltacht while attending an approved three-week course or its aggregated equivalent either in one-week blocks, or in a combination of one-week and two-week blocks.

Details of approved Gaeltacht courses for the SCG/OCG are available from the Irish Language Requirement Website www.ilrweb.ie

2. EXEMPTION FROM ELEMENTS OF OCG

Candidates may apply for an exemption from some elements of the OCG where they have already met the essential requirements of those elements and can produce the required documentary evidence to support their application.

2.1 Exemption Criteria

Candidates who have Irish as a major subject of their degree qualification (See paragraph 3) may apply for an exemption from elements of the OCG. Candidates who are granted an exemption will, however, be required to:

- Undertake the Assessment of the Teaching of Irish in the Classroom.
- Comply with the Gaeltacht requirement (See paragraph 4)

Candidates who have already complied with the Gaeltacht requirement may seek an exemption from this element of the OCG programme. Where a candidate is seeking

exemption from part or all of the Gaeltacht requirement (3 weeks) he/she must provide written documentation from the college in which the original degree (where Irish was a major subject) was undertaken, indicating that the week(s) of Gaeltacht attendance for which exemption is/are being sought were undertaken as part of the original degree.

A candidate seeking exemption from the Gaeltacht requirement must have attended the Gaeltacht course in the capacity of a learner.

3. DEGREE REQUIREMENT

The following are important points regarding eligibility for an exemption from the OCG where a candidate presents with Irish as a major subject at primary degree level:

- The candidate must provide documentation (See note below) which establishes that he/she has Irish as a major subject at primary degree level.
- The candidate must provide a copy of the original transcript of their degree qualification.
- The transcript must be clearly legible and must indicate the subjects/modules/components undertaken in each year of the degree qualification and the marks awarded.
- It should be noted that a candidate presenting as having a degree in Irish where in fact the degree is in Celtic Studies is not entitled to exemption. (A degree in Celtic Studies, where much of the work is undertaken through the medium of English, does not equate with a degree in Irish. Therefore a candidate with a degree in Celtic Studies does not qualify to be exempted from any element of the OCG programme.)

4. GAELTACHT REQUIREMENT:

OCG candidates are required to provide certification that they have resided in the Gaeltacht while attending an approved three-week course or its aggregated equivalent either in one-week blocks, or in any combination of one-week and two-week blocks. Details of DES approved Gaeltacht courses are available on the Irish Language Requirement website www.ilrweb.ie. The following specific requirements should be noted:

- The criteria for full recognition require that OCG candidates attend for three weeks at an approved course in the Gaeltacht. **There is no exemption from this requirement.**
- The candidate must reside in the Gaeltacht for the duration of the course.
- The course may be taken while studying for a degree which has Irish as a major subject, or it may be a DES approved course taken when the candidate commences the OCG programme.
- Candidates should note that week(s) spent on a Gaeltacht course in the capacity of a ceannaire/cinnire/teacher giving instruction, or any other ancillary role, may not be reckoned for exemption purposes.

Summary of OCG requirements where candidates have been granted an exemption

	Element	Detail
A	The Assessment of the Teaching of Irish in the Classroom.	School-based evaluation based on minimum of two school visits by supervisor. Candidate must be in continuous employment in a mainstream class teacher capacity for a minimum of 120 days in the academic year in which this module is taken.
B	Gaeltacht Course Requirement	Attend for 3 weeks at an approved Gaeltacht course

Prospective Candidates should refer to the OCG Guide which is available to download from the Irish Language Requirement website www.ilrweb.ie for further details of the specific requirements listed above.

Full details and guidance on the above requirements are provided in the OCG textbook 'Sruth na Maoile' which is available from the Irish Language Requirement Office, Coláiste Mhuire, Marino Institute of Education, Griffith Avenue, Dublin 9. 01 8535134 ocginfo@mie.ie

5. APPLYING FOR THE OCG

Prospective candidates wishing to apply for the OCG should do so on the OCG APPLICATION FORM which may be downloaded from the Irish Language Requirement Website www.ilrweb.ie. If also applying for an exemption, the candidate should indicate accordingly in the relevant section on the OCG APPLICATION FORM and should complete the EXEMPTION APPLICATION section of the OCG APPLICATION FORM. Candidates applying for an exemption should apply for the Assessment of the Teaching

of Irish module.

6. NOTIFICATION OF DECISION

Prospective candidates who complete and submit the OCG EXEMPTION APPLICATION section of the OCG APPLICATION FORM and enclose the necessary documentation will normally be notified of a decision within 6 weeks of submitting the request for exemption.

NOTE

It is the responsibility of the eligible candidate to apply for the exemption at the appropriate time and to provide the necessary documentation as requested in the EXEMPTION APPLICATION section of the OCG APPLICATION FORM. While clear copies of transcripts will suffice, the Irish Language Requirement Office may request a candidate to provide original documentation. In circumstances where original documentation is requested, it will be returned to the candidate in due course.