

# Educational Psychology in Ireland

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## Presentation overview

- What is Educational Psychology?
- Becoming an Educational Psychologist
- Where do Educational Psychologist work?
- What do Educational Psychologist do?

## What is Educational Psychology

### Educational Psychology

- Educational psychologists deal with the psychological and educational development of people in the education system. This may include students of any age, their parents or guardians and the people who work with them. Their work can involve both assessment and intervention within the education setting. They are also likely to be involved in training and research on related issues.

## Becoming an Educational Psychologist

- Primary degree in psychology (2.1 +)
- Post-graduate qualification in Educational Psychology
- Some courses require a teaching qualification
- Chances of getting a place on a course can be enhanced +:
  - Teaching experience or experience working with young people in an educational setting
  - Experience working with students with disabilities
  - Additional academic qualifications

### Courses are currently offered in Ireland in:

- Queen's University, Belfast
- University College Dublin
- Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick

## Training

- **MA in Educational Psychology, UCD**
  - Two year course – two academic years. Information available from the UCD website under: "schoolofeducationandlifelonglearning" link
  - Current intake – 20 . September 2011 intake – 18 places
- **Doctorate in Educational, Child & Adolescent Psychology, QUB**
  - Three years full time with placements including overseas elective
  - September 2011 intake – 6 places
- **MA in Educational Psychology, Mary Immaculate College/NUI Limerick**
  - 2 year course – began in September 2010 (10 places)
  - Next intake – September 2012
- **PhD for existing practitioners – Feb 2009 – UCD**

Teaching qualification no longer required for above courses.  
Only the Doctorate in QUB is funded – with requirement to work for a period following qualification in the sponsoring Education and Library Board

## What is considered for access to a training course?

- Intellectual Ability
- Personal Qualities
- Readiness for Training
- Interview process important
- Previous experience important

## Course overview

- **Taught course:**
  - The distinctive contribution of the Educational Psychologist to education and psychology
  - Human development and psychological well-being across the life-span
  - Understanding educational systems at both the practical and systemic levels including understanding the school as a system
  - Assessment and evidence based learning
  - Test evaluation, development and practice
  - Educational disadvantage and special educational needs

## Taught Course (contin)

- Research methods and design
- Professional, ethical and legal Issues
- Multi-disciplinary and inter-professional collaboration
- Counselling and other therapeutic interventions in various contexts (inc. Consultation skills)
- Curriculum and pedagogy at all levels of schooling
- Cultural diversity – its educational implications
- Change management and organisational development
- Effective oral and written communication skills

## Placement

### Supervised placement experience in the following skill areas:

- Use of observation skills in education and care settings
- Assessment and report- writing
- Evidence based interventions
- Provision of practical and relevant support appropriate to a client's needs
- Recommendation of appropriate strategies and suggestions for a client which are realistic and functional
- Research
- Evaluation of practice
- Consultancy, facilitation and systems work
- Collaboration with children and young people, parents, professionals and other agencies
- Presentation skills
- CPD training to other professionals and client groups
- Involvement of client as appropriate

## The 8 key professional competences

The 8 Key Professional Competences	
1. <b>Research and Evaluation</b>	finding out what works best in and for service provision
2. <b>Training and supervision</b>	enabling service providers to improve service delivery
3. <b>Prevention</b>	current action to prevent future problems
4. <b>Consultation and problem-solving</b>	enabling others to solve problems

## Contd.

5. <b>Joint working</b>	working together to solve problems which cannot be solved working alone
6. <b>Psychological therapy and methods of intervention</b>	direct work with children and young people or their parents and teachers to promote positive change
7. <b>Psychological assessment and advice</b>	assessing complex problems with a view to achieving improvement
8. <b>Systemic/organisational change and development</b>	using psychological methods to facilitate change in a school, family, organisation or community.

## Employment settings

- National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)
  - 174 approx employed currently. Cap placed on numbers = 178 as part of 4 year plan for National Recovery
  - Recruited regionally
  - Work in schools
- VEC – County and City of Dublin – small number – 2<sup>nd</sup> level only
- Health Service Executive (HSE)
  - Under the heading of Community Psychologist
  - May work in Child Guidance or in Disability services
  - May work in special schools, units
  - May work in multi-disciplinary teams.
- Education and Library Boards, NI, (and other statutory/voluntary settings).

## Employment settings (continued)

- Voluntary Agencies (e.g. St Michael's House, Brothers of Charity)
  - May work in schools, the community, with parents or on a referral basis
  - May be part of a multi-disciplinary team working with persons with disabilities
- Private Practice:
  - Usually involves psychometric assessment
  - May involve contract work in schools
- Academic institutions:
  - Course design, lecturing, supervision
  - Disability support

## The range of work (1)

- Consultative work:
  - Working with teachers to help them work with pupils appropriately:
    - Problem-solving regarding teaching style, behaviour management, programme planning
    - Input to IEPs (Individual Educational Plans)
    - In-service with groups of teachers
    - Helping whole school staffs develop policies e.g. anti-bullying, critical incident management, behaviour management strategies/approaches
    - Helping teachers screen for, identify and intervene with pupils with learning and/or emotional or behavioural difficulties

## Range of work (2)

- Working with individual pupils:
  - Assessment
    - Observation
    - Interpretation of data collated (test results, teacher plans, IEP reviews, professional reports)
    - Psychometric assessment
    - Assessment of attainment/ developmental milestones reached
    - Use of inventories, interview protocols with pupil, parent, teachers
  - Statutory requirements:
    - Depends on the Implementation of two new laws – the Disability Act (under 5s) + EPSEN Act (deferred)
    - In N. Ireland statutory assessment is in place

## Range of work (3)

- Intervention:
  - Whole school emphasis – supporting schools
  - Designing/ advising on intervention programmes
  - Supporting teachers/others in implementing them
  - Helping with planning and review
  - Keeping up-to-date with the literature and best practice in terms of intervention programmes
  - Counselling pupils or providing supervision to guidance counsellors to do so
  - Heading up a team for interventions (e.g. with out of school pupils, pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties)
  - Upskilling teachers in interventions e.g. social skills groups
- Critical Incidents – supporting schools and parents

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## Prospects

- Starting Salary (approx)  
£32,000+ or 56,000 +euro

Opportunities for progression:

- Senior Specialist Posts
- Senior Management Psychologist
- Principal Educational Psychologist/ Regional Director
- Education Administration Posts (N.Irl)
- Professional and Academic Tutor Posts