



Important information for your school community regarding Brexit

Introduction

This notification is intended to give your school some information about the impacts of Brexit on our education system.

The withdrawal from the EU of the UK will bring change to many aspects of Irish life.

While ratification of the Withdrawal Agreement is still the Government's preferred outcome, a series of Government initiatives is underway, both nationally and in conjunction with the EU, in preparation for the possibility that the UK fails to agree a deal for their departure from the EU on 31st October.

Many of the arrangements in place between the UK and Ireland regarding education relate to the Common Travel Area (CTA) with the UK.

Common Travel Area

Every day, pupils and young people from Ireland and the UK travel to school in either jurisdiction. This is a matter of choice for families, as to what works best for them, and this choice will continue to be facilitated under the CTA after the UK leaves the EU. There is no need for any additional actions on the part of school authorities.

In May 2019, the Irish and UK Governments signed a Memorandum of Understanding on the CTA, which notes, among other issues that:

"the CTA affords Irish and British citizens the right of access to all levels of education and training, and associated student support in each other's State on terms no less favourable than those for citizens of that State."

Further information on the CTA is available from the Government of Ireland website at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/a7ba02-brexite-info/>

The CTA also provides clarity for those pupils who are seeking to pursue their higher education in the UK. Irish students will still be eligible for the same rate of fees as British students in the UK. The usual SUSI grant rules will continue to apply Irish students in the UK.

The Central Applications Office and State Examinations Commission are working with UK counterparts to ensure smooth continuity of the applications process. Further information will be provided by those bodies as it becomes available.

Teacher Staff and Qualifications

Under the CTA, UK citizens have the right to work in Ireland without any additional requirements such as visas or work permits.

In terms of qualifications, teaching qualifications from EU Member States are covered under the EU Directives on Professional Qualifications. Once the UK exits from the EU, the Directive will not apply to them. However, The Teaching Council will continue to recognise UK teaching qualifications for the purposes of registration.

All appointments should continue to be made in accordance with Departmental **Circular 0044/2019**.

For information about recognition of teaching qualifications gained outside of Ireland, or entry to post-graduate teaching courses, please visit the website of The Teaching Council at www.teachingcouncil.ie

Erasmus

The EU's Erasmus+ 2014-2020 programme provides funding for a range of international education and training projects, including student and staff mobility and exchanges, job shadowing, teaching assignments, and strategic partnerships between organisations. The EU has decided that students on existing mobilities at the date of Brexit will be permitted to complete their exchange and continue to be funded to do so.

In the event of a No Deal exit, the programme will continue to operate fully for Ireland and the EU Member States, and schools' participation in future Strategic Partnerships under this programme must be framed accordingly. The UK will be no longer eligible to participate in the programme.

More detailed information is available from the EU Commission's website at <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about/brexit>

Data Protection and GDPR

In the event of a 'No-Deal' Brexit, the UK will become what is known as a 'third country', and the European Commission has clarified that it will be some time before an adequacy decision will be made for the UK. Therefore, data on pupils or school staff should not be transferred to the UK unless appropriate safeguards are in place. This includes the use of school applications such as learning applications, pupil/ staff records, finance applications, time-tabling instances where the data may be 'hosted' in the UK.

Further information on this is available from Data Protection Commission's website at <https://www.dataprotection.ie/en/news-media/podcasts/know-your-data-brexit-and-data-protection>

Conclusion

The Department of Education and Skills will continue to provide information to support schools in the lead up to a No Deal Brexit and will provide updates as necessary. Further information on covering issues such as dealing with suppliers and on managing building projects that may be impacted by Brexit will follow at a later date.

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