



An Roinn Oideachais  
Department of Education

## SFI Public Service Fellowship 2023

<b>1. Name of Governmental Department or Agency</b>
Department of Education - Researcher to be seconded to Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST), Technology in Education team (TiE), a support service for teachers directly reporting to Teacher Education: Policy and Digital in the Department of Education.
<b>2. Title of the Project</b>
<b>DOE2</b> Responding to artificial intelligence in primary and post-primary education: Empowering educators to be AI-ready
<b>3. Description of the Project</b>
<p>PDST TiE's remit is to support schools with implementing and embedding digital technologies into classroom practice. PDST TiE has the responsibility to support all teachers in all schools and fulfils this through a comprehensive CPD framework that marries the best of face-to-face and online provision.</p> <p>In the context of this project, PDST TiE is presently participating in a three-year erasmus+ funded project, AI4T: Artificial Intelligence for and by Teachers. This three-year experimental endeavour aims to explore and support the use of AI in education. The AI4T measure consists of implementing innovative teacher training methods designed to meet AI's challenges in education.</p> <p>This project will identify the current readiness of schools to adopt and integrate AI technologies, provide insights into how schools can better leverage AI, and indicate how policymakers can support this change in education.</p> <p>Whatever view we take about the power of AI, it is crystal clear that AI is changing the way we live and work (Posner &amp; Fei Fei, 2020). In the three short years since this assertion, this level of 'change' has surpassed all expectations, with the explosion of generative AI infrastructure and generative AI applications. We witness AI's transformative power daily across various industries, such as healthcare, finance, and transportation.</p> <p>In the context of education, an increasing number of AI applications are available to education and training organisations. This increasing adoption and availability of AI demonstrates the urgent need for educators to understand more about effective, well-designed, ethical AI. The expansion of AI for education and training can be daunting for those involved in designing and delivering education provision in schools, colleges and universities (Walia &amp; Kumar, 2022), and it is important that we determine the readiness of schools to leverage AI and support schools with policy, regulations, guidelines, and professional development.</p>

#### 4. Project Scope

The scope of the project to research AI readiness in the school sector is broad and multifaceted. The project involves identifying the current state of readiness of schools to adopt and integrate AI technologies into their curriculums, as well as developing strategies and recommendations for effective integration. It will require a range of research activities, the development of a thoughtfully considered project plan, and the implementation of effective project management strategies.

#### 5. Skills/Expertise Required

Researchers should be knowledgeable and skilled in areas including mixed methods research, curriculum design, digital competency, and the integration of digital technology. It is also important to be conversant with AI concepts, tools, and methodologies.

The ability to develop, implement, and analyse quantitative and qualitative research instruments and evaluate the collected data is necessary for performing the research. Researchers need to be adept at data collection, analysis, and critical thinking. This includes the capacity to identify research gaps and suggest solutions for addressing them. Additionally, individuals should be able to communicate their findings effectively to stakeholders, including school administrators and policymakers.

Researchers should have a strong understanding of the policies and regulations governing the use of AI and digital technologies in education. This includes knowledge of privacy and security regulations, ethical considerations, and best practices for integrating AI and digital technologies in schools.

Additionally, anyone researching AI preparation in the education sector needs to have a strong understanding of digital competence and the integration of digital technologies. It would enable them to efficiently evaluate how prepared schools are to adopt AI technology, find ways to incorporate these technologies into the classroom and develop strategies to enhance digital equity and access.

#### 6. Expected Outputs of Project

**Report:** A report on the current state of AI readiness in the school sector: This report could summarise the findings from the research, providing insights into the readiness of schools to integrate AI.

**Policy recommendations:** The research could identify policy recommendations to support the adoption and integration of AI in the education sector. These recommendations could focus on infrastructure, regulations, and funding requirements.

**Guidelines for integrating AI into the classroom:** Based on the research findings, guidelines could be developed that provide practical advice for teachers and school administrators on how to effectively integrate AI into the classroom.

**Professional development resources:** The research could identify areas where teachers and administrators need additional training and resources to effectively integrate AI into the classroom. This could inform the development of professional development resources for the sector.

<b>7. Working Arrangements</b>
--------------------------------

PDST TiE currently implements hybrid working arrangements. Staff work a minimum of 40 % of their time in the head office on DCU ALPHA Campus, D11 KXN4
--

<b>8. Expected Timeline</b>
-----------------------------

12 months full-time or 24 months part-time.
---

<b>9. Contact Details</b>
---------------------------

Anthony Kilcoyne- Deputy Director for Digital Technology
--