



**Two funded PhD Studentships opportunities available at the Faculty of Education and Health Sciences, University of Limerick to undertake a doctoral programme in the context of the *Teachers' Professional Journeys (TPJ) Longitudinal Study: The First Decade (2024-30)***

The longitudinal study is funded by the Teaching Council (Ireland) and the Department of Education to a research consortium comprising the University of Limerick (UL), the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI), Dublin and Mary Immaculate College (MIC), Limerick with UL as lead. The longitudinal study comprises a team of researchers from UL, the ESRI and MIC.

For the duration of these studentships (2025-29), the successful candidates will be based at the School of Education in UL. They will be supervised by Prof. Paul Conway, Prof. Aisling Leavy (MIC) and Prof. Emer Smyth (ESRI) and will work with the wider research team across all phases of the study. The PhD studentships are aligned with the strategic research theme professional education/practice in the Faculty of Education and Health Sciences, UL. The overall aim of the study is to understand teachers' professional journeys (in their first 10 years of teaching) by examining the key personal, educational, professional and systemic influences that define and shape their early careers and practice, including the impact of different learning and professional development phases. Further information on the study is available at the TPJ website: [www.tpjstudy.ie](http://www.tpjstudy.ie)

Using a longitudinal mixed methods study design comprising surveys (3 waves) and semi-structured interviews (one-to-one and focus group), TPJ explores the experiences of teachers via surveys (e.g. teacher efficacy, commitment, quality of work/learning environment, resilience) and direct virtual/online engagements with teachers using a one-to-one/focus group interview processes and innovative techniques such as drawings.

There are two 4-year PhD studentship positions starting in September 2025. Both PhD opportunities focus on teachers' professional journeys in Ireland in the context of a major, first-of-its-kind, longitudinal study (mixed methods) from 2024-2030. Prospective candidates should be conversant with quantitative statistical methods (Project 1), or qualitative or mixed methods (Project 2) and be committed to professional education/teaching/workplace learning and development.

**Two PhD projects are available as follows:**

- **Project 1:** You will be supported in using longitudinal data from TPJ. You will aim to understand how and why teachers progress through the first decade of teaching in the

context of a range of factors, including: teacher prior experience and demographics, teachers attitudes/beliefs, school organisational culture and systemic influences. The project will apply quantitative statistical methods to understand the nature of teachers' professional journeys (including teacher supply), impacting practice and outcomes (e.g. commitment, teaching efficacy, resilience) of teachers' professional learning and development.

- **Project 2:** You will be supported in using longitudinal data from TPJ. You will aim to understand how and why teachers progress through the first decade of teaching in the context of a range of factors including teacher prior experience and demographics, teachers attitudes/beliefs, school organisational culture and systemic influences. The project will primarily apply qualitative methods to understand the nature of teachers' professional journeys during their first decade in the profession.

Both PhD projects provide an exciting opportunity to engage with teachers in the first decade of the professional life-cycle to understand their professional journeys at classroom, school and system levels.

Candidates for the respective studentships must at least meet the **essential criteria** below.

### **PhD project 1**

- 2.1 undergraduate degree (or equivalent) in a relevant discipline, e.g., psychology, sociology, education, or allied health professions.
- a MSc-level degree in a relevant subject (e.g. quantitative social sciences, statistics, or equivalent). The study provides training in applying advanced statistical methods (such as Structural Equation Modelling, Latent Class Analysis and/or Multi-level Modelling). You should be able to demonstrate competencies in statistics, be conversant with multivariable regression approaches (e.g. logistic regression), and work in at least one of these: SPSS, STATA, R, MPLUS.
- You should have a strong understanding of education, demonstrated through prior undergraduate/ postgraduate training or equivalent.
- Relevant professional experience will also be considered.
- You should be committed to understanding and engaging with teachers and education system stakeholders in the work.
- All candidates must be fluent in English and have good writing skills.

### **PhD project 2**

- 2.1 undergraduate degree (or equivalent) in a relevant discipline e.g. psychology, sociology, education and allied health professions.
- Training and/or experience in the collection and analysis of qualitative data
- You should have a strong understanding of education, demonstrated through prior undergraduate/ postgraduate training or equivalent.
- Relevant professional experience will also be considered.
- You should be committed to understanding and engaging with teachers and education system stakeholders in the work.
- All candidates must be fluent in English and have good writing skills.

The PhD student ship will include a stipend of €22,000 and EU fees for 4 years (September 1 2025-August 30th 2029). For non EU applicants, a non-EU fee waiver may also be available but this cannot be guaranteed (a difference of approximately €6000 per annum).

To apply, please submit your application to: [genco.guralp@ul.ie](mailto:genco.guralp@ul.ie)

- Curriculum vitae,
- A targeted cover letter, i.e. expressing your suitability for the position vis-à-vis the essential criteria and why you wish to pursue a PhD in the area of teachers' professional journeys,
- One or more samples of written work (e.g. thesis, paper, essay) and
- Two letters of reference electronically.

Candidates should indicate whether they wish to apply for project 1 and/or project 2.

The closing date for applications is **12 noon** (Irish Standard Time) **Monday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2025**.

We reserve the right not to make an award.

Please note that interviews will be arranged for late February/early March. Informal enquiries may be addressed to Prof. Paul Conway by email: [paul.conway@ul.ie](mailto:paul.conway@ul.ie) **AND** CC Dr. Genco Guralp, TPJ Research Project Manager: [genco.guralp@ul.ie](mailto:genco.guralp@ul.ie)