

‘Garda Vetting’ for Researchers in the School of Education, TCD

This document has been written to ensure that all researchers in the School of Education are aware of and are compliant with the provisions of the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012 in relation to the conduct of research with children and vulnerable individuals and groups.

1. The Act states that ‘Any work or activity which is carried out by a person, a necessary and regular part of which consists mainly of the person having access to, or contact with children [vulnerable persons] in....’ [Schedule 1, Parts 1, 2] schools, hospitals, care units etc. must be registered for Garda vetting. In regard to research, the Act includes ‘[A]ny research work or activities (howsoever described) carried out in a university, institute of technology, or other establishment at which third level education is provided where a necessary and regular part of the research work or activity involves contact with or access to children [vulnerable persons].’ [Schedule 1, Parts 1, 2]

Therefore, **full time** researchers at Masters’ and Ph.D./D.Ed. levels whose research involves regular contact with children and vulnerable persons are required to seek and/or hold Garda Vetting through the institution/school at which the full-time research is being conducted or through the School of Education, TCD, as their field work should be considered to fall under the this definition of relevant work. The Garda Vetting process should be completed before any full-time researcher enters the field.

2. Research work carried out by part-time Masters’ students in the course of a taught Masters’ dissertation that requires only **irregular contact** with children and/or vulnerable persons on no more than a 2-3 occasions do not need to seek Garda clearance, but the nature of the any contact must be revealed in good time through the Research Ethics process, so that the student has received advice on the matter.
3. For Masters’ students who are teachers and who are engaged in minor research within their own school and who **hold** Garda clearance as teachers, their research is considered not to be their main work or activity under the Act and therefore do not need to seek further clearance. However, for those teachers engaged in minor research within their own school who **do not hold** Garda clearance, this must be obtained before undertaking any research with children and/or vulnerable person.
4. Part-time doctoral students carrying out research with children and/or vulnerable persons within their own institutions of employment and for whose main work and activities and they **hold** Garda clearance are also not required to seek further clearance for the conduct of part-time research.

5. Part-time doctoral students who intend to conduct research with children and/or vulnerable persons in an institution/school in which they are not employed **are required to seek Garda clearance either through the institution and/or the School of Education.**
6. All research students are required to follow the Research Ethics procedures in the School of Education and no research fieldwork is to be undertaken until research ethics approval has been granted.
7. **Any student found in breach of the above or of the research ethics procedures of the School may be subject to disciplinary proceedings within College.**