An Chomhairle Náisiúnta
um Oideachas Speisialta
National Council
for Special Education

The NCSE Practice-Based Research Programme



Introduction

The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) Practice-Based Research (PBR) Programme supports teachers and schools in undertaking research focused on inclusion and special education. The programme aims to strengthen the research knowledge, skills, and capacity of practising educators by enabling them to conduct small-scale research projects within their own school settings.

Through this work, participants explore issues relevant to their practice and use evidence-informed approaches to enhance teaching, learning, and educational experiences for all learners, particularly those with additional educational needs.

The NCSE is collaborating with several Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to provide training and support for participating teachers undertaking Practice-Based Research (PBR) projects. Throughout the programme, the HEIs will deliver a series of training sessions, either online or in person, providing teachers with flexible opportunities to develop their research skills and apply evidence-informed approaches within their practice.



The programme aims to support the dissemination of effective practice and foster continuous improvement in inclusive and special education. In addition, the NCSE will share the learning and outcomes from these projects through the development of a Practice-Based Research Repository, making research summaries and examples of effective practice accessible to the wider education community.

How will it work?

- Schools that would like to participate in the programme contact the NCSE research section (research@ncse.ie). NCSE staff and HEI's may also invite schools to participate.
- Each school is paired with a HEI, and each HEI supports several schools.
- Training and support sessions are offered to schools throughout the PBR programme across each phase of the research including; research design, ethics, data analysis and writing.
- Each school is asked to complete the research within one school year, but the timeframe needed may be shorter, depending on the research undertaken.
- The PBR programme is not available to support post-graduate studies and must be linked to inclusive practice within the school.

Step 1 How to Apply



Each school will complete a short application form, available from the NCSE.

The HEI will support each school to develop a research idea to be outlined on an application form. The application must be signed by the school principal before submission to the NCSE. Each application is reviewed by the NCSE Research Committee, and the NCSE will inform each school when their application is approved.

Research topics must focus on **inclusion, special education** or other areas of educational practice that have the potential to impact positively on students with special educational needs. Each school has discretion to choose their topic.

Projects could be linked to one or more of the following themes:

- Curriculum and pedagogy
- Learner outcomes and/or experiences
- Learning and teaching
- Transitions
- Supports and resources
- Leadership and management
- Universal Design for Learning
- A topic identified through Looking at Our School Framework, School Self-Evaluation or a School Inspection Report.

Step 2 Training and Preparation



The Higher Education Institution (HEI) and participating school will agree a schedule of training and support sessions to be delivered throughout the duration of the programme. Training will be aligned with the different phases of the research process, ensuring that participants receive guidance and support at each stage of their project.

Initial sessions may focus on areas such as research methods, ethical considerations, and conducting literature reviews. As the project progresses, further training may address topics including research design, the development of research instruments, data collection and analysis, academic writing, and the use of research evidence to inform and enhance practice.

Schools are welcome to draw on existing sources of data where appropriate. This may include data already being collected through school initiatives and processes, such as School Self-Evaluation (SSE), thereby supporting a coherent and practical approach to research within the school setting.

Step 3 Conducting your Research



Each school has up to one school year to undertake the research project. Projects may be completed in a shorter timeline (one or two terms) depending on the topic and the type of research. The HEI continues to support each school while the research project is ongoing.

Step 4 Concluding your Research



Once the research is complete, the school must submit a one-page research summary on their findings to the NCSE. A template for the research summary is provided.

Step 5 Dissemination of the Research



The NCSE is committed to sharing and disseminating the learning emerging from the Practice-Based Research (PBR) Programme to enhance teaching and learning experiences, strengthen teacher knowledge, and promote effective practice in inclusive and special education settings.

The NCSE website will feature a dedicated Practice-Based Research section, where research summaries from participating schools will be available. These summaries will showcase examples of effective practice and provide valuable insights for educators seeking to strengthen inclusive teaching and learning approaches.

A selection of participating schools will be invited to develop a poster presentation for display at the annual NCSE Research Conference. These presentations will highlight research findings, share schools' experiences of participating in the programme, and showcase examples of effective practice. The conference offers an opportunity for educators to network with colleagues, exchange ideas, and contribute to the growing evidence base that supports inclusion and special education.

For more information contact **research@ncse.ie**

Notes

An Chomhairle Náisiúnta
um Oideachas Speisialta
National Council
for Special Education

