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**Sent:** 22 June 2018 03:14:08

**To:** James Noble-Rogers

**Subject:** Department of Education and Skills

Mr. James Noble-Rogers

[J.Noble-Rogers@ucet.ac.uk](mailto:J.Noble-Rogers@ucet.ac.uk)

PLEASE QUOTE REF NUMBER ON ALL CORRESPONDENCE.

Our Ref: CU00580-2018

Dear Mr. Noble-Rogers,

The Minister for Education and Skills, Richard Bruton TD, has asked me to refer to your letter of 27 April 2018 to An Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar TD, which was passed to this Department for response on the funding arrangements for the Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South (SCoTENS).

The Minister has asked me in particular to acknowledge the very considerable contribution that SCoTENS has made since its establishment in the fields of sponsored research and themed conferences on aspects of teacher education North and South, as well as through its programme of student teacher exchanges.

Successive Ministers for Education have supported SCoTENS over the years, allocating some €635,000 in Exchequer funds to assist its work in the period 2003-2018. This includes an allocation of €30,000 which the Minister is providing for SCoTENS' activity this year, which is made available to the Centre for Cross-border Studies which supplies the secretariat to SCoTENS.

The Minister notes the concerns that you have brought to his attention arising from the decision of the Northern Ireland Department of Education not to provide funding for SCoTENS for the 2017/18 financial year. A similar decision by that Department in respect of 2018/19 has since been notified. These decisions, it is understood, stem from the exceptional circumstances that have arisen in the political system in Northern Ireland. In this context, the Irish and British governments are working to achieve the restoration of the normal functioning of the political institutions and budgetary processes in that jurisdiction at the earliest possible date.

In the meantime, Departmental officials will continue to engage with their counterparts in Northern Ireland with a view to mitigating the impacts of budgetary cutbacks there on cross-border cooperation in education, including the work of SCoTE.

Yours sincerely

Derek Newcombe

Private Secretary