Dear Colleague,

I am writing to thank you for your efforts in Initial Teacher Training (ITT) recruitment last year- there were 34,595 new trainee teachers starting in 2018, which is over 2,600 (8%) more trainees than in 2017.

It is of course vital that we ensure every candidate that is suitable to train to teach has the best possible chance of receiving an offer. In particular, while we know that competition for employment based courses is high, and schools must carefully manage risk, we are concerned that rejection rates appear high. For example 55% of applications to secondary School Direct (salaried) courses were rejected during the last cycle. We also noted that at the end of the 2018/19 cycle there were nearly 10,000 'Rejections by Default' where applications were not processed within the 40 day limit (or 20 day limit over summer). There may be a range of factors which have contributed to this figure, but it does not translate into a positive experience for candidates.

In the coming months, we want to continue to work with you to gain insight into candidate selection practices, and to better understand why an ITT candidate may not be accepted onto a course. To do this, we will continue to review application rejection rates, and review these with you should they appear to be higher than sector norms. I would also like to remind you that the clarification we made to the ITT criteria last year relating to school experience continues to apply in this cycle. School experience should not be set as a requirement for entry to ITT – candidates should be accepted or rejected on the basis of their readiness to train to teach. We do recognise the value of school experience and you can of course continue to recommend it. The Department continues to assist candidates to get experience through our School Experience Programme and Internship programmes which supported c13,000 people last year.

We are also asking for your support to **improve the accuracy of submitted rejections and withdrawals data.** UCAS has a range of options which draw a distinction between '*rejected'*, '*withdrawn'*, and '*not considered'* applications. '*Withdrawn*' should be used when candidates fail to attend an interview, or do not reply to any communications. '*Not considered*' should be used if you cannot consider a candidate because your training programme is full. You should ensure that your training programme is closed on UCAS if your programme is full so that candidates are able to make applications to organisations who are still accepting trainees. UCAS also has a '*free text box*' where you can provide feedback to help candidates better understand why they have been unsuccessful in their application. Further information is available in the attached UCAS Guide.

We would also ask you to encourage potential applicants to make use of the free Teacher Training Adviser service. Advisers can now help candidates making applications to all courses (except PE) and if candidates have already worked out their choices, advisers will help tailor their support accordingly. For example, offering a second pair of eyes to proof read a personal statement. This includes supporting candidates who were unsuccessful at Apply 1 to continue to make applications through Apply 2. Data shows that of the 13,000 candidates across all routes who did not receive an offer at Apply1, only around 5,000 went on to make a further application at Apply 2. This is particularly important for highly competitive employment-based courses where some unsuccessful candidates may have potential to succeed on another route or with another school.

Thank you for your continued hard work on ITT recruitment. We look forward to working with you throughout the 2019/20 recruitment cycle.



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