Promoting Quality in Teacher Education

ucet
Universities' Council for the Education of Teachers

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Rt. Hon Anne Milton MP
Minister of State for Apprenticeships and Skills
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3BT

Dear Minister,

Teacher education for the learning and skills sector

The purpose of this letter is to share our concern about the continued lack of oversight and quality control over many of the teaching qualifications that are available to those wanting to teach in FE colleges and elsewhere in the learning & skills sector.

It was previously a requirement that teachers in the sector held a recognised teaching qualification such as a PGCE, Cert Ed or a Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (DTTLS). This requirement was (mistakenly, in our view) removed as part of the de-regulation of the sector that followed publication of Lord Lingfield's Professionalism in the FE sector report in 2014.

Despite the de-regulation, a new de-facto recognised teaching qualification, the 120 credit Level 5 Diploma in Education and Training (DET) was developed and received support from across the sector and from government and its agencies. The DET continues to be popular and, where it is delivered by higher education institutions or by colleges as part of HEI franchises, is in all cases rated by OFSTED as either being 'good' or 'very good'. There is no question that learners benefit from being taught by teachers trained through the DET where this is delivered in a robust and properly quality assured way.

Our concern, however, is that a number of unregulated and often private providers have made use of the loopholes offered to them by de-regulation and are exploiting those wanting to teach in the sector by offering cut price DETs at a couple of hundred pounds a time with little or no direct instruction or supervised teaching practice. Programmes of this kind cannot possibly equip people to become effective teachers.

To protect learners, teachers and institutions we would request that all DET programmes be subject to external and independent inspection by OFSTED. This should include those delivered by all awarding bodies which, although often of good quality, should nonetheless be subject to the same QA processes as those delivered through HE – college partnerships.

We would in time like to see a reintroduction of a formal requirement that teachers in the sector either hold, or are working towards, a recognised teaching qualification delivered by registered and accredited providers. This is something that we would welcome the opportunity of discussing with you in more detail.

Yours sincerely,



James Noble-Rogers
Executive Director
UCET