**UCET Values & Principles**

**Preamble**

We recognise that high quality teaching is a challenging, complex and intellectual endeavour and it is exactly these qualities that make it such an appealing profession. The evidence shows that the single most influential factor in improving pupil learning is the quality of teaching. Initial teacher education is the starting place to ensure high quality teachers. There is a substantial evidence base about both high-quality teaching and high quality teacher education and it is imperative that all teacher education provision builds on this evidence base. Universities are uniquely placed to do this and more.

Universities perform a unique role in society which is to foreground the relentless pursuit of truth and the robustness of knowledge above all other concerns. Unencumbered by corporate or ideological interests the university seeks to offer a grounded and reasoned perspective on the best possible knowledge available at any given time. Universities are trusted authorities with confidence to speak truth to power, who ask challenging and open questions and provide reasoned solutions based on robust evidence. Universities also have a role in verifying the authenticity of claims made by others to ensure that the fields of inquiry are the best of what we know at that point in time. It is precisely these responsibilities that give universities a unique role in teacher education that goes beyond the ‘training’ of teachers but sees teacher education as a multidisciplinary field of inquiry, and a source of knowledge generation and verification that fulfils a pressing and fundamental need in society. That is to ensure the development of a profession made up of the best quality teachers who are able to shape the best quality education for us all.

High quality teacher education equips educators with the necessary competences to provide good quality education for their learners that helps them reach successful outcomes.

*High quality teacher education*

* *encourages a lifelong commitment to the education profession*
* *conceptualises teachers as intellectuals who take an enquiring stance to their work and make meaningful contributions to the professional knowledge base (Hagger & McIntyre, 2006)*
* *is underpinned by a commitment to transparency, integrity and a contribution to excellence*
* *draws on a wide body of knowledge, emanating from various stances and a robust research evidence base (Brouwer and Korthagen, 2005; Hagger & McIntyre, 2006; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Ingvarson et al, 2014)*
* *accepts that knowledge is contested, contestable (Korthagen, Loughran & Russell, 2006)*
* *is embedded in ethical practice (Ingvarson et al, 2014)*
* *pays careful attention to the factors that promote healthy learning environment for teachers and learners*
* *contextualises the role of the teacher within wider local, regional, national and international contexts (Hagger & McIntyre, 2006)*
* *has a positive, transformational impact on communities (Mills, 2013; Zeichner et al, 2015)*
* *contributes to the development of more socially just and sustainable societies (Ingvarson et al, 2014)*

*Characteristics of high-quality teacher education are that it encourages educators to:*

* *recognise and understand that educating is a professional, thoughtful and intellectual endeavour (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Hagger & McIntyre, 2006)*
* *recognise and understand the responsibilities of educators and education as a whole (AACTE, 2010)*
* *recognise the social responsibilities of education e.g. working towards a socially just and sustainable world (Mills, 2013)*
* *recognise the potentially transformatory role of education (Hart et al, 2004)*
* *be independent thinkers*
* *be self-aware (e.g. of own values, dispositions, bias, cultural background, strengths and areas for development) (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Ingvarson et al 2014)*
* *be aware of others and sensitive to their needs (Ingvarson et al, 2014)*
* *be innovative, creative and open and receptive to new ideas (Hagger & McIntyre, 2006)*
* *analyse and interrogate evidence and arguments (Hagger & McIntyre, 2006)*
* *develop the ability and confidence to draw from a wide range of evidence to make informed decisions about practice (Furlong et al, 2000)*
* *search for theories and research that underpin practice (Brouwer and Korthagen, 2005 ; Ingvarson et al, 2014)*
* *be reflective and learn from experience as well as other sources of knowledge (Hagger & McIntyre, 2006)*
* *be authentic and ethical and to act with integrity*
* *recognise that knowledge is contestable, provisional and contingent (Korthagen, Loughran & Russell, 2006; Rowland & Turner, 2007)*
* *understand that teaching is a complex activity that draws upon a long history and a wide range of disciplines and knowledge bases (Furlong et al, 2000)*

Universities are well placed to achieve these characteristics as they offer space to think and reflect, to critique, analyse and test ideas, to explore existing research and create new research that can inform and guide practice. They provide a safe environment in which to explore ideas and they have a civic duty to seek new knowledge in an impartial manner without imposed agendas or motives.

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