

*Promoting Quality in Teacher  
Education*



24 October 2019

Rt. Hon Julian Smith MP  
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland  
Hillsborough Castle  
The Square  
Hillsborough  
Northern Ireland  
BT26 6AG

Dear Secretary of State,

### **Funding for SCoTENS**

I am writing on behalf of the members of UCET NI (the HEIs in Northern Ireland involved in teacher education) to express my serious concern about the continued withdrawal of funding from the Standing Conference on Teacher Education, North and South (SCoTENS), a successful cross-border body which has been in place since 2002. While I fully recognise current budgetary constraints, this decision does need to be reviewed because of the impact that it will have on teacher education and education research, areas that have been identified as priorities in Northern Ireland since publication of the professional learning strategy for teachers in 2016.

Teachers are, in a sense, the profession which produces all others and are, thus, a singularly worthy focus for funding which seeks to improve the evidence base for the learning which is at the core of all successful economies. Building cross-border networks is a challenging, long term process and SCoTENS has worked effectively to support capacity building for teacher education research for some 15 years, in three key areas of activity:

- Seed funding for cross border research projects (c. 10 per year which must have both northern and southern partners) and which have kick started many research partnerships, publications and projects.
- An annual conference which brings key expert speakers to the island and supports collaboration.
- A cross border student teacher exchange .

UCET 9-11 Endsleigh Gardens London WC1H 0EH

T: 020 7388 2388

F: 020 7388 6988

E: [info@ucet.ac.uk](mailto:info@ucet.ac.uk)

W: [www.ucet.ac.uk](http://www.ucet.ac.uk)

Since the withdrawal of funding from the Departments for Education and Skills, SCoTENS has been funded by a modest grant of £25,000 from the Department of Education of skills in the Republic of Ireland, whereas prior to 2017 it received the same amount from the departments in Northern Ireland. It is, to say the least, iniquitous that funding for an extremely successful cross border initiative should come from one side of the border only, and it is no surprise that the issue is being picked up by the media, including the BBC.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Noble-Rogers', with a stylized flourish at the end.

James Noble-Rogers  
Executive Director