

A Registered Charity (No 275082)

*Promoting Quality in Teacher Education*

**Minutes of the meeting of the Northern Ireland Higher Education Liaison Group held at 12 noon on Tuesday 1 October 2019 at the Open University, 110 Victoria Street, Belfast BT1 3GN**

Attendance

Roisin Mc Philemy (Open University, Chair)

Alison Chambers (Department for Education)

Mark Barr (Education & Training Inspectorate)

Akan Boyd (Department for Education)

Gerry Devlin (GTCNI)

Anne Heaslett (Stranmillis)

Martin Hagan (St. Mary’s)

Fiona Henry (Open University)

Paul Mc Flynn (Ulster)

James Noble-Rogers (UCET)

Jennifer Roberts (Queen’s)

John Unsworth (Education Authority)

Apologies

John Anderson (Education & Training Inspectorate)

Carl Bagley (Queen’s)

Linda Clarke (Ulster)

Daw Field (Department for Education)

Jackie Moses (UCET)

David Rooney, Department for the Economy

Welcome, introductions and minutes

Colleagues were welcomed and apologies noted. The minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2019 were agreed, subject to the correction of typographical errors (‘EA’ instead ‘ ‘EFA’, and ‘John Collings’ instead of John Collins’).

Matters arising

The following matters were raised during discussion of the minutes:

* Recognition for schools involved in teacher education partnerships: A strategic approach to this would be required by ETI in the context of learning leaders and collaborative practice. The key role of teacher mentors and the reluctance of some schools to become part of ITE partnerships were noted.
* It had been agreed at the morning UCETNI meeting that an event would be held in May 2020 (provisionally scheduled for 19 May in the Long Gallery at Stormont) to demonstrate to policy makers, opinion formers and others the broad contribution that teacher education (both ITE and CPD) makes to Northern Ireland. As well as covering issues relating to the recruitment and retention of teachers to schools in Northern Ireland and beyond, the event will cover the role of teacher education programmes in equipping teachers with hard and soft skills such as resilience, planning, collegiality, communications that are valued in all sectors of the economy. The event will also cover the pressing teacher supply needs of schools, and the importance of maintaining an infrastructure of teacher education that meets their needs in regards the supply of new teachers and the professional development, in the context of Learning Leaders, of existing staff.
* On ITT allocations, representatives of ITE providers reminded colleagues about the importance of receiving early notification of ITE allocations and the value of allocations covering a two-year period, although DE colleagues reported that any extension to budget cycles might not be feasible until ministers had been appointed. The importance of collecting data, or harvesting existing data, on the actual demand for teachers from schools was stressed. The true extent of teacher shortages could it was noted be understated by the employment by schools of non-specialists to teach particular subjects, which in turn could impact on the quality of experience of ITE students while on school placement.

UCET NI research projects

*(a): The Teacher Professional Learning Framework (TPLF*)

The Learning Leaders Oversight Group, at a meeting on 24th Sept, discussed how the Framework could help to structure and inform the work going forward.  A paper based on the framework has been submitted to Teachers and Teacher Education – co-authored by the Research Fellow and the members of the Steering Group. Linda Clarke will be presenting the framework at the SCoTENS Conference in October.

*(b): Digiskills*

A paper is being drafted and will be circulated to the Steering Group for comments and additions.  Funding is being sought from NI Screen and Education Stakeholders for Phase 2 (Post Primary Study).  The Phase 1 Executive Summary will be launched soon – in discussion with NI Screen.

Teaching post applicants

The wording of guidance was being reviewed in the light of concerns expressed by UCETNI.

Updates

The following updates were received:

* Department for Education: A workshop to make schools aware of Learning Leaders had recently be held. Consistency and coherence in the use of language used in respect of Learning Leaders was felt to be required, alongside a the development of more collaborative peer to peer support for the professional learning of teachers.
* ETI: Guidance that reflected the important contribution of teacher education in schools had been updated, although ITE students work in schools would not be looked at during school inspections. ETI was also continuing to work with the Department of Education on the Professional Learning Framework, using the extremely helpful research report funded through UCETNI.
* Education Authority: The encouragement of professional learning was to an extent challenging because of the ongoing industrial dispute in schools, although the EA would continue to champion and facilitate professional development for teachers, including in key areas such as SEND. An EA team dedicated to Professional Learning was now in pace and would be tasked with communicating with schools, supporting the development of professional learning communities, developing partnerships with HEIs (e.g. over APEL) and through the direct delivery of some professional learning opportunities.
* GTCNI: Work on developing the leadership competencies was ongoing. Discussions were taking pace with ETI about the accreditation of undergraduate ITE programmes.

 Any other business

None

Date of next meeting

14 January 2020