

A Registered Charity (No 275082)

*Promoting Quality in Teacher Education*

**Note of the meeting of the ITE Primary and Early Years Forum held at 1pm on Tuesday 19 November at Mary Sumner House, Tufton Street, Westminster, London SW1P 3RB**

Welcome, introduction & minutes

Colleagues were welcomed to the first meeting of the academic year, and those attending for the first time introduced themselves. The note of the previous meeting held on 11 June was agreed. On matters arising, it was reported that Des Hewitt and Jan Ashbridge had been elected as the forum’s new chair and vice chair.

Mary Russell

A moment’s reflection was held as a mark of respect for former UCET Executive Director Mary Russell MBE, who had died the previous week. Mary had been Executive Director since UCET’s inception in 1967 until she retired in 2004 and had made the organisation the influential force that it had become.

Discussion

Highlights from the afternoon’s discussions included:

* New arrangements to ensure fundamental skills in literacy & numeracy in place of pre-entry skills tests, with contributions to the discussion from Katie Chubb of DfE. The abolition of skills test in favour of provider based mechanism was welcomed and was not thought to be overly burdensome, particularly given that most areas would be covered as part of a primary ITE programmes, students would in many cases demonstrate the required skills by virtue of meeting the teacher standards and OfSTED would look at mechanisms rather than the assessment of individual students. Other points made included: guidance to the teacher standards could indicate that they would in all likelihood encompass the fundamental skills; the changes had helped to ensure greater consistency in assessment across primary and secondary programmes; stress at the time of recruitment had been reduced; and issues relating to the circa 2,500 legacy cases had still to be resolved.
* An update from JNR on non-primary & early years related issues, including: developments in Wales and Northern Ireland; UCET’s support for member institutions in regard the REF; the results of Early Career Framework pilot tenders; and issues relating to student support for PCET ITE students.
* Feedback from the morning symposia on support for ITE students, which had been led by Penny Amott (UCL); Jon Clough (Chester); Mark Andrew Dearden (Marjon); and Suzanne Horton (Worcester), with issues covered including: support in respect of mental health & well-being; reasonable adjustments in respect of students with disabilities; the provision of specific tutors to support specific students; meeting the holistic as well as the particular needs of individual students; and supporting students throughout the entirety of an ITE programme. Suggestions for future symposia topics included: mental health & well-being; the new OfSTED inspection framework; the ITE content framework; and placements in special schools, including issues of compliance.
* The DfE shape of the market review, work in relation to which had been suspended because of General Election purdah.
* Recruitment to ITE, where applications to both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes appeared to be experiencing a slower start than in the past, part time programmes beginning to recruit well and contrasting pictures relating to the balance of recruitment between School Direct and core programmes. Reference was also made to financial incentives, where the lack of a primary bursary had impacted negatively on recruitment, retention and the mental health of students. Reference was also made to the new Apply service and to the latest letter to the sector from Nick Gibb.
* The new ITE content framework, which would have to be reflected in all ITE programmes in England from September 2020. The framework should not, it was pointed out, be used as an assessment tool and did not cover everything that should be included on ITE programmes. UCET and NASBTT would be holding events to help members adjust their programmes, identify how aspects of the content framework were already being covered and change the way some things were done rather than impose wholly new burdens on providers.
* Inspection issues, including feedback from recent pilot inspections (which might or might not be reflected in the new inspection framework). The pilots had included a strong focus on subject knowledge and on partnerships with schools. It was suggested that at least 10 days’ notice needed to be given for such inspections to work effectively. A summary was also given of the recently published OfSTED research on ITE programmes, the results of which would inform the development of the new inspection framework.
* The development of a new UCET strategic plan for 2020 onwards and the work of the Intellectual Base of Teacher Education (IBTE) group.
* Early years issues, with continued reports of EYTS provision being closed, and the scope to grow apprenticeship programmes.

Items for information

The following were noted for information: the UCET general election press release; the report of the 2019 ICET conference; and the summer 2019 UCET newsletter.

Any other business:

It was agreed that future morning symposia would begin at 10.30am, which slightly less time allowed for lunch.

Date of next meeting

Tuesday 3 March 2020.