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Y Gweinidog Addysg
Minister for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref KW/04045/20

James Noble Rogers
Executive Director
UCET

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4 August 2020

Dear James

Thank you for your letter dated 19 June in regard to Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Recruitment and criteria. Firstly I would like to pass on my thanks to all colleagues in the ITE partnerships for the rapid, pragmatic and collaborative way in which they have all worked to address the issues arising from COVID-19.

In your letter you raise several proposals around the introduction of flexibilities to support the continuing delivery of ITE programmes.

We will support the recognition of ITE students and those who support them from partnerships as being integral to the work of schools. We will encourage Local Authorities and schools to regard these students on an equitable basis with the existing school workforce. Officials are currently exploring options around including ITE students on any key worker status list should these still be in force in the future. They will advise you of the outcome in the near future.

The newly accredited programmes came into operation in September 2019 and it is not considered desirable to make any material changes to the accreditation requirements at this point. Therefore there will be no formal reduction in the number of days of school experience from the 120 days set out in the criteria except in circumstances that have been agreed with Welsh Government. It is acknowledged that the school experience will be different from the traditional model and officials are preparing guidance to widen the elements of what can be defined as school experience. This will include areas such as lesson planning, preparation and delivery of distance learning and curriculum design. It is envisaged that this will reduce the requirement for all 120 days to take place in a physical school setting.

Although class sizes and arrangements within schools may differ from traditional models it is a key part of a student's learning to undertake a graduated introduction to learning and in

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

different settings. Therefore no changes will be made to this requirement at this point in time.

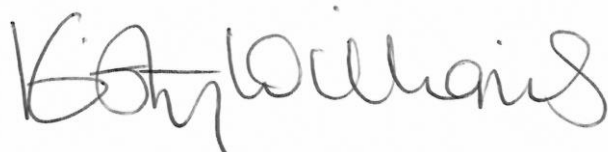
The ITE reforms ensured schools have equal status and responsibility under the new ITE Partnerships, to deliver ITE programmes. As such schools have a responsibility to a whole school approach to ITE and their student teachers. Therefore schools must continue to play an active role in the recruitment process.

The relaxation on the entry requirements that were brought in for the incoming cohort did not reduce the quality requirement but amended the timescale for students to evidence that they met the criteria. This was introduced to mitigate the removal of formal exams during the COVID-19 pandemic and this may not be the case going forward. Officials are currently exploring changes to the entry requirements and equivalency testing and guidance on this will be published by the Autumn to support recruitment for 2021/22.

ITE partnerships have already undertaken significant amounts of work to re-engineer programmes for students entering in September 2020 and this is greatly welcomed. However if the ITE reforms that have been introduced and welcomed by the sector are to be taken forward it is not considered advisable to move away from the published criteria except where absolutely necessary.

My officials will continue to monitor the situation and should this change then they will work with you to support ITE partnerships and students as happened from March this year. I fully appreciate the hard work partnerships have undertaken to maintain ITE provision during these difficult times and Welsh Government will continue to support this through the rapid introduction of any flexibilities that may be required in the future.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirsty Williams', written in a cursive style.

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