

**Notes for the meeting of the University and Schools Council for the Education of Teachers (USCET) on Thursday 15 October 2020**

* **Welcome & introductions**

Elaine Sharpling (Chair), Kin Yu, Catherine Bleasdale, Lisa Taylor, Tracey Eastment, Janet Goodall, Jonathan Davies, Kare Rhys-Jones, Melanie Smith, John Luker, Hazel Wordsworth. Julia Jenkins, Helen Lewis, Andrew James Davies, Sarah Stewart, Sally Llewellyn, Mandy Essen, James Noble-Rogers, Jackie Moses

* **Minutes and matters arising**
* The Chair formally thanked John Luker, previous Chair, for all his hard work in very challenging times.
* UCET Strategy – still need to work on partnership statement, had submitted originally earlier in year but dose need revising and adding to.
* Minutes taken as accurate record & all matters arising are on the agenda.
* **WG research project: parental involvement**

(Jane Goodall, J.s.goodall@swansea.ac.uk)

Copy of PowerPoint to be forwarded and circulated.

This is one of 6 research projects that Welsh Government are funding, it is a partnership between Swansea and Bangor Uni. The project aim is to look at parental/family engagement in learning.

The team intend to collect information via questionnaire and interviews with HEIs

They would also like help in refining the research questions and for HEIs to be involved in the research and act as a gateways to a range of stakeholders.

A point was made that care needs to be taken not to over burden the schools and other stakeholders as there are 6 research projects being undertaken. An overview of all the projects would be useful.

*ACTION - David Egan to be contacted and asked for a brief overview of all projects which will then be circulated to USCET members.*

* **USCET PCET working group update** (Melanie Smith)

This group had met the previous day and there was a lot of discussion around Covid and how Institutions were manging this. There was also a sharing of lessons learned around online learning.

Lot of variations were reported around placements and how these are operating, with huge variations across the sector. A document has been produced by Welsh Government which has been sent to FE Principles outlining the need for equity for students in regard to placements.

There was a lot of discussion around minimum requirement for placement and a hope that Welsh Govt will support this.

Scoping study for PGCE for FE with QTS – aware of this and look forward to hearing more.

No issue with recruitment across the sector, if anything it was felt it was buoyant.

* **Covid 19: discussion of institutional issues and strategies; USCET survey; and issues to raise with WG, Estyn and EWC**

The document had been circulated prior to the meeting with a table showing the main challenges for ITE providers and the strategies being undertaken to address these. This document has been forwarded to Welsh Govt but there hasn’t been a response; this will be raised with them in the second part of the meeting. It was thought that it may be useful to compare this with guidance that is due from Welsh Government (follow up from letter previously sent) and it would be good to identify key areas that need addressing so partnerships can start planning.

Main areas of concern/discussion:

* Discussion around production of universal risk assessment that is endorsed/approved by Welsh Govt?
* OU have put together a definition of online/virtual learning & school experience happy to share if felt of use.
* Issue of 120 days and flexibility with this, also what does this look like – how much can be virtual? Can trainees stay in one school?
* Nervousness over placements - Some concerns been raised by schools where trainees are in two schools, also concerns over second placements, big questions being raised around lesson observations, if done online (e.g. via IRIS) can be costly, if everyone adopts this approach then greater purchasing power so would benefit everyone
* Concerns over lesson observations and evidencing of these
* Two school placement – is this feasible in current climate?
* Added complexity around need for post 16 experience where courses are 11-18? Students might complain if they don’t have experience in the full age-range specified in course documentation.
* Hub accounts – students have Uni hub accounts but have limited access, need hub account through school for full access and schools need to create that – can only be done once DBS clearance has been completed.

**11am, WG, Estyn & EWC colleagues join meeting**

Welsh Govt - Max White & Lisa Drury-Lawson

EWC - Mark Isherwood

ESTYN - Nicola Thomas

* **Covid policy issues**:
	1. **USCET summary of institutional Covid 19 issues**

Welsh Government confirmed that they did receive document outlining the main issues and challenges relating to ITE and confirmed that guidance is due on

* A definition of placement learning (the OU document could be a good starting point for this)
* 120 days
* The two school requirement
* Changes to entry requirements an equivalency testing and guidance published by autumn – changes will continue into this recruitment cycle.

The 120 days question is being worked on and WG recognise the need for clarity around and the complexity that it brings. It is recognised that there are number of things that can be done digitally and away from the school environment. There is a need to work with the HEIs to clarify what needs to done in school and what can be done outside. WG would still like as close to 120 days as possible in schools. There may need to look at minimum requirement and what this might be, it was acknowledged that this might be the way forward. There will inevitably be a need for some allowance for flexibility within this. Co-constructed approaches in past have been very much appreciated and worked well and WG would like to continue with this. Appreciate this needs to be done ASAP (ideally would already be in place) suggest convening a meeting with partnership leads in next two weeks to look at this and produce paper. WG are happy to use the USCET contingency paper as a starting point.

There is an important question of equity that needs considering a number of students will have individual journeys through programmes due to local restrictions. One pressing issue is over the requirement for 2 school placements. WG stated that this is what partnerships should be aiming for as it gives students a better breadth of experience but acknowledges that there may be instances where it is not possible and that is part of contingency planning.

EWC – stressed the importance of flexibility but also that it is important to get a shared understanding of the issues and concerns and how the criteria can best be applied. Communication is very important.

Another challenge has presented around lesson observation and how best to support students in gathering the evidence against the criteria. There was some discission about how these will take place when restrictions in schools limit access. Use of online video type tools were discussed, e.g. IRIS. WG in support of this if allows for observations to still take place, EWC asked what the investment would be? And if partnerships had got any experience in using this.

WG in principle doesn’t object to this being investigated but at the end of the day decisions will come down to cost. There is also a need to consider other platforms e.g. TEAMS

It was suggested that if the provider group was going to meet regularly maybe it could have a more focused name – e.g. COVID Task Force. WG agreed

* 1. **Other Covid 19 issues**

It was asked if there was anything WG could do to encourage school to continue to support ITE & ITE students. WG responded by saying that a letter has been sent out at the start of year to local authorities stating that schools should continue to work with ITE partnerships, and they will do all they can to ensure this happens. WG asked that partnerships let them know where barriers are put in place and they will also apply pressure.

* **Reports from:**
	1. **Welsh Government – Lisa Drury-Lawson, Max White**
* They are rolling over entry requirement relaxations from 20/21 to 21/22
* The Minister is delighted with the recruitment situation and acknowledges the work done by ITE partnerships
* Recruitment allocations for 2021/22 – plan to continue with same as precious year - i.e. no caps (other than for secondary PE) but may need to apply tolerance levels, which will be agreed with partnership. The 30% recruitment to Welsh medium will remain as target.
* National Mission 2 (<https://gov.wales/our-national-misssion-0>) has just been published, this outlines updates and next steps on national mission, for ITE it is business as usual
* Welsh Medium and BAME recruitment – lot of criticism here, recognise lot of work being done to improve this, it would be appreciated if this could be at forefront of current recruitment cycle to try and enhance this. WG working to get all marketing programmes etc aligned to support this.
* Incentives – 21/22 retaining existing incentive schemes with the addition of Biology.
	1. **Estyn – Nicola Thomas**
* Holding stakeholder forum tomorrow (online evet)
* Planning 3 days of peer and additional inspector starting training in November. Pre assessment day 25th Nov and further training in May 2021
* Inspectors making engagement phone calls to school across country – surveying how schools are supporting learning and support those most vulnerable Report published early in 2021 and can be used to inform policy.
* Will continue engagement calls across sector, it was suggested that here may be an issue with some face to face work in spring & summer term due to limited attendance on campus by both staff and students, Estyn will look into this
	1. **Education Workforce Council - Mark Isherwood**
* Looking at gap analysis and mapping across PCET and QTS
* Also looking at criteria to see if there can be a conversion programme, or to allow individuals to gain QTS
* Annual monitoring – felt that principles are right, co-constructed and need to fit with system of improvement. Not wanting to burden sector, small working group established, and over next few months and they will work with 2/3 members from USCET to look at this.
* John Furlong and Hazel Hagger – looking at planning an ITE event for March – want to look at what is working well and what still needs to be done.
* Website – due to be launched by Minister on 3rd Feb 2021 – almost completed internal testing, next stage is limited external testing. Portal will need populating with provider information and activities need agreeing e.g. open evenings etc
* Mark leaving EWC, Elaine wishes him well and thanked him for support he has given sector.
* New contact will be Jessica Stock & Bethan Stacey working with Hazel Hagger until replacement is appointed
* **Any other business**

WG aware of DfE plans to take ITE applications out of UCAS, maintaining watching brief as reasons for move not really applicable to Welsh situation. James Noble Rogers confirmed this is going ahead in England (being trialled this year) and in 12 months’ time will be the normal practice.

Agenda item for next meeting – Seamless pathway- ITE to induction following publication of report.

* **Date of next meeting:** 4 February 2021 (on-line)