White Paper – Pre-Brief - Initial teacher education (ITE) policy – UCET

Key message: The department wants to change how we work with the FE ITE system so that we can support the training of more high-quality teachers. We want to add value to the system where we can, focusing on quality and ensuring that any investment we make is targeted on the best provision that meets the needs of employers, trainees and students.

Our ambition:

We want to work with the sector to ensure that providers can recruit, retain, and develop the teaching staff they need to deliver the best possible education. This will be underpinned by significant new investment in 2021-22. For ITE this will include supporting the reform of the **initial teacher education system,** so it is based on employer-led standards, is driven by quality, offers attractive and accessible training routes and is underpinned by financial incentives for trainees in priority areas and subjects.

The White Paper says:

Throughout our engagement with the sector, we have been told that practice across the system is not uniformly good, and that the initial teacher education offer is too fragmented, difficult to navigate and not always based on sufficiently clear quality standards. Now is the time for the government to take a more active role in challenging the status quo and provide better oversight of the initial teacher education system, ensuring that public funding goes only to high-quality provision based on clear employer-led standards.

We are improving initial teacher education so that all publicly funded training will be rooted in employer-led standards. A revised employer-led standard for further education teaching is currently being developed by a group of sector employers, and we anticipate that a clear benchmark for teaching quality will be set by September 2021. Based on this new standard, we will support the redevelopment of further education initial teacher education qualifications so that they too are based on the same clear set of outcomes.

**Financial Incentives For Further Education Initial Teacher Education (FE ITE), Academic Year 2021/22**

* As part of our ongoing package of support for the FE teaching workforce, we have confirmed in the WP published today that we will continue to offer financial incentives for FE ITE in priority subjects.
* Further details of the programmes available in 21/22 will be published shortly. In summary, we anticipate that financial incentives for AY2021/22 will be broadly similar to those offered in AY2020/21, i.e.:
  + a **bursaries scheme** to support pre-service teacher training in shortage subject areas; and,
  + a **grants programme** to support in-service teacher training in a number of core subject areas, to complement our on-going Taking Teaching Further programme.
* We anticipate that applications for the AY21/22 scheme will open in early March 2021; further detail will be published on the relevant gov.uk webpages.
* We closed the 2020/21 financial incentives scheme to new applications on 18 January 2021, in preparation for the launch of the 21/22 scheme.

The White Paper confirms that we will consider taking powers through new legislation to secure the improvements we want to see in FE teacher training. Our preference is to continue working in collaboration with the sector to drive improvement, but ministers are willing to take a more directive approach if the required improvements are not forthcoming. We are clear that we do not intend any new legislation to mark a return to the regulation of individual teachers in the FE sector – any new powers would be focused on driving improvement to the quality of ITE provision.

Q&A

*How does the Government intend to improve the quality and provision of FE ITE without introducing regulation within the FE sector?*

We think that the FE sector is well placed to improve ITE, building on the best of what is already delivered in the sector, and that we are well placed to work with them to drive forward improvements in the quality ITE of provision. We are focusing on strengthening our relationships with a range of organisations and individuals and making new links with others who we have not previously worked closely with.

We think that this engagement will add value to the system. We are clear that this change is needed and will play an active role in achieving it. We have also confirmed that we will consider introducing new statutory powers so that the Secretary of State can take a more active role in FE ITE if the system cannot respond effectively.

*Is there going to be a return to regulation of FE teachers or the sector?*

No, we are not proposing a return to the regulation by government of FE teachers. We do think that the FE teacher training system could be improved to reduce fragmentation, place more emphasis on quality and consistency of outcomes, and make the whole system easier to navigate. We want to help to ensure that it is consistently high quality, responsive to employer demands and is easily understood.

We think that the new occupational standard will help achieve this, but there is a lot more that could be done to make sure that providers are of sufficient quality. We want to work with all parties to make these changes happen, but we will consider new statutory powers for the Secretary of State to take a more active role in FE ITE if the system cannot respond effectively.

*If you don’t intend to return to teacher regulation, why do you say that you are considering legislation?*

We are serious about the need to drive reform and improve the overall quality of FE teacher training. We are not proposing to re-introduce teacher regulation, but we are clear that, if necessary, we will use legislation to drive change and improvement in parts of the system if needs be. In the first instance, our intention is to continue working closely with all parts of the sector to secure an approach to improvement based on consensus.

*What does this mean for Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills status, do you want to get rid of it?*

No. QTLS status is owned and delivered by the Society for Education and Training – which is independent of government. QTLS is an important badge of teaching proficiency that is recognised across the sector, and we want to make sure that this continues to be the case. We will work with the Society for Education and Training (SET) to make sure that any new qualifications and training routes support eligibility for professional formation, and that any new professional standards and statuses that they develop are aligned with the new occupational standard.