

8 February 2021

Adam Haxell
Senior Parliamentary Officer
MillionPlus
90 London Road
London
SE1 6LN

Dear Adam Haxell

Research on initial teacher education

As you may be aware, Ofsted is conducting research into initial teacher education this Spring. The purpose of the research is two-fold:

- To evaluate the ITE curriculum, including the Core Content Framework
- To build a national picture of how the ITE sector has responded to COVID-19

The project involves **research** with ITE partnerships across the country. The interview and focus group sessions are undertaken remotely, by an HMI trained in research methods. This will result in a published, evaluative national report on the ITE sector.

The feedback we have received from partnerships so far is very positive. Those involved are clear that the discussions are purely for research purposes and are not an inspection. Partnerships have found the process to be straightforward to organise, flexible in nature and a welcome experience.

We are conducting research with a wide range of partnerships and age-phases, including:

- School-led teacher training
- University-led teacher training

Participation in the research

Participation in the research is entirely **voluntary**. This means that the partnerships we contact, their staff members, trainees and mentors are able to choose whether to take part in the research. The choice whether to participate or not will not in any way affect how Ofsted views or treats the partnership.

Partnerships will also **not be identified** by Ofsted during the research or in the published research report. Partnerships can, of course, choose whether they share their participation publicly.

It is really important to the quality of the research that we are able to speak to a **diverse range** of school-led and university-led teacher training providers. As it stands, participation rates for different types of partnerships are very different. While we fully expect to see some partnerships decline to participate, the pattern of participation rates across different types of partnership cannot be easily explained.

On publishing the research report, we will want to demonstrate that our evidence is based on the experiences of a wide range of partnerships. We will not share publicly which partnerships participated or were contacted to participate but declined. However, we will publish a breakdown of numbers of visits by partnership type to demonstrate the breadth of our sample. If our sample is not broad, we may consider publishing participation rates – that is, the number of those agreeing to a visit as a percentage of those being contacted – by partnership type.

What the research involves

Partnerships participating in the research are typically contacted around a week in advance. We ask partnership leaders to arrange five short interviews or focus group meetings with different stakeholders over a set two-day period. These sessions include discussions with strategic partnership leads, programme leaders, mentors, trainees and NQTs. During the focus groups we ask participants a series of mostly open-ended questions about the impact of COVID-19 on their partnership, alongside broader questions about the partnership's approach to the curriculum. We also ask partnerships to distribute a survey to trainees and staff to ensure we capture a broad range of experiences as part of the research.

During these two days inspectors collect the research data for analysis. The research data is then shared with the Ofsted research team who review and analyse the data. We aim to publish the results of this work in spring 2021.

We hope the information is useful. We understand the pressures that the sector is under at the current time, but we do hope that partnerships will take the opportunity

to share their views and participate in research that will be of benefit to the whole sector.

Yours sincerely



Amy Finch
Head of Strategic Evaluation
Research and Evaluation
Ofsted



Helen Matthews HMI
Specialist Adviser
Education Policy
Ofsted