**Background**

Details of the Institute of Teaching (IOT) were published, alongside information about the market review, on 2 January. The two initiatives are technically independent of one another, and the MR EAG is not looking at the IOT. However, the fact that they were announced together, and DfE has described the IOT as being part of an *‘ambitious’*  reform of initial teacher education suggest that they are in fact linked. The reference to ‘a*mbitious reform*’ incidentally suggests that, contrary to statements made, there are at least some preconceptions within DfE about the outcome of the market review, as otherwise how would they be able to say that the conclusions will be as far reaching as they are suggesting.

The IOT will, according to DfE, deliver ITE, ECF and NPQs nationally. The total cost will be about £2m pa for each year of a three year contract, with options to extend. There may be a pilot ITE cohort in September 2022, but for ITE it will really come on stream a year later, building up to 1,000 ITE students by September 2024. It is not clear how the IOT will increase the number of people recruited into teaching, or if this is intended. It might attract applicants away from existing good quality providers, potentially undermining their viability. Alternatively it might simply take on board places held by any existing providers that secure the IOT contract. In addition to ITE students, the intention is that it will train around 2,000 early career teachers each year, 2,000 mentors and 1,000 NPQs

**Key facts**

Key parts of the DfE announcement of the IOT and the slides from the market warming events include:

* The Institute will operate through at least four regional campuses, and will deliver ‘*evidence-based approaches*’ to teacher training, and will include mentoring and early career support, and be part of the ECF reforms.
* Training will be delivered through a blend of on-line, face to face and school-based means.
* The Institute will build evidence about the most effective approaches to teacher training & development, and will ‘*support*’ other organisations such as teaching school hubs to understand and implement ‘*best practice*’.
* The Institute is part of a range of reforms, including the ECF and CCF, aimed at developing a *‘shared understanding of what works*’.
* IOT suppliers will be selected through a procurement exercise to choose *a supplier’*’ or a *‘consortium of suppliers’.* It is expected that the Institute will be established by *‘existing high quality providers’.*
* It will become England’s flagship provider and a national role-model, and will *‘support’* others across the sector.
* The IOT will have its own legal identity. Activities will be delivered on national, regional or local levels, and might involve partners or sub-contractors (e.g. schools).
* The Institute will have its own degree awarding powers that will allow it to award PGCEs independent of an HEI, and over time will be able to validate PGCEs offered by other organisations.

**Key questions**

* How exactly does the IOT link to other reforms, particularly the Market Review and the establishment of the new teaching school hubs? Is there a grand-plan and strategy, or is the link more general and piecemeal? If the latter, is the intention that the reforms will collectively evolve into something more coherent?
* Is the IOT intended as a direct threat to the university sector? Giving it the ability to award its own PGCEs, and in time validate PGCEs awarded by other organisations, suggests that it is. On the other hand, do references to established high quality providers leading the IOT indicate a potential role for the HE sector?
* Does the reference to ‘*existing high quality providers*’ in effect rule out new players such as Ambition from moving into the field? Will Teach First be eligible, given that they have not in effect been an accredited provider in their own right until recently?
* To what extent do references to the IOT being the country’s *‘flagship provider’* , *‘supporting’* other parts of the sector, developing a ‘*shared understanding of what works’* and identifying ‘*best practice’* suggest that other parts of the sector will be expected or required to follow its lead?
* What scope will there be for other providers to critique and question what the Institute identifies as best practice, and us other approaches?
* If issued under short term funding contracts, how will the transition from one IOT provider to another take place, without risking gaps left in overall levels of provision and geographical coverage.

To conclude, it is tempting to see the ITE market review as being a much more significant development than the IOT. And maybe it is. But it is probably a mistake, one that I have occasionally been guilty of, of dismissing it as simply a vanity project for the Secretary of State. We do have to look at the bigger picture, and question the longer term implications of its establishment.

Thank you.