**Introducing International Qualified Teacher Status (iQTS):
Government consultation**

Consultation response

30th April 2021

The Universities Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET)

The Universities Council for the Education of Teachers acts as a national forum for the discussion of matters relating to the education of teachers and professional educators, and to the study of education in the university sector and contributes to the formulation of policy in these fields. Its members are UK universities involved in teacher education, and a number of colleges of higher education in the university sector.

UCET’s vision is to ensure higher educational and personal achievement for all learners through excellence in teacher education. Our mission is to act as an independent and authoritative voice on teacher education while supporting the quality, sustainability and professionalism of teacher education by encouraging cohesive partnerships, engaging constructively with stakeholders and drawing on research from across the UK and internationally.

Member of UCET’s Executive, and UCET members more widely, have contributed to the discussions with DfE officials in the formulation of the proposals for the iQTS and this submission draws and builds on the feedback - and wider consultation – that has been offered to DfE colleagues over the development period.

**Background and Context**

**How should we balance English and international teaching standards? Please select your preferred option below:
a) The iQTS standards should remain as close as possible to the English Teachers’ Standards, with the option to add local or international school-based standards
b) The iQTS standards should remain as close as possible to the English Teachers’ Standards, with caveats only allowed where local law takes precedence
c) The iQTS standards should be adapted to be broader and more reflective of the range of international settings**

We believe that Option C is the most appropriate. There are two categories of needs in respect of the initial education and training of teachers in international settings, these being International Schools and Local Schools. Within International Schools, there is a further sub-division between those that are aligned to and reflective of the English/British Education System and those that are informed by curricula, policies and practices that are American and/or global.

The competences/standards that are used to underpin teacher development and arrive at judgements about ‘capability’ should, therefore, be sufficiently wide to address these different market and professional needs, whilst having a clear framework/spine that – as Teacher Educators – we all recognise.

The important of context must be something that is recogised and embedded in what is used. This is already a feature of many of the programmes that are delivered/validated by Universities from across the United Kingdom in their Initial Teacher Education provision (PGCEi/iPGCE, for example) with overseas partnerships. Programmes are carefully constructed and informed by the best principles of the courses delivered within the UK. This does not weaken or dilute the frameworks that are drawn on by the Universities but add a richness and relevance for those being trained in the local context.

The Standards also need to be sufficiently broad to recognise the realities of the status of teaching in different countries. In a number of cases, teaching is not a graduate profession. In other situations, a Master’s level is a minimum requirement for someone to be a teacher.

The purpose of this proposed qualification also needs to be taken in to account. There is not, we believe, a significant demand for individuals training in international settings to achieve QTS; rather, the driver is about a qualification that has credibility and – from the employers – the requirement to have a highly effective and well-trained work force.

**Do you agree that the entry criteria should remain as aligned as possible to English ITT entry requirements?**

This depends on the setting/context. If the course was one that was being offered within a British Overseas School, for example, it would be reasonable to expect some alignment of entry criteria. However, as already noted, teaching is not a graduate profession in every country. Teachers still need initial training

**Do you agree that the English ITT Core Content Framework should be used in its entirety for iQTS, with explanatory notes for international users?**

No. The Core Content Framework has been developed for the English context. It is aligned with the Early Career Framework as part of a set of policy principles that sees the initial training and early professional development of teachers in the English state system as a continuum.

The CCF is open to interpretation and does not readily translate to other settings.

**Do you agree that the requirement to train in at least 2 schools should be retained?**

No. We recognise the benefits of undertaking two placements and that these should be contrasting and each of sufficient length to give real value in respect both of learning and in demonstrating capability in more than one setting.

However, the use of two placements is something that is valuable as an aspiration. Some schools/groups of schools will be able to achieve this from the outset whereas, for others, there will be a need to develop relationships.

It is, in part, about capacity building and building relationships between schools who may well be in competition with each other, given the nature of the International Schools market.

Capacity is also dependent on the quantity and quality of mentors that will be available. Therefore, a focus on developing the quality required within a one-placement model would be a/the starting point.

**Do you agree that ITT providers should have the freedom to be flexible in how they deliver iQTS, including no limitations on online/distance learning?**

Yes. We believe that this will be valuable in respect of enabling providers to maximize recruitment. In addition, there is already strong evidence of Universities delivering their international ITE courses in a number of different ways, including blended and fully online.

**Do you agree that the delivery language should be English?**

Whilst it might be desirable and indeed appropriate that the medium for teaching in some settings is English, it needs to be recognized that a determining factor will be the location of the training schools and the particular markets.

That is why, we believe, there is a need for different programmes that are designed to meet the specifics of the contexts within which they are delivered – as already is the case with a number of highly successful ITE programmes that are delivered by Universities from the UK.

**Do you agree that provision of iQTS should be limited to accredited English ITT providers?**

Yes. To maintain the high standards necessary for the delivery of the qualification itself, and to ensure the reputational strength of English ITT and indeed English/UK Higher Education it must be delivered by experts in this field who have a track record of ITT delivery and are fully accredited. Any dilution of this, or making iQTS something that can easily be delivered by non-accredited providers, runs significant risks that would outweigh the benefits of this initiative in the first instance.

It would be in the interest of English University ITE providers to say yes. However, there are other accredited providers in the UK who are able to develop and deliver highly effective ITE programmes within the ‘iQTS’ brand – and in fact are already doing so (Universities from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland). Furthermore, they are doing this, and will be able to continue to do so, within the context of their Standards and content requirement.

**Do you agree that the inspection of iQTS provision should be as rigorous as the inspection of English ITT?**

We are not sure that it is appropriate for Ofsted to inspect such provision. Existing (and future) courses are, as already commented on, informed by the frameworks and best practices of ITE providers. They are also subject to an extremely high level of scrutiny through University academic regularly and quality assurance frameworks – given the requirements of the QAA around overseas/collaborative provision.

If a Programme did lead to QTS, it should be subject to same regulatory regime – but, for other programmes, the QA arrangements of HEIs for other programmes should be sufficient

**Do you think we should create two forms of iQTS? Please select your preferred option:
*a) A more broadly achievable English-style teaching qualification that could be taken up in a range of settings, but with no direct link to professional recognition in England (for this option, if the teacher then wanted to gain QTS they would have to undertake the English Assessment Only route to QTS)***

***b) A qualification for specific English-medium contexts, with delivery and inspection arrangements equivalent to those in England, that would lead to recognition for English QTS on completion***

We would support Route (a). If someone then subsequently wanted to teach in England, the assessment only route would offer a way forward as appropriate. There is also valuable evidence available from the use of ‘flexible’ PGCE courses that have been offered in the past by University ITE providers, these taking in to account prior experience to determine a training programme for someone who then is seeking QTS.

We also believe that, for someone to be awarded QTS, there should be a need for them to demonstrate capability within the appropriate setting – hence why we would see the use of the assessment only route as a base line for anyone.

**Do you think there should be any circumstances in which completing iQTS should lead to English QTS? Please describe these, and your view of the level of demand for QTS on top of iQTS.**

We do not believe that it should automatically lead to QTS. If an individual wishes to have QTS, they should be required to undertake some form of additionality, be this training or Assessment Only.

**What arrangements should the Department put in place to ensure that iQTS trainees in these circumstances have had an equivalent experience to trainees undergoing ITT in England in order to be awarded QTS?**

Again, we believe that the iQTS is a starting point for the review of the individual by the accredited ITE provider to make a judgement as to what additionality is required before a recommendation for QTS can be made

**Would it be possible to deliver an environment that replicates the requirements for achieving QTS in England, as described above? If so, please describe how.**

It is possible that there may be a small number of schools who could offer an equivalent experience – such as British Forces Schools – but this is something that is already recognised in the system. However, given what is set out in the current ITT criteria, we do not believe that there are many settings/contexts that would ensure an ‘equivalence’ in terms of experience that could/should then lead to an automatic award of QTS.

Again, we note that the focus is on QTS and, therefore, the English context. Many Universities across the UK successfully deliver highly successful programmes of ITE and further professional development for International Schools and for other forms of schools in international settings.

**Demand, Capacity and Delivery**

**What is your view of demand for a qualification like this in the international education market? Please explain where you think demand will be highest, being as specific as you can.**

We are not sure what the demand is for an ITE course that leads to QTS. As noted in some of the DfE discussion meetings, there was reference to ‘seeking to find a solution to a problem that does not exist’.

There is a demand for the provision of high quality ITE programmes, that lead to a ‘judgment’ of capability as well as an academic award from a University as evidenced by the number of courses successfully being delivered by UCET members.

It is also the case that these courses are valued, in part, because of the academic framework and qualification(s) that underpin them. We do not believe that there is a demand for a programme that would lead to QTS only, given the fact that QTS is not recognized without an associated/integrated academic award at the right level in a number of parts of the world.

**Which of the following do you think are potential markets for iQTS? Select all that apply:
a) the global state sector
b) the local private sector
c) the British international school sector
d) the wider international school sector
e) other - please explain
f) none
Do you have any further comments on what would make this qualification marketable?**

Again, we believe that there is a market for a, b, c and d for ITE programmes. But, we do not believe that the achievement of QTS is significant within these. The needs are, in large part, to ensure that there is a highly qualified and trained workforce for the settings within which the teachers are operating.

**If you are an accredited English ITT provider, do you believe that you have the capacity to offer this new qualification?**

There are a number of UCET members, from across the UK, who have successfully delivered programmes of ITE in a variety of international settings. This number continues to grow. There may be members who have both the capacity and the appetite to develop provision that would be regulated. However, the risks inherent in this would limit size and scale. Universities across the sector will, we believe, continue to be interested in and committed to developing their international provision that is regulated by their own regulatory and quality assurance frameworks.