

**Note of the meeting of the University and Schools Council for the Education of Teachers (USCET) held at 10am on Thursday 20 May 2021 via Zoom**

Attendees

Elaine Sharpling (UWTSD, Chair)

Julia Jenkins (Teach First)

Catharine Bleasdale (UofWTSD)

Lisa Taylor (UoSW)

Hazel Wordsworth (Bangor)

Tracy Eastment (Cardiff)

Max Fincher (UCET)

Jackie Moses (UCET)

Jonathan Davies (Treorchy)

Helen Lewis (Swansea)

Anna Bryant (Cardiff Met)

Sarah Stewart (OU)

Mandy Esseen (Central South Consortium)

Jeremy Griffiths (Bangor)

Sarah Perdue (ERW)

Sharne Watkins (Cardiff Met)

Susan Wyn Jones (Bangor)

Hannah Barry (EAS)

Lisa Bowen (CardiffMet)

**WG/EWC/ESTYN** (from 10am)

Max White (WG)

Hayden Llewellyn (EWC)

Jane Price (ESTYN)

Lisa Drury-Lawson (WG)

**Apologies**  
Sarah Stewart (OU)

Anna Bryant (Cardiff Met)

Alwyn Ward (Aberystwyth)

Welcome, introductions and minutes of the previous meeting

All were welcomed to the meeting and apologies noted.

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 February were agreed, subject to some corrections in regards the list and names of attendees. There were no matters arsing not already included on the meeting agenda.

Feedback from USCET Working Groups

The following reports were received:

* PCET: A consensus had been reached about changes to programmes in respect of teaching hours and other components because of Covid; challenges remained in regards the availability of placements for students; Estyn had been involved in a review of PCET provision; the Welsh Government had commissioned the EWC and Bill Lucas to develop ‘silhouettes’ for the PCET sector; USW and UWTSD had at the request of EWC carried out a scoping study into the feasibility of a joint programme to qualify teachers in both the secondary and PCET sectors, and for bridging programmes for teachers wanting to move from teaching in FE to schools (the lengthy report, which contained a number of recommendations, was with EWC for consideration prior to being shared with WG and subsequent consultation); and Cardiff University had ‘parked’ recruitment to its PCET programme for a further year because of Covid related risks and had referred applicants to other providers.
* Recruitment: Discussions had been taking place with UCAS about the development of a new application system, which would include Scottish ITE providers, as a result of the introduction of the new Apply system in England. It was felt that the new system would be introduced even if the launch of Apply was delayed.

It was agreed that an extraordinary meeting of USCET would be held during the summer[[1]](#footnote-1) to discuss the scope and remit of the USCET working group, and USCET’s strategy and vision for the next 2-3 years more generally. The value of developing joint and shared approaches was noted as a particular issue to consider.

Reports from ITT providers

The following reports were received:

* Caban: EWC accreditation issues were ongoing; most undergraduate students had completed their placements and postgraduates would finish soon; internal procedures for examination boards were proving burdensome, and a number of options for streamlining the process (use of pre-meetings, focussing on borderline students and reducing attendance requirements) were made by other USCET colleagues.
* Open University: Programme accreditation was scheduled in March 2022; an engagement visit was being organised for students; adjustments had been made to second school placements for students on the two year salaried programmes to reflect the needs of employing schools and Covid restrictions (a third placement opportunity would be available in the second year); and codes used for equivalency modules had changed and details circulated.
* Cardiff Met: Challenges had been faced by some students because of the transition from virtual to physical placements; difficulties experienced by students had tended to become apparent later in the year than normal because of Covid disruptions; longer placements would be available to undergraduates in year two because of disruption in year one; and it was now proving possible to plan strategically as the pandemic eases.
* UoSW: An EWC conditions monitoring visit had taken place in January; an Estyn try-out visit took place in March and an engagement visit in June; final year students were receiving support in respect of challenges experienced because of postponing placements and being out of the classroom for a year; and the positive lessons learnt from Covid (e.g. in respect of on-line meetings etc.) were being taken forward.
* Swansea: All students had received placement experiences: Covid had had an impact on the mental health & well-being of both staff and students, although positive lessons had also been learnt; and equivalency of qualifications for entry to programmes continued to be a significant issue.
* UWTSD: All students had received placement experiences, although some schools had not been as willing to offer as many placements as previously because of Covid; a QTS assessment panel had been convened; and virtual meetings and lectures had increased participation.
* Teach First: The postgraduate diploma programme was in the process of being wound-up; USCET colleagues were requested to follow the connect.ed.cyrmu network to take the work of Teach First forward after programmes had ceased, including details of the forthcoming conference (Action: link to be circulated).

Feedback from Consortia colleagues included: it would be helpful if engagement visits to providers and students about induction could be spread more evenly across the year rather than concentrated at the end of programmes when students were often particularly pressured; it would be helpful to connect to an increased number of final year undergraduate and postgraduate students for induction purposes; and an Introduction to Induction presentation for students, which USCET members were encouraged to make their students aware of, was available on-line.

Reports from Welsh Government, EWC and Estyn colleagues

*(a): Welsh government*

The new Education Minister, Jeremy Miles, had been appointed and was expected to follow broadly the same policy line on teacher education as his predecessor. A key interest of the new minister was likely to be Welsh medium provision and the Welsh language more generally. Tom Woodwood will remain as the minister’s special advisor. The new Director of Education Alwyn Lloyd would take up his position in June, and would be supported by a new Assistant Director who was likely to become a key point of contact for USCET. Work on the recruitment of under-represented groups into teaching would continue, although it was recognised that the under-representation was not because of ITE recruitment practices. Additional support would be available to provide NQTs with additional paid experience in schools in September with enhanced mentor support – more details would be available once the number of participants was known and budges could be calculated.

In answer to a question, it was confirmed that the new minister would receive an options paper on entry requirements for ITE which would cover, inter-alia, equivalency issues.

The UK Government’s professional qualifications bill, which currently covered the recognition of teaching qualifications in Wales, was in the process of being drafted. This could, potentially, have implications for the award of QTS in Wales and the qualifications requirements of those entering the profession.

*(b): Estyn*

Engagement meetings with ITE partnerships had been fruitful and interesting, and Estyn was looking forward to discussions with student teachers. Try-out inspections were continuing ad had allowed for valuable professional discussions to take place, and ways in which support could be given to providers and knowledge shared had been identified. Areas for development had also been noted. Engagement events with schools would cover experiences in relation to ITE and NQTs. Reference reports could be found on the Keep Wales Learning website. Full inspections would begin in September. Further details would be made available as soon as practicable.

*(c): Education Workforce Council*

Meetings were taking place between EWC and Estyn to identify how their respective responsibilities complement one another and do not replicate or overlap. EWC had a statutory duty to monitor programmes, which were currently half way through their 5-year accreditation period. Co-constructive proposals would be discussed with the sector and USCET when possible. Account would be taken of the burden on providers of visits and accountability measures from separate organisations. Work was continuing with Welsh Government on the NQT placement scheme. The Assessment of new ITE programmes was about to begin, and the sector would be consulted soon about programme monitoring procedures. There were indications of over-recruitment to primary programmes. The EWC – ITE provider event in March had been a success and a further event would be held in the current financial year. A request was made that it did not take place during the autumn term. The inclusion of international curriculum experts was also suggested. The Education Wales website would be soft-launched on 7 June with a formal launch by the minister about two weeks later. Provider profiles had been uploaded. Feedback on the site would be welcomed.

Any other business

None.

Date of next meeting

21 October 2021 (on-line)

1. Provisionally scheduled for 13 July. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)