



2021-0034337POGibb

Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP
Minister of State for School Standards

Sanctuary Buildings, 20 Great Smith Street, Westminster, London, SW1P 3BT
tel: 0370 000 2288 www.education.gov.uk/contactus/dfe

Mr James Noble-Rogers,
Executive Director, Universities Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET)
By email: m.fincher@ucet.ac.uk

29 July 2021

Dear James,

Thank you for your letter of 5 July, addressed to the Secretary of State, regarding the published report and public consultation on the Initial Teacher Training (ITT) Market Review. I am replying as the Minister of State for School Standards.

I note from your letter that UCET is pleased to support some parts of the proposals in the published report, and I hope that this provides a good foundation for us continuing to work together. Our relationship with UCET remains important as we work towards what our shared goal of providing the very best support possible for the ITT sector.

I was equally interested in the concerns you raised relating to the perceived resource and cost implications of the recommendations, including the planned timescales, the potential impact on teacher supply, the implications for established partnerships, and the status of the teaching profession. As you know, we have launched a public consultation to seek views on these matters, to which I am sure you will be encouraging your members to respond. I would stress that no decisions have yet been taken on any of the recommendations in the report. We will not respond to them until later this year when we have weighed all the issues carefully and considered them in the light of the consultation responses. Therefore, my letter should not be seen in any way as pre-empting the outcome from the consultation.

We are setting a high bar for the quality we expect of ITT so we can achieve standards for trainees that are comparable with the very best worldwide. The proposed implementation timetable we have set out for the review is ambitious because we want to deliver any improvements which we decide upon as soon as is feasible. The ITT review is also a key part of our COVID recovery plans, so we want to move ahead with a sense of urgency and momentum, while thorough consideration is given to the implications of each stage. We know it is important to test the deliverability of the recommendations within the suggested timescale and it is for this reason we are inviting views on this through the consultation.

You have commented in your letter on the implications of the proposed implementation timetable for universities going through an accreditation and validation process, and the requirement to publish programmes so that students can apply for courses. I am grateful to you for sharing further information on this with Departmental officials and I can assure you it will be given careful consideration as part of the wider analysis we undertake of all the responses to the consultation.

Ensuring that there are a sufficient number of well trained teachers in all subjects taught by schools is one of the major priorities of the review and we will be proceeding carefully to make sure this is maintained. If we were to accept any of the recommendations, our priority during the transition period to any new configuration of ITT organisations would be ensuring capacity continues to exist in all parts of the country. We see this as essential to offer enough training places to meet the continuing teacher supply needs across the whole education system. We would assess potential risks and ensure mitigations are in place at each stage of any implementation period so that the effects of any potential disruption are considered.

I share your support for schools' involvement in ITT and I will be interested to see the consultation responses on this matter. The report reflects the fact that schools are at the centre of initial teacher training and states that local recognition and relationships are critical for securing and maintaining the confidence of potential trainees.

Finally, you explain that in UCET's view, it is essential that ITT programmes are informed by research and that new teachers are equipped to use and apply this in their practice. Indeed, the report sets out that expert teachers need to be able to understand and respond to good quality evidence as they move through their careers. The report states that while ITT is likely to focus on practice that is informed by existing high quality evidence, trainees should be equipped to understand and challenge the evidence base that supports this. Trainees should also continue to deepen their understanding of research and its implications as they gain experience, and as research and evidence develops over time.

I note that while you consider this is acknowledged to some extent in the proposals, you also believe the report implies that some research is 'incontestable and set in stone'. We would be interested to understand where you think this is implied and I will ask Departmental officials to discuss this with you as part of our ongoing consultation.

We are engaging with key stakeholders during the consultation as well as encouraging all those with an interest in ITT to respond to the consultation document. I understand that Departmental officials are discussing the plans with you for our ongoing work with UCET. I would like to thank you for your time in taking part in these discussions.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Gold', written in a cursive style.