

 A Registered Charity (No 275082)

*Promoting Quality in Teacher Education*

**Minutes of the meeting of the School Reference Group held at 1pm on Wednesday 20 October 2021 via Zoom**

Present

Chris Buckley

Fiona Hopkinson Kearney (pmat Academy)

Nicole Lyons (Minster School)

Jackie Moses (UCET)

James Noble-Rogers (UCET)

Brian Rock (Ebor Hope TSA)

Jenny Wynn (Bishop Grosseteste University)

Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 May were agreed. There were no matters arising not already included on the agenda.

UCET updates

UCET updates covered: the development of a new teaching qualification for the FE and skills sector by the Education & Training Foundation, within input by UCET and others; a summary of recent meetings between UCET, ITE institutions and politicians; the work of the UCET Equalities sub-group; and developments in Northern Ireland and Wales.

Policy issues

The policy issues discussed covered:

* The DfE review of the ITE Market, the consultation on which had closed in August, with results expected to be announced by the end of the year. Concerns had been expressed from organisations across the sector about the likely impact on teacher supply if a significant number of existing providers either voluntary withdrew from, or were forced out of, the ITE Market. This would, it was explained, potentially: make it more difficult for prospective teachers to find ITE provision close to where they live; break the pipeline between undergraduate programmes and PGCEs at the same HEI; and remove the option to undertake ITE at research intensive HEIs with particular pedagogic and subject knowledge expertise. Schools might also withdraw from ITE, thus reducing placement capacity, because of the increased burdens they might face and because they would not want to partner with a new and potentially more distant ITE provider.
* No fewer than 47% of ITE provision inspected by OfSTED under the new inspection framework since May 2021 had been graded as ‘inadequate’ or ‘requires improvement’. Concern had been expressed about the belligerent and hostile nature of the inspections, with inspectors reportedly looking for reasons to find provision wanting. A particular focus of inspections had been on CCF implementation and on the importance of not assessing students against the teacher standards during their ITE, and on (sometimes dubious) compliance issues. Reference was also made to the findings of the OfSTED research report on Covid and ITE, and the refusal of OfSTED to substantiate many of the conclusions reached in that report. `
* The piloting from September 2022 of the new iQTS qualification prior to national roll-out a year later. About 5 accredited providers would train 20-30 teachers each in schools overseas, with programmes subject as appropriate to English ITE requirements, including the CCF. Doubts had been expressed about the appropriateness of subjecting teacher education programmes for teachers working in local contexts to such requirements.

Teaching Schools Hubs

Reports were received of SRG member’s experiences of working with the new teaching school hubs. Members had generally found the hubs to be collegiate and interested in genuine partnership working. It was agreed that the hubs should over time develop a presence in ITE, often through working in partnership with accredited ITE providers.

Feedback from SRG members

Several examples were given of schools having to withdraw ITE placement offers because of the pressures they face. These included financial pressures, but also the ECF, particularly for smaller primary schools and for small subject departments within secondary schools where any mentor capacity they have has to be directed towards ECT support. Further pressures resulted from OFSTED school inspections, with schools anticipating an inspection wanting to focus on that without the distraction of ITE. UCET confirmed that increasing placement difficulties, which could be made much worse if pressure on mentors increased because of the Market Review, was part of a national trend, with Covid and the ECF being cited as the two main causes.

The Covid 19 boost to recruitment was reported to be at an end, with particular difficulties in some secondary subjects such as physics and MFL. The iniquitous nature of bursary payments, where biology students received much less than those training to teach other science subjects, despite the fact that they would teach the same subjects in school, was noted.

Items for information

The agenda for the 2-3 November UCET conference ([www.ucet/conference](http://www.ucet/conference)) and the summer UCET newsletter were noted.

Any other business

Feedback was received on the Early Career Framework to the effect that that it was too rigid, with delivery dictated by programme structures and timetables rather than by the needs and starting points of ECTs themselves.

Date of next meeting

2 February 2022