



Robin Walker MP

Minister of State for School Standards

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By email: J.Noble-Rogers@ucet.ac.uk

24 May 2022

Dear James,

Thank you for the constructive meeting we had on 17 May. I believe that UCET's close engagement with the Department is crucial to achieving our shared aim of a world-class system of teacher training. I was therefore pleased to hear that you intend to continue to work with us, even though I recognise you have concerns regarding the outcomes of the first accreditation round.

During our meeting, you raised some concerns regarding the second stage of our quality assurance process that I would like to take this opportunity to address.

I heard your concerns about the reference to withdrawal of accreditation in the stage 2 guidance and would like to re-iterate that the potential for withdrawal of accreditation as part of stage 2 was not intended to be in any way punitive. Whilst engagement with stage 2 is a condition of accreditation, we do not expect any providers who have passed stage 1 to be unable to meet the new ITT criteria. My intention for stage 2 is to work with providers to ensure that ITT is of the best quality possible for 2024/25 and offer improvement support should it be required.

In recognition of your concerns, and to avoid any further doubt on this point, I have asked my officials to remove any reference to reviewing a provider's accredited status from the stage 2 guidance.

I also understand that the published stage 2 guidance has caused concern among your members that the process will be more burdensome and less accommodating of institutional autonomy than was previously anticipated. The purpose of stage 2 is to assure the Department that all ITT courses are developed in line with the new ITT criteria 24/25. The new criteria are different to the current criteria, and it is appropriate for the Department to ensure that

providers are ready to deliver against them. However, there are no new requirements being introduced with stage 2, and no element – including the work of the ITT associates – seeks to remove providers' freedom to design their own curricula, select their own evidence base, and tailor their programmes accordingly. The checks have also been designed to be light touch. A very small number of curriculum materials will be requested; timelines for review activity can be mutually agreed with providers to suit their programme development timetables; and elements such as participation in a more involved curriculum support offer from the Education Endowment Foundation are entirely voluntary.

We would naturally be disappointed if concerns around this process were to lead some successfully accredited HEI providers to withdraw from the ITT market. The Higher Education sector plays a critical role in ITT and has trained thousands of high-quality teachers. In the reformed ITT market, we need as many high-quality providers as possible. I would like to better understand the specific concerns your members have with the stage 2 process and therefore invite you to meet with my officials to discuss this in detail over the coming weeks. I hope this will enable us to reach a position that allows your members to feel comfortable undertaking the second stage of the accreditation process.

I hope that these clarifications, alongside the planned future engagement, will help allay the concerns of your members about stage 2 of the quality assurance process. Please do continue to keep my officials updated with the concerns your members have, whichever stage of the process they relate to.

Finally, I would like to reiterate that I strongly encourage all HEIs who were not accredited in round 1 to apply in the second round. As you pointed out, withdrawal of HEIs from the ITT market would pose a risk to teacher sufficiency, particularly in areas of the country without large scale providers, and I am glad that you are providing support to those of your members who wish to apply in round 2.

Thank you again for taking the time to meet and I look forward to our continuing engagement.

Yours sincerely,

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

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