Eich cyf/Your ref

Ein cyf/Our ref: ITE-UCAS-AY2023/24

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| 07/07/2022 |

Dear James Noble-Rogers

Further to our meeting with Wales ITE Providers and UCAS on 16th June 2022. I remain very concerned about the lack of progress in coming to a mutually agreed and suitable position for the ITE application process here in Wales.

As you know since the switch in September 2021 to the APPLY service in England, your members have reported issues with the amended UCAS process which are of serious concern to all of us in the ITE sector here in Wales. Welsh Government is especially concerned where those issues are directly affecting the allocation of numbers process, actual recruitment of student teachers and ITE staff and applicants’ well-being. Despite the sector’s and Welsh Government’s efforts to resolve these issues with UCAS these process issues look to continue into the next recruitment cycle.

Welsh Government does not require nor direct the application systems that universities in Wales utilise to recruit to their courses and we are aware that not all universities in Wales use UCAS. We understand that service level agreements and the student application policy and process is a matter for universities and UCAS as their service provider; Welsh Government is a third party in this area with little to no levers to utilise to direct or implement a solution in the short-term.

Given the above I request that USCET discuss and agree a national approach for resolving some of the issues with UCAS ready for the AY2023/24 recruitment cycle. I understand that there may be some ‘soft’ short-term solutions that UCAS can put into place around a national ‘offer-by’ date and ‘offer-reply-by’ date, however these must be agreed by all ITE Partnerships in Wales.

Once consensus between ITE Partnerships for a solution has been reached, Welsh Government would be happy to act as a broker between USCET and UCAS in order to provide additional support. Unfortunately, Welsh Government cannot design this short-term solution; it must be tackled and agreed by the sector. We would also request that the ITE Departments within universities, supported by USCET, raise the issues to date and the serious risks identified with their senior management teams and teams responsible for overseeing university level recruitment.

I will also escalate this issue within Welsh Government should there be any immediate action we can take to support the sector to resolve this issue in the short-term. We will also begin to explore potential longer-term solutions should they be required in future. However, any long-term policy interventions made by Welsh Government in this space will require evidence over the medium-term; that no other solution could be found following discussions between universities and UCAS, and that it is significantly affecting recruitment. This evidence will be required, especially where there may be resource implications for Ministers to consider.

I am happy to meet to discuss next steps with you, and your chair and deputy chair representatives as you feel appropriate.

Yours sincerely



Max White

Head of Initial Teacher Education

Education Directorate

Welsh Government

p.p.

EWC CEO Hayden Llewellyn

EWC Teacher Education Accreditation Board Chair Hazel Haggard

USCET Chair Elaine Sharpling

USCET Deputy Chair Lisa Taylor

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