

 A Registered Charity (No 275082)

*Promoting Quality in Teacher Education*

**Minutes of the meeting of the School Reference Group held at 11am on Wednesday 18 May 2022 via Zoom**

Present

Spencer Hennessey (Emmanuel College, Chair)

Nicole Lyons (Minster School)

James Noble-Rogers (UCET)

Eileen Robinson (The Heath School)

Emma Rodrigues (Yorkshire Rose)

Pinar Robinson (Edge Hill University)

Brian Rock (Ebor Hope)

Jenny Wynn (Bishop Grosseteste University)

Chris Buckley (East SILC John Jamieson School)

Apologies

Janice Cahill; Jake Capper; Lorraine Hughes; Rachel Rees-Jones; Mathew Parris; Emma Rodrigues; Katerina Schlindwein.

Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 February were agreed. On matters arising, it was reported that information about the SEND gateway would be included on the UCET website.

UCET updates

UCET updates covered: the development of a new teaching qualification for the FE and skills sector; the drafting of a new UCET CPD paper, identifying gaps in ECF and NPQ coverage; and developments in Northern Ireland & Wales.

Policy issues

The policy issues discussed included:

* The DfE review of the ITE Market. The outcome of round 1 applications for accreditation had been published n 16 May. Just 80 (37%) of the circa 220 applications received had been successful, although a significant proportion of the remainder were only thought to have missed out by a couple of points. The low success rate was thought to cast doubt on the efficacy of the process, and significant concern had been expressed about the insulting nature of DfE feedback, the ‘cut and paste’ nature of the feedback given and apparent inconsistencies in the marking of similar answers submitted by different providers. Concern had also been expressed about the prescriptive nature of the Stage 2 process for successful round 1 applicants and the way it would prevent them from developing ITE curricula that reflected their principles and priorities and the contexts within which they operated. The implications for placement schools, many of who were unaware of what was happening, in terms of both their ability to work with long-term partners and increased workload, appeared not to have been taken into account and could lead to schools withdrawing from ITE. These points and others had been made to the Minister by JNR at a meeting the previous day. UCET’s focus would now be on supporting providers (e.g. through the holding of focused workshops and facilitating the sharing of information) through round 2 and expressing the concerns of the membership. The possible impact on teacher supply was thought to be significant.
* OfSTED ITE inspections, where the outcomes of recent inspections had improved since the last meeting, although the inspections continued to be challenging and, in some cases, the approach taken by inspectors not appropriate. Key areas of OfSTED interest included: the embedding of the CCF in ITE curricula and mentor’s understanding of this; the ability of student teachers to articulate how they had received their CCF entitlement; the assessment of student teachers, which should be against the ITE curricula during programmes (but not the CCF) and only at the end against the teacher standards; the understanding by providers of KCSE requirements; and consistency and equity in terms of mentor training across partnerships.

ITE delivery issues

These covered:

* Placement issues, where the availability of placements appeared to have improved since the previous meeting. DfE had offered support to providers in terms of brokering placements with schools (although there could be risks in terms of quality with this) and, in-extremis, institution specific relaxations to the ITE requirements.
* Recruitment to ITE programmes in 2022/23, where applications had generally fallen (especially in STEM subjects, geography, MFL and in one case English) in secondary by as much as 50% and in some cases in primary as well. The quality of applicants was variable, with the risk of schools withdrawing placement offers if students were not of the best quality noted. Recruitment was to an extend being hit by the withdrawal or contraction of participation in ITE by former teaching schools because of the loss of their £40k pa funding. The gradual reduction in placement offers by schools could accelerate as expertise and resource declined as a result. The mentoring burdens placed on schools by the ECF was continuing to have an impact. There had been widespread reporting of an increase in applications from African countries, possibly because of the way the DfE Apply system was operating.

Working with Teaching School Hubs.

The expertise of TSHs in regards different areas of their responsibilities (e.g. Awarding Body, ECF, NPQs and ITE) varied in quality, and the communications of some hubs was sometimes too phase specific. In some areas partnerships were working well and to a high standard.

Early Career Framework (ECF)

Some ECF provision was reported to be problematic in regards: inflexibility; bureaucracy; the demands placed on mentors; stop-start delivery; the lack of mentor capacity in schools; the quality of mentors; the lack of scope to personalise delivery; and the understanding of instructional coaching by mentors. Where there was a good relationship between mentors and teachers, with each understanding their respective roles, things could work well. Some ECF providers were felt to be better than others. In some cases, schools were choosing, if they could, not to employ teachers until their third year of teaching so as to avoid the burdens placed on them by the ECF.

Items for information

The following were noted:

* The Easter UCET newsletter.
* The 1-2 November UCET conference which would take place in Stratford upon Avon on 1-2 November (registration at [www.ucet/conference](http://www.ucet/conference)).

Any other business

None.

Date of next meeting

19 October 2022, 11-1pm, via zoom.