

**Note of the meeting of the University and Schools Council for the Education of Teachers (USCET) held at 10am on Thursday 20 October 2022 via Zoom**

Attendees

Hannah Barry (EAS)

Lisa Bowen (Cardiff Met)

Anna Bryant (Cardiff Met)

Angella Cooze (Swansea)

Emma Hollis (NASBTT)

Helen Lewis (Swansea)

Elaine Sharpling (UWTSD, Chair)

Melanie Smith (UofSW)

Sarah Stewart (OU)

Lisa Taylor (UofSW)

Sharne Watkins (Cardiff Met)

**WG/EWC/ESTYN** (from 11.30am)

Liz Barry (ESTYN)

Lisa Drury-Lawson (Welsh Government)

Andrew Pickford (EWC)

Bethan Stacey (EWC)

Apologies
Jane Bulkley (Chester), Max White (WG)

Welcome, introductions and minutes of the previous meeting

All were welcomed to the meeting and apologies noted. A special welcome was given to Emma Hollis from the National Association of School Based Teacher Trainers (NASBTT) who was observing the meeting.

The note of the meeting held on19 May 2022 was agreed. On matters arising:

* An update was provided on Talk Pedagogy, a friendly, supportive digital space to share and learn about pedagogical approaches which formed part of the wider support for professional learning for teachers and in Wales. Aberystwyth University, The Open University, Swansea University and The University of South Wales are working with Welsh Government to provide opportunities for student teachers to become involved in Talk Pedagogy to support the forging of links with other student teachers and teachers across Wales. Further information is appended to this minute and can additionally be found at: <https://www.ewc.wales/site/index.php/en/about/blog-archive/1665-why-it-s-time-to-talk-pedagogy.html>
* The Global Education Community had been renamed the Global Community of Teacher Education, although there had been few developments since the summer. It was agreed that Welsh Government would be asked about the provision of the agreed funding for ‘thinking time’.
* Tackling Educational Inequality: A number of research projects were reported to be being funded by Welsh Government. Concern was however expressed about the short turn-around time for the research, which had implications for the quality of the research carried out and the workload of ITE providers.

Updates

The following updates were received:

* PCET sub-group: Recruitment challenges continued, particularly in some geographical areas. The cost-of-living crisis and the well-being of students were becoming increasingly significant. Research was being carried out with WG on the incentives scheme, which provided funding (£1,000, or £3,000 for those training in key subjects) for full time students on pre-service graduate pathways. Future work would focus on mentoring. Draft recommendations from the PCET review, which might be significant, were expected to be published soon. Work on the QTS conversion programme was ongoing and proposals would be issued for consultation soon.
* EAS: Work was taking place on developing school capacity and growing ITE partnerships. The quality of ITE students going into school was high and worthy of celebration.
* Central South: Work with providers on existing projects, for example in relation to the transition of students from ITE into school, was continuing. The involvement of more ITE partnerships in such activities would be welcomed. It was suggested, during the discussion, that HE based projects might usefully be showcased during the EWC’s ITE day, although it was also felt that one ITE day would be sufficient, and that separate events led by different agencies were not required and only served to increase workload and duplication.
* Swansea: ITE programmes had returned to normal after two years of Covid related disruption, with positive benefits in terms of the confidence of students and the scope for them to build relationships. Research was taking place on how well new teachers felt they had been prepared for teaching, with some identifying the relevance of parts of their ITE programmes only once they had started work in school.
* OU: Work was taking place with colleagues in local authorities to build ITE capacity, as the lack of capacity in some areas was making it difficult for some people to commence ITE. The WG was providing support to fund in full the salaried route delivered through the medium of Welsh. Feedback from schools indicated a desire for greater consistency in terms of assessment and mentor support. Case studies on aspects of mentoring were about to be published. Cost pressures could make it difficult for schools to appoint more than one salaried ITE student, so efforts were being made to pair them up with students on the part-time fee-paying route. Positive reference was made to the anti-racist materials developed under the auspices of the UCET Equalities sub-group.
* Cardiff Met: There had been a smooth transition to ITE placements, with all students currently in school. Primary recruitment was going well, although there were challenges in secondary. A number of projects, for example in relation to shared understanding, were ongoing and entering their second phase. Contributions were being made to recruitment initiatives, although it was felt that there should be more focus on specific activities that would have a direct impact rather than only on blue-skies projects with purely aspirational targets. High bursaries in England were thought to be having a negative impact on recruitment. It was noted during the discussion that responsibility for increasing recruitment in key areas such as Welsh Medium could not rest with ITE providers, when it was the pipeline which constrained the pool of people that ITE could recruit from. Local authorities might it was hoped to have a role in addressing this.
* South Wales: Applications to primary were strong, and the lack of allocations might lead to over-recruitment. Earlier notification of allocations was needed.
* UWTSD: EWC mentoring had taken place in June, and an Estyn inspection had been scheduled for later in the year.

Accreditation criteria

The Chair reported on the work of the steering group which had been established, under the leadership of John Furlong and Hazel Hagger, to refresh the ITE accreditation criteria. No significant changes were expected, and it was recognised that the ITE curriculum could not be over-burdened by the addition of content requested by any number of interest groups. The vision would however be reviewed, and there might be a greater emphasis on equipping new teachers to become life-long learners; collaborative learning; diversity; and Curriculum for Wales. Over-prescription was likely to be avoided with space in programmes allowed for creativity. A strengthening of requirements about consecutive age-phases, as well as secondary subject knowledge, might be expected. Requirements on research and enquiry strategies would remain. There had been a debate about the suitability of special schools for ITE placements, and input from special schools should be secured. A clear direction of travel on the involvement of special schools was needed.

Estyn and EWC regulatory requirements

While the ITE sector accepted and welcomed the need for appropriate accountability measures, concerns still existed about the overlap between the regulatory functions carried out by the EWC and Estyn. Discissions had taken place with WG, and a USCET paper had been shared with WG, Estyn ad the EWC. Further evidence of overlap was likely to become available by the end of the year by when providers would have experienced both EWC monitoring visits and Estyn inspections.

UCAS

Feedback from USCET members about the shortcomings of the UCAS application process had been shared with WG and it was understood discussions between WG, UCAS and others were taking place. A key issue related to the time but which offers had to be accepted, and it was agreed that ITE providers might set their own timescales independent of UCAS restrictions.

Updates from partner organisations and issues arising from earlier discussions

* WG: WG colleagues agreed to investigate the Global Community of Teacher Education/thinking time issue and the short turn-around time for grant funded projects and report back. An announcement on the equivalencies and Grade B GCSE requirements was expected soon. Overall ITE allocations were with the minister for approval and would be passed to the EWC soon (they were in fact approved as the meeting was in progress). Recommendations on financial incentives were also with the minister for approval and were expected to be announced soon. It was felt unlikely that significant changes would be made although there might be changes to the phasing of payments to reflect cost-of living pressures. The impact of higher bursaries in England on recruitment to ITE in Wales was noted and acknowledged. It was confirmed that, subject to certain constraints, special schools could be involved in ITE; more information and further consultation would follow in the context of discussions about the refreshed accreditation criteria (where no significant surprises were anticipated). On recruitment measures, USCET colleagues pointed out the need for practical and achievable measures to increase recruitment from particular groups. Research was, it was reported, being carried out int the supply lines for entry into ITE (e.g., undergraduate degrees in key subjects) and it was hoped that this would be an annual exercise. Discussions about the regulatory functions of EWC and Estyn were ongoing.
* Estyn: The report on the Cardiff partnership had been published, and the partnership had been invited to prepare case-studies on aspects of their provision for inclusion on the Estyn website. Two further inspections were planned for the current academic year. The inspection guidance would continue to be reviewed. Estyn were grateful to HEIs and schools for making peer inspectors available (about 1,000 were currently on the books) and would welcome more, particularly from partner schools. The Estyn annual report would be published soon after Christmas, although some ‘early insights’ would be published before then. A new thematic report on the role of assessment in teaching and learning was also to be published. A review would be carried out on the 16-19 curriculum in Wales. New guidance was being prepared for inspectors on approaches being taken by schools and local authorities to address poverty issues. Thematic work was to be undertaken on Welsh language in ITE, about which providers would be contacted soon.
* EWC: It was agreed that part of EWC’s ITE day could be used to give providers the opportunity to showcase some of their enquiry-based projects, and that more than one ITE day from national agencies was probably not needed. Two new EWC board members had been appointed who would be involved in ITE monitoring activities. Account was being taken of concerns expressed about monitoring activities. Processes for accreditation were under consideration, with the results to be shared before the end of the calendar year. Reaccreditation procedures for 2024/25 were likely to be relatively light touch. Partnerships would be approached soon about the PGCE QTS conversion issue.

Items for information

The following items were noted:

* The UCET summer newsletter
* Details of the 1-2 November UCET conference in Stratford upon Avon, registration for which was free to USCET members ([www.ucet/conference](http://www.ucet/conference)).
* An update of the review of the ITE Market in England.

Any other business

It was greed that the agenda for the next meeting would include:

* A briefing from JNR an UCET governance and committee/forum structures.
* The new accreditation criteria.
* The development of a shared understanding of assessment of practice.
* The role if special schools in ITE provision.

Date of next meeting

26 January 2023 (on-line)