**Questions about Stage 2 of the accreditation process submitted by UCET to DfE, Jan-Feb 2023**

*Questions from workshops taking place w/b 6 February*

* To what extent will providers be held to account in the future to the range of materials they submit now, taking account of the fact that programmes will have to evolve in the years ahead to reflect changing contexts and priorities? For undergraduate programmes, some aspects of the new curricula won’t be delivered until 2027, and nothing drafted now will be wholly relevant or appropriate by then.
* ITE curricula are being co-constructed with partnerships that are themselves in a state of flux and are being negotiated. Materials submitted, e.g.. in relation to curricula, partnership structures, ITAP and mentoring,  cannot therefore be expected to be in their final form. School-based resources are currently being developed with existing partners (e.g. SD lead schools) who might not be involved in partnerships in the same capacity in the future. What is the scope to change such resources in the light of evolving partnerships?
* DfE has asked for materials etc. that were not included on approved curriculum maps and are sometimes inconsistent with material submitted in stage 1 and subsequently approved. For example, this might include a request for school-based materials for parts of a programme that are centre-based. What is the reason for this?
* When DfE says that material won’t be shared outside the department without the consent of providers, does this include the sharing of information with DfE ‘linked’ organisations such as OfSTED or other government agencies? What does ‘not shared *externally*’ entail? How wide is the definition of *‘department’*?
* There appears to be inconsistency in the level of information required from different providers by DfE. Could we agree some joint guidance to DfE associates about the level of information to be requested? There are also inconsistencies in how DfE are communicating with providers. Sometimes it is the DfE associates and at other times it is partnership relationship managers. Some providers don’t yet know who their partnership managers are, although I do understand that some have yet to be appointed.
* Greater clarity is required about the level of detail that DfE expects in response to information requests. For example, should exemplar materials provided relate to a specific session (e.g. 1.5 hours), a full day or what? The volume of information provided would be overwhelming if too much is expected. Why is there variation in the number of materials requested? Some have been asked for four materials, others up to seven. Why is this?
* Does the request for scripted materials imply that OfSTED, DfE and others will expect such materials to be available for all aspects of programmes in the future? It would not be practicable for scripts to be available for all aspects of a programme. Requests for significant amounts of information are placing additional workload burdens on ITE staff at a time when they are already under significant pressure. Account must be taken of the mental health and wellbeing of ITE staff, which has been put under huge pressure because of recent developments.
* The level of detail requested in respect of school-based aspects of programme is causing some concerns amongst partner schools about the extra burdens they will face and could encourage some to reduce their placement offers or withdraw from ITE altogether. What guidance can DfE give to prevent this from happening? It is not enough simply to ask that ITE providers make sure that pressures on school are kept "manageable". DfE has a responsibility to make sure this is achievable. The pressures that schools are facing (e.g.  with staffing shortages, ECF demands on mentoring capacity, and the expectation for schools to release their ITE mentors for 20hrs of ITT training) might well mean that many simply walk away from ITE.
* Will eligibility for teachers to access Postgraduate Loans be relaxed so that they are able to borrow money sufficient to cover only the costs of master’s level mentor training programmes that have fewer credits than the 180 required for a full master’s?
* Will DfE consider producing either national or regional registers of lead and general mentors that have undertaken the required training to: (a) allow DfE to ensure that public funds have been properly spent; and (b) allow all ITE providers and partner schools to track the training of mentors moving from one school/ITE provider to another? For example, if a teacher trains with one provider for 20hrs then moves across the country to become a mentor in another partnership do they have to repeat all mentor training, over and above what will be required to update them with specifics about the new ITE providers curriculum? Could there be a national database recording which mentors have done what?

Previous questions

*Dear all,*

*As I mentioned, we held the first UCET workshop on the development of new ITE partnerships on Thursday last week and a number of questions and issues arose on which the sector requires clarification and action. These complement and reinforce those identified in the speaking notes I used at the workshop and are which attached to this email and which I forwarded previously.*

*First of all, the deadline of 28 February for the submission to DfE of information on partnerships needs to be significantly extended, as has been requested by a number of institutions and organisations, and not just those from the HE sector.  Discussions and negotiations between, for example, accredited HEIs and non-accredited HEIs who might be interested in becoming lead delivery partners are inevitably complex. There will be a host of legal, financial, governance and accountability issues that will have to involve senior staff (including legal experts) from within both institutions. It will simply not be possible for these decisions to have been completed in the time currently allowed. The quality of the information provided – for example who does what in terms of curriculum design, delivery, mentor training and recruitment – will be much enhanced if more time is allowed. Added to that, some accredited providers will not have had their initial meetings with their DfE advisors until after the deadline has passed, while others will only have had the meetings just before. If the advisors are to be able to support and help steer the process, there will have to be time for them to engage with providers, and for providers to reflect on those discussions, before material is submitted.*

*A key issue of principle concerns the extent to which lead delivery partners will be able to help shape the ITE curricula, whether they be former HEIs that have lost their accreditation or former SD lead schools.  There is an apparent tension between, on the one hand, statements in the DfE documentation that lead partners will be able to contextualise curricula to reflect local needs and circumstances, and on the other hand curricula having to be applied consistently across partnerships. How much influence will delivery partners be allowed? Broad options might for example include: (i) one ITE curriculum that allows only for minor local variations; (ii) the accredited provider identifying the outline of ITE curricula and the principles that underpin it, and then quality assuring how the delivery partner delivers it on the ground; or (iii) the input of delivery partners being restricted to discussions with the accredited provider about the overall curriculum design, in which case contextualisation by different lead partners within the same partnership might not be possible. What would happen if an accredited provider offered, for example, secondary postgraduate provision only but a delivery partner offered undergraduate primary as well? Would this imply the delivery partner having more autonomy in undergraduate primary than in secondary postgraduate? Whatever the answer to this is, it will be essential that DfE, OfSTED and the ITE sector has a common understanding of what the scope for contextualisation actually is, and what ‘consistency’ in terms of delivery and student teacher entitlement actually means.  Is there any further detail on what the actual role of lead delivery partners will be?*

*Linked to the above, is there scope for lead delivery partners to use, in the light of their particular contexts, different research, texts and training materials to support the overarching curriculum?*

*The documentation appears to be based on the assumption that all ITE provision is postgraduate, and ignores the significant amount of undergraduate ITE that takes place. Most of this is for primary although, at DfE’s encouragement, increasingly secondary as well. For example, how will the applications process work where a delivery partner recruits through UCAS to an undergraduate programme, and the accredited provider only offers postgraduate provision? What will the relationship be between a delivery partner that offers undergraduate and an accredited provider that does not? Could the undergraduate degree be offered by one partner and the QTS recommendation by the other?*

*Can existing SD lead schools become lead delivery partners for more than one accredited provider? If so, what would the practical implications of this be? Can non accredited HEIs be lead partners for more than one accredited provider? At the moment, schools often work with a number of different providers, and we have in fact expressed concern about some new providers insisting on exclusive relations, which amongst other things would reduce levels of recruitment.*

*How will the teaching apprenticeship fit into the new arrangements? A number of issues will have to be teased out about how the new apprenticeship could be made to comply with the new Quality Requirements and be delivered in a way that meets DfE and OfSTED expectations in regards consistency across whole partnerships. For example, issues in regards the length of programmes and the time allowed on salaried routes for ‘training’ Will the employing school in effect be a lead delivery partner? What scope will they have to influence how programmes are designed and delivered?*

*On the submission of information about the distribution of financial resources across the partnership, we are assuming that it will be sufficient for accredited providers to identify the principles under which funding will be distributed rather than actual amounts? The latter would not be feasible, as the balance of responsibilities between accredited providers and delivery partners could change part way through a year, for example in response to staffing changes, external pressures on one or both of the organisations or, even, global pandemics. How set in stone and detailed will information about the apportionment of responsibilities have to be?*

*Will it be possible for an accredited provider to make recommendations for QTS, and a delivery partner to confer academic awards such as the PGCE or an undergraduate degree. In such cases, which organisation ‘owns’ the student, and where does accountability to the OfS rest? Regulations about ‘collaborative provision’ in the HE sector are relevant to this.*

*There was a great deal of discussion about the ‘branding’ issue for lead partners and the role they will have in regards recruitment, and how prospective students will be able to express a preference for a particular lead partner through Apply. We very much look forward to further DfE guidance on this.*