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*Promoting Quality in Teacher Education*

**UCET Management Forum: note of the meeting held via zoom at 1pm on Tuesday 14 March 2023**

Colleagues were welcomed to the second meeting of the academic year. The note of the meeting held on 29 November 2022 was agreed. On matters arising, UCET had issued guidance on the implications of industrial action for ITE providers, in respect of which it was noted that OFSTED had sometimes changed its timescale for notifying providers about ITE inspections and the days on which inspections would take place in response to strike days.

A number of issues were discussed, including:

* Latest developments in respect of the ITE Market Review and feedback from the morning symposium, covering:
  + ITAP, with key points including: the need for clarity of how ICT is used and why it is being used; the importance of contingency planning in the event of students or mentors missing aspects of ITAP provision or training[[1]](#footnote-1); the benefits of having focussed (i.e. not overly broad) issues for ITAP focus; the role of mentors in planning ITAP and having a sound understanding of what it covers; ITAP as an integrated part of a planned and sequenced ITE curriculum, not a ‘bolt-on’; workload issues for students and mentors; the strategies on how to assess the impact of ITAP; the division of ITAP responsibilities across accredited providers, delivery partners and others; and the extent to which aspects of ITAP can be piloted during 2023/24.
  + Curriculum issues, where feedback letters from DfE requesting further information had started to be issued, with most providers likely to be asked to provide additional information; the fact that delivery partners could be engaged in the co-construction of curricula, and have limited scope (with the agreement of the accredited provider) to contextualise curricula to meet local needs.
  + Mentoring, where the lack of understanding of schools about the responsibilities they would have in respect of ITE mentoring from 2024/25 was noted. The scope to deliver cross-provider mentor training in particular geographical areas (while taking due account of the need for all mentors to have a deep understanding of their accredited provider’s ITE curriculum) and the possibility of including a range of relevant activities to count towards mentor training requirements (and recognising previous mentor training) were discussed.
  + Partnerships, where reconfigured partnerships were being developed and clarification from DfE about the scope for accredited providers to delegate responsibility for recruitment and the collection of fees was noted.
  + Funding and the difficulty of sustaining provision for partnership development, mentor support and ITAP if DfE funding is not continued beyond 2024/25.
* The work of DfE associates, where a collegiate rather than an inspectorial approach undertaken by associates was felt to be essential if effective working practices were to be developed. Feedback so far from UCET members had been generally positive.
* Inspection issues, including some feedback from some recent inspections, including the possibility that inspectors might identify some key themes which they would then track through programmes, from centre-based training, through placement activities, the knowledge of mentors, feedback from students and the assessment of students. One HEI was congratulated on the outcome of its recent inspection. .
* New UCET guidance on DBS and Keeping Children Safe in Education, the final version of which would be circulated soon.
* Post-compulsory ITE issues, including the introduction of the new DIT qualification from 2024/25 and ongoing discussions with DfE about constraints on bursary eligibility for students based at providers with RI or inadequate OfSTED inspection outcomes.
* Discussions with DfE about the UCET *‘golden thread or guild cage’* paper on the ECF in the context of the review of the ECF.
* The forthcoming review of the CCF, and UCET’s membership of the External Reference Group.
* Recruitment to ITE, where an analysis suggested that only 67% of secondary postgraduate intake targets would be met. Reports on current levels of applications were mixed, although concern about the quality of some applicants was shared and recruitment in 2023/24 to most secondary and many primary programmes was expected to be challenging. DfE should take steps to ensure that ITE programmes remained viable, including communicating with Vice Chancellors about the importance of keeping subject lines open and sustaining programmes until recruitment improves. The increase in overseas applications, possibly because of a misunderstanding of DfE messaging, was identified as an issue. The increase by DfE (mid-cycle) of the number of potential choices applicants could make from 3 to 4 would it was felt add to workload, with no meaningful increase in recruitment. Concern was also expressed about the impact of DfE changes to the timing of the collection of references. Both Apply changes would lead to an increase in ‘no-shows’ at interview and extra work for already overwhelmed ITE staff. The retention of students was also becoming increasingly problematic because of costs pressures, the mental health & resilience of student teachers and the distance students need to travel to partner schools. The poor quality of assessments made by Occupational Health providers had also resulted in the recruitment of some students who were not, for health reasons, able to complete their ITE. Funding should also be available to allow for students to re-take parts of their programmes in subsequent years should they need to pause their ITE. DfE recruitment activities were, on the whole, felt to be piecemeal and ineffective, without any coherent and overarching strategy that championed teaching as a career.

Items for information

The group noted:

* The December UCET newsletter
* The forthcoming review of UCET’s strategy, vision & mission, governance, ways of working and organisational structure in the light of Market Review outcomes.
* Details of the 2023 UCET conference which will take pace n Leeds on 14-15 November.

Topics for future symposia

Suggestions included: assessment; technology used to implement and support the new Quality Requirements; working with Teaching School Hubs; a roundtable with NASBTT; the nature of good ITE research; and equalities issues. It was agreed that a poll would be carried out. One option might be to identify and overarching issue to be discussed at symposia for a full academic year.

Date of next meeting

20 June 2023, either via zoom or face to face (to be decided through an on-line poll).

1. Clarification has been sought from DfE whether ITAP is a programme design requirement or applies to the experiences of each and every student teacher. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)