

A Registered Charity (No 275082)

*Promoting Quality in Teacher Education*

**Minutes of the meeting of the School Reference Group held at 11am on Wednesday 8 February 2023 via Zoom**

Present

Nicole Lyons (Minster)

Jackie Moses (UCET)

James Noble-Rogers (UCET, and Chair of meeting)

Jenny Wynn (University of Oxford)

Andrew Young (Pathfinders)

Apologies

Chris Buckley, Jake Capper; Spencer Hennessey, Kevin Mattinson.

Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 October 2022 were agreed. There were no matters arising not included elsewhere on the agenda.

UCET updates

UCET updates covered: a report on the 2022 UCET conference and plans for the 2023 event; and a planned review of UCET’s strategy, governance, organisational structure and ways of working.

ITE Market Review

None of the appeals against non-accreditation following round 2 of the Market Review exercise had been successful. UCET’s focus was now on supporting the development of new ITE partnerships by both accredited and non-accredited members and supporting accredited providers through Stage 2 of the accreditation process by, amongst other things, holding workshops covering: ITE curricula; mentoring; Intensive Training & Practice (ITAP); and partnership development. Questions and other issues resulting from the workshops were being passed to DfE. The following points were raised during discussion:

* It was felt to be essential, especially in rural areas, that prospective student teachers be able to apply directly to a particular school or express a preference for a particular school through the Apply service, as it was becoming increasingly difficult for many to travel any significant distances to placement schools.
* Schools had very little spare capacity and would struggle to meet new requirements in respect of, for example, the training of mentors and some might either reduce their placement offers or withdraw entirely from ITE as a result. Time limited DfE funding was, while welcome, not sufficient to reassure schools who would not want to increase staffing levels (even if they could) to backfill for staff with mentoring responsibilities as this could lead to over-staffing in subsequent years.
* The pressures on mentor capacity could be alleviated if the time spent by mentors on self-study (reading etc.) and on attending virtual meetings could be counted towards training requirements. The recognition of previous mentor training and experiences towards the 20-hour requirement would also be helpful.
* DfE had to understands that material submitted to them by providers during Stage 2 of the accreditation process would not in many cases be final, and would even then be subject to change in the light of changing circumstances and evolving partnerships.
* Regional networks of ITE providers, placement schools, TSHs etc. could usefully facilitate the sharing of key information and in planning for delivery of the ITE reforms from September 2024.

Applications and recruitment to ITE

Current levels of applications to ITE programmes were no better than, and in some cases worse, than they had been at the same stage of the previous year’s recruitment cycle. Where there had been an increase in applications, these were sometimes of poor quality. An increase in applications from African countries was also noted.

ECF and NPQ issues

The recent UCET *‘golden thread or gilded cage’* paper on the ECF, which had been discussed with DfE in the context of its refresh of the ECF, was welcomed by the group and its identification of key issues not addressed in either the ECF or NPQs was supported. It was however suggested that greater account might be taken of a school-based readership in regards expectations in respect, for example, the sources of evidence deployed to identify CPD needs. The positive reaction of many headteachers to NPQ training was noted. The longer-term impact of the ECF and NPQs on teacher performance should in time be the subject of an in-depth longitudinal study.

Any other business

UCET would soon be publishing an updated version of its guidance on child protection issues and ITE, subject to consideration of comments on an earlier draft from DfE.

Date of next meeting

17 May 2023, via zoom.