

**ECF and CCF Review**

**Call for evidence**

Introduction

UCET is pleased to respond to the call for evidence for the review of the Early Career Framework (ECF) and the Core Content Framework (CCF).

This evidence should be considered alongside that submitted by our member institutions, the higher education institutions involved in initial and continuing teacher education, and educational research.

General points

Teacher education programmes, both ITE and CPD, should equip teachers to be competent and confident professionals and epistemic agents who are able to engage in enquiry rich practice. The programmes should draw upon a broad evidence base of quantitative and qualitative research, giving student teachers a nuanced and detailed understanding of their role, and equipping new teachers to apply, interpret and contextualise research flexibly according to the needs of their employing schools and the pupils they teach. The CCF does not convey the complexity of the teacher’s role, or communicate what it means to learn to teach, and indeed itself conveys a lack of ambition for teacher education programmes, representing teaching as a decontextualised series of interventions with narrow objectives, and potentially de-professionalising teachers’ work.

We want to reinforce the importance, as explicitly allowed for in the CCF, of student teachers being able to critically examine the evidence that underpins the CCF. We also value DfE’s assertion in the Market Review documentation that there is no research that DfE would either expect to see or not expect to see used in ITE programmes, provided that the Learn That and Learn How to statements are encompassed within ITE providers’ curricula. ITE providers are more than equipped to make judgements on appropriate research, drawing on their own knowledge and expertise.

We welcome the invitation to identify new sources of evidence that should inform, underpin and be referenced in both the CCF and the ECF. Our first suggested addition is UCET’s Intellectual Base of Teacher Education (IBTE) report and the research which it itself cites. A copy of the report can be found [here](https://www.ucet.ac.uk/11675/ibte-position-statement-updated-february-2020).

We would caution against merging the CCF and ECF documents into one. Content that might be appropriate to ECF delivery might not be appropriate for ITE, particularly given the detailed and complex regulatory requirements that apply to ITE programmes. The new ITE Quality Requirements, and updated ITE criteria, will come into effect in September 2024 and a great deal of work is currently being undertaken to ensure that programmes adhere to these new requirements. Because of this we would suggest that changes to the CCF are only made where clearly necessary and identified in this document.

Gaps in ECF and CCF provision

There are some key areas that are not addressed in either the ECF or the CCF documentation or in the list of evidence that is appended to them. Although the documents are intentionally generic and could be said to allow space for such areas to be covered, in practice (because of time constraints etc) unless they are specifically referenced it is unlikely that they will always be included.

The areas that we have identified include:

* SEND, where teachers need to be deliberately and explicitly equipped to meet the needs of all who struggle to access the curriculum, but particularly those with special educational needs, in both in mainstream and special school settings. Some of the research currently identified and referenced in the documentation, for example in relation to behaviour management, might not be appropriate for some SEND pupils. The research that we would recommend be added and taken into account in this area should relate to inclusive teaching and learning and evidence on adaptive practice that supports the progress of those pupils who experience barriers to learning, for example trauma informed approaches to inclusion and taught skills strategies to better support behaviour and emotional regulation. The longer-term impact of Covid and Covid restrictions should also be taken into account.
* Subject and age-phase specialisms. While we agree that the main texts of the ECF and CCF documentation should be generic rather than phase or subject specific, reference should be made to appropriate educational research in particular subject areas, and to phase specific research in for example the early years. We recommend that DfE consults the relevant subject associations and phase-specific organisations to identify educational research they think might be included.
* Equalities issues. Omissions of references to race, racism, cultural or linguistic diversity is an issue as it means that the ITE and ECF curricula may not meet the needs of early career teachers who will be teaching within increasingly culturally and ethnically diverse classrooms. This in turn means they may not be able to meet the needs of the pupils. We would suggest that relevant groups and organisations be asked to identify evidence that should be referenced in CCF and ECF documentation, ands specific reference made to equalities issues in the bodies of both texts. Reference should also be made to the [anti-racism-framework for ITE.](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/social-science/research/anti-racism-framework%20for%20ITE.)
* The climate and ecological emergency. Young people are increasingly aware that their teachers are ill-prepared to address this, as are teachers themselves according to recent [research](https://www.teachthefuture.uk/research). This is not simply a ‘worthy social issue’ but the context in which all education is taking place. The DfE’s own [sustainability and climate change strategy](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sustainability-and-climate-change-strategy) highlights a commitment to teacher training in this area yet it is not mentioned in the CCF or ECF.

UCET ‘Golden Thread or Gilded Cage’ paper

In November 2022 UCET published a paper on the ECF called: *‘Golden Thread or Gilded Cage,* which we were happy to discuss with DfE colleagues earlier this year in the context of the ECF refresh. A copy of the full document can be found [here](https://www.ucet.ac.uk/14587/golden-thread-or-gilded-cage-an-analysis-of-department-for-education-support-for-the-continuing-professional-development-of-teachers). While the paper focusses on the ECF, some if its conclusions are also relevant to the CCF and to the inter-relationship between the two.

The paper identifies a number of principles which the ECF attempts to address and that we consider critically important. These include: the provision of a coherent programme of professional development over an extended period; a recognition of the importance of mentoring and coaching in professional development; an emphasis on wellbeing, particularly in relation to introducing strategies to manage workload; different providers developing their own programmes and the potential this allows to provide comparative learning opportunities across the sector; and the identification of a range of different pathways that help to map out opportunities for alternative career stages.

We would also like to make number of suggestions relating to content, some of which have been referenced earlier in this evidence. These include: repetition between the CCF, ECF and NPQs; a lack of progression from CCF to ECF through to NPQs; a limited research base and the absence of any alternative views that would serve to deepen teachers’ professional understanding; a limited range of case studies; the place of Special Educational Needs and disability (SEND), particularly the ‘behaviourist’ approach taken to behaviour management which is counterproductive with many children; and the absence of any reference to the climate crisis and ecological emergency which represent the context within which our economy is developing.

In terms of ECF delivery, the report found that: mentor workload was excessive; increased work and cost pressures were being placed on schools, leading to some avoiding recruiting newly qualified teachers; there was an incorrect assumption of a common starting point for all new teachers; inflexibility over sequencing; a misalignment between Ofsted requirements, the Teacher Standards and the ECF and NPQ frameworks; overly prescriptive facilitator training; and a failure to recognise the role of induction tutors within schools.

Attention should be given during the review to, when delivering the ECF, taking greater account of the starting point of each new teacher so that programmes can address the particular areas for further development that will have been identified on completion of their ITE. A role for ITE providers in the delivery of the ECF would facilitate this. A way to reduce pressures and constraints on schools by synergising training for ITE and CCF mentors should be identified as a matter of urgency. Schools should also be given the flexibility to adjust how they work with and support ECTs in the light of their own particular contexts.

We commend the ‘Gilded Cage’ report to DfE and to those reviewing the EF and the CCF.

JNR

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