UCET

Universities' Council for the Education of Teachers

Forum March 2026

University of Wolverhampton

"How do we successfully help students transition to a successful outcome, whatever that may be?"

Welcome to the first face-to-face UCET Joint Symposium since before Covid

How do we successfully help students transition to a successful outcome, whatever that may be?

The workshop symposium theme was chosen:

1) With the new Ofsted Inclusion theme in mind.

2) Because of the increasingly wide range of trainee/student need we have in our cohorts nowadays.

Primary, Secondary, Post – 16, CPD, and Assembly representatives have increasingly raised the challenges they are facing with diverse student needs, and across the last year, have actively asked Exec members for a closer focus on meeting student needs in future symposia.

The Symposium Workshop

The structured, facilitated symposium workshop will be centred around addressing the needs across **the journey of the student/trainee/employee**:

- Pre-registration/recruitment stage
- Arrival and induction stage
- Placement induction stage
- Removing the stabilisers across a programme: enabling a successful transition into employment (whether teaching or not)
- Integration requirements between academic adjustments and practice adjustments for students
- When needs emerge, mid-programme

Each theme will have a brief provocation then UCET members will discuss approaches and challenges for each stage in smaller groups.

Headline Message

Reasonable adjustments are to enable the person to do the job/course, not changing the job/course for the person. **Our overall job is to create a readiness in students for graduate employment and career leadership.**

- **Headline outcome:** We would like members to use this event to move towards a "collective confidence" across the UCET membership in how to approach meeting the needs of the more varied trainee/student cohort we now see.
- **Other outcomes:** We will share headline thoughts and notes from each discussion group.
- **Future outcome:** This time next year at the next F2F day, we will return to uncover from members:
  (i) How has the increased focus on inclusion and meeting needs gone in your institution?
  (ii) What has changed since March 2026 in your practice as an ITE/education CPD team?

How the symposium discussion will work:

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- Find your allocated group and assemble together in one part of the room. Say hello!
- You will work in this small discussion group throughout the morning, alongside colleagues from other institutions and UCET fora (please do not sit with people you work with, if you can help it).
- Your role is to engage in meaningful conversation on the theme under discussion.
- You do not need to work religiously through all the provocation questions for each theme: as a group, just choose to talk on that which comes up naturally from the initial provocation and its accompanying questions.
- Please allow **all group members** an opportunity to talk across the morning, so that no one voice dominates discussion. You are deliberately placed in a smaller group to enable meaningful dialogue to happen.
- A symposium organiser (UCET forum chair or vice-chair) will sit with each discussion group to capture headline thinking in each theme so that you can focus on conversing together.
- For each theme, we would like you to come up with **three highlights** from your discussion together.
- At the end of the event, you will have some time to consider individually:
  - **Two actions** you will take from today's symposium for your programme/team that might further help your students transition to a successful outcome in their programme.
  - **One connection** you have made today with a colleague from elsewhere that you'd like to continue (e.g. a suggested solution to a problem you discussed together, or a continued challenge you'd like to continue discussing together, etc).

Theme 1 – What can be done at pre-registration and admissions/recruitment stage to support students to openly share with HEI tutors their needs?

Pinky Jain (Leeds Beckett University)

Recruitment/Admissions - Support students to share their needs

If you are thinking about becoming a student teacher, here are some things which you need to consider to be successful. Are you able to:

- Reflect on and cope with feedback effectively
- Recognise and maintain appropriate professional boundaries
- Ensure children's safety remains the top priority at all times
- Work independently without requiring constant supervision
- Commit to working hours of 9am-6pm when at university and typically 8am-5pm whilst on school placement
- While on placement be able to attend after-school meetings as required (varies by school)
- Complete a range of assessments including presentations, group work, podcasts, and essays
- Thrive in noisy, vibrant, changeable, and sometimes unpredictable classroom environments
- Remain present in the classroom throughout school experience placements except for emergencies
- Travel independently to school (with up to a 90-minute travel time each way) and arrive on time without relying on a partner, friend, or colleague for transport
- Enjoy communicating with a range of people and building professional relationships
- Communicate effectively in a public environment
- Can be flexible and enjoy the challenges that change can bring





Theme 1 – What can be done at pre-registration and admissions/recruitment stage to support students to openly share with HEI tutors their needs? – Pinky Jain (Leeds Beckett University)

Opening Questions

- What are the current barriers preventing students from openly sharing their needs during pre-registration and admissions processes?
- What information and reassurance should be provided in pre-application materials to encourage disclosure? What are you doing already?
- Admissions and Recruitment Stage:
- How are open days and recruitment events being used to support disclosure?
- What mechanisms can prevent students from having to repeatedly re-disclose their needs? How are we using the health checks and then the disability disclosure?

Some additional thoughts

- Should we actively encourage students to disclose at this stage? What are the pros and cons of this approach?
- What role can website content, FAQs, and videos play in normalizing conversations about student needs?

Theme 2 – What can be done upon arrival and in early stages to support students with declared needs? How do HEIs empower their students to feel settled, open to discussions about their needs and ready to share/advocate with stakeholders involved in their learning early on in a programme?

– Jo Elliott (University of Portsmouth) and Lizana Oberholzer (University of Wolverhampton)

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Examples of Practice:

Multiple Induction Opportunities

Transition Units – to help develop an understanding of the new academic context as well as develop the relevant skills required.

Academic Coaching support

Welcome guide to the University and City which includes information on:

- Accommodation
- Shopping
- Travel
- How to navigate public transport
- How to join different social groups
- Student Union Support

Pre-arrival induction:

- Outlining expectations
- Outlining how learning will unfold
- Outlining how other activities such as placements will work
- What key information is needed

What support is in place for different needs.

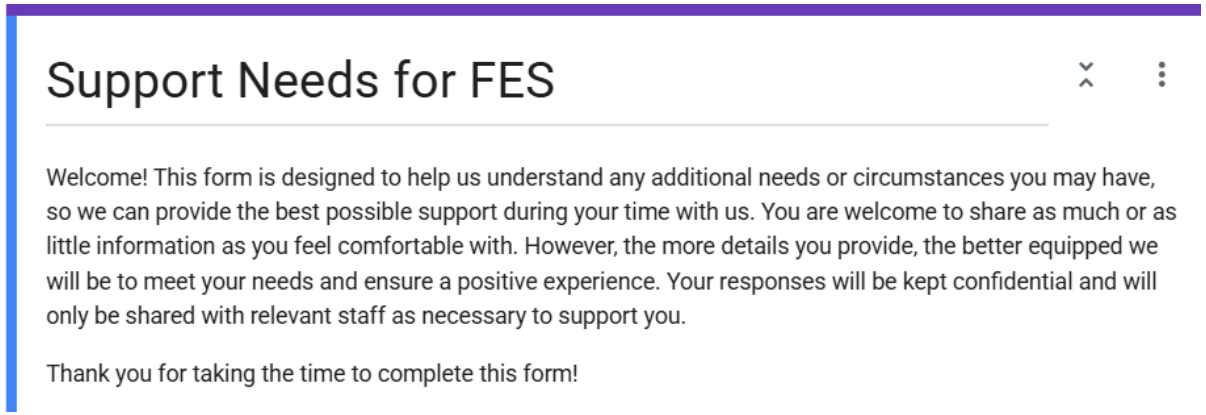
Why different needs are important to share to enable the university to plan for your arrival.

Services available, and pastoral support.

What do we do at University of Portsmouth to empower discussion?

Student Support Form Completed after Day 1:

- Preferred Name
- Preferred Pronouns
- Diagnosed and undiagnosed SEND needs including accommodation and support needs
- Medial Needs and support
- Mental Health and Well being needs and support
- Caring responsibilities
- Any other needs to declare



Support Needs for FES

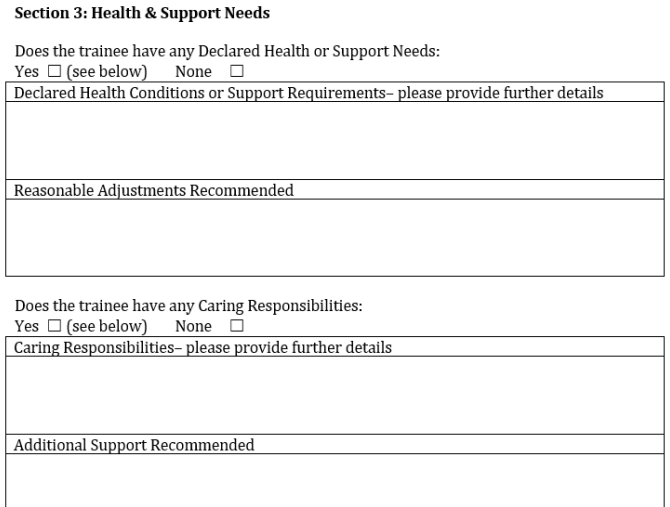
Welcome! This form is designed to help us understand any additional needs or circumstances you may have, so we can provide the best possible support during your time with us. You are welcome to share as much or as little information as you feel comfortable with. However, the more details you provide, the better equipped we will be to meet your needs and ensure a positive experience. Your responses will be kept confidential and will only be shared with relevant staff as necessary to support you.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this form!

The form is signposted depending on answers and provides links and information to the universities Additional Support and Disability Centre and Wellbeing Support as appropriate

Safeguarding and Risk Assessment Form

The Support Form asks for consent to pass this information on to other appropriate members of the team including Tutors and Placement. This feeds into the to pass to placement.



Section 3: Health & Support Needs

Does the trainee have any Declared Health or Support Needs:
Yes ☐ (see below) None ☐

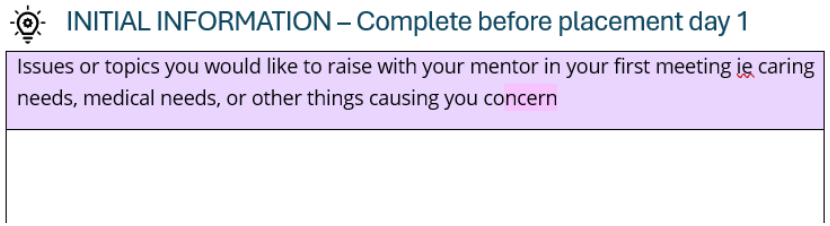
Declared Health Conditions or Support Requirements– please provide further details
Reasonable Adjustments Recommended

Does the trainee have any Caring Responsibilities:
Yes ☐ (see below) None ☐

Caring Responsibilities– please provide further details
Additional Support Recommended

Mentor Record

Encourages trainees to disclose items to discuss with their mentor when they arrive on placement.



INITIAL INFORMATION – Complete before placement day 1

Issues or topics you would like to raise with your mentor in your first meeting ie caring needs, medical needs, or other things causing you concern

Theme 2 – What can be done upon arrival and in early stages to support students with declared needs? How do HEIs empower their students to feel settled, open to discussions about their needs and ready to share/advocate with stakeholders involved in their learning early on in a programme?

– Jo Elliot (Portsmouth University) and Lizana Oberholzer (University of Wolverhampton)

- What can be done prior to arrival to support learners, to have a clear sense of what they need to do on arrival, where to go, what is expected, and how to ensure that they are confident when they arrive on campus or their new academic context?
- What information do tutors need to enable them to prepare well for learners' arrival, and to ensure that their needs are met and to make them feel welcome?
- What can be done upon arrival to ensure that learners feel safe, welcome, and that they belong?
- What information and how much information needs to be shared with learners on arrival?
- What support needs to be provided via mentorship (academic, pastoral and peer)?
- How can learners' needs be evaluated, and undisclosed needs be identified upon arrival through academic mentoring and other interventions?
- What immediate support will help to make a difference to help learners to find their feet and make a difference to start their course with confidence, for example, enrolment, finding rooms, guidance regarding finance?
- What continuous support needs to be put in place to enable learners to transition into their new academic context?

Theme 3 – How can the needs of students be best taken into placement allocation decisions? How much do tutors know and when do they know this? How do we decide what to share/not share with stakeholders?

Joanne Hill (Birmingham Newman University)

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Supporting trainees with additional needs in Primary ITE at Birmingham Newman

As a result of the Abrahart ruling and to ensure equitable access to both university and school placements, a senior member of staff took on the role of Neuro-divergent and Disability Advocate. The role is wide ranging and includes:

- Ensuring timetables are adjusted so trainees with additional needs can safely access areas of the curriculum like PE.
- For example, PE sessions for all trainees have been put back by a couple of weeks to allow for all Occupational Health checks to have been returned and to allow risk assessments to be put in place (particularly relevant to late starters).
- Dissemination of relevant information to the teaching team so appropriate adjustments to taught sessions are made.
- Informing placement schools of need (with trainee's consent) and conducting pre-placement visits to ensure environmental adjustments have been made.
- Signposting to appropriate services.
- Being a single point of information to ensure that trainees with additional needs do not have to tell multiple people about their needs.
- Organising relevant staff training regarding inclusion.
- Supporting monitoring of attainment and attendance data.

There have been notable successes which we are beginning to look at through case studies and there have ben some improvements in outcomes for trainees with a disability.

The initiative is only in its second year so it is still early days…..

Theme 3 – How can the needs of students be best taken into placement allocation decisions? How much do tutors know and when do they know this? How do we decide what to share/not share with stakeholders?

Joanne Hill (Birmingham Newman University)

- How is disability information taken into account when allocating placements?
- Do trainees/students make recommendations/selections of placements to support their needs?
- How do course teams use occupational health reports?
- Whose responsibility is it to share disability information with placement?
- If trainees/students share their own disability information with placements, how much support is given to them?
- At what point in the placement arrangements should information be shared?
- Is there any information that providers should not share?
- Are there any examples of disabilities where reasonable adjustment could not be made?
- How would we manage discussions with a placement partner who had concerns about accommodating a trainee's/student's needs?
- Are there any examples of lessons learnt?

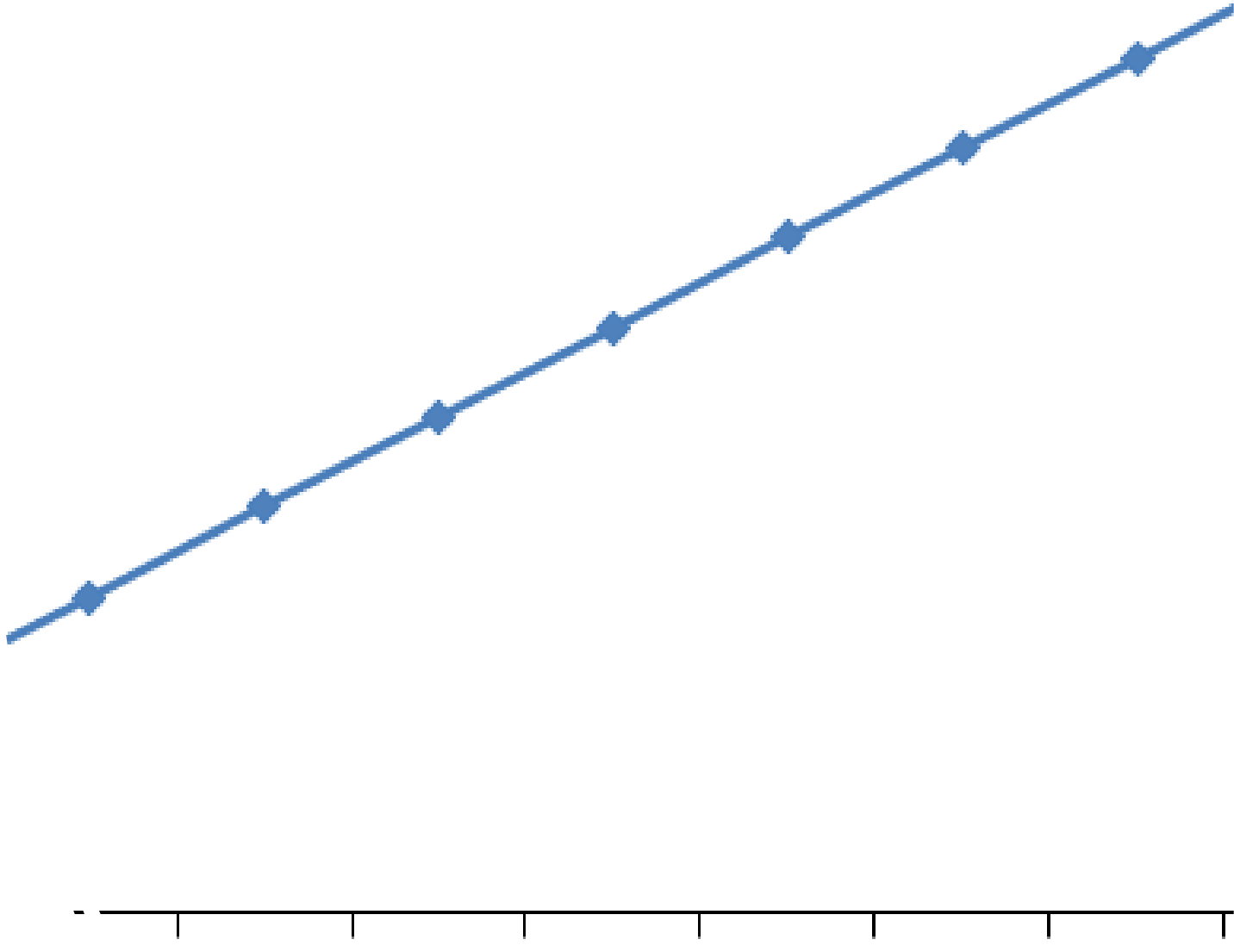
Theme 4 – Once on placement/in programme, how does the level of support change over the training year/s? When should institutions and providers reduce scaffolded support to enable successful transition into employment? Is it always appropriate to do so?

Deb Garcia and Allison Griffiths (Leeds Trinity University)

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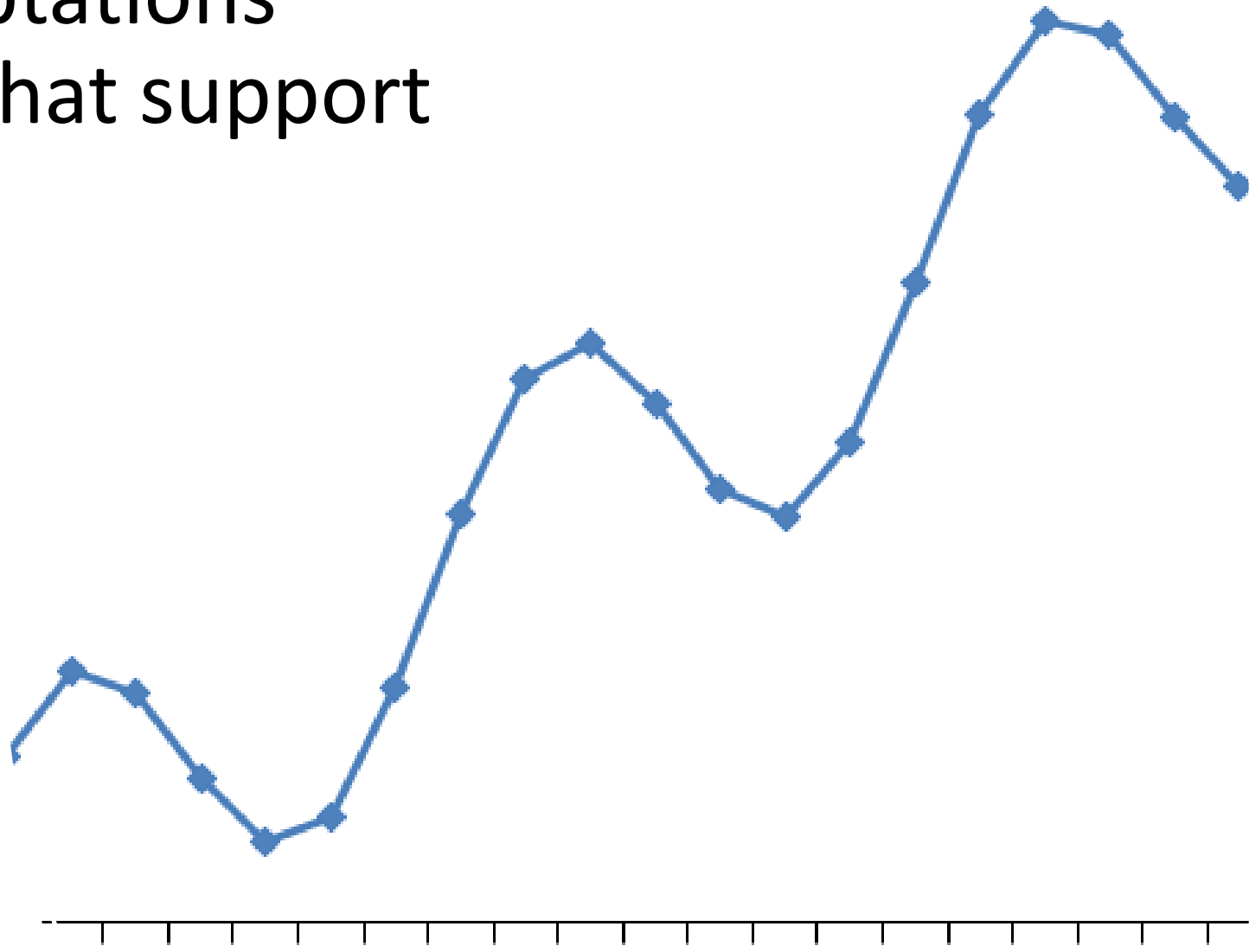
Support across all programmes

- Modules attached to placement preparation for UG
- Expectations in teaching gradually rise over time.
- ABB model provides consistency and stability across setting and phases.
- Targeted ITaPs planned in specific themes and timings to support progression.



Additional support/adaptations throughout placement that support successful completion

- Placement Inclusion Plan
- Monitoring intervention register
- Building in level of autonomy for *LMs (in line with compliance)
- Resource of what reasonable adjustments look like
- Flexible placement offer when and where necessary
- Scaffolds monitored to align with compliance and expectations for employment



Theme 4 – Once on placement/in programme, how does the level of support change over the training year/s? When should institutions and providers reduce scaffolded support to enable successful transition into employment? Is it always appropriate to do so?
(Leeds Trinity University)

- How are roles and responsibilities for providing support clearly identified and communicated between the HEI, Lead Mentor, and placement setting or the facilitator of the CPD programme?
- How are the level and types of support adapted over time to reflect individual trainee progress, and to what extent are Lead Mentors empowered to use professional judgement to vary support?
- What indicators are used to evidence that a trainee/employee is becoming increasingly self-directed or developing self-advocacy?
- How is risk managed during this process to ensure trainee and pupil safety while maintaining developmental challenge?
- How does the final phase of placement support successful transition into employment and or professional development for ECTs?

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Theme 5 - What are the integrations needed between academic adjustments and practice adjustments for ITE students/practising teacher students studying part time?

Claire Ball-Smith (University of York)

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Tackling Assignment-Placement Pressures

Old	Problem	New	Solution
Ass 1 – Dec deadline ETHOS FOR LEARNING	• Identified student stress/exhaustion before Xmas after Term 1 of PGCE. • Juggling placement with academic writing. • Staff marking over Xmas was not popular!	Ass 1 – Oct HT deadline (Thurs)	• Ass 1 out of the way by the time P1 starts. Confidence going into P1 & time to focus solely on early teaching development. • Allows everyone an Xmas break with no academic writing/marking.
Ass 2 – end of P1 deadline PROGRESS-ION IN LEARNING	• Identified student stress/exhaustion before end of P1 (just 4 weeks in P1B2 before deadline). • Juggling placement with academic writing. • No space to reflect meaningfully on teaching their first sequence of lessons.	Ass 2 – Feb HT deadline (Thurs)	• Student feedback asked for time to think and reflect after P1. • Feb HT is part of transition fortnight into P2, so ECAs easier to handle also. • Ass 2 completed before P2 starts. Students feel they are nearly there!
Ass 3 – May HT deadline SPECIAL STUDY – SMALLSCALE RESEARCH	• Timetable increase at same time as undertaking small scale research in school. • Individual ethics permission. • Exhaustion has set in by May HT. • Very tight turn around for marking for staff before final exam board.	Ass 3 – Easter deadline (after 2-week vacation)	• Does not interfere with 80%TT period, can focus solely on teaching in last block of placement. • Blanket ethics permission – restricts but enables • Avoids academic-placement practice crush at the end of a busy year. Still have vacation for writing. • Move to presentation assessment from 2026-27 (preparing for NPQ type assessments in career)

How do we ensure that students with needs can balance the academic demands of assignments whilst undertaking placements/meeting employment requirements?

Theme 5 - What are the integrations needed between academic adjustments and practice adjustments for ITE students/practising teacher students studying part time?
Claire-Ball-Smith (University of York)

- In what ways does the central system of Student Support in your institution differentiate in Student Support Plan details between practice-based learning/ employment and academic learning?
- How do we ensure that students with needs can balance the academic demands of assignments whilst undertaking placements/ employment and meeting practice/ employment requirements in schools/colleges?
- What factors within university systems of support would better support part time students with specific needs who simultaneously work as teachers/ educators?
- Do extensions for academic assignments necessarily support students with needs who are concurrently on placement? What can we do as Teacher Educators within our programme designs to ensure there is adequate space for students with needs to think, draft and write academically?

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Theme 6 - What should HEIs/providers do when a need becomes emergent for a trainee/student that hadn't been declared? – Bryony Black (Sheffield)

1. Through your Professional Studies programme, you discuss a range of additional needs including autism, ADHD and dyslexia. A student attending the session about working with young people with autism starts to wonder whether perhaps they are autistic. They have been struggling to adjust to their placement, and they are finding it challenging to build relationships with their classes. Their mentor is becoming frustrated as they don't appear to be responding to any feedback and pupils are saying they want their usual teacher back.

2. A mature student experiences feelings of depression part-way through their first placement. They are struggling to motivate themselves to plan lessons, and they are absent for 1-2 days per week. Looking back at your interview notes, you see that they mentioned that they had counselling whilst at university but that they have successfully managed their mental health for the past two years. When you talk to the student, they explain that last time this happened it led to a hospital stay and a significant period out of work.

3. A student experiences severe stomach issues a week after starting teaching on their first placement. These issues are worse in the mornings. Whilst they can get to school, they need to be near a toilet first thing, so they want to start placement at 10am each day. It turns out that this is a re-emergence of a previous diagnosis of IBS which is exacerbated by stress.

Consider for each scenario:

a) What can you do in the moment to support both the student and their mentor?

b) Is there anything you could have done to pre-empt the situation?

c) What might be the longer-term plan here?

Overall:

- **How can we support candidates and those about to start a PGCE to understand the particular challenges they are likely to experience?**
- **What can we do during the selection and pre-course stages to encourage students to recognise that it is helpful to disclose previous conditions that might be triggered by this course?**

The biggest outcome we hope to have achieved from today's symposium is that you have benefited from the power of conversation with colleagues across the themes of student support we identified. However, we also hope you can actively take some individual learning and development from the symposium.

Reflection time:

- Look through your group's chosen highlights per individual theme.
- Can you identify 3 highlights to take away from this symposium for your own institution/ programme/ team? [Something to revisit/review? Something to celebrate? something to think further about/follow up on?]
- Can you identify 2 actions you will implement from your learning in this symposium for your own institution/ programme/ team? [Something to try? Something to investigate?]
- Can you identify 1 connection to a colleague from this symposium who you may stay in touch with to explore an aspect of student support further? [Someone to stay in touch with after today?]

We will be writing a UCET Blog following this event and would welcome any colleague's reflection on what they enjoyed about the day, the chosen theme, the discussions they undertook, etc.