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Rt Hon Damian Hinds MP
Secretary of State

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Emma Hollis
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Dear Ms Hollis

Thank you for your letter of 19 February about the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy. I would be grateful if you could share a copy of this reply with your co-signatories. I appreciate your kind words about the strategy and I am keen that we continue to work together to deliver the policy commitments made.

I agree that the Initial Teacher Training (ITT) market is complex. We recognise the achievement of recruiting an additional 34,595 trainee teachers this year - over 2,600 more than last year and an increase of 8%. I am committed to strengthening and supporting a mix of provision led by both universities and schools in the ITT market. Building on its current strengths, we will review the ITT market to ensure it is operating as efficiently and effectively as possible, while delivering trainees to the parts of the country where they are needed most. This longer-term approach will simplify and protect the ITT market and ensure it supports more schools in challenging areas. My officials are working on the scope of the review and will communicate more detail, as well as opportunities to get involved, in due course.

Part of the reason the current application process is so complicated is because of the sheer volume of providers. My officials are already taking action to ensure that the new application service we are working to deliver will reflect the distinct needs of those seeking to become a teacher. We will work closely with candidates, teacher training providers, UCAS and other stakeholders to determine the best way to develop and implement our application service. We anticipate starting with a small cohort of applicants and testing the service regularly, both technically and to understand how applicants respond, as we develop it so that it meets the needs of both applicants and ITT providers.

With regard to your point about how the transition between ITT and the Early Career Framework (ECF), I agree that it is crucial that this is seamless. I believe that over time, the core of the ECF will underpin the teaching profession as a whole. As you know, in the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy, I committed to a review of the ITT core content guidance with the ECF as a starting point and ensuring that the ECF builds on and complements ITT.

Effective quality assurance is critical to the success of our newly developed ECF, and particularly critical to ensuring that the ECF can support teachers in every part of the country and every type of school in which they choose to begin their careers. My department will continue working with you and others who play an important role in supporting early career teachers to explore quality assurance options.

The Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy is clear that career progression opportunities for all teachers is at the heart of attracting and keeping the very best teachers. We have committed to developing new specialist qualifications for teachers, which complement the Chartered College of Teaching's Chartered Teacher Programme, which I know is highly valued in the sector for its rigour and by teachers who demonstrate excellence in the classroom. As our work on delivering the ECF and the new national professional qualification in Teacher Development progresses, we will also explore the option of linking professional development to Master's level credits.

We recognise that the publication of the ECF and the Teacher Recruitment and Retention strategy are just the first step and we look forward to continuing to engage with you as we work together to ensure that teachers are supported throughout their careers.

Thank you for writing on this important matter.

Sincerely
Damian Hinds

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Secretary of State for Education