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**Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP**  
Minister of State for School Standards

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Mr James Noble-Rogers  
Executive Director, UCET  
Institute of Education  
20 Bedford Way  
London  
WC1H 0AL

28 March 2018

*James*

Dear Mr ~~Noble-Rogers~~,

Thank you for your letter of 27 February, addressed to the Secretary of State, regarding your concerns about teacher shortages and the difficulties in recruiting students to programmes of initial teacher training (ITT). I am replying as the responsible Minister of State for School Standards.

The professional skills tests were introduced to assess the standard of literacy and mathematics that all teachers need in order to be able to carry out their wider professional role effectively. Many of those entering teaching do so at least five years after passing their GCSEs and the tests, therefore, reassure parents and school leaders that all newly qualified teachers are still able to demonstrate a high standard of numeracy and literacy when they enter the classroom.

We offer a range of financial incentives for ITT, including bursaries for priority subjects. In 2017-18, postgraduate ITT recruitment was at its highest level since 2012-13, despite a more challenging recruitment environment in recent years, including the decline in unemployment. This shows that increases to postgraduate bursaries in recent years have been effective in increasing recruitment.

We are piloting two new financial incentives, both of which have a retention component. We are offering the phased mathematics bursary nationally, under which trainees will receive a lower initial bursary of £20,000, followed by two additional payments of at least £5,000 each in their third and fifth years of teaching. We are also piloting student loan reimbursement for new teachers of biology, chemistry, physics, computer science, and languages.

With regard to your final point, UCAS has received your feedback around greater flexibility in the handling and cross referring of individual initial teacher education (ITE) applications. They are actively working with the UCAS Teacher Training Advisory Group to identify and implement ways in which they may be able to support extra flexibility. UCAS will also be working closely with senior officials in the Department, through our joint working initiative, to identify further ways of supporting this. I would encourage you to share any more detailed feedback and evidence you might have regarding any of these matters, and will ask officials from the Department to discuss this with you further.

Thank you for responding to our consultation on strengthening qualified teacher status and improving career progression for teachers. We will examine your concerns in our response to the consultation.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Neil', is positioned below the typed text 'Yours sincerely,'.