



The National Association of  
School-Based Teacher Trainers

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## **Seeking policy clarifications for accredited initial teacher education providers**

- QTS review must support recruitment, retention and development of new teachers
- Unregulated providers that do not meet national requirements should be removed
- Student teacher recruitment cap should be relaxed to meet national and local needs

Over the next seven days, we (UCET and NASBTT) are anticipating some policy announcements and developments around Initial Teacher Education (ITE), including the release of a new publication by Reform. After more than seven years of turmoil and upheaval, accredited SCITT and HEI teacher education providers might finally get some clearing of the current policy mists.

Perhaps the most important policy clarification relates to the review of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), which was originally announced in then Secretary of State Nicky Morgan's 2016 'Education Excellence Everywhere' White Paper, but modified by her successor Justine Greening to constitute a 'review' rather than a 'replacement' (Greening promised that QTS will not be scrapped "on my watch" when speaking at the inaugural conference of the Chartered College of Teaching in London earlier this year).

The QTS review could be a good thing or a bad thing. If delaying the formal recognition of someone as a qualified teacher puts even more people off entering the profession it could have a significant and long-lasting impact. If new teachers are to be strung along with 'jam tomorrow' promises about full QTS recognition dependent on potentially variable decision-making, we risk losing valuable new recruits.

If, however, new teachers continue to receive nationally consistent, robust and quality assured initial training delivered by accredited providers – followed by structured early professional development that builds on and complements that initial training, before being awarded (within a set timescale) full and permanent qualified status based on consistent, national, independent and quality assured judgments – it could help to make NQTs even better than they are already and help retain them in the profession. If the early professional development is linked to Masters' level study, so much the better.

The quality of accredited ITE in this country is, by all objective performance measures, extremely good. The results of OFSTED inspections and surveys of NQTs and others bear this out. The extent of teacher shortages faced by schools has, however, led to an increase

in the amount of training delivered by unregulated private providers that does not meet core national requirements. It is not subject to independent inspection, with the possibility (but no more than that) of future recognition as a teacher through routes such as assessment only, which was never intended for such purposes.

To be clear we are not talking here about apprenticeships, which under current proposals will be properly regulated and could fulfil a useful function. Anything that brings more well trained and committed teachers into our schools is, of course, to be welcomed but teaching is too important to allow training and professional formation to go unregulated. And why regulate some routes to teacher education and not all? It makes no sense, particularly when there are so many accredited routes already on offer.

The final piece of the emerging picture relates to how student teachers are recruited. This is one area where accredited teacher education providers have faced particular upheaval in recent years, upheaval which has added to the country's teacher supply problems and destabilised the teacher supply base. We are hopeful that the DfE will relax recruitment controls and allow SCITTs and HEIs to recruit to meet national and local supply needs, rather than constrain recruitment and have the situation experienced in the recent past where strong applicants for whom jobs are available were turned away because of recruitment caps.

We also hope that recruitment systems will reflect the new reality of strong, cohesive and stable accredited teacher education partnerships, with schools, universities and SCITTs working together as partners to provide high-quality ITE and CPD. Artificial and unhelpful distinctions between different kinds of training provision should be forgotten – the reality is that SCITTs, HEIs, Teach First and School Direct providers have long worked together. The various routes into teaching overlap. They are not as distinct as some have them appear.

What we have, and need to develop further, is one accredited teacher education sector, with shared aims, objectives and underpinning principles, which while allowing for different nuances and foci, gives us what we all need: properly trained teachers in all subjects and phases for all our children's schools.

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