



UCU response to 'Training our next generation of outstanding teachers: An improvement strategy for discussion', Department for Education (DfE) June 2011.

The University and College Union (UCU) is the largest trade union and professional association for academics, lecturers, trainers, researchers and academic-related staff working in further and higher education throughout the UK. Our membership therefore includes academic and academic related staff working in university education departments and in current partnerships with schools in Initial Teacher Education (ITE).

In this response we will also make reference to the policy positions of sister trade unions the ATL and the NUT, whose members would be equally affected by adoption of the policies proposed in the DfE paper, likewise the Universities' Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET).

We will respond to all the relevant consultation questions in the Department's on-line questionnaire but will also provide a foreword where we ask relevant questions about the evidence base used to inform both the Department's 'vision' for ITE and the current consultation.

Foreword

Evidence

The comprehensive, authoritative evaluation and analyses of existing ITE provision in the HMCI Annual Report 2010 on:

- 151 ITE programmes across:
- 39 HEI-led partnerships;
- 22 SCITT partnerships, and;
- 39 employment based routes (23 linked directly to HEIs, 23 linked to an HEI through a SCITT partnership)

is only mentioned once in the consultation document in Chapter 4, 'Reform of training', almost in passing:

“OfSTED ratings of PGCE provision led by universities are positive. There are excellent examples of schools and universities working effectively together”.¹

This single, inadequate précis of comprehensive HMCI evidence on the current effective structure of ITE led by universities is then immediately under-cut by a de-contextualised and contestable quote from a small TDA survey of NQTs.

UCU believes that teacher education is a national public good, hence wide-ranging policy on the professional formation of teachers in English primary, secondary and specialist schools, which require at least 33,000 newly qualified entrants a year plus effective CPD for existing staff, should be built on reliable evidence.

Our précis of the evidence in the HMCI Report 2010 would therefore show that:

- OfSTED’s 2010 Annual report Key Finding unequivocally supports HE led ITE: "There was more outstanding initial teacher education delivered by higher education-led partnerships than by school-centred initial teacher training partnerships and employment-based routes."
- "The overall effectiveness of the very large majority of training programmes based in a higher education institution is good or better, with just under a half outstanding (30 out of 64)".
- "*For school-centred provision, the proportion that is outstanding is much lower than that found in higher education institutions*". (Emphasis added)
- "All but two employment-based routes were judged to be good or better, with one quarter judged to be outstanding. This presents a much improved picture compared with the outcomes of the inspection of *independent employment-based providers last year where only one tenth were judged to be outstanding for overall effectiveness*". (Emphasis added)
- "Trainees benefit from the strong links with a higher education institution or school-centred consortium. *They are more able to reflect critically on the impact of their teaching on learning and make progress through the integration and application of theory and practice*". (Emphasis added)
- "There are many strong partnerships between universities, schools and colleges which are characterised by high expectations of trainees’ achievement and good communication. In past annual reports, subject knowledge has been highlighted as an area for development. Now it is a relative strength for many providers. This turnaround is due to a strong focus on ensuring that trainees’ subject knowledge for teaching is audited, developed and monitored closely throughout their training".
- "*Overall, higher education led partnerships offering training to teach in maintained schools demonstrate better capacity to improve than school centred partnerships. A*

1. HMCI Report 2010, paraphrased on page 14, 'Training our next generation of outstanding teachers', DfE June 2011.

very large majority of higher education led providers have good or better capacity to improve and about half are outstanding". (Emphasis added)

- "For school-centred provision, just under one quarter of providers were judged to be outstanding for capacity to improve. *Of the 15 employment-based routes with outstanding capacity to improve, 11 were linked to a higher education institution*". (Emphasis added)
- "Key characteristics of outstanding providers are their ability to sustain high quality training through establishing a culture of self improvement and promoting innovative practice. Self assessment has become well embedded in practice, although it is sometimes too descriptive at the expense of sharp evaluation and a focus on measuring the impact on outcomes".

The OfSTED Annual report 2010, in its 'Key Themes' section on school improvement (paragraph 483) also made a useful overall judgement on the integration of theory and practice in teaching and learning:

"Improvements in teaching and learning are invariably required in schools causing concern – primary and secondary, special schools and pupil referral units alike. Teaching has undoubtedly become more technical in recent years because of greater professional understanding about the most effective techniques to help every child and young person progress in their learning. The monitoring reports and most recent inspection reports refer frequently to the theory and practice of teaching".

Theory and practice

Within the current raft of Coalition government education measures the most significant, damaging and long ranging is the undermining, contraction, deterioration and possible eventual disappearance of initial teacher education in universities. The November White Paper and the current consultation seek to replace the current clearly effective partnerships between schools and universities with 'learning on the job', a model wherein 'teaching is a craft...best learnt as an apprentice'. ²

Whilst hands-on experience is vital in any professional learning and development, the removal of a supportive mix of theory, peer instruction and support from the professional formation of the country's teachers will reduce teacher training to a utilitarian toolbox of techniques supervised by teacher mentors over-stretched by their own school workload and teaching priorities.

² http://www.michaelgove.com/content/national_college_annual_conference

In contrast, educationalist Professor Donald McIntyre clearly recognised and reconciled these approaches – a necessary partnership between university based and school based teacher education – illustrating that the conditions of ITE university lecturers’ work which:

“enable and oblige them, much more than is generally possible for practising teachers, to know about alternative teaching approaches being used elsewhere, to study relevant research and theoretical literature and to explicate and critically examine the principles which should or could inform the practice of teaching.”

But it is only practising school teachers who can *directly* introduce students to the practice of teaching and:

“especially to the use of the contextualised knowledge (of individual pupils, of established relationships with classes, of resources and their availability and of schools, customs and procedures) which is such a crucial element of professional teaching”.³

Taken as a whole, this is an effective vision of teacher professionalism indivisibly composed of strong practical skills personally understood, justified and developed through an intellectually rigorous process embedded in HEI-led partnerships with schools.

Professor John Furlong took this necessary intertwining of theoretical knowledge about teaching and learning with its practice further when he argued that the issue is not a crude trade off between ‘practice’ (good) and ‘theory’ (bad), or even whether teachers naturally engage in theorising their practice.

The issue is whether the theories trainee teachers espouse are sound theories; whether they have been justified and developed by being exposed to the critical scrutiny of other practitioners; whether they are based on a consideration of evidence from research and from elsewhere; whether they have been interrogated in terms of the values and assumptions on which they are based.

When theories of teaching are developed in this rational way they become ‘practical theories’⁴ that stand halfway between the worlds of practice and research, between disciplinary (subject) theory and other forms of knowledge and understanding, as in other forms of applied sciences such as engineering or clinical medicine. As Furlong remarked:

³ McIntyre, D. (1991), ‘The Oxford University Model of Teacher Education’, 1991, pages 114 and 141, quoted in Furlong et al ‘Higher Education and the New Professionalism for Teachers: Realising the potential of partnership’, 2000.

⁴ Hirst, P. (1996), ‘The demands of professional practice and preparation for teachers’, in Furlong J. and Smith R. (eds), ‘The role of higher education in initial teacher education’, Kogan Page, London.

“The new professionalism [of teachers] demands that teachers themselves become practical theorists. *Without serious engagement with practical theories, without learning how to engage in practical theorising, professional education becomes a narrow form of apprenticeship where current practices are simply reproduced.*

They are therefore of crucial importance if the teaching profession is to develop and improve...professional teacher educators within universities and colleges are uniquely well placed to work with practitioners to help them form a bridge between their own practical experience and other forms of professional knowledge...in a way that is impossible for teachers or even whole schools acting alone.”⁵

UCU therefore does not accept the main, unproven and critically unexamined argument of the November 2010 White Paper that the quality of teaching will be raised by the wholesale adoption of an ‘on the job’ model of ITE. (We comment on and evaluate other cost-cutting and quality endangering proposals from the paper in the main body of our response).

This proposal fails to attend to the complex interaction of theory and practice in teachers’ professional development. It equally exposes teachers and pupils to high educational risks. Without good theoretical knowledge, student teachers will have very little to fall back on when the techniques they have ‘learnt on the job’ do not work with particular pupils, classes or schools. And it also fails to properly understand the comment made in HMCI 2010 (quoted above) about teacher professionalism and its formation through the integration of theory and practice:

“Teaching has undoubtedly become more technical in recent years because of greater professional understanding about the most effective techniques to help every child and young person progress in their learning.”

The main argument of both the White Paper and this consultation fails to recognise or acknowledge the centrality of the interaction of theory and practice in current partnership arrangements for ITE between schools and universities. That necessary interaction routinely involves systematic observational visits to classrooms from both university tutors and school-based mentors, an arrangement that is underpinned by a consistent interpretation of standards across contexts which provides rigour in the support offered to student teachers.

UCU Congress 2011 debated the DfE November 2010 White Paper ‘The Importance of Teaching’. Understandably, the headline proposals were seen as a cost-cutting threat to UCU teacher educator members’ jobs. Equally, Congress identified the policy as a threat to existing high quality teacher education that would first undermine and then lead to the

⁵ Furlong, J. (2000), ‘Higher Education and the New Professionalism for Teachers: Realising the potential of partnership’, page 14.

deterioration of university education departments, diminish the effective professional formation of all new teachers and circumscribe the learning experience of all young people, especially narrowing or losing:

“the professionalism and specialist knowledge and skills in areas such as child development, education for children with disabilities and curriculum planning.”

UCU would recommend to the Department a wholly more productive approach to government policy-making on ITE and its implementation: that the DfE re-visits the DfEE 1998 Green Paper “Teachers: meeting the challenge of change”. This paper could be used as a basis for a dialogue with practitioners and teacher educators to strengthen rather than weaken the partnership between schools and universities in building generations of outstanding teachers, reversing the damaging proposal to de-couple teaching practice from HE based high quality research and the professional space in which to reflect on that practice.

This 1998 paper elaborated ‘a new professionalism’, what a modern teaching profession, its system of initial teacher education and teacher practitioners needed. Although all seven points are supported by HEI-led ITE, emphasis has been added here by UCU to the elements of ‘the new professionalism’ that are irreducibly supported by university-led teacher education:

- To have high expectations of themselves and of all pupils;
- To accept accountability;
- **To take personal and collective responsibility for improving their skills and subject knowledge;**
- **To seek to base decisions on evidence of what works in schools in the UK and internationally;**
- To work in partnership with other staff in schools;
- To welcome the contribution that parents, business and others outside a school can make to its success; and
- **To anticipate change and promote innovation.**

Implementation of the ‘new professionalism’ agenda began in 2002 and can clearly be seen to have worked through the ITE system in the steadily improving and, in 2010, ‘best ever’ OfSTED report on ITE. This is too important a structured, strategic gain in quality to be unreflectively set aside as it is in the current proposals, especially as ‘the new professionalism’ could be made even more effective.

For UCU, the education, training and development of England’s primary, secondary and specialist school teachers is a public good of paramount national importance and requires:

- A clear recognition by government of all the available evidence, both international and from OfSTED, which unequivocally shows that the best form of teacher education,

training and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is in HEI led working partnerships between universities and schools. This response works an example from Finland and an OECD commentary, below;

- A dedicated, 'arm's length' funding agency that actively consults with the profession both in schools and in universities on supply and demand for teachers, determining the timely allocation of training place quota numbers, preferably in a three year cycle - unlike the disgraceful delay in allocations for 2010/2011 - that also has strong practitioner and teacher educator involvement in its strategic direction;
- The restoration of a full bursary system for all student teachers;
- The addition of ITE to HEFCE's list of strategically important subjects in order for HEIs to receive full HEFCE Teaching Grant after 2012, at least for PGCEs;
- To make HEI-schools partnerships more effective and in answer to the following bullet point, we would urge the Secretary of State to add to OfSTED's definition of 'an outstanding school' the following sentence, suggested by a Teaching School head at the 12th July 2011 TDA/DfE consultation meeting on the discussion paper: "No school can be classified as outstanding unless it is fully involved in ITE partnerships with HEIs";
- Recognition that there are good grounds for examining how both trainees and NQTs could be better supported to improve the current system even further. All teachers are currently trained in schools: some spend most of their time in school with the university tutors coming to visit them (TeachFirst and GTP), some spend blocks at university and then blocks in school (e.g. PGCEs). Difficulties with the current system include placements becoming increasingly difficult to find as schools are concerned about the interruption of exam classes; PGCE students are not always well supported in placements where school-based mentors are not trained for their involvement; and PGCE students who do get good placements can then struggle when 'thrown in' during their NQT year. All of these suggestions would ameliorate the DfE's perceived problem about retention;
- An equally clear recognition that pedagogy informed by high quality university-led research enables teachers to use and reflect on 'what works in the UK and internationally';
- That the MA in Teaching and Learning established in 2006 on a partnership basis between schools and universities and mainly delivered as in-service CPD modules and, despite its success, abolished by the Secretary of State, be reinstated as *the* professional qualification that all NQTs (Newly Qualified Teachers) should aim for within five years of qualification as a teacher.

International Comparison: Finland

The belief that teaching is mainly practical and that learning theory is irrelevant or of no practical value is culled from cherry-picking global 'best practice' entirely uprooted from its context. UCU does not propose to contest the whole melange of deracinated trans-global 'evidence' variously adduced by the DfE in this and other documents to support the Department's 'craft/apprenticeship model' of ITE. One example, the DfE case for Finnish emulation, will have to suffice.

The Finnish education system is contextualised by clear differences to England in population size, density and distribution; history of national education policy; and industrial and cultural dimensions that frame the Finnish education system.

Even so, emulation of Finnish educational practice might be useful but most current DfE and BIS policies have gone in the *opposite* direction. Finland does not have league tables; they do not test at five years old for reading; they do not encourage a Swedish (or American) 'free' school system where schools compete with each other; they do not allow selection by ability as Finland has a long-established comprehensive education system; they do not straightjacket the curriculum; they value vocational education as much as academic education.

Finland has a properly comprehensive local school system where the whole community attends the same school. Furthermore, their children do not enter formal schooling until they are seven years of age. They also have a coherent set of qualifications that offer choice, diversity and differentiation in the curriculum: there is nothing in the Finnish curriculum as reductive as the 'English Baccalaureate'. And education from seven to the completion of a PhD is fee-free and grant-supported, including teacher education.

The recent OECD Report "Strong Performers and Successful Reformers in Education: Lessons from PISA for the United States", OECD 2010, Chapter 5: "Finland: Slow and Steady Reform for Consistently High Results"

(<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/34/44/46581035.pdf>) states that:

"The quality of teachers and teaching lies at the heart of Finland's educational success, and the factors responsible for producing that quality can be found at the intersection of culture and policy. One policy aspect was the 1979 decision to move teacher preparation into the universities and make it substantially more rigorous".
(OECD, page 124)

Finnish teacher education, led by six universities (commensurate with the Finnish population, its distribution and the number of teachers required), has four important, distinguishing qualities and related strands:

- *Research based.* Teacher candidates are not only expected to become familiar with the knowledge base in education and human development, but they are required to write a research-based dissertation as the final requirement for the masters degree. Upper grade teachers typically pick a topic in their subject area; primary grade teachers typically study some aspect of pedagogy. The rationale for requiring a research-based dissertation is that teachers are expected to engage in disciplined inquiry in the classroom throughout their teaching career.
- *Strong focus on developing pedagogical content knowledge.* Traditional teacher preparation programmes too often treat good pedagogy as generic, assuming that good questioning skills, for example, are equally applicable to all subjects. Because teacher

education in Finland is a shared responsibility between the teacher education faculty and the academic subject faculty, there is substantial attention to subject-specific pedagogy for prospective primary as well as upper-grade teachers.

- *Good training for all Finnish teachers in diagnosing students with learning difficulties* and in adapting their instruction to the varying learning needs and styles of their students.
- *A very strong clinical component.* Linda Darling-Hammond, a leading US scholar and practitioner of teacher education, describes this aspect of Finnish teacher preparation:

“Teachers’ preparation includes both extensive course work on how to teach – with a strong emphasis on using research based on state-of-the-art practice – and at least a full year of clinical experience in a school associated with the university. These model schools are intended to develop and model innovative practices, as well as to foster research on learning and teaching.

Within these model schools, student teachers participate in problem-solving groups, a common feature in Finnish schools. The problem-solving groups engage in a cycle of planning, action, and reflection/evaluation that is reinforced throughout the teacher education program and is, in fact, a model for what teachers will plan for their own students, who are expected to use similar kinds of research and inquiry in their own studies.

Indeed, the entire system is intended to improve through continual reflection, evaluation, and problem-solving, at the level of the classroom, school, municipality, and nation “. (Darling-Hammond, 2010, quoted in OECD 2010, pages 125-126)

That the advantages of the Finnish system need not be confined to that country alone was also noted by Linda Darling-Hammond in ‘Educational Researcher’ (198, 27(1): Teachers and Teaching: Testing Policy Hypotheses from a National Commission Report’, pp. 5 – 15, Sage Publications, 1998):

“...teachers who have spent more time studying teaching are more effective overall and strikingly so for developing higher order thinking skills and for meeting the needs of diverse students.”

She notes that the most successful teachers have subject matter knowledge; have studied the art and science of teaching; have been certified in their subject and education; and have undertaken training in teaching methods. Her analysis of 900 Texas school districts found that teachers’ expertise (licensing exam, masters degrees, experience) accounted for 40% of the measured variance in students’ mathematics and reading achievement gains in grades 1 – 11 (p 6 – 7).

She also reported on the results of the Carnegie Task Force which recommended graduate level teacher education in a 3+2 Bachelor’s + Masters Degree model and has been adopted

by some English HE based Bachelor of Education degrees on a 3 + 1 basis, notably by the Cambridge Faculty of Education:

“Graduates of these programs are rated by principals and teaching colleagues as much better prepared and more effective than graduates of four year programs... they are often as confident and effective as more senior colleagues” (p 8).

She also reported that retention and entry rates to these programmes were also much higher than traditional models.

There is no evidence to support the claim made in the November 2010 White Paper that a move to predominantly school-led ITE would improve standards: but large-scale extra resource would be required to try to improve teacher quality through school-based provision. Even if the necessary resource were made available there is no guarantee that such expense would achieve its goals whilst teacher education could suffer permanent damage.

Despite the contextual differences between Finland and England, UCU sees no reason why the current English HEI-led teacher education partnership with schools system could not be further improved along the lines of successful Finnish practice rather than by adopting a wholesale reversion to a school-led system that most of the rest of the world has wisely moved away from.

Funding

The initial deterioration, longer term fragmentation and eventual atomization of the current successful national system and culture of teachers’ professional formation also find their reflection in the current destabilising lack of clarity about ITE funding. Although the consultation states that final decisions will be announced “later in the year, ready for changes to take effect for teacher training courses beginning in 2012”, neither the consultation document nor the TDA-hosted consultation meetings were in any way clear about short, medium and long term funding proposals.

This opacity is alarming and mirrors the wholly unacceptable position that HEIs and their partner schools were subjected to this year when TDA quotas for 2011/12 were not announced until early February, following the Secretary of State’s much delayed letter dated 31 January 2011, a delay of over four months from the usual announcement. The delay forced institutions into the wholly invidious position of interviewing applicants for PGCE places before institutions were made aware of whether there would be PGCE places to offer or what kind of course the applicants could be enrolled on.

After 2012, teacher trainees will be liable to the full HE fee charge of £6-9,000, almost invariably closer to £9,000. The proposal that ‘Teaching Schools’ should become responsible for recruitment of teacher trainees (something that is currently near universally undertaken on a partnership basis between universities and schools) implies a

top-slicing by 'Teaching Schools' of the tuition fee that the HEI will have to levy on the teacher trainee. It also implies an extra administrative burden on HEIs.

UCU seeks clarification from the Department across the whole matter of ITE funding.

Given that audit trails and cross-payments between schools and HEIs are already complex, time and resource consuming processes, we would like to know what percentage of students would be recruited in this way; what the percentage of the 'top-slice' would be; who will bear the administrative costs; whether there has been any modelling of the costs involved - and possible 'unintended consequences' - and how the Department envisages this process working?

More generally and even more seriously, UCU has an overall concern for the level of funding for ITE and the threat to the efficiency of HEI-based ITT if 'Teaching Schools' were empowered to take an even larger top-slice from the fees paid by student teachers to HEIs after 2012.

UCU believes that this would merely achieve a false economy through a cut in the finance available for HEI-based ITE being transferred to 'Teaching Schools'. HEIs, in partnership with schools, deliver high quality, efficient, research-led ITE, giving trainee teachers a broad basis of experience in schools. The proposed move to school-based ITE would decrease the efficiency of the national system as individual schools and even groups of schools (the DfE's preference for 'academy chains') would necessarily deal with far smaller numbers of trainee teachers each year than are currently provided by HEIs.

UCU believes that the DfE has been extremely dilatory in publishing any detail, let alone consultation, on funding arrangements for its current proposals on 'Teaching Schools'. What little information that has emerged - DfE funding to be made available to schools meeting the 'Training School' criteria - was immediately condemned by Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) general secretary Brian Lightman as "minimal" (£60,000 in the first year, diminishing by £10,000 in each of the following two years) and "likely to endanger the whole initiative".

The response from the National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services, which is co-ordinating the programme, expects the proposed 'Teaching Schools' to "develop more of their own income" through their work delivering training to teachers, which will generate extra Government cash, and selling continuing professional development (CPD) to other schools.

National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) general secretary Russell Hobby shared ASCL's concerns, as 'Teaching Schools' would be expected to generate more of their own income:

"The work schools have been asked to do carries a lot of weight, from school improvement to developing future leaders. It's a big set of tasks. The idea that the

costs can be met through schools providing commercial activities at a time when other schools are economising is unrealistic,” said Mr Hobby. (All quotations from: <http://www.tes.co.uk/article.aspx?storycode=6079625>)

‘Teaching Schools’ are also expected to train teachers in a policy proposal - ‘Schools Direct’ - that envisions the withdrawal of the state to the margins to allow schools to directly lead recruitment and training of teachers for the whole nation.

But the only funding methodology that has as yet emerged from the DfE for ‘Teaching Schools’ is an ill-thought through pyramidal franchise scheme ultimately dependent on state-funded teacher education student debt.

This unacceptable lack of real funding information has and will continue to incapacitate strategic planning by HE education departments and their partner schools of their ITE provision, even more unacceptably prompting efficient, high quality providers to consider contracting their provision and making staff redundant, as has already been the case with Liverpool Hope University’s education department.

UCU is not opposed to there being a diversity of ITE routes that are all connected meaningfully to HE education departments but we are completely opposed to putting all the fee funding that will after 2012 ‘follow the student’ into an untried, untested scheme whilst simultaneously starving the demonstrably best initial teacher education method of funding.

In addition, there are a scant three mentions of ITE in the HE White paper, none of which refer to HEFCE’s role in ‘looking after the interests of students’ through their requirement for HEIs to publish Key Information Sets (KIS) about their provision. We would expect early clarification of who would be responsible for the KIS in the DfE’s proposals for ITE.

We believe that the proposed new bursary system will not have any beneficial impact on the majority of potential teacher trainees as it is geared to ameliorating costs for ‘top’ degree performers only: we comment on the bursary proposals more fully in our responses to specific consultation questions.

In summary, UCU believes a wholesale move toward school-based ITE and any attendant transfer of funding and accountability would be a grave mistake. There is no evidence to support the claim that such a move would improve standards and large-scale extra resource would be required to try to improve teacher quality through school-based provision. Even then, there is no guarantee such expense would achieve its goals and teacher education could suffer permanent damage.

UCU Responses to Annex 1 (Questionnaire): 'Training our next generation of outstanding teachers. An improvement strategy for discussion', DfE, June 2011

Question 1(a): Do you think the proposals for enhancing selection will improve the quality of new teachers? These include more rigorous entry testing, a focus of inspection on how ITT providers' choose which candidates to offer training places to, and the offer for schools to select and help train the trainees that will go on to work in their school.

UCU Response

The Department has offered little evidence to support these proposals so UCU will quote directly here from the evidence given by teacher educator practitioners in the London Institute of Education (I o E) UCU Branch response to the Green Paper:

"1. Throughout this discussion document, there is the assumption that there is a direct, invariable correlation between the quality of entrants into initial teacher education and the quality of teachers; there is a further assumption that the quality of entrants can be established from a single measure, the class of their first degree (1.4, 2.2, 3.7).

We would want to contest both of these assumptions because they are anti-educational: simultaneously, they are predicated on a grossly reductive view of the activity of teaching and they do not allow for the possibility of change, development and learning.

Our experience – and it is very substantial experience as teachers and as teacher educators – is that teacher quality, in any meaningful sense, is not reducible to a single measure of prior academic achievement. What we look for – and see – in candidates, from their initial interview onwards, is the ability to work towards deep and connected understanding about complex phenomena that are essential to teaching: a degree class cannot capture this understanding and fixation on it diverts attention away from it.

2. We are gravely concerned at the unexamined prejudices that are articulated in this document. There is, for example, the assumption that the opportunity to re-sit a test makes the test less rigorous (2.12). We do not accept that this is the case. Limiting the number of times that a candidate can take a test privileges certain qualities (facility, confidence in a test environment, say) at the expense of others (perseverance, for example) that might be considered at least as valuable, in teaching and elsewhere in society. Throughout the document, the essential combination of a number of qualities and dispositions that underlie good teaching is ignored, while there is an overemphasis on success in certain limited forms of examination.

3. The document presents the present system as wasteful, in that ten per cent withdraw from the one-year PGCE and another ten per cent of those who qualify leave teaching in their NQT year (2.3). We tend to the view that a system in which ninety per cent of those who enrol on a course of initial teacher education qualify as teachers is a fairly healthy one. In reality, some of those who enrol on a PGCE, and who at the time of enrolment have a genuine commitment to teaching, discover in the course of the year that teaching is not for them. We believe that this is a legitimate, well-founded decision; we are not convinced that more rigorous pre-course screening could substantially reduce the proportion of withdrawals. Before people begin to inhabit the role of the teacher, they simply cannot know quite how they will respond to the challenges of this role.

4. Comparisons with other routes into teaching must be made very carefully. There are issues concerning the length of time that 'Teach First' participants remain in the classroom, while the higher retention rate of GTP trainees might be more closely related to their relative maturity as to the experience of the programme itself.

We do, however, consider that there are good grounds for exploring how teachers might be better supported during their NQT year, and that better and more systematic support for teachers at this stage in their career might indeed have the effect of reducing the numbers of those who leave the profession at such an early stage". (I o E UCU Branch, July 2011)

UCU would add that the views of the UCU I o E Branch are self-evidently based on their direct experience of recruiting and training teachers. Similar views were expressed by both school and HEI attendees at the recent TDA consultation on the Green Paper (12th July 2011). For example, senior academic staff from Southampton University School of Education pointed out that over the last decade it has been difficult to recruit physics and mathematics graduates with high degree classifications into ITE but:

"Physics and mathematics ITE provision has become better because HEIs have been very successful in working with graduates with Third Class degrees in physics and mathematics".

UCU would also add that although 'Teach First' is successful within its own specific terms - it is a very expensive route into teaching designed more as an 'outreach programme' than an ITE system - it is nonetheless an 'elite', high cost/low result option with a high attrition rate, higher than the DfE's perceived difficulty with the proportion of ITE and NQT non-retention, and could not provide more than a small fraction of the teachers needed each year without massive expenditure.

We would also question the DfE about the volume of pre-entry tests: how many people will undertake the tests? The number would inevitably have to be large in order to provide a big enough 'pool' of potential teacher trainees. If 33,000 new teachers are required each

year then the 'pool' of potential teacher trainees would need to be at the very least three times that number, and would probably need to be over 100,000. Has the DfE modelled the logistics and cost of this proposal?

UCU understands that the DfE will require HEIs and/or 'Teaching Schools' to devise, develop and administrate these tests, with assessment by OfSTED. How will the proposed tests be proofed for equal opportunities, learning difficulties and widening participation? Will there be an appeals mechanism? Given the number of potential trainees there would need to be in a 'pool' of entrants this condition will be time consuming and costly. Is this another arena of 'educational business systems' that will be susceptible to private sector involvement, further removing the selection of trainees from the professional expertise embedded in both HEIs and schools? And again, how will this interact with the requirement for HEIs to publish 'Key Information Sets'?

UCU would also like to know when OfSTED will consult on the criteria to assess the proposed pre-entry tests? Similarly, UCU would like to know when OfSTED will also consult with HEIs and partner schools on the proposed close attention OfSTED will pay to the effectiveness of partnerships between HEIs and partner schools?

Are the current tests testing the right things? The attendee from Southampton University at the TDA Consultation meeting again queried these proposals with an example drawn from his current experience with "an excellent secondary RE teacher trainee who was having difficulty with passing the hurdle of her maths test".

Question 2: What are your views of the vision of schools leading teacher recruitment and training, working in partnership with universities and other ITT providers as they require?

UCU Response

This question is addressed in our Foreword but can be summarised as follows. The Department has offered no convincing evidence that the current system of HEI-led partnerships with schools is anything other than a high quality, effective, self-improving national system delivering the 33,000+ new teachers required each year by the schooling system. Moreover, the current proposals will destabilise the current system, leading to its inevitable deterioration and the potential atomisation of both teaching and learning standards and the professional culture of teaching.

The Institute of Education UCU Branch responds to this question in a similar manner:

"The document is premised on an inadequate and largely technical-rationalist model of teaching. The assumption that teacher quality is reducible to the degree class of entrants to the profession has its corollary in the notion that the content of ITT is little more than the acquisition of the skills of effective behaviour management and, for primary teachers, the ability to use systematic synthetic phonics (4.18). What

remains unexplored and unacknowledged is any conception of teaching as an activity requiring the exercise of complex, situated, professional judgement”.

Question 3 (a): If you are a head teacher, or teacher, do you think your school would be interested in recruiting trainees through the school direct proposal described in chapter three?

UCU Response

UCU members do not fall into either category. However, our sister unions ATL and NUT are both opposed to this proposal as it foreshortens the professional formation of teachers to the strategic needs of just one school (given that employment by the same school that recruits the trainee to teaching seems to be the top line of this proposal), in one region, with a singular demography, intake and socio-economic and cultural profile.

Different schools will have different recruitment needs and strategies. There is an unresolved equity risk embedded in this proposal given that some schools may want to reproduce the type of teacher that they already employ.

Again, this could result in further constriction in a proposal which is already an unnecessarily narrow form of professional training that reverses the current professionally expansive nature of ITE and for which no convincing evidence has been adduced by the Department. For example, see:

<http://www.atl.org.uk/Images/Future%20of%20state%20education%20public%20action.pdf> and

<http://www.atl.org.uk/Images/ATL%20Teaching%20Schools%20Response.pdf>.

Please also refer to the NUT and UCET responses to this consultation.

Question 3 (b): What opportunities and difficulties do you think this approach would present?

UCU Response

Given that the overwhelming majority of HEI-led partnerships with schools have already adopted the good practice of joint recruitment this is almost a non-question unless the intention is in reality merely to shift funding towards schools rather than a properly professional concern with trainee admissions.

What existing partnerships have not generally adopted - although it does of course happen on the merits of both the trainee and the school - is student recruitment as an NQT after training to the school where the trainee undertook their blocks of practice. UCU believes that this should not become an automatic outcome of recruitment to a particular school as it does not underpin the necessarily expansive nature of teacher education enabling

trainees to innovate and develop approaches to teaching and learning, as our sister unions the ATL and the NUT have argued above.

Question 4 (a): If you work in a university or other training provider, would you be interested in working with schools that recruit trainees in this way?

UCU Response

UCU would be very interested in improving as far as is possible the joint recruitment by HEIs and schools of teacher education trainees within the current system but would be equally opposed to unnecessary shifts in the funding of these arrangements. The reason England has a high quality and continually improving system of ITE is precisely because of the current effective partnership arrangements between HEIs and schools.

Question 4 (b): What opportunities and difficulties do you think this approach would present?

UCU Response

English and Welsh schools are facing a teacher supply problem. On 23rd May 2011 statistics from the Graduate Teacher Training Registry showed a 13 per cent decline in the numbers applying to train as secondary teachers, probably as a result of the DfE decision to scrap PGCE bursaries except for graduates holding STEM subjects and modern language degrees. This proposal could augment the current decline in applications into a crisis.

Question 5: Would it be more attractive for a trainee to be able to apply to a particular school for teacher training, rather than a university, with the expectation that the school will offer employment after training?

UCU Response

No: this is again a highly reductive, 'craft/apprenticeship' view of 'training' that cannot fully meet or match the demands made on professional teachers and their education throughout their careers in a range of schools that we have addressed in our Foreword to this consultation.

Question 6 (a): Do you agree that we should offer more financial support to trainees with good degrees and maths and science specialists?

UCU Response

Following from UCU's comments in response to Question 1 (a):

'there is the assumption that there is a direct, invariable correlation between the quality of entrants into initial teacher education and the quality of teachers; there is

a further assumption that the quality of entrants can be established from a single measure, the class of their first degree'

UCU would argue that to equate a First class degree with 'outstanding potential' to become a teacher is further evidence of unreflective, uncritical and inadequately evidenced assumptions about the supposedly sound relationship between subject specialism and pedagogy in the professional formation of 'outstanding teachers' embedded in these proposals.

Both ITE UCU members and the majority of attendees at the TDA 12th July consultation event agree that the distinction between a First and a 2:1 is not a meaningful distinction in terms of becoming an excellent teacher and in any case a First class degree does not necessarily mean that the holder of a First will make a good teacher: in simple terms, someone with a First in physics could be an inadequate communicator and hence ineffectual teacher.

On the teacher education pages of the Institute for Physics website, under the heading 'Physics has been a shortage subject for a long time and tutors have been asked to increase the number of people training as physics teachers significantly in 2011/12', a teacher educator is quoted as follows:

"I have had 3rds with just the right kind of personality and attributes making fabulous teachers - real naturals! Equally, I have had 1st class people who have no concept of how to stand up in front of a class and spark one iota of interest, empathy or personal authority. They'd be eaten alive by a bunch of Year 7s. And probably not even understand what the problem is..."

(http://www.iop.org/education/teach/apply/tips/page_50761.html#degree)

Imran Khan, Director of the Campaign for Science and Engineering, takes a similar position:

"The bursaries are also stratified by degree class – the better your first degree, the more money you get. We're not entirely convinced by this for two reasons: first, as employers know, there is no convincing comparability between degree classes at widely different universities (especially in maths and physics); second, it might be the case that degree class isn't a consistent predictor of teaching quality anyway".

(<http://sciencecampaign.org.uk/?p=5686>)

And according to Peter Main, Director of Education & Science at the Institute of Physics (IOP), there will also be an absolute loss in numbers of physics teachers if the DfE proposal goes ahead unamended:

"Here at the Institute of Physics, we have calculated that 1000 new physics teachers are needed each year for the next 15 years to bring the number of physics teachers

up to level of chemistry and biology teachers. But, for more than 2 decades, even in good years, only about 600 new physics teachers are entering the profession annually, which is not only well below the 1000, it is also below the break-even number. And, if the proposals in the recent White Paper are accepted, restricting PGCE funding to students with 1st and 2nd class degrees, we will lose another 100". (<http://sciencecampaign.org.uk/?p=2565>)

In his annual 'Good Teacher Training Guide' (<http://www.buckingham.ac.uk/research/ceer/publications>), Professor Smithers estimated that under the planned changes, 430 science graduates with third-class degrees would have been turned away from teaching training courses in 2010, including 26 per cent of the physics total.

A further 410 maths (21 per cent) and 131 modern languages (13 per cent) trainees would also have been refused places. Overall, around 91 per cent of trainee teachers have at least a 2:2 degree. (<http://newteachers.tes.co.uk/news/schools-risk-losing-teachers-if-gove-restricts-teacher-training-those-22-or-above/23644>)

UCU would agree with Professor Dylan Wiliam, emeritus professor of educational assessment at the Institute of Education, who has explained that there are no real benefits from imposing such regulations:

"Are we really saying that a biologist with a 2:2 will make a better physics teacher than a physicist with a third?"

There should be an alternative route to bursaries for those with third class degrees who show particular talent for teaching."

Professor William also cited a study by the Centre for Markets and Public Organisation at Bristol University, which found that students learn the same, regardless of their teachers' degree class.

(<http://www.rapidonline.com/latestnews.aspx?id=800258884&tier1=Education+Products&title=Third-class+degrees+should+not+be+a+barrier+to+becoming+a+teacher>)

The only 'winners' in this proposal are those in the happy position of having a First in maths or physics. They could receive a £20,000 bursary, minus £9,000 in fees, leaving an £11,000 bursary. Every other category, except for Primary ITE with a First Class degree, is worse off. So if your degree is a lower class, even a 2:1 and not in a high premium subject, there will be a deficit.

Biology is in the 'other secondary' category, so again there is an inbuilt deficit across these bursaries except for a First in Maths and Physics, whereas a 2:2 in Biology for an intending teacher means a £4,000 bursary but a £9,000 fee.

This would also play out badly with, for example, general science teachers at KS4, where a biologist and a physicist would both be teaching the same material yet one would have had a considerable bursary whilst the other has a significant student debt.

UCU also believes that as this is an elitist proposal it also raises an equity issue as First class degrees tend to correlate with higher socio-economic class.

This system privileges holders of First Class degree in maths and physics with £20,000: UCU believes that this sum should be lowered and the total spread across the bursary system.

UCU is also very concerned that the interaction of this new bursary system with the new HE funding regime may well entrain a negative impact on 'non-traditional' students entering the profession, hence a widening participation and social mobility deficit.

UCU would also seek clarification from the DfE regarding how long the bursaries and the categories described will remain? The department's discussion document suggests that both subject categories and bursary payments would be changed to provide a monetary incentive to recruit teachers in shortage subjects. This proposal is yet another good reason to bring teacher educator practitioners closer in to the funding and quota allocation process, as UCU argued in our Foreword.

Overall, UCU would suggest that the DfE reconsiders both the bursary proposals and the imposition of a minimum 2:2 degree class hurdle on state-supported graduate access to ITE. Specifically, given that the Secretary of State has committed to recruiting more physics, maths and chemistry teachers into both primary and secondary schools, the DfE should reconsider and consult further with the scientific bodies and teacher education professional organisations to elucidate a more coherent way forward on these objectives.

Question 6 (b): Do the proposals for funding in chapter three strike the right balance in the different levels of funding individuals?

UCU Response

No, as we have argued in response to the immediately preceding question.

Question 7: Do you think it is right to give more initial teacher training places to providers that are working in close university/school partnerships?

UCU Response

Overall, they should *only* go to 'providers that are working in close university/school partnerships', as we have argued throughout this response. UCU has also suggested that the necessary partnership relation between HEIs and schools should be embedded in the OfSTED inspection framework, please see this response, pages 6-7:

'We would urge the Secretary of State to add to OfSTED's definition of 'an outstanding school' the following sentence, suggested by a Teaching School head at the 12th July 2011 TDA/DfE consultation meeting on the discussion paper: "No school can be classified as outstanding unless it is fully involved in ITE partnerships with HEIs"'.

We would similarly request that the Department defines 'close relationship' more transparently and fully and that the role of OfSTED in assessing the effectiveness of partnerships between HEIs and schools is examined fully. When will OfSTED consult on the criteria for this proposal?

Question 8: Do you think that a single gateway for PGCE and Graduate Teacher Programme applications is a good idea?

UCU Response

UCU's understanding of this proposal is that a single gateway for PGCE and GTP applications would take the form of concurrent not sequential application, 'like UCAS'.

This will inevitably lead to extra workload, with all institutions interviewing all candidates who apply. But candidates will probably have already made 'first, second and third' choices, so the question then becomes what is the gain for the extra work for providers and trainees?

In UCU's view, it would be better to have deadlines rather than concurrent application with a 'failsafe' added to it in the form of a 'clearing process' to fill those quota places that are unfilled or where prospective students have dropped out. This should be coupled with funding quotas being made available in a timely manner (unlike the 2011/12 quotas debacle) and over a three year allocation cycle. These measures would allow the application and selection process to be speeded up effectively and would also improve candidates' experience of making an application.

Question 9: What more would you change to improve initial teacher training?

UCU Response

Please see our Foreword

Questions for schools

Question 10: How could we improve these proposals to make your school more likely to take a greater role in initial teacher training?

UCU Response

Please see our Foreword

Question 11: Would a reduction in salary subsidy for the Graduate Teacher Programme make it less likely that you will take part in the programme?

UCU Response (to both Questions 11 and 12)

UCU believes that this proposal will be a large deterrent if schools have to pay but, worse still, the quality of the student teacher experience will suffer.

UCU would urge the DfE to examine research in this area and take heed of the views of both teacher educators and schools on this proposal (for example the arguments made by UCET, ATL and NUT) as the quality of GTP programmes and students over the last ten years has improved because GTPs have been supernumerary.

Attendees at the 12 July TDA consultation were strongly opposed to this proposal. A training school head argued that the quality, frequency and impact of mentoring would be diluted. The representative from Southampton University argued that within their GTP schemes no student teacher would be allowed to teach without 60 days prior training. Similarly, observation of trainees becomes more difficult if trainees are not supernumerary.

This proposal seems to be attempting to import practices from 'Teach First', where although 'Teach First' trainees are not supernumerary they undertake six weeks training before they start in a school.

The UCU Branch at the Institute of Education was very clear in its response about the deleterious impact of removing the supernumerary status of GTP entrants:

'We readily acknowledge that GTP has provided a valuable alternative route into teaching, one that has proved particularly attractive to some categories of entrant to the profession. We are fundamentally opposed to the proposal that GTP trainees should no longer be treated as supernumerary to a school's core teaching staff (3.15).

The very fact that GTP entrants are supernumerary functions as a guarantor of the quality of their training: they are enabled to observe and work alongside more experienced colleagues, and to receive high-quality mentoring, precisely because they are not part of the staffing establishment of a school – they are additional to that establishment. To alter this requirement, as is proposed, would be to effect a fundamental change – and a worsening – in the character and quality of the training that is provided.

The document suggests that there is an analogy between what is proposed for GTP and the current arrangements for 'Teach First'. This is simply not the case, both because of the intensive pre-sessional input provided for Teach First entrants and

because of the degree of involvement of HE staff in regular visits to 'Teach First' participants throughout their training year.

Our view is that the proposal to remove the requirement for GTP participants to be supernumerary undercuts any claim the document may have to promote teacher quality: what it proposes is training on the cheap – and that is in the interests neither of the trainees nor of the pupils whom they are to teach'. (I o E UCU Branch, July 2011)

Question 12: Would the removal of the supernumerary requirement for the Graduate Teacher Programme make it more likely that you will take part in the programme?

UCU Response

Please see above response.