

review of initial teacher education stage 2

Ministerial Response



WIDENING ACCESS

COMPETENCES AND VALUES

RELATIONSHIPS

ACCOUNTABILITY



SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

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Ministerial Response

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foreword

I have read the review group's report in the context of the agenda for action I laid out in *Ambitious, Excellent Schools*, of encouraging excellence in Scottish schools through:

- › setting high expectations, and supporting high quality leadership and confident, ambitious schools;
- › giving professional freedom to teachers and schools to tailor learning to the needs of individual young people;
- › offering choice and opportunity for young people to help each of them realise their own potential;
- › supporting learning for young people in challenging circumstances; and
- › applying tough, intelligent accountabilities.

To do this we need a committed workforce of dedicated and inspirational teachers of the highest possible calibre, whose development will start with initial teacher education (ITE) that is second to none.

The Scottish education system has long enjoyed a high reputation worldwide. This has been due in no small measure to the existing quality of ITE, quality confirmed by the HMIE report which preceded the work which is the subject of this report. Because we owe it to Scotland's children to continue to ensure that they have the best possible teachers we have reviewed where we are and how to improve further. We must aspire to producing more self-confident, successful and respected professionals and to attracting a wide diversity of talented people into teaching.

However, ITE needs to be seen as only the first stage of a continuous process of career development. In particular the new induction arrangements, and the recently established continuing professional development framework, mean ITE can be seen in a different context than hitherto. Initial professional development can now be scaled and tailored across a teacher's first few years in the profession rather than, as some have observed, it being addressed as part of a crowded ITE curriculum.



This report therefore outlines a range of actions to be undertaken by all stakeholders – the Executive, local authorities, teacher education institutions and the General Teaching Council for Scotland. Collective action is required and cooperation will be essential if our teachers are to receive the support they require to meet the ever-changing demands of the education environment. We owe it to Scotland as a whole to ensure that our school leavers are well prepared and equipped to take their place in society. We need everyone involved in ITE to respond to the challenges outlined in this report with creativity, vigour and determination.

I am grateful to the review group which has produced this report and helping me establish the next phase of action to move it forward. The following pages describe challenges I am setting for universities, local authorities, the General Teaching Council for Scotland as well as the Executive, as a result of the review group's work.

I am very pleased to note that a number of the issues raised by the review group have already been delivered or are already being addressed. Examples include the revision in entry requirements that I announced last year, and which will be reflected in a revision of the *Memorandum* in due course; the repeal last year of redundant medical standards provisions; the review that HMIE are conducting of student placement arrangements; and the funding that has been provided to local authorities for student placement co-ordination.

I note that the group opted not to comment on the issue of primary/secondary transitions on the grounds that a number of pilot projects are underway. I await with interest the evaluation of these projects and will consider what if any action should be taken in light of the findings. I am also conscious of the need to address issues relating to nursery/primary transitions.

I shall monitor progress on the matters already being addressed and on the various challenges that I have set in the following pages, and take any further action if necessary. I have written to key stakeholders about the challenges I and the review group have set, and I have asked for annual reports from them describing progress, which I shall consider alongside regular survey material from HMIE and new teachers on their preparedness to take on classroom teaching.

Ministerial response to the review group's report

Widening access to teaching

I note the review group's discussion on how well the structure of existing teaching degrees and diplomas serves to ensure widely available access routes to the profession. I endorse their conclusion that the 4-year Bachelor of Education (BEd) and the 1-year Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) continue broadly to serve us well, particularly when seen alongside developments in relation to emerging part-time and distance learning courses and new continuum of development.

The system is demonstrating considerable flexibility in terms of the number of teachers that can be trained, and both the one-year and 4-year models successfully deliver high quality teachers. More recently the system has also begun to show flexibility in other respects. In particular, other modes of delivery of ITE have been developed using part-time course structures and/or distance learning techniques.

I welcome the review group's encouragement of these innovations. However, I also endorse their view that more can be done, and needs to be, if we are to ensure the supply of highly qualified teachers demanded by demographics in the profession and the Executive's commitment to investment in the education system.

The review group has rightly highlighted important improvements in current arrangements that would be addressed by **widening access to ITE**. For example, virtually all of the academic content of ITE courses is delivered by traditional, full-time, campus-based models. This means that many people with home or family commitments cannot readily enter teaching – a wealth of talent which is being denied to the profession and to Scotland's schools.

I am also conscious that we also need to consider the merits of more radical restructuring of ITE courses. I am greatly encouraged by the concept of the Scottish Teachers for a New Era initiative, currently being developed by Aberdeen University in close discussion with the GTCS, with funding coming jointly from the University, the Hunter Foundation and the Scottish Executive.

Finally, in this respect, the review group have highlighted the gender imbalance in teaching, which is a longstanding feature of primary teaching, but is also becoming apparent in most secondary subjects as well, and the importance of attracting more disabled teachers and teachers from ethnic minorities.



These are matters that concern me and I have already commissioned research from the Centre for Research in Education, Inclusion and Diversity at the University of Edinburgh. The study, *Gender Balance of the Teaching Workforce in Publicly Funded Schools*, will look primarily at issues of gender imbalance in teaching but is also likely to shed light on issues of disability and ethnicity.

I have little doubt that some of the factors are complex in nature and profoundly rooted in society. It is extremely unlikely, therefore, that quick fixes will be forthcoming. It may take a generation or more to significantly redress the current imbalances and under-representations. This is all the more reason to take early action and in the light of the research findings I will consider how best resources might be targeted to address these issues.

My challenge to stakeholders is:

- › for **universities** to develop alternative modes of delivery of ITE courses and, more generally, to consider re-modelling the structure and content of courses to attract appropriately qualified candidates who are not otherwise able to come into teaching.

The few established examples that deliver on a part-time and/or distance learning basis will be evaluated to determine the appropriateness of replicating the existing models and/or developing others;

- › for **the Executive** to address with SHEFC and the universities, whether current funding arrangements sufficiently facilitate the development of more innovative and flexible courses, by 2006;
- › for **the Executive** to review the support arrangements for part-time students by 2006;
- › for **the Executive**, in consultation with the General Teaching Council for Scotland, to revise the Memorandum on Entry Requirements to Courses of Initial Teacher Education in Scotland by October 2005 to ensure that entry requirements reflect current undergraduate course structures and present no unreasonable barriers to entry.
- › for **the Executive**, in consultation with other stakeholders, to react in light of recommendations arising from the current gender balance study.

Competences and values required of new teachers

We expect a great deal of teachers – not only of those who have been teaching for years but also of those starting out. The Standard for Initial Teacher Education identifies 22 benchmarks relating to the professional knowledge and understanding, professional skills and abilities, and professional values and personal commitment that we expect of teachers on completion of their ITE course. These range across curriculum; education systems and professional responsibilities, principles and perspectives; teaching and learning; classroom organisation and management; pupil assessment; and professional reflection and communication.

I was therefore very concerned when I learned that HMIE's scoping study, conducted in advance of the review group's work, found that many new teachers considered themselves less fully prepared than they would have liked on qualifying as a teacher to take on classroom duties. However, the review group have considered this point carefully, and have found little supporting evidence that this represents any fundamental failing in ITE, though they have made important recommendations on areas where improvements can be made.

The assessment of newly qualified teachers on the induction scheme indicates that a very high proportion of newly qualified teachers successfully complete their induction year. More than 97% of the probationer teachers' profiles, submitted to the General Teaching Council for Scotland by schools and local authorities in June 2003 and June 2004, recommended that full registration should be granted, and the majority of the remainder were subsequently recommended for full registration after a short extended period of probation. This degree of precision about the quality of new teachers has not been available to us hitherto, and indicates that standards of professional preparation in initial teacher education are producing highly qualified, capable teachers.

Nevertheless, I was grateful to the review group that they gave very close consideration to the perception that new teachers feel themselves less fully prepared than they would wish in a number of vital areas. The group has noted that, despite their concerns, the great majority of teachers are very quickly operating at an effective level, and achieve the Standard for Full Registration by the end of their induction year. Indeed, anecdotal evidence is that many probationer teachers would prefer to have more than a 70% timetable as they progress through the induction scheme in order to be able to have more opportunity to practice their classroom skills.



The areas where new teachers feel most exposed include the very areas of teaching which are the most challenging and stretching to all in the profession – matters relating to pupil behaviour and dealing with additional support needs. Teachers, whatever their experience, need to be able to maintain and enhance their professional skills in these areas on a regular basis. In that regard, the needs of newly qualified teachers are therefore not unique, and I am satisfied the results of the scoping study need to be read in that context. However, there is more work that can be done in relation to new teachers to make sure they are better supported in these important areas of teaching, through ensuring a better structure of professional learning and development, through ITE and Induction into further CPD in their early years in the profession.

I want universities, local authorities and others to work together to ensure teachers are able to develop these essential skills at as early a stage in their career as possible, and in a way which allows them to develop theory and practice simultaneously, for instance by linking CPD content in induction and early years to relevant parts of the ITE curriculum, and vice versa.

A further key feature of the induction scheme is the access that probationer teachers have to mentoring support. There is emerging evidence that when such arrangements are properly developed to provide support and challenge in equal measure, i.e. where the mentor acts in the role of a critical friend – very significant benefits accrue.

I want to see this emerging experience extended, so that similar support is available for student teachers while on school placements. This will take time to develop in the profession and cannot be achieved overnight. However, a substantial start can be made immediately by using the opportunity created by the Executive's commitment to increasing teacher numbers to 53,000. In the coming two years, there will be increasing numbers of teachers freed from some or all of their teaching commitment to create teaching vacancies for the increasing number of newly qualifying teachers. Local authorities have been using such places created since the inception of the induction scheme, to help promote the National Priorities for education. I will be strongly encouraging them in the coming years to look also at the opportunities which can be created to develop mentoring skills in the existing profession, so that structures of support and challenge are better delivered for all new teachers, both in ITE and Induction.

My challenge to stakeholders is:

- › for **local authorities** to develop standardised procedures for providing rigorous, evidence-based feedback to the GTCS and the universities, on an annual basis, about the effectiveness of ITE courses in preparing teachers to teach in their schools. I expect to see formal arrangements in place for teachers graduating in 2007, with pilots being run a year earlier. Local authorities should work in partnership with universities to achieve this goal. I will expect to see early evidence of progress;
- › for **schools and local authorities** to develop mentoring capacity available in individual schools or clusters of schools specifically for qualifying teachers;
- › for **universities** to reflect on advice received from local authorities and adapt as necessary existing ITE course models to reflect Ministerial initiatives and changes in national priorities;
- › for **universities and the GTCS** to ensure that classroom management and awareness of additional support needs receive higher priority, and that no student enters their probation year feeling these issues have not been given sufficient attention and leave their probation year without appropriate classroom management skills;
- › for **the National Continuing Professional Development Team** to work with stakeholders to develop a CPD framework to guide new teachers during the early years of their career – to be available by autumn 2006. Liaison with universities, the General Teaching Council for Scotland and local authorities will be crucial to ensuring continuity across ITE, induction and early years' CPD;
- › for **the Executive and the GTCS** to review the professional standards (initial, full, chartered teacher and headship) by end 2005 and publish by June 2006.



Relationships

The review group has identified a number of areas where clarification of roles between the major partners involved in ITE, and changes in practice, would be advantageous. The most pressing need is in relation to student placements.

The review group describe how student placements are an essential element of ITE that, by their very nature, can only be delivered in schools. It has long been recognised that the responsibility for offering placements has not fallen evenly on all local authorities, schools, secondary departments, or indeed on all teachers. It is now clear that our commitment to expand teacher numbers and, over the next decade, teacher demography mean that this situation must be addressed.

Some of the factors which have contributed to the uneven – indeed inequitable – distribution of placements have been due to Scotland’s geography. However, I recognise there will inevitably be additional logistical issues when placing students at greater distances from universities. I endorse the review group’s conclusion that in part, these can be addressed by extending part-time and distance learning models. However, we must also address wherever possible any administrative, structural and bureaucratic barriers that prevent fair and equitable distribution.

While the increase in student numbers will test student placement arrangements and highlight the need for changes, it will also create opportunities. In the next two years the number of probationer teachers will be such that significant numbers of experienced teachers will be freed of some or all of their teaching workload. This will offer considerable scope for secondments and other ways of developing relationships between ITE stakeholders.

My challenge to stakeholders is:

- › for **local authorities** to take on a strategic co-ordination role in relation to identifying student placement opportunities in their schools and to work in co-operation with neighbouring authorities to maximise the capacity for placements;
- › for **universities** to harmonise arrangements in relation to student placements so that local authorities and schools do not have to adopt differing practices for students from different universities;
- › for **the Executive** to facilitate a national seminar to deliver improvements to current practice in relation to student placements;
- › for **local authorities** and universities to identify opportunities for secondment of staff from schools to universities and from universities to schools to improve the interchange of knowledge and experience;

The group has also drawn attention to the importance of looking at teaching as one of a range of children's services. The way these professionals are trained must reflect organisational change that is being undertaken by a number of local authorities. Teachers and others responsible for delivering children's services must recognise that their contribution to improving the potential outcomes for a child must be seen alongside the contributions that others will make. The foundations for this must be introduced as early as possible in professional development and, with this in mind, universities must ensure that ITE courses are constructed appropriately.

My further challenge is:

- › for **education faculties** to build relationships with other faculties in universities. This might be with a view to student teachers receiving elements of their professional education alongside students of other professions and/or from lecturers from other disciplines on, for example, child protection issues.



Accountability

We spend significant sums on training teachers. It is crucial that rigorous accountability arrangements are in place.

The review group has highlighted issues around **accountability**. For example, they have raised concerns about current accreditation arrangements; in particular, whether they are more burdensome than necessary. The GTCS's accreditation arrangements are largely based on arrangements that were established to address the needs of free-standing teacher training colleges. However, universities' internal validation procedures and accountability rules are different in form and substance and it seems appropriate that the GTCS should consider whether changes should be made to their current procedures and how these might be harmonised with the QA procedures of universities. I welcome the GTCS's intention to review their current procedures.

It is also inherent in other parts of the review group's conclusions, and in my own response, that there is a mutual dependency between local authorities and universities – the latter being a monopoly provider, but the former being a monopsony purchaser who in turn provide a significant part of the course content via student placements.

I want to see far greater levels of engagement between universities and local authorities. I am not inclined to set out in detail what these arrangements should be – that should properly be a matter for the universities and local authorities themselves, not least because they will in part reflect whether local authorities look largely to a dominant university provider, such as in the North East or Lothians, or to several universities such as in central Scotland, or who interact with several universities, such as in Fife or west central Scotland.

However, I shall want to be clear that appropriate arrangements are established to encourage and facilitate exchanges of information about, for example, local teacher supply and demand circumstances, and the content and structure of ITE curricula to ensure that CPD during induction is tailored to complement and build on a teacher's ITE experience.

Local authorities must tell universities what their service needs are and universities must react accordingly. There needs to be a more equal balance in these partnerships than we have been used to and dynamism in these necessary conversations.

My challenge to stakeholders is:

- › for **the GTCS** to review current accreditation procedures and to work with key partners to develop more appropriate and proportionate quality assurance arrangements for the accreditation of programmes reflecting the universities' quality assurance procedures. Revised procedures should be adopted in August 2006;
- › for **HMIE** to complete and publish an aspect review of ITE focusing on student teacher placements.

Conclusion

It is my conclusion that the sector is undergoing significant change and development. This, I believe, has been inspired by a number of factors, not least of which is the teacher induction scheme. This has emphasised the transition from ITE to induction and demands new partnership arrangements if the benefits are to be maximised. This is equally true in the expansion of ITE provision involving part-time and distance learning models.

But the sector has been criticised by some for being too static for much of the last 20 years. The review group suggest that there are signs of increasing dynamism and, in addition to the early examples of the use of part-time and distance learning approaches, I am excited by the concepts being explored in the Scottish Teachers for a New Era project. This will emphasise the importance of research-based practice both in initial teacher education and in teaching.

I very much welcome these initiatives but I want to see more. I believe a momentum is beginning to build and I expect it to continue to do so. I am satisfied that there is no need for institutional reform but that leaves plenty scope for new ideas, more fruitful partnerships and better learning and teaching.



Implementation

I have set a number of challenges for the main stakeholders in ITE – many of them with specific target delivery dates. The review group (see page 15 of the report for membership), which included representatives of the main stakeholders, was unanimous about the content of this report and I therefore look forward to enthusiastic buy-in by all stakeholders.

The Executive will arrange a number of events across Scotland to raise awareness of this report and the challenges I have set. I will look for positive input to these by all involved.

Progress will be monitored and reported upon by the National Continuing Professional Development Advisory Group which has an overarching role in overseeing the whole continuum of professional development from ITE, through induction and on into career-long CPD. I look forward to receiving the group's reports.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Peacock'.

Peter Peacock, MSP
Minister for Education and Young People



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