



**WALES
CYMRU**

RESPONSE TO:

Draft criteria for the accreditation of Initial Teacher Education programmes in Wales and the proposal for the Education Workforce Council to accredit initial teacher education

Contact Details:

Lisa Edwards
Policy and Communications Officer
UCU Wales
Unit 33, The Enterprise Centre
Tondu
BRIDGEND
CF32 9BS

Tel: 01656 721951
E-mail: ledwards@ucu.org.uk

The University and College Union (UCU Wales) represents almost 7,000 academics, lecturers, trainers, instructors, researchers, managers, administrators, computer staff, librarians, and postgraduates in universities, colleges, adult education and training organisations across Wales.

UCU Wales is a politically autonomous but integral part of UCU, the largest post-school union in the world: a force for educators and education that employers and government cannot ignore. It was formed on the 1st June 2006 by the amalgamation of two strong partners – the Association of University Teachers (AUT) and the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education (NATFHE) – who shared a long history of defending and advancing educators' employment and professional interests.

We welcome the opportunity to respond to the consultation on Draft criteria for the accreditation of Initial Teacher Education programmes in Wales and the proposal for the Education Workforce Council to accredit initial teacher education.

Question 1 – Should the EWC have the statutory responsibility for accrediting all programmes of initial teacher education (ITE) in Wales?

Neither agree nor disagree

It makes sense that as the EWC will ultimately approve entrants to the profession, that they should provide accreditation to the programmes. However the EWC is not a body that represents Higher Education.

As it will be HE providers delivering the accredited courses (with schools, who will work in “close collaboration with their university partners”¹) and as the courses will be adult education courses, it seems incongruous that the accreditation process does not sit within a body that oversees post 16 education and training.

From a further education point of view, we do not see how expanding the role of the EWC in relation to ITE will signal trust in the profession. Yet again there is no consideration given to the ITE needs of the FE sector; yet again another strand of the EWC that FE lecturers will be contributing to financially, but receiving no benefit.

Question 2 – Should the EWC establish a Teacher Education Accreditation Committee?

Neither agree nor disagree

Whilst we agree that it would not make sense to have yet another standalone body, we are concerned that, wherever this body might sit, it is described in the consultation as “a range of stakeholders, including representation from the teaching profession itself”.

From our point of view the main body of such a committee should be from the teaching profession. Both Furlong and Donaldson advocate that the profession

¹ <http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/150309-teaching-tomorrows-teachers-final.pdf>.

should take a much more central role in shaping and delivering change in the profession. If an accreditation committee were to be formed, it should be made up of a majority of teaching professionals i.e. practicing or recently practicing teacher educators, teachers, headteachers. If we are to support and encourage “a new kind of teacher professionalism”, proposed by professor Donaldson, we have to start by trusting the profession; This is reflected in the narrative of the consultation which states that “All major parts of [the] reform agenda signal that it is important to enable education professionals to take a much more central role in leading, shaping and delivering change in the profession”.

Therefore, proposals for the make up of a committee should place the emphasis on representation from the teaching/teacher education professions, not on the range of other stakeholders.

Question 3 – Do you agree that the criteria for the accreditation of ITE in Wales, as set out at Annex A, provides sufficient detail for the development of initial teacher education programmes?

Neither agree nor disagree

There is a major omission in the form of further education. The role of further education in the education reform agenda is vital if we are truly to address parity between vocational and academic qualifications.

To provide the breadth of the new curriculum and open up alternative, more suitable ways of learning for many pupils and students, current FE providers will need to be promoted as providing an equally valuable contribution to education. As stated in the 2016 Qualifications Wales Review of Health and Social Care Qualifications, many qualifications for learners aged 14-16 were:

“...delivered and assessed by practitioners with no background in the health and social care sector, and it was therefore unsurprising that some of the key principles were misunderstood or misrepresented.”²

Therefore we must capitalise on the expertise within the sector to provide quality vocational alternatives.

However, if there is no provision for placing teacher education and training for the lecturers on the same level of quality as that provided to school teachers, we are likely to fail in our bid to provide the highest quality learning experience to all those with the potential to benefit. The future Wales should be a country that truly values the contribution of all its citizens and gives equal esteem to both vocational and academic skills. It will take time to achieve such a shift in thinking and attitude, but

² <http://qualificationswales.org/media/1904/hsc-report-2016-e.pdf> (p25)

that shift must start with a clear message from Welsh Government that all forms of education and training are valuable in our society. This will not be achieved by solely focussing on the quality of teaching and learning in schools.

We are concerned that the proposed criteria serve to entrench the divide between different types leaning experience and do not address Donaldson's vision of the curriculum being "designed in ways that will engage the interest of all children and young adults and enable them to achieve."³

At very least there should be acknowledgement of the role of the FE sector, in the education and training of 14 – 19 year olds, and reference made to the future development of equivalent teacher education and training for lecturers, to start the shift in thinking and attitude.

Question 4 – Do you agree with the roles and responsibilities proposed for schools and HEI (higher education institution) partnerships?

Neither agree nor disagree

We absolutely agree with that high quality professional education involves different modes of leaning, in order to explore the interconnection between both theory and practice.

However, we are concerned with the workload issues that this will create, particularly for the schools, with regard to freeing staff to mentor, co-ordinate, private space, cost and the impact on pupils and staff in (fewer) lead schools, which host larger numbers of trainee teachers.

There is a wide diversity of school in Wales, we would want assurances that smaller rural schools won't be disadvantaged going forward and will be able to play their full part in the training of teachers as they do at present.

We welcome the recognition of the importance of scholarly activity for teacher educators.

Question 5 – Do you agree with the overarching requirements that accredited providers must meet for all programmes of ITE study?

Agree

These would equally apply to the FE sector

³ <http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/150317-successful-futures-en.pdf> (p10)

Question 6 – Do you agree with the entry and selection minimum standard requirements for student teachers in Wales?

Disagree

We would like to see further detail on the proposals and requirements for initial teacher training, for students from differing entry points. The current proposals are very much focussed on young school leavers and graduates. In the interest of attracting older students with varying life/work experiences, what entry criteria will they be assessed by? GCSE results may not accurately reflect their skills and talent. This again will be of particular importance with regard to the expansion of vocational qualification opportunities for 14-16 year olds.

The current requirement for grade B in English and maths, while laudable in its intent, appears to be discouraging potentially good teachers from training in Wales. They can train in England with lower grades and then work in Wales. This review is a good opportunity to address this inconsistency.

Further details regarding the fit of Graduate Teacher Programme, would also be welcome.

Question 7 – Do you agree with the principal that the EWC should have the power to charge a fee (which will be subject to a separate consultation) for the consideration of applications, which will be payable by HEIs participating in the accreditation process?

Neither agree nor disagree

The charge for the cost of accrediting Initial Teacher Training programmes should not be passed on to FE lecturers registered with the EWC. It would be wholly unacceptable that they should contribute to the funding of programmes that they will not be part of.

Therefore the EWC will need to ensure that any costs incurred, as a result of accreditation are not funded by FE lecturer registration fees and will need to look for alternative funding streams.

Question 8 – How could the policy under consideration be formulated or revised so that it would have positive effects, or increased positive effects, on:

- (a) opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language?
- (b) treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language?

Supporting comments

Question 9 – How could the policy under consideration be formulated or revised so that it would not have adverse effects, or so that it would have decreased adverse effects, on:

- (a) opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language?
- (b) treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language?

Supporting comments

Question 10 – We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them.

Supporting comments

The proposal that the criteria will be set by Welsh Ministers, appears contrary to the ethos that the profession must take responsibility for leading changes. We have concerns that this will leave the sector wide open to political tinkering, which also goes against the idea of being 'arm's length'.

We have concerns about the unnecessary competition that might arise from different providers having similar and competing programmes accredited, or will individual accredited programmes be offered across all providers?

Responses to consultations are likely to be made public, on the internet or in a report. If you would prefer your response to remain anonymous, please tick here: