

IOP Institute of Physics

Institute of Physics submission 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?

Agree	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>This move is welcome. It will bring the teaching profession more in line both with other professions, as well as with the way in which teacher training is performed in many other countries.</p> <p>It is also important for trainers themselves to have some level of accreditation – particularly in subject-specific pedagogy. ITE trainers should work towards having sufficient subject knowledge and expertise to be eligible for chartered status in the subject(s) relevant to their role – in physics, CPhys. This would provide them with a stronger grounding to best be able to deliver training to teachers in their subject.</p>					

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

Agree	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>A Teacher Education Committee would be welcome provided that it is, and is seen to be, a body with substantial expertise, fully appraised of evolving research evidence.</p> <p>There is insufficient science education expertise in many areas in Wales to effectively train new cohorts of teachers, although there are some excellent teachers. Given the difficulty which has been encountered in recruiting physics ITE providers it seems likely that similar issues will be faced within the new system. Resources will have to be committed to ensure that suitable expertise is brought to the EWC Teacher Education Accreditation Committee.</p>					

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?

Agree	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>

If no, please specify the further detail that should be provided.

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

Agree	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
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If no, please specify the further detail that should be provided.

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

Agree	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
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If no, please explain why.

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

Agree	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor	<input type="checkbox"/>
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				disagree	

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?

Agree	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
If no, please explain why					

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?

Greater provision could be made for student teachers to learn ‘incidental’ Welsh – providing the translations of subject specialist terminology in both languages when teaching – within, or alongside their teacher training, particularly amongst secondary teachers. This could be with either the university or school or other providers as is done with some new medical staff in the health sector. This would reduce disruption to teaching the subject-specific knowledge but give speakers or learners of Welsh the chance to develop their understanding of concepts in both languages.

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.

Inevitably, accreditation of programmes will lead to differences between ITT and PGCE courses in Wales and England. This may create problems when teachers move between jurisdictions in terms of the recognition of qualifications, and the different standards each will have. It will be useful for authorities in both England and Wales to make information on each programme readily available to ensure that all schools are able to understand each qualification. It would also be useful to have clarity on the extent to which the 'shortfall' in initial teacher education may be addressed for those student teachers who complete a PGCE course outside of Wales on programmes that will be, by default, 'non-accredited', and how these teachers will be viewed compared to those who qualify through these accredited programmes.

Fundamentally, the greatest emphasis must be placed on ensuring that there is adequate provision of people to lead training. There are shortages of physics teachers in Wales – the number of physicists registered to teach in Wales having fallen for the third consecutive year to 304 and the number of people teaching physics – which can include non-physicists – has fallen from 427 in 2012 to 388 today. This problem is not helped by a shortage of individuals going into teacher training. Any new system of accreditation will be limited in success if there are too few excellent teacher trainers to provide accredited programmes.

In addition, a sustainable funding mechanism is needed to ensure that retention of ITE trainers is increased. Particularly if further efforts are going to be made at accreditation, it is important that expertise and experience is retained and that there isn't a high staff turnover. Part of this revolves around providing security of future employment; this will help to embed practice and ensure trainers gain experience in delivering training.

**For further information, please contact
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