

Meeting  
19/09/07

Agenda Item  
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Reference No  
HEFCW/07/67

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## **1 Issue**

This paper:

- i. updates Members on recent developments on Initial Teacher Training (ITT) Reconfiguration and offers an opportunity to discuss these;
- ii. notes action taken by the Chairman on Secondary Undergraduate ITT placement grants for 2008/09.

## **2 Corporate Planning Implications / Rationale for paper**

The Council received a remit from the Welsh Assembly Government to take forward the reconfiguration of ITT provision in consultation with the sector in May 2006. This has been incorporated in the current Corporate Strategy and Corporate and Operational Plan.

## **3 Recommendations**

The Council is invited to:

- i. note and discuss recent developments on ITT reconfiguration;
- ii. note the action taken by the Chairman in agreeing that Secondary Undergraduate (UG) ITT placement grants will continue in 2008/09.

## **4 Timing for decisions**

The paper sets out the actions being taken in line with the requirement to present a progress report to the Assembly Government in March 2008. The decision on Secondary UG placement grants will enable timely information for institutions and prospective students.

## **5 Council members' interests**

The Chief Executive has declared that his partner is employed in teacher training at Swansea Institute of Higher Education.

## **6 Further information**

contact Alison Allan (Tel 02920 682223;  
E-mail: [alison.allan@hefcw.ac.uk](mailto:alison.allan@hefcw.ac.uk))

## **7 Background**

We received a remit letter from the Welsh Assembly Government in May 2006 to work with the sector to produce a proposed plan for the reconfiguration of ITT in Wales. This followed the review of ITT provision commissioned by the Assembly Government which indicated the need to reduce the number of teachers trained in Wales. We submitted our advice in November 2006, and further information in May 2007, as requested by the Assembly Government.

The Council has received regular progress reports and had the opportunity to discuss developments at each meeting since the publication of the review report in January 2006. It has also received copies of related correspondence and the advice to the Assembly Government.

## **8 Recent developments**

### **ITT Reconfiguration**

We received a letter from the Welsh Assembly Government on 27 July 2007, giving the response of the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills to our advice. A copy is attached at Annex A.

The response accepts in principle the main points of our advice that:

- there should be three collaborative ITT schools based on:
  - UW Aberystwyth/UW Bangor
  - Swansea Institute/Trinity College
  - UWIC/UW Newport.
- ITT provision ceases at NEWI.

The letter confirms agreement with other points and recommendations in our advice on primary and secondary UG provision, including their contribution to a diverse student intake and Welsh medium provision. The Assembly Government also accepts our view that Welsh medium targets should not be considered for primary or secondary PG provision at this stage. The review commissioned by the Assembly Government on the statistical planning issues underlying Welsh medium ITT course provision, which we expect to be published later in the year, will also inform future decisions.

A particular concern of the Welsh Assembly Government has been that the redeployed student numbers released by reductions in ITT intakes, which will remain with the institutions concerned, must be used for education-related provision to support the Assembly Government's workforce planning priorities. This is reiterated in the letter which states that the Assembly Government will not be able to move from agreement in principle to the intentions for these numbers which institutions have already indicated to confirmed approval, until it receives firm details of the alternative provision (para 8 of the letter). We will continue to stress to officials the need for a practical approach which recognises the role of market demand, and the lead-in times for institutions in developing, validating, marketing and recruiting to courses, particularly in areas where the Assembly Government's own assessment of workforce needs is not yet complete.

The letter contains an agreement in principle from the Assembly Government that it will meet transitional costs which are “clearly and specifically” a consequence of ITT reconfiguration (para 9).

The letter also notes our view that it would not be appropriate to fund changes in education research capacity from the resources freed up from ITT (para 11). The Assembly Government wishes therefore to consider any initiative on research capacity separately from the main ITT reconfiguration process. We informed Members in June about a pilot ESRC project on building research capacity in Education focusing particularly on collaboration between research intensive and non-research intensive institutions. This involves a consortium of all HEIs jointly funded by the ESRC and HEFCW. The Assembly Government letter notes this development.

### **Next steps**

We have arranged joint meetings with the partners in each of three “schools” and with NEWI during September and early October to discuss the actions which now need to be taken. We expect to ask for detailed reconfiguration plans, including transitional costs, to be submitted to us by mid-December. This will give us an opportunity for feedback and further discussion during January and February and for discussion in Council on 14 March 2008, before we present our first progress report as requested by the Assembly Government in March 2008. Officers will consider further how the reconfiguration plans will be assessed: it will be important that they are subject to analysis and scrutiny similar to that undertaken for applications to the Reconfiguration and Collaboration Fund, particularly in relation to transitional costs.

The Chief Executive will update Members on any further developments at the meeting.

***The Council is invited to note and discuss recent developments on ITT reconfiguration.***

### **Secondary Undergraduate Placement Grants**

Since 2003/04 the Council has allocated ITT strategy funding annually to the relevant institutions. This has included a ring-fenced sum, incorporated from an earlier scheme, which institutions use to provide bursaries for secondary UG ITT students.

The Council will consider the future use of overall ITT strategy funding early in 2008. The Chief Executive has already indicated in a letter to HEW in July that we recognise institutions may have existing commitments from this funding which will need to be honoured. While officers do not envisage at this stage recommending radical changes during the period of reconfiguration, we are likely progressively to expect institutions’ use of the funding to link into reconfiguration plans.

We recognised, however, that we needed to make an earlier decision about the availability of bursaries for 2008/09. Without this, ITT institutions could be placed in a difficult position if they were unable to provide firm information to prospective students. Various sources of financial support information for students will also be updated for 2008/09 over the next few months.

The Chairman has therefore agreed that we can confirm that the bursary element will continue, in advance of decisions on ITT strategy funding overall.

***The Council is invited to note the action taken by the Chairman in agreeing that Secondary Undergraduate ITT placement grants will continue in 2008/09.***

## **9 Financial implications**

ITT Reconfiguration: There are no immediate financial implications to the paper. The Assembly Government's agreement in principle to meeting the costs of transitional funding is noted in the paper. Institutions will also be able to redeploy the funded credits/associated funding from the reductions in ITT intake targets. This will be cost-neutral.

Secondary UG placement grants: The actual sum varies from year to year depending on the number of students in the system. The sum for 2007/08 was £320K within total ITT strategy funding of £1.16m. Given the reductions in ITT intake targets, we would not anticipate that the sum for placement grants will increase in 2008/09.

## **10 Communications implications**

The agreement by the Welsh Assembly Government in principle to the outline plan for reconfiguration put forward by HEFCW in its advice in November 2006 has eased the need for the confidentiality which existed during the period when HEFCW was preparing its advice and awaiting the Assembly Government's response. The Assembly Government's letter requested that we distribute this more widely to interested organisations. We have done this and the letter is also available on HEFCW's website.

Nonetheless, the reconfiguration of ITT remains a sensitive political issue because of the impact that changes will have on individual institutions and staff within the institutions. The topic can be expected to attract the attention of those people, including elected representatives, concerned about actions that may adversely affect their local areas or institutions. Should there be press interest, we would respond along the lines that we are acting in line with Assembly Government wishes and that we are working closely with the sector to achieve a reconfiguration of ITT to meet the future needs of Wales for qualified teachers.

We have informed institutions of the decision on the Secondary ITT placement grants.

## 11 Diversity and Equal Opportunities implications

We have informed institutions that we will be setting targets for Welsh medium primary undergraduate provision and have provided indicative targets. The Assembly Government's letter has confirmed their acceptance of this approach. We will expect future actions on Welsh medium provision to be informed by the Assembly commissioned review of statistical planning issues noted earlier in the paper.

Secondary UG provision contributes to providing a diverse intake to ITT: the placement grants support this. We expect in any future requests for ITT strategies from the reconfigured sector to ask institutions to identify actions to support a diverse intake to ITT. We will also need to assess the impact of the changes in ITT provision on the equalities agenda.

## 12 Risk Assessment

RISK	ACTION TO ADDRESS RISK
<p>The Assembly Government letter's stresses that its decisions are in principle and its future action will depend on the progress reports submitted by HEFCW. There could therefore be a risk that the Assembly Government may alter these "in principle" decisions, which could cause difficulties for HEFCW and significant damage to the sector.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actions as set out below to ensure appropriate progress with reconfiguration and continued Assembly Government support.</li> </ul>
<p>Loss of momentum in the sector for reconfiguration following the delay in waiting for the Assembly Government's response/inability of the sector to make sufficient progress on reconfiguration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have published the Assembly Government letter as requested. This has reduced earlier uncertainties and "planning blight".</li> <li>• We will hold meetings with ITT providers as noted in the paper to discuss detailed action and secure progress</li> <li>• We will analyse and provide feedback on reconfiguration plans/and continue discussion with providers.</li> </ul>

<p>Insufficient transitional funding is provided to facilitate the reconfiguration process/delays in making the funding available.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the light of the agreement in principle by the Assembly Government to fund transitional costs, we will work with institutions (as set out above) to ensure that transitional costs presented by institutions are soundly based and meet the Assembly Government's criteria.</li> <li>• We will emphasise to the Assembly Government the importance of having a timely and smooth-running system for releasing transitional funding.</li> </ul>
<p>Too many constraints by the Assembly, particularly on the use of redeployed numbers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will continue to stress the need for a practical and flexible approach, which recognises institutional requirements, particularly in areas where the Assembly Government's own assessment of workforce needs is not yet complete.</li> </ul>
<p>Reconfiguration could de-stabilise the ITT sector</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministerial commitment to avoiding de-stabilisation of ITT institutions.</li> <li>• The redeployment of numbers and funding from the reduction in ITT targets will lessen the risk of destabilisation.</li> <li>• As noted above, we will work with institutions to ensure the robustness of their reconfiguration plans.</li> <li>• We will highlight any risks of destabilisation which emerge during reconfiguration with Assembly Government officials.</li> </ul>
<p>Potential impact of reducing Welsh medium provision on i) achievement of Reaching Higher Welsh medium target ii) supply of Welsh medium teachers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will be setting Primary Welsh medium UG targets</li> <li>• The Assembly Government-commissioned review of statistical planning issues underlying Welsh medium ITT provision, which is expected to be published later this year, will help inform actions in this area.</li> </ul>
<p>Adverse publicity</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that actions are taken with the support of the Council and the Chairman</li> <li>• Be as open as possible, while respecting the need for confidentiality in negotiations with institutions</li> <li>• Prepare press statements for issue if press enquiries are received. Liaise with the Assembly Government as necessary.</li> </ul>