

NAPTEC-UCET EVENT: 15 March 2013

Introduction

- Again, great pleasure to be here to address what I think is the third in a series of UCET-NAPTEC seminars. Long may they continue.
- I am, as at previous events, going to give a broad overview of what is happening in terms of ITT policy at the moment, while Jacquie and Bea will give insights into issues relating to the QTS standards, and how they relate to the new inspection agenda, that we are facing.
- Plenty of time for questions and wider discussion.

School Direct

As most of you will know, the key ITE policy initiative, linked to the so called 'school-led' agenda, we are facing at the moment is School Direct

More significant at present for secondary than primary, but maybe not for long, with TA saying that (although they claim to have no targets) they would like to see primary SD allocations double next year.

SD primary allocations

- Total core primary places: (18,485 core (HEI 17,055)
- Total SD primary allocations: 3,335 (1,397 salaried, 1,939 tuition fee & 2,222 HEI linked and 1,113 SCITT linked)

There is a health warning in these figures, as extra places for both core and SD have been allocated since these were announced, although no revised global totals have been published. But taking these as a reasonable benchmark, and I think the primary numbers have been more stable than secondary, the TA's started preference for a

doubling of primary SD numbers in 2014/15 would take SD from 15% of total primary numbers to 30%.

This will have clear implications for core primary numbers. Whatever you think about School Direct as a matter of policy, for the moment providers have little option but to be pro-active in trying to secure SD places. In a provider's position, I would not simply wait for schools to approach me. You should seek them out and invite them to bid for SD places and name you as their partner. Some secondary providers did not do this last year and lost significant numbers as a result, in some cases all their core places in particular subject lines.

And you can't rest on your laurels if you are rated by OFSTED as 'outstanding', as the guarantee in terms of allocations given to 'outstanding'; providers is not likely continue beyond the current allocations round, and even then the 'outstanding' grade could be lost following an inspection, as now the TA are not waiting until the end of the inspection period before they re-classify providers. So, please do market yourselves. Ministers are reportedly unhappy that some provides, especially outstanding ones, are not engaging sufficiently with SD. There are sometimes good reasons for this. But you do need to be aware that everyone is under the spotlight.

SD issues

Even on a small scale, School Direct would raise a number of issues for HEIs:

- Although schools are to have the leading role in recruiting and training the students, it would still be the accredited ITT providers who will be held to account by OFSTED for the quality of training provided. Accountability, therefore, without any control.
- Providers are being increasingly held to account for the quality of trainees they recruit. And yet under School Direct schools will have a leading role in recruitment, and we have already had reports of schools complaining when a university refuses to accept someone who does not meet their 2:1 entry requirements. Which

government policy is the HEI expected to follow here- the school-led one or the one about increasing degree classifications?

- Schools will not always be aware of the constraints under which training has to be delivered, in terms of the QTS standards, the Secretary of State's ITT requirements and (in regard academic qualification) QAA regulations.

SD models

And some schools, at the encouragement of the government, are sometimes being somewhat unreasonable in what they expect from providers. It is, quite frankly, not possible from an economic or a quality perspective for providers, of whatever size, to tailor programmes to meet what each individual schools wants in respect of each particular trainee. They might to some extent to be able to do this, or do it quite a lot for particular trainees, but totally bespoke

To help inform the sector about their negotiations with schools on SD, UCET has issued a frequently asked qualifications leaflet . This, amongst other things, identifies three broad models on ways in which providers might work with schools on SD. These are:

- School Direct offered in parallel with mainstream provision: Perfectly acceptable if that is what schools want, and certainly consistent with the SD philosophy if schools are already closely involved in the design and delivery of programmes
- Tailored provision, under which some bespoke training is provided and there is negotiation about, for example shared responsibilities on deliver, assessment etc, or some aspects being under the ownership of schools
- Totally bespoke provision, under which programmes are constructed entirely over what a particular school wants, which may or may not be practicable from a cost or quality point of view.

SD futures

How SD will pan out remains to be seen. The unpredictability and year on year uncertainty in respect of allocations could destabilise things to such an extent that good providers decide to pull out of ITT. It will, as we have said this quite forcibly, be very hard to maintain quality provision and a proper staffing base when you have no idea of what allocations are going to be from year to year.

On the other hand, things might evolve into something more manageable. The TA is already encouraging groups of schools to hold larger numbers of SD places collectively, in the light of reasonable expectations about what their future employment needs will be. This could allow them to give reasonable indications to partner providers about likely year on year numbers, and so could help with planning. But it is too early to tell what impact this will have.

Before I move on, two other SD developments for the coming months:

On allocations for 2014 will be: (i) Expressions of interest process for schools to go live on the TA website at the end of February. Schools expressing an interest will receive various marketing and other information; (ii) all schools expressing an interest will receive details of how to formally request places through a portal in early June. This will include information about ITE providers; (iii) the request for places will feed through to the named ITE provider asking them to confirm that they have indeed agreed to work with the school on SD (which represents an improvement); (iv) data will then be considered by the TA's allocations team, where consideration might be given to having a second round; (v) final SD allocations will be made in October, with core allocations shortly after that; (vi) allocations information will be included in the GTTR system in November. Please do look at the proposed system and let the TA have your thoughts.

The Teaching Agency are working on a project to identify the information that schools will find useful when selecting which ITE providers to work with. The information is likely to cover:

- Courses offered
- Fees and payments to schools
- Location and partners
- Ethos & trainee support
- Course content & school involvement
- Views of heads, trainees, NQTs etc
- Recruitment, destination data etc.

It is likely that this information will be hosted on the GTTR website. We will let everyone have further information as soon as we can.

Finally on SD, we will not know for sure what its impact in terms of quality of applicants and numbers of applicants will be until data is published by the TA later in the year. The TA says that indications are that numbers, and quality of applicants, has been holding up well. But they don't know how many multiple applicants there are in the system, and we have heard that there are a lot and there are anecdotal tales of schools relinquishing a lot of their SD places because of a failure to recruit. But we will hang fire on any firm comments until we know what the exact position is, although we have been carrying out some qualitative surveys (including one with ATL) and collecting case studies for use by both us and the TA. Although I have string concerns about the speed at which SD is progressing and about some of the ideological assumptions that underpin in, I would rather that we made it work than having it fall flat on its face.

Other issues

Although SD is , alongside the new inspection methodology, to dominant issue at the moment, there are a couple of other things that I would like to touch on.

- Implications of the new National Curriculum. UCET is preparing a response to the consultation. Please send us your thoughts. Meetings of 'subject expert groups' have been established by TA to look at the implications for ITT. UCET and NASBTT have been liaising with the Chairs of the expert groups to discuss how we might ensure some synergy in their findings and how what they produce might best be disseminated. We are meeting with the chairs of expert groups on 26 March and will be discussing the issue further with NASBTT and at the next morning meeting of the UCET primary committee.
- The GTTR is consulting the sector on a new single application system for ITT that will incorporate SD. In principle, this will be a good thing as at least we will have a better idea on how many people are applying for ITE programmes and to where.
- QTS and academies/free schools: Lib Dems. Stephen Twigg.
- Inspections. OK so far. Issues arising. Over to Bea.