

# **ELL(2) 02-06(p6)**

## **Review of Initial Teacher Training in Wales**

**National Assembly for Wales Education and Lifelong Learning Committee  
26 January 2006**

### **Submission from Higher Education Wales**

#### **Introduction**

1. Founded in 1996, Higher Education Wales is the representative body for the 13 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Wales. It is allied to Universities UK (UUK) and its governing committee, comprising all the Vice-Chancellors and Principals in Wales, is a National Council of UUK.

We welcome the publication of the Furlong Report, which puts forward some interesting recommendations for both the future of initial teacher training (ITT) and the provision of higher level courses and research in the field of education. We are keen to have further detailed discussions on the proposals and to help all those concerned come to a view about implementing them.

In implementing change, due attention must be given to the permeability of the border with England and to ensuring that HEIs could maintain capacity should Wales be faced with a shortage of teacher supply in the future.

It should be noted that Higher Education competes on a global basis, for staff, for students and for research. As with other businesses, there are major advantages for Wales from our globally-competitive higher education institutions. We have welcomed assurances that any proposals in relation to Initial Teacher Training will not de-stabilise institutions.

#### **Abolition of the BA in Education**

If it is decided to withdraw the BA (education), student numbers for 2007-08 should be kept for the following reasons:

Higher Education prospectuses are currently being printed for 2007-08

applications

The potential impact of the withdrawal of the BA (education) on other courses offered by institutions would need to be fully explored.

In order to follow correct quality procedures, a replacement degree (see paragraph 7) for the BA (education) could not be ready before 2007/08, and given the range of issues to address this is optimistic.

## **Secondary PGCE**

We would advise against a 25% cut in the secondary PGCE until further work has been done. Modelling secondary numbers effectively is difficult, and there would be serious consequences from a failure to meet demand in this area.

## **New pre-professional qualification**

This is a promising proposal but clearly further work is needed to test the viability of a new pre-professional qualification in fields related to teacher education. In particular any course would need to gain the recognition of appropriate professional bodies. For those professions without a PGCE equivalent this may prove challenging. Accreditation and validation would also need to be considered. It is not clear at present whether or how new staffing requirements arising from the introduction of a pre-professional degree could be met.

## **Funding**

We support the Furlong proposal to maintain current ITT funding and to reallocate funding to remaining ITT provision and the new pre-professional degree. In line with legal requirements, any funding of the proposed new schools of education would need to flow through HEIs. The Furlong proposals would incur significant cost to the Welsh Assembly Government to implement.

## **Three schools of education**

Higher Education would be willing to work on the proposal for three schools of education. In doing so, a number of matters would need to be resolved, including:

Maintaining the current cross-fertilisation of ITT with other activities within institutions. Failure to do so could threaten the delivery of other courses

Establishing a sensible approach to ITT placements made across regional

boundaries

Ensuring that there is appropriate geographical coverage within the three school model.

Whilst each region should look for as comprehensive subject coverage as possible, some courses simply would not be viable on a regional basis. Provision would also need to be planned between the three schools. It would seem sensible, therefore, to require the new schools to determine delivery of courses. It should be noted that forming the new schools would present different challenges to those presented by mergers between HEIs and teacher training colleges.

## **Welsh medium**

In principle we support Furlong's proposals on Welsh medium provision. There are a number of considerations affecting delivery, including:

How would BA (education) cuts affect existing Welsh medium provision?

Could appropriate language proficiency be developed over a one-year PGCE?

How would additional staff with the appropriate language skills be found, without impacting current supply of teachers to Welsh medium schools in particular?

## **Timetable**

Furlong's proposed timetable for change is considered extremely tight, even assuming strong support and prompt decision-making from WAG and HEFCW, and that the additional work required could be undertaken quickly.

## **Additional issues**

Swift progress would be required in relation to the professional framework for teachers.

Additional funding to schools for CPD would need to be made available if HEIs were to increase provision - these issues could not be separated.

On work-based training routes, it should be noted that much provision is already underpinned by HEIs and it would be important that those linkages were not lost.

The emphasis on research is welcomed.

The impact of the 14-19 agenda, the Welsh BAC and so on would need to be assessed against the teaching needs of schools.

## **Conclusion**

The Furlong proposals present a number of implementation challenges to be resolved. The points made here represent the tip of the iceberg in terms of what would need to be considered.