

ColegauCymru welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Welsh Government's consultation on **Draft criteria for the accreditation of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes in Wales and the proposal for the Education Workforce Council to accredit initial teacher education in Wales**. ColegauCymru is a charity and limited company that represents the 14¹ Further Education (FE) colleges and FE institutions in Wales.²

Colleges are major providers of general education provision in Wales, helping to produce some of the best learner outcomes. Colleges are the predominant providers of funded vocational and technical education in Wales, providing about 85% of the total provision.

1. General comments and role of Further Education

1.1 Following both the Donaldson and Furlong reviews, ColegauCymru is pleased to see a focus on improving the quality of ITE but asserts that this should be part of a package of measures to improve not just initial teacher education but the ongoing development of revised professional standards across schools and FE institutions.

1.2 ColegauCymru is concerned that there is no consideration of the Further Education sector as part of this consultation. This is especially the case in light of the potential crossover between teachers and FE lecturers, with both groups now explicitly under the remit of the Education Workforce Council (EWC). There are opportunities to provide a more consistent approach across the section of the teaching profession involved in delivering post-compulsory education. The 'Draft criteria for accreditation' make no reference to Further Education and focus solely on the relationship between schools and universities. While it is obviously important to get this right, Further Education is an essential part of provision of high quality teaching and learning experience. Coleg Cambria and Bridgend college have evidenced this high quality and received 'Excellence' for Learning Experiences in their Estyn inspection reports in 2016. Considering the relationship between schools and universities without including the role of FE risks creating a disjointed system at the outset which is ultimately detrimental to both teachers and learners. The development of ITE should not simply be a matter for schools and universities. Detailed consideration should be given to the role of Further Education institutions and personnel in designing and delivering ITE to ensure that post-compulsory elements are fit for purpose.

1.3 Any new ITE qualification needs to fit with the existing Further Education workforce and recognise the difference between provision of subject teaching in schools and provision of subject teaching in Further Education. For example, those learners undertaking compulsory Literacy (Welsh & English) and Numeracy (Maths) GCSE resits in a Further Education

¹ The 15 include 10 FE corporations including St David's Catholic College; the two FE institutions - WEA Cymru and YMCA Community College; and The College Merthyr Tydfil, Coleg Sir Gâr and Coleg Ceredigion which are part of university groupings.

² In this paper the terms 'FE college' and 'college' are used to cover FE colleges and FE institutions.

environment require a qualitatively different experience to that of schools in order to provide the maximum chance to succeed. A greater focus on vocational application will be key in many cases.

1.4 Identification of post-16 teacher training universities should not be limited to existing providers.

2. Initial Teacher Education and Professional Standards

2.1 The issue of ITE is linked to that of professional standards in both schools and FE institutions. Appropriate professional standards need to be developed for both the teaching and FE professions and should not be limited to *initial* teacher education. Standards should accompany initial teacher education and should be developed by the Education Workforce Council, with existing work on such standards taken into account. The EWC should then be responsible for regulation of standards. Standards need to be relevant to initial teacher education as well as existing staff to ensure a high level of service.

2.2 ColegauCymru recognises that work on developing revised professional standards for teachers as part of the New Deal for the education workforce is underway. ColegauCymru has been involved in development work around standards for FE within the last 12 months. However, the two sets of standards (for teachers and FE) should not be considered in isolation from each other. ITE should include a commitment to ongoing development, that is continuous professional development. For instance, the Further Education workforce is already committed to ensuring 30 hours of CPD per year.

2.3 It should be possible for educators to switch between post-compulsory teaching in schools and Further Education, with the minimum of difficulty. Testing should focus on new practice and meeting the relevant standards, rather than simply repeating all aspects.

3. Welsh language/bilingual considerations

Consideration must be given to how ITE proposals and the development of professional standards will contribute to reaching the Welsh Government's target of achieving a million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050. This includes development of a truly bilingual approach rather than one which is wholly English or wholly Welsh. FE incorporate bilingual teaching methodology in Wales and increasingly there is a demand for bilingual learning opportunities. This will further support the official status of the Welsh language.

4. Role of Education Workforce Council

4.1 ColegauCymru agrees that EWC should have statutory responsibility for accrediting all programmes of initial teacher education (ITE) in Wales, but that this needs to take into account the needs of the Further Education sector and equal consideration of these needs.

4.2 We are also content for the EWC establish a Teacher Education Accreditation Committee but again, this is subject to adequate and serious consideration of the connections with and role of FE.

4.3 ColegauCymru agrees with the principle that the EWC should have the power to charge a fee for the consideration of applications, which will be payable by HEIs participating in the accreditation process.

5. Other comments on issues raised

5.1 ColegauCymru is unable to comment on the criteria for accrediting vocational Initial Teacher Education as this is not a part of the current consultation. This is an omission.

5.2 The roles and responsibilities proposed for schools and Higher Education Institution partnerships are acceptable as they currently stand. However, there is no acknowledgement of Further Education which is problematic. Serious consideration should be given to refining the roles and responsibilities to include FE, particularly given that schools and Higher Education do not always have a developed and complete understanding of FE.

5.3 In terms of entry and selection minimum standard requirements for student teachers in Wales, previous experience and performance should be taken into account. Where, for example, people seek to enter the teaching profession from industry, ColegauCymru would not wish to see additional barriers put in place where individuals have demonstrated their ability to successfully work with learners to deliver high quality courses, relevant to the workplace.

Dr Rachel Bowen
Cyfarwyddwr Polisi a Datblygu /
Director of Policy and Development
ColegauCymru
rachel.bowen@colegaucymru.ac.uk