DORSET TEACHER TRAINING PARTNERSHIP ACCESS AGREEMENT FOR THE OFFICE OF FAIR ACCESS (OFFA)

1. Introduction

1.1 The Dorset Teacher Training Partnership has a proven track record in the delivery of higher quality Initial Teacher Training. The SCITT operates in a geographical area that is some considerable distance from the nearest HEI offering ITT and is particularly attractive to local graduates who are:

- returning to paid work after a break to have children
- unable to undertake a full time course in another part of the country due to family or economic circumstances
- contemplating a career review and change in direction
- unemployed, having moved to the area for family reasons

The Partnership recognises that it has a responsibility to widen access and admission and will use additional fee income to support improvements in participation rates from under-represented groups.

2. Length of agreement

2.1 This agreement is for 5 years from the academic year 2006/07. However, we have committed to return to OFFA by May 2008 to seek approval for our monitoring criteria which, due to a lack of current relevant data, has not yet been developed (see section 7).

3. Fee limits

3.1 We will charge a minimum fee of £3,000 for our full-time postgraduate ITT course from the 2006/07 academic year. The fee limit will rise with inflation (in line with annually published Government regulations).

4 Bursary support

4.1 The Partnership will offer a graduated bursary, related to the income bandings used to determine the Maintenance Grant. All trainees in receipt of the full state maintenance grant will be entitled to a bursary of at least £500. Other trainees who are in receipt of a means tested maintenance grant above £1100 may be eligible for a bursary of at least £300. We will utilise the Student Loans Company Higher Education Bursary and Scholarship Scheme to calculate eligibility for bursary support. (Figures represent the position for 2009 and will be subject to inflationary rises).

4.2 We will also use a proportion of the additional fee income to attract and recruit a diverse range of trainees to the course.

4.3 Trainees will be eligible for an additional payment towards excessive travel costs in this rural county. This will be related to income and distance from the training centre.

4.4 It is expected that bursary payments will be made in three instalments. One at the end of each term.

4.5 All bursary support is additional to previous financial support.

5. Publicising fees and financial support

5.1 A number of methods will be used to ensure that prospective students are as clear as possible about the fee charged, and the amount of student support they may be entitled to. These are outlined below:

5.2 The DTTP website and course brochure will contain a section on finance, including fee and support information. Support information will include institutional support and support available from the government through the teaching bursaries, maintenance grant and maintenance loans.

5.3 The fee and support information will also be published in a leaflet which we will distribute in the course of any outreach activity.

5.4 The fee and support information will be clearly articulated to all applicants at interview stage, before they make their key decisions on whether to accept a place.

6. Outreach

The Partnership will continue to work closely with the Local Authority to raise awareness of routes into Initial Teacher Training within the County of Dorset.

In addition we will seek to identify areas of under-representation in our trainee cohort. Any significant issues will be addressed through outreach initiatives such as Briefing Meetings or Open Days.

7. Institutional Targets and milestones

Through subscription to the Student Loans Company Higher Education Bursary and Scholarship Scheme we are now in a position to monitor the numbers of trainees participating in our institution who are in receipt of full or partial state support. We have also identified other under-represented groups, namely Black and Minority Ethnic and Disabled.

We will seek to maintain or increase by 5% the proportion of students in our target groups [Black and Minority Ethnic and Disabled]. This amended agreement takes effect from the 2008/9 academic year

8. Monitoring Arrangements

We will formally monitor the progress of the access agreement at least once a year through the Executive Group who report annually to the Steering Group. Initial monitoring will be concerned with participation rates and the development of data on lower income and other under-represented groups, against which to monitor. When specific baselines, targets, and milestones are determined we will look to monitor against these.

Our annual report to the Steering Group will form the basis of our annual monitoring report to OFFA.