January 2012/**01**

Guidance

This document gives guidance to SCITTs and other non-HEI providers of initial teacher training on how to produce an access agreement for 2012-13

All SCITTs and other non-HEI providers of initial teacher training must submit a 2012-13 access agreement by 29 February 2012.

How SCITTs should produce an access agreement for 2012-13

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How SCITTs should produce an access agreement for 2012-13

OFFA guidance for SCITTs and other non-HEI ITT providers

To	Heads of School Centred Initial Teacher Training providers in England
Of interest to those responsible for	Producing access agreements
Reference	2012/**01**
Publication date	January 2012
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Introduction

1. For the academic year 2012-13, full-time 'basic' and 'higher' tuition fee amounts for home and EU students (including postgraduate full-time ITT) have been increased by Parliament to £6,000 and £9,000 a year respectively. As a result, all publicly funded institutions – including SCITTs and other non-HEI ITT providers – that wish to charge fees above £6,000 a year for new full-time entrants in 2012-13 need to have a new access agreement. This must be approved by the Director of Fair Access.

2. Access agreements set out how institutions will safeguard and promote fair access to higher education – in particular for students from low income groups – including through financial support, outreach and retention work, as appropriate.

3. This document provides guidance to SCITT and other non-HEI ITT providers wishing to produce such an agreement. We will issue separate guidance for HEI ITT providers shortly.

4. There are significant differences between this guidance and our original guidance for SCITTs and other non-HEI ITT providers wishing to charge variable fees from 2006 (OFFA 2005/02). Key aspects of our new approach include:

- a minimum level of spend to widen access or improve retention required from institutions wishing to charge over £6,000 a year (equivalent to around 10 per cent of fee income over £6,000)
- an emphasis on better targeted and more effective use of expenditure, which is more closely linked to institutional and TDA priorities
- a greater focus on outcomes and targets
- a greater focus on outreach, including collaborative working where appropriate
- a focus on student retention and success for providers with relatively low retention rates
- annual approval of access agreements.

A note on this guidance

5. This guidance sets out our broad requirements and expectations. Where possible, our intention is to be helpful and illustrative rather than prescriptive. Where our requirements are absolute we have signalled this clearly in the text. We have drawn up the guidance to support good practice in widening participation, fair access and student retention. If you feel that in following our guidance you would be going against your aims to improve access and student retention, please contact us as soon as possible to discuss this.

6. Given that many SCITTs and other non-HEI ITT providers only have small student numbers, we do not expect you to include the same level of detail in your agreement as HEIs or FECs. You should, however, follow this guidance carefully to ensure that you have included everything that we require. If you have any questions, please contact Richard Shiner on 0117 931 7467, richard.shiner@offa.org.uk.

7. A glossary of definitions is included in Annex C.

Action required

8. If you require an access agreement for 2012-13, you must send us your draft agreement and Excel template (see Annex F) by **Wednesday 29 February 2012**. Please submit your agreement via email to accessagreements@offa.org.uk.

9. To help us plan, we also ask that you let us know by **Friday 3 February** if you intend to submit an access agreement, by completing Annex A and e-mailing it to us at accessagreements@offa.org.uk. This is not binding, but it will help us in our planning.

10. You can submit your access agreement at any time from the date of this guidance but no later than **29 February 2012**. We will aim to issue decisions no later than 23 March 2012. However, we will issue approvals on a first come, first served basis, so if you submit your agreement before this date, we will look to give you an earlier decision.

11. Once you have submitted your agreement, we will be happy for you to promote your proposed fees and financial support package in advance of receiving a decision. However, you must make clear that this package is subject to OFFA approval.

Who needs to produce an access agreement?

12. You will need to have an access agreement approved by the Director of Fair Access if you:

- provide accredited mainstream (postgraduate and undergraduate) ITT courses leading to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and
- receive funding directly from the Training and Development Agency[1] for Schools, and
- wish to charge tuition fees for home/European Union trainees on these courses above the basic level of £6,000 in 2012-13.

13. If you do not wish to charge above the basic fee of £6,000 for any of your courses, you do not need to submit an access agreement. You simply need to complete Annex A and return this to us by Friday 3 February.

The situation for part-time courses

14. The Government will shortly be putting in place arrangements to regulate fees for part-time students studying at least 25 per cent of a full-time course. This means that once regulations are place, institutions wishing to charge fees for part-time courses above the basic level will require an access agreement and their students will have access to fee loans.

15. We have only included information for full-time students in this guidance as what we require for part-time will depend on the detail of the regulations which will set out the part-time basic and higher fee caps and when they will apply from.

16. In the meantime, if you offer part-time provision, you may wish to bear in mind future arrangements for part-time trainees when drawing up your 2012-13 access agreements for full-time trainees.

[1] Subject to parliamentary approval, the Training and Development Agency for Schools will close in March 2012 and will be replaced by the Teaching Agency from April 2012.

What is an access agreement?

Introduction

17. Access agreements set out:

- the fees you intend to charge for your postgraduate courses leading to QTS, that are subject to regulated fees
- the additional access measures you commit to put in place to sustain or improve access and, where appropriate, student retention and success (ensuring that under-represented students access the full benefits of higher education)
- the estimated cost of your additional access and retention measures
- targets and milestones
- your commitments to provide timely, clear and accessible information to prospective students and to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of your measures.

18. Access measures can include financial support targeted at students from low income backgrounds or other disadvantaged students; outreach; entry and retention work (including student success and employability); other policies or activities that are likely to support widened participation such as the development and use of contextual data in admissions processes, and targeting outreach, or the improvement of school and college links. The TDA has produced a briefing paper (see Annex D) which identifies the key strategic priorities for ITT in terms of removing barriers to teacher training for the best quality candidates from under-represented groups. For the purposes of access agreements, you may choose to target the following groups:

- teachers from black and minority ethnic groups or sub-groups
- male primary school teaching applicants
- people from lower socio-economic groups or from neighbourhoods where HE participation is low
- people from low income backgrounds (in 2012-13, this can include family incomes up to a maximum of £42,600 – the threshold for partial state grant)
- people who have been in care
- people with disabilities
- any other under-represented groups that you have identified specific to your area.

Type of document

19. Access agreements are statutory documents that must be published (both by OFFA and the provider). They should therefore set out the required information as clearly and concisely as possible. To help you do this, we have developed a template (Annex E) setting out details of the information you need to provide to us. By using this template, you will make it easier for interested parties to read and compare multiple agreements. We also ask that you provide some financial information using the Excel template at Annex F. Most agreements may only need to be a few pages long, although agreements with significant variation between courses or multiple targets may need to be longer.

How long do access agreements last?

20. Initially, we will renew and formally approve access agreements on an annual basis. This is a significant change to previous arrangements under which an agreement could last up to five years before renewal and approval was required. Although a new agreement is required for each year of student entry, previous agreements will remain in force covering students who entered when the agreement in question was approved.

Publication of access agreements

21. Institutions are required under legislation to publish their access agreements in a manner that is conveniently accessible to trainees. We will also make access agreements available via our own website (www.offa.org.uk) so that institutions and trainees can assess and compare agreements.

Content of access agreements

22. Each access agreement must include information on:

a. Your current position in relation to access and retention

b. Fee limits

c. Amounts of fee income over £6,000 per fee to be spent on access measures

d. Financial support for trainees

e. Outreach and retention work (if such work is included as part of the agreement)

f. Targets and milestones

g. Institutional monitoring arrangements

h. Provision of information to trainees.

23. These elements are discussed in more detail below.

a. Your current position in relation to access and retention

24. In order to provide a rationale for the focus of your agreement, we ask that you set out briefly an assessment of your current position in relation to access and retention. This section doesn't have to be long; however, it will help us to understand what your access agreement is setting out to achieve.

25. Access agreements should be targeted at learners with the potential to benefit from higher education, particularly initial teacher training, and who come from under-represented communities. Overwhelmingly these learners are from lower socio-economic groups (groups 4-8 in the National Statistics Socio-economic Classification, NS-SEC), and from disadvantaged backgrounds, living in areas of relative deprivation where participation in HE is low. In addition, the TDA has produced a briefing paper (see Annex D) which identifies the key strategic priorities for ITT in terms of removing barriers to teacher training for the best quality candidates from under-represented groups.

26. You should base your assessment of your current position on your own understanding of the measures and indicators that you think most accurately reflect your access and retention performance. For example, it is up to you to decide whether to recycle your additional fee income into financial support for students, or into outreach and retention work – or a combination of these.

b. Fee limits

27. Your access agreement should set out the tuition fees you intend to charge new entrants in 2012-13.

28. In 2012-13, the basic limit for full-time courses, up to which no access agreement is required, is £6,000 a year. The fee cap beyond which no institutions can charge is £9,000 a year. As with the previous arrangements, these caps may rise each year to maintain their value in real terms.

29. The Government will set out any permitted rises each year in line with the regulations. The fee you set for entrants will apply to them for the duration of their studies. Unless your agreement is clear that you will, or may, apply annual increases in line with the amount set by the Government each year, we will assume that you intend your fees to remain flat.

30. You can set one fee for your whole institution, or vary them by course. If you choose to vary them, you should clearly set out the fee for each course, either in course groupings or on a course by course basis.

31. The fees that you intend to charge should be set out clearly and be accessible to the public. You must tell applicants how much their tuition will cost for the whole duration of their course before they accept a place.

32. You should not charge the new higher fees to trainees who started on a course before 1 September 2012.

c. Amounts of fee income over £6,000 per fee to be spent on access measures

33. You should include estimates of the amount of additional fee income you expect to receive along with the estimated amount you expect to spend on access measures. Please do this by completing the attached Excel spreadsheet (Annex F). As a broad guideline, we would expect you to recycle a minimum of **around 10 per cent of your fee income over £6,000** on access or retention measures. This means that should you wish to charge the maximum fee of £9,000, we would expect you to recycle around £300 per fee on access

or retention measures. If you wish to charge £8,000, we would expect you to recycle around £200 per fee on access or retention measures.

d. Financial support for trainees

34. Your access agreement should include:

- what you plan to spend on targeted fee waivers, bursaries and scholarships for trainees in 2012-13
- the amounts of support and the eligibility criteria for new entrants.

35. Financial support can be offered as:

- a cash bursary
- a fee waiver
- and as other in-kind support such as a voucher for institutional services e.g. books and laptops.

36. It is for you to decide which of these you offer to students based on your own priorities.

37. You should specify, in broad terms, how your financial support schemes will be provided to your trainees; what will be provided (e.g. cash, fee waiver or an alternative) and when payments or waivers will be made. You may also choose to describe how it will be administered, (for example, by your institution, or through subscription to the Higher Education Bursary and Scholarship Scheme operated through the Student Loans Company).

38. You may choose to provide greater support to trainees in receipt of a full grant (those with residual household incomes up to £25,000), or a wider range of financial support providing support to trainees in receipt of partial state support (those with a residual household income up to £42,600) as well.

39. Your access agreement should provide details of the:

- type of bursaries or other financial support on offer (e.g. cash, fee waiver, or in kind)
- level of bursary or financial support
- target groups and eligibility of trainees.

What will count as a financial support scheme?

40. It is important to note that the financial support outlined in your agreement must be targeted; in other words, it would not be acceptable for you to offer a flat-rate financial award to all trainees, as this would not contribute to safeguarding and promoting fair access to higher education. For the purpose of access agreements, we are only concerned with bursaries or other financial support that benefits trainees who are under-represented in ITT and HE more generally.

41. We are primarily concerned with additional activity and support introduced since the implementation of variable fees in 2006. We would consider longer running schemes fully established – however, additional elements to such schemes funded by variable fees would be 'countable' expenditure.

Eligibility for institutional financial support

42. OFFA only regulates financial support for English-domiciled undergraduates studying full-time (and in future, subject to Parliamentary approval, part-time students as well) at English institutions. We will include expenditure for non-English UK trainees. However, there is no legal obligation for you to provide financial support for non-English UK trainees. Nearly all the HEI and FEC agreements that have been submitted to date have chosen to provide the same level of support to all UK trainees. However, you may wish to factor in any differences in funding for non-English UK trainees when considering your support. You may wish to note targets can include all UK students. You should include expenditure on non-English UK or other EU students in your estimates of investment in access measures in Annex F.

How can we offer a financial support scheme which minimises administrative burdens?

43. Most institutions (including SCITTs) offering bursaries or fee waivers use the Higher Education Bursary and Scholarship Scheme (HEBSS) run by the Student Loans Company to distribute their financial support. HEBSS offers two alternative services: Information Only and Full Administration. These are managed on a 'not for profit, not for penalty' contract. For further information, please see www.heiinfo.slc.co.uk/hei-services/bursaries-service.aspx.

e. Outreach and retention work

44. For undergraduate programmes we have asked institutions to consider targeting outreach and retention at groups that are under-represented in HE as a whole. We recognise that this may not be appropriate for postgraduate ITT as this concerns applicants that are in, or have already been through HE. However, you may wish to consider whether your cohort represents the undergraduate population from which you recruit. If, in this context, you identify an area of under-representation, you may wish to address this by implementing measures that encourage applications from trainees in under-represented groups and help aid the retention of such applicants. This may include targeting some outreach at these groups to raise aspirations to teach. Such outreach could include investment in collaborative work with local HEIs, FECs or other SCITTs, where appropriate. You may also wish to consider whether your new cohort of trainees is representative of the general background population from which you recruit, for example in terms of minority ethnic groups and men applying to primary ITT. Please refer to paragraph 18 for OFFA's list of under-represented groups or to the TDA's guidance on under-represented groups at Annex D.

How do we define outreach activity?

45. For the purposes of an access agreement, outreach work means any activity that involves raising aspirations and attainment and encouraging high quality trainees from under-represented groups to apply to ITT and succeed in their studies, so achieving QTS.

46. Some of you will already have a good idea of which groups are under-represented in your institution. However, others may need time to consider what outreach work is appropriate, based on further work required to establish data on under-representation in your institution. Where this is the case, we would be content with a broad description of outreach or a commitment to consider what outreach work, if any, might be necessary once under-represented groups have been identified. The attached guidance from the TDA gives further information on under-represented groups (please see Annex D).

47. Where you decide to fund outreach activities, you should tell us, in broad terms:

- the type and extent of activities you will be undertaking
- your target groups.

48. You should also indicate whether the outreach activities listed are new or are extensions of existing schemes.

f. Targets and milestones

49. We are mindful that most SCITTs will have small numbers of trainees and setting targets can be difficult. In the past we have said it is acceptable for you to measure those students in receipt of full state support and we are happy for you to continue to do this. However, you may also wish to set your own targets, baselines and milestones in order to monitor whether you are making progress in improving access. We are aware that SCITTs with access agreements for the first time may not collect socio-economic or financial data on your trainees at present and as such may have difficulty setting baselines against which to monitor. In such cases, we would be happy for you to commit to develop data over the first 18 months of your agreement and then return to us to outline your monitoring criteria. However, if you do have data, we will expect you to include these in your agreement.

50. We are mindful that the small numbers of trainees in institutions mean that fluctuations in data could be exaggerated. The way in which targets are measured will therefore need to be considered carefully (for example, you may wish to set targets around data averaged over three years rather than on individual years, to allow for fluctuations or an untypical year).

What information do we expect to see in your targets?

51. In the first instance, we expect you to monitor your target groups. Where there are groups that are under-represented, we would expect to see a commitment to improve your performance in recruiting these under-represented students over time. It is acceptable for you to monitor the number of under-represented students rather than include targets with specific numbers as this may be difficult with small numbers of trainees.

52. If you choose to include targets then your access agreement should include descriptions and definitions of these targets. For example, you might choose to set targets based on how representative your applicants are based on your local graduate population. While it is for you to decide your own criteria for measuring your progress, we would expect there to be a statistical element in at least one of your objectives. We would suggest including criteria around the numbers of trainees in receipt of a full or partial maintenance grant as you will need to collect such data in order to determine bursary support. This data will also be accessible through the Student Loans Company for those that choose to subscribe to the HEBSS scheme. You may wish to set targets around a number of different criteria and management information, depending on what groups you are targeting (for example, targets around males into primary, or minority ethnic groups).

53. We will monitor the progress you have made each year towards meeting your targets and milestones.

g. Institutional monitoring arrangements

54. In your access agreement you should show how you intend to monitor your success in meeting the commitments set out in your agreement. You should therefore include a brief description of how you intend to monitor your progress towards your milestones and your success in fulfilling the measures set out in your agreement. For example, on an annual basis, your Management Committee could report to the Board on the progress of your access agreement, including monitoring against targets.

h. Provision of information to trainees

55. Your access agreement should:

- contain an explicit commitment to provide the information set out below
- provide brief details about how you intend to provide such information to both existing and prospective students.

56. You must publish clear, accessible and timely information for applicants and students on the fees that you charge and any financial support that you offer. This information should make it clear exactly what level of financial support you are offering students in each year of their studies.

57. As well as providing clear and up-to-date information through your own information channels (websites, prospectuses etc), we also require an explicit commitment from you to provide such timely information to GTTR and SLC as they reasonably require, to enable them to populate their applicant-facing web services.

How we will assess your access agreement

The approval process

58. Once we have received your access agreement we will consider it against the requirements set out in this guidance. In particular, we will look at whether your plans for access measures are satisfactory, the amounts you are investing are appropriate and your milestones are suitable. For example we will assess whether you have included all the required information and whether you have agreed to recycle an acceptable amount of your additional fee income.

59. If any of the information we require is unclear or missing we may have to clarify matters with you or ask for more information before we can reach a decision. To minimise delays, please fill in the checklist (see Annex B) confirming that you have included all the necessary information.

If we do not approve your agreement

60. If we are not satisfied with your draft access agreement, we will raise our concerns with you and give you the opportunity to make amendments or provide further evidence as to why we should approve your agreement. All such conversations will take place at draft agreement stage. Formal decisions will be made only once all negotiations have been completed.

61. If we do not approve your agreement, you have the right to take our decision to an independent review panel.

62. Where there are significant changes to your circumstances after the submission of your agreement and you wish to change any of your commitments, you should discuss this with us at the earliest opportunity. Any changes that seek to reduce your commitments will require our approval. However, you should note that you must honour any financial commitments you have made to students. Whether or not these commitments change according to the fee charged will depend on how they have been advertised.

Annual monitoring reports

63. As under the current system, you are required to submit annual monitoring reports to us setting out how you have delivered the commitments in your agreements. In these reports, you must report on fee income, expenditure and progress against milestones and targets.

Audit

64. We reserve the right to audit any aspect of the commitments set out in your access agreement.

Sanctions

65. We expect you to honour all the commitments you make in your access agreement, recognising that the financial estimates you make are predictions and are subject to change. You may not spend the exact level laid out in your financial annex. However, we will look to understand that you have maintained the spirit of the agreement.

66. There are sanctions open to us if in our opinion you commit a serious and wilful breach of your access agreement. For example, this could apply if you charge higher fees than you set out in your agreement, fail to provide the financial support that you promised to students or fail to deliver your commitments in relation to your outreach and retention measures. We would not however impose a sanction solely on the basis of you not meeting your targets or milestones.

67. We can:

- direct the TDA[2] to impose a fine or suspend part of any grant until you have put matters right
- refuse to renew your access agreement, thereby preventing you from charging full-time undergraduate and postgraduate ITT trainees tuition fees above the standard level for a period after your access agreement has expired.

[2] The Teaching Agency from 1 April 2012.

How to submit your access agreement

68. If you intend to submit an access agreement, please could you complete the form at Annex A and e-mail it to us at accessagreements@offa.org.uk by Friday 3 February. This is not binding, but it will help us in our planning.

69. You will need to send us your draft agreement and Excel template (see Annex F) by **Wednesday 29 February 2012**. Please submit your agreement via email to accessagreements@offa.org.uk.

Submission and decision deadlines

70. Access agreements can be submitted at any time from the date of this guidance but no later than 29 February 2012.

71. If you submit your agreement to us by 29 February with all the required information and there is no need for negotiation or discussion, we will aim to issue decisions no later than 23 March 2012. However, we will issue approvals on a first come, first served basis, so if you submit your agreement before this date, we will look to give you an earlier decision.

72. Once you have submitted your agreement, we will be happy for you to promote your proposed fees and financial support package in advance of receiving a decision. However, you must make clear that this package is subject to OFFA approval.

How to contact us if you have a query

73. We welcome early discussions with you about the development of your access agreement and are happy to comment on draft proposals. Please contact Richard Shiner on 0117 931 7467 or email richard.shiner@offa.org.uk

Access agreements for future years

74. The higher education sector is entering a transitional period and we have been asked by the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) to renew access agreements on an annual basis. We will therefore review our guidance on access agreements regularly in the first few years of the new arrangements. This will provide OFFA and providers with the opportunity to adjust agreements in the light of experience and any policy changes.

75. Timetables for submission of agreements for 2013-14 have not yet been set. We will inform SCITTs and non-HEI providers as early as possible of the 2013-14 timetable and any changes to our guidance.

Annex B

Checklist

All access agreements must include the information set out in the following checklist.

Does your access agreement include:

Checklist	Yes	No	N/A
1. The fee levels you are proposing to charge?			
2. Information about any targeted financial support (where applicable)? 2a. If you answered yes to question 2, does the agreement include information on the type and level of targeted support that will be offered, as well as target groups and eligibility?			
3. Information about the outreach that will be provided? 3a. If you answered yes to question 3, does the agreement provide a description of the outreach activities, as well as the target groups?			
4. Information about any student retention and success measures that will be implemented (where applicable)?			
5. An explicit indication about whether the expenditure included in your agreement is countable? (Expenditure is only countable if it is i) previous access agreement expenditure that you are continuing to make, or ii) expenditure on new access and student retention and success measures.)			
6. Targets and milestones, and any baseline data to support these, or a commitment to develop this information?			
7. An undertaking to monitor compliance with the agreement and progress towards milestones?			
8. An explanation of how and when you will provide information to prospective students about the financial support available at your institution and the aggregate cost of tuition?			
9. In Table 1 of the Excel template (Annex F), have you included all trainees in each year, not just entrants?			

Annex C

Glossary

Additional measures or expenditure: By 'additional' we mean measures from your 2011-12 access agreement that you will continue to deliver in 2012-13, plus any new measures that are delivered from 2012-13 (including measures that you now fund which were previously funded through other means; for example, collaborative working previously funded by Aimhigher.

Basic level of fee: The level of tuition fee up to which an access agreement is not required. In 2012-13 this will be £6,000.

Fee cap: The maximum regulated fee that can be charged under an access agreement. In 2012-13 this will be £9,000.

Fair access: Equality of opportunity for all those who have the potential to benefit from higher education, irrespective of their background, schooling or income. This term is often used with reference to the most selective institutions, where entry requirements are high and the pool of applicants from disadvantaged backgrounds is relatively small.

Fair access work: Work aimed at improving access of under-represented groups to your institution or institutions like yours (whether measured against the background population, or the background population of qualified people).

Higher level of fee: The level of tuition fee above which an access agreement is required. From 2012 this will be above £6,000.

Outreach work: For the purposes of an access agreement, outreach work includes any activity that involves raising aspirations and attainment among potential applicants from under-represented groups and encouraging them to apply to higher education. This includes outreach directed at young or mature students aspiring to full or part-time study. We particularly encourage sustained, co-ordinated activities that work with pupils and other potential applicants over a number of years.

Publicly-funded institutions: Providers of higher education that are directly funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) or the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA).

Retention and student success: Measures that ensure that students access the full benefits of HE by completing their studies and improving academic outcomes and employability.

Student population covered by access agreements: Full-time home/EU undergraduates (including full-time PGCE) that are charged higher fees.

Under-represented groups: Groups that are currently under-represented in higher education at the national level rather than at a particular institution or course, including:

- people from lower socio-economic groups
- people from low income backgrounds (in 2012-13, this includes family incomes up to £42,600)
- some ethnic groups or sub-groups
- people who have been in care
- disabled people.

Variable fees: The full-time undergraduate tuition fees payable to an institution. Variable fees were introduced by the Higher Education Act 2004. In 2012-13, fee limits can be set between £0 and £9,000.

Widening participation: Improving under-representation in HE at a national level.

Annex D

TDA guidance on the recruitment and retention of under-represented groups in the teaching profession: The access agreement information

The Training and Development Agency for schools (TDA) is committed to removing barriers to teacher training for the best quality candidates from under-represented groups.

Black and Minority Ethnic te achers (BME)

The latest schools workforce figures from the Department for Education show that six per cent of teachers working in maintained sector schools are of ethnic minority origin. Compared to twelve per cent of people from BME backgrounds in the wider workforce, eighteen per cent amongst the graduate population and twenty four per cent of BME pupils in schools, people from BME backgrounds are under-represented in the teaching workforce in schools in England.

Over the last three years the popularity of teaching amongst BME graduates and career changers has increased and the number of applications to ITT from BME candidates has risen. This success has been the result of a national campaign to attract more people into the profession and providers' work to promote ITT specifically amongst diverse communities. But despite increased applications to ITT, the proportion of BME trainees securing a place and entering teacher training has remained around twelve per cent since 2006. One of the causes of this stagnation is that not enough high quality BME candidates, with the appropriate qualifications and skills to compete successfully for a teacher training place, apply to ITT. It is not that too few BME candidates apply to ITT, but that the quality of those candidates is not sufficient to secure places. Furthermore, the quality of trainees impacts on the proportion of those gaining QTS. BME trainees are less likely than their peers to achieve QTS, particularly if they have lower degree classifications; this makes attracting quality candidates central to increasing the proportion of qualified BME teachers.

Teaching is not, currently, perceived as a high status profession. The TDA is implementing a new national recruitment campaign to attract the very best graduates into teaching. The campaign will focus on raising the bar in terms of the skills and academic rigour required to become a teacher and will promote the benefits of teacher training to high performing graduates with a 2:1 or above, and to career changers as a valuable development opportunity. Alongside the national campaign providers should consider what more can be done locally to attract the very best graduates into the profession.

Quality is a key concern, but systemic barriers are also present. Recruitment data reveal that BME applicants are consistently less likely to secure a place on ITT than their white peers, even if they hold similar degree qualifications. The clustering of applications from BME candidates around a handful of institutions accounts for some of the rejections of good quality candidates, but there remains an unexplained gap in the success rate of BME candidates with a 2:1 or above compared to their white peers. Providers have an important role to play in exploring and challenging anomalies in recruitment data to ensure that recruitment processes are not deterring or disadvantaging good quality candidates from all ethnic backgrounds.

As part of their access agreement, ITT providers should consider whether BME students are under-represented at their institution and if so consider setting out how they plan to:

1. **Incorporate activity to attract more high quality BME applicants into a local communications plan and recruitment strategy.** The has published a communications tool that can be accessed at www.tda.gov.uk/resourcebank
2. **Promote staff awareness of the diversity agenda including cultural awareness, particularly for staff involved in trainee recruitment.**
3. **Use data to review performance.** Providers should regularly review local recruitment data on ethnicity and degree classifications. This will enable providers to see if they are attracting high

quality candidates and if these candidates are securing places. Setting an appropriate benchmark for local recruitment will help providers identify realistic but stretching targets which can inform recruitment discussions with TDA Regional Leads.

4. **Implement strategies to improve the retention of BME trainees where there is evidence to suggest that dropout rates are higher amongst this group.**

To help providers develop strategies to attract and retain more high performing BME graduates, the TDA will publish a good practice guide by spring 2012.

Male primary teachers

The latest schools workforce figures from the Department for Education show that thirteen per cent of teachers working in maintained sector primary schools are male. The proportion of male entrants to primary ITT has risen from fourteen per cent in 2006/07 to eighteen per cent in 2010/2011. The TDA will continue to work with providers to ensure that there are no barriers which prevent high quality male graduates and career changers from applying to primary ITT.

As part of their access agreement providers should consider whether male primary teaching applicants are under-represented at their institution and if so consider setting out what they can do to encourage more applications from high quality male primary applicants and remove barriers which prevent good candidates securing a place on ITT. Suggested activities include:

- Targeting local marketing activity on high performing male graduates including career changers.
- Where possible including male tutors on interview panels and ensuring men are present at recruitment events.
- Enabling male primary trainees to link up with other male trainees to create support networks.
- Placing male trainees on school placements in pairs to prevent isolation.

Recruitment data suggest that male primary applicants tend to apply later in the recruitment cycle than their female peers. As primary places fill up quickly, submitting a late application could result in a good quality applicant missing out on a place. Providers need to consider ways in which they can encourage early applications from men and accommodate the tendency of some men (and BME) applicants to apply later in the recruitment cycle.

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