

million +

leading the
university agenda

A MANIFESTO FOR TEACHER EDUCATION



“The NUT endorses this manifesto with enthusiasm and a sense of urgency. Teacher education has been fragmented and disorganised by the policies of the last 5 years. We badly need a new system which secures the supply of qualified teachers, ensures the quality of their initial training, and provides for their continuing development. Universities and schools stand ready to create, in partnership, such a system. The million+ manifesto provides a road map towards it.”

Christine Blower, General Secretary, National Union of Teachers



Our schools and colleges need to be able to recruit qualified teachers who are experts in teaching and learning as well as subject specialisms. This manifesto sets out a new plan for teacher education in England and calls on the next government to:

- > require all teachers to have an academic and professional qualification
- > restore initial teacher training numbers to universities
- > encourage universities to collaborate with school partners and require schools to offer placements to trainee teachers
- > ensure Ofsted inspections of teacher education review schools as well as universities
- > promote a teaching workforce that reflects society by funding universities to recruit trainee teachers from under-represented groups
- > support universities to develop new programmes to train teachers in specialist shortage subjects
- > adopt a teacher supply model which takes account of the needs of regions and rural areas
- > fund opportunities for career-long professional development

“89% of parents said they would like it to be a manifesto commitment for political parties that all teachers in state funded schools should have, or be working towards, a teaching qualification.”
YouGov survey, April 2014



The role of universities in teacher education in England has been downgraded since 2011 and the requirement for teachers to be qualified was abolished by the government in 2012. In spite of the Education Select Committee's recommendations, there are still no agreed national goals for professional development.

This stands in sharp contrast to the approach adopted in many high performing countries. Where children perform well in school, teachers are highly qualified and universities are central to teacher education. In Finland, teachers are required to have a masters as well as an undergraduate degree. Trainee teachers undertake teaching practice in different settings, supervised and mentored by school and university teacher educators and specialists. The government funds professional development programmes in which all teachers are expected to participate throughout their careers.

In contrast the government's reforms to initial teacher training in England have cast doubt over the future of teacher supply and raised concerns about teacher shortages. The next government must have a plan to secure the future of high quality teacher education and teacher supply – a plan that places universities and the needs of schools at the heart of the system.

"Ensuring the right of every child to be taught by a qualified teacher and creating the conditions which support teacher quality are two of the most important issues facing the country, at a time when fewer graduates are choosing to become teachers and when the number of teachers wanting to quit teaching is at the highest level in the profession's history."

Chris Keates, General Secretary, NASUWT – The Teachers' Union



"High quality teacher training is the bedrock upon which a successful education system is built. This manifesto contains all the necessary elements to ensure that beginning teachers are prepared properly for the complex and demanding professional role of teaching. The manifesto emphasises the essential contribution of higher education to quality teacher training. Its principles should be adopted by the next government."

Mary Bousted, General Secretary of the teachers' union, the Association of Teachers and Lecturers



Teacher qualifications

Teacher education, teaching qualifications and career-long support for professional development are the bed rock of high quality teaching.

Parents want teachers to be qualified and every child and student has the right to be taught by a qualified teacher. In other countries, teachers are expected to study for an academic qualification of high standing. Undergraduate degrees may combine subject specialisms with a focus on primary education and teaching or specific subjects at secondary level.

“The future supply of good quality teachers for our country’s schools depends on universities and schools working together in partnership. Any future government must take steps to ensure that the expertise and experience of universities is nurtured and allowed to develop. Schools have the right to expect a steady supply of well trained teachers. Teachers should receive high quality, research informed initial teacher education and ongoing professional development that builds on and complements their initial training.”

James Noble Rogers, Executive Director of the Universities Council for the Education of Teachers



In addition to gaining an academic qualification, teachers are also required to study for a professional qualification. In England this is Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), awarded by the National College of Teaching and Leadership (NCTL).

However, some school-based training programmes now only lead to the award of QTS and teachers who only study for QTS are not allowed to teach in many other countries, including in Scotland.

The next government should ensure that:

- > all prospective teachers study for a nationally recognised professional qualification in teaching which is underpinned by university-based education programmes and where a recognised UK university awards the academic qualification
- > unqualified teachers should only be recruited on the basis that they will be supported to study for an academic and professional qualification within a fixed period
- > the different professional route and the lower status of early years teachers are phased out



High quality teacher education

The curriculum for teacher education should be research and evidence based and developed in universities in liaison with schools and colleges.

All initial teacher education courses should prepare teachers in:

- > pedagogy, research and scholarship skills, reflective practice and co-operative and problem-based learning
- > subject-specific knowledge and the development of subject-based pedagogy
- > teaching in different settings mentored by teacher educators from universities and schools

A professional career structure for teachers

High quality teaching is more likely to be sustained if teachers are required and have the opportunity to refresh and refocus their skills and subject knowledge on a career long basis.

In consultation with universities, the teaching organisations and schools, the Department for Education should:

- > develop a professional career framework which is qualification based
- > provide significant financial support for professional development including through sabbaticals, joint appointments and research opportunities in universities
- > work with teaching organisations to develop the supportive working conditions required to facilitate continued professional development

Delivering teacher supply and a higher quality teaching workforce

By 2015-16, teacher training in England will be fragmented. 17,000 places formerly allocated to university education departments for initial teacher training will have been transferred to schools under the government's School Direct programme in spite of the fact that School Direct has under-recruited since its introduction in 2011. Over-allocation of teaching training places against the target of teachers required has reached a record high (11,000 in 2015-16) and risks teachers being trained in subjects that are not required. At the same time there are acute shortages in the number of people coming forward to train in specialist subjects including maths and the sciences.

Schools and universities have complained that regional needs and the impact of location on initial teacher training provision are no longer used to inform the planning of teacher supply.

By 2014 some universities had withdrawn from teacher training altogether because of uncertainty about trainee numbers. Others have made specialist staff redundant and NCTL itself has said that those interested in training as teachers are confused by the different training schemes now in place.

“University teaching departments have a strong history of providing effective teacher training and producing all-rounders who can teach in different settings. The continued expansion of school-based teacher training is destabilising university teaching departments and making their future uncertain. Universities departments are key to producing a high-quality and flexible workforce at a time when there is a growing demand for more teachers.”
Sally Hunt, General Secretary,
University and College Union





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