

National Association for Primary Education

The Initial Training of Primary Teachers (2015)

Initial training should be a full time two year university centred course for students possessing graduate or equivalent status. Approximately half of the course should be spent in schools which partner the university in providing supervised experience in the classroom. Qualified teacher certification should be awarded following the successful completion of a third induction year.

The status of students engaged in the second year of postgraduate study should be equivalent to that of junior doctors but they will only teach while supervised. The induction year will be monitored but probationer students may teach unsupervised on condition that the mentor is on easy call.

While current staffing problems persist the government should consider the emergency training of mature students extending over a university centred year of 46 weeks of study. A further induction year of successful teaching monitored by the university would be required before the award of qualified teacher certification.

It is recommended that school based training (SCITT) should be phased out. Primary schools should be totally focused upon the growth and development of their pupils and schools are neither staffed nor equipped at the level required for the initiation of initial training. In addition the growing number of primary pupils makes it unlikely that appropriate accommodation can be made available for students. However the schools' valuable role should be to provide training and professional development through the experience of student teaching while supervised by a partnership of senior teacher and university tutor. Student teaching should be accompanied by opportunities for reading, reflection and discussion away from the many demands of the classroom. Such an environment is best provided by the university. In this way we can begin to develop the reflective teacher who is trained to consider what lies beneath the immediate actions of spontaneous young children.

The continuing day to day partnership between school and university will do much to halt the currently high level of premature wastage from the profession by teachers in the early years of their work. Teachers should be associate members of their local university and that university will provide an assurance of professionalism removed from day to day demands. Access to research and further study to second degree level and beyond should be an extended part of the relationship created in the three years of initial training.

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