

The Joint Mathematical Council of the United Kingdom

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Registered Office: De Morgan House, 57-58 Russell Square, London, WC1B 4HS

Minutes of the General Meeting held online at 11.00 am on Wednesday 17 March 2021

Present: Noel-Ann Bradshaw (Deputy Chair); Chris Chipperton (Secretary);
Fiona Curtis (AMET); Paul Glaister (IMA); Helen Harth (RS); Kevin Houston (LMS); Matt
Lewis (NAMA); Steve Lyon (STEM Learning); Lynne McClure;
Andy Noyes (Chair); Sue Pope (SQA); Tom Roper (MA); Alex Smith (DfE);
Alison Thom (Welsh Government Education Department)

This meeting had a single item agenda: the planned Institute of Teaching in England

The Chair started the meeting by setting the context of ITT in England and the raft of changes in initial teacher education over the last decade. This was followed by a presentation from Fiona Curtis which set out the proposed Institute of Teaching and reported concerns from an outside perspective.

The discussion was held under the Chatham House rule and the following points were not agreed by the attendees and do not represent a JMC position.

In the ensuing discussion the following points were made:

- 1000 trainees is a small amount of trainees against the overall number (>30k). Is the IoT meant to be a research institute with the students being research subjects?
- Does the size relate to this roll out 'testing the water' before a larger implementation if it proves successful?
- This is not a scheme to address the recruitment problem.
- Quality will be an issue – how quickly can a new institute establish quality?
- Teaching school hubs are just forming but will have narrow foci on Early Career Framework (ECF) and NQTs.
- There is little being said about professional development.
- The IoT's 4 regional centres might each specialise in different subjects.
- Allowing IoT degree awarding powers is interesting and raises questions. What if this is not possible? How does this impact on HEIs?
- There is concern amongst some HEIs that the IoT and teaching school hubs will end up competing against them and might lead some HEIs to withdraw from ITT.
- Highly centralised national systems are common in other jurisdictions. Is having such a body necessarily a bad thing?
- What is the problem that Government are trying to address? How independent from government will the IoT be?
- What are the concerns of UCET and HEIs? They might include possible loss of funding and reduced independence (of thought, spirit, mind), but perhaps greater consistency limits room for mavericks.
- Will the IoT be promoting Government promoted theories of education and learning?

- For example, is cognitive load theory central to the establishment of the IoT? Should/can this theory be challenged? The promotion of retrieval is a concern. Is this specific to mathematics?
- Is there an agreed theory of education, of learning? Research can be 'itty, bitty' so perhaps an organising body could do some good.
- Current provision is fragmented and sometimes divided so the IoT might be perceived to be a rationalising process a government perspective.
- There are tensions between centralisation and decentralisation in many areas of education.
- It could be argued that a variety of approaches across the ITT landscape is beneficial and healthy. Though from a system perspective the question of how most people get access to the most of the best that is known about ITE remains.

The Chair made some summary comments including that:

- The general move towards school-led provision has resulted in considerable fragmentation in the ITE system and associated quality management challenges.
- The current direction of travel is to rationalise and produce new national structures for intellectual leadership (and degree awarding powers), increasingly independent of HEIs.
- Details of the proposed IoT are unclear, as is how it might work in reality, both initially and over time.
- The drivers and motivations for establishing an IoT have been questioned.
- Serious concerns have been expressed by many established university providers, stakeholder bodies and experts.
- There is, however, value in thinking about the potential benefits of this move and of how comparative international organisations work.
- There are tensions between centralisation and decentralisation, here and in other areas of education.

Links to documents:

<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn06710/>

https://www.hepi.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Embargoed-until-00.01am-Thursday-27-April-2017-WHITHER-TEACHER-EDUCATION-AND-TRAINING-Report-95-19_04_17WEB.pdf

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/399957/Carter_Review.pdf

<https://www.ucet.ac.uk/12623/ucet-press-notice-on-the-ite-market-review-26th-january-2021>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-institute-of-teaching-set-to-be-established>

<https://parentsandteachers.org.uk/professionalising-teaching-through-knowledge-based-pedagogy/>