

Initial Teacher Education Reflective - Responsive - Research-driven

Equality and Diversity Framework in ITE

Introduction

The School of Education and Social Work (ESW) subscribes to promoting equality and diversity and inclusion as part of the University of Sussex's strategy for [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion \(EDI\)](#). Sussex ITE is committed to providing an inclusive environment for all, including student teachers and the pupils they teach in our local partnership of schools, colleges, and early years settings. The context of delivering a professional training course with children and young people in partner schools necessitates an additional focus on EDI for student teachers studying on our ITE courses. By challenging discrimination and prejudice and by educating children and young people about our rich cultural heritage, we have a fundamental role to play in reducing inequalities across a range of educational contexts across the South East.

The ITE Equality and Diversity Framework is to be read in conjunction with the University of Sussex's policies on [Dignity, Respect and Inclusion, Definitions of Violence, Public Interest Disclosure Policy](#) and [Freedom of Speech Code of Practice](#).

1. Curriculum

At Sussex we are committed to developing teachers who understand and respect diversity and who promote inclusive practice in their classrooms. As a key area of our ITE Curriculum Intent, the theme of Inclusion and Diversity permeates all ITE undergraduate and postgraduate training programmes. We expect our student teachers to have a commitment to meeting the needs of all pupils through their phase/subject curricula with a focus on identifying barriers to learning, adapting teaching to meet the needs of all pupils, considering representation through the school curriculum, and working closely with expert colleagues for guidance and support from the university and in school. As such, student teachers are expected to develop an awareness of the features associated with pupils' social backgrounds and cultural and linguistic heritage, their sexuality and gender and their physical, emotional, and intellectual abilities in accordance with the Equalities Act, 2010. Student teachers are taught appropriate processes and protocols to address discriminatory language encountered in the classroom or around school. Student teachers know how to raise concerns with an appropriate expert colleague and have the appropriate tools to challenge discriminatory behaviours in line with school policy.

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2. Student Teachers and Equalities at University

Drawing on the University's policy on [Dignity, Respect and Inclusion](#), student teachers are fully supported both at the university and on school placement to ensure equality of access for all across from application to completion of their training:

Selection and Recruitment

- Selection and interviews take account of student teachers' specific needs during training to ensure equality of access and opportunity as per the Equality Act (2010) and the SEND Act (2001). Our selection materials such as our Applying webpages state that 'We welcome applications from potential student teachers with a wide range of backgrounds, race, country of origin, disabilities, gender, sexuality and age.'
- We consider making anticipatory adjustments to positively promote equality of access for disabled applicants, including access to benefits, facilities and services and liaise closely with our Student Centre to facilitate this. Similarly, interview arrangements also consider any special arrangements that might be made for potential applicants. We also offer interviews online or in person at the request of the applicant.
- All student teachers are invited to complete a Suitability Declaration post-interview to identify if they require additional support or arrangements.
- Heales' occupational health check identifies any diagnoses that we need to be aware of regarding the student teacher's physical and mental health to determine reasonable adjustments both at the university and in school. The Head of ITE determines fitness to practice based on the reports generated by Heales.
- Where there is a clear need that the student teacher has not met DfE threshold requirements in GCSE English and mathematics, equivalency tests are offered to individuals in these circumstances.
- Since September 2018, the part time PGCE/School Choice programme has been developed in response to the needs of our student teachers, particularly parents and carers. This is a flexible and inclusive programme where entry and award requirements are the same as for the full-time PGCE Course. Student teachers on this programme follow the same structure of university sessions and school placements as full-time student teachers but over a two-year period.

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In Course Support and Guidance:

- Further to the Suitability Declaration and Heales Report, an early analysis of needs is conducted during our induction period for student teachers with disabilities and additional learning needs. Both documents are visible to the student teacher's tutor who will then discuss reasonable adjustments with the student teacher for university and school-based learning.
- Student teachers are informed about the Student Centre at the start of their programme, and its role in supporting students with a range of needs. We recommend student teachers visit the Student Centre during induction to ensure that they log their needs with specialist support advisors. This might also include advisors in the Disability Support Centre where appropriate – student teachers are supported to complete DSA funding applications (e.g. for access to technologies) and are allocated a specialist DSA support advisor for the duration of their training.
- Information from the Student Centre is visible to the student teacher's tutor through Sussex Direct and includes recommendations for adjustments both at the university and in school.
- Before student teachers go into their first professional practice, they complete a pen portrait which is shared with school-based colleagues including any reasonable adjustment plans.
- Reasonable adjustments are also made for any student teacher struggling at any stage of the training programme through course variation, temporary withdrawal, and one-to-one tutor/mentor support.
- The part-time course is sometimes used for full-time student teachers who are finding the demands of the course too much at the start of the course whilst managing other responsibilities at home. This allows student teachers to continue their training without pausing through temporary withdrawal until the following academic year. Student teachers are allowed to switch from full time to part time up to October half term.
- For international students, we provide training on the English education system to enable a smoother transition into the school environment, orientation around Brighton and Hove, voice and self- presentation skills, and study and academic study skills. The Head of ITE holds half termly international student group meetings to discuss key issues that this particular cohort of student teachers might be facing such as

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accommodation, finance, visas and sponsorships, etc.

- All tutors support student teachers of colour in university and on school placement to monitor the implementation of equalities. Student teachers of colour are further supported by our Race Inclusion Lead as well as by their personal tutors. Key issues of representation in the teaching workforce are also addressed through Mentor training and our Professional Tutor forum.
- We promote the use of the University's [Report and Support Tool](#). This platform enables student teachers to report any behaviours experienced at the university such as bullying, harassment, a hate incident, sexual violence, domestic abuse or discrimination and receive specialist support. Student teachers are supported to disclose any such behaviours to their school management teams if experienced whilst on placement.

3. Student Teachers and Equalities on School Placement

School placements are requested through the Partnership Agreement to take into account the specific individual needs of student teachers so that schools can provide the necessary support to enable student teachers to reach the professional standard of which they are capable, e.g.

- By supporting physical access.
- By raising racial and cultural awareness among Mentors.
- By supporting student teachers of colour in areas which may prove difficult – e.g. cultural adjustments to managing classrooms, student-centered pedagogies, the principles of inclusion and adaptive teaching, language and accent development, etc.
- By making appropriate adjustments where needed to enable student teachers to reach their potential, for instance considering reasonable adjustments for student teachers with specific SEND – e.g., lesson plans (24-48 hours), teaching timetable, approaches to Mentor feedback and note taking, flexibility in mentoring, support plans with adjustments highlighted.
- By highlighting accessibility issues for student teachers with SEND on our placement lists – e.g. split site schools.
- Our second placement model ensures that wherever possible we place student teachers in a contrasting second placement exposing student teachers to different demographics, needs, attainment and school management.

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4. ITE Tutors and Equalities

- Staff are required to undertake EDI training once every two years via the University's Learn Upon professional development platform
- Modules consider all needs when preparing teaching sessions so that tutors are modelling inclusive pedagogies – for instance, using standard PowerPoint templates, use of ALT text, fonts, backgrounds/contrasts.
- Pre-reading requirements for each course draw on a range of different formats and are accessible to student teachers.
- Our Canvas sites are kept up to date each week and quality assurance checks are made for usability and accessibility of provider-led training.

5. Complaints and reporting incidents:

We log any issues of bullying and harassment that are reported to us by student teachers about a member of staff or another student teacher at the university or a teaching colleague whilst on school placement.

At university we promote the use of the University's [Report and Support Tool](#). This platform enables student teachers to report any behaviours experienced at the university such as bullying, harassment, a hate incident, sexual violence, domestic abuse or discrimination and receive specialist support. If the incident is disclosed with contact details, we log this on our Disclosure Tracker which is available to the Head of Initial Teacher Education and the Senior Course Coordinator.

The University's [Students Complaints Procedure](#) is also available to any student teacher who wants to report an incident arising directly or indirectly from an equal opportunities issue that takes place in school or at the university.

In school, complaints are dealt with on a case-by-case basis by the school's Professional Tutor or member of the Senior Leadership Team and are also logged on our Disclosure Tracker once we have received a communication from the school.

For any student teacher personally involved in such an incident, this may also lead to a Termination of Placement and Suitability for Professional Practice Procedures.

The SCTER Steering Committee reviews Equal Opportunities issues as a standing item on each agenda. Every two years the Head of Initial Teacher Education reviews the Equality and

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Diversity framework and reports to the Sussex Consortium Steering Committee.

6. Further references:

For information and guidance about recent legislation on discrimination on protected characteristic see:

[Special Educational Needs and Disability Act \(2001\)](#)

[Education Health Standards \(England\) Regulations \(2003\)](#)

[Equality Act Guidance \(2010\)](#)

[Public Sector Equality Duty](#)

[\(2011\)y \(2011\)](#)

[Higher Education Research Act 2017](#)

[ACAS Discrimination on Religion or Belief in the Workplace \(2018\)](#)

[ACAS Age Discrimination in the Workplace \(2019\)](#)

[ACAS Sexual Harassment in the Workplace \(2021\)](#)

[ACAS and Employment Equality Legislation \(2024\)](#)

[Disability Rights UK, education and skills guidance for people with disabilities](#)

[Disabled Students' Allowances \(DSAs\) in Higher Education \(2024\)](#)

[National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers 2024](#)

[National Education Union 2024](#)

[Ofsted ITE Inspection Framework \(2024\)](#)