Balancing Workload and Lives Policy: 2022/23

We are committed to high quality, evidenced-based teacher education built upon genuine partnerships, inspired by best classroom practice and we are engaged in teaching as an intellectual and ethical vocation. Our collective mission is to recognise, support and develop a generation of reflective practitioners who are ready, willing and able to improve the life chances of every young person they teach and challenge the status quo. We aim to strive for innovative practice and push the boundaries.

Our Goals

Our partnership is ambitious. Quite simply we expect our graduating teachers to make a meaningful and tangible difference; raising the achievement of all their pupils by being innovative, challenging and creative in their teaching. Equally we all have a responsibility as credible role models to share fresh ideas, foster a hunger to learn and empower our young people to thrive as lifelong learners. **We aim to ensure that the well-being of our pupils, teachers, trainees and staff is valued.** We want teacher education and all those involved to enrich the fabric of the school, contributing beyond the classroom, engaging with wider communities and valuing the whole child within them. (Sussex ITE Mission statement 2020)

High workload is one of the most commonly cited drivers for teachers leaving the profession and can be a disincentive for potential new teachers to join. The most effective actions to reduce workload are those that encourage better teaching – by focusing on what makes the most difference, supported by evidence, and making best use of teacher time. At Sussex University, we have worked with our trainees, pupils and school partners to review workloads and identify what we feel is genuinely important and how we can encourage our teachers and trainees to focus on what they need to. We review paperwork each year to ensure that we only request documents if they are absolutely needed. We review and utilise technology to avoid over duplication. Feedback from our partners and trainees suggest we are doing a good job on this as mentors, professional tutors and the trainees have all reported that they feel the paperwork demands of the course are not burdensome.

**What have we done in response to the DfE workload in ITE?**

- Reviewed all of the induction tasks that tutors give to trainees. This is reviewed and checked through termly rep meetings.
- Reduced the expectation on trainees to develop their own individual lesson plans and curriculum resources for every lesson they teach; instead trainees should focus on evaluating, using and adapting (where necessary) existing high quality resources, schemes of work and textbooks.
- Adopted a phased approach to supporting trainees develop curriculum planning skills, including planning sequences of lessons. Curriculum planning at the early stages of teacher training may require a more structured approach, including encouraging the use of high-quality curriculum resources and textbooks to plan a sequence of lessons alongside Mentor co-planning. As trainees become more secure in their planning, they are encouraged to evaluate existing resources to assess their quality and make decisions on which are best to use in different contexts.
• Ensured that only once trainees have a good knowledge of existing resources and sequencing of lessons, should they then start to develop their own plans when these are required. Over time, trainees should also be encouraged to develop more light touch planning over sequences of lessons in line with the principles found in the DfE (2018) report on planning and resources. This phased approach takes place when the mentor and the curriculum tutor agree.
• Mentors are expected to co-mark in the early stages of assessment and feedback across both Key Stage 3 and 4 to model high quality feedback and analyse with mentors how feedback should be specific, targeted, and developmental.
• Introduced a phased build-up of teaching requirements through teaching phases A-E.
• Minimised pressure points for assignments. We ensure that trainees can take two weeks breaks for Christmas and Easter with no assessment requirements. We moved the hand in date for their main APK assignment to the week following a week of Directed Study time.
• Removed the requirement to present copious files as summative evidence for meeting the Teacher Standards at the end of the training year.
• We always monitor the teaching timetables for every student two weeks after they begin placement to ensure no one is having an excessive timetable. This includes our School Direct Tuition and School Direct Salaried trainees. We encourage our schools to make their Salaried trainees super numerate and allow them sufficient time to build their knowledge and skills. Maximum timetabling requirements are set out clearly in our School Direct Salaried Partnership Agreement.
• We monitor workload for trainees through review meetings and weekly reflections on the Professional Practice Tracker and we monitor workload for Mentors through our two school visits and our Mentor development sessions.
• Through subject specific Mentor meetings, Mentors are asked how they are managing their trainee workload (eg finding out how long trainees are spending on curriculum planning, co-planning, co-marking, helping trainees to source materials, signposting the school’s shared area and helping trainees to prioritise and manage their time effectively).
• We outline at the beginning of the year our email policy. We ask trainees to not send any emails after 17:30 or at the weekends and to not expect tutors or Mentors to respond after those times.
• Our ethos subscribes to evidence based and experiential learning to determine what works in the classroom, where data is considered but is not a driver in trainees’ professional dialogue with expert colleagues around student progress.

Useful documents to refer to:


Smithers and Robinson (2003); Teachers’ Analysis Compendium (2017); Hobson, Malderez, Tracey, Homer, Mitchell, Biddulph, Giannakaki, Rose, Pell, Roper, Chambers and Tomlinson, 2007 (Newly qualified teachers’ experiences of their first year of teaching).
