



The Rt Hon Baroness Jacqui Smith

Minister for Skills

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Helen Hayes MP
Chair of the Education Select Committee

By email: educom@parliament.uk

26th January 2026

Dear Helen,

I am writing to draw the attention of the Education Select Committee to the government's laying of a statutory instrument in Parliament, which has the intention of securing and improving quality standards in initial teacher training for further education¹. The instrument will be subject to the affirmative resolution procedure.

The quality of teaching is, of course, the single most important education-based factor determining outcomes for students and is therefore central to delivering the government's missions and our commitment to high and rising standards across the education system.

It follows that we must have a robust teacher training system that is able to attract new entrants to the profession and equip teachers with the skills and knowledge they need to be effective in their practice. For many years now, the quality of initial teacher training for further education has been subject to much less direct scrutiny from government, especially when compared to the very significant work that has been (and continues to be) done by successive governments in relation to teacher training for primary and secondary schools. There are unquestionably pockets of excellent practice in the FE teacher training sector, but there have also been instances where poor-quality provision has been allowed to persist, to the considerable detriment of both trainee teachers and their potential employers and students in the FE sector.

As the recent *Post-16 Education and Skills* white paper emphasised, we are determined to address these issues, and to ensure that teacher training for the FE sector is of high quality, supporting the needs of trainee teachers and future students. This is, of course, a significant part of our efforts to support a specialist and prestigious further education system that delivers high-quality education and training for all².

¹ The Further Education (Initial Teacher Training) Regulations 2026, to be made under the provisions of s17, Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022.

² See Chapter 2 of the [Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper](#)

The legislation that we are putting before Parliament marks the first step towards building a clear regulatory framework for FE teacher training. This will enable a more direct approach to setting and monitoring standards and managing the provider market, while still supporting and encouraging excellent and innovative practice across the sector.

We are proposing that providers of specified FE teacher training courses³ should be subject to new requirements, specifically that they must:

- Have regard to statutory guidance on (a) curriculum, and (b) delivery standards for FE ITE courses
- Register as a provider of FE ITE courses with the Department for Education
- Submit data and information regarding their FE ITE provision to the Department

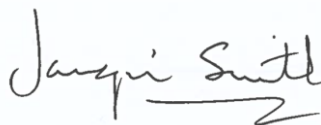
My officials have conducted wide-ranging stakeholder engagement (including a public consultation) on these proposals, and it is clear that there is widespread support from within both the FE and ITE sectors for the approach we are taking, including a clear appetite for government to play a leading role in setting and assuring standards for FE teacher training.

My officials ran a *Call for Evidence* in autumn 2025⁴ and have constituted an Expert Advisory Group, comprising leading academics and teaching practitioners, to assess the evidence (both from the Call for Evidence and wider available sources) that is currently available on what constitutes high-quality teaching practice in post-16 settings, and to advise on the content of the curriculum guidance.

The regulations allow for both the curriculum and delivery guidance documents to be updated from time to time. Officials will continue to work with experts and wider stakeholders to ensure that ITE guidance continues to reflect the latest evidence and practice that can support high quality FE teacher training across the sector.

I am sure that these proposals will be of interest to the Committee in the context of your inquiry into Further Education and Skills, and I hope you will agree that they can make a positive contribution to our wider strategy of boosting teacher recruitment, retention and development. I look forward to the support of members of the Education Select Committee when the legislation is brought before Parliament for approval.

Yours sincerely,



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³ These courses will be specified on a list published by the Secretary of State, under the regulations.

⁴ <https://consult.education.gov.uk/fe-workforce-division/fe-teacher-initial-training-and-development-cfe/>