

Bureaucratic Delays Hindering Training of New Teachers

Wednesday, 11 February 2015

The training of new teachers is being seriously compromised by bureaucratic delays in access to mandatory literacy and numeracy tests, it has been claimed.

It comes as Ofsted, in its annual report published last month, says it is "concerned" about the supply of teachers. According to the inspectorate, the number of entrants to the profession has fallen by 17 per cent over the past five years.

The skills tests were introduced with the aim of making sure everyone wanting to become a qualified teacher had the numeracy and literacy skills required for their role, regardless of the subject they taught.

Initially they were delivered by universities and training providers as part of teacher training programmes. But in 2013 the rules were changed so that applicants had to complete the tests prior to starting a training programme. At that time the tests were placed in the hands of private firms.

All prospective trainees, whether on Initial Teacher Training (ITT), Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) or Assessment Only routes, must pass the skills tests before they can begin their training. However, the test centres, which are operated through profit-provider Learn Direct, are allegedly failing to keep up with demand.

Catriona Robinson, Associate Head of the Institute of Education at the University of Worcester, said many applicants were facing a wait of several months and long journeys in order to sit their tests.

"These delays are having a real impact on those wanting to train as qualified teachers," she said. "For those applying for ITT and PGCE places, it is significantly delaying the application process, but for those on the Assessment Only route, who are those people already working in schools and just waiting to complete their 12 weeks of assessment to gain NQT (Newly qualified Teacher) status, it is potentially costing trainees jobs as they are unable to complete the assessment period in time to meet job application deadlines."

The closest test centres to Worcester are in either Birmingham or Coventry, with some people having to travel hundreds of miles to take the test.

"Many of our prospective students have reported problems with scheduling tests, while others complained that the testing environment was unsuitable," Mrs Robinson added. "We have one applicant, for example, from Redditch, who applied in January 2015 and was offered an appointment in April in Southampton.

"We want to attract the very best candidates to teaching and the skills tests were introduced to ensure we maintain the high quality and status of the profession. In order to ensure our children get the education they deserve we must have teachers in our schools who have been properly trained. We support the aims of the skills test, but the mismanagement of the process is compromising its integrity and slowing efforts to solve the trained teacher shortage."

© University of Worcester Henwick Grove, WR2 6AJ Tel: 01905 855000 - Last reviewed: Tuesday, 19 June 2018

Page can be found:

[Home](#) / [Discover Worcester](#) / [About us](#) / [University News](#) / [News releases](#) / [Archive](#) / [2015](#) / [February](#) / Bureaucratic Delays Hindering Training of New Teachers

<http://www.worcester.ac.uk/discover/bureaucratic-delays-hindering-training-of-new-teachers.html>