



THE FUNDING ENVIRONMENT
FOR UNIVERSITIES 2014

THE IMPACT OF INITIAL
TEACHER TRAINING
REFORMS ON ENGLISH
HIGHER EDUCATION
INSTITUTIONS

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Executive summary

This report is the fifth in Universities UK's series *The funding environment for universities 2014*, which examines issues affecting the funding of higher education institutions and the sector's financial sustainability. This report focuses specifically on those universities in England that provide teacher training.

Universities have a long-standing record of training and delivering tens of thousands of trainee teachers each year, and therefore house significant levels of expertise in teacher education. Teacher education also constitutes a significant part of many institutions' core provision. However, for some, this key area of provision is becoming more vulnerable.

Historically, the vast majority of teacher training in England has been carried out by higher education institutions in partnership with schools, with trainees receiving both on-the-job practical experience within schools and teaching within the university to develop in-depth subject and pedagogical knowledge.

However, the delivery of initial teacher training (ITT) has undergone various changes since 2012–13, which have created some instability for many universities. The government is now moving towards an ambition for more training places to be re-allocated to the new School Direct programme, whereby schools lead on recruitment and the delivery of training, with a university (or other accredited provider) being selected as a partner.

Whilst this change in the delivery model has helped strengthen many university-school partnerships, the pace of this change in the allocation of training places has been rapid: between 2012–13 and 2015–16 the number of places allocated directly to universities has decreased by 23%.

As the balance of allocations has shifted, institutions have been keen to maintain a strong level of engagement with schools. However, at the same time the speed of this change has created certain practical difficulties for institutions. It has reduced their ability both to plan strategically in the long term and to allocate resources from year to year, as the recruitment needs of specific schools can fluctuate. This is compounded by the fact that allocations announcements are annual, which leaves a relatively short amount of time for institutions to plan future ITT provision within a rapidly-changing landscape.

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While institutions continue to value a strong level of engagement with schools, the balance in the allocations model has swung too quickly towards School Direct and away from universities.

For some, the speed and magnitude of the change in allocations has led to questions being asked about the long-term viability of delivering ITT courses in certain subject areas, or even in the overall delivery of ITT. Should ITT provision become unsustainable for some institutions, there would be significant implications not only for the diversity of teacher training provision more widely, but also for the options available to students and the choices available to schools that are looking for university partners with which to co-deliver School Direct training programmes.

The change in balance also has implications for government's need to ensure a sufficient supply and consistent quality in the teaching of skills in areas important to economic growth. The teaching profession is heavily dependent on the university sector for training chemists, physicists, mathematicians, computer scientists and modern linguists. Data shows that the new School Direct training route recruited only two-thirds of its allocation in 2013–14, while university (and other core) recruitment exceeded 90% of its allocation. Whereas School Direct has been more successful in recruiting trainees into subjects such as English and history, it has been less so in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects. This has contributed to a shortfall in the number of trainee teachers recruited into several subject areas, such as mathematics and physics.

There are concerns, therefore, that, as the government pursues its ambition for a school-led system, the pace of change could create teacher supply issues in the future if university-delivered training becomes unsustainable. It is vital that a greater level of stability is given to universities, and that their role within the wider ITT system is recognised and clearly defined within the government's strategy for teacher training.

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Introduction

This report focuses on the recent changes affecting English universities' delivery of initial teacher training (ITT), analyses recent trends in recruitment following the implementation of these changes, and, finally, discusses the specific impact on institutions and its implications for current and future provision in this area.

The education of current and future teachers forms part of more than 80 English universities' business, with as many as 29% of students being engaged in some form of ITT at an institutional level. Teacher education forms part of the core mission of these universities. More broadly, the level of teacher supply has implications for every university, in that they all rely on well-qualified teachers to educate their future students.

The role of universities in the delivery of ITT and teacher education is longstanding and held in high regard. The most recent survey of newly-qualified teachers (NQTs) suggested that 89% of those who had been trained at primary level within a university route rated the overall quality of their training as good or very good. Among secondary NQTs the rate was even higher at 91%, which was higher than the levels of satisfaction reported within other training routes.¹

Universities train and deliver tens of thousands of high-quality school teachers every year, and many of their staff are themselves experienced teachers with extensive school-based careers and a commitment to evidence-based practice.

For students, time spent training within a university allows them to:

- undertake teaching practice in more than one school, in order to learn about different approaches to the profession
- have time to reflect on professional practice outside the classroom, and to learn about new priorities that might not have yet fully permeated into schools²
- learn within a cohort of their peers, to strengthen perspective
- benefit from the expertise of experienced lecturers who are often active in research in their field

¹ National College for Teaching & Leadership, The newly qualified teacher survey (2013), available at: http://dataprovion.education.gov.uk/public/page.htm;jsessionid=5598EB228B74456AFBC603C5C2A566A7?years=2013&years=2012&years=2011&nhs=hk_185344&na=forward&popup-mode=&hiddenXSRFParam=06b6e955-4fa8-4010-9893-cae79d215c7b&to-page=viewRespDiffInsTypesReports&submit_view=View

² UCET, Westminster Education Forum 2014, 'The role of universities in the new initial teacher training landscape'

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- access university facilities such as libraries, ICT and student support services

For schools, universities also provide support in the delivery of ITT through:

- the design and delivery of training programmes
- marketing training programmes to potential applicants
- taking a key role in the admissions process, and continuing to recruit throughout the summer when many schools are closed
- providing advice on quality assurance and legal issues

According to the OECD, the most successful school systems, such as Finland and Shanghai, invest heavily in teacher training and professional development.³ Within such systems, the role of universities is crucial in the training of high-quality teachers. It is therefore fundamental that, in England, their role is also fully recognised in the light of recent and ongoing reforms.

1: Recent changes to the delivery of ITT

This first section will focus on how the delivery of ITT has changed since 2011, across the various training routes into teaching.

Each year, the Department for Education (DfE) sets out the total number of new trainee teachers required to commence training across England. This is calculated using the department's Teacher Supply Model, so that the number of qualified teachers matches the needs of the country.⁴ Of this number, training places are then allocated to different ITT providers.

In 2012, the available routes into teaching were as follows:

- University-led training at undergraduate level (towards a BA, BSc or BEd)
- University-led training at postgraduate level (towards a PGCE or PgCE)
- School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (or SCITT)⁵
- Employment-based Initial Teacher Training (or EBITT)⁶
- Teach First⁷

³ 'Academies "promising trend" says OECD', *BBC* 5 March 2014: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-26448705>

⁴ For a technical description of the Teacher Supply Model, see:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teacher-supply-model-a-technical-description>

⁵ SCITT programmes are both designed and delivered by groups of neighbouring schools. SCITT consortia operate programmes across England.

⁶ EBITT programmes were on-the-job programmes allowing trainees to qualify as a teacher while working.

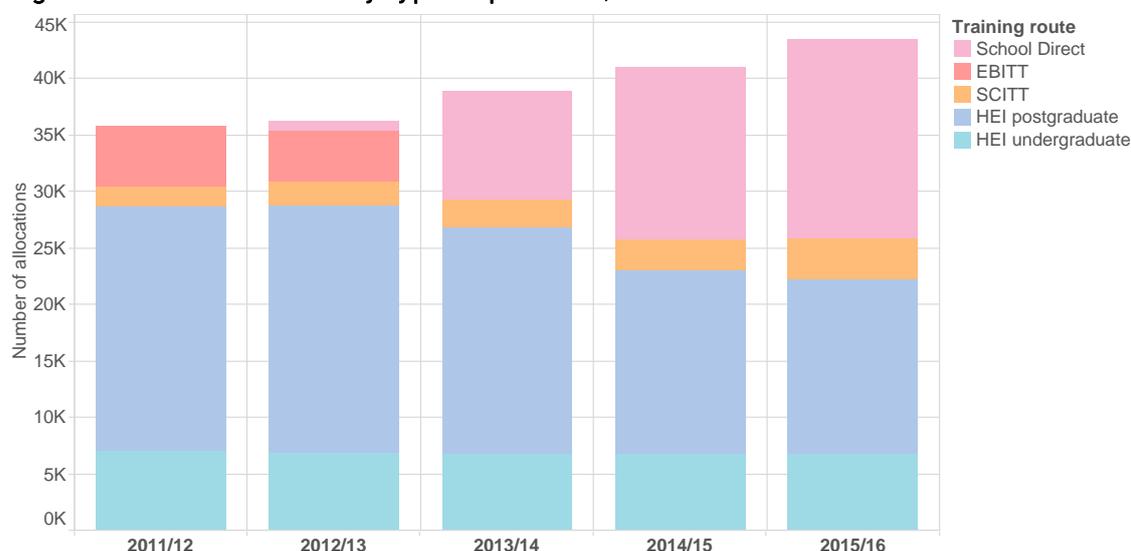
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In 2011–12, there were 73 higher education institutions across England providing ITT courses. At this time, 80% of the 35,744 training places were allocated directly to universities, which are responsible for training their students and working in partnership with schools where they place their trainees.

As shown in Figure 1, the remaining 20% were allocated to other training providers. In the years following this, a move towards a 'school-led' ITT system has resulted in a removal of many 'core' training places historically allocated to universities, and an increase in the number of places allocated directly to schools under School Direct.

Figure 1: ITT allocations by type of provider, 2011 to 2015⁸



Source: National College for Teaching & Leadership

In 2012, the then education secretary announced plans to give schools greater control over the recruitment and training of teachers in England, with the ambition of 'well over half' of all training places being delivered in schools by 2015.⁹

Since starting as a pilot, the allocation of places has shifted away from universities and towards School Direct. While the two training routes both involve a mixture of at least 24 weeks spent in a school as well as time spent being taught at the school's partner provider, such as a university, there are some notable differences:

⁷ Teach First is a registered charity that aims to transform exceptional graduates into 'effective, inspirational teachers and leaders' via an employment-based teacher training programme.

⁸ The allocations for 2014–15 cited in this report are based on those published by the National College for Teaching & Leadership as of November 2013. However, in June 2014, providers of ITT were invited to bid for additional places in certain subjects. This bidding process resulted in more than 400 extra places being allocated to higher education institutions. However, for consistency, the announcement from November 2013 is included for comparison with November 2014.

⁹ Michael Gove at the National College for Teaching & Leadership annual conference (2012), available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/michael-gove-at-the-national-college-annual-conference>

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- The party responsible for selecting a suitable candidate for training will depend on who the lead organisation is (be it a school, a university or a SCITT).
- University-led training involves placing students into more than one school as part of their practice requirements, whereas School Direct trainees might remain in one school.
- The proportion of time a student spends in a university can differ between routes.
- Not all school-led training leads to a PGCE qualification for students.
- Those in School Direct routes can expect to be employed by the school training them (or one of its partner schools), once training has been completed.¹⁰

In 2013–14, the percentage of places allocated to School Direct and SCITTs was 31%; for 2015–16 it has grown to 49% – close to a 50% share, in line with government targets.

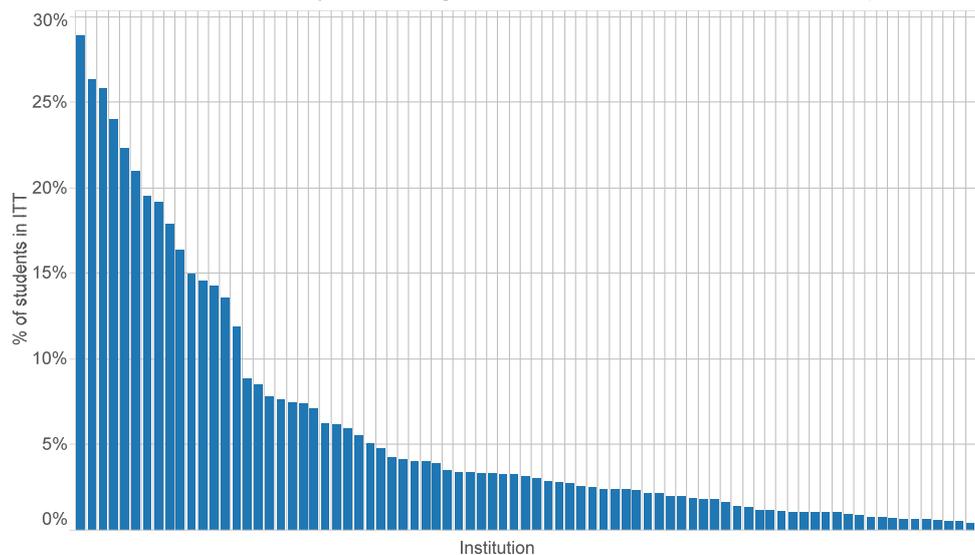
Rapid changes in the allocation of places, as detailed in Figure 1, can have serious implications for an institution's financial standing, most notably those for which ITT constitutes a large proportion of provision. According to the Higher Education Statistics Agency, there were 55,070 ITT students enrolled in English institutions during 2012–13 – around 3% of all higher education students in that year. This was down from 60,300 in the previous year. However, at almost one in five universities involved in teacher training, ITT students comprise more than 10% of their entire student populations, as shown in Figure 2. These institutions are particularly vulnerable, in financial terms, to fluctuating allocations.

¹⁰ For further comparison of the different training routes available, see: <http://www.ucas.com/how-it-all-works/teacher-training/postgraduate-routes-teaching>

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Figure 2: ITT students as a percentage of all students in 2012–13, by institution



Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency

1.1 Recent reforms affecting ITT

There are several reforms that have driven the trend in allocations already highlighted.

In its 2010 White Paper, *The Importance of Teaching*, the government set out a series of proposed changes affecting both the delivery of teacher training in England and applicants' requirements.¹¹ A selection of these, as well as details on more recent revisions to these proposals, is set out in Table 1.

¹¹ Department for Education (2010) *The Importance of Teaching: The Schools White Paper 2010* available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/175429/CM-7980.pdf

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Table 1: Recent reforms to ITT

| Reform | Purpose of reform | Details |
|--|---|--|
| Expansion of school-centred training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To increase the proportion of time trainees spend in the classroom | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allocate fewer training places directly to universities Allocate more training places to School Direct Double the size of Teach First Encourage more groups of schools to become SCITTs |
| Review basic skills tests | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To raise the status of teaching as a profession by making pre-entry tests more rigorous | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trainees to pass skills tests in numeracy and literacy as an entry requirement into teacher training (rather than while receiving training) Pass mark raised and candidates limited to two resits Remove requirement to pass ICT test |
| Review trainee funding criteria and bursaries | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To attract more specialists into subjects where it is hardest to attract teachers To emulate countries such as South Korea, which recruits teachers from the top 5% of graduates | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced bursaries for those recruited to teach mathematics, physics, chemistry and modern languages Restrict funding to those with at least a 2:2 degree |
| Introduce new routes into teaching | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To make it easier for schools to employ those with the required skills | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools can employ those with Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) status Schools can employ anyone qualified as a teacher in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the USA without a requirement for additional training |
| Revise Ofsted framework for inspections of ITT provision | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To increase the quality of ITT provision | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only training providers (eg universities) rated as outstanding guaranteed to keep their core allocation of student numbers for 2013–14 and 2014–15 Remove postgraduate training allocations from providers or lead schools that require improvement |

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The move towards a school-led system is in contrast to international trends.

Countries with high performing school systems have universities at the heart of their own ITT provision:

- In Finland, teacher education was moved from teachers' colleges into universities in the 1970s. Recruitment is highly selective in Finland, and all teachers are required to hold a master's degree. Training is also heavily research based, and the importance of pedagogical content knowledge is emphasised.¹²
- In South Korea, teacher education takes place within departments of education at universities or colleges, or within dedicated teachers' colleges, and the country performs consistently well in the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).
- In Singapore, there is only one teacher training institution: the National Institute of Education (NIE) in the Nanyang Technological University. The NIE offers undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, and, during training, a strong focus is placed on pedagogy and instruction in the craft of teaching.

While in England most ITT does still take place in universities, there has been a rapid increase in the allocation of places to schools and SCITTs, which sets the system apart from those in other countries.

1.2 Recent changes in the allocation of ITT places

This section will illustrate the changes in allocated training places driven forward by the move towards a school-led ITT system.

In the 2011–12 academic year, in addition to the 73 higher education institutions involved in the delivery of ITT in England, there were 56 school-centred organisations (SCITTs) and one further education college. There were also 104 employment-based organisations delivering training. As stated previously, 80% of allocations were awarded to universities in that year. For 2015–16, where the DfE has allocated just over 43,500 training places across England, 51% have been awarded directly to universities.¹³

¹² Center on International Education Benchmarking, Top Performing Countries:

<http://www.ncee.org/programs-affiliates/center-on-international-education-benchmarking/top-performing-countries/>

¹³National College for Teaching & Leadership, *Initial teacher training allocations 2014/15*, 2013:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/300718/itt_allocations_management_information_21_nov_2013_-_fixed.pdf

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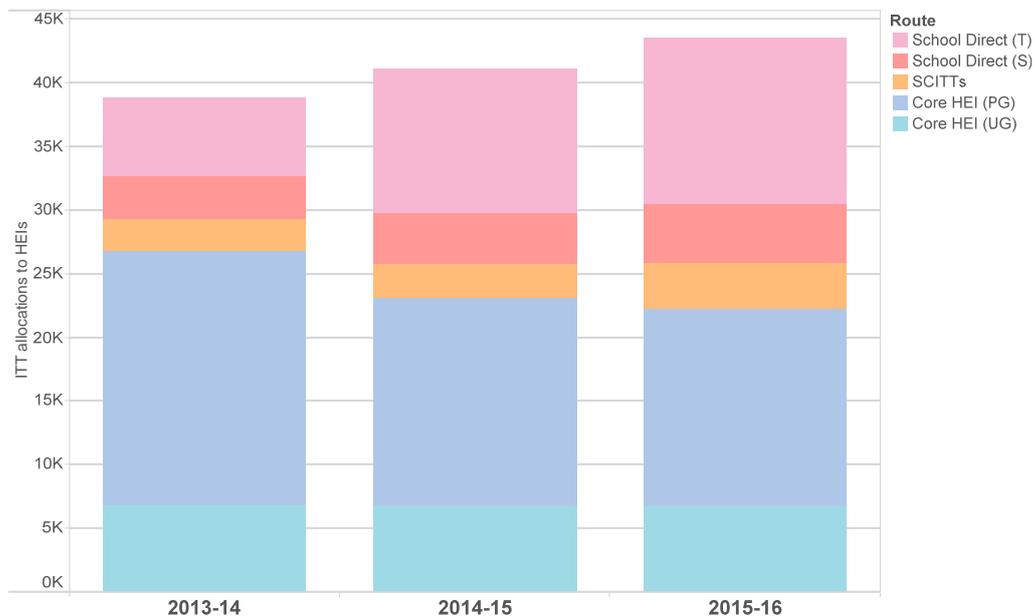
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Institutions would have been affected to various degrees by this change, depending on the nature of their provision. The following paragraphs illustrate exactly how allocations have changed by training route, phase of education (primary/secondary), institution and subject, in order to highlight particular problem areas.

Allocations by training route

As shown in Figure 3, it is postgraduate places, rather than undergraduate, which have seen a dramatic change in the most recent set of allocations. For 2015–16, the number of core postgraduate-level training places allocated to universities has fallen by 23% on 2013–14. At the same time, the overall number of School Direct places has increased by 84%. In comparison, the number of ‘core’ undergraduate training places allocated to universities has remained fairly stable.

Figure 3: ITT allocations by route, 2013–14 and 2015–16



Source: National College for Teaching & Leadership

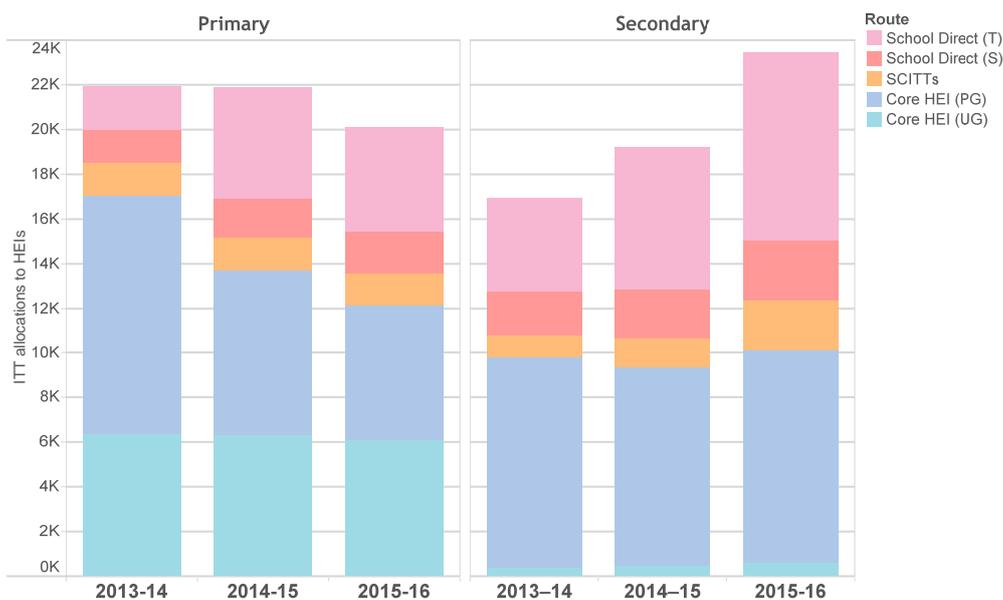
Allocations by phase

Figure 4 shows how, over two years, the number of primary-level training places allocated directly to institutions has fallen by 29% for 2015–16, from 17,010 to 12,125. Allocations to universities providing secondary-level training have been less affected overall, and have actually increased by 3% over two years.

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Figure 4: ITT allocations by route and phase, 2013–14 and 2015–16

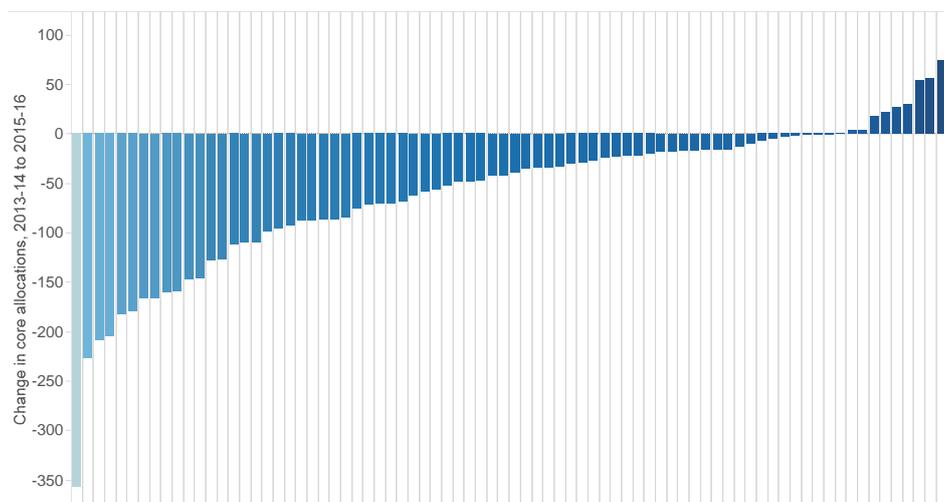


Source: National College for Teaching & Leadership

Allocations by institution

Looking at undergraduate and postgraduate provision combined, some of the changes are even more apparent when looking at an institutional level. Compared to two years earlier, most institutions received fewer core allocations for 2015–16, with many experiencing a reduction of more than 100 places, as demonstrated in Figure 5 (although some will have compensated for a decline by partnering with schools under School Direct – see section 3.2).

Figure 5: Year-on-year change in core allocations by higher education institution, 2013–14 to 2015–16



Source: National College for Teaching & Leadership

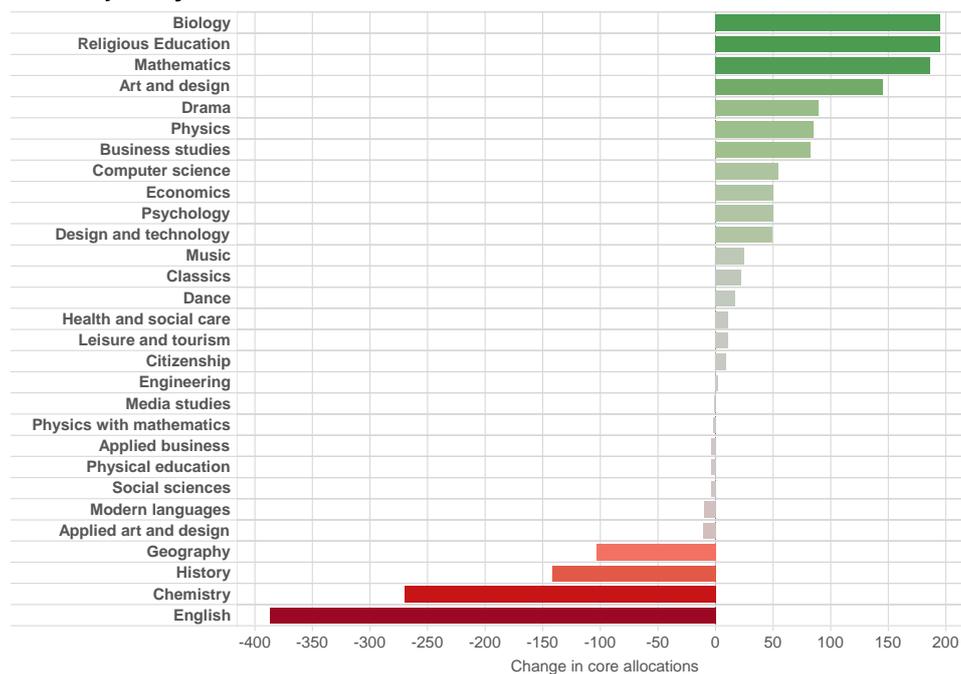
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Allocations by subject

Across all universities, total core allocations have increased in several subject areas including mathematics, physics, biology and religious education. However, there has been an overall reduction in English, chemistry, history and modern languages. Institutions will be affected by these changes to various degrees, depending on the subject mix they traditionally offer.

Figure 6: Two-year change in core allocations to higher education institutions by secondary subject, 2013–14 to 2015–16



Source: National College for Teaching & Leadership

These changes in allocations can have a wide range of impacts on universities, depending on the exact nature of their ITT provision. The overall impact, though, even in the space of two years, has undoubtedly been significant.

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2: Recruitment into teacher training in 2013–14

The allocation of training places is, however, just part of the picture, as not all places are filled. It is necessary to analyse levels of *recruitment* in order to properly assess the position of universities within the wider ITT system.

Across England in 2013–14 there were more than 33,000 entrants into ITT programmes, with the vast majority still enrolling directly within higher education institutions and other core providers, who recruited upwards of 90% of their allocation. In comparison, School Direct routes recruited to 69% of their total allocation.¹⁴

The overall target for that year was 34,470 trainees, meaning total recruitment was 4% short of what the DfE's Teacher Supply Model suggested was required to meet demand.¹⁵

The ITT census for 2013–14 also shows that there has been an under-recruitment in subjects that are important to the skills needs of the UK, including certain STEM subjects. In total, 700 postgraduate ITT places for physics were filled against an overall target of 990. In mathematics the number of filled places was 230 short of the target. As shown in Figure 7, while School Direct has proven to be more popular among students looking to teach English or history (where 46% and 38% of all recruits came via this route, respectively), it has been less so in the sciences and in mathematics.

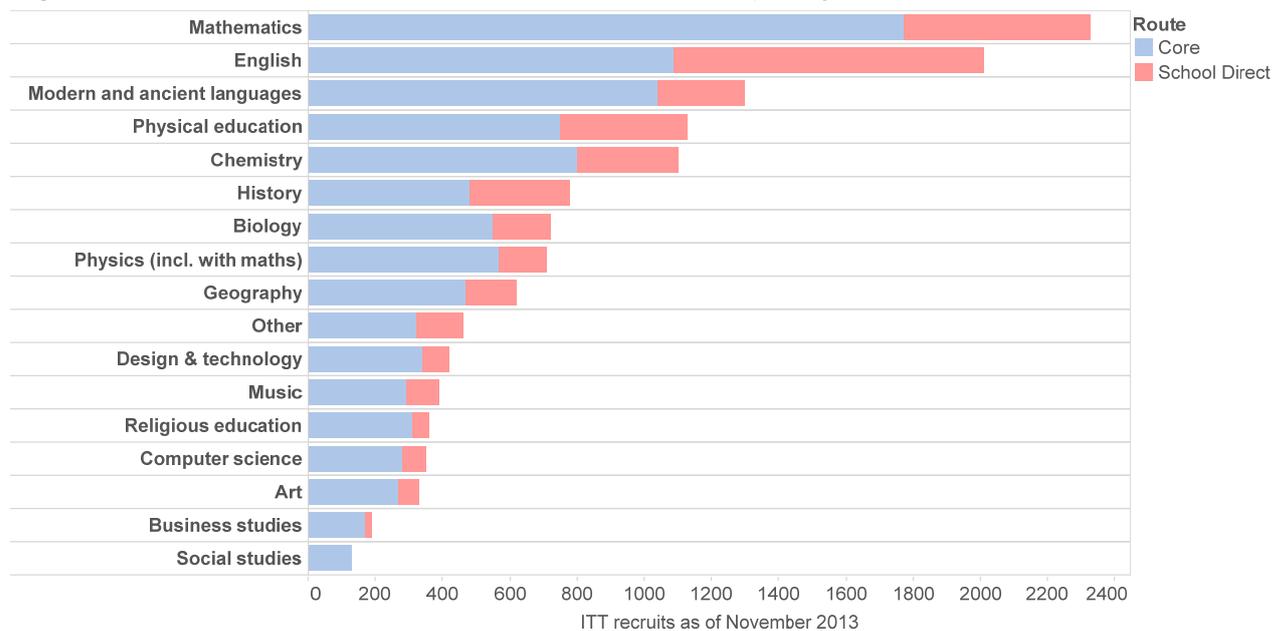
¹⁴ There has also been a growth in the number of people starting Teach First training, to 1,261 in 2013 (up from 560 in 2010). Further details on Teach First are available at: <http://graduates.teachfirst.org.uk/about/index.html>

¹⁵ National College for Teaching & Leadership (2013) *Initial teacher training census 2013: Commentary* available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/300437/initial-teacher-training-trainee-number-census-2013-2014-commentary.pdf

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Figure 7: New ITT entrants as of 13 November 2013, by subject and route



Source: National College for Teaching & Leadership

In physics, 36% of all allocations were to School Direct, although only 20% of new entrants came via this route. This compares to universities and SCITT providers recruiting to 63% of their physics allocations combined (factors affecting demand, which could be contributing to universities not recruiting to target for some subjects, will be examined in section 3.1).

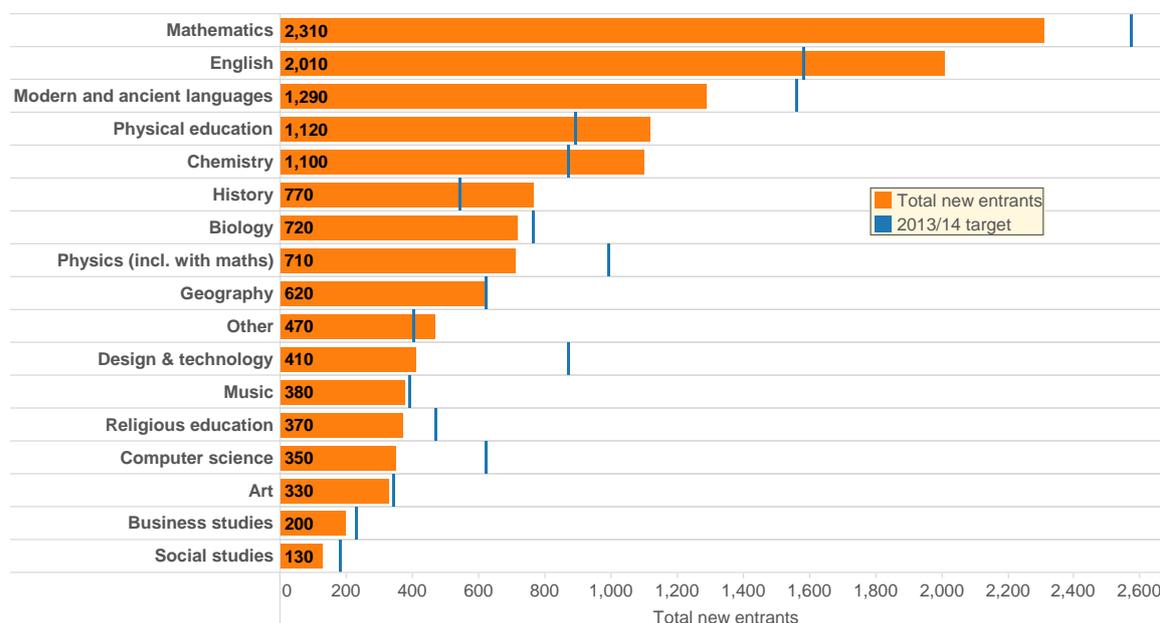
The profession therefore remains heavily dependent on the university sector to supply qualified teachers in chemistry, computer science and modern languages, among other subjects. However, as illustrated earlier, these are subjects in which core allocations have since been reduced overall, and so there is a danger of further shortfalls in 2014–15.

In comparison, as shown in Figure 8, in subjects where School Direct is popular, such as English, PE and history, there has in fact been an over-recruitment of trainees. This can lead to a different type of problem, in that too many newly-qualified teachers (NQTs) are left to chase too few teaching posts.

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Figure 8: New ITT entrants as of 13 November 2013 compared to subject targets, all routes combined



Source: National College for Teaching & Leadership

Attracting recruitment into certain STEM subjects is acknowledged as difficult. In 2014, the Royal Society noted that the UK's capacity to offer a high-quality science and mathematics education to all young people is in fact being hampered by shortages.¹⁶

This shows that universities continue to play a fundamental role within overall ITT recruitment and provision across England, recruiting higher levels of trainees in shortage subjects. Their records in recruitment and their capacity to train across different subjects are key assets in helping government meet its targets on delivering the number of required qualified teachers year-on-year.

Careful consideration therefore needs to be given to the suitability (and popularity) of school-based training by subject. Based on current evidence, reallocating core places in shortage subject areas could prevent some of the levels of under-recruitment experienced last year.

Similar consideration needs to be given to the required number of primary-level trainees. According to the DfE, by 2020 there will be an extra 800,000 pupils in English primary schools, bringing the total number of pupils closer to 5 million. This

¹⁶ The Royal Society (2014) *Vision for science and mathematics education* available at: <https://royalsociety.org/education/policy/vision/teaching-profession/>

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represents an increase of 20% in 10 years.¹⁷ However, the ITT census data on recruitment in 2013–14 shows that, in primary, there were 19,820 new entrants training against a target of 20,630 – a shortfall of 810 trainee teachers, and School Direct filled 84% of its allocated places in primary, compared to 91% within core provider routes.

3: Institutional impact

The policy changes already discussed have had a range of impacts on universities, all of which have implications for ITT provision and, in some cases, for universities' financial sustainability more widely. The following sections will look at how institutions have been affected both at sector and individual levels. This analysis is based on official data on recruitment and allocations already detailed, as well as evidence obtained from UUK members' institutions in both 2013 and 2014.

Several issues are notable and are discussed here in turn: changing levels of demand for ITT courses; changes in the types of trainees attending universities; the future sustainability of courses; the wider financial sustainability of ITT provision; universities' partnerships with schools, and the extent to which allocations reflect regional needs for teaching.

While there have been a number of positive developments from the expansion of School Direct, universities have also had to face an environment of increased uncertainty due to fluctuations in allocations, demand and income. These changes have led to ITT provision being deemed a medium to high-risk activity by universities, and the viability of certain individual courses has come into question.

3.1 Demand for ITT courses

Evidence suggests that overall demand for teacher training dipped in 2013–14. Although limited evidence is available, it is possible that several changes that have occurred over the past few years affected applicant behaviour across all routes into teaching during this cycle.

Recent changes, both to schools themselves (with a growth in the number with academy status and changes made to the curriculum) as well as to the profession (with revised entry requirements and changes made to teachers' performance

¹⁷ As cited in 'The growth of the "Titan" schools', *Guardian*, 23 April 2012:
<http://www.theguardian.com/education/2012/apr/23/titan-schools-primary-largest-school-population>

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management and pensions) could have influenced applicant behaviour, and affected the attractiveness of becoming a teacher more generally.

Looking specifically at entry requirements, in some cases the changes made to the skills tests could have affected the number of applicants applying for, or withdrawing from, an ITT course in this cycle.

Since September 2013, trainees starting an ITT course have been required to pass tests in literacy and numeracy before starting their course, rather than by the end of their training. The number of resits has also been limited to two per subject and, from September 2012, the pass mark for the skills tests was raised. The extent to which these changes affected applicant behaviour is unknown, but some universities have reported anecdotal evidence that it increased pressure on existing and prospective trainees and acted as a disincentive to apply for training, especially at undergraduate level.

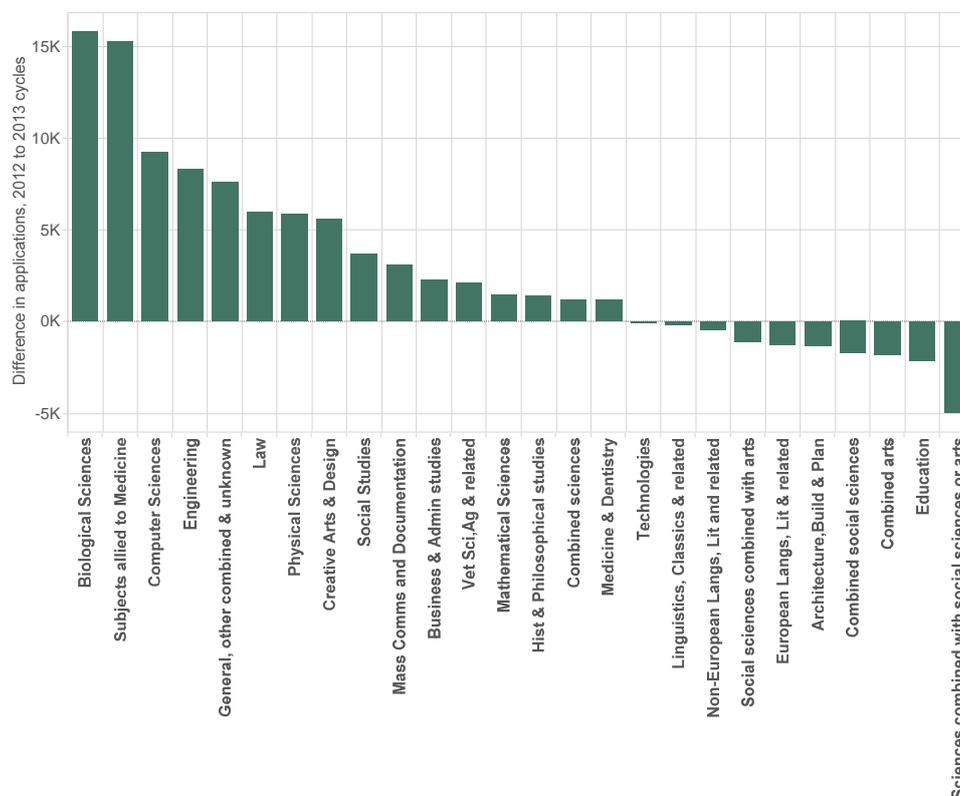
Across all subjects (not just education), undergraduate applications through UCAS in 2013 increased by 3.1%. However, within this (as detailed in Figure 9), applications for programmes in education actually decreased by 2.5%, from 86,023 choices to 83,885 (in a five-choice system).¹⁸

¹⁸ UCAS, *2013 cycle applicant figures – June deadline*, 2013: http://www.ucas.com/system/files/2013-applicant-figures-june-deadline-additional_8.pdf This data relates to institutions across the UK, and is therefore not limited to England.

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Figure 9: Change in total number of UCAS applications by subject group, 2012 to 2013



Source: UCAS

Dips in demand can affect the viability of university courses, especially given that, if an institution under-recruits against its allocation, this can lead to a reduction in allocations in the following year. The size of ITT provision at undergraduate level is significant for some universities, and many institutions enrol greater numbers of students at this level than at postgraduate level. It is therefore encouraging that UCAS applicant data as of 30 June 2014 shows a slight growth in the number of applications made to courses in education compared to the same point in the previous year, from 83,890 to 84,200.¹⁹

However, applications to train at postgraduate level were also affected during that cycle. Some applicants offered a place on a postgraduate ITT course might receive an offer to train on the condition that they complete a Subject Knowledge Enhancement (SKE) course. SKE courses are aimed at those who need to increase their subject knowledge before commencing training. Places are allocated by the National College for Teaching & Leadership and can operate in universities, schools or third party suppliers such as a Science Learning Centre.

¹⁹ UCAS, *June Deadline Analysis: Subjects, 2014*: <http://www.ucas.com/system/files/june-2014-deadline-analysis-subjects.pdf>

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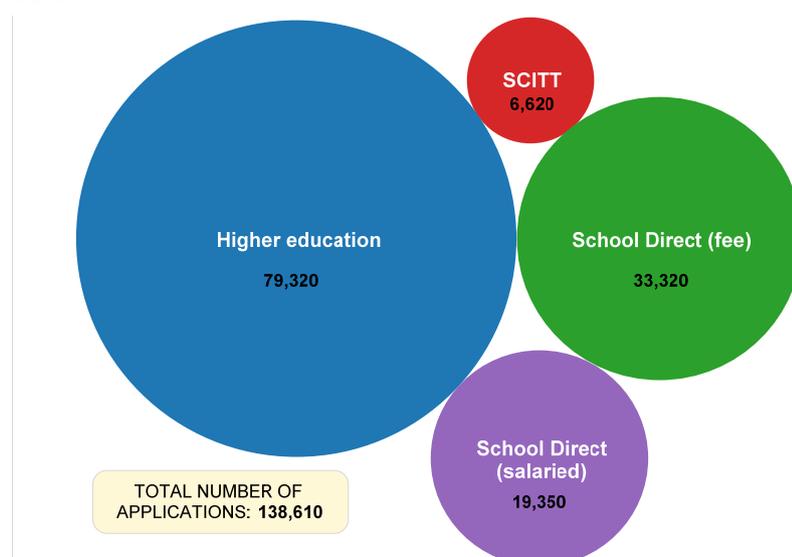
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The announcement of allocated places to teach SKE courses in 2012–13 came slightly late in the cycle for some institutions to be able to commit to ITT provision. This led to some applicants not being recruited into ITT in 2013–14 who could have been accepted had the guarantee of SKE provision been announced sooner.

More widely, it has been noted by some commentators that, during the 2013 application cycle, much of the government's ITT marketing campaigns aimed at prospective trainees focused on School Direct as opposed to university-led training as a route into teaching. This could also have affected demand within different routes in that particular year. From 2014–15, however, the setup of a single, unified applications portal provided by UCAS enables all prospective applicants to access information on the different routes into teaching in one place.

The latest UCAS release on applications for 2014–15 entry shows that, as of 15 September 2014, 57% of applications were made to higher education institutions, equal to 79,320, and 38% were made to one of the School Direct routes.²⁰ This is broadly in line with allocations. Applicants can initially make up to three applications. Therefore, if each applicant has made on average 2.5 choices, this equates to around 55,000 applicants.²¹

Figure 10: UCAS Teacher Training applications as at Monday 15 September 2014, by route



Source: UCAS

²⁰ UCAS Teacher Training, *UTT Monthly Statistics: Applications*, 2014, available at: <http://www.ucas.com/data-analysis/ucas-teacher-training-statistical-releases>

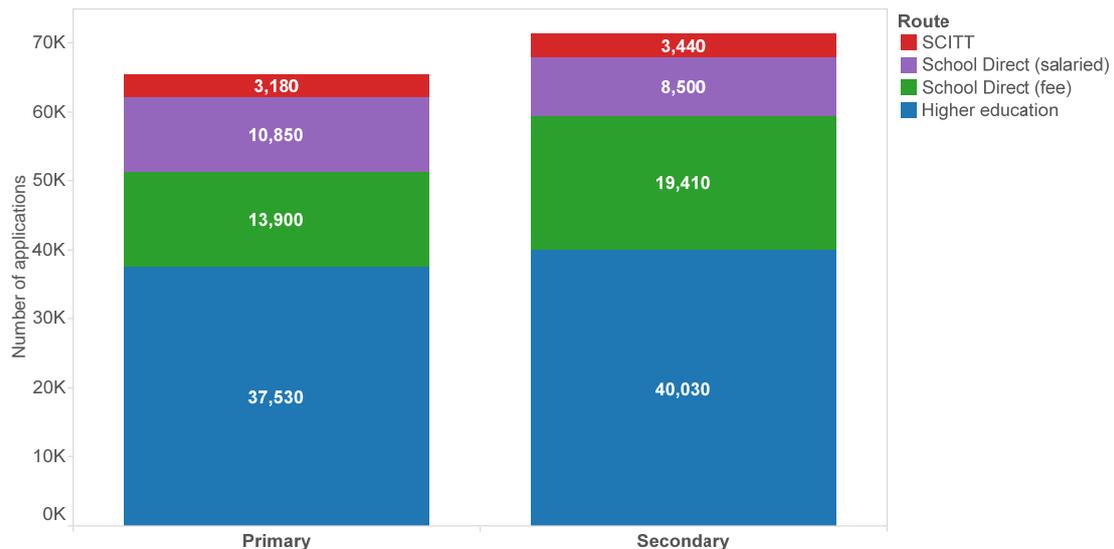
²¹ As this is a new, unified ITT applications system for 2014–15, comparisons with previous years' data can be problematic.

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Within the total 138,610 applications, there have been 65,450 applications made to primary phase training, and 71,390 to secondary. The School Direct salaried route (aimed at career changers) appears to be more popular at primary level, whereas the fee-based route has attracted more applicants in secondary. Applications to higher education institutions are evenly split between phases.

Figure 11: UCAS Teacher Training applications as at Monday 15 September 2014, by route and phase



Source: UCAS

In some areas, demand for higher education courses therefore might appear strong within the current applications cycle, although it will not be possible to determine the outcome in terms of enrolments until the ITT census is published in late 2014. According to some analysts, based on current applicant data, it is likely that recruitment into certain subjects will not meet the DfE's 2014–15 targets.²²

Several changes highlighted in this section might have contributed to a fall in demand for teacher training across all routes during 2013, such as changes made to entry requirements, the timing of the announcement of SKE courses, and – particularly for universities – the investment put into marketing School Direct. These are likely to have temporarily affected some institutions' ability to recruit to their allocations in certain subjects, although they are not likely to permanently decrease demand. However, as highlighted earlier, in spite of these factors, overall, universities still recruited to upwards of 90% of their allocation in 2013–14.

²² John Howson: <http://johnhowson.wordpress.com/2014/08/28/good-news-and-bad-news/>

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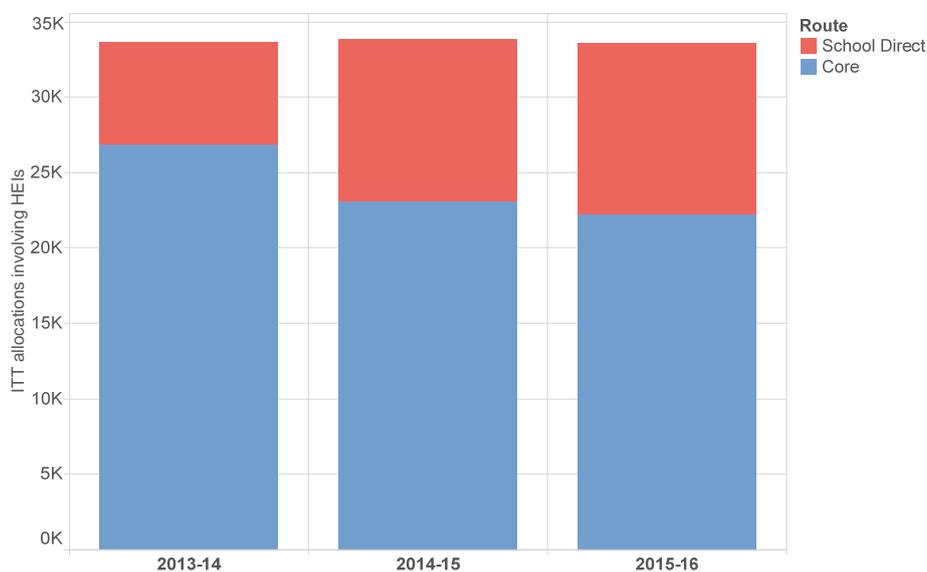
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3.2 Changes in trainees attending higher education institutions

Despite the changes in core allocations, some universities might actually be involved with a greater number of training places than they were in previous years due to an increasing level of partnership working with schools under School Direct. However, underneath these numbers, methods of ITT delivery could be very different for institutions compared to the period before School Direct's expansion. For instance, training could become more resource-intensive under School Direct than it was previously, but at the same time attract differing levels of income, depending on the model of partnership working.

In November 2013, the National College for Teaching & Leadership stated that, 'Many HEI (higher education institution) providers have significantly increased their ITT places due to their engagement with School Direct'.²³ This is because, while initial university core allocations reduced by around 3,700 in 2014–15, the number of School Direct allocations where a university had been selected as a training partner increased by around 3,900, as shown in Figure 12.

Figure 12: ITT allocations involving higher education institutions by route, 2013–14 to 2015–16



Source: National College for Teaching & Leadership

²³ National College for Teaching & Leadership (2013) *Initial teacher training allocations 2014/15* available at:

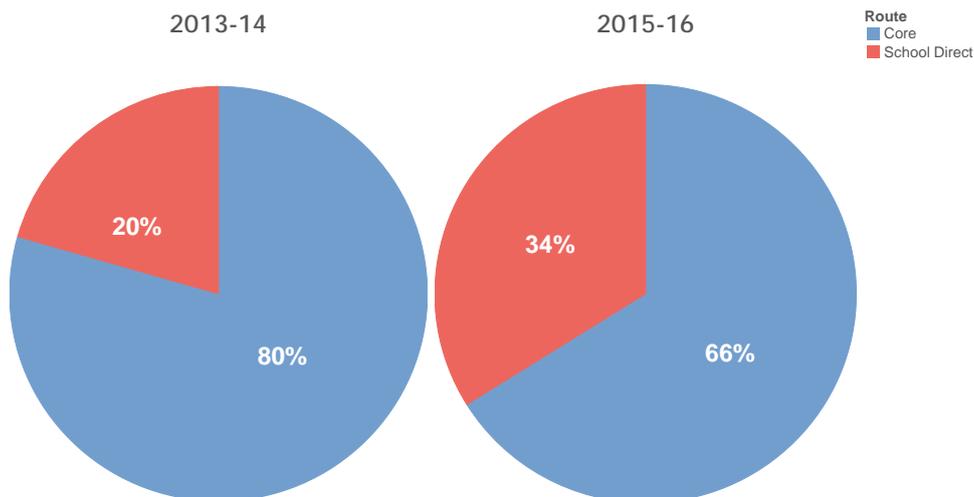
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/300718/itt_allocations_management_information_21_nov_2013_-_fixed.pdf

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While over two years this equates to an overall decrease of just 0.3%, of all allocated places whereby a university plays a role in the delivery of training, the proportion within the School Direct route has increased from around one in five in 2013–14 (20%) to around one in three in 2015–16 (34%).

Figure 13: Allocations where a higher education institution is involved in the delivery of ITT, by route



Source: National College for Teaching & Leadership

This shift in allocations has created benefits but also some uncertainties for universities.

Many institutions have increased their engagement with schools in recent years, as is evident in the numbers of places allocated under School Direct which include a university partner. This shift in allocations has led many to strengthen the existing partnerships that were already in place between universities and schools, and also to develop new partnerships within a competitive market.

As a training model, School Direct can facilitate the setting up of successful partnerships, where both schools and universities take joint ownership in the design and delivery of training. From a school's perspective, this model can allow training to be tailored to their particular needs and circumstances. This could assist in driving up the quality of some training.

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However, as another consequence of the shift in allocations, there is also an increased level of uncertainty for universities, and it has affected some institutions' abilities to plan for the future.

Within School Direct, the exact nature of each partnership, and the role of the university within this, will vary according to the specific partnership agreement that is in place. For example, universities involved in School Direct will have various levels of engagement in marketing, and in the selection, assessment and standards monitoring of the trainees.²⁴ The partnership agreement will also set out exactly how funding will be distributed between the school and the university.

There is an added level of uncertainty for institutions as they might not necessarily know who they will be partnering with year-on-year. This is because it is the decision of schools themselves, when bidding for School Direct allocations, as to which ITT provider to partner with, which may or may not be a university. There is not necessarily a certainty that a university will be selected in such instances, or indeed that schools will bid for allocations at all.

On the one hand, this increased level of competition can incentivise universities to work more strongly with schools in building partnerships, in order to secure a certain level of bids for places under School Direct. On the other hand, this can also create an additional level of vulnerability for universities, as it can be difficult to forward plan or allocate resource – including the required staff capacity – without a guarantee that the university will receive requests from schools to work together.²⁵ All of these difficulties are compounded by the current nature of allocations announcements being made on an annual basis, which adds a further challenge for universities in capacity planning, as there is no guarantee of what allocations might look like in the years ahead.

Recruitment data for 2013–14, and evidence gathered by UUK from institutions in 2014–15, suggests that School Direct does not always recruit near to the levels of places allocated. With this in mind, should School Direct under-recruit in certain areas again in 2014–15, some institutions might in fact *not* be involved in the delivery of more training than before, despite official data suggesting otherwise. Where

²⁴ National College for Teaching & Leadership (2013) *School Direct operations manual: Academic Year 2014 to 2015 (Version 1)* available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/269013/School_Direct_operations_manual_-_academic_year_2014_to_2015.pdf

²⁵ The agreement also sets out: how recruitment and selection decisions are made, who is responsible for communicating with applicants, and which parts of training can be carried out by the schools themselves and which they would like the ITT provider to deliver.

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schools might not want to fill all of their allocated training places, due to a need to meet their own particular needs, overall levels of recruitment might not reflect either the demand that exists from potential students, or the needs dictated by the Teacher Supply Model. If under-recruitment in the School Direct route is common (as has already been the case), this could lead to an overall shortage in trainee numbers across the country.

Any lack of demand from schools to partner with universities can also have resource implications. In order to sustain courses with low core allocations, many universities are now teaching various secondary subjects generically. Not only can this impact the trainees themselves, as it reduces the amount of time spent learning about subject-specific pedagogy, but it also affects staffing. In some cases, it has now become unsustainable to employ full-time members of staff, and some universities have decided to employ associate lecturers or seconded school staff to address this issue. This may have implications for trainees across both core and School Direct routes, and is a worrying development as the expertise of university staff in teaching and research is an important asset within the wider ITT system.

There are also implications for schools. Universities require a certain level of stability within the system in order to provide a sustained level of high-quality service to schools. However, the current environment is uncertain. More stability is needed to ensure that institutions can continue to viably provide core ITT – and to support School Direct, which remains incredibly dependent on the university sector.

3.3 Sustainability of courses

Further to the above, changes in allocations can have an impact on the long-term sustainability of individual courses.

This report has already highlighted the level of decline in core allocations experienced by institutions, but in many universities, reductions in core student numbers are being balanced by an increase in the number of School Direct trainees attending the university for part of their course. In such cases, provision is being integrated for students on different routes. While this has kept several courses viable in the short term, this might not always be a sustainable method of delivery. It is highly dependent on a consistent level of demand from schools to partner with an individual university. Without a sufficient level of core places, continued provision can become vulnerable as, within School Direct, schools might decide to partner with different institutions from year to year, which can lead to fluctuations in enrolments at an institutional level.

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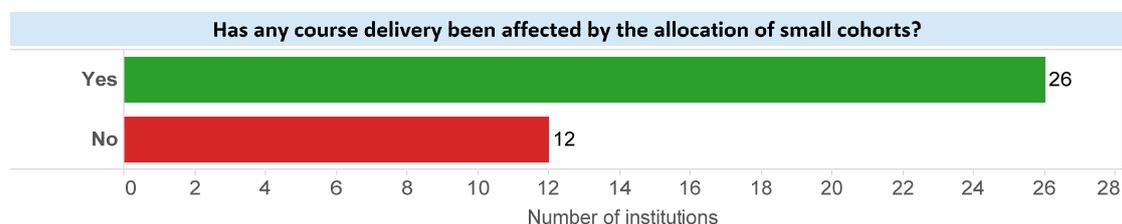
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A reduction in the size of cohorts within certain subjects can be problematic. For example, some universities have reported that only by co-teaching small cohorts of students in biology and chemistry can the subjects remain viable. Similar instances can be found within humanities subjects, where, for instance, history and geography students are taught together for a proportion of the time.

In 2013, the Geographical Association stated that, 'School-led training risks failing to train new teachers well in geography pedagogy.'²⁶ However, evidence from institutions suggests that, in several cases, the percentage of time that trainees now spend focusing on subject-specific pedagogy has reduced. Time spent learning at a subject-specific level is important for secondary teachers in developing an understanding of how best to teach within their area of expertise.

To investigate this, and other issues, further, as part of a 2014 survey of university schools of education, UUK members' institutions were asked whether any ITT course delivery had been affected by an allocation of small cohorts. As shown in Figure 14, around two-thirds of the 39 respondents said yes.

Figure 14: Responses to UUK survey on ITT about sizes of allocated cohorts



Source: Universities UK

To take one subject as an example, Figure 15 shows the distribution of physics allocations by institution for 2015–16. The median allocation is 10 students. While in some cases the core trainees will be co-taught with some School Direct trainees, or with those studying physics with maths, there are several institutions with potential cohorts of fewer than 10 students, a level deemed 'potentially unviable' by the Training Development Agency in 2012.²⁷

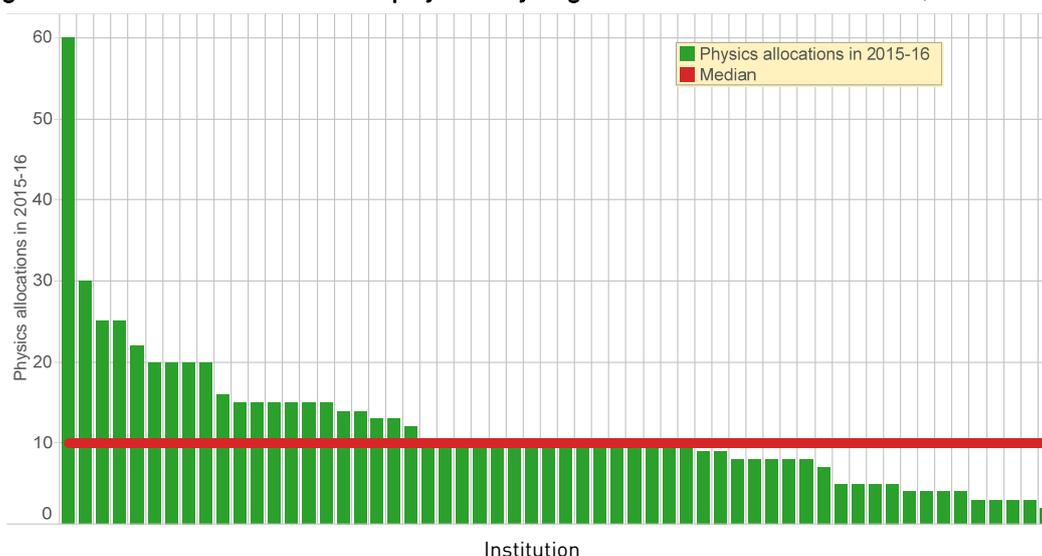
²⁶ Written evidence submitted by the Geographical Association (2013), available at: <http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/WrittenEvidence.svc/EvidencePdf/1089>

²⁷ As cited in 'University-led secondary PGCEs face uncertain future', *BBC*, 8 February 2012: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-16944873>

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Figure 15: Core allocations in physics by higher education institution, 2015–16



Source: National College for Teaching & Leadership

Another element of risk within certain subjects comes from the ending of the ‘outstanding guarantee’ in 2015–16. In 2012, a two-year guarantee of core places was created for ITT providers rated as ‘outstanding’ by Ofsted. This was ‘to provide stability for the best ITT providers as they began to engage with School Direct and the school-led system’.²⁸ However, this policy is due to come to end as of 2014–15. From 2015–16, there is no ‘outstanding guarantee’ of places for such universities.

3.4 Wider financial sustainability of ITT delivery

In 2012–13, there were 13 higher education institutions in England that had more than 20% of their students enrolled onto some sort of teacher training course. This therefore constitutes a significant part of several universities’ activities.

As highlighted earlier in this report, core allocations to universities have reduced by 23% since 2012–13. Despite universities’ engagement with School Direct, and the creation of new university-school partnerships across England, in certain cases the level of change has been so rapid that the viability of delivering ITT more generally has come into question. In the 2014 survey, UUK asked its members’ institutions whether the financial sustainability of ITT provision, and the level of staffing resource required, had changed since the expansion of School Direct.

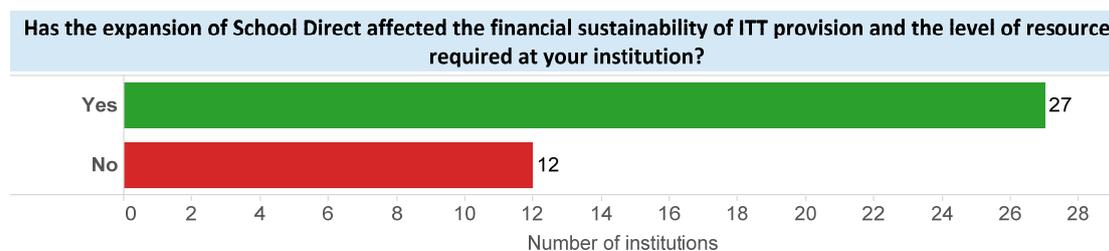
²⁸ National College for Teaching & Leadership (2014) *Provider ITT Allocations Methodology: Academic year 2014 to 2015* available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/273435/Methodology_for_allocating_provider_places_2014_to_2015_v2.0_090114.pdfv

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Of the 39 respondents, 69% said that it had. Cuts in core allocations have led to some institutions implementing restructuring or redundancy programmes. A reduction, or in many cases complete removal, of core allocations within an institution can also lead to course closures.

Figure 16: Responses to UUK survey on financial sustainability of ITT



Source: Universities UK

While overall levels of provision across England should, of course, reflect the levels of demand coming from applicants, some universities have previously had to decline good candidates in certain subject areas, including shortage subjects, because core allocations were filled relatively easily. In the 2013–14 cycle, some institutions requested that unfilled School Direct places be reallocated as core places because there was still further capacity within the university to accept them. These requests were not always granted, leaving the university sector unable to meet demand in some subjects that under-recruited overall during the year, such as physics.

Several UUK members' institutions have provided examples of where a complete removal of core allocations within a specific subject has led to a loss of staffing in that area. This has wider implications for the whole system of ITT delivery; universities house a range of staff expertise as well as the facilities to support schools in the co-delivery of training, as well as providing support for newly-qualified teachers (NQTs). A loss of experienced educators within specific subject areas can affect the diversity and quality of provision in teacher education, thus affecting the level of choice available to schools selecting training partners, and to the trainees themselves.

At the same time, several universities are investing more of their existing staff's resource into supporting School Direct partner schools in activities such as administration, admissions and quality assurance.

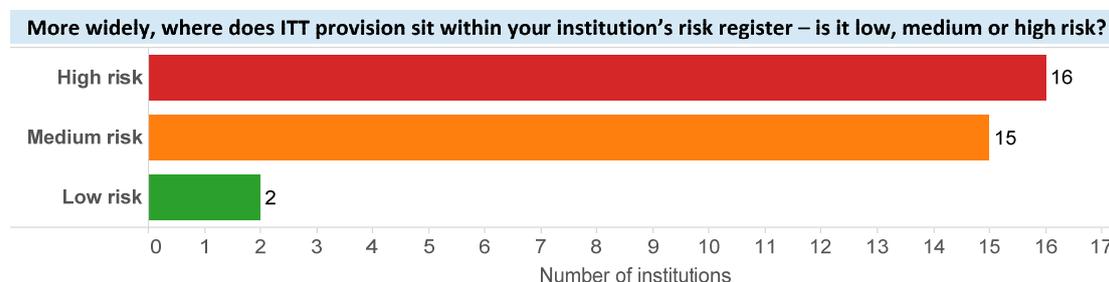
With all of the above in mind, and because allocations announcements can leave universities with just 10 months to plan ahead, UUK asked institutions where ITT

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provision sits within their risk register. As shown in Figure 17, it is almost always deemed medium to high risk.

Figure 17: Responses to UUK survey on the level of risk of ITT



Source: Universities UK

Nonetheless, many universities are adapting their provision accordingly in the face of financial uncertainty, for instance by developing new degrees or engaging more with continuing professional development. While the vast majority of respondents said they remain committed to ITT, this commitment is being kept under continual review by many universities in light of this inability to forward plan. This has significant implications for the School Direct model, which is highly dependent on the existing resource and infrastructure provided by universities.

3.5 Partnerships with schools

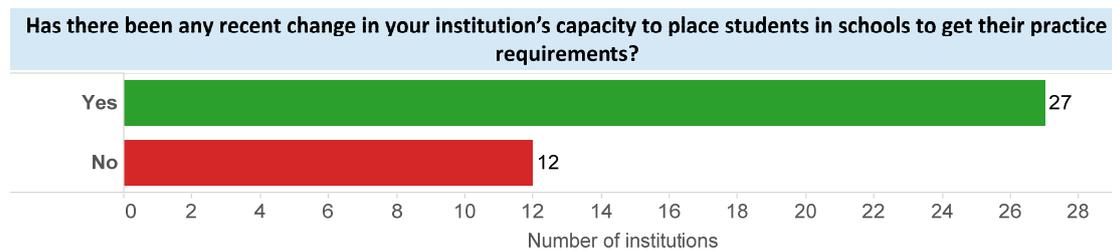
Universities across England are engaging with School Direct. The programme has been a positive development for some institutions, which invest considerable time and resources in working with partnership schools. There is much evidence of universities and schools planning the delivery of training jointly, collaboratively and effectively. On the other hand, some universities have found that they have not had the levels of partnership requests from schools that they expected, which could be the result of changing local needs from the school's perspective, in terms of the changing types of trainees they require. This has created a level of vulnerability, and can affect an institution's relationships with schools.

In addition to this, several universities have experienced a change in their capacity to place students in schools to get their practice requirements. This is because, within some schools involved in School Direct, it might be difficult to accommodate both School Direct and core PGCE trainees.

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Figure 18: Responses to UUK survey on ITT about placing students



Source: Universities UK

Respondents to UUK's survey indicated that this issue was particularly problematic at primary level, where it can be difficult for a university to find schools in which to place students without having to expand the geographical boundaries of the partnership. Such a move has implications for students as well as institutions, as trainees might need to travel further than before to and from their placement school.

3.6 Regional planning

While it is possible for the Teacher Supply Model to forecast the number of required trainee teachers at a national level in a given year, a region's own needs can be slightly different, for example if there is a shortage of teachers within a certain subject locally.

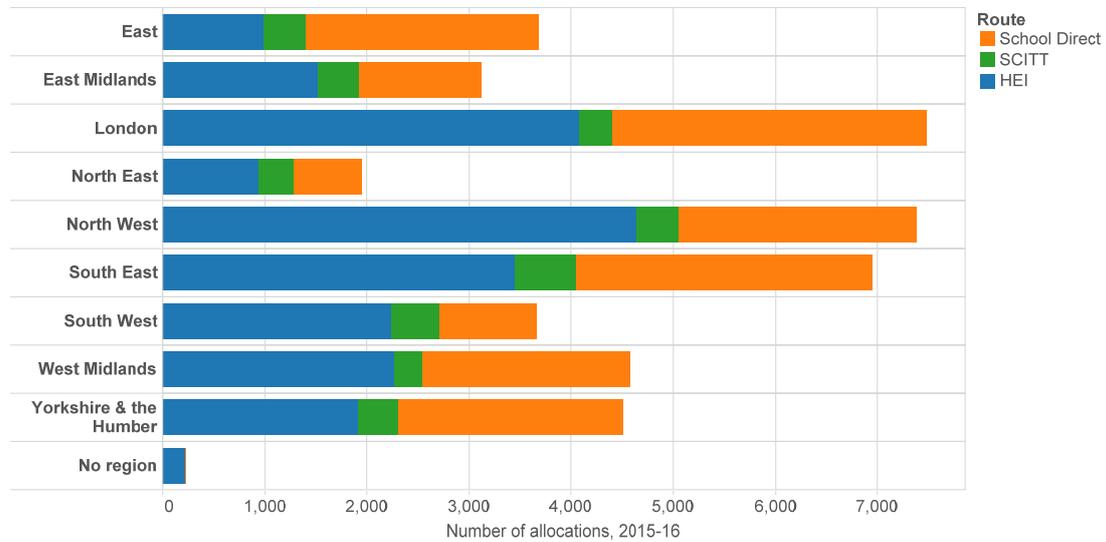
Many NQTs will want to remain working in the area in which they trained. Therefore, where allocations have shifted significantly within a region, this might not always reflect that region's particular needs, and careful planning must be made around these needs. For instance, some universities have had their core allocations removed in subjects where they were one of the only providers in their region.

Figure 19 shows that, in the East of England, the overall number of training places allocated to universities in 2015–16 is less than 30%, whereas more than 60% of places have been allocated under School Direct. However, should School Direct under-recruit again in 2014–15, this could affect the wider supply of teachers within that region.

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Figure 19: Allocations by route within each region, 2015–16



Source: National College for Teaching & Leadership

It is vital that regional needs are taken into account when forecasting the required supply of teachers each year. A failure to do so can unintentionally limit the training options available to students, lead to a shortfall in recruitment in certain subject areas against the need, and risk a loss of expertise that exists within universities.

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Conclusions

Universities' delivery of ITT has changed over the past few years – there are more instances of co-teaching trainees on different training routes, amalgamating the teaching of certain subjects, and the levels and types of staff involved in ITT provision have sometimes changed to accommodate the move to School Direct.

What remains unchanged is universities' commitment to teacher education – it is part of their core mission and, in many cases, their history. They also have a strong track record of recruiting to high levels of their allocations, including in the 'hard to recruit' subjects within STEM, where a sufficient supply of trainees is vital to the continued teaching of skills important to economic growth.

Universities have engaged strongly with School Direct and there have been many benefits both to the wider provision of ITT from the new training model and to the institutions themselves. Universities have also responded to changes in provision by strengthening their activities in other areas of teacher development.

However, the speed of movement towards a school-led system has been too quick and, in the medium term, has created a degree of instability within some institutions delivering ITT following a rapid change in core allocations. It has affected the viability of delivering certain courses – or even of ITT altogether – in some universities. And institutions' ability to plan strategically in the long term has been affected by the short-term nature of allocations and by the uncertainty over exactly how rapidly the move towards a school-led system might take place. At many institutions, ITT is now deemed a 'high risk' area of provision, largely due to the changing nature of allocations year-on-year.

Should a university exit the market for teacher training, this can have wider implications not only for prospective trainees but also for schools and pupils in the region. Universities require a greater level of stability than there is at present – not only for themselves, but in order to sustain the whole ITT system. Universities play a significant and strong role in the delivery of teacher education across England, and in providing support for their partnership schools, including within School Direct – and this role should not be underestimated.

It is therefore vital that universities are given a more stable operating environment, and that their key role in the training and delivery of high-quality teachers is recognised and clearly defined in the government's future ITT strategy.

Higher education in focus

Universities UK's Higher education in focus series covers additions to the evidence base to inform higher education policy development, and is the brand of Universities UK's analytical unit. The series includes the unit's in-house analysis and research, external research that the unit has commissioned, and data visualisations and infographics by the unit.

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