Enhanced Support and Alternative Assessment Approach
Academic year 2020-21
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'This is a difficult time for teachers in schools and universities alike, for young people and for children. In spite of the unforeseen challenges of COVID-19, we continue to seek to ensure that children and young people have the opportunities to learn and to flourish. Student teachers, our next generation of teachers, are eager to gain school experience, an essential element of their journey to become teachers'
([Supporting the next generation of Scotland's teachers in academic year 2020/21](#))

The partnership role between students, teachers, and higher education tutors in providing student teachers with school experience, and in supporting their progress, is critical. In the current environment, higher education institutions are mindful that the support that is being offered to schools around student placements cannot be diminished where in-person university tutor visits do not take place ([Cf. 3.3.3 June 2020 guidance](#)); rather, an enhanced support and assessment approach is needed.

This document sets out a range of potential enhanced and alternative support and assessment approaches, which can inform discussion within partnerships in support of a contextual approach which meets the needs of students, teachers, and university tutors.

Purpose:

- To provide enhanced and alternative university support in the assessment of student teachers (including Cause for Concern and Retrieval);

- To establish processes for the effective support and assessment of student teachers during school placements;

- To clarify expectations for HEIs, university tutors, local authorities, and schools, so that they can enhance their support and assessment approach to help students and schools, with whom they share a common tripartite responsibility to nurture Scotland's future teaching profession.

Potential Enhanced Support Approaches:

- **Regular 'check-in' sessions**: university tutors may meet virtually on, for example, a weekly/bi-weekly basis with student teachers in groups to discuss progress and critical learning incidents and emerging issues;

- **Electronic School Experience files**: the move to electronic school experience files will enable university tutors to support the student teacher to keep their file up to date. While this may not involve giving detailed feedback until the point of assessment later in the placement, a regular review would help to ensure that student teachers are giving due attention to lesson planning, assessment and evaluation.

- **Progress forms/Weekly reflections:** student progress forms (PRoPs, or alternatives) and/or weekly reflections, included in the electronic file, will be periodically reviewed by university visiting tutors so that common emerging themes can be used to inform and guide aspects of the regular group check-in sessions;

- **Direct email:** student teachers and in-school supporters will be provided with a direct email address via which to contact the student teacher's university tutor, should specific support be required;

- **Individual support**: where there is a need for individual support around a particular issue, a university tutor will seek to meet virtually with a student (ordinarily one-to-one). An individual support meeting may take place at the request of a student teacher, in-school supporter, or university tutor, and may involve the in-school supporter, if desired;

- **University tutor/in-school supporter dialogue**: following, or in place of, an individual support meeting between student and university tutors, dialogue between a university tutor and an in-school supporter may be initiated by either, to offer enhanced support or to address ongoing issues;

- **Cause for Concern**: if a school is concerned about the progress of a student teacher, a Cause for Concern should be submitted; this will result in a university tutor conducting an in-person school visit. Where this is not possible (for example, due to external public health restrictions), a virtual observation should be considered; or an assessment by a member of the school's Senior Leadership Team.

Potential Assessment Approaches:

- **Sources of evidence for assessment:** in normal circumstances, four sources of evidence are drawn upon to assess the student against the Standard for Provisional Registration (SPR): observation of a lesson; scrutiny of the school experience file; professional dialogue with the in-school supporter; and a professional learning conversation with the student teacher. In the absence of an in-person university tutor visit, where possible, a virtual observation should be sought (cf. section 3 29th June 2020 guidance), prioritising UG year 4 and PGDE.

- **Virtual observation:** a virtual observation may take in a number of forms: for example, a digital recording of a student teacher leading a lesson.

  There may be the opportunity for Student Teachers to record a series of learning and teaching episodes and to share these with the ITE Tutors to support student professional learning, for example using an online platform. The recording of practice would have to ensure Local Authority and school guidelines were adhered to ([4.2.3: June 2020 guidance](#)).

  Where a virtual observation is not possible, the other sources of evidence indicated above should form the basis of assessment (as below). Further guidance and exemplification is underway to provide further detail.

- **Scrutiny of the electronic school experience file:** the university tutor will access the electronic file in order to identify evidence which demonstrates progress or development needs relating to a range of SPR Benchmarks. In addition, some evidence may come from an in-school enquiry: 'This may include: shadowing a pupil; shadowing a teacher; talking with other staff members; observation of other classes, such as PSE; or offering support in the ASN department' ([4.2.4: June 2020 guidance](#));

- **Professional dialogue with in-school supporter:** the university tutor may meet virtually with the in-school supporter to discuss the student teacher's progress. If a virtual observation has been possible, it should be used to exemplify strengths and areas for development in relation to SPR Benchmarks. If a virtual observation has not been possible, the in-school supporter should elaborate on the student teacher's progress in these areas;

- **Professional learning conversation**: themes emerging from the professional dialogue with the in-school supporter, or the school report, may be explored in detail with the student teacher during a virtual professional learning conversation. Such a conversation may take the form of a tripartite dialogue involving the in-school supporter, where possible. A professional learning conversation will complement scrutiny of the student teacher's file, provide further evidence in relation to SPR, and seek to identify next steps in supporting the student teacher's professional progression;

- **School assessment report:** drawing on the evidence (above) in relation to SPR benchmarks, a report will be produced,

- **Retrieval Placement**: A university tutor will make an in-person visit to assess a retrieval placement student, unless public health guidance prevents this from occurring. Where a university tutor is unable to visit due to public health guidance, a virtual observation should take place. Where a virtual observation is not possible, further guidance should be sought.