

Education, Lifelong Learning & Skills Committee

ELLS(2) 11-06(P3)

Initial teacher training incentives – SO 29 legislation

Issue

1. Proposed legislation under Standing Order 29 – "The Teacher Training Incentives Scheme" – was notified to the Committee as part of the secondary legislation forward look (Item ELL-15-06) on 22 June 2006. A request was subsequently made to scrutinise the regulations in Committee.

Background

2. The Welsh Assembly Government offers incentives for eligible persons to undergo a postgraduate initial teacher training course (training grants) and for eligible persons to take up particular teaching posts (teaching grants). They have been paid for many years, previously using powers under the Education (No. 2) Act 1986 and, latterly, sections 14-17 of the Education Act 2002.
3. Following legal advice last year, it was agreed that legislation made under Standing Order 29 should be in place to provide more effectively and clearly for the various grant conditions and eligibility criteria which apply to these incentives. The Teacher Training Incentive Scheme 2005, made on 11 October 2005, covers the grants payable to ITT students on postgraduate courses in the 2005-06 academic year. It also provides for grants to eligible persons taking up particular teaching posts.
4. At the Committee's meeting of 13 October 2005, the Minister's Report recorded that an announcement had been made on 23 September 2005 that new initial teacher training incentives would be available in Wales for courses starting in September 2006. For trainees starting PGCE courses in September 2006 the new package of incentives available in Wales is as follows:-
 - o eligible secondary maths and science PGCE trainees will receive a £7,200 training grant and a £5,000 teaching grant
 - o eligible trainees on PGCE courses covering other priority secondary subjects will receive a £7,200 training grant and a £2,500 teaching grant. The other priority subjects (modern languages, design and technology, ICT, English (including drama) and Welsh as a second language) will now also include music and RE
 - o eligible trainees on all other secondary PGCE courses (including art, geography, history, PE) and all primary PGCE courses will receive a £4,200 training grant.

The Teacher Training Incentive Scheme 2006

1. The draft regulations are attached at annex A.
2. Because the specific grants, priority subjects, grant conditions and eligibility criteria are specified in the current legislation, a new Scheme will be required from 2006-07 in order to reflect the changed levels of incentive grant and amendments to the list of priority subjects which have been announced for ITT students on PGCE courses in the 2006-07 academic year. The existing scheme will not be capable of covering the revised incentives for new students from that point.
3. We also wish to make allowance for payments to ITT students on Open University (OU) courses. The OU is seeking accreditation by HEFCW as a Welsh ITT provider from the Autumn. The definition of a "postgraduate teacher training course" in the draft 2006 legislation has been expanded from last year so that as well as full-time and part-time courses, it also includes flexible courses. In this context "flexible" indicates that the length and pattern of the course is determined by reference to the student's experience and training requirements.
4. One minor change has been made: a provision which previously allowed people who already possessed Qualified Teacher Status to receive a training grant (on the basis that their degree or qualification was such that maintained schools would be unlikely to offer employment without them successfully completing a fresh postgraduate initial teacher training course in Wales) has been removed. This is because it is now incompatible with another of our long-standing eligibility criteria (that a person must meet the requirements for "eligible students" under the regulations made under section 22 of the Teaching and Higher Education Act 1998 currently in force as they apply to that course) following the publication of The Assembly Learning Grants and Loans (Higher Education) (Wales) Regulations 2006. In actual fact, in the last few years no-one has required this option so its removal will have no significant effect.
5. Other than the changes to the grant levels and the priority subjects already announced and notified to Committee last year, and the two detailed points described in paragraphs 6 and 7, the 2006 legislation has no substantive changes to the provisions in the 2005 Scheme.

Consultation

6. Details of the actual incentives were announced in a press notice on 23 September 2005. As the Scheme does not itself alter those incentives, does not make any significant amendment to the eligibility or other grant criteria and does not introduce any new duties for the initial teacher training providers who deliver the training grants to the students we have not consulted on the terms of this Scheme.
7. The Welsh Assembly Government has regular meetings with the teacher training providers in Wales, at which this issue has been discussed. In particular, we have had extensive contact with the OU who are fully aware of the duties of initial teacher training providers who deliver training grants to students which they will be undertaking if accredited. There has been strong support over the years for the Welsh Assembly Government to operate this scheme, so that that Welsh students deciding where to train as teachers can make that choice knowing that if they study in Wales they will have the same level of incentives as those in England; and to enable teacher

training providers in Wales to compete effectively for the most talented applicants.

Financial Implications

8. There are no additional financial implications for the Assembly. Costs for the incentives themselves are provided for in the existing Teacher Recruitment and Training for Qualified Teacher Status Budget Expenditure Line for 2006-07 of £10.8m.

Implementation

9. Subject to Assembly approval, it is intended that this Scheme be made 19 September 2006 and come into force in 21 September 2006. This is to enable funding to be made available to initial teacher training providers in time for them to make first monthly payments to students in the usual way at the end of October.
10. If the target date is not met and the Scheme is not in place we will not be able to provide funding for students on current eligible post graduate teacher training courses. The training incentives are normally paid monthly and students will have a reasonable expectation of being paid the first instalment by the end of October 2006.