University of Exeter ITE Student Workload and Wellbeing Policy

The University of Exeter ITE courses aim to educate future teachers with long and fulfilling careers in teaching. As such, we recognise the importance of work-life balance and design our courses to ensure that they can be successfully completed within reasonable working hours. Our phased approach to training in the Exeter Model ensures that the planning and teaching load gradually increases as trainees become more confident and skilled. Mentors and tutors guide trainees to build their teaching load at a suitable and appropriate pace.

Trainees who feel their workload is unreasonable and unsustainable should raise this with their personal tutor, UVT and/or mentor who will be able to provide support.

We aim to ensure a reasonable workload for ITE students by:

- **Developmentally Focused Course Design.** Our courses are designed to use developmental training tools that evidence shows help our trainees become better teachers, not simply to generate 'evidence'. We will not require evidence gathering for its own sake. We will simply ask trainees to upload their use of the tools into an electronic Individual Development Portfolio so it is there for assessment points when it is needed.
- **Carefully targeted M-level Assignments.** We use the minimum allowable written word counts for University of Exeter M-level modules, and we design these assignments to enable you to meet the M-level criteria whilst working on activities that develop trainees' teaching. We scaffold formative and summative assignment activities and locate assignment submission points across the year in relation to the pattern of term and holiday time in order to minimise pressure points associated with assignments. We use the University's mitigation system to offer trainees extensions to assignment deadlines within suitable guidelines in response to trainees' personal circumstances.
- **Sensible Communications.** We aim to only contact ITE students between the hours of 8am and 6pm. We are clear that we do not expect student teachers to read or respond to such communications outside working hours. Where staff work in a flexible manner and may send emails outside normal hours, the expectation of response will be clearly signalled in staff email signatures. Similarly, ITE students should be aware that staff are not expected to reply to emails outside of normal working hours, to enable them to also maintain a reasonable work-life balance. No requests for work should be made of either student teachers or staff if completion of this work would require work beyond the normal working day. We will not contact ITE students on the phone outside 8am-6pm.
- **Timetabled time.** We set clear expectations of the time that should be allocated on ITE student placement timetables, to enable sufficient non-contact time to complete the required training activities and academic assignments during the working day.
- **Adoption of policies on workload reduction.** We endorse the DfE guidance on workload reduction with respect to marking, planning and resources, and data management. This guidance and associated expectations of trainees are shared with partner schools. For example, we:

- support ITE students to learn to evaluate and adapt centralised resources in schools and make use of good quality pre-prepared curriculum materials or textbooks rather than a culture of always developing resources from scratch;
- we encourage partner schools to engage ITE students in collaborative planning
- we have carefully scaffolded expectations of ITE students in developing their planning within each of our course phases;
- we have built sessions into our courses on a range of effective feedback strategies including verbal feedback.

Wellbeing

We recognise that teaching can be a stressful occupation at times, and that ITE comes with particular challenges in navigating a busy professional workplace, with rightly high expectations of all teachers to do a good job for the children they teach, and Masters' level work. Our aim is to manage workload to support the wellbeing of ITE students and also to ensure support systems are in place should our students need them. The University of Exeter provides a wide range of wellbeing support which ITE students can access both on campus and at a distance https://www.exeter.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/. In addition, our mentoring system enables ITE students to access support from three distinctive mentoring relationships. Trainees are encouraged to use the University's Accessibility services to gain support for individual needs. We will make reasonable adjustments based on occupational health advice and advice from accessibility. We also encourage students to seek support from the School of Education Race Equality Resource Officer should they experience or need advice regarding racism during their PGCE.