



International perspectives on quality in initial teacher education

An exploratory review of selected international
documentation on statutory requirements and
quality assurance

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The results of this systematic review are available in four formats:

SUMMARY

Explains the purpose of the review and the main messages from the research evidence

REPORT

Describes the background and the findings of the review(s) but without full technical details of the methods used

TECHNICAL REPORT

Includes the background, main findings, and full technical details of the review

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CONTENTS

Abstract	1
1. Background	3
<i>Aims and rationale for current review</i>	3
<i>Definitional and conceptual issues</i>	4
<i>Policy and practice context</i>	5
<i>Research context</i>	6
<i>Authors, funders and other users of the review</i>	8
2. Methods of the review	9
<i>Description of the systematic review methods used.</i>	9
3. What research was found?	11
4. What were the findings of the studies	14
<i>Nature of partnership between institutions</i>	14
<i>Modes of quality assurance</i>	15
<i>Conceptual framework for ITE</i>	15
5. Implications or ‘What does this mean?’	16
<i>Strengths and limitations of this systematic review.</i>	16
<i>Implications for policy and practice</i>	17
References	19
<i>Documents included in this review</i>	19
<i>Other references used in the text of the Report.</i>	22
Appendices	24
<i>Appendix 1 Authorship of this report.</i>	24
<i>Appendix 2 The standard EPPI-Centre systematic review process.</i>	26

List of abbreviations

AACTE	American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
HEI	Higher Education Institution
ITE	Initial teacher education
ITT	Initial teacher training
LEA	Local Education Authority
NQT	Newly qualified teacher
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
PDS	Professional development school
QA	Quality assurance
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
TDA	Training and Development Agency for Schools
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation



Abstract

The review question

What does the literature produced by government and non-government institutions involved in regulation or provision of initial teacher education (ITE) tell us about official and professional views on the impact of institutional roles, quality assurance and conceptual frameworks on quality in ITE?

Who wants to know and why?

This review aims to inform both the policy and the research debates about the relationship between the organisation, management and framework for initial teacher education and its quality. It aims to inform the policy debate by providing an analytical, but accessible, international review of the evidence about, and approaches to, the impact of structures on quality. Further, it aims to support the development of practice by offering a systematic survey of international perspectives on the relationship between structures and quality.

Methods of the review

A systematic search was undertaken of websites relating to the accreditation or regulation of initial teacher education in a selection of countries. The documents retrieved were screened for relevance to the review question

and for trustworthiness. An analytic account was then produced of the elements of these documents relevant to the review question under three themes.

Results

Fifty-four documents were found, the majority of which were written by, or for, national or regional government. Two-thirds of the documents dated from 2002 to 2006, and of the 54, 49 were accounted for by the UK, USA and Australia. The review indicated the following:

- There is widespread agreement that effective partnership between the provider and schools is central to the quality of initial teacher education. In the UK, stringent operational requirements are in place for all ITE partnerships, but, in Australia and the USA, there are very strong and pervasive forms of partnership for some schools and some providers; however, these are seen as innovative or aspirational, rather than mainstream.
- There is widespread agreement on the purposes of quality assessments (QAs) but differences in the extent to which processes are prescribed. In the USA, there is a strong expectation that providers have developed their own rationale, but, in the UK, there is an apparent indifference to rationale and methods, with an emphasis rather on clarity and rigour.

2 International perspectives on quality in initial teacher education: an exploratory review of selected international documentation on statutory requirements and quality assurance

- Whereas in the USA, influenced strongly by the NCATE guidelines, the provider's own conceptual framework for the provision is seen as a core element of quality, in other countries, particularly the UK, the regulatory framework and official discourse is almost silent on the subject.
- Different international practices point to a wide range of data and perspectives, which might be exploited in the evaluation of provision.
- Regulators might encourage coherence in provision of ITE by expecting quality assurance procedures to be based on a rationale.

Implications

- Symbiotic models of partnership between schools and ITE providers are widely advocated but demand appropriate funding.



CHAPTER ONE

Background

Aims and rationale for current review

Aims

This review aims to inform both the policy and the research debates about the relationship between the organisation, management and framework for initial teacher education and its quality. It aims to inform the policy debate by providing an analytical but accessible international review of the evidence about and approaches to the impact of structures on quality. Further, it aims to support the development of practice by offering a systematic survey of international perspectives on the relationship between structures and quality.

It does so by surveying the ways in which institutions offering ITE, local and national government and non-governmental organisations make assessments and judgements about the structures of ITE in relation to its quality. The survey samples from the international literature available to produce an analytic account of issues, trends and assumptions about ITE structures and quality.

Rationale

The review examines relevant material available through the websites of institutions offering ITE, local and national government and non-governmental organisations involved in

the accreditation or quality assurance of ITE. The claims that can be made about the nature of the evidence available from these sources are different from those made about research literature.

These differences relate to the following:

- ***Generalisation and specific context:*** Many research studies make claims to generalisability beyond the context of the empirical work undertaken. On the other hand, the material available for this review by its nature addresses a particular institutional, local or national context. It has the potential, therefore, to provide more specific information about the relationship between that context and the conclusions drawn about effective ITE structures.
- ***Grounds of claims to knowledge:*** Much of the material reviewed draws its authority from the experience and standing of its authors, or from its development and refinement through practice. This too results in the inclusion of greater detail in those areas of most interest to policymakers and practitioners, rather than those with a research interest only.
- ***Bias and the political need to support particular conclusions:*** The material which is included in the current review is open to the charge of political bias from one of several sources. Some material has been published on the authority of individuals who stand

4 International perspectives on quality in initial teacher education: an exploratory review of selected international documentation on statutory requirements and quality assurance

for re-election and who owe allegiance to a party policy. Some has been published by institutions needing to attract students. In most cases, it will be difficult for the authors to admit to uncertainty. These concerns are not completely absent in the case of research studies, of course.

- *Forms of evidence presented:* Not all the documents included in this review report empirical evidence.

These differences mean that this is altogether a different kind of review from that of refereed research studies. This is reflected in the methodology as detailed in Chapter 2 of the Technical Report, and also in the form of the conclusions of the review. The Review Group has been able to report on the issues, trends and assumptions rather than the findings of the material reviewed. Readers will find a survey of international perspectives on quality in ITE as evidenced in statutory requirements and quality assurance procedures at all levels.

Definitional and conceptual issues

This review explores work in initial teacher education (ITE). **Initial teacher education** refers to pre-service/pre-employment professional education and training, that is, programmes of ITE which lead explicitly to accreditation and certification. In some polities, the relationship between academic qualification and professional accreditation is confused and poorly articulated, but the essential concern here is with professional education and training in the context of teaching and teacher development. 'Teacher education', however, is not a conceptually clear structure. In some cases, there is an explicit concern with formal arrangements which address skill and competence development; in others, skills and competence development are implicit in or embedded in academic programmes. For the purposes of this review, the Review Group is concerned with programmes which are explicitly concerned with the certification of teaching, or career entry programmes.

Quality is a contested educational concept (Elliott, 1993). This is particularly so in the case of ITE, where, Wideen et al. (1998) argue that research consistently highlights differences in expectation between student teachers and their tutors. The notion of 'quality' on which this review is based therefore needs to reflect the perspectives of different 'stakeholders'. Wilson et al. (2001) focus on student outcomes and teacher performance as measures of the quality of teacher preparation, but recognise that the studies available to them rarely use these kinds of measures in a rigorous way. In the first instance, it is necessary to define what is meant by quality very broadly, so that as many studies as possible are included.

'Quality' in the following three ways in this report:

- The first is an internal and largely self-referential view of quality, and relates to the extent to which ITE is found to conform to internal, provider-defined measures of quality in terms of self-evaluation processes. In line with the finding by Wideen et al'. (1998) that programmes which were successful in changing student teachers' beliefs tended to offer consistent long-term support, this interpretation of quality includes the notion of consistency or conceptual coherence. In other words, one criterion for judging quality is the extent to which the programme is consistent with the conceptual framework that underpins it.
- The second is a consumer-defined view of quality and relates to the extent to which there is evidence from stakeholders that ITE provision meets stakeholder expectations. Stakeholders in this sense are student teachers who have experienced the ITE whose quality is being interrogated, schools and teachers who employ new students, and managers in ITE institutions.
- The third meaning is a compliance model of quality and relates to the extent to which ITE meets external, normally funder-defined expectations of delivery. Also included in this category are measures of quality which are

based on judgements of graduates' teaching quality against criteria derived from statutory or research-based instruments.

The term **conceptual framework** refers to the underlying model of teaching and teacher education which is deployed in ITE. This will be exemplified in programme aims and definitions.

The term **organisational structure** refers to the form which ITE takes: its location in higher education or schools, its length, the balance and relationship between different elements, and the relationship between subject based and general professional work.

The term **management processes** refers to the structures which operationalise the conceptual framework in the organisational structure, including roles and responsibilities, methods and forms of selection and assessment.

Review question

What does the literature produced by government and non-government institutions involved in regulation or provision of initial teacher education (ITE) tell us about official and professional views on the impact of institutional roles, quality assurance and conceptual frameworks on quality in ITE?

Policy and practice context

In many parts of the world, policy interest in initial teacher education is dominated by teacher supply issues. In the USA and UK, this has resulted in new forms of ITE designed to be appropriate for more mature students making a career change into teaching. These new forms have typically been different in length, intensity and nature of school experience. The interplay between the political imperative to find new pools of candidates for ITE and the conceptual shift which was largely completed in the 1990s to a competence-based view of preparedness to teach has led to some confusion and conflict over evaluation of these new programmes. In less affluent countries (for example, China), the concern has been to

improve the basic academic qualifications of the teaching force. This ambition is intimately connected with decisions about forms of ITE, for example whether they are undergraduate or postgraduate programmes. In sub-Saharan Africa, UNESCO is supporting an ambitious project to increase capacity for preparing teachers to provide the four million extra teachers that would be needed to meet the aim of universal primary education.

In countries with large numbers of remote rural communities, development of distance learning approaches to teacher education is a priority. ITE providers and government alike are engaged in addressing the obvious challenges of providing high quality professional education by this method.

A further common concern internationally is to match the education of teachers to the perceived demands of the classroom. Existing forms of teacher education are in many cases seen as insufficiently driven by the requirements of the tasks that new teachers will need to perform.

One of the drivers that make this survey worthwhile is potential increased workforce mobility. The interest in comparability of qualifications that this has spawned has led to both sharing of information about ITE structures and programmes (e.g. through INCA, the QCA-funded International Review of Curriculum and Assessment Frameworks Internet Archive, KIPUS, the UNESCO-funded Teacher Network of Latin America and the Caribbean and EURYDICE, the information network on education in Europe), and to increased motivation to publish quality assurance frameworks and judgements.

The move to publication of policy, planning and quality assurance documentation is also driven by an interest in evidence-informed policy, and this has been accompanied by a number of government-funded research reviews, some of which form the research background to this review.

Research context

The structure and organisation of ITE is a very broad topic and it is not possible in this short introduction to do justice to the many traditions and strands that have developed in research into ITE, even within one country. This section is therefore restricted to describing a small number of influential studies with particular relevance to this review.

Thinking about the organisation of ITE, in particular the role of schools and the nature of partnership, has been very strongly influenced by two studies undertaken in the late 1980s and 1990s. Furlong et al. (1988) completed an ESRC funded study of 'The role of the school in initial teacher training', which explored the conceptualisation of school-based work in initial teacher training in four programmes of teacher training. The study provided an overview conceptual clarification of the limits and potential of school-based teacher education in terms of the types of knowledge typically deployed by higher-education and school-based teacher educators (Booth et al., 1990; Furlong and Smith, 1996). Furlong et al. (1999), in the Modes of Teacher Education (MOTE) study, developed the concern of the 1989 study in terms of the conceptions of teacher education which were developing in England and Wales, developing what they called a 'topography' of initial teacher education, charting the tensions between the standards-methodology which was underpinning school-based teacher education and the reflective practitioner model, which was broadly current in articulated aims for programmes. These studies mapped the development of new structures in ITE and provided ways of analysing them, but they stopped short of making claims about quality of ITE provision, except in relation to student and employer satisfaction.

In the USA, there has been a stronger tradition of research focusing on measurable outcomes of ITE and this, together with governmental support for review of research evidence, has resulted in a series of research review studies on effective ITE. These have addressed a range of broad questions of policy interest, a

subset of which bear on the Review Group's interest in structures, processes and conceptual framework. Two of these were particularly influential in the design of the first review.

Wilson et al. (2001) undertook a research review which was confined to empirical research meeting their criteria for rigour and undertaken in the USA. It addressed the type of preparation needed in terms of subject matter, pedagogic knowledge and student teaching practice. The review also looked at means of programme improvement and alternative certification practices. An overall conclusion of this review (p ii) is that 'the research base concerning teacher preparation is relatively thin. The studies found, however, suggest that good research can be done, but that it will take the development of more refined databases, measures, and methods, as well as complementary research designs that collect both qualitative and quantitative data'.

This summary finding is reflected in more detailed conclusions that the relationship between subject knowledge and teacher effectiveness is not well understood, and that there is a wide variety of practice described as pedagogical coursework, with no firm evidence about its quality. This finding offers an example of the difficulty faced by researchers in addressing the review question. Since the nature and quality of these elements of teacher preparation programmes is poorly understood, studies concerning the relationship between these elements are likely to be few and weakly conceptualised.

The Wilson review looked for evidence about the impact of state and national policy on teacher preparation, asking particularly about the effect of improvement programmes, but the researchers found the evidence to be thin. The move in the USA, since the early 1990s, to provide alternatives to undergraduate programmes of teacher preparation has given rise to a great many small scale research studies which compare these alternative programmes with traditional pre-service programmes. The wide variety in structure and organisation of the alternative programmes,

and the local nature of most of the evaluation projects means that these studies form only the beginning of a serious enquiry into the relationship between structure and quality in ITE. Wilson et al. (2001, p iii) conclude that 'Future research will need to include more detailed descriptions of the various alternative route program structures and content before conclusions can be drawn about characteristics that make for high-quality programs'.

Wideen et al. (1998) undertook a review of papers addressing perceptions and developing beliefs and practices of beginning teachers related to pre-service education. The review highlights a general lack of impact of teacher preparation programmes on new teachers' beliefs. Programmes which were more successful in this respect featured systematic and consistent long-term support in a collaborative setting. Thus, although the studies reviewed in most cases did not set out to draw conclusions about the structures of programmes, the combined weight of the studies reviewed points to a generalisation which is very much related to the structure of the programme. This points to two difficulties which faced the Review Group in undertaking the first research review. In the first place, the aspects of ITE in which the Group is interested are, by their nature, large scale.

They concern the way in which a programme is designed and managed rather than features of individual teaching approaches and assessment mechanisms, etc. These issues are difficult to address through small scale empirical studies, which are much more numerous than large scale empirical studies. Secondly, an individual study - but still more so, evidence gathered from a number of studies - may draw conclusions related to the structure of an ITE programme, although it did not set out to study structural issues. Both these difficulties, in different ways, have meant that it was not straightforward to locate the studies which provide evidence for the review.

The MOTE study offered a means of analysing the organisation and conceptual framework for ITE, but did not offer a basis for making claims

about their impact on quality. Two major US reviews (Wideen et al.; Wilson et al.) concluded that the design and quality of reporting in existing research left us unable to draw firm conclusions about the relationship between structures and quality.

The first review (Bills et al., forthcoming) found few studies which addressed the review question directly and satisfactorily. Those which came closest to this ideal (Draper et al., 1997; Gormley et al., 1993; O'Hara and Cameron, 1997; Powney et al., 1993) made comparisons of two or more ITE programmes and, in some cases, found significant differences in outcomes. However, none of the studies was able to take account of characteristics of the entrants to the programmes, and Draper et al. concluded that training route cannot be considered to be a distinct variable, but is rather part of a package of variables.

Two more recent projects have addressed the review question more directly. Firstly, Smith and Gorard (2004) undertook a statistical analysis of several large data sets concerning ITE in England and Wales which were available from government statistical sources and involved no extra collection of data. The researchers were therefore unable to go beyond those indicators which had already been identified. One of the questions that the study asked was whether there was any evidence of differential effectiveness of institutions providing ITE; no data was found to support any such conclusion. In terms of the review question, this analysis and conclusion illustrate very well the difficulties of undertaking quantitative studies in this area.

These difficulties include lack of sensitivity in measures of success in ITE, the difficulty of linking individual success with quality of provision, and the lack of agreement on what constitute measures of trainees' baseline competence or ability to benefit from undertaking ITE. Further, the poor level of information available about individual providers makes it difficult to link a provider's success with characteristics of the provision. These problems illustrate the difficulty of addressing

8 International perspectives on quality in initial teacher education: an exploratory review of selected international documentation on statutory requirements and quality assurance

the quality issue by collecting summary data on a large scale, but being unable to access the detail of ITE processes.

Secondly, in a report commissioned by the Victorian Institute of Teaching as part of the Future Teachers Project, Ingvarson et al. (2004) undertook a large scale survey of newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and their employers. The main research instrument was a questionnaire prepared for NQTs and adapted for employers. This questionnaire incorporated a number of scales which were used to measure respondents' opinions about the quality of their preparation to teach. The information independently available to the researchers about the ITE programmes undertaken by the NQTs was restricted to their type (i.e. undergraduate, postgraduate or double degree) and the organisation of the practicum (e.g. length, roles undertaken by students).

However, the use of these scales allowed the researchers to draw some limited conclusions about the features of effective programmes. The main conclusion is that positive ratings for 'opportunity to learn' were strongly related to overall course satisfaction. This was strongest in the case of 'opportunity to learn the content they were expected to teach and how to teach it'. Features of the practicum were not associated with the perceived effectiveness of the course.

The positive conclusions of this report do not have direct relevance to structures and organisation of ITE, and the conclusions themselves are open to the criticism that data on the nature of courses are taken from the NQTs rather than from any independent source; for example, the assessment of opportunities to learn on the course is made by the same people who have been asked to judge the overall effectiveness of the course. However, this study goes substantially further than many others in that the use of scales gives some confidence in the interpretation of constructs, such as 'opportunity to learn'.

Although there has been progress in moving towards techniques that allow researchers to tackle questions about the quality of ITE in relation to its structures, processes and frameworks, it was clear at the time of beginning this review that there was not yet a corpus of robust research in this area. Rather than undertake a further review of research studies, therefore, the Review Group chose to look at what was being said on these issues by those who were setting regulatory or quality assurance frameworks for ITE or advising on these frameworks. Two significant initiatives to collect and compare information about ITE internationally (by INCA and EURYDICE) proved very helpful to us in the work. However, the review has gone much further in examining the relevance of a variety of documentation to the review question.

Authors, funders and other users of the review

The authors of the review are named at the beginning of the report. Ellie Phillips has broad experience of research in the humanities and social sciences, and acted as research assistant for the team. Each of the other authors has research expertise in education and is an experienced tutor for initial teacher education, with responsibility for development and management of ITE programmes.

The review has been funded by the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA), with contributions from the institutions involved via core institutional research funding from the Higher Education Funding Council for England.

Guidance on the direction of the review has been provided by representatives of the TDA and by other review teams working in similar areas. The review users are expected to be ITE tutors and managers as well as the TDA.



CHAPTER TWO

Methods of the review

Description of the systematic review methods used

The principal source of material was the professional literature which forms part of governance and accountability system for ITE in a sample of countries. The Review Group has accessed documents which are available on internet sites and in English. The documents retrieved include accountability frameworks and legislation, policy guidance, and reports by, and about, individual providers. Within this literature, the Review Group have examined those documents which explore the relationship between the conceptual framework, organisational structure and management process of ITE and its quality. The Group worked within a systematic methodology which was adapted to take account of the nature of the documents reviewed. Full details of the method used can be found in the Technical Report.

The first stage of identification of possible documents was to select a sample of countries from which to seek evidence. Having identified the countries to be included, each country was 'scoped' by identifying appropriate websites and systematically searching for relevant documents. The documents that were retrieved in this way were then checked to see that they met a number of criteria:

- Published after 1984
- Written in English

- Addressing initial/pre-service teacher education of school pupils in the 5-19 age range
- Addressing the quality or improvement of initial teacher education
- Addressing the discharge of responsibilities by tutors and/or mentors at course or team level
- Addressing:
 - o the conceptual framework for ITE as expressed through the programme aims, definitions and design, or
 - o the organisational structure or management processes for ITE, or
 - o the organisation and management of partnerships between schools and providers for initial teacher education

The full text documents that found were keyworded using the EPPI-Centre Core Keywording Strategy (EPPI-Centre, 2002a) and additional keywords specific to the context of this review. At this stage, documents were further categorised on the basis of trustworthiness. The aim of this screening process was to exclude those documents that had no claim to represent a view based on collection of evidence or on consensus.

10 International perspectives on quality in initial teacher education: an exploratory review of selected international documentation on statutory requirements and quality assurance

Studies identified for inclusion in the final review were data extracted using Guidelines for Extracting Data which were developed by the Review Group specifically for this review. These were based on the EPPi-Centre Guidelines for Extracting Data, adapted to suit the different kind of literature being addressed in this review.

The review-specific data-extraction tool was used by team members to extract from the documents included in the final review those sections which gave evidence about issues,

trends and assumptions relevant to the review question. During data-extraction, these sections were categorised according to their relevance to aspects of organisational structures, management processes and conceptual framework of ITE. Within these categories, a number of themes were identified and an analytic account was produced organised around these themes.



CHAPTER THREE

What research was found?

Of the 143 documents found, four were duplicates and a further 74 were excluded because they did not match the criteria imposed. This left 65 documents which were keyworded as described in section 2.3 of the Technical Report. Eleven were then removed because they did not meet the criteria for trustworthiness described in section 2.4. This chapter describes the characteristics of the 54 remaining documents.

Table 3.1 Source of documents (N=54)

Source of document	Number
Government department of education website - national	21
Government department of education website - regional	4
Other government sponsored website - national	17
Other government sponsored website - regional	3
Other	9

The majority of these 54 documents were retrieved from government department or government sponsored websites. It was possible to retrieve far fewer documents from the websites of individual providers than had been hoped for, and none of those that were retrieved were included in the in-depth review.

It is not yet common practice for providers to publish material which reports on the outcomes of their quality assurance processes (as opposed

to the processes themselves), nor for them to make available inspection reports even when these are in any case in the public domain.

Examples of other websites from which documents were retrieved include the Australian Council of Deans of Education, the General Teaching Council for England, the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education and the Universities Council for the Education of Teachers.

Table 3.2 Purpose of document (N=54)

Purpose	Number
Report commissioned to inform government policy	17
Statement of government policy or official guidelines	20
Report on provider or course for quality assurance purposes - by consultant (commissioned by the provider)	1
Report on provider or course for quality assurance-purposes - by inspector (commissioned independently of provider)	11
Other	5

The set of documents is dominated by government (national or regional) publications either to inform or to explain policy.

12 International perspectives on quality in initial teacher education: an exploratory review of selected international documentation on statutory requirements and quality assurance

Table 3.3 Authorship of documents (N=54)

Authorship	Number
Government officials, unnamed - national	4
Government officials, unnamed - regional	3
Government-related officials, unnamed - national	21
Government-related officials, unnamed - regional	1
Government-commissioned author or committee, named - national	11
Government-commissioned author or committee, named - regional	4
Consultant commissioned by provider	1
Person employed or commissioned by non-government body	3
Other	7

Most of the authors of these documents were directly employed or commissioned by government in one form or another. By far the majority of the documents were multi-authored.

Table 3.4 Phase of ITE (N = 54, not mutually exclusive)

Phase of ITE	Number
Primary	13
Secondary	12
Cross phase	38
Other	2

The documents analysed were distributed evenly between the different phases of schooling for which teachers were being prepared. ‘Cross-phase’ means that the document reached conclusions which related to both primary and secondary teacher education courses; some documents made separate conclusions about primary and secondary teacher education and these were categorised as ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’, rather than cross-phase.

Table 3.5 Curriculum area (N = 54, not mutually exclusive)

Curriculum area	Number
Art	2
Business Studies	1
Design and technology	3
ICT	2
Literacy - first language	2
Literacy - further languages	1
Maths	5
Music	1
Religious education	1
Science	4
Vocational	1
Other curriculum	2
The material does not focus on curriculum issues.	47

The majority of documents did not focus on specific curriculum issues. Most of the documents selected for inclusion concentrated upon general, rather than subject-specific, aspects of teacher education.

Table 3.6 Date of publication (N = 54)

Year of publication	Number of documents
1990	1
1991	0
1992	0
1993	0
1994	0
1995	2
1996	2
1997	0
1998	4
1999	0
2000	4
2001	2
2002	12
2003	14
2004	7
2005	4
2006	2

Two-thirds of the documents were dated between 2002 and 2006. Since the search strategy used the internet, this bias towards recent documents is unsurprising.

Table 3.7 Country from which the document originated (N = 54)

Country	Number
Australia	12
England (or England and Wales)	10
India	1
Kenya	1
Malaysia	1
Northern Ireland	2
Norway	1
Scotland	5
South Africa	1
USA	7
Wales	13

Just over half the documents originated in the United Kingdom and approximately a quarter more came from Australia. This distribution is largely a reflection of the search strategy, including the decision to consider only documents published in English. It is also, however, an indication of the degree of attention to quality in ITE in the public domain, and the extent to which the internet has become the vehicle for communication in the countries included.

Table 3.8 Number of documents including material on aspects of ITE structures (N = 54, not mutually exclusive)

Aspect of ITE structures		Number
Organisational structures	Nature of programme	25
	Structure of course	26
	Institutional roles	27
	Other	10
Management processes	Selection processes	18
	Roles of tutors and mentors	18
	QA processes	32
	Other	15
Conceptual framework		26

The three main themes which attracted most comment are discussed in section 4. Material on these themes was found under Organisational Structures (institutional roles); Management Processes (QA processes) and Conceptual Framework.

The remaining material addressed a very wide range of issues, with little by way of common ground. The exceptions to this were as follows:

- the remuneration received by schools for the part they play in ITE
- comparisons between undergraduate and postgraduate teacher preparation.



CHAPTER FOUR

What were the findings of the studies?

This section presents the outcomes of the in-depth review of 54 documents. The material extracted from the review documents was extensive and varied. It is neither possible nor desirable to give a comprehensive account of the conclusions from the documents which touch on ITE structures. Rather than do this, the following three themes were selected, which were well represented in the evidence reviewed: the nature of partnership between institutions in providing ITE, modes of quality assurance, and the nature and role of conceptual frameworks for ITE. In each case, there is a unifying general approach along with some interesting differences between, and within, countries. In the following sections highlight the main issues addressed by the documents relevant to these themes.

Nature of partnership between institutions

- In the UK, there is a well established concern about partnership with schools as a key element in high quality ITE, and expectations of strong involvement of schools and teachers in many aspects of ITE programmes are mainstream. Bodies responsible for inspection of ITE stipulate that formal partnership arrangements are in place, with clear documentation of the partners' roles and responsibilities.
- In Australia, there is a strong consensus on the importance of close institutional links and the centrality of professional experience in initial teacher education, but the requirements on providers of traditional programmes are some way distant from the innovative aspirations expressed in forward-looking reports for national government.
- In the USA, much of the writing about development of institutional roles concerns the notion of the professional development school, a model which envisages a very close partnership between higher education institution and school which goes far wider than collaboration for the purpose of initial teacher education.
- In summary, there is widespread agreement that effective school experience, and by extension the strength of the partnership between the provider and the schools, is central to the quality of initial teacher education. The main differences are in the uniformity of approach to this issue. In the UK, through inspection agencies, stringent operational requirements are in place for all ITE partnerships. In Australia and the USA, expectations are differentiated. Very strong and pervasive forms of partnership exist for some schools and some providers, but these are seen as innovative or aspirational, rather than mainstream. UK requirements on the length of time that student teachers must spend in schools during their programmes are greater than in either Australia or the USA, and it may be that the more uniform

requirements for partnership reflect the need to involve most UK schools in initial teacher education placements rather than a small number of selected schools.

Modes of quality assurance

- As might be expected, there is strong agreement that effective monitoring and evaluation is important for the quality of ITE. There is very little disagreement on the purposes of evaluation which centre on *improvement*. The first purpose of evaluation is almost uniformly seen as the identification of need for improvement. A few documents include identification of strengths as an additional purpose, and there is also a sense of accountability in a few publications.
- By contrast, the extent and type of recommendation about procedures for quality assurance varies a good deal. UK inspectorates are keen to emphasise ‘rigour’ in QA processes. The approach is characterised by an insistence on clarity, accuracy, targets and benchmarking.
- Australian sources are keen to emphasise the involvement of partners external to the provider in evaluation.
- US documents regard data collection as an important part of the evaluation and quality assurance processes, in particular placing emphasis on using assessment of student performance in evaluation of programmes.
- The documents surveyed give evidence of variation in the relationship, in terms of QA, between the provider (and its partners) and the body or bodies responsible for accrediting or inspecting the provision. Some cases of this kind of relationship under construction were found. Where these relationships were already well established, there were differences in approach. In the UK, under an inspection scheme, providers were expected to employ demonstrably effective methods, but were not required to make explicit the rationale for their choices. By contrast in Australia and the USA, accreditors were much more prescriptive about the directions for course development.
- In addition, there is a difference between the UK and USA in terms of the expectations regarding providers’ own rationale for evaluation procedures. In the USA there is a strong expectation that providers have developed their own rationale, although there are some tensions inherent in this assumption. In the UK, there is an apparent indifference to rationale and methods, with an emphasis rather on clarity and rigour. It is, of course, possible to argue that this emphasis in itself represents a position on the nature and purpose of evaluation.

Conceptual framework for ITE

- The Review Group’s interpretation of this term was in terms of a conceptual framework for effective teacher education. They looked in the documents for answers to questions such as ‘How do student teachers learn?’ and ‘What makes an effective teacher education programme?’.
- In the USA, there is very strong emphasis on the conceptual framework which the provider sets out for its courses and demands that this be clearly and explicitly expressed in the accreditation documentation.
- Outside the USA, the emphasis is much less on requiring providers to articulate their own conceptual framework and more on specifying what the aims of the programme should be. In the UK, however, accreditation and inspection frameworks do not specify the aims that the provision should pursue, nor do they require providers to be explicit about the theoretical underpinnings of their provision.
- There is a starkly different approach to conceptual framework for ITE in documents from different countries represented in the review. Whereas, in the USA, influenced strongly by the NCATE guidelines, the provider’s own conceptual framework for the provision is seen as a core element of quality, in other countries, particularly the UK, the regulatory framework and official discourse is almost silent on the subject.



CHAPTER FIVE

Implications or ‘What does this mean?’

Interpretation and application of the results of this review requires further work by different users of research, but initial implications are outlined here.

Strengths and limitations of this systematic review

This review differs from other EPPI-Centre systematic reviews in a number of ways:

- The Review Group used the internet, rather than electronic databases, as their source and limited their search to a small number of countries.
- Following screening for relevance, the Review Group undertook a second screening for ‘trustworthiness’, rather than use the standard approach to appraising research studies.
- In place of a synthesis of evidence, the Review Group constructed an analytic account, sorting the evidence into themes and commenting on the similarities and differences between countries.

The reasons for the influence exerted by the documents in the review and the claims that the authors or publishers make, usually implicitly, about the grounds for trust in their conclusions, have been an important element in the Review Group’s reasons for undertaking this review and the decisions made during its

course. The evidence presented in this review is very far from being the same kind of evidence as that available from the generalisable outcome of the ideally rigorous research study. However, the world in which policy and practice decisions about the organisation of ITE take place is one in which practical, political and resource considerations exert a very strong influence. In these circumstances, decontextualised generalisable research findings are deemed to be at best unhelpful and, more than likely, unachievable.

The review draws little on the grey literature produced in connection with individual providers and much more on documents produced for local and national government, especially in relation to the regulatory framework for ITE. These documents provided a very rich source of commentary on the characteristics of ITE that national and local governments perceive to be effective and therefore represent a possible avenue for further exploration.

Although keen for the review to be representative in this way, the Review Group was able to find very little material that could be included in the review from less affluent parts of the world. There are a number of reasons for this. One is that they were restricted to searching for documents in English. A second is that use of the internet for circulation of grey literature is less well developed in these countries. A third is that,

in some cases, quality assurance processes themselves which give rise to most of the grey literature are less well developed. The first two of these are unavoidable limitations of the search procedures, while the third is an outcome of the scoping. It has, however, been impossible to disentangle the three reasons within the budget available.

In this limited review, it has been possible to identify a number of themes on which there is an accumulation of opinion from the representative documents that have been examined. Within these themes, there are some areas of consensus and some interesting differences of approach. These outcomes could be followed up by extending the geographical reach of the review with a tighter review focus or by using additional forms of evidence to pursue the rationale for, or influences on, these conclusions.

Implications for policy and practice

There are three main areas in which conclusions have been drawn from the review of documents. The consensus that the quality of partnerships between schools and providers is crucial to successful ITE will surprise few. Recent investment in supporting partnership is testimony to the Training and Development Agency's concern for this quality. What is rather more complex is the nature of partnerships which are perceived to generate strength. The differences between countries in perspectives on partnership suggest that professional development schools or internships may provide models worthy of attention in the UK. The most radical proposals are for a clearly symbiotic relationship between school and HEI partners, with opportunities for staff from both institutions to be involved in teaching of school pupils, research projects and CPD, as well as activities which are directly part of the ITE programme.

The review also highlighted a number of comments about the need to make adequate remuneration to schools and teachers for

their role in ITE. This suggests that a resource model, which properly reflects the roles of the two partners, is a necessary, perhaps central, element in the construction of an effective partnership rather than something which can be dealt with as an afterthought.

Agreement was also found on the importance and purposes of the provider's own quality assurance processes, and thus the importance for providers of paying specific attention to the relationship between quality assurance processes and the structures for the delivery of ITE. There was widespread support for the use of a wide range of data and engagement of a number of interested parties in the evaluation process. The range of data currently available to support evaluation of ITE in the UK is much more restricted than that which is, for instance, available to schools. All those involved need to develop broader and more meaningful data-capture tools in order to support the development of data-rich collaborative evaluation and improvement processes.

Differences were, however, between US and UK requirements, with the former requiring providers to have a developed rationale for their evaluation processes in terms of the overall conceptual framework for the provision. This difference between the two countries goes well beyond the area of the provider's own quality assurance processes.

In the USA, influenced strongly by the NCATE guidelines, the provider's own conceptual framework for the provision as a whole is seen as a core element of quality, underpinning all other aspects. However, this is complex territory. Local and national government and their agencies exert a strong hegemonic influence on practice in initial teacher education; regulatory frameworks impact directly on, and over time strongly shape, the provision that they seek to regulate.

In some UK instances, there is suggestive evidence that the rationale for initial teacher education is wholly and explicitly compliant, and the lack of interest of regulatory agencies (such as Ofsted) in the nature of rationale for

18 International perspectives on quality in initial teacher education: an exploratory review of selected international documentation on statutory requirements and quality assurance

structures, actions and processes has produced some institutional reluctance to engage in such a rationale. Nor is it the case that the US model circumvents the issue of compliance. A close reading of the NCATE guidelines reveals many areas in which compliance is required, even within the requirements for the conceptual framework itself. For example, values in the area of diversity and intentions for the exploitation of IT are laid down as essential parts of the rationale.

So, although the NCATE guidelines require providers to declare their own conceptual framework, there is still a high degree of prescription. It can be argued that the existence of requirements or guidelines in itself necessarily gives rise to a compliance culture.

There is scope for providers to improve the coherence of their programmes by focusing on the conceptual framework for their provision. The conceptual framework requirement in the NCATE guidelines is as much about coherence of curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and evaluation and about common understanding among partners in the delivery of ITE as it is about giving providers the freedom to set their own priorities. Regulators can encourage providers to pursue this route to coherence by expecting quality assurance procedures to be based on a rationale. To make this effective, there would need to be some genuine scope for difference in rationale and practice and safe routes for innovation.



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Appendix 1: Authorship of this report

This work is a report of a systematic review conducted by the English Review Group.

The authors of this report are:

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They conducted the review with the benefit of active participation from the members of the review group.

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Conflict of interest

There were no conflicts of interest for any member of the review group.

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Appendix 2: The standard EPPI-Centre systematic review process

What is a systematic review?

A systematic review is a piece of research following standard methods and stages (see figure 1). A review seeks to bring together and ‘pool’ the findings of primary research to answer a particular review question, taking steps to reduce hidden bias and ‘error’ at all stages of the review. The review process is designed to ensure that the product is accountable, replicable, updateable and sustainable. The systematic review approach can be used to answer any kind of review question. Clarity is needed about the question, why it is being asked and by whom, and how it will be answered. The review is carried out by a review team/group. EPPI-Centre staff provide training, support and quality assurance to the review team.

Stages and procedures in a standard EPPI-Centre Review

- Formulate review question and develop protocol
- Define studies to be included with inclusion criteria
- Search for studies - a systematic search strategy including multiple sources is used
- Screen studies for inclusion
 - o Inclusion criteria should be specified in the review protocol
 - o All identified studies should be screened against the inclusion criteria
 - o The results of screening (number of studies excluded under each criterion) should be reported
- Describe studies (keywording and/or in-depth data extraction)
 - o Bibliographic and review management data on individual studies
 - o Descriptive information on each study
 - o The results or findings of each study
 - o Information necessary to assess the quality of the individual studies

At this stage the review question may be further focused and additional inclusion criteria applied to select studies for an 'in-depth' review.

- Assess study quality (and relevance)
 - o A judgement is made by the review team about the quality and relevance of studies included in the review
 - o The criteria used to make such judgements should be transparent and systematically applied
- Synthesise findings
 - o The results of individual studies are brought together to answer the review question(s)
 - o A variety of approaches can be used to synthesise the results. The approach used should be appropriate to the review question and studies in the review
 - o The review team interpret the findings and draw conclusions implications from them

Quality assurance (QA) can check the execution of the methods of the review, just as in primary research, such as:

- Internal QA: individual reviewer competence; moderation; double coding
- External QA: audit/editorial process; moderation; double coding
- Peer referee of: protocol; draft report; published report feedback
- Editorial function for report: by review specialist; peer review; non-peer review

The results of this systematic review are available in four formats:

SUMMARY

Explains the purpose of the review and the main messages from the research evidence

REPORT

Describes the background and the findings of the review(s) but without full technical details of the methods used

TECHNICAL REPORT

Includes the background, main findings, and full technical details of the review

DATABASES

Access to codings describing each research study included in the review

These can be downloaded or accessed at <http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/reel/>

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The EPPI-Centre was established in 1993 to address the need for a systematic approach to the organisation and review of evidence-based work on social interventions. The work and publications of the Centre engage health and education policy makers, practitioners and service users in discussions about how researchers can make their work more relevant and how to use research findings.

Founded in 1990, the Social Science Research Unit (SSRU) is based at the Institute of Education, University of London. Our mission is to engage in and otherwise promote rigorous, ethical and participative social research as well as to support evidence-informed public policy and practice across a range of domains including education, health and welfare, guided by a concern for human rights, social justice and the development of human potential.

The views expressed in this work are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the funder. All errors and omissions remain those of the authors.

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