LONDON MATHEMATICAL SOCIETY

Review of Accreditation Criteria and Requirements for ITT.

Response from the London Mathematical Society to the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA)

We appreciate the desirability of having a single set of criteria for ITT courses.

1. The implementation plan aims to improve the 'quality of teachers' by 'setting the bar higher'. But the policy must find some way to recognise the delicate issue of the provenance of the first degree (rather than merely its 'class'), and to allow sufficient scope for assessing the strength of an applicant. The enhanced grants scheme also needs to be much clearer about the relevance of the *subject* of the applicant's first degree (not just of the subject they apply to *teach*). It would seem that those currently applying to teach mathematics are sometimes being accepted simply because they have a 'good degree' (from *any* university at all) - with limited attention being paid to the relevance of the subject of that degree. This suggests the criteria for the award of higher level grants may need to be made clearer if the scheme is to be administered in a way that supports the parallel rhetoric about "improving the selection of candidates".

2. We note that the implementation plan emphasises strengthening phonics and behaviour management, but makes no specific mention of the need to attend to anything relevant to mathematics. There are no similar 'politically sensitive' themes in mathematics, but there are serious issues that may deserve explicit mention to ensure that they are addressed. For example, the traditional CPD structures – in local authorities, in the Strategies, and in NCETM – can no longer be expected to deliver what may be required by the *National Curriculum Review* (which seems likely to propose changes that will require very careful attention during ITT, and during the first few years of teaching).

3. The significance of this neglect becomes all the more disturbing when one notes the proposed increase in 'school time' for PGCE *primary* programmes (from 90 days to 120 days) merely to bring them into line with secondary programmes. This would seem to be ill-advised and bureaucratically doctrinaire. Almost all intending primary teachers need time to review their own KS1-3 mathematics if they are to teach KS1-2 with any confidence – *especially in view of the reported likely changes in the National Curriculum* (which, for example, seem likely to require all primary teachers to teach 'standard written algorithms' for arithmetic that they themselves may never have mastered!). This crucial process of getting trainees to 'revisit KS1-3 mathematics' requires **more** subject-specific time devoted to personal practice, instruction, and reflection – not more time diverted into the classroom. This aspect of the proposal needs rethinking.

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