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RESEARCH AND TEACHER EDUCATION: THE BERA-RSA INQUIRY

# POLICY AND PRACTICE WITHIN THE UNITED KINGDOM

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	1
Introduction	2
Teachers' Standards/Competences and research in national contexts	3
The (re)turn to the practical and the discourse/s of relevance	6
Conclusion	8
Warrant	9
References	10
Appendix 1 Organisation of ITE in the United Kingdom	16

**ABSTRACT**

Across the four jurisdictions of the United Kingdom (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales) initial teacher education (ITE) is under active development, with its content, location, control and quality often the focuses of sustained debate. Statutory and professional requirements for the sector inevitably reflect differing assumptions about teaching, teacher knowledge and governance. In exploring ITE across the four jurisdictions, this paper reviews policies and practices through two major focuses: first, the relationships between the declared teacher Standards (competencies/competences) and research-informed teacher education provision; second, the 'turn or (re)turn to the practical' in teacher education, including policy declarations, changes in practices, and emphases and effects of the discourse(s) of relevance.

Across the UK, the paper argues that the knowledge bases of teaching are contested and reflected in the resultant teacher Standards. In Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales, schooling is clearly important in

the construction of development and/or re-affirmation of national identities. Teacher education policy then assumes strategic importance in devolved Governments' educational policies. In Scotland and Northern Ireland, and less explicitly in Wales, research-informed provision is a declared part of the Standards and the expectations of teacher education programmes and providers. In England, although there has been debate about national identity and values within the Standards and the ITE curriculum, a more generic stance has been adopted in recent policy-making, superficially less influenced by cultural beliefs and more by ideological agendas. The English Standards and current Government policy now indicate a decisive shift away from the idea of teaching as a research-based profession and towards the construction of teaching as a craft.

As part of the (re)turn to the practical in ITE across the UK, all provision places considerable importance on 'practicality' and 'relevance'. Within this debate, this paper argues that the discourse of relevance is a powerful part of the (re)turn to the practical. We suggest

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that there are many manifestations of this discourse across the UK, but an emphasis on the experiential skills and knowledge necessary for new teachers to be 'classroom-ready' is a common and often central feature. In England the (re)turn to the practical has been intensified by specific structural and political factors and by a dominating culture of compliance and regulation. Despite some similarities and differences across the four jurisdictions, forms of the discourse of relevance currently found in England are creating a model of ITE which privileges performativity and 'practical' and experiential knowledge over theoretical, pedagogical and subject knowledge.

The paper identifies past and present areas of similarity in ITE across the four jurisdictions, but it also argues that there is now some marked divergence, with England emerging as the exception or outlier. But in the absence of clear evidence on the effectiveness and lived realities of research-informed ITE provision across the UK, the paper concludes that opportunities for maintaining research-rich and enquiry-led ITE are welcome, alongside debates on the educational research undertaken in universities in partnership with and for the teachers, schools and communities they serve.

## INTRODUCTION

There is widespread international agreement that '(T)he quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers and principals' (OECD, 2011:235). Attention to the quality of teachers has directed attention to national systems for teacher education (OECD, 2005, 2007; Schleicher, 2011). Across the four nations of the United Kingdom (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales) teacher education is under active development and statutory requirements for initial teacher education (ITE) inevitably reflect assumptions about teaching and different approaches to the governance of teacher education. These changes have been facilitated by political devolution and possibilities for greater cross-national divergence in education policy have increased (Raffe, 2005). Reviews of teacher education have been undertaken in Northern Ireland (DENI, 2010a; DEL, 2013), Scotland (Donaldson, 2011), Wales (Tabberer, 2013) and, most significantly, England, where there have been a number of official pronouncements on teacher education since the Coalition Government came to power in 2010 (see, for example, DfE, 2010a; DfE, 2010b; DfE, 2011a). Revised Standards/competences have been introduced in England (DfE, 2013a), Scotland (GTCS, 2012), Wales (WAG, 2009a; WG, 2011) and Northern Ireland (GTCNI, 2007). At the same time, university Schools of Education across the UK have experienced volatility in student numbers, institutional changes in Wales

and a decline in the intake quota in Northern Ireland, destabilised staffing and fewer funding streams for applied research (Christie et al, 2012).

The actual range of providers for teacher education is diverse. In summary (see details in Appendix 1), ITE in Northern Ireland is currently provided through five higher education institutions (HEIs), two local universities and the Open University (OU) and two university colleges. There are no school-based routes into teacher education. In Scotland, teacher education is provided through eight universities with some provision from the Open University in Scotland. There are currently no school-centred (SCITT) or employment-based (EBITT) routes. In Wales teacher training is provided by three regional 'centres', each made up of collaborating HEIs, and the Open University in Wales. Each centre provides the opportunity to complete an accredited teacher education (to avoid 'training') course, as well as managing and delivering an allocated number of employment-based training routes under the Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP) on behalf of the Welsh Government. In England, the diversity of training routes is considerable, with multiple providers and different routes into teaching. In 2010/11, for example, Smithers & Robinson (2012) noted that pre-service teacher education for approximately 37,300 entrants (Howson, 2012) was supplied by 227 providers including 74 HEIs (the vast majority being university Schools of Education), working with their partnership schools, 55 SCITTs and 98 EBITT programmes (some of which had tiny numbers of students, for example one EBITT with only one student)<sup>1</sup>. The introduction of the School Direct route has further complicated such past patterns of provision, and at the time of writing it is not possible to quantify the number and type of providers accurately. Some form of post-graduate provision, however, looks set to remain the dominant mode of pre-service training, with School Direct making the on-going involvement of some universities in teacher education uncertain (Furlong, 2013; McNamara and Murray, 2013).

This paper explores arrangements for pre-service school teacher education in the four jurisdictions of the United Kingdom. It has two major focuses: first, the declared teacher Standards (competencies/competences) and their relationships to research-informed teacher education; and second, the 'turn or (re)turn to the practical' in teacher education, including policy declarations, changes in practice and emphases and effects of the discourse/s of relevance. Our focuses are therefore largely on explicit policy and practices or what Popkewitz (1987) terms 'the public discourses'<sup>2</sup> of the sector across the UK. But following Ball (1994: 16), we would wish to acknowledge that public discourses

<sup>1</sup> Smithers & Robinson (2012:i) record nearly four-fifths of entrants in university programmes, 16.6% in EBITTs and 4.6% in SCITTs in 2010/11.

<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that Popkewitz warns that such discourses serve to dull 'sensitivity to the complexities that underlie the practices of teacher education....(by) a filtering out of historical, social and political assumptions' (1987:ix).

of teacher education (including statements about teaching such as Standards and policy statements) are decoded, mediated and instantiated in practice in markedly differing ways across the teacher education sector. This is not least because they are shaped by and act to shape the perspectives of the various institutions providing teacher education and the pre- and in-service teachers, teacher educators and other stakeholders operating in the field. In short and simple terms then, there are often differences and diversities in the ways in which teacher education policy is mediated and enacted in practice.

Our analysis identifies some similarities across the four jurisdictions, but it also demonstrates that policy in England appears to be diverging markedly from that elsewhere in the UK. This situation has particular implications for the future contribution of research-based knowledge in teacher preparation in England. But, despite these marked policy differences, many aspects of the nature (and quality) of teacher education in the four jurisdictions may not differ as much as political rhetoric, recent reforms and explicit definitions of teaching and teacher education might suggest. We return to discuss this issue in the conclusion to the paper.

### TEACHERS' STANDARDS/COMPETENCES AND RESEARCH IN NATIONAL CONTEXTS

The view of the teacher, and the role of research within initial training, is depicted differently in the Standards/competences frameworks across the UK. Clearly, practice does not reside in the Standards, but these documents frame perceptions of the 'good' or 'good enough' teacher, representing forms of 'prescribed' or 'demanded' professionalism (Evans, 2011). Before 2011 the Standards across the UK were arranged in three inter-related themes - professional values and practice, knowledge and understanding, and teaching skills - but differed in terms of provenance and content. Each carried the inflection of local histories, politics and culture, and these have become increasingly influential, leading to the current diversity of expectations. Since then, although there are some communalities between the smaller countries in formulating and monitoring standards and competencies, there is a growing isolation of England, both in terms of rhetoric and expectation.

The reform of teacher education in Scotland is part of wider changes that include a new school curriculum, qualifications framework, teachers' Standards, and deliberation on teachers' pay and conditions. The Curriculum for Excellence was fully implemented from 2010 and new National Qualifications are being introduced from 2013/14.<sup>3</sup> The General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) was established in 1965 and attained independent status on 2 April 2012. The GTCS

has responsibility for Entry Requirements (GTCS, 2013a) and Guidelines for Initial Teacher Education Programmes in Scotland (GTCS, 2013b). These documents advise that applicants to ITE 'should have the capacity to know about research and scholarship and, where appropriate in the future, be actively able to practise research through, for example, professional enquiry' (GTCS, 2013a:3). Teachers' Standards are generated by the GTCS. Following a process of consultation a revised suite of Professional Standards came into effect in August 2013. These are the Standards for Registration (SFR) - Provisional (ITE) and Full Registration (end of induction), Standard for Career Long Professional Learning (SCLPL) and, for some teachers, Standards for Leadership and Management. Engagement with research and participation in professional enquiry are woven through the Standards framework. There is a movement from small-scale involvement in 'teacher research' towards 'professional enquiry' linked to Professional Update for all registered teachers. The early phase Standards require beginning teachers to know and understand 'the importance of research and engagement in professional enquiry' (GTCS, 2012a:12). The Standards for Registration (GTCS, 2012a) requires that NQTs (newly qualified teachers) 'know how to access and apply relevant findings from educational research; know how to engage critically in enquiry, research and evaluation individually or collaboratively, and apply this in order to improve teaching and learning' (p.12). Beginning teachers are expected to 'systematically engage with research and literature to challenge and inform professional practice' (p.18). The Standard for Career-Long Professional Learning (GTCS, 2012b: 10) includes the following key professional actions: 'engage in practitioner enquiry to inform pedagogy, learning and subject knowledge; lead and participate in collaborative practitioner enquiry'. The Standards for Leadership and Management (GTCS, 2012c:8) require that, 'Leaders apply their enhanced knowledge and critical understanding of research and developments in education policy to support school development'.

In Northern Ireland teacher education courses are approved by the Department of Education, accredited by the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI) and inspected by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) (DENI, 2010b). The GTCNI (established in 1998), which has been active in promoting teaching as a research-informed profession, was responsible for the revision of the professional competence framework for teachers (GTCNI, 2007) within which there are three broad areas: Professional Values and Practice, Professional Knowledge and Understanding, and Professional Skills and Application. The GTCNI framework also provides competence-related exemplars across each phase of teacher education. The concomitant Code of Values and

<sup>3</sup> National 4 and National 5 qualifications will be introduced in 2013/14, followed by the new Higher in 2014/15 and the new Advanced Higher from 2015/16 onwards.

Professional Practice, in accord with the expectations in Scotland, advocates a reflective activist profession which is engaged in and with research:

*The notion of the teacher as a researcher is complementary to the Council's concept of reflective practice. Teachers should engage in action research within their own classroom, school or institution and, in addition, they should take cognisance of research within the teacher education community (GTCNI, 2007: 12).*

Such views are framed by the Teacher Education in a Climate of Change consultation document (DENI, 2010a) which does mention an assortment of roles for research which include, inter alia, 'introducing new information and ideas to schools; encouraging teachers to engage more actively with new knowledge and approaches ... how best teachers can be educated... teaching methodologies that lead to effective learning ... and ...ensuring that the findings from this work are reflected in all stages of teacher education'. Helpfully, it is also suggested that 'research priorities need to be developed and taken forward in a comprehensive and coherent manner and DE needs to form a closer relationship with the producers of research' (DENI, 2010a:17). Obtaining funding for research in education in Northern Ireland will become more difficult with the forthcoming withdrawal of two major US-based philanthropic providers, so a role for DE in supporting reduction research is to be welcomed. Despite this, however, Leitch (2008:111) has suggested that 'the role of practitioner research is significantly under-utilised in terms of knowledge production, teacher development and school improvement'.

In Wales, the position of research is more neutral. All Initial Teacher Training (ITT) programmes are accredited by the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW). The General Teaching Council for Wales (GTCW) is responsible for the notification of award of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) on behalf of the Welsh Government and inspections are undertaken by Estyn (Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales), who inspect the three regional 'centres' [see Appendix] rather than individual providers. Qualified Teacher Status Standards were revised in 2009 to take into account the specific curricular requirements introduced by the Welsh Government. These standards are organised into three interrelated sections (Professional Values and Practice; Knowledge and Understanding; Teaching), whatever route is taken into teaching. Within the standards there is a requirement that new teachers take account of the cultural and linguistic aspirations of Wales by understanding 'how learners' physical, intellectual, linguistic, social, cultural and emotional development can affect their learning' (WAG, 2009a:8). A major change in the standards

was driven by the need to reflect specifically the expectations of teachers training to teach in Foundation phase (3 to 7-year-olds) introduced from 2008 (which replaced Key Stage 1) and was fully implemented in 2012. Drawing on international research evidence, the Foundation Phase is intended to be 'developmental, skills-based and activity-led' rather than 'narrowly knowledge-based' (Hawker, 2009:5). Significantly for this paper, the 2009 standards themselves contain no explicit reference at all to academic (or indeed any) research, although there is an expectation that teachers should be 'confident and authoritative in the subjects they teach'. Although the standards are supplemented by 'Becoming a Qualified Teacher: Handbook of Guidance' (WAG, 2009b), this provides non-statutory guidance. In this document it is suggested that teachers 'should show an awareness of where to find, and how to critically engage with, evidence from sources such as research and inspection reports' (WAG, 2009: 23). This knowledge of research is also supplemented by the suggestion (again not a requirement) that 'Trainees could also demonstrate their knowledge through written assignments, small-scale research activities and school-based tasks.' (p.46)

This is, however, somewhat at odds with the inspection guidance for ITT given to providers by Estyn (2012) where research, at least by ITT staff, features much more prominently. For instance, the guidance asserts that 'Good teaching/training' should be 'well informed by research' (p.25), that the inspection team 'will consider the ITT provider's ability to be at the cutting edge of ITT through 'horizon scanning', collaborative ventures and educational research' (p.32) and that 'Inspectors will take account of the extent to which senior leaders of ITT create opportunities for their staff to engage in teacher education focussed research which enhances courses offered and puts ITT providers at the cutting edge of ITT development.' (p.37) It should be noted that this relates to ITT staff, and no mention is made of how trainees will use research, although 'the inspection team will also take account of how well trainees develop good independent learning skills including research, critical analysis and problem-solving skills.' (p.17)

Teacher education in England, once accredited by various iterations of the government quango latterly called the Teaching Agency, is currently overseen by the new National College of Teaching and Leadership and regulated by Ofsted (the English Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) inspections. The position and value of research in teacher education – or training, as it more usually termed - in England is contested. The importance of research-informed provision has, arguably, diminished over time, and the knowledge base for teaching is often defined as practical, relevant and focused around contemporary, experiential knowledge of schooling.

In common with the other countries (particularly at post-graduate level), there is little explicit inclusion of knowledge, derived from the four traditional disciplines of education (history, philosophy, psychology and sociology), to be found in the ITE curriculum offered by most training providers. Increased time is now spent in the classroom on practicum (usually a minimum of two thirds of the pre-service time). Furlong (2013) argues that the rapid growth of post-graduate pre-service training routes (replacing degree courses for teachers with emphases on both personal and professional education) has accelerated this tendency for more time in the classroom, as has the overwhelming focus of the curriculum on preparation and support for the practicum. But, even in post-graduate training, where very little time is allowed for study in the university, it should be noted that most university-led provision has maintained a commitment to combine perspectives from educational research with meeting the official imperatives of making programmes 'demanding, relevant, and practical' (Furlong et al, 2000:144). Many such programmes also draw explicitly on practitioner enquiry or action research modes of learning and assessment for pre-service teachers.

The English 2007 ITE Standards required beginning teachers to adopt a 'constructively critical approach towards innovation' (TDA, 2007a:8), although only Excellent and Advanced Skills Teachers were expected to 'research and evaluate innovative curricular practices and draw on research outcomes...to inform their own practice and that of colleagues' (TDA, 2007a: 27). Soon after the General Election in 2010, the Coalition Government announced a review of Teachers' Standards. This review, the initial consultation on which ran for just six weeks in spring 2011, marked a return to more directive processes of policy formation. The Review Group, which did not contain any members from university Schools of Education, proposed a reduction from 33 to eight 'baseline' standards for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and Core combined, effective from September 2012. The review report states that 'it is not the task of standards to prescribe in detail what "good" or "outstanding" teaching should look like; that decision is best made by ITT providers, teachers and head teachers themselves' (Independent Review of Teachers Standards, 2011a:7). The second report, published in December 2011, reviewed the higher-level standards – Post-Threshold, Excellent and Advanced Skills. The report recommends the replacement of this set of pay standards with a single 'Master Teacher Standard'. The proposed Standard will be expressed 'in the form of a narrative statement, setting out the characteristics of excellent teachers' (Independent Review of Teachers Standards, 2011b:6) and its achievement will entail an element of external assessment. Significantly, 'Academies and independent schools do not have to assess their

teachers' performance against Part One of the Teachers' Standards as part of an annual appraisal process' (DfE, 2013c). Part Two of the Standards, which address personal and professional conduct, apply to all teachers irrespective of school type. These revisions to the Teachers' Standards in 2012 also apply across all routes, university-led provision and school-centred and employment routes.

These Standards, displayed significantly on a single A4 sheet (DfE, 2013a), are intended to 'set a clear baseline of expectations for the professional practice and conduct of teachers, from the point of qualification' (DfE, 2013b). The focus is predominantly on 'teachers' behaviour, rather than on their attitudes and their intellectuality' (Evans, 2011:851). They are written in what Connell et al. (2010) have described as the language of corporate managerialism, with the good teacher constructed as entrepreneurial and possessed of identifiable skills and attributes which will enable her or him to perform as an effective professional. The Standards do expect that beginning teachers will 'demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how pupils learn and how this impacts on teaching', but the principal focus in terms of a knowledge base for teaching is possession of 'good subject and curriculum knowledge'. The ethical dimensions involved in learning to teach (Mahony, 2009) are certainly downplayed here, and there is also little explicit reference to teachers' engagement with (and in) research or curriculum enquiry. Overall, they may be defined as regulatory rather than developmental in intent (Mahony and Hextall, 2000). The ITE Standards in England from 2012 may be seen then as predominantly skills-based, indicating a decisive shift away from the idea of teaching as a research-based profession and intellectual activity towards teaching as a craft-based occupation (Gove, 2010), an issue to which we will return below. The reconfiguration of the Teachers' Standards in England also supports moves towards a school-based and school-led system of teacher education (Taylor, 2013).

The concept of 'performative professionalism' is evident to some extent in all the various Standards currently in use across the UK, but is demonstrated most clearly in England. This was a recurring theme in analyses of New Labour discourses on teaching (Beck, 2009; Wilkins, 2011; Evans, 2011). Beck (2009:8), for example, suggests that:

*The performative emphasis is what dominates Professional Standards for Teachers. This is manifest not only in the content of the individual standards, but also in the discourse that frames them...The cumulative effect of this form of discourse is profoundly reductive: it suggests that being a professional educator is a matter of acquiring a limited corpus of state prescribed*

*knowledge accompanied by a set of similarly prescribed skills and competencies. The model is a technician one involving the acquisition of trainable expertise.*

### THE (RE)TURN TO THE PRACTICAL AND THE DISCOURSE/S OF RELEVANCE

Furlong & Lawn (2011: 6) refer to current trends in teacher education as representing a 'turn to the practical'. Following Murray (2013) this might be re-phrased as a '(re)turn to the practical', given the centrality of practice and practical knowledge in teaching and teacher education before the mid-1960s. Many of these trends towards placing more importance on the 'practical' and 'relevant' aspects of teacher education, particularly the practicum, are found across the UK as a whole. But in England such trends have been intensified by specific structural and political factors and by a culture of compliance and regulation which often dominates teacher education and its providers (Menter et al, 2006).

The 'discourse of relevance' (Maguire and Weiner, 1994) is a powerful part of the (re)turn to the practical in that it brings an intensification, re-orientation and simplification of professional knowledge to focus – in the main – on contemporary practice in schools (Furlong, 2013). Although Maguire and Weiner (1994) refer only to 'discourse' in the singular, our analysis indicates that there are many forms and iterations of this discourse in the UK. These are sometimes very specific to each country, where, for instance, the language and rhetoric employed to discuss 'relevance' reflect differing views of the teacher and teacher education. For example, the explicit language of relevance, often dominant within recent official documentation and public pronouncements in England, may be contrasted with more subtle nuances in the policy language for pre-service programmes in Northern Ireland and Scotland. These generally use the term 'teacher education' rather than 'training' and, as we indicate in this paper, emphasise the importance of broad, research-informed knowledge bases for teaching. But they also still orientate large parts of courses towards preparation for the experience of the practicum and actual time teaching in classrooms. A significant part of the various discourses of relevance relates then to political understanding of the nature of teaching and the experiential skills and knowledge envisaged as necessary for new teachers to be 'classroom-ready', that is fully prepared for teaching in contemporary schools, immediately after completing ITE courses. In NI the notion of a three phase teacher education model, over three years, is very prominent – that is, Initial, followed by one year of Induction and one year of Early Professional Development – this is laid out in

the Partnership Handbook. However, one is eligible to register with GTCNI following successful completion of just the initial course. In Scotland the introduction of the salaried induction year with formal support from 2002, and the combination of the Standards for Initial and Full Registration from 2013, also acknowledges the need for sustained support across the Early Phase of teacher learning. In Wales, since 2003 all newly qualified teachers in Welsh state schools have received three years of funded support, which includes statutory induction, funded by the Welsh Government. In 2012, an optional Masters in Educational Practice (MEP) was introduced, which teachers could follow alongside their induction programme (commencing on completion of the first term of teaching) and into a further two years beyond induction. (GTCW and WG, 2012).

The process of devolution in particular has allowed a growing polarisation reflecting national identities and how education can help each particular nation reflect and develop this identity. For instance, although for many years there was little difference between the education policy of England and Wales (Jones, 1997; Daugherty et al, 2000), devolution of limited powers has led to a divergence of policy following the landmark publication in Wales of The Learning Country (National Assembly for Wales, 2001). Between 1999 and 2003 the Welsh Assembly Government (now Welsh Government) reviewed and re-modelled policies inherited from Westminster to reflect a distinctive 'made in Wales' agenda (Davidson, 2004). In 2008, the 'successor document' The Learning Country: Vision into Action updated the Government agenda to 'transform education and lifelong learning in post-devolution Wales.' (WAG, 2008:1) Part of this agenda involved ensuring that both the curriculum and teacher training is relevant to the aspiration of Wales as a bi-lingual 'learning country' (WAG, 2004) - where teacher education services both Welsh and English medium schools – and the wider cultural issues covered within the 'Curriculum Cymreig'<sup>4</sup>. Such policies are the result of 'a long period of intellectual soul searching about Welsh identity' (Daugherty and Davies, 2011:5) and also reflect the belief that 'Wales has particular needs that require distinctive policy solutions' (Ibid.) – an argument that could perhaps be made for all nations in his study. Likewise, there is provision for teacher education for Irish language schools in NI at both primary and post primary level. At present, this has resulted in 'three clear goals' for education in Wales set by the recently departed Minister for Education in a speech in 2011 reassuringly entitled 'Teaching makes a Difference': literacy; numeracy; and tackling the link between poverty and poor attainment (Andrews, 2011:6) – although the same speech also signalled a significant reduction in teacher training numbers. These goals are reflected both

<sup>4</sup> 'A Curriculum Cymreig helps pupils to understand and celebrate the distinctive quality of living and learning in Wales in the 21st Century, to identify their own sense of Welshness and to feel a heightened sense of belonging to their local community and country.' (ACCAC, 2003:2)

in inspections of schools and of training providers and Estyn rigorously inspect both trainee teachers' personal literacy and numeracy and their ability to teach them (Estyn, 2012).

The nature of the discourses in Scotland and Northern Ireland also reflects broader concerns about social justice and cultural contexts of the individual countries and, in Scotland, a continuing commitment to comprehensive education and the 'tradition' of the 'democratic intellect' (Davie, 1961). In Scotland, 'maximising relevance and impact' is a core theme within the Donaldson report (2011), both in early phase and career-long professional learning. The report recognises that in order to address the 'wicked issues' that persist in Scottish education (that is, social inequalities in participation and achievement) professional preparation needs to 'go well beyond recreating the best of past or even current practice' (p. 4). Part of the response to this is found in the reform of the traditional 'academic' school curriculum with the more socially inclusive and flexible Curriculum for Excellence (Raffe, 2008).

Policy discourses in Northern Ireland are framed by a situation where responsibility for teacher education in is shared between two government departments (the Department of Education [DE] and Department of Employment and Learning [DEL]). The Departments convened a teacher education conference in 2003 as the initial stage in of a review of Teacher Education in a Climate of Change. The resulted consultation document (DENI, 2010a) was focused mainly around the roles of different parts of the 'system', in particular, the yet to be established Education and Skills Authority (ESA). Some ten years after the initial conference, therefore, this review has not yet been concluded and in 2011 DEL launched two further studies of teacher education, focusing on infrastructure. The first of these studies (DEL, 2013), which examined the financial basis of the two colleges of teacher education, showed that the receipt of exceptional premia means that the cost of training teachers in the colleges is significantly higher than elsewhere – almost 40% higher than in the comparator English institutions. The second review will set out options for a more shared and integrated system for the delivery and funding of teacher education (Northern Ireland Executive) – although it should be noted that both 'shared' and 'integrated' are contested terms. Thus, whilst there have been profound changes in other parts of the UK, Northern Ireland is still dealing with its own persistent practicalities - issues of infrastructure, the oversupply of teachers and excessive direct and opportunity costs – although a second wider infrastructural review has just been announced.

These potential problems do not mean, however, that broader social issues are ignored in relevant standards for teacher training in Northern Ireland, but neither are they

necessarily resolved. The second (of 27) professional competence requires teachers to develop a knowledge and understanding of contemporary debates about the nature and purpose of education, and the eighth has more distinctive local relevance in requiring a knowledge and understanding of the need to take account of pupils' cultures, languages and faiths. In addition, providers of ITE courses are required to ensure that their 'programmes prepare students to address the strategic priorities for education and key education strategies, as defined and communicated by DE' (DENI, 2010b:5). In recent years the key priorities have matched DENI's priorities for the wider education system: literacy, numeracy and special educational needs and inclusion. The inertia which has characterized much of the post-devolution political milieu in Northern Ireland has meant that distinctive local issues such as preparing student teachers to deal with controversial sectarian issues and the compulsory nature of an almost wholly Christianity-focused religious education provision (Montgomery and Smith, 2006) in primary teacher education courses have not been addressed at policy level.

In England, although there has been debate about national identity and values within the Standards and the ITE curriculum, there is a significant move to a generic stance, superficially less influenced by cultural beliefs and more by ideological agendas. As indicated earlier, there has been a strong tendency to '(re)turn to the practical', in large part as a result of government intervention in the governance, monitoring and regulation of ITE, with legislative changes dating back to 1984. At the time of writing this tendency is accelerating with the deregulation of the schooling system and the introduction of the School Direct programme (McNamara and Murray, 2013). These reforms proceed alongside changes in key agencies with responsibility for teacher education, shifts in long established partnerships between universities and schools, changes to the school curriculum and national assessment and to teachers' conditions.

Over the past 30 years then, ITE in England has become highly politicised, positioned as an effective mechanism to transform teaching and teacher professionalism and steer change in schools (Furlong et al, 2000; Furlong, 2005). Recent Governments - of all political persuasions – have worked to change the control and locus of teacher education from the academy into the classroom, around a predominantly practical, relevant and school-led curriculum and assessment framework (McNamara and Murray, 2013). The raft of recent declarations indicate that current policy in England is underpinned by what McNamara & Murray (ibid; page 14) state is "an understanding of teaching as a) essentially a craft rather than an intellectual activity; b) an apprenticeship model of teacher training that can be located entirely in the workplace; and c) the related assumption that more time spent in schools inevitably - and unproblematically

- leads to better and 'more relevant' learning." The model potentially privileges performativity and 'practical' knowledge over theoretical, pedagogical and subject knowledge (ibid).

By contrast, Teaching Scotland's Future (Donaldson, 2011) argues that preference for apprentice models of work-based learning among beginning teachers is to be challenged: "The values and intellectual challenges which underpin academic study should extend their own scholarship and take them beyond any inclination, however understandable, to want narrow training of immediate and direct relevance to life in the classroom" (p.6). It is suggested that:

*The 'craft' components of teaching must be based upon and informed by fresh insights into how best to meet the increasingly fast pace of change in the world which our children inhabit. Simply advocating more time in the classroom as a means of preparing teachers for their role is therefore not the answer to creating better teachers. The nature and quality of that practical experience must be carefully planned and evaluated and used to develop understanding of how learning can best be promoted in sometimes very complex and challenging circumstances. (Donaldson, 2011: 4-5)*

Undergraduate ITE programmes in Scotland have been revised in response to Donaldson's critique (2011:39) that the traditional BEd degree had, 'an over-emphasis on technical and craft skills at the expense of broader and more academically challenging areas of study.' Successor qualifications to the BEd will be in place by 2014. It is argued that the university location of Schools of Education might be more fully exploited to reduce 'unhelpful philosophical and structural divides, [which] have led to sharp separations of function amongst teachers, teacher educators and researchers' (p.5). Whilst highly valued, the practicum should be the site for experimentation in 'well researched innovation' by 'research aware teachers' (p.102). School experience 'should do much more than provide practice in classroom skills, vital though these are. Experience in a school provides the opportunity to use practice to explore theory and examine relevant research evidence' (p.90). Teaching Scotland's Future recommends the creation of a network of 'hub teaching schools as a focal point for research, learning and teaching' (p.91, pp.111-112). In contrast to the model of Teaching Schools adopted in England (Matthews and Berwick, 2013), 'hub schools' extend a role for university-based educators in partnership with strong local authorities. The aim is to promote 'much more direct engagement of university staff in school practice, with research as an integral part of this strengthened partnership rather than as something which sits apart' (Donaldson, 2011:8).

## CONCLUSION

This review of policy and practice in all four jurisdictions over the last decade indicates that the content, location, control and quality of teacher preparation has been the focus of sustained debate across the UK. It suggests past and present areas of similarity as well as some recent and marked divergence, with England emerging as the outlier. In Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales education is clearly important in the construction of developing and/or re-affirming national identities, and teacher education policy thus assumes particular strategic importance in devolved governments. Across the UK, sets of Standards/competence frameworks set out minimum expectations. These Standards/competences vary in the extent to which they are generated within and by the profession, and the ways in which they are instantiated in practice either as tools to support teachers' professional development or as regulatory measures to hold emerging and serving professionals to account (Mahony and Hextall, 2000; Sachs, 2003). The knowledge base of teaching is contested in all four jurisdictions, and the Standards clearly reflect different, declared conceptions of teaching and the professional knowledge of teachers.

In Scotland and Northern Ireland, and less explicitly in Wales, research-informed provision is a declared part of the expectations of teacher education programmes and providers. Notably, in Scotland the intellectual challenge of personal and professional education in undergraduate programmes for prospective primary teachers has been strengthened. In England, as indicated, the designation of teaching as a craft has led to the simplification of teacher knowledge and the processes of learning to teach in policy pronouncements, with a seeming devaluation of the overall place of research in teacher learning resulting. The designation and the revision of the teachers' Standards in England is seen here as consistent with a wider ideological critique of 'progressive educational theory' (Gove, 2013a) that positions university-based teacher education and its educators as 'enemies of promise' (Gove, 2013b). Yet, as indicated above, most providers of ITE in England have maintained a strong commitment to combining perspectives from educational research with meeting the official imperatives of providing relevant and practical programmes. This discrepancy between 'policy and practice' may be attributed in large part to the differentiated ways in which policies for teacher education are mediated and instantiated in practice in England, particularly when the Higher Education sector has long been a powerful stakeholder in the field. Evidence of this differentiation can be found in many accounts of the research-informed richness which - against the policy background outlined in this paper - many universities have continued to provide with their partnership schools for the benefit of their pre- and in-service teachers (see, for example, Childs et al, 2013 in press; Counsell, 2012; Wilson, 2012).

Historically, across the UK there have been close relationships between educational research and the nature of teacher education provision, particularly ITE, (Furlong, 2013), but it is clear that those relationships are currently in flux. This situation is of particular concern in England, where the introduction of the School Direct route threatens the maintenance of current models of research-informed teacher education in many universities. It is feared that School Direct will threaten the financial stability of Schools of Education and their institutional abilities to plan strategically, leading to the increased casualisation of the teacher education workforce and the loss of research-informed knowledge and skills for high quality teaching and teacher education (McNamara and Murray, 2013). But within a general pattern of sharply reduced funding for all education research across the whole UK, there has been a noticeable decline in the funding for research in and on teacher education, accessible to university Schools of Education (Christie et al, 2012). Funding for research capacity building in this area has also not been sustained (Menter and Murray, 2009). And, given the dearth of large-scale and longitudinal studies in the 'young' field of teacher education research (Menter et al, 2010), there is as yet limited evidence on which to base judgements about the effectiveness of teacher education, in its various forms. This situation also means that there is also only limited evidence on how far policy differences are - or are not - reflected in the mediated content and practices of teacher education programmes across the UK. Despite renewed emphasis on the importance of evidence-based policy and practice (Goldacre, 2013; DfE, 2013d) in England, for example, the current direction of teacher education reform makes only selective use of research of any kind (Morris, 2012; Murray, 2011). In Scotland and Wales the nature of teachers' future engagement with research is uncertain, although the aims, purpose, design and funding of 'Masters level' (accredited) professional learning is the subject of continued deliberation. The GTCNI has been an advocate of a Masters level profession in NI, the matter has been discussed at UCETNI and is supported by the ETI – but the matter has fallen off the agenda of late, replaced by the infrastructural concerns.

Our analysis in this paper has identified both similarities and differences across and between the four jurisdictions, but it has also demonstrated that policy in England appears to be diverging from that elsewhere in the UK. But, despite the appearance of such policy divergence, the nature (and quality) of the actual provision of teacher education in the four jurisdictions may not differ as much as political rhetoric, recent reforms and explicit definitions of teaching and

teacher education might suggest. In the absence of clear research-informed evidence on the effectiveness and lived realities of the many and various research-informed teacher education programmes across the UK, we can only conclude this paper with our professional judgements. These are that, in these times of economic austerity, opportunities for maintaining research-informed and enquiry-led professional learning are welcome, as is debate on the contribution of the rich variety of research undertaken in universities in partnership with the teachers, schools and communities they serve.

### WARRANT

This review was carried out by the co-convenors of the BERA Teacher Education and Development Special Interest Group (SIG) who currently work in HEIs in the four jurisdictions of the UK. It builds on work undertaken through the TLRP thematic initiative, Learning to Teach in Post Devolution UK (2006-2007). This was a scoping study of the structures and processes in place to support Initial Teacher Education (ITE), induction and early professional development in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales (Menter et al, 2008).

Policies outlining the statutory requirements for ITE were drawn from government sources and key agencies: the English Training Training/ Development Agency for schools (TTA/TDA), the Department for Education (2010); the Department for Education and Skills, Welsh Government; the Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED) and Scottish Government; and the Department of Education and Learning, Northern Ireland (DELNI). Materials produced by the General Teaching Councils of Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland were consulted; and, where appropriate, the publications of the school inspectorates (HMIE/Education Scotland, Ofsted, Estyn and the Education and Training Inspectorate Northern Ireland).

The review draws on the Literature Review of Teacher Education in the Twenty-First Century (Menter et al, 2010) conducted to support the Donaldson review of teacher education in Scotland. Tribute also needs to be paid to Professor Olwen McNamara of the University of Manchester whose work on policy and workplace learning in teacher education has been highly influential here. Two of the authors of this paper (Hulme and Murray) were members of the UK Teacher Education Group (TEG), which produced a database of research in teacher education (2000-09). The other two authors (Beauchamp and Clarke) have also now joined this continuing group. The review of policy and research literature was supplemented by key informant contact to address omissions and to check for accuracy at a time of fast moving change.

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## APPENDIX 1: ORGANISATION OF ITE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

In **England**<sup>5</sup> in 2010/11, pre-service teacher education for approximately 37,300 entrants was supplied by 227 providers including 74 HEIs (the vast majority of those university Schools of Education), working with their partnership schools, 55 School-Centred Initial Teacher Training providers (SCITTs) and 98 Employment Based Initial Teacher Training (EBITTs) programmes (some with very small numbers of students). SCITTs were introduced in 1993, building on small-scale routes first implemented in the 1980s. Revised versions of EBITTs were launched in 1998. In 2010/11, 29,431 individuals embarked on an HEI ITE programme (78.8%), 1,707 were involved in school-centred consortia (SCITT) (4.6%) and 6,202 on employment-based routes (16.6%) (Smithers and Robinson, 2012:4). Many of the SCITT programmes and some of the EBITTs were offered in conjunction with HEIs, leading to the award of PGCE. The majority of HEI provision was through one-year PGCE programmes. The effects of 'universitisation' meant that the majority of HEI places overall were in post-1992 universities (including all the primary provision at UG level) but pre-1992 universities offered approximately 50% of all secondary PGCE courses. PGCE students undertake two-thirds of their courses in schools and one-third in universities.

Since 2011 Government policy has placed emphasis on School Direct as a key route into teaching, supported in some cases by Teaching Schools, HEIs and other 'training providers'. There are currently approximately 300 Teaching Schools with a planned increase to 500 by 2015. Some of these are designated as National Support Schools (NSS) and most are involved in networks of Teaching School alliances. These schools now take on ITE, CPD and – increasingly – research roles. Another initiative proposed in 2010 – the establishment of University Training Schools on a model 'borrowed' from teacher education in Finland -- has been slower to take off, although a number of such schools are now emerging (for example, at the University of Birmingham).

Teach First was launched in 2002, following the model of the Teach for America programme in the USA. It takes the form of a two-year Leadership Development programme, including just six weeks of university training followed by in-school support to achieve a PGCE. In some universities trainees can also progress on to Masters degrees. Since its launch it has trained 3,700 teachers, most for the secondary phase. Recruiting only trainees with 2.1 degrees or Firsts

from 'elite' universities, it brings some well qualified graduates into teaching who might not otherwise have considered the profession. The route has been well received, particularly in terms of the positive contribution to schools in low-income communities where the trainees are placed, although there are also some acknowledged flaws in the scheme (see, for example, criticisms in the Ofsted 2008 inspection report). Teach First has certainly made an impact on the field of teacher education and is described by Smithers & Robinson (2012: ii) as a 'catalyst' in terms of changing ideas around recruitment to teaching. The route is, however, very small and retention beyond the two-year training programme is low (for example, only 42% of the 2005/6 cohort – n=149 – were still teaching in 2008/9). It is then certainly not a miracle cure' (Smithers & Robinson, 2012: ii) for the teacher recruitment problems which traditionally occur in England in times of economic good health.

With the exception of certain shortage subjects, recruitment to ITE has been buoyant in the last four years as a result of the economic downturn, graduate unemployment and the diminished competition from industry for good graduates. The degree class of entrants has risen – 59% of secondary entrants had a 'good' - 2.1 or better - degree in 2012, compared to 46% in 1998 (Smithers & Robinson, 2012) but, as these authors note, the output of good degrees from universities had also risen over the same timeframe.

In line with general HE funding policy, both UG and PGCE students in England now pay fees, often of up to £9K per annum. Bursaries for PGCEs have been widely available in the past but are currently limited to shortage subjects in primary (mathematics only) and secondary (some STEM subjects + Modern Foreign Languages). Bursary funding ranges from £20K to £4K, with the final amount received by individuals differentiated by subject, phase and class of degree. Within the School Direct scheme there are additional bursary incentives for schools with high numbers of pupils receiving Free School Meals to recruit new entrants with good degrees in shortage subjects.

Prior to 2012 subject shortages in secondary, particularly some STEM subjects, were addressed through the use of pre-ITE enhancement courses. These courses allowed prospective teachers with degrees without sufficient subject content to 'enhance' their knowledge in order to gain entry to a PGCE. Funding for these courses is now threatened, not least because of the lack of 'fit' with the deregulation of entry requirements under the School Direct programme.

<sup>5</sup> According to the 2011 census England has a population of 56.1 million. In January 2013 there were around 8.2 million pupils in England: 4.3 million pupils in state-funded primary schools, 3.2 million pupils in state-funded secondary schools and 579,700 pupils attending independent schools. In 2013 there were 24,328 schools, including 16,784 state-funded primary schools, 3,281 publicly funded (local authority and academy) secondary schools, 961 special schools and 2,413 independent schools (DfE, 2013e). In November 2012 there were 442,000 FTE teachers working in publicly funded schools in England (DfE, 2013f).

In **Wales**<sup>6</sup> ITE is provided by three regional 'centres', each made up of two collaborating universities, and the Open University in Wales: South East Wales Centre for Teacher Education and Training (SEWCTET) (Cardiff Metropolitan University and the newly-formed University of South Wales - previously Newport University and Glamorgan Universities); South-West Wales Centre (the recently merged Swansea Metropolitan University and University of Wales Trinity St David) and North and Mid Wales Centre (University of Wales, Aberystwyth and the University of Wales, Bangor). Each centre provides the opportunity to complete an accredited training course, as well as managing and delivering an allocated number of employment-based training routes under the Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP) on behalf of the Welsh Government. The centres have no physical base, with programmes being allocated to specific campuses, but with a common set of policies and procedures within each centre. Each centre works with partnership schools, but sometimes these are the same schools given the small geographic area covered and the concentration of schools in some larger cities near to the regional centres. In Wales in 2011/12, 1,360 students enrolled for a PGCE (450 Primary and 910 Secondary phase), 400 for a first degree leading to QTS, including 300 for the primary phase (Welsh Government 2013). Eighty three teachers gained QTS by completing the Graduate Teacher Programme (GTCW 2013). The Welsh Assembly Government asked the GTCW to review ITE and EPL following the outcomes of the PISA 2009 survey. The GTCW (2011:1) expressed concern regarding the quality of entrants to the profession in Wales. Entry tariffs into undergraduate ITE courses in Wales are lower than elsewhere in the UK.<sup>7</sup>

In **Scotland**<sup>8</sup> ITE is currently provided by eight universities in partnership with 32 local authorities: Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Stirling, Strathclyde, West of Scotland, University of the Highlands and Islands (plus the Open University in Scotland). Entry to teaching is via a one-year Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) or four-year undergraduate or concurrent degree with QTS. In 2012/13 the ITE intake in Scotland was as follows: 689 BEd and 617 PGDE Primary; 153 BEd Secondary, 929 PGDE Secondary and 169 Concurrent (Scottish Government, 2012). There are

currently no employment-based routes and teachers qualifying by these routes outside Scotland are not eligible to register with the GTCS (that is, Teach First without PGCE, QTS assessment only routes, Graduate Teacher Programme and the Overseas Trained Teacher Programme). The Government accepted Donaldson's (2011:87) recommendation that 'the suitability for Scottish education of a Teach First/Teach Now model of placing students predominantly in a school for their initial teacher education should be investigated'. Discussions have taken place between Teach First, Education Scotland and the Scottish Government. However it is felt that there is as yet no demand for such a scheme in Scotland. The GTCS sets minimum requirements and universities accept candidates in line with their own admissions policies<sup>9</sup>. In Scotland the applicant to offer ratio is around eight to one (Donaldson 2011:32). Applicants ordinarily resident in Scotland do not pay tuition fees. The revised Memorandum on Entry Requirements to Programmes of Initial Teacher Education in Scotland (GTCS 2013a) places greater emphasis on the selection of candidates. Selection processes have varied between HEIs (McKinney et al, 2011). The NPG Report suggested 'piloting an assessment centre approach to aid selection' (NPG 2012: Annex A2). The level of literacy and numeracy of applicants has attracted particular attention. The Universities of Dundee, Aberdeen and Edinburgh, with Education Scotland, are developing online tools to support the diagnostic assessment of literacy and numeracy skills among teachers in training (SCQF level 5, standard grade). From 2013 assessment outcomes will be used to inform support within ITE programmes, rather than as an aid to selection via entry or exit tests.

In **Northern Ireland** ITE is provided by five institutions: Stranmillis University College, St. Mary's University College, The Queen's University Belfast, the University of Ulster and the Open University. Each institution sets its own admissions criteria (Moran, 2008) in addition to those outlined in a departmental circular (DE, 2010b) and each organises their own selection and admissions processes. The University Colleges mainly offer four-year BEd (Hons) courses for primary level teaching, and for secondary teaching in Business Studies, Technology and Design, Science and Mathematics. Stranmillis offers one-year PGCEs in Early Years Education, and St

6 Wales had a population of 3.06 million in the 2011 census. In 2012 there were 22 nursery, 1,412 primary, 221 secondary schools and 43 special schools in Wales. Of these, 461 primary and 55 secondary schools were classified as Welsh medium. The total number of pupils in local authority maintained nursery, primary, secondary and special schools was 465,943. In March 2013 there were 37,862 registered teachers in Wales (GTCW 2013a).

7 Minimum entry requirements for a three-year undergraduate teaching programme requires two passes at A Level (normally minimum 200 UCAS points) or equivalent. For Primary, GCSE Grade C or above (or equivalent) in English, maths and science is needed; from 2014/14 this will be raised to a GCSE grade B or equivalent (<http://teachertrainingcymru.org/node/12>).

8 Scotland had a population of 5.2 million at the 2011 census. In 2012 there were 2,597 local authority schools: 2,080 primary schools, 368 secondary schools and 149 special schools (Scottish Government 2012b); 51,410 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) teachers (22,714 primary teachers and 23,929 secondary teachers) were employed in all sectors, including pre-school, primary, secondary and special schools (Scottish Government 2012a:2).

9 PGDE Primary: A degree plus three Highers, including English at grade C and Maths standard grade at credit level. PGDE Secondary: A degree including 80 credit points relevant to subject teaching (40 credit points at second year undergraduate level or above) and Higher English or an equivalent qualification. Examples of minimum entry requirements for Primary undergraduate route: Glasgow and Strathclyde - Highers AAAB (UCAS tariff 305 points), including English (B) and Maths Standard Grade (credit); Dundee and the University of the West of Scotland - ABBB (UCAS tariff 275 points), including English (B) and Maths Standard Grade (credit). Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Stirling - Highers BBBB (UCAS tariff 260 points), including English (if English at Grade C, then Mathematics at Grade B expected) and Maths Standard Grade (credit).

Mary's has PGCE places for teaching in Irish Medium Primary Education schools. The Universities offer one-year PGCE courses for secondary level teaching for graduates within a variety of subject specialisms. Ulster also offers the only Primary-level PGCE in Northern Ireland. The Open University has part-time PGCE courses in a range of post-primary subject specialisms. In 2012/13 the total allocated ITE intake in Northern Ireland was 600 places, a figure which reflects the latest of a series of significant reductions in places which have taken place over the past four years (DEL 2013:12). Traditionally the university colleges have serviced

each sector, respectively, of the religiously segregated education system and this continues to influence their recruitment patterns. The universities draw students in roughly equal numbers from both traditions. There are no school-based routes into teacher education in Northern Ireland. The potential move towards 'shared education' in Northern Ireland (Connelly et al, 2013) has implications for the future provision of teacher education. The second stage of the two-stage DEL review is likely to set out options for a rationalisation of initial teacher education provision.



This paper has been commissioned as part of a major Inquiry undertaken by BERA and the RSA on the role of research and teacher education. The Inquiry aims to shape debate, inform policy and influence practice by investigating the contribution of research in teacher education and examining the potential benefits of research-based skills and knowledge for improving school performance and student outcomes.

To investigate the contribution that research can make to teacher education, seven academic papers have been commissioned from experts in the relevant fields: international and UK policy and practice on teacher education; philosophical reflections on the nature of teachers' professional learning; innovative programmes of initial teacher education based on the model of research-informed 'clinical practice'; the role of research in effective continuing professional development (CPD); the impact of research-based teaching on school improvement and student outcomes; and research engagement from the teacher's perspective.

Further information on the Inquiry and its other outputs can be found via the BERA website: [www.bera.ac.uk](http://www.bera.ac.uk)