

Rt. Hon Michael Gove Mp
Secretary of State for Education
Department for Education, Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3BT

June 2011

Dear Secretary of State,

Subject specialist teaching in the sciences

As you are aware, there is an ongoing and severe shortage of specialist chemistry and physics teachers. The five SCORE member organisations¹ welcome the Government's desire to address this and the consequent introduction of specific Initial Teacher Training (ITT) allocations for physics and chemistry and the continuation of science ITT bursaries.

I am writing to bring you up to date on SCORE's position on Specialist Teachers. Enclosed with this letter is SCORE's briefing paper on the subject. Some of the key points are:

- There remains a lack of clarity over the term 'subject specialist'. SCORE has developed definitions for the terms specialist, additional specialist and non-specialist teacher. To ensure consistency and clarity, SCORE recommends these definitions for use by the Department and others when collecting and analysing data.
- Biology is currently grouped with General Science in the ITT allocations. This does not support subject specialism and SCORE recommends biology is given a separate allocation.
- The TDA has stopped funding the Science Additional Specialism Programme (SASP). In 2010 alone SASP trained 100 non-specialist physics teachers to teach physics as an additional specialism. Given there are 500 maintained secondary schools without a physics specialist teacher the need for such a programme is evident.
- Candidates applying for teacher training courses in the shortage science subjects should be exempt from any minimum requirement in terms of degree classification.

In addition, the current sequential application process for PGCE is not effective and should be replaced with a streamlined system similar to UCAS.

I would greatly welcome the opportunity for our member organisations to discuss the proposed recommendations with you in person.

Yours sincerely,



Professor Graham Hutchings FRS, SCORE Chair

¹ The Association of Science Education, Institute of Physics, Royal Society, Royal Society of Chemistry and the Society of Biology

