



Department
for Education

Analytical associate pool

Summary of projects

March 2018

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The Analytical Associate Pool

Introduction

The Department for Education (DfE) uses high quality evidence and analysis to inform policy development and delivery to achieve [our vision](#) - to achieve a highly educated society in which opportunity is equal for young person no matter what their background or family circumstances.

Within the DfE there is an analytical community which comprises statisticians, economists, social and operational researchers. These specialists feed in analysis and research to strategy, policy development and delivery.

While much analysis is undertaken in-house and substantial projects are commissioned to external organisations, there is often a need to quickly commission small-scale projects.

We have therefore created a pool of Analytical Associates who can bring specific specialist expertise, knowledge and skills into the department to supplement and develop our internal analytical capability.

In June 2014 we invited applications from individuals to join the pool. We received an overwhelming response and, after evaluating the expertise of everyone who applied, we established the Analytical Associate Pool.

Over 190 independent academics and researchers are in the pool, and they can be commissioned to carry out small-scale data analysis, rapid literature reviews and peer review. They also provide training, quality assurance and expert advice on an ad-hoc basis. Most projects cost less than £15,000, and more than 180 projects have been commissioned since the pool opened in September 2014.

We welcome new Associates to join the Pool. The application form is available on the DfE [research page](#).

Summary of projects

At DfE we aim to make analysis publicly available and we follow the Government Social Research (GSR) [protocol](#) for publishing research. Much of the analysis undertaken through the Associate Pool is too small-scale to be published on its own, and this report summarises these smaller pieces of analysis. More substantial work is published in stand-alone reports throughout the year. See page 11 for details and links to projects already published.

Teacher Supply

Associates: Sarah Gibson, CooperGibson Research
Sally Kendall, York Consulting LLP

Key findings

In March 2017 York Consulting and CooperGibson Research conducted research into teacher supply issues in six local authority districts across England.

The aim was to undertake an initial small-scale qualitative study to explore school and local factors, and drivers of teacher supply.

The six areas were in different English regions with a combination of different characteristics such as: coastal towns, rural and isolated locations and areas with high deprivation. Respondents were given anonymity to help ensure candid discussions during the interviews. Therefore, the names of the six areas have not been disclosed.

Contractors engaged 20 schools conducting interviews with: the Headteacher; the Chair of Governors; three Heads of Department; and, a focus group of teachers. Each area also included feedback from at least one Initial Teacher Training (ITT) provider, with 13 engaged in total. These covered interviews with an ITT lead, tutors and students.

Of the 20 schools involved in the research, around half reported serious recruitment difficulties. Where no recruitment difficulties were reported, this tended to be attributed to, in part the positive reputation of an institution and/or the local area. Nonetheless, even where they had been able to recruit an adequate number of teachers, senior leaders from some of these schools reported a decrease in candidate quality and/or quantity over recent years.

Other general factors affecting recruitment included: lack of choice/lack of quality applicants; particular challenges for specific phases or subject areas; and, difficulties recruiting experienced teachers.

School level factors affecting levels of teacher recruitment included: school performance, school policies and working conditions and school size.

Area-related factors that may influence teacher supply include: perceptions of the area and deprivation levels; lack of knowledge of local area; affordability (such as house prices); poor transport links; and, proximity of training providers.

The impact of local competition on recruitment appeared to vary according to school type and membership of partnerships, such as MATs. Outside of established partnerships, there appeared to be some but more limited networking between schools on recruitment.

Interviewees felt that wider national debates were contributing to local supply issues in terms of: external perceptions of teacher workload and performance measures; salary related issues; budget pressures; and, perceptions of national teacher shortages.

Effective recruitment strategies used by some schools included:

- Schools developing links with training providers.
- Forward planning by Headteachers to develop relationships and networks with prospective teachers.
- Online advertising and other virtual methods such as interviewing and undertaking lessons by Skype.
- Working with other schools – to collaborate on training teachers.
- Use of national training routes such as Teach First and School Direct.

Reasons for teachers leaving were wide ranging; there was no systematic pattern to the reasons evident from the research. In a few cases, smaller primary schools had not experienced any turnover of staff for a few years.

There is some evidence of wage competition and proactive recruitment approaches between schools and school partnerships, such as MATs within local areas. A recurrent theme during the interviews was ensuring that staff were, and felt that they were, being supported and developed.

School-level factors thought by respondents to influence retention included: workload; attitude to employment flexibilities; strategic approach to CPD; and impact of staff shortages on support for NQTs.

The main area-level issue identified by Headteachers in relation to retention was competition from other schools and other school partnerships. Generally,

Headteachers from schools that were part of MATs saw the wider relationship with other schools as a positive factor in staff retention.

Effective strategies to help retain staff included:

- Flexible and creative approaches to teaching roles: using flexible employment patterns, where possible; using teaching and learning responsibility (TLR) payments effectively; and, adapting job roles, for example, reduced teaching hours and increased wider responsibilities.
- Effective leadership was reported by Headteachers and teachers as critical to retention. Teachers felt their job was difficult but stayed because they felt supported.
- Support structures such as regular continuous professional development (CPD), tailored to teachers' needs.
- Partnership links - there was clear evidence of sharing staff and creating career progression within partnerships, for example, through secondments.

The evidence has informed policy development for addressing teacher supply challenges at a sub national level, improving our overall understanding of the variations in issues faced by schools in recruiting and retaining teachers. Specifically, it has informed the design of the Tailored Support Programme, which is aiming to support those schools identified as facing the most severe recruitment and retention challenges.

This study provided additional evidence to inform the Department of activity taking place in the sector to address unnecessary workload and support flexible working arrangements to improve teacher retention.

Furthermore it assisted the Department team in better understanding factors that relate to teacher supply particularly at a local level, and informed understanding of what providers tell us about the challenges that they face in extending provision into 'cold spot' areas to improve supply of trainees and teachers to schools that need them most.

Transferrable Skills Mapping

Associate: Peter Dickinson, Warwick Institute for Employment

Key findings

According to the Post-16 Skills Plan, employers increasingly highlight the importance of softer, transferrable skills in today's flexible labour market. These underpin career adaptability for jobholders, and enable enterprises to adapt and evolve.

There are numerous lists of transferrable skills, but not a rigorous conceptual framework that ties specific transferrable skills to occupational outcomes. To inform and develop the Department's policy on T levels, this commission sought to identify transferrable skills that are pertinent to each T level route. Transferrable skills have been identified and hierarchically categorised through the consideration of existing frameworks and literature. This analysis will be used to structure, qualify and define those transferrable skills identified by T level panels – panels of industry and education experts who will inform the content and format of specific T level routes and pathways.

Developing such a framework was challenging as existing evidence tends to focus on the higher education and graduate labour market, and terminology is inconsistent and interchangeable.

To develop a framework of occupationally specific clusters specific transferrable skills were identified from O*NET and industry related frameworks at levels 2-3. Transferrable skills across apprenticeship standards relevant to T level routes were then identified to help prioritise transferrable skills important T level routes. Examples of transferrable skills include communication, creativity/ innovative thinking, leading, critical thinking, planning, analysing, and self-management.

The analysis has informed the development of a draft transferable skills framework which will be further validated by employers and educational experts. The intention is for the T level panels to use the transferrable skills framework as a guide when agreeing the transferrable skills content of particular T level qualifications. Use of this framework across different qualifications will ensure transferrable skills are consistently articulated.

Skills Literature reviews for Technical Education Rates

Associates: Sue Tate, Sue Tate Consulting Ltd

Clare Vokes, Pye Tait Consulting

Key findings

The Government's Post 16 Skills Plan seeks to reform technical education, and puts employers and professionals at the heart of these reforms. As such, T level panels consisting of industry experts will inform and develop outline content for 11 study-based T level routes. These panels will convene to agree the outline content of T level qualifications, therefore it is essential that in this process they can consider the key knowledge, skills and behaviours at the route level, as identified in sectors, industries and occupations.

To provide this clarity, across two commissions key knowledge, skills and behaviours were summarised for the first routes to be delivered in 2020 and 2021: 1) Education & Childcare; Health & Science; Legal, Finance & Accounting; and 2) Construction; Engineering & Manufacturing. These reviews include academic and industry sources. A literature review for the Digital route – also due to be delivered in the same period – was conducted internally.

Much of the literature focussed on the future skills needs in consideration of technological drivers such as greater automation and machination, and political changes such as Brexit. The literature also highlights the need for transferable and soft skills, including communication, team-working and problem solving.

Route-specific findings:

- Advances in technology mean off-site construction has the potential to become more prevalent, requiring proficiency in computer aided design and manufacturing, demand for both of these skills may therefore grow in importance. Increasing use and sophistication of Building Information Modelling (BIM) is influencing design and planning, as well as onsite construction practices and repair and maintenance as part of a 'whole life' approach.
- To compete in an increasingly competitive and innovate world market, engineering and manufacturing sectors will require more sophisticated digital and STEM skills at all levels of industry. High-level engineering and IT occupations will also be vital for these sectors in the future. For example, digital advancements in robotics and artificial intelligence will drive demand for computing and IT skills.

- In the legal, finance and accounting route, new technology innovations and increased data availability is shaping the way customers access services and changing the way services are delivered. Growing commercialisation of practice has seen a demand for paraprofessionals requiring an understanding of new technologies, the application of regulatory frameworks, compliance, ethics and data security.
- In the health and science route, knowledge of biological science will remain important, but technological skills are becoming increasingly important due to technological advances related to health care delivery and the application of new scientific discoveries.

Communication skills are emphasised most in literature related to Education and Childcare, and this includes the ability to recognise and be sensitive to parental roles. For those working in early years settings, it is important to be able to identify common forms of special needs, to offer necessary support.

Starting in Autumn 2017, T level panels will consult the reviews when scoping and agreeing the outline content of T levels within the following routes: Education & Childcare; Health & Science; Legal, Finance & Accounting; Construction; Engineering & Manufacturing.

Published projects

Many Associate Pool projects have been published as a full report on the [DfE Internet site](#) or on Associate's own websites. See below for more information and links to these publications.

Table 1 Associate Pool Published Reports since August 2017

Title	Summary	Date
Unit Costs of Health and Social Care 2017	This is the latest updated volume in a well-established series bringing together information from a variety of sources to estimate national unit costs for a wide range of health and social care services.	Dec 2017
Support for non-EEA migrant child victim of modern slavery	A review of local authority support for non-European Economic Area (EEA) migrant children identified as potential victims of modern slavery and trafficking.	19/12/17
Alternative Providers of Higher Education: Views of the Validation and Franchise Process and Innovation in the Sector	Views of the validation and franchise processes and innovation in the higher education (HE) sector.	19/10/17
The costs of providing levels 4 and 5 in further education	Research into the cost and income when providing levels 4 and 5 in further education.	21/12/17
Teaching, leadership and governance in Further Education	Review of the further education (FE) sector, focusing on FE colleges.	08/02/18

Further information

If you would like any further information about the Associate Pool or the projects included in this summary please email us on: associate.pool@education.gov.uk



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