



Written evidence from the Royal Society of Chemistry to the Education Select Committee concerning teacher recruitment, training, and retention.

20 April 2023

Introduction

1. The Royal Society of Chemistry is an international organisation connecting chemical scientists with each other, with other scientists, and with society as a whole. Founded in 1841 and based in London, UK, we have an international membership of around 50,000. We use the surplus from our global publishing and knowledge business to give thousands of chemical scientists the support and resources required to make vital advances in chemical knowledge. We bring people together to spark new ideas and new partnerships and we support teachers to inspire future generations of scientists.
2. The Royal Society of Chemistry is submitting this evidence because we believe that all students should have an unbroken chain of experts¹ teaching them chemistry content throughout their school education. An excellent chemistry education is vital for the future of the chemical sciences as well as other sectors. It sets the foundations for progression into further learning and the profession and can be a valuable experience for young people regardless of their career aspirations.
3. This response has been informed by our established policy positions, published research and guidance, discussions with the other science learned societies, and members of our wider community of initial teacher trainers and subject knowledge enhancement course providers.

The current situation regarding teacher recruitment and retention

What are the main factors leading to difficulties recruiting and retaining qualified teachers?

Which subjects are most affected?

4. Recruitment to postgraduate teacher training was significantly below target for the 2022/23 academic year. The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER)

How well does the current teacher training framework work to prepare new teachers and how could it be improved?

the ECF one year after its implementation²⁶ identified issues with the additional workload it created for both early career teachers and their mentors as well as concerns about repetition from the ITT year. The review also highlighted concerns about the lack of subject-specificity in the framework with 60% of mentors to early career secondary teachers reporting that the ECF was not subject specific enough. **DfE should work with ECF training providers and subject associations to consider how the ECF can be made more subject specific.**

²⁶ Ford, I., Allen, B, and Wespieser, K. (2022), Early Career Framework, one year on. <https://teachertapp.co.uk/app/uploads/2022/10/2022-10-Early-Career-Framework>