



**History Teacher
Educators' Network**

The RT Hon Bridget Phillipson MP
Secretary of State for Education
and Minister for Women and Equalities
House of Commons
SW1A 0AA

Dear Secretary of State for Education,

We are writing on behalf of the History Teacher Educators' Network (HTEN) to express our deep concern at the continued lack of bursary for those training to become secondary history teachers and primary teachers who will have responsibilities for teaching history in key stages 1 and 2.

HTEN represents educators working in History Teacher Education. Membership of HTEN is open to all those with responsibility for history teacher education across all sectors. We currently have over 100 members, who are involved with training over 400 history teachers and 300 primary teachers each year. Since 2021, when the bursary was withdrawn for secondary history student teachers, we have witnessed a growing crisis in the recruitment and retention of those applying for secondary history and primary Initial Teacher Training/Education (ITT/E) in England. This is a national problem with significant regional impact. The lack of bursaries combined with rising cost of living expenses, including rents, has led to a lack of supply of new primary and secondary history teachers in particular regions. Such pressures also undermine the diversity of ITT/E provision available to new entrants, by making certain courses unaffordable and unviable for training teachers.

Bursaries are needed to support recruitment in all subjects and phases.

We appreciate the need to target bursaries at shortage subjects. There is robust evidence to suggest that this is effective. However, there is also evidence that targeted financial incentives are having a negative impact on recruitment to teach non-bursary subjects. NFER research conducted by Jack Worth indicated history ITT continued to recruit above target*. This is welcomed news; however, there are significant issues behind this headline. Since the removal of the bursary in history, the number of applicants for history ITT/E has decreased overall. Only 38% respondents to the Historical Association and HTEN ITE Survey 2024 reported that their postgraduate programme had recruited to target for 2024-25. Many respondents also noted that academic profile of their current students is not as strong as in previous years.

For the first time in recent years, the primary sector did not recruit to target for September 2024 (88% of target). This year NFER data shows that overall teacher recruitment is significantly below target for the third year running (68% of target for 2024-2025). Many newly trained secondary history teachers will find themselves teaching a range of subjects (Citizenship, PSHE, Geography, RE) crucially filling gaps in timetables where there are recruitment shortages. Given the overall shortage of teachers and the evidence to suggest that bursaries are effective, it is vital to reintroduce a standard level of financial support for all student teachers to support recruitment to the profession.



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We are concerned for the welfare of our student teachers. They deserve equity of opportunity.

We are concerned for the welfare of our student teachers. The average Maintenance Loan for English students in 2023/24 was around £7,202 a year, while the average UK student accommodation cost is £8,632 a year. It is unrealistic to expect student teachers to be in full-time professional school placements (typically 8am-5pm) and maintain part time work to support their studies. All postgraduate ITT/E routes require a minimum of 120 days in placement schools and most students self-fund their transport adding another financial burden. With the extension of many courses by up to three weeks, because of the new quality requirements, we are asking for even more financial commitment from our student teachers. These burdens fall disproportionately on non-bursary student teachers, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds or those with caring responsibilities. Respondents to the Historical Association and HTEN ITE Survey 2024 noted a decline in mature students on their ITT/E courses. Members of HTEN frequently report that many of their student teachers are under significant financial stress and living in difficult conditions. This impacts on course progression, outcomes and, crucially, retention. In the final weeks before the start of this academic year, many courses also experienced late withdrawal of candidates holding places for 2024 entry due to financial pressures. This would not be the case if Primary and History ITT/E students were paid bursaries, as is the case in other subjects. We need to recruit and retain teachers in all subjects and phases; teacher training in non-bursary subjects cannot become a luxury option only for those who can afford it.

Members have also raised serious concerns regarding equity within the sector.

Salaried and or funded routes to train to teach secondary history and the primary phase remain. In the current financial context these routes are understandably attractive to new teachers. These routes are growing disproportionately in non-bursary subjects, leaving other providers who are unable to offer the same financial incentives at a significant disadvantage and vulnerable to closure. Many of our members are reporting a decline in applications and acceptance rates due to the unlimited expansion of certain routes at the expense of other providers. The closure of different courses and routes into teaching would result in an enormous loss of expertise in the sector and would adversely impact regional supply – regionally based ITT/E partnerships, for example in the Northeast and Northwest of the country, are critical for the supply of teachers to schools. The lack of even subsistence-level bursary funding is removing choice applicants have and severely impacts their ability to select the route that best suits their own learning needs.

HTEN therefore fully endorses the position of the Universities Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET) in calling for a levelling of bursaries 'so that all student teachers receive a standard level of financial support.' On behalf of the members of the History Teachers' Educators Network, **we urgently demand a minimum level of bursary for all student teachers.**

Yours sincerely,

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Laura London, Co-Chair HTEN, Lecturer in Education, The University of East Anglia.



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*These targets are set by the DfE and have been lowered annually, 7% for history ITT/E recruitment between 2022-23 and 2034-24.

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